

T H E N E W A G E

UNDER ORAGE

CHAPTERS IN
ENGLISH CULTURAL HISTORY

by

WALLACE MARTIN

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A. R. ORAGE

Frontispiece

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FOR
MY PARENTS

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Tom Titt is the pseudonym for Jan de Junosza Rosciszewski.

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The Executors of Walter Sickert: quotations from Walter Sickert.

Mrs Valerie Eliot: quotations from T. S. Eliot.

Janice Biala: quotations from Ford Madox Ford.

Mr Christopher Middleton, literary executor of F. S. Flint, and Mrs Ianthe Price: quotations from F. S. Flint.

The Lilly Library, Indiana University: letter from Orage to Upton Sinclair in the Sinclair Collection.

Mrs Jacob Epstein: *The Rock Drill*, by Jacob Epstein.

PREFACE

THE object of this study is to record the history of *The New Age* in the context of English cultural history between 1907 and 1922. While we still think of the literary and artistic achievements of those years as 'modern', the cultural context of which they were a product is now nearly two generations distant, and the acceleration of social and cultural change in the twentieth century has separated us from it more decisively than chronology alone would indicate. Studies of many specialized topics will be necessary for a full and accurate understanding of the intellectual backgrounds of that period. This study of *The New Age* is intended to be one such work, tracing certain aspects of art and thought from the Edwardian age into that period during which modern culture was born.

The volumes of *The New Age* that appeared under Orage's editorship, which contain over 15,000 pages, could not be discussed coherently without some principles of selection. In general, I have concentrated upon those aspects of the magazine that are of enduring interest in relation to cultural history, with particular emphasis on literature. Many writers contributed to the magazine at one time or another without entering in any decisive way into its overall development; most of these have not been discussed, but their names are listed in the appendix. Political contributors, some of them brilliant stylists whose names were forgotten along with the causes they advocated, must await resurrection at the hand of the political scientist. *The New Age's* hospitality to writers with special interests (such as Marmaduke Pickthall, Arthur Kitson,

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and William Poel) will not be treated herein. And finally, it has been necessary to exclude discussion of little-known regular contributors to the magazine whose works constitute an interesting part of its history, but a part which enters only tangentially into the theme of the present study.

In many cases, I have relied upon quotation rather than paraphrase for documentation. Some readers may feel that this is simply an abnegation of the scholar's responsibility to summarize wherever possible; however, quite apart from the pitfalls of paraphrase for even the most scrupulous writer, the spirit and phraseology of these quotations seem to me as important for an understanding of the period as is their paraphrasable content.

Many of those associated with *The New Age* provided hitherto unrecorded information for this study. Orage's kindness to contributors was reflected in their kindness to the present writer, both in recording their memories of the magazine and in making it possible for their letters from Orage to be transcribed. Correspondence with the following contributors was of considerable help: Richard Aldington, Van Wyck Brooks, Professor R. S. Crane, St John Ervine, Storm Jameson, A. M. Ludovici, Alice Marks (secretary of *The New Age*), Ruth Pitter, Paul Selver, Upton Sinclair, and W. R. Titterton. I am especially indebted to Sir Herbert Read for allowing me to quote passages from Orage's letters to him. Philip Mairet, whose memoir of Orage was very helpful for this study, displayed inexhaustible patience in answering questions and in supplying the addresses of people whom it would otherwise have been impossible to locate.

Other contributors and those who knew Orage well were interviewed when this proved practicable. F. S. Flint, Professor Janko Lavrin, Alfred Newsome, Mrs

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Jessie Orage, and Ezra Pound were among those whose help was particularly valuable, as were Mrs Cecil Chesterton, Lady Haden-Guest, Rowland Kenney, Jeffrey Mark, C. H. Norman, S. C. Nott, Marie Rambert (Mrs Ashley Dukes), Maurice Reckitt, and Henry Simpson.

I am grateful to the Scholarly Activities Committee and the Deans of the University of Toledo for facilitating the completion of this study through a reduction in teaching duties and a leave of absence. It originated as a dissertation, directed by Professor Isaacs of Queen Mary College, University of London; my indebtedness to him for countless suggestions regarding sources of information, methods of treatment, and most important for the creative spirit with which he approached such problems, cannot be adequately acknowledged. Professor Norman Callan of Queen Mary College was also helpful with regard to many matters of detail. Professors Sam Hynes, Laurence Lafore, and N. Christophe de Nagy made valuable suggestions regarding revision, as did Noel Stock (to whom I am especially indebted in this respect). I owe a less immediate but no less significant debt to J. C. Lair, F. W. Bornhauser, Yvor Winters, and George Steiner, as teachers. And for stylistic suggestions, typing, and forbearance, I am indebted to my wife.

PART ONE

ORIGINS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: *THE NEW AGE* AND ITS CONTEMPORARIES

‘IN 1907,’ said Shaw, ‘I and another person unknown to me put down five hundred pounds apiece to found a weekly magazine to be called *The New Age*, and edited by my friend Holbrook Jackson and a mystery man named Orage. The paper was in desperate financial straits from the moment this initial capital was spent; and Holbrook Jackson, built for more solid enterprises, soon transferred his activities to a wider field.’¹ After Jackson left the magazine in 1908, Orage carried on alone, paying only those contributors who, like Pound, had no other regular income (‘He did more to feed me than anyone else in England’)² and meeting the annual deficit of over one thousand pounds through the contributions of wealthy friends. Between then and 1922, when Orage relinquished the editorship, *The New Age* was an unparalleled arena of cultural and political debate.

The history of *The New Age* is germane to an understanding of the development of English culture in the early twentieth century. Cultural development depends

¹ Letter to *The New English Weekly*, VI (15 Nov. 1934), 99.

² *The Letters of Ezra Pound, 1907-1941*, ed. D. D. Paige (London, [1951]), p. 344.

upon cultural communication; and the periodical press, which during the nineteenth century, whatever its faults, had at least transmitted the information necessary for the maintenance of a coherent cultural community, failed thereafter to perform even that function satisfactorily. The increasing specialization of those disciplines that had constituted the common intellectual heritage of the educated man in earlier periods was paralleled by an increasing diversity of technique and intention in the arts. New developments in the social and physical sciences became the domain of professional journals; literary innovation was associated with coterie magazines, most of which were unknown to the general public; political philosophy was seldom distinguished from the exigencies of party politics in the dailies and political weeklies. The literary reviews, hitherto the most important medium of cultural communication, were for the most part committed either to a sterile conservatism or to popularization in competition with the monthlies.

Orage said that the periodicals of his time were of two types: the representative, which reflected ‘a mood or mode of thought in the common mind of England’, and the presentative, which introduced new ideas and engendered new points of view.¹ Periodicals devoted solely to a representation of the interests of the public belong to the history of journalism and retain some im-

¹ *The New Age*, XXVIII (17 Mar. 1921), 235-6. *The Spectator* of that period can be cited as a typical example of the representative periodical. John St Loe Strachey, its editor from 1897 to 1925, said that ‘the proprietor who endeavours to be the honest servant of his readers will not go far wrong. . . . To put it another way, there are worse things than studying public opinion and endeavouring partly to interpret it honestly and partly to guide it in the right direction.’ John St Loe Strachey, *The Adventure of Living* (London, 1922), p. 322.

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portance as chronicles of taste, fashion, and public opinion; presentative periodicals, which must to some extent create the audience to which they appeal, belong either to oblivion or to the history of culture, depending upon the extent to which they anticipate and shape cultural development. As an editor, Orage deliberately attempted to make *The New Age* a presentative periodical which would mediate between specialized fields of knowledge and public understanding, and encourage a vital relationship between literary experimentation and the literary tradition. As a result of the editorial genius he brought to this task, *The New Age* provides a comprehensive record of the emergence of modern culture from its Victorian and Edwardian antecedents.

The writers of the first two decades of the century, like the writers of every other period, tried to obtain the best possible price for their work; however, when they wanted to express opinions that were not marketable, or when they wanted to speak to the special audience thus afforded them, they wrote for *The New Age*. In a sense, the magazine served as the centre of discussion for an intellectual circle that had outgrown the coffee house. The topical allusions that occasionally appear in its literary columns and satirical poems reflect an assurance of a defined cultural community which is lacking in most periodicals of the time. This community included the writers and artists of two generations, representing many of the formative tendencies of modern art and literature. In their contributions, and the contributions of lesser-known writers concerned with those disciplines that together constitute the intellectual background of the age, we can trace the cultural development of that perplexingly variegated era.

For the literary historian, *The New Age* is one of the

most important periodicals of the early twentieth century. During the first phase of Orage’s editorship, Shaw, Wells, Belloc, and Chesterton were regular contributors, as were Arnold Bennett (who wrote the weekly literary column) and F. S. Flint. Most of the writers who began to contribute to the magazine during the following years were otherwise unknown to the general public—Ezra Pound, T. E. Hulme, Katherine Mansfield, Wyndham Lewis, Richard Aldington, Edwin Muir, and Herbert Read, to name only a few. To this brief list of literary contributors should be added the name of Orage himself, who was, according to Eliot, ‘the best literary critic of that time in London’.¹ Through its criticism and translations, *The New Age* introduced recent Continental literature to the English public and to writers upon whom it was to exercise a formative influence. Although it played an important part in the development of Imagism, the magazine was never a coterie periodical. Rather, it provided a neutral meeting-ground where the adherents of various movements could discuss their differences.

The New Age is equally important for the political or cultural historian. In addition to representing the most vital intellectual currents of its time, it was the harbinger of the interests of the succeeding period. In advising us to avoid *The New Age* if we seek a typical view of Edwardian taste, John Russell indicates the extent to which it contributed to the emergence of new artistic standards, reproducing and discussing the works of Epstein, Gaudier-Brzeska, Wyndham Lewis, and Picasso.² The magazine’s art critic, Walter Sickert (who was himself avant-garde by Edwardian standards), attempted unsuccessfully to

¹ Letter to *The New English Weekly*, VI (15 Nov. 1934), 100.

² ‘Art’, *Edwardian England, 1901-1914*, ed. Simon Nowell-Smith (London, 1964), p. 344.

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forestall the triumph of ‘the new barbarism’ abstractionism in its columns. Although the magazine gave little attention to developments in English philosophy, it did promote interest in the two Continental philosophers who exercised the greatest influence during this period: Nietzsche (most of the translators of the first English edition of his works were contributors) and Bergson (championed by T. E. Hulme). It would be impossible to discuss the introduction of psycho-analysis in England without reference to *The New Age*. M. D. Eder, one of England’s first analysts and a close friend of Orage’s, introduced its readers and writers to the subject long before the rest of the English press had discovered its existence.

In considering the political importance of the magazine, it is necessary to distinguish between the arena of practical politics and the sphere of political and economic theory. ‘*The New Age*, particularly just before and in the early part of the first world war,’ said Margaret Cole, ‘was the left-wing paper, which everybody who was anybody read.’¹ As the first Socialist weekly in London, it recorded the tactical history of a crucial phase in the relations between Socialists and the newly created Labour Party. But an increasing uneasiness regarding the theoretical basis of Socialism led Orage and many of his contributors to a rejection of its collectivist premises and, after 1912, to the elaboration of a political theory which came to be known as Guild Socialism. Although it numbered George Lansbury, G. D. H. Cole, and R. H. Tawney among its adherents, it never achieved political success; its historical significance, however, has gained increasing recognition from writers on contemporary culture. The name of the magazine’s most influential economic theorist,

¹ Letter to *The New Statesman*, LVIII (26 Dec. 1959), 912.

C. H. Douglas, is less likely to be recognized by recent students of economics than by readers of Pound's *Cantos* and citizens of Canada (where ‘Social Credit’ was until recently an important political force); yet in its increasing recognition of economic theory as more important than party politics for the full development of national resources and a more equitable distribution of their fruits, *The New Age* foreshadowed the developments of succeeding decades.

Two factors contributed to the emergence of a weekly magazine of the character and significance of *The New Age* in the early years of the century. The first was the expansion of the reading public brought about by changes in publishing and the Education Acts of 1870, 1876, and 1880.¹ Reference to the increased circulation of newspapers and periodicals during this period is often attended by lugubrious allusion to the Yellow Press or to Arnold's jeremiad on the ‘New Journalism’, with no recognition of its benefits for authors and for publication as a whole. ‘The last decade of the nineteenth century,’ said H. G. Wells, ‘was an extraordinarily favourable time for new writers and my individual good luck was set in the luck of a whole generation of aspirants. . . . New books were being demanded and fresh authors were in request. Below and above alike there was opportunity, more public, more publicity, more publishers and more patronage.’² In

¹ Recent writers have shown that a high proportion of the population was literate before 1870; however, the Education Acts, and the expansion of secondary education at the turn of the century, undoubtedly increased the desire—and the ability—to read. See Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London, 1961), pp. 135-144, 166-206; and R. K. Webb, ‘The Victorian Reading Public’, *From Dickens to Hardy*, The Pelican Guide to English Literature, vol. VI (London, 1964), pp. 205-25.

² *Experiment in Autobiography* (London, 1934), vol. I, p. 506.

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addition to the six-shilling novel and Northcliffe's *Daily Mail* (founded in 1896), the expansion of the reading public sustained Everyman's Library and *The New Age*. Better education made many poor children of exceptional intelligence aware of the disparity between their abilities and their opportunities, and painfully conscious of the necessity to increase their knowledge if they wished to improve their status and, more important, change the society that had produced it. Where could they go for further education? Many went to *The New Age*, which offered more intellectual fare for threepence than any other periodical of the time. There were probably many young readers who, like Edwin Muir, having been forced to work for a living after a few years of schooling, obtained their education in contemporary politics and literature from *The New Age*.¹

Orage was aware that the magazine appealed to an audience in part produced by the Education Acts and 'the wave of secondary education', to 'a generation rising that finds *Tit-Bits* useless and [*T.P.'s Weekly*] unsatisfactory'.² But this group formed only part of its audience, according to Ford Madox Ford:

The readers of *The New Age* are very numerous and come from widely different classes. I have known several Army officers who regularly studied its pages, together with at least two colonial governors, quite a number of higher Civil Service officials, solicitors, and members of the Bar. On the other hand, I have known it read regularly by board-school teachers, shop assistants, servants, artisans, and members of the poor generally. . . . While there is an enormous amount of Socialistic literature in Germany, there is no well-known journal that so mixes propaganda with advanced criticism of

¹ Edwin Muir, *An Autobiography* (London, 1954), p. 123.

² *The New Age*, IV (28 Jan. 1909), 280.

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the arts and various aspects of life—as does *The New Age* in England. And the circumstances in France are somewhat similar to those in Germany.¹

Whereas the audiences of other weeklies could be distinguished with regard to politics, religion, and social class, the readers of *The New Age*, according to Orage, were ‘Matthew Arnold’s fourth class, the class, namely, that lies outside the three weltering masses, and is composed of individuals who have overcome their class prejudices’.² For lack of an English word to describe them, they were to become known during this period as the ‘intelligentsia’.

The second factor contributing to the creation of a weekly like *The New Age* was the transformation of the periodical press early in the century. Nearly all periodicals of general interest were attempting to attract more readers, and the methods they used in doing so sometimes involved the abnegation of traditional responsibilities. For the daily papers, this meant less concentration on a unique policy, appealing to only a small segment of the population, and a more varied and lively presentation of ‘news’, especially that made available by telegraphy;³ for the monthlies and quarterlies, it meant sacrificing the literature and criticism of interest to the educated few for that appealing to the middle classes, and particularly to women and the young. While it is true that the Education Acts can be cited as a ‘cause’ of these changes, two qualifications are necessary. First, they were a necessary but not a sufficient cause. Finding themselves, as James

¹ ‘Women and Men’, *The Little Review*, VI (May 1918), 59-60.

² *The New Age*, IV (28 Jan. 1909), 280.

³ For the influence of the telegraph on the press, see F. M. Hueffer, *The Critical Attitude* (London, 1911), p. 124.

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said, 'demonstrably in the presence of millions for whom taste is but an obscure, confused, immediate instinct',¹ publishers, rather than lamenting in the spirit of later historians, realized that this was a splendid opportunity to make money. Such is the nature of our system. Secondly, these changes were not so disastrous as they have seemed to some writers, in that new periodicals arose to perform the functions disregarded by the newspapers and reviews. The political weekly now became the medium of political commentary, and the 'Little Reviews' appeared to sustain serious and experimental literature.

According to Matthew Arnold, the transformation of the daily press began in 1886; if he had lived to witness the founding of *The Daily Mail* ten years later, he might have agreed with later writers who cite this date as inaugurating the decisive changes. In 1924 H. W. Massingham, one of the great editors of the century, said that newspapers were no longer journals of policy or opinion, as they had been at the turn of the century, but 'quite frankly organs of business, supplying the wares they think their customers want, and changing them whenever a new demand arises'.² While there is some danger of overemphasizing the extent to which this trend affected the Edwardian era, it was clearly evident by that time and the number of daily papers was declining. As an organ of policy or opinion, a daily with a small circulation, such as those typical of the late nineteenth century, could no longer be operated at a profit; indeed, the costs of production had increased to such an extent that it was no longer possible for an individual owner to sustain the modest losses that

¹ 'The Future of the Novel', *The House of Fiction*, ed. Leon Edel (London, 1957), p. 49.

² *H. W. M.: A Selection from the Writings of H. W. Massingham*, ed. H. J. Massingham (London, 1925), p. 131.

some such papers had hitherto entailed.¹ ‘A cheaper way for a rich man to become a maker of opinion,’ said R. C. K. Ensor, ‘was to publish a sixpenny weekly review. Publications of this class became now more numerous and various than ever before, and from first to last much of the period’s best writing will be found in them.’²

In addition to *The New Age*, this period witnessed the founding of *The Nation*, *The New Statesman*, and a host of lesser-known weeklies such as *The Commentator*, and *The New Witness* of Belloc and Chesterton. Their circulations were quite small by modern standards and they usually lost money; Ensor asserts that *The Spectator* was the only weekly of the period which made a profit.³ Circulation figures were as a rule kept secret, but there is no reason to suspect that any political weekly published between 1907 and 1922 had a circulation greater than that of *The Spectator*—which declined from 22,000 in 1903 to 13,500 in 1922.⁴ *The Nation* and *The Saturday Review* probably had larger circulations before the war than *The New Age*, with a fifteen-year average of over 3,000; or *The New Statesman*, with an increase from 3,000 to 7,000 between 1913 and 1925.⁵ It was still possible, in those years, to publish a sixpenny weekly with a circulation of 3,000 copies without losing more than 2,000 pounds a year. Hence weeklies flourished, more than compensating, in their variegated and forthright political commentary, for the increasing tendency of the daily press to disregard this function.

¹ The history of *The Pall Mall Gazette* is illustrative in this respect. See J. W. Robertson-Scott, *The Life and Death of a Newspaper* (London, 1952), p. 272.

² *England, 1870-1914* (Oxford, 1936), p. 536.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Sir William Beach Thomas, *The Story of the Spectator, 1828-1928* (London, 1928), p. 101.

⁵ Edward Hyams, *The New Statesman: The History of the First Fifty Years* (London, 1963), pp. 18, 80-1.

Edwardian weeklies were similar to those of today: they provided a synopsis of recent events which gave them the perspective inevitably lacking in a daily paper. Then as now, cultural discussion was largely confined to comment on events of the week—concerts, plays, exhibitions, and books published. Occasionally they would include a short story, and usually one poem; a few, like *The Saturday Review* and *The Outlook*, substituted signed essays on the arts for the political 'middle' articles of most weeklies. If this is what we expect of a political weekly, *The New Age* might more appropriately be classified as a 'cultural weekly'. While it did treat the events of the week, a substantial portion of each issue was devoted to subjects of more permanent interest. Literature, philosophy, economics, and political theory were often discussed in a series of articles extending over several months. And the number of creative works appearing in its pages make it comparable to any literary magazine of the period. More than sixty books consisting wholly or primarily of works first appearing in its pages have been published. Hence any discussion of *The New Age* as a product of trends in periodical publication must include consideration of its relation to literary reviews.

Long before the turn of the century, Matthew Arnold concluded that the reviews were not contributing to the preservation and enrichment of culture: 'We have the *Edinburgh Review*, existing as an organ of the old Whigs, and for as much play of the mind as may suit its being that; we have the *Quarterly Review*, existing as an organ of the Tories, and for as much play of the mind as may suit its being that. . . .'¹ In 1908, Arnold Bennett found the situation even worse:

¹ 'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time', *Essays in Criticism* [First Series] (London, 1865), p. 19.

I have no hesitation in saying that our monthly periodicals are, as a whole, the most stupid and infantile of any ‘World-Power’, the United States not excepted. The British Public reads the *Fortnightly* because the *Fortnightly* is a good habit inherited from an earlier age; it keeps the *Nineteenth Century and After* [which, he commented later, ‘really ought to call itself the *Middle Ages*’] on its drawing-room table because the list of contributors is ornamental. . . . Don’t tell me that I have forgotten the *Cornhill*. In my view, the *Cornhill* stands for all that is worst in the British temperament. It has the smoothness and vacuity of a minor official retired from the Foreign Office. Look through a number; in the whole there is not a split infinitive nor an idea.¹

The *Strand* and *Pall Mall Magazine*, he said, were ‘hopeless’; and *Blackwood’s Magazine*, which published ‘some of the feeblest fiction that can be found anywhere’, escaped his wrath only because it also published ‘the very greatest fiction: Joseph Conrad’s’.² Bennett’s attack on the bastions of periodical respectability was not the result of asperity. They were, as he demonstrated with voluminous documentation, often ignorant or timorous in discussing the problems of contemporary culture, and indifferent or hostile towards those writers who, Bennett felt, were the greatest of the period. And time has confirmed his judgment.

The Little Reviews of the 1890’s—*The Hobby Horse*, *The Dome*, *The Pageant*, and others, in addition to the better-known *Yellow Book* and *Savoy*—were indicative of the growing rift between serious writers and the public represented by the monthlies and quarterlies. In the first

¹ *The New Age*, II (25 Apr. 1908), 513.

² *Ibid.*, VI (16 Dec. 1909), 159. In the *Edinburgh Review*, on the other hand, Bennett found a reviewer who had ‘the effrontery to select Mr Joseph Conrad’s *Secret Agent* as an example of modern ugliness in fiction’. *The New Age*, III (9 May 1908), 33.

two decades of the twentieth century, periodicals of this type were important in securing an audience for unknown and experimental writers. There was Ford Madox Ford’s attempt to create a literary community and to ‘enjoin upon the Englishman a critical attitude’ in *The English Review*;¹ there was Harold Monroe’s *Poetry Review* (succeeded by *Poetry and Drama*), which brought together the most interesting of the new poets and poetic theories between 1912 and 1914; there was *The Egoist*, which, Pound says, was ‘necessary to print Joyce, W. Lewis, Eliot and a lot of my stuff that Orage would not have in *The New Age*’;² and there was *Blast*, the abortive manifesto of Vorticism. They offer evidence that, just as the political weekly flourished in fulfilling a function increasingly neglected by the daily papers, so the Little Reviews grew in number and importance because they served a function increasingly neglected by the established monthlies and quarterlies.

During the fifteen years of Orage’s editorship, *The New Age* witnessed the birth of more than thirty English literary periodicals, most of which did not survive for more than a year or two. Even the best known of these had limited circulations (*The Egoist* had less than two hundred subscribers in 1919),³ partly as a result of the fact that they could seldom afford to advertise and were seldom reviewed. In discussing even the most obscure Little Reviews and attempting to relate them to the development of contemporary literature, *The New Age* acted as a clearing-house for information regarding new writers and new methods. In 1921, for example, Orage was recommending Joyce’s *Ulysses* and Eliot’s literary

¹ Ford Madox Hueffer, *The Critical Attitude*, p. 4.

² *The Letters of Ezra Pound, 1907-1941*, p. 344.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 343-4.

criticism to his readers, and providing the addresses of the obscure American magazines in which their work was appearing. Such information was not to be found in other periodicals. 'If a magazine is to be of any value,' wrote Orage, 'it must keep in touch with the magazines of its day, testing itself by them, comparing notes with them, picking up hints from them, and generally profiting by the experience of magazines in circumstances like its own.'¹ When writers found themselves with no medium for publication, or when they were willing to submit the theories of the coterie to public discussion, the columns of *The New Age* were open to them. In addition to publishing works by well-known writers, it was, like the Little Reviews, particularly receptive to writers with little popular appeal and those just beginning their careers. Subsequent chapters will show, in fact, that as a discoverer of creative talent *The New Age* was more successful than any other magazine of the time, English or American.

While the growth of the reading public and consequent changes in periodicals during the Edwardian period help account for the origin and development of *The New Age*, they do not explain its unique character and significance. These were a product of the editorial conception which determined its contents and attempted to shape them into a coherent whole. The talents, the aspirations, the energies of the first two decades of the century were centrifugal: they resulted in literary coteries, in increasing specialization—in an era of private sensibility in the arts and isolated professionalism in the social sciences. It was Orage's conscious and declared intention to integrate these forces so that culture would have an intelligible structure and direction. His assumption that political and economic problems were inseparable from the problems

¹ 'A Bookish Causerie', *The Labour Leader*, IX (12 June 1897), 194.

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of culture as a whole was part of his nineteenth-century heritage, in the tradition of Carlyle, Ruskin, and William Morris; and while he failed to achieve his Utopian aim, it nonetheless gave his period a partial coherence it would otherwise have lacked.

While Orage wrote brilliant political commentaries and penetrating literary criticism, these activities were ancillary to his career as an editor, and it is as an editor that he will be best remembered. The medium of his editorial achievement was technical excellence, a mastery of the manifold skills required in that profession; its foundation was an unwavering commitment to principles and values derived from outside of his immediate historical context. This commitment was, in the best sense, disinterested; it enabled him to discriminate between the transitory and the enduring, and to accept the consequences of any idea or theory that he thought was valid, regardless of the sacrifices that this acceptance entailed.

Allen Tate has said that an editor owes his first duty to 'his sense of the moral and intellectual order upon which society ought to rest, whether or not society at the moment has an interest in such an order or is even aware of a need for it';¹ and it was Orage's devotion to this duty which led Tate to name him as one of the great editors of our time. But equally important to his editorial achievement was his ability to perceive the relevance of the new to the continuous evolution of culture, rather than remaining committed to a static social ideal derived from the past, or to a dogmatic ideal proposed by a political party for the future. As a result of his ability to recognize what of the new was of enduring importance, the policy of *The New Age* underwent continuous revision, acting at

¹ 'The Function of the Critical Quarterly', *On the Limits of Poetry* (New York, 1948), p. 71.

some times as an instigator, at others as a precursor of cultural change.

Under Orage's editorship, *The New Age* was a product not of journalism as traditionally conceived, but of men and ideas interacting in a period of cultural change. While the magazine can be described as a political weekly that performed some functions traditionally associated with the literary review, its true nature is not adequately indicated by such characterization. Its unprecedented form reflects its essential character as a byproduct of political and cultural endeavour on the part of contributors whose association was only incidentally journalistic. *The New Age* is of unique importance because it reflected the diverse interests of its time and attempted to relate them to one another so that they could be absorbed into the common ground of our cultural heritage.

CHAPTER II

THE PURCHASE OF *THE NEW AGE*

THE possibility of jointly editing a periodical had been discussed by Orage and Jackson soon after they first met in Leeds in 1900.¹ At that time Orage, who was then twenty-seven, had been teaching in a Leeds Board elementary school for seven years. Although his formal education had ended after one year in a teachers' training college, his activities in Leeds indicate that through his own efforts he had acquired a comprehensive knowledge of politics, philosophy, and literature. He participated in the founding of the Leeds branch of the Independent Labour Party in 1894, and from 1895 to 1897 wrote a weekly literary column for Keir Hardie's *Labour Leader*. In addition to lecturing for the I.L.P., he travelled in the North of England as a speaker for the Theosophical Society. His interest in Plato (whose works he studied for a period of seven years) had resulted in the formation of a Plato Group, 'in origin and effect a circle for the reception of Orage's expositions of Platonic philosophy'.² According to Philip Mairet, his speculative interests had by 1900 led him away from his earlier concern with social

¹ Philip Mairet, *A. R. Orage* (London, 1936), p. 23. The information in the following paragraphs regarding Orage's activities in Leeds is from Mairet.

² Mairet, pp. 15-16. Orage said that he had devoted seven years to the study of Plato in *The New Age*, XIV (11 Dec. 1913), 177; conjecturally, the period involved was 1893-1900. He also devoted seven years to Nietzsche (1900-7?) and the *Mahabharata* (1907-14?).

reform, but this trend was reversed by his friendship with Holbrook Jackson.

At their first meeting, Jackson introduced Orage to the works of Nietzsche, which were to exercise a decisive influence over his subsequent thought. ‘There are,’ Orage wrote in 1906, ‘books that appeal to sentiment, books that appeal to the mind, and books that appeal to the will. Nietzsche’s belong to this last small but immortal section. Nobody can read his books without receiving a powerful stimulus in one direction or another.’¹ Their effect on Orage was immediate and profound. *Thus Spake Zarathustra* led him to realize that ideas, which he had increasingly isolated from life, were meaningful only in relation to action. After 1900, he was to take a renewed interest in the political and cultural activities that had been overshadowed by his interest in occult philosophy during the preceding four years.

The year 1900 also marked the beginning of Orage’s lifelong friendship with A. J. Penty, then an architect with his father’s firm in Leeds. His acquaintance with Penty renewed Orage’s interest in the arts and crafts movement (during his youth, he had walked to Cambridge, a distance of about twelve miles, once a week in order to take drawing lessons), and Penty’s theory regarding the guild organization of industry was to have a far-reaching influence on his economic thought.

¹ Orage, *Friedrich Nietzsche: The Dionysian Spirit of the Age* (London, 1906), pp. 11-12. His statement regarding the effect of Nietzsche’s works is confirmed by a number of twentieth-century authors. Edwin Muir and Wyndham Lewis said that Nietzsche was the paramount influence in their early intellectual development, and Herbert Read asserts that ‘for at least five years he, and none of my professors or friends, was my real teacher’. Muir, *An Autobiography*, pp. 125-7; Lewis, *Rude Assignment* (London, 1950), p. 120; Read, *Annals of Innocence and Experience* (London, 1940), p. 86.

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In 1900, then, the ideas which were to be embodied in *The New Age* seven years later were being formulated through the collaboration of these three men. In many respects, their interests were complementary. Holbrook Jackson, at that time a lace merchant, was a Fabian Socialist with acquaintances in the political and literary circles of London. Penty contributed a craftsman's knowledge of the processes of manufacture to the former's knowledge of business organization, and his radical suggestions regarding industrialism fertilized their discussions of political theory. Orage's artistic and literary interests gave him something in common with each; his passion for speculative thought was no less important than his knowledge of the labour movement in integrating their political and cultural discussions during the following years.

Soon they were seeking a means of disseminating their ideas concerning the relationship between culture and the political and economic objectives of Socialism. 'Their project,' says Mairét,

was for a movement for cultural reform. It was to be primarily aesthetic in its motives, but with much more far-reaching aims. . . . Their minds met in the idea of a reform of *taste* in art, manners, thought, and discussion. This aesthetic revolution was gradually to engender a social force capable of overthrowing the supreme evil of the age, Plutocracy.¹

This conception foreshadows the insistence on the inter-relationship between culture and economics which is evident throughout *The New Age*. It is not surprising that they considered the possibility of founding a periodical to further their aims; but they discarded this idea and in 1902 formed a discussion group known as the Leeds Arts Club.

¹ Mairét, p. 22.

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Its purview was more extensive than the name would indicate, for philosophy, politics, and sociology, as well as art and literature, were the subjects of lectures and discussions. Some of those who delivered lectures—Shaw, Chesterton, Edward Carpenter—were later to become contributors to *The New Age*.

Between 1902 and 1905, the Leeds Arts Club provided Orage with a more stimulating sphere of activity than he had found in the I.L.P. and the Theosophical Society; it also enabled him to develop those abilities for organization and co-ordination he was later to exercise as an editor. But this period was also one of increasing personal difficulties and professional frustration. He had married in 1896; at the time he was earning only eighty pounds a year, and financial problems exacerbated the tensions of what seems to have been an otherwise unsatisfactory match that later ended in divorce. Although he enjoyed teaching, he felt a growing sense of frustration as a result of his encounters with the educational bureaucracy. In 1905, he ended his career as a teacher and moved to London, intending to support himself through independent journalism.

A. J. Pentty had arrived in London a few months before Orage, and Holbrook Jackson joined them in 1906. Their ideas regarding Socialism, the labour movement, and the methods and standards of industrial production, the product of six years of dialectic, had little in common with the prevailing conceptions of these subjects that they encountered in the Fabian Society in London. Orage’s attitude towards the Fabians is implicit in a review of one of their pamphlets which he had written some years before. They had, he said,

a positive genius for the commonplace. The spirit of Captain Cuttle is in every Fabian tract, and ‘When found, make note

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of,' applies to everything the mysterious society publishes. . . . I am convinced that when the rest of the world shall have taken Mark Twain's advice, and 'shuffled off this mortal coil', there will still be the Fabian Society to prepare neat and accurate tables of averages and percentages for the judgment day.¹

Orage, Penty, and Jackson were concerned with the cultural and philosophic foundations of Socialism, rather than with the statistical superstructure so important to the Fabian Society.

Apparently some members of the Society were in sympathy with their point of view. In order to establish a forum in which their ideas could be discussed, Orage and Jackson decided to form what might be called a London counterpart of the Leeds Arts Club. Accordingly, an organizational meeting was held in the offices of the Fabian Society in January, 1907, G. B. Shaw acting as chairman. Holbrook Jackson moved that

a group called the Fabian Arts Group be formed by members and associates of the Fabian Society with the object of interpreting the relationship of art and philosophy to Socialism. . . . A. R. Orage seconded the resolution, and in pointing out the importance of art and philosophy to the propaganda of Socialism he said that the arguments both for and against Socialism were becoming more and more philosophic and less related to the immediate scientific application of Socialistic measures. The Society had made up its mind on these last, and it had now not only to make up its mind but to help form a Socialist opinion of the former. And he drew attention to the necessity of the Society considering so vital a question as the relation of the handicrafts and craft guilds to Socialism. . . .²

It is interesting to note that Yeats was present, and offered

¹ *The Labour Leader*, VIII (1 Feb. 1896), 36.

² *Fabian News*, XVII (Jan. 1907), 20.

to deliver a lecture in a series to be arranged by the Group’s executive committee. Among those who lectured to the Group in the following months were Aylmer Maude, M. D. Eder, E. Belfort Bax, Edgar Jepson, Chesterton, and Wells.

Ostensibly, the Fabian Arts Group, as a subordinate organization within the Society exploring only one aspect of its objectives (and this not a very important aspect in the eyes of the Fabian Executive), could not be in conflict with the parent body. But it was a natural gathering-place for those discontented with the policies of the ‘Old Gang’ (Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Edward Pease, Hubert Bland, and Shaw). There is a suggestion of sectarianism in Wells’s reference to the formation of the Group as ‘expressing in a most convincing way the new attitude towards Socialism and life’, a suggestion borne out by Orage’s letters to Wells.¹ Eric Gill later said that the Arts Group made ‘vague efforts to deprive Fabianism of its webbed feet–vain efforts’.²

One can understand why these efforts were in vain: although innumerable specific objections to the strategy employed by the Fabian Executive could justly be made, the dissidents did not suggest a coherent alternative policy. But their general attitude towards the Society was clearly that which Orage and Jackson had arrived at some years before: that an investigation of the cultural basis of political reform was at that time more important than the study of the ‘scientific application’ of Socialism. That these two men, who had only recently come to London, were able to organize such a group is some indication of their personal and intellectual resources at the time.

¹ *Fabian News*, XVII (Mar. 1907), 30. The University of Illinois possesses seven letters from Orage to Wells, dated 1907-8.

² *Letters of Eric Gill* (London, 1947), p. 311.

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Meanwhile, they were finding that it was no easy matter to support themselves by occasional journalism. Orage published three books in 1906-7, but the sum he earned from them was negligible.¹ He and Holbrook Jackson thought of collaborating, but these plans never materialized. In any event, occasional journalism would not have been a suitable medium for propagating their political and cultural ideas. Random articles based on a unique and fairly complete framework of thought would have been without effect amid the welter of contemporary journalism. The ideal method of engendering the type of discussion they desired would be, as they knew, to edit a periodical themselves. Thus it is not surprising that they investigated the possibility of buying *The New Age* when they learned that it was for sale.

The New Age had had a varied history as an independent weekly. It was founded in 1894 by Frederick A. Atkins, who pursued a policy of Christian liberalism and was not unfavourably disposed towards Socialism. The contributors included Richard Le Gallienne, Israel Zangwill, and Jerome K. Jerome. After A. E. Fletcher became the editor in 1895, the subtitle was changed from 'A Weekly Record of Culture, Social Service, and Literary Life' to 'A Journal for Thinkers and Workers'. Ramsay MacDonald was a regular contributor during this socialist phase of the magazine's history. Fletcher was succeeded by Arthur Compton-Rickett,² who in turn was followed by Joseph Clayton. By 1900, the magazine was again

¹ Friedrich Nietzsche: *The Dionysian Spirit of the Age* (London, 1906), *Nietzsche in Outline and Aphorism* (London, 1907)—clear and concise expositions of Nietzsche's philosophy—and *Consciousness: Animal, Human, and Superhuman* (London, 1907), in which Orage attempted to synthesize religious concepts of higher consciousness and Nietzsche's theory of the Superman.

² Arthur Compton-Rickett, *I Look Back* (London, 1933), pp. 80-1.

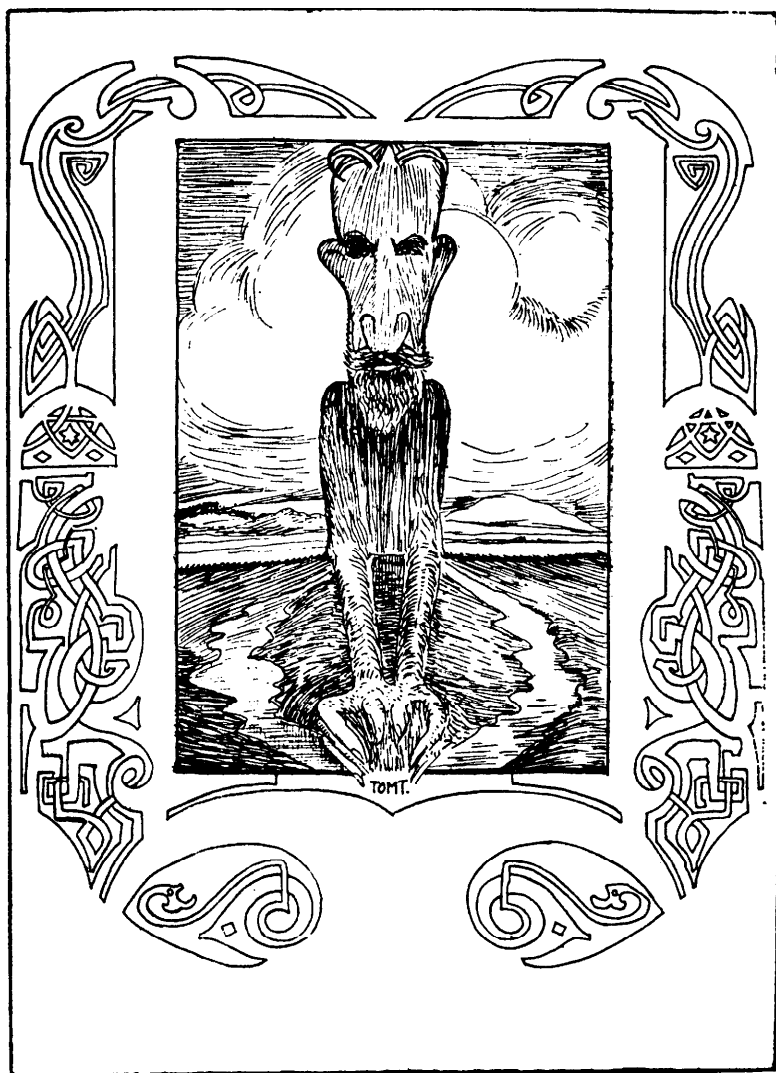
independent, though its sympathies were clearly Liberal. Between 1900 and 1907, the circulation declined, and it became so deeply in debt to the printer at the end of this period that it had to be sold.¹

The price of the magazine was low; even so, Orage and Jackson did not have sufficient funds to purchase it, and they realized that a substantial amount of capital would have to be spent before it became profitable. Therefore Jackson applied to Shaw for financial help. The latter indicated that he would give them some of the royalties from *The Doctor's Dilemma*, which was then enjoying financial success in the West End; he suggested, however, that they ‘raid the City first’, as others would be more willing to help if they did not know of his offer. Meanwhile, Orage was doing just that. One morning early in 1907, their post contained letters from Lewis Wallace, a merchant banker whom Orage had met in Theosophical circles, and Shaw, each offering to contribute five hundred pounds towards the purchase and operation of *The New Age*.²

As a result of their activities previous to the purchase of *The New Age*, it was generally assumed that the magazine's political policy would be Fabian, despite disquieting indications of heretical tendencies within the Fabian Arts Group. The first issue that appeared under their editorship (2 May 1907) contained letters from Sidney Webb and Edward Pease (the secretary of the Fabian Society) wishing them success. However, the new subtitle of the magazine was, significantly, ‘An Independent Socialist Review of Politics, Literature, and Art’, and in an editorial in the previous issue the new editors had made it clear

¹ Interview with C. B. Bonner (printer of *The New Age*), March 1960.

² Mairet, p. 36.



1. MR G. BERNARD SHAW

that they disavowed ‘any specific formula, whether of economics or of party’.¹ Before advocating any specific course of socialist action, they felt that it was necessary to establish a reputation as an independent forum open to all intelligent opinion. Contributors were free to criticize Fabian policies, but in no case were their criticisms supported editorially. The weekly commentary, entitled ‘The Outlook’, was written by Cecil Chesterton, Holbrook Jackson, and Clifford Sharp (the first editor of *The New Statesman*), with the occasional help of Shaw.² They avoided commenting on disagreements within the Fabian Society and, as a product of collaboration, the column remained free from sectarian bias. When, on one occasion, editorial support was given to an article by Wells, Orage and Jackson realized that this single instance might compromise their reputation for impartiality; consequently they obtained two articles attacking Wells’s views for the next issue.³

During 1907, while Jackson was the co-editor, the magazine was devoted primarily to political discussion. When one considers the number of critical decisions that were made within the socialist movement that year, the reasons for this preponderance are evident. In the elections of 1906, the Labour Representation Committee had proved itself an effective political force, and Socialists were debating the extent to which they should commit their fortunes to party politics. Since the Trade Unions

¹ *The New Age* (25 Apr. 1907), p. 453. Hereafter, *The New Age* is cited as ‘NA’.

² Dan H. Lawrence, the editor of Shaw’s letters, has identified four paragraphs on the railway dispute (NA, II [14 Nov. 1907], 41) as the work of Shaw, through a reference in a letter from Shaw to Holbrook Jackson dated 12 Nov. 1907.

³ NA, I (13 & 20 June 1907); letter from Orage to Wells, 9 June 1907.

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Congress, which dominated the Labour Representation Committee and the Labour Party, was not committed to Socialism, many Socialists advocated the formation of an independent Socialist Party. The 'Old Guard' of the Fabian Society remained true to its doctrine of the 'permeation' of existing parties, while Wells attempted in vain to muster support for his theory of 'superimposition'. Since many of those involved in these debates read and contributed to *The New Age*, it soon became the battleground of their proposals.

A substantial portion of the magazine was devoted to discussion of the numerous subsidiary issues connected with Socialism. 'Nothing is more evident,' said the editors, than the fact of divergence amongst leading reformers on precisely the issues of the Socialistic propaganda. To bring those divergences into the light of intelligence . . . will be the aim of *The New Age* in its new form.¹

At that time, reformers with diverse social panaceas, from temperance to selective breeding, were attempting to graft their ideas onto Socialism. Wells, in his autobiography, has summarized the differences within the Fabian Society during those years:

Some members denounced machinery as the source of all our social discomfort, while others built their hopes on mechanization as the emancipator of labour, some were nationalist and others cosmopolitan . . . some Christian and some Atheist . . . some proposing to build up a society out of happy families as units and some wanting to break up the family as completely as did Plato.²

The last of these issues was a source of considerable conflict. Wells's novels had led many to suspect, rightly,

¹ NA (25 Apr. 1907), p. 458.

² *Experiment in Autobiography*, I, 247-8.

that his own views on procreation and the family were far from conventional; political expedience necessitated his denial of such views, and he duly recanted in *The New Age*.¹ But not all Socialists were willing to forsake free discussion for expedience. Florence Farr, defining marriage as ‘a profession in which the amateur commands a higher price than the skilled artist’, discussed the advantages of Eastern sacramental prostitution with the dispassionateness that characterized the ‘new woman’, and Havelock Ellis advocated a reform of the laws on homosexuality in its pages.² *The New Age* became, and was to remain, a weekly debating society, open to the expression of widely differing opinions, with an almost aggressive emancipation from Victorian discretions.

The format of the magazine was at this time similar to that of other political weeklies, There were columns on art, music, and drama; few books were reviewed, aside from those written by Socialists. Occasionally there were discussions of the works of well-known writers in terms of their relevance to the Socialist creed. Apart from a few poems and sketches distinguished only by their revolutionary fervour,³ there were no creative works.

The New Age was unsuccessful financially during 1907. Selling for a penny, its weekly deficit was about twenty pounds, in spite of the fact that contributors were seldom paid. In addition to being plagued by financial problems, Orage and Jackson apparently disagreed about the policy of the magazine. According to Mairet, ‘Holbrook Jackson

¹ NA, I (17 Oct. 1907), 392. In his autobiography, he confesses the validity of the charges brought against him at the time, and concludes that it was a mistake to deny them.

² NA, I (25 Sept. 1907), 294; II (14 Nov. 1907), 45-6.

³ Written by Edwin Pugh, E. Nesbit, George Raffalovitch, and others.

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wanted *The New Age* for the middle classes, to teach them Socialism with a Fabian and Fabian Arts Group policy, whereas Orage was determined that the paper should be more broadly socialistic, and spoke of a "socialist Spectator".¹ By the end of 1907 they had amicably agreed to part, Orage remaining editor of *The New Age* and Jackson beginning an independent journalistic career during which he edited *T.P.'s Weekly* (1911-16) and *To-day* (1917-23).

Orage was thirty-three when he became the sole editor of *The New Age*. The following description of him by Holbrook Jackson is representative of the impression he made on his contemporaries.

In appearance Orage was tall, and, at that time, slim and dark-haired, and he dressed conventionally, except for a soft felt hat, then unusual and probably a result of aesthetic revolt. It was usually worn on the back of his head. He wore a plain hand-woven silk tie, sometimes blue, but oftener an orange or flame colour. His hair was straight and worn short except for a long tuft which sometimes strayed over his forehead. His eyes were hazel, lively, and challenging, and in moments of excitement they seemed to emit a red glint. It was a feline face and there was something cat-like in his movements. He walked as though he were going to pounce on something, much as his mind pounced upon an idea or an opponent. His expression was earnest, without being solemn. There was wit in his poise and manner and he was good to look at without being good-looking. But he did not impress by his features so much as by that which was outside and beyond his features. You were conscious of his aura; you felt his presence so much that you forgot details, even the vague birthmark which broke into his complexion like an irregular sunburn, and seemed to become deeper when he was bored or out of humour.

¹ Mairet, p. 48. Presumably Orage was referring to the *Spectator* of Addison and Steele.

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This appearance, so lively and so earnest, was a perfect background for his conversation. You expected a man who looked like that to talk well, and I am not alone in thinking that his better genius expressed itself in talk. Even his small talk was fascinating. The odd remarks and unpremeditated sallies, often trivial, were always amusing and sometimes something more.¹

Many of the elements of this picture appear in other descriptions of Orage. One might be inclined to discount Jackson's comments concerning the indefinable 'aura' that surrounded Orage if they were not confirmed in the autobiographies of Epstein, Rowland Kenney, and others; it seems to have affected all who knew him. Edwin Muir's comments are helpful in understanding this aspect of his character.

