CHAPTER THREE

THE PERSONAL NATURE OF IMAGIST POETRY AND HILDA DOOLITTLE'S POETIC FORMS

Hilda's poems are marvellous for their movement, for their music and for their imagery. Her movements are informed by her music, her music is initiated by her images and her images are enveloped by both movement and music. Her movements are swift as well as sparkling, her music is sonorous as well as echoing, and her images are varied as well as meticulous.

Robert Duncan, in the jacket note to H.D.'s *Hermetic Definition*, writes that Hilda Doolittle is "...of the same order for me as Ezra Pound or William Carlos Williams". We know that the criticism of Imagism, till today, begins from Ezra Pound and ends in Ezra Pound; and quite unfortunately the critics have disregarded, rather underestimated the calibre of other fellow Imagists of Ezra Pound, if not overestimated Ezra Pound overshadowing the real latent talents of Hilda Doolittle, Amy Lowell and John Gould Fletcher. Otherwise, how could Duncan realize it nearly fifty years after Imagist movement? How come H.D.'s poetic creation, with bubbling talent, evaded the eyes of the critics? was it due to hero
worship, that the critics did in the past and are yet doing, or was it due to their strange fears of tilting the primacy of the traditional masters of the movement. This kind of attitude of the critics shows their unpreparedness, lack of insight into the poetic originality of Amy Lowell and other followers of the Imagist movement, and a sort of indolent critical approach, by way of remaining in the tracked traditions rather than establishing new directions. The basis of Duncan's statement is not shallow, baseless or an overestimation of H.D.'s Imagistic talents, but, it is the right and judicious perception of her poetry. In H.D.'s poetical works, if evaluated from the point of view of her Imagist involvement, we may get a new insight to understand the crux of the Imagist movement as such, its foundation, its infrastructure, its erect pillars and its strengths as well as weaknesses. The Imagistic works of H.D. project a completely new interpretation, original of herself, of the Imagist manifesto, which makes us discover a slightly different manifestation of the movement. It also gives clues for finding the roots of present day characteristic and exotic features of modern poetry.

H.D. was born on September 10, 1886 in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Hilda Doolittle's father, Dr. Charles Doolittle, was a professor of mathematics and astronomy at Lehigh University. Her mother, Helen Eugenia Wolle Doolittle, was very much interested
in music and art. From her father perhaps, H.D. learned mathematical precision, the galaxy of the stars and planets and their peculiar characteristics. From her mother, she learned the very aesthetic crux of life. She says about her mother, in her *End to Torment*:

The mother is the muse, the creator, and in my case especially, as my mother's name was Helen.2

The statement of H.D. is partly devotional of her mother and it partly explains her passionate aesthetic attitude. It is, in itself, a strange complacency to speak of her mother and her namesake resemblance with Helen of Troy. The statement also substantiates Hilda's outspoken and unabashed attitude towards things of beauty. The mother-daughter relationship did not come in her way of drawing a parallel between her mother and Helen of Troy. Her parents belonged to Moravian brother-hood.3 H.D. has devoted many years to studying the Moravian history and doctrine and all through her life she followed the Moravian customs.

Speaking of the household influences on H.D., Emily Wallace writes:

'The household was free' as Williams perceived, and the life of the imagination flourished in that freedom. The mother helped the children create Christmas decorations and
Halloween games, to learn the songs and stories she sang or read to them in her beautiful voice, to appreciate paintings, and flowers, to enjoy visiting and visitors.4

The delicacies of tunes, the compactness of musical composition, the flamboyance of strains, the role of rhythm, the music and the play of light and shade, the contrast of colours from the appreciation of paintings and the appreciation of the floral charm and beauty, all she learned and inherited from her training in the house. We find in her poetry, an ardent love of the elemental forces of nature and its crudeness and wildness.

William Carlos Williams, who met H.D. in 1905 at Bryn Mawr College, where she was a student, was one of the visitors at H.D.'s home. Ezra Pound also visited her place along with Williams. During her college days, Pound influenced her by encouraging and directing her in selection and reading of books. H.D. has recalled this in her _End to Torment_ thus:

It was Ezra who really introduced me to William Morris. He literally shouted "The Gilliflower of Gold" in the orchard. How did it go? Hah! Hah! la belle joune giroflee. And there was "Two Red Roses across the Moon" and "The Defence of Guenevere". It was at this time that he brought me the Seraphita and a volume of Swedenberg—Heaven and Hell? Or is it Blake? He brought me Whistler's _Ten O'Clock_ ... He read me "The Haystack in the Floods" with passionate emotion.
He brought me the Portland Maine, Thomas Mosher reprint of the Iseult and Tristram story. He called me Is-Hilda and wrote a sonnet a day, he bound them in a parchment folder. There was a series of Yogi books too.

In this way, Pound's desultory studies of books also influenced Hilda's reading. Otherwise, how William Morris, Blake, Swedenberg, Whistler, Yogi books came in together? Perhaps, Pound's writing 'a sonnet a day' influenced H.D. to begin her writing. H.D. also studied some Renaissance Italian poets. She studied Latin and Greek, for not learning which Amy Lowell expressed her regret and incapability of getting the first hand experience and perception of the literatures of these languages. H.D. also read Rossetti and Pre-Raphaelites, along with Pound.

In 1909 Pound left for a trip to Europe. In Europe, he came across the European way of life and learnt the European ideas. In England, he had taken a residence. During his visit he learnt much about troubadours. Pound returned to New York in the summer of 1910. He convinced H.D. to come to London. After her fourth-month tour of Europe along with her mother, H.D. decided to settle in London. After coming to London, she knew that Pound's engagement had taken place with Dorothy Shakespeare, the daughter of Olivia Shakespeare, former mistress of William Butler Yeats, as Pound wanted to be a poet.
H.D., who began writing poetry in 1910 and had translated some of Heine's poems, decided to continue her literary studies in London. She started her studies with Richard Aldington, an Englishman, to whom she was introduced by Pound at Brigit Patmore's home. H.D. and Pound attended lectures on Bergson given by T.E. Hulme at the home of Mrs. Franz Liebich between 23rd November to 14th December 1911 and during this time, H.D. learnt that poetry was a process of disentanglement.

H.D.'s Instinctive Imagery

H.D. warmly recalls the moment of Pound's reading of her poems "Priapus" and "Hermes of the Ways," in August 1912, in her End to Torment:

'But Dryad' (in the Museum tea room), 'this is poetry.' He slashed with a pencil. 'Cut this out, shorten this line! "Hermes of the Ways," is a good title. I'll send it to Harriet Monroe of Poetry. Have you a copy? Yes? Then we can send this, or I'll type it when we go back. Will this do?' And he scrawled H.D. Imagists at the bottom of the page.

"Priapus" and "Hermes of the Ways" were written by H.D., at the time, when she, Pound and Aldington were reading from the Greek Anthology. "Priapus or Priapos is the Greek Word for the male genital organ personified as a god", and Janice S. Robinson, one of the distinguished critics of H.D. says that
no esoteric Freudian understanding is required to grasp the image presented in the title of the poem..."7

Hilda Doolittle's Imagism was warranted by instinctive-procreative excesses, that excited her inner poetic personality. This is slightly variant from the art of Amy Lowell, whose poetic animations are informed by sensuous excesses. Even H.D.'s first published poem maintains an open, unfearing reference to male creative potentiality personified as God Priapus. The poem, "Priapus (Keeper of Orchards)", appeared in January 1913 issue of Poetry. H.D.'s "Priapus" is a very interesting poem, that probably summarizes the instinctive image confectional formula. "Priapus" is subheaded as "Keeper of Orchard". In certain dialectic proportions, the word 'Keeper' has the meaning of a man who keeps a woman, rather in an extramarital passion. H.D. is filled with a sort of ecstatic devotion towards this keeper of the orchard. Needless to say, that this ecstatic devotion emerges out of her feminine procreative instinct, desiring to be possessed or kept by the keeper of the Orchard. Precisely, it is the female principle, falling 'prostrate' before the masculine principle. The poem starts with an unassuming but wild and vigorous race that she had begun in competition with the bees:

I saw the first pear
As it fell
The honey-seeking, golden banded
The yellow swarm
Was not more fleet than I
(Spare us from loveliness!)8
The fallen pear is as attractive for her as the flowers are for the bees. The manner in which she symbolically suggests the bee, is highly intricate and suggestive. She calls him the 'honey-seeking' (suggesting intonatively the king of sea of honey or the very manner of seeking honey by the bee). The 'honey-seeking' can be taken as an amorous nickname given by Hilda to the bee. It reminds us of the regality of the bee of the Kingdom of Flowers. But, her running for the fallen pear is poetically enigmatic and anomalous unless and until we brick back to our mind, that, fruit is the final phase of the flower, duly encumbered by the bee into a sexual congress to start with. At the outset, she implores the creative Almighty 'to spare us from loveliness'. It is this loveliness of the flower that attracted the bee. But the childish manner of the hesitation is obvious. As the poem advances, there are two other places in the poem where she seeks to be spared. Here it is from 'loveliness', in the next instance, 'the beauty of the fruit trees' and in the final context, it is again, 'spare us from loveliness'. The whole poem develops into a poised, symphonic growth and ecstasy, in between these three parenthetical requests of 'spare'. First 'spare' is a childish negation, second reflects the youthful hesitation and the third imbibes an ironic invitation.

The race, that started with the bees, prompted her to run after the pear. In the process of which, she fell prostrate
and probably, received an injury also 'I feel prostrate/crying'. Thereon, very mysteriously, the poet, who was otherwise distinguishing herself as a competitive separate entity with the bees, suddenly metamorphoses and identifies herself with the flowers.

"Thou has flayed us with thy blossoms." Here 'us' is significant. 'Thou' here, by implication, refers to the bees, and 'us,' quite naturally, speaks of the poet, along with the other flowers. Here is an image of the ravishment of the flower by the bees which finally becomes an excited formula of inculcating in the poet a passionate desire for union.

Here onwards, the poem seeks a tone of lovers' quarrel. Simultaneously, the 'Keeper of the Orchard' also seeks a metamorphosis and manifests himself as a potential male principle of a god. It is for him that she finally offers herself. And the final offering passage is highly exciting with its intimate symbolic analogy to the feminine physical beauties of attraction. There is a catalogue of fruits brought as an offering:

The fallen hazel-nuts
Stripped late of their green sheaths
The grapes, red-purple,
Their berries
Dripping with wine,
Pomogranates already broken
And shrunken fig,
And quinces untouched
I bring thee as offering.
Where:
'
fallen' 'hazel nuts' stand for the eyes
'red-purple' 'grapes' for lips
'broken' 'pomegranates' for breast
'shrunken' 'fig' for genital organ
'untouched' 'quinces' for thighs

of the woman who offers herself to the male potentiality.

The poem "Hermes of the Ways" which also got published along with "Priapus" is the invocation of the hermetic or the magical spirit of the sea. The occult power of the sea is at once the creator as well as the enjoyer of the game of the sea waves and the winds. The first part of the poem consistently brings forth the natural phenomenal activity of the sea-shore where the sea winds break the 'hard sand', by way of turning it into small transparent grains floating in the wind. These grains form themselves into sand dunes whose shape reflects the wavy structure of the winds and to which the waves of the sea dash themselves. So far, it is a beautiful idyllic picture of the seascape edged by a landscape. It is the interaction of the winds and the waves that created that beautiful dunes. But, in the second part of it this outward creative activity gets juxtaposed with the interior and subjective creative activity. The inner subjective creative activity
is the antithesis of the above formula. But the end of the both activities is the same. In the first part, the activity is wild and vigorous but in the second part it is silent simple and rather subdued. It is this subdual ultimate which and creative elan/is potential/that gets compared by the poet with the mysterious hermetic and occult manner of the sea creating the beauty of the sand dunes. The inner sea of creativity is rather:

Small is
This white stream
Flowing below ground
From the poplar-shaded hill
But the water is sweet

Here again, the creative instinct, with all its passion for creativity is obvious. But it is suggested in a very placid and silent manner. The creative activity on the beach is elemental in structure. But the creative activity of the inner creative complexity of the poet is organic and instinctive. The interacting agents here are the sun and the vegetation. Just as on the seashore, in this formula also, there is that green vegetating formula of wavy performance, the result of which is the late born apples, through the energetic activity of the sun. The exact symbolic implication of the poem suggest the antic manner in which a poem gets created in the mind of the poet. In a way, this poem can be considered as a symbolic expression of the process of a poem coming into a being. In
between sexual imagery is implicit.

H.D.'s Poetry of Sublimation through Submission

The contemporary psychoanalytical critics, like Norman N. Holland and Joseph Kiddle, feel that H.D.'s poetry, at the deepest psychic level is derived from the universal feminine situation expressed in the technical concept of penis envy or a wish to obtain the male genital. The 'universal feminine situation' implies the essential procreative mothering instinct. Though we do find in her early poetry a sense of loneliness and desolation or even a struggle in the state of psychic aberrations and trauma, but it never implies from her poetry that she is aggressive. On the biographical plane, hers is the pack of anguish and agony for the loss she incurred from her love. In her poetry, she pours her elemental urge for the sublimation through submission of her self, her consciousness, and her interior world of dreams and fantasies. It is a kind of aspiration towards a solace and relief through unfolding her agonizing storm within which she sometimes shows through her sexual hankerings and hesitations. Sometimes, the images suggest the wildness and force of the elemental nature. Her poetic imagination directly interacts with the phenomenal objects of nature, in the context of which, there is a direct conflict of her sentiments with the general and ordinary meaningfulness of the objects. As a result, the objects represented in the images are picked as poetic material, altogether
for a different purpose than to give a definitive or descriptive proportions of the objects. There is always that instinctive passion for creation, which takes a precedence over her imagination, which gets emotionally and evocatively reflected in her moods. In her poetry, a pear, a hazelnut, a pomegranate or a shrunken fig are introduced with a great emotional evocation. They are suggestive metaphors for something else which ultimately represents passionate involvement both with the acts of imaginative and physical creativity. In this kind of reflecting at the creative urges, she assumes upon herself the feminine personality of a passive partner with all readiness to surrender herself. It is in this surrender she achieves the highest intensity of desire seeking sublimation or what modern sexologists and psychologists call female orgasm. As a concept, the proposition of female orgasm is a recent innovation in the psychological studies of interpersonal relationship. One may say that the poets like H.D. and Amy Lowell are the forerunners of the modern female liberation movement which is popularly called 'lib' movement. In her poetic exactions for female sublimation through orgasm she slightly becomes exceptional and even abnormal. There is a popular charge against her that she suffers from the psychological envy of the phallus for obvious reasons. But the sort of passionate grudge or envy she expresses towards male potentiality, represented through phallus, is only a matter of poetic
stylization to express her openness, frankness and readiness of her instinctive desire for a proper union. In the long traditions of male dominated societies, female, with all her niceties was relegated to a position of a nonentity. The person and the personal demands of woman are never openly recognized or acknowledged as any worthy properties in these cultures. The open-heartedness of H.D., which sometimes was misjudged as an impossible feminine aggression, is in fact her fond manner of seeking a free and frank open-hearted explorative communion with the opposite sex. The psychological critics unfortunately misconstrued it as a 'penis envy' or a wish to obtain a 'male genital'. This kind of psychological abnormality is usually true in the case of childhood and in the adolescent cases of frigidity in woman. In no way we can consider the poised poetic-anxiety of H.D. as an expression of her frigidity or otherwise incapacitated sexual capacity. But, however, there are those childlike operations of 'penis-envy', symbolically represented in her poetry; and they only tell of her open-hearted, innocent, childlike manner of exacting for the bliss of union. In this sense, it is only her poetic stylistic manner of approach towards the problems of sex in life. Her frequent allusions of the classical world of Greece and Sapphic way of summoning all the senses of the body and the soul exemplify this conflict. Pound also said, while describing H.D.'s poetic strength in her poetry, that she was "straight as
the Greek". 11

The Autobiographical Tint of Attachment in H.D.'s Poetry

In the autumn of 1913, H.D. decided to marry Aldington, six years younger than she. In the beginning they appeared to be a perfect match. H.D.'s "Sitalkas" got published in the fall 1913 issue of The New Freewoman, just after her marriage with Aldington; and it copiously reflects the self-supposed, perfectly adjusted manner of H.D. with her marriage.

