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at the University of New Orleans

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Ezra Pound & the Spanish World

EDITED BY

Viorica Patea,
John Gery, AND
Walter Baumann



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To Javier Coy (1936–2019) in memoriam

Founder of studies of American literature in Spain, he contributed to the study of the works of Henry James, William Faulkner, and Ezra Pound. He is author of the irreplaceable bilingual annotated critical edition of the first 84 Cantos at Cátedra Letras Universales (Madrid, 1992; 1996; 2000) in the translation of José Vázquez Amaral. All that remains is for us to continue his legacy.

What thou lovest well remains,
the rest is dross

What thou lov'st well shall not be reft from thee
What thou lov'st well is thy true heritage

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Pound and Unamuno

The History of a Collaboration

Miriam Borham-Puyal

In 1920, Ezra Pound wrote to Miguel de Unamuno (1864–1936), requesting a collaboration for the journal of which he was then an editor, *The Dial*. On July 5 of that same year he wrote again to confirm the contribution of the Spanish philosopher to the U.S. publication. These letters reveal Pound's multi-lingual, cross-cultural and international vocation, seen not only in his interest to discover and support new voices of a pan-European literature, but also in his admiration for the great Spanish teacher, writer, and philosopher that was Unamuno, who shared his belief in the transnational character of literature. Considered in the historical context in which these two writers' shared international interest developed, their correspondence brings to light significant parallels between Pound and Unamuno, highlights the latter's importance in English-speaking contexts, and reveals key features of Pound's study of the Spanish language and his attitude to Spanish literature as seen in these epistles. Despite that, overall, Unamuno did not seem to find Pound's later work to his liking, their letters and comments denote a telling dimension of the international relevance of both poets.

1 Pound's Modernism and the Spanish Context

Modernism itself as a practice involved an interconnected web of different cultural travel routes, and multilingual juxtapositions, characterized by trans-lingual fusions. For those modernists who were also translators, international poetics often meant blurring conventional lines between translations and creative poetics, speaking through voices of the past that bring together different cultures, and removing themselves from their own national identities. As Gayle Rogers argues, modernism required a fluid pattern of composition, cross-cultural and cross-lingual, creating a "a set of fluid maps of modernist cultures derived from the interlocking constellations such as London-Madrid-Berlin or Dublin-Paris-Berlin,"¹ and the various journals that usually collaborated with each other. Pound served as foreign editor of journals on both sides of the Atlantic, among them *The Dial* (New York), for which he sought Unamuno's contributions. A polymath, Pound was, in his capacity as an editor, above all a promoter of the modernist sensibility, one who was determined to create a forum for modernist poetics.

This aim was shared by Pound's collaborators, such as T. S. Eliot, as well as by Spanish writers and philosophers, among them José Ortega y Gasset. Their respective journals, Eliot's *Criterion* (1922-39) and Ortega's *Revista de Occidente* (1923-36), appearing almost simultaneously, became central to the construction of a literary mosaic of European traditions. Eliot's desire to achieve an international dimension for his journal led him to look for new contacts, and he sought to gain the cooperation of relevant Spanish writers, publishing by recommendation such innovative but at the time little-known authors as Ramón Gómez de la Serna, while also engaging relevant voices to discuss the state of contemporary literature in Spain.

In this Europeanizing project, Ortega's journal proves an ally. The *Revista de Occidente* is an influential, internationalist journal with strong ties to Anglophone culture.² Ortega wanted to transform an anguished country after the debacle of the 1898 Spanish-U.S. War, in which Spain lost its empire to America in the Cuban War, into a "new Spain," cosmopolitan, European, and modern. He became the promoter of a Europeanizing movement, a project that involved philosophy, social pedagogy, educational

projects, book translations, and journals that would collaborate with his foreign counterparts, Eliot and Joyce among them. In his aim, Ortega looked to writers in Britain and America in his desire to Europeanize Spain and to Hispanize Europe.³ He founded a series of journals, such as *Faro* (1908) and *El Espectador* (1916-34), to open Spain to the world and make his countrymen citizens of Europe. Ortega's idea of Europe was one of unity, of the coexistence of peoples who shared common social and cultural values, therefore calling to overcome nationalisms in order to achieve integration.⁴

