

T. E. Hulme's Aesthetics and the Ideology of Proto-fascism

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Introduction

T. E. Hulme (1883–1917) was a philosopher and critic who was acutely responsive to Bergson's theory of intuition, noting its implications for aesthetics and trying to make use of it to renew English poetry. While he is famous for his contribution to Imagism, which led the movement of English literary Modernism, his aesthetic theory is not broadly known. One of the reasons for that is likely external: most of his work was unfinished because he was killed in World War I. There may be a more serious, immanent reason, however, namely, his dilettantism. In studies on Hulme, it is often pointed out that he casually took theories from other philosophers (Husserl, Pascal, Bergson, G.E. Moore, Worringer and so on) and political theorists (Sorel, Maurras and so on).[1] Frankly speaking, we have to acknowledge his eclecticism and dilettantism and admit that his philosophy is in fact a hotchpotch of ideas from other theorists.

Nonetheless, I still believe that his aesthetics is worthy of attention because his eclectic works are valuable documents that can show us the *Konstellation* of politics, aesthetics, society, and philosophy composed in the tense circumstance during the era of World War. In addition, his aesthetic theory was far from neglected at the time, being received sympathetically by many English avant-gardists. Examination of his influence upon the aesthetic and political tendencies of English literary Modernism will reveal the true significance of his philosophy.[2]

The most outstanding points in Hulme's political thinking are conservatism and heroism. Herbert E. Read, who edited *Speculations*, a collection of Hulme's posthumous works, calls him "a militarist by faith" (Sx) in the introduction to this book. When we think also of his strong interest in the French extreme right-wing party, Action Française, and in Sorel's mythical thought on politics, we will easily see that Hulme's thought has kinship with proto-fascism.[3] In fact, the relationship between his thought and that ideology has been already pointed out in earlier studies.[4] However, the relationship between his aesthetics and this political ideology has never been fully examined; his aesthetics and political thinking have only been considered independently.[5] I think that Hulme's proto-fascistic thought is, however, closely connected with his aesthetics. This article aims to explain this close relationship and to show another face of Modernism, whose liberalism and progressivism are generally viewed as antithetical to fascism.

1. Hulme's "classicism"

Hulme's "Romanticism and Classicism" (1912) is the most important of his works of aesthetics when we consider his influence on the literary praxis of the early 20th century. When Hulme contrasts the two aesthetic norms, romanticism and classicism, he insists on the superiority of classicism, explaining that romanticism has lost its validity and should therefore be replaced by classicism. His "romanticism" and "classicism" are unique notions that are somewhat different from those in general use, however. Hulme understands them as follows: "romanticism" uses "imagination" to allow us up to see infinity, to express "the expression of unsatisfied emotion" (S127) without any restraint. For Romanticists, beauty equals to "an impression of the infinite involved in the identification of our being in absolute spirit" (S131), and their supreme creed is humanism, which believes that humanity is originally good, its possibility and progress infinite. Classicists, by contrast, see man as "an extraordinarily fixed and limited animal whose nature is absolutely constant," and believe that "it is only by tradition and organization that anything decent can be got out of him" (S116). Consequently, they think highly of "fancy," rules, and orders.[6] Such a worldview supports the famous notions of Hulme's Neoclassical poetry, such as "the dry hardness" (S126), "accurate, precise and definite" expression (S132), which had a great influence on the later literary movement.

At the beginning of this essay, Hulme states that these contrastive norms, "romanticism" and "classicism," come from those of Action Française, saying as follows:

In this present connection I am using them in a perfectly precise and limited sense. I ought really to have coined a couple of new words, but I prefer to use the ones I have used, as I then conform to the practice of the group of polemical writers who make most use of them at the present day, and have almost succeeded in making them political catchwords. I mean Maurras, Lasserre and all the group connected with *L'Action Française*. (S114)

