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Brevity of Form in Louis MacNeice's Poetry:
Rethinking Imagism and Poetic Convention

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Introduction:

The primary objective of this dissertation is to investigate how the Irish poet, Louis MacNeice, evolved his poetics throughout his life, with a particular focus on his brevity of form, versification and commonalities of thought between MacNeice's younger and later self. It is a distinctive investigation of the origins, interpretations, and uses of Ezra Pound's Imagism, in as far as they are each applicable to MacNeice's poetry, especially within the social, political, and cultural influences that were prevalent in the twentieth century, such as the purpose of poetry and shifting worldviews after the devastation of the two World Wars. This dissertation is best viewed as a set of loose, yet together valuable studies of how MacNeice's process of composition can be considered to be one of negotiating, accepting or resisting influence, even if that influence might be unconscious. There is no valid acknowledgement of this influence in MacNeice's letters, reviews, or diaries, making it impractical to locate. However, if we make implicit connections between MacNeice and Pound, alongside tracing similarities in ideas, style, and beliefs, we can see traces of influence nevertheless.

I will analyse interpretations of both MacNeice and Pound's poetry alongside their poetic style, and provide evidence to support the idea that the principles on which Imagism was founded was amorphous, and membership diverse, to have produced any uniform ideal of understanding amongst its members. By drawing parallels between MacNeice and Pound, it becomes clear that MacNeice places a primary emphasis on his imagination and image-presentation, which relates back to Pound's emotional depth of the image and its centrality in poetry. For example, my analysis of MacNeice's 'Snow' (which is distinguished through its graphic, mental images under abundant wordplay,

enticing lyricism and descriptive objects) and 'Stylite' are deeply rooted in the presentation and substance of the image. Even though MacNeice's oeuvre possesses Imagistic qualities, there are no direct exchanges between him and Pound; as a result, my own close reading of MacNeice and Imagist poetry best exemplifies how both MacNeice's style and Pound's Imagism may be used to develop a commonality. Furthermore, this relationship between MacNeice's poetry and Imagism is best understood as an intertextuality of ideas and influence, or what Harold Bloom would call an 'intra-poetic relationship.'[1] Beyond the idea of textual similarities, the link between MacNeice and Pound represents another paradigm of poetic history that develops into a source of individual identity, poetic style, and artistic power through tracing sources of creation.

The impact of Imagism can be seen in Peter Jones' examination of Imagist poetry, and Imagism has been examined further by contemporary writers such as Justin Kishbaugh and Katherine Bone. Although Kishbaugh and Bone's works target specific areas of Imagism, they each serve to construct an enormous, loosely-interwoven corpus of Imagism which greatly impacted modern poetry. This study occupies a significant position in understanding the distinguishing characteristics of MacNeice's poetry in relation to his diversified status as a thirties poet and an Anglo-Irish writer who discusses wide-reaching topics. As a result, the significance of poetry, particularly when we concentrate on Imagism, will bring to light the significant influence that previous poets, poetic movements, and styles have had on MacNeice.

Friedrich Nietzsche's pre-structuralist essay 'On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense', which focuses on the discerning of truth and falsehood in poetry, will also be

[1] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (USA: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 8

explored, since Nietzsche's scepticism about the worth of poetry is useful for assessing Pound and his enclave's Imagism ideology. Nietzsche believed that poets were 'deeply immersed in illusions and dream images; their eye glides only over the surface of things [...] their feeling nowhere leads into truth, but contents itself with the reception of stimuli.'[2] Nietzsche's speculation that the search for truth should not originate in the artistic impulse is hugely relevant for my discussion of Imagism's turn toward these values through capturing the moment on the page as it is experienced. Nietzsche's assertion that poets are immersed in a superficial world, however, is at odds with MacNeice and Pound's sincere approaches to writing experience. When poetry's language is sharp and clear, it then becomes the most adequate and truthful expression of reality which is a further connection that I will draw on when discussing Pound's influence on MacNeice.

The complexity of poetry makes it challenging to classify within specific genres, as it often incorporates multiple themes, structures, and literary devices that go beyond the confines of a single genre. Both MacNeice's poetry and Pound's Imagism are examples of modernist poetry. They share qualities like language experimentation, a reliance on imagery, and a rejection of established poetic forms. While both MacNeice and Pound are considered modernist poets, they have significant variances. Pound's Imagism prioritises precision, economy of language, and vivid imagery, whereas MacNeice's poetry exemplifies Derrida's idea of genre by integrating numerous genres, such as lyric poetry, narrative, and even aspects of drama, to produce a unique and multifaceted poetic voice.

[2] Frederich Nietzsche, 'On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense', *On Truth and Untruth: Selected Writings* (London: Harper Collins, 2019) p. 15

Jacques Derrida's *The Law of Genre* states how poetic style can become blurred through combinations of genres. Derrida states that a 'the whole enigma of genre springs perhaps most closely from within limit between the two genres of genre which, neither separable nor inseparable [...] appear in the figure of the other, simultaneously and indiscernibly saying "I" and "we."'[3] Derrida's genre theory assesses the difficulty of creating many interpretative possibilities when examining a text, thus blurring the boundaries and criteria of a certain genre, causing genres to lose their initial singularity and risking the introduction of additional components of genre. As a result, it creates an open and ultimately unexpected interpretation, resulting in a myriad of perspectives.

According to Derrida's perspective, poetry represents a spreading pollution that is 'more daring, the intersection of corpora, mixtures of genera or of modes, changes of tone [...], satire, rerouting, grafting, etc.'[4] With such theories, we may understand how literature advances, through genres and styles blending, such combinations of genre complicate poetic styles, especially as genres expand and new poems surface. In light of this, poetry is a synthesis of genres, which becomes hybrid and complex, testing the boundaries of genre; with MacNeice and Pound, genre can be seen as having become loose, through fusing and mixing poetic genres, genre is now a diminished method of categorisation in poetry.

Therefore, I will analyse Imagism in connection to MacNeice's poetics; specifically, the relationship between Pound's theory, his manifestos and aesthetic pronouncements that, however indirectly, have contributed to MacNeice's poetry. I will

[3] Jacques Derrida,'The Law of Genre,' *Critical Inquiry*, trans. by Avital Ronell, 7 (1980), 55 - 81 (pp. 56-57) <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Law-of-Genre-Derrida-Ronell/d74eb1e89819c102974526924cd202083acbbbf7> (Accessed 13th March 2023)

[4] Derrida,'The Law of Genre', (pp. 56-57)

examine Pound's promoted collection of poets, such as H. D. and Richard Aldington whose comprehension of Imagism was partially theorised. Interestingly, as Delmore Schwartz argues, 'if we take Pound's writing as a unity'[5] it enables scholars and critics to trace the evolution of his ideas and writing style over time. It facilitates the analysis of his literary development, influences, and the impact of his work on subsequent writers, particularly MacNeice. By doing this we may notice 'the demonstration of style which is clean-cut, hard, sharp, and visual, the utter rejection of certain types of rhetoric, and the use of subject-matters which have not previously or recently been considered "poetic."'[6] I will draw on Pound's statements on Imagism, which condemn tailoring poetry to viewership, as Anthony Domestico recognises, Pound thought that poetry was becoming false and meaningless, eventually leading to 'the divorce of life and [...] art.'[7] As Romantic poetry focused on conventions and clichés such as decorative verse and sentimentalism, Pound believed that poetry had turned into a mere outlet for personal feelings. As a result, he criticised earlier poetry for being superficial and lacking intellectual depth.

By analysing the connection between MacNeice and Imagism, I will address Imagism's plurality, or, as some claim, its absence of exactitude, which allows for the participation of various poets. Thus while the comparison illustrates the two writers' poetic identities and Imagistic qualities within their identities, it also demonstrates the line of influence that is prevalent in MacNeice's writing. By comparing MacNeice with

[5] Delmore Schwartz, 'Ezra Pound's Very Useful Labors,' *Poetry,* 51 (1938), 324-339 (p. 337) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/20581273.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Ab21d5c4529963d27668c8c8562985d2e&ab_segments=&origin=&acceptTC=1> (Accessed 22nd November 2022)
[6] Schwartz, 'Very Useful Labors,' p. 332
[7] Anthony Domestico and Pericles Lewis, *Ezra Pound - Modernism Lab* <https://campuspress.yale.edu/modernismlab/ezra-pound/> (Accessed 23rd November 2022)

Pound, I hope to enrich the current topic on rethinking Imagism and poetic convention, particularly the changes in convention throughout literary periods and to make sense of MacNeice's connection to Imagist poetry. Apart from scholars who have discussed imagery in MacNeice's poetry, a comparison of MacNeice's lyrical style with Pound's has not been attempted. There is one inconsistency that will be addressed: MacNeice has no direct interactions with Pound or Imagism, and yet it is only through a thorough examination of Imagism's development that we can begin to deconstruct MacNeice.

It is through studying MacNeice that Imagism can be interpreted as a sub-genre from previous movements (such as the French Symbolists), rather than a movement that Pound himself singularly arrogated. Furthermore, understanding how poets' are formed is determined best by their subjective experiences, teachings and interactions within their environment, which are facilitated by the psychological struggle of aspiring poets to resist ideals generated by the influence of their literary predecessors. MacNeice's poetry reflects this anxiety as he grapples with the influence of poets like Pound, striving to find his own unique voice within their literary tradition. Pound, as a modernist poet, was deeply influenced by the works of his predecessors, yet he also sought to break away from their influence and create something entirely new. Bloom's *Anxiety of Influence* helps us understand both MacNeice and Pound's struggle to establish their own poetic identity while acknowledging the weight of literary tradition.

MacNeice's poetry vacillates between various identities and styles. It is through such vacillations, that MacNeice balances between Imagist and non-Imagist principles. His careful craft of language that prevails in much of his poetry adheres to Imagistic clarity and precision. In opposition to this, MacNeice's poetry sometimes combines

abstract with concrete which possesses a decorative quality. MacNeice frequently defies Pound's statement of 'use no ornament'[8] by incorporating vivid and descriptive imagery throughout his poetry; MacNeice ultimately contradicts Pound's call for simplicity. Furthermore, MacNeice's documentation of thoughts, particularly in 'Autumn Journal', is often critiqued as a work of unmodified recorded thought that incorporates a variety of poetic voices and defies Pound's poetic vision. Thus, MacNeice's poetry can be read as foregrounding some principles of Imagism, but his originality and adherence to more traditional techniques of poetry diminishes this connection, notably the intellectual and emotional complex that Pound focuses on.

In each chapter, I provide a number of careful readings of MacNeice's poems that correspond to the chapter titles. The first chapter will provide an overview of current critical reactions to MacNeice's literature, with a focus on the line of influence between MacNeice and Pound. This line of influence serves as a powerful impetus to analyse, question, refurbish MacNeice's poetic identity as a poet who adopts Imagistic principles whilst achieving an individual identity that is acquired through grandiose lyrical ecstasy. This will demonstrate how MacNeice's form, stylistic and thematic choices can be traced back to Pound's Imagism alongside H. D. and Richard Aldington's Greek-inspired Imagist poetry. The idea of poetry as a process of influence will be made especially clear when delineating back Pound's influence on James Joyce and W. B. Yeats, who greatly inspired and influenced MacNeice.

Chapter Two: MacNeice as a Free-Thinker addresses MacNeice's approach to language. From an epistemological standpoint, MacNeice can be understood by his belief that poetry should not be formed on the basis of authority, or tradition and instead

[8] Ezra Pound, 'A Retrospect': *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound* (London: Faber & Faber, 1954), p. 6

by logic, through reason and as a result of empirical observation. This chapter argues that MacNeice's brevity of form takes on a representational significance, emphasising the autonomy of the individual subject as an act of cultural self-consciousness in connection with one's own experience. I will demonstrate how this free-thinking approach that MacNeice undertakes is one of his most fundamental characteristics, one that permeates his poetry and steers him away from Imagism's tenets.

The last chapter focuses on MacNeice as a versatile poet who may be connected to tradition while also rejecting it, particularly Imagism. His brevity of form, along with his intermittent indulgence with poetic and cultural tradition (utilising metrical structures and sporadically claiming awareness of his Irish nationalism), produces a poet who embraces and rejects the world around him. The conclusion will demonstrate that MacNeice finds a balance between his own solipsistic self-enclosure and the dutiful, universal man.

