

# HD's WEB

an e-newsletter

Winter 2008

Number 3

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

Recently I have been remembering some passages in *Helen in Egypt* which speak of Achilles' iron-ring of war. It begins for him as a sign of power and a circle of immortality, but then it comes to seem more a chain or even a slave-collar. HD's work reflects on how difficult it is to extricate oneself from war and resonates, for me, with current events (all quotes are from the first part, "Pallinode"):

what is a promise given?  
this is the iron-ring,  
no Grecian or other king

may contest or disobey;  
within the iron-circle of your fame,  
no more invisible,

you shall control the world...  
how did it end?  
another took command.

(Book 4, section 2)

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We were an iron-ring  
whom Death made stronger,  
but when the arrow pierced my heel,

they were not there;  
where were they? where was I  
and where was Troy?

(Book 4, section 4)

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his was an iron-ring  
but welded to many

(Book 6, section 4)

Yet HD writes quite a bit about survival and renewal against desperate odds. So let us follow the iron-ring with an olive-shoot, undaunted by the "new war plague...with a new name":

Close to the root of the blackened, ancient stump, a frail silver shoot was clearly discernible, chiseled as it were, against that blackened wood; incredibly frail, incredibly silver, it reached toward the light.

(*Ion*, section XIX, 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> paragraphs)

I am pleased to present in this issue an article by Marina Camboni about Bryher and Berlin, which weaves together many threads, among them modernity, the city, film, psychoanalysis, and autobiography. My own brief paper on “Hymen” is my contribution to recent discussion on the list about HD’s use of artifacts. Other sections offer listings of recent calls for papers, publications, reviews, conference doings, a bibliography of some recent classical scholarship, and websites for other modernist writers.

A newsletter depends on contributors. If you have something you think other readers of HD may find of interest, please send it in. (See the [HD’s Web](#) homepage for more details.) It is not necessary to be a professional academic (or one in training) to submit a piece. Please note that articles should include some form of documentation supporting evidence referred to in the article. In this way interested readers can follow up on your work and consult your sources.

Best wishes for a spring of renewal,  
Maria Stadter Fox

ARTICLE: “Why, Berlin, must I love you so?": Bryher in Berlin, 1927-1932

“Why, Berlin, must I love you so?": Bryher in Berlin, 1927-1932

Marina Camboni

trans. Maria Stadter Fox

Originally published in Italian in *Città, avanguardie, modernità e modernismo* [Cities, avant-gardes, modernity, and modernism], eds. Marina Camboni and Antonella Gargano (Macerata, Italy: eum, 2008) 85-118.

I love Berlin so much, like a person I think.  
Bryher

Berlin is one big movie, like an impossible dream.  
Kenneth Macpherson<sup>1</sup>

From Pabst to Hitler

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<sup>1</sup> The two epigraphs are taken respectively from: letter from Bryher to H.D., May 1, 1931; letter of Kenneth Macpherson to H.D., October 1927 (both preserved in the H.D. Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven). I thank the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library for having given me the opportunity to study the papers of Bryher and of H.D.

Not by accident in the title of this synthesis introducing my account of the Berlin experience of Bryher do I evoke the famous essay which Siegfried Kracauer wrote about the German cinema of the years between the two world wars of the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup> If in fact the cinema is what Bryher and Kracauer had in common, it was the self-assertion of Nazism that determined in Kracauer the symptomatic rereading of German films, and in Bryher the forced and suffered interruption of her visits to Berlin and the concomitant ending of her first experience of cinematographic criticism. In the six years of her frequenting Berlin Bryher had engaged in a “love affair” with the city. And perhaps for this reason the pages dedicated to the city in *The Heart to Artemis* (1962) conclude with the question, “Why, Berlin, must I love you so?”<sup>3</sup> a rather painful and agonized admission.

Bryher goes to Berlin for the first time in October of 1927. That was for her a year of exciting experiences, of radical changes and of new initiatives. In May she flew to Vienna from Venice—a flight that turned out to be one full of suspense and risks—in order to meet Freud personally, who, thanks to a letter of introduction from Havelock Ellis, had chosen her from many others hoping to make his acquaintance.<sup>4</sup> In June she had divorced her first husband, the American poet Robert McAlmon; in September she had married Kenneth Macpherson and meanwhile gone into business.<sup>5</sup>

She had in fact decided to invest her money in a new editorial and cinematographic venture. And, with Macpherson, an artist and writer with an interest in the cinema, and Hilda Doolittle,<sup>6</sup> in the spring of that year she created POOL, a publishing house and film production company, which already in May 1927 had produced a short film, *Wing Beat*, with Macpherson and H.D. as protagonists.<sup>7</sup> Alongside the cinematographic enterprise was the cinema journal *Close Up*, which proposed to offer critical analysis of films produced not only in Europe or the United States, but also in Japan or by African-Americans, who in this historical moment were occupied with the construction of a pan-African

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<sup>2</sup> Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974). Originally published in 1947.

<sup>3</sup> Bryher, *The Heart to Artemis: A Writer's Memoirs* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962) 268. The volume was reprinted by Paris Press in 2006.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 193.

<sup>5</sup> Letter to Mary Herr, May 30, 1927, Bryher Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

<sup>6</sup> Bryher and H.D. met in 1918 and from 1919 began between them a relationship destined to last the rest of their lives. See Barbara Guest, *Herself Defined: The Poet H.D. and her World* (London: Collins, 1985), and Marina Camboni, *H.D.: La donna che divenne il suo nome* [H.D.: The woman who became her name] (Urbino, Italy: Quattroventi, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> In the advertisement for the film, presented as a film-poem, the film's being “[a] study in thought,” a study of telepathy, is underlined. Two images of the short film, of which nothing remains except fragments now preserved at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, were published in the first number of *Close Up*. They are now reproduced in “*Close Up*” 1927-1933: *Cinema and Modernism*, eds. James Donald, Anne Friedberg, and Laura Marcus (London: Cassell, 1998) 15-16. On the films produced by POOL see Friedberg's work in the volume, 212ff.

cultural and political movement. Her husband Kenneth Macpherson was its official editor but as assistant editor, and owner, Bryher was the journal's real manager. And further, as she knew French and German, she took charge of the network of relationships and correspondence necessary to acquire contributions.

Modeled on the cultural little magazines of the early 1920s, published monthly beginning July 1927, the journal, stressing the privileged relation between cinema and psychoanalysis, wanted both to draw the attention of a more demanding readership to experimental and artistically valuable cinematographic works, and to stimulate the production of auteur and amateur films, without by this neglecting the commercial and educational aspects of cinema as a form of mass communication. In addition, by giving space in its pages to contributions that were more technical and methodological, the journal insisted on the artistic potential of the new medium, creating thus an explicit relationship between film, literature, and the artistic creativity of the avant-garde. Bryher even secured the collaboration of writers such as Gertrude Stein and Dorothy Richardson, with whom during the 1920s she had established solid literary and personal relationships. Richardson in particular will edit regularly the column "Continuous Performance."

Bryher, who already beginning in 1921 divides her time between London and Switzerland, makes her house Riant Chateau at Territet the organizational center of the journal, besides being the place where she lives with Macpherson and Hilda Doolittle. Theirs is an unusual family, which includes also the daughter of Hilda, Perdita, whom Bryher will adopt at the beginning of 1928.<sup>8</sup> The first number of *Close Up*, written almost entirely by the three of them and published in five hundred copies, attracts the interest of Oswald Blakeston, a British film cameraman, and of Robert Herring, art critic for the *Manchester Guardian*, who convinces Bryher that a sojourn in Berlin is necessary, both for the distribution of the journal and for establishing the contacts and relationships necessary for its growth.

In the course of the six years of the life of *Close Up* the personal story of Bryher and that of the journal are closely tied to Berlin. And it is precisely the letters which between 1927 and 1932 Bryher writes from Berlin to H.D. that initially make the guiding thread of my account. Reading them one senses in the

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<sup>8</sup> On the relationship of the three and on the journal see Paola Zaccaria and Francesca De Ruggieri, "'Close Up' as Context," in *Networking Women: Subjects, Places, Links Europe-America: Towards a Re-writing of Cultural History, 1890-1939*, ed. Marina Camboni (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2004) 249-280. For a selection of articles from the journal, see, besides the previously cited "*Close Up*" 1927-1933: *Cinema and Modernism, "Close Up" (1927-1933): Antologia della prima rivista internazionale di cinema* [*Close Up* (1927-1933): Anthology of the first international journal of film], ed. Paola Zaccaria (Torino: Lindau, 2002). On the journal in the context of the little magazines of the period, see Gillian Hanscombe and Virginia Smyers, *Writing for their Lives: The Modernist Women 1910-1940* (London: The Women's Press, 1986) as well as Jane Marek's "Bryher and *Close Up*, 1927-1933," *H.D. Newsletter* 3.2 (1990) 27-37 and *Women Editing Modernism: "Little Magazines" & Literary History* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1995), also by Marek.

woman who writes the alternation of being in love and of suspicion, of excitement, of fear, and obscure presentiments. Above all it is possible to reconstruct the almost personal relationship that Bryher ends up establishing with the city, passing from an initial diffidence, to her subsequent involvement, to the final painful separation.

The letters, which on the one hand consolidate a shared common world, on the other, by constructing a living image of the city, dramatize the dynamics and emphasize the happening of events, transporting the destined reader [H.D.] into the scene. The dialogue over distance between Bryher and Hilda is charged with emotion and nourished by allusions and implied references. In her writing Bryher conveys the experience before a reflective distance dims it; she privileges the instant and the immediate; she gives space to the senses, sight, sound, odor, so that Hilda herself can hear and taste almost firsthand her experiences.

And it is in this dialoguing that the Berlin of Bryher takes shape. A Berlin whose topography we reconstruct through the places which she inhabits, which she visits, across which she moves. A Berlin which at first reminds her of New York but ends up having its own distinct personality when, finally, through G.B. Pabst, she comes into contact with a group of intellectuals and artists who move between film and psychoanalysis. Many of them are Jews; many, like Pabst, are not native to Berlin, and from 1930 on they will suffer the combined effects of the economic crisis and of omnipresent anti-Semitism, besides those of the incipient National Socialistic movement. Almost all will leave Berlin and Bryher herself will never return.

Attentive to detail, the letters give equal importance to every thing, and, like a chronicle, diagram a time in which History and the present are on the same plane.<sup>9</sup> Not so with memoir. Because memoir, as Benjamin writes, differently from autobiography, which attempts to reconstruct the flow and the continuity of time, has to do with "space, of moments and discontinuities. For even if months and years appear here, it is in the form they have at the moment of recollection."<sup>10</sup> In the memoir of Bryher as well the spatial dimension dominates, while the selection of events in the flow of narrated time and the careful montage of the different chapters emphasize the present point of view of the author.

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<sup>9</sup> For a reflection on the dynamics in which the sender and the receiver of the letters found themselves involved, see: Wendy Deutelbaum, "Desolation and Consolation: The Correspondence of Gustave Flaubert and George Sand," *Genre* 15 (Fall 1982) 281-302, and "Disputes and Truces: The Correspondence of Lou Andreas-Salomé and Sigmund Freud," unedited typescript. On the time of the chronicle and of the memoir, see also *Il filo e le tracce* [The thread and the tracks] by Carlo Ginzburg (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2006), especially 295-305.

<sup>10</sup> These are considerations that Benjamin addresses in "A Berlin Chronicle." Cf. Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, vol. IV (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag) 488, cited in Carol Jacobs, *In the Language of Benjamin* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999) 17. [English translation is from Walter Benjamin, *Reflections*, ed. Peter Demetz, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York and London: Harvest/HBJ, 1979) 28.]

In the chapter of *The Heart to Artemis* in which Bryher runs through again the Berlin experiences noted in the letters, the elapsed time and the events by which it has been marked—Nazism and then the Second World War, with their human and personal consequences,—are an unavoidable filter. The first thing that Bryher describes about Berlin in her autobiography are the poor refugees, who, like flotsam that backwash carries to the shore, the First World War had uprooted and dislocated after having destroyed the world to which they belonged. The narrative, which has as its focal point Berlin, opens with these images incised in the memory, and with their historical import. It concludes with the anticipation of the disaster of a new war.

But what transpires from the narrative discourse itself is how much Bryher has learned from modern arts and cinema, in particular from the documentary cinema which she loved so much. Even its structure is modeled after the techniques of montage developed by the Soviet cinema. Thus the construction of the narrative in her pages can be best appreciated if put in relation to the film-documentary that Walter Ruttmann made about the city, *Berlin: Symphony of a City* (1927), even if that of Bryher may be considered an elegy more than a symphony.

The consciousness that the experiments of modernism of the years passed in Berlin had by now been transformed from marginal matters, phases of a process still underway in which she herself had participated, into consolidated acquisitions, contributed strongly to the construction of the narrative distance in *The Heart to Artemis*. And it is in this construction of Western modernism as cultural event that, through her memoir, Bryher intends to participate. Yet if the cities of Paris and Berlin objectively coincide with the places of the modernity of Europe, it is not this historical objectivity which Bryher puts at the center of her narration. Once again the pivot is in fact those “geographical emotions” that have conveyed and matured her personal, intellectual, and historical consciousness.

Berlin, as Paris before it, lends itself to becoming an emblem of a wholly personal change and maturation, politically and artistically. Like Paris, in addition, it is a place through which Bryher realizes herself as the quintessence of the modern woman, the living incarnation of the history of the twentieth century.

## Paris 1900 and geographical emotions

“All my life I have suffered from ‘geographical emotions.’ Cities are much easier to understand than people.”<sup>11</sup> A declaration of a personal and immediate affective response to the milieu, to the territory, and above all, to the city, in 1937 begins the narrative-memoir written by Bryher about her first visit to Paris in

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<sup>11</sup> Bryher, “Paris 1900,” *Life and Letters To-day* 2 (Summer 1937) 33.

