T. E. HULME AND THE PROBLEM OF UNITY

by

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T. E. Hulme is a controversial figure in modern literary criticism, but his influence on the thought of T. S. Eliot and on the principles behind the Imagist movement is assured. Recent critical examinations of him have discovered strong Romantic tendencies in his thought, in spite of his firm anti-Romantic initial stand. This Romanticism is particularly evident in his aesthetics, in the definition of unity he applies to the image. The aim of this paper is to trace the idea of unity through the whole of Hulme's writings, to clarify his definitions of the idea in different contexts, and to try and discover some basis for the particular definition of unity he uses in the case of the image.

Hulme's metaphysics delineates the limits of unity and provides his basic definitions of the term. Hulme denies the principle of continuity which he believes to be the basis of Humanism and Romanticism. In place of one all-pervasive unity, he presents a triple structure, in which each realm is different. The realm of ethical and religious values is unified and unchanging. The realm of the knowledge of mathematics and the physical sciences is unified, yet subject to change. The unity of this realm is the product of the human intellect, of its tendency to organize and manipulate the flux of life, reducing it to counter words. The ideas of this realm, which Hulme believes to be finite unities, will change when new facts are introduced. The realm of life is characterized as a continuous state of flux or change and
is not unified. Hulme ascribes to Bergson's theory that man has two ways of obtaining knowledge, by intuition and by intellect. Intuition achieves a direct contact with the flux, obtaining an intensive manifold, in which the parts cannot be separated. The intellect divides things into parts, obtaining an extensive manifold. An awkwardness in Hulme's metaphysics is his belief in Original Sin, which makes man a finite unity. This definition of man is a contradiction of his belief that life is flux and change.

Whereas Hulme's metaphysics denies a single unified system of reality, his aesthetics postulates the unity of the aesthetic creation. Hulme begins with a mechanistic conception of art which he subsequently contradicts completely. Art occupies a unique place in Hulme's thought, in that he allows it a vital unity which is inconsistent with any of the definitions of unity brought out in the discussion of his metaphysics. Yet the life-in-death which Hulme allows art is only temporary and will decay into commonplace.

In the Cinders theory Hulme asserts that plurality is the nature of reality and that relativity is absolute. Unity is impossible, an illusion, on this theory. Yet a work of art emerges in this discussion as a unity, in which the form contains the content completely. Hulme states that art creates another "mystic" world. Art would appear to be the one unity, bringing together all three realms, which according to Hulme's metaphysics must be discontinuous. At the same time, the
existence of an artistic unity, unlike the absolute values of religion and ethics, is ephemeral.

The idea of unity, in the writings of T. E. Hulme, has different meanings in different contexts.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO</td>
<td>METAPHYSICS: THE LIMITS OF UNITY</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER THREE</td>
<td>AESTHETICS: THE VITAL UNITY</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER FOUR</td>
<td>CINDERS: A GLIMPSE INTO ETERNITY</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td></td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td></td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Because most of the quotations in this paper are taken from the two books of T. E. Hulme, *Speculations*, and *Further Speculations*, it was considered advisable to note the page references to these books directly after the quotation. All other references will be cited in footnotes.

The bibliographical information for Hulme's books is:


The importance of Thomas Ernest Hulme to the main stream of modern literary criticism is still a matter of controversy. The studies of him, whether exhaustive, such as Alun R. Jones' recently published The Life and Opinions of T. E. Hulme, or more limited, such as periodical contributions, fail to establish any consistent way of looking at him. This inconsistency of viewpoint is, perhaps, inevitable, in view of the fragmentary nature of most of his notes and the lack of system they present to even the most scrutinizing reader. Hulme emerges, in Speculations, and Further Speculations, as an energetic proselytizer, determined to enforce a particular world-view and willing to use the most aggressive methods to do so. Even in conversation, he was not above using knuckle-dusters to drive home his argument (though it must be noted that even here his aesthetic sense prevailed and the knuckle-dusters were carved by Gaudier-Brzeska, in an abstract design)

Jacob Epstein reports, in his Foreward to Speculations, that Hulme "was capable of kicking a theory as well as a man downstairs when the occasion demanded". (Speculations, vii.)

The force and bombast of Hulme's writing,—what might be termed "The Knuckle-Duster method of Criticism"—cannot alone account for the influence that at least certain aspects of his thought have had on prominent modern writers. Alun Jones' assertion that Hulme "is related
to the achievement of the first half of the century in much the same way as Coleridge is related to the first half of the nineteenth.\textsuperscript{2} Jones' might well be taken, with certain restrictions, as the conclusion of a man who must justify his own extensive endeavours on one topic. On the other hand, Jones' statement contains at least part of the truth and his accuracy is questionable mainly because of the vagueness of his generalization. The list of Hulme's personal contacts alone, the fact that no less a figure than Jacob Epstein refers to him as "my very great friend" (Speculations, vii.), and that Henri Bergson can write,

\begin{quote}
Ou je me trompe beaucoup, ou il est destiné à produire des œuvres intéressantes et importantes dans le domaine de la philosophie en général, et plus particulièrement peut-être dans celui de la philosophie de l'art. (Speculations, x.)
\end{quote}

merit attention, and give an indication of Hulme's stature. Furthermore, the influence Hulme's ideas had on the thought of T. S. Eliot, and on the guiding principles of the Imagist movement, though at times disputed, may be accepted with certainty.

Eliot and Hulme had no personal contact, but Eliot was well acquainted with Hulme's writings. David Daiches writes in The Present Age that

\begin{quote}
...it was from Hulme that Eliot got much of his critical and general thought.
\end{quote}

We understand, too, the sources of Eliot's classicism in literature, royalism in politics, and Anglo-Catholicism in religion...when we examine the pairs of opposites which Hulme lines up.  

Daiches' observation is backed up by W. K. Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks who note that "the parallels between his position and Eliot's are striking". Numerous other critics point out the similarities between the two men, laying particular stress on the categories which Daiches mentioned, although it must be pointed out that Hulme never affiliated himself with an organized religion during his life-time.

Hulme is often considered to be "the father of Imagism." Graham Hughes makes this claim for him in *Image and Experience*. Indeed, the Imagist credo as quoted by Hughes is Hulmian in tone and content. Hughes reports questioning "several" of the Imagist poets (the nucleus group consisted of Richard Aldington, Amy Lowell, F. S. Flint, Hilda Doolittle and John Gould Fletcher) as to how much they were influenced by Hulme and states that "they agree that the influence was considerable..." The most dogmatic contradiction of Hulme's importance to the imagist movement comes from Ezra Pound, who gives the laurel to Ford Madox Ford.

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6. Ibid., p. 22.
Pound writes in *This Hulme Business*:

> Without malice toward T. E. H. it now seems advisable to correct a distortion which can be found even in portly works of reference. The critical LIGHT during the years immediately pre-war in London shone not from Hulme, but from Ford (Madox etc.) in so far as it fell on writing at all.  

Recently, the *South Atlantic Quarterly* in the issues of Summer 1961 and Spring 1962 has carried an argument between Alun Jones and F. MacShane, with Jones asserting the leadership of Hulme, and MacShane giving most of the credit to Ford. It is unlikely that the argument will ever be settled, and it is not of any real importance to this paper. Suffice it to say that Hulme remains a figure to contend with in any discussion of important modern literary movements and is likely to continue to be so. His influence on Wyndham Lewis is discussed to some extent by Geoffrey Wagner, who partially attributes Lewis' abstractionism to his "infatuation with the teaching of T. E. Hulme."  

There is, then, considerable evidence that Hulme's influence was extensive, and, in some cases, profound. But, of greater importance than the discussions on the extent of Hulme's influence, are the examinations of the ideas which constituted this influence. Such discussions have been most ably executed, in the present writer's opinion, by Frank

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Kermode in *The Romantic Image* and Murray Krieger in *The New Apologists for Poetry*. Kermode's book is a presentation of the principles relating to the poetic image, concentrating particularly on the work of modern theorists and poets. Kermode points out that the belief in the Image as "a radiant truth out of time and space," though basically a Romantic notion, is shared by Hulme despite his rigorous anti-Romantic assertions.

Murray Krieger's work is aimed at the discovery of "those crucial questions on the answers to which a systematic apology for poetry depends. As an aesthetician, Krieger is well-equipped to tackle such a problem, and his examination of certain major critics and their relation to each other, as well as his clarification of the key questions he sought to discover, is an invaluable guide to any study of modern literary theory. His discussion of Hulme is detailed and he is able to delineate the distinction between Hulme and the Romantics, Coleridge particularly, while at the same time picking out their similarities. He is able, also, to convey an admiration for Hulme, while simultaneously making clear his inadequacies. Krieger places great importance on the role Hulme gave to language in the creative process, believing "That the critical theorists who followed Hulme did not, in their discussions of poetic creation, adhere consistently to his new view does not lessen the importance of his contribution."\(^9\)


The view on Hulme which both Kermode and Krieger share, a view which is now widely accepted, is that, having started from a rigidly defined classical position, he eventually works himself into a theory of art which is romantic. In spite of the modifications from the old view which his theory contained, it remains, nonetheless, romantic. This is indeed damning criticism of Hulme, who objected "even to the best of the romantica" (Speculations, 126.). It is also highly ironic when one realizes that Hulme’s rebellion was directed against what he considered to be the romantic attitude in general, and its effect on literary output in particular.

It would seem that nothing further need be added to the analysis of Hulme, that re-interpretation is unnecessary. But a more creative approach (and one which even Hulme would have approved of) is to seek fresh viewpoints, and to recognize that the subject of Hulme is far from exhausted. As the title indicates, this paper will be devoted to an examination of Hulme’s handling of the concept of unity. I hope to explain in detail Hulme’s aesthetic principles, particularly his theory of the image, and to show that, in general, these cannot be accounted for in terms of his metaphysical statements.

The problem of unity is central to modern thought, preoccupying the scientist, psychologist and literary critic alike. All are searching for some basic irreducible unit or unified concept which will enable them to understand existence and man’s place in it. There are sometimes attempts made to generalize, to apply a seemingly unified concept from one field
of study to another. In literary criticism, the belief that a poem should be an organic unity is not easily given up and care is usually taken to account for it. The idea of unity was important to Hulme and a good case can be made for the fact that he attempted to organize his thought in terms of the limits he allowed for unity. In other words, "unity" may be considered the key term in an understanding of Hulme's thought.

Hulme's metaphysics is the groundwork of this study. There Hulme gives an indication of what he means by unity and defines the limits which he imposes on the concept. Hulme's metaphysics is a rather intricate and complex pattern of ideas, but, as is revealed in the following chapter, Hulme's main concern here is to establish a framework which contains the spheres of knowledge and defines the possibilities of what man can know. The concept of unity is essential to the whole discussion.
CHAPTER II: METAPHYSICS: THE LIMITS OF UNITY

T. E. Hulme defines philosophy simply:

It is not a question of the unity of the world and men afterwards put into it, but of human animals and of philosophies as an elaboration of their appetites. (Speculations, 230.)

Philosophy is an expression of what men want; it depends more on the nature of man, than on the external world. Here is the core of Hulme's outlook and the genesis of much of the ambiguity of his further statements on art and life.

Hulme's view of metaphysics is the inevitable consequence of his general outlook. He recognizes two possibilities for metaphysics.

There are two aims that metaphysics conceivably might have. It might wish to be considered an art, a means of expressing certain attitudes to the cosmos, or it might be taken as a science, humbly groping after the truth. (Further Speculations, 16.)

But it is not a science and truth is not its goal. Metaphysics is an art and its practitioner an artist.

In it by work one can never discover the secret of the cosmos, one merely finds elaborate and complete ways of expressing one's personal attitude towards it. (Further Speculations, 18.)

Again the emphasis is on man, and not on the possibility of unity existing in the world. The parallel or equation that Hulme draws here between metaphysics and art is significant. Much of his aesthetics is a direct derivative of his metaphysics, and much of his confusion in the latter field is to be found in the former. The bases of both studies are the
same, and an understanding of Hulme's metaphysics is prerequisite to an understanding of his aesthetics.