Chapter One:

Ezra Pound, in his 1913 poetry magazine article 'A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste', defines what he means by image: 'that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instance of time.'[9] Although Pound does not provide a definite explanation of Imagism, it presents a valuable approach to understand poetry, and this assertion was guaranteed to evoke both confusion and an overwhelming interest in Pound's ideas. Imagism's call for a 'direct treatment of the 'thing' whether subjective or objective'[10] piqued the interest of academics, critics, and even other poets since it necessitated a direct interaction with the text, the interpretation of underlying meanings, and the construction of images. However, despite Pound's numerous explanations that sought to define Imagism, many still remain wondering what an image is and how it differs from mere ornamentation. What stands out in Pound's explanation is the composed yet authoritative tone with which such an explanation of Imagism is given; it is offered to writers as a possible future for poetry, and as a proclamation away from the Romantic ideals of ornamental literature. Nevertheless, it adds little to our knowledge of Imagism during its usage and operation, or how its definition changed as Imagism's membership expanded over time after we read its history.

F. S. Flint in his essay 'The History of Imagism' recounts the guidelines for Imagist poetry, stating that it developed out of 'dissatisfaction with [..] poetry'[11] which

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[9] Ezra Pound, 'A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste', *Poetry. A Magazine of Verse,* 1 (1913) 173-209 (p. 200) <https://modjourn.org/issue/bdr457473/> (Accessed 14th March 2023)

[10] Pound, 'A Few Don'ts', (p. 200)

[11] F. S. Flint, 'The History of Imagism, in *The Egoist,* Vol. 2, No, 5. (May 1915), p. 71. <https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/item/bdr:521317/PDF/> (Accessed 15th March 2023)

prompted a new approach to writing: ‘H. D., Richard Aldington and myself decided that we were agreed upon the three principles following:

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.’[12]

Pound’s rules claim to provide direct reports on Imagism’s offerings, which include the rules, philosophy, and definition of an Image (all of which rely on abstractions for their meaning). Therefore, the undefined foundations of Imagism, as well as the events and persons involved in its inception, further complicate the movement. Ironically, the root of Imagism, which strives to teach and assist people to comprehend the movement itself, becomes a recondite codification with no clear definition. Joseph Frank expands upon what Pound meant by the image by defining it ‘not as a pictorial reproduction, but as a unification of disparate ideas and emotions into a complex presented spatially in an instant of time.’[13] Barbara Rosenwein specifies this emotional complex: ‘[e]motional forms and colors are shaped by experiences unique to each society and era. Ostensibly individual, our feelings are in reality part of a larger historical phenomenon—call it a collective mood, the emotional signature of an age.’[14]

[12] Pound, ‘A Retrospect’, p. 13

[13] Joseph Frank, ‘Spatial Form in Modern Literature,’ *The Idea of Spatial Form,* p. 226 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991)

[14] Barbara Rosenwein, Passion(s) in Culture(s): Exploring the Emotional Signature of the 21st Century, ‘Problems and Methods in the History of Emotions,’ *Einstein Forum* (2006) <https://www.einsteinforum.de/programmreihen/passions-in-cultures/?lang=en> (Accessed 17th March 2023)

Imagism, or the image therefore, is best understood as an emotional identifier, shaped by the poet's surroundings, perceptions and experiences which endeavours for poetry to be succinct and direct, not extraneous and false. It not only suggests the possibility of changing the vision of poets but it also establishes moments of truthful perception; Richard Aldington stresses that preceding poetry has avoided that: '[a]ll the dreariness of nineteenth century poets comes from their not quite knowing what they wanted to say and filling up the gaps with portentous adjectives and idiotic similes.'[15]

T. S. Eliot, in his essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' states that '[n]o poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone.'[16] Eliot not only represents influence as an inevitable path and something of a problematic issue, but he also recommends it as a method for understanding poetry's relationship with influence. By applying Eliot's theory to MacNeice, he becomes a matter of a much wider significance by which we compare and contrast him to movements such as Imagism. Imagism's influence on MacNeice is evident throughout his career, however, it is fair to say that in the majority of instances, this influence is largely mechanical. Rather than defining MacNeice as an Imagist, his poetry posits Imagist qualities such as his focus on image-presentation and direct linguistic intoxication.

Pound's poem 'In a Station of the Metro' is regarded as an example of Imagist poetry. In terms of line count, Imagist poetry is distinguished by brevity and precision within the line. MacNeice's style also contains these details, as stated by Morton Zabel,

[15] Richard Aldington, 'Modern Poetry and the Imagists', *The Egoist,* 1 (1914), 201-213 (p. 202) <https://modjourn.org/issue/bdr521317/> (Accessed 15th March 2023)
[16] T. S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent: An Essay', *The Egoist,* 4.6 (1919) 50-64 (p. 55) <https://modjourn.org/issue/bdr522989/> (Accessed 13th March 2023)

MacNeice practised 'the sheer virtue of brevity'[17] and a 'stricter style'[18] in his poetry. 'In the Station of Metro', Pound's poem, which is most famous for its Imagism, has the same brevity and strict style of writing. Pound confesses that the poem was originally much longer but he decided that he could actually say more about what he was experiencing using less words:

'I wrote a thirty-line poem, and destroyed it because it was what we call work 'of second intensity.' Six months later I made a poem half that length; a year later I made the following hokku-like sentence:–

'The apparition of these faces in the crowd:
Petals, on a wet, black bough.'[19]

Pound distils his entire Imagist manifesto into this poem, using clear and non-descriptive language, and he teaches how to engage with poetry rather than merely analysing it. Pound's statement 'The natural object is always the adequate symbol'[20] demonstrates that he saw poetry as a carefully constructed composition that generates images, emotions, and sensations. For example, Pound expresses the idea that simple poetry is far deeper and more intimate than most readers perceive, and he employs a casual tone to convey the importance of appreciating a poem rather than forcing information out of it. The brevity of the language has an accessible and

[17] Morton Dauwen Zabel, Journey to a War (W. H. Auden and Louis MacNeice), *Two Years of Poetry,* 5 (1939) 568-579 (p. 568) <https://www.proquest.com/openview/5ea0cdc754417de66b8c7d56c1ed9e4d/1?cbl=1819563&pq-origsite=gscholar> (Accessed 23rd June 2023)

[18] Zabel, Journey to a War, (p. 568)

[19] Ezra Pound, 'Vorticism,' *The Fortnightly Review* (1914), 461–471 (p. 463) <https://fortnightlyreview.co.uk/vorticism/> (Accessed 23rd June 2023) following references for this poem will have direct citations to the page number.

[20] Pound, 'A Few Don'ts' (p. 187)

thought-provoking flair, the poem defines the purview of poetry as all that encompasses the human experience, or as Upton Sinclair states 'art begins as the effort of man to represent reality.'[21] Similar to the fleeting faces you see as the metro doors open, the words in the poem come and go quickly. The speaker's observations encompass his inaction as he retreats into imagery of the petals and branches, the rural and the urban, the collision of nature and modernisation. The poem is made up of an eight-line octave focusing on the crowd's faces followed by a volta: a six-line sestet which concentrates on the petals. The monosyllabic words in the second line strongly juxtapose the multisyllabic words in the opening line, making the details of the petals and the bough linger, forcing the reader to analyse the image.

The poem's environment is completely observational toward the distortion of the faces surrounding the bustling metro, and the natural components are afterwards depicted, addressing the speaker's inability to focus on one entity. The petals, which cross and disrupt the first image, reinforce this. The closing line holds within the poem a recognition of the disparity between contending notions of representation: the urban and the rural. The poem combines two sentence fragments, each with a subject, but without an action; for that subject to perform as a presentation of the reader's own image the description is short and does not leave much ambiguity.

Although nothing happens here with action or feeling, a lot may be gathered from this Imagist poem. The 'thing' here is the documentation of this particular experience and is addressed directly in this poem through the clear and understandable language so that the reader may envisage something similar. This is an example of the Imagist

[21] Upton Sinclair, *Mammonart: An Essay in Economic Interpretation* (Pasadena: Sinclair, 1925) p. 10

approach at its most potent level: the goal is to enhance Pound's own perception so that, to use T. E. Hulme's words, there is 'between ourselves and our own consciousness, [...] a veil that is dense for the ordinary man, transparent for the artist and the poet.'[22]

Pound's second, but brief, thought of the petals emphasises his sense of belonging to the natural world while simultaneously being removed from the hectic atmosphere of La Concorde. The rush of the first image allows the reader to find a calmness in the dripping wet petals despite their bland appearance in colour and presentation. Although the metro, a bustling and temporal atmosphere, is soon to change as different people enter and some never return, it is carefully framed in a photographic image. Pound provides a visual framing of stillness which becomes an image forever fixed in his mind. Nevertheless, despite being praised for its conciseness, this Imagist poem generates a number of different readings and raises intriguing queries about the act of reading poetry itself, but just like with other forms of poetry, there are several ways to read an Imagist poem.

Pound's fundamental principle of Imagism stated that an image must convey an 'intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time.'[23] For instance, Pound does not comment on the colour of the petals, which can only indicate that this is not the 'thing' being directly addressed. Instead, we should pay greater attention to the arrangement of faces. The title is a determiner of the 'direct treatment of the thing' which is Pound's emotive experience as he observes the bustling blur that is a combination of peoples' faces as they rush around the metro, alongside what appears to be a very sudden

[22] T. E. Hulme, 'Bergson's Theory of Art', *The Collected Writings of T. E. Hulme* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 198
[23] Pound, 'A Few Don'ts', (p. 200)

afterthought of Pound visualising a tree with petals. It is a mental process whereby one visual image has provoked another, which is rather fitting for a poetic movement called Imagism, as, after all, we find one primary image combined with sincerity and mental power as Pound intended.

To demonstrate Pound's poetic theory, he thought of an image not as a symbolic ornament but as something that can transcend the idea of an image just being an image; it transforms into a very visual experience that is unforgettable in the poet's mind. Not only does Pound directly treat the thing, he cannot dispose of it from his mind. 'In a poem of this sort,' as Pound explained, 'one is trying to record the precise instant when a thing outward and objective transforms itself, or darts into a thing inward and subjective.'[24] The informed, non-decorative tone summons the Imagist concept of avoiding excessive ornamentation in literary representation and underlines the cardinal rule of Imagism that 'the natural object is always the adequate symbol.'[25] Pound's vision aspires to represent a deep interconnection between the world in which we see and the way in which the poet perceives it, which is why Pound stated that 'the image is itself the speech'[26] and should not be used 'as an ornament'.[27]

In the April 1916 publication of *Gaudier Brzeska,* Pound reprinted the article 'Vorticism.' 'In a Station of the Metro' has a complicated history of change and omission, Pound substitutes the colon for the semi-colon making the connection between the apparitions of faces and the petals to be more subtle:

[24] Pound, 'Vorticism', (p. 466)
[25] Pound, 'A Few Don'ts', (p. 200)
[26] Pound, 'Vorticism', (p. 467)
[27] Pound, 'Vorticism', (p. 467)

‘The apparition of these faces in the crowd;

Petals, on a wet, black bough.’[28]

Steve Ellis recognises the problem within this punctuation change, he believed that the colon’s function was that of ‘being primarily that of introducing the ‘Image’ in line two which the colon informs us is necessary to complete the first line’s meaning. With the semi-colon the first line is [...] definitely a ‘prologue’ to the second, the linkage between the two lines being insisted on less emphatically. The relationship between them can be said to be not only more subtle but even more equivocal, and the cost of not foregrounding the ‘Image’ is the possibility [...] the semi-colon assists the first line in overturning its subordinate position and becoming foregrounded.’[29] Ellis recognises that the colon served as a transition symbol, a second and extended part of the poetic sequence, whereas now the semi-colon has separated the two images, which causes the reader to question which image we are to focus on and how the two images have come to create said ‘emotional complex.’ The sentences are no longer bound together, thus not only is this a prime example of Imagism, but Imagism’s complicated standing.

