

## “Cinders” and “Notes on Language and Style”: Twin Manuscripts?

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### 1

On a summer day in 1999 when I first visited Keele University in Staffordshire, England, I only intended to peruse the manuscript of one of T.E. Hulmes' early writings, “Notes on Language and Style”, kept at the Library there. I had long been looking forward to the occasion, as any researcher will be interested in the handwriting and manuscript of the literary men whom he or she has read repeatedly for many years.

A few hours after I began to turn over the sheets of his manuscript in a special reading room of the Library, I came to a sudden stop, finding myself astonished at what lay open before my eyes. There was a fragment on the reverse side of a sheet of paper, which reads as follows:

How is it that London and most places look prettier by night?

Because for the general cindery chaos, there is substituted a simple, designed, ordered arrangement of a finite number of lights.<sup>(1)</sup>

In any previous edition the fragment above is included in “Cinders”, the other of the two early writings of T. E. Hulme, but not in “Notes on Language and Style”. I was bewildered at the fact that it existed nowhere but in this batch of sheets of paper as it did. What is more, the text itself seemed slightly different from what I learnt by heart from the previous editions. For reference, the relevant text adopted in any current edition of “Cinders” is identical, reading as follows:

Why is it that London looks pretty by night? Because for the general cindery chaos there is substituted a simple ordered arrangement of a finite number of lights.<sup>(2)</sup>

Faced with the perplexing sheet, almost instantly I felt I would have to return here soon in order to compare for myself the currently available printed editions with the entire manuscript at Keele University Library. Eventually, I have visited the Library two more times during the remaining eight months of my stay as a Visiting Scholar at Cambridge as well as once from Tokyo after I came back to Japan in 2000.

Having examined all the sheets for myself, I think two significant points can be addressed about the text of T.E. Hulme's "Notes on Language and Style". One is that, although three main editions have already been published since Herbert Read first published one in 1925, there still remains some room for improvement to the text if Hulme's writings should be made available in condition as original as possible. (The entire text on earlier pages of this booklet, as you see, is the result of editing Hulme's manuscript kept at Keele.) And another point is that a hypothesis could be proposed about the possibility of the two manuscripts, "Cinders" and "Notes on Language and Style", developing from the same source.

In this essay I will try to expound on my idea of the same source developing into the two separate writings. Probably the hypothesis proposed here could be confirmed in parts from the already published texts of the two writings alone, but I feel I must refer to the occasion when the idea first occurred to me as I was reading T.E. Hulme's handwritten manuscript at Keele University Library.

## 2

The possibility of the two writings coming out from the same source could be discussed in two aspects: main elements or key-words common to the two texts and the relations between or among the elements.

In the first aspect, it will be useful to make a distinction between two kinds of elements which seem to contribute as evidence for the hypothesis. One is the appearance of Aphra who is taken to be the protagonist of "Cinders" when the manuscript is completed. And the other is the fact that there are two words which play a significant role in one of the texts and at the same time occur frequently in the other.

We will begin with an observation of the protagonist Aphra's appearance in the two different texts.

Aphra is understood to be conceived by T.E. Hulme after Zarathushtra, whom Nietzsche had employed in his turn as a superhuman predictor for his own ideas on life and the world. Zarathushtra is another name for Zoroaster, and the highest god of Zoroastrianism is also called Ormazd or Ahura Mazda. There is a slight difference in spelling between Ahura and Aphra, but Aphra of Hulme's creation could safely be said to be identical with the highest god of the ancient Persian religion. In passing, this is one of the cases where Nietzsche exerts an influence on T. E. Hulme, together with some other examples such as his reference to "Nietzsche's image of the tight-rope walker" and the value of the "body"<sup>(3)</sup>.

Although Herbert Read affirms that “Apart from the name Aphra, who was to be the central figure, nothing of its allegorical structure can be discerned”<sup>(4)</sup>, only one reference to the name of Aphra can be found throughout the text of “Cinders”. This seems to be a puzzling fact, but an explanation could be given for that: As in Nietzsche’s “Zarathustra”, the author could easily complete any fragment, when finished, only by adding the phrase, “Thus spake Aphra”, just after preaching on life and the truth. In fact, a fragment “Aphra’s Finger”<sup>(5)</sup> looks to be by far the most accomplished one of all in the presentation of ideas. But it is only a solid fact that Aphra is mentioned no more than once throughout the entire writing.

