

HD's WEB

an e-newsletter

Winter 2009

Number 5

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

I am pleased to present in this issue “Goods or Gods: The Place for the Spirit in the Life of the Mind” by David Lane and “Reading Beyond Initials: Fishing the Murex Up in H.D.’s *Palimpsest*” by Christopher McVey. David has been working on a play about H.D.’s analysis with Freud, and his essay explores her disagreements with the Professor about God, a compelling theme that nevertheless did not fit into the theater piece (this essay is the first of two parts). McVey’s essay is a reading of H.D.’s three-part novel, *Palimpsest*, examining especially her use of intertextual and intratextual refrains as structural nodes within the text. In addition, Jane Augustine provides a brief but very helpful note on the “Moravian muddle.”

H.D., like many people of her time, was a prolific letter-writer. While compiling the Bibliographic Notes (where to find published and unpublished letters) I was struck by the difficulty that surely faces future scholars of contemporary literary figures. It may not be fiscally or geographically easy to arrange to see the deposits of letters in the Beinecke, the Rosenbach, the Huntington, or the Houghton collections, but how much more challenging to follow trails of e-mail messages, networking sites, or blog comments! New techniques and skills of electronic research will be—*are*—needed to recover such elusive documents.

Sometimes I wonder how H.D. would have made current electronic means of communication her own: a FaceBook page updating her circle of friends on her analysis with Freud? A blog of her séance experiences? What would she have thought of the resources the Web can provide to far-flung members of a community, to scholars unable to visit museums, libraries, or archaeological digs, to young artists starving for culture, validation, or friendship? How would she have used the internet and its possibilities for links and connections in her poetry, memoirs, fiction? Would she and Bryher have played with YouTube or Twitter? What would she have thought of writing with light rather than ink? I think of her poem, “Projector” (*Collected Poems* p. 349):

Light takes new attribute
and yet his old
glory
enchants;
not this,
not this, they say,
lord as he was of the heiratic dance
...
but we say otherwise

vehement disagreements over God. The problem was that a fascinating argument can lack dramatic thrust. I could not wed this theme to theater. I also couldn't leave it alone – H.D. and Freud, in conflict over this topic, is such a powerful concentration of intellectual, spiritual, and poetic energy. It is beyond "interesting."

Hilda's forte is evocative details. She starts out small. In *Tribute to Freud*, she describes a "semicircle of priceless little *objets d'art*"¹ on Freud's desk. We have photographs of the figurines and the office. Freud's seat faces this phalanx of posed gods, heroes in action, and busts of goddesses; Hilda (when not on the sofa) would have sat with her back to the bookcase, looking at, like Moses, the rear ends of divine figures. Hilda emblemizes her differences of opinion with Freud, the "argument implicit in our very bones,"² by offering two descriptions of these figures, inspired by a piece of illegible correspondence: they are either "Goods or Gods."³

"Goods or Gods" can, for the moment, be translated "Materialism or Spirituality," but neither H.D. nor Freud would repeat the familiar dialogue of the deaf between atheists and believers. Neither held conventional views about religion - both held strong ideas in opposition to certain conventions. Today, most of us resemble them in this respect, whatever we believe. Notable writers are, in Lionel Trilling's incisive words, "repositories of the dialectic of their times" containing "both the yes and no of their culture" and are thereby "prophetic."⁴

Even fundamentalisms, rather than providing a point of reference for religion, are just more exotic genera in the family of contemporary responses. Our civilization has been and is currently thinking out loud, working out a deep ambivalence about the relationship we have toward God and atheism. The legal dimensions of the topic (such as State neutrality on religion) are the tip of an iceberg cutting through all strata of modernity. In fact, the shift in our epoch's stance toward God is, arguably, more historically significant than the wars and the technological innovations of the last two centuries. French philosopher Michel Foucault expressed our situation this way: the "death of God" should not be understood

...as the end of his historical reign, or as the finally delivered judgment of his nonexistence, but as the now-constant space of our experience. By denying us the limit of the Limitless, the death of God leads to an experience in which nothing may again announce the exteriority of being...[T]he death of God is an explosive reality... not merely an "event" that gave shape to contemporary experience as we now know it: it continues tracing indefinitely its great skeletal outline.⁵

Go with the poetry of it - imagine a conceptual explosion going on for over a hundred years. Imagine that our culture's bass line, our intellectual background radiation, is a death so deafening we've grown deaf to it. When we try to articulate current common-sense, and how it contrasts with the God-fearing previous millennia, we refer to a societal enlightenment, knowledge achieved versus a superstitious past. We mistake a state of being for an insight others had, generations ago.

¹ H.D., *Tribute to Freud* (NY: New Directions, 1956), p. 8.

² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴ Lionel Trilling, "Reality in America", in *The Moral Obligation To Be Intelligent: Selected Essays* (NY: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2000), p. 76.

⁵ "A Preface to Transgression" in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews* by Michel Foucault, ed. D. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1977). p. 32.

The wrecking crew – Freud, Darwin, Nietzsche, Marx, Russell – had insight. The logical analysis of language; historical materialism; natural selection; the will-to-power; sublimation: each of these perspectives annexes territory that had belonged to theologians and offers reasons why large tracts of that territory is uninhabitable. Our own intellectual reflexes come subsequent to their explosive work. It's not evident why or if we should return to outmoded, ill-formed, ahistorical, unscientific, naively metaphysical questions.

Hilda Doolittle, by contrast, traced the great skeletal outline of our constant state of experience. Where Freud saw, in speech and in dreams, our repressed primary processes, Hilda would claim “idols and their secret is [*sic*] stored / in man's very speech, // in the trivial or / the real dream.”⁶ These words from *The Walls Do Not Fall* are, I believe, her response to Freud, things she may have wished she had the presence of mind to say when she had the chance: “[G]ods have been smashed before,” she asserts, and she asked us to “search the old highways // for the true-rune, the right spell, / recover old values.”⁷ After thinking about it for some time, I begin to make sense of her words.

I'll put my cards on the table now; here's my conclusion: Nietzsche makes the argument that religion is essentially evolved ancestor worship⁸; a Marxist describes it as one form of production, spiritual-production, conditioned (like everything else) by dominant modes of material production and the state of the class-struggle at a historical moment⁹; a logical positivist explains that the question is ill-formed in that it poses unverifiable and unfalsifiable claims¹⁰; a psychoanalyst explains that God occupies the emotional place allotted to our father, a relationship which we may not abandon or release even though our actual situation makes the expressions of such feelings obsolete. In each system “God is *essentially* [fill in blank].” They encapsulate the concept; explain in what way God arises; or unmask for what reason. In these approaches, particulars are gratuitous. Analysis of the actual use and presence of God in human life and discourse is avoided. These highly influential explanations of God commit the intellectual sin of putting Essence before Existence, of confounding origins with justifications. H.D., while she makes other mistakes, cannot be accused of this.

.....

It's hard to imagine the power Freud had in 1933, when he met H.D. Even adjusted for inflation, no celebrity intellectual of our time has equivalent social capital.¹¹

Freud...exploited the structure that enveloped the medical personage; he amplified its thaumaturgical virtues, preparing for its omnipotence a quasi-divine status. He focused upon this single presence – concealed behind the patient and above him – all the powers that had been distributed in the collective existence of the asylum; he transformed this into an absolute Observation, a pure and circumspect Silence, a Judge

⁶ *Trilogy* (NY: New Directions, 1998), p. 15.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 15 and p. 5.

⁸ *The Genealogy of Morals: An Attack*, tr. Francis Golffing (NY: Doubleday Anchor, 1956), Part 2, Sec. 19.

⁹ Text available at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology/>.

¹⁰ Text available at <http://gnadav.googlepages.com/TheScientificConceptionoftheWorldeng.doc>.

¹¹ Bourdieu's term. Pierre Bourdieu, *The State Nobility: Elite Schools in the Field of Power*, tr. Lauretta C. Clough (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 1996). See, for example, pp. 42, 122, 148, 158, 331, 346, 360.

who punishes and rewards in a judgment that does not even condescend to language...¹²

On first meeting, H.D. entered his office sideways, facing the tchotchkes and books and, when prompted to address him directly, began to scream and cry. At that time, it was plausible for the Ur-psychoanalyst to address an audience on whether he was ushering in a New World View.¹³

The intellectual novelty upon which he built the majority of his capital was not the codification of poet's insights (as it is sometimes expressed), or his discovery of the involvement of the unconscious in our actions; not just the importance he laid on slips of the tongue or dreams, or the scandalous assertions about childhood bisexuality. It was the larger picture in which all of these things fit, the human ontology which made sense of these counter-intuitive propositions. He had opened the Book of Us, and the particular subjects he addressed (history, religion, schizophrenia, literature) were chapters in that text.

One may of course cherry-pick Freud's oeuvre to say many things, but here is the key: Freud bound every spiritual and intellectual product to the physical body, period. Nothing that the human mind creates is free from our distorted (repressed) relationship to our bodies; further, that the human mind would not create without this distorted and repressed relationship to our bodies.

There is a dividing line, intuitively grasped and commonly made, between culture and nature, adult rational thought and childish mental associations, the pursuit of purely mental activities and physical pleasures. Freud takes this line and draws a continuous circuit. The assertion, "[t]he ego is first and foremost a bodily ego,"¹⁴ is the first line of a syllogism that, contemplated seriously, is the wildest ride in modern thought. He attempts, from there, to alter our view of all human inquiry and endeavor; to offer the first (to my knowledge) scientific and secular explanation of Man's Unhappiness.

In A General Introduction:

[C]ivilization has been built up, under the pressure of the struggle for existence, by sacrifices in gratification of the primitive impulses, and that it is to a great extent forever being re-created, as each individual, successively joining the community, repeats the sacrifice of his instinctive pleasures for the common good. The sexual (forces) are...thus utilized: they are in this way sublimated.¹⁵

The "sexual forces" are not adult and genital – Freud is referring to infantile sexuality broadly defined and imagined as the bliss of union with a loving mother, but the truly weird idea here is what he calls sublimation.