To Hulme, the base of both studies is the nature of man. He believes that any philosophy, however elaborately presented, is merely a presentation of what that philosopher wants to believe, of what to him is satisfying. Hulme gives an amusing metaphor for this phenomenon by describing philosophical arguments as armour which impresses by its seeming omnipotence. If one were to see this armour chasing after a lady, or eating tarts in the pantry, one would recognize a human being under it. So it is with philosophy; one recognizes the man in the conclusions he draws in the last chapter of his book and the armour is revealed to be but the creation of his desires.

If you ask what corresponds to the pantry which betrayed the man in armour, I should answer that it was the last chapters of the philosophers in which they express their conception of the world as it really is, and so incidentally expose the things with which they are satisfied. How magnificently they may have been clad before, they come out naked here! (Speculations, 20.)

What a man believes is easy to discover. The more basic problem is to discover why he believes it. Hulme deals with this problem under the heading of what he calls the Critique of Satisfaction. He makes his Critique serve two purposes. On the one hand it exposes false habits of thought, and on the other, it clarifies what Hulme considers to be the
true source of satisfaction.

Having asserted that men employ philosophical arguments to justify beliefs that unconsciously satisfy them, Hulme goes on to analyze these beliefs. They function as categories, usually unconsciously held, through which man views phenomena, and into which he fits them. They are given by the age, and one is aware of them only when they are denied. Otherwise, categories are held as absolute; they satisfy.

It should be noticed that the canons of satisfaction are quite unconscious. The philosophers share a view of what would be a satisfying destiny for man, which they take over from the Renaissance. They are satisfied with certain conceptions of the relation of man to the world. These conclusions are never questioned in this respect. Their truth may be questioned, but never their satisfactoriness. (Speculations, 17.)

The canons of satisfaction are attitudes. The ramifications or extensions of them may be controversial, but never the basic attitudes themselves. His awareness of the function of attitudes leads Hulme to assert that

In spite of its extreme diversity, all philosophy since the Renaissance is at bottom the same philosophy. The family resemblance is much greater than is generally supposed. The obvious diversity is only that of the various species of the same genus. (Speculations, 12.)

Hulme's rather vague over-generalization about "all philosophy since the Renaissance," is brought about by his belief that this philosophy shares the same basic attitude, that "the final pictures they present of man's
relation to the world all conform to the same probably unconscious standards or canons of what is satisfying." (Speculations, 16.) What precisely this attitude is will be discussed later. It must be noted here, that Hulme believed that this unity of attitude gave its character to a period.

History is a study of the changing pattern of attitudes. (Speculations, 36.) Through history we are enabled to glimpse the unity of attitude which underlies each age. Most important, with the use of the historical method, we are able to stand outside our own age, and view its categories objectively.

I think that history is necessary in order to emancipate the individual from the influence of certain pseudo-categories. We are all of us under the influence of a number of abstract ideas, of which we are as a matter of fact unconscious. We do not see them, but see other things through them. In order that the kind of discussion about 'satisfaction' which I want may be carried on, it is first of all necessary to rob certain ideas of their status of categories. (Speculations, 37.)

Whereas categories had previously been the unquestioned basis of any discussion, they now become the subject discussed. Once objectified, categories lose their inevitability. They cease to be categories. By an historical examination of different periods, one comes to understand that the categories he holds are not necessarily right, but simply a choice from a number of possibilities. The two possibilities with which Hulme is most concerned are the attitudes of religion and humanism.
Hulme's arguments thus far would seem to imply relativism. But quite the contrary is true. He anticipates the charge and answers it directly. 

...the way in which I have explained the action of the central abstract attitudes and ways of thinking, and the use of the word pseudo-categories might suggest that I hold relativist views about their validity. But I don't. I hold the religious conception of ultimate values to be right, the humanist wrong. (Speculations, 70.)

The difference between the two attitudes is "simply the difference between true and false." (Speculations, 55.) Hulme's aim is to expose the fallacy of the humanistic position and to re-establish the religious position in its stead. First in the line of fire is the humanist category of unity.

The idea of unity or continuity, the belief that all aspects of reality are continuous one from the other, reducible to a unity, is inherent in the humanistic position. It is regarded as "an inevitable constituent of reality itself" (Speculations, 3.). So solidly is it established in the humanistic position that facts which tend to deny it or appear to contradict it are rejected or re-examined in the light of making them fit. This is particularly true in what Hulme calls "general theories about the nature of reality." (Speculations, 4.). The humanist wishes to encompass the whole of reality in a unified scheme, wherein a known fact in one area would be applicable to all other areas. To the humanist, reality should be explainable on a single theory; everything should interpenetrate and synthesize. To Hulme, this attitude is sheer nonsense. His immediate purpose is "...the re-establishment of the temper of disposition of mind
which can look at a gap or chasm without shuddering" (Speculations, 4.)

He would enforce the category of discontinuity.

By denying continuity, Hulme indeed denies the foundation of humanism. Without the foundation, the whole superstructure will crumble. In its place will go an edifice of a different sort. As is usual in his writing, Hulme provides a visual image to convey his theory of reality.

Let us assume that reality is divided into three regions, separated from one another by absolute divisions, by real discontinuities. (1) the inorganic world, of mathematical and physical science, (2) the organic world, dealt with by biology, psychology and history, and (3) the world of ethical and religious values. (Speculations, 5.)

These three regions are separated by absolute divisions; they are absolutely dis-united. The first and third regions are characterized by absolute knowledge, whereas the second region, "the muddy mixed zone" of life, will yield only relative knowledge. In a significant statement, Hulme asserts that the two outer zones partake "of the perfection of geometrical figures". The middle zone, though, is to be his primary concern.

It is essential to recognize the different types of knowledge which can be provided by these three realms. Hulme's scheme represents a complete break with the humanist tradition and with the romantic movement with which he associates it. The sacred cows of both are slain together. The most critical point on which he opposes them is his insistence on the absolute gap between religion and life. Attempts had been made previously--
by Nietzsche, Dilthey, and Bergson (Speculations, 7.) --to separate life and the physical sciences, but they had not gone far enough for Hulme. They had made the first distinction, but not the second, the distinction between religion and life. The reason is clear, "For the first falls easily into line with humanism, while the second breaks the whole Renaissance tradition." (Speculations, 8.) It is on this point of the second distinction, then, that Hulme takes his firmest stand. The method he employs involves holding "the real nature of the absolute discontinuity between vital and religious things constantly before the mind."

By means of this method, Hulme hopes to destroy all "bastard phenomena" now existing and in so doing to "re-cover the real significance of many things which it seems absolutely impossible for the 'modern' mind to understand." (Speculations, 11.) To Hulme, the two most apparent "bastard phenomena," offsprings of the union between what to him should be discontinuous, completely segregated realms, are the mechanistic view and the notion that man can partake of perfection. He believes that mechanism is the result of the application of the absolute knowledge of mathematics and mathematical physics to what he terms the "vital" realm of life. (Speculations, 10.) In other words, the application of scientific knowledge to life enables man to describe life in terms of scientific absolutes, which results in a complete distortion of the nature of life. Placing the absolute standards of religion and ethics into this same "vital" zone has resulted in the category of human perfectability. Hulme believes, that rather than leaving the absolute of perfection in the religious sphere where it belongs, the Renaissance and post-Renaiss-
sance philosophies have let it penetrate the sphere of life, where it is made to apply to man. Personality and "all that bunkum" follow. (Speculations, 33.)

Clearly, in spite of Hulme's insistence that the gap between religion and life was to be his more important emphasis, the threat of mechanism preoccupied him. It is largely because of Bergson's solution of the dilemma which mechanism posed that Hulme aligned himself so energetically with him. Before reading Bergson, Hulme considered mechanism "the one thing which overshadows everything else in an attempt to get a satisfactory view of the cosmos" (Speculations, 48.). Mechanism appears in his notes as "a nightmare," "the obstacle which the saint must surmount," "the awful fact," and the "corpse of a 'dead world'." Bergson had given the life back to life. And Hulme's relief neared ecstasy.

I felt the exhilaration that comes with the sudden change from a cramped and contracted to a free and expanded state of the same thing. It was an almost physical sense of exhilaration, a sudden expansion, a kind of mental explosion. It gave one the sense of giddiness that comes with a sudden lifting up to a great height. One saw clearly in perspective the shape of things which before had only been felt in a muzzy kind of way. (Further Speculations, 29-30.)

It is to Bergson, then, that Hulme gives the credit for successfully counteracting mechanism, and it is for this reason, feeling that one chasm has been established securely, that he makes the recognition of the second chasm his central issue. But Bergsonian metaphysics, it must
be remembered, is Hulme's adopted land, and he acknowledges his indebtedness to Bergson in the formulation of his own metaphysics and aesthetics.

The second distinction remains central to Hulme's outlook. He accepts Bergson's definition of the first distinction, the gap between life and mathematical science, but insists that the second distinction be recognized, the gap between religion and life. Some of the points he will later make in aesthetics are based on his belief in this second gap. At the core of the modern tendency to reject or be unaware of this second gap, Hulme asserts, is the complete inability of the modern mind to understand the nature of religion. So confused has the subject of religion become, because of the continuity that has been allowed between it and life, that the essence of the subject is lost to the modern understanding. The characteristics of life have been allowed to flow into religion and the interpenetration of the two realms has destroyed the religious spirit. Hulme maintains that this overflow of life into religion began at the Renaissance.

You get at that time the appearance of a new attitude which can be most broadly described as an attitude of acceptance to life, as opposed to an attitude of renunciation.

*(Speculations, 25.)*

It is precisely this life-affirming quality which Hulme would remove from religion. For, to him,

The divine is not life at its intensest. It contains in a way an almost anti-vital element; quite different of course from the non-vital character of the outside physical region.

*(Speculations, 8.)*
By separating the vital and the religious, Hulme is opposing the notion of progress which has been the consequence of their interpenetration.

The religious attitude admits no progress. On the contrary, it concentrates on the fixity of man's limitations and gives him nowhere to look but to the absolute standards of religion. Life is a closed world.

It is the closing of all the roads, this realization of the tragic significance of life, which makes it legitimate to call all other attitudes shallow...most conveniently remembered by the symbol of the wheel.

(Speculations, 34.)

Humanism, by contrast, leaves all roads open.

You disguise the wheel by making it run up an inclined plane; it then becomes 'Progress', which is the modern substitute for religion.

(Speculations, 35.)

Hulme is leading straight to his central point about religion.

Hulme's analysis of the nature of religion pivots exactly on dogma.

I am not...concerned so much with religion, as with the attitude, the 'way of thinking', the categories, from which a religion springs, and which often survive it. While this attitude tends to find expression in myth, it is independent of myth; it is...much more intimately connected with dogma. (Speculations, 46.)

The dogmas of religion assume the position of categories, but because they are religious, to Hulme they are true. They are "the closest expression of the categories of the religious spirit." (Speculations, 71.) The particular dogma to which Hulme gives his most fervent endorsement, and
with which his name is often connected, is Original Sin. Because of his allegiance to the category of Original Sin, Hulme is led to his rigid definition of the nature of man, a definition which it is sometimes difficult to make consistent with other aspects of his thought.

To Hulme, the nature of man is a static unity. History provides no evidence of human progress, but presents instead a kaleidoscope of attitudes which bring man into different perspectives. Man does not change; categories concerning man do. The absolute fixity of human nature is significant to Hulme.

I do not imagine that men themselves will change in any way. Men differ very little in every period. It is only our categories that change...this constancy of man thus provides perhaps the greatest hope of the possibility of a radical transformation of society.

(Speculations, 58.)

The conclusions to be drawn from this belief of Hulme's are obvious. If man is a static entity, then only one attitude about him can be correct. All other possible attitudes which history has put forth must be discarded in favour of this truth. Within the scheme of reality which Hulme has drawn, the possibilities are already limited. It remains only for Hulme to classify man exactly. His classification will naturally fall into accord with the religious attitude.

