

Emerging Perspectives in H.D.'s Hellenic Modernity and the Future of New Modernist Studies

Book of Abstracts and Bios



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Amphitheater I, Research Dissemination Centre

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Speaker: **Elizabeth Anderson**

Title: **Divine Botanicals: Ritual and Plant Life in H.D.'s Poetics**

Abstract:

From her early lyrics to her later epic poetry, H.D. explores feminine divine figures – goddesses, madonnas and saints – in relationship to plant life in her writing. In her work, the ephemerality of flowers and other plants become signifiers for the intersection of space, time and materiality in ritual actions. Drawing inspiration from Sappho and using experimental forms and styles, H.D.'s poetry creates an invitation to sacred encounter grounded in the natural world. In this paper, I map the association of feminine divine figures and plants in H.D.'s ritualising poetics in the context of Jane Ellen Harrison's work on ancient Greek religion. In emphasising the significance of emotion to ritual, Harrison brings together the ancient and the modern, anticipating the attention to affect, materiality and action prevalent in religious studies today.

The paper concludes by considering how the legacy of these poetics is evident in the work of contemporary writers who also explore the relationship between the sacred, ritual and plant life. Like their modernist predecessors, these writers also investigate the telescoping of time in the context of emotionally charged ritualised actions and writing.

Bio:

Elizabeth Anderson is a Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Aberdeen. She is currently working on a project exploring the interconnections of ritual, spirituality and environment in a hundred years of women's writing. She is the author of *Material Spirituality in Modernist Women's Writing* (Bloomsbury, 2020) and *H.D. and Modernist Religious Imagination* (Bloomsbury, 2013) and co-editor of *Modernist Women Writers and Spirituality: a Piercing Darkness* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). She has published articles in *Feminist Modernist Studies*; *Modernist Cultures*; *Literature and Theology* and *Women: A Cultural Review* and has contributed to several edited collections on modernism and religion. She serves as Associate Editor for the journal *Literature & Theology*. She holds a PhD in Literature, Theology and the Arts and English Literature from the University of Glasgow.

Speaker: **Elizabeth Arseniou**

Title: **The Great New Word 'Helen': a Hieroglyph Making Sense in Late Modernism (Some Comments on H.D.'s *Helen in Egypt*)**

Abstract:

In *Helen in Egypt*, Hilda Doolittle's fascination with the symbolic richness and diverse interpretations within Hellenism has been widely emphasized. By challenging the traditional narratives on Hellenism through mysticism, feminism, and fragmentation, H.D. constructed an experience of the Greek world that was not only parallel but also converging to the late Greek modernist understanding of an expanded New Greekness that is based on an alternative modernist tradition. This 'other' Hellenic, an unabashedly textualized one, can be combined with the philhellenic, philosophical, Freudian, Palmerian, Cavafian, surrealist, and late modernist investigations of the Greek, which, whenever adopted, referred to what Cavafy called the new "far-flung" world with a 'flexible policy of judicious integration'. In addition, and by divergence from the high modernist 'imagization' of new Hellenism (its serviceable compression within an undeciphered ideogram), H.D. constructed a new factory of sense through which *Helen in Egypt* becomes a philosophical paradigm: the passage from the ideogram to the hieroglyph, from image to text, from imagism to a new modernism. Helen's hieroglyph is Cavafy's 'Great New Hellenic World' metamorphosized into the Great New Word "Helen". Through 'Helen' H.D. exerts her own power on the phanopoeia of Hellenism, imposing meaning and knowledge not as a void or a problem but as a complement and a solution. Words without meaning, which can however be covered by multiple layers of reasoned significance, in *Helen in Egypt* lose their attraction to images and take their place, within the context of our always-late Hellenic modernity, in order to gradually become textual places of production of truth.

Bio:

Elizabeth Arseniou is a Professor of Modern Greek Literature in the Department of Communication, Media, and Culture at Panteion University of Athens. She received her M.Phil. and Ph.D. in Modern Greek Studies at the Centre for Ottoman, Byzantine, and Modern Greek Studies at the University of Birmingham, UK. She has taught Modern Greek Literature and Culture in Greece (University of Crete and Thrace), England, and the U.S.A. Publications on modernist, avant-garde, and postmodernist poetry and poetics. Books: 2021: *Nikos Engonopoulos and the Revolution of 1821*, Vivliorama. 2018: *Seven studies on C.P. Cavafy* (ed. and intro.) Mandragoras, *Cultural Poetry: the Glocal Writing of Demosthenes Agrafiotis*, To Mellon, Athens, 2016: *C.P. Cavafy: The Value of Poetry*. Metechmio, Athens, 2012: *Practical Introduction to the Study of Modern Greek Literature: Terms, Methods, Theory*, Metechmio, Athens, 2009: *The*

Rhetoric of Utopia: Studies for the Transition to a New Avant-garde (five essays on the work of Andreas Empeirikos), Ypsilon/Books, 2008: Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons: Objects—Food—Rooms*, Translation and Introduction, Typothito, Athens, 2003: *Aspirants and Makers: Journals, Texts, and Movements in Postwar Greek Literature*, Typothito, Athens, 1995: *Between Modernism and the Avant-Garde: Greek Literary Experimentation in the Early 1960s (the Case of the Journal Pali)*, the University of Birmingham.

