Dreams of a Better Life: Hope in T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land (1922), W. B. Yeats's The Tower (1928), and Ezra Pound's Eleven New Cantos (1934)

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Introduction

'Dreams of a Better Life', the title of the present study as well as the intended title of Bloch's *The Principle of Hope* (1954-1959, 3 volumes) to be published in America, "has hoping at its core" (Bloch *Principle* 3). This is Ernst Bloch's (1885-1977) central claim; we all hope and we all are driven forward by hope; "the world is full of propensity towards something, tendency towards something, latency of something, and this intended something means fulfilment of the intending" (18). Bloch, a contemporary of Ezra Pound (1885-1972), T. S. Eliot (1888-1965) and thus a generation younger than W. B. Yeats (1865-1939), was an unorthodox (East-)German philosopher who "was, is, and will always be out of step" (Zipes *Bloch* vii). As a voice of dissent, Bloch was considered too much "'an idealist, 'a religious mystic', 'a pantheist'" to be welcomed in the Frankfurter Schule or included in official Soviet discourse (Hudson 1), while, surprisingly and paradoxically, occupying a more influential position in the West, writing most of *The Principle of Hope* having fled to the United States in the late 1930s and becoming a professor in West Germany in the 1960s.[1]

Whereas hope as phenomenon has historically been met by somewhat ambiguous attitudes, for it inhabits a "dual nature" which is comprised of the known yet intends for the unknown (Gravlee 5), Bloch asserts hope as ontological core of human being, for "everybody lives in the future … and as yet genuine present is almost never there at all" (*Principle* 4). It is in this sense that the present study explores Bloch's principle of hope, as a factor of unceasing and irrepressible motivation and (not-yet) consciousness. How does hope constitute a foundational motivation for three of the major paleo-modernist poets of the early twentieth century?

[1] For a detailed biographical discussion on Ernst Bloch, see Zipes (*Bloch* 1-24); Hudson (4-19); Plaice et al. "Translators' Introduction," pp. xix-xxxiii.

Chapter one will explore Bloch's principle of hope in relation to a *re*active notion of modernism, whereby the avant-garde of the early twentieth century reacted against nineteenth-century bourgeois notions of art and culture. Furthermore, the literary high modernism of the 1920s found itself in a period of post-WWI chaos and a prelude to the rise of political extremism anticipating WWII. Using Bloch's notion of reality as in process, the modernist effort at emancipating art from a bourgeois vacuum of autonomy is understood in terms of a speculative materialism; the process of the 'now' is completed through a dialectics between subject and object in the image of the aesthetic object, thus heeding latent potentialities present in the (not-yet) forms of object and subject.

Consequently, this notion of hope is seen at work in what Pound deemed "the justification of the 'movement'" (Pound *Selected Letters* 180): T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922). The second chapter explores how, even in a poetry of cultural lament, traces of hope and genuine possibility seek to burst to the front, beyond the passivity of the waste land.

The third chapter explores W. B. Yeats's *The Tower* (1928) and attempts to come to terms with the dooming presence of death over life. How is hope sustained in the process of bodily decay and in the face of death? The chapter explores the many different ways in which *The Tower* attempts to triumph over death, and, inevitably failing to conquer the unknown, how language attempts to offer a repose for the hoping subject.

Lastly, chapter four turns to a collection of poems of explicit political character: Ezra Pound's *Eleven New Cantos* (1934). In analysing the hopeful core of Pound's poetry, the chapter attempts to move beyond an analysis of the historicity of the socio-economic and political contents foregrounded in the poems in order to expose a deeper underlying faith in language as such.

Ultimately, the present research will show that Eliot, Yeats, and Pound maintained a foundational belief in poetry's ability to mediate between the subject's core desires, wishes, and dreams, and the externality of the material world, in order to give voice to the future. After all, as Yeats put it, "But I, being poor, have only my dreams; / I have spread my dreams under your feet; / Tread softly because you tread on my dreams" ("Cloths of Heaven" 53).

Chapter 1: Bloch, Hope, and Modernism

The early decades of the twentieth century, the period constituting the modernist movement[2], are often retrospectively characterised as rejectionist, "*re*active, not enactive" (Williams 5), and, projecting a post-war "pessimism" (Kohlmann 1), as "potentially, or even essentially coercive" in its attempt at constructing totalising "grand narratives" (1). Even though modernist narratives paradoxically culminated in both right- and left-wing extremism, the modernist movement is at the core propelled by "a utopian desire to create a better world, to reinvent the world from scratch" (Wilk 14). This reactive utopian desire stems from the avant-garde seeing its "ultimate values – intensity, quality" – in need of being "defended against the grain of the new (industrial, democratic, 'mass') civilization, not liberated by it" (Williams 5)—thus establishing a schism, rather than the consensus the nominal similarity might suggest, between modernity and modernism, the latter *re*acting ardently *against* the former.

Early twentieth-century modernity was experienced as a "float[ing] in space", unable to "perceive the new order" (Gropius qtd. in Wilk 11), and described by Bloch in similar terms as a "wavering in the greatest blackout, one of the interior as well as, above all, of the exterior and the superior, that has ever occurred in history" (Bloch *Spirit* 167). Opposing a more conventional Marxist critique of modernism[3] as "a form of irrationalism" whose reactionary origins would further stagnate into an "ultimately indeterminate" radicalism with "its logical end; it leads to Fascism" (Bronner 25; Ziegler qtd. in Bloch "Expressionism" 9), Bloch argued that "everything solid has gradually become not a matter of experience, but just a base habit" (Bloch *Spirit* 167), necessitating a reactionary modernism against a cultural ossification. Furthermore, for Bloch this reactionism would not inherently lead to stagnation as he emphasised the progressive "sentiments of resistance" by which it "undermined the

[2] For a more detailed discussion on modernism's historical context, see Raymond Williams' "When Was Modernism?" in *Politics of Modernism*, pp. 31-6.
[3] For example, see Georg Lukács' "Expressionism." (1934).

schematic routines and academicism to which the 'values of art' had been reduced" (Bronner 26; Bloch "Expressionism" 18).

Bloch turned to the quotidian and trivial experience as an alternative to the "reified relationships" of the late nineteenth century (Hudson 10), seeking "traces" of the metaphysical in "details from everyday life" (Boldyrev 8; Hudson 10). Bloch saw this modernist utopian drive in the perpetual quest for a metaphysical adequation of the soul in relation to the material, external world, calling this "the 'archetypal' mystical function of the soul" which deduced the subject as utopian centre "contain[ing] the elements of a new creation within itself" (Hudson 28). Bloch thus saw within the experiences of everyday life the constant dialogue between the subject's desires and wishes and the external world containing endless possibility. This awareness, Bloch argued, had been suppressed by reification of social relations within bourgeois society and the consequent "'disinterestedness' of aesthetic judgement" (Williams 17). In attempting to reappropriate aesthetic judgement in order to "reintegrate this fractured world" of modernity (Kohlmann 6), Bloch emphasised the "ultimate categories" of aesthetics as traces of utopia (*Spirit* 151), whereby aesthetic judgement is withdrawn from its autonomous isolation back into society as horizon depicting "*the things of this world be completed without their ceasing, apocalyptically, to exist*" (151). For example, Bloch, in typical modernist fashion, deployed language in order "to induce estrangement from the familiar" (Zipes *Bloch* 6); an understanding of language's capabilities and the subject's "definite social function" common in modernism (Pound *ABC of Reading* 32):

> Poetry … may help to break up the conventional modes of perception and valuation which are perpetually forming, and make people see the world afresh, or some new part of it. It may make us from time to time a little more aware of the deeper, unnamed feelings which form the substratum of our being, to which we rarely penetrate; for our lives are mostly a constant evasion of ourselves, and an evasion of the visible and sensible world. (Eliot *Use of Poetry/Criticism* 155)

Eliot here describes a similar connection between subject and object for there appears to have been a sundering between the experience of life and "ourselves". It is from this point, Bloch argues, "we have to begin. Life has been put in our hands. For itself it became empty already long ago. It pitches senselessly back and forth, but we stand firm, and so we want to be its initiative and we want to be its ends" (Bloch *Spirit* 1). Modernism's reactionary character is thus not obstructive, but, rather, a call to encounter the self—"I am by my self. Here one finally has to begin" (Bloch *Spirit* 165). The romantic promise—"When the evening is spread out against the sky" (Eliot "Prufrock" 11.2)—is met by an enjambment of "counter-romantic irony" (Kenner *Pound Era* 132), whereby modernity has become "a patient etherized upon a table" (Eliot "Prufrock" 11.3). Yet, Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1915) seizes this moment in which the self comprises a dichotomy of "you and I" (11.1), and, rather than irrational stagnation, sees it "as a beginning which looks forward to an end, and which defines the terms of the unending inquiry" (Rajan 368-9).

In order to better understand Eliot's "Prufrock" as "unending inquiry" we must explore the core of Bloch's ontology of hope, namely his critique of the totalising character of understanding reality in "human concepts without a remainder" (Hudson 22). Epitomised in Bloch's contemporary Heidegger and his notion of *Dasein*, there seems to exist a belief in the "myth of absolute presence, in the notion that there exists something like a plenitude of being and that for this reason something like a full and self-contained present instant of time is ontologically possible" (Jameson *Form* 128). In this critique of Heidegger, Bloch articulates the historic tendency of emphasising Kant's first two of three questions regarding the interest of reason—"(1) What can I know?" and "(2) What ought I to do?" (Kant 457)—whilst neglecting the importance of "the self-transcending movement of man towards his future" (Braaten 208)—"(3) What may I hope?" (Kant 457). For Bloch reality is essentially not fully understood as "being finished" (Bloch *Spirit* 6), but as "in *process and open*" (*Utopian*

Function 71). Thus opposing Heidegger's *Dasein* as "precisely incomplete, in process, not yet altogether there" (Jameson *Form* 123), Being and utopia are identical in their Messianic, ahistoric essence: the completion of the self—*Dasein*—"is not the telos of the historical dynamic … but the end" (Benjamin 155).

Therefore, there arises a tension between understanding the essence of *Dasein* as a-, or even anti-historic, in historical terms; what Bloch calls the "inconstruable question" (*Spirit* 165). For the perfect metaphysical question relies always on a pre-given answer which, imaginatively constructed and temporally in the future, retroactively completes history; it is a question which "already aims frivolously at something named, accustomed, already commits us to a weak, restrictive word" (Bloch *Spirit* 196). Therefore, Eliot's "Prufrock" does not negate its repeated invitation to quest—"Let us go" (11.1; 11.4; 11.12)—when its speaker urges us "Oh, do not ask, 'What is it?'" *during* our quest *towards* that "overwhelming question …" (11.11; 11.10). The poem reflects an awareness of precisely that tension between the drive towards utopia and the fragility of such a quest; being tethered into immobility upon an inherently incomplete formulation of that very end-goal.

As mentioned previously, this unidentified end-goal outside of history is not 'inconstruable' because of its great distance from the present, but, rather, because the present constitutes a "blind spot" (Jameson *Form* 136), for it is "*the nearest* [which] *is still completely dark*, and precisely because it is the nearest and most immanent; *the knot of the riddle of existence is to be found in this nearest*" (Bloch *Principle* 292). Like the process of history as totality, essence can only be formulated in hindsight as "the immediate moment that is still in the dark as a 'right-now' … is lacking all distance" (Bloch *Utopian Function* 208); it is "'lived in' (*gelebt*) but not experienced (*erlebt*)" (Hudson 26). Thus, as the essence of the present remains hidden in its processual unfinishedness, so does the essence of the self "remain… hidden both for herself and for those around her" (Boldyrev 14). Therefore there

exists a surprisingly close proximity between the subject's wish: "I want to occupy my self", and the transformation of the objective into an idealised utopian state (Bloch *Spirit* 7). The illuminated and understood instant of the "Now of the existere" ceases to exist as such, and is only to be understood in terms of "foretaste or aftertaste" (Bloch *Principle* 293): "In my beginning is my end" (Eliot "East Coker" 1); consciousness excludes experience.

This latency between the lived-in-instant and the experience of that moment constitute Bloch's main operator: the 'not-yet'. It encapsulates the tension and paradox so far constructed: it simultaneously accounts for the unfinished character of process and the totalising absolute constituted by possibility. As Shelley had already argued in his "A Defence of Poetry" (1840), an awareness of this tension allows one to behold "the future in the present". Bloch argued that both within the subject—as the "not-yet-conscious", a future-oriented unconscious as critique to the "Freudian unconscious" which is "a no-longer-conscious" of what has "ceased to be" (Jameson *Form* 128-9)—and within the object—as the "not-yet-become" (Zipes 3 *Bloch*)—there resides a future not-yet-made actual; emphasising the processual, rather than the finite, character of reality. Thus, as Shelley had already argued, there resides great opportunity within the not-yet, but its realisation is not guaranteed.

Both the subjective and objective not-yet are limited in their dialectic towards utopia. For the subject, latent futures "cannot always be successfully fantasized", whereas the material "statics and dynamics, the elementary laws of gravity and locomotion" of objective historical possibilities are constrained in their possibility to be re-structured or built (Jameson "Utopia" 41). In exploring the paradise of poetry, with the poet "*making*" paradise from poetry rather than figuring as "*vates*, a medium between our world and an otherworld" (Pryor 22), the utopian drive is limited to its locale within the imagination as the horizon. Because the entirely other and different—the "world beyond our experience" (Pryor 7)—is limited to our historic referentiality, "we can only imagine paradise in terms of our experience" (7). Yet,

it is precisely this utopian horizon which grants its metaphysical desirability, for "we, its *makers*, can only believe in what we have made" (16). The movement towards a metaphysical end—be it formulated as 'paradise' or 'utopia'—is thus reliant on the subjective ability to perceive "the unfinishedness of the material world" (Levitas 14), allowing for imaginative reconstruction, while being inherently limited to the objective possibilities and limitations of the object. In this sense, the movement towards this end-state—hope as characterised by its anticipatory articulation of the future—functions "not … *only as emotion*, … but *more essentially as a directing act of a cognitive kind*" (Bloch *Principle* 12).