This Europeanizing movement was at the heart of the artistic exploration of Spain's *Silver Age* (1898-1936), and Madrid became a vortex of polycentric modernisms. Antonio de Marichalar (1893-1973), Ortega's collaborator, introduced Joyce and Proust in Spain, and he further cooperated with Eliot's *Criterion*. In Spain, he published articles on and texts by Joyce, Lytton Strachey, Virginia Woolf, and William Faulkner in Spanish. His essay on Joyce's *Ulysses*, entitled "James Joyce en su laberinto" ("Joyce in his Labyrinth"),⁵ proves an early and profound approach to the novel and Joyce's criticism of British imperialism, remaining a landmark even today for its reading of the novel. Marichalar also sought to popularize Spanish writers, acting as an ambassador of the Generation of '27 in the *Criterion*. He also provided accounts from Spain—for example, his chronicles entitled "Contemporary Spanish Literature," where he presents an optimistic portrayal of what he understood as Spain's new writing within a wider European frame.⁶

Like Ortega and Eliot, who created translational spaces, Pound as an editor and foreign correspondent for many avant-garde journals (*The Egoist*, *The Little Review*, *Poetry*, *The Dial*) also aimed to create a translational culture, in part, to rebuild Europe's devastation after the Great War; to do so, he engaged in a vigorous transnational cultural dialogue. All three editors developed projects involving essays, translations, the dissemination of artwork, and foreign collaborations; their goal, it seemed, was to create a new cosmopolitan intellectual community. Fed up with England's provincial, isolated cultural atmosphere, and frustrated with his crusade with publishers, Pound, in particular, left London for the continent to pursue his fight against a Europe divided by wars and "artificial nationalities" and to look for collaborators and authors, beyond German and French circles.

2 Pound and Unamuno

Given his attempts to provide an international dimension to the journals for which he was editor, in this case *The Dial*, in 1920 Pound corresponded with Unamuno, whom he regarded as the foremost intellectual of Spain, given his attempts to provide an international dimension to the journals for which he was editor.⁷ His letters to the Spanish writer have been reproduced before, both in academic and non-academic contexts. For example, in "Unamuno and the United States" (1966), Unamunian scholar Manuel García Blanco translated Pound's and Unamuno's letters entirely into English. Then in 1991 Vicente Araguas translated them into Spanish in *Diario 16*, in an article which included a double-page feature with a portrait of both writers, facsimiles of the letters themselves, and general explanatory notes on *The Dial*, as well as on William Carlos Williams and Pound's knowledge of Spanish. Following these scholars, who were, nevertheless, uncertain of the final outcome of the project,⁸ I want here to trace and analyze the collaboration that ensued and to identify the similarities between both writers evident in their correspondence. Here is a complete transcription of both letters:⁹

Letter 1. Not dated.

Hotel de l'Elysée
3 rue de Beaune
Paris

Miguel de Unamuno
Salamanca

Dear Sir:

I should like very much to persuade you to write something for THE DIAL, or at least to permit us to publish simultaneously in English some of your literary studies or "recuerdos" [memories].

I'm so far as the matter lies with me personally I should like you to make THE DIAL your representative organ in the United States. Muchos años hay despues que fue en España y he obliado la lengua. Por eso, perdoneme Ud. de escribir esa carta en ingles. Quiero que Ud. envíará algunos sus escritos al DIAL, y tambien que Ud. hara saber a los directores los noticias necesarias por haber sus libros.

Poesias; Recuerdo de ninez y mocedad; Contra esto y aquello; Del Sentimiento tragico de la vida.

(Quiero que Williams hace una critica de sus obras.) Ud. puede mandar manuscritos (prosas) en Espanol; mi amigo el poeta W.C. Williams, hijo d'una espanola sabe muy bien traducir los en Englis.

Si Ud. ha tanto bondad mandá los, priego a Ud., a la direction.

Dial. 152 W. 13th St.
New York

Stados Unidos

Soy ignorante, y quiero mucho saber, si es possible, con su autoridad, que son los escritores jovenes Espanoles que meritan ser conocidos en los Estados, y en Inglilterra, y, tambien que son en nececidad, y con que la question del dinero esta grave.

Hay siempre algunos jovenes de talento a quellos se puede hacer el bien de la literatura, en haciendo pagamiento.