Speaker: **Marina Camboni**

Title: **Then and Now. H. D.'s Troubling Hellenism and its Heritage**

Abstract:

“Then and now” in my title signifies H.D.’s deep vision of time, enveloping cultural and biographical, as well as physical/psychic time. It stands also for literary art, its relation to its own time as well as to readers and writers at all times. In “The Greek Boy” (1911), an early story H.D. wrote in London, an American boy is taken to the British Museum room where the *Elgin Marbles* are exhibited. Deeply bored, he falls asleep, and dreams. In his dream, he meets a Greek boy, who introduces him to his life, describes the temple to which the broken pieces of marble belong, walks the city’s streets with him, and shows the children playing there. The dream makes classic Greece and present-day London co-exist, and the boy is finally able to appreciate its art. For H.D., art and life are connected. Yet art by integrating the knowable and the imaginable, the conscious and the unconscious, chaos and order, can, like the dream, frame an idiosyncratic vision of the past, and in its own way recover what human and cultural memory has lost to the present. My paper centers on temporality and the different functions Classical Greek and Hellenistic culture play in H.D.’s life and artwork. By appropriating Karen Barad’s multiple senses of “troubling times”, and Husserl’s concept of an “envirning world” (*Umwelt*), it also seeks to develop the relational model of the cultural sphere and the biosphere as a complex system defined in my previous theoretical works.

Bio:

Marina Camboni has held the position of professor of American Literature at the universities of Rome, Palermo, and Macerata, where she also directed the Ph.D. Program in Comparative Literature. She is the founder and Honorary President of the Center for ItalianAmerican Studies, University of Macerata. She has written extensively on Walt Whitman, experimental and multilingual poetry, and transatlantic feminism and Modernism (*Networking Women: Subjects, Places, Links Europe-America, 1890-1839. Towards a Rewriting of Cultural History* 2004). She has

translated H.D.'s *Trilogy* (1993) and written essays and books on H.D., including *H.D.'s Poetry "the meanings that words hide"* (2003), and *H.D. La donna che divenne il suo nome* (2007). She has co-edited *Translating America: The Circulation of Narratives, Commodities, and Ideas Across the Atlantic* (2011). Her last published book is devoted to Adrienne Rich's poetry: *Adrienne Rich: poesia e poetica di un futuro dimenticato* (2022). Marina Camboni served as president of the Italian Association of North American Studies from 2007 to 2010. She is co-founder of the Transatlantic Walt Whitman Association (TWWA).

Speaker: **Antoine Cazé**

Title: **Greek De-Lights: For a Photonic Approach to H.D.**

Abstract:

In my article "Clarid Vision: H.D. on the Threshold of Theory", I attempted to show how H.D.'s theoretical approach to her own capacity to see and create images was premised on a certain conception of *light* not as an illuminating medium, but as "revealing blindingly, opening up for the artist's clairvoyant possibilities which opacity her theoretical gaze." (Cazé, 2014) I ended with an analysis of H.D.'s poem "Projector," in which a "quivering of day-light" allows the poet to explore and practice a "de-lighted gaze ... to reflect on the nature of the image itself beyond the simplification of more standard Imagist theory." (*ibid.*)

Crucially, this poem features the Delphian Apollo cast as the god of cinema, whom H.D. "envisions... reasserting his domain on a ray of image-bearing, world-creating light" (Morris, 2003). In the present paper, I will take a fresh look at H.D.'s conception of light by tracing it back to her experience of Greece. At the center of this experience lies of course H.D.'s Corfu "visions," which she narrates in *Tribute to Freud*. While her complex description of the play of light and shadow during that famous episode can certainly be read metaphorically in the context of her sessions with Freud, it can also be seen as a more literal reminiscence and transcription of how she was physically and emotionally affected by the Greek light. Considering these two concomitant interpretations, as well as other instances where light plays a crucial role, I will examine how H.D.'s lifelong relationship with, and account of, Greece as both landscape and mindscape is exemplary of such mechanisms of the psyche as projection or repression. The brightness of the Mediterranean lights paradoxically erases what it reveals, proving to be both a *delight* and a *de-light*, i.e. the defeat of an excess of visibility, leading H.D. to imagine herself as a (blind) prophetess, if not the "founder of a new religion" which Freud saw in her. Thus for H.D., Greece would be situated at the meeting point between perception, imagination and vision—the perfect candidate for placing it under the erasure of her palimpsestic writing.

Bio:

A former student at the *École Normale Supérieure* in Paris, **Antoine Cazé** holds a PhD in American Literature. The author of 100 published articles and three books, he has devoted his research to American poetry, particularly addressing the question of the lyric/anti-lyric divide in the Modernist and postmodern eras, the representation of the self in poetic discourse, the interactions between poetic discourse and public discourse, and more recently the theory of lyric poetry in the light of Trauma Studies. His research bears notably on Emily Dickinson, John Ashbery, H.D., and Susan Howe.

Antoine Cazé is Professor of American Literature at Université Paris Cité, where he also runs the MA Program in Professional Literary Translation. He has run the “Observatoire de la Littérature Américaine,” a research unit devoted to the study of cutting edge innovative American literature which, over the years, has collaborated with many leading contemporary U.S. writers, and is the co-founder of the Center for Translation Studies. Between 2015 and 2023, he was Vice-President for International Strategy and Relations of Université Paris Cité. He has published over 30 translations into French of American writers, among which F. Scott Fitzgerald, Jack London, William Faulkner, Ken Kesey and Susan Howe.

Speaker: **Leanne Darnbrough**

Title: ***Palimpsest, Mathematical Papyri and the Role of the Female Writer***

Abstract:

Palimpsest is a tripartite short story cycle first published in 1926. Each of the short stories centres around a female protagonist, struggling with her identity as a writer. It is also in this short story cycle that H.D.’s “specific Attic paradise” comes into stark contrast with the awe-some splendor of ancient Egypt, where “[t]he Greeks came [...] to learn.” What the Greeks learned in Egypt, according to *Palimpsest*, was a mathematical description of the world. The geometric and the mathematical are metaphors in H.D.’s work but they are much more than that too. They are also powerful, spiritual truths that sprang from the cradle of art and civilization: Egypt. They are, like the title of the Rhind Mathematical Papyrus (itself a palimpsest of mathematical calculations), “[r]ules for inquiring into nature, and for knowing all that exists, [every] mystery ... every secret.”¹ What is missing from most H.D. scholarship is an investigation into her fusion of mathematics and Egypt – which is then filtered through the lens of ancient Greece – and how this unique pairing reflects her profound consideration of the very medium of writing. This paper uses

¹This translation of the title of the Rhind Mathematical Papyrus is taken from Annette Imhausen. 2020. *Mathematics in Ancient Egypt: a Conceptual History*. Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, pg. 66.

the often-overlooked *Palimpsest* to demonstrate H.D.'s idiosyncratic interpretation of mathematics and writing as originating in Egypt before gaining their polish and refinement in Greece.