The central "subject-object mediation" of Bloch's speculative materialism remained dormant in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century bourgeois society, Bloch argues (Boldyrev 13). Here, the individual's impulse toward the "self-encounter" is impeded by the ossification of the aforementioned object's essence (Bloch *Spirit* 5); an absolute conventionalism preventing the socially constructed essence of the object to be understood as such (Berger and Luckmann 88-9). This "reification of social reality" (88), Bloch argues, can be disrupted by "immediate experience" of the object in the form of "astonishment" or wonder (Jameson *Form* 122), whereby the direct experience of the object unmediated by social convention or "conscious intellectual interpretation" allows for a direct experience of the not-yet-become essence as "correlative, on the subjective side, of an objective disposition of the world itself" (122).

The estrangement in such instants of wonder, a "sense of … falling out of time into eternity" (Boldyrev 15), is echoed in Pound's early poems from *Personae* (1908). In *Personae*, returning to the Provençal troubadours, Pound explores the notion of "persona", or the act of putting on a mask (Brooker *Guide* 29); tracing a diachronic poetics in order to move towards a 'self-encounter'. In seeking the "original integrity" in the style of the Provençal troubadours (30), Pound was in fact also in search of "oneself" or "the real" (Pound qtd. in

31). Seeking the "*virtù*" of oneself was one of the chief concerns of the artist, for it is the single "element" which denotes the artist's individuality (Pound qtd. in Brooker *Guide* 31). Precisely in the immanence of the "*virtù*" in poetic language Pound recognises "moments of delightful psychic experience" which, in their "fleeting" character, grant "access to eternal realities" (Pryor 15). The immanence of such an experience, transcending beyond the reified social reality where "subject and object have simultaneously ceased to be separated from each other" (Bloch qtd. in Jameson *Form* 141), is characterised by a sense of timelessness; "a certain sort of moment more than another, when a man feels his immortality upon him" (Pound *Spirit of Romance* 94).

Pound celebrates the experience of such a moment in "The Tree", where an instant of defamiliarization accounts for a new and deeper understanding of reality. The metamorphosis of the speaker into a "a tree amid the wood" is correlated with a moment outside of time or process (Pound *Selected Poetry* 20.1); as "that which 'gives pause'": "I stood still" (Jameson *Form* 124; Pound *SP* 20.1). The exact relationship between the moment of wonder or estrangement, the becoming of the "tree", and the experience of eternity, the standing "still", is made somewhat ambiguous by the conjunction "and" (20.1). It is ambiguous in the sense that it can account for a *causality* between the "falling out of time into eternity" (Boldyrev 15)—as the speaker "stood still"—and the consequent enlightening 'self-encounter'—"Knowing the truth of things unseen before;" (Pound *SP* 20.2)—but it can also be a mere indication of temporal *concurrency* of the two, thus negating a possible descriptive reconstruction of the 'self-encounter'. Even though the poem appears to present one of "these moments of delightful psychic experience" in simple terms (Pound *Spirit of Romance* 92), as an atemporal vision of the "truth of things unseen before" (*SP* 20.2), the ambiguity captured by the conjunction between the atemporality and the vision embodies the essence of the instant whereby, in a Yeatsian fashion, "[t]ruth can only be experienced and not known, it

cannot be talked about" (Rajan 367). It is in this sense that, in its portrayal of the experience of the vision rather than the vision itself, the "Daphne" and "that god-feasting couple old" become "*real*" (Pound *SP* 20.3; 20.4; *Spirit of Romance* 92). Pound is aware of the futility of trying to describe such an instance of the 'self-encounter'—"no man having beheld them can fittingly narrate them or even remember them exactly" (*Spirit of Romance* 96)—but, as he shows in "The Tree", in presenting the experience "we may draw back upon the mind some vestige of the heavenly splendor" (96).

The indescribable essence of such an experience is what Bloch calls the "*Novum*" (Zipes *Bloch* 36). The *novum* defines the contents of the astonishing experience in terms of opposition from the reified social and cultural relations of modernity as "the utterly and unexpectedly new, the new which astonishes by its absolute and intrinsic unpredictability" (Jameson *Form* 126). Because of its unpredictability it is not defined within conventionality, and thus "always at the front of human experience" as a propellant forwards into the future (Zipes *Bloch* 36). However, in breaking from bourgeois norms and conventions, Bloch saw the possibility of bourgeois heritage to be "reutilized (*umfunktioniert*)" in a manner that would activate the latent *novum* in modernity (20). For Bloch argued the future was, as a not-yet, present throughout society but impeded at some points and activated at others.

The early twentieth century was a place in time "where different forces are moving" (Williams 47), constituting a society "at the intersection between a semi-aristocratic ruling order, a semi-industrialized capitalist economy, and a semi-emergent, or -insurgent labour movement" (Anderson qtd. in Williams 15). Bloch calls this "non-synchronism (*Ungleichzeitigkeit*) or the inequality of temporal change" (Zipes *Bloch* 2); different subjective experiences of time whereby society consists of subjective and objective "*contradiction*[s]" (Bloch qtd. in Zipes *Bloch* 8). This non-synchronicity—the temporal "disharmony and dislocation" (Solomon 573)—determines the content of the *novum*, being

temporally directed forwards in the process of speculative materialism. The product of this speculative materialism can function either as a "prelude to and model for a desired transformation of the individual or of society" (573), or, when "it finds no counterpart in reality", it "becomes part of the fantasy world of past gratification—for illusory gratification in turn is transformed into memory and thereby becomes 'historical'" (Solomon 573).

This dichotomy makes up Bloch's contrast between "abstract" and "concrete utopia"[4] (Levitas 13). Articulations of the utopian drive are understood to be concrete when they are mediated "in terms of built-in constraint as well as of built-in possibility" (Trotter "Material Futures" 53), an acknowledgement which Bloch calls the "objective-real possibility" (Bloch *Utopian Function* 6). It is a speculative materialism which acknowledges the *novum* "to the degree to which present conditions allow for [its] realization" (6). The "present conditions", however, include the not-yet-become of the future—the "possible futures" as "a part of reality" (Levitas 17). Bloch calls movement towards the *novum* with an awareness of the objective-real possibility "*docta spes*", or "*comprehended hope*" (Bloch *Spirit* 9). This notion of *docta spes* differs fundamentally from "mere wishful thinking" or "naïve optimism" (Bloch *Utopian Function* 105; 16), whereby the "wish is not accompanied by a will to change" (Levitas 14-5). Abstract utopia originates from the individual's subjective non-synchronicity, wanting a different place within the status quo without addressing the objective non-synchronicity. Lawrence articulates the superficiality and futility of abstract utopia in "How Beastly the Bourgeois Is" (1929) when the speaker asks "wouldn't you like to be like that, well off, and quite the thing?" (646.9), referring to the "beastly" bourgeois. The individual's optimism is characteristically static, because the abstract utopia does not actually constitute a realisation of a latent future—being unable to realise "a new life-demand" (Lawrence 647.17)—but, rather, a reinforcing of the status quo.

[4] Not to be confused with "Major" and "Minor" utopias, see Winter 73.

In its reliance on a fixed external objectivity, abstract utopia is a rearticulation of the external by the subject, whereas a concrete utopian longing is the expression of the "*Innen* in the outer world" (Hudson 28). Concrete means here, in a Hegelian sense, the "growing together of tendencies and latencies within the relationship between material reality and human intervention" (Thompson "Principle of Hope"). It is grounded in the belief that "all humans deep down, whether they admit this or not, know that it would be possible or it could be different" (Adorno in Bloch *Utopian Function* 4), and that this hope is "*latent* in all of us, and it *tends* toward enlightenment" (Zipes *Bloch* 67). This tendency is only latent because of an external suppression of the subject, whereby the subject's latent hope is projected "all over the world as attainable possibility, as the evident possibility of fulfilment" yet "presents itself to them as radically impossible" (Adorno in Bloch *Utopian Function* 4).

Even though the tendency of latent hope can be suppressed by externality, "utopian thought" itself is always the polar opposite of "ideology" as "its connection with its own time 'is always negative'" (Solomon 572). The utopian tendency must be understood as "a pervasive 'impulse' rather than in terms of a specific ideological content" (Kohlmann 3). Yeats experienced this binary opposition in seeking to unify Ireland culturally from "a bundle of fragments" (Yeats qtd. in Muller 28). Instead of seeking a latent tendency towards a *novum* of Irish culture, Yeats's sought to externally impose this tendency through the artificiality of the Irish literary revival—constructing an ideal not grounded in the latent hope of the subject. In order to accomplish an actual "growing together of tendencies and latencies", hope requires a totality.

As Adorno argues, "there is nothing like a single, fixable Utopian content" (Bloch *Utopian Function* 7). And thus, no constituting category of Utopia can be isolated, fulfilled, and expected to bring about a "totality" of utopian content (7). Bloch argues that true utopian movement is an attentiveness to a Messianic salvation present in the subject's imagination, in

the subject's "longing for God-likeness" (Bloch qtd. in Boldyrev 13). Concrete utopia thus moves beyond what Jameson calls the "causal utopia" which is constituted by "the way in which this or that 'root of all evil' has been eliminated from that world" ("Utopia" 36). Again, this utopia is a mere expression of the external, identifiable problem instead of an attentiveness to the tendency forward.

Pound saw in "usury age-old and age-thick" a fundamental societal malice (Pound *SP* 100.IV.18). In seeking a central cause for his experience of a cultural decline—this we may call, in Blochian terms, Pound's subjective non-synchronicity—Pound celebrates medieval art created in a "morally clean era" when "usury and beggary were on par" (Pound *SL* 303), that is, "both condemned by the Church" (Brooker *Guide* 286). A society tormented by usury—as Pound saw happen in his surroundings—is incapable of the production of aesthetic greatness: "with usura / hath no man a painted paradise on his church wall" (Pound *Cantos* 45/229). Pound's use of metaphysical imagery—the "painted paradise"—emphasises his belief in usury as fundamental obstruction of the subject's tendency, seeing it as "sin against nature" or "CONTRA NATURAM" (45/229; 45/230).

Pound not only articulates a utopian causality, he also suggests a tension between temporality and the absolute in his going back to a past in closer proximity to aesthetic essence—before "the line [grew] thick" (45/229). Elsewhere he similarly deduces the absolute in terms of temporal distance: in a letter to his mother, writing from London in 1914, he states that "London may not be the Paradiso Terrestre, but it is at least some *centuries* nearer it than is St. Louis"[5] (Pound *SL* 30, emphasis added). It is a tension recurrent in Bloch's thinking as well as in Eliot's argument on tradition. Bloch valued the absolute and ahistoric, or the "place into which gods were imagined" (Bloch qtd. in Solomon 569), in a direct relation to the historic, the "ideal of historical freedom" (569).

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[5] Pound would later fiercely critique London as a city of cultural decay, as in, for example, *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* III (Pound *SP* 99).

Returning, then, to Shelley's earlier argument which saw the poet participating "in the eternal, the infinite, and the one; as far as relates to his conceptions, time and place are not" (Shelley). The essence of art is contained in the absolute; the ahistoric, for only in aesthetics can the potentiality, the not-yet-become of the object be made to appear. Aesthetic portrayal "means to be more immanent and accomplished, to be more elaborate, more essential than in the direct and sensual or direct and historical presence of this object" (Bloch *Utopian Function* 146). The historicity of the creation of art is contrasted by its aesthetic product, whereby the portrayal is in a referential relationship with the absolute, constituting a "sharpened, condensed, or made more decisive" image of the object that "is rarely shown by reality that is experienced" (146). The aesthetic image thus conveys an "illusion" (146); not in an illusive but transcending manner, reproducing the "object, outside of itself, in all its depth onto a plane of reflection" (146). This tension is furthermore emphasised by modernism's "sequence of innovations and experiments, always more immediately recognized by what they are breaking from than by what, in any simple way, they are breaking towards" (Williams 43). The historicity of the method and its place within socially reified relations is understood in a constant struggle for the achievement of the priorly mentioned illusion. It reflects the tension between the retroactively articulated experience of the astonishing instant and the 'self-encounter' experienced, but not understood, in the *novum*; the absolute can only be experienced in the transcending illusion of the object, not in the conventionalised understanding of the object.

The modernist avant-garde struggled against the bourgeois denial of this tension, whose discourse on art was "a suffocating coercion imposed by mediocrities and tolerated by mediocrities" (Bloch *Spirit* 1). Bloch criticised the bourgeois tendency towards "contemplation" of art, a tendency which would arouse mere "passive enjoyment" (*Utopian Function* 71); "In the room the women come and go / Talking of Michelangelo" (Eliot

"Prufrock" 11.13-4). Essentially, the avant-garde criticised the notion of art's "*autonomy*" which was not only merely undesirable for Bloch (Williams 17), it was ontologically impossible. Aesthetic portrayal—in its proximity to the absolute and the subject's consequent 'self-encounter', experiencing both the material and subjective not-yet, i.e. possibility—inherently corresponds to the future; the not-yet which is present in the aesthetic illusion. Pound very much recognised the futility and the impossibility of art's autonomy, deducing the "fear of change" of the bourgeois as the "contributing cause" to cultural "non-performance" and the lack of "printing good books *when* written" (Pound "Murder by Capital." 589; 588).

