# THE ROAD FROM PARIS

## INTRODUCTION

### I

T. S. Eliot, in 'A Commentary' in *The Criterion* in 1934, observed that: 'Younger generations can hardly realize the intellectual desert of England and America during the first decade and more of this century.' He continued:

> The predominance of Paris was incontestable. Poetry, it is true, was somewhat in eclipse; but there was a most exciting variety of ideas. Anatole France and Remy de Gourmont still exhibited their learning . . .; Barrès was at the height of his influence . . . Péguy, more or less Bergsonian *and* Catholic *and* Socialist, had just become important, and the young were further distracted by Gide and Claudel. Vildrac, Romains, Duhamel, experimented with verse which seemed hopeful, though it was always, I think, disappointing; something was expected of Henri Franck, the early deceased author of *La Danse devant l'arche*.[1]

Nor did Eliot stop with homage to literary France. He recalled the importance of the sociologists Lévy-Bruhl and Durkheim, of Janet, the psychologist, of Loisy, of Faguet, and above all of Bergson, whose metaphysic 'was apt to be involved with discussion of Matisse and Picasso'. This account of the intellectual dominance of France in the years before World War I is matched, more succinctly, by Eliot's statement of the impact of those currents on English poetry. 'I look back to the dead year 1908', he wrote, 'and I observe with satisfaction that it is now taken for granted that the current of French poetry which sprang from Baudelaire is one which has, in these twenty-one years, affected all English poetry that matters'.[2]

The view of Eliot's fellow exile in London, Ezra Pound, was even more sweeping. In one of his earliest articles on contemporary French poetry, 'The Approach to Paris' in 1913, Pound declared: 'For the best part of a thousand years English poets have gone to school to the French, or one might as well say that there never were any English poets until they began to study the French . . . The history of English poetic glory is a history of successful steals from the French . . . The great periods of English have been the periods when the English showed the greatest powers of assimilation'.[3] Whether Pound's assertions are accurate for all of English literature or not, they are right for his own period, for he correctly defined the source of the poetic renaissance in early twentieth-

[1] 'A Commentary', *The Criterion*, XIII, 52 (April 1934) 451–2.
[2] 'Books of the Quarter: *Baudelaire and the Symbolists*', *The Criterion*, IX, 35 (January 1930) 359.
[3] 'The Approach to Paris, II', *The New Age*, XIII, 20 (11 September 1913) 577.

century England. In partial demonstration of his assessment, his own statement appeared in a series of articles which was one of his attempts to 'school' English poets in the achievements of the French poetic *avant garde*. The effort had already been launched by F. S. Flint, Ford Madox Ford, T. E. Hulme, John Middleton Murry, and even some lesser figures. Pound himself, in this article, was offering poems from Remy de Gourmont's *Le Livre des Litanies* as an illustration of accomplishments in verse-rhythm that English poets should seek to equal. In fact, the imagist poets for whom Pound then spoke had already 'stolen' the theory and technique of *vers libre* and adapted both as important elements of their own poetry. And in the two years immediately after this essay, Pound and his fellow vorticists Wyndham Lewis and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska assimilated the aesthetic views of cubists, futurists, and abstract expressionists and articulated the precepts of a British movement of abstract art.[1] The abstract poetics Pound shaped in this period still illuminates and often guides much American poetry today.

Of course, the origins of modern poetry in England are far too complex to be seen only in terms of a foreign influence. The attention of Richard Aldington and Hilda Doolittle (H.D.) to classical Greek lyric cannot be attributed originally to French inspiration; Pound had begun to study the troubadours before he became an exile in Europe; even the scientific formulation of wave patterns as a description of the motion of sound and matter made a contribution to new ideas of form; and 'influences', finally, can never *explain* individual accomplishment. But with these caveats in mind, one may summarize French presence in early twentieth-century British poetry thus: French influence was ubiquitous in the innovative movements of poetry in London between 1908 and 1920; French intellectual currents were far more extensive and important than those of any other foreign origin in this period; and the rhythm, metric, subject, and form in imagist, vorticist and immediately succeeding poetry all exhibit properties which were inspired or reinforced by French practices or by poetry or criticism in the French language. Neither Eliot nor Pound was excessive in his emphasis upon the paramount influence of France on the English poetic world between 1908 and 1920.

