

CHAPTER IX

THE ORIGINS OF IMAGISM

WHILE English poetic theory was affected by the cultural interests discussed in the preceding chapter, the reevaluation of its traditional technique and content that originated among a group of poets brought together by a review in *The New Age* was to prove of more importance for its subsequent development. Hulme called this group his 'Secession Club'; Pound referred to it as the 'School of Images' and 'the forgotten school of 1909'. Most of its members contributed to *The New Age*, and its activities deserve more detailed attention than they have hitherto received. Because of Pound's assertion that the Imagists were 'the descendants of the forgotten school of 1909',¹ the latter group has been considered only as a precursor of Imagism, and its real significance has been obscured by this mode of treatment. In addition to revealing the origin of several characteristics of modern poetry, the history of the forgotten school provides an insight into the process of literary development during its time, as distinguished from a history of the masterpieces that emerged from this process. 'Most histories of poetry,' says Professor Isaacs,

are just a chronological sequence of accounts of individual poets. What we need is perspective rather than chronology, based on what was really happening in poetry itself, rather than in certain prominent and successful poets—a history of the turf rather than of winners only. . . . We need a history of the struggle, rather than the achievements, of the process of

¹ *The Ripostes of Ezra Pound* (London, 1912), p. 59.

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English poetry as seen by the reading public, and by poets struggling for the glory and dignity of their craft.¹

The history of the forgotten school of 1909 exemplifies this struggle.

I. F. S. FLINT AND THE FORGOTTEN SCHOOL OF 1909

When Holbrook Jackson left *The New Age* in 1907, Orage was left without a contributor whom he considered qualified to write a column on poetry. Perhaps he told some of the regular contributors to look for a poet with critical abilities (he seems to have preferred that the magazine's reviews be written by authors rather than scholars or critics). M. D. Eder recommended F. S. Flint. An interview was arranged; and, in spite of the fact that Flint had little formal education, no experience as a reviewer, and no publications to his credit (aside from a poem published in *The New Age* a few months earlier), he left Orage's office with an armful of books, having been appointed the magazine's poetry critic.² Orage may have found himself in agreement with the ideas that Flint expressed during this interview. Twelve years earlier, he had argued that the form of poetic expression 'varies progressively in all ages, that rhyme and regular metre are to poetry what ruffs and doublets in Elizabethan times were to the human—a temporary fashion, not an essential attribute. Poetry is independent of forms, though not of form.'³ F. S. Flint's earliest reviews show that he shared this opinion.

The first of Flint's articles on poetry appeared in July

¹ J. Isaacs, *The Background of Modern Poetry* (London, 1951), pp. 2-3.

² Interview with F. S. Flint, Nov. 1959.

³ *The Labour Leader*, VIII (4 Jan. 1896), 2.

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1908; with the possible exception of an essay by T. E. Hulme (which cannot be dated with certainty), it contains the earliest statement of several principles apparently shared by members of the forgotten school. The first part of this article concerns *Sword and Blossom*, a volume of Japanese poetry translated by Shotaro Kimura and C. M. A. Peake:

Surely nothing more tenderly beautiful has been produced of late years than this delicate conspiracy of Japanese artist and Japanese poet! It is a pity, however, that the translators did not choose some other measure than the heavy English rhymed quatrain. It is probable that nearly all the spontaneity of the Japanese tanka has thus been lost. The Japanese, we are told, are quick to take an artistic hint . . . and 'to them in poetry as in painting, the half-said thing is dearest'—the suggestion, not the complete picture (one thinks of Stéphane Mallarmé). A word will awaken in them, therefore, a whole warp and weft of associations. Take this haikai, typical of a common form of Japanese poetry:

Alone in a room
Deserted—
A peony.

Or

A fallen petal
Flies back to its branch:
Ah! A butterfly!

I could have wished that the poems in this book had been translated into little dropping rhythms, unrhymed. To the poet who can catch and render, like these Japanese, the brief fragments of his soul's music, the future lies open. The day of the lengthy poem is over—at least, for this troubled age. . . .

[Commenting on the soulful excesses of a contemporary poet:] For the new humanity he builds the lofty rhyme; but it is to be feared, alas, that the new humanity will prefer more subtle rhythms and broken cadences.¹

¹ NA, III (11 July 1908), 212-13.

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Indirect presentation, free verse, vivid fragments rather than lengthy poems: Flint returns again and again to these ideas in the reviews written between 1908 and 1910. However, the fact that he advocated a radical departure from traditional techniques before his association with Hulme and Pound should not lead us to conclude that his opinions were unique at this date or that they were a decisive influence on his contemporaries. Edward Storer must have independently arrived at similar conclusions by this time. While his *Mirrors of Illusion* bears the publication date 1909, Flint reviewed the volume in November, 1908; we can assume that the manuscript was nearly complete in July of that year (the date of Flint’s first review). On reading *Mirrors of Illusion*, Flint recognized that he and Storer had a great deal in common:

How much . . . can a poet be conscious of his art, or can have any art at all, who, like Mr Drinkwater, writes at the end of his second volume:

Men say the strings are broken
Of the magic lute of old,
That heaven sends no token
Of its silver tongues of gold

and so on for five stanzas. Against this mere wordiness and mechanical rhythm it is good to place Mr Edward Storer’s verse, and to know, from the essay at the end of his book, sweeping and wrong though it may be in many of its assertions, that we have a poet who has fought his way out of convention, and formed for himself a poetique. Neither is it surprising to find that he has drawn inspiration from France. . . . Mr Storer makes war on all poetic conventions . . . and [for him] the soul of poetry is the *vers libre*—heroic blank verse cut up and phrased according to the flow of the emotion and exercise of the sixth sense.¹

¹ NA, IV (26 Nov. 1908), 95.

Poetry’ was read at one of the Club’s meetings before March 1909. It is impossible to determine whether Hulme’s essay antedates Flint’s earliest reviews and Storer’s *Mirrors of Illusion*. In any case, such information is not really important; the similarities in the ideas they expressed could have resulted from their reliance on the same sources of information regarding contemporary French poetry.¹

Two of Hulme’s poems appeared in *For Christmas, MDCCCXVIII*, an anthology published by the Poets’ Club belatedly in January of 1909. It was Flint’s attack on this volume in *The New Age* that resulted in his acquaintance with Hulme and the founding of the forgotten school of 1909. In a passage that has often been quoted, Flint scornfully compared the ‘after dinner ratiocinations’ of the Poets’ Club and its ‘tea-parties in suave South Audley Street’ to the ‘discussions in obscure cafés’ that ‘regenerated, remade French poetry’. The letter from Hulme which appeared in the following issue contained a spirited refutation of the Bohemian implications of Flint’s article.² In one sense, however, Flint had the best of the argument: a few weeks later, Hulme was contributing to the rebirth of English poetry in discussions that took place in an obscure English café.

