

# Joan Jonas's Imagist Poetics

Catherine Spencer

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## Joan Jonas's Imagist Poetics

Joan Jonas has frequently emphasized her work's indebtedness to modernist poetry, particularly early twentieth-century Imagism, declaring that she has "thought of the structure of poetry from the very beginning," and deployed this "very consciously" when creating performances and videos.<sup>1</sup> Jonas encountered the writings of H.D., Ezra Pound, W. B. Yeats and Ernest Fenollosa through her MFA in sculpture at Columbia University (awarded 1965), during which she took a course with the literary critic Frederick Wilcox Dupee.<sup>2</sup> These poets provided models of structural intensity, compression and experimentation with "telegraphic" styles like the haiku, which moreover self-reflexively address the perceiving subject's experience of mediation.<sup>3</sup> Yet most considerations of the connections between Jonas's work and Imagism, while noting her use of poetry as a source, stop short of any deeper assessment of its formal and conceptual implications.<sup>4</sup> What are we to make, then, of statements by the artist such as her assertion in the compendium *Video Art: An Anthology* of 1976: "I think of the work in terms of imagist poetry"?<sup>5</sup> Imagist poetics, I argue, has provided a decisive way for Jonas to explore the image's psychological and sociocultural operations. Understanding the impact of Imagism on Jonas's work has ramifications in turn for wider theorizations of the relationships between video, performance art and the image, notably regarding their intersections with modernism, psychoanalysis and feminism, as well as their engagement with the narcissistic gaze.

Launched in a 1912 manifesto signed by Richard Aldington, H.D. and Pound, Imagism flourished during the early 1910s in Europe and the US.<sup>6</sup> Inspired by tenets of vitalism and individualism, Imagists advocated purging language of all superfluous detail, description and narrative content. "Direct treatment of the 'thing' whether

subjective or objective” was a priority, and the carefully honed image became integral to this process.<sup>7</sup> Paradoxically, however, the image bridged the real with the metaphysical.<sup>8</sup> Drawing a comparison with Karl Marx’s theorization of the commodity fetish, Daniel Tiffany observes that the “modernist Image” is at once “a material thing, unmediated by any form of exchange or transference, and a metaphysical thing, imperceptible to the senses, which arises in the act of exchange (or translation) to become the object of collective hallucination.”<sup>9</sup> The Imagist conception of the image is therefore intensely dualistic, merging facticity with transcendence, literalism with recalcitrance: qualities that Jonas pursued through performance and video.

Of all the poets Jonas has claimed as interlocutors, H.D. (the pen name of Hilda Doolittle) holds a preeminent position.<sup>10</sup> In 2002, Jonas used H.D.’s poem *Helen in Egypt* (1961), an epic reimagining of the Helen myth, as the basis for her video performance *Lines in the Sand*.<sup>11</sup> This essay, however, adopts a deliberately anachronistic approach, asserting the relevance of H.D.’s writing – the early Imagist poems, but also the densely-layered prose and autobiographical texts, especially her account of undergoing analysis with Sigmund Freud – for Jonas’s adoption of performance and video in the early 1970s.<sup>12</sup> In the first section, I propose that group performances like *Choreomania* (1971) and *Delay Delay* (1972) drew on Imagist poetics to generate fluid, ephemeral image juxtapositions that addressed the workings of consciousness and perception, specifically in relation to memory and the image’s afterlife. The second and third sections contend that H.D.’s significance for Jonas goes beyond structural considerations. I read Jonas’s affinities with the women’s liberation movement and feminist reinterpretations of psychoanalysis through H.D.’s *Tribute to Freud* (1956), in order to show how the artist’s performance and video

images are linked to modes of visionary experience that contrast Freud's connection between the image and narcissism.<sup>13</sup>

Scholars analyzing the image in performance art have predominantly either critiqued its association with spectacle and commodification, or excavated the performative potentialities of documentation.<sup>14</sup> Diverging from both routes, Jonas's treatment of the image illuminates the associations between performance, its mediation and literary modernisms.<sup>15</sup> While art historians have meticulously investigated performance art's incontrovertible ruptures with modernism and formalism during the 1960s, scholars including Elise Archias, Frazer Ward and William R. Kaizen have shown how performance's relationship with modernism and medium involves intricate overlap rather than complete severance.<sup>16</sup> Tracing Jonas's Imagist poetics reveals the fusions of corporal, psychic, and socio-political experience in her performances and videos, as well as their connections with feminist, psychoanalytic and materialist approaches to the gendered body, and to the interplay between individual subject and historical process.

### Image Generators

In 1972 Jonas assembled an audience on the roof of 319 Greenwich Street in New York City. Looking down on the space below, they watched as a group of thirteen performers moved through a section of Manhattan's Lower West Side that had been scheduled for redevelopment but where construction had slowed, leaving piles of rubble stretching to the dilapidated piers.<sup>17</sup> Dressed in white with orange headbands, for approximately one hour the performers conducted activities reminiscent of children's games, generating a constant image stream.<sup>18</sup> One rolled along the ground

inside a metal hoop, their limbs spread like a star. Another ran across the lunar-like landscape, grasping a jagged shard of mirror that transmitted flashes of reflections. Groups of people filed past and repeatedly clapped blocks of wood together above their heads. At one point, the performers painted two white circles and a line in the middle of the road, to the perplexity of an oncoming motorist (fig. 1).<sup>19</sup>

By elevating the audience in *Delay Delay*, Jonas flattened the action on the ground and rendered it into a series of interconnected images devoid of verbal exegesis. Douglas Crimp noted how this distancing tactic, which Jonas used in several outdoor performances, enabled the artist to uncouple sound and vision – the rooftop viewers saw the blocks come together before the resulting crack ricocheted back to them – and thereby destabilize the subject. For Crimp, Jonas’s use of de-synchronization challenged the presupposition of a centered self that could either fully generate or comprehend the work, so that both performer and spectator were revealed to be “decentered, split.”<sup>20</sup> Yet *Delay Delay* also reflects the impact of poetic composition on Jonas’s practice, specifically the artist’s conviction that “a poem is like a condensed image.”<sup>21</sup> *Delay Delay* did result in de-synchronization, but it also manifested Jonas’s desire to construct referentially concentrated image sequences.

H.D.’s most well known poem *Oread* (1914) powerfully encapsulates the association Jonas makes between poetic composition and condensation:

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.<sup>22</sup>

H.D. conveys the ocean's vitality by folding its form and action into the visual metaphor of pine trees, without subordinating either image – of sea or forest – to the other. *Oread* epitomizes Imagism's push towards ever more concentrated images, but at the same time shows how this reification results in forcefully expressive but ambiguous states. As the literary critic Susan Stanford Friedman observes, H.D.'s title signals that the poem's center is not actually the sea or forest, but the perceptions of an Oread, a mountain nymph from Greek mythology. Through its turbulent evocation of inchoate emotions, Friedman contends, the poem ultimately addresses the experience of consciousness, rather than the external world.<sup>23</sup> Despite being stripped of excess content, the modernist Image produces meaning that refuses to be symbolically anchored, veering between the concrete and the highly enigmatic.

