

Guide to Kulchur Study Guide

Guide to Kulchur by Ezra Pound

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Plot Summary

Ezra Pound (1885-1972) is one of the great figures of the Modernist cultural movement within the first fifty years of the 20th century. No one is better known for promoting modernist ideas and approaches in poetry. Pound was an American expatriate, critic and an intellectual; he opened up exchanges between the works and ideas of many of his contemporaries. Pound is also famous for his movement within poetry writing poetry that draws on classic Chinese and Japanese poems, which emphasize tight, concise and clear prose. His most famous work occupied the nearly last 50 years of his life, his epic *The Cantos*.

However, Pound's writings are not confined to poetry. *Guide to Kulchur* is a compilation of a wide range of Pound's non-fiction prose essays, most of which are quite short. It would also be his last non-fiction work. Written in 1938, the book contains fifty-eight chapters with a post-script written in 1952. The essays reveal Pound's cultural, political and economic views on many issues and focuses on his opinions about philosophy, poetry, epistemology, religion and, most of all, culture.

Nothing really ties the essays together; instead, the book lacks a plot, has no narrative structure, and, even more, the discourse and the essays themselves display a total absence of clear reasoning. Pound jumps back and forth between various cultural, political and economic observations, comments on obscure historical and artistic pictures, and throws in aphorism and Chinese ideograms along the way. Those new to Ezra Pound will find *Guide to Kulchur* quite daunting because it is very difficult to understand how it fits together.

Perhaps the main idea of *Guide to Kulchur* is Pound's conception of "kulchur" which he defines as "the history of ideas going into action." Pound claims that *Guide to Kulchur* is written for those men interested in learning who never received a formal education. These are men whose minds have not been ossified by the structure and reading canon of modern educational institutions, particularly universities.

Pound constantly complains that the world of ideas is become trapped and fixed, which leads to the death of civilizations. Pound insists the *Kulchur* must be understood not as knowledge but as what remains when knowledge is forgotten. Thus, in cultural studies, one misses the essence of a culture by learning true propositions about it. One might think that this provides a reason that Pound seems uninterested in communicating clear, detailed systematic information about his cultural opinions.

The book is divided into six parts and thirteen sections, but little ties the parts and sections together. However, one will find continuity among the expression of Pound's opinions, many of which are quite infamous and may leave the reader disgusted.

While Pound admires men like Confucius, he also compares the greatness of Mussolini to Confucius. Pound was an ardent fascist, as were many Western intellectuals in the early 20th century. Pound also expresses anti-semitic opinions and constantly

complains about central banking and sometimes combines the two. Pound is obsessed with combating the idea of "usura" or the practice of usury, charging people money for the use of money. For Pound, usury is at the heart of all economic problems and corrupts and devours cultures. The reader will also run across Pound's appreciation of the American founders and the Catholic Church.



Part I, Section I: Digest of the Analects, The New Learning, Sparta 776 B.C., Totalitarian, Zweck or the Aim

Part I, Section I: Digest of the Analects, The New Learning, Sparta 776 B.C., Totalitarian, Zweck or the Aim Summary and Analysis

Section I contains five short essays, all of which appear to concern different topics. The first essay, "Digest of the Analects" contains Ezra Pound's commentary on brief sections of Confucius' (Kung Tze) Analects. Pound skips around among passages and it is not clear how they string together. Pound will print a passage, reproduce the appropriate Chinese symbols, and then make comments. He claims that the reason he made the digest is that "rapacity is the main force in our time" and so it is difficult to print wisdom. As a result, Pound wants to increase the amount of wisdom available. Another section, Pound argues, points to the futility of taxation and great stores without orderly distribution.

In, "The New Learning Part One" Pound notes that the essay is a bit dry but that something worthwhile can be gotten out of reading it. The essay rambles and Pound apologizes for this. His main aim seems to be to distinguish two sorts of ideas. The one sort are ideas that exist and are discussed within a vacuum, intended be to the mere objects and playthings of the intellect. There are other ideas which guide action and serve as rules of conduct. Pound argues that the men of today are almost exclusively concerned with the latter.

Today, all knowledge cannot be collected in one place and it is beyond most men to consider the "vacuum ideas" (let us call them) as a result. Pound includes among the "vacuum ideas" the writings of the ancient Greek Philosophers, the Medieval Philosophers and the Scholastics and the Confucians. He points out the great precision that these men placed in their ideas that have been lost to modernity.

"Sparta 776 B.C." begins by emphasizing that in the ancient period, money was not a mere "medium of exchange" such that anything could be used as money. Instead, it was a service the state performed when the state had the power of credit. Early, the use of precious metals to trade was only bartering with a commodity. He also remarks that ancient coins were made with great precision and that fraud was rampant in Athens.

Pound also remarks that many great men felt no obligations to their community to follow its customs, like the Greek philosophers and the "irresponsible protagonist of the New Testament." Instead, Rome was responsible and focused on the social. The Greeks and Christians focused only on the eternal. He then runs through very quick assessment of



various great thoughts in history. The essay ends with the claim that the state's first duty is to maintain public order and that the great spiritual men had a self-centered lust for salvation such that public order did not matter to them.

"Totalitarian" notes that Pounds' program of "New Learning" will bring ideas to everyone and all will know their positions. He then argues that a culture's history is the history of ideas leading to action. He then gives some examples. Pound understands that some men irresponsibly focus only on ideas but in fact all men should be able to combine the practical and the philosophical. He discusses ancient fights against economic monopolists and argues there should be no monopolists of ideas either.

Pound ends the piece by arguing that the old philosophy was focused on the idea of definition and that the culture and art of his period has forgotten this. Experimental, scientific method took over; men who want to order their ideas should spend at least a week thinking over medieval scholasticism.

"Zweck or the Aim" argues that the point of writing is to "reveal the whole subject from a new angle." This is why we write: to reveal the subject. The new angle brings newness to different readers. One will miss the newness in daily newspapers and colleges and public education. Ideas petrify; orthodoxies accrete and snobbism arises as it did in the late Medieval and early modern Muslim world. Knowledge is less important than understanding. It is a shame that true scholars are not connected to the press.

Men should understand and read for power and be intensely for power. Pound laments the decline of classical education and then explains his lamentation; the New Learning must focus on disseminating true understanding. The "vast mass of school learning" is death to the mind. Understanding good style is also important. One can write history through chasing ideas and seeing how a concept grows. The American system is particularly bad, in Pound's view.