Although Hulme believes that man is a unity, he defines this unity as being limited. As has already been pointed out, Hulme will not allow generalization from the region of absolute values to the region of life.
The reverse process is similarly impossible. Complete discontinuity must exist between both realms.

In the light of these absolute values, man himself is judged to be essentially limited and imperfect. He is endowed with Original Sin. While he can occasionally accomplish acts which partake of perfection, he can never himself be perfect. Certain secondary results in regard to ordinary human action in society follow from this. A man is essentially bad, he can only accomplish anything of value by discipline—ethical and political. Order is thus not merely negative, but creative and liberating. Institutions are necessary. (Speculations, 47.)

Apart from the authoritarian overtones which are inherent in Hulme's definition of man, there are many implications here which are central to his thought as a whole, and to the subject of unity as an aspect of his thought. His recognition and acceptance of certain absolute values or standards, such as perfection, which exist apart from man, and his dogmatic insistence on man's unchanging, yet unified, nature are consistently held features of his thought. The difference between his arbitrarily defined historical periods, "from Augustine, say, to the Renaissance" and "from the Renaissance to now" is "fundamentally nothing but the difference between these two conceptions of man." (Speculations, 50.) The former period accepted Original Sin; the latter rejected it.

The basis of Romanticism is also to be found in the Romantics' interpretation of man. This, to Hulme, of course, is their basic mistake.
Here is the root of all romanticism: that man, the individual, is an infinite reservoir of possibilities; and if you can so rearrange society by the destruction of oppressive order then these possibilities will have a chance and you get Progress. (Speculations, 116.)

Hulme has already shown, to his own satisfaction at least, that a belief in progress is false, and here he endeavours to prove that its immediate source is also wrong. Hulme's arguments often involve little else than negation and affirmation. He often does little else than state that one attitude is wrong, another right. He apparently hopes to persuade by force. So after negating the Romantic attitude, Hulme affirms the Classical, the view that "Man is an extraordinarily fixed and limited animal whose nature is absolutely constant. It is only by tradition and organization that anything decent can be got out of him." (Speculations, 116.)

Man is finite and fixed. He is a finite unity. He exists in the "muddy mixed zone" of life, in complete disjunction from either realm of absolute knowledge. Any other vision of him, one that fails to accept the gap between the vital zone in which man exists, and the outer two zones, is wrong to Hulme, serving only to obscure the essential nature of the human condition. The fatal flaw of Romanticism as far as Hulme is concerned is that it ignores the gap between religion and life.

The concepts that are right and proper in their own sphere are spread over, and so mess up, falsify and blur the clear outlines of human experience. ...Romanticism then, and this is the best definition I can give of it, is spilt religion. (Speculations, 118.)

Hulme would have everything within its proper boundaries, allowing no
trespassing between realms.

Hulme's fixing of the nature of man within the boundaries of the vital zone is the key point in his definition of philosophy. As was noted at the beginning of this chapter, to Hulme the nature of man is the mainspring of any philosophy. The fixity of this nature is constantly reiterated in Hulme's notes.

Motives are the only unalterable and fixed things in the world. They extend to the animal kingdom. They are the only rock: physical bases change. They are more than human motives; they are the constitution of the world. (Speculations, 233.)

Motives are the "constitution of the world"; they constitute the way men look at the world. And men look at the world in a unified way. Philosophy is not an expression of truth; it is a complete expression of a personal attitude to the world. The emphasis is on the word "complete." Completion implies unity. The basic motive of man then is to see the world in a unified way.

The apparent scientific unity of the world may be due to the fact that man is a kind of sorting machine. (Speculations, 228.)

If man is finite, then his expressions must also be finite. If man is unified, then his philosophy must also be a unity. Philosophy, then, is the working out of a unified method of expression.

Unity is the essential quality to seek in a philosophy. "The principal criterion, is then, is it a consistent whole?" (Further Speculations, 20.) But a distinction must be made between the attitude
expressed and the means employed to express it. Hulme is led here to distinguish between Weltanschauung and Pure Philosophy. For Hulme Weltanschauung is the attitude that a philosopher wants to express, the category he desires to fix. In Hulme's scheme this must necessarily be subject to limits. It will be concerned solely with the vital zone. It will be subjective, a personal expression. Pure Philosophy, on the other hand, "ought to be, and may be, entirely objective and scientific." (Speculations, 18.) Or, "...in the case of philosophy the scientific terminology is the means by which we control ourselves, i.e., by which we completely express ourselves." (Further Speculations, 19.) By equating completion with control, Hulme indicates how arbitrary his definition of unity is. The philosopher deals with finite objects or ideas, his expression is subject to the controls of language, and the resultant philosophy can only be a limited unity.

But I should be the first to attack the Philistine who thought he could dismiss this ritual terminology by saying that it corresponded to no reality. It is the finest and most delicately wrought language and means of expression of all the arts. Its elaborate technique enables it to get a leisurely effect of final statement where the other arts can only hint. It is the art of completion. The series of graduated words and definitions, the elaborate balancing and checking of meanings make it possible to isolate an emotion or idea from all accidental relations, so to study it completely. The jargon is a walled garden which enables meanings to grow to their full expression, or to use a less sentimental metaphor,
it is a kind of experimental tank, a laboratory where one can practise 'control' experiments on ideas.  

(Further Speculations, 19.)

Philosophical language enables one to see an idea in all its finitude. It provides for precision and exactitude in the delineation of a finite entity. It presents a particular in a unified way. To expect of it that it also present Truth is absurd. In doing so

One is extrapolating the curve of truth outside its proper limits, applying it to fields where it has no meaning. All philosophy is bound to be untrue, for it is the art of representing the cosmos in words, which is just as much a necessary distortion as the art of painting, which represents solidity in a plane of two dimensions.  

(Further Speculations, 20.)

Truth is meaningless in the vital zone of life. It has significance only in the realm of religion. Truth is contained only in religious dogma.

It is easy to see, now, why Hulme condemns the Romantics. They search for truth in life. In Romanticism, "You have the metaphysics which in defining beauty or the nature of art always drags in the infinite." (Speculations, 31.) But man, to Hulme, is limited and finite and his creation will be equally so. Yet Hulme is willing to extend to certain rare individuals greater perception than is usual. The philosopher is able to probe more deeply into the chaos of our existence and to clarify certain aspects of it.
Or perhaps a more correct metaphor would be to say that out of the muddy stream of our own thoughts the philosopher dives in and dries on the bank into a definite and fixed shape the idea that in our own mind was but muddy, transient, and confused. (Further Speculations, 37.)

The philosopher clarifies certain finite particles of reality, bringing them into sharper focus. He deals directly with the idea, separating it off in its exactness from the surrounding chaos. He makes an idea distinct. To do so, he must circumscribe it in language, and "dry" it. The philosopher's creation, like religion, is anti-vital. It is a dead world, superimposed on the live world.

It is in this dead world that men are conscious. Consciousness itself is anti-vital. At this point, Hulme's metaphysics can be finally clarified. The three discontinuous realms of reality represent the framework of his thought. The realm of religion and ethics constitutes absolute value:

...a satisfying ethic not only looks on values as objective, but establishes an order or hierarchy among such values, which it also regards as absolute and objective. (Speculations, 62.)

This realm is independent of life. It is static and unchangeable. The realm of physical science is also characterized by objective knowledge, but this knowledge is of a different order than that of the inner realm. It is derived from the study and manipulation of the fixed shapes and static ideas which are used to describe physical phenomena. In a sense,
this knowledge is absolute, but arbitrary. It is subject to change when new facts become fixed, thus destroying a pre-existing unity of perception. But in the meantime, such knowledge can justly be called absolute. The middle realm, in contrast, is in a continual state of flux.

Hulme's conception of the realm of physical science and the realm of life openly parallels Bergson's metaphysic. His definition of the nature of reality is Bergsonian. (Speculations, 146.)

I have had to suppose a reality of infinite variability, and one that escapes all the stock perceptions, without being able to give any actual account of that reality. I have had to suppose that human perception gets crystallised out along certain lines, that it has certain fixed habits, certain fixed ways of seeing things, and so is unable to see things as they are.

(Speculations, 145-146.)

The reason for man's "crystallised" perception and fixed habits is his necessity for action.

Man's primary need is not knowledge but action. The characteristic of the intellect itself Bergson deduces from this fact. The function of the intellect is so to present things not that we may most thoroughly understand them, but that we may successfully act on them. Everything in man is dominated by his necessity of action. (Speculations, 147.)

Man's intellect is a necessary consequence of his need for action. If men were not conditioned by this need they would not conceptualize, or fix certain phenomena.
The fixed shapes or concepts with which man thinks, and by which he acts, are derived from external phenomena, from patterns of flux, and from internal states. Once conceptualized, they become categories of our thought and dim our true perception. We no longer perceive things as they are, "but only certain conventional types." (Speculations, 147.) These conventional types stand in the way not only of a direct perception of the external world, but also of a direct perception of internal states. Having only certain ways of recognizing our emotions, we no longer feel them distinctly. Perception is reduced to the terms of certain fixed types. We perceive things not as they are, but under the label of their type. "As we not only express ourselves in words, but for the most part think also in them, it comes about that not only do we not express more than the impersonal element of an emotion, but that we do not, as a matter of fact, perceive more. The average person as distinct from the artist does not even perceive the individuality of their [sic] own emotions." (Speculations, 166.) The distinction Hulme makes here is between the static classification of the intellect and the true nature of life. The intellect has little or nothing to do with reality. It paves roads so that man can make his way.

The separation between intellect and reality is the separation between what Hulme, following Bergson, calls "extensive" and "intensive manifolds." The intellect seizes the extensive manifold, examines and analyses it. It divides things into parts.

It seems then that the intellect distorts reality (if it does distort it) because it persists in unfolding things out in space. It is not satisfied unless
it can see every part. It wants to form a picture. (Speculations, 178.)

The intellect does not deal directly with reality. It deals with the dead categories which have been set up to cope with reality. There must, then, be another mode of knowledge which deals directly with the flux. This mode of knowledge is intuition.

...intuition can be defined as the method of knowledge by which we seize an intensive manifold, a thing absolutely unseizable by the intellect. (Speculations, 179.)

An intensive manifold is the flux itself. It is

...an absolute interpenetration--a complex thing which yet cannot be said to have parts because the parts run into each other, forming a continuous whole, and whose parts cannot even be conceived as existing separately.

It has differences, but these differences could not be numbered. It could not therefore be called a quantitative multiplicity, but a qualitative one. (Speculations, 181.)

The intensive manifold can also be equated with emotional states, where

There are no clearly outlined and separated states; in fact there are no separate states of mind at all: each state fades away into and interpenetrates the next state. (Speculations, 184.)

Basically, Hulme believes that the whole zone of life is in a state of flux. Action depends on the intellect to categorize certain aspects of the flux. The categories of the intellect have no real relation to the flux itself. They are arbitrary outlines imposed on the flux, deaden-
ing it in certain sections. Categories are necessary, because man must be able to perceive life in an organized way, so that he may act; they are the tools with which man manipulates the flux. However, categories are not true.

The gradual conclusions on the whole matter (and only as a conclusion) is that language puts things in a stereotyped form. (Speculations, 167.)

Language then is arbitrary. It is composed of the dead forms dragged up out of the flux of reality. It is the solid subject matter of the realm of physical science and mathematics. Language is the ideas in this realm.

There are important parallels between the language-flux distinction just described and the matter-life-impulse distinction which Hulme believes to be the central point of Bergson's philosophy. Bergson countered the theory of mechanism, which assumed that all natural phenomena can be submitted to analysis and dissection, with his theory that there are two main streams of life, one which can be understood by the intellect, the other being understood by intuition. (cf: Speculations, 173-174.)

It is useless then to dream of one science of nature, for there must be two -- one dealing with matter which will be built up by the intellect, and the other dealing with certain aspects of life which will employ intuition. (Speculations, 174.)

There will be two separate studies according to Bergson's theory: one of extensive manifolds, the other of intensive manifolds. The other aspect of Bergson's view, which is adopted by Hulme, and has particular
relevance in his aesthetic theory, is the theory of evolution. Bergson believed that the fact of evolution could only be accounted for by assuming that there is an original life-impulse (élan vital) which must struggle to work itself out through matter, until it gradually becomes embedded in it, thus producing the definite shapes which we recognize as the products of evolution.

