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THE THEORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF IMAGISM

Of all the many "-isms" which sprang up at the beginning of the modernist era, Imagism seems to have had the greatest impact on the development of modern poetry both in England and America. The movement commenced as a strong revolt against the poetry of the late 19th century. It rejected such characteristic features of 19th century poetry as traditionalism of form and sentimentalism of subject. Imagism was created by a group of modern poets which included Edward Storer, F.S. Flint, T.E. Hulme, Ezra Pound, H.D. /the penname used by Hilda Doolittle/ and Richard Aldington, who by means of their poetry and propaganda produced an anomaly: a literary movement of great and lasting significance without a great literature. For although few of its poems may be regarded as strictly Imagist according to the poets' own definitions, the Imagist principles of vers libre, linguistic economy, precision and eclecticism had an enormous influence both upon literature and the visual arts. In the preface to his Imagism and the Imagists Glenn Hughes says that "Imagism may be characterized as the best organized and the most influential movement in English poetry since the pre-Raphaelites."¹

Imagism developed from a sequence of three literary groups, formed during the years 1909 to 1917. W. Pratt in his book The Imagist Poem labels the three groups as follows: The Schools of Images, Des Imagistes and Amygism.

The success and esteem the Imagists enjoyed in their own time can be partly attributed to their gift for self-advertisement: in numerous manifestoes and articles they explained their poetry and the theory behind it. However, the constant changes of the Imagistic programmes have led to a state of confusion about what constitutes Imagist theories. A close analysis of the bulk of the material produced by the Imagists shows that two main ideas predominated in their manifestoes during all the three phases. These were the necessity of creating an image which would evoke a visual picture, and the principle of vers libre.

Apart from all the deviations introduced by the particular poets to their own theories Imagist poetry is characterized by the following general principles:

1. To use the language of common speech, but to employ always the exact word, not the nearly-exact, nor the merely decorative word.

2. To create new rhythms - as the expression of new moods - and not to copy old rhythms, which merely echo old moods. We do not insist upon "free-verse" as the only method of writing poetry. We fight for it as for a principle of liberty. We believe that the individuality of a poet may often be better expressed in free-verse than in conventional forms. In poetry, a new cadence means a new idea.

3. To allow absolute freedom in the choice of subject. It is not good art to write badly about aeroplanes and automobiles; nor is it necessarily bad art to write well about the past. We believe passionately in the artistic value of modern life, but we wish to point out that there is nothing so inspiring nor so old-fashioned as an aeroplane of the year 1911.

4. To present an image /hence the name: "Imagist"/. we are not a school of painters, but we believe that poetry should render particulars exactly and not deal in vague generalities, however magnificent and sonorous.

It is for this reason that we oppose the cosmic poet, who seems to us to shirk the real difficulties of his art.

5. To produce poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred nor indefinite.

6. Finally, most of us believe that concentration is of the very essence of poetry.²

On the basis of these key ideas, three tests may be established which will help to show the relations between the poetry and theories produced by Imagist poets. These three basic points are:

1. The whole poem should present a visual picture, as a complete entity.
2. The visual pictures should be evoked by a striking analogy-image which is not a rhetorical device or an ornament of the poem.
3. Vers libre should be used and the poetic rhythms should be related to the character of the poetic expression.

The following analysis of a small range of representative Imagist poems by some of the leading theorists and practitioners of this disparate movement will illustrate the principles they developed. It will also indicate the differences of theory that existed amongst the poets and some of the problems involved in trying to write poetry of this nature.

The School of Images, also referred to as the pre-Imagistic phase, was founded in 1909. It was led by T.E.Hulme, a poet and philosopher who formed the basic ideas of Imagistic theory which were later developed and turned to firm principles by Ezra Pound. Hulme was influenced by the ideas of the philosopher Henri Bergson, and based his theory of Imagism on them. The new theory of Imagism gained wide popularity within London literary society. By 1909 Hulme had gathered around him a group of poets and philosophers who organized themselves into

an informal group which used to meet on Thursday evenings to discuss contemporary poetry. The main supporters of the group were, besides Hulme, such young poets as Edward Storer and F.S. Flint who later became the main theorists of Imagism. Through Flint, also, the Imagists learnt about French Symbolist literature. That influential trend became another source of inspiration for all the Imagist poets.