In Maurras's understanding, "classicism" is not only a notion of aesthetics but also one of politics, connoting a particular attitude toward French society at that time; Maurras organized Action Française in order to realize his aesthetic-political ideal, which he called "classicism." He put that idea into action to overthrow the republican government, advocating the restoration of imperial rule. Action Française led an armed group called the "Camelots du Roi" to hold demonstrations and to attack the political rallies of the left. They did not hesitate to resort to acts of terrorism, sometimes even killing political enemies. Their willingness to resort to violence in order to achieve their ends, their active use of propaganda for political ends, and their ultranationalistic, anti-democratic, and anti-Semitic ideology, give us enough reasons to think of Action Française as a proto-fascist movement.[7] Maurras considered the French Revolution to be the main culprit in damaging the dignity and culture of his nation, and its fruits—freedom and equality—were, for him, nothing but leftover waste for the French people. He was also contemptuous of and rejected romanticism, because of its connection with the spirit of the Revolution; he said, "Romanticism and Revolution resemble trunks which are different at a glance but in fact grow from the same root.[8] "Classicism," in contrast, thinks

that the traditional order is the first priority that we should respect and obey, and it precedes the freedom of individuals. Maurras asserted that the freedom that each social group has, essentially, "consists in being a master of its regulation," and that freedom could be permitted to each citizen as long as he followed "the system which suits what he demands and should do." [9] As for artistic praxis, he similarly placed rules and order as the highest values. [10]

We may find one of the reasons Hulme accepted Maurras's "classicism" in his desire to shake off romanticism, a legacy of the Victorian era. Hulme probably saw in Maurras's "classicism" an effective tool to dispose of the sentimentalism and lyricism of the previous literature, because "classicism," by bestowing form and order on literature, could liberate it from the obsession with creativity and freedom and give it another kind of freedom. From such a point of view, it might be thought that Hulme's "classicism" resembles the Formalism of Roger Fry or Clive Bell, which tried to overcome Victorian sentimentalism and historicism.

However, Hulme's "classicism" differs decisively from Formalism, because his fundamental principle is anti-Modernism. Hulme took over Maurras's "classicism" rigorously, both aesthetically and politically, that is to say, against romanticism and the progressive idea of the Revolution. Hulme's "classicism" is unique in that it includes, like Maurras's, a political aspect, as well as anti-Modernism and anti-humanism. [11] In Hulme's view, politics is more "certain sentiments" than "any facts or worked-out theories about it," [12] and consequently, he did not adopt a positive attitude toward Action Française's political theory. Nonetheless, he still accepted "classicism" not only as a literary principle but also a particular frame of mind or attitude to the world and humanity that has some relation to the sphere of politics. In his essay "A Tory Philosophy," he says

I am trying to maintain that behind the opposed attitudes, and one can take up a great many different subjects, from politics or art, lie two contrasted sets of prejudices and sentiments, two different points of view as to the nature of man, which I am calling the romantic and the classical. [13]

It is obvious that "romanticism" and "classicism" in this passage have the same meaning as those in "Romanticism and Classicism" (1912). While the former "imagines that it is preparing a new age, in freeing mankind from tradition and discipline" and believes in the infinite possibilities of man, [14] the latter insists on the necessity of order from the standpoint of "Original Sin," that is, believing that "man is evil by nature" and therefore "has a great respect for the past and for tradition." "It does not expect anything radically new, and does not believe in any real progress." [15]

From such a view of "classicism," Hulme admits that his political standpoint is that of "a certain kind of Tory." [16] His political belief system, based on "classicism" is more clearly understood by these keywords: "constancy," "order," "hierarchy," "nationalism." [17] These words indicate that Hulme's "classicism" shares its anti-modernistic political theory with that of Action Française. Because of his hatred of innovation, Hulme makes a stable, unchanging society his political ideal. He deplores that people today "are suffering from this modern disease, the horror of constancy," [18] and he preaches that "it is quite as easy and natural for

emotion and enthusiasm to crystallize round the idea of a constant world as round the idea of progress.”[19] We can, therefore, suppose that Hulme’s classical taste for accuracy, precision, and definiteness is backed by a worldview whose ideal is an anti-modernistic utopia, an “absolutely constant world.” In general, such a worldview or ideal is common to all conservatism, so we may conclude that Hulme is a reactionary conservative who finds his highest values in tradition and order.[20] However, I believe that there exist other elements beyond traditional conservatism in his thought. We shall examine these in the next part.

