INTRODUCTION

The thought of T.E. Hulme is very much alive today. In the spheres of literary criticism, poetic discipline and theory, and philosophy, one comes across ideas which have their (though frequently unacknowledged) source in his work. Sometimes brief references to his work are accompanied by an inability to recognize the true significance of his influence. For instance, H.A. Mason in his review of the book T.E. Hulme by Michael Roberts in the Scrutiny was of the opinion that 'T.E. Hulme was even in his lifetime, the object of a cult which the publication of Speculations did apparently nothing to dispel.' I.A. Richards similarly, was engaged in the same debate like Hulme though he did not admit it. Mention may also be made of Pound's article in The Townsman, titled 'This Hulme Business' (now printed at the end of the Hugh Kenner's book: The Poetry of Ezra Pound). The history of the modern movement in literature is scarcely complete without a discussion on the theories of T.E. Hulme for many of the ideas articulated in his works are germane to the growth and development of literary modernism. This thesis will attempt to rediscover, restate and find new meaning in the beliefs and practices of T.E. Hulme.

Hulme was born on 16th September in 1883 at Endon, North Staffordshire. He was the eldest son of a country squire. His provincial background did not hinder him from making friends and acquaintances with some personalities who went on to make an impression in poetry and art. Hulme was naturally resistant to authority, a fact borne out by his expulsion from Cambridge on the ground of indulging in a brawl during May week. His forceful personality enhanced by his
ability to argue and above all his uncompromising fidelity to what he believed to be the truth, created a reputation which Sir Jacob Epstein remarked, 'to be no less than the aura created by Plato and Socrates.'

Hulme had already begun the first stirrings toward a serious discussion in poetry through the establishment of the Poet's Club in 1908. The following year, two of his poems 'Autumn' and 'A City Sunset' were published in a small volume titled *For Christmas M D CCC C VIII*. The Poet's Club gave way to weekly meetings in Hulme's own salon and a group of men like F.S. Flint, Francis Tancred, Joseph Campbell, Florence Farr, Edward Storer gathered to discuss poetic tradition and the need to replace the excess of words and emotion with a suitable vehicle. Ezra Pound joined this group in early 1909, and thus began an association that has had its share of controversy. Though Ezra Pound shared Hulme's lodgings and views he was strangely averse to admitting the contribution of T.E. Hulme and unexpectedly named Ford Madox Ford as the originator of Imagism. But in all fairness, Hulme deserved credit for the constant focus he had on poetic form. He was all the time involved in a serious attempt to avoid the discursive in poetry and to make it a concrete presentation.

F.S. Flint's account 'The History of Imagism' rightly points out that the group that got together in Hulme's Poet's Club shared a sense of dissatisfaction with 'English poetry as was then (and still is alas!) being written.'

To Hulme, poetry appeared to have ebbed in accurate expression and precise effect. Poetic form was dominated by the romantic preference for naturalistic representation. It was a familiar mechanism in which the writer as well as the reader found a self-identity and social acceptance. It had a functional value;
it performed a variety of tasks from offering an intellectual support to British imperialism to the idealization of the self, very often the English self set in a favourable natural scene. Annexed to these considerations, poetic technique was only a continuation of the romantic standard. Both the subject and the treatment complemented each other. They were, in essence, an extension of a comfortable, complacent and compromising social attitude. Eliot referred to this phase as a period of 'stagnation.' Hulme’s efforts at establishing an altogether different aesthetic within the context of late 19th century tradition assumed significance and also determined the course of development of English poetry. The English literary and visual art scenario furnished an empathic character. Like the Victorians, the later 19th century practitioners and the Georgian poets regarded the audience as an integral part of the creative process. There were many currents prevailing during the initial two decades of the 20th century. After the great Victorian, Tennyson, Alfred Austin became the poet laureate, writing on the same themes and style as the former did; except for the fact that most poetry was now a tired and exhausted elaboration of the works of the previous era. Pictorial description through reflective verse and the dramatic monologue derived from the master, Browning, found a local vocabulary in Hardy, and the art for art's sake movement of Ruskin and Pater still cast an influence in the treatment of the subject under consideration. Georgian poetry tried to chart an independent course yet it could hardly shake off the inspiration of nature and rural subject. This kind of inspiration, however, was not harmful. Yet it is noted that the poetry of many middle level poets became diluted and uninspiring. Poetry, like the visual art movement, ‘Impressionism’ gave primacy to a simple recording of the natural landscape and the sensation,
pictorially. Positivism as a philosophy was found to have a connection with poetry and the visual arts, as they showed man in his characteristic everyday surrounding, the perception of nature and the world, and the consequent stimuli received from such a perception.