As a man he lived on the plane of antique virtue, and like Plutarch's heroes aroused admiration not so much for his inborn genius as for the conduct of his life, his formulation and control of his endowments. Consequently, his life had a style, like his writings: a style achieved by conscious discipline which he concealed from the world, letting it speak for itself. . . . He had an extreme faith in the power of man to create out of himself by conscious discipline the image which lies buried in him. . . . He had dealt with himself in the same faith, and ever since his youth had taken up and followed creeds which seemed to provide a short-cut to intellectual and spiritual power. . . . The effect of Orage's extraordinary spiritual effort, sustained for so many years, could be felt by anyone who met him; it gave him an unspoken ascendancy, a charm (in both senses of the word) which was peculiar to himself.²

This belief in personal development through conscious discipline was a controlling factor in Orage's early life.

¹ Quoted by Mairet, pp. 24-5.

² Muir, *An Autobiography*, pp. 172-4.

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Lacking a 'world of thought and men such as he . . . dreamed of but never realized',¹ he had developed his intellectual powers in isolation. In spite of the unquestionable impact of the works of Nietzsche, the influence that was most decisive in developing his mind and shaping his thought was probably his study of Plato. In Orage's writings one discerns the same range of thought, from the incisive analysis of conceptual confusions to mystical speculation, and the same dialectical methods, that one finds in the *Dialogues*. Holbrook Jackson's comment that he 'remained true to one master, Socrates',² helps one understand both his character and, as we shall see, his methods as an editor.

¹ Orage uses this phrase in describing the effect of Schopenhauer's works on Nietzsche (*Friedrich Nietzsche* . . . , p. 18); it obviously has autobiographical overtones.

² Letter to *The New English Weekly*, VI (15 Nov. 1934), 114.

CHAPTER III

ORAGE'S EDITORIAL METHODS

IN discussing the development of *The New Age*, S. G. Hobson says:

The reader cannot fail to be impressed with the editorial grip and sense instinctively shown in the earliest issues. It is said that a good editor never writes a line; certainly he will be judged by the paper as a whole and not by what he himself writes. In these early numbers the professional will notice amateur touches, inequalities in literary values, and the like, but they do not detract from the high editorial level immediately attained.¹

This achievement was a product of the joint efforts of Orage and Jackson. It is difficult to say which of the magazine's features were the outcome of Jackson's influence. In view of the form that the magazine was later to take, it seems that he wanted to make it similar in format and content to the other political weeklies of the time. He thought that if *The New Age* appealed to middle-class Socialists, and if the amount of advertising in the magazine could be increased (advertisements being a prerequisite for profits), its financial problems would be solved. Orage, on the other hand, envisioned *The New Age* as an experiment in a new form of journalism, a weekly which would devote as much attention to the arts as it did to political commentary. He disliked the onerous task of securing advertisements, preferring to rely upon gifts from benefactors who did not attempt to influence the policy of the magazine.²

¹ *Pilgrim to the Left* (London, 1938), p. 140.

² Mairer, pp. 48-9.

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By the end of 1907, the political opinions of the two editors were diverging. In that year and in 1908, Holbrook Jackson was a candidate for the Fabian Executive; although he was not elected, he seems to have gained wide support in the Society as a whole. Orage, on the other hand, was collaborating with Cecil Chesterton, Clifford Sharp, Wells, and others, in a political 'cave' intent upon overthrowing the conservative leadership of the Executive.¹ In a 'Private and Confidential' letter to H. G. Wells, he said that they should consider 'whether the Fabian Society has not ceased to be the medium of free discussion; whether, in fact, it has not become so dogmatic as to make its future as an intelligent organ of discussion and enquiry very doubtful'.² Orage felt that the limitations of the Society should not be those of the magazine, and that *The New Age* would be of more value to the Socialist movement as a whole if it criticized Fabian policies. The working classes and the labour unions represented an effective political force through which Socialism could be achieved; he had more faith in their efforts than in those of the middle-class Fabian Society.

But Orage did not use *The New Age* as a platform for the expression of his own political theories when he became its sole editor in January 1908. Subscribing to the precept that a good editor never writes a line,³ he devoted his energies to obtaining contributions from the best writers of the age. The methods he used in doing so,

¹ Mrs Cecil Chesterton, *The Chestertons* (London, 1941), p. 14.

² Letter to H. G. Wells dated 9 June 1907.

³ Mairet, p. 47. For want of a staff member able to write the 'Notes of the Week', Orage was forced to do so himself after 1909. His literary column, 'Readers and Writers', commenced two years after Arnold Bennett ceased contributing 'Books and Persons' (1911); in the interim it had become increasingly apparent that no one but Orage could fill the gap left by Bennett's departure.

according to Arnold Bennett, help explain the magazine's success. In discussing the problems confronting periodicals, Bennett says that the most serious one is

the exceeding difficulty of obtaining the right contributors. English editors have never appreciated the importance of this. As English manufacturers sit still and wait for customers, so English editors sit still and wait for contributors. The interestingness of *The New Age*, if I may make an observation which the editorial pen might hesitate to make, is due to the fact that contributors have always been searched for zealously and indefatigably. They have been compelled to come in—sometimes with a lasso, sometimes with a revolver, sometimes with a lure of flattery; but they have been captured.¹

When he found either achievement or exceptional promise in the works of a contemporary author, Orage took the unusual step of asking him to contribute to the magazine. Allen Upward says that he was ‘almost the only editor who has approached me of his own accord to ask for contributions, and he offered me an absolutely free hand’.² It is probable that the single contributions of Galsworthy, John Drinkwater, J. E. Flecker, Rupert Brooke, and others were made in response to editorial requests. Later, when editing *The New English Weekly*, Orage sent approximately one hundred complimentary copies to prospective contributors each week, with requests for comments or contributions;³ this serves as some index of his earlier methods.

The first issues of *The New Age* to appear under

¹ NA, VII (8 Sept. 1910), 443.

² ‘20/1631’ [Allen Upward], *Some Personalities* (London, 1921), p. 242.

³ Letter from Orage to Ezra Pound dated 29 Oct. 1932. I am indebted to Mr Pound for allowing me to examine his letters from Orage.

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Orage's editorship testify to his success in obtaining contributors. In response to a request for a discussion of his objections to Socialism, G. K. Chesterton wrote an article entitled 'Why I Am Not a Socialist', which appeared in the issue of 4 January 1908. The following issue contained an article 'About Chesterton and Belloc' by H. G. Wells. Chesterton and Belloc both replied, only to be routed by Shaw's brilliant analysis of the 'Chesterbelloc', that fabulous, four-legged pantomime creature which claimed that it was the *Zeitgeist*.¹ The controversy, one of the most significant in their incessant political combat, continued for several months and broke out again later in the year. It was carefully planned and sustained by Orage; his suggestions to the combatants that they reply at each stage of the debate were accompanied by advance proofs of the latest article.² Their contributions were always printed exactly as written, which is not always the case in journalistic publication. Orage was quick to realize that 'established writers hate to have their "copy" meddled with. There are too many clever sub-editors who like an article to appear as they want it and not as the writer wants it. Orage would have none of it. The article was never touched by blue pencil, even if it ran two or three lines over the column.'³

Shaw, Wells, Chesterton, and Belloc were not paid for their contributions, a fact which testifies both to their generosity and to their opinion of Orage. Ideally, an editor is able to pay all of his contributors, roughly in proportion to the quality of their work; however, as *The*

¹ 'Belloc and Chesterton', *NA*, II (15 Feb. 1908), 309-11.

² Orage's letters to Wells dated 24 June and 17 Nov. 1908, contained such proofs; it is reasonable to assume that this courtesy was extended to Shaw, Belloc, and Chesterton.

³ S. G. Hobson, *Pilgrim to the Left*, pp. 140-1.



2. MR G. K. CHESTERTON by Tom Titt

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New Age was operated at an annual loss of over one thousand pounds,¹ this was impossible. And, indeed, it does not seem to have been necessary, for many were willing to contribute without payment. There were several reasons for this: Socialists wanted to do what they could to forward their cause; some admired the magazine and its audience, considering it the ideal medium for the publication of their works; and still others contributed because of their admiration of Orage. Perhaps the most important factor, suggests S. G. Hobson, was that writers were free to express their convictions in *The New Age*; they were willing to forgo payment in return for intellectual freedom.

Whilst it is assuredly a proof of disinterestedness that . . . these busy and well-established authors should write for love of adventure, I draw another conclusion: that the best work is unpaid: that no commercial value can be attached to it. At the time I was doing a great deal of well-paid technical and commercial journalism; I dictated every word and damned it heartily. What I did for *The New Age* was infinitely harder work and infinitely more enjoyable. Nor could the observer fail to notice the joyous light-heartedness of the *New Age* writers when they foregathered. . . . You cannot appraise a revolution in guineas.²

¹ NA, XI (26 Sept. 1912), 525-6; XIII (14 Aug. 1913), 458. 'The New Age Press' was incorporated in 1908, with £8,200 capital; it was seriously in debt when the stockholders liquidated in 1917. The company's financial records are preserved in the Public Records Office. Most of the subscribers to the first stock issue purchased five shares or less; only one purchased more than one hundred shares, indicating that during its early years *The New Age* enjoyed widespread support among Socialists. The chief financial supporters of *The New Age* in later years were Lewis Wallace, James A. Allan (later Lord Allan, of Glasgow), and Sir Henry Slesser.

² *Pilgrim to the Left*, pp. 145-6.

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The intellectual freedom of *The New Age* was part of its declared policy. In an editorial concluding the first year of its publication, Orage wrote:

If the social revolution which both Socialists and the better sort of non-Socialists alike desire to see is to be brought about peacefully by the persuasion of the intelligence (and only so will a revolution succeed), it will be, we are more and more convinced, by frankly and fully discussing now before the tide is on us all the outstanding, obscure, and vexing problems associated with the revolutionary propaganda, and visibly arising in its wake.

To this end, friend and enemy of Socialism alike will find the need more and more insistent of some neutral ground where intelligences may meet on equal terms. . . . We shall therefore continue to invite and welcome discussion even when, as sometimes happens, our own cherished convictions are the first to be challenged.¹

Many were puzzled (and some Socialists were irritated) by Orage’s editorial tolerance. According to Belloc, it was not without significance in the history of English journalism. In dedicating his book *The Free Press* to Orage, he wrote: ‘You were, I think, the pioneer, in its modern form at any rate, of the Free Press in this country. I well remember the days when one used to write to *The New Age* simply because one knew it to be the only paper in which the truth with regard to our corrupt politics, or indeed with regard to any powerful evil, could be told.’² With characteristic pungency, Pound states the difference between Orage’s policy and that of other editors of the time:

The New Age permits one to express beliefs which are in

¹ NA, II (25 Apr. 1908), 503.

² ‘Prefatory Letter to A. R. Orage’, *The Free Press* (London, 1918), p. v.

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direct opposition to those held by the editing staff. In this, *The New Age* sets a most commendable example to certain other periodicals which not only demand all writers in their columns shall turn themselves into a weak and puling copy of the editorial board, but even try to damage one's income if one ventures to express contrary beliefs in the columns of other papers.¹

Believing that 'discussion, after all, is the rational remedy for everything',² Orage opened the columns of the magazine to all who fulfilled his two basic editorial requirements: that they write sincerely, and write well.³ His confidence that truth would emerge from free discussion, and his belief that 'the persuasion of the intelligence' was the only valid basis of social change, indicate clearly the influence of Plato on his thought.

He himself was always ready to instigate discussions if no one disagreed with the opinions of imposing contributors. 'He had the art-finesse if you like-of setting the roaring wild beasts at one another and realizing the value of their later thoughts,' says one contributor. 'They were stimulated by opposition exactly as footballers and prize-fighters and race-horses.'⁴ The significance of T. E. Hulme's articles on 'Modern Artists',⁵ for example, cannot be fully understood unless seen in relation to the series by Walter Sickert appearing at the same time. This

¹ NA, XVI (14 Jan. 1915), 277.

² NA, XIV (8 Jan. 1914), 307.

³ NA, IV (28 June 1909), 280. There is a remarkable correlation between Orage's statement of his editorial criteria and one of Ezra Pound's comments on the magazine fifty years later: 'No honest opinion clearly expressed was refused a hearing' (Interview, July 1959).

⁴ Letter from Alfred Newsome dated 31 May 1960.

⁵ NA, XIV & XV (16 Jan.-9 July 1914). Reprinted in *Further Speculations*, ed. Sam Hynes (Minneapolis, Minn., 1955).

controversy, like that between Shaw, Wells, Chesterton, and Belloc, was a result of editorial planning. Contrary to custom, contributors could not expect immunity from attacks within the magazine. Some of them, as a result of such attacks, criticized Orage (and the magazine) ever after. Such are the liabilities of freedom of expression, which it is perhaps best to recognize as inevitable and to evaluate in light of its ultimate advantages.

It was Orage's hope that by stimulating and co-ordinating the abilities of the contributors, he would be able to find solutions to all of the outstanding political, economic, social, and cultural problems of his time. It would be more accurate to say that he sought a single solution to these problems, for he was attempting to find a theory under which they could all be subsumed. No proposed solution to economic problems, for example, would satisfy him unless it solved the literary problems related to it, such as the proliferation of inferior literature and the financial difficulties of serious writers. He also required that such a proposal be based on a coherent philosophy of man, and that it take into account spiritual as well as social problems. And finally, he insisted that it be based on common sense. He defined common sense as

a grip upon reality which never weakens even when the substance is of the very thinnest. In the simplest form I should say that common sense is the successful resolution of the mind to hold nothing true that is not implicit in the common mind. . . . The brilliant common sense to which I have often referred as the ambition of *The New Age* is not, in my interpretation, the discovery of anything new; it is the rediscovery of what everybody knows but needs to be reminded that he knows.¹

The religious idealism that was manifest early in

¹ NA, XXI (20 Sept. 1917), 447.

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Orage's life did not disappear when, in 1900, he turned to more immediate problems: it was simply transferred to them. His Promethean objective and his confidence in the possibility of solving all problems rationally were based upon a religious hypothesis:

Intellectually, as I have observed before, we are honourably bound to agnosticism. But this does not make impossible certain hopeful guesses or imaginative hypotheses, one of which is this: that in time we shall find a reason for everything. I believe that we are not so far off the discovery of a few more 'reasons', as materialists imagine. . . . On the supposition—purely supposition, note—that there is an 'intention', discoverable by and, in the long run, agreeable to, human reason—of which 'intention,' moreover, we and our reason are a part—a modified doctrine of the absolute in matters of ethics would certainly be necessary. And without such a doctrine anarchism, it appears to me, is inevitable.¹

There would be no political or economic solution to the world's problems, he often said, while the spiritual solution remained in doubt.

The comprehensiveness of Orage's objective explains the inclusiveness of *The New Age*. Under his editorship, it contained considerably more discussion of art, literature, and philosophy than it had in 1907, leading some Socialists to criticize it for not remaining exclusively political. 'We are sometimes told by the old Socialist buccaneers,' wrote Orage in 1909, 'that *The New Age* is too damned literary, or too damned aesthetic, or too damned something or other. But the fact is that Socialism in *The New Age* is losing its bony statistical aspect and putting on the colours of vivid life.'² Obviously his programme could not succeed unless it incorporated the best of contemporary

¹ NA, XIV (20 Nov. 1913), 81.

² NA, IV (28 Jan. 1909), 280.

thought from a number of fields. Occasionally he commented on the proportion of the magazine devoted to each aspect of culture and indicated the balance that he hoped to achieve. In 1913, to cite one instance, he editorially sought contributors who could keep the magazine informed of recent developments in science, an Italian literary correspondent (there were regular contributors responsible for nearly all of the other languages of Europe), and someone with ‘a talent for expository philosophy’ (as T. E. Hulme’s indolence had left a gap in this respect).¹ From time to time there were special supplements to the magazine on such subjects as Architecture, Sociology, Town Planning, and the Art of the Theatre.

Intellectual freedom and breadth of scope, however, were not the only ingredients necessary for the achievement of Orage’s aims; these provided only ‘the freedom of the explosive which is not confined in a cannon, spending itself incalculably in all directions’, as Shaw said in discussing the magazine.² They required the co-ordination and cross-fertilization, the unification and elaboration that are essential if a periodical is to be edited rather than agglomerated. It was in performing this function that Orage’s editorial abilities were most evident. He integrated the efforts of contributors by meeting with them frequently and introducing them to one another, by creating literary and political circles similar to those of the eighteenth-century coffee houses. On Monday afternoons, for example, he could always be found in the basement of the ABC restaurant in Chancery Lane, where he read the proof sheets of Thursday’s issue in the company of the contributors. When these sessions ended at about six

¹ NA, XIV (18 Dec. 1913), 211.

² *Pen Portraits and Reviews* (London, 1932), p. 42.

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o'clock, recalls Paul Selver, a few of them might accompany him to his flat near the Safe Deposit.

Sometimes we began our circuit at an Italian restaurant near the corner of Gray's Inn Road. . . . The Holborn Empire was another of our haunts. It removed from us any taint of undue intellectualism which might have been left over from the conclave at the ABC. And we frequently wound up at the Café Royal which, in those days, was somewhat more of a café than it is now. . . . At a later date the Chinese Restaurant in Piccadilly Circus became one of Orage's resorts, and we used to meet Epstein there.¹

Thus the discussions of politics and the arts that had commenced in the afternoon would often continue until late in the evening.

The names of those who attended these meetings are legion. In the early years, Clifford Sharp, Cecil Chesterton, S. G. Hobson, M. D. Eder, A. E. Randall, J. M. Kennedy, and Beatrice Hastings were often present; H. G. Wells and Arnold Bennett attended occasionally. Later, they were joined—some of them, replaced—by F. S. Flint, J. C. Squire, Katherine Mansfield, Ezra Pound, T. E. Hulme, Ramiro de Maeztu, Stephen Reynolds, and Ashley Dukes. And after the war, Edwin Muir, Herbert Read, Michael Arlen, Denis Saurat, Janko Lavrin, and Philip Mairet, to mention a few, attended regularly. There were also occasional visitors, such as Yeats, Epstein, Augustus John, Upton Sinclair, and R. S. Crane. 'These regular, informal meetings,' says Mairet, 'were a forum around Orage's editorial work, and were always essential to his method. Here he was frequently accessible to all who wrote for the paper; and it was these group discussions and dissensions that generated the intellectual

¹ *Orage and the New Age Circle* (London, 1959), pp. 48-9.

tension which *The New Age* communicated to its readers throughout the country.’¹

One of the purposes of these meetings was to increase the intellectual scope of the contributors and to show them how their interests could be related to other fields of thought. Many whose interests were purely literary (Ezra Pound among them) received their first political and economic education in the Chancery Lane ABC. Orage hoped that each contributor would be led to see his objectives as a part of the whole magazine’s policy. ‘Politics, philosophy, literature, psychology—all cultural topics (and in this case *cultural* does not require inverted commas) were discussed,’ says Janko Lavrin. ‘One could not find so high a level of conversation anywhere else in London; one went away from each discussion with new ideas and new points of view.’²

In addition to the Monday afternoon meetings, there were weekly discussions at the Kardomah Café in Fleet Street and occasional lunches at the Sceptre restaurant.³ At his table at the Café Royal, Orage was usually surrounded by a group of *New Age* contributors. On Tuesday evenings there was T. E. Hulme’s renowned salon at 67 Frith Street; more than half of those who are mentioned as having attended were contributors.⁴ Orage’s occasional sallies to the Poetry Book Shop and Yeats’s evenings provided him with additional contributors and fresh ideas.⁵

Unfortunately discussion, one of the most important

¹ Mairret, p. 46; and various contributors.

² Interview, Apr. 1960.

³ Letter from R. S. Crane, 17 Feb. 1960; interview with Marie Rambert (Mrs Ashley Dukes), May 1960.

⁴ Alun R. Jones, *The Life and Opinions of Thomas Ernest Hulme* (London, 1960), pp. 94-8 (and the sources he cites); H. J. Massingham, *Remembrance* (London, 1941), p. 33.

⁵ NA, XIV (9 Apr. 1914), 722; NA, XIII (22 May 1913), 89.

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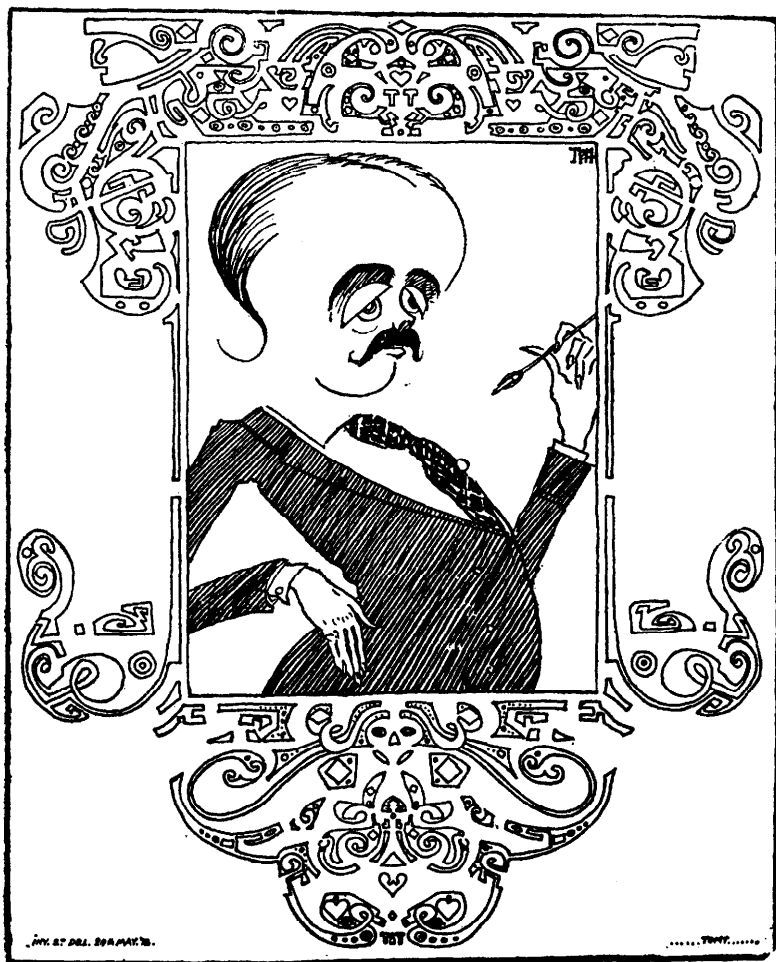
factors in the evolution of literature, is the least permanent. If there had been a Boswell present, we might know, for example, what Ezra Pound said to Edwin Muir and the extent to which T. E. Hulme was indebted to J. M. Kennedy, the intellectual Tory whose condemnation of post-Renaissance culture preceded Hulme's by a year.¹ Fortunately, we have a partial record of these discussions: it is embodied in *The New Age*. The results of a conversation on Tuesday night often appeared as an article in the next issue; Monday's political debate might be embodied in the 'Notes of the Week'; and Orage's suggestions regarding a new approach to a problem often resulted in a short story or a whole series of articles.

Orage dominated these sessions not so much through volubility (according to Mairet, 'he usually gave the initiative to others'),² or truculence (Hulme seems to have presided over his evenings with a combination of intellectual and physical aggressiveness), as through his personal presence and his occasional incisive comments. He had 'an intellect with a cutting edge that went through pretensions like butter', says H. J. Massingham. 'But he was more than an acid, even a ferocious critic; he was a genuinely constructive thinker, and his creative example permeated the whole journal.'³ Janko Lavrin says that 'one was never bored when talking to him. Those who have spent their lives in the company of "intellectuals" will realize that this is high praise. He was the only real *causeur* in London.'⁴ Edwin Muir's comments indicate why Orage's suggestions were of such great value to writers:

Orage was one of the most brilliant talkers I have ever

¹ See J. M. Kennedy, 'Tory Democracy', *NA*, IX (4 May-21 Sept. 1911).

² Mairet, p. 46. ³ *Remembrance*, p. 31. ⁴ Interview, Apr. 1960.



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listened to, particularly on the border-line where conversation meets discussion. . . . His mind was peculiarly lucid and sinuous, and could flow round any object, touching it, defining it, laving it, and leaving it with a new clarity in the mind. From a few stammering words he would divine a thought you were struggling to express, and, as if his mind were an objective clarifying element, in a few minutes he could return it to you cleansed of its impurities and expressed in better words than you could have found yourself. . . . He was a born collaborator, a born midwife of ideas, and consequently a born editor. His mind went out with an active sympathy to meet everything that was presented to it, whether trifling or serious; and his mere consideration of it, the fact that his intelligence had worked on it, robbed it of its triviality and raised it to the level of rational discourse.¹

'I have mentioned a new line of thought to Orage,' says Rowland Kenney, 'and within an hour he would undermine my own arguments with it; in the meantime he would have grasped its implications and shaped it into a coherent whole, improving it almost beyond recognition in the process.'²

Orage's meetings with contributors were the source of the magazine's unity and the basis of its vitality. His creative understanding seized on the random ideas of contributors and related them to the programme of the magazine. If disagreements developed into debates, he often acted not as an arbiter, but as a mediator, combining the best elements of each point of view. Editing was to him a positive, a creative function, extending from the formation of a comprehensive policy to the problems of the youngest contributors.

Orage's consideration in dealing with young writers, many of whom had never before appeared in print, is one

¹ *An Autobiography*, p. 172.

² Interview, Mar. 1960.

of the most important aspects of his editorial methods. He never sent the printed rejection slips that most editors find indispensable; each contribution was acknowledged by a personal note the day it was received.¹ Frank Swinnerton’s first contribution to *The New Age*, for example, was an unsolicited review of Bennett’s *What the Public Wants*. The regular dramatic critic had seen and reviewed the play; ‘Nevertheless, there came back a rather nice little note from Orage, thanking me for my “extreme kindness” and explaining about the critique already commissioned.’² No contribution was rejected without some indication of its faults and virtues. Alfred Newsome says that ‘Orage’s letters told them, encouragingly if possible, diplomatically, why their proffered contributions would not quite do—and they rewrote ’em. In that function, “nursery-governess”, Orage had a patience that wore out only if the case was hopeless.’³

Those who have encouraged and attempted to help young writers realize how difficult and unrewarding the task can be. There are inevitably more failures than successes, criticisms are often misunderstood, and in the end the thankless effort may not seem worth making. It takes unusual perspicacity to discern the latent virtues of an inexperienced writer, and to aid their development without superimposing one’s own preoccupations on his work. With the exception of Ezra Pound, Orage seems to have been more successful in this respect than anyone else of his generation. According to Janko Lavrin, he obtained from the contributors the best work of which they were capable.⁴

¹ Alfred Newsome, interview, May 1960.

² Frank Swinnerton, *Background with Chorus* (London, 1956), p. 108.

³ Letter, 31 May 1960.

⁴ Interview, Apr. 1960. In discussing the period between 1915 and

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His acceptance of a contribution from a young writer was often accompanied by an invitation to visit him at the *New Age* office in Rolls Passage, which intersects Chancery Lane immediately below Cursitor Street. The building which at that time housed 'Bonner & Co., The Chancery Lane Press' and the small room which served as Orage's office was destroyed during the war, but several descriptions of it have survived in novels and memoirs. After entering the back door of the printing shop and climbing two flights of narrow stone stairs, the visitor would encounter Miss Marks, Orage's secretary, one of whose most important duties was to protect him from unwanted callers. If he was expected, he would enter a small room containing two desks, three chairs, a set of pigeon-holes, and a typewriter.¹

Paul Selver has described his first visit to the *New Age* office:

Well, there sat Orage behind a somewhat battered roll-top desk, in what might be described as a fair-sized cubicle, the walls of which were draped with cartoons,

'Please sit down, Mr Selver,' he said, and the everyday words sounded to me like a snatch of lyricism. In a daze I discovered myself shaking hands with him and feeling the hypnotic effect of his smile.

Most of those who knew Orage and have recorded their impressions of him agree that he cast a spell on his hearers. Often enough, too often in fact, famous men are credited with qualities to which they have but the flimsiest of claims. But I can avouch that whenever Orage made his appearance,

1922, Sir Stanley Unwin says that 'no one was doing more to assist and encourage young authors of promise [than Orage]'. *The Truth About a Publisher* (London, 1960), p. 153.

¹ Descriptions of the office can be found in: Paul Selver, *Schooling* (London, 1924), p. 258, and *Orage and the New Age Circle*, p. 14; Carl Bechhofer-Roberts, *Let's Begin Again* (London, 1940), p. 261.

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wizardry came into action. The Orage magic was no mere legend. Nor, in my case, did it ever diminish. . . .

The captivating externals of Orage were matched by his voice. What epithet am I to apply to it? Musical and well-modulated? Yes, but many people with voices of this description lecture on faith-healing or make speeches at election meetings or defend swindlers in the law courts. Orage, however, used his voice for worthier purposes. Thus, the first remarks I heard from him were in praise of the Slav poetry which I had unearthed.¹

Thinly disguising *The New Age* as the *New Endeavour* and himself as Pendlebury, Carl Bechhofer-Roberts subjects the magazine and its editor to merciless satire in his novel *Let's Begin Again*. Nevertheless, his first impression of Orage (‘Whitworth’) was similar to Paul Selver’s:

‘Well, well,’ he said, ‘I expected to see an old man and you’re but a boy.’ So caressing was his voice that these words sounded to me like sweet praise, as doubtless they were meant to do. ‘Sit down, my dear Pendlebury, and tell me all about yourself.’

He tapped out a pipe, filled, and lit it. Every one of his gestures was graceful; in all the years I was to know him, I never saw him do or say anything gauche. . . .

‘What do you think of Mr Whitworth?’ [Miss Jones, the secretary,] asked me.

‘He’s awfully kind,’ I replied. ‘Isn’t he?’

‘He’s the most wonderful man in the world,’ she said, her face lighting up. I had seen the same reverent look on Mr Breadbasket’s face when he spoke of Whitworth. I was to see it again and again so often in scores of other people, men and women, young and old alike.²

Inspired with such admiration, young writers were willing to labour over their contributions and to profit from Orage’s criticisms.

¹ *Orage and the New Age Circle*, pp. 14-16.

² *Let's Begin Again*, pp. 261-2.

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The contributions of the young and inexperienced were usually printed in a section of the magazine entitled 'Pastiche'. It was set in small type in order to afford space for the works of as many promising aspirants as possible. As they improved, their contributions would be promoted to the larger type of the front part of the magazine. Thus a distinction between the editorial literary standards and the unequal but interesting works of the young was maintained, and an incentive for further effort added. Paul Selver has written an interesting account of how, after his contributions had appeared in 'Pastiche' for two years, he attempted to write literary notes for inclusion in the column 'Readers and Writers' at Orage's request:

Flattering myself that I had made a first-rate job of it, I sent off the manuscript and awaited a message of approval. Instead my article came back, scored with emendations. The accompanying note from Orage let me down lightly, but I could not doubt that he was disappointed in me as a writer of prose. I had been looking forward to one of those neat little eulogies which Orage alone knew how to bestow, and now I found myself ruefully staring at my mutilated screed. . . . And I felt thoroughly resentful. But then it occurred to me that the distasteful task of re-writing my article must have taken up a great deal of Orage's time which he could and should have devoted to some better purpose. My resentment slowly ebbed and I began to feel guilty as well as crestfallen. . . .

Slowly I improved. Little by little I grasped how and why the standards of Orage differed from the 'essays' which I had penned as an undergraduate, without incurring any professorial censure and occasionally even basking in lukewarm professorial praise. . . . Hence, many weeks went by before Orage began to print my articles word for word as I had written them.¹

¹ *Orage and the New Age Circle*, pp. 51-2.

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Orage devoted a considerable portion of his time to teaching young contributors the fundamentals of prose style. After they had absorbed these lessons, he directed their attention to the subtler aspects of expository prose, to the methods of attaining a seemingly effortless conversational tone which conceals the strenuous intellectual effort required to achieve finality of judgment in criticism, to the attainment of simplicity and lucidity regardless of the complexity of the subject matter. This aspect of his work is well illustrated in a series of letters which he wrote to Herbert Read when the latter superseded him as author of the column ‘Readers and Writers’. ‘I have kept them all this time,’ says Herbert Read, ‘not only because I was so grateful to Orage for the help he gave me at the beginning of my career, but also because they illustrate his creative conception of an editor’s function.’¹

[No date; early July, 1921?]

Dear H. E. R.,

(a signature I like for ‘R & W’) I missed your letter in London, but it has followed close on my heels here. Let me say at once that I think ‘R & W’ will do,—at the least as a good beginning. You have the causerie style and a good sense of what can and cannot be said in brilliant talk at leisure. Also you can range, i.e. let one thing suggest another; a kaleidoscope is the proper model for one type of the first-rate causerie. Having said this—and of course, meaning it—I proceed to welcome your willingness to come and talk with me. My particular forte as R. H. C. was (if I may say so) a kind of inspired audacity. I certainly took great pains to be right; but

¹ Letter dated 21 Nov. 1959. In the following extracts, explanatory notes have been enclosed in brackets. ‘R & W’ refers to the column ‘Readers and Writers’, ‘R. H. C.’ to the pseudonym that Orage used while writing that column. The occasional abbreviations (‘&’ for ‘and’, ‘yr.’ for ‘your’, and ‘shd’ for ‘should’) have been written out.

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thereafter I *said* it as if no trouble had been involved at all. I think that this confidence is contagious; and there is nothing I should like better than to see it conveyed on to your page. . . .

I thank you exceedingly for your spirit and kindness in sentencing yourself to six months hard labour [Herbert Read had agreed to write twenty-six articles]; and I hope that, between us, we shall make it fruitful to all concerned.

Yours sincerely,

A. R. Orage [headings and signatures are omitted from the following extracts.]

July 14, 1921

You need not take my kaleidoscope idea too seriously. The only point of it is not to disappoint readers, but to surprise them *pleasantly*. Keeping readers' attention always slightly strained is a strategy of the subtlest order. There is no *rule*, but variety is certainly one of the elements. . . .

I hope you won't feel it necessary to sweep under every mat. Keep your critical energy for the enemies who count.

[Postmark: July 21, 1921]

It will do; but strategy suggests that the *earlier* of your 'R & W' should deal with the *current* letters, leaving over the old stagers for off weeks. The present is the more actual and plastic; and a *new* 'R. H. C.' should announce a new critique of which the *living* should stand in awe.

Tues. [July 26, 1921?]

Very many thanks for R & W III. I think it is very good. Later on, and when we can discuss together, I'll suggest a higher *pitch* of subject-matter; but for the present your choice is good. Ford Madox Ford wrote yesterday that 'you were the man for the job',—said job being one he had offered to do,—viz. R & W for the N. A.!

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Aug. 7, 1921

I like your notes on Russell, though in my opinion he deserves severer and, in fact, savage treatment; but I have still a bone to pick in the matter of 'problems' and solutions. I hope you'll be able to come and pick it with me.

Mond. [Aug. 15, 1921?]

No. VI received with many thanks,—and compliments. I think you are doing exceedingly well; and my only criticism is that you are less dogmatic, conclusive, final, black-cappish than R. H. C. was wont in his latter days to be. The fact seems to be that you are, still, rather more occupied with *problems* than with *solutions*—and anxious, therefore, to keep them always open; while, on the other hand, *my* latter day tendency was to close them once and for all. I won't say which method is better; but I will leave you to gather my opinion from my experience!

Aug. 22, 1921

Your holiday has begun to bear fruit very early! And I am particularly glad that it has renewed your health. Health is a divinity and a very jealous one. But beware of the robustiousness that writes an *essay* in place of a *causerie*. 'Everything divine runs on light feet'; and I will take the liberty of saying that the discussion Romanticism v. Classicism is just a little on the scholastic side. The criterion, however, in all these things is neither subject nor treatment in the abstract,—but one's relations with one's readers! *Provided* they are interested, *provided* they are kept in hot pursuit,—anything is permissible. Au contraire, nothing is justified in writing that is not read. I gently recommend you to *cultivate* your divinations as regards your readers. You will never see them, probably never hear from them,—yet somehow you must *know* them intimately if your *causerie* style is to be perfected. With that sage advice, I conclude,—with all good wishes. . . .

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Aug. 26, 1921

Ever so many thanks. The style is certainly several leagues nearer the goal: but (do forgive me) beware of too often choosing subjects *unfamiliar* to your readers. Enlighten them about things they *think* they already know! Good holiday!

Sept. 5, 1921

Very good, indeed; in every way (may I say without reflections on its predecessors) the best so far. I see now: the causerie style (i.e. *your* style) requires the urge of some fresh enthusiasm to carry it along rapidly. Pace is an essential of the causerie; but it can only be developed by the whip of a keen interest. You like 'Moby Dick' immensely, and become lyrical about it,—lyrically critical, of course, for otherwise it would be gush. Critical lyricism! Voilà the causerie! . . .

How easily correspondence develops misunderstanding. I did not intend to warn you against the 'unfamiliar' as such. There is no subject in the world barred to you on one condition, that you sustain your readers' attention. And when I say 'readers', I mean what a parson or orator means by his audience. Individuals may nod or go out or disagree; but the speaker *knows* whether he has got his audience in hand. Similarly, *you* should know by clairvoyance and other devices whether you have your readers' attention. Given that, and you may write even of Shaw without risk! . . .

P. S. The quality by which a book survives is its *force*. It is exactly comparable in this respect to a top that spins. How long was it wound up for?

Dec. 21, 1921

...

For the less immediate future—say, a few months hence—beware of the *danger* of the causerie style: want of compression, *on occasion*. You should now and again introduce deliberately a few chiselled sentences just to assure yourself that you are not in slippers automatically.

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To be fully appreciated, these letters should be read as commentaries upon the articles to which they refer. Nevertheless, they retain a general value apart from the articles, and the inferences that one can draw from them regarding Orage's editorial methods are significant. When compared with Paul Selver's account of Orage as a teacher of prose, they show that *The New Age* was a school which accommodated those who had attained a high degree of literary proficiency as well as those just beginning their careers. Carl Bechhofer-Roberts spoke for scores of writers when, on being asked where he was educated, he replied, ‘On *The New Age*.’¹ Orage devoted a considerable portion of his critical and creative energies to this aspect of editing. Gorham Munson once asked him why he did not devote more time to writing; ‘I write writers,’ he replied.²

As stated earlier, *The New Age* was not able to pay most of its contributors. Orage's advice constituted a type of payment, from which many received tangible rewards later in their careers. Although it was not generally known at the time, a number of young contributors were paid-but on the basis of need and ability rather than ability alone. Pound provides the most striking evidence concerning the importance of these payments: ‘My gate receipts Nov. 1, 1914-15, were 42 quid 10s. and Orage's 4 guineas a month thereafter wuz the *Sinews*, by gob the sinooz.’³ Several contributors lived on the pound or guinea a week that they received from the magazine. T. E. Hulme, Richard Aldington, Allen Upward, Ivor Brown, and Edwin Muir were paid, as were the staff writers A. E. Randall and J. M. Kennedy. Of the older

¹ Alfred Newsome, interview, July 1960.

² ‘A. R. Orage’, *New Democracy*, II (18 Nov. 1934), 626.

³ Pound, *The Letters of Ezra Pound, 1907-1941*, p. 344.

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contributors who were able to subsist on their other literary earnings, only one was paid for his articles. 'How long am I going to continue making [*The New Age*] a present of £150, at least?' wrote Bennett to his sister in 1908. 'There is no virtue in me, because I only do it for the amusement of self and a few others.'¹ Realizing the value of 'Books and Persons', Orage agreed to pay him a guinea a week for the column (a low price in comparison to Bennett's usual fee).²

If payments to contributors had been deducted from the magazine's revenue, its deficit would have been at least half again as large as it was. In a letter to Upton Sinclair discussing Sinclair's plan for the 'endowment of genius', Orage reveals the source of the funds used for this purpose.

I do not fervently believe in your scheme. Good will come of it, however, if attention is directed to the necessity of making some sort of provision for young genius; but I am sure the way is not by a Committee, however enlightened. What I should like to see done more generally is what I have seen done in particular cases. You may guess, for instance, that the paid writers of *The New Age* are not paid by *The New Age*. The business side could not keep them in bread and butter. Who pays? Well, there you are. I have a number of friends who are willing to take my word that such and such a writer is both hard-up and able. They provide me with a little fund which I pay to the writers *as if it came from the N.A.* In one case, a different procedure is adopted. My best writer (guess his name) has been receiving £200 a year from a friend solely in order to permit him to write for the N.A. for nothing. I could do with several more such friends. . . . That is

¹ Quoted by Reginald Pound, in *Arnold Bennett* (London, 1952), p. 194.

² Bennett, 'Books and Persons', *The Evening Standard* (10 July 1930), p. 5.

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rather my line. Get your millionaire to trust you alone with the money: use your own judgment; but *don't* rely on another soul. I'm in perhaps a peculiar position, being able to employ but not to pay. Consequently I'm the very man to entrust with a fund: since these wealthy people can pay but cannot employ.¹

No account of Orage's interest in young writers would be complete without an indication of his ability to detect talent in their early works. The first published works of the following authors appeared in *The New Age*: F. S. Flint, T. E. Hulme, Katherine Mansfield, John Middleton Murry, Storm Jameson, Herbert Read, Ivor Brown, Llewelyn Powys, Ruth Pitter, and Edwin Muir. It is interesting to compare *The New Age* with other contemporary literary periodicals in this respect. According to a comprehensive survey of Little Reviews, 'most of the significant little magazines discovered no more than two writers worthy of note. . . . Those that discovered four or five are exceptional, the authors of this book finding only four magazines that have reached this level in the past half century.'² Orage's influence as a teacher of writing is indicated by the following letter from Katherine Mansfield :

Feb. 9, 1921

Dear Orage,

I want to tell you how sensible I am of your wonderful and unfailing kindness to me in the 'old days'. And to thank you for all you let me learn from you. I am still—more shame to me—very low down in the school. But you taught me to write, you taught me to think; you showed me what there was to be done and what not to do.

¹ Letter dated 9 June 1910. Six of Orage's letters to Upton Sinclair are now in the possession of the Indiana University Library.

² F. J. Hoffman, Charles Allen, and Carolyn F. Ulrich, *The Little Magazine* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1947), pp. 13-14.

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My dear Orage, I cannot tell you how often I call to mind your conversation, or how often, in *writing*, I remember my master. Does that sound impertinent? Forgive me if it does.

But let me thank you, Orage—*thank you for everything*. If only one day I might write a book of stories good enough to ‘offer’ you. . . . If I don’t succeed in keeping the coffin from the door you will know this was my ambition.

Yours, in admiration and gratitude
Katherine Mansfield¹

The individual attention that Orage gave to countless writers, correcting their prose, sharpening their minds, suggesting themes and methods of treatment congenial to their particular abilities, was one of his most valuable contributions to the literature of our time. Ezra Pound has suggested that this aspect of his editorial methods had a general influence on the development of twentieth-century prose. ‘Orage and F. M. (Hueffer) Ford,’ he says, ‘are the two figures of the period who keep getting larger while the others decline.’² As editor of *The English Review*, Ford brought together the best of the creative prose then being written in England. Orage’s literary criticism (and his influence in teaching the young) was ‘NOT aimed at novel writing, french impressionist criteria, BUT in tradition from Sam Johnson, and towards expository prose, i.e. clarity of a different kind’.³ Through example and precept, Pound suggests, Orage helped maintain the precision of language as a mode of analysis and definition during the first two decades of the century.

The results of his other editorial objectives are evident in the volumes of *The New Age* that appeared under his editorship. In one sense, the magazine is representative of its age: to examine its successive issues is to follow an

¹ Quoted by Mairet, p. 59.

² Letter from Pound dated 20 June 1959.

³ Ibid.

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exceptionally complete chronicle of the development of culture during these years. We shall see how other disciplines influenced the technique and content of literature and how the audience reacted to the innovations that confronted them. We shall also see how *The New Age* influenced these developments, introducing and encouraging certain movements and writers, criticizing others, attempting to give coherence and direction to the cultural life of the period. ‘I am convinced,’ said Herbert Read in a letter to Orage, ‘that when the literary history of the period between 1907 and 1922 comes to be written your influence will be found to have run deep and far.’¹ The following discussion will provide further evidence in support of that opinion.

¹ Letter to *The New English Weekly*, I (21 Apr. 1932), 21.

PART TWO

THE NEW AGE, 1908-1910: LITERARY REALISM AND THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION

CHAPTER IV

THE 'NEW DRAMA'

THE first three years of *The New Age* under Orage's editorship were years of rapid progress. In 1908, Arnold Bennett commenced his column 'Books and Persons', which, according to Frank Swinnerton, acquainted the younger writers of the time with Continental literary standards.¹ That year also marked the introduction of F. S. Flint's poetry reviews in *The New Age*, displaying an awareness of contemporary French poetry and suggesting new techniques for English verse. Translations of works by Dostoevsky, Chekhov, Gorky, and Anatole France appeared in the magazine with increasing frequency during this period. The United States was represented by the contributions of Ambrose Bierce, Upton Sinclair, and the expatriates Francis Grierson and Frank Harris. Among the occasional contributors were Edward Carpenter, Edgar Jepson, Vincent O'Sullivan, Israel Zangwill, Eden Phillpotts, and Ananda Coomaraswamy. Meanwhile, Orage was not neglecting the political development of the magazine. In October, 1908, when Victor Grayson was carried out of the House of Commons, after dis-

¹ *Background with Chorus* (London, 1956), p. 142.

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regarding Parliamentary procedure in order to raise the question of starvation in England, Orage induced him to become the political editor of *The New Age*. Its circulation soon reached 22,000, and the magazine was incorporated to ensure funds for its continuation.¹

In 1909, Ashley Dukes, T. E. Hulme, J. C. Squire, and J. M. Kennedy became regular contributors; in 1910, Walter Sickert became the art reviewer and Katherine Mansfield contributed the first of a series of stories later to be collected for her first book. The contributions of the younger writers made it seem that a change was imminent, that the preoccupations and techniques of the older generation were about to be superseded. When Pound became a regular contributor in 1911, the year of the coronation, this change was under way and *The New Age* entered a new phase in its development.

Between 1908 and 1910, the energies of most contributors were devoted to the creation of a coherent socialist programme for the development of culture as a whole, thus enriching a political theory which tended increasingly to limit itself to economic objectives. While the Fabians compiled statistics and the Labour Party bargained with the Liberals for ameliorative legislation and parliamentary seats, Shaw, Wells, Chesterton, and Belloc debated the cultural and spiritual meaning of Socialism in *The New Age*. The relationship between art and what is now termed ‘intellectual commitment’ was one of the main themes of *The New Age* during these years. ‘We live

¹ NA, III (24 Oct. 1908), 501; IV (26 Nov. 1908), 81. In November 1909, the price was raised from a penny to threepence, and the circulation gradually declined following this date. Between 1907 and 1910, the size of the magazine increased from sixteen to twenty-four pages, and by 1910 there was a sizable supplement to at least one issue per month.



MR G. BERNARD SHAW



MR G. K. CHESTERTON



SIR A. W. PINERO



MR H. G. WELLS

in a purposeful age,’ wrote Holbrook Jackson, ‘in which the hand of every man is at the throat of his brother, often, it must be admitted, in an attitude of salvation, but it is none the less uncomfortable. We are, moreover, bent on proving things.’¹ The correspondence column, always an interesting index of public feeling, echoes this conclusion: ‘Evidently we live in an age of patent-medicine literature, when it is not sufficient to be a dramatist—one must also be a perambulating chest of patent cures for moral diseases.’² In the following issue, another reader insisted that art could not be isolated from ideas and moral judgments: ‘It is late in the day to point out that every idea, every new point of view, whether it is woven into a poem, a picture, or a drama, carries with it a certain power of propagating itself, of being absorbed—and therein lies the supreme virtue of art.’³ The ensuing controversy on ‘Propaganda by Art’ continued in the correspondence column for six months, and reappeared in various guises during the next two years of the magazine’s history.

Although the creative and critical approaches to literature in these issues of the magazine are varied, writers return again and again to two subjects which seem to be germane to the period. The first is realism, as applied to the form and subject matter of literature. While the word is used in a number of senses, realism is usually considered a desirable, or even an essential quality. The second subject of perennial discussion is the relationship between social reform and literary content. Socialists saw literature as an ideal medium for the dissemination of their ideas. Some authors advocated political reform in their works; others considered it sufficient to portray economic and social

¹ NA, III (18 July 1908), 233.

² Ibid., 238.

³ NA, III (25 July 1908), 257.

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evils, leaving the message implicit in the facts. It was during this period that *Tono-Bungay*, *The Old Wives' Tale*, *Clayhanger*, and Galsworthy's *Strife* and *Justice* appeared, and these works were ideally suited to discussion within the socialist frame of reference.

