

H.D.: HER LIFE AND WORK

D. Phil. Thesis

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis argues that H.D.'s creativity originates in a flight from reality. Hilda Doolittle's adoption of her initials is interpreted as a sign of the writer's rejection of any identity located in the shared reality of the historical and the quotidian. From childhood her personality presented itself to her as a duality; detaching herself from the merely visible and material world, H.D. created an intense inner life which asserted itself in the dimension of artistic realization. It is argued that paradoxically the unevenness and discontinuity that characterize H.D.'s work derive from the same roots as her artistic originality and power: in her "split dual personality" which posited reality in the disembodied self. H.D. discovered in ancient Greece a metaphor and a direction for her own inner world. However her Imagist poems are not imitative but genuinely original: H.D. invented a new reality which she projected as a world devoid of all traces of human presence. H.D.'s subsequent shift of interest towards autobiographical prose is interpreted as a response to the threatened disintegration of her identity after World War I. The formlessness and repetition of much of H.D.'s prose is thus attributed to the exacerbation of the writer's dichotomy of being. However, in some of her prose works H.D. succeeded in transfiguring the autobiographical material through the re-invention of reality in the image of her own subjectivity. Seeking new forms for her projection of the self, H.D. turned increasingly towards the occult which she understood as the science of the invisible dimension. She conflated with the occult her discoveries of the cinema as self-projection, and psychoanalysis as an instrument of knowledge of the inner being. It is argued that these interests exacerbated the solipsism inherent in H.D.'s rejection of external reality. With the exception of the war Trilogy, H.D.'s work becomes locked in private meanings which render it increasingly inaccessible to the reader. It is argued that after her mental breakdown in 1946, H.D. never recovered her vitality and originality as an artist. The space that this thesis devotes to the life of H.D. does not intend to justify her work by her life, but to signify that the literary message cannot be isolated from the circumstances in which the process of creation takes place. Thus H.D.'s flight from reality is not judged from an existential point of view as a diminution of being, since it is out of her "split dual personality" that H.D. emerges as a genuinely creative and original artist.

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Preface

Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind
Cannot bear very much reality.

- T. S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton"

Among the fragmentary essays of Nietzsche's last years, there occurs a phrase which offers an important key to the critical understanding of the enigmatic American writer, Hilda Doolittle. Nietzsche observed that art is either the consequence of a dissatisfaction with reality, or it is the expression of gratitude for a happiness received.¹ Hilda Doolittle's dissatisfaction with reality declared itself at the outset of her career in the adoption of her initials as a new identity.

If an artist's work is the outcome of dissatisfaction with reality, paradoxically both its originality and also its weaknesses from the literary point of view derive from this common source. Nietzsche's observation provides a clue to the otherwise inexplicable unevenness and discontinuity of H.D.'s work, suggesting that her art be understood as originating in an underlying existential position of flight from reality. Following from this initial premise, it proves necessary to devote a certain space to the artist's life. This thesis, however, does not intend to justify H.D.'s art by her life, but rather to signify that the literary message does not originate in isolation from its historical context

and that the comprehension of this message is not independent of the circumstances in which the creation takes place.

"Hilda Doolittle" is thus of interest to the critic in so far as she elucidates certain enigmas which envelop the writer, "H.D." In this context, it is significant that Hilda Doolittle chose only the initials of her name as her literary signature. At the time it was said that she found her name too banal, and even ridiculous, to represent her as an artist. However, behind these two initials that rendered her identity secret there hides the sign of a being who was unable to bear her own historical contingency. Paradoxically H.D. revealed her own historical contingency by concealing her name.

What, then, is a name? For the ancients, a man's self or soul was indissolubly interwoven with his name. The name came to be considered as a genuine substantial being, an integral part of man that was equivalent to his body and soul. In Roman public law slaves were nameless because they were not considered as having independent personalities, and in fact only the heads of the leading families had individual names. For the Egyptians, the name had an even deeper significance. At birth, an Egyptian was given two names, only the lesser of which was made public while the other name belonged to the Ka, a mysterious life-force which survived bodily death. To know a man's secret name was to have power over him. For the Hebrews the true name of God was secret and unutterable, an emanation of His infinity of being.

It may be concluded that Hilda Doolittle chose to conceal her name in a sigla because the public assumption of a name represented to her the delineation of contours and limitations of being, or a univocal direction. H.D. consistently revealed herself to be incapable of accepting any definition of herself, or any compromise with reality. This thesis is not the place to propose psychoanalytical or sociological interpretations of the original motivations of such a position, although an allusion to H.D.'s recollection of her earliest "break in consciousness" is inevitable. In Tribute to Freud, H.D. recalls her desire to "become" her brother in order to be loved by her mother, who preferred the elder boy. It seems probable that this episode, in which the first displacement of the self may be located, played a key role in provoking that lack of ontological security which is apparent in the personality of H.D. and which manifested itself in recurrent crises of identity.

What H.D. called her "split dual personality" arose out of her underlying ontological insecurity. From childhood, she began to conceive of herself as dichotomically and irreconcilably split into a mind and a body. She developed an intense life of the imagination, gradually distancing herself from the merely visible and material world and positing reality in the inner, invisible world of the disembodied self. Especially in her later years, H.D.'s rejection of the shared reality of the historical and the quotidian condemned her to a solipsism that further exacerbated the instability of her sense of identity.

It was in this process of flight from reality that H.D.'s creativity originated. Through her writing she projected, and thus affirmed, her inner world. The extraordinary originality of her early work was the consequence of H.D.'s inauguration of a new reality: the poem was a sacred space on which she traced the contours of an inner self which was incorporeal and transcendent. In her life as in her art H.D.'s freedom consisted in being inaccessible, and remote from mere humanity. When a photograph of her was published for the first time in 1923, H.D. claimed that her life's work had been ruined: the initials "H.D." could have been "pure spirit," but with the photograph she was "embodied."² The inevitable loss of vital contact with real people and objects which ensues from this existential position was responsible both for H.D.'s emotional instability and for the unevenness of her work.

The primary consequence of this was that H.D., being immersed in a world of mental phantasms, was not able to establish a dialectical relationship with the "other." She desired above all to conserve an imaginary "inner" identity, which in later years affirmed itself through the eccentricity of her interests: alchemy, spiritualism, tarot, numerology, and the whole realm of occult knowledge. H.D.'s relationships with other people exhibit the same desire to control reality through the laws of magic. Time and time again, she felt herself to have been betrayed by another person, when it is evident that the relationship had existed only in H.D.'s phantasy. She did not see people as auto-

nomous beings with a real life of their own, but rather as projections of parts of her own inner reality. Homosexuality thus attracted her as a means of projecting herself, but only in order to consume herself in self-love because what she sought was the personification of her own self.

After these introductory remarks, one might perhaps conclude that H.D. is a myth to be rediscovered, given that both mythology and literature are the positive side of the human unconscious. In this mythic space, the significance of H.D.'s early relationship with Frances Gregg, whom she regarded as her double, becomes apparent. Rather than a libido of a homosexual nature, this episode reveals H.D.'s narcissistic conception of the self. H.D., even in extreme old age, had a compulsive need to seduce and to be adored. Perennially seeking mirrors of the self, both in people and in things, H.D. became increasingly locked in a solipsism which severely undermined the vitality of her work.

To live a myth is difficult, since it inevitably links the ridiculous to the sacred. While H.D.'s goddess-like appearance and behaviour inspired the veneration of many, including Havelock Ellis, it was also the butt of a number of bitingly satirical novels by H.D.'s former friends who were acutely aware of the ambiguity of H.D.'s behaviour. Satirized by Frances Gregg and her husband as "the Divinity," whose real name is Eunice Dinwiddie, H.D. is invariably depicted as a "spiritual hetaira" and a seductress who bewitches men and abandons them.³

At the outset of her career H.D. was in love with

ancient Greece and its gods. This exalted love is highly significant from a literary point of view, since it was out of her passion for an imagined Hellas that H.D. wrote her best Imagist poems. Under the critical eye of Ezra Pound, H.D. invented a new lyricism and a new poetic language. At the same time, if H.D. loved the Greek gods it was also in order to project herself as their equal. Such behaviour is not to be wondered at in a narcissistic personality, because it is a means of acquiring power. For H.D. power signified being venerated - being a goddess - because the divine, as Hermann Usener expresses it, is "that which unexpectedly occurs to us as a destiny that comes from above."⁴ Symbols of limitless power, the Greek gods were well suited to H.D.'s narcissistic personality. Jean-Pierre Vernant writes:

The Hellenic gods are Powers and not persons.... In the midst of his travail man feels himself to be beneath the gaze of a divinity that is characterized by his perfect fullness of being without relation, without participation possible with the world of "passion."

In this context, Vernant recalls an episode from the Hippolytus of Euripides. When Hippolytus asks the goddess Artemis, "Lady, do you see my tears?" she replies, "I see them, but tears are forbidden to my eyes."⁵

An alien, like Artemis, to the world of human passion and to emotional bonds with the other, H.D. at the outset of her career was all contemplation and concentration on nature. H.D.'s is a natural world devoid of all traces of human presence, in which she invents a new reality. The

originality and dynamism of H.D.'s Imagist poetry derives from its stripping away of all mere decoration. In this context, H.D.'s flight from reality cannot be judged as a diminution of being, because the poet derives from it her inspiration to re-invent reality through artistic creation. In H.D.'s Imagist poetry, words function like objects which magically reflect a world contemplated in the tension of its elements. The sensibility which animates these poems is vibrant and exacerbated, but nonetheless always controlled. This control diminished during periods of crisis, when her inner world was threatened with engulfment by external reality. Especially after the two World Wars, when death and destruction pressed in upon her, she succumbed to the disintegration of the psyche.

In the early 1920s, in an attempt to recover her artistic identity, H.D. turned to prose. The structure of prose demanded concessions from a poet who acknowledged no limits apart from the word itself, and she rarely succeeded in establishing the same control in her prose as in her poetry. H.D.'s characters are the projections of the narrator, and as such they represent all the planes of her consciousness in a confined area of subjectivity. The facts are narrated through the writer's own self, without establishing a different space which allows the etching of a fictional character. In the context of H.D.'s prose, a small group of works, which includes Her and Kora and Ka, have particular significance. These stories arise out of an exacerbated self-analysis, caught in the desperation of a

wounded sensibility. Fruit of a searing and agonized lucidity, at times the prose seems to disintegrate in the oscillations of the unconscious. H.D.'s creativity is a fascinating mystery, which could also be of great interest to students of the human psyche in its artistic manifestations.

It should come as no surprise that sometimes her contemporaries saw H.D. as a goddess in their midst. The same thing was said of Hölderlin by his school companions: "it seemed as if Apollo were walking through the room."⁶ Like H.D., Hölderlin was seduced by the secret fascination of Hellas. Before losing himself in that deep night of the mind, he asked: "Of what use are poets?" For himself and for H.D. - a new Diotima in a world without oracles and deprived of faith - Hölderlin replied: "But they are...like the priests of Bacchus, from land to land pilgrims of the sacred night."⁷ H.D., who could not or would not be Hilda Doolittle, was in exchange priestess of Bacchus and pilgrim of the sacred night. What better title or honour for a poet?

Chapter One: Hilda Doolittle

(i) The Moravian Background

Hilda Doolittle was born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in September 1886. Originally founded in 1741 as a religious settlement by the Moravian Brethren, Bethlehem by the late nineteenth century was experiencing an influx of "more worldly-minded newcomers" who would transform it into a centre of the steel industry.¹ The Bethlehem of H.D.'s early childhood, however, retained much of its original character as an inward looking community where Moravian traditions were of central importance to everyday life. Although she left Bethlehem at the age of eight, it was ultimately to her maternal Moravian heritage that H.D. traced the sources of her creativity, which she described as the "Gift" of the Holy Spirit.²

Even in the context of Pennsylvania, the history of the Moravian Brethren (officially known as the Unitas Fratrum) is a singular one. An episcopal church, the Unitas Fratrum formerly claimed uninterrupted succession from the apostles Paul and Titus although there is no reliable evidence of its existence prior to the fifteenth century, when a "brotherhood" of Moravian and Bohemian Hussites seceded from the Roman Catholic church and was subsequently persecuted as a

heretical sect. Fascinated by evidence of close contacts between the Unitas Fratrum, the Waldensians, and possibly also the Albigensians, H.D. came to believe that Moravianism was part of the lost Church of Provence, which was in its turn part of a larger "secret" tradition which included the Greek mysteries and Gnosticism.³

The Unitas Fratrum advocated a pietistic way of life which emphasised ethical conduct, faith and love rather than a particular doctrine. Since the Bible alone was accepted as the source of religious practice, Moravian ceremonies resembled those of the early Christians: the Lot was cast to appoint new ministers, and the faithful partook of a religious meal known as the "love feast" which derived from the agape. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Unitas Fratrum was the leading protestant church in Moravia and Bohemia, but was driven underground during the Thirty Years' War and for a century was persecuted by Catholics and Protestants alike.

The "Hidden Seed," Brethren who worshipped in secret, ensured the survival of the Church but its revival was due to the Austrian Count Zinzendorf who gave asylum to the Brethren on his estate in Saxony in 1722. At Herrnhut religious life was initially based on the old ways but soon came under the influence of the complex and charismatic personality of Zinzendorf, who became a bishop and undisputed spiritual leader. Strongly attracted to mysticism despite his pietistic background, Zinzendorf emphasised the emotions rather than the reason as the source of religious

experience. Perhaps his single most significant contribution to Moravianism, and undoubtedly the key to the attraction it held for H.D., was his belief that love was the spiritus universalis of a true religion. For Zinzendorf, Christ's suffering had released man from his burden of guilt and penitence, leaving him free to worship God with joy.

As a child, H.D. heard occasional references to a period of Moravian history which was regarded as "a blot on the church": characteristically, her later interest in the Unitas Fratrum would arise out of this "secret," suppressed side of her religious heritage. During the Sifting Period (1738-1752), under the leadership of Zinzendorf, emotional and mystical tendencies inherent in the Moravian tradition came to dominate religious life. Adoration of Christ's wounds transformed the meetings into "ritualistic sorts of parties" in which the language of worship was characterized by a morbid sexuality.⁴ Although the excesses of the Sifting Period were later discredited, hymns like the following were still sung in H.D.'s childhood:

Draw us to thee, and we may come
 Into thy wound's deep places,
 Where hidden is the honey-comb
 Of thy sweet love's embraces.⁵

Bethlehem was founded by Zinzendorf himself at the height of the Sifting Period, on Christmas Eve 1741. By 1886, the year of H.D.'s birth, few changes had occurred in Moravian religious ceremonies and language but fervid emotionalism had long since given way to an emphasis on the observance of ethical values like hard work, frugality and

attention to detail. The economic success which these values brought to Bethlehem encouraged the development of a capitalist spirit which was easily incorporated into the heterogeneous Moravian tradition. H.D.'s grandfather, Francis Wolle, exemplifies the spirit of nineteenth century Bethlehem: he made a small fortune by inventing a machine to manufacture paper bags before becoming a Moravian minister and a world-famous botanist.⁶

The young Hilda lived in the heart of the original Moravian settlement, next door to the maternal grandparents whom she thought of as her own "other" parents.⁷ Custodians of the Moravian traditions, "Mamalie" and "Papalie" Wolle represented continuity with the past and with the unseen world of the spirit. An affectionate grandfather who involved the children in the making of the nativity scene which was placed under the Christmas tree, Papalie embodied the orthodox, patriarchal side of the Moravian heritage:

...he was the apple of God's eye. He was a minister, he read things out of the Bible, he said I am the light of the world when the doors opened at the far end of the church and the trays of lighted beeswax candles were brought into the church by the Sisters in their caps and aprons....⁸

It was Mamalie, whose stories were regarded by her husband as "some feverish phantasy," who imparted to her granddaughter fragments of a "secret" Moravian tradition.⁹ Mystical initiation ceremonies, she recounted, had taken place between the early settlers and the Indians: men and women alike had celebrated the unity of the Holy Ghost of

the Christians and the Great Spirit of the Indians. H.D. believed that her true spiritual inheritance and the source of her creative or visionary "gift" lay in the suppressed Moravian mysteries: like her "heretical" ancestors, she strove in her writing towards a "mysterious unity that would be wholly Spirit."¹⁰

The apparent ease with which her Moravian ancestors were able to reconcile heterogeneous, or even contradictory, cultural influences would always elude H.D. Although her childhood was outwardly tranquil, with everyday life permeated by the reassuring Moravian spirit of communion, inwardly the child Hilda experienced the world around her as irreconcilably fragmented. What she referred to as her "inner schism" or "broken duality" seems to have originated within the heart of her family and subsequently radiated outwards to inform her way of seeing the world at large.¹¹

H.D.'s father was not a Moravian. Of Puritan descent, Charles Leander Doolittle was described by his daughter as a "cold, distant, upright, devoted father and husband" who did not really participate in family life.¹² With his first wife and two sons, Eric and Alfred, Professor Doolittle had come to Bethlehem to teach astronomy and mathematics at Lehigh University. After learning that her father's first wife and two of his daughters had died, Hilda secretly feared that the tall black-bearded Professor, with his nocturnal habits, might be Bluebeard. At the same time, she was attracted by her father's intellect, which was that of "a pathfinder, an explorer."¹³

H.D.'s attitude to her mother, Helen Wolle Doolittle, was even more complex and ambivalent. Paradoxically, Hilda adored her mother: the trouble was that Helen preferred her first-born son, Gilbert. H.D. would later impute her "inner schism" to the radical sense of exclusion from her mother's love that she had experienced as a very young child:

If I stay with my brother, become part almost of my brother, perhaps I can get nearer to her.

But one can never get near enough, or if one gets near, it is because one has measles or scarlet fever. If one could stay near her always, there would be no break in consciousness....¹⁴

One of the central preoccupations of H.D.'s life and art would be the healing of this "break in consciousness," which she came to understand as symptomatic of a break in human consciousness itself. Increasingly she would see her poetic vocation as the recovery of the continuity of a suppressed female tradition of which her Moravian mother was a symbol.

H.D. believed that she had inherited her creativity from her mother, who had taught music and painting before her marriage. Helen's most successful student was her own brother, J. Fred Wolle, who went on to study music in Munich and then to found the famous Bach Festival held annually in Bethlehem. In accordance with Moravian belief, the family considered Fred's talent to be the "gift" of the Holy Spirit. From an early age Hilda too was attracted by music and painting; taught by her mother she became quite a good pianist. Nonetheless, Helen failed to take her daughter's aspirations seriously: H.D. would always remember the

"strange gap in consciousness, the sort of emptiness" she experienced when her mother said that none of the children were gifted.¹⁵

Hilda soon began to associate her feelings of inferiority and inadequacy with her femaleness. As she placed flowers on the graves of her dead sister, half-sister and aunt in the Moravian cemetery, she wondered: "Why was it always a girl who had died?"¹⁶ She longed for a sister with whom to share her experiences, and increasingly resented the demands made on her mother's attention by the large household of boys: Eric and Alfred (the two grown up half-brothers), Gilbert, Harold and Charles Melvin.

As a tiny child, Hilda had sought to win her mother's acceptance by trying to become like her brother, Gilbert. She soon realized, however, that it was her body itself which constantly betrayed her inferiority to the outside world:

It [Hilda] was small, mignonne, though it was not pretty, they said. It was a girl between two boys [Gilbert and Harold]; but, ironically it was wispy and mousy, while the boys were glowing and gold. It was not pretty, they said. Then they said it was pretty - but suddenly it shot up like a weed. They said, surprised, "She is really very pretty, but isn't it a pity she's so tall?" The soul was called Mignon, but, clearly, it did not fit its body.¹⁷

The splitting of her identity into a mind-body duality was Hilda's instinctive, unconscious response to an environment she perceived as threatening her very being. By rejecting her body as a false self totally separate from her true inner self, Hilda achieved a certain independence. While

outwardly conforming to social expectations, she developed the intense and highly individual imaginative life which first found outward expression in her Imagist poetry - but at the same time she was laying the foundations of the "inner schism" that would torment the adult H.D.

(ii) "Dryad"

The "great tide-wave of moving" away from Bethlehem occurred when Hilda was nine.¹⁸ Her father's appointment as Director of the Flower Observatory and Professor of Astronomy at the University of Pennsylvania entailed living beside the Observatory at Upper Darby, in the countryside near Philadelphia. The move, which occurred just after the death of Papalie, heightened H.D.'s inner tensions: cut off from the Moravian spirit of community, she felt increasingly alienated from the world around her.

At Upper Darby, family life revolved around Professor Doolittle. In order to devote her energies entirely to her husband and the organization of the large house, which was without running water and electric light, Helen Doolittle abandoned music and painting; stranded in domesticity and "morbidly self-effacing," she represented a feminine role which her daughter unequivocally rejected.¹⁹ William Carlos Williams recalls the famous astronomer as a "remote figure" whose patriarchal authority depended on the complicity of his submissive wife:

At a meal...if the alert Mrs. Doolittle detected in the general din that the doctor wanted to say something, she would quickly announce: Your father is about to speak! - Silence immediately ensued. Then in a slow and deep voice, and with his eyes fixed on nothing, as Ezra Pound said, just above, nothing nearer than the moon, he said what he had

to say. It was a disheartening process.²⁰

Despite her father's coldness and austerity, H.D. found his world of intellectual discovery preferable to her mother's domesticity. Quick to recognize his daughter's giftedness, Professor Doolittle hoped to turn her into a second Madame Curie. Unlike Gilbert and the younger boys, Hilda was allowed free access to her father's study, but her father's declaration that she was "worth all his five boys put together" gave her a "terrible responsibility" to fulfil his expectations of her.²¹ Although she secretly longed to study art or music, H.D. submitted to her father's efforts to turn her out to a "mathematical formula" - she had been "too stupid to rebel," she later confided to a friend.²²

Professor Doolittle was a supporter of the emancipation of women, but his daughter felt trapped by his expectations and denied control over her own life. While outwardly conforming to the role her father had chosen for her, Hilda increasingly withdrew into her private, inner world. As an adolescent, she escaped whenever possible into the surrounding countryside: in the natural world, devoid of all traces of humanity, H.D. found her spiritual home. In her Imagist poetry H.D. would draw the inspiration for her "Greek" landscape - a metaphor for her inner world - from her long walks in the woods near her home and from summers passed on the coasts of Maine and New Jersey.²³

The profound loneliness which permeates H.D.'s Imagist poetry also has its origins in her early life. At Upper Darby she made two life-long friends, Margaret Snively and

Matilda Wells, but they did not fulfil her longing for a companion with whom to share her secret inner world. From childhood, Hilda's inner life had been dominated by her longing for "the lost companion, the sister I never had, a twin sister best of all."²⁴ Until the family stifled the relationship Hilda cast her young cousin, Gretchen Wolle, in the part of sister/companion. Later, when her favourite half-brother Eric returned from university to become his father's assistant Hilda turned to him for companionship. Their relationship, which was based on "cerebral-erotic affinities" according to H.D.'s autobiographical novel, Her, came to an abrupt end when Eric married.²⁵

H.D. first met Ezra Pound at a fancy-dress Hallowe'en party in 1901, when she was fifteen and he a year older. He cut a striking figure with his green Tunisian robe and red hair, and his extraordinary self-assurance and sophistication immediately impressed Hilda. Whereas she was "clothed with confusion," he already proclaimed himself to be a poet: he later asserted that even at the age of fifteen he had believed that "the 'impulse' is with the gods; that technique is a man's own responsibility."²⁶

Although he and H.D. did not become close friends until four years later, in 1905, Pound in the meantime was part of an event which marked a turning-point in H.D.'s inner life. In April 1903 Pound's class at the University of Pennsylvania performed Euripides' Iphigenia Among the Taurians in Greek. Ezra was one of the maidens of the chorus, and in order to distinguish himself from his class-mates he spoiled

the symmetry of the dance by crumpling up his scarf.

Ezra's exhibitionism did not, however, diminish for Hilda the electrifying impact of her first contact with the Greek spirit. What struck her in the performance was the almost tangible reality of the gods. Iphigenia, transported to the land of the Taurians by Artemis, is a priestess - a mediator between the world of the gods and the world of men. H.D.'s frequent references to herself as "priestess," "prophetess," and even "half-god" ultimately derive from this performance, which she also claimed was the source of her visions.²⁷

H.D.'s concept of the artist, as formulated in "Notes on Thought and Vision" and "Helios and Athene," matured out of her original perception of the nature of Iphigenia. Referring specifically to Socrates' discourse on love in the Symposium, H.D. sees the artist as a daemon, a being of an intermediate nature which bridges the gap between gods and men.²⁸ After seeing Iphigenia Among the Taurians, H.D. identified her own inner world with the spiritual world of the Greeks. The material or "visible" world ceased to exist for her: the gods were as real to her as to Iphigenia, and their presence animated the world in which she moved.

H.D.'s "inner schism," originally generated by her feeling of being a misfit in her own family, thus moved into a broader cultural and philosophical context. Her linking of her own inner life with the spirit of Greek drama was the first tangible step in the transformation of a sensitive and troubled adolescent into a writer: H.D.'s mind-body dualism

became the basis of an artistic vision in which ancient Greece was a metaphor for liberation into the world of the creative imagination which is "stronger than reality."²⁹

In the world of quotidian reality, however, Hilda continued to conform to her father's expectations, and in 1904 she became a student at Bryn Mawr. One of her classmates was Marianne Moore, who later recorded her impression that Hilda "was not interested in the life of the moment."³⁰ As a day student, Hilda did not have the opportunity to form close friendships, and her detachment from college life was exacerbated by Ezra Pound's return to the University of Pennsylvania in 1905. The earlier friendship deepened into a romantic involvement, which in its early stages seemed to fulfil Hilda's desire for companionship: with Pound, Hilda was able to express the artistic and eccentric side of her personality for the first time.

The iconoclastic Pound had only contempt for H.D.'s conventional studies at Bryn Mawr, and undertook her re-education according to his own eclectic tastes which included classical literature and yogic writings, the troubadours and the pre-Raphaelites. H.D. was particularly fascinated by Balzac's novella Séraphita which Pound brought her together with a volume of Swedenborg, whose ideas had inspired Balzac's story.³¹

An hermaphrodite, Séraphita symbolizes a higher state of being in which there is neither male nor female; the other characters, however, are blind to the inner spiritual reality and perceive Séraphita either as male or as female.

Hilda's projection of herself into Balzac's character added a further dimension to her aesthetics: she henceforth sought in the material world signs of hidden spiritual realities - or "correspondences" in Swedenborgian terminology. This concept of the material world was to form the essence of H.D.'s Imagism.³²

Balzac's Séraphita also played a major role in the evolution of Hilda's attitude to her own body, to the extent that she later identified herself with the statue of the hermaphrodite in the Diocletian Gallery in Rome.³³ The unease with her body that Hilda had first experienced as a "wispy and mousy" girl between two "glowing and gold" boys had intensified when she grew to the height of five feet eleven inches: she began to think of herself as a duality in a sexual as well as a psychical sense. Séraphita enabled her to interpret her physical androgyny as the outward manifestation of her inner spiritual nature. H.D.'s new way of thinking of her body was not, however, a resolution of her mind-body duality but a refinement of it: she negated her own physical existence as such.

It was Ezra Pound who laid the basis of H.D.'s literary culture. Apart from "the usual school routine," Hilda's reading had been limited to Grimm, Hawthorne's Tanglewood Tales, and a handful of novels: Uncle Tom's Cabin, Jane Eyre, Little Women, and some Dickens.³⁴ Her only foray into less conventional literature earned her a public reproof; when the fifteen year old Hilda named Poe as her favourite American writer, her teacher told her that Poe was "unwhole-

some, morbid."³⁵ The most potent formative influences on the young Hilda, however, are to be found in Moravian liturgy and in the Bible. In particular, the dualistic language of St. Paul and his insistence on the life of the Spirit had a profound and enduring impact on H.D.

Pound's exotic and eclectic tastes opened up an entirely new realm of experience to H.D. For a time she was a willing disciple, though never a passive one. Although she read eagerly whatever Pound pressed upon her, she filtered her new reading through her own personality, selecting only those elements with which she felt an instinctive affinity. H.D. shared Pound's passionate enthusiasm for the Greek mystery cults, the pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, Morris and Swinburne: she was creating a culture around her mind-body dualism.

H.D.'s friendship with Pound, while expanding her cultural horizons was also implicitly a rebellion against her family. Hilda's cousin, Francis Wollé, recalls that in 1905 Ezra was already a "conspicuously outstanding figure" whose contempt for middle-class conventions of dress and behaviour did not endear him to the staid Doolittle family.³⁶ Interpreting Pound's eccentricity as evidence that he too was an outsider whose true self was not appreciated by the world at large, Hilda believed that she had finally found the "lost companion" with whom she could share her inner world.

Pound, who was in love with Hilda, thought of her as his muse. Some of the poems that she inspired survive in

"Hilda's Book," a small volume which he bound in vellum and presented to her in 1907.³⁷ Invoked as "Sancta Patrona," "La Donzella Beata" and "Domina", Hilda appears in these poems as a troubadour's lady - a stylised muse who often bears little resemblance to the actual woman. Nonetheless the setting of "Hilda's Book" was inspired by the woods at Upper Darby where their romantic encounters took place, and in places the influence of H.D.'s mode of perceiving reality is unmistakable.

In the autobiographical novel, Her, H.D. identifies the world of inner reality with the forest and writes of her own self: "Tree on tree on tree. TREE. I am the Tree of Life. Tree. I am a tree planted by the rivers of water."³⁸ When Pound nicknamed her "Dryad," he implicitly acknowledged the inner Hilda. While Pound helped H.D. to discover the cultural dimension of her tree identification, she introduced him to a different order of perception. "The Tree," originally part of "Hilda's Book" but first published in A Lume Spento, is emblematic of the process by which Pound took H.D.'s spontaneous experience and used it as a means of approaching the myths in a new way:

I stood still and was a tree amid the wood
 Knowing the truth of things unseen before
 Of Daphne and the laurel bow
 And that god-feasting couple old
 That grew elm-oak amid the wold....³⁹

"The Tree" draws together many of the threads of Pound's development in these years (1905-1907): his belief that the gods exist, his interest in metamorphoses, and his

exploration of various manifestations of the pagan mystery cults. The specific theme of "being" a tree, however, first occurs in this poem from "Hilda's Book" and appears to have been directly inspired by "Dryad." The theme recurs in a number of Pound's early poems before its incorporation into the cantos. In "La Fraisne" the poet's bride is a "a pool of the wood": the lines stand out from the rest of the poem, which is imitative of the early Yeats, for their presage of H.D.'s Imagist poem "Oread" and Pound's own invocation of H.D. in Canto 83: "Dryad, thy peace is like water / There is September sun on the pools...."⁴⁰

"Dryad's" presence is hardly less tangible in "A Girl" which was published in 1912 in Ripostes, Pound's pre-Imagist volume to which he appended the poems of T.E. Hulme:

The tree has entered my hands,
The sap has ascended my arms,
The tree has grown in my breast -
Downward,
The branches grow out of me, like arms.

Tree you are,
Moss you are,
You are violets with wind above them.
A child - so high - you are,
And all this is folly to the world.⁴¹

In this poem, not only the mode of perception at its core, but also the language itself, suggests that Pound was thinking of H.D. The first stanza in particular bears a striking resemblance to the Imagist language that H.D. was creating in 1912.

If Pound owes a part of his poetic development to H.D., her debt to him is immeasurable. Resentful of the scientific

education forced upon her by her father, Hilda had longed to learn music and drawing. It had never occurred to her to write poetry until she met Pound, whose example enabled her to realize the artistic potential of her personality. When she first met Pound, H.D. had only the most rudimentary and narrow artistic culture. Her inner life, however, revealed an extraordinarily highly developed and original personality which Pound's example enabled her to recognize as an artistic personality in the best Romantic and Decadent tradition. Becoming a writer was for H.D. a natural consequence of this new self-awareness, since the artistic personality must justify itself by creating works of art.⁴²

Through Pound, H.D. met other aspiring artists, including the musician Walter Rummel and the consumptive artist William Brooke Smith, to whose memory Pound dedicated A Lume Spento. In April 1905 Pound introduced H.D. to William Carlos Williams. Fascinated by Hilda's "provocative indifference to rule and order," Williams was clearly infatuated with her though he would claim disingenuously in his autobiography that she was "just a good guy." Pound, however, was jealous and in a mock duel nearly poked out Williams's eye with an umbrella.⁴³

Encouraged by Pound's example, Hilda was cultivating the trappings of the artistic personality. She told Williams that when she wrote she splashed her clothes with ink "to give her a feeling of freedom and indifference to the mere means of the writing." Although he too had acted out Aucassin and Nicolette and As You Like It, in retrospect

Williams found Hilda's dramatization of her personality "rather silly."⁴⁴ When she held out her arms to welcome the rain instead of running for shelter, he thought that she was merely trying to impress him; in fact Hilda's relationship with nature was genuinely passionate. What Pound understood more clearly than Williams was that Hilda's self-dramatization was a means of communicating aspects of her inner self to the outside world. Hilda's artistic personality was never merely exhibitionist: in this period she translated some of Heine's lyrics and began her study of Greek.

H.D.'s new literary interests and her love affair with Pound were increasingly taking precedence over her official studies at Bryn Mawr. In the same period Pound earned his M.A. at the University of Pennsylvania, and Williams graduated in medicine. Hilda however was less and less able to reconcile the rigid academic standards of her father and teachers with the development of her artistic personality under Pound's guidance. In 1906, in her sophomore year, Hilda failed English and barely passed her other subjects. Disgraced in the eyes of her family, she withdrew from Bryn Mawr.