Part I, Section II, Vortex, Great Bass, Ici Je Teste, Tradition

Part I, Section II, Vortex, Great Bass, Ici Je Teste, Tradition Summary and Analysis

Section II contains four essays that begin with "Vortex." It focuses on how sculpture reflects the geometrical orientation of culture. The Greeks reflected on themselves and so they made statues of themselves, while the Christian medievals made statues of the heavens; their geometry was vertical. Each major culture has a "vortex" which explains their yearnings and what draws them. Ancient Chinese sculpture had a vortex of intense maturity. The moderns, who have conquered material reality, have a vortex of will and consciousness. The idea of the vortex lies in the work of Gaudier-Brzeska.

In "Great Bass: Part One," Pound focuses on the lowest noises the ear can hear. The great composers neglect this frequency but one cannot study music without focusing on it. To understand things intellectually, one must understand their perfections. Pound also focuses on Leibniz, the last of the philosophers to really "get hold of something" and among the last to worry about reconciling churches. The Catholic Church lost to Luther because it did not take his ideas seriously and it cannot revive without taking ideas seriously again. Pound then maintains that these ideas all fit together.

"Ici Je Teste" begins by focusing on the Catholic Church. It had an important rise among the temporal powers in the 19th century, but this was perhaps its most infamous century. The recent social encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno*, comments on economic matters and thus was of more interest to the non-religious than all the preaching on Sundays. Pound is convinced that the culture Catholicism allowed to die has more in it than all the modern institutions. He then discusses the three important modes of thought: cogitation, meditation and contemplation.

Aquinas was the grandfather of Descartes. Until Leibniz, men could struggle with words and speculate without hiding. However, after Leibniz professional philosophers were just lazy blokes who did not have labs. However, this is a tragedy.

Finally, in "Tradition", Pound laments the examination of consciousness required for confirmation in Christianity. Such examination degenerates. Civilization requires more than this and then Pound reviews some cases that illustrate his claims. He notes that his generation has seen many great empires fall to pieces. The 19th century involves much cultural decline. Today, culture is in decline. Pound denies that he is merely cherry-picking points to support his argument; instead, he emphasizes that a man must know his own "address," where his time and place stand in relation to others times and places.



Part II, Section III, Guide, Italy, Aeschylus and ..., Monumental, Section IV, The History of Philosophy is ...?

Part II, Section III, Guide, Italy, Aeschylus and ..., Monumental, Section IV, The History of Philosophy is ...? Summary and Analysis

"Guide" is simply a series of observations Pound makes about the thoughts and productions of various painters throughout modern history. The purpose of the "Guide" is to walk the uneducated quickly through a range of different artists, explaining them with choice, short stretches of prose. Most of the focus is on French intellectuals and their art. "Italy" is a single page, which argues that a vast civilization is contained within a few hundred Italian writers.

In "Aeschylus and ..." Pound discusses the triumph of meaning over detail in culture. For instance, many great Greek Tragedies carry meaning in the original language but attention to detailed translation makes them boring. Pound then covers various cases of this. He calls what he is doing "aesthetic criticism." The next essay, "Monumental" is also a single page; Pound deals with James Joyce in this place alone. He expresses the general sentiment of catharsis upon completing the difficult Ulysses.

In "The History of Philosophy Is ...?" Pound opens by noting that many philosophers tried to understand the world totally apart from observation and he commends Aristotle for including some observation of exterior fact. This adds to the goodness of a philosophy. He then explains some ancient views of nature, such that the world is all water. He claims that real knowledge goes into men in tidbits. Pound then transitions to argue that Montessori education has tried to apply this idea to teaching infants. The essay ends with the claim that discoveries are made by gluttons and addicts, by unusual men who can endure.



Part III, Section V, Values, Europe or the Setting, Sophists, Kulchur: Part One, Kulchur Part Two, March 12th, Textbooks

Part III, Section V, Values, Europe or the Setting, Sophists, Kulchur: Part One, Kulchur Part Two, March 12th, Textbooks Summary and Analysis

In "Values", Pound aims to show that table of values among the men he has seen and talked with. He claims that Mussolini was a great man. Pound thinks of being genuine as swiftness in a given field and has seen many honest, patient men applying their words. However, there are volcanic and disordered minds like Wyndham Lewis's that are of great value especially in a rotted milieu. He does well in England, consequently.

"Europe or The Setting" opens with a discussion of some European writings. Pound argues that real knowledge does not jump from the page into the mind; instead, the process is much more complicated. Pound illustrates with his methods of comprehending writers over decades. Much of his discussion focuses on Dante and the deep fineness of argument Pound finds in the text. He next turns to descriptions of cathedrals and how the beauty of it is processed. He claims that in 1938, a bloke with small means could still see the best of Europe. Pound next recommends how such a trip should go, for instance with taking a car through Italy rather than any other way. He also covers France.

In "Sophists", Pound focuses on philosophers known of the usurer. In fact, throughout Guide to Kulchur, Pound is interested in usury and those who engage in it. Usury allows for the depreciation of currency which pays for war. Borrowing money is a bad idea. Pound maintains that a complete picture of a public man, ruler, or prime minister is incomplete without a look to his finances and his public acts relating to financing.

Next follows a discussion of the pre-Socratic philosophers Anaimandros, Parminedes and Zenophanes. He then discusses Zenophanes's financial situation. There are various other discussions of ancient Greek philosophers that are hard to tie together. He takes a brief interlude into poetry and then returns to defend Zeno's Stoic philosophy of life. In the process he explains their views. Interspersed are Chinese symbols. The text seems odd and thrown together and may indeed be intended to illustrate what a sophistical document is really like.

"Kulchur: Part One" claims that "when you don't understand it, let it alone." Philosophers and others must cut corners. Not all can be understood. He then discusses ancient



Greek philosophers again, covering the Stoics, Gorgias and others. The next part of the essay covers mathematicians and physicists. "Kulchur: Part Two" Pound hunts for the "localization of sensibility" or how to find the sensible in the world. He denies that knowledge is culture; in fact, culture only begins when one "has forgotten-what-book," which is to say that culture is what remains when all the particular facts are forgotten. Pound then flitters between comments about Confucius, Beethoven and Bartok.