If we find that during these years the importance of social and political content in literature is discussed most frequently in connection with the drama, this is largely a result of the influence of Shaw and William Archer. By introducing the plays of Ibsen to English audiences, Archer had created an interest in the drama of ideas which was especially evident among the socialist writers in *The New Age*, who saw it as an instrument of social reform. They considered Shaw the harbinger of a dramatic renaissance and a social revolution.

* * *

William Archer states his conception of the relationship between this drama and social reform in a series of four articles in *The New Age* entitled 'Fabianism and the Drama'. His thesis is

that the themes, the conflicts, which lend themselves to theatrical treatment are part of the friction arising from bad sociological conditions, and will no longer present themselves when these conditions are amended. Conflict, as the theorists assure us, is the very essence of drama; and when life flows smoothly, where are the conflicts to come from?¹

This thesis is supported by reference to the themes of contemporary plays. When class distinctions, opulent idleness, poverty, cupidity, and crime have disappeared from the world, we shall not have plays such as *The Marrying of Anne Leete*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*,

¹ NA, III (3 Oct. 1908), 451.

The Power of Darkness, *The Voysey Inheritance*, and *Mrs Warren’s Profession*. Even domestic conflicts and ‘the duel of sex’ will largely disappear through the reform of marriage laws and the economic emancipation of women; thus there will be no *Getting Married*, no *Ghosts*. Archer allows that certain domestic conflicts may still exist, but in seeking examples of this theme in modern drama, he finds that its use has resulted in minor plays.

There remains the vast drama of human psychology, and Archer’s explanation of why conflicts in this area will disappear is revealing in terms of the contemporary approach to this subject. In the future, he says, there will be no *Rosmersholm*, no *Lady from the Sea*, or *Hedda Gabler*.

Why are they ruled out? By the fact that they all turn on cases of neurotic abnormality. Beata, the dead Beata, whose morbid spirit still reigns at Rosmersholm, Ellida, with her obsession of the sea and its ferlies, Hedda, with her malignant egoism and her acute hyperaesthesia, are all pathological cases begotten of the unhealthy conditions of our so-called civilized life. Progress will mean the elimination of such psychopathic disasters as these.¹

While sociology would find remedies for many such aberrations, others resulting from heredity would presumably be eliminated through the ‘development of the science of eugenics’. The assumption that social environment and heredity are the causes of psychological disorders is one that seems to have been common in the period. Archer admits that there will be a residue of conflicts between the sexes and crimes of passion, but thinks that a wiser age will ‘hide them away as we have incurable and distressing diseases, subjecting them only to the clinical study of specialists’.² As a result, the drama of the future

¹ NA, III (17 Oct. 1908), 490. ² NA, III (24 Oct. 1908), 510.

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will consist largely of spectacle, and if the plays of the unregenerate past are ever performed, it will be for historical purposes, so that man can spend a few hours with his ancestors. It is interesting to note that Wells later envisaged a similar society of the future in which there would be 'shows', combining 'thought, music, and vision', but not plays in the ordinary sense, 'except by way of archaeological revival'.¹

One wonders if Archer intends to be taken seriously; in concluding his essay, he says, 'to be quite frank with you—I do not know'. He suspects that in the contest between social reform and drama, drama will win, as human frailties will prove ineradicable. But this does not affect his thesis regarding the social basis of dramatic conflict. And he has no doubts about the importance of drama as an impetus to social reform.

One reflection I may urge upon you without scepticism and without irony—namely, that drama is its own worst enemy, and is constantly striving to cut its own throat. If ever the Fabian ideal of justice and health is realized, it will be largely through the agency of drama. . . . I ask you to believe that the drama is, or at any rate may be and ought to be, one of the most potent instruments for furthering the transition from the insensate individualism of the present to the rational collectivism of the future.²

This attitude permeates *The New Age* and seems to have influenced some dramatists of the time. It did not dominate dramatic criticism to the exclusion of an intelligent discussion of plot, characterization, and content, but in discussing these subjects there was a marked tendency to digress into social commentary whenever the opportunity arose. Florence Farr's series of articles on 'Ibsen's Women',

¹ *Experiment in Autobiography*, II, 541-2.

² *NA*, III (24 Oct. 1908), 510.

for example, contains a number of perceptive comments on his plays; yet in discussing *Hedda Gabler*, a ‘tragedy of Norwegian Suburbia’, she cannot help finding a sociological moral: thousands of girls, she says, like Hedda Gabler, are senselessly being subjected to the restraints of ‘a foolish tradition which tells them perpetually: “My dear, people don’t do those things.” Hedda’s case makes us realize the futility of conventionality.’¹ Archer condones such methods of analysis in the passages quoted above, and Shaw, the leading dramatist and one of the most important critics of the day, had taught people how to hunt for a play’s ‘message’ through his *Quintessence of Ibsenism*.

The limitations of a commitment to this approach were clearly illustrated when Chekhov’s work was first performed in London. According to Ashley Dukes,

Our leading critic, William Archer, admitted with his invariable honesty that he had found the dramatist completely incomprehensible. Shaw, characteristically, entered the discussion by explaining Chekhov in purely scientific and social terms; the man, he said, was merely showing how futile the life of the bourgeoisie could be. . . . These perplexities and obscurations were due to the simple fact that *The Cherry Orchard* was a work of art. It had nothing to do with the drama in which Shaw and Archer had been mainly interested, the social drama of Ibsen and his followers.²

It is but a short step from interpreting all plays in terms of sociology to discussing their political application.

¹ NA, I (17 Oct. 1907), 390.

² Ashley Dukes, *The Scene is Changed* (London, 1942), pp. 35-6. This passage refers to the Stage Society’s production of *The Cherry Orchard* in June 1911. Bennett also attended this performance; he notes that many members of the audience left before it ended. NA, IX (8 June 1911), 132.

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L. Haden Guest (later Lord Haden-Guest), the dramatic critic of *The New Age* during its early years, occasionally digressed into politics. In reviewing a production of *Rosmersholm*, he says that 'something greater is in the lives of these people than can be comprehended by them; Rosmer dreams of a race of noblemen, and a vista of stupendous and wonderful possibilities opens up before us. It is the shaping of these possibilities into realities that we socialists have taken in hand, by the process of Socialism.'¹ The popular drama seemed insipid in comparison with the revolutionary fervour of the time:

During the week I allotted myself to criticize three plays and have been to one great packed socialist meeting. The effect of the socialist meeting, where real things and great things were talked of to a huge audience . . . has been to make the three plays seem remote and far away, spinney and spin-drift of a social order that is passing. . . . [In one play the characters] all take the present world for granted, they talk of their 'property' and their incomes, they wear expensive dresses made by sweated labour, and employ uniformed servants, and there is never so much as a rumble or an echo of the threatening cries of discontent that are rising in these days all around them.²

While admitting that plays should not be evaluated on such grounds, we can understand that this attitude was the product of a sincere interest in social reform. The appalling conditions of the time were partially responsible for the intrusion of politics and economics into the discussion of art; in 1908 for example, there were 126,000, paupers in London, 80,000 of whom were in workhouses, and pauperism had increased sixteen per cent since the turn of the century.³ In such circumstances, the popular

¹ NA, II (22 Feb. 1908), 337.

² NA, II (1 Feb. 1908), 266-7.

³ NA, II (4 Jan. 1908), 182.

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stage, portraying the frivolous indolence of the upper classes, might seem irresponsibly trivial. Haden Guest hoped that in dealing with social change and social unrest, the new drama would provide ‘plays terribly real, plays terribly painful, plays that will force us to realize new things, to feel pain, to suffer in the bringing of new life into our minds’,¹ and this aim transcended the sectarian goals of the Socialists.

The technique of the new drama was to be realistic; Haden Guest wanted to see ‘plays produced habitually in which the observation of character and locality is genuine scientific observation’.² He considered the problem of establishing a drama which reflected the life of the time more important than that of introducing social messages into plays. A thorough knowledge of existing realities and a passionate belief—regardless of what this belief entailed—were to him the elements of revitalization.³ In order to represent human experience faithfully, actors would have to forsake the patently artificial methods of the current theatre and develop a new technique through ‘clinical observations’ of real people.⁴ Thus realism was a challenge to the producer of plays as well as to the playwright.

Performances of plays always have a significant role in the development of the theatre, and comments in *The New Age* reveal that the contemporary revolution in methods of dramatic production was largely responsible for the renewed interest in drama. The actor-manager tradition, in which all details of production were subordinated to the stylized performance of the protagonist, was inappropriate for the drama of ideas;⁵ the prefaces to

¹ NA, I (23 May 1907), 59.

² NA, III (20 June 1908), 158.

³ ‘Towards a Dramatic Renaissance’, NA, III (18 July 1908), 231.

⁴ NA, I (23 Sept. 1907), 348-9.

⁵ See William Poel, ‘The “Go-as-you please” Actor-Manager’

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Shaw's early plays are revealing documents in this respect. With the founding of the Court Theatre in 1904, under the management of J. E. Vedrenne and H. Granville-Barker, the English drama had entered a new phase in its development. Frank Swinnerton has testified to the impact of Granville-Barker's methods on contemporary audiences,¹ and Holbrook Jackson summarized the importance of the Court Theatre to contemporary drama when the experiment ended in 1907:

The first chapter in a new volume of the British stage has closed. It has been a chapter of such remarkable promise as to leave us full of happy anticipations as to the rest of the volume. For there is no doubt that the Vedrenne-Barker performances represent a dramatic event of the first order, comparable, without any imaginative strain, to the dawn of a new era in the theatre. And that era is nothing less than the establishment of a permanent drama of ideas on a stage whose primary object has been amusement.²

Granville-Barker accomplished this revolution by making communication of the play's meaning, rather than exhibition of an actor-manager's talents, the central focus of the performance. Elaborate scenery was abolished and all aspects of the production were co-ordinated:

The actor who went to the Court Theatre had to unlearn much. . . . He found most of the stage conventions in gesticulation and articulation in severe disapproval. The

(*NA*, VII [1 Sept. 1910], 418-19), which is a commentary on the relationship between authors and actor-managers. Poel was one of the first to utilize modern methods of production in performances of Shakespeare: *NA*, III (2 May 1908), 17; and 'A Lost Art', *NA*, V (16 Sept.-7 Oct. 1909), 378-9, 411-12, 427-8. He also led the movement for the establishment of a National Theatre, writing many articles on this subject for *The New Age*.

¹ *Background with Chorus*, pp. 100-1.

² *NA*, I (3 Oct. 1907), 356.

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imposing ‘entrance’ was abolished, and the ‘curtain’ held well within the bounds of probability. Such an attempt to create a realistic atmosphere was absolutely necessary if we were to have a drama expressing life in any terms above the capacity of a sixth-form boy or a high-school miss. The Court Theatre went a long way towards establishing this new environment.¹

Nearly three-quarters of the performances at the Court Theatre, 1904-7, were of plays written by Shaw; of the seventeen dramatists whose works were performed, all but five were British. Galsworthy and Masfield began writing for the stage during these years, and Granville-Barker established his position as an important new playwright. The plays of Ibsen and Shaw had virtually demanded a new type of theatrical production; once it appeared, other writers found that the drama, so produced, was a congenial medium for their talents. The dramatic revival was not confined to London. ‘In the provinces,’ wrote Arnold Bennett, ‘which are, of course, less backward artistically than London, the movement moves briskly.’² Repertory theatres were founded in Dublin, Glasgow, and Liverpool; and Bennett described Manchester, which produced a new school of realistic dramatists, as the city

where they have more and better classical concerts than London; where Shakespeare is played for a run without expensive scenery or an actor-manager; where the theatrical critics intimidate even the most fashionable and haughty actor-managers; and where Ibsen is played to two houses a night!³

The death of the Court Theatre in 1907 left London with no centre of dramatic experimentalism, and the task

¹ NA, I (3 Oct. 1907), 356.

² NA, VII (23 June 1910), 183.

³ NA, VII (28 May 1910), 87.

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of keeping the new drama alive devolved upon the small theatrical societies. Their importance was twofold: they were able to perform plays such as *Ghosts* and *Mrs Warren's Profession*, which could not be performed publicly because of the dramatic censorship; and they could present experimental works which offered no prospect of financial success to the commercial theatre. Haden Guest and Ashley Dukes, his successor as drama critic of *The New Age*, often disregarded the popular plays of the West End in order to attend productions by the Stage Society, the Pioneers, the New Stage Club, the English Drama Society, and the Playactors. While most of the new English plays performed by these groups between 1908 and 1910 observed the conventions of realism as expounded by William Archer and exemplified by Ibsen, Shaw, Galsworthy, and Granville-Barker, there were a number of attempts to revive poetic drama. Florence Farr was probably correct in saying that as a dramatic medium 'blank verse, which is always apt to run into sing-song inversions and artificial archaisms, will never be the equal of vigorous prose until some new means are found of vitalizing it'.¹ The poetic prose of Masefield's *Nan* (first performed by the Pioneers in 1908) met with some success; however, the most significant attempts to utilize this form were those of the Irish playwrights. Synge's *Playboy of the Western World* was one of the most successful plays of the period,² and W. R. Titterton found the performance of Yeat's *Deirdre* in 1908 'the most important dramatic event of the season'.³

Occasionally the dramatic societies produced plays by contemporary Continental dramatists (works by von

¹ NA, I (26 Sept. 1907), 341. Her remarks were apropos of Laurence Binyon's *Attila*.

² NA, V (17 June 1909), 162. ³ NA, IV (10 Dec. 1908), 142.

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Hofmannsthal, Maeterlinck, and Arthur Schnitzler were performed in London before 1910), but in general they displayed little awareness of the new writers and new techniques of production for which the period is best remembered. *The New Age* made significant contributions to the English knowledge of these subjects. In 1910, according to Ashley Dukes,

Orage, who was always a good editor, suggested that instead of gnashing my teeth weekly over plays that his readers would never go to see, I should write about the Continental stage and its dramatists. This suited me perfectly, and the series began with the Scandinavians and went on with Germans, Austrians, Frenchmen, Russians, Dutchmen and Italians, with Shaw, Barker and Galsworthy as the three Court Theatre playwrights planted in the midst of them. These essays were later published in England and America under the title *Modern Dramatists*, which was far too important for their content. . . .¹

His modesty regarding the merits of these articles does not lessen their importance. Of the two hundred plays he discussed, less than thirty had been performed in England. He included lengthy extracts from the plays of Chekhov (none of which had previously been translated), Strindberg (who was practically unknown in England), Bjornsen, Wedekind, Gorky, and D’Annunzio. For professional and amateur groups interested in the Continental drama, his book was an invaluable source of information. One year later (again, perhaps, at Orage’s instigation), Huntley Carter visited the major cities of Europe in order to study techniques of theatrical production. His detailed articles in *The New Age* on the innovations of Max Reinhardt, Gordon Craig, and Stanislavsky’s Moscow

¹ Ashley Dukes, *The Scene Is Changed*, p. 32. These articles appeared between Sept. and Dec. 1910.

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Art Theatre were later published in book form with illustrations of stage settings for modern plays.¹ It is difficult to ascertain the effect of these articles on the English theatre; however, the director of the Liverpool Repertory Theatre, in a letter to *The New Age*, said that he planned to employ some of the methods discussed by Huntley Carter in future productions.²

The efforts of the theatrical societies (and *The New Age*) to instil new life into the English theatre were, on the whole, unsuccessful. In contrast to the Court Theatre of 1904-7, which had raised hopes so high, Charles Frohman's Repertory Theatre of 1910 dampened the spirits of those who hoped for a dramatic renaissance. Ashley Dukes noted that at the beginning of the season, Frohman had said he would produce 'plays by anybody and everybody, conversational plays and literary plays, plays with plots and plays without plots, debates and dialogues of every imaginable kind. In especial, he was going to produce the New Drama.'³ However, after presenting Galsworthy's *Justice*, Shaw's *Misalliance*, and Granville-Barker's *The Madras House* (twenty-five, eleven, and nine performances respectively), he whittled the 'repertory' down to two plays: *Prunella* and *Trelawny of the Wells*—with marked popular success. 'From the beginning,' said one writer,

the Repertory Theatre was a house divided against itself. It had no standards and no policy. It mingled Shaw with Pinero, Granville-Barker with Anthony Hope, John Galsworthy with J. M. Barrie. It was clumsy and unduly expensive in its management, and (as has been already pointed out by several

¹ *The New Spirit in Drama and Art* (London, 1912). The articles appeared between June and Oct. 1911.

² NA, IX (2 Nov. 1911), 22.

³ NA, VI (28 Apr. 1910), 617.

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writers) the production of the balance sheet would be its most illuminating moral.¹

Those who wrote for *The New Age* were also disappointed with the new plays produced by the Repertory Theatre. In his review of *Misalliance* and *Justice*, Ashley Dukes wrote: 'The interpretation of life is not a lecturing business . . . neither is it the photographic reproduction of assize court scenes.'²

Wary criticisms of Shaw's discursive dramatic methods had been voiced earlier by Haden Guest.

There is at least a suspicion in Bernard Shaw's other plays of the preface becoming as interesting as the play. There is more than a suspicion in *Getting Married* of the preface invading the play. . . . Is there any value in thus assimilating the art of the dramatist to that of the rhetorician? So far as the art of drama is concerned the gain is undoubted. Every enlargement of the dramatic field is valuable. But as few can follow G. B. S. in his technical mastery of dramatic expedience, fewer still will be able to follow this Wagnerian abandonment of form.³

Such comments imply no criticism of Shaw's fundamental methods; even if his characters had become loquacious, they could still be considered part of a realistic theatre that would bring about social reform. Ashley Dukes's disparaging allusion to Shaw's 'lecturing', however, indicates that by 1910 different criteria were being used to evaluate his plays; what was involved was no less than a criticism of the use of art for the purposes of propaganda.

[Shaw] carries Socialism to its furthest extreme. He nationalizes his men and women the instant they are created. He expropriates their imagination. He municipalizes their emotion. He confiscates their surplus value. And he renders

¹ NA, VIII (10 Nov. 1910), 42-3.

² NA, VI (3 Mar. 1910), 426. ³ NA, III (23 May 1908), 77.



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compensation to each by the gift of a flickering cloud-halo of wit which sometimes illumines, sometimes obscures, the individual figure and the eminently social purpose. . . .

[Shaw is a Puritan, and Puritanism] sets ethics before taste, desiccates illusion, diverts all artistic emotion through the individual to a social end, creates a moral test of pure enjoyment, and offers a bribe of civic self-satisfaction to the artist as surely as Calvinism offers the promise of heaven and the threat of Hell.¹

'The artist who subordinates art to propaganda,' concluded St John Ervine, 'ceases to be an artist and becomes a propagandist.'²

No such complaint could be made about Galsworthy's plays, which displayed a studied impartiality. They are probably the best example of the type of drama advocated by Socialists in the early issues of *The New Age*: a social or ethical problem is often the mainspring of the action, and the treatment is realistic throughout. But Ashley Dukes's comment on 'photographic reproduction' in connection with *Justice* indicates that realism, as well as propaganda, was being questioned by 1910. It was not long before another writer referred to Galsworthy as a 'playwright of the narrow type evolved by the Fabian Society'.³ Later, his plays were said to consist of 'a number of psychological, physiological, and economic considerations that cannot be efficiently treated on the stage', and it was asserted that 'problems that are capable of a practical solution' have no place in the drama.⁴

By the time that the movement for a realistic drama that would help reform society had begun to have an effect on contemporary playwrights, there was a reaction

¹ NA, VIII (23 Mar. 1911), 497-8

² NA, XIV (26 Feb. 1914), 525.

³ NA, X (22 Feb. 1912), 395. ⁴ NA, XIII (25 Sept. 1913), 640.

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against it. Having interpreted the plays of Ibsen as social commentaries, many Socialists concluded that contemporary dramatists could achieve similar success by treating social problems realistically. But the results belied the premise. 'Realism' often proved to be as boring as life. The Manchester playwright Charles McEvoy, an early practitioner of realism, came to feel that it was 'a prostitution of the theatre to a baser purpose . . . the exchange of a tremendous possibility for a puny fact'.¹ 'It will be an idle bargain,' said Ashley Dukes, 'if in our eagerness to pass from the old theatre to the new we are content only to exchange false convention for glaring fact, the vacantly unreal for the merely real, the form of the penny novelette for that of the pitiful anecdote.'² Realism had substituted chains of inexorable causality for individual volition; the plot carried helpless victims of environment and accident forward to their meaningless fate. If contemporary drama was to have any meaning, said Ashley Dukes, it would have to present characters 'engaged not only in being but in becoming. The final curtain must see them changed. Both they and the audience must have learned something.'³

These criticisms of the realistic method do not form a coherent critique of realism, nor do they suggest an alternative convention for the contemporary stage. The theatrical experimentalism of the time, mentioned in connection with the dramatic societies, was eclectic, providing new ideas but not the basis of a new tradition. These were the circumstances in which Orage, having left literary criticism in the hands of contributors during the first three years of his editorship, wrote several articles

¹ 'The Easy School of Play-Writing', *NA*, XV (14 June 1914), 183.

² *NA*, VII (26 May 1910), 89.

³ *NA*, VI (3 Mar. 1910), 426.

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to give coherence to the criticisms of contemporary playwrights that had appeared in the magazine and to suggest a new conception of the drama. Henceforth, *The New Age* was to develop a critique of contemporary literature quite different from that supported by leading socialist writers. But before discussing this transition, it will be useful to examine the criticisms of the novel which appeared in *The New Age* between 1908 and 1910. Many of the same issues were discussed, and on the whole they were subjected to more precise and more intelligent analysis.

CHAPTER V

THE REALISTIC NOVEL

I. THE TWO TRADITIONS

THE discussions of the 'new drama' appearing in *The New Age* show that it traced its origin to Ibsen. Contemporary fiction, on the other hand, was discussed with a perplexing wealth of genealogical reference which demands some classification, even at the risk of oversimplifying. In general, two groups of writers are represented: those who looked on the novel as an art form demanding technical perfection in 'rendering the subject', with every detail arranged so as to enhance the effect of the whole (hereafter referred to as 'Impressionists');¹ and those who regarded the novel primarily as a medium for the portrayal of life in all its aspects, with a sociological emphasis and very often a social thesis as its theme (hereafter, 'Realists').² Both of these groups differed in one important respect from their Victorian predecessors: they eschewed sentimentality and pursued each theme to its logical conclusion,

¹ This use of the term 'Impressionism' as applied to literature is derived from Ford Madox Ford, *Thus to Revisit* (London, 1921), p. 138; and Arnold Bennett (cf. note 4, p. 85).

² In this sense, 'Realism' includes such features of Naturalism (a term best reserved for the followers of its chief exponent, Zola) as were absorbed into the English tradition. When not capitalized (as in the following discussion of Bennett's criticism), 'realism' may include some of the techniques of the Impressionists.

In general, these words were not carefully distinguished by novelists themselves in their critical writings. Bennett, for example, says that Chekhov 'seems to have achieved absolute realism', and elsewhere that Chekhov's 'naturalism is positively daring'.

not resorting to the stroke of fortune which would result in a happy ending.

The doyen of the first group was Henry James, who traced his literary lineage to Flaubert, de Maupassant, and, above all, Turgenev, ‘the novelist’s novelist—an artistic influence extraordinarily valuable and ineradicably established’.¹ Ford Madox Ford, Galsworthy, and Conrad shared these predilections.² Using the same models, these writers held similar views on the technique of the novel, especially with regard to disinterestedness and ‘composition’.³ In contrast to James, Conrad, Ford, and Galsworthy,⁴ the writers who looked on the novel as a vehicle of sociological content were united not by a technical tradition, but rather by virtue of their subject matter.

G. K. Chesterton traced the growth of Realism in England to the rise of science, accompanied by the decline of religion:

Mr Wells is one of a school of sensitive artists who awoke in the aching void of a world (as he has admirably put it) ‘full of the ironical silences that follow great controversies’: Dickens was dead; dogmatic democracy was dying. Aristocrats began to ‘study’ the poor, as if they were chimpanzees;

¹ Henry James, *The House of Fiction*, ed. Leon Edel (London, 1957), p. 170.

² Ford Madox Ford, *Mightier than the Sword* (London, 1938), pp. 172, 179; and *Thus to Revisit*, p. 57. *Letters from John Galsworthy*, ed. Edward Garnett (London, 1934), p. 218. Conrad, ‘Foreword’ to Edward Garnett’s *Turgenev* (London, 1917).

³ James, *Henry James and H. G. Wells*, ed. Leon Edel and Gordon N. Ray (London, 1958), p. 128; and *The Ambassadors* (London, 1909), vol. I, p. xx. Conrad, ‘Author’s Note’ to *The Nigger of the ‘Narcissus’*, *The New Review*, XVII (Dec. 1897), 630. Ford, *Thus to Revisit*, p. 138. Galsworthy, *The Inn of Tranquillity* (London, 1912), pp. 207-8, 266-267.

⁴ Galsworthy, as we shall see, has affinities with both traditions.

THE REALISTIC NOVEL

and aesthetes began to write slim novels, novels which were pessimistic. . . .¹

The novels of Zola were largely responsible for this new trend in English fiction. In 1880 he had written,

Et c'est là ce qui constitue le roman expérimental: posséder le mécanisme des phénomènes chez l'homme, montrer les rouages des manifestations intellectuelles et sensuelles telles que la physiologie nous les expliquera, sous les influences de l'hérédité et des circonstances ambiantes. . . .²

'In our modern mythology,' wrote May Sinclair in 1897, 'Custom, Circumstance, and Heredity are the Three Fates that weave the web of human life.'³

The relatively new sciences devoted to the study of these subjects—sociology and eugenics—attracted the attention of Realistic novelists. As Chesterton indicates, sociologists 'studied' the lower classes in such works as Charles Booth's seventeen-volume *Life and Labour of the London People* (1892-1903). Eugenics, which at that time had not been chastened by the rigorous application of scientific methods, gave writers new explanations of human psychology. While Galton was asserting that mental illness was inherited, Hardy and Gissing were attributing mental disturbance to heredity in their novels. Shaw, William Archer, and H.G. Wells were members of the Sociological Society, where eugenics was frequently discussed. Galton and other eugenicists held that 'mental and moral qualities are hereditary in much the same sense and degree as physical characters'.⁴ This opinion occasionally made its way into literature, as in Galsworthy's *Justice* (1910), where

¹ NA, II (25 Jan. 1908), 250.

² *Le Roman Expérimental* (Paris, [1929]), p. 25.

³ *Audrey Craven* (London, 1897), p. 12.

⁴ W. MacDougall, 'A Practicable Eugenic Suggestion', *Sociological Papers*, vol. III (London, 1907), pp. 56, 58.

the lawyer attempts to extenuate Falder’s theft in the following manner: ‘His further acts . . . are merely evidence of weak character which is clearly enough his misfortune. But is a man to be lost because he is bred and born with a weak character ?’¹ In one instance, a eugenic proposal provided part of the subject matter of a novel : the scheme for the endowment of mothers advocated by Remington in H. G. Wells’s *New Machiavelli* is based upon M. D. Eder’s pamphlet ‘The Endowment of Motherhood’ (published by ‘The New Age Press’ in 1908). None of the Realistic novelists with whom we are concerned analysed heredity and environment with the same remorseless detail as did Zola, but the influence of his emphasis on documentation is evident in their works.

These two traditions, one concerned with the technique of the novel and the other with its subject matter, met in Arnold Bennett. In his conscientious effort to become a great novelist, Bennett studied the craft of fiction as practised by the masters of the Impressionist school. ‘He was the only Englishman who ever talked to me about how books should be written,’ said Ford Madox Ford.² His models were ‘(1) Turgenev, a royal first . . . (2) de Maupassant; (3) [the] de Goncourts; (4) George Moore.’³ Edward Garnett’s introductions to the works of Turgenev, Bennett says, ‘constituted something new in English literary criticism; they cast a fresh light on the art of fiction, completing the fitful illuminations offered by the essays of Mr George Moore. . . . We were utterly convinced that

¹ *The Plays of John Galsworthy* (London, 1929), p. 244.

² *Return to Yesterday* (London, 1931), p. 187. The form of the comment indicates that Ford is distinguishing between native Englishmen and such authors as James and Conrad.

³ Letter to Frank Sturt, 11 Nov. 1895; quoted in Reginald Found, *Arnold Bennett* (London, 1952), p. 88.

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Turgenev had carried imaginative narrative art further than any man.'¹ Two years after he made the preceding list, he added another name: 'There is scarcely an author—unless it be Henry James—whom I find flawless, and who therefore, I can read in perfect comfort.'²

Bennett's choice of subjects and his methods of developing them unite him with the Realistic tradition. While writing *Clayhanger*, for example, he journeyed to Burslem where he collected a mass of factual information for inclusion in the novel. When it appeared, he wrote in his journal, 'On reflection I think that it does contain more sociology than "The O.W.T.". I had promised this in the prospectus of it, but I was afraid I had not fulfilled the promise.'³ He trained himself to be a 'philosophic observer—fairly exact, and controlled by scientific principles'; while writing *The Old Wives' Tale*, he wished that

some schoolmistress had written down simply her impression[s] of her years of training; I want them for my novel. The whole of life ought to be covered thus by 'impressionists', and a vast mass of new material of facts and sensations collected for use by historians, sociologists and novelists.⁴

Bennett considered sociology an important aspect of the subject matter of the novel; the English founder of that science had developed principles which he found useful in

¹ 'Adventures Among Russian Fiction', *The Soul of Russia*, ed. Winifred Stevens (London, 1916), p. 86. This invaluable essay on the popularity of Russian novelists in England has not received the attention it deserves.

² *The Journals of Arnold Bennett*, ed. N. Flower (London, 1932-3), I, 67 (hereafter cited as *Journals*).

³ *Journals*, I, 343, 381-2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 254. Bennett's use of the word 'impressionists' in this context requires some definition. Elsewhere, in discussing Conrad, he says that the first paragraph of 'The Return' is 'perhaps the most dazzling feat of impressionism in modern English' (*NA*, III [19 Sept.

narrative development. Of Spencer, England’s ‘greatest philosopher’, he wrote:

When I think how *First Principles*, by filling me up with the sense of causation everywhere, has altered my whole view of life and undoubtedly immensely improved it, I am confirmed in my opinion of that book. You can see *First Principles* in nearly every line I write.¹

II. BENNETT’S ‘BOOKS AND PERSONS’

The influence of both Impressionism and Realism on Bennett as a critic is evident in the articles which he contributed to *The New Age* between 1908 and 1911. During this period, his column ‘Books and Persons’, written under the pseudonym ‘Jacob Tonson’, was the most distinguished literary feature of the magazine. His audience included authors, publishers, and columnists of other weekly journals; one reader asserted that ‘Books and Persons’ was ‘the

1908], 412). In the latter context, ‘impressionism’ refers to the techniques employed by James, Ford, and Galsworthy, as defined in the passages cited in note 3, p. 82. It requires, as James indicates, ‘a particular detachment’ through which the imagination transforms and fuses the details of experience. When Bennett refers to the ‘impressions’ of a schoolmistress, however, he is using the word as we would use it in conversation. This is an important distinction; for no quantity of ‘impressions’, however great, can result in ‘Impressionism’ in the Jamesian sense. Bennett described his own technique as ‘synthetic impressionism’, by which he presumably meant that the impressions of various characters would be so arranged as to create a balanced compositional effect (we shall examine his statements on this point in the following pages). To this aspect of Bennett’s work, involving the careful arrangement of innumerable details, James applied the word ‘saturation’. This technique was not related—it was, in fact, antithetical—to the ‘fusion and synthesis’ of the Impressionists.

¹ NA, VII (30 June 1910), 214; *Journals*, I, 383.

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most widely read . . . literary causerie of any of our weeklies'.¹ Bennett was ideally qualified to write such a column. He had an inexhaustible curiosity about the production, sale, and distribution of literature, and as a result his articles give us valuable information about the history of publishing during these years. He spoke frankly of literary fees, agents, publishers, and book prices; he asked his readers to send him lists of the books they bought and tried to compile a list of the most popular authors of his day on the basis of advance sales. One of the best qualities of his column was its forthright bluntness. He attacked the mandarins, the literary arbiters of London, the inanity of current periodicals, and the stupidity of reviewers; he even went so far as to suggest that there was some relation between advertisements and reviews.

But perhaps the most important factor in his success as a literary causeur was that he brought to his column a wide range of reading and that intimate knowledge of creation which only a practitioner can possess. He understood the problems of the author and, through his criticism, tried to create an atmosphere in which literature could flourish. The dominant themes of his articles were these: that the writer should possess a thorough knowledge of his craft and that he should be free to treat any aspect of life in his works without suffering retaliation from a commercial publishing system in which the touchstone of the morally permissible is the innocence of a naïve adolescent.

In 1899, Henry James had pointed out that the novel suffered from the restrictions placed upon it by an adolescent audience:

While society was frank, was free about the incidents and accidents of the human constitution, the novel took the same robust ease as society. The young then were so very young that

¹ J. H. Benzies, *NA*, IX (6 July 1911), 238.

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they were not table-high. But they began to grow, and from the moment their little chins rested on the mahogany, Richardson and Fielding began to go under it. There came into being a mistrust of any but the most guarded treatment of the great relation between men and women, the constant world-renewal, which was the conspicuous sign that whatever the prose picture of life was prepared to take upon itself, it was not prepared to take upon itself not to be superficial.¹

The result was that the circulation of many important novels was restricted. Bennett found, for example, that none of the following could be obtained at the twelve lending libraries in Glasgow: the works of Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett; *Anna Karenina*; *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*; *Jude the Obscure*; and *Tono-Bungay*. The situation became much worse when, in 1909, the circulating libraries, which were the largest purchasers and distributors of books, instituted a censorship system and apparently applied it in a haphazard manner.

Bennett made enquiries and recounted the immediate cause of the censorship in *The New Age*. A socially prominent woman had been shocked to find her daughter reading a book from a circulating library which, she was sure, would corrupt the child’s morals. She went immediately to a member of the Cabinet and demanded that action of some sort be taken. ‘The result,’ said Bennett, ‘was that “certain machinery” was set in motion, and “certain representations” were made to the libraries; indeed, the libraries were given to understand that unless they did something themselves “certain steps” would be taken.’³ A number of books were banned, and the circulation of others was restricted by supplying them only after they had been requested ten or twelve times. It seemed for

¹ *The House of Fiction*, p. 56.

² NA, VII (26 May 1910), 86.

³ NA, IV (23 Dec. 1909), 184.

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a time that adults might be allowed to read only books fit for children. Mistakes were inevitable, and absurd situations arose; one reader, for example, was told that Henry James's volume of essays *Italian Hours* was an 'improper book'.¹ These incidents are noteworthy not only because Bennett crusaded tirelessly against the censorship, but also because they illustrate the prevalent delicacy with regard to the unmentionable and the unpleasant that exercised an important influence on the publication of books and periodicals. Henry James had stated the arguments in favour of freedom for the novelist in the abstract; Bennett, who placed more emphasis on the novel as a presentation of all aspects of contemporary life, vigorously applied these arguments to particular cases.

Contemporary periodicals were to Bennett a notorious example of how the fear of offending the public resulted in the exclusion of controversial essays and realistic fiction. His attack on *The Fortnightly*, *The Nineteenth Century and After*, and *The Cornhill* was quoted in Chapter 1; aside from Ford's *English Review* (which he said came 'as near to the ideal as any magazine of pure letters is likely to get')² the only literary periodical which won his grudging approval was *Blackwood's Magazine* (because it printed stories by Joseph Conrad; 'In Scotland, whatever their manners, they do read'). 'Why is it,' he wrote,

¹ When *The Times* printed a letter concerning the incident, the libraries were deluged with requests for 'a rather improper book by Mr Henry James—a sex novel of Italian life'. *NA*, VI (20 Jan. 1910), 276.

² *NA*, IV (14 Jan. 1909), 245. 'Many thanks for your kindly reference to me in *The New Age*,' Ford wrote to Bennett just before relinquishing the editorship of *The English Review*. 'You are . . . the only one I know who has in the least appreciated what I have been trying to do and that I have been disinterested in the effort.' Douglas Goldring, *The Last Pre-Raphaelite* (London, 1948), p. 148.

that in England among the half-dozen really big and wealthy publishing houses there is not one that cares or dares to cater for the average intelligent man? The popular magazines of this country are a disgrace to its intelligence, unworthy of its intelligence, below its intelligence. They are prudish to a degree that even New England would laugh at. They pander to every vice except that of concupiscence. They boycott the real life of the nation. Artistically they are deplorable. As literature they scarcely exist. And if they do happen to touch a genuine subject they debase it by a frivolous insincerity.¹

If the short stories they contained displayed even a modicum of realism, it disappeared in time to preserve the traditional happy ending. Bennett was amazed to find, on reading a story in the popular American magazine *McClure's*, that ‘it does not end happily. Scarcely expecting to be believed, I reiterate that it does not end happily. . . . Why cannot we have such a magazine in England?’²

When a realistic writer did succeed in publishing his work, it was often criticized solely on the grounds of its ‘unpleasant’ subject matter.

As sure as ever a novelist endeavours to paint a complete picture of life in this honest, hypocritical country of bad restaurants and good women; as sure as ever he hints that all is not for the best in the best of all possible islands, some witling is bound to come forward and point out with wise finger that life is not all black.³

The arbiters of literary taste were largely responsible for this situation, and Bennett did not hesitate to attack them when their moral austerity or sheer ignorance blinded them to the virtues of a work. His protests were not limited to unfavourable reviews of works by authors he

¹ NA, VI (16 Dec. 1909), 159.

² Ibid.

³ NA, II (9 May 1908), 33.

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admired; he also attacked critics when they praised a great author for the wrong reasons.¹

In opposition to what he considered the prudery and provincial narrowness of reviewers, Bennett attempted to introduce Continental literary standards into the discussion of English literature. His long residence in France had given him a close acquaintance with current French literature, and about one-fifth of his articles were devoted to that subject. He discussed Anatole France, the de Goncourts, Rémy de Gourmont ('the greatest unappreciated writer in France today'),² Romain Rolland, Gide, and (incessantly) Stendhal. Nor did he neglect contemporary poets. 'Who among you has ever heard of Paul Valéry? Yet Paul Valéry is one of the very finest intelligences in France today,' he wrote in 1911.³ Claudel, Péguy, and Corbière were singled out for special mention.⁴ His discussions of French literature, however, were not to prove as important in influencing literary taste as his enthusiasm for Russian novelists. They led him to conclude that 'French realism is an artificial and feeble growth compared with the spontaneous, unconscious realism of the Russians', and that 'there simply are no novels in England, and very few in France';⁵ and it was largely through his influence that the younger generation came to hold the same opinion.

By 1908 Turgenev and Tolstoy were accepted as

¹ As, for example, in the *Athenaeum* review of Conrad's *Set of Six*, which Bennett compared to 'the antics of a provincial mayor around a foreign monarch sojourning in his town'. *NA*, III (19 Sept. 1908), 412.

² *NA*, IV (25 Feb. 1909), 369.

³ *NA*, VIII (23 Feb. 1911), 397.

⁴ *Ibid.*; *NA*, IV (25 Feb. 1909), 363.

⁵ *NA*, VI (31 Mar. 1910), 518; 'Adventures Among Russian Fiction', *loc. cit.*, p. 85.

masters of the realistic tradition; in 1909, Bennett added another name to their ranks. A volume of short stories by Chekhov had appeared in 1903 (*The Black Monk and Other Stories*, published by Duckworth), but soon went out of print. After the same publisher issued another volume of his stories in 1908, Bennett wrote:

The progress of every art is an apparent progress from conventionality to realism. The basis of convention remains, but as the art develops it finds more and more subtle methods, fitting life to the convention or the convention to life—whichever you please. Chekhov’s tales mark a definite new conquest in this long struggle. . . . He seems to have achieved absolute realism. (But there is no absolute, and one day somebody—probably a Russian—will carry realism farther.) His climaxes are never strained; nothing is ever idealized, sentimentalized, etherealized; no part of the truth is left out, no part is exaggerated. There is no cleverness, no startling feat of virtuosity. All appears simple, candid, almost child-like. . . . Beneath the outward simplicity of his work is concealed the most wondrous artifice, the artifice that is embedded deep in nearly all great art. All we English novelists ought to study *The Kiss* and *The Black Monk*. They will delight every person of fine taste, but to the artist they are a profound lesson. We have no writer, and we never have had one, nor has France, who could mould the material of life, without distorting it, into such complex form to such an end of beauty.¹

Shortly after this passage was written, translations of Chekhov’s stories began to appear in *The New Age*. Although Frank Swinnerton may be correct in asserting that ‘the admiration for Chekhov which spread among English writers and readers dates from the publication of two volumes of his tales in 1916’,² his influence was clearly present at an earlier date. It has been assumed, for example,

¹ NA, IV (18 Mar. 1909), 423.

² *Background with Chorus*, p. 174.

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that Katherine Mansfield was introduced to Chekhov during her visit to the Continent in 1909.¹ This assumption is unnecessary in view of the fact that Bennett discussed his short stories in *The New Age* earlier that year.

Even more important was Bennett's praise of Dostoevsky. 'I thought I had read all the chief works of the five great Russian novelists [Gogol, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Chekhov, Dostoevsky],' he wrote in 1910,

but last year I came across one of Dostoevsky's, *The Brothers Karamazov*, of which I had not heard. It was a French translation, in two thick volumes. I thought it contained some of the greatest scenes that I had ever encountered in fiction. . . . The scene with the old monk at the beginning . . . is in the very grandest heroic manner. There is nothing in either English or French prose literature to hold a candle to it. . . . And now, Mr Heinemann, when are we going to have a complete Dostoevsky in English?²

As one who attached great importance to form, he was not without reservations about the construction of Dostoevsky's novels. 'They have especially the grave fault of imperfection, that fault which Turgenev and Flaubert avoided,' he said. 'They are tremendously unlevel, badly constructed, both in large outline and in detail.'³ But it is significant that Bennett deleted the following sentence in reprinting a number of these articles in 1917: 'In spite of the recent wave of enthusiasm for Dostoevsky, I am still

¹ Anthony Alpers, *Katherine Mansfield* (London, 1954), p. 129. Katherine Mansfield's first story, 'The Child-Who-Was-Tired' (*NA*, VI [24 Feb. 1910], 396-8), is freely adapted from Chekhov's 'Spat Khochetsia', which had appeared in *The Black Monk and Other Stories* (London, 1903), as 'Sleepyhead' (pp. 179-88). See E. M. Almedingen, letter to *The Times Literary Supplement* (19 Oct. 1951), p. 661.

² *NA*, VI (31 Mar. 1910), 519.

³ *Ibid.*

of [the] opinion that nobody alive or dead has written finer novels than Turgenev.'¹ For his appreciation grew rapidly in the months following his first mention of *The Brothers Karamazov*. A year later, he wrote:

Personally, I class this work with Stendhal's *Chartreuse de Parme*, as the most heroical novel in European literature. It contains about a dozen absolutely colossal figures. It is fiction raised to the highest power. Stendhal is perhaps more even and more easily comprehensible and more urbane; but Dostoievsky goes deeper and rises higher.²

His enthusiasm was not without effect. Perhaps Mr Heinemann noticed Bennett's suggestion regarding publication, and perhaps Constance Garnett noticed the following passage: 'The crying need of the day, in the translation department, is a complete and faithful Dostoievsky. . . . It is the duty of one or [an]other of our publishers to commission Mrs Constance Garnett to do it.'³ Six weeks after this passage appeared, Mr Heinemann announced that he would publish the principal novels of Dostoievsky, translated by Constance Garnett.⁴

Bennett's opinions also seem to have been influential among the young. Katherine Mansfield, John Middleton Murry, Frank Swinnerton, Richard Curle, and Gilbert Cannan agreed, when they met one evening in 1912, that *The Brothers Karamazov* was the greatest novel ever written, *La Chartreuse de Parme* its only second.⁵ 'That "occasional causerie" of his in *The New Age*, wrote Frank Swinnerton,

familiarized us with the language and views of Parisian critics. It was quite different from the literary letters of C. K. S.

¹ NA, VII (16 June 1910), 159. ² NA, VIII (23 Mar. 1911), 492.

³ NA, VIII (9 Feb. 1911), 349. ⁴ NA, VIII (23 Mar. 1911), 492.

⁵ *Background with Chorus*, p. 145.

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[Clement Shorter] and Claudius Clear [W. Robertson Nicoll] and the sedate gossip of other bookmen; and it opened our eyes. The Continent, we found, was rich in authors to be read and judged and perhaps emulated. How exciting that was; and what a challenge to intelligence. . . . His words about Russian writers—he once declared that the five greatest novelists were all Russian—made his readers examine the meagre representation of Russian novelists standing on their shelves, and long for more.¹

When *Books and Persons*, a selection from the articles that had appeared in *The New Age*, was published in 1917, Rebecca West wrote to Bennett as follows:

Dear Mr. Bennett,

I was for two years forced by a benevolent government to attend a cookery class every Friday afternoon, and it was my habit to make these hours that would otherwise have been unprofitable more valuable than the rest of my education put together by reading Jacob Tonson. . . .²

The immediate source of the value of Bennett's articles for young authors, however, was not his praise of Dostoevsky, for *The Brothers Karamazov* was not to be published until 1912, and it took some time for writers to see how an alien method and an alien intensity could be absorbed into the English tradition.³ Most of them were closer in the technique and subject matter of their novels to the tradition of Bennett; thus his influence worked primarily through his precepts and his own creative works. 'If this

¹ Ibid., p. 142.

² Letter dated 4 July [1917?], now in the library of University College, London.

³ Bennett's attempt to emulate this intensity in *Hilda Lessways* (1911) probably resulted from his enthusiasm for Dostoevsky at the time. It is ironic that Virginia Woolf should have chosen this novel, which represents a sincere effort on Bennett's part to free himself from the limitations of his usual methods, as exemplifying them.

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column has any interest of originality,’ he said, ‘it is that it expresses the point of view of the creative artist as distinguished from that of the critic.’¹ He could cite specific weaknesses in early novels and point out the technical methods that would improve a work. Perhaps he would recommend that the author listen more carefully to ordinary conversations, in order to remove the literary artificiality of his dialogue; he might mention inconsistencies in the conception of a character that resulted from an inadequate study of an age group or class; if an author had difficulty in effecting transitions from present to past time, he recommended a careful study of Balzac’s novels. ‘“Trifles!” you may say. Art is made up of trifles. The difference between first-class and second-class in art is only a series of trifles.’²

III. THE DOCTRINES OF REALISM

Arnold Bennett was as conscientious a craftsman as any novelist of his time. His limitations were primarily limitations of talent; perhaps his painstaking attention to technique resulted from an attempt to achieve through skill what in the end must come from inspiration. Whatever its source, this attention makes his criticism continuously interesting as a record of the methods of a representative novelist who understood and emulated many of the techniques that were shared by the greatest of his contemporaries.

His indebtedness to the Impressionist tradition is clearly evident in his discussions of ‘composition’ and character portrayal. While his own novels, like those of the Realists, were based upon a laborious accumulation of detail, he realized that the vividness of imaginative representation

¹ NA, V (21 Oct. 1909), 461.

² NA, V (19 Aug. 1909), 320.

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would suffer if this labour should call attention to itself. 'I would like to ask Mr Galsworthy,' he said in discussing *Fraternity*, 'if he has decided definitely for himself that minute descriptions of the faces of characters ever, save by extremely rare hazard, leave any impression on the reader.'¹ In this case the 'impression' has been blurred and hence does not evince a discriminating artistic consciousness. The opposite fault is that of caricature, which implicitly condemns the recording consciousness of the novelist as being either insensitive to finer discriminations, or, worse yet, as lacking in detachment, the essence of artistic creation.

Wells once suggested that Bennett give one of his heroes a distinguishing trait, such as a bit of vanity about the shape of his nose; to Bennett such a suggestion was redolent of the outworn tricks of the Victorians. 'You still cling to the Dickens-Thackeray standards, and judge by them,' Bennett replied. 'As when you say: "How like Becky Sharp!" Would you say: "How like Eugenie Grandet, or Madame Bovary, or Maisie?" The strongly marked character, the eccentric, the sharply-defined type, is the easiest thing in the world to do.'² The same criticism of portraying types rather than characters is implicit in Bennett's comments on *Tono-Bungay*. After distinguishing carefully between the protagonist, who writes in the first person, and Wells himself, he mentions some of the former's faults:

The one other slip that George Ponderevo has made is a slight yielding to the temptation of caricature, out of place in a realistic book. . . . So much for the narrator, whose 'I' writes the book. I assume that Wells purposely left these matters

¹ NA, IV (11 Mar. 1909), 405.

