

with Germany in the Great War, was on the brink of collapse. On June 4-5, Russian forces under the command of General Brusilov attacked from the east along a 200-mile front with spectacular success. In the next few weeks, some 350,000 Austrian troops surrendered.

12. TLS-5

[November 10, 1917]

BALLS !!!!!

BALLS! My dear William. At what date did you join the ranks of the old ladies??

Among the male portion of the community one constantly uses fragments of letters, fragments of conversation (anonymously, quite anonymously, NOT referring to the emitter by name) for the purpose of sharpening a printed argument.

I note your invitation to return to my father land (pencil at the top of your letter sic g. t. h. [go to hell]), I shall probably accept it at the end of the war.

My knoweldge [sic] of the ("stet") American heart is amply indicated in L. Homme Moyen Sensuel.

I had no ulterior or hidden meaning in calling you, or the imaginary correspondent an "American" author. Still, what the hell else are you? (I mean apart from being a citizen, a good fellow (in your better moments), a grouch, a slightly hypersensitized animal etc??

Wot bloody kind of an author are you save Amurikun (same as me).

And whether, O Demosthenes, is one to be called a "damn fool" or a "person"?

Your sap is interrupted. Try De Gourmont's "Epilogue" ('95-'98). And dont expect the world to revolve about Rutherford.

If you had any confidence in America you wouldn't be so touchy about it.

I thought the fuckin' millenium that we all idiotically look for and work for was to be the day when an American artist could stay at home without being dragged into civic campaigns, dilutations of controversy etc. when he could stay in america without growing propagandist. God knows I have to work hard enough to escape, not propagande, but getting centered in propagande.

And America. What the hell do you a bloomin foreigner know about the place. Your pere [father] only penetrated the edge, and you've never been west of Upper Darby, or the Maunchunk [sic] switchback.

Would Harriet [Monroe], with the swirl of the prairie wind in her underwear,

or the Virile Sandburg recognize, you a effete easterner as a REAL american.!!? INCONCEIVABLE!!!!

My dear boy you have never felt the woop of the PEEreries. You have never seen the projecting and protuberent [sic] Mts. of the Sierra Nevada. WOT can you know of the country?

You have the naive credulity of a Co. Claire [sic] emigrant. But I (der grosse Ich) [the great I] have the virus, the baccillus [sic] of the land in my blood, for neary [sic] three bleating centuries.

(Bloody snob. 'eave a brick at 'im!!!!)

You (read your Freud) have a Vaterersatz [father figure], you have a paternal image at your fireside, and you call it John Bull.

I of course like your Old Man, and I have drunk his Goldwasser.

Your statement about my wanting Paris to be like London, is a figment of your own diseased imagination.

"I warn you that anything you say at this time, may later be used against you". The Arts vs. Williams.

Or will you my head on a platter. Or would you like it brought over to be punched?? A votre service, M'sieu [at your service, sir]. I am coming to inspect you.

I was very glad to see your wholly incoherent unamerican poems in the L. R.

Of course Sandburg will tell you that you miss the "big drifts", and Bodenheim will object to your not being sufficiently [sic] decadent.

(You thank your bloomin gawd you've got enough spanish blood to muddy up your mind, and prevent the current American ideation from going through it like a blighted collander [sic].

The thing that saves your work is *opacity*, and dont you forget it. Opacity is NOT an American quality. Fizz, swish, gabble of verbiage, these are echt Amerikanish [sic, truly American]

And Alas, alas, poor old Masters. Look at Oct. Poetry.

But really this "old firend" [sic] hurt feeling business is to [sic] Skipwithcannellish; it is *peu vous* [not like you]. I demand of you more robustezza. Bigod sir, you show more robustezza, or I will come over to Rutherford and have at you, *coram*, in person.

And moreover you answer my questions, p. 38. before you go on to the p. s. p. 39 which does not concern you.

Let me indulge the American habit of quation [sic]:

"Si le cosmopolitisme littéraire gagnait encore et qu'il réussit à éteindre ce que les différence de race ont allumé de haine de sang parmi les hommes, j'y verrais un gain pour la civilisation et pour l'humanité tout entière."

L'amour excessif et exclusif d'une patrie a pour immédiat corollaire l'horreur

[sic] des patries étrangères. Non seulement on craint de quitter la jupe de sa maman, d'aller voir comment vivent les autres hommes, de se mêler à leurs luttes, de partager leurs travaux, nonseulement on reste chez soi, mais on finit par fermer sa porte."

"Cette folie gagne certains littérateurs et le même professeur, en sortant d'expliquer le Cid ou Don Juan, rédige de gracieuses injures contre Ibsen et l'influence, hélas, trop illusoire, de son oeuvre, pourant toute de lumière et de beauté."

et cetera.

lie down and compose yourself.