On the other hand, the name of Aphra does appear twice in “Notes on Language and Style”<sup>(6)</sup>, or three times if one more mention to him in a line which has not been restored yet in any previous version is to be counted<sup>(7)</sup>. This unexpected fact suggests that if Aphra is supposed to act as protagonist in “Cinders”, he could also be claimed, and that with more justice, to be one in “Notes on Language and Style”.

Next, we will consider the second type of elements: the two words playing an important role in both of the two unfinished writings.

One of the key concepts in “Cinders” in which Hulme intended to examine the truth of life and the world, with Aphra as a speaker for himself, is, as the title suggests, “cinders”. Besides the fragment about the beauty of London at night mentioned at the beginning of this essay, many more can be cited which contain the word “cinders”. Here are a few of them:

There is a difficulty in finding a comprehensive scheme of the cosmos, because there is none. The cosmos is only *organised* in parts; the rest is cinders.<sup>(8)</sup>

The sick disgusting moments are part of the fundamental cinders—primeval chaos—the dream of impossible chaos.<sup>(9)</sup>

And the same word frequently appears in “Notes on Language and Style”, too. Here are cited two examples of them:

The red dancer on the stage.

A built-up complex of cinders so not due to any primeval essence.

Cinders as foundations for (i) philosophy (ii) aesthetics.<sup>(10)</sup>

Literature as red counters moving on a chess-board, life as gradual shifting of cinders, and occasional consciousness.<sup>(11)</sup>

And, on the other hand, “counter(s)”, one of the key-words in “Notes on Language and Style”, appears many times in “Cinders”, and that much more frequently than is the case with the word “cinders” in “Notes on Language and Style”. Let us first cite the instances of “counters” appearing in “Notes on Language and Style”:

The ideal of modern prose is to be all counters, i.e. to pass to conclusions without thinking.<sup>(12)</sup>

The chessboard of language expression, where the two players put down counters one after the other. And the player who became interested in the pieces themselves and carved them, and gazed at them in a kind of ecstasy.<sup>(13)</sup>

The same word “counters” occurs frequently in “Cinders”, and here are two examples of them:

World is indescribable, that is, not reducible to counters; and particularly it is impossible to include it all under one larger counter such as ‘God’ or ‘Truth’ and the other verbalisms, or the disease of the symbolic language.<sup>(14)</sup>

The aim of science and all thought is to reduce the complex and inevitably disconnected world of grit and cinders to a few ideal counters, which we can move about and so form an ungritlike picture of reality—one flattering to our sense of power over the world.<sup>(15)</sup>

To cite a few instances from “Cinders” and “Notes on Language and Style” would be sufficient to show that the two writings have some elements which are not only common to the two writings but respectively significant from the point of view of their relationship to the contents.

Out of caution, consideration should be given to the question of whether or not there is any evidence in “Notes on Language and Style” which could suggest the possibility of the two writings being originally composed separately from each other. In fact, a phrase “the old book” occurs twice in the text, suggesting the existence of a writing prepared earlier than “Notes on Language and Style”.

This suggests that the type of all reasoning is that of arranging counters

on the flat, where they can be moved about, without the mind having to think in any involved way. (Cf. this with note in the old book, about chess-board.)<sup>(16)</sup>

Complete theory, what was thought, in the old book, of relations between the poet and the reader seen suddenly at a glance in listening to boys going home from music-hall whistling a song. Chelsea Palace.<sup>(17)</sup>

If “the old book” in the former instance refers to the manuscript for “Cinders”, as Karen Csengeri suggests<sup>(18)</sup>, some relevant passages about a chess-board are found in “Cinders”. But, as for the latter quotation of “relations between the poet and the reader”, no evidence can be found in “Cinders”, though the issue is discussed in detail in “Notes on Language and Style” instead<sup>(19)</sup>. The problem here is how the fact could be explained. One possible supposition is that a sheet or sheets from “the old book” might have later been transferred to the new “book”, “Notes on Language and Style”. No adequate evidence is available yet to confirm it, as far as I know, but if the sheet(s) explaining the “relations between the poet and the reader” had been transferred to another “book”, it could safely be argued that the two “books” could not have been prepared separately from each other.

Rather, the two writings contain the passages which seem to emphasize the possibility of their developing from the same source. It is what was referred to as “the relations between or among the (common) elements” earlier in this chapter. Here is an example from “Notes on Language and Style”:

Aphra sees each word with an image sticking on to it, never a flat word passed over a board like a counter.<sup>(20)</sup>

To criticize the use of abstract words by employing the metaphor of chess counters is one of Hulme’s main ideas in “Notes on Language and Style”. It should also be noted that the person who criticizes the use of “a flat word passed over a board like a counter” is none other than Aphra who is assumed by Herbert Read to be the protagonist of “Cinders”.