² *Arnold Bennet and H. G. Wells*, ed. Harris Wilson (London, 1960), pp. 85, 95.

uncorrected, as being essential to the completeness of George’s self-revelation.¹

The assumption seems gratuitous.

If Galsworthy erred in describing faces in detail (the result, perhaps, of an overzealous realism), he at least attempted to individualize them in doing so. A contrasting fault is not devoting enough attention to individuality, and Bennett criticized Conrad, one of his favourite authors, on this ground. Speaking of the inevitable narrator in Conrad’s works, he said:

This peculiarity . . . detracts from the realistic authority of the work. For by the time you have got to the end of *A Set of Six*, you have met a whole series of men who all talk just as well as Mr. Conrad writes, and upon calm reflection the existence of a whole series of such men must seem to you very improbable.²

‘Out of place in a realistic book’; ‘detracts from the realistic authority of the work’: realism was paramount, and it allowed but the slightest deviations in presentation.

Characters, according to Bennett, should be grouped pictorially. He says in discussing *Fraternity* that Galsworthy has not ‘composed’ his picture by distinguishing ‘background’ from ‘foreground’;³ the pictorial analogy, which is also employed by James, Ford, and Galsworthy himself (cf. note 3, p. 82), may have important implications which we cannot pause to examine here. ‘The true art of fiction,’ said Bennett,

consists, first and mainly, in a beautiful composition. But in Anglo-Saxon countries any writer who can induce both a grin and a tear on the same page, no matter how insolent his

¹ NA, IV (4 Mar. 1909), 384.

² NA, III (10 Sept. 1908), 412.

³ NA, IV (11 Mar. 1909), 404.



6. 'AND I DRIVE THE 'BUS THAT MARY RIDES ON'

by Walter Sickert

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contempt for composition, is sure of that immortality his contemporaries can award.¹

This was his fundamental complaint about Victorian novelists: they substituted sentimentality for careful construction. His own aim was to achieve what he called a 'synthetic impressionism'; 'What I aim at,' he wrote to Wells, 'is the expression of general moods, whether of a person or a whole scene, a constant "synthesizing" of emotion.'² The pictorial analogy is extended in the following passage:

In a well-designed picture the eye is drawn chiefly to one particular spot. If the eye is drawn with equal force to several different spots, then we reproach the painter for having 'scattered' the interest of the picture. Similarly when writing a novel. A novel must have one, two, or three figures that easily overlap the rest. These figures must be in the foreground, and the rest in the middle-distance or in the background.³

Very well, one may say; and what then? Should there not be some focus in the action toward which the characters move? No such principle of composition is mentioned in his articles in *The New Age*, and Bennett's other critical writings lead one to think that he did not consider such a focus necessary. Life is a series of minor and major crises; perhaps he felt that it would be unrealistic and in some way Victorian if the novel were to move towards a dénouement. Like life, the novel is a continuous process, plotless. He praised the 'astounding thoroughness and completeness' of Eden Phillpotts's twenty-five novels on

¹ NA, III (11 July 1908), 212.

² *Journals*, I, 16; Arnold Bennett and H. G. Wells, p. 96.

³ 'The Story Teller's Craft', *The English Review*, XIV (May 1913), 350.

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Dartmoor;¹ in writing of Romain Rolland's *Jean Christophe*, he said,

Everyone who has begun this novel—one of the most extraordinary of modern times—will want to finish it. And no one ever will finish it, for it will never be finished. And there is no reason why it should be. Such is my opinion.²

This reminds one of Wells's statement that Victorian novels were not long enough to satisfy his insatiable appetite.³ Both he and Bennett seemed to feel that there was a virtue in quantity as such. In planning *The Old Wives' Tale*, Bennett decided that 'my book must "go one better" than [de Maupassant's] *Une Vie*, and that to this end it must be the life history of two women instead of only one'.⁴ One suspects he spoke at least half in earnest.

Bennett saw the novel as an essentially static composition, its organization consisting in a consistently sympathetic attitude towards the variegated episodes that life, and the novel, dispose in temporal sequence. In praising Chekhov, he says: 'As you read him you fancy that he must always have been saying to himself: "Life is good enough for me. I won't alter it. I will set it down as it is."' Such is the tribute to his success which he forces from you.'⁵ In Bennett's canon of critical judgments, this is high praise. We find a similar attitude expressed in his novels. *The Old Wives' Tale* and *Clayhanger* each contain one italicized sentence. In the former, it appears in the last few pages as Constance meditates on her life: 'She had many dissatisfactions. But she rose superior to them. When she

¹ NA, VIII (9 Mar. 1911), 445.

² NA, III (18 July 1908), 232.

³ 'The Contemporary Novel', *Henry James and H. G. Wells*, p. 137.

⁴ *The Old Wives' Tale* (London, 1911), p. vii. (This preface did not appear in the first edition of the novel, 1908.)

⁵ NA, IV (18 Mar. 1909), 423.

surveyed her life, and life in general, she would think, with a sort of tart but not sour cheerfulness; "*Well, that is what life is!*"¹ Near the end of *Clayhanger*, Edwin says to himself: "*What a fine thing life is!*"² In each instance we have a generalization which implies its absorption of the texture of the book. The meaning lies in the attitude of the protagonist, or the writer, toward the incidents represented.

The communication of this attitude required a carefully maintained impartiality (akin to what James referred to as the 'detachment . . . of the observant and recording and interpreting mind') on the part of the novelist. This did not mean that social criticism was to be excluded from the novel. His own novels, Bennett said, contained criticisms of society 'designed to make you uncomfortable'.³ This was an inevitable result of a painting the world as it is, with all its virtues and faults. He made, however, a careful distinction between the novel as a picture of reality and the novel as a vehicle of propaganda. He rebukes Galsworthy for philosophizing: in discussing *The Man of Property* and *The Country House*, he suggests that the author should

contrive to take a walk with his prejudice against the successful class, and lose it. First-rate writers have no business with hostilities. First-class writers ought to be aware that one kind of man is just as deserving of sympathy as another, and that to shed tears over the weak and oppressed is a sign of facile emotionalism rather than of an ordered and powerful imagination. It is not morally reprehensible to live in Bedford Court Mansions.⁴

¹ *The Old Wives' Tale*, p. 609.

² *The Clayhanger Family* (London, 1925), p. 547.

³ *NA*, V (19 Aug. 1909), 319.

⁴ *Ibid.*

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Bennett found the same fault in Wells's novels. In *Tono-Bungay*, one of George Ponderevo's less attractive traits was his bitter hatred of people whom he found ignorant or conventional.

The savagery of his description of the family of Frapp, the little Nonconformist baker, and of the tea-drinkers in the housekeeper's room at Bladesover, somewhat impairs even the astounding force of this, George's first and only novel—not because he exaggerates the offensiveness of the phenomena, but because he unscientifically fails to perceive that these people are just as deserving of compassion as himself.¹

'Why this immense animus against the "nace" class of person, since we are all human together?', wrote Bennett in a letter to Wells concerning *Kipps*. 'Am I to understand that in your opinion as a purposeful observer of life the "nace" class is more ridiculous, or less worthy of sympathy, or less the outcome of natural and inevitable causes [*sic*] than any other class.?'² If we can discern the causes of human behaviour, our prejudice falls away with the realization that people are not directly responsible for their faults. In his journal, Bennett wrote: 'Essential characteristic of the really great novelist: a Christlike, all-embracing compassion.'³

The compassionate detachment and intellectual curiosity that Bennett advocated as a critic are evident in his own novels. When *The Old Wives' Tale* appeared in 1908, J. E. Barton, the writer of the review in *The New Age*, indicated the importance of these qualities in an age devoted to social reform. In all of Bennett's works, he says, the praise of life—first function of the artist—precedes its

¹ NA, IV (4 Mar. 1909), 384.

² *Arnold Bennett and H. G. Wells*, p. 127.

³ *Journals*, I, 19 (from the year 1896).

analysis. And his Socialism (or Radicalism, or whatever he calls it) is likewise subjected to aesthetic laws. . . .

His characters neither wriggle on an entomologist’s pin, nor pirouette dialectically, as properly galvanized impersonations of Will-to-Live are expected to do. . . . The human comedy, as presented by writers like Mr Wells and Mr Shaw, is a vehicle for certain versions of the modern gospel. I enjoy them. . . . But there are seasons when I wish to contemplate this splendid, turbulent and exciting modern epoch with pure pleasure, with no moral or philosophic obsession whatever; to gaze enrapt on this world of swift transit, large hotels, crumbling creeds, cosmopolitan culture, incredible wealth, fierce materialism, and recrudescant superstitions, without one single impulse to reprove it, or pity it, or put it right. This is where Mr Bennett comes in. . . . The quintessence of life is surely this force, which life alone possesses, of persuading us that to live and to feel are in themselves immensely desirable. An artist is he who discerns this quintessence, condenses it, and therewith impregnates his creation. . . .

Useless? Inactive for the regeneration of society? My answer is that men must feel and understand life thoroughly before they tinker with it; that art outlines philosophy, as the Greeks were aware, just because it roots itself in that sure ground of instinct and emotion with which the philosopher—his eye on the horizon—is apt to lose touch.¹

At the beginning of this chapter, Bennett was said to be indebted to the Impressionist tradition for his conception of form in the novel, and to the Realist tradition for his subject matter. This combination of interests creates many problems; for if one strives for inclusiveness, attempting to record as many aspects of life as possible, it will be

¹ J. E. Barton, ‘Fiction and Mr Arnold Bennett’, *NA*, IV (3 Dec. 1908), 110-11. Mr Barton claims he is ‘neither a professional reviewer nor a Socialist, but simply a quiet provincial reader who happens to have read Mr Bennett entire’.

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difficult for him to maintain the strict economy of means advocated by those seeking formal perfection. There is evidence that during this period Bennett's conception of the novel was changing, as witnessed by one of his later discussions of James, that master of formal composition:

On the debit side:—He is tremendously lacking in emotional power. Also his sense of beauty is over-sophisticated and wants originality. Also his attitude towards the spectacle of life is at bottom conventional, timid, and undecided. Also he seldom chooses themes of first-class importance, and when he does choose such a theme he never fairly bites it and makes it bleed. Also his curiosity is limited. . . . What it all comes to is merely that his subject matter does not as a rule interest me.¹

A correspondent, who must have been aware of 'Jacob Tonson's' true identity, pointed out how different his opinions were from those of Arnold Bennett, who had praised James six years earlier.² It seems that by 1911, Bennett considered subject matter more important than form.

Between 1908 and 1910, Bennett's attitude toward the novel established the tone of *The New Age's* criticism as a whole. His emphasis on technique, his demand that the novelist be given freedom in choosing his subject matter, and his insistence that propaganda had no place in literature were of unquestionable value during that period. Eventually, however, criticisms of the novels of Wells and Bennett began to appear in the magazine, and soon their whole attitude towards fiction was questioned. J. E. Barton's review of *Clayhanger* cautiously indicates the form that these criticisms were to take and illustrates the attitude

¹ NA, VI (27 Oct. 1910), 614-15.

² J. H. Hobbs, NA, VIII (10 Nov. 1910), 46.

of many contributors to *The New Age* by the end of 1910:

As the first of a contemplated trilogy of novels, it implies in the author a conscious maturity and range of synoptic power which hitherto, with his irrepressible ardour in experiment, he has not so definitely asserted. And it implies, also, by its restriction of matter and scene, a very deliberate cult of patient realism; a cult which I call ambitious, because it is the hardest path a novelist can tread, and a form of art which creates, as of set purpose, many of the difficulties which it has to conquer. . . .

In our young days we all chanted the maxims that beauty lurks in the eye of the artist, that no sort or scene of life is dull if really apprehended, that romance (fundamentally) is universal. Excellent, no doubt; and extremely true as corrective of popular preconceptions in the sphere of art. But subject after all does count, even for the realist. . . .

To hold the balance scrupulously between his characters and their fate; to concede nothing to our common illusion that we are masters in our own house; to be satisfied with an intellectual survey of the world, unprepossessed by sentimental cravings; these, it would appear, are the aims which have guided him. They play an enormous part, I know, in the modern artist's conception of his own function. In fact, he deceives himself. He thinks he is founded on a rock, superior to the sands of time and evolution. The probable truth is that this modern notion of art is only the aesthetic obverse of a quite ephemeral 'scientific' phase through which the world has been passing. . . .

To view life from the outside . . . and to choose such material as may be treated without bias one way or the other, is no more the essence of art than it is the essence of fighting or feeding. . . . Something even more imperious than reason admonishes us that life's inmost secret lies, not in the slow adaptation of man to circumstances, but in his costly victories and splendid defeats.¹

¹ NA, VIII (15 Dec. 1910), 160.

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As in the case of the drama, we find that realism was being questioned at this date, but that no coherent critical framework had been developed to support the new attitude. At this point Orage, who had been exclusively occupied with his editorial duties and political activities, began commenting on current conceptions of the novel in his occasional dialogues entitled 'Unedited Opinions'. Considerable attention was devoted to the theory of the novel between 1910 and 1914; these were the years in which James, Bennett, and Wells wrote some of their most important essays on the subject. Although the following discussion will carry us beyond the period indicated in the title of this part of the study, it involves many works written during those years, and can be seen as the culmination of a certain line of literary development. It will also indicate the new direction that literary criticism in *The New Age* was to take after 1910.

CHAPTER VI

THE REJECTION OF REALISM

SHAW, Bennett, Wells, and Granville-Barker were Socialists, and Galsworthy was sympathetic towards their objectives if not towards their politics. In varying degrees, and with or without propagandist intent, each included references to social problems in his works. Shaw and Wells, as leading thinkers in the socialist movement and apostles of modern gospels, also employed literature to purvey radical social and ethical doctrines. As a result of the natural sympathies of the editor and the contributions of these writers, *The New Age* was during its early years a champion of their works. After 1910, this was no longer true. Orage began to attack their ideologies and their basic assumptions about the function of art. He held that the proper subject of literature was not man's heredity and environment, but his soul; that social questions were inappropriate as the subject matter of literature; and that any artistic commitment to social reform was but the first of a series of compromises that would turn art into propaganda.

One month after Bennett's *Clayhanger* had been reviewed in *The New Age*, Orage wrote an article entitled 'On Pseudo-Psychology' in which he questioned the claims of modern psychologists and the novelists who had followed in their wake.

They imagine that by exhausting the details of a given character they can seize the whole. But in truth they can no more exhaust the aspects of a single character than they can number

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the sides of a sphere. . . . Psychology is the science of the psyche or it is mere post-mortem analysis; and people who concern themselves with detail are, you may be sure, ignorant of the nature of the whole. . . . Hence comes, too, the bewildering multitude of their personages. In truth they are not personages at all, but dummies stuffed with notebooks.¹

Orage includes many modern dramatists and 'so-called advanced thinkers' in the same category as the psychologists and novelists. His criticism has religious overtones; the soul was an entity which modern thought tended to ignore or deny. In discussing the drama a few months later, he analyses the religious implications of his attitude in detail. He asserts that drama should be essentially religious—not in any orthodox sense, but in having 'the soul for its subject, predicate, and object'. The only modern dramatist who he feels has come near achieving this ideal is Ibsen. When his interlocutor suggests the name of Shaw, Orage replies that he stands in the same relation to Ibsen as Euripides did to Sophocles: 'For a soul [Euripides] substituted an idea. The descent was rapid. An idea became a political or moral notion. Euripides a decade after Sophocles' death was down among the propagandists. Shaw is there still.'² The Mass, in which the soul is nourished by participation in a ceremony, is mentioned as an example of the effect that great drama should have on the spectator. And there are as many kinds of Mass, says Orage, as there are souls and adventures. Comedy is not excluded from this view of drama. But materialism and rationalism are.

In this and subsequent articles, Orage discussed the implications of this theory as applied to the subject matter and content of modern literature. He disagreed with the

¹ *NA*, VIII (26 Jan. 1911), 300.

² 'On Drama', *NA*, IX (18 May 1911), 58.

realistic precept that the subject matter of art is unlimited. Beauty being the object of art, how can it be said that all subjects are equally suitable for embodying it? Each subject has its own possibilities; but a craftsman would not use elm or deal if walnut or mahogany were available: ‘Selection is the genius of the artist, and his art is revealed by it. The denial of this truth is a major error.’¹ One argument in favour of the use of sordid or base subject matter was that the artist should expose social evils in order to bring about reform. But the result, countered Orage, is not art:

The expression of intense feeling I can understand. An exposure of a social evil is also necessary and useful. So, too, are expositions of science. But what have these to do with beauty? The sole object of a work of art is to reveal beauty and to leave that beauty to affect whom it may. Surely, it argues a small belief in beauty if we must add to it a moral or a purpose other than itself. . . . It is the nature of all spiritual things that they are above utility.²

The proper place for a discussion of prostitution or revolutionary ethics, he said, is the lecture room or the market square, and its ideal audience would consist of sociologists. Art and propaganda have nothing to do with one another.

These views were directly opposed to those of Wells, who by this time seems to have prized the novel largely for its suitability as a medium of propaganda. In May 1911, he expressed this opinion in a talk entitled ‘The Scope of the Novel’, delivered before the Times Book Club.³ His thesis was that the conception of the novel as

¹ ‘Some Errors of Modern Writers’, *NA*, IX (5 Oct. 1911), 539.

² ‘The Limitations of Art’, *NA*, IX (12 Oct. 1911), 562.

³ A revised version of this address appeared in the *Fortnightly* (Nov. 1911) as ‘The Contemporary Novel’; it is reprinted in *Henry James and H. G. Wells*.



7. MR H. G. WELLS

a serious art form, constructed around a single theme and written with the strictest possible economy (the conception held by the Impressionist school), was arbitrary and academic. In common with Dickens and Thackeray, he saw the novel as a discursive form, capable of containing a ‘woven tapestry of interests’, and said that he looked forward to the return of ‘a laxer, more spacious form of novel-writing’. The great value of the novel in a world of changing social and moral values, he asserted, was that it provided ‘a study and judgment of conduct, and through that of ideas that lead to conduct’. In concluding his essay, he said that the novel should be ‘the social mediator, the vehicle of understanding, the instrument of self-examination, the parade of morals and the exchange of manners, the factory of customs, the criticism of laws and institutions and of social dogmas and ideas’.¹

One month after this lecture was delivered, a translation of it appeared in *Le Temps*. A member of the *New Age* staff, J. M. Kennedy, retranslated it, summarizing the less important paragraphs and appending a number of critical and some unjustifiably derogatory comments. The result appeared in *The New Age* of 6 July 1911, under the title ‘The Last Straw’. Thenceforth, the cordial relations between Wells and the magazine were at an end.²

¹ *Henry James and H. G. Wells*, pp. 136-7, 143, 154.

² Wells contributed a number of articles to the early issues, and his books were often praised in Arnold Bennett’s column. *Ann Veronica* (1909) was criticized in an anonymous review; curiously, Bennett did not mention this work in ‘Books and Persons’. But *The History of Mr Polly* was received enthusiastically on its appearance in 1910 (‘Literary Supplement’, *NA*, VII [23 June 1910], 1). Four weeks after the appearance of ‘The Last Straw’, Wells demanded fifty pounds for infringement of copyright and an apology from *The New Age*. No notice of copyright had appeared in *Le Temps*; therefore Orage disregarded his demands.

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Orage could not accept Wells's conception of the novel as 'the factory of customs' and was especially irritated with the products that Wells manufactured. A large portion of *The New Machiavelli* (1911) was devoted to descriptions of the sexual activities of the protagonist, which were, at least by implication, defended. In finding fault with the novel, Orage criticized it not for portraying such incidents, but for the ethical values it implied:

Here is Mr H. G. Wells calmly permitting his hero to sacrifice his career to a sexual infatuation; and without a single note of cynical humour to condemn it. Will not his inexperienced readers continue to suppose that sex is indeed a mysterious and wonderful thing, tragically attractive and so on? They must needs think so if heroes are allowed to die of it. Really, responsible novelists should be above that kind of thing.¹

The Passionate Friends, which Wells says is 'pervaded' by a 'rather hopeless objection to the existing stereotyped marriage formula',² led Orage to repeat his charges on its appearance two years later:

There is not a sign of passion (which is intelligent single-mindedness) in *The Passionate Friends* from beginning to end. What Mr Wells calls passion is nothing but lust. All the chief characters are as promiscuous as they can hang together. There is neither charm nor virtue in one of them.³

Orage had two other objections to the works of Wells. The first was that he relied too heavily on autobiography; the second, that in trying to include too much material in his novels, he lost all sense of structure. 'I suppose what

¹ 'On Sexual Idealism', *NA*, VIII (16 Feb. 1911), 372.

² *The Works of H. G. Wells* (London, 1924-7), vol. XVIII, p. ix (hereafter cited as *Works*).

³ *NA*, XIII (16 Oct. 1913), 730.

I’m really trying to render,’ says the protagonist of *Tono-Bungay*, ‘is nothing more nor less than Life, as one man has found it. I want to tell—*myself*, my impressions of the thing as a whole. . . .’¹ The result, according to Orage, may be interesting, but it will not be art. Wells defended both inclusiveness and autobiography in ‘The Scope of the Novel’ and, in a very different way, Bennett repeated this defence in ‘The Story Teller’s Craft’ (1913). Orage’s conclusion regarding the use of autobiographic subject matter was as follows:

I would not say, without further consideration (though I think it), that novels are bad in proportion as they are autobiographic; but it is certain that such novels are not only the easiest to write, but usually the most tedious to read. As Johnson said of *Hudibras*, that it was so much easier to invent dialogues than to imagine adventures—a remark, by the way, that settles a good many modern plays—it may as well be said that autobiography requires neither invention nor imagination, and still less creation.²

With considerable tact, James criticized the autobiographic element in the novels of Bennett and Wells in his essay ‘The Younger Generation’, which appeared in *The Times Literary Supplement* in 1914. He had condemned it more directly in a letter to Wells concerning *The New Machiavelli*, animadverting against ‘that accursed autobiographic form which puts a premium on the loose, the improvised, the cheap and the easy’.³ In reply, Wells criticized and satirized James’s methods in *Boon* (1915), a book which also contained a number of malicious comments about Orage. We are concerned here only with the impersonal aspects of this controversy and its relevance to literary criticism in *The New Age*. Orage’s conception

¹ H. G. Wells, *Works*, XII, 7. ² NA, XVII (27 May 1915), 85.

³ *Henry James and H. G. Wells*, p. 128.

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of the novel was similar to that of James, as can be seen in his comments on *Boon*:

We may see, indeed, in Mr Wells's recent work the reductio ad absurdum of his anarchic theories of literary form. Listen to him upon Mr Henry James. 'James, he says, 'has never discovered that a novel isn't a picture. He wants a novel to be simply and completely *done*. He wants it to have *unity*; he demands homogeneity. . . . But if the novel is to follow life it must be various and discursive.' Who demanded that the novel 'follow' life? No artist, it is certain. 'Leading' life is more the way of the creator. And, again, who, but Mr Wells, disputes Mr James's claim that a novel must be a unity and have homogeneity? The effect of Mr Wells's theories is to be seen in contrast with the effects Mr James produces. In the latter the illusion of life is preserved, but of life in selected aspects designed to exhibit a single mood or a single character. But in the former everything sprawls like the items in a daily paper. String on a thin running motive the contents of any issue of *The Times*, from 'Births, Deaths and Marriages' to 'Property Sales', and the result is one of Mr Wells's recent novels. And twopence is less than six shillings!¹

There is a striking similarity between one of Orage's comments on Wells and a sentence in a letter from James to Edmund Gosse. In 1912, James had written, '[Wells] has cut loose from literature clearly-practically altogether; he will still do a lot of writing probably-but it won't be *that*'; in 1913, Orage wrote, 'Mr Wells, I am afraid, is lost to art.'²

Although Orage criticized those aspects of Bennett's conception of the novel which he held in common with Wells, he was more favourably disposed towards Bennett's creative and critical work as a whole. When *Books*

¹ NA, XVII (30 Sept. 1915), 527.

² *Henry James and H. G. Wells*, p. 164; NA, XIV (11 Dec. 1913), 211.

and Persons appeared in 1917, Orage discussed the qualities which had made the column the best of its kind. Within the limits imposed by his rationalism, said Orage,

there neither is, nor has been, in English letters, Mr Bennett’s parallel as a literary causeur. He has all the qualifications for a leading part in this role—an immense store of reading, an eye for contemporary literary happenings, a minute acquaintance with the practical world of publishing, personal relations with authors, a practical experience both of writing and selling, liveliness, audacity, and above all, a most readable style. You can read Mr Bennett’s literary criticisms even when you do not agree with a word of them. . . . Disagree as you may please with his judgments, you can seldom dismiss them either as superficial or as idiosyncrasies. There is always something competent, professional and respectable about them.¹

Orage defends Bennett’s criticisms of the literary mandarins of the time, ‘who didn’t know the craft they judged’, and praises his work as an apostle of literary freedom, adding a qualification which was to be echoed two years later in Eliot’s ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’: ‘To the extent that a writer knows himself to be original he usually elects to work within the great traditions of his craft.’² But he finds Bennett’s work limited in one respect :

I have praised Mr Bennett’s praise and practice of good workmanship; without good workmanship there is no art worth consideration. But in Mr Bennett’s case good workmanship and good art are convertible terms. . . . When Mr Bennett is writing of art he is thinking of craft. . . . Occupation with the craft is, of course, a necessity of the artist; but his pre-occupation is with something altogether different,

¹ NA, XXI (12 July 1917), 247.

² Eliot’s essay first appeared in *The Egoist*, VI (Sept., Dec. 1919), 54-5, 72-3 .

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namely, with what he has to say. The distinction between the artist-craftsman and the craftsman is precisely in the matter of pre-occupation. While the latter thinks of nothing so much as how he shall say it, the former thinks of nothing so much as what he shall say.¹

Orage disliked Bennett's businesslike concern with the 'cash value' of literature, illustrated in his advice to Pound ('Butter reviewers. From fifty to three hundred / I rose in eighteen months'). He felt that in order for a writer to do the best work of which he was capable, his motives had to be pure; otherwise, the inevitable result was artistic compromise. Alfred Newsome remembers a conversation between Bennett and Orage some years after 'Books and Persons' ceased appearing in *The New Age*. Bennett nostalgically recalled 'the good old days when I was doing my best work'. 'You can recapture those days,' said Orage; on being asked how this could be done, Orage replied, 'Give up the love of money.'²

In September 1911, exactly three and a half years after 'Books and Persons' first appeared, Bennett ceased writing for *The New Age*. During this time, he said, he 'looked in vain. . . for a sign that I myself am getting old-fashioned. I looked in vain for an artistic enemy. This, I maintain, is bad. At any rate it is a disquieting symptom.'³ In discussing John Middleton Murry's *Rhythm*, he wrote:

If [*Rhythm*] is convinced, for example, that the fiction of Conrad, George Moore, Wells, Galsworthy, is getting old-fashioned, as indeed it probably is, then let it print a short story of at least five thousand words embodying some new principle. I would not expect a masterpiece; I would not expect anything nearly as good in achievement as the best of the work

¹ NA, XXI (12 July 1917), 247-8.

² Interview with Mr Newsome, July 1960.

³ NA, VII (13 Oct. 1910), 568.

which the new principle is to prove old-fashioned; I would be satisfied with the sight of the new principle put into action, and a certain promise for the future. . . . Also, let the magazine publish a critical study finding fault with some work of established reputation produced according to our old principle.¹

Some of the short stories published in *The New Age* towards the end of this period—those of Katherine Mansfield, for example, and Wyndham Lewis’s ‘Brobdingnag’—departed from the canons of realistic fiction advocated by Bennett; in themselves, however, they could not be taken as signs of an artistic revolution. It was Bennett himself who, in Post-Impressionism, discovered the possibility of a radically new approach to literature and who questioned the methods he employed. In December, 1910, one week before the appearance of J. E. Barton’s review of *Clayhanger*, he wrote:

The exhibition of the so-called ‘Neo-Impressionists’ over which the culture of London is now laughing, has an interest which is perhaps not confined to the art of painting. For me, personally, it has a slight, vague repercussion upon literature. . . . It is in talking to several of these painters, in watching their familiar deportment, and particularly in listening to their conversations with others on subjects other than painting, that I have come to connect their ideas with literature. They are not good theorizers about art; a creative artist rarely is. But they do ultimately put their ideas into words. You may receive one word one day and the next next week, but in the end an idea gets itself somehow stated. Whenever I have listened to Laprade criticizing pictures, especially students’ work, I have thought about literature; I have been forced to wonder whether I should not have to reconsider my ideals. . . . Noting in myself that a regular contemplation of these pictures inspires a weariness of all other pictures that are not

¹ NA, IX (3 Aug. 1911), 327-8.

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absolutely first rate, giving them a disconcerting affinity to the tops of chocolate-boxes or 'art' photographs, I have permitted myself to suspect that supposing some writer were to come along and do in words what these men have done in paint, I might conceivably be disgusted with nearly the whole of modern fiction, and I might have to begin again. . . .

The average critic always calls me, both in praise and dispraise, 'photographic'; and I always rebut the epithet with disdain, because in the sense meant by the average critic I am not photographic. But supposing that in a deeper sense I were? Supposing a young writer turned up and forced me, and some of my contemporaries—us who fancy ourselves a bit—to admit that we had been concerning ourselves unduly with [in]essentials, that we had been worrying ourselves to achieve infantile realisms? Well, that day would be a great and disturbing day—for us. And we should see what we should see.¹

¹ NA, VIII (8 Dec. 1910), 135-6.

PART THREE

1911-1914: NEW DIRECTIONS

CHAPTER VII

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BY 1911, *The New Age* had established its position as one of the most important weeklies of the time. A leading article appearing in *The Spectator* that year paid tribute to the magazine and its writers:

We should like to take the opportunity of expressing our appreciation of the literary and journalistic ability with which *The New Age* is conducted. We disagree profoundly with its political, moral, social, and religious views, and often find in it articles which seem to us wrongheaded and unjust in a high degree. We should not be sincere, however, if we would not admit, as journalists, the courage and independence of those who conduct it.¹

In a contemporary article concerning periodicals of the time, C. K. Ogden indicated that *The New Age* was of considerable importance in shaping the policies of the Labour Party,² and the attitude of many non-Socialists towards its political commentaries is indicated in a letter to Orage from Stephen Reynolds: 'I don't think I agree with your policy—it's hard to know—and I'm certainly not a Socialist in any immediate sense of the word, but

¹ Quoted in NA, IX (4 May 1911), 22.

² In *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, vol. XXXVII, no. 2 (Tübingen, 1913); quoted in NA, XIII (30 Oct. 1913), 800.

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may I say how much I have appreciated your facing the facts instead of inventing political fictions? Whether one agrees with *The New Age* or not, one does look forward to it.¹ The circulation was not strictly sectarian; among the authors not ostensibly interested in partisan politics who read the magazine were D. H. Lawrence, Ford Madox Ford, Harold Monro, and Wyndham Lewis (who said he was 'a great admirer of *The New Age* ').²

During these years, political differences led to the founding of two new political weeklies, both edited by former contributors to *The New Age*, and the circulation and financial position of the magazine suffered as a result. Hilaire Belloc, who never agreed with its programme, had contributed in order to expose political chicanery and to point out what he considered the imbecilities of Socialism; in 1911 he founded *The Eye-Witness*, hoping thereby to promulgate his views more effectively. Cecil Chesterton became the editor when, in 1912, this journal became *The New Witness*. During 1907 and 1908, he had written the 'Notes of the Week' in *The New Age*; when he, G. K. Chesterton (his brother), and Belloc left the magazine, it lost three of its most brilliant and entertaining political writers.³

The New Age itself was largely responsible for the appearance of its most significant rival, *The New Statesman*. For political reasons which will be discussed at greater length in the following part of this study, Orage was highly critical of the policies of the Fabian Society. In

¹ *Letters of Stephen Reynolds*, ed. Harold Wright (London, 1923), p. 130.

² M. D. Eder, letter to *The New English Weekly*, I (21 Apr. 1932), 20; *NA*, XXIII (27 June 1918), 144; *NA*, XIV (8 Jan. 1914), 319.

³ Belloc, however, contributed to the magazine occasionally during the following ten years.

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1912, when he, A. J. Penty, and S. G. Hobson formulated a political theory which came to be known as Guild Socialism, *The New Age* began to advocate radically new solutions to the problems which had given rise to Socialism. Traditional Socialists were left without a weekly journal to support their cause, and consequently, in 1913, *The New Statesman* was founded, with the blessings of Shaw and the Fabian Society. The political editor was Clifford Sharp, a former Director of The New Age Company and a regular contributor; the literary editor was J. C. Squire, former poetry reviewer and parody-writer for *The New Age*. Partisan feeling ran high when the journal appeared; Orage is reputed to have said it was ‘worse than the *Nation*—the damnation!’¹ And H. G. Wells, writing in *The New Witness*, said: ‘One of their best writers is almost good enough for *The New Age*. . . . Ideas! There is not so much as the tenth of an Orage in the whole enterprise.’²

Undoubtedly London journalism was enriched by the appearance of these two weeklies, but their immediate effect on *The New Age* was to increase its financial difficulties. By August, 1913, its circulation had decreased to 4,500.³ In the face of these circumstances, aggravated by financial difficulties, Orage was able to keep the quality of the magazine virtually unimpaired. When the funds realized from the incorporation of *The New Age* dwindled, he secured private financial support; as older writers left the magazine, he found brilliant young contributors,

¹ Mairret, p. 71.

² Quoted in *NA*, XIII (1 May 1913), 18.

³ *NA*, XIII (14 Aug. 1913), 458. The price of the magazine was increased from threepence to sixpence in Nov. 1913, with the result that the circulation decreased by one thousand during the following year.

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whose inexperience was only a short-lived disadvantage as a result of his painstaking care in training them. At the same time, the size of the magazine was increased from twenty-four to thirty-two pages.

A description of its contents and a list of the contributors during this period will be helpful in indicating its position in relation to other weeklies of the time. Political commentary, economics, and foreign affairs occupied about half of its pages, the remainder being devoted to discussions of the arts, reviews, and creative works. 'Notes of the Week' and 'Foreign Affairs', written by Orage and J. M. Kennedy respectively, were regular features. (The Foreign Office is said to have exerted pressure for the removal of Kennedy's predecessor, C. H. Norman.) Kennedy, a former reporter for the *Daily Telegraph* who was reputed to know all of the languages of Europe, was an assiduous reader of foreign periodicals, and few articles of political significance escaped his attention. G. D. H. Cole, Rowland Kenney (the first editor of the *Daily Herald*), and S. G. Hobson were among those who regularly contributed articles on politics; the most renowned of the contributors in the field of economic analysis were J. A. Hobson (to whom Keynes was indebted for his theory of chronic underconsumption) and Arthur Kitson (who also contributed to the *Financial Times*). A number of writers served intermittently as foreign correspondents during these years; Ernest A. Boyd and Upton Sinclair wrote on the United States, Marmaduke Pickthall on the Near East, Richard Aldington on Italy, and C. E. Bechhofer on Russia.

In securing contributors concerned with the arts, *The New Age* was exceptionally successful. T. E. Hulme and E. Belfort Bax kept readers informed of recent trends in philosophy; A. M. Ludovici and J. M. Kennedy, both



8. A PAIL OF SLOPS by Walter Sickert

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engaged at the time in the translation of Nietzsche's complete works, contributed expositions and contemporary applications of his philosophy. Religious topics were discussed by a number of writers, including Conrad Noel, Allen Upward, and Orage himself. One of the most significant features of the magazine was its discussion of art during these years of conflict between the traditionalists and the importers of Continental innovations. Walter Sickert, as the art reviewer, proved himself an articulate and entertaining defender of the older school, while T. E. Hulme expounded the philosophic basis of aniconic design. After F. S. Flint ceased contributing to *The New Age* in 1910, J. C. Squire served briefly as the poetry reviewer; his discussions were of less significance, however, than those of Ezra Pound, who contributed thirty-six articles to the magazine during these years.

Of these contributors, four (Orage, Kennedy, A. E. Randall, and Beatrice Hastings) wrote approximately one-third of the magazine's contents each week. A. E. Randall, in addition to his articles on psychology, wrote a weekly column entitled 'Views and Reviews', and, under the pseudonym 'John Francis Hope', acted as the dramatic critic from 1912 onwards. (Shaw said of him that *The New Age* has had the rare fortune to secure the services of a critic of the theatre who understands what is happening on the stage technically.)¹ Beatrice Hastings displayed amazing versatility as reviewer, poet, and satirist; she was most effective, albeit unnecessarily malicious, in the last capacity. The sphere of her contributions was gradually decreased, and, in 1913, Orage replaced her critical columns with his own 'Readers and Writers'. These staff members were not responsible for the policy of the magazine, which was the prerogative of Orage, but they

¹ NA, XXVIII (13 Jan. 1921), 128.

provided that core of regular features necessary for a weekly and discharged that function with unusual ability. As the other contributors were not usually pledged to submit articles each week, they wrote only when they had something to say, an arrangement which must have been partially responsible for the high quality of their contributions.

Some mention must be made of the occasional contributors, numbering over six hundred during the magazine's history, who played an important part in its development. Between 1911 and 1914, they included T. Sturge Moore, Rupert Brooke, John Rodker, J. E. Flecker, Wyndham Lewis, Stephen Graham, Storm Jameson, G. W. Russell, John Cowper and Llewelyn Powys, Marinetti, and John Middleton Murry. Many of them were unknown aspirants to literary success; others, like T. Sturge Moore, contributed because no other journal was willing to publish some of their works;¹ a few, like Marinetti, used the magazine's hospitality to expound their own gospels of Art and Life. Their contributions were important in that they provided a cross-section of contemporary literary activity.

The preceding lists of contributors provide a general picture of the scope of the magazine during these years. Many of their contributions are still interesting in and of themselves or in relation to specific disciplines, but have no place in a general discussion of the magazine itself. In the following pages we shall be concerned first with the new cultural trends which asserted themselves in *The New Age* during these years and their relation to the literary

¹ In a letter to *The New English Weekly*, VI (15 Nov. 1934), 120, T. Sturge Moore says that no one else was willing to publish his 'Aesthetic Aims', which appeared in an 'Art Supplement' to *The New Age*, VI (7 Apr. 1910), 6-7.

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development of the period. Next we shall examine in detail the discussions of poetry that appeared in the magazine between 1908 and 1914, and their importance in the development of the new noetic methods that emerged during these years. And finally, we shall survey the frenzied outburst of artistic activity just before the war.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CULTURAL AWAKENING

ONE of the most interesting aspects of *The New Age* is its reflection, month by month, of the prevailing mood of its time. In some cases the contributors left a record of immediate and temporary enthusiasms; over a number of months, there were often signs of important and far-reaching movements of thought. And on occasion the magazine seems to have acted as a barometer, indicating changes to come which were felt, but not yet manifest. This was especially true in 1910 and 1911. Many writers expected that a 'new age' was at hand, but had no definite conception of what it would entail. 'It is a sign of the times,' wrote Allen Upward, 'that so many of us should be busy in studying the signs of the times. In no other age since the birth of Christianity has there been manifested the same devouring curiosity about the future, and the same disposition to expect a new earth, if not a new heaven.'¹

The death of Edward VII in 1910 undoubtedly contributed to the sense of anticipation that was evident in the pre-war years. *The New Age* of 2 June 1910, contained 'Some Forecasts of the Coming Dispensation' by Gilbert Cannan, Bernard Bosanquet, and others, and an article on 'The General Mourning' by Shaw. As a representative of the revolutionary Socialists who derided monarchy and its trappings, Shaw discussed the event with characteristic levity:

¹ NA, VIII (26 Jan. 1911), 297.

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Let me end with a practical suggestion. Let the Coronation be at Stonehenge, not at Westminster Abbey. London, with London's mighty traffic, is no longer a place where pageants can be tolerated. The propaganda of Royalism, which is the purpose of these pageants, need not suffer: far more people will see them on Salisbury Plain than could be wedged behind the troops in Piccadilly; and the cinematograph will work all the better in the open.¹

Wells portentously introduced an analysis of the naval strength of Germany as compared with that of England into his discussion of the new reign.² Orage's comments on this occasion are of particular interest in light of the changes of the following years:

At each successive death of the great men who lived during the reign of Queen Victoria, the public has been instructed to believe that each was indeed the close of his age. Tennyson was the last, so was Lord Salisbury. Then it was Meredith, and only recently it was Swinburne. But all of these announcements of the real close of the Victorian Era have been premature. The last genuine link with the Victorian age has been broken with the death of King Edward VII. . . . King Edward was spiritually the mere executor of Queen Victoria. The impulse of her epoch flowed over, as it were, and merged in his reign. . . . If it is felt, as it is clearly felt, that the era of Victoria is indeed at last over, who is so bold as to dare forecast the nature of the epoch that is now opening?³

The most interesting of the predictions concerning the new era were those which expressed a belief in the imminence of a renaissance. It was expressed in its most optimistic form by Galsworthy.⁴ Pound, feeling that

¹ NA, VII (2 June 1910), 101.

² 'The New Epoch', *The Daily Mail*, 23 May 1910.

³ NA, VII (12 May 1910), 26.

⁴ 'Vague Thoughts on Art', *The Inn of Tranquillity* (London, 1912), p. 260 (this essay is dated 1911).

‘“Renaissance” is not le mot juste’, referred to the contemporary movement as a ‘Risorgimento’, a ‘Risvegliamentó’, or simply an ‘Awakening’. He thought, however, that it would originate in the United States:

When I say that I believe in the imminence of an American Renaissance, I do not by any means intend this as a peculiar tribute to the intelligence of the American people. . . . You may say that ‘The Awakening’, if it comes at all, will move from the centre outwards, and there is much to be said on this side of the question.

On the other hand, if one will study the *cinque cento* minutely, one will perhaps conclude that the earlier renaissance had two things requisite: one, an indiscriminate enthusiasm; two, a propaganda. I mean that and just that. There was behind the awakening a body of men, determined, patient, bound together informally by kindred ambitions, from which they knew that they personally could reap but little.¹

So complete was his belief in the historical parallel that he listed the ideas which he thought were the basis of the contemporary movement alongside their Renaissance counterparts (having decided, by 1915, that England was the centre of ‘the Awakening’).² Orage was somewhat less optimistic:

If I were asked upon what I rely for the renaissance of England, I should say a miracle. But it does not follow that because we cannot define the causes of miracles, miracles are not therefore to be understood. They can be understood easily enough if they are regarded as works of art instead of works of logic. . . . The miracle that may therefore be confidently anticipated in England is not necessarily one that we cannot

¹ ‘America: Chances and Remedies’, *NA*, XIII (1 May 1913), 9.

² ‘Analysis of This Decade’, *NA*, XVI (11 Feb. 1915), 409-10.

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sense in advance or cannot even deliberately create. We can both divine what it will be and prepare for its coming.¹

It is noteworthy that these expressions of confidence in the appearance of a cataclysmic transformation in the arts preceded any substantial evidence of such a change. In examining *The New Age* between 1911 and 1914, it becomes clear that this optimism had in fact moved 'from the centre outwards', that the art and thought of the Continent had provided the impetus for the changes of the following years. This impetus was transmitted not through the recognition and emulation of defined artistic canons, but as an emotion, a sudden expansion of the realm of imaginative possibility, which was to find its own forms of expression in England. Post-Impressionism, the philosophy of Bergson, psycho-analysis, and Russian culture were the sources of this emotion; collectively, they appeared to imply cultural changes of such magnitude as to justify comparisons with the Renaissance.

The first discussion of the Post-Impressionists in *The New Age* appeared in April, 1910, several months before their work was first exhibited in London. After seeing the exhibition of the '*Indépendants*' in Paris, Victor Reynolds concluded that the hope of any future for art lay in a 'return to primitive sources of inspiration, and a resemblance to such things as Aztec decoration'. After mentioning the most significant artists involved in the exhibition, he said that Picasso was 'one of the few men in modern France whose work can in any real sense be called progressive'.² When the Post-Impressionist Exhibition at London's Grafton Galleries opened in November, according to *The Annual Register*, 'unsparing ridicule [was] bestowed upon these pictures in criticisms and letters to

¹ 'Renaissance', *NA*, XI (10 Oct. 1912), 569.

² 'Art Supplement', *NA* (7 Apr. 1910), 8.

the Press’.¹ George Calderon (who earlier that year had translated *The Cherry Orchard* for the first production of a play by Chekhov in Britain) reviewed the exhibition in *The New Age*.

At the Gallery itself it is all titter and cackle; well-dressed women go about saying ‘How awful! A perfect nightmare, my dear!’ ‘Did you ever? Too killing! How they can!’ They are like dogs to music; it makes them howl, but they can’t keep away. . . . All through the galleries I am pursued by the ceaseless hee-haw of a stage duke in an eye glass. It is not a matter of artistic taste; all that it wanted is a little politeness, a little reflection that the brain that pondered between the palette and the canvas was probably as huge a one as that in your small silk hat.²

Post-Impressionism struck Calderon as a revelation, the visible manifestation of deeper levels of consciousness. He found, as had Arnold Bennett, that these pictures radically altered his views about art; in closing his article, he suggested that after seeing them one should ‘go forth and pass along the streets about and note how flat, stale and unprofitable have become all those engravings, pictures and statues in the dealers’ windows, that represent the bare photographic semblance of reality, with dramatic meanings laid on it, not drawn out from it’.³

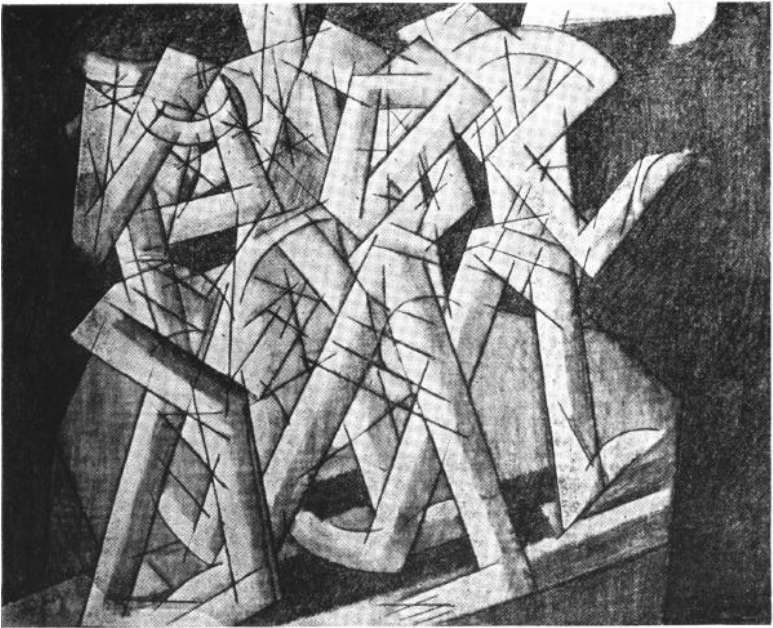
The impact of the Post-Impressionist Exhibition on the contemporary audience is registered in the letters column of *The New Age*. Ardent champions of the new art were opposed by those who damned the decadent artistic

¹ W. T. Whitley, ‘Art’, *The Annual Register*, 1910 (London, 1911), Part II, p. 100.

² NA, VIII (24 Dec. 1910), 89. (Calderon’s translation of *The Cherry Orchard* was first performed by the Glasgow Repertory Theatre; in 1911, it was performed in London by the Stage Society.)

³ NA, VIII (24 Dec. 1910), 90.

2 April 1914



9. CHINNERETH by David Bomberg

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anarchism of which it was a product; one month after Calderon's review appeared, the controversy had grown until it occupied two full pages of the magazine. This, however, was only the beginning. In November 1911, *The New Age* reproduced a Cubist 'Study' by Picasso. As the exhibition of 1910 had contained only one of his paintings and no works which could be called Cubist, this 'study' aroused an even greater furore. G. K. Chesterton wrote:

The eulogists of the latest artistic insanities (Cubism and Post-Impressionism and Mr Picasso) . . . circulate a piece of paper on which Mr Picasso has had the misfortune to upset the ink and tried to dry it with his boots, and they seek to terrify democracy by the good old anti-democratic muddlements: that 'the public' does not understand these things. . . .¹

A correspondent expressed himself even more forcefully:

While there are any deeper depths of degradation, inanity, or of sheer lunacy to be gone through the Continental anarchists will drag the dishevelled Gods of Art through them. I saw the Post-Impressionists had nearly touched bottom, and have been curious to see the next step of the downward movement. So we are indebted to you, Sir, for giving us an idea, in black and white, of the latest of the dying gasps of art. Post-Impressionism represented the art of the lunatic asylum fairly well; Picassoism represents a step lower; ingenuity will not stop there, and we may expect even worse things next year; but, fortunately, the law will prevent the last step from being taken-on this side of the channel.²

The ensuing controversy continued in the letters column for over two months, during which time *The New Age* contained reproductions of works by Herbin, de Segonzac, and Ben Zies.