Perdoneme la barbarita duna lingua que no ho dicho desp hablado, por doce anos.

Sincerely yours,
Ezra Pound

[written sideways on right margin]

// Referencia C. Linati Enzo Ferrieri de Milano

Letter 2. Dated July 5, 1920.

3 rue de Beaune
Paris

Senor
Miguel de Unamuno

Dear Sir:

Thank you for your kind and prompt answer

I am writing to the New York Office of The Dial (152 W. 13th St.) and to W. Carlos Williams (9 Ridge Rd. Rutherford. N.J. U.S.A.); asking the editors of The Dial to send you a definite request for a certain number of articles.

I am more than happy to find that you are ready to cooperate. Please have your publishers send the new books to *The Dial*; this will enable us to print notices of them earlier than if you wait to hear from New York. I think *The Dial* has already had an article on Antonio Machado (but light and inadequate.)

Thank you for your mention of the other authors. I had of course heard of R. Perez de Ayala.

I do not think you need write articles for *The Dial* alone. There are some things which you will perhaps want to write effortlessly for the United States; but in most cases, certainly in matters of philosophy or literature [*sic*], all *The Dial* asks is that our english version shall be able to appear not later than the Spanish original (whether in Spain or the Argentina) or the Italian and French versions.

One can not assume appearance at same day and hour, but can come fairly near synchronization.

I suggest that the best plan would be to have your carbon copies marked with the month you intend them to appear, and that you should calculate our New York copy needing from 6 to 8 weeks from arrival in New York to appearance in print.

With cordial thanks and wishes for pleasant relationship between yourself and *The Dial*.

Believe me your most sincerely

Ezra Pound

5 July 1920

As seen in the correspondence, an admiring young Pound seems adamant in his wish to have the older and respected Unamuno as a regular collaborator,¹⁰ writing to the editor of the journal, Scofield Thayer, that he was the most important Spanish writer, describing him as the "recognized best,"¹¹ and an essential source, if the magazine wanted to convey "what the outer world ought to know about Spain"; claiming that to "gain the respect of the Hispanic world [...] a monthly Unamuno would be a good start."¹² Miguel de Unamuno was indeed at the forefront of Spanish thought and literature at that time, as a poet, novelist, and essayist. Known for his often

contradictory and controversial line of thought, he lost his rectorship at Salamanca University in 1924 and was banished to Fuerteventura (one of the Canary Islands) because of his criticism of the dictator General Primo de Rivera. He later escaped to France, lived briefly in Paris, and established himself in Hendaye close to the Spanish border. He shared his exile in France with Eduardo Ortega y Gasset, José's older brother, and other writers and intellectuals until 1931, when after Rivera's fall, he regained his rectorship. Although an enthusiastic representative of the Republican--Socialist faction, he criticized Manuel Azaña's policies, and in 1936 the Republican government removed him again as Rector of the University of Salamanca.¹³ However, that same year, because of his public confrontation with the Nationalist General Millán Astray, Unamuno was placed under house arrest. Heartbroken, he died on December 31, 1936.¹⁴

Pound's interest in Unamuno, in fact, responds to his well-established popularity outside Spain, including in Anglophone countries. It is seen, for instance, in the response to his exile, which induced authors as distant as H. G. Wells to write on his behalf and to rise in support of the Spanish philosopher.¹⁵ Unamuno's banishment to the Canary Islands, indeed, became a well-known cause among intellectuals. Moreover, his ample impact in the United States has been recounted, for instance, by Thomas Inge in his study of Unamuno's correspondence with North Americans, which ranges from fan mail to literary commentary among colleagues, including numerous requests for original pieces or permission to translate his work.¹⁶ This interest would be long-lasting, as seen in the *New York Times* request to him to write a piece on the occasion of the proclamation of the Republic, a contribution originally entitled "La promesa de España," the English version of which appeared in three installments.¹⁷

However, Unamuno must have been of interest to Pound also for his international vocation and possible parallels between them. After all, Unamuno has been heralded as one of the great poets of the Spanish language, comparable to Wordsworth and Whitman.¹⁸ His notions on the "rhythm of thought" have been compared to those of Eliot and Valéry.¹⁹ While his poetry has escaped easy categorization, described (often pejoratively) as "poesía de ideas" (a poetry of ideas), it was nevertheless positively reviewed by the great modernist Rubén Darío, and later heralded as a form of "modernismo interior" (inner modernism). Part of this richness of

interpretation derives from the poet's own rejection of schools and trends, of aestheticism with no inner engagement, of "shallow" modernism or the abandonment of the role of poet as visionary, as "ciego vidente" (blind seer) or mediator between the physical and spiritual worlds.²⁰