Throughout her life the conflicts inherent in H.D.'s divided nature would render her psychic equilibrium extremely precarious. In moments of extreme tension, a recklessly self-destructive streak would come to the fore. Williams found emblematic of H.D.'s life and work her near escape from drowning in June 1906, after her failure at Bryn Mawr

and Pound's departure for six months in Madrid. As if in a trance, Hilda rushed headlong into wild surf on the New Jersey coast and was "crushed, trampled, swept out, drowned." She was rescued unconscious and had to be resuscitated.⁴⁵

Having disappointed her father by her failure at Bryn Mawr, Hilda was relegated to a domestic role in the family. When Pound returned from Europe, he assumed even greater importance in her life: he represented the only alternative to a conventional female destiny. Until September 1907, when he took up an appointment at Wabash College in Indiana, Pound visited Upper Darby with a frequency that alarmed Hilda's disapproving family. He and Hilda spent hours together in the branches of a huge maple tree in her garden, or in the woods nearby. In old age, H.D. reflected that "no 'act' afterwards, though biologically fulfilled, had had the significance of the first demi-vierge embraces."⁴⁶ Pound, too, felt a lifelong spiritual bond with Hilda, but characteristically he was not exclusive in his affections. From Wabash it was Mary Moore of Trenton, not Hilda, to whom he became very briefly "engaged" by letter.

After only four months at Wabash College, Ezra Pound was dismissed because an actress had been found in his rooms. Taking advantage of the scandal, Professor Doolittle virtually forbade the house to his daughter's undesirable suitor. The world's cruel mistreatment of Pound was enough to make Hilda want to devote her life to one who was "beyond all others, torn and lonely" and they became secretly

engaged in early February, 1908.⁴⁷ Within weeks the engagement was "shattered" and Pound sailed for Europe alone. "You must come away with me, Dryad," Pound had urged her in vain. Hilda not only lacked the courage to rebel against her family, but also - despite protestations that hers was a great love - she felt too ambivalent towards Pound to risk running away with him.⁴⁸

Although he had been the first person to recognize her inner identity, Hilda had come to feel that Ezra Pound was too self-centred and overbearing to understand her. She was his muse but not his creative equal. In his greed for new intellectual experiences, Pound had desecrated her inner self: he had "banged on a temple door, had dragged out small curious, sacred ornaments, had not understood their inner meaning" and had left them "exposed by the roadside, reft from their shelter and their holy setting."⁴⁹

Pound had ransacked her personality and produced "Hilda's Book," but the image of herself that Hilda found there was in some ways a disturbing one: Domina's "lips part, tho no words come", and elsewhere the lady's fingers are "LIKE LITTLE WINDS THAT DREAM / BUT DARE IN NO WISE TELL THEIR DREAM ALOUD -."⁵⁰ Implicitly, Pound's image of Hilda as his muse was as much a denial of her creativity as her mother's belief that she was not gifted. In an unpublished autobiographical novel, "Paint It To-day," H.D. recalled her state of mind after Pound's departure for Europe:

What chemistry and the binomial theorem had not drained from her of avidity and living fervour, the male adolescent [Pound] had.... She had no sap or vivid living power left in her. She felt instinctively that she was a failure by all the conventional and scholarly standards.... She had burnt the candle of rebellion at both ends....⁵¹

In early 1908, when she was not yet twenty-two, H.D.'s life seemed to have reached an impasse.

(iii) Frances Gregg

Into H.D.'s life there came "as to Paul of Tarsus, light" in the form of a young woman called Frances Gregg. Recognizing in Frances the twin soul for whom she had always longed, Hilda fell in love with her at first sight. The Doolittles soon began to wish that their daughter had married Pound who, on his return from Europe, told Hilda that "you and that girl, a hundred years ago, would have been burnt at Salem, for witches."⁵²

Frances, who was two years older than Hilda, had grown up in Philadelphia in somewhat straitened circumstances with her widowed mother. Llewellyn Powys wrote that the first impression Frances produced was of one walking in a trance, her head full of dreams, with the curious look of a person going on a second errand."⁵³ Hilda had immediately sensed that Frances's peculiar intensity was the mark of a highly developed inner life which was in conflict with its material surroundings. She was even more impressed when she discovered that Frances had visions: it was a further confirmation of the reality of the world of the spirit. Although Pound had been interested in spiritualism and palmistry, H.D.'s later fascination with the occult derived from her relationship with Frances Gregg. Whereas Pound's curiosity about the occult was of an intellectual nature, Hilda and Frances attempted to live in the world of the spirit. They thought of themselves as Delphic prophetesses and spent hours gazing

into each other's eyes, "soul-communing."⁵⁵

In Her, an autobiographical novel which she wrote in 1927 but never attempted to publish, H.D. explored the significance of her love for Frances Gregg. It was a love which erased the barriers between the self and the other, as H.D. conveys in the novel by exploiting grammatically the implications of her protagonist Hermione's nickname: "I know her. Her. I am Her. She is Her. Knowing her, I know Her." In contrast, Hermione/H.D. feels suffocated and frightened when George Lowndes/Ezra Pound tries to make love to her.⁵⁵

Through her relationship with Frances Gregg, H.D. was able to understand more fully her attraction to the figure of Séraphita and to androgyny in general. Frances's appearance on stage, soon after their first meeting, as a boyish Pygmalion in a short tunic represented the incarnation of the spiritually perfect boy-girl who had long intrigued Hilda in literature. In Her, H.D. suggests moreover that it was Frances Gregg who introduced her to books on psychoanalysis, from which she discovered that "there were people who loved ... differently."⁵⁶ They came to associate androgyny with bisexuality, and it is probable that Frances was Hilda's first lover.

Although H.D. and Frances Gregg considered androgyny to be the sign of the spiritually superior being, in practice this tended to result in ambiguous behaviour and considerable emotional confusion. Her, corroborated by Frances's diary, reveals that after Pound's return from Europe in 1910 the relationship became a triangular one. Hilda, both

attracted to and repelled by Pound, continued the old relationship despite her declared love for Frances, who in her turn fell in love with Pound. Frances's diary records: "Two girls in love with each other, and each in love with the same man. Hilda, Ezra, Frances."⁵⁷ The shock of the betrayal caused H.D. to suffer a severe nervous breakdown, and the unresolved emotional triangle itself became the paradigm of H.D.'s subsequent emotional life.

H.D.'s relationship with Frances Gregg also played a decisive role in the process by which she transformed herself into a writer. Before meeting Frances in 1909, H.D.'s literary efforts had been limited to translations from Heine and some lyrics for musical settings. In 1909 she began to write short stories, including children's stories, which were published in various minor newspapers under such pseudonyms as "Edith Gray" and "J.Beran." Although these stories have a rather schoolgirlish air, some of H.D.'s predominant themes already emerge. In "The Greek Boy" a statue comes to life, and several other stories hinge on a supernatural experience: despite her attempts to construct realistic settings, H.D.'s interest is in the invisible spiritual reality which animates the material world.⁵⁸

Early in 1910, H.D. decided to leave Upper Darby and pursue her career in New York. She joined her childhood friend, Julia Wells, at Patchin Place in Greenwich Village where she was distressed by the "sordid" living conditions and unable to get her work published: after a few months she returned with relief to the "nice house and surroundings" at

Upper Darby.⁵⁹ It was in the middle of 1910, when Pound returned to his family home after two years in Europe, that the triangular affair with Hilda and Frances developed.

1910 was the year of Halley's Comet, and Hilda helped to explain the phenomenon to the visitors and reporters who flocked to the Flower Observatory. Since she had once considered following in her father's footsteps, H.D. had a sound basic knowledge of astronomy and of science in general. In this period she was reading with great interest the works of Camille Flammarion, whom her father considered to be "unreliable and sensational": the impulse to integrate science and religion, which would acquire an ever-increasing urgency in H.D.'s life, was already manifest in 1910.

Flammarion believed that scientific discoveries would alter the interpretation of phenomena. Wireless telegraphy, for example, would make it possible to understand telepathy and psychic transmissions. H.D. returned again and again to the image of wireless telegraphy, often in surprising contexts such as her "Notes on Thought and Vision" where she syncretizes Flammarion's "scientific" concepts with the teachings of Jesus and Socrates' discourse on love.⁶⁰

It was Pound, with his uncanny ability to give form and direction to Hilda's aesthetics, who brought her the book which had the most immediate effect on her development in this period: Andrew Lang's translation of Theocritus. H.D. was struck by the intensity of Theocritus's apprehension of natural beauty, and by his presentation of an accurately described realistic world informed by the presence of the

gods. Each idyll (from the Greek eidullion, or "little picture") was like a vision - a window which opened onto a different mode of perception.⁶¹

H.D.'s first poems, written to Frances in 1910, were modelled on Theocritus. Only one of these poems, "The Shepherd," survives. H.D. quotes the first five lines of the following extract in End to Torment as an example of her earliest poetry:

O hyacinth of the swamp-lands
 Blue lily of the marshes,
 How could I know,
 Being but a foolish shepherd
 That you would laugh at me?

But you will mourn
 when the white fire flickers
 out of my face
 and leaves me staring, mortal;
 you will be sorry
 that you took their rose-leaves,
 scorning my golden crocuses.⁶²

Although H.D. soon abandoned the pastoral convention for a more sophisticated narrative voice, this poem already prefigures the work of "H.D., Imagiste" in its concision of expression and above all in its mode of perception. Blue, which was the colour of Frances Gregg's eyes, represented for H.D. "the 4th dimensional world, the world of dream, of vision" which in moments of heightened spiritual awareness shone through material existence. The hyacinth which grows in the swamp-lands recalls H.D.'s likening of her meeting with Frances Gregg to the light (elsewhere Frances is described as a blue light or flame) which came to St. Paul.⁶³

In Her, H.D. ascribes her awakening to a full awareness of her artistic vocation to Frances Gregg. At the end of the novel, after recovering from her nervous breakdown, Her/H.D. walks alone across the snow-covered fields near her home. She sees the expanse of snow as a world "razed" for her to create anew: the landscape is "virginal for one purpose, for one Creator. ...the creator was Her's feet, narrow black crayon across the winter whiteness."⁶⁴ Nonetheless, Her still hovers between the past and the future, imperfectly aware of her destiny. She likens herself to a star in daylight - invisible to the bodily eye. It is an epiphany of the visionary Fayne/Frances that transforms Her's way of seeing, enabling her to realize fully her vocation as poet and seer:

When she said Fayne a white hand took Her. Her was held like a star invisible in daylight that suddenly by some shift of phosphorescent values comes quite clear. Her saw Her as a star shining white against winter daylight.⁶⁵

The star symbolized for H.D. the being who was marked out for a special destiny due to the possession of the spiritual gifts of vision and prophecy. In The Gift she recounts that a gypsy had predicted to Helen Doolittle the coming of an especially gifted child who would be "born under a star."⁶⁶ Born in Bethlehem under the sign of Virgo, the daughter of an astronomer, H.D. identified her birth as the fulfilment of the prophecy. Apocryphal or not, the story reveals H.D.'s conviction that writing was a divinely inspired mission, an idea which would often lead H.D. to

regard her writing as an instrument for the transmission of "messages" rather than a vocation in itself.

H.D.'s conception of the poet as a priest or prophet, if immediately inspired by Frances Gregg, clearly owes much to Pound. The exploration of different modes of perception in poems like "The Tree" stems from Pound's belief that the poet is a seer who is able to enter into the eternal state of mind that he calls "the gods." In The Spirit of Romance Pound describes the artist as a "seeing man among the sightless" whose highest honour is to interpret the "vital universe"⁶⁷ Both Pound and H.D. were well aware of similar ideas in the work of Whitman and Emerson, but ultimately the tradition derives from Orpheus, whom Horace describes as the "prophetic bard and interpreter of the divine will."⁶⁸

While her Moravian background and her relationship with Pound provided H.D. with the ingredients of her conception of herself as poet and prophet, it was Frances Gregg who effected the "shift of phosphorescent values" which focussed H.D.'s sense of vocation. She subsequently pursued her aim to become a poet with a relentless dedication that had been absent from her life to that point. The first tangible step in the process of self-realization was H.D.'s decision to break away from her restrictive family and follow the path which was bringing success to Ezra Pound.

H.D. sailed for Europe with Frances and Mrs. Gregg on July 22nd, 1911. Ostensibly she was to return within a few months, but both she and her father were aware that she intended to remain in Europe even if it meant marrying

Pound. William Carlos Williams and Professor Doolittle were the only people who went to see Hilda off; Williams recalled that the elderly professor did not utter a word to anyone and presented a "disconsolate picture."⁶⁹ For H.D., however, her departure was an exhilarating moment of liberation which transformed her life:

The happiest moment of my life was when I stood on the deck of a second class boat called the Floride and saw the beauty of New York above me and knew the beauty of New York was part of all beauty being free...free, my first trip to what we then called "Europe" in 1911, going with a friend I loved and going straight with little luggage and a Dante (that was hers) and a few old dresses.⁷⁰

After a stormy crossing which sharpened H.D.'s perception of Europe and America as two irreconcilably conflicting worlds, the "Floride" landed in Le Havre. Hilda and the Greggs spent the late summer in France before proceeding to London. In Rouen H.D. experienced a profound identification with Joan of Arc, who had been burnt as a witch - the fate that Hilda and Frances would have met, according to Pound, had they lived in Salem:

They had trapped her [Joan of Arc], a girl who was a boy.... They would always trap them, bash their heads like broken flowers from their stalks, break them for seeing things, having "visions".... This was the warning.⁷¹

As an androgynous visionary who was destroyed for "daring to be herself," Joan of Arc embodied H.D.'s conception of her own inner self, and of the true artist.

In Paris H.D. visited the American pianist Walter

Rummel whom she had met through Pound in Philadelphia. H.D. was deeply moved by Rummel's interpretations of Debussy, and became infatuated with him although he was already living with Thérèse Chaigneau whom he later married. In "Asphodel" she suggests that he is her spiritual double: "O Walter you are like great dog-wood trees, men are trees sometimes."⁷²

Infatuations which were not based on reciprocal understanding would become a recurring motif in H.D.'s life, and the subject of her art. Walter Rummel, like others who took his place, embodied a phantasm of H.D.'s psyche: her lifelong search for the "lost companion" was the manifestation of a metaphysical sense of loss or absence. In perceiving Rummel as a tree, H.D. erased the barriers between the self and the other by making him part of her own inner reality which was not the shared reality of everyday life. The repeated shocks which she received when the two realities came into conflict threatened H.D.'s psychic equilibrium, but at the same time generated much of her creative energy.

H.D. arrived in London with the Greggs in the autumn of 1911. Her satisfaction at finding herself in the midst of literary London was marred for H.D. only by Pound's dismissal of her own poems in favour of "some rather Celtic conventional poems" by Frances.⁷³ H.D. wrote to Isabel Pound that at a tea given by May Sinclair "Frances was properly introduced as the rising American poetess, and I as - well, just a friend of great people." On this occasion the company included Alice Meynell, Francis Thompson and Ernest Rhys, and soon Pound had introduced H.D. to Yeats, by whom she was

not "hyper-impressed," and the Shakespears.⁷⁴

When Frances and Mrs. Gregg returned to America at the end of the year H.D. remained in London. Throughout the preceding months, Hilda (despite the fact that she still considered herself half engaged to Pound) and Mrs. Gregg had competed for Frances's love. Describing Mrs. Gregg's love for her daughter as incestuous and oppressive, H.D. records in "Asphodel" her own last desperate attempt to persuade Frances to stay on in London:

I, Hermoine [sic], tell you I love you Fayne Rabb
[Frances].... Men will say I love you Hermoine but
will anyone say I love you Fayne as I say it?
I see you. I feel you. My pulse runs swiftly. My
brain reaches heights of deliriu[m.]⁷⁵

After seeing the Greggs off in Liverpool, H.D. returned to London to a room that Ezra Pound had found for her in Duchess Street, off Portland Place. She frequented daily the British Museum where she devoted herself to learning Greek and began to write her first "Imagist" poems.

Chapter Two: "H.D."

(i) "H.D. Imagiste"

Hilda Doolittle became "H.D." in the British Museum tea-room in September 1912. Ezra Pound chose two poems, "Hermes of the Ways" and "Priapus," out of a batch that H.D. had submitted to him and declared, "But Dryad...this is poetry." After making cuts and changing the line forms, he "scrawled 'H.D. Imagiste' at the bottom of the page."¹

In adopting the sexless and enigmatic initials, H.D. symbolically erased a past and an identity which did not correspond to her inner self. Like the expanse of virgin snow on which the poet's feet trace a hieroglyph in Her, H.D.'s new identity was a tabula rasa: a limitless inner space which was defined only by the poems which bore her signature. Distraught at the publication of her photograph for the first time in 1923, she elucidated the significance which the initials held for her: "The initials, H.D. had no identity attached; they could have been pure spirit. But with this I'm embodied!"²

H.D. had long felt uncomfortable with the banal, even slightly ridiculous name of Hilda Doolittle. Her early short stories were written under the pseudonyms "Edith Gray" and "J. Beran," and Pound felt it advisable to warn his London

acquaintances that Hilda was "shy of her name."³ Although H.D. occasionally published under other pseudonyms, it was the sigil suggested by Pound which was at the same time least limiting of her identity and most suggestive of her spiritual affinities: "H.D. - Hermes - Hermeticism and all the rest of it" was the outline she traced of herself in End to Torment.⁴

"Imagism" came into being at the same moment as "H.D." although Pound had heralded the movement in his preface to the five poems which constitute "The Complete Poetical Works of T. E. Hulme": "As for the future, Les Imagistes...have that in their keeping."⁵ By 1912 a number of different influences were converging to encourage Pound to formulate a new set of poetic principles. The Bergsonian philosophy of Hulme was avowedly a major influence but the eclectic Pound's sources for the new poetry included vers libre, Japanese haiku and tanka, French symbolism, and perhaps even early psycho-analytic theory.⁶ In the period 1909-1912, Pound frequented the meetings of Hulme's poetry club at a Soho restaurant, but also spent Monday evenings with Yeats, Wednesdays at the home of Ernest Rhys, and many afternoons with Ford Madox Hueffer's circle.

Pound told Glenn Hughes that Imagism was invented "to launch H.D. and Aldington," as well as "to establish a critical demarcation."⁷ H.D.'s poems embodied the "modern" qualities which Pound perceived as essential for the renewal of English poetry: "Objective - no slither; direct - no excessive use of adjectives, no metaphors that won't permit

examination. It's straight talk, straight as the Greek!"⁸ If Pound had already anticipated a revolutionary poetic movement, the immediate inspiration for its formation was the work of H.D. and Richard Aldington. It was only after the appearance in Poetry of Aldington's poems in November 1912 and H.D.'s in January 1913 that Pound began to publish a theory of Imagism and to draw other poets into the movement.

Aldington, with some rancour against Pound's dictatorial ways, wrote to Herbert Read in 1925:

...imagisme, as written by H.D. and me, was purely our own invention and was not an attempt to put a theory into practice. The "school" was Ezra's invention. And the first imagist anthology was invented by him in order to claim us as his disciples, a manoeuvre we were too naifs to recognize at the time....⁹

If the first Imagist poems were not written according to any precise theory, they nonetheless owed much to the influence of Pound who throughout the preceding months had expounded his ideas to H.D. and Aldington during their daily tea-shop meetings. Imagism as it finally emerged was more the outcome of the intense and intellectually stimulating relationship between the three young poets than a calculated attempt to translate Hulme's theories into poetic practice.

A figure usually omitted from accounts of the origins of the Imagist movement is Brigit Patmore to whom, under the Provençal name of "Vail de Lencour" Pound would dedicate Lustra in 1915. Yet again Pound played the role of what she might later have termed an alchemist in H.D.'s life and art. Early in 1912, after the departure of Frances Gregg, he

insisted in a "Machiavellian" manner that Brigit meet his young American friend.¹⁰ A close friendship immediately developed between the two who were often considered the most beautiful women in London. Brigit Patmore, an Irish pianist who had studied in Dresden, was married to Coventry Patmore's grandson. Through her unhappy marriage to John Deighton Patmore Brigit had become part of London's most exclusive literary circles, her closest friends being Alice Meynell and Violet Hunt.

In her memoirs, My Friends When Young, Brigit Patmore describes her first meeting with H.D.:

The tall girl...seemed too fragile for her height and build. Had her head been held high and her shoulders straight, she would have looked, as Richard [Aldington] might have said, "like a goddess". But no goddess ever showed such extreme vulnerability in her face, nor so wild and wincing a look in her deep-set eyes.

As they spoke, Brigit fell under the spell of H.D.'s "extraordinarily appealing charm."¹¹ H.D., who was immersing her everyday life in the spirit of ancient Greece, immediately suggested that they study Greek together and always brought her grammar books to their meetings; although Brigit made little progress in Greek, it added to the enchantment which H.D. exercised over her.

It was at one of her parties that Brigit introduced H.D. to Richard Aldington, a nineteen year old poet who had been Brigit's lover. He too fell under the spell of H.D., who seemed to him the embodiment of the Greek spirit - even a goddess, as Brigit Patmore observed. The relationship

which developed between the two aspiring poets spurred them to self-expression. Whereas Ezra Pound had rejected her poems the previous autumn, for Richard H.D. was already a poet and an oracle, and he became her acolyte. Aldington's adoration represented to H.D. an affirmation of her inner self and contributed enormously to her development of the clearly defined artistic identity which her Imagist poems embody.

Frances Gregg's return to London in April 1912 broke the flow of H.D.'s new life with such force that the episode recurs almost obsessively in H.D.'s autobiographical prose of the 1920s; in 1933 H.D. declared to Freud that she might have been happy with Frances.¹³ On her return to Philadelphia Frances had met John Cowper Powys, who fell in love with her. Since he was not in a position to marry her, Powys arranged for her to marry his friend Louis Wilkinson, an Englishman who was something of a celebrity on the American lecture circuit. Frances's reappearance, despite her marriage, threatened to distract H.D. from her ambition to affirm herself as a writer.

In End to Torment H.D. writes that Frances told her that one of the objects of her marriage was to enable her to return to Europe to join H.D. It was arranged that H.D. should join the couple on their honeymoon on the Continent, but at the last minute Pound intervened, as H.D.'s "nearest male relative," to prevent her from leaving.¹⁴ The autobiographical novels "Paint It To-Day" and "Asphodel" elucidate Pound's motives: he explains that Frances is in

love with John Cowper Powys and that she intends to use H.D. as a sexual lure for Wilkinson. Pound accompanied H.D. to Victoria Station, where he compelled her to tell Frances that she had changed her mind. As Pound had foretold, John Cowper Powys met the Wilkinsons a few weeks later in Venice, where Frances provocatively dressed up as a boy: soon Llewellyn Powys, who had accompanied his brother, was in love with her too.¹⁵

In 1916 Louis Wilkinson published a brutally satirical portrait of H.D. in his novel The Buffoon, which was in large part written by Frances. H.D. appears as Eunice Dinwiddie, an American poetess who affects to be a Greek goddess and is known as the "Divinity." While enslaving men and inflaming their desire, Eunice Dinwiddie winces merely at the words "physical desire."¹⁶ H.D. was deeply hurt by this cutting portrait and broke off all contact with the "Dregg," as she referred to Frances in letters to Bryher, until the late 1920s.

After the shock of Frances's behaviour, H.D. left for Paris alone but was soon joined by Richard Aldington and Ezra Pound. There she experienced yet another emotional shock: the marriage of Walter Rummel, followed by the suicide of a young American, Margaret Craven, who like H.D. had been infatuated with the pianist. H.D. identified herself with Margaret Craven, whom she thought of as an "authentic sister" or spiritual double.¹⁷

On this occasion it was Richard Aldington who rescued H.D. from the brink of a breakdown by encouraging her to

continue with her writing. In terms of the development of their aesthetics, the most significant aspect of their stay in Paris was undoubtedly the evenings H.D. and Aldington spent with the Polish American philosopher Henry Slonimski.

Slonimski was a friend of Pound's from his student days at the University of Pennsylvania, but according to Aldington Ezra Pound never appreciated the philosopher because he never really listened to him:

But H.D., with her swift unerring response to whatever is beautiful and lofty, at once comprehended his greatness and charm. What evenings we spent listening to him in Paris! Noctes Atticae....he talked to us of Hellas and Hellenism, of Pythagoras and Plato...of Empedocles and Heraclitus, of Homer and Thucydides, of Aeschylus and Theocritus.¹⁸

Slonimski, moreover, was an opponent of T. E. Hulme, and particularly impressed Aldington by his refutation of Hulme's Bergsonian philosophy.

Although Richard Aldington later denied any debt whatsoever to Hulme, and H.D. never so much as mentioned him, it is improbable that the two original Imagists escaped Hulme's influence entirely. After their Paris sojourn H.D. and Richard Aldington both took rooms near Ezra Pound in Church Walk and more than ever formed part of Pound's inner circle. H.D. may have attended Hulme's lectures on Bergson at the end of 1911 but she was never a theorist and probably any Hulmian influence on her work came to her through Pound's exposition of his ideas on what poetry should be. Throughout the Imagist period H.D. was so totally immersed in things Greek that she virtually abandoned all reading outside her

chosen field; she moreover insisted that she simply "wrote as she felt" without any theoretical reference. Nonetheless, as Pound recognized, her poetry reveals remarkable affinities with Hulme's ideas.¹⁹

In his essays "Bergson's Theory of Art" and "The Philosophy of Intensive Manifolds" Hulme describes the process of creation as one of discovery and disentanglement. For Hulme the great artist is a great innovator who discovers in the flux of life a new shape which he communicates to others by means of fresh metaphors; he rejects the conventional means of expression since they fail to capture the individuality of his perceptions. Thus poetry's great aim is "accurate, precise and definite description," which can only arise out of a "terrific struggle with the language." The poet must possess "the particular faculty of mind to see things as they really are" and also "the concentrated state of mind, the grip over oneself which is necessary in the actual expression of what one sees." The image, according to Hulme's philosophy, is thus the very essence of poetry: it is not decorative, but essential to the communication of the poet's intuition so that other men may experience a vivid conviction of the poem's truth.²⁰

The concept of the image is central to Hulme's philosophy. He claimed that all real communication between human beings was achieved by means of images, and that each word must be "an image seen, not a counter."²¹ Bergson himself had written of the poet in Time and Free Will:

The poet is he with whom feelings develop into images, and the images themselves into words.... In seeing these images pass before our eyes we in our turn experience the feeling which was, so to speak, their emotional equivalent....²²

Poetry attracted the attention of both Hulme and Bergson because they saw it as the form of communication which came closest to pure intuition, although ultimately even the image was an intermediary between the concrete and the abstract. Poetry, wrote Hulme on another occasion, is a "compromise for a language of intuition."²³

H.D.'s Imagist poetry may to some extent be regarded as embodying Hulmian and Bergsonian concepts of poetry and of language. As Pound described it, H.D.'s poetry contained "no slither;" it arose from that "terrific struggle" with language which Hulme claimed was essential in order to present accurately the poet's intuition. H.D. later described her early poems as being "automatic or pseudo-automatic writing," but Richard Aldington recalls the exacting revision which followed the original inspiration:

[H.D.'s] craftsmanship was the result of infinite pains. Version after version of a poem was discarded by H.D. in the search for perfection, and the pruning was ruthless.... I was staggered by this relentless artistic conscience.²⁴

The brief "Oread" is perhaps the poem which most nearly embodies Hulme's theory of the image. Here the poem is the image, devoid of any ornamentation; it is an accurate visual presentation of the poet's intuition, and defies explication or paraphrasing. The sense of compressed energy is so powerful in "Oread" that Ezra Pound cited it as a Vorticist poem:

Whirl up, sea -
 whirl your pointed pines,
 splash your great pines
 on our rocks,
 hurl your green over us,
 cover us with pools of fir.²⁵

The essence of H.D.'s Imagist poems is the intense apprehension of the natural world which she had first experienced during her adolescence in Upper Darby. Her powers of accurate observation of natural phenomena probably owed much to her family's scientific background, but H.D. early on had transformed observation into contemplation. Despite the marked (if largely coincidental) similarities between Hulme's theories and H.D.'s poetic practice, it is their understanding of the object of contemplation which reveals an ultimate irreconcilability of outlook.

In his essay "Romanticism and Classicism" Hulme writes that "the object of aesthetic contemplation is something framed apart from itself and regarded without memory or expectation, simply as being itself, as an end and not a means, as individual and not universal."²⁶ For H.D., on the contrary, contemplation is a means to an end: in the natural world she found the hieroglyphs of an inner reality. At the beginning of her career she regarded this way of seeing as "Greek." In her short story "Hipparchia" H.D. uses a stream of consciousness technique to describe the creative processes of a Greek poetess who, like all H.D.'s protagonists, is more or less herself. Hipparchia's contemplation of the natural world transports her into a visionary state of

"disembodied ecstasy" in which she returns to the "inner world" of the spirit; she likens her mode of perception to that of "Greeks of the old days [who] disregarded the sheer substance of the flower as they perceived (mysterious script) the aie, aie that tells of lost Adonis or the wail of the dead Spartan."²⁷

Speaking on behalf of H.D. at the Imagist dinner in July 1914, Richard Aldington claimed that "the essence of Imagism lay in the restoration of the Hellenic view of life."²⁸ At that early stage of his career, Aldington was still the poetic disciple of H.D., whom he had married in October 1913. The outbreak of war would soon profoundly change the nature of his poetry; the other original Imagist, Ezra Pound, had become a Vorticist by 1914 and would soon begin writing his early cantos. H.D., however, would remain faithful for many years to her original Imagist mission to restore the "Hellenic view of life." Like Hipparchia, a Greek living in Rome, H.D. saw herself as an exile from her spiritual homeland; like Hipparchia she became through her poetry oracle, priestess and goddess:

Life draws back from the Delphic priestess. Life, a black torrent, had drawn its dark tide away from her, away from Hipparchia who now stood a giant Thetis among islands....she seemed (giant) to tower, to outgrow earth and human possibilities, to be (in all the world) the one fated to recall the islands, to string them, to thread them, irregular jagged rough-jewel on a massive necklet...to be laid simply at an altar, she officiating to re-sanctify it.²⁹

(ii) H.D.'s Hellas

"The Crocus Lady was in love with Ancient Greece, and she seemed far away, locked in a world of her own," was Derek Patmore's recollection of H.D. as she had appeared to him in his childhood.³⁰ It was H.D.'s remoteness from quotidian reality which struck all those who came into contact with her in the Imagist period: she seemed to be an exile from her spiritual homeland of ancient Greece. Havelock Ellis, who for a time was under the spell of H.D., thought of her as "one of those rare divine beings who pass veiled and disguised through life, as in mediaeval days the old forsaken gods of Greece and Rome were said still to linger here and there in the world."³¹

H.D.'s world was informed by the presence of the gods. Her photograph album, now at the Beinecke Library at Yale, reveals the way in which she saw herself and the world around her. Wearing only a headband, H.D. poses as a Greek statue in a woodland setting; the photograph nestles under the upraised wing of a cut-out image of Nike. Elsewhere a photograph of the naked H.D. is pasted onto a reproduction of a bas-relief from Epidauros: H.D. takes her place among the gods Aesclepius, Hygieia and Nike. On another page, H.D. juxtaposes her profile with that of the Delphic charioteer in order to highlight her astonishing physical resemblance to the Greek. A god, probably Zeus, towers above Professor Doolittle's observatory, and woodland scenes are animated by tiny cut-outs of gods and demi-urges.³²

There is nothing decorative about the Greekness of H.D.'s poetry. Although her Greek scholarship was considerable, H.D.'s Greece was a world of her own imagining. She wrote of her Imagist poetry:

It is nostalgia for a lost land. I call it Hellas. I might, psychologically just as well, have listed the Casco Islands off the coast of Maine, but I called my islands Rhodes, Samos and Cos. They are symbols.³³

The spiritual affinity with the Greeks that H.D. had first experienced in 1903, when she saw Iphigenia Among the Taurians had developed by 1912 into an exclusive, all-pervading passion. She identified her mode of perception as "Greek," and as she grew increasingly alienated from quotidian reality H.D. inevitably came to consider herself a spiritual exile. If H.D.'s Greece may be regarded as essentially a metaphor for her own inner world, it was a metaphor which she lived not merely through her poetry but in every aspect of her daily existence.

H.D.'s passion for ancient Greece and Hellenic beauty had important consequences both for her personality and her poetry. Her desire to transfer herself and immerse herself in a reality where the gods were "at home" led to a schism in her being. Her identity became dichotomic, split between her physical existence and her nostalgia for Hellenic beauty. H.D.'s irrevocable historical reality was that of a woman of the twentieth century, and with the outbreak of war in 1914 the actuality of the particular historical moment became pressing. During the war H.D. lived through the

bombing of London, the still-birth of her first child, the irretrievable breakdown of her marriage to Richard Aldington and the death of her brother in France. Aldington soon abandoned the ideal he had espoused a month before the outbreak of war of restoring through poetry the Hellenic view of life. Amidst the physical and moral destruction wrought by the war some members of H.D.'s circle even began to doubt the value of literature.³⁴ H.D., however, remained faithful to her pre-war vision of life and art, and despite a severe breakdown in 1919 reconstructed that vision anew in her post-Imagist work.

In her passion for ancient Greece, H.D. most resembles not her contemporaries but the German poet, Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843). There is no evidence that H.D. read the work of Hölderlin, but the parallels between the lives and the art of the two poets are remarkable. Like H.D., Hölderlin rejected the everyday shared reality of his materialistic society and through his writing attempted to restore the Hellenistic values of harmony, restraint and beauty. Like the H.D. of the Imagist years, Hölderlin described vividly a "Greek" landscape which he had never seen. Hyperion is the story of the title character's return to his Greek homeland after the failure of his revolutionary ideals: the elegiac character of the work is the consequence of Hyperion's being born too late and in a Greece that is no longer what it once was. For Hölderlin, harmony exists only in a society which sees its gods everywhere; the poet's function is to mediate between the gods and men. Another

curious parallel between the two writers is their attempt in later years to reconcile paganism and Christianity; for such "split dual personalities" (H.D.'s description of herself could also apply to Hölderlin) the search for harmony inevitably became imperative and all-consuming.³⁵

The tragedy of Hölderlin's life was his inability ever to attain the harmony he longed for: the Greece of his dreams was irreconcilable with the society in which he actually lived. In 1802, when Hölderlin was only thirty-two years of age, the first signs of a severe psychic disturbance manifested themselves. From 1807 until his death in 1843 the poet had only brief moments of lucidity: the present, which he had always refuted in his writing ceased to exist for him. When H.D. first visited Greece in 1920, the shock of disillusionment was so great that she suffered a mental breakdown and experienced hallucinations. Subsequently H.D. suffered other breakdowns in which she lost contact with the present, although ultimately she succeeded in maintaining a precarious psychic equilibrium which enabled her to continue writing. Her creative energy in fact derived from her refusal of everyday, shared reality in favour of a reality of her own invention. When H.D. discovered Euripides and Theocritus in adolescence her sensibility was already predisposed to locate "reality" in an imagined world far from her restricted quotidian existence: Greek pantheism provided a model of an alternative reality, but at the same time it was a model which H.D. re-invented in the image of her own psyche.