It's also nonsense this wail that [Margaret] C. [Anderson]. "dislikes" you.

Yrs

EP

Fragments of letters: A postscript at the end of "The Reader Critic: Letters from Ezra Pound," *The Little Review* 4:6 (October 1917), p. 39, reads as follows: "An american author writes to me 'You mix your damn foolery with sense, so you continue readable'. Chere Editreuse [dear editor], what does this person want? Does he wish it unmixed and therefore unreadable?'" The "american author" was WCW, but the letter from which EP quotes has not survived.

your invitation: The letter to which EP refers has not survived. He did not return to America immediately after the war.

"set": "Let it stand" is a standard proofreader's command meaning that no correction is called for.

L'Homme Moyen Sensuel: EP's poem of this title (The Ordinary Sensual Man) appeared in *The Little Review* for September 1917.

Demosthenes: Greek orator and statesman (c. 384–322 B.C.).

De Gourmont's "Epilogue": See "Biographical Notes" on GOURMONT, Remy de. Gourmont's *Epilogues* (1903) is the source of the passage in French at the end of this letter. *God knows* . . . *brick at im!!!!*: Taking EP at his word, WCW quotes extensively from this letter in his "Prologue" to *Kora in Hell: Improvisations* (Boston: Four Seas, 1920).

This passage occurs on pp. 13–14.

Your pere: See "Biographical Notes" on WILLIAMS, WILLIAM GEORGE.

Upper Darby, or the Maunchuk switchback: Locations to the west of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where, in the college days of EP and WCW, the city gave way to the country. H. D. lived in Upper Darby.

Sandburg: Like Harriet Monroe, the American poet and biographer Carl Sandburg (1878–1967) was closely associated with Chicago and the American Midwest. He was the author of *Chicago Poems* (1916) and *Cornhuskers* (1918).

Co. Claire: County Clare, in west-central Ireland, provided many immigrants to the United States.

three bleeding centuries: EP's grandmother told him that one of his ancestors had arrived in America as early as 1632; see Carpenter, p. 2.

Freud: EP attributes WCW's Anglophobia to an Oedipal conflict with his English father. According to the theory of the Austrian psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), a son's unconscious childhood rivalry with his father may be transferred in later life to a surrogate father-figure (*Valerersatz*).

John Bull: In John Arbuthnot's satire *Law Is a Bottomless Pit* (1712), John Bull typifies the English national character.

Goldwasser: A liqueur containing particles of gold leaf. WCW quotes this sentence in the "Prologue" to *Kora in Hell*.

"I warn you . . .": In these words, American officers of the law are supposed to advise arrested persons of their Constitutional right to remain silent as a protection against self-incrimination.

my head on a platter: In the Gospel of St. Matthew, Chapter 14, the daughter of Herodias asks for the head of John the Baptist in a charger. Eliot had recently alluded to the same episode in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock."

the L. R.: *The Little Review* began in Chicago under the editorship of Margaret C. Anderson and moved to New York at the end of 1916. EP became Foreign Editor of the magazine in April 1917. Several of WCW's "Improvisations" appeared in the numbers for October 1917 and January 1918. Speaking of them in a letter to Margaret Anderson of February 22, 1918, EP writes: "Bill Wms. is the most bloody inarticulate animal that ever gargled"; see Pound/*The Little Review*, p. 190.

I was very glad . . . *Oci. Poetry*: WCW quotes this passage in the "Prologue" to *Kora in Hell*.

Bodenheim: After "Bodenheim," EP wrote and then crossed out "another American name."

spanish blood: See "Biographical Notes" on WILLIAMS, RAQUEL HELENE ROSE.

Masters: The American poet and novelist Edgar Lee Masters (1869–1950) published his best-known work, the *Spoon River Anthology*, in 1916. EP had reviewed Masters' work favorably in *The Egyst* for January 1915 and in *Reedy's Mirror* for May 21, 1915; but he expressed reservations about it in *The Little Review* for August 1917. The lead poem in *Poetry* for October 1917 was Masters' "Canticle of the Race."

Skipwithcannellish: Skipwith Cannell (1887–1957), an American poet from Philadelphia, met EP in 1913 and played a role in the London Imagist movement. His work appeared in *Poetry*, *Smart Set*, *The New Freewoman*, *The Little Review*, *Des Imagistes*, and *Others*. His delicacy is suggested by EP's remark, in a letter to Iris Barry of July 27, 1916, that Cannell was "afraid to read anything for fear it would destroy his 'individuality'" (Paige, p. 88).

robustezza: In his essay on "Mediaevalism and Mediaevalism" (Guido Cavalcanti), EP defines *robustezza* as "masculinity."

my questions: On p. 38 of "The Reader Critic: Letters from Ezra Pound," EP writes: "I would ask you to try to understand WHY American literature from 1870 to 1910 is summed in the sentence: 'Henry James stayed in Paris reading Flaubert and Turgenyev."