The image in Imagism is, of course, paradoxically non-pictorial.<sup>24</sup> However, *Oread's* operation can be compared to that of *Delay Delay*, with its disparate images like beads threaded onto a string, at once bluntly literal (metal hoop, mirror), and intractably ambivalent. *Oread* holds two images in suspension to bring about a new state that resists resolution into a single entity.<sup>25</sup> Jonas similarly links multiple visual components that together crystalize the urban environment of New York City, while simultaneously underscoring the multivalency and hence instability of signification and perception. Jonas made the twenty-minute 16mm film *Songdelay* (1973) in conjunction with *Delay Delay*, which tracks similar movements to those in the performance, while oscillating between close-ups and bird's-eye perspectives. For Crimp, these shifts prevent the viewer from assuming complete knowledge of, and by extension ownership over, the environment.<sup>26</sup> Equally, it is through the fragmentation

and abstraction caused by curtailed, desynchronized viewpoints that images in *Delay Delay* and *Songdelay* become archetypes, containers for multiple possible desires, memories and associations, including but not limited to the threat of their imminent obliteration as a result of rampant real-estate speculation.<sup>27</sup>

A year before *Delay Delay*, Jonas had already invoked the framing, flattening device of the projection screen in her indoor performance *Choreomania* (1971). The audience gathered at one end of Jonas's loft, facing a large rectangular wooden barrier that was suspended in the air by chains snaking around the ceiling beams. A mirror partly covered one side of the structure, which was fashioned for Jonas by the sculptor Richard Serra.<sup>28</sup> The barrier occluded and revealed, fracturing the action as it swung back and forth, while reflecting the blurred, ghostly forms of the spectators (fig. 2). Jonas compared this effect to the wipe in film editing, enabling transitions from one image-sequence to another.<sup>29</sup> The performers moved around the wall executing various gestures, one moment doubled in the mirror, the next vanishing from sight. They circled hand in hand, clapped blocks of wood above their heads, and processed with a large light bulb that flicked on and off, imprinting images on the audience's retinas after the blackout.<sup>30</sup> *Choreomania* culminated with slide projections of art historical images onto the wall, including Egyptian frescos, Medieval landscape paintings, and Renaissance portraits, which flitted across the mirror, and were re-projected around the space using hand-held mirrors.<sup>31</sup> Performers quixotically poured water over the large mirror in order to try and reflect the colors in the projections, attempted to fit their bodies inside fleeting shapes and designs, and raised sheets of paper to ensnare segments of a projection, conjuring the eyes and mouth of a portrait from the air like rabbits from a hat (fig. 3).<sup>32</sup>

As its title indicates, *Choreomania* was awash with physical encounters between the performers and the images they created. Both it and *Delay Delay*, during which audiences were exposed to dense image relays, alluded to the structures of film and video.<sup>33</sup> Jonas acquired a Sony Portapak on a trip to Japan in 1970, and although she did not realize her first video works until 1972, *Choreomania* and *Delay Delay* correspond with her conviction that the technology functioned imagistically.<sup>34</sup> Decades later, Jonas reflected how video provided: “an added nonnarrative layer in a kind of condensed poetic structure,” comparable to “the writings of the American Imagists.”<sup>35</sup> The qualities Jonas valued in video – the rejection of narrative, and capacity to generate multiple images that telegraph without foreclosing meaning – were equally present in *Delay Delay* and *Choreomania*.

*Choreomania*'s slide projections register Jonas's MFA studies in art history with Meyer Schapiro as well as modernist poetry, correlating in particular with Aby Warburg's concept of “*nachleben*” or afterlife.<sup>36</sup> Warburg proposed that the relationship between the historian and their objects of study is imbued with performative empathy; through each encounter the remnants of the past are brought into being anew via the actions of association and interpretation.<sup>37</sup> In notes for his Kreuzlingen lecture *Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America* (1923), Warburg refers to “memory images,” whereby recollections are “consciously accumulated in images or signs.”<sup>38</sup> Warburg's approach to images as vehicles of associative accumulation informed his *Mnemosyne Atlas*, a compilation of photographic reproductions, popular prints, astrological charts and stamps gathered from 1924 until his death in 1929. By arranging and constantly re-arranging these items on large panels covered with black cloth according to non-linear, subjective affinities rather than preconceived categories, Warburg hoped to trace how images



from classical antiquity recurred across cultural manifestations (fig. 4).<sup>39</sup> As with H.D., it was only later that Jonas drew on Warburg directly, using the Kreuzlingen lecture in *The Shape, the Scent, the Feel of Things* (2004–6).<sup>40</sup> However, Warburg's notion of the image's affective afterlife corresponds with the concurrently materialist and irrepressibly psychic operations of images in early performances like *Choreomania* and *Delay Delay*.<sup>41</sup> Attentiveness to the psychic ramifications of the image forms another significant link between Jonas's work and H.D.'s writing.

### Psychic Images

During a 1973 discussion with the artist-filmmaker Carla Liss and dancer Simone Forti, Jonas connected her approach to image generation with the emergence of second-wave feminism: “my work had always been about releasing images and tensions from my psyche, within the framework of structure and a perception of space. But the [women's liberation] movement helped me in asserting and understanding my individual female content.”<sup>42</sup> Jonas did not read H.D.'s *Tribute to Freud*, which comprises the two texts “Writing on the Wall” (1944) and “Advent” (1948), until she was developing *Lines in the Sand* in the early 2000s.<sup>43</sup> Nonetheless, the poet's account of her analysis with Freud helps to elucidate the image's role in Jonas's work, especially as it relates to the construction of gendered subjectivity. While H.D. deeply admired Freud, she also questioned his interpretations of the images from her unconscious that she presented during their sessions, anticipating feminist re-readings of Freud that extended this critical perspective on psychoanalysis.

Jonas's 1970 performance *Mirror Check* is rooted in what the artist remembers as a period of fervent feminist questioning about the body and the patriarchal gaze.<sup>44</sup> *Mirror Check* began life as a short, self-contained episode within the longer performance *Mirror Piece II*, before migrating into the video performance *Organic Honey's Vertical Roll* (1972–4).<sup>45</sup> During *Mirror Check*, Jonas stood naked in front of the audience, holding a small circular mirror in one hand. After regarding her face in the sliver of silver, Jonas extended her arm and moved it across her body, continuing to peer into the mirror's surface as it relayed glimpses of her flesh back to her. In a photograph from 1972 by Roberta Neiman of *Mirror Check* at the Ace Gallery in Venice, California, the inspection Jonas subjects herself to seems overtly impersonal, even clinical (fig. 5).<sup>46</sup> The muscles in Jonas's right arm and neck are sculpted with tensile energy, the skin corded with veins; she lifts her left arm for examination with intense concentration. Both arms point stiffly sideways, like a clock metering out time. Anne M. Wagner captures *Mirror Check*'s exacting control: "A technician seems to speak through it – think of 'sound check' as an immediate parallel – but here the naked Jonas plays the technician's role herself."<sup>47</sup> The performance undoubtedly tests the mechanisms for instigating and controlling the gaze, but crucially does so in terms of their effects on the psyche.