In 1937 H.D. acknowledged that her Imagist poems were "poems of escapism - if there is any such word." In "A Note on Poetry" she reveals that she even during World War I she had been profoundly aware in one part of her being of the historical reality, but she reaffirms her nostalgia for the eternal perfection of Hellenic beauty, symbolized by the Greek islands:

...the inner world of imagination, the ivory tower, where poets presumably do live, in memory, does stand stark with the sun-lit isles around it, while battle and din of battle and the whole dreary, tragic spectacle of our times seems blurred and sodden and not to be recalled, save in moments of repudiation, historical necessity.³⁶

In fact the shock of war, and its destruction of the London pre-war life she had so loved, exacerbated the dichotomic schism that her nostalgia for ancient Greece necessarily created.

In Miranda Masters, a bitter roman à clef about H.D., John Cournos describes how the "ugly dream" of the war caused H.D. to retreat increasingly into "oracular moods." Even in company she would go into trance-like states in which she described her visions of Greek religious practices. "It was as if some ancient demon possessed her, granted her ancient sight, vouchsafed to few," writes Cournos of Miranda Masters/H.D.³⁷ In her own unpublished roman à clef, "Paint It To-Day," H.D. confirms that she began really to "see things" during the war. Referring to World War I as "a tidal wave" H.D. writes:

A tidal wave does one of two things. Either it swirls you into it, with a million others of

your sort.... Or else it slashes you out, in the crest, as it were, high, high above the rest of itself and the rest of humanity. This is a very marvellous sensation to the few thus chosen to be the high froth or the high nothingness of the wave itself.

It is a pleasant sensation to behold the great mass, and the flow and black lift of it, beneath you. It is not an altogether healthy nor wholesome nor sane feeling to feel...so thoroughly [sic] out of touch with all humanity.³⁸

Throughout her work H.D. associates humanity with pain and disillusionment; in "Hipparchia," for instance, humanity is a "swarm of black-winged hornets" which threatens the perfection of the poet's "abstraction."³⁹ To be merely human, merely Hilda Doolittle of Pennsylvania, represented for H.D. an intolerable limitation of her being. Hellenism thus became for H.D. an absolute and indisputable value, which could not be submitted to analysis because her imagination was passionate: ancient Greece represented perfection without human limits, and in the modern world H.D. was an exile.

The only opening which the modern or visible world offered to H.D.'s personality was the contemplation of nature. The natural world was timeless; it was a space devoid of the signs of human interference. J. B. Harmer has observed that: "H.D.'s work exists on the borders of discourse. In her poems there is often an intensity disproportionate to the apparent situation."⁴⁰ This extraordinary intensity is due to H.D.'s channelling of feeling in such a way as to project her secret inner vitality onto and into nature. Thus H.D.'s poetry is genuinely sensitive and devoid of ornamentation. It is as if

a constant fluid or subterranean energy infused every flower or tree or wave that her eyes touched. H.D.'s contemplation of nature conceals the innate dynamism of her soul, a dynamism that she could not release towards another human being, with the exception of Frances Gregg - H.D.'s spiritual double.

An Imagist poem is thus a sacred space, a space which H.D. called "Hellas." The beings which inhabit her world are neither humans nor even the Olympian deities whom the Greeks had rendered almost human. H.D.'s is a Greece in which the gods and demi-urges are manifestations of that subterranean energy which animates the natural world. Despite genuine affinities with the historical Greece, H.D.'s world is ultimately the creation of her own imagination.

(iii) "A New Beauty"

I have had enough -
border-pinks, clove-pinks, wax-lilies,
herbs, sweet-cress.

....

For this beauty,
beauty without strength,
chokes out life.
I want wind to break,
scatter these pink-stalks,
snap off their spiced heads,
fling them about with dead leaves....

O to blot out this garden
to forget, to find a new beauty
in some terrible
wind-tortured place.⁴¹

The urgent search for a "new beauty" dominates H.D.'s Imagist poems. In an era in which Swinburne and the Georgian poets to a large extent dictated the aesthetic canons, H.D.'s poems broke into the Victorian tradition with a startling originality - an originality of vision which, as Hulme and Pound had predicted, necessarily involved a re-invention of poetic diction.

The adjective most often used by early critics to define H.D.'s Imagist poetry was "crystalline." Although the word does convey something of the hardness and clarity of H.D.'s poems, it also suggests that their perfection is static and even passionless. For years H.D. rejected the description of her poems as "crystalline" but in 1949, in "Notes on Recent Writing," she re-interpreted the word in the light of her own understanding of the essential quality

of her early work:

I grew tired to [sic] hearing these [early] poems referred to as crystalline. Was there no other way of criticizing, of assessing them? But perhaps I did not see, did not dare see any further than my critics.... For what is crystal or any gem but the concentrated essence of the rough matrix, or the energy, either of over-intense heat over-intense cold that projects it? The poems as a whole... contain that essence or that symbol, symbol of concentration and stubborn energy. The energy itself and the matrix itself have not yet been assessed.⁴²

Forty years later, it is still true that the vibrant, compressed energy which permeates H.D.'s Imagist poems remains largely unassessed.

As in the lines from "Sheltered Garden" quoted at the beginning of this section, the hidden energy in H.D.'s poems often manifests itself as wind. Wind annihilates the lifeless beauty of the man-made garden, but vibrates through the wild landscapes where H.D. seeks a new beauty. Often wind and wave become almost merged with each other to form a single force which ripples under or over the surface of the thing contemplated. Even in H.D.'s first published poem, "Hermes of the Ways," the landscape is not static like a still-life painting but is permeated by a subtle movement:

The hard sand breaks,
and the grains of it
are clear as wine.

Far off over the leagues of it,
the wind,
playing on the wide shore,
piles little ridges,
and the great waves
break over it.

(CP 37)

When the poet speaks of the god Hermes, he seems to emerge out of the natural forces of wind and wave. "Dubious," she calls Hermes, "facing three ways." Hermes is undetermined or ambiguous in the sense that his identity and limits are indefinable: the only certainty is that the god "waits" in natural forces, in which the poet too immerses herself in order to find him:

Hermes, Hermes,
the great sea foamed,
gnashed its teeth about me;
but you have waited,
where sea-grass tangles with
shore-grass. (CP 39)

In "Sea Gods," the fusion of the gods with natural forces is total. Implicitly suggesting the godless age in which she actually lives as a spiritual exile, H.D. writes that men say "there is no hope to conjure" the sea gods. With passionate inner certainty that they will manifest themselves, the poet invokes the sea gods as the fluid force of the sea itself:

You will trail across the rocks
and wash them with your salt,
you will curl between the sand-hills -
you will thunder along the cliff -
break - retreat - get fresh strength -
gather and pour weight upon the beach.

You will draw back,
and the ripple on the sand-shelf
will be witness of your track. (CP 29-31)

In her first book of poems, Sea Garden (1916), H.D.

delineated her inner landscape. Everywhere, even when the gods are not actually invoked, H.D. finds "witness of

[their] track." However, as Ezra Pound knew, the gods are a "state of mind" and their presence in H.D.'s poems is really the pouring of her own secret vitality into the object of contemplation. The strength and freshness of a poem like "Sea Gods" lies in the poet's projection of herself into the forces of nature. H.D. uses adjectives with extreme, even austere, economy in her early poems, preferring strong, active verbs; she does not describe but participates in her contemplation of nature as an event. The gods who "trail across the rocks" and "curl between sand-hills" are essentially the poet's own inner energies.

The true originality of H.D.'s Imagist poems lies in their re-invention of reality. H.D.'s passion for a "new beauty" was so strong that she ignored the sign-posts marked out by literary tradition. As May Sinclair observed, H.D.'s poems "do not lend themselves to convenient classification, as Poems of Passion and Emotion, Poems of Reflection, Poems of the Imagination, and Poems Descriptive, and so on." May Sinclair attributed to H.D.'s poems a "divine quality" in their suggestion of "unspeakable mysteries."⁴³ Other writers actually described H.D. as a "mystic," in recognition of the intensity and inwardness of her Imagist poems. H.D.'s friend and fellow Imagist, John Gould Fletcher, began his review of Sea Garden with the following observation:

The great mystics, whether they call themselves Christians or pagans, have all this trait in common - that they describe in terms of ordinary experience some super-normal experience. The unpractised reader, picking up H.D.'s Sea-garden [sic] and reading it casually, might suppose it was all about flowers and rocks and waves and

Greek myths, when it is really about the soul, or the primal intelligence, or the Nous, or whatever we choose to call that link that binds us to the unseen and uncreated.⁴⁴

In H.D.'s Imagist poetry, the spatial dimension between the contemplator and the thing contemplated is diminished to vanishing point. It is the poet's projection of the essence of her being into the thing contemplated which constitutes H.D.'s re-invention of reality, or her so-called "mysticism." Things are not described, but vibrate with the poet's intensity and vitality. The effect is reminiscent of the paintings of Vincent van Gogh, where the surface ripples with an intensity that might seem "disproportionate to the apparent situation," as J. B. Harmer wrote of H.D.'s poems. Van Gogh's paintings resemble fields of energy. In his self-portraits, van Gogh's brush strokes create a vortex-like effect in which the energy emanates from the painter's head as from a "radiant node or cluster," as Pound described the vortex.⁴⁵ The same effect occurs in many of van Gogh's still-lives and landscapes, most notably in his "Road with Cypresses" where the scene appears to vibrate, such is the intensity of the painter's inner dynamism. Van Gogh does not observe or describe the object of contemplation, but lives in and through it: the conventional distance between the contemplator and the contemplated is eliminated as the two become identified.

In Bid Me to Live H.D. wrote that van Gogh's pictures were "dynamically exploding inside" with the energy of his inner self. She refers to the "divine," "inhuman" element of

wind which "swirls" round his paintings, seeing it as the sign of Van Gogh's identification of himself with nature: "His wheat stalks are quivering with more than the wind that bends them."⁴⁶ In terms of the painter's art, the traces that van Gogh leaves of the projection of his own vitality (the wind) into the landscape are the furrows of paint which form circles or swirls of energy.

H.D.'s projection of her own vitality into the natural world also left furrow-like traces. In the poem "Garden" it is the wind, characteristically, which is the manifestation of the poet's energy:

O wind, rend open the heat,
cut apart the heat,
rend it to tatters....

Cut the heat -
plough through it,
turning it on either side
of your path. (CP 25)

Wind may be likened to the anima or vital breath in H.D.'s work: it is as if the poet breathes into the thing contemplated in order to bring it to life. "Sheltered Garden" opens with the lines: "I have had enough. / I gasp for breath." (CP 19) The poet suffocates in the man-made garden, but exults in the release of the full force of the wind which annihilates any beauty which is merely human. Sea Garden delineates a landscape of "marred" and "meagre" things become hieratic and transcendent in their survival of the lacerating force of the wind. In "Sea Lily" H.D. addresses a flower wracked by a wind which in the final stanza metamorphoses into a wave:

Reed,
 slashed and torn
 but doubly rich -
 such great heads as yours
 drift upon temple-steps,
 but you are shattered
 in the wind.

....

Yet though the whole wind
 slash at your bark,
 you are lifted up,
 aye - though it hiss
 to cover you with froth. (CP 14)

H.D.'s poems are bitter and tortured, like the sea rose which is "acrid fragrance hardened in a leaf." (CP 5) She was able to reject quotidian reality and create a new reality only through incessant struggle. Douglas Bush, in his Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry, quotes H.D.'s own words in "Sheltered Garden" against her: her "beauty without strength, / chokes out life" according to Bush. He writes:

Her refuge is a dreamworld of ideal beauty which she calls Greece.... The fact is that the hard bright shell of H.D.'s poetry partly conceals a soft romantic nostalgia which, however altered and feminized, is that of the Victorian Hellenists.⁴⁷

In H.D.'s Imagist work, however, there are few traces of anything that might conceivably be described as "soft" or "romantic." It is a measure of H.D.'s originality that her earlier reading of Swinburne, Lang and Pater was, if not forgotten, subjugated to a compelling and highly personal artistic vision. Nostalgia for her spiritual homeland of ancient Greece is a potent force in H.D.'s work, but it never leads her to substitute a reproduction of classical

poetry for the expression of her own inner life.

Douglas Bush's conclusions about H.D.'s work rest largely on his detection of stasis in her work: the total effect of her poetry, he writes, is "curiously indoor and static, as of a seascape and landscape modeled in wax."⁴⁸ Like most other critics, Bush fails to sense the matrix of energy which animates each poem, and the landscape as a whole. In H.D.'s garden, even colour is an energy. "Hurl your green over us," the poet cries to sea and tree in "Oread" (CP 37), and in "Sea Iris" she asks the flower:

Do the murex-fishers
drench you as they pass?
Do your roots drag up colour
from the sand? (CP 37)

There is no romantic ornamentation in H.D.'s poetry. The forces of wind and wave pare away all artifice and excess, exposing the essence of life - which is where H.D. locates beauty. Even night, in the poem of that name, is perceived by H.D. as an energy:

The night has cut
each from each
and curled the petals
back from the stalk
and under it in crisp rows;

under at an unfaltering pace,
under till the rinds break,
back till each bent leaf
is parted from its stalk.... (CP 33)

The inexorable force of the night (which like the wind is essentially the poet's own vitality), exposes the "stark core" of the rose which becomes a hieroglyph of the poet's

reality:

O night,
 you take the petals
 of the roses in your hand,
 but leave the stark core
 of the rose
 to perish on the branch. (CP 33)

"Night" also offers to the reader a glimpse of H.D.'s creative processes. The first three stanzas have a contemplative tone which borders on the descriptive, despite the action which impels the poem to its conclusion. H.D. begins the poem in the third person and the present perfect tense ("The night has cut...."), but in the final stanza she abruptly shifts to the second person and the present tense (O night, / you take the petals....) The tone shifts from contemplation to invocation, following what seems to have been H.D.'s creative process: through observation she arrived at contemplation and ultimately at identification with nature. Richard Aldington described H.D.'s poetry as "a kind of accurate mystery": through the contemplation of nature, H.D. fuses accurate rendering of detail with her "innate sense of mystery, of aloofness."⁴⁹ Until the last stanza of "Night" the poet has not arrived at the final stage of the projection of her entire being into the natural world; when she invokes the night she seems to invoke her inner self and become one with the night - a sensation reinforced by the personification of the night ("you take the petals / of the roses in your hand").

H.D. frequently addresses things in the second person

in these early poems, but the "you" to whom she speaks seems in the end to be herself. When H.D. turned to prose, her blurring of the conventional distinctions between subject and object, and between the first and third persons, became a pronounced characteristic of her style. The implications of the name "Her," in H.D.'s novel of that title, have already been touched upon in the first chapter of this thesis: through exploiting the grammatical ambiguities of her heroine's nickname, H.D. was able to convey the elimination of barriers between subject and object in Her's love for another woman. H.D.'s "fiction" is characterized by sudden shifts from the third to the first person, while in her "autobiographical" works the opposite process occurs.

The apparent inconsistency of H.D.'s narrative voice in fact provides a key to understanding the relationship with reality which exists in her work. It is H.D.'s concept of the self which is the source of the originality of her poetic vision. She absorbed into her own inner world those things and people with whom she sensed a spiritual affinity; like Walter Rummel, upon whom H.D. conferred the honour of being a tree, people and things became facets of H.D.'s inner life. Inevitably the two realities came into conflict in H.D.'s life, and when quotidian reality engulfed her inner world the result was that weakening of her creative powers which led to the unevenness of her work as a whole. H.D. is at her best when her projection of herself into the world around her flows unimpeded by impact with the ordinary, shared reality of historical time and place.

Although she is often said to have changed little throughout her three Imagist volumes, H.D. did in fact find new ways of developing the artistic consciousness which declared itself in Sea Garden.⁵⁰ In Hymen and Heliodora, published in 1921 and 1924 respectively but containing many poems written years earlier, H.D.'s debt to ancient Greece is more explicit. Hermes is the only god named in Sea Garden, but the two later volumes (and also the section "The God" which H.D. created out of uncollected poems for the 1925 Collected Poems) abound with characters from Greek mythology.

In the later poems, mythological characters (especially women) channel the energies that formerly were directed through the things which made up H.D.'s "sea garden." Although H.D. speaks in the first person as Circe, or Thetis, or Hippolyta, it seems inadequate to say that she used these characters as dramatic masks. The intensity of H.D.'s identification with her characters suggests rather that H.D. wrote them in moments of oracular inspiration in which, like a Delphic priestess, she actually became the goddess. H.D.'s description of Hipparchia, already quoted in the section "H.D., Imagiste," is the key to understanding her later Imagist poetry: when Hipparchia achieves the creative state of "disembodied ecstasy" she becomes "a giant Thetis" who is "(in all the world) the one fated to recall the [Greek] islands." A sense of prophetic mission pervades H.D.'s later Imagist poems.

H.D. wrote two poems entitled "Thetis," one published

in Hymen and the other in Heliadora. As the mother of Achilles, Thetis also appears in H.D.'s late poem Helen in Egypt. H.D. was fascinated by the protean quality of the Nereid, and her fusion with nature itself. The first version of "Thetis," despite H.D.'s truncation of it for publication in Hymen, is one of her least successful poems. It is descriptive and lacking in that intensity which enables H.D. in her best poems to offer a new way of seeing. The image here is blurred and unoriginal:

You will pass
beneath the island disk...
and the white stretch
of its white beach,
curved as the moon crescent
or ivory when some fine hand
chisels it.... (CP 117)

The "Thetis" which appeared in Heliadora is, by contrast, a poem which vibrates with intensity. The poet projects herself into Thetis, in the same way as Thetis becomes a wave or a river: for a brief but eternal moment there is total identification with something which, according to ordinary perceptions of reality, is separate from the self. Thetis exists in the poem as pure spirit, who takes on the reflected form of her surroundings:

...so I crept, at last,
a crescent, a curve of a wave,
(a man would have thought,
had he watched for his nets
on the beach)
a dolphin, a glistening fish,
that burnt and caught for its light,
the light of the undercrest
of the lifting tide,
a fish with silver for breast,
with no light but the light
of the sea it reflects. (CP 160)

The poem is really the love song of Thetis for her son, Achilles. Over thirty years later, in Helen in Egypt, Achilles would appear as the manifestation of the "lost companion" whom H.D. had sought throughout her life. When the phantom of Helen of Troy meets that of Achilles, she recognizes him as her "soul-mate" by "the sea-enchancement in his eyes / of Thetis, his sea-mother." Helen realizes that she must love the warrior, who has come straight from the carnage of battle, "as Thetis, his mother."⁵¹

The nature of Thetis's love for Achilles is explored in the poem from Heliadora. It is a love which is neither maternal nor even human, in any ordinary sense of those words: H.D. has entered into the world of the Nereid, a world where human values do not exist. The poem shimmers with vitality and freshness of vision; when Thetis leaves the sea-bed in order to find Achilles, the energy created is a reminiscent of the forces of wind and wave in the earlier poems:

...all blue and wet,
I flung myself, an arrow's flight,
straight upward
through the blue of night
that was my palace wall.... (CP 162)

Thetis finds Achilles' footprint in the sand, and imagines that a goddess or a nymph might worship the mark as the sign of a god's passing. In order to worship Achilles' footprint, however, the goddess must kneel down to kiss it while Thetis, the mother-lover, flows along the sand as a river:

...so she must stoop, this goddess girl,
 or nymph, with crest of blossoming wood
 about her hair for cap or crown,
 must stoop and kneel and bending down,
 must kiss the print of such a one.

Not I, the mother, Thetis self,
 I stretched and lay, a river's slim
 dark length,
 a rivulet where it leaves the wood,
 and meets the sea,
 I lay along the burning sand,
 a river's blue. (CP 163)

There is a powerful sexuality in this poem, though not of the kind attributed to it in The Classical World of H.D. where Thomas Swann claims that "because her sexual feelings are masquerading as maternal, [Thetis] is able to feel physical desire for a man."⁵² "Thetis," like most of H.D.'s poems, is not about human love or passion; its sexuality is that of an intense, all-pervading communion with nature. Sexuality is part of that energy with which the later Imagist poems are infused, but it is rarely directed towards another human being. Through mythological characters H.D. is able to channel feeling in such a way as to invent a new reality which uses as its starting point the Greek mode of perceiving gods in nature.

Two poems about the Amazon Hippolyta best illustrate the nature of the sexuality in these poems: "She Contrasts with Herself Hippolyta" and "She Rebukes Hippolyta." In both cases the speaker, the "she" of the titles is Phaedra, who married Theseus after the death of Hippolyta. According to legend, Hippolyta became a devoted wife to Theseus after his defeat of her in battle. In "She Contrasts with Herself

Hippolyta," however, H.D. presents the Amazon as inviolate in spirit even though she has been violated in the flesh by Theseus and bears his son:

Theseus sought Hippolyta;
 she yielded not nor broke,
 sword upon stone,
 from the clash leapt a spark,
 Hippolytus, born of hate. (CP 137)

Hippolyta asks Artemis to grant her forgiveness and finally prays that she be turned to ice so that she might not feel any warmth towards the child in her womb:

Then did she pray: Artemis,
 grant that no flower
 be grafted alien on a broken stalk,
 no dark flame-laurel on the stricken crest
 of a wild mountain-poplar;
 grant in my thought,
 I never yield but wait,
 entreating cold white river,
 mountain-pool and salt:
 let all my veins be ice.... (CP 138)

Snow and ice and marble recur throughout H.D.'s work as images of the inviolability of the self. When the outside world threatened to engulf H.D.'s inner self, she retreated into a physical petrification where she feels herself to be frozen and/or a statue. This metamorphosis occurs frequently in H.D.'s work, but nowhere so explicitly and startlingly as in the short story "Hipparchia." When she begins to emerge from the disembodied state in which she sees herself as Thetis and writes oracular verses, Hipparchia experiences the clash of the inner and outer worlds. She feels her hand turn to marble:

[Hipparchia's] hand sank suddenly and she recalled exactly her surroundings. The hand sank down lax, nerveless and as the cold of the fresh green spires of the inner un-sunned grasses...it contracted, tense, shocked from its nervelessness to a marble quality of tension. Her hand lay, separated in her consciousness, a marble hand broken, separated. It was as if a heavy marble hand had been broken from the draped body of some exiled Muse or early unfashionable Aphrodite.⁵⁴

Later in the story Hipparchia contemplates her "stone self" in a pool of water. Like Narcissus, she falls in love with her own image, which is that of a "silver goddess" who must "wait fitly for some god, a suitable Helios, for lover." Anything resembling mere human passion is rare in the work of H.D.: it is not that she is passionless, but rather that her passion is of another order.

"Was she so chaste?" asks Phaedra in "She Rebukes Hippolyta." The inviolate spirit of Hippolyta who in the first poem "returned and sought no kiss" is in fact revealed as intoxicated by her passion for nature:

She was mad -
 as no priest, no lover's cult
 could grant madness;
 the wine that entered her throat
 with the touch of the mountain rocks
 was white, intoxicant:
 she, the chaste,
 was betrayed by the glint
 of light on the hills,
 the granite splinter of rocks,
 the touch of the stone
 where heat melts
 toward the shadow-side of the rocks. (CP 140)

Hippolyta's son, too, is a figure who fascinates H.D. She wrote a poem called "Hippolytus Temporizes" and in 1926 published a lyrical drama of the same name which was based

on Euripides' Hippolytus. H.D.'s exposition of the argument of her play elucidates the source of her fascination with Hippolytus and his mother: "Hippolytus is his mother again, frozen lover of the forest which maintains personal form for him in the ever-present vision, yea, even the bodily presence of the goddess Artemis." Hippolytus rejects human passion for:

...the immortal flower
bred in the storm,
sister of ice and wind,
queen only of the soul,
white Artemis.⁵⁴

Nature itself remains the source of H.D.'s creative power throughout her early poetry work - nature which "maintains personal form" for H.D. as for Hippolytus, and becomes divine. Nature alone is eternal and inviolate, devoid of all traces of human intervention. The divinities which pervade the later Imagist poetry are emanations of nature; H.D. experiences them as real, present all around her in the sea, in flowers, in the forest.

H.D. seeks beauty as the sign of the presence of the divine on earth, but the beauty which she finds is new. It exists in wild things stripped to their hieratic essence or "stark core." The landscape of these poems is that of H.D.'s inner world: like the natural world she invokes, a poem represents for H.D. a sacred space on which to trace the hieroglyphs of her inner self. The originality and greatness of these early poems lie in H.D.'s rejection of quotidian reality and historical time in order to create a new

reality. Through the contemplation of nature, H.D. achieves an ecstatic state of mind in which the barriers between the contemplator and the thing contemplated cease to exist. That intensity with which her poems vibrate is the sign left by H.D.'s anima - her vital breath - as she projects her entire being into nature.

Chapter Three: Transitions

(i) "Tidal Wave"

The "tidal wave" of war changed the course of H.D.'s life and art. Despite her attempt to construct an alternative reality, the destruction of pre-war values and conditions of life ultimately forced even H.D. to succumb to quotidian reality. H.D. lived through both world wars in London, and the urgency of her quest for a higher reality in the midst of destruction stimulated her to write some of her greatest poetry in these periods. At the end of both wars, however, she suffered severe breakdowns which threatened to undermine her artistic identity. On both occasions H.D. succeeded in reaffirming the artistic consciousness which had declared itself in her Imagist poetry by finding new sources of inspiration.

In 1921, after a decade of exclusive devotion to Imagist poetry and translations from the Greek, H.D. began to write prose. She wrote in different styles and used different settings, but the story was always that of her own life. In particular H.D. was obsessed by her experiences during and immediately after the war, when external reality had threatened to engulf that inner reality which she had always identified as her true self. For H.D. as a person and as an artist, it became imperative to reconcile the shocks

she had experienced with her conviction that her inner life transcended historical and quotidian reality.

In August 1914, on the morning that war was declared, H.D. was told that she was pregnant. Although she had apparently not wanted the child, H.D. was profoundly shocked when her daughter was still-born in the spring of 1915. The theme of this lost child appears over and over again in her work, but while all sources agree that the child was a girl it appears as a boy in H.D.'s later writing. In his roman à clef, Miranda Masters, John Cournos attributes to Miranda/H.D. the following thoughts: "Is there something lacking in me as a woman that the very thought tortures me? Have I killed my child by sheer non-desire to bear one? I know I should have been born a man!"¹ In her own unpublished roman à clef, "Asphodel," H.D. writes that during her pregnancy she had felt that her mind was "glued down, broken and held back like a wild bird caught in bird-lime." In the Tribute to Freud, however, she claims that she had lost the child "from shock and repercussions of war news broken to me in a rather brutal fashion."²

In "Asphodel" and a later version of it, Bid Me to Live, H.D. recounts the effects which the shock of the still-birth had on her life and her art. She attributes the breakdown of her marriage to Aldington in large part to the repulsion from physical contact that she experienced after her confinement. Her state of physical and emotional debilitation, however, "rewarded" her with the gift of vision: "the mind clarified past all recognition, herself

gazing through her mind unto a fair country."³ These visions, which inspired much of H.D.'s Imagist poetry, represented a confirmation of the reality of the world of the spirit in the midst of death and destruction.

In "Asphodel" H.D. reveals how profoundly she resembled the women of her poems, and in particular Hippolyta. Darrington/Aldington calls her the "sister of Charmides," a reference to Wilde's poem about a Greek boy who fell in love with a statue. He continues: "The wind from the Bay was as married, more, than I to you, Astraea. The rock citicus [sic] was more your lover, not as people love." H.D.'s response is that she feels with "senses and sets of sense vibration" that are unknown to other people: implicitly she acknowledges that her passion, like Hippolyta's, is not of a human order.⁴

Richard Aldington joined the army in 1916, and on his leaves was having an affair with Dorothy ("Arabella") Yorke, an American woman who lived in the same house in Mecklenburgh Square. H.D. initially encouraged the relationship, believing that she would continue to be Aldington's spiritual guide and companion, but soon felt betrayed by him in the spirit as well as in the flesh. Increasingly she turned for companionship and intellectual stimulation to D. H. Lawrence, whom she had met in 1914. According to Bid Me to Live, H.D. thought of Lawrence as her spiritual double and creative equal, although his letters reveal that she was a severe critic of his work. In August 1916 Lawrence complained to Amy Lowell that "Hilda Aldington says to me,

why don't I write hymns to fire, why am I not in love with a tree?" A few months later H.D. was objecting that his poems were "not eternal, not sublimated: too much body and emotions."⁵

Lawrence's letters to H.D. were later destroyed by Aldington, but H.D. reconstructs one of them in Bid Me to Live. Rico/Lawrence angers Julia/H.D. by telling her that she should not write about male emotions:

...I don't like the second half of the Orpheus sequence as well as the first. Stick to the woman speaking. How can you know what Orpheus feels? It's your part to be woman, the woman vibration. Euridyce should be enough.⁶

The "woman vibration" alone was not enough for H.D., who considered androgyny to be spiritual perfection. This episode in Bid Me to Live probably refers to H.D.'s poem "Euridyce" which was written in this period. Since it was published without an Orpheus section, H.D. may have submitted to Lawrence's advice. In this poem, Euridyce bitterly indicts the male "arrogance" which has condemned her to live in the Underworld, but her spirit remains inviolable:

At least I have the flowers of myself,
and my thoughts, no god
can take that;
I have the fervour of myself for a presence
and my own spirit for a light.... (CP 55)

Despite the clash of their artistic identities, H.D. was inspired by Lawrence's creative energy, and until her death considered him to be one of her "initiators." Her earlier

"initiators" had been Pound and Aldington: men who had inspired both her creativity and her love. Bid Me to Live makes it clear that H.D. had wanted Lawrence as a lover, but that he rejected her.⁷

Lawrence based two of his characters on H.D.: the witch-like Julia in Aaron's Rod and the priestess of Isis in The Escaped Cock.⁸ In the latter work, the relationship between the priestess and the Christ who had been taken down too soon from the cross is an implicit acknowledgement of the importance for Lawrence of his friendship with H.D., despite the decade of estrangement that preceded the publication of Lawrence's story in 1928. H.D.'s initial reaction to Lawrence's story was indignance; she suspected that Brigit Patmore had told Lawrence about her own story of Christ's survival of the crucifixion, "Pilate's Wife," on which she had begun work in 1924. In old age, however, H.D. came to regard The Escaped Cock as the realization, on a spiritual plane, of the relationship from which Lawrence had drawn back in 1918.

Disappointed by Lawrence's rejection of her, H.D. left for Cornwall early in 1918 with Cecil Gray, a musicologist and composer who was one of Lawrence's closest friends. Gray, like Lawrence, had escaped conscription through ill health. In "Asphodel" H.D. describes Vane/Gray as "pre-chasm" (pre-war) and "divine": in 1918 he was the only young man of her acquaintance who was "undimmed by powder, by explosive, by gas." He was wealthy and had a patrician air about him that attracted H.D. after Aldington's military

bluster; moreover "she knew better what love was for Cyril Vane was tall and gentle and not heavy and domineering like her husband."⁹ Cornwall was an escape from the "ruin" and "horror" of London, and H.D. lived intensely in her inner world. Inevitably, the idyll was shattered in mid-1918 by the intrusion of reality - in the form of a second unwanted pregnancy. In his letters from the front, Richard Aldington advised her to abort the child, but promised to stand by H.D. regardless of her decision. Addressing her as Astraea - the Greek name for Virgo, H.D.'s birth-sign - Aldington wrote that he wanted her to have all the lovers, male or female, that she desired.¹⁰

The shock of H.D.'s impact with an irrefutable reality threw her into a delirium which she relives in "Asphodel": "I am priestess, infallible, inviolate. I am chosen.... Madness rings me." Uncertain whether or not to have the child, H.D. sought an oracular answer. When a swallow (which she interpreted as the dove of the Annunciation) flew into her room, she decided that God wanted her to have the child: "Her body was like some coffin merely, a thing of bone and fibre, a cacoon [sic] for the enfolding of a spirit."¹¹ Gray's failure to provide emotional support aggravated the shock of pregnancy, and H.D. seems to have lived these months in a continuous delirium out of which emerged new creative paths.

Cornwall was a suggestive setting for H.D.'s "madness." At night the house at Bosigran Castle, in the haunted area of southwestern Cornwall, echoed with strange noises said to

be caused by "knockers" - spirits who inhabited the tin mines, and whom H.D. identifies in "Asphodel" as Phoenician and Mithraic. During the day H.D. wandered the cliffs and felt all around her not the Greek gods and demi-urges of her Imagist poetry but the spirits of Cornish legend and history. She recalls in "Asphodel" that "things alien to her own cult of classic images were yet suddenly all blended, all at one, good and bad alike, welded one in the mystery." In her inner world, God was her lover and the father of her child, and she herself the Virgin Mary.¹²

Christianity was, however, only one strand in the "mystery." In "Asphodel" H.D. projects herself into the witch, Morgan le Fay, whose magic annihilates the reality of the external world. Through her identification with Morgan le Fay, H.D. reaffirms the power of her inner spiritual reality by discovering new forms of inner life. The witch is not human but a protean energy unlimited by Greek harmony and restraint:

She was being disorganized as the parchment-like plain substance of the germ that holds the butterfly became fluid, incohere [sic], as the very tight bud of her germination became incohere, frog-shaped small greedy devouring monster. The thing within her made her one with frogs, with eels. She was animal, reptile.¹³

The origins of that interest in eclectic religious traditions and the occult which dominated H.D.'s later years are to be found in the delirium she experienced at the end of the war. The "Greek" way of seeing failed to absorb and redimension the series of shocks which H.D. received during

the war, making it imperative for H.D. to find other sources of inspiration for her inner life.