Due to MacNeice’s careful craft of preserving an observational moment, ‘Snow’, like ‘In the Station of the Metro’, has vivid imagery that emerges as we read the poem. MacNeice is often treated as a poet who was self-conscious, self-aware and self-testing. The thought process behind his poems is often considered, alongside how he shaped and communicated his personal experiences. Nao Igarashi remarks that MacNeice ‘starts his career as a poet influenced by modernist poets and gradually

[28] Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska* (London: Laidlaw & Laidlaw, 1917), p. 65

[29] Steve Ellis, ‘The Punctuation of ‘In a Station of the Metro’, *Paideuma: Modern and Contemporary Poetry and Poetics,* 17 (1988), 201-207 (p. 205) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24724956> (Accessed 24th June 2023)

formulates his own style of poetry, in which he tries to balance his aesthetic ideals with an awareness of the world outside himself.'[30] This balance of aesthetic ideals includes Imagistic aspects as well as traditional techniques of poetry, such as a poem's lyrical and rhythmic quality. Throughout 'Snow,' MacNeice balances between perception and knowledge. When we look at the poem, it is significantly lengthier than 'In a Station of the Metro':

> The room was suddenly rich and the great bay-window was
> Spawning snow and pink roses against it
> Soundlessly collateral and incompatible:
> World is suddener than we fancy it.
>
> World is crazier and more of it than we think,
> Incorrigibly plural. I peel and portion
> A tangerine and spit the pips and feel
> The drunkenness of things being various.
>
> And the fire flames with a bubbling sound for world
> Is more spiteful and gay than one supposes—
> On the tongue on the eyes on the ears in the palms of one's hands—
> There is more than glass between the snow and the huge roses.[31]

Written in free verse, this poem is beautifully descriptive yet charmingly casual. Its strength lies in its ability to conjure up vivid images effortlessly, as if imagination is

[30] Nao Igarashi, 'My Road to Freedom and Knowledge': Louis MacNeice's Self-Conscious Art (published doctoral thesis, Durham University, 2019) <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/13399/1/PhD_Thesis_Nao_Igarashi__.pdf?DDD11+> (Accessed 27th June 2023), p. 1

[31] Louis MacNeice, 'Snow,' *The Complete Poems of Louis MacNeice,* ed. by E. R. Dodds (London: Faber & Faber, 1966), p. 30, following references for all MacNeice poems will have direct citations to the page number.

boundless yet simultaneously controlled. The rapid sibilance of MacNeice's images 'suddenly' (30) and 'Spawning' (30) undercut any hope of slowing down the poem and suggests an unexpected and immediate change, which enhances the suddenness of the words. It creates a jarring effect, as the reader is abruptly transported from a richly decorated room to the sight of snow being born outside the window. Like Pound's 'Petals', (30) MacNeice's natural images also contain a bleakness, that although they stand pink and beautiful, they will wilt and crumble for the 'World is suddener than we fancy it.' (30) In his poem, MacNeice displays features of critical reflection concerning aesthetics, and the poem becomes Imagistic.

MacNeice reacts as if the window is producing snow. He makes no attempt to use inflated metaphors, instead writing with a direct portrayal of what he sees and how the images evolve. Like Pound's observations, MacNeice too knows that similar ordinary experiences can be had and the senses themselves can be had by anybody, but a poet's perception can lead to different depths of assessment. 'Snow' is an experience of sensory overload provoked by the snow and roses which is materialised through the poem's suffocating syntax and remarks on his own perception. Pound's abundance of 'faces' (463) suggests an overwhelming sensory experience. Additionally, the word 'apparition' (463) implies a fleeting and ghost-like quality, further emphasising the overwhelming feeling of the sensory input. Pound's brevity manages to condense the sensory experiences, however MacNeice experiences synesthesia with the appearance of the snow and roses, as well as the taste of the orange pips.

The absence of the article 'the' (30) in the second stanza (unlike 'the room') (30) immediately places the reader in close contact with the 'world'; (30) and the words

quickly dissolve into images. The fear of the world's quick-paced environment and suddenness troubles MacNeice as he picks up on the sprouting of the pink roses and the snow which arguably dominate and overtake the structure of the building, serving as a distraction from the world's brutality. This image, like that of the 'spitting the pips of the tangerine' (30) offers a sour realisation as we reject such falseness and fail to absorb an imaginative insight toward the world. The world being both 'soundless' (106) and 'collateral' (30) offers a double danger - not only is this foregrounded by framing the conflated images within a struggle with reality, but by removing the element of sound, MacNeice creates a void that intensifies the suddenness of events, making them feel more abrupt and unexpected.

The poem's structural absence mirrors the world's unexpected volatility, and this structural disorder signals that something is amiss or out of balance. When MacNeice describes the world as 'incompatible,' (30) he suggests that it is fundamentally at odds with itself. The world's incorrigible nature denies any possibility of being controlled, leaving individuals trapped within its overwhelming senseless complexity. The internal rhyme 'Soundlessly collateral and incompatible' (30) creates a rhythmic pattern that is both alluring and entrapping; the rhythmic language is hypotonic which further affirms itself as a threat whereby internal fantasy is dominant over external perception. Like Pound's poem, 'Snow' is preoccupied with the quotidian life of human beings and how this may prompt existential questioning. The images here are not simply abstractions; they are vital activity for the poem's genuine intellectual examination.

For MacNeice and Pound, modernity represented a dissatisfaction with poetry's lack of honesty and failure as an art form, and, like Pound, MacNeice saw modernism to

be characterised by a singleness of vision: '[t]he modern monist too castrates, negates our lives.' (198) MacNeice aimed for poetry to provide many tools to monitor, aid and verbalise his existence in an imaginative format. It is precisely Imagism, which Pound insists, 'is more than an idea. It is a vortex or cluster of fused ideas and is endowed with energy'.[32] MacNeice also channels his thoughts into images thus producing a poem with Imagist qualities: 'when I am thrown out of gear by circumstances or emotion - that I feel like writing poetry.'[33] MacNeice accesses this Poundian world by similarity rather than personal interaction.

MacNeice and his poetry unmistakably reflect Imagism's craft, especially in the poet's focus on the poetic image and significance within the context of his own creative process. Like the snow in the poem, MacNeice's thoughts fall down as he captures them on the page. Since MacNeice offers a wealth of detail, his poetry serves as a constant source of experience and imagination. This poem adheres to a sudden insightfulness into Imagist patternings which critics have remained blind to, even Edna Longley, a prestigious Irish literary critic, remarks that 'Snow' is primarily about 'the unpredictable nature of snowfall and the chaotic aspects of life.'[34] The pictures produced in MacNeice's poetry are simple to envisage yet leave their final meaning intriguingly equivocal. We may recall Pound's 'apparition of faces', (463) but are the 'Petals, on a wet, black bough' (463) intended to evoke the urban bleakness of the city or the stark rural beauty?

MacNeice and Pound form their poetry through a world of experience, influence and personal beliefs. After writing 'In a Station at the Metro' Pound stated, 'The image is

[32] Ezra Pound, 'As for Imagisme', *Selected Prose 1909-1965,* ed. William Cookson, (London: Faber, 1973), p. 345
[33] Louis MacNeice, *The Poetry of W. B. Yeats* (London: Faber & Faber, 2008), p.146
[34] Edna Longley, *Louis MacNeice: A Study* (London: Faber & Faber, 1991), p. 71

the word beyond formulated language' therefore a 'word' that does not exist in 'formulated language'[35] cannot be termed a word. Pound argued that a sensual hold on tangible objects could only be communicated if it appeared verbally; Imagism hence signifies a dematerialisation of language. The relationship between the signifier (the writer) and the signified (the concept/thing/image) is impossible to settle, as Homi Bhabha argues, 'language is a hybrid culture that is fed by new cultural, social and political borders which make language a perpetual site for conflict and an ultimate space for interpretation.'[36] Imagism muddles the signifier-signified relationship by emphasising the importance of sensory perception and direct experience. 'Use no superfluous word, no adjective that does not reveal something,'[37] Pound challenges the concept of language and meaning by removing certain (typically extraneous) words and focuses on exact images. Instead, he emphasises language's intrinsic subjectivity, confounding the link between words and their referents. Bhabha's theory sheds light on the connection between MacNeice and Pound by emphasising their shared interest in language as a space of interpretation. Both poets actively engage with the gaps and ambiguities in language, creating works that invite readers to actively participate in the meaning-making process and they each believed in the transcendental power of imagery and its ability to convey deeper truths.

When Pound argued that the image 'presents itself to the vivid consciousness in some primary form'[38] and thus explained it in an anecdotal fashion: 'must have needs beyond the existing categories of language, just as a painter must have pigments or

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[35] Pound, 'Vorticism,' p. 467
[36] Homi K. Bhabha, Third Space Theory, *The Location of Culture* (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2004), p. 33-34
[37] Pound, 'A Few Don'ts', (p. 198)
[38] Pound, 'Vorticism', *(*p. 467)

shades more numerous than the existing names of the colours.'[39] MacNeice echoed Pound's approach to understanding the role of the image in order to demonstrate that his own thinking upon image-formulation and image-understanding had already covered similar ground. There is a confluence between the two when MacNeice outlines the writing process for 'Carrick Revisited'; he describes the sea as 'something that I hardly ever went on but there it was always, not visible from our house but registering its presence through foghorns [...] the noise of the trains [...] a symbol of escape [...] had a significance apart from what caused that noise; impinging on me before I knew what they meant, i.e. where they came from, these noises had as it were a purely physical meaning which I would find it hard to analyse.'[40]

Pound considered the image as more understandable through colour, which transcends language as a structure and thus stands as a metaphor. Similarly, MacNeice's earliest poetry is often an attempt to get at meaning through sound rather than colour such as his poem 'The Ear': '[t]here are many sounds which are neither music nor voice'. (185) This absorption into a multisensory experience heightens MacNeice's fascination with the sound of poetry. As a self-conscious poet who demonstrates his integrity and desire to use poetry as a method of documenting experience, MacNeice upholds the importance of poetry and its ability to communicate with its audience; he also uses his poems to emphasise the writer's inevitability in the world, challenging the concept that poets are restricted to some isolated, poetic domain.

As a classicist who visited Greece and taught Greek in London as a lecturer, MacNeice's involvement with Greek poetry owes a lot to the Greek-inspired Imagism of

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[39] Pound, 'Vorticism', (p. 467)

[40] Louis MacNeice, 'Experiences with Images' in *Selected Literary Criticism of Louis MacNeice,* ed. by Alan Heuser (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 153-164 (p. 158)

H. D. and Richard Aldington. Pound, H. D., Aldington and MacNeice all translated Greek plays and composed Greek poetry. It is through their Greek translations that poetic questions are directly addressed, such as the form, versification and subject matter in poetry, alongside the sociopolitical ones, such as the role of poetry in times of war. Djuhertati Muhni's study of H. D. 's Greek-inspired poems mentions Pound's teachings and influence over H. D. 's writing style, connecting Imagism and Hellenism. Muhni writes that 'Imagist writings was in the belief that poetry is a unique expression of subjective reality on perception [...] And to comprehend the poet's expression, a reader will have to unmask the image and complete any missing details. Pound's intensive study of Greek literature has some influence in the formation of this view.'[41] Both MacNeice and H. D. held the belief that Greek works function as a source of inspiration which later becomes an instrument of experience. Like Aldington too however, MacNeice sees the Greek world as a sort of escapism in which he can run away from the sheer brutality of his surroundings and toward the sacred solitude that the Greeks held in their art.

MacNeice's 'Stylite', which combines the humanist dilemma with ancient myth, echoes back to H. D. 's Greek-inspired Imagist poem 'Helen'. The voice in each poem is that of a spectator looking for answers. As seen in 'In a Station of the Metro' and 'Snow', 'Stylite' and 'Helen' draw upon the ideas of T. E. Hulme, the poet who cultivated the ideas and concepts that characterised Imagism. A critic whose 'theory of the image became a cornerstone of modernist poetics as well as modernist politics in that it

[41] Djuhertati Muhni, 'Ancient Greek Influence and Imagism in H.D's Early Poems', *Humaniora*, 8 (1998) 20-27 (p. 24) <https://www.neliti.com/publications/12169/ancient-greek-influence-and-imagism-in-hds-early-poems#id-section-abstract> (Accessed 5th June 2023)

emphasised an anti-romantic return to objective language.'[42] Hulme wished to deal with the microcosm which is what he believed to be the construction of reality, a small world of a particular being, which Pound later defined as the 'direct treatment of the thing.' MacNeice and H. D. 's engagement with Greek antiquity should be seen not as idealising commitment to tradition (as some may perceive), but rather as a shift towards creating a new poetic approach of image-focused literature which fits to address contemporary existence.