What matter does is to separate out distinctly into separate elements the characteristics which in the original impulse were interpenetrated. Evolution then is not a process of organization, of building up, but one of dissociation.

(Speculations, 204.)

Matter functions in the same capacity as language. The life-impulse is flux. Or,

The characteristic of matter is necessity. The characteristic of the impulse which has produced life is, on the contrary, a free creative activity. The process of evolution can only be described as the insertion of more and more freedom into matter.

(Speculations, 208.)

In view of what has already been said about Hulme's definition of the relation of language to the flux of life, it is relatively simple to find the similarities between that definition and his relation, here, of Bergson's theory of evolution. Language, like matter, breaks down and controls the flux, but exists apart from it. As was pointed out previously, language constitutes the ideas of the sphere of mathematical sciences. Hulme's insistence on the recognition of an absolute chasm
between language and life must be kept in mind, particularly when, as will become apparent in chapter two, he ignores this chasm himself in his aesthetics.

Since the Bergsonian theory of evolution has definite application to Hulme's thought, it must be closely examined. If, to Bergson, the life-impulse is pure flux and if flux is the nature of reality, then matter must play a subordinate role, merely defining the flux at certain points. But even in that case, matter would have to be more closely related to flux than Bergson would seem to allow. R. G. Collingwood treats this ambiguity in Bergson's theory succinctly:

This implies one of two things: either that the cause of these obstructions and ramifications is inherent in the life-force itself, or that this cause is something other than life. The first alternative is ruled out by Bergson's conception of life as pure activity, sheer infinite positive *élan*. We are therefore thrown back on the second, and compelled to think of this cause as something real in its own right, an obstruction to the flow of life; in short, a material world in which life develops and by whose agency the workings of life are conditioned; in a word, we come back to the idea of matter as the stage on which life plays its part. This is the vicious circle of Bergson's cosmology: ostensibly he regards matter as a by-product of life, but actually he cannot explain how that or any other special by-product can arise without presupposing, alongside of and indeed prior to life, matter itself. 11

This is also Hulme's "vicious circle." He asserts that language is dead, fixed, anti-vital, an extensive manifold, but he is ultimately unable to treat it as such. Eventually, as will be revealed in the chapter on Hulme's aesthetics, he treats language as an intensive manifold.

Hulme's metaphysical outlook is based on the total destruction of the idea of continuity or one all-pervasive unity. In place of a single unified system, he presents a triple structure, in which each realm is different. The realm of ethical and religious values is unified, although Hulme is not clear in his definition of this unity, apart from stating that it is unchanging and absolute. The realm of mathematical knowledge is also a unity, absolute, yet subject to change. This realm is the creation of man, of his need to organize and manipulate life. It is a dead world. The world of life, in which man exists, is in a continual state of flux and change, and can in no way be said to be unified.

The additional fact, that man also is a unity to Hulme, needs further examination, for it represents an ambiguity in his thought. Hulme's interpretation of the meaning of Original Sin is never clearly defined by him, but he seems to believe that it implies that man is basically evil, finite and limited. Yet man exists in the changing world of flux. Why then should he not be subject to change? Hulme had at least a momentary awareness of this awkwardness in his theory. In a brief note in
Cinders, he wonders why he has accepted "Person" as a unity, why the line is "drawn exactly there in the discussion of counter worlds." (Speculations, 233.) This is the only indication he has given of a recognition on his part that his rigid and uncompromising definition of man was at odds with his equally rigid insistence that the realm of life is in a constant state of movement and change. In the interests of consistency, Hulme should have allowed man to be part of the flux which surrounds him. As it is, his belief in Original Sin remains an awkward and unresolved problem. Hulme has, figuratively speaking, killed man, made him static, a counter word, so that he could enforce his belief in Original Sin. His belief in Original Sin is in direct contradiction of his acceptance of Bergsonian metaphysics. Man's finite and limited nature is of considerable importance to certain aspects of Hulme's aesthetic theory, so this particular confusion in his thought needed clarifying here.

To Hulme, there can be no one law that will explain life. Life is a closed world of infinite variability in which man acts by virtue of certain categories which enable him to conceive the flux in certain static patterns. These patterns, or philosophies, represent unitities, but they have no real relation to life. Man himself, being fixed, is a unity. Unity, then, can only exist in certain finite things, and is really only a function of man, who desires to see the world in a unified way. Unity is a myth; there is only flux in life.
CHAPTER III: AESTHETICS: THE VITAL UNITY

Although Hulme opposes all metaphysical theories based on unity, unity, paradoxically, is the central concept of his own aesthetics. He asserts,

that while the world cosmically cannot be reduced to unity as science proclaims (in the postulate of uniformity), yet on the contrary poetry can. At least its methods follow certain easily defined routes. *(Further Speculations, 77.)*

He denies the unity of reality, but affirms the unity of the artistic creation. The nature of this aesthetic unity is defined partly by his metaphysical outlook, but a true understanding of it must go beyond the limitations into which Hulme tries to fit it.

Any examination of an aesthetic theory must dwell on certain central questions. Eliseo Vivas and Murray Krieger list these briefly in *The Problems of Aesthetics:*

What relation has the object created by the artist to the data given him by the external world? Does the artist merely imitate or select from this data and superimpose an external form upon it? Or does his object reveal something which can in no way be accounted for in terms of what the artist's world has given him? To what extent, in other words, has the mind of the artist, in the creative process, added to the material furnished it by experience? To what extent is the artist literally creative? Or, if, on the other hand, the object seems to correspond to the external world, does it answer to the reality given us by our senses or to a deeper, less attainable reality which art alone can give us? If it is the latter, can art in any strict sense
be called "imitation"? Does the artist, then, really create his object or does he merely discover it? 12

All these questions are broached either directly or indirectly, within the context of Hulme's aesthetics. Many of his statements will be seen to be contradictory, however, and in the final analysis, Hulme's aesthetics are far from presenting a cohesive whole.

There is no doubt that Hulme's metaphysics is an indispensable guide to a study of his aesthetics. But Hulme was concerned with art first of all; his metaphysics simply helped him clarify what he wanted to say about art.

One of the main reasons for the existence of philosophy is not that it enables you to find truth (it can never do that) but that it does provide you a refuge for definitions. The usual idea of the thing is that it provides you with a fixed basis from which you can decide the things you want in aesthetics. The process is the exact contrary. You start in the confusion of the fighting line, you retire from that just a little to the rear to recover, to get your weapons right. Quite plainly, without metaphor this--it provides you with an elaborate and precise language in which you really can explain definitely what you mean, but what you want to say is decided by other things. The ultimate reality is the hurly-burly, the struggle; the metaphysic is an adjunct to clear-headedness in it. (Speculations, 130.)

His metaphysics was the weapon Hulme needed to define his position on art. The language of philosophy was his ammunition. As was shown earlier, Hulme regarded art and philosophy as essentially the same. At bottom, both express an attitude towards existence.

Hulme is definite about what he considers should be the attitude of art. "It is essential," he writes, "to prove that beauty may be in small, dry things." (*Speculations*, 131.) "The new art is geometrical in character, while the art we are accustomed to is vital and organic." (*Speculations*, 76-77.) The appearance of this new art is of great importance to Hulme, for,

...the re-emergence of geometrical art may be the pre-cursor of the re-emergence of the corresponding attitude towards the world, and so of the break-up of the Renaissance humanistic attitude. The fact that the change comes first in art, before it comes in thought, is easily understandable for this reason. So thoroughly are we soaked in the spirit of the period we live in, so strong is its influence over us, that we can only escape from it in an unexpected way, as it were, a side direction like art.

(*Speculations*, 78.)

The new art is a forerunner of a complete change in the categories by which men think. It signals a new era in human thought, paving the way to the establishment of new categories. To Hulme, it is the death knell of Humanism and Romanticism. Yet, because the categories which characterized a previous age tend to linger in the minds of men,
because they continue to constitute the way men see things, Hulme thinks "...that if good classical verse were to be written to-morrow very few people would be able to stand it." (Speculations, 126.)

This final statement provides a new vantage-position from which to interpret the importance Hulme attached to philosophical language, and hence, to metaphysics. Briefly, the point is this: so intractable are categories that, though a new art may emerge, there is no language to justify it.

The critic in explaining a new direction often falsifies it by his use of a vocabulary derived from the old position. The thought or vocabulary of one's period is an extraordinarily difficult thing to break away from. While an artist may have emancipated himself from his own period as far as his art is concerned, while a spectator may have emancipated himself by looking at the art of other periods in museums, yet the mental, or more accurately speaking, the linguistic emancipations of the two, may not have gone forward parallel with the artistic one. (Speculations, 76.)

Hulme's response to the necessity was the provision of a framework so that the new art could be understood.

Hulme's insistence on the inherent rightness of the religious attitude as opposed to the humanist attitude carried over to his interpretation of the art which was the product of these two attitudes. Hulme loosely categorizes the two distinct kinds of art as "new" and "old." He believed that the "new" abstract art was right, the "old" false. The new art, he thought, had much in common with some primitive
art and with the art of the Byzantine and Egyptian periods. Hulme terms "Greek and modern art since the Renaissance," old art.

In these arts the lines are soft and vital. You have other arts like Egyptian, Indian and Byzantine, where everything tends to be angular, where curves tend to be hard and geometrical, where the representation of the human body, for example, is often entirely non-vital, and distorted to fit into stiff lines and cubical shapes of various kinds. (Speculations, 82.)

Hulme aligns the new art with the religious attitude, with man's sense of his limitations amidst the incessant change of existence, and with the doctrine of Original Sin. The old art, on the contrary, is the inevitable outburst of periods dominated by the categories of the intrinsic goodness of men and the sense of harmony between man and the external world. The two arts answer two different conceptions of satisfactoriness.

Since all art is created to satisfy certain desires, since it is always the expression of a certain attitude of mind, Hulme is able to distinguish between the two main art types with which he deals on the basis of the mental tendencies of the people who produced them. The new, geometrical art is the product of an attitude that "can be described most generally as a feeling of separation in the face of outside nature." (Speculations, 85.) The old, naturalistic art "is the result of a happy, pantheistic relation between man and the outside world..." (Speculations, 86.) Borrowing his terminology
from Worringen, Hulme classifies these two opposing mental tendencies as the tendency to abstraction and the tendency to empathy (Abstraction and Einfühlung are Worringen's terms). The feeling of empathy can only exist in those people who find pleasure in the contemplation of natural forms. Art for them is an objectification of their own vitality. Abstract art represents a disjunction from nature, a shunning of natural, vital forms, and a desire for fixity and stillness. (Speculations, 85.) The art that relies on empathy is vital; abstract art is anti-vital.

Hulme insists that he accepts Worringen's antithesis completely. He found in Worringen's writings on art a clarification of the attitude he himself was trying to formulate. (Speculations, 82.) Worringen was to his aesthetics what Bergson was to his metaphysics. Both men had already objectified and fixed attitudes that he himself was struggling to express. But, his adoption of the theories of these two men involved him in a conflict that, although it is unlikely that he was aware of his own contradictory positions, made the final picture of his aesthetics quite different from his initial statements. Basically, his aesthetics can be seen to rely far more heavily on Bergson than on Worringen. In fact, his aesthetics eventually become an almost complete contradiction of Worringen's views.

The parallel Hulme drew between art and philosophy has already been noted. The general statements he made on both fields are similar. However, since he devoted more time to art, he worked out his basic
position more fully in that field. His aesthetic position, then, serves to illuminate his definition of philosophy and to expose many of its flaws.

Hulme defined the tendency to abstraction as "the desire to turn the organic into something hard and durable." (Speculations, 107.) In another context, he discusses "a certain abstract geometrical shape, which, being durable and permanent shall be a refuge from the flux and impermanence of the outside world." (Speculations, 86.) The new art is a creation distinct from life, from the flux of constant change—ability which Bergson postulates. It shares the anti-vital quality with primitive and Byzantine art, yet there are dissimilarities in the world-view which produced them.