1900, when, a girl of only five years, she went along with her parents, who were visiting the Grand Universal Exposition.

And with the eyes and from the perspective of a little girl Bryher describes the pavilions in which the merchandise was exhibited and arrayed in abundance and great variety. Naturally, the girl of 1900 is not very interested in the furniture, tapestries, grand objects or extremely small ones made of amber, coral, and enamel which crowd the windows. Of this manifestation of consumerist capitalism the only things that interest her are the rifles and cannons, to the great scandal of her parents but consistent with her childish aggression and internalized nationalism. The little girl is also unconscious of the role which the great universal expositions, where the merchandise acquired the value of fetishes, played in Europe and the United States in the years at the turn of the century. But there is nothing of the ingenuous in the use of narrative distance on the part of the adult author, who in this way can trace back to the years of early childhood a masculine and warlike nature, a sense of self and an idea of justice that distinguishes her both from her parents, who had gone to Paris exactly to see the fetish-merchandise, and from the monarchist and conservative British bourgeoisie itself, which was the class to which she belonged.

Bryher the writer attributes her first consciousness of different national cultures to her contact with the French capital and its inhabitants, which occurred when she was at an age particularly open to profound impressions. To that experience she also traces a precocious political choice for liberty, equality, and, even more fundamentally, for a transnational and geographical dimension of personal identity. "It was in France that I first learned to be a European," concludes her narration, condensing into few words the import of that first encounter with Paris.<sup>12</sup>

### Bryher: an island, a world

But who was Bryher? Her original name was Annie Winifred Ellermann. Born in 1894, she was the natural daughter of Hannah Glover and Sir John Reeves, ship-owner and magnate, considered the richest man in England. Her relationship with her parents, who were loving and attentive but nevertheless determined to educate their daughter according to the values of the bourgeoisie and of late-Victorian femininity, and to keep her isolated in order to hinder friendships presumably interested only in her money, was complicated, beginning with the years of adolescence.<sup>13</sup> The name Bryher at first was only a

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>13</sup> Despite the fact that her parents were married at the time of the birth of their second child, John, Bryher remained officially "illegitimate." The facts of her life are rather scarce, even though, thanks to her long relationship with H.D., through this last it is possible to gather precious information. See, besides the succinct notes which introduce the catalog of Bryher's archive at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University (Bryher Papers Gen MSS 97), Susan Stanford Friedman (ed.), *Analyzing Freud: Letters of*

pseudonym (Winifred Bryher) used to protect the family from eventual negative fallout associated with the publication of her first two autobiographical novels, *Development* (1920) and *Two Selves* (1922), in which she criticized her private and public education, but from 1948 it was her legal name.<sup>14</sup> In this way she cleanly cut her ties with her brother, heir of the family fortune, if not with the paternal entrepreneurial spirit.

Bryher, besides being a very common surname in Scotland,<sup>15</sup> is the name of one of the Scilly Isles off Cornwall, where the author passed many summers and to which she was emotionally attached. This geographical name, which Bryher associated with the sea and with her desire for adventure, represents well the deep and personal connection which she established with places to which she felt affectively conjoined. Seen another way, however, this island in the middle of the sea lends itself as a symbol of her individualism, in addition to her refusal of every sort of nationalism, considered by her intrinsically dangerous and irremediably compromised by the two world wars. This does not mean that Bryher did not recognize affinities inscribed in the blood, that she did not feel in her being—in agreement with her contemporary Virginia Woolf—the weight of genes, cultural as well as biological, of generations of ancestors.<sup>16</sup> In particular in *The Heart to Artemis* she would repeatedly affirm the acknowledgment of Nordic forebears, that she felt herself at home in Berlin and in that part of Germany, Prussia, from which came her father's side of the family. But the roots, internalized more than fixed in a particular place, would be transplanted every time. And her world would not be limited to her roots or to her nation of origin, since on the contrary in her constant desire to explore new places, to the North,

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*H.D., Bryher, and their Circle* (New York: New Directions, 2002); Guest, *Herself Defined*; Hanscombe and Smyers, *Writing for their Lives*; Robert McAlmon, *Being Geniuses Together 1920-1930*, revised with supplementary chapters and an afterword by Kay Boyle (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1984); Caroline Zilboorg (ed.), *Richard Aldington & H.D.: The Early Years in Letters* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992). See also my "Bryher: fra barbarie e modernità," in Marina Camboni, Gigliola Sacerdoti Mariani, and Biancamaria Tedeschini Lalli (eds.), *Words at War: Parole di guerra e culture di pace nel "primo secolo delle guerre mondiali"* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 2005) 1-25. ["Bryher: between barbarity and modernity," in *Words at war: Words of war and cultures of peace in the "first century of world wars."*]

<sup>14</sup> *Development* (London: Constable & Company, 1920); *Two Selves* (Paris: Contact Publishing Company, 1923). Reprinted in *Two Novels: Development & Two Selves*, ed. Joanne Winning (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000).

<sup>15</sup> See the interview given to Thomas Jenkins of *The Sunday Express* of London (August 21, 1960), in which Bryher, besides speaking about the genesis of her name, justifies the reasons for the adoption of it as her legal name by the following: "I was breaking completely from my family {...} I was going on my own." The legal adoption of the name follows the passing of her mother, of whom Bryher had taken care after the death of her father, and is linked to her definite break with her brother John, the sole heir of the paternal fortune. Although her father in 1930 had acquired for her a property in the center of London for a price of two million and five hundred thousand pounds, assuring the daughter a substantial income, at his death, in 1933, the entire amount of his fortune, about 300,000,000 pounds, went to his son John, who unlike Annie was not very gifted as an entrepreneur. And it was precisely after the death of their father that, as Bryher was to declare in another interview, their relationship broke down irreparably (see *The Sunday Express*, July 21, 1963).

<sup>16</sup> In "A Sketch of the Past," in writing about herself, Woolf recognizes having found herself at birth laden with "instincts already acquired by thousands of ancestresses in the past." *Moments of Being* (Reading, England: Triad/Granada, 1981) 80. [*Moments of Being* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976) 69.]



the East, and the South, she would seek to recreate that sense of adventure and fullness lived in the years of her early childhood when, with her parents, she passed long periods of time in the south of Italy and in North Africa.

Neither emigrée nor exile, Bryher chose rootlessness as an answer to every form of boundary and prohibition, and nomadism as the characterizing trait of one who felt herself above all a citizen of the world. And the places, the cities in particular, were the scene upon which she inscribed her experience of modernity.

### Paris 1900, Berlin 1927

In "Paris 1900," a narrative of her first encounter with Paris, Bryher the intellectual, the woman who also aspired to write the history of an epoch, not only puts into focus the wholly personal process which leads her from isolated England to the European continent and allows her to access an identity that is geographically enlarged and culturally more composite and complex, but in addition locates in a precise biographical and historical moment the birth of the modern. In this birth, she writes, the desire of the individual and of the collective have collaborated in different ways. It is the heavy nineteenth-century forms that cause the rise in the desire for the new in the public of adult spectators who crowd the rooms of the Grand Universal Exposition of 1900, a desire that little Annie Winifred seems to perceive better than any of the adults:

And perhaps because all sincerity of emotion was repressed, the age, as it felt itself dying, redoubled outward forms and put emphasis of life upon ownership of thousands of small possessions. It was at the Paris exhibition that modern art was born. The unconscious mind of thousands must have begun to imagine blank spaces and straight lines, while the eyes stared at cabinets full of miniatures, toy clocks, jeweled thimble cases, and Fragonard paintings reproduced in beads upon tiny bags.<sup>17</sup>

Her underlining of the modernity of empty spaces and essential lines, which reveals itself as a desire hidden in the heavy and redundant forms of the late nineteenth century, echoes the considerations of Walter Benjamin, who in the same years studied the Paris of the arcades, "Passages," and of the Grand Expositions, and for whom "[e]very epoch, . . . , not only dreams the one to follow, but, in dreaming, precipitates its awakening. It bears its end within itself and unfolds it..."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Bryher, "Paris 1900," 36.

<sup>18</sup> Walter Benjamin, "Das Passengen-Werk," *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. IX, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1982). The English translation is from Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press) 13.

For Bryher it will be the Paris she visited as a child, rather than the one she shared with the Lost Generation in the 1920s, to assume the role of illumination, to construct in her and for her that salvific image of the past that projects her into the future.<sup>19</sup> The visits to Berlin during the years of the life of the journal *Close Up* would have an analogous function of European experience and of modernity lived as a full and vital process.

It is in fact in Berlin that her initiation into European, Russian, and Japanese cinema takes place, both of the avant-garde and not. Soon, however, films and her activity as critic and reviewer become the means of more personal encounters with directors, actresses, and actors, and with notable exponents of Freudian psychology in Germany, to the point of extending to the new generation of architects, which has realized the empty spaces and straight lines imagined by the nineteenth century in a modernity which in Berlin manifests itself as underway, openly revealing also all its contradictions. Berlin: "52° 31' North Latitude, 13° 25' East Longitude, 20 main-line stations, 121 suburban lines, 27 belt lines, 14 city lines, 7 shunting stations, street-car, elevated railroad, autobus service."<sup>20</sup> These are the coordinates of the city which Alfred Döblin gives us in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, the exact fixity of the geographical position immediately run through and modified by lines that branch off in every direction or which converge on Berlin. Railroad lines, streetcar lines, city lines cross Berlin; the means of transportation trace directives, moving at the same time thousands of people and so representing a constant movement in and out of the city, interacting with its internal circulation. The Berlin of the late 1920s is a crossroads. Like the train on which Virginia Woolf makes her Mrs. Brown travel,<sup>21</sup> Döblin's Berlin is an emblem of the changing of human, social, and cultural relations provoked by emerging social subjects, particularly women and workers, by the most modern technological innovations, and by the market economy, as well as by the destructuring effects of the First World War.

Alexanderplatz, far from being the background of Franz Biberkopf's drama, instead "governs his existence," Walter Benjamin maintains. In Döblin's novel, he remarks, the square is the pulsing heart of the city precisely because there "the most violent transformations have been taking place."<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> For Benjamin the past can only be known in the image that flashes for an instant. The gift of the historian is "fanning the spark of hope in the past." Walter Benjamin, "Über den Begriff der Geschichte" (1940), in *Gesammelte Schriften*, eds. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, vol. I (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1972). The English translation is from Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," *Illuminations*, ed. and intro. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969) 255.

<sup>20</sup> Alfred Döblin, *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, intro. Walter Benjamin (Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, 1929). The English translation is from Alfred Döblin, *Berlin Alexanderplatz: The Story of Franz Biberkopf*, foreword Alexander Stephan, trans. Eugène Jolas (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2004) 372.

<sup>21</sup> Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" (1924), *The Captain's Deathbed and Other Essays* (New York and London: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1978) 94-119.

<sup>22</sup> Walter Benjamin, "La crisi del romanzo: A proposito di *Berlin Alexanderplatz* di Döblin," introduction to *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, 7. The English translation is from Walter Benjamin, "The Crisis of the Novel" (1930), in *Selected Writings*, vol.2, 1927-1934, trans. Rodney Livingstone and others, eds. Michael W. Jennings,

Alexanderplatz stands at the center of the movement, literary and ideal, both internal and international, of a city also full of contradictions and conflicts.<sup>23</sup> Berlin was a young metropolis, Chicago on the Spree [River], and, like the American city, it grew from six hundred thousand inhabitants in 1896 to three million at mid-century. With the Grand Exposition of 1896, writes Georg Simmel, Berlin proved to have become a world city, or “a city to which the whole world sends its products.”<sup>24</sup>

It is the city where the architecture of the nineteenth century meets the new, which is born from and in the bowels of the earth. As Herwart Walden writes in 1923, half-seriously and half-facetiously, “Berlin is the capital of the United States of Europe,”<sup>25</sup> or rather, it is that pole, that international center, that can make of Europe a cohesive entity, like the United States. It is a program of Europe.

### Berlin or New York?

Bryher and Macpherson arrive then in Berlin at the end of October 1927, with the first three numbers of *Close Up* to distribute and each of them with their own project to realize. Macpherson intends to use the journal to insert himself into the world of cinema as a director, while Bryher, who a short time before had very little respect for the new art, ventures without hesitation into that territory to be explored which for her is the world of the cinema. Berlin is, beginning with the early 1920s, the Hollywood of the European cinema and a pole of attraction for artists and experimenters of all kinds. In its cinematographic studios are produced box-office films which attempt to compete with the aggressive American cinema, but also educational films and auteur films, and new technologies and new narrative techniques are experimented with. The tyro film critics, Bryher and Macpherson, can see in Berlin the original versions of German and Russian films, which even when they are permitted to be shown, too often arrive in English, or even Swiss, movie theaters cut from motives of censorship or even completely modified.<sup>26</sup>

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Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999) 302. On Berlin as a city in continual transformation see the contribution of Antonella Gargano, “Le due modernizzazioni di Berlino” [“The two modernizations of Berlin”] in *Città, avanguardie, modernità e modernismo*, eds. Marina Camboni and Antonella Gargano (Macerata, Italy: eum, 2008) 229-250.

<sup>23</sup> See the series of volumes on Berlin edited by Hans Oswald between 1900 and 1924 of which Dorothy Rowe has furnished a valuable synthesis in *Representing Berlin: Sexuality and the City in Imperial and Weimar Germany* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2003) chapter 3.

<sup>24</sup> Georg Simmel, *Berliner Gewerbeausstellung* (1896), cited by Rowe in *Representing Berlin*, 44. The English translation is from the Italian, by Fox.

<sup>25</sup> Cited in *La Berlino dell'espressionismo* [The Berlin of expressionism] by Paolo Chiarini and Antonella Gargano (Roma: Editori Riuniti, 1997) 239.

<sup>26</sup> The denunciation of censorship and of the arbitrary manipulation of film prints in different countries is present in practically every number of *Close Up*.