In addition, there are instances where the words functioning separately as keys in each of the two writings, “cinders” and “chess-board”, are combined together to make up one fragment in either writing. Although a few passages already cited suggest the fact of coexistence, the one below from “Cinders” can be claimed to exemplify the close connection of the two key-words in a very clear way:

This plurality consists in the nature of an ash-heap. In this ash-pit of cinders, certain ordered routes have been made, thus constituting whatever unity there may be—a kind of manufactured chess-board laid on a cinder-heap. Not a real chess-board impressed on the cinders, but the gossamer world of symbolic communication already spoken of.<sup>(21)</sup>

This is an example which demonstrates a substantial correlation between the *Weltanschauung* of “cinders” and the notion of language compared to “counters on the chess-board”<sup>(22)</sup>, and goes further, suggesting most strongly the possibility of the two manuscripts developing from the same source.

3

All this is, in fact, what could be deduced from “internal evidence” in the already published texts of “Cinders” and “Notes on Language and Style”. Merely to put the relevant passages side by side would be sufficient to illustrate that the two fragmentary writings might have developed from the same source.

As the case is as it is, the manuscript of “Notes on Language and Style” kept at Keele University Library seems to me to go further, supporting my hypothesis strongly with a few valuable facts about the text. One of them is that a passage describing the beauty of London at night was put at the reverse side of a sheet of paper, as already mentioned. And another of them is that a subheading “expression” appears much more frequently than the reader expects from the previous texts edited by Herbert Read and Michael Roberts, and even by Karen Csengeri. The reader can examine the fact for himself or herself only by having a look at the text restored in the present volume.

The first point to be discussed is why the fragment now under consideration appears on a sheet for “Notes on Language and Style” and is slightly different in phrasing from the fragment contained in “Cinders”. Before starting to examine the question, it should be noted that the original manuscript of “Cinders” was lost forever after Herbert Read “pruned” it “a good deal”, while editing for *Speculations*<sup>(23)</sup>. That is the reason why there is no way of comparing the published version of the text with Hulme’s original manuscript, and what we can say is no more than a supposition.

Two assumptions could be made as to the relations of these two fragments about the beauty of London at night. One assumption would be that both of them were actually written by Hulme himself on different occasions, and the other would be that the fragment in “Notes on Language and Style” is the only genuine words Hulme put for himself and the fragment in “Cinders” was

“pruned” by Herbert Read as editor.

In the former case, the very assumption to that effect suggests that “Cinders” and “Notes on Language and Style” have the common root in Hulme’s thought, though their respective composition dates are not known. Hulme wrote down one version in the manuscript for “Cinders” on one occasion and another version in the manuscript for “Notes on Language and Style” on another occasion. As the manuscript kept at Keele shows, Hulme often rewrote dwelling on the same ideas, and this is also what Herbert Read points out about “Cinders” in his “Introduction” to *Speculations*<sup>(24)</sup>. And in the latter assumption, what is suggested would be that Hulme wrote two phrasings, and Herbert Read “pruned” in any way one of Hulme’s original texts when it was included in “Cinders”. Whichever the case, it should be assumed that Hulme was continuing to write both manuscripts, which were later to be “Cinders” and “Notes on Language and Style”, simultaneously during a certain period of time and that the contents of them were closely related to each other in not a few parts.

All the above reasoning is based on the assumption that the two writings were originally planned to grow into two books separate from each other, having some elements common to both of them. However, in my opinion, there seems to be room for a third possibility: Hulme did write the one and only text about the beauty of London at night. If so, it would follow that Herbert Read, while editing, transplanted the very passage into the body of “Cinders” and left the original sheet behind because the short passage was written on the reverse side of the sheet. Although there is no knowing whether he might have only copied the text or “pruned” it to any extent, the supposition could help to explain the mystery of why the passage in question is also contained in the manuscript of “Notes on Language and Style” as it is. And it implies further that Herbert Read might have somehow been motivated to judge that the passage could and should be transferred to “Cinders” owing to the commonness of the contents.

The second fact about Hulme’s manuscript is that it has the same subheading “expression”, instead of varied ones provided by Herbert Read and Michael Roberts, in many places throughout the entire manuscript of “Notes on Language and Style”. Faced with the same subheading appearing so often, roughly as many as thirty times, throughout the text, we are led to deduce that Hulme might have been writing these sheets, with some other general ideas standing in a sharp contrast with “expression” in mind. If they had been originally prepared solely for “Notes on Language and Style”, the headings should have been broken into much more particular, detailed ones. Here we should remember a fact about “Cinders” that it has a subtitle of “A Sketch of

a New Weltanschauung". *Weltanschauung*, that is a way of looking on the world, can safely be said to be opposing and at the same time coordinating to "expression", that is a way of saying ideas.