The primitive springs from what we have called a kind of mental space-shyness, which is really an attitude of fear before the world; the Byzantine from what may be called, inaccurately, a kind of contempt for the world. (Speculations, 92.)

The new attitude Hulme finds it difficult to define precisely, and is reduced to generalities.

In comparison with the flat and insipid optimism of the belief in progress, the new attitude may be in a certain sense inhuman, pessimistic. (Speculations, 93.)

The new art will also be "new" because of its resemblance to machinery. Thus,

...the new "tendency towards abstraction" will culminate, not so much in the
simple geometrical forms found in archaic art, but in the more complicated ones associated in our minds with machinery...It is not a question of dealing with machinery in the spirit, and with the methods of existing art, but of the creation of a new art having an organisation, and governed by principles, which are at present exemplified unintentionally, as it were, in machinery. (Speculations, 104.)

Although Hulme cannot state exactly what this relation to machinery will be, it is reasonable to assume, on the basis of certain related statements and examples, and with the background of his definition of philosophy, that he is classifying art here as an extensive manifold. Machinery would certainly be a subject for intellectual analysis and dissection.

Since the new art is somehow related to machinery, the actual organization of the new art is like the organization of machinery. Many of Picasso's paintings, "whatever they may be labelled, are at bottom studies of a special kind of machinery." (Speculations, 105.) If this abstract art is so akin to machinery, being "absolutely distinct from the messiness, the confusion, and the accidental details of existing things," it must share the nature of matter and be explicable in mechanical terms. Hulme himself states: "In the endeavour to get away from the flux of existence, there is an endeavour to create in contrast, an absolutely enclosed material individuality." (Speculations, 89.) The words "material individuality" are revealing. Hulme is implying that the artistic creation is a finite and limited
bit of matter. This is the most obvious conclusion to draw from his initial hypothesis, the distinction between abstraction and empathy, and the sensible conclusion to make from his definition of abstraction. Abstract art, then, if it is to be consistent with Worringer's views will have the status of a Bergsonian extensive manifold and will be capable of analysis by the intellect.

Hulme defines art then as he defines philosophy. The philosopher's job, to recapitulate, was to dive into the muddy stream of our own thoughts, and dry "into a definite and fixed shape the idea that in our own mind was but muddy, transient, and confused." (Further Speculations, 37.) The artist's function is the same.

It is as if the surface of our mind was a sea in a continual state of motion, that there were so many waves on it, their existence was so transient, and they interfered so much with each other, that one was unable to perceive them. The artist by making a fixed model of one of the waves enables you to isolate it out and to perceive it in yourself. In that sense art merely reveals, it never creates. (Speculations, 151.)

Hulme answers one of the central aesthetic questions in terms of what is, thus far, his mechanistic theory of art. By depriving the artist of creativity, and denying that art can be other than revelation, Hulme would seem to be treating art much as he treated physical science and mathematics. Art, to Hulme at this point, is static and lifeless.

In order to make a "fixed model" of one of the waves of the flux,
the artist must struggle. He must contend with the fixed ways men have of perceiving things because of their necessity for action. He must also contend with the already fixed categories by which men describe their perceptions. He must struggle to get the "exact curve of the thing."

The great aim is accurate, precise and definite description. The first thing is to recognize how extraordinarily difficult this is. It is no mere matter of carefulness; you have to use language and language is by its very nature a communal thing; that is, it expresses never the exact thing but a compromise—that which is common to you, me and everybody. But each man sees a little differently, and to get out clearly and exactly what he does see, he must have a terrific struggle with language, whether it be with words or the technique of other arts. Language has its own special nature, its own conventions and communal ideas. It is only by a concentrated effort of the mind that you can hold it fixed to your own purpose. ... You know what I call architect's curves—flat pieces of wood with all different kinds of curvature. By a suitable selection from these you can draw approximately any curve you like. The artist I take to be the man who simply can't bear the idea of that 'approximately'. He will get the exact curve of what he sees whether it be an object or an idea in the mind. ... Suppose that instead of your curved pieces of wood you have a springy piece of steel of the same types of curvature as the wood. Now the state of tension or concentration of mind, if he is doing anything really good in this struggle against the in-
grained habit of the technique may be represented by a man employing all his fingers to bend the steel out of its own curve and into the exact curve which you want. Something different to what it would assume naturally.

(Speculations, 132-133.)

The discipline Hulme requires of the artist, if he is to break away from the habits of perception, is undeniably great. Even apart from this discipline, the artist is a unique type, freed from the restrictions imposed on men by their compulsion for action, and therefore more able to get into actual contact with reality. He is, by nature, better equipped to see things as they are. Because his work is a presentation, simply, of things as they are, he is a revealer, not a creator.

If reality as Bergson (and therefore Hulme) understands it is flux in continual motion, one of the most pertinent questions to ask of Hulme's aesthetic is "What are those things that the artist gets the 'exact curve' of?". An analogy Hulme uses to describe Bergson's metaphysics provides an answer to this question.

When I see in the changing shape of flame something which resembles a saw edge I may solely for the purpose of human communication call it that. But I have not by that altered the nature of the flame. So with concepts and universals of all kinds. We envisage the flux in certain static geometric shapes entirely for practical purposes, which have no ultimate reality at all. Proteus is god, and he cannot be seized in any formula. (Further Speculations, 5.)

The "things" which the artist is able to perceive and to convey exactly
are instantaneous outlines on the surface of the fluid, ever-moving flux. The artist 'catches' these and 'dries' them, making them rigid and static, for the purpose of human communication. If everyone could "break through the veil which action interposes" and attain direct contact with reality by themselves, art would be useless. Hulme defines aesthetic pleasure in terms of the artist's ability to transmit a sense of reality. It is, then, "...in this rare fact of communication that you get the root of aesthetic pleasure." (Speculations, 136.)

What sort of activity must the artist undergo in order finally to fix his insight? Hulme describes this activity "as a process of discovery and disentanglement."

To use the metaphor which one is by now so familiar with--the stream of the inner life, and the definite crystallised shapes on the surface--the big artist, the creative artist, the innovator, leaves the level where things are crystallised out into definite shapes, and diving down into the inner flux, comes back with a new shape which he endeavours to fix. (Speculations, 149.)

The artist places himself within the flux, identifies himself with it and then must strive against the fixed forms to objectify his insights. The artistic process of 'discovery' which Hulme describes is an exact parallel of the Bergsonian concept of evolution. In the artistic process, the intuitive insight battles for expression by contending with the conventions of established tradition; in the evolutionary process
the life-impulse must struggle with matter in order to remain free.

The characteristic of matter is necessity. The characteristic of the impulse which has produced life is, on the contrary, a free creative activity. The process of evolution can only be described as the gradual insertion of more and more freedom into matter. (Speculations, 208.)

Similarly, in the artistic process, the intuitive insight must manipulate fixed forms in order to free the object exactly as it is. Hulme himself was aware of the parallel between these two processes.

"Our eye," he writes,

perceives the features of the living being merely as assembled, not as mutually organised. The intention of life--a simple movement which runs through the lines and links them together and gives them significance--escapes it. This intention is just what the artist tries to regain in placing himself back within the object by a kind of sympathy and breaking down by an effort of intuition the barrier that space puts between him and his model. (Speculations, 144.)

If intuition is the basis of the artistic process, then, on the grounds of Bergson's theory, the object of that intuition must be an intensive manifold, wherein all the parts interpenetrate and cannot be separated out by the intellect. The weapon which poets will use to present these intensives in verse, Hulme believes, will be fancy. Fancy will bring out the individual object in its exactitude.

When the analogy has not enough connection with the thing described to be
quite parallel with it, where it overlays the thing it described and there is a certain excess, there you have the play of fancy—that I grant is inferior to imagination.

But where analogy is every bit of it necessary for accurate description in the sense of the word accurate I have previously described, and your only objection to this kind of fancy is that it is not serious in the effect it produces, then I think the objection to be entirely invalid. If it is sincere in the accurate sense, when the whole of the analogy is necessary to get the exact curve of the feeling or thing you want to express—there you seem to me to have the highest verse, even though the subject be trivial and the emotions of the infinite far away. (Speculations, 137-138.)

The intuition grasps and conveys the whole of the 'thing'. That is, it presents a synthetic unity. Hulme has gradually worked himself into a position which is a complete contradiction of his original stand, that art is "a material individuality" and therefore capable of analysis by the intellect. Hulme's main objection to the Romantics, then, is not their theory of organic unity, but the fact that they use this theory to bring together two realms which to him must remain separate. Unity for Hulme is found in finite things, which are regarded in themselves, "as individual not universal." (Speculations, 136.) The artist does not look through the object to discover the universal in the particular, but strives instead to find the exact particularity of the particular.
Hulme feels no qualms, once having ascertained his exact position, about taking over some of the terminology associated with "the sloppy dregs" of Romanticism. Coleridge, he feels, uses the word "vital" in "a perfectly definite and what I call dry sense."

It is just this: A mechanical complexity is the sum of its parts. Put them side by side and you get the whole. Now vital or organic is merely a convenient metaphor for a complexity of a different kind, that in which the parts cannot be said to be elements as each one to a certain extent is the whole. The leg of a chair by itself is still a leg. My leg by itself wouldn't be. (*Speculations*, 138-139.)

Clearly, Hulme is confused. On the one hand, he conceives the object of aesthetic perception as being organic in that it interpenetrates with the flux. Once removed from its source, once separated out by the disentangling process of discovery, it must inevitably be a dead form. According to his metaphysical position, this is the only interpretation that Hulme will allow, for language, in terms of this position, is the material world. In that case, language cannot be organic or vital, because it is material, and matter, to Hulme, is dead. On the grounds of Bergson's matter-flux dualism, a dualism that Hulme is working with here in his aesthetics, art should be like machinery, as it is the dead, fixed forms which are derived from the flux. What Hulme has done is to postulate that art is anti-vital, and then proceed to describe it in vital terms. This, as it will be developed
in the rest of this paper, is the core of the ambiguity of Hulme's aesthetics.

Still, in spite of Hulme's confusion on certain major points, it must be noted that he did not deviate from his attention to the individual, the particular. His awareness of the hindrance which conventional ways of expression imposed on the exact definition of these particulars forced him to focus on the nature and function of the artist's medium. Language, he saw, was a barrier to precise, exact communication.

The straightforward use of words always lets the individuality of things escape...If you are able to observe the actual individuality of the emotion you experience, you become dissatisfied with language. You persist in an endeavour to so state things that the meaning does not escape, but is definitely forced on the attention of the reader. To do this you are compelled to invent new metaphors and new epithets. (Speculations, 162.)

The difference which Hulme is endeavouring to make plain here is the difference between the language of prose and the language of poetry. He describes prose as "the museum where the dead metaphors of the poets are preserved." (Speculations, 152.) What Hulme is implying is that prose is dead, as distinct from poetry, which is alive. Prose might well be termed poetry's morgue. Hulme calls it a "counter" language, which permits the reader to glide through an abstract process. In another context, Hulme terms prose an "old pot" that lets meaning leak out. (Speculations, 135.)
Poetic language, on the other hand, is constituted by images. The image transmits the artist's direct contact with reality. "Creation of imagery is needed to convey over this freshness of impression." (Speculations, 163.) Hulme emphasizes the "freshness" of imagery to differentiate it from prose which is stale and dead.

Freshness convinces you, you feel at once that the artist was in an actual physical state. You feel that for a minute. (Speculations, 135.)

The image gives the reader the physical sensations experienced by the artist. This is the core of the Hulmian aesthetic experience. The image does not in any way appeal to the intellect, but to the feelings of the reader. Its impact is physical.

The thing that concerns me here is of course only the feeling which is conveyed over to you by the use of fresh metaphors. It is only where you get these fresh metaphors and epithets employed that you get this vivid conviction which constitutes the purely aesthetic emotion that can be got from imagery. (Speculations, 152.)

In a later discussion on poetry, Hulme develops this point.