According to Flint, the others present at the first meeting of Hulme’s ‘Secession Club’ in March 1909, were Edward Storer, Florence Farr (who probably knew Flint through her association with *The New Age*), Joseph

¹ Hulme did not know Storer and had not read *Mirrors of Illusion* before early 1909 (undated letter from Hulme to Flint, probably written between late February and mid-March, 1909. I am grateful to Mrs Ianthe Price, F. S. Flint’s daughter, and to the University of Texas for having allowed me to examine his literary remains).

² *NA*, IV (11 Feb. 1909), 327; *NA*, IV (18 Feb. 1909), 350.

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Campbell (an Irish poet whose best-known poems are contained in *The Mountainy Singer*, published that year), Francis Tancred (a friend of Hulme's and 'a perfect museum piece', according to Pound),¹ and 'one or two other men, mere vaguements in my memory', whom Hulme may have induced to secede from the Poets' Club with him.² Pound was introduced at the fourth of the group's weekly meetings, a few days after the publication of *Personae*. Flint's review of *Personae* probably provides a representative picture of the impression Pound made on the group :

Mr Pound is a poet with a distinct personality, he is a rebel against all conventions except sanity; there is something robustly impish and elfish about him. He writes with fresh beauty and vigour; and revolting against the crepuscular spirit in modern poetry cries:

I would shake off the lethargy of this our time, and give
For shadows—shapes of power,
For dreams—men. . . .

Let us at once acknowledge what Mr Pound owes to Browning, his mediaeval poets, mystics and thinkers, and, perhaps, a little to Mr Yeats and Thompson; and take his poems as poetry, without reference to the sources of the raw material. I think there is sufficient craft and artistry, originality and imagination in *Personae* to warrant one in giving them high praise. Mr Pound writes in a free form of verse that will not,

¹ Patricia Hutchins, *Ezra Pound's Kensington* (London, 1965), p. 128. Pound says that Desmond Fitzgerald also attended these meetings (*ibid.*); he has not been treated in this discussion because I have been unable to locate any of his poems.

² Flint, 'The History of Imagism', pp. 70-1. A letter-card from Hulme to Flint dated 24 Mar. 1909, indicates that Ernest Radford and Ernest Rhys may have attended this meeting.



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I hope, lead him into the wastes. He is working toward a form that other English poets might study.¹

Flint's review of *Exultations* six months later shows that while he disliked Pound's polyglottery, he found in this volume and its predecessor the proof (as contrasted with the theories and experiments of others) that free verse was to replace conventional forms:

Mr Pound is an American, and a hotchpotch of picturesque-ness, made of divers elements—in literature, words from divers tongues—is the American idea of beauty. Thank heaven that Mr Pound is a poet also, and that this picturesqueness is only the sauce in the dish. . . . One thing is proved by these two little books of his, *Personae* and *Exultations*, and that is that the old devices of regular metrical beat and regular rhyming are worn out; the sonnet and the three-quatrain poem will probably always live; but for the larger music verse must be free from all the restraints of a regular return and a squared-up frame; the poet must forge his rhythm according to the impulse of the creative emotion working through him.²

Pound and Flint have given conflicting reports of the discussions that took place at the meetings of the forgotten school and their significance in relation to Imagism. Flint's account, written only six years later, has usually been accepted as accurate; however, his hostility toward Pound at this time (apparently shared by the other contributors to the Imagist issue of *The Egoist*, 1 May 1915) may have coloured his account. Pound took issue with Flint's 'History of Imagism' shortly after it appeared; his letters to Flint on this occasion, which have not yet been published, make it clear that Imagism as he conceived it had little to do with the discussions of the forgotten

¹ NA, V (27 May 1909), 101.

² NA, VI (6 Jan. 1910), 233-4.

school.¹ Whom are we to believe? Lacking the opportunity to cross-examine the witnesses, it seems justifiable to disregard their testimony concerning these discussions and to examine instead the criticism and poetry produced by members of the group.

By 1915, discussion of the origins of Imagism had been distorted by two factors. First, the forgotten school was being discussed not in terms of its own theories and experiments, but as a precursor of a later group of poets committed to a different aesthetic and writing a different kind of poetry. Thus some of its accomplishments were disregarded, and others interpreted in an entirely different light. Secondly, what was once a co-operative creative endeavour had by 1915 become the subject of a querulous apportionment of literary and philosophic laurels. It is doubtful that the members of the forgotten school selfishly tried to 'influence' each other and suspiciously analysed the insights of their colleagues to see if they were based on stolen ideas. It is also doubtful that one member (Hulme—or Pound—or Flint) educated his naïve friends, that these were in some sense postgraduate lectures for neophyte poets rather than intelligent discussions among equals. Through examining such documents as can be dated with certainty, it is possible to confirm these assumptions. In the creative spirit of 1909 rather than the critical spirit of 1915, let us try to obtain some understanding of the activities of this group.

The fine arts have often been important sources of ideas and analogies for literary revolutions. The Imagists, as we have seen, proclaimed themselves contemporaries of the Post-Impressionists. The school of 1909 also stressed

¹ Flint's replies to Pound, together with an account of the quarrel, can be found in Christopher Middleton's 'Documents on Imagism from the Papers of F. S. Flint', *The Review* (Apr. 1965), pp. 35-51.

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the importance of the visual element in poetry; however, it drew its inspiration from an earlier school of painting:

Impressionism has shown us a technique which seeks apparently to belittle itself in order that there may be more room for art itself. To argue for or against impressionism at this time of the day would be as foolish as to write a treatise proving the circulation of the blood. . . .

An examination of the best things in the best poetry of the world enables us, to some extent, to find out what good poetry does really consist of. On close analysis, it seems to be made up of scattered lines, which are pictures, descriptions, or suggestions of something at present incapable of accurate identification.