The two install themselves in Berlin at the Hotel Adlon, a building erected in 1907 at number 1, Unter den Linden, near the Brandenburg Gate and the Pariser Platz, the center of society in those years. The hotel, which attracts an international clientele of journalists and diplomats (in the neighborhood there are several embassies), of actors and directors, offers diverse opportunities for whoever desires not only to enter the world of journalism and cinema, but also to dedicate oneself to knowing the city. Thus already on the first morning immediately after their arrival they go visit the nearby Kaiser Friedrich Museum, a neo-baroque edifice built on the point of the Museuminsel, where they admire the pictures of Crivelli and of other Italians collected there and where Macpherson is carried away by Michelangelo's John the Baptist.

But that which exhilarates the two the most is the city itself, for which they immediately feel a form of attraction that resembles falling in love. "Berlin is my soul's you know what, what Venice is to you. I just lie down and give in to it meekly," writes Macpherson to H.D. It is a matter of a sense of total and immediate belonging for Macpherson, who sees a city made of "honey and clover with a dash of high power voltage" or, even better, as an immense film, an impossible dream, almost as if cinema were the psychological dimension through which he looks at the city.

Bryher initially demonstrates an enthusiasm that is more critical and more dubious. Kenneth represents her as a dog that "sniffs and says Amuuuuurica all over only a bit more Americanized."<sup>27</sup> The Americanization of Berlin makes her suspicious. But the letters written by her to H.D. during the eleven days of her first sojourn record her progressively drawing nearer to Berlin, so much so that at the moment of parting Bryher is definitively conquered by the city.

"I'll head this New York," she writes as soon as she arrives, "and not be far out, in anything but the language!"<sup>28</sup> There are many things about Berlin that remind her of New York. First of all, the hotel itself, which with its mix of international clientele brings to her mind the Brevoort in Greenwich Village. The Adlon offers services similar to those of American hotels: room service ranging from breakfast to the newspaper, everything ordered by telephone, naturally. Even the crop of advertisements proffered to customers reminds her of America. And then, the wide roads, the crowd, the noise, the traffic of the city, which frightens her. Then the prices. "[T]he prices are on New York level, too" she writes; the taxis especially are cheap, even if she is literally terrified by the speed with which they cross the city.

Bryher had been in New York in 1920 and 1921 with H.D. Before arriving America had been for her the land of desire, of the new. And she considered New York, in which she had spent five intense days in September 1920, "a city to

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<sup>27</sup> Undated letter, probably of October 24<sup>th</sup>, H.D. Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

<sup>28</sup> Letter written the first day of her stay, probably October 23<sup>rd</sup>, H.D. Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

love.”<sup>29</sup> New York responded to her desire for renovation, so much so that she praised its youth, its lack of history, its projection towards the future and the heights, which in her opinion had much to teach her and a Europe exhausted and deluded after the Great War.<sup>30</sup> And on first impact she had mythologized the city, represented the skyscrapers projected towards the sky as giants of a classical epic, and had seen in the cars that ran through the roads the elephants of Hannibal. Later, after the disappointing months spent in “savage” California, her enthusiasm was dampened. She had in fact discovered that American society was more conformist, puritan, and dull than what she had expected, while she felt disturbed and threatened by the omnipresence of advertising. But on her return to New York, in February 1921, she had found exhilarating the international atmosphere which was lived in Greenwich Village and which appeared again, multiplied by ten, among the guests at the Brevoort, the hotel where she had gone to stay.

The identification of Berlin with New York, and more broadly, with America, will be a leit-motif in the letters written during her first visit. It will always, however, be accompanied by a sentiment oscillating between enthusiasm and detachment. “Berlin is more and more American,” she writes Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup>. In the hotel one asks for a telephone number as in America, and in Berlin, as in New York, the streets are straight. But it is most of all the stance which Berliners take with respect to life that Bryher finds very American. The dominant attitude in Berlin, she asserts, is “‘Be your age’ and if you can’t get on, get out.”<sup>31</sup> Bryher represents Americanization as a movement of time and in time in which the modern individual finds himself caught up. More precisely, modernity is in her words that means of transportation which one must get onto or be forced to get off of. And in this way she is well able to convey the acceleration of the rhythm of life, the aesthetic beauty of which Ruttmann represents in Berlin: Symphony of a City through the intensification of the movements of the gears of machines. But, like Chaplin in *Modern Times*, her observation, uniting Americanness, modernity, and acceleration, provides evidence of the negative effects, shows the competitive and destructive side of capitalism and of modernity, where, then as now, in a sort of Darwinian struggle for survival, the one who wins is the one who is able to keep up with the times.

Even as she concurs that Berlin is exciting and, as many must have repeated, is the future made reality, she confesses to her friend, “I guess I feel with Freud. It has the future, but--!”<sup>32</sup> Her instinctive flair for things (her nicknames

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<sup>29</sup> “An Impression of America I: New York,” *The Sphere*, Nov. 27, 1920.

<sup>30</sup> See, besides “An Impression of America,” what she writes in novelized form in *West* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1925), which is an account of her first American experience.

<sup>31</sup> Both quotes are from the same letter, written probably October 27<sup>th</sup>, H.D. Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

<sup>32</sup> Letter written probably October 23<sup>rd</sup>, H.D. Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. On Berlin as a city projected onto the future, see also Gargano’s “Le due modernizzazioni di Berlino” [“The two modernizations of Berlin”].

are “dog” and “Fido”), her political sensibility, her British traditionalism, all nourish Bryher’s reservations, which, moreover, are not articulated in words, as though to do so would project a shadow over the luminous present.

Immediately there ignites between Macpherson and Bryher a dispute over Berlin and Vienna. Bryher still prefers Vienna: she finds it more European, despite the recent visit which forced her to observe how hard the war had hit the city, which was recovering with great difficulty.<sup>33</sup> And yet, bit by bit, as the days pass, this perplexity vanishes. Berlin in 1927 gives her a charge of energy, a sense of the new and of possibility which accompanied and sustained well the novelties of her life. In Berlin she breathes the air of liberty and lives, she, a person with a strong sense of duty, in a condition of happy abandon, of innocent pleasures probably denied for a long time in the regulated diet of a normal life. “We are living on ice cream,” she writes at the end of her first day there, talking of herself and of Kenneth Macpherson.<sup>34</sup> It is the beginning also of a liberation from the interior bonds imposed on her behavior by the education she received, which was both elitist and Victorian.

If the morning is dedicated to visiting museums and establishing relationships for the journal, the afternoon and the evening are for the cinema. Beginning with the first day, when, aboard a fast taxi, they move to the neighborhood of the cinema, far from the hotel:

Last night we took a taxi to the Ufa [sic] Palast am Zoo. The catch about the Adlon is that all the cinemas, theatres and night places are about twenty minutes away by fast taxi. There is as K.[enneth] remarked, no law against speeding. We certainly speeded. And finally hit Broadway. Miles upon miles of electric lights. And the Palast am Zoo! It must be almost as big as the Roxi. About the size of the South Kensington museum with red plush walls and dozens of rooms. We got the last two five shilling seats and at that were separated and rows apart. But we saw the new three screen process, “Napoleon” directed by Abel Gance, a French film. Suddenly curtains drew back and you saw troops marching and superimposed stuff on three screens, with three projectors working at once. Thus there was Napoleon escaping from Corsica in a small boat in a storm, the waves shifted into mob at Paris revolution convention and back into waves or later the troops marched into Italy on either side with Napoleon looking at locket etc going round in the middle. Very stunted but very interesting. All the Germans

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<sup>33</sup> Bryher, *The Heart to Artemis*, 241-242.

<sup>34</sup> Letter written the first day of her stay, probably October 23<sup>rd</sup>, H.D. Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

frightfully keen but middle-class: we get the impression that upper class Germany does NOT go to the cinema.<sup>35</sup>

The movie theaters owned by UFA,<sup>36</sup> the Gloria Palast and the Palast am Zoo in particular, showed commercially successful films, in addition to films produced by UFA companies, which in the naïve opinion of the neophyte Bryher, are totally true to life. Marvels of technical innovation, multi-room theaters were found in Berlin, where one could also attend the first experiments of cinemascope. As a foreigner, Bryher notes the differences between the English, Swiss, French, and German audiences. In Berlin the cinema is frequented by a petty-middle bourgeois and proletarian audience and Bryher underlines how the cinema is a people's matter, from which the bourgeois elites keep themselves at a distance. In 1931, having become by this point an inveterate consumer of film and a frequenter of small and large movie theaters, she identifies the youth and the housewives, who with their shopping baskets seek in the dark of the movie theater a bit of amusement in the round of the day, the predominant audience, especially in the afternoon, when the ticket costs less.<sup>37</sup> But her observations about the audience are not extemporary sociological notations, since Bryher, and all of *Close Up*, will always pay particular attention to the cinematographic audience. The journal in fact attempts to find a middle way between the snobbery of those who consider the cinema an affair of the masses in search of escapism, the elitism of the avant-gardes and the need to stimulate the quality of cinematographic production, even as a form of mass education.

It is worthwhile to point out also that in the cited passage of the letter Bryher describes the nightlife, the movie theater, the lights of Berlin, constantly finding them equivalent to New York or London, almost as if the metropolises were interchangeable or, even better, that the cinemas, the illuminated streets, the nocturnal life were what bring together the great cities of modernity.

Naturally, a visit to the cinematographic studios in which by now were made international productions was obligatory for whoever, as do Bryher and Macpherson, produces films, as well as writing film criticism. Therefore the visit to

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<sup>35</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>36</sup> The initials stand for "Universum Film AG." This colossus which at the height of its splendor, in 1921, produced up to 600 films a year, and competed with Hollywood as more than an equal, had been initially created as an instrument of war and nationalist propaganda. On UFA see Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 35-39; Toni Stooss, "'Conquistare il cinema!' ovvero la Prometheus contro l'UFA & Co.," in Leonardo Quaresima (ed.), *Cinema e rivoluzione: la vita tedesca 1919-1932* (Milano: Longanesi, 1979) 3-67. ["'Conquer the cinema!' or Prometheus against UFA & Co." in *Cinema and revolution: German life 1919-1932*.]

<sup>37</sup> Letter of May 1, 1931. "Every day, only in Berlin, 200,000 people go to the cinema," one reads in "Manifesto-appello della Volks-Film-Bühne" [Manifesto-call of peoples-film-stage] *Film und Volk* 1 (February-March 1928), reprinted in Quaresima, *Cinema e rivoluzione*, 128. According to Heinrich Mann, the movie audience was above all made up of the common people, seeing that, given the falling quality of films, intellectuals had distanced themselves from them. See Mann, "Cinema e popolo" [Cinema and the people] in the same volume, 137-141. English translation by Fox.

the UFA establishments, heart of the German film industry, is inevitable. But Bryher finds the guided tour of the UFA in Neubabelsberg, suburb of Berlin, rather ascetic. It is true that she has the opportunity to see still standing the house of Rotwang and the sets of Metropolis, to visit the studios where cultural documentaries are shot, and the sets of certain films being made at that moment. But she is not able to meet Fritz Lang, as she had hoped, or to establish other contacts, and she is left disappointed.

The person who will strike a first spark will be another director, Georg Wilhelm Pabst, who will open for her not only the doors to the world of cinema but will put her in contact with a small circle of people who will become her little community point of reference and who will greatly influence her political ideas, as well as her aesthetic ones. Between Pabst, Bryher, and Macpherson is immediately established an understanding, born of an instinctive affinity and interest from both sides. Even before arriving in Berlin the two had had a great opinion of this Viennese theater director who had transferred himself to Berlin in order to dedicate himself to film, soon becoming the exponent of the "Neue Sachlichkeit," the "new objectivity," or new realism in film.<sup>38</sup> And they had already seen *Die freudlose Gasse* (1925, *The Joyless Street*), a film about which H.D. had written an enthusiastic review in the first number of *Close Up*, reading in a classical, mythical, and romantic key the character interpreted by Greta Garbo.<sup>39</sup>

This review was probably the calling card of the two and it must have made the director quite well-disposed towards them. Bryher and Macpherson were most of all interested in his quest to translate psychological processes into cinematographic images, something which Pabst had done in the film he had dedicated to Freudian psychology, *Geheimnisse einer Seele* (1926, *Secrets of a Soul*), based on a text by two disciples of Freud, Hanns Sachs and Karl Abraham.<sup>40</sup> His films were emblematic of the encounter of the new visual art, of new techniques and technologies of the image, and of the new science, psychoanalysis. They could not fail, therefore, to inspire the interest of Macpherson, who aspired to become a full-blown director and who in the October issue of the journal praised the potentiality of this "photographic art" capable of producing miracles. An art that was not static, that in the hands of an artist would be capable of realizing to the utmost its potential for "movement, change, rhythm, space," and, thanks to multiple technical tricks, offered "infinite possibilities of suggestion, contrast, fusion, disassociation; whole

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<sup>38</sup> See what Kracauer writes about him in *From Caligari to Hitler*.

<sup>39</sup> H.D., "The Cinema and the Classics I: Beauty," *Close Up* 1 (July 1927) 22-33.