'Stylite' and 'Helen' are two poems that utilise ancient Greece as a mouthpiece for change. For both MacNeice and H. D., Greece represents poetry's textual heritage rather than as the total cultural representation. These two poems put a twist on Greek literature; the 'saint' or Stylite, (as the title suggests) stands in isolation: 'no one ever comes / And the world is banned' (158). Like that of a Greek statue, he 'has stood so long / That he himself is stone' (158) and the saint himself has become an object of study. Yet, Greece is untouched like in H. D. 's poem: 'All Greece hates [...] All Greece reviles [...] Greece sees unmoved.'[43] The saint, like Helen, is trapped, and must confront the world from his own pillar. If 'the world is banned' (158) is the reader under the impression that reality has been removed and that the world of the Greeks is imaginative and somewhat false? When his human features kick in and 'his eyes close / He stands in his sleep' (158) a fear pervades this still figure and brings him to life: 'Round his neck there comes / The conscience of a rope' (158). The archaic execution method relates past violent conflicts through history which connects nicely to the approaching warfare that necessitates a fresh approach to the outside world. As Tze

[42] Andrzej Gasiorek, *T. E. Hulme and the Question of Modernism* (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2006), p. 78
[43] H. D., *Collected Poems 1912-1944* (New York: New Directions, 1944), p. 87, following references for this text will have direct citations to the page number.

Chan remarks, 'warfare, to the Greeks, was so vivid a thing that almost every generation of ancient Greeks had either himself seasoned in war or had witnessed it happen.'[44] The stylite's strong stone build is now that of flesh and blood, he is not an immortal Greek God, nor an invincible spartan. The saint's conscience is gained and he has the freedom of movement. It seems to happen just at the right time, before he turns to complete stone, he finds his humanity.

The penultimate verse, where a second enigmatic pillar appears, features a strange, indecipherable figure. This volta whereby the pillar becomes 'two' (158) provides a stark juxtaposition as a seemingly real 'Greek God' (158) appears: 'A young man opposite / Stands in the blue, / A white Greek god, / Confident, with curled / Hair above his groin / And his eyes on the world' (158). There appears to be no imminent action with this Greek figure, he is an observer not a fighter or a doer. The image of the 'saint' (158) seems fulfilling, his humanity and consciousness is rectified, the reader can only hope that he achieves something as his human appearance is restored. The saint and the Greek god mark the opposition between the Hellenic and Christian world. The saint with the 'conscience of a rope' (158) is ordained to be human, aware and highly conscious while the 'confident' (158) physical beauty is a superficial and ancient Greek value which stands to compromise the whole living world. The appearance of the Greek god, after the saint's near-death experience marks the dive into a classical world which directly opposes Christian reality. Yet, does the appearance of the Greek god represent an answer to the saint's prayers or to serve as a reminder that his flesh and blood stands with more potential than the statue with his motionless 'eyes on the world'? (158)

[44] Tze Chan, The War Ethos and Practice in Ancient Greece (published Master's thesis, Hong Kong University, 2011), p. 1 <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/48537928.pdf> (Accessed 7th July 2023)

MacNeice treats Greek culture as something that he cannot quite assimilate, that his poem cannot quite digest, that he cannot quite translate, without, at least, bridging the gap between Greek tradition and contemporary life. H. D. however, serves to comment on the misogyny and ambivalence of men towards women such as Helen of Troy. H. D. writes a poem from Helen’s viewpoint, as opposed to historians who would recount the deeds of men in the Trojan War or objectify Helen of Troy. Like H. D, MacNeice laments the fact that war is not increasingly undesirable and is still appealing to out of touch power-obsessed politicians; society has learned nothing from what they have previously lost. The world is merely a pursuit to be the most powerful, the only difference is the spartans with spears have been substituted for soldiers with mechanised guns.

With regular full rhymes and a ballad-like metre that is reminiscent of a nursery rhyme, ‘Stylite’ generates a compelling image of two individuals standing on pillars, with an atmospheric sense of a moral dilemma. The ‘Stylite’, or ‘saint,’ (158) is the ‘thing’ that has to be ‘directly treated,’ as the title of the poem suggests, but unlike H. D., it is not Helen who becomes a symbol of human power, it is the myth of man. ‘Stylite’ is a dramatic poem consisting of clear imagery and language that dwells on continued human ignorance and tragedy, describing the rise and collapse of a great empire and drawing parallels between the ferocity of Greek wars and the violence of today. In human affairs, intellect and chance interact, as does the role of people and communities in influencing the course of historical events while being bound by fortune, nature, and one another. ‘Stylite’ and ‘Helen’ are two poems which demonstrate how poetry can

transmit and express images, and, more fundamentally, how language can mediate between artists and the world.

H. D. 's poem should be expelled as a misguided application of modern standards to ancient tragedy and seen as a modern interpretation of Helen which aimed at evoking sympathy, a sense of feminine fortitude, and betrayal. 'Helen' not only represents a Greek-Imagist approach to poetry with a modern educational twist, but it also relates to Eliot's 'Tradition and the Individual Talent.' Helen is set in a classical milieu with passing references to Homeric myth to create a platform for H. D. to introduce her own interpretations of Helen's narrative. Donna Copeland recognises H. D. 's take on the tragedy of Helen of Troy which is a true blend of adhering to the careful craft of the image and her own spin on the myth: 'Helen's own feelings and Greece's reaction to her are not part of the myth that appears in classical literature [...] Hilda Doolittle has filled that gap between Homer's narrative and the contemplation of the woman he describes and the country that comes to hate her.'[45] Again, this poem allows us to witness the multilayered history of poetry which proves Eliot's case that '[y]ou cannot value [the poet] alone; you must set [them], for contrast and comparison, among the dead.'[46]

The title of H. D. is meant to draw parallels to Edgar Allan Poe's 'To Helen' and to critique his dehumanisation, but it also emphasises the poem's direct approach to its subject matter. Both H. D. 's Helen and Poe's 'To Helen' have three five line stanzas, while H. D. 's grows from five to seven. However, the commonalities of these two poems do not end with structure. H. D. 's exclusion of the preposition 'to' indicates that her

[45] Copeland, 'Doolittle's 'Helen'', (p. 33)
[46] Eliot, 'Tradition' (p. 57)

poem is one that is focused on the image and self-image of Helen of Troy, unlike Poe who lets Helen become the object of critique and judgement: ‘How statue-like I see thee stand, / The agate lamp within thy hand!’[47] H. D. ’s poem is an attempt at something that has not already been explored.

‘God’s daughter, born of love’ (87) turned condemned feminine archetype alludes to both ancient and contemporary misogyny and scapegoating. The stasis of the situation as Greece remains ‘unmoved,’ (87) can only be solved by the death of ‘the maid’ (87) and her dissolution into ‘white ash.’ (87) H. D. ’s perseverance with her Greek poetry and delivery of the figure Helen, especially in her book *Helen in Egypt,* weighs Euripides’ Helen: ‘It is good to meet Helen face to face, for men and poets have visualised her so crudely. We had become tired of her sweetness, her contours painted for us, as soft and luxurious.’[48] Helen’s narrative is heartbreaking and genuine, requiring the reader to criticise rather than accept sexist portrayals of her.

H. D. was keen to offer a different portrayal of Helen and to denounce Poe’s objectification of her, and this approach is what positions H. D. ’s work as underlining Pound’s cardinal rule of direct treatment of its subject matter. Like the mournful MacNeice in ‘Stylite’, H. D. is retrospectively disillusioned: Helen has been misunderstood by ‘past enchantments’ (87) and ostracised by ‘past ills.’ (87) However, despite Helen’s exquisite beauty, the enormous battle she created was considerably more memorable, alongside the sensation of success, therefore the Greeks hated Helen despite her innocence. Both MacNeice and H. D. wished to bring the unseen spiritual truth into the artificiality of the material world, which is sparked by the strength

[47] Edgar Allan Poe, *The Complete Poetry of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York: Signet Classics, 2009), p. 304
[48] H. D., *Helen in Egypt* (New York: New Directions, 1974), p. 3

of images that can be envisioned as the poem is read. Despite the marked (if somewhat coincidental) similarities between the comprehension of the object in H. D. 's Greek-inspired poetry and MacNeice's poetic practice, there is a focus on the direct treatment of the image. The didactic intensity and artistic direction of each poem conform to Pound's mastery of the image-presentation; the clash between inner and outer realities caused both MacNeice and H. D. a deep suffering. For all of Greece's beauty and advantages, its lived reality is proved to be plagued by conflict and bloodshed. However, the analogies between Greek and modern life transport the poem into a visionary condition of the imaginative realm as well as actuality.

Pound's impact extended from H. D. and Aldington, to Yeats and Joyce. However, MacNeice's questions regarding the poet's purpose and pursuit for truth is one of the most profound and formative influences on the earlier MacNeice. In particular, Pound's dualistic language and his insistence that the poet must be forthright, register deep thought and transmit images had a profound effect on MacNeice. Pound's diversified preferences introduced MacNeice, as well as H. D. and Aldington, to an altogether new world of experience. Although MacNeice gladly absorbed ideas provided by poets such as Yeats and Joyce, he sifted through poetry, discovering his own individuality and choosing only those components with which he experienced an impulsive harmony.

Chapter Two:

MacNeice's earlier poetry is influenced by his childhood memories in his hometown Carrickfergus, which he describes as 'between the mountain and the gantries.' (69) MacNeice outgrew his adolescent challenges, but he never completely abandoned them: remnants of Keats' personality, Horace's classicism, and Yeats' Irish sensibility are visible as MacNeice evolves. Later in his career, however, as indicated in 'The Earth Compels' and 'Springboard' he focused on the poet's function alongside universal issues. His piece 'Modern Poetry: A Personal Essay' defines the attributes of a great poet: 'a man who is 'a reader of the newspapers, [. . .] informed in economics, [. . .] actively interested in politics'',[49] insisting that poetry 'is only valuable if it can add something to the experience of its public'.[50] As an informed and aware poet, MacNeice considers self-consciousness to be a 'man half aesthetical but also half congenial'[51] which emphasises his belief that poetry should encourage not only beauty but also empathy for the human condition. Although 'The Earth Compels' and 'Springboard' are not only beholden to but also derivative of MacNeice's early inspirations, they each serve as a catalyst for his individuality and thus his creative career.

MacNeice wanted poetry to be led by purpose, logic and empirical terms which closed in on the poet's individual subject as an act of cultural self-consciousness in connection with one's own experience. MacNeice's brevity of form and focus on image-presentation should not be awarded completely to Imagism, and instead admired as MacNeice's own personal craft of poetry. MacNeice governed knowledge for his own

[49] Louis MacNeice, *Modern Poetry - A Personal Essay* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938), p. 198-199
[50] MacNeice, Modern Poetry, p. 200
[51] MacNeice, 'Notes on the Way' in *Selected Poems*, pp. 180-3 (p. 180)

purposes, regardless of distant influences and his own individuality is strongly persistent, especially if we are to examine and analyse his later poems.

Through the analysis of 'Snow' and 'Stylite' MacNeice has connections to Pound and his Imagist enclave, whereas poems like 'London Rain' and 'Prayer Before Birth' are powerfully associated with the MacNeicean. Using poetic traditions such as a strict rhyme scheme and decorative language became a tendency for MacNeice's later poems; his poetry was therefore allegiant to ideas that Pound despised. MacNeice demonstrates his recognition that 'form is 'essentially functional' when he reviews the recent history of English poetry in 1948.'[52] MacNeice reminded himself that 'the iambic groove'[53] possesses a strong 'English metrical instinct'[54] and that many poets 'have been trying to get out of the 'iambic' groove which [they] were all born into.'[55] Conversely, Pound wanted a complete divorce from poetic tradition, unlike MacNeice who still had subtle connections to traditional English verse.