In this sense, Unamuno also comes close to Eliot's modernist agenda. Although Unamuno could never be considered an avant-gardist like Pound, he shows some theoretical affinity with Anglo-American modernism. Unamuno's poetic creed formulated in a poem with the same title as early as 1907, "Piensa el sentimiento, siente el pensamiento" [think the feeling, feel the thought],²¹ places him in the camp of Eliot and Pound:

Poetic Creed

Think feelings, feel thoughts,
may your songs have nests on the earth
and when they soar up to the skies,
may they not be lost behind clouds.

They need weight, weight in their wings,
the column of smoke melts away completely,
something that is not music is poetry,
what is heavy is all that remains.

What is thought, be sure, is what is felt.
Pure feeling? He who believes in that
has never reached from the source of feeling
to life and the deepest vein.

Don't be too fussy about the clothing,
you are a sculptor, not a tailor, so
do not forget that the idea, when naked
is most beautiful.

Remember, not he who incarnates a soul in flesh
nor he who gives form to the idea is a poet,
a poet is he who finds the soul behind the flesh,

and finds idea behind the form.

The chaff of formulas, clumsy science,
are what veils the truth from us;
undress it with your hands, and your eyes
will enjoy its beauty.

Look for naked lines. Although you try
to unwrap us in the vagueness of mist,
even the mist has lines and sculpts itself,
so keep your eyes don't lose them.

Let your songs be sculpted songs,
anchored in the ground as they soar;
language, above all, is thinking
and its beauty is thought.

Let us grasp the entrails of passing
forms in truths of the spirit,
May the Idea reign supreme in all;
let us, then, sculpt the mist.²²

While Unamuno, on the one hand, apparently prefigures Eliot's theory of the dissociation of sensibility, in which he calls for a "direct sensuous apprehension of thought, or a recreation of thought into feeling" or for the "transmuting ideas into sensations,"²³ he also echoes Pound's ideogrammic method. Pound, influenced by Fenollosa, saw in "The Chinese Written Character" the ideal aesthetic method for Imagist and Vorticist innovations as well as the structural principle of the later modernist epic. He believed that the pictorial aspect of the Chinese ideogram was the perfect avant-garde remedy to both the abstraction and sentimentalism that modernism defied, since it grounded an abstract concept in the concrete elements that shaped it.²⁴ Moreover, Unamuno's poetic creed emphasizes the idea of a sculptural verse: he equates the poet with a sculptor who finds beauty in the naked idea, who sculpts

songs and carves out the fog, all of which echoes Pound's own wish to produce a "sculpted verse."

Unamuno was also, like Pound, "a reader in all the languages," who "annotated and translated fragments of everything that came his way," expressing "solidarity as a universal reader," while he also embodied the mixture of cultures and traditions that comprised Spain.²⁵ For Unamuno, Spanish (and European) history and culture have been shaped by a melting-pot of peoples, ranging from the Phoenicians and Romans to the Moors,²⁶ who together make the essence to which he wished Spaniards to return. He also developed the notion of intra-history, and the contradiction of "pueblo" [people] versus "nación" [nation].²⁷ Furthermore, he advocated for the Europeanizing and universalizing of Spain, for opening the country to outside currents that would renew the inner streams.²⁸ He saw this renewal being achieved by Spaniards "becoming" more Spanish, for Unamuno found the universal man in the local and transient one, that is, the common man, one characteristic of his own time and place,²⁹ whereas Pound endorses the notion of "exceptional individuals," meaning "those who made history or have at least appeared in the story."³⁰ For Unamuno, history could be best understood by looking at interpersonal histories of anonymous people in popular culture, arguing that "life lay in a vast communitarian sea" and that "what happens to individuals happens also to the people [pueblos],"³¹ a conviction nevertheless similar to Pound's own idea that, to a significant degree, the culture of all ages is contemporaneous.³² Consequently, given their cross-cultural perspectives, not surprisingly, both poets share a similarly polyglot approach to literature.