The short story "Hipparchia" is another version of this turning point in H.D.'s life. The setting is ancient Rome but the story is identical, except that the protagonist's delirium is attributed to a fever and not to a pregnancy. Hipparchia renews her inner life by turning to the Egyptian deity, Isis:

The garment of her present body was worn out. Outside there was another garment waiting to cover her wan shoulders. It was blue, blue, blue.... There is Isis in blue. I will claim her. I will be her.... Isis had no attributes. The Greeks were gods of action. Isis was a blue cloud....¹⁴

It was the Egyptian gods' "lack of attributes" - by which H.D. meant the total absence of human limitations - which was the source of that fascination with Egypt which was the prelude to H.D.'s later occult research. In another story from Palimpsest, "Secret Name," H.D. reveals that ultimately the Greek way of seeing was too human, and therefore too limited, to correspond to her infinite inner reality:

Here [in Egypt] there was no need of measure, of self-scale.... The Athenian made a god, strict and subtle, by which a human soul could (by standing tip-toe) by making the the greatest of physical and psychic effort, yet contrast himself. He was (to the god) a brother, dwarfed yet still a human relative. In Egypt...one measured oneself by new and as yet unpremeditated standards. Crouched on the temple wall, she was some long and tenuous insect, drawn inward to the heart of the moon-flower.¹⁵

Despite her discovery of Egypt and the occult, H.D. never abandoned ancient Greece as a source of inspiration; Greece

henceforth became merely one thread, albeit a dominant one, in the syncretic pattern of her later thought.

H.D.'s pregnancy, if it stimulated her to make new psychic discoveries, was creating great difficulties in her personal relationships. Despising Gray for his anxiety to cover up the scandal, H.D. left him and returned to London to find D. H. Lawrence set against her: after she told him that she was expecting Gray's child, he broke off all contact with her. Aldington too turned against H.D., withdrawing his earlier offer to look after her and the child and even threatening to denounce his wife if she registered the child in his name. In early 1919 H.D. received the news of the death of her brother Gilbert in France, and of the death of her father from shock immediately afterwards.

Debilitated physically and psychologically, H.D. contracted double pneumonia and the doctors did not expect her to survive. As recounted in Tribute to Freud, the miracle which was needed to save H.D. and her daughter, and to lead them to a new life, arrived from an unexpected quarter:

The material and spiritual burden of pulling us out of danger fell upon a young woman whom I had only recently met.... Her pseudonym is Bryher and we all call her Bryher. If I got well she would herself see that the baby was protected and cherished and she would take me to a new world, a new life, to the land, spiritually of my predilection, geographically of my dreams. We would go to Greece....¹⁶

(ii) Bryher

Bryher, as Annie Winifred Ellerman chose to call herself, was the daughter of Sir John Ellerman, the shipping magnate who was reputed to be the wealthiest man in Britain. A precociously intelligent child who resented the restrictiveness of her over-protective Victorian upbringing, Bryher decided at an early age that she would assert her freedom of spirit through writing. In 1914, at the age of eighteen, she published Region of Lutany, a volume of poems in the style of Francis Thompson which became a source of embarrassment to Bryher after her discovery of Imagism.¹⁷

The book which changed Bryher's life was Sea Garden: she learnt it by heart and was determined to meet its author. In her autobiography, The Heart to Artemis, Bryher recalls her first meeting with H.D. at Bosigran Castle in July 1917:

The door opened and I started in surprise. I had seen the face before, on a Greek statue or in some indefinable territory of the mind. We were meeting again after a long absence but not for the first time.¹⁸

This was the beginning of a complex relationship between the two women that would endure until H.D.'s death in 1961.

Without Bryher's emotional and financial support, H.D. would almost certainly have died in 1919. Bryher's promise of a trip to Greece gave H.D. a reason to live, and at the end of March she gave birth to a daughter who was named

Frances Perdita. Nowhere is H.D.'s interweaving of life and art more strikingly evident than in her naming of her daughter. In Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale Perdita is the daughter of Hermione, the woman who became a statue and whose name H.D. made her own in two autobiographical novels (Her and "Asphodel"). In the play Perdita is lost and then found, and the name "Frances Perdita" thus holds within it the memory of H.D.'s still-born child and of her lost lover, Frances Gregg.

When Pound visited H.D. in the nursing home before the birth of Perdita, "pounding, pounding" against the wall with his ebony stick, he announced: "my only real criticism is that this is not my child."¹⁹ In End to Torment, where H.D. recounts this story, Pound's phrase is linked to the development of the imago of the Child in H.D.'s work. This male spirit-Child appears in End to Torment itself, and is also the theme of one of H.D.'s last poems, "Winter Love," where the Child is Euphorion or Espérance. The poem is based on a legend that in her childhood Helen of Troy had been carried off by Odysseus, a story used by Rider Haggard and Andrew Lang in The World's Desire. H.D. had Pound consciously in mind when she wrote this work, Odysseus being one of the personae most frequently adopted by Pound; she herself appears under her own personae of Helen and Hermione. The Child is a complex symbol in this poem, but represents above all the spiritually perfect creation that issued from that moment long ago when "the Virgo breasts / swelled under the savage kiss of the ravening Odysseus." In "Winter Love" H.D.

fuses her life and her art into a single perfected image:

Hermione lived her life and lives in history;

Euphorion, Espérance, the infinite bliss,
lives in the hope of something that will be,

the past made perfect....²⁰

In 1919, however, the past haunted H.D. After the birth of Perdita, Richard Aldington brought her violets and asked her to come back to him, but subsequently threatened to have her imprisoned for perjury if she registered the child in his name. H.D. found the courage to register her daughter as Aldington's, but according to "Asphodel" was unable to stand Perdita's presence; with the help of the faithful Brigit Patmore, she placed the baby in a nursery. When Perdita grew a little older it was Bryher who took over her education and became in effect her second mother. Years later, H.D.'s daughter (now Perdita Schaffner) recalled: "I had two mothers. My real mother, H.D., who lived on an exceedingly rarefied plane. And her surrogate, Bryher, who took care of reality."²¹ In 1927 Bryher ratified this relationship by adopting Perdita.

In the months after her confinement, H.D. was absorbed in the intense relationship which was developing with Bryher. She urged the younger woman to take a flat with her, attracted by this new admirer but at the same time finding her somehow repellent: "that hateful hard child...hard, pedantic and so domineering," H.D. described Bryher in "Asphodel."²² Bryher's constant suicide threats menaced H.D.'s own psychic equilibrium as she records in "Asphodel"

and in a poem written in 1919 but published only recently, "I Said." The speaker attempts to extol the beauties of life to a friend who replies "'twere better, better being dead." The poem ends on a note of distress, the speaker's initially confident tone having been undermined:

Don't crouch on the floor
in the dark,
don't say the fear
is gnawing you and gnawing you away,
perhaps I have the same fear.

Don't tempt me any more. (CP 325)

The dissonance and flatness of these lines is characteristic of H.D.'s poetry when her belief in oracular inspiration deserts her and she becomes engulfed by quotidian reality. The contrast of the conclusion of "I said" with its opening, which is in the oracular style of H.D.'s later Imagist poetry, is dramatic:

I said:
"think how Hymettus pours divine honey,
think how the dawn vies
in the shelter of Hymettus,
with the clusters of field violet,
(rill on rill of violets!
parted and crested fire!)...." (CP 322)

In the years after the war H.D.'s writing became the quest for an artistic identity which could integrate the apparent formlessness and squalor of actual experience with what she believed to be the poet's true role: prophecy.

H.D.'s search for identity became enmeshed in her relationship with Bryher. On one level, Bryher represented a second Frances Gregg (the two women even shared the same

birthday, September 2nd) although Bryher never succeeded in erasing the imprint of H.D.'s first and greatest love. This new relationship raised once again the issues of gender and sexuality. Early in their friendship Bryher revealed to H.D. that she had always believed herself to be a boy trapped in a girl's body. At H.D.'s suggestion she consulted Havelock Ellis in early 1919:

...we got on to the question of whether I was a boy sort of escaped into the wrong body and he says it is a disputed subject but quite possible.... We agreed it was most unfair for it to happen but apparently I am quite justified in pleading I ought to be a boy, - I am just a girl by accident.²³

Hanns Sachs, Bryher's analyst from 1928 to 1932, likewise did not attempt to challenge Bryher's deep-rooted conviction that she had been born in the wrong body. Through H.D. Bryher came into contact with people who accepted her image of herself and provided a certain security for a personality which H.D. described to Pound as "borderline."²⁴

In two so-called novels, Development and Two Selves, Bryher told the story of her early life and her growing awareness of being a misfit in her environment. The opening of Two Selves delineates Bryher's psychological dualism:

Two selves. Jammed against each other, disjointed and ill-fitting. An obedient Nancy with heavy plaits tied over two ears that answered "yes, no, yes, no," according as the wind blew. A boy, a brain, that planned adventures and sought wisdom. Two personalities uneasy by their juxtaposition. As happy as if a sharp sword were thrust into a golf bag for a sheath.²⁵

There are similarities here with H.D.'s early psychological

experiences, but the fundamental difference was that H.D. had not drawn the conclusion that she was trapped in the wrong body, but rather that she was an androgynous being: to be merely male or merely female represented to H.D. a limitation of the spirit.

Bryher to some extent resolved her psychological dilemma through writing: "She could never be a sailor, she could never be a boy, but she could be an artist, she could be a writer" decides the protagonist of Development.²⁶ Bryher began her career with autobiographical novels and poetry much influenced by H.D.'s Imagism. She subsequently became interested in psychoanalysis, film and politics and wrote polemical articles on these subjects in Close Up, a film magazine which she financed and helped to run. During World War II she financed the London literary magazine, Life and Letters To-day, and in later years devoted herself to historical novels and travel books.

Bryher's achievement has tended to be over-shadowed by the figure of H.D., and also by her extreme reticence about her career. In her long life (she died in 1983 at the age of eighty-eight) Bryher gave financial assistance to many artists, including her close friends Dorothy Richardson and Edith Sitwell. Prior to World War II she supported a fund to help Austrian and German Jews escape through Switzerland, and her name was placed on a Nazi black list. Bryher never sought recognition for her patronage, and in a series of interviews with this author in 1980 she denied that her activities in this area were worthy of attention. Her

friends, however, attest to Bryher's immense generosity despite the fact that she herself, despite her wealth, lived frugally.²⁷

In their relationship it was Bryher who supported H.D. financially and took care of the more mundane aspects of life, providing H.D. with the freedom to devote herself to writing and to travel. For several years they were almost constantly together, travelling to Greece, America and Egypt. H.D. appears never to have been passionately attracted to Bryher as she had been to Frances Gregg, and soon took other lovers although her deepest emotional commitment was always to Bryher - her companion. H.D., Bryher and Perdita formed the nucleus of a "family," based in Switzerland, whose other components varied over the years. For a time, the family included the American writer Robert McAlmon whom Bryher married in 1921 in order to break free from her family. Bryher provided the financial backing for McAlmon's Paris publishing venture, *Contact*, while her married status lent respectability to the relationship with H.D.

Bryher divorced McAlmon in 1926, and the following year married H.D.'s lover Kenneth Macpherson: Bryher and Macpherson immediately adopted Perdita in order to protect her in the event of Aldington beginning divorce proceedings against H.D.²⁸ Bryher financed Macpherson's films (acted by H.D.) and together the threesome collaborated on the film magazine Close Up until Macpherson drifted out of the relationship in the mid-1930s. Lovers, male and female, came and went but the relationship between the two women endured

until H.D.'s death, as H.D. seems to prophesy in a poem written at the beginning of their life together, "We Two":

We two remain:
yet by what miracle,
searching within the tangles of my brain,
I ask again, have we two met within
this maze of daedal paths
in-wound mid grievous stone,
where once I stood alone? (CP 165)

(iii) "Notes on Thought and Vision"

Since post-war conditions and H.D.'s own weakened health prevented the immediate realization of Bryher's dream of taking H.D. to Greece, the two women went to the Scilly Isles in July 1919. The pseudonym "Bryher," which was later registered by deed poll, was taken from one of the wildest and loneliest of these islands where Bryher had passed the happiest moments of her adolescence. In this remote and wind-swept place which so resembled the setting of Sea Garden, H.D. had the visionary experience which inspired her to formulate her artistic principles in an essay called "Notes on Thought and Vision."

The "jelly-fish" experience, as Bryher referred to it, is described by H.D. in Tribute to Freud:

...I felt this impulse to "let go" into a sort of balloon or diving-bell...that seemed to hover over me.... When I tried to explain this to Bryher and told her it might be something sinister or danger-ous, she said, "No, no, it is the most wonderful thing I ever heard of. Let it come".... There was, I explained to Bryher, a second globe or bell-jar rising as it were from my feet. I was enclosed. I felt I was safe but seeing things as through water.²⁹

In her novel, The Bell Jar, Sylvia Plath uses the same image to describe the protagonist's sensation of being cut off from her own body and from the outside world: "To the person in the bell jar, blank and stopped as a dead baby, the world itself is the bad dream."³⁰ H.D.'s "bell jar" experience likewise originates in that mind-body dualism which was the core of her personality. The series of shocks that H.D. had

undergone during the war threatened to engulf her inner reality, and the "bell-jar" or "jelly-fish" experience may be interpreted as an instinctive, unconscious attempt to detach the inner self from the hostile outer world that Sylvia Plath calls the "bad dream." For a brief moment H.D. was able to transcend quotidian reality and historical time; under the bell-jar she was "immunized or insulated from the war disaster." (TF 116)

The tone of "Notes on Thought and Vision" is daemonic or prophetic. H.D. was convinced that Havelock Ellis, with whom she had struck up a close friendship during her pregnancy, would receive the work with enthusiasm but "he appeared unsympathetic, or else he did not understand or else he may have thought it was a danger signal." (TF 130) Freud's comment on this episode was that Bryher "by a miracle of love and intuition, understood what Dr. Ellis could never have understood."³¹ "Notes on Thought and Vision" is indeed a strange document, but it is central to the understanding of H.D. as a writer.

"Notes on Thought and Vision" describes a state of consciousness which H.D. calls "over-mind," a state of heightened spiritual awareness which opens up the world of vision. The sensation of this state of consciousness is described as an invisible cap, like the bell-jar:

That over-mind seems a cap, like water, transparent, fluid yet with definite body, contained in a definite space. It is like a closed sea-plant, jelly-fish or anemone.

Into that over-mind, thoughts pass and are visible like fish swimming under clear water.

The swing from normal consciousness to abnormal consciousness is accompanied by grinding discomfort and mental agony.³²

In the last sentence H.D. suggests something of the anguish she suffered as a result of her "split dual personality." Although the "jelly-fish" experience represented a confirmation of inner reality, such states of heightened awareness could be sustained only for brief periods.

In a letter to Bryher, signed "your world-wracked Hyacinthus," H.D. writes, "A thousand times I wish I had more strength and agility in jumping from one world to another! But if I am Greek I am gone - and the adjustment is painful."³³ The autobiographical prose which H.D. began to write in 1921 represents a search for a way of integrating the two worlds. "Notes on Thought and Vision" is an early attempt by H.D. to theorize new directions for her creativity while at the same time reaffirming the artistic consciousness which informs her Imagist poetry.

H.D. opens "Notes on Thought and Vision" with the assertion that body, mind and over-mind must develop in harmony, and that physical relationships are necessary "at certain times of life" to ensure normal development. The tendency of the rest of the work, however, is to negate the body and physical existence as such:

When a creative scientist, artist or philosopher has been for some hours or days intent on his work, his mind often takes on an almost physical character. That is his mind becomes his real body. His over-mind becomes his brain.³⁴

H.D. refers constantly to the body, identifying the two

centres of consciousness as the brain and the "love-region." That she does not mean the physical body is made clear from her discussion of the senses ("super-feelings") in the following passage:

These feelings extend out and about us, as the long, floating tentacles of the jelly-fish reach out and about him. They are not of different material, extraneous, as the physical arms and legs are extraneous to the gray matter of the directing brain. The super-feelers are part of the super-mind....³⁵

The rejection of the physical body is unequivocal: it is "extraneous" to the mind. The perfected body of which H.D. is aware during visionary experiences is a projection of mind itself.

Love is the central doctrine of "Notes on Thought and Vision." H.D.'s discussion of the relationship between love, vision and creativity is inspired by Socrates' discourse on love in the Symposium. H.D. argues that the mysteries of vision are only accessible to those who are "in love." The basis of this love must be a profound intellectual affinity, which is not "dissipated in physical relation":

The minds of the two lovers merge, interact in sympathy of thought.

The brain, inflamed and excited by this interchange of idea, takes on its character of over-mind, becomes (as I have visualised it in my own case) a jelly-fish, placed over and about the brain.

The love-region is excited by the appearance of the loved one, its energy not dissipated in physical relation, takes on its character of mind, becomes this womb-brain or love-brain that I have visualised as a jelly-fish in the body.

The love-brain and over-brain are both capable of thought. This thought is vision.³⁶

Apart from H.D.'s talk about jelly-fish and womb-brains, the passage is drawn entirely from Diotima's discourse to Socrates on love and creativity. The object of love, according to Diotima, is not beauty but the procreation of beauty; the poet, inspired by his lover, begets spiritual progeny. The path to the perfect revelation of the love-mysteries begins in youth with the contemplation of physical beauty. The young man will "first fall in love with one particular beautiful person and beget noble sentiments in partnership with him." Later the lover will "become a lover of all physical beauty, and will relax the intensity of his passion for one particular person." The lover then passes through stages of awareness of moral beauty and the beauty of knowledge before coming to know absolute beauty.³⁷

The source of the attraction which Socrates' philosophy exercised over H.D. was its mind-body dualism, which is like a mirror of her own. Diotima asks:

What may we suppose to be the felicity of the man who sees absolute beauty in its essence, pure and unalloyed, who, instead of a beauty tainted by human flesh and colour and a mass of perishable rubble, is able to apprehend divine beauty where it exists apart and alone.³⁸

The theory of love and creativity which H.D. expounds in "Notes on Thought and Vision" is one of impersonality. Drawing on Camille Flammarion's comparison of psychic transmissions to wireless telegraphy in Death and Its Mystery, H.D. describes the beauty of a lover, a tree or a statue as transmitting a "definite message...like dots and

lines ticked off by one receiving station, received and translated into definite thought by another telegraphic centre."³⁹ As examples of great artists who live in the world of pure over-mind, and whose love is impersonal, H.D. cites Leonardo da Vinci, Meleager of Gadara and Christ. According to H.D. these men fell in love with things as well as people, but this love was not a human passion: it was the love of the spiritual energies which people and things embodied, and which facilitated contact with the world of over-mind.

Again and again H.D. returns in this work to the contemplation of nature as a form of love which opens up the world of vision. She projects herself into the poet Lo-fu's contemplation of a single apple branch. First, she writes, he observed the branch; when he knew its every individual feature, he was able to project himself into the branch:

...in his little cool room, out of the sun he closed his eyes. He saw that branch but more clearly, more vividly than ever. That branch was his mistress now, his love...the world had ceased to exist. It was shut off, shut out, forgotten. His love, his apple branch, his beautiful subtle mistress, was his. And having possessed her with his great and famished soul, she was his forever.⁴⁰

The possession of nature by the soul, as the final stage of contemplation, could also describe H.D.'s relationship with the natural world in her Imagist poems. Elsewhere in "Notes on Thought and Vision" H.D. suggests that the work of art is the projection of the artist's inner self:

When Leonardo da Vinci worked, his brain was Leonardo, the personality, Leonardo da Vinci.... The Madonna of the Rocks is not a picture. It is a window. We look through a window into the world of pure over-mind.⁴¹

Although "Notes on Thought and Vision" is primarily concerned with "over-mind," H.D. returns almost obsessively to the body, seeking a way to integrate it into her scheme. Lo-fu's fruit tree and the human body "are both receiving stations, capable of storing up energy, over-world energy." This statement sheds light upon that passion for statues which had prompted Aldington to call H.D. "sister of Charmides." The statue represents for H.D. the pure over-world energy of the body untainted by the corruption of the flesh:

The body of the Greek boy, Polycleitus used for his Diuademenos [sic], was as impersonal a thing as a tree. He used the body instead of a tree. That boy's body was, of course, capable of human passions but Polycleitus' approach to that body was not through the human passions.

But of course he was in love with it just as Lo-fu was in love with apple branch [sic] and Leonardo with the boy's face of the Gallilean [sic] with the field lilies.⁴²

The body, however, continues to present difficulties for H.D. in this work. "Where does the body come in? What is the body?" she asks. She explores a number of ways of integrating physical existence, that "elementary, unbeautiful and transitory form of life," into the creative life. The body is likened to the oyster which casts off the pearl of the spirit, or the coal which gives off heat, but invariably H.D. undermines her own attempt to acknowledge

the reality of the body: "It is all spirit but spirit in different forms."⁴³ The entire material world, not simply the body, becomes for H.D. pure spirit or Christ himself:

Christ was the grapes that hung against the sun-lit walls of that mountain garden, Nazareth. He was the white hyacinth of Sparta and the narcissus of the islands. He was the conch shell and the purple-fish left by the lake tides. He was the body of nature, the vine, the Dionysus, and he was the soul of nature.⁴⁴

The themes of "Notes on Thought and Vision" are not new to H.D.'s work, but its syncretism represents a departure from that exclusive concentration on ancient Greece that characterized her Imagist period. In Cornwall, during her pregnancy, many religious traditions had "suddenly all blended, all at one, good and bad alike, welded one in the mystery."⁴⁵ It was in this period that she wrote the poem "Simaetha," which she described as "a Sicilian witch-piece," and identified herself with the Cornish witch, Morgan le Fay.⁴⁶ In "Notes on Thought and Vision," too, H.D. identifies her pregnancy as the beginning of a new kind of consciousness:

Is it easier for a woman to attain this state of consciousness [over-mind] than for a man?

For me, it was before the birth of my child that the jelly-fish consciousness seemed to come definitely into the field or realm of the intellect or brain.⁴⁷

"Notes on Thought and Vision" syncretizes Greek and Chinese philosophies, Flammarion's occult science, the Eleusinian mysteries, contemporary psychological theories and much else. D. H. Lawrence had not yet published his two

essays on psychoanalysis, "Fantasia of the Unconscious" and "Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious," but it is probable that he and H.D. had discussed the theories espoused in these works. H.D. much later, after analysis by Freud and others, professed intolerance for Lawrence's psychoanalytical writings but there are some similarities between her work and his, notably in his discussions of tree worship and of the two planes of consciousness (the spiritual and the sensual). However, H.D.'s opposition to certain of Lawrence's ideas may have been more important to "Notes on Thought and Vision" than the areas of agreement. Apart from her suggestion that a woman's "womb-consciousness" may facilitate the attainment of over-mind, H.D. does not distinguish between male and female. Lawrence, on the contrary, insists that the man represents being and action, while the woman's world is one of love, emotion and sympathy. In Bid Me to Live H.D. expresses her repugnance at Lawrence's "blood-stream, his sex-fixations, his man-is-man, woman-is-woman."⁴⁸ "Notes on Thought and Vision" theorizes liberation from the human passions into the realm of pure spirit, the world of vision.

Despite H.D.'s disappointment at Havelock Ellis's lack of appreciation of "Notes on Thought and Vision," the friendship between them intensified. In her *Autobiographical Notes* H.D. records apropos of a visit to Havelock Ellis, "I had psychic experience, felt I had failed to cross border, but later fully realized the experience, without nerve-strain."⁹ Havelock Ellis's biographer, Phyllis

Grosskurth, reveals an episode dating from this period which is probably the "psychic experience" referred to by H.D. In the Third Series of his Impressions and Comments Ellis describes the visits made to him by a "Person" whom he regards as a visitant from a far world, an embodiment of the "Divine Image":

I speak of her as a woman, yet she was in a sense beyond the distinction of sex, at once a married mother and an adolescent virginal youth, and these two together, not by any inharmonious clash, but lifted into the higher unity of a being who belongs to another race.⁵⁰

On one of her visits the Person reveals to Ellis a transcendent vision by satisfying his own particular form of sexual variation which he called "urolognia" or "undinism" - his sexual pleasure in seeing a woman urinate. Ellis here describes H.D. as she would wish to be seen, but she was distressed by his publication of the following passage:

The tall form languidly arose and stood erect, taut and massive it seemed now...and the form before me seemed to become some adorable Olympian vase, and a large stream gushed afar in the glistering liquid arch, endlessly, it seemed to my wondering eyes, as I contemplated with enthralled gaze this prototypal statue of the Fountain of Life, carved by the hands of some daring and divine architect, out of marble like flesh....⁵¹

Despite Ellis's publication of this episode, H.D. would always retain a deep affection for him, nicknaming him Chiron - the wise teacher.

In 1920, when Bryher and H.D. realized their dream of going to Greece, Havelock Ellis accompanied the two women as

their guest. H.D. was still in an overwrought state, and on the boat had another psychic experience that would haunt her writing in the coming years. She struck up a friendship with one of the other passengers, the archeologist Peter Rodeck, who appears in Tribute to Freud under the name of Peter Van Eck in order to maintain anonymity. H.D. writes in Tribute to Freud that she had believed herself to be on the deck with Peter Van Eck watching the dolphins, but that Van Eck denied the episode and that no dolphins had been sighted by the crew. She decides that this was an experience of astral projection or doubling and links it to her reading of Algernon Blackwood's novel, The Centaur, in which a boat on its way to Greece suddenly "slipped into enchantment."⁵²

The Centaur, which H.D. read repeatedly, had considerable influence on the shaping of her thought. Algernon Blackwood refers to doubles and divided selves, the Urmensch and the Urwelt. He constantly quotes Gustav Fechner, and in particular Fechner's theory that the earth is a living, conscious Being to which is attached an immense Collective Consciousness. Centaurs are said still to live on the earth, although to see them means death - which is a return to the Urwelt.⁵³

In her prose H.D. told the story of "the Man on the boat" many times over. She saw Rodeck only occasionally over the years, but regarded his marriage and ordination into the Anglican church as a betrayal. As she did with so many other people in her life, H.D. appropriated Rodeck so that he existed for her only as a fantasm of her own personality.

When Rodeck failed to conform to her image of him, the clash between inner and outer realities caused her deep suffering.

Similarly, the clash between H.D.'s expectations of Greece and its modern reality was a shock to H.D. The final blow was the impossibility of reaching Delphi. Relations became strained between the two women and Havelock Ellis, who found them both "very peculiar" but in particular H.D. whom he described as "selfish, weak, and excitable." Ellis decided to return to England alone, a decision he was glad to have taken when he found out that in Corfu, after his departure, H.D. had seen a series of visions projected on the walls of her room and gone "right out of her mind." Bryher had had to take her home overland.⁵⁴

The first part of Tribute to Freud is entitled "The Writing on the Wall" in acknowledgement of the central role this episode had in H.D.'s analysis by Freud. Although H.D. spoke of her other psychic experiences with Freud, he picked out only the Corfu episode of April 1920 as "being dangerous, or hinting of danger or a dangerous tendency or symptom."⁵⁵ Before seeing the visions H.D. began to sing and dance a series of "Indian dance-pictures" in which she assumed various personae, including Minnehaha, a medicine man gathering plants, a Spanish woman, a Japanese girl and a Tibetan priest. Freud dismissed H.D.'s suggestion that this dance-drama may have been a form of possession or connected with magic or the old mysteries. In a letter to Bryher, H.D. records that "papa [Freud] seems to imply that I wanted all along in uc-n [unconscious] to be an actress, and that is

one reason I am never satisfied with writing."⁵⁶

The "dance-pictures" were followed by H.D.'s vision of a series of seven "shadow- or light-pictures" projected on the wall like colourless transfers: the head of a soldier, a goblet, a tripod, a ladder, the figure of Athene Nike, a series of question marks, and a series of triangles. Unlike the other visions, the Nike was not flat or static but moved in space with the question marks opening out towards her; finally she moved through the tent-like triangles which constituted the last picture. Around the base of the tripod there had been a swarm of black insects, which H.D. interprets as humanity: "people, people - did they annoy me so? Would they perhaps cloud my vision or, worse still, would one of them get 'stuck in my eye'?" (TF 48) When H.D. dropped her head in her hands, Bryher (who up until that moment had seen nothing) saw a final vision: a sun-disc in which a man (Helios) was reaching out to draw a woman (Nike) into the sun beside him.

Freud "translated" the writing on the wall as H.D.'s desire for union with her mother, rejecting any interpretation which hinted of the occult; he regarded these visions as a dangerous symptom in that they represented "a sort of unclassified 'delerium [sic]'."⁵⁷ H.D., on the other hand, is primarily interested in placing her visions in an ancient tradition of writing-on-walls, of "warnings or messages from another state of being." She interprets her visions as a sign of her prophetic mission as a writer, although in this psychoanalytic work she proceeds relatively cautiously,

concealing and revealing at the same time:

Religion, art and medicine, through the latter ages, became separated. These three working together, to form a new vehicle of expression or a new form of thinking or of living, might be symbolized by the tripod, the third of the images on the wall before me.... The tripod...was the symbol of prophecy, prophetic utterance or occult or hidden knowledge; the Priestess or Pythoness of Delphi sat on the tripod while she pronounced her verse couplets, the famous Delphic utterances which could be read two ways.

We can read my writing, the fact that there was writing, in two ways or in more than two ways. We can read or translate it as a suppressed desire for forbidden "signs and wonders," breaking bounds, a suppressed desire to be a Prophetess, to be important anyway, megalomania they call it - a hidden desire to "found a new religion".... Or this writing on the wall is merely an extension of the artist's mind.... (TF 50-51)

In this passage H.D. delineates the path which lay ahead of her after World War I: writing as prophecy, as the creation of a new form of thinking in which religion, art and science would work together.

On one level, the "dance-pictures" and visions may be regarded as the projection of a short prose work, distinctly prophetic in tone that H.D. had written in Athens before leaving for Corfu: "Helios and Athene."⁵⁸ The climax of the trip to Greece was to have been a visit to Delphi, but this proved impossible due to post-war conditions. Greece in fact was not the Hellas of her dreams, and H.D.'s disappointment may have led her to flee within her own psyche in order to realize on a visionary plane what was lacking in reality.

In "Helios and Athene" H.D. in fact invites the kind of "possession" which occurred in Corfu: "Let daemons possess us! Let us terrify like Erynnes, the whole tribe of academic

Grecians!" (CP 328) H.D. urges a religious experience of Greek art and culture rather than an academic one. Once again the idea of the statue as a link between the human and the divine lies at the heart of the work, but H.D. takes the argument a step further than in "Notes on Thought and Vision." She writes that the Greek sculptor's work began when it was finished: the statue is merely the point of departure for the mind's flight into the the higher mysteries.

"Helios and Athene" was inspired by H.D.'s fascination with the Greek mystery religions and with the goddess Athene. "Helios and Athene" is an attempt to reconcile Delphi, the centre of music and inspiration, with the intellectual abstraction represented by Athens. The final section of the brief essay is devoted to Athene, the cold and abstract goddess whose spiritual evolution is so high that she can only be approached through the mysteries and the intercession of other gods, never directly. This is the Nike whom H.D. saw in vision followed by a series of question marks. In H.D.'s essay, Athene becomes the symbol of H.D.'s own creative path. The goddess whose love protected the Eleusinian cult welds all mysteries into one, as symbolized by her perfect androgyny which combines into a higher spiritual unity the attributes of Demeter and of Phoebus (H.D. conflates Helios and Phoebus Apollo in this text):

The Love of Athene is symbolized by the arch of wings, for Demeter by the cavern or grot in the

earth, and for Phoebus by the very essential male power. Love for Athene is the surrender to neither, the merging and welding of both, the conquering in herself of each element, so that the two merge in the softness and tenderness of the mother and the creative power and passion of the male. In her hand is the symbol of this double conquest and double power, the winged Nike. (CP 330)

Havelock Ellis's later description of H.D. herself as combining into a higher spiritual unity the physical characteristics of the mother and the adolescent youth echoes this passage from "Helios and Athene" which H.D. may have shown to him in Athens in the spring of 1920.

In her subsequent work, H.D. consistently identifies herself with the Athene Nike whom she had seen moving across the wall of her room in Corfu, followed by a series of question marks. By merging and welding all mysteries into one, H.D. hoped to find the answer to the question mark that hovers behind all her writing, the question mark of her own identity.

Chapter Four: Palimpsest

(i) The Autobiographical Impulse

In 1921, on her return from five months in America with Bryher, H.D. embarked on the writing of a series of autobiographical novels in which she responds to the challenge of the question marks she had seen projected on the wall in Corfu. Engulfed by quotidian reality and threatened with the disintegration of her personality, H.D. turned to her past in order to find herself as a woman and an artist.

In all of H.D.'s prose there is only one character: H.D. herself. Even the historical novels are versions of H.D.'s own life. She thought of her prose as a palimpsest, a parchment from which one writing was removed in order to make way for another which told the same story in a different setting or a different period. The primary layer of this palimpsest is represented by four novels in which H.D. explicitly recounts the story of her own life, changing the names but recording with precision people, events and places. The four novels are "Paint It To-day," "Asphodel," Her and Bid Me to Live.¹

Of these four novels, only Bid Me to Live was published in H.D.'s lifetime. She made no attempt to publish the other novels, apparently considering them too private. In 1949 H.D. wrote of Bid Me to Live:

I had been trying to write this story, since 1921. I wrote in various styles, simply or elaborately, stream-of-consciousness or straight narrative. I re-wrote this story under various titles, in London and in Switzerland. But...last winter I was able conscientiously to destroy the earlier versions.²

H.D. wrote "DESTROY" on the typescript of "Asphodel" but the instruction was never carried out. Bid Me to Live, although the most finished of the four texts, tells only a small part of the story that H.D. began to write in 1921. "Paint It To-day," Her and "Asphodel" together span H.D.'s life from her adolescence until the end of World War I, while Bid Me to Live deals only with a very brief period at the end of the first world war.

