

NOTES

BOOKS NEW AND FORTHCOMING

The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology. Edited by Bonnie Kime Scott. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990. An anthology representing a "forgotten modernist territory"—writings of twenty-one modern women writers and five men, each selection prefaced by a critical introduction. The selection of materials by H.D., introduced and edited by Susan Stanford Friedman, consists of "Notes on Thought and Vision" (entire); the *Borderline* pamphlet (entire); "Marianne Moore," a review of early poems (1916); "Responsibilities," a review of a volume by W. B. Yeats (c. 1916-1919); "Joan of Arc," a review of the film by Carl Dreyer (1928); letters to Amy Lowell (1914, 1916); letters to Marianne Moore (1915, 1917).

H.D. Edited by Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea, 1989.

Signets: Reading H.D. Edited by Susan Stanford Friedman and Rachel Blau DuPlessis. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990 (due in December, in time for the MLA). Cloth \$40; paper \$16.50. Friedman and DuPlessis "have gathered the most influential and generative studies of H.D.'s work and complemented them with photobiographical, chronological, and bibliographic portraits unique to this volume. . . . In addition to the editors, the contributors are Diana Collecott, Robert Duncan, Albert Gelpi, Eileen Gregory, Susan Gubar, Barbara Guest, Elizabeth Hirsh, Deborah Kelly Kloepfer, Cassandra Laity, Adalaide Morris, Alicia Ostriker, Cyrena N. Pondrom, Perdita Schaffner, and Louis H. Silverstein."

RECENT ESSAYS ON H.D.

Barry Ahearn. "Williams and H.D., or Sour Grapes." *Twentieth Century Literature* 35 (Fall 1988): 299-309.

Marina Camboni. "Time in a Room: H.D.'s *Bid Me To Live*." *RSA, Journal of American Studies* 1 (1990).

Diana Collecott. "What Is Not Said: A Study in Textual Inversion" (on H.D.'s "I Said" among other texts). *Textual Practice* 4.2 (June 1990): 236-58. [This special issue on "Lesbian and Gay Cultures: Theories and Texts" is edited by Joseph Bristow. *Textual Practice* is regularly edited by Terence Hawkes and is available from Routledge Journals, 11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE, England. Single Copies \$18; subscriptions \$48 (individuals) and \$72 (institutions)—D.C.]

Donna Copeland. "Doolittle's Helen." *The Explicator* 46.4 (Summer 1988): 33-35.

Gloria G. Fromm. "The Forging of H.D." *Poetry* 153 (December 1988): 160-71.

Miriam Fuchs. "H.D.'s Self-Inscription: Between Time and 'Out of Time' in *The Gift*." *Southern Review* 26.3 (July 1990): 542-554.

Rose Lucas. "Re(reading)-Writing the Palimpsest of Myth." *Southern Review: Literary and Interdisciplinary Essays* (South Australia) 21.1 (March 1988): 43-57.

Sigrid Renaux. "H.D.'s 'Lethe': A Linguistic Approach." *Estudos Anglo-Americanos* 12-13 (1988-1989): 30-41.

- Sigrid Renaux. "H.D.'s 'Oread': A Linguistic Approach." *Revista Letras* 37 (1988): 81-98.
- Paul Smith. "An End to Torment: H.D.'s Metonymic Course." *Faith of a (Woman) Writer*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1988. 273-78.
- Penny Smith. "Hilda Doolittle and Frances Gregg." *The Powys Review* 6 (1988): 46-51.
- Helen Sword. "Orpheus and Eurydice in the Twentieth Century: Lawrence, H.D., and the Poetics of the Turn." *Twentieth Century Literature* 35.4 (Winter 1989): 407-28.
- Linda W. Warner-Martin. "H.D.'s Fiction: Convolutions to Clarity." *Breaking the Sequence: Women's Experimental Fiction*. Ed. Ellen G. Friedman and Miriam Fuchs. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1989. 148-60.
- Caroline Zilboorg. "H.D.'s Influence on Richard Aldington." *Richard Aldington: Reappraisals*. Ed. Charles Doyle. English Literary Studies Monograph Series No. 49. Victoria, B.C.: University of Victoria, 1990. 26-44.
- Caroline Zilboorg. "A New Chapter in the Lives of H.D. and Richard Aldington: Their Relationship with Clement Shorter." *Philological Quarterly* 68.2 (Spring 1989): 241-62.