In all the arts, we seek for the maximum of individual and personal expression, rather than for the attainment of any absolute beauty. . . . There is an analogous change in painting, where the old endeavoured to tell a story, the modern attempts to fix an impression. We still perceive the mystery of things, but we perceive it in entirely a different way—no longer directly in the form of action, but as an impression, for example Whistler's pictures. We can't escape from the spirit of our times. What has found expression in painting as Impressionism will soon find expression in poetry as free verse.¹

The first of these quotations is from Storer, and the second, from Hulme; while Flint never used the word 'Impressionism', it is clear, from his discussion of Japanese poetry, that he was arguing for a form of poetry similar to the one they envisioned. But such statements are only the beginnings of a theory of poetry. They suggest the areas of theoretical and practical exploration which occupied the school of 1909 for at least a year. To

¹ Storer, *Mirrors of Illusion*, pp. 101-2; Hulme, *Further Speculations*, ed. Sam Hynes (Lincoln, Nebr., 1962), pp. 71-2.

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judge from surviving evidence, they gave more concerted attention to problems of versification than to any others; perhaps this is because technique lends itself to disinterested discussion and can enrich that particular talent or temperament which constitutes the ‘voice’ of each poet. While they also concerned themselves with the diction, subject matter, and content of poetry, their treatment of these subjects was more tentative and less concordant.

Their interest in prosody resulted from their discovery of free verse in French poetry and in Henley. Simply as a technical device, free verse had been little more than an idiosyncrasy in the English tradition, rediscovered by successive generations (Milton and Cowley, Macpherson, Whitman and Arnold, Edward Carpenter and Stephen Crane) through imitation of classic models (Greek drama, the Pindaric ode, the King James Version) with varying degrees of success. The forgotten school helped make free verse an enduring concern in twentieth-century poetry because it saw free verse as a means of reintegrating ‘sound and sense’ in a period of perfunctory versification and provided a rationale concerning its use. Storer wrote:

Form should take its shape from the vital, inherent necessities of the matter, not by, as it were, a kind of rigid mould into which the poetry is to be poured, to accommodate itself as best it can. There is no absolute virtue in iambic pentameters as such, for instance, however well done they may be. There is no immediate virtue in rhythm or rhyme even. These things are merely means to an end. Judged by themselves, they are monstrosities of childish virtuosity and needless iteration. Indeed, rhythm and rhyme are often destructive of thought, lulling the mind into a drowsy kind of stupor with their everlasting, regular cadences and stiff, mechanical lilts.¹

This desire to create an organic relationship between

¹ *Mirrors of Illusion*, pp. 106-7.

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rhythm and meaning was shared by Pound, Flint, Hulme, and Florence Farr ('it is a delicate and difficult art,' wrote Hulme, 'that of fitting the rhythm to the idea'). Free verse, advocated on these grounds, was also advocated by Hulme for historical reasons:

It must be admitted that verse forms, like manners, and like individuals, develop and die. They evolve from their initial freedom to decay and finally to virtuosity. They disappear before the new man, burdened with the thought more complex and more difficult to express by the old name. After being too much used, their primitive effect is lost.¹

These arguments for free verse came directly from French poets. Storer and Hulme both refer to Gustave Kahn as the originator of free verse, and Hulme unquestionably read Kahn's discussion of the subject, as comparison of the following quotation with the preceding one reveals:

Il faut bien admettre que, ainsi des moeurs et des modes, les formes poétiques se développent et meurent, qu'elles évoluent d'une liberté initiale à un dessèchement, puis à une inutile virtuosité; et qu'alors elles disparaissent devant l'effort des nouveaux lettrés préoccupés, ceux-ci, d'une pensée plus complexe, par conséquent plus difficile à rendre au moyen de formules d'avance circonscrites et fermées. On sait aussi qu'après avoir trop servi les formes demeurent comme effacées; leur effet primitif est perdu. . . .²

This is but one of several instances in which Hulme simply translates (with occasional deletions or additions) from a French source without attribution. Champions of Hulme who accuse Pound of stealing his ideas are in a precarious

¹ *Further Speculations*, pp. 689.

² Gustave Kahn, 'Sur le vers libre', *Premiers Poèmes* (Paris, 1897), p. 23.

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position. A more realistic approach to literary ethics would lead to the conclusion that good ideas are relatively scarce, and that it is to any writer's credit if he is able to recognize and use them.

It is probably impossible for us to appreciate the difficulties that these poets encountered and the energies they expended in the exploration of poetic rhythms. Poems which seem to us simply skilful or merely routine may have been, in relation to the thousands of poems written during that period which are now forgotten, replete with technical innovation. The forgotten school experimented endlessly, read (and wrote) treatises on metrics, adopted unusual forms from languages they knew and occasionally from languages they didn't know.

Storer's experiments in verse form, in addition to the type illustrated in the poems quoted above, included prose poems, free verse technically similar to that of Henley, and rhythmically irregular poems with rhyme. They are more obviously related to contemporary French poetry than those of other members of the forgotten school. Flint's range approximates that of Storer, though he more often employs traditional stanzaic patterns and occasionally uses unusual forms that may have been inspired by Provençal poetry, or Pound's experiments with these forms, as in the following example:

Praise?—
I sing of the trees
And the wind's and the sea's ways
And the rose that brushed your face
Yet I can find for you
No praise.¹

The range of rhythmic exploration in Hulme's poems is

¹ 'Unpraised', *In the Net of Stars* (London, 1909), p. 62.

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impressive, considering how few he wrote. Their variety does not result from random experimentation: he had obviously found the form within which he wanted to work, and such conventional patterns as seem at first to obtrude from this form usually prove to be functional upon closer examination. A comparison of the final version of 'Sunset (II)' with the earlier version, which bears accentual marks, reveals the painstaking care he exercised in rhythmic revision.¹

Francis Tancred, Padraic Colum, Joseph Campbell, and Florence Farr devoted their attention to verse forms more closely related to earlier traditions. The few poems by Tancred that survive are written in carefully wrought couplets. According to Flint, he 'used to spend hours each day in search of the right phrase'; a meticulously revised version of one of his poems, originally published in an anthology in 1911, appeared in *The New Age* nine years later. Pound aptly compared him to Herrick, and it is possible that the dry, hard, fanciful verse advocated by Hulme in 'Romanticism and Classicism' is exemplified in the works of Tancred. As a tribute to the last of the neo-classicists, I quote his poem 'To T. E. Hulme':

Great Hulme! as you by dint of toil have won
Laurels and cater for your pot, have done
With fostering verse, lay by Sorel, desist
From turning your yoked brain-might into grist;
And let your thoughts like boots long stretched on trees
Relax where Host Mirth at the Cheshire Cheese
Plumps a guest's craving for enjoyment with
Dishes and wines that give lank'd sprites new pith.²

¹ Alun Jones, *The Life and Opinions of Thomas Ernest Hulme* (London, 1960), pp. 177-8.