Edward Storer was the first propagator and theorist of the image. He believed that the image should be descriptive rather than analogical, as T.E. Hulme argued. Hulme and later Ezra Pound considered analogy as the basic element of image. Storer's ideal image was in the form of an "inserted clause" - a trope. The picture created by descriptive imagery of this sort conveys emotion by itself without reference to analogy. His poem Image is an example, which confirms that assumption:

Forsaken lovers,
Burning to a chaste, white moon,
Upon strange pyres of loneliness and drought.³

The power of the evoked visual picture in the poem is weakened by the vague expression "pyres of loneliness", which contravenes the Imagistic principle of concreteness and exactness of words. The form of descriptive image itself also seems very awkward. In an Imagist poem such as Ezra Pound's In a Station of the Metro, which is commonly regarded as a fine example of Imagist poetry, the title and the poem make an analogy. Thus, the title contributes to the whole visual picture, while in Storer's poem the title is useless, contributing nothing new or creative to the poem, and violating the principle of concentration at the same time. Actually the first line of the poem could function as its title:

Forsaken Lovers

Burning to the chaste, white moon,
Upon strange pyres of loneliness and drought.

In this form the poem would resemble the short haiku poems by Ezra Pound, in which the verse and its title are in close relation. It would also gain a higher degree of concentration. Generally speaking, in comparison with an analogy image the descriptive image possesses less power to evoke the visual picture.

In another of his poems Storer chose a more striking title which fits the Imagistic conventions: Street Magic,

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

However, the poem itself is not a good example of Imagist poetry because the vision is weakened by too many adjectives. The image found in the poem is as follows: "a theatre...faint with sweet... loveliness warm in the street's cold side" /my italics/. It is based on the contrast between two opposite notions - "coldness" and "warmness" which should be considered with respect to their figurative meaning and literal meaning. Again, in this poem, the image has also descriptive character and makes the whole poetical picture extremely elusive. The low degree of visual effectiveness is due to the usage of unnecessary adjectives. Some of them, for instance "strange" in connection with "pyres" or "crinkled" in "crinkled loveliness" do not contribute to the whole image. The Imagist poet should not "dull the image" with "superfluous words which reveal nothing new" as Ezra Pound warned the poets some years later in his famous article A Few Don'ts⁴. The word "strange" belongs to the group of adjectives which only dim the image, because they do not explain the physical nature of the object.

However, in some of his poems Storer was able to create symbolic expressions of great appeal. A good example of such expressions is found in his poem entitled Beautiful Despair:

I look at the moon,
And the frail silver of the climbing stars:
I look, dear, at you
And I cast my verses away.

In the phrase "the frail silver of the climbing stars" all the adjectives are meaningful and contribute to the description of the natural object. At the same time, the description is not trivial. The colour of the stars is difficult to define, indeed, and "frail silver" may evoke the image of twinkling half-silver and half-white stars, which seem to move up and up above the observer's head.

This poem may be regarded as one of the best examples of Imagist poetry by Edward Storer. The poet attempts to present the vision in form of an analogy instead of a descriptive image. The implied image of a woman whose beauty is beyond description /she is more beautiful than the moon and the stars/, makes a realistic and concrete vision. The poet admires the moon and the stars and his contemplation is interrupted by the appearance of the woman. When he looks at her, she seems so beautiful that the poet is ready to abandon everything, even writing poetry. Due to the woman-moon analogy, Storer achieved a two-level vision which is both realistic and emotional.

On a third level the poem also includes an ironic joke, since the poet has not "cast his verse away", but has, in fact, written this poem.

However, despite the fact that Storer used an analogy image, his poem still seems to be slightly traditional. This is due to the usage of the expression "dear" in his poem, which reminds the reader of the traditional poetry of 19th century.

