Abstract
This paper takes as its starting point a transnational friendship. Two of the most revolutionary figures of twentieth-century literature, James Joyce and Ezra Pound, enjoyed for a time a rich correspondence and friendship, and their respective modern epics came to be considered the apotheosis of the twentieth century’s most dynamic aesthetic movement: the series of cultural revolutions that together can be understood as modernism. In his critical works Pound articulated his interest in the global dimension of the Irish writer’s work, declaring that “anybody is a fool who does not read Dubliners, The Portrait, and Ulysses for his own pleasure, and anyone who has not read these three is unfit to teach literature in any high school or college. I don’t mean simply English or American literature but any literature, for literature is not split up by political frontiers.” Pound retained an enduring interest in Ireland right up to the sentimental references to Ireland in the late cantos, and visited Dublin just once, late in his life in 1965. This paper examines the often productive, but sometimes conflicted, place of Ireland and Irish modernism in Pound’s global epic. How might Joyce’s modern epic have influenced, or conflicted with, Pound’s poetics? Moreover, how might we approach Pound’s skepticism towards Irish nationalism, given his later enthusiasm for Italian nationalism? By examining the Pound/Joyce correspondence and the prose pieces that Pound devoted to Joyce, this paper seeks to form a more sophisticated understanding of the relationship between Irish modernism, American expatriate modernism, and something that we might call world literature.

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