² *The Poetry Review*, I (Dec. 1912), 537; line 4 is corrected in accordance with a letter from Tancred to Flint.

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While Padraic Colum, who occasionally attended the group’s meetings,¹ experimented with a form of free verse, similar in its rhythmic periods to the King James Version, most of the poems he wrote during this period employ short rhymed lines. Given this basic form, a great deal of metric originality is possible when using run-on lines and substituted feet to create counter-rhythms. The diction and imagery of his poetry may have served as examples of a desired simplicity for other members of the group.

Joseph Campbell is a poet too little read and discussed in connection with the origins of Imagism. A number of the poems in *The Mountainy Singer* are similar in form and method to the following one:

The dawn whiteness.
A bank of slate-grey cloud lying heavily over it.
The moon, like a hunted thing, dropping into a cloud.²

Like the poets of ‘a certain French school’ mentioned by Pound in *Ripostes*, Campbell ‘attempted to dispense with verbs altogether’ in his descriptive poems. The following lines are from ‘A Thousand Feet Up’, another of his ‘impressionistic’ experiments:

A thousand feet up: twilight.
Westwards, a clump of firtrees silhouetted against a bank of
cumulus cloud;

The June aglow like a sea behind. . . .
A falcon wheeling overhead
The moon rising.
The damp smell of the night in my nostrils.³

The Mountainy Singer, which was probably in press before

¹ Hutchins, p. 128.

² ‘The Dam Whiteness’, *The Mountainy Singer* (Dublin, 1909), p. 45.

³ *The Mountainy Singer*, p. 9.

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Campbell had been influenced by the meetings in 1909, also contains an example of the Hebrew verse form that Flint mentions as having served as a model for experimentation. Such evidence as is available indicates that Campbell was as representative a member of the forgotten school as Flint, Storer, or Hulme; thus his work confirms the hypothesis that there was no *maître d'école*.

The actress Florence Farr (Mrs Florence Emery) was one of those amazing 'new women' produced by the iconoclastic temper of the turn of the century. Her mysticism led to friendship with Yeats; her rebellion against social conventions and abilities as an actress led to friendship with Shaw; and her concern with the interrelationships of music, poetry, and the spoken language made her a central figure in discussions of poetry during these years. Her readings—for the poets that gathered at the homes of Yeats and Ernest Rhys, at Pound's flat in Kensington—were sometimes accompanied by the psalter which Arnold Dolmetsch had designed for her. The interest of the forgotten school in the relationship between poetic rhythms and the spoken language may have been a result of her influence as a reader and theorist. Yeats gave serious attention to her book *The Music of Speech* (published in 1909—as Hulme noted, almost every member of the group produced a book that year). However, he felt that her own poetry was not as successful in creating verbal music as Pound's.¹ Her poems are so difficult to trace that it is impossible to generalize about them; as experiments with rhythm, they retain some interest.

In examining poems produced by the forgotten school between 1908 and 1912, one finds little evidence of concerted experimentation with regard to diction, selection of subject matter, and content. The statements regarding

¹ *The Letters of W. B. Yeats* (London, 1954), p. 543.

an 'impressionistic' poetry quoted earlier express an attitude toward subject matter which was shared by most members of the group: on occasion they all treated subjects which most of their contemporaries would have considered too mundane to embody appropriately poetic significance. Ford Madox Ford, like Hulme, advocated a return to the commonplace as a source of subjects. In an article published in 1909, Ford argued that the rebirth of poetry would come 'when some young poets get it into their heads to come out of their book-closets and take, as it were, a walk down Fleet Street, or a ride on the top of a bus from Shepherd's Bush to Poplar'.¹ Flint recommended this article to readers of *The New Age*, but added that the task of renovating a language which had become 'a set of newspaper counters' (the influence of Hulme is here unmistakable) could not be solved simply through selection of subject, and reiterated an argument of the aestheticians: 'The town itself has no real organic existence—only that of a machine; so that, as it rumbles and roars over his head, the poet turns inward, and writes of what he finds there.'²

Caution is necessary in attempting to generalize about the content of the poems written by the group during these years or the aesthetic on which they were based. Hulme, Storer, Flint, and Campbell each wrote a few poems that could serve as illustrations of Hulme's statement that the modern poet seeks 'the maximum of individual and personal expression' in attempting to communicate 'some vague mood' through 'minute perfections of phrase and words'.³ But they also wrote other types

¹ 'Modern Poetry', *The Thrush*, I (Dec. 1909), 52-3. Perhaps his remarks resulted in Pound's 'Dans un omnibus de Londres'.

² *NA*, VI (6 Jan. 1910), 234.

³ 'A Lecture on Modern Poetry', *Further Speculations*, pp. 71-2.

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of poetry—Hulme whimsically domesticating a ‘poetic’ subject in the closing lines of a poem with allusion to a child’s balloon or petticoat, Campbell eschewing content in pursuit of pure description or working with song and ballad forms, Flint departing toward a Keatsian romanticism sometimes tempered by irony.

In its theoretical statements concerning content and subject matter, the forgotten school represented a continuation of aestheticism (including of course the Symbolist influences on this movement). Literary impressionism, defined by Pater, found poetic embodiment in Wilde’s ‘Impressions’ (1877) and Symons’ *Silhouettes*, the latter of which contains a preface justifying ‘impressionistic’ poetry. After a period of dormancy, Symons’ theories gained renewed currency with the republication of his collected poems in 1906 and *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* in 1908. While the forgotten school was less self-conscious in cultivating an awareness of the fleeting impression than its predecessors, its short poems were clearly based on an impressionist theory, and most of its members never attempted to free themselves from the subjectivity that Pound later identified as ‘softness’ in poetry. Their emphasis on the commonplace as a source of subjects can be traced to Henley and Symons.

It is in technique that the poets of the forgotten school are clearly differentiated from most of their contemporaries (the Georgians, for example). Instead of using an inherited poetic vocabulary indiscriminately, they tended to employ a diction appropriate to the theme and subject at hand, with the result that each poem displayed a distinct decorum. Their lines were seldom ‘padded’ for metrical purposes—a technical improvement that the forgotten school may have developed through practice with free verse. Unlike their contemporaries, the forgotten

school seldom produced narrative or didactic poems. Their concentration on the short lyric had the effect of making technique, rather than subject or conceptual originality, the criterion of their success. While they employed poetic diction, inversions—the outworn techniques that were to be condemned by Imagism—they did so far less than most poets of the time. If there is a collective tendency in their work, it lies in their attempt to evoke a response without naming it or simply providing a frame of reference with which 'poetic' emotions are traditionally associated—a tendency to make technique rather than information or convention the mode of artistic communication.