<sup>40</sup> The film was of an educational nature and proposed to spread psychoanalysis among a more ample audience but it never had the approval of Freud, who exactly because of his differences about the opportunity of realizing a film broke his ties with Abraham. On the vicissitudes of the film see Sanford Gifford, "Freud at the Movies, 1907-1925," in Jerrold Brandell (ed.), *Celluloid Couches, Cinematic Clients: Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy in the Movies* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2004) 147-167.



realms of fantasy, states of mind, psychic things," so much so as to permit also the representation of "the inner and inmost working."<sup>41</sup>

After the first encounter, which took place October 26, 1927, the connection which Bryher made with Pabst quickly transformed into friendship and trust. A friendship which for Bryher and Macpherson translated itself immediately into support for his work. Thus the December 1927 of *Close Up* is almost entirely dedicated to him, with Macpherson writing a long review of *Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney* (The Love of Jeanne Ney) which came out that year, and with Bryher offering a synthesis of the entire opus of the director.<sup>42</sup>

In the words of Bryher one reads the adherence, in an anti-Hollywood key, to that "new objectivity" of which the cinema of Pabst is the bearer. But in her, even before being a aesthetic-formal criterion, the need for objectivity is born of a requirement for reality as opposed to the escapism promised by a great part of the American and popular cinema. As the aspiring historian that she is, she feels the necessity of finding also in art a counterpart to lived experience in the real life of post-war Europe. And in film she sees a denunciation of the damages produced by the First World War, of hunger and poverty, in brief, of the general social upheaval of which the convulsion of the values of the petty and middle bourgeoisie is emblematic. In *The Joyless Street*, she writes, she had found what she had looked for "in vain in all post-war literature," that is, "the unrelenting portrayal of what war does to life, of the destruction of beauty, of (as has been said) the conflict war intensifies between those primal emotions, 'hunger and eroticism.'" <sup>43</sup>

## Berlin between psychoanalysis and Russian cinema

Pabst "is an ardent pacifist, very pro-Russian, says he is taking us to the Soviet place to see Russian films,"<sup>44</sup> writes Bryher to H.D., but, to underline the distance between her thirst for peace and justice, her generically left sympathies, and her adherence to the communist creed, is her reaction to *Hoppla, wir leben!* This representation of the theatrical work of Ernst Toller which Erwin Piscator stages in the autumn of 1927 in his Berlin theater, the old Nollendorf theater in Nollendorf Platz, is for Bryher simply apocalyptic. She remains in fact greatly struck by the attunement of the subject matter, the modalities of representation, and the typology and the behaviors of the audience in attendance. And she interprets the whole as the general message

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<sup>41</sup> Kenneth Macpherson, "As Is," *Close Up* 1 (October 1927) 15-16.

<sup>42</sup> See: Kenneth Macpherson, "*Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney*," *Close Up* 1 (December 1927) 17; Bryher, "G.W. Pabst: A Survey," *ibid.*, 56.

<sup>43</sup> Bryher, "G.W. Pabst: A Survey," 58.

<sup>44</sup> Letter, perhaps of October 28, 1927, H.D. Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

of “a Red Flag Communistic Down With the World play of excessively violent and gloomy tendencies.”<sup>45</sup>

In the letter’s four full pages devoted to the show, Bryher describes the sets and the ways in which the theatrical narrative is carried forward. If on the one hand she admires the action on the stage, in which Piscator renders by means of diverse levels and positions in space the articulation of classes and social contexts and the politics of power in Germany, on the other she remains stunned by the modernity and the efficacy of the filmed sequences which, according to a collaborator of *Close Up*, create a connection between the spoken word of the theater, the depth of the stage, and the image projected on the surface of the screen, so making it that “thought becomes image and image translates itself into words!”<sup>46</sup>

She does not indicate, however, she, who repeatedly remarked on the Americanness of Berlin in her letters, the ways in which Piscator represents the Americanization of the city and of Germany. As in the central panel of the triptych *Großstadt* [Metropolis] painted by Otto Dix, also in 1927, where the left side of the canvas is occupied by a band of jazz musicians, to whose music is moving a “New Woman”—in the center with her hair in a bob, wearing a short dress, and with an androgynous body—so does Piscator have a jazz band playing, to whose music dancers move in synchronicity, like the dancing troupes of chorus girls coming from the United States, who enlivened the variety shows. Staging a version of the Tiller Girls about whom Kracauer writes,<sup>47</sup> Piscator intended to offer through their regular and synchronized movements a mirror to the spectators, who in their turn were lined up in rows in the theater, so that they would become conscious of the dehumanizing automation in the alienating mechanism of which everyone found themselves caught up.

The androgyny or the asexuality of the female body and the synchronicity of the rhythmic movement represented in this way both modernity and, along

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<sup>45</sup> Letter, perhaps of October 29, 1927, in which Bryher gives a precise account of the spectacle, H.D. Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. On the work of Piscator see also Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 192.

<sup>46</sup> “La pensée devient apparition et l’apparition se traduit en paroles!” E. Hellmund-Wadlow, “Combinaison le film et la scène” [Combination film and stage], *Close Up* 2 (April 1928) 28. English translation by Fox. The work narrates the circumstance of the revolutionary Thomas who sees his death sentence commuted into being locked up in an insane asylum, on exiting which he finds things so changed that his wife and family reject him, his revolutionary friend has become a government minister, and he finds himself outside of society and out of work. Unjustly accused of the assassination of the government minister, he hangs himself before the truth is made clear. The filmed sequences show, at the beginning, the scenes of the revolutionaries awaiting judgment, and then the eight years passed by him in the asylum, during which war, inflation, and the occupation of the Ruhr follow one upon the other. Of this work as an expression of epic theater in which modern time is represented, only two years later Piscator would write: “It is like a novel, in which not only is the dramatic plot portrayed but also the social and political conditions which determine *modern life* are described {...} the dramatic processes, the action, the plot, become simultaneous juxtaposed actions, the drama becomes epic on stage” (italics Camboni’s). Erwin Piscator, *Das Politische Theater* [The Political Theater], cited in Rowe, *Representing Berlin*, 172.

<sup>47</sup> Kracauer considers them a product of “American ‘distraction factories,’” cited in Rowe, *Representing Berlin*, 166.

with jazz music, German Americanness. The synchronized and repetitive rhythm, moreover, rendering the mechanical motion of machines transformed into an aesthetic function, not only rationalized but represented the cyclicity with no way out of a modernity perceived in terms of mechanism. Differently from the movement of means of transportation, and of human mobility, which can well represent the transformation, the polycentricity, and the multidirectionality of the modern, the repetitive and obsessive rhythm of the forms and of the machines gave evidence of the self-destructive, inhuman, conservative element, emblematic of the hegemony of capitalistic power.

But, to return to Pabst and Bryher, it is good to remember that the reaction of our British woman to Piscator's show should be considered a point of departure for a process that will make her ever more sensitive to the concerns of the left and, if not exactly to Marxism as an ideology, certainly to the social concerns developed thematically and formally by the Russian cinema. Through *Close Up*, beginning in 1928, she will give space to the needs of an independent German cinema and she will sustain the Volksverband für Filmkunst [People's Association for Film Art], a transversal association of democrats and communists of which Heinrich Mann was president and to whose leadership and artistic committee were joined, besides Pabst, numerous other exponents of art, theater, cinema, and criticism, among whom were Piscator and Andor Krasna-Kraus, the photographer director of *Filmtechnik*, who from 1928 would become the correspondent in Berlin for *Close Up*. Moreover, Bryher, who on the pages of *Close Up* wrote about the educational function of film, would have had no difficulty underwriting their charter document, in which it was desired that the cinema become:

an instrument for the dissemination of knowledge, an instrument of information and education. An instrument for the coming together and the reconciliation of peoples! A concrete and active element of our existence, in its daily aspects and in its intellectual and artistic manifestations.<sup>48</sup>

Many of her prejudices and much of her respectability would be put to the test in the years of her visiting the city, years that would see her progressively approaching the positions of Pabst, of Ernö Metzner, and of the intellectual elite of Berlin, which would be her milieu. She would also change her mind about communism. Going regularly to the movie theaters which showed Soviet films, she would have the means to appreciate the work of Eisenstein, Vertov, Pudovkin, and of other important directors of the time. She would become the friend of Eisenstein, whose essays on montage *Close Up* would be the first to

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<sup>48</sup> "Manifesto-appello della Volks-Film-Bühne," in Quaresima (ed.), *Cinema e rivoluzione*, 129. English translation from the Italian by Fox.

publish in English.<sup>49</sup> Finally, she herself would write a book entirely dedicated to the Russian cinema, entitled *Film Problems of Soviet Russia*.

Passing in review the Russian directors in her book, Bryher illustrates, in addition to the technical innovativeness, the high artistic and human, and therefore, universal, value of their films. But exactly by bringing forward the example of Russian cinema she is able to provide evidence, in contrast, of the limits of the British cinema and denounce the anti-communism of the censor in England, who barred access to any film coming from the Soviet Union, for any such film was held to be propagandistic. And, even if you affirm that “art has little to do with politics, but a great deal to do with truth,”<sup>50</sup> it is exactly by means of art that she reaches the point of appreciating the messages and the stories contained in the Soviet films, which she will find adhere to an unconventional morality, and therefore closer to the reality of life. “I saw a dozen of these films last summer (1928),” she writes, “in small projection rooms without music at nine o’clock in the morning, and they were art—as the Elizabethans were art—and they were truth.”<sup>51</sup>

But it is not by accident that Bryher had her encounter with Russian cinema right in Berlin. Walter Benjamin himself points out that “[t]he greatest achievements of the Russian film industry can be seen more readily in Berlin than in Moscow,” because “[w]hat one sees in Berlin has been pre-selected, while in Moscow this selection still has to be made.”<sup>52</sup>

Bryher and Macpherson would ask Pabst for an opinion of the short films directed by Macpherson, and they would also make use of his help in distributing the full-length film *Borderline*, in which H.D. and Paul Robeson play the protagonists.<sup>53</sup> Problems of quota made the thing difficult but finally, by means of the Deutsche Liga für unabhängigen Film (German League for Independent Film) the film was shown in April 1931, although without much success.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> After an initial contribution by Eisenstein on “The New Language of Cinematography” in *Close Up* 4 (May 1929), in 1930 would be published, divided into two parts, “The Fourth Dimension in the Kino,” *Close Up* 6.3 and 6.4, while his films would receive constant attention.

<sup>50</sup> Bryher, *Film Problems of Soviet Russia* (Riant Chateau, Territet, Switzerland: Pool, 1929) 11.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>52</sup> Walter Benjamin, “On the Present Situation of Russian Film” (1927), *Selected Writings*, vol. 2, 12.

<sup>53</sup> Besides *Wing Beat* in 1927, *Foothills* in 1928, and *Monkey’s Moon* in 1929, Macpherson also directed the feature-length film *Borderline* (1930), in which Paul Robeson and Eslanda Robeson acted, as well as H.D., Bryher, and Macpherson himself. See Anne Friedberg in “*Close Up*” 1927-1933: *Cinema and Modernism*, 15-16. On the films produced by POOL see Anne Friedberg’s introduction to part V of the volume, 212 and following. On *Borderline* see also Susan Stanford Friedman, “Border Forms, Border Identities in *Borderline*: Contemporary Cultural Theory and Cinematic Modernity” in *Networking Women*, 125-134.

<sup>54</sup> The League, of which Hans Richter was the primary mover, was founded in 1929 with the express scope of fighting against the glorification of war and the devastating effects of censorship. The German League was part of the Geneva International Film League and organized the showing of avant-garde and Russian films, followed by debate. It was thanks to the international character of the League that *Borderline* was able to have any kind of circulation.

Beginning with 1928, following the suggestions of Pabst, Bryher would stay during her Berlin visits at the Pension Exquisit, Kurfürstendamm 57, in a more central neighborhood and one certainly more helpful for her interest in cinema. This new centrality, united to the intense association of her small circle of friends, would make the city more "hers." She would then write to H.D., "I love Berlin so much, like a person I think."<sup>55</sup>

In 1927, at a dinner at Pabst's house she had met someone who would become a great friend and a constant point of reference in Berlin, the director Lotte Reiniger, the only Berliner of the group. She reports to her friend Hilda that Lotte makes all her films by herself in a studio the size of their dining room at Territet, with a piece of glass, a Debie movie camera and an electric apparatus.<sup>56</sup> Between Bryher and Lotte is immediately established a great understanding. Lotte, on her part, will introduce Bryher into a most modern, liberal, and informal Berlin, that is, into an atmosphere very far from that in which Bryher grew up and in which she still lives when she returns to London.<sup>57</sup> In 1931, however, when even in the cinema the economic crisis had become severe, it will be Bryher with her money to help Lotte get out of a dead-end.

Again in 1927 and at Pabst's house, Bryher had met the Viennese psychoanalyst Hanns Sachs, author of the screenplay for *Secrets of a Soul*. Sachs would become her psychoanalyst immediately afterwards. From 1928 Bryher would therefore have an ulterior motive, this time wholly personal and private, for returning to Berlin. And, accordingly, beginning with 1928, in her letters Bryher will narrate her morning pilgrimages to Sachs's studio at number 7 Mommsenstrasse, Charlottenburg. She feels herself to be a man in a woman's body and hopes with his help to get at the roots of her identity problem. Perhaps she does not resolve it, but certainly Sachs knows how to listen to her and to help her emancipate herself from her two other partners, H.D. and Macpherson, who are more gifted artistically, so much so, that when their commitment to the journal wavers, she will be the one to champion it. Encouraged by Sachs, she then prepares to undertake a didactic analysis in order to become in her turn a psychoanalyst, a project which she ended up abandoning, but which in the Berlin years would allow her to be admitted to the conferences for insiders, sponsored by the lively Freudian psychoanalysis society of Berlin, and to study more deeply both the German language and the dialect of Berlin.

Bryher meanwhile has met also the noted architect and director Ernö Metzner, who in 1929 had produced and directed the experimental short *Überfall* (Accident), considered by Kracauer the most radical film shot in Germany because of its attack on sedimented convention and every form of

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<sup>55</sup> Letter of May 1, 1931, H.D. Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

<sup>56</sup> Letter of April 16, 1931, H.D. Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Reiniger worked with silhouettes and in 1926 had made a very successful animated film, was *Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed* (The Adventures of Prince Achmed), *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*, taken from *The Thousand and One Nights*.

<sup>57</sup> See her letter of April 24, 1931, H.D. Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

authoritarianism.<sup>58</sup> Reviewed by *Close Up*,<sup>59</sup> the film will also be the occasion of a direct contribution by Metzner to the journal and for an attack against the censorship that has prohibited its circulation. At Metzner's house Bryher would become informed about the heavy discrimination which was the precipitate of the anti-Semitic culture which was gaining ground in Berlin. Moreover, almost all her friends were Jews, from Pabst to Sachs, from Reiniger to Andor Krasna-Kraus.

