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From Utopia to Paradise :
Louis Zukofsky and the Legacy of Ezra Pound

Richard Thomas Arie Parker

D.Phil. Thesis

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be submitted in whole or in part to this or any other University for the award of any other degree.

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Abstract

In my introduction I begin by sketching Ezra Pound's engagement with utopian and paradisaal themes, charting his moves from aestheticism in the pre-war years to utopian-political concerns in the 1930s and on to a synthetic-paradisaal phase after the Second World War.

In my first chapter I chart the period of Pound and Louis Zukofsky's closest collaboration, analysing the presence of Zukofsky's political thought in his poetics through this crucial phase and the proximity of his thought to his mentors Pound and William Carlos Williams.

In my second chapter I discuss Pound and Zukofsky's interest and use of music in their poetries, suggesting that this theme provides an analogue to their paradisaal thought from the late 1930s until the mid-1950s. Music is of great importance to both writers and the points at which their approaches coincide and differ are revelatory of their conceptions of paradise.

Finally I turn to the late, paradisaal segment of Zukofsky's career in the 1960s and 1970s, describing the manner in which Zukofsky's synthetic paradisaal method relates both to Pound's in *The Cantos* and takes stock of the work and interests of the younger poets writing of the period.

In my conclusion I briefly describe the termination of Pound and Zukofsky's relationship and make some closing comments on their paradises, relating their final synthetic paradises to differing conceptions of time that relate to their entire oeuvres, even back to the poets' early aesthetic phases.

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Abbreviations

AOA	Zukofsky, Louis (ed.). <i>An "Objectivists" Anthology</i> . Le Beausset: To, Publishers, 1932.
Beinecke	Yale collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
BOP	Bunting, Basil (ed. Peter Makin). <i>Basil Bunting on Poetry</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
CSP	Louis Zukofsky. <i>Complete Short Poetry</i> . Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.
EM	Adorno, Theodor (ed. Richard Leppert). <i>Essays on Music</i> . Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
HRC	Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin.
LE	Pound, Ezra (ed. T.S. Eliot). <i>Literary Essays</i> . New York: New Directions, 1968.
LP	Pound, Ezra (ed. D.D. Paige). <i>The Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941</i> . New York: Harvest, 1950.
P&M	Pound, Ezra (ed. R. Murray Schafer). <i>Ezra Pound and Music: The Complete Criticism</i> . New York: New Directions, 1977.
P&T	Ezra Pound. <i>Poems & Translations</i> . New York: Library of America, 2003.
PLF	Mark Scroggins. <i>The Poem of a Life</i> . Berkeley: Shoemaker Hoard, 2007.
P/Z	Pound, Ezra and Louis Zukofsky (ed. Barry Ahearn). <i>Selected Letters of Ezra Pound and Louis Zukofsky</i> . London: Faber, 1987.
R80	Leggott, Michele J. <i>Reading Zukofsky's 80 Flowers</i> . Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.
SP	Pound, Ezra (ed. William Cookson). <i>Selected Prose 1909-1965</i> . London: Faber, 1973.
W/Z	Williams, William Carlos and Louis Zukofsky (ed. Barry Ahearn). <i>The Correspondence of William Carlos Williams and Louis Zukofsky</i> . Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2003.

Introduction: Ezra Pound's Utopian-Paradisal Paradigm

Utopia, as Norman Finkelstein has demonstrated,¹ has been a central theme of twentieth-century American poetry, with ideological reactions both for and against this concept colouring political-poetic thought from modernism onwards. The 'end of ideology'² that Daniel Bell detects as coincident with the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War violently challenged the utopias that had been ideologically dominant between the wars, and for poets as committed to political utopias as Ezra Pound and Louis Zukofsky this new difficulty would lead to complex realignments. The poets' response to what Frederic Jameson identifies as a fundamentally *anti*-utopian new political landscape³ would be the construction of elaborately paradisal poetries containing new paradises that would both recognise the political restrictions of the 1950s and maintain a complex relation with the impulses that

¹ See *The Utopian Moment in Contemporary Poetry*.

² See Bell's *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties*. Elsewhere Bell writes that 'the older political ideas of the radical movement had become exhausted and no longer had the power to compel allegiance or passion among the intelligentsia.' [*Capitalism Today*, p. 24.]

³ 'During the Cold War [...] Utopia had become a synonym for Stalinism and had come to designate a program which neglected human frailty and original sin, and betrayed a will to uniformity and the ideal purity of a perfect system that always had to be imposed by force on its imperfect and reluctant subjects.' [*Archaeologies of the Future*, p. xi.]

had originally spawned these poets' utopian phases. Their cardinal techniques would be fusion and opacity while their architectures would be dialectical and synthetic.

This dissertation will focus on Zukofsky's shift from utopian to paradisaal poet, with frequent and inevitable reference to Pound, the poet to whom Zukofsky's utopian and paradisaal strategies are most indebted. My reading of Zukofsky necessitates a particular reading of Pound which will remain implicit throughout much of this narrative, but which I will explore in more detail in my introduction with the intention of setting out a paradigm to be considered throughout this dissertation. The older poet's idiosyncratic relation to belief, religion and the paradisaal has been a central concern of his interpreters since their first criticism began to appear: the structural suggestion of Dante in *The Cantos* leading many of them to lend primacy to his purportedly paradisaal worldview. Hugh Kenner's foundational works emphasise this aspect, as does Carroll F. Terrell's tendency to foreground the mystical in his *Companion to the Cantos of Ezra Pound*. James J. Wilhelm's *Dante and Pound: The Epic of Judgement* continued this aspect of Pound studies, as has Leon Surette's work in *The Birth of Modernism: Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, W.B. Yeats and the Occult* and the collection of essays *Literary Modernism and the Occult Tradition* (co-edited with Demetres Tryphonopoulos) and Scott Eastham's *Paradise and Ezra Pound: The Poet as Shaman*. More recently this study has been continued, and systematised, by Peter Liebrechts's *Ezra Pound and Neoplatonism* and Sean Pryor's as yet unpublished doctoral dissertation 'The Poetry of Paradise: W. B. Yeats and Ezra Pound'. Some of the earlier critics tended, sometimes strategically, to ignore Pound's refusal of 'an orderly Dantescan rising',⁴ suggesting a teleological homogeneity that is antithetical to the texture of *The Cantos* and passing over the paradigm that would be so useful for

⁴ *The Cantos*, p. 457. Unless otherwise indicated all references to *The Cantos* will be to the 1987 Faber edition.

Zukofsky's paradise. The conceptual shifts, the *disorderly* rising, delineate a trajectory that is as important to Zukofsky's paradise as Pound's thematic treatment.

Perhaps surprisingly, considering the important early influence of Poundians in the younger poet's reception, the Zukofsky 'industry' has not often read him as a paradisaical poet, a factor which can be partly explained by the complexity of his late paradisaical phase, which is only now beginning to be explained fully: a difficulty comprised of both a multiplicity of sources that matches Pound's late cantos and an opacity central to Zukofsky's paradisaical manner. Some work on this aspect of Zukofsky's work has emerged, however; Bruce Comens's *Apocalypse and After: Modern Strategy and Postmodern Tactics in Pound, Williams and Zukofsky*, in which Comens maps a move from an empiricist modernist 'strategy' towards an informal Postmodern 'tactics', and Michele Leggott's *Reading Zukofsky's 80 Flowers* set some initial coordinates for such a study. Regarding Zukofsky's utopian thought the detailed readings of "A"-8 and "A"-9 in Luke Carson's *Consumption and Depression in Gertrude Stein, Louis Zukofsky and Ezra Pound* offer a developed reading of Zukofsky's idiosyncratic Marxism, helpfully outlining its differences from the prevalent 'scientific' Marxist-Leninism of the 1930s, while Finkelstein's *The Utopian Moment in Contemporary Poetry* is helpful in situating Objectivist verse within a canon of utopian thought in twentieth-century American poetry. Most important, however, for the fuller exploration of Zukofsky as a paradisaical poet, have been a series of recent, less specifically focused developments in the field. In 2003 Wesleyan University Press published the complete correspondence between William Carlos Williams and Zukofsky, edited by Barry Ahearn, who had previously edited a helpful selection from the correspondence between Pound and Zukofsky. Prompted by Zukofsky's centenary in 2004, Wesleyan also reissued the entirety of Zukofsky's critical writings, the first time that all of these works had been in print at one time and the first time *Le Style Apollinaire* (1932) and *A Useful Art* (written in 1938 and 1939 but unpublished

until 2003) had been available to a general audience. In 2005 Jeff Twitchell-Waas's *Z-Site: A Companion to the Works of Louis Zukofsky* came online, a compendious and growing digital index of Zukofsky sources for "A" and most of the short poetry and the criticism, that also contains a wealth of bibliographical material. Shortly after that, in the autumn of 2007, Mark Scroggins's biography of Zukofsky, *The Poem of a Life*, was published and, towards the end of 2008, the University of Pennsylvania unveiled a webpage as part of its *PennSound* site archiving recordings of the poet made between 1954 and 1975. For sources and for reliable dating of Zukofsky's work Twitchell-Waas's site has been invaluable, and the *Z-Site*, in conjunction with Scroggins's biography, has revealed "A" and its satellites in unprecedented detail. These developments have allowed Zukofsky to be read for the first time with the kind of apparatus available to Poundians since the 1970s, initiating a new and fertile period in Zukofsky studies, likely presaging a wholesale revaluation of his oeuvre.

Some areas of Zukofsky's work are readier for re-evaluation than others: a thoroughgoing and persuasive explanation of *Bottom: On Shakespeare* (1963) has yet to appear, "A"-24 is often ignored, and the newly available criticism has still to be digested thoroughly. Zukofsky's final poetry is still relatively unexplicated; the *Z-Site* does not yet include detailed explication of *80 Flowers* (1978), Zukofsky's most compressed and difficult sequence, and a central text of his paradise. Leggott's *Reading Zukofsky's 80 Flowers* serves as a guide to this sequence and is helpful, though necessarily partial. Despite its length Leggott's book only explores 35 of the 81 'flowers' in detail, providing an invaluable resource for those 35 'flowers', bringing a large amount of important archive material into the public domain and presenting it straightforwardly. Crucially, *Reading Zukofsky's 80 Flowers* also offers a template for reading those 'flowers' that she does not approach. The 'flowers' tackled in this dissertation are generally not explicated in Leggott's book, though her method has been a necessary tool for these and for the

explication of ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’, Zukofsky’s intended next project at his death in 1978 and the most pressing gap in the record for an understanding of Zukofsky’s work on paradise. Draft materials and notes held at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin (HRC) were key to the provisional reading of that sequence here, as were various draft materials held at both the Beinecke Library at Yale and the HRC for the genealogical understanding of the early movements of “A” I will approach in the first chapter. The question of Zukofsky’s complicity in the academic exploitation of these archives will be addressed in my third chapter.

From Pound’s publication of ‘Poem Beginning “The”’ in *The Exile* number 3, Spring 1928 until the final unrealised plans for ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’ Pound is a crucial influence on Zukofsky, particularly regarding the paradisaical sections of the younger poet’s work. A meaningful exploration of Zukofsky’s paradise without an awareness of Pound’s would be impossible, and this dissertation will be, therefore, a ‘Poundian’ reading of Zukofsky, though I hope not with the reductive implications of those first generation Poundians, such as Kenner, Terrell and Ahearn, who, with various levels of inadvertency, made Zukofsky appear a derivative apostle of Pound’s. My Poundian reading, on the contrary, shall emphasise Pound’s function as a polarity for Zukofsky, particularly in his final years, to oppose his work to, attempting both to offset that first generation and offer some corrective to more recent, post-modern and anti-Poundian readings.

Pound’s development as a paradisaical writer was already well underway by the time his correspondence with Zukofsky began in 1927, and though both poets’ investigations of paradise follow comparable trajectories, Pound’s early immersion in a late nineteenth-century literary, cultural and religious milieu that was quite different from Zukofsky’s early twentieth-century youth on the Lower East Side, made his exploration of this theme necessarily different, though this immersion would indirectly

colour Zukofsky's extensive adoption of and equally important reaction to Pound's paradisaical mode. Pound's background was dominated by at least three competing, though related, systems of thought. Transcendentalism, and its heir Pragmatism, had been dominant in America for fifty years at his birth, while his schooling would have been affected by American scholars' oscillation between the poles of philology and educational aestheticism as the academy attempted to systematise itself for the first time, a struggle Rebecca Beasley describes in *Ezra Pound and the Visual Culture of Modernism*.⁵ Pound and his peers existed uncomfortably between two educational poles: a religious, transcendental impulse and a philological, scientific professionalisation of such discourses. This problematic, and fundamentally American, dialectic would predict the dynamics of much of Pound's dealings with paradise throughout his career.

To these factors should be added the crucial influence of Victorian aestheticism, and Walter Pater in particular can be felt throughout both Pound's criticism and poetry in this period, and was key to his developing conception of paradise. Helen Carr writes that 'emotionally and artistically the introduction to Pater, the Pre-Raphaelites and their successors was for some years to be much the most significant [influence on] him in his rejection of the American doctrine of progress and its materialist present.'⁶ Pound's early work echoes Pater's at a number of significant junctures. *The Spirit of Romance* (1910) shares Pater's belief that 'the Renaissance was an uninterrupted effort of the middle age',⁷ a kinship also displayed in the book's opening chapter, 'Two Early French Stories', in which Pater identifies Dante as transmitter of the troubadour tradition, while his valuation of Provençal and his then unfashionable interest in Botticelli suggest

⁵ See 'American Aestheticism', *Ezra Pound and the Visual Culture of Modernism*, pp. 11-48.

⁶ *The Verse Revolutionaries*, p. 19.

⁷ *Studies in the Renaissance*, p. 152.

further consonances.⁸ The vocabulary of Pater's aestheticism would also be important for Pound. *Studies in the Renaissance* (1872) concludes with a description of the transcendent possibilities of the study of art that became ubiquitous within Victorian aestheticism and would have ramifications for Pound's paradisaic thought throughout his career. For Pater '[t]o burn always with this hard, gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life',⁹ a state attained via a mixture of sensual and mental stimulation primarily provided through the creation and consumption of works of art. The 1910 preface to *The Spirit of Romance* echoes Pater's contention that the 'service of philosophy, of speculative culture, towards the human spirit, is to rouse, to startle it to a life of constant and eager observation':¹⁰

Good art never bores one. By that I mean that it is the business of the artist to prevent ennui; in the literary art, to relieve, refresh, revive the mind of the reader – at reasonable intervals – with some form of ecstasy, by some splendor of thought, some presentation of sheer beauty, some lightning turn of phrase – laughter is no mean ecstasy. Good art begins with an escape from dullness.¹¹

The 'ecstasy' that both writers refer to would remain the model for Pound's visionary, transcendental and paradisaic moments throughout his career, though in a number of different, sometimes contradictory, configurations. Crucially, this ecstasy provides Pound with a paradisaic model that was not explicitly tied to the idea of an afterlife or a specific geography, period or dogma. Pater's aesthetic moment would appear repeatedly in Pound's early poetry, often with a specifically paradisaic inflection, becoming a stopgap telos before he developed a more urgent political utopianism during the 1920s and 1930s. Liebrechts detects Pater's 'flame'¹² in Pound's early poem 'The

⁸ Cf. Pater's description of Botticelli's 'Venus' in the 'Sandro Botticelli' chapter of *Studies in the Renaissance* and Pound's description of the same scene in canto 17. [*The Cantos*, pp. 76-77.]

⁹ *Studies in the Renaissance*, p. 151.

¹⁰ *Studies in the Renaissance*, p. 152.

¹¹ *The Spirit of Romance*, p. 8.

¹² *Studies in the Renaissance*, pp. 153.

Flame’,¹³ published as part VIII of the sequence ‘Und Drang’ in *Canzoni* (1911), that features – in contradiction of David Moody, who insists *Canzoni*’s ‘progress is certainly not towards any otherworldly paradise or beatific vision’¹⁴ – a moment of aesthetic transcendence at Sirmione, reproducing the Paterian aesthetic paradisaal moment:

Sapphire Benacus, in thy mists and thee
Nature herself’s turned metaphysical,
Who can look on that blue and not believe?¹⁵

Benacus is Catullus’ Garda,¹⁶ and by its shores Pound details the culmination of a centuries-long tradition in his moment of personal transcendence, linking his epiphany to the poets of *The Spirit of Romance*:

’Tis not a game that plays at mates and mating,
Provençe knew;
’Tis not a game of barter, lands and houses,
Provençe knew.¹⁷

[...]

There *is* the subtler music, the clear light
Where time burns back about th’ eternal embers.
We are not shut from all the thousand heavens:
Lo, there are many gods whom we have seen,
Folk of unearthly fashion, places splendid,
Bulwarks of beryl and of chrysoprase.¹⁸

Through connection with Provençe and Catullus Pound’s moment is linked explicitly to the experience and transmission of the work of art, just as Pater counsels at the dénouement of *Studies in the Renaissance*. For Pater ‘a taste for metaphysics may be one of those things which we must renounce, if we mean to mould our lives to artistic perfection’,¹⁹ a motion Pound reverses beside Garda where ‘Nature herself’s turned

¹³ See *Ezra Pound and Neoplatonism*, p. 78.

¹⁴ *The Young Genius*, p. 136.

¹⁵ *P&T*, p. 169.

¹⁶ See Michael Alexander’s *The Poetic Achievement of Ezra Pound*, p. 50.

¹⁷ *P&T*, p. 168.

¹⁸ *P&T*, p. 169.

¹⁹ *Studies in the Renaissance*, p. 153.

metaphysical'.²⁰ In the sunshine at Sirmione Pound depicts a paradise in which 'there are many gods' and in which, in what seems almost a caricature of aestheticism, paradise's bejewelled decoration is described more concretely than the hazy religious model this poem reproduces. Michael King reveals that Pound's line 'Sapphire Benacus, in thy mists and thee'²¹ replaces an earlier line in the poet's manuscript which reads 'God set his sign in colour of Lake Garda',²² a change which reinforces the pantheistic and classicist flavour of the poem, suggesting the kind of cultural milieu Pater was comfortable in and underlining Pound's rejection of conventional religion. His paradise would not be a conventional Christian heaven.

That 'The Flame' explicitly rejects that 'game of barter, lands and houses' contradicts the economic and political interests of *The Cantos*, and Pound's later treatment of the complicated lives of the troubadours. This is a paradise without much to say about society, in accordance with James McNeil Whistler's denial of 'the fabled link between the grandeur of Art and the glories and virtues of the State, for Art feeds not upon nations, and peoples may be wiped from the face of the earth, but Art *is*.'²³ Such pure aestheticism lies in contradiction of the later Pound's canto 45, the 'usury' canto, in which Pound makes his belief in the connection between the 'virtues of the State' and the production of great art plain: 'Pietro Lombardo / came not by usura / Duccio came not by usura / nor Pier della Francesca; Zuan Bellin' not by usura / nor was 'La Calunnia' painted.'²⁴ Pound's 1911 Sirmione paradise likewise has no place for such social concerns.

When Pound came to draft a new preface for the 1929 edition of *The Spirit of Romance*, he would state that '[a]t least part of the subject matter then treated would not

²⁰ *P&T*, p. 169.

²¹ *P&T*, p. 169.

²² *Collected Early Poems of Ezra Pound*, p. 310 n.

²³ *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*, p. 155.

²⁴ *The Cantos*, pp. 229-30.

bear my present acids’;²⁵ his earlier ecstatic aestheticism would not, and his unwillingness in ‘The Flame’ to consider the ‘game of barter, lands and houses’²⁶ as a theme would be abandoned accordingly. ‘Near Perigord’ (1916) approaches Bertrand de Born’s Hautefort’s history of contest and exchange through just these themes:

How would you live, with neighbours set about you –
Poitiers and Brive, untaken Rochecouart,
Spread like finger-tips of one frail hand;
And you on that great mountain of a palm –
Not a neat ledge, not Foix between its streams,
But one huge black half-covered up with pine,
Worked for and snatched from the string-purse of Born –
The four round towers, four brothers – mostly fools:
What could he do but play the desperate chess,
And stir old grudges?²⁷

Having lived through the First World War, lost Henri Gaudier-Brzeska in 1915 and T.E. Hulme in 1917 and read and met C.H. Douglas for the first time in 1919: ‘The Flame’ could no longer offer an appropriate model of engagement. *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920) would mark Pound’s official, if ambivalent, abandonment of aestheticism, and introduced two of the principal political themes of his utopian period: ‘usury age-old and age-thick’²⁸ and, with ‘Brennbaum’, anti-Semitism. *The Cantos* were in production also, the first three cantos developing from the ‘ur-cantos’ published in *Poetry* in 1917 to their final shape in 1923, discarding the last vestiges of his previous Victorian models in the process, with Pound committing himself to an understanding of the the process that would come to be identified with the ‘repeat in history’ that echoes Pater but that applies his historicism to current societal concerns and, increasingly, to the support of a utopian political desire.²⁹ Mussolini would become Prime Minister of

²⁵ *The Spirit of Romance*, p. 10.

²⁶ *P&T*, p. 168.

²⁷ *P&T*, p. 303.

²⁸ *P&T*, p. 551.

²⁹ Mary Ellis Gibson suggests that ‘[t]hough Pater’s language is significant only in Pound’s early poetry, his response to the historicist dilemma of attachment and detachment had a lasting impact on Pound’s method in *The Cantos*.’ [*Epic Reinvented*, p. 28.]

Italy in 1922 and Il Duce in 1925, the year of *A Draft of XVI Cantos*, the first volume of *The Cantos*.

Pater would not disappear completely from Pound's thought, however, and his presence continued in a number of ways through Pound's London years. Carr connects Pater's aesthetic moment to the inception of Imagism:

Pater's passionate aestheticism and celebration of the visionary moment are central to [Pound's] thought. The heritage of Paterian aesthetics was to be vitally important for the imagist movement as a whole, even when the imagist poets, particularly Pound, repudiated him. The imagist poem in its brief intensity would be in itself, one could argue, an attempt to record 'the highest quality of [our] moments as they pass'.³⁰

The 'vortex or cluster of fused ideas [...] endowed with energy'³¹ of Vorticism can be read as a further development of Pater as adapted for Imagism, and elements derived from the Paterian aesthetic-paradisal moment are also still present in *The Cantos* sporadically through its early stretches, sometimes in situations that recall the jewelled paradise of 'The Flame' as in moments of cantos 3, 13, 17 and 20. Pound's telos, however, has changed and those visionary moments that are retained no longer move *The Cantos* towards the goal Pater espouses, thereby relinquishing the potentially paradisal aesthetic opportunity. Through *Eleven New Cantos* (1934) and *The Fifth Decad of Cantos* (1937) such moments become rarer and more attenuated and are outweighed by societal and historical concerns, until, with *Cantos LIII-LXXI* (1940) it effectively disappears, a process that coincides with Pound's accelerating concentration upon a political, utopian worldview.

Zukofsky and Pound came to know one another in the midst of this process. Their epistolary exchange began in August 1927 when the 23 year-old Zukofsky sent 'Poem Beginning "The"' for inclusion in *The Exile*.³² The record, as presented by Zukofsky in *All* (1965) and in the posthumous *Complete Short Poetry*, shows a modernist

³⁰ *The Verse Revolutionaries*, p. 20.

³¹ *SP*, p. 345.

³² *PLF*, p. 62. See Norman Douglas's *Ezra Pound*, p. 292 for excerpts from the accompanying letter.

poet emerging effectively fully formed with this submission to Pound in 1927, already a utopian anti-aesthete like Pound. Kenner is misled by Zukofsky's judicious editing here and makes a rash claim for the Objectivists, suggesting that '[t]he quality of their very youthful work is that of men who have inherited a formed tradition',³³ the tradition Pound had worked his way towards in the early teens, with paths not taken like 'The Flame' thereby avoided by Zukofsky et al. Scroggins, however, argues that the lyrics Zukofsky wrote before "'The'" in fact contain, in contradiction to Zukofsky's mature work and the popular tendency at Columbia in the 1920s, moments of 'unabashed Paterianism',³⁴ revealing that Zukofsky himself experienced a truncated version of Pound's aesthetic phase. 'Moments', an uncollected poem published in Columbia's *The Morningside* in 1922, explores themes and uses a vocabulary familiar from 'The Flame' and *Studies in the Renaissance*:

And the most perfect moment is the twilight's
When we see golden strands through mist; the sky lights
Its stars; a radiance shines through all things –
Truth, seraph with bare sword and fire-tipped wings,
We seem to see beyond our turbid strife,
Yet there is no flamed truth but that is life.³⁵

Zukofsky rejects Pound's depiction of an at least symbolic heaven with the final assertion that 'there is no flamed truth but that is life', making this youthful effort of Zukofsky's³⁶ more strictly Paterian than 'The Flame'; here the paradisaal state is entirely bound-up in that momentary experience Pater outlines and connects to the power of experiencing and creating art at the conclusion of *Studies in the Renaissance*. With "'The'" Zukofsky

³³ *A Homemade World*, p. 169. Stephen Fredman takes umbrage at these statements and posits a radical realignment of Objectivist influence away from a Kennerian Pound in "'And All Now Is War": George Oppen, Charles Olson, and the Problem of Literary Generations'. [*The Objectivist Nexus*, pp. 286-93.]

³⁴ *PLF*, p. 34.

³⁵ *The Morningside* 10, nos. 5-6 (April-May 1922), p. 157. Quoted in *PLF*, p. 34.

³⁶ Zukofsky turned 18 in January 1922, 'Moments' was published in the April-May number of Columbia's *The Morningside*.

would cast himself as a poet as anti-aesthetic and as politically utopian as Pound had become by that time.

“‘The’” contains recantations of some of Pound and Zukofsky’s earlier aesthetic concerns, bringing him in line with Pound’s development by the mid-1920s. It performs some of the same functions as *Mauberley* had, and is, particularly in its autobiographical aspects, closer to that sequence than *The Waste Land* (1922), its putative model. Just as Pound had sought to slough off his earlier aesthetic encrustations, and the London milieu that had proved unsatisfactory to him, in *Mauberley*, Zukofsky consciously casts off elements of his background that no longer seem appropriate to his new role: Columbia and the Lower East Side are jettisoned, though not without parting affection, while the Zukofsky family is treated with a Joycean disconnection and his modernist predecessors (including Pound) are listed in a proto-modernist canon, thereby defusing a potentially threatening dominance. The feature that both poems share most obviously is, however, an instability on this front: in both the mixture of ironic repudiation and affection is such that it is not straightforwardly evident which aspects the poets mean to retain. Just as the young poet who ‘might as well look Shagetz just as much as Jew’³⁷ goes on to translate and work into his text extensive sections of the Yiddish of Yehoash, it is not clear which of Mauberley’s ‘contacts’ are to be abandoned and which saved: which, of Max Beerbohm, Ford Madox Ford, Arnold Bennett and Victor Plarr, survive the cut?³⁸ And, just as Pound had focused on the work of his immediate successors, Zukofsky addresses his modernist forefathers in a move that simultaneously establishes and problematises their canonicity. *Mauberley* itself is included in a collage of disparate modernist works and writers, some of which have remained within the accepted canon of modernism, some of which have not:

³⁷ *CSP*, p. 17.

³⁸ See John Espey’s *Ezra Pound’s Mauberley: A Study in Composition*.

Masterworks of Western Literature course here becoming ‘Askforaclassic, Inc.’)⁴⁵ the subject of Zukofsky’s ire. Zukofsky’s dedication reveals that the “*Renaissance*” of the title refers to Pater’s *Studies in the Renaissance*,⁴⁶ and Pater reappears as nebulous daydream in Erskine’s lecture:

173 On Weary bott’m long wont to sit,
174 Thy graying hair, thy beaming eyes,
175 Thy heavy jowl would make me fit
176 For the Pater that was Greece.
177 The siesta that was Rome.⁴⁷

That Paterian paradisaic moment is confounded with a mid-lecture nap, and would be dismissed on similar grounds in 1928’s “A”-1, where, after the potential transcendence of a seat at the *St Matthew Passion*, Zukofsky finds himself ‘Not boiling to put pen to paper’,⁴⁸ a refusal of the Paterian/Poundian flame of ‘The Flame’ and the aesthetic moment of ‘Moments’. The lack of discrimination behind Zukofsky’s attacks in “The” makes it difficult to identify it with confidence as a utopian poem, though the dismissal of aestheticism here is worthy of note. Like *Mauberley*, again, while a repudiative intention is apparent, the social and political concerns with which it seeks to replace aestheticism remain implicit. The lines translated from Yehoash with which Zukofsky concludes his poem suggest a coming radicalism, which relates complicatedly both to Zukofsky and Yehoash’s shared ethnicity and to an emergent political radicalisation, one that inhabits a space somewhere between Zionism and *The Communist Manifesto*:

327 How wide our arms are,
328 How strong,
329 A myriad years we have been,
330 Myriad upon myriad shall be.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ *CSP*, p. 14. For this detail and other exegetical material on “The” see the *Z-Site*, <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/Poem-beginning-The.php>.

⁴⁶ *CSP*, p. 8.

⁴⁷ *CSP*, p. 15.

⁴⁸ “A”, p. 4.

⁴⁹ *CSP*, p. 20.

When Zukofsky would come to collect his early work in *55 Poems* (1941), the poem after “‘The’” would be ‘Memory of V.I. Ulianov’, a eulogy for Lenin, an indisputable sign of Zukofsky’s early politics written shortly before the sequence.⁵⁰

Through the 1920s Pound began to sketch the political and utopian telos initiated in *Mauberry*, beginning his long and notorious involvement with Social Credit. Though Pound would have seen this monetary reform as a simple adjustment of the financial system its demands and intentions are classically utopian, as well as its flaws. The most important, and most persistent, element of Thomas More’s foundational utopian vision in *Utopia* is its resistance to capitalism, ‘More’s fundamental principle’⁵¹ for Jameson. Raphael, More’s interlocutor, cannot

see how you can ever get any real justice and prosperity, so long as there’s private property, and everything’s judged in terms of money – unless you consider it just for the worst sort of people to have the best living conditions, or unless you’re prepared to call a country prosperous, in which all the wealth is owned by a tiny minority – who aren’t entirely happy even so, while everyone else is simply miserable.⁵²

Its opposition to capitalism structures More’s *Utopia*, serving as that locale’s energising force. Jameson, reads the refusal of capital as utopia’s central and identifying impulse, running ‘through the Utopian tradition like a red thread’,⁵³ with all anti-capitalist political movements (of the left or right) intrinsically utopian in their resistance of ‘the invincible universality of capitalism’.⁵⁴ In this analysis Social Credit and other early to mid twentieth-century forms of ‘monetary heterodoxy’⁵⁵ are an inevitable, though doomed, part of a resistance to capitalism as it adapted itself to modernity, for ‘when the

⁵⁰ Twitchell-Waas’s *Z-Site* records that ‘Memory of V.I. Ulianov’ was completed on the 3rd of August 1925 [<http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/29-Poems.php>], while “‘The’” was completed during 1926 [<http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/Poem-beginning-The.php>].

⁵¹ *Archaeologies of the Future*, p. 18.

⁵² *Utopia*, p. 44.

⁵³ *Archaeologies of the Future*, p. 20.

⁵⁴ *Archaeologies of the Future*, p. xii. Though Pound and modernism are for the most part outside of the purview of this work, Jameson links it firmly to Pound’s work and the wider project of modernism through an epigraph from *The Pisan Cantos* and its implicit continuation of *A Singular Modernity*, a work that dealt with the utopian temporality of modernism at length and with reference to Pound.

⁵⁵ *The Route of All Evil*, p. vii.

use of money is generalized to all sections of the “modern” economies [...] Utopian speculation will take the form of various substitutions – stamp script, labor certificates, a return to silver, and so forth’.⁵⁶

Alongside this seminal anti-capitalist impulse Pound’s politics also conform to some structural problems inherent to utopianism from More onwards. As Meghnad Desai asserts, Pound’s conception of an adjusted economic world suffers from a problem found in ‘all utopian economics[:] one has to rely on the brightest and the best to rule’.⁵⁷ Just as *Utopia*’s foundation is dependent upon the unlikely and boundless selflessness of the founder Utopos (a difficulty More himself suggests with Utopos’s double-negative: ‘Willingly I-impart my-things, not not-willingly I-accept better-ones.’)⁵⁸ The impracticality of both Social Credit and Pound’s other central monetary reform, Gessellite stamp-scrip, is typically utopian, as is Pound’s contradictory resistance to the necessary bureaucracy (which he dubs ‘a pox’).⁵⁹ He optimistically suggests that ‘we are to be saved by a few hundred chartered, but honest accountants working in a plate-glass room under a communal supervision’,⁶⁰ while his schemes would require the establishment of intrinsically larger, more authoritarian governments; this underestimation of the complexity of his projected utopia reminiscent of More’s actually arcanelly hierarchicalised and authoritarian society, ‘where things are run so efficiently with so few laws’.⁶¹

At around the same time as he was getting to know Zukofsky Pound was writing the two essays that go furthest in capturing the physical aspects of his nascent paradiso terrestre and that also make clear the aesthetic’s submerged persistence in his utopian

⁵⁶ *Archaeologies of the Future*, p. 17.

⁵⁷ *The Route of All Evil*, p. 89.

⁵⁸ *Utopia*, p. 3.

⁵⁹ *SP*, p. 187.

⁶⁰ *SP*, p. 179.

⁶¹ *Utopia*, p. 44.

thinking. ‘Machine Art’ was written between 1927 and 1930 and remained unpublished during Pound’s lifetime, while ‘The City’ was published in the autumn 1928 number of *The Exile*. These essays show Pound both deepening his utopian commitment and moving further away from Zukofsky’s Marxist politics. ‘Machine Art’ begins by making some suggestions that seem recognisably aesthetic, initially recalling an aestheticised Futurism, an echo of Marinetti declaring in 1912 that he wanted ‘to make literature out of the life of a motor, a new instinctive animal whose general instincts we will know when we have learned the instincts of the different forces that make it up.’⁶² Pound’s first conclusion, presented at the beginning of his essay, is that ‘[t]he beauty of machines (A.D. 1930) is now chiefly to be found in those parts of machines where the energy is most concentrated.’⁶³ This seems initially aesthetic, the aptly named ‘Bliss Press’ apparently offers ‘something to comfort us in an age filled by political villainies and confusions’,⁶⁴ recalling Whistler’s celebration of aesthetic detachment. It is not clear, however, that the Bliss Press can therefore be enjoyed as disconnected artistic object in the sense attributed to Pater when he urges the ‘love of art for its own sake’.⁶⁵ As Pound proceeds he complicates this position, beginning to emphasise the function of machinery in a way that gradually drifts away from aestheticism: ‘Among the remarks about beauty that I have come upon in diverse works on philosophy, art, aesthetics, etc., I recall with pleasure the simplest: we find a thing beautiful in proportion to its aptitude to a function.’⁶⁶ It is not impossible that the moment of function may itself become aestheticised, but this move opens a route of attack that Pound follows wholeheartedly, transferring his interest to the ways in which machines interact with society, first as part of a curiously imagined orchestrated

⁶² ‘Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature’, *Poetry in Theory*, p. 59.

⁶³ *Machine Art & Other Writings*, p. 57.

⁶⁴ *Machine Art & Other Writings*, p. 59.

⁶⁵ *Studies in the Renaissance*, p. 190.

⁶⁶ *Machine Art & Other Writings*, p. 69.

workshop,⁶⁷ and then, dealing with the functionality of machinery more directly, in explicitly sociological terms, stating that '[i]t is possible that machinery will lead men to cooperate more sanely, and break up a too violent concept of private property, in so far as that concept relates to machines'.⁶⁸ Here Pound reveals the extent of his new materialist utopia, one in which the benefits of technology free the worker and foreman from drudgery and permit them to live in a perfected society free from the manipulation of unjust financiers, while those that still toiled in factories would be soothed by a harmonised engineering process. This societal rearrangement, complete with capitalist bugbears to be attacked and defeated, widens Pater's private paradisaal moment. Art will still play a key role in this utopia, with those freed from machines becoming something approaching artists (again recalling More's *Utopia*), a process described in 'The City'.

In Pound's imagined future city the physical environment positively influences the lives and behaviour of its inhabitants, who, through generous exposure to culture, more free time and – in an echo of 'The Flame' and many of Pound's visionary moments – plentiful exposure to clement weather, become more like Pound:

The government will be reduced to a minimum. The more intelligent people are, the less organised government they will tolerate; the fewer pompous officials and busy bodies will be allowed to stand about clogging the circulation. Even the need of the traffic cop will be diminished by the open nature of the roadways. I mean the main routes and speedways through the high buildings will be as wide as the Place de la Concorde, and between the chief towers there will be light steel footbridges at every tenth or fifteenth level. But all of it airy.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Pound asserts that '[n]o one has thought of utilizing [machine generated noises] for the ease and refreshment of the workers. They are waste and bad practice. Just as bad ventilation is bad policy.' [*Machine Art & Other Writings*, p. 74.] In *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* Jacques Attali reveals the oppressiveness latent in this suggestion:

Mass production is programming, the monotonous and repeated noise of machines imposing silence on the workers. This silence in replication becomes more pronounced with the growing automation of the process. Fewer and fewer people work at machines for the silent manipulation of entrapped speech. An extraordinary spectacle: the double silence of men and commodities in the factory. An intense spectacle, because after leaving the factory the commodities will speak much more than the people who manufactured them. [*Noise*, p. 121.]

⁶⁸ *Machine Art & Other Writings*, p. 77.

⁶⁹ *SP*, p. 196.

Superficially there is little to separate this vision from a Marxist workers' republic sought by left-leaning utopian thinkers in this period. Though he would not describe his utopia so fully as Pound, Zukofsky's utopia might be imagined along similar lines. The use of the technicalities of quantum physics in *The First Half of "A"*-9 (1940) can be read as a faith in science comparable with 'Machine Art', while the relatively orthodox nature of his calls for the liberation of the workers through the 1930s imply a confidence in official Communism's optimism towards technology. To conflate Pound's idiosyncratic brand of Italian fascism with Zukofsky's, at this point, quite conventional Marxism as two strands of an identical utopianism would, however, be a mistake. Pound seems comfortable with the patrician and authoritarian aspects of his utopian society (it might be argued that he is in fact attracted to utopian thinking *because* of these aspects). Pound's deepening commitment to Mussolini's Italy led his particular utopianism closer to fascist orthodoxy (a development made clear by his uncharacteristic support of the Italian invasion of Abyssinia from 1936) and a lessening of his interest in machines and cityscapes, and a more pronounced concentration on a Confucian feudalism bereft of Paterian transcendence. Nicholls notes this move towards a more agrarian utopian model:

Although Pound was [...] quite prepared to accept Mussolini's 'ruralisation' policies [...], he was perhaps wiser than he knew in directing his poem back toward ancient China. For the 'hierarchical' model depended upon a rudimentary division of labour and a low level of economic competition; Mencian 'benevolence' could not survive as an ordering principle in the face of the 'false' equality of the market-place, and had Pound devoted these Cantos to modern Italy his controlling concepts would have stood starkly revealed as but an ideological 'camouflage'. Yet the attention to ancient China also had its disadvantages, since it now became clearer than ever that Pound's ideal state could have a material basis only in a pre-capitalist economy.⁷⁰

This difficulty is a presence in 'Machine Art', in a manner that conflicts with Italian fascism's (and Pound's) utopian anti-capitalism:

⁷⁰ *Ezra Pound: Politics, Economics and Writing*, p. 123.

An organization like Henry Ford's is probably feudal. I use the word here with a sense of, relatively, very high commendation; it implies the responsibility of the overlord to his vassals; and implies a very different mode of thought from that implied in the abusive term 'industrial system' or 'industrialism.' To put it another way, I might say that Kublai Khan's power was founded on finance and pillage, the Byzantine empire was founded on money (backed by war machinery and bureaucracy), feudalism was founded on produce, or on produce plus service, obligations, and a good deal of sentiment. If you don't like this last term, call it 'good will.'⁷¹

Ford's capitalism, like Baldy Bacon's in canto 12, is allowed where Basil Zaharoff's is proscribed in canto 18 under the dubious terms of the Ford Motor Company's productivity, with Ford taking on the role of kindly tyrant, proxy for the central figures in Pound's utopia: Confucius and Mussolini. At this point his utopianism begins to contradict Zukofsky's; Chinese feudalism permitting Pound access to a particularly virulent form of capitalism.

In Zukofsky, just as in Pound through this period, the paradisaical moment becomes increasingly attenuated in the short lyrics of '29 Poems' and '29 Songs', a development I will explore in my first chapter, while Pound, after employing various stand-ins, including Venice in canto 26, struggles to integrate it with his growing social concerns, its Neoplatonic aspect, already suggested in 'The Flame', outstripping its aesthetic-paradisaical shading as *The Cantos* develops with, after the mid-1930s, both effectively replaced by Confucianism. In *Guide to Kulchur* (1937) Pound's new Confucian-societal concerns master his previous interests, including those of ancient Greece (which had been approached via his aesthetic concerns in the early century):⁷²

Plato's *Republic* notwithstanding, the greek philosophers did not feel communal responsibilities *vide infra*. The sense of coordination, of the individual in a milieu is not in them.

Any more than there is a sense of social order in the teachings of the irresponsible protagonist of the New Testament. The Anschauung of an individual of, or among, a dominated race, however admirable from some aspects, is not the Anschauung of man who has held responsible office.

Rome was the responsible ruler. The concentration or emphasis on eternity is not social. The sense of responsibility, the need for coordination of individuals expressed in Kung's teaching differs radically both from early Christian absolutism and from the maritime adventure morals of Odysseus or the loose talk of argumentative greeks.⁷³

⁷¹ *Machine Art & Other Writings*, p. 80.

⁷² See *Ezra Pound: Politics, Economics and Writing*, p. 106.

⁷³ *Guide to Kulchur*, p. 38.

Pound dismisses Homer, revered in the opening passages of *The Cantos*, Jesus, a figure accorded ambivalent respect in his early lyric poetry (as in ‘The Ballad of the Goodly Frere’ [1909]),⁷⁴ and even Plato and his tradition, crucial to Pound’s visionary aesthetics up to this point. That his new utopia disregards the ‘emphasis on eternity’ shows just how far *The Cantos* has moved from a paradisal conception by this stage. Confucius – Kung – would then go on to dictate the moral coordinates for the remainder of this poem, initiating what Nicholls refers to as ‘a transition from the visionary affection and eroticism of the earlier Cantos to an idea of “benevolence” as that socially motivated feeling which so far has emerged explicitly only in the historical sections of the poem.’⁷⁵ Such ‘benevolence’ runs necessarily from a patriarchal leader and/or an authoritarian state: functions usually read as central to Pound’s utopia.

Walter Benjamin insists that ‘[t]he logical result of Fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into political life.’⁷⁶ Pound is not as brutal as Marinetti, Benjamin’s example of the aestheticised fascist, and, specifically in his utopian phase, displays a concern for society that is anathema to Marinetti, but the polarity that Benjamin sets up between Fascism and Communism is applicable to Pound and Zukofsky, his final enigmatic statement offering a ready description of Zukofsky’s utopian phase through the early sections of “A”: ‘Communism responds by politicizing art.’⁷⁷ Pound’s rapprochement with Marinetti would come in canto 73, the second ‘Italian’ canto, published in the naval magazine the *Marina Repubblicana* in February 1945, the most uncomplicatedly fascistic, war-like and least paradisal canto. This is the point at which he came closest to fulfilling Benjamin’s rationale for fascist aesthete was at the very last gasp of his utopian phase, the moment at which he displays his anti-aestheticism most clearly: near the

⁷⁴ *P&T*, p. 109.

⁷⁵ *Ezra Pound: Politics, Economics and Writing*, p. 106.

⁷⁶ *Illuminations*, p. 234.

⁷⁷ *Illuminations*, p. 235.

beginning of canto 72, published in part in the January number of the *Marina Repubblicana*,⁷⁸ Pound refers to ‘Dio / Il grande esteta’,⁷⁹ making his contempt for both conventional religion and aestheticism clear. Pound’s utopian materialist phase, with residue of aestheticism, would last until the collapse of Italy at the end of the Second World War, his parallel distrust of aestheticism and conventional religion deepening as his paradiso terrestre seemed, with the advance of the Allies, less immanent.

The political distinction between Pound and Zukofsky is, of course, the primary tension in their relationship, though racial, class and educational differences are also present throughout, in addition to an inevitable struggle over influence between mentor and pupil. Throughout their interaction such tensions coloured their dialogue and, particularly for Zukofsky, their work, which would, through certain periods, thrive on this tension. This can be seen in the manner in which Zukofsky formulates his paradisaical vision; a vision that ultimately owes a great deal to Pound’s example but, through a series of late and complex textual re-evaluations, would also present a conscious rebuttal of that example.

Pound would turn 60 in November 1945, shortly after writing the bulk of *The Pisan Cantos*, the volume in which he first introduced the incremental admixture of his paradisaical stage. As with Pound’s turn from aestheticism in the 1920s *The Pisan Cantos* do not mark an immediate and complete reversal. In the late cantos Paradise is ‘spezzato apparently / it exists only in fragments’,⁸⁰ and is combined with the utopian politics of the 1930s: this is not a return to the aesthetic paradisaical moment of ‘The Flame’, but the construction of a new, synthetic paradiso that seeks to combine elements of Pound’s

⁷⁸ 15th Jan. 1945. This controversial statement was, unsurprisingly, not included in the *Marina Repubblicana* extract and would be withheld until New Directions included them in their 1987 edition of *The Cantos*. See Massimo Bacigalupo’s translation, introduction and notes of the Italian cantos in *Paideuma* for details of these poems’ publication histories: ‘Ezra Pound’s Cantos 72 and 73: An Annotated Translation,’ *Paideuma*, 20, 1-2 (1991), pp. 11-41.

⁷⁹ *The Cantos*, p. 425.

⁸⁰ *The Cantos*, p. 452.

political and economic thought with moments that recall the Paterian paradisal moment, thereby introducing a new paradisal timbre derived from his utopian politics appropriate to a wider community than solipsistic aestheticism.

Zukofsky's own anti-capitalist politics become as dangerous as Pound's in the years after the war as Zukofsky set about constructing his paradise. Jameson writes:

During the Cold War [...] Utopia had become a synonym for Stalinism and had come to designate a program which neglected human frailty and original sin, and betrayed a will to uniformity and the ideal purity of a perfect system that always had to be imposed by force on its imperfect and reluctant subjects.⁸¹

This political situations in which both poets' utopianisms are exposed as apparently oppressive political systems, and in which utopianism became a despised mode of thought, underlies the production of Pound and Zukofsky's paradises. Zukofsky's paradisal phase began in 1963, with America's political landscape changed by the escalating tension between the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R., a moment I will deal in my final chapter, with most of the year's production occurring after his 59th birthday in January. As with Pound's Confucian, quasi-fascist politics, Zukofsky sought to retain the labour politics and many of his Marxist concerns as he began his own paradisal phase and, in a move that extends Pound, added a domestic theme that would act as locus and example of the paradisal state. The key to the turn from utopian to paradisal poet is its dialectical nature; neither Pound nor Zukofsky discarded their utopian phases as they did their aesthetic phases, both poets attempted to carry their utopias on into their paradisal visions, raising the level of their utopias up to coexist beside their more esoteric paradises; 'to hitch sensibility to efficiency'.⁸²

This synthesis creates tensions that are difficult for Pound, in particular, to master. His inability to achieve an adequate balance between that resurrected paradisal, transcendent moment and his political concerns is increasingly evident

⁸¹ *Archaeologies of the Future*, p. xi.

⁸² *The Cantos*, p. 802.

through the last four volumes of *The Cantos*, which, in *Drafts & Fragments of Cantos CX – CXVI* (1968), initiate a series of assertions of failure, a conviction that his attempt to synthesise these concerns had failed:

But the beauty is not the madness
Tho' my errors lie about me.
And I am not a demigod,
I cannot make it cohere.⁸³

Zukofsky's paradise is not so obviously flawed as Pound's: his adoption of some elements of the transcendently tinged politics of the New Left during the 1960s and his particular religious interests seem to ease his struggle with that utopian-paradisaal dialectic.⁸⁴ This does not, however, mean that Zukofsky's portrayal of paradise is necessarily the more successful of the two: perhaps Pound's failure to write his paradise is inevitable and appropriate in the circumstances. In 'The Storyteller' Benjamin questions the possibility of the kind of resolution the paradisaal theme seems to offer, writing that 'there is no story for which the question of how it continued would not be legitimate.'⁸⁵ Any ending must be unsatisfactory, and Pound's flawed and fragmentary attempt to write a paradise for *The Cantos* is therefore this poem's fitting dénouement:

The art of storytelling is reaching its end because the epic side of truth, wisdom, is dying out. This, however, is a process that has been going on for a long time. And nothing would be more fatuous than to want to see in it merely a 'symptom of decay,' let alone a 'modern' symptom. It is, rather, only a concomitant symptom of the secular productive forces of history, a concomitant that has quite gradually removed narrative from the realm of living speech and at the same time is making it possible to see a new beauty in what is vanishing.⁸⁶

The Cantos inhabits this tension, with the utopian-paradisaal dialectic at its end displaying it most clearly. Benjamin's 'new beauty in what is vanishing' is the key to the quasi-

⁸³ *The Cantos*, pp. 809-10.

⁸⁴ The contrast between Zukofsky's late embrace of Zen Buddhism and Pound's long-standing and vituperative though, as Kenner points out, not always consistent intolerance of Buddhism is of importance here. See 'Inventing Confucius', *The Pound Era*, pp. 445-59.

⁸⁵ *Illuminations*, p. 99.

⁸⁶ *Illuminations*, p. 86.

functionality of Pound's paradiso. Zukofsky's paradise would broach a different relation to this dialectic.

My approach to Zukofsky's paradise will be split between two important moments addressed in the first and third chapters here. I shall first approach Zukofsky's crucial early Objectivist period between 1927 and 1932, in which Pound's influence was least mediated and during which the conceptual and poetic foundations upon which his eventual paradise would be built were laid. This moment accords roughly with Pound's move from aestheticism to a politically utopian outlook, though the manner in which Zukofsky develops his own utopia is in many ways quite different from Pound's development. In my third chapter I will look at Zukofsky's late writing of the paradise that he had been preparing for throughout his career, a project beginning in 1963 and that was ongoing at his death in 1978. It was during this period that Zukofsky finally ended his conversation with Pound, and in which he made an attempt at writing a paradise to which Pound was central, both as influence and as a figure to react against. Between these two chapters I will spend some time looking at Pound and Zukofsky's approaches to music: as theme, analogue, structuring facility, exercise, fully-fledged production and conceptual problem. In all of these capacities Pound and Zukofsky's musics will be seen to be related to their utopian and paradisaal themes and I will venture an explanation of this subject that will foreground this aspect.

I. 'Not today but tomorrow is their focus':¹ From Aestheticism to Utopia, 1927-1932

¹ "A", p. 107.

i) Pound's Contribution to The Beginning of "A"

In this chapter I will chart Pound's early influence on Zukofsky, beginning with "A" in this section but then going on to look at his Objectivist period more widely, focusing on his nascent utopian interests and Pound's role in their development. The years between Zukofsky's submission of 'Poem Beginning "The"' to *Exile* in 1927 and the appearance of *An "Objectivists" Anthology* (1932) would be the period of his closest collaboration with Pound. Pound was vital in persuading Harriet Monroe to allow Zukofsky to edit the February 1931 Objectivist number of *Poetry*, and would advise freely on that project and the anthology that followed. He also offered Zukofsky a series of useful introductions and they both became involved in a series of projects (including *To, Publishers*, *The Objectivist Press*, *Writers Extant*, guest editorship of *Exile*) that, while they were all ultimately unsuccessful, gave Zukofsky a pragmatic grounding in how to engineer and control a poetic vortex. At the same time as Pound was offering this tutelage he was also involved in passing over to Zukofsky, in a complex and ambivalent manner, the Poundian poetic inheritance. The key moment in this mentorship came in 1928 when Pound would edit the opening of "A"-1, the first movement in Zukofsky's projected long poem "A". Though not so extensive, Pound's editing here would be as important for

Zukofsky's career as Pound's editing of *The Waste Land* had been for Eliot. The cuts and queries Pound wrote on his copy of "A"-1, combined with discussion in their correspondence, would affect the development of Zukofsky's poetry and poetics throughout the remainder of "A", both via the advice that Zukofsky would accept directly from Pound and the strictures he chose to ignore. With Pound's utopian interest in Social Credit and Italian Fascism increasing alongside Zukofsky's Marxism during this period it is unsurprising that much of the advice he gives is subtly materialist in effect, and serves as gentle assistance to further help Zukofsky away from the 'unabashed Paterianism'² that he was himself already challenging in 'Poem Beginning "The"'. For from its inception Zukofsky planned "A" as a struggle with aestheticism and, as in Pound's oeuvre, Zukofsky's move towards materialist and utopian political thought would not be final with enough ideological flexibility left in the politics of the early sections of "A" for an eventual move towards the paradisaal. The way in which Pound worked to shape the beginning of "A" is key to both the complicated move from the aesthetic to the utopian at the outset of this poem and the evolution of the paradise at its end and after.