Again and again in these novels H.D. returns to the same events: her relationships with Ezra Pound and Frances Gregg, the still-birth of her first child, World War I, the disintegration of her marriage. Although each one of these novels tells a story, as a series they do not follow a linear or chronological sequence; the stories overlap each other, as if incessantly searching for new meaning in the same episode. The strictly autobiographical nature of these episodes is verifiable by comparison with documents concerning H.D.'s life. Occasionally artistic considerations induce H.D. to make minor modifications of autobiographical fact, such as the telescoping in Her of events which in H.D.'s life were spread out over several years. In general, however, the episodes around which the four novels are constructed faithfully reproduce selected events of H.D.'s own life.

The autobiographical impulse which prompted H.D. to turn from poetry to prose in 1921 prefigures her later interest in psychoanalysis. It is even possible that her obsession with the reinterpretation of her own life was in part influenced by contact with psychoanalytic theory. In Her H.D. suggests that she may have read early psychoanalytical works with Frances Gregg as early as 1910, but she certainly came into contact with Freudian theories after World War I through her friendship with Havelock Ellis and through Bryher's enthusiasm for the new discipline. In her autobiography, The Heart to Artemis, Bryher recalls the post-war intellectual climate:

The war had brought such a complete reversal of values that it was a good climate for the psychological research that was just beginning to be generally known.... I felt very much at home in this early atmosphere of the investigation of human states. Ellis gave me the first paper by Freud I ever read.... I started to read whatever was available of Freud in translation and became one of the first subscribers to the British Journal of Psychoanalysis and it was Ellis who gave me the introduction that enabled me to meet Freud himself in 1927.³

From 1931 until her death H.D. worked with five different analysts, including Freud, but her interest in psychoanalysis nonetheless remained highly selective, even idiosyncratic. Characteristically, she tended to appropriate only those elements of Freudian theory which could be adapted to her own way of perceiving herself and the world around her.

One of H.D.'s intentions in her autobiographical novels

was self-analysis, although not in any specifically Freudian sense of the term. In becoming "H.D." in 1912, she had symbolically rejected her past and the identity imposed upon her by the past: the initials represented an identity which was "pure spirit."⁵ The shocks of the war years, however, released a flood of memories which threatened to engulf H.D. It became imperative for her to analyse these memories in order to trace and reassemble the dispersed elements of her own identity.

H.D.'s first autobiographical novel, "Paint It To-day," was written in 1921, immediately after her return from America. She conceived of the novel as a self-portrait, emphasizing that "this is, at the moment, the only possible way I can work." The work is strictly autobiographical, but like the autobiography of St. Thérèse of Lisieux who later fascinated H.D., it is essentially the "history of a soul." H.D. writes:

...I am attempting, not so much, to reproduce an atmosphere, a medley of conditions and circumstances and surroundings, and to show how a single being pierced through them, or slung its tenuous way across them.... I am trying rather to give a picture of that being, that spider, that small hatched bird, that flawless shell that once contained an unborn being.⁶

The events and people and places in the novel are thus not significant in themselves, but only in so far as they throw into relief the outlines of the spirit like a star against the night sky. H.D. does not recount, as would a Freudian, the childhood and early adolescence of her protagonist, Midget. Those early years are reduced to the soul's "hunger"

or "yearning" for its double: Midget "wanted most passionately a girl child of her own age, a twin sister...."⁷

The original layer of the palimpsest of consciousness which is the real subject of H.D.'s prose is her love for Frances Gregg, her spiritual double. In "Paint It To-day" Frances Gregg is Josepha (her actual second name), and she enters Midget's life with the force of a spiritual conversion or rebirth: "there came as to Paul of Tarsus, light."⁸ In H.D.'s work the inner dynamism of her soul is invariably directed towards nature or statues rather than other human beings, with one exception: Frances Gregg. In "Paint It To-day" she depicts a passion that sweeps away Midget's former life:

The worlds had broken down, all the worlds, at least all the reasonable and reasoning worlds filled with all the people of the reason, parents, every friend, the shadow of the erstwhile fiancé [Pound], who had guessed at something but who had never penetrated beyond the worlds of to-day.⁹

"To-day" - quotidian reality - has been a "millstone," a "slave yolk about her neck," but it is annihilated by the intensity of Midget's passion for her spiritual double. The past and the future, which she also symbolizes as the morning and evening stars, represent the eternal plane of being which in "Notes and Thought and Vision" H.D. called "over-mind":

When she and Josepha...found themselves for the first time face to face, the present which was dead melted away and they were together in the past and in the future.¹⁰

This episode at the beginning of "Paint It To-day" generates the major themes of the novel, and of H.D.'s prose as a whole. "Paint It To-day" recounts H.D.'s own story: Frances Gregg's refusal to remain in London with H.D., Ezra Pound's intervention to prevent H.D. from joining the Wilkinson/Powys ménage on Frances's honeymoon, H.D.'s marriage to Aldington and its disintegration, the horror of the war years, the birth of Perdita. What connects all these episodes and transforms autobiographical fact into "fiction" is the development of themes within the boundaries of the work itself. The stated theme of the novel is the protagonist's attempt to "find a link" between the eternal state of being and quotidian reality.¹¹

In H.D.'s fiction there is always a tension between different planes of consciousness, and nowhere is this more apparent than in her autobiographical novels. H.D. seeks a way of integrating the external world - the "facts" of her own life - with the inner world whose values are spiritual. The unevenness of much of H.D.'s prose originates in this attempt to harmonize the underlying consciousness. H.D.'s mind-body duality is at the centre of her prose, and the psychic fluctuations caused by this dual identity are mercilessly reflected in her fiction.

One of the major critical difficulties presented by H.D.'s work is its apparent discontinuity. The hard, clear outlines of the Imagist poetry appear only in patches in the prose, which tends to be formless and repetitive. Frequently H.D.'s creativity seems held down by the autobiographical

material, her writing empty of that extraordinary intensity with which her Imagist poems vibrate. Only when H.D. enters the same plane of consciousness out of which she created her early poems does the prose vibrate with the same intensity. "Paint It To-day" attempts to recreate moments of heightened awareness, but the prose is descriptive where the poems had concentrated emotion, sensation and perception into a single complex image. After the shocks of the war years, however, H.D. was compelled by a crisis of artistic identity to turn to autobiographical prose. The oracular inspiration of the early poetry had risen out of H.D.'s conviction that her inner world was the true reality, but after the war she was unable to ignore the other reality which rushed in on her. The experience of being in a bell-jar may be interpreted as a defence of her inner world, but even in that moment of isolation H.D. could see the outside world through the glass.

In "Paint It To-day," H.D. reveals that although she had previously been "touched by the shadow of an understanding," her real awakening to the spiritual plane of being was her love for Frances Gregg. Through the "intensity of her passion" she had "found the door to another world."¹² In Her H.D. uses the same image in recounting her first meeting with Frances Gregg, and also reiterates the same Pauline language of spiritual conversion:

...she had passed out in the twinkling of an eye into another forest. This forest was reality. There, the very speaking of words, conjured up answering sigil.... A whole world was open. She looked in through a wide doorway.¹³

Her, which H.D. wrote in 1927, is more successful as a novel than "Paint It To-day." In the earlier novel, H.D.'s attempt to assimilate events and people into her inner world so as to confirm its reality is never convincing. The autobiographical material remains formless and repetitive; even when H.D. speaks of her flights into the world of vision the prose lacks vitality, as if only the ghost of a memory is being described. In Her, however, the subjectivity is direct and vibrant. H.D. succeeds throughout the novel in animating the autobiographical material with the heightened consciousness whose origins she attributes to her passion for Frances Gregg.

Her, the story of how she became a writer, is revelatory of H.D.'s creative processes. It was the meeting with Frances Gregg that released H.D.'s latent creativity by opening a window onto a new plane of consciousness in which the merely quotidian or material world is transformed into subjectivity. In Her, Fayne/Frances is the mirror of the self, a mirror in which the personality finally experiences itself as a unity instead of a duality:

...Hermione] realized her head - the bit here, the bit there, the way it fitted bit to bit - was two convex mirrors placed back to back. The two convex mirrors placed back to back became one mirror. . .as Fayne Rabb entered. (Her 138)

What Her sees before her is Fayne Rabb dressed as Pygmalion: the mirror image of the self is "a boy in a tunic." Fayne likewise finds her double in Her, but with her second sight

predicts the ambiguities inherent in a passion which is the projection of the self. Fayne tells Her:

Something in you makes me hate you. Drawn to you
I am repulsed, drawn away from you, I am negated.
You are not myself but you are some projection
of myself. Myself, myself projected you like
water.... (Her 146)

Fayne predicts that this relationship will not endure; as Midget/H.D. came to realize at the end of "Paint It To-day," this relationship was "a remote and impossible sister-hood ...ghostly and unreal."¹⁴ Inevitably, as H.D. recounts in her early autobiographical novels, this narcissistic love was shattered by the impact of reality: Frances Gregg was a real person, not simply a projection of H.D.'s self, and hence behaved autonomously.

The sense of betrayal which haunts H.D.'s work has its origins in the gap between her appropriation of people as fantasms of her own subjectivity, and their real existence in the outside world. Frances Gregg became the prototype for other figures whom H.D. perceived as spiritual doubles, and thus absorbed into her inner world. Some of these figures have already been mentioned: Walter Rummel, with whom H.D. was infatuated in 1911-12, and Peter Rodeck, the "Man on the boat" on H.D.'s first trip to Greece. These "lovers" appear in H.D.'s prose not as characters, but as mirrors of H.D. herself. Walter Dowel/Rummel in "Asphodel" is a projection of H.D. in which she sees reflected her own inner self: "O Walter you are like great dog-wood trees, men are trees sometimes."¹⁵ H.D. seeks to recreate that moment with Frances Gregg in which she experienced herself as a unity

where there had been duality; she seeks to reconcile the inner and outer worlds by finding reflections of her self in people and things.

Her is a highly sophisticated rendering of subjectivity. The protagonist begins as a "nebulous" personality whose fears of disintegration are suggested by drowning imagery:

Her Gart looked up into liriiodendron branches and flat tree became, to her, lily pad on green pool. She was drowned now. She could no longer struggle. Clutching out toward some definition of herself, she found that "I am Her Gart" didn't let her hold on. Her fingers slipped off; she was no longer anything. (Her 4)

Even before the meeting with Fayne which transforms her mode of perception, Her identifies with her brother, a spiritual double whose marriage she regards as a betrayal. The forest near her home, where she escapes her family, exists in the novel primarily as a projection of H.D.'s own inner self. When George tries to make love to her in the forest, Her escapes into her inner world:

It was George about to bend, he was near, he was coming nearer, he was small, he could never, never come near for Hermione looks far and far and George was a midge and an acorn-cup would shelter herself. . .for. . .I am a tree planted by the river of water. George did not know that, was midge under peony, I am the word tree....

George could never love a tree properly. (Her 73)
This intense inner life only finds its true direction (which is ultimately creativity) through Her's passion for Fayne. At last she is able to project her secret vitality onto

another person, and is able to experience wholeness of being. The grammatical ambiguities of Hermione's nickname are exploited in order to convey the full impact of her projection:

Things are not agaçant now I know her. I know her. Her. I am Her. She is Her. Knowing her, I know Her. She is some amplification of myself like amoeba giving birth, by breaking off, to amoeba. I am a sort of mother, sort of sister to Her. (Her 158)

Her's love for Fayne empowers the formerly nebulous personality by transforming its relationship with external reality. Her's decision to become a writer is the direct outcome of her new way of perceiving the whole world as potentially a projection of the self: at the end of the novel the world is a white expanse of snow which is ready for the imprint of Her's feet. The world is "razed" so that it may be remade in Her's image, for she is now the "Creator." An epiphany of Fayne, whose hand reaches out to Her, enables Her to realize her metamorphosis into a writer; the "nebulous," drowning personality becomes "a star shining white against winter daylight."¹⁶

In Her, the development of the theme of the projection of the inner self onto external reality carries the novel inexorably to the conclusion in which Her becomes aware of her artistic vocation. In this novel, H.D. succeeds in animating the autobiographical material with an artistic consciousness that vibrates with an inner vitality. Unlike "Paint It To-day" and "Asphodel," Her is not a descriptive novel but a dynamic one, in which H.D. seems to project

herself into her own past in order to bring it to life again.

In Her, H.D. places in the mouth of George Lowndes/ Ezra Pound the work's only explicit reference to the myth of Narcissus:

...[Hermione] said, "Anyhow I love - I love only Her, only Her, Her, Her." And [George] said "Narcissus in the reeds. Narcissa. Are you a water lily?" And she said "No, no, no - George have another orange?" (Her 170)

Although Her brushes away George's observation, H.D. allows an important theme to come to the surface: her narcissism. Characteristically, H.D. simultaneously conceals and reveals in her writing, raising important issues but without drawing conclusions. This ambiguity is nowhere more apparent than in Tribute to Freud, where H.D. again brings up the subject of narcissism. In the "Advent" section, which is based on a diary she kept during her analysis, H.D. describes a session with Freud in which she recounts a dream about a mirror which is set in velvet with flowers painted on it. H.D. introduces the Narcissus theme in a deceptively casual manner: "...there are other flowers but I can only recall the narcissus, some association possibly with the myth of Narcissus falling in love with his reflection in a pool." (TF 151) Frances Gregg subsequently appears in the dream, and H.D. feels that Frances is trying to hurt her by reminding her of distressing memories of old acquaintances. Pound and Freud later enter the dream too, and H.D. abandons the subject of her relationship with Frances Gregg. Abruptly,

she returns to this relationship in the last paragraph of the diary entry:

When I told the Professor that I had been infatuated with Frances Josepha and might have been happy with her, he said, "No - biologically, no." For some reason, though I had been so happy with the Professor (Freud - Freude), my head hurt and I felt unnerved. Perhaps it was because at the end I tried to tell him of one special air-raid when the windows of our room in Mecklenburgh Square were shattered. (TF 152)

The last sentence casts a veil of ambiguity over the entire passage. Like Hermione's "George have another orange," mention of the totally unrelated story of the air-raid is an attempt to diminish the significance of H.D.'s association of herself with the myth of Narcissus - yet even H.D. is unable to avoid reference to a myth which is so suggestive of the personality she depicts in her prose.

Bid Me to Live, the last of H.D.'s strictly autobiographical works, is a heavily revised and cut version of "Asphodel," a novel in two parts which spans H.D.'s life from her departure for Europe with Frances Gregg until the birth of Perdita. Bid Me to Love eliminates the earlier period, and concentrates on the war years. H.D. may have written this work at Freud's suggestion, as a therapy for the writer's block from which H.D. suffered in the 1920s and 1930s. Freud attributed H.D.'s difficulties with writing to her blocking out of her World War I experiences. In a letter to Bryher, H.D. writes of the results of a session with Freud:

Evidently I blocked the whole of the "period" [World War I] and if I can skeleton-in a vol. about it, it will break the clutch. I can only build up on that old foundation.... But the "cure" will be, I fear me, writing that damn vol. straight, as history, no frills as in *Narthex*, *Palimp[sest]* and so on, just straight narrative, then later, changing names and so on.¹⁷

In her next letter to Bryher, H.D. reports that Freud insists that she should make the 1913-1920 period "explicit" in a novel, but reflects that "it will need a lot of 'guts'...to get the thing down in a stern manner and not leap goat-like on the top of things in a dope-y stream of consciousness like *Narthex*."¹⁸

Although in *Bid Me to Live* H.D. succeeds in disciplining the "dope-y" excesses of much of her earlier prose, she inevitably resorted to the stream of consciousness technique which allowed her to project her own subjectivity. Like *Her*, the novel begins with a protagonist whose personality is threatened with engulfment, and concludes with the emergence of a new state of consciousness which is again likened to a star:

The greater the gap in consciousness, the more black-hole-of-Calcutta the gap; the more unformed the black nebula, by reasoning, the more glorious would be the opening up into clear defined space, or the more brilliant a star-cluster would emerge, if somehow, at some time, the surface could be adequately dealt with.¹⁹

The still-birth of Julia/H.D.'s first child, even though it was unwanted, becomes a symbol of the "present which is dead," as H.D. had described it in "Paint It To-day." Julia denies that the horror and destruction of the war is "real"

for "reality lived in the minds of those who had lived before that August [1914]." (BMT 24) As Julia cringes from physical contact with her soldier-husband, Rafe Ashton, she turns increasingly to the "cerebral" poet, Rico (D. H. Lawrence). Julia begins to experience herself as a mind-body duality, seeking to detach herself from the physical and material world in order to live in the world of vision. Rico becomes a projection of her own reality, part of Julia's own psychic immanence:

...as the war crept closer, as it absorbed everything, the thing that bound body and soul together seemed threatened, so that she seemed to tune-in to another dimension, a world where she walked alone with an image and that image was Rico. Truly, yes, she loved him but loved him in another dimension, out of the body, wandering in thought, in dream, Rico himself had written "You are entangled in your own dream."

But this was reality. (BMT 68-69)

Julia believes that Rico wants a physical as well as a sexual relationship with her, but he seems repelled by her touch. Like Walter Rummel and Peter Rodeck, D. H. Lawrence existed as a fantasm of H.D.'s inner life and inevitably this fantasm was irreconcilable with the real man. Although Julia leaves for Cornwall with Vane/Gray, she continues in fantasy to live in the dimension where she is alone with Rico. A long section of "Asphodel," the early version of Bid Me to Live, is devoted to H.D.'s delirium in Cornwall, where she identifies herself as Morgan le Fay. The later novel portrays the Cornish delirium as directly inspired by her projection of Rico as her spiritual double.

Like Hermione in "Asphodel," Julia lives in the world

of myth, but in Bid Me to Live the protagonist's perception of her own subjectivity is searingly lucid. She experiences the boundaries of her own self as expanding out to the universe itself, and at the same time as contained in what is least:

One individual leaf, she might have philosophized, holds the soul of the forest, as one salt drop, the ocean's. So here, in this walled-in space, was a world; the world, the whole world, was given her in consciousness, she was see-er, "priestess," as Rico called her, wise-woman with her witch-ball, the world. (BMT 147)

To contain the greatest and be contained in the least constitutes harmony between one and all, between the finite and the infinite: for H.D. this is divinity, or the gloire as she calls it in Bid Me to Live. The realization of the gloire is a vindication of Julia's creative power, which has been wounded by Rico's rejection of her as a lover and as a creative equal. In the last section of the novel she acknowledges that her projection of the male artist as an image in her inner world has enabled her to attain the gloire, but at the same time she reproves Rico, remembering his rejection of her poem about Orpheus:

I could be Euridyce in character, you said, but woman-is-woman and I couldn't be both. The gloire is both.

No, that spoils it; it is both and neither. It is simply myself sitting here, this time propped up in bed, scribbling in a notebook, with a candle at my elbow. (BMT 177)

In writing Bid Me to Live in 1939, H.D. found a way out of the writer's block that had afflicted her since the end

of World War I, when the events recounted in the novel had occurred. Freud had specifically advised her to write this novel as therapy for her block, although H.D. herself as far back as 1921 had conceived of her prose as self-analysis. In her two early autobiographical novels, "Paint It To-day" and "Asphodel," H.D.'s analysis of the self does not succeed in retrieving her artistic consciousness from its engulfment by the events recounted. Her and Bid Me to Live are successful both as novels and as self-analysis because the autobiographical material is subjugated to H.D.'s self-projection: the development of the writer's consciousness carries these novels inexorably to a conclusion which affirms the inner reality from which H.D. derives her creative power.

(ii) The "Spider-Web"

H.D.'s four romans à clef constitute the primary layer of her prose palimpsest. Although H.D.'s prose output is vast, it may be interpreted in its entirety as the incessant rewriting of the original story of her own life, with the different historical settings providing various frames for H.D.'s subjectivity. Even actual historical characters exist in H.D.'s work only as projections of her own consciousness. "White Rose and the Red," for instance, is a novel ostensibly based on the relationship between Rossetti and Elizabeth Siddal, but H.D. transforms the story into a roman à clef of her own life during World War I. When historical reality threatens to intrude in the form of the death of Elizabeth Siddal, H.D.'s inspiration fails and the novel trails away inconclusively; in "Notes on Recent Writing," H.D. explains that "I had so identified myself with the story that I could not, for some strange reason, let [Elizabeth Siddal] die."²⁰

Only when reality originates at the centre of her consciousness, and converges back upon it - unimpeded by the intrusion of external reality - is H.D. able to transform the autobiographical elements of her prose into a creative dimension. Much of H.D.'s prose is repetitive and formless; she returns obsessively and monotonously to the events of her own life without succeeding in transmuting this material artistically. The prolixity and the ornateness of language seem irreconcilable with the austere concision of H.D.'s Imagism, but reflect a crisis of artistic identity which

manifested itself as a recurrent writer's block. The poetry of the 1920s and 1930s reveals a similar lack of intensity and artistic direction, and appears to have been particularly affected by H.D.'s block. Apart from some uncollected poems, there exist only two collections between 1924 and 1944: Red Roses for Bronze (published in 1931), and "A Dead Priestess Speaks," which was published only recently in her Collected Poems: 1912-1944. Despite her crisis of artistic identity in these years, H.D. nonetheless produced a small group of works which distinguish themselves from the rest by their extraordinary originality: in particular "Hipparchia," Kora and Ka and Nights - works which are almost entirely ignored by students of H.D. - demand critical attention.

"Hipparchia," the first of the three stories which make up Palimpsest, has already been cited on several occasions in this thesis in order to elucidate the nature of H.D.'s artistic consciousness. In comparison with "Murex" and "Secret Name," the other two stories in the volume, "Hipparchia" is infinitely more concentrated and vibrant: the very being of the author seems to animate this story, as it does the Imagist poems. Although the plot of "Hipparchia" is strictly autobiographical (the disintegration of H.D.'s marriage, her affair with Gray, the first encounter with Bryher), in this story reality does not reside in events but rather is centred within the protagonist herself. On rereading "Hipparchia" in 1955, H.D. made the following comments:

It is hallucinated and I must become hallucinated in order to cope with it.

The writing though uneven, in the original script and badly punctuated, has held me and astonished me. I do not think I have read this story for 20 or more years.

It is actually the same story as Madrigal [Bid Me to Live], where I assemble the same set of players in modern dress; it took me 20 years or more to get the Greek characters into time. They are out-of-time in the Greek scene, the only way that I could assemble them in the early or mid-twenties.²¹

The legacy of Imagism is evident in "Hipparchia." The story proceeds less by the development of the action (the autobiographical narrative), than by the stringing together of a series of moments which could be described, as Pound wrote of the Vortex, as "radiant nodes or clusters."²² These "clusters" bring together themes and ideas which recur throughout H.D.'s work, but which rarely appear with such concentrated intensity as in "Hipparchia." That unevenness which H.D. detects in the story is a consequence of her departure from traditional narrative structures in order to experiment with an original form of stream of consciousness technique. Similarly, H.D.'s weak conclusions to her stories reflect her lack of interest in narrative as such: her most successful prose works resemble a web of perception which enmeshes the reader in the author's subjectivism. Reality, like the web that the spider spins out of itself, derives exclusively from H.D.'s inner world.

"Boy and girl alike," the Greek Hipparchia is an androgynous poetess who appears variously as priestess, prophetess and goddess.²³ She lives in a permanent state of disembodiment which conveys the extreme psychic fragility of the character, but at the same time this disembodiment effects a continuous transmutation of outer into inner

reality. All reality is centred in Hipparchia herself. In a letter, her former lover Decius (who is based on Aldington) likens Hipparchia's metamorphosis of reality to witchcraft; her projection of her own psychic immanence is so powerful that she forces real people actually to conform to her phantasmatical projection of them:

I think the thing I hated most in Hipparchia was her curious sublimating quality. She thought this or so. Therefore by some witchcraft of intellectualisation, we who loved her, were forced by a sort of suggestive hypnosis to become, in some subtle manner, somewhat of the thing, she, in her high mind, saw fit to see us. (P 61)

The phantasmogorical reality which Hipparchia lives inevitably leads to the expansion towards infinity of the boundaries of a self which rejects any human definition or limitation. In this moment H.D. rediscovers herself as an artist, by returning to the same dimension out of which she created her Imagist poems. All traces of mere humanity are stripped away as the self projects itself into nature in order to possess and contain it. Every least particular of the physical world is magnified and transfigured through the artist's sensibility and Hipparchia attains ecstasy; she sheds the last vestiges of mere humanity and realizes her own divinity:

She was happy. Life draws back from the Delphic priestess. Life, a black torrent, had drawn its dark tide away from her, away from her, away from Hipparchia who stood now a giant Thetis among islands. Grass islands made minute emerald outline of Melos, Naxos, the minute sacred Cyclades. With half-closed eyes, blinded with summer, half-drugged with summer fragrance, she seemed (giant) to tower, to outgrow earth and human possibilities, to be (in all the world) the one fated to

recall the islands, to string them, thread them,
 irregular jagged rough-jewel on a massive necklet,
 no frail woman-ornament, nor one to be bartered for
 fresh continents, but to be laid simply at an altar,
 she officiating to re-sanctify it. (P 56)

It is out of this same plane of consciousness, in which she is able to command reality, that H.D. creates her most original works. The "new beauty" of H.D.'s Imagist poems is in fact the beauty of a reality constructed by the artist; similarly, the expanse of snow in Her represents a sacred space in which the artist inaugurates a new world. H.D.'s originality is strictly linked to her flight from pre-existing conceptions of reality; her true creative path is the audacious and difficult one of remaking of the world in her own image.

In "Hipparchia" the reflected image of the self is the poet's lover and oracle. In a long passage, the theme of narcissism is explicit although never named as such (a name would represent a definition of the self, and hence a limitation of it). In a green sea pool, Hipparchia stares hypnotically at her own image, seeing reflected a "silver goddess," an "Aphrodite gazing at her mirror." (P 74-75) She is an abstraction, cold and static and austere in her naked beauty: a statue rather than a woman of flesh and blood. Loving herself, Hipparchia "concedes" her love only to one other who is equal in beauty - Helios, whom she identifies as the sunbeam that touches her shoulders:

She saw Hipparchia and she loved Hipparchia.
 Verrus [her lover] could not love her as she loved
 herself, silver inviolable as she gazed back at herself
 standing with late autumn sun-light now a veritable
 lover, touching with electric warmth her smooth bared
 shoulders. Hipparchia loved the

silver cold Hipparchia and with electric fervour of sun-light on bared shoulders she conceded further, Helios.... Contemplating the stone self that so steadily regarded her, she must pierce further, further than the mere outward silver of that image. Hipparchia in the sea-pool must speak to her; from the sea-pool she must gain decision. She consulted Hipparchia as a votary the goddess. (P 75-76)

In this passage Hipparchia lives the myth of Narcissus in its fullness, adumbrating the tragic fate of the beautiful boy who pined away and died through the contemplation of his own image. Hipparchia's drama is her need to be adored for her divine beauty, while remaining untouched by human passion. Earlier in the story H.D. writes of Hipparchia: "She needed nothing, no one, only Verrus...to assure her that her body was perfection. She must know that her body was perfection...." (P 59) This is the personality portrayed by Louis Wilkinson, John Cournos and Brigit Patmore in their respective romans à clef about H.D.: a personality which needs human relationships only to be assured of adoration. In John Cournos's Miranda Masters, for instance, Miranda/ H.D. is described as a "spiritual hetaira" who bewitches men but draws back from real relationships.²⁴

The narcissistic personality is doomed to a solipsistic relationship with the self which the Greek myth presents paradoxically as leading to the destruction of the self. In The Golden Bough, Frazer relates the story of Narcissus to the Greek maxim not to look at one's reflection in water. The Greeks, he says, believed that the water-spirits would drag the reflection - the soul - under water, leaving the soulless person to die.²⁵ In her short story, H.D. establishes a dialogue between the two images, and from the

depths the reflected self entices Hipparchia:

"Come; fling straight forward and you must fall, white stone, weighted, unstruggling, breaking the water but once. You will not struggle, white Hipparchia. My hand will hold you. See, we will slide under this uptilt of stone to another region. Image to image, we will cling until beneficent sea-tides wash us to some distant sand-stretch. We will wait on white sand, whiter than polished stone. We will wait fitly for some god, a suitable Helios, for lover...." Hipparchia seemed to hear her stone self in the depth of ice-green water speak, insistent, tender. The reflected self, a wraith, an image had advised her as a temple oracle. (P 76-77)

The ecstasy of self-contemplation is realized here in all its fullness, making explicit that narcissism which throughout H.D.'s work underlies the projection of the disembodied self. H.D. hints at the danger of self-annihilation that such solipsism involves, but in this story the contemplation of the self is a source of creative power. Hipparchia's "hallucinated," but at the same time vibrant and original, mode of perception is nourished by the dialogue with her double, whereas in other stories the mirroring of the self too often becomes a desperate attempt to imprint the author's presence on material which is otherwise formless.

Hedylus, an historical novel published in 1928, pursues the theme of narcissism without achieving, except in brief passages, the same metamorphosis of perception which occurs throughout "Hipparchia." There are mirrors, both actual and metaphorical, everywhere in the work, which is ultimately itself a house of mirrors. In this work H.D. prefigures her later obsession with hermeticism in the reflection of her own initials in the names of her characters, the mother and son Hedyle and Hedylus. What the novel lacks is that ecstasy

which transfigures reality in "Hipparchia." Strangely, from a poet whose early renderings of the Greek were characterized by an extreme austerity of language, the Greek world that H.D. depicts is florid and decadent. In a review of Hedylus which typifies the general critical reception of H.D.'s prose, John Collier writes:

H.D. was pleasing enough in her short poems; surely she should realise that their attraction lay in their clear, bitter images and their truly Greek terseness rather than in this "Greekiness" which she pours out in a formless, intolerably sweetened flood.²⁶

In Hedylus H.D.'s obsessive mirroring of the self in order to assert her dominance of world around her does not succeed in masking the failure of the true metamorphosis of outer into inner reality that H.D. achieves in "Hipparchia."

A similar effect occurs in H.D.'s first post-Imagist volume of poetry, Red Roses for Bronze (1931). Nowhere is the creative vacuum more apparent than in "Sea-Choros," an extremely liberal translation from Euripides' Hecuba. The wind which in Chapter Two of this thesis was likened to the anima or vital breath of the poet here is directionless:

Wind,
wind,
here I stand,
wind,
wind,
at an end;
Hymen has left me for Death;
love passes,
light passes my hearth;
I face Europe
from Asia,
this lost land;
wind,
wind,

wind,
 were it best
 to die
 in Asia's great death?
 wind,
 wind,
 wind.... (CP 239-240)

There are more than four pages of this repetition, which seems intended to convey a mounting intensity but which more closely resembles hysteria and the failure of artistic direction. Interspersed with the word "wind" are the fragments of an elegy in which it is possible to detect H.D.'s nostalgia for a Hellas - a world of creative imagination - now lost.

With few exceptions the poems of Red Roses for Bronze reveal H.D.'s Imagist vitality as spent, the poet attempting in vain to replace it with repetitions that strive for a vibrant intensity but frequently border on the febrile. That projection of the self into nature that constitutes the originality of H.D.'s Imagist poems here, as in Hedylus, becomes a soulless house of mirrors. Only occasionally does H.D. seem to stand, like Hipparchia, at the centre of the poems and to command reality. "Trance," for instance, is a beautiful poem in which the poet is metamorphized into a statue, priestess and seer, through the projection of herself into the objects that her gaze touches:

I am each of these,
 I stare
 till my eyes are a statue's eyes,
 set in,
 my eye-balls are glass,
 my limbs marble,
 my face fixed
 in its marble mask;
 only the wind
 now fresh from the sea,
 flutters a fold,

then lets fall a fold
 on my knee. (CP 244-45)

Although this poem is more reflective and discursive than H.D.'s early Imagist work, the same originality is present. The reality is that of an inner invisible world, the traces of the poet's projection of her own vitality again represented by the movement of the wind.

The Narcissus myth, which is implicit throughout Red Roses for Bronze, is developed in one poem, "Myrtle Bough." As in "Hipparchia," H.D. remakes the myth in her own image, introducing her personal symbol for the realization of a creative and prophetic vocation: the star. The poem is ostensibly about the Greek would-be tyrannicides, Harmodius and Aristogiton, of whom many statues were made in the Athenian classical period. The actual details of the story are irrelevant here, since H.D. reworks it into an instance of homosexual love which is in turn merely a vehicle for her own projection of the narcissistic personality. H.D.'s relationship with Frances Gregg, as depicted in Her, lurks just under the surface: this is a love which is the contemplation and adoration of the self in the other. The narrative voice orders Narcissus to "turn...from your reeds." The naked image knows that:

its one bliss
 to see itself,
 itself,
 itself
 is this:

myself
 who cast my silver-self afar,
 armour and greaves and helmet,
 for one star
 rises above the sand-dunes,

one star lights
 the pool above the marshes,
 the fresh weeds;
 arise;
 delight
 yourself in your own image,
 Hesperus.

Yourself in myself,
 mirror for a star,
 star for a mirror.... (CP 246-7)

Again in this poem, reality is commanded by the poet whose self contains the entire universe. The poet is both the star and the reflected image of the other: nothing has existence independent of the self.

Between 1928 and 1934, H.D. wrote three experimental prose works in which the themes of projection, narcissism and the underlying duality of being find new forms of expression: The Usual Star, Kora and Ka, and Nights.²⁷ All three works were published privately, at Bryher's expense, by the Imprimerie Darantiere at Dijon in 1934 and 1935. The first two novels were presented by H.D. to her friends, but the extremely personal Nights was never circulated. These three novels reflect a period of H.D.'s life in which she began to develop the interests that would dominate her later poetry: the occult, psychoanalysis and the cinema, interests which are discussed more fully in Chapter Five of this thesis.