The choreography of *Mirror Piece I* (1969), performed at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson and the Loeb Student Centre, New York University, parodied the rococo patterns of Busby Berkeley dance routines.<sup>48</sup> Women arrayed in brightly-colored dresses and men in suits manipulated body-length mirrors which proliferated doubles, transmitting reflections of the other performers, audience members and shards of the environment (fig. 6). In *Mirror Piece II* (1970) at the 14<sup>th</sup> Street Emanuel YMHA, the mirrors were employed for a wider variety of tasks, and combined

with an audiotape of Jonas reading David Antin's "A List of the Delusions of the Insane: What They Are Afraid Of." First published in *Code of Flag Behavior* (1968), Antin's poem appropriated a list compiled by the Scottish psychiatrist Thomas Smith Clouston in his *Clinical Lectures on Mental Diseases* at the turn of the century, itemizing the hallucinations of over 100 women patients diagnosed with melancholia.<sup>49</sup> The cumulative impact of these visions, which Antin adapted only slightly, is one of extreme psychic fragmentation:

... being poisoned  
 being killed  
 being alone  
 being attacked at night  
 being poor  
 being followed at night  
 being lost in a crowd  
 being dead  
 having no stomach  
 having no insides  
 having a bone in the throat  
 ...  
 that their flesh is boiling  
 that their head will be cut off  
 that children are burning ...<sup>50</sup>

These violent paranoid fantasies resonated with *Mirror Piece II*'s choreographic references to the physical contortions associated with hysteria, notably a sequence during which a male performer dragged the rigid body of a woman across the space. The photographer Peter Moore captured the woman holding a mirror lengthways on her stomach, gripping the lower edge so tightly that her forearms rise off the surface, exhibiting a high level of tension that extends to her pointed feet (fig. 7). The man clasps his hand over the woman's eyes, blinding her. The woman's pose and the male performer's agency over it together recall the photographic iconography of hysteria developed by Jean-Martin Charcot at the Salpêtrière hospital in Paris during the nineteenth century, converging with Antin's poem to invoke the gendered policing of women's bodies and minds.<sup>51</sup>

*Mirror Check*'s provocation and frustration of the gaze of the clinician, technician, or analyst anticipates Luce Irigaray's critique of Western thought from the Enlightenment through to Freudian psychoanalysis as fundamentally phallogentric. Irigaray's meditation on the speculum – any “instrument to *dilate* the lips, the orifices, the walls, so that the eye can penetrate the *interior*” (italics in original) – culminates in a condemnation of the all-seeing but blindly unknowing invasiveness of the patriarchal gaze.<sup>52</sup> While the viewers apparently enjoyed unrestricted access to Jonas's body, *Mirror Check* generated a separate, secret mirror image that the audience could only experience vicariously, endowing it with oppositionality.<sup>53</sup> *Mirror Check*, by hiding what the mirror reveals, incites and denies what Irigaray terms “speculative intent.”<sup>54</sup> When performed as a segment within *Mirror Piece II*, *Mirror Check* served as a deconstruction of the physical and psychological control attempted through the concept of hysteria. The mirror image became a means of

preserving the psychic economy of the subject in the face of voyeuristic, disciplinary ways of looking and their attendant knowledge regimes.

Jonas's treatment of the mirror image in *Mirror Check* parallels H.D.'s examination of the image as a tool enabling strategic opacity. H.D.'s first period of analysis in 1933 lasted three months, and was followed by a second, five-week session towards the end of 1934.<sup>55</sup> In "Writing on the Wall" and "Advent," H.D. described how her dialogues with Freud both revolved around and occurred through images. Important recollections took the form of "transparencies in a dark room, set before lighted candles," and their conversations explored the hieroglyphic imagery of H.D.'s dreams.<sup>56</sup> H.D. lingered on the sculptures and archaeological fragments that stood sentinel on the desk and in the glass-fronted display cabinets of Freud's consulting rooms on Vienna's Berggasse (fig. 8), which, their owner informed his patient, provided a means of stabilizing the ideas uncovered through analysis.<sup>57</sup> These objects embodied the psychoanalytic process, whereby shards of thought and memory were "skillfully pieced together like the exquisite Greek tear-jars and iridescent glass bowls and vases that gleamed in the dusk from the shelves of the cabinet."<sup>58</sup> For H.D. and Freud, images provided a means of fusing multiple temporal and spatial referents, enabling transcendence of the present. This pursuit of re-signification corresponds with Warburg's concept of the image's afterlife, but H.D.'s account of the relationship between image and psyche also endows the image with the capacity to resist deterministic diagnoses.<sup>59</sup>

Supported emotionally and financially by her partner Bryher (Annie Winifred Ellerman), H.D. sought out her sessions with Freud in order to ascertain the meaning of two visionary experiences that she had undergone after a breakdown in 1919.<sup>60</sup> H.D. recounted the trance state that she fell into when staying with Bryher on Corfu in

1920, during which she saw images and writing flash across the wall.<sup>61</sup> A small three-legged lampstand sitting on the wash table morphed into the tripod of Greek Delphi, which H.D. interpreted as a symbol of poetry and prophecy, before the figure of Nike, goddess of victory, appeared.<sup>62</sup> Yet H.D. did not unquestioningly accept Freud's diagnosis of these images from her unconscious as symptoms rather than visions, rejecting the patriarchal speculum in favor of ways of seeing that prioritized multivalence.<sup>63</sup> In her autobiographical study *The Gift* (1969), H.D. contrasted the visionary perception that she believed she had inherited from her grandmother in Pennsylvania's Moravian community with the scientific rigor of her grandfather and her father's astronomical experiments.<sup>64</sup> H.D. in turn connected the phallic signifiers of her grandfather's microscope and father's telescope with Freud's psychoanalytic probing.<sup>65</sup> By contrast, the multifaceted images accessed through the matrilineal gift provided a means of eluding Freud's scrutiny, which caused her "bat-like thought-wings" to "beat painfully in that sudden searchlight."<sup>66</sup> H.D.'s resistance was distinctly feminist and queer, fueled by her anger at Freud's dismissal of women's creative agency, and the divergences between his writings on homosexuality and her lived experience as a woman who had relationships with both women and men.<sup>67</sup>