It is exactly these friends who, diversely dislocated on the map of Berlin, would acquaint her with cafés and restaurants; in the course of the years they would introduce her into the heart of the milieu of the cinema and of the left; they would cause her to meet actresses such as Elizabeth Bergner, for whom she would nurse a veritable passion. But it will be thanks to the architect Hermann Henselmann that Bryher would be drawn by the architectural aspects of Berlin and would visit the proletarian neighborhoods in the outskirts of the city. In one of these areas lived in extreme poverty a rather gifted adolescent girl, the daughter of out-of-work proletarians, whom a teacher, known by way of Sachs, proposed that Bryher adopt, but that she decided, after days of indecision, to help only financially.<sup>60</sup>

Henselmann, together with the architect Alexander Ferenczy, will design Bryher's house in Switzerland in the most pure Bauhaus style and with all the technological innovations possible, such as rubber floors. Through this house, named Kenwin, a contraction of the names of Kenneth and [Winifred] Bryher, the dream of the modern, of sober lines, of plays of light and shadow, will be realized, even if not without some inconveniences. It will be Henselmann again who will help her choose the furnishings, taking her, among other places, to visit the textile factory of Adolph Ellerman, an event that would make her feel that she had finally reconnected with her own roots. And it will be on just this occasion that Bryher will reflect on her affinities with the city. In a letter of May 5, 1931, she writes, "I so curiously belong to this place as little Henselmann said, 'aber ja, sie [sic] sind Deutsch' [but yes, you are German]." And she concludes, "I love it so here."

### "A not to be imagined barbarism"<sup>61</sup>

But the idyll was destined to end. In 1932 her last visit becomes a nightmare. Clashes between communists and Nazis are the order of the day, the actions of the fascist squads and the Nazi aggressions have multiplied, the violence has become palpable and the anti-Semitism manifest. In this context her positions become even more radical and she goes so far as to attend

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<sup>58</sup> Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 194-195.

<sup>59</sup> *Close Up* 4 (April 1929) 70-72.

<sup>60</sup> See the letters written to Hilda from Berlin in June 1931, H.D. Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

<sup>61</sup> Bryher, "What Shall You Do in the War?," *Close Up* 10 (June 1933) 192.

communist meetings. To her friend Hilda she writes of actors, actresses, and directors who, in a constant trickle, are fired by UFA companies, or who leave Berlin because the climate of reborn nationalism takes away every space from strangers and dissidents, making Berlin suffocating. In the last letter from Berlin we read:

Berlin {...} was simply an armed camp. Mounted cyclist Nazis dashing up and down streets with passwords and fights everywhere. Wasn't in one myself, but the youngest Williams pup was. They have passed a law excluding all Jews from the stage, so the Bergner is aus there unless it gets repealed.<sup>62</sup>

This is the context in which one should read the words of Bryher's contribution in the June 1933 number of *Close Up*, already in its title anticipating war: "What Shall You Do in the War?" Introduced by a slogan popular in Germany during those years, "To be a Jew is bad, to be a Communist is worse, but to be a Pacifist is unforgivable," the article opens with images of the scenes which she witnessed during her last visit to Berlin, "a city where police cars and machine guns raced about the streets, where groups of brown uniforms waited at each corner." In the article Bryher denounces the persecution of the Jews, who according to the National Socialists "are to be eliminated from the community" and she names the intellectuals and writers whose books are burned in public, among these "Heinrich and Thomas Mann, Remarque, Arnold Zweig, Stefan Zweig, Tucholsky, Feuchtwanger, Schnitzler, Glaeser," to then dwell particularly on the two Mann brothers and on Pabst. After having finally invited her readers, and potential spectators, to remember going to the films of many of the directors and actors thrown out of German film studios and dispersed throughout Europe, "because they believed in peace and in intellectual liberty," she concludes:

The future is in our hands for every person influences another. The film societies and small experiments raised the general level of films considerably in five years. It is for you and me to decide whether we all plunge, in every kind and color of uniform, towards a not to be imagined barbarism.<sup>63</sup>

### Berlin, elegy for a city

1927, the year in which Bryher arrived for the first time in Berlin, was also the year in which was shown a film entirely dedicated to the city, which was reviewed promptly in the journal: *Berlin: Symphony of a City*. In this visual

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<sup>62</sup> Letter written June 29, 1932, H.D. Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

<sup>63</sup> *Close Up* 10 (June 1933) 188, 189, 192.

symphony in five movements the director Walter Ruttmann celebrated a day in 1927 Berlin from dawn to far into the night. Like the Russian director Dziga Vertov, author of the famous *Man with a Movie Camera*, Ruttmann interlaced in his feature-length film the documentary and the abstract and expressionist modalities into a non-narrative style, in order to capture the life of a modern metropolis, to which he brings the spectator by train, by framing a locomotive which approaches the colossal city station.

The thematic focus of Ruttmann's film is movement as characteristic of modernity. Of this modernity Berlin was the quintessence, cultivated in the linear darting of trains and streetcars, in the rotating or geometric movement of the cars, which in their apparently clean symmetry seem to desire to deepen the implications of contrasts.

Bryher, too, who considered the documentary the true expression of the time,<sup>64</sup> and held that she had borrowed from cinema the movement, the speed, and the essentiality of her writing, will open her pages about Berlin in *The Heart to Artemis* with images of approaching the city by train one day in late October, and with a description of objects and countryside which, more than the surrealist colors that she affirms, evokes expressionist ones:

We took the train for Berlin {...} passing through an extraordinary landscape of black and white cows standing among pools of coral-colored leaves {...} and occasionally, to add a *surréaliste* touch, strips of blue bark hung from the trees.<sup>65</sup>

The strips of blue bark tell of both her emotion and her anxiety. "I fell in love with Berlin at once to my own amazement," she affirms right afterwards, just as in her letters.

In her memoir, however, time and events have already changed the ways in which Bryher reads the city. The first thing about Berlin that she describes in her autobiography is not the general impression of the Americanization of that metropolis. She underlines rather what makes Berlin a very European city. More than anything else she is struck by the signs of recent history, the legacy of the First World War:

In the sharp bite of the air of the North I could watch the first patterns evolve of the postwar decade. Russian and Polish refugees sat on benches in the station, clasping bundles done up in old, faded blankets, too weary at first either to look for work or beg for food. We were conscious that we were standing near the center of a volcano, it was raw, dangerous, explosive but I have never

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<sup>64</sup> Bryher, *The Heart to Artemis*, 248.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 247.



encountered before or since so vital a response to experimental art.<sup>66</sup>

The human presence makes of Berlin a meeting place of many uprooted people, like those desperate ones who inhabit the station, and like Bryher, who after the First World War feels like she no longer has a sense of homeland or belonging. The station, a place of transit and brief stops, of temporary aggregations and permanent dispersals, is the very emblem of the modern city, or rather of modernity, of a humanity in motion, visionary and voyeuristic, full of both hope and despair. In Bryher's narrative, in particular, this motion puts into contact representatives of the privileged classes and the intellectual elites to which she herself, pilgrim of art, belongs, and the many who suffer the misery and the uprooting produced by the war and by the redefinition of borders and social classes, indirectly identifying in the effects of the war one of the motors of modernity.

Into this cultivated Berlin in vital motion, immersed in its Nordic atmosphere, she is able to sink temporary roots; with this dangerous Berlin, like a volcano which can erupt from one moment to the next, Bryher feels herself attuned. Because risk is at home in Berlin, a city of "violent contrasts," in which "life and death seemed to hang upon trifles," in which "a collective but unconscious mind had broken through its controls." Therefore she feels at ease. Like the adventurer, like the explorer of risky places, she holds that her vice is "danger."<sup>67</sup>

From this very explosive context Bryher makes emerge the Berlin of modernity, realized by expressionism, film, and Bauhaus. In Berlin are the edifices that in 1900 the visitors of the Parisian Grand Exposition dreamed. The Berlin architects have simplified and reduced architectural style to essentials, and even the style of living has conformed. Berlin in this way is liberated from the forms saturated with war. In Germany, the cleansing, the uprooting, the reduction to the essential, to the elementary struggle between life and death, which was brought by the war, according to Bryher required, more than in other places, new forms. Because in Germany "the total upset of all values" provoked extremes of behavior. With words that she will also use to describe Pabst's film *The Joyless Street*, she tells of having seen "hunger, brutality and greed but there was also the sudden compassionate gesture, a will to help, or the pre-battle awareness of the single rose, the transient beauty of some girl's face."<sup>68</sup> Not even the style of Bauhaus is left out of this representation of extreme contrasts: Bryher sees its buildings as "locked in a struggle between light and darkness."<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 252 and 247.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 257.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

The cinema also becomes an occasion for a final reflection on the function of film and on the audience which benefits from it. This time, however, she does not dwell on the education of the public. Rather it is people's suffering that causes her to reevaluate even the films of escapism, at one time disparaged:

[A]ll these objects had gone to make what we should now call tranquilizers for a war-shocked generation whose members had been torn from everything they had been brought up to revere. Perhaps the films were illiterate but they reflected their time and gave a moment's respite to the millions whose lives had been wrenched out of shape. They may have also fulfilled the same purpose in the twenties as the epidemic of dancing is said to have done after the plague and the Crusades. There really are moments when reality is too grim to be faced by the majority if they intend to survive.<sup>70</sup>

In the memoir, finally, more than in the letters, Bryher would reconstruct the threads that tied her to her artist friends, by now recognized as a community which found its own cohesion not only or not so much in ideas, ideologies, and shared experiments, as in a feeling of belonging to a world where the national borders ceased being cultural, artistic, or personal points of reference. The common anti-bourgeois and anti-national sentiment, in fact, made of the artists with whom she associated a little transnational community, which recognized its own homeland in the aspirations held in common rather than in a precise place. This was the sentiment that had allowed her to become part of Berlin, which, like a true international city, was a center capable of attracting people from different places, who in their turn would form their own "circle," an international circuit in an international city.<sup>71</sup>

"Why, Berlin, must I love you so?"

And yet, the events recounted in *The Heart to Artemis*, no longer isolated in the sequence of a chronicle entirely conjugated in the present tense, are now marked by the signs that Nazism and the Second World War have inscribed in memory. It is these which determine the choice of images and events. Bryher records the progressive loss of the internationalism which had followed the First World War and the birth of a nationalism more violent than that of the nineteenth century.

The dangerousness of volcanic Berlin at this point acquires another sense, political and historical, in addition to the personal one. Bryher, the woman who

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 249.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 257.

loves danger, is confronted with this dangerousness, year after year, until the end of the Second World War. For Bryher during those years would help more than one hundred Jews and victims of political persecution leave Germany, Austria, and the occupied countries. Among these, and notwithstanding the tragic end of his flight, was Walter Benjamin, the Berlin intellectual who, like Bryher, believed in the cinema and in the possibilities of opening the human cognitive and intellectual world by means of the adventure into the imaginary offered by the cinema.

Using the plural pronoun, a plural that includes her community of friends, among whom were Pabst and Eisenstein, but also Brecht, whose Threepenny Opera she had seen in Berlin and which, along with Mahagonny, she knew by heart, Bryher writes:

Most of us made fun of the bourgeoisie but they had their revenge, the Nazis destroyed all forms of expression and drove the artists into exile.<sup>72</sup>

The community of the newly dispersed and of the survivors would find itself in much-admired America. But in circumstances rather different from those it had dreamed of! With a careful montage and a circular construction, in the memoir the last memories of Berlin close with scenes from the station. A station no longer crowded with the rejected ones of the First World War but with the many who were leaving Berlin out of fear or because they were forced to go,

those lucky enough to have relatives in the States, South America, or England. Not all were Jews; there were many war veterans who wanted to end their days in peace.<sup>73</sup>

And Bryher, she also was hindered by the new living conditions: during her last stay in Berlin she gives up going out of the house except for necessity. The city of the future, the international city of a thousand lights, in her narrative shuts itself up once more in the darkness of nightmare and fear, a city reabsorbed into the soft underbelly of National Socialist Germany.

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 251.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 261.

## ARTICLE: Conference Paper: H.D.'s Hymenic Mysteries

In late 2008 there was an extended discussion on the H.D. list on H.D.'s use of artifacts in her work, centering on "Flute Song." Here is a small contribution to the general discussion. More on this topic from Lisa Simon is planned for the next (Summer 2009) issue. I haven't changed the paper much except to fill out the footnotes a bit.

### H.D.'s Hymenic Mysteries

Maria Stadter Fox

Presented at Lost Measure: A Conference on H.D.  
Bethlehem, PA September 20-22, 2002

Let daemons possess us! Let us terrify like Erynnes [sic], the  
whole tribe of academic Grecians!

Because (I state it inspired and calm and daemonical)  
they know nothing!<sup>74</sup>

These lines from H.D.'s "Helios and Athene" always cause me some hesitation before I write about her work, although my classical scholarship is not anywhere near sufficient to qualify me as an academic Grecian. Today I will indulge not so much in pretending knowledge of ancient Greece, but in exploring in one work some of H.D.'s ways (daemonical, mysterious) of knowing and making new what she called Hellas.

The work "Hymen," even apart from the rest of the collection Hymen, is an impressively complex piece, usually called a masque (because H.D. tentatively named it so in one her letters to Bryher).<sup>75</sup> It is meticulously imagined in terms of music, spectacle, and language. The visual aspects include codes of colors, flowers, gestures, and costumes. H.D.'s strategies for "making new" Hellenism include the recuperation, recontextualization, and elaboration of ancient fragments; the reinterpretation of ancient genres; the focus on the feminine and

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<sup>74</sup> "Helios and Athene," in Collected Poems 1912-1944, ed. Louis L. Martz (New York: New Directions, 1983): 328.

