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**THE DEVELOPMENT OF A POETIC VISION:
H.D.'S GROWTH FROM IMAGIST
TO MYTHOLOGIST**

presented by
Melody M. Zajdel

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for
Ph.D. degree in English

Linda C. Wagner
Major professor

Date August 7, 1979



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THE DEVELOPMENT OF A POETIC VISION:
H.D.'S GROWTH FROM IMAGIST
TO MYTHOLOGIST

By

Melody M. Zajdel

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A POETIC VISION: H.D.'S GROWTH FROM IMAGIST TO MYTHOLOGIST

By

Melody M. Zajdel

A rigid regard for H.D. as "the perfect Imagist" has generally limited the scope of critical investigation of her works. The result has been to relegate H.D. unfairly to a minor position in modern literary history. Yet H.D.'s poetry and mature aesthetic vision place her not at the periphery but at the center of modern poetics. H.D.'s works need to be reassessed in light of the developmental nature of her career. The intent of this study is to read H.D.'s works as naturally evolving in both their forms and themes, from her first publications in Poetry (1913) to her epic-quest, Helen in Egypt (1961). Seen as the climax of an entire career, H.D.'s final works are her highest achievement in both vision and form.

The philosophical and technical tenets of Imagism are the basis for H.D.'s earliest writings. Imagist theory accepted Bergson's belief that the poet has a special function: to express intuited perceptions of reality by

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careful presentation of images. As developed by Pound and Hulme, Imagism advocated conveying perceptions via the juxtaposing of concrete images and the use of uncluttered language and forms. H.D.'s adherence to these tenets is apparent in Collected Poems (1925); however, H.D.'s personal talents and ideas led her to expand upon these general guidelines. From 1913 to 1925, she presented in her works increasingly complex cadences, depictions of events (vs. objects) and personae.

Experimentation in fiction and films during the second phase of her career (1925-1932) yielded new themes and structural forms to her writing. In Palimpsest, Hedylus and "Narthex," H.D. explored themes concerning the palimpsest-like nature of experience, the role of the artist in discovering meaningful patterns in reality, and the emotional and psychological need of the individual's creating a means of unifying the fragmentary nature of experience. H.D.'s fiction also began to express her growing interest in women characters and in the problems of the woman artist. Film, along with fiction, suggested the use of montage as the means to create lengthier forms without losing the concreteness of Imagist presentation. Unfortunately, the only poetry of this period, Red Roses for Bronze (1932), failed to either develop effectively the new themes or integrate the elements of fiction with her standing prosodic techniques.

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H.D.'s studies and analysis with Sigmund Freud (1933-1934), focused her own thoughts and confirmed much of what she had learned through experimentation. Freud's use of associative probing, added to her own experience with stream-of-consciousness fiction, prompted H.D. to evolve a style of presentation based on both imagistic and sonal associations. Freud's affirmation of myth as a means of conveying psychological reality confirmed H.D.'s own use of myth to explain personal experience and revelation. A psychic dream-vision, which she analyzed with Freud, provided her with a personal myth or eidolon: the fusion of universal duality conveyed and resolved in the image of united masculine and feminine symbols. The emphasis of the myth was on complement, not androgyny. Freudian analysis also confirmed H.D.'s belief in the poet as a questor for meaning and an interpreter of both personal and cultural hieroglyphs.

The Second World War proved the impetus to H.D.'s final phase as a writer. Trilogy (The Walls Do Not Fall, Tribute to the Angels, and The Flowering of the Rod) and Helen in Egypt are the supreme examples of H.D.'s final poetic form and vision. Trilogy expresses H.D.'s belief in the regenerative nature of life and the place of personal revelation in understanding reality. In its melding of multiple mythological systems, its belief in a mystical Oneness underlying all human experience, and its

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use of sonal and thematic etymology to link a work, it provides a paradigm for her newly evolved final form. Helen in Egypt represents H.D.'s completed poetic vision. For the first time she creates a myth which is entirely her own, based on her psychic vision. Helen in Egypt is the quest of a woman for identity, revelation and transcendence. Its dialectic form is the result of H.D.'s belief in the duality of nature and her use of juxtaposition to convey revelation. Its mystical sense of reality and the role of poet as prophet-priest is directly based in Bergson and Freud, as well as H.D.'s personal studies in the occult.

Trilogy and Helen in Egypt seek to provide a "hermetic definition" of the world. H.D.'s final vision is one of fusion, a fusion which is almost magical and alchemical, grounded as much in sound and poetic form as it is in the physical and rational world. Concise Imagist poetic form, techniques from both her poetry and fiction (particularly use of juxtaposition and compression), Freud's method of using myth to pattern understanding, her growing personal interest in mythic and mystical studies, all are blended in the final syncretistic vision of H.D. H.D.'s later works prove that the completed vision and form of a career always exceeds the sum of its parts.

"Memory is a kind
of accomplishment
a sort of renewal . . ."

FOR MY PARENTS,
Maxine and Stewart McCollum,
whom I remember with love

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CHAPTER I

H.D. AND THE CRITICS

H.D. is a surprisingly underrated modern poet. Considered a significant and powerful writer by her own contemporaries (Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, Edith Sitwell and D. H. Lawrence) and recognized as an important influence by contemporary writers (Denise Levertov, Robert Duncan, Robert Creeley and Hayden Carruth), H.D. has generally been viewed by critics and editors as a minor modern writer. Many readers have difficulty recalling who she is. While fellow poets are willing and able to perceive a scope and depth in H.D.'s works which can inspire and teach them, critics are satisfied to view her as the producer of a few rarefied lyrics and perfect Imagist "gems," whose early writings are the model of Imagism and whose later works are its relics. This too facile critical acceptance of H.D. as "the one perfect Imagist,"¹ the only one of the "original Imagist group . . . [who has] kept the faith,"² is possible only if one ignores the bulk of the H.D. canon. Critics and editors have been consistently willing to do so.

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H.D. is almost exclusively known for her standard anthology pieces: "Oread," "Heat," "Hermes of the Way," "Orchard" and "The Pool."³ These anthologized poems are taken from the misleadingly named Collected Poems (1925) and represent, at best, only the first quarter of H.D.'s career. Overlooked is the majority of H.D.'s writing: six volumes of poetry (Red Roses for Bronze-1931, The Walls Do Not Fall-1944, Tribute to the Angels-1945, The Flowering of the Rod-1946, Selected Poems-1957, Helen in Egypt-1961, and Hermetic Definition-1972); three novels (Palimpsest-1926, Hedylus-1928, Bid Me To Live-1960); one novella ("Narthex"-1928); three non-fiction books (Tribute to Freud/Advent-1956, By Avon River-1949, Borderline-1930); a children's book (The Hedgehog-1936); and several classical translations.

The critical inclination to label H.D. an Imagist, to judge H.D.'s work according to a preconceived and limited criterion (is it good Imagism?) and to present only her earliest publications as representative has resulted in a misleading picture of H.D.'s accomplishments. As Robert Duncan has noted, "Her trilogy . . . stands with Ezra Pound's Cantos, Eliot's Four Quartets, and William Carlos Williams' Paterson as a major work . . . ; yet the news of that achievement has traveled slowly."⁴ The question is: why?

Within the works of other major poets, one sees a developmental, cumulative and ultimately culminating process

of discovery taking place. Pound's Cantos, Williams' Paterson and Eliot's Four Quartets are all complex presentations of intensely personal artistic quests. Each poet prepares for and chronicles his quest throughout his literary lifespan. In each writer's career, the preceding works led to the final statement and power of the later poems. Ezra Pound's Cantos need the intense young scholar of the Fenollosa studies, the technician of Personae, the eclectic critic of the Literary Essays. Without the experimentation in form of a Kora in Hell and the search for an American mythic past in In the American Grain, William Carlos Williams would not have arrived at the montage technique or the themes of Paterson. Certainly the descriptive poet of Preludes and the erudite critic of "Tradition and the Individual Talent" are worthy and necessary components of the questing narrator of Eliot's Four Quarters. Critics have long acknowledged the basic principle of developmental unity in the careers of these modern poets. But few critics have considered H.D.'s career as a similar totality.

To understand and appreciate the achievement of H.D.'s later poems (particularly the War Trilogy and Helen in Egypt), one must see them in a continuum with her earlier poetry and fiction. It is not, in any discussion of poetic evolution, necessary to perceive point-by-point, cause-and-effect relationships between each of

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the writer's works. Rather, it is a case of discovering a personal vortex: in the writer's life and works, multiple experiences and forms must be explored and mastered before a new, final form and statement is possible. The unfortunate shackling of H.D.'s reputation to a very small portion of her work has unfairly relegated her to a minor post in literary history.

Yet H.D.'s position as a poet and literary figure should place her not at the periphery, but near the very center of modern poetics. She maintained close relationships throughout her life with seminal modern writers: Pound, Williams, Lawrence, Edith and Osbert Sitwell, Dorothy Richardson. She was personally involved in a variety of literary and artistic forums: serving on the editorial staff of The Egoist and Kenneth MacPherson's Close Up, while maintaining friendly involvement with Harriet Monroe's Poetry and Robert McAlmon's Contact Press. Her personal involvement in the Imagist Movement, in cinematic techniques and production, in the study and use of myth and the occult in literature, and in psychoanalysis, place her within the mainstream of modern intellectual and artistic concerns. Her world is very much the world of Freud, Frazer, Whitehead and Eisenstein. And she is sensitive as well to this world. The recognition of H.D.'s centrality in modern poetics will occur only "when people learn how to read her--also when they

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learn to dissociate her reputation from that of what we might call . . . the static image"5

H.D.'s critical reputation has been hampered by the lack of public and scholarly attention given her. As Ezra Pound correctly notes, "One's name is known, in so far as it is known at all widely, through hearsay and reviews and through a wholesale quotation."6 Although brief reviews in poetry columns have appeared at the publication of each of H.D.'s books, serious discussions of her methods and themes are rare. Hearsay has been more prevalent than careful examination.

The most extensive critical attempt to examine H.D.'s work was a special issue of Contemporary Literature (Summer, 1969) devoted exclusively to her. The seven articles are among the most informed H.D. criticism. The journal hoped to trigger "intensive studies and explications of H.D.'s prose and verse, in an attempt to discern and define just what its timeless attributes are."7 But no such scholarly investigation occurred. Since then, fewer than seven articles on H.D. have been printed. To date, only two booklength studies have been published: Thomas Burnet Swann's The Classical World of H.D., 1962 and Vincent Quinn's H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), 1967. Both books are essentially conventional in their readings of H.D., seeing her as an interesting but anomalous writer whose poetry peaked in 1925. However, these books are useful to the

H.D. scholar since their critical methods and stances elucidate quite clearly the too narrow critical attitudes toward H.D.

Quinn's book, the single most comprehensive work on H.D., offers many perceptive and useful insights. But Quinn does not view H.D.'s career as developmental. Quinn establishes the lyrical brevity, clarity and force of H.D.'s earliest Imagist poems as the criteria for judging the entire H.D. canon. Quinn allows the Imagist label to restrict, from the beginning, his consideration of H.D.'s writings. Since H.D. is an Imagist, and Imagism (as a movement) is dead, H.D.'s time of importance is past and her writings are merely interesting documents of a dead literary movement. Worse, if H.D. is an Imagist and her best poems are Imagist, then obviously any poem not rigidly limited to the form and intent of her earliest works is automatically less effective. Her later works become nothing more than "gauges by which the superiority of her early poems may be measured."⁸ Quinn ignores the possibility of meaningful and intentional change within H.D.'s writing. All change is perceived as a falling away from a standard, rather than a growing towards a somewhat different goal.

Interestingly enough, even the analogies Quinn uses to describe H.D.'s poetry show his unwillingness to deal with her as an evolving writer. Rejecting her proclaimed

sense of her career as one of growth, Quinn is led to see H.D.'s works as "cameos and etchings,"⁹ dry and static rather than organic. Nor is he alone in this view.

Bernard Engel, as late as 1969, felt it appropriate to characterize H.D. as "the poet of a few gems--a word she would like--"¹⁰ even though H.D. repeatedly rejected such a view of her writings, seeming almost directly to refute Engel (and Quinn) when she said, in 1943:

I do not want to pick out gems or be a 'clear-cut crystal.' That catch phrase is easy for journalists. A seed is not a crystal and if my mustard seed has grown too high and spread too many branches, that is a pity for the critic, that is a pity for H.D. fans . . . But that is it . . . ¹¹

The analogies critics use to describe H.D.'s writings are not trivial, for they reveal a fundamental problem in H.D. criticism. H.D. did perceive her career as one of conscious growth and change, intentionally moving from genre to genre, technique to technique, until she could speak, in a highly evolved personal style, of the things most vital to her. To view her writing as static, or as rigidly determined by her earliest publications, is to overlook and misunderstand both her intent and her achievement.

Part of what has limited Quinn's evaluation and others', too, is a too narrow definition of Imagism. By Quinn's comments, Imagism refers to the single, static image poems which H.D., Pound and others wrote (occasionally) in 1913-1917. The notion of implied author complexity and expanded form (both in number and type of images) seems to

have no place in this definition. H.D.'s later poetry is episodic. It uses a number of images, juxtaposing them for various thematic emphases. This adaptation of form allows for an expansion and complication of the initial theme. Thus, Quinn's restrictive definition hobbles his critical judgment. Quinn's final evaluation of H.D. follows inevitably:

Recognizing that H.D.'s finest work is in Collected Poems involves accepting her place in modern poetry as minor. Splendid as these poems are, they are slight. Their brevity is the sign not only of delicacy and precision, but of modest capacity . . . he [the reader] does not find in them the larger intellectual and social concerns of major poetry. The range of subjects and the complexity of mind and feeling found in Yeats, Eliot, Auden and the great poets of the past define the limits of H.D.'s achievement.¹²

By defining Collected Poems as the yardstick by which to measure all else, Quinn has effectively prevented himself from dealing directly with the later poems, the poems which do have the range and complexity he finds lacking in Collected Poems.

Unfortunately, Quinn is not isolated in his judgment. Glenn Hughes, whose Imagism and the Imagists is one of the major studies of the Imagist Movement, established a similar criterion and judgment. He notes in his essay on H.D. that

It is somewhat astonishing that she should have arrived so quickly at the mastery of a difficult technique, but it is even more astonishing that a poet of her abilities should have been satisfied during so many years to labor within the bounds of one so narrow.¹³

Given that he is writing in 1931, Hughes is slightly less culpable than Quinn or Engel. H.D.'s poetry had not yet begun its most radical transformation. Still, Hughes has taken the first step, by failing to deal with the prose that H.D. was then writing and by being unwilling, apparently, to even speculate on the reason for H.D.'s experimentation in another genre. Nor does he devote much space to considering the changes in form and theme that H.D. attempts in the poetry written between Collected Poems in 1925 and Red Roses for Bronze in 1931. As with Quinn, it is simpler to allow her label to define her.

H.D. did not, and indeed could not, deny being an Imagist. But she did not stop writing and developing when the Imagist Movement ended in 1917. As she wrote then to Amy Lowell, "each of us has gained by the brother-ship but we are all developing along different lines--all of us who are developing."¹⁴ Like any good artist, H.D. continued throughout her life to explore and expand both her methods and themes. She agreed with Pound's dictum that "any work of art which is not a beginning, an invention, a discovery, is of little worth."¹⁵ H.D.'s development is not one of exclusion. The knowledge (both prosodic and philosophic) she gained from her earlier writing permeates her later works. Her earliest poetic works are models of both the Imagist technique and its aesthetic. But her subsequent experiences--her psychoanalysis by Sigmund Freud, her experiences in wartime London, her own studies of mythology

and the occult--all lead to the evolution of new forms and expanded themes. H.D.'s Imagism is a base from which she grew, not by pruning but by branching. Critics are not wrong to call her an Imagist, they are only wrong to assume that this is the scope of her writing: to be only a 1913 Imagist.

In Swann's The Classical World of H.D., we find examples of the other popular critical stance towards H.D. Like Quinn, Swann focuses primary attention on H.D.'s earliest poetry and takes somewhat too literally the idea that H.D. is an "ardent Hellenist."¹⁶ As a result, Swann perceives H.D.'s work as essentially escapist and judges too hastily her presentation of mythological characters.

From 1913, when her earliest published poems appeared in Poetry, much of H.D.'s imagery has stemmed from Greek mythology. Place names, characters, situations in ancient mythology, are frequently alluded to throughout her works (from "Hermes" and "Oread" in 1913 to Helen and Ulysses in Helen in Egypt in 1961). As a result, critics--from Amy Lowell in 1917 to Swann in 1962--have tended to see her choice of Greek settings and figures as an escape to a world more beautiful and less threatening than the present. Glenn Hughes captures the essence of this complaint when he describes H.D. as

. . . not of this world, but of one long past, and we must not look to her for an interpretation of modern life. All that she brings to the twentieth century is a vision of beauty which has not altered since the days

of Homer, and which may be perceived only by those who have within themselves something likewise fixed and immutable. Her shyness and her incapacity to assimilate the life of today have caused her much pain, but this has been made to serve the purpose of her art.¹⁷

This stance is both a biographical and literary fallacy. H.D. is very much a participant in and a respondent to the modern world. Many of her writings seek to discover a means of living in the present. Her novels, Palimpsest and Bid Me To Live, graphically recreate World War I London and the early '20s. Their themes of loss, love, betrayal and alienation are by no means escapist or other-worldly. In her later poems, such as The Walls Do Not Fall and Good Frennd [sic], H.D. directly confronts a world in chaos--using bombed houses and newspaper attacks on effete writing to describe both the physical reality of 1944 London and the universal world of the human spirit. H.D. uses myth and allusions to draw parallels, to seek out common experiences and truths across time. This seeking is conscious and creative; it is not an escape to the past, but a means of understanding and living in the present. Like Pound--who ranges in his poetry from Confucian China to Federalist America to WWII Pisa--and Eliot, especially in "Burnt Norton," the writer of these later poems is tracing a universal pattern. For H.D., myth and the past become a way to organize and make sense out of the modern world. It is comprehension, not forgetfulness, that she seeks. Still, critics like Swann point out her reliance

on the past and interpret it as "another escape to the gods and cities of her short poems . . . she remains in the past. Her real achievement . . . is not that she wrote well about the present but that she wrote incomparably well about the past."¹⁸ Yet the past was a passion only so long as it served to elucidate the present and the personal. It is this last point which Swann and others fail to acknowledge.

Another flaw that Swann finds in H.D. is her willingness to adapt myths to her personal needs. Like Eliot, Pound, and Joyce, H.D. not only uses myth--she re-creates it. Although she may start with a "known" figure, her presentations extend the givens with a new interpretation, using the figure to personalize some psychic or spiritual truth not necessarily associated with the character. Swann and Douglas Bush have both accused H.D. of misusing mythological figures, and have regarded her adaptations as flaws in classical scholarship rather than innovative literary creations.¹⁹ To them, her classicism becomes affectation, escapism, rather than a cultural heritage capable of fostering variant, yet valid meanings. Like all good translators, H.D. takes some liberties with the specifics of her mythic characters. What is important is whether or not she actually violates their integrity, if they can have any integrity beyond the confines of a single literary work. H.D.'s past is not designed to be solely an "escape into fancy,"²⁰ but a portrayal of universal truth through

particular experience. Her successful characters, whatever their previously attributable characteristics, remain true to psychological and emotional reality.

An excellent example of this is the portrayal of Helen in Helen in Egypt. Many of the facts of Helen of Troy are noted in this poem: her beauty, her abduction by Paris, her love of Theseus, her marriage to Menelaus. But the character of the Iliad and the Odyssey is here changed to emphasize the theme of love and questing that fascinated H.D. H.D.'s Helen searches for an understanding of her fate, strives to reconcile her pasts, acknowledges and acts out her need to give and be given love, acts not mentioned in previous treatments of Helen. Yet these traits "fit" the character of both the story and the myth. Thus, H.D. re-creates the myth of Helen; she does not merely recite it. The re-creation is not the result of faulty scholarship (H.D. was schooled early in stories from mythology and Greek literature),²¹ but the result of H.D.'s need to examine both the human psyche and the collective past. An understanding of her intent and method is necessary in any criticism before a complete judgment of her work is possible. What some critics have again failed to do is to deal with H.D. on her own terms.

One of the ironies involved in evaluating H.D.'s achievement is the disparity in judgment between the critics and poets. Contemporary poets acknowledge H.D. as an important literary influence. Significantly, she was the

first woman to receive the Award of Merit Medal from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (in 1960) for her poetry. This award is bestowed as "recognition of outstanding work in one of the . . . arts . . ." ²¹ (painting, sculpture, the novel, poetry and drama), with consideration for the award being given in this order. The award is voted on by Academy members and is given only in years when a noteworthy recipient is chosen. (Between 1944 and 1973, the award was made only sixteen out of a possible twenty-nine years.) The distinction is bolstered by the quality of its recipients, who in literature have included Hemingway, Mann, Perse, Auden and Nabokov. As this award indicates, fellow artists have been more ready than the academic community to praise H.D.'s work. Indeed, since the start of her career, writers have been consistently quick and strong in their appraisal of her writing.

One of the first poets to recognize her abilities was Ezra Pound. A longtime personal friend (and one-time fiancé), Pound was the first promoter of H.D.'s writing and one of her staunchest supporters. Some idea of his regard is visible in his letters to Harriet Monroe while Foreign Editor for Poetry. He predicts in one of his first letters that "H.D. and William Carlos Williams . . . Ought [sic] to produce really fine things at great intervals." ²³ Even after his personal break with Imagism, Pound continued to believe in H.D.'s importance, writing to Monroe that he

felt Poetry should focus its attention on major writers: himself, Yeats, Eliot, Ford Madox Ford, H.D., Frost and Masters.²⁴ From a critic as adept at pinpointing the major forces of modern writing, this is no minor accolade.

Richard Aldington, one of the original Imagist poets and H.D.'s husband, was also quick to rank H.D. among those writers he felt significant. As he recalls in his memoirs,

An American friend of mine was then [1919] editing the Outlook, and asked me to write an article telling his readers about young writers and picking out those I thought would make a name. I made a choice which I modestly think was not bad . . . : James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, H.D. and Marcel Proust.²⁵

Again, this is no modest list. Aldington ranks H.D. among some of the most noted and brilliant writers of the century.

Other of her contemporaries are just as laudatory. F. S. Flint proposed "she may be the most exquisite English poet we have,"²⁶ while Mark Van Doren went even further, calling her "the most perfect woman poet alive."²⁷ Edith Sitwell, herself an experimenter in form and versification, praised H.D.'s use of free verse and organic form.²⁸

Younger poets have likewise acknowledged her significance and power. Critical appreciation in this case seems to have skipped a generation. Robert Creeley, Robert Duncan, Denise Levertov, Hayden Carruth and Robert Eberhart all point to H.D. as a major influence in shaping the form and content of modern poetry.

In an interview with Charles Thomlinson, in Review, 1965, Robert Creeley discusses the influences he feels shaped and encouraged the young writers of his generation. In trying to enumerate and explain these influences, he says

. . . I think that what happened was that once the social aspect of the Roaring Twenties dies out in writing, people assumed that the actual work that had been initiated in that same period was done, too, but we find that people actually worked continuously all during the time: besides Williams and Zukofsky, there is H.D., and the younger men who were dissatisfied with the Ransom and Tate school went to them. They were happily available²⁹

Later in the interview, Creeley expresses the strong conviction that poets like Williams and H.D. are more significant to contemporary American writers than Eliot, Ransom or Tate. They provide the young writer with a language and form that the modern academic poets cannot. Although I would hesitate to list H.D. above Eliot, certainly this statement suggests that, to other poets, H.D. is not a minor figure.

Similarly, Robert Duncan sees H.D. as such an influential figure that he has, for the past fourteen years, been the single most active H.D. critic. During this time he has published, in the form of articles, eleven chapters of his "H.D. Book."³⁰ Throughout these chapters, Duncan presents and examines H.D.'s poems as major twentieth-century works, significant to the study of contemporary

poetry by virtue of their power and their thematic and technical depth:

. . . in the early 50s, the Pisan Cantos and the Paterson had been the challenge. But for me, the War Trilogy of H.D. came earlier . . . From the beginning then, certainly from 1947 or 1948 when I was working on Medieval Scenes and taking H.D. as my master there among my other masters, there was the War Trilogy. In smoky rooms in Berkeley, in painters' studios in San Francisco, I read these works aloud; dreaming about them; took my life in them; studied them as my anatomy of what Poetry must be.³¹

Duncan's articles are some of the very few critical pieces to view H.D.'s work as cumulative. His insights into both her development and her lyric power are among the most useful now available.

Denise Levertov also has focused an "appreciative" article on the developmental unity of H.D.'s poetry. As she is quick to note, "the icily passionate precision of the earlier work, the 'Greek' vision, had not been an end, a closed achievement, but a preparation; so that all the strength built up . . ."³² Levertov counters the frequent critical complaint that H.D.'s poetry is rarefied and elitist with the recognition that "the more one reads it, the more it yields. It is poetry both 'pure' and 'engaged'; attaining its purity . . . through its very engagement, its concern with matters of the greatest importance to everyone: the life of the soul, the interplay of psychic and material life."³³ In her poem, "Fall, 1961," she goes even further in her statement of H.D.'s significance, placing her with Pound and Williams as the poets who have given

form, method, and meaning to American poetry; she is one of "the great ones" who by "the light of their presence, . . . have told us/ the road leads to the sea,/ and given/ the language into our hands."³⁴

This evaluation of her writings is echoed and reinforced by Richard Eberhart's view of her as "a living classic"³⁵ and Hayden Carruth's statement that "All her work is of a very superior, possibly the most superior, order, transcending questions of merely technical success or failure" until, in some of her later poetry, she has "created one of the great works of her time in poetry."³⁷

What so many of the critics fail to see (and what the poets have been quick to perceive and point out) is that H.D.'s prose and poetic themes and technique are mainstream. Like Pound, Williams, Eliot and Stevens, her works must be viewed as cumulative and evolutionary; her development as a writer is a journey of expansion and adaptation, rarely one of exclusion. H.D.'s final pieces seek, as one of her titles indicates, to provide via her prosody and its philosophy a "hermetic definition" of the world. As this phrase suggests, H.D.'s final vision is one of fusion, a fusion which is almost magical, alchemical, grounded as much in sound and poetic form as it is in the physical and rational world. Her career was a double quest: to see and understand reality, and to convey this reality through her craft. H.D. devoted a lifetime to her quest and her best

poems succeed in presenting its results as effectively and comprehensively as those of any modern writer.

To begin to assess H.D.'s place in modern poetry adequately, we must re-examine her writing as a whole. We must consider the changes, variations and experiments she tries and, more importantly, gauge why she makes certain adaptations and what effect they ultimately have on her poetic style and vision. That is the scope of this book: to uncover the vortex of H.D.'s experience in order to appraise her evolution as a writer. To do so other than chronologically seems unreasonable, so we must start, like so many other critics, at the beginning, with "H.D., Imagiste."

FOOTNOTES

¹Alfred Kreymborg, Our Singing Strength (New York: 1929), p. 340. Term also used by Glenn Hughes; Imagism and the Imagists (New York: 1931), p. 109.

²Fred B. Millet, Contemporary American Authors (New York: 1940), p. 143.

³Some exceptions to this have been the recent entries in The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry (New York: 1973) and No More Masks (New York: _____). Both of these include selections from Trilogy as well as earlier poems.

⁴Robert Duncan, "In the Sight of a Lyre, a Little Spear, a Chair," Poetry XCI (January 1958):256.

⁵Norman Holmes Pearson, "Norman Holmes Pearson on H.D.: An Interview," Contemporary Literature, X, iv (Autumn, 1969), p. 439.

⁶Ezra Pound, "How I Began," T.P.'s Weekly (June 6, 1913), p. 707. Reprinted Stony Brook, 112 (Fall, 1968), i.

⁷L. S. Dembo, "Introduction to Special Issue on H.D.," Contemporary Literature, X, iv (Autumn, 1969), p. 433.

⁸Vincent Quinn, Hilda Doolittle (H.D.) (New York: 1967), p. 148.

⁹Ibid., p. 148.

¹⁰Bernard F. Engel, "H.D.: Poems that Matter and Dilutions," Contemporary Literature, X, iv (Autumn, 1969), p. 522.

¹¹Norman Holmes Pearson, "Introduction," Trilogy (New York: 1973), p. vi.

¹²Quinn, p. 31.

¹³Hughes, p. 111.

¹⁴Stanley K. Coffman, Jr., Imagism. A Chapter for the History of Modern Poetry (Norman, Oklahoma: 1951), p. 31.

¹⁵Ezra Pound, "How I Began," p. i.

¹⁶Coffman, p. 8.

¹⁷Hughes, p. 124.

¹⁸Thomas Burnett Swann, The Classical World of H.D. (Lincoln, Nebraska: 1962), pp. 172-173.

¹⁹Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry (Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1937).

²⁰Swann, p. 172.

²¹J. Lee Kaufman, "Themes and Meanings in the Poetry of H.D." (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1959), p. 27.

²²Literary and Library Prizes, ninth ed., ed. and rev. by Olga S. Weber (New York: 1976), p. 157.

²³Harriet Monroe, Poets and Their Art (New York: 1926), p. 368.

²⁴Ellen Williams, Harriet Monroe and The Poetry Renaissance, The First Ten Years of POETRY, 1912-1922 (Urbana, Illinois: 1977), p. 167.

²⁵Richard Aldington, Life for Life's Sake (New York: 1941), p. 219.

²⁶H. P. Collins, Modern Poetry (London: 1925), p. 9.

²⁷Mark Van Doren, "Women As Poets," The Nation CXIV (April 26, 1922), p. 499.

²⁸Edith Sitwell, "Lecture on Poetry Since 1920," Life and Letters To-Day XXXIX (November 1943):73-74.

²⁹Robert Creeley, "Robert Creeley in Conversation with Charles Tomlinson," Review X (January 1964):25.

³⁰Duncan has published 11 chapters (10 articles) which are to be a part of his H.D. book: "Beginnings: Chapter I of the H.D. Book," Coyote's Journal V-VI (1966): 8-31; "From the Day Book-excerpts from an extended study of H.D.'s poetry," Origin X (July 1963):1-47; "The H.D. Book, Part I: Chapter 2," Coyote's Journal VIII (1967): 27-35; "The H.D. Book: Part II, Nights and Days, Chapter 4," Caterpillar II (April 1969):27-60; "Nights and Days, Chapter One," Sumac (Fall 1968):101-146; "Part I: Beginnings; Chapter 5. Occult Matters" Stony Brook Review 1/2 (Fall 1968); "Part II, Chapter 5," Stony Brook Review, 3/4 (1969), 36-47; "Rites of Participation, I," Caterpillar, I (October 1967):6-29; "Rites of Participation, II," Caterpillar, II (January 1968):125-153; "Two Chapters from H.D.," TriQuarterly XII (Spring 1968):67-98.

³¹Robert Duncan, "Nights and Days, Chapter One," Sumac (Fall, 1968), p. 114.

³²Denise Levertov, "H.D.: An Appreciation," Poetry, C (June 1962), p. 183.

³³Ibid., p. 186.

³⁴Denise Levertov, "September 1961," O Taste and See (New York: 1964), pp. 9-10.

³⁵Richard Eberhart, "Holderin, Leopardi and H.D." Poetry XCI (January 1958):264.

³⁶Hayden Carrath, "Poetry Chronicle" Hudson Review XXVII, 2 (Summer, 1974):308.

³⁷Ibid., p. 311.

CHAPTER II

BEGINNINGS: EZRA AND IMAGISM

One writes the kind of poetry one likes. Other people put labels on it. Imagism was something that was important for poets learning their craft early in this century. But after learning his craft, the poet will find his true direction,¹

remarked H.D. in 1956, attempting to explain the place of Imagism in her career. Certainly she went beyond Imagism in her writing, yet to understand the direction she and so many modernist poets have taken, we cannot overlook the significance of the Imagist movement of 1912-1917. As T. S. Eliot said in his address on "American Literature and the American Language," in 1953: "the point de repère usually and conveniently taken as the starting-point of modern poetry is the group denominated 'imagists' in London about 1910."² Almost all of the important American poets since 1914 (Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, T. S. Eliot, H.D., Marianne Moore, Wallace Stevens, e.e. cummings, Archibald MacLeish, et al.) underwent "an Imagist tempering"³ and were exposed to the theories of poetic style, reality and purpose which were the main concerns and principles of this literary community.

No name is more closely linked with the Imagist movement than H.D.'s. Since their appearance in January, 1913, H.D.'s poems "Orchard," "Hermes of the Ways," and "Epigram" have been models of what Imagism is supposed to be. It should not be too surprising, therefore, to discover that two virtually indisputable sources indicate that the Imagist Movement of 1912-1917 per se was founded intentionally to provide a hearing for her poetry.

Writing in September, 1915, Ezra Pound, the self-proclaimed founder and original literary agent of the movement, recalled:

the whole affair was started not very seriously chiefly to get H.D.'s five poems a hearing without its being necessary for her to publish a whole book. It began certainly in Church Walk with H.D., Richard and myself.⁴

Richard Aldington (the Richard of Pound's quote and one of the original seven Imagists) suggests in his autobiography that on a literal level H.D. was the first Imagist:

If I am not mistaken these poems of H.D.'s ["Hermes of the Ways," "Priapus"--called "Orchard" in Collected Poems, and "Epigram"] were the first to appear with the Imagist label. Three of mine (which launched me on my Italian trip) had appeared a month or two before without the label, although Ezra afterwards included them in the first Imagist anthology. I think this fact (which can be established from the early files of Poetry) lends considerable support to those who say the Imagist Movement was H.D., and H.D., the Imagist Movement.⁵

But these statements do not, precisely, inform us of what is meant by critics when they use the term Imagist movement, nor do they completely explain how H.D. acquired her position in it.

It is necessary when talking about Imagism to differentiate between the Imagist movement of 1912-1917 and the more generic literary principles which make up Imagism (a complex conglomeration of techniques and aesthetic theory which stresses the graphic and concrete nature of poetry and perception). The Imagist movement, like most literary movements, was short-lived. It produced four anthologies of poetry, promoted the writings of several "new" poets (particularly H.D., Pound, Amy Lowell and Aldington), popularized vers libre in England and America, and broke new ground in technical experimentation in poetry. Its attitude towards conscious craftsmanship and the purpose of poetry has helped to mold modern poetics. As an organized movement, its focus was more on technique than on aesthetic theory or phenomenology. As a result, the Imagist movement, as a school of writers, had the looseness that term denoted for Pound when he announced its existence in January, 1913:

The youngest school here [in London] that has the nerve to call itself a school is that of the Imagistes. To belong to a school does not in the least mean that one writes poetry to a theory. One writes poetry when, where, because, and as one feels like writing it. A school exists when two or three young men agree more or less, to call certain things good; when they prefer such of their verses as have certain qualities to such of their verse as do not have them.⁶

Yet discussions of Imagism necessarily entail more than the historical data on the Imagist movement. For Imagism was more than the publication of four anthologies.

It was a milieu of ideas and theory both on the nature of perception and the more craftsmanlike problem of expression. It was, as Flint wrote to Pound, "a general movement, a product and impulse of the time."⁷ As such, the ideas and forms it championed were neither "fads" nor publicity tricks; they form the matrix of experience and theory from which almost all of modern prosody grew. The best practitioners of the Imagist movement used this base to expand and build on. H.D. was both a charter member of the Imagist movement and a consistent, lifelong practitioner of the more general imagistic principles.

The most comprehensive history of the Imagist Movement of 1912-1917 is Stanley Coffman's book, Imagism. A Chapter for the History of Modern Poetry (Norman, Oklahoma, 1951). Coffman does an excellent job of tracing the Imagist movement, its politics and some of its products. As he generally explains it, "Imagism refers to the theory and practice of a group of poets who, between 1912 and 1917, joined in reaction against the careless technique and extra-poetic values of much nineteenth-century verse."⁸ At its most reductive level, the Imagist movement was originally a seven-person experimental group of poets, joined together by the catalytic presence of Ezra Pound. In many ways, its organized beginning was a promotional enterprise of Pound's, a touting of those writers whose work best exemplified the craftsmanship and clarity that he felt lacking in the popular poets of the day.

It is in Pound's eclectic gathering of people and ideas that we begin to piece together the start of modern poetry. It is important, therefore, to keep in mind his centrality and his personality, for both the intensity of the man and his ideas drew people into his literary orbit. Certainly H.D.'s involvement with Pound is a good example of this double attraction. Pound is a central character throughout H.D.'s life and career, and her personal relationship is the starting point to understanding both "H.D., Imagiste" and the later H.D. His influence as a critic and poet on her is seminal, as it was with many others (including Williams and Eliot).

H.D. met Pound in 1901, in Philadelphia; she was fifteen and he was sixteen, a freshman at the University of Pennsylvania. They quickly became close friends, sharing an interest in both literature and one another. Hugh Kenner, in The Pound Era, tells us something of their very early relationship:

They were old friends. He had called her "dryad" since Pennsylvania days, when a crow's nest high in the Doolittles' maple tree had been one of their adolescent trysting-places, and the little apple orchard in the Pound's back garden at Wyncote another. He had brought her Balzac's Seraphitus, and Ibsen and Shaw, and Whistler's Ten O'Clock . . . and William Morris . . . and under the apple trees read to her He wrote her sonnets and verses attem with labile archaisms, and gave her 26 of them in blue typescript, bound with thongs, into a little four-by-five-inch parchment chapbook: "Hilda's Book."⁹

Even then, Pound was indulging in his lifelong habit of inundating his friends with readings and ideas which he

found stimulating, urging them to follow his line of discovery and to seek out areas of their own. Shortly after their meeting, Pound started to encourage H.D. in her studies of classical literature and within the year (by 1902) had introduced her to another student at the University of Pennsylvania, also interested in writing poetry: William Carlos Williams.

In 1904, H.D. entered Bryn Mawr, becoming a classmate and acquaintance of Marianne Moore. While here, she continued to see both Pound and Williams frequently. With Pound she read and discussed the Greek and Latin classics, beginning to make some translations of Latin originals on her own; with William Carlos Williams she read "Aucassin and Nicolette."¹⁰ H.D. reminisced later about how Pound would, at this time, bring her

. . . (literally) armfuls of books to read. Among others, there were some old rather de luxe volumes of Renaissance Latin poets. I was happy with these because the Latin was easy yet held the authentic (though diluted) flavor of the overworked and sometimes slavishly copied Latin and Greek originals. I did a few poems that I don't think Ezra liked . . . but later he was beautiful about my first authentic verses.¹¹

Pound was already setting some of the standards which his colleagues would respect.

Pound, Williams and H.D. would meet together (or sometimes in pairs) to walk out into the country and discuss poetry, both the works which they were reading, and their own works. These included Pound's "Hilda's

Book" and some early writing by both Williams and H.D.

As Williams describes one time in his Autobiography:

H.D. used to go walking with me in the woods and fields about Upper Darby. We were both writing poems, too shy to let the other see. But once, after being teased for weeks and with my heart in my mouth, I brought her what I had been intent on when I should have been studying pathology. It was an ode, after Keats I presume, on of all things the skunk cabbage! She listened incredulously and then burst into a guffaw, catching her breath the way only Hilda could--almost hysterical.¹²

Other instances recorded in both Williams' Autobiography and later letters of all three indicate that other poems were exchanged and commented on--including some elaborate (and terrible) anacrostics for H.D.'s birthday. Although all three exchanged poems, the most common arrangement was for Williams and H.D. to give their poems to Pound for criticism.

What is impressive about these early meetings is the relationships set up. Throughout their lives, Williams, Pound and H.D., with varying degrees of affection and approval, would remain in touch, actively involved in one another's careers. Pound was the early agent in placing their writings. Later, H.D. would use her position on the staff of The Egoist to both print and chastise Williams. Williams would alternately be infuriated by and supportive of both H.D. and Pound. They served as supporters and critics of one another at the very beginning of their writing and their mutual interest in writing would be felt and elaborated on throughout their lives.

In 1906, Hilda Doolittle withdrew from college because of ill health and started to apply herself seriously to her writing. Later, in a letter to Glenn Hughes, H.D. summarized this period of her life:

. . . of course, I scribbled a bit, adolescent stuff. My first real serious (and I think, in a way, successful) verses were some translations I did of Heine (before I was seriously dubbed "Imagist"). I think they were probably very lyrical in their small way, but of course I destroyed everything. I did a little verse-translation of the lyric Latin poets at Bryn Mawr, vaguely, but nothing came of them I scribbled later, just before coming "abroad," a half dozen rather free verses that might have been vers libre, but I had never heard of vers libre till I was "discovered" later by Ezra Pound.¹³

More specifically, during this period (1906-1911), H.D. began to publish articles and stories in newspapers. For at least part of 1910, she lived in New York, and it is here, according to her friend and literary executor, Norman Holmes Pearson, that she wrote her first serious poetry, including the free verse she mentions above. These early efforts were "modelled on Theocritus who she knew through a translation that Pound had given her."¹⁴ Again, Pound's name crops up. Although their short-lived engagement was over--it ended almost before it could begin, when Hilda's father declared Pound was "nothing but a nomad!"¹⁵--Pound was still closely involved with and interested in H.D.'s work. He was a major supporter of her choice of writing as a career and, via his father, helped her find a market for some Sunday school stories and children's articles in a Presbyterian newspaper.

In the summer of 1911, H.D. sailed for Europe, ostensibly for her vacation, although Pearson suggests very strongly that it was really to be with Pound; she was twenty-six. After a brief tour of Italy and France, she settled permanently in London, seeking out her ex-fiance, who was now a literary bull-in-a-china-shop, if not a literary lion. It is through Pound that H.D. met the literati of London, both the established and the aspiring-- W. B. Yeats, Ford Madox Hueffer (later Ford), May Sinclair, F. S. Flint and Richard Aldington. By winter 1911-1912, four of them (Ezra, Hilda, Richard Aldington and F. S. Flint) had begun to meet on a regular basis "to discuss each other's verse, new developments in poetic diction, and French poetry . . ."¹⁶

These four poets formed the nucleus of the Imagist movement, and throughout their association it is friendship and mutual interest which bind them, as much as aesthetic similarity. Each contributed a specialized interest to the group. Flint contributed his extensive knowledge of contemporary French poetry and his interest in haiku and tonka; Aldington and H.D. contributed their enthusiasm and appreciation for the elements of Greek and Latin lyricism (Aldington also contributed knowledge of contemporary French critical theory, via Remy de Gourmont, with whom he was already corresponding); Pound provided his eclectic readings and philosophizings on both aesthetic theory and

poetic craft (he had just finished writing The Spirit of Romance and was working on the Fenellosa essay). Both Pound and Flint also brought a knowledge of Hulme and Bergson, acquired by their attendance at Hulme's Poets' Club. These four young writers met as a study-discussion group, in many ways similar in intent and practice to an informal writing workshop. At their meetings a groundwork was laid for a "school"--one which Pound, the publicist, was quick to name.