In 1926, H.D. cautiously picked up the threads of her severed relationship with Frances Gregg, who had pursued her early interests in the occult and in eclectic religions. The ambivalent relationship between the two women is explored in a number of H.D.'s short stories, such as "The Moment," in which Elaine/Frances is described as holding the philo-

sopher's stone - the key to hidden knowledge.²⁸ In 1928, Frances Gregg published a story called "The Unknown Face" which deals with self-contemplation. Believing herself to be dying (she suffered from both cancer and tuberculosis but died in an air-raid during World War II) Frances Gregg seeks her identity by observing her face in the mirror. She describes herself as a priestess of Beauty, which she conceives of as God, and describes the development in her of a mind-body duality which strikingly resembles H.D.'s own split personality:

I could feel, at moments, agonizingly conscious of the invisible, the unheard, the apparently non-existent all about me.

Later on, I felt myself as dual: Mind: Body. Mind was unique, personal, and omnipotent, intact and unassailable. The Body was an instrument of apprehension, registering imperfectly, making crass inaccurate deductions, throwing up endless defenses against the refining by the intellect.²⁹

At the end of the story, all that exists is the narrator's own face. She writes: "I interest myself frightfully, and that is not egotism; I am the nearest approach that I have to the universe."³⁰ The Narcissus theme is explicit also in Frances Gregg's early poetry; in "Perché," which was published in 1915, she writes: "I am the possessor and the possessed" and later, "The red circlet of Narcissus gems my blood."³¹ H.D.'s artistic and personal debt to her relationship with Frances Gregg is profound, but will be clarified only when Frances Gregg's own life and ideas are more fully researched.

Through Frances Gregg, H.D. met a young man who became her lover. Kenneth Macpherson, as he appears in photographs

in H.D.'s album was tall, Nordic, and startlingly androgynous: he appears in one photograph as a Valkyrie, complete with long plaits, and in others he accentuates his somewhat effete beauty by wearing makeup.³² H.D. was fascinated by this young androgyne who so resembled her physically, and her passion for this double underlies her prose in the following years. Macpherson was twenty-three and H.D. forty when they met, and this difference in age may have suggested in part the mother-son relationship in Hedylus.

Apparently in order to protect Perdita legally and financially, Bryher and Macpherson married in 1927 and immediately afterwards adopted the child. The period that followed was one of the happier moments of H.D.'s life. In Switzerland, where Bryher built a villa on the shores of Lac Léman near Vevey, H.D. devoted herself to new interests and new friendships. Kenneth Macpherson was an aspiring film-maker, and produced three silent films, financed by Bryher, which starred H.D.: Wing-beat (1927), Foothills (1928-29) and Borderline (1929-30).³³ These are fascinating documents, worthy of study in their own right as well as in relation to H.D. The influence of H.D. is apparent in the themes, if not in the artistic realization of the films. Together Bryher, H.D. and Macpherson founded Pool Publications, which published their film magazine Close Up. H.D. contributed many articles and film reviews to this magazine, and for several years acting and the cinema in general absorbed her more than her writing.

Written in 1928, "The Usual Star" is the first of H.D.'s works to reveal the direct influence of the cinema. Together

Ray Bart/H.D. and her lover, Daniel/Kenneth "project" London as they walk through the fog: "We have made this thing as people make screen vision."³⁴ Frances Gregg appears in this story as Katherine who, like Elaine in "The Moment," criticizes H.D.'s writing as mere absorption in the self; in both stories the protagonist replies that her writing is merely an instrument. In "The Usual Star," Ray Bart says that "it's the thing behind my writing that I cling to," and in "The Moment" writing is described as "mediumship."³⁵ The "thing behind" her writing was to assume an increasingly important role in H.D.'s work from the mid-1920s onwards.

H.D.'s later development is prefigured in "The Usual Star" in its syncretism of cinematic, psychoanalytical and occult ideas. It was not until she wrote "Kora and Ka" in 1930, however, that H.D. made a truly original use of this syncretism. If in "The Usual Star" and other works it seems that the writing itself is merely a vehicle for H.D.'s message (the "thing behind" her writing), in "Kora and Ka" H.D. seems less concerned with messages and mediumship than with making almost tangible the experience of the "split dual personality."

The protagonist of "Kora and Ka," John Helforth, is a divided being; within him, ready to take over his mind and look out of his eyes, is the Ka. At birth an ancient Egyptian was given two names, only the lesser of which was made public; the other name, which embodied the magic power of the individual, belonged to the Ka. To know a person's secret name was to have power over him. The Ka was thus a mysterious life-force which survived after bodily death, and

has some affinities with the Greek daemon in that it is an intermediary between the human and the divine; it might also be compared to the Greek idea of the soul as residing in a man's reflection - the omen that lay behind the Narcissus myth. In her letters to Bryher, H.D. makes frequent mention of the Ka, describing it as "the naked spirit" whose native state is "the super-depth of the transcendental." In astrological terms she identifies it with Neptune.³⁶

The Ka in H.D.'s story simultaneously represents a modern psychological reality. "Kora and Ka" is really the story of a mental breakdown, seen from within. Perhaps a comparison might be made with Virginia Woolf's novel, Mrs Dalloway, which explores subtle relationships between the "sane" world of Mrs Dalloway and the "insane" world of Septimus Smith. In "Kora and Ka," however, sanity and insanity are located within the consciousness of John Helforth, who reveals many of the characteristics of the schizoid personality as described by R. D. Laing in The Divided Self.³⁷ The Ka is a disembodied self which H.D., echoing the language of her "Notes on Thought and Vision," calls "over-mind." In "Kora and Ka" this duality of being is exacerbated to the point that the personality is threatened with disintegration and total loss of identity. "Who gave me this broken duality? Who gave me this curse of intimate perception?" asks the anguished Helforth, his mind reduced to a "blood-strewn arena."³⁸ The lucidity of this portrait of duality makes "Kora and Ka," especially in its earlier sections, one of H.D.'s most disturbing and fascinating works.

The narrative voice in "Kora and Ka" oscillates between that of Helforth and that of the Ka which lives inside his mind and looks out on the world with his eyes. At certain moments the Ka is able to possess Helforth's being. The opening pages describe the Ka waiting to "tear...the curtain that shuts me from Helforth."³⁹ With cinematic clarity, H.D. describes Helforth's transition from observation of the external world, to contemplation of it and finally to the trance-like state which is the native element of the Ka: this process is the subject also of H.D.'s poem, "Trance," which was cited above. Initially Helforth sees "in detail," and observes everything around him, but gradually his vision narrows to the point at which the Ka, or over-mind, takes over:

Helforth must see everything. And...I grow impatient. The eyes of Helforth drink in the purple of the clematis-blossom and gouge out the colour of the rose-clematis. The passion of the eyes of Helforth disregards me, waiting. They come to rest, then, on the root-stalk of the vine that clambers up the other side of the barn wall.... The eyes of Helforth follow the twining insistence of the little tendril. It seems they will be lost forever in the purple star. But I know Helforth, and I wait for Helforth. His eyes drop again and rest on the spiral of the grape tendril. Then his eyes fall lower on a sheaf of vine-leaves and on one leaf. As his lids fall and as his mind discards the drug-purple of the lordly blossom, I know he knows that I am waiting. His lids droop to blacken out the heady visual memory of rose and purple, and then widen. His eyes rest on the cool young vine-leaves and I come.

I am most at home with Helforth in this green space.⁴⁰

This passage has remarkable affinities with Andrew Marvell's poem, "The Garden," where human passion yields to

a mystical ecstasy which Marvell, like H.D. throughout her work, associates with trees. In "The Garden" the colours of passion, white and red, are discarded in favour of green, the colour in which creation is annihilated and the mind remakes its own world:

Meanwhile the Mind, from pleasure less,
Withdraws into its happiness:
The Mind, that Ocean where each kind
Does streight its own resemblance find;
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other Worlds, and other Seas;
Annihilating all that's made
To a green Thought in a green Shade.⁴¹

John Helforth's description of his experience of being possessed by the Ka recalls Marvell's image of the mind as an ocean. The experience of the expansion of the disembodied self towards infinity, while at the same time being contained in what is least, is symbolized by a drop of water:

For one instant, for some long or short space of time, memory was eradicated. Ka brushed across my mind, a sponge on a slate. Ka then was the shape of a drop of water, magnified to the size of a universe. Ka was a universe. In it, I swam, one microbe in a water-bead.⁴²

In contrast to Marvell and to H.D.'s Hipparchia, Helforth does not experience the disembodied, visionary state as "happiness." His broken duality of being is a source of acute anguish to Helforth, rendering him incapable of feeling and threatening him with the disintegration of identity. If in "Hipparchia" creativity arose out of the state of disembodied ecstasy, in "Kora and Ka" H.D. portrays the exacerbation of duality to the point at which Helforth, locked in a sterile solipsism, is unable to create.

Helforth's way out of his breakdown is through his love for Kora. Initially she appears in the story as little more than a phantasm of Helforth's mind, but gradually a real relationship emerges. Kora, who is aware of the latest psychoanalytical theories, forces Helforth to remember the past that he has suppressed. In remembering, Helforth begins to feel again: at first his emotions are limited to anger, hatred and resentment, but through them he is liberated and able to turn in love to Kora. The Ka still exists within Helforth but as part of an harmonious whole, giving Helforth the special sensitivity of vision without cutting him off from his body and emotions.

Ka...still belongs to Helforth, his personal little dragon; it seemed, with the assistance of this personal little pest, that I could see around and, as it were, through walls and into tree-trunks. I could see through the wall behind Kora and I saw Kora sitting in a Florentine frame, her head encompassed with an aura of lilies. I saw Kora then, just as Kore-Persephone and I realised that I too have proper affinity with her.⁴⁴

The story ends on a note of hope which is unusual in H.D.'s work in that it arises out of a relationship between two human beings. Through their love, Helforth (Hell-forth) and Kora are resurrected: "We were Kora of the Underworld and Dionysus, not yet risen. I...had no place then in any living landscape. Now we are Kore and the slain God ... risen."⁴⁵

Although the personality of Helforth is clearly based on H.D.'s own experience of duality, the story departs from the usual autobiographical framework and creates a fictional existence for her character. The fiction is developed still further in Nights, which was published under the pseudonym

of John Helforth. Nights is in two parts: a "Prologue" by John Helforth, and a text by a writer named Natalie Saunderson who has committed suicide. H.D. wrote the second part of Nights in 1931, before beginning analysis, and the "Prologue" in 1934 after the completion of her analysis by Freud. H.D.'s use of both a male and a female persona in the same work (as she had already done in Hedyle) reflects the gender crisis which H.D. experienced with particular intensity in these years. According to H.D.'s letters to Bryher, H.D.'s sexual duality was a theme of major importance during her analysis by Freud.

Like "Kora and Ka," Nights places duality at its centre, in the image of Nat Saunderson's suicide. She drowned herself in a frozen alpine lake, skating right into its depths. Her duality is resolved only in death: "The two lines [the skate marks] ran straight out, two parallel lines - they met in a dark gash of the luminous ice-surface."⁴⁶ The manuscript which Nat leaves unpublished at her death is the description of twelve nights spent with a young lover after the breakdown of her marriage to Neil. This part of the novel is strictly autobiographical, dealing with the disintegration of H.D.'s relationship with Kenneth Macpherson, and her brief affair with a young Englishman: all of the characters are readily identifiable, and the setting is Bryher's Swiss villa. Nights was never circulated like the other volumes published at Dijon: in 1943, H.D. wrote to Norman Holmes Pearson that it represented for her a "lost, sad period" and that she did not want to look back.⁴⁷

John Helforth claims that Nat wrote her work, without

revision, immediately after the "erotic experiments" had taken place; he describes her as a "scientific lyrist," who "seemed to take a pencil and run it round the contour of a psychic map." The lucidity of H.D.'s delineation of her own "split dual personality" gives the work its power, but at the same time Nights is a disturbing work: H.D.'s anguish, which has its fictional outcome in Nat's suicide, is always just beneath the surface.

The "erotic experiments" which Nat Saunderson describes are really her attempt to attain a disembodied state in which she seeks direct contact with godhead. During lovemaking Nat experiences her body as "obliterated," her head a dismembered piece of marble which is kissed by a centaur. Passion frightens her, and destroys her "astral-dream." Nat's physical contact with David serves only to prepare her for the true experiments which come when he has left her room. She "excites herself," willing herself to get out of her body and reach the "source of power" which is the deity:

...as the radium gathered electric current under her left knee, she knew her high-powered deity was waiting. He would sting her knee and she would hold muscles tense, herself only a sexless wire that was one wire for the fulfillment. She was sexless, being one chord, drawn out, waiting the high-powered rush of the electric fervour. It crept up the left side...at the nape, it broke, distilled radium into the head but did not burst out of the hair. She wanted the electric power to run on through her, then out, unimpeded by her mind.

She would be a spirit, Saint'Angelo, Saint Angel, and Neil would be a spirit. In heaven, there is assuredly, no marriage nor giving in marriage. If she were a Christ, she would use, distribute this power; she would think only holy thought; she would be purified like a clod of earth, drawn up into the radiant texture of some fragrant lily.⁵⁰

In the "Prologue" Helforth likens Nat to Semele, who tricked Zeus into coming to her in his true shape and was killed by the fire of his thunderbolts. H.D. saw herself, as she depicted Nat, as a stealer-of-fire from the gods: her increasing obsession with the occult and psychoanalysis in these years reflects a craving for secret knowledge as a source of divine power. Nat's rejection of humanity is uncompromising, like the death to which it led her: "I didn't want a body. I didn't want to be a person."⁵¹

John Helforth's psychoanalytical perspective frames Nat's story. Having been analyzed by Dr. Frank in Vienna, Helforth has resolved his problem "definitely and scientifically" but at the same time has paid the price of having his creativity undermined. Natalie Saunderson's blazing originality and creative force, from Helforth's analytical point of view, are symptoms of the problem of her duality, but where H.D. chose to seek resolution through analysis, the fictional character chooses death. Although elsewhere H.D. almost invariably reveals herself an enthusiastic missionary of psychoanalysis, Nights offers a different perspective, but one which seems to reflect her own experience. After her analysis by Freud in 1933 and 1934, undertaken partly in an effort to resolve her writer's block, H.D. wrote almost nothing (with the exception of a few poems and the early version of Bid Me to Live) until 1941.

"Kora and Ka" and Nights represent H.D.'s highest achievement in prose. Although H.D. employs the stream of consciousness technique common to most experimental prose of the period, these two works are virtually sui generis, both

in terms of H.D.'s own work and also in the wider context of literary history. The searing lucidity with which H.D. etches the contours of the divided self has few parallels in literature, perhaps its closest affinity being with Kafka. In these works the duality of being is exacerbated to the extreme where the personality hovers between madness and sanity, and the experience is rendered almost tangible by the cinematic or scientific precision with which every detail of this state is registered on the page. If for the reader these works are fascinating and disconcerting, for H.D. the writing and publishing of them was the source of great anguish. In a letter to Conrad Aiken in 1934, she confessed of "Kora and Ka":

...that sketch, in particular, was a sort of hair-shirt to publish. I mean reading it, reading it again and again in the galleys, was sheer agony. And yet the power behind me, the sheer WILL in me, was what I admire. The thing in me, that in spite of me, or to spite me, ALLOWED that to get published, is the thing that matters....But it IS at the last, a sort of experiment in spider-web, which, has in its way, succeeded. And you know... the experiment is so important, and the achievement of an experiment, even if at the last, it only shows, the posion [sic] in the test-tube.⁵²

With Her, "Kora and Ka" and Nights are the solitary minor masterpieces of H.D.'s vast prose output, drawing the reader into a fascinating and disturbing web of perception. If H.D. chose not to develop the creative paths suggested by these works, the reasons are to be sought in her letter to Conrad Aiken. She retreated from the "poison in the test-tube."

Chapter Five: The Universal Language

(i) Cinema, Psychoanalysis and the Occult

In "The Walls Do Not Fall," the first of her trilogy of poems written during World War II, H.D. writes:

 this is the age of the new dimension,
 dare, seek, seek further, dare more,

 here is the alchemist's key,
 it unlocks secret doors...

 the elixir of life, the philosopher's stone
 is yours if you surrender

 sterile logic, trivial reason;
 so mind dispersed, dared occult lore,

 found secret doors unlocked,
 floundered, was lost in sea-depth....

 illusion, reversion of old values,
 oneness lost, madness. (CP 532-33)

These lines condense metaphorically the tendency of H.D.'s thought from the 1930s until her death in 1961. With the prophetic insight that she so often reveals, H.D. also foresees here the pitfalls which lay ahead in her growing obsession with the occult and psychoanalysis, instruments of her search for a "new dimension."

H.D.'s interest in the occult may be traced back to her early life in America, and in particular to her friendships with Ezra Pound and Frances Gregg. In that early period, Pound was interested in spiritualism and palmistry, yogic

writings and the theories of Swedenborg, interests reflected in the reading matter that he pressed upon H.D. The deepest, most enduring impact on H.D. was made by Swedenborg's idea of correspondences between the material and the heavenly dimensions. More than by Heaven and Its Wonders and Hell, H.D. was influenced by Balzac's use of Swedenborg's ideas in his novella, Séraphita, where androgyny (like the hermetical symbols of the Hermaphrodite and the Child) symbolizes spiritual perfection. Pound also introduced to H.D. his theory about the derivation of the Provençal love cult from the Eleusinian mysteries, a theory that thirty years later would inspire H.D. to trace the origins of Moravianism to a secret, heretical tradition which originated in the mystery cults and hermeticism.¹

Where Ezra Pound's interest in eclectic religions was a consequence of his burning intellectual curiosity and remained only one strand in his thinking, Frances Gregg had actually experienced visions since her childhood. Pound's influence on H.D. was enormous, but the books he gave her to read are cultural sign-posts that enable the critic to assess the extent and nature of H.D.'s debt to him. In the case of Frances Gregg, whose influence on H.D. was through the "mystical" tendency of her nature, it is possible to assess her profound importance to H.D.'s development only indirectly. It seems likely that "soul-communing," in which the two young women gazed for hours into each other's eyes, was the origin of H.D.'s later trance-like states in which she too saw things which confirmed her belief in the exist-

ence of another dimension of reality. Perdita Schaffner's recollection of her mother's method of writing reveals H.D.'s dependence, by the middle of the 1920s, on occult or magical practices to inspire her creativity. H.D. spent hours every day in "an intense trance-like meditation" during which she gazed at the tiny figurine of a cat that she had brought back from Egypt in 1923. Later she replaced the cat with a crystal ball given to her by Peter Rodeck (the "Man on the boat").²

The re-appearance of Frances Gregg in H.D.'s life early in 1926 coincided with, and probably stimulated further, H.D.'s developing interest in the occult and in mystery religions. As she had been in her youth, H.D. continued to be fascinated (and perhaps more than a little envious) of Frances's superior psychic powers, although H.D. regarded Frances's use of her gifts as often negative and destructive. In "The Moment" H.D. writes of Frances/Elaine:

A power that can draw up the past, hold itself as a flame, act as a magnet to forgotten thoughts, buried in the ruin of sub-conscious strata, is either a divine or a perilous possession. Elaine held a philosopher's stone, a magnet, a sort of key to hidden stores of knowledge. Elaine could draw out confession, could drag the soul to its fine point of spiritual intensity in order - was it possible? - to blight it? ³

In America, during World War I, Frances Gregg and her husband Louis Wilkinson had become involved, in a way that is not entirely clear, with the black magician Aleister Crowley. Frances apparently attempted to resist her

husband's association with Crowley, who took his revenge by reducing Frances to such a state that he almost succeeded in having her committed to an asylum.⁴

H.D.'s initial predisposition to fascination with the occult is to be sought in her early background, in her mixedcultural inheritance of Moravianism and science. The desire to unify science, art and religion which predominates H.D.'s thinking in her later years had already declared itself in America in 1910 (the year of Halley's Comet) when she studied intensely the work of Camille Flammarion, who proposed a "scientific" basis for the study of occult phenomena. During the Imagist period, in which she devoted herself almost exclusively to the study of ancient Greece, H.D.'s occult and religious interests went into abeyance, although the underlying predisposition towards the occult or magical dimension is apparent even in this period. The Imagist poem may be interpreted as a magical space in which the poet is able to command reality, "magic" here being used in the sense given by The Oxford Classical Dictionary:

Magic is a complex of practices through which man exercises power on the world around him by irrational means....the magical attitude forms a substratum to all human thought and experience. In it, man does not see the world around him as an object, but he participates in it as it does in him; he transfers the outward world into himself and dominates it from within.⁵

H.D.'s Imagist poems are acts of power, in the sense that they externalize or project her inner world. The trees and waves and flowers of which she writes do not exist as objects in the outer world; instead they become the vehicles

of her domination of reality from within. H.D. participates in the material world by animating it with her own vital energies.

Throughout the Imagist period, an imagined Hellas is H.D.'s metaphor for her inner world, but the signs of a certain dissatisfaction with this metaphor are apparent in the later poems. It is observed in the entry on magic in The Oxford Classical Dictionary that "as the intellectual adventure of Greek civilization is precisely the discovery of the world as an object of rational contemplation, the magical elements were more and more suppressed."⁶ For H.D. it was the rationality of the Greek mind, and its tendency to humanize its divinities, which constituted the motives of dissatisfaction. Her Imagist poems reveal a consistent preference for the more primitive and magical of Greek gods, those who, like Hermes and Thetis, are least human in their attributes. By 1921, when Hymen was published, H.D.'s attention had turned towards the Eleusinian mysteries and the mythological characters associated with magic. The titles of the poems are revelatory: "Demeter," "Simaetha," "Circe," "Phaedra."

H.D. was in fact following the path of the Greeks themselves, who in the Hellenistic period turned towards a religious syncretism in which the magical and irrational played a major role. The discovery of Egypt was for H.D., as it had been for Hellenistic thinkers like Plutarch, a revelation. The subject of H.D.'s poem, "Egypt," which she dedicated to Poe, is her rapprochement of Greece and Egypt:

We pray you, Egypt,
 by what perverse fate,
 has poison brought with knowledge,
 given us this -
 not days of trance,
 shadow, foredoom of death,
 but passionate grave thought,
 belief enhanced,
 ritual returned and magic;

Even in the uttermost black pit
 of the forbidden knowledge,
 wisdom's glance...

Hellas re-born from death. (CP 141)

As the final lines of the poem indicate, it was her discovery of Egypt which enabled H.D. to regenerate her inner reality (metaphorically, Hellas) which had been undermined in the wake of World War I. H.D.'s new interest in Egypt was the precursor of her later thirst for occult knowledge as power, understood in a magical sense as control over reality. Egypt represented the infinity of being which H.D. had always sought; its gods were protean, undefined, and immeasurable by human standards.⁷ The syncretism of Greek and Egyptian religious values formed the basis of H.D.'s occult research, its fruit being the long poem, Helen in Egypt, which she wrote in 1952.

During the 1920s, H.D.'s discovery of the cinema and psychoanalysis suggested to her new creative directions for her developing occult syncretism. In "Notes on Thought and Vision" she had made some effort to develop a scientific, psychological basis to her study of the invisible dimension of "over-mind," although the results had not impressed Havelock Ellis. It was the cinema which revealed to H.D. the

full potential of psychoanalysis, recalling to her the visions she had seen projected on the wall in Corfu in 1920. She regarded the cinema as the translation into images of the unconscious and its processes, and believed that this made the silent film an art form superior to all others.

In one of her film reviews for Close Up, H.D. heralded the coming of "a universal language, a universal art open alike to the pleb and the initiate."⁸ She detected in the cinema the perfect instrument for this "universal art" since it was the projection of dream, vision and myth as materialized, moving images. Describing the cinema palace as "a sort of temple," she likens the audience to "Delphic or Elucianian [sic] candidates, watching symbols of things that matter."⁹ The "new beauty," the beauty of inner reality which she had sought in her Imagist poems, is found by H.D. in this new medium. Her enthusiasm for the cinema knew no bounds, and her writing became secondary to her involvement in the making of films with Kenneth Macpherson and the writing of articles and reviews for Close Up. The tone of these articles is that of a prophetess of the "age of the new dimension," of whose imminent coming H.D. is convinced: "There has never been, perhaps since the days of the Italian Renaissance, so great a 'stirring' in the mind and soul of the world consciousness."¹¹

The film which was H.D.'s "never-to-be-forgotten premiere to the whole art of the screen" was Pabst's Joyless Street, which starred Greta Garbo.¹² H.D., Bryher and Kenneth Macpherson travelled frequently to Berlin, the centre of the

German film industry, in the late 1920s and became friendly with G. W. Pabst at the end of 1927. They also met Hanns Sachs, the Freudian analyst who had collaborated with Pabst on his film, Secrets of a Soul, the first attempt to make a psychoanalytical film. Sachs became Bryher's analyst, and in 1931 H.D. too was analyzed by him for a few months. They called him "Turtle," and he became a close friend who contributed articles about psychoanalysis and the cinema to Close Up and later to Bryher's literary magazine, Life and Letters To-day.

In an article entitled "Film Psychology," Sachs argues that the role of the cinema is to "externalise and make perceptible - if possible in movement - invisible inward events."¹⁴ By "invisible inward events" Sachs meant specifically the traumas, neuroses and psychoses of the individual's unconscious life, but if the phrase is extended to include the spiritual dimension of vision it represents exactly H.D.'s understanding of the cinema. Kenneth Macpherson, who had introduced H.D. to the world of film, shared H.D.'s occult interests, and his three films reflect the idea of film as a projection of inner reality.

Macpherson's first film, Wing-beat, was described in Close Up as "a film of telepathy. The feeling of 'something about to happen' pervades [it]."¹⁵ In the fragments that survive of Wing-beat, nothing actually happens, and the film is pregnant with a mystery that is never revealed, like much of H.D.'s later writing. H.D. appears in this film as an androgynous being with short spiky hair who appears to be in

a state of vision or trance. Macpherson's most ambitious and successful film was Borderline, which was completed in 1930 and released in both Germany and Britain. Although both H.D. and Bryher sought to attribute the entire credit for the film to Macpherson, Eric Walter White claimed in an interview with this writer that H.D. actually wrote the script. The montage was done by the two women, since (according to White) Macpherson in a fit of pique refused to complete his work. Thus Borderline, in which H.D. starred under the pseudonym of Helga Doorn, would appear to be almost as much H.D.'s work as Macpherson's.¹⁶

In Close Up, Kenneth Macpherson described Borderline as "perhaps the only really 'avant-garde' film ever made." Where Pabst's Secrets of a Soul treated the human mind objectively, Macpherson's aim was subjectivity:

...instead of the method of externalised observation, dealing with objects, I was going to take my film into the minds of the people in it, making it not so much a film of "mental processes" as to insist on a mental condition. To take the action, the observation, the deduction, the reference, into the labyrinth of the human mind....¹⁷

The film, however, does have a plot. The neurotic, almost witch-like Astrid (played by H.D.) and her young husband, Thorne, live in a quiet European town where unexpectedly there arrives a black couple, Pete and Adah (played by Paul and Eslanda Robeson). Thorne's affair with Adah provokes Astrid's hysteria, and during a violent argument Thorne stabs his wife to death. Later he is acquitted of murder, and it is Pete and Adah, the social outcasts, who are asked to

leave the town.

"Borderline" is a psychoanalytical term for a personality that is on the threshold of the psychotic. In the film it becomes a metaphor for the lives led by the characters. H.D. explained the significance of the title in a pamphlet about Borderline:

[Astrid and Thorne] are borderline social cases, not out of life, not in life; the woman is a sensitive neurotic, the man, a handsome, degenerate dypsomaniac. Thorne has not reached the end of his cravings, may step this side, that side of the border; Astrid, the white-cerebral is and is not outcast, is and is not a social alien, is and is not a normal human being, she is borderline. These two are specifically chosen to offset another borderline couple of more dominant integrity. These last, Pete and his sweetheart Adah, have a less intensive problem, but border; they dwell on the cosmic racial borderline. They are black people among white people.¹⁸

Although the plot and setting are realistic, the film's subjectivity is achieved through the montage, which at times brings it close to a dream or delirium. H.D herself describes it as a "dream-nightmare" which merges with myth. Film, she writes, is "the art of dream portrayal," and as such is a superior art form which fuses life and art.¹⁹

H.D.'s devaluation of her writing in favour of film in this period was not so much a result of her enthusiasm of film for its own sake. Rather, it was the cinema's superior capacity to transmit underlying messages that fascinated H.D.: she perceived it as the hieroglyphic or telegraphic language for "over-mind" thought transmission that was theorized in her "Notes on Thought and Vision." The language

of ordinary speech, she writes in her study of Borderline, is no longer a fit vehicle for the communication of pure thought and vision:

...words, as such, have become weathered, the old stamp is obliterated, the image of king or of olive wreath or the actual stars or the actual oak branch have been worn off the coin.... The film brings words back and how much more the actual matter of the drama. Words become again "winged" indeed.²⁰

In 1933, Freud suggested to H.D. that one of the reasons why she was never satisfied with her writing was that she had really, all along, wanted to be an actress in her unconscious.²¹ Through her acting, H.D. found an extraordinarily potent vehicle for self-projection. The "silver screen" represented to H.D. a mirror in which she saw projected the image of the inner self; the screen may be likened to the pool in which Hipparchia gazed, hypnotized by the image of herself as a "silver goddess." In her article on H.D.'s involvement with the cinema, "Garbo/Helen: The Self-Projection of Beauty by H.D.," Charlotte Mandel argues that H.D.'s projection of the self has a function similar to that of the Muse of male poets. However, Mandel ignores entirely the narcissism inherent in such a projection, and the implications of narcissism for H.D. as an artist. H.D.'s projection of her inner reality onto the external world was undoubtedly a source of creative power, but at the same time contained within it the seeds of H.D.'s decline as an artist. The paradox of the Narcissus myth is that self-contemplation leads to the destruction of the self, and

H.D.'s fascination with her own projected image on the screen portends the increasing solipsism that characterizes her later work.

The obsession with the reflected image of the self is evident in the name given by Bryher, Macpherson and H.D. to the publishing company which they set up at Territet. Pool Publications was originally established in 1927 in order to publish Close Up, and its name is implicitly a metaphor for the cinema: the screen, like the pool in the myth of Narcissus, is the mirror of the self. One of the first works published by Pool was Kenneth Macpherson's Poolreflection, a novel about an adolescent boy's search for an identity which he finds not through relationship with others but in his own reflected image.²² Both stylistically, and in its subject matter, this novel is imitative of H.D.'s own work, and especially her novel, Hedylus, which was published in the same period and dedicated to Kenneth Macpherson. There are many parallels between the work of Macpherson and H.D. in this period: each saw the other as the double of the self, and their work between 1927 and 1930 may be considered as a web of inter-reference. Until H.D.'s faith in Kenneth Macpherson was shattered by the intrusion into their life together of his affairs with men, she regarded him as the "lost companion" whom she had sought since childhood. Like Frances Gregg, whose lover he had been, Macpherson represented to H.D. the materialization of her double.²³

For H.D., the cinema was the nexus that linked psycho-analysis and the occult. Everything hinges on the term

"projection" which was common to the cinema, alchemy and psychoanalysis. In alchemy, "projection" means the casting of an ingredient into the crucible. "Powder of projection" was another term for the powder of the philosopher's stone, which was cast upon base metals in fusion in order to transform them into silver or gold. The silver celluloid strip of black and white films, produced through a chemical process which actually employed silver, was the physical manifestation of the process of mental projection of the creator's vision through the film art: the cinema represented for H.D. that perfect welding of art and science which fascinated her in the alchemical tradition. Film was a "universal language" precisely because it transmuted the prima materia of the visible world into the higher reality of vision.

In Freudian and post-Freudian psychological writings, the term "projection" has a complexity of meanings and nuances that it is not the scope of this thesis to explore. In the discussion that follows, the term "projection" is used in several inter-related senses that reflect its basic or original meaning in early psychoanalysis. Projection, as Anthony Storr succinctly describes it, is "the phenomenon in which characteristics belonging to oneself are attributed to others."²⁴ Projection, in this sense, has been shown to be a dominant trait of H.D.'s personality, one closely related to her narcissism. The term also refers to the process by which aspects of the unconscious manifest themselves; thus, for Freud, dreams and slips of the tongue and even works of art are all projections of the individual's repressed,

unconscious life. A closely related concept is that of the "screen memory," which replaces an actual childhood memory with some other recollection, for example of a favourite fairy tale. The appearance of the screen memory, often as a component of dreams, is a key to the discovery of the repressed material.

Psychoanalysis attracted H.D. because of its discovery of the world of memory and dream, and its attempt to give a scientific basis to the study of this invisible dimension. Perhaps due to her rigorous scientific background, H.D. invariably sought a scientific justification of occult theories, and while the status of psychoanalysis as a science was and is frequently disputed H.D. was quick to recognize its potential as an instrument for her research into the invisible dimension of reality. She became well versed in psychoanalytic theory, but H.D.'s obsessive interest in the new discipline could be interpreted as constituting in itself an example of projection in Storr's sense. She attributed to psychoanalysis characteristics of her own thought, appropriating those elements which confirmed her own ideas and ignoring or distorting the aspects which contradicted her. This discussion thus proposes to indicate the idiosyncratic use which H.D. made of Freudian theory in her construction of an occult system or universal language.

H.D. first began analysis in 1931 with Mary Chadwick, a London friend who was part of a circle of Freudians that was centred around Barbara Low and David Eder. This experience

was an unhappy one for H.D., who after three months broke off the analysis to continue with Hanns Sachs and then with Freud.