H.D. IN CORNWALL

H.D. Reading Party, Trevone, North Cornwall, 30 June to 7 July, 1990. This account is contributed by Harriet Tarlo.

In Cornwall this summer, twelve women with diverse backgrounds, ages, and expectations, staying in a house and nearby hotel, came together to read H.D. In a pattern that evolved during the course of the week, a member of the group would give a brief introduction to each session, followed by an intense interchange of responses, each contributing her own approach to and reading of texts. In this way we discussed H.D. and the sea, using certain key poems, from which conversation emerged other issues—identity, consciousness, and the figure of the mother; the Cornish chapters of *Bid Me to Live* and the palimpsesting of place; H.D.'s use of Sapphic fragments as mutilation/re-sexualisation of body/poetry; and *Notes on Thought and Vision*, involving a debate on the nature of vision and the Platonic and anti-Platonic.

Important sessions within the week included a colour workshop that took place both inside and on the beach, and, on the last night, a dramatic reading of parts of *Helen in Egypt*, accompanied by Cornish mead. In the afternoons some read from a pooled library of books and photocopied material, while others took cliff walks, swam and surfed, explored the local connections with Dorothy Richardson, visited nearby Tinagel, and talked more informally. We emerged from the week determined to repeat it, although aware of the eclectic nature of this first experimental Reading Party and the need for a more specific framework.

The 1991 week will be from 6 to 13 July. Suggested themes are "The Gift," highlighting H.D.'s *The Gift* and the selection of poems from the *Collected Poems*, "The God"; or "H.D.'s HERo(ine)s," highlighting *HER(mione)* and *Heliadora and Other Poems*. Those interested in joining the party should

contact Diana Collecott and Harriet Tarlo at the School of English, Durham University, Durham, DH1 3JT, England, as soon as possible, to let us know your reactions to these themes and to obtain further information.

H.D. IN CAMBRIDGE

The Shadow of Spirit: Contemporary Western Thought and Its Religious Subtexts. King's College, Cambridge, July 21-25, 1990. This account is contributed by Diana Collecott.

This significant conference, organized by Philippa Berry of King's College Research Centre, was attended by over a hundred women and men during sweltering punting weather: an unexpected but very appropriate context for H.D.'s re-entry into current cultural debates. The keynote of the conference was struck by the opening plenary on "Religion and Postmodernity." In this and in subsequent plenaries, where speakers included Gillian Rose, Gayatri Spivak, and George Steiner, there was a strong preoccupation with the possibility that a new kind of polytheism is replacing a discredited monotheism. Feminism had much to offer in such a pluralistic context, and the theme of a number of contributions from both feminist theologians and feminist literary critics was (in Freud's terminology) "the return of the repressed." This note was struck by two H.D. scholars who turned their attention to the Hebrew Bible. Susan Stanford Friedman offered a powerful intertextual reading of Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* and *Dora* and the biblical story of Joseph, and proposed a repressed narrative of female power within the male narrative of origins. Alicia Ostriker concluded her superbly provocative, palimpsestic reading of biblical narratives of female burial with the suggestion that the rebirth of the long-suppressed divine female may be occurring in our time.