The element in it which will be found in the rest of art is not the accidental fact that imagery conveys over an actually felt visual sensation, but the actual character of that communication, the fact that it hands you over the sensation as directly as possible, attempts to get it over bodily with all the qualities it possessed for you when you experienced it.

(Speculations, 164.)
Intuition then is a physical realization, and the aesthetic emotion is felt as a physical communication. This is true of painting as well as poetry. Hulme states that he agrees with Bernard Berenson in finding the essence of aesthetic experience in painting to lie in direct communication, in its life-communicating quality. (Speculations, 168.) In the light of these statements, Hulme's poetry-prose distinction is made clearer. Whereas prose is dead, removed from life, constituting a world unto itself, poetry is alive, containing and communicating life.

Hulme has come a long way from his Worringer-based initial statements. In fact, he has arrived at the opposite extreme. As was already shown, he understands art as being vital rather than anti-vital, and as life-communicating, rather than life-negating. The emphasis he places on the visual quality of the imagery is also revealing. Hulme equates vision with meaning. In Further Speculations, he states, "We replace meaning (i.e. vision) by words." (Further Speculations, 77.) In other words, the meaning of the thing lies in what it is. The artist catches this meaning in an image and lets the reader know what this visual impression felt like to him. He appeals to the feelings as opposed to the intellect, for the intellect is capable only of analysis and manipulation. Thus Hulme's dictum: "Each word must be an image seen, not a counter." (Further Speculations, 79.) Prose lets meaning escape; it no longer transmits a visual sensation to the reader. Poetry has meaning because it is composed of images.
Hulme is led from his interpretation of the image as conveying physical sensations to define empathy as the basis of art. "...This possibility," he writes,

of living our own emotions into outside shapes and colours is the basic fact on which the whole of plastic art rests. ...There is nothing mysterious in this process by which form becomes the porter or carrier of internal emotions. (Further Speculations, 140.)

Hulme abandons here his original stand that abstract art denies life, and embraces the opposing empathy theory, that art allows the spectator to project himself into its forms. Art enables the artist to express his internal states, his emotions, to enclose these within a form, which will, in turn, produce an emotional recognition in the viewer. The emotional response is dependent on the accuracy of the vision: "All emotion depends on real solid vision or sound. It is physical." (Further Speculations, 78.)

Since form is the "carrier" of the vision, it merits attention. Hulme believes that a feeling for form of a certain kind must always be the motivation behind a new art. The verse form and the state of poetry in any period are always closely related. (Further Speculations, 68.) The new poetry will be characterized by free verse forms.

This new verse resembles sculpture rather than music; it appeals to the eye rather than to the ear. It has to mold images, a kind of spiritual clay, into definite shapes. This material ... is image and not sound. It builds up a plastic image
which it hands over to the reader,
whereas the old art endeavoured to
influence him physically by the hyp­
notic effect of rhythm.

(Further Speculations, 75.)

The "old" verse, relying on definite meter, had a lulling effect on
the reader, allowing him to slide through his reading of it in a
rhythmical way, without deriving meaning from it. You might say that
such verse is a sort of rhythmical prose. Hulme's main objection to
meter is that it "enables people to write verse with no poetic in­
spiration..." (Further Speculations, 75.) In other words, it makes
use of counter-words rather than new images. The new verse will ar­
est the reader physically by means of the images. The image, to
Hulme, then, is not just the fabric from which poetry is woven; the
image is poetry just as certainly as prose, the counter-language,
is the material world.

The image and the free verse form are closely related. The
image, a physical sensation produced by an object in reality, re­
produced for its own sake alone, can never be more than a very small
thing.

To put this modern conception of the poetic spirit, this tentative and half­
shy manner of looking at things, into regular metre is like putting a child
into armour. (Further Speculations, 72-73.)

The new attitude demands a new form, and at the same time it must
have maximum self-expression. Free verse, to Hulme, is the only
answer for these requirements.
Free verse still requires discipline of the poet, "Continual effort necessary to think of things as they are, the constraint necessary to avoid great tendencies to use big words and common phrases without meaning." (Further Speculations, 98.) In submitting himself to this discipline, in striving to capture "the exact curve of the thing," the poet finds new images. The attempt to work out the original impression brings about a new impression. The struggle with language "forces the idea...back on itself and brings out the original idea in a clearer shape. ...The idea has grown and developed because of the obstacles it had to meet." (Speculations, 211.) "In a sense the poetry writes itself." (Further Speculations, 95.) The final image is new and fresh, even to the poet. Just as philosophical language constitutes philosophical ideas, the image constitutes the physical sensations of poetry.

What relation do these later developments in Hulme's thought have on his ideas about abstraction? Hulme reiterates, in several different contexts, that the external world of life is always the source of any art. The "Object must cause the emotion before the poem can be written." (Further Speculations, 97.) He also emphasizes that the artist selects from the data provided by reality, that he "picks out" something. (Speculations, 156.) "Literature, like memory, selects only the vivid patches of life. The art of abstraction." (Further Speculations, 99.) Abstraction is finally defined then as a selection from reality.
There must be just as much contact
with nature in an abstract art as in
a realistic one; without that stimulus
the artist could produce nothing...
All art may be said to be realism,
then, in that it extracts from nature
facts which have not been observed be­
fore. But in as far as the artist is
creative, he is not bound down by the
accidental relations of the elements
actually found in nature, but extracts,
distorts, and utilizes them as a means
of expression, and not as a means of
interpreting nature. (Further Speculations, 128.)

Nature is the source of all abstract art, but to Hulme, unlike the
naturalist, it is not reproduced for the sake of the pleasure which
may be found in natural things, but as a means of self-expression for
the artist. Hulme places the emphasis on the artist, on his need for
self-expression, just as he had placed emphasis on the philosopher's
need to express his attitude. The conclusion of this matter is that
"...all our analogies spiritual and intellectual are derived from
purely physical acts. Nay, more, all attributes of the absolute and
abstract are really nothing more (in so far as they mean anything) but elaborations of simple passions." (Speculations, 242.)

Basically, Hulme defines poetry in the same way as he defined
philosophy. Both the poet and the philosopher desire to fix an im­
pression or an attitude, and they must achieve their aim through the
medium of language. The achievement in both cases is the creation of
another world, a world apart from life. The worlds of poetry and
philosophy are unified, because they are shaped by language, but the
unity they possess is not the same. The world of philosophical language is a mechanical unity, dead and static; the world of the poetic image is a vital unity, fixed, yet alive. In so far as Hulme finds unity only in language (apart, of course, from the absolutes of religion and ethics), unity, to him, implies death. Yet he allows poetry a life-in-death existence.

However, it is necessary to define the nature of this life-in-death existence. It must be remembered that poetry is the product of man, who, by Hulme's definition, is finite and limited. His creation, therefore, will also be finite and limited. Furthermore, his creation is impermanent. Hulme's realization of the imminent decay of all art leads him to conclusions that would jar most art-lovers. At one point, he states, "Personally I am of course in favour of the complete destruction of all verse more than twenty years old." (Further Speculations, 69.) Odd-sounding as it is, such a statement is the inevitable extension of Hulme's theories. Poetic imagery is merely the language which later will degenerate into prose categories. It will grow old and lose its newness. This is why the criterion Hulme establishes for good poetry are "freshness" and "zest." The poet is able to experience new sensations intensely, and to transmit these sensations to others. In this sense, "Great painters are men in whom has originated a certain vision of things which has become or will become the vision of everybody." (Speculations, 149-150.) The same thing may be said of poets, who bring forth new images which ultimately
become part of common thought.

Hulme's metaphysics can be seen to influence his aesthetics at certain points. He rigidly adheres to the view that the object of aesthetic perception must be a small thing, and condemns any attempt to let its sphere of relevance spread beyond itself. In this sense, his theory is consistent in its attempt to eliminate all poetry that tries to "drag in the infinite." On the other hand, Hulme has obviously tried to avoid a mechanistic theory of art. In so doing, he has created a 'niche' for art which cannot be accounted for within the framework of his metaphysics. The language of prose, merely the decayed language of poetry, can be accounted for mechanistically. Poetry, however, is explainable in terms of vital and organic unity. It partakes of the character of the flux, yet it is apart from the flux, deriving from the \textit{elan vital}, yet alien to it.

Hulme would obviously need to posit a fourth realm in his metaphysics in order to make his theory of art valid. As it is, the vital unity he allows art is not consistent with any of his general assumptions. Art is unique in that Hulme allows it a unity which he denies to anything else. Art, to Hulme, is a paradox; it is dead, yet alive--a sort of life-in-death. It is not, however, an absolute, for it will die completely eventually. It achieves a momentary uniqueness.
CHAPTER IV: CINDERS: A GLIMPSE INTO ETERNITY

Had Hulme lived longer he would undoubtedly have made some attempts to give his philosophy greater consistency. At his death he was still planning an exposition of his personal philosophy which, according to Sir Herbert Read, editor of Speculations, would have been cast in an allegorical form, much like Nietzsche's Zarathustra. The hero of this work, Aphra, appears rarely in Hülme's notes, but he was obviously as visually-oriented as his creator, and experienced the world in images. Most of the fragments for this work, on the whole jottings and aphorisms, were collected by Read under Hulme's own title, Cinders. The main purpose of this work is to destroy the notion of unity and to establish plurality in its stead. Furthermore, Hulme refuses to accept that this plurality can be described in words; language, he maintains, in Cinders, is merely illusion.

In the opinion of the present writer, the easiest approach to the Cinders theory is through Bergson's theory of time, a theory which Hulme subscribes to. (Speculations, 212-214.) The distinction Bergson drew between real time and mechanical time is essentially the same distinction he drew between the flux of the real world and the statis of the dead world dealt with by the physical sciences and mathematics. The difference between the two is the difference between what is happening, and what men must think is happening in order that they may act. Bergson described real time as meaning real duration. "Duration is the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which
swells as it advances." This real duration which characterizes the flux, and is identified with it, is continually growing. New things are constantly appearing and disappearing. Bergson writes, "The more we study the nature of time, the more we shall comprehend that duration means invention, the creation of forms, the continual elaboration of the absolutely new." On the continuous process of change which is real duration, creation is constantly occurring. In real time the past joins with the future to continue into the present. Bergson calls such duration "a hyphen, a connecting link." Reality, then, the flux which Bergson postulates, exists in real time, and is intrinsically linked with it. Interpreting Bergson's theory of time, Hulme writes,

Real change does exist but we shall always find it inconceivable if we try to form a picture of what we mean. When we think in that way we shall always reduce real change to the kind of change that you get in any mechanical system. (Speculations, 197.)

Mechanical time, in contrast with real time, is connected with space, with the tendency of the intellect to analyse things out in spatial terms, to see the world as consisting in certain ordered patterns. Mechanical time is a function of the intellect which, by nature,

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14 Ibid., p. 11.
15 Ibid., p. 24.
according to Bergson, is opposed to creation and change.

...against this idea of the absolute originality and unforeseeability of forms our whole intellect rises in revolt. The essential function of our intellect...is to be a light for our conduct, to make ready for our action on things, to foresee, for a given situation, the events, favourable or unfavourable, which may follow thereupon. Intellect therefore instinctively selects in a given situation whatever is like something already known...

In other words, the intellect opposes real change and tries to fit new facts into pre-determined patterns or systems. It cannot allow for completely new things except by distorting them to fit old patterns. Mechanical time, then, might be said to be "out of time" because it contains only dead elements. Since there is no change there is no time, so irrevocably are time and change connected. Mechanical time is time standing still, or measured out, and is therefore completely alien to the nature of reality. It is inevitably artificial and opposed to creation, in complete contrast to real time which is creation. (Speculations, 197.) Mechanical time is clock-time, by which men regulate, plan and understand their lives. In contrast with real time which, in linking the past, the present, and the future, "swells as it advances," or brings new things into existence, mechanical time fits past, present and future into one pattern.

The dichotomy established here between real time and mechanical

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time is the dichotomy between chaos and unity. Chaos, to Hulme, is
the nature of life; unity is unnatural to life, is imposed upon it by
the minds of men by manipulating dead counters. Language gives a sense
of unity, and this unity is false, an illusion. Language connects
things, welds them together, unifies them. Eventually, this language
itself becomes considered an absolute, and people believe that words
are the constitution of the world.