¹² *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, by Michel Foucault, tr. R. Howard (NY: Random House, 1965), p. 277-8. Foucault is viewing Freud's importance from within the history of treatment.

¹³ Sigmund Freud, "The Question of a *Weltanschauung*", in *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, tr. James Strachey (NY: W.W. Norton, 1965). Lecture delivered 1933.

¹⁴ Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, tr. Joan Riviere (NY: W.W. Norton, 1960), p. 20.

¹⁵ Sigmund Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, tr. Joan Riviere (NY: Perma Giants, 1953), p. 27.

The story goes something like this: an infant very early has a traumatic experience of “object loss”: the Mother is desired and the Mother is not there. In that moment, the human ego is a thin strip of beach between two raging oceans - the demands of the “id” and the demands of reality - and in order to survive it begins to *repress*. The ego develops an opacity protecting itself from, on the one hand, the situation and, on the other, the demand. This opacity grows to become your conscious mind.

The Raging Demand is told, “She’s right here,” and, in the most familiar example, the thought process of the conflicted infant produces a substitute: thumb-sucking. Substitution continues upward through levels of abstraction. In a later stage, when parental judgments threaten the lifeblood of parental acceptance, the ego tells itself “I am them” and thus a super-ego (in theological terms, “Conscience”) is born. We are split into ourselves and an “introjected” parental influence that defends us from anxiety born of the threat of abandonment. We cannot accept, we cannot deny, we therefore hallucinate a solution.

The increasing distortion in the character of the ego (in jargon: “transformation of object-libido into narcissistic libido”) is an increase in the direction of etherealization, or desexualization. We give up the body and keep the fantasies. Out of our bodily ego, via fantasies, we develop a soul, a phantom version of our physical selves which will not die; is nourished by different things; which is, in some mysterious way, our truer, more essential self.

Infantile fantasies become, in adult life, sublimations. Narcissistic libido now has a reservoir of love at its disposal and this is the energy used for our accomplishments, now directed toward society-at-large or toward a particular community (the Scientific Community, the Artistic World – i.e., more abstractions). “I will write a great work that will endure”; “I will be the singing idol of millions of Americans”; “I’ll be rich enough to do whatever I want”; “I will discover something to benefit mankind.” We have lost our real life and our real world and are completely committed to substitute, symbolic gratifications of our instincts. The manipulation of the symbolic realm is the scrap of pleasure the disembodied (or intellectual) soul is allowed, the only sustenance on offer. We are eating menus, and starving for simple play in love. Our goals, socially useful products, are a confused and circuitous path which never ends in simple love and satisfaction: “That is why wealth brings so little happiness; money is not an infantile wish”¹⁶

Even the highest achievements of the human spirit must bear a demonstrable relation to the facts found in pathology – to repression, to the efforts at mastering the unconscious and to the possibilities of satisfying the primitive instincts.¹⁷

The highest achievements: in contemporary physics and mathematical practice human perception and cognitive skills are frequently a hindrance to comprehension, so the Freudian may see at work the infantile fantasy of ridding oneself of a physical body. On the spiritual path, to die and go to heaven for good behavior is the pathological wish of an ego that suffers from repression and is barely aware of the profundity of this suffering, because everyone else is likewise suffering, and denying it.

¹⁶ Sigmund Freud, *The Origins of Psycho-Analysis: Letters to Wilhelm Fleiss*, tr. E. Mosbacher and J. Strachey (NY: Basic Books, 1954), p. 244.

¹⁷ Sigmund Freud, “Psycho-Analysis & Religious Origins” in *Collected Papers*, ed. J. Riviere & J. Strachey (NY: International Psychoanalytic Press, 1924-1950), vol. 5, p. 94.

H.D.'s father, to give an example, a thoroughly scientific and secular man, an astronomer, was quite sublime and quite pathological in the Freudian scheme. The particulars of Charles Doolittle's own life, according to the objective standards in which he conceptualized himself, meant little: he was devoted heart and soul to the cause of astronomy. In his case, measuring the wobble in the earth's rotation ("latitude variance") required that he sleep during the day, sometimes freeze at night, and behave as if he "seldom even at table focused upon anything nearer, literally, than the moon."¹⁸ Mr. Doolittle's purpose in life, the arena in which he accomplished, and the pleasure he derived from his successes are, underneath it all, the total eclipse of his bodily ego's drive for satisfaction. Mr. Doolittle had a big tube, pointed up at night, to which he enslaved himself.

According to *Group Psychology and Analysis of the Ego*¹⁹, the institutions which protect and ennoble us, in which we live and function as citizens, are large scale sublimations; in *Totem and Taboo*²⁰, art, religion and philosophy are compared to hysteria, neurosis and paranoia; and in *Leonardo & A Memory of His Childhood*²¹, Freud shows how intellectual curiosity itself is sublimated infantile sexuality, barred permanently from real satisfaction. We cannot think nor work ourselves out of this thicket. Our mode of thinking and working is the problem.

Is Freud expressing a fundamental human truth here? We are understandably skeptical, but here is evidence: the only way repression allows us to conceive of our situation is as an abstraction. We process Freud's thoughts as a commentary on The Human Condition, as a philosophical system or a social critique. According to psychoanalysis, however, if the veil were lifted, and you and I could grasp the content of this current moment, we'd see these words you read are negations of my self (in repression) and an expression of aggression toward a world in which I must aggrandize myself. You believe you read this essay in order to learn something, or find insights you may apply to a project of your own, but you are caught unwittingly in the same blind undertaking.

I may write, I may quote, I may stand up to get another text off of the shelf, but all of the blood in my body is sucked into my eyes and head as I work, I have no immediate perception or sensation (normally) outside of the ideas I manipulate as I think and write. The experience of writing and reading, of contributing to a discourse above and beyond my immediate life, is thoroughly disembodied. Speaking in direct, existential terms to you, breaking the fourth wall as I did in the prior paragraph, somehow that diminishes the seriousness of this inquiry. And if I mention in this context my lower back, my mouse-clicking hand, my empty stomach or the fact that I have needed to pee for the last few paragraphs, I do so on pain of not being taken seriously. There is no place, outside of isolated moments (perhaps a yoga class) for the human body to live in its fullness, naturally.

Reasonable objections abound – Freud's argument are unfalsifiable²², he commits the genetic fallacy²³ – but at least once in life we must seriously consider with our belly and our

¹⁸ William Carlos Williams, *The Autobiography of William Carlos Williams* (NY: New Directions, 1951), p. 67.

¹⁹ Sigmund Freud, tr. J. Strachey, (NY: Liveright, 1951).

²⁰ Sigmund Freud, tr. A.A. Brill (NY: Vintage, 1918).

²¹ Sigmund Freud, tr. A. Tyson (NY: W.W. Norton, 1964).

²² Popper's criticism – science only moves forward when hypotheses are tested and proven. Since nothing can disprove psychoanalytic assertions (the analyst can always say your resistance is part of the proof) then they're not properly scientific. *Conjectures & Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1963), pp. 34-37.

genitals, mouths and backsides where our thoughts, opinions and interests come from; whether Freud was right.

H.D. would not take issue on “reasonable” grounds.

Hilda Doolittle never did more than allude to her disagreements with Freud: “I was angry with the old man /.../ I was angry with his mystery, his mysteries, / I argued till day-break” she writes in “The Master,” a poem about her analysis.²⁴ We are poorer for the lack of details. To some extent, neither party was inclined or capable of such a sustained debate with the other. Certainly the free-associative environment of psychoanalysis doesn’t lend to linear reason and, what’s more, any intellectual disagreement with an analyst is always interpreted as a packet of meaning within the transference relationship; power dynamics permeate the expression of ideas. Just try disagreeing with your analyst. “[N]o, / he was rather casual”, she writes, “we won’t argue about that’ / (he said) / ‘you are a poet”²⁵ and that’s one way to avoid a subject.

The weakest link in this essay lies in the imprecise work of expressing ideas dormant in their exchange, in reconstructing a dialogue. Sifting and organizing Freud’s perspective on spirituality required considerable searching, second-guessing, and my results are arguable, at best, a good approximation. Such exegetical hurdles are multiplied in the case of H.D. - what’s invigorating and flabbergasting about *logopœia* (I use Pound’s term for *the idea content of poetry* or “the dance of the intellect among words”²⁶) is how much it can take for granted; how much ground a phrase can cover but then ideas can go, without notice, elsewhere; how global impression is so often betrayed by details.

Nonetheless, we may say with confidence that in the thoughts of Hilda Doolittle, the Material interacts with the Spiritual and the Symbolic, and then ultimately conceptualizes God, in a way psychoanalysis would not accept. Things and events often had, for her, the emotional valence of emblems: “[we] who have no part in...the practical issues of art / and the cataloguing of utilities”, we “useless” poets, are “the keepers of the secret...[that] grape, knife, cup, wheat // are symbols in eternity, / and every concrete object // has abstract value.”²⁷ “There is a spell, for instance, / in every sea-shell.”²⁸ H.D. saw even Freud, the biographical, breathing, cigar-smoking man whom she visited for one hour a day, as an emblem: “He is the infinitely old symbol, weighing the soul, Psyche.”²⁹ Culling the sense from these lines, coaxing the philosophy from her poems and writings, I will try to recreate her point of view and place it alongside Freud’s, from fragments build the whole skeletal form of the argument in their very bones.

²³ Googling for the origin, first mention is credited to Morris R. Cohen and Ernest Nagel, *An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method* (NY: Harcourt & Brace, 1934). E.g., evolutionary psychologists will shoehorn a preference for blue eyes, callousness toward the poor, or the presence of homophonic words in English into the theory of natural selection: “people like to read when they’re on the toilet because in Paleolithic times we used to...” This is an objection and not a fullblown refutation - we don’t discard the theory of evolution because it can’t explain why we enjoy a song or love a person but when we assume that the origin of something justifies it or explains its current status, that confusion is “the genetic fallacy.”