Before I turn to the genealogy of "A"-1 I will address the manner in which Zukofsky's poem addresses the models that Pound's work and thought offered before his direct involvement in the project began. "A" begins with an implicit analysis of how useful Pound and *The Cantos* will be as models for this new project and to what extent those models will need to be adjusted to fulfil Zukofsky's needs. This process can be seen most clearly in the manner in which Zukofsky approaches Pound's central paradisaal influence: Dante. Dante is a necessary consideration for any poet beginning a poem on the scale Zukofsky was planning but, for one following the model of *The Cantos* and potentially embarking on a programme of societal and paradisaal contemplation, *The*

² *PLF*, p. 34.

Divine Comedy would need to be addressed. Zukofsky set about this task throughout the early movements of “A”, with Dante a presence in “A”-1 to 7 as they appeared in *An “Objectivists” Anthology* and in the short poems of the same period. Fittingly, however, it would be in “A”-1 that Zukofsky would deal most fully with the *Commedia*, using the presence of a raft of echoes of *Inferno* to simultaneously address the problem of Dante, Pound and the theme and architecture of paradise in the long poem in a move that preceded Pound’s editorial intervention. Pound’s project is so closely associated with the Dantean model that when Zukofsky is read addressing Dante and the *Commedia* they should be read as potential proxies for Pound and *The Cantos*, and this is certainly the case in “A”-1. There are also moments in which J.S. Bach and his *St Matthew Passion* will fulfil a similar function, particularly as Zukofsky navigates his slow and finally ambivalent change from his early aesthetic thought to his slightly later Marxist-materialist phase. An analysis of Dante (and then Bach) in “A”-1 and a selection of satellite texts is therefore a necessary preface to an approach to Pound’s contribution there.

The progression towards Zukofsky’s paradise begins, appropriately enough, in Dante’s hell. Ahearn’s reading of Dante in “A”-1 in the ground-breaking work of Zukofsky criticism, *Zukofsky’s “A”: An Introduction*, established the terms of the study of Dante in “A”, and his approach will inform my analysis here. “A”-1 relates the attendance of a young ‘Zukofsky’ (here, following Ahearn, held in quotation marks as an example of one of the many ‘Zukofskys’ in the early movements of “A”) at Bach’s *Passion* at Carnegie Hall just before Easter 1928 and his subsequent deflating travel across New York City, followed by an attempt to synthesise the political and aesthetic concerns raised by this experience. Dante, particularly in the *Inferno* of Carnegie Hall as the audience chaotically exits, is important for this narrative, both in terms of the counterpoint his depiction of hell lends to the transcendent *Passion* and as exemplar of a

poet addressing both the flaws of his society and an underlying paradisaical theme. As ‘Zukofsky’ attempts to leave Carnegie Hall he is accosted by an usher, initiating a reverie coloured with the *Inferno*:

Galleries darkening.
 “Not that exit, Sir!”
 Ecdysis: the serpent coming out, molting,
 As tho blood stained the floor as the foot stepped,
 Bleeding chamfer for shoulder:
 “Not that exit!”
 “Devil! Which?”³

Ahearn sees the twenty-fifth and twenty-eighth cantos of the *Inferno* in this section, going on to dismiss these references as dramatic irony: ‘[t]he hell Zukofsky envisions is supplied with props taken from literary tradition. We begin to perceive that “A”-1 is a scrupulous investigation by the author of a less mature version of himself.’⁴ This is an example of a repeated tendency of Ahearn’s, who often reads the early stretches of “A” almost solely as autobiography, simplifying the analysis of poetics and influence necessarily present in the autobiography of a poet like Zukofsky.

Ahearn writes that the ‘bleeding chamfer for shoulder’ is attributable to the attendant that addresses Zukofsky, and is therefore a reference to the mutilated denizens of the 28th canto of the *Inferno*,⁵ which contains ‘those who are guilty of causing discord’,⁶ a fitting home for an usher that upsets the delicate harmony of a young Zukofsky still aloft from his aesthetic communion with Bach. This canto in the *Inferno* is also, however, of significance to Pound, suggesting that there may be another layer of relevance to its selection. *Inferno* 28 contains references to two characters relevant to Pound’s work. First Pier da Medicina approaches Dante:

³ “A”, p. 2.

⁴ Zukofsky’s “A”, p. 41.

⁵ ““Bleeding chamfer” recalls the description of the amputated damned in the twenty-eighth canto.’ [Zukofsky’s “A”, p. 41]

⁶ *The Divine Comedy*, p. 163, *Inferno*, XXVII, l. 136. Except where noted I have used C.H. Sisson’s Oxford Classics translation throughout.

If you ever return to that sweet plain
Which stretches from Vercelli down to Marcabò

And make it known to the two best men in Fano,
To Messer Guido and to Angiolello,
That, if what is foreseen here is not vanity,

They will be thrown overboard from their ship,
With a stone about their necks, near La Cattolica,
Through the treachery of a ferocious tyrant.⁷

That tyrant is the ‘Young Mastiff’⁸ Malatestino of Rimini, ancestor to the Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta of Pound’s Malatesta cantos (cantos 8-11, first published in book form as part of *A Draft of XVI Cantos* [1925], as Zukofsky was working on ‘Poem Beginning “The”’). Zukofsky is indirectly introducing a Poundian culture-hero, underlining the proximity of Pound to his use of Dante in “A”-1. Later, Dante comes across Bertrand de Born carrying his head for a lantern:

‘[...] And, so that you can take back news of me,
Know I am Bertram [sic] de Born, I am the man
Who gave the young king evil advice.

I made father and son rebel against each other:
Achitophel did no worse by Absalom
And David, with his incitements to harm.

Because I separated persons so close,
I carry my brain separated, alas,
From its beginning, which is in this trunk.

So in me is observed retaliation.’⁹

De Born is the central character and force behind ‘Sestina: Altaforte’ (first published in *Exultations* [1909]), Pound’s account of ‘where worth’s won and the swords clash’.¹⁰ This poem is, alongside Dante’s ‘Al poco giorno e al gran cerchio d’ombra’, a source text for Zukofsky’s “Mantis”, which calls for gentleness towards its discombobulated subject and simultaneously makes a warlike assertion of the rights of working men. Zukofsky

⁷ *The Divine Comedy*, p. 165, *Inferno*, XXVIII, ll. 74-81.

⁸ *A Companion to The Cantos of Ezra Pound*, p. 37.

⁹ *The Divine Comedy*, p. 167, *Inferno*, XXVIII, ll. 133-42.

¹⁰ *P&T*, p. 106.

dates “Mantis” the 27th of October 1934,¹¹ and it would be published in the March 1935 number of *Poetry*, six years after he had completed the first drafts of “A”-1, and is therefore somewhat removed from the chronology under observation here, though it nevertheless suggests the pervasiveness of Zukofsky’s Dante/Pound complex here. In “A”-7, dated 4th to 7th August 1930¹² and therefore closer in chronology to “A”-1 than “Mantis”, Zukofsky describes street saw-horses with ‘Blood red, red lamps hang from necks or where could / Be necks’,¹³ a description that re-contextualises de Born’s head ‘Swinging in its hand like a lantern’¹⁴ in Dante and ‘headless trunk “that made its head a lamp”’ in Pound’s ‘Near Perigord’.¹⁵ As well as becoming an important poem for “A”-7 and “Mantis”, ‘Sestina: Altaforte’ is also a presence in “A” -1. Zukofsky’s ‘As the blood stained the floor as the foot stepped’¹⁶ echoes Pound’s impersonation of de Born’s description of battle: ‘But ah! when I see the standards gold, vair, purple, opposing / And the broad fields beneath them turn crimson’.¹⁷ Dante’s text is bloody, and it is perhaps reasonable to infer a bloody bottom to the ditch of Malebolge, but he refers to no floor-level blood in Malebolge or in the 28th canto, while ‘Sestina: Altaforte’ does clearly, suggesting that, in contradiction to Ahearn, Zukofsky is here working Pound directly into his Dantesque scene. That ‘bleeding chamfer’, again in contradiction of Ahearn, need not necessarily refer to the attendant that insults young Zukofsky. While Dante describes an array of tortures in *Inferno* 28, he does not describe this specific shoulder injury; the nearest he gets is the maiming of Mosca dei Lamberti:

[O]ne who had both his hands amputated,
Holding the stumps up in the dark air,

¹¹ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/Mantis.php>.

¹² See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-7.php>.

¹³ “A”, p. 39.

¹⁴ *The Divine Comedy*, p. 167, *Inferno*, XXVIII, l. 122.

¹⁵ *P&T*, p. 303.

¹⁶ “A”, p. 2.

¹⁷ *P&T*, p. 105.

So that the blood poured over his face[.]¹⁸

Horrific, but not quite the mutilation Zukofsky suggests for his attendant. There has been red carpet at various places in Carnegie Hall in its history, which could well be Zukofsky's reference point: a red carpet stretched over wooden steps, offering both the image of 'chamfer' at the edge of the step and the bloodied floor of 'Sestina: Altaforte'.¹⁹

Ahearn's assertion that the 'Ecdysis: the serpent coming out, molting'²⁰ relates to 'the twenty-fifth canto of the *Inferno*, where thieves are punished by being repeatedly changed into loathsome reptiles'²¹ is also suspect, and on similar grounds. Dante's description of the torment of the thieves is not interchangeable with the process of 'ecdysis', moulting and regeneration amongst arthropods and reptiles:

As I kept my gaze fixed upon them,
I saw a serpent with six feet hurl himself up
In front of one of them, and hold him tight.

¹⁸ *The Divine Comedy*, p. 166, *Inferno*, XXVIII, ll. 103-05.

¹⁹ This information was received through personal correspondence with Gino Francesconi, archivist at Carnegie Hall, and his colleague Rob Hudson, who, in reply to a suggestion by Twitchell-Waas that Zukofsky's image might refer to a red grained marble, stipulated that '[t]he interior floors of the auditorium have never been marble; they were (and still are) hardwood floors with carpeted runners in the main aisles. The carpet (and seat upholstery) was red, pretty much as it is today (the current red is slightly darker than the original, 1891 colors, but this changed several times throughout the years). The color scheme on the walls was much darker in 1928 than it is today, so he could have been referring to that as well.' Francesconi also provided the photograph below of the Hall in 1925, three years before Zukofsky attended the *Passion* and began "A".



²⁰ "A", p. 2.

²¹ "A", p. 2.

With the middle feet he wound about the belly,
 And with the back ones, took hold of the arms;
 Then fixed his teeth in one cheek, and the other;

The hind feet he spread about the thighs,
 And put his tail between the two of them,
 And curled it up into the small of his back.

[...]

And his tongue, which before was single, and designed
 For speaking, split in two; and in the other
 The forked tongue came together; the smoke's work is done.

The soul which had turned into a beast,
 Hissing, fled down the valley, and the other
 After him went walking, and spat.²²

This metamorphosis, in the tradition of Ovid that Pound continues into *The Cantos*, is a transactional one in which beast and man exchange physiologies. This exchange is symbolically central to the thieves' punishment as they must have their human shape stolen by beasts as fitting retribution for their sins in life, and is not easily equated with such a personal act of self-regeneration as the moulting of old skin and the hardening of new. It is this hardening part of the process of ecdysis, whereby a new skin or exoskeleton is quickly manufactured to replace the shed, which Zukofsky seems to be alluding to here, continuing the re-clothing begun with 'hats picked up from under seats.'²³ Ahearn is correct when he suggests that "A"-1 casts its 'Zukofsky' as the fall-guy, but he is mistaken when he suggests that readers must wait until "A"-2 to hear the poet Zukofsky's riposte, for it is already present in the procedures of "A"-1. This modulation between metamorphoses illustrates Zukofsky's method, and his nascent discussion with Pound, suggesting a rejection of the Poundian/Ovidian metamorphosis so important to the early *Cantos* and the emergence of a new, more complicatedly dialectical, form of metamorphosis in "A".

²² *The Divine Comedy*, pp. 151-54, *Inferno*, XXV, ll. 49-57 and 133-38.

²³ "A", p. 2.

‘Zukofsky’ moves onwards, out of Carnegie Hall, under ‘stars’ that recall Dante’s return from *Paradiso* at the end of the *Commedia*.²⁴ For Ahearn ‘this grand gesture inflates “Zukofsky” like a balloon’,²⁵ and the visual pun on a packet of camel cigarettes that Ahearn notes deflates the gauche alter ego accordingly.²⁶ As can be seen in instances like the above, the Zukofsky character in “A”-1 is, for Ahearn, firmly attached to early Poundian Paterianism:

By now we understand that ‘Zukofsky is victimized in “A”-1 by an assumption that some vague, ethereal sphere tagged ‘Art’ contains the answers to his problems. We recognize that the contents of his mind are considerably less grand than ‘Art,’ containing as it does specimens of commercial art alongside the Bible and Dante. We suspect, and rightly so, that the ‘Zukofsky’ fulminating in “A”-1 bears a strong resemblance to the member of the Boar’s Head Society who dreamed of fauns and nymphs. Pained by the tragedies of modern life, he plans to flee to the beautiful world of illusions. “A”-1 works to subvert and make ludicrous such intentions.²⁷

“A”-1 re-enacts the procedures of ‘Poem Beginning “The”’:

The figure of “Zukofsky” in “A”-1 is basically the personality sketched in “The”, but with one crucial difference. In “A”-1 he lacks the wit, discipline, and ironical self-consciousness that went into the making of “The”. To put it another way, author and subject were identical in “The”, but are several years apart in “A”-1. “Zukofsky” in the poem’s first movement has potential, but is deliberately stripped of synthesizing power. This “pre-poet” disappears into the cellar at the end of the first movement, to be replaced in “A”-2 by the figure of the “real” Zukofsky, the author of “A”-1.²⁸

This explanation fits neatly into the architecture of call and response that Ahearn discerns in the early movements of “A”, yet runs the risk of over-simplifying the project at hand in “A”-1. Tim Woods attacks Ahearn’s reading for its biographical emphasis:

²⁴ “A”, p. 2.

²⁵ Zukofsky’s “A”, p. 42.

²⁶ This tangential pun has hardened into a certainty of Zukofsky criticism, yet it is not so clearly present as Ahearn suggests. Ahearn:

Those sand dunes have an inglorious origin, and the cigarette is the clue. In 1928 a pack of “Camels” depicted a camel, two pyramids, and three palm trees, all supported by a desert. [Zukofsky’s “A”, p. 42]

There are no camels, pyramids or palm trees in “A”-1: only the dunes are shared by both the poetry of Zukofsky (memorably described by Pound as a ‘struggler in the desert’ [*Guide to Kulchur*, p. 5]) and the Camel logo.

²⁷ Zukofsky’s “A”, p. 43.

²⁸ Zukofsky’s “A”, p. 46.

Ahearn's method argues that the poem directly transfers "life," the textual process and production of meaning being reduced to a medium in which Zukofsky-the-subject inscribes his already-formulated, private experience. That such a subject is a construct for purely linguistic, legalistic, or conventional purposes, or that language itself might elude the control of the author, is overlooked by such a critical perspective.²⁹

Zukofsky's re-enactment of Pound's early struggle with Pater and then his investigation of Pound's Dante becomes, as Ahearn's reading of "A"-1 shows, caricatured by such a rationale, and Zukofsky's growing political consciousness is also antithetical to this autobiographical approach. For while the early movements of "A" do indeed enact that struggle between the aesthetic and the materialist, they do so in a more complex way than Ahearn's 'Poem Beginning "The"' influenced reading allows, with the aesthetic moment, in spite of the fun poked at it in parts of "A"-1, effectively granted an equal weight to Zukofsky's political concerns, with both options uncomfortably coexisting until "A"-7. As the poem developed Dante would, accordingly, become a less obvious presence: the conflict between political and aesthetic concerns taking precedence. Zukofsky would come to consciously reject Dante's model, writing to Pound in 1930 that he would 'rather be the troubadours (or one of them) than Dante, Burns instead of your papa's [Robert Browning's] Ring and the Book or Sordello'.³⁰ In some instances Dantean elements would be suppressed or camouflaged between their publication in 1932 and the final revision of "A"-1 to 6 in 1942, as in "A"-6, where Dante's 'Ahi quanto a dir'³¹ is quoted in Italian in the 1932 version, but translated for all post-1942 printings as 'It's hard to say',³² a reference difficult to detect without knowledge of the earlier version. The 'orderly Dantescan rising'³³ would prove even less appropriate to "A" than *The Cantos*, then, with Dante's teleological progression uncombinable with the consciously dialectical model Zukofsky prefers from the beginning of his poem. This

²⁹ *The Poetics of the Limit*, p. 20.

³⁰ *P/Z*, p. 78.

³¹ *AOA*, p. 137.

³² "A", p. 25. Twitchell-Waas identifies this as a reference to *Inferno* I.4, [<http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-6.php>].

³³ *The Cantos*, p. 457.

preference, in due course, would similarly mark the construction of Zukofsky's paradise. Other models, particularly Bach, though also a camouflaged Pater, would have a more extended influence on "A".

Ahearn's psychological, mimetic reading of "A"-1 is defined most clearly in the emphasis he places on the antiphonal structure of the early sections of "A". The antiphonal model is indeed present from the outset of "A"-1, with Zukofsky's quotations from the *Passion* introducing the pattern in the poem's famous opening passage. A discussion of Zukofsky's structural and, indeed, thematic approach to Bach in "A"-1 becomes, then, the logical next stage in this analysis of Pound's contribution to "A"-1. Theodor Adorno calls Bach 'the unattainable goal of all objective will in modernism',³⁴ and his example in "A"-1 straddles the subjective aesthetic experience of the music in performance and the objective functionality of modernist structuring in the same movement. Antiphonal call and response is essential to the progress of the early stages of "A", a progression often described using the vocabulary of musical composition. This call and answer pattern can be readily discerned in "A"-1's antiphonal elements: the first antiphony is that between the quotations from Picander's libretto for the *Passion*³⁵ and Zukofsky's description of the experience of attending a performance of this piece in 1928.³⁶ Zukofsky takes two sections from the very beginning of the libretto and conflates them at the outset of "A"-1. The first section, performed by the double choir, is comprised of a series of statements followed by questions, which are in turn followed by answers. These lines are split between the two choruses, so that in the *Passion* the first

³⁴ *EM*, p. 620.

³⁵ Picander was the pseudonym of Christian Friedrich Henrici, Bach's primary librettist. Picander also wrote libretti for many of Bach's Leipzig cantatas and wrote the cantata of Bach's *Coffee Cantata*. [See "A", pp. 37-38.]

³⁶ Williams had planned to attend this concert with Zukofsky: in a letter dated Monday the 2nd of April 1928 Williams writes: 'I'd give my shirt to hear the Mattheus Passion this week but I doubt if it can be done. If I do get there in spite of everything I'll cast an eye around for you.' [*W/Z*, p. 5.] Williams was finally unable to attend: 'Was the Matthäuspassion well sung? I wish I could have been there.' [7 April 1928, *W/Z*, p. 5].

chorus will state ‘See Him!’ and the second chorus answers with the question ‘Whom?’ Here Zukofsky ends his line, the question asked but unanswered, while the libretto goes on to answer ‘Die Bräutigam’, or ‘the bridegroom’. Zukofsky’s answer is ‘Bediamond the passion of our Lord’, marking the intrusion of the wealthy audience of 1928 and their apparel as a third chorus, the consonance between ‘bediamond’ and ‘bridegroom’ and the positioning of ‘our Lord’ at the end of the line echoing the standard English translation; ‘The Bridegroom Christ.’³⁷

The third line of the *Passion* that Zukofsky uses denotes an early entry of *Bottom*: On *Shakespeare*’s epistemological crux into “A”: ‘See Him! How?’ is again left without the final answer; for Picander this is ‘Als wie ein Lamm’, which is usually translated elliptically in English versions of the *Passion* as ‘A spotless Lamb’, an unsatisfactory response to such an explicit enquiry. In “A” Zukofsky follows this curiosity in the standard English translation, for his also provides little practical advice as to how Christians should come to see Christ: Zukofsky has ‘His legs blue, tendons bleeding’. This appears as in early drafts of “A”-1³⁸ and in *An “Objectivists” Anthology* with an additional line that gives context to the passage: ‘Tinsel over his ribs’,³⁹ making the image more clearly one of a deflated Christ, tinsel the desire and pretensions of the Carnegie Hall audience. This antipathy represents, then, the central dialectic in Zukofsky’s thought at this time: the Paterian, pseudo-religious complex is represented by the *Passion* (here more important for its transformative artistic achievement than its religious content, though both senses contribute to this aesthetic complex), with Zukofsky’s disdain for the Carnegie Hall audience providing a political, materialist contrast.

³⁷ I have used the Bärenreiter bilingual vocal score for references to the *Passion* throughout.

³⁸ From an unpublished draft of “A”-1 and 2, entitled “‘Come, ye Daughters’”, forwarded to and amended by Pound in the autumn of 1928. [Beinecke]

³⁹ *AOA*, p. 112.

Black, black full dress in the audience –
 O dead century where is your motley,
 Country people in Leipzig,
 Easter;
 White matronly flounces, cloth
 Over two breasts – starched, heaving,
 Belly freighted – boom!
 Checks of the patrons of Leipzig –[.]⁴¹

This would be cut in 1942, resulting in a generally smoother rhythm in the final version. Pound, with a characteristic intolerance of tautology, advises Zukofsky to sacrifice the internally antiphonal line for the sake of the poem, and demands the removal of most of Zukofsky's response words. Pound, with this advice, is in fact challenging one of the ways in which he is himself present in Zukofsky's poem, for the antiphonal structure of "A"-1 is not only partly derived from his practice in *The Cantos*, but the dialectic it seeks to dramatise is dependant on Pound's model. This hint of the complexity of Pound's contribution to "A"-1 serves here as an ideal point to begin an analysis of his advice to Zukofsky at the beginning of "A".

This 'patterned integrity',⁴² which appears towards the close of "A"-1, will serve as entry point to the Pound/Zukofsky collaboration, and evidence of the proximity between Zukofsky's interests in Bach and in Pound:

*Cold stone above Thy head.
 Weary, broken bodies.
 Sleeping: their eyes were full of sleep.*⁴³

This is a collage of extracts from the *Passion*; the first line comes from number 68, the second is a version of lines from no. 67 and the third from no. 26. Zukofsky changes the body of Christ in the second line into a multiple and then takes a line of recitative which would be sung as something like the King James' 'And he came and found them asleep

Nineteen twenty-eight,
 Thursday evening, the fifth of April.
 The autos parked, honking. ["A", p. 1.]

⁴¹ Beinecke.

⁴² See *The Pound Era*, pp. 145-162.

⁴³ "A", p. 4.

again: for their eyes were heavy'⁴⁴ and compresses it into the rhythmically and syntactically ambivalent style typical of the early parts of "A". Like "A" and *The Cantos*, the *Passion* is a portmanteau text: a fact that is key in Zukofsky's negotiation with Pound's work at the beginning of "A". In his oratorio Bach set to music an interpretation of chapters twenty-six and twenty-seven of *The Gospel According to St Matthew*, its libretto is made up of words from the Luther bible, original arias by Bach's librettist Picander and a selection of pre-existing folk hymns.⁴⁵ It is not clear which translation Zukofsky used for his quotations from the *Passion*: it is unlikely that he was familiar with the German original and the Carnegie Hall performance, as was then customary, would have been sung in English translation. The *New York Times* review also reveals that Zukofsky's 1928 version was not the full *Passion*, stating that there 'might well be discussion of the cuts that had been made' by the conductor that night, Ossip Gabrilowitsch.⁴⁶ This textual complexity recalls Pound's embedding of traditions through *The Cantos*, and the layering of different performances of the *Passion* from 1729 to 1928 recalls Pound's *Cantos* technique clearly.

As the portmanteau complexity of its libretto and its subject matter insist, the *Passion* is not 'pure' music of the kind that would form the musical models for later movements of "A".⁴⁷ As well as being a grand piece of musical theatre, the *Passion*, with its traditional performances at Easter and its origin, as "A"-8 reveals, in Leipzig's Thomaskirche,⁴⁸ is religious music, its performance a quasi-mass. And while Zukofsky the aesthete is clearly primarily interested in the *Passion* as disinterested and

⁴⁴ Matthew, 26. 43.

⁴⁵ These chorales do not appear in Picander's published text of the *Passion*, and, following Bach's practice elsewhere it is not unreasonable to assume that he employed 'found texts' pillaged from the German eighteenth century's rich heritage of church-based folk music.

⁴⁶ See the 6th April 1928 *New York Times* review of this *Passion*.

⁴⁷ Bach's second partita for solo violin would provide a framework for "A"-13 ['Bach's Second Partita for Violin Alone plays / As the wrestlers thud', "A", p. 297] and Arnold Schoenberg's tone rows provide the procedure of "A"-20. ["A", pp. 435-36.]

⁴⁸ "A", p. 43.

transcendent artwork, the incongruity of this work's grand religious theme is nonetheless vital to "A"-1. The subject matter of the *Passion* is most jarring when Zukofsky quits Carnegie Hall and ventures onto the streets of Manhattan, and the contrast of Bach's sublime with Zukofsky's Chaplinesque pratfalls is a clearly self-satirising moment. At the same time it is difficult to imagine a more self-aggrandising comparison a poet can draw against his own experience than the Passion of Christ, and Zukofsky makes just such a comparison in "A"-1. In an updated parallel to the action of the *Passion* the 'Zukofsky' of this section of "A" remains critically alone throughout his urban perambulations, dealing at once with his Christ-like isolation and the ramifications of Zukofsky's 1928 dialectic, initially observing from an entirely detached position the wealthy patrons of the arts at Carnegie Hall, before encountering a selection of less salubriously situated Manhattanites. Immediately upon exiting Carnegie Hall, shortly after shaking off the Malebolgian usher, 'Zukofsky'/Jesus seems to be almost physically shaking off Pater and the Victorians.⁴⁹ The 'Zukofsky' as Messiah theme is temporarily submerged in a passage that builds a picture of the 'necessitous poor',⁵⁰ employing a 'staccato'⁵¹ phrasing that Pound would criticise and structural repetition to escalate its music towards a climax. But Zukofsky holds back, instead delivering 'Nothing' and sending his alter ego back among the bourgeois concert-goers, an inversion of the Paterian moment. The young poet, while alienated by the conspicuous wealth in the auditorium, is equally unable to empathise with the ill-attired apparition of the vagrant. Young Zukofsky's resultant attitude towards socially conscious literature, the conventional, less complicatedly multivalent solution to this dialectic, is summed up in the disconnection he displays when, further along his walk homeward, he comes across

⁴⁹ See "A", p. 2.

⁵⁰ 'Ferdinand', *Collected Fiction*, p. 227. 'A tautology of a seventeenth century English economist'. The economist is John Bellers, writing in *Essays About the Poor, Manufactures, &c.* (1699), <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-prose/Ferdinand-1961.php>.

⁵¹ 'Constant staccato stops one too often.' From the unpublished 1928 draft of "A"-1, Beinecke.

a group of pragmatic idealists in the *New Masses* mold (whose editor, Mike Gold, here becomes ‘Carat’)⁵² seen huddled in the Manhattan gloom in imitation of Christ’s mourners in the *Passion*’s no. 68:

And on one side of the street near an elevated,
Lamenting,
Foreheads wrinkled with injunctions:
“The Pennsylvania miners were again on the lockout,
We must send relief to the wives and children –
What’s your next editorial about, Carat,
We need propaganda, the thing’s
becoming a mass movement.”⁵³

‘Zukofsky’ is sympathetic to the plight of the Pennsylvania miners, and approves of a philanthropic intervention, while in the next line the religious theme reappears with ‘It was also Passover’,⁵⁴ a reiteration of God’s most direct intervention on behalf of his chosen people, and yet the ‘Zukofsky’ messiah finds himself separate and ineffective: here the aesthetic moment, the political materialist impulse and the possibility of a religious solution all fail. After the Passover interjection ‘Zukofsky’ catches a train home, where he is thrown back into the aesthetic reverie occasioned by the *Passion*:

The blood’s tide like the music.
A round of fiddles playing
Without effort –
As into the fields and forgetting to die.
The streets smoothed over as fields,
Not even the friction of wheels,
Feet off ground:
As beyond effort –
Music leaving no traces,
Not dying, and leaving no traces.⁵⁵

The poet’s only reply to the Pennsylvanian captains of industry is to retreat into the musical world of Bach, one in which Zukofsky can imitate the angel of death’s flight over Egypt on the first Pesach,⁵⁶ aloft equally upon New York’s elevated railway and his

⁵² See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-1.php>.

⁵³ “A”, p. 3.

⁵⁴ “A”, p. 3.

⁵⁵ “A”, p. 4.

⁵⁶ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-1.php>.

memories of the evening's concert; his glimpse of the aesthetic ineffable bringing with it intimations of immortality and of an art as ungraspable as the rushing 'el': 'not dying' but also not dyeing; 'leaving no traces': Zukofsky's most straightforward evocation of Paterian aestheticism in "A"-1. "A"-1's 'Zukofsky' is seen to reject both high and low society in favour of a fleeting transcendental moment that he acknowledges as unattainable. On his return he is 'not boiling to put pen to paper',⁵⁷ and is capable only of a brief collage of the words of three modernist forebears: Pound, Williams and E.E. Cummings.⁵⁸ So much for a creative response to his experience of the *Passion*. 'Zukofsky' is a lonely aesthete; though 'Zukofsky' here reaches for Pater's flame, it eludes his grasp.

The *Passion* shows the Messiah in moments of unusual solitariness, the recitative of no. 26 (see Zukofsky's conflation of this recitative with the *Passion*'s final chorus, discussed above) is made up of verses of Matthew that suggest a fragile Christ. This moment is important because it speaks about the curious function of religion in "A"-1, adding another layer to the aesthetic, utopian, religious complex:

And he came and found them asleep again: For their eyes were heavy. And He left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

Then cometh He to His disciples, and saith unto them, 'Sleep on now, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; behold, he is at hand that doth betray Me.'⁵⁹

Picander expands upon this loneliness in sections such as no. 19, in which that vulnerability in Matthew is further emphasised:

O grief! how throbs His heavy-laden breast!
His spirit faints, how pale His weary face!

⁵⁷ "A", p. 4.

⁵⁸ Cummings is Zukofsky's forgotten modernist forebear. In 'Program: "Objectivists" 1931' he calls the following list of works 'absolutely necessary to students of poetry': 'Ezra Pound – *XXX Cantos* (Paris, 1930); William Carlos Williams – *Spring and All* (Dijon, 1923); Marianne Moore's *Observations* (New York, 1924); T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (New York, 1922), and *Marina* (London 1930); E. E. Cummings' *Is 5* (New York, 1926)'. [*Prepositions* +, p. 189.] The politicised voices of the second and third sections of *Is 5* are an important influence on what Zukofsky calls 'the invectives' [*P/Z*, p. 79] of the early sections of "A".

⁵⁹ A lightly condensed version of Matthew 26, 43-54.

He to the Judgement-hall is brought,
 There is no help, no comfort near.
 The powers of darkness now assail Him,
 His chosen friends will soon forsake Him.
 Ah! if me love Thy stay could be.
 If I could gauge Thy grief, and share it,
 Could make it less, or help to bear it,
 How gladly would I watch with Thee[.]⁶⁰

Picander's Christ is isolated and without agency; with even his few disciples gone and without the opportunity to physically resist his captors, the son of God experiences an existential difficulty to which Zukofsky compares his own 'Zukofsky', further dramatising the conceptual confusions of "A"-1.

"A"-1 concludes with a final quotation from the *Passion*'s libretto:

Dogs cuddling to lampposts [sic],
 Maybe broken forged iron,
 "Ye lightnings, ye thunders
 In clouds are ye vanished?"
 Open, O fierce flaming pit!"⁶¹

This section is taken from chorus no, 27b:

Have lightnings and thunders their fury forgotten?
 Then open, o fathomless pit, all thy terrors!
 Destroy them, o'erwhelm them, devour them, consume them
 With tumult of rage,
 The treach'rous betrayer, the merciless throng.

This moment finds Christ betrayed; the chorus cast imprecations initially upon His betrayer, but then audaciously question nature and God Himself for failing to immediately destroy Judas and those that came for Jesus – in the section that Zukofsky quotes the chorus asks where the 'thunders' and 'lightnings' can be that they do not strike down Jesus' betrayers (a parallel to the main action of "A"-1). The interpolation of this fragment, from the centre of the *Passion*, shortly before the end of its first section,

⁶⁰ This is the recitative section of the *Passion*'s no. 19. This translation is even further from Biblical austerity than Picander's German and it should be remembered that Zukofsky's *Passion* was mediated through such a translation.

⁶¹ "A", p. 5.

at one of the work's most climactic points, suggests an impassioned plea from the young poet that the industrialists of the preceding lines be obliterated, at the same time as adding an apocalyptic flavour to the movement's conclusion. That Picander gives these violent lines to the still moment of Christ's betrayal in the garden of Gethsemane reinforces Zukofsky's picture of a vulnerable Jesus.⁶²

It should be noted at this stage how quickly Zukofsky would move from the almost static equivocation of "A"-1 to a far clearer, materialist view of history and literature in his long poem, a move that would also be clear in his short poems, especially between the sequences '29 Poems' and '29 Songs', produced contemporaneously with "A"-1 to 8. By the time he came to write "A"-6 (dated 12th to 16th August 1930)⁶³ Zukofsky would be referring to Bach's composition as 'a particular',⁶⁴ a distinctly Poundian turn of phrase that suggests the younger poet was at this time seeing Bach's piece in Objectivist terms, its musical complexities and historiography outstripping the importance of the libretto; through the remainder of "A" Bach's music is referenced regularly though there is never again such a concentration on a libretto as there is in "A"-1. In 'Program: "Objectivists" 1931' Zukofsky writes:

It is understood that historic and contemporary particulars may mean a thing or things as well as an event or a chain of events: i.e., an Egyptian pulled-glass bottle in the shape of a fish or oak leaves, as well as the performance of Bach's *Matthew Passion* in Leipzig, or the Russian revolution and the rise of metallurgical plants in Siberia.⁶⁵

⁶² '[T]he great Magnus' and the Capitalist slave-drivers of Argentina are familiar from Pound's work of this period; Magnus' greasy opulence reminiscent of 'Metevsky' (Basil Zaharoff) and his profiteering cronies in canto 18 (published in 1928, the year Zukofsky started work on "A"-1), which begins with 'War, one war after another, / Men start 'em who couldn't put up a good hen-roost', [*The Cantos*, p. 83] while the Argentinean anecdote calls to mind the 'usurers in excelsis' [*The Cantos*, p. 55] of Pound's Jim X canto, canto 12 (1925).

⁶³ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-6.php>.

⁶⁴ "A", p. 24.

⁶⁵ *Prepositions* +, p. 189. The 'Russian revolution' would be dropped from Zukofsky's final contraction of this essay in 1967 (See *Prepositions* +, p. 12.).

The reader's attention is drawn here to the moment of the *Passion*'s first performance, a historical locus that the 1928 revival is contrasted with in "A"-1. In "A"-8's summation of the poem's preceding movements (dated 1935-37) Zukofsky offers a materialist account of the *Passion*, one that focuses on the piece's curious 1729 first performance, jettisoning "A"-1's concern with aesthetic experience and the life of Christ for a historiographic and integrally utopian contextualisation of the piece:⁶⁶

And of labor:
 Light lights in air,
 on streets, on earth, in earth –
 Obvious as that horses eat oats –
 Labor as creator,
 Labor as creature,
 To right praise.

THREE HOURS
 AGONY
 IN THIS CHURCH
 GOOD FRIDAY

To provide the two Choirs the work demanded
 He employed his *chorus primus* and *chorus*
 secundus
 Choruses comparatively simple,
 Within the competence of singers
 Not called on to sing figural music,
 The Thomaskirche could provide the two organs
 the score prescribes,
 (The larger, in the west gallery, a two-manual
 instrument)
 Two orchestras composed of the town's musicians,
 Players in the Thomasschule, University *studiosi*,
 And members of Bach's Collegium Musicum[.]⁶⁷

Here Zukofsky expands upon the brief outline of "A"-1 to describe the circumstances surrounding Bach's first performance of the *St Matthew Passion*: the 'THREE HOURS / AGONY' are both Christ's agony and the unexpected three hour concert on hard church pews for the congregation of the Thomaskirche. Zukofsky is careful to adumbrate the technicalities of the innovative double chorus, drawing attention to the

⁶⁶ This dating was commonly accepted when Zukofsky began work on "A", though the *St Matthew Passion* is now generally thought to have been played for the first time in 1727.

⁶⁷ "A", p. 43.

intended polyphony imitated both within and between the early movements of “A”. The poet is outlining the particular elements that go to make up Bach’s great work, Bach’s masque as much a ‘thing’ made of antiphonal choruses as “A” is an object, suspended between its quotation marks. This idea of the *Passion* as a ‘particular’ foregrounds its structure and its methodology and paces it within a carefully defined historical context, a use that coincides with the contemporaneous prose theorisation of his poetics Zukofsky would attempt in *Poetry* and *An “Objectivists” Anthology*, and one that continues the utopian historiographic concerns of Pound’s developing *Cantos* method.

The opening of “A”-2, antiphonal and dialectic as “A”-1, also suggests the distance Zukofsky wishes to open between the words of the *Passion* and its musical significance:

– Clear music –
Not calling you names, says Kay,
Poetry is not made of such things,
Music, itch according to its wonts,
Snapped old catguts of Johann Sebastian,
Society, traduction twice over.⁶⁸

In response to the aestheticism of “A”-1 Kay (a figure representing, in part, Zukofsky’s friend at Columbia, Irving Kaplan, though he presents ideas attributable to Zukofsky himself)⁶⁹ reminds the poet of *The Communist Manifesto* (‘itch according to its wonts’; ‘each according to his needs’).⁷⁰ Hence materialism and social concerns are linked together in a utopianism set in fundamental opposition to aestheticism, a polarity that would persist throughout Zukofsky’s utopian phase.

In the foregoing I have attempted to describe some of the complex ways that Pound’s influence would work itself into the materials of “A”-1, and how the narrative of

⁶⁸ “A”, p. 6.

⁶⁹ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-2.php>.

⁷⁰ “A”, p. 6.

Zukofsky's struggles with aestheticism, utopianism and the grounds of his eventual paradisalism was coloured by Pound's example. Much of this was already in place when Pound and Williams first looked at "A"-1 in 1928, though the discussions that followed would further complicate Zukofsky's relation with his mentors while catalysing the dialectical nature of his projected long poem. I will now turn to Pound's work on the 1928 typescript of "A"-1 and Pound and Zukofsky's associated correspondence, as well as addressing the contribution of Zukofsky's other mentor, Williams.

"A"-1 would pass through five key versions: two copies of the same typed draft that were sent to both Pound and Williams in the autumn of 1928, with Pound marking up the first three sides of his copy; another version of that same draft amended by Zukofsky soon after; the version printed in *An "Objectivists" Anthology* in 1932 and a manuscript version with further edits prepared in 1942 that would form the basis of all future printings of "A"-1, including Origin Press's *"A" 1-12* (1959) and the University of California's complete edition (1978). A consideration of how and why Zukofsky changed "A"-1 as it passed through this genealogy will inform my reading of his early relations with Pound, and will provide an underlying narrative for his utopian, and then paradisal, poetics.

When the first drafts of "A"-1 and 2 were ready in the autumn of 1928 Zukofsky sent copies to both Pound and Williams, eliciting commentaries from both poets. Williams's involvement with "A" is prefigured in his essay 'An Essay on Virginia' (1925): 'Begin with A to remain intact, redundant not even to the amount of a reflective title',⁷¹ and the 1928 typescript would surface in the Williams/Zukofsky correspondence before Zukofsky spoke of it to Pound. On the 30th of August 1928 Williams writes: 'I count on seeing the beginning of the Poem beginning "A". It is the logical completion of your

⁷¹ *Imaginations*, p. 321.

original idea and you alone should do it.’⁷² He was still waiting at the beginning of October, finally receiving what sounds like the typescript of “A”-1 and -2 with a letter marked by Zukofsky as ‘Oct 17/28’.⁷³ His response was positive:

What a swell idea you have hit on with which to open your poem. I was thrilled at once. Why is it you have unerringly struck a major note in your two longer poems whereas I find nothing of it in the earlier shorter things? [...]

Anyway, I was thrilled by your beginning – and from that moment to this I have been nearly torn apart by the exigencies of my practice.⁷⁴

The tone of self-deprecation is characteristic of Williams, and continues in his next letter as he attempts a fuller response:

I don’t as yet know what it is all about any more that I do of some of Pound’s best things – or my own, for that matter. It is, however, fully up to your best work.

[...]

The thing is that when you are at your best there is a beauty all over the work that comes out of the words as an emanation comes out of a woman to us at times.⁷⁵

Williams gives a more considered appraisal of “A”-1 and -2 in his letter of the 20th of December, beginning with a contradiction of his earlier praise: ‘so far I like the last two of the small group and – not the beginning of “A” – but later where it gets swinging.’⁷⁶ He continues with ‘nothing I see here comes up to “The”’,⁷⁷ another volte-face since October. Williams goes on to give a series of practical injunctions concerning Zukofsky’s style; complaining about the use of repetition, though the repetitions that he dislikes are integral to Zukofsky’s discursive poetics at this time, and essential to the argument of the beginning of “A”. Williams would reiterate throughout his career that he could not understand Zukofsky’s work, and would never get close enough to it to pass

⁷² *W/Z*, p. 15. Williams’s nebulous message here contains submerged clues suggestive of Zukofsky’s early conception of “A”. William refers to “A” as ‘the Poem beginning “A”’, revealing a structural link to ‘Poem Beginning “The”’, while his injunction that Zukofsky ‘alone should do it’ reads like a polite refusal of a posited collaboration on the project.

⁷³ In a letter dated by Williams as sent on October 10th 1928, soon after meeting Zukofsky, Williams complained that he had ‘wanted to see the beginning of your new poem’. [*W/Z*, p. 17.]

⁷⁴ *W/Z*, p. 17.

⁷⁵ *W/Z*, p. 18.

⁷⁶ *W/Z*, p. 25.

⁷⁷ *W/Z*, p. 25.

on extensive advice. In his 1959 essay ‘Zukofsky’, which would be appended, after edits by Zukofsky, to the Origin Press edition of “A” 1-12 (the first publication of any part of “A” in book form since *An “Objectivists” Anthology*), he writes: ‘I for one was baffled by him. I often did not know what he was driving at.’⁷⁸ As the rest of this essay demonstrates, Williams, over thirty years after their initial exchange over “A”-1, and after producing much of his own long poem *Paterson* (1946-58), had not yet come to terms with “A”. For now Pound’s advice would be more important.

A few days later, on Christmas Eve, Pound joined the fray from Rapallo: ‘IF you want the pome “A” to be read, you’ll have to sweat like hell on the first three pages’,⁷⁹ much as Pound had as he drafted the early *Cantos*. At around this time Pound sent Zukofsky back his typescript of the first two pages of “A”-1 with extensive annotations suggesting possible improvements.

When Pound edited *The Waste Land* he told Eliot to ‘particularize’,⁸⁰ a directive that undergirds many of Pound’s instructions here. Pound searches out slacknesses in the already sparse poetry: against the third line commenting on Zukofsky’s ‘clear music’ that ‘obviously if fiddles play Bach they play music’. Zukofsky would dutifully drop the ‘clear music’ line, initially changing it to ‘The double chorus’ in the hand-amended version that he sent to Pound shortly after,⁸¹ a version that made Zukofsky’s intent clearer, though this revision would in turn be edited out with the 1942 revision. Pound robustly insists that the female audience members that Zukofsky mentions in the seventh line are ‘obviously NOT gents[,] bare arms’, and also takes issue with ‘White matronly flounces, cloth’ (a line that Williams singles out for praise, complaining that ‘[t]he images on this first page come too fast, they joggle and nothing is distinctively set down

⁷⁸ “A” 1-12, p. 291.

⁷⁹ *P/Z*, p. 25.

⁸⁰ *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript*, p. 107.

⁸¹ This unpublished draft is also to be found in the ‘Manuscripts by Others’ section of the Pound archive at the Beinecke.

save “white matronly flounces”⁸²). Pound dismisses the line with ‘founce usually is cloth’, an opinion that would win out over Williams: the line is combined with the remnants of the following line to become ‘Matronly flounces, starched, heaving’ in 1942.

Williams was for the most part, however, in accordance with Pound on such issues; and both would object to Zukofsky’s use of repetition, though, in fact, Pound’s blue-pencilling notwithstanding, Zukofsky’s mode often seems an imitation of Pound’s voice in *Cathay* (1915), a collection that would influence the short poems Zukofsky wrote contemporaneously with the early stretches of “A”. In ‘The Beautiful Toilet’ Pound has ‘Blue, blue is the grass about the river’ and ‘White, white of face’,⁸³ and in ‘Poem by the Bridge at Ten-Shin’ ‘Sorrow to go, and sorrow, sorrow returning, / Desolate, desolate fields’⁸⁴ instances that sound much like Zukofsky’s first draft version of “A”-1 (particularly the combined repetition and inversion of the first instance in ‘The Beautiful Toilet’). Again in accordance with Williams, Pound complains at Zukofsky’s ‘A / Thousand fiddles playing Bach’, pragmatically adjusting this estimate (and ignoring the historical conflation Zukofsky is presumably trying for with this hyperbole): ‘rubbish = probably about 30, possibly 16’,⁸⁵ while Williams complains ‘Why “thousand” in the first line[?]’,⁸⁶ causing Zukofsky to adjust his estimate, though he would avoid abject defeat by abandoning the numerical and deciding on a non-specific ‘Round of fiddles playing Bach.’⁸⁷ This reaction against the multiple is characteristic of Pound’s editing technique: in his comments on *The Waste Land* typescript he changes ‘gardens’ to

⁸² *W/Z*, p. 25.

⁸³ *P&T*, p. 249.

⁸⁴ *P&T*, p. 254.

⁸⁵ Beinecke.

⁸⁶ *W/Z*, p. 25.

⁸⁷ “A”, p. 1.

‘garden’ and ‘mountains’ to ‘mountain’ on the same page.⁸⁸ Such cuts, recommended by both poets, are evidence of Zukofsky’s modernist schooling, his mentors pragmatically initiating him, in a process sped-up by these older poets’ hindsight, into both a set of poetic techniques and an associated system of thought. Pound and Williams had spent their time in the wilderness and could be helpful to this younger poet, offering a series of recommendations that were in agreement with the strictures of the Imagists and the modernist philosophy these poets arguably followed. Zukofsky is pushed towards away from looseness and tautology towards the exact, singular and particular, a direction that would lead towards his theorisation of the Objectivists soon after this exchange, though Zukofsky would react against elements of Imagist doctrine including, prominently, their emphasis on the visual.

The beginnings of Zukofsky’s resistance to the strictures of his mentors can be seen in his reaction to their more general advice. As his own revision of the typescript sent to Pound and Williams shows, the younger poet follows almost all their specific textual recommendations but leaves the architecture of his poem unchanged. This general advice is mostly focused around the contentious poles of Zukofsky’s approach to the unconventional sound of his verse and the visual impact of his imagery, both of which would become breaking points between the Objectivists and Imagism. Pound cautions that ‘this constant vocative destroys impression’ and that there are ‘[t]oo many vocatives’, but Zukofsky would retain this part of speech in all the subsequent versions of “A”-1. Both Williams and Pound attack Zukofsky’s ‘staccato’: Pound thinks the ‘constant staccato stops one too often’ while Williams complains of the ‘joggle’⁸⁹ of images on the first page, yet Zukofsky responds to these complaints by exaggerating this quality, cutting back to the cluster of images that make up the definitive “A”-1 of 1942,

⁸⁸ *The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript*, p. 83.

⁸⁹ *W/Σ*, p. 25.

writing to Pound that '[y]ou wanted me to omit Staccato in A1 - & I think emphasized it'.⁹⁰ Both Pound and Williams complain of the lack of visual imagery, Pound, in the vicinity of his complaints about 'vocatives', writes that the 'reader cant see' while Williams 'cannot see at all. or I see only spots'.⁹¹ This associated refusal of both the visual and Pound and Williams's idea of the music of poetry predicts a non-visual version of Imagism that would be important for "A", for Zukofsky's short poetry of this period and for his prose theorisation of the Objectivist verse.

The procedure by which Zukofsky adopts Pound's suggestions also predicts his later tendencies. "A"-1's progress from the drafts of 1928 towards its final version in "A" 1-12 is almost wholly one of excision. There is little in the 1942 version of "A"-1 that is not in Zukofsky's first draft, though almost every line has had something cut from it. On the rare occasions when Zukofsky adds to a line this happens in unobtrusive fashion, though he often radically alters the sense of lines while drafting sections of "A" by moving punctuation or rearranging syntax, as in lines 10 and 11 of the final "A"-1, where he moves a comma from before to after 'motley', changing this word from an unusual noun into a conventional adjective, and, at the same time, realigning line 11 with line 10 rather than line 12. Thus 'Dead century where is your motley, / Country people in Leipzig'⁹² becomes 'Dead century, where are your motley / Country people in Leipzig'.⁹³ This method of revision would remain an essential part of Zukofsky's practice, and a compositional theme in his later work.

⁹⁰ *P/Z*, p. 81.

⁹¹ *W/Z*, p. 25.

⁹² *AOA*, p. 112.

⁹³ "A", p. 1. The manuscript of this revision of "A"-1 to 6 (HRC) is not entirely clear. The tail of the 'y' of 'motley' is deformed, and reaches back up towards the right of the body of the letter in what may be a blot and what may be a distended comma. Whether by design or contingency this change is retained in the 1959's Origin Press edition of "A" 1-12 and in the 1978 University of California Press publication of the complete "A".

Eliot would repeatedly commend Pound as an editor, stating in 1959 that '[h]e was a marvellous critic because he didn't try to turn you into an imitation of himself.'⁹⁴ However, as the 1930s began there were moments when a more complex form of influence was passed between Pound and Zukofsky. This new phase of Pound's mentoring began with a self-conscious analysis of his own influence: in a letter dated 27th November 1930 Pound refers to "A"-1 to -7 as 'one development or fugue [...] produced by Ludwig von Zuk and Sohn, on not always digested meat of his forebears',⁹⁵ and then goes on to attack the 'final contortion' of Zukofsky's canzone in "A"-7. In 1928 Pound had advised '[w]here accusation possibly false, that reminiscence of E.P. [...] alter, when possible',⁹⁶ a statement that simultaneously allowed that Zukofsky may not be influenced by 'E.P.' at all and that Pound's influence might be so ingrained in the poetry of "A" that it would not be 'possible' to remove it. Now Pound is clearer about his own influence on Zukofsky, insisting that the structural procedures of "A", and particularly those of "A"-7, are derived from his work, urging Zukofsky to desist from this imitation. The younger poet was not persuaded, and in "A"-9 he would approach Cavalcanti's 'Donna mi priegha' in a similar fashion to that proscribed in "A"-7: Zukofsky would stubbornly retain the influence of Pound even as Pound attempted to influence him against doing so. For Zukofsky at this point in their relationship both writing like Pound and not writing like him seem to be the result of Pound's influence.

Pound's criticism continues, instructing Zukofsky to 'eliminate top dressing inherited. / You'll have to work at that, just as hard as I did to get Roberto de Brownening's [...] vocabulary outer my system.' Pound's pupil must 'make it new', but only while conforming to his teacher's dicta of what to make and how to be new.

⁹⁴ In an interview with Donald Hall in 1959 for *The Paris Review*, quoted in Hall's *Remembering Poets*, p. 206.

⁹⁵ *P/Z*, pp. 75-77.

⁹⁶ *P/Z*, p. 25.

Zukofsky is then persuaded towards a period of recapitulation, suggesting a plan reminiscent of Pound's time spent rearranging the early cantos:

Wots to be done about that? Possibly PATIENCE.

Not spoiling the sheep for a ha'porth o' tar. But conserving reservativeness and returning to the poem.

[...]

"A" a work not in but showing progress.

You have not wasted the year or however long it has been.

Zukofsky should return to his desk and begin again. Here Pound is attempting to marshal the kind of influence he has on Zukofsky, endorsing the imitation of his own working practices, but repudiating any imitation of the texture of his work. Zukofsky would reply with self-criticism, insisting that had he 'seen Cantos XIV, XV, and XVI and the later American ones before I wrote A 1 & 2, the poem would never have been written [...] I had started <without knowing it,> something in 1928 which you had started in 1908'.⁹⁷ The younger poet admission is double-edged, for while he admits to mistakenly embarking upon a project apparently identical to *The Cantos*, he simultaneously denies knowledge of that text, reinvesting his own production with originality, the *sine qua non* of modernism. It is hard to know how much experience Zukofsky had of *The Cantos* at this stage. In 1930 he insists on his ignorance of *The Cantos* when he began "A", writing that when he began work on "A" in 'late 1927 or early 1928, I had not seen the 3 Mts. edtns of your Cantos. Had read only the early ones in Lustra & 4, 5, & 6 in Poems 1918-21'.⁹⁸ Later Zukofsky would write to Lorine Niedecker that he 'had *not* seen any of Cantos at that time',⁹⁹ and by 1935 had begun to

⁹⁷ *P/Z*, p. 79. This letter is dated December 12th 1930. See *P/Z*, pp. 77-83.

⁹⁸ *P/Z*, p. 78. Zukofsky draws attention to the links with between the invective of the closing sections of "A"-I and the 'Metevsky' sections of *The Cantos*.