Pound was the only one of these original four able to provide the group with a hearing in print, first through his association with Poetry and later through his association with The Egoist. For H.D. and the early Imagists, Pound served in one of his favorite roles, as a friendly impresario. Having struck up a correspondence with Harriet Monroe in the summer of 1912, Pound had promoted himself to the position of overseas agent for Poetry. Or, as Miss Monroe more stately announced in the second (November, 1912) issue of Poetry, "Mr. Ezra Pound has consented to act as foreign correspondent for Poetry, keeping its readers informed of the present interests of the art in England, France and elsewhere."¹⁷ In reality, Miss Monroe had consented to the arrangement, not vice-versa.

It is in the fourth issue of Poetry, in January, 1913, that Pound officially initiated the Imagist movement, with the publication of three of H.D.'s poems. These are

the poems under which Pound, before sending them to Harriet Monroe, had scrawled the signature "H.D., Imagiste." Richard Aldington (not always fond of Pound) gives his account of the movement's founding in this manner:

. . . The Imagist mouvemong was born in a tea-shop--in the Royal Borough of Kensington. For some time Ezra had been butting in on our studies and poetic productions, with alternate encouragements and the reverse, according to his mood. H.D. produced some poems which I thought excellent, and she either handed or mailed them to Ezra. Presently each of us received a ukase to attend the Kensington bun-shop. Ezra was so much worked up by these poems of H.D.'s that he removed his pince-nez and informed us that we were Imagists Was this the first time I had heard that Pickwickian word? I don't remember My own belief is that the name took Ezra's fancy, and that he kept it in petto for the right occasion I do remember that H.D. looked very much pleased by the praise Ezra generously gave her poems. I didn't like his insistence that the poems should be signed: "H.D., Imagist," because it sounded a little ridiculous. And I think H.D. disliked it too. But Ezra was a bit of a czar in a small but irritating way, and he had the bulge on us, because it was only through him that we could get our poems into Harriet Monroe's Poetry, and nobody else at that time would look at them.¹⁸

Pound had written to Harried Monroe in October, 1912, about the possibility of her publishing H.D.'s poems. His letter gives the first written indications of what this new movement of his would be about.

Dear Harriet Monroe:--I've had luck again, and am sending you some modern stuff by an American, I say modern, for it is in the laconic speech of the Imagists, even if the subject is classic This is the sort of American stuff that I can show here and in Paris without its being ridiculed. Objective--no slither; direct--no excessive use of adjectives, no metaphors that won't permit examination. It's straight talk, straight as the Greek! And it was only by persistence that I got to see it at all.¹⁹

In the literary and publishing movement Pound was calling "Imagism," what he hoped to do was deal a sharp blow to the vague abstractness and flowery language and forms of the Georgian poets. In another letter to Harriet Monroe at about the same time (1912/13) Pound mentions the possibility of an Imagist anthology as a reaction to Georgian Poets, an anthology published in December, 1912.²⁰ What he hoped to institute in place of Georgian prosody was an exacting regard for craftsmanship and a theory of reality and the Image based on current philosophical thought.

The time seemed right, in London, in 1912, for just such a move. Since at least 1908, dissatisfaction and reform had been a vocal and growing concern of the literary scene. In 1908, T. E. Hulme and the first Poets' Club started to meet. Their purpose: to discuss the state of poetry and those ideas and philosophies which they felt impinged on their study. Their clearest expression was the frequent articulation of discontent with most poets publishing in London magazines. Also around 1908, literary forums sympathetic to change began to appear. Early in 1908, Ford Madox Hueffer founded The English Review, a journal which would serve as a major outlet for modernist writings for several decades. A little later, A. R. Orage took over the editorship of The New Age. Although not so liberal as Hueffer in his literary choices, Orage provided a hearing for some of the new ideas in philosophy and criticism. It is in The New Age that some of Flint's early

essays on French poets were published. Some of Hulme's articles on Bergson appeared here as well, along with several reviews by Pound. Individual writers were starting to experiment: Hueffer was exploring/defining literary Impressionism and Yeats was working in a new mode (talking regularly with his sometimes-secretary, Ezra Pound). Change seemed in the air.

Like all literary movements, Imagism is both a direct reaction to its predecessor and a complex construct of new ideas. As a reactionary move, it directed its attention to the external form of poetry, particularly as exemplified by the Georgian poets. Bryher, a British novelist, recalls the period this way:

Poetry had reached an incredibly low level in 1913 although it was fashionable to quote it continually in conversation. Verse then was distinguished from prose because each line began with a capital letter and it rhymed. It was improper to mention the modern world except in terms of horror; the writer should be down on his knees in the clover (odorous was a better word than scented) waiting to be stung by a bee. It was also important to use poetic language, we "quoted" rather than spoke. Naturally "free verse" was confused with "free love" and not to rhyme was felt to be a form of cheating.²¹

Bryher's comments seem justified after a perusal of Georgian Poets. Most of these poems are consciously "poetic" in the most pejorative sense. John Drinkwater's "The Fires of God" shows many of the traits which Pound and his coterie of young Imagist writers were rejecting

as "fluid, fruity, facile stuff."²² One stanza may help to explain:

I turned me from that place in humble wise,
 And fingers soft were laid upon mine eyes,
 And I beheld the fruitful earth, with store
 Of odorous treasure, full and golden grain,
 Ripe orchard bounty, slender stalks that bore
 Their flowered beauty with a meek content,
 The prosperous leaves that loved the sun and rain,
 Shy creatures unreprieved that came and went
 In garrulous joy among the fostering green . . . ²³

There is conformity to form for the sake of form, rather than as an organic part of the poem. Although it is not written in the interminable rhyming couplets of de la Mare, Davies and Brooke, the poem employs an elaborate rhyming scheme which frequently forces inversion and unnecessary verbiage. In the first two lines, the choice of "in humble wise" instead of "humble" seems predicated more on the need to rhyme with "eyes" than on any semantic necessity. The inversion of "fingers soft" is likewise unnecessary.

The formal, latinate diction of the period is apparent in the stanza's "odorous treasure," "prosperous leaves," "garrulous joy." The phrases are, at best, ponderous. Worse, they have little meaning as used. What, precisely, is a "prosperous" leaf? How are the creatures "garrulous?" "Odorous" treasures remain abstractions. With such statements, we are left with a vague sense of what the writer probably wanted us to see and know: the abundance of nature. But we certainly don't have much in

the way of presented experience. The words are more ornamentation than presentation.

Even more gauzily described throughout the poem are the poet's emotional experiences, as an earlier passage shows:

For I became caught up into the strife
That I had pitied, and my soul was strained
At last by that most venomous despair,
Self-pity.

Although the poet states that his feeling is self-pity, the reader never really feels it, or even sees the writer feeling it. His self-pity, which should be a unique experience, is something the reader cannot perceive because it remains an abstraction. He never watches nor engages in the strife, the strain, or even the despair. Although the reader may guess at the experience, if his formula for despair and self-pity match the order presented by the poet, the emotion is not immediate for him.

It was against such vague, abstract and pretentious poetry that the Imagists set themselves. Their experiments in form, their changes in diction and subject, were in many ways less a desire for originality per se than an affirmation of the importance of good writing as they saw it. As Flint told J. C. Square, in 1917, trying to explain in part the Imagist stance, "We do not pretend that our ideas are original. All that we wish to do is place gently in evidence certain principles of the art of writing which journalism had submerged."²⁵

Imagist theory, particularly as expounded by F. S. Flint and Pound in their essays in March, 1913, in Poetry, and by Amy Lowell and Richard Aldington in the prefaces to the later Imagist anthologies, focuses on three basic areas. First, a concern with the outward form of verse, as exhibited in their interest in conciseness, brevity and vers libre. Secondly, an interest in the pristine quality of the imagery used in poetry, a desire to return to the concrete, the sensual, the immediate. And finally, a theory of the Image coming from Bergson and Hulme which concerned the very nature of reality and perception itself. The first two areas provided the poets with the tools of their craft; the third provides, in large part, their rationale.

It is, unfortunately, this third area which is least explained in the Imagist movement's publications. Although few of the poets involved with the movement were scholars of philosophy, the aesthetic theories they were exposed to by Pound and Hulme form a part of the matrix which explains and bolsters their artistic reform. Like any intellectual milieu, the impact of these ideas would be both immediate and indirect. Immediately, these ideas prompted their specific technical changes in writing. Indirectly, they helped to redefine the power and responsibility of the poet and provided the writers with definitions of reality and time which would be useful in their mature methods and visions.

Much of Imagist philosophy stems from the writings of Henri Bergson and T. S. Hulme, as these ideas were filtered through the syncretistic mind of Ezra Pound. Still, Pound is not the only link the Imagists had to portions of this aesthetic theory. Aldington was in close correspondence with Remy de Gourmont, a French critic and philosopher whose ideas coincide with and sometimes derive from Bergson. F. S. Flint, as the single most knowledgeable critic-scholar of contemporary French poetry, both Symbolist and Post-Symbolist, was directly aware not only of Bergson, but of de Regnier, Gautier and de Gourmont. Hulme, Flint and Pound were all, at various times, present at the Poets' Club's discussions of new French influences. The ideas were potent and prevalent throughout the period. For our immediate purposes, however, Hulme and Pound appear to be the most important links.

Like many of his friends in the Poets' Club, Hulme was motivated in his investigations by a dissatisfaction with contemporary English poetry. As a philosopher rather than a writer, Hulme was interested in discovering (or creating) a system which would redefine poetry and literary form--in other words, a new aesthetic. He needed a system which would oppose the "romantic" elements of late nineteenth century writing. It is important to note that, in a very real sense, Hulme's complaints with romanticism are leveled against the sentimentality and social meliorism

of the Victorians more than the theory of imagination and form one would find in Coleridge or Wordsworth. Hulme's targets were Pater, Ruskin and the Georgians, who, in the parlance of 1908, were "romantics."²⁶ Hulme would have concurred wholeheartedly to Pound's assessment of the nineteenth century as "a rather blurry, messy sort of a period, a rather sentimentalistic, mannerish sort of a period."²⁷ In trying to construct this new system, Hulme found himself turning to the works of Henri Bergson and his ideas on the nature of reality and perception.

Bergson is not so much an aesthetician as a phenomenologist. His philosophy of reality is in many ways directly opposed to scientific rationalism. Bergson conceived of reality as "a flux of interpenetrated elements unseizable by the intellect."²⁸ Intellectual knowledge, achieved by analysis, may help men to act, but it does not help them to know reality. Analysis "reduces the objects to elements already known, that is, to elements common to both it and other elements."²⁹ As a result, the uniqueness and completeness of an object can never be known by analysis. The intellect alone can neither explain nor encompass reality.

Bergson postulates as an alternative to intellect the existence of "intuition," a different activity than analysis. Intuition is a "kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently

inexpressible."³⁰ Intuition is an act of sudden synthesis, rather than analysis. It is the recognition of a shape as man, rather than the intellectual knowledge of all the human organs. For Bergson, reality is not so much the sum of individual parts, but the recognition of the way segments are both unique and yet related to one another--how the parts are of the whole, yet the whole remains greater than the parts. To explain this difference between intuition and analysis, Bergson uses an example from literature.

Suppose that I wished to communicate to someone who did not know Greek the extraordinarily simple impression that a passage in Homer makes upon me; I should first give a translation of the lines, I should then comment on my translation, and then develop the commentary; in this way, piling up explanation on explanation, I might approach nearer and nearer to what I wanted to express; but I should never quite reach it.³¹

The reader's original response is the true knowledge of the work, the intuition of it; the explanation via analysis is intellectual, but incomplete knowledge of the original Greek passage.

Bergson suggests that it is only the artist who really sees reality, who really experiences things intuitively. The rest of the world, forced to view the surface of things, to deal with their similarities and their rational parts, is never in touch with reality. The artist does not seek to act, but to know his experience and world. Thus, his role is a special and an almost mystical one: to show reality to others who have neither the ability nor time to experience it by themselves. But how can the

artist convey his knowledge of the world to another?

According to Bergson, only by using images. " . . . Matter exists just as it is perceived, and since it is perceived as an image, the mind would make of it, in itself, an image . . . matter, in our view, is an aggregate of 'images.'" ³²

Bergson turned to the idea of images only because it seemed the most capable of conveying experience and reality to the individual:

The inner life is all that at once, variety of qualities, continuity of progress, unity of direction. It cannot be represented by images.

But still less could it be represented by concepts, that is, by abstract ideas, whether general or simple. Doubtless no image will quite answer to the original feeling I have of flowing of myself. But neither is it necessary for me to try to express it. To him who is not capable of giving himself the intuition of the duration constitutive of his being, nothing will ever give it, neither concepts nor images. In this regard, the philosopher's sole aim should be to start up a certain effort which the utilitarian habits of mind of everyday life tend, in most men to discourage. Now the image has at least the advantage of keeping us in the concrete. No image will replace the intuition of duration, but many different images, taken from quite different orders of things, will be able, through the convergence of their action, to direct the consciousness to the precise point where there is a certain intuition to seize on. ³³

If every person would seek to know, rather than act, all would be in direct contact with reality and would personally have Bergson's "intuition of the duration constitutive of his being." Since, however, people are geared to action rather than knowledge, direct knowledge of reality is impossible. Thus the artist must attempt to direct people to intuitions. He must simulate and stimulate the reader's

mind in his construction of awarenenses. He does this by presenting a situation in such a manner that his audience cannot see merely the common elements, it must see new facets and relationships. He must, to use Eliot's later term, create an objective correlative.

In order for Bergson's artist to construct these points leading to intuitive knowledge effectively, he must use images, not intellectual abstractions. To give any meaning or order to the constant flux around him, the artist must arrest single objects at a given time and explore their particularity. He must " . . . seize and combine at the same instant all the important ideas and . . . work with one of them . . ."³⁴ The artist must recognize, as Remy de Gourmont says, "L'intelligence n'est qu'une des manières d'être de la sensibilité, et non pas la plus stable, encore moins la plus volontaire."³⁵ To be effective, the artist must have a unified sensibility.

Hulme accepted and expanded Bergson's ideas on the nature of perception and the role of the artist. More even than Bergson, Hulme focuses his attention on the role of the poet. According to Hulme, "Thought is prior to language and consists in the simultaneous presentation to the mind of two different images."³⁶ It is only through unexpected juxtapositions of images that real thought (or creation) occurs. The poet must simulate this thought process for his reader via language. Yet most language (prose) is designed to convey action, not knowledge. The power and

meaning of individual words has been eroded by general use until they are abstractions: "Every word in the language originates as a live metaphor, but gradually of course all visual meaning goes out of them and they become a kind of counter."³⁷ The task of the poet is to stop the glossing over of ideas, "to arrest you, and make you continuously see a physical thing, to prevent you gliding through an abstract process."³⁸ The poet does this by using new analogies, by creating models (objective correlatives) to convey his discovery and emotion. Hulme felt that consideration of hard, concrete details was the only way in which a person could perceive any new meaning: "All emotion depends on real solid vision or sound. It is physical."³⁹ This use of images is not merely the presentation of a visual picture, but the recreation of an intuitive process. Each image in poetry becomes a new perception of reality. Hulme explains the method of the poet in his Speculations:

You start off with some actual and vividly felt experience. It may be something seen or something felt. You find that when you have expressed this in straightforward language that you have not expressed it at all. You have only expressed it approximately . . . Language, being a communal apparatus, only conveys over that part of the emotion which is common to all of us. If you are able to observe the actual individuality of the emotion you experience, you become dissatisfied with language. You persist in an endeavor to so state things that the meaning does not escape, but is definitely forced on the attention of the reader. To do this you are compelled to invent new metaphors and new epithets. It is here, of course, that the popular misunderstanding about originality comes in. It is usually understood by the outsider in the arts that originality is a desirable quality in itself. Nothing of the kind. It is only the defects of language that make originality necessary.⁴⁰

Thus, Hulme reemphasizes the need to use images (and to use them via juxtaposition) to communicate effectively in poetry. Words as ornamentation or as formuli merely impede the intuition achieved by the juxtaposing of images. His own experimentation in verse (especially the five poems which Pound reprints as "The Complete Poetical Works of T. E. Hulme" at the end of his own Ripostes) attempts to deal in images as intuition and to avoid words not directly related to the immediate presentation of these images.

Pound extracted from Bergson and Hulme three main points for his Imagism (and later, his expanded aesthetic term: Vorticism): (1) the role of the poet; (2) perception via juxtaposing images; and (3) expression via concrete image and uncluttered language and form. Poetry, for him, is not ornamental but experiential. The act of reading poetry is an act of conception, not reception. What Pound sought to provide his reader with were "new eyes, not to make them see some new particular thing."⁴¹ Poetry, then, is an active process, evocative and creative simultaneously. For him, "Poetry is a sort of inspired mathematics, which give us equations, not for abstract figures, triangles, spheres, and the like, but equations for the human emotions."⁴² The equation is composed of images. Thus his images present "an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time,"⁴³ so as "to record the precise instant when a thing outward and objective

transforms itself, or darts into a thing inward and subjective."⁴⁴

Pound's Image has sometimes been misunderstood. It is not merely a visual representation, a static picture. It is the images and the movement (relationship) between them. It is the process of discovery and knowledge, not just the objects which bring one to the point of seizing intuition. It is this active nature of the image which distinguishes the Imagist descriptions from merely lyrical description. The image is not an ornament, but a new perception. This sense of conception and creation is one of the fundamental attitudes among modernist poets. It also underlies many of Pound's technical innovations. The longer, almost epic poems of H.D. (like Pound's own Cantos) make use of this idea to expand the length and number of images used in any given "complex."

Since Pound, unlike either Bergson or Hulme, is a poet, it is little wonder that his attention is more often directed towards the craft of poetry than the philosophy of knowledge. Most of his fellow Imagists also center their attentions on the techniques resulting from Bergsonian philosophy rather than its tenets. Still, the philosophy permeated the discussions of the times and must be understood as a groundwork for later poetic theory and visions.

Published Imagist theory most often presented a program of writing reform which enumerated those techniques the individual group members had concurred were necessary

for good writing. The first listing of these techniques (or rules) was in an essay ascribed to F. S. Flint (although actually drafted by Pound), in 1913. As this Poetry essay, entitled "Imagisme," explained, the Imagists applied three rules to their works:

1. Direct treatment of the "thing" whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in the sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome.⁴⁵

The first rule is the closest statement to a demand to use Pound's Image as the major mode of expression. The poet is admonished to "Go in fear of abstractions,"⁴⁶ to leave off using the counter words of the past and directly present new analogies, new intuitions to the reader. Georgian abstractness and didacticism are rejected.

The second rule strikes directly at the problems of language in poetry. Implicit is a rejection of Georgian diction, a request for concrete presentation (vs. ornamental description) and a stated preference for economy and brevity wherever possible.

The third rule deals with the form of the new poetry. It was read at the time as an endorsement of vers libre and indeed it is. But, it is less revolutionary than some thought, being intended as an affirmation of all good writing--in many ways, a reiteration of Coleridge's organic form. As Hulme stated earlier, originality was not a

necessity in and of itself. Pound's rhythm, whatever form it took, was to "correspond exactly to the emotion or shade of emotion to be expressed."⁴⁷ Cadence and sonal elements were not to be ignored, but chosen carefully to correspond to the poem's content. Necessity replaced conformity.

In other Imagist documents, these three points are elaborated. In all cases, however, some recognition is given to each of these major tenets. As the leadership of the group shifted, attention shifted more towards the last two points than the first. The theory of the Image, although it underlied the other two points, became less a conscious concern. In the case of the best Imagists, H.D. and Pound most certainly, it had become internalized; poetry would almost always be the process of understanding for them. As a result, the expanded rules of the later documents became principally manifestos of style. This is apparent in the six rules that Aldington delineated in the preface to Some Imagist Poems (1916):

1. To use the language of common speech, but to employ always the exact word, not the nearly-exact, nor merely the decorative word.
2. To create new rhythms--as the expression of new moods--and not to copy old rhythms, which merely echo old moods. We do not insist upon "free-verse" as the only method of writing poetry. We fight for it as for a principle of liberty. We believe that the individuality of a poet may often be better expressed in free-verse than in conventional forms. In poetry, a new cadence means a new idea.

3. To allow absolute freedom in the choice of subject. It is not good art to write badly about aeroplanes and automobiles; nor is it necessarily bad art to write well about the past. We believe passionately in the artistic value of modern life, but we wish to point out that there is nothing so uninspiring nor so old-fashioned as an aeroplane of the year 1911.
4. To present an image (hence the name: "Imagist"). We are not a school of painters, but we believe that poetry should render particulars exactly and not deal in vague generalities, however magnificent and sonorous. It is for this reason that we oppose the cosmic poet, who seems to us to shirk the real difficulties of his art.
5. To produce poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred nor indefinite.
6. Finally, most of us believe that concentration is the very essence of poetry.⁴⁸

Point four is a partial statement of the theory of the Image, but its focus is more one of style than philosophy. The other five points spell out their concern for the form of verse: precision in diction, free choice of cadence, free choice of subject, vivid visual detail and compression. This technical care is where we find the most agreement and similarity among the Imagists as an organized group.

These principles were not intended to be construed as an ordered dictum for all the poems written by the individual Imagists. The grouping of these poets, as Pound stated earlier, merely represented some points (and the poems which illustrated these points) which these writers concurred were estimable qualities. As Pound wrote to Flint, a good imagist is "one who writes good Imagist poems when trying to, not one who writes nothing else."⁴⁹ Still,

in spite of changes in membership and leadership, it is by a general adherence to these principles of writing that we judge a poet Imagistic or not. It has been in accordance with these rules that H.D. has been adjudged an exemplary Imagist. She absorbed both the philosophy and tenets on which Imagism rests. Only when we begin to understand how both work in her poetry--not just the form, but the theory too--can we begin to trace the evolution of "H.D., Imagiste" into the questing/heroic narrator of Helen in Egypt.

FOOTNOTES

¹Horace Gregory, "A Poet's Poet," Commonweal LXVIII (April 18, 1958):82.

²Peter Jones, ed., "Introduction," Imagist Poetry (Harmondsworth, England: 1972), p. 14.

³Warren Ramsey, "Uses of the Visible: American Imagism, French Symbolism," Comparative Literature Studies IV, p. 186.

⁴Hugh Kenner, The Pound Era (Berkeley: 1971), p. 177.

⁵Richard Aldington, Life for Life's Sake (New York: 1941), p. 136.

⁶Ezra Pound, "Status Rerum," Poetry, I, iv (January 1913):126.

⁷Christopher Middleton, "Documents on Imagism from the Papers of F. S. Flint," Review, XV (April 1965):43.

⁸Stanley K. Coffman, Jr., Imagism. A Chapter for the History of Modern Poetry (Norman, Oklahoma: 1951), p. 3.

⁹Kenner, Pound Era, pp. 174-175.

¹⁰Swann, p. 14.

¹¹Hughes, pp. 110-111.

¹²William Carlos Williams, The Autobiography of William Carlos Williams (New York: 1948), pp. 7-8.

¹³Hughes, p. 110.

- ¹⁴Pearson, "Interview," p. 437.
- ¹⁵Charles Norman, Ezra Pound, revised (London: 1969), pp. 5-6.
- ¹⁶Cyrena N. Pondrom, ed., "Selected Letters from H.D. to F. S. Flint. A Commentary on the Imagist Period," Contemporary Literature, X, iv (Autumn, 1969):588.
- ¹⁷Quinn, p. 20.
- ¹⁸Aldington, Life, pp. 134-135.
- ¹⁹Ezra Pound, Letters. 1907-1941 (New York: 1950), p. 11.
- ²⁰Ellen Williams, Harriet Monroe and the Poetry Renaissance. The First 10 Years of Poetry, 1912-1922 (Urbana, Illinois: 1977), p. 40.
- ²¹Bryher [Winifred Ellerman], The Heart to Artemis: A Writer's Memoirs (New York: 1962), p. 153.
- ²²Aldington, Life, p. 187.
- ²³The Poetry Bookshop, Georgian Poetry 1911-1912 (London: 1920), p. 79.
- ²⁴Ibid., p. 78.
- ²⁵Middleton, p. 48.
- ²⁶T. E. Hulme, Speculations. Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art (New York: 1924), p. 146.
- ²⁷Ezra Pound, Literary Essays (New York: 1968), p. 11.
- ²⁸Alun R. Jones, The Life and Opinions of T. E. Hulme (Boston: 1960), p. 43.
- ²⁹Ibid., p. 43.
- ³⁰Ibid., p. 44.

³¹Henri Bergson, An Introduction to Metaphysics, trans. T. E. Hulme (London: 1913), p. 5.

³²Wallace Martin, "The Sources of the Imagist Aesthetic," PMLA, 85 (March 1970):202.

³³Henri Bergson, The Creative Mind, trans. Mabelle L. Andison (New York: 1946), pp. 194-195.

³⁴Jones, Hulme, p. 49.

³⁵Alun R. Jones, "Imagism: A Unity of Gesture," American Poetry, ed. Irvin Ehrenpreis (New York: 1965), p. 120.

³⁶T. E. Hulme, Further Speculations, ed. Sam Hynes (Minneapolis: 1955), p. 84.

³⁷Hulme, Speculations, p. 152.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 134.

³⁹Hulme, Further Speculations, p. 78.

⁴⁰Hulme, Speculations, pp. 161-162.

⁴¹Ezra Pound, "Vorticism," Fortnightly Review, XCVI (September 1, 1914):465.

⁴²Ezra Pound, Spirit of Romance (New York: 1953), p. 14.

⁴³Ezra Pound, Literary Essays (New York: 1968), p. 4.

⁴⁴Pound, "Vorticism," p. 467.

⁴⁵William Pratt, ed., The Imagist Poem (New York: 1963), p. 18.

⁴⁶Pound, Literary Essays, p. 5.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 9. ⁴⁸Pratt, p. 22. ⁴⁹Middleton, p. 44.

CHAPTER III

"H.D., IMAGISTE" AND COLLECTED POEMS

Any consideration of H.D.'s writing must start with an examination of her Collected Poems (1925). Contrary to the suggestion of the title, this is her starting point as a professional writer. Poems written prior to Collected Poems do not exist; H.D. retained none of her juvenalia and few of her working drafts. Both Richard Aldington and Harriet Monroe have indicated that she destroyed her immature works, preferring always to present to the world a finished product.¹

Collected Poems is a compilation of all H.D.'s previously published verse, starting with her three poems in Poetry (1913) and including Sea Garden (1916), Choruses from Iphigenia in Aulis and the Hippolytus (1919), Hymen (1921), and Heliodora and Other Poems (1924). The poems in this volume represent the best-known works by H.D. and are the anthologized Imagist poems which critics have frequently considered her best work.

Collected Poems has the virtue of allowing the critic to deal physically with H.D.'s early poetry as a single body of work. The traits which inform her four early

volumes are relatively uniform and correspond well to Amy Lowell's summation of the Imagist method: "Simplicity and directness of speech; subtlety and beauty of rhythms; individualistic freedom of idea; clearness and vividness of presentation; and concentration."² Indeed, H.D.'s early poetry more consistently exemplifies these characteristics than the work of almost any of the other Imagist poets.

Collected Poems is one of the masterpieces of the Imagist movement. Its subjects, forms, language and methods are exemplary. H.D. is here the "perfect Imagist." The directness of style and meaning, the sparseness of language, the vivid visual presentation of the physical world, the determination not to overload objects and situations with abstract values which they could not sustain, are all recognizable elements in Collected Poems. Yet Imagism is more than an editorial checklist for H.D. Its theories of knowledge and perception provide for a complexity of emotions and techniques rarely associated with this literary movement. As a result, H.D.'s writing has a depth frequently overlooked. Her poems are at once direct and evocative. Her descriptions are lyric in their immediacy and yet narrative in their ability to depict accurately specific states of mind or awareness. H.D. expands on the obvious technical innovations of Imagism, while exploring the human psyche through her choice of subject and narrator. It is even possible to perceive changes among the four volumes represented in Collected Poems. The more H.D. writes, the

more she adapts and expands the original Imagist principles. Between Sea Garden in 1916 and Heliodora and Other Poems in 1924, the increased use of detectable personae and narrators, the increased complexity of rhyme and rhythm, and the increased description of situations instead of single objects--all attest to the increasingly evocative nature of H.D.'s poetry. Using Collected Poems as a representative Imagist work, it is possible to then judge its growth in both form and content.

Selections from Collected Poems exemplify the simplicity and directness of speech that Pound first pointed out to Harriet Monroe as "straight talk, straight as the Greek!" H.D. pares away superficial adjectives and uninformative figurative language. She gives her reader clear, exact statements: clear in their diction and order, exact in their representation of objects. An excellent example of her directness of speech and image is "Orion Dead":

The cornel-trees
uplift from the furrows;
the roots at their bases
strike lower through the barley-sprays.

So arise and face me.
I am poisoned with rage of song.

I once pierced the flesh
of the wild deer,
now I am afraid to touch
the blue and the gold-veined hyacinths.

I will tear the full flowers
and the little heads
of the grape-hyacinths;
I will strip the life from the bulb
until the ivory layers
lie like narcissus petals
on the black earth.

Arise,
 lest I bend an ash-tree
 into a taut bow,
 and slay--and tear
 all the roots from the earth.

The cornel-wood blazes
 and strikes through the barley-sprays
 but I have lost heart for this.

I break a staff.
 I break a tough branch.
 I know no light in the woods.
 I have lost pace with the wind.³

In this poem, H.D. does not overly moralize or philosophize on an experience in human life. Nor does she directly lament the loss of a lover, comment on the shortness of life, directly rage against death or fate. There is no symbolic representation of an abstract idea. Death is not some concept which we contemplate as we gaze at Orion. What is presented is not the mysterious vagueness of the Symbolists nor the sometimes vacuous phrases of the post-Victorian poets. We find direct and in most cases simple declarative sentences, which relay in compressed phrases a sharply physical scene. There are no inversions, no convolutions of language. The heavily latinate diction of the more pretentious Georgian poets has become H.D.'s colloquial speech, for, as Robert Duncan has suggested, "the main drive of the Imagists [is] away from the specifically 'poetic' diction of the nineteenth century toward the syntax and rhythms of common daily speech" ⁴ H.D. strives for concise diction, sufficient statement (neither melodrama nor vagueness), and brief presentation. In

seeking this, she retains the freshness and sincerity of the best lyric poets.

The images in "Orion Dead" are also direct and clear. When H.D. uses description, it is not merely a desire for ornamentation and flowery pictures. Certainly the "blue and gold-veined hyacinths" of the third stanza are more than facile color references. The blue veins relate thematically to the flesh of the wild deer, whose veins were filled with similarly blue (oxydized) blood. The image is a compressed moment, turning, by its juxtaposing, the flower into living flesh. The description is not trite, not haphazard, but reflective of the meaning--the image of living things--being conveyed. The images of the last four lines are similarly hard and concrete. Instead of saying "you are dead, I'm angry with the world," the writer conveys her sense of frustration and dislocation with specific subject-verb phrases: "I break . . . I break . . . I know no light . . . I have lost"

"The Pool" is another good example of H.D.'s conciseness.

Are you alive?
I touch you.
You quiver like a sea-fish.
I cover you with my net.
What are you--banded one?

(CP, 82)

Again, there is no moral. Rather, we are presented a simple statement of action, a statement which recreates for us a moment, a thought, a feeling. For the pool,

quivering like a sea-fish is nothing if not physical, immediate, concrete reality. Five simple sentences are enough to show us the shivering water and the questioning wonder of the speaker. There are no adjectives at all until the last line, when the "banded" one is again as thematic as it is descriptive. The water is both banded in color and banded (held) in the net. The narrator is banded as well as the water, caught in the moment of musing. H.D.'s direct speech allows the action she describes to incarnate the emotion, rather than decorate it.

The very simplicity of H.D.'s speech lends itself to vivid and always concrete presentations. Some of her poems present a vision so graphically that we feel an almost camera-like panning of the physical scene. In her poem "Evening," we sense the encroachment and stealthy action of the sunset in a meadow:

The light passes
 from ridge to ridge,
 from flower to flower--
 the hypaticas, wide-spread
 under the light
 grow faint--
 the petals reach inward,
 the blue tips bend
 toward the bluer heart
 and the flowers are lost.

The cornel-buds are still white,
 but the shadows dart
 from the cornel-roots--
 black creeps from root to root,
 each leaf
 cuts another leaf on the grass,
 shadow seeks shadow,
 then both leaf
 and leaf-shadow are lost.

(CP, 24)

The movement of light across the flowers, across the meadow, casting shadow over what was once bright and sharp, is accurately portrayed. The light moves across one object to the next; the flowers, with their blue tips, close for the night; the shadows grow, intersect, until they merge together, forming the dusk where object and shadow become indistinguishable. H.D.'s observations are minute, unfettered by reflections or moralizings on human feeling and experience. What she has managed to do is "present concrete particulars with precise, vivid imagery that brings to the reader a quick, accurate, and moving presentation of an observation."⁵ By precise selection of details and by a ready awareness of all the nuances those details might elicit, she captures and recreates specific moments-in-time.

H.D. attempts to lead the reader to a new intuition by finding an objective correlative for her experience, rather than discoursing on her personal feelings. It is this ability to educe a feeling or mood within her reader that is one of her principal virtues. In "Storm," her concrete presentation of very specific items conjures the very feel and visual effects of a storm:

You crash over the trees,
you crack the live branch--
the branch is white,
the green is crushed,
each leaf is rent like split wood.

You burden the trees
 will black drops,
 you swirl and crash--
 you have broken off a weighted leaf
 in the wind,
 it is hurled out,
 whirls up and sinks,
 a green stone.

(CP, 52)

In "Storm," we see the destructive energy crashing around a tree. The subject-verb phrases are transitive, active, even violent in their meaning and movement. Playing on the scene is not merely a clinical eye, but an imaginative one: an eye that can see the force of the storm "burden" the tree, can see it whirling, crashing, raging about the tree itself, until the leaves are blown away; a mind that can juxtapose two images, the falling leaf and the sinking stone, in such a way that the leaf and the stone become one another in the reader's mind. When the leaf falls, what we are seeing is not a leaf, but a green stone.

"Oread," too, evokes the sea. Oread is a nymph of the mountains who stands on the seashore looking at the ocean and visualizing it in terms which have a more readily available meaning and connotation for her:

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

(CP, 81)

In "Oread" the sea is the pine-wood, and somehow the pine-wood has become, in a strangely tangible sense, the sea.

There is a perfect fusion of precise physical details which are common to both sea and pine: their whirling peaks, their pointedness, their greenness, each forming a pool around us. The reader, along with Oread, sees the sea and the pine as one: two disparate images which, fused together, give us a better understanding of the character of both the sea and the pine-wood, an understanding which is intuitive and not possible without the juxtaposition. What "Oread" and "Storm" present for us is "a strong sense of the abstract caught within the concrete; and no form but the poem itself."⁶ The numerated details recreate the experience (not just the visual impression) of the object(s) and the moment in time. As Pound explained in his essay "As for Imagisme," the image presented may be either objective or subjective; it may either be solely presentational or it may be evocative as well.⁷

H.D. uses the Imagist method of evocation in her poem "Sea Gods." In the first stanza of "Sea Gods," H.D. shows how images are used to produce the sensation and awareness within an experience:

They say there is no hope--
 sand--drift--rocks--rubble of the sea--
 the broken hulk of a ship,
 hung with shreds of rope,
 pallid under the cracked pitch.

(CP, 42)

If the statement "They say there is no hope" is the starting point for understanding the experience, then the physical particulars which succeed it are used to show how and to what degree that hope was ceased to exist.

"Sand--drift--rocks," are pieces, remnants. The ship's hulk is broken, wrecked. All is in disrepair. The images convey the mood of hopelessness and desolation.

A similar method is used in "Fragment Forty," one of H.D.'s Sapphic translations. A listing of concrete images drives home the sense of the poem:

4

I had thought myself frail;
a petal,
with light equal
on leaf and under-leaf.

I had thought myself frail;
a lamp,
shell, ivory or crust of pearl,
about to fall shattered,
with flame spent.

(CP, 257-258)

The fragility, the brittleness of the persona, becomes a much clearer state when one sees it through the opaque leaf, when one watches the teetering lamp of shell. Implicit in both images is imminent breakage, a special feeling of doomed frailty, which is not so clear in the statement "I had thought myself frail."

The recreation of intuited feeling is even stronger in "Islands." In the sixth strophe, H.D. establishes a feeling of desolation and defeat. This poem is an excellent example of something outward and objective becoming inward and subjective, per Pound's dictum.

VI.

In my garden
the winds have beaten
the ripe lilies;

in my garden, the salt
 has wilted the first flakes
 of young narcissus,
 and the lesser hyacinth,
 and the salt has crept
 under the leaves of the white hyacinth.

In my garden
 even the wind-flowers lie flat,
 broken by the wind at last.

(CP, 184-185)

Nowhere in the strophe do we find a personal comment which expresses desolation. But the progression of items within the poem, the winds which beat down the hyacinth and the narcissus--even the sturdy wind-flowers themselves--the salt which has encroached until it has come to eat the very roots of the plants, all describe and evoke within the reader a feeling of desolation and defeat that is immediate and enduring: "broken by the wind at last."

H.D. is extremely Imagistic in her reliance on the concrete image throughout Collected Poems. Never merely descriptive lyrics, her poems focus our attention on each object, each movement, until they seem, as Louis Untermeyer says, "a set of Tanagra figurines . . . beauty [seems] held in a frozen gesture."⁸ It is only by intuitively perceiving individual images, perceiving how (and why) they are juxtaposed, that we can understand her meaning. Her intense focus forces us to know and live the experience. Her poems show that "the process of art is from perceptual culmination to perceptual culmination." Or as Flint noted so early and so correctly, "in detail it [H.D.'s poetry] has the precision of goldsmiths' work, in ultimate effect it is mysterious

and only to be comprehended by the imagination."⁹ This is the core of Imagism, and the core of H.D.'s poetry.

One of the more subtle changes that occurs in H.D.'s poetry (and in most of the other Imagists' as well during the early 1920s) is a movement from predominantly visual imagery toward an increased reliance on phonetic and rhythmic effects to achieve the recreation of mood and object. Frank Doggett, in a 1929 essay on H.D., notes that one of the principal achievements of the Imagist poets is their use of cadenced verse and their creation of "the illusion of rhythm by suggesting meter with repetition and vowel usage."¹⁰ What H.D. comes to stress in her verse are staccato line lengths (which may have helped originally to direct her towards using vers libre), alliteration, repetition, and a conscious shifting and manipulating of stress patterns. The first and the final elements in particular are expansions on the theories of cadenced verse and vers libre propounded by F. S. Flint and Amy Lowell. Lowell, a student of French prosody and herself an innovative practitioner of free verse, felt that H.D.'s poetry "achieves[s] a beauty of cadence which has been surpassed by no other vers libriste. Indeed, her subtly changing rhythms are almost without equal."¹¹ The shift in emphasis from the exclusively visual to the sonal as well is not a change of intent in the Imagist movement, but the development of even more subtle and sophisticated structural techniques.

Indeed, H.D.'s use of rhythm and sound always remains extremely Imagistic, for it follows Hulme's belief that

artists attain the original mood and induce use to make the same effort ourselves by rhythmical arrangements of words, which, thus organised and animated with a life of their own, tell us, or rather suggest, things that speech is not calculated to express.¹²

Many of H.D.'s poems in Collected Poems use line length to isolate and intensify individual visual images within the poems. The short lines keep the images separate from one another, yet foregrounded in the reader's mind. Thus, "Sea Iris" begins:

I.

Weed, moss-weed,
root tangled in sand,
sea-iris, brittle flower,
one petal like a shell
is broken,
and you print a shadow
like a thin twig.

Fortunate one,
scented and stinging,
rigid myrrh-bud,
camphor flower,
sweet and salt--you are wind
in our nostrils.

(CP, 53)

The line length becomes significant here because each phrase has been isolated, and each line houses a complete visual or tactile image. The form becomes a conscious tool of perception for both the poet and the reader. Such craftsmanship helps the reader focus on individual images and, more importantly perhaps, on the movement of the total poem. Within "Sea Iris," for example, there is a shift

from the visual to the tactile, from seeing to smelling. With the exception of the first line in each stanza, the lines within the stanzas each deal with one of the two senses. More importantly, all of the visual images are in the first stanza and all the olfactory images are in the second. The length and isolation of the poetic line makes this change extremely obvious.

In other poems, the short line lengths and isolated images accentuate the movement of the poem even more. They allow for the rapid juxtapositions of objects and experience which lead the reader and the poet to their intuitive understanding. "Hymen" contains a good example:

I have heard--
 I myself have seen the floating ships
 And nothing will ever be the same--
 The shouts,
 The harrowing voices within the house.
 I stand apart with an army:
 My mind is graven with ships.

(CP,112)

Line one sets the moment: "I have heard--" The reader and the poet are listening, but to what we aren't sure. Line two provides us with a second image, again with little data to understand the emotion. Line three colors the preceding two images; they are extreme happenings. We are not to take them lightly. Because of what we have heard and seen, "nothing will ever be the same." Line four, although only two words, begins to clarify/vivify the scene: what we hear are shouts. Line five, by adding the word "harrowing," transforms the earlier images with a negative connotation.

The shouting, the floating, are not joyful, but frightening. Line five establishes our passivity, our role as viewer, while line six, with its fixed image, makes our sense of a caught moment, a viewed moment of importance, complete. The use of separate lines for separate images gives us time to both concentrate on what is happening and, through juxtaposing, to know the scene and experience.

Alliteration within H.D.'s verse also establishes movement from one image to the next, one line to the next, while simultaneously establishing a sonal unity between the distinct and sometimes disparate images. In "Fragment 36," a poem based on a lyric fragment written by Sappho, the penultimate strophe is unified by its striking sibilance:

I know not what to do:
strain upon strain,
sound surging upon sound
makes my brain blind;
as a wave-line may wait to fail
yet (waiting for its falling)
still the wind may take
from off its crest,
white flake on flake of foam,
that rises,
seeming to dart and pulse
and rend the light,
so my mind hesitates
. . .

(CP, 245)

Of the thirteen lines, all but three contain a strong /s/ sound. The three that do not contain a /s/ stand out, thereby accentuating their images and their importance. The first line, "I know not what to do," states the basic position of the speaker. The ninth line (the second

non-sibilant line), "white flake on flake of foam," is a dominant visual image within the strophe, and the only color reference. The shift in consonant stress (from /s/ to /f/) singles out the image contained in the line. Finally, the third /s/-less line, "and rend the light," (l. 12), is divisive in content and intent. The break with the normal consonant pattern emphasizes the segregation. By discerning breaks within the sound pattern of a poem we find ourselves moving from important image to important image. Certainly the change in sonal quality forces the reader into an awareness that he might not otherwise have had.