Symbols are picked out and believed
to be realities. People imagine that
all the complicated structure of the
world can be woven out of "good" and
"beauty". These words are merely
counters representing vague groups
of things, to be moved about on a
board for the convenience of the
players. (Speculations, 218.)

When language is allowed to usurp and replace reality, you find people
explaining themselves by means of words, which, at best, should only
be a medium of communication. The philosopher Haldane, for example,
admiring organization above all, is criticized by Hulme for his com­
plete reliance on language, for his absurd belief that language is the
ultimate reality.

Surely this is the greatest comedy in
human history, that men should come to
think themselves as made up of one of
their own tools. (Further Speculations, 14.)

There are echoes here of the Weltanschauung-Pure Philosophy dis­
tinction made earlier. Haldane is "distinctly a 'counter' as distinguished
from a 'visual' philosopher." (Further Speculations, 9.) Language is
his sole reference. What he is doing in his philosophy is describing language in terms of language. This is a completely unreal activity. The visual philosopher, on the other hand, refers to the flux, and language to him is but a hardening of his impressions of a direct contact with reality. The flux, the source of his philosophy, must be closely adhered to and often returned to. Such a philosopher must beware of going too far into the abstract realm for fear of losing sight of his original physical intuition. This physical basis of knowledge, believes Hulme, is all that is really essential to metaphysics; logic is only an elaboration, a drawing out, and building upon, of the original physical perception. He asserts, "I think that what we require now is a race of naked philosophers, free from the inherited embellishments of logic." (Further Speculations, 12.)

It is interesting to trace the use of "naked" in Hulme's writings and to discover just how consistently, and appropriately, he applies the word. In pinpointing the superiority of his philosopher-hero's contribution to aesthetics, he states, "The great advantage of Bergson's theory is that it states the thing most nakedly, with the least amount of metaphysical baggage." (Speculations, 149.) Conversely, the last chapters of most books of philosophy expose the "armour" as having been nothing but the cover-up to an attitude to life. "How magnificently they may have been clad before, they come out naked here!" (Speculations, 20.) "Nakedness," then, becomes the
criterion by which Hulme judges a philosophy. This is the key to his making art and philosophy synonymous. Both the artist and the philosopher are "naked" in reality, completely exposed to physical sensations, open to new impressions, and unhindered by the weight of logic or "metaphysical baggage." What Hulme expects from philosophy is a Weltanschauung, and this is what he attempts to give. The sub-title of Cinders is A Sketch of a New Weltanschauung.

Hulme can never be criticized for carrying any excess metaphysical baggage into his Cinders theory. His expression here is original, often finding itself in an image. Moreover, it has the visual quality which Hulme required of the image. The central theme is the Bergsonian notion of reality being flux and change its attribute, but it is examined here in greater detail and in many more of its ramifications. The impossibility of discovering an absolute Truth is its constant message.

All is flux. The moralists, the capital letterists, attempt to find a framework outside the flux, a solid bank for the river, a pier rather than a raft. Truth is what helps a particular sect in the general flow. (Speculations, 222.)

Truth is a relative term, relative not only to the flux of reality, but also to other truths. Relativity is then, the norm not only of the flux, but also of the mechanical world of matter. Plurality, not unity, is the constant in both. Language is a false refuge, an escape from plurality to plurality.
This plurality consists in the nature of an ash-heap. In this ash-pit of cinders, certain ordered routes have been made, thus constituting whatever unity there may be—a kind of manufactured chess-board laid on a cinder heap. Not a real chess-board impressed on the cinders, but the gossamer world of symbolic communication already spoken of. (Speculations, 219.)

The image of the chess-board is used often by Hulme to make concrete his theory of the organizing quality of language, the way it outlines and divides off physical impressions, providing tenuous lines of communication around and over the cinder-heap of reality. The organization given by language is artificial, but it provides a means of getting from one place to another, with a feeling of certainty and security. But the squares of this chess-board always contain cinders and are bounded by cinders, and are inevitably incomplete.

All the sudden insights (e.g. the great analogy of a woman compared to the world in Brussels)—all of these start a line, which seems about to unite the whole world logically. But the line stops. There is no unity. All logic and life are made up of tangled ends like that.

Always think of the fringe and of the cold walks, of the lines that lead nowhere. (Speculations, 235-236.)

There is always a "fringe" of cinders which is lost or left out in the generalizations achieved by language. Even language itself cannot work out a complete synthesis by manipulating all its elements, because there will always be a conflict in terms, an opposition of purposes.
Truth, to Hulme, implies conflict and opposition. It is relative and relativity is the only absolute.

The absolute is invented to reconcile conflicting purposes. But these purposes are necessarily conflicting, even in the nature of Truth itself. (Speculations, 228.)

Plurality, the nature of reality, is synonymous with Truth. This is simply saying that everything is in its own right, in no way united to anything else. Hulme finds plurality in many different manifestations. The sight of soldiers in Bologna excites him as a visual representation of his philosophy.

I am a pluralist, and to see soldiers for a pluralist should be a symbolic philosophic drama. There is no Unity, no Truth, but forces which have different aims, and whose sole reality consists in these differences. (Further Speculations, 26.)

Hulme's position in the Cinders theory is strikingly analogous to the findings in contemporary physics. He is at pains to point out that there is no ultimate reality which, when found, will be the basis of a general law subsuming everything in a unified way. As he admits himself, the use of the word "cinders" is an awkward attempt to convey an impression that by its very nature cannot be given in words.

The absolute is not to be described as perfect, but if existent as essentially imperfect, chaotic and cinder-like. (Even this view is not ultimate, but merely designed to satisfy temporary human analogies and wants.) (Speculations, 221.)
Hulme is not advancing an atomistic outlook to reality. He is not implying that there is a single irreducible unit, the cinder, but that all is necessarily in a continual state of flux and change and that the "cinder" is just a convenient fiction. Dr. Marcus Fiery substantiates this view on the basis of modern experimentation. He writes,

> Atoms as we know them today, have hardly anything more in common with the notion that was intended by the inventors of the atomic concept. In particular, atoms are not the ultimate irreducible entities which one might take as a basis for explaining Nature. In fact, it is doubtful whether any such 'ultimate' unit exists at all.\(^{17}\)

The conclusion to be drawn from Hulme's theory thus far, apart from its prophetic role in relation to modern scientific discoveries, is that language is completely fictitious by its very nature, and at its very best can only be "behind the times" in its description of a continually changing instant of time. Or, to co-ordinate cinders once more with the Bergsonian time-concept given at the beginning of this chapter, language is out of time, and can never refer to reality.

Hulme has succeeded in presenting a Weltanschauung which, in virtue of its basic premises, is the broad framework for all other Weltanschauungs. If reality is defined as chaotic, confused and con-

tradictory, then all expressions may be equally valid, in that all are equally invalid. Just as the real world is capable of an infinite number of possibilities, so language expression is unlimited in its scope. Hulme asserts "That the world is finite...and that it is yet an infinitude of cinders (there is no finite law encompassing all.)" (Speculations, 222.) Since the world exists in real time, real duration, and change is the only constant, it is not subject to the limitations of space and will therefore never exhaust the possibilities of differences. Man, on the other hand, lives in the world of space and must feel secure in an inherently insecure world. He has an infinite scope for novelty of self-expression. Hulme believes that,

The truth is that there are no ultimate principles, upon which the whole of knowledge can be built once and forever as upon a rock. But there are an infinity of analogues, which help us along, and give us a feeling of power over the chaos when we perceive them. The field is infinite and herein lies the chance for originality. Here there are some new things under the sun. (Perhaps it would be better to say that there are some new things under the moon, for here is the land pre-eminently of shadows, fancies and analogies.)

(Speculations, 233-234.)

Hulme's description of language as forming a moon-world as opposed to the real world "under the sun" leads straight to the core of his beliefs about language, art and unity. It is quite obvious already that language is separate from reality, that it is only the
instrument of communication. Yet when Hulme allows for the introduction of new elements into language he would seem to be contradicting the whole notion of mechanical time as being fixed and static. This seeming contradiction can be explained away by Hulme's postulation of plurality as being the norm of the mechanical world combined with his conception of man as a kind of "sorting-machine." In other words, there are an infinite number of possible patterns into which man can arrange his experience, which he does, instinctively. Once the elements of experience have been named, or given counters, this ordering is accomplished by selection or abstraction from among them. Briefly, order implies choice, (and on Hulme's theory, the choices could, of course, be infinite in number) and it is by this facility for making a choice that man is able to develop a satisfactory outlook to existence.

A judicious choice of illusions, leading to activities planned and carried out, is the only means of happiness, e.g., the exhilaration of regarding life as a procession or a war. (Speculations, 232.)

What Hulme is saying, virtually, is that all words are illusions which men use as building blocks in order to build their future in terms of the present. With regard to choice, it must always be remembered that it is artificial and arbitrary, that there will be countless elements it has not included or accounted for. Choice implies the leaving out of other things of equal validity, but just not of equal relevance to
the desires of a human being. Thus Hulme can define "All theories as toys" (Further Speculations, 100.) which men can play with and which satisfy their desire for security in a strange and inconstant world.

In making language synonymous with illusion, Hulme is saying, in effect, that man lives in a world of dreams. The motivation behind the dreams is the satisfaction of human desires, specifically, the desire to perceive the world in a unified way, which is contrary to the nature of reality.

The aim of science and of all thought is to reduce the complex and inevitably disconnected world of grit and cinders to a few ideal counters, which we can move about and so form an ungritlike picture of reality--one flattering to our sense of power over the world. (Speculations, 224.)

Man lives in a world apart from reality, in his own artificially contrived unity, while all around him is chaos. Hulme sees "Certain groups of ideas as huts for men to live in." (Speculations, 225.) In another context, he states, "The truth remains that the world is not any unity, but a house in the cinders (outside in the cold, primeval)." (Speculations, 223.) The image of the "house" can only have been carefully chosen by Hulme, for it conveys so succintly what he is saying. The house, artificial, built up from the cinders, provides protection and isolation from the chaos under it. It enables man to live in security. Probably because it so serves as an image for his theory, Hulme says, "there is only one art that moves me: architec-
ture."  (Speculations, 238.)

But the security is ephemeral and Hulme often points out the proclivity of all matter to revert to chaos. He draws his examples from illness, disgust, death. Man has built his house on the sand. Man himself is but a cindery thing, partaking of the characteristics of the flux. If such is the case, then man can in no way constitute a unity, except in so far as he is manipulated in terms of counters. Hulme's belief in Original Sin should have been shaken at this point, but he gives no indication that he was aware of this contradiction.

Man is the chaos highly organized, but liable to revert to chaos at any moment. Happiness and ecstasy at present unstable. Walking in the street, seeing pretty girls (all chaos put into the drains: not seen) and wondering what they would look like ill. Men laughing at a bar --but wait till the fundamental chaos reveals itself. (Speculations, 227.)

Hulme is constantly reminded of the contrast between man-made organization and the flow of cinders. It is his awareness of this contrast that makes Hulme contemptuous of all theories that push counters into a synthesis. He is always aware of the tag-ends of cinders which they did not include, and of their remoteness from reality. He frequently juxtaposes the dream and the reality, to point out the absurdity of the former.

Philosophical syntheses and ethical systems are only possible in armchair moments. They are seen to be meaningless as soon as we get into a bus with a dirty baby and a crowd. (Speculations, 228-229.)
Reality constantly points out the senselessness of man's intellectual endeavours. It shows the absurdity of trying to fit chaos into a system.

Despite the fragility of all attempts at synthesis, man must have his house in the cinders, and art to Hulme is another shelter outside reality. He harbours no illusions that poetry can be morally uplifting or didactic in any way. For him it is only "for the amusements of bankers and other sedentary arm-chair people in after dinner moods." (Further Speculations, 92.) All art achieves is to provide man with the tools to organize his life.