Storer attempted to apply analogy to his poems under the influence of T.E. Hulme who became the most important theorist of the image. Hulme maintained that an "appeal to visual" is the main function of the image. The term "appeal to the visual" refers to the relations between poetic perception and poetic expression. The philosopher

suggests that the ordinary man perceives in connection with the present and the past, namely, he can see "a table" because he always associates it with its potential use, while the poet should see "the table" as something individual. Only when the poet is prepared to see objects as individual things, is he able to express his visual picture through an appropriate image.⁵

The analogy was characterized by two features: concreteness /as "Each word must be an image seen, not a counter"/⁶, and an original juxtaposition of images. Due to their concreteness, the images make the reader see a physical thing and prevent him from "gliding through an abstract process". The role of the other feature was, as S.K.Coffman observed, to "set poetry apart from the practical and dully reasonable attitudes of normal life".⁷ Hulme himself in his Notes made the following comment on the use of analogy:

Never, never a simple statement. It has no effect. One must always have analogies, which make another world. Through-the-glass-effect, which is what I want.⁸

T.E. Hulme was a poet who managed to relate his theory to practice and his poems show how to use analogy in poetry. Although the poet wrote only five poems, all of them may be regarded as small masterpieces of Imagist poetry. Ezra Pound was one of the first to appreciate Hulme's talent. He gathered and published his poems under the title of Complete Poetical Works of T.E.Hulme, in 1912. The poems give examples of how to use an image as well as how it functions in the poem as a structural device.

Autumn is the most popular poem in the collection. It was first printed in 1909 together with another poem A City Sunset:

A touch of cold in the Autumn night -
I walked abroad,
And the ruddy moon leaned over a hedge.

Like a red-faced farmer.
I did not stop to speak, but nodded,
And Round about were the wistful stars
With white faces like town children.

The vision of a man who wanders in the night and notices the stars and the moon is easily evoked. As the man is in a hurry, he does not stop to admire the sky. However, he notices the contrast between the golden nearly red moon and the glittering stars that seem white in comparison with it. The moon and the stars are described by a sequence of analogies, which are very personal as not every man would associate the moon with "a farmer's face" and the stars with "the white faces of the town children". This specific way of perception and the evening walk are interdependent. In other words, what the poem expresses is the sense of a sudden, penetrating and unusual perception which is noted down in terms of its context, the night time and a walk. However, the form of the analogy is spoiled by the use of superfluous words such as the conjunction "and" or "like". The like-conjunction brings to the reader's mind another literary device, that of simile, while according to Imagist theory poetic analogy should not be in form of simile or metaphor. The phrase "in the Autumn night" is also unnecessary because the title of the poem already defines the whole setting. With Imagist revision the poem could read as follows:

Autumn

A touch of cold
I walked abroad,
The ruddy moon leaned over a hedge,
A red-faced farmer.
I did not stop to speak, but nodded,
Round about were the wistful stars
The white faces of town children.

The poem Autumn shows that, although Hulme propagated the principle of precision and exactness, he was not always

able to realize his ideas.

However there is a poem in Hulme's collection which may be regarded as the best illustration for his theory. The poem is entitled The Sunset.

A coryphee, covetous of applause,
Loth to leave the stage,
With final diablerie, poises high her toe,
Displays scarlet lingerie of carmined clouds,
Amid the hostile murmurs of the stalls.

The poem must be discussed in close connection with its title, which explains the whole image and should be regarded as a part of it. If Hulme had written "the sunset like a coryphee" it would be a simple simile; by leaving out the "like" and merely implying it in the title, he presented an analogy in the form of an image.

The comparison of the sunset to a dancer gives the poem special originality. The notion of sunset is not mentioned in the poem, however the reader is forced by the title to have it constantly in mind, and although the second part of the analogy is descriptive in character it does not dim the whole picture. All the poetic phrases used by Hulme contribute to the visual picture that is based on motion and colour associations which are evoked by the natural phenomenon of sunset. When the sun sets, the sky around is stained with wide range of red colours which continually change their shades. Similarly, it is very difficult to describe the colours of the dancing "coryphee's" garment as the colours are changing with every gesture of the dancer.

At the same time, the expression "carmin'd clouds" constitutes a new metaphor which plays a double role: it is a poetical substitution for the dancer's laced petticoats which are very delicate and look like clouds, but simultaneously, the notion of clouds makes it clear that the dancer stands for the sun disappearing beyond the horizon among light pink and scarlet clouds. As a result, the image is developed, until the whole poem evokes the

complete vision. The vision appeals to the reader's senses, creating a specific emotional mood.