"Writing on the Wall" and "Advent" participate in the trans-generational feminist questioning of Freud that would in turn shape the context for Jonas's engagement with Imagism.<sup>68</sup> In 1970, the year of *Mirror Piece II* and *Mirror Check*, the New York-based radical feminist Shulamith Firestone proclaimed in *The Dialectic of Sex* that Freudianism and feminism were intimately connected, arguing it was "no accident" that Freud's writings on the unconscious had coincided with first wave feminism and the women's suffrage movement.<sup>69</sup> Firestone argued, however, that psychoanalysis and psychology had subsequently parted ways with feminism, and

actively suppressed rather than advanced women's liberation.<sup>70</sup> Four years later in the UK, the psychoanalyst Juliet Mitchell published her feminist reappraisal of Freud's legacy, pointing to the importance of his prioritization of sex and gender as the locus of psychic formation. Mitchell defended Freud against complete rejection by feminists, arguing that his writings on masculinity and femininity were informed by a culturally constructed rather than innately biological and essentialist understanding of gender.<sup>71</sup> As much as Irigaray and Mitchell interrogated Freud's thinking, they, like H.D., remained committed to psychoanalysis.

Yet while for Freud and his follower Jacques Lacan the image retained associations with narcissism and scotomization, H.D. understood her visionary images as permeated with what she described in *The Gift* as the "time-out-of-time" quality of psychic life.<sup>72</sup> The distancing effect in *Mirror Check* echoes the generative recalcitrance of Imagist poetics. For Jonas, this severance is not melancholic; the image in *Mirror Check* is cathected, transformed into a locus of power. Kathy O'Dell observes that while *Mirror Check* might appear "overarchingly narcissistic" and "exhibitionist," the fragmentation of the performer's body tends ultimately toward abstraction.<sup>73</sup> In the performance, self-imaging mediates between the material and the psychic, frustrating patriarchal structures of knowledge generation, while luxuriating in the threat to the phallic economy posed by the narcissistic female subject. Although *Mirror Check* is very different from *Choreomania* and *Delay Delay*, it too counters simulacral superficiality, instead accentuating the Warburgian capacity of images to act as trans-temporal psychic containers for memories and desires.<sup>74</sup>

Beyond Narcissism

*Mirror Check* demonstrates how Imagist poetics complicates the association of Jonas's work with narcissism. In her influential essay "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism" (1976), Rosalind E. Krauss references Jonas's *Vertical Roll* (1972) as an example of how early video performance challenged the modernist precepts of medium-specificity and autonomy of the artwork by making the psychological state of narcissism its medium.<sup>75</sup> Krauss compares the monitor with a mirror or pool that replicates the artist's image through video technology's instant feedback. Mapping this situation onto that of the relationship between analyst and analysand, Krauss identifies video's temporality as the perpetual recursivity instigated in the patient who is unable to coincide with the illusionary wholeness offered by narcissism.<sup>76</sup> Viewed from this Lacanian perspective, *Vertical Roll*, in which Jonas appears as if she is gazing enraptured at her own reflection via the camera, presents the transformation of "the performer's subjectivity into another, mirror, object," and the ensuing psychic entrapment.<sup>77</sup>

*Vertical Roll* exploits the effect of vertical de-synchronization, whereby the image "rolls" repeatedly up the screen. Glimpses of Jonas's body interrupt the flickering ripple of the vertical hold bar, which is supposed to keep the video image in check, with disorienting results (fig. 9). The roll thus signals the fragmentation of identity, while bearing the vestiges of authorial resolve, inferring that the subject preserves the facility to rupture the seamless circuit of technologically induced narcissism.<sup>78</sup> Although Krauss grouped *Vertical Roll* among works that tangibly assail the video mechanism in order to break the circumscribing feedback loop between performer and monitor, her framework nonetheless established narcissism as the dominant currency with which the image operated in performance for the camera during the early 1970s.<sup>79</sup>



In *Vertical Roll*, Jonas appears as Organic Honey, an alter ego that catalyzed a cycle of works merging performance and video. These began with *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy*, performed twice in 1972 at Lo Giudice Gallery, New York and in Rome (fig. 10), followed by nine performances of *Organic Honey's Vertical Roll* between 1972–4. Jonas also made two related but stand-alone videos, *Vertical Roll* and *Organic Honey's Visual Telepathy* (1972).<sup>80</sup> To create the Organic Honey persona, Jonas sourced a plastic kewpie-doll mask from a shop on New York's 42<sup>nd</sup> Street.<sup>81</sup> Jonas paired this objectifying mask with other costume fragments including a beaded crop-top, a beaded dress, and a feather headdress, the textures of which referenced the sublimated sexual desire of the fetish object (fig. 11). Developing Krauss's premise in "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism," Anne M. Wagner hypothesizes that artists working in performance and video circa 1970 strategically wielded narcissistic aggression to garner the attention of an audience.<sup>82</sup> Re-directed narcissism is one of the weapons in Organic Honey's arsenal, and the related performances explicitly enacted the narcissism that Freud attributed to the onset of puberty in the young girl.<sup>83</sup> Jonas's decision to perform *Mirror Check* at the beginning of *Organic Honey's Vertical Roll* underscored these connections with fetishism and narcissism, and this suite of works undeniably used narcissism to force viewers' awareness of their own surveillance in an era of screens and broadcast technology, while confronting them with what Amelia Jones has theorized as the "radical unknowability" represented by the narcissistic subject.<sup>84</sup>

Yet other dynamics are also in play.<sup>85</sup> The Organic Honey persona anticipates Jonas's later exploration of one of the most fetishized figures in literature through H.D.'s *Helen in Egypt* for *Lines in the Sand*. *Helen in Egypt* reimagines a lost poem by the Greek lyric poet Stesichorus, which imagined that Helen had actually spent the

Trojan War in Egypt while a phantom took her place in Troy. Just as H.D.'s Helen attacks, and thereby undoes, her treatment as simulacrum – “she whom you cursed / was but the phantom and the shadow thrown / of a reflection” – so too is Organic Honey an active creative agent.<sup>86</sup> *Organic Honey's Vertical Roll* used live feedback to transmit Jonas's mediated image alongside her physical form. Kneeling on the floor before the camera, Jonas executed multiple drawings, attempting communication through hieroglyphic, ideogrammatic signs, which were screened on the monitor and wall (fig. 12).<sup>87</sup> The technology thus extended the generation of images undertaken in *Choreomania* and *Delay Delay*. Jonas connected her desire to explore the “female psyche” with her acquisition of a video camera, indicating that for her it also facilitated feminist multiperspectivalism, countering the flattening, fetishistic and ultimately frustrated objectification of the narcissistic gaze.<sup>88</sup>