Bloch called this mediatory function of art between the historic and the absolute the "anticipatory illumination" present in art (Bloch *Utopian Function* 73). In this sense "art is not at all a totality" of the future (72), but, rather, able to portray details of life "driven to their typical, characteristic end, to an abysmal or a blissful end" as its anticipatory illumination "presupposes possibility beyond already existing reality" (*Spirit* 15). Pound calls this the "luminous detail" of the work of art and it corresponds with the absolute, for "the luminous details remain unaltered" in conversation with the subjective (Pound *Selected Prose* 23). So, in their belief that the aesthetic portrayal is able to approach the priorly mentioned "inconstruable question" (Bloch *Spirit* 165), the modernist avant-garde judges the work of art in its illumination of the absolute; the "book shd. be a ball of light in one's hand" as Pound puts it (Pound *Guide to Kulchur* 55).

The celebration of tradition—conveying "certain forces, elements or qualities which were potent in the medieval literature of the Latin tongues, and are, as I [Pound, that is] believe, still potent in our own" (*Spirit of Romance* v)—is not an avant-garde desire to make the reader "re-hear, or hear for the first time, the freshness of the original" as if its belonging to a lost generation of aesthetics is only of historic importance (Stauder 25), but, rather, because it contains that absolute aesthetic essence. A work is not traditional in its "blind or

timid adherence" to past stylistics or because it "conforms to certain structural rules, or fits certain definitions" (Eliot *SW* 48; Pound *ABC of Reading* 13-4), but because it "is the thing that is true and stays true that keeps fresh for the new reader" (*Literary Essays* 22). A work becomes traditional upon entering the dynamics of an absolute structure—the "ideal order" (Eliot *SW* 50)—of referentiality. Its referentiality to the material object in historic terms, and thus exclusive of the not-yet-become, is "virtually extraneous to its integrity" (Kenner *Pound Era* 123).

Bloch's ontology of hope, of the close proximity between the 'self-encounter' and the metaphysical end-state, is thus fundamental in the "utopian desire" (Wilk 14). The subject is driven towards investigation of the not-yet "ultimately only in order to penetrate the darkness so near it of the just lived moment, in which everything that is both drives and is hidden from itself" (Bloch *Principle* 12). The utopian desire thus constitutes the core of human ontology as a search for the self, which is only ever *experienced* in moments of wonder and *understood* from a temporal distance. It is here, rescued from its imposed bourgeois vacuum, that the aesthetic image is able to approach the absolute; and is valued in these terms by the *re*actionary avant-garde of the modernist movement.

Chapter 2: T. S. Eliot's *The Wasteland* (1922)

T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) seems an unlikely place to find hope. In terms of biography, the poem was created during a period where its author was "preoccupied partly with the ruin of post-war Europe, partly with his own health and the conditions of his servitude to a bank in London, partly with a hardly exorable apprehension that two thousand years of European continuity had for the first time run dry" (Kenner *Invisible Poet* 145). In terms of its reception, the fragmentary poem induced a sense of "bewilderment" among its readers (Richards 218), or, in Virginia Woolf's first encounter with the poem, among its audience—for Eliot "sang" and "chanted" *The Waste Land* at a dinner party she attended (Woolf 188)—as it left a similar impression: "What connects it together, I'm not so sure" (188). However, especially in terms of its contents and imagery a particularly hopeless cavalcade of gloomy scenes is presented. Introduced by the surprisingly disturbing image of spring—typically connected with, and celebrated for its renewal of life—opening the poem, a tension is articulated between the cyclical character of life and the subject's teleological desire "for a spiritual life" (Mitchell 23). This mutual exclusivity, between cyclical and linear history, contained in the subject's attitude towards spring—"April is the cruellest month" (Eliot *The Waste Land* 45.1)—appears to function primarily as a lament for a dissolved teleology, leaving the subject behind in a waste land doomed by the symbolical image of Madame Sosostris' "Wheel" (47.51).

The opening lines of the poem, however, contain, in its "April" allusion to Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* (circa 1375-1400), an implicit invitation to a pilgrimage, in search of lost metaphysical meaning. In the prologue to his tales, Chaucer's narrative commences:

> Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote,
> The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
> And bathed every veyne in swich licóur
> Of which vertú engendred is the flour; (Chaucer 1-4)

Eliot's poem paradoxically presents an inverted spring image in line with the hopelessness of the poem's title and Sybilline epigraph, while the allusion implicit in that spring image invites the reader on a quest, or, rather, a pilgrimage. It is here, in the poem's "goal-directed journeying" (Kinney 273), that we encounter the first traces, or, "*Spuren*" of hope as "the imperceptible tending of all things toward Utopia" (Jameson *Form* 121). We must, therefore, turn to the poem's traces of hope; the latent tendencies protruding through the "brown fog of a winter dawn" and embrace the poem's invitation to pilgrimage (Eliot *WL* 47.61). It is in this manner that the poem posits genuine possibility[6] for the future in its portrayal of "the radical immediacy of the void" (Raulet 81), through a secularisation of the notion of hope and, especially, the element of faith present in hope. Furthermore, *The Waste Land* encourages the reader, not to construct a narrative by inserting a "coherent intellectual thread upon which the items of the poem are strung" (Richards 218), but to break free from the chains of modern passivity—through a deliberate deployment of estranging fragmentariness. This, of course, does not constitute a complete negation of Eliot's lament for Western Europe; nor does it argue for the poem as a celebration of a Nietzschean death of God[7]. It does, however, allow the poem to escape its totalitarian title, whereby, in a portrayal of the modern waste land, the utopian drive strives to move beyond a passive surrender, towards entelechy; for "realism must reflect that every process reality has a utopian horizon" (Hudson 173).

In arguing for the emancipation of the utopian drive, Bloch does not deny religion absolutely, but argues for a secularisation "defined both as a break with and as the continuation of Biblical hope" (Raulet 77). He argues not for a process of secularisation "by which the religious institution obtains a foothold through its secular orders" (Raulet 73), but, instead, seeks to recover eschatological faith and to articulate its emancipatory essence. In

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[6] that is, in its awareness of what Bloch calls the "inconstruable question" (Bloch *Spirit* 165). For a more detailed discussion on the "inconstruable question", see chapter 1, p. 9.

[7] Eliot would, after all, famously characterise his "view" as "classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion" (Eliot *Essays on Style and Order* ix).

denying the a priori determination of the future in religious narratives, the subject is understood as "a fallen *alter deus*" (78); that is, leaving "the field open for religious meditation and its hope in a totality, by freeing it of its allegiance to the phantom-throne of its hypothesis" (Bloch qtd. in Raulet 79-80). Eliot echoes this notion of the faltering prophecy, whereby pre-determined future narratives—be it religious or occult—are denied in their totalising authority. The waste land as offered by Eliot is a place where the "Son of man" (Eliot *WL* 45.20)—referring to God's addressee Ezekiel: "Also, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say … hear the word of the LORD" (*King James Bible*, Ezek. 36.1)—is unable to prophesise: "You cannot say, or guess, for you know only / A heap of broken images" (Eliot *WL* 45.21-2). No longer can a metanarrative order the not-yet; totalising narratives are undermined by the fragmentariness of modernity.

Eliot, elaborating on F. H. Bradley's thought, argues for the "ultimate *relativity* of the relationship between self and world" (Sorum 164), whereby it is this *relative*, rather than religious absolute, relation of the subject with the past that enables the future. In this sense, "[s]urpassment and retention become the essential themes of re-reading the past" (Raulet 82-3). History is emancipated and given back to the subject for a process of dialectics, being given the "historical task to mediate the Absolute and history" (78); yet, in its immanent possibilities, it posits a disturbing image. Retroactively, the denial of the "Son of man" secularises the collective ritual of "The Burial of the Dead" (Eliot *WL* 45.20). Not only is the implied promise of reincarnation in the Anglican ritual denied, an image made disturbingly literal in the speaker's question "'That corpse you planted last year in your garden, / 'Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?" (47.71-2), but the collective narrative is replaced by the individual void. Here we return to the poem's opening spring-image, for the communal in collective ritual, the giving of "hyacinths" (46.35), no longer constitutes a stable identity; contrasting the stability of predetermining social narratives—"'They called me the hyacinth

girl'"—with the destabilisation of identity in the face of genuine possibility—"I knew nothing, / Looking into the heart of light, the silence" (46.36; 46.39-40).

Paradoxically, the "dialectical secularization of hope" required for the formation of the "thought of Utopia" seems to offer only a void (Raulet 83), emphasising the fragility of the individual subject. The emancipation of history from metanarratives appears unable to fulfil the subject's desire, symbolised in the "breeding" of "[l]ilacs out of the dead land" (Eliot *WL* 45.2-3). History has become a "dead land", no longer guiding the subject's desires—the "Lilacs"—in what Bloch calls the "objective-real possibility" (Bloch *Utopian Function* 6). Thus, as Mitchell has already remarked, the subjects' fear in the waste land is one of death *and* life for "[f]ear of life and death are, indeed, closely connected" (23). In fact, this fear of not only the termination of possibility, in death, but also of possibility itself, in life, constitutes a despair which is paradoxically close to Bloch's notion of hope. Bloch argues that a waste land as portrayed by Eliot—in its "horror and black emotions" (Jameson *Form* 133)—remains hopeful insofar as fear "constitute[s] forms of that elemental ontological astonishment which is our most concrete mode of awareness of the future latent in ourselves and in things" (133).

Many of the inhabitants of Eliot's waste land, however, seem to have adopted a general passivity towards the emancipation of possibility. The typist, for example, experiences a complete dissolvement of any meaningful communion during the "the evening hour that strives / Homeward" (Eliot *WL* 53.220-1). This moment, in capturing the anticipation of genuine lovers, carries with it a tendency towards Bloch's notion of "*Heimat*" (Zipes *Bloch* 32). Bloch characterises the utopian drive as the "striv[ing] / Homeward" attempting to approach the "home that we have all sensed but none have ever experienced or known" (Eliot *WL* 53.220-1; Zipes *Bloch* 32). This posited promise of overcoming "exploitation, humiliation, oppression, and disillusionment" in the image of a "*Heimat*" tending movement is thus denied in the failure of genuine communion: "he assaults at once" (18; Eliot *WL*

53.239). Furthermore, Mitchell argues that the typist, "[h]ardly aware of her departed lover" (Eliot *WL* 54.250), "commits an act of violence against herself by not caring, in the least, that she has been assaulted" (Mitchell 24-5). It is in this passivity that resides the true negation of the promised possibility of the "Homeward" image, for the carnal act of communion functioned merely for the subjects as to "escape their humanness" allowing them to "dehumanize themselves" (25); while the typist's relief—"Well now that's done: and I'm glad it's over" (Eliot *WL* 54.252)—is an escape into "naïve optimism" (Bloch *Utopian Function* 16).

In a similar act of failed communion—a couple "in rats' alley" convicted to a game of chess (Eliot *WL* 49.115)—the consequences of the secularisation of the Messias-figure and his redemptive return become apparent in the passivity of the "*wishful image*" (Bloch *Principle* 46). The panicking speaker, in contrast to the calm interior, thought-like responses, is overwhelmed by the absence of an ideologically dominated not-yet: "'What shall I do now? … What shall we ever do?'" (Eliot *WL* 49.131-4). This futile attempt at "mixing / Memory and desire" seeks to ground individual identity by a return to collective ritual (45.2-3): "What shall *we* ever do?'" (49.134; emphasis added). Furthermore, the collected internal voice anticipates the passivity of the wish-image in terms of a messianic salvation: "And we shall play a game of chess, / Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon / the door" (49.137-9). This image echoes the earlier desire for growth and its biblical allusions: "what branches grow / Out of this stony rubbish?" (45.19-20). The Messias stated that "[a]s the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me" (*KJB*, John 15.4). The passive "waiting for a knock upon / the door" thus emblematises an ultimate passivity: lacking any real agency for change, the characters have turned inward—indicated by the lack of real dialogue between the spoken and internal voice—in a hopeless lament for a saviour-figure.

In accordance with the subjects' narcissism—the "rescinding of self" with "the desire for self-destruction" (Sorum 168)—and a general Oedipal fixation—the acts of communion constituting "the wrong kind of love, incestuous, murderous love" (Mitchell 27)—an escape into naïve optimism constitutes a totalising enslavement. In this sense, two binary opposites—"Winter kept us warm" and an escape from winter: to "go south in the winter" (Eliot *WL* 45.5; 45.18)—are in essence equal in their hopelessness. Both opposites essentially offer only an escape from genuine possibility, either forming a numbing cushion of "forgetful snow" or initiating an escape from any real confrontation (45.6).

This passivity is emblematic of the poem's "suggestions of significant design that nevertheless refuse to propel the reader towards any sustained moment of resolution or revelation" (Kinney 273). Holt, however, does argue for a more syntagmatic narrative in which, through an "emotional dialectic of hope and fear" (Holt 21), the speaker, understood as harmonious singularity distilled from the poem's polyphony, moves towards a "generation" (21). In this sense, the speaker, "dominated by his fears" (22), undergoes a baptism after Buddha's fire sermon, urging for the "Burning burning burning burning" of passion before salvation is offered: "O Lord thou pluckest me out" (Eliot *WL* 56.308; 56.309). This self-death, Holt argues, constitutes a "conversion" for it "involves the consumption of that which is unredeemable in the nature of the convert" (25).