As MacNeice saw modernity's ideals as being in crisis, to the point where poetry has turned to 'self-assertion, the self-indulgence, of a limited self',[56] he would go to marginalised features such as 'poetry is about something is communication'[57] in order to assemble his own beliefs concerning tradition. For MacNeice, removing poetic tradition would comprise not only poetry's purpose but introduce a parasitic influence into the literary world: 'There are cultured people in England today who write poems which are

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[52] MacNeice, 'English Poetry Today', *The Listener,* 2 September 1948, 346-7 (p. 346)
[53] Louis MacNeice on The Burning Perch, *Poetry Book Society Bulletin*, 38 (Sept. 1963), repr. in Alan Heuser (ed.), *Selected Literary Criticism of Louis MacNeice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 247
[54] MacNeice, *Poetry Book Society,* p. 247
[55] MacNeice, *Poetry Book Society,* p. 247
[56] Gerald Dawe, 'Anatomist of Melancholia: Louis MacNeice', in *Against Piety: Essays in Irish Poetry*, (Belfast: Lagan Press 1995), pp. 82-87, (p.85)
[57] MacNeice, Modern Poetry, p. 32

mere and sheer Shelley; these are psittacists; they are betraying themselves (and, incidentally, betraying Shelley). There are also the enthusiasts (mostly Americans in Paris) who set out to scrap tradition from A to Z; this should logically lead to aphasia.'[58] The reference to the American enthusiast undoubtedly brings to mind Pound and his four years in Paris. We can infer that MacNeice thought Pound's manifestos were counter-traditional and parasitic, unnatural and detrimental, and overly intent on being different. For this reason, MacNeice's ideologies stand directly against what Pound was trying to achieve. MacNeice, far from a vehement traditionalist, still believed that remnants of tradition must be present in art. Pound could not stand to see tradition being transformed into a work of art, for he only saw his literary projections such as Imagism to be a pure art form. MacNeice, on the other hand, wished to preserve or awaken traditional instincts in poetry (whether it be form, versification, or commonalities of thought).

From his 1938 poetry collection 'The Earth Compels', MacNeice retains his extraordinary ability to conjure images while decidingly returning to the traditions of classic literature. Although not a firmly tight metre, the rhyming and cadence of 'London Rain' sets the poem up to be traditional. This poem is explosively descriptive but not direct with its aims; MacNeice has many questions that he is trying to answer rather than depicting a single image to the reader. There is a moral dilemma present as MacNeice looks out to the London rain; his struggle with neutrality towards both war and religion is ever present in this poem, which directly opposes Pound's Imagist manifesto: 'Don't mess up the perception of one sense by trying to define it in terms of another.'[59]

[58] Louis MacNeice, Poetry Today', 1935; Heuser, *Selected Literary Criticism*, quoted in Edna Longley, 'Traditionalism and Modernism in Irish Poetry', in *Lernout,* 1991, pp.159-73 (p.161)
[59] Pound, 'A Few Don'ts', (p. 198)

'London Rain' presents a poem that recounts digressing personal thoughts full of rhythm, rhyming, and continuous imagery of London; as a result, any solidly anchored investigation of the poem is hampered by the aesthetic uncertainties. Written just a few months before the war and troubled by the unsettling sense of foreboding in the atmosphere, MacNeice's poem defies Pound's imperative '[d]on't be descriptive'.[60] The poem begins: 'The rain of London pimples / The ebony street with white / And the neon lamps of London / Stain the canals of night / And the park becomes a jungle / In the alchemy of night' (161). MacNeice's introspective approach allows for a more nuanced investigation of the human condition, going beyond the surface-level observations prevalent in Imagist poetry. MacNeice's lineage cannot leave him and his troubles with religion remain tirelessly persistent in his thoughts: 'To a place where God and No-God / Play at pitch and toss.' (162) MacNeice reveals the contradiction between the validity of religious beliefs and the invalidity of the Christian faith altogether. He is questioning humanity's purpose alongside his own, he demands answers and clarity, yet despite the sense of value religion has offered him, he seems adamant that this value is null and hollow beneath the surface.

MacNeice hopes that religion will strike reasoning and justice in this world, for god has the final word: 'Under God we can reckon / On pardon when we fall / But if we are under No-God / Nothing will matter at all, / Adultery and murder / Will count for nothing at all' (162). The religious enumerations demonstrate MacNeice's childhood teachings about religion and the spiritual values that he still somewhat values in his poetry. MacNeice however, is not satisfied with this optimistic grant that god has seemingly provided, he has somewhat turned his back on what he once believed in and

[60] Pound, 'A Few Don'ts', (p. 187)

must confront his uncertainties. When we try to place ‘London Rain’ inside Pound’s Imagist manifesto, we see the limits of MacNeice’s relationship to Imagism as there is no definitive, singular image.

The descriptive language and narrative structure create a sense of familiarity and emotion, offering a deeper exploration of London’s rainy ambiance beyond the limitations of Imagism. ‘London Rain’ is not Imagistic as it does not rely solely on vivid and concrete imagery to convey its message. Instead, it incorporates a more narrative and reflective tone. As Peter McDonald argues, ‘MacNeice’s poem moves beyond the Imagist tradition by focusing on the emotional and psychological impact of the rain rather than purely describing its physical qualities.’[61] Pound writes that ‘the scientist [...] begins by learning what has been discovered already. He goes from that point onward.’[62] Pound is referring to the process of building upon existing knowledge and understanding before venturing into new territories. The use of the word ‘alchemy’ (161) suggests a transformative process, similar to the scientific method Pound refers to. However, it does not necessarily imply learning from previous discoveries. The fence image represents the barriers and limitations surrounding MacNeice’s soul; it suggests a desire to break free and explore beyond these boundaries, but already bruised with self-realisation, MacNeice’s thoughts remain in circulation. MacNeice therefore does not ‘dissect the lyrics’[63] in his poem, he strives to maintain control over his unravelling thoughts.

The cyclicality in ‘London Rain’ is not uncommon in MacNeice’s poetry, his indecision lingers in his poems such as ‘Entirely’ (If we could get the hang of it entirely /

[61] Peter McDonald, *Louis MacNeice: The Poet in his Contexts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 45
[62] Pound, ‘A Few Don’ts’, (p. 187)
[63] Pound, ‘A Few Don’ts’, (p. 187)

It would take too long) (158) and 'Autobiography' (Come back early or never come) (183). The second stanza which discusses 'the fences / That fence about [his] soul' (142) and the image of the dark horses associate this poem with primal, untethered instincts, emphasising the speaker's wishes as wild and uncontrollable. The violent nature of the wishes (which are used through horse imagery), denote a lack of constraint; yet the notion of fences encircling the soul evokes a sense of confinement or restriction. The rhyme in the stanza contributes to the rhythmic character; for example, 'coal [...] fancy [...] soul,' (161) constructs a pattern that directs the reader through the stanza, giving it a structure that powerfully contrasts and restrains the entangled thoughts. MacNeice is not directly treating anything here; his ideas are his own, however disorganised, wandering, and severely disoriented.

Pound associates traditional science with Imagist poetry and he approaches words in the same manner that a scientist approaches cells and atoms; his approach is lifeless and devoid. Pound remarks that Imagists must 'consider that Art is all science, all religion, philosophy and metaphysics.'[64] He suggests presenting data without bias or opinion, thereby connecting poetry with science rather than empirical observation as revealed in MacNeice's poetry. Pound later remarked, after revealing Imagism to the world, that poetry is 'constation of fact. It presents. It does not comment. It is irrefutable because it doesn't present a personal predilection for any particular fraction of the truth.'[65] Pound distinguishes poetry from discourse or explanation. Poetry, if it offers facts, stays far from the domain of dispute. Pound later connects his thoughts on poetry with nature '[i]t is as communicative as Nature. It is as uncommunicative as Nature. It is

[64] Ezra Pound, *Poetry and Prose* (London: Garland, 1991), p. 119

[65] Ezra Pound, 'The Approach to Paris: V', *New Age,* 13.23 (1913), 662–64 (p. 662) in Pound's *Poetry and Prose* (London: Garland, 1991), p. 181

not a criticism of life. I mean it does not deal in opinion. It washes its hands of theories.'[66]

As a direct juxtaposition, 'London Rain' seems to demonstrate how an empirical expression of one's own experience can generate such debate with so little regard for the interpretations or confusion it may cause. Moreover, MacNeice's poem could not be further from the scientific as his autobiographical poem 'Autumn Journal' goes against Pound's statement: when 'a man writes what he feels at the moment; to attempt scientific truthfulness would be - paradoxically - dishonest.' (101) Thus, in MacNeice's view science and truthfulness are opposed, and are ultimately a dishonest method of writing, the poet must be an honest observer with his individuality and empirical experiences at the core of his poetry. Pound's Imagist manifesto alternatively believes that logic and observation damages poetry and that the human aspect is secondary, if not altogether unnecessary. Poetic precision and scientific accuracy, according to MacNeice, cannot coexist. As a result, poetry is seen as the opposite of science, indicating a non-rational method of thought, and is prominently removed from MacNeice's 'Autumn Journal' and his other volumes of poetry.

Although Imagism aimed to represent precision, it instead formed a great deal of ambivalence under Pound's diverse and almost liberal poetic applications. Pound's most audacious declaration about Imagism was that extraneous content should be eliminated: 'Use no superfluous word, no adjective, which does not reveal something. Don't use such an expression as 'dim lands of peace.' It dulls the image.'[67] Yet, the problem with this statement is that revelation in poetry is entirely subjective and

[66] Pound, 'Approach to Paris', (p. 662)
[67] Pound, 'A Few Dont's', (p. 187)

depends upon individual opinions. Pound believed that language had to be precise and not ornamental, yet MacNeice's desire for personal and individual expressions in his poetry holds his own artistic autonomy beyond the confines of Pound's Imagistic standards.

Pound's theoretical claims suggest a committed and constrained focus on poetry, without full attention to language or literature as a whole, MacNeice even states 'poets are learning to forget their literature. Here Mr Pound is one of the worst offenders.'[68] For example Pound's theoretical claims, such as his famous dictum '[m]ake it new,'[69] emphasises the importance of innovation and originality in poetry. This suggests his commitment to pushing the boundaries of poetic expression and his unwavering focus on the art form itself. Pound's focus on poetry can be seen in his rejection of traditional narrative structures and his preference for condensed and fragmented forms. Pound's strong commitment to poetry often led him to dismiss or criticise other literary movements or traditions that did not align with his own ideas. For instance, Pound famously rejected Romanticism and Victorian poetry, considering them outdated and lacking in innovation. This singular focus on poetry hindered his ability to fully appreciate or engage with the broader and more diverse literary landscape. This suggests that Pound's poetry presented an idea because it was required by his ideology, rather than because it arose from his experience. Conversely, the primary elements of MacNeice's poetry are his quest for truth and his capacity for artistic

[68] Louis MacNeice, 'Poetry Today' publ. in *The Arts Today*, ed. Geoffrey Grigson (6 Sept. 1935), pp.25-67; rep. in Alan Heuser, ed. *Selected Literary Criticism of Louis MacNeice* (Clarendon Press 1987), pp.10-44
[69] Ezra Pound, *Make It New / essays by Ezra Pound* (Connecticut, Yale University Press, 2003), p. 4

expression, which eventually lead to the observation made by the empiricist commentator that poetry ‘has an essential relationship to life.’[70]

‘Prayer Before Birth,’ for all of its masterful craft of language, tends to resist Pound’s pledge for direct treatment of the object. Despite the technical similarities surrounding this poem’s powerful images, MacNeice takes a different approach to language than Pound. Pound believed that when poetry adhered to Romanticism or a Romantic style of language, it lost its potential. MacNeice believed that language retained its power when the poet followed his instincts and wrote in a communicative manner, despite subtle poetic subversions, whether it may be form or style. Another contrast between MacNeice and Pound is their predilection for feeling over meaning. MacNeice found tradition crucial for the formation of future poetry, whereas Pound desired a break away from tradition. MacNeice however, believed Pound’s ideas were insincere, contrived and pretentious: ‘Mr Pound lacks grip; professing to offer us poetry. There has been a great deal recently of this (often unwitting or half-witted) dishonesty; see the past numbers of Transition, passim, or Mr Pound’s recent Active Anthology or even the earlier, almost forgotten Imagists.’[71] Thus, there were clear ideological differences between MacNeice and Pound.