⁹⁹ Quoted in Sandra Kumamoto Stanley's *Louis Zukofsky and the Transformation of a Modern American Poetics*, p. 46.

feel that perhaps there had also been some influence in the other direction. In an unpublished, unsent draft of a letter to Pound Zukofsky wrote that his

sober eye noticeth that in the new eleven Cantos you write about the audience in black at the Matthew Passion, matter handled in “A” (~~I’m not comparing how it was handled~~) and that you write about certain matters in a vein similar to “A” (you might look up “Active” [...] “Played polo / and they – they – the very old stutterers,” etc) I believe in the same Canto.¹⁰⁰

The difficulty in determining how much of *The Cantos* Zukofsky knew as he began “A”, and the poet’s defensiveness on this matter, reveals a complex transferral of influence in “A” that would colour the whole of that poem and contribute to the formulation of his paradise at its end and in the sequences that followed.¹⁰¹

After the 1930 attack on “A” Zukofsky would re-evaluate his position, writing that:

The only things that might possibly save me would be the objective evaluation of my own experience [...] and a natural ability (or perverseness) for wrenching English so that (again, possibly) it might attain a diction of distinction not you, or Eliot, or Bill, or anyone before me.¹⁰²

This is a crucial moment for Zukofsky’s development: after Pound’s assistance in editing “A”-1, and after his advice on “A”-1 to -7, Zukofsky is set on creating his own style in contrast to his masters, one that will make ample use of his predilection for the ‘wrenching of English’, a ‘perverseness’ that many, including Pound and Basil Bunting,

¹⁰⁰ From an unpublished, unsent draft of a letter from Zukofsky to Pound, dated April 8 1935, [HRC] The canto from which Zukofsky chooses to cite his influence on Pound in an uncomfortable one, canto 35, the ‘Mitteleuropa’ canto. Described by Donald Davie as ‘the first display of Pound’s anti-Semitism’. [*Studies in Ezra Pound*, p. 119.]

¹⁰¹ Zukofsky’s contribution to Williams’s career is more readily apprehendable, resulting in a more conventional and equitable exchange; his editorial role around sections of Williams’s work is well known: he helped cut and restructure both *The Descent of Winter* (1928) and *The Wedge* (1944) for publication, earning a dedication in the second volume. Bunting suggests that Williams ‘learned in a series of consultations with Zukofsky in the 1920s how to make his poetry much tighter – to leave out what didn’t matter, what the reader could supply for himself, what merely repeated or served only for elegant variation.’ [*BOP*, p. 161.]

¹⁰² *P/Z*, p. 79.

would criticise.¹⁰³ Pound's commentaries, in contradiction to Williams's, led Zukofsky to a statement that predicts what was to come in "A": as the more obvious 'Poundisms' of "A" fall away Pound's hand can still be felt, their collaboration takes on the characteristics of a Bloomian anxiety of influence: Zukofsky's swerves away from *The Cantos* serving to cement his poem's underlying connection to Pound. This influence is particularly clear in the repetition of the dialectical development of Zukofsky's relation to utopia and then paradise, and would effectively determine the manner in which Zukofsky's paradise would develop. The shift from utopia to paradise and the attempted sublation of utopian politics into his paradisaical vision would be the central moment of the exchange of influence in Zukofsky's oeuvre, and the foundational exchange for this dissertation.

After the attack of 1930 Pound ceased his support of "A". In a carbon copy of a letter to Bunting from the mid-1930s Pound states his late position with some force:

I TOLD him years ago that he had set out on a full length poem TOO SOON.
 He had enough for a 20 or 20 page poem.
 That is NOT the same thing as having a subject for a full length epos, or nepos or whatever.
 AND the dead beginning, prob/ all part of the same error[.]¹⁰⁴

The beginning that Pound had once spent time shaping is now rejected, though, curiously, as Pound continues his diatribe he compares Zukofsky with Yeats, a poet whose influence upon Pound is unquestionable: 'dead as Yeats/ and More static/ Yeats

¹⁰³ In October 1938 Bunting would send this ambivalent criticism of the canzone that ends "A"-8 to Zukofsky:

You will allow that it is crabbed, as is also the original model. Well, deem me dull. The noises are angular, but ok as ever. If I were certain I followed the reasoning I've no doubt it is also close, angular, ok. But so far I'm detracked at the junction of lines six and seven and though in time I may lever myself back onto the permanent way for the moment I'm in no position to proceed beyond.

The age of poems for commentators returns. Stil nuovo, you wouldnt like me to call it dolce. Go ahead, man, you canzoneer, old mole whose diggings will want charting. [From an unpublished letter, HRC]

¹⁰⁴ From an unpublished letter. [Beinecke, YCAL MSS 43, Box 280.]

at least worried by subconscious feeling he is dead, and the stuff slop; but clinging to habit of being a writer.¹⁰⁵ This is a sign of how focused Pound had now become on his materialist utopia, rejecting as ‘dead’ any hint of decadent Victorian spiritualism in Yeats, and by this time Zukofsky, presumably because of the extended aesthetic equivocation with which “A” begins, has been associated with such thought.

“A”-1 is a vivid dramatisation of the conceptual struggles and changes Zukofsky’s poetry was going through at the turn of the 1930s. As he dealt with these changes in “A”-1 the movement became a testing ground for how “A” was to proceed, with various models tested and refused before his project could continue. Thus Dante and aestheticism would be tested, and rejected, to be found only in transformed states in the rest of the poem. At the heart of these changes was Pound, whose influence Zukofsky experienced directly through Pound’s work on the 1928 typescript of “A”-1 and his advice and strictures throughout this period, and indirectly as the wealth of Poundian material to be found in the version of “A”-1 that predates Pound’s intervention demonstrates. “A”-1 was, however, effectively complete before the most important contextual events during this period for Zukofsky’s work had played out, with the Wall Street Crash and the Great Depression occurring after Zukofsky and Pound had moved on to other projects. The effects of these events would be crucial to Zukofsky’s development, and were particularly so for the discussion between the aesthetic moment and the materialist political impulse, and can best be perceived in the short poems that Zukofsky was writing as these events unfolded: the sequences ‘29 Poems’ and ‘29 Songs’. In my next section I will read the poems that make up these sequences for evidence of both Zukofsky’s increasingly utopian political concerns and his evolving relationship with Pound.

¹⁰⁵ From an unpublished letter. [Beinecke, YCAL MSS 43, Box 280.]

ii) ‘Environs – the sea’:¹⁰⁶ Cathay, Venice, Long Island and the East River; Four Utopian Locales in Early Pound and Zukofsky

In contradiction to much criticism on Zukofsky, in particular that of Poundians, “A” was not the poet’s sole organ of his aesthetic-utopian dialectic at the turn of the 1930s. His often overlooked short poems, especially those that would make up the two sequences ‘29 Poems’ (1923-29)¹⁰⁷ and ‘29 Songs’ (1931-34) and would be collected in *55 Poems* (1941), contribute to the narrative of how his poetry sought to address contemporary political developments. In order to negotiate the changes evidences in his shorter poems through this period a recontextualisation of Zukofsky’s work at this time is required. Partly because of the precedent the poet himself set in *Autobiography* (1970) and the reference to ‘H.J. intensely in / New York the year that I was born’¹⁰⁸ in “A”-18 (1964-66), the context attributed to this early poems has tended to focus on the turbulence of the turn-of-the-century Yiddish-speaking Lower East Side, with particular reference to

¹⁰⁶ *AOA*, p. 134.

¹⁰⁷ Information relating to dating of these sequences is from Twitchell-Waas’s *Z-Site*: see <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/29-Poems.php> and <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/29-Songs.php>.

¹⁰⁸ “A”, p. 397.

Henry James's depiction of the neighbourhood in *The American Scene* (1907). In *Autobiography* Zukofsky writes:

I was born in Manhattan, January 23, 1904, the year Henry James returned to the American scene to look at the Lower East Side. The contingency appeals to me as a forecast of the first-generation American infusion into twentieth-century literature.¹⁰⁹

Steve Shoemaker makes much of this connection,¹¹⁰ as does Scroggins in *Louis Zukofsky and the Poetry of Knowledge*¹¹¹ and, more extensively, in *The Poem of a Life*.¹¹² Later in *Autobiography* Zukofsky undercuts his centrality to that 'transfusion', however, with another reference to James's book: 'it was not until 1965 that an easily accessible volume of my poetry appeared on the American scene'.¹¹³ The poet is at one remove from both the American scene and *The American Scene*, intimating with his pun that too close a connection to James may be unwarranted. Zukofsky has nothing to say about James's ambivalent depiction of Lower East Side Jewry beyond that 'intensely' in "A"-18 and instead allows his opinion of *The American Scene* to be inferred: the reference in "A"-18 and tacit approval of its first appearance in *Autobiography* suggest that Zukofsky appreciated James's daring forays into working-class New York, though the bitter second reference suggests some anger at his exclusion from James's America. As Shoemaker makes clear in his essay, James's view of the Jewish population of the Lower East Side was hostile, and *The American Scene* presents a picture of an overcrowded social and linguistic maelstrom, the fusion from which Zukofsky's 'infusion' would develop. Such context fits well with the polyglot 'Poem Beginning "The"' with its downtown references and Yiddish translations, but does not offer an explanation of the poems that follow: the sequences '29 Poems' and '29 Songs' and the early stretches of "A".

¹⁰⁹ *Autobiography*, p. 13.

¹¹⁰ 'Between Contact and Exile', *Upper Limit Music*, pp. 23-43.

¹¹¹ *The Poetry of Knowledge*, p. 21.

¹¹² *PLF*, pp. 21-23.

¹¹³ *Autobiography*, p. 43.

Zukofsky attached James to his vision of New York retrospectively; Scroggins writes that he did not actually read *The American Scene* until 1946¹¹⁴ while his widow Celia, in an interview with Terrell, stated that Zukofsky ‘felt that he should have read James earlier’¹¹⁵ and that most of his careful reading of James occurred in the last ten years of his life. This does not mean that it is a mistake to connect James’s and Zukofsky’s New Yorks, though it should at least suggest that Zukofsky’s early depictions of his city descend from a wider set of forebears and more complicated web of influences than a concentration on James might imply. In fact, the early short poems present a view of New York City unrelated to James’s in *The American Scene*, offering instead an admixture of an elementally re-imagined aestheticised beach life and a depopulated industrial seascape that together combine into a radically new way of looking at the city. Both are quintessential New York locales, though quite foreign to James’s Lower East Side.

I shall first address ‘29 Poems’ in the context of Long Island Beach, the scene of the many elementally transcendent moments in that sequence. Pater is still a foundational presence in this setting, and a sensuous aesthetic moment is central to a series of Zukofsky’s short poems at this time that address recollections of summers spent on this beach. After the Zukofskys’ final remove to Port Jefferson, Long Island, in October 1973¹¹⁶ Zukofsky would write the final pages of his paradise in a locale only a few miles away from the Long Island beach of the early lyrics,¹¹⁷ and already in the mid-

¹¹⁴ *PLF*, p. 21.

¹¹⁵ *Louis Zukofsky: Man and Poet*, p. 71.

¹¹⁶ *PLF*, p. 436.

¹¹⁷ In addition to the transcendent moments interspersed throughout the ‘29’ sequences the Long Island beach is a repeated setting for his other early poems of this period, for example some of those included in the ‘Discarded Poems’ section of *Louis Zukofsky: Man and Poet*, with a couple dealing with Paterian moments identified as having been completed at ‘Long Beach’ [pp. 151-52], an unlikely, and otherwise undocumented sojourn of the young poet’s (unless they were written during the two visits Zukofsky made to fellow Chambers associate Irving Kaplan’s California home during the late 1920s, though Kaplan seems not to have moved west until after graduation in 1924, after the dating of the ‘Long Beach’ poems in ‘Discarded Poems’ [see *PLF*, p. 35]).

1920s Long Island beach was taking on a paradisaal form for the young poet. Scroggins describes a group of young Columbia graduates summering on the beach in 1924:

Whittaker Chambers and his friend Henry Bang, also a Columbia dropout, were camping on the Long Island beach after their Manhattan apartment burned out. Friends would join them there, among them Clifton Fadiman, Henry Zolinsky, and Zukofsky.¹¹⁸

The summer days spent with Chambers, who was described by Celia after Zukofsky's death as '[h]is closest friend at Columbia',¹¹⁹ on Long Island present a contrasting sea to the churning waters of the East River, and the reiterated sand, sun, blue sky and sea in the short works by Zukofsky during this period seem an invocation of the formative days this city-boy spent in the midst of an elemental American summer. Moments spent on this beach, function much as Pound's Garda shoreline in 'The Flame', and are recognisably Paterian in their privileging of sensual experience and the fleeting moment. In the 14th poem of '29 Poems' Zukofsky encounters a distinctly Paterian flame on his beach:

Only water –

We seek of the water
The water's love!

Shall we go again
Breast to water-breast,

Gather the fish-substance,
The shining fire,
The phosphor-subtlety?

We sing who were many in the South,
At each live river mouth
Sparse-sighted, carried along!¹²⁰

The openly Paterian aestheticism of 'Moments' lingers here, though there is a discernible utopian element. The fact that these moments are experienced with a group

¹¹⁸ *PLF*, p. 48.

¹¹⁹ In an interview with Terrell published in *Louis Zukofsky: Man and Poet* [p. 51]. See pp. 51-52 for Celia's description of Zukofsky's relations with Chambers and the Communist Party at Columbia.

¹²⁰ *CSP*, p. 29.

of increasingly politically minded Columbia intellectuals should be noted: by this time Chambers was a committed member of the Communist Party and working on his own aesthetically tinged utopian writing, while the other members of the group were following him leftwards. The Long Island beach is an essential element of the Chambers Circle's utopianism, revealing that a submerged aestheticism had as strong an influence on his utopianism as the science of Marxist-Leninism. This development is underlined by Chambers in *Witness* (1952) when he reveals the centrality of artistic production before political or philosophical texts to his development; insisting upon Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* as the foundation of his own utopian politics (and his eventual apostasy), that novel outlining to him for the first time 'the play of forces that carried me into the Communist Party, and carried me out'.¹²¹ A poetic project begun in 1923 that Chambers recalls in *Witness*, and which recalls Zukofsky's in some aspects, suggests how influenced by aestheticism Chambers's utopian political thinking was during those summers on Long Island:

I set about a definite poetic project. Its purpose was twofold. I wished to preserve through the medium of poetry the beautiful Long Island of my boyhood before it was destroyed forever by the advancing City. I wished to dramatize the continual defeat of the human spirit in our time, by itself and by the environment in which it finds itself.¹²²

The concept, however, of a politically conscious (Chambers's theme of 'the continual defeat of the human spirit' should be read as a code for the impulse behind Communism) poetic sequence that would fuse short, Imagistic poems (work by Chambers would appear in the Objectivist number of *Poetry*)¹²³ around the poles of a cherished and transitive rural Long Island milieu and an expanding capitalist New York metropolis.

¹²¹ See *Witness*, pp. 133-37.

¹²² *Witness*, p. 165.

¹²³ 'October 21st, 1926', [*Poetry*, vol. XXXVII, no. V, pp. 258-59.] a eulogy to Chambers's dead brother Richard, who would also be the subject of "A"-3.

The poems between 14 to 22 in ‘29 Poems’ inhabit this Long Island world most prominently, though it is an even more vaguely differentiated milieu than Zukofsky’s East River. 20 serves as an example of how free of geographical particulars these evocations of a summer on Long Island are (I reproduce it in its entirety):

Close your eyes,
the sun low – upon them

Sky grows down, one petal
Daisy petal, broad, luminous.
A wind that makes for blindness –
Sun[.]¹²⁴

Without biographical context this poem could occur more or less anywhere, by the Venetian lagoon as readily as the Long Island shore. A comparison with the manner in which Pound separated his glimpses of modern Paris and London and his timeless evocations of the orient in his Imagist work is instructive here. The characteristic tone of these moments in ‘29 Poems’ is one of contemplative transcendence in the midst of a stilled, exotic landscape familiar from Pound’s early evocations of Venice and other hallowed locales in *The Cantos*, echoing of both ‘The Flame’ and ‘Moments’ with their Paterianism. The sun and sea that Zukofsky attaches to his Long Island summer are also present in Pound’s *Cathay*: a sentence in ‘South-Folk in Cold Country’ reads simply ‘Sea sun.’¹²⁵ Water and sun are the primary ingredients of Zukofsky’s paradisaical moment, with the wind a frequent intruder, and all three are found together in various configurations, along with a Venetian colour scheme of blues and greens, throughout ‘29 Poems’. Zukofsky identifies the ‘Leopard, glowing-spotted’¹²⁶ of ‘Not much more than being’ as the constellation Camelopardalis for L.S. Dembo,¹²⁷ but this image also describes the dancing spots of sunlight and darkness on rippling water, an image used in

¹²⁴ *CSP*, p. 32.

¹²⁵ *P&T*, p. 259.

¹²⁶ *CSP*, p. 22.

¹²⁷ *Prepositions* +, p. 238.

Cathay with the ‘ripples like dragon-scales, going grass green on the water’¹²⁸ of the ‘Exile’s Letter’.

The other geographical context for these poems are the industrialised waterways around Brooklyn: the East River, Buttermilk Channel, Atlantic Basin, Erie Basin, Gowanus Bay and, most centrally, the Brooklyn Navy Yard Basin, a locale markedly different from anything in Pound and apparently equally removed from the Long Island beach scenes. Of these stretches of water the Brooklyn Navy Yard Basin would have been most consistently visible to Zukofsky. The Brooklyn Navy Yard Basin is located on the Brooklyn side of the bend in the East River across from the Lower East Side, between the Manhattan and Williamsburg Bridges, about a mile and half from Chrystie Street, where Zukofsky was born, at number 97,¹²⁹ and a half a mile from Willow Street in Brooklyn Heights, his most permanent address. The poet would have been able to see the Brooklyn Navy Yard from the window of subway trains as he crossed either the Manhattan Bridge or (until 1944) the Brooklyn Bridge, a crossing recounted in the third poem of ‘29 Poems’: ‘where on the air (elevated) / waves flash – and out – // leap / signalling – lights below’.¹³⁰ During this period of industrial boom (the Wall Street Crash would come six months after the completion of ‘29 Poems’) all of these stretches of water would have been busy, teeming with merchant vessels, ferries, transatlantic liners and the occasional warship. Zukofsky would have caught the Yard at a moment of unusual stillness: no ships were launched during the period of ‘29 Poems’, only one ship was launched through the 1920s, compared with ten during the rearmament of the 1930s (work was begun on four ships and three were launched during the period of ‘29

¹²⁸ *P&T*, p. 256.

¹²⁹ *PLF*, p. 11.

¹³⁰ *CSP*, p. 23.

Songs') and six during the teens.¹³¹ In 1920 work had begun on two 43,000 ton battleships, the U.S.S. South Dakota and the U.S.S. Indiana, but both were scrapped under the terms of the Naval Limitations Treaty in February 1922, before launch. After work ceased their partly constructed hulls (the South Dakota was 38.5% completed) were left to rust on the building ways until October/November 1923, just as Zukofsky's sequence got under way. The U.S.S. Pensacola, a 10,000 ton heavy cruiser, was begun on the 26th of 1926, midway through work on '29 Songs', and launched on the 25th of April 1929, months after the sequence was completed. The Pensacola, which would have been a growing presence in the landscape of the Yard throughout the period in which Zukofsky was working on his sequence, was commissioned on the 6th of February 1930, served in the Pacific through the Second World War and ended its service as a target vessel during the atomic tests at Bikini Atoll, a moment that would resonate in both "A" and *The Cantos*.¹³²

¹³¹ Contextual information relating to the Brooklyn Navy Yard from various websites including John R. Strobo's 'The Brooklyn Navy Yard: Civil Servants Building Warships' [<http://www.columbia.edu/~jrs9/BNY.html>] and the Naval Historical Centre website [<http://www.history.navy.mil/index.html>].

¹³² Leucothea's 'bikini', an updated version of the magic cloth with which Leucothea saves Odysseus in *The Odyssey* [See *A Companion to The Cantos of Ezra Pound*, p. 554] with overtones of the American nuclear weapon test programme at Bikini Atoll between 1946 and 1958, appears repeatedly in the later sections of *The Cantos*. Stephen Wilson's paper 'My bikini is worth yr/ raft': The Theme of Drowning and Rescue at the End of *Rock-Drill* and the Beginning of *Thrones*', presented at 22nd International Pound Conference in Venice, July 2007, explored this theme more fully. Also see pp. 630 and 659. In *Apocalypse and After: Modern Strategy and Postmodern Tactics in Pound, Williams, and Zukofsky* Bruce Comens explores this theme of nuclear apocalypse in the works of both writers.



[The launch of the U.S.S. Brooklyn on the 30th of November 1936, the Williamsburg Bridge can be seen in the background. The Brooklyn was a light cruiser of 10,000 tons, the same tonnage as the Pensacola.]

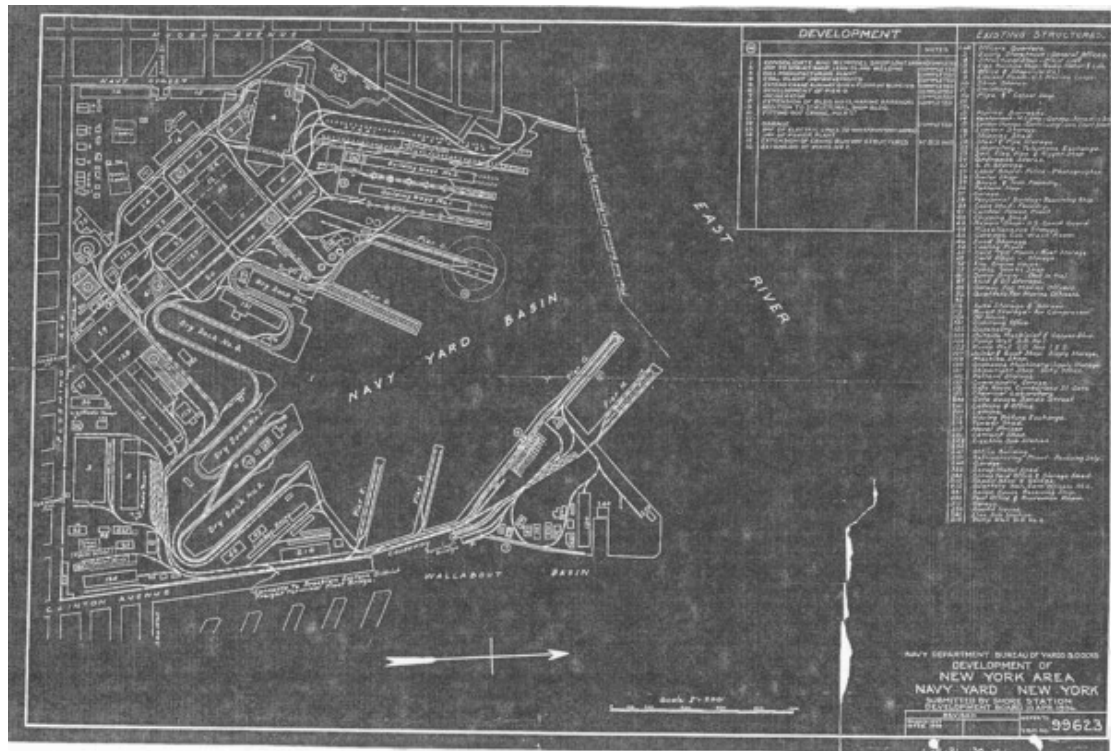
The manner in which Zukofsky chooses to depict this shifting industrial landscape is markedly different from the bustle applauded by Futurists and Vorticists. Wyndham Lewis's encomium on ports in *Blast* serves as an example of the worship of mechanical movement popular with that earlier generation:

BLESS ALL PORTS

PORTS, RESTLESS MACHINES of scooped out basins
 heavy insect dredgers
 monotonous cranes
 stations
 lighthouses. blazing
 through the frosty
 starlight, cutting the
 storm like a cake
 beaks of infant boats,
 side by side,
 heavy chaos of
 wharves,
 steep walls of
 factories
 womanly town

BLESS these MACHINES that work the little boats across clean liquid space in beelines.¹³³

There is more general and productive movement in this industrial seascape than we find in Zukofsky's. What both visions do share, however, is a lack of human beings. For Lewis people would interfere with the scale of his anthropomorphised machinery; the machines are his characters. For Zukofsky the elimination of the human from his landscape suggests, as I shall argue, some of the complexities of his developing political awareness.



[The Brooklyn Navy Yard in 1938]

The coming of rearmament would have radically altered Brooklyn's shore-scape; the Yard, relatively quiet during the writing of '29 Poems', would have been loud with ominous activity as '29 Songs' was drafted. The axis about which the two sets of poems turn around is, of course, the Wall Street Crash and the beginning of the Great

¹³³ From *Blast 1*, 1914. Reprinted in *Blasting and Bombardiering*, p. 45. Pound collected pictures of dockyard cranes for his projected 'Machine Art' project, some of which have now been published in *Machine Art & Other Writings*. [pp. 98-99.]

Depression in 1929, a fact referred to in the sequence's titles (neither sequence actually contains twenty-nine pieces: the first runs through 30, the second 31). The industrial landscape would have changed as desuetude set in; the parts of Brooklyn's shore that would have been most bustling during the 1920s (such as the massive Gowanus Bay area, a thriving centre of shipping since the 1860s) would have grown quieter, while as the Naval Limitations Treaty was progressively dismantled between 1930 and 1936 the Brooklyn Navy Yard would have experienced a renaissance.

This industrial landscape would provide the setting for a conscious politicisation of Zukofsky's work: his most openly utopian work of this period, though this utopianism would, nevertheless, contain traces of a submerged aestheticism. The final poem of '29 Songs', 'N.Y.', makes play with the number 29: when originally published in *Poetry* in September 1933 as '29' the poem was dated '(N.Y. 1/29/1933)',¹³⁴ the day that Zukofsky at that time believed to be his birthday (as he was born in 1904, 1933 would have marked his 29th year),¹³⁵ and began with a quotation from Shakespeare's 29th sonnet:

"At heaven's gate" the larks: have
Read to date the nth reversion, "re" Marx

Of the mind's image a hangar
A red crane – on the nearby wharves

In the spring-blue day – not working
But not out of languor

January the 29th, the 29th birthday
Falling on a Sunday

As planned there should be to-day
29 songs written over two years
And with, but without expected, pay

I have written down twenty-three
Leaving 5 and another page blank

To record a January without snow

¹³⁴ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/29-Songs.php>.

¹³⁵ For details of the confusion over Zukofsky's birth date see *PLF*, pp. 11-12.

For the delectation of the file and rank.¹³⁶

The poem is a summing up of the industrial background of both sequences, a circling around the conditions of the Great Depression, the year that it arrived and the radical solution Zukofsky sought. Zukofsky would be, in contrast to Pound, at least a partial supporter of Roosevelt's New Deal methods, and the rearmament America tentatively began when it began to back out of the Naval Limitations Treaty was a part of the New Deal spending designed to reinvigorate industrial areas such as the East River. Zukofsky's politics here are clearly congruent with New Deal utopianism.¹³⁷ In the second and third stanzas Zukofsky presents an image of industrial desolation more likely related to Gowanus Bay or the Atlantic or Erie basins than the Brooklyn Navy Yard, the 'red crane', an urban/industrial realignment of Williams's 'red wheelbarrow',¹³⁸ left unused because of the financial catastrophe that had befallen the city. Zukofsky's willingness to allow his endeavours to go without remuneration in this poem and his privileging of 'file' over 'rank' in the phrasal inversion at the poem's conclusion seem signs of support for the labouring man, though, as the final stanza self-deprecatingly suggests, the poor of New York would likely be more interested in a mild winter than in Zukofsky's songs.

In *A Test of Poetry* (finished in 1937, though unpublished until 1948)¹³⁹ Zukofsky suggests something of the manner in which his verse was moving away from Imagism at the same time as he began to consciously politicise his short verse. In his analysis of 'The Red Wheelbarrow' Williams's poem is initially commended for its visual qualities:

¹³⁶ *CSP*, p. 64.

¹³⁷ Zukofsky, unlike Pound, gained directly from New Deal projects, gaining employment with the Civil Works Administration in January 1934 [See *PLF*, p. 141]. Zukofsky had little positive to say about Roosevelt, though, again in contrast to Pound, his criticism castigates Roosevelt for not going far enough; for not instituting the kind of Socialist state Pound accused him of attempting to camouflage with the New Deal. [See *P/Z*, pp. xvii, 148 and 174.]

¹³⁸ *Collected Poems I*, p. 224.

¹³⁹ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-prose/A-Test-of-Poetry-1948.php>.

‘But for the first four words, this description might have been painted.’¹⁴⁰ Zukofsky, however, quickly makes it clear that it is those four words that are of most significance: ‘It may take only four words to shift the level at which emotion is held from neatness of surface to comprehension which includes surface and what is under it.’¹⁴¹ In his own poem Zukofsky is careful to attach his crane to cognition: the “re” Marx [remarks] / of the mind’s image’. The viscosity of these poems is very carefully balanced with their mental movements, for, though they at first appear to be primarily visual evocations of Zukofsky’s New York environs, they are without exception carefully wrought explorations of particular problems of thought, a fact which explains the near emptiness of Zukofsky’s wharfs, and which chimes with his themes of industrial breakdown in the 1930s. For the short poems of the 1920s the quiet of the treaty bound Navy Yard is his analogue: for the 1930s it is the industrial shoreline, abandoned by, and abandoning, its workers. Chambers would also describe this maritime industry of New York, employing a vocabulary close to Zukofsky’s: his short story ‘The Damned Fool’ describes an East River upon which ‘[t]he lights twinkled red, white and green and trembled in long liquid rays on the black waters.’¹⁴²

The poetry of Charles Reznikoff offers a socially conscious model for approaching this urban, industrial milieu. Many little poems among Reznikoff’s early sequences locate sudden moments of imagistic stillness within an urban milieu: a trope repeated in the less self-conscious sections of Zukofsky’s early sequences. With these short poems the Paterian ‘moment’ is shorn of its aesthetic baggage and used in support of a materialist, political project in an affront to apolitical Imagism and the feudalism of Pound’s medieval China. This would become the defining political development of Objectivist technique. Like Zukofsky’s, Reznikoff’s industrial world is depopulated:

¹⁴⁰ *A Test of Poetry*, p. 101.

¹⁴¹ *A Test of Poetry*, p. 101.

¹⁴² Quoted in Sam Tanenhaus’s *An Un-American Life*, p. 27.

The shopgirls leave their work
quietly.

Machines are still, tables and chairs
darken.

The silent rounds of mice and roaches begin.¹⁴³

In many of Reznikoff's very early poems the city and its peoples are present only through the suggestion of context: in the fourth section of *Rhythms II* (1919) Reznikoff evokes the collision of the natural order with the city in a manner that does not explicitly mention the city (the houses could be country houses), but derives much of its force from its implied urban setting:

I look across the housetops,
through the leaves in a black pattern:
where are you hidden, moon?

Surely I saw her,
broad-bosomed and golden,
coming toward us.¹⁴⁴

The sudden appearance of the moon would not be a surprise, or something to be doubted, outside of the man-made canyons of New York City: for the moment to hold the significance this poem intends the reader must apply an implicit urban environment. Reznikoff's poems enact the compression of the natural and the urban, offering a trope Zukofsky would make extensive use of.

These examples from Reznikoff make the strangeness of Zukofsky's East River more plausible and hint at that poetry's political connotations. Zukofsky detected the same kind of political positioning in Reznikoff's urban-Imagism as in his own work, sensing the abandonment of an older aesthetic in this admixture:

The verbal qualities of Reznikoff's shorter poems do not form mere pretty bits (American poetry, circa 1913) but suggest [...] entire aspects of thought: economics, beliefs, literary analytics, etc.

¹⁴³ *The Poems of Charles Reznikoff*, p. 5.

¹⁴⁴ *The Poems of Charles Reznikoff*, p. 11.

The entire matter involves the process of active literary omission and a discussion of method finding its way in the acceptance of two criteria: sincerity and objectification.¹⁴⁵

It should be noted that Zukofsky's concept of the Objectivist poem is fundamentally bound up here with things that are outside of the image: his list of 'aspects of thought' could not be more abstract. Zukofsky's timeline, however, suggests that this is not necessarily a break with Imagism: *Des Imagistes* would appear in 1914, a year after Zukofsky's suggested 1913 shift. American poetry's 'pretty bits' are therefore implicitly to be found elsewhere than in Imagism. This new Objectivist poetry, while expressly transgressing the rules of its predecessors, is pegged as a moving out of that early movement, not a simple moving against.

Pound's most effective imagist poem, 'In a Station of the Metro', works within exactly the urban-Imagist dynamic, though it is clearer in the more urbanised poetries of Zukofsky, Reznikoff and Oppen. The abiding sense of working New York in these poets is of a place emptied, littered with the detritus of departed business. In '29 Songs' this state of things comes to be linked appositely with the Depression, though, as we see in Reznikoff, such depopulation was a trope in modernist descriptions of New York over a decade before that catastrophe. It is perhaps due to the prominence of Pound's little Parisian poem that Imagism was able to manifest its influence in the urban poetries of writers like Reznikoff and Zukofsky, for there is little of this kind of thing in the original Imagist anthologies, *Des Imagistes* (1914) and the *Some Imagist Poets* volumes that followed (1915, 1916 and 1917). Pound never wrote another poem quite like 'In a Station of the Metro' (which did not appear in any of the anthologies):¹⁴⁶ the few other Imagist period poems he wrote with a contemporary setting, such as 'The Garden' and 'Albatre' from *Lustra*, are more involved with a satirical reading of particular social sets than they are to

¹⁴⁵ *Prepositions* +, p. 194.

¹⁴⁶ See Carr's *The Verse Revolutionaries* and Peter Jones's anthology *Imagist Poetry* for details of these publications.

do with urban London. The other Imagists get little closer than Pound. Richard Aldington's diminutive war poems come a little closer, but the New Yorkers' ambivalence is crucially missing. In 'Living Sepulchres' Aldington produced a poem the first half of which approaches the subtlety of the later New York technique, but it is let down by an over-emphatic second half:

One frosty night when the guns were still
I leaned against the trench
Making for myself *hokku*
Of the moon and flowers out of the snow.

But the ghostly scurrying of huge rats
Swollen with feeding upon men's flesh
Filled me with shrinking dread.¹⁴⁷

Aldington is distracted from his poetry by the squalor about him. Reznikoff, in particular, would use a commensurate squalor for the animating force behind his poetry, and Zukofsky was not so distracted by his mantis that he was left unable to write his sestina "Mantis". The aesthetic moment Aldington experiences under the influence of moon, flowers and snow is terminated by the reality of war, whereas Chambers's and Zukofsky's moments originating in sun, sea, sand and wind are reinvigorated by an urban context: where the Imagists openly repudiate political involvement it becomes a constant concern for the Objectivists. Had Aldington concluded his 'Living Sepulchres' halfway through his position would have been closer to Reznikoff's, who finds significance in the conjunction of moon and tenements which does not refute poetry. Those moments of paradisaical realisation on the beach at Sirmione are thus perverted to moments of a more political realisation: squalid epiphanies revealing the true cost of the capitalist system.

The marriage of the Imagist empyrean with the urban worker in early Reznikoff is a political gesture, and it is probably for this reason that the Imagists were unable to

¹⁴⁷ *The Complete War Poems of Richard Aldington*, p. 73.

match it. None of those poets, especially not Pound (whose own utopian political phase would not begin until around 1919, after his Imagist work), had such an avowedly leftist political background as these New Yorkers, and were all living some distance away, both literally and metaphorically, from the New York poor eulogised by Reznikoff and suggested by Zukofsky.¹⁴⁸ In Imagism's revolt against modernity (expressed in Pound's Orientalism and H.D.'s Hellenism) the modern urban poor are disenfranchised. Though the Objectivists would consciously address those disenfranchised city-dwellers, Reznikoff and Zukofsky actually critique the modern city even more forcefully than the Imagists: they were not the kind of pro-moderns Lewis suggests by blessing ports. The narrator of Pound's 'The Garden' is as terrified of becoming *déclassé* as he is in awe of the decadent upper classes; Zukofsky, in the silence with which he surrounds his industrial scenes offers a profound sympathy for 'the filthy, sturdy, unkillable infants of the very poor';¹⁴⁹ workers, in the '29' sequences, without work. To find anything like the political radicalism of Reznikoff and Zukofsky in Pound's Imagist period recourse must be made to *Cathay* rather than the thematically more modern *Lustra*. Moody makes a compelling case for a vein of social commentary in *Cathay*:

Cathay mirrors an empire in which the vortices of power and those of creative intelligence are both of them weak and ineffectual. The best poet of the day has no wish to serve the state, and the state does not care for his work. The state itself is at war with the barbarians on its borders; while in its heart, at court, it is in a condition of high decadence. Its energies, such as they are, are concentrated in its soldiers dying and forgotten far from the court and from their homes. Separation and sorrow are the keynotes, set against brilliant but enervated display and self-indulgence.¹⁵⁰

It would be an exaggeration to suggest that Pound's social consciousness and nascent Confucianism in *Cathay* was in any way leftist, but there are parallels with Zukofsky's

¹⁴⁸ Chambers's *Witness* gives a lively, if biased and defensive, account of New York's leftist intellectual milieu during this period. Daniel Aaron's *Writers on the Left* provides a more measured, though less personal, account.

¹⁴⁹ *P&T*, p. 264. Reznikoff's innocents in *Poems* and his collections following 1920 are far from 'unkillable'.

¹⁵⁰ *The Young Genius*, p. 266.

political position here. Moody describes *Cathay* as a ‘multifaceted image of a great empire in a dysfunctional phase’,¹⁵¹ a description that could equally well be applied to Zukofsky’s two sequences, and while Pound is theoretically more concerned with those that form the corroded centre of his ‘great empire’, he expresses the collapse most effectively when he addresses the woes of the less fortunate members of that society: the archers in ‘Song of the Bowmen of Shu’, the prostitute of ‘The Beautiful Toilet’, those that ‘Lice swarm like ants over’¹⁵² in ‘South-Folk in Cold Country’. These poems display a sympathy with the lot of the common folk that is not found in Pound’s depictions of modernity (there is a suggestion of such concern in ‘In a Station of the Metro’, but the obliquity of the poem disguises Pound’s intention).¹⁵³ This inability to identify with his contemporaneous working poor would have ramifications for Pound’s utopian vision and impact on his decision to locate the majority of his civic theorising in medieval, semi-feudal China. It would take another generation of American poets to take this sympathy and move it from the countryside to the city. Pound himself, by the 1930s, was moving irretrievably further away from the left, his précis of American revolutionary history in *Eleven New Cantos* (1934) and *The Fifth Decad of Cantos* (1937) clearing the path for the patriarchal feudalism of *Cantos LII-LXXI* (1940), in which would be contained *The Cantos*’ clearest invocation of Pound’s medievalist, Chinese feudalism, while 1933’s *The ABC of Economics* and 1936’s *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* would attempt to link that Chinese agrarianism with Italian Fascism. As the Objectivists relocated their utopia away from Pound’s Chinese fields and into the city they also transplanted the techniques of *Cathay* with more alacrity than they would anything from the Imagists’ more ‘modern’ poems.

¹⁵¹ *The Young Genius*, p. 267.

¹⁵² *P&T*, p. 259.

¹⁵³ In Pound’s prose description in *T.P.’s Weekly* of this poem’s originating scene he describes ‘in the jostle... a beautiful face, and then, turning suddenly, another and another’, [Quoted in *The Verse Revolutionaries*, p. 547] suggesting a rare urban moment of aesthetic transcendence was its cause.

Cathay would be resituated in the East River. A comparison of Zukofsky's maritime poems with those of fellow Objectivist Oppen's *Discrete Series* (1934) is revealing here. The poems in this collection share an obvious heritage with Zukofsky's '29' sequences: they were written over roughly the same period, share a nascent Marxist politics, are similarly self-conscious, of equivalent dimensions (both in terms of their individual pieces and their overall length) and are in debt to the example of the Imagists, and to Pound in particular. Some poems in *Discrete Series* share themes and images with Zukofsky's early sequences and what might be termed an Objectivist praxis. Before concluding this section I compare elements of Zukofsky's and Oppen's maritime poetry with a view to establishing its key distinctions from Imagism; distinctions linked integrally to these poets' utopian political outlooks.

This poem by Oppen strongly recalls Zukofsky's East River pieces:

Tug against the river –
 Motor, turning, lights
 In the fast water off the bow-wave:
 Passes slowly.¹⁵⁴

A comparison with Zukofsky's 'Ferry', the fifth poem of '29 Poems', is instructive:

Gleams, a green lamp
 In the fog;
 Murmur, in almost
 A dialogue

Siren and signal
 Siren to signal.

Parts the shore from the fog,
 Rise there, tower on tower,
 Signs of stray light
 And of power.

Siren to signal
 Siren to signal.

Hour-gongs and the green
 Of the lamp.

¹⁵⁴ *New Collected Poems*, p. 19.

Plash. Night. Plash. Sky.¹⁵⁵

This poem describes a presumably commercial shipping scene, with vision reduced by fog to the glimpse of a ship's starboard navigation light and the East River's merchant marine therefore manifested in sound: industrial sounds that engage in conversation as Marx's commodities do in *Das Kapital*, a moment that would reappear in "A"-9.¹⁵⁶ In Oppen's piece the tugboat is itself seen, though part of that vision is held in the reflection of its lights in the water as Zukofsky's ship's light in the fog. Both poems deal with a complicated kind of immanence, both poets are trying to offer 'objectified' images of functioning industrial machinery – both attempting to use a Poundian, Imagist form to do something impossible in 'pure' Imagism. The last line of 'Ferry' is particularly Poundian, and redolent of moments in *The Cantos*, 'the Beat, beat, whirr, thud, in the soft turf'¹⁵⁷ of sacked Troy in the fourth canto or, far later, the 'paw-flap, wave-tap'¹⁵⁸ about Pound's Torcello. Oppen tends to get a bit closer to the water than Zukofsky; 'The mast' describes the act of sailing a small boat, a communal proximity to water and, with its 'us', to other human beings; its conclusion reads: 'Beneath us glide / Rocks, sand, and unrimmed holes.'¹⁵⁹

To return to Oppen's tugboat poem, without its first line it is almost a haiku, both through its syllable count (sixteen), its lineation and the cadence and syntax of its last line. Unlike Aldington, Oppen does not feel the need to separate his haikus from modern experience: the moving water, the equivalent here of Aldington's 'moon and flowers out of the snow'¹⁶⁰ is not seen as separate from the machinery that cuts through it, it is occasioned by the movement of the tugboat and coloured by its lights. This

¹⁵⁵ *CSP*, p. 24.

¹⁵⁶ See *Capital Volume I*, pp. 176-77 and "A", p. 106.

¹⁵⁷ *The Cantos*, p. 13.

¹⁵⁸ *The Cantos*, p. 791.

¹⁵⁹ *New Collected Poems*, p. 12.

¹⁶⁰ *The Complete War Poems of Richard Aldington*, p. 73.

makes Oppen's poetics seem a kind of industrialised, perfected Imagism, but he also includes something else in this poem that would be germane to the particular development of his own and Zukofsky's work away from their modernist forebears. Oppen's poem begins in intense syntactic uncertainty: the "Tug against the river"¹⁶¹ does not specify whether 'tug' is noun, standing for 'tugboat', or verb, first person present singular or plural for tug, or, more persuasively, an imperative – the instruction of industry to the river worker. 'Against' is also unclear: is the tugboat 'against' as in 'seen before' in the composition of a painting, or is it pulling 'against' the flow of the river? The remainder of the poem favours the first reading; the recording of the flash of lights in the bow-wave suggests a perspective and a viewer, someone to see the reflected lights and to see the tugboat set against the background of the river, while the second reading fits well with 'tug' as verb, but can also stand for toil in either reading, giving some idea of the manner of movement of the boat and is evocative of its squat strength, as well as a continuation of the political hints begun by the possible imperative at the poem's outset.

Zukofsky's 'Ferry' also uses a similarly ambivalent language: the syntax is jumbled, 'parts' and 'signs' are unclearly attached to the words around them, while the intention of the modulation from 'siren and signal' to 'siren to signal' is opaque: perhaps this is mimetic of the siren and signal calling through the fog to locate one another before conversation is begun and the outset of their conversation (thus, with conversation proceeding, the second repetition of this section omits the 'and'), or perhaps the movement from the conjunction to the preposition suggests a separation, the thickening of the fog and a bar on communication. Both poems begin with a sudden indeterminacy: neither 'tug' nor 'gleams' fitting easily into the ensuing sentences. Nicholls reads 'Ferry' as typical of this tendency, 'a praxis of perception is defined' in these poems 'by giving them an opacity in its own way as resistant to the material

¹⁶¹ *New Collected Poems*, p. 19.

“facts” of which they write.”¹⁶² Nicholls goes on to suggest that such poems’ ‘obstructive syntax [...] inhibits the Imagistic move from outer to inner’;¹⁶³ their strange language slows the reader and prolongs the moment between reading and understanding. The time spent with the poem as ‘poem’ before its subjects are approached is thus extended. This would become a defining element in the work of both poets. This troubling of language marks a further movement away from Imagism and has paradisaal implications to be added to the political-utopian subject matter of these poems. Thus that moment of experience that originates in Pater, and that Carr has demonstrated as shaping Imagism,¹⁶⁴ is extended into the process of experiencing these poems. This process, dubbed Objectification by Zukofsky, would become, with the late exaggeration of such techniques in “A”-22 & 23 and *80 Flowers*, a paradisaal process; one that I will analyse in greater length in the third chapter of this dissertation.

If the praxis is paradisaal then the subject matter is utopian. Both poems are specific about the vessels they describe: a tugboat is a powerful though necessarily small vessel used for pulling larger ships in harbour, a maritime beast of burden; ferries carry people and connect communities; a quotidian, working vessel that, like Oppen’s tugboat, would never experience the glamour of the open sea, in contrast to the dinghy of ‘The mast’ and the bourgeois pleasure cruiser of ‘Party on Shipboard’.¹⁶⁵ These choices are straightforwardly political. Neither poet paints a direct visual picture of their chosen vessel. Zukofsky’s ferry is manifested only by the lights and sounds that it emits through the fog, while Oppen’s tugboat breaks the water and its lights are reflected in it. The fact that it is a ferry being described offers some room to speculate about where it might have been heading, for if the locale for the poem is taken as the

¹⁶² *George Oppen and the Fate of Modernism*, p. 11.

¹⁶³ *George Oppen and the Fate of Modernism*, p. 12.

¹⁶⁴ See *The Verse Revolutionaries*, p. 20.

¹⁶⁵ *New Collected Poems*, p. 15.

waters between Manhattan and Brooklyn, and if it is the starboard side of the vessel that is visible (as the green of the navigation light suggests: green for starboard, red for port), and if it is viewed from Brooklyn (and Brooklyn is more likely as it would have been more difficult for Zukofsky to get a view of the water from most of the lower end of Manhattan), then the ferry would have to be moving northwards up the East River, against the flow like Oppen's tugboat. So there is actually quite a lot of information inferable from these little poems; we know from the way in which they both subtly position their subject vessels in space that they deal with specific, identifiable perspectives, and yet their subjects are never in themselves clearly visible.

Between '29 Poems', "A"-1, Reznikoff's early short poems and '29 Songs', the Objectivist essays and *Discrete Series*, lie the Wall Street Crash and the outset of the Great Depression. The change in Zukofsky's world caused by the Depression should not be underestimated and is manifested in a deepening of the poet's political radicalism, while the extended work on "A" leads to a parallel radicalisation of the techniques employed in the first sequence. The approach of the earlier poems is not abandoned or contradicted but retained in an increasingly nuanced and complex form, as can be seen throughout the '29' sequences: Pater would not be abandoned outright. While "A", '29 Poems' and '29 Songs' would, then, enact Zukofsky's struggle to create a politically conscious, materialist version of his early interest in Paterian aestheticism through the late 1920s and early 1930s, and the creation of a fitting voice to express them, it would be, however, in his critical prose of the same period that the struggle between these poles would be fought most intensely. I will address these prose pieces in the next section.

iii) An Objectivist Lexicon

Objectivist Verse

The chronology of Zukofsky's activities through the late 1920s and early 1930s is key to the development of the changes in Zukofsky's poetics I have been charting. The poems of '29 Poems' were written between the 27th of November 1923 and the 5th of February 1929,¹⁶⁶ while "A"-1 was begun over Easter 1928 to be published with "A"-2 to "A"-7 in 1932's *An "Objectivists" Anthology* and the songs of '29 Songs' between the 1st of March 1931 and the 7th of March 1934.¹⁶⁷ The two sequences and "A" straddle, as I have shown, the stock market crash of October 1929 and the first phase of the Great Depression, moments that would both challenge American society in a manner that seemed close to apocalyptic and that would simultaneously persuade many, including both Pound and Zukofsky, that the possibility of a newly utopian society was at hand. Zukofsky's prose theorisation of Objectivist verse occurred in the midst of this chronology in the form of three brief, though dense, essays, with 'Program:

¹⁶⁶ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/29-Poems.php>.

¹⁶⁷ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/29-Songs.php>.

“Objectivists” 1931’ and ‘Sincerity and Objectification: With Special Reference to the Work of Charles Reznikoff’ both appearing in the February 1931 ‘Objectivist’ number of *Poetry*, edited by Zukofsky with Pound’s encouragement and assistance, and “‘Recencies” in Poetry’ in *An “Objectivists” Anthology* in 1932, published by To, Publishers, a collaboration between Zukofsky and Oppen.¹⁶⁸ The extent of Zukofsky’s control of these publications and the context of his theorisation suggests premeditation: the appearance of his special issue and anthology, its selection of poems and its critical pronouncements all working together both, in accordance with Pound’s advice, to pragmatically raise awareness of the poets he placed under the Objectivist rubric, and to define through both example and critical intervention his ‘movement’.¹⁶⁹ Zukofsky never explained in simple terms what the nebulous ‘movement’ he created actually was, though in his essays he did set down a terminology that, though often frustrating, was as carefully organised an action as his Objectivist editing. Naming and terminology would be key to his Objectivist essays both in terms of critical explanation and justification and, more importantly, as example, making Zukofsky’s three essays illustrations of a new hybrid genre; in their difficulty these essays explain themselves. The intentional opacity with which Zukofsky shrouds his explanations is also connected, as I shall explain, with the same transcendent impulse from which Zukofsky’s aestheticism, utopianism and, finally, paradisaal interests sprang. Much as in “A” and the short poems I will read the critical prose as an expression of the tension between Zukofsky’s early aesthetic thought

¹⁶⁸ Zukofsky’s later comments on these three early essays would tend towards the dismissive and defensive, and their compression into ‘An Objective’ for *Prepositions* (1967) would disguise much of the flux that was so important in their early appearance, as well as omitting most of the essays’ references to the American poetic and political scene of the 1930s. Here I shall for the most part ignore Zukofsky’s later opinions of these essays and confine my reading to the versions that appeared in *Poetry*, *An “Objectivists” Anthology* and *5 Statements for Poetry* (1958).

¹⁶⁹ The essays collected in Rachel Blau DuPlessis and Peter Quartermain’s *The Objectivist Nexus* offer a range of different approaches and readings of the foundation of this premeditated and short-lived ‘movement’. Charles Altieri’s ‘The Objectivist Tradition’, Burton Hatlen’s ‘A Poetics of Marginality and Resistance: The Objectivist Poets in Context’, Eric Homberger’s ‘Communists and Objectivists’ and Michael Heller’s ‘Objectivists in the Thirties: Utopocalyptic Moments’ are helpful background reading for the matters under discussion here.

and his growing materialism, with that tension expressed most forcefully and complexly in these essays.

Zukofsky never used the term ‘Objectivism’, titling the members of his notional group “‘Objectivists’”, usually in quotation marks, referring to their project as Objectivist poetry, their process as ‘objectification’ and speaking of various other procedural and technical elements that shared Objectivist poetry’s linguistic root: the ‘object’, the ‘objective’ and so forth. Objectivist poetry, as theorised by Zukofsky, becomes so nebulous that it cannot be explained with one all-encompassing definition, and must, rather, be conceived of as a constellation of associated ideas that should be understood individually before a perspective on Objectivist poetry as a whole can be reached. In accordance with Zukofsky’s penchant for an individualised technical terminology I shall approach my definition of Zukofsky’s Objectivist poetry here through the creation of an Objectivist lexicon.

An Objective (1 & 2)

The Objectivists’ inception came during Zukofsky’s editorship of the Objectivist edition of *Poetry*, which would be published in February 1931, though he had been writing about an ‘objective’ for some months previous to that. “A”-6 contains the first mention, the first version of which is dated 12th to 16th August 1930.¹⁷⁰ Zukofsky writes:

The melody! the rest is accessory:

My one voice. My other: is
An objective – rays of the object brought to a focus,
An objective – nature as creator – desire
for what is objectively perfect
Inextricably the direction of historic and contemporary particulars.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-6.php>.

¹⁷¹ “A”, p. 24.

This first statement on the objective contains Zukofsky's ideas of Objectivist poetry in their most compact form. The Objectivist essays would expand upon these ideas, offering a selection of ways in which this fragment can be teased out into a poetics.

'Program: "Objectivists" 1931', begins with a prose restatement of the passage from "A"-6. This preamble is quintessential Zukofsky in its opacity, its disturbing syntax and its surprising vocabulary: none of its three definitions of 'An Objective' are immediately apprehensible. The syntax of the first statement seems initially to be suggesting a process, and seems like it should be attached to a verb rather than a noun: the *act* of a lens bringing its rays. In fact, it is the lens here that is the 'objective'. Known as the objective, the object lens, the object glass or the objective glass, an objective is the lens used to focus rays of light into an optical instrument used for observing an object, such as a camera or a telescope. It is the first lens that the rays of light will reach, that lens with the closest proximity to the object under observation itself.