A similar use of alliteration punctuates the images in "Night":

The night has cut
each from each
and curled the petals
back from the stalk
and under it in crisp rows.
(CP, 47)

Here, the reader finds himself following the emphasis established by the strong /c/ sound. In this case, it is not found in each line of the strophe, but at important image beginnings. The night cuts and Curls the petals; they are back and crisp. Although a little less obvious than in "Fragment 36," the sonal element is a form of structuring the reader's attention.

In other poems, H.D. makes specific use of onomatopoeic phrases and words as well as strictly consonant

and vowel changes. An obvious example of this, again, is "Storm." (See p. 60). In "Storm," we are made aware, from the very beginning, of strong /cr/ and /ch/ consonant combinations, sounds usually associated with explosive impacts. We find that the water crashes, it cracks, until branches are crushed and each leaf rent. The clash of strong palatal consonants reflects the not-so-muted clash of water and wind on the tree. In the second strophe of "Storm," the /r/ and /l/, the /w/ and /h/, reflect the slower, smoother, more muted whistling that the wind, rather than the rain, makes throughout the gale. The wind swirls, hurls, whirls. The sonal allegiances heighten internal movement and mood.

H.D.'s careful use of sound, particularly alliteration, shows her progression in her writing toward greater continuity, a movement toward blending, or at least unifying, image with image. The sonal connections tie the short phrases together, moving the reader from image to image, helping to weld them into a single unit: the poem. Even "Oread"--the most visual of H.D.'s poems--shows this almost subliminal unification by sound. The pines become pools. The sea is green. The sound moves in step with the progression of the poem. As a result, the movement of thought becomes easier for the reader.

The third device used by H.D. is repetition. Again, the technique is used to reinforce the imagery, as well as serving to reinforce covertly the subjective, emotional

situation. "Adonis" shows effectively how repetition of both word and phrase occurs within her works. Although the poem is composed of two strophes, both are linked closely by repetition:

I.

Each of us like you
has died once,
each of us like you
has passed through drift of wood-leaves,
cracked and bent
and tortured and unbent
in the winter frost,
then burnt into gold points,
lighted afresh,
crisp amber, scales of gold-leaf,
gold turned and re-welded
in the sun-heat;

each of us like you
has died once,
each of us has crossed an old wood-path
and found the winter leaves
so golden in the sun-fire
that even the live woodflowers
were dark.

(CP, 68)

First, we become aware of the repetition of the word gold, or a similar color reference: gold, amber, gold-leaf, sun-heat. The words stack up, one atop the other, until in the reader's mind there settles a golden haze, a view of Adonis in terms that can in no way be differentiated from the brightness of the color gold. Further, the phrase repetition of "each of us like you/has died once,/each of us . . . ," particularly at the beginning of each strophe, produces a feeling of affirmation or certainty which grows from repeated sounds as much as repeated ideas. Much as in a litany a speaker repeats over and over key phrases, the

speaker here connects himself with the demi-god by both what he says and the fact that he repeatedly says it.

The use of repetition for affirmation is used with considerable skill in the poem "Sea Gods," too. H.D. concludes the verse with this stanza:

For you will come,
you will come,
you will answer our taut hearts,
you will break the lie of men's thoughts,
and cherish and shelter us.

(CP, 44)

The repetition of "you will . . ." becomes an act of affirmation. The statement is simple and its sincerity believable. The reiteration of the phrase first establishes, then fulfills a phonetic expectation, just as the recitation of idea fulfills a psychological one. We find, then, the sonal elements of the poem used as a major structural device, taking and sustaining within a given verse both the idea and the subconscious mood the idea should elicit.

H.D. consciously and skillfully uses stress and rhythm patterns in her verse. Her cadences grow out of her use of alliteration and repetition. In "Eurydice," a monologue by the title character as she is turned back to Hades, a sob-like quality evolves, in part fostered by the repetition of certain phrases, and in part created by a set of three-stress lines. In the second segment of "Eurydice," the breath-line becomes central:

why did you turn?
why did you glance back?

why did you hesitate for that moment?
 why did you bend your face
 caught with the flame of the upper earth,
 above my face?

(CP,75)

The breathless feel of the lines results from accenting only three words in each line. The cadence evokes the feeling. The speaker's breath is forced out, caught, then completely expelled, just as a sob would be.

In like manner, a mood of static waiting is established in "At Ithaca." There, the regular rhythmic pattern of the verse serves to reflect the regularity, almost monotony, of Penelope's life:

Over and back,
 the long waves crawl
 and track the sand with foam;
 night darkens and the sea
 takes on that desperate tone
 of dark that wives put on
 when all their love is done.

Over and back,
 the tangled thread falls slack,
 over and up and on;
 over and all is sewn;
 now while I bind the end,
 I wish some fiery friend
 would sweep impetuously
 these fingers from the loom.

(CP,239)

Once again we find H.D. employing a three-stress line, but here the stresses seem more regular. As Thomas B. Swann suggests, "Each line beats out its regular pattern . . . just as each day beats out its unvarying pattern in Penelope's life."¹³ The rhythm reflects the ebb and flow, the "over and back," of Penelope and her shuttle.

In "The Look-Out," cadence is again a corollary to mood and meaning. Interestingly enough, a three-stress line is again the predominant foot. The first strophe of the poem sets the sea-like mood, or rather, the wave-like motion of the verse:

Better the wind, the sea, the salt,
in your eyes,
than this, this, this.

(CP, 291)

The repetitive beat of "the wind, the sea, the salt," in line one and the "this, this, this" in line three all reflect the lapping of the water against the boat, the monotonous sway of the vessel. The sense of the poem is built upon what Amy Lowell calls "'organic rhythm,' or the rhythm of the speaking voice . . ."¹⁴

H.D.'s cadences are very much her own, and it has been her subtle rhythms which have attracted so many of H.D.'s modern admirers. As is apparent in the suggestions above, her stress-line would be understandable and admirable to most post-Olson writers. It is nothing less than a model breath-line. Indeed, it is in her musical (sonal) talents that Levertov and Duncan find H.D.'s greatest strength. In her essay, "H.D.: An Appreciation," Levertov commends H.D.'s poetry for "its unassailable identity as word-music, the music of word-sounds and the rhythmic structure built of them . . ."¹⁵

H.D.'s "music of word-sounds" is a major element throughout her poetry. Although in Collected Poems she

does not use the extensive etymological methods of her later works, the germs of some of her mature methods are here. Some are predicated on her use of repetition, alliteration, line-length, and rhythm. Others come from her variations on these elements: her ability to lengthen her breath-line to exceed the printed line and, as a result, her very sophisticated use of rhyme. These last two variations occur more frequently in the last two volumes represented in Collected Poems: Hymen and Heliodora. In both these volumes, H.D. consciously experiments with her cadences and her rhyming schemes. She achieves the two-fold vision that Pound explains in his introduction to his Cavalcanti translation (1910):

the perception of the intellect is given in the word,
that of the emotions in the cadence. It is only,
then, in perfect rhythm joined to the perfect word
that the two-fold vision can be recorded.¹⁶

"Phaedra," in Hymen, gives us a clear sense of H.D.'s use of end rhyme as an element in establishing poetic cadence:

Think, O my soul,
of the red sand of Crete;
think of the earth; the heat
burnt fissures like the great
backs of the temple serpents;
think of the world you knew;
as the tide crept, the land
burned with a lizard-blue
where the dark sea met the sand.

(CP, 199)

This is a craftsman at work, exploring the possible patterns of her stanza, without disrupting or distorting the smooth flow of her language. Three of the first four lines rhyme.

Yet, since the lines are not end-stopped, the rhyme becomes muted. In both lines three and four, the rhyme is carefully aligned with a longer breath-line; enjambment lessens our realization of rhyme. In the last four lines, we find two interlocking couplets. Again, the pattern leads us past the end of the lines, to the image carried onto the line beneath. The rhyme, since unstressed, serves as a secondary, almost subconscious link between the lines and images rather than the primary function of the poem.

The poems in Heliodora go even further in their use of rhyme. "Helen" shows how effectively H.D. uses rhyme along with her other musical elements. In "Helen," there is no formal stanza pattern, but frequent use of close and end rhymes:

All Greece hates
the still eyes in the white face,
the lustre as of olives
where she stands,
and the white hands.

All Greece reviles
the wan face when she smiles,
hating it deeper still
when it grows wan and white,
remembering past enchantments
and past ills.

Greece sees unmoved,
God's daughter, born of love,
the beauty of cool feet
and slenderest knees,
could love indeed the maid,
only if she were laid,
white ash amid funereal cypresses.

(CP, 227)

Each stanza has some end rhyme: in stanza one, "stands" and "hands"; in stanza two, "reviles" and "smiles"; in stanza three, "Maid" and "laid." Likewise, in each stanza there is close rhyme as well: "still" and "ills"; "unmoved" and "love"; "hates" and "face" (depending upon the stress). Each of the stanzas employs alliteration, repetition (both intra- and inter-stanza) and varying stress lines. Still, the rhyme and rhythm are subsidiary to the images. The music of the words is the subtle rather than overt link in the poem.

"After Troy" provides a final example of H.D.'s subtle use of rhyme. In this poem, the rhyme is a major element yet remains almost hidden to the casual reader. It is only when read aloud or scrutinized extremely carefully that readers begin to see the multiple rhyme.

. . .
 we knew the loss
 before they ever guessed
 fortune had tossed to them
 her favour and her whim;
 but how were we depressed?
 we lost yet as we pressed
 our spearsmen on their best,
 we know their line invincible
 because there fell
 on them no shiverings
 of the white enchantress,
 radiant Aphrodites's spell:

(CP, 248)

In addition to the abundant end rhyme ("guessed, depressed, pressed, best, enchantress"; "whim and them"; and "invincible, fell, and spell."), there is also some hidden internal rhyme. "Tossed" in line three finds an echo in the

"lost" of line six. Likewise, "Before" in line two and "favour" in line four have resonance. For the entire twelve line sequence there are essentially only three end rhyme patterns. This repetition of sound works on the reader more subtly than any visual image.

Only one poem in all of Collected Poems has a formal, regular metrical pattern: "Lethe" in Heliodora. Still, H.D.'s elision of phrases and her focus on the images and alliteration make the rhyme less noticeable than one might expect. The meter ties the poem together on an unconscious level until there is music and incantation, as well as graphic clarity and precision.

H.D.'s use of images, her studies in cadence and poetic forms, are all a part of her Imagism, and have been recognized as such. But one significant aspect of her early poems is often neglected: her use of persona and myth. This omission is the result of a too limited definition of Imagism. Imagism is certainly more than the pictorial element of poetry. Pound, Hulme and Bergson all see the image as much more complex than mere description. The image can be either objective or subjective; it is intuition, not just of the nature of an object, but also the nature of an emotion and perception.

As a result of restricted definition, some of the best Imagist critics have ignored the place of persona in Imagist writings. Stanley Coffman, for example, notes that H.D.'s "early poems . . . limit the feelings so

rigidly to the concrete that personality has relatively little meaning here."¹⁷ This may be true if the personality alluded to is the biographical Hilda Doolittle of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. But it certainly ignores the implied voice, the implied narrator, whose emotion and personality are conveyed in so many of H.D.'s poems. Indeed, the voice, the persona and that persona's reaction to his experience, is frequently the occasion of H.D.'s poetry. A good example is "Pool," mentioned earlier on page fifty-eight.

I. A. Richards has criticized "The Pool" as an instance of "defective communication": too little is said too simply.¹⁸ Yet Richards' reading seems terribly superficial. The poem effectively conveys the observer's sense of wonder. It asks an essentially metaphysical question, the philosophical question of Bergson himself: what is something? It evokes, via its images and the presentation of these images (an implied voice), the same sense of wonder in the reader. It is definitely specific and imagistic. But implicit in our experience as readers is the sense of a presence seeing the images with us, feeling and understanding the event with us. What we receive from the poem is both the experience of the observer and an awareness of its meaning to both the implied narrator and to ourselves.

Critics have complained that the imagistic method of presentation has made prolonged monologues or character

development difficult. In particular, unnamed or unidentified speakers have obscured the experiences since the brevity necessary for graphic imagism has made the personae too vague. Yet this seems false right from the beginning. One of H.D.'s earliest poems, "Sheltered Garden," shows the centrality of persona to the experience of the poem. In "Sheltered Garden," the "I" is seminal. What is conveyed in the poem is the "I"'s experience, the stifled sense of one individual bound to a too narrow space. The importance resides not in the names of the "I" or the "You" characters. We need not know the specific placename of the garden. We need not even hear the dialogue between the two characters. What we need, we get: the specifics which convey the feeling of oppression. We see the overripe pears heavily clinging to the trees. We feel the smothering, sweet air around us. We experience the frustration which longs to break branches and stalks, snap off flower heads, seek wilder, saltier regions. The specifics provide us with the objective correlative for the poem's action. The voice that delineates these items is important to us for it is our empathetic link to the experience itself.

The use of a narrator/persona is most obvious in the last section of Collected Poems, called Heliodora. Most of the twenty-six poems in this section are individual monologues. These monologues allow us to share the personas' experiences and lead us to Bergson's point at which "there is an intuition to be seized." Our understanding

of the poems comes from our understanding of the narrators and their responses to their experience.

The narrator of "The Look-Out" is a good example of H.D.'s use of monologue. Lynceus, the look-out of the Argos and the persona of the poem, conveys to the reader his feelings of seeing too much, knowing too much, being responsible for too much. Lynceus fears "that constant old, old face/ that leaps from each wave . . . in the hope that at last she's [the boat's] lost" (CP,292). He knows, reluctantly yet definitely, "what strange terror lurks in the sea-depth" (CP,294). His tension, his duty, his devotion to the quest are all present and believable. What is significant in the poem, though, is not just the uniqueness of Lynceus' feelings, but the universality of them. We recognize in his particular experience our own stresses, exhaustion, envy for an easier life. We intuit the feelings clearly, because we both see them concretely in Lynceus' voice and person and because we are made to experience them by re-enacting the scene with him. The monologue becomes simultaneously a specific case and the recreation of a timeless moment.

The demand of critics like Swann that the images in various poems must support the story-line is a misinterpretation of the monologues' intent and achievement. In H.D., the images are the story-line, the tangible part of the experience which is the only part that can be conveyed to a reader. What we must remember is not to confuse

narrative monologues with histories. In "Loss," for example, a poem which Swann claims is too brief,¹⁹ the experience of the poem lies in the reader's understanding of the narrator's sense of loss. It is not necessary, therefore, to know who the two friends are nor what they fought for. We recognize the love evoked by "the outline/ no garment could deface" and the loss due to "the gods wanted you back." To perceive this, we need the details of the beloved's wrist, his shorn locks, his curious knee-cap, his beautiful feet. Other data--names and history--would be superfluous, they would add nothing to our understanding.

The majority of H.D.'s narrators are mythological characters. H.D.'s mythological characters are more psychological truths, however, than historical realities. For H.D., as for so many modernists, stock mythological figures are identified in her poetry as "facets in the swift-running, unseizable stream of her own personality."²⁰ They interest her as the means to reconstruct scenes of intuition for her readers. In her use of myth, H.D. would agree with Pound that "the myths are explications of mood: you may stop there or you may probe further."²¹ For H.D., the characters allowed her to represent universal emotional states and to do so concretely.

Frequently though, H.D.'s psychology is truer than her history. H.D. remains true to her characters to the extent of letting them be autonomous, sometimes doing and saying things which are not on record. It is only their

names which differentiate them from the immediate present. Thetis, proud and alone; Penelope, waiting, searching for/longing for a lover; Evadne and Leda, both of whom experience the ecstasy of loving a god; Eurydice, proud of her own strength and thoughts, which will sustain her in hell itself; all of these characters are a synthesis of both tradition and present-day psychology. H.D. allows them to be strong enough personae to be able to change--they may never have actually done what she allows them to do, but we don't see where their actions would be impossible. H.D.'s narrators help to show us her "concern[ed] with life, which changes little from epoch to epoch"22

More and more, the awarenenses, the intuitions H.D. wanted her readers to seize, became more complex. Understanding was contingent on being aware of multiple factors. As a result, she had to expand her poetry well beyond static, single image poems. Personae allowed for some expansion. But H.D. wanted more. She began, after the publication of Collected Poems (1925), to look around at other forms and techniques. The next phase of her career is a period of considerable experimentation. Between 1925 and 1932, she attempts a new kind of poetry, fiction and some cinematography. Although the quality of the projects varies, they form an important link in H.D.'s quest toward her final form and vision.

FOOTNOTES

¹Harriet Monroe, Poets and Their Art (New York: 1926), p. 98, and Aldington, Life, pp. 138-139.

²Amy Lowell, Tendencies in Modern American Poetry (Boston and New York: 1917), p. 246.

³H.D., Collected Poems (New York: 1925), pp. 84-85. Hereafter noted within the text as CP, followed by page number.

⁴Peter Jones, Imagist Poetry (Harmondsworth, England: 1972), p. 28.

⁵Engel, p. 512.

⁶Peter Jones, p. 31.

⁷Ezra Pound, "As for Imagisme," New Age XVI (1915):349.

⁸Louis Untermeyer, Modern American Poetry, 5th rev. ed. (New York: 1936), p. 381.

⁹F. S. Flint, "The Poetry of H.D.," The Egoist II (May 1, 1915):73.

¹⁰Frank A. Doggett, "H.D.: A Study in Sensitivity," Sewanee Review XXXVII (January 1929):4.

¹¹Lowell, p. 256.

¹²Hulme, Speculations, pp. 152-53.

¹³Swann, p. 67.

¹⁴Coffman, p. 99.

¹⁵Levertov, "H.D.: An Appreciation," p. 186.

¹⁶Hugh Witemeyer, The Poetry of Ezra Pound. Forms and Renewal, 1908-1920 (Berkeley: 1969),

¹⁷Coffman, p. 213.

¹⁸I. A. Richards, Principles of Literary Criticism (New York: 1925), pp. 199-200.

¹⁹Swann, p. 70.

²⁰Marjorie Allen Seiffert, "Glacial Bloom," Poetry XXV (December 1924):162.

²¹Ezra Pound, Spirit of Romance (New York: 1953), p. 92.

²²Bryher, "Spear-Shaft and Cyclamen Flower," Poetry VI (March 1922):336.

CHAPTER IV

EXPERIMENTATION: H.D.'S FICTION, CINEMATOGRAPHY AND RED ROSES FOR BRONZE

The six years from 1925 to 1931 mark a period of considerable experimentation for H.D. Although the Imagist movement was over, her poems represented the spirit and achievement of that group's impact on twentieth century prosody. For the next six years, however, H.D. published no book of poems. Instead, she began to write and perform in newly challenging media: fiction and cinematography. From the start of her career, H.D.'s original ideas and her personal curiosity about life and artistic form had led her to experiment with a variety of methods. As her own experiences became more complex and demanding, so did her methods of expression and her themes.

Throughout the late 1920s and early 1930s, H.D.'s life was extremely active. Separated from Aldington and rearing her daughter alone (with assistance from her friend, Bryher), H.D. divided her time between London and Switzerland. This split provided H.D. with opportunities to meet with fellow artists and friends, while also allowing her to devote long stretches of time to her writing. This

dual arrangement is useful to remember, for some critics tend to view H.D. as isolated, a writer separate from the mainstream of modernist writing. Although she needed the months alone in Switzerland to write, H.D. was in close touch with the literary and social activities of London and Paris. Until after World War II, she spent at least some months each year in London. With Bryher's marriage to Robert McAlmon, in 1921, and to Kenneth MacPherson, in 1927, her connections with the avant-garde and expatriate writers in Paris were strengthened. H.D., for example, read most of the material McAlmon published through Contact Press. Through Pound and McAlmon, she had read large portions of Ulysses and Finnegan's Wake before they were officially published. She maintained her friendships and correspondences with both Pound and Williams, as well as with British writers like May Sinclair and Dorothy Richardson. Meanwhile, her continued and close friendship with Bryher encouraged her interests in cinematography and psychology.

In addition to the intellectual stimulation of her friends, H.D. was also coming to the end of a series of travels which would figure both directly and indirectly in her new writing. Since the end of WWI, she had visited Greece, the Scilly Isles, Egypt, Paris, Berlin and America (including a visit to Hollywood and the Southwest, as well as a stay in her parents' home in Philadelphia). The

activity in her life--coupled with her curiosity about all the new places, people and ideas--was bound to be reflected in her writing.

Much of H.D.'s writing during this period was a more obvious reflection of her own experiences and feelings than had been apparent in her earlier poetry. The war and her emotional ties (particularly her marriage to Aldington) were still traumatic incidents which she needed to resolve. The problems she began to explore during this period, then, tended to be less abstract than before. Like Levertov today, H.D. found she could not talk of a subject like love without naming its object. Abstractions (platonic ideals) gave way to specific experiences, experiences no longer discussable in aesthetic or intellectual terms. To talk of love necessitated focusing on a precise experience, most commonly in H.D.'s work, a unique woman's problems with the various men in her life. H.D. began to explore relationships as well as to record the tropistic emotions underlying them. She focused on incidents of betrayal and loss much like her own. She studied with care the conflicts between the spirit and the flesh--a tension which she had come to see as seminal in her own life. Consciously H.D. began to use her writing to place in perspective the elements of her personal experience, to investigate the reasons for her past actions, and to extract some clear understanding and significance from what had happened to her and the world around her.

At first consideration, novels and full-length films may appear disturbingly distant from the short poetic forms normally associated with this poet. Yet these new forms are significantly linked to her earlier work. In both fiction and films, H.D. adapts the major elements of Imagism to new media. Juxtaposition and compression remain her primary modes of structure and development, her use of personae is merely given greater scope and emphasis. The length of her new forms allows for more extensive development of themes which appeared in both her short works and those of other Imagist writers. Most importantly, the basis of Imagist writing, the belief in seeing reality through the concrete image, is still followed. Indeed, this adherence to the philosophic tenets of Imagism is extremely important when considering this period of H.D.'s career. For H.D. (and Pound and Williams as well), the concept of the image was never limited to a single static image. Indeed, the notion of image always included action and motion as well as description. As Pound explained,

The defect of earlier Imagist propaganda was not in misstatement but in incomplete statement. The diluters took the handiest and easiest meaning, and thought only of the stationary image. If you can't think of imagism or phanopoeia as including the moving image, you will have to make a really needless division of fixed image and praxis or action.¹

Without this belief, juxtaposition and its resulting tension, would have been absent from even the earliest Imagist writings. In a sense, this was the point Pound tried to make in his vorticist essays. The image was always

a vortex, a complex of actions and images which led to a single perception, a sudden understanding. With such a definition, increased length and complexity in Imagist writing was not merely possible, but almost inevitable.

H.D.'s fiction, written and published in the five years between 1926 and 1931, is remarkably consistent in form and theme. As a single segment of her career, these works serve as one of the major links between the poetry of the 1910s/1920s and H.D.'s later work. Their themes and techniques are expansions of past areas as well as explorations of some of her newer concerns. H.D.'s first novel, Palimpsest (1926), is an excellent touchstone to understanding H.D.'s work.

Palimpsest juxtaposes three separate stories which, by their proximity and similarity, reveal themselves to be essentially the same. Hence, the book's title: Palimpsest, "a parchment from which one writing has been erased to make room for another." What H.D. emphasizes are the recurring patterns both within sections and between sections. Each story focuses on the experiences of a female protagonist; jointly they form a triptych whose panels illuminate one another the longer they are considered.

The first section of the novel, "Hipparchia: War Rome," takes place around 75 B.C. Hipparchia, a Greek courtesan from Corinth, has taken Marius, a young Roman noble, for her patron-lover. In many ways they are a poorly matched pair. Hipparchia is the daughter of Crates, the

Cynic philosopher, and his wife, the beautiful Hipparchia. The protagonist's past is the intellectual past of all Greece. She is, literally, the daughter of philosophy and beauty. Marius, on the other hand, is Imperial Rome, a soldier, scion of a noble Roman family, Marius is the eternal conqueror, a materialist, a sensualist. He is a child of action and power. From the beginning, Hipparchia recognizes that their relationship is "not, Marius, personal,"² and for both (most overtly, though not necessarily most strongly, for Marius), the relationship is unsatisfactory. Hipparchia's continual obsession with the past ("since when, Decius, has one been able to escape the dead?" PAL,9) makes her, for Marius, not "a woman, but a phantom," PAL,9). This is both Hipparchia's attraction and shortcoming for Marius: Hipparchia forces Marius (often against his desire) to think, not just act. She asks questions which have no answers, or only an answer which will stop Marius from performing his duty. She questions the power and right of Imperial Rome: "Can Rome live forever?" (PAL,19). She demands that he probe the influence of the past on the present: "Who escapes the dead?" (PAL,9).

Marius leaves Hipparchia, his phantom, for Olivia, "so simply, so whole-heartedly a woman," (PAL,24). Olivia is another courtesan, more commonly recognized by Marius' fellow officers for her physical beauty and sensuality. If Hipparchia is the ethereal/intellectual past, Olivia is the very physical/material present. At Marius' suggestion,

Hipparchia leaves the city for the villa and protection of an aesthetic Roman, Verrus--who is immersed in Egyptian antiquities. Verrus is an intellectual, but coldly, not creatively so. He is a scholar rather than an artist. Still, Hipparchia finds herself "matched physically with Quintus Verrus She felt priestess rather than poet, sheltered, appreciated, wholly substantiated in her being," (PAL,43). Hipparchia acceptingly becomes the detached object of Verrus' even more detached adoration.

While living amid the carefully tended garden and library of Verrus' Capua villa, Hipparchia receives letters written by Marius, who is now at the battlefront. Marius, fevered and despondent after a close encounter with death, writes that only the name, the memory of Hipparchia kept him alive. "It seems the deepest abyss of my unreliable being claims your bounty: Hipparchia, a name, saved me," (PAL,51). Hipparchia returns to Rome, leaving Verrus to return to Marius, creating an even more complex dilemma for them both. Between them lay too many painful experiences. Facing her, Marius is reminded of the death and the battlefield horror through which her memory sustained him: "Hipparchia. To see you reminds me only of death, the terror, the horrible and final waiting," (PAL,64). Hipparchia sees in Marius the betrayal to Olivia "Now if Marius touched her, she felt her very form beneath those equalising soft hands turn, by some enchanter's craft, into the very substance of Olivia," (PAL,66). Marius' betrayal was not only

physical, but a rejection of "the heady supersensuousness of Spirit," (PAL,65), which is the real Hipparchia. Marius again leaves Hipparchia for Olivia.

Alone, Hipparchia is forced to recognize that neither Marius nor Verrus is sufficient to her own needs. She is finally where her reflections foretold, "wait[ing] on white sand, whiter than polished stone . . . wait[ing] fitly for some god, a suitable Helios, for lover. Marius, Verrus. Intransient, alluring; false utterly" (PAL,56). She needs her own identity, her own achievement. Her relationships with men have shown her that she desires "intimacy without intercourse" (PAL,67). She leaves for the country, with her old Greek maid, to resume work on a manuscript which will synthesize poetry and botanical information. This project had been researched and planned with her young uncle, Philip, before his death and her move to Rome. Writing, "she was back with the family problem treading round and round and round" (PAL,67). What confronts her is an extreme form of mind-body split. Hipparchia immerses herself in the intellectual act of creating the book, working until she is "in a state of drugged intellectual sensuality" (PAL,77). Her immersion is so complete, her break with the physical and material world around her so total, that she awaits her personal revelation from the gods. "She no longer repudiates her mother's mystical decision . . . She was sure now she had it. God kissed her shoulder" (PAL,81).

But her final revelation comes not in submission to the gods, but as an interruption to her receptive, trance-like world. A young Roman girl, Julia Augusta, comes to purchase original manuscripts from Hipparchia. She acclaims Hipparchia's poetry and recalls Hipparchia's presence in the world with the statement--the answer in part to Hipparchia's quest to understand her past and her identity--"Greece is a spirit. Greece is not lost" (PAL,94). Julia gives Hipparchia a reason to continue her work rather than lapse into "absolute peace" (PAL,92) and lethargy. What is affirmed is not the intellectual or the physical in isolation, but the human desire to quest after spiritual enlightenment.

The second section of Palimpsest, "Murex: War and Post War London," skips forward two thousand years to 1926. At first glance the story seems not particularly similar to that of Hipparchia, but the parallels become obvious as the episode progresses. The central character is Raymonde Ransom, a poet who writes under the penname of Ray Bart. Raymonde is asked by a mutual friend to speak to a young stranger, Ermy Solomon, whose artist-lover has been seduced by another mutual acquaintance, Mavis. Ermy comes to talk to Raymonde, ostensibly to obtain letters of introduction to people in Florence, but really because ten years earlier Mavis had similarly betrayed Raymonde's friendship by appropriating her husband, Freddie. Raymonde, who on her trips to London was able to "blur[red] her acute

perceptions . . . be in a state of expectation . . . [a] twilight of the spirit" (PAL,95), does not wish to see Ermy. She particularly does not wish to confront her own past which she has been successfully repressing. Ten years ago, while recuperating from a miscarriage, Raymonde had asked Mavis to "Look after Freddie. Freddie is due on leave. Look after Freddie" (PAL,114). Mavis looks after Freddie by seducing him. Ultimately, Freddie and Raymonde are estranged and Freddie fails to become the poet both Raymonde and he had planned. The afternoon meeting with Ermy forces Raymonde to focus on both the present (Ermy's loss of a lover) and the past (her own loss of Freddie). As Ermy tells her story, the past is both reviewed and revitalized. Raymonde is forced finally to come to understand her relationship with Freddie, Mavis' betrayal, the birth of her stillborn daughter, even the war itself.

But if Ermy's visit revives the past, Raymonde's understanding is completed only by the transmutation of these experiences into poetry, the metamorphosis of Raymonde Ransom to Ray Bart. Ray Bart the poet had come to realize that art gives back the eternal pattern--the frozen moment of understanding. "Art was magic . . . Poetry was to remember" (PAL,155). For Ray Bart, memory transforms experience into knowledge. Seeing the configuration of relationships, Ray Bart can transform the experience into epiphanic verse and thereby understand its significance.

The completion of Ray Bart's poem at the end of the story signals the final understanding of Raymonde Ransom and the reader.

The final section, "Secret Name: Excavator's Egypt," takes place at Karnak, 1926. The story revolves around the American and British travelers visiting Tutankhamen's tomb at Karnak and the relationships set up within the group. The central character is Helen Fairwood, an expatriate American writer who hopes, much as Hipparchia in the first section, to be given a direct personal inspiration. "She wanted to drag up from some drowned region of human consciousness those very stones. She wanted to dive deep, deep, courageously down into some unexploited region of the consciousness, into some common deep sea of unrecorded knowledge and bring, triumphant, to the surface some treasure buried, lost, forgotten" (PAL,179).

A student of Greece (author of several intense articles), Helen comes to Egypt warily, fearing two sides of a single coin: first, her Greek heritage will exclude her from new (Egyptian) revelations and second, Egyptian revelations will destroy Greece:

Yet she was well on guard, fearful from the start, lest for very rapture of this other world, this anodyne of Egypt, she might lose her slightly more familiar, hard-won, specific Attic paradise. Aware too of danger in another direction. She might so very easily, with so slight a mental faux-pas, through curiosity, mere inquisitiveness, desire to use the steel she had so hardly won, forego, past remedy, her right of entry to this just-found Egypt. On the specific prowl. She feared lest with cautious

Attic brain, she might freeze at a moment of discovery. Lest at a moment where cool pulse is requisite, she might flame into some self-destructive aura (PAL,176).

Helen discovers that the two need not be incompatible; indeed, they may be complementary: Greece is human knowledge and intellect at work; Egypt is unconscious knowledge and mysticism. Before arriving at this recognition, Helen must work out parallels between the two cultures. The most distant past is Egypt, man's unconscious, while Greece is modern Western man, man the thinker. Interwoven with this larger synthesis of cultures is Helen's understanding of her personal past, part of which is illustrated in her response to her young American doppelganger, Maryland.

H.D.'s methodology and themes in Palimpsest are extensions of techniques and themes she was beginning to develop in her early poetry. Poets like Mark Van Doren noted after reading Palimpsest that "its idiom is not very different from that of her poetry."³ Although another genre, the novel's structural reliance on juxtaposition and compression, repetition, and more completely developed characters is less a break with her previous writings than a building on them. The use of "poetic" techniques in prose is a trademark of modernist fiction, be the author Joyce, Woolf, Barnes, Hemingway, or H.D. The result is not prose poems, but a kind of concentrated, Imagistic fiction. It is the kind of prose that Eliot recognized in Djuna

Barnes' Nightwood as having "appeal primarily to readers of poetry."⁴ In both genres,

the sequence of images coincides and concentrates into one intense expression The reader has to allow the images to fall into his memory successively without questioning the reasonableness of each at the moment; so that, at the end, a total effect is produced.

Such selection of a sequence of images and ideas has nothing chaotic about it. There is a logic to the imagination as well as a logic of concepts.⁵

In Palimpsest, juxtaposition is the technique which provides the reader with his or her awareness of the imaginative logic of the novel. Each of the three sections is, in effect, a single complex image placed contrapuntally against the other two. The major themes of the book are best understood by comparing and contrasting the sections. Characters, situations and emotions are all shown to be interrelated. While each section works as a single unit, within each section are multiple image clusters whose likenesses are similarly understood only in juxtaposition with one another.

The three women protagonists of the novel, Hipparchia, Raymonde and Helen, are vivified and vitalized for the reader through their comparisons and contrasts in the three opposing stories. Each woman is a questor, seeking understanding on both a personal and universal scale. Each woman seeks to achieve a clear sense of identity. In at least two cases (Hipparchia and Raymonde) they are helped to their self-definition by their artistry. Even Helen is partially

defined by her work: as a writer-researcher, however, she is the only one of the three not presently working on her writing. Each of the protagonists tries to define herself without attachment to other people, particularly men. Each is haunted by her past and acknowledges the need to both understand it and reconcile it to her present. Each is involved at some point in her story with a younger woman in whom they see either themselves reflected or themselves as teachers. For Hipparchia, Julia Augusta comes at a crucial moment. Her desire to learn and preserve the spirit that was Greece jars Hipparchia out of her lethargy and motivates her reintegration into reality. Ermy is a partial mirror for Raymonde Ransom--their experience with Mavis is very similar. Helen Fairwood sees in Maryland the young American she once was, facing a similar threshold of experience. Each of the three central characters is an ex-patriate--Hipparchia, a Greek transplanted to Rome; Raymonde, an American in London and Switzerland; Helen, another American in Europe (first Greece and England, now Egypt). Each is an intellectual; each has lost a lover (has, really, been rejected by a lover); all are attracted to similar men: materialistic, martial (each is a soldier), sensual, intellectual (but pragmatically so, not aesthetic), sensitive but not cultivated. All three women are maternal, nurturing both men and the younger women with whom they are involved. All three are more spiritual than physical in

their attraction to men. All are sensitive to aura and nuance. Their similarities, by their recurrence in all three sections, accentuate the qualities in each of the characters. The fever to create in Hipparchia, for example, is rekindled in the transformation of Raymonde Ransom into Ray Bart. Similarly, the desire to understand the unconscious or unknowable is strengthened by the importance of Egypt to both Helen Fairwood and Hipparchia, the submerged feelings of both Raymonde and Helen. The desire to confront the past is imperative in all three.

The three female protagonists also contrast one another, and thus clarify their individual personalities. They are at different points in their relationships with other people. Although all are involved with men, their involvement takes varying forms. Hipparchia is in the midst of her affairs. She is still working out choices: Marius, Verrus or Philip. More metaphysically, she is trying to choose between Osiris and Helios (again male gods represented by male characters). Her rejection and response to rejection is occurring at the moment. Raymonde Ransom's story takes place ten years after the original event, but she is still working through it. Her repression has removed the physical choice, but she is now forced to resolve the questions of blame and the use of memories. Helen is far removed from romantic (passionate) entanglements, to the extent that they are not the real issue of her life.

The women are also at different points in their relationships with the younger female figures in their respective stories. Hipparchia sees Julia Augusta as someone separate from her, someone she can act as guide and teacher to. Raymonde Ransom starts with the idea that she and Ermy are different, that her role will be that of teacher, but before the end of the sequence, she sees many similarities between herself and Ermy. As a result, their relationship is more that of equals than instructor-pupil. Helen Fairwood makes the most complete identification with her protege. Maryland is seen as a facet of an earlier Helen. In Maryland, Helen sees, quite frankly, herself in the past.

The women also provide variations on the creative process. All, are writers, yet each presents a slightly different view of the creating process. Helen Fairwood is less immediately involved in creation than the other two. In her story, she is taking a vacation from her work. The other two, however, present almost opposing views on the creative process. Hipparchia represents complete withdrawal. To write her scholarly work, Hipparchia leaves not only her Roman lovers: she emotionally withdraws from all human relationships. She feels herself isolated, waiting for a god (Helios or Osiris) to come to her, engage her. Raymonde Ransom provides a different view of creation. For her, creation is confrontation--facing the explosive

feelings of the past and for the first time being able to represent them in her work. For her, art is created from life, and serves as a fusion of understanding and image. The bulk of her story shows that she makes a poem from the experience of seeing Ermy. Ermy's visit has compelled her to search her own experience and to see, for the first time, through the pain of her rejection to an understanding of the almost archetypal occurrence that it represents. Although Raymonde usually is isolated from others when she writes, it is a physical isolation only. She must actively reconstruct her experiential world in order to find both the patterns and images which will give shape to her new awarenesses.

The novel is enriched by the fact that the three protagonists are individuals, as well as multiple facets of a single universal character. Besides contrasting each other, all of them are contrasted to other characters within their own section. This constant comparing by juxtaposition helps to even more sharply delineate their personalities.

In "Hipparchia," we are constantly seeing Hipparchia comparing herself to her mother and to Olivia. These two women represent the extremes of Hipparchia's choices: the elder Hipparchia completely relinquishes the material world for the intellectual; Olivia is the complete sensualist/materialist. In Hipparchia's vacillating responses to each of these women, we perceive her uncertainties, her

insecurities, her doubts and her desires. The contrast between Hipparchia and Olivia is obvious. Physically, even, they are opposites. Hipparchia is finely-drawn, spiritual, light; Olivia is soft, sensual, dark. While Hipparchia is "the strange, the spiritualized, the slightly bizarre," Olivia is "common and inconsiderable . . . not too precious, not too exquisite" (PAL,23). Marius sees in Hipparchia the attenuated mind, in Olivia the voluptuous body.

The comparison and contrast between Hipparchia and her mother, the elder Hipparchia, is much more complex and reveals more of the conflicts Hipparchia feels. Having the same name, it is little wonder that Hipparchia feels the need to separate and identify herself. Even her position as a courtesan is, in part, a response to her mother more than a reaction to external events. The elder Hipparchia left wealth and finery ("I kept no tunic with bright gem / nor shoes the Asiatics wear, / not the myrrh-scented diadem!" (PAL,18) to follow her philosopher-husband. She abandoned the material world, in a literal sense, for the intellectual. Hipparchia tries, through her affair with Marius, to touch a different world--a physical, sensual world. Even her liaison with Verrus was an attempt to show that spirit "dwelt in flesh as well as intellect" (PAL,93). She imagines herself constantly confronting the elder Hipparchia, explaining her choices. Even in the end, when her phantom mother recognizes her return to work on the manuscript and gives a modified version of "I told you so"

("I could have told you there was no use" (PAL,78)),

Hipparchia asserts her need to have discovered her own truth:

I tell you mother, mother that they helped me. . . . I have this, Hipparchia. I found it on the way back. It will endure. It will stamp me as one of the chosen of Wisdom. My fame excels as Wisdom's must excel mere winners of hill games. So yours. So mine. But mine would not have excelled had it been a mere feeble copy, a counterfeit of yours (PAL,78).

This compulsive demand for self-identity and self-actualization runs throughout not only Hipparchia's sections, but all H.D.'s writings. Hipparchia's conscious awareness of opposite alternatives explains her conflicting attractions to Verrus and Marius; her movement towards both aestheticism and passion; even her endeavor to create and her final revelation that "wisdom was misdirected endeavor" (PAL,86). Hipparchia cannot be her mother, nor can she be Olivia. But her search for something of her own becomes all the more vivid against the backdrop of the other two women in her life.

In a similar manner of juxtaposing, we come to understand the characters of Verrus, Marius and Philip by what they separately come to represent to Hipparchia. Each symbolizes an alternative philosophy. Philip is the pure intellect, the asexual, the representative of Hipparchia's Grecian past. Marius is the pragmatic present. He is a seeker, too, of sorts, but his is a search for applicable knowledge. He is the conqueror, in contrast to Philip, who is the civilizer. Verrus is the non-striver--he is beyond striving for knowledge and signifies for Hipparchia

forgetfulness, detachment. Not surprisingly, the contrasts are intensified by their associations with specific cultures. Philip is Greece, Marius is Imperial Rome, Verrus is mystical Egypt. Hipparchia's time with each is an exploration of cultural potentials. In the end, her choice to be alone is an act of synthesis rather than fragmentation, for from each she has learned something more of herself.

The juxtaposition of characters and cultures is not limited to Hipparchia's section of the novel. "Murex" provides an even more complicated set of comparisons for Raymonde Ransom. Raymonde must be understood against the figures of Ermy, Mavis, and her own alter-ego, Ray Bart. Although her betrayal by Mavis and Freddie is similar to Ermy's, she reacts differently. Her facade of cool acquiescence is more self-protective than Ermy's apparent pain. Her ability to detach herself intellectually from both hers and Ermy's experiences allows her to understand an eternal pattern which Ermy cannot. As Raymonde recognizes, while listening to Ermy, "It was not Ermentrude that Raymonde saw, not the Ermentrude seeing herself in a mirror in a pretty bed-room at the Landour's. It was not Ermy that faces her in her own room. It was Raymonde" (PAL,110). Although similar, of the same generation as Mavis, although superficially involved with the same people, Raymonde maintains an integrity which Mavis does not. Her love included a desire to help Freddie as a poet; Mavis stops him from ever writing anything good again. Raymonde respects the

patterns of life, while Mavis breaks them--not always to go through them, but because she is unaware of them.

Again, in this section, parallels are made between people and cultures. Ermy, a Jew, is the representative of Eastern knowledge. Her mystical awareness of nuance and patterns corresponds to the Egyptian element in Hipparchia's section. Freddie and Mavis (and possibly Martin, Ermy's lover) are modern materialists. They correspond both indirectly and directly to the Romans of Hipparchia's story. Ray Bart and Raymonde are intellectual, associated with images of light and the Greek past. The reader must add knowledge of these types from Book I to understand Book II. In particular, Freddie and Mavis, who are talked about only obliquely, are made clearer through our earlier view of Marius and Olivia. Further, both Raymonde Ransom and the reader are drawn into Ermy's story (and therefore Raymonde's subsequent personal confrontation with her past) by the similarities between Freddie and Martin.