Bio:

Dr. Leanne Darnbrough is a Canadian research and lecturer based in Leuven, Belgium. She recently defended her doctoral thesis, *The Historical Avant-Garde's Temporal Imagination of Ancient Egypt*, at the University of Leuven. She now teaches European literary history and western European literary theory in the Department of Translation and Intercultural Exchange at the University of Leuven. She has published on Max Ernst, Sergei Eisenstein, Hedwig Fechheimer, Velimir Khlebnikov and Margery Lawrence. The special edition of the *Journal of Avant-Garde Studies* she guest-edited with Prof. dr. Sascha Bru should appear in print in February. Leanne is also a member of the MDRN Research Lab.

Speaker: **Annette Debo**

Title: **An American in Greece: Greek Palimpsests in H.D.'s Early Poetry and the H.D. Scrapbook**

Abstract:

I stepped into H.D. studies as part of the generation that followed giants like Susan Stanford Friedman and her generation of critics delving deep into the Greek myths, lore, and place in H.D.'s poetry. In response, I turned my gaze to H.D.'s personal and literary identities as an American, as an integral writer in a tradition that very nearly excluded her after World War II since she was then a British citizen living in Switzerland. It is with great pleasure that I come to this conference as an opportunity to take my American H.D. back to Greece.

H.D. reveled in palimpsests. She gloried in moments when a single allusion could capture complex multiplicities, and she sought out those spaces. For example, many of the photographs in the "H.D. Scrapbook" evoke the Greece she and Bryher visited in early 1920 but were in fact taken on the rocky California coast in the fall of 1920, despite the seemingly Greek landscape, poses, and clothing. The photos, then, are rooted in the American landscape, which has been transformed by perspective and adornment to connect that moment to the ancient culture of Greece.

My presentation addresses the palimpsests of Greece and the United States in H.D.'s early poetry, exploring specifically landscape in *Sea Garden*, myths in *The God*, and performance in the "H.D. Scrapbook." Rather than trying to separate the layers as

critics have typically done, my analysis considers what story is told when they are read simultaneously, as a single and complete text.

Bio:

Annette Debo is professor and Department Head at Western Carolina University where she teaches classes on modernism and African American literature. Her monograph *The American H.D.* was published by the University of Iowa Press in 2012; her edition of H.D.'s *Within the Walls and What Do I Love?* by the University Press of Florida in 2014, and she is the co-editor with Lara Vetter of the MLA volume *Approaches to Teaching H.D.'s Poetry and Prose* (2011). She is past co-chair of the H.D. International Society, and she has held the H.D. Fellowship at Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Her articles have appeared in *Modernism/modernity*, *African American Review*, *Callaloo*, *Paideuma*, *South Atlantic Review*, *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, *CLA Journal*, *College Literature*, and edited collections. Her new book *The Necessary Past: Revising History in Contemporary African American Poetry* will be published by Northwestern University Press in April 2024.

Speaker: **Miranda Dunham-Hickman**

Title: **"O sea-mother": H.D., Mary Renault, and the "Phantom" of the Masculine Hero**

Abstract:

This paper takes as point of departure a comparison between H.D.'s complex meditation in *Helen in Egypt* (1955) on the figure of the masculine warrior figure and the representation of the male hero in the nearly contemporaneous work of historical novelist Mary Renault (*The King Must Die*, 1958; *The Bull from the Sea*, 1962). Renault, like H.D., often engages Ancient Greek myth and culture toward rethinking gender, sexuality, and *Bildung*. In drawing upon Renault's fiction as a lens through which to read H.D.'s feminist thought on heroism, the paper takes a cue from a correspondence sustained after H.D.'s death between Renault and H.D.'s partner, Bryher. H.D.'s and Renault's shared fascination with the nexus of myths associated with Theseus, Phaedra, Hippolytus, and Hippolyta signals a mutual quest to interrogate models of heroism by ethical lights, one which reaches new heights for H.D. in *Helen in Egypt*. Here, H.D. culminates an exploratory arc extending throughout her career, whereby she re-visioned mythic material, often through the mediation of Euripides, to rethink "womanhood," its formation, and its positioning *vis-à-vis* the male hero. Whereas Renault's fiction initially seems to valorize uncritically the very masculine warrior memes that H.D. appears to critique, both writers affirm the maternal force behind the male hero, whose "eyes" expose the

limits of the male masculine warrior mode. The paper ultimately considers Renault's and H.D.'s common investment in Hellenism, posed as anachronism, as a modernist mode of ethical dialogue with contemporary thought.

Bio:

Miranda Dunham-Hickman specializes in modernist literature at McGill University, where she is Associate Professor of English and director of the Poetry Matters initiative. She is recipient of the Noel Fieldhouse Award for distinguished teaching for the Faculty of Arts and McGill's Carrie M. Derick Award for graduate supervision and teaching. Recent essays engage the historical fiction of Mary Renault (2023), the film criticism of Iris Barry (2021), Q.D. Leavis and archives (2021), and H.D.'s feminist translations of Euripides (2018). She is coeditor (with L. Kozak) of *The Classics in Modernist Translation* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2019). She is author of *The Geometry of Modernism* (2005), author and editor of *One Must Not Go Altogether with the Tide: The Letters of Pound and Stanley Nott* (2011); and coeditor of *Rereading the New Criticism* (2012).