Hulme's poetry helped to establish a new standard for evaluating modern poetry written in irregular metre. The poet himself argued that verse "is not an occult art exempt from the demands of clarity" but a "means of expression", just as prose is, and should be communicative. The technique of vers libre helped, in Hulme's opinion, to revitalize the language of poetry. His ideas became the basic inspiration for Ezra Pound's principle of Imagism.

The years 1910-1911 were marked by a poetic silence on the part of the Imagist poets and may be regarded as a preparatory period for the poetic outburst of 1912. In autumn of 1911, Ezra Pound began to meet some of his friends who later formed the Imagistic group under his leadership. They used to meet at one of the Kensington tea-shops. Officially, the next Imagistic group emerged in 1912 and continued till 1914. The chief participants were Pound's Kensington friends: Hilda Doolittle, a poet who came to England in 1911; William Carlos Williams - Pound's friend from Pennsylvania University and a poet; and a young English poet Richard Aldington. Later, F.S. Flint also joined the group.

In 1912 Ezra Pound published his next volume of poetry /after Canzoni, 1911/, entitled Ripostes. The poet included in the collection The Complete Poetical Works of T.E.Hulme, as well as a preferatory note in which he made some references to the Imagist group of 1909:

As for the "School of Images", which may or may not have existed, its principles were not so interesting as those of the "Inherent dynamists", of Les Unanimistes, yet they were probably sounder than those of a certain French movement which attempted to dispense with verbs altogether.... As for the future, Les Imagistes the descendants of the forgotten school of 1909, have that in their keeping.⁹

The note shows that Pound saw the links between the group of 1909 and his own intentions. In fact, he borrowed and extended many of Hulme's ideas.

Apart from Hulme, Ezra Pound was the greatest theorist of Imagism, and an enthusiastic drafter of literary manifestoes. His opinions inspired the other Imagists, who also tried to publish their own credoes and articles. F.S. Flint was the first of them. In his article Imagisme which was published in 1913, Flint tried to give the first programme of the movement. He remarked that the Imagists

...Had a few rules, drawn up for their own satisfaction only, and they had not published them. They were

1. Direct treatment of the "thing", whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that did not contribute to the presentation,

As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of a musical phrase, not in a sequence of a metronome. They held also a certain "Doctrine of the Image", which they had not committed to writing.¹⁰

The "Doctrine of the Image" was explained by Ezra Pound in his article A Few Don'ts By An Imagiste, published in 1913. This article is considered the best literary credo of the Imagist movement. It opened with Pound's definition of the Image:

An Image is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time.¹¹

This was followed by further explanations and a reference to Flint's cardinal points of Imagist theory.

Although Ezra Pound used Hulme's theory as the basic source for his Imagist principles, there are some elements differentiating the two programmes. Hulme maintained that an "appeal to the visual" is the main function of the image, and hence, he stressed the emotional aspect of the device. Ezra Pound expanded the definition of image introducing the factor of intellectual appeal, describing it as a mental

reproduction a memory of the past sensation or perceptual experience. Hulme believed that analogy was the most important device of poetic structure. Pound invented a literary device of his own - "the superposition", by which he meant the application of one image as the basis for the whole poem. This device was brought to perfection in the epigrammatic forms of tanka and haiku which were introduced to English poetry by Ezra Pound from Chinese and Japanese literature. Poetry of these countries had a profound influence on his own work.

Poems written in the haiku form are based on a single image which is close to a simile or analogy and consists of five perceptive phrases. The poem In a Station of the Metro is the best known example of this kind of poetry:

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet black bough.