There was a pattern in the development of scientific knowledge and the intensified concern with the factual, the local, and the detailed that had become an artistic device. Darwin arrived at the conclusion that there was something natural to supplant the breeder as a selective agent in the process of biological progress of species. In 1859, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* created a flutter and reinforced the doctrine of the survival of the fittest. T.H. Huxley, also confronted traditional theology by extending the Darwinian theory to social issues and implications. Religion was gradually occupying the position of the facilitator in placing the working of God as an act of cooperation in advancing the evolutionary process. The notion of progress spelt by scientific findings found literary uses in the writings of Carlyle, in Arnold’s historical sense that emphasized the tragic irony of man’s destiny when placed in a condition out of his reach and in the wide variety of works that placed man within the scheme of things, that included physical phenomena, the question of heredity and environment particularly in the works of Zola and Hippolyte Taine. John Vickery, in *The Literary Impact of The Golden Bough* maintained that Frazer was not in opposition to the 19th century views; he had built upon the scientific, rational historical temper of the times to show that there was an order in the gradual evolution from myth to general laws. There was reliance on the notion of progress and literature reinstated confidence in it by adapting it for its imaginative creations.
In circumstances such as this, Hulme pressed for a different and new sensibility that took on 19th century beliefs and this undertaking can be judged as a growing force of iconoclasm truly representing the times that was marked by diverse revolutionary movements in visual arts and literature. According to Raymond Williams the interregnum before World War I ended with 'a major skepticism, and its only novelty, in the works of T.E. Hulme.'

Hulme began to exert influence through his poems. They illustrated clear distinction with the form prevailing during those times. The refreshing new conceptualization of nature, the economy of words and expression and the deft handling of inter-contextual meaning ushered in a new phase in the history of English poetry. Hulme realized that poetry was a serious art and it required application and study. His insistence on craftsmanship, on the need to revitalize language through metaphor and to raise poetry to the level of abstraction were the fundamental ideas that characterized modern poetry. His own poems demonstrate the imagist ideals; they show the suggestive use of musical cadence and at the same time the deliberate exclusion of the intonation springing from the use of the metre. The most striking factor is the conveyance of the image, a complex construct of inter-twined meaning meandering towards a generalized effect. Hulme felt that the inexactness present in poetry was largely due to the reliance on worn out phrases; what he meant was that the same expressions given in composition to convey the perceived idea failed to reach accurate description and ended in clichés. Poetry had to be armoured in order to be robust. There was distinctive sections of Hulme’s interest in poetry. His central ideas were already formed by the time the Poet's Club came into existence and he consolidated them over the following years.
through his association with poets like Pound, Richard Aldington, Hilda Doolittle and F.S. Flint. He further developed his theory on the basis of his conviction that poetry required a sound philosophical principle to establish a concrete and durable standard, in unambiguous terms. The assessment of Hulme's importance as the originator of many modern engagements is acknowledged, one encounters reservations only within the philosophical contexts that he tried to employ. Hulme accomplished a responsible task by locating the breaches in contemporary poetry and promulgating a firm theory on the art of poetic practice.

The early twentieth century saw many currents of thought flowing and critical principles emerging not from England but from France. Whether it was visual art or a new genre of poetry writing, the French applied new experiments at defining a wholly different perspective of the relation between life and thought. Continental philosophy too was exerting a deep impact in the minds of suitably inclined people. As J. Kamerbeek, Jr. points out,

By 1913 a small elite was aware of Picasso's coming greatness. An elite of another cast was then beginning to gather about Edmund Husserl. It seems incredible that before World War I a young Englishman should see the importance of both the painter and the philosopher. However, Speculations and Further Speculations are there to bear out this remarkable feat.  

Hulme, therefore not only demonstrated that a new kind of verse was possible and headed many practitioners through his slim output, he also viewed the developments in art and philosophy in their entirety to find and construct a theoretical structure of poetry and art based on the inter-relationship. Such an
attitude definitely installs Hulme as a serious pursuer of critical thought who tried
to disentangle much of the confusion surrounding art and literature. It is precisely
because of this particular preoccupation that Hulme did not go on to write further
poetry and projected a certain indifference to Pound's characteristic zest in
formulating and formalizing the Imagist movement. That he was engaged in a
project envisaged to correctly estimating the times and applying concrete
philosophical thought in the sphere of poetry, caught everybody unawares when
fragments of paper containing jottings were recovered after his death. A nearly
completed work on Jacob Epstein was destroyed when he died near Nieuport,
Flanders in the World War I in 1917. A.R. Orage, friend and editor of the New Age
wrote in the 1920 issue:

None of us, I am sure, had any adequate idea of the industry with
which Hulme was preparing himself for a long and great career. In
personal contact the he appeared to be too overflowing with energy
and bonhomie to be capable, as yet, of the sustained study and practice
indispensable to great expression; but there is the rick of MSS, which I
have seen to prove that all the while Hulme was gathering himself and
his powers for the work he intended one day to accomplish.12

Some terms had gained currency primarily because of T.E. Hulme's usage.
One such term was 'humanism' and it is essential to understand the sense in which
he employed it. Humanism, Hulme believed to be the faith in moral, ethical and
intellectual progress of man and the denial of the superior position of religious
absolute values that exercise restraint over our excesses and offers a well
demarcated limit to function within. According to Hulme, humanism represented
The Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy gives three versions of the meaning in which humanism has been used. The second version states: 'especially in the English speaking world, humanism has since the nineteenth century come to designate a non-religious or anti-religious world view, usually based on a belief in man's capacity for self-cultivation and self-improvement, and in the progress of mankind.' Hulme has applied the term to carry this import. Humanism was the philosophical garb that provided an impetus to all forms of enterprise. Hulme's historical sense was etched by his perception of the factors responsible for the listless state of creative output and its inability to produce a corresponding relation with experience. The single most important flaw that he identified was the shortage of a valid objective that could be said to be legitimately proportional to the treatment given. The interpretation of history was thus on the basis of moral and ethical standard projected in a piece of work. Hulme was of the opinion that the Renaissance sensibility was still present but a survey of contemporary thought and expression indicated a shift in that attitude. With customary clarity Hulme arrived at an apparently simple conclusion that the humanistic theory manifested in literature and art that had dominated the mind and attitude of both the artist and his audience was undoubtedly drawing to a close. A new attitude was gradually emerging accompanied by a new stylistic reference and a new medium.

The term 'humanism' is not without its own share of ambiguities. In America, Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More gave shape to the Neo Humanism movement. Neo-humanism emphasized conservative, ethical, political and aesthetic standards. They drew inspiration from Christian tradition, however, not
from theology and dogma. Babbitt and More recognized the power of the inner self as a force that could manoeuvre man beyond the primal energies of desire and instinct. Therefore, Babbitt and More can be said to depend upon intuition, not derived from nature, but from man's instinctive understanding of a higher truth. They supported reason but it was the reason of a higher self that was akin to Matthew Arnold's 'best self'. Their insistence on ethical standards may suggest similarity with Hulme's stand, but the latter wanted to reinstate the absolute nature of ethical values as the reference for all attitudes whether literary, social or political. In fact Hulme dreaded reposing any faith on the 'better self' for he never believed man was capable of rising beyond the impulses and the only way to restrain the inclination towards spilling 'personality' over in enterprises was to enforce discipline through the recognition of absolute values. In this context T.S. Eliot's perspective gains significance because as a student of Irving Babbitt, Eliot was exposed to his ideas initially. But after the publication of the Speculations Eliot found himself agreeing with the Hulmian concept. He wrote, "I agree with what Hulme says, and I am afraid that many modern Humanists are explicitly or implicitly committed to the view which Hulme denounces; and that they are, in consequence, men of the Renaissance, rather than men of our time. I cannot help feeling that Mr. Foerster and Mr. Babbitt are nearer to the view of Rousseau than they are to the religious view... It is to the immense credit of Hulme that he found for himself an 'absolute' to which Man can never attain."

Here we find that the term 'humanism' had the potential of being interpreted in different ways; the common denominator was the belief in man and his immense capacity for progress. The Renaissance was the greatest testimony to
this belief, yet it was only a Weltanschauung, an outlook of life and man’s place in it. With the lapse of time and accumulation of physical and material knowledge about the earth and man, the emergence of myriad perspectives has strengthened the humanistic orientation of our times. The critique of humanistic history was considered to be a foregone conclusive argument offering nothing that was original in the real sense of the term. In contrast, the religious view offered a solid edifice with substantial scope for a ‘critique of satisfaction.’ It had the structure of a great tree rising high and lofty, having provided shade and shelter over the centuries that simply could not be dishonoured even today. The challenge before Hulme was to define the religious attitude in concrete terms for the danger of slipping into the vague and the ephemeral was always there. The religious perspective was anything but a woolly perception; it was a firm, resolute and steady belief in the absolute nature of ethical values. Hulme was quite conscious that the religious attitude would be regarded as impossible for an ‘emancipated’ man to hold.\textsuperscript{15} Therefore he searched for a concrete method to substantiate his beliefs. He found philosophy a useful subject for this purpose. However, philosophy itself had got entangled in issues that were man centred; it had become a subject for elaborating the Weltanschauung. In order to redeem philosophy Hulme urged a reinstatement of the objective and scientific element of philosophy. The history of philosophy had become warped after the Renaissance, completely absorbed in analysing man’s future in this world. It was time to recognize that philosophy was a mixed subject; the objective and scientific element was an investigation into the relation between abstract categories. It also was an outlook of the world offering explanations on the nature and destiny of man. The second having held sway over the first for several
centuries was undergoing a transformation not only in his own sensibility, there were similar signs in the works of German philosophers like Husserl, and Dilthey, in the neo realism of G.E. Moore and the French philosopher, Henri Bergson.