In this matrix the H.D. panel marked what might be seen as an apotheosis in which H.D. herself represented the return of the repressed, manifesting not as the marginalized female poet of modernism but as the foremother of contemporary feminist liminality. There were two papers in this session—the only session except for that on Irigaray to be devoted to a single author. Jane Augustine's paper on "Christian Theosophy and the Goddess-Figures in H.D.'s Late Poetry" drew on the "Curtiss Books," now in Bryher's library, that H.D. read and annotated between 1935 and 1943. Augustine argued that these works by American Christian followers of Madame Blavatsky influenced H.D.'s religious syncretism as well as her concern with cosmic horoscopes and numerology. She made a persuasive connection between the "marah . . . Mother" passage of *Tribute to the Angels* (section 8) and the Curtisses' discussion in *The Key of Destiny* (chapter 20) of the mystic significance of the letter "M," arguing that H.D.'s linguistic correlation between the sea and the mother places her in an occult tradition of "substantified" language. According to Augustine, this cross-cultural tradition—evident, as Ostriker noticed, in the association of Miriam with water in the Moses narrative, as well as in Greek and Buddhist sources—underlies H.D.'s recovery, in the *Trilogy* and in *Helen in Egypt*, of the divine mother as hieroglyph overcoming the dualities of love and war, birth and death.

On the same panel, Adalaide Morris's paper, on "Feminism, Politics, and Mysticism in H.D.'s War Trilogy," argued that the *Trilogy* is "passionately involved with a variety of languages that insist on sacred realities, realities which a concentration on the poem's psychological and discursive elements inevitably occludes." Hence, Morris challenged the tendency of H.D.'s interpreters to mute her mysticism in favour of psychoanalytical or post-structural readings, and argued instead for readings

that admit the poem's embarrassingly contradictory impulses: toward the secular as well as the sacred, the social as well as the liminal. Drawing on Victor Turner's analysis of ritual, Morris related these apparently opposing impulses to "different moments in the ritual process," and offered a reading of the *Trilogy* that recognised its role as social drama and cultural performance: its presentation of "our access to mystery" and our membership in a community beyond time and place. In admitting the congruence in *Trilogy* of mysticism, politics, psychoanalysis, and feminism, Morris's paper placed H.D.'s writing at the nexus of the concerns of this conference.

Plans to follow up "The Shadow of Spirit" include a further meeting, possibly in North America, and an H.D. conference, possibly in Europe. For information on the former, write to Philippa Berry, King's College, Cambridge, CB2 1ST, England.

H.D. FELLOWSHIP, BEINECKE LIBRARY

The H.D. Fellowship, awarded annually to support post-doctoral research in English or American literature at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, was initiated this year. It is made possible through the generosity of Sylvia Dobson and other benefactors.

BEINECKE FELLOWSHIPS, 1991-1992

The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library offers short-term fellowships for visiting scholars pursuing post-doctoral or equivalent research in its collections. The fellowships, which support travel to and from New Haven and pay a living allowance of \$1,500 per month, are designed to provide access to the library for scholars who reside outside the greater New Haven area. The length of a grant, normally one month, will depend on the applicant's research proposal; fellowships must be taken up between September 1991 and May 1992. Recipients are expected to be in residence during the period of their award and are encouraged to participate in the activities of Yale University.

There is no special application form. Applicants are asked to submit a résumé and a brief research proposal (not to exceed three pages) to the Director, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Box 1603A Yale Station, New Haven, Connecticut 06520-1603. The proposal should emphasize the relationship of the Beinecke collections to the project and state the preferred dates of residence. The applicant must also arrange to have two confidential letters of recommendation sent to the Director.

The following named fellowships will be among those awarded; there is not special application process for these fellowships:

The Frederick W. Beinecke Fellowship in Western Americana

The H.D. Fellowship in English or American literature

The Donald C. Gallup Fellowship in American literature

The A. Bartlett Giamatti Fellowship

The H. P. Kraus Fellowship in early books and manuscripts

The Alexander O. Vietor Fellowship in cartography and related fields

All application materials must be received by January 15, 1991. Awards will be announced in March 1991 for the period September 1991 through May 1992.

REVIEW: NOR HALL ON H.D. AND JANE HARRISON

A review of Nor Hall, *Those Women* (Dallas: Spring Publications, Inc., 1988), by Jeffrey Gardiner.