Similarly, in the final triad "Secret Name," the characters continue to serve as foils to one another and to the characters who have proceeded them in the novel. Helen Fairwood is quick to note that "Maryland is exactly the sort of child more or less I was . . . when I first crossed" (PAL,204). Both came to Europe looking for some values, knowledge beyond that offered in their native country. Both sought a world of new experiences, of culture, of art and the intellect. For Maryland, this new world is her

first glimpse of Europe. For Helen, long in Europe, this quest for experience has broadened. Her expectations are now different. She is able to recognize the positive elements of America that Maryland and the younger Helen could not. She has become more distanced. But she is still similar to Maryland in her present situation: her excitement and apprehension over Egypt (a new world, different from her previous world of Greek-based Western Europe), is equivalent to Maryland's expectations for Europe.

Maryland and Helen are also contrasted in their relations to men. Helen is presently aloof. Although Mrs. Fairwood, she is not trapped by love. Mr. Fairwood is not to be seen, seems not to exist. She appears not to use love as a means of self-definition or escape. She is attracted to Captain Rafton, but the attraction is only incidentally physical. Maryland, on the other hand, is attracted to Jerry as an escape, as an expansive experience. For her, he is the incarnation on a personal level of Europe. Helen understands what this symbolic Europe means to Maryland, for it has meant at different times the same to her: "Freedom from social self-imposed restrictions, from maternal, fraternal or paternal solitudes" (PAL,231). More and more, as she chaperons Maryland and Jerry, Helen perceives the fundamental similarities between herself and Maryland:

For weren't she and Mary in their outlook singularly, even as the captain had last night on the home trip

insinuated, alike? The same gaunt frames, thin with that underlayer of reserve power, of strength, that frequently brings certain types of thin-boned women more than their share of unsolicited sympathy. . . . Thin and virile, the two were temperamentally matched and physically. The sun smote alike on her and on young Mary. . . . Infatuated, both of them, come down to dots, with life, with some adventure, wherein Love might come, would come, temperamentally, destructively, but which in the end would free them.

(PAL, 230-31).

This belief in the adventure of Love is an underlying theme throughout the entire novel. For the younger characters or versions of the protagonists, the search may be the actual search for Love. For the older protagonists (all three) this Love is transmuted into love of knowledge--understanding.

The juxtaposing of Greece, Rome, Egypt and the present serves throughout Palimpsest to illuminate their likenesses, the recurring patterns between periods. Each culture becomes a cluster of associations, some of whose uniqueness is mirrored or sharpened by similar patterns in another period. This development of a compressed, complex image for each civilization corresponds to Pound's definition of a Vortex. By repetition, the reiteration of images and phrases, each image accrues meaning by continual re-appearance at strategic moments. Although each image does not "represent" something specifically (it is not a precisely defined symbol), the attachment of incidents to these images does serve as a touchstone for the reader.

One of the most common devices used to create these images is repetition of color. Frequently in Palimpsest colors are used to foreground emotions and experiences.

If the three sections of the novel are considered a visual triptych, certain colors predominate in each panel. "Hipparchia" is infused with shades of yellow and gold, the bright colors of Hipparchia, who sees herself as the child of Helios. Hipparchia's room is "honey-colored hyacinth" (PAL,3), she seems a "tall golden spike of some pulsating lily" (PAL,4). The color yellow is not merely the saffron garb of a courtesan. It is the final color of Helios' "pure honey-white flame" of inspiration and Aphrodite's "pure gold" ideal love. The yellow/gold motif is another sign of Hipparchia's spirituality. "Murex," on the other hand, is smokey blue, the color of hydrangea, of Mavis Landour's eyes, of Raymonde in the mirror, of the Tyrian blue hyacinths of Ray Bart's poem, of the soldiers' eyes as they march away. Its blue is the motif for Raymonde Ransom's expanding sea of consciousness. It is the unconscious world of the murex, brought to the surface. "Secret Name" is black: the black opal of the tombs, the dark bronze figure of Captain Rafton, the shadow-dark world of Karnak at night, the black of shrouded mystery. The constant repetition of these colors link on an almost subconscious level the objects being described, and is very much a transferred technique from H.D.'s poetry.

Other unifying images connect the three sections. In all of them, water becomes a conscious referent for understanding, particularly subconscious knowledge. The image is strongest in "Murex" where a key question in

Raymonde Ransom's mind is "Who fished the murex up?"--who stirred the mind's depth? Rephrased, the question becomes, who understands the universal, the truth behind the particular experience? Raymonde tries to answer the question in her alter-ego of Ray Bart, the poet:

The murex was just that. Not particularly trenchant, old-fashioned, but her own gem. Her own treasure. Deep-sea fishing. . . . Down, down, down. . . . Verses, verses, verses. Who fished the murex up? Verses were the murex. . . . Life was one huge deep sea and flat on its surface, merging, mingling was the business of existence. Verses. That meant diving, deep, deep, deep--Who fished the murex up? And where? Landor in Tuscany. Keats' room on the Piazza di Spagna, Shelley on some wild Genoa sail-boat; Byron in Athens. Who fished the murex up? And where? Not here, not here, Freddie. Drift and obliteration and Mavis in her green-blue and aquamarines. Who-fished-the-murex-up?

(PAL,160)

The murex is the poem, the transformation of experience into knowledge. The poet, to create art, must enter into a world of subconscious (sometimes unconscious) awareness. The poets--Landor, Keats, Shelley, Byron--all managed to create, to project their awareness into poetic forms. Freddie, whose war experience showed him "there ain't going to be no afterwards. There ain't going to be no poets. Only one--. . . Raybart" (PAL,737), could not. Indeed, it is only as the magical transformation from Raymonde Ransom to Ray Bart occurs, that Raymonde can deal with her perceptions. From deep in the waters of her unconscious, through her use of revitalized memory, Raymonde is able to come to new understandings.

Likewise, Helen in "Secret Name" is seeking some new, deeper psychological understanding. Having decided "it was utterly Athenian starkly to define, to outline in terms of thought every human emotion," she now seeks to understand "this intermediate state where shadows of bronze palms were soft and fern-like, where thought and emotion were delicately merged" (PAL,193). To pursue her quest, Helen comes to see herself as

speckled like a fish, was a fish that some sun had speckled with gold that has sunk down, down to some unexplored region of the consciousness, that had sunk, loosing in the sinking beneath wave and wave of comforting obscurity, shape, identity.

(PAL,221)

With Helen, the exploration of Egypt and its mysticism is compared to fishing. As one begins to open up to this kind of experience it is like a "drop, drop down from the edge of the flat earth into some realm, deep, hidden from the curious, prodding brain" (PAL,230).

Even Hipparchia's section is linked to the other two by less obtrusive water images. Although not "fishing," Hipparchia waits, in the rain at Tusculum, for her personal revelation (her understanding). Writing her poems in a "dire campagna mist," she, like Ray Bart, is metaphorically diving into an unknown world to bring back understanding.

Not merely visual images, but sounds (words and phrases) recur within each section, serving as thematic evocations as well as refrains. H.D.'s use of language in Palimpsest is a turning point in her technical development.

The prose of the novel is unique; it is not merely the impressionistic prose of Woolf and the early Joyce. Rather, it verges on the incantational and transformational prose of Joyce's Finnegan's Wake. Robert Duncan describes its unique quality well when he notes that:

Language becomes throughout a ground of suggestion and association, a magic ground. . . . We must come back and back to the same place and find it subtly altered each time like a traveler bewitched by lords of the fairy, until he is filled with a presence he would not otherwise have admitted. Here it is not past time or present time but the blur, the erasure that is the magic ground in which an image may appear.⁶

It is with this intent and to this end that H.D. uses auditory as well as visual imagery.

"Murex" has a particularly poignant merging of visual and auditory imagery. This imagery becomes the field of past experience upon which Raymonde Ransom will make her new discoveries. The association starts when

There was a sound of feet. There were feet, feet, feet, feet passing up Sloane Street on the way to Victoria. London had forgotten. She was one with London. She had forgotten. She came to London to forget--feet, feet, feet, feet. . . . London blurred her over, permeated her and she (with London) had forgotten--feet--feet--feet--feet--Feet were passing on the way to Victoria Station. Feet were passing on the way to Victoria. Carry on. Carry on. Carry on. She had forgotten feet, feet, feet, feet. . . . Raymonde wasn't going to face the matter. If Mavis wanted the young man and if Mavis got the young man--All's fair in love and--feet, feet, feet, feet.

(PAL, 98-99)

The marching feet are the echo of the past, Raymonde's experience of World War I in London where soldiers were constantly marching to the troop trains. Within a page,

another association is added: her husband, Freddie. Freddie is one of the feet, part of her suppressed past.

Her [Ermy's] husband. O bother. Let her keep her husband out of it. Raymonde didn't want to hear anything whatever about Ermy's husband. . . . O, do keep quiet. Let it alone. Feet, feet, feet, feet, feet. London had forgotten. Raymonde wanted to shout at Ermy, "play the game. Shut up. Don't you see I am, everyone is always fighting, always fighting to--forget? Like London--to forget--feet--feet--feet--feet--feet? . . . anything was better than talking about husbands and feet--feet--feet--feet--feet.

(PAL,100)

Lying in the hospital, in childbirth, Raymonde heard the marching past her window. Another association is acquired: the marching feet are related in some way to her own labor and stillborn child.

Long ago. Far and far and far as far as a buried Egyptian's neatly painted coffin, as far even as 1917. It was settled then forever. It was settled then forever. Feet--feet--feet--feet--Or was it a heart beating? There seemed to be a succession of muffled treadings, of slidings, of slitherings even as she looked at Ermy.

(PAL,110)

The associative power of "feet, feet, feet, feet" becomes even more merged with her labor, as the nurse speaks to her. "She heard it with the sound of feet--feet--feet--feet--feet. 'It will be much worse before it's any better'" (PAL, 141). And "it" does get worse: Raymonde's daughter is still-born while outside her window the war's slaughter of an entire generation continues. The sound of marching feet grows to become the auditory image for the world shattered by war:

Everything's altered horribly. That was the crux of the whole dreary matter. Everything had so horribly altered and there were new ways of looking at things

and Raymonde and her like were centuries apart (who of their generation wasn't) from the young people who weren't, all in all, so much younger than they were. Feet, feet, feet, feet, feet. There was no use going on. Everything in life was blighted, still-born--that was the crux of the matter. Feet, feet, feet, feet, feet. They were a still-born generation.

(PAL,117).

The final transmutation of feet occurs when her association with death, the war and Freddie pivots to focus on Freddie, his stillborn-poetry, the pre-war past and her own poetic creations.

That pain and that sound and that rhythm of pain and that rhythm of departure were indissolubly wedded. Or was it her heart beating? Feet, feet, feet, feet. No, Freddie, no Freddie not metres. Not poems. Not that kind of feet. Not trochaic, iambic or whatever, not verse, free or otherwise. I am listening to something. To feet, feet, feet, but not that kind, not your kind Freddie. No not iambic feet, not beat and throb of metre, no Freddie. I don't want to write it.

(PAL,145-146)

Despite her disclaimers, it is precisely this transfiguration which was taken place. To deal with the pain and loss, she must turn to Freddie's feet, to poetry. All the other feet, all the other associations, will be fused into this new meaning for feet. It is only the creation of Ray Bart's poem which allows Raymonde to fully confront her experience, to complete the cycle of her understanding.

Faces, people, London. People, faces, Greece. Greece, people faces. Egypt. James Joyce was right. On, on, on, on, and out of it like some deep-sea jewel pulled up in a net squirming with an enormous catch of variegated squirming tentacled and tendrilled memories, just this, this--who fished the murex up? Who, who, who? Was it a question of American, French, or Indian? Was it a matter of Greece, Rome or Petrograd? The gem, the eternal truth, the eternal law, the song, saga was beyond the shallow boundary of nationality.

(PAL,157-58)

Although the feet sequence is the most pervasive, H.D. continually uses other words as avatars to link moments within her novel. In all cases, there is more than playful rhyming going on--there is the exploration of meaning through sound and association. Another good example is again in "Murex." Again, it is not a point-by-point accumulation to a single, defined symbol; it is an auditory thread which links two entirely different moments within the story. Ermy's complaint against Mavis' duplicity is a hydra--no matter how Raymonde tries to help Ermy resolve her loss, Ermy's question of how and why Mavis took Martin is a "recurring hydra" (109). Listening to it, Raymonde makes some connections between her own past and Ermy's hydra-like questioning.

And so on and so on. It would never end. Go on like that interminably and a blue hydrangea seemed to flame, a frail blue smoke-bush of smoke-blue flower. A blue hydrangea disentangled itself from all the over-layer of blurred reminiscence that was Raymonde's formula for London. Nebulous reminiscence, through which ran thread of all too vibrant colour. Colour. Blue, smoke-blue that was the oddest comment on the blue eyes that regarded her across it. The blue eyes of Mavis by some miracle just had not matched (like the subtle blend on some rue d'Echelle spring model) the smoke-blue of the flowering bush. The blue of the hydrangea made a cloud against the wall . . .

(PAL, 112-13)

The hydra has sonally as well as figuratively transformed--or melted into--a blue hydrangea, which flames and turns into Mavis' eyes. This blue flame/blue eye image appears throughout Raymond's working out of her own past. All the soldiers have blue eyes; Freddie has blue eyes. Another

link has been forged, with sound, which shows Mavis, Freddie, the war and death all held in a continuum. They are held together by Eliot's "logic of the imagination" rather than the logic of concepts. A second strand comes from the blue flame. The flame is and remains a sign of illumination, for both Raymonde and the reader. The laws of Delphi and Christ which Ray Bart affirms as most important are "cloud and fire. They permeated the temple of ancient Greece like blue incense" (PAL,158). The images, though, are extended even further. Blue flame comes to signify an understanding of eternal patterns, eternal values. For Raymonde, in the end, "Antiquity showed through the semi-transparence of shallow modernity like blue flame through the texture of some jelly-fish-like deep-sea creature" (PAL,158). Although here the visual image dominates, its primary source in Raymonde's mind is the sonal link between hydra and hydrangea.

Other word plays are even more consistently sonal. In "Hipparchia," the Greek script "aie" is transmuted to the Roman "ave," matching Hipparchia's acceptance first of allusion (which "aie" represents), then renunciation ("ave" equalling farewell):

I, like Phoebus reading his love's name on the flower-leaf, may yet take comfort. Your eyebrows, Hipparchia, deft black, pencilled for my dismissal are engraved somewhat on my spirit, if Rome has yet a spirit. I take comfort in departure, reading across your wide brow the letters of allusion. Aie, aie. Your Greek script aie. And in my Roman I will simply parry Ave."
(PAL,12)

Later, in one of her dreams, Hipparchia sees Io becoming Isis and Eros becoming Horus. The sounds are important in this transformation, just as they are for Helen Fairwood in "Secret Name," who, seeking to link Greek to Egyptian, finds herself looking at flowers, at irises:

Iris; I don't really think of iris here. It's so essentially a Greek flower. But Isis, it's almost the same thing.

(PAL,226)

The little Nike birth-house, in a way a shrine to Isis, is blue, like irises: "Blue, cobalt, blue again, the burning blue fire of the iris. Isis, iris, wasn't it almost the same . . ." (PAL,232). The words (their sounds more than their meanings) link the reader's ideas, even when one would least expect it. They also become thematic links in H.D.'s story-telling.

A final example of sound as a connective (structural) element in the novel is again from "Murex." Part of the reason for the proponderance of sound play and rhyming in "Murex" is the fact that this section is written extensively in stream-of-consciousness narration. In this section, the reader follows Ray Bart's (Raymonde Ransom's) thought process, in which she makes free associations based on both logical and sonal cohesiveness:

It must be late, late. Time for bed. Pull down the wine-blue cover and unroll one's night things and sleep--sleep--sleep--bed--Army. One couldn't betray one of her race for nothing. And thou too, Brutus. Where some buried Caesar bled. Bled--bed. Army on a bed. She could see her. Bed, bled, dead. She could see Army dead. Dead for she was never alive in this

milieu. She was not of this milieu. She would always be a misfit, but it didn't do to betray them. Not Jews. It was lacking in taste to betray one of the East. An Arab, a Jew. One didn't. One just couldn't. Respect for--learning. . . . Ermy was a formula. Dead, alive or half-alive. Unopened, unawakened. Martin was right. She was unawakened. She was dead.

(PAL,160-61).

The first link in this progression is logical: sleep leads to bed and bed links to Ermy's confrontation, in the bedroom, with Mavis and Martin. Sleep also relates to Ermy and her awareness of betrayal. For a period, Ermy is asleep to what is happening around her. Betrayal as an idea leads to Caesar, who was betrayed. Caesar's betrayal led to his death; his stab wounds bled. Thus, a link, both logical and sonal, between bed and bled. "Bed, bled, dead." The rhyming is as strong a link here as the image. Then there is a thematic shift to Ermy as dead, or at least non-human, not of this world. She is "one of the East," a formula who means something. What she means is not explicit. For, as Raymonde realizes, she has long fled the understanding of her own past that Ermy triggers. Ermy is an abstraction, one of the pieces in some eternal pattern. The closed circle of rhyme made by the words creates a circle of associations. Around and around both sight and sound go in Raymonde's mind, in the readers' minds, until the movement goes outside itself and sees the center--the meaning--of the whole episode.

Palimpsest conscientiously shows events and their effect on one another. H.D. seems to be working on some of the areas that critics pointed out as weak in her Collected

Poems, while striving to maintain certain strengths. The visual element--the concrete imagery--is still here. So is H.D.'s rather unusual use of repetition as a connective element. Added to this is a stronger narrative voice. Partly, this is due to the genre. Fiction presupposes a more elaborate, multifaceted presentation of experience than poetry. Frequently it provides the writer with space and time rarely available in a poem. Rather than a single register of one experience on a single sensibility, the novel permits more development of character and incidents, a stronger storyline and the recreation as well as response to events. If the characters are stronger individuals vs. disembodied sensibilities, it is due to seeing them in multiple situations, through multiple vantage points. Through flashbacks and stream-of-consciousness segments, we see more clearly our main characters. Raymonde Ransom is only understandable, to herself as well as the reader, when she confronts her past in her flashbacks. Likewise we learn of her not just by observing her conversation with Ermy but by pursuing her thoughts and associations as well. We get all the ramifications of her confrontation scene with Ermy, for example:

"I keep my candles in my desk drawer. These desks nowadays are very useful." Candles, desk, drawers. Illumination, inspiration, feet, feet, feet, feet, feet. Freddie. Who had changed him? Feet, feet, feet, feet, feet. Raymonde now recognized all of her old stability, her old not-quite-diminished glory as a meaner not so rare quality of just sheer feline caution. She had been too proud. Unlike Ermy she had not arraigned poor

Mavis. Raymonde had been too proud to admit that Freddie had so altered. If she said to herself even then that Mavis had so changed him, she had recognised his weakness, and hers for so championing him. Freddie was weak or he couldn't so have altered. It was not Mavis. It was Freddie's fundamental weakness.

(PAL,119)

In this scene, Raymonde is talking with Ermy, when she directs their attention to her desk, which serves as a reminder of Mavis' excuse to Ermy for being in Martin's bedroom. What follows in Raymonde's mind is a play on the idea of candles--which is what she is looking for in the desk. Candles are a source of illumination; illumination leads to inspiration when Raymonde transforms into Ray Bart. This idea of understanding (illumination) is extended by the feet which (as both the war and as poetry) have given Raymonde her awarenesses (her illumination). Finally, Raymonde faces a pivotal question in her working through the situation with Freddie and Mavis: who changed Freddie? For the first time, Raymonde does find an answer: Freddie. With this recognition comes an understanding of her own response, her own repression of the event over the years. Her pride has refused to let her see certain truths about Freddie and herself. Multiple views of supportive characters is also common. We learn of Marius Decius, for example, from Hipparchia (who sees him in her unhappiness as "a rather bulbous vegetable . . . no cabbage but a turnip" (PAL,11)), from Sergius Gaius (a fellow soldier who worries that the officer whose head "was the head of some fine gladiator as yet unspoiled by Rome's corrupting favorites"

(PAL,20) is being emotionally undermined by a Greek hetaira), from Olivia (who simply wants him, who returns to him his ability to live on the surface of things), from his own letters to Hipparchia, from both the implicit and explicit comparisons made between him and Verrus and Philip, and finally from Hipparchia's vision of him in her final fever--Marius, the Roman "wine presser," the hieroglyph for mis-directed endeavor, unachieved or imperfect knowledge.

Palimpsest is not merely the key to H.D.'s fictional technique; it is also the repository for the themes she investigated in all her work during this period (1925-1932). Some of the themes are ideas coming directly from her earlier poetry, while some are new. One theme with obvious connections to Imagist theories is H.D.'s concept of time and patterning. H.D.'s increasing interest in flashbacks and in the palimpsest-like nature of reality may well have its root in some Bergsonian ideas on time and change. In his essay, "The Perception of Change," Bergson posits

nothing prevents us from carrying back as far as possible the line of separation between our present and our past. An attention to life, sufficiently powerful and sufficiently separated from all practical interest, would thus include in an undivided present the entire past history of the conscious person--not as instantaneous, not like a cluster of simultaneous parts, but as something continually present which would also be something continually moving. . . .⁷

In a sense, this is precisely the perception upon which Palimpsest is based. The sections in Palimpsest are not historically simultaneous, they are repeating patterns. All three sections exemplify this point. The past for

Hipparchia, Raymonde Ransom and Helen Fairwood is "continually present," a facet of their lives which they must constantly seek to integrate and understand. As they meditate on it, with more and more understanding, it continually changes (acquires new meaning, new dimensions). Understanding comes to the characters when they recognize in their pasts (and their presents) parallels, patterns, which help them to interpret the previously mis-understood or repressed portions of their lives. Ray Bart, in "Murex," verbalizes for the reader H.D.'s view of patterning.

Her mind was a glass that was set between this world, this present and the far past that was eternal. A glass, a lens, a living substance lies between ourselves and our final attainment. Antiquity. It lay there. Raymonde could just not--see it. She could occasionally sense it for a moment through, so to speak, the interwashing layer of modernity that was like some octopus-like deep-sea creature, semi-transparent but never quiet. Pictures were superimposed and showed dark shadows where the outlines held.

(PAL,163).

This patterning is very much a manifestation of her sense of real time. She acknowledges both Joyce and Einstein as recognizing with her this sense of the continuing moment:

Space was infinite if one's room were small enough. Layers and layers of interweaving thought. . . . James Joyce was right. . . . Layer on layer of emotion, of sensation were cut by that insistent and diabolic ting-ing. It went on and on and on and on. Her nerves, sweet bells jangled--stop, stop. It went on and on. It cut across the past that was (Einstein was right) the future. The past (she knew) was the future. . . . The present and the actual past and the future were (Einstein was right) one. All planes were going, on, on, on together and the same laws of hospitality held on all levels of life.

(PAL,165-66)

This sense of reaching backward, in order to understand both the present and the future, is evident in all her characters. Like her earlier poems, the point is not to fabricate stories about historical events and personae. Rather, the past is a part of the present. It explains not by simply analogy, but by recreation of the very essence of the experience. As Helen Fairwood realizes,

Past, present, all the commutations of past and present
(as light cast through darkened glass) were merged at
one within her. The just past, the far past. She was
released. . . .

(PAL,218)

Contingent to this sense of a perpetual present, apprehensible by the recognition of eternal patterns (archetypes), is an awareness of the priest-like function of the artist. In "Hipparchia" and "Murex," H.D. directly confronts this theme. In both stories, the artist is the individual responsible for discerning the eternal patterns and for transmitting them to her readers. In "Hipparchia," Hipparchia turns to the creation of her manuscript, seeking a final and total merging with a godshead. Although she wanted oblivion, her writing ultimately anchors her and gives her the identity and purpose she seeks. She is called back to reality by Julia Augusta's praise of her poetry, a poetry which has made clear the meaning of Greece: "Greece is a spirit. Greece is not lost" (PAL,94). Hipparchia, the personification of this spirit and its transmitter, acknowledges her responsibility to keep alive this spirit by remaining in the world--by being the artist.

Even more explicitly does "Murex" deal with the role of the artist. The story traces the purpose and process of a poet at work. Ray Bart, the transformed Raymonde Ransom, comes to understand the patterns which have made up her life. She thus transforms the events of the past into poetry, putting them into an artistic form, until their significance is realized, not merely by herself, but by her readers. Ray Bart, better than Raymonde Ransom, realizes that "Art was magic. . . . Poetry was to remember" (PAL,155).

A third theme in Palimpsest is one central to H.D. not merely during this period, but throughout her career: the individual's search for self-identity, and the concomitant need for identity integration. This search is presented in at least four ways: a separation from parents, a separation/reconciliation from homeland, assertion of self in work (art), and the reconciliation of any mind-body splits. Although not all three protagonists display all four of these needs, each has to accomplish some of them within the context of their story before they have completely affirmed their own strength and personalities.

Hipparchia most explicitly illustrates the need for separation from parents. Her entire life is an attempt to be other than her mother. Her constant comparing of herself and her mother is frequently her assertion of independence, an almost adolescent statement of "I am not-you." Her choices are reversals of the elder Hipparchia's choices. Even in the end, when a part of her sees herself as having

arrived at her mother's solution, she asserts (and correctly) that she needed her own experience to lead to this end:

". . . mine would not have excelled had it been a mere feeble copy . . ." (PAL,78). Her final state is not a "counterfeit" of her mother: Hipparchia is the artist, her mother followed the philosopher. Hipparchia's life is now her own, both of her own choosing and of her own conscious making.

The need for separation is also present in "Secret Name." Here the emphasis is on a minor character and only obliquely on the protagonist. Maryland is striving to break free of her family, particularly her overbearing mother. Since Helen compares herself directly to Maryland, the implication of a similar experience for Helen is made. Maryland is seriously thinking of marrying Jerry Cope, the young Englishman, more as an escape (an escapist infatuation) than for love. As Helen Fairwood knew from her own experience, Jerry and Europe represent autonomy and adventure to Mary: "Freedom . . . from maternal, fraternal, or paternal solitudes" (PAL,231). The need for independence from parents was obviously one H.D. understood and supported.

Closely allied with this for both Hipparchia and Helen (Maryland) is the need to experience more than a single world culture. All three women are willing expatriates. They have chosen to live away from their native lands. What each appears to seek is a place in which their sensibilities as well as their bodies feel at ease. Each feels the need to understand more than one culture. Helen leaves

America for Europe, and then expands her Europe to include Egypt. It is only after all of these experiences that she can see new values in her own heritage (more than Maryland can):

This seems vaguely familiar. I spent most of my childhood (although you won't accept it that I'm American) along the gigantic stretches of New Jersey. Sand and scrub-bushes. So the incurve of the sand about these sphinxes is somehow familiar. I would like to ask Mary if she feels it but when I say "America" she sidles off, vaguely uneasy, unhappy somehow. It seems perhaps a pity to spoil for poor Maryland her first impressions of what she calls Europe, by even so much as vaguely mentioning to her her own native and so peculiarly lovely sands. Mary, of course, wouldn't see it anyway even if it were presented laboriously. She has been really too short a time away. . . .

(PAL,203-04)

It is her distancing which has allowed Helen to look at both Maryland and America with new eyes.

Similarly, Hipparchia needs the exposure to Rome and Egypt before she can return to her Greek past, and understand the elements which are most positive, most essentially her own. It is to experience another world that she takes Marius for a lover. In answer to Verrus' claim that she loves Marius, Hipparchia replies: "I don't know. He was made up of my escape from people, from Greeks who had a pre-conceived idea of me, who threatened to make me a carping pedant, that simply" (PAL,62). Beyond this, his sensuality is also a new world of sensation to her, as is Verrus, who more completely matches her.

Even Raymonde Ransom has several worlds: an American, she now splits her time between London and Switzerland.

Each of the three places has shaped her experience. Her position as an American in London intensified both feelings about the war (she is doubly wounded when a nurse maintains "you after all, as an American, can't feel as we do" (PAL, 141)) and her perception of herself and her daughter's stillborn birth. ("Nervy--not much grit--an American" (PAL,141)). What she is seeking, in her transcendence of all three of her countries, is an allegiance to a world of beauty and art, a world she glimpses with the pre-war, pre-Mavis Freddie:

Freddie in the Louvre, Freddie on the slope of Mount Solario. Freddie that first winter in the gorge above Cava where she had first seen primroses. "Don't you actually have them, transponti nissimo, in your country?" "My country? My country, Freddie? But this--is--my--country." Raymonde had found Italy, found all that past layer of consciousness that was life to her with Freddie. "Then precious, you don't want England?" "Freddie, later." She hadn't wanted to so simply marry Freddie. She wanted to be free and wild and to find beauty on her own, on its own.

(PAL,140)

This eternal world in many ways parallels the spiritual Greece that Hipparchia acknowledges at the end of her story and the Egypt of Helen Fairwood. It is a place created by the spirit and the world of the Spirit. A person (usually an artist) must synthesize the best of all known worlds to achieve entry into it, to transcend.

Each of the three protagonists illustrates another facet of the search for self-identity and self-fulfillment. Each works to assert herself in some sort of work, frequently creative work--writing. All three have jobs:

Raymonde Ransom is a poet, Hipparchia and Helen are researcher /writers. When all else fails her, Hipparchia returns to work on her manuscript, returns to her own mind, until "She was dazed, drugged and drunk with snatches of Euripidean choros, with the new Alexandrians. This was the perfected ecstasy where body having trained its perceptions, finds itself the tool of sheer intoxicating intellect" (PAL,77). In the end, Hipparchia is identified as a scholar and a poet--one who has and can teach understanding of beauty. Similarly Ramonde Ransom (as Ray Bart), after confronting her own past, realizes that her home and writing are her real identity: "Now she knew, with rhythms recurrent in her head that she was again fated for d'y-Vau. . . . She would go as inevitably as the sun-rise, as the sun-set" (PAL,147). Even Helen, who seems at moments ready to submerge herself in the captain, in the end rejects him and returns to her life as a writer of "terrible, intense, erudite" (PAL,189) articles on Graeco-Roman texts. Each woman is ultimately isolated so that she may continue to create her works. It is through this assertion of intellect that each makes her discoveries about the world. In all cases, in the choice between lover and mind, the mind wins. In particular, the knowledge-yielding role of artist outweighs any self-effacing love.

A final element and a not always resolved problem in the protagonists' movement towards self-integration is the merging of mind-body splits. Each woman recognizes a

certain bifurcation of intellect and sensuality. Within Palimpsest, no one ever seems to effectively incorporate the two. The assumption of the role of artist seems the last in a chain of preferences which results in the exultation of the mind and the abandonment of the physical (particularly the sexual). Hipparchia leaves both Marius and Verrus and returns to the dead Philip, who "was her passion, her intellect, her mind which none had broken" (PAL,73). Raymonde Ransom loses Freddie, and discovers "Cret-d'y-Vau . . . was her inspiration" (PAL,169). Helen turns from Captain Rafton's offer to accompany him to Assuan, feeling "exactly as one who has been under ether, that pollen dust of physical annihilators, and has come out of it" (PAL,224). She returns to her high-class secretarial position, committed to her studies, her Greece. As a theme, H.D. seems to present the physical and the mental as either-or choices. Her protagonists relinquish or deny their need for the physical, reject or are rejected by their suitors, and turn towards their artistry and scholarship to give them fulfillment and knowledge. Although all of her protagonists search for a fulfilling love, all three appear in the end as solitary sensibilities, rather than halves of complementary couples or androgynous wholes. They are complete only after they have set strict limits.

Again, this theme grows out of some of H.D.'s concerns in Collected Poems, where the mind-body split assumes a slightly different form. The only direct confrontations

occur in the Hippolytus sequences (where Hippolytus seeks the chaste beauty of Artemis rather than the physical desire of Phaedra) and the Sapphic lyric "Fragment 36." In "Fragment 36," the poet asks "is song's gift best? / is love's gift loveliest?" (CP,243). It is not, for the persona, a rhetorical question. She perceives the conflict as real: arise and write or lie beside one's lover. The persona sees the two choices "as two white wrestlers / standing for a match, / ready to turn and clutch . . ." (CP,245). In the poem, no choice is made, but the persona clearly sees each of the two needs as exclusive. The prose form of Palimpsest allows H.D. considerably more length and latitude in which to pursue this theme.

H.D.'s second novel, Hedylus, was published in 1928. Set in the Greek island of Samos, in the third century B.C., Hedylus uses many of the techniques and themes that H.D. had already experimented with in Palimpsest. The main characters of the novel are Hedyle, the Athenian mistress of Samos' king, Douris, and her illegitimate son, Hedylus. The story revolves around Hedylus' need to break with his mother and to assert his own identity as a poet. As his name, a derivative of his mother's, indicates, Hedylus finds himself constantly overshadowed and dominated by Hedyle. Both characters are discontent with their mutual dependency when the story opens. Hedyle sees in Hedylus Athens--her token for beauty, intellect and culture. Yet this token is cold comfort to Hedyle. To maintain the illusory

perfection she demands, she must constantly chide him. Their relationship is strained, almost adversary. As a result Hedyle is correct when she accuses Hedylus of "trying to escape me."⁸ At the same time, Hedylus recognizes his dependence on Hedyle, even as he wishes to break away: "Part of him was sustained by Hedyle. He was sustained kept alive, revolving in her beauty" (HED,33-34). But he is tormented by the realization that "Part of him lived elsewhere" (HED,33-34). The elsewhere, the space in which to write his poetry, is what Hedylus must find. The appearance of Demetrius, one of Hedyle's former lovers, now the Athenian delegate to Alexandria, precipitates the novel's action.

To escape the tedium of a court reception for the Athenian delegate, Hedylus slips away from court, to a secluded cove, to read his poetry. Alone on a small stretch of sand, Hedylus proclaims his poems as offerings to Helios, sacrificing their imperfections by burning the scrolls on which they are written. Discontent, feeling his works inadequate ("They're no good really. The thing's all in my head. It won't get out" (HED,63)), Hedylus even begins to contemplate suicide: "I sometimes think the simply way out would be to slide down simply, not look for the last irregular bit of rock-edge, roll off. Fall like a split birdling. Fall from the nest of human intercourse, human thought and thinking, and be shattered simply" (HED,71). At this point, an "apparition" appears before him. The

apparition is another escapee from Douris' reception. The man, making a circuit of the island in a boat, has overheard Hedylus' declamation and has stopped to discover what is going on. Hedylus rapidly concludes while exchanging pleasantries with him, that the man is no ordinary mortal: "The man, Hedylus mused . . . was (he knew infallibly) fully evolved, the man and the god, each alive, each alert to each contingency" (HED,88). Hedylus begins to invest this visitor with godlike powers of observation and knowledge. To Hedylus, the unknown man assumes the stature of Helios, the colonizer, the father, the inspirer of poetry.

In a discussion the two characters have upon returning to the visitor's quarters, the visitor praises Hedylus' verse and offers to help him by making him one of his secretaries. Hedylus and his two young friends (and fellow-poets), Posidippus and Sikeledes, are all invited to go with Demetrius' mission to Alexandria, perhaps to "found a new academy" (HED,136). What the visitor succeeds in doing for Hedylus (via his listening and his socratic questioning) is to force him to acknowledge the need to pursue his art and to assert his independence from Hedyle and her standards of excellence: "Let go; spark of electric fire would answer spark of fire. But how intense, he had no way of gauging. Only he felt, with an intuition bred by long slavery to Hedyle's over-sophisticated intellect, that there would be, must be, final severance" (HED,131). In his subsequent confrontation scene with Hedyle, Hedylus realizes for the

first time his real independence from her. He is intractable to her suggestions that he remain, finally feeling himself "freed . . . of that dwarfing spiritual incumbrance" (HED, 138). Heydlus leaves Hedyle's room to prepare for his departure.

After Hedylus' departure announcement, the book shifts its focus to Hedyle, who reviews her relationship with Hedylus and tries to make coherent sense of her past. Hedyle has always cast herself in the role of goddess-teacher, rather than affectionate mother to Hedylus: "To tell the child I loved him . . . would have been not Athene with young Ion or Erechtheus" (HED,154). She has always served her ideal, her "codes of rightness," her Athenian ideals, before all else--certainly before all human relationships. Hedylus had become for her "her standard, her threat, her constant heartache" (HED,158). For the years she had spent on Samos, Hedyle consciously strove to embody all the best of Athens, to be the complete intellect, and to cast her child in this spiritualized and idealized mold. Neither was allowed to be totally human, for in both of them emotion had been transmuted into intellect.

Hedyle's reverie is broken by the intrusion of the visitor, who for the first time reveals himself to be Demion of Olympia, one of Hedyle's former lovers. Recognizing Demion brings Hedyle back to an awareness of her human side (vs. her spiritualized), for Demion is the passion of Hedyle whom she has "always loved" (HED,160) and for whom

she waited "with fervid spiritual integrity" (HED,161). Yet even here, the passion is linked to the divine. For the first time, talking to the nearly silent Demion, Hedyle tells of Hedylus' birth and her own choice on how she would live her life. The daughter of a Greek mathematician, who believed not in the gods, but in logic, Hedyle had unexpectedly found herself pregnant:

I never meant to have him. Clarix, my first lover, had betrayed me. It was all due to Papa. He was so remote. There was no competing with him. No one ever taught us. The thing was a shock. Had nothing to do with formula, with numbers, with the why and the why, not even with philosophic dissertations of my uncle from Cyrene.

(HED,162-63).

Confronted with an unintellectual reality, Hedyle decides to leave the fate of this unborn child to the gods: if the gods (whom her rationalist father said didn't exist) give her a sign, she will have the child. If there are no gods, no sign, there will be no child. She closes her eyes, opens them, and at first sees nothing. Then she becomes aware of a small grass snake staring at her. Her sister, sitting beside her, unaware of Hedyle's vow, confirms the presence of the snake, singing in out amidst all the objects in the landscape. Hedyle decides the snake is exactly the kind of sign the gods would send. She decides, "I'll have the child because of that small grass snake but it will be the sun's child" (HED,166). The child will have its origin in the mystical (divine) act of revelation (more than the

physical action of conception). What Hedyle has acknowledged is the belief in the irrational.

The snake and, a year later, her first meeting with Demion are symbolic moments for Hedyle. Raised to believe only in the world of pure reason, Hedyle's emotional responses to the snake and the man are "linked with an absolute illiterate faith in the materialization, in the reality, of beauty" (HED,184). It is this irrational side which has been the motivating force in Hedyle's life and is the key to her relationships with Hedylus. As the recipient of the god's sign, Hedyle sees herself committed to dedicating her son, Hedylus, to the gods; he is to be her creation of beauty. Hedylus will be the most perfect expression of Athens, he will represent the gods themselves.

The novel focuses on two of H.D.'s familiar themes: the search for identity and the role of the artist in the world. Both Hedylus and Hedyle recognize themselves as partial, rather than whole, personalities. Each feels an incompleteness to their lives. Hedyle has perceived herself as both a reality (unknown to any on Samos) and a reflection, one all can see and one she constantly seeks within her handmirror. Indeed, she convinces herself of her own identity by gauging how acceptable her reflection is to others: "I was one move off, as if everything I did was done from the reverse side, as if I were moving in a mirror and myself was only a transient reflection of another self that mattered. People could accept this reflection . . .

I wanted to convince myself that the mirage forecast the sane reality" (HED,183). For Hedyle, the reality (reflection) is the rational, intellectual hetaira, Douris' mistress. The hidden segment of her self is her irrational/mystical side: the side that believes in gods and their manifestations.

Although Hedylus sees his personality as fragmented, an "odd severance in his forehead" (HED,33), his sense of incompleteness stems more from a sense of thwarted development. Constantly overshadowed by Hedyle's perfection and sophistication, Hedylus has no identity of his own:

My name, my name, my name. What is my name anyway? I am enclosed in Hedylus the son of Hedyle. Hedyle still encloses me as if I never were born. The boat slid out from the shore, slid across the surface of the metallic water and then sunk as in a second into some other element.

(HED,86)

With no known father, he has no past and no masculine model. He exists only as an offshoot of Hedyle. Hedylus' sense of two options is most clearly indicated in the two women in the novel to whom he is drawn: his mother, Hedyle, and a young girl, Irene. The two are opposites. Hedyle is highly refined and cultured. Irene is a tomboy, a wild young creature whose attractions are her innocence and her attachment to the sensual (earthbound). Hedyle is idealized Athens, the past, the pure intellect. Irene is untamed nature, the unknown (unformed) future, the emotions. Hedylus feels himself torn between the two. But both women remain secondary to Hedylus' first love: his poetry. It is to

his role as poet that Hedylus commits himself. To do so, he must break with Hedyle.

Both Hedylus and Hedyle are blocked from total understanding of themselves at the beginning of the book because of their mutually destructive dependency on one another. In the world of Samos, of his mother's creation, Hedylus will never feel free to assert himself. With Hedylus present, Hedyle can be only her idealized self, her formal reflection. The need for independent identity is worked throughout the book by both:

Hedylus knew now, seated calmly by this stranger, that he had always been striving self with self, the two distinct halves, felt (he visualized it) that day when at five he had flung forward, clinging to scrub root of dwarf cypress to find his brow wreather with poppy-scarlet . . . he realized at last that his head was somehow adequately and suitably at one with the length of thin yet wiry, muscular young torso.

(HED,100)

The novel also focuses on the role of the artist, for both Hedylus and Hedyle are artists. Hedyle, after all, has created a world of culture and beauty within Douris' palace. And, she has created the beautiful Hedyle herself: the symbol of Athenian beauty and intellect. Even more, Hedyle's role is one of recognizing the godshead (the divine) in the commonplace--a role usually associated, at least in H.D.'s poetry, with the poet. Hedylus more directly figures as a creative artist. Like Hedylus' love for the symbol named Demion, Hedylus' poetry seeks to give concrete form to the mystic power of emotion and beauty. Hedylus seeks to create poetry which will adequately express the beauty he

sees, for he believes (like his mother) "One never could . . . destroy beauty" (HED,99). Like Hedyle, he recognizes the godshead under the everyday: "They seemed suddenly to become visual in his mind, gods and gods and half-gods. It's obvious, he thought, that everyone holds in himself germ of divinity" (HED,87-88). Hedylus' need to be a poet, to create beauty, is a responsibility and one which transcends all his other duties, defining his life.