T.E. Hulme had chalked out an agenda which was varied but not dispersed. In all likelihood his interests would have taken considerable time to sort out as a distinct presentation, the scores of notes and scribbling on bits of paper which Herbert Read confessed in the introduction to the *Speculations* to be sometimes no bigger than the size of a postage stamp, bear out the magnitude of the task. The tight inter-relation between philosophy and art had already formed in his mind and that accounted for his somewhat lukewarm response to the Imagist programme. He was undergoing a ceaseless process of arranging his thoughts and views to give a final shape that, had it appeared, would have certainly left a deep mark in the history of critical theory. In their unfinished nature, Hulme's theories have the potential of beginning a debate on a new approach to literature and art.

Most of the controversies arising out of the religious attitude of Hulme was the result of absolutely missing the point he had tried to make. Religion was not a sentimental or emotional consciousness of the divine. To Hulme, it was a rock like presence that had great social and moral implications. In the field of art too, the loss of the religious attitude had given rise to a humanistic form. It is essential to understand what Hulme meant by 'form'. Form was not the representation of the subject; it was perception of the world and the perception of the relation between man and the world. A painting could have the human as the subject but the perception behind the painting was the recognition of the common belief that man was placed in a harmonious position in the scheme of the world. The person
looking at the painting could contemplate an empathic relation with it. In fact, the viewer's mind was so oriented that a different approach was considered far-fetched. Hulme, therefore, knew that a new sensibility was a difficult proposition to achieve but it was not impossible. The knowledge that Cubism and geometric art of Cezanne were making headway gave tremendous hope to him. We are inclined to read the religious attitude only as a governing principle that will perhaps confuse those expecting to detect the spiritual experience.

Art and sculpture was presenting a new dimension in intellectual and artistic consciousness. The literalness in observation, the accurate reproduction of surfaces and planes emphasized that the contradiction obvious to the penetration into the inner law of phenomena was not projected. The tension in the new art form arose out the artist's struggle to present within a single dimension the entire content of the perceived subject. The linear projection presented a new approach in the contemplation of the object. Hulme's friendship with Jacob Epstein has already been referred to; Gaudier Brzeska, another name in world of sculpting had made a 'toy' for Hulme, which was reportedly a customary adornment on his fingers.17 This 'toy' had a clean, smooth surface with two triangles arranged at the base and the top respectively. It had a rectangular middle with a convenient groove to hold. The complete 'toy' shows practically what Hulme meant by the artist's struggle to achieve the exact curve of the thing. Pound remarked that the 'toy' made by Brzeska was 'the best of several purely geometrical abstractions, cut straight into brass.'18