In discussing the theory and practice of the forgotten school, it has been necessary to rely on the distinctions of our handbooks of poetry (prosody, subject matter, content, diction) for clarity of exposition. But it is in the inter-relationships of these elements that the contribution of the forgotten school is at once most significant and least tangible. Their primary aim was to achieve a reintegration of form and content. Novelty of subject or verse-form is not essential, in fact it is only incidentally relevant, to this aim. They may have regarded the very short poem and free verse (their most striking and influential innovations) simply as means to an end. Regardless of the theory that introduced it, the short poem can be seen as a laboratory for poetic experiment. It is ideally suited for the solution of a few problems at a time, and after practising with it, most of them went on to write longer poems. Likewise, they considered free verse a legitimate form of poetic expression but not by any means the only acceptable or desirable form. The most important contribution of the forgotten school to Imagism was neither the short poem nor free verse; it can be found in works which appear purely conventional at first glance.

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Consider, for example, the following passages:

Do you recall one calm, sad autumn eve's
Bitterness, when we walked along the street
And all the while were rustling at our feet
The shrivelled spoils of summer. . . .

And round about were the wistful stars
With white faces like town children.¹

Both passages (the first from Flint, the second from Hulme) are based on conventional metres; both are derivative (the first from Baudelaire's 'Une Charogne', the second from Henley's 'Midsummer Midnight Skies', as Professor Isaacs has noted); neither displays any notable innovation of subject or theme, for the modern reader; yet each displays a sensitive integration of sound and sense and implies an evaluation of the poetry of the period. Flint reinforces his irony through the run-on line followed by a trochaic substitution ('Bitterness'), where Baudelaire had relied primarily on subject matter for his startling effect ('Rappelez-vous l'objet que nous vîmes, mon âme, / Ce beau matin d'été si doux: / Au détour d'un sentier, une charogne infame . . .'). He deliberately collocates the choicest epithets of his contemporaries in the first line in order to cauterize them with the second. Hulme reinforces his comparison by making the rhythm in the first hemistich in line two correspond to the second (this is the only line in the poem displaying such correspondence). His second line, in contrast to Henley's ('The wistful stars / Shine like good memories'), fixes our sense of the speaker (for only a country man could have said *that*) and undercuts a decade of poetic stars at the same time.

Many examples displaying an equal concern with the

¹ 'Once in Autumn', *In the Net of Stars*, p. 34; Hulme, 'Autumn', in Jones, p. 156.

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integration of form and content could be adduced from the works of the forgotten school. They would display few obvious similarities that would differentiate them from the well-written poetry of any period. In seeking deeper emotional sources for poetry than those that issued in (or were derived from) cliché, and in trying to find forms appropriate to these sources, the forgotten school helped revive the conception of poetry as an art requiring careful study, and Pound's distinction between 'hard' and 'soft' poetry does not lessen the importance of this accomplishment. Revitalization of a tradition results from discovery, or rediscovery, of the essentials of art; discovery requires experiment, and experiment entails failure. Considering their circumstances, these poets were remarkably successful. The forgotten school is appropriately named; but if it failed to create a body of poetry that is of major significance, at least it helped create an atmosphere in which the achievements of the following years would be possible.

II. T. E. HULME AND THE 'IMAGE'

Flint probably introduced the members of the forgotten school to Orage, for in July, 1909, a few months after it began meeting, both Hulme and Storer became contributors to *The New Age*.¹ Hulme's first contribution was a review of books by William James and Bergson; soon he commenced a series of articles entitled 'Searchers after Reality', discussing the philosophical works of E. Belfort Bax, Haldane, and Jules de Gaultier. Most of his subsequent writings were to appear in *The New Age*, and after 1912 he was to contribute to the political philosophy

¹ Hulme, 'The New Philosophy', *NA*, V (1 July 1909), 198-9; Storer, 'Two Fables' [prose poems], *NA*, V (22 July 1909), 251.

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which emerged from the magazine's rejection of Collectivist Socialism. Our present concern, however, is with his earlier contributions, in particular with those which shed light on his conception of the 'image'.

In the preceding pages, Hulme's poetry and poetic have been discussed in relation to the activities of the forgotten school as a whole. While his short poems are superior to those produced by other members of the group, his poetic—that is, his statements concerning specific procedures relating to the writing of poetry—is so similar to theirs as to justify treating it in that context. His unique theoretical contribution to the forgotten school seems to have been his theory of the 'image', which Pound is said to have elaborated, or stolen, or invented independently, as the basis of Imagisme (Pound's '-e' suffix here being retained to distinguish his conception of the movement from the 'Imagism' over which Amy Lowell presided after 1914). Rather than reviewing the evidence, most of which comes from secondary sources, that leads to the selection of one of these descriptions of the relationship between the theories of Hulme and those of Pound, I shall discuss briefly Hulme's theory of the image and its origins, insofar as these are ascertainable from his contributions to *The New Age*.

One of Hulme's early articles is of particular value in that it contains the only surviving record of his theory of language, and of the image, that can with certainty be dated as belonging to the period when the forgotten school was meeting.

In prose as in algebra concrete things are embodied in signs or counters, which are moved about according to rules, without being visualized at all in the process. There are in prose certain type situations and arrangements of words, which move as automatically into certain other arrangements as do

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functions in algebra. One only changes the x's and y's back into physical things at the end of the process. Poetry, in one aspect at any rate, may be considered as an effort to avoid this characteristic of prose. It is not a counter language, but a visual concrete one. It is a compromise for a language of intuition which would hand over sensations bodily. It always endeavours to arrest you, and to make you continuously see a physical thing, to prevent you gliding through an abstract process. It chooses fresh epithets and fresh metaphors, not so much because they are new and we are tired of the old, but because the old cease to convey a physical thing and become abstract counters. Nowadays, when one says the hill is 'clothed' with trees, the word suggests no physical comparison. To get the original visual effect one would have to say 'ruffed', or use some new metaphor. . . . Visual meanings can only be transferred by the new bowl of metaphor: prose is an old pot that lets them leak through. Prose is in fact the museum where the dead images of verse are preserved. Images in verse are not mere decoration, but the very essence of an intuitive language.¹

Such, we can assume, was the theory he expounded at the meetings of the forgotten school.