As a novel, Hedylus shows the continued expansion of some of H.D.'s poetic techniques, particularly her use of word-play and recurring visual imagery. Both techniques have thematic as well as stylistic significance in the novel. Throughout the book, H.D. uses word play for obvious thematic purposes. It becomes more than a form of empathic repetition. When Hedyle meets the Athenian delegate, she greets him with "Demion of Olympia, you are here. Demion, Daemon or Demon. I knew you were god" (HED,168). The changing pronunciation of his name is an associative process which reflects his transformation in Hedyle's mind from a man to a divinity. To her, Demion is always a divinity, a personal projection of the irrational ("Demion was something out of intellectual calculation" (HED,179) and the beautiful ("You made beauty reality and reality (that was the miracle sheer beauty. . . . My love for you is linked with an absolute illiterate faith in the materialization, in the reality, of beauty" (HED, 183-84).) For Hedyle, Demion is a demon and the word play

embodies for both Hedyle and the reader the total and immediate transformation of Demion and demon.

Hedyle uses this technique at other points in the novel as well, most notably when discussing her past belief in the supremacy of intellect over emotion. "I had been taught that pure reason was the only goodness. Goodness. Goddess" (HED,163). The interchangeability of the words is truly the interchangeability of thought. The connection in both Hedyle's mind and the reader's occurs on two levels simultaneously the sonal and the thematic (associative). Throughout the story, understanding comes through the progression and unravelling of the characters' associative processes. These associations are intertwined with the very word play which presents them.

In addition to a growing use of sonal association, H.D. continues to rely heavily on recurring visual images. These images are keystones to the thematic structure of the novel, but they are never designed to be set symbols. Although she is not a symbolist, many of the images she presents are linked to one another and serve as talismans to indicate to the reader that the physical world leads to something beyond itself, that the image retains not meaning but the way to meaning. In Heylus, two excellent examples of her use of images are her use of mirrors and the repetition of the color blue.

The novel starts with Hedyle's looking into her mirror. She is viewing herself, judging that person (really,

that object) which the world knows as Hedyle of Athens. Inspection and introspection are, in many ways, the occasion for the entire story, so the first image given is a telling one thematically. The mirror reappears throughout the book: Hedylus is a mirror of Hedyle ("She saw in him, as in a polished mirror, herself" (HED,22)). As mirrors of one another, they visually signify the problem of identity. Later, Hedyle sees her entire life on Samos as a reflected, mirage-like life--her emotional life so intense it could only exist one step removed from reality. ("I was one move off, as if everything I did was done from the reverse side, as if I were moving in a mirror and myself was only a transient reflection of another self that mattered" (HED, 183).) The mirror has multiple meanings and functions--it is not a symbol for any one thing. Still, each meaning is a part of the intellectual complex which is the story. Each image adds to the understanding of the book's themes of identity and reality. Hedyle is the surface and the depth of the mirror, she is herself and the reflection in Hedylus. The images of the mirror, the lines of meaning they represent, become more tangled, more untangleable.

A similar process of accrued understanding and association occurs with the color blue. Again, the most obvious association with the color is Hedyle, who is seen by both herself and others as a blue lily. She uses the term to identify herself to Demion ("I am a blue lily, flung . . . at dawn upon a dust heap" (HED,179)), while

Heydlus uses it to contrast her with Irene (in the "Blue lily / and wild lily" (HED,65), of his poem). But blue gathers other associative meanings as well. Blue is the color most often mentioned in conjunction with thought and intellect, as in the description of Hedylus: "His thought went on and on and on. Like the blue slim smoke-trail, it went blindly upward" (HED,72). Even earlier, Hedylus associates his mother with both blue and smoke: "Hedyle his mother was blue flame and he was mere pallid smoke-stuff" (HED,22). Both smoke and blue acquire associations, then, with the intellect, symbols of the rational.

But blue also links another series of associated objects with Hedyle, a series which is in many ways the exact opposite of blue, smoky intellect. Blue is a part of the Egyptian snake bracelet, Hedyle's snake vision, and even Hedyle's final vision of herself. The bracelet, which figures throughout the story, is "a narrow band of some unfamiliar metal, gleaming white in daylight, now by lamp-light, taking edge of luminous blue. The blue metal was the body of a serpent, merging to frank lapis" (HED,6). Taken from the dead body of an Egyptian woman transported to Samos, the bracelet is a link to the physical and spiritual worlds beyond Samos. It is a fragment from the unknown world of the East, a world not necessarily worshipful of rationality. But the bracelet has even greater meaning. Hedyle pretends to herself that the bracelet is a gift sent to her by Demion: "I pretended you had sent it" (HED,180).

Not only that, Hedyle begins to associate it with both her snake vision (her revelation) and her own feelings. The bracelet is a serpent, just as the earlier sign from the gods is a small garden snake:

I had asked for a sign. HELIOS, the god of signs, the mantic deity, had shown me . . . a small serpent not much larger than a longish lizard. Just that one day at Sunium. I didn't at first entirely realize what you were. I was broken by that prevision of mortality. Men could care, did care even for Hedyle, who had twice risen to flower, who had twice been driven back into the shadows. I felt I was doomed for loving. I loved you so, so ardently adored you that I feared to lose you. Oh, it went round and round like that tiny green-white serpent biting its own tail. . . . This bracelet. I wore it because of that small reptile.

(HED, 176-77)

The connections of the color and the serpent are not one-on-one correlations. But the snake, Hedyle's thoughts, Hedyle herself, all become inexplicably linked to the color blue and to one another. No single thing equals anything else, but in true Imagist form, all together the impact of all the visual items leads to a new configuration, in this case, Hedyle's final revelation of her self and her motives. The method does not stop with just the mirror image or the color blue. The words of Hedylus' poetry are reminiscent of the iridescence of Hedyle's snake vision. Hedyle's thoughts go in circles, like the bracelet she wears. Clothes, rooms, thoughts all echo one another until a synthesis of experiences flashes momentarily for both the characters and the reader. In the end of the novel, Hedyle articulates an almost Imagistic perception of understanding, one that is the mode of the entire novel:

So with these things. There comes a moment when life seems overlaid with immortality as a flower with pure dew; like a flower-bud sustained beneath water, held and nourished. So this super-life seems to descend sometimes, to lie across one's whole vision.

(HED,181)

Association, the reality behind the object, is a thematic point as well as a structural and stylistic devise in Hedylus.

"Narthex," a novella published in 1928, is the last major fictional work H.D. published until Bid Me To Live, in 1960. The work continues to adapt poetic devices to prose writing and also explores several of H.D.'s favorite themes. But "Narthex" adds a new slant to one of them; H.D. particularizes the difficulty of being an artist by focusing on the problem of the compatability of love and a career, in art, for a woman. In "Narthex," there reappears H.D.'s doppelganger, Raymonde Ransom (who also appears in Palimpsest). In many ways, the novella is less a narrative than a character study. Raymonde Ransom has joined two friends, Gareth and Daniel, in Venice. Gareth had extricated Raymonde from a love affair in London the year before, had sent her back to her writing and then, after a frustrating winter, had invited Raymonde to meet her in Venice to embark on a trip to Athens. Throughout their long relationship, Gareth and Raymonde have been "intellectual twins," both devoted to their art and studies. Their differences have rested primarily on their ages. Raymonde is a member of the war generation; her life, her marriage, her entire world view was shattered by WWI. Gareth, on the other

hand, is younger, a post-War person. Her feelings and expectations are necessarily different--in many ways, she is more dogmatic, more extreme, without Raymonde's emotional vulnerability. "Gareth was protected by little iron scales of sheer intellectual plate metal."⁹

What Raymonde discovers in her afternoon in Venice are both the similarities and differences she has with Gareth. More importantly, she comes to realize that their differences yield necessarily different perceptions and needs. "People, things exist in relation to the understanding; they don't exist obviously, unless you exist, dynamo of comprehension, catching dynamic spark from the object you're attuned to" (NAR,241). In a sense, what Raymonde realizes is her own identity. Gareth's refusal to deal with anything except the intellectual aspects of life and art leads to her dislike of Venice, while Raymonde's receptivity to experience (no matter how painful and irrational) leads to her appreciation of the Venetian people and buildings in Venice for the first time.

"Narthex" continues H.D.'s study of personality integration. In the story, Raymonde Ransom tries to synthesize her intuitions and her reason, her past and her present. Unlike Gareth, Raymonde recognizes that formulas are not enough, that the purely intellectual is not sufficient. Raymonde had her first awareness of this the year before, in London, when she became involved with Katherine, an old wartime friend, and Alex Mordaunt, a soldier who wanted to

marry her. Discouraged with her writing, feeling more and more cut off from human intercourse, Raymonde turned to Mordaunt as a possible alternative. As she rationalized at the time, "what use is hanging on to ideals, writing, the heady idealism she lived by? Heady idealism grows in time sour, virgins without oil in lusterless intellectual vessels" (NAR,231). She comes to view her choices as opposite sides of a single coin: Katherine and Mordaunt are on one side, representing her emotional, sensual, pragmatic needs, and Gareth and Daniel are on the other side, representing her intellectual, mental, ideal needs. Like Hipparchia and Hedyle before her, Raymonde Ransom perceives herself as a split person, one who must choose between irreconcilable forces in her personality:

You give your soul to one thing, you can't give it to another. Yet is that true? She had given her soul to abstraction, little crystal boxes, she had given her soul to loss of identity, a snail outside an aquarium sort of window . . . soul shut in crystal boxes too long and too deliberately is in psychic danger.

(NAR,282).

Unlike any other of H.D.'s protagonists so far, Raymonde actively strives for a viable synthesis. What she finally feels is the necessity to somehow manage both--or at least, not to negate either:

Dream is the reaching out feelers like a snail's horns. Reality is the shell or the thing of crystal boxes. We must have the two together.

(NAR,283)

More than any character in H.D.'s fiction, Raymonde Ransom perceives the limitations a choice between the two extremes

creates--and rebels against it. Although she rejects Mordaunt and returns to her writing, the appearance in Venice of Daniel (and the admiring soldiers) indicate that the emotional side of life is one which Raymonde will not reject totally. Although the parts of her life may not be equal, neither is one part exclusive in defining her.

One of the reasons for the preferential choice of writing over marriage with Mordaunt is the continuing theme in H.D. concerning the function and importance of the artist within the culture. A true artist, like Raymonde (as Ray Bart), is sensitive to a world of meaning which lies underneath reality as it is commonly seen, she is an initiate in the use of hieroglyphs:

Hieroglyph . . . getting things (thoughts, sensation) across in some subtle way, too subtle to grasp with intellectual comprehension . . . this hieroglyph language she and Daniel had between them. Hieroglyph language had beat in her room in London. . . .

(NAR,256-57)

Raymonde, as a poet, sees language as a hieroglyph. She knows that "Things, people, didn't exist now in any one dimension" (NAR,264). Since the poet is the cultural means of giving form to these hieroglyphs, since so few people seem to know this subtle reality truth, being an artist takes precedence over other roles. H.D.'s artist is here more mystical than intellectual, for it is, as Raymonde Ransom knows, some "X-thing," not logic, which leads to understanding.

H.D. continues in this novella to express the idea of time as a palimpsest, or a spiral. At any given moment (at any given place), the past can be seen through the texture of present action. Raymonde can see, in San Marcos Square, the Fascisti and Marco Polo, Athene and Gareth, Hermes and Daniel, the Renaissance and the present. As H.D. first states, "Aeons brushed through her [Raymonde]" (NAR,225), while Raymonde herself notes "Ages keep coming up into ages where they didn't belong . . . ghost ages . . ." (NAR,242). Just as Raymonde Ransom in Palimpsest came to the conclusion that Einstein was correct about time, so does Raymonde in "Narthex" believe that time is irrelevant, that there is some "Psychic pre-natal thought. . . . Venice was in her before ever she was yet born, my mother loved it; dial hand went swiftly backward . . ." (NAR,281).

In addition to her usual themes of spiraling time, synthesis of opposites and the importance of the artist, H.D. adds in "Narthex" an interesting corollary to this last theme: the unique problems of the woman as an artist. In particular, in showing Raymonde's temptation to renounce her role as an artist for the role of a wife and mother, the reader is presented with the problem of self-effacing love (the cultural norm for women). Alex Mordaunt wants Raymonde to marry him and have children. As Raymonde recognizes "'You ought to have two children' meant two things, actual realism of all life in its full emotional completion or actual destruction" (NAR,231). The demands of time and

attention required by the role of wife and mother seem, to Raymonde Ransom, to prohibit the role of artist. More and more during her London summer, Raymonde came to see self-effacing love as directly, destructively opposed to her identity as an artist. The situation with Mordaunt is all the more ironic and detrimental, because he, too, writes--verse which Raymonde recognizes as inferior to her own:

". . . He thinks you'll marry him, coddle his pretentious little pseudo-literary ambitions." Wasn't that temptation? It's easier to lull the threadbare second-rate into smug contentment, lull oneself into self-effacement with it, then to compass fresh creation. Dope artistic consciousness out of all existence, bring carpet-slippers, mix a little night cap. Irony stalking blatant had enticed Raymonde, irony saying man, woman, you are woman, he is apparently man. Man-woman, a temptation. The intellect grows sterile being bisexual . . . or a-sexual.

(NAR,233)

Mordaunt "tempts" Raymonde with two things: first, a socially and sexually satisfying relationship, and second, with the patently false promise that if she lived more, if she married him, she could write better. ("If you lived, you might really write . . . something. Not this unwholesome introspection . . ." (NAR,233).) Raymonde is seriously drawn to Mordaunt, almost hypnotically so. He offered the material, human alternative to her poetic, inhuman life of the spirit. He was "like the priest of some cult of which I am ignorant, so something certainly not to do with intellect" (NAR,259). And this is, of course, extremely tempting to the woman artist.

But Raymonde acknowledges the flaw of this temptation: she knows that to accept the socially prescribed secondary role in this man-woman relationship is to deny herself as poet and, through her as instrument, poetry itself. As she tells Daniel, in London, "Men have a way (the world accepts) of sinking with women to their lowest. Now with a mind, a sort of blade beating itself raw in your raw forehead, a woman like myself must have some such like anodyne" (NAR,259). Mordaunt is her proffered anodyne; the acceptable alternative to her complaint of being tired of writing, tired of the demands it places on her. But she is unable to accept him--or more importantly, her self-negation in him. Although it is ultimately Gareth who tells her to get out of London, go back to d'y Vaud and her writing, Raymonde goes because of her own inability to devalue her worth as an artist. Certainly, that is the realization implicit in her remembrance of her response to his poetry

Heavy trampling of great hooves [one of Raymonde's images for Mordaunt] might trample out the thing in her that burned and burned . . . but the thing in her that burned and burned became like glass spikes under the great hooves of Mordaunt . . . and her desire to deceive him into thinking she could accept him become so great that she overdid it. . . . So anxious to make him think he was the more important that she leapt over, over the other side and instead of being trampled into numb obscurity (why won't the gods let one just be trampled?) spiking little acrid pin points into his weighty ankles. Give up, give in.
(NAR,257-58)

Even worse, Mordaunt fails to see his own inadequacy as a writer and feels it possible--no, necessary--to reform Raymonde. Even when he has no real right, other than his

importance as a man, to correct her, Mordaunt acts out of the prescribed role he sees for himself: protector, teacher, dominant personality. This is a turning-point for Raymonde. As an artist, she morally cannot sanction the second-rate, or deny the first-rate, or, quite simply, marry Mordaunt. When she returns to d'v Vaud, returns to isolation, she is returning to her striving towards understanding as well, for all artists are readers/recorders of the hieroglyphs of reality.

For Raymonde Ransom, the occasion of the story is the recognition that what she wants, transcends the socially prescribed roles offered her as a woman and the dichotomous choices offered her as an artist. Neither Mordaunt nor Gareth is enough. "I said, I wanted something . . . so-called Christian mysticism that finds complete co-relation with so-called classicism. . . . I never really understood, accepted the renaissance till this time" (NAR, 272).

Raymonde's year, from London to Vaud to Venice, from Mordaunt to Gareth to Daniel, allows her to shrug off social roles, her previously limiting perspectives, and to move into a newly synthesized world of greater understanding of herself.

The predominant images of the novella are, not surprisingly, two mystical signs: the circle and the six-sided star (Solomon's seal). As in H.D.'s other fiction, neither sign has a single referent; rather, each comes to represent a complex of ideas. Raymonde spends the story

working through the events of the past year, the image of which is alternately a calendar (a zodiac circle) and a clock (the circle of time): "The year moved backward as a clock-hand steadily pushed backward, encompassing the whole dial, to last spring" (NAR,229). The past which she meditates on is but a further re-winding on this wheel:

Time and set cycles of time had shifted for her, years had no bearings on things, had no meaning somehow. Fixed years, revolving on her set track through the fever path of Europe, now meant nothing . . . all meant nothing. Going round like a Tibetan prayer wheel, out of peace, the blue waters of non-entity, into brakish "life." . . .

(NAR,228-29)

Raymonde's thoughts and the events in the past are always "Going round and round, enchanted magic wheel . . ." (NAR, 232). Watching the clock in San Marcos Square, Raymonde contemplates her past. Before her, the clock stands as an object outside of time: continuous, moving, marking time. The circular image (the eternal line) recurs not only in references to the zodiac and the clock, but in the images of Gareth circumscribed (limited) as a compass, Raymonde as a vessel on a potter's wheel (unsure of identity, waiting to be shaped), and the ripples of thought which emanate from a single memory.

The second major image is the six-pointed star, the mystical Solomon's seal. The form of the star takes on a thematic importance: the star is the synthesis of two, superimposed triangles, each facing the opposite direction. It is two separate forms (two separate worlds) transformed

into one. For Raymonde, each of the triangles prefigures one of her apparently exclusive choices. One triangle consists of Raymonde, Katherine and Mordaunt. The other consists of Ray Bart (Raymonde), Gareth and Daniel. Although opposites, the triangles are mystically joined: "Triangle pointing up [to the spirit], triangle pointing down [to the sensual] . . . the seal of utter wisdom [the synthesis]" (NAR,249-50). The star image reappears within other contexts: as a part of the zodiac circle (constellations) and as the corona on the Virgin's statue. The pattern of two triangles, stripped to just the framework, becomes the hieroglyph for the entire experience:

Katherine had set the whole thing flying like a pin-wheel. Triangle on triangle that made a star, set flying. Sparks went off and off, sparks went off in London. What was left really but a bare skeleton of a star on a star? Rip star from star, Alex, Katherine, Raymonde, from star Gareth, Ray Bart, Daniel and you get clean star triangle . . .
(NAR,262-63)

Even the moment of synthesis in Venice becomes a part of this image: a "sizzling pin-wheel" of memory (NAR,265). Raymonde's new vision of her life is likened to a telescope ("her own vision was the living optical lens to a burnt out iron frame work"--NAR,263), an instrument usually used to chart the stars. So the image of the star and all its corollary associations serves a structural as well as decorative purpose in the story.

In the end, "Narthex," like most of H.D.'s fiction, combines her Imagist methodology with expanding themes.

What is remarkable in her fiction is its consistency. In all three works, common themes are worked and reworked. Unlike her early poetry, which was occasionally so compressed that the reader did not consciously distinguish more than a single descriptive moment, the use of stream-of-consciousness narration--with its almost obligatory use of image patterning, juxtaposition and association--allows H.D. to investigate major themes. Both her patterning and her word play are traits of modernist fiction, as well as outgrowths of Imagist poetry.

H.D.'s fiction met with relatively little critical enthusiasm. Although Robert McAlmon, in his foreward to Palimpsest, applauded her experimentation ("she has no crawling nature, and wanted no haven of security . . . to artists literature is not a haven; it is an assertion")¹⁰ and her achievement (she "see[s] things straight"),¹¹ little critical attention was even paid to her novels. H.D. did not, however, restrict her experimentation only to fiction. While she was working on all three works, H.D. was also working in another medium: films. Indeed, her long standing interest in the presentation of complex images leads naturally to work in both fiction and cinematography.

H.D. seems to have taken an early interest in the movies. Bryher notes in her autobiography (The Heart to Artemis, 1962) that H.D. was interested in films and filmmaking several years before she was. During their trip to California in the winter months of 1921-22, the two women

visited Hollywood. Although Bryher turned down a chance to meet Mary Pickford and watch an actual filming, she records that her disinterest was not shared by H.D.: "H.D. was much more interested, she often went to the cinema."¹² At this point, however, H.D.'s interest was still that of an enthusiastic spectator. It isn't until Bryher's marriage to Kenneth McPherson (in 1927) that H.D. becomes actively involved in cinematography.

Late in 1927, Bryher and McPherson started an avant-garde cinema journal, entitled Close Up. Starting with a capital of sixty pounds and the expectation of running only a few issues, the journal became a successful little magazine which ran for almost six years. For at least four of those years, 1927 to 1931, H.D. contributed regularly to Close Up. Poems, movie reviews, appreciative essays, even an account of her participation in a short psychological film ("Borderline"), all appeared under her byline. Comments in her columns indicate that she probably accompanied Bryher and McPherson to extremely early showings of German cinematographers, particularly G.W. Pabst. But H.D.'s interest superseded that of the usual viewer of the form--she became an actual participant in film-production as well.

The extent of H.D.'s interested involvement in filming is apparent in a questionnaire returned to the Little Review, in 1927. The first question asked respondents was "1. What should you most like to do, to know,

to be?" H.D.'s answer is entirely preoccupied with cinema, not her writing:

1. Just at the moment I am involved with pictures. We have almost finished a slight lyrical four reel little drama, done in and about the villages here, some of the village people and English friends. The work has been enchanting, never anything such fun and I myself have learned to use the small projector and spend literally hours alone here in my apartment, making the mountains and village streets and my own acquaintances reel past me in the light and light and light. At the moment I want to go on in this medium . . . I should like to work the Debie camera which I can't. I can do a little work on the small cameras and some of it will be incorporated in the big film that we are busy on . . .¹³

The film H.D. mentions in the quote is almost certainly McPherson's "Borderline." In the movie, written and directed by McPherson, H.D. made her acting debut. The announcement of the film appeared in the first issue of Close Up, under a still shot of H.D. taken from the film. According to the promotion, "This is H.D.'s debut in films, and her many admirers will welcome the opportunity to see her. The same clear genius is in her acting that sets her so high among contemporary poets and authors."¹⁴ Continued promotion of the movie was accompanied by several pictures from the movie, some of which include H.D. (under the stagename of Helga Dorn) and the movie's other "star," Paul Robeson. According to Bryher's memoirs, both H.D.'s acting and the finished movie were successes:

H.D. was superb as the heroine with an almost too realistic death scene at the end . . . it ["Borderline"] was shown in half a dozen countries, Pabst sent all his cameramen to the performance in Berlin and would have given Kenneth a position on his own set if he had been willing to take it. Spain showed it a

number of times. The English asked "Whatever is it all about?" and there have been requests for the loan of a copy as late as a couple of years ago, when there have been exhibitions of early avant-garde cinema.¹⁵

What becomes clear from these sources is the extent of H.D.'s interest and commitment to work in this new medium.

But what, exactly, was the attraction of the cinema for H.D.? At first, silent films may seem an odd adjunct for a writer, a believer in the special power of words to preserve experience. But H.D.'s comments in her reviews show the connections that she was making between films and her own writing.

H.D. perceived of movies as images which, unlike poetry, were "a universal language, a universal art open alike to the pleb and the initiate."¹⁶ Movies, like poetry, were "a matter . . . of inter-action."¹⁷ Just as she invented, as a poet and novelist, personae to convey experiences and intuitions, in movies there is also an actor, a filter who leads the viewer to new understandings. "This screen projection is not a mask, it is a person, a personality. That is just it. Here is art, high art. . . ."¹⁸ Like the hieroglyphs and images she repeats in her writing, movies have "subtlety, that feeling of something within something, of something beyond something."¹⁹ Cinematography was, for H.D., another mode of perceiving, another way of plumbing reality by focusing on concrete details. Her fascination with light in movies is merely another manifestation of her interest in visual effects. She is intrigued

with looking at objects, discovering new facets about them, searching for the something which lies behind them. It is always this function of perception she concentrates on: "The fascinating question of light alone could occupy one forever; this edge of a leaf and this edge of a leaf . . ."²⁰

Besides being a very Imagistic mode of perception, movies also confirm her growing belief in the universality of experiences and forms. Reaffirmed are her beliefs that "beauty, among other things, is reality"²¹ and "A bare square room is today what it was in Pompeii, what it more or less was in Athens, in Syracuse."²² Some things, some patterns, appear to be eternal. The structures, the outlines remain the same under various guises.

H.D.'s interest in cinematography shows her curiosity and awareness of the new movements in the arts. It further illustrates her ability to extend the philosophic and technical bases of Imagism into new modes. The key to all her experimentation rests in her ability to both extend and adapt what she already knew, while simultaneously discovering the unique possibilities that each form offered her. Fiction and films evolve naturally from the notion of moving images (Pound's *phanopoeia*). The increased length and complexity of the new forms lead to developed themes and characters which were largely undeveloped in her early poetry. By 1931, however, H.D. was ready to return to her chosen craft, poetry. The volume she publishes

Red Roses for Bronze, marks the end of this experimental phase of H.D.'s career.

Although Red Roses for Bronze did not appear until late 1931, most of the twenty poems and three translations had been printed in literary journals between the publication of Collected Poems and Red Roses for Bronze. As such, they are very much a part of this experimental phase in H.D.'s career. A number of the poems seem to have particular affinities with H.D.'s fictional works. In these poems, there is increased emphasis on characterization. The persona is more emphatically presented; almost all of the pieces are either dramatic monologues or interior monologues. As a result, the emotions and ideas presented within the poems seem to be coming from particular people, rather than disembodied voices. The occasions for the personae's talks are clear as well as their responses to the reader's awareness of both characterization and action is generally stronger than in some of the earlier poetry. Increased character development leading to more apparent narrative lines is certainly more closely related to H.D.'s prose than her poetry in Collected Poems. For example, in the title poem of the collection, "Red Roses for Bronze," the reader knows a considerable amount about both the speaker and the events leading up to the monologue. Although the speaker remains unnamed, the reader knows her profession; the speaker is a sculptor who wants to do a bust of her

godlike lover. As she announces in the opening stanza, she would like to

take a weight of bronze
and sate
my wretched fingers
in ecstatic work²³

But the reader is aware of more than just her obsession to create, he knows the reason for this obsession. The lover has many other admirers and the speaker wishes to distinguish herself from them, she wants more than "just the ordinary sort of come and go" (RRB,2) or "the casual sort of homage" (RRB,3) he usually bestows. The sculptor-speaker craves a means of forcing the beloved "to grasp my[her] soul's sincerity, / and single out / me, / me, / something to challenge, / handle differently" (RRB,4). Her means of doing this is her work as an artist. She can create an objectification of her love unmatched by any one else--her statue will be immortal and, like her passion, will outlast any gift of the other admirers:

such is my jealousy
(that I discreetly veil
with just my smile)
that I would clear so fiery a space
that no mere woman's love could long endure;
and I would set your bronze head in its place,
about the base,
my roses would endure,
while others,
those, for instance,
she might proffer,
standing by the stair,
or any tentative offers of white flowers
or others lesser purple at the leaf,
must fall and sift and pale
in (O so short a space)
to ashes and a little heap of dust.

(RRB,8)

More than in many of the poems in Collected Poems, the reader of "Red Roses for Bronze" is confronted with a clear situation and a distinctive persona. The tendency to record the poem in the loose conversational style of stream-of-consciousness works, and to clarify the incident is, it seems likely, the result of H.D.'s work in narrative form (her novels).

Another obvious correlation between H.D.'s fiction and the poems of this period is the development of similar themes in both forms. Much of H.D.'s attention in Collected Poems was directed towards perfecting stylistic techniques and rendering concrete images. In her fiction, H.D. more overtly developed what were becoming characteristic themes. At least three of these themes are also used extensively in Red Roses for Bronze: first, the importance and function of the artist; second, the belief that the center of reality is a mystery which people come to know not by logical, but intuitive means; and third, the belief that what understanding individuals do achieve comes from seeing timeless patterns which underlie individual experience. These themes are not new to H.D.'s poetry, but in Red Roses for Bronze H.D.'s preoccupation with them seems to overshadow her craftsmanship. Red Roses for Bronze tries to adapt and synthesize the earlier strengths of H.D.'s poems with the new possibilities of presentation explored in her fiction. The development of sustained and foregrounded themes is one result of this attempted synthesis. To consider the

effectiveness of new mode, it is best to focus on four of H.D.'s poems which seem most overtly to express these three themes: "Red Roses for Bronze," "Let Zeus Record," "Mysteries," and "Sigil."

Both "Red Roses for Bronze" and "Let Zeus Record" deal with the theme of art. Both poems state and illustrate the power inherent in the creation of a work of art. In the last stanza of "Red Roses for Bronze," (quoted on p. 159), the enduring quality of art is stressed. The speaker knows that the sculpted roses around the base of the bronze head will outlive all the other tributes to her lover. Art, both the bust and the roses, will endure, while other tributes fade "in (O so short a space) / to ashes and a little heap of dust" (RRB,8).

"Let Zeus Record" is even more explicit in its statement on the permanence of art and the significance of the artist. The speaker of this poem is a poet, one "who still kept of wisdom's meagre store / a few rare songs and some philosophizing" (RRB,112). He offers these songs, his poems, to another (the subject of the poem). This implicit recipient, the "you" of the poem, has not betrayed their mutual ideals (represented by Athens), even though others have:

when all the others, blighted, reel and fall, your
star, steel-set, keeps love and frigid tryst to
freighted ships, baffled in wind and blast.

(RRB,114)

The steadfastness of the friend is reflected in the steadfastness of poetry itself. Just as the "you" is strong and enduring ["Men cannot mar you, / women cannot break / your innate strength, / your stark autocracy" (RRB,110)], so is the speaker's poetry: "still I will make no plea / for this slight verse; / it outlines simply / Love's authority" (RRB,110).

Poetry, art, idealized love, all have an inhuman power in both "Red Roses for Bronze" and "Let Zeus Record." They exceed man's strength, outlive the individual mortal. Indeed, the title of "Let Zeus Record" almost extends this into a godlike power. Zeus, like the poet, records the moments of importance--is, in a sense, a writer (historian-artist). And Zeus' recordings, like those of other artists, are immortal; they stand forever, "daring Death to mar" (RRB,115) them.

Another theme which appears throughout Red Roses for Bronze, most notably in the book's final verse, "Mysteries," is the belief that at the center of reality there is a mystery, some unknown and unknowable power, which is regenerative and eternal. In a way, this is nothing more than a belief in the mystical (irrational) world beyond the physical (logical) world that we perceive. Such a belief echoes and is compatible with Bergson's reality, which is visible only through the concrete but which exists beneath it. The poet is the voice of this mystery, the "enchanter / and magician / and arch-mage" (RRB,141), whose

job it is "Not to destroy, / nay, but to sanctify / the fervour / of all ancient mysteries" (RRB,146). The poet, the "I" of "Mysteries," understands, or at least knows of, the mysteries which exist in the world. He informs the reader that

The mysteries remain,
I keep the same
cycle of seed-time
and of sun and rain;
.
I hold the law,
I keep the mysteries true,
the fruit of these
to name the living, dead
(RRB,148)

The poet's job is to recognize the mysteries (know they "remain"), validate them ("keep the same . . . seed-time"), and then, keep them alive ("Name the living, dead"). This belief in a reality grounded in mystical apprehension leads easily into a third theme that H.D. was working with during this period: the idea that discerning common patterns (almost, archetypes) in any situation will provide the observer with the meditative base through which to intuitively perceive reality. "Sigil" clearly presents this theme.

The title itself established the theme of "Sigil." In occult studies (which H.D. was also investigating during this period),²⁴ a sigil is an image which retains some mysterious power. In a sense, therefore, the poem itself is a sigil for experience. What remains after love is gone

is the poem, which tells an individual experience of love.

As the poem's persona explains:

when you would think,
"what was the use of it,"
you'll remember

something you can't grasp
and you'll wonder
what it was

altered your mood
(RRB,133)

The poem is the remembrance; it traces the outline of love as an experience, leaving it, after an lapse of time, accessible to the reader. The image of love retained in the poem is eternal:

Whether this happened before,
whether this happens again,
it's the same
(RRB,137)

The pattern of love (of passion--betrayal--loss), is universal. Whether presented in the setting of ancient Greece or twentieth century Europe, the experience is the same. As in Collected Poems, H.D. uses the past and its myths to express personal concerns. Her image of significance lying in a palimpsest, a sigil, is stressed through this period.

As a single volume, however, Red Roses for Bronze is by far the least effective of H.D.'s experiments. Although it is understandable within the context of her other experiments in fiction and film, the poems in Red Roses for Bronze remain the most flawed in H.D.'s canon. As poems, they fail to capitalize on the strengths of Collected Poems, while simultaneously failing to appropriate

skillfully the techniques which she had explored in her fiction. Uninteresting characters and monologues, a decrease in the amount of effective sonal techniques, and vague (sometimes trite) imagery, all plague the poems in this collection. Pieces such as "In the Rain," "Chance," and "Halcyon" readily illustrate these problems.

Although H.D.'s monologues capture the flavor of colloquial speech, many of them present insufficient or trivial information about her characters. The monologue of "In the Rain," is simplistic rather than revealing. In the third section, at what appears to be the epiphanic point in the dissolution of a love affair, what we are presented with is

I'm late to-day,
 you were late yesterday,
 but he didn't say,
 "I'm sorry,
 I kept you waiting,"
 (the rain beats in my eyes again)
 I lifted my face,
 surprised
 to see no answer in his

(RRB,11)

The only element of real significance here is the narrator's surprise that no apology or kiss is forthcoming. The other data yields little information about either character or motivation.

Even less revealing is the information given in "Chance." Here, the monologue consists of statements like "chance says, / sweetheart, / we haven't loved for almost a year, / can you bear / this loneliness?" (RRB,126) and

"chance says, / dear, / I'm here, / don't you want me / anymore?" (RRB,127). The occasion for the speech is clear enough, but the mode of presentation is certainly boring. Gone is the compressed, intense language of H.D.'s best poems. The sharp, driving sense of passion and loss is undercut by the flat, flaccid statements the characters make.

The colloquial language of the monologues seems to be the cause of a second problem with the poems in Red Roses for Bronze. One of H.D.'s strengths as a writer had been her use of rhythm and repetition as sonal connectives within poems. Yet in poems like "Chance," H.D. fails to employ any of her previous sonal devices (like breathline) to emphasize the tenor of the speaker's voice and experience. Unlike Collected Poems' "Eurydice" and "At Ithaca," the forms used in Red Roses for Bronze seem arbitrary rather than organic. In particular, repetition, one of H.D.'s strongest thematic as well as sonal element, is used indiscriminately and unsuccessfully. In section II of "In the Rain," the repetition of gold seems almost gratuitous:

I am glad;
 the cold is a cloak,
 the gold on the wet stones
 is a carpet laid;
 my hands clutch at the rain,
 no pain in my heart
 but gold,
 gold,
 gold
 on my head

(RRB,10)

The three-line repetition of "gold" does not forward the poem's meaning. Although the rain becomes the color gold in line 3, the emphatic echoings in ll. F-9 seems misplaced. Throughout the poem, other incidences of repetition occur (in section VI, for example, the echoing of "lost / lost / lost"), seemingly more out of habit than necessity. As a result, the rhythm of the poems is marred by the loss of concise speech-patterns.

This vagueness in rhythm is matched in Red Roses for Bronze by a surprising vagueness of imagery. H.D.'s power as a writer derived heavily from her ability to present clear, evocative images. Many of the details and perceptions presented in this volume are unfortunately trite. Instead of giving the reader new awarenesses (Pound's "new eyes") by forcing him to look at objects clearly, H.D. glosses over objects by cloaking them in cliches. Certainly this is true in part VI of "Halcyon":

O the days, the days
 without these quarrels,
 what were they?
 something like a desert apart
 without hope of oasis

 or a grot lacking water
 or a bird with a broken wing
 or some sort of withered Adon-garden,
(RRB, 97)

Here, evocation is lost in stock formulations: "Like a desert . . . without hope of an oasis," "like . . . a bird with a broken wing." Both of these images evoke no explicit sense of desolation. The reader nods, having heard both

numerous times before, does not attempt to visualize the moment, and loses the emotional immediacy the writer is seeking to present.

In section VI of Collected Poems' "Islands," on the other hand, both repetition and the visual images work to establish a sense of loss:

In my garden
the winds have beaten
the ripe lilies;
in my garden, the salt
was wilted the first flakes
of young narcissus,
the lesser hyacinth,
and the salt has crept
under the leaves of the white hyacinth.

In my garden
even the wind-flowers lie flat,
broken by the wind at last.
(CP, 184-85)

The repetition of "in my garden" takes on the force of a lament. The anthropomorphically creeping salt is an active evil, an active destructive force. The wind-flattened flowers of a single spring garden produce an objective correlative for desolation which far exceeds that of "Halcyon's" clichés. The specificity of the second poem illuminates the triviality and banality of the first.

The publication of Red Roses for Bronze conveniently and realistically marked the end of a distinct phase of H.D.'s career. Between 1926 and 1931, she embarked on a period of extensive experimentation, writing not only poetry, but two novels, one novella, one verse-drama, and essays on cinematography. This six year span was one of

the most prolific in H.D.'s career; the diversity of the forms she worked in was indicative of both her curiosity and her depth as an artist. But Red Roses for Bronze was a turning point. Between 1932 and 1943, H.D. published only two volumes of writing: a children's story (The Hedgehog, 1936) and a translation of Euripides' Ion (1937), neither of which ranks as a major creative work within her canon.

H.D. described the thirties, this lull before the second world war, as a personally frustrating and anxious time:

The years between seemed a period of waiting, of marking time. There was a growing feeling of stagnation, of lethargy, clearly evident among many of my own contemporaries . . . their theories and their accumulated data seemed unrooted, raw. But this I admit--yes, I know--was partly due to my own helpless feeling in the face of brilliant statisticians and one-track-minded theories. Where is this taking you, I wanted to shout. . . .²⁵

The final question operated on two levels for H.D. Although she had tried a variety of literary modes, Red Roses for Bronze seemed to indicate that her direction ("Where is this taking you [me]") was unclear. She recognized almost immediately that Red Roses for Bronze was "not altogether satisfactory" (TF,148). Individual achievement in each form had failed to lead to an acceptable synthesis of either technique or vision. Further, behind her literary dissatisfaction loomed an even greater personal discontent. H.D. needed some answers to both her personal and artistic questions before she could produce the type of poetry she

wanted to write. The answers, and the impetus to use them, came with her psychoanalysis with Freud and the onset of World War II.

FOOTNOTES

¹Hugh Kenner, The Poetry of Ezra Pound (London, 1951), p. 57.

²H.D., Palimpsest (Carbondale, 1968), p. 1. Hereafter noted within the text as Pal, followed by page number.

³Mark Van Doren, "First Glance," The Nation, CXXIII (December 22, 1926), 668.

⁴T.S. Eliot, "Introduction," Nightwood (New York, 1961), p. xi.

⁵St. John Perse, Anabasis, trans T.S. Eliot (London, 1959), p. 10.

⁶Robert Duncan, "Two Chapters from H.D.," Tri-quarterly, XII (Spring, 1968), 90.

⁷Bergson, Creative Mind, pp. 179-80.

⁸H.D., Hedylus (Boston/New York, 1928), p. 31. Hereafter noted within the text as HED, followed by page number.

⁸H.D., "Narthex" in The Second American Carovan, eds. Alfred Kreyborg, Lewis Mumford and Paul Rosenfield (New York, 1928), p. 280. Hereafter noted within the text as NAR, followed by page number.

¹⁰Robert McAlmon, "Forewarned as Regards H.D.'s Prose," in Palimpsest (Carbondale, 1968), p. 242.

¹¹Ibid., p. 243.

¹²Bryher, Heart . . ., p. 198.

¹³Questionnaire reprinted in The Little Review Anthology, ed. Margaret Anderson (New York, 1953), p. 364.

¹⁴H.D., "The Cinema and the Classics. Part I. Beauty," Close Up, I, 1 (July, 1927), 120.

¹⁵Bryher, Heart . . ., pp. 261-62.

¹⁶H.D., "Conrad Veidt," Close Up, I, 3 (September 1927), p. 44.

¹⁷H.D. "The Cinema and the Classics. Part III. The Mask and the Movieton," Close Up, I, 5 (November, 1927), p. 22.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁹H.D., "Boo," Close Up, II, 1 (January, 1928), p. 48.

²⁰H.D., "The Cinema and the Classics. Part II. Restraint," Close Up, I, 2 (August, 1927), p. 33.

²¹H.D., "The Cinema and the Classics. Part I. Beauty," p. 32.

²²H.D., "The Cinema and the Classics. Part II. Restraint," p. 32.

²³H.D., Red Roses for Bronze (New York, 1970), p. 1. Hereafter noted within the text as RRB, followed by page number.

²⁴H.D., Tribute to Freud (Boston, 1974), p. 57. Hereafter noted within the text as TF, followed by page number.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS: FREUD AND THE UNIVERSE WITHIN

H.D.'s experience with psychoanalysis is exceptionally well documented. In Spring, 1933, and again in Fall, 1934, H.D. spent several weeks studying with Sigmund Freud in Vienna. These meetings and their impact on H.D. are pivotal to understanding the evolution of her writing. Her sessions with Freud helped to clarify and confirm the methodology and mythology H.D. was working on in her poetry. Few artists leave detailed accounts of their analyses, so H.D.'s short, appreciate memoir, Tribute to Freud, provides a unique opportunity to observe both Freud (the man, his method of analysis, and his interest in artists and their creative sensibilities) and a very particular artist's application of his methodology to her own life and work.

H.D. recounts her experience with Freud in two forms: in an impressionistic remembrance of her analysis entitled "Writing on the Wall," and in "Advent," a compilation of excerpts from her 1933 journals and notebooks. Only "Writing on the Wall" appeared in the originally published (1956) volume of Tribute to Freud. "Advent" was

added for the first time in the 1974 re-issue of the book. Together, they provide important insights into H.D., her relationship with Freud, and her response to her analysis. Both pieces attempt to recreate the experience and texture of H.D.'s sessions. Their form is impressionistic and allusive, for H.D. noted early

I cannot classify the living content of our talks together by recounting them in logical or textbook manner. It was . . . "an atmosphere."

(TF,137)

Each of the two sections in Tribute to Freud provides a slightly different view of the meetings. "Writing on the Walls," written from memory, in London, 1944, is more formalized in style, more determined to show the shape and pattern of the entire experience. "Advent" written in journal form by H.D. while she was living in Vienna for the first sessions (March-June, 1933), focuses on the small, day-to-day incidents and ideas which occurred to her. "Advent" shows the fragments of thoughts the writer is in the process of considering and interpreting, rather than the artful pattern of the finalized experience. Both sessions provide an extremely human view of Freud as teacher-therapist, as well as openly presenting H.D.'s acceptance of, and occasional resistance to, Freud's reading of her character.