Hulme detected change in the early 20th century milieu; from naturalism, nature transcription to a genre of compressed space and abstraction. The
conceptual idea of the image was now broken up in Cubist painting of Picasso and Braque, in the Post Impressionism of Cézanne, Van Gogh, Ganguin etc. Reality was no longer a presentation of the external world presented in the three-dimensional. The effort was towards abstraction, to look at an object without the aid of space. Geometric art was replacing the three dimensional effect by producing a generalized perception of the object, through the arrangement of planes and surfaces. Form became the content. The reduction of the natural motif to simple surfaces and planes brought in a totally new conceptual idea of the image. The image was viewed from different angles, lending several simultaneous views adding to a density of effect. The aim of the artist was not to express the subject. The likeness was hardly pictorial; it was more intellectual. It offered multiple meanings and increased the contextual dimensions of the subject. A painting on a flat surface could have any subject but the challenge lay in the awareness of the limitation imposed by the surface of the canvas and the surface of the representation. Hulme sensed that a new sensibility was setting in. It began a new exploration of the relation between form and space. The flat surface of a painting or sculpture contained fixed referential points. It was akin to the fixed nature of association that language had in poetry. The only way to break through was to search for non-representational forms and scatter them through the multitude of experience in order to create a general impact. New perceptions and consciousness reduced the need to create familiar forms. The visual was accepted as the outcome of the unusual conceptualization. Apparently simple yet a sharply contrasted conceptualization of the construction was then depicted even in sculpture. There was a redistribution of traditional ideals of beauty.
Hulme believed that an attitude corresponded to the art of any given period. He was influenced by Wilhelm Worringer's *Abstraction and Empathy*. It was a study of the absolute artistic volition; a priori condition existing independent of the object of art. Worringer rejected empathy as the only precondition required in painting to extract aesthetic pleasure. The psychological precondition therefore was not man centred vitality but revolved around the non-vital. According to Worringer there were two poles in art. One pole was surrender to self-activation, the urge towards empathy and artistic experience found its gratification in the beauty of the organic. The other pole was the urge towards abstraction and its sense of beauty was to rely on the life denying inorganic crystalline forms. In Hulme’s parlance it was the reflection of the religious attitude that saw an absolute severance in the relation between man and the cosmos. Though inspired by Worringer’s ideas, Hulme defined his own theories on the basis of his interest in charting a course for poetry. The relation between art and poetry as media that tightly held on the truth of the object under scrutiny could not be missed. To elaborate further: Hulme sincerely believed that since the fanciful flights of imagination could not endow poetry with vigour or authenticity there was a need to find an adequate vehicle to transport the experience. Language, Hulme felt, fell short of exact description. He suggested the use of fancy to bring poetry closer to reality. He was convinced that the control over expression would remain steady as long as we were backed by a belief in the absolute nature of values and admitted a separation between the vital and non-vital zones. Thus, Hulme attempted to construct a structure that would support modern art and poetry. The denial of the external environment was in other words the removal of the personal; the personal,
satisfied and complacent attitude, in harmony with external phenomena. To Worringer, the artistic volition was a purely psychic condition and to Hulme the essential corollary to artistic volition was the search and fixing of solid expression. It therefore follows that modern art and poetry was a continuous struggle of the artist’s creative impulse to seize that elusive psychological moment of experience. The absolute nature of the belief, the value, the individual worth of the object had to be represented in the ultimate form. Another characteristic that sprang from the isolation of the object from the associated natural frame was the reduction of the object to one dimension. Worringer defined this as the ‘immense spiritual dread of space’.*19 Hulme thought that the new art and sculpture was emerging with non-conforming features chiefly presenting a changed perception of the world and sensibility.

In comparison with the flat and insipid optimism of the belief in progress, the new attitude may be in a certain sense inhuman, pessimistic. Yet its pessimism will not be world-rejecting in the sense in which the Byzantine was.20

Like Worringer (who incidentally pays tribute to the Viennese scholar and art critic Alois Riegl and to Theodore Lipps for their theories that greatly influenced him in *Abstraction and Empathy*) Hulme saw the element of archaism in the new art as an expression of religious sensibility that could be seen in the art of the East. In *Egyptian Art*, Worringer writes that the absence of the third dimension in Egyptian art springs from a lack of tension between surface and depth. Egyptian art is pure surface character. This was because certain phenomena were beyond human conscious range. The religious attitude that Hulme drew
attention to as the uncompromising faith in absolute values had marked Egyptian culture. The spiritual experience was not something that could be described or be brought forth by presenting within a contextual framework. Worringer’s view was:

Egyptian rigidity is a rejune sober rigidity of which the necessary condition is a state of inward non-participation in all the deeper thrills of life. It admits no being above all becoming, but a being either before or after all becoming, in any case unaffected by becoming, it is metaphysical consciousness.21

Further Speculations contains a segment on Hulme’s essays on art and most of them were published in the New Age by 1913. In a particular essay ‘Modern Art II: A Preface Note and Neo-Realism,’ Hulme mentions that he had already formulated his thesis, albeit a little crudely, before he came across the work of Riegl and Worringer. He had even met the latter at the Berlin Aesthetic Congress in 1913 and was immensely impressed by the clarity of his views. A study of Hulme’s theory of art and poetry reveals a certain common mechanism operating in the formulation of both forms. They may be stated as below:

1. Both diverged away from naturalism, the illusionistic sophisticated representation.

2. Both distanced empathic relation with the object under consideration.

3. Both the forms viewed the object in isolation without spreading it in space to maintain the individuality of the object, the purity of the object as well as the observation.
4. There was a realization that a new art and poetry was definitely emerging with very different ideas, techniques and points of reference. The apparently simplistic style concealed a deep and profound attitude towards the world.