Also a heterodox and a master of translation, Unamuno published several translations of English and German works for the publishing house directed by José Lázaro, the founder and editor of *La España Moderna* (1889–1914),³³ and relevant scholars have traced how his translations contributed to shaping his thought.³⁴ Translation was also a hermeneutic, poetic, ethnographic process for Unamuno, as he believed one could understand a nation as it expressed itself in its literature. A polyglot like Pound, he claimed in a letter to Joan Maragall, in 1907: "When I was a child, my mother who had studied in France, had me learn French; I read German at twenty, English at twenty-five, and I've scarcely read in Spanish. I have lived outside Spain in spirit—and this is what has made

me Spanish."³⁵ As did Pound, Unamuno also advocated that the study of foreign literature would enhance the autochthonous language and literature of Spain; indeed, reading foreign literature helped him discover his Hispanicity. In *ABC of Reading*, for instance, Pound asserts his conviction about foreign literatures, when he writes, quite frankly,

The sum of human wisdom is not contained in any one language, and no single language is CAPABLE of expressing all forms and degrees of human comprehension.³⁶

While it may be too much of a stretch to say that Pound discovered his Americanness through other literatures, he did become the poet he was through his translations and imitations of foreign and past literatures, which opened his horizons. In his introduction to the English translation of *Del sentimiento trágico de la vida*, Unamuno claims:

As for many years my spirit has been nourished upon the very core of English literature [...] the translator [...] has merely converted not a few of the thoughts and feelings [...] back into their original form of expression. Or retranslated them, perhaps, whereby they emerge other than they originally were, for an idea does not pass from one language to another without change.³⁷

Not only is Unamuno vindicating the origins of his thought, but he is arguing for translation as a process of re-creation, of remaking or reliving the text and the idea therein contained. This might recall Pound's own radical approach to translation, yet also his notion that some elements of poetry are not translatable *per se*, but require to be paraphrased and so 're-created' into the foreign language. For Pound, when considering what he understands as the three dimensions of poetry, its *phanopoeia* can be preserved through translation, while a poem's *melopoeia* can be appreciated by shared sensibilities, but not transferred to a different language. Finally, in his opinion, a poem's *logopoeia* "does not translate," although it "may pass through a paraphrase"; in other words, a poem's "attitude of mind" cannot be translated "locally" but can be conveyed by means of understanding the original author's "state of mind" or finding "a derivative

or an equivalent," hence, in a way making it new through the "dance of the intellect among words."³⁸

As José Luis Mora García documents from such critics as Peter Earle and Manuel García Blanco,³⁹ many of Unamuno's English-speaking scholars or friends shaped his beliefs and religious thought in rich and complex ways, including an extensive list of American writers; among those on the list, according to Thomas Inge, were such "moderns as Willa Cather, Floyd Dell, John Gould Fletcher, Waldo Frank, Langston Hughes, Sinclair Lewis, William Vaughn Moody, Lewis Mumford, Ezra Pound, Carl Sandburg, George Santayana, and Edith Wharton."⁴⁰ Moreover, his well-marked copies of these writers' works demonstrate "a careful reading by Unamuno." Yet, for Inge, "evidence of greater significance is [sic] the mentions and absorption of what he read in his own work; in particular, in his poetical diary, the *Cancionero*."⁴¹ Written between 1928 and 1936, it contains over 1,750 poems. On at least ten occasions, while Unamuno was reading American authors, "he was moved to write poems" in response.⁴² These seven authors included Whitman (who inspired two poems), Herman Melville, Edgar Allan Poe, Sidney Lanier, William Vaughn Moody, Carl Sandburg, and Langston Hughes. In fact, for Peter Earle, Unamuno's approach to foreign literature is best described as a process of *assimilation*, a "Platonic-like 'relationship'" with his favorite writers and thinkers of the past, "gleaning from their works concepts, metaphors and images; quoting them [...]" and answering them, forcing their original meanings so that they might better conform to the peculiar Unamunian vision of man and the universe."⁴³ Introducing the poems in his *Cancionero*, Unamuno himself writes,