¹ NA, X (14 Dec. 1911), 158 (quoted from *The Daily News*).

² NA, X (30 Nov. 1911), 119.

The immediate and most important effect of Post-Impressionism on sensitive members of the contemporary audience, to judge from the remarks of Calderon and Arnold Bennett, was to give them a visual shock which changed the appearance of other works of art and the world itself. Some attempted to find an aesthetic theory which would clarify the relationship between Post-Impressionism and post-Renaissance art as a whole. John Middleton Murry explained Cubism by relating it to Plato’s theory of forms; others found in Post-Impressionism the triumph of self-expression over external impressions, of individuality over reality.¹ Still another view, one which T. E. Hulme was to expound three years later, is expressed in an article by G. F. Abbott entitled ‘The New Laocoon’. Western art, he says, has constantly been declining since the time of Giotto as a result of its ever-increasing realism; the otiose contemporary novel is a product of a parallel literary degeneration.

It is the essence of art to be unlike Nature—it is her mission to improve nature: by idealizing the real to realize the ideal. . . . In both Greek and Roman literature the terms ‘Art’ and ‘Nature’ are always used antithetically. . . . Modern Europe’s misfortune is that she has forgotten this principle, and that she has consequently lost all correct sense of the beautiful. Realism has played Mephistopheles with European Art. We constantly aim at the natural and usually achieve the hideous. Realism, forsooth! . . . What man of culture and delicate feeling would give sixpence for the most faultless pictorial imitation?²

He concludes that the future of European art lies in the development of a formalism such as one finds in the art of

¹ J. M. Murry, ‘The Art of Pablo Picasso’, *NA*, X (30 Nov. 1911), 115; Huntley Carter, ‘The Post-Savages’, *NA*, VIII (15 Dec. 1910), 137.

² *NA*, VIII (5 Jan. 1911), 225.

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the East, and sees the Post-Impressionists as indicative of such a trend.

It is interesting to find that Abbott, like Arnold Bennett, thought that Post-Impressionism had literary implications. Another contributor, Katherine Mansfield, later said that two of the Van Gogh paintings in the exhibition taught me something about writing, which was queer, a kind of freedom—or rather, a shaking free. When one has been working for a long stretch one begins to narrow one's vision a bit, to fine things down too much. And it's only when something else breaks through, a picture or something seen out of doors, that one realizes it.¹

Traces of the influence of the exhibition can be found in stories that she wrote during the following year. 'The sky was indigo blue, and a great many stars were shining: our little ship stood black and sharp in the clear air' (indigo skies are a product of art, not nature); 'There were sudden pools of light in the darkness'—the influence of Van Gogh is evident, at least in descriptive passages.² The new art also gained adherents among poets; volumes entitled *Post-Impressionist Poems* and *Cubist Poems* soon appeared.³ The Imagists associated themselves with its notoriety by saying that they were 'contemporaries of the Post-Impressionists and the Futurists'.⁴ One of them, John Gould Fletcher, said that during these years 'the prodigality of Post-Impressionist pictures . . . [was] working on me to fortify me in my determination to forget every rule and

¹ Quoted by Antony Alpers, *Katherine Mansfield* (London, 1954), pp. 135-6.

² 'The Journey to Bruges', *NA*, IX (24 Aug. 1911), 402.

³ Horace Holly, *Creation: Post-Impressionist Poems* (London, 1914); Max Weber, *Cubist Poems* (London, 1914).

⁴ F. S. Flint, 'Imagisme', *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, I (Mar. 1913), 199.

precedent, and to bring out a poetry which would follow . . . the inner rhythm of my own moods, and not some preconceived outer pattern imposed by my mind upon nature’.¹

Scarcely had the cultural life of England recovered from the shock of Post-Impressionism when another, of almost equal magnitude, arrived. Using the *Reader’s Guide to Periodical Literature* as a rough indication of contemporary interests, we find that between 1905 and 1910 no articles on Bergson were published in the seventeen English periodicals indexed in that work; in the following four years, however, over thirty appeared. The immediate cause of his popularity in England seems to have been the lectures he delivered here during the summer of 1911. In November of that year, T. E. Hulme wrote: ‘There have been stirring times lately for those peculiar people amongst us who take an interest in metaphysics. We have not been able to buy even a sporting evening paper without finding in it an account of a certain famous philosopher.’² Whereas the notoriety of the Post-Impressionists resulted largely from the delight people took in deriding the eccentricities of their pictures, Bergson enjoyed a genuine popular success.

Hulme introduced readers of *The New Age* to Bergson’s works in 1909, and two years later wrote five lengthy articles entitled ‘Notes on Bergson’, explaining in personal terms his reasons for embracing the new philosophy. As these articles have been reprinted and recently discussed at length,³ there is no need to comment upon them here,

¹ *Life Is My Song* (New York, 1937), p. 64.

² ‘A Personal Impression of Bergson’, reprinted in Alun R. Jones, *The Life and Opinions of Thomas Ernest Hulme* (London, 1960), p. 205, from *The Saturday Westminster Gazette*.

³ *Further Speculations*, ed. Sam Hynes (Minneapolis, Minn., 1955); they are discussed by Jones.

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except to note the historical significance of Bergson's central concepts as Hulme saw it. 'The growth of the mechanistic theory during the last two centuries,' he says,

has put a weapon of such a new and powerful nature into the hands of the materialists, that in spite of oneself one is compelled to submit. . . . It isn't simply a question of what you would like to win. It is a matter simply of the recognition of forces. If you are candid with yourself you find, on examining your state of mind, that you are forcibly, as it were, carried on to the materialist side.

It is from this frank recognition of forces that comes my excitement about Bergson. I find, for the first time, this force which carries me on willy-nilly to the materialist side, balanced by a force which is, as a matter of fact, apart from what I want, able to meet on equal terms the first force. . . . It could not be said, then, of me that I had 'discovered my soul'. But simply that for the first time the side that I favoured was able to meet fairly and without any fudging the real force which was opposed to it.¹

In reading these articles, we find that for Hulme, the question of whether or not the universe is a mechanism was charged with spiritual significance. When, as he sat on the cliffs of Dorset reading *Les Données Immédiates de la Conscience*, he intuitively realized the central meaning of Bergson's philosophy, the moment was charged with an emotion which 'put an end to an intolerable state. . . . I felt . . . an almost physical sense of exhilaration, a sudden expansion, a kind of mental explosion'.² It is unlikely that many of his contemporaries underwent an experience of such intensity on reading Bergson. Nevertheless, the

¹ 'Notes on Bergson, III', *NA*, X (23 Nov. 1911), 80.

² *NA*, X (23 Nov. 1911), 80. The information regarding the circumstances of Hulme's discovery of Bergson (in 1907) is from an interview with F. S. Flint, Nov. 1959.

apprehensions of those who had watched with dismay as science encroached on the last stronghold of religion, the soul, were certainly relieved on being told that there was nothing to fear, that their intuitions gave the lie to the mechanistic theory. And the arts, whose claims to ‘truth’ had been undermined by science, found in intuition a theoretical basis which gave them renewed vitality.

Bergson’s philosophy lent itself to two types of literary application. First, in encouraged individuality, as witnessed by the following passage from *Rhythm*:

The philosophy of Bergson has of late come to a tardy recognition in England, in France it is a living artistic force. It is the open avowal of the supremacy of the intuition, of the spiritual vision of the artist in form, in words and meaning. He has shown that the concepts of the reason, while the reason remains untrue to itself, fail before the fact of Life. . . . [Intuition] is the triumph of personality, the culmination and not the negation of the reason.¹

The New Age was not sympathetic towards this point of view; an aesthetic which exalted personality was acceptable neither to Hulme nor to Orage. But the artistic implications of Bergson’s psychology attracted the attention of many who wrote for the magazine. His predication of the existence of an inner flux of unrealized memories, thoughts, and emotions could be used as the basis of a new aesthetic, and pointed the way to new literary methods. Hulme used this conception in his explanation of the source of art: ‘The creative artist, the innovator, leaves the level where things are crystallized out into . . . definite shapes, and, diving down into the inner flux, comes back with a new shape which he endeavours to fix.’ In 1913, Hulme noted that the phrase ‘the stream of the inner life’

¹ J. M. Murry, ‘Art and Philosophy’, *Rhythm*, I (Summer, 1911), 9.

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had by then become a familiar one.¹ Henceforth, art depended more and more for its validity not upon its correspondence to reality, but upon its accuracy as a representation of the 'inner life'.

Thus we pass from the realm of philosophy to that of psychology, which, if not a major influence on writers during these years, was very soon to become one. The progress that had been made in that field since Macbeth had said 'Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?' was summarized by Wells in 1913 :

Psychology, like sociology, is still largely in the scholastic stage, it is ignorant and intellectual, a happy refuge for the lazy industry of pedants; instead of experience and accurate description and analysis it begins with the rash assumption of elements and starts out upon ridiculous syntheses. Who with a sick soul would dream of going to a psychologist?²

1913 marked the appearance of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, the first of Freud's books to be published in England. But the circulation of this volume was limited

¹ *Speculations*, ed. Herbert Read (London, 1936), pp. 201, 149.

² *The Passionate Friends* (London, 1913), p. 195. H. G. Wells recognized the need of a new outlook in psychology earlier than did most of his contemporaries. In *Tono-Bungay* (1908) he had written, 'I sometimes think that all the life of man sprawls abed, careless and unkempt, until it must needs clothe and wash itself and come forth seemly in act and speech for the encounter with one's fellow men. I suspect that all things unspoken in our souls partake somewhat of the laxity of delirium and dementia.' And in *The New Machiavelli* (1911): 'It is one of the curious neglected aspects of life how at the same time and in relation to the same reality we can have in our minds streams of thought at quite different levels. We can be at the same time idealizing a person and seeing and criticizing that person quite coldly and clearly, and we slip unconsciously from level to level and produce all sorts of inconsistent acts.' His sporadic attempts to record such aspects of experience in his novels do not seem to have influenced his Contemporaries.

to ‘Members of the Medical, Scholastic, Legal, and Clerical professions’,¹ and it was not until one year later, with the publication of *On Dreams* (translated by M. D. Eder), that some of his ideas were made available to the public at large. Psycho-analysis did not immediately achieve the notoriety that had been accorded to Post-Impressionism and Bergson. An incident which occurred at the annual meeting of the British Medical Association in 1911 indicates that it was slow to win even professional recognition. On this occasion, Dr Eder, a frequent contributor to *The New Age*, read a paper on his psycho-analytic treatment of a case of hysteria and obsession before the Neurological Section of the Association. When he had finished speaking, ‘the chairman and the entire audience rose and stalked out without a word’.²

‘With his remarkable flair for spotting new ideas of significance in almost any field of human endeavour,’ says Rowland Kenney, ‘Orage had grasped the importance of psycho-analysis, and given space to Dr M. D. Eder, one of the pioneers in this country, and to others interested in it. . . . When *The New Age* began to deal with the subject openly in its columns psycho-analysis was anathema.’³ Freud’s name was first mentioned in *The New Age* in 1912. Early that year A. E. Randall, who frequently reviewed books on abnormal psychology, contributed an article entitled ‘The Heart of Hamlet’s Mystery’, which was largely a summary of Ernest Jones’s now-famous analysis of the play. Randall explained the basic structure

¹ A ‘Publisher’s Note’ to this effect is contained in the copy of this work in the British Museum: *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. A. A. Brill (London, 1913).

² Dr Edward Glover, ‘Eder as Psycho-Analyst’, in J. B. Hobman, et al., *David Eder: Memoirs of a Modern Pioneer* (London, 1945), p. 89.

³ *Westering* (London, 1939), p. 323.

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of the Oedipus complex, and said that the theories which Jones employed were a product of the investigations of 'Freud and his school'.¹ Although it would take considerable research to prove that his article was the first concerning Freud's work to appear in England, it was certainly one of the first to appear in a non-professional journal. *The New Age* devoted increasing attention to his works as they gradually appeared in English. 'M. B. Oxon' (Lewis Wallace), an occasional contributor, wrote a series of articles criticizing Freud's methods and conclusions, but psycho-analysis had found an ardent defender in Randall, who replied to each of his arguments in detail. At the same time Randall supported Jones's thesis concerning *Hamlet* in a running debate with Orage, who accepted the basic concepts of psycho-analysis but felt that there were dangers in applying them to the interpretation of literature.² These controversies, occurring in 1914, undoubtedly drew attention to the scanty literature then available on the subject. Within a few years several psycho-analysts were contributing to the magazine, and Janko Lavrin was demonstrating how their conclusions could be profitably applied to a study of Dostoevsky. At least one contemporary author has cited *The New Age* as the main source of his knowledge of psycho-analysis.³

The issues of *The New Age* appearing between 1911 and 1914 reveal one further contemporary interest which deserves brief mention. 'Everybody nowadays with any degree of culture,' observed one writer, 'is aware of the fact that some of the best literature, some of the most polished prose and refined taste in letters is essentially

¹ NA, X (15 Feb. 1912), 377-8.

² NA, XV (16 July-1 Oct. 1914).

³ James Bridie, *One Way of Living* (London, 1939), p. 242.

Russian.'¹ In 1911, Russian supremacy in another cultural field was acknowledged: the St Petersburg Ballet, which, according to Bennett, 'produced something in its ensemble more beautiful than was ever before produced upon the stage',² took London by storm. (Every event of cultural significance during these years seems to have had its poet, and a volume entitled *Poems to Pavlova*, some of which had previously appeared in *The New Age*, shows that the Russian Ballet was no exception.)³ This period also marked the introduction of the word 'intelligentsia' into the English language; it appeared in *The New Age* in 1913, one year before its first recorded use in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.⁴

Arnold Bennett's efforts to bring Russian literature to the attention of English writers were discussed in the preceding chapter. The characters in the novels of 'the convulsed and terror-haunted Dostoievsky', those 'strange beasts in a menagerie or damned souls knocking themselves about in the stuffy darkness of mystical contradictions', as Conrad described them,⁵ exposed the young to a world entirely different from that represented in the success story of George Ponderevo and the life history of

¹ J. B. Burke, *NA*, XVI (14 Jan. 1915), 270.

² *NA*, IX (29 June 1911), 202.

³ A. T. Cull, *Poems to Pavlova* (London, 1912).

⁴ 'Since it is the legal custom of the youth of Intelligencia to visit a consulting psychologist on attaining their majority, we will give a brief description of one such visit.' Harold Lister, 'A Visit to the Doctor', *NA*, XIII (2 Oct. 1913), 659. Ashley Dukes had described the Russian 'intelligence' in the magazine in 1910. The credit for introducing the word in its Russian form and first applying it to English culture, however, must go to Maurice Baring: 'Russian Intelligentsia', *The Eye-Witness*, II (11 Jan. 1912), 112-13.

⁵ Joseph Conrad, 'Foreword', *Turgenev*, by Edward Garnett (London, 1917), pp. viii-ix.

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the Baines sisters. A new violence was manifest in the almost plotless short stories that appeared in *The New Age* during these years. A young servant girl bludgeons a baby to death so that she will be able to sleep undisturbed; a man rushes his wife back to England, whereby she loses her life, in order that his child will be born on English soil; a French peasant who beats his wife as a matter of course is agonizingly perplexed and becomes incurably melancholy when she is injured in an accident. These stories, by Katherine Mansfield, W. L. George, and Wyndham Lewis respectively,¹ are typical. Wyndham Lewis acknowledged that Russian literature was a decisive influence on the stories he wrote during these years; the influence of Chekhov is evident in the seeming inconsequence and the sharply delineated detail of Katherine Mansfield's earliest works.²

When *The New Age* rejected the realistic techniques of the socially conscious writers whom it had championed during its early years, it was left without a clearly defined literary programme. Between 1911 and 1914, it absorbed a number of new cultural forces and became the haven of the new writers and artists who emerged just before the war. The new contributors were, on the whole, individualist rather than collectivist; they displayed little interest

¹ 'Bavarian Babies. The Child-Who-Was-Tired', *NA*, VI (24 Feb. 1910), 396-8; 'The Patriot', *NA*, VIII (2 Feb. 1911), 323-4; 'Brobdingnag', *NA*, 'Literary Supplement' (5 Jan. 1911), pp. 2-3.

² Wyndham Lewis, *Rude Assignment* (London, 1950), pp. 144-6. Although six books by Dostoevsky had been translated into English before the turn of the century (most of these having been published by E. A. Vizetelly), his influence on English writers other than Lewis, before the appearance of Constance Garnett's translation of *The Brothers Karamazov* in 1912, seems to have been negligible. The best brief account of Dostoevsky's influence before 1916 is still Arnold Bennett's 'Adventures Among Russian Fiction', loc. cit.

in the political, social, and economic ideas that had animated their predecessors; artistically, they were expressionists rather than impressionists, in the general sense of these terms. A similar spirit was manifest in the art and thought of the Continent before it appeared in England. Its origins involve such complicated cultural interrelationships (scientific theory here being included as an integral part of culture) that any attempt to identify certain factors as ‘causal’ leads inevitably to oversimplification. In some sense, the audience that welcomed Post-Impressionism and Bergson to England must have been prepared for their coming; and the fact that English art and literature of the succeeding decade were to find their own new forms of expression testifies more to a kinship of spirit, a common impetus to artistic experimentation, than to a mechanical transmission of ‘influences’.

CHAPTER IX

THE ORIGINS OF IMAGISM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Alone in a room
Deserted—
A peony.

Or

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

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

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

¹ NA, III (11 July 1908), 212-13.

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

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

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

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

¹ NA, IV (26 Nov. 1908), 95.

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The first poem in *Mirrors of Illusion* is entitled 'Image'. It has been quoted by Professor Isaacs in his discussion of the origins of Imagism, but is sufficiently short and significant to warrant repetition here:

Forsaken lovers,
Burning to a chaste white moon,
Upon strange pyres of loneliness and drought.

Another poem in this volume manifests those qualities of 'originality and freshness of feeling' that are often cited as characterizing the poems of T. E. Hulme:

One night I saw a theatre,
Faint with foamy sweet,
And crinkled loveliness
Warm in the street's cold side.¹

In 1909, Flint said that in *Mirrors of Illusion*, Storer was 'aiming at a form of expression, like the Japanese, in which an image is the resonant heart of an exquisite moment'.² (This later statement, with its reference to the 'image', may have been influenced by intervening discussions among members of the forgotten school.)

We have practically no verifiable information regarding Hulme's ideas and activities during 1908. Hulme's biographers have accepted Flint's assertion that Hulme was responsible for founding the Poets' Club in that year—an assertion contradicted by Henry Simpson, its first president.³ An account of one of its meetings appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette* of 17 June 1907, several months prior to Hulme's return from the Continent late in 1907. Internal evidence indicates that Hulme's 'Lecture on Modern

¹ 'Street Magic', *Mirrors of Illusion* (London, 1909), p. 30.

² NA, VI (9 Dec. 1909), 137.

³ F. S. Flint, 'The History of Imagism', *The Egoist*, II (1 May 1915), 70; interview with Mr Simpson, 1959.

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

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

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

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

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

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

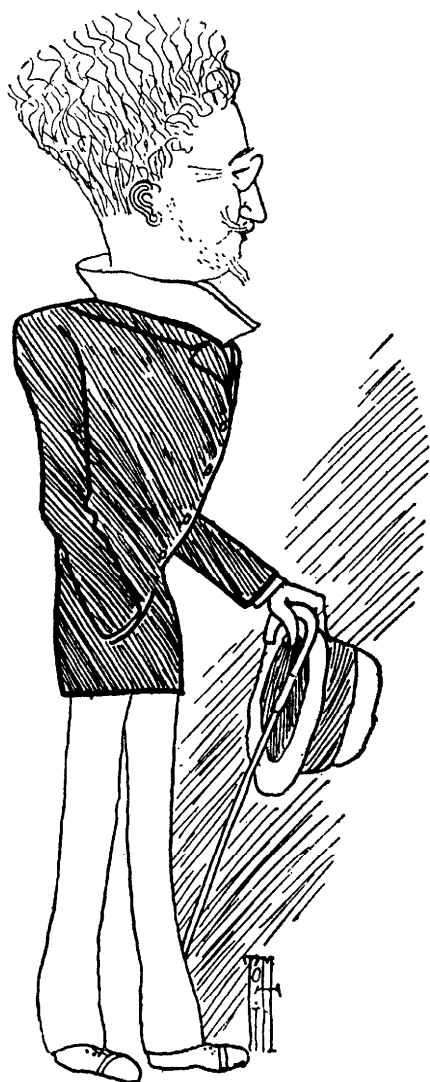
Mr Pound is a poet with a distinct personality, he is a rebel against all conventions except sanity; there is something robustly impish and elfish about him. He writes with fresh beauty and vigour; and revolting against the crepuscular spirit in modern poetry cries:

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

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

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

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



10. MR EZRA POUND

THE ORIGINS OF IMAGISM

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

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

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

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

¹ NA, V (27 May 1909), 101.

² NA, VI (6 Jan. 1910), 233-4.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This desire to create an organic relationship between

¹ *Mirrors of Illusion*, pp. 106-7.

THE ORIGINS OF IMAGISM

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

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

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

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

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

¹ *Further Speculations*, pp. 689.

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

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

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

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

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

The range of rhythmic exploration in Hulme’s poems is

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The dawn whiteness.

A bank of slate-grey cloud lying heavily over it.

The moon, like a hunted thing, dropping into a cloud.²

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

A thousand feet up: twilight.

Westwards, a clump of firtrees silhouetted against a bank of cumulus cloud;

The June aglow like a sea behind. . . .

A falcon wheeling overhead

The moon rising.

The damp smell of the night in my nostrils.³

The Mountainy Singer, which was probably in press before

¹ Hutchins, p. 128.

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

³ *The Mountainy Singer*, p. 9.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

² *NA*, VI (6 Jan. 1910), 234.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Consider, for example, the following passages:

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

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

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

Many examples displaying an equal concern with the

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

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

II. T. E. HULME AND THE ‘IMAGE’

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ NA, V (19 Aug. 1909), 315.

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

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

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

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

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

¹ *Further Speculations*, p. 73.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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III. EZRA POUND AND 'IMAGISME'

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

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

¹ NA, X (25 Jan. 1912), 307.

² Letter from Pound, 20 June 1959.

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

⁴ NA, X (30 Nov. 1911), 107.

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

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

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

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

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

² NA, X (7 Dec. 1911), 130.

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

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

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

¹ NA, X (15 Feb. 1912), 370.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹ *NA*, XVI (28 Jan. 1915), 349-50.

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

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

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

Imagism was a product of this cultural atmosphere.

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

² NA, XVI (11 Feb. 1915), 411.

CHAPTER X

OTHER MOVEMENTS

IMAGISM was selected for extended treatment in the preceding chapter because contributors to *The New Age* played such an important part in its development. But it was only one of a number of movements which contributed to the increasing exuberance of what Wyndham Lewis called the 'big bloodless brawl prior to the Great Bloodletting'.¹ Marinetti's energetics, the new school of English artists, *Blast* and the Vortex, and, as a symbol of the transition between pugnacious aesthetics and the European holocaust, Hulme with his brass knuckles, saying that the most appropriate method of dealing with one of his intellectual opponents would be 'a little personal violence'²—all left their mark on *The New Age* during this period.

On 1 March 1912, nearly two years after the arrival of Post-Impressionism, another artistic movement, this one of more journalistic than cultural interest, made its appearance in London. The Futurist exhibition at the Sackville Gallery which opened on that date was the first of a series of assaults which Marinetti made on the 'passéiste' sensibility of England during the following two years. In a letter to Douglas Goldring's short-lived periodical *The Tramp*, Marinetti had explained the principles of his movement in 1910,³ but it attracted little attention

¹ *Blasting and Bombardiering* (London, 1937), p. 39.

² NA, XIV (25 Dec. 1913), 252. Hulme's brass knuckles were carved for him by Gaudier-Brzeska.

³ *The Tramp*, I (Aug. 1910), 487.

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in England before his arrival with the exhibition of 1912. His lecture of 19 March 1912, was satirized in *The New Age* one week later, and after interviewing him, one contributor concluded that Futurism had little to offer to contemporary art.¹ This did not deter Marinetti from contributing to the magazine, however, and two of his pronunciamientos on poetry appeared in its pages.

The essential elements of Futurism are summarized in one of his contributions, 'Geometrical and Mechanical Splendour in Words at Liberty':

We have already hastily dismissed the grotesque funeral of passéiste beauty (romantic, symbolist and decadent) whose essential elements were wild picturesqueness, yearning for solitude, multicoloured disorder, crepuscular darkness, corrosion, wear and tear and grime of time, the deep track of the years, the crackling of ruins, musty smells, taste of putrefaction, pessimism, consumption, suicide, the coquetteries of agony and the adoration of death.

From this chaos of new and contradictory sensations there is born today a new beauty which we shall substitute for the former, and which I call GEOMETRIC AND MECHANICAL SPLENDOUR. . . . My futurist senses first realized this geometric splendour on the bridge of a Dreadnought: the speeds of the ship, the distance of the shots calculated at a great distance from the bridge in the fresh breeze of warlike probabilities. . . . I had noted several times, whilst spending some afternoons in the battery De Suni at Sidi-Messri, in October, 1911, how the geometric and mechanical splendour of a luminous aggressive flight, inflamed by the sun and by the quick firing, renders the spectacle of human flesh mangled or dying nearly negligible. . . .²

Futurism glorified speed, machinery, war ('the only hygiene of the world'), 'the somersault, the smack in the

¹ NA, X (28 Mar. 1912), 524; XII (21 Nov. 1912), 63-4.

² NA, XV (7 May 1914), 16.

face, and the blow of the fist’.¹ In poetry, its principles led to typographical ingenuities which make those of the Dadaists and Surrealists look unimaginative; Marinetti’s articles in *The New Age* are largely devoted to an explanation of the principles underlying his unintelligible poems. The ‘literature’ produced by Futurism, apart from its manifestoes, seems to have excited little interest in England. Its art, however, was sufficiently novel to provoke both criticism and emulation (C. R. W. Nevinson becoming one of Marinetti’s few English disciples).² As no Cubist pictures were exhibited in England before the second Post-Impressionist exhibition in the autumn of 1912, Futurism, having arrived in March of that year, had the fortuitous advantage of appearing more novel than it actually was.

With new styles and manifestoes more profuse than creative works to justify their creation, *The New Age* had the good fortune to obtain as its art critic Walter Sickert. Although his predilection for the Impressionistic tradition of which he was a product may have blinded him to some of the virtues of more recent styles, he was at least able to present, week after week, a coherent criticism of modern art based on long and careful thought. Many of the articles which he contributed between 1910 and 1915 have been republished in book form;³ the following extract from one of them illustrates his attitude towards Marinetti and other innovators of his time.

Modern painting has incurred an immense debt to three

¹ Marinetti’s ‘Credo’, quoted by F. S. Flint, ‘Contemporary French Poetry’, *The Poetry Review*, I (Aug. 1912), 411.

² One of Nevinson’s Futurist lectures, ‘Vital English Art’ (delivered at the Doré Galleries, 12 June 1914) was printed in *The New Age*, XV (18 June 1914), 160-2, and satirized in the same issue.

³ W. Sickert, *A Free House!*, ed. Osbert Sitwell (London, 1947).

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men living, a debt that it would be impossible to overstate. Signor Marinetti has hurried his little troop of painters through, and past all representative effort, to the reductio ad absurdum of statues, built up of cigarettes, and of paintings, with eye-brows and half a moustache, of Clarkson's crape-hair. . . . The arch-fumiste Picasso, wearied of what was undeniably clever-doing, has also landed his art in canvases where bits of cloth, and bits of tin, and bits of glass stuck on to their surfaces, recall in less amusing fashion, the tinsel of our grandfathers. . . . Our third benefactor has been Mr Roger Fry, the critic. I wonder if Mr Fry has not now and again qualms of regret. . . . Was it worth while to divert a whole choir of innocents from serious study to the elaboration of a fruitless game at spelicans on canvas? The Neo-pied Piper of Fitzroy Square, may he not still perhaps repent, and lead his little flock of peculiar people back to the impregnable rock of common sense?

To criticism, at least, these three men, Marinetti, Picasso, and Roger Fry, have done incalculable service. They have demonstrated, in four or five years, with the rapidity of a galloping consumption, where lies a blind-alley. Up that cul-de-sac, at least, criticism need spend no time in wandering. To that extent they have helped us in our orientation towards progress.¹

The virtues of the representative technique he favoured were well exemplified in his own drawings, a number of which appeared in *The New Age*.

But Sickert did not monopolize the discussion of art in the magazine, nor were reproductions of works by those he criticized excluded from its pages. A new school of artists was emerging in England, and *The New Age* did more than any other pre-war periodical to call attention to their works. In 1912, at the height of the controversy about Epstein's Oscar Wilde Memorial, *The New Age*,

¹ 'Transvaluations', *NA*, XV (14 May 1914), 35.

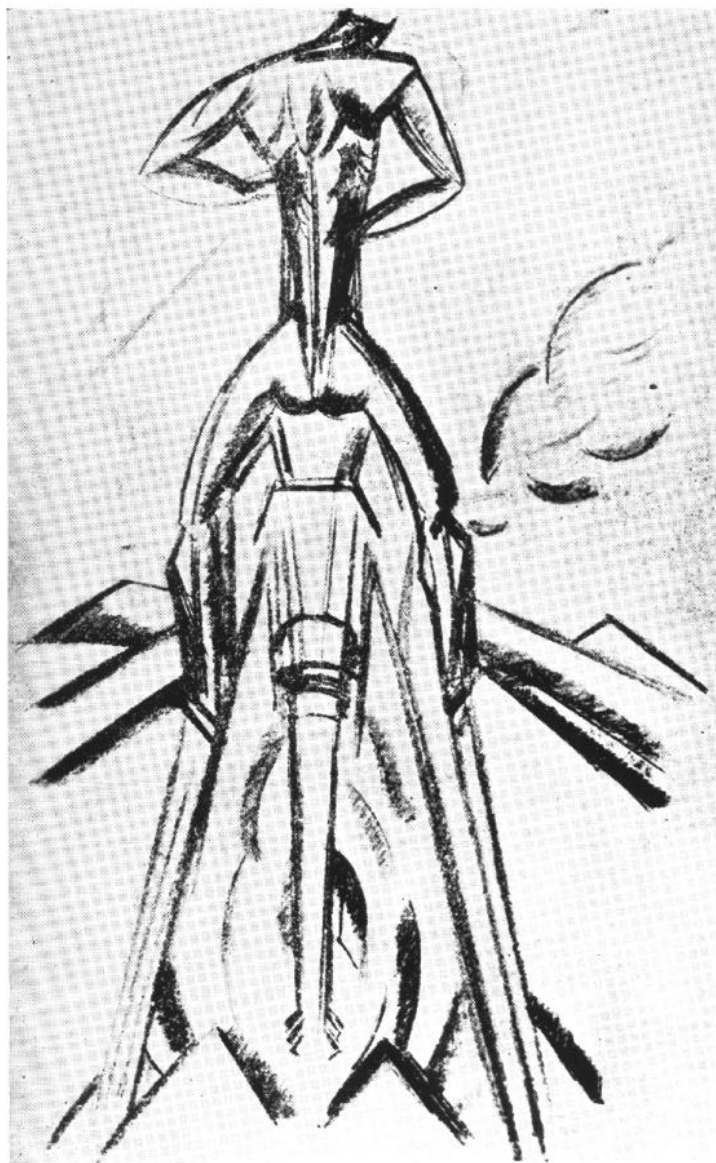
which had defended his Strand Statues from similar attacks in 1908, contained a full page gloss reproduction of that work.¹ In the next two years, it printed an increasing number of works by modern artists: one of Epstein’s sketches for his ‘Rock-Drill’, drawings and paintings by Gaudier-Brzeska, David Bomberg, Wyndham Lewis, C. R. W. Nevinson, Edward Wadsworth, and William Roberts. A number of these appeared in a series entitled ‘Contemporary Drawings’, edited and annotated by T. E. Hulme. These experiments in hieratic and aniconic design were anathema to Sickert, who had inaugurated a series of ‘Modern Drawings’ by the Camden Town Group a few months earlier.² Often he would refer to his opponents as if they were scarcely worth his serious attention, as when he attempted to explain the creative process, ‘Hulme and Bergson and all incomprehensible bedevilments and obfuscations and convolutions and Rogerisms apart’.³ On one occasion, he was more direct:

We hear a great deal about non-representative art. But while the faces of the Persons suggested are frequently nil, non-representation is forgotten when it comes to the sexual organs. Witness Mr Wyndham Lewis’s [Epstein’s] ‘creation’, exhibited at Brighton, Mr Gaudier-Brzeska’s drawing in last week’s *New Age*, and several of Mr Epstein’s later drawings. . . . So that the Pornometric gospel amounts to this. All visible nature with two exceptions is unworthy of study, and to be considered pudendum. The only things worthy of an artist’s attention are what we have hitherto called the pudenda! *Solvuntur risu tabulae*.⁴

¹ NA, XI (6 June 1912). The ‘Strand Statues’ were executed for the British Medical Association Building, which is now known as Rhodesia House.

² These series appeared Jan.-June 1914.

³ NA, XIV (19 Mar. 1914), 632. ⁴ NA, XIV (26 Mar. 1914), 65.



12. THE ROCK DRILL by Jacob Epstein

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The grounds of his attack were, perhaps, ill-chosen. Wyndham Lewis replied in the following issue:

Mr Walter Sickert, for 20 or 30 years, was the scandal of the neighbourhood (as a painter) and he was very proud of it. His bedroom realism, cynical and boyish playfulness with Mrs Grundy, his French 'légèreté' (as he would write), all marked him out as a Bohemian plague-spot on clean English life—part, indeed of that larger Yellow plague-spot, edited by Arthur Symons. But now he has survived his sins, and has sunk into the bandit's mellow and peaceful maturity. . . . As for phallic aesthetics, I have no quarrel with them, only I don't happen to participate myself, that is all: though much preferring the naked and clean thing to the boudoir suggestiveness and Yellow Book Gallicisms. . . .¹

If Sickert erred occasionally in criticizing contemporary art for the wrong reasons, at least he displayed a restraint unusual in his time by discussing aesthetics rather than personalities. The controversies that erupted with growing frequency in *The New Age* during 1913 and 1914 were often personal; it was as if the distinction between art, criticism, and intellectual activity on the one hand, and life with its friendships and animosities on the other, were disappearing. Artistic 'movements', originally intended to unite their members, brought to light new differences and ended in personal quarrels. Pound sarcastically referred to one of Hulme's lectures on modern art as 'wholly unintelligible'; Flint wrote a 'History of Imagism' inspired in part by malice towards Pound;² Richard Aldington satirized one of Pound's articles in a letter to *The New Age*, and *The Egoist*, of which Aldington was now literary editor, referred to Pound's poems in *Blast* as

¹ NA, XIV (2 Apr. 1914), 703.

² Pound, 'The New Sculpture', *The Egoist*, I (16 Feb. 1914), 67.

‘rubbish’;¹ Hulme and Lewis, both champions of the new school of English artists, were separated by a personal quarrel.² *The New Age* itself took on a petulant tone. A number of reviews consisted only of one or two contemptuous sentences; though many books may have deserved no better treatment, publishers retaliated by not sending review copies to the magazine.³ Contemporary movements and their members provided a rich supply of material for satire, and very few escaped ridicule in the section of the magazine entitled ‘Pastiche’.⁴ Intellectual aggressiveness or violence, as manifested in the assault of Wyndham Lewis and other members of the Rebel Art Centre on one of Marinetti’s meetings,⁵ was the order of the day.

The mounting truculence and frenzy of the period reached their climax with the appearance of *Blast* in June, 1914. The magazine resulted in part from ‘boredom with that feeble Europeanism, abasement of the miserable “intellectual” before anything coming from Paris, Cosmopolitan sentimentality, which prevails in so many quarters’.⁶ It was truculently anti-Romantic, anti-Decadent, and anti-Impressionistic. More immediately, it resulted from the activities of the Futurists; the idea of

¹ NA, XVI (21 Jan. 1915), 246; *The Egoist*, II (2 Aug. 1915), 131.

² There is an allusion to the fight between Lewis and Hulme in *The New Age*, XIV (26 Mar.; 16 Apr. 1914), 661, 767. Lewis referred to Hulme’s criticism of his work as an ‘attack’ on him: NA, XIV (2 Apr. 1914), 703.

³ NA, XII (27 Mar. 1913), 504; XVI (8 Apr. 1915), 613.

⁴ *The Egoist* and *Blast* were both satirized: NA, XV (25 June 1914), 186; (30 July 1914), 308. Several humorous poems contain allusions to Pound: NA, XVII (2 Sept. 1915), 435; XVIII (13 Apr. 1916), 572; and to Hulme: NA, XIV (12 Feb. 1914), 472.

⁵ Wyndham Lewis, *Blasting and Bombardiering*, p. 36.

⁶ ‘Manifesto, III’, *Blast*, No. 1 (20 June 1914), p. 34.

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organizing a movement would probably not have occurred to Lewis if Marinetti had not set an example.

According to Orage, *The New Age* shared with *Blast* a 'detestation of the Naturalistic or Realistic school', and of Lewis's 'Enemy of the Stars', which appeared in the first issue he wrote:

It deserves to be called an extraordinary piece of work. . . . [It] contains ideas of an almost grandiose dimension, though felt rather than thought. This, indeed, I take to be characteristic of the school—that they prefer the feeling of ideas to the clearly thinking of them.¹

But he found the other literary contributions disappointing; it was characteristic of the period that Vorticism should have a manifesto, but few creative works to exemplify it. Of the writers who contributed to the first issue, Ford did not pretend to be a Vorticist, Rebecca West did not appear to be one, and Lewis doubted that Pound was one at heart. *Blast* was a coterie magazine without a coterie.

During these years, Orage repeatedly attempted to ascertain the direction in which contemporary art and literature were moving. He felt that in order to formulate a policy, two things are necessary: carefully defined standards and 'a perceptible drift and tendency in one's age'.² Without the latter, no standards, however excellent, could be applied in such a way as to nurture the cultural life of the time; they would be dissociated from the forces shaping the future. And what, in his opinion, was the tendency of the age?

In the first place, there are practically no schools, but only cliques of writers personally but not spiritually related;

¹ NA, XV (16 July 1914), 253. ² NA, XIV (9 Apr. 1914), 722.

secondly, no common problem is posed for practical solution; thirdly, there are no currents of literary opinion. Large criticism in such a world cannot possibly be consecutive, since there is no bond of unity among the various sets of writers. Today somebody publishes a realistic novel; tomorrow somebody else publishes a romantic or an historical or a genre or a fantastic novel. How can they be related?¹

He found in some contemporary movements disquieting signs of eccentricity:

I received an invitation to the dinner hastily scratched up in honour of Signor Marinetti the Futurist by a London committee; but I should as soon think of accepting an invitation to dine with Barnum's freaks. Decadence I have often defined as the substitution of the part for the whole; and in this sense Futurism is decadence in extremis. I know that there is something to be said for Futurism and that it contains an intelligible idea. There is no rationalism to equal the rationalism of certain forms of lunacy . . . I have read Signor Marinetti's 'poems,' I have looked at Signor Marinetti's 'pictures'; and I see in both a cell of a healthy organism swollen and overgrown to cover and kill the organism itself.²

As war approached, he began to see contemporary movements as signs of 'spiritual anarchy' in modern society:

This, believe me, is not cant on my part. I am old enough to have lived through the *Yellow Book* period from its start and to have shared in every phase since . . . in what may be called their practice as well as their theories. Without boasting, I can say I have known them all. And the conclusion left in my mind is that for the last thirty years the spiritual character of our intellectuals has been declining. To what we must look for a renaissance I have often tried to say in these Notes; but I can see now . . . that *The New Age* must be more definite than ever in the future. To tell the truth, the work is

¹ NA, XV (21 May 1914), 62. ² NA, XIV (27 Nov. 1913), 113.



13. PROGRESS by Will Dyson

Post-Elliptical Rhomboidist: 'Him a modern, Bah! He paints in the old-fashioned manner of last Thursday!'

‘THE NEW AGE’ UNDER ORAGE

at present incredibly difficult. Even to think straight in these days requires an effort; as the alienist often finds it hard to perceive his sanity among his patients.¹

About 1914, says Wyndham Lewis, ‘Europe was full of titanic stirrings and snortings—a new art coming to flower to celebrate or to announce a “new age”.’² But the coming of war reduced the artistic cataclysm to insignificance, and the bravura of those few who continued to proclaim its importance sounded strangely hollow. ‘In the *Fortnightly Review*,’ Orage noted a few weeks after war was declared, ‘Mr Ezra Pound writes on “Vorticism”. Whether he knows it or not, Vorticism is dead. It was, at best, only a big name for a little thing, that in the simmering of the pre-war period suddenly became a bubble, and is now burst.’³ The hope for an artistic renaissance was not gone, but for the time being it was forgotten.

¹ NA, XV (9 July 1914), 229.

² *Blasting and Bombardiering*, pp. 255-6.

³ NA, XV (10 Sept. 1914), 449.

PART FOUR

1915-1918: THE SEARCH FOR VALUES

CHAPTER XI

GUILD SOCIALISM

THE war soon made itself felt in the literary life of London. Many writers went into the Army and several literary periodicals, including *Blast* and *Poetry and Drama*, disappeared within a few months. Marinetti returned to Italy, where he was arrested, and Futurism was forgotten in England;¹ Vorticism survived for only a few months before sinking into an oblivion from which even its founder, Wyndham Lewis, was reluctant to rescue it. Instead of heated discussions in the Café Royal and fist-cuffs between the adherents of various artistic movements, the satires in *The New Age* reflected a quieter atmosphere in the literary scene:

The apparition of Ezra at the Party
To his right the curling sandwiches
And the fruits that are somehow watching—
The apparition of Ezra
Under the tree branches triangularly waving . . .
Ezra at the Party, half friz, half nibble
Ezra talking Art. . . .²

As the younger contributors went into the Army,

¹ Geoffrey Wagner, *Wyndham Lewis* (London, 1957), p. 130.

² 'Ninon de Longclothes' (Beatrice Hastings), *NA*, XVII (2 Sept. 1915), 435.

Orage found it increasingly difficult to assemble each week's issue of *The New Age*. The following passage from a letter to A. M. Ludovici indicates his position during these years: 'I wish you would write [i.e. for *The New Age*]. So many of my older writers are either abroad or (worse) cowed by the new situation, that I'm driven to overwork and am still painfully aware that *The New Age* is not rising with the occasion. Listen to my cry from Macedonia!' ¹ In addition to doing most of the editorial work during this period, he continued to write the 'Notes of the Week' and his literary column, 'Readers and Writers'. The financial management of the magazine also became his responsibility when the New Age Press, deeply in debt, was liquidated at a shareholders' meeting in 1917. ² The costs of publication rose sharply during the war, and such funds as Orage was able to secure were not adequate to pay as many of the contributors as had been paid previously.

These difficulties did not have so great an effect on the quality of the magazine as might be expected. T. E. Hulme, M. D. Eder, and several other writers continued to contribute from the front. Those who remained in London were induced to write more frequently. Pound, in addition to reviewing art and music, wrote nearly fifty articles for *The New Age* during these years. Shaw reappeared in the magazine after a six-year absence; Belloc and Katherine Mansfield again became regular contributors. New writers were obtained: Dikran Kouyoumdjian, better known as 'Michael Arlen', contributed both fiction and criticism, and poems by 'Edward Moore' (Edwin Muir) appeared with increasing frequency. The magazine began to reap the harvest it had sown as those who had

¹ Letter dated 18 May 1917.

² NA, XX (8 Mar. 1917), 446-7.

GUILD SOCIALISM

read *The New Age* during their undergraduate years became contributors, Herbert Read, Ivor Brown, and Maurice Reckitt among them.

The new contributors were one of several factors which led to a change in the tone of the magazine following 1914. We have already seen that Orage was disturbed by the literary anarchy of the pre-war years. This was not a result of any inherent distrust of literary innovation on his part. But he was concerned by the fragmentation of literary endeavour which led cliques of writers to select their own methods and objectives without reference either to each other or to the tradition of their art. The purpose of criticism in his time, as he saw it, was to formulate a coherent set of values, based upon tradition, which would be sufficiently flexible to absorb new forms without being a weather-vane of literary novelty. This had become one of the objectives of *The New Age* as early as 1911. It was partially obscured by the literary variety of the following three years, but with the coming of war and the simultaneous decrease of interest in revolutionary artistic movements, it emerged as one of the most important aspects of the magazine's policy.

This tendency was manifest in two types of contributions. After 1911, there was a marked increase in the number of translations published in *The New Age*. 'I cannot help thinking,' Orage said, 'that it is better for a nation to "import" art than to go without it altogether; and, in fact, it is the *duty* of its critics to stimulate home-production by importing as many as possible of the best foreign models.'¹ As a corrective to the equation of love with sexual infatuation in the contemporary novel, Orage induced a contributor to translate Stendhal's *De L'Amour* (which at that time had not appeared in English) for

¹ NA, XXVII (30 Sept. 1920), 319.

serial publication in *The New Age*.¹ Renderings of passages from Aristophanes, Anacreon, the Greek Anthology, and the Latin poets of the Italian Renaissance were supplemented by articles on classical authors and an occasional column entitled 'Notes on the Classics'. Pound's translations from Arnaut Daniel and Cavalcanti awakened an interest in the neglected poets of Provence and the *dolce stil nuovo*. By 1915, translations of their works were appearing in *The New Age* nearly every week. In addition to providing young writers with an opportunity to develop their technical skills, the publication of these translations directed their attention to poetic standards worthy of emulation. On this point *The New Age* and Pound were agreed, and his articles combined with expressions of the same opinion elsewhere in the magazine to encourage the study of classic models.

Another group of contributions was intended to establish an atmosphere congenial to the development of a catholic criticism. An admirer of eighteenth century prose, Orage encouraged contributors to study the writings of Swift, Steele, and Addison as models of clarity and perspicuity. Eighteenth century literary forms such as the 'periodical essay' and the hortatory epistle were employed in the serial articles 'Philosophy of a Don' by G. F. Abbott, 'Letters to My Nephew' by 'Anthony Farley' (S. G. Hobson), and the contributions of 'Holbein Bagman' (Professor P. E. Richards), a contemporary counterpart of Sir Roger de Coverly. There is also a decidedly eighteenth century flavour in Orage's six 'Tales for Men Only', urbane commentaries on the absurdities resulting from relations between idealistic men and 'emancipated' women.² These superficial similarities

¹ 'On Love', trans. P. V. Cohn, *NA*, XVII-XVIII (26 Aug.-25 Nov. 1915).

² Appearing Aug. 1911-Nov. 1912.

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between *The New Age* and the classic examples of English journalism, *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, betray a deeper affinity which Orage consciously cultivated. He felt that the civilized rationality of the neo-classical period provided an admirable model for maintaining a sense of balance in a period of literary and cultural transition. Consequently he tried to instil this tone in his own writings and constantly recommended it to contributors.

This reference to the past for creative and critical models was part of a larger aspect of the magazine's policy during these years. In Chapter III, it was said that one of Orage's foremost editorial objectives was to create a comprehensive programme which would embrace politics, economics, and philosophy as well as the arts. It is not misleading to call this aim scholastic, for it involved a synthesis of disciplines which were at the time often treated as exclusive entities, and, more important, it was based on the assumption that all fields of thought should be subsumed under a unified theory of value. Fabian Socialism offered a radically simplified solution to the problem of the relationship between social and literary problems, one which was based upon neither an adequate conception of the part that literature plays in society nor a coherent philosophy of man. Between 1908 and 1910 *The New Age* came to reject the Fabian solution, which found its most typical literary expression in the works of Wells and Shaw. In the following years, by drawing on both the past and contemporary thought, the contributors succeeded in formulating a unified approach to political, social, and cultural problems which can be described as 'neo-classical'.¹ It is usually associated with T. E. Hulme;

¹ The term 'neo-classical' is commonly used to characterize their ideas, and it is here employed in deference to established usage. 'Neo-mediaeval' would be a better designation, for it indicates more

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but Hulme, if the best propagandist of the movement, was by no means the only writer responsible for its creation. Many of the ideas which began to appear in his contributions to *The New Age* in 1915 had been discussed in the magazine during the preceding four years by Allen Upward, J. M. Kennedy, and Orage himself; later, they were coherently summarized by another contributor, Ramiro de Maeztu.