In "March 12th", Pound claims that the civilized man is one who gives serious answers to serious questions. Civilization involves a sound balance of values. He transitions into a discussion of the formation of poetry, which includes language, imagery and "ideoplasty" which comes from imagery. It is the shape of idea in the poem. Ideas cannot be reduced to imagery but they arise from them. Morality poems cannot function because of ideoplasty.

"Textbooks" follows. Pound has published a note on the year's Italian textbooks. He thinks that the "advanced" will never look into them and they do not do much harm. He comments that Christianity survives because it is rooted in the idea of human universality. When Pound returns to worry about textbooks, he sees a "racket" for them, especially in America.



Part III, Section VI, Savoir Faire, The New Learning: Part Two, Examples of Civilization, Books

Part III, Section VI, Savoir Faire, The New Learning: Part Two, Examples of Civilization, Books Summary and Analysis

"Savoir Faire" begins by asking what we mean to do when we act. One measure of a civilization is how it answers this question, and its hopes. Great intelligence leads to truth, as both Mussolini and Confucius show. These questions are also answered with mystery. Pound then argues that the lessons of Greek epics and writings for poetry have been given insufficient attention. He concerns himself in this essay to praise intelligence; he finds great stupidity in the age, particularly because Chinese literature has not been more often translated.

Shakespeare, on the other hand, is discussed enough, but he is not often read as a poet. Pound then lists the books a man should read and the ones he wants to re-read. Many of the texts are canonical, but others are not.

"The New Learning: Part Two" begins by emphasizing the need for a new learning. Bilingual classics tests help, as do microfiche editions of music. Pound then discusses various important musical pieces, characteristically flipping quickly between different composers. During the discussion, Pound notes that he worked in the Vatican library and has learned to reject anti-clericalism because priests may be needed to save civilization. He then attacks American presidents and the "dirty childishness" of the English and the Americans.

Pound elaborates a bit on the principles of fascism; he argues that a civil society combines strength with enjoyment. Democracy is often a sham in this regard; they fail to educate the people. He ends by claiming that Russia is not a civilized nation.

In "Examples of Civilization", Pound discusses various important architectural structures. He begins with the Tempio Malatestiano which is both an apex and a failure. Europe is not yet rotted by "usury" or the practice of making money from money, which Pound deplores and sees as destroying culture. He then ends with a discussion of various important writings.

In "Books 'About'", Pound discusses secondary literature concerning great writers. He begins with analyzing books written about Shakespeare. Francis Bacon comes in next. The discussion rambles somewhat and then transitions into more complaints about usurers.



Pound dislikes law-worship and finds it perverted. Code-worship should be rejected for truth-worship. Focus on codes misses the point because it does not focus on the truth that the code is supposed to represent in the world. He again emphasizes that this point was the downfall of Catholicism. Pound believes that Christianity has declined more generally as well and is full of shallow minds; the Christianity of Leibniz was superior.

Pound, mid-essay, complains that his writing suffers from being too general; he then discusses writers that are more effective. Further into the essay, he again defends fascist institutions, particular economic ones. He thinks that the achievements of totalitarian states will not last. He ends by justifying his exclusion of Russian, German and English poets from his discussions.

"On Answering Critics" begins by claiming that 99% of the time one should not respond to criticisms of one's artwork. Either the critic is right, in which case you should accept it, or he is wrong, in which case he is not worth fighting with. One exception is attacks by the young and honest, who might change their minds. Writers should also not think that they are creating anything new but destroying those who came before.

Again Pound turns to discussing the usurers, whom he thinks are at their most crass when they mar plays. The corporate ruins music; instead, they should be maintained by every thousand men. Each town should do so. Pound transitions to argue that the usurers reduce the world to the material but that "mud does not account for mind." However, contemplation of matter can still be a good thing.

Next Pound notes that he is often criticized by Catholics for his affinity for Confucius, whose Analects he thinks bear clear analogies to the New Testament. Pound then argues that there are four expanses of thought the curious reader should look into: Gesell, Douglas, the Canonist doctrine of economics and the actual practice and achievement in the corporate states of the day. He then argues that democracies cannot accommodate corporate practices. Next comes something of an attack of democratic institutions.



Part IV, Section VII, Maxims of Prudence, Human Wishes

Part IV, Section VII, Maxims of Prudence, Human Wishes Summary and Analysis

Section VII is uncharacteristically short, containing only two essays. "Maxims of Prudence" is only a page. When collaborating with small, fussy or idle men, consult them, but with large and busy men, do not consult. The latter will prefer your error to a waste of his time. Pound then argues that he is old enough to give this advice.

"Human Wishes" opens with Pound thinking that Dr. Johnson's new 'London' represents civilization and T.S. Eliot's preface is "urbane." Pound's "slap-dash" is rebuked. Following are discussions of various writings, such as *The Vanity of Human Wishes*. Returning to review London, Pound praises Eliot's introduction and Johnson's thought. He turns to discuss the romantics and claims that Jefferson was wise to oppose usury. Pound ends with a quote from a letter H.L. Mencken wrote to him, arguing that it is impossible to eliminate usury but Pound responds that he is willing to accept even the slowest progress.



Part IV, Section VIII, Guide to Kulchur, The Proof of the Pudding, Canti, The Novel and So Forth, Precedents, On Arriving and Not Arriving, Praise Song of the Buck-Hare, Time-Lag, The Culture of an Age

Part IV, Section VIII, Guide to Kulchur, The Proof of the Pudding, Canti, The Novel and So Forth, Precedents, On Arriving and Not Arriving, Praise Song of the Buck-Hare, Time-Lag, The Culture of an Age Summary and Analysis

Section VIII begins with "Guide to Kulchur" which Pound argues is a ridiculous title and a stunt piece. Instead he wants to write something to allow the average man to appreciate the poetry of Samuel Johnson and to hear how Haydn and Mozart are similarly great. He wants men to appreciate the great prose of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams. Comprehending incompatible thinkers is also important.

Pound claims that Protestantism engages in its own practice of heretic burning when it eliminates any portrayal of human mental corruption and descriptions of the decaying mind. Although Pound does not want to burn heretics; anyone who really believes would not engage in such "excess." Puritans are perverts because they "squirt" their sense of mental corruption into sex. The idea of greater and lesser evils was removed by Calvinists and Lutherans. As a result, Protestants have obliterated values in order to remove hierarchy. Pope Pius saw this in his last significance. The heart and liver of the body do not try to reduce each other to a common level. This is why Mussolini is a genius because he sees that social crisis is not in a system but "of" it. America has been imbecilic from 1900 on because it lost an understanding of the line between public and private. Next Pound attacks English immortality laws. The British are good at servility, Americans at irrelevance and simply stupidity. The only reason Americans are not as enslaved as the English is because we are too stupid.