One can examine this influence as it appears in the development of individual writers or as it is manifest in the currents of London literary history. Studies of the influence of particular French poets on the work of Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, T. E. Hulme, Edith Sitwell, Hilda Doolittle, and John Gould Fletcher already exist, and they have the virtue of fully documenting specific examples of direct imitation and of showing the French influence on major portions of the careers of individual

[1] See William C. Wees, *Vorticism and the English Avant-garde* (Toronto, 1972).

poets.[1] The present volume provides many of the materials for a broader literary historical study of the impact of French literary culture on the development of poetry in England between 1900 and 1920 – a study, that is, of the way ideas, themes, and techniques common to important segments of the French literary community came to be important in London, where they had an independent and parallel development, reinforced in part by continuing developments in France.[2] Examining the period rather than individual writers enables one to assess the full range of French influence in England, to identify the ideas or techniques most important to the period as a whole, and to examine the course of transmission rather than the effects of influence alone. Observing the course of transmission lays the foundation for the revaluation of some literary reputations: both F. S. Flint and John Middleton Murry, neither highly regarded for his own creative work, made important and in the case of Flint extremely extensive contributions to the transmission of French influences, and thus played a significant role in shaping the course of English poetry.

Viewed from the perspective of literary history, French influence passed through several slightly overlapping but reasonably clear stages between the years 1900–20. The first stage is the period of the persistence of nineteenth-century symbolist influence of the type prevalent in the British 1890s.[3] This kind of 'French presence' is characteristic in much work from the years 1900–10, before the great modern poetic revolution got well underway. Essays on the French mostly harked back to the achievements of the symbolist period – as did F. S. Flint's reviews for *The New Age* on 11 July 1908 and 11 February 1909; or Francis Grierson's 'Paul Verlaine' and 'Stéphane Mallarmé', André Beaunier's 'La Littérature française contemporaine', and Catherine Verschoyle's 'On Beauty and Some Modern French Poets', which all appeared in the first months of 1910.[4] In poetry the characteristic note of this phase of

[1] A selected bibliography of these studies includes, for Pound, Eliot, H.D., and Fletcher, René Taupin, *L'Influence du symbolisme français sur la poésie américaine (de 1910 à 1920)* (Paris, 1929); and individually, John J. Espey, *Ezra Pound's 'Mauberley': A Study in Composition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1955); Edward J. H. Greene, *T. S. Eliot et la France* (Paris, 1951); Alun R. Jones, *The Life and Opinions of T. E. Hulme* (London, 1960); Ihab H. Hassan, 'Edith Sitwell and the Symbolist Tradition', *Comparative Literature*, VII (Summer 1955) 240–51.

[2] Attention is given to the French contributions to imagism by Stanley K. Coffman, *Imagism: A Chapter for the History of Modern Poetry* (Norman, Okla., 1951) and by Wallace Martin, 'The Origins of Imagism', in *'The New Age' under Orage: Chapters in English Cultural History* (Manchester, 1967), pp. 145–81. I have a book-length study of French influence on English poetry, 1900–20, in progress.

[3] The fullest available study of the transmission of French influence into England in the latter part of the nineteenth century is Ruth Z. Temple's *The Critic's Alchemy: A Study of the Introduction of French Symbolism into England* (New Haven, *c.* 1953).

[4] Flint, 'Recent Verse', *The New Age*, n.s. III (11 July 1908) 212–13, and review of *For Christmas*

influence was struck by the imitations of Swinburne, Dowson, and Symons in Pound's early collections *A Lume Spento* (1908), *Personae* (1909), and *Exultations* (1909);[1] by the *symboliste* manner in many poems of Flint's *In the Net of the Stars* (1909); and by some passages in Yeats' *In the Seven Woods* (1904). One of the most important critics still was Arthur Symons, whose *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* of 1899 – perhaps the apogee of French influence in the 1890s – was republished in 1908; and the standard anthology of French poetry was the two-volume Adrien Van Bever and Paul Léautaud *Poètes d'aujourd'hui*, a thorough selection of French symbolist verse by poets active before 1900.