Even though the poem's fragmentariness deliberately resists such a notion of a syntagmatic narrative, which will be explored later in this chapter, the generation-quest, as proposed by Holt, does point to a crucial distinction between drive and desire within the poem. Already subtly hinted at in the poem's opening by a shift in tonality and tense, the utopian drive cannot be satisfied by the object of desire, for the "drive is always searching to fill a hollow space, a missing space in the striving and longing, to fill something lacking with an external something" (Bloch *Principle* 46). The inevitability of spring's return is articulated

through April's definite characterisation, "April *is* the cruellest month" (Eliot *WL* 1; emphasis added); while the shifting tonality away from objectivity into a subjective "we" is paired with the past-tense verb indicative of a volatile memory: "Winter *kept* us warm" (5; emphasis added). The utopian horizon which defines the drive "reveals itself to be inescapable" (Holt 26), taking on messianic forms as the arctic horizon—the "white road" ahead (Eliot *WL* 361)—seems to carry with it "the third who walks beside you" (359), alluding to Christ accompanying two unknowing men on the road to Emmaus (*KJB*, Luke 24.13-32).

Like the speaker's response to the thunder's second imperative "*Dayadhvam*" (Eliot *WL* 411), the utopian drive is essentially defined by its anti-thesis, for "[t]hinking of the key, each confirms a prison" (414). In this sense, the utopian drive characterises itself by the not-yet, thus being defined by the void rather than a concrete object of desire. It is such a tendency towards "*Heimat*" which Holt ascribes to the use of a nursery rhyme in the poem's final stanza: "London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down" (Zipes *Bloch* 32; Eliot *WL* 426). However, this "reversion to a primitive emotion" indicates not, as Holt suggests, the melancholic madness of the "crumbling into ruin" of a former life (Holt 27), but, rather, implies a future-oriented approaching of "the home that we have all sensed but *none have ever experienced or known*" (Zipes *Bloch* 32; emphasis added).

A crucial element in this utopian drive, and Bloch's understanding of reality more generally, is its resistance to ideology, for "[r]eality is objectively fragmentary" according to Bloch (Hudson 173). Bloch's process philosophy understands reality as an ongoing process of dialectics "full of dissonance, discrepancies and breaks" rather than "a structuration of logically arranged contradictions" (178); a situation in which the *novum*'s tendency to break forth struggles against its latency. It is in this fragmentary sense of reality that *The Waste Land* constructs from Bradley's notion of "immediate experience" (Sorum 169), combining different perspectives, yet negating Bradley's emphasis that "it is meaningless to conceive of

a presentation that cannot be resolved into an experienced and a 'finite center' which experiences" (Kenner *Invisible Poet* 149). However, as Eliot's quotation from Bradley in one of the poem's notes suggests, such a finite centre as the only measure for truth quickly leads to solipsism:

> my experience falls within my own circle, a circle closed on the outside; and, with all its elements alike, every sphere is opaque to the others which surround it. … In brief, regarded as an existence which appears in a soul, the whole world for each is peculiar and private to that soul. (Bradley qtd. in Eliot *WL* p. 66)

In fact, *The Waste Land*'s fragmentation resists both such solipsism and what may be called the "detective-critic" (Jay 137). Such an approach is deemed futile, for it seeks to compress the polyphony of 'finite centres' into a "'totalization' or systematic comprehension of fragments" (137); in such a "'rationalisation' … we are adding something which does not belong to the poem" (Richards 218).

The Waste Land, then, posits a challenge to "the autonomy of the individual subject" through its use "of a center of gravity nowhere explicitly located" (Sorum 162; Kenner *Invisible Poet* 146). In its portrayal of a polyphony of voices, the poem incorporates the "noisy" character of modernity where conflicting voices, such as "mass journalism", "the high-toned speechifying of bourgeois society", "the public demands of suffragettes and the working class" (Levenson 88), but also non-human voices penetrate the poem: "the chug of urban transport" and "[t]he sound of horns and motors" (88; Eliot *WL* 52.197). Furthermore, through the poem's frequent use of quotation and allusion, a connection is drawn to the voices of the past. Entering into tradition, which entails an altercation of "the *whole* existing order" "after the supervention of novelty" (Eliot *SW* 50), the poem is, in Bloch's words, "not undertaking a new common task, but consciously accomplishing the ancient one" (Bloch qtd. in Raulet 85). It does this by merging what appears to be the poem's novel and original voices with allusion and quotation, whereby separate voices "become only one style among many"

(Levenson 91), but also by merging the poem's pre- and post-text. Eliot's quotation from Baudelaire—"'You! hypocrite lectuer!—mon semblable, —mon frère!'" (Eliot *WL* 47.76)—is "at once pre-textual (a quotation from Baudelaire) and post-textual (an accusation *through* the text, aimed directly at the reader)" (Albright 5). This polymorphing of voice is thus, paradoxically, both form and "form-disturbing and form-breaking" (Levenson 87-8). As seen in the echoes of Ariel's song to Ferdinand in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1623), voice constitutes a destabilisation of authorial centre. The repeated "Those are pearls that were his eyes" is in actuality an "exquisite lie" (Eliot *WL* 46.48; 49.125; Kinney 275), for Ariel's song turned out to be mere fiction. This quotation indicates how the notion of authority through voice itself is unstable; unable to encapsulate reality as totality.

The poem's pluriform, polyphonous, and fragmentary character is typically defined as "montage" (Levenson 90). A literary aesthetics of montage originates from, or, according to Trotter, through a symbiotic "parallelism" with the rise of cinematic experiments in the early twentieth century ("Cinema" 239). In essence, montage generates meaning from the "combination of two shots" (238); effecting a transference, or translation, of meaning across fragments—be it on morpho-syntactic or narratological level. Continuing from Bloch's emphasis on a secularisation of religious faith, or biblical hope, montage builds upon a disruption of reified social conventions:

> for it *improvises* with the context that has been exploded. Out of those (exploded) elements that have become pure and are made into rigid facades by objectivity, montage creates variable temptations and attempts in the empty space. This empty space originated precisely because of the collapse of bourgeois culture. Not only does the rationalization of a different society play in it, but one can see a new formation of figures arising out of the particles of the cultural heritage that have become chaotic. (Bloch qtd. in Zipes *Bloch* 20)

We see in Bloch's deduction of montage's genuine possibility a typical modernist conception of what Albright calls the "poetic atom" (Albright 1). Bloch argues for a reutilisation of

bourgeois culture, not as a singular totality, but as built from "particles of … cultural heritage" (Bloch qtd. in Zipes *Bloch* 20). This deconstructive tendency among modernists to "discover what a poem is before it is a poem, and what a poem becomes after it is assimilated by its audience" (Albright 1), seeks to correspond with both the absolute—the "archaic unity" (4)—and the historical—in its understanding of language's social agency—through a belief in fragmentation's "resistance to any master narrative that seeks to univocally encapsulate the whole" (Upton 31).

Montage, not only in *The Waste Land*'s five-part structure, but also in the communication across fragments and voices of past and present, "brings ideological positions and social languages into confrontation, debate, and conversation" (Upton 37). This heteroglossia comes into being not only from the fragments' contents, but also from the ideological "invest[ment]" of language; all linguistic style and form is "internally plural or 'dialogized,' [as] a product of the confrontation of different social positions through the medium of a single language" (Upton 37). *The Waste Land* posits a similar dialogical language whereby, in 'A Game of Chess' for example, a stylistic dichotomy appears to confirm social conventions; upper-class formalities are contrasted with lower-class contemptuous gossip. Besides the obviously upper-class setting of the scene ("The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne, / Glowed on the marble" Eliot *WL* 48.77-8), the tense tonality of the speaker corresponds with typical bourgeois social conventions: "My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad", "Is there nothing in your head?", and, emblematic of a frustration with social conventions, an act of emancipation is imagined: "'I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street / 'With my hair down, so" (49.111; 49.126; 49.132-3). In this last phrase especially, language engages in a social dialogue, whereby social convention defines the revolutionary act articulated in restricted language. This despairing, yet formally restricted frustration is contrasted by the following scene, where, moving from the privacy of the drawing room to the

publicity of the pub—where narrative is prone to external interruption and denial: "HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME" (50.141; 50.153; 50.165; 50.168; 50.169); "Goonight Bill. Goonight Lou. Goonight May. Goonight. / Ta ta. Goonight. Goonight" (50.170-1)—the frantic gossiping is characterised by excessive repetition of "I said" (50.140). Here, the speaker deploys, probably unconsciously, and relies on the authoritative tonality of the declarative phrase.

Montage, in this sense, does not confirm reified convention, but, through an estranging fragmentariness, seeks to effect distance from "immediate experience of life and from those customary forms that locked life into blocks of classifications and categories" (Zipes *Bloch* 21). The sudden and unannounced scene shifting calls on the reader "to reconstruct a *plane of action*" which "may display continuity or fragmentariness" (Johnson 400). It is in this sense that the drawing room and pub scenes, rather than confirming the social status quo, estrange the reader in their subversion of stylist convention. Both scenes, for example, appear to adhere to the stylistics of dialogue; the upper-class speaker's phrases are placed in quotation marks and the speaker in the pub scene appears to introduce a recollected dialogue: "I said—" and "she said" (Eliot *WL* 50.149; 50.150). Both attempts at dialogue, as prompted by form, are, however, denied: the quoted speech is met with internal monologue and Lil, like the poem's many references to Philomel, is never actually granted authority over her voice, her speech always being filtered by the poem's speaker.

As a consequence of its fragmentariness, *The Waste Land* resists a conclusive, syntagmatic narrative, but, through what Johnson calls "*paradigmatic linkage*" (400), meaning can be found across fragments. This notion of paradigmatic linkage seeks to bridge the distance enforced upon the narrative by montage on a paradigmatic, rather than a narratological, plane. It is through this framework that Spenser's words on the river Thames—"Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song" (Eliot *WL* 51.176)—can be interpreted as not-yet become. The allusion to Spenser's refrain does not propel the narrative forward, but

allows the wish-image to ground itself in "a more stable, implicitly more 'real' background" (Johnson 409). It is across this paradigmatic plane that a later, narratological unrelated scene is implicitly informed by the wish image. During a moment of apparent hopelessness, the previously established connection between the Thames and Spenser's poetry informs a later scene:

> 'On Margate Sands.
> I can connect
> Nothing with nothing.
> The broken fingernails of dirty hands.
> My people humble people who expect
> Nothing.' (Eliot *WL* 55.300-5)

The future-image remains invisible and the speaker is inarticulate, yet the wish-image has been articulated across a paradigmatic plane through the allusion to Spenser's Thames.

Taking the poem's secularisation of faith and discursive fragmentariness in account, then, we can conclude that, rejecting the notion that *The Waste Land* "is more concerned with moments of aborted or suppressed vision" (Kinney 280), a space is created for the *novum*; genuine possibility manifested in a not-yet form. This space manifests itself in the moments following Tiresias' witness to the typist's failed communion. Here, Tiresias appears to construct a daydream after the typist "puts a record on the gramophone" (Eliot *WL* 54.256). Bloch values the utopian capabilities of the daydream, for they "are filled with our wishes and anticipatory illumination" (Zipes "Daydreaming" 218). This theory of the daydream originates from Bloch's critique on Freudian and Jungian notions of the nocturnal dream; nocturnal dreams are little constructive in a future-oriented manner for they occur in a state where "the ego is weakened … and cannot censor damaging thoughts" and "only the dregs" of dreams carry over into "the experience of the day and cause regression" (Zipes "Daydreaming" 220). Even though daydreams are often fragmentary (Zipes "Daydreaming"

220), they reflect the subject's "utmost needs, … feelings, and … preferred plans" (Klinger 12).

Referring again to Johnson's notion of "*paradigmatic linkage*" (400), the paradoxical surprise of Tiresias' daydream is prepared for. Even though Tiresias has "foretold" and "foresuffered all" (Eliot *WL* 53.239; 53.243), the poem's earlier references to prophecy—"Son of man, / You cannot say" (45.20-2)—and clairvoyance—"Madame Sosostris, famous clairvoyante, / Had a bad cold" (46.43-4)—had been negated, denying an ideological grasp over the future through the process of secularisation. Returning to Eliot's emphasis on "the material world as central to determining the boundaries and the content of subjectivity" (Sorum 162), Tiresias becomes susceptible to the utopian drive, becoming neither "seer" nor "helpless *voyeur*" (Kinney 280), but attentive to the actual now as it contains the not-yet; a pro-active state in which the future becomes constructed rather than determined.

In line with Eliot's emphasis on "perception" (Eliot *SW* 10), Tiresias is carried along the Thames by the "music" towards "a public bar" where one hears "[t]he pleasant whining of a mandoline / [a]nd a clatter and a chatter from within" (Eliot *WL* 54.257; 54.261-2). The music carries Tiresias to a "future … which 'comes towards us'" and is manifested in the "*surprising*, the new, the unexpected or the coincidental" (Fuchs). No longer bound to the determinism of prophecy, Tiresias' not-yet-consciousness has "implicitly anticipated or unconsciously helped to bring about, namely in the form of dispositions, hunches, anticipations and tendencies," that "[i]nexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold" (Fuchs; Eliot *WL* 54.265). The music that carries Tiresias with it constitutes "a subject-like correlate outside of us which embodies our own intensity, and in which we experience an anticipatory transcendence of the existing interval or distance (*Abstand*) between subject and object, … 'utopia' is present in music: as the anticipatory presence and pre-experience (*Vorgefühl*) of the possibility of the self encounter in an adequate object" (Hudson 175).

In this daydream wish-image of Tiresias, made possible by the poem's secularisation of biblical hope and informed by the paradigmatic plane of the not-yet, *The Waste Land* moves beyond the passivity of an ideologically determined future; from a passive, reactive stance awaiting a saviour to "hold on tight" (Eliot *WL* 45.16), into an active mode whereby the not-yet is given agency and genuine possibility to constate "a pre-appearance of a possible *regnum humanum*" (Hudson 175). It is thus precisely because of the poem's fragmentary and subversive essence that the speaker's fragile and illogical concluding declaration—"These fragments I have shored against my ruins" (Eliot *WL* 60.430); for fragments appear to make a fragile foundation for new beginnings—makes sense and "produce[s] a peculiar liberation of the will" (Richards 220).