The definition of a 'Military Objective' is also confusing, seeming to describe by the unhelpful metaphorical use of 'aims' here, in a situation in which we might expect the verb to be being used literally, a target, linking it to the military connotations of the 'avant-garde'. A military objective will often be a geographical location: an enemy trench that must be reached, subdued and secured. It is often, however, a more abstract objective: a *state* of things that should be achieved. Thus in a propaganda operation the persuasion of a people may be an objective, or for an occupying army the approval of local inhabitants or the removal of one's own forces from an untenable position by way of withdrawal. This objective, though another noun, is also very much associated with processes; it is an abstract term that can be applied to any number of eventualities and, without the supports of a process behind it, it must fall into meaninglessness, just as the position of the objective lens in the process of observation defines it.

Such terminology seems clearly materialist, with Zukofsky's overlay of militaristic terms and the connection he insists upon between poetry and 'the direction of historic and contemporary particulars'¹⁷² suggests the science of Marxist-Leninism. There are elements, however, of Zukofsky's Objectivist lexicon that trouble this materialist vision.

An Objective (3) / The Objectively Perfect

It is the third definition that is really difficult here: 'Desire for what is objectively perfect, inextricably the direction of historic and contemporary particulars.' Again there are problems with vocabulary: 'inextricably' would be more comfortably read as 'inexorably', suggesting the movement of a process rather than the attempted untangling of one, and 'objectively perfect' confuses the reading also, making it unclear where in this sentence the definition is: we should be learning about the 'desire', not the 'perfect' as an initial perusal might suggest. Zukofsky is employing a linguistic trick typical of his style, using a word that is related to his formulation of his subject but that does not refer directly to the case in hand: as far as untangling the meaning of this third definition of 'an objective' we can treat, initially at least, this 'objectively' (an adjective here: his important objectives are nouns) as a red-herring. If we relate these two formulations too closely the definition begins to appear tautological: an object defined as being the search for the process that gives it its objecthood. Zukofsky's thought does not, again initially, need to be so complicated as that. Instead this third definition, linked by the manner in which the three statements are set out primarily to the military definition (that definition is the one 'extended to poetry'), is making a statement as to

¹⁷² *Prepositions* +, p. 189.

what the objective, the goal, of poetry is, and it is something called the ‘objectively perfect’. This is followed by an ambiguous sub-definition which we can understand to relate either to ‘an objective’ or to the ‘objectively perfect’. If it is the first then poetry’s objective is the description of ‘historic and contemporary particulars’, if it is the second then this mysterious ‘objectively perfect’ is in fact the result of ‘historic and contemporary particulars’: a camouflaged Empyrean concept; history leads to *this*. It is, of course, both of these things. Thus the transcendent-paradisal would be forced to exist side by side with the materialist-utopian in Zukofsky’s poetics can be discerned.

Particulars/An Object

Zukofsky means both things, and, true to form, neglects to explain what the ‘objectively perfect’ might be, though it seems like it should be key to be to an understanding of the objective. Those ‘particulars’ are also left unexplained, though with their prior experience of Eliot, Pound and the other High Modernists, readers of *Poetry* would have been able to have a guess at these; something in the line of Pound’s ‘luminous detail’¹⁷³ perhaps. The concluding statement of the main body of the text of ‘Program’ reiterates these ideas in the context of a critique of American poetry as it stood in 1931, bemoaning the lack of artistic production during the previous decades.¹⁷⁴ This is a reversed arrangement of the opening statement, and is probably best made sense of in that respect: whereas the first paragraph spoke obliquely of what Objectivist poetry, via ‘an object’, might be, this speaks of what Objectivist poetry is not, and in rather clearer terms. Whereas that first italicised statement began with the optical lens, this ends with a dysfunctional optics: the strabismic squint. The middle statement is the richest here:

¹⁷³ *SP*, p. 23.

¹⁷⁴ See *Prepositions* +, p. 190.

contemporary American poetry has failed because it is without an objective; nothing has been “aimed” at’. The other things that these inferior poets have not been doing is creating a ‘new object’ or exposing an old one to a recognisably Poundian Neoplatonic light. Dispensing with the ‘object’ momentarily (Zukofsky is again systematically confusing in his application of shared formulation to adjacent though not directly connected concepts), this light is perhaps pivotal to what has been going on in this curious essay. It suggests, along with the nod towards the lens-grinder Spinoza in ‘nature as creator’ in “A”-6, that the Objectivists are manufacturers of lenses: each poem a machine for focusing the rays of light that emanate from a particular object to allow a more exact viewing of it in its objecthood. That other ‘objective’, used to designate aiming, in fact describes another aspect of these poets’ production, one that exists in parallel with the first but that is not one with it. The optic objective is a metaphor that explains the manner in which these poets try to look at an object; the military objective metaphorically explains their wish to associate this seeing with the development of history. The squint-eyed strabismics of ‘Program’ lack that ability to ‘look away’ into history, bringing the two definitions back together. It is in some way their skill with focus that allows the Objectivist opticians to look at history in its particulars and seek out that further objective.

‘Program’ introduced five words into Zukofsky’s Objectivist lexicon: “Objectivists” in its title only, preceding a relatively thorough definition of ‘An Objective’, the somewhat more obscure ‘objectively perfect’ and ‘object’, and ‘particulars’. The other essay in *Poetry* would set out to explain another two words, labelled ‘criteria’:¹⁷⁵ ‘sincerity’ and ‘objectification’, that go further to explaining what Zukofsky’s conception of Objectivist poetry was in 1931, though not without difficulties commensurate with ‘Program’.

¹⁷⁵ *Prepositions* +, p. 194.

An Objective (4) / Sincerity / Shapes

First, ‘sincerity’. Zukofsky spends more time explaining this word than he does ‘an objective’, though without attaining much more initial clarity:

In sincerity shapes appear concomitants of word combinations, precursors of (if there is continuance) completed sound or structure, melody or form. Writing occurs which is the detail, not mirage, of seeing, of thinking with things as they exist, and of directing them along a line of melody. Shapes suggest themselves, and the mind senses and receives awareness. Parallels sought for in the other arts call up the perfect line of occasional drawing, the clear beginning of the sculpture not proceeded with.¹⁷⁶

This paragraph needs unpicking one sentence, sometimes one clause, at a time, in accordance with Zukofsky’s purposeful, functional and demonstrative opacity. The first sentence begins with a subtle reconfiguration: ‘in sincerity’. The reader may at this stage, having apparently reached the meat of this essay, be expecting an explanation of what sincerity is. That is not what Zukofsky provides here. Rather, he writes of what happens when sincerity is present: explaining it via its symptoms and effects rather than addressing what it is, or how it might be achieved. The ‘definition’ begins by echoing Eliot’s ‘objective correlative’: ‘a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.’¹⁷⁷ Eliot uses a different kind of ‘particular’ than Zukofsky here, who employs the noun where Eliot uses the adjective, but both, as evidenced by Eliot’s emphatic italics, attach great value to this word, and both use it in the counterintuitive context of an algebraic method for conjuring specific emotion. The other word that overlaps in Eliot and Zukofsky’s poetics is, of course, ‘objective’, but Eliot uses it in a manner quite different

¹⁷⁶ *Prepositions* +, p. 194.

¹⁷⁷ T.S. Eliot, *Selected Essays*, p. 145. Eliot’s emphasis.

from any of Zukofsky's coinages. Eliot again uses the adjectival form of a word Zukofsky tends to prefer as noun, and also uses the most common meaning of 'objective' in his 'objective correlative', as relating to a detached, unemotional approach, a meaning that Zukofsky avoids making direct reference to, but which must underlie an understanding of Objectivist poetry. Though Zukofsky does not choose to emphasise this definition of 'objective' in his writings on Objectivist poetry it should nevertheless be added to his Objectivist lexicon; a definition that, in contrast to the 'objectives' of lenses and armies, suggests a methodology behind Zukofsky's notional movement. Zukofsky's move away from Eliot and adjectives towards nouns in fact supports the rhetoric of scientific objectivity: Zukofsky uses Eliot against himself. This adjectival 'objective', it should be said, was the favoured usage of the High Modernists as a whole, including Pound, who in *Gaudier-Brzeska* writes on 'In a Station of the Metro' in the following terms: 'In a poem of this sort one is trying to record a the precise instant when a thing outward and objective transforms itself, or darts into a thing inward and subjective.'¹⁷⁸ This polarity between objective and subjective is undermined by Zukofsky's theorising of Objectivist poetry, which seems to postulate a closer contact than such a binary system would permit: that 'objective lens', remember, being the closest part of the optical machinery to the subject, that element that comes closest to a rapprochement. A complication, as I have shown, of Zukofsky's relation to Paterian aestheticism. This refusal of an objective-subjective polarity¹⁷⁹ is part of Zukofsky's discussion with aestheticism in this period. That movement's concentration on a fundamentally subjective individual profoundly influenced, via both Pound's example and the

¹⁷⁸ *Gaudier-Brzeska*, p. 103, quoted in *Ezra Pound: Poet as Sculptor*, p. 41.

¹⁷⁹ Of the sort identified by Robert Browning in his *Essay on Shelley* (1888), generating a polarity 'between the "objective poet," "whose endeavour has been to reproduce things external," and the "subjective poet," who, "gifted like the objective poet with the fuller perception of nature and man, is impelled to embody the thing he perceives, not so much with reference to the many below as to the One above him."' [Liebrechts, *Ezra Pound and Neoplatonism*, pp. 42-43.]

Chambers circle, Zukofsky's Objectivist verse but also clashes problematically with his materialist Marxist-Leninism. The process of Objectification would be the dialectical solution to this problem, whereby an experienced moment related to aestheticism is permitted within the framework of a praxis allied (most clearly via Zukofsky's terminology) to materialist, utopian Marxist-Leninism.

To return to sincerity: while similar to Eliot's formulation, Zukofsky's 'sincerity' seems to be more subject led. Where Eliot commends the author's active apprehension of a subject, Zukofsky moves towards a celebration of the subject's surreptitious ordering of the work of art. The paragraph in 'Sincerity and Objectification' continues:

Writing occurs which is the detail, not mirage, of seeing, of thinking with the things as they exist, and of directing them along a line of melody. Shapes suggest themselves, and the mind senses and receives awareness. Parallels sought for in the other arts call up the perfect line of occasional drawing, the clear beginnings of a sculpture not proceeded with.¹⁸⁰

I will attend to the second and third sentences of this extract before returning to the first. The manner in which Zukofsky has introduced passivity into Eliot's formulation is marked in the second sentence: it is the shapes that are doing the suggesting, while the mind passively receives information about them. The nature of these 'shapes' is also mysterious: they do not accord with any conventional notions of syntax, meter or conceptual development, instead suggesting, perhaps, elements of all of these possible systems of 'shapes' working mysteriously together. As he goes on Zukofsky then seems to draw a connection with a concept derived from Pound, a surer touchstone for Objectivist verse and theory than Eliot. The 'clear beginnings of a sculpture' certainly calls to mind the connection between the bringing out of the shape of the naked rock in sculpture that Davie explores at length in *Ezra Pound: Poet as Sculptor*. Placed within this paradigm 'sincerity' may be seen to exist in a natural bringing out of emotions from

¹⁸⁰ *Prepositions* +, p. 194.

language. The language itself guides the poet as the grain in a block of marble guides the sculptor, making the protagonist a passive vehicle for the communications of his medium. That is not to say that the artist in this articulation is without skill, for it is in fact the precision and sensitivity needed for this bringing out that makes the Objectivists what they are: they need, in specific contrast to the nefarious poetasters of mainstream American poetry circa 1931, to be able to combine the precision of the lens grinder with the sensitivity of the artist, and this is essentially the product Zukofsky is selling in his two Objectivist publications.

Typically, however, the sentence in which this sculpting appears is more ambiguous than it may at first seem. Zukofsky again re-introduces an integral opacity, for at the same time as stressing the importance of the poet as artisan, it also introduces a contradictory element of dilettantism. It is ‘*occasional* drawing’ that Zukofsky compares his art with, and the sculpture, in contrast with the productions of Pound’s Gaudier, is ‘*not* proceeded with’.¹⁸¹ Like occasional verse, occasional drawing can be taken as something frivolous, temporal and produced with relative rapidity. The sculpture is not completed, which also suggests that what is achieved is achieved quickly and without great concentration. After the inexorable ‘inextricability’ of Zukofsky’s objective it is surprising to hear this note of the gestural at this point, though such moments are frequent in Zukofsky’s work (indeed, far more readily detectable than the ‘objective’), and would become a defining feature of his work from around this period, issuing in a number of Valentine’s poems and private familial communications throughout the rest of his oeuvre. The slightness of much of the output of the poets associated with the Objectivists during this period is also of relevance here: in his essay Zukofsky concentrates on Reznikoff’s shorter, more personal poems rather than the longer, dramatic evocations of his Jewish heritage such as *Israel* and *King David* (both 1929). In

¹⁸¹ My emphasis.

fact the contrast between the slight and the pre-meditated may be part of an implicit dichotomy in the ‘Sincerity and Objectification’ essay, for while both processes seem to be present in a postulated Objectivist poetics, it is clear that they may occur in different ratios and are not necessarily interdependent: Zukofsky, in one of this essay’s most frustrating passages, attempts a survey of the presence of his two qualities in the poetries of his contemporaries and immediate predecessors and finds much objectification in Pound and Williams, much sincerity in Eliot, Marianne Moore and Reznikoff’s failure and an apparently hybrid objectification in Cummings.¹⁸² While Zukofsky insists on Eliot, Moore and Reznikoff failing to achieve much objectification, he frustratingly does not specify whether Pound and Williams had achieved sincerity on their way to objectification: as a by-product of that achievement. Also, it should be remembered that while these are all poets that Zukofsky admires, the fact that Pound and Williams, his mentors and models, are those most abundant in objectification suggests a privileging of this criteria. Later in ‘Sincerity and Objectification’ Zukofsky refers to sincerity as the ‘preoccupation with the accuracy of detail in writing’,¹⁸³ and we may be tempted to think of it as really exactly what it says it is: honesty, telling the truth. Thus the less worked over occasional pieces are more truthful in that they are less premeditated, and those marble-grains and sounded emotions of the initial definition are sincere in that they deal accurately with the emotion being communicated, which is not a requirement in Eliot’s version. All of this is also leads the reader back towards that ‘objective’ in ‘Program’ that was significant in that it marked the least mediated part of the optical machine before the object. Now sincerity in an allied way requires a cleaving to the object. This process will be repeated as Zukofsky moves on to define objectification.

¹⁸² See *Prepositions* +, pp. 196-97.

¹⁸³ *Prepositions* +, p. 199.

Objectification

Proceeding with ‘Sincerity and Objectification’, Zukofsky’s next statement seems to suggest that objectification is a progression out of sincerity:

Presented with sincerity, the mind even tends to supply, in further suggestion which does not attain rested totality, the totality not always found in sincerity and necessary only for perfect rest, complete appreciation. This rested totality may be called objectification – the apprehension satisfied completely as to the appearance of the art form as an object.¹⁸⁴

This compact account introduces a series of terms to the Objectivist lexicon: ‘rested totality’, ‘objectification’ and ‘an object’ all need explanation. Zukofsky initially seems to be suggesting that sincerity is simply objectification without the ‘rested totality’, a situation that is hard to square with the previous comparison with the objective correlative. The language is again ambiguous: is ‘necessary only for perfect rest’ to be read as a suggestion that the rested totality is the single necessity for this state? Or is Zukofsky suggesting the rested totality is only necessary at all when it is being used to make the jump from sincerity to objectification? On initial reading the first seems more plausible, though on closer inspection the second reading is indicated by the gnarled syntax. With this ‘only’ accounted for, the connection between sincerity and objectification becomes clearer, for the still mysterious rested totality is revealed as the admixture that converts sincerity into its rarer companion, objectification. This revelation is also most helpful in explaining sincerity itself, that fugitive criteria which is now more definitively revealed as a transitive state that precedes Objectification (and in that sense resembling the transitive aesthetic instant of ‘Moments’). Zukofsky’s studied opacity, which is at its most forceful in his prose, also relates to this transitivity: each time Zukofsky introduces a new term the reader is involved in a temporal process of

¹⁸⁴ *Prepositions* +, p. 194.

exploration that is found more often in poetry than in conventional prose, that same process Nicholls observes in his comparison of the short poems of Zukofsky and Oppen.¹⁸⁵

Rested Totality

‘Totality’ in this context is strange; Zukofsky may be speaking in mystical terms about a rested universe, though this totality is perhaps one of those objects or particulars that appeared in ‘Program’. If we accept this second meaning we might want to think of the totality of an object being rested, perhaps as in placed, not revitalised: put simply, the rested totality is an object in its entirety placed into a certain poetic context. This potentially moves closer to an understanding what objectification actually entails. The mystical element should not be dispensed with entirely, however, for the ambiguities here and elsewhere in the prose are conscious, and I will return to them in due course.

Zukofsky goes on to suggest that objectification is a way of investing a poem with, or at least emphasising the pre-existent presence of, thingness – making it an object:

That is: distinct from print which records action and existence and incites the mind to further suggestion, there exists, tho it may not be harbored as solidity in the crook of an elbow, writing (audibility in two-dimensional print) which is an object or affects the mind as such.¹⁸⁶

The writing that achieves objectification succeeds in making itself an object. And that veritable and revelatory sincerity is an indispensable part of that process, along with the objective lens that placed the observer in the closest possible proximity to the observed. In a formulation that seems a mixture of elements of both Zukofsky’s aesthetic and

¹⁸⁵ See *George Oppen and the Fate of Modernism*, pp. 9-13.

¹⁸⁶ *Prepositions* +, p. 194.

materialist tendencies, objectification can be seen, then, as an attempt to endow the written word with immanence, to reaffirm the connection between signifier and signified, ‘a reassertion of faith that the combined letters – the words – are absolute symbols for objects, states, act, interrelations, thought about them. If not, why use words?’¹⁸⁷ ‘Symbols’ rather takes the wind out of Zukofsky’s sails here, but the thrust of his argument stands, and is reaffirmed towards the end of this essay when he addresses the applicability of quotation to objectification when he writes that ‘[i]t is more important for the general good that individual authors spend their time recording and objectifying good writing wherever it is found’,¹⁸⁸ and then goes on to approvingly report on Moore, Williams, Pound and Reznikoff’s extensive use of quotation in their work. Quotation becomes a part of the process of objectification; the recontextualisation entailed by such a procedure has an objectifying effect beyond that included in the material being quoted: text immanent within text.

‘Recencies’

The reaction from both readers and the editors of *Poetry* was negative and led to a series of anti-Objectivist statements within the journal’s pages and elsewhere,¹⁸⁹ while Zukofsky’s friends and collaborators like Bunting and Pound were also severely critical of both the style and content of his critical work.¹⁹⁰ ‘Recencies’ marks a last-ditch

¹⁸⁷ *Prepositions* +, p. 198. This statement is disappointing for those Language poets, such as Ron Silliman who commended for Zukofsky’s use of ‘language as he found it (i.e., parole)’, [*The L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E Book*, p. 290] who attempted to co-opt Zukofsky into their battle against reference.

¹⁸⁸ *Prepositions* +, p. 201.

¹⁸⁹ Monroe responded in the Objectivist number itself with a patronising and moderately hostile editorial entitled ‘The Arrogance of Youth’. [*Poetry*, Vol. XXXVII, no. V, pp. 328-33.]

¹⁹⁰ In a letter dated Oct 2 1932 Bunting informed Zukofsky of an open letter he had had published in Italian in Rapallo’s *Mare* newspaper that brutally attacked his friend’s prose criticism. Bunting attacks Zukofsky’s prose of this period using a characteristic variety of rich and violent images:

defence of the ideas outlined in *Poetry*, his isolation displayed in his desperate request: ‘Don’t write, telegraph.’¹⁹¹ For the most part this essay is a Poundian restatement of his Objectivist ideas and a dilution.¹⁹² It is perhaps the most straightforward of the three essays, a new clarity that suggests that the dialectical tension that had driven the earlier essays is now settled in favour of materialism. Parts of this simplification offer insight into what went before. Towards its end Zukofsky offers a formulation that seems a more direct approach to the ‘rested totality’ when he writes that ‘[u]ltimately, the matter of the poetic object in its simple entirety must not be forgotten.’¹⁹³ ‘Rested totality’ becomes a ‘simple entirety’, a rejection of the transcendent implications of the earlier formulations. At another point in the essay, however, Zukofsky seems to simplify his thinking in the opposite direction, back towards that mystical reading:

Perfect rest – Or nature as creator, existing perfect, experience perfecting activity of existence, making it – theologically, perhaps – like the Ineffable – [.]¹⁹⁴

Note the ‘Perfect rest’ here, combining the ‘rested totality’ of ‘Sincerity and Objectification’ with the ‘objectively perfect’ of ‘Program’, situated in a far less ambiguously mystical setting than the previous essays. The capitalised ineffable is bold and disconcerting in the midst of this ‘objective’ modernist diagnosis. Finkelstein locates a vital moment for Objectivist verse in this moment, writing that ‘[t]he crucial entrance of the term “perfection” in Zukofsky’s equations should itself indicate how much the Objectivists’ project is concerned not only with that which is, but with that which longs

If I buy a hat I am content that it should fit, be impermeable, of good texture, and of colour and cut not outrageously out of fashion. If I am a hatmaker I seek instruction in a series of limited practical operations ending in the production of a good hat with the least possible waste of effort and expense. I NEVER want a philosophy of hats, a metaphysical idea of Hat in the abstract, nor in any case a great deal of talk about hats. [From an unpublished translation by Bunting sent to Zukofsky, held in the Zukofsky archive at the HRC]

¹⁹¹ *Prepositions* +, p. 213.

¹⁹² References to Pound are rife throughout this essay, see, in particular, *Prepositions* +, pp. 206 and 209.

¹⁹³ *Prepositions* +, p. 214.

¹⁹⁴ *Prepositions* +, p. 207.

to come into being.¹⁹⁵ Finkelstein finds here the point at which the materialism of Objectivist theory shades into a utopian impulse: a moment of ambivalent sublation that predicts Zukofsky's later development from utopian to paradisaal poet. For Finkelstein, Objectivist verse exists around this dialectical tension between the material and the utopian, the archetypal

Objectivist poem is thus the formal manifestation of a test of perceptions, ideas and beliefs – the result of a tension between sincerity and perfection. The poem as a rested totality depends upon the particular balance it achieves between the acknowledged state of immediate existence and the desired state of unfolding futurity.¹⁹⁶

The elements of this fertile contradiction are present in the earlier essays: 'Nature as creator' comes from Spinoza's 'natura naturans' and 'natura naturata', a key element in "A"-6, and recalls those processes in 'sincerity' that bring out the poetry inherent in language: nature creating the sincere phrasing of a concept as it creates the correct form of a sculpture from within the grain of a block of marble. The rested totality that objectification leads to, out of sincerity, is framed as a mystical moment, in a both theological and ineffable sense. All of this suggests the urgency with which Zukofsky desired to prosecute his approach towards his immanent object, and leads the reader back to that extract from "A"-6, presented in 'Recencies' in a compressed quotation from the version of this movement in *An "Objectivists" Anthology*.¹⁹⁷

Returning to "A"-6 at this juncture also raises the question of these questions' practical, poetic, application. Does "A"-6 objectify effectively? The 'military objective' and 'historic and contemporary particulars' are provided for generously in "A", more clearly than in anything else by the so-called Objectivist poets. The objective lens, with its implied immanence is more difficult to locate (perhaps Oppen's post-Objectivist work

¹⁹⁵ *The Utopian Moment in Contemporary American Poetry*, p. 33.

¹⁹⁶ *The Utopian Moment in Contemporary American Poetry*, p. 34.

¹⁹⁷ See *Prepositions*, p. 203.

comes closest to this objective), though Zukofsky's objectifying technique is clearly at play here in the decelerating function that the punctuation in "A"-6 performs: the ellipses and dashes and the curious syntax they inhabit inevitably create a consciousness of the materiality of the poem. The less mystical reading of the 'rested totality' also seems to be accounted for here, for it is perhaps sincerity that Zukofsky is referring to at the beginning of the extract when he writes of 'The melody, the rest are accessory –', locating the poem's truth in its song, its sounds. Sincerity is the most subjective of Zukofsky's definitions, and the most difficult to prove – though its apparent privileging in "A"-6 (implicitly objectification and so on are the accessories) further complicates the theories he puts forward in the Objectivist essays.

Zukofsky's only examples of objectification and sincerity from within the Objectivist coterie are taken from Reznikoff's work, and Zukofsky is lukewarm about them. He quotes, in their entirety, 'Aphrodite Vrania' from *Rhythms* (1918), 'Hellenist' from *Jerusalem the Golden* (1934) and the fourteenth section of *Rhythms*. The first is an example of sincerity, the second and third examples of objectification. In this setting it seems that the objectifying poems are those that stray furthest from Imagism; 'Aphrodite Vrania' is one of Reznikoff's most Imagistic poems in his most Imagistic phase: its central image 'The ceaseless weaving of the uneven water.'¹⁹⁸ This, with its straightforwardly visual, timeless image and its Greek/Latin title could comfortably have appeared in *Des Imagistes*. The other two poems by Reznikoff, however, add elements forbidden in the Imagist manifestos. 'Hellenist' includes an indefinite 'I' and introduces critical quotation marks around "blue-eyes Athena"¹⁹⁹ (the poem, with its central image of painting as object/artwork, presents a version of objectification so

¹⁹⁸ *The Poems of Charles Reznikoff*, p. 25 and *Prepositions* +, 195.

¹⁹⁹ *The Poems of Charles Reznikoff*, p. 93 and *Prepositions* +, 195.

straightforward it seems a caricature), and, according to Zukofsky, involves itself with a good deal of objectifying self-conscious technique:

[T]he purposeful crudity of the first line as against the quantitative (not necessarily classic) hexameter measures of the others, the use of words with two syllables [...] with suitable variations of words of four and three [...]; the majority of the words accented on the first syllable, all resolve into a structure [...] to which the mind does not wish to add; nor does it, any more than when it contemplates a definite object by itself.²⁰⁰

Zukofsky's strange technical prose once again swings back from the material to the subjective verging on mystical, highlighting the confusion that the foregoing has demonstrated to be at the centre of these Objectivist essays. This confusion, with its structural consonances with Zukofsky's approach both to music and to paradise (as I shall discuss in the second and third chapters respectively), is in fact the source of these essays' effectiveness, their function being primarily demonstrative rather than explicatory: the dialectic they enact is the central force in Objectivist verse.

Other Definitions

In conclusion to this section I shall briefly outline two views of Objectivist verse from outside the three original essays, looking first at the definition by Zukofsky's fellow-travellers in the group and finally in his own retrospective thoughts on the venture. When the other Objectivists ventured their own definitions of this movement of convenience they tended to agree with its founder's thought about objectification, and the resultant emphasis on the poem as object that that process leads to, but remained silent on the more confusing and potentially mystical elements of his Objectivist thought. Williams thought that 'the poem, like every other form of art, is an object, an object that in itself formally presents its case and its meaning by the very form it

²⁰⁰ *Propositions* +, pp. 195-96.

assumes',²⁰¹ a reading that emphasises the semiotics of form latent in Zukofsky's theories, and Oppen effectively agreed, writing that 'Objectivist meant, not an objective viewpoint, but to objectify the poem, to make the poem an object'.²⁰² For Reznikoff it seems to have meant more or less the opposite:

By the term 'objectivist', I suppose a writer may be meant who does not write directly about his feelings but about what he sees and hears; who is restricted almost to the testimony of a witness in a court of law; and who expresses his feelings indirectly by the selection of his subject matter and, if he writes in verse, by its music.²⁰³

This is from Reznikoff's fragmented essay 'Obiter Dicta', in which he does not mention Zukofsky, but seems to lay the creation of the Objectivist movement at the door of Pound, quoting a letter to Monroe in which the poet emphasises '[o]bjectivity and again objectivity'.²⁰⁴ This definition does not completely exclude Zukofskian objectification, however, for Reznikoff also suggests a belief 'in writing about the object itself'.²⁰⁵ For Carl Rakosi the term Objectivist combined both versions and 'conveyed a meaning which was, in fact, my objective: to present objects in their most essential reality, to make each poem an object... meaning, by this, obviously, the opposite of a subject; the opposite, that is, of all forms of personal vagueness'.²⁰⁶ Rakosi approaches Zukofsky's conception of Objectivist poetry sensitively, critically and generously, producing a body of analysis that is probably the most helpful critical emanation on this subject from a poet involved in the group. His paraphrases are certainly easier to parse than

²⁰¹ *Autobiography*, p. 264. Tom Orange's 'William Carlos Williams Between Image and Object' is instructive on Williams's relation to the Objectivists. *Sagetrieb* special edition: *William Carlos Williams and the Language of Poetry*, 1999. His proposal of 'No ideas / but in things' appears first in 'A Sort of a Song' [*Collected Poems*, see p. 55] in *The Wedge* (which was dedicated to Zukofsky) and is appears multiply in *Paterson*; a statement that supports Objectivist verse's material telos but that also poses problems for their unabashed abstraction.

²⁰² *LP*, p. 47.

²⁰³ *The Poems of Charles Reznikoff*, p. 371.

²⁰⁴ *The Poems of Charles Reznikoff*, p. 374 and *LP*, p. 49.

²⁰⁵ *The Poems of Charles Reznikoff*, p. 372.

²⁰⁶ *A Note*, p. 36.

Zukofsky's full-blown versions, and his objections are thought provoking. First the paraphrase: Objectivist poetry, as defined by Zukofsky, was

a desire, an aim, for what is objectively perfect, the aim being like a lens which brings the rays from an object into focus. This plus sincerity results in objectifying, making the poem an object [...], and when a poem is that, it is, in his words, in a state of total and perfect rest, one's apprehension completely satisfied.²⁰⁷

This is a straightforward and pragmatic description of Zukofsky's objectivist thought, though the turn of phrase Rakosi uses to describe the rested totality pushes objectification back into Paterian territory, losing some of the thought's invigorating tension. Inevitably, Rakosi does not address the structural ambiguities inherent in Zukofsky's constellation with his paraphrase that Zukofsky's dense critical prose accommodates, and the choice to approach this side of Zukofsky's understanding of Objectivist poetry in isolation is itself a critical stance. Rakosi goes on to draw out an apparent contradiction in Zukofsky's thought, suggesting that he 'had omitted all reference to the poet's relation to the real world, except for that insistence on the necessity for particulars, and that was at odds with his argument, which rested solely on the poet's relation to the poem.'²⁰⁸ Rakosi misses Zukofsky's political intentions in the multiple definitions of 'an objective', but is correct in detecting a difficulty over this issue of 'particulars'. Rakosi is perhaps overstating his case in the distinction he draws between the poem and the 'real world', but we have already seen how unsatisfactorily Zukofsky's attempt to dispense with this problem is in 'Recencies'. It is around this issue that Zukofsky parts company with the other Objectivists: his approach to objecthood is at one remove from theirs, troubled by the unresolved nature of his aesthetic-materialist dialectic at this time.

²⁰⁷ *Collected Prose*, p. 105.

²⁰⁸ *Collected Prose*, p. 106.

After: ‘that’s that’

In 1956 Zukofsky sent the following description of Objectivist poetry to Williams (at Williams’s request):

Objectivist Poetry = <equals> poetry – and that’s that. A poem has an expressed shape, form, love, music (or what other word have you?) And that goes for a poem in any time, for any time – granted the other guy knows the language. Otherwise nothing is said, the “poem” so-called is empty, misshapen. It ought to be the same when we’re all – not we but the deluge <is> – buzzing around in interstellar space. Only heavens knows what words if any they’ll be using to make up the shape, and the order (movement) another indissoluble aspect of it.²⁰⁹

Zukofsky is peevisish here, his ‘that’s that’ a motion of finality, an injunction to cease discussion of this old subject, thought it is also an inadvertently punchy analysis of the ontological aspect of Objectivist poetry; the enterprise boiled down to an insistence on the immanence of the written word. He also instructs Williams to ‘[n]otice how I tell it differently each time’,²¹⁰ a sign of Zukofsky’s surly intolerance for those still obsessed with his still-born non-movement twenty-five years after the fact, but also an admission of his self-conscious technique as founder and mouthpiece of the Objectivist project. Each of the essays do describe Objectivist poetry slightly differently, an aspect of the exercise that reveals the method of Zukofsky’s constellation: each separate meaning, each version of the project, builds into an elastic whole, one that approaches poetry in its fluidity and the complexity of its consciousness of the duration between a first reading and an eventual comprehension.

The Objectivist essays match and even outdo Zukofsky’s poetry of the period in this respect, predicting the distinctive reading experience of the late movements of “A” and *80 Flowers*, through which Zukofsky would employ a simulated sense of simultaneity developed via the poems’ uniquely complex punning and syntax. Intimations of

²⁰⁹ *W/Z*, p. 472.

²¹⁰ *W/Z*, p. 472.

Zukofsky's late paradise can be heard through the poetry and prose of the turn of the 1930s, though perhaps most clearly in the prose, in both the manner in which Zukofsky attempts to negotiate the relationship between his youthful aesthetic interests and his growing commitment to Marxist-Leninism and in these early signs of his later technique. The element that Zukofsky would need to explore most fully to arrive at that late, temporally ambivalent, pseudo-harmonic technique, would be music. A constant and crucial presence throughout all of Zukofsky's work, music would become an analogue for paradise through the middle sections of Zukofsky's career as well as the central tool for his paradise when he came to write it. An understanding of paradise in Zukofsky must necessarily approach his use of music, and in my next chapter I will address Zukofsky's music as a bridge between the early tensions of Zukofsky's aesthetic-utopian period and his late synthetic utopian-paradisaal work.

At the conclusion of this chapter on Zukofsky's Objectivist period it is clear that a number of important elements in his development were decided by the mid-1930s. In a move that resembles Pound's eventual excision of Robert Browning's *Sordello* (1840) voice in his 'ur-cantos' Zukofsky can be seen in the early sections of "A" inspecting and rejecting a series of models for his long poem: thus Dante will never again be so structural a presence in Zukofsky's long poem as he is in "A"-1, just as Bach and eventually Marx are also displaced as Poundian culture-heroes quickly after "A"-1 to 7, though both of their influences would continue and come to influence Zukofsky's final paradisaal profoundly. In the same way, that caricatured 'Zukofsky' or series of 'Zukofskys' that Ahearn detects in the early movements of "A", who functions as foolish exemplar of the ideas Zukofsky is progressively divesting himself of, would disappear as his poem neared its midway point, another rejected model for the progression of "A". That argument with Pater which was already underway when "A"-1 was begun, though

associated with this process of testing and rejecting different models of progression, would be retained in a more complex way, as would Pound's influence and presence, with, as I have attempted to show, the tension between the aesthetic and the utopian-political generating a forceful conceptual propulsion for both Zukofsky's long poem and his other projects. These processes and tensions are visible also in the short poetry and critical prose, though each genre highlights separate aspects of Zukofsky's early struggle to get to grips with his poetics. The arguments set down here will fundamentally colour the development of Zukofsky's attempt to write paradise in the 1960s and 1970s, though before I turn to that late paradisaal phase I shall turn to Zukofsky's music.

2. 'The tune's image holding in the line':¹ Music in Pound and Zukofsky

¹ *CSP*, p. 88.

i) The Problem With Harmony

Through the mid to late 1930s, Pound and Zukofsky, as well as many of their modernist confrères, would find themselves at the fullest extension of their political utopian thought. Through the 1930s Pound's distinctive combination of Social Credit economics, Italian fascism and Confucian social concerns came to dominate his thought, while Zukofsky would write of the left, moderating his always distinctive Marxist thought through collaboration with magazines such as *The Left*² and *New Masses*³

² *The Left: A Quarterly Review of Radical and Experimental Art* survived for two issues, both in 1931. Zukofsky contributed two poems to the first.

³ Zukofsky's most traditionally Communist contribution to *New Masses* was an early component of what would become "A"-8, 'March Comrades', in which Zukofsky adopts a broad revolutionary timbre and a subject matter taken from *The Communist Manifesto*. The last stanza reads:

March comrades in revolution
From hirer unchained
Till your gain
Be the freedom of all
The World's May Day! May!
May of the Freed of All the Earth! [*New Masses*, May 3, 1938, see <http://www.marxists.org/subject/mayday/poetry/march.html>.]

On an undated typescript version of this poem sent to Bunting Zukofsky crosses through his title: "~~MARCH COMRADES~~" / (~~Words for a workers' chorus, from "A"-8~~) / <Title for New Masses – didn't dare say use Internationale for fear of blasphemy.> [Held at the Basil Bunting Archive, Durham University Library, University of Durham, Bunting MS 39.] This change suggests that Zukofsky was perhaps more fully supportive of international Communism at this time than *New Masses* and a consciousness of the squabbles over terminology that divided the American left through the 1930s.

towards something that at least sounded like conventional Marxist-Leninism:⁴ as Pound was writing *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* (1936) Zukofsky worked on ‘A Workers Anthology’.⁵ For both writers 1940 would bring their most overtly political utopian volumes of poetry: *Cantos LII-LXXI* and *The First Half of “A”*.⁶

At the same time, however, both poets were becoming increasingly involved with music, which would provide, both thematically and as concretised in their praxis, a sustained connection to the utopian and paradisaical. Pound would embark upon second and third operas (*Cavalcanti* would be finished in 1933, *Collis O Heliconii* was begun but left unfinished in the same decade),⁷ continue with music criticism, in Ronald Duncan’s *Townsmen* and elsewhere,⁸ and would instigate the Concerti Tigulliani in Rapallo, a series of concerts held in Rapallo with the collaboration of his partner, the violinist Olga Rudge, and German pianist and composer Gerhart Münch. Zukofsky, meanwhile, would revisit the *Passion* through the lens of his developing Marxism in “A”-8 (1935-37), continuing the centrality of musical form to “A”. In this chapter I will approach Pound and Zukofsky’s engagements with music, attempting to connect both poets’ thought on

⁴ Luke Carson’s *Consumption and Depression in Gertrude Stein, Louis Zukofsky and Ezra Pound* helpfully delineates the peculiarities of Zukofsky’s politics through this period.

⁵ This project would founder and re-emerge in less politicised form as *A Test of Poetry* (1948). A projected ‘Editor’s Preface’ sent to Bunting clearly displays Zukofsky’s political allegiance during the 1930s:

This anthology illustrates the presence of revolutionary struggle and idea in some of the best poetry of 2000 years. Lenin has said that art must unite the feelings, thoughts and wills of the masses, and awaken and develop the artist in them. The excellence of these selections should help to develop the artist in the worker, and awaken the class conscious artist to the possibilities for excellence in poetry for the masses.

New York,
March 8, 1935[.]

[Held at the Basil Bunting Archive, Durham University Library, University of Durham, Bunting MS 54.]

⁶ This volume, self-published by Zukofsky, contains a wealth of material besides the eponymous poem, including extensive quotations from *Capital*.

⁷ In 2005 Robert Hughes and Margaret Fisher published *The recovery of Ezra Pound’s third opera ‘Collis O Heliconii’, Settings of poems by Catullus and Sappho*, containing the extant scores from this opera, a publication that, along with Fisher’s *Ezra Pound’s Radio Operas: The BBC Experiments, 1931-1933*, goes some way to uncovering this lost project.

⁸ See *P&M*, pp. 321-32 for R. Murray Schafer’s précis of Pound’s musical criticism from 1928-41.

this subject to their utopian and paradisaal projects more generally, before turning to the examples of canto 75 and “A”-24 as their central musico-paradisaal moments.

A musical development can be perceived in Zukofsky’s short poems of the early 1930s, particularly along the fault-line between ‘29 Poems’ and ‘29 Songs’. The change in medium between the sequences, what were once poems are now songs, indicates the beginning of a very particular central movement towards music had begun in Zukofsky’s work. Singers and musical models are frequent throughout ‘29 Songs’: ‘Madison, Wis., remembering the bloom of Monticello (1931)’, for example, takes songs by Helen Kane⁹ and Bessie Smith for its sources, and was ‘to be spoken with an accent on every syllable – like vaudeville recitative’,¹⁰ while ‘Song – $\frac{3}{4}$ time’ is written to the tune of ‘Three O’clock in the Morning’, a popular waltz.¹¹ The ‘songs’ themselves are for the most part at some remove from conventional music, their subject matter and apparent awkwardness making them seem initially less conventionally lyrical than the Imagistic ‘29 Poems’. Their songness manifests itself, however, in a concentration on the aurality of these pieces’ words and in a series of semi-obsured models that lie behind the verse: thus vision is further sidelined and hearing privileged in a continuation of the disagreement between Objectivist verse and Imagism. This leads to a distinctive type of poem that foregrounds a surreal and a tortured aurality, as in ‘Cricket’s / thickets’¹² and ‘It’s a gay li - ife’, a poem that provides an early key to Zukofsky’s unusual musicality:

There’s naw-thing
 lak po-ee try
it’s a delicacy
 for a horse:

Dere’s na-thing

⁹ In “‘Recencies” in Poetry’ Zukofsky compares Cummings unfavourably with Kane, suggesting that ‘the diction of Cummings’ colloquial chanting [has been] recently not showing as much growth as Helen Kane’s.’ [*Prepositions* +, p. 211.]

¹⁰ *Prepositions* +, p. 213.

¹¹ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/29-Songs.php>.

¹² *CSP*, pp. 48-49.

lak pea- nut-brittle
 it's a delicacy
 for the molars.¹³

Poetry is a delicacy, something to be masticated and sounded: the acts of speech and consumption combined in the locale of the mouth, the kingdom of such textural verse. The poet, associated frequently by Zukofsky with the horse (“A”-7, the horsiest movement in “A” had been completed about nine months before ‘It’s a gay li - ife’),¹⁴ here sings as a horse might: a grating, toothy song, but a song nonetheless.

Building on his use of these early, and pointedly inharmonious, models Zukofsky would soon be utilising musical shapes as foundational structures for “A”, evolving the antiphonal structures of Bach’s *Passion* of “A”-1 into a more complex ‘fugal’ style. The fugue as structuring principle was an early and notorious accusation made of *The Cantos*, with Yeats prominently making the suggestion in his ‘A Packet for Ezra Pound’ insertion in the 1938 edition of *A Vision*:

[W]hen the hundredth canto is finished, [*The Cantos* will] display a structure like that of a Bach Fugue. There will be no plot, no chronicle of events, no logic of discourse, but two themes, the descent into Hades from Homer, a metamorphosis from Ovid, and mixed with these, medieval or modern historical characters. [...] He has scribbled on the back of an envelope certain sets of letters that represent emotions or archetypal events – I cannot find any adequate definition – A B C D and then J K L M, and then each set of letters repeated, and then A B C D inverted and this repeated, and then a new element X Y Z, then certain letters that never recur [...] and all set whirling together.¹⁵

This analysis is only appropriate to the earliest stretches of *The Cantos* (Wilhelm suggests the first eleven¹⁶) and would cause Pound consternation as his poem developed, writing to Hubert Creekmore in 1939 ‘God damn Yeats’ bloody paragraph. Done more to

¹³ *CSP*, p. 43.

¹⁴ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-7.php> and <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/29-Songs.php>. Zukofsky would die in 1978, the Chinese year of the horse.

¹⁵ *A Vision*, pp. 3-5.

¹⁶ *The Tragic Years*, p. 43.

prevent people reading *Cantos* for what is *on the page* than any other smoke screen.¹⁷ Music as an organisational principle would return, in radically altered form via Clément Janequin, in *The Pisan Cantos*, but for the most part this model is not one that Pound would follow. For Zukofsky, however, the fugue would form a touchstone throughout “A”. In “A”-6 Zukofsky writes of the possibility of employing fugue form in a moment that addresses Pound’s early but passing interest in that process as well as signalling his intention to continue with it:

Forgetting
 I said:
 Can
 The design
 Of the fugue
 Be transferred
 To poetry?¹⁸

This is a moment of great uncertainty in “A”, with Zukofsky finishing the movement in dramatic parataxis, miming his hesitancy while regretting the death of his mother:

How shall I –
 Her soles new as the sunned black of her grave’s turf,

 With all this material
 To what distinction – [.]¹⁹

Zukofsky’s admission of forgetfulness and the piquancy of his questioning contain a tacit acceptance that Pound’s abandonment of that experiment was inevitable, though with a parallel assertion that he will continue with this impossible task. This awareness that the telos of his musical exercise is unachievable is vital, and is associated with both his concurrent utopian interests and his eventual paradisaical work.

¹⁷ *LP*, p. 321. Pound concludes with a portentous injunction: ‘As to the *form* of *The Cantos*: All I can say or pray is: *wait* till it’s there. I mean wait till I get ’em written and then if it don’t show, I will start exegesis. I haven’t an Aquinas map; Aquinas *not* valid now.’ [p. 323.]

¹⁸ “A”, p. 38.

¹⁹ “A”, p. 38.

In *Louis Zukofsky and the Poetry of Knowledge* Scroggins tries to come to terms with music in Zukofsky, offering a masterful explanation of fugal form and its application at the beginning of “A”. He reads Bach as the first movement’s main fugal subject, with ‘the economic struggle’ and ‘the poet/narrator’s own struggle to arrive at an aesthetic that can encompass both the sublimity of Bach’s music [...] and the brutal realities of the class struggle’²⁰ as counter-subjects. After tracing these subjects through the movement Scroggins concludes:

What the fugue offers Zukofsky, then, is a fundamentally musical structuring principle that can organize the diverse materials of his poem without excluding, on formal or aesthetic grounds, any subject he desires to treat. While a high modernist parataxis remains his basic compositional method, the overall model of fugal composition allows him to introduce into his poem as much heterogeneous material as he cares to, whether in the form of multiple repeated countersubjects or of nonrepeating episodes.²¹

While demonstrating the extent of Zukofsky’s use of musical form, Scroggins limits the extent of its importance to “A”. Music is at the heart of Zukofsky’s project for Scroggins: he suggests that ‘[f]or Zukofsky, it is poetry’s particular telos to achieve its tangibility through a musical, or musiclike, objectification’²² though, for Scroggins, it must remain solely ‘analogical’, its forms transferable across genres only in a metaphorical sense: it is ‘musiclike’, not music. Scroggins writes:

While words have the same general mode of existence as musical notes – like a musical tone, a word is a sonic event occurring over time – words do not (at least in English) share music’s qualities of pitch, timbre and so on. More important, perhaps, the words of a poem follow one another one at a time; the harmonizing (or discord) of simultaneous tones, the basis of modern Western musical composition, is a technique not available to the composer who works with words.²³

To suggest that something cannot be music if it does not follow the traditions of ‘Western’ harmony is equivalent to suggesting unmetrical writing cannot be classed as

²⁰ *Louis Zukofsky and the Poetry of Knowledge*, p. 197.

²¹ *Louis Zukofsky and the Poetry of Knowledge*, p. 202.

²² *Louis Zukofsky and the Poetry of Knowledge*, p. 183.

²³ *Louis Zukofsky and the Poetry of Knowledge*, p. 172.

poetry; the challenging of tonality has been a primary narrative in serious music for over a century, one of the most important narratives in twentieth-century art, as central to the development of modern composition as Pound's 'first heave' against the pentameter.²⁴ The problem here lies in Scroggins's narrow conception of what music can be: while it is true that poetry is not normally written to specified pitches, Scroggins fails to take into consideration the vast amount of music produced during the twentieth-century that is just as vague when it comes to pitch. From Schoenberg's Sprechgesang in *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912) to John Cage²⁵ and others' pitchless scores,²⁶ modern composers have abandoned specified pitches as readily as Cummings abandoned the uppercase. Steve Reich's *Different Trains* (1988), while reincorporating tonality, is composed to the pitches and rhythms of the spoken phrase.²⁷ Scroggins might argue that a score that does not specify a particular pitch must nonetheless translate into a performance of particular (though possibly variable) pitches, but this is to confuse media, for just as a score would inevitably lead to sounds of identifiable pitch in performance, so, as Christopher Logue suggests when he writes of 'printed verse being a sort of a score as well as a text',²⁸ would a printed poem lead to a read version made up of various pitches (not necessarily the same pitches every time, but this indeterminacy is a commonplace in avant-garde composition and in improvisation of all kinds). Even if a poem is never

²⁴ *The Cantos*, p. 532.

²⁵ In his late mesostic phase Cage would create a piece drawn from the words of *The Cantos*, though he would later express disappointment with this piece's lack of variation in comparison with similar work produced from *Finnegans Wake*: 'I must say that I don't regard them as highly as I do the Wake. The reason is that there are about four or five ideas that keep reappearing in the Cantos, so that in the end the form resembles something done with stencils, where the color doesn't really change. There's not that kind of complexity, or attention to detail, as there is in Joyce.' [*Conversing with Cage*, p. 152.] In his mesostics Cage produces a thoroughly aural kind of linguistics that, like *Catullus*, comes close to truly combining the linguistic and the musical. See Marjorie Perloff's 'The Music of Verbal Space: John Cage's "What You Say"', <http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/perloff/cage.html>.

²⁶ Of the kind Betur reacts against in *Little*: 'would be difficult to play when's hot becus summer flies change composer's score.' [*Collected Fiction*, p. 161.]

²⁷ Scroggins writes with sensitivity about the relation between Reich's minimalism and the poetry of John Taggart. [See *Louis Zukofsky and the Poetry of Knowledge*, p. 304.]

²⁸ *Prince Charming*, p. 121. Carl Rakosi also addresses this complex in his brief essay 'A Note on Music and the Musical'. [*Carl Rakosi: Man and Poet*, pp. 39-41.]

read aloud, and it is probable that “A” is read aloud in its entirety rarely, there is still an aural quality to the manner in which it is read: just as a musician reading a score in silence will be able to imagine the sounds of the piece he reads, so a reader of poetry will have some awareness of the sounds on his page of poetry. In *Principles of Literary Criticism* I.A. Richards refers to this capacity as the ‘auditory imagination’,²⁹ going on to detect an inherent pitch in certain lines and using works by John Milton and William Collins as his examples.³⁰

Analogy should not be abandoned, however, in an interpretation of the modernists’ approach towards music, and need not be considered a pejorative label. A comparison of Zukofsky’s work with some prominent analogically structured modernist works is revealing. Bunting’s ‘Sonatas’³¹ predict *The Four Quartets* (1936-42) and grow out of Eliot’s ‘Preludes’ and *The Waste Land*, only resembling musical form loosely. Bunting states that ‘Eliot in *The Waste Land* stumbled by sheer accident on something very closely analogous to the form that musicians call the sonata but he was surprisingly slow to realize what he had done – though in the end he proclaims it in the title of *The Four Quartets*, a quartet being normally a sonata written for violins, viola and a cello.’³² Though work on *The Four Quartets* would not begin until the mid-1930s, Eliot had already approached music analogically in his early ‘Preludes’ and ‘Rhapsody on a Windy Night’ in *Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917), and he had employed

²⁹ See *Principles of Literary Criticism*, pp. 109-11.

³⁰ *Principles of Literary Criticism*, p. 129.

³¹ This long poem/sequence form, characteristic of Bunting, includes ‘Villon’ (1925), ‘Attis: Or, Something Missing’ (1931), ‘Aus Dem Zweiten Reich’ (1931), ‘The Well of Lycopolis’ (1935), ‘The Spoils’ (1951) and *Briggflatts* (1965). Zukofsky would read and comment various ‘sonatas’ as Bunting drafted them, offering particularly important editorial advice to Bunting during the construction of *Briggflatts*. Bunting, on the final page of a typescript of *Briggflatts* marked by Zukofsky ‘r’ed Nov 13/65’ writes:

Yes; now I’ve a publisher [?] there is one to spare. Here you are, Louis. Something to irritate you, perhaps a little to please you.

You’ll see 2/3 of your suggestions are adopted / or in [?] part / But generally very little change from 1st. draft. [HRC]

³² *BOP*, p. 135.

approximation of the Wagnerian leitmotif in *The Waste Land*.³³ Bunting goes on to compare Zukofsky's fugal style with Pound's:

Pound [...] and Zukofsky after him, was fascinated by the close texture of the fugue and by its somewhat spurious air of logicity. They wanted to know whether the design of the fugue could be transferred to poetry. A short but incomplete answer is that it can't. A fugue is essentially contrapuntal, several voices imitating each other, yet each free of each other, all talking simultaneously, whereas poetry is written for one voice at a time or, at most, for voices in unison.³⁴

Bunting's dismissal here suggests the difference between his comfortably analogical project and Zukofsky's; Bunting, like Scroggins, requires harmony for music to enter literature on a more than analogical level, here to provide the requisite fugal counterpoint. Yet for Bunting the problem is not with music as a whole but with the specific form of the fugue, and a solo piece for violin has as little chance of being a true fugue as "A"-1:

Bach had set an example. He wrote at least two fugues for unaccompanied violin. Of course they are not really fugues. No amount of double stopping can get three or more voices to sing simultaneously on the violin. The entries in Bach's unaccompanied violin fugues wait till the last entry is done or nearly done before they start. Yet he manages to convey a rather teasing sensation of a fugue, never really satisfied.³⁵

While there are no musical annotations corresponding to particular pitches or harmonies in "A"-8, the arrangement of subjects and counter-subjects is fully realised: just as it is possible to imagine the manner in which a fugue written in the style of the New Complexity would put to fugal treatment a series of non-pitch related variables it should be possible to imagine a fugue written from words and phrases. Scroggins's favouring of harmony as the defining characteristic of music is similarly suspect. Many folk traditions include single-line solo vocal performances, and to say that something

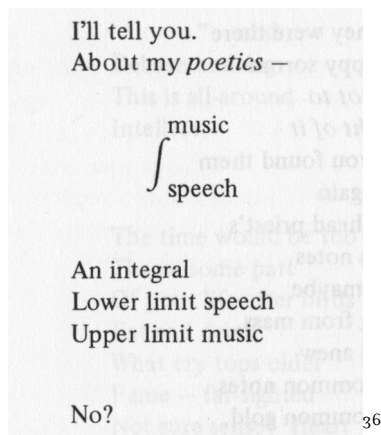
³³ See the volume *T.S. Eliot's Orchestra: Critical Essays on Poetry and Music* edited by John Xiros Cooper for a wealth of information and criticism of Eliot and music. Margaret E. Dana's 'Orchestrating *The Waste Land*: Wagner, Leitmotiv, and the Play of Passion' deals with Wagner's presence in *The Waste Land*.