Certain aspects of this conception, in particular the emphasis on 'intuition', originated in the writings of Bergson. In *Les données immédiates de la conscience*, which Hulme read in 1907, he had written: 'Le poète est celui chez qui les sentiments se développent en images, et les images elles-mêmes en paroles, dociles au rythme, pour les traduire. En voyant repasser devant nos yeux ces images, nous éprouverons à notre tour le sentiment qui en était pour ainsi dire l'équivalent émotionnel. . . .'² Hulme apparently approved of this conception, for it is similar to that expressed in his 'Lecture on Modern Poetry': 'Say

¹ NA, V (19 Aug. 1909), 315.

² *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (Paris, 1889), p. 11.

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the poet is moved by a certain landscape, he selects from that certain images which, put into juxtaposition in separate lines, serve to suggest and to evoke the state he feels.¹ More important than Bergson's description of poetry as consisting of images, however, was the use of the word '*image*' in his philosophic writings. In these it was invested with a significance which made it ideally suited for aesthetic applications.

For Bergson, an 'intuition' was by definition incommunicable; yet as a philosopher it was his aim to communicate it. The '*image*' was the pivotal concept mediating between intuition and the misleading fixities of linguistic symbolism. In a paper which Hulme heard presented at the Philosophical Congress in Bologna in 1911, Bergson described the importance of the image as follows:

What is this intuition [which gives rise to philosophic systems that fail to communicate it]? If the philosopher has not been able to give the formula for it, we certainly are not able to do so, But what we shall manage to recapture and to hold is a certain intermediary image between the simplicity of the concrete intuition and the complexity of the abstractions which translate it, a receding and vanishing image, which haunts, unperceived perhaps, the mind of the philosopher, which follows him like his shadow through the ins and outs of his thought and which, if it is not the intuition itself, approaches it much more closely than the conceptual expression. . . .

[Speaking of the essence of Berkeley's philosophy:] We shall get closer to it, if we can reach the mediating *image* referred to above,—an image which is almost matter in that it still allows itself to be seen, and almost mind in that it no longer allows itself to be touched. . . .²

¹ *Further Speculations*, p. 73.

² 'Philosophical Intuition', *The Creative Mind* (N.Y., 1946), pp. 128-9, p. 139. Hulme wrote an account of the Bologna conference for *The New Age*, VIII (27 Apr. 1911), 607-8.

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It is this image—almost matter and almost mind; almost concrete, but intangible, and vibrant with meaning, yet not to be defined by ratiocination—that poetry presents.

Hulme undoubtedly deserves the credit for introducing this concept of the image to the forgotten school of 1909, having developed its aesthetic and linguistic implications.¹ When he says, for example, that poetry is 'a compromise for a language of intuition' he is referring to the compromise outlined above. Hulme was not the only writer to recognize the relevance of Bergson's 'image' to poetic theory. In French criticism between 1900 and 1911, the *image* was replacing the ineffable *idée* as the crucial term in the definition of Symbolism—and an article in *The New Age* not hitherto noticed by writers on Hulme reveals that he was acquainted with the works in which this change is exemplified. In *La Poésie nouvelle*, a detailed survey of the theory and practice of contemporary French poetry that Hulme read in 1905 or 1906,² André Beaunier defines the symbol as follows: 'Un symbole est une image que l'on peut employer pour la représentation d'une idée, grâce à de secrètes concordances dont on ne saurait rendre compte analytiquement.'³ This definition, based upon the doctrine of correspondences and perhaps owing something to de Gourmont ('une idée . . . est une image') may have influenced Hulme's 'Notes on Language and Style'. But it is mediate to that later employed by Hulme and sub-

¹ For his conception of prose as a 'counter language' and as 'the museum where the dead images of verse are preserved', he may have been indebted to de Gourmont. See René Taupin, 'The Example of Rémy de Gourmont', *The Criterion*, X (July 1931), 619-20; de Gourmont, *Le Problème du style* (Paris, 1902), p. 45.

² In a review of *L'Attitude du lyrisme contemporain*, *NA*, IX (24 Aug. 1911), 400, Hulme says he read Beaunier's book 'five or six years ago'.

³ *La Poésie nouvelle* (Paris, 1902), p. 45.

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sequent French critics who were influenced, as he was, by Bergson. The following definition of Symbolism is taken from Tancrede de Visan's *L'Attitude du lyrisme contemporain* (Paris, 1911), a book which Hulme reviewed in *The New Age* (cf. note 2 above). It is italicized in the original form, since the argument of the book is in part directed toward finding such a definition: 'Le symbolisme ou attitude poétique contemporaine se sert d'images successives ou accumulées pour extérioriser une intuition lyrique.'¹ The reference to 'intuition' makes the source of this definition unmistakable, and Flint refers to its source in defining Symbolism in *The Poetry Review* one year later:

[Symbolism is] an attempt to evoke the subconscious element of life, to set vibrating the infinite within us, by the exquisite juxtaposition of images. Its philosophy, in fact . . . was the philosophy of intuitiveness: it has been formulated by Bergson.²

Through Bergson's use of the word, the *image*, which in the writings of earlier French critics had simply signified a verbal 'picture' such as those found in the works of the Parnassians or in Kahn's *Livre d'Images* (literally, 'picture-book'), acquired associations which made it ideally suited for use in defining a new aesthetic.³

Hulme's discussions of the image are found in 'A Lecture on Modern Poetry' (1908—early 1909?), 'Searchers after Reality, II: Haldane' (1909), 'Bergson's Theory

¹ *L'Attitude du lyrisme contemporain* (Paris, 1911), pp. 459-60.

² 'Contemporary French Poetry', *The Poetry Review*, I (Aug. 1912), 355.

³ A brief discussion of the use of the word '*image*' in French criticism can be found in my 'The Forgotten School of 1909' and the Origins of Imagism', *A Catalogue of the Imagist Poets* (New York, 1966), pp. 27-8.

of Art’ (probably one of the series of lectures on Bergson he delivered in 1911), and the ‘Notes on Language and Style’ (which I conjecturally date as including entries before 1907 and none later than 1911). In ‘Romanticism and Classicism’, probably the manuscript of his lecture at Clifford’s Inn Hall on 15 July 1912, we find a slightly different conception of poetry which is only incidentally relevant to the discussions of the forgotten school. By 1912 he had discovered ‘*L’Action française*’ and the romantic-classic antithesis as expounded by Lasserre and Maurras. This was a transitional phase in his thought, leading to the rejection of Bergsonian vitalism. If the picture of Hulme’s thought implied in the preceding pages seems unrepresentative, this is because there are three Hulmes—a pre-1907 empiricist, a 1907-12 Bergsonian, and a post-1912 reactionary—who are not usually distinguished from one another and hence unjustly accused of self-contradiction. I have been concerned only with the second of these three.