Thou are come at length
more beautiful
than any cool god
in a chamber under
Lycia's far coast,
than any high god
who touches us not
here in the seeded grass,
aye, than Argestes
scattering the broken leaves. 12

(C.P.88)

This is one of the passages which shows her initial exuberance of joy and happiness in getting married to Aldington. This is a rare confessional piece which has the autobiographical tint of attachment. In the above poem, 'thou' refers to Aldington and it is her way of poetically celebrating the hymnical joy of her marriage. In the poem, H.D. implies to say that the advent of Aldington in her life is superior to that of one's getting the solace of the gods at any level of man's existence. The references to the 'cool god', 'high god' and 'Argestes'
suggest her finding happiness in all her intellectual emotional and sexual life.

**H.D.'s Imagistic Technique**

When H.D. came to London, Pound was taking interest in Hulme's ideas. Secondly, Aldington had already started writing vers libre. After coming to London, H.D. Aldington and Pound began reading Greek literature. H.D. Aldington and Flint also began to study Henri de Regnier, Remy de Gourmont and other contemporary French poets. Pound introduced H.D. to Hulme who wanted to add a new dimension to his concept of art. H.D. found Hulme's ideas interesting. From Hulme H.D. learnt both the processes of discovery and disentanglement, as the proper modes of writing poetry, which are the basic assumptions of the formulation of the Imagist tenets.

Janice Robinson writes about H.D.'s Imagistic technique:

> The metaphorical layer of meaning in H.D.'s poetry, the layer at which the landscape in nature is a metaphor for the landscape of the mind and body, is one of the most complex in the work. It is interesting because it is deliberately ambiguous; the body referred to metaphorically may be either the physical body or imagination. There is, in fact, the suggestion that these two dimensions of reality are related, but the same.

It is true, that in H.D.'s poetry the landscape in nature is a
metaphor for the landscape of the mind and even body, as H.D. builds her images of nature as the replicas of her impressions of experiences on her physique and mind but the metaphorical manifestations seem interesting not only because of their deliberate ambiguity but also because of her understanding of nature as an anthropomorphic entity, maintaining in itself all the human tendencies and aspirations. Conversely, H.D. believes that man himself acquired these tendencies and aspirations from nature directly. So, there is always a possibility of exploring parallels in nature and man. For an inventive poet, these parallels become the points of discovery. To her, the interiority and the exteriority of man are not in any way different from the interiority and the exteriority of nature. Her poetry shows that the elemental forces of nature are hidden in the human nature too. They are in the garb of sophisticated, artificial, refined and rather controlled and restrained nature. She wants to reveal this hidden truth and wants to live her life true to her elements, as crude and as wild as nature, by tearing off the fake garb of artificiality and sophistication that usually encumbers man to tradition, civilization and culture.

The sense of freedom, that she seeks for her body and soul, both sensual and intellectual, are to some extent influenced by D.H. Lawrence. After her marriage with Aldington they
started living in Kensington. The intrusion of Pound caused tension in their personal lives. So, they soon left their room in Kensington and moved to Hampshire Heath. Here their new neighbours were Frieda and D.H. Lawrence. Referring to H.D.'s association with D.H. Lawrence Barbara Guest writers that there;

... began the friendship with D.H. Lawrence, who would be after Pound and Aldington, one of H.D.'s "initiators" since neither H.D. nor Lawrence was capable of an ordinary relationship what was established between them became, intense, arbitrary, passionate — ending in disappointment and anger.14

The statement is quite revelatory of the personal nature of relationship between Lawrence and H.D. It is exactly from this time onwards, that H.D. sought to incorporate depth-analytic revelatory manner of inventing appropriate poetic images suitable for her inner complexities of existence.

Imagery of Contrary States of Feminineity

The intensity of passion is reflected through H.D.'s six-line poem "Oread", a master-piece of H.D.'s Imagist verse. Pound cites this poem "in the Vorticist manifesto, ranking it with Kandinsky and Picasso".15

Whirl up, sea
Whirl your pointed pines
Splash your great pines
On our rocks,
Hurl your green over us,
Cover us with your pools of fir.

(C.P. 81)
Where the physical voluptuousness of exploitation fails
there a gentle entreaty succeeds in the case of woman. The
above six lines are an invocation to the sea, wherein it was
asked to 'splash' its 'pointed pines on our rocks'. 'Our
rocks' should give us the clue for the riddle-like meaning
involved in the image. To speak of the sea waves, as pointed
pines, is deliberately odd and unconventional but one signifi-
cant quality of a pine tree is to grow very tall, massive
and stubborn. So, the pineyness of the waves must refer to
the decisive manner in which the huge waves incessantly dash
the rocks on the shore. In this continual activity of the
sea waves, dashing on the rocks, there is a great sense of loss
of energy and futile effort on the part of the sea. However
massive and huge might be the effort of the sea, nothing exactly
results on the rock with this effort. So is the state of a
frigid woman who is like a rock, on whom the entire potential
vitality of the sea (a usual symbol in H.D.'s poetry to suggest
at the potential creative activity) turns into a waste of
energy. But, however, the passionate manner, in which she in-
vokes the sea, suggests the femininity exacting for a wild
and vigorous onslaught. Psychologically speaking, this is a
strange nature abnormally found, sometimes, particularly in
frigid women out of disgust, because of their physical incapaci-
city to come to the requisite emotional heights, they are
capable of inviting a deliberate wounding or chastizing from
their partners. It is this kind of feminist desire that is expressive in the first four lines. But the next two lines are altogether opposite of the above. This part may be taken as the antithesis, whereas the thesis is proposed in the first four lines. The juxtaposition of the thesis and the antithesis has a strange innovative effect. These two lines are expressive of self-care born of self-pity which emerges out of fear of being wounded physically. The rash-bravado manner of the first four lines totally metamorphoses here into a sort of seeking for warmth and comfortability. This is another state of her femininity which is diagonally opposite to that of frigidity. It is fulfilment that is sought here. For which the sea, requested to 'hurl your green over us/ cover us with your pools of fir,' is again interestingly a prickly image; fir being a coniferous tree with needle placed singly on the shoots. Simultaneously, in the whole poem, there is a hidden suggestion that it is not at all the wild vigorous manly onslaught that fulfils the feminine entity. On the other hand, it is a graceful and artistic submergence of her totality with a sort of mingling in possession. Incidentally, the slight prickly manner of physical provocation adds to the zest. Hence, the desire for 'pools of fir' suggests innumerable such gentle prickings.

Certain aspects of the above poem have a close resemblance to Japanese haiku and tanka, when she particularly juxtaposes
two antithetical activities of the elemental force of water in the image of sea. Here violence is juxtaposed with niceity, delicacy and grace. But, however, H.D. was aware of the nearness of the poem to the Japanese haiku and tanka verse forms, hers was the model of epigrams of Greek Anthology.

H.D.'s Greek adaptations made the critics call her a classicist. Hellenism, Sapphic music, Greecian landscape and Greek epigrams have contributed for the Greek sculptural quality of her poems. The Collected Poems of H.D. published in 1925 including Sea Garden (1916), Hymen (1921) and Heliodora and Other Poems and her translations from Iphigeneia Hippolytus and Odyssey gives a unified impression of H.D. Greek association.

Also these poems show her perfection in Imagist craftsmanship. They are written in vers libre with precision and control. H.D.'s search for the aesthetic perfection sharpened her craftsmanship. The poems, included in this collection, are delicate in structure, expressive through natural artifacts, aesthetic in their harmonious built, spontaneous in the movement and exciting in their artistic presentation.