‘Prayer Before Birth’ is an agonised request from an unborn child in its mother’s womb to God to hear him out before he is born. Published in his 1944 collection ‘Springboard’, we may assume that the voice in the poem belongs to his unborn daughter Corinna MacNeice who was born in the summer of 1943. The religious

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[70] MacNeice, *Yeats*, p. 17

[71] MacNeice, ‘Poetry Today’, pp.10-44

imagery in ‘Prayer Before Birth’ is often viewed as a reflection of MacNeice’s agnostic or atheistic worldview. The speaker’s plea for protection and guidance from an unknown higher power highlights the existential uncertainties and anxieties of the modern world, rather than expressing a religious sentiment. This is illustrated in the opening stanza where MacNeice employs language such as ‘O hear me’ (193) which is reminiscent of the opening of the Jewish service’s most significant prayer is ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God the Lord is One,’[72] and ‘Let Not,’ which recalls the Old Testament’s Biblical language. The atrocities are reflected in the coarse alliterative percussive consonants. The phrase ‘tall walls wall me’ (193) alludes to both real and metaphorical incarceration. The repeating of wall/s in two separate forms, noun and verb, is an example of polyptoton, which emphasises the sense of imprisonment felt by the speaker. The word ‘tall’ (193) implies that the walls are imposing and intimidating, emphasising that the speaker is stuck in a space from which it is difficult to escape. The speaker is cut off from the outside world in this imprisoned, constrained environment due to the imposing walls around them.

The anaphora ‘I am not yet born’ (193) serves as a constant reminder that this newborn is already a victim of life’s crimes; the refrain is repeated in each verse for emphasis and to maintain the hypnotic pattern: ‘For the sins that in me the world shall commit, my words / when they speak me, my thoughts when they think me’ (193). The unborn baby fears loss of control, that the world’s sins become their sins, that they will lose themselves and be subsumed by the evil around them. The poem explores themes of powerlessness, which adds to the sense of unease by emphasising the speaker’s

[72] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (New York: Harper Collins, 2001), Deuteronomy 6:4

fear of being susceptible to external forces beyond their control, such as all aspects of life, death and the constant fear of an impending war.

The 1915 Imagist anthology welcomed poetry 'that is hard and clear, never blurred nor indefinite.'[73] Thus, Imagism sought to ground its language in concrete images of objects. Pound's fixation on Imagism was set within a system of superficial, ritualistic laws that were devoid of definitive material which questions the movement's authenticity and motives. In contrast to this, MacNeice would write poetry as it came to him organically, expressing 'what he feels at the moment.' (101) Pound believed in conveying the essence of a subject through clear and unadorned language, whereas MacNeice's use of rhyme scheme results in a more formal and distanced tone.

In opposition to Pound, who strove for a more open-ended interpretation with his frequent use of vers libre, MacNeice uses rhyme and form, which results in a more predictable and regulated reading experience. Pound's 'clear, never blurred' criterion, however, is unquestionably problematicated by the interpretive engagement. The superficial script of Imagism has a code that demands comprehension and because Pound's criteria is ambiguous, Imagism appears to hide the essence of the 'thing.' Imagism, which is concealed by coded discourse that is external to the poetry world, lacks the clarity and description that are ostensibly stamped on its label.

Imagism may capture the essence of a certain moment or object, but it frequently ignores the greater social fabric, leaving poems without the required depth to engage readers in meaningful social dialogue. The Imagist subject maintains just a distant acquaintanceship with such an object, rather than a close personal contact with the

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[73] Amy Lowell, 'Preface to Some Imagist Poets', *The New Poetry Series,* 1 (1916) 3-95 (p. 5) <https://modjourn.org/journal/some-imagist-poets-1916/> (Accessed 13th July 2023)

contents of its poem. Pound's obsession with clarity and precision in language, often avoiding sentimental or overly emotional expressions, can lead to a perception of unfeeling or detached poetry. For example, it is challenging for readers to form an emotional connection with William Carlos Williams' Imagist poem 'The Red Wheelbarrow' because the poet does not do anything substantial nor meaningful: 'so much depends upon / a red wheel barrow / glazed with rain / water / beside the white chickens.'[74] The theme is meaningless and dull, failing to arouse powerful emotions or leave a lasting impression on the reader. As a result, it is thought to be a less emotionally resonant work, which harms the reputation of Imagistic poetry.

Pound's 'The Pisan Cantos' which was originally published in 1948, breaks all of his Imagism standards. 'Prayer Before Birth' is a poem that is more reminiscent of the style and theme found in Pound's 'The Pisan Cantos'. Both MacNeice and Pound's poems deal with serious issues that go beyond mere imagery. 'Prayer Before Birth' delves into an unborn child's anxieties and fears, addressing political, social, and existential concerns. 'The Pisan Cantos', on the other hand, digs into Pound's own experiences while imprisoned, pondering on history, culture, and the meaning of human life. These thematic investigations go beyond Imagistic emphasis on accurate visual images, signifying a break with Imagist ideas. The break from Imagism in 'The Pisan Cantos' sparked debate and created divisions in the minds of literary critics; while some praised Pound for making a daring and avant-garde change, others criticised him for renouncing the values that had characterised his earlier Imagist work. In contrast to Scott Hamilton, who saw Pound's use of Imagism as 'a complete deviation from

[74] William Carlos Williams, *The Collected Poems 1909-1939* (New York: New Directions, 1987), p. 82

Imagism,'[75] Justin Kishbaugh believed that Pound's Imagism was 'a developmental step in his poetic progress toward The Cantos.'[76]

In Canto LXXXI, Pound reflects on the fall of civilisations and the loss of purity in human societies: '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.'[77] Similarly, the second stanza in 'Prayer Before Birth' expresses the fear of being born into a world where power and authority corrupt the innocent: 'Let them not make me a stone and let them not spill me / Otherwise kill me.' (194) Each poem incorporates a concerned, defeatist speaker troubled by the cruelty of the modern world.

While Imagism focused primarily on external observations of the physical world, 'Prayer Before Birth' employs more lyrical and emotive language, using vivid metaphors and personal expressions, which diverges from Pound's Imagist approach of using precise and concise language to capture images. MacNeice presents a highly subjective perspective, as it delves into the unborn child's thoughts and fears, which cannot be objectively observed. This challenges Pound's Imagist belief in the objective reality of images as MacNeice focuses on the internal, emotional reality of the speaker.

Imagism's strict adherence to objectivity and avoidance of personal sentiment can result in a detached and impersonal tone, making it difficult for readers to connect with the poem. Imagism's insistence on precise and concrete imagery can sometimes restrict the poet's creative freedom, as it imposes a rigid framework that may not

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[75] Scott Hamilton, *Ezra Pound and the Symbolist Inheritance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 39

[76] Justin Kishbaugh, 'Pound's Progress: The Vortextual Evolution of Imagism and Its Poetic Image' (published doctoral thesis, Duquesne University, 2014) in Duquesne Scholarship Collection <https://dsc.duq.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1768&context=etd> (Accessed 16th February 2023)

[77] Ezra Pound, *The Pisan Cantos* (New York: New Directions, 2003), p. 6

accommodate more abstract or symbolic expressions. For example, Carlos Williams eventually left the Imagist movement because he felt it limited his capacity to explore poetry, 'unsuited to the conveying of thinking or feeling,'[78] according to Frederick Morgan. Furthermore, Imagism's rejection of traditional poetic devices, such as rhyme and metre, can result in a lack of musicality and rhythm, making the poems feel disjointed or fragmented. An example of this is H. D. 's poem 'Oread' which has been criticised for its lack of musicality, as the absence of traditional poetic devices makes it difficult for readers to engage with the poem's flow: 'Whirl up, sea— / whirl your / pointed pines, / splash your great pines /on our rocks'.[79] MacNeice, on the other hand, would not relinquish his own style and sought his own compromise, making some of his poetry Imagistic while others were exactly the opposite. MacNeice specifically valorised the capability of the honest man/poet and stressed the way poetry occupied other realms of thought. As a result of MacNeice's own personal struggles—including those brought on by teenage religious expectations, obligations as a poet, and a tumultuous connection with his own existence—his poetry also came to address universal concerns alongside his personal conflicts.

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[78] Frederick Morgan, 'William Carlos Williams: Imagery, Rhythm, Form', *The Sewanee Review,* 55.4 (1947), 675-690 (p. 683) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27537788> (Accessed 5th August 2023)
[79] Hilda Doolittle, *Collected Poems 1912-1944* (New York: New Directions, 1944), p. 74

Chapter Three:

Many people associate MacNeice with his later poems, which cover a wide range of themes, are replete with poetic voices and serve as a mouthpiece for the closing years of his life. His poems 'Apple Blossom' and 'The Brandy Glass', each represent everything that MacNeice has achieved since he began writing poetry at the age of seven: poetry that is distinctively individual alongside occasional variations within his poetic identity. A lot of critics admirably highlight the novelty of MacNeice's later poetry but also urge his readers to address the self-conscious and occasional depressive undertones. Michael O'Neill recognises this quality: 'In MacNeice's work, we encounter a poignant self-consciousness that is both innovative and tinged with sadness.'[80] In order to communicate his views and reach a larger audience, MacNeice experimented with a variety of literary styles and media which ultimately caused him to obtain this identity as a multifaceted writer who vacillates between his numerous identities, namely his Anglo-Irish upbringing, the dutiful poet and the modern, concerned voice for man.

In his poem 'Day of Renewal,' MacNeice acknowledges that his post-war writing abilities did not meet an adequate standard. This is evident when MacNeice states 'This middle stretch / Of life is bad for poets'. (349) MacNeice's later poetry stands out for its unfiltered honesty, as he bares his soul on the pages of his verse. This recurrence in his later works is his self-consciousness about his writing ability. MacNeice remains a poet still searching for answers in his own poetic expression and of course, his poetry: 'The poems themselves (as always) are an attempt to find out.'[81] MacNeice is ultimately an

[80] Michael O'Neill, *Auden, MacNeice, Spender: The Thirties Poetry (*London: Palgrave, 1992), p. 84

[81] Louis MacNeice, *Notes for Argo* (Texas: The Humanities Research Centre, 1961), p. 22

ambiguous poet torn between an identity that best fits him: 'we have so many Pasts and Presents to choose from. We have too much choice and not enough brute limitations.'[82]

When World War II breaks out, MacNeice's interest in form becomes more prominent, leading him to explore more varied ways of expressing emotion and experience. MacNeice's thoughts about the social function of poetry are reflected in the consciousness of traditional poetry and the arranging of rhyme schemes, thus MacNeice holds a brevity of form but never entirely abandons it. His inspiration is pulled deeply from the Romantic tradition, following in the footsteps of MacNeice's favourite poet, Keats. MacNeice's modernist and occasionally Imagistic qualities would eventually give way to a more profound and nuanced contemplative attitude about themes such as religion, nature, and love.

MacNeice's poetry embraces all kinds of traditional impulses, from timelessness ('Meeting Point') and explicit sexual love ('Mayfly') to the mildness of classical myths ('Charon') and references to classical texts ('The Sunlight on the Garden'). MacNeice evokes a sense of optimism and rejuvenation in his poem 'Apple Blossom', a biblical poem about Adam and Eve that is normally associated with adversity and expulsion. The poem adheres to traditional Romantic poetry by exploring the theme of nature's beauty and its ability to evoke emotions. The poem is inherently optimistic with the language that it uses 'the sun may rise, / A new thing dawns upon our eyes' (473) and 'the first blossom is the best blossom' (473) suggesting that nature possesses a transcendent quality that can inspire awe and wonder, a characteristic often associated with the sublime in Romantic poetry. Pound advocated for the use of concise and minimalistic language, whereas MacNeice's poem employs more elaborate and

[82] MacNeice, 'Poetry Today', p. 161

ornamental language, subverting Pound's emphasis on economy. MacNeice's poem utilises rich and decorative language, employing metaphors, similes, and other figurative devices to describe the apple blossom: 'For the child who never had seen an orchard; / For the youth whom whisky had led astray' (473) deviating from Pound's preference for direct and unadorned language.

The rhyme scheme ABCCDEFF in 'Apple Blossom' creates a sense of musicality and rhythm, enhancing the overall flow of the poem. The consistent end rhymes (astray [...] day [...] Fall [...] all [...] unfurled [...] hurled [...] to [...] blue [...] rise [...] eyes) (473) helps to establish a cohesive structure, allowing the reader to follow the poem's progression and thematic development, which again is visible in much Romantic poetry. The use of rhyme indicates a deliberate and structured approach to composition, suggesting that this poem finds comfort within the 'sequence of [the] metronome'[83], rather than solely relying on the cadence and 'musical phrase'[84] of spoken language as proposed by Pound. By adhering to a rhyming pattern, MacNeice pays homage to traditional poetry. This deliberate choice highlights the tension between conformity and innovation, reflecting the poem's exploration of the complexities of nature and human experience.