The poem was first printed with respect to the five perception phrases looked like this:

The apparition /of these faces/ in the crowd:
Petals / on a wet, black bough,

It is interesting to trace the steps of creation of this poem. In his memoirs the poet explained what situation and what emotional experiences gave him the inspiration for writing the poem. C. Norman in his biography of Pound quotes these extracts:

I got off the train ... and saw suddenly a beautiful face, and then another beautiful woman, and I tried all that day to find words for what this meant to me, and could not find any words that seemed to me worthy, or as lovely as that emotion. I wrote a thirty-line poem, and destroyed it because it was what we call it at work "of second intensity". Six month later I made a poem half that length: a year later I made the hokku-like sentence...¹²

An important element in the technique of Imagist verse is

the desire to reduce the length of the poem. Over the period of a year, the poet reduced the poem, from 30 to 2 lines, achieving in the process a poem of maximum intensity in both visual and emotional terms.

The title of the poem, In a Station of the Metro, is especially important as it illustrates the contrast between man and his place in the world of machines. In this context the word "apparition" plays the role of the factor which detaches the beautiful faces from the huge crowd of various faces. The epithet presides over the whole image describing the way in which the faces are different. They are similar to "Petals on a wet, black bough."

Hugh Kenner, in his book The Pound Era, points to the significance of the place where the whole image happens. He says that

...this is not any crowd, moreover, but a crowd seen underground, as Odysseus and Kore saw crowds in Hades.¹³

He also suggests that in the underground, "in the place where nothing grows and wheel turn", flowers / that are, here, taken out of their natural environment / must convey an unusual message. An implication may be that man and nature, despite the Futurists' declarations, cannot be unified with machinery and technology. Pound's opinions show that he never agreed with Marinetti that the "... splendour of earth has become enriched by a new beauty, the beauty of speed...". The choice of flower analogy heightens the power of the whole image to appeal to the reader's imagination as flowers are always associated with beauty while machinery is not.

From the point of view of structure, the poem constitutes an example of a "double image": one image is the poem itself and the other emerges when the vision evoked by the "apparition-petal" image is considered in connection with the title. On the other hand, the poem is based on a simile-like image with ellipsis as there is no exact phrase /faces ...

look like, are like, etc.,/ which would determine the correlation of the two lines. An analogy like this without the "like" element was defined by Pound as "an equation, meaning not redundancy, a equals a /Pound's italics/, but a generalization of unexpected exactness"¹⁴. This small lyric "drawing on Gauguin and on Japan, on ghosts and on Persephone, on the Underworld and on the Underground"¹⁵, as Hugh Kenner calls it, is one of the finest achievements of Imagist poetry.

In 1914 Ezra Pound published the first anthology of Imagist verse entitled Des Imagistes which contained pieces of poetry written by all the supporters of the 1912 Imagist group. The anthology was badly received both in Britain and America and after its publication Pound abandoned the Imagists. He joined a new movement, Vorticism and presented its programme in one of the poetic magazines The Fortnightly Review. Vorticism "was a stricter form of Imagism" as P. Jones states¹⁶. S.Coffman also admits that Pound

...had converted his Imagism into Vorticism and when Vorticism was announced, the manifesto embraced Imagism in a somewhat rude grasp: "the English Parallel Movement to Cubism and Expressionism, and Imagism in poetry."¹⁷

During his Vorticist period Pound continued to write short poems in haiku form which were characterized by strong effectiveness of their pictorial imagery and realistic subject. Poems like L'art, 1910, Women before Shop or Alba are structurally based on a single image which creates a clear realistic visual pictures. In 1914, the poet published these poems together with H.D.'s Oread in his Vorticist manifesto.

The last theorist and practitioner of Imagism, F.S.Flint, based his Imagist theory on the principle of descriptive image / a notion introduced to English poetry by E.Storer/. He also created his own theory of "unrhymed cadence" as an essentially English counterpart of vers libre. Flint's poetry of the Imagist period shows some deviation from the fundamental principles of Imagism. In fact, his interpretation

of Storer's descriptive image is also far from its author's intentions. Instead, Flint uses a kind of "symbolic image" rather than a typically descriptive one, and it is very difficult to determine whether he uses symbols or images. In some poems, for instance, Fragment, the poet introduced a series of symbols. In another, The Swan, only one simple image-symbol dominates the whole poem and it is regarded as Flint's best Imagist piece.