The second stage of French influence in the first two decades is that of the rapid spread of interest in symbolist *cénacle* and post-symbolist French poetry and theory. This stage corresponds to the beginnings of the modernist movement in English poetry in the years 1909–14. It is marked by the widespread adoption of *vers libre*, development of a poetic theory heavily indebted to Bergson's aesthetic views, attention to some aspects of the French stress on a renewed classicism, and use of realistic, industrial, and lower or middle class subjects and diction in poetry. All of these developments are clear in the beginning and growth of imagism, a movement itself modelled on the coteries which dominated the post-symbolist French poetic world in the years from 1900 to 1914. The important sources or models were no longer the symbolist masters (like Mallarmé, Verlaine, or Rimbaud) but the men active in the years following the formal establishment of the symbolist school, a development usually dated from Jean Moréas' use of the name *symbolisme* in *Le Figaro*, 18 September 1886. Among these *cénacle* figures, for example, Gustave Kahn was an important source for Hulme's advocacy of free verse in 'A Lecture on Modern Poetry' (1909), Émile Verhaeren a shaping influence on the *vers libre* of Flint's transitional volume *In the Net of the Stars* (1909), and Remy de Gourmont and Henri de Régnier the models Pound suggested to English language poets for, respectively, 'rhythm' and 'simplicity of syntactical construction'.[2] Hulme and Flint spread information about poets of the symbolist *cénacle* in the secession Poets' Club of 1909.[3] In addition, a larger British audience was introduced to these French writers by means of essays in journals like *The*

*MDCCCCVIII*, *The New Age*, n.s. IV (11 February 1909) 327–8; Grierson, 'Paul Verlaine', *The New Age*, n.s. VI (6 January 1910), and 'Stéphane Mallarmé', *The New Age*, n.s. VI (10 February 1910) 351–2; Beaunier, *The Nineteenth Century and After*, LXVII (January 1910) 48–64; Verschoyle, *The Thrush*, II, 1 (April 1910).

[1] Discussions of Pound's use of a British 1890s variety of *symbolisme* appear in N. Christoph de Nagy, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound: The Pre-Imagist Stage* (Bern, 1960); Thomas H. Jackson, *The Early Poetry of Ezra Pound* (Cambridge, Mass., 1968); and Hugh Witemeyer, *The Poetry of Ezra Pound: Forms and Renewal 1908–1920* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969).

[2] Ezra Pound, 'Editorial Comment: Paris', *Poetry*, III, 1 (October 1913) 26–7.

[3] F. S. Flint, 'The History of Imagism', *The Egoist* (1 May 1915) 71.

*New Age*; both characteristic and significant are Flint's review of Verhaeren's volume of poetry *The Sovereign Rhythms* and Richard Buxton's 1911–12 series on de Régnier, Moréas, Francis Vielé-Griffin, Stuart Merrill, Francis Jammes, Paul Fort, and Albert Samain.[1]

At almost the same time, London poets began to know of the French generation that succeeded the *cénacle* – the post-symbolist poets who were ranged in competing coteries like *unanimisme*, *néo-Mallarmisme*, *néo-paganisme*, *paroxysme*, *fantaisisme*, and a cluster of others. The two earliest extensive sources of information about these poets in London were F. S. Flint's 'Contemporary French Poetry' in 1912 and Pound's series 'The Approach to Paris' in 1913, and they shared two significant features: both discussed the post-symbolists in the context of *cénacle* poets like Fort, de Régnier, Jammes, and Kahn, and both emphasized, among *les jeunes*, the *unanimistes* and their supporters, like Jules Romains, Charles Vildrac, Georges Duhamel, and André Spire. Other essays – like Tristan Derème's 1912–13 series for *Rhythm*[2] and Flint's regular 'French Chronicle' for *Poetry and Drama* in 1913–14 – treated more innovative French contemporaries, like Guillaume Apollinaire, Henri-Martin Barzun, André Salmon, and Paul Claudel. These essays made somewhat less of the symbolist heritage and thus prepared for English writers to look to their *current* French counterparts as the source for aesthetic innovation.