Norman Holland, in his book, Poems in Persons, and in his article, "H.D. and the 'Blameless Physician,'" gives in-depth psychoanalytic critiques of Hilda Doolittle, based

principally on "Writing on the Wall." His study of H.D.'s neuroses and emotional disorders is extensive and clinical. What is of even more interest than a clinical diagnosis to the student of H.D., however, is an understanding of the nature and value of her relationship with Freud, primarily as it impinges on her poetic growth. Insofar as they are separable, H.D.'s poetic development, not her personal lifestyle, remains the object of this investigation. To determine the effects of H.D.'s psychological studies, the reason for her interest in Freudian analysis must be sought.

H.D. turned to analysis for a complex number of reasons--general, artistic and personal. The decade following World War I had popularized Freud's works and ideas. By the early '20s, for example, disciples like James Strachey had started translating and publishing Freud's writing (under the Hogarth Press imprint). The same writers and intellectuals who were reading Frazer and the other Cambridge anthropologists had also begun to read Havelock Ellis, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. The increased interest in myth and myth-interpretation provided a milieu in which H.D. would almost inevitably come into contact with psychoanalytic ideas. Freud's use of mythic and classical literary figures to embody psychic drives, and his correlations between dreams and myths, appealed to the young avant-garde, expatriate writers in Paris, London, and Berlin. For a writer like H.D., already personally committed to a belief in the palimpsest-like nature of reality

and experience, already enthusiastically supportive of writers who experimented with myths and its applications to their writings (Yeats, Joyce, Pound), Freud's theories would be necessarily compelling.

Beyond these general and artistic attractions, H.D. had more personal reasons for her interest in psychoanalysis. H.D. had early access to the world of psychoanalysis through the experiences of her close friend, Bryher. Bryher had, in the 1920s, worked with both Havelock Ellis and Hanns Sachs on her own analysis. Although the exact extent of H.D.'s study and interest in psychoanalytic studies is unclear (throughout the '20s), she did, through Bryher's long standing interest, have access to both the written documents (journals, books, monographs) and human actuality of analysis.

Yet H.D.'s interest was even more directly personal than this. H.D. had already had two nervous breakdowns: first, while at Bryn Mawr, and second, at the end of World War I (about the time of her separation from Aldington and the birth of her daughter). In 1919, she had gone to see Ellis, presumably for help, but had found him disappointing. She recollected, in "Advent," both her meeting with Ellis and her subsequent sense that he did not understand her, therefore could not help her:

. . . [I] told the Professor [Freud] how kind Havelock Ellis had been to me when I saw him in his flat in Brixton, those few times before the birth of my child . . . I had expected to meet the rather remote, detached, and much-abused scientist, I found the artist.
(TF(129))

Although she "greatly admired" (TF,129) Ellis, he failed to assist her in either sorting through her personal, emotional dilemmas or in understanding an incident that she felt was both psychic and revelatory. This latter failure seems to have been the determining factor in her discontent with Ellis.

In July, 1919, H.D. and Bryher had gone to St. Mary's, Scilly Isles. While there, H.D. experienced what she and Bryher called

the "jelly-fish" experience of double ego; bell-jar or half-globe as of transparent glass spread over my head like a diving-bell and another manifested from my feet, so enclosed I was for a short space . . . immunized or insulated from the war disaster.

(TF,116)

After the experience, H.D. wrote a short, rough account, entitled Notes on Thought and Vision, which she shared with Ellis, thinking he might find it interesting and might be able to help her understand its significance. Ellis did not respond as she expected:

When I returned to London, I sent my Notes to Dr. Ellis. I thought he would be so interested. But he appeared unsympathetic, or else he did not understand or else he may have thought it was a danger signal.

Dr. Ellis did not understand . . .

(TF,131)

H.D. never doubted the authenticity of this experience as a legitimate and important psychic occurrence. She differentiated the jelly-fish experience (and later, one or two other "visions") from other, more common dreams or daydreams. She felt "there are trivial, confused dreams and there are real dreams" (TF,35). Real dreams, by their

intensity and clarity, are sigils produced by the unconscious, deserving contemplation and meditation. They have an inherent significance which is clearly manifested:

Those memories, visions, dreams, reveries--or what you will--are different. Their texture is different, the effect they have on mind and body is different. They are healing. They are real. They are as real in their dimension of length, breadth, thickness, as any of the bronze or marble or pottery or clay objects that fill the cases around the walls, that are set in elegant precision in a wide arc on the Professor's table in the other room. But we cannot prove that they are real. We can discriminate as a connoisseur (as the Professor does with his priceless collection here) between the false and the true . . .

(TF, 35)

H.D. intuitively trusted her ability to discriminate between the false and true dreams. She was not sure that Ellis could; she was not even convinced that he realized the distinction existed. Ellis' response to Notes seems to have decided for H.D. that he could not help her. If he gave no understanding of the sigil, how could he aid in deciphering it?

The jelly-fish experience was not the only occult experience H.D. had. Another, occurring in Corfu, in 1920, which she termed "writing on the wall" became the basis for many of her sessions with Freud and later, a touchstone to her personal myth system. While sitting in her hotel room, with Bryher, H.D. "saw" a series of six pictures projected on the wall in front of her. First to appear was a head-and-shoulders silhouette of a soldier in a visored cap. This faded and was replaced by the outline of a chalice. The third picture was a small spirit-lamp which proceeded

to flow into the shape of a tripod. The pictures stopped for a moment, but then continued. The fourth picture started with two dots of light which expanded until they formed a line. This single line became a series of lines, finally forming a Jacob's ladder linking heaven and earth. The fifth image was a representation of Niké, surrounded by inverted S-marks, or question marks. The final picture, which was seen by Bryher as well, was a male figure within a sun-disk, who reaches out and draws a female figure into the circle with him. These pictures, which she believed to be true dreams, needed interpretation. Although she recognized that these occult experiences were "superficially, at least, outside the province of established psychoanalysis," (TF,39) she felt that analysis with Freud might be able to teach her how to read these rune-like signs:

I wanted his opinion on a series of events. . . . I had sought help from one or two (to mind) extremely wise and gifted people in the past and they had not helped me. At least, they had not been able to lay, as it were, the ghost.

(TF,39-40)

In addition to the desire to find assistance in interpreting her occult experiences, H.D. felt the need to lay other ghosts to rest as well. As the decade of the '30s began, a friend's breakdown (which seemed it might be a foreshadowing of one of her own) and her fear of the imminence of war (whose aftermath, after all, had caused an earlier breakdown), led her to seek counseling once again.

This time, she saw herself embarking on a quest to find a way of fortifying herself against another breakdown:

There was something that was beating in my brain; I do not say my heart--my brain. . . . I wanted to free myself of repetitive thoughts and experience--my own and those of many of my contemporaries. I did not specifically realize just what it was I wanted, but I knew that I, like most of the people I knew, in England, America and on the Continent of Europe, were drifting. Where? I did not know but at least I accepted the fact that we were drifting. At least I knew this--I would (before the current of inevitable events swept me right into the main stream and so on to the cataract) stand aside, if I could (and if it were not already too late), and take stock of my possession.

(TF,13)

To prepare herself, H.D. needed to understand her past; she needed to "take stock" of her emotional resources. Psychoanalysis seemed a logical means of doing just this.

In 1931, H.D. arranged for 24 sessions with a London psychoanalyst, Mary Chadwick. Although Chadwick helped H.D. begin to recall and sort out some memories from the past (H.D. speaks, for instance, in "Advent," of an accident of her father's which she "had forgotten . . . until I began my work with Miss Chadwick"--TF,139), her help was apparently not enough. Many of H.D.'s most significant preoccupations and fears appear not to have been discussed, apparently due to a prejudgment on H.D.'s part that Chadwick would be inadequate to her special needs:

I am certain that I never mentioned Lawrence in my three months' preliminary work with Mary Chadwick at Tavistock Square in Bloomsbury. [Lawrence was a major figure in H.D.'s analysis with Freud and seems to have been, along with Aldington, a person/symbol she was obsessed with] I felt that Miss Chadwick could not follow the workings of my creative mind. [Italics my own]

(TF,150)

Although her meetings with Chadwick were unsatisfying, as a result, H.D. began a period of self-study which included "intensive reading of psychoanalytic journals, books and study [of] Sigmund Freud" (TF,ix). In the winter of 1931, H.D. went to Berlin to try again, this time with Dr. Hanns Sach. Whether because of any prejudgments on H.D.'s part or his own involvement with emigrating to America, Sach agreed with H.D. that "it would be better to continue the work, if possible with a man and preferably one superior to myself. 'The Professor?' he asked me. Of course I would work with the Professor if he would take me" (TF,150). With Sach's assistance, H.D. went to Vienna in March, 1933, to study with Freud. She was there for 12 weeks, meeting with the Professor for an hour a day, five days a week.

H.D.'s perception of her position as analysand is important to understand, for it illuminates both her reason for going to Freud and her response to Freud's analysis. H.D. saw herself as a student of Freud, not as a mentally ill patient. In particular, she equated her role with that of another of Freud's analysands, Dr. J. J. van der Leeuw (whom H.D. called the Flying Dutchman).

The Professor had said in the beginning that he classed me in the same category as the Flying Dutchman--we were students. I was a student, working under the direction of the greatest mind of this and of perhaps many succeeding generations.

(TF,18)

Van der Leeuw was a scholar who had come to Vienna to study with Freud for an express purpose: to learn how to apply

"the principles of psychoanalysis to general education. . . . He wanted to apply the laws of spiritual being to the acute problems of today" (TF,5). As students, then, H.D. and van der Leeuw were both coming to Freud to learn his method of analysis in order to apply it--as specialists in their own fields (education and art)--to practical circumstances. It must be kept in mind, therefore, that H.D. was not looking for a cure, but for a method by which to better understand herself, the world around her, and the most effective means with which to present her perception of both in her art. She hoped that from Freud, she could "learn the secret, be priestess with power over life and death" (TF,117).

This image of priestess is revealing and has several useful corollaries. First, a priestess is powerful, an initiate into mysteries which are primary and not necessarily fathomable by everyone. It is a mystical position. One becomes a priestess by having special knowledge and special perceptivity. Second, a priestess, by virtue of her special (direct) relationship with the godshead (the divine), interprets mysteries and visions for the uninitiated common man. She is, in a sense, the analyst and transliterator of the mystical world. H.D. viewed herself literally as a priestess, which in part explains the reason for her discontent with her previous analysts. H.D. did not want to be the recipient of understanding (the patient to someone else's therapy), but a participant in the actual act of finding meaning:

Freud's acceptance of her as analysand/student seemed to grant her this right:

One day he said, "I struck oil. It was I who struck oil. But the contents of the oil wells have only just been sampled. There is oil enough, material enough for research and exploitation, to last fifty years, to last one hundred years--or longer." He said, "My discoveries are not primarily a heal-all. My discoveries are a basis for a very grave philosophy. There are few who understand this, THERE ARE VERY FEW WHO ARE CAPABLE OF UNDERSTANDING THIS."

(TF,18)

H.D. felt herself to be one of the "very few who are capable of understanding" Freud's method. More significantly, she felt herself to be capable of using Freud's method to dredge up her own, new knowledge.

H.D.'s sense of having a special function was later reinforced by van der Leeuw's death, which triggered her second psychoanalytic sessions with Freud in 1934. As she explained then, to Freud, "I felt all the time that he [van der Leeuw] was the person who would apply, carry on the torch--carry on your ideas, but not in a stereotyped way" (TF,6). She had, as Freud realized, come back "to take his place" (TF,6). She saw herself as one of the disseminators of Freud's theories--a non-stereotypic student who would sensitively and creatively apply his methods.

As a priestess and student, H.D. also demanded for herself the right of interpretation: once initiated, she felt she could apply the methodology as an expert, as an equal to any other therapist. This belief allowed H.D. to

embrace Freud's method without concurring with his specific interpretation (diagnosis) of her case.

So again I can say the Professor was not always right. That is, yes, he was always right in his judgments, but my form of rightness, my intuition, sometimes functioned by the split-second (that makes all the difference in spiritual time-computations) the quicker.

(TF, 98)

In other words, her interpretation was as valid as his.

This attitude led to some interesting divergencies of opinion. Having already determined his method (dream analysis via myth), Freud sought to apply to H.D.'s experience his predetermined mythic patterns. H.D., on the other hand, felt that once she had learned how to analyze dreams/memories, it was her prerogative to establish their meanings in reference to a personal system of myth and association. She recognizes this as a challenge to a single-correct-interpretation system, but maintains that it is inevitable and valid:

The wordless challenge goes on, "You are a very great man. [She is mentally addressing herself to Freud at their first meeting] I am overwhelmed with embarrassment, I am shy and frightened and gauche as an over-grown school-girl. But listen. You are a man. Yofi is a dog. I am a woman. If this dog and this woman "take" to one another, it will prove that beyond your caustic implied criticism--if criticism it is--there is another region of cause and effect, another region of question and answer."

(TF, 99)

This other region is personal--and its existence is equally valid. Thus, while Freud saw H.D.'s writing on the wall as the most compelling and dangerous symptom of her

personality problems, H.D. felt entirely free to disagree.

She could merely interpret it differently:

But of a series of strange experiences, the Professor picked out only one as being dangerous, or hinting of danger or a dangerous tendency or symptom. I do not yet quite see why he picked on the writing-on-the-wall as the danger-signal, and omitted what to my mind were tendencies or events that were equally important or equally "dangerous."

(TF,41)

H.D. buttressed her claim to this right of personal interpretation by reasserting her belief that knowledge is an almost Platonic Absolute which, once one knows how to plumb it, is accessible through individual revelation and work:

The point was that for all his amazing originality, he was drawing from a source so deep in human consciousness that the outer rock or shale, the accumulation of hundreds or thousands of years of casual, slack, or even wrong or evil thinking, had all but sealed up the original spring or well-head. He called it striking oil, but others--long ago--had dipped into that same spring. They called it "a well of living water" in the old days, or simply the "still waters."

(TF,82)

For H.D., individual perceptions and presentations of knowledge drawn from this "spring" were not only acceptable, but obligatory. Freud's voice was one of the best interpreters, but he could not be the only one.

So, H.D. went to Freud and analysis as a student, one who saw herself as special, non-stereotypic, singled out to be a transmitter of whatever methodology and insights she gained, specially distinguished by her intuitive understanding to be an interpreter of mystical knowledge. When she went to Vienna, H.D. had three expressed goals. First, she wanted to lay to rest the ghosts of her past. She

wanted to integrate in some coherent manner her interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts; she wanted to more clearly understand and define her own identity. To do so, she intended to "dig down and dig out, root out my [her] personal weeds" (TF,91). Second, she wanted to obtain Freud's expert opinion on the meaning of her various psychic experiences. Third, she wanted to prepare herself for a future war and forearm herself against a personal breakdown. She hoped to understand the method of psychoanalysis so that she could help both herself and other "war-shocked and war-shattered people" (TF,93). She was, in a sense, a patient training to be a practitioner.

H.D.'s analysis centered around recollections of her past. Her movement towards psychoanalysis denoted in itself a desire to consciously uncover any unconscious or subconscious patterns in her life. This search for a pattern led back to her childhood and, in particular, her relationships with her parents and elder brother. As both "Writing on the Wall" and "Advent" indicate, the discussions between Freud and H.D. were rarely abstract or predeterminedly focused:

We touched lightly on some of the more abstruse transcendental problems, it is true, but we related them to the familiar family-complex. Tendencies of thought and imagination, however, were not cut away, were not pruned even. My imagination wandered at will. . . .

(TF,14)

H.D.'s remembered past revealed a strong sense of polarity and separation between family members. Her father, the

dominant figure within the family configuration, was a detached scientist, an intellectual, a savant. Her mother, on the other hand, was a warm individual, an artist, but extremely self-effacing. H.D. was her father's favorite; he wanted her to become a mathematician. Her choice of poetry as a career moved her into her mother's realm, the domain of art. Yet H.D. was never her mother's favorite, that was the position of her elder brother (who was later killed in WWI). To get closer to her mother, closer to the creative Muse, H.D. identified herself with her brother:

If I stay with my brother, become part almost of my brother, perhaps I can get nearer to her. . . . If one could stay near her always, there would be no break in consciousness . . .

(TF, 33-34)

This involved circle of oppositions and separations, conveniently drawn along stereotypic sexual lines, was the basis for H.D.'s personal legend (her identity theme, to use Holland's term).

Freud informed H.D. at the beginning of their sessions that she had come to Vienna to find her mother. What H.D. sought, according to Freud, was a return to a state without uncertainty, without a feeling of dislocation or isolation. His interpretation of all her visions and memories hinged on this premise. H.D. did not disagree, but used this idea in an expanded form to indicate the almost archetypal need of each individual to seek identity integration. For in addition to seeing her parents as individuals in her past, H.D. had come to identify them with two parts

of herself, two conflicting heritages for which she needed to find a synthesis. As she noted throughout "Advent":

Obviously this is my inheritance. I derive my imaginative faculties through my musician-artist mother, through her part-Celtic mother, through the grandfather of English and middle European extraction [her Moravian grandfather]. My father was pure New England . . .
(TF,121)

What H.D. hoped was that through "the psychology or philosophy of Sigmund Freud," she would be able to successfully reconcile "the light of my father's science and my mother's art" (TF,145).

H.D.'s view of herself, from childhood on, was that of a questor after knowledge. Throughout her life, she had turned to men who, like her father, were guides, knowledge-givers. She sought in personal relationships a godfather, a god-the-father, some initiate to realms of knowledge she did not already have. First, there was her brother, who like Prometheus, showed her how to start a fire using a lens. Then, there was Pound, the first break away from her family, the poet-critic who encouraged and instructed her. There were Aldington and Lawrence, emotional counterparts. There was Freud himself, the "man . . . preferably superior" (TF,150), who was going to teach her how to link all the memories into an understandable pattern. Each of these relationships contains the common thread of seeking both knowledge and complement, and all form one strand of H.D.'s analysis. (It is interesting to note that in all these cases, with the exception of Freud, there is a final pre-death separation. No merger is permanent.)

Having sought answers on an intellectual basis, following the lead of her male guides, H.D. now sought an alternative (or complement)--the transcendental knowledge she associated with her mother. This segment of H.D.'s quest was bound to her interest in and worry over her own art. She had come to recognize, particularly after her novels, that "The critical faculty can guide and direct us but it is not easy to be critical and at the same time recapture the flame that glowed with unreserved abandon" (TF,151). By working through her memories of her mother, H.D. hoped to redefine her heritage from this artistic, Muse-like source. Her mother's Moravian background, with its mystical beliefs, merely emphasized the difference between the intuitive side and the paternal, rational one. If Freud saw H.D.'s movement as one of identification with her mother, H.D. saw it, in part, as a reaching back for "a fusion or transfusion of [her] mother's art" (TF,151). Her books (she mentions Hedylus and Red Roses for Bronze several times had failed to match her vision because they were "born from the detached intellect" (TF,149). H.D. hoped that a re-definition of her past and an emotional reconciliation with her mother would result in a more complete art and personality.

Since Freud singled out her writing-on-the-wall as the most important sequence in her analysis, it is useful to see how H.D. arrived at her own interpretation of the experience. Remember, although she did not always agree

with Freud's interpretation, this was not because she did not understand his system. Freud himself seemed to approve regularly of her interpretations of situations:

When I told him of the Scilly Isles experience, the transcendental feeling of the two globes or the two transparent half-globes enclosing me, I said I supposed it was some form of prenatal fantasy. Freud said, "Yes, obviously; you have found the answer, good--good."
(TF,168)

Whenever H.D. presented material (either in her journal or in her sessions), she had to work through it to her own satisfaction. She was seeking "her own legend . . . to get well and re-create it" (TF,vii). If her past and her psychic experiences were signs, H.D. would be the one to read them.

In her presentation of the six pictures, H.D. drew the analogy between them and tarot cards, another method of reading signs. She speaks of "My own skinny hand would lay, as it were, the cards on the table. . . . If he could not 'tell my fortune,' nobody else could" (TF,40). The experience of seeing the writing-on-the-wall and the deciphering of it were both, in H.D.'s eyes, occult experiences. This analogy with the tarot cards reinforced H.D.'s position that her vision could be read "in two ways or in more than two ways" (TF,51), for tarot cards (and now, her writing-on-the-wall) are "hieroglyphs of the unconscious" (TF,47), picture writing, which whether the expression of repressed desire or "an extension of the artist's mind," (TF,51) serve as images would in a poem. Each perceiver, within certain limits, can interpret them for herself.

For H.D., the last of the six pictures is the "'determinative' [a term again taken from Tarot] that is used in the actual hieroglyph, the picture that contains the whole series of pictures in itself or helps clarify or explain them" (TF,56). This final picture was actually reported by Bryher, but H.D. accepted it unconditionally as the culmination of her own experience. The picture was a male figure within a sun-disk (a circle), who reaches out and draws a female figure (which H.D. identifies as her Nike) into the circle. What this symbolized for H.D. was the reconciliation of opposites; dualistic concepts were represented by the characters' sex and by their personae--Nike and Helios. Nike was the female questioner, whose surrounding question marks (in the fifth picture) represent both H.D. herself and mankind's questions throughout the ages. The winged Nike indicated the ability to transcend, to move into "another, winged dimension" (TF,56). Helios, the Sun, is god and creator. In all H.D.'s writing, Helios had been the particular divinity of the artist. As the sun-god, H.D. can also link him to the Christian Son (Christ), a mystical link to the godhead once again. The final emblem, then, was one of unification, of quest leading to resolution--in H.D.'s eyes, an integration of personality parts.

Of primary importance to H.D. was belief in her visions as hieroglyphs. At one point, she worried about their actuality, but never about their authenticity as visions:

"I don't know if I dreamed this or if I just imagined it, or if I later imagined that I dreamed it." "It does not matter," he [Freud] said, "whether you dreamed it or imagined it or whether you just made it up, this moment. I do not think you would deliberately falsify your findings. The important thing is that it shows the trend of your . . . imagination."

(TF,123)

This was the key to H.D.'s understanding of her psycho-analytic experience and the images and method it generated. The pictures and memories were hieroglyphs, compressed signs, which, though hard to read, could be deciphered. Once deciphered, they yielded hidden understanding, mythic stories, and an awareness of the creative process behind them.

In simplest terms, H.D. received from Freud confirmation, on psychoanalytic grounds, of insights and intuitions she had already had on more literary and personal grounds. What she gained from Freud was verification of what she, and so many other writers (Yeats, Eliot, Pound), had learned from their writings: experience had a common pattern of movement from unity to fragmentation and, through dedicated questing, back to unity again. This motion was apparent in their work, in hieroglyph form. Freud emphasized for H.D. the idea of universality and the underlying structure to all human life. He provided her with a means of linking the tribal myth with her personal dreams (visions). H.D. remembered, "One day, he [Freud] said to me, 'You discovered for yourself what I discovered for the race,'" (TF,25).

What both H.D. and Freud had discovered individually and affirmed jointly was the notion that all experiences

were variant expressions of eternal themes. According to Freud, all dreams connect, in their themes and their structure. As H.D. realized:

He [Freud] had dared to say that it was the same ocean of universal consciousness, and even if not stated in so many words, he had dared to imply that this consciousness proclaimed all men one; all nations and races met in the universal world of the dream; and he had dared to say that the dream-symbol could be interpreted; its language, its imagery were common to the whole race, not only the living but of those ten thousand years dead. 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. . . .

(TF,71)

Every particular experience then was a recreation of the overriding myth experience. What was most real, most important, most enduring were the mythic patterns behind common action. History becomes, as it did for Eliot, "a pattern of timeless moments," or a fourth dimension which incorporates past, present, and future into an ever-present Now.

Freud's approach to understanding the myth--by studying the personal intuitions of it (the dreams)--was not so radical a change from the Imagist idea of seeing reality by particulars. H.D. was very aware of the similarity in method between Freudian investigation and Imagist perception:

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

(TF,71-72)

Just as Bergson saw the possibilities for capturing the abstract and intuitive in the concrete, so did Freud see the universal in the personal. H.D. had discovered for herself, at least as early as 1926, her own hieroglyph for this intuition: a palimpsest. Her novels were artistic presentations of her belief that human experiences were superimpositions on an original pattern/order. By studying the fundamental emotions and motivations, the simplest components of a situation, H.D. was able to perceive meaning in a seemingly chaotic and unknowable world. Freud helped by showing H.D. what to look for, how to link and interpret hidden patterns.

Using Freud's associative techniques, H.D. was able to restructure and redefine her personal past. Her memories (both what she remembered and how she remembered it) produced what Freud called "corners"--points of intersection which visibly showed the connections H.D. had subconsciously been making between events and people. Many of the journal entries in "Advent" are especially revealing of this method. They are embodiments of the puzzling-out process H.D. and Freud were engaged in, in which they "patiently and meticulously patch[ed] together odds and ends of our [their] picture-puzzle . . . spell words upside down and backward and crosswise, for our [their] crossword puzzle . . ."

(TF,119). Freud and H.D. examined associations made on both imagistic (picture-puzzle) and sonal (crossword puzzle) lines. An excellent example of how this associative

process worked comes in one of the sections of "Writing on the Wall" where H.D. is putting together for herself an understanding of Freud's significance:

My serpent and thistle--what did it remind me of? There was Aaron's rod, of course, which when flung to the ground turned into a living reptile. Reptile? Aaron's rod, if I am not mistaken, was originally the staff of Moses. There was Moses in the Bulrushes, "our" dream and "our" Princess. There was the ground, cursed by God because Adam and Eve had eaten of the Fruit of the Tree. Henceforth, it would bring forth thorns and thistles--thorns, thistles, the words conjure up the same scene, the barren unproductive waste or desert. Do men gather grapes or thorns, or figs of thistles? Another question, another question mark, a half-S the other way around, S for seal, symbol, serpent certainly, signet, Sigmund (TF,88).

The quote is connected by several strands of associations. The first sequence begins with the image of the thistle. One of H.D.'s earliest dream-visions had been of a signet ring with a strange engraving of a thistle on it. Thus, the first point of reference is with a psychic/mystic experience that H.D. had. Then begins the process of interpreting the meanings connected with the images of the dream. The thistle becomes Aaron's rod. A rod, in biblical times, was usually a branch of a tree. The best known biblical tree is the Tree of Life, which is also the Tree of Knowledge. H.D. had come to Freud for knowledge/enlightenment. A second strand of associations reinforces this first. Again it starts with the thistle. Then, the thistle is Aaron's rod, which turns into a serpent. The most obvious serpent in the Bible is the serpent in the Garden of Eden (Satan), who twines round the tree of Life, tempting Adam and Eve to eat

of the tree's fruit. The tree of Life is still the symbol of knowledge, which is what H.D. is seeking. H.D.'s quest is for knowledge and it has led, in the end, to Sigmund, to Freud. Also incorporated in the associations of the rod and the serpent is the caduceus, the sign of healing and physicians. Freud is a physician, a healer. Further, in H.D.'s associations, serpents are also signs of regeneration, of moving into new skins, sloughing off the old, the outgrown. Thus, the caduceus links the immortality of the soul and Freud's works. A third strand stems from the thistle. Aaron's rod was originally Moses' staff. Moses was a leader of the Jews; Freud is a Jew. One of H.D.'s dreams was of a princess discovering a baby in the bulrushes (Moses in the bulrushes). She and Freud had interpreted this to mean several things; Freud felt it represented H.D.'s desire to be the founder of a new religion, a new understanding. H.D., however, saw it as a dream indicating that Freud (the Moses' figure) had been the light out of Egypt, the discoverer of the new knowledge. Both Freud and Moses were mystics, guiding people into a new, unknown world (awareness). Both were setting down the laws--establishing the framework of a new life. This particular strand links the two men as leaders, guides. A fourth line of association is an even more graphic one than the other three. The question leads to a question mark, which is a reversed letter S. The fifth of H.D.'s writing-on-the-wall images was surrounded by question marks (again, then, the link to

specific dream-visions which she and Freud were exploring). S as a sound connects all the words in the last line: the seal (the ring with the thistle), the symbol (all of the dream-visions), the serpent (back to the rod and knowledge), the signet (again the ring, but also H.D. herself, who had come to see her initials as the signet for herself), and finally, Sigmund Freud himself. All were related.

The associations also outline some implicit themes which are also important to H.D. at this time. The first is the notion of questing for knowledge. Like Eve before her, H.D. is eating of the Fruit of Knowledge; she has come to Freud to learn how to understand her past and her personal thought processes. Linked to this questing is the second theme of exploring new ground, of coming out of the wilderness (the confusion) and into Canaan (the methodology and theory which will lead beyond barren desert to new understanding). Even more obvious is the theme of looking for a home, for a place without separations. Adam and Eve are forced to leave such a place, when they are expelled from the Garden. They (and all their progeny--all mankind) are waiting for a time, a way to return. Moses and the Israelites are journeying through the desert to return to their promised homeland; to return, in a sense, to both their past and their direct relationship with God. And for H.D. and Freud, H.D. is looking for a way to work through the past, to get back to a reconciled past with her parents

(particularly her mother, who, for H.D., represents the Muse as well as her biological parent).

Freely associating images, sounds and themes, H.D. felt she could understand and interpret both her past and her present. Psychoanalysis confirmed this associative method of perception and presentation, while her own visions yielded a personally satisfying legend (or myth). As a poet, she would seek to use both the method and the myth.

H.D.'s new method and themes were extremely compatible with her earlier Imagist techniques and the themes she had explored in her fiction. Once again, H.D. could grow into a new form without abandoning the old. Rather, it was transformed. She had to discover how to adjust her new method to manifest her growing meanings. Her adaptation was particularly clear in her technique: in her continued use of concrete images, in her use of myth and mythic personae, and in her use of a sound as a major structural device.

Freud had affirmed H.D.'s awareness (on a conscious level) that all experience, all history, is a single recurring moment; individuals merely exhibit diverse representations, variations, of this common pattern (or Ur-myth). The Imagist method of presenting the "thing" allowed H.D. to create a hieroglyph (a thing-in-itself--a poem) which was both immediate ("in an instant of time") and timeless. A poem would be located in time and space by its presence on the page and yet would transcend time in its re-enactment

of the Ur-myth. Since all stories and experiences enact common patterns, what better way to identify the analogous themes and experiences than to present particularized events, the superimposition and juxtaposing of which would yield understanding of the single myth underneath the multiple presentations. What H.D. sought to capture in her writings was

Length, breadth, thickness, the shape, the scent, the feel of things. The actuality of the present, its bearing on the past, their bearing on the future. Past, present, future, these three--but there is another time-element, popularly called the fourth-dimensional.
(TF,23)

This fourth dimension is the sense of eternal time elicited by the recognition of the timeless patterns which underlie everything. It is also the sense of eternity (timelessness) which supported H.D.'s belief in the immortality of souls.

An interesting manifestation of this belief occurred when H.D. realized that Freud viewed immortality as a metaphorical state. He would be immortalized by his grandchildren, by his physical presence in his descendents. He conceded, as well, that his work was secured in his books. But, H.D. felt there was more--a future that Freud did not accept as she did.

One day, I was deeply distressed when the Professor spoke to me about his grandchildren--what would become of them? He asked me that, as if the future of his immediate family were the only future to be considered. There was, of course, the perfectly secured future of his own work, his books. But there was a more imminent, a more immediate future to consider. It worried me to feel that he had no idea--it seemed impossible--really no idea that he would "wake up" when he shed the frail locust-husk of his years, and find himself alive. . . .

I had accepted as part of my racial, my religious inheritance, the abstract idea of immortality, of the personal soul's existence in some form or other, after it has shed the outworn or outgrown body.

(TF, 43)

At this point, H.D. personified her perception with an image of the Chambered Nautilus, the spiraling shell of which remains constant while the mollusk within moves through phases (growths), leaving one chamber behind for the next. This belief in a more mystical fourth dimension for the soul, an immortal existence, bolstered the idea for H.D. of eternal patterning. The use of images as hieroglyphic presentations of these patterns certainly correlates easily with Bergson's notions of reality, particularly as expressed in the image of time as a stream. The stream is always--in a sense, outside and beyond time; eternal. But the glimpses into it are possible only through single moments (images).

What began, after analysis, to change in H.D.'s writing is not her use of images, but the length and organization of them within her works. This was controlled by her use of associative processes learned from Freud. In particular, H.D. began to use the technique of montage. The increasing length of her works required an episodic treatment of images, a rapid succession of ideas to simulate (and stimulate) the mind's associative processes. Like an Eisenstein filmtrack (an image suggested by Pearson)¹ or the avant-garde films which she had worked in with Bryher and MacPherson, H.D. wanted to rivet attention on specifics, allowing the compilation of associations and the juxtaposing

of contrasts to trigger the readers' understanding and resynthesis of events and actions into a new, more comprehensive whole.

H.D.'s poems always had a remarkably autonomous feel to them, a kind of "Grecian-Urn" existence outside of time. Her poems had more often than not been recreations of enduring situations and emotions: "'the showing-forth' of the timeless moment in situations that are as true today as they were three thousand years ago."² In both her mythic personae and her settings there had always been the basis for movement from the past to the eternal present, from the chronological to the eternal. This, in large part, explains both her original and continued use of mythological characters and places.

Engaged in a search for "a substratum of universality,"³ H.D. saw events and characters as projections of mythic patterns. Mythical heroes and heroines become exact, concrete presentations of spiritual and abstract elements in her own personality and life experiences. H.D. identified characters with her own emotional states rather than used them as set symbols. Freudian psychoanalysis validated mythological figures as a means of universalizing the ego. H.D.'s allusions to mythic characters in both her analysis (as recorded in Tribute to Freud) and her poems were not based on popular interpretations; rather they reflected a personal analogue. Freud substantiated for H.D. that their force was that of psychic reality. Starting

with the late nineteen-thirties, after her analysis, H.D. moved from the use of Greek mythology to the broader use of all mythologies. Greek began to blend with Egyptian, Moravian, and modern systems of thought and theosophy. With Freud, H.D. confirmed the fact that ". . . the angle of incidence>equals the angle of reflection."⁴

The Imagist technique of mythological allusion (as a sort of emotional shorthand) expanded after analysis until it linked all individuals and cultures in a complete configuration. Looking for similarities between various cultures (much as Freud did, using his artifacts), H.D. was able to take a long view of life: a view which recognized the prevalence of certain thoughts and feelings throughout history, while simultaneously being able to foreshorten the events so they may all occur within a single timeless moment (within one artistic work). As a later character, Julie, in Bid Me To Live, would recognize: "Somewhere, somehow, a pattern repeated itself, life advances in a spiral. . . ."⁵ Myth was the physical means of showing the spiral: ideas circling back and forth on a continuous thread, no disruption, only variations in the wave. The individual life had significance in the way it revivified (elucidated) the eternal. Classical mythology, like Freud's dreams, spanned time and cultures. It was to recognize the patterns that H.D. studied with Freud, deciphering "all these shapes, lines, graphs, the hieroglyph of the unconscious" (TF,93). H.D., in her analysis and the poems which were

written after the analysis sought to liberate this hieroglyph from personal complications and to understand its transcendental value.

One distinctive way H.D. attempted to liberate the hieroglyph and to understand its multiple, as well as its mythical, values was the use of sound and repetition as structural elements within her poetry. Such repetition was an outgrowth of the cadenced verse which characterized the Imagist poets. Pursued in the manner employed by H.D., the words and sounds produce an almost subconscious, sonal approach to the deep image. The language H.D. employed, and the figures that the sounds and words made on a page, became a ground in which association, suggestions, and repetition allowed various thematic threads and myths to be interwoven. The result was sometimes more an incantation than an explanation of belief. Within the field that language forms, there needed to be no past and no present, only a single enduring moment. Language became the one man-made system capable of incorporating (without great internal inconsistency) seeming paradoxes and contradictions. Impulse and intuition worked with logic in language to make a system which could lead the reader beyond what he or she presently, rationally, knew.

Robert Duncan has suggested that H.D.'s use of language within her later (post-Freudian) poems produce "sensual immediacies (as images) and are themselves sensual immediacies (as elements of a most skilled tonal structure)."⁶

In particular, H.D. sought to find the etymology of words and experiences (within words) by tracing phonetically and thematically associated words, by taking these words back in history to their primary meanings. H.D. recognized that "the impact of a language, as well as the impact of an impression may become 'correct,' become 'stylized,' lose its living quality" (TF,15). She sought to breakthrough the stylized meanings and recapture the living quality of words. As a result, words as isolated units of speech began to work figures and patterns as in a tapestry, becoming hypnotically (associatively) incantational. The rhyme, the correspondences, all created figures through which a reader could intuitively apprehend a whole which could not actually or logically be seized. The meaning in a poem came to be felt in the sound as well as the imagistic logic. H.D.'s language, then, became a progress, associative, searching attempt to discover relationships in words and sound that were analogous in structural power to her use of mythological characters.

She does this very effectively in her breakdown of Freud's first name: "We have victorious or victory, Sieg, and the sole voice, the voice, or speech, or utterance, Mund, Sigmund" (TF,105). In H.D.'s view, Freud is the singular voice, the interpreter through whose methods she will be victorious in understanding her past and her visions. He is also the voice, the explainer, of her very personal Victory sign, her Nike, the fifth picture in her

writing-on-the-wall sequence. She uses this technique of associative etymology even more in making a connection between her thorn-thistle dream and her fifth picture:

But to our little abridged Greek Lexicon, to verify akantha. [Associated in her mind with the acanthus leaves which are on the Corinthian columns surrounding temples of Nike] Yes--as from ake, a point, edge, hence a prickly plant, thistle; also a thorny tree. . . . Perhaps even of that singularly prickly Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. . . .

(TF, 89)

In H.D.'s writing, one image recalls another by vowel sounds, alliteration, repetition of phrases and words, as well as by definition. All of the elements which were a part of the cadenced verse of the Imagists are expanded and explored within her later writings. In word associations, in repetition, in melodic stress and pitch, a discernible physical pattern emphasizes the images and meanings, re-assembling them along associative lines. Words follow phonetically similar words in almost an anagrammatical manner to produce an immediacy of effect and linkage.

After her analysis with Freud, H.D. evolved more overtly and more completely her belief in the importance of art (poetry, particularly) as hieroglyph: the singular word becoming the Word of truth. Each word was a cryptogram, a storehouse of both connotation and denotation. Each poet, therefore, becomes a priest of the Word, a sacred initiate in the reading of poetic runes. Like an image, words are concrete objects which somehow in their nature capture the abstract. Poetry becomes the bridge over the chasm of

unconsciousness. The poet uses words (with their hidden meanings) to link himself with the past and the present. The word has an existence and power of its own. It is the substance which forms the "indelible ink of the palimpsest" (TRIL,17) of man's existence. Through language as well as image, initiates can see "the-writing-on-the-wall," the meaning of an individual experience. Language provides the still point in a turning world (to use Eliot's phrase) or the "rod of power . . . [which] brings life to the living" (TRIL,7).

H.D. placed the poet in the role of rune-maker, of enchanter and cantor, who will, as both she and Eliot did, discover within the word patterns of a poem the incarnation and manifestation of reality. The poet, through the spiritual etymology his words encapsulate, would lead the reader through the netherworld of associations. For H.D., the artist is the center of the fragmented world. As Freud provided the method which would help scientists to integrate fragments of reality into a comprehensible whole, poets provide a similar function for the layman.

Beyond the philosophic and artistic confirmations that Freud gave H.D., the final vision of H.D.'s six writings-on-the-wall (which she interpreted with Freud) provided H.D. with the images and themes for a very personal expression of the Ur-myth. The sixth picture is the unification picture: dualistic concepts (represented by sexual characters) unified and merged. Completion, wholeness, is

only possible with both elements present and balanced. This personal myth of a constantly blending interaction between opposites took at least two thematic manifestations after analysis. First is the quest for unity, the merging of all opposites into an androgynous whole. H.D. seeks to reconcile the masculine with the feminine, the subjective with the objective, the intuitive with the intellectual, and the "real" with the "dream." H.D. attempted to view all experience and all factors as in some way capable of fitting into a complete whole. Opposition became necessarily reconcilable--one need only discover a key. Her approach was similar, in many ways, to the yinyang principle in Chinese philosophy. Thematically, this quest for synthesis developed into a second, more concrete quest for the Eternal Lover.

This quest for Love and a Lover is derived expressly from this picture: a man drawing a woman into a circle. H.D. explained the myth in the following terms: "women are individually seeking, as one woman, fragments of the Eternal Lover. As the Eternal Lover has been scattered or dissociated, so she in her search for him . . . she seeks for him in contemporary time. . . . She seeks him in fantasy, myth."⁷ The image is merely a specific element of the fragmentation--search for unification theme. What this Eternal Lover myth stresses is the centrality of the quest motif and the regenerative/eternal power of love. Again, this myth was reinforced by Freud:

Eros and Death, those were the chief subjects--in fact, the only subjects--of the Professor's eternal preoccupation. . . . Hercules struggled with Death and is still struggling. But the Professor himself proclaimed the Herculean power of Eros and we know that it was written from the beginning that Love is stronger than Death.

(TF,103).

The love H.D. is seeking is a Platonic ideal, a part of "the sea of super-human perfection, the 'Absolute,'" (TF,84) rather than a single experience. Since H.D. is herself a woman, her natural complement, her symbol of what she is searching for, most readily appears as a man. In many ways, H.D.'s personal myth parallels the Egyptian myth of Isis and Osiris. In H.D.'s version of the myth, a mysterious oneness lies at the center of the world. This mystery can be understood when, and only when, all the fragmentary parts are gathered together; when, through love, the conflicting elements of the whole are accepted as compatible and reconciled; when Isis finally reassembles Osiris (or later, when Helen finds her Eternal Lover).

After analysis, H.D. did not immediately return to poetry. Between 1934 and the outbreak of war in 1939, H.D. published only two book length works: The Hedgehog (1936), a children's story, and a translation of Euripides' Ion (1937). Ion presented several of H.D.'s characteristic themes (the betrayal of love and the dedication of the artist to his work), as well as continuing H.D.'s interest in translation. Of the two Hedgehog seems most clearly influenced by her analytic experience. The story is about a

very young adolescent girl (apparently modeled after H.D.'s daughter, Perdita), who is searching one afternoon to discover the answer to "What is a herisson? Significantly, she perceives the characters in her small Swiss village as mythic characters. Her friend, a young goatherd, becomes identified in her mind with Pan. The local doctor, whom she visits in order to find the answer to her question, is Zeus. Through a recognition of patterns as well as particulars, Madge, the young heroine, is able to piece together the information she needs; she discovers the identify of the herisson. In a sense, the quest is solved when she realizes that a herisson is merely another name (another form) for a hedgehog, just as Pan and her friend are interchangeable. This sense of changed shape but underlying similarity is certainly consonant with H.D.'s discoveries with Freud.