The origins of this movement were largely political; what began as a distrust of Socialist and Liberal objectives ended with a rejection of the ideology upon which these objectives were based. Cultural conservatism has usually been associated with reactionary politics in our century; T. E. Hulme, T. S. Eliot, and Wyndham Lewis are the three writers most often cited to illustrate this relationship. One of the unique achievements of *The New Age* was to combine a conservative theory of value with a progressive political philosophy known as Guild Socialism. It was conceived and elaborated by contributors to the magazine between 1912 and 1918, occupying a large share of Orage’s energies during this period. A brief account of its development will serve as the basis of a discussion of the magazine’s cultural conservatism, and will perhaps show that a respect for traditional values is not inevitably associated with reactionary political views.

* * *

In *Culture and Society*, Raymond Williams has discussed the nineteenth century reaction against a social structure based upon *laissez-faire* economics and its implicitly mechanistic conception of cultural inter-relationships. In

accurately the sources of the movement and the nature of its tenets. The shortcomings of the term ‘neo-classical’ are apparent in view of Hulme’s and Ramiro de Maeztu’s emphasis on original sin.

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opposition to this structure and the Liberalism which was its political expression, Ruskin, Carlyle, and Morris envisioned a society based upon 'organic' relationships. 'This conception,' says Williams,

was at one point the basis of an attack on the conditions of men in 'industrial production', the 'cash-nexus' their only active relation, and on the claims of middle-class political democracy. Meanwhile, at another point it was the basis of an attack on industrial capitalism, and on the limitations of triumphant middle-class liberalism. One kind of conservative thinker, and one kind of socialist thinker, seemed thus to use the same terms, not only for criticizing a laissez-faire society, but also for expressing the idea of a superior society. This situation has persisted, in that 'organic' is now a central term both in this kind of conservative thinking and in Marxist thinking. The common enemy (or, if it is preferred, the common defender of the true faith) is Liberalism.¹

Between 1912 and 1922, precisely the same opposition was embodied in the conflict between the Collectivist Socialists and Liberals on the one hand, and Guild Socialists and conservative Distributivists on the other. Today, this opposition has practically disappeared from politics; it has recently attracted attention in Sociology, where Max Weber's antithesis of communal (organic) and industrial (mechanistic) relationships has been employed to illuminate many aspects of social behaviour. But in so far as political philosophy transcends the political activities through which it is expressed, this opposition is of more than historical interest. The basis of our present economic and political organization is mechanistic; and since certain forces in the machine (for example, those involving relations between employers—including the State—and employees) are opposed, and there is no

¹ *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (London, 1961), p. 146.

mechanistic solution for this conflict, breakdowns are inevitable. If some day the human and economic waste resulting from this situation should prove intolerable (and only then would it attract serious consideration), one of two solutions is possible: strikes among public employees could be made illegal (as in Russia, Spain, and New York City), or alternative theories of social organization could be considered. Guild Socialism is the most recent attempt to apply the organic conception of society to modern conditions, and thus provides an interpretation of that conception which, in many respects, applies to the present.

During the first year of Orage's editorship, *The New Age* attempted to maintain strict impartiality with regard to the various factions in the Socialist camp. In common with most radical movements, Socialism included many groups with divergent objectives, and most suggestions for immediate action were buried in an avalanche of discussion which left the movement less united than it had been. Orage saw *The New Age* as a forum in which differences could be discussed and settled rationally; he hoped thereby to promote socialist unity. But events soon led him to oppose the political methods which Socialism adopted to achieve its ends, and the magazine came to pursue an entirely independent policy. He explained how this came about in a series of articles written some years later.

The predominant question of the moment [in 1908 and 1909] was the possibility of fusing the trade-union movement, which served as the basis of the Independent Labour Party, with the socialist movement; and many and strong were the advocates in the latter of a union of forces on the political field. My friends and I, however, had quite a different idea. We had no objections to the trade-unions as such. On the

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contrary . . . we attached even an exaggerated value to them. Nor, of course, had we any general, but only a particular, criticism in those days to make of the socialist groups. But one distinction between Labour politics and Socialism seemed to us to be decisive—that whereas Socialism explicitly claimed to be nationally representative, the political Labour Party was avowedly based on a single class—that of the wage-earners or proletariat. To both sections, it appeared to us, the political Labour Party was making a false appeal. The trade-unions, it is certain, were originated in response to a purely economic motive. . . . By appealing to the workers to support a parliamentary Labour Party, it seemed to us that the heads of the party were diverting them from their original object and merely trying to ride on their backs to personal power. . . . The trade-unions were to be led by the nose from the economic field where alone they could conceivably win any advantage for themselves, into the barren fields of politics; and the nation was to lose the criticism and advice of national, that is to say non-class Socialism. . . . When it came to a decision concerning the political fusion of the Fabian Society with the Labour Party, *The New Age*, after vainly supporting the ingenious proposal of Mr Ramsay MacDonald to form a Socialist representation committee, repudiated the Fabian Society, and set out to plough a lonely furrow.

Avowed opponents of political labour in any shape or form, antagonists of the Fabian Society from the moment of its surrender to class politics, our situation was, indeed, that of Ishmael.¹

Once *The New Age* had opposed the political union of socialist groups and the Labour Party, it was free to criticize aspects of their policies about which it had hitherto remained silent. The magazine soon proved itself more radical than either. It castigated the Labour members of

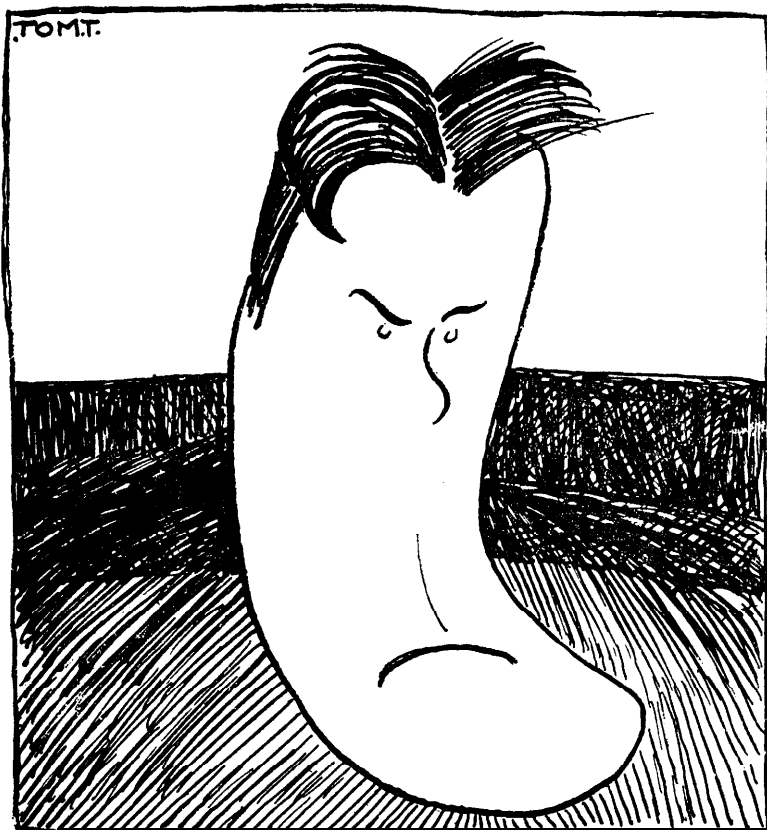
¹ 'An Editor's Progress', *NA*, XXXVIII (15 Mar. 1926), 235.

Parliament for not proposing Socialist legislation and for acting in effect as obedient supporters of the Liberal majority. Its attitude towards the Fabian Society was similar to that of Marx towards all groups working for amelioration of social evils. Although the Webbs were Socialists, they freely admitted their willingness to work with any Government that would accept their advice. As a result, the Liberal Party was credited with legislation that was socialist in origin. In the eyes of the radicals, the socialist revolution was thus delayed by its own advocates, who prolonged the existence of capitalism by palliating the worst of its abuses.

The New Age was opposed to another tendency which became manifest in the socialist movement during this period: the tendency to seek an aggrandizement of the powers of the State even when this was accomplished at the expense of traditional liberties. When, for example, the Government employed compulsory arbitration to avert a railway strike in 1907, the Fabian Society approved of its action, and in a letter to *The New Age* the Executive of the society said, ‘The nation can no more afford to let the railway industry be interrupted by the claims (however just) of the railway workers than by the obstinacy (however dignified) of the railway directors.’¹ At a meeting of the Society, Orage was among a minority opposing the stand of the Executive.² He saw in this attitude the beginnings of totalitarianism; it was but one step from saying that the nation as a whole could not afford a strike to saying that strikes were illegal. He found the same tendency in certain legislation purporting to improve the lot of the working classes. In 1911 and 1912,

¹ *NA*, II (7 Dec. 1907), 119.

² *Fabian News* (Jan. 1908); quoted by Niles Carpenter, *Guild Socialism* (New York, 1922), p. 64.



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while prices were rising faster than wages,¹ Parliament, with the support of the Labour members, enacted a National Insurance Bill which compelled workers to contribute a certain percentage of their wages towards unemployment and sickness insurance.² Again, it was the compulsory element of the Bill, attended by its unprecedented legislative distinction between wage-earners and the professional and merchant classes, that led Orage to attack it in *The New Age*.

The most incisive analysis of the anti-democratic tendencies inherent in Collectivist Socialism was made by another contributor, Hilaire Belloc. As early as 1908, he had used the phrase ‘servile state’ to describe a beneficent despotism whereby the working classes sacrificed their freedom in exchange for social welfare measures; in 1910, writing in *The New Age*, he applied the phrase to tendencies in recent legislation.³ When his book entitled *The Servile State* appeared two years later, its effect on many Socialists, especially those connected with *The New Age*, was immediate and profound. Maurice Reckitt has recorded its influence in his autobiography:

I cannot overstate the impact of this book upon my mind, and in this I was but symptomatic of thousands of others who had passed through the same phases as I had. Belloc argued, with a rigorous cogency and with forceful illustration, that the whole allegedly socialist trend, which the Fabians were so fond of boasting that they had grafted upon Liberalism, was leading not to a community of free and equal citizens, not even to any true collectivism, but to the imposition upon the

¹ ‘Great Britain Board of Trade Report, 1913’, quoted by Carpenter, p. 76.

² G. D. H. Cole, *The Second International, 1889-1914* (London, 1956), pp. 225 ff.

³ ‘The Three Issues’, *NA*, III (2 May 1908), 8-10; ‘The Servile State’, *NA*, VII (26 May 1910), 77-9.

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masses, as the price of the reforms by which their social condition was to be ameliorated, of a servile status, sundering them from the condition of those more prosperous members of the community not requiring to be subjected to such legislation. . . . That [his thesis] contained enough truth to blow the New Liberalism sky-high I was convinced.¹

Orage and Wells, who were acquainted at first hand with the tendency of the Fabian Society to consider the interests of the State—as a whole more important than freedom and justice to minority groups, accepted Belloc's argument without qualification.² In 1907, *The New Age* had declared its intention to examine the philosophic basis of Socialism; by 1912, this examination had been carried out, and the collectivist theory of the movement had been rejected.

This reaction against Collectivism was based upon ethical considerations and included criticisms of its materialism as well as its authoritarian nature. The Fabians and the Labour Party were primarily concerned with increasing the wages and improving the living conditions of the working classes. They proposed to distribute the wealth of the nation more equitably through State ownership of industries, and suggested few changes in the basic structure of industry as inherited from capitalism. From one point of view, this change would merely substitute a governmental despotism for a capitalistic one. The former would presumably be more beneficent; but were the aims of Socialism to be merely materialistic? It would seem that the nineteenth-century reaction against industrialism, with its emphasis on human as opposed to monetary values, had been forgotten. This tradition went back to Carlyle's bitter attack on industrialists who

¹ *As It Happened* (London, 1941), pp. 107-8.

² H. G. Wells, 'The Great State', *An Englishman Looks at the World* (London, 1914), p. 116.

considered the payment of wages their only obligation to employees; to Ruskin’s emphasis on social as opposed to material wealth; to William Morris and the Mediaevalist reaction, with its opposition to industrialism and insistence on the importance of art to life. It was to these ideas that contributors to *The New Age* turned in attempting to find an alternative to Collectivism.

One of Orage’s close friends, A. J. Penty, had attempted to provide an alternative to Fabian Socialism in *The Restoration of the Guild System* (1906), which evidenced a heavy debt to nineteenth-century writers, in particular Ruskin.¹ Whereas the Collectivists were primarily concerned with the distribution of wealth, Penty emphasized the problems of production. He wanted to free workers from the unrelieved tedium of mass production and restore a sense of craftsmanship which would make labour satisfying and its products beautiful. Inferior workmanship would disappear, he argued, with the establishment of guilds that set their own standards of quality, and craftsmen would receive a ‘just price’ for their work, rather than the lowest possible wage for which they could be hired by an employer. His discussion of the possibility of restoring Mediaeval guilds was conducted largely with reference to the Arts and Crafts movement.

When Penty’s book appeared, he and Orage were organizing a ‘Gilds Restoration League’, which was to take practical action in establishing guilds in the arts and crafts.² Although Orage seems to have had reservations about the mediaeval emphasis of the movement, he

¹ Penty acknowledges his debt to Ruskin, Carlyle, and Matthew Arnold in the preface to this work.

² Orage, ‘An Editor’s Progress’, *NA*, XXXVIII (25 Mar. 1926), 246. The use of the spelling ‘gild’ was characteristic of this early phase of the guild movement.

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supported its general aims in an article in the *Contemporary Review*¹ and printed a series of articles by Penty in the early numbers of *The New Age*. Several meetings of the Fabian Arts Group were devoted to discussions of the guild movement,² but it suffered an eclipse after 1908. The reasons for this are fairly obvious. While certain principles of the mediaeval guilds might be applicable to the organization of the arts and crafts, the suggestion that modern society forsake industrialism was unrealistic. In essence, Penty's ideas were scarcely distinguishable from the nostalgic mediaevalism in which Belloc and Chesterton occasionally indulged. Yet one aspect of the idea—that workers should have more control over the standards and conditions of their labour—remained alive.

In 1909, when French Syndicalism was first attracting attention in England, Orage suggested as an alternative 'the creation of guilds . . . with all the privileges as well as all the responsibilities of ancient guildsmen'.³ The industrial recession of 1908-9, followed by an increasing number of strikes in the next two years,⁴ gave renewed impetus to the attempt to incorporate the guild concept in some viable political theory. During this period, according to G. D. H. Cole, 'more and more strikes came to centre round questions which employers had hitherto refused to regard as matters for collective bargaining or negotiation. Questions of "discipline" and "management" came to the front, and formed the subject matter of many important disputes.'⁵ Early in 1912, Orage recommended

¹ Carpenter, p. 84; 'Politics for Craftsmen', *The Contemporary Review*, XCI (June 1907), 782-94.

² Carpenter, p. 93; *Fabian News*, XVII (Apr. 1907), 35-6.

³ NA, V (3 June 1909); quoted in Carpenter, p. 85.

⁴ *The Second International*, p. 224.

⁵ 'The Guild Movement in Great Britain', in Odon Por's *Guilds and Co-operatives in Italy* (London, 1923), p. 168.

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as a solution to these problems partnership between management and labour, with ‘a frank acceptance of the integral character of the unions and their right to an equal share in the responsibility of management in the business their members are engaged in’.¹ Later that year, S. G. Hobson commenced a series of articles in *The New Age* employing this idea as the basis of a complete industrial and political system. Orage ‘edited’ these articles, which appeared anonymously, making many suggestions regarding the implications of the theory; according to one contributor, they would not have been half so brilliant as they were without his collaboration.² Between 1913 and 1915 (the year in which these ideas became the basis of an active political movement), Orage, G. D. H. Cole, and other writers elaborated Hobson’s ideas. Thus ‘Guild Socialism’ was born.

Guild Socialism was an ingenious synthesis of political Socialism and industrial Syndicalism. The trade unions were to be converted into guilds which, by virtue of their ‘monopoly of labour’, could demand the State to give them control of industries and services. (Ideally clerical and administrative workers other than directors would be members of the guilds presenting this demand.) Both shareholders and the State would be helpless in the face of this concerted action. The State would purchase each industry and issue its guild a charter stating the conditions under which it would be allowed to operate. Its responsibilities would include the maintenance of high standards of quality and a fixed price for its products (to be determined by a joint body representing all guilds and the State); the guild would pay a single tax or rent to the State (determined by the same body). Factories would be

¹ NA, X (18 Jan. 1912); quoted by Carpenter, p. 85.

² Rowland Kenney, interview, Feb. 1960.

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locally controlled, a guild consisting of all the factories in a particular type of industry. Each guild member would be assured of continuous pay, full medical coverage, and a pension; the government would not be burdened with the administration of these social services. The early Guild Socialists did not envisage the disappearance of the State, as did the Syndicalists; the citizens as a whole would elect a government which would regulate the guilds, enact national legislation, and conduct international affairs. But they were opposed to the gargantuan bureaucracy of Fabian Socialism, with its omnipotent centralization of power. The basic premise of the movement, according to G. D. H. Cole, was that 'men could not be really free as citizens unless they were also free and self-governing in their daily lives as producers.'¹

The political theory of Guild Socialism is less important to the present discussion than the ethic that it embodied and the philosophy of man that could be derived from it. The motto of the movement was taken from the Apocrypha: 'They shall maintain the fabric of the world, and in the handiwork of their craft is their prayer' (*Eccles.* xxxviii, 31). From one point of view, it can be seen as an attempt to redeem labour from the emptiness that capitalism had inflicted upon it. Workers were to be given more responsibilities in the management of industry; at the same time, they would be given more freedom in determining the conditions of their labour. The ethical

¹ *The Second International* p. 244. This account of Guild Socialism is a summary of information contained in *National Guilds* (London, 1914), a collection of S. G. Hobson's articles which appeared in *The New Age*, 1912-13; and Carpenter, pp. 97-229. As Guild Socialism developed, its basic principles were occasionally the subject of heated controversy, leading to divisions within the movement. This summary contains only the essence of the theory as Hobson stated it.

aims of the system are stated in a pamphlet issued by the National Guilds League:

Substitute the national service of the Guilds for the profiteering of the few; substitute responsible labour for a saleable commodity; substitute self-government and decentralization for the bureaucracy and demoralizing hugeness of the modern State and the modern joint stock company; and then it may be just once more to speak of a ‘joy of labour’ and once more hope that men may be proud of the quality and not only the quantity of their work. There is a cant of the Middle Ages, and a cant of ‘joy in labour’, but it were better, perhaps, to risk that cant than to reconcile ourselves for ever to the philosophy of Capitalism and Collectivism, which declares that work is a necessary evil never to be made pleasant, and that the workers’ only hope is a leisure which shall be longer, richer, and well adorned with municipal amenities.¹

The ethical emphasis of Guild Socialism made it attractive to a wide range of intellectuals. Many Christian Socialists joined the movement, among them Nevill Figgis, Conrad Noel, and William Temple (who later became Archbishop of Canterbury).² Bertrand Russell was an advocate of Guild Socialism;³ R. H. Tawney and G. D. H. Cole devoted their energies to its success during these years. Orage did not take an active part in the political organization of the movement, but *The New Age* remained its primary organ. A number of contributors elaborated various aspects of the guild idea under Orage’s direction, and in the ‘Notes of the Week’ he interpreted industrial unrest and social evils of the day from a Guild Socialist point of view.

¹ ‘The Guild Idea’, *Pamphlets of the National Guilds League*, No. 2 (London, n.d.), p. 14.

² Cole, *The Second International*, p. 245.

³ Bertrand Russell, *Roads to Freedom* (London, 1918), pp. 92-6; *NA*, XIX (17 Aug. 1916), 384.

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Enough has been said of Guild Socialism to indicate that it rejected most of the premises of Collectivism and the 'New Liberalism'. It was implicitly religious, whereas they were materialist in their objectives; it retained some vestiges of the Mediaevalism important in its earliest formulation, while they were based on progressivist theories. Ultimately, Guild Socialism entailed a philosophy of man, a theory of value, and a concept of history opposed to those of the prevailing ideologies. These differences were elaborated in *The New Age* by a group of writers whose ideas were absorbed by the movement and gave it a solid theoretical basis.

CHAPTER XII

A CONSERVATIVE PHILOSOPHY

WHEN *Speculations* appeared posthumously in 1924, T. E. Hulme stood out from his generation as the lone defender of conservative political and religious values. He had diagnosed the intellectual maladies of his time as 'Romanticism in literature, Relativism in ethics, Idealism in philosophy, and Modernism in religion'.¹ The unstated assumptions (or, to use his terminology, the 'pseudo-categories') which characterized these tendencies were easily recognizable: the belief that art should be 'vital' (i.e. communicate 'life values'), and could express the 'infinite'; that morality was a matter of custom; that man was inherently good and society perfectible; and that dogmatic theology was an anachronism. Hulme argued that these views resulted from a misunderstanding of the nature of reality. According to his analysis, it was composed of three parts separated by absolute disjunctions: '(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.'² The third category, embodied in the Christian religion, taught that man was sinful and could never attain perfection; that absolute, static, transcendent values were more important than those of this life; and that 'progress' as envisaged by the Liberals was a fatuous concept. Historically, Hulme identified this anthropocentric ideology as one which had arisen during the

¹ 'A Notebook', *NA*, XVIII (9 Dec. 1915), 138; reprinted in *Speculations* as 'Humanism and the Religious Attitude'.

² *Ibid.*

Renaissance and prevailed in Western Europe since that time.

The genesis of this phase of Hulme's thought has never been examined in detail. Many of the ideas it contains are to be found in the writings of those associated with the political party *Action française*; T. S. Eliot's suggestion that he was indebted to Lasserre and Maurras is confirmed by allusions in Hulme's essays.¹ Another source mentioned by Hulme deserves more attention than it has received: 'Most people,' he says, 'have been in the habit of associating these kinds of views with Nietzsche.'² It is interesting to note that two of the leading figures in the twentieth-century attack on Romanticism, Lasserre and Paul Elmer More, published books on Nietzsche early in their careers. Our present concern, however, is with the relationship of Hulme's ideas to those of other contributors to *The New Age*. If he has been viewed as a solitary figure in the history of twentieth-century English thought, this is only because his writings have not been related to the context in which they first appeared. In fact, the reaction against Romanticism and the philosophy of Liberalism (which Nietzsche defined as the 'transformation of men into cattle')³ was one of the most significant features of *The New Age* during these years.

¹ 'Crites' [T. S. Eliot], 'A Commentary', *The Criterion*, II (Apr. 1924), 231-2; *Speculations*, ed. Herbert Read (London, 1924), p. 114; Hulme, 'A Tory Philosophy', reprinted in Jones, *The Life and Opinions of Thomas Ernest Hulme*, p. 189. The influence of the *Action française* group on English thought is summarized by Geoffrey Wagner, *Wyndham Lewis*, pp. 8-13.

² 'A Tory Philosophy', in Jones, p. 190. Nietzsche's complete works appeared in English between 1909 and 1913. Four of his books had been translated earlier (1896-7, 1907).

³ Nietzsche's term is '*Herden-Vertierung*': *Werke* (Munich, 1955), vol. II, p. 1014.

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During 1911 and 1912, while he was attacking the collectivist tendencies of recent legislation in ‘Notes of the Week’, Orage recommenced his series of dialogues entitled ‘Unedited Opinions’, wherein he examined the objects, methods, and motives of the Liberals and Socialists.¹ These articles, though consistent, were not systematic; Orage seems to have looked on them as a means of stimulating further discussion and therefore only indicated lines of thought which could have been the subject of extended discussion. If this was his purpose, he was successful, for many of the ideas they contain were later elaborated by other contributors.

On examining the foundations of Liberalism, Orage concluded that it was based upon two beliefs: that society was capable of indefinite progress, and that individuals were similarly capable of attaining perfection. The idea of ‘progress’ in the writings of most Liberals was entirely materialistic, and the Socialists, he felt, had uncritically accepted this usage. As a result, ‘progress’, having no realistic object, became a continuous search for novelty:

Have you ever considered on what theory Western civilization proceeds? It is the theory that the more desires men have and the greater number of devices for satisfying them that society produces, the more civilization advances. Why, I have actually heard it said, and very nearly sung, that progress means the creation of new wants or the satisfaction of old ones.²

He found the belief that man could attain perfection even more fatuous:

¹ As the Fabian Society and the Labour Party often worked with the Liberals in promoting social legislation such as the National Insurance Acts, Orage came to use the term ‘Liberal’ to denote the basic philosophy of all three. In the following discussion, therefore, it is employed in the same sense. ² NA, IX (15 June 1911), 154.

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In the first place, the earth is the home of accident, and, in the second, man is a fixed species. That is why perfection is as silly as happiness as a definition of the purpose of life. It is sillier, because it means less. . . . There are as good tigers now as when the first was formed; there will never be better men than there have been and are.¹

In a later article in this series, he defended this idea—in the face of many objections, according to his interlocutor :

Your remark the other day that man is a fixed species and therefore incapable of indefinite progress, has been almost angrily repudiated in some circles. It is so contrary to the prevailing current of thought that to express it appears to be simple perversity. . . .

The modern mind, being shameless, hates to think itself defined. For all that, it is defined, and very rigorously. Mind being as defined in capacity as a goat's tether goes its length but no further. At the end of it the modern mind bleats. . . . Starting from a false conception of the nature of man, the mind naturally sees everything else in a false light. Its whole object is to become something that it really is not, and can never be. . . . With human nature undefined nothing else is definable.²

Orage discovered that Liberals often attributed to themselves that perfection which all men were theoretically capable of attaining. Their love of mankind was demonstrated by the concern they consciously displayed for the less fortunate members of society. But the practical result of their social legislation was to convert the proletariat into a mob. Loving man in the abstract, but in few particular instances, and unconsciously distinguishing between their equals and their inferiors, the Liberals set about socializing not England, but the lower classes. The

¹ NA, IX (25 May 1911), 84.

² NA, IX (27 July 1911), 299.

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end of the dialogue in which these ideas are expressed is particularly interesting in connection with Orage’s statements on the limitations of man:

Have you any theory which accounts for all these cross-purposes of the world?

None but the very oldest of all, the theory of the Fall and Redemption, now superficially disguised as Evolution. . . .¹

This was neither the first nor the last time that original sin entered into political discussions in *The New Age*. ‘Christianity believes in Original sin: so do I: so does the “man in the street”. It is the only quite self-evident truth in Christianity,’ wrote G. K. Chesterton.² And T. E. Hulme was to emphasize the importance of this doctrine again four years later.

What was the historical origin of the fallacies of Liberalism? In 1910, Allen Upward suggested an answer to this question which was frequently repeated in *The New Age* during the following years :

The superstition set up by Jean Jacques Rousseau in the eighteenth century is generally known as the Religion of Humanity. . . . It is simply a worship, with no more reason in it than the worship of cats or crocodiles or meteoric stones, or any other form of idolatry; and therefore its right name is anthropolarity, or man-worship.

Anthropolarity has its roots in a generous delusion, common to idealists, the delusion that they themselves are representative of humanity. If they do not consider mankind in general as already possessing their own lofty ideas and unselfish motives, at least they credit men with a general capacity to rise to their own level. The theory of Rousseau and Volney,

¹ NA, IX (29 June 1911), 203.

² NA, X (12 Mar. 1912), 489. He had expressed the same opinion on two earlier occasions: NA, II (22 Feb. 1908), 349; IV (31 Dec. 1908), 203.

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of Paine and Shelley, is that man was born without sin, and that he has been deliberately enslaved and degraded by kings and priests.¹

Orage accepted Upward's historical thesis and concluded that the disparity between Rousseau's public pronouncements and private conduct was common to all idealists. The result of Rousseau's doctrines was the French Revolution, which incarnated his idealism in the political principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. 'In every sense,' wrote Orage, 'individual, social, national, these three ideas have done more harm and less good than any trinity ever invented. The world will never be sane till it forgets them.'² The concept of liberty, he argued, did not entail any moral principle; it was tacitly regarded as the right to indulge in all liberties not contravened by law. He could find no factual basis for asserting the equality of men, and no moral imperative which would justify belief in, or practice of, indiscriminate fraternity. Thus Orage concluded that Liberalism, founded upon 'the propaganda of the rights of man', was 'hollow in its assumptions and empty in its practical conclusions'.³ When asked what he would substitute for its principles, he replied,

The one thing which, in the end, contains all good falsely attributed to these three, and a great deal more besides. . . . Give us justice, we would say to those who have power. Take away our liberties if they are unjust; affirm neither our equality nor our fraternity; but act justly, and we shall be satisfied.⁴

Orage had two basic objections to the Liberal ideology: its assumptions regarding the nature of man were false

¹ NA, VI (3 Jan. 1910), 249. ² NA, IX (21 Sept. 1911), 489-90.

³ NA, IX (2 June 1911), 203. ⁴ NA, IX (21 Sept. 1911), 490.

and it provided no ascertainable ethic regarding the relation of the individual to society. ‘Liberty’ was not a standard; it was an unlimited ideal, and only an arbitrary and usually vague distinction (such as ‘the common good’) could prevent its leading inevitably to anarchy. His suggestion that ‘justice’ should be considered the goal of society was only a partial solution to the problem; ultimately he saw ‘the recognition . . . of a value beyond life’ as the source of a stable social order:

Utilitarianism, I repeat, postulates life itself as the final goal; of the individual first, and of the community when doubt arises. But this is merely the forceful selfishness of the many overruling the powerless selfishness of the few. There is no real standard in the matter whatever. If, however, both the few and the many agree to submit both themselves and their differences to a standard based not upon numbers but upon fixed ideas, the causes in any dispute may be argued pro and con with a hope of rational solution.

And this fixed standard you discover in the admission of the existence of the soul?

In its *real* admission, yes; and in the ideas that flow from it. For it is obvious that, if the soul exists, neither life is the greatest good nor death is the greatest evil. The one and the other are to be referred to the soul for their certificates of value. . . .

And the same holds for a community as for an individual; they, too, must be prepared to obey the soul at all costs?

What, otherwise, is a standard but an expediency? A fixed standard such as we are now discussing owes its very value to its incapacity for bestowing rewards or punishments. A pair of scales adds no weight to the articles judged by it. Similarly the soul gives nothing to life or life to the soul. But without the soul life has no value either for one individual or for many.¹

¹ NA, XII (16 Jan. 1913), 251.

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These articles, most of which appeared in 1911, can be seen as an attempt on Orage's part to separate the ideology of Liberalism from Socialism and to find a defensible substitute for it. His conclusions were tentative. The preceding quotation, suggesting that only through the recognition of transcendent values could material aims be accurately appraised, does not contain any dogmatic assertion of the existence of the soul. This is where Orage differed from later writers who attacked Liberalism, using arguments very similar to his own. Many of them made no attempt to create a theory of value which could be reconciled with prevailing religious beliefs and political realities, but rather suggested an impossible historical regression. The most important fact that emerges from the preceding quotations is that Orage was ridiculing the prevailing idea of progress and insisting on the importance of man's limitations in relation to political theory as early as 1911, one year before T. E. Hulme expressed similar views.

There is also a possibility that another contributor to *The New Age*, J. M. Kennedy, was of some influence in determining the orientation of Hulme's post-Bergsonian writings. Like Hulme, Kennedy proclaimed himself a reactionary conservative. His series of articles entitled 'Tory Democracy', appearing in *The New Age* in 1911, was intended to serve as the basis of a conservative revival. While repeating many of Orage's objections to Liberalism, Kennedy attached them to an interpretation of intellectual history which has by now become familiar. He also compiled a list of antitheses (Liberalism and Conservatism, individualism and cultural unity, relativism and absolutism, Protestantism and Catholicism) which was employed by a number of subsequent writers.

The fundamental error of Liberalism, Kennedy argues,

is that it completely misunderstands the nature of man and hence the process of history:

The Liberal . . . does not speak of the past except with contempt. He is all for ‘progress’. He looks upon the innate and inherited forces of man as being susceptible of change from day to day and year to year. He is not concerned with man in his fixed and permanent state, but with some idealistic human being who is in a constant condition of transition from a state of ‘evil’ into a state of ‘good’, the definition of what is good and what is evil naturally varying from generation to generation. The Liberal, in short, cannot understand the influence of tradition and the place tradition occupies, and ought to occupy, in politics, art, literature, or sociology. . . .

Unfortunately for Liberalism and the shallow philosophical foundations upon which Liberalism is based, we do not live in such a world. The human race acts on the inherited impulses of millions of years. Every generation is connected with the generation which has gone before and the generation which is coming after.¹

He attributes this confusion, and a number of others, to the rise of Protestantism.

What is of special concern to us at the present moment is that this principle of theological individualism spread into philosophy and politics, as was only to be expected, and gave rise to an entirely new school of thought, a school that set itself to disseminate principles which necessarily lead to Liberalism, Radicalism, and a crude form of what may be described as communistic Socialism. . . . Abroad the vices and the virtues of the new school were summed up in Rousseau. . . . Rousseau’s *Contrat Social* was their natural outcome, as was likewise the French Revolution.²

Kennedy traces the concept of liberty through the writings of Locke, Tom Paine, Mill, and Bentham, showing how

¹ NA, IX (29 June 1911), 197. ² NA, IX (10 Aug. 1911), 341.

they are related to one another and to the Protestant tradition. In concluding his articles, he says: 'The future lies between Burke and Mill. The doctrines of Burke lead naturally to order and stability; the doctrines of Mill lead equally naturally and inevitably to disunion and anarchy.'¹

During 1911, T. E. Hulme also turned his attention to politics, contributing a number of articles to a reactionary weekly called *The Commentator*. Most of them have not hitherto been identified as his work; they are of particular interest in that they give us a more complete picture of his intellectual development during these years.² It is significant that nowhere in these articles does Hulme discuss the political implications of original sin and the limitations of man. When he turned his attention to these topics in 1912, his opinions were similar to those Orage had expressed during the preceding year. Like Orage, he mentions both the Fall and evolution as explanations of man's mixed nature, and attacks Rousseau's idealistic conception of man and the belief in inevitable progress.³ But he goes beyond Orage's analysis by associating romanticism with Liberalism and classicism with Conservatism. He does not adduce literary examples to support this part of his argument, aside from a brief discussion of Rousseau, and the essay as a whole, though forceful in parts, is poorly organized and repetitive. Nevertheless, we find here for the first time in twentieth-century English criticism the association of classicism in literature, Conservatism in politics, and (by implication) Anglicanism in religion.⁴

This attitude was to appear again one month later in

¹ NA, IX (17 Aug. 1911), 367.

² See my 'T. E. Hulme: A Bibliographical Note', *Notes & Queries*, IX (Aug. 1962), 307.

³ 'A Tory Philosophy', in Jones, pp. 189-91, 196-8.

⁴ Several months earlier, Hulme had expressed his admiration of

J. M. Kennedy’s *English Literature, 1880-1905*.¹ In his preface, Kennedy attacked Liberalism, materialism, idealism, romanticism, and atheism as a complex of ideas often associated with one another. It is illuminating to compare Hulme’s distinction between classic and romantic literature with Kennedy’s:

The classical attitude, then, has a great respect for the past and for tradition, not from sentimental, but on purely rational ground. . . . In art this spirit shows itself in the belief that there are certain rules which one must obey, which do not in themselves give us the capacity for producing anything, but in which the experience of several generations of artists has traced the limits outside which one can produce nothing solid or excellent. . . . The ‘romantic’ point of view is the exact opposite of this. . . . The romantic imagines everything is accomplished by the breaking of rules. The romantics of 1830 thought that they had, by freeing themselves from roles and traditions, attained liberty—that is to say absolute spontaneity in artistic creation. [Hulme]

When we speak of classic work we mean, or should mean, work modelled on the style of the best Greek and Latin authors: works in which the ideas expressed are correctly moulded to the form of their expression, in which the thoughts are clearly and simply outlined, and in which certain definite artistic canons are strictly adhered to. . . . On the other hand, this ideal has often been opposed and scoffed at. It has been opposed by those men who played the part in literature that Liberalism has played in politics: men who saw nothing of the influence of tradition in art or literature, who acted as if the

the Thirty-nine Articles as follows: ‘I can never read that misunderstood work of genius without a thrill of admiration.’ ‘Bergson Lecturing’, *NA*, X (2 Nov. 1911), 16.

¹ Hulme’s ‘Tory Philosophy’ appeared during April and May 1912; Kennedy’s book was reviewed in *The New Age* on 13 June 1912 (XI, 154).

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world were re-created from day to day and year to year, who chafed under the artistic discipline to which their opponents, the classicists, willingly submitted. These were the men, too, who desired free play for 'individuality', who thought that every author was quite right in laying down his own artistic canons. . . . In their works we find puny thoughts enveloped in mystic, florid, symbolic language. [Kennedy]¹

The similarity of these passages would not be striking if they had not appeared within a month of one another, at a time when the view of literature they express was uncommon.

The relationship between Hulme and Kennedy, who undoubtedly knew each other through their connection with *The New Age*, is of less importance to the present discussion than the fact that following 1912, *The New Age* absorbed their view of literature; hence the emphasis on classical models discussed in the preceding chapter, and Orage's emphasis on the eighteenth century, which he considered the classic period of English literature. When Irving Babbitt's *Masters of Modern French Criticism* appeared in 1913, Orage asserted that Babbitt's view of literature was substantially the same as that of *The New Age*:

Mr Babbitt, so I understand, would have critics return to or re-create definite standards of literary values; not the 'rules' formulated by Aristotle, but the same rules formulated anew and in a modern dialect. . . . Precisely what we aim at with so much unavoidable offence in the endeavour.²

He quoted approvingly Paul Elmer More's definition of Romanticism as 'the illusory substitute of the mere limitless expansion of our impulsive nature for the true infinite within the heart of man'.³ In so far as the modern

¹ Hulme, 'A Tory Philosophy', in Jones, pp. 190-1; Kennedy, *English Literature, 1880-1905* (London, 1912), pp. 7-9.

² NA, XIII (8 May 1913), 38. ³ NA, XIII (31 July 1913), 394.

distinction between the ‘classic’ and ‘romantic’ points of view had any validity, *The New Age* favoured the former.

The most important difference between the policy of *The New Age* and the ideas of Hulme and Kennedy was that the magazine never supported the Conservatives politically. In the realm of beliefs underlying political philosophies it was certainly closer to the Conservatives than to the Liberals and Collectivist Socialists, but the Guild Socialists were too concerned with practical questions to contemplate the implications of this fact. It remained for Hulme, in his preface to Sorel’s *Reflections on Violence*, to point them out. We do not know why Hulme, avowedly a Tory, translated a book on Syndicalism which advocated the overthrow of the ruling classes by force. Whether by accident or design, however, many of the arguments in Sorel’s book could be applied directly to Guild Socialism. In the ‘Translator’s Preface’, which appeared in *The New Age* six months before the publication of the book, Hulme wrote:

In a movement like Socialism we can conveniently separate out two distinct elements, the working-class movement itself and the system of ideas which goes with it. . . . If we call one (I) and the other (W), (I + W) will be the whole movement. The ideology is, as a matter of fact, *democracy* [i.e. the Liberal ideology associated with that word, not the doctrine that all men are created equal]. Now the enormous difficulty in Sorel comes in this—that he not only denies the essential connection between these two elements, but even asserts that the ideology will be fatal to the movement. The regeneration of society will never be brought about by the pacifist *progressivists*.

They may be pardoned if they find this strange. This combination of doctrines which they would probably call reactionary, with revolutionary syndicalism, is certainly very disconcerting to liberal Socialists. It is difficult for them to understand a revolutionary who is anti-democratic, an abso-



15. STUDY by W. Roberts

This drawing contains four figures. I could point out the position of these figures in more detail, but I think such detailed indication misleading. No artist can create abstract form spontaneously; it is always generated, or, at least, suggested, by the consideration of some outside concrete shapes. But such shapes are only

interesting if you want to explain the psychology of the process of composition in the artist's mind. The interest of the drawing itself depends on the forms it contains. The fact that such forms were suggested by human figures is of no importance.

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lutist in ethics, rejecting all rationalism and relativism, who values the mystical element in religion 'which will never disappear', speaks contemptuously of modernism and progress, and uses a concept like honour with no sense of unreality.¹

Hulme goes on to discuss the two conceptions of man that, in his opinion, underlie the distinction between classicism and romanticism, defining as romantics 'all who do not believe in the Fall of Man'.² During the following months, he elaborated the ideas contained in this preface in a series of articles entitled 'A Notebook' (reprinted as 'Humanism and the Religious Attitude' in *Speculations*). Its argument was summarized at the beginning of this section; it constitutes the most complete and logical exposition of his later thought that has survived. While the ideas it contains are not original,³ they are expressed in such a powerful style and convey such an intense impression of personal conviction that his influence was soon evident in the writings of other contributors.

Hulme's influence is particularly evident in the writings of Ramiro de Maeztu, who began to contribute to *The New Age* in 1915. During these years, he was an intimate friend of both Orage and Hulme,⁴ taking part in their discussions at the Frith Street salon, the Chancery Lane ABC, and the Café Royal. From Orage he learned the theory of Guild Socialism, and from Hulme, 'the political and social transcendency of the doctrine of original sin'.⁵

¹ NA, XVII (14 Oct. 1915), 569.

² Ibid., p. 570.

³ Michael Roberts asserts that 'there is scarcely an argument or instance in Hulme's writing that does not come from Pascal, Sorel, Lasserre, Worringer, Husserl, or Bergson'. *T. E. Hulme* (London, 1938), pp. 12-13.

⁴ Mairet, p. 71.

⁵ Ramiro de Maeztu, *Authority, Liberty, and Function in Light of the War* (London, 1916), p. 5 (hereafter cited as *Authority, Liberty, and Function*).

He came to realize what is implied in the preceding pages: that the political philosophy expounded by Hulme could serve as the ideological basis of Guild Socialism. Between March 1915, and June 1916, he discussed this idea in a remarkable series of articles appearing in *The New Age*. After revision, they were published in book form as *Authority, Liberty, and Function in the Light of the War*.

De Maeztu's argument can be understood as the completion of a philosophic enquiry suggested by Hulme. 'A complete reaction from the subjectivism and relativism of humanist ethics,' wrote Hulme in one of his last essays, 'should contain two elements: (1) the establishment of the *objective* character of ethical values, (2) a satisfactory ethic [that] not only looks on values as *objective*, but establishes an order or *hierarchy* among such values, which it also regards as absolute and objective.'¹ This is precisely what de Maeztu attempted to do, employing the concepts of objective good, objective rights, and objective logic developed in the writings of G. E. Moore, Léon Duguit, and Edmond Husserl respectively. Most political systems, he argued, are based either on the principle of authority (oligarchy, aristocracy, monarchy, dictatorship) or on that of liberty (democracy, republican government, constitutional monarchy). In each case the ethical justification of the system is subjective; there are no logical grounds for asserting the right of the few to rule the many or the 'rights of man' as an inalienable heritage of human beings simply because they are human beings. For these subjective concepts de Maeztu would substitute the 'functional principle', based on the assumption that both authority and liberty should be granted to individuals or organizations in proportion to their contribution to

¹ NA, XVIII (27 Jan. 1915), 307.

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society.¹ Authoritarianism leads to unrestrained tyranny; individualism leads to 'the hell of free competition and the exploitation of man by man,' which is 'incompatible with all social discipline'; the functional principle leads to 'the balance of power, or, what is to say the same thing, justice'.²

Given any scale of values, those men or associations of men are functionaries who devote themselves to maintaining or increasing values. To those functionaries are due the powers, rights, dignities, and pay corresponding to their function. The men or associations of men who do not devote themselves to preserving or increasing values are not functionaries; and, therefore, they ought not to have any rights at all. And those who destroy existing values are criminals who deserve punishment. The principle of objective right simply says that rights ought only to be granted to men or associations of men in virtue of the function they fulfil, and not on any pretences of a subjective character.³

Guild Socialism provided a political system cognate to the objective moral philosophy expounded by de Maeztu. In return for his labour, each man was entitled not only to a salary (which he would receive even if sick or temporarily discharged), but also to participation in the management of the organization for which he worked. Correspondingly, his employment entailed certain obligations, such as maintaining satisfactory standards of production (whether material or intellectual) and marketing his product at a just price. Other rights and duties were granted to individuals on the basis of their familial and

¹ The essentials of de Maeztu's 'functional principle' can be found in the writings of Ruskin. See Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society*, pp. 148-52.

² *Authority, Liberty, and Function*, pp. 272, 107.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

communal functions. The rights of the State were also rigorously defined by its functions; so long as Guilds fulfilled the obligations stated in their charters, the State could not interfere with their conduct.

De Maeztu emphasized the mediaeval origins of the Guild idea, for he thought the connection between the religious and economic values of that period was more than accidental. Hulme had expressed a similar belief, and the following passage is a further indication of the relationship between his theories and the ethic of Guild Socialism. In discussing the religious values of the Middle Ages, Hulme wrote: ‘It is necessary to realize that *these beliefs were the centre of their whole civilization, and that even the character of their economic life was regulated by them*—in particular by the kind of ethics which springs from the acceptance of sin as a fact.’¹ The limitations imposed upon the mediaeval guilds and their modern counterpart were, according to de Maeztu, a logical consequence of the belief in original sin and a frank recognition of man’s inherent rapacity. The mediaeval period was characterized by its subordination of material to spiritual values, and de Maeztu proposed a similar subordination in outlining a hierarchy of objective values, in accordance with Hulmes’ suggestion.² Of the Guild Socialists, he said:

Disdained by the Officials of the State and the State Socialists of the Fabian Society because they refuse to regard the State as the universal panacea; attacked by the Labour Party because they do not hold an exclusively proletarian idea; and anathemized by the Marxians because they cannot accept an economico-fatalistic interpretation of history, the men of *The New Age* may nevertheless look to the future with tranquil eyes; for a guild organization of the nation is the only means

¹ NA, XVIII (27 Jan. 1916), 306.

² *Authority, Liberty, and Function*, p. 274.

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of warding off the catastrophes to which we are perpetually exposed by the uncontrolled supremacy of the executive power of the State—the only social class which has so far been formed into a guild.¹

De Maeztu's articles had a profound influence on Guild Socialism. He provided a philosophical and ethical basis for its political and economic proposals; 'the functional principle' became an axiom of the movement, appearing frequently in the writings of G. D. H. Cole, S. G. Hobson, and R. H. Tawney.² His emphasis on religious values helped bring to Guild Socialism the support of Anglican churchmen and Christian Socialists. And finally, since de Maeztu's thesis embraced a wide range of phenomena, it unified the discussions of politics, philosophy, and the arts appearing in *The New Age*. 'Many of our readers,' wrote Orage,

appear to imagine that the subjects of economics and literature, as treated in these columns, are separate in the minds of our writers as well as separable in fact. And as frequently I have assured them that they are wrong. The reason, I hope, has now been made clear [by de Maeztu]. We are guildsmen in literary criticism, jealous *for* our profession, as we are guildsmen in economics, jealous *for* the welfare of industry. At present, it is plain, the judgment together with the reward of good literary workmanship is in the hands of the mob—from which it is as much our duty to deliver it as we have made it our duty to deliver the judgment and reward of industrial labour from the hands of profiteers. *Their* standard, like the standard of the mob in literature, is obviously not a craft standard; but refers to the profitability in commercial exchange of material products; as *this* refers to the mere

¹ Ibid., pp. 100-1.

² Carpenter, p. 98. The most important study of the implications of the functional principle is Tawney's *The Sickness of an Acquisitive Society* (London, 1920).

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capacity to tickle the ears of the groundlings. The popular author of today . . . is very often the counterpart of the profiteer and, like him, exploits ignorance and other disabilities. We would have him judged and paid by his peers.¹

The Guild concept could be applied to the arts as well as to industry, with the best artists determining which apprentices should be encouraged. In Chapter III it was said that Orage sought an economic system which would enrich the community culturally as well as materially. Guild Socialism, as expounded by de Maeztu, satisfied this requirement.