2. Geometrical abstractionism and “the absolute view of ethics” in Sorel

Hulme’s reactionary worldview came to the fore in his later essays, “Modern Art and Its Philosophy” (1914) and “Humanism and the Religious Attitude” (1915–16). By then, he had shifted his interest from literature to fine art, especially the English avant-garde movement known as Vorticism. He supported this new artistic movement enthusiastically, taking notice of the new tendency for geometrical abstraction in such works as the paintings of Wyndham Lewis and the sculptures of Jacob Epstein. Hulme saw a new *Zeitgeist* emerging in their enthusiasm for geometrical abstraction and tried to explain it. He found in them an “endeavour to get away from the flux of existence” (S89) or a “desire for austerity and bareness, a striving towards structure and away from the messiness and confusion of nature and natural things” (S96), as well as “the desire to turn the organic into something hard and durable” (S107) in contemporary art, which shows a strong tendency to “austere, mechanical, clear cut” (S96) abstraction. It is certain that this Hulme’s appreciation of the search for eternal consistency revealed in such abstract art was the result of his worldview, based on his “classicism.”

Hulme’s art theory is obviously influenced by Wilhelm Worringer’s *Abstraction and Empathy* (*Abstraktion und Einfühlung*) (1908).[21] In fact, Hulme admits frankly in his essay that he was inspired by Worringer’s work. In this book, Worringer explains the abstractionism in Oriental art, such as the Egyptian and Byzantine, in this way: In those areas where the natural environment is harsh, people “feel only confusion and uncertainty in the context and interplay of external phenomena,” and fall into a helpless mental condition. In order to evade such a condition, and to make existence (*Seins*) more “inevitable and unshakeable” and come close to “absolute values,” they required “values of necessity and conformity of a law”[22] of abstract form. Hulme applied this theory of Worringer’s directly to his understanding of Vorticism.

We should not ignore, however, that Hulme gives Worringer’s theory a twist. He replaces the contrasts between “abstraction” and “empathy,” and between “non-vital” and “vital” with the contrast between anti-humanism and humanism that we find in “Romanticism and Classicism” Hulme explains the difference between Byzantine art and Renaissance art as follows:

These two arts thus correspond exactly to the thought of their respective periods. Byzantine art to the ideology which looks on man and all existing things as imperfect and sinful in comparison with certain abstract values and *perfections*. The other art

corresponds to the humanist ideology, which looks on man and life as good, and which is thus in a relation of harmony with existence. (S53–4)

This passage can tell us where Hulme's intention lies; by applying Worringer's theory, he aims to argue that "the re-emergence of geometrical art may be the precursor of (...) the breakup of the Renaissance humanistic attitude" (S78) and that his generation wishes to liberate itself from the ideology of humanism.

These views of Hulme concerning humanity and the world have a close relationship with "the religious attitude" described in "Humanism and the Religious Attitude," (the previous citation is from this essay). In it, Hulme presents a worldview according to which the world consists of three concentric circles: (1) the mechanical sphere, explicable by mathematics and physical science; (2) the organic sphere, discussed by biology, psychology, and history; and (3) the sphere of ethics and religion. Hulme thinks that the second and the third treat matters of human being, but he keeps them strictly divided. He thinks that the third, that is, the sphere of ethics and religion, is the most important, being concerned with the absolute values of human beings, whereas the second is concerned with only relative values.

In "Romanticism and Classicism," Hulme had already stated that "classicism" is "absolutely identical with the normal religious attitude" (S117), and thus his position in "Humanism and the Religious Attitude" takes up from the previous essay. This is not a mere extension, however, but a growing process. What we notice here is that Hulme's "religious attitude" marked by such words as "Original Sin" or "absolute values of ethics" is a formalistic, abstract category, which, in fact, has only a slight relation with traditional religions. Hulme cuts off any mysterious feeling and sentimentalism from "the religious attitude," which is understood by "the dogmas like that of Original Sin" (S71). In Hulme's thought, "the religious attitude" is an absolute view of some ethical value that is released from any relativism connected inevitably to almost all human activities. Such a view of ethics that requires us to disregard any of the complicated conditions of real life and rationalism and to obey some absolute value tends to become abstract by losing sight of any concrete goals to be realized in our lives. As a result, it lapses into a mere dogmatism. Such a dogmatism, which comes from a pessimistic view of human beings takes a particular set of values and ethics as our unavoidable fate or destiny. When we consider Hulme's acceptance of rules, system, and discipline from a stand point of Original Sin, his rejection of the progressiveness of democratic society and his justification of war, in contrast to the humanistic pacifism of Bertrand Russell, we cannot deny that his thought comes close to the proto-fascist ideology of Maurras and Sorel. He says "Values are not relative only to life, but are objective and absolute, and many of them are above life. This ethic is not, therefore, bound to condemn all sacrifice of life" (FS200).[23]