Although Freud had provided her with new insights and confirmation of her own myth and method, it would not be until World War II, when "outer threat and constant reminder of death drove me[her] inward," that H.D. would give full form to her developed vision.

FOOTNOTES

¹Pearson, "An Interview," p. 445.

²Horace Gregory, "A Poet's Poet," Commonweal,²
LXVIII (April 18, 1958), 82.

³Quinn, p. 55.

⁴H.D. Trilogy (New York, 1973), p. 45. Hereafter
noted within the text as TRIL, followed by page number.

⁵H.D., Bid Me To Live (New York, 1960), p. 148.

⁶Duncan, "In Sight of a Lyre, a Little Spear, a
Chair," p. 256.

⁷H.D., Hermetic Definition (New York, 1972), p. vi.
Hereafter noted within the text as HD, followed by page
number.

CHAPTER VI

SYNTHESIS: THE WALLS DO NOT FALL, TRIBUTE TO ANGELS, THE FLOWERING OF THE ROD

The publication of The Walls Do Not Fall, in 1944, marks the start of the final phase in H.D.'s career. Like the first third of her career (that leading up to Collected Poems of H.D.), the last third of H.D.'s career is devoted primarily to poetry. Her five book length poems, The Walls Do Not Fall (1944), Tribute to Angels (1945), The Flowering of the Rod (1946), Helen in Egypt (1961), and Hermetic Definition (1972), are the final evolutionary steps in H.D.'s quest for understanding and expression. These books fuse all of H.D.'s past experience, expanding on her imagistic prosody, drawing and elaborating on the themes she developed in her fiction, and successfully manipulating the associative method she had learned and confirmed in Freudian psychoanalysis.

The first three out of the five volumes form a trilogy, indeed, that is the title under which they are now, jointly, published. Written closely together during World War II, they stand as independent poems, which are

nonetheless clearly linked by their underlying definition of the nature of reality and their consciously similar form. Trilogy is, more than the last two volumes of poetry, an overt aesthetic expression of H.D.'s belief in the underlying Oneness of experience, and the responsibility of the artist to approach and present this totality through his/her reading of the multiple/partial forms (the hieroglyphs) which are its manifestation. Like the stories in Palimpsest, each volume of the Trilogy functions as a segment of a visual and emotional triptych. The Walls Do Not Fall is devoted to defining the identity and function of the poet. Tribute to the Angels focuses on the counterbalance to war, the feminine principle of Our Lady. It asserts the power of revelation and the balancing of dualities. Finally, The Flowering of the Rod attempts to recreate a moment of transcendence. If The Walls Do Not Fall and Tribute to the Angels are strongly didactic, The Flowering of the Rod is the fruition of their philosophy, the actual attempt to present a moment when the poem's persona (and reader) succeed in seeing below the superficiality which passes for reality, into the true reality which links under the surface.

H.D. began writing The Walls Do Not Fall in 1942, in London. At the outbreak of World War II, H.D. had left Switzerland to live full-time in England. Returning to London to live was, for H.D., an act of conscience and principle. As she explained to her friend, Bryher, who later joined her, "It was here that people first read my

poetry . . . I am staying with them."¹ H.D. lived through the Blitz in London in spite of a phobia of noise, and it is the experience of the war which triggered H.D.'s new outpouring of verse. What H.D. felt under the barrage of enemy attack was an awareness that "The past is literally blasted into consciousness with the Blitz in London" (TF, vii).

For the first time, in The Walls Do Not Fall, the poem's persona is clearly identified with the poet H.D. Witnessing the effects of war and the genuine fear of a disintegrating order, the poet is faced with the dual task of desiring "to create (music)," . . . [and] "to make real to [herself] what is most real."² As a result, the poem is at once a personal quest to understand the horror of war and a cultural quest to understand the responsibility of the poet in response to this horror. H.D. explains some part of this when she writes:

In order to speak adequately of my poetry and its aims, I must, you see, drag in a whole deracinated epoch. Perhaps specifically, I might say that the house next door was struck one night. We came home and simply waded through glass, while wind from now unshuttered windows made the house a barn, an unprotected dug-out. What does that sort of shock do to the mind, the imagination--not solely of myself, but of an epoch? One of the group found some pleasure in the sight of the titled shelves and the books tumbled on the floor. He gave a decisive foot-ball kick with his army boot to the fattest volume. It happened actually to be Browning. He demanded dramatically, "what is the use of all this--now?" To me, Fortu and the yellow-melon flower answered by existing. They were in another space, another dimension, never so clear as that very moment.³

It was to answer, in part, the question "What is the use of all this--now?" that H.D. once more began to write.

The final prod to the writing of The Walls Do Not Fall was the even more specific indictments being made in the press against the poet. In a letter to Norman Holmes Pearson, in 1943, H.D. explains this final impetus. In particular she cites two people, an unidentified American critic who called writers who tried to "express world-issues" as "pathetic" (TRIL,vii), and an English girl who questioned "the status of the poet, the writer in the future world-reconstruction" (TRIL,vii), as causing her to write. And what she writes is an answer to their charges that poetry has no meaning in a world racked with violence. What she writes is, in her phrase, "a vindication of the writer, or the Scribe" (TRIL,vi). Basically, she strives in Trilogy to present the belief that in spite of all destructiveness, treachery, and ugliness, both mental and physical, poetry endures and illuminates the real values--it is immortal and survives all destruction. For H.D., the poet is the intermediary between the eternal and the immediate. She provides the objects (poems) and ideals which reveal the rubric of ancient (and it necessarily follows, modern) wisdom.

The Walls Do Not Fall is composed of forty-three sections, of varying lengths and forms (both tercets and couplets). The poem serves as an affirmative presentation of the process of spiritual regeneration. It shows how the poet can unify and understand the world. The forty-three

sections can be grouped into ten units to illustrate the evolution of the poet's affirmation of his role.

The Walls Do Not Fall is dedicated to H.D.'s friend, Bryher, with the inscription "for Karnak, 1923" (in remembrance of their trip to Egypt together), "from London, 1942" (in recognition of their survival as individuals and writers in the inferno that was World War II London). H.D. immediately starts within the inscription to draw parallels between the past and the present. The walls that do not fall are both the walls of the Egyptian temple of Amen-Ra in Karnak and the gutted buildings of war-torn London. Within the first section (1), H.D. establishes the parallels between twentieth-century England and ancient Egypt:

there as here, ruin opens
the tomb, the temple; enter
there as here, there are no doors:

the shrine lies open to the sky,
the rain falls, here, there
sand drifts; eternity endures:

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 the gloom:

(TRIL,3)

"here, there"; "there as here"; the very phrases and sentence patterns are repetitive. Karnak is "there," London is "here," yet both are simultaneously present in the mind. The open temple-ruins, with the shrine open to the sky, is not unlike the roofless building. Both have been destroyed.

Ruin is everywhere. The act of destruction must be recognized as not new, not unique, not the end. From within the ruins comes the assurance of eternity, of eternal inspiration. The individual incidents which compose the world's history (the building of the temple, the worship in the shrine, the horrors of World War II) are sand, finite, and will drift away. Even so, eternity exists: the pattern exists which will allow the sand to be reshaped, remolded. No matter what happens to the body, the frame (the skeleton) survives:

the flesh? it was melted away,
the heart burnt out, dead ember,
tendons, muscles shattered, outer husk dismembered,

yet the frame held:
we passed the flame: we wonder
what saved us? what for?

The frame holds and within itself holds war and worship, destruction and poetic beauty, death and creation. All apparent opposites coexist--all fit within the frame. Within this poem, H.D. shows the parallels of the forgotten past with the present in such a way that our final understanding incorporates both. The framework in London and Karnak does not fall to total destruction, just as the frame of H.D.'s poem is capable of holding the two experiences in juxtaposition. The section ends with the question of "what saved us? what for?" This is the poet's immediate quest throughout the book, to discover the what and why of spiritual regeneration.

The next two segments of the poem, (2) and (3), are an Evocation of the past and a recognition of duality. There has always been both good and evil, the "gods always face two-ways" (TRIL,5). Gone are the times, the people of the past. Still, the power of the word to elicit the past and link it to the present is eternal. It is a Caduceus--the sign of Hermes, Greek patron of the writer and herald to the gods. The poet does not change, "scratch out," the "indelible ink of the palimpsest" (TRIL,6); he does not change or even recreate the past. What he does is recognize that his responsibility is to search "for the true-rune, the right-spell, / [to] recover old values" (TRIL,5). For "the rod of power" is language, and it brings understanding, "it brings life to the living" (TRIL,7).

The subsequent four segments (4-7) stress the regenerative nature of existence. Within this portion of the poem, the individual is seen as an evolving, transforming creature. The worm is actually a cocoon which becomes a butterfly. As a metamorphosizing individual it "know[s] how the Lord God / is about to manifest, when I, / the industrious worm, / spin my own shroud" (TRIL,12). The cyclic pattern of constant change is stressed. As a chambered nautilus, another image from this portion, movement is again growth, a growth which does not forget its past but carries it with him on his back. It is a cumulative development, "unintimidated by multiplicity" (TRIL,11). So, the

implication is, the past remains an integral part of man's present. It forms a clue to understanding the present.

Strophe (8) is H.D.'s most explicit statement on the value and function of the poet. As such, it dominates much of the poem. It heads the fourth part of the poem, the segments which deal with the power of the poet, as wielder of words, to connect all time and experience into a single continuum:

So we reveal our status
with twin-horns, disk, erect serpent,

though these or the double-plume or lotus
are, you now tell us, trivial

intellectual adornment;
poets are useless,

more than that,
we, authentic relic,

bearers of the secret wisdom,
living remnant

of the inner band
of the sanctuaries' initiate,

are not only "non-utilitarian,"
we are "pathetic:"

this is the new heresy:
but if you do not even understand what words say,

how can you expect to pass judgment
on what words conceal?

yet the ancient rubrics reveal that
we are back at the beginning:

you have a long way to go,
walk carefully, speak politely

to those who have done their worm-cycle,
for gods have been smashed before

and idols and their secret is stored
in man's very speech,

in the trivial or
the real dream; insignia

in the heron's crest,
the asp's back,

enigmas, rubrics, promise as before,
protection for the scribe;

he takes precedence of the priest,
stands second only to the Pharoah.

(TRIL,14-15)

Strophe (8) directly answers the charges that in a world engaged in the holocaust of war, a poet is superfluous, "non-utilitarian," and his attempts at writing are pathetic means of coping with the political and economic world around him. Both these charges had come to H.D.'s attention during the War. H.D.'s answer is to explain the task (function) of the poet. She sees the poet as "authentic relic, / bearers of the secret wisdom." The writer is the original rune-maker, majic-maker [sic]; he understands the immortal power of words; he recognizes the cyclic (spiralling) nature of all human existence (he sees the worm-cycle). Although destruction has come before, "gods have been smashed before / and idols . . .," what is significant and meaningful in these gods is still available to man's comprehension by virtue of his language and his reflection on the past. As the creative center of truth and understanding, as the interpreter and implementor of dreams, history, and words, the poet is an almost sacred individual. He "stands second only to the Pharoah," second only to God.

For his word-creations are explanations and recreations
(vital representations) of reality. His reading of enigma
and rubric yields to himself and his culture the key to how
to confront the present as a culmination of the entire past.

Strophe (9) is useful in showing how H.D. connects
the poet in a timeless manner to both the events of the past
and the present. What it succeeds in doing is delineating
affinities and parallels between four chronological periods:
the Egyptian, the Greek, the eighteenth century, and the
twentieth century.

Thoth, Hermes, the stylus,
the palette, the pen, the quill endure,

. . .

yet give us, they still cry,
give us books

folio, manuscript, old parchment . . .

(TRIL,16)

Thoth and Hermes are related, indeed interchangeable, names
within H.D.'s canon. Thoth is the Egyptian god, founder of
alchemy and other occult sciences. Called by the Greeks
Hermes Trismegistus (Hermes the thrice-greatest), he became
identified with (assimilated into) Hermes, god of science,
eloquence, and cunning. Hermes is the herald-messenger of
the Olympian gods. Generally depicted with winged shoes
and hat, carrying a caduceus, he is the guide of departed
souls to Hades, thereby linking the past (death) with the
present (life). In H.D.'s associative system, Hermes and
Thoth are patrons of the scribe. The list of four writing

implements define our time periods. The stylus is Egyptian, the palette--Greek, the quill--eighteenth century, and the pen--twentieth century. Similarly the forms of writings--books, folio, manuscript, old parchment--are each matched to the same times. Thus, by reference points--specific objects and individuals--H.D. establishes a connection between four distinct (and different) chronological times, so that the linkage between past and present is as much a result of linguistic patterning as it is a recognition of the cyclic nature of experience.

Of final importance in this section on the poet is strophe (10), in which H.D. shows the power of the word (as linguistic unit) and the Word (as Incarnation):

so what good are your scribblings?
 this--we take them with us

beyond death; Mercury, Hermes, Thoth
 invented the script, letters, palette;

the indicated flute or lyre-notes
 on papyrus or parchment

are magic, indelibly stamped
 on the atmosphere somewhere,

forever; . . .
 (TRIL,17)

Words transcend death, are both antecedent and posterior to it, and exist as a timeless intermediary, a hieroglyph in a world ". . . somewhere, / forever, . . ." (TRIL,17). H.D. clearly expresses this belief when she quotes from The Book of Revelations: "in the beginning / was the Word" (TRIL,17).

Strophes (13-19) show how the poet continually links times, seeing the total past within the present and noting the correlations and correspondences between all activities. The poet is "the spinner[s] / of the rare intangible thread / that binds all humanity / to ancient wisdom" (TRIL,54). In (17), for example, H.D. again links Greek, Egyptian, and modern (Christian) times in an uninterrupted line, producing a feeling of the eternal present:

let us go down to the sea,
gather dry sea-weed,
heap driftwood,

let us light a new fire
and in the fragrance

of burnt salt and sea-incense
chant new paens to the new Sun

of regeneration;
we have always worshipped Him,

we have always said,
forever and ever, Amen.
(TRIL,26)

In this particular segment of the poem, the first seven lines evoke a feeling of Ancient Greece, with its images of gathering sea-weed, driftwood, and offering it as a gift to a deity. In many of H.D.'s poems, the idea of sea, and of a temple by the sea, recreates for her an image of ancient Greece which extends throughout her canon. The recognition--intellectually discernible--of the links in time come in "we have always worshipped Him. / we have always said . . ." [italics my own]. Although the names

given to the deity have changed, the action of reverence and adulation has remained an eternal verity.

The last line--"forever and ever, Amen"--most clearly presents the Egyptian and Christian elements which link in some way to the Greek. "Forever and ever, Amen" is used at the end of Christian prayers. The notion of Christian implication also becomes more obvious if we reconsider an earlier phrase, "chant new paens to the new Sun." "New Sun," the Son of God, plus the sun gods Apollo (Greek) and Amen-Ra (Egyptian), are all caught up in this poem. Likewise, the use of the word "Amen" at the end of this strophe starts all sorts of reverberations and responses. It recalls to mind Amen-Ra of Karnak as well as the Christian's "so be it" in concluding a prayer.

What has become obvious to H.D. by this time is the fact that no matter what the name, what the method, the actions of worship, the search for deity is a common link throughout all time, a link which the poet (with her peculiar relationship with words) is best able to make. As a "nameless initiate[s]" (TRIL,21), the poet knows that

. . . every concrete object

has abstract value, is timeless
in the dream parallel

whose relative sigil has not changed
since Nineveh and Babel.

(TRIL,24)

The sonal connections within the poem allow for an instantaneous, almost intuitive, jump from one period to another. H.D. is constantly aware that words have a rhetorical and emotional effect as well as an intellectual one. This is the power of enchantment, of incantation. This is the use of incantation to weave the "right-spell," leading to a primordial (subconscious) discovery of the "true-rune." H.D. seeks the power of magically evoking meaning in poetry via sound.

The poet, in H.D.'s definition, is a visionary who can perceive a Mystery at the core of Life. Whether it is perceived as the Mystery, the God's-head, or the Holy Ghost matters little, for ultimately all the names merge into one, for all their reference points are the same.

Splintered the crystal of identity,
shattered the vessel of integrity,

till the Lord Amen,
paw-er of the ground,

bearer of the curled horns,
bellows from the horizon:

here am I, Amen-Ra,
Amen, Aries, the Ram;

(TRIL,30)

Lord Amen becomes a manifestation of the sun god Amen-Ra. Simultaneously, by name and by characteristics, he is also linked to Aries, the Ram. The eternal element common to all three is re-born at the start of each "new spiral" (TRIL,30) in time.

The Mystery includes the fusion of fragments into a whole, into a comprehensive unity in which contradictions become mere contrasts. Paradoxes melt into balanced opposites, their seemingly irreconcilable elements being merely non-understood dualities. Although H.D. does not find in this poem a means of explaining the Mystery or how it works, she does believe in its existence. She recognizes the possibility of oneness that the Mystery includes. This theme runs throughout segments (20-24).

Strophe (23) is an excellent example of how the poetry throughout The Walls Do Not Fall has affinities and parallels with H.D.'s previous lyric verse. It shows her ability to adapt her artistic means to match her evolving philosophic and theosophic ideals.

Take me home
where canals

flow
between iris-banks:

where the heron
has its nest:

where the mantis
prays on the river-reed:

where the grasshopper says

Amen, Amen, Amen.

(TRIL,32)

The presentation is of the physical scene, of the tranquil return to a previous condition (possibly along the banks of the Nile itself), where grasshoppers and people evoke the presence of a god, meanwhile evoking the quality of the

Christian ideal of "so be it, so be it, so be it." The tranquility of the poem is movingly and skillfully wrought. Within ten lines, H.D. manages to link the Egyptian with the Christian and concurrently recreates in her best Imagist style the peace of mind which accompanies a rapport with the gods--any of the gods.

There are four more movements in the poem. Strophes (25-29) revolve around the image of a seed. The idea that what is planted in men's minds as an idea or intuition is not necessarily epiphanic or culminating by nature. An idea serves as a germ, something self-generative. In the end, a seed is not a seed but a tree, with far-reaching, intuitive roots and thriving, side-spreading branches. The seed H.D. alludes to is the seed of awareness. Dropped by the bennu bird (the Phoenix), it has lodged in the speaker's person until it bursts its container (the heart) and leaves him flooded in awareness of his state in nature. It is the awareness of the possibility of mystical transcendence which leaves a man defenseless. It is the forcing open of a new dimension, the timeless dimension, which is so strong and so complete that "the heart's alabaster / is broken" (TRIL, 39). This awareness, this receptiveness to the possibility of the Mystery's existence, requires that the poet seek for the deities' presence, for a means of hooking-up with the oneness. Or, as H.D. prays in the conclusion of (29):

O, for your Presence

among the fishing-nets
by the beached boats on the lake-edge;

when, in the drift of wood-smoke,
will you say again, as you said,

the baked fish is ready,
here is the bread?
(TRIL,39)

Strophes (30-34) are, in a way, a continuation of the previous theme. The strophes deal with the need to recognize unreflective present life as "oneness lost, madness" (TRIL,41). The individual in an early stage of awareness realizes he must "dare, seek, seek further, dare more" (TRIL,40). He must "surrender / sterile logic, trivial reason," until through mediation, "runes, superstitions, evasions" (TRIL,42), he can become an "initiate of the secret wisdom" (TRIL,43), a bona fide questor after the Mystery.

The images used throughout the section continue to incorporate the notions of regeneration, opening to the occult and the palimpsest-like nature of reality. Strophe (30), for example, follows the movement of the Zodiac from Scorpio to Aquarius. The movement is from Winter to Spring, from death to new life, ending at Aquarius, "the age of new dimension" (TRIL,40), the sign of the occult. This section, however, is not without its fears. The movement into the unknown (possibly unknowable) is a difficult one for the poet to explain. Present language and form seem frequently inadequate ("overworked assonance nonsense, / juxtaposition

of words for words' sake, / without meaning, undefined;
 imposition, / deception . . ." (TRIL,44)), yet it is still
 the only possible way (" . . even the erratic burnt-out
 coment / has its peculiar orbit" (TRIL,45)). The poet's
 methods are limited, but only through her writings can the
 mystery even be approached.

The next stage of spiritual regeneration, found in
 strophes (35-39), is the acknowledgment by the persona (the
 poet) of his own ability to create for himself and his
 culture a new "spiritual realism" (TRIL,48). Recognizing
 both the need and the possibility for understanding the
 universal, dream, world, the poet comes to see:

chasm, schism in consciousness
 must be bridged over;

we are each, householder,
 each with a treasurer;

now is the time to re-value
 our secret hoard

in light of both past and future . . .
 (TRIL,49)

By searching for "historic parallels" and "psychic affini-
 ties" (TRIL,51), the poet can bring his reader (and himself)
 closer and closer to the truth of oneness. His writings
 will "re-vivify the eternal verity" (TRIL,48).

This sounds very like an outgrowth of Freud's dream
 studies. In his analysis and in H.D.'s poem, the "spiritual
 realities" are manifest in individual visions:

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

in the forest, as every snow-flake
has its particular star, coral or prism shape.

(TRIL,51-52)

The commonality which underlies all leaves, all snow-flakes, all minds, is expressed uniquely in each individual. The poet can reach back into the common experience, into the mysterious oneness by his words and images. She knows "the meaning that words Hide" (TRIL,53) and, through the power of words (words as "anagrams, cryptograms" (TRIL,53)), the poet can direct the generative consciousness of her reader.

In the concluding four strophes of The Walls Do Not Fall, the poet-persona illustrates the method the poet must use in order to direct her reader toward the Mystery, the oneness, at the center of experience and history. Strophe (40) is an ideal example of H.D.'s method:

For example:

Osiris equates O-Sir-is or O-Sire-is;

Osiris,
the star Sirius,

relates resurrection myth
and resurrection reality

through the ages;
plasterer, crude mason,

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,
Fosterer, Begetter, the Same-forever

in the papyrus-swamp
in the Judean meadow.

(TRIL, 54-55)

H.D., breaking-down the very words and myths of the past, can see a oneness taking shape. She breaks down in a sonal sense the word Osiris, a primary Egyptian god. Osiris is the masculine counter-part in the masculine-feminine dichotomy in the world, always seeking unity with Isis. Further, Osiris as the Eye of the Sun, symbolizes continuity. In the Egyptian Book of the Dead, it is noted that:

Through him the two existences of man shift without the slightest disruption. One life, short and relative, belongs to the here and now. The other, the only one which is genuine and not illusory, is life eternal, and there. The two states are only a pretext one for the other.⁴

But, most importantly, within the poem is the fact that in the original myth, Osiris, like his name in line 2, becomes fragmented. In the verbal split, there are at least two readings of Osiris' name: O-Sir-is, stressing the masculine quality of the concept (Sir), and O-Sire-is,

stressing the God-like or father-like quality of the name (and its myth). Throughout the poem, references to a Father (or a God-the-Father) abound: Sire, Osiris, Abraham (a major Old Testament father figure), the Healer (a reference to Christ the Healer, a part of God-the-Father, and to the magic healing qualities of Osiris, the original Egyptian god), One (the God), Creator, Fosterer, Begetter, the Same-forever. Further support of the idea of Osiris as a Christ figure is the biblical "Before Abraham was I am." Osiris, Eye of the Sun, like Christ, Son of God, is the symbol of continuity. He is eternal.

The myths, no matter from which culture, all refer to the same thing. The repetition of that idea, through words which are appositives, creates a fabric on both a conscious rational level and on a more immediate, almost intuitively-associative level. Myth and sound have fused to propel a reader into a world in which everything and everyone is related and united. The poet is the "crude mason" who bridges for the reader the chasm of the unconscious mind, in order to lead him back to a prelapsarian world of oneness. Like Isis, the poet knows the secret, the Mystery: that in the beginning, there is One, only One. Although he cannot explain how the oneness is achieved, its existence has become unquestionable. The universal myth, whether put in terms of a papyrus-swamp (Egyptian history) or a Judean meadow (Christian history), is the final reality.

Thus "resurrection myth" is "resurrection reality" for the generative myth is the reality.

In the end, in strophe (43), H.D. sees that the walls do not fall, that there is a frame or structure which keeps them standing. She knows the Mystery, the unity, exists, but not how it reconciles the dualities within the world. In the end of The Walls Do Not Fall, all H.D. and the poet (in a generic sense) can do is commit themselves to the task of searching, hunting-out correlations and affinities, which they hope will ultimately lead beyond the recognition of the Mystery, to an understanding of it. Until then,

we are voyagers, discoverers
of the not-known,

the unrecorded;
we have no maps;

possibly we will reach haven,
heaven.

(TRIL,59)

Tribute to the Angels, the centerpiece of the triptych, continues to focus the reader on the regenerative nature of history, of all-time. Where The Walls Do Not Fall affirmed the function of the poet, Tribute to the Angels indicates the method of double vision which will allow a person to see "spiritual realities," to see "a half-burnt-out apple-tree / blossoming" (TRIL,87) and recognize it as "the flowering of the rood" (TRIL,87).

Like The Walls Do Not Fall, Tribute to the Angels is composed of 43 sections. It, too, can be grouped into

10 units, the evolution of which illustrate even more clearly the multiple manifestations which make up the Oneness underlying reality and the questing nature of humanity in piecing together some understanding of these multiple forms. While much of The Walls Do Not Fall is concerned with the quest for the father, Tribute to the Angels focuses on the opposite (yet identical) quest for the mother. In Tribute to the Angels, the Lady figure, rather than the father, stands at the center of the Mystery.

Tribute to the Angels opens with an invocation to Hermes Trismegistus, the patron of alchemists and poets. Given the definition of the poet forged in The Walls Do Not Fall, the appropriateness of this double patronage should not be overlooked. In the opening strophe, the poet is extolled to "steal" and "plunder" the past (TRIL,63), to use history once again to find the eternal realities. She is commanded to

collect the fragments of the splintered glass
and of your fire and breath,
melt down and integrate,
re-invoke, re-create
(TRIL,63)

Once again, in undertaking the quest which is this poem, the poet must piece together a fragmentary truth. By her passionate vision and her poetic words (her "fire and breath"), the poet will be able to integrate, to fuse disparate parts of experience and history into a single vision/understanding. To do so, however, she must discover

a new pattern ("not four-square, I thought, / another shape" (TRIL,64)).

The next section, strophes (3-7), establishes the apocalyptic, the prophetic tone of the quest. Its quote from Revelations ("I make all things new. / I John saw. I saw. I testify" (TRIL,65)), implies a continued consideration of the theme of regeneration ("I make all things new") and the importance of the poet ("I John saw. I testify") as reader/creator of the hieroglyphics. This section also starts the actual tribute (praise) to the angels. H.D. presents seven Angels which surround the throne of God. Only one (Uriel) is war. Thus, though the present is a time of war ("Not in our time, O Lord, / the plowshare for the sword" (TRIL,66)), this is but one facet of reality, only "one of the seven fires" (TRIL,67). If there is war, there is also peace (Annael), life (Raphael), death (Azreal), righteousness (Zadkiel), change (Gabriel) and knowledge (Michael).

The next segment of the poem, strophes (8-12), points to the method the poet must use to forge her new pattern and to the enduring nature of the Lady figure. If war and destruction exist, so do beauty and unity (personified by "Our Lady"). Strophe (8) is one of the best examples in H.D.'s canon to illustrate how the poet, by linguistic and thematic associations, can unite the seemingly different forms which conceal a universal theme:

Now polish the crucible
and in the bowl distill

a word most bitter, marah,
a word bitterer still, mar,

sea, brine, breaker, seducer,
giver of life, giver of tears;

Now polish the crucible
and set the jet of flame

under, till marah-mar
are melted, fuse and join

and change and alter
mer, mere, mère, mater, Maia, Mary,

Star of the Sea,
Mother,

(TRIL,71)

In lines 12 to 14, we see, through the movement of sound, a cumulative growth of ideas from mar to Mother. At the beginning of line 12, the changes are entirely sonal, from the understood mar (in lines 4 and 9) to mer, to mere, to mère. Only the vowel tone is altered. The associations between the words are less apparent than their sonal similarities. The movement in the second half of line 12, while still strongly sonal, becomes progressively more an associative progression: mère is synonymous with mater, Maia and Mary are both mothers, mater is used in the "Hail Mary" of the Catholic liturgy--linking even more closely the two words. Significantly, both Maia and Mary are mothers of gods. Maia links line 12 to line 13 by virtue of being the name of a star, the eldest of the Pleiades. The Star of the Sea is also a symbol of Venus, another mother-goddess, many of whose attributes were assimilated into the cult of

Mary. Thus the verbal associations start a chain of association which links the various images, accumulating connotations, emphasizing connections which are not always obvious, until the sound forces us to consider them together.

In addition, there are thematic associations which reinforce the notion of superficial duality and underlying unity. Marah was the name given to the place in the Wilderness where the Israelites rested. There, the water was too salty to drink. Yet from this word, through sonal association, comes Maia, a Pleiade, a water symbol. The salt water of the sea is both "giver of life; giver of tears." Marah and Mar represent the feminine and masculine forms of the same word. Beneath seeming paradox lies unity. Beneath multiple myths lies the one core (true) myth.

The other strophes in this section continue to seek out and attempt to unify examples of "this unsatisfied duality" (TRIL,72). In stophe (10), the duality is between Hesperus and Phosphorus, stars which appear at opposite times of the day, each linked to the multifaceted goddess figure:

glowed the star Hesperus,
white, far and luminous,

incandescent and near,
Venus, Aphrodite, Astarte,

star of the east,
start of the west,

Phosphorus at sun-rise,
Hesperus at sun-set.

(TRIL,73)

Although not the same, they are the same, both stars and goddesses. The planet Venus is both called Phosphorus and Hesperus. Likewise, Venus is the same as Aphrodite is the same as Astarte. In the final strophe of the section, the poet turns to the goddesses and pleads for their return, the return of the feminine principles of peace and beauty vs. the masculine principles of war and destruction.

Strophes (13) and (14) return the reader's attention to the poet's job. Once in possession of knowledge, once knowing that Venus is both Phosphorus and Hesperus, both Aphrodite and Astarte, the poet must express this knowledge to an audience. She must "name it," or if she knows no name, then she must "invent it" (TRIL,76). The poet, at the moment of experiencing this recognition of oneness must "minimize thought, / concentrate on it / till [she] shrink[s], / dematerialize / and am drawn into it" (TRIL, 77).

In strophes (15-18), the poet dwells on the contrast between war (Uriel) and peace (Annael), yet carefully maintains them as opposite sides of a single coin. She sees that

. . . we hail them together,
one to contrast the other,

two of the seven Spirits,
set before God

as lamps on the high-altar,
for one must inexorably

take fire from the other
as spring from winter

(TRIL,80)

Opposites are slowly resolving themselves (with the help of the poet) into complements.

At this point, the poem begins to pivot on the question of what is the complement to the war reality around the persona? If not Uriel, then who? The answer, in strophes (19-23) is the vision of Our Lady, the regenerative impulse within creation. The poet sees her "visible and actual, / beauty incarnate" (TRIL,82). The Lady "gave a sign" (TRIL,82) to the poet in the form of a charred tree. In the center of the bombed out yard, is "the tree flowering" (TRIL,83). Everyone has seen one like it, "it is happening everywhere" (TRIL84), when suddenly the viewer becomes aware of a difference, "a new sensation" (TRIL,85). The tree is charred and dying, yet also live and blossoming. It is a totality; it encompasses its oppositions. Seeing this, the poet has a moment of revelation, she "admit[s] the transubstantiation" (TRIL,87). The tree is both at once--an indivisible unit.

The next five strophes (24-28) bring this regenerative spirit even closer in the form of an occult experience. The Lady appears in a dream at the door of the poet's house. The poet and two friends are left to wonder what brought her. They determined that in spite of the war-horror around them (or, perhaps because of it) "she had miraculously / related herself to time here" (TRIL,91). Trying to piece together the problem of the seven Angels,

the poet is confronted with the Lady, the sigil of mankind's desire for and effort to achieve this transubstantive vision.

There is no question in the poet's mind of who she is, "We have seen her / the world over" (TRIL,93). She has been / is "Our Lady of the Goldfinch, / Our Lady of the Candelabra, / Our Lady of the Pomegranate, / Our Lady of the Chair" (TRIL,93). She has had the form of empress, goddess, saint; yet always, she has been immutably the same beneath these guises. And still, she will continue to take on various manifestations. All of her various forms are less important than the individual vision of her, for "none of these, none of these / suggest her as I saw her" (TRIL, 96). This vision can only be approximated by indicating objects which are similar, which each yield up a part of her. (This is, in effect, a microcosm of the function of the entire poem.) In their various incarnations, Hermes, Thoth and St. Michael all announce and conjure up the Lady.

In strophes (35-42), the poet gives even more details of the vision of Our Lady and its significance. Of first importance is her blessing of poets (the hieroglyph readers who see into her meaning). Seen carrying a book presumably the Book of Life (TRIL,101), the poet realizes the Lady's support of her function:

she must have been pleased with us,
for she looked so kindly at us

under her drift of veils,
and she carried a book.

(TRIL,100)

Hidden by her veils, she is the hidden meaning, the "Holy Wisdom, / Santa Sophia, the SS of the Sanctus Spiritus, / . . . the incarnate symbol of the Holy Ghost" (TRIL,101). But the universal symbol of beauty does not remain a static vision. Her book is not only "the tome of the ancient wisdom" (TRIL,103), but "the unwritten volume of the new" (TRIL,103). She is both past and future, there and here, a metamorphosizing Psyche who retains "the same--different--the same attributes, / different yet the same as before" (TRIL,105). She carries the book to signify her satisfaction with the poet's purpose, to discern the core of immutable reality beneath the shifting forms of the human world.

The final strophe, (43), culminates in a final recognition of synthesis and oneness. The end is a blinding vision of white, "the point in the spectrum / where all lights become one" (TRIL,109). Here, the amethyst of Zadkiel, the red of Uriel, all the colors, blend into all-color, white, the color associated with Our Lady. What the poet sought and found within the perimeters of the poem is the moment / place "where the flames mingle / and the wings meet, when we gain / the arc of perfection, / we are satisfied, we are happy, / we begin again" (TRIL,109). Regeneration (beginning again) and constant flux (the arc of perfection--not a moment, but a sequence of moments) give both the poet and the reader cause to "give / thanks that we rise again from death and live" (TRIL,110).

The Flowering of the Rod, the final segment of the trilogy, is less didactic, less overtly philosophic than the other two sections. It is the recounting of a moment of transcendence and it chronicles the actual moment when experience fuses, when the spirit awakens to the realization of the mysterious oneness at the base of all regeneration and knowledge. The Flowering of the Rod is not just a statement of belief in resurrection, but the actual occurrence, to an individual, of a resurrection of spirit. As a single narrative story, The Flowering of the Rod is the elaboration and growth of a fictional, biblical incident: the meeting of Kaspar, the Mage, and Mary Magdalen. It is the point at which Kaspar's memories and his dreams merge. The 43 strophes are less clearly divided than those of the first two poems. The result is more a clustering of five or six incidents than relatively defined units.

The Flowering of the Rod opens with praise for those who engage in the quest for knowledge and transcendence. The persona of the poet, having survived "the anger, frustration, / bitter fire of destruction" (TRIL,114), now is ready to "mount higher / to love--resurrection" (TRIL,114). She is ready to leave behind her undesired world "go where [she] belong[s]" (TRIL,115). Where she belongs is in a world of undifferentiated oneness; she is "seeking what [she] once knew, / we know ultimately we will find / happiness" (TRIL,117). This return to prelapsarian unity is the resurrection she seeks. It comes not through polemics, but

through individual affirmation and action: "do not delay to round up the others, / up and down the street; your going / in a moment like this, is the best proof / that you know the way" (TRIL,116).

The next section of The Flowering of the Rod, strophes (5-11), stresses the use of memory (both personal and cultural) to return to the lost oneness. This desire for unity is "the eternal urge," "the desire to equilibrate / the eternal variant" (TRIL,119) and those who unceasingly seek, who "hunger / for Paradise" (TRIL,120) and remember what once was, will ultimately know "certain ecstasy" (TRIL, 120). The love of the quest and the constant attempt to "see what is beneath me, what is above me, / what men say is-not" (TRIL,1221) are necessary prerequisites to resurrection. The questors use memory to reach both "the highest point of the spiral" and "the innermost centre of the ever-narrowing circle" (TRIL,119). What the seeker remembers is both her individual experiences and the regenerative cycle of all existence. Although the seeker herself is "No poetic fantasy / but a biological reality, / a fact" (TRIL,125), it is in her recognition of an eternal pattern that she finds hope. Her concern is not with the plight of bombed cities, but with the knowledge that human life in the world is

. . . a lily, if you will,
each petal, a kingdom, an aeon,

and it is the seed of a lily
that having flowered,

will flower again
(TRIL,126-27)

More specifically, within the Christian context of this persona, the resurrection, the seed of the lily, is Christ, the first to promise "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (TRIL,128).

Strophes (12-19) tell of the appearance of Mary Magdalen at a market-place stall. She has come to purchase myrrh from an Arab merchant. She is "the first actually to witness His life-after-death, / . . . an unbalanced, neurotic woman" (TRIL,129). Unlike other women (she "left home . . . not caring for house-work" (TRIL,129)), she is impervious to the merchant's implied dismissal. Just as he recognizes that she is "unpredictable" (TRIL,131), she realizes that "he was no ordinary merchant" (TRIL,132). Although he twice tries to rebuff her, Mary remains persistent in her task of acquiring myrrh to take to the tomb. In the sixteenth strophe, Mary associates herself with the myrrh she seeks:

I am Mary, she said, of a tower-town,
or once it must have been towered

for Magdala is a tower;
Magdala stands on the shore;

I am Mary, she said, of Magdala,
I am Mary, a great tower;

through my will and my power,
Mary shall be myrrh;

I am Mary--O, there are Marys a-plenty,
 (though I am Mara, bitter) I shall be Mary-myrrh;

I am that myrrh-tree of the gentiles,
 the heathen; there are idolaters,

even in Phrygia and Cappadocia,
 who knell before mutilated images

and burn incense to the Mother of Mutilations,
 to Attis-Adonis-Tammuz and his mother who was myrrh;

she was a stricken woman,
 having borne a son in unhallowed fashion;

she wept bitterly till some heathen god
 changed her to a myrrh-tree;

I am Mary, I will weep bitterly,
 bitterly . . . bitterly.

(TRIL,135)

Using both sonal and thematic associations, Mary links herself to other women. She is Mary of Magdala, but there are, as she realizes, "Marys a-plenty." As Mara, she is bitterness. As Mary-myrrh, she assumes the enduring qualities of myrrh. The myrrh-tree is also sacred to the Mother of Mutilations. The Mother who bore a son is both the Mother of Mutilations and the other mother, Mary, the Virgin. As Mary Magdala, witness to the death of Christ, as Mara, as the Mother of Mutilations, as the Virgin Mary, Mary-myrrh has good cause to "weep bitterly." Another, less obvious thematic link is through Mary to its root word Miryam. Miryam is Hebrew, meaning rebellious, and certainly Mary Magdala (both in her historical identity as whore and in her immediate fictional identity as the un-maidenly maid in the shop) is rebellious. Other links reinforce those mentioned above. Both the Virgin and the Mother of Mutilations

are worshipped along with their sons. Both Adonis and Christ are resurrection/regenerative gods. All these thematic links, plus the sonal one explicit in Mary, Mara and myrrh, provide fertile ground for the reader's imagination (and the poet's) to draw associations.

As Mary stands there at the shop door, the merchant is suddenly stirred to his own memories. Something about this woman--"it was her hair" (TRIL,136)--strikes a cord of recognition. Seeing her there, he returns her fallen scarf and she leaves.

But her departure in strophe (19) merely signals the beginning of the remembrances and associations made in the mind of the merchant. For the first time, in strophe (20), the identity of the merchant is considered. Like Mary, he has many identities. He might be "a Magician, / a Chaldean, not an Arab at all" or "Balthasar, Melchior, / or that other of Bethlehem" (TRIL,139). He could be a masquerading Angel or one of Mary's old lovers. His possible guises are so multiple, "some say he was Abraham, / some say he was God" (TRIL,140). If Mary is the feminine principle in all its manifestations, the merchant is her masculine counterpart. The strongest affirmation makes him Kaspar, the Mage.

In strophes (21-26) the reader is given the chance to pursue some of the associations presented in connection with Kaspar and Mary. In strophe (21), for example, the remembrance of Mary Magdala's hair and the permeating smell

of myrrh ointment triggers the reconstruction of the scene of the Last Supper where, amid the fragrant air, Mary sat "deftly un-weaving / the long, carefully-braided tresses / of her extraordinary hair" (TRIL,141). As she bends to wash the Master's feet with her hair, Simon the host is reminded of another woman, a pagan creature, "a Siren, / a maid-of-the-sea, a mermaid" (TRIL,142). Again the fascinating, almost subliminal echoes: Mary in her associated forms of Mara and Venus, is linked to the Sea. The life-giving attributes of women in general (and Mary the Mother in particular) are linked to the sea. Even more, the mermaid echoes the myrrh of Mary, the maid. A single image of hair and scent yields this plentitude of crosscurrents.

Although Simon does not know the women, Kaspar (to whom he is compared in strophes 25-26) does. Simon sees Mary as "a heathen / picture or carved idol" (TRIL,145), but Kaspar sees further, the seven daemons within the heathen and knows their names: "Isis, Astarte, Cyprus / . . . / Ge-meter, De-meter, earth-mother / or Venus" (TRIL, 145). Once again, Mary Magdala has become all women. The syllabic breakdown of DeMeter and Gemeter emphasizes the role of women as life-giver (meter = mater = mother).

Although Kaspar did not at first remember Mary Magdala, slowly, after her scarf slips and he sees her hair, he begins to recognize her. But what he recognizes is directly related to his own past. What he hears is "an echo of an echo in a shell" (TRIL,149); what he sees is "in a

mirror, / one head uncrowned and then one with a plain head-band / and then one with a circlet of gems of an inimitable colour" (TRIL,150). As Mage, he "Knew the old tradition, the old, old legend" (TRIL,151) and remembering it, he can decipher the hieroglyph which is Mary herself. Memory is a germinal awareness. Like a seed, opening petal by petal, or the ripple of a stone in water, "the circle [of connections, remembrances] went on widening / and would go on opening / he knew, to infinity" (TRIL,153). In any particular, in any one of the guises, the Mystery exists. Kaspar recognizes that his awareness and knowledge each has "transmuted its message / through spiral upon spiral of the shell / of memory that yet connects us / with the drowned cities of pre-history" (TRIL,156). What he had thought was direct contradiction is actually the same, or some form of the same. He knows as if a certainty, "it [all experience] had happened before, / it would happen again" (TRIL,161).