"The Proof of the Pudding" opens by claiming that ideas are true only when put into action. This is an attempt to give a pragmatic proof. Pound wants to resist materialistic philosophers, however. He claims that communism should not attract one to Russia. Pound wants to see history as driven by ideas and embrace volitionism and certain values. The Catholic Church rises and sinks with the civilization around it.



The worship of God is not inhuman or bigoted. Art is religious in that it emphasizes segregating part of the divine intelligence to make it more perceptible. The work of art takes one to God. Religion needs culture to stay alive and cannot be maintained by Scripture. Civilized men will not permit a savage religion.

Communism is a revolt against those who hog the harvest and in that it was admirable, but as a theory it goes against human instinct. It "suits monkeys." Movements against capital must distinguish between capital and property; communism fails in this. Further, public and private must be separate for the sake of sanity. In the next sub-section Pound returns to discuss various writers like Shakespeare and poets like Lucretius.

In "Canti", Pound discusses his famous Cantos. They are a tale of a tribe; he says they are openly volitionist and try to show that personality has causal force; responsibility extends in persons to societies as a whole. Pound again attacks the Puritans for failing to distinguish between public and private. He then comments on the New Testament and claims that it is somewhat anti-semitic. Pound moves in the same sub-section to again attack monetary illiteracy.

The nonconformist has lost an inability to see the obscene save in regard to sex. Protestants really do not have value scales. In a future sub-section, Pound comments that you know when you hit middle-age when you admit that your father knew something. He then discusses the nature of musical composition. He claims that the good artist never knows enough.

In "The Novel and So Forth", Pound reviews the distinction between communication and the production of reading matter. Again, like many of Pound's essays, he runs between various distinct commentaries that are very brief. Chinese symbols are reproduced in this essay again. A German poem is also listed. He comments that as a cultural vortex breaks, it is slow starting another. He advocates, nonetheless, bringing the rigors of Chinese verse into poetry.

In "Precedents" Pound again recommends various writers he regards as important, such as Plato, Plutarch, Herodotus, Montaigne, Rabelais, and so on. In "On Arriving and Not Arriving", Pound argues that culture does not result from forgetting but instead begins when you can do the thing without straining. Faking it cannot be done in the arts anyway. "Praise Song of the Buck-Hare" simply reproduces a poem written by Wm. Radloff in 1866.

In "Time Lag" Pound points out the lag between Van Buren's autobiography, written in 1861 and unpublished until 1920. He wonders if others have done this and then discusses other known time lags.

"The Culture of an Age" has a subtitle: "Is what you can pick up and/or get in touch with, by talk with the most intelligence men of the period?" Thus, Pound wants to know how one can understand a culture at its time.



Part IV, Section IX, Education or Information, Neo-Platonicks Etc., Losses, Odes: Risks, Great Bass: Part Two, Tone

Part IV, Section IX, Education or Information, Neo-Platonicks Etc., Losses, Odes: Risks, Great Bass: Part Two, Tone Summary and Analysis

In "Education or Information", Pound reports that in his youth, American universities tended to believe that one should go to Germany to receive systematized information. He says he wasted time studying Lope in Madrid. Then, again characteristically, Pound begins to muse on different versions of his original subjects. He laments the decline of Oxford and the fall of 19th century philology.

"Neo-Platonicks Etc." discusses those philosophers that followed Plato, or the Neo-Platonists. Plato was the father of prose rhapsody. Platonic thought overflowed the Church fathers, lifting them away from their Hebrew roots. In this philosophy, men are drunk with God, inebriated with infinity. The view is not limited to merely defining abstract concepts. It leads to two mystical states: the ecstatic and goodwill towards others. These feelings motivated these philosophers to press on despite public stupidity. These feelings, in Pound's mind, have never done men any harm.

"Losses" explains that England after Waterloo suffered from a special darkness that resulted from interrupted communication with the continent. No more Voltaires to admire English authors. The British mind of 1909 was decadent. He then discusses how this attitude led to the decline of the British Empire. He thinks this was a disaster for English culture. Pound then trashes a variety of supposed civilizations in the 18th century. Germany's best 90 years were 1660 to 1750. British Stuartism was born in usury.

"Odes: Risks" argues that Confucian teaching in the home involved Confucians asking their sons whether they have read various books. This involves a great sensibility. In "Great Bass: Part Two", Pound takes up the discussion of the glories of bass notes again. It is tragic to miss a proper great bass note as the differences in wavelengths are significant. "Tone" shows that tone is something everyone has a view on; everyone is bothered by bad tones.



Part V, Section X, Government, The Recurring Decimal, Decline of the Adamses, Royalty and All That

Part V, Section X, Government, The Recurring Decimal, Decline of the Adamses, Royalty and All That Summary and Analysis

"Government" begins by arguing that government is based on ignoble elements; it is physical strength working through armies and involves deception. Ruling ideologies are often dressed-up superstitions. Pound then comments that democratic government cannot survive without letting bad people on the air. The best government is that which makes the best of a nation's intelligence; FDR was acceptable at this. Pound admires the Fascist intellectuals of Italy but the tax system is primitive and monetary knowledge basic. He then meanders into a discussion of various diffuse matters and aphorisms.

Pound believes that economics is "NOT" a cold subject. It bears more impact on human life than any other. He also deplores pacifism. The prose next delves into a rant against usury again. Economic knowledge of the day has not come from those hired or bureaucrats but free men, engineers, men of commerce. Again materialism is attacked, but the League of Nations also comes in for criticism.

"The Recurring Decimal" opens with a brief discussion of odes and then reminds the reader that Mussolini told the Italian people that poetry is necessary to the state. This indicates a higher form of civilization in Rome than London or Washington. No British Prime Minister would sit down with Pound to discuss the nature of money and others matters, as Mussolini did with Pound.

Civilization starts to become respectable when the people prefer a small amount of great things to a large amount of average things; Pound then gives examples. Music often progresses through reviving old music and messing it up. However, most of these revisions have been bad.