Video's materiality is significant in this respect. While Krauss focused on the mirror image created through the feedback loop between monitor and camera, other commentators in the 1970s noted video's combination of materiality with abstraction. In “The Surreality of Videotape” (1976), the artist Ingrid Wiegand contrasted the low resolution of early video to film, describing how the closer the viewer got to the video image, the more undefined it became.<sup>89</sup> The imprecision of the images generated by video, Wiegand averred, entailed that they “shimmer at the edge of the familiar, eliciting momentary glimpses of unconsciously articulated possibilities.”<sup>90</sup> The video practitioner Stuart Marshall comparably reflected that the disintegration of the video image into an electronic blur revealed how “as an object of desire it is properly elusive.”<sup>91</sup> In these accounts, the video image is not a coherent, easily accessible whole, but undefined and ambiguous. Video's combination of materiality and abstraction converged with Jonas's understanding of the image as concrete but

multivalent. The video images that Jonas incorporates into works like *Organic Honey's Vertical Roll* are not simply triggers that kick-start narcissistic or fetishistic desire, but unstable entities that might, like the writings of the Imagist poets, open up at any moment onto vertiginous depths, bridging conscious and unconscious realms.

Jonas's work across performance, film and video attests to a fascination with the afterlives of images, particularly their psychic reverberations and potential to act as instruments of feminist resistance against narcissism and fetishization. While their reductive, objectifying and simulacral dangers remain ever present, Jonas's images serve as mediators between lived, bodily experience and unconscious activity. Emerging at the intersection of literary modernism, Warburgian art history, psychoanalysis, and feminism, Jonas has consistently mined Imagist poetics to pursue modes of visualizing that are not easily consumable, and which offer oppositional possibilities.

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<sup>1</sup> Joan Jonas, interview by Karin Schneider, *BOMB* 112, Summer 2010, 67.

<sup>2</sup> Joan Jonas, in "An Exchange Between Joan Jonas, Susan Howe and Jeanne Heuving," in *Joan Jonas: Five Works*, ed. Warren Niesluchowski and Valerie Smith (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 2003), 133.

<sup>3</sup> Jonas, interview by Schneider, 67.

<sup>4</sup> A review of Jonas's 1976 *Stage Sets* exhibition at the Philadelphia Institute of Contemporary Art noted that, despite its prominence, "nothing much has been said about the imagery that pervades all her work." Jeanne Silverthorne, "Performance as Metamorphosis: The Art of Joan Jonas," *Philadelphia Arts Exchange* 1, no. 2 March/April 1977, 11. Joan Simon makes the connection in her introduction to a 2010 interview with the artist, quoting a transcript from the Documenta Archive in which Jonas states: "In a sense I'm an Imagist ... I put many different images together to

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create another kind of image in the audience's eye." Joan Jonas, cited in "Imagist," interview by Joan Simon, *Art in America* 98, no. 10, November 2010, 158. On Jonas and poetry, see also Marina Warner, "On Oracles & Treacle: Some Reflections of the Art of Joan Jonas," in *Joan Jonas*, ed. Niesluchowski and Smith, 89–93.

<sup>5</sup> Joan Jonas, untitled entry in *Video Art: An Anthology*, ed. Ira Schneider and Beryl Korot (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 73.

<sup>6</sup> Michael H. Levenson, "Symbol, Impression, Image, Vortex," in *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine 1908–1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 103–36.

<sup>7</sup> Ezra Pound, "A Retrospect" (1918), in *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. T. S. Eliot (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), 3.

<sup>8</sup> Rebecca Beasley, *Ezra Pound and the Visual Culture of Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 56.

<sup>9</sup> Daniel Tiffany, *Radio Corpse: Imagism and the Cryptaesthetic of Ezra Pound* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 60. Marx argued that social relationships between things quickly supersede those with their producers: "Through this substitution, the products of labour become commodities, sensuous things which are at the same time suprasensible or social." Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (1867; London: Penguin; 1990), 165.

<sup>10</sup> Rachel Connor notes that H.D.'s early writing has come to exemplify Imagist verse for many readers, in *H.D. and the Image* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 4.

<sup>11</sup> Together with the live version, like several of Jonas's performances *Lines in the Sand* exists in installation format, combining video projection with related props. See Jane Philbrick, "Paper Trail: (Re)Viewing *Lines in the Sand* and Other Key Works of

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Joan Jonas,” *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 26, no. 3 (September 2004): 22–7.

<sup>12</sup> H.D. became increasingly dissatisfied with the Imagist label. The writer’s account of her invention as “H.D.” during tea with Pound at the British Museum reverberates with patriarchal domination, as he: “scratched ‘H.D. Imagiste,’ ... at the bottom of a typed sheet, now slashed with his creative pencil, ‘Cut this out, shorten this line.’

H.D. – Hermes – Hermeticism and all the rest of it.” H.D., *End to Torment: A Memoir of Ezra Pound*, ed. Norman Holmes Pearson and Michael King (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1980), 40.

<sup>13</sup> Jonas was one of the artists included in Rosalind E. Krauss’s essay “Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism,” *October* 1 (Spring 1976): 50–64. Krauss’s essay and Douglas Crimp’s argument that the central effect of Jonas’s performances is “de-synchronization” constitute the two most enduring critical frameworks for the artist’s work. See Douglas Crimp, “De-synchronization in Joan Jonas’s Performances,” in *Joan Jonas: Scripts and Descriptions, 1968–1982*, ed. Douglas Crimp (Berkeley: University Art Museum, University of California, 1983), 8–10. Surveying the scholarship on Jonas in 2015, Pamela M. Lee argued that beyond these early interventions, the artist’s critical reception has “congealed ... into a rather monolithic edifice. ... More hyperbolic encomium than rigorous characterization.” Pamela M. Lee, “Double Takes: The Art of Joan Jonas,” *Artforum International* 53, no. 10, Summer 2015, 310. There are, however, several valuable sources on Jonas’s work, notably Joan Jonas, *In the Shadow a Shadow: The Work of Joan Jonas*, ed. Joan Simon (New York: Gregory R. Miller & Co., 2015).

<sup>14</sup> For a key account linking ephemerality with resistance to commodification and normativity, see Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (1993;

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Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2006). For counterarguments that outline documentation's performativity, see Amelia Jones, "'Presence' in Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation," *Art Journal* 56, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 11–18; Philip Auslander, "The Performativity of Performance Documentation," *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 28, no. 3 (September 2006): 1–10; and Mechtild Widrich, "Documents," in *Performative Monuments: The Rematerialisation of Public Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 13–52. More recently, Jones has pointed to performance art's heightened institutional visibility, and the concomitant danger of its curatorial and art historiographical ossification into "single iconic images." Amelia Jones, "'The Artist Is Present': Artistic Re-enactments and the Impossibility of Presence," *TDR: The Drama Review* 55, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 21.