²⁴ “The Master” in *Collected Poems, 1912-1944* (NY: New Directions, 1986), p. 455.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 458.

²⁶ “How to Read” in *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound* (Norfolk: New Directions, 1954), p. 25.

²⁷ *Trilogy*, pp. 14, 22, and 24.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁹ *Tribute*, p. 97.

After H.D.'s 1934 analysis Freud's goods were confiscated by Nazis. In hindsight, Freud's blindness to the political events around him has the facile irony of a genius behaving foolishly. His letters, read alongside the chronology of political events, show an impressive will to ignore plain truth. He did not see the writing on the wall, so to speak. Chancellor Dollfuss (a fascist relatively "good to his Jews") was assassinated and Austria became vulnerable to German invasion as Freud opined that Austrians are incapable of the virulent anti-Semitism seen in Germany and therefore he is safe. Mussolini threatened Hitler with war if he should enter Austria while Freud fretted over a litter of chow puppies. Friends and well-wishers begged Freud for years to leave, but a lifetime of genius is too hard a habit to break, and he knew better. The chow dog saga dragged on while Mussolini and Hitler came to an "agreement". Freud's sisters were taken to Auschwitz where they would be incinerated and he was caught along with his family and possessions by the Gestapo in 1938. Strings as high as Roosevelt were pulled to get him an exit visa and the Nazis squeezed him for all they could before allowing him to flee to England.

When Freud's goods – including the antiquities from his office -- were released, around his 77th birthday, H.D. sent him a bouquet of his favorite flowers and an unsigned card on which she wrote "To greet the return of the Gods." Her handwriting was notoriously bad and, Freud said in his reply, "(other people read: Goods)."³⁰ "Goods or Gods" struck H.D.'s gong of emblem.

In *Tribute to Freud* she describes "excursions...into the other room" where he showed her his art collection. A little, helmeted bronze statue, Pallas Athené, "to be venerated as a projection of abstract thought...without human or even without divine mother," was held out to her.³¹ "'She is perfect,' he said, '*only she has lost her spear.*'"³²

'She is perfect,'...and he meant that...there was no scratch or flaw, no dent in the surface or stain on the metal...He was speaking as an ardent...art-collector... speaking in a double sense, it is true, but he was speaking of value, the actual intrinsic value of the piece; like a Jew, he was assessing its worth...³³

I don't know what to make of Freud's motives – he may have been flirting; making a point about the importance of the missing phallus in terms he thought would resonate; referring to the confused goal of becoming our own parents that he felt Hilda was suffering from... I'll shelve that issue along with H.D.'s blithe anti-Semitism. What suits this essay is the dualism she decides is the real meaning of the exchange. Analyzing a dream, a vision, or a memory, Freud has (according to her) that same eye, the appraiser's eye: he is looking for the *value* – to dismiss the metaphor, he is assigning some specific *meaning* to it. Athené, (her "projection of abstract thought"), for Freud = expensive hunk of bronze + a symbol of penis-envy.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

³¹ *Tribute*, pp. 67-70.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 69.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

With precise Jewish instinct for the particular in the general, for the personal in the impersonal or universal, for the *material* [her italics] in the abstract, he had dared to plunge into the unexplored depth...³⁴

In the unexplored depths of myth, primitive fetishes, neurotic symptoms, slips of the tongue and dream, Freud is a translator, an Enigma machine in the battles between unconscious and conscious world: “He had said, he had dared to say that the dream had its worth and value in translatable terms...”³⁵

“Value in translatable terms” - another way to say this is, yes, Freud accorded an importance to dreams which was missing from the philosophical landscape, but he did not explore them as a type of experience; the *Interpretation of Dreams* psychologized the dreamscape and heaped up Explanations at the expense of Description. In psychoanalysis, a dream has a meaning for the analyst and, on a good day, this meaning is more or less accurately read through the haze of confirmation bias.³⁶ “Any amateur dabbler with the theories of psychoanalysis can reconstruct, even from...brief evidence, the motive or material or suppressed or repressed psychic urge that projected this dream-picture...”³⁷ But a dream is not simply a “meaning,” it’s also, and perhaps more primarily, a private universe that has its own qualities and rules and atmosphere. Back to the metaphor, the statuette may be accurately described as “material plus symbolism”, but that description hasn’t yet read off any of the particulars that make Athené Athené.

Perhaps a dream about a house on fire is really about infidelity and eros, but why sexual fire as opposed to wet sexuality? Why a wide ocean and not a cramped bathtub? Why a dream that seems embedded in a whole life and not a story line compressed into a single moment? Though H.D. wouldn’t use these terms, dream “signification” can be read as an existential stance that has been unmoored from the perceptions of obdurate waking life. That is, asleep, we are let loose in a world without stable objects, we are freed for radical choices of time, space, emphasis and association, and only in the world created by those choices do we find our consciousness.

Or H.D. might have, if tempted into such a conversation, referred to Principle One of the Imagist manifesto³⁸, “[d]irect treatment of the ‘thing’ whether subjective or objective”; i.e. the dream description has (through psychoanalytic interpretation) been betrayed by the analyst’s assumption that, at bottom, the dream is tied to its meaning. That displays the analyst’s preconceptions, not sensitivity to its images and emotions.

“*Direct treatment of the subjective thing*” applies to more than just dreams and tchotchkes. H.D. was not a consistent anything (a poor choice for Imagist Spokeswoman), but she does often speak, especially in her most recondite writings³⁹, as a scientist might, a scientist whose job it is to examine the inner realms for their nuances and content. H.D. takes us deep into the heart of subjectivity. Listen to her compare a mystical vision she experienced and a particularly powerful dream – they “belong in the sense of quality and intensity, of clarity and

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

³⁶ *Confirmation bias* is defined as “the tendency [for a scientist] to hold on to initial hypotheses in the face of contradictory evidence” in *Human Error* by James Reason (NY: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990), p. 128.

³⁷ *Tribute*, pp. 37-38.

³⁸ *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, p. 3.

³⁹ The best example I can think of is *Notes on Thought and Vision* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1982).

authenticity, to the same psychic category".⁴⁰ She contrasts certain types of memories to others in these terms: "[t]hey are steps in the so-far superficially catalogued or built-up mechanism of supernormal, abnormal (or subnormal) states of mind."⁴¹ She unravels herself like a grand Persian rug:

Those memories, visions, dreams, reveries...are different. Their texture is different, the effect they have on mind and body is different. They are healing. They are real... We can discriminate as a connoisseur... between the false and the true; a good copy of a rare object is not without value, but we must distinguish...there are certain alloys too that may corrode and corrupt in time, and objects so blighted must be segregated...there are priceless broken fragments that are meaningless until we find the other broken bits to match them.

There are trivial, confused dreams and there are real dreams.⁴²

For H.D. all non-normal forms of consciousness deserve definite description; she looks for specificity, not meaning. For H.D. the influence of Imagination ≠ Dream ≠ Vision ≠ Inspiration ≠ Memory ≠ Idea... They can be thought of, not as manifestations of repressed primary processes but like a sorority of Muses, obviously related, but different, and cataloguing them is an artistic as well as an intellectual project, (a project that ultimately has theogonic aspects). Visions have no element of will, and they aren't perceived as arbitrary; Dreams also don't involve will (except in rare instances of lucid dreaming), but have a spectrum of emotion, whereas a Visionary experience is singularly powerful; one can affect or play with mental Images; Inspiration generally wants to be revealed; and, in distinct ways, each Muse is by turns threatening and beautiful.

Threatening & beautiful - both bear stressing because we easily lose sight of what H.D. & Freud felt was at stake. No less than the fate of humanity was riding on the way our private fantasies, pathologies, ideas - mere abstractions by some accounts - interact with the material world and determine our behavior. That topic had a practical intensity for intellectuals during World War II that may not be possible for us to grasp. Europe was literally overrun by the *isms* of the 1930s and '40s when their argument was taking place. The shared universe, no less than the private world, deserves attention to detail, or unmasking of its repressed roots, because such reflection may be the only protection against unimaginable destruction, thoughtlessly executed. It was fairly certain that politics could not explain the horrors of the new war, that some subconscious, demonic motive was closer to grasping madness practiced on such a scale.

While tanks crushed houses, families tried to survive, and the effects of atom splitting were being imagined as second and third derivatives, H.D. conceived herself as one of the "spinners // of the rare intangible thread / that binds all humanity // to ancient wisdom."⁴³ Everyone, to some extent, was in shock, and one clings, with certainty, to some particular idea during trauma. She is guarding, however, a profound point, a point that is under attack in our age of materialisms: we live in houses, have families, we know what a tank is, and we may guess at how a billowing mushroom cloud expresses derivatives, but *House, Family, Engines of Destruction, The Derivative*, these are mental fabrications, or emblems that catch something about the experience that "tank" and "my house" does not. A Panzer is, undeniably, an object

⁴⁰ *Tribute*, p. 41.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁴³ *Trilogy*, p. 24.

and it can reduce a living room to rubble in minutes, but it was also a conversation, a plan, an expression of something before it was built. And it was built because one idea, A Thousand Year Reich, trumped another idea, The Sanctity of Your Home. This is my grasp of the logopœia of §11, *The Walls Do Not Fall*: "Without thought, invention, / you would not have been, O Sword, // without idea and the Word's mediation, / you would have remained // unmanifest in the dim dimension / where thought dwells, // and beyond thought and idea, / their begetter, // Dream, / Vision."⁴⁴

Her poem about the priority of thought and idea jives with Freud's notion of the inevitable return of repressed urges. Or, put another way: a necessary condition for the devastation in Hiroshima was the Manhattan project; and for that to happen, at Los Alamos, those derivatives must be contemplated; and behind the calculations, fear and infantile rage, a dream of desperation and a pure tantrum in which the air itself will explode. Musings, imagination, feelings...these are the only paths to the "goods."