Mr. William Dean Howells returned to America and read the writings of Henry James.' And WHY Whistler stayed in Europe, although Chase went back to the Philadelphia Fine Arts Academy. These are simple questions which the serious reader will not try to shrink answering."

Let me indulge . . . compose yourself: WCW quotes this passage in his "Prologue" to *Kora in Hell*.

"*Si le cosmopolitisme . . . beauté*": The passage quoted by EP comes from a section of Gourmont's *Epilogues* entitled "1895. Novembre 3. Cosmopolitisme" (p. 15). The words are not those of Gourmont, who says he is quoting from a work of 1890 by the French critic Ferdinand Brunetière (1849-1906).

"If literary cosmopolitanism prevails and succeeds in extinguishing the blood hatred kindled among men by racial difference, I would see in that a victory for civilization and humanity as a whole.

An excessive and exclusive love of one country has for its immediate corollary a fear of foreign countries. Not only is one afraid to let go of his mother's apron strings, to go and see how other men live, to join in their struggles, to share their labors, not only does one stay at home, but he ends up by shutting his door.

"This absurdity overcomes certain writers and the same professor who starts out to explain *The Cid* or *Don Juan* compiles genteel grievances against Ibsen and the influence—alas, all too deceptive—of his work, however full of illumination and beauty."

13. TLS-2

[January 28, 1919]

My Dear Old Sawbukk von Grump:

How are your adenoids? Am rejoicing in vacancy; prose collection "finished" committed to the gaping maw of the post office; and I freed of its weight. Haven't heard from you since the pig died.

Is Bodenhestein's book any good? The whirlwind prose hope of Chicago Rabi [sic] Ben Hechtenberg passed by us; his wife said you looked calm and healthy against the foetid backsideground of Greenitch Village.

Ben very vivid converser, reel jenuine cinema trajectory.

Lewis' show opening Thursday. etc. Manning again in circulation.

All sorts of "projects" artoliteresque in the peaceconferentialbolshevikair. Switzerland bursting into Dadaïque manifestos *re/* the nothingness of the all.

Fat Madox Hueffer in last evening, Aldington at "front" educating Tommies, Wadsworth and Lewis in town, more or less free;

I think it might be worth while for you to send me any mss. you have by you; there are several schemes in the air re Quarterly, and re a weekly; and something or other will probably start. There is the banked water of several years during which paper restrictions forbade starting of new periodicals; I think something will start cant yet say which or what; was offered a salary two days ago; but that is too wild a fantasy. At any rate shd. like to have some of your stuff by me in case of emergency.

Mgr said the first number of a weekly wd. appear in March but words of financiers ??

Am reprinting note on you from "Future" in next prose vol. which Knopf says he is bringing out this autumn.

Did a longer note for an America paper which cut down its size on receipt [sic] of article, which latter is still floating about in my progenitor's possession. Dont know that you will like it; but I did go so far as to say you weren't a matoid.

Are you capable of doing quarterly notes (1000 words say per three months, on American publications????)

Or is there anybody in the great pure prohibition monarchy capable of writing brief summary criticism of its contemporary abortions?

regards to yr. spouse & offshoots

yrs

EP

Sawbukk: Perhaps a conflation of the American slang terms *sawbuck*, or ten-dollar bill, and *sawbones*, or doctor.

Prose collection: *Instigations of Ezra Pound. Together with an Essay on the Chinese Written Character by Ernest Fenollosa* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1920).

Bodenhestein's book: Maxwell Bodenheim, *Minna and Myself* (1918), a collection of poems.

Ben Hechtenberg: See "Biographical Notes" on HECHT, BEN.

Lewis' show: See "Biographical Notes" on LEWIS, PERCY WYNDHAM.

Manning: Frederic Manning (1882-1935) was an Australian poet and novelist who served in Flanders and France during World War I. His books include *The Vigil of Brunhild* (1907), *Scenes and Portraits* (1909), *Poems* (1910), and *Her Privates We* (1930).

Peaceconferentialbolshevikair: The Versailles Peace Conference of 1919 resulted in the treaty which officially ended World War I. The Bolshevik (majority) faction of the Russian communist party took power after the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Dadaïque manifestoes: The Dada movement in art and politics began in Switzerland in 1915-16 and spread across Europe after the war came to an end. Its spirit was anarchistic, iconoclastic, and nihilistic.

Hueffer: See "Biographical Notes" on FORD, FORD MADOX.

Aldington: See "Biographical Notes" on ALDINGTON, RICHARD. In a letter to EP from