The rhyme scheme contributes to the poem's exploration of duality and contradiction. Through the consistent pattern of end rhymes, MacNeice juxtaposes the beauty of apple blossoms with the fleeting nature of life, highlighting the transient and fragile aspects of existence. This adherence to tradition serves to emphasise one of Romantic poetry's most common themes: the inseparable condition of man and nature,

[83] Pound, 'A Retrospect', p. 13
[84] Pound, 'A Retrospect', p. 13

as Amal Hussien states: ‘it finds its roots back in the Romantic belief in man’s initial, instinctive union with nature, which he loses as a result of social constraints, and spends his life in quest of his primary innocent natural state.’[85] Pound highly disapproved of Romantic poetry and desired to emancipate literature from the constraints of Romanticism. He dismantles Romanticism and offers a realistic perspective on life that is central to Imagism. In his book *ABC of Reading,* Pound states that a new and different approach to poetry should be a rudimentary feature: ‘[a]ny work of art which is not a beginning, an invention, a discovery is of little worth.’[86]

MacNeice’s use of rhyme is deployed with brevity, with occasional rhyming couplets and other poetic techniques such as anaphora and a blend of anapestic and trochaic variations. Despite the rhyme scheme not having inherently fluent nor traditional cadence, the consistent pattern of end rhymes helps to establish a cohesive structure, allowing the reader to follow the poem’s progression and thematic development. Amy Lowell’s Imagist poem *A Letter* lacks a rhyme scheme and instead ends with an unpredictable volta: ‘am tired, Beloved, of chafing my heart against / The want of you; / Of squeezing it into little inkdrops, / And posting it.’[87] Lowell’s exasperation and impatience is revealed in this volta, turning the poem’s focus from desire to resignation. Although ‘Apple Blossom’ contains a combination of MacNeice’s personal life and biblical allusions, his form is far more rigid than most Imagist poetry.

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[85] Amal Hussein, Transatlantic Romanticism: The English Romantics and American Nineteenth–Century Poetic Tradition (published doctoral thesis, Durham University, 2011) <http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/3197/> (Accessed 3rd August 2023), p. 41.

[86] Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading,* (New York: New Directions, 2011) p. 39

[87] Lowell, Imagist Poems, p. 15

For example, Lowell's absence of a strict rhyme scheme or metre allows her to experiment with unconventional line breaks and stanza structures, creating unexpected shifts in tone and meaning throughout the poem. Without the constraints of a traditional poetic structure, Lowell's poem becomes more fluid and dynamic, making it harder for the reader to anticipate the direction of the poem or the emotions being conveyed. Just as a letter can be unpredictable in its content, the free verse in the poem reflects the unpredictability of Lowell's thoughts and emotions. The irregular line lengths and enjambments mirror her erratic nature as she navigates her feelings.

'Apple Blossom' was written for MacNeice's scandalous lover Mary Wimbush, who was sent a typescript[88] of this poem. MacNeice incorporated many themes: his relationship with Mary, interest in mythology alongside the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 and Horace's *Odes* 4.11. The line 'The first blossom was the best blossom' (473) can be interpreted as a metaphor for MacNeice's first experience of love, implying that it was a significant and memorable event in his life. The phrase 'For the child who never had seen an orchard' (473) suggests a lack of exposure or knowledge about the world, indicating MacNeice's relative inexperience in life, this could be a broader reflection of his overall naivety and youthful perspective. While the stanza does not directly correlate MacNeice's alcoholism to his first love, it can be inferred that the experience played a significant role in shaping his life. MacNeice intertwines the story of Adam and Eve by using the motif of a new beginning and the loss of innocence, similar to the biblical tale which suggests that MacNeice cherishes the first experiences in life, just like the first blossom of an apple tree which reflects his own desire to recapture a sense of innocence or purity.

[88] Jon Stallworthy, *Louis MacNeice* (Birmingham: New Editions, 1996), p. 444-50

The orchard symbolises a place of natural beauty and fertility and it represents MacNeice's longing for a simpler, more idyllic existence, free from the complexities and struggles of his own life. The reference to alcohol indicates that MacNeice may have faced challenges in his own life, similar to his youth that was 'led astray' (473) by 'whisky' (473). He implies that the morning after a mistake can be seen as a fresh start, a chance to begin anew, like the blossoming of a flower. Sean Devlin examines the poem's personal and biblical connection in the second verse: 'the 'first apple' (473) relates to MacNeice's 'first love' (473), as does the apple from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in Genesis 3 that the serpent duped Eve into eating against God's commandment. When God discovered the sin, he expelled Adam and Eve and revealed to Adam that he would have to till the fields for his and Eve's sustenance ('the trees were his to plant for all'), (473) and placed a 'flaming sword' (473) at the entrance so the two would not return. 'The first verdict' (473) of the fourth stanza again refers to the punishment of Adam and Eve for eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, but also to MacNeice's divorce from Mary.'[89] The hyperbolic 'worst verdict' (473) adds emotional depth to the poetry by creating a tone of personal impending doom. MacNeice heightens the impact of the words and imagery, resulting in a more vivid and memorable reading experience.

MacNeice's adherence to traditional English verse provides a framework that allows for a harmonious blending of his personal experiences with nature. The structured form of the poem serves as a vessel for conveying his unity with the natural world, reinforcing the sense of connection and balance between the two. Like Adam

[89] Sean Devlin, Louis MacNeice: Apprentice and Critic of Horace (published doctoral thesis, The University of Calgary, 1999) <https://prism.ucalgary.ca/server/api/core/bitstreams/4748b4d2-0f7d-4856-88d5-f3f76bcbc48f/content> (Accessed 15th July 2023), p. 81-82

from the Bible, MacNeice finds his first love to be one of torment and beauty that he found to drown but satisfy him: 'The first ocean was the best ocean / His first love was his first world.' (473) MacNeice's reference to the ocean captures the paradoxical nature of his first relationship, where he experienced both the enchanting beauty and the overwhelming turmoil, just like the ocean's captivating yet treacherous qualities. It encapsulates the nostalgia and mixed emotions associated with MacNeice's first relationship, highlighting the simultaneous presence of beauty and pain. Mary Ezra helped MacNeice forget the littered streets of Carrickfergus ('a puppet world') (13). This love has reshaped his perception of the world, washing away the scattered memories of a disruptive and troubled childhood. MacNeice's family issues are mitigated, just as Adam's were when he met Eve. This is reminiscent of Adam's unity with Eve: 'Adam said, 'This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh.''[90]

The contrasting image of the 'blue [...] sky' (473) beyond the gates alternatively conveys a ray of hope, implying that there is yet a chance at redemption and a brighter future. MacNeice illustrates this point with the image of 'bitter gates' (473) clanging shut, which he contrasts this with the depiction of the sky being 'just as blue,' (473) implying that the earth will continue on untouched regardless of its ongoings. Strong images are still formed in 'Apple Blossom' by utilising nature and Romantic representations, but they require context and do hint at a feeling of surreal embellishment. The universality of the themes may be lost without a shared awareness of the unique setting, thereby diminishing the poem's resonance, as F. S. Flint predicted in 'The History of Imagism.' MacNeice evokes a sense of contrast and contradiction, highlighting the coexistence of hardship and beauty, bitterness and optimism. The 'last ocean' (473) is Mary Wimbush,

[90] *The Holy Bible,* Genesis 2:23

the ‘last’ of his ‘love[s]’ (473) which appears everlasting and final. In Horace’s *Odes* the word ‘last’ is also conclusive: ‘for hereafter I shall glow with passion for no other woman’.[91]

Interestingly, ‘Apple Blossom’ follows the Imagist concept of language economy by employing succinct and precise phrases and avoiding unneeded or excessive descriptions. However, MacNeice’s personal turmoil, which he manages to weave into this Biblical tragedy, is a decision that Pound would not have approved of. Another distinguishing aspect of the poem is the use of anaphora, such as ‘for, [...] and, [...] the, [...] when’(473) and ‘The first blossom [...] the first apple [...] the first ocean’ (473) serves as a constant reminder that this poem is a reference for adolescent findings and personal discovery which is monitored throughout as the poet writes retrospectively. Furthermore, the final stanza replicates the previous one, giving the poem a sense of completion and unity while also emphasising nature’s enduring beauty and significance. The familiar words can evoke a sense of familiarity and comfort, as well as a feeling of continuity and stability, enhancing the reader’s connection to the natural world and its rhythms. The repetition symbolises the eternal cycle of life, death, and rebirth, foregrounding the poem’s themes of transience and the enduring beauty found in nature. We cannot help but think of the breathtaking moment captured by the Pre-Raphaelite artist John Everett Millais in his painting, ‘Spring (Apple Blossoms)’[92] which MacNeice manages to evoke through his lyrical poem.

‘The Brandy Glass’, which appeared in MacNeice’s posthumous collection *The Burning Perch* in 1963, is one of MacNeice’s older poems. ‘The Brandy Glass’

[91] Horace, *Horace: the Odes, Epodes and Carmen Saeculare* (New York: Cincinnati, 1902), Odes 4.1 1

[92] John Everett Millias, ‘Spring (Apple Blossoms)’ [online] <https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/spring-apple-blossoms-10259 > (Accessed 2nd August 2023)

represents MacNeice's existentialist perspective, emphasising life's transience and the value of living in the present. The poem proposes that we embrace our ephemeral existence and seek significance in the present. 'The moment cradled like a brandy glass' (84) is pushed away from the world of metaphors and stands reminiscent to the near-surreal images that MacNeice depicts in 'Snow.' 'The Brandy Glass' is an elaborate arrangement which attempts to 'cage the minute' (84) like MacNeice does in 'Sunlight in the Garden' and to perhaps occupy him with a distraction like he achieves in 'Meeting Point' so that 'time was away and somewhere else.' (167)

MacNeice's battle with time, employing his mental images which are inscribed on the page as forewarnings of oncoming disaster, of an ending more definitive than that of a poem, the conclusion of an all-too-real memory. If we read MacNeice's poem 'The Heated Minutes': 'I should not feel the dull / The taut and ticking fear / That hides in all the clocks / And creeps inside the skull / If you were here, my dear.' (86) The word dull, in conjunction with the distressing time-based verbs 'ticking,' (86) and 'creeps,' (86) evokes a sense of dread and foreboding, reflecting MacNeice's fear of death. The term 'taut' (86) denotes strain and tension, highlighting the poet's anxiety. It implies that MacNeice's fear of death is not a passing sensation, but rather a persistent presence that weighs heavily on his mind, emphasising a deep-seated fear. His lover has the power to change his fear of death into a sense of security and peace, demonstrating the power of love in alleviating existential fears. However, not all poets have this luxury. Philip Larkin for example, has no companion that can temporarily deter death: 'plain as a wardrobe, what we know, / Have always known, know that we can't escape, / Yet can't

accept'[93] but he does recognise that love will outlast the clutches of death: 'What will survive of us is love.'[94]

In 'The Brandy Glass' the speaker's request for the moment to 'form within his hands once more' (84) exemplifies Imagism's capability to emphasise the importance of preserving ephemeral moments. In cradling the 'moment,' (84) MacNeice aspires to preserve and cherish it as a mother would a new-born baby. We are nestled into a comforting moment, where worries and anxieties are temporarily set aside. Regardless of how much the speaker 'begs' (84) for the recollection to remain a moment and never again become a memory, the poem's final line is nearly identical to the first, a grammatical impasse that causes the speaker to remain at a standstill. Lee Montague believed that the experience is arranged in MacNeice's own style but its content is Imagistic. 'MacNeice acknowledged that his imagistic propensity for the topical and visual led him to diffuse composition, in which one descriptive passage led to another.'[95] 'The Brandy Glass', if excessively focused upon, may lead to a repetitive and monotonous composition. Yet, MacNeice's Imagistic propensity for the topical and visual causes him to get lost in his own words, enriching his composition as each line seamlessly leads to another, as Pound intended.