There must be something on which we can hang up our hat. Better something to which, when for a surging moment we have a feeling (really the cinders drunk for a minute) we can refer it.

Literature as a building up of this state of reference. (Further Speculations, 89-90.)

Art is the conveyor of rare moments of synthesis; it selects, builds up and makes concrete what are otherwise only vague passing sensations in the mind. By so doing it provides a unified fiction which men can refer to as a fact and use as a means of communication. These particular fictions are then sometimes prolonged, made to apply to a greater range of experience. Thus Hulme states that the literary man is always striving for "the creation of his own chessboard." (Further Speculations, 94.)
The chess-board world provided by the artist, the "state of reference" art builds up, is nothing more than an escape from reality, "an escape to the infinite." Because of the scattered nature of the Cinders notes, Hulme never really defines what he means by "infinite," but in view of the other statements he makes about art in somewhat the same context, it is much closer to the realm of religious values than to the realm of scientific and mathematical knowledge, and comes near to the Romantic stand which he condemned for "dragging in the infinite." Art contributes to the creation of another world, which nourishes man's sense of the infinite.

The universal conspiracy: other people unconsciously provide the sentimental spectacle in which you luxuriate. The world is nothing more or less than a stage. (Speculations, 232.)

The activities of the stage are absolutely alien to reality, in no way bearing reminders of their source.

In a sense all ideals must be divorced, torn away from the reality where we found them and put on a stage. They must appear separate and far from all dirt and laughter at their low and common relations. They must be posed and moved dramatically, and above all, their gestures must express their emotions. This is the art of literature, the making of this other world.

They must wear high-heeled shoes which make them appear free movers, and not sprung from that low thing Earth. The separation of the high heel and the powdered face is essential to all emotions, in order to make a work of art. (Further Speculations, 90.)
Hulme finds many examples of this separation from reality which is the character of art. A girl's "ball-dress and shoes are symbolic of the world organized (in counters) from the mud. Separate from contact." (Speculations, 227.) But the most important feature of this other world is unity, wherein the form contains the content.

In order to achieve this unity, the artist must work with the cinders, plying them, until they all add up to the vision of a new world.

Not sufficient to find analogies. It is necessary to find those that add something to each, and give a sense of wonder, a sense of being united in another mystic world. (Further Speculations, 88.)

This other mystic world is variously referred to by Hulme as "life seen in a mirror" (Further Speculations, 88.), and "other-world-through the glass." (Further Speculations, 87.) The quality of this other world obviously consists in a paradox; it must be alive, and yet not subject to death. In this, it is infinite. The image that most impressed Hulme as conveying exactly this infinite quality was the dancer, who represented a perfect synthesis of form and content, who expressed "the organisation of cinders, finally emancipated" (Speculations, 235.)

Each dancer on the stage with her effects and her suggestions of intensity of meaning which are not possible, is not herself (that is a very cindery thing) but a synthesized state of mind in me. The red moving
figure is a way of grouping some ideas together, just as powerful as the one called logic which is only an analogy to counter-pushings. (Further Speculations, 89.)

The dancer is not a "cindery thing," subject to the limitations of time, but exists in the mystic world, timeless and infinite. Her gestures express her emotions with no verbal interference. Her being is identified with what she does.

Hulme wanted the literary image to possess the same quality as the dancer. Whereas "...reader takes words as x without the meaning attached. Aphra sees each word with an image sticking on to it, never a flat word passed over a board like a counter." (Further Speculations, 78.) He described his own feelings about words in the same way (Further Speculations, 82.), keeping always within himself the vision, the synthesis, which was lost in a counter. A word must be a live thing, yet contained in its form. It means what it is. It stands up. (cf. Further Speculations, 86.)

The creation of the mystic world where things live and yet are dead is Hulme's definition of the function of art. The conclusion of the Cinders theory is that there is

No Geist without ghost
This is the only truth in the subject. (Speculations, 243.)

In other words, there is no spirit without death, no meaning without form. What Hulme is saying, as was mentioned in the chapter on aesthetics, is that unity implies death. Unity is a complete removal
from the world of real time in which all is flux and change. Yet it
is still not in the dead world of matter where time is made to stand
still. It is found in a magic, mystic world which art creates.

The unity of art cannot be compared to consciousness in the usual
sense in which Hulme uses the word. This consciousness is always ex­
tremely ephemeral, tenuous and incomplete. At one point he states,

Only in the fact of consciousness is
there any unity in the world. Cf. Ox­
ford Street at 2 A.M. All the mud,
endless, except where bound together
by the spectator. (Speculations, 222-223.)

Consciousness can only unify a part of reality and the unity it effects
is always fringed with cinders. Similarly, only when the mind takes
in impressions is there any unity in it, but this is just for a par­
ticular moment, which will be relative to all other particular moments.

A melancholy spirit, the mind like a
great desert lifeless, and the sound
of march music in the street, passes
like a wave over that desert, unifies
it, but then goes. (Speculations, 245.)

Consciousness is only occasional and even then fleeting, always flow­
ing on with the flux. The artist, however, holds "on through waves"
(Further Speculations, 80.), and his work has a unity made concrete,
cut off from the tag-ends of cinders. Art sets the cinders free from
their servitude to the flux. A suitable analogy to Hulme's definition
of art would be a shadow, cut off from the object which it reflected,
yet keeping the attributes of life. Art is a moving shadow.
Art may be a moving shadow, existing in a mystic world, but Hulme makes no provision for it on the grounds of his Cinders theory. His conception of the world that art creates defies explanation in terms of his basic statements. The fact that Hulme attributes magical qualities to art does not assist in any way, except perhaps to make his ideas more confusing to interpret. The fact that he enters the camp of his enemies, the Romantics, as soon as he defines art has been excellently handled by many writers, particularly Frank Kermode in his Romantic Image. Kermode places Hulme in the Romantic tradition largely because Hulme allows the artist "access to realms of truth habitually inaccessible..." The intuition with which Hulme credits the poet, is almost identical with the Romantic imagination, Kermode believes, except in so far as Hulme insists on the finite nature of the object of intuition. Murray Krieger's examination of Hulmian aesthetics in The New Apologists for Poetry reaches the same conclusion. The basic, (and perhaps only) distinction between Hulme's intuition and the Romantic imagination is the difference in the definitions of reality given by the two views. In the case of Coleridge's concept of the imagination for example, "The poet's imagination, in dealing with the particular, can, through its creativity and its organic powers of unification, harmonize the concrete and the finite with the universal, the infinite, the real. But for Hulme, following Bergson, universals are not reality but are arid superimpositions upon reality which are

demanded by our practical propensities."\(^{19}\) Both writers emphasize Hulme's insistence on the finite nature of the image and the unity of vitality he attributed to it. Yet neither man traced the possibilities for this unity in terms of the total picture of Hulme's thought. The present work has attempted to conduct such a search in the belief that it was worthwhile to follow the concept of unity throughout Hulme's writings, and try to discover some basis for the particular unity he allows the image.

The Cinders theory provides no basis for unity. In fact, it rests on a complete denial of absolute unity and in the acceptance of the relativity of all knowledge. The basic flux, the general "lava flow of cinders" is all, in which things come forth, change, die. "The world lives in order to develop the lines on his face." (Speculations, 229.) Opposed to this are the feeble attempts of man to organize the chaos and reduce all cinders to counters, then move the counters around the organized chess-board until everything is accounted for and reduced to a single, all-encompassing unity. But the cinders always defy counters and life can never be completely organized in spatial terms, for the reason that the cinders are always changing. Yet, art on the Cinders theory is life without change, life that is form. Art is a sort of vital chess-board.

There can be no doubt that the world of art as Hulme describes

it is an ideal world, free from the limitations of flux and the conditions of change and death which it imposes. Yet it is not, in the final estimate, material, because, unlike the language which is the material world, it leaves no fringe of cinders unaccounted for. Furthermore, art is alive, whereas matter is dead. Yet both partake of unity. This is the crux of the ambiguity of the concept of unity in Hulme's thought. Unity implies death, to Hulme, because it is remote from, unattached to, the flux of life. At the same time, unity implies life, life at its most perfect. It implies life with inherent organization.

Hulme's definition of art seems to resemble most closely his definition of the eternal values of religion and ethics. Like those values, art is beyond life, yet has similarities with the mechanistic realm. Hulme's paucity of comments on the character of the religious and ethical values is frustrating here, but it is reasonable to assume that the terms in which he defined art are very near to his conception of those values. At this point, the limits of unity which Hulme established in his metaphysics are broken down. All three of the realms which he so dogmatically asserted were independent and discontinuous, coalesce in his theory of art. Art, to Hulme, appears to have the status of a continuous unity, encompassing all spheres within its form. Art would seem to provide a glimpse into eternity.

Yet there is one important qualification. Art can never provide more than a glimpse into eternity. Unlike the values of religion
and ethics, which are eternal, art is ephemeral, transient. It is the result of a new sensation, a new discovery and it will eventually become commonplace. "Wonder can only be the attitude of a man passing from one stage to another; it can never be a permanently fixed thing." (Speculations, 140.) Art presents a novel perception, which at first might seem strange, but on more familiar grounds, loses its appeal.

It is the stranger that sees the romantic and the beautiful in the commonplace, cf. in New York, or in strange city, detached and therefore able to see beauty and romance. (Further Speculations, 99.)

The "other world" which art conveys is, fundamentally, only a new set of categories, enabling man to perceive the flux in a different way.

A work of art can find its place, in part, on the Cinders theory. Like a philosophical theory, art is a finite unity among an infinite number of possible finite unities. The unity of art, however, is unique, and cannot be explained in terms of any other aspect of Hulme's thought.
In his metaphysics, Hulme delineates the limits of unity and gives his definitions of unity. He allows unity to characterize only the realm of absolute religious and ethical values, and the realm which consists of the knowledge of mathematics and the physical sciences. Hulme describes the kinds of unity of these two realms as being similar to one another in some respects and dissimilar in others. Both realms are similar in that they are anti-vital, completely disjoined from the third realm of life. The values of religion and ethics, however, are eternal and changeless, existing outside space and time. The unity of this realm is absolute, unknowable by man. The unity which characterizes the realm of mathematics and physics, on the other hand, is the product of the human intellect which conceptualizes the continuous flux of life, perceiving it in unified terms. The unity of this realm consists in language, which fixes, or makes static, passing waves of the flux, by applying words to them. As Hulme points out, the language of the material realm always leaves something out; in other words, it consists in an arbitrary unity. Change can occur in this realm when new facts are introduced, but the tendency of man to try to organize new facts into a system is inevitable. These unified systems of the material world, are, however, finite, and relative to other finite systems. The third realm which Hulme postulates, the
realm of life, as continuous flux, wherein change is the constant and unity is impossible.

Basically, then, in terms of Hulme's metaphysics, unity can exist only in the realms of religious and ethical values or in the material world of physical science and mathematics, wherein the unity is supplied by language. Furthermore, Hulme is emphatic that no communion or continuity can exist among the three realms he defines. There is no one basic unity, which, if discovered, would explain everything.

Yet Hulme's theory of art, essentially his theory of the image, seems to represent a cohesion of all three of the realms which he postulates in his metaphysics, signifying a complete contradiction of his basic belief in discontinuity. The aesthetic image, like religious and ethical values, is remote from time and space, yet unlike those values it is not eternal. At the same time, the image partakes of the vitality of life, yet it is life organized, life completed. In its organization, it is akin to the material realm, yet in its vitality it is dissimilar to it. The image partakes of all three realms and would seem to represent the one basic unity which Hulme's metaphysics states is an impossibility. But Hulme allows for this impossibility, probably unknowingly, in art. The unity of the image is a total contradiction of Hulme's metaphysics. However, Hulme allows it only an ephemeral existence, before it degenerates into the arbitrary unity of the material realm. The image
of art is a perfected finite, which momentarily permits a glimpse of eternity.

Hulme's idea of unity cannot be generalized. He circumscribes unity within certain realms, defining it differently in each case, and then allows the boundaries to fall when he defines art. Unity, to Hulme, then, has many meanings, taking on different meanings in different contexts.
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