Hall's book began as an introductory essay to Linda Fierz-David's *Women's Dionysian Initiation: The Villa of Mysteries in Pompeii* (Spring Publications, 1988). In the process of writing her introduction, Hall decided that the importance of Dionysos to the work of Jane Harrison and H.D. warranted an extended essay. The prose of her essay sustains a remarkable lyric power throughout an successfully underscores her concern with psychic initiation into the Dionysian as a heightened condition. The commentaries on Harrison and H.D. are brief, part of her attempt to place historically the importance of Dionysos to a generation of female analysts, poets, and scholars. Her argument about Dionysian initiation is very effective, but careful and extensive attention to the texts and sources cited would have provided more convincing evidence for her claims about this generation of women.

Hall's book is valuable for the attention it gives to the place of Dionysos in H.D.'s work. She claims, for instance, that "Jane Harrison and H.D. were both open about their magnetic attraction to Dionysos. No caution surrounds their tributes" (5). This claim ignores some of H.D.'s reservations about Dionysos. For instance, H.D.'s poem "The God," identified by Louis Martz in his introduction to the *Collected Poems*, the imagery and basic narrative suggest that the deadening violence experienced by the speaker was caused by Dionysos. "The Orchard" offers another experience of god's dark, destructive side. In the poem, H.D. seems to accept the classical account of Priapus as Dionysos' son, but includes some of the attributes which Priapus and Dionysos have in common, indicating that she was aware of other accounts in which Dionysos "could even be identified with Priapus" (Kerenyi, *The Gods of the Greeks*, p. 176). The lines "flayed us / with your blossoms" from "The Orchard" recall H.D.'s description of Dionysos Zagreus in *Notes on Thought and Vision*. Furthermore, H.D.'s fictional accounts of Lawrence and Pound, as manifestations of Dionysos or his followers, contain elements of fear, violation, and reservation. In short, there is evidence in H.D.'s poetry and prose that something other than wholehearted praise, something more complex psychologically, surrounds H.D.'s "tribute" to Dionysos. Though H.D.'s approach to the god doesn't exhibit the critical reservations expressed by Rachel Blau DuPlessis in her essay "Romantic Thralldom," it does exhibit a mixture of emotions (pain and devastation among them) which temper the enthusiasm of *Notes on Thought and Vision* (1919) and her affirmation of Dionysian ecstasy in *End to Torment* (1958).

Hall allows her own argument, one that locates a less disturbing Orphic presence, to impose the conclusion that there is a "continued presence or Orpheus in her [H.D.'s] creative life" (68). To back this claim of a life-long presence, she quotes Rafe/Richard Aldington's description, in *Bid Me to Live*, of Julia/H.D.'s Lawrence-influenced writing as "this Orpheus thing" (66). Her use of this "evidence" isn't convincing, given the presence of Dionysos in *Sea Garden* (1916), *The God* (1913-1917), *Notes on Thought and Vision* (1919), *HERmione* (Began in 1926), *Kora and Ka* (written in 1930, published in 1934), *Bid Me to Live* (first worked on in 1922, rewritten in 1939, and again in 1948 and in the late 1950s), *End to Torment* (1958), and the "Winter Love" section of *Hermetic Definition* (1959). If the "Orpheus thing" is, as it seems likely, the poem "Eurydice" (written at roughly the time of the setting of the novel), then the "presence of Orpheus in her creative life" becomes untenable. H.D.'s poem is an emphatic repudiation of Orpheus, a revision of the classical myth in which the creative is located within herself; it is an assertion necessary for her to sing among the living and the flowers. (This repudiation

of Orpheus the failed husband is, I suspect, the cause of Rafe/Aldington's annoyance with Julia/H.D.'s "Orpheus thing.")