As an ensemble, I believe, they form a poem of great unity, the compact, intimate unity that life gives. And they are, I dare say, poetry and philosophy if these two are different [...]. This bouquet, or rather, forest of songs forms a single, integral, authentic poem [...] and it offers a philosophy, though not a philosophical system.⁴⁴

Concerning the connection between Pound and Unamuno, this "forest of songs" is significant especially because of their appreciation of Whitman,

and the poems Unamuno dedicates to him. In 1906, Unamuno discovered Whitman by a gift of *Leaves of Grass* which he had received from his friend, Everett W. Olmsted, an American professor at Cornell. His response is recorded not only in his letters and in the annotations on his copy of the book, but also in the story "El canto adámico" [The Adamic Song], which indicates his early, and perceptive, role in the study of the American poet in Spain.⁴⁵ Unamuno then wants to transfer America's lost poetic tradition to Spain: he wants to resuscitate Whitman in translation, together with the regional poets, Sandburg, Lanier, and Moody. In fact, in autobiographical pieces and short stories in Spanish for the New Orleans-based *Mercury*, to which he contributed in 1911 and 1916,⁴⁶ Unamuno sees himself as an "exiled icon of dissidence for many writers and cultural critics beyond Spain, as part of an English-Spanish global union—an heir to Whitman—translating across two languages and inserting Anglophone US poetry into his own *Cancionero*,"⁴⁷ a poetic diary he began precisely in exile. For all these reasons, it seems natural that Pound would regard Unamuno a literary authority, to the point of claiming his own ignorance and requesting his advice on which young Spanish writers to read and follow.

Yet, returning to the reason for Pound's initial letter, in the end, *The Dial* did manage to secure a contribution from Unamuno. Pound, as the Paris correspondent at the time, hoped in his second letter to receive a "certain number of articles" by him and to establish a "pleasant relationship" between Unamuno and *The Dial*. Adding to Pound's letters, James Watson wrote on July 21, 1920, requesting regular "articles on the literary and artistic activities of Spain," "aimed particularly at the American public." However, the letters to Unamuno by the editors, and those between Pound, Thayer, and Watson themselves, reveal that further collaboration did not go smoothly;⁴⁸ not the least because of a growing fear of Unamuno's incarceration and his later political exile.⁴⁹

The letters that exist in the Salamanca archive, however, fill in the remaining gaps. On October 15, 1923, Gilbert Seldes, then managing director of *The Dial*, acknowledges the receipt of a story by Unamuno, yet he also requests a piece on Pío Baroja while they await the verdict of the translator on the suitability of the piece. On December 27 of that same year, another editor, Alyse Gregory, was assigned the unpleasant

task of rejecting Unamuno's story as unsuitable for the journal, while still insisting on the possibility of a review of Baroja's work. Probably Unamuno did not reply, for a reminder was sent by Gregory on April 17 of the following year. So while Watson even advertised Unamuno as part of the journal's "foreign staff" covering the continent's "literary and artistic activities,"⁵⁰ they actually published only one piece, "The Cavern of Silence" (1924), an enigmatic parable of literary philosophy. In it, Unamuno has a Dante-inspired dream in Bilbao, his hometown, and on awakening he transcribes the "tale of the secret of the cavern,"⁵¹ the story of a grotto that attracts people who then disappear in it forever. He writes as a conclusion that he "wrote it to dictation": "To whose dictation? I don't know. Whence came this tale? I don't know either. The only thing I do know is that it is not a symbol, it is not an allegory, it is not what it is. Somebody told it to me—I don't know who—and I tell it to you as somebody told it to me."⁵² Once more, Unamuno introduces himself as a medium for other voices,⁵³ while he also recalls, in his local context of Bilbao, one of the pillars of European culture, namely, Dante, a reference that further resembles Pound's own interests, as well as emphasizes Unamuno's idea of a transnational approach to literature and inspiration.⁵⁴ Therefore, although not a straightforward description of Spain's literary and artistic activities as requested and advertised by *The Dial's* editors, the story does provide insight into Unamuno's own conception of creative literature.