In Tribute to Freud, H.D. writes that:

I felt that Miss Chadwick could not follow the workings of my creative mind. Talking this over with Dr. Hanns Sachs in Berlin, winter 1931, he agreed that it would be better to continue the work, if possible with a man and preferably one superior to myself. (TF 150)

Through Sachs's recommendation, Freud accepted H.D. as his analysand. She underwent five months of intensive analysis in early 1933, and returned for several months in late 1934. H.D.'s sessions with Freud are well documented. She kept a diary, which under the title "Advent" was later published in Tribute to Freud, the first section of which is a memoir, "Writing on the Wall," which she wrote after Freud's death. Perhaps the most valuable source of information about H.D.'s analysis is her extensive correspondence with Bryher. Between H.D.'s published memoirs and her letters there exist frequent discrepancies which reveal much about H.D.'s transformation of her actual experience of analysis so that it conformed to her own system of thought. In her published works, and in letters to those outside her intimate inner circle, H.D. virtually denies that she undertook analysis for therapeutic reasons. In Tribute to Freud, she claims:

I had begun my preliminary research in order to fortify and equip myself to face a war when it came, and to help in some subsidiary way, if my training were sufficient and my aptitudes suitable, with war-shocked and war-shattered people. (TF 93)

Similarly, H.D. emphasized in a letter to Conrad Aiken, that "Freud considered me and the Dutchman [the theosophist, J. J. van der Leeuw]...as rather special - not crazy, not professional, but people who would 'help'."²⁵ In contrast, H.D.'s letters to Bryher reveal that H.D. was motivated to seek a therapeutic relationship for the specific reason that she feared the disintegration of her identity. The anguish caused to H.D. by her "split dual personality" is reflected in her pre-analytical writing, and especially in Kora and Ka, and in fact H.D. seems to have suffered a breakdown in 1930 when her relationship with Kenneth Macpherson fell apart. H.D.'s writer's block was also a constantly recurring subject of the analysis.

From a therapeutical point of view, Freud's analysis of H.D. cannot be considered a success. After completing her analysis in 1934, H.D.'s writer's block intensified and until the war years she produced almost nothing. Moreover, her analysis (which she continued throughout the war with Walter Schmideberg) did not "cure" the underlying insecurity of H.D.'s personality; in 1946 she suffered a severe mental breakdown which ravaged her creativity. What H.D. did receive from psychoanalysis was the confirmation and renewal of her own personal vision. H.D.'s letters to Bryher reveal that from the outset she was exploiting Freud's theories in order to construct a syncretistic scheme which located reality in an invisible dimension. Since Freud had early in the analysis expressed his disapproval of her astrological and occult interests, H.D. was forced to work in secret on

her conflation of Freud's theories and astrological symbolism. Freud's scientific materialism was irreconcilable with H.D.'s occultism; they never actually argued, but H.D. writes that "there was an argument implicit in our very bones."²⁶

The key to H.D.'s attraction to psychoanalysis was Freud's formulation of the idea of the unconscious, in which H.D. found a vindication of her belief in the reality of the unseen world. As Freud describes it, the unconscious has a reality of its own, completely independent of all preconceived notions of reality that derive from the external world. In his essay, "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning," which was first published in 1911, Freud writes:

The strangest characteristic of unconscious (repressed) processes...is due to their entire disregard of reality-testing; they equate reality of thought with external actuality, and wishes with their fulfilment - with the event.... Hence also the difficulty of distinguishing unconscious phantasies from memories that have become unconscious. But one must never allow oneself to be misled into applying the standards of reality to repressed psychical structures, and on that account, perhaps, into undervaluing the importance of phantasies in the formation of symptoms on the ground that they are not actualities.... One is bound to employ the currency that is in use in the country one is exploring....²⁷

Although Freud classified phantasies, dreams and even art as "symptoms," it was his insistence on the reality (for the psychic life of the individual) of the unconscious that fascinated H.D. Freud's exploration of the underlying structures of human thought led him to confirm the symbolic

power of myths and fairy tales. His discovery of the relationship between the individual and the race consciousness confirmed for H.D. the existence of a "universal language" of pure thought, or "over-mind" as she had called it in "Notes on Thought and Vision." The images which recurred in dream and myth were like those "symbols of things that mattered" that were projected before the eyes of the Eleusinian candidates.²⁸

"Writing on the Wall," the first part of Tribute to Freud, is dedicated to Sigmund Freud as "the blameless physician" - Homer's description of Asclepius in the Iliad. H.D.'s Freud is a combination of scientist, artist and priest who restores the lost harmony of human thought; she describes him as the "midwife of the soul," whose re-integration of religion, art and medicine would create a "new form of thinking or living."²⁹ H.D. sees Freud as a prophet of the universal language which would heal individual and racial breaks in consciousness:

The picture-writing, the hieroglyph of the dream, was the common property of the whole race; in the dream, man, as at the beginning of time, spoke a universal language, and man, meeting in the universal understanding of the unconscious or the subconscious, would forgo barriers of time and space, and man, understanding man, would save mankind. (TF 71)

This passage more appropriately embodies H.D.'s ideas about analysis than those of Freud, for whom dream and vision remained essentially symptoms of neuroses or psychoses rather than spiritual truths. The desire to "forgo barriers of time and space" is a tendency of H.D.'s thought and not

Freud's: she is here prophesying the coming of a new reality which will shed the merely human dimension of time and space.

Freud suggested to H.D. that her deepest wish was to be "the founder of a new religion." (TF 37) H.D.'s "religion" was the universal language, the language of the fourth dimensional world of dream and vision. The sense of a prophetic mission had always been strong in H.D., and closely identified with her creativity. In the Imagist period, H.D.'s prophetic mission had manifested itself through her poetry, in which she sought to invent reality anew. Subsequently, however, H.D.'s increasing interest in the cinema, psychoanalysis and the occult led to a diminution of her concentration on writing as such. H.D.'s main interest, from the 1930s until her death, was the exploration of the spiritual dimension through the instruments of cinema, psychoanalysis and the occult. Her writing became of secondary importance, a vehicle for messages which prophesied the coming of a "new dimension" in which communication would be achieved through the "universal language" of dream symbolism and vision. In her short story, "The Moment," H.D. describes writing as an instrument for the reception of messages from the spiritual dimension: writing "made each moment a possible forerunner of the moment. It made mediumship, at rare intervals, legitimate."³⁰

H.D.'s early research into astrology, the occult and alchemy quickly developed into a relentless, all-consuming thirst for knowledge. Possession of secret knowledge became

for her an affirmation of her own power, of her magical control over reality. As H.D. writes in the lines quoted at the beginning of this section, the search for hidden knowledge is endless, perpetually luring the adept with the promise of the philosopher's stone. Occult lore is metaphorically conceived of as a vast ocean in which the mind flounders. At the end of the second World War, H.D. underwent the experience that is predicted in her lines from "The Walls Do Not Fall"; having surrendered logic and reason in order to dare into the realms of the occult, H.D. lost all contact with the world of shared reality and experienced "illusion, reversion of old values, / oneness lost, madness."

(ii) Trilogy

During the bombing of London in 1941, H.D. wrote: "It is black, unutterably, the human consciousness. But maybe where it is most terribly dense, this blackness, there will be more opportunity for those lights to show."³¹ The lights to which H.D. refers are those of the "high-powered cerebral minds" who are able to attain another dimension of awareness in the midst of death and destruction. It was as if the war were a test by fire, an initiation ceremony that proved the inner being.³²

The death and destruction which surrounded her forced H.D., as it had during the first World War, to turn inwards. As she recounts in The Gift, H.D. was able to disembody herself and project out her spirit so as to survive the terror of the air raids: "there would come that moment when I had left myself lying secure and it did not matter what happened to the frozen image of myself lying on the bed, because there was a stronger image of myself." In this state of cerebral intensity, visions would come to H.D. and she became aware once again of a prophetic mission to be realized through her writing: she would witness to the Spirit.³³

After the relatively unproductive years of the late 1930s, H.D.'s creativity burst forth during 1941. In this year she wrote The Gift, a memoir of her childhood which is

also a rediscovery of the Moravian religion. H.D. in this work identifies and accepts her mission as the "inheritor" of a secret, mystical tradition of Moravianism. The story hinges on a rather vague episode in which H.D.'s grandmother, as if in trance, recounts to the child Hilda a story of mystical ceremonies which had taken place between the early Moravian settlers and the Indians. Both men and women alike had participated in these rites, which celebrated the unity of the Christian Holy Spirit and the Great Spirit of the Indians. H.D. saw herself as the one destined to restore the vision of her ancestors, who had "planned a secret powerful community that would bring the ancient secrets of Europe and the ancient secrets of America into a single union of power and spirit, a united brotherhood, a Unitas Fratrum of the whole world."³⁴ This is another variation on the theme of a "universal language" which would heal the breaks in human consciousness: during the war, the universal language becomes that of the Holy Spirit.

H.D.'s greatest achievement during the war years is her trilogy of poems written between 1942 and 1944. Visionary and cerebral, these poems are the fruit of H.D.'s inner conviction that death and destruction could not be the only reality. The opening of the first poem, "The Walls Do Not Fall," declares the existence of a reality which transcends that of the ruins which surround the poet:

ruin everywhere, yet as the fallen roof
leaves the sealed room
open to the air,

so, through our desolation,
 thoughts stir, inspiration stalks us
 through gloom:

unaware, Spirit announces the Presence;
 shivering overtakes us,
 as of old, Samuel.... (CP 509-510)

London has been through "Apocryphal fire," but the initiates
 have passed through the flame and been saved for a purpose
 of which they are as yet unaware.

Although the style is more discursive, and the vision
 syncretistic, "The Walls Do Not Fall" frequently recalls
 H.D.'s Imagist poems. She finds transcendent qualities in the
 things stripped to their essence, the sea-shell becoming an
 adequate image of her being and the vehicle of her inner
 vitality. Like the mollusc, the poet finds immortality and
 completion within the self through resisting engulfment by
 external reality: "my shell-jaws snap shut / at invasion of
 the limitless, / ocean weight." (CP 513) That expansion and
 contraction of the boundaries of the self that characterized
 H.D.'s prose recurs here; to be contained in that which is
 least and to contain that which is greatest represents
 divinity for the poet, who becomes the oracle of a new
 dimension of being:

be firm in your own small, static, limited
 orbit and the shark-jaws
 of outer circumstance
 will spit you forth:
 be indigestible, hard, ungiving,
 so that, living within,
 you beget, self-out-of-self,
 selfless,
 that pearl-of-great-price. (CP 514)

Later she identifies with the worm, whose attributes are persistence and industriousness; surviving and profiting by every calamity, the worm eventually spins its own shroud from which it emerges transcendent as a winged butterfly. This is the revelation offered by the poet to those who claim that in a war writers are "non-utilitarian" and "pathetic." The poet "takes precedence of the priest," and his words "are magic, indelibly stamped / on the atmosphere somewhere, / forever." (CP 517-19)

The poet admonishes the Sword that "in the beginning / was the Word," making manifest the Johannine inspiration of "The Walls Do Not Fall." (CP 519) The entire Trilogy may be regarded, for all its syncretism, as a predominantly Christian poem if Christianity is understood in its Gnostic form. St. John's Gospel has many points of contact with Gnosticism, and many of the extant Gnostic texts concern the disciple who was beloved of Jesus. St. John is concerned with the secret teachings of Jesus which were restricted to his circle of initiates. A dualism of dark and light pervades the gospel; Light is identified with the Divine Word, which does battle with the forces of darkness until it finally triumphs in the resurrection of Christ. Throughout, the author is aware of inspiration by the Holy Ghost. The origins of H.D.'s attraction to Saints John and Paul is to be sought in the submerged Moravian background which in the upheaval of war returned to her consciousness. In the Moravian tradition, there is a strong underlying dualism which approaches Manichaeism; it is the Holy Ghost, as

Love, who unifies and transcends the otherwise irresolvable conflict of good and evil, light and dark.³⁵

In Trilogy H.D. is conscious of inspiration by the Holy Ghost, who manifests itself variously as the Dream and as Santa Sophia. H.D. casts off her corruptible flesh in this work, and becomes one of the "latter-day twice-born." (CP 521) The anima which informed H.D.'s Imagist poems is here the presence of the Holy Ghost, the spirit that flows through all things and heals all breaks in consciousness. It is the presence of the Holy Ghost that enables poets to re-forge the lost links with ancient wisdom:

we are the keepers of the secret,
the carriers, the spinners

of the rare intangible thread
that binds all humanity

to ancient wisdom,
to antiquity;

our joy is unique, to us,
grape, knife, cup, wheat

are symbols in eternity,
and every concrete object

has abstract value, is timeless
in the dream parallel

whose relative sigil has not changed
since Nineveh and Babylon. (CP 523)

Every object in this poem is infused with spirit, just as every object in H.D.'s Imagist sea garden was infused with the poet's vital breath. The prima materia of art, like that of alchemy, is all around, waiting to be transmuted into "spiritual" reality which is the "one-truth." (CP 537) The

Holy Ghost is revealed to the poet as Love in this poem, and H.D.'s conceives of her role as the making manifest of the spirit of love which is the light in human darkness. She traces all the manifestations of the spirit of love, uniting all religious traditions as if evoking the legions of light against darkness. In the end, there is for H.D. only one unified tradition in which there is no male nor female, pagan nor Christian, but only the healing truth of love.

In attempting to heal breaks in human consciousness H.D. is forced to employ anti-rational, anti-historical methods. Since no path exists for her to follow, she is constrained to invent her own links by releasing hidden meanings from words. Thus "Osiris equates O-sir-is or O-Sire-is," and hence both Christ and the star Sirius. In Trilogy H.D. is restrained in her use of this technique of making meanings, but in her later poetry it degenerates into a facile exercise which locks the poem into private meanings which exclude the reader's participation. H.D. was probably inspired in part by her experience of free association during analysis, and also by ancient Hebrew practice.

Gematria is the cabalistic method of interpreting Scripture by the calculation of the numerical values of words. It is a technique that is essentially magical in scope, since it permitted the conflation of words with the same numerical value to create new words that were considered to be endowed with power. Since Hebrew was written without vowels, the possible interpretations of any one word were numerous. Since the 1920s H.D. had been familiar with

cabalist ideas, which she used daily in her tarot readings and numerological calculations.³⁶ In Trilogy H.D. describes words as "anagrams, cryptograms, / little boxes, conditioned / to hatch butterflies." (CP 540) The cryptic meanings which she hatches here follow the logic of myth. Osiris, at this moment of the poem, is the symbol of the "one-truth" which underlies the apparent diversity.³⁷ The truth of Osiris, who is here conflated with his sister/wife Isis, is one which defies the normal channels of knowledge:

not too well equipped, my thought
would cover deplorable gaps

in time, reveal the regrettable chasm,
bridge that before-and-after schism,

(before Abraham was, I am)
uncover cankerous growths

in present-day philosophy,
in an endeavour to make ready,

as it were, the patient for the Healer;
correlate faith with faith,

recover the secret of Isis,
which is: there was One

in the beginning, Creator,
Foster, Begetter, the Same-forever

in the papyrus-swamp
in the Judean meadow. (CP 541)

In "Tribute to the Angels," the second part of Trilogy, the "secret of Isis" becomes that of "Our Lady" who appears to the poet in vision. "She is not-fear, she is not-war," writes H.D. of this Lady who carries not the Child but a book that is "the unwritten volume of the new." (CP 570) The Lady is the incarnation of the Holy Ghost and of Psyche,

uniting in herself the universal spirit of Love. H.D.'s Lady is both the same and different from before; she is not remote and hieratic, but almost palpable and even "one of us, with us." (CP 572) In Trilogy H.D. brings the spiritual dimension into the everyday: it is like the air which rushes in to the roofless houses of bombed London. The spirit of Love paradoxically manifests itself amidst death and destruction, like the blossoming amidst the ruins of a "half-burnt-out apple-tree" (CP 561)

"The Walls Do Not Fall," which was written the bleak year of 1942, is the most vibrant of the poems that make up Trilogy. The urgency of H.D.'s quest for "spiritual reality" communicates itself through the poetic language itself, which has an austerity that recalls H.D.'s best Imagist poems even when the subject of the writing is highly abstract:

...when the shingles hissed
 in the rain of the incendiary,
 other values were revealed to us,
 other standards hallowed us;
 strange texture, a wing covered us,
 and though there was whirr and roar in the high
 air,
 there was a Voice louder,
 though its speech was lower
 than a whisper. (CP 520)

The poet's mind burns with cerebral intensity in this poem, which is a voyage into an unknown dimension. Like the outcome of the war itself, her destiny is uncertain:

we know no rule
of procedure,

we are voyagers, discoverers
of the not-known,

the unrecorded;
we have no map;

possibly we will reach haven,
heaven. (CP 543)

"Tribute to the Angels," which was written in May 1944, already anticipates redemption, but until the vision of the Lady the verses are tortured by inner, apparently irreconcilable tensions:

what is this mother-father
to tear at our entrails?

what is this unsatisfied duality
which you can not satisfy? (CP 552-53)

The flowering of the bombed apple-tree and the coming of the Lady restore the lost harmony of consciousness. Alchemical symbolism dominates this section of Trilogy, whose subject is the permeation of ordinary, everyday life by the spirit of Love.

H.D. wrote the final section of what was to become Trilogy during the last days of December, 1944, when the Allied victory was assured. "The Flowering of the Rod" is a complex and uneven poem which presages H.D.'s later development. Ironically, the poem begins with a profound sense dissatisfaction. The trying of the spirit has not initiated a new spiritual era of love: "we have given until we have no more to give; / alas, it was pity, rather than love, we gave." (CP 578) Whereas in the earlier sections, H.D.

attempted to reconcile external and inner realities, here she begins a flight from reality which underlies the whole later development of the poem:

I go where I love and where I am loved,
into the snow;

I go to the things I love
with no thought of duty or pity;

I go where I belong, inexorable,
as the rain that has lain long

in the furrow; I have given
or would have given

life to the grain;
but if it will not grow or ripen

with the rain of beauty,
the rain will turn to the cloud;

the harvester sharpens his steel on the stone;
but this is not our field,

we have not sown this;
pitiless, pitiless, let us leave

The-place-of-a-skull
to those who have fashioned it. (CP 578-79)

In place of the "age of the new dimension," a world animated by the Holy Spirit, the poet finds Golgotha. Although H.D. attempts to rejoice in the resurrection, her attitude is at best ambivalent. She sees herself as "a frozen Priestess, a lonely Pythoness" who sings the doom of rulers and kingdoms. (CP 584-5)

"The Flowering of the Rod" is dominated by the figure of Mary Magdalene, with whom the poet identifies. H.D.'s choice of this character stemmed from her Gnostic readings where Mary Magdalene is sometimes raised to the position of

the only true initiate of Jesus.³⁸ After the beauty and power of the opening of the poem, H.D. slips into a long narrative which has only the thinnest story line, and which is told in a flat, prosaic style. The episode on which H.D.'s story is based is the Biblical account of Mary Magdalene's washing of the feet of Jesus; she is said to have dried his feet with her hair, and anointed them with oil. Jesus is said to have cast seven devils out of Mary's body, but even the disciples still regard her as impure. H.D. invents the story of Mary Magdalen's attempt to acquire a jar of myrrh from Kaspar, the Magian. The possessor of sacred symbols, Kaspar initially rebuffs the impure woman, but through the sight of her hair (normally hidden by Hebrew women), he experiences a vision; in an instant of time, he sees, like a flower opening outwards the whole plan of man's existence on earth. Once again the expansion and contraction of infinity represents a sudden apprehension of divinity. Kaspar's attention is caught by a fleck of light in Mary Magdalene's hair:

And the flower, thus contained
 in the infinitely tiny grain or seed,
 opened petal by petal, a circle,
 and each petal was separate
 yet still held, as it were,
 by some dynamic force of attraction
 to its dynamic centre;
 and the circle went on widening
 and would go on opening
 he knew, to infinity.... (CP 601)

In the final stanzas of the poem Mary Magdalene is enveloped

by the odour of sanctity.

Although the many pages devoted by H.D. to Mary Magdalene are rarely enlivened by the energy of H.D.'s opening of "The Flowering of the Rod," they warrant attention in that they foreshadow H.D.'s later poetry. At the beginning of this poem, H.D.'s faith in the arrival of the "age of the new dimension" is shattered, and inevitably provokes in her a crisis of artistic identity. The earlier poems of Trilogy are oracular works, in which the poet is inspired to announce a new reality. When the age of Love fails to materialize, the poet is deprived of her place at the centre of reality and seeks a new vehicle for the projection of the self. Mary Magdalene is one of the many characters in H.D.'s work who seem to be devoid of creative energy; she is an instrument of the poet's need to affirm her command over reality. In this part of the poem H.D. brings together all her occult lore, asserting that "through my will and my power, / I shall be myrrh." (CP 590) In poetic terms, however, the promised transmutation does not take place.

(iii) "Returning from the Dead"

At the beginning of 1946, H.D. suffered a mental breakdown. The symptoms of a disturbing flight from reality are already apparent in "The Sword Went Out to Sea," an autobiographical novel that she began to work on in 1945, but when H.D. tried to throw herself from the roof-top, Bryher took control of the situation. She chartered one of the first civilian planes able to operate in post-war Europe and flew H.D. to a Swiss clinic. The unsent letters which H.D. scribbled in pencil during this period reveal that she had lost all contact with reality: she believed herself to have been kidnapped and taken into Nazi-occupied territory, and wrote to famous people like Greta Garbo as if they were her intimate acquaintances.³⁹

In September 1946, to the surprise of both her doctors and friends, H.D. made a sudden, dramatic recovery. In a letter to Bryher, H.D. claimed that "I was never really afraid, until that 'shock treatment,' then I was so damned mad, I sort of got well." Nonetheless, H.D. would spend most of the rest of her life in Swiss clinics, and although she continued to write until shortly before her death in 1961 her creativity was ravaged by this experience of madness. In a letter to Bryher at the time of H.D.'s recovery, Edith Sitwell foresaw the underlying tragedy of H.D.'s life after the war:

It is so wonderful that dear Hilda is better - like a miracle. One expected it to happen, but not quite so suddenly. But oh, how terribly and deeply I understand your underlying fear. That is one of the things which is so tragic - that fear must be there. It is like, in a way, someone returning from the Dead - they have had an experience that one hasn't known, and that is like a dread in one - that they pulled back.⁴¹

The origins of H.D.'s breakdown appear to lie in the intensive spiritualist research that she was engaged in throughout the terrifying war years. H.D. and Bryher belonged to spiritualist circle which was centred around a Eurasian medium called Arthur Bhaduri. When Bhaduri married, H.D., characteristically, felt herself to have been betrayed, and continued her spiritualist research alone. Using a triangular table that had belonged to William Morris, she began table-tipping and soon made contact with a group of dead R.A.F. pilots. This research was accompanied by an increasingly obsessive fixation on Lord Dowding, the mastermind of the Battle of Britain. After the victory of his strategy, Dowding collapsed and was forced into retirement. He devoted himself to spiritualist research, receiving messages from dead pilots (messages which pre-dated H.D.'s).

During 1945 H.D.'s pilots told her that they wanted to get in touch with Dowding in order to communicate to him the details of a mysterious machine which would bring about world peace. Dowding actually came to visit H.D., but told her that her research was dangerous, and that she should give it up. To her lasting indignance, he suggested that her spirits might be of a lesser order. Although they met only a few times, H.D. constructed a phantasy romance with Dowding

that endured for many years after the war.⁴²

In 1951, H.D began work on a long poem, Helen in Egypt. Following the version of Stesichorus, H.D. takes her Helen to Egypt during the Trojan War: "Helen of Troy was a phantom.... The Greeks and the Trojans alike fought for an illusion."⁴³ In Egypt, Helen meets the phantom of Achilles, the soldier-lover, who was based on Lord Dowding. The poem immediately plunges the reader into a shifting, ambiguous dimension where all standards of reality disintegrate. Helen is "both phantom and reality," and the dead Achilles is a being of flesh and blood:

the harpers will sing forever
of how Achilles met Helen
among the shades,

but we were not, we are not shadows;
as we walk, heel and soul
leave our sandal-prints in the sand.... (HE 6)

Helen in Egypt is a vast phantasmagoria, a shifting web of illusion. H.D. has peopled this work with her own inner phantasms. Dowding, and through him all the men by whom H.D. had felt rejected, are represented by Achilles. In the poem, H.D. establishes herself at the centre of reality whereas in life she had played only a marginal role in the life of Dowding. She even speculates that the Trojan War might have occurred "in order that two souls or soul-mates should meet." (HE 5)

Other people from H.D.'s life appear in the poem: most significantly, Freud is Theseus and Havelock Ellis is Chiron. This is a poem about H.D.'s relationships with

powerful men, and her attempt to re-define those relationships. The many feminist studies of Helen in Egypt invariably see Helen as searching for self-knowledge and in the process re-defining patriarchal institutions. Such interpretations of the poem ignore certain fundamental aspects which tend to undermine the claim that Helen in Egypt is H.D.'s greatest work.⁴⁴

There are almost seven hundred question marks in Helen in Egypt. Anything which approximates a statement is immediately questioned. The doubt about whether Helen is phantom or reality, and which Helen is the real one and which the phantom, lies at the heart of the poem's questions. There is no identity at the centre of this work, and Helen's search brings her no nearer in the end than in the beginning. The "Message" which Helen receives at the end of the poem is that Love and Death are one, but this is a message which is not convincingly created through the movement of the poem itself. The language has a flat emptiness:

there is no before and no after,
there is one finite moment
that no joy can disperse

or thought of past happiness
tempt from or dissipate;
now I know the best and the worst

the seasons revolve around
a pause in the infinite rhythm
of the heart and heaven. (HE 303-4)

In the phantasmagoria of Helen in Egypt it is the poet's

identity which is missing, and which prevents a convincing realization of Helen's quest for self-knowledge. It is as if the poet herself were full of phantasms with no unifying structure of identity.

Helen in Egypt is a highly sophisticated work. H.D., in all her later poetry, would rely (as she does here) on her intelligence and her erudition in order to cover up the creative vacuum. H.D.'s creation of the web of illusion in Helen in Egypt is extremely subtle, every brush stroke adding a new contradiction or doubt; the prose captions, for instance, frequently give an explanation of the poetry which is in fact at odds with it. This is a poem full of phantasms, but without an anima.

H.D.'s final poem, "Hermetic Definition," which is included in the collection with the same title, arises out of a similar psychological situation. The figure of a Haitian reporter, Lionel Durand, inspired the work. H.D. met Durand briefly on two occasions, but constructed a mythical love affair with him in which she imagines the poem as the child of their union. As its title indicates, this poem is much concerned with hermetical meanings, and especially with some sort of cryptic "definition" of H.D. The identity that is mirrored in the poem, however, is like that of Helen in Egypt, a series of ghostly phantasms:

I must keep my identity,
walk unflinching toward a Lover,
the hachish supérieur of dream.⁴⁵

"Sagesse," the second poem from the collection Hermetic

Definition, is yet another palimpsestic version of the same story: in this case the phantasmatical lover is H.D.'s analyst, Erich Heydt.⁴⁶ Here H.D. recites the names of the angels which protect each twenty minutes of the night. It is a ritual which allows the poet to cast a tenuous thread of unity through the sleepless nights in which fragments of memory and dream and occult lore are jumbled without revision onto the page. It is, as H.D. describes it, a "game of affirmations and of angel's names."⁴⁷

After the second World War, H.D. never recovered that vibrant intensity and originality which she revealed in her Imagist poems and the early section of Trilogy. It was as if her identity became a mere husk full of phantasms which represent fragments of a lost identity. H.D.'s later poetry becomes a "pure core of burning cerebration" which attempts to manipulate the shadowy reflections of real people and events in order once again to stand at the creative centre and command reality. H.D.'s own lines in Trilogy foretold the tragic disintegration of identity that ravaged the poet's creativity in her later years:

Wistfulness, exaltation,
 a pure core of burning cerebration,

 jottings on a margin,
 indecipherable palimpsest scribbled over

 with too many contradictory emotions...

 jottings of psychic numerical equations,
 runes, superstitions, evasions...

reversion of old values,
oneness lost, madness.

(CP 533-34)

Notes.

Preface

1. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Aus dem Nachlass der Achtzigejahre," in Werke in Drei Bände, ed. Karl Schlechta, vol. III (München: Carl Hauser Verlag, 1966), p. 495. Nietzsche wrote: "Ist die Kunst eine Folge des Ungenügens am Wirklichen? Oder ein Ausdruck der Dankbarkeit über genossenes Glück?"

2. Frances Wolle, A Moravian Heritage (Boulder, Colorado: Empire Reproduction and Printing Co., 1972), p. 55.

3. See discussion of these romans à clef in Chapter 3.

4. Hermann Usener, Gotternamen: Versuch einer Lehre von der religiösen Begriffsbildung (Bonn: n. p., 1896), p. 129. (My translation.)

5. Jean-Pierre Vernant, Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs: Etudes de psychologie historique (Paris: Librairie François Maspero, 1965), p. 369.

6. Rudolf Léonhard, "Hölderlin," in Hölderlin, trans. and ed. Robert Rovini (Paris: Pierre Seghers Editeur, 1953), p. 43. (My translation.)

7. Friedrich Hölderlin, "Brot und Wein," in Sämtliche Werke, ed. Friedrich Beissner (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, p. 298. Hölderlin's words are:

...und wozu Dichter in dürftiger Zeit.
Aber sie sind, sagst du, wie des Weingotts heilige
Priester,
Welche von Lande zu Land zogen in heiliger Nacht.

Chapter One: Hilda Doolittle

1. H.D., The Gift (1982; rpt. London: Virago, 1984), p. 4. See also Gillian Lindt Gollin, Moravians in Two Worlds: A Study of Changing Communities (New York and London: Columbia Univ. Press, 1967) for the history of Bethlehem, Pa.

2. See H.D., The Gift, passim. The Moravian concept of the Gift is derived from St. Paul's reference to "spiritual gifts," e.g. I Cor., xii.

3. See A. Bost, History of the Bohemian and Moravian Brethren (London: Religious Tract Society, 1834) for the early history of the Unitas Fratrum. [Mrs. R. Batty,] Moravian Schools and Customs (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1889) describes a typical nineteenth century Moravian community. See also Gollin, pp. 1-22. Moravian history was the subject of a number of works by H.D. See her short story "The Death of Martin Presser," Quarterly Review of Literature, 13 (1965), pp. 241-261. Extracts from a novel based on Moravian history, "The Mystery," appear in Eric Walter White, Images of H.D. / From The Mystery (London: Enitharmon, 1976), pp. 33-58. The typescripts of "The Mystery" and "Zinzendorf Notes" are held in the Hilda Doolittle Archive in the Collection of American Literature (C.A.L.) at the Beinecke Library, Yale University (hereafter referred to as C.A.L. Beinecke).

4. H.D., The Gift, p. 97.

5. Quoted by John Jacob Sessler in his Communal Piety Among Early American Moravians (New York: Holt, 1933), p. 128.

6. See Francis Wolle, A Moravian Heritage, passim. Wolle was H.D.'s first cousin, and in his book gives a detailed account of H.D.'s maternal family history.

7. H.D., Tribute to Freud (Boston: David R. Godine, 1974), p. 32.

8. H.D., The Gift, pp. 9-10.

9. H.D., The Gift, p. 97, and pp. 73-100 passim.

10. H.D., "The Death of Martin Presser," p. 225.

11. H.D., letter to Norman Holmes Pearson, 11 April [1958], C.A.L. Beinecke.

12. H.D., letter to Bryher, 27 April [1933], European Collection, Beinecke.

13. H.D., The Gift, pp. 7-8, 41.

14. H.D., Tribute to Freud, p. 33.

15. H.D., The Gift, p. 21. See pp. 11-12.

16. H.D., The Gift, p. 4.

17. H.D., Tribute to Freud, pp. 106-107.

18. H.D., The Gift, p. 33.

19. H.D., Tribute to Freud, p. 164.

20. William Carlos Williams, "A Letter from William Carlos Williams to Norman Holmes Pearson Concerning Hilda Doolittle and Her Father and Mother," William Carlos Williams Newsletter, 2, No. 2 (1976), pp. 2-3.

21. H.D., The Gift, p. 42. H.D. refers to her father's ambition for her to become a second Madame Curie in her 1957 diary, "Hirslanden-Zürich Notebook II," C.A.L. Beinecke, pp. 26-27.

22. H.D., letter to Eric Walter White, quoted by White in his Images of H.D., p. 18.

23. H.D., "A Note on Poetry" in The Oxford Anthology of American Literature, ed. William Rose Benét and Norman Holmes Pearson, II (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1956), p. 1287. See Norman Holmes Pearson, "Norman Holmes Pearson on H.D.: An Interview," Contemporary Literature, 10 (Autumn 1969), pp. 435-446. See also Richard Aldington, "A Young American Poet," The Little Review, 2 (March 1915), pp. 23.

24. H.D., Tribute to Freud, p. 186. See also H.D.'s unpublished autobiographical novel, "Paint It To-day," C.A.L. Beinecke, Chapter 1, p. 6.

25. H.D., Her (1981; rpt. London: Virago, 1984), p. 17. Her is an autobiographical novel about H.D.'s adolescence. H.D.'s autobiographical novels, which are in general reliable sources of biographical information, are discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis.

26. H.D., End to Torment: A Memoir of Ezra Pound (1979; rpt. Manchester: Carcanet, 1980), p. 12. See Ezra Pound, "How I Began" in Ezra Pound: A Collection of Criticism, ed. Grace Schulman (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), p. 24. For an account of H.D.'s first meeting with Pound see Douglass Macpherson, "Ezra Pound of Wyncote," Arts in Philadelphia, 2 (May 1940), pp. 10, 28.

27. See H.D.'s partly autobiographical novel, "The Sword Went Out to Sea," II, C.A.L. Beinecke, pp. 147-178 for her memories of the performance of Iphigenia Among the Taurians.

28. See H.D., "Notes on Thought and Vision," C.A.L. Beinecke, *passim*. See also "Helios and Athene" in H.D.'s Collected Poems: 1912-1944 (Manchester: Carcanet, 1984), pp. 327-328.

29. H.D., "Asphodel," II, C.A.L. Beinecke, p. 57. "Asphodel" is an autobiographical novel covering the period 1911-1919; it is discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis.

30. Marianne Moore, letter to Bryher, 7 July 1921, quoted by Barbara Guest in Herself Defined: The Poet H.D. and Her World (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984). I am indebted throughout this thesis to Barbara Guest's accurate and sensitive biography of H.D.

