



# **H. D. and the Victorian Fin de Siècle: Gender, Modernism, Decadence (Cambridge Studies in American Literature and Culture)**

*Cassandra Laity*

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H. D and the Victorian Fin de Siecle argues foremost that H. D. eluded the male modernist flight from Romantic 'effeminacy' and 'personality' by embracing the very cults of personality in the Decadent Romanticism of Oscar Wilde, A. C. Swinburne, Walter Pater and D. G. Rossetti that her male contemporaries most deplored: the cult of the demonic femme fatale and of the 'effeminate' Aesthete androgynie. H. D., Laity maintains, used these sexually aggressive masks to shape a female modernism that freely engaged female and male androgyny, homoeroticism, narcissism and maternal eroticism. Focusing on the early Sea Garden , the plays and poetry of the 1920s and her late epic Trilogy, H. D. and the Victorian Fin de Siecle demonstrates H. D.'s shift from the homoerotic 'white', vanishing tropology of the male androgynie fashioned by Pater and Wilde to the 'abject' monstrously sexual body of the Pre-Raphaelite and Decadent femme fatale.

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