It is difficult to determine the relative importance to the forgotten school of Hulme’s aesthetic of the image as compared to the more practically oriented poetic (involving the writing of short poems in free verse based upon a single impression) which Flint, Storer, and Hulme seem to have developed independently. In two respects, his theories may have been of unique importance to their experiments. His discussions of language, with their emphasis on new metaphors and images as the test of poetic originality, may have been instrumental in freeing them from the influences of late nineteenth-century poets. Secondly, his concept of the image was germane to the creation of an ‘objective’ poetry free from the impressionistic subjectivity of Pater and Symons, traces of which survive in his own earliest writings. For Pater and Symons,



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it was impossible to reconcile the realm of impersonal fact with the sensitive individual consciousness which constituted the only source of poetry. Hulme realized that Bergson's *image* was the answer to this problem, and it led him to conceive poetry as an objectification of response rather than a vehicle for the communication of a subjective state, accompanied by appropriate evocative description. Like Coleridge before him, he absorbed the influence of a Continental philosophy of organicism so completely as to make it his own and extend its literary application, introducing it to a philosophical and critical climate dominated by British empiricism and its mind-matter antithesis. While neither he nor other members of the forgotten school were able to create a body of poetry which consistently reflected this conception, they made the earliest—and hence most difficult—steps in this direction.

It remained for Eliot and Pound to reassert the importance of this conception of an objectification of response (Eliot in his discussion of the 'objective correlative', Pound in his distinction between the 'hard' and 'soft' in poetry) and to exemplify it in their poetry. However, they reached it by different paths and explained it in relation to different frames of reference. Eliot and Pound were anti-Bergsonian. Pound may have found Hulme's discussions of the image and the language of poetry valuable, but he probably never understood, or even tried to understand, their philosophic origins. Thus he was understandably offended when, some years later, his writings on poetry between 1912 and 1920, which no one had ever related *specifically* to the writings of Hulme—were discussed in terms of Hulme's influence. That influence was general rather than specific; it was transmitted as an attitude, not a theoretical framework; and consequently it is impossible to assess precisely.

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III. EZRA POUND AND 'IMAGISME'

By 1911, Flint was no longer contributing to *The New Age*; Hulme had turned from poetry to philosophy and politics, 'The Complete Poetical Works of T. E. Hulme' appearing in the magazine as a belated testimony of his earlier activities.¹ In November 1911, Orage obtained another member of the forgotten school (which had ceased meeting in the winter of 1910) as a contributor. In this case it was Ezra Pound, whom he probably met at Hulme's Frith Street salon.² Their association was of great importance in the magazine's history: over the following ten years, Pound contributed nearly three hundred articles to *The New Age*. Some of them were obviously written in journalistic haste: 'one simply can't afford to rewrite and properly compress stuff for his rates', he said in a letter to a friend.³ Yet others, especially among those that appeared between 1911 and 1915, when he was first attempting to define his critical attitude and creative method, are written with a clarity and precision equal to that of the best of his prose.

Pound's first contribution to the magazine was his translation of 'The Seafarer'. It was accompanied by an editorial note indicating that under the title 'I Gather the Limbs of Osiris', he would contribute 'expositions and translations in illustration of "The New Method" in scholarship'.⁴ (This note was probably added on Pound's advice; he was aware of the usefulness of catch phrases and slogans in advertising the arts.) The ten articles that appeared in the following three months substantiate

¹ *NA*, X (25 Jan. 1912), 307.

² Letter from Pound, 20 June 1959.

³ Letter to John Quinn, 25 Oct. 1919, in Pound's *Letters*, p. 213.

⁴ *NA*, X (30 Nov. 1911), 107.

Flint's contention that at this date, Pound was still pre-occupied with his investigations of Provençal poetry.¹ Several are devoted to annotated translations of poems by Cavalcanti and Arnaut Daniel. In their concern with historical investigation, these articles seem to lead away from the 'Imagisme' which was to appear two years later. But if we remember that the definition of the image appearing in the Imagist Manifesto is only one of its components, we shall be in a better position to assess the relevance of these articles to that movement and to the development of Pound's poetic.

'The New Method' that Pound advocates in these articles is what he calls the method of 'Luminous Detail'. His central argument is that our sense of the past and our awareness of the development of literature have been blurred by compendious scholarly works which show no awareness of the relative importance of the facts they contain. The concise presentation of interpretive facts in scholarship, he says, is parallel to the creative method in which a poem is stripped of all superfluous verbiage:

The artist seeks out the luminous detail and presents it. He does not comment. His work remains the permanent basis of psychology and metaphysics. Each historian will 'have ideas'—presumably different from other historians—imperfect inductions, varying as the fashions, but the luminous details remain unaltered. As scholarship has erred in presenting all detail as if of equal import, so also in literature, in a present school of writing we see a similar tendency.²

Pound's history of literature is largely a history of technical innovations; his discussion of how poetry should be written is likewise concerned primarily with technique, which he defines as 'the means of conveying an

¹ F. S. Flint, 'The History of Imagism', p. 71.

² *NA*, X (7 Dec. 1911), 130.

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exact impression of exactly what one means in such a way as to exhilarate'. In the final article in this series, having applied this definition to the past, he discusses it in relation to the future:

As far as the 'living art' goes, I should like to break up *cliché*, to disintegrate these magnetized groups that stand between the reader of poetry and the drive of it, to escape from lines composed of two very nearly equal sections, each containing a noun and each noun decorously attended by a carefully selected epithet gleaned, apparently, from Shakespeare, Pope, or Horace. For it is not until poetry lives again 'close to the thing' that it will be a vital part of contemporary life. As long as the poet says not what he, at the very crux of a clarified conception, means, but is content to say something ornate and approximate, just so long will serious people, intently alive, consider poetry as balderdash—a sort of embroidery for dilettantes and women. . . . We must have a simplicity and directness of utterance, which is different from the simplicity and directness of daily speech, which is more 'curial', more dignified. This difference, this dignity, cannot be conferred by florid adjectives or elaborate hyperbole; it must be conveyed by art, and by the art of the verse structure, by something which exalts the reader, making him feel that he is in contact with something arranged more finely than the commonplace.¹

The articles in this series are of value to the present discussion for several reasons. In addition to showing what conception of poetry was being presented to readers of *The New Age*, they reveal that Pound had articulated a comprehensive conception of his art by this date. While the relationship between his preoccupation with Provençal poetry and his concern with the problems of modern verse has seemed remote, these articles show that the first

¹ NA, X (15 Feb. 1912), 370.