'*Authority, Liberty, and Function* was a remarkable book,' said Rowland Kenney. 'It could have served as the philosophic basis of the Labour Party, or, equally well, as the basis of a dictatorship.'² The fact that de Maeztu returned to Spain to lead the movement known as *Accion Española* and supported Franco in the Civil War has led to the neglect of his earlier writings and hence his real significance in English political thought.³ There is a fundamental political ambiguity in his early work—one which Orage was quick to detect—but the authoritarianism so prominent in his later writings was present only by implication in his essays in *The New Age*. From 1915 to 1922 (when, after some success in establishing Building Guilds, the Guild movement ceased to be active politically), none of its critics ever charged Guild Socialism with containing dictatorial tendencies. On the contrary, it

¹ *NA*, XVII (6 May 1915), 13. This passage was stimulated by one of de Maeztu's articles, 'The Jealousy of the Guilds', *NA*, XVI (29 Apr. 1915), 687-8.

² Interview, Feb. 1961.

³ For an account of the evolution of de Maeztu's thought see Martin Nozick, 'An Examination of Ramiro de Maeztu', *PMLA*, LXIX (Sept. 1954), 719-40.

was conceived as a means of giving men a greater degree of economic and political freedom than they had hitherto enjoyed.

As one who was partially responsible for stimulating de Maeztu's articles, Orage found himself largely in agreement with them. But he urged several qualifications which reveal that he was aware of their limitations. The world portrayed by Hulme and de Maeztu was indeed a gloomy one. The burden of original sin lay heavy upon the worthless individual, who could be made tolerable in the sight of the Lord and the philosophers only through being subjected to discipline. As compensation for the destruction of his fatuous belief in progress he was offered a 'realization of the *tragic* significance of life'.¹ In disagreeing with this view, Orage utilized the doctrines of Christianity, upon which it was supposedly based: an excessive concern with original sin, he said, had led Hulme and de Maeztu to neglect its complement—the doctrine of Redemption.² He was even more concerned about the absolutism which their system entailed. In formulating an 'objective' theory of value they found it necessary to exclude any evaluation of man *qua* man. De Maeztu asserted that the only ultimate values were transcendent, all others being instrumental in relation to them; and that no value could be attached to man, except in so far as he entered into associations or fulfilled functions to which an 'instrumental value' could be assigned. This led him to assert 'the primacy of things' ('things' including, in this context, associations and functions) :

Human solidarity can only exist in things. We do not associate directly with another person; it is friendship or love or community of interests or ideas that makes us associate

¹ Hulme, *Speculations* (London, 1936), p. 34.

² NA, XVIII (23 Dec. 1915), 181.

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with him. The individuality of the other person always remains for us the unknowable mystery and the unpierceable wall. Without the mediation of the thing association is impossible. . . . Rights do not arise from personality. Rights arise primarily from the relation of the associated with the thing that associates them. . . .

No man—emperor, pope, or workman—is entitled to any consideration other than that due to a possible instrument of the eternal values. Instruments are used when they are in good order; repaired when damaged, and thrown away when useless.¹

Orage realized the dangers inherent in this view. He admitted that ‘men must be tested by things’, but added as a necessary qualification that ‘things must be tested by men; for neither can be measured, as to their value, on *their own terms*’.

Everything depends on time, place, and circumstance; and there is no rule that can be absolutely applied. What we need, therefore, is a balanced judgment to know, in any given case, what things or what men are of the greater value. To assume beforehand that either is always to be preferred is to abdicate the office of moral judgment and to put ourselves in a kind of mortmain to an authoritarian theory.²

It must be emphasized that this discussion involved, at the time, only a philosophic corollary of de Maeztu’s position. His discussion of politics was based on the concept of function, leading to a society in which both freedom and authority would be held in check by a well-defined balance of powers. Orage’s criticism was of the nature of a prediction, indicating on the basis of one passage, the direction that de Maeztu’s thought might take. This was the aspect of his thought that could be used

¹ *Authority, Liberty, and Function*, pp. 250, 255.

² Letter signed ‘R. H. C.’, NA, XVIII (13 Apr. 1916), 574.

to justify a dictatorship, as Rowland Kenney perceived. *Authority, Liberty, and Function* contributes to an understanding of the perplexing conversions from Socialism to Fascism in the 'thirties.¹

The importance of de Maeztu's book, which was the culmination of a line of thought originating in the writings of Orage, Hulme, J. M. Kennedy, and S. G. Hobson, can best be appreciated if it is contrasted with the liberal ideologies of the time. Fabian Socialism, for example, did not attempt to develop an ethic based on spiritual values; laudable as its humanitarian sentiments were, they found their expression in strictly materialistic aims. In so far as Fabianism could be said to have an ideology, Orage and Hulme were probably correct in identifying it with that of the Liberals. Much of value can spring from liberal sentiments and programmes; the writers for *The New Age* would be the first to agree that wealth should be more equitably distributed. But they would add that this is not enough, and the plight of contemporary Socialism, which finds itself without a distinctive programme once capitalism has proved itself able to satisfy the material desires of the working classes, would seem to corroborate their position. The Guild Socialists attempted to deal with man's religious instincts, his artistic proclivities, his desire for ownership and professional pride, as well as his inherent tendency to

¹ The Guild theory and its syndicalist counterparts have, in this century, been employed by both Fascist and Communist states. In 1933, Orage noted that Mussolini was utilizing certain features of the Guild idea; but he thought that it had been 'corrupted' in being so employed: A. R. Orage, *Political and Economic Writings* (London, 1936), p. 221. At present, an attempt is being made in both Yugoslavia and Portugal to create what will in effect be a Guild state, with one important exception—that each will remain a dictatorship rather than the democracy envisaged by the Guild Socialists.

place his own advantage ahead of that of the community. They attempted to take account of all the phenomena of civilization, rather than economic phenomena only, in formulating their political system. They failed to achieve their ends, but their efforts are worthy of record.

CHAPTER XIII

ORAGE'S LITERARY CRITICISM

THE political, philosophic, and religious values discussed in the preceding chapter are important to an understanding of Orage's literary criticism. For in his eyes, it could not be an autonomous discipline. His opinion of those who concerned themselves exclusively with the arts was no less harsh than his opinion of those interested only in politics :

The neglect to read widely and to think seriously upon such 'dull' subjects as history, foreign affairs, economics, etc., is often claimed as proof of aesthetic fastidiousness instead of being accepted as evidence of narrow-mindedness. The lesser artists, the greater philistines and the man in the street, are usually at one in this. What the two latter classes for sheer brain idleness cannot study, the former class, on the pretence that such reading ruins their art, will not study; with the general result that England is in control of an Empire of which the vast majority of her inhabitants know next to nothing of how it was acquired, how it is managed and what ought to be done with it. . . . There are, I understand, readers of *The New Age* who skip everything but the 'Notes of the Week' and the other political articles, on the ground that we other fry have no business poking our interests into their exalted affairs. . . . If I and others of us, people of letters and the arts, can school ourselves to nod at economics and politics, the masters of the latter ought not to be too conceited or idle to become in turn pupils at our school. The sooner the whole of *The New Age* is regarded as more important than any of its parts the better.¹

¹ NA, XVI (21 Jan. 1915), 313.

Arnold Bennett's 'Books and Persons' was in the opinion of many the best literary column of its time, and when he left the magazine in 1911, Orage was unable to find a suitable replacement for him. A number of anonymous critical articles appeared during the following two years. Many were written by Beatrice Hastings; some (in particular those on the classics) were probably the work of J. M. Kennedy.¹ In May 1913, Orage ('R. H. C.') commenced a weekly literary column entitled 'Readers and Writers' which he continued to write until 1921. It seems that this task was forced upon him simply because until 1921 he could find no one capable of writing such a column to his satisfaction. Occasionally he would allow Paul Selver or C. E. Bechhofer to add a few paragraphs on Continental literature, but neither proved himself competent for the more extended labour of the column itself.

Bennett's chief virtues as a critic resulted largely from his participation, as a creative artist, in the literary movements of his time. He spoke of them with the authority which only a practitioner can possess, and his discussions of the novel provide us with a valuable insight into his own preoccupations and those of his contemporaries. He was immersed in his immediate context, as regards both his art and his view of its function. He read extensively; few novels of importance escaped his attention, and his column provides an unusually complete record of contemporary literature. We do not find these virtues in Orage's criticism. His time was divided between politics, literature, and editing; this may explain why, in reading his column, one finds that some important contemporary authors are not even mentioned. His criticism does not

¹ Beatrice Hastings, *The Old 'New Age': Orage-and Others* (London, 1936), pp. 17, 43.

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display the detailed concern with problems of technique that we find in Bennett's criticism. But it contains other qualities which more than compensate for the lack of those in which Bennett was unsurpassed. We go to 'Books and Persons' for a picture of contemporary literature; we go to Orage's 'Readers and Writers' for an evaluation of it.

Orage attempted to interpret and to judge literature not with reference to the methods and aims of which it was a product, but in relation to the literature of all time. There is a critical distance in his writings which results from two factors: first, he looked beyond the period itself for the principles whereby he evaluated its literature. Secondly, he was more concerned with the relationship of literature to culture in general than with its progress as an autonomous discipline. The criticism which is specifically a product of our own age—that of Richards, Empson, and the 'New Critics' of America—is distinguished by its preoccupation with technique and verbal analysis. Orage, however, is part of that tradition which considers literature a source of knowledge and asserts that it has a didactic function; while not ignoring the importance of technique in its creation, the values upon which he bases his judgments are, ultimately, social, ethical, and philosophic.

Orage often declared himself a classicist, and his conception of literature and its function is such as to justify his use of that term. In the preceding pages, reference was made to the 'modern distinction between the classic and romantic points of view' in order to distinguish between the traditional interpretations of those terms and the less exact interpretation that has played a prominent part in contemporary criticism. In proclaiming themselves classicists, J. M. Kennedy, T. E. Hulme,

and Irving Babbitt seem to have meant that they attached great importance to tradition in the development of literature, that they felt it should display ‘form’, which would result from adhering to established artistic canons, and that creative artists should recognize the limitations of man and the existence of transcendent values. These concepts are of little use to us until we see how they are to be applied to modern literature; unfortunately, neither these writers nor their successors have proved as zealous in seeking applications as in advocating the formulation. Aside from a few references to Aristotle in Babbitt’s criticism, we do not find examples in their works either of what they mean by the ‘rules’ of literature or of what specific ‘classic’ doctrines they feel are still valid. Orage’s criticism is more satisfactory in this respect. He demonstrated that it was possible to apply these ideas to modern literature and to profit from the results.

I. CRITICAL PRINCIPLES

Orage defined art as ‘the imaginative perfecting of nature; or the intuitive perception and representation of reality in actuality’—a definition which he said was recommended not by its originality, but by its tradition. He quoted approvingly Sidney’s dictum that Nature’s world ‘is brazen, but the poets only deliver a golden’, and defended it against a writer in the *Nation*:

‘The oracle of Sidney,’ comments the *Nation*, is ‘a fine saying rather than an interpretation. . . . It has no importance as a theory of poetry as compared with Wordsworth’s definition in the preface to his *Lyrical Ballads*.’ On the contrary, as a description of poetry, and of art in general, I find it infinitely to be preferred to Wordsworth’s definition of the psychological method he, a single poet, employed. Sidney’s sentence

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throws a light upon all poetry and all art, Wordsworth's upon—Wordsworth.¹

According to Orage, the 'imaginative perfecting of nature' (or 'creation in the spirit of nature') 'is two-formed. One kind divines the potential reality, and the other divines the intention.' Regarding the first type, he says that the actual world and its events represent only one of many potential paths of development. In truly creative literature (as opposed to that which merely reproduces the actual), we feel that creation is taking place before our eyes; 'at each moment we stand at a new crossroads'. Thus 'actuality itself becomes transfigured' and we are able to see our own life and experience as a creative process.² The second type of creation gives us an insight into the universal truths which govern actuality. This idea echoes Aristotle's distinction between truths of general significance communicated by poetry and the specific facts which are the subject of history. At the same time, in opposing 'actuality' (the world as we know it) to 'reality' (the laws to which it is subject and the 'intention'—of the Creator?), he added Platonic overtones to the distinction.

The strength of Orage's criticism lies not in the formulation of this conception of literature, which consists, as he said, of ideas that are to be found in classic and Renaissance criticism, but in his ability to apply it to the literature of his time. The first of the two creative methods defined above served as the basis of his condemnation of the Realistic novel. It was a product of lifeless reproduction rather than 'creation'; it transcribed but did not transfigure actuality, presenting characters which were 'dummies stuffed with notebooks'.

¹ NA, XVII (6 May 1915), 14.

² NA, XVI (18 Mar. 1915), 538-9.

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'When I read the Song of Deborah,' Coleridge said, 'I never think that she is a poet, although I think the song itself a sublime poem.' Why is this remark just? The answer is to be found in the remark of Aristotle that 'of all works of art, those are most excellent wherein chance has the least to do'. But for the chance of her exploit, Deborah would have remained dumb. But for the chance of their experiences most travellers would never have written a line of literature. But for the chance of this or that, the material of our novelists would never have fallen their way. They are as dependent upon chance as any reporter sent out of a morning to pick up a 'story'. There is no art in it, no creation; it is simply luck.¹

The same standard, when applied to the works of Henry James, revealed why he succeeded where Bennett, Wells (with the exception of his early novels), and their followers failed.

The surprising thing about Henry James's novels is that one approaches them as stories and leaves them having stared at a piece of life. One begins to read him as a diversion and finds at the end of him that one has had real experiences. He is, in fact, a magician of psychology, who not only describes . . . but reveals. He takes his readers through a new world. . . .

Henry James's characters cannot be said to be selected for their extraordinariness; nor had he the accessories of the stage-magician for his properties. Quite ordinary people in quite ordinary surroundings are sufficient for his purpose—which is to show us, not the conscious, but the sub-conscious, in man. 'Here,' he seems to say,—having placed his reader at a point of vantage for observation,—'just observe and listen and hold your mind in readiness to catch the smallest gesture and the lightest tone. These persons, you will notice, are not at the first glance anything out of the common, nor are they up to anything very unusual. Nevertheless, watch them and try to see and to feel what they are doing!' And as his readers look

¹ NA, XV (25 June 1914), 181.

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at the figures through Henry James's eyes, they are aware of a strange transformation in the ordinary people before them. While still remaining ordinary, extraordinary manifestations begin to be visible among them. They arouse wonder, they arouse pity, they arouse admiration, they arouse horror or fear. There are few emotions they are not capable of producing under the wand of Henry James. Yet, all the time—I must insist upon it—these people remain ordinary.¹

James's 'piece of life' is not the 'slice of life' presented in the works of the Realists; it is 'creation', the creation of a 'new world' through the transforming power of the imagination. Having read his works, we return to life with a renewed sense of its possibilities. Our approach to experience has been subtly modulated. James, he says, is 'the best schoolmaster of psychological manners of any novelist that has ever written'; we can profit by attempting to utilize the range of perception revealed in his works.²

We can see in this analysis of James how the two forms of the 'imaginative perfecting of nature' are related. In practice, Orage rarely separates them, for the first form, the creation of a new world, reveals the second, which is the 'intention', or the meaning, of reality.

Take any great book you please. Its two characteristics are, first, that it contains the record of the experiences of a rare and powerful mind; and, second, that it indicates in its method the means by which the writer turned his experiences to the account of truth. And we, the readers, by sympathetic following of him, are thus doubly instructed: in the first instance, by sharing in his experiences; and, in the second, by learning the means of turning our own to account.³

¹ 'Henry James and the Ghostly', *The Little Review Anthology*, ed. Margaret Anderson (New York, 1953), pp. 230-1; reprinted from *The Little Review* of Aug. 1918.

² NA, XIX (5 Oct. 1916), 541. ³ NA, XVIII (9 Mar. 1916), 447.

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This conception of literature as a source of knowledge separates Orage from the critical attitudes that we find in the Realistic and Impressionistic novelists. His criticisms of the Realists were discussed in Chapter VI; while he considered two of the Impressionists, James and Conrad, the only major novelists of the period and praised their emphasis on technique,¹ he attached to it an instrumental rather than an ultimate value. One example will make this distinction clearer than generalizations about the Impressionists as a group, for their views of the purpose of fiction were not identical. We have seen that they were united in their admiration of Turgenev, whom they considered a flawless artist. His method, said James, had ‘a side that makes too many of his rivals appear to hold us in comparison by violent means, and to introduce us in comparison to vulgar things’.² The context of this remark makes it apparent that Turgenev is being compared to Tolstoy; one infers that by this date (1897), James may also have been aware of Dostoievsky’s incipient challenge to Turgenev’s supremacy. ‘My God!’ wrote Galsworthy in 1914, after his second reading of *The Brothers Karamazov*, ‘what incoherence and what verbiage, and what starting of monsters out of holes to make you shudder. It’s a mark of these blood-bespattered-poster times that Dostoievsky should rule the roost. Tolstoy is far greater, and Turgenev too.’³ ‘Against Turgenev,’ said Ford Madox Ford,

Young England erects the banner of Dostoievsky, as if the fame of that portentous writer of enormous detective stories,

¹ NA, XVI (11 Mar. 1915), 509.

² ‘Turgenev and Tolstoy’, *The House of Fiction*, ed. Leon Edel (London, 1957), p. 175.

³ *Letters from John Galsworthy*, ed. Edward Garnett (London, 1934), p. 217.

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that sad man with the native Slav genius for telling immensely long and formless tales, must destroy the art, the poetry and the exquisiteness that are in the works of 'the beautiful genius'. . . .¹

In 1917, when Edward Garnett's *Turgenev* appeared (with a preface by Conrad denouncing 'the convulsed and terror-haunted Dostoievsky'), Orage wrote:

I remark both in Mr Conrad's introduction and Mr Edward Garnett's critical study of Turgenev . . . the attitude of defence. . . . While I agree (or affirm, for I am quite willing to take the initiative) that Turgenev's art is more exquisite, more humane, more European than that of any other Russian writer . . . to compare the whole of him with the whole of Dostoievsky is to realize in an instant the difference between a writer great in parts and a writer great even in his faults. Turgenev is at best a European, a Parisianized Russian, I would rather say. But Dostoievsky, while wholly Russian, belongs to the world.²

In the debate regarding the relative merits of Turgenev and Dostoievsky, one which was in many ways central to the development of contemporary fiction, Orage sided with the latter because, although his novels contained technical flaws, they revealed 'a rare and powerful mind'; Dostoievsky was, to Orage, 'the greatest novelist that ever lived'.³ The close concern with technique that characterized the Impressionists prevented them from recognizing Dostoievsky's gifts. In this respect, Orage would agree with Coleridge, that the great artist subordinates art to nature, the manner to the matter.⁴ The Realistic novelists

¹ *Henry James: A Critical Study* (London, 1913), p. 11.

² *NA*, XXII (20 Dec. 1917), 152.

³ *NA*, XIII (17 July 1913), 330; XVIII (17 Feb. 1916), 372.

⁴ *Biographia Literaria*, Chap. XIV. Cf. Orage's distinction between the artist-craftsman and the craftsman, *supra*, Chap. VI.

devoted most of their attention to subject matter, and the Impressionists emphasized the importance of form; Orage’s primary concern was with the content of literature.

The knowledge of experience which literature communicates forms an important part of the subject matter of the critic, according to Orage. For ‘criticism’ is a meaningless term if it is applied solely to technique. The material of art is nature, and its object is truth; we cannot judge the means (technique) without reference to its efficacy in achieving the end. And since all experience has an ethical dimension, the critic must concern himself with the moral implications of literature: ‘Far from being an offence to literature, this attitude of the true critic does literature an honour. It assumes that literature affects life for better or worse.’¹ It is impossible, says Orage, to write a novel in which no moral standard is implied, as the portrayal of human beings and their actions necessarily entails morality. Similarly, a critic who does not comment on this aspect of a novel is committing himself to an ethical judgment: he is tacitly condoning the morality it portrays.

Orage’s position regarding the moral function of criticism requires careful definition; it has fallen into disrepute because in practice it often leads to unintelligent application.² He was careful to distinguish between biographical and literary evaluations:

Any moral decadence, so-called, that conceals itself from the eye of the critic of pure literature is to my mind irrelevant to

¹ *NA*, XIII (25 Sept. 1913), 394.

² When the United States Post Office confiscated one issue of *The Little Review* on the grounds that the chapter from *Ulysses* which it contained was obscene, Orage wrote: ‘The *Ulysses* of Mr James Joyce is one of the most interesting literary symptoms in the whole literary

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criticism. Either it is discoverable in the style or it is not; and if not, what have I, as a critic, to do with it? . . . Decadence . . . is at once a moral and an aesthetic term; but decadence, for me as a critic, is absence of a mission, of a purpose, of a co-ordination of powers; and its sign manual in style is the diffuse sentence, the partial treatment, the inchoate vocabulary, the mixed principles.¹

He defined decadence as 'the substitution of the part for the whole',² and the range of his application of the term was both moral and aesthetic.

These are the principles upon which Orage's criticism was based. The function of the critic, as he conceived it, was first to understand the work in question; and this involved a careful analysis of it. He rejected impressionism as a critical method and insisted that analysis enhanced rather than destroyed the beauty of literature. When Richard Curle rejected the analytic approach in his *Joseph Conrad* (1914), Orage wrote:

Far from 'wrecking', as Mr Curle says, 'the meaning of a work of art' by examining it philosophically, if it cannot stand that, it cannot stand time. And Conrad, moreover, has nothing to fear from such an examination. On the contrary, our appreciation of his work will grow as we plumb his mind and try its depths.³

Within the limits of a causerie as distinguished from a critical essay, Orage seldom had the opportunity to

world, and its publication is very nearly a public obligation. Such sincerity, such energy, such fearlessness as Mr Joyce's are rare in any epoch, and most of all in our own; and on that very account they demand to be given at least the freedom of the Press.' *NA*, XXVIII (28 Apr. 1921), 306.

¹ *NA*, XVIII (25 Nov. 1915), 85.

² *NA*, XIV (27 Nov. 1913), 113.

³ *NA*, XV (25 June 1914), 181.

undertake detailed textual analysis; but when he did so, he proved himself capable of the task.¹

Analysis within a framework of traditional critical values was for Orage the basis of evaluation. He believed that criticism could be an objective activity, rather than simply a record of personal preferences, and that, by providing reasons for his conclusions, a critic could attain ‘finality of judgment’. His own statement of the arguments in favour of this conclusion is much more effective than any summary of it could be.

It may be said that if we dismiss personal preference as a criterion of art judgment, there is either nothing left or only some ‘scientific’ standard which has no relevance to aesthetics. It is the common plea of the idiosyncrats that, inconclusive as their opinions must be, and anything but universally valid, no other method within the world of art is possible. I dissent. A ‘final’ judgment is as possible of a work of art as of any other manifestation of the spirit of man; there is nothing in the nature of things to prevent men arriving at a universally valid (that is, universally accepted) judgment of a book, a picture, a sonata, a statue or a building, any more than there is to prevent a legal judge from arriving at a right judgment concerning any other human act; and, what is more, such judgments of art are not only made daily, but in the end they actually prevail and constitute in their totality the tradition of art. . . . A judge—that is to say, a true judge—is he with whom everybody is compelled to agree, not because he says it, but because it is so.

What I should like to see is reasons given for every judgment. When the judge delivers sentence it should be after a summing-up of the evidence actually before both court and jury; and his principles of judgment should be the established principles of the world’s literature. . . . I appeal for a more careful reading and for a more careful evidence in every case,

¹ NA, XV (22 Oct. 1914), 597.

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and for such evidence as an honest though plain man cannot reject.¹

Orage's conception of literature and the function of criticism is a synthesis of the English critical tradition from Sidney to Matthew Arnold. As such, it is sharply differentiated from the critical views current in his own time. His definition of literature as 'the imaginative perfecting of nature' had seldom been utilized in literary criticism since the eighteenth century. It probably appealed to him because of the Platonic cast of his mind; a Platonic interpretation was inherent in it, through Sidney's debt to Minturno. Again it must be emphasized that this idea was not simply restated; it became part of Orage's critical equipment, and he applied it in such a way as to show that it was of perennial value. It enabled him to analyse, for example, the theoretical bases of new literary movements:

We agree [with the Vorticists] that Nature should not be imitated. The second commandment must be obeyed in art as well as in ethics. But we are hopelessly at variance when the next step is to be taken. Mr Lewis is for creating a 'Nature' of his own imagination. I am for idealizing the Nature that already exists in strenuous imperfection. He is for Vorticism; I am for idealization of the actual. It is worth quarrelling about.

Mr Marinetti is reviving an old quarrel that ought to have been drowned with the Flood,—the quarrel of presentation with representation; and he is on the wrong side of the controversy. The jealousy of every writer for the omnipotence of pure literature is something fanatic. As Hokusai used to hope that by the time he was a hundred and twenty every one of his drawings would be alive, every man of letters looks forward one day to writing living sentences. Absolutely no

¹ NA, XXIV (14 Nov. 1918), 25-6; XIII (23 Oct. 1913), 761.

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writer of any rank has ever complained, in my recollection, that his own language was not sufficient for him; but all of them have despaired of ever employing it fully. Mr Marinetti, however, appears to assume that artists feel cramped by the common language and desire new materials of expression; and he proceeds to invent crazy typographical and onomatopoeic tricks as a means to this end. But as well as mistaking the despair of writers (which, as I have said, is with themselves and not with their medium), he mistakes the whole *raison d'être* of literature, which is precisely not to present and reproduce, but to represent and produce.¹

This is aesthetic criticism at its best: it shows that abstract questions of critical theory can be relevant to specific literary methods.

The definition of literature in terms of ‘art’ and ‘nature’ is traditionally associated with another duality, that of pleasure and instruction. In terms of a radically simplified outline of the history of English criticism, we can say that between the time of Sidney and Pater (setting aside Matthew Arnold for the moment), the emphasis on the pleasure afforded by literature increased as that on its capacity to instruct decreased. Coleridge said that ‘truth, either moral or intellectual, ought to be the *ultimate* end’ of literature; but this did not enter into his definition of literature (that species of composition ‘proposing for its *immediate* object pleasure, not truth’). Orage’s conception of its function was closer in spirit to Dr Johnson’s precept that ‘the only end of writing is to enable the reader better to enjoy life, or better to endure it’. He did not dissociate technique and content. And he did not commit himself, as did Coleridge, to the position that the truth contained in literature was ‘either moral or intellectual’; it was truth about experience—possibly moral or intellectual, but

¹ NA, XVII (29 July 1915), 309; XV (14 May 1914), 89.

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possibly, for example, psychological (as in the case of James). He avoided one of the difficult problems of the didactic view by contending, not that an author should attempt to instruct, but that we should be able to learn from him. 'Pleasure' was usually employed to describe the emotional component of literature, 'instruction' to describe its intellectual content. Orage's view presupposed that the 'truth' of literature was both emotional and intellectual.

II. POETRY AND SOCIETY

Orage's reliance on traditional critical doctrines, reshaped to meet the demands of his time, was one of two factors which gave his criticism a distance from its immediate context, a disinterestedness, which one seldom encounters. The second was his ability to discern the cultural trends of his time and to relate them to its literature, offering illuminations which usually come only after time has given us an historical perspective. The period was witnessing, he felt, a decline in 'pure intelligence', which he defined as a 'disinterested interest in things; in things, that is to say, of no *personal* advantage, but only of general, public or universal importance. . . . It reveals itself, while it is still active, as a love of knowledge for its own sake.' Disinterestedness in this sense usually results from a belief in something higher than one's personal ambitions, and Orage found in the decline of religious belief one of the causes of this change.

Another explanation that can be suggested is the reaction against intellectualism of the nineteenth century. I need not dwell upon a familiar topic; but it is obvious that if faith is lost in the ultimate *use* of intelligence men become cynical in regard to the passion itself. . . . The nineteenth century

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reached its climax in a vast disappointment with science, with the intellect, with intellectualism. . . . It was no wonder that the twentieth century opened in a return to impulse and a corresponding reaction from intellectuality. That the reaction has gone too far is the very disease we are now trying to diagnose; for only an excessive reaction towards impulse and away from thought can account for the poverty of free intelligence.¹

He diagnosed the contemporary enthusiasm for the philosophy of Bergson as one symptom of the reaction against rationality. For although ‘intuition’ could be precisely defined so as to indicate one function of the mind, Bergson’s use of the term was so vague as to include ‘impulse’: ‘While slyly cheapening reason by naming it intellectualism,’ said Orage, Bergson ‘raises the estimation of impulse by calling it intuition. The choice for foolish people is therefore pretty well determined!’² As a result, impulse tended to take the place of intellect in contemporary culture; spontaneity was praised and logic derided. These phenomena were of interest to Orage as a critic because they engendered what he regarded as specific types of literary decadence. If the culture of which artists were a product displayed an imbalance, it would probably be reflected in their work; and this is what had happened to literature in his time. Criticism exalted spontaneity and did not provide reasoned evaluations; poetry did not contain a comprehensive and intellectually coherent vision of life. It was the critic’s duty, he thought, to attempt to counter these trends. ‘Criticism,’ he said, ‘does not create literature—but it prepares appreciation for it, and, above all, it extends the domain of the good.’³

The decline of free intelligence was particularly evident,

¹ NA, XXIII (31 Oct. 1918), 429.

² NA, XV (7 May 1914), 12. ³ NA, XVIII (17 Feb. 1916), 372.

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according to Orage, in the works of the Georgians. The following passage was probably written after a visit to the Poetry Bookshop, as it concerns the poets who contributed to Harold Monro's *Poetry and Drama*:

I need only wonder what in the language's name these young versifiers are after. A recent meeting with a few of them satisfies me that they are, as they foolishly hope, remote from the world right enough, but not, as they also foolishly suppose, on any peak of Darien. Their ignorance is appalling! Not content to boast that they are not concerned with such vulgar subjects as politics and economics, they boast also their ignorance of the main stream of English poetry. The main stream, if you please, is not broad enough for them; it is on the little rivulets that fed it that they ply their little boats. Well, I do not deny that discoveries are to be made there—but what of them? The discoveries will be of modes and forms discovered by the great poets, worked and then abandoned.¹

Of the Georgian suggestion that modern poetry should return to Wordsworth as a source of inspiration (which apparently led Pound to challenge Lascelles Abercrombie to a duel),² Orage said:

Back to Wordsworth by all means, but *not* back to Wordsworth's failures—far more numerous than his successes, and, of course, more easily imitated. Abjure 'literary' language too, if you like; but remember that the exclusive use of 'every-day' language is equally a 'literary' affectation.³

¹ NA, XIV (9 Apr. 1914), 722.

² John Gould Fletcher, *Life Is My Song* (New York, 1937), p. 72. Orage attributes this suggestion to an article in *Poetry and Drama*; the parallelism between the form of the statement he records and that recorded by Fletcher makes it probable that Abercrombie wrote the article in question. Neither Patricia Hutchins nor the present writer has been able to locate this article, either in *Poetry and Drama* or elsewhere.

³ NA, XIV (15 Jan. 1914), 338.

He suggested that in following Wordsworth, they should remember that Wordsworth did not consider politics beneath him; nor, for that matter, did Coleridge, Pope, Swift, and Milton.

The condition of contemporary poetry was of particular concern to Orage because he felt that it was indicative of the condition of literature as a whole and of the course of its future development. Even a sympathetic examination did not yield encouraging results. Most minor poetry, he noted, is inspired ‘not by personal experience of life, but by experiences among books’,¹ and the poetry of the preceding period (that of Wilde, Francis Thompson, the Rhymers’ Club and the *Yellow Book*) was not worthy of emulation. Its themes reappeared in the works of the Georgians, none of whom, he thought, deserved prolonged attention. He found few virtues in the works of Lascelles Abercrombie, Wilfrid Wilson Gibson, and John Drinkwater; he was highly critical of Rupert Brooke, who at the time was the most popular of the Georgians. Of the sonnet beginning ‘If I should die, think only this of me,’ he said: ‘No great critical ability is needed to discern that the thought of the sonnet comes to an end in the third line. All the rest is verbiage.’²

One might suspect that Orage attacked the Georgians because *The New Age* was a semi-official organ of the Imagists. This was not the case. He was willing to print their contributions, but they were more frequently criticized than praised in the magazine. Imagism, he contended, was the substitution of a part for the whole in poetry. Its programme was

nothing new; but, as I have always contended, one of the instrumental objects of all poets and writers. To convey in an

¹ NA, XIX (12 Oct. 1916), 565.

² NA, XVII (23 Sept. 1915), 501.

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image the maximum meaning by the minimum means is obviously the purpose in literature of images. . . . But there is clearly no reason to make a cult of it to the neglect of other elements (such as lucidity) equally indispensable to good writing.¹

Twenty years before the preceding passage was written, he had advocated the use of free verse as a means of revitalizing poetry; by the time that it came to be written, he had concluded that traditional forms gave more pleasure to the reader and acted as a beneficial discipline for the writer.² And finally, he found that Imagist poetry was, as a rule, intellectually empty; its theory engendered short poems with negligible content.

Orage discussed Imagism most frequently in connection with its leading theorist and practitioner, Ezra Pound. When *Cathay* appeared, he attempted to explain his objections to the movement while acknowledging his admiration of the poems in this volume.

If I were to say that *Cathay* contains the best and only good work Mr Ezra Pound has yet done, my judgment might be defended. . . . As in the 'Sea-Farer', the thoughts contained in the Chinese poems are of a very simple character. The imaginary persons are without subtlety and almost, one might say, without mind. But it cannot be the case that only simple natures can be the subjects of poetry; or that 'naturalness' belongs to them alone. I have noted in the vers librista a tendency to confine themselves to the elementary emotions of elementary people; as if the possession of a cultivated mind excluded its owner from poetry. But Browning was quite as simple, straightforward and 'natural' in, say, 'Bishop Blougram's Apology' as Rihaku with his 'Merchant's Wife's Letter'. The difference is that Browning was 'perfecting' the

¹ NA, XIX (22 June 1916), 182.

² NA, XV (8 Oct. 1914), 548.



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expression of a powerful and subtle mind, while Rihaku was perfecting the mind relatively of a child. The extension of the directness and simplicity, the veracity and the actuality aimed at by vers libristes, into subtler regions than the commonplace is advisable if they are not to keep in the nursery of art.¹

Although Orage found little of value in his criticism ('I would part Mr Pound from his theories as often as I found him clinging to one, for they will in the end be his ruin'),² he and Pound had this in common: they both considered good poetry a product of conscious discipline rather than inexplicable afflatus. The following passage summarizes Orage's estimate of Pound's influence on the literature of his time.

Mr Pound will not deny that he is an American in this respect, if none other, that he always likes to hitch his wagon to a star. He has always a ton of precept for a pound of example and in America, more than in any other country save Germany, it appears to be required of a man that there shall be 'significance', intention, aim, theory—anything you like expressive of direction—in everything he does. . . .

It must be admitted, however, that this habit of Mr Pound has its good as well as its somewhat absurd side. . . . No poet, I think, dare claim to be a pupil of Mr Pound who cannot prove that he has been to school to poetry and submitted himself to a craft-apprenticeship; and no poet will long command Mr Pound's approval who is not always learning and experimenting. Now this, which I call the good side in Mr Pound's doctrine, is disliked in England, where it has for years been the habit of critics to pretend that poetry grows on bushes or in parsley-beds. That poetry should be the practice of 'a learned, self-conscious craft' to be carried on by a 'guild of adepts' appears to Mr Archer, for example, to be a heresy of the first order. How much of the best poetry, he exclaims, has been written with 'little technical study behind it'; and

¹ NA, XVII (5 Aug. 1915), 332-3.

² Ibid., 332.

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how little necessary, therefore, any previous learning is. . . . It will be seen, of course, how the confusion in Mr Archer’s mind has arisen. Because it is a fact that the ‘best’ poetry *looks* effortless, he has fallen into the spectator’s error of concluding that it *is* effortless. And because, again, a considerable part of the work of the ‘learned, self-conscious craftsman’ is pedantic and artificial, he has been confirmed in his error. The truth of the matter, however, is with Mr Pound. Dangerous as it may be to require that a poet shall be learned in his profession, it is much more dangerous to deprecate his learning.¹

This is what led Orage to support Pound during his years in London.

III. THE ART OF PROSE

While Orage’s criticism of creative works was not without consequence, he influenced contemporary literature more directly as a critic, practitioner, and tutor of expository prose. Although there has been a phenomenal increase in the publication of expository writing since 1900, there has been no corresponding increase in the number of outstanding writers of prose. A comparison between our own age and the Victorian period underlines this difference. Both narrative prose and poetry were enriched by a closer concern with style during the early years of the century. According to Ford Madox Ford, the stylistic precision characteristic of Flaubert was introduced into England by Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and W. H. Hudson; he claims that he was the chief advocate of this Impressionistic prose during and after his editorship of *The English Review*.² At the same time, Pound and others

¹ NA, XXIII (25 July 1918), 201.

² *Mightier than the Sword* (London, 1938), p. 146; *Thus to Revisit* (London, 1921), p. 138.

were attempting to free poetry of the linguistic accretions that had burdened it since the death of Browning, to restore 'simplicity and directness of utterance'.¹ These movements met with some success; and many would say that the general level of style in novels and poems has improved as a result. No such stylistic revolution occurred with respect to expository prose, which at the time seems to have been passing from the hands of men of letters—into the hands of the Yellow Press. Whatever the causes of the decay of expository prose, Orage's attempts to prevent its progress were of importance in his time and take on renewed significance in view of its continuation.

Perhaps one cause of the lack of interest in expository prose was that it came to be regarded as a purely utilitarian medium rather than an art form. This is not the case, argued Orage. While it is utilitarian (this being a merit rather than a defect), its stylistic possibilities are even greater than those of poetry. He opposed the tendency to consider prose more excellent as it approached the condition of poetry. Perhaps our critical vocabulary for dealing with the technique of verse misleads us when it is applied to prose; the discovery of regular metres, metaphors, assonance and consonance in prose often leads to the implication that it can be evaluated in terms of its poetic qualities. Orage felt that the attempt to write prose as if it were poetry led to a species of decadence: the elevation of technique at the expense of content. This was true, he said, in the case of Pater: 'Pater, I verily believe, never had an idea in his life. In consequence he spent the whole of his energy in concealing the fact in his style. On his style he spent enormous pains, as he knew he would live by that or nothing.'² Certain qualities which are characteristic

¹ NA, X (15 Feb. 1912), 370. ² NA, XIII (12 June 1913), 177.

of poetry, such as regularity of rhythm, lead to monotony in prose; he found this monotony, symptomatic of stylistic decadence, in the essays of Oscar Wilde, with their balanced cadences and regular caesurae.¹

Poetic prose, Orage said, was a product of the ornate tradition originating in Cicero and exemplified in English by Lyly, De Quincey, and Pater. Opposed to it was the lucid simplicity characteristic of Demosthenes and his English imitator, Swift. The question was one of taste, he thought—which can obviously be a matter of dispute. ‘Which of the two schools of style is capable of the highest development; and, above all, which is the most suited to the English language? My mind is fully made up; I am. . . for the simple and against the ornate.’² He was not blind to the virtues of styles which were not intended to achieve perfect simplicity; on one occasion he devoted an entire column to a favourable analysis of a passage from De Quincey.³ Of the style perfected by Milton, he wrote: ‘He would be a bold man who dared, and a great man who could, restore the rhetorical style to English; and at present I see no likelihood of it. Nevertheless, the style is legitimate and even noble. In a greater age we shall recover its use.’⁴ His preference for the simple style was in part personal, as he admitted; but it was also related to a more objective judgment regarding the vices that the ornate style often engendered:

Every writer of a unique style is liable to ruin his imitators; and, from this point of view, the wise thing to be done is to classify good writers as writers to be imitated and writers never to be imitated. Among the former are the writers whom

¹ NA, XVI (16 Apr. 1914), 755.

² NA, XXIII (26 Sept. 1918), 351.

³ NA, XXI (16 Aug. 1917), 347-8.

⁴ NA, XIV (11 Dec. 1913), 177.

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I personally prefer; for I love best the men of the eighteenth century, who aimed at writing as nearly as possible like the world, and through whom the common genius of the English language spoke.¹

The ornate stylists, he said, perfected a unique mode of self-expression, whereas those who attained simplicity did so through complete impersonality.²

The great danger of the ornate style is that its practitioners tend to employ it indiscriminately, without regard to its suitability for the subject they are discussing. It is entirely inappropriate, for example, in literary criticism. 'Dr Johnson,' he said,

has written about poetry in a proper style. He was respectful in the very distance his prose kept from poetic imagery. Cold and detached he may have seemed to be, but all great criticism, comment, and even appreciation labour of necessity under this charge. What would be said of a judge who demonstrated the emotions of the persons before him; or, equally, of a judge who did not feel them? To be a critic or judge of poetry, or of any art, requires, in the first instance, a powerful self-restraint in expression, manifested in poetic criticism, I should say, by a prose style free from the smallest suggestion of poetry.³

This self-restraint is evident in his own criticism and in that of the modern critics he admired (Irving Babbitt, Paul Elmer More, Julien Benda). He also found it in the writings of another critic who at the time was comparatively unknown:

A very serious critic of our day is Mr T. S. Eliot; and I commend his essays wherever they are to be found. Of American birth and Harvard education, he has made himself

¹ NA, XXII (17 Jan. 1918), 231-2.

² NA, XXIX (12 May 1921), 20.

³ NA, XXIII (18 July 1918), 187.

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a good European; and in all matters concerning literature his judgment is both wide and weighty. . . . He delivers his judgment with rather too detached an air, as if he were a High Court judge adjudicating fully and impartially over a question of no emotional concern to himself; but, on the other hand, the feeling is only concealed; if the reader will watch his own reactions, it is not absent. The truth appears to be that Mr Eliot cultivates expressionlessness as other people cultivate expression. He would not have you suspect that the matters in hand are of great emotional concern to him. They should be, he suggests, of great emotional concern to his readers; but for himself he prefers to appear to be above that plane. He can keep cool where the rest ought to be enthusiastic; but at bottom, as I have said, he is really more enthusiastic than most of his readers are ever likely to be. And that is his real complaint against them; and the origin of his mask. . . . The result is a curious atmosphere unique in modern literature: a style at once lawyerlike and romantic, and a judgment at once intimate and distant. It is a phenomenon worth attention, one of the current ‘events’ of literary criticism; and once more I commend Mr Eliot’s essays to my readers’ notice.¹

An impersonal and seemingly dispassionate style is also required, Orage felt, in journalism. The leading articles of his day were compounded of the simple and the ornate, with the result that they never achieved the clarity so vitally necessary for intelligent political and economic discussion. Simplicity in itself, he said, was without value unless it was a product of ‘a love amounting to a passion for conveying ideas—and this implies a love of the minds to which they are to be conveyed; and a discrimination of words and phrases which resembles, though it much surpasses, the discrimination the musician must exercise on sounds’.² These qualities could be found in Demos-

¹ NA, XXVIII (31 Mar. 1921), 259.

² NA, XIX (20 July 1916), 279.

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thenes, Milton, Swift, and Burke, who had 'too serious a passion for their purpose and too reverent an attitude toward their medium of prose to forget the one or to play tricks with the other. When they wrote they wrote for their lives'; the modern journalist, however, 'writes for his living', and the resultant attrition of the language leaves it less able to perform its true function.¹

In our time, Orage said, the ills resulting from the misuse of language have led to a widespread distrust of men of letters; many people have concluded that writers do not perform a useful social function. This makes the performance of that function all the more necessary.

To discover, not more and more things, but more and more the truth or the real relations of things, is . . . what distinguishes men from animals. Man, in short, is the truth-seeking creature; and any material function, however ingeniously discharged, is properly subordinate to this, his unique research. But words . . . are the tools of this trade, Words are to truth what raw materials are to any industry—the substance upon which and with which the directing mind must work. True enough that they are most readily susceptible of error, and that few minds can deal with them with any precision. But the effort must not be given up on that account. Rather, indeed, it behoves us to be a thousand times more critical. And, again, it is not as if we can ever dispense with words, good, bad, or indifferent. A democracy is governed by words; all human government, in fact, is logocracy. To the extent, therefore, that the use of words is properly understood, government, even in the most practical affairs, is itself good. What, for instance, have practical men not had to pay for the failure of our intelligentsia to impress upon the public the distinction between Equality and Identity, Liberty and doing as one pleases, Impartiality and Neutrality? To belittle the right use of words, with the results of their wrong use before

¹ NA, XVIII (23 Mar. 1916), 494.

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our eyes, is to invite still worse practical confusion. The only cure for intellectual dishonesty is intellectual honesty.¹

Orage's critical writings have met with comparative neglect since his death. Only two volumes of his criticism appeared during his lifetime, and, as one of them was published in the United States, it did not circulate widely in England.² Some would say this neglect is undeserved. T. S. Eliot described his most important contribution to criticism as follows :

I cannot recall, in *Readers and Writers*, any startling recognition of [literary] novelty. What I do recall is that when faced with authority or reputation and success, Orage was never distracted; and that he could penetrate quite simply and unpretentiously to the heart of the moral rottenness, or intellectual dishonesty and turpitude, of the most acclaimed authors; that he was the enemy of pretence and stupidity. And I recall a style which was as far from that of a *Times* leader as it was near to the essentials of good prose. I say that Orage was primarily a moralist; but to say that he was a moralist is not to say that he was a moralist *instead* of being a critic of literature. He was that necessary and rare person, the moralist in criticism; not the inquisitor who tries to impose (his) morals upon literature, but the critic who perceives the morals of literature, and who recognizes that intellectual dishonesty, laziness, and confusion are cardinal sins in literature.³

But Orage was not concerned only with the morals of contemporary literature. He devoted a large share of his

¹ NA, XVIII (2 Mar. 1916), 421.

² *Readers and Writers* (London, 1922); *The Art of Reading* (New York, 1930). Shortly after his death, Herbert Read and Denis Saurat edited a collection of his criticism entitled *Selected Essays and Critical Writings* (London, 1936). Of the three volumes, only *The Art of Reading* contains a substantial amount of his best work; all three leave much to be desired in terms of organization.

³ ‘A Commentary’, *The Criterion*, XIV (Jan. 1935), 260-1.

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critical energies to the relationship between culture, society, and the arts, as Eliot himself did two decades later. The sins of an author are responsible for some of the faults in his work, but others may result from the general cultural climate of the age in which he has the fortune or the misfortune to find himself. We have seen that Orage considered his age one of transition. And this, he felt, had an adverse effect upon its literature.

Nobody will deny that what my colleague, Mr Ludovici, calls 'a great order of society' is lacking in most men's mind today. . . . Our writers do not *think* from a settled background either of fact or of imagination. Actually either variety would serve the purpose of literature and art; the order of society that exists (if only it would stand still for five minutes) or an order of Utopia.¹

It is especially difficult to write coherent criticism in such a period, for the critic himself will be subject to the same cultural cross-currents as authors—unless he can formulate a durable system of values on which to base his criticism. This Orage did, in conjunction with other writers such as J. M. Kennedy, S. G. Hobson, T. E. Hulme, and Ramiro de Maeztu. They affirmed their belief in transcendent values; in an age which exalted impulse, they asserted that man, though limited, arrives at truth through his intellect; they attempted to create a stable social order as a heritage for future generations.

The effect of this effort on Orage's criticism was two-fold. Since it led him to devote most of his time to politics and economics, we do not find in his critical writings any 'startling recognition of novelty', as Eliot observed; his awareness of new trends and new writers of

¹ NA, XIV (8 Jan. 1914), 307.

importance was limited. But his constant attention to the larger problems of society and culture gave his criticism this virtue: it evinces a clear understanding of the relationship between contemporary literature and the society of which it is a product. Without allowing his own political beliefs to intrude into his literary interpretations, as did the Marxists and other social critics of the 'thirties, Orage was able 'to exhibit the relations of literature—not to "life", as something contrasted to literature, but to all the other activities which, together with literature, are the components of life'.¹

Orage grounded his literary criticism firmly in tradition, developing it with a logical consistency and a cogency that make one feel it is the product of a mind disciplined by a long study of philosophy. At the same time, his criticism is never abstruse; while remaining a specialized activity, it never withdraws into the sphere of the specialists, with their 'affective', 'formalist', and 'semantic' theories. 'My own rule is simple,' he said. 'It consists in requiring of every conclusion to which I am brought that it shall be *susceptible* of being expressed in what is called plain language, that is, idiom. . . . Every piece of work should reduce to a simple truth capable of being understood by the jury of mankind.'² His best criticism displays that quality which it was his object to achieve: 'brilliant common sense'.