In one of their pre-marital flirtatious visits to Capri, Hilda and Aldington together reenacted among themselves what all they read in the famous Greek anthology. It is all a sort
of very free and uninhibited manner of adopting for themselves
the ecstatic Greek stylistics of love and mythology. In this
context, the words of Aldington are worth recalling here. Says
Aldington:

Youth spring in a Mediterranean Island, Greek
poetry, idleness ... Those were the days when
Greek was an intoxication of delight ... when
the white violet was peculiarly sacred ... becaus e it was the flower of Meleager ... But
then we were happy, then we were near the gods
... There were wild pear trees in blossom, the
green silver olive gardens ... little cyclamen
flowers ... purple anemones, green lizards ...
sunny rocks ... Strangest of all came from close
at hand the shrill, pure note of a reed-pipe,
made by one of the boys who guard the goats. It
was as if Lacon and Daphnis were not dead, but
still making music for Pan.16

The above passage is abundantly illustrative of the jubilant
and exciting manner in which H.D. and Aldington spent their
trip to Capri. But, however, there is a great personal
trouble with H.D. always in her life. The initial romantic
exuberance fades quickly and quite often intermittently she
dalls into a fit of prosaic drabness. Even the individual
poems are absolutely illustrative of the antithetical status
of her authentic self. But, however, in poetry, being a perfect
craftsman, she does not allow the drab prosaic emotional moments
of her poetry reflective of her personal drabness. On the other
hand, like a great poetic craftsman, she effects such moments as stylistic antitheses of her massive voluptuous exuberant romantic heights. But in personal life, the manner, in which she changed her stations as well as lovers speaks for the fact that familiarity for more than a few hours or days literally breeds in her a contempt followed by ruthless hatred towards them. In all probability, Hilda is a high flown poetic romantic whose romanticism neither assures a permanence of exquisiteness on ecstasy nor does she get adjusted with the natural alternative heights and the opposites, as it could be done by the traditional romantics.

H.D.'s Imagery of Elemental Forces of Nature and the Greek Mythological World

H.D.'s imagery depicts the impulses of nature. Her poetical refuge to the Greek world reflects her rejection of modern urban life. This rejection, takes us to her world of nature, where the Greek characters move around in their passionate freedom of existence, from any kind of known institutional structures and prerogatives. In breaking the moral, ethical and even personal conventions and convictions the Greek mythological characters find a great assertion of their own personal individualities. Such is the credo of H.D. in her poetry. Quite often, she might appear to contradict herself but these contraries provide the essential aesthetic base for
her craft. They can be taken as poetic reverses or sudden expositional shakes appearing sometimes in the middle and very often at the end of her poems. To illustrate the same, the following poem, "Storm" can be taken as an example:

You crash over the trees
you crack the live branch—
the branch is white,
the green crushed,
each leaf is rent like split wood.
You burden the trees
with black drops,
you swirl and crash—
you have broken off a weighted leaf
in the wind,
it is hurled out,
whirls up and sinks
a green stone.

(C.P.52)

H.D. attributes to the storm all the anthropomorphic violent destructions. The whole poem is more or less a heart-rending depiction of the elemental havoc perpetrated by the storm. It is in one simple word-picture, lyrically appended in the last line, that provides the antithesis for the whole destructive phenomenal activity of the storm. The images of destruction are continually proposed in an ascending order, until they become absolute heavy weights on the mind of the reader. They turn the reader desolate and frustrated. That may be the personal reflections of the poet too. But, however, in the last line we have the 'green stone' image. The leaves, that are
destroyed by the storm, are whirled into the wind. Ultimately, they come down and fall on the earth like static green stones. The 'green stone' image is important here. By calling the leaves 'green stone' she is attributing a permanence to the leaves. The obvious manner in which they appear as green stone, is reminiscent of the sepulchral stone. They are green because they are the sepulchres of the leaves—very apt burial stones of course. Hilda's usual poetical theme is her emotional ups and downs, having intimate connection with her feminine expectancy and frustration thereof. The destruction of the outward storm, described through the packed images, symbolically refers to the inward storm that might have raged in the mind of Hilda.

**Imagery of Primitivity**

In the poem "Huntress," we discover the images of primitivity. The speaker of the poem is the huntress, extending a challenging invitation to 'blunt your spear', that is, to follow her in the act of hunting. The huntress is not alone. She speaks, as though, she is the mouth-piece of all the huntresses. Therefore the plural 'with us'— 'us' simultaneously connotes the royal plural.

Come, blunt your spear with us,
Our pace is not
and our bare heels
in the heel-prints—
we stand tense—do you see—
are you already beaten
by the chase?

(C.P.32-33)
After extending the challenging invitation, she gives a wild and hazardous description, of how bravely and heroically they have to pursue their task. Their pace has to be quick ('hot') and they have to run 'bare heels in the heel prints' suggesting that there are no trodden paths available in the forest. For obvious reasons they are tense, because they have to chase into the wilderness. In this chase the invitees are likely to get scared and exhausted. The expressions, like 'are you already beaten by the chase' and 'Spring up — ... at our feet,' are highly suggestive of the pride of expertise with which the huntress jeers and casually intimidates her followers. There are many other lines in the poem which the huntress speaks with a rare conviction of expertise and prowess, wherein she knows no defeat. But, at the same time, the huntress-activity symbolically refers to the manner in which the female principle speaks with an ingiven uniqueness of being superior in force and conviction. Just like the huntress, the female principle in nature goes on a challenging expedition, in which she always feels a pride of being an inexhaustible formula of energy. On the contrary, the male principle in nature is susceptible to quick exhaustions and failures. But, however, at the end of the poem there is an encouraging address extended to the male principle:

Spring up — Sway forward—
follow the quickest one,
aye though you leave the trail
and drop exhausted at our feet.

(C.P. 32-33)
H.D.'s Mysticism

John Gould Fletcher, while reviewing the twenty seven poems of H.D.'s first Imagist volume *Sea Garden*, says:

The great mystics, whether they call themselves Christians or pagans, have all this trait in common -- that they describe in terms of ordinary experience some super-normal experience. The unpractised reader picking up H.D.'s *Sea Garden* and reading it casually might suppose it was all about flowers and rocks and waves and Greek myths, when it is really about the soul....17

Fletcher wants to suggest that H.D. is a mystic capable of successfully dabbling with the metaphysics of 'soul'. But, Fletcher should have said the feminine soul, if we can be permitted to speak of the possibility of the genderical distinctions in souls also. It is much better to call it the abstract feminine principle, stripping itself off with a mind to make public the personal yearnings of the female principle in the universe. In this context, one may say that she is one uninhibited feminist capable of poetically assorting or even exacting for the freedom of the feminine prerogative. It is true, that H.D.'s poetry, from an apparent judgement reflects that she is instinctively expressive of the elemental forces of nature, its artifacts, taking a refuge in the Greek mythical world, but at the core they are just the simplistic expressions of the deeper impressions. The images are commonplace but the
authentic experience of the poet they embody is lofty.
As an Imagist deals more with the manner than the matter of
what he has to say, the composition of the images, individually as well as in their welding together, creates an 'intellectual complex' (to borrow the expression of Pound) in the mind of the reader. H.D.'s imagery, though from an apparent reading, does not reveal her mysticism, it in no way fails to create such a complex through its intricacy and delicacy of structure, connotative variations, lightning reflexes, apart from the musical, symbolic and dramatic juxtaposition within it.

H.D.'s ordinariness of experience, in the choice of image, is there in the poem "Sea Iris" where there is a deep rooted mysticism. The poem is one of the many flowers of her 'Sea Garden'.

I

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

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

II

Do the murex-fishes
drench you as they pass?
Do your roots drag up colour
from the sand?
Have they slept gold under you--
Rivets of gold?

Rand of iris-flowers
above the waves
you are painted blue
painted like fresh prow
stained among the salt weeds.