"Decline of the Adamses" argues that the tax system is infamy and based on ignorance of the nature of money. Actions in favor of public utility should not be taxed. The United States has faced a tragedy, starting with the decline of the Adamses, who had the corrective for Jefferson. In Italy, the problem is that the state does not have enough power. Pound argues that liberalism is running and barely surviving. Liberals have asked for almost no freedoms save to commit acts contrary to the general good.

What matters most is a people's level of civilization. Decent men do not torture prisoners and clean men do not tolerate advertising atrocities. Men "free of mental lice"



will not tolerate the tax system or the banks. Music provides order to daily life and makes us more capable of realizing these things. Next Pound comments that the history of Western philosophy is mostly a record of poor sensibility. The Protestant centuries placed high value on usury and greed. Morality was twisted and narrowed to carnal relations; it was a red herring for usury. The essay ends with the claim that no officials in England or the USA have supported the arts. The bourgeois mass has not attained a high level of civilization.

"Royalty and All That" comments that the people should think harder on ethical training in part from seeing empires and monarchies fall. Children will not remember history but some should learn it. Pound comments that the English Church is a mere bureaucracy full of hypocrites but that the Church of Rome has undergone a revival.

History that omits economics is bunk. Government has undergone revolution through sheer force and craft. Ideologies are only epiphenomena of this process. Pound then illustrates this latter argument with examples of kings and how they managed their finances.

In the 1930s, men look at Russell and Gladstone as comics but more of their time was spent on serious issues. Civilization went on, however. Pound then briefly discusses high and low points in the history of various European countries and the United States. Up to the Grant administration, Americans had something to be proud of. After this, Pound briefly attacks Marx. He then claims that the sad nature of this age can be measured by how many, or how few in this case, people learned to read the real Gaudier.



Part V, Section XI, Arabia Deserta, Kung, Chaucer Was Framed?, Happy Days, The Promised Land

Part V, Section XI, Arabia Deserta, Kung, Chaucer Was Framed?, Happy Days, The Promised Land Summary and Analysis

"Arabia Deserta" begins with discussions of old writings that identify high and low cultures. There are other ways to measure cultures as well, but Pound does not primarily give concrete advice, save for his liking of Chinese culture. On the next page, Pound lists a large quote on the nature of usury in medieval and ancient times. He points out that "sovereignty rests in money" and that the United States Constitution is the greatest political document of all time. The basis of the state is its economic justice. Communism is therefore barbarous and Hebrews are primitive theocrats. No people ignorant of the nature of money can maintain their rights.

"Kung" is another discussion of Confucius, whose life Pound believes was in line with the best modern views. Confucius thought travel opened the mind and that knowing local conditions helped mitigate the excesses of theorists. He was modern because he was interested in folklore. The lesson of Chinese history is of two kinds but Pound does not explain them. He then discusses the American habit of ignoring history and claims that American history is parochial.

The United States Constitution came to be seen as an innovation that could be changed. Americans can learn from Chinese history, at least about the New Deal. Also, Orientals are not lacking emotions; only idiots think this. No one person is responsible for American and English ignorance. Pound then turns to discuss taxes and argues that the enemies of mankind are those who ossify thought. Muslims did this in the past and Marxists attempt it today.

Pound argues that the more men know, the more men can get out of Aristotle. He had a clear concept of money and saw that it was measured and can therefore be changed or made useless by choice. However, Kung is superior to Aristotle through totalitarian instinct.

"Chaucer Was Framed?" opens by asking how civilized Chaucer was. It is unclear to Pound but Chaucer's civilization was three hundred years old. Pound decries as barbaric allowing murder in books when a culture is squeamish and then maintains that usury is against nature. Protestant morality is too tied to the toleration of usury and therefore vulgarizes sex. The Romantic movement fought against this. Two centuries of history show that usury opposes the arts, melody, and design. It supplants art. He ends

by claiming that the truth about a field is not captured by the painter but the farmer who wishes to plant in it.

"Happy Days" argues that British observers have had a tone of disgust since Queen Anne. The Pope's enemies were violent and so illustrated this point. Next Wordsworth is discussed, and then the essay declines into various brief, seemingly unrelated cultural comments again. Hardy's poetry is a common theme. Again Pound emphasizes the combination of tolerating usury and sexual Puritanism.

In "The Promised Land", Pound begins by discussing the Victorians and their culture. Hardy is discussed again. The Victorians produced a generation of experimenters, Pound's generation. His generation thinks all ideas are only appropriate to particular moments. However, the refusal to recognize distinct, general categories leads to cultural mush. Various writers are then discussed, focusing on English verse. Sophistication is not enough for high culture.



Part VI, Section XII, Study of Physiognomy, And Therefore Tending, Pergamena Deest, Watch the Beaners

Part VI, Section XII, Study of Physiognomy, And Therefore Tending, Pergamena Deest, Watch the Beaners Summary and Analysis

"The Study of Physiognomy" begins with T.S. Eliot's observation that the modern period has obscured mysteries by emphasizing the individual too much. Next Pound expounds on the merits of Ovid and claims that this need not denigrate the learning in the West since then. Christianity has become a nuisance in various European countries, save "pagan" Italy. Then in small print, Pound briefly explains the history of his views on religion.

Pound argues that he is writing about civilization. He then claims that most Protestant parsons are uncivilized and many are pigs. They have little intellectual curiosity. He then praises that popular education given to the public by Father Coughlin. Pound again praises the "New Catholicism" and then ends with brief aphoristic commentaries on various important historical figures.

"And Therefore Tending" is by far the longest essay of the book. Pound begins by explaining that this piece is a brochure intended to record some of his more outrageous remarks. He claims that while writing he has 40 pages of notes with him and promises to try to be impartial.

For several pages, Pound analyzes Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics. He regards it as clear that Aristotle is not a wise man and is a "swine and a forger." The writing is a giveaway. No truth is in him. For this reason, Pound is ready to exclude him from general curricula. However, he encourages the reader to suppose that Aristotle knew something. The main idea of the Nicomachean Ethics is the idea of Eudemonia which Pound translates as "well-being" while emphasizing that this is not the common use of "well-being" or even happiness. It is more objective than this. It also explains why medieval theologians studied him.

Pound cites one author as arguing that the Nicomachean Ethics is a mass of notes, but the work is still subversive and morally bad. Aristotle apparently did not even know that Eudemonia had a previous usage. Pound also rejects the view that the young should not study moral philosophy.