5. There was a tendency towards abstraction in both. Abstraction is the urge to add intuitive interpretation to external objects or experience. It is an inclination to recast a traditional scene or sensation through a new sensibility, an individual way of looking at things. It was the intention to go beyond the veil of cause and effect, to dismiss the limitations of the rational and practical application of space and time.

6. The absolute nature of the new emerging forms of art and poetry rejected the notions of progress, humanism and interlinking the vital and the non-vital zones. In both the genres the artistic volition, communication and expression had to be allied together into a single determining factor.

7. The new geometric art and modern poetry implied freedom in a paradoxical sense. In spite of the closed material individuality, the artist enjoyed a degree of freedom over his subject. The truth was not situated in the context but in the object and the artist needed to view it only rejecting all other paraphernalia.

8. Modern art and poetry was deliberate and intentioned. It was the technique to hold on to actuality. It was not the result of an emotional and inspired outpouring.
T.E. Hulme joined the World War I by enlisting in the Honourable Artillery Company as a private. His support for the war stemmed from a sense of need towards the re-organisation of society. His first hand account of the war and his observation of it from close quarters brought out a poem 'Trenches.' Naturally inclined towards discipline and authority, Hulme found the war as an opportunity to install character in individuals and resist the looming threat of a resurgent Germany. His articles contributed to the *New Age* and *The Cambridge Magazine* under the pseudonym of 'North Staff' has been compiled in *Further Speculations*. They bear the concern about the future of Europe and the inevitable new power equations in the event of a German victory. We know now that Hulme’s fears were not unfounded as Germany propelled the world into another war with the aim of controlling economically strategic positions. The rise of the Nazi party also consolidated German desire to have a stronger role in the social, cultural and political developments in Europe.

Every conscious man cannot but be touched by politics. Since Hulme was essentially talking of fundamental categories of values and ethics, the war naturally affected values and ethical moorings of nations. A war is not a simple calculation of loss or victory, annexation and occupation. It also has social, cultural implications. When a war ends, the primary need is physical reconstruction and the search for ethical positions follow very closely. In the essay, ‘On Liberty,’ Hulme scrutinized Max Scheler’s arguments in support of Germany’s interest in World War I. Scheler had considered English naval supremacy as the single responsible factor in securing colonies and imperial policy. Germany thus needed to strike where there would be optimum loss. Hulme feared that Germany would emerge as
a hegemonic power and hegemony spelt the erosion and disintegration of nationalist ideals. To Hulme this was unacceptable.

Given the fact that Hulme passionately defended the participation of England in the World War I, it was interesting to note that he had no illusions about British imperialism. He was convinced that occupation of alien land could not be explained tamely as the 'triumph of virtue over vice.' He had no romantic notions about war or the use of force and violence. He failed to understand the pacifist argument that Britain should remain detached from the war. In the concluding part of 'The Framework of Europe,' Further Speculations, Hulme suggested that he identified a contradiction in England's reluctance to recognize the German threat and its resolve to hold to foreign acquisitions. In other words, a question arises as to the rules of the game for, essentially, they arise from the same desire. Hulme pointed out that pacifism represented acquisitions as the triumph of virtue over evil but it clouded over the 'calculation' and 'brute force' that had gone into the 'making of the colonial empire'. If Germany was allowed, it would adopt similar tactics to establish an empire in Europe.

Hulme's anti romantic, anti humanistic stance was further reinforced by the ideas of Georges Sorel whose doctrine of direct action sought to bring out the heroic qualities in man. Discipline and submission to a higher authority (in Hulme's case it was absolute values) were indispensable in the quest for preserving absolute values. The fundamental theory that stirred Hulme's interest in Sorel was the latter's view that transformation of society required heroic virtue and it could be applied to war as it ultimately meant reorganization of society. In his introduction to the translated version of Sorel's Reflections on Violence, Hulme
asserted a belief that progress and democracy were mutually exclusive. As a political theory, democracy implied chaos and degeneration of values. Since there was a straight connection between democratic ideals and progress, the former could never ensure progress. His political leanings have strong social ethical considerations. He opposed liberalism and the notion of progress. He advocated a classicist stand which he called the 'Tory' principle. It laid emphasis on moral progress as against inevitable progress, and believed moral progress was possible in a hierarchial set-up. Thus Hulme's literary principles of classicism could also be seen controlling his political attitude. Gaudier Brzeska, sculptor and Hulme's friend echoed the same sentiments in his article from the trenches:

This war is a great remedy. In the individual it kills arrogance, self-esteem, pride.23

'La Action Francaise', a movement that wanted to establish a hierarchial, non-republican order even through violent means had gained momentum in France by 1910 and Hulme found that their definition of humanism suited his own understanding of the term. Since Hulme favoured order and authority and believed in the subordination of man to absolute values, he could be mistaken to be a fascist sympathizer. However, Fascism was not even remotely in his mind; his effort was the establishment of absolute values as the supreme force in guiding and controlling human endeavour. Hulme was only concerned about a social order with a profound consciousness of the futility of material and physical advancement. The tenets of Fascism were, doubtless, noble and the objective was to extract the best out of man through rigorous discipline and submission to authority. But the operating principles of Fascism were repressive. Therefore, Hulme's sympathy and
admiration for Sorel and 'La Action Francaise' was restricted to the philosophical aspect. His conservative outlook went beyond mere political theory and laid stress on the artistic and literary attitude of his times.

Hulme's interest in philosophy was a natural consequence of his encounter with the artistic expression of his times. The basis of his extraordinary interest in philosophy was the belief that the attitude of any given age is reflected in creative forms. He also maintained that philosophy allowed freedom to extend theories. These theories at times breached the limits of observable facts and traveled into areas beyond the scope of verification. The truth of philosophy did not generally rest on premises that belonged strictly to scientific facts. At the same time the truths themselves were objective like scientific truths. They were priori in nature.

There are two things that stand out in Hulme's preoccupation with philosophy. One is that he regarded philosophy as an art. Unlike science, which gave, a final or nearly final picture of any enquiry, philosophy never claimed to provide the solution or explanation of what the ultimate and absolute nature of truth was. Truth was an absolute entity, it could not be explained, solved or unravelled. Philosophy only added to the absolute, it only expressed a possibility amongst a host of possibilities. Thus philosophy had a very fluid and flexible character. Philosophy was not constrained by the requirement to prove. 'We are free in philosophy,' Hulme had stated. The apparent provisional nature of philosophy was in reality an expanse of unrestricted movement, each contributing to the structure: truth. Again philosophy, according to Hulme, could never proclaim originality, it was not like some fact or physical matter that could be
discovered or explained with the aid of empiricism. Hulme believed that the only originality left to a philosopher was:

The invention of a new dialect in which to restate an old attitude.²⁵

The other point worth noting in Hulme was his sincerity in upholding the scientific, objective element in philosophy. He tried to confer on philosophy the privilege of belonging to the same category as the inorganic absolute sciences like mathematics and physical science. Like mathematics, philosophy assumed certain absolute truths. It had access to regions that were abstract and difficult and the difficulty involved in establishing a relation between the abstract categories provided a pleasure and satisfaction unknown to organic sciences. Thus Hulme conceptualized reality to be not one but many, each legitimate in its context and application. The reality dealt exclusively by ethical and religious values was completely separate and distinct than the ones dealt with by biology, psychology and history. He thought that any attempt to connect the two would result in confusion and disorder. Philosophy should never be mixed up and considered to be religion in itself. It was the expression of only an attitude. The absolute zone of ethical values rested on firmly anchored, time tested and traditional values thereby lending durability and permanence to the attitude.

Hulme arranged philosophy into two distinct classes: one was the purely scientific method of exploring the relation between abstract categories and the other was Weltanschauung or the interpretation of life. Weltanschauung, dealt with the relation of man with the world. It is clear that Hulme was appealing for a change in attitude. He wanted abolishment of the anthropomorphism of the scientific element in philosophy. In demarcating the two parts of philosophy as
separate distinctive subjects he hoped to install the religious attitude in its proper perspective and give it current functional value. He also wanted the religious attitude to use the scientific and objective instruments like any other absolute science. Hulme appreciated contemporary efforts to reinstate the objective scientific enquiry into abstract categories. He located philosophers from Germany, France and England who were building up a legitimate structure of scientific philosophy based on the tools of logic.