3 Pound and (New) Spanish Voices

Beyond his admiration for Unamuno, it seems necessary to highlight the ways in which these two epistles contribute to understanding Pound's connection to Spain and his knowledge of its literature, evident throughout his work. First of all, they illustrate Pound's skill as a linguist. In the first letter, Pound apologizes to Unamuno for writing in English, yet only the first two paragraphs are, in fact, in that language. The rest are in Spanish, as Pound recalls his time as a student of that language and the last time he spoke it, twelve years earlier. In this passion for languages and how they opened the world for him,⁵⁵ he also echoes Unamuno, who, after all, was Chair of Greek but who also taught himself several languages

in order to read texts in their original version and to translate them. By contrast, Pound's letter of July 5—after having heard from Unamuno—is written entirely in English, and it suggests that he now seems assured by the Spanish poet's obvious command of English.

In the letters, Pound also displays that he shares with Unamuno an interest in some of the great writers and texts of Spanish literature. In *Spirit of Romance*, for instance, his key figure is El Cid (1140–1207), while in the epistolary exchange with Unamuno they discuss Ramón Pérez de Ayala, Manuel Machado, and José Ortega y Gasset.⁵⁶ In the last paragraphs of the first letter, Pound's interest in new Spanish voices seems to echo a wish to return to that pre-imperialistic era of translational exchange, which would be fitting given the post-1898 dissolution of the concept of an empire and the feeling of fragmentation and fracture that permeates Spanish literature and culture. Having established Unamuno's prestige in America and Pound's consideration for his discernment, as well as their common disenchantment with the idea of a hegemonic culture, it comes as no surprise that he invites the elder poet's views on which younger Spanish writers deserve to be known in the United States and England. Moreover, he wishes to know who among them are in need of financial support. Pound's interest in the advancement of new writers facing adversity is particularly touching—and realistic—when he states that there are always young talents who could contribute to literature if helped financially. In the second letter, Pound thanks Unamuno for his references to these other authors, mentioning his acquaintance with Pérez de Ayala's work, as well as his assessment of *The Dial's* article on Antonio Machado, which he deemed "tight and inadequate."

Pound's wish to translate Spanish voices to make them better known in Anglophone contexts proves again his rejection of an exclusively national literature in favor of the idea of modern literature as a mosaic of different influences, languages, and voices. In a series of articles on Spanish culture published in the Basque journal *Hermes*, in 1921, Pound claims that Spain fell from literary greatness when it stopped translating, during the Counter-Reformation.⁵⁷ For Pound, as for Unamuno, this emphasis on an exclusively nationalistic literature killed the transnational "spirit of romance" and confined Spain's cultural achievement. Therefore, this last appeal to Unamuno seems to point at a collaboration in restoring that

transnational creative network, trading texts and languages to create an expansive literary exchange. While the fruitful correspondence that Pound seemed to hope for did not finally occur, both writers would continue to develop a body of work based on an international, cross-cultural approach that, despite their individual differences as poets, would collaboratively enrich the history of literature in English and Spanish alike.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Juan Ramón and the Imagists A Reappraisal of “Modernism(o)”

Santiago Rodríguez Guerrero-Strachan

Juan Ramón Jiménez (1881–1958) declared himself a practitioner and theorist of Hispano-American *modernismo* early in his life. As far back as 1900, Rubén Darío, the Nicaraguan poet who fostered *modernismo* in Spanish America and Spain, had asked Jiménez to promote *modernismo*, which he willingly did. In lectures he gave in 1953, and in poetry collected posthumously (1962) as *El Modernismo: Apuntes de curso* (1953) [*Modernismo: Notes from a Course* (1953)],¹ he was still promoting the movement. In those fifty-three years, Jiménez had experienced some poetical shifts that had changed his poetry radically. This evolution was accompanied by a nuanced understanding of “*Modernism(o)*” that included Spanish and Spanish American *modernismo* and Anglo-American modernism, eventually resulting in a personal blending of both. A central event in Jiménez’s evolution was his marriage in 1916 to Zenobia Camprubí and their honeymoon in America. During this voyage he wrote *Diario de un poeta recién casado* [*Journal of a Newly-Wed Poet*]² (1917), which, critics have noted, revealed a change in style due to his readings of poetry in English.³ With his wife, Jiménez embarked on an intense program of reading of authors such as the English Romantics, Coleridge or Shelley, as well as the American writers Edgar Allan Poe, Vachel Lindsay, and Edgar Lee Masters.

His shift from French Symbolism to English poetry can be perceived in Jiménez’s own verse, both in the topics he chose and in his diction.