The third stage of French influence, in 1914, 1915, and 1916, is that of Anglo-American assimilation of contemporary developments in poetry and abstract aesthetics. It was a time of attention to the ideas of cubism, futurism, and abstract expressionism and a period of regular reporting on *les jeunes poètes* of France. The most dramatic aesthetic development in the London of these years was the formation of the vorticist movement as a correlative to the Continental schools of non-representational art. The process of assimilating Continental theories of aesthetics began in earnest late in 1913, although the roots of the process go back as far as 1910,[3] and the effects of these influences were manifest theoretically in T. E. Hulme's art criticism in early 1914 and in the vorticists' aesthetic statements of 1914 and 1915. The effect of these new theories on poetry became clear only after the period of assimilation of influence was largely over. Some poems of 1914–16 hint at new techniques (one thinks of Pound's 'Heather' or 'Dogmatic Statement on the

[1] 'The Sovereign Rhythms', *The New Age* (22 September 1910) 496–7. The Buxton essays appeared respectively, on 14 September, 28 September, 12 October, and 2 November 1911, and 11 January, 8 August, and 24 October 1912.

[2] 'Lettre de France, I–V', *Rhythm*, June, August, October, December 1912, and February 1913.

[3] F. T. Marinetti gave his first London lecture on futurism in March 1910, and Roger Fry held the first Post-Impressionist Exhibition at the Grafton Gallery in the fall of the same year.

Game and Play of Chess'), but the full significance of abstract aesthetic theories for poetry began to emerge only with the publication of Pound's first three cantos in summer, 1917, 'Homage to Sextus Propertius' and 'Canto IV' in 1919, and 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley' in 1920, and Eliot's 'The Waste Land' in 1922. In these years of most active interest in aesthetic theory France was important both as the point of origin of significant influences – like post-impressionist painting, cubism, and the poetry of Apollinaire and Max Jacob – and as broker for intellectual currency from throughout Europe. The Italian futurists, for example, spoke and often wrote in French, and their propaganda in London was very often published in French rather than in translation from Italian.[1] The Oriental influence so important to those years was also imported through French versions, as well as English ones.[2]

At the same time that Pound, Wyndham Lewis, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, and T. E. Hulme led the way toward the formation of an aesthetic theory which integrated many Continental experiments in abstraction, Richard Aldington and Hilda Doolittle, as literary editors of *The Egoist*, consolidated the achievements of imagism and made *The Egoist* the means of continual, non-partisan commentary on current events in French poetry. Aldington was not really exaggerating when he wrote in 1915: '*The Egoist* has been hammering at people to read French poetry.'[3] Unlike the introductory essays by Buxton, Flint, Pound, and Derème in the preceding years, comments on French poets in *The Egoist* were predicated on the accurate assumption that a lively interest in literary France and at least some knowledge did exist among the *avant garde*. Thus, from 1914 through 1916 *The Egoist* offered selections of recent poetry in French,[4] translations of Remy de Gourmont's novel *The Horses of Diomedes* and Lautréamont's *The Songs of Maldoror*, regular reviews of new French books, more extensive essays

[1] The leader of literary futurism, F. T. Marinetti, wrote his poetry in French up until 1914. The first futurist manifesto in 1909 was published in French in *Le Figaro*, and later manifestoes very often appeared either originally or simultaneously in that language. When Marinetti travelled about London to lecture and converse, he spoke in French and relied on Aldington, Pound and others to translate for the benefit of the relatively small number of literati who could not understand. Gino Severini, the futurist painter with the largest number of English connections, lived in Paris and received English guests in Parisian *avant garde* company that included Apollinaire. For anecdotes about the futurists and English writers see Richard Aldington, *Life for Life's Sake* (New York, 1941), p. 108, and C. R. W. Nevinson, *Paint and Prejudice* (New York, 1938), p. 64.