Actually, Hulme was the first translator of Sorel's *Reflection on Violence (Réflexion sur la violence)*[24] in Britain. He had a strong interest in Sorel's political thought, which asserted that a revolution by labor would be possible by means of myth, even though Sorel's views were at the opposite end of the political spectrum to the extreme right position of Action Française. The aspect of Sorel's work that attracted Hulme was not the concrete policy of syndicalism, but his views on the world and humanity, as indicated in the following passage:

What is at the root of the contrasted system of ideas you find in Sorel, the classical, pessimistic, or, as its opponents would have it, the reactionary ideology? This system springs from the exactly contrary conception of man; the conviction that man is by nature bad or limited, and can consequently only accomplish anything of value by disciplines, ethical, heroic, or political. In other words, it believes in Original Sin. (...) From the pessimistic conception of man comes naturally the view that the transformation of society is an (sic) heroic task requiring heroic qualities...virtues which are not likely to flourish on the soil of a rational and sceptical ethics. This regeneration can, on the contrary, only be brought about and only be maintained by actions springing from an ethic which from the narrow rationalist standpoint is irrational, being not *relative*, but absolute. The transformation of society is not likely to be achieved as a result of peaceful and intelligent *readjustment* on the part of literary men and politicians. But on the optimistic and romantic view this is quite possible. For the optimistic conception of man leads naturally to the characteristic democratic doctrine of inevitable *Progress*. (S256–258)

This part makes clear that Hulme sympathizes with Sorel's thinking on the following points: the belief that irrational and heroic attitude are required to promote a revolution and the "classical" view of human beings, as indicated by his rejection of democracy and affirmation of mythical violence as a means of revolution. In his interpretation, Hulme replaces the antagonism between "romanticism" and "classicism" with that between democracy and anti-democracy and replaces "classicism" with a mythical and irrational theory of revolution.

Meanwhile, Sorel's extreme left policy brought about a strange friendship with the extreme right; Sorel himself associated with Action Française, and Italian Fascism declared Sorelian Syndicalism to be on its political agenda. What joints the extreme left and the right is undoubtedly their praise of irrationalism and heroism, the revolutionary impulse of the Bergsonian *élan vital*, a rejection of history and progress, a negative attitude toward humanity, and an anti-democracy derived from that attitude.[25] Hulme acutely points out that those elements, the core of Sorel's philosophy, are actually the essence of fascist ideology. Hulme's deep sympathy with the ideology shows that he was also in the same stream that led to fascism. Considering the above, I think that the ideology of proto-fascism lurks in his insistence on "classicism" and his interest in geometric-abstract art, and that there is a strong connection between his political ideology and aesthetics.

3. Philosophy of life (*Lebensphilosophie*) and the transition of Hulme's philosophy

The relation between abstract art and the proto-fascistic ideology in Hulme's thought reminds us of Georg Lukács's criticism of Expressionism in his essay "The Greatness and the Decline of Expressionism" ("Größe und Verfall des Expressionismus"). In this essay, Lukács points out that Expressionism and the impulse for abstraction proposed by Worringer have some points in common, and he tries to reveal the relation between Expressionism and the ideology of fascism. He states that there is a common point in them in the following passage:

First, the reality is regarded from the start as “chaos,” therefore as something unrecognizable, seizable, and existing without any rules. Second, the method to grasp the essence (...) must be the isolating, tearing up, exterminating of all the connections whose tangle without any rules makes up the very “chaos.” Third, the “organ” to grasp this essence is passion, which is regarded here from the start as something irrational and the opposite of the rational which shuts it out stubbornly. [26]

In the abstractionism in modern art and in “the religious attitude,” Hulme also tried to find an absolute order corresponding to eternal human nature that enables us to evade the fluid, chaotic condition. Moreover, we should remember that Hulme's view was originally based on an anti-intellectualism and anti-rationalism that came from Bergson's philosophy. Though Lukács's insight is limited to the problem of Expressionism, its validity could apply to other abstract art movements, including Vorticism, particularly if we bear in mind that the avant-garde art movement was international in those days. Vorticism was, in fact, inspired by Expressionism.[27] Expressionism took much from Worringer's theory, and it was through his theory that Hulme understood Vorticism. Thus, the resemblance between Lukács's understanding of Expressionism and Hulme's understanding of Vorticism is not just a coincidence, though their attitudes to each art movement are decisively different; the former is a harsh critic whereas the latter is an admirer.