³⁴ *BOP*, p. 135.

³⁵ *BOP*, p. 135. Makin notes: 'Bunting refers to the sonatas for unaccompanied violin, BWV 1001, 1003, 1005, whose second movements are marked "Fuga."' [*BOP*, p. 208 n. 5.]

must be harmonised to become music would be to eliminate almost all kinds of solo voice work from the art form, as well as unaccompanied soloists on all monophonic instruments. Reich's *Clapping Music* (1972) is a piece of conventionally scored music that exists without *both* pitch and harmony. Scroggins's limited definition of music implies the casting out of a great deal of the last century's most significant musical work.

These musics call into question the necessity of Scroggins's analogical approach, and when Zukofsky sets down his famous 'integral' in "A"-12 (1950-51) something closer than analogy is clearly implied:



While there is an intimation of ultimate impossibility in this integral's upper limit – and in 'A Statement for Poetry' Zukofsky confirms that 'poems perhaps never reach' this 'musical horizon of poetry'³⁷ – that there is movement between the limits forces a reality beyond that of the analogy. Scroggins concludes:

[T]he relationship between [Zukofsky's] musiclike structuring of poetry and the actual structure of the music he proposes as a model remains a relationship that is easily grasped but purely analogical. Musical structure is one of the necessary fictions of Zukofsky's poetics, and while approaching "A" with Zukofsky's claims in mind can yield valuable insight into the work's complex makeup, one must continually remind oneself of the instrumentality of Zukofsky's

³⁶ "A", p. 138.

³⁷ *Prepositions* +, p. 20.

characterizations of his own art, and one must continually question the presuppositions on the poet's part that make him present his musical analogies as self-evident or natural.³⁸

Readers of so complex a poet as Zukofsky could be considered lax if they were not to question his 'presuppositions', and after illuminating much that is difficult in this poetry it is disappointing that Scroggins concludes so unadventurously.

Music is present in the thought of these poets in a manner that goes beyond these adumbrations. Thus the musical function is applied not just to Pound's 'melopœia', 'wherein the words are charged, over and above their plain meaning, with some musical property, which directs the bearing or trend of that meaning',³⁹ but also to 'logopœia', "'the dance of the intellect among words'",⁴⁰ thus the interaction of ideas in the mind embodies the fugue, approaching the written score, though conventionally unperformable. Both poets search for a *combination* of music and poetry, not solely an auditory music emanating from a verbal poetry, but more or less the opposite of that, abstract (non-referential) music conveying a definable verbal meaning. They do not want to set poems to music: they want the music itself to transmit the poetry: 'the tune's image holding in the line'.⁴¹ A poetry without words but with a fixed and definable semiotic value.

In 'Music, Language, and Composition', one of a series of essays that has important ramifications for Zukofsky's musical practice, Adorno suggests that his apparently less lyrical approach to music in literature is actually the more truly musical:

Not for nothing did Kafka, in several of his works, give to music a place that it had never before occupied in literature. He treated the meaningful contents of spoken, signifying language as if

³⁸ *Louis Zukofsky and the Poetry of Knowledge*, p. 184.

³⁹ *LE*, p. 25.

⁴⁰ *LE*, p. 25. Harry Gilonis notes that 'Pound is here *reversed*; instead of *melopoeia*, "the music of words charged - over and above their plain meaning - with some musical property", we have words with their "plain meaning" removed - or at least inhibited - leaving their *innate* musicality uncluttered.' [In a paper entitled 'The Zukofskys' "A"-24: a masque not for dancing' presented at "'A"-24: A Louis Zukofsky Seminar and Performance' at the University of Sussex, January 23rd 2009.]

⁴¹ *CSP*, p. 88.

they were the most extreme contrast to the ‘musical’ language of Swinburne or Rilke, which imitates musical effects and which is alien to the origins of music. To be musical means to innervate the intentions that flash forth, without losing oneself to them in the process, but taming them, instead.⁴²

If Adorno’s conception of music in literature is to be usefully applied to Zukofsky then the mention of Swinburne here is decisive, for it is essentially Swinburne’s model of musically mimetic poetry Pater posits in ‘The School of Giorgione’:

All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music. For while in all other kinds of art it is possible to distinguish the matter from the form, and the understanding can always make this distinction, yet it is the constant effort of art to obliterate it. That the mere matter of a poem, for instance, its subject, namely, its given incidents or situation – that the mere matter of a picture, the actual circumstances of an event, the actual topography of a landscape – should be nothing without the form, this mode of handling, should become an end in itself, should penetrate every part of the matter: this is what all art constantly strives after, and achieves in different degrees.⁴³

Pater suggests that art moves naturally away from representation, away from the restrictions of language, towards the pure abstraction of music. Adorno directly contradicts this suggestion, however, instead locating the true move towards music as a move *towards* language and away from mimesis: the kind of linguistic complexity and inharmonious sonics of ‘29 Songs’. Moving Zukofsky away from the Swinburnian / Paterian model importantly resituates his technique apart from notions of structural and aural imitation, offering an alternative to analogy. Outside of “A”, Zukofsky’s (and the Zukofskys’) transliterations from Hebrew,⁴⁴ Latin⁴⁵ and Welsh⁴⁶ make for extravagantly musical poetry in this model. Distinctions between the linguistic and the musical (a distinction already a step away from Scroggins’s delineation of the poetic and the musical) are inverted in such work.

⁴² *EM*, pp. 114-15.

⁴³ *Studies in the Renaissance*, p. 86.

⁴⁴ See “A”, pp. 359-60, where “A”-15 (1964) opens with a collage of transliterations from the Book of Job. See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-15.php> for Twitchell-Waas’s annotations. In 1967 the Job section would be published on its own as *Iyyob* by Turret Books.

⁴⁵ In 1969, under the auspices of Tom Raworth at Cape Goliard Press, Celia and Louis Zukofsky’s *Catullus (Gai Valeri Catulli Veronesis Liber)*, a homophonic translation/transliteration of the complete works of Catullus, would appear.

⁴⁶ Examples of Zukofsky’s playful renditions of Welsh can be heard throughout *Little / for careenagers* (1970). See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-prose/Little-1970.php> for Twitchell-Waas’s annotations.

A return to Pound's approach to music is fitting here, with an emphasis on the centrality of language to his thought on music, in a sense that is close to Adorno's conception and, increasingly, subtly opposed to Pater's. Writing in 1925, Mina Loy, while overestimating the profundity of Pound's procedures and mispredicting the course of his oeuvre, gives some idea of the ubiquitous connection between Pound and music in the 1920s and '30s:

Close as the relationship of poetry to music is, I think only once has the logical transition from verse to music, on which I have often speculated, been made, and that by the American, Ezra Pound. [...] Almost together with the publication of his magnificent Cantos, his music was played in Paris; it utters the communings of a poet's mind with itself making decisions on harmony.⁴⁷

Loy misapprehends the distance between Pound's written and sounded work, but is insightful when she aligns Pound's work with the problems of harmony. Pound's earliest thought on music in poetry indicates much of his later, finessed and occasionally contradictory, thought on this matter. From the outset the troubadour tradition of 'motz el son', a tradition arguably closer to Adorno's thought than Pater's, was central to Pound's understanding of music in poetry. In 'A Retrospect' (published as such in the 1918 edition of *Pavannes & Divagations*, though containing previously available material) Pound goes some way to suggesting the importance of music to his early poetics when he advises 'the candidate [to] fill his mind with the finest cadences he can discover, preferably in a foreign language, so that the meaning of the words may be less likely to divert his attention from the movement',⁴⁸ and lists the components of a lingual but senseless poetic music: 'syllable long and short, stressed and unstressed, [...] vowels and consonants.'⁴⁹ These very general definitions suggest that for Pound at this stage all poetry has the aural function of music – for all poems and sentences have syllables, and

⁴⁷ From 'Modern Poetry', *Poetry in Theory*, p. 133.

⁴⁸ *Pavannes & Divagations*, p. 98.

⁴⁹ *Pavannes & Divagations*, p. 98.

most have both vowels and consonants – but the poet promptly undermines this foregrounding of the musical in his next paragraph when he states that ‘[i]t is not necessary that a poem should rely on its music, but if it does rely on its music that music must be such as will delight the expert.’⁵⁰ A certain lack of confidence in his subject is apparent in this muddying statement, for if music is as integral as Pound’s initial remarks suggest then it seems natural that all good poems must rely on their music; he reiterates this when he speaks of the concerns of metre having ‘exact parallels in music’.⁵¹

Pound details his ideas about music in poetry most clearly in his essays on Cavalcanti. In ‘Cavalcanti’ (1935) he stresses the thoroughgoing (mimetic) musicality of the canzone, which he suggests include both the premeditated repetition and modulation of real music:

The strophes of canzoni are perforce symmetrical as the musical composition is only one-fifth or one-sixth the length of the verbal composition and has to be repeated. I don’t believe we can prove complete absence of modulation; or that in case of canzon in tenzone one should assume impossibility of answer to tonic from dominant. Neither do we know what happened to the tune of the sestina while the recurrence scheme was performing its evolution; the six units of the tune may, and in the case of Arnaut’s *Oncle ed Ongla* could very well, have followed some permutation of modes or key. The aesthetic of the carry-through of one rhyme scheme from strophe to strophe is of Provençal not of Tuscan composition.⁵²

The suggestion is that the troubadours were writing music as they wrote poetry, and that the poems they left are therefore scores. Pound’s version of music in his introduction to *Sonnets and Ballate* (completed 1929, published 1932 with *Guido Cavalcanti Rime*) is urgent and sensual, and addresses the problems with harmony raised by Bunting and Scroggins by re-approaching his dismissal of harmony in ‘A Retrospect’, where he considered ‘[t]he term harmony [...] misapplied in poetry’.⁵³ Pound believes ‘in an

⁵⁰ *Pavannes & Divagations*, p. 99.

⁵¹ *Pavannes & Divagations*, p. 99.

⁵² *Pound’s Cavalcanti*, p. 220.

⁵³ *Pavannes & Divagations*, p. 99.

ultimate and absolute rhythm as I believe in an absolute symbol or metaphor⁵⁴ and goes on to write that

[r]hythm is perhaps the most primal of all things known to us. It is basic in poetry and music mutually, their melodies depending on a variation of tone quality and of pitch respectively, as is commonly said, but if we look more closely we will see that music is, by further analysis, pure rhythm; rhythm and nothing else, for the variation of pitch is the variation in rhythms of the individual notes, and harmony the blending of these various rhythms. When we know more of overtones we will see that the tempo of every masterpiece is absolute, and is exactly set by some further law of rhythmic accord. Whence it should be possible to show that any given rhythm implies about it a complete musical form – fugue, sonata, I cannot say what form, but a form, perfect, complete. Ergo, the rhythm set in a line of poetry connotes its symphony, which, had we but a little more skill, we could score for orchestra. *Sequitur*, or rather *inest*: the rhythm of any poetic line corresponds to emotion.⁵⁵

The ‘fugue’ predicts Zukofsky, the ‘sonata’ Bunting’s and Pound’s harmony of rhythms counters Scroggins’s analogy with some force;⁵⁶ Pound rails against ‘these bastards who are such nuts on harmony’.⁵⁷ Recalling Eliot’s objective correlative, Pound’s ‘inest’ suggests a mathematical music in which harmonic (or, for Pound, complex rhythmic) arrangements are attached to specific, predictable emotional formulae; chiming with the precision that Pound craves, and suggesting that he hopes for his poetry to be as tightly controlled; his conceptions of poetic language and successful musical composition aligning closely. In a series of articles on music published in *Townsmen* in the late 1930s Pound attacks harmony from another direction, here emphasising melody:

⁵⁴ Pound’s *Cavalcanti*, p. 18.

⁵⁵ Pound’s *Cavalcanti*, pp. 18-19.

⁵⁶ As science, Pound’s rhythmic harmony is semi-persuasive, though its practical applicability to verse seems unlikely. As A vibrates at 440 hertz, so a verse repeating a selection of letters at variously regular intervals could, conceivably, suggest a slow, low harmony; a ‘t’ and an ‘r’ repeated according to a formula could make up two voices in a fugue, their pitches rising and dropping as the letters are repeated more or less frequently. This music is attractive, but it raises questions: could music encoded in this way really be responded to aurally, as music? If the music is inaudible, then its presence is surely as analogous as Scroggins suggests; Pound implicitly believes that the low notes reverberate in the subconscious and make themselves felt as emotions. This position is difficult to quantify, and it is not clear that Pound himself ever wrote in this controlled fashion, unless it is to be supposed that such poetry is written in as subconscious a fashion as it is to be felt. Zukofsky comes closer; his embedding of the formulae of particle physics into “A”-9 is strongly recalls the ‘great bass’. But, in *Bottom: On Shakespeare*, Zukofsky distances his conception of music from this scientific mode when he writes: ‘No abstract note equals the material sound as in theory f # # equals g. In music, no produced note is ever equal to itself or equal to equals. Apart from gauge, tension, weight of a string – all tolerances – the fingering hearing mates the sense known as perfect pitch.’ [*Bottom: On Shakespeare*, p. 418.]

⁵⁷ *The Townsmen*, October 1937, p. 9.

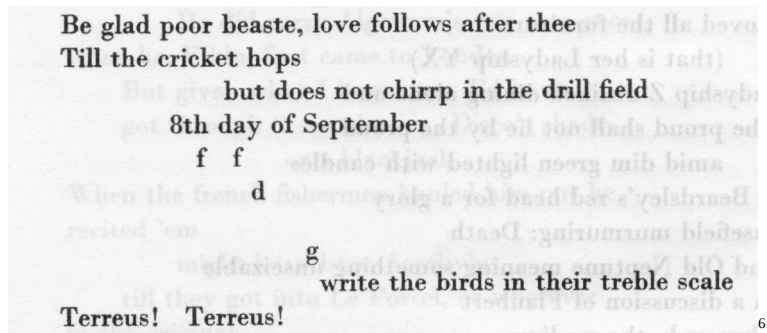
The way to LEARN composition is:

A. Melody. Study of Melody. Comparison of melodies from the earliest known up to now. Comparison of melodic development in the orient with that of the occident.

B. Almost as a sub-head, the study of simultaneous rhythms, say in oriental dance music.⁵⁸

The music implied is related to Cavalcanti's: combined rhythms create harmony, here added to melody, and can be created without harmony and should therefore be possible in poetry. This 'melody whether its maker be conscious of it or not HAS a base, it is written willi-nilly ABOVE certain simple progressions of fundamental.'⁵⁹ The 'fundamental' is Pound's 'great bass': the slow unconscious harmonic rhythm he identifies in his introduction to his collection of Cavalcanti's poetry, and which is as applicable to the sense of poetry as its sound.

In the later *Cantos* the connection between music and language is displayed repeatedly. Canto 82 contains a graphic amalgamation of musical notation and the written word that is unbroached in the other sections of Pound's long poem:



This node of poetic energy brings together a number of themes and processes from elsewhere in *The Pisan Cantos*: the birds themselves are representatives of the green world of the animals that provides solace for Pound in the camp at Pisa, while the wires upon which they sit represent Pound's confinement and are employed in a number of effective

⁵⁸ 'Muzik, as Mistaught', *The Townsman*, October 1938, p. 8.

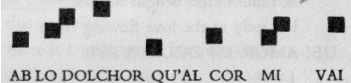
⁵⁹ *The Townsman*, October 1938, p. 9.

⁶⁰ *The Cantos*, p. 525

images. The birds are arranged upon the barbed wire of the D.T.C. in a manner that recalls the placing of notes upon a musical stave and, more specifically, the arrangement of Janequin in canto 75. Here, in contrast to 75, Pound chooses to write his music in hybrid fashion; the spatial placement and terminology of music are retained, though the lines of the stave are lost and the black-tailed notes replaced by the letters which stand in for both birds and notes, a combination that emphasises Pound's conception of musical

notation and music itself as language. Canto 91 opens with  ⁶¹,

which unfamiliar Provençal phrase Terrell detects as a conflation of various troubadour lyrics, 'with the sweetness that comes to my heart';⁶² and which Pound reinvents, thereby attaching the moment to Neoplatonism, as 'the body of light come forth'.⁶³ The

canto continues with a variation and reiteration,  ⁶⁴, that

illustrates the proximity of linguistic and musical meaning here: that the statement is capitalised on reiteration suggests emphasis while at the same time the melody reinforces that emphasis; the greater elaboration of the second statement is emphatic. That the melody figures both reach their highest notes upon the word 'dolchor' implies that there is weight in this word, while the melisma on 'mi' in the reiteration suggests that this word is of greater importance in the repetition. In this case the musical 'accompaniment' has a syntactical influence upon the poetry, 'with the sweetness that comes to my heart' changing to 'with the sweetness that comes to *my* heart', emphasis moving from the movement of the 'sweetness' to the its particular location in the poet's 'heart'. Here Pound's project is shown to be not really the integration of music into his

⁶¹ *The Cantos*, p. 624.

⁶² *A Companion to The Cantos of Ezra Pound*, p. 545.

⁶³ *The Cantos*, p. 624.

⁶⁴ *The Cantos*, p. 624.

poetry, but to endow music with the communicative qualities and functions normally associated with words and sentences.

In *Ezra Pound's Radio Operas* Margaret Fisher emphasises effectively how central this addition of semiotic power to music was to Pound's musical thought and, indeed, his own compositional practice:

Pound's reasons for composing music differ from the usual reasons to compose. He sought to revive the troubadour art of 'motz el son' through a recombination of words and music that would recover and transmit the voice, rhythm, and mind of the composer or performer.⁶⁵

Thus Pound is developing Adorno's music and language thesis further, effectively inverting Pater's hierarchy in that here music metamorphoses into a linguistic tool; his poetry essaying, like Swinburne's, a non-referential, contentless music. Fisher goes on to describe the poet's compositional technique, recalling Pound on Cavalcanti:

Pound's technique for setting words to music adhered to the principle that the melody of a song arises from the 'tonal leadings' of the words themselves; the rhythm emerges from the spoken proportions of vowels to consonants, and is also established by the words. For the cadences to properly reflect the emotion of the poem, the governing tempo of the poem (or its sections if there are several tempi) and the durations of the notes have to be precise in their relation to the poet's words.⁶⁶

Richards's 'auditory imagination'⁶⁷ is manifested in Pound's procedures here, with music secondary to literature to such an extent that it may exceed Adorno's dialectic; for just as language becomes more like music by forswearing the mimetic approach to music, for Adorno music's 'similarity to language is fulfilled as it distances itself from language.'⁶⁸ As Adorno suggests in 'Locating Music', he 'who takes music literally as language will be led astray by it.'⁶⁹ Jacques Attali reiterates and strengthens this warning when he writes that the 'idea of a language coded in music is linked to the idea

⁶⁵ *Ezra Pound's Radio Operas*, p. 5.

⁶⁶ *Ezra Pound's Radio Operas*, p. 22.

⁶⁷ See *Principles of Literary Criticism*, pp. 109-11.

⁶⁸ *EM*, p. 117.

⁶⁹ *EM*, p. 113.

of military order and imperial universality',⁷⁰ suggesting a totalising, Confucian reading of *The Cantos*.

In the 'Musicks Letters' section of *Bottom: On Shakespeare* Zukofsky sets down a collage of quotations that suggests a version of music's interaction with language that owes much to Pound. Zukofsky urges a close link between poetry and music; his interest in Byrd and Lawes is redolent of Pound's in the 'libretto' section of 81:⁷¹

Erasmus laughed at pre-Reformation music for setting notes – as Purcell did later in his songs for *The Tempest*. Morley, Dowland, Weelkes, Campion, Lawes cared more for the quantities of the spoken syllables (declamation), the homophonic and harmonic. The words of Shakespeare's songs keep the feeling of old dance, as against ear busy hearing more than one voice in the counterpoint of his stage iambs.⁷²

Shakespeare's verse is thus more musical than his song, and the counterpoint of his prosody is of such complexity as to suggest the harmony apparently inaccessible to verse. Elsewhere in this section Zukofsky reveals that music is something pre-existent that should be revealed by the poet and the composer alike: 'The reed of the grass discloses itself in the wind; the musical reed, moisture of breath and touch. The voice or the tune is never seen. Riffing flows away on the shape of the riffle.'⁷³ The music precedes the poem, and it is the composer's job to release that music rather than to 'set' the poem to his own composition. There is something of Davie's *Poet as Sculptor* in this, and it is crucial to our understanding of Zukofsky's use of music as more than analogy: as the music proceeds the poem so the written poem is a score for its music like the score of a piece of music: 'the visible reference persists "tangibly" as print, and the air of the voice in handwriting as notes.'⁷⁴ The music, derived of 'a various architectonic of birds singing',⁷⁵ precedes even human speech. The headline that concludes this section reads:

⁷⁰ *Noise*, p. 92.

⁷¹ *The Cantos*, pp. 533-34.

⁷² *Bottom: On Shakespeare*, pp. 420-21.

⁷³ *Bottom: On Shakespeare*, p. 423.

⁷⁴ *Bottom: On Shakespeare*, p. 423.

⁷⁵ *Bottom: On Shakespeare*, p. 424.

‘Electronic Synthesizer Produces Good Music / And May Later Imitate Human Speech’;⁷⁶ the song precedes the word’s meaning and is inherent in it, as in Zukofsky’s preface to *Autobiography*, in which he writes, regarding the poems there set to music by his wife Celia, that ‘the words had potentially their own tunes which she followed even more carefully to complete for me.’⁷⁷ This point marks Zukofsky’s fullest musical development out of Pound, and suggests a fruitful elaboration of Adorno’s thought. While Zukofsky may appear contradictory of Adorno, he is in fact articulating the other pole of Adorno’s dialectic: rather than language effectively taking on the dynamics of music, here music becomes language.

Woods, who largely accepts the analogical reading of music in Zukofsky’s work, calls Zukofsky’s desire to make poetry music a ‘utopian aspiration’.⁷⁸ This analysis both capitulates to those supporting the analogy thesis by a tacit acceptance of this project’s impossibility and affirms the importance of music in Zukofsky’s work by linking it with his transcendent, political utopian project. Bunting compares Zukofsky’s musical techniques to the practices of the Serialists,⁷⁹ a practice Zukofsky would employ in “A”-20 (1963)⁸⁰ and that Adorno would famously praise for its emancipatory and dialectical implications:

Radical freedom from all objective norms imposed upon music from the exterior is coordinated with the most extreme rigidity of immanent structure, so that music by its own forces eliminates at least within itself alienation as a matter of subjective formation and objective material.⁸¹

This ‘immanent structure’ is key to music’s utopian function in Zukofsky’s poetry; his procedures, which, as Bunting notes, often recall Serialism in their apparent

⁷⁶ *Bottom: On Shakespeare*, p. 427.

⁷⁷ *Autobiography*, p. 7.

⁷⁸ *The Poetics of the Limit*, p. 214.

⁷⁹ *BOP*, p. 160.

⁸⁰ “A”, pp. 435-36.

⁸¹ *EM*, pp. 399-400.

arbitrariness, going so far as to consciously imitate their tone rows in “A”-20, and offering an example of how his wider technique is integrally related to both his musical interests and his utopian politics.

Woods also writes that ‘Pound’s distinction from Zukofsky and contemporary “Language” poetry is that he conceives the “musical property” as in some manner detachable from the sense of “plain meaning” of words.’⁸² This distinction from Pound underestimates the Adornian musicality of Pound’s mature musical thought, though in the manner that it runs against the analogists position so forcefully it does speak accurately of Zukofsky’s practice, and suggests something of the manner in which Zukofsky’s music would go further than his mentor’s. To demonstrate this development I return, finally, to Adorno, who offers a recalibration of Zukofsky’s ‘integral’⁸³ as a dialectical ‘musical continuum’:⁸⁴

Music aims at an intention-less language, but it does not separate itself once and for all from signifying language, as if there were different realms. A dialectic reigns here; everywhere music is shot through with intentions – not, to be sure, only the *stile rappresentativo*, which used the rationalization of music as a means of coming to terms with its resemblance to language. Music without any signification, the mere phenomenological coherence of the tones, would resemble an acoustical kaleidoscope. As absolute signification, on the other hand, it would cease to be music and pass, falsely, into language.⁸⁵

A comparison between Pound and Zukofsky through the light of this dialectic is revealing, with the example of Pound’s unequivocal lingualism in his thought on music and in his compositional practice excluding him, while Zukofsky’s more ambiguous integral suggests a dialectical tension in his work. This moment, in which both writers are approaching an inherently dialectical problem, reveals perhaps the fundamental difference in these poets’ practices, with the tension persisting more productively in

⁸² *The Poetics of the Limit*, p. 242.

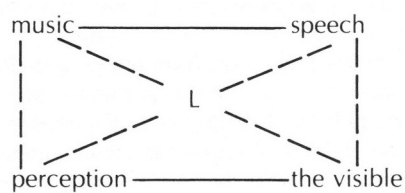
⁸³ “A”, p. 138.

⁸⁴ *EM*, p. 115.

⁸⁵ *EM*, p. 114.

Zukofsky's work and Pound displaying a problematic discomfort. This dynamic would continue as these poets turned to write their synthetic paradises, with Zukofsky again comfortable within the tensions of that final dialectic while Pound's attempt fragments into regret and collapse.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Silliman attempts a diagram of this dialectic in Zukofsky, suggesting that the music – speech integral also applies to the ratios of perception and the visible dealt with in *Bottom: On Shakespeare*, while language ('L') holds the centre:



[*The L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E Book*, p. 291.]

ii) ‘Will she write the music I cannot’?:⁸⁷ Canto 75 vs. “A”-24

I will now turn to an analysis of the most extensive moments of musical interruption in *The Cantos* and “A”. In the clearest possible contradiction of the analogical model, “A”, with Celia Zukofsky’s settings of her husband’s work to the music of Handel in “A”-24, actually includes over a hundred pages of indisputably non-analogical, performable music, just as *Bottom: On Shakespeare* terminates with the printed score of Celia’s *Music to Shakespeare’s Pericles*⁸⁸ (230 pages), while the majority of *Autobiography* (1970)⁸⁹ is made up of her musical accompaniments to Louis’s poetry. Pound does something similar in canto 75 and, as I have shown, at other moments through the later *Cantos*.⁹⁰ These

⁸⁷ *CSP*, p. 101.

⁸⁸ Here the Zukofskys contradict Pound in *Townsmen*: ‘Lay aside the fact that Antheil hadn’t the verbal culture necessary for a Pericles, Shakespeare’s Pericles is not a libretto. You can’t make opera by taking a mass of words made to be declaimed from a stage and just shoving the pitch up and down.’ [April 1938, p. 17.]

⁸⁹ A recording *Autobiography*, with Celia’s music performed by professional singers and Zukofsky reading the prose interludes at Lincoln Center in New York March 31, 1971 can be found at <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Zukofsky.php>.

⁹⁰ The inclusion of scores is a feature of a variety of modernist texts; in addition to the structurally analogist ‘Sirens’ chapter in *Ulysses* (1922) Joyce includes printed scores in both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* (1939). This example is inserted into the catechism of ‘Ithaca’ with similarly interruptive visual and aural effect to Münch’s score in canto 75. Note that here, again as in canto 75, musical notation appears in the form of a photographed manuscript:

moments share a number of consonances, though most pressingly for this study it should be noted that both intrusions occur with crucial proximity to their paradisaal visions; Pound's coming near the opening of *The Pisan Cantos*, the beginning of his paradisaal phase, while, though it is held over until the very end of his poem, Zukofsky's was in fact completed and included in 1968, before "A" 22 & 23 (1975) and *80 Flowers* (1978), the most important sections of his paradisaal phase, had been written. Terrell refers to canto 75 as 'a transitional move out of hell [...] toward *paradiso terrestre*',⁹¹ and the intrusion of musical annotation and music itself will therefore be seen in these moments as essential introductions to both poets' paradisaal phases.

It is notable that both of these musical interruptions occur in the form of collaborations, with the setting of Zukofsky's words to George Frideric Handel's harpsichord music in "A"-24 arranged by Celia, and the arrangement of Clément Janequin inserted in canto 75 made by the German pianist and composer Münch, who created the arrangement specifically for Pound's partner, the violinist Rudge.⁹² That



[p. 809.]

'The Ballad of Persse O'Reilly' similarly interrupts *Finnegans Wake* [p. 44], while Samuel Beckett includes music in this auditory-visual fashion, notably with the 'Frog Song' in *Watt* [pp. 117-18].

⁹¹ *A Companion to The Cantos of Ezra Pound*, p. 389.

⁹² Bunting hears Celia's music in other works by Zukofsky, stating that it has 'given his verse a clarity of sound that has steadily increased all his life. The later short poems show it particularly. It stays light in the mouth, where the rest of us [...] often go heavy.' [*BOP*, p. 154.]

these acts of collaboration occur at the gates of both poets' paradises suggests something of the nature of their paradisaical visions with this most dialectical moment (this musical-poetical dialectic introducing the synthetic utopia-paradise) divided among a series of different pairs of hands. With this in mind I will first attempt a reading of canto 75 both as the culmination of Pound's musical thought and as a summation of his long collaboration with Münch and Rudge. In her essay 'Pound's Janequin in Canto 75' Ellen Keck Stauder writes that

75 is, like many of the other elegiac recollections of friends and fellow artists [in *The Pisan Cantos*], a portrait of Münch via the music he so often played at Rapallo. But the notated score is not an effort of nostalgic recollection; rather, Pound is interested in acts of making that are most precisely embodied in the distinctive particularities of a given rendition and the way these new engagements with the material of older works reveal unheard possibilities that are provoked through new forms or shapes.⁹³

The analysis of canto 75 in this extract is exemplary, though Stauder's desire to minimise the personal connection with Münch is overemphatic. Born in 1907, Münch, according to Pound, '[a]t the age of thirteen [...] played the piano solo in Liszt's Concerto with the Dresden Philharmonic [...] in Berlin, Leipzig, Munich, Brussels, and Zürich',⁹⁴ and, in the 1920s, was among the first Germans to produce player-piano scores. Münch's work with Pound and Rudge began soon after his arrival in Rapallo, the German acting as Rudge's accompanist and as researcher, transcriber and arranger for their various Vivaldi projects.

Münch's engagement with Janequin began when Pound discovered that the son of Oscar Chilesotti, an authority on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century lute music, was resident in Rapallo and in possession of his late father's collection of lute tablatures. Pound secured Münch access to these manuscripts, resulting in a series of what R.

⁹³ *Ezra Pound, Language and Persona*, pp. 262-63.

⁹⁴ *PEM*, p. 333.

Murray Schafer calls ‘quite elaborate reconstructions’⁹⁵ of various pieces of medieval music. Among these was Francisco da Milano’s lute setting of Janequin’s ‘Chant des Oiseaux’,⁹⁶ a setting of which was performed on the 10th of October 1933 as part of the first of Concerti Tigulliani on a programme including works by Giovanni Terzi, Arcangelo Corelli, Bach and Debussy.⁹⁷ Pound would write in *Il Mare* that Münch was ‘the real pivot of the [Concerti Tigulliani] and that without him (his talents and great general competence) it would be, if not impossible, at least very difficult to continue.’⁹⁸

The benefactors of his concert series were

not only paying Münch for that hour of virtuoso playing he offers us on the evening of the concert. His real task is different and greater: he must decipher a whole system of abbreviations for old music adopted by Chilesotti, who had for the most part, merely transcribed the *tablatura* used by the composers of lute music.⁹⁹

It was in these capacities that Münch became so important for Pound, working as the ‘editor’¹⁰⁰ of Pound’s concert series and overseeing its musical content in a manner that simultaneously corresponded with Pound’s interests and exceeded his musical capacities. Without Münch the musical vortex in Rapallo could not have attained the importance for Pound that it did: Münch’s characteristic blend of twentieth-century technique and knowledge of medieval music fed directly into the poet’s music criticism and, indeed, music of the period (Pound’s second opera *Cavalcanti* would be finished in 1933, the same year as Münch’s Janequin).¹⁰¹ This vortex would reach its most direct expression in canto 75.

⁹⁵ *P&M*, p. 328.

⁹⁶ See Anne Conover, *Olga Rudge & Ezra Pound*, pp. 115-16.

⁹⁷ *ABC of Reading*, p. 23.

⁹⁸ *P&M*, p. 334.

⁹⁹ *P&M*, pp. 340-41.

¹⁰⁰ *P&M*, p. 347.

¹⁰¹ Fisher tellingly describes this work as ‘a dense work of literary criticism and self-criticism.’ [*Ezra Pound’s Radio Operas*, p. 193.]

The vortex was, however, short-lived, and Münch would leave Rapallo and the Villa Chilesotti in July 1935, not returning until the spring of 1937 only to leave for Dresden soon after.¹⁰² The Pound/Münch/Rudge correspondence reveals that the 1930s were a time of some personal disruption for Münch, with his letters detailing the collapse of his relationship with his partner Berthe and the turbulent beginning of his subsequent, life-long marriage to the American poet Vera Lawson, as well as various nervous collapses and periodical disagreements with Pound and, particularly, Rudge. Discussions of various anthropological and artistic figures, including Frobenius and Klages, also feature in the Münch/Pound correspondence. In their letters Pound and Münch discussed Münch's initial ambivalence towards the German Nazi party and Pound seems to have been instrumental in persuading Münch to toe the Nazi line; in April 1938 Münch wrote: 'I could work with the Party, but until now preferred [sic] not to do so',¹⁰³ to which Pound replies '[d]o for God's sake work WITH THE PARTY, the party is right and is the future. and the future is RIGHT'.¹⁰⁴ There were changes under the Nazis that Münch approved of; after returning to live in Munich in 1937 he wrote to Pound that 'it is easy to agree and not loose ones temper in a country where Frobenius and Klages are recognised'¹⁰⁵ and suggested that 'the absence of jews in public and private life is too pleasing for words'.¹⁰⁶ Münch joined the Wehrmacht in 1940, leaving through illness in 1944, and had returned to Dresden before the firebombing of February 1945.

Münch's presence is central to the text of canto 75. The first section is typographically relatively conventional and addresses Münch directly, apparently before Pound could know if he had survived the firestorm at Dresden (the first draft of canto 75

¹⁰² *PCM*, p. 383.

¹⁰³ From an unpublished letter dated 12.4.38. [Beinecke, YCAL MSS43, Box 36, Folder 1504.]

¹⁰⁴ From an unpublished letter dated 15 Ap 1938. [Beinecke, YCAL MSS43, Box 36, Folder 1504.]

¹⁰⁵ From an unpublished letter dated 12.4.38, held at the Beinecke, YCAL MSS43, Box 36, Folder 1504.]

¹⁰⁶ From an unpublished letter dated 5.1.38. [Beinecke, YCAL MSS43, Box 36, Folder 1503.]

emphasises this uncertainty with an additional question mark at the end of the second line).¹⁰⁷ Münch is imagined fleeing Dresden, here represented by Phlegethon, the river of fire in which those who had committed violence against their fellow men boil in the seventh circle of Dante's *Inferno*,¹⁰⁸ implicitly running parallel to Lethe, the river of forgetfulness with which canto 74 closes. In his satchel he carries, in a revision of canto 9's Malatestan postbag, artefacts relating to three culturally significant Germans (none of whom are regularly presences in Pound's oeuvre): a score or scores by Dietrich Buxtehude, the mid-Baroque Danish-German organist and composer and influence upon Bach, a work by Ludwig Klages, a figure to whom I will return in a few moments, and 'the / Ständebuch of Sachs'.

This Ständebuch is an edition of the songs of the Meistersinger Hans Sachs accompanied by illustrations by Jost Amman. In 'The Culture of An Age' chapter of *Guide to Kulchur* Pound describes an ideally cultured German, who, like Münch, is 'sufficiently civilized to prefer Bach, Lubek, Tielmann [sic], The Ständebuch, Minnelied',¹⁰⁹ with this Ständebuch representing a required text in a reading of German culture. In the *Guide* Pound places the work of the Meistersingers in a tradition of skilled primitive artists, giving a very Poundian context to the Ständebuch:

It is very hard to stop quoting Das Ständebuch. I don't think the verse is, technically, up to that of the best earlier Minnelied, [...] [b]ut I can't see now, any more than I have been able to see at any other time during the past 30 years, that German tonkunst in poetry has advanced or maintained the earlier verse-art.¹¹⁰

Sachs's verse, for all of its technical infelicities, retains a cultural purity that Pound admires and is comparable with Buxtehude's baroque organ music. Münch's postbag is

¹⁰⁷ Beinecke, YCAL MSS43, Box 76, Folder 3393.

¹⁰⁸ See Canto XI, ll. 34-39.

¹⁰⁹ *Guide to Kulchur*, p. 217.

¹¹⁰ *Guide to Kulchur*, p. 203.

by Leo Frobenius and included in canto 74, confirms Terrell's reading of the poem as '*forma*'.

The interest in the double-stops of Münch's violin line in the Dudek letter speaks of the piece's ability to reveal the song, in Pound's paraphrase of Rudge, 'not of one bird but of many',¹¹⁹ Pound's other concern with this piece, in which, in accordance with important elements of his musico-poetics, the single line of the violin (augmented by double-stops) seeks to represent a series of different voices simultaneously, here appreciated where Bunting dismisses Bach, insisting that '[n]o amount of double stopping can get three or more voices to sing simultaneously on the violin.'¹²⁰ Münch, as composer/arranger, is central to this process, just as he must be for the historical repeat. At one point Pound suggests that Münch was in fact more important to this process than his predecessors, writing that he was 'inclined to wonder whether any chorus was ever sufficiently perfect in execution to give the intervals with the clarity of the fiddle, or if F. da Milano's lute could have rendered them as effectively.'¹²¹ By reintroducing music so concretely, and foregrounding polyphony, Pound is offering instruction on how to read *The Pisan Cantos*. Early composers Janequin and Buxtehude are exemplars of the polyphony Pound wishes to emulate: Klages and Sachs exemplars of the *sagetrieb*, a concomitant polyphonic cultural melody line.

The photographed, musical segment of canto 75 functions in a series of different ways, each of which entails ramifications for how this canto should be read, and each of these readings is associated intimately with aspects of Münch and Pound's relationship. The music is the violin part from Münch's radical re-setting of Janequin's (1485-1558) *Reveilles-Vous* ('Chant des Oiseaux'), a piece first published in 1539, transcribed by Francesco da Milano in the sixteenth-century for solo-lute and then set by Münch in the

¹¹⁹ *The Cantos*, p. 464.

¹²⁰ *BOP*, p. 135.

¹²¹ *P&M*, p. 399.

twentieth-century for piano and violin. Pound had recently made two abortive attempts to write Janequin into *The Cantos*: ‘the birds praising Jannequin [sic]’¹²² would first emerge in a fragment meant ‘to go into canto 72 or somewhere’¹²³ sent to Katsue Kitasono in March 1941,¹²⁴ and would eventually appear in the ‘Now sun rises in Ram sign’ section of *Drafts & Fragments*,¹²⁵ ‘as an afterthought’ according to Laughlin.¹²⁶ In 1944 he again prefigured those birds in Pisa with ‘molti ucelli fecer’ contrappunto¹²⁷ (‘many birds singing in counterpoint’ in Pound’s own translation)¹²⁸ in the Italian canto 72, which, as it was not included in the extract published in *Marina Repubblicana*, would not be published until the 1980s.¹²⁹ Janequin was a composer attractive to Pound for a number of reasons. He enjoyed great fame during his lifetime, though he worked for the most part outside of the prevalent systems of ecclesiastical and aristocratic patronage.¹³⁰ His work, crucially for canto 75, was highly mimetic, as was common in the Renaissance and Baroque periods: ‘Chant des Oiseaux’ reproduces onomatopoeically the sound of bird song, while another famous piece, ‘La chasse’, captures the sounds of hunting and ‘La Bataille’, Janequin’s best-known work, strives to reproduce the noise of battle in celebration of the French victory over the Habsburgs at the Battle of Marignano in 1515. This kind of mimetic music has parallels in some of the twentieth-century music that Pound liked, including his collaborator George Antheil’s *Ballet Mécanique* (1924), and by providing Pound with a way to link such

¹²² *The Cantos*, p. 820.

¹²³ *LP*, p. 348. See Peter Stoicheff’s ‘The Interwoven Authority of a Drafts & Fragments Text,’ from *A Poem Containing History*. This useful essay can also be found at http://www.usask.ca/english/fac/stoicheff_peter/w-interwoven_author.html#i30n.

¹²⁴ See *LP*, p. 348.

¹²⁵ *The Cantos*, p. 814.

¹²⁶ See http://www.usask.ca/english/fac/stoicheff_peter/w-interwoven_author.html#i30n.

¹²⁷ *The Cantos*, p. 430.

¹²⁸ *Paris Review*, no. 128, Fall 1993, p. 315.

¹²⁹ See Bacigalupo’s translation, introduction and notes of the Italian cantos in *Paideuma* for details of these poems’ publication histories: ‘Ezra Pound’s Cantos 72 and 73: An Annotated Translation,’ *Paideuma*, 20, 1-2 (1991), pp. 11-41.

¹³⁰ See Howard Mayer Brown’s entry on Janequin in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

modern music with his interest in the medieval Münch's Janequin has a synthetic function for Pound's musical thought.

Janequin was also one of the first renaissance composers to have his work printed and distributed on a large scale, connecting this work to ideas of reproduction both in the manner in which he undertakes to represent the natural world in his scores and because of the fact that he was among the first beneficiaries of the mass reproduction of artistic media, placing him at the border between Attali's conceptions of the medieval, self-employed musician and the incipient encroachment of the market via distribution through this period:

Until that time, the musician had been a free craftsman at one with the people and worked indifferently at popular festivals or at the court of the lord. Afterward, he would have to sell himself entirely and exclusively to a single social class.¹³¹

Janequin's position in the 'political economy of music' that Attali charts, a history that is a development out of Adorno's critique of the music industry and that stretches back to the troubadours,¹³² is key to his importance for Pound. Such economic analysis of the arts had been a constituent element of *The Cantos* for some time before 1945, embodied in the critique of usury's effect on the, particularly visual, arts and support of the medieval system of patronage present throughout the middle sections of Pound's poem, noticeably in *The Fifth Decad of Cantos*. This analysis runs throughout Pound's poetry and thought and is expressed most directly in canto 45, the 'usury canto', in which a series of artisanal processes are compromised,¹³³ while the fly-fishing episode in canto 51 suggests

¹³¹ *Noise*, p. 16.

¹³² Attali identifies the troubadours as harbingers of the future political development of music; court musicians active in a society that, for most, 'remained a world of a circulation in which music in daily life was inseparable from lived time, in which it was active and not something to be watched.' [*Noise*, p. 15.]

¹³³ See *The Cantos*, pp. 229-30.

a similar political economy of sport.¹³⁴ In Attali's analysis the itinerant jongleur fills a similar position to the troubadours in Pound's:

It took centuries for music to enter commodity exchange. Throughout the Middle Ages, the jongleur remained outside society; the Church condemned him, accusing him of paganism and magical practices. His itinerant life-style made him a highly unrespectable figure, akin to the vagabond or the highwayman.¹³⁵

By the sixteenth-century music and musicians were firmly under the control of the church and the wealthy, and it would be composers such as Janequin, employing new distributive technologies, that would make the first moves towards freeing their production from these forces, instigating the development of a newly professionalised class of musicians. By using the work of a composer active at such a critical junction in the development of the musical-political economy Pound permits the entry of a complex artistic situation into *The Cantos* in much the same fashion as he attacked usury in 45 and 51 and earlier introduced the patronage system via figures such as Sigismundo Malatesta in cantos 8 to 11, who, in the construction and decoration of the Tempio Malatestiano in Rimini, instituted an apparently mutually beneficial exchange for both patron and artist that implies an economic reading of both the Italy of the condottieri and Pound's milieu between the wars. Janequin's role at the juncture of two distinct musical distributive economies is emblematic of the narrative Pound will tell via the mediations this piece will undergo.

Janequin is attached to a new and quintessentially modernist mode of distribution by the physical nature of the photographed score in canto 75 and its proximity to Rudge's article 'Music and a Process' on microfilm reproduction in the *Townsmen* when Münch's setting was first published in January 1938.¹³⁶ The Concerti

¹³⁴ See *The Cantos*, p. 251.

¹³⁵ *Noise*, p. 14.

¹³⁶ *Townsmen* 1.1, January 1938, pp. 21-22.

Tigulliani also represent an attempt at another kind of popular dissemination by Pound, while, as I will explain, Klages's interest in handwriting also ties in with this cluster of ideas, making canto 75 partly a meditation on the nature of reproduction and dissemination, an exploration of Benjaminian aura.¹³⁷ The 'patterned integrity'¹³⁸ located in Janequin's piece is therefore more than simply the agent of the troubadour tradition and those other quintessentially Poundian artistic concerns: it is revealed as the vehicle for a sketch of a history of the political economy of music. Stated briefly, Pound's implicit narrative addresses the means of musical distribution from the sixteenth- to the twentieth-centuries, taking into consideration Janequin's trail-blazing practices; di Milano's popularising resetting of Janequin's score for the lute, a development that continues Janequin's move away from the liturgical setting for music towards a prototypical bourgeois domestic consumption on solo instrument by replacing Janequin's original motet rendering. Finally, Münch and Pound's handling of the piece introduces a series of archotypically twentieth-century developments: Münch introduces the great German musical tradition at the point of its demise, that country's great period of domination of the musical tradition and mastery of the economics of classical musical production, while his associations with neoclassical composers such as Paul Hindemith¹³⁹ and a concomitant interest in such recent developments as the player-piano attach

¹³⁷ See 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', *Illuminations*, pp. 211-44, an essay rife with consonances with Pound's practice.

¹³⁸ See *The Pound Era*, pp. 145-162.

¹³⁹ Pound would try, and fail, to secure Hindemith's presence at the Concerti Tigulliani, writing to Münch in December 1936: 'Do you know Hindemith well enough to be able to find out what is the minimum he wd. take to give an all Hindemith program with you (or with you and Olga, if there is a trio)?' [*LP*, p. 284.] Another mention of Hindemith is more ambivalent, linking the composer to Zukofsky and, in contradiction of Adorno, Schoenberg:

I have been watching [Tibor] Serly's scores for some time. Last year his orchestration of the fantasy which Mozart wrote for a musical clock, was performed in Budapesth [sic] under Dohnanyi, and I believe Toscanini approves of this orchestration.

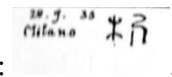
Twelve years ago Serly was moving against clinical thermometer music, against hyper-intellectuality as we find it in Hindemith, that is the writing of music that is 'interesting' to musical specialists almost exclusively.

Roughly this music is paralleled in *part* of Eliot's poetry, and in that of his imitators, notably Louis Zukofsky, Schönberg, Hindemith, etc. [*P&M*, p. 371.]

further modernities to the piece.¹⁴⁰ Münch's status as professional musician reliant on the patronage of the Rapallese via the Concerti Tigulliani places his experience at the centre of Pound's political economy of music. The piece's position at the culmination of this narrative is suggestive of its utopian potential, just as cantos 45 and 51 are imbued with an insistent urge to utopia. Pound's demonstration of new means of dissemination with the reproduction in 75 and Rudge's 'Music and a Process' heralds a new age of artistic and, implicitly, non-artistic distribution resistant to the iniquities of capital: a development pregnant with as much importance as Janequin's had previously been in his narrative of the political economy of music.

The means by which Münch's Janequin is presented to the reader also continues this history. When Pound alludes to Münch's 'handwriting' in the Dudek letter he introduces the third important factor in canto 75; the visual – at the same time clearing up the much debated question of which hand the manuscript of Münch's piece photographed for canto 75 is in. In a letter to Duncan preceding the first publication of Münch's Janequin in his *Townsmen* magazine Pound wrote 'Munch ms wont fotograph. O/R's photos magnificently',¹⁴¹ hinting that that publication, which is in a different, clearer hand than 75, had been photographed from a Rudge manuscript. A comparison of Münch's handwriting and canto 75 also suggests the score is in Münch's hand (note the distinctive shared 's' shapes in the letter reproduced below). The figures

at the end of the manuscript have also been a matter of some contention:



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¹⁴⁰ Adorno would have little time for this 'undialectic' generation of musicians, composers 'who were not able to cope with their innovations and hence somehow put a brake on themselves', [EM, p. 649.] going on to attack at length that most Poundian composer Igor Stravinsky for his neoclassical tendencies in *Philosophy of Modern Music* and writing regularly in disparaging terms about Hindemith.

¹⁴¹ From a carbon copy of an unpublished letter dated 9 Lug 37. [Beinecke, YCAL MSS43, Box 14, Folder 630.]

¹⁴² *The Cantos*, p. 465.

It seems unlikely that they are the ‘early bone inscription form for [...] “make it new”’¹⁴³ that Terrell suggests, nor can they readily be read as the ‘initials’ of Rudge that Bacigalupo and William Pratt detect.¹⁴⁴ Sinologist Charles Orzech has identified ‘the first character [as] the “seal” or oracle bone version of 木 mu, meaning variously: “tree,” “wood” the second character is 信 xin, meaning “trust,” “honesty,” “confidence,” etc.’¹⁴⁵ Kenner records Münch leafing ‘through that same dictionary’¹⁴⁶ in which Gaudier-Brzeska had miraculously understood the ideogram for ‘horse’ during the teens, suggesting at least a passing familiarity with Chinese script, while the composer also occasionally signed his name in hybrid ideogrammic script:



¹⁴⁷ Here the first ideogram here is also ‘xin’. ‘Xin’, or ‘Hsin’, also appears three times in *The Cantos*, in canto 34¹⁴⁸ (the first Chinese ideogram to appear in *The Cantos*, in 1934’s *Eleven New Cantos*, a year after the ‘28.9.33’ dateline at the end of Münch’s arrangement), canto 86¹⁴⁹ and (transliterated) canto 99.¹⁵⁰ Pound described this ideogram in *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* ‘[t]he first ideogram (on the right) shows the fascist axe for the clearing away of rubbish (left half) the tree, organic vegetable renewal.’¹⁵¹

At this point, with the question of the visual in canto 75 raised, the third figure with work in Münch’s satchel becomes relevant: Ludwig Klages. Terrell lists Klages as ‘anthropologist’,¹⁵² though he is more well known as a philosopher, psychologist and,

¹⁴³ *A Companion to The Cantos of Ezra Pound*, p. 389.

¹⁴⁴ *Ezra Pound, Language and Persona*, p. 272.

¹⁴⁵ In private correspondence with the author.

¹⁴⁶ *The Pound Era*, pp. 250-51.

¹⁴⁷ From an unpublished letter dated 12.4.38. [Beinecke, YCAL MSS43, Box 36, Folder 1504.]

¹⁴⁸ *The Cantos*, p. 171.

¹⁴⁹ *The Cantos*, p. 578.

¹⁵⁰ *The Cantos*, p. 716.

¹⁵¹ *Jefferson and/or Mussolini*, p. 113.

¹⁵² *A Companion to The Cantos of Ezra Pound*, p. 389.

appropriately considering the handwriting controversy, a graphologist. A 1935 letter from Münch to Pound, in typically idiosyncratic English, is the key to Pound's passing interest in Klages in canto 75 and contains evidence of what drew Pound to this figure:

GERHART MÜNCH
VILLA CHILESOTTI
RAPALLO

Dear Ezra

I am not of your opinion that one can tell with a few words the "idea" of a philosopher, specially as Klages has too much New to say.

Did you read his critics on Platon's "ideas"? (Chapter II.)

He has a very clear terminology - I go so far to say the clearest.

But if you read his Caractérologie which is translated into French and I could lend you --- you would perhaps get out more of it.

He means to developpe - always and whatever he takes as Theme - the contrast between Soul and Spirit. You'll find that in Chapter IV.

That is his chief-point. He is the first man - (not more the last!) to consider this point as the great "The" danger of humanity. The

following Chapter developpes ^{what he} ~~that he~~ understands under Reality of the Imagines. (And not Reality of Things.) Last chapter about cultes des Ancêtres.

His chief-work: The spirit adversary of the soul.

Critic of every philosophic system from beginning till end of the world (= I mean 193..... etc.)

Short work: L'Être de la Conscience.

but hated too!

Klages is considered as greatest "after Nietzsche".... he is known too as the best Graphologue "of to-day".