[2] French sources for the early imagist interest in Japanese poetry are discussed in Earl Miner's *The Japanese Tradition in British and American Literature* (Princeton, 1966), pp. 97–107. Glenn Hughes in *Imagism and the Imagists* (New York, 1960) notes that John Gould Fletcher's interest in Chinese poetry (p. 138) and Amy Lowell's attention to Japanese verse (p. 204) both were first stimulated by French translations of the Oriental poems.

[3] 'New Poetry', *The Egoist*, II, 6 (1 June 1915) 89.

[4] These selections included (but are not limited to) poems by Paul Fort, 1 March 1915; P. J. Jouve, 1 July 1915; Guy-Charles Cros, 2 August 1915; and André Spire, 1 December 1915.

on such figures as Léon Deubel, Charles Péguy, Joris-Karl Huysmans, and Remy de Gourmont, and in each issue a lengthy French literary causerie entitled 'Passing Paris' by Muriel Ciolkowska. During the first two years of the war there were few competing *avant garde* journals; *The New Age*, however, also continued to open its columns to those interested in French poetry and the new aesthetics. Pound and Hulme published there frequently during this period, and extracts from Max Jacob's 'cubist' prose poems appeared in the issue for 6 May 1915.

The fourth stage of French influence began in the later years of the war and continued through and beyond 1920. It was marked by a more reserved attitude toward most contemporary French poets and by greater interest in the French nineteenth century. By this time a strong and independent modernist movement in English poetry existed, and a new generation of English poets – including Edith Sitwell, Aldous Huxley, and Herbert Read – were beginning to take their places in this new tradition. Since the appearance of the fourth stage of influence is characterized by a subtle change in attitude toward France on the part of London literati, a precise beginning date cannot be specified. The presence of this new attitude is clear, however, in the first cycle of *Wheels* in 1916, in *The Egoist* from June 1917, when T. S. Eliot became literary editor, and from the first number of *Art and Letters* in July 1917. The 'new generation' of English modernist poets was active in all three journals. Although the contemporary French no longer occupied the authoritative position in poetic experiment they had held before the war, by this time French and English literary worlds were so contiguous that anyone seriously interested in poetry was presumed to be acquainted with recent French literature. The French post-symbolist coteries, like the *unanimistes*, *fantaisistes*, *paroxystes* (*ad infinitum*) – largely disrupted by war – no longer offered technical inspiration to the English, and coterie spirit of the Bloomsbury kind did not lead to the formation of significant French-style poetic movements, like imagism or vorticism. Rather, individual English poets, like Edith Sitwell or Aldous Huxley, turned to selected French figures for inspiration – particularly to the proto-surrealist Lautréamont or to Baudelaire, Rimbaud, and Mallarmé. The one contemporary French poet really acclaimed in Britain was the man who most fully represented French symbolism in the twentieth century, Paul Valéry. Here too the new independence and strength of judgement of the English modern poetry movement was clear; Valéry's extremely important volume *La Jeune Parque* was first fully appreciated – in either country – by John Middleton Murry in the *Times Literary Supplement* for 23 August 1917.[1] This British independence meant an eclectic,

[1] The author of the anonymous *TLS* review is identified by Charles Du Bos in 'Letters from Paris, v: On the Symbolist Movement in French Poetry', *The Athenaeum* (30 July 1920) 159.