Lukács points out that Expressionism is connected to a series of irrationalistic idea, such as that of *Lebensphilosophie* (philosophy of life), which he regards as an important source of fascistic ideology. He asserts that such an irrationalism, originally relative and agnostic, changed into the insistence on an abstract *Weltanschauung* (worldview) during the era of imperialism and eventually merged into fascistic ideology.[28] Lukács's argument concurs on some points with Kurt Sontheimer's study of the political thoughts of the Weimar Republic. Sontheimer thinks that *Lebensphilosophie* played a part that is impossible to ignore in the development of proto-fascistic ideology, such as the idea of Conservative Revolution, which was popularized and distorted in the thoughts of such ideologists and through the actual political movement.[29] According to Sontheimer, a common denominator of this “popularized *Lebensphilosophie*” is an intense hostility to rationalism, regarded as a destroyer of life, and the insistence on a worldview based on an irrationalism that rejects analytic reason. We can see that it puts the cart before the horse, conceiving of relativism and individualism, originally the cores of *Lebensphilosophie*, as obstacles that should be overcome in the process of submitting our lives to the absolute values of order of some sort.[30]

We can find all these elements of proto-fascist ideology in Hulme's philosophy, that is, hostility to rationalism and dogmatic belief in a set of values. In addition, when we follow the development of Hulme's thought, we find the same process of popularization of *Lebensphilosophie*. Reading Bergson's works was, for Hulme, a shocking experience, which liberated him from a mechanical worldview and which he conceived of as a “nightmare” in his early days (FS29–30). He accepted Bergsonian fluidity as the *Zeitgeist*, and his aesthetic theory, greatly influenced by Bergson's theory of intuition at first, takes it to be a task of every art to

eliminate preconceptions on a matter in order to grasp its real existence by intuition. In “A Lecture on Modern Poetry” (1908 or 1909), Hulme said, “we no longer believe in perfection, either in verse or in thought, we frankly acknowledge the relative” (FS71). As we have seen, Hulme’s later aesthetic theory distances itself from the fluidity and relativism in Bergson’s philosophy,[31] but we can see that it was still strongly influenced by Bergson at the same time; Hulme insisted that the language of “classicism,” that is, “accurate, precise and definite” language, is “the very essence of an intuitive language” (S135), which is strictly distinguished from a conceptual use of language. He says that the “language of intuition” “always endeavours to arrest you, and to make you continuously see a physical thing, to prevent you gliding through an abstract process,” and that a “visual concrete one” will give fresh, new images to poetry (S134).

This inconsistency of Hulme’s theory, praising both the Bergsonian *élan vital* and the anti-humanism of “classicism,” is apparent here and has been often pointed out in the studies of his works.[32] For Hulme himself, however, these two elements can be consistent,[33] for he distinguishes abstract art from “dead conventions” or “formulae,” saying, “[The abstractions’] almost geometrical and non-vital characters are not the result of weakness and lack of vitality in the art. They are not dead conventions, but the product of a creative process just as active as that in any realist art” (FS122). This passage tells us that Hulme insists on the stability and anti-vitalism of abstract art on the assumption that there exists already an intuitive creativity in it. Therefore, the crucial point in the transition of Hulme’s philosophy is not the denial of vitalism but the denial of relativism and an acceptance of absolutism. As for art, Hulme no longer demands fluid chaos but an attitude to mediate metaphysical essence and stable substance with irrational intuition, as Lukács recognized in Expressionism.