We have almost no record of the most important part of Orage's criticism, which took the form of selecting manuscripts for publication in *The New Age*, giving advice to authors, and teaching them the elements of good style. The greater portion of this work was done in

¹ T. S. Eliot, 'The Function of a Literary Review', *The Criterion*, I (July 1923), 421.

² NA, XIX (20 July 1916), 279.

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connection with expository prose, and it was in this medium that he exercised his greatest influence, in his sustained effort to raise weekly journalism to the level of literature.

PART FIVE
1919-1922:
SOCIAL CREDIT AND MYSTICISM

CHAPTER XIV
THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

ALTHOUGH many radicals considered the Great War a product of capitalism and the plots of unscrupulous financiers, the writers for *The New Age* saw it as a necessity for the preservation of freedom and, ultimately, of the ideals of Western civilization. At the same time, Orage carefully maintained in the magazine a certain degree of detachment. Unlike other periodicals, it did not contain retrospective castigations of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer; Orage continued to publish translations of German poems in spite of the popular reaction against German literature. He refused to print accounts of atrocities and realistic descriptions of the horrors of war,¹ feeling that no constructive purpose would be served by embittering or shocking readers. Instead, he urged contributors to devote their attention to domestic problems and the possibility of economic reform after the war. Once a lasting peace had been achieved in Europe, Guild Socialism, which was rapidly becoming an important political movement, might make a valuable contribution to the social revolution that was expected. Thus it is understandable that Orage had confidence in the future and that he could

¹ Letter from Orage to Herbert Read, 17 Dec. 1918.

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work with sustained energy in the face of adverse circumstances.

This confidence was shattered, however, by the events of the post-war years. Far from assuring a lasting peace, the Treaty of Versailles seemed to make another conflict inevitable:

There can be no doubt whatever that war is contemplated not only as a possibility, but as a high probability in the peace that is just about to be signed. Hatred and distrust and fear of Germany are to be found in almost every line of the terms; and since upon a peace of hate it is impossible to build a peace of justice, the pillars of the present peace are certain to moulder and crumble away and to bring down war upon the world once more. It would be difficult to fix individual responsibility for the disastrous character of the peace. With very few if any exceptions we are all guilty of contributing our faggot, some by the kind of patriotism which now finds its agents in men like Mr Bottomley,¹ but others, it must be remembered, by the kind of pacifism . . . that has left the pacifist element without any weight in the peace terms. It is strange to reflect upon the effectiveness with which the parties to the war-controversy have exchanged roles. Before and during the war, the patriots were right in demanding the defeat of Germany, as the pacifists were wrong in objecting to it. Today the patriots are wrong in demanding the destruction of Germany, while the pacifists are right in protesting against it. Unfortunately, however, the prestige acquired by the two parties by their attitude to the war allows the former to be supported and followed now that they are wrong, and the latter to be repudiated as generally now that they are right as when they were wrong. These pacifists, indeed, have done nothing for Germany save to embitter, first, the war, and now, the peace, to the infinite sorrow not only of Germany, but of the world.²

¹ Probably Horatio Bottomley, who wrote for the *Sunday Pictorial*.

² NA, XXV (22 May 1919), 53.

He was also bitterly disappointed by the political trends of the post-war period. While most radical papers were greeting the Russian Revolution as the first great victory of Socialism, *The New Age* gradually came to see it as a regression to tyranny and barbarism. ‘I am quite sure,’ wrote its Russian correspondent, ‘that a regular crusade would have started in England against Bolshevism could the British nation only realize the meaning of events in Russia, their causes and the goal they are leading us to.’ Bolshevism, he said, was ‘hostile to culture and civilization. This is the vital point which you miss when you are speaking of Bolshevism in England. You will realize it only when it is too late.’¹ The Servile State envisaged by Belloc had come into being; the ‘liberation of the masses’, said Orage, had resulted in a ‘Marxian dictatorship’.² Guild Socialism, which had been conceived as a democratic alternative to the authoritarian tendencies of Collectivism, was only a theory, whereas Bolshevism was an accomplished fact. Assailed by Communists from within and without, the National Guilds League became less and less effectual, finally disappearing in 1922.³

These disappointments, however, did not lead Orage or *The New Age* to become a disillusioned champion of lost causes. Guild Socialism had attracted widespread interest largely because its appearance coincided with what G. D. H. Cole has called the period of ‘Labour Unrest’.⁴ The validity of the Guild proposals was not dependent on the events of the period, but they were particularly relevant to these events. The economic difficulties that plagued

¹ P. D. Ouspensky, ‘Letters from Russia’, *NA*, XXVI (27 Nov., 18 Dec. 1919), 53, 106.

² *NA*, XXVII (19 Aug. 1920), 241.

³ Mairret, p. 73; Margaret Cole, letter, 8 Feb. 1961.

⁴ *The Second International, 1889-1914*, p. 222.

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England after the war were a result of different conditions. Orage realized that they necessitated a thorough examination of traditional economic theories. We have seen in the preceding chapters that *The New Age* was largely a product of its time; Orage's comments on the trends asserting themselves in the magazine in 1919 indicate that this was also true during the post-war period:

While unable, any more than anybody else, to predict the future of *The New Age*, I can roughly indicate its direction from an examination of its present momentum. It appears to me . . . that the present momentum of *The New Age*, that is to say, of the vital thought of our immediate day, is gathered to carry us forward in two directions simultaneously and equally: in the direction of a more radical and simple analysis and synthesis of modern industrial society, and in the direction of a more profound analysis and synthesis of human psychology.¹

Economic theory and psycho-analysis were the central concerns of the magazine between 1919 and 1922.

While he still looked upon Guild Socialism as an ideal solution for the problem of industrial organization, Orage felt that its economic theory was inadequate.² The Guild proposals, if accepted, would leave the nation subject to the fluctuations of economic cycles, one of the greatest evils of the capitalistic system. By 1920, England had entered an industrial depression; a conservative estimate indicated that over three million people were unemployed.³ Widespread unemployment was anticipated

¹ NA, XXVI (6 Nov. 1919), 12.

² 'An Editor's Progress', NA, XXXVIII (25 Mar., 1 Apr. 1926), 246-7, 258.

³ In May 1920, 3,289,000 people were receiving unemployment compensation. As this figure would include only those workers covered by the Insurance Acts (primarily industrial workers), 'the total number of unemployed was probably much larger'. Carpenter, p. 108, n. 38.

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after the war, but the Government had not been able to prevent its occurrence, nor were economists agreed upon what steps could be taken to alleviate the situation. In these circumstances, it is understandable that Orage was willing to listen to the theories of a man who claimed that he knew the cause of depressions and how they could be permanently avoided without recourse to inflation, Government indebtedness, Collectivism, or authoritarianism.

Major C. H. Douglas had recently returned to England from India, where he had been the manager of the British Westinghouse Company. By profession he was an engineer; his interest in economics resulted from his experience with the cost accounting methods of modern industry. On arriving in England, he did not have a comprehensive economic theory; however he did have one idea which, if applied to traditional theories, would produce startling results. In 1917, Holbrook Jackson printed several articles by Douglas in *The Organizer*. Their ostensible subject was methods of cost accounting, but Douglas's ideas were so unique and his prose style so anfractuious that even those few who did understand what he meant must have been convinced that they did not.¹ In spite of this disappointing reception, Douglas was confident that his thesis would gain widespread acceptance if he could find a suitable medium for its circulation. According to Philip Mairet, ‘Holbrook Jackson told Douglas that there were only two editors who would have the courage to give him the platform he needed—one was Austin Harrison of the *English Review* and the other was Orage.’² Shortly after they had been introduced, Douglas and Orage began to meet regularly to discuss economic problems. In January 1919, nearly a

¹ Mairet, p. 74.

² Ibid.

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year later, articles by Douglas began to appear in *The New Age*. Under Orage's tutelage, his prose style became more readable and his ideas more comprehensible.¹ The result of their collaboration was the 'Social Credit' movement.

Orage did not have a thorough knowledge of traditional economics and monetary theory; such knowledge, regardless of its limitations from a post-Keynsian point of view, might have prevented him from accepting Douglas's ideas. But traditional economists had no answers for the problems of 1920, and even if Douglas's theory was completely wrong, its objective—enabling the nation to consume the goods it could produce by putting money in the hands of the people—was so obviously desirable that many people may not have concerned themselves excessively with details of its implementation. 'Social Credit' was based upon the thesis that there is never enough money in circulation to purchase available goods, due to the intricacies of cost accounting, which create costs faster than they distribute purchasing power. The only possible solution is to issue more currency. The quantity of currency in circulation was at that time rigidly determined by the amount of gold held by the Bank of England. A more absurd basis of currency issue cannot be conceived. The 'real credit' of a community, Douglas argues, consists of its ability to deliver goods when and where required.² When we increase this ability, we should increase the amount of money in circulation proportionately, to such an extent that the nation shall be able to consume *all* the goods it produces. How shall we go about creating this money? We shall simply print it and

¹ According to Pound, 'Orage taught Douglas how to write.' Interview, July 1959.

² *Credit-Power and Democracy* (London, 1920), p. 21.

distribute it to each citizen as a ‘national dividend’. Prices will remain fixed by law, and the ever-recurring problem of ‘poverty amidst plenty’ will disappear forever.¹

In attempting to understand Orage’s acceptance of these ideas, it may be helpful to consider the economic conditions of the time. The gold standard had been suspended by a stroke of the pen in 1914. Douglas strongly opposed its reintroduction;² and the opinion of an orthodox authority on financial problems lends support to his view:

Perhaps in this as in so many other respects the year 1919 was the year of lost opportunities. Perhaps in those heroic days, when men’s minds were impressed with the strangeness of the situation in which they found themselves and of the chances which it offered for the building of a new world, it might have been possible to take this definite step [abolishing the gold standard] along with others towards acquiring control of the material forces before which humanity suffers itself to be driven as before the wind. But with every month that passed it became more difficult.³

Orage was aware of the importance of economic issues during this period. On January 2, 1919, Douglas’s first article appeared in *The New Age*. In June of that year, his first book, *Economic Democracy*, began to appear serially in its pages, to be followed by *Credit-Power and Democracy* (commencing in February 1920). Unemployment increased as the nation entered its second industrial depres-

¹ *Credit-Power and Democracy*, pp. 42-4. It is impossible to give an adequate account of the theory of Social Credit in one paragraph, and undesirable in this context to accord it fuller treatment. Those interested in monetary theory can refer to Douglas’s works and to C. B. MacPherson’s *Democracy in Alberta* (Toronto, 1953), pp. 93-141.

² *Credit-Power and Democracy*, pp. 104-5.

³ D. H. Robertson, *Money* (London, 1948), p. 146.

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sion in fifteen years.¹ After a prolonged period of discussion, Orage was convinced that Douglas had found a solution to the nation's economic problems. It was, as Robertson says, a time of unparalleled opportunity for the building of a new world; and the world envisaged by Social Credit, with government dividends, no taxes, and decreased labour for all, was as close to a terrestrial paradise as any supposedly practical economic scheme that has captured the imagination of man.²

While economics dominated the political discussions in *The New Age* during these years, psycho-analysis was the topic most frequently discussed in articles on cultural subjects. We have seen that the subject received considerable attention in the magazine before the war. At that time, however, only two of Freud's books had been published in England. By 1918, there was a substantial body of literature on psycho-analysis available in English. Orage realized that the subject had vast implications:

Of all the new sciences, psycho-analysis is the most inviting. Its immediate practical applications in the hands of competent psychoanalysts are already considerable; but the field both of theory and of practice has scarcely begun as yet to be cultivated. The first results, as is only natural, are mainly therapeutic; but obviously the method and conclusions of

¹ The preceding depression had extended from 1907 to 1910.

² *The New Age* teas at the Chancery Lane ABC, where C. H. Douglas expounded his ideas, probably served as the basis of Pound's education in economics. In 1921, *The New Age* reprinted an account of an interview with Pound which had appeared in the *New York Herald* (Paris edition). 'Mr Pound,' wrote the reporter, 'declared that he looks upon credit control as the focus of power, and that he can see no economic improvement without revision of the credit system.' Pound told him that Douglas's *Economic Democracy* was 'the one real contribution to creative thought that has been made in five years'. *NA*, XXIX (19 May 1921), 36.

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psychoanalysis will prove to be applicable to education, history, religion, and to statesmanship in the very widest sense.¹

He noted a few weeks later that he had recently read ‘thousands of pages’ on the subject,² and during the following months he recommended works by Freud, Jung, and Ernest Jones to the readers of his literary column. Three analysts, Dr James Young, Dr Maurice Nicoll, and Dr J. A. M. Alcock, contributed to the magazine, Alcock appearing nearly every week between 1920 and 1922. By this time other sections of the press had discovered psycho-analysis. Outraged denunciations of its lubricious emphasis on sex appeared in the *Daily Express* and the *Daily Graphic*; the *Pall Mall Gazette* spoke for many of its contemporaries in saying that

The unwholesomeness of morbid introspection has always been recognized by healthy-minded men and women, and we hope that parents and all who have control of the young will set their faces sternly against experiments which, in the name of science, may ruin a generation.³

The New Age’s emphasis on psycho-analysis and utopian economics did not increase its popularity. Psycho-analysis had at the time attracted the serious attention of only a limited number of intellectuals. There can be no doubt that Social Credit alienated many readers. Between 1912 and 1918, *The New Age* had literally created a political movement, Guild Socialism, and had at the same time created the audience to which it appealed. This was accomplished without the help of any existing political organization. However, the success of the movement was

¹ NA, XXII (31 Jan. 1918), 271.

² NA, XII (21 Mar. 1918), 417.

³ Quoted by ‘Edward Moore’ (Edwin Muir), NA, XXVIII (20 Jan. 1921), 139.

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largely a result of its appeal to Socialists and, through the trade unions, to the proletariat. Social Credit, on the other hand, disavowed all political and class affiliations; it repudiated the Marxian economics accepted by most radicals. The Guild Socialists were angered by Orage's apparent tergiversation and as a result the magazine lost the support of many readers and contributors. Even if Douglas's economic theory had won the approval of authoritative economists, it is doubtful that the magazine's circulation would thereby have increased; political weeklies, be they anarchist or Empire Loyalist, always appeal to some segment of the population, whereas weeklies devoted to economic theory are seldom if ever encountered.

These were not the only factors which operated to the magazine's disadvantage during this period. The war had created immense difficulties for Orage as an editor. The costs of printing, having risen rapidly, increased by another fifteen per cent. in 1918.¹ As *The New Age* had not carried any advertisements since 1913, it was unable to offset these costs by an increase in advertising rates. In March, 1918, the Government reduced by half the amount of paper allocated to periodicals;² Orage was forced to reduce the size of the magazine to sixteen pages, with a consequent decline in circulation. A large number of new literary magazines appeared. The younger writers were not interested in the political issues that had been so important to the preceding generation; hence they submitted their works to *Art and Letters*, *Wheels*, *Coterie*, or *Voices* rather than to *The New Age*. Previously, it had reflected and contributed to the most important cultural and literary movements of the period. After 1918, it was

¹ NA, XXIII (10 Oct. 1918), 381.

² NA, XII (21 Mar. 1918), 417.

only partially representative. Nevertheless, *The New Age* continued to make a noteworthy contribution to the literary life of the time, publishing works by established authors and encouraging several young writers who were virtually unknown.

Of the poets whose earliest works appeared in *The New Age*, two—Ruth Pitter and Edwin Muir—are particularly important to this study because of their long association with the magazine. Both became contributors before the war, but in spirit they belong to the post-war period in which they achieved their first literary success. Ruth Pitter’s first published poem appeared in 1911.¹ A note appended to the poem revealed that she was thirteen years old. Orage had retained an interest in poetry written by the young as a result of his experience as a teacher. After seeing more of her work, he arranged to meet the author and her mother. ‘My first impression of Orage,’ says Miss Pitter, ‘was that he was the possessor of a devastating charm. I was only fourteen, and it quite bowled me over. . . . He was very kind to young aspirants and made us feel we had some little significance.’² She continued to contribute to *The New Age*, including many poems that had appeared there in her *First Poems* (1920).

The importance of Orage’s kindness to the young is clearly illustrated in his relationship with Edwin Muir. In his autobiography, Muir recounts how in 1912, when he found his ‘elusive world’ crumbling about him, he wrote to Orage asking him for advice. He had been reading *The New Age* for about three years, during which time it had served as the basis of his education in contemporary literature and politics.³ In retrospect he concluded that

¹ ‘Field Grasses’, *NA*, IX (11 May 1911), 29.

² Letter from Miss Pitter, 28 Feb. 1960.

³ Edwin Muir, *An Autobiography*, p. 123.

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writing to Orage was 'pure impertinence, for the only claim I had upon him was that I read him every week'. Orage, however, whose intellectual development was in some ways similar to his own, apparently did not consider it an impertinence:

He wrote me a long and kind letter describing his own intellectual struggles as a young man, and saying that he had been greatly helped by taking up some particular writer and studying everything he wrote, until he felt he knew the workings of a great mind. He had studied Plato for several years in this way, he was now studying the Mahabharata, which he tentatively recommended to me.¹

Muir selected Nietzsche, whom Orage had also studied for several years, as the author whose works he would master.

In May 1913, Edwin Muir's first published work appeared in *The New Age*. It was a short dialogue on the use of epigrams by contemporary authors, signed 'Edward Moore', a pseudonym which he continued to use until 1922.² Within a few months he was contributing poems which appeared in 'Pastiche', the section of the magazine devoted to the works of inexperienced contributors. While many young poets were experimenting with free verse, Muir was practising the traditional forms recommended by Orage. Most of the poems he wrote during these years were political and literary satires. Late in 1916, he commenced a series of articles entitled 'We Moderns'. They consisted of short paragraphs and epigrams on society, politics, and the arts which he had written to relieve the tedium of his work as a costing clerk. While apparently labouring over the accounts, he would be

¹ Ibid., p. 126. Orage's letters to Muir have not survived (letter from Willa Muir, 24 Nov. 1959).

² 'The Epigram', NA, XIII (29 May 1913), 124.

polishing an aphorism written on a slip of paper inserted in his ledger.¹ The first fruit of his study of Nietzsche, ‘We Moderns’ displayed an intellectual arrogance that later led Muir to repudiate it. Orage was conscious of its shortcomings; ‘Mr Moore’, he wrote when the series appeared in book form,

is a romantic to whom it is fatal to apply the criterion of common sense. The world in which his discoveries are made is not the world in which the jury of mankind sits; it is a world shared mainly by himself and Nietzsche, a world of his intellectual imagination.²

At the same time, Orage discerned in the work an exceptional talent :

If you regard it as an imitation of Nietzsche, you must admit that it is a tour de force—parody of the very highest order, parody amounting to originality almost equal to Nietzsche’s own; as good as Burke on Bolingbroke. If you regard it as the note-book of a man hitherto unknown as a writer, you must marvel at the finish of so much of the style—a finish without any superior in its contemporary school. Or if you take it merely as the occasional reflections of a modern mind, you must be moved to admiration by the variety, the profundity, and the passion of the thoughts so apparently easily poured out.³

Never before had he praised the talents of an inexperienced contributor so highly, and never was he more justified in doing so.

The articles on cultural and literary topics that Muir contributed to the magazine following the publication of *We Moderns* confirmed Orage’s estimate of his abilities.

¹ Letter from Willa Muir, 24 Nov. 1959.

² NA, XXI (20 Sept. 1917), 448.

³ Ibid.

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When he moved to London late in 1919, he accepted Orage's offer of a post as Assistant Editor of *The New Age*.¹ It was Orage's intention to train him to write the 'Notes of the Week'; this plan failed, however, and Muir continued writing articles of general interest under the headings 'Recreations in Criticism' and 'Our Generation'.² He did not publish any poems between 1917 and 1921, perhaps because of his emotional disturbance during this period. However, after undergoing psycho-analytic treatment, arranged for him by Orage, his poetic talent re-emerged in the form and style that were to be characteristic of his later work.³

Edwin Muir was one of several young writers who were readers of *The New Age* for some years before they became contributors. Herbert Read was another. *The New Age* was the first periodical to print his work.⁴ Several of the contributions he submitted between 1916 and 1920 were accepted for publication; a few were returned, accompanied by a letter from Orage explaining why he found them unsatisfactory. Orage must have

¹ Muir, *An Autobiography*, p. 156. He became the Assistant Editor in Jan. 1920 (letter from Willa Muir).

² Ibid., p. 171. The style and content of the column 'Epistles to the Provincials' (1920) suggest that it too may have been written by Muir. It was signed 'Hengist', a pseudonym which he did not use elsewhere.

³ Ibid., p. 157. The analysis was performed free of charge by Dr Maurice Nicoll, one of Orage's close friends during this period; see Michael Hamburger, 'Edwin Muir', *Encounter*, XV (Dec. 1950), 47. Two poems which Muir published in 1922, 'Re-Birth' and 'Ballad of Eternal Life', are accounts of 'waking dreams' he experienced at the time: *NA*, XXI (8 June, 6 July 1922), 72, 121-2. A prose description of them is given in his *Autobiography*, pp. 159-67.

⁴ Letter from Herbert Read to *The New English Weekly*, VI (15 Nov. 1934), 112. In 1915, he had published *Songs of Chaos*, a volume of verse, at his own expense.

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written hundreds of such letters during his career as an editor; one of them is reproduced below to illustrate the care he exercised in performing this function:

Feb. 9, 1920

Dear Capt. Read,

I am much obliged for the offer of the MS.; and I may say that I personally have read it with pleasure and admiration. But *my* interest is in you as a writer; and I see no reason to suppose that this would sustain many other people through a narrative which, however unique, is only one of thousands or even millions of similar uniquenesses. You are quite at liberty to call me anything you please,—but I cannot pretend that the measure of your emotional experience is necessarily the measure of mine as hearer. In fact, as dreams are often as dull to the listener as they have been vivid to the teller, *your* war story is not nearly so exciting to hear as for you to relate. The Lord forgive me,—but I find it dull in every sense but the purely personal one of considerable interest in *your* psychology. It is not my place, of course, to offer you advice; but if I did it would be to urge you to forget the war and its experiences in *their detail*, and to bring into consciousness what your *unconscious* thought of it all! What did your *soul* learn in the Great War?

Yours sincerely,

A. R. Orage

The difference between a personal letter from the editor and a printed rejection slip accounts in part for the fact that *The New Age* never suffered from a lack of unpaid contributors.

Because of his interest in Herbert Read's work, Orage invited him to call at the office of *The New Age*. In June 1921, they began to meet once a week to discuss literary and cultural topics.¹ Orage wanted to employ Read's

¹ Letters from Orage to Read, 17 Dec. 1918; 1 June 1921; and 7 July 1921. F. S. Flint attended some of these meetings.

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talents to the fullest possible extent; the first opportunity to do so was provided by the discovery of T. E. Hulme's unpublished manuscripts.¹ After looking through them, Orage wrote:

In T. E. Hulme our nation lost as promising a mind as we had amongst us, which is to say a great deal in view of the actual losses the world knows it has sustained. Hulme's mind was constructed on the grand scale simple, and the impression irresistibly formed of him by everybody capable of judgment was one of capacity. It is obvious, too, from the material left by him that his conception of his life's work was proportionate to his abilities. He was still very young, but the fragments he had begun to accumulate were plainly intended for a cyclopean architecture. 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 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 evidence of 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.²

As F. S. Flint had been one of Hulme's close friends, Orage asked him if he would edit the manuscripts for serial publication in *The New Age*. Flint refused because he was too busy to do so; therefore Orage suggested to Herbert Read that he undertake the task.³ The eventual result of this suggestion was the publication of *Speculations* (1924), most of which had appeared in *The New Age* in

¹ Mrs Ethel Kibblewhite, in whose home at 67 Frith Street Hulme lived during most of his years in London, loaned the manuscripts to Janko Lavrin in 1920. He in turn showed them to Orage (interview with Janko Lavrin, Apr. 1960).

² *NA*, XXVII (26 Aug. 1920), 259.

³ Letter from Orage to Read, 17 May 1921.

1922. It was said in the preceding chapter that Orage sought someone capable of replacing him as the author of ‘Readers and Writers’. In 1921, he entrusted Read with the column, which is some measure of his confidence in Read’s abilities.

‘Readers and Writers’ was written in turn by several contributors during 1922. One of them was inadvertently brought to *The New Age* by Edwin Muir. In reviewing *Wheels*, an annual anthology of poetry, he wrote:

Miss Edith Sitwell is more tantalizing and more prolific in good lines than ever. Her apparent perversity of expression is really a form of wit: a cross between Meredith and the Queen of Spades. She appears to be writing more and more a sort of ‘Alice in Hell’.¹

At best, Muir’s compliments were ambiguous; in discussing the poems in the same volume by Sacheverell and Osbert Sitwell, Muir was unambiguously critical, though not excessively so. But literary sensibilities are easily offended, and a few days later the trio arrived in Orage’s office, Edith threatening a lawsuit because of the review. According to Orage’s secretary, Miss Alice Marks, they were in his office for some time; toward the end of the interview, Orage invited Edith to contribute to *The New Age*.² Apparently the lawsuit was forgotten, for her first contribution to the magazine appeared a short time later. During 1922, she enlivened ‘Readers and Writers’ with her exquisite and unique prose style.

¹ NA, XXVIII (14 Apr. 1921), 284. Edith Sitwell was the editor of *Wheels*.

² Letter from Alice Marks, 15 Mar. 1960. This account was corroborated by Mrs Jessie Orage (interview, Dec. 1960). The evidence that Muir’s review was the cause of the threatened lawsuit is circumstantial; however, it was the only review of Edith Sitwell’s work in *The New Age* which was critical and accords with the chronological sequence involved.

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In addition to criticism by Edwin Muir (who reviewed poetry after 1919), Herbert Read, Edith Sitwell, Denis Saurat, and Janko Lavrin (whose *Ibsen and His Creation* and *Nietzsche Revisited* appeared serially), the magazine published creative works by a number of old and new contributors during these years. Oliver St John Gogarty contributed short stories, and Marmaduke Pickthall his *Oriental Encounters*; Michael Arlen's first novel, *London Papers*, appeared in weekly instalments between August 1918, and May 1919. The most interesting of Ezra Pound's contributions (numbering over a hundred during this period) were 'Homage to Sextus Propertius' and 'Indiscretions', an entertaining account of his forebears and his early years in the United States.¹ There were poems by Wilfrid Thorley, Desmond Fitzgerald, and others as well as by Muir and Ruth Pitter. Translations from Serbian epic poems (by Helen Rootham), the *Mahabharata* and the *Nun-Hoa-King* appeared regularly.

While all of these contributions are of interest, considered individually, they do not display any unity of theme or technique which would justify discussing them as a whole. The magazine's lack of literary unity during this period resulted partly from the fact that another group of contributions, ranging in subject from psychoanalysis to mysticism, displaced the arts as the central focus of its cultural discussions. They are not in themselves of general interest, but they deserve some attention because of their bearing on Orage's decision to relinquish the editorship of *The New Age*.

¹ From Nov. 1917 to Apr. 1920, Pound reviewed art and music in *The New Age* on alternate weeks under the pseudonyms 'B. H. Dias' and 'William Atheling' respectively.

CHAPTER XV

ORAGE'S RELIGIOUS QUEST

THE war led to an exodus of occult philosophers from Eastern and Central Europe, and most of those who arrived in London seem to have appeared at Orage's weekly meetings with contributors in the Chancery Lane ABC. Janko Lavrin introduced R. A. Vran-Gavran, a Russian monk who contributed a number of apocalyptic fables and visions to the magazine. Lavrin has described him as a holy sinner, the living counterpart of the Dostoevskian hero.¹ Even more unusual was Dmitri Mitrinovic', a Yugoslav who was brought to the *New Age* circle by Paul Selver.² His shaven head indicated that he too had been a monk, but his mystical theories had little in common with any orthodox religion. Muir has described some of them in his autobiography:

Mitrinovic' was often in our house; he would arrive with a large bottle of beer under each arm and talk endlessly about the universe, the creation of the animals, the destiny of man, the nature of Adam Kadmon, the influence of the stars, the objective science of criticism (for he held that it was possible to determine the exact greatness of every poet, painter, and musician and set it down in mathematical terms), and a host of things I have since forgotten. . . . As mankind was a great man to Mitrinovic', mightily growing through the vast years of history, so the different races and nations were parts of that great man, all with their separate functions, which in their inter-working made up the synthetic instrument of his soul.

¹ Interview, Apr. 1960.

² Paul Selver, *Orage and the New Age Circle* (London, 1959), p. 59.

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Germany, Russia, France, China, England, were such functions, and when they grew bloated or atrophied great disasters were brought about.¹

These ideas served as the basis of a column on 'World Affairs', written by 'M. M. Cosmoi', which appeared weekly between August 1920 and October 1921.²

What Orage meant in 1919, when he said that *The New Age* would undertake 'a more profound analysis and synthesis of human psychology', had become disconcertingly clear by 1921. The disillusionment that resulted from the war was undoubtedly one cause of Orage's search for spiritual certainty; and it is understandable that he should first turn to psycho-analysis for new answers to age-old questions. The theories of Jung, with their startling juxtapositions of history, myth, religion, and psychology, seemed to offer, to those who could no longer accept the dogmas of Christianity, a means of arriving at scientifically valid religious truths.³ The psycho-analytic discussion of spiritual questions drifted gradually towards the discussion of spiritualism. Mitrinovic's articles on the psychic functions of various races and nations were the apotheosis of this movement, and they coincided with the least successful phase of the magazine's history. As a result of their publication, the circulation declined and Orage lost some of the independent financial support that

¹ *An Autobiography*, pp. 174-5, 176.

² As Orage had serious reservations about Mitrinovic's theories, he wrote 'World Affairs' for several months from notes taken during their conversations. Mitrinovic himself wrote the column after this probationary period. (Mairet, p. 82.)

³ An anonymous note in Orage's *The Active Mind* (New York, 1954), says that sometime before 1920 Orage 'formed a study group of practising psychologists to investigate psycho-analysis from all sides' (p. 121). Dr Maurice Nicoll is named as one of the members of this group.

had enabled *The New Age* to survive in spite of its continued deficits.¹

In view of Orage's comments on religion in *The New Age* between 1907 and 1919, his later interest in the occult may be difficult to understand. In 1913 he had written, 'Intellectually, as I have observed before, we are honourably bound to agnosticism';² and in spite of his insistence on the importance of religious values, his discussions of them were always tentative. On the other hand, the fact that he was a member of the Theosophical Society for a number of years indicates that his propensity for spiritualism was not suddenly acquired after the war. He retained this interest throughout his career, but until 1919 he was careful not to let it impinge upon his activities as an editor. I have tried to preserve the distinction between Orage's private and public life which he himself so scrupulously maintained before this date. Therefore the personal circumstances underlying his interest in spiritualism (which in any case would remain a matter of conjecture) need not detain us here.³ However, he himself discussed the intellectual background of his search for spiritual certainty in a series of articles published in 1926, and they are relevant to the last years of *The New Age* under his editorship.

'The Great War,' he wrote, 'put an end to many things and many ideas; and among the latter was undoubtedly Guild Socialism. We woke from the evil dream shortly after the armistice; and in the horrible light of morning

¹ Mairer, p. 82. Between Oct. 1920 and Dec. 1921, the magazine contained only twelve pages. Its circulation during this period was probably less than two thousand.

² NA, XIV (20 Nov. 1913), 84.

³ Biographical information regarding this phase of Orage's career can be found in Philip Mairer's *A. R. Orage*.

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we began to count our losses.'¹ When it became obvious that Guild Socialism had little chance of success in the face of opposition from both Socialists and non-Socialists, he turned his attention to non-political methods of achieving social reform. The theories of C. H. Douglas seemed to provide solutions to a wide range of economic problems, and Orage had complete confidence in their feasibility. But Social Credit met with even less success than Guild Socialism; after three years of discussion, it could claim only a few supporters. Within a decade, *The New Age* had given birth to two movements, neither of which had had any effect on the economic evils they were intended to eradicate. Orage concluded that in his efforts to promote social reform he had neglected to consider some important factor. He re-examined the genesis of Guild Socialism in order to discover why it had failed.

To return to the historic origin of the English guild system, it appeared to me on reflection that its background was undoubtedly religion. The guilds were the creation of the Church; or, if not the creation of the Church, at the very least the Church was the soil and garden in which they flourished. What we had done when formulating a modern guild system applicable to modern conditions was to take the mediaeval guild out of its original setting and try to make it grow in a soil quite barren in respect of religion. No wonder the seeds so transplanted failed to germinate; they were sown upon stony ground.

It must not be assumed, however, that our disillusionment immediately brought us to the realization of the necessity of a change of heart in the religious sense. Religion for the so-called modern mind is the last, rather than the first, resort of despair. Remembering the cultivated intensity of the anti-religious movement among the intelligentsia of twenty or even ten years ago (it is rapidly losing its momentum today

¹ 'An Editor's Progress', *NA*, XXXVIII (1 Apr. 1926), 258.

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even if it is not entirely dead) nobody will wonder that our first thought was a change of heart by means of brotherhood. . . .

Quite seriously, there appears to be no hope in the brotherhood of man secularly conceived; nor, I may add, in any system of morality, transcendental, naturalistic, or rationalist, taken by itself—no hope, I say, for any radical social reform. The reason is clear. Every such system assumes that man is accountable only to man, and has only social obligations. In the end, every individual must, therefore, owe duty only to his neighbour. His neighbour is his only *raison d’être*; and society is the Moloch of us all.

The alternative of individualism is, however, quite as unthinkable. A community of Ishmaelites is a contradiction in terms. But, between a society containing only ‘individualists’ and a society containing no individualists, the choice was difficult to make. And, fortunately, the choice proved to be unnecessary.

What was the missing factor, the neutralizing force that alone keeps the world on the middle way—when it is kept!—between the extremes of imbecility and madness? Simply religion. Yes, but what is the essence of religion, that distinguishes it from even its most colourable imitations in the form of morality, neighbourliness, humanitarianism? I reply quite simply, God. Religion without God is, strictly speaking, as ridiculous as science with nothing to know. There is and can be no religion in the absence of God, though there may be God in the absence of religion! Religion I venture to define as the attempt to establish an ideal and conscious relation between man and God; and since, in my experience, every attempt to establish an ideal and conscious relation between man and man, without taking God into account, has failed, the only remaining hope of the serious social reformer is to ‘find religion’, that is to say, find God.¹

In February, 1922, G. I. Gurdjieff, another esoteric

¹ ‘An Editor’s Progress’, *NA*, XXXVIII (22, Apr. 1926), 295-6.

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teacher from Eastern Europe, arrived in London. The issue of *The New Age* for 28 September 1922, contained a brief note stating that Orage would soon be leaving London 'in connection with work of general and special interest'.¹ 'I shall leave many things undone in England,' he wrote to Herbert Read, 'but one day perhaps I shall return to finish them.'² Early in October he entered the Gurdjieff Institute (the Château Prieuré near Fontainebleau).³ 'It would be saying too much,' he wrote, 'to affirm that I resigned from *The New Age* and from active social reform in order to find God. I only wish that my motives could be as clearly conscious as that would imply. But at least I am clear now that no other end will end my search.'⁴

The concluding phase of *The New Age* under Orage's editorship leaves one with a sense of disappointment. At best, Douglas's economic theories were too abstruse to be of general interest; professional economists were better

¹ NA, XXXI (28 Sept. 1922), 267.

² Letter, 19 Sept. 1922.

³ Rowland Kenney, *Westering* (London, 1939), pp. 331-3.

⁴ NA, XXXVIII (22 Apr. 1926), 296. After spending a year at the Château Prieuré, Orage went to New York, where he taught Gurdjieff's system until 1930. One of those who attended his meetings in New York has published an account of his teaching: Charles D. King, *The Oragean Version* (New York, 1951). (This edition was limited to one hundred copies, most of which were given to libraries.) Occasionally Orage contributed articles to *The New Republic*, *The Commonweal*, and *The Atlantic Monthly* while in New York; most of his literary energies were devoted to the translation of Gurdjieff's *All and Everything*. In 1931, Orage returned to London, and a year later founded *The New English Weekly*, which numbered among its contributors T. S. Eliot, Dylan Thomas, Lawrence Durrell, Allen Tate, Oscar Williams, Bonamy Dobree, Basil Bunting, and George Orwell, as well as many former contributors to *The New Age*. He died on 6 Nov. 1934.

equipped than the general public to judge their feasibility, and no economist of standing came forward to support them. Their application to the discussion of political events in Orage’s ‘Notes of the Week’ made *The New Age* a sectarian paper. Social Credit substituted a dogmatic interpretation of current affairs for one which had at its best displayed a shrewd grasp of political realities and a sensitive awareness of the complexity of the issues involved. One cannot help but feel that the factors shaping the material and political future of society are too varied to admit a solution based upon a few startling economic premises.

If Orage had had complete confidence in the validity of Douglas’s theory—if, that is, he was certain that it could withstand any degree of rational scrutiny—his conclusion that it was necessary to seek spiritual enlightenment before undertaking economic reform would be inadmissible. For even stronger than his initial confidence in Social Credit was his conviction that the truth, if propagated, would prevail. A belief in God was not a prerequisite to an understanding of Social Credit, and many of his friends whose faith he would never question (Hilaire Belloc and Conrad Noel among them) were as unconvinced of its validity as were the anti-religious Marxists. Douglas spoke with contempt of those who thought that a ‘change of heart’ was necessary for economic reform. It is significant that Orage does not refer to Douglas when explaining why he set out on his religious quest. The discussion is conducted with reference to Guild Socialism, a movement in which he had not actively participated during the preceding three years.

These inconsistencies, and the reasoning whereby Orage arrives at the conclusion that the serious social reformer must first establish an ‘ideal and conscious

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relation' with God, lead one to suspect that in the preceding quotation he is attempting to rationalize a decision which does not admit of plausible rationalization. A search for spiritual certainty is in the end a personal matter, one which can never be explained to the satisfaction of a person who has never felt such a need. It is unfortunate that Orage did not recognize this fact, and that he did not realize, between 1919 and 1921, that he was allowing his personal interests to encroach upon his editorial activities, leading *The New Age* from the public sphere, where it had during the preceding years made a valuable contribution to politics and culture, into the private circle of his own preoccupations.

However, it would be unfair to judge the influence of Orage's religious interests in his career as an editor solely on the basis of the magazine's decline after 1918. A more balanced judgment appeared in *The Criterion* shortly after his death. 'Without this restless desire for the absolute,' said T. S. Eliot,

Orage would have done little more than half a dozen men who survive him could do; he would have merely been a reasonable persuader towards the reasonable revolution. . . .

Of good revolutionists, there are two kinds, distinguished by the end from which they start. There are those who are impatient with human stupidity; these begin by wanting some kind of monetary reform. . . . And there are those who begin from the other end, who talk, in France, of *le spirituel*, or with us (I am sorry to say) of 'change of heart'. Orage did a great deal to hold the two together. He saw that any real change for the better meant a spiritual revolution; and he saw that no spiritual revolution was of any use unless you had a practical economic scheme. What we need to remember is Orage's mediating position, and we need to work as if he were still here to mediate. . . .

The religious passion which inspired him cannot rightly be

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belittled or ignored. That is what put him in an essential position, and made possible that through him men of most varied sorts were brought together, in loose but certain association, who otherwise would have no common ground of action.¹

These comments apply primarily to Orage’s interests after 1918, but they also shed light on his previous activities as an editor. Between 1907 and 1918, his desire for social reform was just as intense as it was in the subsequent period, with this difference: earlier, he had considered all aspects of culture important to the solution of social problems. ‘The sooner the whole of *The New Age* is regarded as more important than any of its parts the better,’ he had written;² for to him the development of civilization was one unified process of which no part could be considered in isolation. This is why, until 1918, all fields of cultural endeavour were well represented in *The New Age*. His later concentration on economics and mysticism resulted from a radically oversimplified conception of this process.

Orage’s most valuable work as an editor was done before 1918. His ‘religious passion’ at that time was no less intense for not being attached to a specific dogma; ‘Without the soul, life has no value,’ he had written in 1913.³ Many of his friends saw his interest in spiritualism as the fatal weakness in his character; they felt a sense of both personal and public loss when he relinquished the editorship of *The New Age*. Yet the motives that led him to do so had, until that time, served as the basis of his achievement as an editor. Maurice Reckitt, who strongly

¹ ‘A Commentary’, *The Criterion*, XIV (Jan. 1935), 261, 262, 264.

² *NA*, XVI (21 Jan. 1915), 313.

³ *NA*, XII (16 Jan. 1913), 251.

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disapproved of Orage's mysticism, recognized the importance of religious values in his career as a journalist:

It is a notable fact that two of the most profound and yet versatile spirits of their age, Chesterton and Orage, should have given their chief energies not to any conscious cultivation of the permanent, but to the interpretation, against a background of eternal values, of the significance of every day. Neither had any of that sort of snobbery which disdains the transient; they matched themselves with the evil, the falsehood, the folly, and the bewilderment of a supremely difficult period in human affairs; they were never blinded by it, and they never gave way before it. Rather did they see through it, not as men cynically unveiling shams (we have had indeed no lack of such, and their importance is merely secondary), but as seeing through to the other side, where, with the basis of existence established on reality and human dignity, the true life of man and society would be ready to begin.¹

Orage left London after fifteen years as the editor of *The New Age*. He had not succeeded in drawing the cultural forces of his time together in a concerted programme of social reform. But his attempt to do so, as Eliot said, 'made possible that through him men of most varied sorts were brought together, in loose but certain association, who otherwise would have no common ground of action'; and thus culture found a partial coherence it would otherwise have lacked.

¹ Maurice Reckitt, *As It Happened* (London, 1941), p. 188. Pound recognized that Orage's spiritual values were germane to his editorial achievement; see his 'In the Wounds (Memoriam A. R. Orage)', *The Criterion*, XIV (Apr. 1935), 391-407. Recently he has written,

But the lot of 'em, Yeats, Possum and Wyndham
had no ground beneath 'em.

Orage had.



Thrones: 96-109 de los cantares (London, 1960), p. 37.

WHY I AM NOT A SOCIALIST: G. K. Chesterton.

THE NEW AGE

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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

NEW YEAR is the time for good resolutions, and we hope that some good ones will at least be made. Whether they will be kept is, of course, another matter; but we should be thankful if our politicians really persuaded themselves to express an intention of abolishing poverty in the British Empire this year. Perhaps the task is too difficult for mortal man, but even the will and the attempt would redeem our world from the disgrace of acquiescence in its own eternal degradation. If an instant of sanity is allowed us it is surely on the threshold of a new year, and we for our part in that instant freely extend our sympathy and offer our co-operation with men of good intent all over the world. After all, the world is not an easy place to live in, even for the most happily situated. Yet who doubts that it could be made infinitely better? Let us at any rate begin the year with that intention, and start as friends, even though in a week's time we should discover each other to be deadly enemies.

What strikes us most on reviewing the events of the week is the lamentable exhibition once more of political timidity among our own people. For one or two crumbs of solace we are truly thankful, but the banquet is still missing. Mr. Birrell still remains faithful among the faithless to the sound principles of No Coercion in Ireland. He is a bright star of hope in a black Cabinet. His example has even been infectious, and Sir Edward Grey, we hope we understand, has lifted at last from the Empire the disgrace of Denkhawai. If he has really released the unhappy victims of our idiotic officials, we shall send him thanks. Egypt, we are convinced, will be safer after every such act of justice.

But we have no particular intention in singling out England as an example of political timidity. If we do so it is because England stands for so much, claims so much, and in the long run will be judged by so much. If only our Imperialists were Imperial we could endure them gladly. If only they really believed and acted on the belief that England is superior to all other nations, we could not only forgive but admire their proper Chauvinism. The contrary, however, is so often the

never in the direction of strengthening and using. And thus it comes about that England, that should be the foremost Power among civilised Powers, lags behind or moves only under the impulsion of some ignominious boot-toc.

If other nations were so wonderfully competent we should see room for caution. But other nations (excepting, perhaps, Japan) are even more stupid. The spectacle in France just now of the trial and sentencing of M. Hervé is calculated to move the cynical few to laughter, and the feeling few to tears. What on earth can one man do against a nation unless he happens to be right? And if he is right, what on earth is the sense of advertising him? No human civilisation is above criticism; no civilisation, in fact, can be maintained without criticism; we have got to be democratic or perish, since the old aristocracies are blown out never to be relit. Hence the only safety for a modern State threatened with subversion by criticism is to insist not upon less, but upon more criticism. If the French Government had had a grain of intelligence they would have subsidised a dozen or so orators and newspapers to criticise M. Hervé. Why not? The State is bound to back its own horse. What we object to in all this repression is not the State's determination to maintain its point of view, but its inconceivably foolish and suicidal method of doing it. We object to M. Hervé quite as much as the French Government do. Only, our method of suppressing him would be by counter criticism, or by the substitution of a more inspiring propaganda. Unless war had been made so unattractively hideous, we may be sure peace would have had no charms. The Hervé trial is another proof that France is losing her political intelligence.

We made an exception of Japan, and so did the "Times" after the first speech of Count Okuma delivered at Tokio. Count Okuma is the Lord Rosebery of Japan, an orator, an ex-political leader, and a man of extraordinary national attraction. But like his English alter ego, he is not to be relied upon two speeches running. At Tokio Count Okuma eulogised England in India as a "crystal of righteousness and humanity"; and the "Times," with its usual touting instinct for pleasant things said of England by foreigners, delightedly printed the rhetoric in full. Only a few days later Count Okuma was off on another tack, inviting, like another Joshua, his countrymen to behold the Land of Goshen and the grapes thereof that they were good. "Being oppressed by the Europeans; the three hun-

APPENDIX

BETWEEN 1907 and 1922, approximately seven hundred writers contributed to *The New Age*. Those not named in the text who either contributed frequently, or are sufficiently well known to warrant mention, are listed below.

Anderson, G. Wherry	Ensor, R. C. K.
Arnold, Prof. Edward V.	Ervine, St John
Bax, Clifford	Figgis, Darrell
Beerbohm, Max	Fitzgerald, Desmond
Bierce, Ambrose	Fletcher, A. E.
Billington-Greig, Teresa	Forel, Auguste
Bishop, Henry	Geddes, Prof. Patrick
Bland, Hubert	Gibson, Wilfred W.
Blatchford, Robert	Gogarty, Oliver St John
Brock, A. Clutton	Graham, Stephen
Brooks, Van Wyck	Granville, Charles
Brown, Maurice	Grierson, Francis
Burdett, Osbert	Haigh, Richmond
Burns, John	Hare, Kenneth
Carpenter, Edward	Harris, Frank
Carter, Huntley	Hartley, C. Gascoigne
Cohn, Paul V.	Haskell, Arnold
Collins, Adrian	Hay, J. Stuart
Coomaraswamy, A. K.	Isaacs, Prof. J.
Crowley, Aleister	Jepson, Edgar
Cunninghame-Graham, R. B.	John, Augustus
Curle, Richard	Kennedy, Bart
Davidson, John	Kenway, Philip T.
Davies, Oliver	Lawrence, Herbert
Dobbs, Prof. Leonardo	Lowe, David
Doolittle, Hilda ('H. D.')	Lytton, Neville
'Dyce, O. W.' (G. Wherry Anderson)	Maguire, Stephen
Eglinton, John	Mairet, Phillip
	Massingham, Harold
	Maude, Aylmer

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Meynell, Francis	Sassoon, Siegfried
Neill, A. S.	Saurat, Denis
Newsome, Alfred	Scott-James, R. A.
Orton, W. A.	Spero, Leopold
O’Sullivan, Vincent	Stephens, R. A.
Phillpotts, Eden	Swinnerton, Frank
Playford, John	Taylor, G. R. S.
Por, Odon	Thorley, Wilfrid
Pugh, Edwin	Thorn, Arthur F.
Radford, Ernest	Titterton, W. R.
Raffalovich, George	Untermeyer, Louis
Rappoport, Dr Angelo S.	Vane, Sir Francis
Reed, Acton	Visiak, E. H.
Reynolds, Stephen	Webb, Sidney
Reynolds, Victor	Weinstein, David
Robieson, M. W.	Wroblewski, W.
Rootham, Helen	Young, Filson
Ross, Robert	Zangwill, Israel
St. Cyr, Edmund	

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