individual approach to contemporary French poetry and some resistance to imitation of recent Continental currents. Eliot, for example, drew on St.-John Perse, particularly on the *Anabase* (1924),[1] though the French poet was neither popular nor widely known in England in the 1920s. The English return to the French symbolists was paralleled (and perhaps to some extent prompted) by a new attention in Paris to the French late-nineteenth century, to Rimbaud, Lautréamont, and Jarry; and two significant French post-war movements in poetry, dadaism and surrealism, grew out of this concern. These movements were discussed in London by 1920, but chiefly by the one critic who had been really devoted to thorough reportage on current French poetry in the years before the war – F. S. Flint. He treated the new developments in three essays: 'Some Modern French Poets (A Commentary, with Specimens)' in *Chapbook*, October 1919; an abbreviated version of the same article for the *Times Literary Supplement* leader for 2 October 1919; and most important, 'The Younger French Poets: The Dada Movement' in *Chapbook*, November 1920. Flint himself had almost stopped writing poetry; his influence with *avant garde* poets had been through the defunct imagist movement and with the end of war he had resumed his work in literary circles as journalist and translator rather than as a member of *les jeunes*. Meanwhile, John Middleton Murry and Aldous Huxley were directing British attention to exciting developments in French prose – to the novels of Marcel Proust and André Gide. Perhaps consequently, Flint's early and significant essays on French dadaism went largely unheeded in the circles of poetry; critical journals were slow to follow his lead; and it was not again until the 1930s that a French movement, surrealism, belatedly became important to English poetry. For the interim decade or so it was fair to say, as T. S. Eliot did in the same essay in which he praised the France of pre-war years, that 'the intellectual primacy of Paris' was 'not what it was' in the vital, tumultuous years in which a modern English poetry was shaped.[2]

## II

In terms of understanding both the importance of French influence and the complicated origins of modern English poetry, the most interesting stages of influence are the years of the discovery and widening knowledge of symbolist *cénacle* and post-symbolist poets and of the assimilation of abstract aesthetic theories – that is, 1909–16. It is with the disputed origins of imagism, which lie in the years 1908 or 1909, that one can best begin to examine the extension of French influence in twentieth-

[1] Edward J. H. Greene, *T. S. Eliot et la France* (Paris, 1951), pp. 135–6.
[2] Eliot, 'A Commentary', *op. cit.*, 53.

century England. Literary revival was brewing in England in 1908. Only William Butler Yeats, the writers of the Irish renaissance, and occasionally Thomas Hardy had continued to do really significant work in poetry during the years since the demise of *The Yellow Book* in April 1897. But in 1908 T. E. Hulme and other members of a first Poets' Club were meeting to discuss the techniques of poetry, and in December of that same year, Ford Madox Ford launched one of the important journals of the half-century: *The English Review*. At about the same time A. R. Orage became editor of *The New Age* and shaped that weekly into an important source of information on foreign literature and *avant garde* theories in philosophy and aesthetics. The Poets' Clubs, *The English Review*, and *The New Age* all served to spread the influence of the French.

One part of the story begins with the emergence of a young working-class man, Frank S. Flint, as a poetry reviewer with an unusual gift for language. A self-educated man, Flint studied French in a workingman's night school just after he entered the civil service at age nineteen,[1] approximately 1904. By 1906 he had begun literary work,[2] and in 1908 he became the regular poetry reviewer for *The New Age*. In his first essay there, 11 July 1908, he spoke of the tanka, the haikai (using, as Earl Miner points out, the French form of that term),[3] unrhymed verse, broken cadences, and Stéphane Mallarmé.[4] The first Poets' Club, which had been meeting throughout 1908, issued in January 1909, an anthology of its work: *For Christmas, MDCCCCVII*, and in February 1909, Flint reviewed it for *The New Age*. Flint particularly liked Hulme's 'Autumn' – later to be regarded as a paradigm imagist poem – but he compared the Poets' Club to the discussions of poetry in French cafés, and concluded: 'Those discussions in obscure cafés regenerated, remade French poetry; but the Poets' Club – ! . . . the Poets' Club is death.'[5]

As subsequent descriptions of the period have often recorded, the review led to a meeting between Flint and Hulme, and the formation in March 1909, of a second or secession Poets' Club, attended by Flint, Hulme, Edward Storer, Florence Farr, Joseph Campbell, Francis Tancred, Ezra Pound (who began attending with the fourth meeting),[6]