As I stated before, Hulme’s understanding of Sorel shows us that such a view of art has a close relationship with his political views. Hulme thinks highly of Sorel’s theory, which argues for the necessity of ethical motivation for a successful revolution. Sorel himself was also greatly inspired by Bergson’s theory and tried to infuse its dynamism into his theory of revolution. The most original point in Sorel’s work is that he regards “myth,” which he calls “an organization of images” as the most powerful driving force of revolution.[34] In his theory, “myth” refers to a complete, imaginary picture of revolution awoken in each laborer’s mind by intuition. What Hulme regards as “the absolute view of ethics” of Sorel is nothing but this belief in this *image*, namely, myth. Hulme apparently noticed an affinity between his “classicism” and “the religious attitude” and Sorel’s absolute belief in this myth, “which from the narrow rationalist standpoint is irrational, being not relative, but absolute” (S257). Both in Sorel and in Hulme, we can recognize that the irrationalism of *Lebensphilosophie* is compatible with an absolute view of ethics.

This transition of Hulme’s thought is obviously parallel to the change seen in the process of acceptance of *Lebensphilosophie* pointed out by Lukács and Sontheimer; both Hulme and the copycats of *Lebensphilosophie* twisted and changed it by focusing on unity and absolutism rather than fluidity and relativism. Hulme did not advocate nationalism or a faith in “blood” at the top of his voice like a Nazi, but given the the consideration above, I think that Hulme’s philosophy still has an obvious similarity with proto-fascism. In his study of the movement of

English literature in the early 20th century, Michael Levenson argues that the transition in Hulme's attitude is linked with the general tendency toward conservatism during the crisis period around World War I.[35] I believe that Hulme's change should be understood as a reaction to this tendency, not only in its aesthetic respect but also its political one; his aesthetics and politics, bound closely to one another, came close to proto-fascism, another offspring of the epoch of crisis.

Conclusion

In view of the above, I come to the conclusion that Hulme's aesthetics and proto-fascistic political ideology are closely related. In his thought, advanced art theory could join hands with retrogressive, conservative political attitudes. It would be optimistic and simplistic to think that this relationship is a unique matter that can only be seen in Hulme's thought, because his philosophy was cultivated in the spirit of the time under the overwhelming influence of *Lebensphilosophie*; in addition, the artists in those days admitted the persuasiveness of his theory and had not a little sympathy for it. Sara Blair, in her discussion about Modernism's politics of culture, mentions his name alongside Wyndham Lewis, Ezra Pound, and T. S. Eliot, as a member of what she calls "Modernism on the right." Considering her opinion that they had the almost same ideology of "high Anglo-American Modernism" which embraces "ideals of cultural unity and organicism, hierarchy, and social order,"[36] Hulme's attitude was not probably a singular one. Therefore, I think that his thought should not be underestimated when we consider the problem of Modernism's involvement in politics.

As for Modernism, we tend to emphasize its autonomy and independence from society or politics. When its relationship with politics becomes a theme of discussion, though it happens rarely, Modernism is often thought of as an opponent of fascism, except for a few cases, such as Futurism. Modernism did not always remain aloof from politics in the political crisis of World War era, however. In recent years, more studies are appearing that try to elucidate the relationship between Modernism and fascism.[37] In fact, a brief look at "the debate on Expressionism" in 1937-38,[38] is enough to show that the connection between Modernism and right- or left-wing politics was so complicated that we could not assess it easily. As long as fascism and Modernism are, of course, not identical, we should not ignore details and complications in its relationship, but I think that the affinity between fascism and Modernism is a grave problem in the study of Modernism. These things considered, Hulme's thought cannot be ignored because it tells us that Modernism sometimes approached proto-fascism spontaneously and voluntarily.

Abbreviations

S: T. E. Hulme. *Speculations: Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art*. ed. Herbert Read, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1924

FS: T. E. Hulme. *Further Speculations*. ed. Sam Hynes, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1955