The first book of the Nicomachen Ethics is one that Pound would not give to a young man because it confuses. General readers are not expected to delve too deeply into



Aristotle's terminology. Pound then, as before, emphasizes Schopenhauer's essay on style as providing a method for discerning true and false writing. In light of the essay, Pound thinks that Aristotle combining terse prose with shiftiness is peculiar, which might just prevent those not suspicious from "smelling the quicksands."

Book II is next analyzed. He claims that some books are a treasure, a basis, once read, that serves one for the rest of his life. Pound feels blessed that he did not encounter Aristotle early on. There are some books you can leave be, and Aristotle is one of them. Book II.ii.3 is "mere subversive CRAP." Pound then again analyzes his language and compares Aristotle to Confucius, finding Aristotle wanting.

Book III only reinforces Pound's comments on Aristotle's terminology. He argues that a real book is one whose words grow more luminous as experience increases, but Aristotle is not like this. Pound claims that the danger of Aristotle is wasting time analyzing the text. He then remarks on various sub-passages. Book IV contains some good doctrines, however and yields good "copybook maxims." Book V has words that show the whole book to be invalid and is Aristotle's account of distributive justice. However, Pound appreciates Aristotle's doctrine of money but sees it as utopian.

Book V starts a rise in the quality of the book and Book VI continues it, with Aristotle ceasing to be irritated. Pound likes Aristotle's understanding of prudence and practical wisdom. He also introduces the idea of contemplation and the identification of consciousness with the object. Pound thinks this idea would require 600 pages to discuss adequately. In his comments on Book VII Pound decides to lay down a principle of criticism for works of great reputation and then discusses some features of the Catholic Church. Book VII is largely skipped over and Book IX argues that individuals "exist in activity." Unfortunately books VII-IX are a bit slow.

Book X is not as profound as many believe and Pound finds Eudoxus more interesting. Aristotle is "a shallow, clear layer of water, now and again flowing over the deep." Aristotle then goes to argue that the activity of the intellect constitutes human happiness and Pound thinks that Aristotle is wrong about this. The commentary on Book X ends the essay.

The "Pergamena Deest" begins by comparing Aristotle unfavorably to Confucius again. He thinks everything unsatisfactory in medieval scholasticism comes from Aristotle. In "Watch the Beaneries" Pound says that he cannot continue to analyze Aristotle's other writings. Quite simply, Aristotle does not measure up to Confucius, Homer, the middle ages, the renaissance or even the present.



Part VI, Section XIII, Epilogue, To Recapitulate

Part VI, Section XIII, Epilogue, To Recapitulate Summary and Analysis

Part VI is quite short. The epilogue simply comments that a London architect named Ricards was the last pastoral mind and a genius. In "To Recapitulate", Pound reaffirms his high opinion of Confucius. He thinks that one should respect Plato's influence even if one hates him. Next Pound asks the reader to hesitate criticizing him for the nature of his book and then suggests that readers only read a few of the essays, which he lists. He ends by claiming that today we see the following institutions in the world: Aristocracy, Oligarchy, the constructive element of society, the credulous, producers and the dregs.



Addenda: 1952, As Sextant, Introductory Textbook

Addenda: 1952, As Sextant, Introductory Textbook Summary and Analysis

Here Pound claims that he did not comment on Aristotle's *Magna Moralia* and lists the books that one must absolute read: Confucius and Mencius's Four books, Homer's *Odyssey*, the Greek Tragedies, the *Divine Comedy*, Frobenius, Brooks Adams, and the English Charters along with the American Constitution. The Four books contain answers to all problems of conduct that can arise; the other six parts of the list are amenities.

The *Introductory Textbook* reviews four quotes from great Americans. Next comes a note and some corrections to the text with miscellaneous comments. He exhorts the reader to distinguish between claims and things and that economic justice consists in allowing the unproductive to claim things when they did not contribute or getting materials to those who need them. Next follows a brief Chronology that is quite idiosyncratic but reflects who Pound thinks are the important economists. He lists three social diseases: false history, false current news and the stupidity of economic life. Afterwards Pound prints his piece "Heaulmiere" from his opera *Villon*. Next he comments on it.



Characters

Ezra Pound

The author of Guide to Kulchur is Ezra Weston Loomis Pound (1885 - 1972). He was a widely known and renowned intellectual and poet and a major member of the Modernist cultural and artistic movement in the early 20th century. He was an American expatriate, spending most of his professional life in Italy, including during World War II, where he infamously supported the Axis powers, particularly Mussolini.

Early on in the 20th century, Pound promoted an intellectual exchange between important British and American writers, including Frost, Hemingway and T. S. Eliot. He is most well-known artistically for promoting Imagism, a poetical trend that focused on imitating the style of classical Asian poetry, which focused on clear writing and concise prose. It avoids standard rhyming styles in order to focus on more intricate phrasing.

Pound's most famous work is his epic poem, The Cantos. However, his Guide to Kulchur is one of his most important compilations of his non-fiction work. Guide to Kulchur is not only a guide to culture, but explains Pound's opinions on many subjects, including but not limited to politics, economics, history, art, architecture, philosophy and sociology. Pound became quite unpopular late in his life because he was a well-known fascist and anti-Semite, garnering him many enemies. That said, he was profoundly influential in early 20th century poetry, influencing the career of the 20th century's most important writers. He also worked to introduce classical Asian poetry to English-speaking cultures.

Confucius

Confucius was a Chinese intellectual and philosopher whose ideas had a dramatic influence on Chinese, Korean, Japanese and Vietnamese thought. He focused on the morality of persons and government, appropriate social relationships and justice. His system of philosophy is known as Confucianism. Readers will find his ideas in the Analects of Confucius, which was compiled years after his death. His writings were only introduced to the West in the 16th century and have had little influence. Pound regards this as a great tragedy.

Pound refers to Confucius as "Kung" and expresses an important fascination with him. The book begins with periodic discussions of passages and dialogues from Confucius's Analects, which Pound ranks among the most important writings in human history, even greater than the Greek philosophers.

Pound's first essay in Guide to Kulchur is a Digest of the Analects which explains some of his philosophical ideas. He sees in Confucius the recognition that the force of history in many periods of time is simply rapacity. Pound also admires Confucius for understanding that work must be for a purpose and that taxation is folly. Included



among this essay, along with others, are various Chinese ideograms and explanations for them. Essay 49 concerns only Pound's thoughts on Confucius, where he praises Confucius for believing that travel broadens the mind and that knowing local conditions balances the mind against excessive abstraction. He is also interested in folk-lore.