While one of Rafe/Aldington's comments serves Hall's Orpheus argument, another one leads her to portray Aldington as a man speaking through "a soldier husband's mask like Pentheus's" (66). She criticizes him for calling the phrase "look not back," from H.D.'s "Orpheus thing," "Victorian." This label, Hall claims, meant "old-fashioned, pre-war . . . covered-up (pinned bodice, hair dressed high)." In using the word "Victorian," Hall adds, Aldington had "labeled her old-fashioned, stiff ('Victorian')" (67)—in short, neither inspired by Orpheus nor by Dionysos. Hall's argument misleadingly jumps from the poetic to the personal. With the sexual context of their relationship, Aldington's remark *may* have carried those connotations. H.D. did experience Aldington's treatment of her at this time as denying her sexual passion and compassion. So confronted by Aldington, H.D. needed to burst out and was attracted, understandably, to Lawrence—both a Dionysian figure in *Bid Me to Live* (note the description of Rico as a Satyr whose "curious dynamically stressed utterance" is dithyrambic) and a critic of the war. In fact, if Rafe/Aldington was Pentheus then Julia/H.D.'s liberator would be Dionysos, not Orpheus. However, to hold to the form of the writing itself Aldington's observation is accurate: the syntax of "look not back" is Victorian.

These criticisms aside, Hall's work provides another psychological frame for understanding the movements and needs of H.D.'s psyche. She demonstrates, following Fierz-David's Jungian lead, the presence of a female psychic initiation with the Dionysian. The drive behind and the identity of this female initiation is distinct from both Nietzsche's and Walter Otto's Romantic orientation toward the Dionysian and from Thomas Burnett Swann's mistaken concept of H.D.'s pure classicism (in which Dionysos and other Greek gods are little more than mythic decoration). Hall's book may well further a thoughtful Jungian reading of H.D.'s work. Throughout most of the book, Hall demonstrates that she could, if she focused solely on the complexity of H.D.'s writing, provide such a reading.

REVIEW: A BIOGRAPHY OF RICHARD ALDINGTON

A review of Charles Doyle, *Richard Aldington: A Biography* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), by Caroline Zilboorg.

Doyle's biography of Aldington comes at an exciting time. While other major modernists have had at least one if not several highly regarded biographies to their credit, Aldington has suffered from inadequate treatment. Doyle's biography attempts to define the man and to place him in the context of his written work and, to a certain extent, of the period out of which that work grew.

Doyle's book fails for a number of reasons, and it will be of little use to H.D. scholars as a result. Besides technical errors that go well beyond the occasional typo (for some reason the book was printed in The People's Republic of China), the biography is on the whole poorly written. Further, it offers little new information and is not always factually correct. These problems seem to stem from Doyle's willingness to trust other scholars and to sidestep the difficult task of reevaluating primary material himself. For example, he places the famous tea in the British Museum over which Imagism was invented "around April 1912," then offers us a footnote indicating that this is "generally accepted as the appropriate date" (pp. 14, 328). It is much more likely that this event occurred sometime in September of that year, as H.D. wrote to Norman Holmes Pearson in her autobiographical notes and as is clear

from Pound's published correspondence with Harriet Monroe in the autumn of 1912 when he sent H.D.'s and Aldington's poems to her for publication in *Poetry*. Even when apparently working directly with primary materials, Doyle offers little that is fresh and often conveys misinformation. He suggests, for instance, that Lawrence was at 44 Mecklenburgh Square as early as August 30, 1917 (p. 61), when in fact he did not leave Cornwall until October 12; Doyle indicates that Aldington met Eliot in the spring of 1918 and helped him in assuming the literary editorship of *The Egoist* that June (p. 58) at a time when Aldington was in fact in France. Doyle even offers an address for Aldington in late 1919 as 15 Noon Street (p. 90), but Doyle is merely misreading Aldington's admittedly sometimes difficult handwriting: the Hotel du Littoral where Aldington took a room after his demobilization was at 15 Moor Street, and there is no Noon Street in London.

