

Anton Chekhov
Mark Twain

→ Chekhov's gun // The Middlesex

IMAGISM

- Principles agreed upon by Ezra Pound, Richard Aldington and Hilda Doolittle (1912):
 1. Direct treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective.
 2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
 3. As regarding rhythm, to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome.
- General Imagist features:
 - impersonality, objectivity and verbal precision
 - simplicity and directness, through which sight becomes insight
 - denunciation of subjective feelings, abstractions or literary elaborations
 - the Image is not exclusively visual nor a snapshot of surface reality, but that which 'presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time' (Pound), in other words a disciplined expression of experience
 - evocation of depth, reciprocity of inner and outer realities
 - free verse, new rhythms, colloquial speech
- Imagism versus Symbolism
- Imagism (Modernism) versus Romanticism
- On Imagism:
 - 'Imagism is not something superficial. It obeys an instinct. Moreover, it is an ancient phase of poetry. It is something permanent'. (Wallace Stevens)
 - 'If an image were set down on canvas, it was both a poem and a picture at the same time. The design of the painting and of the poem I've attempted to fuse'. (William Carlos Williams)
 - 'It is possible to find a metaphor for anything, an analogue: but the image is encountered, not found; it is an account to the poet's perception, of the art of perception; it is a test of sincerity, a test of conviction, the rare poetic qualities of truthfulness'. (George Oppen)

HD (Hilda Doolittle) (1886-1961)

- Distinctive poetic characteristics:
 - a perfect 'Imagiste', at least initially
 - manipulation of mythical connotations and archetypes
 - overt or covert celebration of sexual love
 - turn towards antiquity (ancient Greece and Egypt)
 - turn towards 'ancient wisdom' and the occult
 - fragmented self-consciousness which finds an outlet in an organic harmony within the universe, and thus acquisition of identity
 - feminist, autobiographical and visionary creative power
 - constant use of poetic 'personae of the inspired seer' (Robert Duncan)
 - myth and mysticism in 'Trilogy' and 'Helen in Egypt'
 - 'My mind has its peculiar egocentric personal approach to the eternal realities'
- Robert Duncan contends: 'HD had come to be concerned with finding out the gods in levels of many meanings, as personae of states of mind, but also as guides in reading the message of the universe. Here, the Image is also a Sign. Image and Fact are now Logos, revelations that we must receive'.
- HD herself writes: 'We are voyagers, discoverers/ of the not-known' ('The Walls Do Not Fall', 1944). Later on she realizes that 'I did not know that I must keep faith/ with something, I called it writing,/ write, write or die'. ('Hermetic Definition', 1972)

empathy + John Keats

poems spoke to an audience which was unready to respond to the strong feminist principles articulated in her work. She died in 1961.

From an Imagist manifesto:

1. To use the language of common speech, but to employ the exact word, not the nearly-exact, nor the merely decorative word.
2. We believe that the individuality of a poet may often be better expressed in free verse than in conventional forms. In poetry, a new cadence means a new idea.
3. Absolute freedom in the choice of subject.
4. To present an image. We are not a school of painters, but we believe that poetry should render particulars exactly and not deal in vague generalities, however magnificent and sonorous. It is for this reason that we oppose the cosmic poet, who seems to us to shirk the real difficulties of his art.
5. To produce a poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred nor indefinite.
6. Finally, most of us believe that concentration is of the very essence of poetry.

- Yet when we came back, late, from the Hyacinth garden,

Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not

Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither

Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,

Looking into the heart of light, the silence.

Oed' und leer das Meer.

OUR SEA WAS MED:
The sea is empty.

"The hyacinth girl"

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