The anaphoric 'once more' (84) is a moment of hallucinatory self-indulgence whereby MacNeice will continue to live in this moment, sipping and digesting it as if it is a shot of brandy - he is back to where he started 'once more.' (84) This repetition reminds us of the first line - MacNeice is stuck in an ungainly fate from which there is no

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[93] Philip Larkin, 'Aubade', *The Complete Poems of Philip Larkin* (London: Faber & Faber, 2014), p. 69
[94] Larkin, 'An Arundel Tomb', *Complete Poems,* p. 131
[95] Lee Monatague, 'An Evening with Louis MacNeice - Lee Montague 10th Oct,' *Keats Community Library,* (2019) <http://www.keatscommunitylibrary.org.uk/LouisMacNeice.shtml> (Accessed 31st July 2023)

hope whatsoever of liberation only in his nostalgic thoughts. He will keep going, navigating through ‘like a ventriloquist’s doll / Left by his master’. (84)

The ‘moment’ (84) MacNeice mentions in this poem is the directly treated thing, the image with which he utilises so much focus. The past is both distant and near, and oblivion is offset by a powerful vigilance that keeps the speaker cautious and alert. This particular moment has taken over his mind, ‘Piling around carafes and table legs / And chokes the passage of the revolving door,’ (84) and he ‘begs’ (84) to be able to visualise it and never forget it because he knows time is encroaching upon him: ‘Only let it form within my hands once more.’ (84) Time, indifferent and cruel, is the background puppeteer running a performance and impinging a conscience into MacNeice.

MacNeice uses the image of a brandy glass to symbolise both indulgence and escapism. Brandy, for all its bitterness, symbolises a sweet fragile delicacy, reflecting the vulnerability of human existence. It can also be interpreted as a symbol of self-destruction and addiction which evokes a sense of longing, decadence, and melancholy, especially considering the man’s loneliness, it elicits feelings of desire for a life of luxury, but also a recognition of the emptiness and fleeting nature of such desires. The image of the brandy glass corresponds to Pound’s concept of Imagism, MacNeice uses that image to create a visual depiction of the poem’s ideas, mirroring Pound’s conviction in the power of images. The picture of a brandy glass adds dimension to the poem by emphasising the contrast between the sumptuous and fleeting nature of pleasure. It acts as a metaphor for life’s transient moments of bliss and its inherent fragility, ultimately underlining the poem’s investigation of the human condition, which Pound considered was essential in all good poetry.

Both 'The Brandy Glass' and Eliot's 'Preludes' (a poem well known to utilise Imagist techniques) employ consciousness as an image creator. In 'Preludes', Eliot applies the scent of alcohol as a trigger for his consciousness when writing: 'The morning comes to consciousness / Of faint stale smells of beer / From the sawdust-trampled street.'[96] MacNeice's 'moment cradled like a brandy glass' (84) also exemplifies consciousness as it conveys a sense of tenderness and careful handling. The thought process behind this line involves recognising the significance of the moment and to portray it as something delicate and cherished, comparable to how one would handle a brandy glass with care. Both images encapsulate a complex emotional state of alertness and contemplation within a single snapshot. Furthermore, they each present another vision of the reality as activated and filtered via the poet's mind, resulting in newly formed projected experiences. Thus both 'The Brandy Glass' and 'Preludes' exemplify Pound's call for direct treatment of the physical world.

Pound felt that it was necessary to reiterate his terms and rules for Imagism in a letter to Harriet Monroe: 'Objectivity and again objectivity, and expression: no hindside-before-ness, no straddled adjectives (as 'addled mosses dank'), no Tennysonianness of speech; nothing-nothing that you couldn't [...] actually say Language is made out of concrete things. General expression in nonconcrete terms are a laziness; they are talk, not art, not creation. They are the reaction of things on the writer, not a creative act by the writer.'[97] Pound advocated for the use of 'luminous details' in poetry, which are particularly tangible, sensory-rich images that expose and transmit an image quickly and deeply. 'The moment cradled like a brandy glass' (8) not

[96] T. S. Eliot, 'Preludes', *Prufrock and Other Observations* (London: Faber & Faber, 2001), p. 24
[97] Ezra Pound, 'To Harriet Monroe,' *Letters of Ezra Pound: 1907-1941* (California: Harcourt Brace, 1950) p. 49

only piques the reader's visual imagination, but also creates a physical and audible response, further enriching its images. The poem is tightly packed, rhythmically built, and intense to read, something he felt other Imagist poets struggled to grasp. For example Pound comments on Lowell's failure to possess an Imagist quality: 'The general weakness of the writers of the new school is looseness, lack of rhythmical construction and intensity.'[98]

The movement's hazy examples and requirements have therefore allowed scholars to extend onto poets like MacNeice, who has no direct connections to Pound but bears a resemblance to his movement in some of his work. Imagist poetry engages the reader's imagination and encourages personal connections and emotional responses by giving vivid imagery and allowing for interpretation. The transformational ability of words into objects allows for a more in-depth investigation of the human experience, encouraging readers to actively engage in the creation of meaning. MacNeice, somewhat influenced by Pound, adopts the plural and vague qualities of Imagism in his own poetry. Jacques Derrida's *Law of Genre* challenges the fixed boundaries of literary genres, emphasising their inherent instability and fluidity. MacNeice's use of Imagist poetry aligns with Derrida's notion of genre as a dynamic and evolving concept. By embracing the plural and vague nature of Imagism, MacNeice blurs the lines between traditional genres, transcending their limitations and creating a unique poetic form that defies categorisation.

In 'Bagpipe Music', MacNeice blends elements of satire, social commentary, and personal reflection, creating a unique fusion that defies traditional genre expectations. By juxtaposing seemingly unrelated themes, MacNeice challenges readers to question

[98] Pound, *Letters,* p. 50

the fixed boundaries of genres and encourages a more fluid interpretation of his work. MacNeice's ability to be considered an Imagist poet relates to Derrida's *Law of Genre* through his experimentation with form, blending of personal and historical themes, and his challenge to traditional genre expectations. MacNeice's poetry exemplifies the fluidity and openness that Derrida advocates, encouraging readers to question fixed boundaries and address the nuanced interpretations of literary works. Through his innovative approach, MacNeice and Pound both expand the possibilities of poetic expression, inviting readers to explore the interplay between form, genre, and meaning.

Nietzche in his essay 'On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense' has trouble coming to terms with truth in art. He states 'What then is truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonymies, and; anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical, and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions– they are metaphors…'[99] Nietzsche's belief that poetry has become a mistruth is supported by Pound's Imagism, which also believed that poetry had glided toward superficial and decorative language that is superfluous and excessive. Nietzsche believed that language is inherently subjective and influenced by individual perspectives, while Pound advocated for a similar idea by emphasising the importance of precise language in order to convey images. Both thinkers recognised the potential of language and poetry to shape and influence human experience. Yet, Pound's simplistic language that is employed in his Imagist poems also suggests a preoccupation with stimuli and a desire to do something that has not been achieved before. Imagism challenges conventional notions of poetry

[99] Nietzsche, 'On Truth', p. 15

by prioritising the artistic impulse over traditional poetic techniques such as rhyme and metre. This allows for a more direct and visceral experience for the reader, focusing on the power of the image rather than adhering to traditional poetic structures. It emphasises the individual's subjective interpretation of stimuli, highlighting the limitations of language in capturing the full essence of experiences.

Like Nietzsche, MacNeice explores the idea that our understanding of truth is hindered by illusions and dream-like imagery whereby he makes his poetry communicative and didactic. His poetry reflects the fragmented and distorted nature of human experience, inviting readers to question their own perceptions. Imagism rejects the idea of an objective reality and instead emphasises the subjective nature of perception. Both Pound and Nietzsche argue that reality is shaped by individual perspectives and that truth is a product of personal interpretation rather than an absolute entity. Pound's artistic impulse, however, is not unfavourable; it was a shift that Nietzche had been looking for, but Pound's personal tastes were, of course, crucial for determining this artistic impulse. Although Nietzsche saw artistic impulse and stimuli as two bad aspects of poetry, they both provided Pound with zest and intensity for the production of his Imagist poetry. 'In a Station of the Metro,' a two-line poem, immortalised him and spread his impact far and wide to poets like MacNeice.

Conclusion:

Like Pound, MacNeice was raised in a world that would endure two devastating World Wars and was filled with numerous concerns, questions, and creative expressions; consequently their experiences were sculpted into poetry that resonated with them. Pound had connections to Yeats, Eliot and Joyce, all of whom MacNeice adored and used as further inspiration for his poetry. Pound's revolutionary ideas and avant-garde affinities may have created a sense of anxiety in MacNeice, as he had to navigate his own artistic path while being aware of Pound's extensive influence. This anxiety likely influenced MacNeice's work, pushing him to find his unique voice within the modernist movement.

Pound's literary theories provided MacNeice with a framework to approach his own writing, encouraging him to focus on vivid imagery and concise language. Both MacNeice and Pound were deeply concerned with the societal anxieties of their time: MacNeice's poetry often reflected the anxieties and disorientation of the interwar period, while Pound's work grappled with the aftermath of World War I and the changing societal norms of the early twentieth century. Both poets used their work to critique the social and political landscape of their era, showcasing their shared concern for the human condition.

Bloom's book *The Anxiety of Influence* suggests that poets often struggle with the fear of being influenced by their predecessors. This fear can hinder their creative process and lead to a constant battle to establish their own originality. MacNeice and Pound, being aware of such influences, may have grappled with similar anxieties in their poetic endeavours. While MacNeice and Pound may have had shared friends and a

similar modernist background, their poetic styles were distinct. However, it is possible that their interactions and discussions with other poets such as their mutual friends (Yeats, Eliot and Joyce) influenced certain aspects of their work, such as their experimentation with language and their exploration of new poetic forms.

During MacNeice and Pound's time, modernist poetry was still in its formative stages, with poets exploring various approaches and techniques. MacNeice's poetry evidently vacillates between his numerous identities as a writer and he thus becomes inclusive to Imagism. Yet, MacNeice's poetry often exhibits a conscious effort to distance himself from Pound's influence. He sought to develop his own voice and themes, which led to a more personal and introspective style compared to Pound's more intellectual and allusive approach. Influence played a crucial role in shaping modernist poetry, as poets were inspired by each other's works and ideas, pushing the boundaries of poetic expression. The exchange of ideas and influences among modernist poets fostered a sense of experimentation and innovation, leading to the development of new poetic techniques and styles such as Imagism and Postmodernism.

Richard Danson Brown stated that MacNeice's poem 'Thalassa' 'remains a good way to begin an acquaintance with MacNeice'.[100] However, given that it was the last poem discovered in MacNeice's writings after his death in 1963, and was included as the final poem in both E. R. Dodds' and Peter McDonald's versions of the 'Collected Poems', it serves to mark the end of his life. This is especially important given that in 'Thalassa' MacNeice uses the vastness and power of the sea to symbolise the finality and inevitability of death. The poem's imagery and language evoke a sense of

[100] Richard Danson Brown, *Louis MacNeice and the Poetry of the 1930s* (Devon: Northcote Publishers, 2009) p. 3

surrender and acceptance, suggesting that MacNeice sees his own mortality as an integral part of his artistic journey.

As the concluding poem, 'Thalassa' serves as a poignant farewell and reflection on his entire body of work. MacNeice uses the sea as a metaphor for the vast unknown, representing both the end of his life and the enigmatic identities which he embraced in his poetry. By likening his own mortality to the boundless depths of the ocean, he suggests that his artistic journey has reached its final destination, leaving behind a legacy that is as mysterious and immeasurable as the sea itself. It evokes a sense of both melancholy and wonder, capturing the complex emotions associated with the end of a creative journey. To quote Aldington's Greek-inspired poem 'Amalfi' he remarks 'We will come down, O Thalassa, And drift upon / Your pale green waves / Like petals'[101] with which MacNeice's 'Thalassa' adds a macabre twist: 'Our end is life. Put out to sea.' (546) Even in the final moments of his life, MacNeice's last documented poetry returns to Imagism.

There is no doubt that MacNeice respected Romantic and traditional literature and moulded much of his poems based on this deference. He develops a sense of literary continuity by borrowing components from his literary predecessors, so that his own artistic activity not only comments on present happenings, philosophy, and aesthetics, but also on literary consciousness as it is inherited by readers and other poets. Nonetheless, it is his identity as a man that asks we uphold some amount of obligation (even if it is characterised by brevity) toward poetic tradition, together with his desire to transmit honesty through his personal findings, that causes variations to occur across his Anglo-Irish intricacies and in his Greek-inspired world.

[101] Richard Aldington, 'Amalfi,' *The Complete Works of Richard Aldington* (London: Allan Wingate, 1948), p. 49

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