Note

- [1] cf. Michael Roberts. *T. E. Hulme*. Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1982 (1938), p. 117
- [2] Ezra Pound is one of the important poets strongly influenced by Hulme. Pound sometimes joined Hulme's poetry circle. In fact, inspired by Hulme's aesthetics, he became an avant-gardist and an enthusiastic promoter of Imagism and Vorticism. After a while, Pound went to Italy and became an admirer of Mussolini. T. S. Eliot is another example. He praised Hulme's "classical, reactionary, revolutionary" spirit as "the spirit of 20th century." (cf. T. S. Eliot. "A Commentary." *The Criterion*. Vol. 11, No. 7, April 1924, p. 231). Eliot took over not only Hulme's "classicism," but also his reactionary political thought. He called himself a Tory and approved of the political views of Action Française.
- [3] On the relation between Georges Sorel and proto-fascism, see Zeev Sternhell's *The Birth of Fascist Ideology*. (trans. David Maisel) Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989. See [7] on the relation between Action Française and proto-fascism.
- [4] Sam Hynes, the editor of *Further Speculations*, says, "It is largely on the basis of this authoritarianism that Hulme is often called a Fascistic or proto-Fascist. The former term is obviously a meaningless anachronism, but we must give more careful attention to the latter" (FSxxix). David Daiches says as follows: "Hulme's philosophical position was more elastic and more many-sided than these extracts would seem to suggest: he combined a strong anti-romanticism with an anti-rationalism derived largely from Bergson, a vague religious attitude with a strong vein of cynicism, a pragmatism in politics combined with a species of proto-fascism derived in part from the French Syndicalist, Georges Sorel, and from (to use Hulme's own phrase) "the brilliant group of writers connected with *L'Action Française*." In applying these views to criticism, he related the romantic individualist view, which he rejected, to naturalistic art, and the "religious" classical view to abstract art" (David Daiches. *Poetry and the Modern World*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1940, p. 93).
- [5] The following are the most important works on Hulme: Alun R. Jones's *The Life and Opinions of T. E. Hulme*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1960, Michael Roberts's *T. E. Hulme*, Tomiich Takada's *A Study on T. E. Hulme's "Speculations,"* Kitazawa-Tosho Shuppan, 1974 (in Japanese). None of these works focuses on the relation between aesthetics and politics in Hulme's thought. Takada refers briefly to the subject, saying, "Hulme's classicism was deeply influenced by Sorel, Maurras, Lasserre. This should not be separated from his political view." However, he did not reflect at length on this problem.
- [6] Hulme's contrasting view on "imagination" and "fancy" follows the tradition of aesthetics since Coleridge. On the one hand, Coleridge thought highly of imagination as a power of idealizing and unifying materials; on the other hand, he thought of fancy as an inferior one of only combining concepts and existing matters. According to his idea, imagination, a tool of romanticism, is superior to fancy (cf. S. T. Coleridge. *Biographia Literaria*. ed. J. Shawcross, London: Oxford University Press, 1958, vol. 1, p. 202). Hulme reverses this hierarchy and thinks highly of fancy, a tool of his "classicism."
- [7] For example, Ernst Nolte regards Action Française as an example of fascism in *Three Faces of Fascism: Action française/Italian Fascism/National Socialism*. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), one of the classic works on fascism. Some scholars, such as R. De Felice, disagree with his view. Though we should admit that their refutation to Nolte is persuasive and that it is difficult to think of Action Française as belonging to the same movement as Italian Fascism and National Socialism, I still think that there is enough reason to regard it as an ally of proto-fascism when considering that members of the organization cooperated with Nazism under the Vichy regime.
- [8] Charles Maurras. "Romantisme et Révolution." *Oeuvres Capitales*, vol. II. Paris: Flammarion, 1954, p. 31