(C.P.53)

In this poem the image of sea-iris comes as the symbol of existential principle of being. In the world of struggle and conflict the hope remains alive, as the sea-iris blooms from the sea weeds erect in the sea waves. It is the zest of life that we notice when we read 'Do your roots drag up colour from the sand?' From the reality and earth-clinging attitude of us we keep our hopes alive. Though apparently our hopes seem brittle but our optimism never gets deterred even if 'one petal like a shell is broken'. This particular line reflects the personal set back H.D. suffered in her love life. The aroma of the sea-iris is the aroma of hopes that makes man exist in this world of 'sand' and 'mass-weed'. From the struggle itself, we acquire an increased zest of life and learn the art of 'courage to be' (to borrow the expression of Paul Tillich).

H.D.'s Metaphysical Imagery

This inherent mysticism of H.D.'s poetry makes us say that the poems particularly of Sea Garden are like Egyptian
characters or symbols used in place of letters are Egyptian hieroglyphs. Through such characters a picturesque narrative emerges. A hieroglyph is an objective image picked from nature combining sight and sound. H.D.'s poems have such symbols as the symbols of the sacred things carved in the Imagistic mode. Every symbol, used, has a subtle meaning inherent. H.D.'s "The Helmsman" can be considered in this context.

O Be swift—
We have always known you wanted us.

We fled in land with our flocks,
we pastured them in hollows,
cut off from the wind
and the salt track of the marsh.

We worshipped inland—
we stepped past wood-flowers,
we forget your tang,
we brushed wood grass.

We wandered from pine-hills
through oak and scrub-oak tangles,
we broke hyssop and bramble,
we caught flower and new bramble fruit
in our hair: we laughed
as each branch whipped back,
we tore our feet in half buried rocks
and knotted roots and acorn-cups.

We forgot—we worshipped,
we parted green from green,
we sought further thickets,
we dipped our ankles
through leaf-mould and earth,
and wood-bank enchanted us—

and the feel of the clefts in the bark,
and the slope between tree and tree—
and a slender path strung field to field
and would to would
and hill to hill
and the forest after it.
We forgot--for a moment
tree-resin, tree-bark
sweat of a torn branch
were sweet to the taste.

We were enchanted with the fields
the tuft of coarse grass
in the shorter grass--
we loved all this.

But now our boat climbs--hesitates--drops--
climbs--hesitates--crawls back--
climbs--hesitates--
O be swift
we have always known you wanted us.

(C.P. 4-5)

Here we have idyllic impressions of the popular life styles,
fondly recalled with a sense of fulfilment and contentment.
But, however, the vivid and fond manner, in which the past
life styles involuntarily ebbed to the surface of the memory
plane suggests the unforgettability of the events of life.
The speaker knows, for certain, that none of those particulars
of life lived and lost are capable of being re-enacted.
Therefore, there is a mere recollection which in itself is
abundantly expressive of the fond impressions that life imparted
on the being in the course of its continuance. The
images pertinently lend to life spent on the land. Presently,
the journey is in the helmsman's boat. The helmsman is being
appraised of the past of the being. The protagonist also
knows, for certain, that the helmsman always 'wanted us'. It
suggests that so long the life was being spent on the land, he
was after 'us'. At last he could put 'us' in his boat for further journey. The poem is reminiscent of the spirit of Emily Dickinson and her metaphysics. An enviable story of life is being appraised to the helmsman.

**H.D. as a dramatic artist**

The technique of image-making in H.D.'s poetry is her objective approach to the subjective aspect of an image. That is to say, she visualizes an image with a divided personality; one who observes the image and reacts accordingly; and another who observes the image and the observer's reaction. She tries to make the patterns of the ripples produced by the visualization of the image and the organic whole of the image. Here, the recording of the impression is objective and subjective side by side. The observed and the observer influence each other. The distance between the observed and the observer gradually gets reduced. Then, for the poet, there comes the need of splitting his personality because there remains no distinction between the subjectivity of the observer and the objectivity of the observed. The observer and the observed become one and the same. The need of the third becomes an essential aspect to record the impressions of both the object and the subject. But the true perception of the ripples of the subject becomes plausible when the third one is borne out of the observer to record the impressions. All this implies that Hilda is a very subtle dramatic artist. The dramatization
of hers is certainly not the outcome of that Aristotalian boached concept of imitation. It emerges out of the expressive counters of her deep-felt authenticity. Incidentally, the observer in her poetry is also the maker of the observed. It is in this sense that the poetic world of H.D. is unique and ingeniously opposite to the general world of common experience. It is, however, the fullness and completeness of the dramatic world of hers with its weeds, flowers, tree-barks, forests, sea-waters turned into substantive poetic characters.

What we gather from H.D.'s imagery is her search for the elemental chord of kinship between man and nature. Her vision is the vision of the crude realities of man, the primitive spirit that he has veiled, and the wildness that he has suppressed forcibly and ruthlessly through institutionalization and civilization. She tries to visualize this inner passion in its primeval force of a hunter or a fisherman. The rapid whirling of sense perception of the images effects the agitation and urgency of the senses. It is a kind of assemblage of tumultuous physical and spiritual repercussions of the observer comprehending the image. It may happen so, that the existence of the image, the shape and the mould of the image, its contours and colours may remain in a perpetual flux. The image may get dissolved and take new shapes creating commotions in the mind of the reader. The poet tries to ensemble the everchanging image and encodes his impressions with shades, with clusters
of impressions, unrelated to one another, but related to the object if it is an object at all. This is the unique stylistic manner of Hilda as an Imagist. Therefore, H.D.'s imagery is of a kinaesthetic kind, where one sense perception is implied in various other senses and the complicated whole quite strangely enters into a musical filigree.

**H.D.'s American Spirit in her Imagery**

H.D.'s divided personality gets even splintered into opposite warring counters in her expressions. As a result of which there emerges a significant manner of self-search in the insupportable hollowness of the interiority. Her refuge into the classical world and her plunge into primitivity reinforce her true Americanness. Rachel Blau Duplessis in her recent study of H.D. has not rightly studied the kind of Americanness evolving out of the classical and primitive burst of H.D.'s poetry and she says that it is possible to see her "... lyrics are coincidentally Greek; the landscapes are American, the emotions are personal, the 'Greek' then becomes a conventional". ¹⁸

H.D.'s poetry is not Greek coincidentally but it is Greek in its mould in its natural and inevitable course of a romantic under a need and urgency to escape from the realities of the world around, that is, the excessively mechanized and urbanized world of America. It is rather a reflection of her true image,
the image, that she holds in her American identity, which is rootless, shattered and full of struggle and adventure. It is the struggle for existence that unites the American land and its people that struggle to stride into classical manifestation through H.D.'s journey into the world of Greece. She discovers the most needful primitivity and wildness, for herself, in the Greek world of free and frank entanglements and onslaughts. To her, even Imagist tenets are nothing new and the Imagist poetry is nothing bizarre. In certain discussions of poetry in her novel Hedylus, she reflects that the Imagist poetry is Greek only and it is quite old too. Her landscape is never American but the spirit of American life is what we perceive through her 'Greek' experience. About her American-ness, her friend Winnifrid Bryher has something different to say, from what Duplessis has expressed:

She took me to Bethlehem where
H.D. has been born. Hilda was
Greek, it is true, but her training
and background came through every
word she wrote. Her long residence
in Europe merely intensified her
love, for her native country, and
to me she has always been the most
American of poets.20

It is evident from the above, that it is not merely the landscapes, that are American but her very poetic spirit is abundantly American, in the sense, that she passionately falls after the assertion of freedom unfettered and uninhibited
freedom of inverting oneself and looking at the interiority with a great objectivity. The same objectivity is consequently focussed upon the people as well as the landscapes of America. The wild, desperate and carefree spirit of the life of every American is what we note in her poetry. She wants to be liberated. But her sense of liberation is static and dynamic simultaneously. By dynamic liberation, we mean the return to the primitive world reviving the thwarted elemental aspects of life and breaking open the artificiality of civilized living. The various artifacts of nature, in which she discovers the crudity of life, are not confined to her personal emotions, but they are the manifestations of the latent elemental force suppressed under the layers of formal taboos. She tries to capture the ripples of the primitive instinct that emerge in the subconscious state of mind.