Klages when writing forgets to say where - knowing almost everything and supposing his readers the same kind of "Encyclopédie". He holds very good lectures. Lives near "Füssen". He deals with you contempt of Professorialism.

that makes people look with yellow eyes on him, is the fact that he takes it for proved (by him, of c.) that World's history is a failure! And then he says many astonishing things.

Eros is three-times longer. If I find the time to go on soon, I send you the rest. Some of it is to be copied just now.

Do read - if you can find the time - his Caractérologie.

He comes out (Eros) that Christianity poisoned Eros - awaking men's desires of "immortality" so placing human will-power versò future dreams. and out of this earth. The holy spirit as Enemy of Life. Spirit incorporated on earth in the form of Commandos and as Instrument of Human Height-Aspirations.

Insulte di dice che a millions of enemies, and very little adaptes. I'm a very wild adept, anyhow.

you would find a very new point of view on Romantics. If you are free enough of instinct & adoration.

You'll have noticed anyhow that he is solid enough.

By the way, Frobenius has stolen lots of his foundations - which one can prove easily by dates. !

We are here till the 10th of August. If you finished reading Eros till then, I sh'd like to get it back.

Shall I give your books to Loughlin to take them up to your place?

As I started a very long new orchestral work, we decided to go to Capri for some other six months. We made out that life in Brancaccio is almost unbelievably cheap. The 9th August, I am playing Radio-Sonora. Are you back before we leave?

Rapallo is rotten without your presence. I hate more and more human relation and I conserve such a fine souvenir of our "super-human" hours, that I want to thank you for it. Pity, that human facts troubled somehow this state. Forgive my faults.

Best wishes and my best wishes

yours
G.

I am not of your opinion that one can tell with a few words the "idea" of a philosopher, specially as Klages had too much New to say.

[...]

Klages is considered <but hated too!> as "greatest" after Nietzsche he is known too as the best Graphologue of to-day.

[...]

He comes out (Eros) that Christianisme poisoned Eros - awaking mad desires of "immortality", so placing human will-power verso future dreams. and out of this earth. The holy Spirit as Enemy of Life.

[...]

By the way, Frobenius has stolen lots of his foundations [?] - which one can prove easily by dates.¹⁵³

That Klages is bound up with the rhetoric of clarity would have appealed to Pound, as would the anti-Christian tendency Münch describes and his historic pessimism. Klages's foreshadowing of Frobenius and uncompromising presentation also seem quintessentially Poundian. The correspondence between Münch and Pound tells us that Münch did indeed lend some Klages to Pound, but there is no evidence that Pound

¹⁵³ Beinecke, YCAL MSS43, Box 36, Folder 1502. Note Münch's 'S' here in comparison with that used at the outset of the canto 75 score:

(S'addegnato from Saturn) - La canzone de li ucelli -
Pietà del Virgilio Francesco da Milano (5^o canto) - S'addegnato (3^o canto) [per metamorfosi]. -

read widely in him. It is therefore safe to assume that it is Münch's précis that Pound's gist refers to.

Münch's contribution is underlined by the shift to the visual that Klages provides here: the pianist has proved to be central to each of the ways of understanding canto 75 outlined here, with the addition of Klages to the other composers listed in this canto proof that Münch's contribution is more than simply musical. Münch stands, then, simultaneously as a cultural exemplar of a defeated Germany and as living embodiment of Pound's *Cantos* method, a technique apparently in need of defence against Allied attack as Pound wrote *The Pisan Cantos*, just as he imagined Münch to be in Dresden. Canto 75 is more than reiteration: Münch's work for the Amici Tigulliani allows Pound to condense his years of effort in Rapallo and advances in his musical understanding made during that period into a concise and singular gist; while 75 convincingly rehearses Terrell's *Cantos* 'forma' it also insists upon the nature of that *forma*'s modern synthesis, with Münch a case study of the modern artist. The canto, as Pound predicted to Dudek in 1951, the 'FINAL product'¹⁵⁴ of his musical paideuma, its process, and the exemplar Münch pave the way for the Pound's late synthetic paradise.

Klages and the controversy around the origin of the handwritings in canto 75 are most important, however, for what they say about the means of production here, with Pound's inclusion of Klages the graphologist in Münch's satchel suggesting that his inclusion of a photographed manuscript is self-consciously related to the debate on musical reproduction. The first draft of 75, made at Pisa, confirms that photography of a handwritten score was always a part of the plan for this canto, with Pound interjecting after an opening section that is close to the final version:

HERE FOLLOWS the music of
Gerhart's Jannequin, [sic] as I think

¹⁵⁴ Dk/ *Some Letters of Ezra Pound*, p. 63.

printed in Townsman,

Canzone degli Ucelli.

Probably have to be reduced in size as Townsman's page
larger than usual page size.¹⁵⁵

As I have shown, that *Townsman* version of Münch's Janequin, while not in Münch's hand, was nevertheless a reproduction of a manuscript version: the inclusion of another's hand in *The Cantos* through modern techniques of reproduction was therefore a constituent part of the plan for *The Pisan Cantos* from the outset.

The revelation of the musical-lingual aspect of Pound's and Zukofsky's musical project also throws some light upon the rationale behind "A"-24, the 'L.Z. Masque', compiled for Louis Zukofsky by Celia in 1968 and included as the climax of "A". Criticism of "A"-24 has tended to modulate between musical and linguistic readings of this movement, with Alison Rieke excluding it from her analysis of Zukofsky in *The Senses of Nonsense* on the grounds that it is 'more musical than linguistic',¹⁵⁶ while Marnie Parsons, partly in response to Rieke, offers an almost exclusively linguistic reading in 'A More Capacious Shoulder: "A"-24, Nonsense and the Burden of Meaning'.¹⁵⁷ Such readings ignore the dialectical nature of Zukofsky's project, in which music and literature coexist in agreement with Adorno's 'musical continuum'.¹⁵⁸ The movement consists of five 'voices':

Handel's 'Harpsichord Pieces' are one voice. The other four voices are arrangements of Louis Zukofsky's writings as follows:

Thought (T) – *Prepositions*
Drama (D) – *Arise, Arise* [sic]
Story (S) – *It was*
Poem (P) – "A"[.]¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ Beinecke, YCAL MSS43, Box 76, Folder 3393. In the next version of the canto the 'I think' relating to *Townsman* is removed. [Beinecke, YCAL MSS43, Box 76, Folder 3394.]

¹⁵⁶ *The Senses of Nonsense*, p. 260 n. 39.

¹⁵⁷ *Upper Limit Music*, pp. 230-56.

¹⁵⁸ *EM*, p. 115.

¹⁵⁹ "A", p. 564.

Though Zukofsky seems to have had no say in which parts of his writing were set to which parts of Handel or how the project was arranged, his decision to incorporate his wife's work wholesale into "A" reconfigures it into a critical statement by Zukofsky himself. Though "A"-24 features words apparently 'set' to music, they are not set as Pound sets Villon in *Le Testament*. 'The words are NEVER SUNG to the music',¹⁶⁰ in contrast to Pound's operas, while the layering of five simultaneous voices to a large extent precludes immediate comprehension of Zukofsky's 'sense', reversing Pound's abiding concern with the B.B.C. broadcasts. There are instructions as to which voices should be emphasised at different points in the performance ('14 pt = loud; 12 pt = moderate; 10 pt = soft')¹⁶¹ and Celia stipulates that 'each voice should come through clearly',¹⁶² though as a listening experience Zukofsky's thought will inevitably be challenged and reformulated by the aural confusion inevitably generated by the process.¹⁶³ Rakosi, in an interview, suggests that "A"-24 is an impossible 'exercise', in performance

a jumble because words are not like musical notes, they can't be combined to form chords. When [the piece is] attempted, they simply obliterate each other in a glutinous mass. That's why I say it's an exercise.¹⁶⁴

Following this dismissal Rakosi goes on to suggest "A"-24's status as 'exercise' need not, however, be pejorative:

¹⁶⁰ "A", p. 564.

¹⁶¹ "A", p. 564.

¹⁶² "A", p. 564.

¹⁶³ Two recordings of "A"-24 made by Steve Benson, Carla Harryman (who split the male and female characters of 'Drama', taken from Zukofsky's play *Arise, arise*, between them), Lyn Hejinian, Kit Robinson and Barret Watten, with Bob Perelman on piano, made at the University of California Davis on the 16th of November 1978 and at the Grand Piano in San Francisco on the 30th of June 1978 are available at <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Zukofsky.php>. For much of these recordings the separate voices are difficult to discern, a problem compounded by the substitution of piano for the harpsichord specified.

¹⁶⁴ *Carl Rakosi: Man and Poet*, p. 72.

There's nothing like it in literature. Its scope and complexity, its intricacy, are awesome. Nobody will ever be able to say of it, 'It's old hat.' [...] If it had succeeded, it would have raised our level of consciousness.¹⁶⁵

Here Rakosi reveals the inherent utopianism of “A”-24; the piece aims at the benefit of a listening community, an ideal audience in which the boundaries and temporalities of normal understanding are removed, perhaps in the sense that Adorno's ‘immanent structure’ hopes for.¹⁶⁶ That failure is built into the piece's structure confirms this utopian status. Exceeding Zukofsky's ‘integral’¹⁶⁷ and modulating Zukofsky's old labour politics into a more transcendent kind of utopianism rooted in a shared consciousness, “A”-24 suggests the paradisaal.

Like canto 75, “A”-24 is also fundamentally involved with the political economy of music. Pound's model is an important one for the later stretches of “A”, and Janequin is a presence in Zukofsky's poem. The composer is most important for Zukofsky in the context of his 11th July 1954 visit to Pound in St Elizabeth's in Washington, his third and final encounter with Pound. On that occasion Zukofsky, who was travelling on a cross-country family trip to the West Coast, arranged for the performance, at Pound's request, of the score from canto 75 and the prelude from Bach's third partita for solo violin.¹⁶⁸ Zukofsky's account of his 1954 holiday is worked into “A”-13 (1960):

The mad kept way out there in a circle as he played –
Corelli, Jannequin's song [sic]
In the shadow of curtain behind curtain of trees
And then chased the birds.¹⁶⁹

These birds mark the continuation of Pound's leitmotif into “A”, in a movement that continues a preoccupation with the violin that extends from the ‘Round of fiddles

¹⁶⁵ *Carl Rakosi: Man and Poet*, pp. 72-73.

¹⁶⁶ *EM*, pp. 399.

¹⁶⁷ “A”, p. 138.

¹⁶⁸ See *PLF*, pp. 269-70 and <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-13.php>.

¹⁶⁹ “A”, p. 298.

playing Bach¹⁷⁰ of the second line of “A” to the description of a Genoese violin competition in “A”-19 (1965-66).¹⁷¹ Janequin would also appear in the ‘Nor did the prophet’ section of ‘Songs of Degrees’ from *Some Time* (1956), a poem that Twitchell-Waas calls ‘an oblique comment on [Pound’s anti-Semitism],’¹⁷² and that begins and ends with references to Janequin’s birds:

The birds are our friends –
 Janequin’s, [sic]
 The sun’s.
The man is our friend?
Our friend.

[...]

The birds sing:
The man is our friend,
*Our friend.*¹⁷³

Both of these moments, while emphasising a personal nervousness with Pound’s friendship, seem Poundian in their use of Janequin: they employ the leitmotif of Janequin and his birds in a manner that is an unmediated reproduction of Pound’s in *The Cantos*. “A”-13 is subtitled ‘partita’¹⁷⁴ and is divided into five parts following the structure of Bach’s second partita in D minor for solo violin, with the time signatures of the various sections of that piece determining Zukofsky’s measures for his poetry in this movement.¹⁷⁵ This movement, while being one of the most explicitly musical stretches of “A”, represents the use of Scroggins’s and Bunting’s analogical model most clearly, with Adorno’s dialectical musicality here held apparently in abeyance. It would be another composer, from a quite different point in the narrative of the political economy of music, that would take the place of Janequin in “A”: Zukofsky’s critique of Pound’s

¹⁷⁰ “A”, p. 1.

¹⁷¹ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-19.php>.

¹⁷² <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/Some-Time-1956.php>

¹⁷³ *CSP*, pp.146-47.

¹⁷⁴ “A”, p. 262.

¹⁷⁵ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-13.php>.

thought on music is to be found in his use of Handel rather than in his approaches towards Janequin.

Handel appeared repeatedly in Zukofsky's oeuvre before he assumed ascendancy in "A"-24. There are at least two mentions of him in *Some Time*, his 'Largo' from the opera *Serse* (1738) sounding through 'Chloride of Lime and Charcoal'¹⁷⁶ and a compromised Handel appearing as '*Handel, Butcher*'¹⁷⁷ on a shop sign in Zukofsky's reticent elegy to his brother-in-law Hyman Thaw.¹⁷⁸ The Zukofskys' 'Index of Names & Objects' in "A" lists four mentions of Handel in that long poem previous to "A"-24,¹⁷⁹ which stretch from "A"-13¹⁸⁰ to the penultimate page of "A"-23 (1973-74), upon which Zukofsky's climactic alphabet begins with 'A living calendar, names inwreath'd / Bach's innocence longing Handel's untouched.'¹⁸¹ This final reference, written after the decision to include "A"-24 at the end of "A" had been made, suggests a conscious moving away from Bach, Zukofsky's first musical model in "A", to Handel.¹⁸² Thus the great liturgical oratorio of the *Passion* gives way to a smaller-scale, more private music designed for consumption at home. This move, which echoes a direction in his poetry that had been obvious for some time, can be characterised as a move towards the domestic, one which is reliant upon an awareness of Handel's position in the history of the political economy of music and that predicts Zukofsky's paradisaical milieu.

Handel, like many of the figures important for the final movements of Zukofsky's long poem, was not favoured by Pound. This sentiment appears repeatedly in Pound's

¹⁷⁶ *CSP*, p. 126. See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/Some-Time-1956.php>.

¹⁷⁷ *CSP*, p. 145.

¹⁷⁸ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/Some-Time-1956.php>.

¹⁷⁹ "A", p. 813.

¹⁸⁰ "A", p. 277.

¹⁸¹ "A", p. 562.

¹⁸² Attali hears Bach as presaging the industrial revolution: 'Bach alone explored almost the entire range of possibilities inherent in the tonal system, and more. In so doing, he heralded two centuries of industrial adventure.' [*Noise*, p. 19.] This analysis makes the connection between Bach and Marx in "A" -1 seem obvious, and charges the later turn to Handel with political significance.

early writing on music, particularly in the long series of reviews he produced for *The New Age* under the sobriquet 'William Atheling' between 1917 and 1921. In May 1918 Atheling is ambivalent:

Handel's 'Hear me, ye winds and waves,' is a good hymn tune, and impressive if one likes church music for opera. We reserve our personal grudge, however, against the Near Eastern influence. [...] Handel was not a pernicious influence in English music. English music had already gone to pot and Meinheer von Handel was the best man of his time. He did not reattain the best style of his earlier English predecessors, but neither did his English competitors.¹⁸³

Atheling's 'personal grudge' here is suggestive of both the anti-German sentiment that occasionally inflects his wartime music journalism and Pound's later anti-Semitism. The particular 'English music' implicitly moribund before Handel's arrival in London in 1712 is that elegiacally remembered in the 'libretto' section of canto 81, where Pound asks 'If Waller sang or Dowland played' before replying that 'for 180 years almost nothing.'¹⁸⁴ Elsewhere Atheling questions Handel's 'melodic faculty'¹⁸⁵ and, crucially, Handel is seen to fail in Pound's project to combine language and music, 'motz el son'; the composer's 'Thy Rebuke', as sung by Vladimir Rosing, 'is flat prose; a musical fuss is made over it, but there is no particular rhythm in the words, and the marriage with notes does not imbue it with any great interest.'¹⁸⁶ By 1938 Pound's view had hardened, and he repeated his implication of Handel's pollution of English music while attaching it to his distinctive political economy of music in the British Union of Fascists newspaper *Action*:

The betrayal of English musicians [...] began with the betrayal of English music.

England HAD (past tense) a music that asked and needed no favours. Then you got Herr Handel and boiled potatoes. He was a composer above the average, and no one cried havoc. Nobody thought of connecting art and economics. In came the Dutch baking system. OUT went critical acumen. The usurer has never subsidized a free press. Under usuriocracy [sic] there is one kind of art, namely art that does NOT cause the beholder to 'NOTICE.' As usury rises, perception declines. As long as people look at art or really listen to music they notice

¹⁸³ *P&M*, p. 100.

¹⁸⁴ *The Cantos*, pp. 534.

¹⁸⁵ *P&M*, p. 153. *The New Age*, January 9, 1919.

¹⁸⁶ *P&M*, p. 177. *The New Age*, May 22, 1919.

the design. The habit of noticing anything is prejudicial to the moneylender. Man asking: 'WHY?' is not Shylock's meat. If a man notices the FORM of a melody he may notice something else, he may notice, in fact, anything. And when that starts, good-bye to Baldwins, Sieffs, Baruchs, and Normans.¹⁸⁷

The anti-German and anti-Semitic undertones of the *New Age* review are here made explicit with the suggested supper of 'boiled potatoes' and 'Shylock's meat', though the exact manner in which Handel is complicit in finance's usurpation of English music is not explained straightforwardly. Handel, as court composer to George I, would seem to fit Pound's support of courtly patronage.¹⁸⁸ In *Guide to Kulchur*, however, Pound dubs the composer 'Handel (the dull)'.¹⁸⁹ This appellation, when considered beside the analysis in *Action* and the accusation of musical 'prose' in *The New Age*, begins to explain Pound's resentment for Handel: the composer provides an art 'dull' both in the sense that it is without interest and that it does not shine, thereby attracting attention. This 'dull' art, in an analysis close to Adorno's critique of the 'culture industry',¹⁹⁰ serves the purposes of an oppressive English royalty by further dulling the critical faculties of the listening public, ensuring that that public will neither question nor cause problems for the ruling elite. The criticism of the lack of linguistic presence in Handel's music is tied necessarily closely to Pound's (though not Adorno's) critique of the political economy of music here, for it is via the semiotic capacity of music that he sees the potential distribution of the information necessary for revolution.

¹⁸⁷ *P&M*, p. 440.

¹⁸⁸ Again in *Action* Pound wrote that '[m]ercantilism rots the arts. When a musician starts worrying about pay instead of music, good-bye music. In the foetid hell of a mercantilist age, he HAS to think about costs, payment, and "overhead" in the concert hall.' [*P&M*, pp. 440-41.]

¹⁸⁹ *Guide to Kulchur*, p. 230.

¹⁹⁰ In 'Towards an Understanding of Schoenberg' Adorno writes that 'the habit of listening that is dominant, and that is perhaps growing even stronger thanks to the culture industry, the business of music that is wholly or completely entertainment, is calibrated to perceive music in a more or less de-concentrated way' [*EM*, p. 632], while in 'Difficulties' he writes, in relation to Verdi's musical stupidity that '[t]his element of stupidity is nothing other than reified consciousness that draws a veil of deception, with musical babbling, over the real social contradictions.' [*EM*, p. 670.]

If Pound's political problem with Handel can be traced back to the linguistic then it is not surprising, given the more successfully dialectic nature of Zukofsky's musical-poetic complex, that this composer should serve Zukofsky's project better than those of Pound's pantheon. The particular aspect of Handel's composition that the Zukofskys choose to valorise is suggestive of their difference from Pound: Celia ignores Handel's royal music and large-scale works, pieces such as *Water Music* (1717), *Zadok the Priest* (1727) and *Messiah* (1741), and instead chooses to set her husband's words to a selection written for harpsichord. The harpsichord is a quiet instrument designed for and necessitating a private, domestic setting;¹⁹¹ an instrument that in the eighteenth-century heralded the usurpation of music at the hands of the bourgeoisie and their favoured musical scenario of pianoforte and drawing-room, which was, for Attali, both 'an instrument of sociality and an imitation of the Parisian salons and courts.'¹⁹² The harpsichord is, then, a revolutionary instrument, though one from a phase that precedes Zukofsky's twentieth-century proletarian revolution and that was associated with a class that, by the end of the eighteenth-century, would be ripe for overthrow themselves. Attali reports a significant moment in the harpsichord's troubled political history in his account of the French Republican National Institute of Music, in which '[t]he only things banned were the chant and the harpsichord';¹⁹³ the first of which was problematic to the Republicans because of its liturgical connotations while the second was unconscionable because of its insoluble connection to the salons of the wealthy.

¹⁹¹ A January 23rd, 2009 performance of "A"-24 at the University of Sussex as part of "'A"-24: A Louis Zukofsky Seminar and Performance' did not require amplification for the speakers to be heard above the harpsichord. This performance featured poets Sean Bonney, Ken Edwards, Daniel Kane and Francesca Lisette, with Kerry Yong playing harpsichord.

¹⁹² *Noise*, p. 69.

¹⁹³ *Noise*, p. 56.

In a talk given before a performance of “A”-24 given at the University of Sussex in 2009 Harry Gilonis explored the apparently domestic nature of the music selected by Celia for her ‘L.Z. Masque’:

Handel moved to England in 1710, and wrote most of his keyboard music here in the next decade. It is important, I think, to grasp what this body of work *was*, and was *for*. Some of the pieces *may* have been intended for teaching, but most are literally ‘chamber music’, designed to be played in a small room for the amusement of oneself and/or a few others. They are the *opposite* of operas, being small-scale; private; and self-directed. In domestic performance they must very often have been music to be talked over – just as they will be this evening.¹⁹⁴

This connection is vital for an understanding of the arrangement of “A”-24. The particular form of chamber music that this piece becomes is of relevance, for, while both di Milano’s and Münch’s versions of Janequin are irrefutably chamber music pieces, they both privilege the solo musician, as represented by di Milano’s lutenist and, particularly in Pound’s repeated insistence on the reproduction of Münch’s violin part without piano accompaniment, Rudge’s violin, rather than the small ensemble. In “A”-24, however, the solo musician is deposed, with pieces originally intended for a single performer that would be equivocally socialised by the milieu in which they were performed (as Gilonis notes) here worked into a collaborative arrangement with four additional voices: ‘a quintet for strings and keyboard’, as Bob Perelman suggests.¹⁹⁵ This is a further, more integrally socialised, version of chamber music, approaching the democratic form of the string quartet, a category of chamber music commended by Adorno with specific relevance to the development of his political economy of music, calling it ‘specific to an epoch in which the private sphere, as one of leisure, has vigorously parted from the public-professional sphere.’¹⁹⁶ The lack of leading solo voice and conductor makes for a fundamentally democratic music, one suited to the emergent

¹⁹⁴ In a paper entitled ‘The Zukofskys’ “A”-24: a masque not for dancing’ presented at ““A”-24: A Louis Zukofsky Seminar and Performance’ at the University of Sussex, January 23rd 2009.

¹⁹⁵ *The L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E Book*, p. 292.

¹⁹⁶ *Beethoven: The Philosophy of Music*, p. 86.

bourgeoisie's expropriation of the means of musical production. Celia's insistence on the modulation of each speaker's volume ('14 pt = loud; 12 pt = moderate; 10 pt = soft')¹⁹⁷ emphasises the crucial social function of chamber music, an apparently irrelevant to the collaboration of Pound and Münch.

Throughout the foregoing the connection of music to both the utopian and paradisal thought of Pound and Zukofsky should be clear. With their respective narratives of the involvement of music with politics clearly emphasising their divergent (though related) political utopias and, as their differing dialectical approaches to the problem of music in language and language in music show, a difference in their approach towards their impending paradisal phases is revealed. Each poet's musical project is utopian and therefore *a priori* unrealisable. This unrealisability in the musical projects of Pound and Zukofsky must be recognised as fundamental to their paradisal phases: the synthesis between music and language that Pound strives for is finally unreachable, while Zukofsky's dialectically aware integral exists between two poles that will remain permanently beyond view, a fact that is essential to an understanding of the manner in which both poets come to write their paradises.

¹⁹⁷ "A", p. 564.

3. 'Eden gardens labor':¹ Zukofsky's Synthetic Paradise, 1963-1978

¹ "A", p. 563.

i) 1963

In this chapter I will describe Zukofsky's late paradisal phase. I place its beginning in 1963 and the first section of this chapter will begin with a discussion of the developments of that year, suggesting some of the political and inter-generational influences that affected his poetics at this time and his, sometimes surprising, strategies for integrating them with his previous political-utopian concerns into the fabric of "A". In this chapter's second and third sections I will address Zukofsky's paradisal phase in its maturity, charting its beginning in "A" and its continuation in the sequences that followed, concluding with a detailed analysis of 'Gamut', the poet's last poem, and a partial reconstruction of 'Gamut: Trees ninety 5's', his final, unwritten sequence.

Zukofsky's late re-emergence was orchestrated by a succession of younger poets variously associated with the counterculture as it developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s: Zukofsky found a congenial editor at Chicago's *Poetry* when Henry Rago took over in 1955 (leading to a working relationship through the early 1960s that would culminate in the October 1965 Zukofsky special issue of *Poetry*, a symbolic return to prominence, 34 years after the 'Objectivists' number), Robert Creeley published chunks of Zukofsky in *The Black Mountain Review* in the mid to late 1950s, bringing him into the

sphere of influence of Olson. Cid Corman published a wealth of Zukofsky material in *Origin*, again in the company of Olson (who had been the featured writer in the magazine's first series, with Zukofsky featured in its second) and the other Black Mountaineers such as Paul Blackburn, but with the addition of an eastern influence (*Origin* and the Origin Press [publishers of the 1959 edition of "A" 1-12] were based in Kyoto for various periods and incorporated an eastern aesthetic and sundry Zen influenced material) that was congruent both with Zukofsky's early Objectivist work and his drift in the 1960s. An association with Robert Duncan ran parallel to this, offering Zukofsky access to exciting San Francisco mysticisms and radicalisms. Back on the east coast, Zukofsky would spend time and offer generosity to a succession of youthful poets including Michael Palmer, Jerome Rothenberg, Jonathan Williams, Robert Kelly, Michael Heller and Bob Perelman, all allowing, through conversation and artistic atmosphere, Zukofsky into America's poetic avant-garde in this period. Ian Hamilton Finlay's Wild Hawthorn Press and Raworth's Goliard Press offered a similar access to British writers.²

The key year in this development, and possibly Zukofsky's most important twelve months of work since 1931 and the Objectivist number of *Poetry*, was 1963. This year saw the publication of *I's* (*pronounced eyes*), the finishing touches and official publication of *Bottom: On Shakespeare* (though its copyright page reads 1963 it would not actually appear until February 1964), the drafting of much of Zukofsky's last volume of short poems, *After I's*, "A"-17, "A"-16 and "A"-20 (in that order). Zukofsky's exposure in the *Black Mountain Review*, *Origin* and Rago's *Poetry* ('The Old Poet Moves to a New Apartment 14 Times' would appear in the March number) was beginning to pay off, the suggestion of a readership leading to a newfound confidence in the short poems as well

² See Peter Barry's *Contemporary British Poetry and the City* and *New British Poetries: The Scope of the Possible*, edited by Barry and Robert Hampson, for information on this period in Britain.

as a new community and geography, with Zukofsky alluding repeatedly to his interactions with his young admirers, and the beginnings of a final step-change in the techniques of “A”. Linked to the consolidation of Zukofsky’s reputation was the effective loss of both of his poetic forebears in this crucial year: Williams would die on the 4th of March, while his relationship with Pound would end with a final letter from Zukofsky on the 15th of December. Zukofsky and Olson were now arguably the senior figures in American avant-garde poetry, the central influences behind the poetry of Donald Allen’s *The New American Poetry*. The circumstances surrounding the completion and publication of *Bottom: On Shakespeare* also contribute to the sense of a final settling of his accounts with his forebears: *Bottom: On Shakespeare*, a massive project and Zukofsky’s last extended critical piece, had been in production since 1947 and would be published as part of a complicated exchange with the HRC that saw that library take possession of Zukofsky’s personal archive, presumably of interest at this point for its wealth of materials relating to figures such as Pound and Williams. At the same time, America’s turbulent domestic and foreign policies in this decade would begin to have a significant impact on Zukofsky’s work. Guy Davenport writes of this period in the poet’s development that ‘[t]he home in which Zukofsky lived is “A”. It contained two musicians, a poet, and a television set’;³ suggesting a new, if qualified, opening up of his poem to political concerns that were not present in the early movements of “A”. The battles around the American Civil Rights movement were making headlines through 1963: in January George C. Wallace became governor of Alabama and Harvey Gantt entered Clemson University. Wallace would stand in the door of the University of Alabama to protest against integration, before stepping aside and allowing African Americans James Hood and Vivian Malone to enrol in June; Martin Luther King’s ‘I have a dream’ speech followed in August and in September the 16th Street Baptist

³ *The Geography of the Imagination*, p. 107.

Church in Birmingham, Alabama was bombed, killing four and injuring 22. Civil Rights is a central concern through the later movements of “A”, its grass-roots collaboration between middle-class educated (often Jewish) northerners with working-class black Americans presented an attractive recalibration of those utopian concerns with labour and Marx through “A”-1 to “A”-9: the new battle less ideologically compromised and with a more clearly defined and achievable victory. The iniquities of racism had already featured in 1960’s “A”-13 in a suggestive context that links this new concern to Zukofsky’s earlier work:

The grace of a madhouse – courtesy, *Thanks*
for *Passover delicacies*
specially the *black bambino*

(*bambini plural*) *Aint tasted*
that kind of *ADmired* [sic] *chocolate*
for 40 years —

Candy nigger babies and the beast Apartheider
Hind-dependence of gold dust Africa
On slaviest business, free root’s pest⁴

This extract illustrates how closely associated Zukofsky’s earlier “A”-themes are with those newer issues that began to appear in the poem during the 1960s: a note identified by Ahearn as coming from an incarcerated Pound in the 1950s begins a discussion of the South African apartheid system that Zukofsky goes on to link to fundamentally American and Marxist concerns,⁵ with that ‘slaviest’ suggesting a connection between his new interest in racial inequality with the established labour politics of “A”. Pound thanks Zukofsky for a food package sent by the Zukofskys to St Elizabeth’s, taking time both to allude to Zukofsky’s race (he emphasises their status as ‘Passover delicacies’)⁶

⁴ “A”, pp. 264-65.

⁵ See *Zukofsky’s “A”*, p. 218.

⁶ This is one of a pair of Poundian thank you notes that appear in “A”-13, the other (dated 30th March 1956 by Twitchell-Waas, <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-13.php>) also refers to Passover, linking the seven branches of the menorah to Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *House of the Seven Gables* and its ‘li’ll ole / candy / shoppe’ [“A”, pp. 288-89], an author Zukofsky was working into *Bottom: On Shakespeare* around this time.

and to single out a particular item that represents, or reminds Pound of, a 'black bambino'. Zukofsky only includes Pound's side of the correspondence here, so it is difficult to know how complicit in this exchange Zukofsky is; we cannot tell whether the Passover reference has a provenance beginning with Zukofsky nor the exact nature of the 'Candy nigger babies' and the intention of their gift to Pound. Nevertheless, Zukofsky is clearly concerned by Pound's response and makes reference to the older poet's notorious racism, allowing him to be connected to the 'the beast Apartheid', which, in such close connection to the Passover reference, can only refer the reader back to Pound's anti-Semitism. Through the 1950s the National Party in South Africa had been tightening the terms of their apartheid regime with accelerating pace as the decade moved on under Prime Ministers Daniel Malan, J.G. Strijdom and, particularly, Hendrik Verwoerd, in office from 1958 until his assassination in 1966, and a likely character to be compounded with Pound as that 'beast Apartheid'.⁷

It is the next two lines that are most important here, however. In 1960 this kind of *Catullus* punning and sounding was not so prevalent in "A" as it would later become; here that compressed style is employed as a miniature analysis of the economics of South Africa under apartheid: 'Hind-dependence of gold dust Africa / On slaviest business, free root's pest'. South Africa's independence is questionable as it is really dependent upon exports of gold mined under social conditions that are reminiscent of American slavery. Capitalist financial concerns are the arbiter of the particular kind of racial segregation at play in this instance, as Twitchell-Waas suggests, 'free root's pest' 'refers to the historical role of slavery in the development of Western capitalism, or more generally the appropriation of surplus-value on which capitalism is based in Marx's analysis'.⁸ Here, then, an ambivalence towards Pound (appreciated for his 'courtesy'

⁷ See Twitchell-Waas for these references, <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-13.php>.

⁸ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-13.php>.

and castigated for his racism) coexists with a racial awareness that closely predicts the concern with the Civil Rights movement that appears in “A” around 1963, with both of these linked implicitly to Zukofsky’s foundational belief in a Marxist analysis of labour.

Elsewhere in “A”-13 Zukofsky leaves further signs that his interest in labour has not lessened, using Aristotle to criticise tyrants ‘making / Works // To occupy people / And keep them / Poor’⁹ and Logan Pearsall Smith’s *Unforgotten Years* (1939) to illustrate the discomfort of living as an intellectual under capitalism:

These blossoms nourished by something
As ugly as manure . . . and the questionable gold
The world keeps putting . . . into (my?) pockets—¹⁰[.]

Characteristically, Zukofsky compresses Smith’s prose in a fashion that serves to disguise some of the radicalism of his statement (a habit that is perhaps a contributing factor to the general assumption that Zukofsky’s social concerns disappear after the war). I will use this passage as an example of Zukofsky’s tendency in his synthetic paradisal work; the methods here typical of the manner in which he seeks to include a transferred utopianism in his late work. The passage in *Unforgotten Years* from which this extract is taken explains Smith’s (and, by extension, Zukofsky’s) position more fully:

Thus the sense of malease grew, and has indeed remained with me so vividly that I never meet a rich, successful business American without some slight speculation about the bones he has crushed and the wretches he has eaten. These experiences have given me a certain dislike for the whole iron economic system upon which our civilization is founded – a dislike, however, which I must admit is by no means strong enough to make me forgo any of the pecuniary advantages which I derive from it. And anyhow I quiet my conscience – how honestly or dishonestly it would be difficult for me to say – by the reflection that I cannot think out any other economic scheme of things that would allow the human spirit to put forth fairer blossoms. The only alternative to it seem to be Fascism and Communism, and of the prospects these offer it would be difficult to say which is the more ghastly. But that these blossoms of capitalism are nourished by something as ugly as manure seems plain enough to me when I think (as I try not to think) of our present social system, and the questionable gold which the world keeps on putting into my pockets.¹¹

⁹ “A”, p. 272.

¹⁰ “A”, p. 278.

¹¹ *Unforgotten Years*, pp. 151-52, <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-13.php>.

Zukofsky introduces a peevish '(my?)' before 'pockets' and, crucially, omits that 'of capitalism' after blossoms. This is one of a series of points in late "A" where Zukofsky works in material relating to his earlier political-utopian concerns but elides their connections with his previous thought. As late as "A"-19 Zukofsky still remembers the clarion call to the American left that the execution of Ferdinando Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti in 1927 had been, reporting bathetically that 'the / Viennese director / of opera / still thinks / Sacco/Vanzetti / are a / pair of / lovers'.¹² The fascination with Khrushchev in "A"-13,¹³ and with the Russian space programme elsewhere in the movements of the 1960s, perhaps suggests a certain residual sympathy for the U.S.S.R. and its vision of technological utopia. These encoded references to labour continue in the 1964 movements, with Teddy Kennedy praised for his concern for the poor in "A"-14¹⁴ and John F. Kennedy's condemnation of US Steel in April 1963 commended in "A"-15.¹⁵ It should be noted how in both cases without relatively in depth contextual knowledge either anecdote, as presented, could easily be misread as attacks on the Kennedys' privileged background. These manoeuvres seem counter-intuitive: why should Zukofsky disguise his political concerns in this manner? Just as it is difficult to determine Zukofsky's position on Khrushchev, it is hard to say exactly what Zukofsky means to imply, politically at least, by reporting a misreading of Sacco and Vanzetti as 'lovers'. "A"-19 makes use of mistranslation and miscommunication, so the provenance of the joke is not hard to locate, yet the quip's import remains mysterious, a situation that is particularly unsettling because of the central importance of Sacco and Vanzetti to the history of the American left. Zukofsky's act in disguising his political beliefs, making it difficult to discern a position without relatively involved study (now

¹² "A", p. 432.

¹³ See "A", p. 284 and <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-13.php>, where a series of Khrushchev's witticisms are reproduced and "A"-14, p. 346 and <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-14.php>.

¹⁴ "A", p. 331.

¹⁵ "A", p. 365.

aided by the *Z-Site* and *The Poem of a Life*), is difficult to explain. Zukofsky may have been intimidated by McCarthyism, his earlier connection with figures as notorious as Chambers must have raised concerns for him, while the post-war ideological exhaustion that Bell detects may also have played a part in Zukofsky's wish to conceal his utopianism,¹⁶ though there is no record of him repudiating the more openly political segments of "A". Instead, this exaggerated and perplexing defensiveness is a symptom of an important change in Zukofsky's poetics during the early 1960s, one that encompasses both his political thought and his poetics. Beginning in 1963 Zukofsky's work, initially in "A", shifts from a utopian, societal set of concerns into a more openly mystical, paradisal phase. The shift from utopia to paradise does not, however, suggest 'an orderly Dantescan rising',¹⁷ nor does it necessarily confirm those critics that insist on Zukofsky's abandonment of politics. Peter Quartermain is one of those, writing that '*Das Kapital* would disappear from the poem after eight-and-a-half movements',¹⁸ referring to the split between Marx and Spinoza as source texts in "A"-9 and suggesting that the relative paucity of reference to Marx from then on is indicative of an apostasy. Marx *is* mentioned less often after "A"-9 (the 'Index of Names & Objects' records the last entry in "A"-12,¹⁹ while the 'Internationale' stirringly crops up in the midst of the musical hurly-burly of "A"-24),²⁰ but, as we have seen, labour politics is still a theme and will remain one until 'Gamut'. Rather, Zukofsky, from around 1963 onwards, chooses to camouflage it a manner that is not readily recuperable but is connected to a specifically paradisal poetics. While the old labour politics are retained, a new political consciousness recognisably related to the radical politics gaining momentum through

¹⁶ See *Capitalism Today*, p. 24.

¹⁷ *The Cantos*, p. 457.

¹⁸ *Disjunctive Poetics*, p. 60.

¹⁹ See "A", p. 207: 'So record / Politics, / Record / Labor. / – Marx's presumption? / – He wrote fugues / On a theme of Aristotle.'

²⁰ "A", pp. 661/68.

the early 1960s would be added to his poetry: a fusion of the old left with elements of the New. Zukofsky's political opacity during his paradisaal phase can be read as his attempt to raise his political texts up to the level of his paradisaal intention; a morphic intent familiar from Pound's late work, as can be read in his attempts to sublate texts such as *The Eparch's Book* and *The Great Edict* into his paradisaal vision in *Thrones*.

The first significant work dated 1963 that Zukofsky produced was 'Finally a Valentine', a short poem which, when published as a broadside by the Piccolo Press in 1965, gained the following note: "my last short poem for a long time" this finally a valentine will close or now closes my collected short poems to be called ALL'. Norton's *All* was still over two years off when this brief valentine was penned, and there is no reason to suspect that 'Finally a Valentine' was invested with this finality when first drafted, and the poet would carry on writing the short poems that would make up the rest of *After I's* through the remainder of 1963 and into the beginning of 1964. There is, however, an elegiac timbre through them that does suggest that endings of one type or another were of immediate concern to Zukofsky.

The early 1960s were a period of uncertainty for "A", the sections written during 1963 make up the most varied, and perhaps least typical, sections of Zukofsky's poem, their contrasting methods and contents suggesting a series of different ways of interacting with the period, their non-chronological ordering and their processes suggesting that Zukofsky was becoming more concerned with structuring his work and was momentarily unsure of how to continue. The confused chronology of "A" during this period is emblematic; he would begin with "A"-17,²¹ skipping "A"-14 – 16. Offering "A"-17 to *Poetry* Zukofsky wrote to Rago that "A"-14 to 16 were 'largely in my

²¹ Twitchell-Waas dates this movement as being completed from the 12th till the 13th of March 1963, <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-17.php>.

head, and may take some years to write down'.²² "A"-17, 'A Coronal for Floss', was written in memory of Williams, who had died on the 4th of March, and was made up of a collection of extracts from various writings by Zukofsky on Williams and some words from Williams that relate to Zukofsky covering the period from 1928 to 1962. Williams would have been eighty on the 17th of September 1963, giving the movement its '17'. The chronology and the subject matter both make it inevitable that this poem of the 1960s will address issues from the decades previous to that, and place Zukofsky within a familiar modernist narrative; unlike his other poetry from this period the movement steers clear of contemporary detail and focuses almost completely on the work of writing and collaborating on poetry. Williams's presence in "A" is foregrounded and Zukofsky's assistance with *The Wedge* (1944) and proximity to the Objectivists are also given space. The letters and other documents excerpted give no sense of the political and wider cultural interests explored in letters not printed here, for "A"-17 is consciously, aside from brief references to Celia and Floss, the record of a working relationship. Its subject matter and even its quasi-historical, collage-like technique are thoroughly modernist, apparent justifications for thinking of Zukofsky purely as a second-generation modernist, a position the poet would challenge repeatedly through 1963.

"A"-17 would seem, then, to be an unlikely place to find evidence of Zukofsky's interest in the 'New American' poets, but, as is typical in Zukofsky, the evidence is there but buried. In the entry for 1957 Zukofsky quotes a series of stanzas from his poem '4 Other Countries' from the volume *Barely and widely* (1958). Williams, who was already ailing by this time, praised the poem fulsomely to Zukofsky:

I don't care if I never write another line and hope not to do it after Floss has just read me the 4 Other Countries which she has just finished reading me and at her own request reading it over again. That is a pleasure I never hope to live through again – and when I looked over her shoulder to see the pages as she was and saw those quatrains unrolling before her – my mouth literally fell open at my own amazement.

²² *PLF*, p. 333.

[...]
 The lyricism [is] contemporary, through your knowledge of music [and] with [...] music dinning it in your ears.²³

This is the ostensible reason for the inclusion of ‘4 Other Countries’ in “A”-17,²⁴ and Williams’s amazement at Zukofsky’s stanzas makes the lineal descent clear; the shape of this longish short poem resembling Williams’s late lineation. An awareness of the familial proximity of the violin and the centrality of music to Zukofsky’s poetics in Williams’s letter prove a knowledge of Zukofsky’s oeuvre and life, but do not of themselves remove the younger poet from the narrative of modernism “A”-17 appears to place him in. Actually, the first two stanzas quoted from ‘4 Other Countries’ in “A”-17 had been quoted elsewhere before they were worked into “A”-17 in 1963; in Duncan’s poem ‘After Reading *Barely and Widely*’ [sic], in his volume *The Opening of the Field* (1960), a poem Zukofsky had responded to in ‘Her Face the Book of – Love Delights in – Praises’ in June 1959²⁵ and that had been included in *I’s* (*pronounced eyes*), the first volume in which Zukofsky began to get to grips with the poetics and ideas of his immediate successors, published in May 1963.

Duncan’s poem is also alluded to indirectly in “A”-17, where Zukofsky includes an excerpt referring to ‘father Huc [...] in Tartary’²⁶ from *Bottom: On Shakespeare* that also turns up in ‘Her Face the Book of – Love Delights in – Praises’.²⁷ Duncan had been responsible for Zukofsky’s residency at San Francisco State College in the summer of 1958 and had begun a friendship with the older poet that does not obviously translate into an identifiable poetic influence, but which was fruitful nonetheless. Zukofsky, with his family in tow, did not find himself at the centre of the San Francisco Renaissance,

²³ *W/Z*, pp. 501-02.

²⁴ See “A”, p. 386.

²⁵ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/Is-pronounced-eyes-1963.php>.

²⁶ “A”, p. 387.

²⁷ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/Is-pronounced-eyes-1963.php>.

and while he renewed his acquaintance with Kenneth Rexroth and briefly met Muriel Rukeyser, he seems to have steered clear of contact with the central figures of the Renaissance beyond Duncan.²⁸ In fact the most notable product of his time in California was the course-pack Zukofsky put together for his series of talks at the Poetry Centre, which would result in *5 Statements for Poetry*.

‘Her Face the Book of – Love Delights in – Praises’ is made up of responses to three poets that had been publicly complementary about Zukofsky’s work. As well as Duncan’s work, Zukofsky addresses a poem called ‘Orizons’ by Henry Birnbaum that would appear in the June 1959 number of *Poetry*, the same number in which sections of *Catullus* were first published, and work by Niedecker (here ‘knee deck her’),²⁹ a more venerable and, at one time, more proximate, associate of Zukofsky’s. A look at ‘After Reading Barely and Widely’ illuminates Duncan and Zukofsky’s interaction. The poem is typical of Duncan’s approach to his poetic elders in the interpretative force with which it approaches (and attempts to assimilate) its subject; he would deal similarly with Pound, whose troubling political views are absent from Duncan’s reading of *The Pisan Cantos*,³⁰ and H.D., whose stint with Freud and her late *recherché* mysticisms come to overshadow her Imagist inheritance and Hellenism in Duncan’s reading. At the outset Duncan recalls Pound’s invocation of Whitman in ‘A Pact’, asking himself in a syntax that combines title and first line ‘*AFTER READING BARELY AND WIDELY* // will you give

²⁸ See *PLF*, p. 291. Scroggins has ‘1957’ here, though the context makes it clear that Zukofsky in fact visited San Francisco in 1958. Duncan repeatedly tried and failed to introduce Zukofsky to Jack Spicer [see *Poet Be Like God: Jack Spicer and the San Francisco Renaissance*, p. 136], resulting in Spicer’s poem ‘Conspiracy’, which, like Duncan’s poem, focuses on Zukofsky’s music: ‘A violin which is following me / [...] Or is it really a tree growing just behind my throat / That if I turned quickly enough I could see / Rooted, immutable, neighbouring / Music.’ [*My Vocabulary Did This To Me*, pp. 177-78]

²⁹ *CSP*, p. 206.

³⁰ In ‘The Lasting Contribution of Ezra Pound’ Duncan makes a proviso that is reminiscent of the demurring of many critics bemoaning Pound’s anti-Semitism but picks a characteristically different set of complaints: ‘in his blindness in regard to Lao-tzu Pound diminishes our view of Kung who shares with Lao-tzu the idea of cosmos as Tao, and that in this blindness in regard to Christianity (which he persistently sees in its aspect of the fetter) he diminishes our view of the gods. The Kuanon may enter *The Cantos* but not Mary; Helios, but not Christos.’ [*A Selected Prose*, p. 91.]

yourself airs / from the lute of Zukofsky?’³¹ The poem ends on a similar note: ‘we share / a tradition, a caution, a string of the lute / from division and union whereon // this air.’³² Unlike the relationship of ‘one sap and one root’³³ with Whitman Pound suggests in ‘A Pact’, however, it is, initially, difficult to see exactly how Zukofsky’s poetry affects Duncan’s thought or practice. Duncan’s central concern in this poem is a description of Zukofsky’s poetics, one that gives equal weight to the poet’s musicality and Duncan’s charged Romanticism is antipathetic to Zukofsky’s compressed musicality, the exploded projective verse of this work quite the reverse of the controlled quatrains of ‘4 Other Countries’ in *Barely and widely* that serve as its source text. Duncan’s focus on the apparently distinctively Jewish import of these techniques is also problematic, with his compulsive unearthing of the mythologic encouraging a simplified version of Zukofsky’s relation to his Jewish inheritance. At times Duncan seems to link Zukofsky’s Jewishness with his own homosexuality, both apparently versions of a shared otherness: ‘Good and bad jews, gods / and *bæddel* mixtures, / dwarves then, twisty-sexd men, cobs / / that survive in spite of man’s best nature...’³⁴ ‘Bæddel’ is the Anglo-Saxon for an effeminate man; here, through the telescope of myth, Jews and homosexuals are viewed as associated in their rejection at the hands of ‘man’s best nature’, a conclusion that seems almost an orthodoxy in Duncan’s cosmogony but that is difficult to find in Zukofsky’s oeuvre.³⁵ Duncan’s depiction of Zukofsky’s poetics and the centrality of his peculiar musicality is sensitive, however: ‘The beauty is mind, / a discretion circling round / a containd danger, an impending mystery.’³⁶ Duncan links the differing strands of Zukofsky’s transcendental thought deftly, just at the point that these circling discretions

³¹ *The Opening of the Field*, p. 88.

³² *The Opening of the Field*, p. 92.

³³ *P&T*, p. 269.

³⁴ *The Opening of the Field*, p. 90.

³⁵ See Libbie Rifkin’s *Career Moves: Olson, Creeley, Zukofsky, Berrigan, and the American Avant-garde*, pp. 87-91.

³⁶ *The Opening of the Field*, pp. 91-92.

are becoming paramount in Zukofsky's poetics: that 'impending mystery' is exactly what Zukofsky would dedicate his work to for the last decades of his life: his paradisaal phase.

When Zukofsky came to respond to 'After Reading *Barely and Widely*' his awareness of the limits of Duncan's reading was clear. 'Her Face the Book of – Love Delights in – Praises' begins by quoting the opening of Duncan's poem, then asks 'How will his praise sound back to him?'³⁷ Duncan himself reads this as a 'proofreading [...] a re-proof, in hearing how one line sounds back to oneself.'³⁸ Zukofsky goes on to link Duncan's praise with that of 'one Henry Birnbaum', 'The second in less than six months'. Birnbaum's piece, printed in close proximity to a selection of pieces from *Catullus* in the June 1959 number of *Poetry* (Zukofsky's poem is dated 18th-19th June 1959),³⁹ is a more straightforward appreciation than Duncan's, though it also emphasises the importance of Zukofsky's voice.⁴⁰ Birnbaum and Duncan are then combined, their praise and practice seeming a confirmation to Zukofsky, but one that must be kept at arm's length:

No my young-old well-wisher,

³⁷ *CSP*, p. 206.

³⁸ *A Selected Prose*, p. 142.

³⁹ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/Is-pronounced-eyes-1963.php>.

⁴⁰ The third section of Birnbaum's piece reads:

I ought to thank
 Zukofsky,
 a wonderful voice,
 Zukofsky.
 That makes me eclectic
 wonderfully pejoratively
 eclectic,
 but I don't care
 and neither should he
 should he
 so long as we
 walk out on cartels
 and make sounds
 that sound uncom
 fort
 able
 in parlor chairs.

[<http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/Is-pronounced-eyes-1963.php>]

such as Pound.⁴⁴ After Father Huc the poem approaches Niedecker, a longer-standing appreciator of Zukofsky's work and a far closer collaborator than Duncan or Birnbaum, an example of a kind of praise more worthwhile than the others': the closer proximity of their practice a surer sign of consanguinity than the praise lavished by the younger poets.

It seems apparent, then, that Zukofsky himself did not feel his work to be linked in any profound sense to Duncan's; throughout *P's* (*pronounced eyes*) Zukofsky explicitly distances himself from his newfound fame and acolytes; in 'Homage' he outlines his ambivalent position towards the young when he writes of 'the old / much too far away / to make friends'⁴⁵ and in '1959 Valentine' he prefers his wife to the attentions of youth: 'The more that— / who? the world / seeks me so / to speak // the more / will I / seek / you.'⁴⁶ Here Duncan and Birnbaum become indistinguishable, continuous in an amorphous 'world'. The mélange of esoteric religions that would become so important at the end of "A", *80 Flowers* and the 'Gamut: Trees ninety 5's' notes is reminiscent of Duncan's eclecticism, however, in spite of how different the poetries are texturally. 'A Pact' perhaps offers another way of understanding how Duncan and Zukofsky's oeuvres are linked: both of them are, of course, thoroughly Poundian writers. Whereas Zukofsky's compression and punctiliousness seems to suggest that he took Pound's insistence that 'Now is a time for carving'⁴⁷ to heart, Duncan allows an unconfined horticulture in his dealings with his Poundian inheritance. Both poets are equally Poundian in their approach, and both fiercely unique in their mature styles, each of them attempting to write past Pound in his own way. Their mythological interests display this most clearly, with Duncan's approach to non-Poundian esoteric texts in

⁴⁴ See *P/Z*, pp. 217-18.

⁴⁵ *CSP*, p. 204. The emphasis is Zukofsky's.

⁴⁶ *CSP*, p. 208.

⁴⁷ *P&T*, p. 269.

Buddhism and elsewhere matched, from 1963, by Zukofsky's interest in Zen and, later, the Vedas. It should be noted that, while he strays further than Zukofsky from Pound regarding his source texts, Duncan cleaved closer to the master in terms of the texture of his verse with his signature open field form. While Duncan, with serial poems such as *Passages*, sought to combat the ubiquity of Pound's influence through expansiveness (a strategy also employed by Olson), Zukofsky attempted to develop a poetics that contradicted *The Cantos* through an insistence on compression and involution. In this respect Duncan and Zukofsky can be seen as Poundian inversions of one another.

Duncan and Zukofsky's shared mistrust of Pound's understanding of the orient and desire to found their own, corrected versions of the far-east, would provide a signal moment in Zukofsky's adoption of new influences in the early 1960s. Zukofsky's paradise would retain a flavour as oriental as Pound's, though after a fashion that was contradictory to his predecessor's and very much a product of the 1960s. *I's* (*pronounced eyes*) would be published in 1963 by the Trobar Press, George Economou and Robert Kelly's (the 'sweet fat friend' of 'The Old Poet Moves to a New Apartment 14 Times')⁴⁸ publishing off-shoot of their journal *Trobar*. Its cover features a calligraphic rendering of a poem by the Japanese poet Ryokan, photographed from a scroll lent to Zukofsky by Corman and mistakenly printed upside down. The first poem in this slim volume, '(Ryokan's scroll)', includes a translation of Ryokan. Here an earlier Poundian influence is revitalised by two younger generations of poets: Corman, Kelly and Economou were admitting Zukofsky into an orientalism in which Zen replaced Pound's Confucianism. Zukofsky's poem is essentially a collaboration with Corman; from its seventh line till the end the words of the poem are entirely Corman's literal translation of Ryokan, sent to Zukofsky in a letter dated the 13th of December 1960,⁴⁹ with Zukofsky's only

⁴⁸ *CSP*, p. 230. See *PLF*, p. 350.