Chapter 3: W. B. Yeats's *The Tower* (1928)

The core of human ontology looks forward, and is hopeful, so Bloch argues, for it "goes out of itself, makes people broad instead of confining them, cannot know nearly enough of what it is that makes them inwardly aimed, of what may be allied to them outwardly" (Bloch *Principle* 3). Humankind simply does not seem to "tire of wanting things to improve" (77); the utopian drive incessantly seeks to move beyond the completed now, into the processual not-yet of the future latently present in the now. The objectively-real possible in the not-yet, however, appears to be undermined by a single, totalitarian, inescapable certainty: death. And thus, as Jameson rightly remarks, such an all-encompassing and future-oriented philosophy as Bloch's principle of hope "remains a dead letter unless it comes to terms in one way or another with death itself" (Jameson *Form* 134). It is thus that we turn to "that bitter section" from a poet's oeuvre for whom aging "was an obsession" (Unterecker *Guide* 169; Bornstein 46). William Butler Yeats's *The Tower* (1928), a collection of poetry concerned with life and death—"Whatever is begotten, born and dies" (Yeats *Tower* 7)—youth and age—"the ageing man" and "the growing boy" (25)—and the relation between body and soul—the poet's heart "sick with desire / And fastened to a dying animal" (8)—attempts to come to terms with the inevitability of death—"the hardest counter-utopia" (Bloch *Utopian Function* 9).

The concept of death holds a paradoxical relationship to the utopian. It is utopia's opposite in its essence as total absence in life without a possible presence, for "at death the world does not alter, but comes to an end. Death is not an event in life: we do not live to experience death" (Wittgenstein 247). In its absence, however, it approximates utopia in that hope too "expresses the vision, or the foresight, of the possibility to realize something which is not yet anywhere" (Levy 4). Wittgenstein's notion of death is therefore often problematised by objecting to its finality. Because death's essence transcends any empirical framework, the possibility of a postmortem existence can, in the broadest sense, not be definitively excluded;

"having experienced nothing is absolutely no proof, whether of the No or of the Yes, while even the least thing that could be experienced would *eo ipso* have to be put on the account of the Yes" (Bloch *Spirit* 249). Furthermore, death can, besides possibly commencing the after-life, exercise great influence over life itself. Marcuse criticises the Heideggerian notion of death "as an existential category" (Marcuse qtd. in Harries 138). Marcuse, in an attempt to move towards an unalienated human essence, sees the dooming presence of death over life—that is, human ontological essence as a "being-towards-death" (Harries 141)—as the betrayal of "the promise of utopia" (Marcuse qtd. in Harries 138). It is in this tension that we see death recurring in Yeats's poetry; as an anticipation of an ontological "mode of absence" met with a fervent desire to move beyond death's alienating character (Ramazani *Yeats* 3), which, in its dooming presence, forces the subject "to express his existence in a set of divinities above and beyond him" (Green 132).

Opening *The Tower*, "Sailing to Byzantium" presents a dramatic monologue of an aged man looking back at life, concluding: "That is no country for old men" (Yeats *Tower* 7). The speaker recalls a Heideggerian image of life, whereby the closing-in of death typifies life as an unceasing process of dying. "Those dying generations" are oblivious to their own impermanence, and, in their denial of death's presence, "neglect / Monuments of unageing intellect" (7). The young, caught up in passion—"that sensual music" (7)—are oblivious to the eternal—that which triumphs over death. The "I" we encounter in the second stanza, however, exemplifies what Gadamer identifies as humankind's "indisputable specificity", namely the "in-built capacity of man to think beyond his own life in the world, to think about death" (Gadamer 74-5). The speaker sets himself apart from youth by his move beyond death—"And therefore I have sailed the seas and come / To the holy city of Byzantium" (Yeats *Tower* 7). Bloch recognises a similar distinction between a human and an animalistic,

instinctive attitude towards death, whereby for humans death "is actually cast into a picture and is based on rich experience that humans have had" (Bloch *Utopian Function* 11).

Yeats's image of death actually aligns with Bloch's understanding of humankind's triumph over death in terms of imagination, for Bloch sees "the environment to which [humankind's] structure is attuned" as dominant, yet renders humankind's adaptive capabilities reductive "if it [that is, humankind as evolutionary product] were merely impressions of the milieu that assembled, and not potential victors over them" (Bloch *Spirit* 233). There is thus, even in an understanding of death as existential category, the inherent possibility of triumph: "Man alone, in other words, is here the latest and yet the firstborn creature; only he broke through, exceeded the genus fixed for so long among the animals" (234). Thus Yeats's image of Byzantium as afterlife, an image which will be explored later in this chapter, is the product of what he elsewhere has called "Adam's Curse"; "It's certain there is no fine thing / Since Adam's fall but needs much labouring" (Yeats "Adam's Curse" 218). A theme recurring in *The Tower* as well, Yeats often comments on the laborious process of creation in his poems, mocking, for example, the product as vain attempt: "blear-eyed wisdom out of midnight oil" (Yeats *Tower* 45). Yeats despises the futility of great amounts of labour in liberating the subject from human frailty, as he concludes a meditation on Plato, Aristotle, and Pythagoras's efforts: "What a star sang and careless Muses heard: / Old clothes upon old sticks to scare a bird" (44). Elsewhere, Yeats's laborious efforts to transcend the transient actually seem to effect an undesirable opposite: "yet I, being driven half insane / Because of some green wing, gathered old mummy wheat / In the mad abstract dark and ground it grain by grain / And after baked it slowly in an oven" (41). Thus what Yeats describes in rather negative, condemning terms—labour being the product of the "pain of destruction" (Bloch *Spirit* 234); as the suffering imposed on postlapsarian humankind—contains, for Bloch, the

very possibility for utopia: “Under pain of destruction, he became the toolmaking, detour-making animal; thus he could also not get by with inborn reflexes, the earlier signals” (234).

Whereas Bloch values “Adam’s Curse” for it has allowed humankind to perceive itself within a state of process, opening up the future as the malleable not-yet, Yeats contrasts the acquired knowledge of experience with an absolute and superior kind of knowledge which transcends his cyclical notion of history: “but now / I bring full-flavoured wine out of a barrel found / Where seven Ephesian topers slept” (Yeats *Tower* 41). Differing from Bloch, Yeats sees history in repeating cycles of 2000 years[8]: “Another Troy must rise and set, / Another lineage feed the crow” (37). Yeats, seeing parallels between the death and resurrection of both Dionysus and Jesus Christ—“I saw a staring virgin stand / Where holy Dionysus died” (37)—deduces the notion of a utopia-oriented drive to be merely repetitions of seasonal cycles of life and death: “Of Magnus Annus at the spring, / As though God’s death were but a play” (37). Thus aligning both the individual human subject—“what disturbs our blood / Is but its longing for the tomb” (32)—and human history, Yeats sees Bloch’s conception of hope, as a movement forward towards a completion of the self, as disrupted by cycles of birth, decay, and death. Utopia is hidden by “an indifferent multitude” of “innumerable clanging wings that have put out the moon” (25).

Combining, then, both Bloch’s and Yeats’s emphasis on labour, how does Yeats attempt to transcend the putrefying cyclicality of life? Being as a continuous state of decay—“Death, despair, division of families, all entanglements of / mankind grow” (Yeats *Tower* 61)—causes us to turn to look in Yeats for “[w]hat is left to wish for in old age” (Bloch *Principle* 35). Taking Yeats’s conclusion from “From Oedipus at Colonus”—“Never to have lived is best, ancient writers say” (Yeats *Tower* 62)—we turn to Yeats’s attempt to move beyond what passes to what is absolute and eternal. Besides allowing the “ancient writers” to

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[8] “A Great Wheel of twenty-eight incarnations is considered to take, if no failure compels repetition of a phase, some two thousand odd years” (Yeats *A Vision* 202).

speak through his translation of a choral ode from Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* (401 B.C.), Yeats poses a paradox in the line's temporality. Not only are the voices from an ancient past given a voice in the now—allowed to "say" rather than have "said"—they appear to speak from an experience impossibly attainted: as never having lived. Their evidence, of course, stems from a syllogism which deduces life as decay and its binary opposite—never having lived—in terms of the eternal. It is in this sense that we can sense Yeats's attempt to approach the absolute through a distancing from life as decay, and an approximating of the self to the eternal.

Returning, then, to Yeats's image of the eternal in "Sailing to Byzantium", the speaker expresses a feeling of liberation—similar both in death and hope as ultimate ends in which there "will be freedom from hunger and distress, from fear and anxiety" (Levy 7)—upon being gathered "[i]nto the artifice of eternity" (Yeats *Tower* 8). Echoing the death-wish articulated later in *The Tower*—in "The Wheel" the speaker articulates a collective human "longing for the tomb" (32)—Yeats senses his creative faculty—finding still "[t]hat young vigorous muse" in old age (Bornstein 47)—impaired by the inevitable bodily decay. As Bloch puts it, "[t]he impression remains undeniable that in us a hand governs the glove, and perhaps could remove it, too" (Bloch *Spirit* 249); we perceive the possibility of a release of our soul into permanence, and in this sense "precisely the will to life can point to death, … toward death as release, certain of its power to overcome death, and beyond it attain permanence in itself" (251). Byzantium, for Yeats, constituted what he called "Unity of Being" (Melchiori 35):

> I think that in early Byzantium, maybe never before or since in recorded history, religious, aesthetic and practical life were one, that architect and artificers … spoke to the multitude and the few alike. The painter, the mosaic worker, the worker in gold and silver, the illuminator of sacred books, were almost impersonal, almost perhaps without the consciousness of individual design, absorbed in their subject-matter and that the vision of a whole people. (Yeats qtd. in Ramazani *Norton Anthology* 230n1)

Byzantium becomes a symbol for the "perfection" and "complete fulfilment" that is unattainable in Yeats's concept of cyclical history; the image of Byzantium is "the point where the gyre (the movement of human life) becomes a sphere", becomes whole (Melchiori 33). However, the symbol as "governing something like a *determination of the end*" appears untenable as, its meaning originating from and existing within the known, it fails to account for the totality of the unknown (Bloch qtd. in Jameson *Form* 147). Bloch thus sees the symbol as a burden to the entelechy of the aesthetic object: "Art is in its representation of the way just as completely allegorical as it *remains indebted to the symbol* for the end which determines that way (and which remains for all its unity and totality a human one)" (Bloch qtd. in Jameson *Form* 147). Pryor, in discussing Yeats's presentation of Byzantium as paradise, problematises the speaker's confident declaration on Byzantium as paradise: "And therefore I have sailed the seas and come / To the holy city of Byzantium" (Yeats *Tower* 7). The speaker seems not to contemplate the possibility of setting sail, nor does it present the decision to have left, but completes the journey in presenting the journey upon arrival. This satisfaction, however, is short-lived as immediately following the confident exclamation "new and unfulfilled desire impels that desperate prayer" (Pryor 91). Symbol appears unable to approach a satisfactory completion, prompting the speaker to invoke further divine guidance: "Oh, sages standing in God's holy fire / … Come from the holy fire … / And be the singing-masters of my soul" (Yeats *Tower* 8). "Sailing to Byzantium", therefore, does not offer an image of paradise, but, in closer proximity to its title, emphasises the journey, a "Sailing" which continues into the imagined image of paradise.

This "unexpected element of scepticism", which, according to Ellmann, can be found in most of Yeats's poems on the afterlife (144), thus tells us more about the speaker than the completion of time in death. This form of "lyric tragedy", an apparent paradox for the lyric 'I' cannot be a spectator to its own death, is an internalisation of the imagined self-encounter

"staged as imaginative encounters with death, mediations at the brink of catastrophe" (Ramazani *Yeats* 84); an imagining of death "as that instant in which no future (and no hope) is any longer possible" (Jameson *Form* 135). In this sense, Unterecker's emphasis on the poem's reflective character—as "a paradoxical structure that lets [the poet] sing of flesh yet be freed from its limitations" (*Guide* 174)—frees a selection of consequent poems—"The Wheel", "Youth and Age", and "The New Faces"—from their apparent regressive return to meditations on bodily decay. Rather than perceiving these consequent poems and their "insights into our experience of time" as a harsh awakening from the Byzantian paradise (Young *Troubled Mirror* 61), they constitute a continuation of the death-wish—an attempted triumph over the unknown. Articulated in the conclusion of "The New Faces", in which the speaker "seems almost to accept death" (Unterecker *Guide* 184), death is understood as an agent of eternity denying the decaying force of life. For, even in death, the speaker's relation with Lady Gregory, the addressee of the poem, triumphs over decay and achieves eternity: "Our shadows rove the garden gravel still, / The living seem more shadowy than they" (Yeats *Tower* 34). This confidence, however, is subverted by the consequent poem, which constitutes "life's ultimate triumph over death" (Unterecker *Guide* 184). There seems to occur, in the whiteness of the page in between "The New Faces" and "A Prayer for My Son", a Hamletian moment of doubt concerning the subject's becoming eternal in death—"Thus conscience does make cowards of us all" (Shakespeare III.1).

Hinted at by the symbol's failure to constitute paradise in "Sailing to Byzantium", in turning to "A Prayer for My Son" the speaker emphasises creation of life within life—"Though You can fashion everything / From nothing every day" (Yeats *Tower* 35). Offering a more positive perspective on acquired knowledge and bodily decay, "A Prayer" portrays Christ—"You" (35)—as "inarticulate child … dependent on the protection of his parents until he had mastered speech (until he had become the artist-in-fact as well as the potential artist)"

(Unterecker *Guide* 185). Presenting first his son—"my Michael"—the speaker introduces future potential through a contrast with future threat: "For I avow / Such devilish things exist" (Yeats *Tower* 35). By comparing the threats to his son's potentiality with those of Christ, the speaker grants himself a sense of power projected into the future. For, just as when Christ was threatened by "[t]he servants of Your enemy" (36), there was "A woman and a man, / … Protecting, till the danger past, / With human Love" (36), so does Yeats perceive his old age; as harbourer, protector, and enabler of potentiality.