Speakers: **Andrea Eis** and **Steven Rost**

Title: **Architectonic Perspectives and Filmic Visions: Two Artists' Engagements with Greece, Modernism, and H.D.'s Hellenism**

Abstract:

We weave together our artistic trajectories, creative visions, and experiential senses of place, searching through our different media to engage with real and mythic worlds, with modernist principles and postmodern uncertainties, with the depths of H.D.'s Hellenism and our own encounters with Greece.

Years after H.D. wrote her last word, her receptions of ancient stories remain dynamic and relevant. Her modernist melding and fracturing of time, space, myth, and narrative form are generative inspirations for our own experiments in experience and storytelling. In a photographic practice immersed in the power of place and space, myriad personal, social, cultural and historical associations collide. Relationships of image and experience are in flux. While the making of a photograph freezes a moment of these shifting relationships, the fluidity of expressive meaning remains active. In film narratives of ancient stories, often reimagined amidst the very landscapes where they took place, editing disintegrates, fuses, and re-orders time and space, the convergence transforming the present reality, creating new relationships to be explored.

Sequencing creates additive image banks, activating the mind and the senses. Observed experience intertwines with the memory of place, each aspect retaining its own sensory richness. Through our restructurings, we touch the past while living in the present and imagining the future. We ask of our viewers a similarly active engagement, a synergistic participation in the construction of meaning, as we observe, consider, fracture, and amalgamate present and past, sense and thought, reality and myth.

Bios:

Andrea Eis is Distinguished Professor of Film Studies and Production, in the Department of English at Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan, USA. Eis is a practicing artist, working in photography, film, and installation art. Her work has been shown nationally and internationally, including solo exhibitions in Paris and Athens, and group exhibitions in China, Finland, and Hungary. Her films have been shown in Edinburgh, Stockholm, and Athens, as well as in several states in the US, including two films chosen as official selections in the Ann Arbor Film Festival. Her work is included in the collections of the Walker Art Center, The Minneapolis Institute of Art, the Detroit Institute of Art, and Ryerson University, as well as many private collections. Her book, *Ancient Finds*, is in the Artists' Books collection of the Museum of Modern Art. She has received an Art in Public Places grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, and two Creative Artist grants from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs. Eis has her MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art (1982), BFA from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design (1980), and BFA in classics and archaeology from Beloit College (1974).

After 40 years of teaching, **Steven Rost** recently retired as professor emeritus of art and design at Lawrence Technological University, Southfield Michigan USA. Rost is a practicing and published artist. He shows his photography and sculpture nationally and internationally, and has his work in multiple international publications, and has co-authored books on portfolio design for architects and designers. His work is currently on display at the Kresge Foundation headquarters in Troy, Michigan, and has been exhibited in Shenzhen and Chengdu, China, and Paris, France, along with local Detroit community exhibition spaces. One of his sculptures, created as part of a public art initiative, stands as a gateway to southwest Detroit's Clark Park sculpture garden. His work is included in the collections of Cranbrook Academy of Art Museum and the Detroit Institute of Arts, as well as many private collections worldwide. He has received an Art in Public Places grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, and a Creative Artist grant from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs. Rost is a graduate of Cranbrook Academy of Art (MFA 1982), University of Denver (BSBA 1975) and attended Minneapolis College of Art and Design (1978-80).

Speaker: Anna Fyta

Title: **The Choragus Leads the Dance: The Many-Names and Voices of the Goddess Thetis in H.D.'s Hellenic Poetry**

Abstract:

In 1954, the magazine *New Ventures* published "Choragus" and "Helen," two "new" poems by H.D. The title "Helen" heads a poem in the 1924 collection *Heliadora*, but the content does not match that of the 1954 poem. Similarly, there is no connection, content-wise, between H.D.'s 1919 essay "Helen in Egypt" from *Notes on Euripides Pausanias and Greek Lyric Poets*, and the *New Ventures* publication. It is in this journal, however, that a new depiction of "Helen", a poem composed in two sections and written in unrhymed tercets, emerges as "Choragus". In fact, both poems of this 1954 publication served at the time as a prequel, a fragment from H.D.'s long, yet unpublished, epic poem *Helen in Egypt* (published in its entirety in 1961). "Choragus" eventually became Canto 1 of Book 7 from *Pallinode* (*HiE* 93-94), the poem's first Rhapsody, while "Helen" consists of Cantos 7 and 8 from the same Book of the same Rhapsody (*HiE* 105-108). The primary focus of these poems falls on the goddess Thetis and has inspired me to explore a crucial aspect of H.D.'s desire to write her seminal, long poem. This was, in her own words, "a wish to make real to myself what is most real". To do so, it is Thetis, I argue, and not Helen as expected in *Helen in Egypt*, who is the agency providing the properties of hermeneutic transgression and oblique representation as crucial tools in the act of poesis. When Laura Slatkin wrote in 1992 about *The Power of Thetis*, she posited the role of the goddess as pivotal in the development of the Homeric *Iliad* and managed to reconceptualize our understanding of this liminal goddess. This protean, form-shifting mythic figure enters for good reason the Hellenic female genealogy in H.D.'s poetry. H.D. assigns to her the agency of "Choragus," the divine leader or chorus leader of women who speak their "tales" in her poetic constellation. H.D.'s different versions of Thetis as mythical Choragus, both in isolated poems as well as in *Helen in Egypt*, demonstrates the goddess' metonymic, transformative potential to be human and divine, among the human and the divine, and to shape in her many names and many forms the poetic process from pre-Homeric poetics to the present time.