⁴⁹ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/Is-pronounced-eyes-1963.php>.

contribution after the seventh line being typographical, off-setting lines 14 to 18 to the right, and even within the first six lines Zukofsky's presence is studiously minimal. The brackets in the title seem explicable primarily as a visual representation of the curled ends of the scroll itself, though brackets of course have a syntactical function, here suggesting that the title of the text is subordinate in some sense, auxiliary to the rest of the poem: Ryokan's text so thoroughly subsumed into the texture of Zukofsky's poem and his collection that its provenance is a secondary issue (the fact that the words are predominantly Corman's becomes tertiary). His words continue this concentration on the physical presence of the text: 'dripping / words // off // a / long / while'.⁵⁰ The cover, upside down as it may be, must be considered a part of this arrangement, with Zukofsky choosing to restrict his ideograms to the outside of his book in contrast to Pound's practice in *The Cantos*, the lack of apparent authorial intervention by Zukofsky around Ryokan's words and Corman's very literal translation (little more than a crib) recalls a curtailed version of the Poundian reiteration of forms as depicted in those multiple versions of *Janequin* he condenses into canto 75. In its numinous simplicity Zukofsky's poem stands as both a further reimagination of that tradition and an affront to it, for, likely through the Japanese connections offered by Corman and *Origin*, Zukofsky offers a particularly Zen confrontation to Pound, a challenge that would continue in Zukofsky's following volumes. Zukofsky's commentary upon this poem, the cover of *I's* (*pronounced eyes*) and the problems around its publications would appear in "A"-14 (1964):

As at
the scroll's
first hanging

found my
own initials
looking in

⁵⁰ *CSP*, p. 203.

Ryokan drop
down almost
as one

might breathe
in the
falling snow

of its
blossoms the
sound forgot[.]⁵¹

In the word-counted line, first introduced to “A” in this movement, Zukofsky reveals that part of his attraction to Corman’s scroll was the appearance among the ideograms of shapes resembling his own initials, an action of apparent frivolity typical of this period of Zukofsky’s work, and an action easily misinterpreted. The word-count line, with its apparent elision of both syntactical and metrical justification, joined with the accidental appearance of ‘LZ’ in Corman’s scroll and its inadvertent, uncorrected, misprinting all introduce a flavour of the aleatoric to this incident that should be approached carefully. The treatment of the materials in “A”-14 is fuller than in ‘(Ryokan’s Scroll)’, and serves as a gloss on that poem, a function that the 1964 movements of “A” assume repeatedly in relation to the publications of 1963. More than just commenting, however, Zukofsky allows a lyric voice to intrude upon Ryokan and Corman’s words, an action prohibited in the 1960 poem, the inverted printing offering pleasing confirmations of Zukofsky’s poetics:

Emptied out
of the
petals whichever

way they
fall, as
the earth

heaped in
all senses
but not

⁵¹ “A”, p. 325

the worst
erratum
for 'the

blossoms to
fall up' [.]⁵²

The petals repeat the action of the 'dripping / words // off // a / long / while' in '(Ryokan's Scroll)', the connection between the 'blossoms' and their equivalent 'words' serving to highlight the connection between these moments. This concentration upon apparently random moments involved in the physical production of a collection of poetry serve, in conjunction with Ryokan's blossom-words, to reinforce Zukofsky's Objectivist thesis on the ontology of verse. Corman and his circle would be central to this thesis taking a Buddhist turn during the early 1960s.

It should be remembered that while *I's* (*pronounced eyes*) appeared in 1963, most of its poems were finished by the end of 1959, its title taken from the 'Definitions' section of *Bottom: On Shakespeare*, which was probably also finished in 1959.⁵³ In fact, '(Ryokan's Scroll)', dated the 16th of December 1960,⁵⁴ despite its position at the beginning of *I's* (*pronounced eyes*), was actually the last piece written for that volume and the piece that comes closest to the timbre of *After I's*, Zukofsky's next and last collection of short poems. The collaboration with Corman here overturns that ambivalence towards the appreciation of youth that we see elsewhere in this volume, preparing the way for a far greater involvement with his poetic successors in *After I's*.

That volume would in fact begin with a further exploration of those Zen themes implicit in '(Ryokan's Scroll)': it opens with 'Daruma', a poem addressed to Will Petersen, one-time collaborator of Corman's on *Origin* and something of an ubiquitous figure in the circles of Beat-era Buddhism and an associate of Gary Snyder's, he appears

⁵² "A", p. 326. The only non word-counted line here flags itself as a mistake: 'erratum'.

⁵³ See *Bottom: On Shakespeare*, p. 266. Twitchell-Waas identifies this section as 'written, compiled or finished in 1959' [<http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/Is-pronounced-eyes-1963.php>].

⁵⁴ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/Is-pronounced-eyes-1963.php>.

as Rol Sturlason in Jack Kerouac's *The Dharma Bums* (1958). Daruma is an English representation of the Japanese transliteration of Dharma, the 'way' of Buddhism. Here that constellation of ideas is connected to a fundamentally Zukofskian concern: Zukofsky begins, 'Daruma / *found object* / that is art'.⁵⁵ *Found Objects 1962-1926*, a brief selected poems, would appear the following year. That collection's reference to 'found objects' both reinforce the idea that the process of Objectification that Zukofsky had theorised in the early thirties and been adapting to his work ever since had the potential to be linked to the practices of Zen Buddhism, its reverse chronology suggesting the beginning of the poet's career, the creation of the process of Objectification, as a kind of telos. Petersen's most famous accomplishment was a seminal essay on the Zen garden of Ryoanji, 'Stone Garden',⁵⁶ which details a process and discipline equally related to Zukofsky's late poetics and Snyder's 'Riprap': that focus on the mute object in Zen gardening, here 'a bit / of rock', seems readily comparable to both the practice and the ideas behind Zukofsky's late work. 'Stone Garden' describes and goes some way to explaining the stone garden of Ryoanji, a very unconventional garden by western standards:

The garden consists simply of fifteen rocks – of various sizes and shapes, but of no odd or particular unusual quality – composed in five groups of 5-2-3-2-3 on a flat, rectangular area of carefully raked white sand, about the size of a tennis court. Except for a little moss at the base of each rock, serving to soften the transition between rock and sand, nothing grows in the garden.⁵⁷

The garden has a symbolic meaning and function:

[T]he aim is not the creation of an imitation or miniature world, as decadent examples would lead us to assume, but to translate the elements of nature into comprehensible form – into art. By various means, without trace of artificiality, within the most intimate or limited space infinities could be realized.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ *CSP*, p. 221.

⁵⁶ *Evergreen Review* 1.4, 1957.

⁵⁷ *Evergreen Review*, 1.4, 1957, pp. 127-30.

⁵⁸ *Evergreen Review*, 1.4, 1957, p. 130.

Those ‘elements’ turn up in the ‘air / fire / water’ of ‘Daruma’.⁵⁹ The methods and aims of this miniature maximalism predict Zukofsky’s method, particularly in the short lyric poems of a slight volume such as *After I’s*. The garden comes to represent Buddhist nothingness through the thingness of its minimal ingredients, much as Zukofsky’s object-poem tries to get at ‘rested totality’ through the interjection of language:

It is at this point that we come to one of the basic paradoxes of Buddhist thought: only through form can we realize emptiness is thus considered not as a concept reached by the analytical process of reasoning, but as a statement of intuition or perception.⁶⁰

Thus ‘[o]nly by filling the paper does it become empty’,⁶¹ a statement readily applicable to all stages of Zukofsky’s career, but particularly appropriate to his late voice.

Centrally, the arrangements of the various sub-groups of rocks are held to represent a series of different meanings and symbolisms, their semantic interaction creating a complex layering of different possible meanings that suggests a Zukofskian multivalency:

In declaring that the garden represents islands in the sea, etc., as is most commonly done, is to be held by form [sic]. To say, on the other hand, in more abstract terms, that the sand represents void, is to ignore the rock. All of these are merely equations in which the garden represents X, the unknown, and X is merely substituted. Regarded as a puzzle, the garden offers no solutions, but presents new questions to meet each answer.⁶²

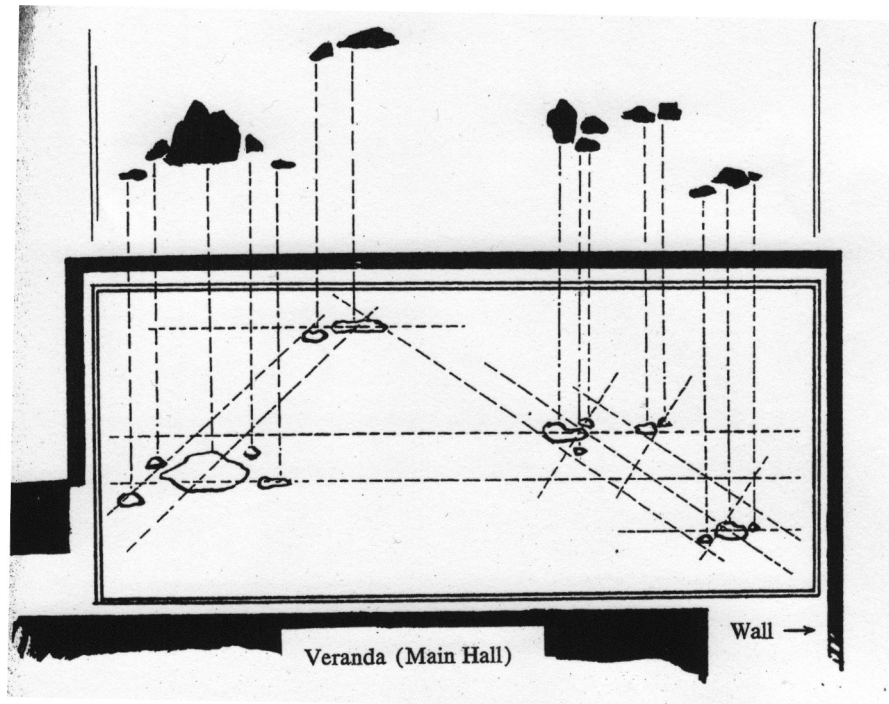
The small, unconventionally linked stanzas in ‘Daruma’ function in a repetition of this arrangement, suggesting that they exist together in as mutable a set of connections as the Ryōanji rocks. The ‘daruma’ Petersen suggests fits well with Zukofsky’s project and results in a poem that comes as close as Zukofsky would get to an open avowal of Buddhism in his work.

⁵⁹ *CSP*, p. 221.

⁶⁰ *Evergreen Review*, 1.4, 1957, p. 132.

⁶¹ *Evergreen Review*, 1.4, 1957, pp. 132-33.

⁶² *Evergreen Review*, 1.4, 1957, p. 137.



[Petersen's '[d]iagram of stone arrangement with projection in silhouette' at Ryoanji.]⁶³

The Corman and Petersen connection also offers a possible explanation to some developments in “A” during 1963. “A”-16 (dated 23rd May 1963)⁶⁴ remains relatively unelucidated; various theories have been put forward as to what it might be about and what its compression signifies, but none have been conclusive. It reads:

An

inequality

wind flower[.]⁶⁵

⁶³ *Evergreen Review*, 1.4, 1957, p. 129.

⁶⁴ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-16.php>.

⁶⁵ “A”, p. 376 and the back cover of the final number of the second series of *Origin*.

Ahearn has little to say about it, beyond suggesting that it ‘hardly seems serious’⁶⁶ and, obliquely, that it might be a tribute to Robert Frost (who had died on the 29th of January).⁶⁷ Davenport attaches ‘wind flower’ to ‘windflower’ and detects a linking function between “A”-15 and “A”-17:

“A”-16 has but four words, one of which is a compound [...]. The windflower, or anemone, is in Hebrew the Na’amon flower, in honour of Adonis, its English name being a supposed from the Greek *wind*. The imagist knot here tied is a kind of emblem between elegies, alluding to the brevity of individual lives and to the continuity of life. Life seeds life; the wind moves over the flower scattering its seed.⁶⁸

Windflower becomes ‘wind flower’ so that it can represent the wind that buffets it, as well as its flower. Elsewhere Davenport points out the movement’s lack of punctuation, suggesting that this absence makes the poem ‘airborne’⁶⁹ in prediction of the punctuation-less *80 Flowers*. He does not ask, however, why an entire movement of “A” would be demoted to a bridge between two others. Rachel Blau DuPlessis wonders whether ‘wind’ might not be sounded ‘wynd’, and suggests a number of ways in which this unique movement evades capture; referring persuasively to its status as ‘proto-lyric’ and the difficulties of placing this piece within the context of its neighbouring movements, though she does point up their status as elegies, implying a connection between its heavily compressed lyricism and the elegy.⁷⁰ Scroggins thinks this movement’s ‘probable inspiration was a houseplant on the terrace, fighting an unequal battle against the harbor wind’,⁷¹ going on to associate it with the Civil Rights Movement and locating its first draft in the midst of ‘a series of references to the

⁶⁶ Zukofsky’s “A”, p. 141.

⁶⁷ Zukofsky’s “A”, p. 137.

⁶⁸ *Agenda*, Vol. 8, Nos. 3 & 4 (Autumn/Winter 1970).

⁶⁹ *The Geography of the Imagination*, p. 109.

⁷⁰ In a paper entitled “‘Merely more of a good thing?’ – Considering the Long Poem’ presented at the Long Poems :: Major Forms Conference at the University of Sussex, May 16th-17th, 2008.

⁷¹ *PLF*, p. 359.

atrocities of state troopers and white supremacists in Alabama.⁷² A moment in “A”-14 backs up this image:

sweep down
by pressure
hoses, the

cutting streams
strip the
bark off

trees four
little girls
bombed[.]⁷³

The first section seems somewhat like that windflower battling the wind, while the bombing occurred in September at Birmingham Alabama’s 16th Street Baptist Church, a tempting reasoning behind “A”-16’s otherwise unexplained numbering, though that movement’s dating in May makes such a reading less plausible.⁷⁴ Elsewhere⁷⁵ Scroggins detects a congruence with “A”-15, which begins ‘An / hinny’,⁷⁶ though it should be remembered that all of the sections of “A” after 14 begin with ‘An’, so that sound is accounted for, leaving ‘hinny’ and ‘ine’, a not impossible echo in Zukofsky. The short ‘i’ in ‘inequality’ also tracks onto the windflower for Scroggins, ending ‘the movement on a dying fall.’⁷⁷

None of these readings address the context in which this movement first appeared. “A”-16 was first published on the back cover of the final number of the second series of *Origin*. Zukofsky’s work had been the focus of Corman’s second series, and he had been the only writer to be included in all of the series’ numbers, assuming the central role Olson had had for the first series of the magazine. But for “A”-16 the

⁷² *PLF*, p. 359.

⁷³ “A”, pp. 318-19.

⁷⁴ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-16.php>.

⁷⁵ *Louis Zukofsky and the Poetry of Knowledge*, p. 31.

⁷⁶ “A”, p. 359.

⁷⁷ *PLF*, p. 391.

last number was made up of Corman's own translations of Basho and a handful of his own eastern inflected poetry, a factor that, along with *Origin's* Japanese home and Zen orientation, adds a redolence of the orient to "A"-16. Its privileged position at the climax of *Origin's* second series and following Basho makes it seem a summation; a summary of the haiku-like compacted lyricism he was developing, with Corman's Zen proximity a possible influence. The movement, penned in March 1963, appeared in the midst of the Civil Rights conflict and in the year of Williams's and Frost's deaths, as the above critics have noted, but it also appeared at a time when Zukofsky was discovering a new audience, was considering his position at the margin of a new coterie and was being exposed to succession of new and esoteric potential influences – and at the moment that he was beginning to plot his dialectically synthetic paradise and determine its ingredients. Through the 1960s Zukofsky recombined his old Objectivist tenets with some surprising, often submerged, elements: thus the Confucian Imagism of the early short poetry becomes mixed, in *I's* (*pronounced eyes*) (1963) and *After I's* (1964), with the influence of Zen, and in *80 Flowers* (1978) and the projected 'Gamut: Trees ninety 5's' Zukofsky's early Marxism would become fused with an exotically mystical ecology. "A"-16 represents a useful example of the synthetic method in use; the political concerns Scroggins detects are sublated and thereby raised up, via the mechanics of Zukofsky's dialectical method, to the attenuated lyricism DuPlessis identifies. This would become the template for the poems of *80 Flowers* and beyond.

An important document for understanding exactly the way in which Zukofsky's political concerns are retained in his paradisaal phase, and how that process was made more likely by the thought of those poets that crowded around him through the 1960s, is Snyder's 'Buddhism and the Coming Revolution', a brief but seminal essay originally published as 'Buddhist Anarchism' in the first number of Lawrence Ferlinghetti's *Journal for the Protection of All Beings* (1961) and then revised, retitled and collected in *Earth House*

Hold (1969). While Zukofsky does not directly address this essay (and does not appear to have owned a copy of either of the relevant publications),⁷⁸ its articulation of the proximity of social and mystical revolution in circles adjacent to Zukofsky in the early 1960s is helpful, as is the fact that Snyder, with his interest in Imagism and the East, can be said to be a part of the same tradition as Zukofsky as readily as Corman and Petersen. He is also connected, via *The Dharma Bums*, in which a version of him appears as Japhy Ryder, the novel's central figure, with Petersen.

In 'Buddhism and the Coming Revolution' Snyder posits a radicalised version of Buddhism in which the removal from political activity traditionally associated with Buddhism is foresworn as running against that religion's true conception:

Institutional Buddhism has been conspicuously ready to accept or ignore the inequalities and tyrannies of whatever political system it found itself under. This can be death to Buddhism, because it is death to any meaningful function of compassion. Wisdom without compassion feels no pain.⁷⁹

Snyder, whose work is openly influenced by Pound Objectivist fellow-traveller Kenneth Rexroth, and whose 'Riprap' with its 'words / Before your mind like rocks'⁸⁰ reads like a popularisation of Zukofsky's Objectivist thought, here identifies and, to a certain extent, corroborates the criticism of the 'goddam buddhists'⁸¹ Pound puts forward so violently in his Chinese cantos. Typically for Pound, his problem is never set down straightforwardly, though hints throughout the sections of *Cantos* *LII-LXXI* that deal with Chinese history point towards a frustration with 'muzzy language',⁸² muzzy thought, exemplified by misrule, 'False laws are that stir up revolt by pretense [sic] of virtue',⁸³ a tendency towards decadence and luxury, and, more generally, the nefarious influence

⁷⁸ Lists of Zukofsky's libraries can be found on the *Z-Site*, <http://www.z-site.net/biblio-research/LZ-Library.php>.

⁷⁹ *Earth House Hold*, p. 90.

⁸⁰ *The Gary Snyder Reader*, p. 404.

⁸¹ *The Cantos*, p. 284.

⁸² *The Cantos*, p. 285.

⁸³ *The Cantos*, p. 334.

their, for Pound (Kenner has demonstrated how mistaken Pound was in his attempt to dissociate Neo-Confucianism from Taoism),⁸⁴ fundamentally anti-Confucian passivity had upon the development of Chinese history, ‘poisoning life with mirages, ruining order’.⁸⁵ Snyder, however, turns Pound’s criticism back on itself, and, through the path of compassion (as Snyder goes on to explain, there are ‘the traditional three aspects of the Dharma path: wisdom [prajña], meditation [dhyana], and morality [sila]’),⁸⁶ vigorously connects Buddhism with political activism. The vision here is one in which the concerns of both Buddhism and ecology are squared with Marxism; the exploitative bourgeoisie are also those that destroy the planet and those that discourage spiritual awareness:

They create populations of “preta” – hungry ghosts, with giant appetites and throats no bigger than needles. The soil, the forests and all animal life are being consumed by these cancerous collectivities; the air and water of the planet is being fouled by them.⁸⁷

Just as Buddhism has been near synonymous with political passivity, the ecological movement has often strayed towards a kind of atavistic individualism that is an anathema to Marxism. Snyder suggests a move that could combine the commune with the individual and, implicitly in a discussion of Zukofsky, the family: ‘The mercy of the West has been social revolution; the mercy of the East has been individual insight into the basic self/void. We need both.’⁸⁸ Later Snyder would tread this divide with less theoretical elegance; strident calls for population limitation can be found throughout his work and a strain of quite unsophisticated privileging of ancient feudal civilisations enters his thought soon after this: both of which problematise Snyder’s relationship with the left, and make his politics quite different from Zukofsky’s 1930s, urban, zealously

⁸⁴ See ‘Inventing Confucius’, *The Pound Era*, pp. 445-59.

⁸⁵ *The Cantos*, p. 318.

⁸⁶ *Earth House Hold*, p. 92.

⁸⁷ *Earth House Hold*, p. 91.

⁸⁸ *Earth House Hold*, p. 92.

labour-oriented brand of Marxism. Michael Davidson points up a flaw in some of Snyder's work that comes close to repeating Pound's Confucian feudalism:

[I]n the interest of historicizing poetry by linking it to ancient traditions and cultural sources, he often uses firstness as a self-evident sign of authenticity. The term "primitive" quickly loses its descriptive or historical function and becomes a metaphysical category, an ideal of immediacy that has been lost to modern society.⁸⁹

If it is hard to square Buddhism with anarchism or communism this brand of atavism seems flatly contradictory of 1930s style Objectivist theory. Perhaps, however, this friction is part of what attracts Zukofsky to such thinking in the 1960s: the broken society of "A"-1 to 7 had never fixed itself; the possibility of a renewal of that Marxist commitment but in a very new, contrastingly non-urban connection answered as many queries for Zukofsky as the new interest in Civil Rights had, illuminating the natural world of the poet's final works. In "A"-18 Zukofsky includes an extensive excerpt from an article appearing in the *New York Times* for the 1st of September 1963,⁹⁰ entitled 'THRONGS OF VIETNAMESE PILGRIMS VISIT POND OF MIRACULOUS FISH' that details anti-Buddhist South Vietnamese, and American, attempts to destroy a 'giant fish apparently a / carp swimming in a pond the incarnate Buddha.'⁹¹ This moment is part of an increasingly radicalised interaction with Buddhist thought in Zukofsky: the violence of this account confirming Snyder and contradicting Pound. By connecting his late work to the younger generation of poets in preference to both his modernist forebears and his earlier political concerns Zukofsky was able to reinvigorate his late work without damaging its fundamentals.

It is also worth considering the family at this point. Snyder, both in 'Buddhism and the Coming Revolution' and more extensively elsewhere, calls for a reinvention of

⁸⁹ *The San Francisco Renaissance*, p. 109.

⁹⁰ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-18.php>.

⁹¹ "A", p. 392.

what the family unit should be, calling for ‘free-form marriage’,⁹² whether that be ‘polygynous, polyandrous or homosexual.’⁹³ This quintessentially 1960s credo seems a long way from the Zukofskys’ familial triangle, described repeatedly and bitterly by Mary Oppen and others as overly close, protective and insular.⁹⁴ The family unit that the Zukofskys attempt is, however, revolutionary. While not clearly according with Snyder’s model (though he would have approved of the ecological responsibility of producing only a single child), nor to any other conception of 1960s ‘free love’, the Zukofsky family is nonetheless a singular arrangement, one in which the precocious son and the gifted wife attain something approaching collaborative equality with Zukofsky. This is clearly not *Anti-Oedipus*, but apparently not Oedipus either. It is during the 1960s when this experiment reaches fruition.

“A”-24, with its arrangement by Celia of Louis’s works is a classic example of the Zukofskys’ collaboration, but such collaboration runs throughout Louis’s late work: the second volume of *Bottom: On Shakespeare* and 1970’s *Autobiography* are both musical collaborations between Louis and Celia, while “A”-20 is at least mimetic of further such collaborations. More centrally in Zukofsky’s work, however, are a series of pseudo-collaborations that place Louis’s ventriloquism of voices from his family centrally beside his own in *Little, Bottom: On Shakespeare*⁹⁵ and the second, ‘Gigue’, section of “A”-13.⁹⁶

The familial authority that Zukofsky cedes through these activities is significant, particularly in the case of “A”-24. Part of the value of this process does, indeed, seem to be derived from this abrogation of self, an intention that brings this argument back to Snyder and his radicalised Buddhism. In his essay ‘Anonymous Poetry’ Peter Middleton has suggested, with specific reference to the work of the San Franciscan

⁹² *Earth House Hold*, p. 93.

⁹³ *Earth House Hold*, p. 92.

⁹⁴ See *Meaning a Life*, Oppen’s memoir of her marriage.

⁹⁵ *Bottom: On Shakespeare*, p. 266.

⁹⁶ “A”, p. 274.

Philip Whalen (another poet Zukofsky seems not to have encountered during his summer on the West Coast), that the particular sense of self (or lack thereof) in Buddhist thought offers a helpful example to avant-garde writers attempting to establish a way of dealing with ‘I’ in their poems, Whalen’s work bringing

into being a somewhat comic version of the humanoid unit of authenticity inflected by Buddhist practice, which treats the pretensions to self-founding subjectivity as a clumsiness of self that deserves to be seen for the comedy it presents to the enlightened.⁹⁷

Buddhism here offers Zukofsky the opportunity to further complicate the status of subjectivity in his work and, as in Zukofsky’s other interactions with Buddhism, it is coloured by a specifically 1960s sensibility.

The 1964 movements of “A”, “A”-14 and “A”-15, and, partially, “A”-18 (begun on the 26th of December 1964 but mostly written between the 8th of March and the 28th of April 1966),⁹⁸ serve as a review of the developments of the previous year, setting them into an order subsumable into the larger pattern of Zukofsky’s long poem. Their appearance out of chronological order cements this process; the section that runs from “A”-14 to “A”-20 is the most chronologically confused section of the poem’s composition, with the actual order in which the pieces were written being “A”-17, “A”-16, “A”-20, “A”-14, “A”-15, “A”-18, “A”-19.⁹⁹ “A”-14 marks the beginning of the ‘An’ section of “A”, fulfilling a plan set since 1930 that the poem’s movements would begin with ‘An’ rather than ‘A’ in its second half, and from the 1963 movements onwards the poem also drops the convention of capitalising the first words of each line. Thus the fact that the two movements that open the sequence as printed are those movements that approach 1963 retrospectively suggests how important that year is for the development

⁹⁷ *Distant Reading*, p. 114.

⁹⁸ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-18.php>.

⁹⁹ See Twitchell-Waas’s *Z-Site* for the composition dates of these movements.

of the closing sections of “A”: those comments on ‘(Ryokan’s Scroll)’, on the development of *Catullus*, *Bottom: On Shakespeare*, on Kennedy’s death, Civil Rights and Vietnam, that appear in the 1964 movements prove how enduring the developments of 1963 would be. The year 1963 was the crucible in which Zukofsky’s late poetics was forged.

What 1963 gave to Zukofsky, then, was a new dialectical locus for his paradiso, one that finally abandoned Pound’s particular esoterica, that superseded Williams’s American miniaturism and that broadened the political focus of Zukofsky’s pre-war Marxism. By the end of 1963 Williams was dead and the communication with Pound was over, but a new generation of poets had presented themselves to Zukofsky, their personalities finding their way into Zukofsky’s poetry and, while it would be difficult to detect a definite stylistic influence flowing from these younger poets to Zukofsky, it does seem clear that the political concerns of that decade and the new answers these young poets offered did influence Zukofsky profoundly. In the short poems of *I’s* (*pronounced eyes*) and *After I’s* Zukofsky began his involvement with these ideas, though they would not appear fully fledged in his work until his final projects: the great, confounding sequence of *80 Flowers*, and the unfinished proto-sequence ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’.

ii) ‘Go and praise London’:¹⁰⁰ Austin, Port Jefferson and London, Three Paradisal Locales in “A” 22 & 23 and *80 Flowers*

In this section I shall describe three of Zukofsky’s paradisal locales; Austin, Port Jefferson and London, using them to locate the development of the poet’s paradisal phase. Austin, with its HRC, would provide the financial assistance that would make the writing of Zukofsky’s paradise possible, as well as suggesting the possibility of a future readership; Port Jefferson would be the site of the Zukofskys’ retirement and the horticultural theatre in which Celia would plant and tend their paradise in *80 Flowers*; while London would give that sequence and its proposed sequel, ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’, their originating impulse.

The most important material development for Zukofsky’s oeuvre during 1963 would be the finalisation of the deal with the HRC and the beginning of the transferral of his archive to that location. As successive tranches of Zukofsky’s work arrived in Austin his work was made available to a new audience; a future audience that would be able to come to Austin and read the archive in addition to his published works: an

¹⁰⁰ “A”, p. 191.

academic posterity. Zukofsky's years in the wilderness had taught him patience: for Perelman the poet's 'separation from his own contemporaries was almost total and was a primary fact conditioning his writing,'¹⁰¹ and the possibility of privileging a projected future audience over those current readers that had neglected him for so long must have been appealing. By preserving those notes, drafts and other explicatory permanently down in Austin Zukofsky had secured for himself just enough of a possibility that his work would survive him that he could essentially dispense with the worry of being read by his contemporaries; he would be 'born posthumously' in accordance with Nietzsche's insight.¹⁰² This development is clear in the opacity of all of his post-*Catullus* output, but is most clearly exploited in the works of the early 1970s: "A"-22 & 23 with their immaculately detailed notes, as well as the final sequences *80 Flowers* (which, with a print run of 80 at \$150 a copy, was effectively withheld from the public on initial publication) and 'Gamut: Trees ninety 5's'. The HRC would provide material assistance for the new kind of opacity that would become the methodological manifestation of Zukofsky's paradisaal phase. The archive at the HRC, because of the access it offered to a future audience, became so central to Zukofsky's paradisaal method that it should be considered one of Zukofsky's paradisaal locales.

The gathering pace of modernist criticism in the early 1970s also contributed to this process. Pound studies were gaining momentum; Kenner's landmark *The Pound Era* appeared in 1971; the Pound journal *Paideuma* began publication in 1972 and the bulk of Pound's personal papers (including Zukofsky's letters to him and some of his manuscripts) were sold in 1973 to Yale's Beinecke library: another paradisaal repository for Zukofsky material across Long Island Sound from the Zukofskys' final home at Port Jefferson. At the end of the 1960s the possibility that the archiving of his personal

¹⁰¹ *The Trouble With Genius*, p. 170.

¹⁰² *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. xxiv.

papers could provide a valid adjunct to his poetry must have seemed even more realistic to Zukofsky: just as *The Cantos* were finally being paid the attention they deserved, and beginning to suggest a semblance of completeness (*Drafts & Fragments* had provided a provisional ending in 1968, the first ‘complete’ edition of *The Cantos* would follow soon after), Zukofsky’s oeuvre might also be able to benefit from the academy. The particular hermeticism of the early 1970s works is consistent with these possibilities: the combination of his papers being permanently available at Austin and the increasing interest in his peers meant that there was a real chance that production as opaque as “A”-22 & 23 (1975) would, in due course, attract academic readers with access to the travel budgets needed to visit Texas. Perhaps explanatory volumes on the scale of those produced about Pound might even be in the offing. Shortly after the poet’s death Kenner wrote that ‘[t]hey will still be elucidating [Zukofsky’s work] in the twenty-second century’.¹⁰³ It seems likely that Zukofsky was aware of this possibility, and this is the position that Libbie Rifkin describes in *Career Moves: Olson, Creeley, Zukofsky, Berrigan, and the American Avant-garde*, implying that Zukofsky’s interaction with his archive can be read as a series of ‘career moves’, with the initial 1963 deal that would facilitate the publication of a luxuriously printed, two volume first edition of *Bottom: On Shakespeare* serving his immediate professional interests, and the possibility of developing and controlling a future readership appearing at the turn of the 1970s. Rifkin also sees the archive itself as a Zukofskian product:

The awkward compromise between art and commerce persisted throughout the relationship, infusing the incremental process of building the collection with characteristically Zukofskyan aesthetic intentions and inflecting Zukofsky’s poetic practice with a – new and unique for him – sense of “commercial” possibility.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ ‘Louis Zukofsky: All the Words’, *Mazes: Essays*, p. 311.

¹⁰⁴ *Career Moves*, p. 105.

In this sense the HRC ‘reveals its subject irremediably immersed in the world.’¹⁰⁵ Rifkin’s theme is the connection between poetic commercial careers and, though she is correct regarding the immediate benefit of the deal with the HRC, it seems likely that his interest in a career beyond death, his stocks in posterity, would be of more importance in this context than his immediate financial gain. Michele Leggott’s *Reading Zukofsky’s 80 Flowers* extends this position; becoming effectively a reading of the *80 Flowers* materials housed at Austin rather than a conventional close reading of the published volume. She writes that ‘Texas was in effect written into the history of the work; Texas was an ultimate insurance against the black holes of neglect into which the very difficult too readily falls.’¹⁰⁶ It should also be noted that on publication in 1989 Leggott’s volume, while published in relatively small quantities itself, was more readily available than the text it sought to explicate, which would not be collected until 1991 in the *Complete Short Poetry*, and by including 35 of the volume’s 81 poems entire became a stopgap ‘Selected Flowers’.

Leggott’s work is also, partly because of this decision, a *partial* reading of Zukofsky’s *80 Flowers*; attempting extensive explication of 35 of the ‘flowers’, and of those some are dealt with more fully than others. More significantly, however, the presence of the archive affects the manner in which Leggott approaches those flowers that she does elucidate, with the great potential for source-finding the archive material offers inevitably shaping some sections of the book into list-like puzzle solutions. What Leggott signally fails to do is to provide a description of what it is like to *read* this volume and to explain why that reading method might be justified and appropriate. In this instance Zukofsky’s Austin strategy might be seen to have backfired, for though his late works were written with a consciousness of their eventual exegesis, their most important

¹⁰⁵ *Career Moves*, p. 107.

¹⁰⁶ *R80*, p. 32.

aspect (the thing that marks them as unprecedented and audacious) is their method. Leggott provides an unrivalled snapshot of the inner workings of this method but gives little idea of why this method was arrived at and what it finally achieves.

Reading Zukofsky's 80 Flowers is helpful, however, in mapping the paradisaical tendencies of Zukofsky's late works. As the book progresses it becomes increasingly clear that there are three locales of importance to the paradise Zukofsky describes in "A" 22 & 23 and *80 Flowers*: Austin, as eventual home of the materials that will make this unique kind of writing and its concomitantly unique kind of reading possible; Port Jefferson, as Zukofsky's last home and the place where many of the 'flowers' were grown by Celia; and London, visited by Louis and Celia in the spring of 1969 providing vital instigations for *80 Flowers* and 'Gamut: Trees ninety 5's', with a trip to Kew Gardens prominent.¹⁰⁷ A reading of this late poetry that looks at these three locales in turn and at their relations to their parallel texts has the potential of going further in describing Zukofsky's paradise.

Leggott demonstrates clearly and repeatedly the closeness between the closing movements of "A" and Zukofsky's next project, *80 Flowers*. The projects were sometimes worked up from the same sets of notes, apparently constructed using much the same systems and refer to one another repeatedly, with Zukofsky predicting the future sequence near the climax of "A"-23, written between the 13th of April 1973 and the 21st of September 1974,¹⁰⁸ writing in his seventieth year '10 years – 80 flowers',¹⁰⁹ a loose schema for what was to follow. The quiet domesticity of the later sequence, and a hint of the *80 Flowers* method, first appears in the following passage from "A"-23, in which the Zukofskys' new home in Port Jefferson is detailed with exactness, lyricism and simplicity:

¹⁰⁷ See *PLF*, pp. 414-15.

¹⁰⁸ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-23.php>.

¹⁰⁹ "A", p. 562.

[...] pitched high
 ridgeplate (kingpost roofed) one's eavesdropping
 secret – fenced and the chainlink
 spring's locust blossoms alight on
 discourse, 'none impressed none oppress':
 unsighted uses 7 or 8
 small rooms to ramble in –
 looking within, listening out windows:
 a dog's nosing bark lifts
 starlings: scattered choir less. East:
 the old mulberry's escapes, wild
 locust, 5-lobe-leaf maple honeysuckled to
 an outgrown rhus (woodhouses. .) – as
 the eyes turn north lilac
 blue-red, white too, right-angled facing
 stone porch whose low wall
 ranges (pachysandra mingling) yew, flame-azalea,
 box-like shrub holly, kalmia more
 you, discolor willow with the
 lilac. West – from windowed bays,
 trimmed hemlock halves each – hills,
 at the road's three-crossings to
 them evenings candle chestnut blossom
 candles ten times the life
 of the watcher's hat, question
 bird migrant promises nest there,
 respond of South windows: in
 the ground ivy half a
 house-wren's egg pink-white as the
 slingshot by: spring's ant wings
 and (under stones) runs a wake
 to a song mostly chrysanthemums'.¹¹⁰

In contradiction to the formidable reputation of the closing stages of "4" this passage is readily apprehendable: it is a 360 degree panoramic view of the Zukofskys' house and garden in Port Jefferson, passing through their eastern, northern, western and southern aspects. The house and its function as a conscious tool of removal from the outside world ('looking within, listening out windows') make it seem somewhat like Pound's 'nice quiet paradise / over the shambles',¹¹¹ a locale at once physically removed and insulated from the outside world and also insulated from the ravaging demands of artistic ambition (Pound's earlier paradises would never have been 'nice' or 'quiet'). It is the move into the garden here, as Zukofsky turns east, however, that is of particular

¹¹⁰ "4", p. 554.

¹¹¹ *The Cantos*, p. 810.

significance for this paradise. In October 1973 Louis and Celia left New York City for Port Jefferson on Long Island. Port Jefferson is located on the northern shore of Long Island, across Long Island Sound from Connecticut (which would become ‘connect a cut’ in *80 Flowers*’ ‘Aster’, a positive reimagination of Bettelheim’s ‘Connect-I-Cut’¹¹² in Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus*), the shoreline that appeared repeatedly in Zukofsky’s short early poems dealing with the Chambers and Columbia circle and that he travelled opposite between Boston and New York in December 1963 and documented in ‘After Reading’. There ‘The Sound’ had represented the transition into death, the ‘ice clump / sparkling root etc’¹¹³ floating on Long Island Sound viewed from New England. Now Zukofsky had crossed that water to his final garden; he would die in Port Jefferson in 1978. The garden so carefully described here would become the theatre for the action of *80 Flowers*; Zukofsky’s requirement to actually see each of his ‘flowers’ personally before inclusion in the sequence meant that for the rest of the time they stayed he and Celia would be kept busy growing and understanding plants relevant to the project in this garden and its greenhouse.

“A” 22 & 23 predicts the *80 Flowers* style in a number of ways in this extract. The five word line is there and would be repeated in both *80 Flowers* and ‘Gamut’, a unit that had been used before in sections of “A”-21 and which continued the word-counting that had been Zukofsky’s primary measure since “A”-14. Compression is obviously an element here also and lines like ‘scattered choir less’ suggest *Catullus*-style homophonic soundings are at play also, while the truncated and ambiguous ‘garden path’ tendency of the syntax here will become a central semantic device in *80 Flowers*. In some respects, however, “A”-23 and, particularly, this section do not go so far as the later sequence. The five word line is under some stress here, with a repeated one word enjambment

¹¹² *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 40.

¹¹³ *CSP*, p. 233.

occurring seven times across lines such as ‘ridgeplate (kingpost roofed) one’s eavesdropping / secret’ and ‘spring’s locust blossoms alight on / discóurse’. Zukofsky’s syntax, while being far from conventional, is readily traceable in comparison with *80 Flowers*, and these enjambments suggest that for the most part the word-counting in this section is not affecting sentence structure particularly adversely, with Zukofsky’s sentences sometimes seeming to ignore the line-unit suggested by the counting. The stress marks on ‘discóurse’ and ‘díscolor’ also bring to mind a metrical involvement that word-counting would seem to proscribe, though the marks seem to have a primarily semantic rather than rhythmic function, revealing these words’ etymologies with the unconventional emphasis upon the ‘course’ of ‘discóurse’ suggesting an adjacent golf-course, the ‘dis’ of ‘díscolor’ adding a funereal tincture to the Zukofskys’ willow.

There are also recollections of earlier paradises here. When Zukofsky turns westward, towards sundown and death, he looks ‘West – from windowed bays, trimmed hemlock halves each – hills’. Windows, bays and hills refer back to an important moment in *Anew*, the short poem ‘*che di lor suona su nella tua vita*’:¹¹⁴

I walked out, before
 “Break of day”
 And saw
 Four cabins in the hay.

Blue sealed glasses
 Of preserves – four –
 In the window-sash
 In the yard on the bay.

Further:
 The waters
 At the ramp
 Running away.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Zukofsky’s emphasis.

¹¹⁵ *CSP*, p. 77. This poem would also apparently be crucial to ‘Bayberry’ in *80 Flowers*, a connection made by Zukofsky in a recorded reading in Hugh Kenner’s kitchen in 1975, <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Zukofsky.html>. See *R80*, pp. 369-72 for a transcription.

Written in February 1937,¹¹⁶ a note appended to *Anew* in 1946, reveals that this poem apparently came to Zukofsky in a dream, and suggests the importance of the word ‘bay’ to its composition:

The word “bay” is what I could reconstruct later from the feeling of the action in the dream, as I moved from place to place, and should convey something of all the meanings of the word “bay”: red-brown, the laurel, the laurel-wreath, a bay horse, a deep bark or cry, a window-bay, a large space in a barn for storage as of hay or fodder, the state of things being kept at a standstill, but more specifically two meanings that seemed to include all the others, they are, an arm of the sea and a recess of low land between hills.¹¹⁷

As in ‘After Reading’, Zukofsky here predicts the locale of his dotage with some accuracy. He goes on to quote J.A. Carlyle’s translation of the title from Dante’s *Inferno*, which finds Virgil explaining the existence of Homer, Horace, Ovid and Lucan in a sphere of light in limbo.¹¹⁸ In 1937, with Zukofsky still involved in his communist utopia, the nearest to a Dantean paradiso he can approach is a dreamt moment that relates obscurely to a venerated part of limbo. With his house at Port Jefferson he would recreate the scene described in ‘*che di lor suona su nella tua vita*’, and, with Zukofsky immersed in his dialectical mode, the polarities that made the 1937 version possible only in a dream and through the protective scrim of Dante are retained: the garden at 306 Broadway would form a combined utopia and paradise.

The descriptions of Celia’s plants and the use Zukofsky makes of their names here predict *80 Flowers*. That final possessive apostrophe on ‘chrysanthemums’ offers agency, while the way in which the house-wren’s song runs into it posits a shared ownership of song: the flowers are already beginning to sing before the end of “A”.

In *80 Flowers* Zukofsky would encounter another ‘Chrysanthemum’:

Margurite-chain color not royal-or-blue
boll samited *costmary* perennial herb

¹¹⁶ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/Anew-1946.php>.

¹¹⁷ *CSP*, p 103.

¹¹⁸ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/Anew-1946.php>.

askance leaf jagged feather pinching
 October *feverfew* short-rayed part then
 home abreast *oxeye* yellow disk
 long white doublepetal look cant
 a *mum* time *goldenflower* far
 East spring winter hearts renew[.]¹¹⁹

This ‘feather’ recalls the bird shells in “A”-23, while ‘East’ suggests that extract’s compass points (the chrysanthemums had originally been seen from the house’s ‘South windows’). ‘Chrysanthemum’ is one of the ‘flowers’ that Leggott leaves unelucidated, pausing only to note an echo of Thomas Campion in its last line, his ‘The spring that winter’d harts renu’t; / and this is that my soule pursu’t’¹²⁰ becoming ‘East spring winter hearts renew’. The seasonal progression that Leggott notes as a structuring principal throughout the volume is also present in that ‘spring winter’ conjunction and the mention of ‘October’ in this autumnal poem written between the 28th of October and the 13th of November 1975 (shortly after the publication of “A” 22 & 23). And, as it happens, the chrysanthemum is known as the appropriate birthday flower for November. Leggott’s guide also coaches the reader into listening for botanical information relating to the flower in question and to think about possible links with Zukofsky’s domestic situation; we can reasonably expect the italicised words to be names of different kinds of chrysanthemums, or alternative names for various types, and in among the rest of the text we will find description of the flower itself. ‘Mums’ is a contraction of chrysanthemums and must refer to Celia.

The text is denser than that passage from “A”-23, but with a little help from Leggott can be unpicked. Along with the description of the Zukofskys’ Port Jefferson home ‘Chrysanthemum’ shares a palette with and an approach to the pastoral. In the midst of the refraction of Zukofsky’s late style a handful of traditional poetic tropes are allowed to continue; the mode through much of “A” 22 & 23 and throughout the whole

¹¹⁹ *CSP*, p. 332.

¹²⁰ *R80*, p. 345.

does not mean one, oh, four, 104%

Error of chaos. Justification is from kindness of heart
and from her hands floweth mercy.
As for who demand belief rather than justice.¹²¹

Pound's 'perennial' is very different from the 'perennial herb' chrysanthemum, here referring to Pound's repeated formulation 'bellum perenae'. The vagueness over the year of the Constitutional Convention (presumably the Philadelphia convention of 1787) is curious in a passage calling for right-naming (criticising 'calling Paul Peter'), and it clashes with the emphatic spelling-out of '104%' a few lines later. When Pound is vague like this in *Rock-Drill* and *Thrones* it can normally be explained as part of a coterie rhetoric: the correctness of Pound's thesis is such that individual slips and ellipses are of no matter, and this will be perceived by any right-thinking reader of Pound's inner circle. Here, however, the old force is dissipated, the proportion of lyric to bombast is inverted and the context makes Pound seem less like a writer so convinced that he need not stop to explain than one not quite convinced anymore. Note how quickly he returns to the characteristic *Drafts & Fragments* mystical mode with 'Justification is from kindness of heart'. '17... whichwhat' is a part of a process of realignment in the late *Cantos* that is similar to the development in Zukofsky's final works: there is an attempt in both cases to transcend the earlier agglutination of historic and political facts, a structural constant in the utopian stretches of both *The Cantos* and "A", by raising it up to coexist with the lyric in these poets' poetic paradises. Both writers can be seen to struggle with the combination of these elements in their last works. This process begins in Pound around the time of *The Pisan Cantos* and continues to the end of the poem; as the poem's historic and political content becomes ever more compressed, obscure and opaque, the lyric sections gradually expand and remain syntactically stable: in canto 90 Hitler is retained,

¹²¹ *The Cantos*, p. 802.

In *80 Flowers* Zukofsky sounds ‘artemisia’ through that musical concern he shares with Pound: ‘Art to me’s hear stellary / honor never translated my sum’.¹²⁶ This commentary on two of Zukofsky’s most characteristic structural conceits (music and ‘translation’) could be a comment on the Poundian inheritance. More importantly, this example of both writers approaching the same flower reveals moments of similarity and difference in their work. Pound’s botany is derived from religious rites and, unlike Zukofsky, he makes no insistence on having actually seen the plants he describes. The *80 Flowers* and ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’ notes suggest, however, that the process may have been more similar than it initially seems. As Pound moved east towards the Himalayas for the ethnological material in *Drafts & Fragments*, Zukofsky was moving eastward also, to London.¹²⁷

Zukofsky visited London between the 13th and the 27th of May 1969, a moment that was foundational for both *80 Flowers* and ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’, and that would be reported in “A”-23 also. In notes from that trip Zukofsky describes a visit to the West End:

Grosvenor Sq, Berkley, Bedford, Parks
 the flowers, laburnum, linden thriving on the
 damp, the English sky, the clouds of London,
 one minute of blue and sun followed by ~~complete~~
 mountainous cumulus, and a downpour, the background heat
 of Adam’s Georgian (& Queen Anne’s?) houses cannot warm: grass
 greener, a chill of flowers thriving.¹²⁸

This material would appear refracted in “A”-23:

damp cannot warm the houses –
 linden thrives, one minute of
 blue and sun then downpour –
 treecolumned greensward greener, man empty

 spaces in cells sounds thick
 gardens, digs up, plants may –[.]¹²⁹

¹²⁶ ‘Artemisia’, *CSP*, p. 347.

¹²⁷ See *PLF*, pp. 414-15.

¹²⁸ Black notebook, p. 56. Quoted in *R80*, p. 325.

London, while obviously a very different locale from Port Jefferson, shares some elements with Zukofsky's Long Island home in its representation here. Zukofsky's London, though its weather is familiar, is pastoral in a noticeably contained and ordered manner: the great squares of Bloomsbury, Fitzrovia and St James's take on a quaintly domestic aspect; Kew Gardens seems an exotic extrapolation of the quiet cultivation at Port Jefferson – a very different London from the disorderly vortex of avant-garde activity experienced by the young Pound and described in Peter Brooker's *Bohemia in London: The Social Scene of Early Modernism*. This would be the locale from which 'Gamut' would be drawn, and from which the planned 'Gamut: Trees ninety 5's' was to have sprung. Part garden, part museum and part experimental centre founded with the aim of amassing as many of the British empire's plants in one place for study and potential exploitation as possible, botanist Peter Collinson described it in 1766 as '[t]he paradise of our world, where all plants are found, that money or interest can procure',¹²⁹ Kew Gardens makes an ideal setting for Zukofsky's late paradisaical-botanical sequences, as Leggott notes, 'paradise' comes from the Persian for park or garden.¹³¹ Zukofsky's late pastoral, in contrast to the Tibetan wildness Pound was becoming interested in, is one that privileges the cultivated and the botanical, the patience and minute exactness of the *80 Flowers* form miming the processes of tending flowers grown for exhibition.

On the 21st of May Zukofsky gave a reading at the American embassy in London and in the following question and answer session delivered an extemporised paper that would, after being recorded by Zukofsky's interlocutor, Michael Shayer, pirated by Tom Pickard and edited by Zukofsky, appear as 'About the Gas Age' in the

¹²⁹ "A", p. 537.

¹³⁰ *The Creation of the British Atlantic World*, p. 276.

¹³¹ *R80*, p. 406 n.

1981 expanded edition of *Prepositions*. The poet makes a horticultural reference that suggests the transcendental intent of *80 Flowers*:

I'd like to keep solid because I can't help myself, I was born in a gas age, but I don't want to falsify my time so I get it down; it's an attraction, but the older I get, oh I'd like to look at a leaf occasionally, and in the polluted city of New York with all the fumes and so on I really go out hunting for a crocus in an areaway.¹³²

80 Flowers' 'Crocus' would, as a draft, feature a dedication 'for JSB',¹³³ suggesting this flower, along with the remaining 80, represents a return to the utopian-musical impulses that pulsed through Bach into "A" from "A"-1 on. London, for Zukofsky apparently a greener, more cultivated city than New York, was the locale that allowed Zukofsky's last close interaction with that impossible 'solid' age.

¹³² *Prepositions* +, p. 170.

¹³³ *R80*, p. 365.

iii) ‘Gamut’: Provisional Sequences and Provisional Endings

Following *80 Flowers* the next project was to have been ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’.¹³⁴ As a move towards an understanding of the texture of Zukofsky’s paradise I shall now attempt a genealogical reconstruction of that lost sequence, using the notes interred at the HRC as my guide. Only one, presumably introductory, ‘tree’ from ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’ survives. Found among the *80 Flowers* notes and now known simply as ‘Gamut’, it reads:

Much ado about trees lichen
hugs alga and fungus live

¹³⁴ Critics, including Scroggins, following Leggott’s practice, have tended to refer to the sequence as ‘Gamut: 90 Trees’, though on the first page of this project’s notes, among a series of other titles Zukofsky has written ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’ and drawn an arrow towards the words ‘*final title Apr 20/75*’ [Old notes p. 1]. A later schema confirms this title date:

Anticipating in *80 Flowers*, and
while planning it since 12/29/68,
a book entitled, Gamut, Trees ninety
*Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s**
– that is, (for the year 2000)
five-word
90 poems of 5 word lines
each.

showed to Hugh Kenner
Baltimore, Md.
Sat. Dec 13/75

*final title
decided
Apr 20/75
LZ [*R80*, p. 17.]

These notes are as definitive as anything else I have seen and I will therefore use this appellation throughout.

off each other hoe does
 dear owe dear earth terrace
 money sunday coffee poorjoe snow[.]¹³⁵

The five-by-five pattern, dubbed by Zukofsky the ‘5’, is appealing; its grid-like aspect suggests a possible verticality, while its brevity allows the reader to retain most of the information in the piece as it is read: the words seem to sound simultaneously, outside of syntax’s linear temporality, a continuation of the desire to sound harmonic counterpoint in language throughout “4”, and a remarkably rhizomatic effect for a ‘tree’, in contradiction to Deleuze and Guattari’s rejection of the ‘arboreal’.¹³⁶ Scroggins also points out that the language here is substantively different from the rich vocabulary of *80 Flowers*, ‘forecasting a new stripped-down demotic language for “90 Trees.”’¹³⁷ Part of this change is effected by a move towards one and two syllable words; no word in this poem has more than two syllables, in contrast to the frequent Latinate multi-syllables and compound words in *80 Flowers*. In spite of the five-word line’s apparent resistance to meter the ‘flowers’ often contain a ghost of the pentameter; ‘Gamut’, but for the pentameter of the last, instead suggests a three-beat line.