F.S. Flint's achievements in the field of poetic theory are of greater importance than his experiments with the image. Simultaneously, it must be admitted that he was most successful in his experiments with vers libre. He strongly advocated the technique of what he called "unrhymed cadence". He called it cadence to dissociate it from "verse" which implied some metrical irregularity, which the poet wanted to avoid.

F.S. Flint was the last representative of Imagist movement who tried to relate his theory to practice. Hilda Doolittle /H.D./, Richard Aldington, Amy Lowell and J.G. Fletcher did not propound new theories and may be considered as only more or less talented practitioners of Imagistic theory. They wrote their own credoes but these were merely reproductions of Ezra Pound's, T.E. Hulme's or F.S. Flint's theoretical assumptions. However this did not prevent them from creating good Imagistic poetry.

Of these four poets, H.D. was the most admired figure of the 1912 phase of Imagism. She was regarded as the archtypal Imagist poet by all her contemporaries. Her poetry deeply moved Ezra Pound and inspired him with new ideas about Imagism. Now she is mainly remembered for one poem Oread, which is often quoted as perfect example of Imagist verse:

Whirl up, sea -
Whirl your pointed pines,
Splash you great pines
On our rocks,
Hurl your green over us,
Cover us with your pools of fir.

This poem is, in fact, one of those rare examples in which Hulme's and Pound's ideas became united. The implied analogy presents the sea in terms of a pine forest. The two notions, trees and sea, are inseparable. Only together, have they the full force of visual and sensuous appeal which Ezra Pound called an "intellectual and emotional complex". S.K. Coffman supports this opinion saying that

Metaphor here conveys not just a single sensation but a whole "complex" of impressions, to use the term employed by Pound in his manifesto, and this complex is the poem, for the poem is built upon a single metaphor. The comparison of the waves to fir trees gives not only pictorial outline, but colour, a suggestion of coolness, softness, hushed sound, and even perhaps, of fragrance. The personal feeling, the clarity, the hardness of the poem satisfy Hulme's requirements. Still, in spite of the directness achieved by the analogy, it does not emphasize the incongruity between the object treated, nor does it attempt to translate the lofty and poetic sea into terms of the everyday and trivial.¹⁸

Interpretation of the poem is very difficult. The elements of the analogy, fir-sea, are so closely related that it is impossible to determine whether the sea describes the forest or the forest serves as a means of poetic expression for the sea. Although the poem has been discussed by many critics, they, too, cannot agree on a common interpretation of the poem. S.K. Coffman, as his comment shows, believes that sea is the subject of description in this poem, while another contemporary critic, C.K. Stead suggests that the poet describes the forest in terms of the waves of the sea, and interprets the poem in this way:

From H.D.'s single moment of experience the world of values is totally excluded; but the rare point

is achieved at which discourse can disappear without communication being eliminated. An Experience is suggested in which the persona behind the poem lies in a forest while wind moves the pines overhead. The correspondence between the pine forest and the sea is one of shape, colours and above all /implied not stated/ sounds - the sound of waves breaking and of wind in pines.¹⁹

"The persona behind the poem" is an oread, a mountain nymph. She utters the words of the poem. Introducing the figure of the nymph, the poet strictly defines the setting: the sea or the forest must be near or in the mountains. Thus, the title of the poem is not merely decorative but it contributes new elements to the whole picture, and constitutes an inseparable part of the poem.

The original and complex character of the visual image in the poem, makes Coffman's and Stead's interpretations valid. Oread is one of those Imagist poems, in which the analogy works both ways. This is due to the objectivity of the poem and the fact that there is no excess of adjectives. H.D. addresses things, she attributes to them volition, and speaks of the sea as if of an animate object. The language of the poem is simple and communicative and the vers libre technique gives the statement the quality of a very personal and original perception.

Richard Aldington, H.D.'s husband, shared with her a deep interest in classical themes, Greek mythology in particular. He was also an active participant in the Imagist movement in its last phase. His first volume of poetry Images contains poems written according to the Imagist theory and those which were inspired by his interest in Hellenic culture. Poems like Evening and a sequence of short poems entitled Images are Aldington's best achievements of the early period.

The poem Evening displays the influence of Hulme's idea of analogy as the most effective means of poetic expression.

The poem Images is interesting for its cadence which is similar to the biblical Song of Songs.