Bio:

Anna Fyta teaches English and American Literature at Athens College, Greece. Her scholarship focuses on H.D., Pound, Sappho, classical receptions, and travel writing in Modernist texts. Since 2014, she has participated in numerous international academic conferences while her essay "Translation as Mythopoesis: H.D.'s *Helen in Egypt* as Meta-palinode" was published in *The Classics in Modernist Translation* (Bloomsbury Academic 2019). Her article "Dramatic Heterotopias: Joan Jonas' *Lines*

in the Sand and *Helen in Egypt*” was included in the Journal *Ex-Centric Narratives* (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece). In April 2021, her essay “Galatea Kazantzaki (Alexiou) (1884–1962): a Modernist Greek Author’s Decadent Poetics” was published in *Feminist Modernist Studies*. She recently completed the translation of H.D.’s long poem *Vale Ave* in Modern Greek, and in December 2023, as guest editor, completed the special issue titled “Trajectories from the Past: Modernist Futures and the Future of Modernism” in *Ex-Centric Narratives* published by Aristotle University in Thessaloniki. Her work in progress addresses H.D.’s reception of Euripides.

Speaker: **Anett K. Jessop**

Title: **Modernity-Antiquity and the Case for Invention**

Abstract:

Twentieth-century theorist Walter Benjamin observed that, “Among all relationships into which modernity entered, its relationship to classical antiquity stands out,” even as, paradoxically, writers were innovating in order to, in Ezra Pound’s phrase, “make it new.” Modernist men found predecessors in the great classical writers, seers, and statesmen, as evidenced in their many allusions in T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*. While some modernist women writers incorporated classical motifs into their works—notably in the poetry and translations of H.D.—their reception of the classical legacy was more oblique, problematic even, than that of their male colleagues. As the women of antiquity were largely portrayed in supporting roles—if at all—while the heroic roles went to female divinities, modernist women writers inherited a less than empowering historiographic canon as they worked to determine their own historicity and kinships in the past.

In her novels, *A Trojan Ending* (1937) and *Lives of Wives* (1939), Laura Riding devised an historical record with emphasis on the lives of historical women. Her philosophy of historical consciousness is an *ars poetica* for creative recovery. While her novels parallel events described by classical authors as well as medieval and Renaissance receptions of the Troy cycles, she takes liberties (her “suppositious histories”) to imagine new characterizations and narrative points-of-view. This paper situates Riding’s historical fiction within current conversations in classical reception studies, to include Saidiya Hartman’s notion of “critical fabulation” and Lauren Fournier’s “autotheory” as creative feminist praxis. For Riding, historiography becomes story, and the poetic imagination serves as a variation of human memory by which to rebalance Western origin tales.

Bio:

Anett K. Jessop is Associate Professor of English at The University of Texas at Tyler (USA) where she teaches late-19th- through 21st -century American literature and creative writing. Her research and teaching specializations include modernist studies, classical reception studies, vanguard movements, philosophies of language, feminist and gender studies, as well as Mediterranean and Middle Eastern studies. Recent publications include essays in *The Robert Graves Review* (2023), *The Classics in Modernist Translation* (2019), *Women Poets and Myth in the 20th and 21st Centuries: On Sappho's Website* (2018), *Brill's Companion to Classical Receptions: International Modernism and the Avant-Garde* (2017), and *Mediterranean Modernism; Intercultural Exchange and Aesthetic Development, 1880-1945* (2016). Additionally, she has an article forthcoming in *Nomadic New Women: Exile and Border-Crossing between Spain and the Americas, Early to mid-20th Century* and *Women's Writing* journal. Her monograph, *Remediating Antiquity in Modernism: Laura Riding and Robert Graves' Restaging of the Trojan War*, is under contract with Edinburgh University Press's Critical Studies in Modernism, Drama and Performance series.

Speaker: Susan McCabe

Title: H.D. & Bryher: Ecstatic Channeling & Green Hermeticism

Abstract:

Meter, song, the earth goddess, Venus, the star, burning green in morning and evening, are part of H.D.'s complex cosmogeny, and I will suggest, make her a green lyric hermeticist whose geographical touchstone—*islands*: she cultivates ecstasy as an eco-aesthetic aim. The unique characteristic of islands, their mythic and real ecosystems, haunted H.D. The peculiar draw of islands, whether in the Scilles, on Corfu, the British Isles, through the channeled "Wunden Island" (locus for a failed attempt by her Moravian ancestors to create a sanctuary for the Indigenous), or Sappho's charged Lesbos—share in being permeable magic enclosures, such as in *The Tempest*, with "its sweet air" that "hurts not." For our couple, islands reveal palimpsestic trans-corporeal time, an archive of eco-poetic and geo-political history. Bryher, naming herself after the wildest island in the Scillies, took H.D. in 1919 to St. Mary's—before they traveled to Athens and Corfu in 1920; it resulted in what I consider a foundational text for all H.D.'s channeling and writing, *Notes on Thought and Vision*, transcribed after the trip. Though unpublished in H.D.'s times, it was brought out by City Lights Books in 1982. Still in print, this text, though short, defies brevity in its imaginative reach, and ahead of its times, is popular in my courses as *ars poetica*, as "creative criticism," and as an eco-poetic manifesto. In this textual *preview* (one also reframing the earlier *Sea Garden*), she inventively establishes a set of trance and writing methods. Famously, H.D. delineates her "jellyfish

consciousness” that H.D. enacted, and Bryher encouraged. One might say, with Jane Bennett, that the Scillies had a “geoaffect” through an “interstitial field of . . . human forces, flows, tendencies, and trajectories,” highlighting the creaturely and the unhuman. The island’s jagged shores and “resonance of wind” helped the pair establish their “receiving station,” amounting to an interlayering of texts and figures, from Euripides to Lo-Fu, as well as tracking the transformation of dung to rose. My talk, with this text as a navigating device to other texts, will establish H.D.’s rhythmic *method* for synchronizing ecological, hermetic, erotic and aesthetic worlds, laying out her role as visionary eco-poet, and if you will, as an extasist. I aim to trace out what, in fact, constitutes the “H.D. effect/affect,” through several close readings in the oeuvre: that is, not how does her writing describe visionary experiences, but how does it induce them? What is that specific elixir that inspires readers to “lose their heads,” to venture to liminal edges, and ultimately to question Anthropocene centrism?