The fact that Hulme kept abreast of the developments in philosophical study can be appreciated when we take into account that their language did not garner a wide readership immediately after their publication. Hulme’s knowledge of French and German not only gave him an insight into their thoughts; it provided appropriate support to him to spell out his attitude. The philosophers who, Hulme felt, were working towards the establishment of the scientific element in philosophy were:

Henri Bergson  \hspace{2cm} Edmund Husserl  \hspace{2cm} Wilhelm Dilthey  \hspace{2cm} G.E. Moore
(1869-1941)  \hspace{2cm} (1859-1938)  \hspace{2cm} (1833-1911)  \hspace{2cm} (1873-1958)

Henri Bergson, whose *Introduction to Metaphysics* was translated by Hulme in 1913 was quite impressed by the latter, so much so, he wrote a letter requesting the Cambridge University authorities to re-induct Hulme. Bergson’s distinction between mechanical time and real time upheld the theory that real time was indivisible into parts. Intuition, not rational analysis, could penetrate into the
unique moment of experiencing real time. Bergson argued in *Creative Evolution* that evolution must be explained in terms of basic life force. He refuted the mechanistic explanation of evolution. He emphasized freedom that could be enjoyed only through intuition.

Edmund Husserl was the founder of the phenomenological movement in modern philosophy. As a mathematician Husserl gave an account of logic and mathematics as ideal studies that ignored empirical formula. Consciousness was also considered a valid territory for study. The contents of consciousness were acceptable even though they may not have any connection with reality. Phenomenology took every search as valid and concentrated upon the object or the content, thus inducting abstract areas into the purview of study.

Wilhelm Dilthey too differentiated between natural sciences and cultural sciences. He regarded both, as Hulme did, as separate classes. While natural sciences explained phenomena, cultural sciences undertook to understand phenomena through interpretation. Thus the tools and aim of cultural sciences could not be rejected as arbitrary.

G.E. Moore scrutinized the meaning intended and the meaning understood in statements. He was one of the fathers of modern linguistic analysis. He took up the same formula of logical analysis while dealing with moral concepts. He found that there was a 'naturalistic fallacy' to confuse the criteria of goodness, especially those in naturalistic terms, with the meaning of 'good'. He worked untiringly in his quest for accuracy and clarity of thought and expression.
T.E. Hulme was a man of wide interests. He was actively involved in the issues confronting the times. He constructed an interlinked aesthetic structure weaving together absolute ethical values exerting a definite and powerful impact on expression in art and literature, philosophical positions determining the social organisation of an age, the necessity to invigorate language from the confines of discursive treatment and compelling attention on innovative craftsmanship inducing special aesthetic pleasure.
Notes:


   Without malice toward T.E.H. it now (1938) 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) in so far as it felt on writing at all.... It detracts no jot from the honour due Hulme that he had no monopoly of London literary life and did not crowd out other interests.... I have no doubt that the bleak and smeary ‘Twenties’ wretchedly needed his guidance, and the pity is that he wasn’t there in person to keep down vermin....’


8. Carlyle had a poor opinion of Science, his literary executor J.A. Froude had said. He held truth to be sacred, however, "with his evangelical training and his deep-rooted conviction of the truth of the fundamentals of Victorian faith he watched with almost dismay the controversy that centred round the 'Darwin theories' of the transmutation of species." *The Outline of Literature*, ed. John Drinkwater, London, George Newnes Limited, 628, 1950.

Carlyle was deeply influenced by science and reason, yet he was a puritan, firmly believing in the spirituality of life. In *Sartor Resartus* published as a book in 1838, Carlyle offers a journey of the soul's development from the egoistic through a crisis to the final certainty of faith. According to Carlyle, "all human transformation springs from within. The outward garb of institutions, of practical activities and manners, will be renovated by the effect of a spiritual rejuvenation."


9. In ‘The Function of Criticism at the Present Time,’ Arnold assesses his age. He not only finds the material progress aiding moral confusion but also finds the values of the times unsuited to the purpose of literature. The dilemma is reflected in *The Scholar Gipsy*:

*But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!*

*For strong the infection of our mental strife,*

*Which, though it gives no bliss, yet spoils for rest;*

*And we should win thee from thy own fair life,*

*Like us distracted and like us unblest.*

*Soon, soon thy cheer would die,*

*Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfix'd thy powers,*

*And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made:*
And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,
Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours.

In 'Dover Beach,' "Arnold discloses his melancholy preoccupation with the thought of the inevitable decline of religious faith; and he expresses the belief that in a successful love-relationship he may realize values to which 'the world' is hostile."


16. Ezra Pound failed to understand the 'fuss' Hulme was making while exploring the philosophy of Georges Sorel and Henri Bergson. While pointing out that Guido's metaphor was concrete and Petrarch's was the 'fustian and ornament,' Pound was

17. “From Gaudier Brzeska he commissioned some small works which Gaudier thought it great fun to do. These were small brass carvings in a somewhat abstract style, and Hulme would carry them about in his pocket and handle them while talking.” 'Rock Drill: 1913-1914,' *Epstein: An Autobiography*, London, Hulton Press, 60, 1955.


25. Hulme, 36.