Freud didn't have patience for such ornate descriptions, but she did:

my mind (yours),
your way of thought (mine),

each has its peculiar intricate map,
threads weave over and under

the jungle-growth
of biological aptitudes,

inherited tendencies,
the intellectual effort

...

but my mind (yours)
has its peculiar ego-centric

personal approach
to the eternal realities,

and differs from every other
in minute particulars,

as the vein-paths on any leaf
differ from those of every other leaf...⁴⁵

Freud's attempts to explain can fall short in their descriptions, and H.D.'s attempts to describe often fail to explain, and there's little point in trying to force a synthesis on them, but that may be the most beautiful Venn diagram ever.

[This is part 1 of 2.]

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

echoing not T.S. Eliot's famous essay, but rather E.M. Forster's image of the history of literature as "a sort of British Museum reading-room—[where all the authors are] writing their novels simultaneously."⁴⁹ Forster's observation—"[t]ime, all the way through, is to be our enemy"⁵⁰—reminds us that literary modernisms often held ambivalent, if not contradictory, relationships to the pasts or traditions from which they appear to break. It's this tension that provides both the structural and the thematic architecture for most of H.D.'s work.

H.D. herself was well-trained in Greek during her time at Bryn Mawr College, although she never completed her degree.⁵¹ It was during these formative years that classical poets became important motifs of her work. Sappho, in particular, influences both the thematics and the mechanics of H.D.'s poetry, where she blends the tenets of imagism with the fragmentary, lacunae characteristics of Sapphic verse.⁵² Unlike Pound and Eliot, whose classical allusions serve as oppositional spaces to the fragmented incoherence of the post-war, industrialized world, H.D. seems to challenge what Jerome McGann terms a "central myth of modernity," namely that "one can go forward but not backward...But what if one were to imagine the present being overtaken by the past, being made subject to the authority of what our historical sense declares is dead and gone...?"⁵³ I argue that H.D.'s later prose wrestles with this very project; this must be seen as both an extension and emphatic departure from her earlier work in imagism.

H.D. criticism tends to frame this ideology of the mythic and the visionary—embodied best perhaps in H.D.'s *Notes on Thought and Vision* (1919)—as a consciously feminine

⁴⁹ Forster, E.M. *Aspects of the Novel* (London: Edward Arnold, 1974), 5.

⁵⁰ Forster, *ibid.*, 5.

⁵¹ Rachel DuPlessis, *H.D.: The Career of that Struggle* (Indiana University Press, 1986), 17-18. Hereafter cited "*Career*."

⁵² See Susan Stanford Friedman, "H.D. – Who is She?: Discourses in Self-Creation," Chapter 1 in *Penelope's Web: Gender, Modernity, H.D.'s Fiction* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1990), 64-5.; Rachel Blau DuPlessis, *Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985), 70-1, 109-10.

⁵³ Jerome J. McGann, *The Scholar's Art: Literary Studies in a Managed World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 185.

(re)construction of artistic value, an Eleusinian “gynopoetic.”⁵⁴ In many ways the evolution of this criticism parallels the general arc of feminism as a whole. In the 1970s, Susan Gubar and Susan Stanford Friedman suggested that H.D.’s women should not be analyzed through Freudian (and thus phallogocentric) methods; Friedman, in particular, argues that early H.D. criticism sought to “tame” her subversive texts through containing them within a biased psychological schema. Gubar offers a provocative and nuanced deconstruction of H.D.’s prose, noting that “[H.D.] testifies to the continued need for approaching the center, for retelling, [for] rewriting, and [for] adding to a palimpsest even as she realizes that such an approach is a regression, and that—as the word ‘re-cover’ implies—she hides what she seeks to reveal.”⁵⁵ H.D. does, indeed, challenge heteronormative conventions, and sexuality/sensuality remain important themes across the entire breadth of her work, but to frame H.D. only as a marginal woman writing against a hegemonic patriarchy severely misreads the subtleties of her feminine figures, ignoring the ways in which they participate (and break from) wider modernist anxieties of authenticity, cultural tradition, and the mythologized role of the artist.

As H.D. criticism matured through the 1980s, major critics such as Rachel DuPlessis situated H.D.’s work within the context of new biography—that is, DuPlessis examined how H.D.’s own personal life offers a methodology for approaching her art. Focusing on the “[gendered] authority of Otherness,”⁵⁶ she argued that H.D.’s prose consistently reworks themes such as the “decentred self”⁵⁷ and “accretive decoding,”⁵⁸ and through this DuPlessis explores the contradictions and internal problematics of H.D.’s own positioning of the feminine. Building

⁵⁴ See Friedman, *Penelope’s Web*, 9-11.

⁵⁵ Susan Gubar, “The Echoing Spell of H.D.’s Trilogy,” *Contemporary Literature* 19.2 (Spring 1978): 217-218.

⁵⁶ DuPlessis, *Career*, 31-34.

⁵⁷ DuPlessis, *Career*, 3.

⁵⁸ As a consequence, DuPlessis argues that the image of the palimpsest “may suggest the metonymic chain, a series of tellings of something with no one ever having final dominance, an evocation of plurality and multiplicity, lack of finality....To understand is to read, decode, translate, but there is always something not fully decipherable.” See DuPlessis, *Career*, 56.

off these projects, ideological and new historical readings of the 1990s attempted to situate H.D.'s work within the context of its historical production and contexts. Some critics, such as Bret Keeling, troubled and disrupted the feminist readings that Gubar, Friedman, and DuPlessis had thus far offered, and arguing that H.D.'s "[Sapphic gaze] initiates not a fixed subject/object exchange but an oscillating sense of subjectivity...[becomes] a literary and literal site where H.D. can visualize subject/object and female/male encounters in ways that extend beyond oppositional discourses."⁵⁹ Other critics, such as Georgina Taylor, contended that we must not conceive of H.D. and other writers, such as Mina Loy or Djuna Barnes, as reactionary to, or in participation with, the dominant trends of Anglo-American modernism, but rather that these women pursued a unique, concurrent movement in their own right.⁶⁰

As these studies suggest, it is crucial to revise our understanding of H.D.'s position within the framework of 20th century modernisms. However, the movement which Marjorie Levinson and others have called "new formalism," which reclaims literary interpretation as "multilayered and integrative responsiveness to every element of the textual dimension,"⁶¹ reminds us that we must not forget to attend to H.D.'s own re-situating of that history. I draw on new formalism to underscore the way in which H.D. expands understanding of the "crisis of representation" in form and content which, according to Pericles Lewis, constitutes the unifying theme of modernism.⁶² The mechanics of *Palimpsest*, specifically in the novel's utilization of both intra-textual and inter-textual "refrains" and recalls, foregrounds this (re)conception of subjectivity at the same time that it frames itself as a "product" (socially, economically, politically) of the scene of writing.

⁵⁹ Bret L. Keeling, "H.D. and 'The Contest': Archaeology of a Sapphic Gaze," *Twentieth Century Literature* 44.2 (Summer 1998): 177 and 179.

⁶⁰ See Georgina Taylor, *H.D. and the Public Sphere of Modernist Women Writers, 1913-1946* (Oxford, 2001).

⁶¹ See Marjorie Levinson, "What is New Formalism?" in *PMLA* 122:2 (March 2007), 558-569.

⁶² Pericles Lewis, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), xviii.

Because *Palimpsest* operates through a circular structure of absence/presence, critical analysis of her work needs a new poetics of discourse if it is to reckon successfully with her prose. The key to developing this discourse rests in approaching the refrains as the central nodes of the text's palimpsestic matrix. The refrain becomes an internalized space which all of H.D.'s women writers inhabit tangentially and simultaneously; language becomes the primary medium of this temporal and spatial disruption, localized at the same time it undermines a linear, narrative coherence or local referent. In these refrains we find an ideal example of H.D.'s "precise difficulty,"—a supposed moment of clarity in which inscrutability ("difficulty") lays claim to a larger mythological and inherently communal/public cultural heritage.

Palimpsest pivots around the life of three women: Hipparchia, (ca. 75 B.C.), Raymonde Ransome (ca. 1916-26), and Helen Fairwood (ca. 1925). As H.D. defines it on the title page, a palimpsest is "a parchment from which one writing has been erased to make room for another." H.D.'s use of passive voice begs the question: *who* has "erased" one writing for another? In many ways the structure of *Palimpsest* can be considered a scroll already deciphered and organized into its separate, independent narratives and voices. One story echoes into the next; the last story seems to move, at its end, two-thousand years backward into the first. The text never resolves this internal conflict—the refrains serve as connecting nodes between time and (textual) space, but they equally defer a full or stable relationship between these connections.