Janice Robinson, another critic of H.D., is, to some extent, right in her reflections on H.D.'s objective process of presentation. She says:

H.D.'s poetry is objective in the primitive or archaic sense; it includes the present and the past with no attempt to distinguish between them, but excludes the realm of future.21

H.D. visualizes the past with the eyes of the present and therefore her poetry being classical in spirit does not lack the modern perception. Her revolt is against the masks of
refinement. She wants to break the shell of trivial values of the present day. Her primitive tone itself is a sort of protest against artificiality of life. She is not an escapist in the romantic sense but she suggests at the path of discovering one's soul by way of revelatorily entangling with what the ancient Greeks had done in their literature, myths and life. She had not distinguished between the past and the present because, for her, the past never died. It was never considered as something bygone or lost. In not taking future into any serious consideration, she only suggests that one day or the other future becomes present and then alone its inalienable association of the past becomes evident. So long future remains future it is ungiven, unassured and unnecessary to fondle with. Thus the design of temporality of H.D. maintains no relevance, provides no place for future. Precisely, so to say, H.D. is not a dreamer. Her imagination seeks a solid ground of operation in the past, which in itself becomes a plinth of her poetic superstructure in the present.

H.D.'s Symbolic Imagery

H.D.'s imagery, from the classical world and the primitive world, becomes acutely symbolic when she goes to dispose it artistically and imagistically. About language through which H.D. encodes her imagery T.E. Hulme's view seems appropriate. Hulme says:
The great aim of poetry is accurate, precise and definite description. The first thing to recognize is how extraordinarily difficult this is. It is no mere matter of carefulness; you have to use language and language is by its very nature a communal thing. But each man sees a little differently and to get out clearly and exactly what he does see, he must have a terrific struggle with the language.

H.D. encodes the images after a true and terrific struggle with the words. She weighs every word at its connotative and denotative level and examines its exactness and appropriateness. After the arrangement she sincerely follows the preciseness of the image and its development and juxtaposition with the other images keeping the aspect of influence of one image on the other images, its identity and individuality. In the poetic course every image becomes widely connotative. The same image is capable of adducing innumerable impressions. It is in this elusive sense that she is symbolist. To substantiate her symbolistic worth of images we may consider the poems "Sea Rose" and "Sea Violet".

**SEA ROSE**

Rose, harsh rose
marred and with stint of petals,
meagre flower thin,
sparse of leaf,
more precious
than a wet rose
single on a stem--
you are caught in the drift.

stunted, with small leaf,
you are flung on the sand,
you are lifted in the crisp sand
H.D. in the first two stanzas of the above poem brings a comparison between the 'rose' which is 'harsh' and the 'rose' which is 'wet'. The preciousness of a 'harsh rose' is substantiated in the third stanza. If we examine the adjectives used by H.D. the wetness of a rose could be understood as it is literally possible but the harshness of a rose is metaphorical. And H.D. calls a harsh rose more precious than a wet rose. To develop the image of a harsh rose she goes to the physical state of a harsh rose in the beginning. She says that a rose is harsh because it is 'marred', it has 'stint of petals', it is 'thin' and 'meagre flower' and it is 'sparse of leaf'. It is harsh in the sense that it is stubborn without being washed off by the 'drift'. The 'drift' makes it 'flung on the sand'. The wetness of the rose is accounted by the poet as a rose which is 'single on a stem'. For H.D. the rose that has lost almost all of its petals, that which has been driven by the wind from sand to sand in the drift of the sea waves, that is to say a rose (an adolescent) who disregarding or denying its tamed life (the clutches of the conventions) plunges into the wildness (unshackled herself according to her own ways) is a more precious one than a 'wet
rose' which has yielded to the conventions and artificial modes of life although being unhappy in its surrender. Precisely the 'harsh rose' gets a preferential treatment in the poem, over and above the 'wet rose'. This is so because the 'harsh rose' is the one which could substantially remain itself even in the destructive harsh realities of life. The poem shows H.D.'s conviction that the real struggling man or a person who really takes work as a challenge is many times superior to the delicate, sophisticated and flimsy person, who always gets washed away by movements. One who stands against the current movements is really heroic. He is even superior to the rose itself which is called as 'spice rose' because of its delicate fragrance. The rose is all important because of its fragrance only. But the fragrance that 'drips' from the 'harsh rose' is superior to the fragrance of the 'spice rose' also. The word 'drips' is calculatedly used. A worker drips his sweat and performs his task. 'Harsh rose' dripping the fragrance symbolically refers to such courageous manner of toiling and withstanding. In this way the image of rose becomes several symbols at a time.

In the next poem "Sea Violet" there is a significant colour imagery through which a sort of spiritual meaning is suggested. The image of 'violet' in its togetherness with the colour-codes attain the status of symbol.
The white violet
is scented on its stalk,
the sea-violet
fragile as agate,
ilies fronting all the wind
among the torn shells
on the sand-bank.

The greater blue violets
flutter on the hill,
but who would change for these
who would change for these
one roof of the white sort?

Violet
your grasp is frail
on the edge of the sand-hill,
but you catch the light—
frost, a star edges with its fire.

(C.P. 36)

In this poem H.D. considers three kinds of violets; the white violet which remains in its stem with its fragrance; the sea-violet of red colour facing the sea-winds lies on the sandy shore in the company of shattered shells with its transparence; and the blue violet fluttering on the hills. For H.D. the colours of the violets from plains, hills and sea have different connotations. The whiteness and fragrance, the redness and transparence, the blueness and mercurial nature are symbolic of three different stages of life cycle. But it may happen so that the cycle of life may get struck at a particular stage. The poet conceives these three stages as three different states of man's emotional development from
redness to blueness and from blueness to whiteness of the violets. The redness implicating heroic subsistence, the blueness suggesting the worldly manner of entangling with romantic love and whiteness signifying spiritual piety and purity are the three implicit stages from youth through middle age to old age.

H.D.'s Greek Sculpture-like Imagery

The symbol-image condensation of H.D.'s imagery and the snapping of the images from the classical world have produced rock-chiselled Greek sculpture-like poetry. The poems she has written have produced concrete but intensely connotative imagistic patterns. The words she chooses to express her emotions, are accurately suggestive, profusely dynamic, profoundly impressionistic, sharply dimensioned and subtly musical in their operation. Her poem "Orion Dead" is the best example of combining all the Imagist tenets together in balance.

ORION DEAD

The cornel-trees
uplift from the furrows
the roots at their bases
strike lower through the barley sprays.
So arise and face me
I am poisoned with rage of song.

I once pierced the flesh
of the wild deer,
now I am afraid to touch
the blue and the gold-veined hyacinths.
I will tear the full flowers
and the little heads
of the grape-hyacinths;
I will strip the life from the bulb
until the ivory layers
lie like narcissus petals
on the black earth.

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

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

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

(C.P.84-85)

The 'cornel-tree' is rather an unwanted weed in the barley field. The connotative pun with cornel here is suggestive of all her disgust with her extra-marital affairs in the married life. But, however, their roots are far below the delicate marital bond suggested through 'barley sprays'. The poem exactly is a challenging invitation to all her near ones to face her. She considers herself to have been poisoned by a 'rage of song' suggesting that she is extremely roused in her anger towards the type of disgusting affairs. She further confirms that she could be wild to the extent of piercing the flesh of the 'wild deer' (wild deer probably with her bare hands), but presently she is afraid to touch 'the blue and gold-veined
hyacinths'. It suggests that somehow she lost her courage to assert her personal prowess. She even goes to the extent of nurturing the idea of self destruction.

