



FACULTY OF ARTS Charles University

Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

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Supervisor's report on BA thesis by Anna Pavienská:

Imagism, Imagists, and Imagery: Ezra Pound, H.D. and William Carlos Williams

In her thesis, Anna Pavienská examines Imagist poetry from the early twentieth century, attempting to characterize this Anglophone movement by identifying its primary stylistic tendencies and illustrating these through examples of its major representatives.

Pavienská has structured her thesis clearly, beginning with a chapter that lays the foundation of the study by identifying the main tenets of Imagist poetry, as expounded by Ezra Pound in 1913. Having done so, the chapter then aims to develop these ideas by situating Imagism in broad terms within the historical, social and aesthetic moment of Modernism. The thesis then examines one poet per chapter, focusing on several poems by William Carlos Williams and Ezra Pound, before moving to an examination of some exemplary poems included in *Des Imagistes: An Anthology*, a watershed publication for Imagist poetry. The final chapter of the thesis comments on the long-term influence that the short-lived movement of Imagist poetry had for the poets involved, as well as future generations.

Pavienská clearly had ambitious goals for this thesis and her familiarity with these poets and their broader historical moment has been informed by primary resources from the early twentieth century as well as crucial, more recent reappraisals by Hugh Kenner, among others. The basic conceptual and organizational foundations of the thesis are sound and the author's enthusiasm for this literature is palpable. However, the thesis suffers from a sense of being rushed and can often feel cursory, as poems are not examined in depth and their exemplification of Imagism's stylistic and conceptual characteristics is not always argued at the length that would be necessary to feel complete or fully convincing.

The structure of the thesis is clearly considered, but, alongside the occasional lack of depth, the diction of the thesis often feels too conversational. Another round of edits might have helped remedy both of these issues.

This was a somewhat difficult thesis to supervise, though it began in a promising manner, as Anna contacted me well in advance of the deadline to begin work. After several initial meetings, our communication lapsed during her Erasmus tenure. Following her return to Prague, she had to scramble to complete the thesis in time and due to this I was only able to provide minimal input, edits, and suggestions. There is no doubt that the thesis would be improved by another round of supervised editing, as well as a more trenchant consideration of the subject matter.

Despite this, the thesis does achieve its aims of detailing the key characteristics of Imagist poetry and examining those characteristics in the work of important Imagist poets. While the thesis is clearly centered on Ezra Pound to the expense of other poets like H. D. and Amy Lowell, that is perhaps understandable given Pound's importance to the movement. The evident research that went into the thesis is one of its strengths, with quotes and concepts drawn from many of the key texts of Imagism as well as important critical commentary. If there were more time, I'm sure the ideas and arguments of the thesis would have been marshaled more carefully and authoritatively.

In light of the above comments, I have three questions to pose:

- 1) If you had more time to work on the thesis or more pages to fill, how would you develop what you have written here? Are there areas of your argument or framework that you feel could use more attention?
- 2) How would you sum up the difference between Georgian poetry, Imagism and Vorticism? Where does Imagism sit in relation to Modernism?
- 3) You conclude by putting Imagism within the context of the writing careers of the poets examined in the thesis. Do you believe Imagism has had a long-term influence on Anglophone poetry, beyond these individual poets? In what way, if any, might Imagism be relevant to the Anglophone poetry of the late twentieth century and today?

In light of the questions and opinions expressed above, I hereby recommend the mark of 3 (**dobře**) for this thesis work, depending on the student's performance during the defense.

Stephan B. Delbos, MFA, PhD