At the beginning of the first section, Hipparchia (a Greek) is conversing with her Roman lover, Marius, and almost immediately the stringent presence of utilitarian Rome is contrasted with the mythic, though fragmentary and eroded, past of the now-conquered (and thus absent) Greece. The prose modulates between omniscient narration and free-indirect discourse, seldom

providing any syntactical, structural, or narrative markers between its discursive fields; we are both inside character voices at the same time we remain at an odd, if not detached, distance:

Baffled, he swung backward. The room unexpectedly to his strained vision, was empty of her. Half expectant, entirely oblivious of her own wishes in this or in any matter, it was borne upon him for almost the first time in their some half year's intimacy, how great, how overmastering was this peculiar longing...He might know no Greek. But "Rome," he continued unrebuked by her suave utterance, "builds rock upon the ruins of a decadent civilization." She said, "have you heard, Marius, how the grape gives sweetness?...shaken from the parent, broken, sometimes ruthless from the firm vine. Cast ruthless into one basket. Carried and flung indiscriminate, fine white by heady ruby of the vine into one huge vessel of destruction. Romans are wine pressers." He said, "not badly spoken; you do give us credit sometimes." (P 3 and 4)

The first paragraph is structurally and syntactically disorienting (both in its tendency to prefer pronouns as well as its awkward constructions), and this disorientation parallels the larger narrative ambiguity; we are ourselves "swung backward" into Rome, "swinging" between textual perspectives, and Hipparchia's mind consistently "swings" back and forth between her poetry, her manuscripts, and the haunting presence of her deceased parents. Hipparchia's mother, whose name was also Hipparchia and who was also a poet (though far more famous), continuously invades Hipparchia's thoughts. Rome, however, builds "rock upon the ruins of a decadent civilization," and this destructive "mastery" becomes extremely problematic for Hipparchia, whose relationship with a lost past—both personal and national—paralyzes her ability to write. Thus she observes that "Romans are wine pressers," implying that the Romans have violently desecrated Greece and its history in order to pursue both capitalistic and military strength. Marius ironically misinterprets Hipparchia's point—"you do give us credit sometimes"—but Hipparchia's refrain, through the different ways it is both conjured and received/interpreted throughout the section, becomes an important site for her own *poesis* or making, reclaiming the image as a symbol of colonial oppression. Indeed, "Romans are wine pressers" is the most

volatile phrase of the *Hipparchia* narrative, occurring at least sixteen times over the course of ninety pages.⁶³

The performative dynamics involved the in the various avatars of the phrase, though, must be triangulated with its counterparts: two other, usually concurrent, refrains appear on these first few pages as well, both taken from Hipparchia's translation of Antipater of Sidon. The section opens with the prefatory quote, "*I cast my lot with cynics, not / with women seated at the distaff,*" and Hipparchia soon continues another translation:

*Where Corinth, charm incarnate, are your shrines?
your citadel, your towered wall, your line
of noble women...
...
Corinth is lost, Corinth is desolate.*

Hipparchia speaking that, remarking as prelude that perhaps Antipater had not shown wisdom in so questioning Rome's authority, had been wont to strike a peculiar serpent twisting in his entrails. She spoke so sweetly of this. (P 5)

"I cast my lot with cynics, not" occurs five times,⁶⁴ and "Where Corinth, charm incarnate, are your shrines" occurs seven times.⁶⁵ That Hipparchia casts her lot with "cynics," invokes Hipparchia's father, Crates the cynic, whereas the "noble women" of Corinth gesture toward both Hipparchia's mother and her ancestry as a whole. Not much "happens" throughout *Palimpsest*—Hipparchia travels through a series of domestic spaces, but the prose remains centered on internal (and often confused) mental reflections or quiet dialogues. Hipparchia does, however, continually modify her "translation" of these passages; thus these fragments, and the "epiphanies" they induce, occupy the majority of the textual space.

⁶³ P 4 (twice), 37, 44, 72, 73 (twice), 74, 76, 79 (twice), 89, 92, 93 (three times). I am working out of the 1968 Southern Illinois UP edition, based off the original imported, though unbound, imprints from the Paris 1926 Houghton Mifflin publication.

⁶⁴ P 3, 8, 34 (twice), 35.

⁶⁵ P 5 (twice), 9, 14, 29, 40, 94.

Before engaging in a detailed analysis of how and why the mechanics of these later refrains operate, it is important to note Hipparchia's manuscript project. She has inherited an extremely detailed botany book first begun by her deceased uncle, but instead of merely restoring the book, she decides she will make it into something entirely different:

She would not stop at mere scientific exposition....Hipparchia was building...a correlation of gods, temples, flowers, poets...If she wrote their names often enough they would serve (as some Eastern charm) eventually to destroy Rome...She would quote it entire in Greek. The Greek words, inset in her manuscript, would work terrific damage....Romans were wine pressers but they had yet to drain the dregs of the very soul of Athens. (P 71, 72, and 73)

By turning her uncle's manuscript into a palimpsest that draws from multiple media and authors, Hipparchia creates a dialogic space that visibly manifests the past at same time it occludes, redirects, or redefines the images/voices of that past. The anxiety of influence—something relevant not just for Hilda Doolittle, but for many of her literary compatriots—becomes transcended not through mastery or rejection, but through a direct insertion into the communal space, the “scene of writing,” that all art (for Hipparchia, for H.D.) occupies. Thus H.D.'s work seems more in line with Laura Riding⁶⁶ or David Jones rather than Pound or Imagism.⁶⁷ H.D.'s ideology of the mythic both enacts a purchase on “authenticity” at the same time it frames the notion of the subject as something “produced,” rather than something that produces.

As Deborah Kelly Kloepfer has pointed out, “Palimpsest” is an anagram, a text “containing/concealing another text; rearranged, the letters read ‘simple past.’ ‘Palimpsest,’ then, actually enacts its own functioning, both erasing and engaging the ‘past’ that engenders it...it accommodates a multiplicity and yet, in the privacy of its intersections, creates a cryptic and

⁶⁶ Laura Riding, “The Telling,” in *The Laura (Riding) Jackson Reader* (New York: Persea Books, 2005), 335-68.

⁶⁷ See Michael Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1984) and *Modernism and the Fate of Individuality* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1991). Levenson's studies focus on conceiving “modernity” in terms of a radical egotism and individualism of the post-industrial subject. In particular, see *Genealogy*, 69-79.

distorted space as well.”⁶⁸ Klopfer’s observation speaks to the dialectical relationship of clarity/difficulty that serves as a structural helix for all of H.D.’s prose. By intentionally troubling the paradigmatic and syntagmatic referents of these refrains, by interpolating them (almost randomly) throughout different internal and external textual spaces (e.g. dialogue, free-indirect discourse), *Palimpsest* mythologizes the power language can harness over (temporal) consciousness. *Palimpsest* is not so much a “stream of consciousness” as it is an intentional interruption of that “stream,” a performative “saying” that never resolves into a sustainable “said.”

The series of refrains that resonate throughout the novel, then, function as important palimpsests themselves, structuring and undercutting the narrative’s temporal and spatial framework. It is equally important, as well, not to lose sight of the body/sexuality in these moments; in fact, the prose ecstatically fetishizes sensory impressions and corporeality in these moments of spiritual possession. The text invokes a body/mind dualism at the same time it troubles or disrupts that dualism by characterizing thought through bodily sensations, and likewise, by characterizing the body as a product, or as sensations produced, by the mind. Hipparchia, having left Rome in exile for Greece, is with Verrus, her other lover:

When Verrus touched her gently and said, “you are not tired, Hipparchia?” she said, “no Verrus.” *I cast my lot with cynics, not* was running through her head. She had apprehended poetry physically as she had never apprehended loving—*with women seated at the distaff*. The metre beat and beat rhythmic and undeniable hypnotic refrain in her tired body. *With cynics not—gem—diadem*. She recalled the rhythms she had repeated this very morning jolting in the elegant wagon Verrus had sent to Capua to meet her. Relaxed in the elegant chariot, she had sunk against an inner lining of fitted dove-down cushions, on mole-lined blankets, Syrian sheep-skin, as now she was resting in soft fleeces beside Verrus. *With I kept no tunic with bright gem* an iterated refrain. But more than ever she repudiated her mother and her mother’s intellectual decision. *With cynics, not*—“No, Verrus.” (P 34-5)

⁶⁸ Deborah Kelly Klopfer, “Fishing the Murex Up: Sense and Resonance in H.D.’s *Palimpsest*,” *Contemporary Literature* 27.4 (Winter 1986): 553.

By repeating the refrains over and over again, interpolating one poem into another, Hipparchia becomes a palimpsest herself. It is unclear exactly what her mother's "intellectual decision," might have been, but Hipparchia (withdrawing from both male lovers in her life, Marius and Verrus, as well as from Olivia—another one of Marius' lovers for whom the theme of (bi)sexuality operates in the background) continuously preoccupies herself with these poetic fragments, changing their operative referents by interpolating them into other thoughts or fragments, and also by silencing the rest of the original text. For example, by only quoting the first line of the original "*I cast my lot with cynics, not/ with women seated at the distaff,*" Hipparchia displaces the object of the negative clause from "women" to "cynics," thus reversing where "her lot" is cast. On the other hand, the rest of the poem, though absent, still resonates, so the poetic fragment that she now interpolates negates both the cynics and the women, while at the same time neither can remain *fully* negated. That Hipparchia spurns her own mother further complicates the possibility of aligning herself with women at the "distaff"—a weaving spindle, the great classical *ars poetica*, and undoubtedly a symbol of her mother. Modulation, repetition, and refiguration of these refrains become the primary vehicle through which Hipparchia negotiates her familial, sexual, cultural, and artistic selves. Having become an embodied palimpsest, then, Hipparchia enters a mythic, almost timeless, ethereality, transcending all of the domestic and confined spaces that dominate *Palimpsest* as a whole.⁶⁹

The focused clarity of the text, as well as its destabilized referential fields (and thus its "difficulty") create H.D.'s ideology of the "mythic-seer," an individual who, though forever caught between spaces, remains free from being confined to any of them. As H.D. observes in *Notes on Thoughts and Vision*—a work as Nietzschean in its mythological "over-mind" (not

⁶⁹ We rarely, if ever, see Hipparchia outside of these domestic spaces. Though she moves between Rome and Greece, we find her either in Marius' bedroom or Villa Capua, the house in Greece. She recalls her chariot ride at the beginning of the tenth section, but she characterizes the chariot as a surrogate bedroom-space.

unlike the “over-man”) as it is characteristic of H.D.’s erratic prose—successful artists *must* enter into palimpsestic, almost Vedantic, in-between states if they are to achieve “authenticity”:

The over-mind is like a lens of an opera-glass. When we are able to use this over-mind lens, the whole world of vision is open to us...[w]hen these lenses are properly adjusted, focused, they bring the world of vision into consciousness. The two work separately, perceive separately, yet make one picture. (NTV 23)

This brief detour into H.D.’s philosophical writings sets up an important contextual background for the mechanics and aesthetics that inform her prose. As Albert Gelpi and Rachel DuPlessis note,⁷⁰ 1919 marked an important turning point in H.D.’s life. Having come to the Scilly Isles off the Cornwall coast with Bryher, H.D. was recovering from her break with Richard Aldington, the miscarriage of her daughter in 1915, the aftermath of the war in which her brother Gilbert was killed in France, and the death of her father that February. As if that was not enough, H.D. had just given birth to her daughter, Frances Perdita, two months earlier—thus birth and death operate as important *leitmotifs* within *Notes* and the later prose that follows. As Gelpi remarks, “The importance of ‘Notes on Thought and Vision’ is that it anticipates a lifetime spent in the divination of such epiphanal ‘spots of time’...her experience of an ‘over-mind’ [allows] a sense of participation in both the natural and the transcendental and a perception of ‘eternal, changeless ideas’...[creates a] ‘vision of the womb.’”⁷¹ The textual mechanics of *Palimpsest* are thus the realization of H.D.’s mythic vision, moments of quiet ecstasy and epiphanic revelation quite unlike the louder—and self-assured—moments in Proust or Joyce.