Doyle's unwillingness to reconcile others' accounts or to provide alternative explanations of events is a more serious problem, however, for he takes us no closer to understanding, for instance, H.D.'s relationship with Gray or Lawrence or Aldington himself than have previous biographies (Janice Robinson, Barbara Guest). But in the process of drawing on these earlier sources Doyle increases the reader's difficulties in seeming to validate accounts which are in fact themselves confused, partial, or erroneous. A few examples should suffice: after a brief account of Imagism and a suggestion that its story is important but simple, Doyle notes that "Numerous books and essays on the history or theory of Imagism have been published, and this is not the place to explore the subject in detail" (p. 14). After indicating H.D.'s close relationship with Pound, Doyle writes about Aldington's courtship of H.D.: "If he was in love with her, so she in some fashion reciprocates" (p. 24). As if realizing that he is not clarifying matters here, Doyle turns to other sources: "If we chose, as others have done, to accept H.D.'s fiction as evidence. . . . and, if we are to take *End to Torment* as proof. . . . But a passage in Aldington's *Death of a Hero* may cast his relationship with H.D. in a somewhat different light . . ." (p. 24). Such an amalgam of sources only compounds the problem. In remarking the tensions in H.D.'s friendship with Lawrence, Doyle comments that "at least part of the explanation is a rebuff" (p. 57), then notes: "How big a part may depend on whether one makes as much of the Lawrence-H.D. relationship as her biographer, Janice Robinson does, or rather less, as do Guest and [Peter] Firchow" (p. 335). Doyle avoids making sense of these myriad accounts, sidesteps the important issues of who was telling these versions for what audiences, and finally leaves the reader in frustration, without a coherent account or an analysis of why such an account may not be possible.

When dealing specifically with H.D., Doyle is superficial and unhelpful. He insists, for example, on H.D.'s "fantasies of cerebral empathy with Lawrence" (p. 63). H.D. may have wished for a physical, sexual expression of her friendship with Lawrence that never materialized, but certainly their "cerebral empathy" was very real, as evidenced by Lawrence's desire at one point to include H.D. among the participants in his *Rananim*. Doyle concludes that "the Aldingtons' marriage effectively came to an end" during his leave in November, 1918 (p. 66), for "When Aldington arrived in London H.D. had left" (p. 67). Yet Aldington writes to H.D. telling her of his arrival from the front at a time when both are in London (Aldington to H.D., 17 November 1918; The Beinecke Library), and later both dine at the Ellermans' (Aldington to Amy Lowell, 8 December 1918; The Houghton Library). Doyle comments that "H.D. decides almost at once to throw in her lot with Bryher" (p. 68), while in fact this decision was a slow and difficult process for her. Even when we might expect Doyle's sympathy for his subject,

he obtusely describes Aldington's state after demobilization as characterized by "unaccountable depressions" (p. 69)—depressions I think certainly understandable in light of the trauma of his war experiences and of his failing marriage. Doyle does not analyze the relationship that continued between Aldington and H.D. after 1919, although he draws information from the voluminous correspondence between them that resumed in 1928 and, with a break in the early thirties, persisted until 1961. Doyle notes that on receiving the news of H.D.'s death, Aldington was "utterly distraught" (p. 310), but why this should be the reader is not informed.

Richard Aldington: A Biography is finally a boring book, one derived from a list of achievements rather than from penetrating or synthetic analysis. Doyle occasionally reveals an insightful understanding of his subject, noting for instance Aldington's ability to see both side of a question and "his distrust of any covenants beyond the personal and individual" (p. 107). He remarks Aldington's unwavering sincerity, pointing out that in his writing Aldington was more personal finally than Pound or Eliot and closer to Lawrence (p. 74); he perceives Aldington's deep sense of responsibility (p. 112) and "innate conservatism" (p. 116), his social abilities but his desire for solitude (p. 173). The biography is stronger in its treatment of the period after about 1940, and strongest when covering the last fifteen years of Aldington's life (Alister Kershaw, to whom the book is dedicated, became a close friend of Aldington during his final years, and has been very helpful to the biographer here). But Doyle is clearly uninterested in Aldington's personal life, and throughout the biography there is an uneasy relation between the account of personal and professional experience. Doyle's book is intentionally a critical biography, but his refusal to grapple with the "personal" even in this context is unfortunate. The nature of the territory of modernism is intensely personal, T. S. Eliot's theories of impersonality notwithstanding, and any understanding of modernist art must, it seems to me, deal with artists' personal lives—that is their experiences and theories of reality, values, transcendental verities, sexuality, relationships. It is from attention to such contexts newly considered that fresh understandings of modernism and its participants will arise.