In this sense, old age also brings with it what Wordsworth called "[a]bundant recompense" (Wordsworth 301), allowing the poet "to re-create their images in his own verse" (Bornstein 53). This gift of old age allows the poet to "*See Phantoms of Hatred and of the Heart's Fullness and of the Coming Emptiness*" (Yeats *Tower* 24). This being the title of the final section of "Meditations in Time of Civil War", a poem which had moved "from the personal to the impersonal" (Young 41), it presents the aged poet—his bodily decay echoed by the "broken stone" of the tower which grants the poet his overview (Yeats *Tower* 24)—in a "visionary state" (Young 41). This visionary gift, however, is made uncanny, the speaker perceiving a "mist" that covers the landscape upon which he looks down (Yeats *Tower* 24); the poet almost appears to enter into this state involuntarily: "Frenzies bewilder, reveries perturb the mind; / Monstrous familiar images swim to the mind's eye" (24). After presenting, in succession, a vision of a murderous crowd, an image of seductive unicorn-riding ladies "[w]here even longing drowns under its own excess" (25), and an overwhelming flock of birds so "innumerable … that [they] have put out the moon" (25), the speaker diverts his mind away from the visions: "I turn away and shut the door" (25). Not only are these visions rather eerie, they also appear to originate from an independent faculty within the self: imagination. Finding himself socially isolated and helpless at the hands of his powerful imagination—"I … / Wonder how many times I could have proved my worth / In something that all others

understand or share" (25)—the speaker in old age, while physically diminished, seems better able to approach the self-encounter: "the chisel-blows of life have worked an essential shape, and what is essential can be seen by it better than ever before" (Bloch *Principle* 40). Having lost the "self-control" required in social inclusion (Yeats qtd. in Young 35), "it seemed / Juno's peacock screamed" (Yeats *Tower* 21); "The loss of control over thought comes towards the end; first a sinking in upon the moral being, then the last surrender, the irrational cry, revelation—the scream of Juno's peacock" (Yeats qtd. in Young 35).

Yeats seems to approach here that underlying utopian drive of which Bloch speaks: the will "to liberate oneself from one's immediate factual surroundings, in order to create new 'possibilities' such as have not even been 'dreamed' of" (Levy 9). The creative inspiration is portrayed in terms of extremely violent divine inspiration in "Leda and the Swan"—"So mastered by the brute blood of the air, / Did she put on his knowledge with his power / Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?" (Yeats *Tower* 40)—and as leading him to the dark, inaccessible border-regions of the self in "On a Picture of a Black Centaur by Edmund Dulac": "Your [that is, the imaginative faculty in centaur form] hooves have stamped at the black margin of the wood" (41). And, recognising his creative inspiration to be his essence—"I have loved you better than my soul for all my words" (41)—the poet bids his imagination to a paradoxical sleep: "Stretch out your limbs and sleep a long Saturnian sleep", yet "there is none so fit to keep a watch and keep / Unwearied eyes upon those horrible green birds" (41). However, this sleep entails a schism with his consciousness in order to facilitate a "participat[ion] in the instinctive, spontaneous experience (which he connects with sleep) that is now open to him, for there it can best observe the wood beyond normal consciousness" (Ellmann 265-6).

Recognising in this ongoing and unceasing creative faculty of the self an escape from the decay of time—the "being-towards-death" (Harries 141)—and a liberation from the

totalitarian character of the symbol-as-end—that is, the symbol's inability, in its determination of the way, to successfully articulate the end (as we had seen in "Sailing to Byzantium")—the poet posits a "*being at one with oneself*" through the completion of the subject in the aesthetic object (141). Therefore, we recognise in "the *unclosed closure* of many of Yeats's mature poems" an apparent paradox (Bornstein 59): in the open-endedness, the not-yet-found-solution, of Yeats's contemplations on self and creation—"How can we know the dancer from the dance?" (Yeats *Tower* 45)—and the "continuing need to go on. … continue writing" (Bornstein 59), the poet approaches a state of being, a "self-encounter" (Bloch *Spirit* 5), in the becoming of the aesthetic object.

Using Bloch's concept of "non-synchronism" (Zipes *Bloch* 2), it becomes apparent how "[t]ime itself is not something that can be approached only in a fixed and linear fashion" (Thompson "'Ungleichzeitigkeit'" 49). Instead, Bloch argues, "various years are always beating in the one which is just being counted and dominates" (Bloch qtd. in Thompson "'Ungleichzeitigkeit'" 60). Therefore, upon the poet's entering into tradition, time is replaced by eternity, not as "infinite temporal duration but timelessness" (Wittgenstein 247): "then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present" (247). Yeats's presentation of the conception of beauty in Ledean terms and his celebration of the eternal, his "mythopoetic works" (Hirschberg 142), attempt to enter into the timelessness of the absolute. Sitting in his tower at his table, the poet perceives timelessness in "Sato's gift, a changeless sword" (Yeats *Tower* 20). The speaker directly contrasts his own temporality with the timelessness of the object: "That it may moralise / My days out of their aimlessness", yet it is precisely this awareness of one's own impermanence that gives the absolute its strength: "only an aching heart / Conceives a changeless work of art" (20). Timelessness provides the "everyday self with a hidden dimension of human consciousness" (Hirschberg 142); an awareness that

"[w]hat is lying all about us will long remain. Only we move away, stay warm, and yet one day will go pale and blind by what covers us" (Bloch *Spirit* 255).

It is thus in a varied plethora of "Masks" as "ideal opposites" of reality that Yeats constructs the not-yet (Unterecker "Faces" 30). Perceiving timelessness in "another age, historical or imaginary, … images that rouse his energy" (Yeats qtd. in 31), Yeats sought to deploy masks, not only on an individual, but also on a national scale, so that it "might resemble *that which is most unlike*" the known (31; emphasis added). In creation, then, Yeats sought "to be what was not" and in this sense approach a kind of timelessness (31). Just as the timelessness of Sato's sword was appreciated by the speaker because of his own impermanence, so does the mask function only in a struggle with the temporal, as struggle between "mask and face, of anti-self and self, of desire and attainment, of choice and chance, of image and idea" (Ellmann 214-5).

This struggle between opposites, which is the only lens through which timelessness may be perceived, does, however, pose a paradox. Gadamer presents the paradox as the threshold between lives: "the burial of the dead" (75). Burial, distinctly resembling the end of physical life, in fact is "the fundamental phenomenon of becoming human", for "there is sought an abiding with the dead, indeed a holding fast of the dead among the living" (75). It is in this sense that Yeats transposes his self into the future, both by addressing his descendants—"And what if my descendants lose the flower / Through natural declension of the soul, / Through too much business with the passing hour, / Through too much play, or marriage with a fool?" (Yeats *Tower* 22)—and by positing the timelessness of the artwork—"Once out of nature I shall never take / My bodily form from any natural thing, / But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make / Of hammered gold and gold enamelling" (8). Even here, however, Yeats appears unable to triumph over death. For, in an act of "anticipatory vengeance" (Ramazani *Yeats* 124), Yeats "comes dangerously close to turning himself into the

agent of death to avoid becoming its victim" (122). The speaker curses his descendants were they to spoil the continuation of his essence through his legacy: "May this laborious stair and this stark tower / Become a roofless ruin that the owl / May build in the cracked masonry and cry / Her desolation to the desolate sky" (Yeats *Tower* 22).

Using Lacan's concept of "symbolic death" (Kim 104), Yeats's attempted triumph over death may be explored, and, consequently, deemed futile. For, whereas Yeats perceives the essence of his self to continue beyond his death within his legacy, Lacan argues that this self dies a second death at "the point at which the very cycles of the transformations of nature are annihilated" (Lacan qtd. in Kim 104). This entails a death of the self through the "obliteration of the signifying network" through which the symbolic subject exists beyond the physical subject (105). Here we thus return to the paradox of timelessness, for the subject's hoped-for timelessness through legacy exists only in temporal networks: "Even this work [the symbolic image of the subject], however, shines beyond the grave only within others, who likewise must die; it is no independently animate, free-floating mode of existence, and even if it were, the soul can still not possess an existence of its own through such an effect" (Bloch *Spirit* 256). Implicitly, Yeats acknowledges this in the required external object through which he may continue living—be it the bird "set upon a golden bough" (Yeats *Tower* 8) or the tower whose "stones remain their monument *and mine*" (22; emphasis added). His soul cannot transcend history, for neither does it "posses an existence of its own", nor "[d]o the relay stations of historical-cultural memory exist by themselves" (Bloch *Spirit* 256; 257).

Returning, then, to hope in the face of death. It is precisely this existential doubt of life beyond death which characterises it as hopeful, for "[w]ithout the real possibility of disappointment, there could be no hope: only the certainty that this or that phenomenon will be achieved and implemented. Hope is the name of the disappointable as such" (Richter 51). It is this possibility of disappointment that is encapsulated by the unresolved conclusion of

"Among School Children": "How can we know the dancer from the dance?" (Yeats *Tower* 45). Existing beyond his physical death, Yeats's works—the dance—will carry his soul—the dancer—only through the medium of the aesthetic image. Like the image of the girl's beauty in "The Tower", Yeats's soul exists only as it is "commended by a song" (10); with the risk that "they mistook the brightness of the moon / For the prosaic light of day" (11), for, if death would truly be triumphed and a state of isolated timelessness achieved, meaning "will only drift like debris down some nameless river" (Bloch *Spirit* 257). Even in this objectification of the subject into the artwork, the poet cannot escape death, for it is "a kind of self-murder: it exchanges life's spontaneity for the deadness of the word" (Ramazani *Yeats* 139).

Tracing Yeats's struggle with death-as-horizon and the implied being-towards-death throughout *The Tower*, it becomes apparent how the poet explores the inevitability of death, be it physical, death-through-objectification, or death in the network of symbolic meaning. Following from Young and Kenner, taking into account the deliberate order of the poems in *The Tower* (Kenner "Sacred Book" 13), the fact that this ordered whole "is both dramatically and thematically greater than the sum of its parts" (Young x), thus constituting an "artistic interdependence" rather than independence of the poems (6), *The Tower* posits a broad exploration of the multifaceted character of death in life. Death's inevitability and totalitarian denial of the not-yet actually invokes in the poet a journey inward, towards the self-encounter. From "Sailing to Byzantium", where the poet calls forth the "sages standing in God's holy fire" (Yeats *Tower* 8), to the collection's closing poem, "All Souls' Night", where the poet invokes a ghostly audience for he has "a marvellous thing to say" (70), Yeats does seem to reach a kind of victory, not over death as such, but over its control over life—pushing death out of life; approaching a state of being rather than becoming—as "[p]upil has become master" (Kenner "Sacred Book" 11).

Chapter 4: Ezra Pound's *Eleven New Cantos* (1934)

Ezra Pound can be characterised by his own imperative in the Mussolini apologia-diptych *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* (1935), where he argues that "any estimate of Mussolini" will be invalid "unless it *starts* from his passion for construction" (Pound *J/M* 33-4). Beyond a descriptive capability, the Pound of the 1930s values mostly the constructive—approximating a totalitarian prescriptive—tendency in art. Whereas Pound would later admit the frustrations he had encountered in attempting to (re-)construct reality through poetry—he stated in 1960: "It is difficult to write a paradiso when all the superficial indications are that you ought to write an apocalypse" (Hall)—during the first half of the twentieth century he spoke full of hope about the future and of the artist's place within it. Already in 1909, in a letter to William Carlos Williams, he exclaimed: "And remember a man's real work is what *he is going to do*, not what is behind him. Avanti e coraggio!" (Pound *SL* 8); and a similar sentiment was echoed later in 1938: "I mean to say that one measure of a civilization, either of an age or of a single individual, is what that age or person really wishes to *do*. A man's hope measures his civilization" (*Guide to Kulchur* 144). There is thus, for Pound, a clear Blochian echo of a dialectic between the subject's wish-image of the future and the objective material reality, whereby the former is either restricted or facilitated by the latter; Bloch calls this process the "objective-real possibility" of the wish-image[9] (Bloch *Utopian Function* 6). By inverting the "objective-real possibility", Pound, in an act which is less prevalent in Bloch, seeks to expose the collusive elements of society as preventing progress; for "[t]he attainability of the hope measures, or may measure, the civilization of his nation and time" (Pound *GK* 144). These brief, future-oriented remarks already sketch a starting point from which to approach Pound's *Eleven New Cantos* (1934) as an attempt, not only to "diagnose", but also "cure the evils of society" (Eiselein 31).

[9] See also p. 14 for a discussion on Bloch's "objective-real possibility".

In this sense, Pound's *Eleven New Cantos*, in their explicit political character, epitomises the characteristically modernist "frustration with the quarantine of certain subjects in the garden of the 'poetical', to the exclusion of everything else" (Pryor 123). As a consequence of *The Cantos*'s explicit[10] inclusion of politics, ideology, and a broader socio-historical awareness—"An epic", Pound would famously declare, "is a poem including history" (*Literary Essays* 86)—it would inevitably become susceptible to judgement upon its politics or ideology. In an attempt to exonerate the work's aesthetics from its repulsive fascist politics, Brooker argues that Pound's release from St. Elizabeth's Hospital and him being awarded the Bollingen Prize in 1949 were attempting "a distinction between his politics and his poetry, obscuring the one in the high claims made for the other" ("Lesson of EP" 9), in fact reinstating and allocating Pound's poetry to the very "bourgeois literary ideology" which it had so explicitly and vehemently struggled against (10). Relevant for the present study, however, is not a judgement upon the condemnable politics of Pound[11], but the manner in which Pound sought to include history in order to construct the future. In this sense, the present study focusses not on an analysis of the causes of decline as proposed by Pound, for, in the image of the cause as preventing utopia[12], the inverted utopia-image-as-horizon restricts genuine possibility, completing the 'now' by determining the future, and thus denying the genuine, latent not-yet.