Bio:

Susan McCabe is a professor at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, teaching poetics, modernism, ecology, and creative writing. She is a past President of the Mondernist Studies Association. She has received a Fulbright, a residential fellowship at American Academy in Berlin as well as being a fellow at Stanford’s Humanities Center in 2016. She has published two books of poetry, one a Lambda Literary finalist, *Swirl*, the other her award-winning *Descartes’ Nightmare* (University of Utah Press, 2008), two critical books, *Elizabeth Bishop: Her Poetics of Loss*, and *Cinematic Modernism*. She has most recently published a dual bi-biography, *H.D. & Bryher: An Untold Love Story of Modernism* (Oxford, November 2021). She has directed the PhD program in Creative Writing at USC, and is currently working on a book of poems, *I Woke a Lake* as well as a lyric long essay, *The Poetics of Breath*. Her poetry reviews have appeared recently in *Los Angeles Review of Books* and *Denver Quarterly*, among other venues. She has also written an introduction for the reprint of Bryher’s world-war II set *Beowulf* in 2021.

Speaker: **Maureen Niwa**

Title: **H.D.’s *Palimpsest*: Editing “Murex”**

Abstract:

Out of print for decades, copies of H.D.’s highly experimental triptych novel *Palimpsest* (1926), are housed in special library collections, or are selling as expensive, rare books online. Yet, *Palimpsest* signals H.D.’s extrication from the Imagist constraints imposed by Pound and Aldington, and her move towards literary

innovations central to her later novels, *Hermione* (1927, 1930) and *Bid Me to Live* (1939). *Palimpsest* superimposes three narratives: a Greek woman poet/translator, captured by a Roman soldier in 75 B.C.E.; an expatriate woman writer in post-World War I London; a woman scholar assisting archeologists in Egypt excavating Tutankhamen's tomb in 1925. These demonstrate H.D.'s "transhumance," a merged consciousness connecting history, space, and time. Collaborating with Demetres Tryphonopoulos, Celena Kusch and Sara Dunton, I am contributing to an annotated, critical edition of *Palimpsest* (forthcoming, Florida UP). This edition places *Palimpsest* within modernist women's writing, early twentieth-century Hellenism, and post-World War I imperialism. I will describe the delights and challenges of editing *Palimpsest*, Part II, "Murex," part of H.D.'s Raymonde Ransome/*roman á clef* series. With complex allusions and biographical references, "Murex" unveils the cultural and political context of early twentieth century London, depicting World War I PTSD, still-birth trauma, and Jewish immigration. I will highlight Raymonde's later "ghostings" in H.D.'s *Narhex*, *The Usual Star*, and *Mira-Mare*; the intricacy of selected Sapphic annotations; and the imbrication of H.D.'s original poems in *Palimpsest*. With its densely allusive prose and intergeneric form, H.D.'s *Palimpsest* is arresting in its originality and artistry—a Modernist must-read.

Bio:

Maureen Niwa is a faculty member in the Department of English at Camosun College, Victoria, B.C., Canada. She completed her graduate degrees at the University of Victoria, specialising in narratology, literary theory, and 18th-century/Modernist writing. Her thesis, *Disembodied Voices in James Joyce's Ulysses*, and dissertation, *Relational Narrative Desire: Intersubjectivity and Transsubjectivity in the Novels of H.D. and Virginia Woolf* present narratological models for analysing voice-centered novels. She also works as an English Placement Counsellor at Camosun College, and is the Chair of a working group developing a national Indigenized English Placement Assessment for use by post-secondary institutions across Canada. She is an Instructional Skills Facilitator, the recipient of the Camosun Student Success Award, and three NISOD Awards; her hobby is teaching group fitness and growing flowers.

Speaker: **Matte Robinson**

Title: **“Of an old, old sphere”: time (ordinary and extraordinary) and Hermetic definitions**

Abstract:

As her work reached the peak of its maturity, H.D. deployed a rich array of strategies to effect generative readings of both new and old, while at the same time employing a strategy of two-lensed seeing first set out theoretically in her early notes. In weaving narrative and lyric, self-consciousness and self-abandonment, “old habit” and “new to me,” unfolding and closing, night and day—in effecting autobiographical stereopsis to scry new dimensions and recast the old—H.D.’s speaker remembers how to “cling / to a Greek rock” yet expresses an insistent desire also to continue to extend the self into the unfolding present, to elude narrative (or lyric) foreclosure.

When the collection called *Hermetic Definition* (1972) appeared, a year after the pirated *Hermetic Definitions*, Hugh Kenner in the *New York Times* characterized H.D.’s speaker (or H.D. herself?!) as “a ghost, invoking a goddess [Isis] who is herself dispersed among names,” but he admitted that “unlike most ghosts, she had the guts to keep coming back; and her hour may be here at last.” Kenner had little appreciation of the kaleidoscopic lenses linking H.D.’s speaker to Isis, nor was he willing to concede that this so-called “amateur of Greek” conceived a Hellenism that was richer and stranger than he let on. To paraphrase Borges in “Pierre Ménard,” H.D. “chooses to continue to be H.D. and come to Greece *through the experiences of H.D.*” *Hermetic Definition* invokes two ghosts at once, snarling a brief greeting as they arrive, their time come again at last.