<sup>75</sup> Cited in Donna Krolik Hollenberg, H.D.: The Poetics of Childbirth and Creativity (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1991): 80. The letter is dated 14 February 1919 and in the Beinecke manuscript collection.

decentralization of the masculine; and the exploration of the irrational, or mystical elements of ancient Greece.

In "Hymen," the ancient fragments include the poetry of Sappho and specific sculptures and friezes; the main genres are the epithalamion and the lyric; the bride and her life up to marriage, rather than the bridegroom's anticipation and the ratifying of social ties, are the focus; and the heiros gamos, or sacred marriage, i.e. the union with the god, is the mystical climax. In the Eleusinian mysteries as H.D. understood them, it is important to remember, darkness and loss are necessary for the union to be fruitful.<sup>76</sup>

All these strands are tightly twined in "Hymen" and in the larger collection. Diana Collecott and Eileen Gregory, among others, have done much to clarify actual lines of Sappho echoed or alluded to in "Hymen," as well as to illuminate what following Sappho may have meant to H.D.<sup>77</sup> What I hope to do is to point to the specific pieces of sculpture that H.D. refers to or may have been referring to in "Hymen" and discover whether there is an analogy between her use of these ancient fragments and her engagement with Sappho's fragmented texts. (This reference to specific sculpture is used elsewhere in H.D., for example extensively in her lon commentary, and, in another medium, in the photos of the H.D. Scrapbook.<sup>78</sup>) Since the allusions are from several different periods of ancient history, H.D.'s familiar palimpsest technique is also in play.

The sculptural allusions are the following (in order of appearance):<sup>79</sup>

1. Ionic columns (101) of an open hall or palace
2. Marble hair of the temple Hera (1<sup>st</sup> group: 16 queenly matrons; 101)
3. The hair of the chryselephantine Hermes (2<sup>nd</sup> group: 4 very little girls; 102)
4. Medallions with twin profiles (four young children; 103)

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<sup>76</sup> Martha C. Carpentier discusses Jane Ellen Harrison's influential interest in a "Sacred Marriage and Birth of the Holy Child" and the Eleusinian mysteries in Ritual, Myth, and the Modernist Text: The Influence of Jane Ellen Harrison on Joyce, Eliot, and Woolf (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1998): 70-75. "For Harrison, 'the Marriage and the Birth were the culminating ritual acts by which union with the divine, the goal of all mystic ceremonial, was at first held to be actually effected, later symbolized.'" (74)

<sup>77</sup> Eileen Gregory, "Scarlet Experience: H.D.'s Hymen," Sagetrieb 6.2 (Fall 1987): 77-100; Gregory, H.D. and Hellenism: Classic Lines (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997); Diana Collecott, H.D. and Sapphic Modernism, 1910-1950 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Gregory in "Scarlet Experience" points out the close relationship of the whole book Hymen with Greek artifacts as well as Greek myth. In this brief paper I followed up this important insight of Gregory but limited myself to "Hymen" and tried to identify more precisely actual artifacts and to suggest how the allusions to them are used in the masque. Gregory, "Scarlet Experience," 79 and note 4.

<sup>78</sup> See Diana Collecott, "Images at the Crossroads: The H.D. Scrapbook," in H.D.: Woman and Poet, ed. Michael King (Orono, ME: National Poetry Foundation, 1986) 319-367. A revised version of this essay appeared as "Images at the Crossroads: H.D.'s Scrapbook" in Signets: Reading H.D., eds. Susan Stanford Friedman and Rachel Blau DuPlessis (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990): 155-181.

<sup>79</sup> Page numbers refer to Collected Poems 1912-1944.

5. Hair smooth against the heads, etc. (four young children; 103)
6. Sharp marble folds of tunics, to the knees (four young children; 103)
7. Loose and rayed out hair like that of sun-god (four boyish wood-maidens; 104)
8. Turquoise, sapphire, lapis-lazuli (104, in text)
9. Procession of young women as on temple frieze (bride-chorus; 105)
10. Veiled Tanagra (bride; 105)
11. Tanagra group (four very young matrons; 107)
12. Marble vase (107, in text)
13. Precise bending of arms (young serene women preparing bed; 107)<sup>80</sup>
14. Boys' symbolic gestures (boys outside Love's room; 109)
15. Triangular design at the base of a vase or frieze (boys with torches; 109).

Now a few of these seem to be general allusions (arms bending,<sup>81</sup> the boys' gestures,<sup>82</sup> the precious stones), but most examples are either references to a specific piece or genre of pieces of ancient sculpture.

The Ionic columns of an open palace, for example, recall the period of Greece most admired by H.D. The Ionic column describes a fluted column with a scrolled capital, such as may be found in the Erechtheum and the Temple of Nike Apteris on the Acropolis.<sup>83</sup>

The description of the third group (the chorus of four older children—sex is not identified and possibly, as Gregory suggests, a reference to the Dorian Hyacinthia rites in which both young boys and girls took part) is: “The hair is smooth against the heads, falling to the shoulders, but slightly waved against the nape of the neck...The tunics fall to the knees in sharp marble folds” (103). The hair seems to suggest a kore, or maiden, of the Archaic period, statues and heads of which are in the British Museum and Akropolis Museum collections<sup>84</sup>—although it could also describe a youth, kouros, which has similar hair. The knee-length garment does not seem to be common to the kore or kouros statues, but is possibly a ritual garment for children. On the Parthenon frieze, for example, girl and boy attendants wear knee length drapery (less closed than a tunic). It is also possible that H.D. is describing the over-tunic that falls to the knees on the kore figures.

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<sup>80</sup> The groups have built to the entrance of a single figure, flaming Love in ritual knee-tunic and sandals, and described as a flamboyant bird: this strikingly non-sculptural figure is connected also with the major non-sculptural element of the set: the dark purple curtain (hymen).

<sup>81</sup> Gregory (“Scarlet Experience,” note 28) seems to suggest that the Panathenaic festival, during which nubile young women carried the woven veil of Athena, is perhaps referred to here, as is perhaps the attendant holding the peplos on the Parthenon frieze.

<sup>82</sup> The boys' gestures recall Ion sweeping before the temple in Euripides's play.

<sup>83</sup> Some beautiful pictures may be found on the internet, for example at [www.davidgill.co.uk/attica/akropolis.htm](http://www.davidgill.co.uk/attica/akropolis.htm).

<sup>84</sup> E.g., British Museum B91, from the temple of Ephesos; or at the Acropolis Museum, the Peplos Kore 679 (Akr. 679), or heads (Akr. 660, 616, 619).

The loose-rayed hair given to the Artemisian swallow-maidens<sup>85</sup> suggests the close but antithetical association between Artemis and Apollo/Helios that H.D. develops at length in her play Hippolytus Temporizes and such poems as "All Mountains."<sup>86</sup> I found two, but apparently there are many, examples: one head of Apollo on a Rhodian coin, one on a metope in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin.<sup>87</sup>

The marble vase is mentioned in the text by the chorus of very young matrons bearing laurel: "The sun shines through, / And throws a purple shadow / On a marble vase" ("Hymen," 107). Greek marble vases, generally oil-flasks and water urns, were used as grave markers.<sup>88</sup> Many critics have noticed the similarity of the wedding rite enacted in "Hymen" to a death rite. Indeed such an identification is not uncommon in Greek literature (Iphigeneia, e.g., Polyxena, Persephone herself). But we should not forget the sunlight on the vase and the purple color, which is associated later in "Hymen" very strongly with Love. In addition, the water urn or loutrophoros was also used to bring water for ritual washing on a wedding day (though perhaps not a marble one).

The triangular design echoed by the boys holding the torches is found on many Greek vases, especially black-figured ones: more like darts than triangles. Friezes used leaf and dart motifs that were also roughly triangular. These are the general motifs and features of ancient sculpture mentioned by H.D. The specific pieces however, are more suggestive.

The temple Hera most probably refers to the colossal limestone head of Hera found at Olympia.<sup>89</sup> It is thought to be the head of a cult statue mentioned by Pausanias, which, when whole, would have represented Hera, as Magna Mater, Great Mother, seated on a throne with a helmeted Zeus at her side as consort. She wears a crown of upright leaves and her hair is bound in a fillet; parallel locks end a row of flat curls. This visual reference for the first group, the sixteen matrons of Hera's temple (whom Gregory points out are mentioned in Pausanias in a rite at Elis in Hera's honor), suggest the power and queenliness the Bride will one day enjoy as a married woman: they are described as "each

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<sup>85</sup> A possible reference not just to Procne and Philomela (nightingale and swallow) but also Swinburne's "Itylus," an important poem for H.D. and woven into the text of, for example, HERmione (New York: New Directions, 1981).

<sup>86</sup> CP, 288-290.

<sup>87</sup> An example of a Rhodian coin may be seen at [www.lawrence.edu/dept/art/buerger/catalogue/036.html](http://www.lawrence.edu/dept/art/buerger/catalogue/036.html). Unfortunately I have been unable to trace the specific reference for the metope. It is possible I found it in John Boardman, Greek Sculpture: The Archaic Period: A Handbook (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1978), but this volume is no longer available to me.

<sup>88</sup> Examples may be seen at [www.museum.upenn.edu/Greek\\_World/pottery\\_big-32.html](http://www.museum.upenn.edu/Greek_World/pottery_big-32.html) and [www.museum.upenn.edu/Greek\\_World/pottery\\_big-33.html](http://www.museum.upenn.edu/Greek_World/pottery_big-33.html).

<sup>89</sup> Although I have not yet pinpointed the date of its discovery, it is described, with photograph, in a book published in 1925: E. Norman Gardiner, Olympia: Its History and Remains (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925). See also Ludwig Drees, Olympia: Gods, Artists, and Athletes (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968). Images of this famous piece may easily be found online.

a queen," "Each wears a crown or a diadem of gold" (101). It is significant that this group, the first, represents what the Bride will gain, what she will be transformed into. Hera is of course the matron par excellence, and (to Zeus's sorrow) not powerless or silent.

The case of the chryselephantine Hermes is an odd one, because there doesn't seem to be one, or any clear record of one.<sup>90</sup> The reconstruction of the Athene at the Acropolis is very striking; it seems unlikely that H.D. could have mistaken the material. No ancient gold and ivory statues are extant because of the fragility of the precious materials, only fragments—which may be part of the appeal of them for H.D. It is known that gold and ivory were used to make statues of Zeus, Athene, Apollo, and Artemis. A chryselephantine statue of Dionysus is described by Pausanias in the theater at Athens. The most famous Hermes is of course the Hermes Praxiteles (found in 1877, now at the Olympia Museum), which depicts in marble Hermes with the baby Dionysos (themes of birth and sacred marriage there: Hermes is taking the baby Dionysos, whose mortal mother had recently perished when Zeus came to her in all his glory, to the nymphs of Nysa). His hair is very short and very curly.<sup>91</sup> H.D. may be thinking of the description by Pausanias of the gold and ivory table in the Heraion, where he describes figures, including that of Hermes. However, it is not clear whether these are free-standing statues.<sup>92</sup>

The medallions with twin profiles may have been suggested by a gold coin in the British Museum depicting two generations of the Ptolemies, husband and wife (obverse Ptolemy II and Arsinoe II, his sister/wife; reverse Ptolemy I and Berenice I), in profile, one behind and slightly in advance of the other.<sup>93</sup> This shows another aspect of H.D.'s use of ancient sculpture: she uses the twin profiles to describe the delicate, sharply delineated profile of the children with kore/kouros-hair (possibly also suggesting the mixed sex of the group), while the actual coins present definitely adult, slightly double-chinned profiles. Here it seems it is the technique of representation rather than the associations of Ptolemaic Egypt that interest her, although the figures of ruling married couples, and one a brother/sister pair, may also have interested H.D.

The procession of young women as in a temple frieze seems most probably taken from the Parthenon frieze in the British Museum.<sup>94</sup> The drapery of

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<sup>90</sup> Hermes is an important god in H.D.'s thought, both as patron of scribes and as underworld or threshold guide.

<sup>91</sup> Images of this famous statue may also be found online.

<sup>92</sup>On ancient gold and ivory sculpture, see Kenneth D.S. Lapatin, Chryselephantine Statuary in the Ancient Mediterranean World, Oxford Monographs on Classical Archaeology (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002). The gold and ivory table is discussed on p. 97; another possibility, that a figure of Hermes might have been included with the enthroned Zeus by Pheidias, is mentioned on p. 80. Pausanias, whom H.D. read, is a major source of knowledge about ancient gold and ivory sculpture.

<sup>93</sup> The coin, a gold octadrachm of Ptolemy II (CM 1964-12-3-2) can be seen at [www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/compass/ixbin](http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/compass/ixbin) (enter search term "octadrachm").

<sup>94</sup> E.g., Marshals and maidens, East Slab VII; Maidens with jugs, East Slab VIII.



the figures is extremely detailed and precise, as are the clear profiles. The Parthenon frieze as a whole is famous for its very strong sense of movement balanced by very careful composition and detailed but idealized forms—the visual impact that H.D. seems to be describing in “Hymen,” as a matter of fact. (She also ignores the extensive battle scenes, and scenes of horsemen—part of her focusing on the female, as she all but ignores the bridegroom in her epithalamion.)

Finally, the bride and her attendants are described by references to Tanagra figurines (many of which are at the British Museum), small delicate terra-cotta statues discovered at gravesites in Tanagra (Boeotia) depicting very graceful women, usually tightly wrapped in carefully delineated drapery, but not particularly goddess-like.<sup>95</sup> I was unable to find a veiled “official” Tanagra figurine, but there is a veiled terra-cotta in very similar style from Boeotia which depicts a woman completely veiled except for her eyes, also at the British Museum. There is a very strong suggestion of the cocoon in the women’s draped clothing: the chrysalis was an important image for H.D. in the figuring of rebirth (she explores it fully in Helen in Egypt) and this visual reference to the Bride and her attendants gives weight to the mystical reading of “Hymen” suggested by Gregory.