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

The narcissus who usually revolves in the direction of the sun is symbolic of passionate love towards the fiery sun god. But presently she prefers the petals lay dead as, the black earth. In the latter half of the poem the challenge becomes decisive and wild reflecting her invincible fury. The blazing of the cornel-wood and its striking of the barley sprays is again indicative of her hatred towards the manner in which she is being passionately enticed by her old lovers, threatening her marital harmony. The last four lines are confessional in tone and reflect at her extreme hatred of herself.

The poem, from the very title takes a mythological frame-work. Orion according to Greek mythology "...was the handsomest man alive. He fell in love with Merope. Her father Oenopion, promised Merope to Orion in marriage if he would free Oenopion's island from the dangerous wild beasts that infested it. Orion performed the dead and brought Merope the pelts, but Oenopion claimed wild animals were still
living in the hills--the truth being that he was himself in love with his daughter." 23

The poem develops a mythological image of Orion who is considered dead by the poet. The presentation here is symbolic of H.D.'s disgust with married life because of Pound's love for her even after her marriage with Aldington. Also the rift that takes place between H.D. and Aldington is symbolically and imagistically built up drawing an image from nature. The dwarfish 'cornel-trees' uplifting 'from the furrows' imply the regeneration of the latent love and degeneration of the apparent conjugal love. The conflict in the marital life is noted from the lines that follow 'So arise and face me/ I am poisoned with rage of song'. The dwarfish cornel-trees have been considered by H.D. a forceful symbol of rage and protest. The line "the cornel-wood blazes/and strikes through the barley sprays' reflects the burning within. The line also connotes the burning of love and passion. H.D. has artistically exploited the Greek myth to show the love of Ezra Pound for her and her conjugal life devoid of most necessitous consummation. Her rage is pronounced through the fourth strophe and the fifth strophe of the poem. But the speaker here does not know the end of this rage; and the breaking of the 'staff' and 'the tough branch' may or may not light her life. But in her life she has lost pace with the wind'. Yet
her rebellion continues. The repetition of /a/ sound and the long diphthongal and long vowel sounds reflect the acuteness of the tension and conflict in her life. The verbs 'pierced', 'tear', 'strip', 'bend', 'slay' and 'break' all indicate to the spiritual separation and disruption in the conjugal bond reinforcing the theme of protest and rebellion. The repetition of 'I' implies the individualistic identity and the ego of the speaker. And the beginning of the poem shows the acute emphasis the speaker lays on the conflict and subsequent tension of her mind. A beautiful use of 'bases' and 'sprays' and 'blazes' and 'sprays' shows the association of conflict and rage.

The Moravian Hymnal-Influence in H.D.'s Imagist Technique

We always find an eternal zest for primeval realities of life and a hope for spiritual enlightenment in H.D.'s poetry. Her Moravian background has influenced much in this context. There is a considerable impact of the Moravian hymns here. Jacob John Sessler has something particularly interesting to say about the strange manner of Moravians singing their songs in the church services. Says Sessler:

A knowledge of hymnal as well as of the Bible was required for inspiration and instruction. Instead of singing all the stanzas of a hymn or several stanzas of the same hymn, they sang selected stanzas from many hymns, successively or interspersed by prayer, testimony or address; according to the nature of the service.24

H.D.'s poem "Hymen" can be considered in the light of the Moravian hymns.
The crimson cover of her bed
Is not so rich, nor so deeply bled
The purple-fish that dyed it red,
As when in a hot sheltered glen
There flowered these stalks of cyclamen.

(Purple with honey points
Of horns for petals;
Sweet and dark and crisp,
As fragrant as her maiden kiss.)

There with his honey-seeking lips
The bee clings close and warmly sips,
And seeks with honey-thighs to sway
And drinks the very flower away.

(Ah, stern the petals drawing back;
Ah rare, ah virginal her breath!)

Crimson, with honey-seeking lips,
The sun lies hot across his back,
The gold is flocked across his wings.
Quivering he sways and quivering clings.
(Ah, rare her shoulders drawing back!)
One moment, then the plunderer slips
Between the purple flower lips.

(C.P. 157-158)

Parenthesized passages in the above poem act as juxtaposed lyrics from somewhere beyond the poem. But, however, the variation is much more prominent in their lyrical movement rather than in the impressions created by the images. It is here that it resembles with the folk Moravian formula of singing bits of various hymns together in a sequence. In fact the parenthesized passages can be set for altogether a different musical tuning and pace than the main body of the poem.
The main event is rather descriptive of a celebration of Hymen. The intermediary ejaculations are the contingent expressions of lyrical ecstasy and wonder. At the outset a description of the bed of 'stalks of cyclamen' flowers haunted by the 'honey-seeking' bees is of central importance. The allegorical connotations suggest that women sought after by men in order to satisfy their desire and passion. This kind of figurative expression is not something new in the lyrical poetries of almost all nations. The juxtaposed interlocutions are extended lyrical expressive bits of carnal desire, wonder, shame and inhibitions uttered by the observer, that is the poet. The poet emotionally gets attuned to the passionate moment she observes in her personality. What the poet observes is the swarming of the bees at the flower bed with the passionate purpose of squeezing and plundering the honey. Figuratively it may be considered as the imaginative act of deflowering the flower, in which sense it is the celebration of breaking the hymen.

The poem is highly effective because of the interlocutory ejaculations expressive of H.D.'s dramatic and passionate reactions. On observing the passionate scene, the bee struggling to withdraw is highly suggestive of male aggressiveness and female passivity which are highly desired and liked by both the parties. In this context the words of Barbara Guest
are highly significant. Says she that H.D. discovered a little figure of 'The Hermaphrodite' at the "Diocletian Gallery" which "would haunt her future trips to Rome and she would always visit it. How early H.D. was attracted to the physical unification of male and female! She may have suspected even in her pre-Freud days the depth of her own bisexuality."25

**H.D. Imagistic Tools and Imagistic Process**

In H.D.'s poetry we often come across the rare finish of a sculptor. Sometimes we have frescoes and sometimes full-drawn sculptured figures of men and women actively involved in the affairs of their lives. In the poem "Prayer" from *Hymen*, H.D. prays to the goddess of poetry to equip herself with the instruments of sculpturing her poems.

Give back the glamour to our will the thought; give back the tool, the chisel; once we wrought things not unworthy, sandal and steel-clasp; silver and steel, the coat with white leaf pattern at the arm and throat: silver and metal, hammered for the ridge. Of shield and hamlet-rim; white silver with the darker hammered in, belt, staff and magic spear-shaft with the gift spark at the point and hilt.

(C.P.209-210)

In the above poem H.D.'s prayer is for acquiring poetic tools of sculpturing. The tools of creating a poem is expressed
here which deals with how to express her emotions. The poem we consider below is about what she wants to express. We can distinguish two kinds of activities that H.D. performs when she writes a poem; the activities of thought and brooding and the activities of expression and structuring. Both these activities are simultaneously available for the reader in each and every poem. In the poem "Wash of Cold River", the epigraph to Heliodora from Heliodora she speaks about her thought process that takes place before the process of expression. The poem significantly exemplifies her entire poetic activity.

Wash of cold river in a glacial land
Ionian water, ...

In the same poem she further states:

intimate hands and dear
draw garden-ward and sea-ward
all the sheer rapture
that I would take
to mould a clear
and frigid statue;....

(C.P. 215-216)

The expression 'garden-ward' and 'sea-ward' is clearly indicative of the entire poetic scope of H.D. In fact there is nothing else in her poetry except gardenscapes and seascapes. In a way these gardenscapes and seascapes preleptically encumber
the total purpose of being human in the world. It is a
sort of rare finish taking the artistic shape of poetry in
her hands.

Sappho's Influence on H.D.'s Poetry

There are some poems in H.D. which are inspired by the
translations of Sappho into English. In this connection she
mainly depended upon Henry T. Wharton's translations. Sappho's
poetry is intensely personal and expressive of her commitment
to the feminine prerogative in the interpersonal relations
of man and woman. Her lyrics are highly charged with a complex
poetical effort at signifying the necessity of recognizing
the individuality and the personal uniqueness of being a woman.
The free, frank and open-hearted manner in which she speaks
of her peculiarities and excesses particularly attracted the
attention of H.D. (for example we consider "Fragment Forty-
One").