[1] 'Obituary: Frank S. Flint, Imagist Poet', *The Times*, 29 February 1960, p. 14.
[2] A typed manuscript of *The Agora: A Journal for All and None*, dated November 1906, is held in The Academic Center Library of The University of Texas. It consists of poems and articles by Flint and others.
[3] Miner, *The Japanese Tradition in British and American Literature*, p. 101.
[4] *The New Age*, n.s. III (11 July 1908) 212–13.
[5] 'Recent Verse', *The New Age*, n.s. IV (11 February 1909) 327.
[6] The quotation and most of the foregoing information is from Flint's 'History of Imagism', *The Egoist*, II, 5 (1 May 1915). See also Wallace Martin, *op. cit.*; Pound, 'Preface' to 'The Complete Poetical Works of T. E. Hulme' in *Ripostes* (London, 1912); and Patricia Hutchins, *Ezra Pound's Kensington* (London, 1965).

and, as one of Hulme's organizing letters indicates, Ernest Radford and Ernest Rhys.[1] 'We were all much influenced by the French symbolists', Flint said of that group – and it was back toward those 1909 meetings that both Pound and Flint pointed[2] as sources of inspiration for the imagism that had its real development in 1912 and 1913. Three members of that group have laid claim to priority in transmitting French influence or have been pointed out by later critics as chiefly responsible for introducing London poets to crucial aspects of contemporary French poetry and criticism – T. E. Hulme, Ezra Pound, and F. S. Flint. Both unpublished letters and the files of *avant garde* journals or little magazines make clear that Flint holds priority. His first published references to French literature in *The New Age* reviews which began 11 July 1908, certainly preceded Pound's interest in the French. They did not precede Hulme's *interest* in French poets, but it is reasonably certain that the earliest Flint reviews preceded Hulme's first formal and public use of recent French poetic ideas in 'A Lecture on Modern Poetry', which was probably given early in 1909.[3] Flint's knowledge of the contemporary French scene was far more extensive than that of Hulme or Pound, though less the product of personal friendships. His publications on the subject are far larger than even those of Pound or Richard Aldington; and the judgements revealed by his choice of subjects, though not guided by a zeal to advocate a particular kind of poetic technique, were on the whole no less reliable than those of his more famous London contemporaries. For example (if one may look ahead chronologically), Flint was aware of the significance of Apollinaire, Paul Claudel, Charles Péguy, Jean Cocteau, and Paul Eluard before Pound was.[4] Flint did underestimate the significance of Valéry, and he exhibited a tolerance for minor poets like Lucien Rolmer, Charles Périn, and Drieu la Rochelle that led critics and competitors for the title of chief interpreter of French poetry to fault his critical judgement.[5] He was, moreover,

[1] Hulme to Flint, unpublished card postmarked 24 March 1909. The manuscript is in the Academic Center Library of The University of Texas.

[2] See footnote 6, page 9.

[3] The exact date of the lecture is unknown. I have presented several arguments for the probability of January 1909, in 'T. E. Hulme's "A Lecture on Modern Poetry" and the Birth of Imagism', *Papers on Language and Literature*, v, 4 (Fall 1969), pp. 465–70.

[4] The essays in which Flint first really discusses these figures are the 'French Chronicle' in *Poetry and Drama* for December 1913 and March 1914 (Apollinaire); March and December 1913 (Claudel); December 1914 (Péguy); and 'Some Modern French Poets (A Commentary, with Specimens)' in *Chapbook*, October 1919 (Apollinaire, Cocteau, Eluard).

[5] The *Chapbook* essay on 'Some Modern French Poets' omitted reference to Valéry, and Flint was severely criticized for this in the short notice and letters columns of *The Athenaeum* for 31 October and 7 November 1919. Richard Aldington defended him in a letter which appeared 7 November, and Flint himself explained in a letter to *The Athenaeum* on 14 November that he had omitted Valéry because he had been unable to secure a review copy of *La Jeune Parque*.