It is primarily through her subtle, though extensive, language-play that H.D. enters into her mythological “over-mind.” The “divided-self” becomes, too, an important theme and refrain throughout the *Hipparchia* section: “Hipparchia wasn’t Hipparchia” occurs, though it changes

⁷⁰ See Albert Gelpi, “Introduction” to *Notes on Thought and Vision & The Wise Sappho* (City Lights Books, 1982), 7; and DuPlessis, *Career*, 32-33.

⁷¹ Gelpi, *ibid.*, 9, 12, 13.

form, at least four times in full,⁷² and parallels the (even more prominent) refrain “*Greece is now lost—the cities dislocated from any central ruling,*” occurring twelve times over the course of fifty-three pages.⁷³ The textual interpolation of the refrains deconstructs or divides their syntactical referents at the same time it figuratively divides Hipparchia both from her mother and herself:

Why hadn't Olivia even warned him? That Hipparchia wasn't Hipparchia. The girl Hipparchia who had the dour Crates for a father. Why hadn't Olivia told him, as was most obvious, that Hipparchia was simply that lost Hipparchia who took “the beggars stick,” “the cloak full thick,” and the rest of the Laconian appurtenances. Phantom. Wraith.

I kept no tunic with bright gem.

Hipparchia was simply that Hipparchia. Returning to claim fresh “shoes the Asiatics wear.” Involving him, of all people, with death and with illusion. (P 15-16)

“That” operates as a restrictive pronoun, referring to either Hipparchia herself *or* Hipparchia the mother, but it also functions as an observational pronoun; Olivia should have warned Marius simply “that” this Hipparchia was not Hipparchia the mother. In the second reiteration of the refrain, after the interpolated poetry fragment, “wasn't” changes to an affirmative “was,” offering both readings that “[The present] Hipparchia was simply that Hipparchia [not her mother],” “[That mother] Hipparchia was simply that Hipparchia [and not the present Hipparchia],” but also “[The present] Hipparchia was simply [the same as the mother] Hipparchia. Furthermore, that the present Hipparchia literally *recites* her mother's poetry synthesizes both Hipparchias together through the personal pronoun “I.” Thus it is unclear *which* Hipparchia is “lost” at any moment—though it is, of course, both of them lost and found at the same time through the language that (physically and metaphorically) embodies them together. As Klopfer keenly observes:

⁷² P 15, 28, 53, 55, 78.

⁷³ P 41 (three times), 71, 72, 75, 92 (three times), 93, 94 (twice).

As we know from poststructuralism, once there is the written sign, the ability—the need—to represent, there is by definition a loss, a gap, a split between the “I” and the narratizable “me,” between self and other...But to H.D.—and this is crucial to an understanding of every word she wrote—the sign is the mark not of absence but of presence. This is why she grapples to textualize “the story,” this is why she works her experiences and relationships through verse and prose...⁷⁴

Though Kloepfer is correct in pointing out just how important precise, clear, and exact language is for H.D., *Palimpsest*, a generic hybrid between poetry and prose, plays upon *both* the presences and absences in linguistic matrices. Palimpsests both include and occlude temporal differences, registering the past (imperfectly erased) while also rewriting that past at the same time. Indeed, it is through this act of negation that H.D. *defines* palimpsest on the title page, anticipating both the structural helix of *Palimpsest*'s refrain, as well as its ambivalent critique of Roman and British empire: a palimpsest is a document where “writing has been [imperfectly] *erased* to make room for another” (*P* 1; my emphasis). Hipparchia first believes she must erase the ghost-space of her mother if she is to achieve any sense of individuality, but as the novel progresses Hipparchia begins to realize something completely different.

A young girl named Julia Cornelia Augusta visits Hipparchia, claiming interest in her manuscripts, but Hipparchia, disoriented and wound up in her own thoughts, continuously confuses the girl with Moero, one of the classical Greek poets whom Hipparchia is translating. The girl explains that she is “completing certain records on the Macedonian conquest” (*P* 91), and that she has come in order to incorporate Hipparchia's knowledge of important Greek poets. Hipparchia first refuses to cooperate with the girl's project, and the prose begins winding, almost like a vortex, through the entire range of refrains set up throughout the section. The text begins in Hipparchia's skewed (and divided) perspective, but the ambiguity, previously a mark of division, becomes a mark of presence, of synthesis, in this ecstatic finale:

⁷⁴ Kloepfer, “Fishing the Murex,” 565.

“My father collects everything that is Greek.” *Greece is now lost*. “He believes all Rome will yet acclaim her. That’s why we sought you”...Far and far and far, surrounded with a web of old illusion. “Romans are wine pressers.” There were many Romans. Romans. Romans. Romans....*Wind of the sea, O whence*—her reverie was again interrupted by the girl’s voice. “Doctor Grattius brought your poems to us. I know them all by heart.” By heart? What did this wide-eyed child mean by knowing them by heart?...A small firm hand, detached and hard as ivory, dragged her back, back when she was lax and floating going—gone—Verrus who awaited. Wind of the sea, O swift. “Come back. Don’t sleep.” From far and far and far the voice of Julia Augusta who was not Moero. “I know them all by heart.” By heart? Again Hipparchia by some superhuman effort recalled herself, sat upright. “What do you know by heart?” “Poetry. Your poetry. All your poetry. All those rare translations. *Wind of the sea O swift—where Corinth, charm incarnate, are your shrines*—I know them all, all. They helped me to love Athens....” “But Greece is now lost, its cities dissociated from any central ruling.” Hipparchia now repeated it. “Dissociated from any central ruling.” But Moero would not listen. Moero would not hear her. Eyes looked and looked and islands shone far and far and far. “Greece is a spirit.” Who said Greece is a spirit? Was it Moero? “Did you say that?” “Say what?” “Greece is a spirit. Someone said *Greece is a spirit. Greece is not lost*. I will come with you.” (P 93 and 94)

At first Hipparchia believes the girl’s project will, like Marius, fetishize, overwrite, and ultimately erase even these fragmented remnants of lost Greece. Thus Hipparchia persists that “Romans are wine pressers,” but this refrain—first an incisive criticism of Roman conquest—ironically turns into a metaphor for those that would acknowledge and retain Greece’s past. She confuses the girl with Moero, but even when she realizes that the girl is not this poet (dead for over one hundred years), Hipparchia persists in associating her with Moero. That the girl has literally internalized Hipparchia’s translations, and thus Moero’s poetry, erases the absent (dead) Moero in order to make room for Moero in the present, in Rome. Hipparchia, Hipparchia the mother, Moero, and Julia all become part of the same mythological, romanticized spirit through which Greece will survive. The confusion as to “who said” what at the end of the section is further evidence of this synthesis—the poet is not the “creator” of poetry, but rather the mythic conduit through which poetry, as a public and communal space, transcends temporality altogether. Thus the artist is not, as Joyce might have it, paring his fingernails—self and subjectivity are rather constructed through and within the scene of writing, self as text and textual process.

It is important to remember that palimpsests are documents imperfectly erased; there always remains a trace, a presence of the past. The second section of *Palimpsest*, “Murex: War and Postwar London (Circa A.D. 1916-1926),” retains and reworks many of the linguistic and narrative dynamics of the Hipparchia section. Raymonde Ransome, an American expatriate living in London—an obvious parallel to Hipparchia, a Greek expatriate living in Rome—struggles with a dual/divided personality (Raymonde Ransome vs. Ray Bart, her mythological identity as a writer) while somewhat reluctantly speaking with her friend Ermentrude. Their discussion evokes an odd mixture of anti-Semitism and homoeroticism in Raymonde; Ermentrude is at once the counterpart to Hipparchia’s Olivia/Julia at the same time she is a counterpart of Raymonde herself, for each has had her husband leave her for another woman. It is ultimately this discussion that “fishes...up” the murex, a small marine mollusk whose shell twists to form a long, winded canal that grows around itself.

It is from this mollusk that the Ancient Greeks extracted a deep, purple dye by either forcing apart or crushing the shell. The dye was used for both textile as well as writing pigment.⁷⁵ As Kloepfer points out, “who fished the murex up?” also alludes to Robert Browning’s “Popularity,” a poem which disdains the clichéd image of the stars for, instead, the purple dye of the murex that makes both writing and printing possible.⁷⁶ For Kloepfer, the image of the murex “provides the way of closing the gap...the sign of the inner spaces of both consciousness and language.”⁷⁷ However, it’s important not to forget the violence that this new image carries with it—the dye is only available by crushing or breaking apart the shell. In this sense, a writing of the past always already invokes a kind of erasure or rewriting, just as the

⁷⁵ See “purple” and “dyeing” in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth (Oxford, 2005).

⁷⁶ See Kloepfer, 571-72.