Bio:

Matte Robinson is the author of *The Astral H.D.: Occult and Religious Sources and Contexts for H.D.’s Poetry and Prose* (Bloomsbury 2017) and has, with colleagues, worked on annotated scholarly editions of H.D.’s mature work and contributed to volumes on modernism and spirituality. With William L. Randall, Matte has recently co-edited and contributed to *Things That Matter: Special Objects In Our Stories as we Age* (University of Toronto Press 2024) and is keenly interested in the ways modernist literary studies finds dialogue with interdisciplinary narrative studies of aging. Matte is Chair of English at St. Thomas University, Fredericton, and teaches modernist literature, American literature, and creative writing.

Speaker: **Liana Sakelliou**

Title: **H.D. as The Gardener of the Sea**

Abstract:

I will tackle the idea that H.D. develops her own female aesthetic in the sensual imagery of her early imagistic poems in the *Sea Garden*, in the lines of “Hymen”, and in the 1940’s *Trilogy*, a work that revises the myth of the Garden of Eden and that announces the divine source of knowledge and life to be feminine. In later life she wrote about Helen [*Helen in Egypt*], to redeem the place of feminine beauty in the history of human culture.

Bio:

Liana Sakelliou has published twenty-seven books of poetry and criticism, as well as translations of the American authors Ralph Waldo Emerson, Sylvia Plath, Emily Dickinson, H. D., Denise Levertov and Gary Snyder. Her own poems have been translated into ten European languages—including, most recently, a volume of selected poems in Romanian, in Spanish and in English—and have been published in a number of anthologies and international journals. She teaches American literature and creative writing in the Department of English Language and Literature of the University of Athens. The recipient of grants from, among others, the Fulbright Foundation and the Department of Hellenic Studies of Princeton University, Ms. Sakelliou was a member of the Coordinating Committee of the Greek Writers’ Association, as well as the president of the committee for the European Union Prize for Literature in 2017 and 2018. *Όπου φυσᾶ γλυκᾶ ἡ αὔρα* (The Greek original of ‘Wherever the Sweet Breeze Blows’) was a finalist for the Greek National Poetry Award.

Speaker: **Catherine Theis**

Title: **After a Choral Conditioning**

Abstract:

H.D. spent decades translating Euripides. Her lifelong obsession with Euripides often appears as fictional moments concerning the art of translation. Julia, a translator in H.D.’s novel *Bid Me Live*, compares herself to a sculptor, chiseling, and hewing lines from ancient blocks of text. The translator’s relationship with time is one of a kind. She must prove herself bilingual in languages both inside and outside of time, in dimensions above and below ground. My paper, “After a Choral

Conditioning,” reads H.D.’s more dramatic poem-translations in relation to her ideas about the chorus. For H.D., the choral songs extend a revisionary space within an ancient poetic form, creating a poetic conditioning that is not related to extending a tradition but to the improvisation of a new, embodied lyric intensity, an affective rhythm particular to its own age.

Bio:

Catherine Theis is the author of the poetry collection *The Fraud of Good Sleep* and the play *MEDEA. Slashing Sounds*, her translation of the Italian poet Jolanda Insana, is forthcoming Fall 2024 from the University of Chicago Press’ Phoenix Poets series. She teaches at the University of Southern California.

Speaker: **Demetres P. Tryphonopoulos**

Title: **“Choriambics of a forgotten Melic”: H.D.’s Rejection of Ezra Pound’s Patriarchal Prosodies**

Abstract:

The following narrative is now part of standard, modernist lore: H.D. was influenced immensely by Pound who “baptized” her “H.D., Imagiste” and presented her to the literary world as the foremost practitioner of Imagism, a “movement” he conceived as reproducing what he considered the essential Greek poetic idiom. Hellenized, objectified, and rendered by Pound into his “Sapphic fragment” (a kind of treasured possession). A reading of *HERmione* (completed in 1927) reveals that H.D., nonetheless, to resist and ultimately reject Pound’s patriarchal prosody and she did not succumb to his clear directive to devote herself to the study and production of Sapphic stanzas or to conform with his expectation that she continue to represent the *melos* or lost song in choriambics in her poetry. Beginning as an Imagist poet, a writer of epigrammatic, direct, objective poems, H.D. was able to remake herself into a poet of epic quests (while avoiding the pretensions of the hegemonic, classical prosodies and rhetoric of Pound), grounded in feminist revisions and prosodic unfastening of the patriarchal foundations of the Western tradition.

Bio:

For the past thirty-five years, **Dr. Tryphonopoulos** has been teaching and researching in twentieth-century American Literature with a focus on difficult modernist texts (especially long poems), often approaching them through the lenses of poetics, translation theory and practice, prosody and rhetoric, and editorial theory and

textual criticism. Over his academic career, he has attended more than 130 conferences in the U.S., Canada, England, France, Italy, and Greece. His essays on Ezra Pound, H.D. and other Anglo-American modernist poets have appeared in North American and European journals. He has contributed to many collections of essays published in the U.S., Italy, France and Greece. As well, he is the author, editor, co-editor, or translator of sixteen volumes, including *The Celestial Tradition: A Study of Ezra Pound's "The Cantos"* (WLUP, 1992); *"I Cease Not to Yowl": Pound's Letters to Olivia Rossetti Agresti* (U. of Illinois P, 1998); an annotated edition of H.D. (writing as Delia Alton), *Majic Ring* (UP of Florida, 2009); a translation and performance text for Iakovos Kambanellis' play *The Courtyard of Miracles* (performed at the Richard Stockton College's School of Arts and Humanities, February 18-12, 2015); and *Approaches to Teaching Pound's Poetry and Prose* (PMLA, 2021). He is in the process of completing a second Approaches volume: *Approaches to Teaching Cavafy Poetry* (PMLA, 2023). He considers his most important achievement to be the establishment in the early 2000s of the so-called "mod-squad," a group of former and at the time current students and colleagues that has been collaborating on a SSHRC-funded edition of H.D.'s late long poems.