- [9] *ibid.*, p. 48
- [10] *ibid.*, p. 45
- [11] The origin of Maurras's classicism is Jean Moreau's theory on poetry, but Maurice Barrès, an author and reactionary politician of anti-Modernism, seems to have been more influential on him.
- [12] T. E. Hulme. "A Tory Philosophy." Alun R. Jones. *The Life and Opinions of T. E. Hulme*. p. 187
- [13] *ibid.*, p. 189
- [14] *ibid.*, p. 191
- [15] *ibid.*, p. 190
- [16] *ibid.*, p. 187
- [17] *ibid.*, pp. 194-195
- [18] *ibid.*, p. 199
- [19] *ibid.*, p. 201
- [20] Michael Roberts states that Hulme's political-philosophical view, in general, should be understood as that of an aristocrat, conceding that his view has not a little tendency to fascism. (cf. Roberts. *T. E. Hulme*. pp. 192-194)
- [21] On Hulme's acceptance of Worringer, see Takada's *A Study on T. E. Hulme's "Speculations,"* pp. 136-141
- [22] Wilhelm Worringer. *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*. München: P. Piper, 1948, S. 29, 30
- [23] Hulme published a series of essays on war from 1915 to 1916, where he criticized Russell's progressionist pacifism and affirmed war from the view of objectivism in ethics. These essays are in *Further Speculations*. (pp. 170-199)
- [24] Georges Sorel. *Réflexion sur la violence*. Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1921
- [25] cf. Zeev Sternhell. *The Birth of Fascist Ideology*. Masamichi Shinmei. *Social View of Fascism*. Iwanami-books, 1936 (in Japanese), pp. 199-242
- [26] Georg Lukács. "Größe und Verfall des Expressionismus." *Probleme des Realismus I*. Berlin: Luchterhand, 1971, S. 137-138
- [27] Pound, one of the important formulators of Vorticism, had already read Kandinsky's theory in those days. He wrote about the affinities between his abstractionism and Vorticism in an essay. (cf. Ezra Pound. "Vorticism. Gaudier Brzeska." New York: New Directions, 1970, pp. 81-94)
- [28] Lukács. *Probleme des Realismus I*, S. 111-125
- [29] Kurt Sontheimer. *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik*. München: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung, 1962, S. 42-78
- [30] One of the most powerful theorists of such "popularized *Lebensphilosophie*" is Friedrich Georg Jünger, a brother of Ernst Jünger and an important promoter of the Conservative Revolutionary movement. He was greatly influenced by Nietzsche's philosophy and insisted on a unique nationalism based on "blood." For him, enthusiasm felt in the blood is the highest criterion for every matter. He finds the highest value in a devotion to a "heroic, powerful feeling of life" and to the fate of his nation, what he calls "community bound by blood" (*Blutgemeinschaft*). (cf. Sontheimer. *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik*, S. 67)
- [31] On the transition of Hulme's philosophy and aesthetics, see Levenson's *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine 1908-1922*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, pp. 37-47, pp. 80-102, Ai Tanji. *The Poetics of Modernism: Dissolution and Creation*. Misuzu books, 1994 (in Japanese), pp. 17-53. Levenson and Tanji have the same view on Hulme's transition: At first Hulme was strongly influenced by Bergson but later he shook that influence off. I think more careful inquiry would be necessary on this matter. The point should not be overlooked that Hulme's attachment to Bergson's philosophy could be found in his lifelong aphoristic writing (S217-245) and later works, such as the essays on Sorel.
- [32] Frank Kermode points out this inconsistency in *Romantic Image*. London: Routledge, 1957, p. 122

- [33] Hulme himself was conscious of this inconsistency. Pierre Lasserre and Action Française attacked Bergson's philosophy, especially its theory of intuition and *élan vital*, so Hulme visited Lasserre to discuss it. (cf. Levenson. *A Genealogy of Modernism*, pp. 85-86) Probably in order to overcome this inconsistency, Hulme proposed his worldview in which the world consists of three circles to divide the field of life and the field of ethics and absolute value. His attachment to Bergson and Sorel tells us this view was not thorough enough.
- [34] Sorel. *Réflexion sur la violence*. p. 182
- [35] See Levenson. *A Genealogy of Modernism*.
- [36] Sara Blair. "Modernism and the Politics of Culture." *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*. ed. Michael Levenson, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 162. On the relationship between Fascism and Pound or Eliot, see note [2]. On the relation between Wyndham Lewis and proto-fascism, see Fredric Jameson's *Fables of Aggression: Wyndham Lewis, the Modernist as Fascist*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979
- [37] *Fascism, Aesthetics, and Culture*. Richard. J. Golsan. (ed.) Hanover: University of New England, 1992; Andrew Hewitt. *Fascist Modernism: Aesthetics, Politics, and the Avant-Garde*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993; *Fascist Visions: Art and Ideology in France and Italy*. Mathew Affron & Mark Antliff. (eds.) Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997; Roger Griffin. *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, etc.
- [38] A series of debates on the political significance of Expressionism on the eve of World War II. (cf. *Die Expressionismusdebatte Materialien zu einer marxistischen Realismuskonzeption*. Hans-Jürgen Schmitt (hrsg.) Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1962).

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