<sup>15</sup> Jonas's work comes closer in this respect to Jack Smith's impressionistic, richly allusive performances in his New York loft, which Jonas has referred to as a key inspiration. Joan Jonas, "Jack Smith, 1970...", revised version of a text first published in the exhibition catalogue for *Queer Voice*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (2010), in *In the Shadow a Shadow*, ed. Simon, 141. On Smith, see Dominic Johnson, *Glorious Catastrophe: Jack Smith, Performance and Visual Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012); and in relation to the wider context of downtown performance, Jay Sanders with J. Hoberman, *Rituals of Rented Island: Object Theater, Loft Performance, and the New Psychodrama—Manhattan, 1970–1980* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 2013).

<sup>16</sup> See Elise Archias, "When the Body Is the Material," in *The Concrete Body: Yvonne Rainer, Carolee Schneemann, Vito Acconci* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 1–29; Frazer Ward, "Performance after Minimalism: Fantasies of Public and Private," in *No Innocent Bystanders: Performance Art and Audience* (Hanover, NH:

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Dartmouth College Press, 2012), 27–51; and William R. Kaizen, “Framed Space: Allan Kaprow and the Spread of Painting,” *Grey Room* 13 (Fall 2003): 80–107. These texts build on Krauss’s expanded conception of medium in her writings, on which see Rosalind E. Krauss, “*A Voyage on the North Sea*”: *Art in the Age of the Post-medium Condition* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000). On performance’s role in the modernist avant-garde, see Nell Andrew, “Dada Dance: Sophie Taeuber’s Visceral Abstraction,” *Art Journal* 73, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 11–29; Lisa Tickner, “The Popular Culture of *Kermesse*: Lewis, Painting, and Performance 1912–13,” *Modernism/modernity* 4, no. 2 (April 1997): 67–120; and RoseLee Goldberg’s foundational *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*, rev. ed. (1979; London: Thames and Hudson, 1988).

<sup>17</sup> Janelle Reiring, “Joan Jonas’ ‘Delay Delay,’” *The Drama Review: TDR* 16, no. 3 (1972): 142–3.

<sup>18</sup> Crimp recorded in 1983 for the Berkeley retrospective that, as a rule, Jonas’s performances lasted about an hour. Crimp, “De-synchronization in Joan Jonas’s Performances,” 10.

<sup>19</sup> Reiring, “Joan Jonas’ ‘Delay Delay,’” 146–7.

<sup>20</sup> Crimp, “De-synchronization in Joan Jonas’s Performances,” 8.

<sup>21</sup> Jonas, in “An Exchange Between Joan Jonas, Susan Howe and Jeanne Heuving,” 133. Jonas’s phrasing echoes Pound’s definition of the poetic “Image” as “that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time.” Ezra Pound, “A Few Don’ts” (1913), in “A Retrospect,” 4.

<sup>22</sup> H.D. “Oread” (1914), in *Heliodora and Other Poems* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1924), 31.

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<sup>23</sup> Susan Stanford Friedman, *Psyche Reborn: The Emergence of H.D.* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 56.

<sup>24</sup> Chet Lisiecki addresses the visual antecedes of Imagism in “‘A Sort of Metaphor’: Dynamic Figurative Language in Nietzsche, Pound, and H.D.,” *Modernism/modernity* 22, no. 2 (April 2015): 264.

<sup>25</sup> This correlates with what Karen Jacobs describes as modernism’s “multiperspectivalism.” Karen Jacobs, *The Eye’s Mind: Literary Modernism and Visual Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 9.

<sup>26</sup> Douglas Crimp, “Action around the Edges,” in *Mixed Use, Manhattan: Photography and Related Practices, 1970s to the Present*, ed. Lynne Cooke and Douglas Crimp with Kristin Poor (Madrid and Cambridge, MA: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia and MIT Press, 2010), 127.

<sup>27</sup> For Crimp, *Songdelay* captured the intense artistic creativity afforded by New York’s alternative spaces, but also understood the vulnerability of their provisional nature. Crimp, “Action around the Edges,” 125. On the art world’s involvement in the rapid erosion of these spaces, see Rosalyn Deutsche and Cara Gendel Ryan, “The Fine Art of Gentrification,” *October* 31 (Winter 1984): 92–111; and Aaron Shkuda, *The Lofts of SoHo: Gentrification, Art, and Industry in New York, 1950–1980* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016).

<sup>28</sup> In 1971 Jonas and Serra collaborated on the 16mm film *Paul Revere*, which interwove elements from *Choreomania* with Ray L. Birdwhistell’s 1962 essay “‘Redundancy’ in Multichannel Communication Systems” (published in *Kinesics and Context*, 1970). See Joan Jonas and Richard Serra, “Paul Revere,” *Artforum* 10, no. 1, September 1971, 65–7; and for an analysis Judith F. Rodenbeck, “Wipe,” in *Joan*



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*Jonas Is on Our Mind*, ed. Frances Richard (San Francisco: CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, 2017), 31–4.

<sup>29</sup> “Choreomania,” in *Joan Jonas*, ed. Crimp, 24.

<sup>30</sup> “Choreomania,” in *Joan Jonas*, ed. Crimp, 22.

<sup>31</sup> “Choreomania,” in *Joan Jonas*, ed. Crimp, 24.

<sup>32</sup> “Choreomania,” in *Joan Jonas*, ed. Crimp, 24.

<sup>33</sup> This relates suggestively to H.D.’s involvement with cinema. Bryher, H.D.’s partner for over 40 years, founded POOL Productions in 1927 with her then-husband the cinematographer Kenneth Macpherson and H.D. An essay attributed to H.D. on POOL’s only feature-length film *Borderline* (1930) relates its effects to art historical precedents from Leonardo and Botticelli to Corot, comparing the resulting layering with the dream’s unconscious operation. H.D., *Borderline: A POOL Film with Paul Robeson* (London: Mercury Press, 1930), 32. On *Borderline*’s framing of racialised “otherness” to explore a subtext of queer sexuality, see Tirza True Latimer, “‘Queer Situations’: Behind the Scenes of *Borderline*,” *English Language Notes* 45, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2007): 33–47.

<sup>34</sup> Joan Jonas, “Film and Video,” in *In the Shadow a Shadow*, ed. Simon, 375.

<sup>35</sup> Joan Jonas, “Transmission” (1998), in *Women, Art, and Technology*, ed. Judy Malloy (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 122.

<sup>36</sup> For an exposition see Georges Didi-Huberman, “Artistic Survival: Panofsky vs. Warburg and the Exorcism of Impure Time,” trans. Vivian Rehberg and Boris Belay, *Common Knowledge* 9, no. 2 (Spring 2003): 273–85.