Speaker: **Lara Vetter**

Title: **"what is your reason / to this wild unrest?": H.D.'s *Hippolytus Temporizes* and *Ion***

Abstract:

In this paper, I explore H.D.'s adaptations of two plays with similar plots: *Hippolytus Temporizes*—written several years before her analysis with Freud—and *Ion*—penned after her final session with him. Many scholars, particularly those forward biographical readings, favor the latter, seemingly following Freud's praise of her *Ion* as a triumph of (H.D.'s) reason over passion. Indeed, alongside her *Ion*, in which familial restoration engenders a happy ending, *Hippolytus Temporizes* seems an odd, messy play, dwelling as it does in the insatiate, crippling madness of "perilous fervour" and concluding in an extended debate between the gods over the mangled body of a dying Hippolytus. I argue, however, that *Hippolytus Temporizes* deserves more scholarly attention (and appreciation) than it has received to date. With an eye to recent queer theorizing of temporality and antinarrativity, this paper examines the extent to which *Hippolytus Temporizes* is a truly queer play, set in a feral liminal space between seashore and mountainous forest, in a world outside the *polis* and the *oikos* alike, where ontological boundaries are precarious, even shattered. Moreover, I contend, it is not just at the level of content that the play is deeply queer, but at the level of its form as well. Freud—who decried "dope-y stream of consciousness," who pathologized disjointed and fragmented narrative technique—urged H.D. away

from the more queer formal elements of modernist experimentation to a more conventional, heteronormative mode. A brief glance at *Ion* will attempt to evaluate the extent to which he succeeded.

Bio:

Lara Vetter is Professor of English at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, where she teaches modernism, poetry, and modern and contemporary life writing. She is the author of a recent biography of H.D. with Reaktion Press, as well as *A Curious Peril: H.D.'s Late Modernist Prose* and *Modernist Writings and Religio-scientific Discourse: H.D., Loy, and Toomer*. She has edited H.D.'s *By Avon River* and co-edited *Approaches to Teaching H.D.'s Poetry and Prose* and *Emily Dickinson's Correspondences*. Her articles on Kazim Ali, Julia Alvarez, Emily Dickinson, Robert Duncan, H.D., Mina Loy, and other modern and contemporary writers have appeared in journals such as the *Journal of Modern Literature*, *Feminist Modernist Studies*, *Review of English Studies*, *Genre*, and *MELUS*. For her work on H.D., Lara has twice held fellowships at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University. She is currently at work on a monograph about the queer quotidian in modernist literature and a scholarly edition of selected short fiction by H.D.

Panel speakers: Caroline Zilboorg, Elizabeth Vandiver and Andrew Frayn

Title: H.D. and Richard Aldington: "It was you who taught me to love those things..."

Abstract:

It is impossible to understand H.D.'s Hellenism without an understanding of her relationship with Richard Aldington. Zilboorg will discuss particularly Aldington's cycle of prose poems about the love affair between two Greek women, *The Love Poems of Myrrhine and Konallis*. Vandiver will focus on translation (idea, fact, project). Frayn will reflect on the very different critical statuses of the two authors in the context of the expansionist projects of the New Modernist Studies. We will argue that Greece ('Hellas'/Hellenism) was for Aldington and H.D. a mutually constructed idea anchored in their relationship, in a particular historical moment, in their ways of thinking about the past (history and literature) and the present (their love for one another and the First World War). Their own 'theories' of literature (about writing itself, the writer, the reader, the canon) are anchored in both their life experiences and their work, and merit fresh attention within that shared context.

Bios:

Dr Andrew Frayn, Lecturer in Twentieth-Century Literature and Culture at Edinburgh Napier University and past Chair of the British Association for Modernist Studies, is the author of *Writing Disenchantment: British First World War Prose, 1914-30* (Manchester U.P., 2014).

Dr Elizabeth Vandiver, until her recent retirement the Clement Biddle Penrose Professor of Latin and Classics at Whitman College (Washington, USA), is the author of *Stand in the Trench, Achilles: Classical Receptions in British Poetry of the Great War* (Oxford UP, 2010). Her book on classical receptions in Richard Aldington's work is currently under consideration by Oxford University Press.

Dr Caroline Zilboorg, Life Member of Clare Hall, Cambridge University, and Scholar of the British Psychoanalytic Council, is the editor of *Richard Aldington and H.D.: Their Lives in Letters* (Manchester UP, 2003) and *H.D.'s Bid Me to Live* (Florida UP, 2011). She is the author of *The Masks of Mary Renault* (Missouri UP, 2001) and *Transgressions* (2011), a historical novel about Aldington and H.D.

Round table speakers: **Matte Robinson**,² **Demetres P. Tryphonopoulos**,³ **Sara Dunton**, **Anna Fyta**⁴

Title: "**Editing H.D.'s Late Poems: A SSHRC-funded Project**"

Bios:

Sara Dunton is an Honorary Research Associate in the Department of English and Creative Writing at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton (PhD 2016). Her research explores the interconnectivity between modernist poetry and visual artworks, especially in the works of Mina Loy, H.D. and Ezra Pound. Sara began graduate studies in 2009 after a career as a professional interior designer. Since then, she has participated in numerous international conferences, including *The Politics of Space and the Humanities* at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (2017). Sara has authored and co-authored essays appearing in *Approaches to Teaching: Pound's Poetry and Prose* (2021), *The Edinburgh Companion to Ezra Pound and the Arts* (2019), *The Classics in Modernist Translation* (2019), and *H.D. and Modernity* (2014).

² Bio available on page 15.

³ Bio available on page 18.

⁴ Bio available on page 11.