4

From what has been discussed so far, I dare to propose my supposition about the genesis of "Cinders" and "Notes on Language and Style" that these two early writings are of the same source. And I would like to go further, assuming that, at a certain stage of developing of the material, Hulme himself divided the manuscript sheets into two groups according to their contents.

What now remains to be confirmed is to what extent this supposition could clear up the mysterious aspects of Hulme's two early writings. First, the fact of Aphra appearing in both manuscripts could be explained fully by the same-source supposition and suggests in its turn that the two manuscripts might be in their earlier stage of development, especially if they had been meant to grow up into two separate writings, because of the loose connections between Aphra and the contents of fragments. Secondly, the occurrences and mutual relations of such concepts as "cinders" and "chess-board" and "counters" in both manuscripts could be understood to be quite necessary and further help to testify that the two manuscripts might not be differentiated sufficiently as a separate writing, at least in parts. Thirdly, the mystery of the passage describing the beauty of London at night could be solved by supposing a large pile of sheets into which Hulme was incessantly delivering ideas about "Weltanschauung" and "expression". If Herbert Read had transferred the copied passage into "Cinders", as I audaciously assumed earlier, it would only be possible to suppose that Herbert Read, while getting through Hulme's manuscripts, had some evidence or feeling to convince him that the act of transfer could be justified.

Through the preceding argument, I believe I have demonstrated the reasonableness of my supposition of the two writings coming up of the same source.

Lastly, I would like to consider if my supposition could be consistent with what Herbert Read describes in his "Introduction" to Hulme's *Speculations*. Herbert Read refers to "Notebook on Notebooks" which he found among "a great mass of notebooks and manuscripts" Hulme left behind him.<sup>(25)</sup> Since no realistic description of the material is available, there is no knowing what the "Notebook" looked like, but the "Hulme's aims and methods of work" which Herbert Read reconstructed from it seem to suggest much to us. As he presents it, Hulme: (1) always carried with him a "daybook" "into which he en-



tered every thought or observation as it occurred to him”; (2) further went on to enter what “on second sight seemed worthy” into a “corpus”; (3) “when a general idea began to emerge from the accumulation of notes, then a new notebook or file was to be opened and all ideas that could be subsumed under that general idea were to be transferred”; and (4) “the final work would be written” from the notebook or file. This description is quite valuable in that it seems to correspond roughly to what I have proposed in my supposition of the same source which was derived from “internal evidence” in both writings. And here are two additional facts: “Cinders” was the title Hulme decided on, as Herbert Read witnesses<sup>(26)</sup>, and the folder, which is kept at Keele, containing about a hundred sheets of paper has a title “Notes on Language and Style” written by Hulme’s own hand on the front cover torn out of a notebook<sup>(27)</sup>. If these facts are measured against the four stages of development of the material into a final work, both “Cinders” and “Notes on Language and Style” could be partly claimed to have grown up into the second to third stage. Herbert Read adds that “unfortunately this ‘Notebook on Notebooks’ shows signs of being one of the last things written by Hulme, and certainly the system was never put into complete operation”<sup>(28)</sup>. But I cannot escape the conclusion that, even if Hulme had not carried a “daybook” in his younger days, that might have been basically his way of nurturing ideas from the start of his career.

Let me finish my essay by making a proposal concerning Herbert Read’s list of “at least six works or series of works” from “I” to “VI”<sup>(29)</sup>. He writes in his “Introduction” to *Speculations* that “The more coherent fragments have been gathered together in this volume under Hulme’s own title *Cinders*”<sup>(30)</sup>. My question is: against what standard did Herbert Read judge the fragments in “Cinders” to be “more coherent”? It would not be probable that he gathered “the more coherent fragments” alone from the file of “Cinders” and left out the rest, less “coherent fragments”, somewhere, which eventually got lost forever. I suspect that, when Herbert Read described them as “the more coherent fragments”, what was on his mind might have been another file named “Notes on Language and Style” which was “in the form of rudimentary notes—mere indications to the author of a train of thought associated with some image or expression”. If my reasoning concerning the source of the two manuscripts is correct, then I think I could propose that “A book on Expression and Style (the Psychology of Literature)” should have been placed not separately from, but just above or below “A philosophy or *Weltanschauung*, in an allegorical form” in the list of works which Hulme might have completed if he had survived the Great War.