31. See H.D., End to Torment, pp. 11, 19. The edition which Pound brought H.D. was probably Honoré de Balzac, About Catherine de' Medici, Séraphita and Other Stories, trans. Clara Bell and James Waring (Philadelphia: Avil, 1901). See also Emanuel Swedenborg, Heaven and Its Wonders and Hell (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1867).

32. For H.D.'s understanding of the relationship between spirit and matter see her "Notes on Thought and Vision" and "Helios and Athene."

33. H.D., "Paint It To-day," Chapter 6, pp. 11-12

34. Thomas Burnett Swann, The Classical World of H.D. (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1962), p. 10. H.D. mentions her early reading in Her, End to Torment, The Gift, and Tribute to Freud.

35. H.D., Tribute to Freud, p. 132. See also "Paint It To-day," Chapter 5, pp. 15, 17, for H.D.'s fantasy of Poe as her lover-companion.

36. Wollé, p. 55.

37. "Hilda's Book" is now in the Houghton Library at Harvard University. It was first published as an appendix to End to Torment, pp. 67-84. "Hilda's Book" includes some poems which were later published with minor changes in Pound's early volumes. Ezra Pound's "San Trovaso Notebook" is in the Beinecke Library's Pound Centre; it contains poems addressed to H.D. as Is-Hilda and Ysolt.

38. H.D., Her, p. 70. See also pp. 73, et *passim*. See her "Notes on Thought and Vision," pp. 23-25.

39. H.D., End to Torment, p. 81.

40. Ezra Pound, "La Fraisne," in his Collected Shorter Poems (London: Faber, 1984), pp. 4-5. Ezra Pound, The Cantos, Rev. Collected Ed. (London: Faber, 1975), p. 530. See William French, "'St. Hilda,' Mr. Pound, and Rilke's Parisian Panther at Pisa," Paideuma, 11 (Spring 1982), pp. 79-87. On p. 80, French writes that "whenever E.P. starts drifting off about trees...we are not ill-advised to check for the aura of 'Dryad.'"

41. Ezra Pound, Collected Shorter Poems, p. 62. Compare, for example, H.D.'s "Mid-day," in her Collected Poems, p. 10.

42. See Otto Rank's discussion of the artistic personality, "Creative Urge and Personality Development," in his The Myth of the Birth of the Hero and Other Writings (New York: Vintage, 1959), pp. 108-137. Pound and H.D. were influenced by the works of Walter Pater and Arthur Symons.

43. William Carlos Williams, The Autobiography of William Carlos Williams (New York: Random House, 1951), p. 68. See also The Selected Letters of William Carlos Williams, ed. John C. Thirlwall (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1957), pp. 8-9.

44. Williams, Autobiography, p. 69.

45. William Carlos Williams, "H.D.'s Collected Poems Recall Author's Dash into Raging Deep," Literary Review of the New York Evening Post, 23 May 1925, p. 4. See his Autobiography, p. 69.

46. H.D., End to Torment, pp. 18-19.

47. H.D., letter to William Carlos Williams, Feb. 1908. Quoted by Whittemore Reed, William Carlos Williams: Poet from New Jersey (Boston: Houghton and Mifflin, 1975), p. 43.

48. H.D., End to Torment, pp. 15.

49. H.D., "Paint It To-day," Chapter 1, p. 7.

50. H.D., End to Torment, pp. 74, 79. The first quotation is from "Domina," the second from a sonnet fragment.

51. H.D., "Paint It To-day," Chapter 1, pp. 7-8.

52. H.D., "Paint It To-day," Chapter 1, pp. 8, 11. See also H.D.'s Her, pp. 55-62.

53. Quoted by Richard Perceval Graves in The Brothers Powys (London: Rutledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), p. 89.

54. Wollé, p. 56. See H.D., Her, pp. 146, 160-161, 171, 180. During the first World War, H.D. too began to see visions.

55. H.D., Her, p. 158. For a discussion of the novel see Susan Friedman and Rachel Blau DuPlessis, "'I Had Two Loves Separate': The Sexualities of H.D.'s Her," Montemora, 8 (1981), pp. 7-30. At the beginning of the typescript, H.D. identified all the characters, with the exception of Fayne Rabb/Frances Gregg. Although the chronology has been slightly altered, in most respects Her is consistent with extant documents concerning H.D.'s life in this period.

56. H.D., Her, p. 203 (H.D.'s ellipsis). See Charlotte Wolff, Bisexuality: A Study, rev. enl. ed. (London: Quartet, 1979), pp. 1-39 et passim for ideas of homosexuality and bisexuality current in H.D.'s youth.

57. Quoted by Barbara Guest, p. 26.

58. The Hilda Doolittle Archive at the Beinecke Library holds two bound volumes containing typescripts of nine early stories by H.D. The dates are uncertain, probably ca. 1909-1911. "The Suffragette," the most successfully realized of these stories, was probably written in London in late 1911 or early 1912.

59. H.D., "Autobiographical Notes," C.A.L. Beinecke, p. 1.

60. Camille Flammarion, Death and Its Mystery, trans. E. S. Brooks and Latrobe Carroll, (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1922-23), I, p. 109 et passim. See H.D.'s "Notes on Thought and Vision" passim.

61. Andrew Lang, trans. Theocritus, Bion and Moschus (London and New York: Macmillan, 1889). See H.D.'s "Notes on Thought and Vision" for her idea of the work of art as a window into the world of vision.

62. H.D., Collected Poems, p. 335-336. One stanza is quoted by H.D. in End to Torment, p. 36.

63. H.D., "Tide-line," p. [1]. This short story is part of an unpublished collection entitled "Within the Walls," C.A.L. Beinecke.

64. H.D., Her, p. 223.

65. H.D., Her, p. 225.

66. H.D., "Fortune Teller," C.A.L. Beinecke, p. 43. Designated by H.D. as the third chapter of The Gift, "Fortune Teller" was silently omitted (with other passages and H.D.'s notes) from the recently published version. For a discussion of the resultant distortion of a text which H.D. had prepared for publication see Rachel Blau DuPlessis, "A

Note on the State of H.D.'s The Gift," Sulfur, 9 (1984), pp. 178-182. See The Gift, pp. 21-23.

67. Ezra Pound, The Spirit of Romance (London: Dent, 1910), pp. 87, 93.

68. Horace, "On the Art of Poetry," in Classical Literary Criticism, trans. T. S. Dorsch (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965), p. 92. See Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Poet," in his Selected Essays (London: Thomas Nelson, n.d.), pp. 127-152.

69. Williams, Autobiography, p. 90. See Williams, "A Letter to Norman Holmes Pearson," p. 3. See H.D., "Autobiographical Notes," p. 1.

70. H.D., "Confessions: H.D.," The Little Review, 12 (May 1929), p. 39.

71. H.D., "Asphodel," I, p. 11.

72. H.D., "Asphodel," I, p. 46.

73. H.D., "Autobiographical Notes," p. 2.

74. H.D., letters to Isabel Pound, [4 Dec. 1911; misdated by cataloguer as 1910] and [26 Feb. 1912], Pound Archive, C.A.L. Beinecke.

75. H.D., "Asphodel," I, pp. 96-97.

Chapter Two: "H.D."

1. H.D., End to Torment, p. 18. See H.D., "Autobiographical Notes," p. 2. See also Richard Aldington, Life for Life's Sake: A Book of Reminiscences (New York: Viking, 1941), pp. 134-136. H.D. later changed the title of 'Priapus' to 'Orchard.'

2. Wolle, p. 58.

3. Brigit Patmore, My Friends When Young: The Memoirs of Brigit Patmore, ed. Derek Patmore (London: Heinemann, 1968), p. 64.

4. H.D., End to Torment, p. 40. For a discussion of Pound's role in the renaming of H.D. see Paul Smith, "Wounded Woman: H.D.'s Post-Imagist Writing," in his Pound Revised (London and Canberra: Croom Helm, 1983), pp. 110-132.

5. Ezra Pound, Ripostes of Ezra Pound: Whereto are Appended the Complete Poetical Works of T. E. Hulme (London: Stephen Swift, 1912), p. 59.

6. See W. Martin, "Freud and Imagism," Notes and Queries, 8 (Dec. 1961), pp. 470-71, 474. See also Wallace Martin, "'The Forgotten School of 1909' and the Origins of Imagism," in A Catalogue of the Imagist Poets, ed. J. Howard Woolmer (New York: Woolmer, 1966), pp. 7-38.

7. Ezra Pound to Glenn Hughes, 26 Sept. 1927, in The Letters of Ezra Pound: 1907-1941, ed. D. D. Paige (London: Faber, 1951), p. 228. See also Harriet Monroe, A Poet's Life: Seventy Years in a Changing World (New York: Macmillan, 1938), p. 267.

8. Monroe, A Poet's Life, p. 264.

9. "Richard Aldington's Letters to Herbert Read," ed. David S. Thatcher, Malahat Review, 15 (July 1970), p. 18. See also Aldington, Life for Life's Sake, pp. 135-36.

10. Patmore, My Friends When Young, p. 64.

11. Patmore, My Friends When Young, p. 65.

12. The relationship between H.D. and Aldington is explored at length in H.D.'s autobiographical novel Bid Me to Live (1960; rpt. London: Virago, 1984). See also her unpublished novels "Asphodel" and "Paint It To-day."

13. H.D., Tribute to Freud, p. 152.

14. H.D., End to Torment, p. 8; "Paint It To-day," Chapter 4, pp. 1-6.

15. Graves, pp. 89-90.
16. Louis U. Wilkinson, The Buffoon (1916; rpt. London: Village Press, 1975). Both John Cournos and Brigit Patmore, after estrangement from H.D., wrote novels about H.D. which portray her as a figure very similar to "the Divinity" in The Buffoon. See John Cournos, Miranda Masters (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926); and Brigit Patmore, No Tomorrow (New York: Century, 1926).
17. H.D., "Asphodel," I, p. 193; see pp. 186-194.
18. Aldington, Life for Life's Sake, p. 119.
19. John Gould Fletcher, Life is My Song: The Autobiography of John Gould Fletcher (New York and Toronto: Farrar and Rinehart, 1937), p. 79. See also Aldington, "Letters to Herbert Read," [June 1925], p. 18. Janice S. Robinson in her H.D.: The Life and Work of an American Poet (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1982), p. 35, claims that H.D. attended Hulme's lectures with Pound in late 1911, but cites no source for this information.
20. T. E. Hulme, Speculations, ed. Herbert Read (London and New York: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1924), pp. 132, 133.
21. Hulme, Speculations, p. 134.
22. Henri Bergson, Time and Free Will, trans. F. L. Pogson (London: Swan Sonnenschein and New York: Macmillan), p. 15.
23. T. E. Hulme, Further Speculations, ed. Sam Hynes (Lincoln, Nebraska: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1962), p. 10.
24. H.D., "A Note on Poetry," p. 1287; Aldington, Life for Life's Sake, p. 138.
25. H.D., Collected Poems, p. 55. "Oread" was first published in The Egoist, 1 (Feb. 1914), p. 55. See Ezra Pound, "Our Vortex," Blast, 1 (1914), p. 154.
26. Hulme, Speculations, p. 136.
27. H.D., "Hipparchia," in her collection of short stories, Palimpsest (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1926), pp. 54, 114, 112.
28. Fletcher, Life is My Song, p. 56.
29. H.D., Palimpsest, p. 56.
30. Derek Patmore, "Introduction" to Brigit Patmore, My Friends When Young, p. 7.

31. Havelock Ellis, Impressions and Comments, 3rd Series (London: Constable, 1924), p. 64.

32. H.D.'s photograph album is in the Hilda Doolittle Archive, C.A.L. Beinecke. She probably began to assemble it in the late 1920s with the help of her lover, Kenneth Macpherson.

33. H.D., "A Note on Poetry," p. 1287.

34. H.D., "A Note on Poetry," p. 1287.

35. H.D., letter to Bryher, 7 Dec. [1934], Beinecke. The two volumes of Hölderlin's Hyperion oder der Eremit in Griechenland, a work in prose, were first published in 1797 and 1799 respectively. The work received little recognition, and the few editions of it in the nineteenth century were incomplete: Hyperion was dismissed by early critics as unintelligible and bizarre. Nietzsche was one of the earliest critics to sense the work's originality, which achieved wider recognition only towards the beginning of the first World War. An accurate modern edition of Hyperion may be found in the volume of Hölderlin already cited, Sämtliche Werke, pp. 485-765.

36. H.D., "A Note on Poetry," p. 1287.

37. Cournos, Miranda Masters, pp. 14, 12, 11.

38. H.D., "Paint It To-day," Chapter 5, pp. 5-6.

39. H.D., Palimpsest, p. 60.

40. J. B. Harmer, Victory in Limbo: Imagism 1908-1917 (London: Secker and Warburg, 1975), p. 142.

41. H.D., "Sheltered Garden," Collected Poems, pp. 19-21. References to Collected Poems are hereafter cited in the text as CP, followed by the page number. H.D.'s Imagist phase is here interpreted as concluding with the publication of her third volume of poems, Heliadora and Other Poems (London: Jonathan Cape, 1924).

42. H.D., "Notes on Recent Writing" (1949), C.A.L. Beinecke, pp. 10-11. See also H.D., letter to Bryher, 22 April [1933], where she writes that she was shocked by Freud's use of the "hackneyed word 'crystallized' that makes me so sick from States reviewers." For the use of the term "crystalline" to describe H.D.'s poetry see, for example, May Sinclair, "The Poems of H.D." [rev. of Hymen], The Dial, 72 (Feb. 1922), p. 207. See also Marjorie Allen Seiffert, "Glacial Bloom" [rev. of Heliadora], Poetry, 25 (Dec. 1924), p. 164.

43. Sinclair, "The Poems of H.D.," pp. 203, 207, 206.

44. John Gould Fletcher, "H. D.'s Vision" [rev. of Sea Garden], Poetry, 9 (Feb. 1927), pp. 266-267. See H[arriet] M[onroe], "H.D.," Poetry, 5 (Aug. 1925), p. 272. See also Richard Aldington, "A Young American Poet," The Little Review, 2 (March 1915), pp. 22-25.
45. Ezra Pound, "Vorticism," The Fortnightly Review (Sept. 1914), p. 469. Pound claims that the true Image is in fact a Vortex.
46. H.D., Bid Me to Live, pp. 179, 159, 183; see pp. 166-184 passim. H.D. here compares D. H. Lawrence with Vincent van Gogh, but in so doing reveals as much about her own artistic values as those of Lawrence.
47. Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry (1937; rpt. New York: Pageant, 1957), p. 505.
48. Bush, p. 501. Even more sympathetic critics have detected a "feeling of stasis" in H.D.'s work; see, for example, Hyatt H. Waggoner, American Poets: From the Puritans to the Present (New York: Delta, 1968), p. 359.
49. Aldington, "A Young American Poet," pp. 23, 25.
50. Glenn Hughes, Imagism and the Imagists: A Study in Modern Poetry (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1931), p. 111.
51. H.D., Helen in Egypt (New York: New Directions, 1961), pp. 5, 7, 14.
52. Swann, p. 47.
53. H.D., Palimpsest, pp. 57, 77.
54. H.D., Hippolytus Temporizes (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1927), "The Argument" (n.p.), p. 32.

Chapter Three: Transitions

1. Cournos, Miranda Masters, p. 4. In "Asphodel," II, pp. 1-14, H.D. writes about the conflict between creativity and pregnancy.
2. H.D., "Asphodel," II, p. 12; Tribute to Freud, p. 40.
3. H.D., "Asphodel," II, p. 9.
4. H.D., "Asphodel," II, pp. 78, 79. See also H.D., Bid Me to Live, *passim*.
5. D. H. Lawrence, letter to Amy Lowell, 23 Aug. 1916, in The Letters of D. H. Lawrence, ed. George J. Zytaruk and James T. Boulton, et. al., II (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981), p. 645. Lawrence, letter to Catherine Carswell, [9 March 1917], Letters, ed. James T. Boulton and Andrew Robertson, III (1984), p. 102. The account of the relationship between D. H. Lawrence and H.D. given by Janice Robinson in H.D.: The Life and Work of an American Poet, pp. 142-180 is not supported by the evidence of H.D.'s letters and romans à clef. See also Perdita Schaffner's article on her father, Cecil Gray: "A Profound Animal" in H.D., Bid Me to Live, pp. 185-194. See also Peter Firchow's article, "Rico and Julia: The Hilda Doolittle-D. H. Lawrence Affair Reconsidered," Journal of Modern Literature, 8 (1980), pp. 51-76.
6. H.D., Bid Me to Live, p. 51.
7. H.D., "Compassionate Friendship," C.A.L., Beinecke, p. 35; see pp. 53-54. See H.D., Bid Me to Live, pp. 80-82. "Compassionate Friendship" is a work in the form of a diary that H.D. wrote in 1955: in it she refers frequently to Lawrence and other important male figures in her life as "initiators."
8. See "Compassionate Friendship," p. 45. See D. H. Lawrence, Aaron's Rod (London: Heinemann, 1922) and The Escaped Cock (Paris: Black Swan Press, 1929). The Escaped Cock is also known as The Man Who Died.
9. H.D., "Asphodel," II, pp. 67, 68, 81.
10. See Richard Aldington's letters to H.D., August-December 1918, Beinecke. See Guest, pp. 87-101 for an account of this period.

11. H.D., "Asphodel," II, pp. 86, 91. For confirmation of the story of the swallow-oracle see H.D., letter to Bryher, [20 Aug. 1933], Beinecke.
12. H.D., "Asphodel," II, pp. 94-95. See also p. 98, and pp. 81-158 passim. See also Cecil Gray, Musical Chairs (London: Home and Van Thal, 1948). Gray omits all mention of H.D., but describes the setting and atmosphere of his house at Bosigran Castle. See H.D., Tribute to Freud, p. 173.
13. H.D., "Asphodel," II, p. 100.
14. H.D., Palimpsest, pp. 117, 118, 128.
15. H.D., Palimpsest, p. 297.
16. H.D., Tribute to Freud, pp. 40-41. This account is based upon H.D.'s memoir, "Compassionate Friendship," and "Asphodel," II. See Bryher, The Heart to Artemis, pp. 186-193.
17. Winifred Ellerman [Bryher], Region of Lutany (London: Chapman and Hall, 1914).
18. Bryher, The Heart to Artemis, p. 188.
19. H.D., End to Torment, pp. 8, 41.
20. H.D., "Winter Love," in Hermetic Definition, p. 112. See Rider H. Haggard and Andrew Lang, The World's Desire (London: Longmans, Green, 1890).
21. Perdita Schaffner, "Afterword," in H.D., Her, p. 236. See "Asphodel," pp. 167-181, and "Autobiographical Notes," p. 7. See H.D., letters to Bryher, 1918-19. See H.D., letter to Ezra Pound, [1929], where she describes the circumstances of Perdita's birth.
22. H.D., "Asphodel," p. 119. See pp. 111-137.
23. Bryher, letter to H.D., 20 March 1919.
24. H.D., letter to Pound, [1929].
25. Bryher, Two Selves (Paris: Contact, 1923), p. 5.
26. W. Bryher, Development (London, Constable, 1920), p. 25.
27. See Bryher, Heart to Artemis, pp. 276-96. Information from personal interviews with Bryher (March-April 1980), Eric Walter White (20 July 1980), and Phyllis Nesbit (1 Jan. 1980). See also Bryher-Dorothy M. Richardson correspondence at Beinecke.
28. See undated letters from Brigit Patmore to H.D., Beinecke. See also Bryher's Heart to Artemis.

29. H.D., Tribute to Freud, p. 130. Subsequent references to this work are given in the text as TF.

30. Sylvia Plath, The Bell Jar (1963; rpt. London and Boston: Faber, 1966), p. 250.

31. H.D., letter to Bryher, 5 March [1933].

32. "Notes on Thought and Vision," p. 3.

33. H.D., letter to Bryher, [1919].

34. H.D., "Notes," p. 2.

35. H.D., "Notes," p. 4.

36. H.D., "Notes," p. 6.

37. Plato, The Symposium, trans. Walter Hamilton (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1951), p. 92. See pp. 81-95.

38. Plato, p. 95.

39. H.D., "Notes," p. 8.

40. H.D., "Notes," p. 25.

41. H.D., "Notes," p.2.

42. H.D., "Notes," p. 27.

43. H.D., "Notes," pp. 29, 28. See pp. 28-32.

44. H.D., "Notes," p. 32.

45. H.D., "Asphodel," II, pp. 94-95.

46. H.D., letter to Bryher, [14 Feb. 1919].

47. H.D., "Notes," p. 4.

48. H.D., Bid Me to Live, p. 62. See D. H. Lawrence, Fantasia of the Unconscious and Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious (1923; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), pp. 100-101, 42-47, for Lawrence on tree worship and planes of the unconscious.

49. H.D., "Autobiographical Notes," p. 7.

50. Havelock Ellis, Impressions and Comments, 3rd. Series, pp. 55-56. See Phyllis Grosskurth, Havelock Ellis: A Biography (London: Allen Lane, 1980), pp. 331-332.

51. Ellis, Impressions and Comments, p. 63. See Brigit Patmore, letter to H.D., 18 March 1924.

52. See H.D., Tribute to Freud, pp. 159-161.
53. Algernon Blackwood, The Centaur (London: Macmillan, 1911), pp.108, 114, 190.
54. Quoted by Grosskurth, p. 297.
55. H.D., Tribute to Freud, p. 41.
56. H.D., letter to Bryher, 25 March [1933]. See H.D., Tribute to Freud, pp. 172-173.
57. H.D., letter to Bryher, 19 March [1933].
58. "Helios and Athene" is included in H.D.'s Collected Poems: 1912-1944, pp. 326-330. The typescript at Beinecke is dated "Athens 1920" in H.D.'s hand. H.D. conflates Helios and Phoebus Apollo in this work.

Chapter Four: Palimpsest

1. The four romans à clef were written as follows: "Paint It To-day" (1921), "Asphodel" in 2 vols. (1921-22), "Her" (1927), "Madrigal," published as Bid Me to Live (1939; 1948).

2. H.D., "Notes on Recent Writing," p. 1.

3. Bryher, Heart to Artemis, pp. 198-99. See H.D., Her, p. 203.

4. H.D.'s attitude to psychoanalysis is discussed in more detail in the first part of Chapter 5 of this thesis. See Bryher-H.D. correspondence for references to H.D.'s analysis of various London woman friends during the 1930s.

5. Wolle, p. 58.

6. H.D., "Paint It To-day," ch. I, p. 6. H.D. owned several different editions of Autobiography of a Saint by Thérèse of Lisieux.

7. H.D., "Paint It To-day," ch. I, p. 6.

8. H.D., "Paint It To-day," ch. I, p. 8.

9. H.D., "Paint It To-day," ch. I, p. 12.

10. H.D., "Paint It To-day," ch. I, pp. 12, 15.

11. H.D., "Paint It To-day," ch. I, p. 16.

12. H.D., "Paint It To-day," ch. I, p. 15.

13. H.D., Her, p. 62. Subsequent references are included in the text.

14. H.D., "Paint It To-day," ch. VIII, pp. [11-12].

15. H.D., "Asphodel," I, p. 46.

16. H.D., Her, pp. 1, 225. See pp. 223-225.

17. H.D., letter to Bryher, 15 May, [1933]. "Narthex" is a short story by H.D.

18. H.D., letter to Bryher, 18 May [1933].

19. H.D., Bid Me to Live, p. 13. Hereafter cited in the text as BMT.

20. H.D., "Notes on Recent Writing," p. 40. See also her "White Rose and the Red," written in 1948.

21. H.D., "Compassionate Friendship," pp. 28-29. H.D.'s spelling and punctuation were never orthodox.

22. Ezra Pound, "Vorticism," p. 469.

23. H.D., Palimpsest, p. 40. Hereafter cited in the text as P.

24. Cournos, Miranda Masters, p. 172. See pp. 173, 176. See also Patmore, No To-morrow, and Wilkinson, The Buffoon.

25. Frazer, The Golden Bough, p. 253.

26. John Collier, "Contemporaries," The New Age, 6 Aug. 1925, p. 165. Conrad Aiken was one of the few admirers of H.D.'s prose. See his review of Palimpsest in New Republic, 49 (2 Feb. 1927), p. 309. Aiken refers to "this burning subjectivism, this consuming Narcissism."

27. H.D., The Usual Star (Dijon: Darantière, 1934); Kora and Ka (Dijon: Darantière, 1934); [John Helforth], Nights (Dijon: Darantière, 1935).

28. H.D., "The Moment," in H.D.'s collection of that name, C.A.L., Beinecke, p.19. Frances Gregg is Katherine in The Usual Star.

29. Frances Gregg, "The Unknown Face," in The Second American Caravan, ed. Alfred Kreymborg, et. al. (New York: Macaulay, 1928), p. 298. See Graves, The Brothers Powys, pp. 124-197 passim for biographical information about Frances Gregg. Frances Gregg also had heart and thyroid problems.

30. Frances Gregg, "The Unknown Face," p. 301.

31. Frances Gregg, "Perché," in Others, 1915, p. 76. See also her poem "Hermaphroditus," p. 77, for Frances Gregg's fascination with physical androgyny. Frances Gregg's son, Oliver Marlow Wilkinson, is preparing his mother's papers for publication.

32. For a description of Kenneth Macpherson, see Frances Gregg's story, "The Apartment House," in Kreymborg, pp. 285-294. See H.D.'s photograph album at Beinecke.

33. Fragments of Wing-beat and Foothills are held at the Museum of Modern Art, N.Y. Borderline is held at Eastman House, Rochester. See H.D.'s anonymous pamphlet, Borderline (London: Mercury, 1930) for a discussion of the film. H.D. and Bryher both acted in these films, along with a number of their friends. Paul Robeson made his film debut in Borderline, in which his wife Eslanda also starred.

34. H.D., The Usual Star, p. 21. "The Usual Star" is the first of two stories in the volume. The H.D. character is Raymonde Ransome, who signs her writing "Ray Bart" - the same character appears in "Murex," the second story in Palimpsest.

35. H.D., The Usual Star, p. 86; "The Moment," p. 41.

36. H.D., letter to Bryher, [15 April 1935].

37. See Laing, The Divided Self, passim. Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway (London: Hogarth, 1927).

38. H.D., Kora and Ka, pp. 40, 29, 22. "Kora and Ka" is the first of two stories in the volume. Citations follow H.D.'s corrected version at Beinecke.

39. H.D., Kora, p. 10.

40. H.D., Kora, pp. 11-12.

41. Andrew Marvell, "The Garden," in The Metaphysical Poets, ed. Helen Gardner, rev. ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p. 257.

42. H.D., Kora, p. 27. See also p. 17.

43. H.D., Kora, pp. 26, 20.

44. H.D., Kora, p. 52.

45. H.D., Kora, p. 54. The ellipsis before the last word is H.D.'s.

46. H.D., Nights, p. 13.

47. H.D., letter to Bryher, 23 Aug. [1943].

48. H.D., Nights, pp. 12-13, 36, 37.

49. H.D., Nights, pp. 63-64, 102, 104.

50. H.D., Nights, pp. 66-67.

51. H.D., Nights, p. 122. See p. 38.

52. H.D., letter to Conrad Aiken, 7 Nov. [1934]. Xerox copy in H.D. papers at Beinecke.

Chapter Five: The Universal Language.

1. H.D., End to Torment, contains references throughout to the works that Pound brought to H.D. See William J. French and Timothy Materer, "Far Flung Vortices and Ezra's 'Hindoo' Yogi," Paideuma, 11 (Spring 1982), pp. 39-53.
2. Perdita Schaffner, "The Egyptian Cat," in Hedylus, by H.D. (Redding Ridge, Ct.: Black Swan Press, 1980), p. 144.
3. H.D., "The Moment," p. 19.
4. Graves, The Brothers Powys, p. 124.
5. The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Scullard (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), p. 637.
6. Oxford Classical Dictionary, p. 637.
7. See passage from H.D.'s "Secret Name," in Palimpsest, p. 637: already cited on p. 76 of this thesis.
8. H.D., "Conrad Veidt," rev. of The Student of Prague, Close Up, 1 (Sept. 1927), p. 44.
9. H.D., "The Cinema and the Classics III: The Mask and the Movietone," Close Up, 1 (Nov. 1927), p. 23.
11. H.D., "Russian Films," Close Up, 3 (Sept. 1928), p. 20.
12. H.D., "An Appreciation," Close Up, 4 (March 1929), p. 62.
13. See Bryher, The Heart to Artemis, pp. 249-263.
14. Hanns Sachs, "Film Psychology," Close Up, 3 (Nov. 1928), p. 8.
15. Caption to still from Wing-beat, Close Up, 1 (July 1927), p. [66]. See Anne Friedberg, "Approaching Borderline," Millennium Film Journal, 7-9 (1980-81).
16. Personal interviews with Eric Walter White, 10 July 1980, and Bryher, March-April 1980. In her pamphlet Borderline, p. 24, H.D. claims that Macpherson did the montage; this is contradicted by her "Autobiographical Notes," p. 20.

17. Kenneth Macpherson, "As Is," Close Up, 7 (Nov. 1930), pp. 293-94.
18. [H.D.], Borderline, pp. 5-6.
19. [H.D.], Borderline, pp. 32, 31.
20. [H.D.], Borderline, pp. 27-28.
21. H.D., letter to Bryher, 25 March [1933].
22. Kenneth Macpherson, Poolreflection (Territet: Pool, 1927).
23. See H.D., "Autobiographical Notes," pp. 19-20. See Kenneth Macpherson's unpublished stories at Beinecke, "Two" and "Helmet"; see also H.D.-Macpherson-Bryher correspondence at Beinecke.
24. Anthony Storr, The Integrity of the Personality, p. 88. Susan Friedman's Psyche Reborn is concerned throughout Part I with H.D.'s relationship with psychoanalysis.
25. H.D., letter to Conrad Aiken, Aug. 26 [1933], Huntington Library, San Marino, Ca.
26. H.D., Tribute to Freud, p. 13. See also pp. 43, 98-99, 102-103 for Freud's resistance to H.D.'s occult and religious interests. See H.D.'s letters to Bryher (1933-34) for evidence of H.D.'s conflation of astrological and psychoanalytical interpretations of dreams and events. See especially her letter to Bryher [27 April 1933], which includes a lengthy description and explication of a dream. H.D. writes that "the real and beauty of this dream is, that it is founded on my readings of the [Evangeline Adams] Astrological book." See Susan Friedman, Psyche Reborn, pp. 87-120 for a discussion of Freud's materialism.
27. Sigmund Freud, "Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning," in Standard Edition of the Works of Sigmund Freud, vol. 12 (London: Hogarth Press, 1950), p. 225.
28. See H.D., Tribute to Freud, pp. 12-13.
29. H.D., Tribute to Freud, pp. 116, 50.
30. H.D., "The Moment," p. 41.
31. H.D., "Blue Lights," in "Within the Walls," Beinecke, p. 4.
32. See H.D., The Gift, p. 133.
33. H.D., The Gift, p. 133; see pp. 134-142 *passim*.

34. H.D., The Gift, p. 135; see "The Secret," pp. 73-100.

35. See Kurt Rudolph, Gnosis: The Nature and History of an Ancient Sect, ed. Robert Lachlan Wilson (Edinburgh: Clark, 1983). Also see Elaine Pagels, The Gnostic Gospels (1980; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982) for an account of St. John, St. Paul and Mary Magdalene in the Gnostic tradition.

36. Kurt Seligmann gives an excellent summary of cabalistic practices in his Magic, Supernaturalism and Religion (1948; rpt. Frogmore, Herts.: Paladin, 1975), pp. 324-342.

37. One of H.D.'s most important syncretist sources was Arthur Weigall, The Paganism in Our Christianity (London: Hutchinson, [1928]).

38. See Pagels, *passim*.

39. See H.D.-Bryher correspondence for 1946. Also miscellaneous H.D. papers. For an account of H.D.'s collapse, see Guest, pp. 277-79. Robinson, p. 340, claims that Bryher kidnapped H.D., and that H.D. showed no evidence of mental disturbance: this assertion is disproved on the evidence of H.D.'s letters alone.

40. H.D., letter to Bryher, 21 Sept. 1939 [sic, 1946].

41. Edith Sitwell, letter to Bryher, [Oct. 1946?]

42. See "The Sword Went Out to Sea," I, *passim*.

43. H.D., Helen in Egypt, (New York: New Directions, 1961). Subsequently cited as HE.

44. See Friedman, Psyche Reborn, *passim*. See also Alice Ostriker, "The Poet as Heroine," The American Poetry Review, 12 (March/April 1983), pp. 29-38. See also Robinson's H.D. See also L. M. Freibert, "Conflict and Creativity in the World of H.D.," Journal of Women's Studies in Literature, 1 (Summer 1979), pp. 258-271.

45. H.D., Hermetic Definition, p. 21. See Guest, pp. 320-322 for an account of H.D.'s "relationship" with Durand.

46. H.D.'s complex relationship with the "existential analyst," Erich Heydt is a recurring theme in H.D.'s memoirs, "Thorn Thicket" and "Compassionate Friendship."

47. H.D., Hermetic Definition, p. 63.

LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED.

Works by H.D.

Published Works by H.D.:

[For a preliminary bibliography of H.D.'s publications see Jackson R. Bryer and Pamela Roblyer, "H.D.: A Preliminary Checklist," Contemporary Literature, 10 (Autumn 1969), pp.633-675. The works by H.D. listed here are those cited in the thesis.]

"An Appreciation." Close Up, 4 (March 1929), pp. 56-68.

Bid Me to Live. 1960; rpt. London: Virago, 1984.

[H.D.] Borderline - A Pool Film with Paul Robeson. London: Mercury Press, 1930.

"The Cinema and the Classics I: Beauty." Close Up, 1 (July 1927), pp. 22-33.

"The Cinema and the Classics II: Restraint." Close Up, 1 (Aug. 1927), pp. 30-39.

"The Cinema and the Classics III: The Mask and the Movietone." Close Up, 1 (Nov. 1927), pp. 18-31.

Collected Poems of H.D.: 1912-1944. Ed. Louis L. Martz. New York: New Directions and Manchester: Carcanet, 1984.

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