In freeing art from its societal isolation, Pound did continue the "almost religious estimation of artistic sensibility" of the nineteenth century (Hesse 33), but transcended its pure aestheticism with the notion of a "social responsibility" for the artist (33). For Pound,

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[10] Explicit, for, as Bloch argues, the aesthetic object is an image of the completion of time as process through a speculative materialism, thus necessarily including history in a more or less implicit or explicit manner. See p. 18.

[11] For a discussion on Pound's syncretic politics, see Cassillo, Robert, "Ezra Pound: The Marxist Anti-Semitic Zionist?" (49-53); Chace, William M., *The Political Identities of Ezra Pound & T. S. Eliot*, pp. 49-105; Redman, Tim. "Pound's Politics and Economics." *Cambridge Companion to Ezra Pound*, ed. Ira B. Nadel, Cambridge UP, 2006, pp. 249-263.

[12] For a discussion on the notion of "causal utopia" see p. 16.

"[a] nation's language and mental health … are in the care of its *litterateurs*. … Art then is not only an index of social conditions, it is set in advance of them and if attended to, a proper guide to future conduct" (Brooker "Lesson of EP" 12). Exhibiting still the modernist belief in the absoluteness of language—"the power of language to shape worlds" (Schneidau 111)—Pound deemed it necessary to include "a little NECESSARY history (data) in Cantos" (Pound qtd. in Pryor 123). In escaping the bourgeois notion of art's autonomy—"Has literature a function in the state … which ought to mean the public convenience …? It has" (Pound *LE* 21)—Pound promoted the responsibility of the artist to be "the antennae of the race" (58).

Transitioning from the Renaissance concluding *A Draft of XXX Cantos* (1930), the reader is met with a collage of quotations from correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and John Adams (the 2nd and 3rd Presidents of America, respectively). In an act of "subject-rhyme" Pound compares the "America of circa 1770" with "the Italian New Birth of circa 1500" (Kenner *Pound Era* 423). Overwhelming, disorienting even, Canto XXXI appears to drop the reader in foreign territories of "poetic obscurity" through the use of "materials which are abstruse, learned, even pedantic" (McGann 97). Yet, it is here, in the "refreshing" transition into the New World (Cookson 47), where Pound's poetic project leaves behind the "darkness and despair" of its "*Inferno*" and enters the stage of "*Purgatorio*"; here "the dominant note is now one of hope" (Pearlman 136).

Pound's use of montage is fitting in light of his reactionism, for it "breaks off parts from the collapsed context and the various relativisms of the times in order to combine them into new figures. … it is a process of interruption and thereby one of intersection of formerly very distant areas. Precisely here the wealth of a cracking age is large" (Bloch *Heritage* 3). Bloch recognises in this "cracking age" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century bourgeoisie a possible "refunctioning"[13] of old forms in order to make sense of the very chaos

[13] The German "*umfunktioniert*" is elsewhere translated as "reutilization" (Zipes *Bloch* 20), see p. 13.

into which this "cracking age" has culminated (207); in the "empty space, the hollow gap" the artist must "fill the void with substantially new forms and contents" (Zipes *Bloch* 20): "the context of the old surface is decomposed, a new one is formed" (Bloch *Heritage* 202). Here, Bloch's emphasis on process and montage's inclination "towards the new 'passage-forming' through things and towards the display of what has previously been extremely remote" (207) is precisely what Pound, in using documents already unfamiliar and historically distanced to his contemporaries, emphasises:

> Knowledge is or may be necessary to understanding, but it weighs as nothing against understanding, and there is not the least use or need in retaining it in the form of dead catalogues once you understand process. Yet, once the process is understood it is quite likely that the knowledge will stay by a man, weightless, held without effort. (Pound *GK* 53)

The quoted correspondence of Canto XXXI is deliberately "unadorned", for "[t]heir fragmentary condition allows us to see them with a new clarity" (Schneidau 114). In combining this fragmentary representation with subject-rhyme, the poetry can "magnify patterns of difference", thereby exposing the causes of cultural decline (Schneidau 115). This use of juxtaposition recurs throughout *Eleven New Cantos*, but perhaps most deliberately and harshly in Canto XL where both "financial conspiracies and the cultural effects of usury" and the creation of civilisations, be it through settlement or an act of colonisation which perhaps anticipates Mussolini's conquest of Ethiopia[14], are able "to exist within a self-contained unit" which consequently "gives definition to the whole presentation" (Maerhofer 97).

The image of "mechanical time" in the first half of the canto symbolises the "meaningless stream of experience in the modern world" (Pearlman 165). Here, Pound connects the usurious, exploitative and deconstructive "desire for seignieurial splendours"

[14] Even though Italy invaded Ethiopia a year *after* the publication of *ENC*, Pearlman argues that "anyone reading newspapers during the period could easily have foreseen Mussolini's Ethiopian venture" (165).

(Pound *Cantos* 40/198) with a lack of future-orientation by including "clocks" in the list of "seignieurial splendours":

> (ÀGALMA, haberdashery, clocks, ormoulu, brocatelli,
> tapestries, unreadable volumes bound in tree-calf,
> half-morocco, Morocco, tooled edges, green ribbons,
> flaps, farthingales, fichus, cuties, shorties, pinkies
> et cetera[.] (40/199)

Time in the modern world is spent seeking "ornament" ("ÀGALMA") and not-quite gold ("ormoulu" is "brass made to imitate gold" Terell 165). Against these things, "[o]ut of which … seeking an exit" (Pound 40/199), Pound juxtaposes the journey of Hanno the Carthaginian, where time is measured in "days of purposive sailing; time is a process of continual discovery and creation" (Pearlman 165). Hanno's travels are measured in

> 12 days sailing southward, southward by desert
> one day sailed against sun, there is an harbour
> with an island 15 miles in circumference,
> we built there, calling it Cyrne
> believing it opposite Carthage as our sailing time
> was the same as from Carthage to the Pillars. (Pound 40/199)

Having seen the juxtaposition of fragments at work in Canto XL, I wish to return to the opening of *ENC* in order to explore how its fragments "begin to organize themselves into meaningful patterns" (Hesse 13). Bell recognises in the Thomas Jefferson presented by Pound in Canto XXXI a tension between the belief in a scientific language of a "philosophy of sensation" which "emphasized both the shaping energy of language conceived empirically and the scientific impossibility of the immaterial" and a "romantic contradiction to capitalism, which misses things in present-day life and longs for something vaguely different" (Bell 151; Bloch *Heritage* 2). Jefferson here represents the "contradiction" inherent in nineteenth-century American populism which Pound could "look back for legitimacy" (Brooker "Lesson of EP" 16).

Whereas Pearlman sees the opening of the canto—"Tempus loquendi, / Tempus tacendi" ("There is a time to speak, there is a time to be silent" Terell 120) (31/153)—to be a subject-rhyme between Malatesta (on whose tomb the motto is inscribed) and Jefferson, Bell emphasises the quotation's allusion to Ecclesiastes. More specifically, the inversion of the biblical phrase (in Vulgate's Ecclesiastes the phrase goes "*Tempus tacendi, et Tempus loquendi*" qtd. in Terrell 120) signifies a refusal of "the determinancy [*sic*] of [the natural cycle] by the construction of a man-made world" (154). A third layer of signification becomes apparent by the fact that the phrase is used in a poetry of quotation; as if the "editor-poet" asserts his dominance over the voices he allows to speak and orders to silence throughout the poem (Eiselein 31). Furthermore, the floating signifier in Jefferson's phrase—"*It* wd. have given us / time" (Pound 31/153; emphasis added)—seems to echo the priorly mentioned importance of the "objective-real possibility" (Bloch *Utopian Function* 6). Through the enjambment of "time" the editor-poet seems to emphasise the importance of the objective place within history in relation to the subject's act of creation, the "It".

Continuing, then, from Bell's observation of Jefferson's pronounced triumph over natural time through "mechanical readings of the world" (Bell 153), knowledge is presented as existing within a totality "unfragmented by metaphysics or spiritualism" (154). Practically emancipating mankind through a celebration of man-made creation; "placing his own destiny in his own hands as it became possible to recognize his liberation through the machine, both human and non-human, from the dictatorship of nature's imprisoning circle" (154). Pound presents this materiality latent with potential for construction in Jefferson's advocation for the construction of the Ohio Canal: "water communication between ours and the western / country" (Pound 31/153). Jefferson's advocation for the construction of the canal recurs later in the canto—"…turn through the Potomac,..commerce of Lake Erie…." (31/154)—and, by juxtaposing it with "Jefferson's views on meritocracy" (Bell 155)—"I can further say with

safety there is not a crowned head / in Europe whose talents or merits would entitle him / to be elected a vestryman by any American parish" (Pound 31/155)—Pound argues for a liberation from corrupted and outdated European aristocratic ruling-classes through a celebration of science and technology.

There arises, then, a tension or contradiction between Pound's valorisation of this scientific materialism and a Romantic "yearning that can find no objectification in the material world" (104; Graff qtd. in Schneidau 104). In a contemporary account to Pound's *Eleven New Cantos*, Bloch offered an analysis of fascism's rise and, more poignantly, fascism's mobilisation of a middle-class longing for "*Heimat*, Bloch's symbolic term for the home that we have all sensed but none have ever experience or known" (Zipes *Bloch* 32). As Bloch argues in his *Heritage of Our Times* (1934), the peasantry symbolises a sense of grounding, "being rooted" (99); their sense of freedom rooted in a "[s]oberness and a sense of ownership … stem[ming] from pre-capitalist times" (100). And it is precisely this sense of belonging to another age, this "non-contemporaneity" (97), which paradoxically "commends itself to big business as an instrument against the class struggle, but to the middle stratum simply as a salvation and a topically romantic expression of its non-contemporaneity" (102-3). In practice, Bloch argues, a "false consciousness" arises whereby a "proletarianization de facto" occurs (25), yet, because of an absolute scientific materialism, the peasantry—being deemed "the most organic caste" for their identity is grounded in the nation's soil (90)—in fact constitute a "lasting empty mechanicism most romantically disguised" (90).

This celebration of a kind of materially constituted "nationhood"—"the *national pathos of blood*" (90)—is able to exploit the non-contemporaneity present in society for it "drives time, indeed history out of history: it is space and organic fate, nothing else" (90). While Italian fascism was initially less concerned with eugenics than German fascism[15], the

[15] Only during the second half of the 1930s did Mussolini instate "policy changes with regard to race and religion" (Hull 157).

tension Bloch sees in German fascism between the celebration of science and technology as emancipatory process—instating mankind with creative power—on the one hand, and a valorisation of the irrationality and romanticisation of the pre-capitalist sentiments of the peasantry on the other hand, is exposed in Pound's account of Italian fascism as well, for "Pound failed to recognize that the valorization of technology which such a revival [of scientific materialism] advocated was a prime characteristic of industrial capitalism itself" (Bell 160). Thus, Pound's intended juxtaposition of the Ohio "canal, / 'if practicable, as a very important work" as emblematic of progress and emancipation (31/153) and the reprehensible consequences of debt—a concept of monetary value without material tangibility—as advocated against by Van Buren in Canto XXXVII—"Thou shalt not,' … 'jail 'em for / debt'" (37/181)—are in fact products of the same capitalist, scientific materialism.

In practice, then, Pound's Mussolini/Jefferson apologia-diptych becomes an act "of concealment, stressing the agrarian operations of both men" (Bell 157): "they both hate machinery or at any rate the idea of cooping up men and making 'em all into UNITS, unit production, denting in the individual man, reducing him to a mere amalgam" (Pound *J/M* 63). Not only does Pound explicitly emphasise both men's dislike for the dehumanising character of absolute scientific materialism, he also partakes in what Hull recognises to be a common element of contemporary American perspectives on Italian fascism, for "[b]oth he [Mussolini] and T. J. had sympathy with the beasts" (63): "In contrast to earlier interpretations, which had invoked Mussolini's simple upbringing to portray him as a self-made man who had risen out of poverty in the Horatio Alger tradition, propaganda in the early 1930s tended to root Mussolini in his rural past, to suggest that he still belonged there" (Hull 91-2).