<sup>37</sup> Kurt W. Forster elucidates how, for Warburg, the aftereffects of images mean that they “outlive their own time within the compendium of cultural memory.” Kurt W. Forster, “Introduction,” in Aby Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*:

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*Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance*, trans. David Britt (1932; Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 1999), 57. See also Griselda Pollock, “Whither Art History?,” *The Art Bulletin* 96, no. 1 (March 2014): 11.

<sup>38</sup> Aby Warburg, “Memories of a Journey Through the Pueblo Region,” Unpublished Notes for the Kreuzlingen Lecture on the Serpent Ritual (1923), Warburg Institute, London, catalog no. 93.4, in Philippe-Alain Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion*, trans. Sophie Hawkes (New York: Zone Books, 2004), 314. Warburg wrote his lecture, which revisited a 1895–6 trip to see the Hopi snake dance, while convalescing from a breakdown at Ludwig Binswanger’s Kreuzlingen sanatorium to prove his recovery. See Michael P. Steinberg, “Aby Warburg’s Kreuzlingen Lecture: A Reading,” in Aby Warburg, *Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America*, trans. Michael P. Steinberg (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 59–109.

<sup>39</sup> The project remained unfinished on Warburg’s death. The original panels are lost; the Warburg Institute in London holds photographs of the panels, taken by Warburg as aide memoires, and posthumously. For a digital guide to selected panels, see <https://warburg.library.cornell.edu/>, Accessed 6 October 2019.

<sup>40</sup> Judith F. Rodenbeck gives a detailed account in “Cult of Lateral Thinking: Splits, Doubles, and Sleight of Hand in the Work of Joan Jonas,” *Modern Painters*, February 2007, 71–3. Indicating the productive overlap between H.D. and Warburg for Jonas, the title *The Shape, the Scent, the Feel of Things* is taken from H.D., “Writing on the Wall” (1944), in *Tribute to Freud* (1956; Manchester: Carcanet, 1985), 23.

<sup>41</sup> Matthew Rampley also notes the links between Warburg’s thinking and that of Walter Benjamin in “From Symbol to Allegory: Aby Warburg’s Theory of Art,” *The Art Bulletin* 79, no. 1 (March 1997): 42 and 52–3. Benjamin’s comments on the

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dialectical image, which refer to “images in the collective consciousness in which the old and the new interpenetrate,” parallel the operation of the *Mnemosyne Atlas*.

Walter Benjamin, “Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century,” Exposé of 1935, in *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, prepared on the basis of the German version edited by Rolf Tiedemann (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 4.

<sup>42</sup> Joan Jonas, in “Show Me Your Dances... Joan Jonas and Simone Forti talk with Carla Liss,” *Art and Artists* 8, no. 7, October 1973, 15.

<sup>43</sup> Jonas, “Imagist,” 164. H.D. composed “Writing on the Wall” in 1944; it was published during 1945–6 in *Life & Letters Today*. “Advent”, the more critical text, is based on 1933 diary entries assembled in 1948.

<sup>44</sup> Jonas has allowed *Mirror Check* to be re-performed, but not by men, citing the importance of its originary socio-political moment. Joan Simon, “Mirror Check,” in *In the Shadow a Shadow*, ed. Simon, 55. I do not read this as a biological statement on “woman,” but as pinpointing a specific historical socio-cultural gender construct.

<sup>45</sup> The duration of *Mirror Check* varies, depending on how long it takes the performer to scrutinize themselves in the mirror. The version I saw during Jonas’s 2018 retrospective at Tate Modern, as part of the *Ten Days, Six Nights* program curated by Catherine Wood, lasted approximately 5–10 minutes.

<sup>46</sup> Howard Junker noted this clinical quality, and the way in which *Mirror Check* collapses together the traditional gender codings of life-class model (female) and artist undertaking a self-portrait (male). Howard Junker, “Joan Jonas: The Mirror Staged,” *Art in America* 69, no. 2, February 1981, 90.

<sup>47</sup> Anne M. Wagner, “Performance, Video, and the Rhetoric of Presence,” *October* 91 (Winter 2000): 78.

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<sup>48</sup> “Mirror Piece I,” in *Joan Jonas*, ed. Crimp, 14.

<sup>49</sup> Thomas Smith Clouston, “Lecture II: States of Mental Depression–Melancholia (Psychalgia),” in *Clinical Lectures on Mental Diseases*, 6th ed. (1883; London: J. & A. Churchill, 1904), 78–80.

<sup>50</sup> David Antin, “A List of the Delusions of the Insane: What They Are Afraid Of” (1968), in *Against Expression: An Anthology of Conceptual Writing*, ed. Craig Dworkin and Kenneth Goldsmith (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2011), 43–4.

<sup>51</sup> See Georges Didi-Huberman, *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière*, trans. Alisa Hartz (1982; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

<sup>52</sup> Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (1974; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 144.

<sup>53</sup> “Mirror Check,” in *Joan Jonas*, ed. Crimp, 19.

<sup>54</sup> Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 144.

<sup>55</sup> For an evocative insight into H.D.’s time in Vienna, *Tribute to Freud* can be read in conjunction with Susan Stanford Friedman, ed., *Analyzing Freud: Letters of H.D., Bryher, and Their Circle* (New York: New Directions, 2002). The heightened political tension and danger of Freud’s situation due to the Nazi threat permeates these exchanges, but the analysis remained paramount, with Freud deeming it “the only thing now.” H.D. to Bryher, March 22, [1933], in *Analyzing Freud*, 135.

<sup>56</sup> H.D., “Writing on the Wall,” 35 and 36.

<sup>57</sup> H.D., “Advent” (1948), in *Tribute to Freud*, 175.

<sup>58</sup> H.D., “Writing on the Wall,” 14. Friedman compares the treatment of the image in Imagism to Freud’s account of dream-work in *Psyche Reborn*, 56.

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<sup>59</sup> On the connections between Warburg and psychoanalysis via Charcot (with whom Freud briefly studied), see Georges Didi-Huberman, “*Dialektik des Monstrums: Aby Warburg and the Symptom Paradigm*,” trans. Vivian Rehberg, *Art History* 24, no. 5 (November 2001): 621–45. Margaret Iversen posits the relevance of Warburg’s rejection of objectivity, and his connection of art with emotion, for feminist enquiry in “Retrieving Warburg’s Tradition,” *Art History* 16, no. 4 (December 1993): 541.

<sup>60</sup> Friedman, *Psyche Reborn*, 131.

<sup>61</sup> H.D., “Writing on the Wall,” 45.

<sup>62</sup> H.D., “Writing on the Wall,” 46 and 54–6.

<sup>63</sup> On the Scilly Isles in 1918, H.D. also underwent “the ‘jelly-fish’ experience of double ego,” which felt as if glass bell-jars had encased her head and feet, isolating her from the trauma of the First World War. H.D., “Advent,” 116.