Notes:

- ( 1 ) Quoted from T.E. Hulme's manuscript in T.E. Hulme Collection, Keele University Library. The present volume, p.32.
- ( 2 ) T.E. Hulme, *Speculations*, ed. Herbert Read (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1924), p.221, *The Collected Writings of T.E. Hulme*, ed. Karen Csengeri (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.10 and T.E. Hulme, *Selected Writings*, ed. Patrick McGuinness (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1998), p.21.
- ( 3 ) Herbert Read, ed., *op. cit.*, pp.220 and 242, and Karen Csengeri, ed., *op. cit.*, pp.9 and 21.
- ( 4 ) Herbert Read, ed., *op. cit.*, p. xiv.
- ( 5 ) Herbert Read, ed., *op. cit.*, pp.236–7 and Karen Csengeri, ed., *op. cit.*, p.18.
- ( 6 ) Michael Roberts, *op. cit.*, pp.272 and 278, and Karen Csengeri, ed., *op. cit.*, pp.24 and 28.
- ( 7 ) The present volume, p.25.
- ( 8 ) Herbert Read, ed., *op. cit.*, p.220 and Karen Csengeri, ed., *op. cit.*, p.9.
- ( 9 ) Herbert Read, ed., *op. cit.*, p.228 and Karen Csengeri, ed., *op. cit.*, p.13.
- (10) Michael Roberts, *op. cit.*, p.288 and Karen Csengeri, ed., *op. cit.*, pp.34–5, though their readings are slightly different. Cf. the present volume, p.21.
- (11) Michael Roberts, *op. cit.*, p.296 and Karen Csengeri, ed., *op. cit.*, p.40.
- (12) Michael Roberts, *op. cit.*, p.274 and Karen Csengeri, ed., *op. cit.*, p.25.
- (13) Michael Roberts, *op. cit.*, p.283 and Karen Csengeri, ed., *op. cit.*, pp.30–1.
- (14) Herbert Read, ed., *op. cit.*, p.221 and Karen Csengeri, ed., *op. cit.*, p.9.
- (15) Herbert Read, ed., *op. cit.*, p.224 and Karen Csengeri, ed., *op. cit.*, p.11.
- (16) Michael Roberts, *op. cit.*, p.274 and Karen Csengeri, ed., *op. cit.*, p.25.
- (17) Michael Roberts, *op. cit.*, p.294 and Karen Csengeri, ed., *op. cit.*, p.39. See the footnote (51) on p.27 of the present volume.
- (18) For Karen Csengeri's note to "the old book", see *op. cit.*, p.458.
- (19) Cf. Michael Roberts, *op. cit.*, pp.292–6 and Karen Csengeri, ed., *op. cit.*, pp.37– 40.
- (20) Michael Roberts, *op. cit.*, pp.272–3 and Karen Csengeri, ed., *op. cit.*, p.24.
- (21) Herbert Read, ed., *op. cit.*, p.219 and Karen Csengeri, ed., *op. cit.*, p.9.
- (22) Patrick McGuinness has already indicated explicitly that " "Notes" reflect broadly the same 'new weltanschauung' as "Cinders" " and that "Language, and by extension poetic language, is inseparable from the vision of the world as conceived in "Cinders" " in his "Introduction" to

- T.E. Hulme, *Selected Writings*, pp. xii and xxii.
- (23) Herbert Read admits in his letter to C.K. Ogden, dated 16 April 1923, that he as editor “pruned...a good deal”, as cited in Karen Csengeri’s headnote to her version, *op. cit.*, p.7.
- (24) Herbert Read, ed., *op. cit.*, p.xiv.
- (25) *Ibid.*, pp.xi–ii.
- (26) *Ibid.*, p.xiv.
- (27) Helen Burton and I observe that the title on the cover was written by Hulme’s own hand.
- (28) Herbert Read, ed., *op. cit.*, p.xii.
- (29) *Ibid.*, pp.xii–iii. He recognized that “at least six works or series of works were taking shape” as follows:
- I. Modern Theories of Art.
  - II. A General Introduction to the Philosophy of Bergson.
  - III. A book on Jacob Epstein and the Aesthetics of Sculpture.
  - IV. A book on Expression and Style (the Psychology of Literature).
  - V. A series of pamphlets on anti-humanism, anti-romanticism, and pre-Renaissance philosophy.
  - VI. A philosophy or *Weltanschauung*, in an allegorical form.”
- (30) *Ibid.*, p.xiv.