¹³⁵ *CSP*, p. 355.

¹³⁶ See ‘Introduction: Rhizome’, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 3-28.

¹³⁷ *PLF*, p. 458.



[Flowering buttonweed, 'diodia teres'.]

The dedication's central character is a weed, poorjoe, whose botanical name is 'diodia teres', a name transliterated in the fourth line as 'dear owe dear earth terrace'.¹³⁸ 'Gamut: Trees ninety 5's' was to have been a book about trees. Poorjoe finds its way into a book about trees because it is a weed, 'Gamut' is a dedication for a book of trees and is, for that reason, extraneous to the central matter of the work: a literary weed. 'Lichen / hugs alga and fungus live / off each other' and off of trees in the same way as this dedication grows from the notional collection 'Gamut: Trees ninety 5's'. 'Gamut' was composed between the 5th and 11th of February 1978,¹³⁹ a significant date as the poem is also a likely Valentine's dedication for Celia, or so Quartermain assumed when he arranged the poem's initial publication, appending the following note:

Some score copies of this, the last Valentine poem and possibly the last poem Louis Zukofsky completed before his death on May 12 1978, is privately issued in a special limited edition to *The Friends of Louis Zukofsky* to mark the poet's 80th birthday, January 23 1984.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ For this and other exegetical information relating to 'Gamut' see Corman's 'On "Gamut"', *Origin*, fifth series, number four. Jan. 1984, pp. 51-54.

¹³⁹ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/80-Flowers-1978.php>.

¹⁴⁰ *Gamut: 90 Trees*, p. 2. This *Gamut: 90 Trees* is Quartermain's publication of 'Gamut', and should be differentiated from the unrealised 'Gamut: Trees ninety 5's'.

‘Gamut’ becomes, then, a love poem – the alga and fungus that make up lichen live symbiotically as Louis and Celia live together, in a relationship where ‘dear owe[s] dear [the] earth’.

The title, ‘Gamut’, is the musical scale: A, B, C, D, E, F and G is the full gamut, while the ‘do’ of the equivalent ‘do re me’ becomes a part of the sonic texture in ‘ado’, ‘hoe does’ and extended into ‘dear owe’. The sense of ‘running the gamut’ predicts the scope of the project ahead, the description of ninety trees to come, while the harmonic scale is thereby placed within the framework of nature and the harmonic series, Zukofsky’s musical apparatus working in harmony with his biological explorations just as Herbert Stanley Allen,¹⁴¹ Marx, Spinoza and Cavalcanti consort harmoniously in “A”-9. As Zukofsky writes in ‘The Effacement of Philosophy’: ‘Materialist philosophers of history may do well to think about Bach’s remark: The order which rules music is the same order that controls the placing of the stars and the feathers in a bird’s wing.’¹⁴²

Unused *80 Flowers* notes suggest something of the significance of lichen in this poem, with Zukofsky rhyming the musical scale with parts of the symbiotic process that creates lichen:

Nov 8/74 – zygote fertilized cell (= male + female)
gametes [sex cells joined] (sigh goat
(game meat) gam meet
gam

12/12/74 sounds invisibly (from 90 Trees p. 1)[.]¹⁴³

The process of symbiosis comes to represent in this valentine’s poem Louis and Celia Zukofsky’s growing together. Lichen grows on trees, money, of course, does not, and the financial imagery built into this poem relates to the impoverished domestic situation of the Zukofskys as well as drawing us back to Marx: at the base of this poem is an

¹⁴¹ Author of *Electrons and Waves: An Introduction to Atomic Physics*, one of the first half of “A”-9’s source texts. See *PLF*, pp. 186-88.

¹⁴² *Prepositions* +, p. 55.

¹⁴³ *R80*, p. 360. *80 Flowers* Notes, p. 5.

incident where someone, perhaps ‘poor Joe’ or a Zukofsky (most likely the green-fingered Celia) too poor to be able to pay another, is forced to clear ‘snow’ or buttonweeds from, presumably, the Zukofskys’ ‘terrace’. Labour is still the root in this synthetic paradise.

The ‘Gamut’ notes contain a quote from *Taylor’s Encyclopaedia of Gardening, Horticulture, and Landscape Design* by Norman Taylor (a key source text for both *80 Flowers* and the ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’ notes), referring to snow as ““poor man’s manure””,¹⁴⁴ reiterating the economic concerns of this poem:

350 -/ Cf Poorjoe U.S. Weeds
 DONE Gamut * Snow (Americana= ~~literally~~
 “poorman’s manure”, i.e. snow blanket)
 L.Z. use poorman’s resource[.]¹⁴⁵

Next to this Zukofsky writes ‘i.e. snow blanket’,¹⁴⁶ which Leggott persuasively connects to an untitled poem by Niedecker from the projected collection *For Paul and Other Poems*, the last stanza of which begins ‘In February almost March a snow-blanket / is good manure’¹⁴⁷ (another February poem). Niedecker writes that the oil of the Garden of Eden ‘if freed, could warm / the world for 20 years and nevermind the storm’,¹⁴⁸ a practical paradisaal and quotidian optimism also present in ‘Gamut’.

Zukofsky makes use of a selection of poor man’s resources in this poem: the buttonweed, as a weed, presumably saves the cost of seeds and planting, while the snow provides sustenance for the Zukofskys’ terrace and its weeds. The ‘cup of joe’ suggested by the bringing together of ‘poorjoe’ (a member of the coffee family) and ‘coffee’ in the last line is meagre payment for physical work, while poetry at the same time as being the

¹⁴⁴ ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’ Notes, p. 11. [H.R.H.R.C, Louis Zukofsky Archive, Box 13, Folder 8. See also *R80*, p. 360.]

¹⁴⁵ ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’ Notes, p. 11.

¹⁴⁶ ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’ Notes, p. 11.

¹⁴⁷ *Collected Works*, p. 173.

¹⁴⁸ *Collected Works*, p. 173.

least remunerative of the arts is also the art with the smallest material outlay for its practitioner. Zukofsky's parsimonious use of language suggests a financial restriction also, his need to fit the most meanings he can into single words makes the poetry seem rationed: the five-by-five unit an imposition to reduce verbal, though not intellectual, expenditure.

'Gamut' is the last poem in both Zukofsky's *Complete Short Poetry* and *Selected Poems*. It is exemplary of Zukofsky's late method and in its own tiny way a summation of the decades of work that precede it. "A" was officially completed in 1974, the year of Zukofsky's 70th birthday – tying the later sequences (written for his 80th and 96th birthdays) to the long poem. Towards the end of *80 Flowers* Zukofsky included a poem that would bring trees and flowers into close proximity, "'X'", the 78th flower, the typography of the title of which also draws in "A", contains a series of flower-like trees and tree-like flowers: Leggott detects 'a tree peony, a tree hydrangea, even a tree primrose'¹⁴⁹ within these eight lines. 'Yaupon', the 79th, is a shrub that Leggott reports 'in Texas grows into a tree',¹⁵⁰ a fact that led Zukofsky to refer to it as a 'transition to *Gamut*',¹⁵¹ and which might draw our attention to the proximity of the HRC archive throughout this project. 'Gamut' doesn't actually contain any trees, it instead makes reference to lichen and to the weeds of *80 Flowers*, things that grow around trees but that are themselves quite different from trees. That the last five flowers of *80 Flowers* are 'Vines', 'Weeds', "'X'", 'Yaupon' and 'Zinnia' – V, W, X, Y and Z – recalls the alphabetising that occurs at the end of "A"-23 with its rush towards the 'z-sited path' of its conclusion, the section of "A" that contains an announcement of *80 Flowers* with the

¹⁴⁹ *R80*, p. 332.

¹⁵⁰ *R80*, p. 333.

¹⁵¹ *R80*, p. 333.

line ‘abreast of “10 years – 80 flowers”’.¹⁵² The overlaying of differing organisational procedures allows all three sequences to exist simultaneously and through one another.

The major themes of “A” are in ‘Gamut’ – the little poem manages, miraculously, to run the gamut of that massive poem’s thematic development in just twenty-five words: capital and labour, the interlayered method, the Zukofsky family unit, the natural world and music are all organisational principles. As the dedicative poem for a longer sequence, ‘Gamut’ is necessarily a summation, though not just of ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’: it also sums up Zukofsky’s entire oeuvre, and marks, provisionally, the completion of “A” in full synthetic paradisal mode.

‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’ was to be a sequence for the new millennium, to be published for Zukofsky’s ninety-sixth birthday in the year 2000. The volume would have contained ninety poems about trees, which with their five lines suggest the number 95, and, speculatively, the dedication ‘Gamut’ would have brought the sequence up to the commemorative 96. As that part of the poem that tips its balance into the millennial the completed ‘Gamut’ can be read as Zukofsky’s attempt to write his paradise. The idea of the ‘gamut’ is itself about the completion of a series: to ‘run the gamut’ is to cover an entire range of possibilities: the entirety is key. Each note is required to make the major scale, and the scale is incomplete without any of them, the idea of this last collection, planned for far enough in the future that Zukofsky could not yet imagine writing on beyond it, would be to make everything that had gone before in his career cohere.

A look at the materials gathered for ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’ gives us some idea of what shape the sequence would have taken. On the first page Zukofsky records the foundational note for the sequence:

¹⁵² “A”, p. 562. There are two earlier mentions of the project on pp. 538 and 562.

5/13-27/69 London Notes (5/19/69) Kew Gardens: ..a Chinese tree <name?> whose leaves undersides in the wind + rain (over the rolling green) hang their white papery tags[.]¹⁵³

Back to London: the originating moment of ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’ is one of quiet exoticism, an oriental tree encountered in a distant city. On the same page Zukofsky notes down the word ‘MANDUKAS’ from the Indian Veda in praise of frogs, with the instruction to ‘transliterate’,¹⁵⁴ noting the source as ‘pp. 141 ff’¹⁵⁵ of Arthur Anthony Macdonell’s *Vedic Reader* (1917). The note describes the mandukas as a ‘<rain> “spell” panegyric of frogs raising their voices’¹⁵⁶ in celebration of the arriving rains ‘like Brahman pupils repeating the lessons of their teacher.’¹⁵⁷ The rest of this first page is made up of extracts from and references to the Veda. Zukofsky notes the ‘Hymn of the Gambler’, which Macdonell describes as

the lament of a gambler who, unable to resist the fascination of the dice, deplores the ruin which he has brought on his family. The dice (aksás) consisted of the nuts of a large tree called vibhidaka (*Terminalia bellerica*), which is still utilized for this purpose in India.¹⁵⁸

Zukofsky does not transcribe this section, though this arboreal connection is surely in his mind when he makes the following comment ‘nb. note interest in property throughout the Vedas – e.g. cows; wealth, prayer for wealth etc (Caste?)’.¹⁵⁹ Zukofsky’s utopian materialism, connected to ideas of class and labour since the beginning of interest in Marx in the 1920s, is still present at the heart of his last project. Drizzle in suburban Kew connects with the frogs and foliage of the Far East, the concern with ownership and material dates back to these ur-texts of Hinduism.

¹⁵³ ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’ ‘Old Notes’, p. 1.

¹⁵⁴ ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’ ‘Old Notes’, p. 1.

¹⁵⁵ ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’ ‘Old Notes’, p. 1.

¹⁵⁶ ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’ ‘Old Notes’, p. 1.

¹⁵⁷ ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’ ‘Old Notes’, p. 1.

¹⁵⁸ *Vedic Reader*, p. 186.

¹⁵⁹ ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’ ‘Old Notes’, p. 1.

Zukofsky goes on to approach the ‘Hymn of Creation’, the prior use of which in “A”-12 and “A”-22 he notes, with the formulation ‘sat – ásat’,¹⁶⁰ the existent out of the non-existent: ‘Water thus came into being first; from it was evolved intelligence by heat.’¹⁶¹ Finally Zukofsky notes down ‘VÁTA = the wind’, the final strophe of the hymn dedicated to the wind that Macdonell translates as

[b]reath of the gods, germ of the world, this god fares according to his will. His sounds are heard (but) his form is not (seen). To that Váta we would pay worship with oblation.¹⁶²

Leggott also finds ‘Váta’ in the first line of the *80 Flowers* epigraph: ‘Heart us invisibly thyme time’,¹⁶³ ‘Heart’ housing ‘hear’ and the action of this Vedic breath in *80 Flowers* and ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’.¹⁶⁴ Zukofsky seems to detect an analogue for his homophonic practice in this hearing without seeing, which he transforms in the notes into ‘he sounds invisibly’,¹⁶⁵ and prepares a homophonic translation of the line:

Strophe 4 p 218-219		
sounds	flow – sru	
ghósa í,d asya s r h v i r e, má		
<form> supám = “his sounds are heard		
his form not seen”	[belta:	he sounds
		his sounds
		invisibly
goes as shrubbery sue[?] patron [?] flow		no form]
(over)		invisibly[.] ¹⁶⁶

The wind and rain at Kew are both matched in the Veda then, and out of them spring thought (intelligence) and a material awareness of property. ‘Goes as shrubbery’, Zukofsky’s transliteration of the Sanskrit, is the result of this exercise; the wind and rain

¹⁶⁰ ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’ ‘Old Notes’, p. 1.

¹⁶¹ *Vedic Reader*, p. 77.

¹⁶² *Vedic Reader*, pp. 218-19.

¹⁶³ *CSP*, p. 325.

¹⁶⁴ *R80*, p. 76.

¹⁶⁵ ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’ ‘Old Notes’, p. 1.

¹⁶⁶ ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’ ‘Old Notes’, p. 1.

at Kew sounding that wind that can be heard but not seen out of the Vedas, Kew's shrubbery manifesting it.

The second page lists other sorts of trees, and a reference to Shelley, whose 'Hymn to Intellectual Beauty' matches the evolution of intelligence in the Vedas, its tracking of the effects of the intellect familiar from Macdonell's Váta:

THE AWFUL shadow of some unseen Power
 Floats though unseen among us, – visiting
 This various world with as inconstant wing
 As summer winds that creep from flower to flower, –
 Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower,
 It visits with inconstant glance
 Each human heart and countenance;
 Like hues and harmonies of evening, –
 Like clouds in starlight widely spread, –
 Like memory of music fled, –
 Like aught that for its grace may be
 Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.¹⁶⁷

A list, dated Oct 3/74, then follows of possible trees that might take a place in 'Gamut: Trees ninety 5's'. The first is 'live oak', attached to 'Walt Whitman' by an arrow, and an originating moment in Zukofsky's American tradition in Whitman's 'I saw in Louisiana a live-oak growing', a poem of gregariousness in which Whitman compares himself to the lonely oak:

I saw in Louisiana a live-oak growing,
 All alone stood it, and the moss hung down from the branches;
 Without any companion it grew there, uttering joyous leaves of dark green,
 And its look, rude, unbending, lusty, made me think of myself;
 But I wonder'd how it could utter joyous leaves, standing alone there, without its friend, its lover
 near – for I knew I could not;
 And broke off a twig with a certain number of leaves upon it, and twined around it a little moss,
 And brought it away – and I have placed it in sight in my room;
 It is not needed to remind me as of my own dear friends,
 (For I believe lately I think of little else than them:)
 Yet it remains to me a curious token – it makes me think of manly love;
 For all that, and though the live-oak glistens there in Louisiana, solitary, in a wide flat space,
 Uttering joyous leaves all its life, without a friend, a lover, near,
 I know very well I could not.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, p. 40.

¹⁶⁸ *Complete Poems*, p. 159.

Zukofsky shares Whitman's fear of solitude, though with less exuberance. The symbiosis of 'Gamut' is implied by Whitman's certainty of his inability to exist alone in Louisiana. The second on the list, 'Canelo' is connected with "A"-8, while further down 'palm' is connected with "A"-17 and "A"-22. The first set of notes concludes with a brief list of subjects and sources carried over from *80 Flowers*: 'various fruit tree blossoms: <alderberry> apple, cherry, crab, peach, pear, quince etc bark with "light green, bright green, brighter green, little leaves Jungle, field" (L.Z. quotes L.Z)'.¹⁶⁹

The next set of notes for 'Gamut: Trees ninety 5's' begins with an alphabetical list of subjects for inclusion in the project beginning with 'Acer rubrum'¹⁷⁰ (red maple) and running through to 'Zanthoxylum'¹⁷¹ (prickly ash). It is fitting that even this predicted ending to Zukofsky's oeuvre terminates with a new beginning: the 'Z' tree is an 'A' tree: ash. It should also be remembered, as Scroggins points out, that the XYZ that ended *80 Flowers* itself concluded with an 'Zinnia', 'which begins with Z and ends with A'.¹⁷²

To adumbrate the planned major themes of 'Gamut: Trees ninety 5's', the notes seem to set up two nodes: an archaic, originating mythology, as represented in the Vedas, and a social concern that Zukofsky also points out in the Vedas and that is explored in 'Gamut', his most direct representation of his dialectical paradisaic mode. A fascination with musical organisation, biological taxonomy and the alphabet would clearly have provided the shape of the sequence, while the 'sat – ásat', the existent out of the non-existent, formulation – privileged through repetition and various arrangements in the notes – may well have provided a model for the sequence's process. Here the mythological and material nodes are conjoined, the thingness of that which becomes

¹⁶⁹ 'Gamut: Trees ninety 5's' 'Old Notes', p. 3.

¹⁷⁰ 'Gamut: Trees ninety 5's' notes, p. 3.

¹⁷¹ 'Gamut: Trees ninety 5's' notes, p. 13.

¹⁷² *PLF*, p. 464.

existent is to be valued, though the impossible immanence of the non-existent from which it came is also. The Váta wind that reveals itself in the rustling shrubbery of Kew is another approach towards this process, as is the transliterative technique Zukofsky planned to continue with in this project. This is where the notes for ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’ begin to seem miraculous, for what could be a more perfect central metaphor for a poem that would never be written than Zukofsky’s articulation of this idea with ‘he sounds invisibly’?¹⁷³ This must be read in the same way as the Váta wind is seen among the bushes at Kew and Gaius Valerius Catullus heard in the homophonic *Catullus*.

Pound complains of the difficulty of bringing together the disparate elements of *The Cantos* – his inability to ‘make it cohere’¹⁷⁴ – and his work ends in the face of this difficulty. This attempt to make his utopian and paradisaical visions cohere, to sum up and bring together those diverse threads, is also the impulse behind the stretching out of “A” into *80 Flowers* and ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’. When Zukofsky placed “A”-24 at the conclusion of “A” in 1974, he may well have felt that he had sidestepped the Poundian blockade, but the poem, now bigger than “A”, continued. *Thrones* extended *The Cantos* beyond its century, and it seems likely that without the exigencies of pirates and publishers his poem would have been left even more open-ended than it eventually was. *Drafts & Fragments* is in many ways a satisfactory ending to *The Cantos*: its indeterminacy mimes the struggles Pound was experiencing, its poetry the ‘best’ since *The Pisan Cantos*. But *Drafts & Fragments* is of course a collaborative work: without Laughlin’s insistence on securing copyright and the attentions of Ed Sanders and the Fuck You Press it is unlikely that the poems would have appeared in anything like the form in which they eventually did. Stoicheff writes of *The Cantos*:

¹⁷³ ‘Gamut: Trees ninety 5’s’, ‘Old Notes’, p. 1.

¹⁷⁴ *The Cantos*, p. 810.

That terminal and fractured shore has beckoned many readers, lured there in the certainty that their vision of the poem and Pound's will harmonize in a moment of suspended closure, dedicated to encountering the text of their desire. Not so miraculously, they do, because the *Drafts & Fragments* text is as much theirs as Pound's, a socially constructed text pushed and pulled by various requests for *The Cantos*' close that Pound either refused to, or could not, accommodate.¹⁷⁵

The move to collaboration for his poem's paradiso is in fact the same strategy, though adopted less voluntarily, as that used by Zukofsky in "A"-24. In these cases heaven is other people: their attentions key to the paradises both long works strive to attain. Zukofsky's collaborative moment, however, provides a less hermetic conclusion than Pound's – as *80 Flowers* and 'Gamut: Trees ninety 5's' demonstrate. Pound's final, most unPoundian, act of ceding control of *The Cantos* to his publisher is the work's ideal climax, allowing the work and its attendant poetics to outstrip its master and his intentions. Zukofsky, though more conscious of the desirability of such relinquishment, probably because of his consciousness of its desirability, fails to create an ending that achieves it.

"A" is not terminated in the harmonisations of "A"-24, it changes but develops anew – in *80 Flowers*. Zukofsky's long work is often contrasted with *The Cantos*, *The Maximus Poems* and *Paterson* as the single completed long poem of American modernism. Tom Sharp, comparing *The Cantos* unfavourably with "A" writes that 'Zukofsky's scheme is textually and dramatically self-evident and resolved.'¹⁷⁶ That the poem finishes with a restatement, and that it then continues into *80 Flowers*, complicates this attitude – and that *80 Flowers* is compulsively extended into 'Gamut: Trees ninety 5's' makes it untenable. The mysterious self-knowledge of that provisional sequence marks "A"'s authentic conclusion.

¹⁷⁵ http://www.usask.ca/english/fac/stoicheff_peter/w-interwoven_author.html#i30n.

¹⁷⁶ "Objectivists" 1927-1934 [unpublished PhD thesis], p. 382.

Finally, I shall return to word-counting, a form that contains the seeds of a definition of Zukofsky's paradise: that simultaneity that the 25-word grid encourages is in itself a paradisaical formulation. Corman writes that all Zukofsky's 'final work – from late "A" on counts and counts on each word AS word and as poem.'¹⁷⁷ Counting achieves this by disrupting syntax, by discounting meter and by challenging the Poundian line unit. David Levi Strauss writes that

[t]he development is not an accumulation, not a building up, but rather a paring down – to *word*. Punctuation drops away, sequential syntax, in favor of word *chords*, or tone clusters. Prepositions, if they remain, are given the same weight as any other word. This balancing of the count, so every word occurs with equal intensity, equal weight in sense, set apart and particularized, not robbed to feed fore and aft, strips to the *movement of sounds*.¹⁷⁸

Counting is the method that allows of these word-units to exist both within the framework of larger sequences ("A", *80 Flowers* and their individual movements or flowers) and to retain a separate existence in their own right, a status which increasingly seems to allow the word to resist the temporality of the line in two directions: to ring separately and to chime all at once. The single example of the 'trees' style that we have suggests, with its quotidian vocabulary, a rhythmic continuation or even further compression of the 'flowers'.

In a recording of the epigraph and first 22 flowers made by Zukofsky in Kenner's kitchen in 1975 Zukofsky makes a brief exegetical aside after reading the 16th flower, 'Four-o'clock': 'actually the clock going up to our attic is set at four o'clock, and it's permanent. I hate the tick-tock of the clock'.¹⁷⁹ Zukofsky's distaste for the passage of time is suggested in this anecdote, while the flower itself describes the still paradise the Zukofskys inhabited in Port Jefferson:

Nicked a gin-ace seeing hour

¹⁷⁷ *Origin*, fifth series, number four, Jan. 1984, p. 52.

¹⁷⁸ 'Approaching *80 Flowers*', *Code of Signals*, p. 84. Levi Strauss's emphasis.

¹⁷⁹ This recording can be found at <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Zukofsky.html>.

a bitter herb core horrors
 poor man's weatherglass cloudburst sun
 pimpernel *weed it* and funkia
 plantain leaves hosting their flowers
 only companion-bells each recall *no*
 in galas an attic stairs
 evening timeless days sun four-o'clock[.]¹⁸⁰

Here counting's anti-temporalism can be heard expressing clearly the 'content' of the poem: that '*no*' seems a firm refusal of time going by ('hour / a bitter herb'). The 'attic stairs' seem emblematic of something more deathly than paradisa; in his gloss Zukofsky refers to it as 'the clock going up to our attic', inferring some malignancy in its hurry to measure the time left on the Zukofskys' journey up those stairs. The poem was completed between the 4th and 10th of September 1975, at the end of summer and with an awareness of the changing seasons to come: 'cloudburst sun' reads like London at the end of "A": seasons' modulation predicted in a flower known as a 'poor man's weatherglass', that manages also to predict the coming snows of winter by foreshadowing Niedecker's 'poor man's manure' and its ghostly presence in 'Gamut'. The 'companion-bells' must be Louis and Celia moving together towards death, while the last line posits their wished eternity: 'evening timeless days sun four-o'clock'. Counting, the technique of Zukofsky's paradisa years, mimes this eternity's resistance to time.

There is also a political aspect to this atemporal paradise that is a crucial part of Zukofsky's move from utopian to paradisa poet. 1964's "A"-15 contains, amongst much else, an extended quotation from Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (the longest quotation from any single source in "A"), a move that has been claimed as a final repudiation of Marx by Zukofsky. Davenport writes ambiguously on this: 'It was Louis Zukofsky, the friend of Whittaker Chambers at Columbia in its Reddest heyday, who read Gibbon with an eye to seeing what Marx

¹⁸⁰ CSP, p. 330.

would have done about it all and thus bade farewell to Marx and all his host.”¹⁸¹

Davenport is being slightly unhelpful here with his implicit, and irrelevant, comparison with Chambers: since their acquaintance in the 1930s Zukofsky’s reticence on Marx was far from comparable with Chambers’s soapbox apostasy, and there is no reason to suspect that a comparison with Chambers is any more apposite than a comparison with Oppen or Reznikoff, neither of whom turned away from the Communist party with the definitiveness of Chambers. The prominence of Gibbon in “A”-15 represents, nonetheless, a challenge to the earlier Marxist programme of “A”. The extract runs for about three and a half pages and, while heavily compressed, is allowed to carry much of Gibbon’s sense. It is taken from ‘General Observations on the Fall of the Roman Empire in the West’, a chapter that posits Gibbon’s general thesis quite clearly, a thesis of societal rise and inevitable dissolution that contradicts utopian Marxist progress. By 1964, following a reading begun in 1954, this evidence suggests that Zukofsky had indeed given up on the historical inevitability of an eventual Marxist utopia: the paradise of “A” would result from ‘no orderly Marxist rising’. This need not, however, suggest a Chambers style repudiation of all of the early politics of “A”, for, as we have seen, that concern for labour and a labour based politics is retained until the end of “A”, where it is situated explicitly in the Zukofskys’ paradisaal retreat (on the last page of “A”-23 Zukofsky writes that ‘Eden gardens labor’,¹⁸² a phrase that sums up the poetics, politics and activities of the Zukofskys’ last years at Port Jefferson) and is then retained even in the final poem, ‘Gamut’, drafted months before Zukofsky’s death. This inclusion of Gibbon’s model of the repeat in history as Zukofsky’s long poem enters its paradisaal phase is clearly linked to the anti-temporality displayed in ‘Four-o’clock’: the

¹⁸¹ ‘Ronald Johnson’, *The Geography of the Imagination*, p. 194. Scroggins follows Davenport’s lead and writes that ‘Zukofsky seems to have read Gibbon for the first time in 1954, and later he would ascribe his final rejection of Marx to that reading.’ [*PLF*, p. 390.] Scroggins annotated his source for this tidbit as Davenport’s essay.

¹⁸² “A”, p. 563.

paradiso terrestre has been abandoned, though his heavenly paradiso will still be organised on recognisably leftist terms.

Conclusion: Towards a Temporal Definition of Paradise

In this conclusion, with the extent of Zukofsky's paradisaical poetry and its complicated development out of his utopian thought delineated in the preceding chapters, I will provide some analysis of the fundamental difference between his eventual synthetic utopian-paradisaical thought and that which it superseded. I will begin by briefly looking at some of Zukofsky's final comments on Pound and drawing from these sources an understanding of how his posited paradise might manifest itself. I will then set out a distinction between the temporalities of his utopian and paradisaical phases, demonstrating that this difference encapsulates the tension between these two forces and, finally, enlivens this last dialectic in Zukofsky's work. Through this analysis I will move towards a definition of the fugitive paradisaical state in Pound and Zukofsky.

The younger poet's late comments on the elder are reticent in the extreme and occlude the great tensions that characterised their professional relations from the late 1930s on. In *Autobiography*, a most diffident book, Zukofsky presents his last account of his collaboration with Pound to be printed during his lifetime and remains straightforward and respectful, though his recollection of their interaction is perhaps

selective.¹ His final public pronouncement on Pound would be made in June 1975 at a conference in Orono, Maine entitled ‘Symposium on Ezra Pound’s 90th Birth Year’, defending him, according to Terrell, against charges of anti-Semitism.² In both of these reflections Zukofsky is characteristically unforthcoming about areas in his relationship with his mentor that may be supposed to be contentious, entering into a tacit pact of silence regarding Pound’s memory. Another statement from this period extends this tendency into philosophical and paradisaal areas. At the beginning of a reading given at Bard College on the 9th of November 1972 Zukofsky commemorated Pound’s recent death with an impromptu discourse on death and Neoplatonism that is suggestive of the nature of these poets’ shared paradisaal conceptions:

I do want to say something about my friend Ezra. It’s a strange coincidence – life is a matter of contingencies – that he should have reached his 88th birthday just two days ago.³ Death is a very private matter, and as a great philosopher said, ‘we do not live through it’, and I feel rather happy that I won’t have to announce my own.

I think Ezra would smile at that and if he, and I have no – infidel as I am – I have no reason to doubt that he felt very much like Plotinus. [He] very beautifully described what was probably happening in [that] life of his, producing a sound and a poetry which is so much a

¹ The report in *Autobiography* reads, in full:

My poems first appeared in print in 1920 and continued to appear in more than one hundred ‘little’ magazines, national and international. The appearances led to friendship with Ezra Pound and William Carlos Williams beginning in 1927. I wrote the first extended essay on Pound’s *Cantos* 1-27, which appeared in French in *Echanges* (Paris) 1930. It was thru Pound’s efforts that Harriet Monroe invited me to edit the February 1931 issue of *Poetry* (Chicago). But it was not until 1965 that an easily accessible volume of my poetry appeared on the American scene. My thanks for this fact are due to W.W. Norton & Company. [*Autobiography*, p. 43.]

² Responding to a group discussion of Pound’s anti-Semitism Zukofsky spoke up: ‘Now I’ve heard about as much of this as I want to hear. And I want to say that I have never once in Pound’s presence felt the kind of embarrassment I always feel in the presence of a “Goy” who is anti-Semitic. Not once.’ [*PLF*, p. 440.] As Scroggins notes, Terrell, never an entirely reliable witness to Pound’s anti-Semitism, reported this statement, noting that the critic’s memory may have been inflected by Zukofsky’s ‘Work/Sundown’ essay of 1948. There Zukofsky writes:

I never felt the least trace of anti-Semitism in his presence. Nothing he ever said to me made me feel the embarrassment I always have for the ‘Goy’ in whom a residue of antagonism to ‘Jew’ remains. If we had occasion to use the words ‘Jew’ and ‘Goy’ they were no more or less ethnological in their sense than ‘Chinese’ and ‘Italian.’ [*Prepositions* +, p. 165.]

The essay ends with Zukofsky’s fullest statement on the difficulties of Pound’s prejudice, suggesting that his apparent character flaws ‘will matter very little against his finest work overshadowed in his lifetime by the hell of Belsen which he overlooked.’ [*Prepositions* +, p. 166.]

³ Zukofsky dating is mistaken here; Pound was born on the 30th of October 1885 and died on the 1st of November 1972, so that he had reached his 87th birthday two days before his death, 10 days before the reading at Bard.

mixture of wind and fire. I – as I started to say, and have as usual become a little convoluted – I have no reason to doubt that if memory means anything it's a present thing, and Ezra's very much alive. I won't ask you to go through anything like the usual rituals of standing for a moment of silence because he is always there when I read him and I'm sure that he will be there when you read him.

So, let's go on to the life, as Ezra would've, I think, because, well, Plotinus reached out of the body to something else – it's always this poor body, you know, that is trying to reach to something else, but the body is always there, and that's about what counts. At least in this life. And so my old friend is very much present. Otherwise the body becomes a mysterious carriage, betraying the defects of the mind, as Ezra used to smile.⁴

With this apparently extemporised oration the audience at Bard heard Zukofsky's most direct description of his conception of the afterlife. The first 'great philosopher' Zukofsky paraphrases seems likely to be Ludwig Wittgenstein, who in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* writes that 'Death is not an event in life. Death is not lived through',⁵ a proposition that had previously appeared in *Bottom: On Shakespeare*,⁶ a work in which Wittgenstein is a key thinker. Here the proposition is used as part of a disquisition on mortality, figuring as the entrance point to a synthetic philosophical view of the afterlife that mirrors Zukofsky's own synthetic paradisal conception: Wittgenstein offers a materialist approach towards death as a liminality that cannot be experienced, while Plotinus, the next philosopher that Zukofsky turns to, offers a more mystical (though not in this relation necessarily contradictory) vision of what occurs beyond that unknowable passageway into death.

A number of elements in Plotinus' thought are suggested here: the following passage from *The Enneads* addresses the relation of time to the intellect and predicts Zukofsky's paradisal temporality. Describing 'the world of sense'⁷ of the intellect or *Nous*, Plotinus offers Zukofsky a paradisal home for the recently departed Pound:

That archetypal world is the true Golden Age [...]. For here is contained all that is immortal: nothing here but is Divine Mind; all is God; this is the place of every soul. Here is rest unbroken:

⁴ A recording of this reading is available at <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Zukofsky.php>. I have lightly edited Zukofsky's hesitations and syntax in this transcription.

⁵ *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, p. 185, proposition 6.4311.

⁶ See *Bottom: On Shakespeare*, p. 83.

⁷ *The Enneads*, p. 351, Tractate V, 1:4.

for how can that seek change, in which all is well; what need to reach to, which holds all within itself; what increase can that desire, which stands utterly achieved? [...] Its knowing is not by search but by possession, its blessedness inherent, not acquired; for all belongs to it eternally and it holds the authentic Eternity imitated by Time which, circling around the Soul, makes towards the new thing and passes by the old [...] this is pure being in eternal actuality; nowhere is there any future, for every then is a now; nor is there any past, for nothing there has ever ceased to be[.]⁸

This circular history, at once progressive and static, matches Zukofsky's paradisaical temporality as suggested in the Bard speech – 'if memory means anything it's a present thing' – and, indeed, that suggested in *80 Flowers*, Plotinus' state of the intellect, 'pure being in eternal actuality', a measure of the paradisaical state Zukofsky has been implying through his final volumes.⁹ This static timeliness is made available, as Zukofsky suggests at Bard, via the Plotinian intellect, here in the form of the poetry Pound leaves behind, which becomes a gateway to the afterlife, as well as the static time in which he is from that point embedded in for Zukofsky and the readers at Bard. This very literary paradisaical realm, in which poets continue after death through connection to their published works, recalls the purchase of the Zukofsky archive by the HRC and, as I suggested in my third chapter, that institution's function at the outset of the poet's paradisaical phase.

As Liebrechts has demonstrated, Plotinus was a seminal figure for young Pound. 'Plotinus', a poem written as early as 1905,¹⁰ appeared in *A Lume Spento* (1908), a sonnet that, for Liebrechts, adopts Plotinus as a persona, 'a man who expresses his despair about his feeling of "being chosen" to explain the workings of the universe to mankind':¹¹

As one that would draw thru the node of things,
Back sweeping to the vortex of the cone,

⁸ *The Enneads*, p. 351, Tractate V, 1:4.

⁹ In 'The Rejection of Closure' Lyn Hejinian suggests a similar anti-temporal understanding of paradise, reading that locale as 'a horizontal or spatial sense of time, eternity being that moment when time is transmuted into space'. [Quoted in Nery Williams's *Reading Error: The Lyric and Contemporary Poetry*, p. 153.]

¹⁰ See Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound*, p. 28.

¹¹ *Ezra Pound and Neoplatonism*, p. 52.

Cloistered about with memories, alone
In chaos, while the waiting silence sings:

Obliviate of cycles' wanderings
I was an atom on creation's throne
And knew all nothing my unconquered own.
God! Should I be the hand upon the strings?!

But I was lonely as a lonely child.
I cried amid the void and heard no cry,
And then for utter loneliness, made I
New thoughts as crescent images of *me*.
And with them was my essence reconciled
While fear went forth from mine eternity.¹²

Moody reads 'Plotinus' within the context of *A Lume Spento* as one of 'eight poems forming a kind of ascending chain of poetic being: rising from uncertain or unresolved states [...] then up through "Plotinus" and "Prometheus" to a transcendental state in "Aegupton".'¹³ Thus the Neoplatonist offers the tyro Pound a step on his path towards aesthetic, at root Paterian, transcendence, an urge still taking shape in 1905; the abstractness of Plotinus' system compensated for, made palatable to Pound's late Victorian inflected sensibilities, by the sensuousness and affective richness of the Paterian imagination. In two persuasive chapters Liebrechts adumbrates a number of central connections between Pound's early thought and Plotinus' distinctive Neoplatonism which have ramifications for his adoption of the Paterian aesthetic moment; a temporality key to the development of both his early poetics and his late synthetic paradise. Liebrechts suggests that Pound was selective in his adoption of Plotinian philosophy, bypassing the Plotinian One:

It is in the *Nous*, the primary cause of intelligible being, of the Forms and the sensible world, that Pound would 'locate' his universe of fluid forces, his vital universe of cosmic potencies, and his 'gods' as expressions of states of mind, all of which can be known or experienced through the higher self.¹⁴

¹² *P&T*, p. 46.

¹³ *The Young Genius*, p. 53.

¹⁴ *Ezra Pound and Neoplatonism*, p. 28.

The *Nous* as described here is related to Pater's desire 'to be present always at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy',¹⁵ Plotinus' intellect the seat of Pater's 'hard, gem-like flame'.¹⁶ And, as Pater makes clear, this moment is necessarily transitory:

Every moment some form grows perfect in hand or face; some tone on the hills or the sea is choicer than the rest; some mood of passion or insight or intellectual excitement is irresistibly real and attractive to us, – for that moment only.¹⁷

Experience of the *Nous* is occasional (Porphyry records that Plotinus himself only achieved this four times during their relationship),¹⁸ though *Nous* itself is permanent.

As he struggled to bring his synthetic paradise into focus in *Thrones* (1959) Pound would return to Plotinus. After having dropped out of the poem since the emergence from hell to purgatory in canto 15,¹⁹ the philosopher is mentioned five times in that volume, his re-appearance evidently part of Pound's attempt to meet his paradisaical agenda. Throughout *Thrones* Pound repeats variations of the phrase 'The body is inside',²⁰ a statement that Terrell and Liebrechts concur originates in the 'Preller-Ritter Extracts'; a German 'conspectus' of Plotinus retranslated and appended to Stephen MacKenna's 1917 translation of *The Enneads*. Terrell suggests Pound's source is the following passage in the 'Preller-Ritter Extracts':

Plotinus does not allow that the authentic, the separable Soul, is in the body: the body is in the soul[...]. The body is visible; the Soul is not:[...] The Soul is in the body as light is in the air (permeating but not enclosed).²¹

¹⁵ *Studies in the Renaissance*, p. 152.

¹⁶ *Studies in the Renaissance*, p. 152.

¹⁷ *Studies in the Renaissance*, p. 152.

¹⁸ *On the Life of Plotinus and His Work, The Enneads*, p. cxxii.

¹⁹ See *The Cantos*, p. 66.

²⁰ *The Cantos*, pp. 699/704/14.

²¹ Liebrechts's contractions. Quoted in *Ezra Pound and Neoplatonism*, p. 337. See MacKenna's translation of *The Ethical Treatises*, pp. 153-54.

This compressed version relates to this somewhat less emphatic section of *The Enneads*, also translated by MacKenna, without the mediation of ‘Preller-Ritter’:

Because the Soul is not seen and the body is: we perceive the body, and by its movement and sensation we understand that it is ensouled, and we say that it possesses a soul; to speak of residence is a natural sequence. If the Soul were visible, an object of the senses, radiating throughout the entire life, if it were manifest in full force to the very outermost surface, we would no longer speak of soul as in body; we would say the minor was within the major, the contained within the container, the fleeting within the perdurable.²²

The condensation of the ‘Preller-Ritter’ text must have appealed to Pound, though it over-simplifies and radicalises Plotinus’ initial concept. It is significant that it is this element of Plotinus that Pound returns to as he struggles to write his paradise in *Thrones*, the section of *The Cantos* in which the dialectical tensions between Pound’s utopian and political thought are most obvious. Plotinus, as represented by the ‘body is inside’ paraphrase provides something of a paradisaic leitmotif in this volume; a method that attractively mimes Plotinus’ concept of the metaphysical Soul (*Nous*) and its interpenetration of the physical body as the Neoplatonist appears intermittently between the resolutely social (and integrally utopian) documents of *The Great Edict* and *The Eparch’s Book*.²³ Plotinus is both the source and subject of Pound’s synthetic practice here and is revealed, then, as an important precursor to Pound’s late synthetic paradise: just as he had been key to his youthful adoption of the Paterian aesthetic moment. It seems likely, also, that it is to this complex of ideas that Zukofsky refers when he insists that ‘Plotinus reached out of the body to something else – it’s always this poor body, you know, that is trying to reach to something else, but the body is always there, and that’s about what counts.’²⁴ That these ideas should appear in this very late and offhand

²² *The Enneads*, p. 274, Tractate IV, 3:20.

²³ See Nicholls’s ‘2 Doits to a Boodle: Reckoning With Thrones’, Wilhelm’s *The Later Cantos of Ezra Pound* and Bacigalupo’s *The Forméd Trace: The Later Poetry of Ezra Pound* for analysis of these documents’ place in *Thrones*.

²⁴ See <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Zukofsky.php>.

eulogy to Pound suggests how close these two poets' conceptions of paradise had grown at the end of their careers.²⁵

The end of Zukofsky's relationship with Pound had, however, come in 1963, a decade before the Bard speech, at the beginning of the younger poet's paradisaic phase, and predicts the later eulogy. Zukofsky's last letter to Pound seems a conscious settling of accounts. Dated the 15th of December 1963, it was written the day after a reading at Harvard's Adams House at the invitation of Michael Palmer.²⁶ At the Harvard reading Zukofsky had met Desmond O'Grady, who had informed Zukofsky that Pound would meet O'Grady in the morning with the greeting 'now Zuk used to say', which for Zukofsky 'almost proves there is a theosophy.'²⁷ There is a suggestion here of an apostolic succession between Pound and Zukofsky: their personal relation allowing the continuation of a particular poetic tradition. At this point Zukofsky's attitude seems quite uncomplicatedly that of the adherent, trusting in the greatness of his forebear to ensure his own capabilities; essentially the same inflection as in the earliest letters: a model of influence that accommodates both prostration and great ambition. As the letter continues, however, a subtle change appears, a new paternalism that reverses the earlier son and father relation, with Zukofsky gently chastising Pound for his late pessimism: 'for the rest the song carries along, yours, always right. So stop saying such

²⁵ Plotinus, as summarised by Porphyry, would garner a passing reference in "A"-22, which Twitchell-Waas dates as written between the 14th of February 1970 and the 14th of April 1973, [See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-a/A-22.php>] straddling the Bard reading:

Or 6 nine's of material
light and fire from long
habit of greeting everyone, a
diffusion of warmth cold from
snow or flowers conceived scented
intimate in a whorl of
soul, received body always One –
its active Necessary unstopped modes
manifest of a source over
what change and chance bring –
unfaced and seeing all faces. ["A", pp. 525-26.]

²⁶ See <http://www.ofscollege.edu.sg/z-site/notes-to-poetry/After-Is-1964.php>.

²⁷ *P/Z*, p. 217.

things.”²⁸ A hint at what the Harvard reading meant to Zukofsky follows: ‘at last I was invited to read — 60 in January — that lag even longer than you predicted: so you see you were right there too.’²⁹ Then, among the very last words of this letter, Zukofsky repeats his insistence on his lack of interest in the opinions of the young, reinforcing his concern for Pound’s opinion as he dismisses criticism of *Catullus*: ‘sometimes wonder what you* might think of ’em if you <can> read ’em.’ The asterisk leads to ‘*Don’t matter what anyone else thinks — even the praise.’³⁰ The sentiments here are respectful and, though there are hints of Zukofsky wishing to assert his own importance beside his mentor’s, this final missive does not disperse the late miasma around these poets’ relations. On the same day, however, as he terminated his correspondence with Pound, Zukofsky wrote ‘After Reading’, a poem that links, through the most implicit of means, the termination of these poets’ collaboration with the beginning of Zukofsky’s paradisaal phase and which tellingly recalls the imagery of Pound’s lonely ‘Plotinus’.³¹

‘After Reading’, Zukofsky’s penultimate non-sequence short poem, revolves around images of isolation familiar from Pound’s Plotinus persona:

After reading, a song

a light snow
a had been fallen

the brown most showed
knoll trunk knot treelings’ U’s

The Sound marsh water

ice clump
sparkling root etc

and so far out.³²

²⁸ *P/Z*, p. 218.

²⁹ *P/Z*, p. 218.

³⁰ *P/Z*, p. 218.

³¹ See <http://www.z-site.net/notes-to-poetry/After-Is-1964.php> for this poem’s date.

³² *CSP*, p. 233.

This poem, written after an encounter with the new American poetic avant-garde at Harvard, seems, like many of the poems in *After I's*, a meditation upon Zukofsky's own mortality. Returning by train along the New England coast to New York, the poet sees the written in the natural world: 'knoll tree trunk knot treelings' U's'³³ shows trees knotting into letters and an 'ice clump / sparkling root etc' lingers at the edge Long Island Sound. Watching the moving landscape becomes like reading, an act 'after' reading, or 'later / or chasing'³⁴ reading. Trees emerge from snow as black letters on a white page, poetry's sound becomes Long Island Sound, and, mimicking Zukofsky's own practice, the poet finds himself looking at sound: the second half of the poem enacting his own work's relation to music with that pun on Long Island Sound, an emptiness upon which an objectified '&c.' floats.

The manner in which Zukofsky's poems are to be read is suggested by the action of the poem: the snow melting to reveal letter-trees recalls the way in which they gradually reveal themselves to the understanding of a 'non-predatory' reader,³⁵ as do the words floating 'so far out' on sound/Sound, this poem on its white page approximating the New England snow scene Zukofsky describes. The ampersand, with its syntactical need for Plotinian conjunction, upon the Sound is as 'alone / In chaos' as Pound's 'crescent images of *me*', though here in the context of a poet entering his 60s and stalked by the companionlessness of death rather than the social and professional rejection that haunted the young Pound in 'Plotinus'. As the gyre turns a new generation of tyro poets appears in Harvard, leaving Zukofsky after his reading 'a had been fallen', as transitory in the procession of poetic generations as the New England snow. Zukofsky's final letter to Pound confirms this question's importance, suggesting handing down of tradition

³³ *CSP*, p. 233.

³⁴ *CSP*, p. 222.

³⁵ See *Prepositions* +, p. 16. Also see Quartermain's 'Thinking With the Poem', <http://jacketmagazine.com/30/z-quartermain.html> for an exploration of 'non-predatory reading'.

(echoing both Gibbon's cyclical history and Plotinus' metempsychosis) from Pound to Zukofsky to Palmer.

The entrance of this newly cyclical historiography at the outset of Zukofsky's paradisaal phase is of importance to the nature of his paradisaal poetry, for it is this new conception of history and, by extension, temporality, that marks the essential difference between his synthetic paradisaal thought and his earlier political-utopian thought. At this point the teleological time of utopian thought is replaced by the eternal stasis of the paradisaal, a temporality partly represented by the cyclical, which, with its ultimate refusal of progress, is implicitly static. Time is revealed most clearly as the decisive factor in Zukofsky's paradise in *80 Flowers*; the aesthetic moment in his, and Pound's, early work is seen to stretch complicatedly through their utopian phases to return in their paradises, joined to the stasis of mortality. As Carr and Nicholls note³⁶ the aesthetic moment had lived on into Imagism as an integral part of the image, 'that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time',³⁷ an instant that, like Pater's aesthetic moment, implies a transcendent, static temporality; expressed in 'A Few Don'ts' as a paraphrase of the Victorian:

It is the presentation of such a 'complex' instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art.³⁸

The compressed lyric that would become the archetypal Imagist form would grow directly from this idea; its compression miming the moment of realisation. The same impulse and formal strategy would be employed in the early works of the Objectivist poets, though for Zukofsky in "A", as with Pound in *The Cantos*, the introduction of

³⁶ See *Ezra Pound: Politics, Economics and Writing*, pp. 7-10 and *The Verse Revolutionaries*, p. 20.

³⁷ *LE*, p. 4.

³⁸ *LE*, p. 4.

utopian political concerns would necessitate a longer, more discursive form with the capacity to deal with historiography and political analysis.

A move towards a specifically utopian temporality is arguably a constitutive part of modernism. In *A Singular Modernity* Jameson suggests that a utopian element is integral to the temporality of the kind of forward-thinking modernism the young Pound espoused, writing that

the trope of modernity bears a libidinal charge: that is, it is the operator of a unique kind of intellectual excitement not normally associated with other forms of conceptuality [...]. This is, no doubt, a temporal structure, distantly related to emotions like joy or eager anticipation: it seems to concentrate a promise within a present of time and to offer a way of possessing the future more immediately within that present itself. It is in this sense something of a Utopian figure, insofar as it includes and develops a dimension of future temporality[.]³⁹

This teleological temporality posits a future moment in time that is to be approached relatively rapidly and whose coming is to be welcomed; a temporality with a defined endpoint and purposeful progression; as Jameson writes elsewhere: ‘the properly Utopian program or realization will involve a commitment to closure’⁴⁰ that must not ‘encourage an apolitical mysticism of the infinite or the unattainable.’⁴¹ The socially progressive political involvements that Pound and Zukofsky, as well as many, if not a majority, of their modernist confreres, pursued during the 1930s seem to follow naturally from the modernist insistence on progress Jameson apprehends, while their desire ‘to write paradise’⁴² and the ‘apolitical mysticism’ inherent in that exercise while retaining the politics of utopia offers the central tension in their attempted paradisaal syntheses.

For both Pound and Zukofsky when they enter their paradisaal phases, this temporality shifts into a new view of the future in which the immanence of the *paradiso*

³⁹ *A Singular Modernity*, pp. 34-35.

⁴⁰ *Archaeologies of the Future*, p. 4.

⁴¹ *Archaeologies of the Future*, p. 84.

⁴² *The Cantos*, p. 816.

terrestre recedes. In this aspect Dante obviously underlies Pound's paradisal ambitions and, indeed, *The Cantos* and "A" throughout, impacting upon the temporality of Pound and Zukofsky's paradises. Liebrechts suggests that 'Dante's *Paradiso* is an elaborate expression of the Italian poet's epiphanic insight into insight into and temporary identification the Plotinian *Nous* through his higher self using the *phantastikon*',⁴³ and, at the outset, that paradise is tinged with a temporality inflected by Plotinus; on first experiencing the disorientating brightness of heaven Dante asserts that 'approaching the object of its desires, / Our intellect is so deeply absorbed / That memory cannot follow it all the way.'⁴⁴ The shift from a teleological temporality to stasis replicates the emergence from the *Purgatorio* to *Paradiso*, and Dante's model of paradisal equilibrium is also repeated in Pound and Zukofsky's attempts upon their synthetic paradises. Pound's *Cantos* technique, which had been specifically developed for the expression of his utopian political thought, proves, in *Drafts & Fragments*, not to be adaptable to the conceptual stresses of his synthetic paradise; that volume appearing finally in compromised form largely beyond Pound's control. Zukofsky, a more comfortably dialectical writer both in terms of his approach to music in literature and through the writing of his terminal paradise, creates a formal language capable of expressing his paradise and its temporality more effectively, though "A" itself would be necessarily abandoned during this process. Thus Zukofsky's addition of Gibbon to Marx in his historiography during this period: the cyclical concept of rise and fall added to the linearity of scientific Marxist-Leninism, an anti-temporality that finds its fullest formal application in the compacted word-counting of "A" 22 & 23, *80 Flowers* and 'Gamut'. In perhaps the greatest divergence of his paradisal phase from Pound's, Zukofsky moves away from the long and structurally diverse sequential form, as represented in *The Cantos* and "A", with

⁴³ *Ezra Pound and Neoplatonism*, p. 50.

⁴⁴ *The Divine Comedy*, p. 351, *Paradiso*, I, ll. 7-9.

its convenience to the diverse materials of utopian historiography, and contemporaneously abandons the short, lyric poem (shortly subsequent to 'After Reading'), instead embarking upon a projected series of numerically proscribed sequences made up of identically sized, pseudo-lyric pieces. This adjusted sequential form, with its echoes of both previous models, would prove ideally suited to the demands of Zukofsky's late paradisaical temporality.

This notion of time, here traced back to the shared early aestheticism that coloured both Pound and Zukofsky's work so fundamentally, is inherently metaphysical, and, hence, necessarily anti-utopian. The great dialectical tension that Nicholls sees deforming the later stretches of *The Cantos* as Pound attempts to synthesise his utopian and paradisaical visions can be read clearly in the incompatibility of these time schemes: the eternal Plotinian *Nous* accessed via the ephemeral aesthetic moment is finally irreconcilable with a steady, historiographic, progress towards social harmony. That the aesthetic moment, sourced by Zukofsky via Pound who adapts Pater and Plotinus, should prove so central to these poets' actually quite inexact sketches of paradises, foregrounds the importance of the specific paradisaical temporality. Both poets in their declining years value the suggestion of infinite stasis implicit in the aesthetic temporality derived from Plotinus/Pater, and in the case of Zukofsky, who goes further than Pound to write timelessness into his poetry, this essentially anti-progressive temporality becomes his paradise.

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