The Catholic Church

Pound is a great defender of the Catholic Church, recognizing its decline but excited by what he perceives as its revival.

Benito Mussolini

The fascist dictator of Italy preceding and during World War II, Pound had met with Mussolini and admired him deeply.

The American Founders

Pound strongly defends the genius of the American Founders, particularly John Adams. He thinks that the United States Constitution is the greatest political document ever written.

T.S. Eliot

A famous poet, playwright and literary critic who was promoted by Ezra Pound.

Plato

An ancient Greek philosopher admired by Pound.

Aristotle

Pound engages in an extended critique of Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics towards the end of Guide to Kulchur.

Leibniz

Important 17th century philosophy and mathematician that Pound discusses at various points in the book.



Anglo-Americans

Pound is roundly critical of American and British culture.

Usurers

Those who charge interest on loans; Pound thinks usurers are among the most deplorable of persons.

Medieval Philosophers

As a fan of Catholicism, Pound is also a fan of Medieval philosophy, including Aquinas, Occam and the Neo-Platonists.

Homer

The great Greek writer. Pound argues that he is among history's most important writers.



Objects/Places

Italy

Pound lived out most of his professional life in Italy, dying in Venice.

The United States

Pound was born in the Idaho Territory in the 1880s and eventually left the United States for Italy.

Usury

The practice of charging money on loans which Pound believed was a great destroyer of civilizations.

Ideograms

A graphic symbol used to represent ideas or concepts and used in the Chinese language; Pound makes use of Chinese ideograms in the book.

Kulchur

Kulchur is the process of putting ideas into action.

The New Learning

The new learning is the learning that must take place beyond the confined structures of thought given in most universities.

Puritanism

Pound condemns Puritanism for its focus on the equality of persons and its (in Pound's opinion) resulting obsessive focus on sex.

Civilization

Civilization and culture are what is left over once propositions and knowledge about a people's view of the world are forgotten.



Vortices

Prisms of perception and cultural emphasis that cultures apply to the world.

The Analects

The writings of Confucius.

The Cantos

Pound's epic poem.

Fascism

A political ideology that combines authoritarianism, nationalism, and corporatist economics. Mussolini was an important fascist leader and in part due to his admiration of Mussolini, Pound himself was a fascist.

The United States Constitution

Pound saw the United States Constitution as among the most important political documents in history.



Themes

Kulchur

Ezra Pound's Guide to Kulchur might be understood as a simple cultural guide. "Kulchur" is related but not identical to the ordinary English term "culture." Kulchur is related to the Greek term "paideuma" which means "the taught." Pound defines Kulchur as "the tangle or complex of the inrooted ideas of any period" and as "the gristly roots of ideas that are in action."

This is a crucial distinction. Culture often includes knowledge that can be passively known but Pound's conception of Kulchur is a more active sort of knowledge. It is also non-propositional in that it is what remains when all propositional knowledge of a culture has been removed.

Kulchur then is a kind of movement of ideas. The notion of active ideas is crucial to understanding Guide to Kulchur. Pound conceives of himself as a defender of civilization; but he conceives of civilization as an active playing out and development of the ideas of a people as manifested in philosophy, art, music, architecture and the other active forms of life that make one culture distinct from another.

Pound is critical of institutions that he perceives as ossifying the world of ideas and preventing them from becoming active in the world. Thus, he attacks education on the grounds that it stops ideas from coming alive. He in fact announces that the Guide to Kulchur is written for lay intellectuals who are not already corrupted by university educational systems.

Civilization and Its Decay

Kulchur lies at the heart of each civilization. While civilizations often produce raw propositional knowledge, the real locus of a civilization's life is at the interface between its ideas and its activities. Pound is sharply critical of materialist and economic modes of understanding history; he strongly believes that history is driven by ideas and the way they are applied to human life. A civilization is alive when ideological development manifests itself in the institutional life of a people. Thus, ideas must affect the growth of philosophy, art and the like.

Ideas are also not static; they do not merely stick to the page. Instead, they develop themselves. While some ideas are timeless, many ideas are new. Pound is no enemy of modernity but at the same time he greatly admires classical Chinese culture, much about the ancient Greeks and the life of the medieval Catholic Church. He is also fascinated by the history of ideas and how they shaped the "vortices" that peoples used to view and shape their worlds.



For Pound, anything that ossifies the development of ideas and blocks their application to reality is dangerous and threatens to destroy civilization. For instance, he appears to see standardized education as destructive of human civilization. He calls "The New Learning", the learning that occurs outside of mainstream educational institutions and among those whose minds are still free enough to grasp the life of ideas, not ideas recorded simply and propositionally.

Usury

Usury is the economic practice of charging interest on loans. However, modern readers may not be aware that throughout most of world history, usury was strongly condemned by most world religions. Condemnation of usury in principle is still practiced in Islamic countries but today most world religions permit usury, although there are universal laws barring the charging of excessive interest.

In ancient and medieval times, ethicists saw something corrupt in the practicing of making money from lending money. Money has a function of commensurating differing goods, as Aristotle argues in his *Nicomachean Ethics* and *The Politics* (and Pound picks up on this). However, when money is used to make more money it is no longer used for its proper purpose; instead, it is distorted and can be used in the interests of the greedy and wicked to exploit the vulnerable.

Pound radically embraces the pre-modern view of usury. He admires the medieval philosophers for understanding that usury was evil and he even tries to read anti-usury views into other thinkers he admires, such as Confucius. For Pound, the cause of world conflict and World War II is the international banking system which survives on interest and is run by covetous Jews. Stopping the practice of usury is vital to saving civilization and so leaders who opposed capitalism and usury and the Jews must be supported (hence Pound's support for the Axis powers and their fascistic forms of socialism).

Usury corrupts a society and allows money-making to seep into all of social life. Mussolini, Pound argues, understood this and understood that the life of a people must be spiritual, not commercial. Pound decries Protestantism for being usurious and even thinks their harsh views on sex result from their loss of a general sense of obscenity because they cannot see the obscenity in usury. The tolerance of usury also pervades and corrupts Anglo-American cultures.

Style

Perspective

Guide to Kulchur was composed by Ezra Weston Loomis Pound (1885 - 1972). Pound was known widely as a renowned intellectual of the modern period, and also as a poet and central figure within Modernism, a cultural and artistic movement in the first part of the 20th century. Pound was born in the United States but became an expatriate and lived most of the rest of his life in Italy, including World War II. He became infamous at this time because he supported the Axis powers, especially Mussolini.