⁷⁷ Kloepfer, *ibid.*, 572.

growth of the mollusk shell grows around itself, repeating—but with difference—the patterns and shapes of its earlier form. The murex, in this sense, doesn't provide a safe, "inner space," but instead remains as a symbol of exposure.⁷⁸ The ink/dye inside the shell here transforms into the "dream-anodyne of mist," echoing Eliot's image of the ether fog that settles heavily over London streets:

It was the fabric of a past London through which her fine mind ran a silver thread. The present only as it was part of that past was part also of her. But London that she (fine pulsing thread) passed through had changed somewhat. It had changed. People were forgetting. Everything was different. People were forgetting. They must forget or they would go mad with it—feet—feet—feet—feet—feet.... "I haven't so much as spoken of your poetry." Poetry? What was poetry? Keats, Browning. *Who fished the murex up?* "O poetry,"....Behind the Botticelli, there was another Botticelli, behind London there was another London, behind Raymonde Ransome there was (odd and slightly crude but somehow "taking" nom-de-guerre) Ray Bart. There was Ray Bart always waiting as there was behind the autumn drift and dream-anodyne of mist, another London. (P 101-103, 104)

Raymonde Ransome, like Hipparchia, remains completely confined to domestic spaces; most of her section takes place in her sitting room while she converses with Ermentrude. Yet this confinement is something that Raymonde originally *desires*—buried in her room, buried beneath the "feet—feet—feet—feet—feet" that she hears on Sloane Street, tapping outside her window. The feet on Sloane Street, metonymic for a seemingly endless line of soldiers heading off to France, progress toward Victoria Station, whence they will travel by rail toward the coast and to war. It is crucial to understand the "feet" repetition/refrain (ultimately symbolic of poetic "feet," and thus her own identity as a writer) within the context of how physical/temporal/mental spaces modulate throughout the entire section. Indeed, "feet—feet—feet" occurs *almost seventy times* throughout the course of sixty-seven pages, marking it as the most-often repeated refrain of the

⁷⁸ My sincere gratitude to Maria Stadter Fox for encouraging me to pursue the history of the murex, and for pointing me to Browning's "Popularity."

entire novel.⁷⁹ Moreover, the refrain enacts the dual-nature of the palimpsest: the repetition becomes a type of paralysis, an inevitable return or digression to a past thought, at the same time it physically advances or makes present that past. Like Hipparchia's *Romans are wine pressers*, the *feet—feet—feet* gradually change meaning as they slip through different syntagmatic contexts: at first they operate as an image of confinement, but once Raymonde identifies herself as Ray Bart and reclaims her status as a writer, the poetic “feet” help her leave London for France and “get some [writing] done” (P 138).

Like Hipparchia, Raymonde's relationship to writing is equally ambivalent. Raymonde, the only one of the three whose writing is *not* displaced in a different temporal context (Hipparchia writing a lost Greece, Helen writing a lost Egypt)—unites both Hipparchia and Helen through embodying an almost parenthetical apex/center of *Palimpsest*. Similar to Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of *heteroglossia*, language does not operate through a single linguistic code or structure of relations—for Raymonde, this revelation defines the “modern” condition, where art's desperate break from a past necessitates a dialogic medium forever dependent on the textual and literary traces of that past:

Laws like reading tea leaves. James Joyce was right. Inflexible laws were to be read in the meanest actions, the set of a ribbon...Something compounded like faces seen one on top of another. Art wasn't seen any more in one plane, in one perspective, in one dimension. One didn't any more see things like that. Impressions were reflected now, the salt had lost--they were overlaid like old photographic negatives one on top of another...there is no law...James Joyce was right. Formula to be enduring must be destroyed. (P 151, 154, and 155)

Though these thoughts arise from Raymonde's own self-reflections, this is an important meta-fictional moment in *Palimpsest*. Like triple-exposed photographic film, the textual voices echo and refrain *over each other*, as refrains themselves, in the same way that each protagonist must

⁷⁹ P 98, 99 (twice), 100 (twice), 102, 110 (twice), 112, 113 (twice), 114 (three times), 115 (five times), 116 (four times), 117 (twice), 118 (twice), 119, 120, 121 (three times), 128, 138, 140 (four times), 141 (seven times), 142 (six times), 143 (twice), 144, 145, 149, 153, 155 (three times), 157, 158, 160 (twice), 162, 165.

negotiate the traces of her own memories or pasts. It is not that the past simply reincarnates itself into the present, but rather these impressions are “reflected,”—an important distinction, since mirrors always distort and reverse the images they reflect. As Keeling notes, “[H.D.] saw translation as a means of bringing new life to ancient texts, extending rather than fixing meaning....In her 1937 translation of Euripides’s *Ion*, H.D. insists, ‘You cannot learn Greek, only, with a dictionary. You can learn it with your hands and your feet and especially with your lungs.’”⁸⁰ Emulation is not the same as imitation, but rather constitutes a powerful, generative, and (per)formative act in its own right.

For H.D., the author paradoxically attains a claim to authenticity precisely because she can interpolate herself between other texts, enter into this palimpsestic, and thus public, scene of writing. It is appropriate, then, that Raymonde’s final poem resonates with the same image of the “holy diadem” of Hipparchia’s work. We find Julia fished up, as well, in the murex-shell of Raymonde’s poem: “I worship, / more, more, more—I love her / who has sent you to my door” (*P* 172).

Helen Fairwood, the final protagonist of *Palimpsest*, operates as a figure not of the novel’s conclusion, but rather as its re-beginning. Her name, undoubtedly an allusion to Euripides’ Helen misplaced in Egypt during the Trojan War, re/dis-places this Helen “swinging backward” into the present and the same time she “swings backward” into Egypt, into Hipparchia’s manuscript. It is this dialogic imagination—to borrow from Bakhtin again—that empowers Helen’s negotiation of these pasts into the present, of “presence” within the past:

Like a juggler, she considered two regions, two shining and slippery worlds, to be balanced carefully, lest one, lest the other topple her over; she must keep suspended, she must hold balanced, two exactly shaped, exactly weighted, yet mysteriously exactly antagonistic worlds. She must keep, miraculously, by very cautious manipulation, her own balance meanwhile. She must keep her own balance, like a tightrope walker, by the very use of this couple of heavy balls,

⁸⁰ Keeling, “H.D. and ‘The Contest,’” 195.

these worlds, one at either end of some sort of slender balancing pole (her everyday self?) themselves serving to keep her firm...One foot. The other. The two world [sic] swaying precariously (swaying by their very opposites) swayed herself into this very perfect realisation of herself. (*P* 176 and 177)

For H.D., the important task for modernity—and, as Kloepfer might say, this is crucial for understanding everything H.D. wrote—is to occupy this paratactic in-between space, to “keep [one’s] own balance,” a complete rejection of Pound’s notion that “any work of art which is not a beginning, an invention, [is] a discovery...of little worth.” That these two worlds must remain separate at the same time they are overlaid onto each other to form a singularity is why Hipparchia must create a palimpsest rather than a rewriting or simple translation. That Helen’s whole passage pivots on the indefinite pronoun “she” is not an accident; we are to read Hipparchia, Ray, and Helen into that pronoun, though we must never reduce the indefinite volatility of “she” into one or the other.

Robert McAlmon’s⁸¹ eccentric 1926 introduction to *Palimpsest*, set up in type but not used for the original edition, observes “[E]ven if it is difficult to read, even if one must think and go down deep in thinking...[*Palimpsest* is not] an escape, but a necessity, an inevitable assertion,”⁸² though he never identifies exactly what that “assertion” might be (*P* 241). The introduction, curiously entitled “Forewarned as regards H D’s Prose,” also notes that those who know H.D. for her “clear, clean, [and] chaste” imagery (*P* 241) will find something quite unexpected—that *Palimpsest* marked a redirection of H.D.’s own aesthetic program is certain. It is a volatile, indefinite text, and perhaps this is exactly what it “asserts,” its own inability—and its outright resistance—to wrest experience into something clear, clean, or chaste. Kloepfer notes that *Palimpsest* is “a hermetic text that nonetheless spills out of itself freely,” and she is

⁸¹ McAlmon was the husband of Annie Ellerman, or Bryher, to whom H.D. dedicates *Palimpsest*, as well as an important figure in H.D.’s personal and professional life. See Friedman, *Penelope’s Web*, 221-222.

⁸² It is revealing that McAlmon focuses on H.D.’s position between America—“they are curious, more impressionable, new-rich, and eager there”—and England (*P* 241), perhaps anticipating more recent moves toward studying modernism and modernity in transatlantic and trans-hemispheric contexts.

entirely correct.⁸³ We must read beyond the initials of the text just as we must read beyond the initials of “H.D.”—a signature that also hides while it reveals.

Works Cited and Consulted

- Doolittle, Hilda. *Palimpsest*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 1968.
- . *HERmione*. New York: New Directions, 1981.
- . *Notes on Thought and Vision & The Wise Sappho*. San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books, 1982.
- . *Tribute to Freud*. Foreword Norman Holmes Pearson. New York: New Directions, 1974.
- Dunn, Margaret M. “Altered Patterns and New Endings: Reflections of Change in Stein's *Three Lives* and H.D.'s *Palimpsest*.” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 9.2 (1987): 54-59.
- DuPlessis, Rachel Blau. *H.D.: The Career of That Struggle*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1986.
- . *Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985.
- Forster, E.M. *Aspects of the Novel*. London: Edward Arnold, 1974.
- Friedman, Susan Stanford. “Who Buried H. D.? A Poet, Her Critics, and Her Place in ‘The Literary Tradition.’” *College English* 36.7 (March 1975): 801-814.
- . *Penelope's Web: Gender, Modernity, H.D.'s Fiction*. New York, NY: Cambridge UP, 1990.
- Gelpi, Albert. “The Thistle and the Serpent.” Introduction. *Notes on Thought and Vision & The Wise Sappho*. By H.D. San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books, 1982. 7-14.
- Gubar, Susan. “The Echoing Spell of H.D.'s *Trilogy*.” *Contemporary Literature* 19.2. (Spring 1978): 196-218.
- Keeling, Bret L. “H. D. and ‘The Contest’: Archaeology of a Sapphic Gaze.” *Twentieth Century Literature* 44.2 (Summer 1998): 176-203.
- Kenner, Hugh. *The Pound Era*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971.
- Kloepfer, Deborah Kelly. “Fishing the Murex Up: Sense and Resonance in H.D.'s *Palimpsest*.” H. D.