I have gone over these sculptural allusions in such detail because they seem similar to H.D.’s allusions to and incorporations of classical literature. She does not approach them as a scholar. She takes as she desires from different periods and regions (Athens, Olympia, Boeotia, Egypt). She uses these images as she uses Greek poetry: as portholes, gates into another, wider, world.<sup>96</sup> In “Helios and Athene” (1921), H.D. describes the effect of the self-conscious artifice of the Greeks:

The naked Greek, the youth in athletic contest, has set,  
accurately prescribed movement and posture. This con-  
vention made of him a medium or link between men in ordinary  
life and images of Pentellic frieze or temple front. We gaze  
upon this living naked embodiment of grace and decorum.  
We are enflamed by its beauty. We love it.

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<sup>95</sup> See, besides the British Museum collection, R.A. Higgins, Greek Terracottas (London: Methuen, 1967). British Museum figures include items GR 1875.10-12.9 (Terracotta C263), GR 1894.11-1.303 (Terracotta A 410), GR 1873.1-11.12 (Terracotta C 75), and GR 1895.10-29.7 (Terracotta C 7). Higgins provides a picture of the cocooned figure, also in the British Museum collection, “Woman Dancing,” catalogue number 881, unknown provenance, mid-4<sup>th</sup> c. B.C.E. Higgins, plate 34, illustration C.

<sup>96</sup> She writes in “Notes on Euripides,” “...the lines of this Greek poet (and all Greek poets if we have but the clue) are today as vivid and fresh as they ever were, but vivid and fresh not as literature (though they are that too) but as portals, as windows, as portholes I am tempted to say that look out from our ship our world...These words are to me portals, gates.” Cited in H.D., Ion: A Play after Euripides (Redding Ridge, CT: Black Swan Books, 1986): 133.

When we have exhausted the experiences of personal emotion, we gain from the statue the same glow of physical warmth and power.<sup>97</sup>

For H.D., the formalization of posture and gesture makes one particularly receptive to beauty. She sees the statue as opening a way of mystic or daimonic perception:

The youth is a link between men (let us say) and statues.

The statue is a link between the beauty of our human lovers and the gods.

The statue enflames us. Its beauty is a charm or definite talisman.<sup>98</sup>

In a revision of Plato's ladder of love from the Symposium, H.D. declares that human beauty allows us to be enchanted by the beauty of art (statues), which points us further to the beauty of the gods. But the work of art does not contain in itself the gods' beauty. She insists that work is not done for the artist when the statue is completed or for the viewer when its beauty is seen: "The statue was like a ledge of rock, from which a great bird [the psyche] steps as he spreads his wings."<sup>99</sup> The statue works similarly to an Eastern Orthodox icon: as a portal into the infinite (as she describes Greek poetry).

H.D. thinks this language of gesture and posture can be made new in the newest of media: one of her essays on cinema, "Restraint," several times urges the adoption of such a language.<sup>100</sup> In this article H.D. argues against the cast of thousands and the elaborate sets of films set in ancient times such as Quo Vadis and The Last Days of Pompeii. She urges sweeping away the extraneous:

Having become sated with the grandiose, can't someone with exquisite taste and full professional share of technical ability light our souls with enthusiasm over...one laurel branch, one figure sitting sideways, one gesture (not too frigid and not too stagily static)...?<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> CP, 327.

<sup>98</sup> CP, 327.

<sup>99</sup> CP, 328.

<sup>100</sup> Close Up, vol.1 no. 2 (August 1927): 30-39.

<sup>101</sup> "Restraint," 34.

For H.D., "'restraint' is a classic virtue which means simply tact and intuition and a sense of the rightness and fitness of things in their interrelation."<sup>102</sup> It is not merely then a stark aesthetic, but one which uses an economical approach the better to show complex relationships. H.D. imagines this style as "slightly natural, naturalistic but formalised"<sup>103</sup>—what she points to as admirable in "Helios and Athene," and what people admire about, say, the Parthenon frieze. She praises a scene from the prologue of the film Helen of Troy, writing: "Could anything be more true, more real, more unsullied, more unstudied yet more exactly artificial, in the sense of art made reality?"<sup>104</sup> This is the very effect striven for and achieved in "Hymen."

Clearly H.D. has a very different idea from Hollywood's of what film should be. In "The Mask and the Movietone"<sup>105</sup> she laments that the talkies, while improving film mechanically, take away a great part of the mystery of film-watching. The cinema-palace is no longer a temple: "We were almost at one with Delphic or Elucian [sic] candidates, watching symbols of things that matter, accepting yet knowing those symbols were divorced utterly from reality."<sup>106</sup> She resents not being allowed to supply her imaginative contribution:

She is doing everything. I want to help to add imagination to a mask, a half finished image, not have everything done for me. I can't help this show. I am completely out of it.<sup>107</sup>

In "Hymen" H.D. does give the reader the opportunity to play an imaginative part. Gregory remarks that "the evocation of this Greek rite...is highly self-conscious and artificial."<sup>108</sup> As we have seen, this is a positive aesthetic value for H.D. Gregory goes on, in a comment that might apply to H.D.'s view of the

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 39. In particular she notes "that proud simple figure curled...on a great shell." She also admires excerpts of the German film Force and Beauty (Kraft und Schönheit): "In the distance there were figures wrestling in pure vase-gesture, black-figure vase pre-fifth century gesture...There was also one exquisite naked silhouette of a woman, the famous judgment of Paris tableau" (31). I think she is referring to Nicholas Kaufmann and Wilhelm Prager's 1925 film, Wege zu Kraft und Schönheit (sometimes translated "Ways to Strength and Beauty") in which may be glimpsed (according to some) the young Leni Riefenstahl. For stills illustrating H.D.'s point, see <http://www.riefenstahl.org/actress/1925/> (scroll down to the "Image Galleries"). For a movie poster of the 1926 re-release, also clearly influenced by classical figures, see [www.filmplakat-archiv.de/filmplakat.php?id=1109](http://www.filmplakat-archiv.de/filmplakat.php?id=1109). In these images one can see the forms of visual popular culture from which the Nazi cult of Aryan beauty developed. I think the version of Helen she refers to is Alexander Korda's comic The Private Life of Helen of Troy (1927), based on John Erskine's 1926 novel. Burlesque is not a genre usually associated with H.D. and her taste, but she here is praising an excerpt that illustrates her point. On the other hand, she pleads, "Don't, above all, let hair stream in the wind as happened (perhaps not without a certain charm) in Helen of Troy." (34)

<sup>105</sup> Close Up, vol. 1, no.3 (November 1927): 18-31.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>108</sup> Eileen Gregory, "Scarlet Experience," 90.

cinema: “[S]he attempts to establish our proximity to the rite as dream. This rite does not happen...: it is as if it happens.”<sup>109</sup> But H.D. does what the talkies do not: she “attempts to engage her audience in a form of active imagination, to involve them in a dream-rite.”<sup>110</sup>

Gregory stresses that the rite of marriage in “Hymen” displaces the usual social and masculine concerns of the epithalamion. I agree with her reading, against most other critics, that while there is a deathlike aspect to “Hymen,” read as a sacred marriage, as we are invited to do by the archetypal presentation of the bride’s life offered by the choruses, and the figure of Love himself (rather than the bridegroom) entering the chamber, this death is but the necessary death to self that one also finds, for example, in alchemical practice.

Rachel Blau DuPlessis in her influential essay “Romantic Thralldom in H.D.”<sup>111</sup> outlines three ways that H.D. copes with destructive thralldom to a male lover in her work: resistance, transposing the conflict to a spiritual level, and the sufficient family. I would like to suggest that much of H.D.’s interest in the sacred marriage (e.g., lon, “Hymen,” Helen in Egypt) is an attempt at the “gloire,” defined by DuPlessis as “a transposition of conflicts into a spiritual area of unification.”<sup>112</sup> It is an attempt to create a feminist view of heterosexuality: one that places woman at the center, one that does not describe such a union as rape, or a barren loss of integrity. We find comparatively little in H.D. about what a sacred marriage might mean for a man.<sup>113</sup> The descriptions of submission to love (lon, “Hymen”) seem violent or unjust to the woman if they are not read in the context of the heiros gamos.

In conclusion, I find that sculptural allusions support the reading of “Hymen” as a rite of mystical marriage. Although H.D.’s approach is palimpsestic rather than scholarly, it is very effective in suggesting the psychically resonant threshold of marriage (both literal and mystical). Reading “Hymen” in connection with H.D.’s film essays and “Helios and Athene” helps to illuminate H.D.’s understanding of the role of ancient artifacts in modern art: a role analogous to that attributed to Greek literature in her “Notes on Euripides.” I think she also desires this role for her own art: that it be the rock ledge from which our winged psyches can triumphantly soar.

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>111</sup> Signets: Reading H.D., ed. Susan Stanford Friedman and Rachel Blau DuPlessis (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990) 406-429. An earlier version was published in Women’s Studies 5.2 (1977).

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 414.

<sup>113</sup> There are some hints about Hippolytus, especially in H.D.’s play Hippolytus Temporizes. On the other hand, Theseus, Phaedra’s husband, barely exists in that play. Xouthos, Kreousa’s husband, in lon is clearly not engaged in any mystical transformation. The Bridegroom himself (as opposed to Love) is not involved in “Hymen.”





For the CFPs for the Modernist Studies Association Conference, **MSA 11: The Languages of Modernism** (Montréal, November 5-8, 2009), go to <http://msa.press.jhu.edu/conferences/msa11/cfp.html> .

## QUERIES:

None submitted for publication in this issue.

## CONFERENCES:

### **New research series established in London: "Spiritualism and Technology in Historical and Contemporary Contexts"**

Amy Evans presented a paper on H.D.'s later, Spiritualist poetry on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2009 in London. The paper forms part of a series of research, entitled "Beyond Text," on Spiritualism, text and technology. Amy was invited to present her work on H.D.'s 1957 poetry sequence "Vale Ave" at the third meeting of the "Spiritualism and Technology in Historical and Contemporary Contexts" series, hosted by Westminster University, London, as part of the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Beyond Text programme. Full details of the panel are included in the complete list of seminars provided below. Those who would be interested in attending, or in receiving further information regarding the series can contact Amy (King's College, London) on [alpevans@hotmail.com](mailto:alpevans@hotmail.com).

#### Seminar #1 October 24<sup>th</sup> 2008 - Disciplines and Institutions

Roger Luckhurst (Birkbeck): "The British Museum in the Empire of Shadows"  
Tom Ruffles (Society for Psychical Research): "The Early History and Development of the SPR"  
Suzanne Treister (Independent): "Hexen 2039"

#### Seminar #2 November 28<sup>th</sup> 2008 Methodologies and Theories

Bob Eaglestone (Royal Holloway): "Levinas, Derrida and Religion"  
Monica Germanà (Westminster): "Simulacral Bodies and Spectres of Desire: Contemporary Revenants in Scottish Women's Writing"  
Pavel Buchler (MIRIAD): Recent Work

#### Seminar #3 January 30<sup>th</sup> 2009 - Memory and Forgetting

John Harvey (Aberystwyth): "Remembering the Departed: Returning and Reconstituting the Dead Through Photography"  
Carolyn Burdett (Liverpool): "The Origins of Empathy: Aesthetic Sensitivities at the Fin de Siècle"

Amy Evans (Kings): "'Strange traffic with daemonic powers': Spiritualist Poetry, London's War Dead, and HD's Revisionist Task"

Seminar #4 March 27<sup>th</sup> 2009 - Documents and Evidence

Melvyn Willin (Society for Psychical Research): "Psychical Research and Archive Work"

Annette Hill (Westminster): "The Paranormal and Popular Culture"

Susan MacWilliam (National College of Art and Design Dublin): "Remote Viewing -Materialising the Past in the Present"

Seminar #5 May 29<sup>th</sup> 2009 - Technology, Ritual and Magic

Peter Lamont (Edinburgh): "Victorian Magic: Knowledge, Belief and Disbelief"

Pamela Thurschwell (Sussex): "Recent Ghost Films and the Technological Melancholic"

Olivia Plender (Independent): Recent Work

HD's later work is now receiving fuller attention within the UK and, as this series indicates, is now being considered from an increasingly interdisciplinary vantage point. The broader aims of the above series contribute to an increased interest in more fully comprehending, and publishing the texts that contributed to, the esoteric and occultist momentum within Modernism and HD's important influence upon it. At the same time, through examination of spiritualist practices and beliefs throughout the twentieth century, this previously neglected, more occult aspect of both HD's work and the Modernist project as a whole is importantly considered in terms of its relationship (and often contributions) to technological developments, the visual arts, popular entertainment and the military effort in wartime and peace.

The specific research aim of the series has been outlined as follows: to think about the contemporary resurgence in religious and spiritualist interest through the lens of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. In order to do so, we plan to bring together photography, literature and cultural studies academics, practicing photographers and artists and specialist archivists in the field. By doing so we hope to generate a research network that will be beneficial to individuals' research and outputs and that will contribute toward the wider dissemination of knowledge in this field. The initial stage of the project is structured as a series of five themed seminars and a conference, spaced at two-month intervals across the academic year 2008-2009.

The aim of establishing a multi-disciplinary gathering from several institutions across the UK has been a success. Current organisers and members of the Society for Psychical Research have attended, as have artists, photographers, musicians and a gathering of academics from disciplines such as English







- and Gertrude Stein." *Dissertation Abstracts International, Section A: The Humanities and Social Sciences* 68:3 (September 2007): 995.
- Zelazo, Suzanne. "Modernist Multisensuality: Mina Loy, H. D., and Gertrude Stein." *Dissertation Abstracts International, Section A: The Humanities and Social Sciences* 68:7 (January 2008): 2940.