The final phase of the Imagist movement is called "Amygism". The term was coined by Ezra Pound who believed that Amy Lowell distorted the idea of Imagist poetry. However, the popularity of Imagism in America was due to her interest in the movement. This phase took place from 1914 to 1917.

Amy Lowell, an American poet and critic, is the most controversial participant of the movement. It is extremely difficult to consider her poetry in terms of Imagist theory as it hardly fits the theoretical assumptions of Imagism. Some pieces of her poetry show that she made attempts to keep within the bounds prescribed by the movement, but she did not strictly develop and apply the principles which she had observed from Hulme, Pound and Flint. J.B. Harner characterizing her role in the development of the movement says that

She was...an active propagandist for the cause of poetry as she understood it. Her attitude in most of her public dealings was that of a missionary rather than a critic. It is easier to place the work of Amy Lowell than to sum it up. She was verbose, prolific, insensitive in many experiments, sometimes absurd. Yet she cannot be dismissed.²⁰

There are some examples of her poetry in which the influence of Imagism may be traced, for instance, the poem Patterns :

I walk down the garden paths,
And all the daffodils
Are blowing, and the bright blue squills.
I walk down the patterned garden-paths
In my stiff, brocaded gown,
With my powdered hair and jewelled fan,
I too am a rare
Pattern. As I wander down
The garden paths.

The vision of the poem is created by means of narration and description as the poet does not create a precise and concrete image in Pound's or Hulme's style. But despite its elusiveness the poem contains an image. This poem is an attempt to recapture the ethos of a past age. The age is first summoned up in the image of the formal garden and then a parallel is drawn between the patterns of the garden and the patterned formality of the lady's hair, dress and jewels. Both garden and woman share a similar pattern of artifice, they are both "natural" and "created". The phrase "garden paths" is repeated three times and in the second repetition it becomes - "patterned garden-paths". The formal garden paths work as an analogy to the formally dressed woman who walks down the paths. The figure of the woman complements the garden and is a part of its formality. The poem, however, is a rather clumsy attempt to evoke a past consciousness; if one compares it to a poem like Pound's Fanpiece, for Her Imperial Lord, Lowell's verbosity as well as her lack of poetic impulse becomes apparent.

With Amy Lowell the list of the Imagist poets ends. It is hardly possible to regard Ford Maddox Ford, J.G.Fletcher and D.H.Lawrence as Imagist writers and as a matter of fact, none of those poets claimed to belong to the movement.

After World War I, the Imagist movement passed to history and ceased to exist as an organized coterie. For some of its previous members, such as Amy Lowell and F.S.Flint for instance, Imagism was the final step in their literary careers. For others, on the contrary, the Imagist doctrine constituted a sort of experimental period which helped to shape their literary tastes. Ezra Pound turned his attention to longer poetic forms, which resulted in such masterpieces as Hugh Selwyn Mauberley and The Cantos. At the same time, such poets as Marianne Moore and William Carlos Williams, who were never officially associated with the movement, accepted some of its principles and included them in their literary programmes.

As one of the modernist trends, Imagism had a great impact

on the poetry of the twenties, Both in Europe and in America. However, in England and London - the literary capital of the Imagist movement - there was little poetic continuity after the movement as such had ended. After 1918, supported by Edward Marsh and his anthologies of Georgian Poetry, English poets made a quick comeback to traditional forms of poetry. Vers libre lost its popularity and only a few poets continued to use that technique in their works. One of these who believed that vers libre was still an appropriate means for poetic expression was T.S.Eliot. He was one of the last editors of the Egoist and was greatly indebted to Pound's influence and help. The technique of vers libre was not the only element T.S.Eliot borrowed from Imagist theory. T.S. Eliot's theory of the "objective correlative" shares a common basis with Pound's principles of objectivity and equation.

In America Imagism was stronger and its influence can be more easily traced. Most of the American poets of the twenties accepted vers libre as an effective form for the expression of poetic feelings. The literary programmes of Carl Sandburg, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams and many other poets echo Pound's views on the shape and character of poetic expression.