For "a second or a second and half a second" (TRIL, 165), looking at Mary's hair in the sunlight, Kaspar experiences transcendence, his spiritual resurrection. Behind Mary Magdala come to purchase myrrh, he sees the young Virgin Mary, to whose child he carried the first of the matching jars of alabaster and myrrh. The jar of myrrh he gave the Child is identical to the jar of myrrh he sells to Mary Magdala. The woman he sees in his shop is Mary Magdala, but she is also the Virgin.

The final vision in strophe (43) completes the arc of experience. Looking at the Virgin and her child, Kaspar perceives that this experience (with its attendant elements of myrrh and Mary) is "as of all flowering things together" (TRIL,172). In her arms, the Virgin cradles her child, himself the bundle of myrrh, the oneness and resurrection which permeates the entire poem.

Trilogy is the first synthesis of H.D.'s mature abilities. Both the craftsmanship and the philosophy are expansions and metamorphoses of her previous writings. This by no means implies that the works are derivative. On the contrary, this is the first expression of H.D.'s perfected verbal powers and her almost mystical spiritual beliefs. Like so many major modern poets (Yeats, Pound, Eliot, Stevens, Williams) H.D. discovers within herself and her writing a belief in both the existence of a mystical oneness (an Ur-myth) and the existence of multiple, even dualistic forms through which oneness manifests itself. The poem, for H.D., has come to serve much the same function poems did for Stevens--it is the "poem of the mind in the act of finding / what will suffice."⁵ The sacred duty of the poet (which is explained in The Walls Do Not Fall, illustrated in Tribute to the Angels and The Flowering of the Rod) is to engage in the act of finding what will suffice. The poet is the image for mankind's quest to make/discover meanings. As a result, H.D.'s poetry is no longer epiphanic, but germinal.⁶ It generates within itself

new forms, new associations. Certainly her spiritual etymology and her dream-like associative leaps both foster and demand this.

The thematic growth of H.D.'s writing is relatively apparent within the frame of our reading of her poems. But equally impressive throughout Trilogy is the verbal power of her form. In all three poems, the incantational quality of her poetry has become both its form and its meaning. Her exploration in word etymology is equally an exploration in spiritual etymology, as her breakdowns / breakthroughs of Osiris, marah/mar, dev-ill, Amen, and Mary-myrrh illustrate. As Denise Levertov suggests:

There are certain things about the music of poetry and its relation to meaning which I think one can learn from those later poems. They're very simple--you might almost think them prosy on the surface, and yet if you read them out loud there's the most marvelous music that arises out of them, like incense.⁷

In the poems of Trilogy, H.D.'s ear is faultless and the result is music, enchanting and incantational. Sometimes this is the result of subtle, near perfect rhyme, as in strophe (4) of Tribute to the Angels:

Not in our time, O Lord,
the plowshare for the sword,

not in our time, the knife,
sated with life-blood and life,

to trim the barren vine;
no grape-leaf for the thorn,

no vine-flower for the crown;
not in our time, O King,

the voice to quell the re-gathering,
thundering storm.

(TRIL,66)

The first two stanzas are rhymed couplets. But the lack of a sharp endstop in the second stanza keeps the rhythm from becoming too balanced. More impressive, however, is the subtler rhyme of the last six lines. There are echoing sounds of -ing in King, gathering, thundering; there is the slant rhyme of thorn and storm, as well as thorn and crown, and vine and thorn; finally there is the refrain lines of "not is our time." Within a slight 10 lines, the poet has musically united all the major elements, as well as all the stanzas. Throughout this poem (and all the others in Trilogy) H.D. retains her emphasis on the breath-line vs. the line of print to create complex modulations in tone and rhythm. Such craftsmanship is an outgrowth of her cadensed verse, but is also inextricably connected to growing thematic belief in the power of words to yield the Word (logos to Logos).

In the poems of Trilogy, H.D. takes a quantum leap in terms of her view on the nature and form of poetic expression. But Trilogy is in many ways an explanation and illustration of these views; it is a statement of aesthetics. It is NOT until these beliefs have been stated and internalized (synthesized) that H.D. can write a poem not of vindication but of her own vision. This she does in Helen in Egypt.

FOOTNOTES

¹Bryher [Winifred Ellerman], The Days of Mars, A Memoir, 1940-1946 (New York, 1972), pp. 115-16.

²William Rose Benét and Norman Holmes Pearson, eds., "H.D.," The Oxford Anthology of American Literature, Vol. II (New York, 1938), p. 1288.

³*Ibid.*, p. 1287.

⁴Albert Champdor, The Book of the Dead, trans. Faubion Bowers (New York, 1966), p. 59.

⁵Wallace Stevens, "Of Modern Poetry," The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens (New York, 1972), p. 237.

⁶Both Pound and Duncan use this term to indicate the poem as reflective process (active meditation). Idea includes belief in poem as immediate creative art, not an artifact.

⁷Denise Levertov, "A Conversation with Denise Levertov," The Minnesota Review V, 4 (October-December, 1965), p. 336.

CHAPTER VII

ACHIEVED VISION: HELEN IN EGYPT

Helen in Egypt (1961) is the visionary and poetic climax of H.D.'s career. Although another volume of poems, Hermetic Definition, was posthumously published, even those do not surpass the emotional power and craft of Helen in Egypt. In form, philosophy, and force, Helen in Egypt is the culmination of a lifetime of writing, thinking, meditating. As H.D. told Pearson, Helen in Egypt is her own equivalent to Pound's Cantos. Like the Cantos, her book-length poem is a quest, and the answer to its searching comes not from its ending alone, but from the act and scope of the quest itself. The journey undertaken by the poet, through the persona of Helen, is both the personal quest for identity of Helen of Troy and, simultaneously, the mythic quest for understanding of the role of all women (the feminine principles and their place in the world).

In Helen in Egypt, H.D. starts with the traditional legend of Helen of Troy, but reshapes, it using a fifty-line fragment from Stesichorous of Sicily's Pallinode. This original Pallinode was a lyric recantation of Stesichorus'

earlier attack on Helen as the cause of the Trojan War. In his recantation, Stesichorus stated the "Helen was never in Troy. She had been transposed or translated from Greece into Egypt."¹ The Trojan War was fought not over her, but a phantom Helen (an illusion). H.D.'s poem is the real Helen's quest to understand the reality of her life, to find and affirm her true identity. To do so, she must re-examine the past, question the gods' plans, discern illusion from reality, intuitively grasp the meaning of life itself, integrate the various facets of her own personality, synthesize the apparently conflicting dualities around her, acquire her own voice, and find the means to live out her newly acquired knowledge of self and world. This is no trivial quest, as the complexity and fecundity of H.D.'s vision in Helen in Egypt attests. The myth of Helen which H.D. creates is very much her own invention, as is the quest she sets Helen on.

As a quest poem, Helen in Egypt incorporates both action and meditation. To effectively convey both, H.D., for the first time in her poetry, institutes a style of alternating prose and prosodic sections. Written primarily in three-line stanzas, each of the poem's 160 strophes is preceded by a short narrative passage. These prose interludes sustain the action, the narrative line, while the poems provide the intensely felt reaction or reflection on the events. Neither is intended to be an explanation or usurpation of the other's function. Rather their purpose and

intensity balance one another. Some critics, including Swann and Engel, have erred in thinking the prose passages are indictments against the comprehensibility of the poetry segments. Swann, for example, has stated that "a poem which must be bolstered with an almost equal amount of prose has failed as a poem."² What he fails to see is that the prose does not bolster the poem, but is a part of the poem. H.D. synthesizes the two modes into an entirely new form, a contrapuntal movement between the two commoner modes. Once again, Norman Holmes Pearson provides insight into the actual genesis of this form. If, as he says, the original choice to use it was accidental, the decision to retain it was not.

I wanted a recording of H.D.'s voice. . . . She chose excerpts of Helen for the recording, and she introduced the excerpts by a few of these prose passages. I was so struck by the effect that they made that I suggested to her that she write them as interludes of every song, and she did it. Now this is simply a further rendition of an idea that was in her own mind, because, of course, she thought of the prose passage without putting it down, and then wrote her lyric about it.³

The poem then is a true expression of the way H.D.'s mind worked over her topics. As a form, it is both organic to the creative method of H.D.'s mind and an eidolon itself for one of the major themes of this poem: the dualistic nature of reality and its ultimate integration into a single unit via mystical vision. The dualities of prose and poetry dissolve and merge into a new form, which, if unnamed, is nonetheless well developed in Helen in Egypt.

The poem is divided into three parts: "Pallinode," "Leuke," and "Eidolon." Each part has seven books (with the exception of "Eidolon" with six), each with eight strophes. Here again, the structure mirrors the theme. Each of the three Parts recreates a distinct segment of Helen's quest. The first two books provide the dialectic, the third presents the synthesis. Helen in "Pallinode" sheds her false myth (denies her phantom self) and asserts her real self as Helen in Egypt. Once her false identity is discarded, Helen in "Leuke" must redefine and reinterpret all of her past experience in view of this new identity. Once both these tasks are accomplished, the Helen in "Eidolon" must identify and affirm this new, real Helen. From Egypt to Leuke to Egypt, from Troy to Sparta to Egypt, Helen has to come full circle and (like Eliot's questor in The Four Quartets) "know[s] the place for the first time," know herself at last. The poem abounds in this movement through two to one, from dualities--opposites--to a single reality. Since the poem is a quest, the journey, the experience of the tensions and balancing between the parts, is as important as the result. Indeed, the journey is the ever-present act of arriving. To understand the story of Helen in Egypt, therefore, we must accompany Helen on her quest.

"Pallinode" opens with Helen alone in the Amen-temple, in Egypt. She is there not to forget, but to remember; she is not dead ("The potion is not poison, / it is not Lethe and forgetfulness" (HE,3)), nor is she a phantom (" . . .

not shadow[s]" (HE,6)). But more than this, she does not seem to know. Her first question, on realizing she is in Egypt, is to ask why, then, the Trojan War was fought. She perceives that "God for his own purpose / wills it so, that I / stricken, forsaken drawn to me, / . . . / Achilles" (HE,5-6). She realizes essentially intuitively that for a reason known only to God, the Trojan War was fought so that Helen and Achilles could meet here, in Egypt.

They meet at night, at the seashore. Achilles does not immediately know Helen. While together at the shore, Helen translates for Achilles and the reader a hieroglyph, a "symbol in time" (HE,13). Flying above the pair is a night-bird. Having just died at Troy, Achilles sees it as a "carrion creature," a symbol of war and death. Helen, on the other hand, intuitively knows that "the shape of this bird is a letter, / they call it the hieroglyph" (HE,13-14). Helen associates the bird with Isis, who, as a mother-goddess, is a life-sign. Helen goes further in her reading to link Isis with Thetis, Achilles' own goddess-mother. From this scene, the reader learns several important points: first, Helen has an intuitive knowledge sharpened by her role as initiate into the Egyptian Mysteries, and second, Helen sees and seeks the regenerative elements in the world. Her alignment with the mother-goddesses arraigns her on the side of traditional feminine values and powers (love, birth, nurturing).

Achilles recognizes Helen and, enraged at what "she" has done as Helen of Troy, tries to strangle her. His associations with war, death, and violence, form the traditional masculine counterpart to Helen's feminine aspects. Significantly, his physical attack is vanquished by Helen's strongest weapon: love. For, at the mention of Thetis' name (by Helen, in supplication), Achilles halts his attack. Love has proved stronger than death.

A sense of masculine-feminine polarity permeates the entire poem, but is particularly apparent in all the scenes concerning the relationship between Helen and Achilles. Throughout the book, the tension between Death (associated with Achilles) and Love (associated with Helen) is a central motif. Achilles, hero-member of a warrior caste, the "iron-ring/whom Death made stronger" (HE,55) and Helen, whether the symbol of beauty and passion (as the legendary Helen of Troy) or an initiate into the hieratic cult of Egyptian Mysteries, are opposites. He is Eris; she is Eros. Yet as opposites, they are immutably linked: "all things would change but never / the glance she exchanged with me" (HE, 54). Though Achilles is "invincible, the hero-god," (HE, 15), it is Love's arrow which strikes his heel; his death comes about because of Love (so he may meet Helen in Egypt) and concurrently, his Love is "born of War" (HE,32), for only after the War, after his death, can he meet Helen.

Other polarities are likewise represented in the figures of Helen and Achilles. Achilles is a Greek, who

believes in intellect. To answer him in his own terms, Helen realizes she "must . . . summon Hellenic thought / to counter an argument" (HE,37). But Helen's knowledge is not rational, but intuitive. She does not ask why, so much as how; for her, "The pattern in itself is sufficient and it is beautiful" (HE,32). Helen is sincerely dedicated to the belief that enlightenment is not found by logic and argument; rather, it comes as a form of grace:

you may ask forever, you may penetrate
every shrine, an initiate,
and remain unenlightened at last

(HE,79)

As a result of this difference in attitude, Achilles questions at times Helen accepts. Achilles questions his fate, for example, asking "was it a trivial thing / to have bartered the world / for a glance?" (HE,62), while Helen accepts hers. She has already come to realize "the heart does not wonder? / the heart does not ask? / the heart accepts, / encompasses the whole / of the undecipherable script" (HE,86). The riddle-asker the intellect, Achilles, is a Sphinx and near the end of "Pallinode," the Phoenix, Helen, the symbol of mystic regeneration and resurrection, vanquishes the Sphinx.

Throughout "Pallinode," Achilles represents the active, masculine forces within the world. He is linked to numerous other masculine figures: Osiris (ruler of the dead), Typhon (the Destroyer), Odysseus (the trickster and wanderer), Agammemnon (the war lord) and Orestes (the revenger). All (with the exception of Osiris) represent some facet of

the death-cult of warriors and heros. Conversely, Helen is relatively passive in "Pallinode." She waits for Achilles to come; she "will not challenge / the ancient Mysteries;" she responds to violence with passive acceptance, to slander (the hatred of all Greece towards the phantom Helen) with forgiveness. In turn, she is linked to other feminine figures: Isis and Thetis (both mother-goddesses), Aphrodite/Venus (goddess of Love), Clytaemnestra (wife and mother figure), Iphigenia (child and sacrifice), and Cassandra (prophetess and sacrifice).

But part of the power and the complexity of H.D.'s use of allusion and duality is the mutability, the constant flux of each character's associations. If Achilles and Helen are opposites, each carries within themselves a similar dichotomy. If Achilles is "Osiris, King and Magician, / ruler of the dead" (HR,26), he is also his brother, "Typhon, the Destroyer" (HE,26). He is

destroyer and destroyed,
his very self was lost,
himself defeated
.
.
.
they were not two but one,
Typhon-Osiris
to the initiate
(HE,27)

Achilles is both Lord of Myrmidons (Death) and the Star in the night (Love). He is a "living hieroglyph" (HE,23) of the theme of duality.

Likewise, Helen, in her multiple guises of all women, has a bifurcation as complete as Achilles'. However,

she realizes earlier than Achilles that "She herself is the writing" (HE,22,91). Her split is even more obvious than Achilles', however, for she is confronted with a tangible, physical as well as mythical twin-Clytaemnestra:

Clytaemnestra gathered the red rose,
Helen the white,
but they grew on one stem,

one branch, one root in the dark;
(HE,85)

These two represent two possible modes of action for women. Clytaemnestra's response to war and the sacrifice it demands (Iphigenia) is to answer back in anger and in violence. She becomes those forces which she would typically oppose by virtue of being a woman:

Clytaemnestra struck with her mind,
with the Will-to-Power,
her Lord returned with Cassandra,

and she had a lover;
does it even the Balance
if a wife repeats a husband's folly?

never; . . .
(HE,97)

Helen, much as she identifies with her sister, is ultimately not her sister. But the potential to become Clytaemnestra rests within Helen's psyche. Helen is alternately active and passive, intuitive and intellectual. The shifts are quick in her character and the range of associations are, as a result, innumerable.

"Pallinode" ends with Helen ready to move on to new discoveries. She has experienced the dream, the intense mystical meeting and union with Achilles. (This transcendent

moment is coded in Helen's mind as the Star in the Night.) She has asserted her true self (she tells Achilles at their first meeting that she was never at Troy), thereby proving her ability to discern illusion from timeless reality. She has laid, momentarily at least, Helen of Troy to rest, moved through her time in Egypt, and has been called home--called to her past. Thus far, much of what she knows, she cannot articulate or explain; she is an initiate to hermeticism and hieroglyphs, not yet a full-fledged poet-priestess. Having shed one identity (Helen of Troy), she can now go farther in her quest for identity and self-actualization.

"Pallinode" had taken place on a strangely transcendental plane. Helen's ecstasy of meeting Achilles takes place outside of normal time and body; it was a meeting of two souls. "Leuke" returns Helen to a slightly more human plane. Though much of its time is time in the past, memory, it is still involved with experiences within the world. In "Leuke," Helen is "awake, no trance" (HE,109). Helen's ultimate quest is the search for the Eternal Lover (for the Platonic ideal of Love). Although she knows the search ends with Achilles, who waits for her in Egypt, complete understanding will only come after she has re-examined her first experience with Love--her love with Paris. Brought to Leuke, Helen

. . . woke to familiar fragrance,
late roses, bruised apples;

reality opened before me,
 I had come back;
 . . .

I was laughing with Paris
 (HE,116)

Paris' love was what lured Helen from Sparta in the first place. It is his arrow which killed Achilles (and thereby ended her quest). The first half of "Leuke" is Paris' story. He recounts the Trojan side of the war. Throughout his life and his dying, Paris has remained true to his ideal of love--Helen. He rejects the condition of Oenone's healing, that he "forget--Helen" (HE,124), and likewise rejects Aphrodite's offer to recall him to life "if you forget--Helen" (135). Paris recalls for Helen what Troy and their love was like, seeking to reclaim her from Achilles:

why, why do you yearn to return?

I sense through the fragrance
 of pine-cones, Egyptian incense
 wafted through infinite corridors;

why, why would you deny
 the peace, the sanctity
 of this small room,

the lantern there by the door?
 why must you recall
 the white fire of unnumbered stars,

rather than that single taper
 burning in an onyx jar,
 where you swore

never, never to return,
 ("return the wanton to Greece"),
 where we swore together

defiance of Achilles
 . . .

why remember Achilles?
 (HE,141-42)

In spite of her past promise, in spite of his faithfulness, Helen cannot, after her meeting with Achilles, return to Paris. After the horror of the war and the losses of the past, for her "there was 'healing . . . death or awakening . . . the love of Achilles'" (HE,143). Both angered (Helen by Paris' assertion that Achilles never loved her; Paris by Helen's assertion that he is the one who recalled the past), Helen and Paris again part.

Helen then enters the second phase of redefining her past; she meets with Theseus, who once kidnapped (and loved) the child Helen. Transformed by age and his own questing into a suitable guide, Theseus "outlines the story" (HE,149) for Helen. He already knows that under the individual action, there is a universal pattern:

that is the law here, perhaps everywhere,

that only Love, the Immortal,
brings back love to old-love,
kindles a spark from the past

(HE,149)

Each person's moment of transcendence, each person's touch with the Absolute ("the Immortal"), establishes and re-enacts a pattern ("kindles a spark from the past"). His moment of fulfillment came with "the Quest and the Argo" (HE,150); hers has come with Achilles, the Star in the night. The knowledge he can give her is the awareness that "all myth, the one reality / dwells here" (HE,151). This is what he has learned and can now instruct Helen; it is the answer to

her somewhat rhetorical question "do the mysteries untangle / but to re-weave?" (HE,155). Obviously, yes.

Helen has come to Leuke to integrate her mystic experience (her moment-out-of-time with Achilles) and her past (which certainly included her physical being):

Love is insensate and insatiable,
I found perfection in the Mysteries,
but I was home-sick for familiar trees,
I wanted to hear the wind, to feel

snow, to embrace an ancient
twisted pine, so I walked
a long way up a mountain

he called Ida
(HE,153-54)

She is after the satisfaction of completion on all levels; she wants both the sensible world and the Mysteries. Theseus helps her to this re-integration, by helping her to place things in a human perspective, rather than the ideal one: "Her emotional experience has been 'too great a suspense to endure'" (HE,162). The realization of the Abstract can be sustained in human lives only by experiences which trace the original pattern. "There was always another and another and another" (HE,162), weaker copies, less blinding moments, through which the individual could glimpse his/her primary experience. Theseus will help Helen remember all these manifestations of the Ideal Lover. Like a butterfly, a Psyche, Helen must "disappear into the web, / the shell, reintegrate" (HE,170). Free to remember, or forget, Helen knows that she will "never, never, / . . . [forget] Achilles" (HE,171).

Now, Helen finds a voice within her--her own awareness of what is happening--which proclaims her dedication to her manifestation of the Absolute: her passion and Love for Achilles. This voice comes to Helen with a new song, an evocation, which proclaims the reconciliation for Helen between the seemingly multiple and oppositional elements around her:

It is a lyric voice this time, a song rather than a challenge. It takes us back to Egypt but in a Greek Mode. Isis is Cypris (Cytheraea) and Isis is Thetis. Amen-Zeus is the father of Isis-Thetis-Aphrodite (Cypris). We can not altogether understand this evocation, the rhythms must speak for themselves and the alliterations, Cypris, Thetis, Nephtys, Isis, Paris. Proteus, the legendary King of Egypt, as we have learned before, takes many shapes.

(HE,178)

The voice is not an outside force speaking through Helen, but a voice from within. She has become a singer, a poet if you will. As such, she relies in her evocation on words (their incantational power) to control understanding--to thematically and actually unify experiences and meanings. Both by words and in reality, the sonal links between names allows Helen to connect various elements/people. The rhythm and the alliteration in a sense prove that one thing may take many manifestations. If that is so, then "could the two opposites (the slayer [Paris] and the slain [Achilles]) merge into one, and that One, the Absolute?" (HE,178). The implicit answer is yes. Pursuing further the sonal links (continuing on as a poet), Helen works to reconcile the dualities of Paris and Achilles in a "subtle genealogy" (HE,184), via the connections between Eros, Eris

and Paris. In her quest for understanding, Helen has become not merely an initiate in the Mysteries, but a poet as well.

After her creations/poems, Helen understands, along with Theseus, that reality is the combination of seemingly different arcs of experience which form complements, a two-sided coin, much as she and Clytaemnestra are twins, the same yet different:

Thus, thus, thus,
as day, night,
as wrong, right,

as dark, light,
as water, fire,
as earth, air,

as storm, calm,
as fruit, flower,
as life, death,

as death, life;
the rose deflowered,
the rose re-born;

Helen in Egypt,
Helen at home,
Helen in Hellas forever.

(HE,190)

Helen has her answer to "how reconcile Trojan and Greek?" (HE,157). Reconciliation is inherent in the existence of both. She need not put them together by any logic, need not understand ("no need to untangle the riddle" (HE,192)), for they are together. She need only recognize both separately and know that they are complements.

With this knowledge, Helen realizes that the completion for her own Quest for Love is Achilles, is the merging with the Absolute possibly only through Death. Only

the single moment-out-of-time, only the Vision, is unwavering. Its manifestations are fluid and many. She knows now that "She will encompass infinity by intense concentration on the moment" (HE,200). With Theseus' help, H.D. steps outside of time again, into another kind of dimension. For her "the Wheel is still" (HE,202,203). Helen was re-seen her past in relation to her eternal moment. She has the key to the hieroglyph of herself.

The final book, "Eidolon," begins with Helen's return to Achilles in Egypt. This Achilles is not "Lord of Legions, 'King of Myrimidons,'" but a "royal sacred High Priest of love-rites" (HE,210). Both Achilles and Helen are now ready to serve as parts and priests of the Absolute, "the Nameless-of-many-Names, Proteus, King of Egypt" (HE, 212). But before they may serve together, Helen must finish her quest. Once again, this time in a dream, Helen meets Paris. Paris, fearing to lose Helen entirely, deprecates Achilles. Helen, knowing she must look for a pattern, vaguely connects Paris' response to both Achilles and herself with the Oedipal myth. But the connection is implicit, not defined. All Helen and the reader can really figure out is that Paris must be some necessary part of the Helen-Achilles configuration. "He evidently represents a secondary order, 'completing the circle, the triangle, the broken arc'" (HE,215). Paris, accepting this undefined secondary role, agrees to be part of this immortal configuration: he will be the son of Achilles and Helen. Helen's first love

is now the offspring of her last love. Helen wakes from her dream to a sense of balance. It is almost dawn and light is coming.

Helen has listened to Achilles in "Pallinode" and Paris in "Leuke" tell their versions of the Trojan myth. But their stories have "challenged and contradicted each other" (HE,225). In her state of equilibrium, however, Helen shifts from asking how to reconcile them and begins to ask, why reconcile them? Once she makes this shift in perspective, Helen realizes it is "the very force of opposition that creates the dynamic intensity . . ." (225). Although Helen has lost her past, she has gained "a rhythm as yet unheard" (HE,229). Loss and compensation are one, too.

Helen almost re-enters Apollo's snare, the doubting labyrinth of the Trojan War. But she had paid for her balance and will not unknowingly relinquish her perspective. She, instead, re-enters the Love-Death cycle of questing, via Achilles' past. She will willingly, as she offered earlier, share in Achilles' labors. Before, she had focused on Infinity or the past. With the new Achilles, Helen is ready to look at the personal side of their union, "the human context of the dream" (HE,255). As participant and on-looker to Achilles' memories, Helen can, like Theseus, begin to see a pattern. Because of her "arduous, preliminary training or instruction of the Amen-script" (HE,262) and her stay with Theseus, Helen can watch "as a careful

craftsman, / the pattern shape, / Achilles' history" (HE, 262). For the first time, Helen knows herself awake, truly able to "see clearly at last, / the old pictures are really there" (HE,264). Personal experience is finally visible to her as a superimposition on the eternal hieroglyph--Helen can read the palimpsest of her life. At once, Helen sees the labyrinth of her own mind, which she has been treading repeatedly throughout her quest, and "knew [her] way, / . . . knew [her] ways" (HE,265).

Helen and Achilles "will always be centralized by a moment" (HE,270), the enduring moment of their union. La Mort, L'Amour will for them be the ultimate experience, their contact with the Absolute. Each has been brought to the experience by Thetis. As Achilles' mother, her actions of forgetting to invite Eris to her wedding (thus causing Eris to throw the golden apple and prompt the occasion of the Judgment of Paris) and forgetting to dip Achilles' heel (thus making him mortal/vulnerable) led to Achilles' death. In her guise as Aphrodite, she promises Helen to Paris (the literal cause of the Trojan War) and as Isis-Aphrodite, she makes Helen the initiate of a love cult. Achilles comes via Death, Helen via Love, but their ultimate experience is the same. Death and Love are opposites yet (as should be obvious by now) the same--two halves of a single moment.

Helen once again acknowledges that the fused moment of contact with the Absolute is hard to sustain. It can be glimpsed intuitively, though, through "the most abstruse

hieroglyphs or the most simple memories" (HE,297). There is no easy formula, the quest is never, therefore, totally over. Rather, each experience/recollection of the primary experience must be reached via a new quest.

The final statement of the poem is delivered by "one greater than Helen"--the epic poet perhaps, or Proteus himself--

so the dart of Love
is the dart of Death,
and the secret is no secret;

the simple path
refutes at last
the threat of the Labyrinth,

the Sphinx is seen,
the Beast is slain
and the Phoenix-next

reveals the innermost
key or clue to the rest
of the mystery;

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

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

the seasons revolve around
a pause in the infinite rhythm
of the heart and of heaven.

(HE,303-04)

The momentary or partial glimpse of the Absolute (the mystery) is "the pause of the infinite rhythm." It is the moment that Helen and Achilles share, when "the dart of Love / is the dart of Death." Recognition and initiation come from intuition, "the simple path," rather than by

logic ("the threat of the Labyrinth"). The reason (the godshead, the first cause, the Sphinx) is glimpsed, time (the Beast circle of the Zodiac chain) is obliterated and the fusion of all things (the Phoenix-nest, whose burning branches are both birth and death) signals a moment of communion and revelation: "there is one finite moment."

Helen in Egypt is extremely associative and allusive --almost elusively so, at points. But that is its strength as well as its weakness. H.D. is creating the center of a vortex, the point of constant flux at which, at least momentarily, things come together before being pushed outward from the intense center. H.D.'s achievement in Helen in Egypt is that at so many points, the reader senses the flow of the undercurrents, senses the underlying patterns and implied meanings, and quests along with Helen until able to articulate what it is s/he perceives. In this sense, Helen in Egypt is paradigm for effective organic form. Its three-part structure, its linked but fluid images, its mix of poetry and prose, all reflect its themes of reconciled dualities and intuitive knowledge.

The three-book structure is a graphic presentation of H.D.'s dialectic mode at work (and a recognizable offshoot of her continued use of juxtaposition). Books I and II are frequently contradictory or opposite in information and ideas. Most typically, Book Three resolves or balances the tension. One example of this is the mode of perception which is the foundation of each book. In "Pallinode,"

Helen is in Egypt, in the land of Mysteries. What she understands in this book, she will understand intuitively, because Amen-Zeus allows it. In "Leuke," Helen is living on an essentially Greek island. Here, with the Athenian Theseus, the intellect is stressed, the ability of man to discern patterns. Using inspired thought, Helen learns to remember. She is given instruction by Theseus which leads her to a certain type of knowledge. For example, he tells her directly that experience, all myths, follow the pattern of an Ur-myth. But it is not until Book III that she can use this knowledge. There, in "Eidolon," she is in the human realm and must act on her intuitions and knowledge. In this section, she can assemble meaning by:

things remembered, forgotten,
remembered again, assembled
and re-assembled in different order
as thoughts and emotions
(HE,289)

She will use both thought (intellect) and emotions (intuition) to produce her different order.

Another example of the progressive resolution between books is hinted at in Helen's statement in "Eidolon:" "I am awake, / I see things clearly; it is dawn" (HE,255). In Book I, she is awakened to the knowledge of reality and illusion; in Book II, she sees clearly Theseus' knowledge that "All myth, the one reality dwells here" (HE,155); in Book III, "it is dawn," a new beginning. Helen has passed

from darkness (night) to light (dawn). She has actually seen the pattern, glimpsed the Absolute. There is no going back.

Other opposites are apparent in the poem. Helen's physical movements even strive for re-integration. First, she is in Egypt, then Leuke, finally back in Egypt. The first Egypt is the hieratic world of Egyptian mysticism. Leuke is her Greek heritage of thought and oracle prophecy. The return to Egypt carries within it attributes from both of the previous two books. Superimposed on the Egyptian hieroglyphs is "the 'marble and silver' of her Greek thought" (HE, 264). Likewise, each section represents a particular time. Book I is the enduring moment, the moment-outside-of-time. Book II is the past. Book III is the bringing together of both in the present.

The images used within the poem also work with a dynamic tension between the sections. H.D.'s use of fire illuminates this effectively. In Book I, at their first meeting, Achilles builds a fire with an old piece of flint he thought he had lost. Helen associates with their first meeting a burning ember, token of both the funeral pyre which consumed the Greek heroes at Troy and the "Burning ember . . . the flint, the spark of his [Achilles'] anger" (HE, 20). The fires in Book I are consuming, destructive elements. This image is contrasted obliquely in Book II with Theseus' brazier. Before the brazier, "an altar-fire" which does not demand the sacrifices of the pyre and rage

of Book I, Theseus "will revive her [Helen], together they will forget and together they will remember" (HE,1953).

Theseus' brazier brightens the room and remembrances Helen and Theseus share: "you say it is not dark here? / you say the embers make happy pictures" (HE,157). The warmth and comfort offered Helen by the brazier allows her, in her form as Psyche, to consider the room she is in her cocoon. Within its calm, she will metamorphosize. Theseus rekindles in Helen memories of the past and a belief that "the ember glow[s] / in the heart of snow" (HE,174). In her trance by the fire, Helen partially reconciles the opposites of Paris and Achilles using fire imagery. The flames of Troy, the fire-brand Paris, are both offsprings of the ember of the Helen and Achilles' love. The fire imagery in Book II gives physical and mental comfort. It fosters change and remembrance, and stands as a haven vs. Book I's destruction.

In Book III, the strongest fire image is the Phoenix's nest. The forging of new identities is possible only through resurrection and/or metamorphosis--the Phoenix-nest. Wounded, dying, Achilles is "touched with / the Phoenix-fire, / [so that] the invincible armour / melted him quite away, / till he knew his mother" (HE,260-61), who was the goddess of Love in her Venus guise. Both Helen and Achilles are literally melted down and reforged by their experiences. The name of Thetis, his mother, is like a "flame and the fire / would weld him to her [Helen] / who spoke it" (HE,278). The fires of battle and the fires of

passion suddenly become one as the burning Phoenix-nest in the one-greater-than-Helen's message reveals the clue to the mystery: "there is one finite moment," the blaze is both death and life; the two are inseparable.

Another three part, prismatic image is light and its relation to Love/lovers. In "Pallinode," Achilles is "the Star in the night" (HE,77). In the darkened night-world of their first meeting, in their darkened state before understanding, Helen's and Achilles' love is as immortal, as otherworldly as a star. Like the constellations of the zodiac, it is a hieroglyph of their experience. Like a navigational star, it will be a fixed point in their search for understanding, a directional which will help to lead them home.

The light in "Leuke" is the lesser light of Paris' love--"the single taper / burning in an onyx jar" (HE,142). Its proportionate importance is clearly contrasted with "the white fire of unnumbered stars," (HE,142), the love of Achilles. Light's other form in "Leuke" is the steady hearth-fire of Theseus. Neither can compare in intensity or immutability to the Star in the Night.

Dawn, the "new light of a new day" (HE,226), permeates Book III. Helen and Achilles have begun to "know the Sun / hidden behind the sun of our visible day" (HE,34). Dawn, as the sign of regeneration, echoes the Phoenix-nest in meaning.

One last, possibly less obvious, structural motif which links the three parts of the poem is the notion of the eternal (complete) circle and the still point at its center. "Pallinode" focuses on a single point, really: the moment-out-of-time which is the meeting of Helen and Achilles. This meeting is the glimpse of the Abstract, the still-point, for Helen and Achilles. In Egypt, at their meeting, "the old enchantment holds, / here there is peace" (HE,2). (Interestingly enough, much of the language echoes Eliot's quest in the Four Quartets for his still-point. Helen is ordered not to "strive against Fate" (HE,96), to "Be still" (HE,103), to not question for it may be the wrong question--"I ask not nor care to know / what is or is not the answer" (HE,33). Helen is on the same quest as Eliot.)

"Leuke," on the other hand, contains several images of arcs, matching parts of a circle, but never the whole. Half of the book is Paris's story, half is Theseus. Each is only part, an arc, of Helen's total past. Theseus most clearly places the duality of Book II in terms of arcs:

O tiny world, O world infinity,
 two mortals strike across
 to intercept the path
 of two daemons; two spirits
 seek to save
 the lost sister or brother,
 (HE,188)

The circle, the tiny world, the infinite world, is created by the intersecting path--the arcs. Helen answers Theseus' statement with a question: "how have the arcs crossed? /

how have the paths met?" (HE,189). She must still puzzle out the means of intersection, the means of unification. At the end of Book II, she begins to find a possible answer in the stars (hieroglyphs) above her--the zodiacal circle.

Book III abounds in circle imagery. Helen completes the circle of her own journey--from Egypt to Troy to Greece to Egypt. She returns to Achilles renewed through her meditation on and prayers to the Zodiac wheel. Helen recognizes that Paris is "completing the circle, . . . [he is one of] the broken arc[s]" (HE,215). As her first lover, born of her last lover, he is a complete circle. Helen sees the pattern in Achilles' history as a circlet in a smelting fire (HE,262). Finally, the "eternal moment returns" (HE,269) and "the circle grows smaller" (HE,270). The space between the experiences of Helen and Achilles, the space between Love and Death, is smaller; they are moving towards completion: the still-point in the center of a circle. Helen sees Achilles and herself surrounded by "the circle of god-like beasts, familiars of Egypt" (HE,271) as the events close around them. They become a kind of zodiac frieze on the wall of Amen-temple. Thetis has brought them together and:

it could not happen again,
not one, not the whole arc,

not the circle complete,
enclosing the day and the night;
under and through the sea

she had sought them out,
she had gathered the worshippers
from the caves, and the host of light

from the circles of heaven,
 two and two, brothers, and sons,
 like my own twins, the Dioscuri
 (HE,275)

Helen's union with the Absolute, the Abstraction, cannot be continuous in human time. Helen struggles with the questions of her quest in a circular manner. Her "mind goes over the problem, / round and round like the Chariot-wheel" (HE,298), like a spinning wheel "spinning the infinite thread" (HE,298). Only in the final Message, delivered by one-greater-than Helen, is the union stated: "The seasons revolve around / a pause in the infinite rhythm / of the heart and of heaven" (HE,304). Reality, life, the seasons, is the circle, all the broken arcs together, and the moment of transcendence, the moment of Helen and Achilles' meeting, the moment when Helen is most herself--in her ideal Amen-script identity--is the pause, the still-point, in the infinite rhythm.

H.D. continues in Helen in Egypt to explore themes that fascinated her throughout her career. Helen's story is one of the most fundamental in H.D.'s canon: a woman's search for self-identity and identity integration. It is, however, the most comprehensive treatment of this theme. Even the heroines of her novels do not explore all the facets of their pasts and personalities, as Helen does. Within her quest, Helen reconciles her past to her present, discerns that "one straight grain in [her] that is pure rock, that is set under [her] feet when [she is] most

febrile and flabby,"⁴ reconciles the most obvious of her mind-body splits, and, through identification with multiple feminine characters, comes to understand and accept seemingly opposite facets of her own personality. As a part of her integration, Helen embodies another pet theme of H.D.: the role of the poet.

After her acceptance of the revelation that "all myth, the one reality dwells here," Helen finds a voice within her, a voice which commands Theseus (and the reader) to "listen--let it speak for me" (HE,175). Helen's voice is her artistry; she has become a poet. The voice is not merely prophetic, after all, but lyric. Using rhythm and alliteration (the tools of all poets--but particularly H.D. herself), the voice evokes Proteus, the One with many manifestations. Not only does Helen have the method of the poet (sonal associations and incantation), but she has the mystical awareness of one. As an initiate in the Egyptian Mysteries she can read the hieroglyphs; as a questor, she is learning to discern the mythic patterns; as a complete inspired voice, she is both poet and priestess. Her art (her evocation) is an assertion of all she has come to understand. Like Theseus, she too is now a guide into the Mysteries.

Helen, as she evolves within H.D.'s new myth of her, is also the prime example of H.D.'s belief in the quest for some form of transcendence into the mystical reality behind the rational world. In Helen in Egypt, the quest is

for the Eternal Lover, the complement--a theme implicit in this same form throughout H.D.'s other works, particularly Palimpsest, Hedylus and Tribute to the Angels. Helen's quest is simply the most graphic, having a clearer ediolon: Achilles.

Helen in Egypt is also the most consciously feminist work of H.D. It is the expression of the desire for personal revelation and integration as it occurs for a woman. In this sense, it is both the personal quest for Helen's identity and, through her, an exploration of the cultural identity of women. Helen in Egypt traces the somewhat historical evolution of women from passivity to activity, from objects to creators (both of themselves and art). The passivity usually associated with the legendary Helen of Troy is rapidly dispelled by the vision of Helen as questor, equal in power and determination to any man. (Achilles notes in Book I his surprise and fear at discovering Helen was "stronger than God . . . stronger than Fate . . . stronger than Hercules" (HE,61).) The quest for personal identity is played out against a traditional world of masculine-feminine dichotomies. Feminine characters are life-giving, loving, intuitive and symbols/believers in regeneration. Men, on the other hand, are almost all part of the iron-ring of warriors, associated with death, rationality, violence and destruction. H.D.'s Helen must find the means to positively assert the strengths of her feminine identity. The contrast between Helen and Clytaemnestra is designed

to show what happens when a woman tries to act out her independence (her selfhood) using the masculine values: "no sword, no dagger, no spear / in a woman's hands / can make wrong, right" [*italics my own*] (HE,97). Helen must "not strive to re-weave . . . the pattern the Fates decree" (HE,97), but must strive to strengthen the peculiarly feminine traits which are her natural/inevitable strength. When she does, when she relies on her love, Helen is acting out of strength and selfhood. Over and over, from their first meeting to their last, Helen's love is shown to be as powerful (actually, more powerful) than Achilles' Death.

Helen in Egypt also integrates both personally and culturally all the various facets/roles of women. Helen identifies herself with all other women: Thetis (the mother), Clytaemnestra (the wife), Iphigenia (the daughter and the sacrifice), Cassandra (the unheard prophetess), Cytheraea (the lover), and Isis (the feminine principle among the gods). Helen is concerned about understanding what happened to each of them, and she strives to revitalize their positive attributes within herself, without falling prey to their weaknesses. She is particularly careful throughout not to over-identify with the numerous sacrificial elements of the women. She is never willing to be so self-effacing as to lose her own identity. Helen is striving to create a new kind of feminine identity, one which can function in conjunction with the masculine elements of the world without being inferior to them, or subsumed by them. For H.D.,

whose feminine personae from Collected Poems through her novels have had the tendency to become submerged in the lives of their men, Helen is the strongest feminine character H.D. has created. She does integrate all women (the feminine principles) into her self; she does learn to read and create her own patterns and to assert herself through her own voice (her art); she does transcend, with her complement, to the Absolute.

In Helen in Egypt, H.D.'s vision reaches its supreme statement. The form and the themes are interwoven so effectively that their subtlety and complexity yield new pleasure and understanding with successive readings. The poem is, as Denise Levertov recognized, "a life-experience that gives rise to changes in the reader . . . one must go inside and live in them, live them through."⁵ The reason for this fecundity and enjoyment is that, in Helen in Egypt, H.D. provides both the hieroglyph and its reading. Unlike Trilogy the poem does not tell how to find the core myth, it is the core myth. By creating the new myth of Helen, H.D. reveals her own completed vision of reality. Concise Imagist poetic form, techniques from both her poetry and fiction (particularly her use of juxtaposition and compression), Freud's method of using myth to pattern understanding, her growing personal interest in mythic and mystical studies (particularly the Kabbalah), all are blended in the syncretistic vision of H.D. In the end, the whole

as any good Imagist, psychoanalyst, or mystic knows,
exceeds the sum of the parts.

FOOTNOTES

¹H.D., Helen in Egypt (New York, 1961), p. 1.
Hereafter noted within the text as HE, followed by page number.

²Swann, p. 179.

³Pearson, "An Interview," p. 440.

⁴H.D. questionnaire, The Little Review Anthology (New York, 1953), p. 365.

⁵Denise Levertov, "H.D.: An Appreciation," Poetry, C (June, 1962), p. 186.

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