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was germane to the second: he bases his creative programme on the conclusions drawn from his research in the development of poetic technique. We find here, in inchoate form, some of the principles of Imagism. The 'luminous detail' is very close to the 'image'; and the desire that contemporary poetry should be 'close to the thing' reminds us of the first precept of that movement: 'Direct treatment of the "thing". . . .'¹ The advice contained in 'A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste' is, like that contained in these articles, largely technical.

For his definition of the image, the only part of the Imagist manifesto (published in *Poetry* magazine in March 1913) which concerns aesthetics rather than technique, Pound may have been partially indebted to Bergson: the 'sense of freedom from time limits and space limits' which it creates ally it to Bergson's intuition. But the substance of the definition is derived from Freud, as interpreted by the English psychologist Hart. Pound defines the image as follows:

An 'Image' is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time. I use the term 'complex' rather in the technical sense employed by the newer psychologists such as Hart, though we might not agree absolutely in our application.

It is the presentation of such a 'complex' instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art.²

Hart describes the 'general conception underlying Freud's teaching' in the following terms:

¹ 'Imagisme', *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, I (Mar. 1913), 199.

² 'A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste', *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, I (Mar. 1913), 200.

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Unconscious ideas are agglomerated into groups with accompanying affects, the systems thus formed being termed 'complexes'. These complexes are regarded as possessing both potential and kinetic energy, and thus are capable of influencing the flow of phenomenal consciousness according to certain definite laws. . . . This train of thought is the analogue of that underlying all the great conceptual constructions of physical science—the atomic theory, the wave theory of light, the law of gravity, and the modern theory of Mendelian heredity.¹

In August, 1913, Imagism was introduced to the English audience by Rebecca West, writing in *The New Freewoman*.² As Pound had recently become the literary editor of that magazine, it was an ideal medium for launching the new movement. However, in spite of his other journalistic commitments and propagandist activities, he continued to contribute to *The New Age* (three series of articles on America and one on contemporary French poetry during 1912-13). In January 1914, when *The New Freewoman* became *The Egoist*, Richard Aldington became its literary editor;³ there is evidence of a rift in the Imagist camp shortly after this date, as Pound did not appear in the magazine for over a year. This would explain why, early in 1915, he contributed to *The New Age* a series of articles on the men and movements he had hitherto discussed in *The Egoist*. Three of these articles were included in his *Gaudier-Brzeska* (1916); the others have never been reprinted, and one, 'As for Imagisme,'

¹ 'The Conception of the Subconscious', in Hugo Münsterberg, et al., *Subconscious Phenomena* (London, 1911), p. 129. See also my 'Freud and Imagism', *Notes & Queries*, VIII (Dec. 1961), 470-1, 474.

² 'Imagisme', *The New Freewoman*, I (15 Aug. 1913), 86-7.

³ Richard Aldington contributed a number of 'Imagist' poems (though they were not defined as such until a few months later) to *The New Age* in Nov. 1912 and Jan. 1913. He had been introduced to Orage by Pound (letter from Aldington, 9 Sept. 1959).

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certainly deserves more attention than it has received. It contains Pound's most complete statement of the aesthetic (as distinguished from the technic) of Imagism, illuminating the terse definition of the image contained in the manifesto.

Intense emotion causes pattern to arise in the mind—if the mind is strong enough. Perhaps I should say, not pattern, but pattern-units, or units of design. (I do not say that intense emotion is the sole possible cause of such units, I say simply that they can result from it. They may also result from other sorts of energy). . . .

Not only does emotion create the 'pattern-unit' and the 'arrangement of forms', it creates also the Image. The Image can be of two sorts. It can arise within the mind. It is then 'subjective'. External causes play upon the mind, perhaps; if so, they are drawn into the mind, fused, transmitted, and emerge in an Image unlike themselves. Secondly, the Image can be objective. Emotion seizing upon some external scene or action carries it intact to the mind; and that vortex purges it of all save the essential or dominant or dramatic qualities, and it emerges like the external original.

In either case the Image is more than an idea. It is a vortex or cluster of fused ideas and is endowed with energy. If it does not fulfil these specifications, it is not what I mean by an Image.¹

A comparison of the conceptions of the image found in the writings of Hulme and Pound reveals important differences. For Hulme, the image is a philosophical concept. It combines the communication of sensations ('poetry. . . is a visual concrete [language], a compromise for a language of intuition which would hand over sensations bodily') with the creation of ideas ('thought . . . consists in the simultaneous presentation to the mind of

¹ *NA*, XVI (28 Jan. 1915), 349-50.

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two different images').¹ For Pound, the image is a psychological concept. It involves not sensation and ideation, but emotion or other unspecified psychic 'energies', and in its subjective form, it is characterized not by any correspondence with the sensations or ideas which gave rise to it, but by a quality of feeling, the poetic expression of which may be dissimilar to the original occasion of the feeling. Hulme attempts to define the image philosophically; Pound discusses its psychological causes and effects, and emphasizes the fact that, like the 'complex', it is endowed with energy. Hulme's concept of the image was derived from Bergson; Pound's was derived from Freud.

That the philosophy of Bergson and the psychology of Freud should influence the aesthetic of the new poetry indicates that the cultural trends discussed in the preceding chapter were capable of enriching literature in unsuspected ways. This is not simply an instance of the 'history of ideas' being reflected in literature, but of a creative transformation of new ideas contributing to the emergence of a new art. 'New masses of unexplored arts and facts are pouring into the vortex of London,' wrote Pound;

They cannot help but bring about changes as great as the Renaissance changes, even if we set ourselves blindly against it. As it is, there is life in the fusion. The complete man must have more interest in things which are in seed and dynamic than in things which are dead, dying, static.²

Imagism was a product of this cultural atmosphere.

¹ NA, V (19 Aug. 1909), 315; *Further Speculations*, p. 84.

² NA, XVI (11 Feb. 1915), 411.