<sup>64</sup> H.D., *The Gift: The Complete Text*, ed. Jane Augustine (1969; Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), 39–42. In *The Gift*, H.D. powerfully recounts her visionary experiences during the London Blitz: “we were able, night after night, to pass out of the unrealities and the chaos of night-battle, and see clear.” H.D., *The Gift*, 111. It was in this context that H.D. composed “Writing on the Wall.”

<sup>65</sup> H.D., “Advent,” 116.

<sup>66</sup> H.D., “Writing on the Wall,” 30.

<sup>67</sup> H.D. reported her annoyance with Freud for saying “that women did not creatively amount to anything or amount to much, unless they had a male counterpart or a male companion from whom they drew their inspiration.” H.D., “Advent,” 149. H.D.’s poem *The Master*, unpublished in her lifetime, dramatizes the intensity of her bond with Freud, but also her frustration “with his talk of the man-strength”: “I could not accept from wisdom / what love taught, / *woman is perfect*” (italics in original). H.D.,

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“The Master,” *Feminist Studies* 7, no. 3 (Autumn 1981): 410 and 411. DuPlessis and Friedman read this as refuting Freud’s diagnosis of lesbianism as desire for a mother-substitute. Rachel Blau DuPlessis and Susan Stanford Friedman, “‘Woman Is Perfect’: H.D.’s Debate with Freud,” *Feminist Studies* 7, no. 3 (Autumn 1981): 423–5. Freud elaborates this theory in “The Psychogenesis of a Case of Female Homosexuality,” *The International Journal of Psycho-analysis* 1, no. 2 (1920): 125–49.

<sup>68</sup> H.D.’s work and queer identity formed a vital focus for feminist re-readings of modernist literature. See Susan Stanford Friedman, “Who Buried H.D.? A Poet, Her Critics, and Her Place in ‘The Literary Tradition,’” *College English* 36, no. 7 (March 1975): 801–14; and the essays in Susan Stanford Friedman and Rachel Blau DuPlessis, eds., *Signets: Reading H.D.* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990). Jonas may not have referenced H.D. directly until the 2000s, but Nancy Spero, an artist closely associated with the US feminist art movement, quoted *Helen in Egypt* extensively for *Notes in Time* (1979), combining cut-and-pasted images and texts across twenty-four panels to interrogate historical and philosophical gender stereotypes while asserting women’s creative agency.

<sup>69</sup> Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution* (1970; London: Verso, 2015), 40.

<sup>70</sup> Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex*, 63.

<sup>71</sup> Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis* (1974; London: Penguin, 1990), 68. First published as *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: Freud, Reich, Laing, and Women*.

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<sup>72</sup> H.D., *The Gift*, 222. Elizabeth A. Hirsch contrasts H.D.'s approach to the image with that of Freud and Lacan in "Imaginary Images: 'H.D.', Modernism, and the Psychoanalysis of Seeing," in *Signets*, ed. Friedman and DuPlessis, 434.

<sup>73</sup> Kathy O'Dell, "Performance, Video, and Trouble in the Home," in *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, ed. Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer (New York: Aperture in association with the Bay Area Video Coalition, 1990), 149.

<sup>74</sup> This also differs from Freud's notion of the "screen memory," which he variously theorized as a memory image that displaced repressed material from childhood, and adult working-over of childhood remembrances. For the latter, see Sigmund Freud, "Childhood Memories and Screen Memories," in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901), Vol. 6, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, trans. Alan Tyson, ed. James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson (London: Vintage, 2001), 43–52.

<sup>75</sup> Krauss, "Video," 50.

<sup>76</sup> Krauss, "Video," 58. On this dynamic see James Boaden, "Lives in Exchange: The Collaborative Video Tapes of Lynda Benglis and Robert Morris," *Tate Papers* 25 (Spring 2016): <http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/25/lives-in-exchange>, Accessed August 11, 2017.

<sup>77</sup> Krauss, "Video," 55.

<sup>78</sup> Krauss, "Video," 60.

<sup>79</sup> Krauss, "Video," 59. Lucy R. Lippard noted the early association of performance by women artists with narcissism in "The Pains and Pleasures of Rebirth: European and American Women's Body Art," *Art in America* (May–June 1976), reprinted in *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1976), 125.

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<sup>80</sup> For chronologies see Joan Simon, “Organic Honey,” in *In the Shadow a Shadow*, ed. Simon, 142–3; and “Video Performances 1972–1976,” in *Joan Jonas*, ed. Crimp, 41–3.

<sup>81</sup> Constance de Jong, “A Work by Joan Jonas: *Organic Honey’s Visual Telepathy*,” *The Drama Review: TDR* 16, no. 2 (June 1972): 64.

<sup>82</sup> Wagner, “Performance, Video, and the Rhetoric of Presence,” 79.

<sup>83</sup> Sigmund Freud, “On Narcissism: An Introduction” (1914), in *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 11, The Pelican Freud Library, trans. James Strachey, ed. Angela Richards (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984), 82.

<sup>84</sup> Amelia Jones, *Body Art/Performing the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 182.

<sup>85</sup> Siona Wilson proposes that Echo is as important an avatar as Narcissus for Organic Honey’s “repetition with difference.” Siona Wilson, “Abstract Transmissions: Other Trajectories for Feminist Video,” in *Abstract Video: The Moving Image in Contemporary Art*, ed. Gabrielle Jennings (California: University of California Press, 2015), 57.

<sup>86</sup> H.D., *Helen in Egypt* (New York: New Directions, 1961), 5.

<sup>87</sup> One review of *Organic Honey’s Vertical Roll* emphasized how: “the camera focuses our attention, allowing us subconsciously to block out our environment and submerge ourselves in the image.” Robert J. Pierce, “The Bang of One Spoon Rolling,” *Village Voice* 18, no. 3, January 18, 1973, 40.

<sup>88</sup> Jonas, in “Show Me Your Dances,” 15. JoAnn Hanley ascribes video’s materiality with feminist politics: “most early 1970s’ video work by women *is* feminist simply by virtue of having been made by women at that time – a period when, as Ilene Segalove said, ‘just to put your hands on the equipment’ was ‘a feminist act’” (italics in



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original). JoAnn Hanley, "The First Generation: Women and Video, 1970–75," in JoAnn Hanley and Ann-Sargent Wooster, *The First Generation: Women and Video, 1970–75* (New York: Independent Curators Incorporated, 1993), 15.

<sup>89</sup> Ingrid Wiegand, "The Surreality of Videotape," in *Video Art*, ed. Schneider and Korot, 281.

<sup>90</sup> Wiegand, "The Surreality of Videotape," 282.

<sup>91</sup> Stuart Marshall, "Video Art, the Imaginary and the *Parole Vide*," revised version of an article first published in *Studio International* (1976), in *New Artists Video: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1978), 117.