Pound was also well-known for bringing together the most respected British and American literati, such as Ernest Hemingway, Robert Frost and T. S. Eliot. He is also regarded as one of the most important advocates of Imagism, a poetical practice which attempts to copy the poetical form of classical Asia, which abandoned traditional rhyming schemes to focus on clear prose and intricate phraseology.

Pound is most famous for writing *The Cantos* but the *Guide to Kulchur* ranks among his most famous compilations of writings. It is not only a cultural guide but discusses Pound's views on politics, economics, philosophy, sociology, history, art and architecture. He is an ardent supporter of Mussolini and his politics are undeniably fascist. Economically, he is extremely hostile to capitalism because he sees it as essentially involving the practice of usury, which he abhors. He is a major fan of the great philosophers of history, adoring Plato but having mixed and mostly negative feelings about Aristotle. He loves Aquinas and Leibniz as well. Pound is most impressed with Confucius and was important for introducing Confucius' writings to the West. He also expresses various historical, literary, architectural and artistic opinions about a wide range of matters.

Tone

The tone of *Guide to Kulchur* will strike the reader first encountering Pound as bizarre and unstable. Pound will often capitalize words when he becomes excited and other times mill about aimlessly, making unrelated comments on culture. Even between short essays, Pound will change tone, again oscillating from a kind of bombastic urgency to a detached cultural review. The bombastic urgency manifests itself most clearly in Pound's condemnation of usury and Anglo-American culture.

However, the tone shifts to explicit admiration when Pound comes across historical figures that he admires. For instance, he constantly praises Confucius' *Analects* and expresses a deep admiration not only for Mussolini but the American Founders as well. The tone in these passages is that of one who believes that these men were among the few who "got it" or truly understood the meaning of civilization and how to maintain it.



Interestingly, in some places, Pound sounds almost embarrassed by himself, not only by his rambling writing style but about his inordinate focus on certain topics. He realizes his take on certain issues is idiosyncratic. However, in other places, Pound seems absolutely certain that he has seen something that most others have not. The only other tone that manifests itself is when Pound is explaining an abstract topic, such as his analysis of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. In these passages, Pound is at his most sane, somewhat calmly explaining his interpretation of the subject in question.

Structure

The *Guide to Kulchur* has an unusual structure because it has hardly any structure at all. There is no plot or consistent narrative. Instead, Pound seems completely unable to focus on any one topic for any period of time, save those matters where his opinions are most bizarre, such as his admiration for Mussolini, his hatred of usury and his conviction that all of academic education is deeply destructive. Pound even described this book as a "book of yatter" with a feel of urgency.

Some interpret Pound's erratic structuring of *Guide to Kulchur* as reflecting an ideographic method used in his famous *Cantos*. He argues that with the "ideogrammic method" one produces and explains one aspect and then another until the reader has lost his dead mental surface and penetrates deeply into the parts of the reader that are worth reaching. Pound saw the *Guide* as having a clear purpose because it is a reading program and focuses on those who could not afford a university education.

Guide to Kulchur is a moderately-sized work at around three hundred and seventy pages. The book divides into six Parts which divide the book into large groups of essays. Within the parts are sections that contain smaller groups of essays. The sections and parts have no apparent relation to subject matter, as even the short essays themselves seem to have no coherent structure. There are fifty-eight essays in all that range across many topics, including Confucianism, the history of philosophy, anti-materialism, how to teach, his stark condemnation of usury and his idiosyncratic analysis of many forms of cultural media from plays, to epics and musical compositions.



Quotes

"Rapacity is the main force in our time in the Occident." (Part I, Section I, Digest of the Analects, 15-16)

"The history of a culture is the history of ideas going into action." (Part I, Section I, Totalitarian, 44)

"There was and is a higher civilization in a dozen, or a hundred or two hundred Italian writers, who will never achieve any celebrity, than in the much published and touted names." (Part II, Section III, Italy, 91)

"When you don't understand it, let it alone." (Part III, Section IV, Kulchur: Part One, 127)

"A civilized man is one who will give a serious answer to a serious question. Civilization itself is a certain sane balance of values." (Part III, Section IV, March 12th, 137)

"A new learning is necessary, is demanded by every one of the few hundred sufferers who has a respectable decent and clean curiosity." (Part III, Section V, The New Learning: Part Two, 151)

"No man has a natural right to be a money-lender save him who has money to lend." (Part IV, Section VII, Human Wishes, 181)

"Ideas are true as they go into action." (Part IV, Section VIII, The Proof of the Pudding, 188)

"Culture is not due to forgetfulness. Culture starts when you can DO the thing without strain." (Part IV, Section VIII, On Arriving and Not Arriving, 209)

"Government has been based on fact, fancy, superstition, folk-ways, habits, ideas, ideologies." (Part V, Section X, Government, 241)

"Sovereignty rests in money." (Part V, Section XI, Arabia Deserta, 270)

"The enemies of mankind are those who petrify thought, that is KILL it" (Part V, Section XI, Kung, 277)

"I am writing about civilization." (Part VI, Section XII, Study of Physiognomy, 301)

"I cannot state my beliefs about art more succinctly than I have done by naming particular works and makers." (Part VI, Section XIII, To Recapitulate, 347)

"All a man ever thought would go onto a half sheet of notepaper. The rest is application and elaboration." (Addena, Condensare, 369)



Topics for Discussion

Explain Pound's notion of "Kulchur." Why is it so important?

What is Pound's critique of modern forms of education? What do they leave out? What do they overemphasize?

Explain Pound's admiration for Mussolini. What does Mussolini understand that many other political leaders do not?

What explains Pound's inordinate focus on the evils of usury? What is usury? Why does Pound think it is bad? What does usury do to culture?

Perhaps the most famous character within Guide to Kulchur is Confucius. Explain why Pound admires Confucius and why he thinks him superior to many Western philosophers, including Plato and Aristotle.

Pound is well-known for employing Chinese and Japanese ideograms in his writing. Is there any explanation for this? What does Pound think these symbols add to his prose?

For what reason does Pound claim that he wrote Guide to Kulchur? Is his explanation at all plausible?

Why do you think that Guide to Kulchur has no plot or logical structure? Does this add or take away from the text? What might it add? What might it subtract?