Other recent publications:

- Comentale, Edward P. "Thesmophoria: Suffragettes, Sympathetic Magic, and H.D.'s Ritual Poetics." *MODERNISM/modernity* 8:3 (September 2001): 471-92.
- Detloff, Madelyn. *The Persistence of Modernism: Loss and Mourning in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- DuPlessis, Rachel Blau. "H.D. and Revisionary Myth-Making." In *The Cambridge Companion to Modernist Poetry*. Alex Davis and Lee Margaret Jenkins, eds. Cambridge Companions to Literature. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007: 114-125.
- Featherstone, Dan. "A Place of First Permission: Robert Duncan's Atlantis Dream." *MODERNISM/modernity* 15.4 (November 2008): 665-684.
- Jenkins, Thomas E. "The 'Ultra-modern' Euripides of Verrall, H.D., and MacLeish." *Classical and Modern Literature* 27.1 (2007): 121-145.
- Johnson, Jeannine. *Why Write Poetry?: Modern Poets Defending Their Art*. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2007.
- Johnston, Georgia. *The Formation of 20th-Century Queer Autobiography: Reading Vita Sackville-West, Virginia Woolf, Hilda Doolittle, and Gertrude Stein*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Kalaidjian, Walter. "Incoming: Globalization, Disaster, Politics." *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 106:4 (Fall 2007): 825-48.
- Kelley, Carolyn A. "Aubrey Beardsley and H.D.'s 'Astrid': The Ghost and Mrs. Pugh of Decadent Aestheticism and Modernity." *MODERNISM/modernity* 15.3 (September 2008): 447-475.
- Martin, Tim. "From Cabinet to Couch: Freud's Clinical Use of Sculpture." *British Journal of Psychotherapy* 24.2 (2008): 184-196.
- Phillips, Kathy J. "Seeing the War through Cut-Off Triangles: H.D. and Gertrude Stein." In *Back to Peace: Reconciliation and Retribution in the Postwar Period*. Aránzazu Usandizaga and Andrew Monnickendam, eds. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007: 217-229. For a review of this volume, see "Reviews" in this issue.
- Piette, Adam. "Pound's 'The Garden' as Modernist Imitation: Samain, Lowell, H.D." *Translation & Literature* 17.1 (Spring 2008): 21-46.
- Scott, Jill. "Mourning to the Limit: The Gift of Forgiveness in H. D." In *Modernism and Mourning*. Patricia Rae, ed. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2007: 271-85.
- Walter, Christina. "From Image to Screen: H.D. and the Visual Origins of Modernist Impersonality." *Textual Practice* 22:2 (June 2008): 291-313, 403.

Watson, Jenn Wolford. "Embracing the Liminal Space: H.D.'s Androgynous Language in *Trilogy*." *EAPSU Online: A Journal of Critical and Creative Work* 4 (Fall 2007): 119-134.

H.D.'s work often appears in anthologies. Here's a few that have recently come to my notice:

The Finnish anthology *Kuu Kultainen Terälehti* [Moon Golden Petal], published Oct. 6, 2008, by Otava Publishing Company (ISBN 978-951123007-6), includes three poems by H.D.: "Oread," "Lethe," and "Helen." The translator, Pertti Nieminen, is a poet himself. For further information see the [Otava website](#).

*American War Poetry: An Anthology*. Ed. Lorrie Goldensohn. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006. H.D.'s contribution, placed between work by Wallace Stevens and Marianne Moore, is a selection from *Trilogy*.

*The New Oxford Book of Christian Verse*. Chosen and ed. Donald Davie. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981. 258-260. An excerpt from "Sagesse" is preceded by Clifford Bax ("Turn back, O man") and followed by T.S. Eliot ("Journey of the Magi").

## REVIEWS:

Black, Cheryl. Rev. of *Trifles; The Outside; Chains of Dew*, all by Susan Glaspell, and *Suppressed Desires*, by Susan Glaspell and George Cram Cook. Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond, Surrey, UK. *Theatre Journal* 60.4 (December 2008): 646-649.

Houlding, Sybil. "Psychoanalysis and (Auto)Biography: *Analyzing Freud: Letters of H.D., Bryher, and Their Circle*." *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 53 (2005): 1343-1349.

James Donald. Rev. of *Borderline*, directed by Kenneth Macpherson. With a new soundtrack by Courtney Pine. London: British Film Institute, 2007; *Paul Robeson: Portraits of the Artist*. New York: Criterion Collection, 2007. *MODERNISM/modernity* 15.3 (September 2008): 594-598.

Luskey, Matthew. Rev. of *The Little Magazine "Others" and the Renovation of Modern American Poetry* by Suzanne W. Churchill. Aldershot, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2006. *MODERNISM/modernity* 15.4 (November 2008): 822-824.

Martin, Colin. "Freud's Sculpture." Rev. of an exhibit. *British Medical Journal* 332:613 (March 11) 2006. See the first 150 words at <http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/extract/332/7541/613>

Pérez Rodríguez, Eva M. Rev. of *Back to Peace: Reconciliation and Retribution in the Postwar Period*. Aránzazu Usandizaga and Andrew Monnickendam, eds. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007. *ATLANTIS: Journal of the Spanish Association of Anglo-American Studies* 30.2 (December 2008): 161-166. The review may be read online at [www.atlantisjournal.org/Papers/30\\_2/2008PerezRodriguez.pdf](http://www.atlantisjournal.org/Papers/30_2/2008PerezRodriguez.pdf)

- Phillips, Terry. Rev. of *May Sinclair: Moving Towards the Modern* by Andrew J. Kunka and Michele K. Troy, eds. Aldershot, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2006. MODERNISM/modernity 15.4 (November 2008): 825-826.
- Sargeant, Amy. Rev. of *Red Velvet Seat: Women's Writing on the First Fifty Years of Cinema*. Antonia Lant, ed., with Ingrid Periz. London and New York: Verso, 2006. MODERNISM/modernity 15.3 (September 2008): 580-581.
- Wollaeger, Mark. Rev. of *Paradox of Modernism* by Robert Scholes. New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2006. MODERNISM/modernity 15.4 (November 2008): 819-822.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTES:

I first became aware of H.D. through her engagement with ancient Greek writers. She herself was intrigued by, although not necessarily in agreement with, the classical scholarship of her day. If one is interested in H.D.'s reception and positioning within classical traditions, Eileen Gregory's *H.D. and Hellenism: Classic Lines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) is indispensable. What follows is a list of works, mostly from the past ten years, that may be suggestive to anyone thinking about women, classicism, and modernism. It is not methodical or exhaustive.

- Alvar, Jaime. *Romanising Oriental Gods: Myth, Salvation and Ethics in the Cults of Cybele, Isis and Mithras*. Trans. and ed. Richard Gordon. Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 165. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- Arethusa* 34 (2001): 153-171. Special issue: "The Personal Voice in Classical Scholarship: Literary and Theoretical Reflection." Guest eds. Judith P. Hallett and Thomas van Nortwick.
- Cameron, Averil, and Amélie Kuhrt, eds. *Images of Women in Antiquity*. 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Cosmopoulos, Michael B., ed. *Experiencing War: Trauma and Society from Ancient Greece to the Iraq War*. Chicago: Ares Publishers, 2007.
- des Bouvrie, Synnove. *Women in Greek Tragedy: An Anthropological Approach*. Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1990.
- Gamel, Mary-Kay. "Apollo Knows I Have No Children': Motherhood, Scholarship, Theater." *Arethusa* 34 (2001): 153-171. Special issue: "The Personal Voice in Classical Scholarship: Literary and Theoretical Reflection." Guest eds. Judith P. Hallett and Thomas van Nortwick. Includes a discussion of H.D.'s *Ion*.
- Hardwick, Lorna, and Christopher Stray, eds. *A Companion to Classical Receptions*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2008.
- Hoberman, Ruth. *Gendering Classicism: The Ancient World in Twentieth-Century Women's Historical Fiction*. New York: SUNY Press, 1997.
- Karakasi, Katerina. *Archaic Korai*. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2003.
- Kanaan, Vered Lev. *Pandora's Senses: The Feminine Character of the Ancient Text*. Wisconsin Studies in Classics. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2008.
- Lardinois, André, and Laura McClure, eds. *Making Silence Speak: Women's Voices in Greek Literature and Society*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001.

- Lefkowitz, Mary R. *Women in Greek Myth*. 2<sup>nd</sup> updated and expanded ed. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007.
- Martindale, Charles, and Richard F. Thomas, eds. *Classics and the Uses of Reception*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2006.
- Maurizio, L. "Anthropology and spirit possession: a reconsideration of the Pythia's role at Delphi." *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 115 (1995): 69-86.
- Nelson, Sarah Milledge. *Women in Antiquity: Theoretical Approaches to Gender and Archaeology*. Lanham, MD: Rowman Altamira, 2007.
- Pretzler, Maria. *Pausanias: Travel Writing in Ancient Greece*. Classical Literature and Society. London: Duckworth, 2007.
- Prins, Yopie. *Victorian Sappho*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.
- Radford, Andrew. *The Lost Girls: Demeter-Persephone and the Literary Imagination, 1850-1930*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007.
- Rowlandson, Jane, ed. *Women and Society in Greek and Roman Egypt: A Sourcebook*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Seaford, Richard. "The Imprisonment of Women in Greek Tragedy." *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 110 (1990): 76-90.
- Winterer, Caroline. *The Mirror of Antiquity: American Women and the Classical Tradition, 1750-1900*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007.
- Yatromanolakis, Dimitrios. *Sappho in the Making: The Early Reception*. Hellenic Studies 28. Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2007.

## WHAT MATERIALS ARE WHERE:

No new items submitted for this issue.

## RECORDINGS AND PERFORMANCES:

In September 2001, the Harmonium Choral Society presented a work by composer Mark Miller, "The Mysteries Remain," which sets to music "The Mysteries: Renaissance Choros" by H.D. (*Collected Poems 1912-1944*, 301-305). For local coverage of the event, search (for free) the (paid) archives of *The Star-Ledger* (Newark, NJ) at <http://www.nj.com/starledger/> . To hear some of the music, go to <http://odeo.com/episodes/22455851-The-Mysteries-Remain> . For more information or to order a CD, go to [www.harmonium.org](http://www.harmonium.org) .

## HD ON THE WEB:

Adam Richter has written about the shells being left on HD's headstone. Go to [www.lehighvalleylive.com/entertainment/index.ssf/2008/09/what\\_the\\_shell\\_is\\_going\\_on.html](http://www.lehighvalleylive.com/entertainment/index.ssf/2008/09/what_the_shell_is_going_on.html) to read more and see a photo. (Thanks, Heather Hernandez.)

The December 2006 issue of *Poetry* has a likeness of H.D. from an engraving by David Schorr. The original is at Yale and may be viewed online. Go to [ecatalogue.art.yale.edu/search.htm](http://ecatalogue.art.yale.edu/search.htm) and enter search term "schorr hd" (without the

quotation marks). The portrait (zinc plate engraving, 1977) of H.D. should be the first image. (Thanks, John Mahoney.)

*Des Imagistes* (1914) is now available online as a website, <http://www.desimagistes.com/> or as a .pdf of the original book: [http://www.desimagistes.com/Des\\_Imagistes.pdf](http://www.desimagistes.com/Des_Imagistes.pdf) (Thanks, Heather Hernandez.)

## SEARCH THE LIST ARCHIVES:

It is possible to search the H.D. Society List archives. Go to: <http://listserv.uconn.edu/hdsoc-1.html> and select "Search the archives." You may have to create a password if you haven't set one up already. Or search with e-mail commands. For more information, go to the Listserv users' manual and select the format you prefer at: <http://www.lsoft.com/manuals/1.8d/userindex.html> (Thanks, Heather Hernandez.)

## ORIGINAL HD NEWSLETTER ISSUES:

For back issues of the original (printed) *HD Newsletter*, please contact Eileen Gregory, [neileengregory@sbcglobal.net](mailto:neileengregory@sbcglobal.net). There are 8 issues in all, available for the cost of mailing and copying. (Some issues are available in photocopied form only.)

## OTHER STRANDS IN THE WEB:

Here are some links to some other modernists on the web. In general, Wikipedia can sometimes be a good starting place, if one keeps in mind its limitations, and [www.poets.org](http://www.poets.org) is another good site. The following are given in no particular order.

### **Mina Loy:**

<http://www.case.edu/artsci/engl/V/SALM/mod/wolkowski/main.html>  
Interesting links, including a manuscript image.

### **Mary Butts:**

[http://www.thewoodwasinnocent.co.uk/public\\_html/thewoodwasinnocent.co.uk/](http://www.thewoodwasinnocent.co.uk/public_html/thewoodwasinnocent.co.uk/)  
A good introduction to this often overlooked writer.

### **Nancy Cunard:**

<http://tls.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,25336-2647083,00.html>  
This review of a biography makes you wonder why there *isn't* a Nancy Cunard webpage.

### **Jessie Redmon Fauset:**

[http://voices.cla.umn.edu/vg/Bios/entries/fauset\\_jessie\\_redmon.html](http://voices.cla.umn.edu/vg/Bios/entries/fauset_jessie_redmon.html)  
And take a look at the VG (Voices from the Gaps) site in general!





One of the fun things about wandering an archive, whether paper or electronic, is the odd things one turns up. I found "Can Lawyers Find Happiness?" by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, reprinted from *The Syracuse Law Review* 58.2 (2008). In it, the authors consider Archibald MacLeish and his forty-year correspondence with Ezra Pound. The article seems to summarize the argument of their book, *How Lawyers Lose Their Way: A Profession Fails Its Creative Minds* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005). (No link because of uncertainty about copyright.)

#### ERRATA:

Or in this case, erratum. In John Mahoney's "A Short Biography of Charles L. Doolittle," paragraph 7, the birth date of H.D.'s mother, Helen Wolle, should be corrected to 1853. The article appeared in the Summer 2008 issue (number 2).