I was not dull and dead when I fell
back on our couch at night
I was not indifferent when I turned
and lay quiet
I was not dead in my sleep.

Lady of all beauty,
I give you this
say I have offered small sacrifice,
say I am unworthy your touch
but say not:
"she turned to some cold, calm god,
silent, pitiful, in preference".

(C.P. 269-270)
While the influence of Sappho is obvious on the poetical structure of the above lines, the confessional manner in which she clarifies her own stance in her love-life. She is exactly monologuizing to her partner about her own reason for her probable indifference or for her failure to come upto the requisite passionate expectancies in the love act. She suggests that her falling back 'on our couch at night' and her 'turn(ing) and lying quiet' are likely to be mistaken as her indifference towards the partner. Her intimate manner in which she makes confession convinces us that she is sincere. In fact she has no real convincing explanation for the manner in which she behaved. She certainly has a desire to come to the expectation of her partner. But she failed, the reasons of which are beyond her. Therefore she makes amends and promises a sort of re-dedication in future. Moreover, her indifference and her dullness and deathliness are likely to be mistaken, and she has a fear that her partner would support her. She might even be doubted to be maintaining a secret love towards somebody else. What all she wants to clarify is that at least there is none else in her love life.

but say not: 
"she turned to some cold, calm god, silent, pitiful, in preference."

According to psychologists the possessive instinct in men and women makes them inwardly suspicious of their mutual
partners' total devotion towards themselves. This kind of suspicion and doubt is very common. But, however they never come out with open verbal arguments about their suspicions. One of the plausible reasons for the failure of one or the other partner is to be found in the divided devotion and love. The partner here wants to make it certain that her counterpart should not mistake her behaviour as the symptom of divided love and devotion.

Coming to the real situation of human mind and its capacity to be constant there is always a question. Mind is not a static phenomenon, it is an ever-changing and never-resting phenomenon of associations. That does not mean that men and women are incapable of unified devotions. With all the unified devotions, the mind at least would not change its phenomenal manner of free and frank associations in its interiority. Self-contradiction is a usual phenomenon in human mind. But, however, that should not become a cause of outward disruption in the possible devotions to each other. So to say man has to exist with inward incessant contradictions and outward inevitable constancies. In a sense in this poem we have an innocent plea of the speaker to her partner to accept her and that he should not mistakenly understand her involuntary contradictory behaviours as suggestions and symptoms of divided devotion.

The eccentric manner of the affair itself becomes clear when we notice that the partner addressed to in the monologue
is also a woman ("Lady of all beauty"). Lesbian dimensions of the passage are obvious. But at the same time more prominent are the reiterations of the devotions. Lesbian connotation is definitely arresting but the devotional posture entices our sympathy. Our sympathies are all the more strengthened on seeing the helpless manner and free and frank manner in which she instantly and uninhibitedly speaks her mind out. The poem has the abrupt frankness of the sort that we find in John Donne. We should not forget here that John Donne is another English poet who learnt his poetic techniques from Sappho's satires. Sappho is a satirist who never spares herself also; and so is H.D.

Mary Bernard in "A Footnote" of her translation of Sappho's poems quotes Rowra's views about Sapphic verse which clearly mentions what is Imagistic in it that might have lured H.D. to experiment that form:

The sense of her poems goes naturally with the meter and seems to fall into it, so that it looks like ordinary speech raised to the highest level of expressiveness. In her great, range of different meters there is not one which does not move with perfect ease and receive her words as if they were ordained for it.26

The natural flow of rhythm and the 'highest level of expressiveness' through 'ordinary speech' are two very important and essential aspects of Imagist poetry. The natural flow of
rhythm points to the very characteristic of *vers libre* and the colloquial speech is what Amy Lowell has added to earlier tenets in her revised manifesto of Imagist movement. The highest level of expressiveness is nothing but an implication that we gather from Ezra Pound's definition of an image which is to create an 'intellectual complex' in the mind of the reader.

**Freud and H.D.**

The study of H.D.'s Imagistic patterns would be incomplete if we don't bring into H.D.'s association with Freud as well as his writings when she was experimenting the Imagistic techniques. When H.D. was in Scillies she experienced something of her getting lost in the space quite disembodied. She described her experience to Freud:

> We were in the little room that Bryher had taken for our study when I felt this impulse to "let go" into a sort of balloon, or driving bell...that seemed to hover over me...when I tried to explain this to Bryher and told her it might be something sinister or dangerous, she said "No, no it is the most wonderful thing I ever heard of. Let it come..." I felt I was safe but seeing things as though water. I felt double-globe come and go and I could have dismissed it at once and probably would have, if I had been alone. But it would not have happened, I imagine, if I had been alone.27

H.D. left for Cornwall during the autumn of 1918. Here in Cornwall Aldington had an affair with Flo Fallas who was a
friend of Cournous. H.D. was well aware of it but she developed a pathological fear of pregnancy. H.D. turned to Cournous when the War separated herself from Aldington. But the relationship did not prolong much. H.D. had led a part of her life with Cecil Gray in Cornwall. The affair started early. The affinity has had interesting influences on H.D.'s poetic writings. Gray had already confessed before asking her to come to Bosigran that he had fallen in love with her. Gray wanted to become a musicologist and later he became a distinguished critic of music. And in Cornwall a few months later H.D. found herself pregnant. Perdita H.D.'s daughter in 1947 saw Gray in Capri and she told Barbara Guest that "...seeing him was like looking at herself."27 Perdita's birth caused the divorce of H.D. and Aldington. Winnifrid Bryher who read the poems of H.D.'s Sea Garden became an ardent lover of H.D.'s poetry. She became a friend and nurse to H.D. The hallucinatory experience of H.D. shows the intense relationship she had grown with Bryher which though resulted in an extreme strain developed her hyper consciousness towards the world. During this time H.D. was writing her Notes on Thought and Vision. In her Notes she wrote about Bryher, Lawrence, her dream of a super-world and her views on the Greeks and Moravians. H.D.'s lesbianic attitude in her later Imagistic verse shows how "...she wanted to use her sexuality strengthened by Bryher's fixation on her."29
H.D.'s longer poems Hippolytus Temporizes, The War Trilogy; The Walls Do Not Fall, Tribute to the Angels, and The Flowering of the Rod are in a sense strewn garlands of innumerable short Imagistic poems. In fact her long poems can be conveniently separated into innumerable short poems. But, however, the unifying force of them lies in the couplet form, as against the vers libre pattern of her short pieces; and these long poems run like beautiful unending poetic arguments. Also in the long poems there is a considerable shift from the world of ancient Greece to the world of the Bible. This shift also contributed for the possibility of these long poems. There is a continual running thread of spiritual devotionalism, which in its turn rendered the long poems feasible and profound. But in all probability the real brilliance of her poetry, even in these long poems, emerges out of the flashes of short concrete, clear and easy to grasp Imagist assemblages. That way the long poems of H.D. need a separate study.
FOOTNOTES

1 Quoted in H.D., Hermetic Definition (New York: New Directions, 1972), The Jacket note by Robert Duncan.


5 End to Torment, pp.22-23.

6 End to Torment, p.14.


8 H.D. 'Imagists', "Verses, Translations and Reflections from 'The Anthology'," Poetry, 1. No.4 (Jan.1913), 121-122.

9 Ibid, pp.118-120.


H.D., *Collected Poems of H.D.* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1925), p.88. Henceforth the passages quoted from the collection all through the chapter will be mentioned with C.P. against every passage.

Janice S. Robinson, p.51.


Quoted in *Herself Defined*, p.53.


Janice S. Robinson, p.73.

23 Janice S. Robinson, p.75.


25 Barbara Guest, p.51.


27 Quoted in Barbara Guest, p.119.

28 See Barbara Guest, p.96.

29 Barbara Guest, p.120.