It is in this sense that time, for Pound, is not the "objective, abstract and graduated time of calendar and clock that academic historical studies take for granted, but the subjective time of individual experience" (Hesse 38), for it is precisely the persistence of a different age

in the present one that contains the latent potentialities Pound seeks to extract. Thus, when Pound quotes Jefferson near the end of Canto XXXI—"..this was the state of things in 1785…" (31/156)—it laments not the loss but celebrates the still-latent potentiality of Jefferson's thought. The past becomes "material to be raided" (Brooker "Lesson of EP" 14), yet, in its "literal repeatability" through quotation it appeals to a continuation of essence through history (Bell 166). "The art of quotation", Sieburth argues,

> is a mode not merely of copying or reflecting but of including the real …. In a larger sense yet, quotation involves shifting the emphasis from language as a means of representation to language as the very object of representation. To quote is thus to adduce words to facts, as exhibits, as documents, to lift them out of context, to isolate them, to make them self-evident. (Sieburth 121)

Not only, then, does Pound's presentation of the correspondence between Jefferson and Adams in Canto XXXI (or the fragments from Marx in Canto XXXIII or the Bank War retold through quotations in Canto XXXVII) seek to carry over their pragmatic economic and political relevancy, but, in the historic documents' reconfiguration as poetic fragments, it "seeks to master and control history for its own purposes" (Brooker "Lesson of EP" 18). Already hinted at in Canto XXXI, Pound is highly aware of the power that comes with a control over the access to knowledge and the ability to alter or create social narratives through that very control: "'English papers…their lies….." (31/154). Thus, in responding to a cultural decline through *Eleven New Cantos*, Pound agrees with Bloch that "[n]ot merely the reader is to blame for this, but also those who supply him" (Bloch *Heritage* 29); in fact, this belief in a collusive, deliberate suppression of knowledge occupies a central role in *Eleven New Cantos*, for

> Wherever it [that is, absolute power] has resided
> has never failed to destroy all records, memorials,
> all histories which it did not like, and to corrupt
> those it was cunning enough to preserve….. (Pound 33/160)

Consequently, Pound argues, the "monopolists, obstructors of knowledge, / obstructors of distribution" prevent the very documents Pound now quotes from being printed (14/63). The reason, Pound estimates, are the fact that those in the position to advocate for their circulation "were too god damn stupid to understand it" (*SL* 247); and, seeing himself responsible—"I am perhaps didactic" (*SL* 180)—to educate the masses, he sets outs to "junk our accepted literary heritage and provide us with the true one" (Pearlman 140), including in his poetry the "few clean and decent pages in the nashunul [*sic*] history, …. And Van B. was one of 'em" (Pound *SL* 247). This does not mean, however, that *Eleven New Cantos* constitutes a historically accurate account. For, in his position of power, the editor-poet as "poet-historian" decides (Baar 531), in what Baar deduces to be a "conspicuous manhandling of history" (540), to present the Van Buren and Jackson of Canto XXXVII through mostly positive characterisations, suppressing the Van Buren "whose disgusting conduct regarding the slaves captured from the schooner *Amistad* is only too well known" (540), while describing the antagonists of the Bank War in exclusively derogatory terms: "'The man is a dough-face, a profligate,'" (Pound 37/183).

In an act of a similar hopeful and idealising manner as his inference of Mussolini as "catching the point before the aesthetes had got / there" (41/202) in response to his *A Draft of XXX Cantos*, Pound casts his meeting with the "commandante della piazza" in a utopian wish-image (41/202). The quoted Italian phrase in Canto XLI—"'Noi ci facciam sgannar per Mussolini'" (41/202) (meaning "We would let ourselves be butchered for Mussolini" Terrell 167)—is extrapolated in *Jefferson and/or Mussolini* in order to create an ideal opposite against the suppression of knowledge discussed prior. Intending to look up a manuscript in Romagna and finding the library closed, Pound was surprised by the "Comandante['s]" immediate call to action (*J/M* 27), acknowledging both the importance of the artist and the

availability of knowledge: “the Comandante had damn well decided that if I had taken the trouble to come to Romagna to look at a manuscript, the library would cut the red tape” (27).

Thus, beyond the political and economical causes of decline and their corresponding remedies offered by Pound in *Eleven New Cantos*[16], Pound emphasises a belief in language; a belief in the artist’s vocation to strife for accurate, constructive language which will be able to order “the disarray of life’s materials”[17] (Brooker “Lesson of EP” 23). It is in this sense that the history offered by Pound does not constitute an “escape in the nostalgia of the past” (Bizzini 30), nor does it require the reader to “consult the very sources Pound used in order to understand the poem’s meaning” (39). Instead, Pound “tightens the language” (Eiselein 33); through acts of “condensation”, only the “key phrase” is ordained “to stand alone and resonate” (32). This method, which Pound calls “[t]he ideogrammic method”, presents the reader with a series of “facet[s] … until at some point one gets off the dead and desensitized surface of the reader’s mind, onto a part that will register” (Pound *GK* 51).

Even though the physicality of this ideogrammic method becomes more apparent and striking later in *The Cantos* (“from LII to the end” McGann 106), Canto XXXIX’s quotation of Greek supplemented with English transliterations and use of free verse (which is common throughout *Eleven New Cantos*) achieves a similar effect of “permanence” through materiality (McGann 106). In fact, the materiality of the Greek phrases amplify their meaning, for the entrancing effect of providing sound and rhythm—“kaka pharmak edōken” (39/193)—while withholding meaning—offering the Greek original “κακὰ φάρμακ’ ἔδωκεν” (39/193)—echoes the very effect of Circe’s “evil drugs” (Terrell 161), delivering “the magic of ‘pure’ sound” (Pryor 137). The transliterations in the canto, then, create a sense of

[16] Pound generally accuses a collusive social elite for “deranging the country’s credits, obtaining by panic / control over public mind” (37/184), exploiting the masses “in order to feed on the spoils” (37/184), and propagating war for profit—“guns are a merchandise” (38/191). One of the economic solutions advocated for by Pound—C. H. Douglas’ Social Credit—sought to redress the “clog” in the system (38/190); for a discussion of Pound and Social Credit, see Kenner, Hugh. *The Pound Era*, pp. 301-17.

[17] A tendency which, Brooker argues, is “itself inherently fascistic” (Brooker “Lesson of EP” 23).

"palimpsestueousness, of layers of language, of a calculatedly imperfect erasure" (Alexander 29); the poem creates a "new language" by presenting Greek aurality through transliterations in an English partial retelling of Book X of the *Odyssey*, which, in exclaiming its own creation, includes Latin phrases as well: "'Fac deum!' 'Est factus.'" (39/195) ("Make god! He is made" Terrell 162). It is in this visual-aural understanding of meaning that Pound, talking of the Greek quotations, argues only "one along in 39 that can't be understood without Greek" (Pound *SL* 251). For, where the Latin—"illa dolore obmutuit, partier vocem" (49/194)—tells of a silencing ("She hushed with grief, and her voice likewise" Terrell 161), the consequent Greek stanza remains without transliteration. This stanza—perhaps the "one along in 39" meant by Pound—plays on its very own method of transliteration. At the moment that "Circe falls silent" in the Latin phrase, "the Greek lines give voice to her prophecy" on Odysseus's journey to his *Heimat*[18] (Pryor 137). The Greek lines, then, are without their aural meaning, but offer perhaps, in line with the "Song sharp at the edge" (Pound 39/194), a sense of materiality in their appearance on the page, "like old stones that cannot be deciphered" (Pryor 137).

This notion of doubling, which is not limited to sound and rhythm and quotation, "structures the poem at every level" (Pryor 136). Using this notion of doubling, Pound articulates a contemporary relevance in both Canto XXXIX and XXXVI, a translation of Cavalcanti's "Donna mi Priegha". In Canto XXXIX, Pound blurs the distinction between the present and a kind of a "tradition of cumulative, heterogeneous, inclusive, polytheistic and polymorphic works" (Schneidau 110); the familiarity of walking through Rapallo "where the cat sat" and Pound heard the "'thkk, thgk' / of the loom" seamlessly transitions into the "'Thhgk, thkk' and the sharp sound of a song" of Circe's "spellbinding voice as she glided

[18] I am using Bloch's notion of "Heimat" here (Zipes *Bloch* 32).

back and forth / at her great immortal loom" as heard by Odysseus's men approaching Circe's ingle (Pound 39/193; Homer 10.243-4).

Whereas Canto XXXVI appears to "rise in sharp contrast" with Canto XXXV, to "stand… in judgement upon" the previous images of European decline and offer an image of paradise in "isolation" (Mearhofer 108; Pearlman 155; Pryor 124), it is, in fact, a doubling of a similar understanding of language as propagated through Jefferson and Van Buren elsewhere in *Eleven New Cantos*. Inasmuch as Pound's translation of Cavalcanti constitutes a paradise, Pryor contends that "[i]t seems to clash with Pound's insistence elsewhere that politics and spirituality or history and aesthetics are inseparable" (124). However, taking its cue from the materialistic-scientific language of Jefferson, Canto XXXI actually seems to carry forward, rather than confirm an isolated case, the essential belief in language. Just as Jefferson had stated that the "difference ascribed to our superiority in taking aim when we fire.." (Pound 33/161), Pound includes a translation of "Donna mi Priegha", for Cavalcanti's figurative "expression is there with *purpose to convey* or to interpret a *definite meaning*" (*LE* 154). In line with the Jefferson "intent on clarity and explicitness" (199), the translation echoes the Latin opening of Canto XXXI when it states "I speak in season" (36/177).

In criticising the bourgeois dominance of abstraction, which "makes the dissimilar comparable by reducing it to abstract qualities" (Adorno & Horkheimer qtd. in Bell 163), Pound celebrates Cavalcanti for his exact language; "Guido [Cavalcanti] thought in accurate terms; that the phrases correspond to definite sensations undergone" (Pound *LE* 162). This belief in language's absolute connection to reality echoes from Cavalcanti to Jefferson, who stated that "[d]ictionaries are but the depositories of words already legitimated by usage. Society is the work-shop in which new ones are elaborated" (Jefferson qtd. in Bell 151). Cavalcanti's language, for Pound, originates not from "the proof by reason"[19], but has a

[19] Pound, condemning a belief in the primacy of logic and reason over experience, portrays "Aquinas head down in a vacuum" (36/179).

concrete correspondence in the physical world through "*natural demonstration* and the proof by experience" (*LE* 149; 158). Here, then, arises the same contradiction discussed earlier in this chapter, for Pound celebrates uniqueness "unavailable for exchange as commodities" through the very "metaphors of technology which … are themselves inevitably infected by their contradictory effects in the world of commodities" (Bell 163; 164).

Pound supposes that the poem "is a sort of metaphor on the generation of light" (Pound *LE* 161). The poem is, in this sense, not a developed image for the reader to perceive, but a "vortex of ideas which draws the reader personally into the creative process" (Hesse 15). Pound elucidates this distinction, between presented image and an "ideation in which the image has not yet developed" (15), in his decision to translate, or "distort", "'*accidente*' into '*affect*'" (Pound *LE* 159). As Brooker explains, the Italian is "a term implying the scholastic distinction between substance or essence and accident" (*Guide* 273-4). Applying this distinction to Cavalcanti's notion of love, it becomes apparent that "the essential form of Love is held in the memory, and that human passion is an 'accident' … which occurs when the ideal form seems to be embodied in a particular woman" (Dekker qtd. in Pearlman 155). Thus, Pound's understanding of the poem in scientific terms, as a "metaphor on the generation of light" (Pound *LE* 161), perceives the absolute in materialist terms. The absolute "[c]ometh from a seen form which being understood / Taketh locus and remaining in the intellect" (36/177). Just as love's essence exists as absolute external to the subject—"love as the still point of a turning world" (Pryor 124)—and requires an '*accidente*' or "an affect" to be sensed (Pound 36/177), knowledge (or the absolute in general) exists beyond the subject and requires a "diafan" (177/36), a medium to be perceived and, consequently, to register in the subject. The love which is sensed, then, "is not vertu but cometh of that perfection / Which is so postulate not by the reason / But 'tis felt"[20] (36/178).

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[20] Pound defines "vertu" as "the potency, the efficient property of a substance or person" (qtd. in Brooker *Guide* 274). Specifically referring to Cavalcanti, Pound sees the poet's "interactive force: the *virtu* in short" in that

Pound's hope thus manifests itself, not in "water communication between ours and the western / country" or the deed of "[h]aving drained off the muck by Vada / From the marshes" as such (41/202), but in a profound belief in language. If only the perfect word can be found, the absolute can inform the present. Just as Pound urged regarding "the *form* of *The Cantos*: All I can say or pray is: *wait* till it's there" (Pound *SL* 323), the absolute rejects "a neat, logical argument" (Pryor 126). Instead, the poem has "no will to try proof-bringing" (36/177), anticipating the kind of faith Pound had in his poetic project: "I *have to* get down all the colours or elements I want for the poem. Some perhaps too enigmatically and abbreviatedly. I hope, heaven help me, to bring them into some sort of design and architecture later" (Pound *SL* 180). Pound had hope in language and knew it might not be "understood in his time" (36/179), yet maintains a belief in its capability to access the absolute.

Cavalcanti "declines to limit his aesthetic to the impact of light on the eye" (Pound *LE* 151). In short, Cavalcanti's *virtu* is his presentation of both sense and essence. See also p. 12.

Conclusion

The present study has explored how, for all three poets as well as for Bloch, language, and especially its voicing of the *novum*, is deserving of their faith. Hope manifests itself in a desire to overcome the waste land's teleological void in Eliot, to come to terms with the totalitarian inescapability of death in Yeats, and, in Pound, to articulate absolute essence. Behind the elements of modernity's chaos and decline reside, for all three poets, traces of the not-yet; the future-oriented subject turns to poetry and exclaims "may *great expression* rule … to the sounding of our inner care above the silence of the outer" (Bloch *Spirit* 15).

Chapter 2 has explored a secularisation of Biblical hope in the figure of Tiresias; being emancipated from the determinism of prophecy the flawed seer was responsive to the music, guiding him to an image "[i]nexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold" (Eliot *WL* 54.265). Chapter 3 explored death in terms of physical death, death-through-objectification of the self into the aesthetic object, and symbolic-death of the subject in a network of signification. Concludingly, chapter 4 has explored Pound's quest for a poetics of exactness, and the tensions and paradoxes that arise in attempting to do so. In seeking to establish a language of sense, materiality, and exactness in order to transcend the capitalist dehumanisation of the individual, the poet exhibits a foundational faith in language's diaphanous anticipatory illumination.

In seeking a voice for their hopes, the poets deploy various poetic tropes—i.e., montage-induced estrangement, allusion, quotation, translation, and transliteration—in search of the perfect 'word' in the broadest sense. For language, once extracted from its bourgeois-imposed isolation, can inform the present with a "revolutionary gnosis" (Bloch *Spirit* 279).

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