The idea of objectivity, one of the strongest points of Imagism, reintroduced new qualities to English poetry. These qualities of concision and verbal precision show how deeply Imagism differed from 19th century poetry. Simultaneously, through the new elements Imagism could become a genuinely modern trend which had a great impact on European and American poetry. One of its recent critics, Natan Zach, points out that the hardness of Imagist poetry constitutes the basis on which Imagist doctrine corresponds with other modern movements. In his article Imagism and Vorticism Zach writes:

In its preoccupation with hardness, Imagism...
is as close to Futurism with which it shares some
common tenets, as to expressionism, from which

it differs in many crucial respects. When it aspires to the condition of sculpture rather than to that of music, Imagist work manifests an affinity with German Dinggedicht /object poem/ ... Williams's red wheelbarrow glazed with rainwater - nothing more nor less than just that - is Imagism at its most objective. Pound's Make it New ideology bears comparison with what Brecht, the Surrealists and the Italian and Russian Futurists understood by the same slogan. Finally, in Russian Imaginism, sensitive to Futurist "errors" but equally condemnatory of Symbolism and Decadence, Imagism finds a curious counterpart whose existence it ignored.²¹

Imagism therefore is of great importance, not so much in terms of the poetic works produced during the brief years of the Imagist movement, but because Imagism constituted a radical revolt against the 19th century poetic traditions and helped to shape and formulate some of the tenets of modern poetry.

NOTES

- ¹ All the quoted poems come from the anthology Imagist Poetry ed. Peter Jones, /Penguin Books, 1976/.
- ² C.K. Coffman, Imagism, /University of Oklahoma Press, 1951/. p.155.
- ³ *ibid.*, p.157.
- ⁴ T.E.Hulme, Notes on Language and Style, /London and New York, 1925/. p.20.
- ⁵ Quoted by C.Norman, Esra Pound, /New York, 1960/, p.72.
- ⁶ Ezra Pound, A Few Don'ts, in Imagist Poetry, *op.cit.*, p.129.
- ⁷ C.Norman, *op.cit.*, p.52.

- ³ H.Kenner, The Pound Ezra, /Berkeley, 1971, London, 1972/, p.86.
- ⁹ Quoted by C.Norman, op.cit., p.47.
- ¹⁰ H.Kenner, op.cit., p.87.
- ¹¹ C.K.Coffman, op.cit., p.162.
- ¹² C.K.Stead, The New Poetics, /London, 1964/, p.103.
- ¹³ J.B.Harmer, Victory in Limbo, /London, 1975/, p.91.
- ¹⁴ Modernism, ed. M.Bradbury and J.McFarlane /Penguin Books, 1976/, see Natan Zach, Imagism and Vorticism, pp. 238-239.

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Streszczenie

Teoria i rozwój Imagizmu

Imagizm rozwinął się na początku wieku XX i stał się wyrazem buntu młodego pokolenia przeciwko tradycyjnej poezji angielskiej wieku XIX. Idee propagowane przez imagizm stanowią podstawę dla rozwoju poezji modernistycznej w Europie i Ameryce.

Podstawowe etapy tego ruchu to grupy literackie powstające w latach 1909, 1912, 1914. Głównymi twórcami imagizmu byli T.E. Hulme, Ezra Pound oraz F.S. Flint. Twórcy ruchu wierzyli, że poezja powinna być pisana w konwencji "vers libre" i oddziaływać na wyobraźnię czytelnika przez odpowiednie metafory i obrazowe wyobrażenia /stad nazwa - "wyobrażenie", po ang. "image" - Imagism/. Jednakże imagizm nie stworzył wielkich utworów literackich, natomiast dzięki licznym manifestom i programom publikowanym w latach 1909 - 1915

miał ogromny wpływ na kształtowanie się podstaw poezji modernistycznej.

Zadaniem artykułu jest ukazanie rozwoju samego ruchu oraz procesu formowania się jego programu. Teoretyczne założenia ruchu poparte zostały omówieniem utworów poetyckich takich przedstawicieli imagizmu jak Ezra Pound, T.E. Hulme, R. Aldington i Hilda Doolittle. Równocześnie wykazane zostały istotne różnice w programach poszczególnych przedstawicieli ruchu.