

The entire matter involves the process of active literary omission and a discussion of method finding its way in the acceptance of [three criteria]: sincerity, objectification, and [contingency].<sup>1</sup> In sincerity shapes appear concomitants of word combinations, precursors of (if there is continuance) completed sound or structure, melody or form. Writing occurs which is the detail, not mirage, of seeing, of thinking with the things as they exist, and of directing them along a line of melody. Shapes suggest themselves, and the mind senses and receives awareness. Parallels sought for in the other arts call up the perfect line of occasional drawing, the clear beginnings of sculpture not proceeded with. Presented with sincerity, the mind even tends to supply, in further suggestion which does not attain rested totality, the totality not always found in sincerity and necessary only for perfect rest, complete appreciation. This rested totality may be called objectification—the apprehension satisfied completely as to the appearance of the art form as an object. That is: distinct from print which records action and existence and incites the mind to further suggestion, there exists, tho it may not be harbored as solidity in the crook of an elbow, writing (audibility in two dimensional print) which is an object or affects the mind as such. The codifications of the rhetoric books may have something to do with an explanation of this attainment, but its character may be simply described as the arrangement, into one apprehended unit, of minor units of sincerity and [contingency]—in other words, the resolving of words and their ideation into structure. Granted that the word combination “minor unit of sincerity” is an ironic index of the degradation of the power of the individual word in a culture which seems hardly to know that each word in itself is an arrangement, it may be said that each word possesses objectification and [contingency] to a powerful degree; but that the facts carried by one word are, in view of the preponderance of facts carried by combinations of words, not sufficiently explicit to warrant a realization of rested totality such as might be designated an art form. Yet the objectification which is a poem, or a unit of structural prose, may exist in a very few lines.

—Louis Zukofsky, “Sincerity and Objectification: With Special Reference to the Work of Charles Reznikoff,” *Poetry* 37.5 (1931): 273-274.

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<sup>1</sup> For the articulation of *contingency* within context of this passage, see W. Scott Howard and Broc Rossell, “‘After’ Objectivism: sincerity, objectification, contingency,” *Poetics and Praxis ‘After’ Objectivism*, ed. W. Scott Howard and Broc Rossell (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2018), 1-20; 181-189.