⁸³ Kloepfer, 572.

- Challis, Debbie. *From the Harpy Tomb to the Wonders of Ephesus: British Archaeologists in the Ottoman Empire 1840-1880*. London: Duckworth, 2008.
- Colivicchi, Fabio. *Materiali in alabastro, vetro, avorio, osso, uova di struzzo*. Materiali del Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Tarquinia XVI. Roma: Giorgio Bretschneider, 2007.
- Collins, Derek. *Magic in the Ancient Greek World. Blackwell Ancient Religions*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008.
- Coltman, Vicky. *Classical Sculpture and the Culture of Collecting in Britain since 1760. Classical Presences*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Creuzer, Friedrich, and Gottfried Hermann. *Lettere sulla mitologia*. Ed. Sotera Fornaro. Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2009.
- Damaskos, Dimitris, and Dimitris Plantzos, eds. *A Singular Antiquity: Archaeology and the Hellenic Identity in the Twentieth Century. Mouseio Benaki 3rd Supplement*. Athens: Benaki Museum, 2008.
- Dumasy, Françoise, and François Queyrel, eds. *Archéologie et environnement dans la Méditerranée antique. École pratique des Hautes Études, Sciences historiques et philologiques III. Hautes études du monde gréco-romain, 42*. Genève: Droz, 2009.
- Gallo, Luciana. *Lord Elgin and Ancient Greek Architecture: The Elgin Drawings at the British Museum*. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Gilhuly, Kate. *The Feminine Matrix of Sex and Gender in Classical Athens*. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Goldhill, Simon, and Edith Hall, eds. *Sophocles and the Greek Tragic Tradition*. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Graf, Fritz. *Apollo. Gods and Heroes of the Ancient World*. London/New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Harris, William V. *Dreams and Experience in Classical Antiquity*. Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Hartigan, Karelisa V. *Performance and Cure: Drama and Healing in Ancient Greece and Contemporary America. Classical Inter/faces*. London: Duckworth, 2009.
- Hunter, Richard, and Ian Rutherford, eds. *Wandering Poets in Ancient Greek Culture: Travel, Locality and Pan-Hellenism*. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Instone, Stephen, ed. *Greek Personal Religion: A Reader*. Oxford: Aris & Phillips, 2009.
- Kipfer, Barbara Ann. *Dictionary of Artifacts*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.
- Mastrocinque, Attilio. *Des Mystères de Mithra aux Mystères de Jesus. Potsdamer Altertumswissenschaftliche Beiträge*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2009.
- Mirto, Maria Serena, ed. Euripide. *Ione*. Classici greci e latini. Milano: BUR, 2009.
- Nakhai, Beth Alpert, ed. *The World of Women in the Ancient and Classical Near East*. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008.
- Ogden, Daniel. *Magic, Witchcraft and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Sourcebook. Second edition (first published 2002)*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Benét and Norman Holmes Pearson. New York: Oxford UP, 1938. 1287-1288.
Reprinted in *Agenda* 25 (1988): 71-76.
Richard Aldington & H.D.: The Early Years in Letters. Ed., intro., comm. Caroline Zilboorg. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1992.
Richard Aldington & H.D.: The Later Years in Letters. Ed., intro., comm. Caroline Zilboorg. Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 1995.
Richard Aldington & H.D.: Their Lives in Letters, 1918-1961. Ed., intro., comm. Caroline Zilboorg. Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 2003.
"Selected Letters from H.D. to F.S. Flint: A Commentary on the Imagist Period." Ed. Cyrena N. Pondrom. *Contemporary Literature* 10.4 (Autumn 1969): 557-586.

Unpublished Letters and Deposits of Letters:

Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut:
Letters to Richard Aldington, Bryher, H. P. Collins, Helen Wolle Doolittle, Havelock Ellis, Robert Herring, Viola Jordan, Robert McAlmon, John McDougall, Kenneth Macpherson, Brigit Patmore, Norman Holmes Pearson, George Plank, and Ezra Pound (be sure to consult also the description of the Pound papers, see below), among others.

For more information, go to

<http://drs.library.yale.edu:8083/saxon/SaxonServlet?style=http://drs.library.yale.edu:8083/saxon/EAD/yul.ead2002.xhtml.xsl&source=http://drs.library.yale.edu:8083/fedora/get/beinecke:hilda/EAD> .

For guides to the Pound papers, see

<http://drs.library.yale.edu:8083/saxon/SaxonServlet?style=http://drs.library.yale.edu:8083/saxon/EAD/yul.ead2002.xhtml.xsl&source=http://drs.library.yale.edu:8083/fedora/get/beinecke:pound/EAD&big=y&adv=&query=eza>
http://drs.library.yale.edu:8083/saxon/SaxonServlet?style=http://drs.library.yale.edu:8083/saxon/EAD/yul.ead2002.xhtml.xsl&source=http://drs.library.yale.edu:8083/fedora/get/beinecke:poundadd/EAD&query=eza_pound&filter=&hitPageStart=1 and
http://drs.library.yale.edu:8083/saxon/SaxonServlet?style=http://drs.library.yale.edu:8083/saxon/EAD/yul.ead2002.xhtml.xsl&source=http://drs.library.yale.edu:8083/fedora/get/beinecke:poundadd/EAD&query=eza_pound&filter=&hitPageStart=1 .

Bryn Mawr College Library:

The collection of H.D. materials includes letters to John Cournos, Mary Herr, Katherine McBride, Alys Russell, and Jeannette Trumper. For more information, go to
<http://www.brynmawr.edu/library/speccoll/guides/hdcorrespondence.shtml#outgoing> .

Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts:

Letters to John Cournos (58 letters), Amy Lowell (57 letters). The finding aid for the collection of Cournos correspondence is here:

<http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/deepLink?collection=oasis&uniqueid=hou01377> .

See the finding aid for the collection of Amy Lowell correspondence at

<http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/deepLink?collection=oasis&uniqueid=hou00100> .

Please note that the Houghton prefers the name "Hilda Aldington" when cataloguing H.D. items.

Huntington Library, Los Angeles:

Letters to Conrad Aiken. No online finding guide is available. I did not find H.D. listed as a correspondent in the brief description of the Conrad Aiken collection, but Susan Stanford Friedman lists the letters in her "Works Cited" of *Penelope's Web: Gender, Modernity, H.D.'s Fiction* (Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 417), as does Barbara Guest (*Herself Defined: The Poet H.D. and her World*, Doubleday, 1984, p. 345). See <http://catalog.huntington.org/search~S0?/Yconrad+aiken+letters&SORT=D/Yconrad+aiken+letters&SORT=D&extended=0&SUBKEY=conrad%20aiken%20letters/37%2C40%2C40%2CB/frameset&FF=Yconrad%2Baiken%2Bletters%26SORT%3DD%26extended%3D0%26SUBKEY%3Dconrad%2520aiken%2520letters&40%2C40%2C> .

Lilly Library at Indiana University:

See the guide to the Ezra Pound papers at <http://www.indiana.edu/~liblilly/guides/pound/ezra.pdf> and also the description of the William Carlos Williams collection at <http://www.indiana.edu/~liblilly/lilly/mss/html/williamswc3.html> .

Morris Library, University of Southern Illinois at Carbondale:

Letters to Henry Slominsky, a close friend of Richard Aldington. See, for more information, <http://archives.lib.siu.edu/index.php?p=collections/findingaid&id=509&q=&rootcontentid=10487#id10487> . Friedman (*Penelope's Web*, p. 417) and Guest (*Herself Defined*, p. 345) cite letters from H.D. among the Richard Aldington papers; I was unsuccessful in finding more specific information online.

New York Public Library, Berg Collection:

Letters to May Sarton, with the May Sarton papers. For more information, go to <http://catalog.nypl.org/search~S1?/Xhilda+doolittle&searchscope=1&SORT=D/Xhilda+doolittle&searchscope=1&SORT=D&SUBKEY=hilda%20doolittle/51%2C185%2C185%2CB/frameset&FF=Xhilda+doolittle&searchscope=1&SORT=D&61%2C61%2C> .

Norlin Library, University of Colorado at Boulder:

Letters to Francis Wolle, in the Francis Wolle Collection on Hilda Doolittle. See the guide at <http://rmoa.unm.edu/docviewer.php?docId=couspcms12.xml> .

River Campus Libraries, The University of Rochester:

Some letters to family and to Norman Holmes Pearson. For more details, go to <http://www.library.rochester.edu/index.cfm?page=852> .

Rosenbach Foundation, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania:

Letters to Marianne Moore. See the online guide to Marianne Moore's papers at http://www.rosenbach.org/sites/default/files/moore_collection.pdf .

Also of interest:

OTHER STRANDS IN THE WEB:

Here are some more links to other modernists on the web, in no particular order.

Willa Cather: <http://www.willacather.org/> (The Willa Cather Foundation) and <http://cather.unl.edu/> (The Willa Cather Archive).

Zora Neale Hurston: <http://www.zoranealehurston.com/index.html> (website maintained by the Hurston estate) and <http://zorafestival.com/> (site for the annual Zora Neale Hurston Festival of the Arts and Humanities).

Katherine Mansfield: <http://www.katherinemansfieldsociety.org/> (The Katherine Mansfield Society) and <http://www.katherinemansfield.net/> (site maintained by Kathleen Jones, biographer).

Sylvia Townsend Warner: <http://www.townsendwarner.com/> (The Sylvia Townsend Warner Society) and <http://www.sylviatownsendwarner.com/> (The Sylvia Townsend Warner Archive).

Rebecca West: <http://www.rebeccawestsociety.org/> (The International Rebecca West Society).