



H.D. Temporizes: How far does H.D. succeed in capturing ‘an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time’?

Anirudh Singh Katoch

In order to understand the extent to which H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) succeeded in capturing the ‘image’ as ‘an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time’,¹ the terms ‘complex’ and ‘time’ must be understood in relation to the ‘image’ in ‘Hippolytus Temporizes’. As a ‘complex’, the ‘image’ would suggest Gestalt psychology (via Bernard Hart) and would therefore constitute a figural displacement of its mental object.² To apply and modify the positions of Joseph Riddel and Ming-Qian Ma, the ‘image’ has no object as such and it is time’s linearity which would be displaced into a figural space – ‘an instant of time’ as exemplified by the use of parenthesis in each stanza.³ Pound understands that ‘it is quite obvious that we do not all of us inhabit the same [instant of] time’.⁴ Therefore, the implication is that the displacement of ‘time [by] an incarnate consciousness living out its life in a given situation’⁵ can be represented by H.D. via the ‘image’. Hence, as Riddel argues, the ‘instant’ is ‘displaced as time, as consciousness, and thus as a movement of images’ through language within ‘Hippolytus Temporizes’.⁶

As a result, H.D. aims for the ‘complex’ to become an ‘image of differences known only in the play of translation between ideas’.⁷ Moreover, Pound states the translation between ideas becomes ‘a form of super-position’⁸ in creating the ‘complex’. Thus, the ‘complex’ is an act of translation of the image and ideas to the reader; that is, viewing the image of Hippolytus, the male virgin, as a crystalline object: a brilliant white jewel. H.D. believed that the image of Hippolytus in her poetry is ‘in a sense, the projection of the jewel or the crystallization of the jewel’.⁹

The success in capturing ‘an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time’ is based on the crystallization and translation of the image via the super-positioning of ideas within this Imagist poem. H.D.’s translation of the image is by temporizing the complex, the instant, the image. She adopts ‘some course for the time or occasion; hence, to adapt [herself] or conform to the time and circumstances; [and] to trim’.¹⁰ H.D. in ‘Hippolytus Temporizes’ avoids temporality by displacing the linearity of time in each of the four stanzas. This is

¹ Ezra Pound, ‘A Few Don’ts by an Imagist’, *Poetry* I.6 (March 1913), p. 200.

² As understood by Herbert Schneidau, *Ezra Pound: The Image and the Real* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), pp. 99-100.

³ See Joseph Riddel, ‘Decentring the Image: The “Project” of “American” Poetics?’ in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, edited by Josué V. Harari (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979), p. 341 and Ming-Qian Ma, ‘“In an Instant of Time”: The Imagist Perception and the Phenomenology of the “Upsurge” of the Present in Ezra Pound’s Cantos’ in *Temporality in Life as seen through Literature*, edited by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (New York: Springer-Verlag New York LLC, 2007), pp. 47-48.

⁴ Ezra Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound* (New York: New Directions, 1935), p. 87.

⁵ Christopher Macann, *Four Phenomenological Philosophers* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 198.

⁶ Joseph Riddel, ‘Decentring the Image’, p. 341.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Ezra Pound, *A Memoir of Gaudier-Brzeska* (New York: New Directions, 1970), p. 89.

⁹ H.D., ‘H.D. by Delia Alton’, *Iowa Review*, Vol. 16, Issue 3 (1986), p. 221.

¹⁰ ‘temporize’, *Oxford English Dictionary*, online edition (Oxford: Oxford University, 1989) <http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50248769?single=1&query_type=word&queryword=temporize&first=1&max_to_show=10> [accessed 08 December 2009].

through immediate telos super-positioned with parenthetical erotic murmurings both concerning an Artemisan goddess: 'I worship the greatest first – / (it were sweet the couch . . . the thought: her bones / under her flesh are white . . .)'.¹¹ Eileen Gregory understand the act of temporizing as

a wry name for an affective and cognitive disorientation, for an attitude of access and approach constituting the very texture of H.D.'s poetics and of the erotics of reading H.D.¹²

I will be reading this texture of 'Hippolytus Temporizes' by H.D. as a 'genreader'.¹³ I will not be 'merely a decoder of textual signals [...] but rather a "textual agent" who reads texts "in the context of an expanding archive" in order to see both how they are written and how are they read'.¹⁴ To understand how far H.D. succeeds in capturing an 'image' – I will look at the translation of the image in the genesis of the first two stanzas of the poem seen in Appendices I, II and III which are transcriptions of Typescripts A and B (both undated, but written in succession of each other between Summer 1920 and September 1921) and the published version in *Hymen* (1921).¹⁵

The first four lines of Typescript A, Typescript B and the published version in *Hymen* remain constant. Interestingly, in the second stanza, the first four lines (13-16) remain the same too. In a singular line (lines 1 and 13: the first lines of each stanza), a logocentric statement captures an image. The nucleus of the 'intellectual and emotional complex' in the 'instant of time' is based on 'self-possession, clarity, awareness of status and priority' as outlined by Gregory.¹⁶ Lines 1 and 13 both utilise the pronoun 'I'; the simple present form of 'worship'; the temporal adverb 'first' and variants of 'great' in its noun ('great' line 13) and superlative ('greatest' 1.1) forms. H.D. establishes the image of Hippolytus praying to the statue goddess in the present tense. The concepts of pious devotion, animate mortal and male virgin are established through anaphora and repetition.

H.D. captures a coexisting image, a simultaneous intellectual and emotional complex in a parallel instant of time: this is Hippolytus's thoughts within the parenthetical sentence encompassing lines 2-12 in the first stanza and 14-21 in the second. The image displaces time's linearity into the parenthesis and is refracted like a light through a jewel. Hippolytus worships the statue in the present tense with piety and concurrently worships her erotically using another time made from a *mélange* of tenses from simple 'invoked' (line 16) to simple present 'lies' (line 12) and the adverbial clause 'having provoked' (line 20). The nucleus of the 'complex' in the 'instant of time' in the parenthetical murmurings is based on maternal eros, clarity, awareness of body and thought. However, the genesis of the parenthetical section of the each stanza is richly dynamic compared to the logocentric statements of lines 1 and 13.

H.D. temporizes the translation of the image via the process of creating the poem itself. For example, the fifth line, 'the thought: the bones', appears in Typescript B and *Hymen*. In Typescript A, however, it is 'the thought: her bones are which' – with 'are' boxed

¹¹ Eileen Gregory, 'Virginity and Erotic Liminality: H.D.'s *Hippolytus Temporizes*', *Contemporary Literature*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (Summer, 1990), p. 136.

¹² Ibid., p. 135 and H.D., 'Hippolytus Temporizes', *Hymen*, first edition (London: The Egoist Press, 1921), p. 24.

¹³ Jean-Michel Rabaté, *James Joyce and Poetics of Egoism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 183

¹⁴ Daniel Ferrer and Michael Groden, 'Introduction: A Genesis of French Genetic Criticism', ed. by Jed Deppmann, Daniel Ferrer and Michael Groden, *Genetic Criticism: Texts and Avant-textes* (Pennsylvania: University Pennsylvania, 2004), p. 15, cf. Jean-Michel Rabaté, *James Joyce and Poetics of Egoism*, p. 196.

¹⁵ The scope of the essay allows me to focus upon the first two stanzas of 'Hippolytus Temporizes'. Please refer to Appendices I, II and III for the texts and IV for a stemma and context of the text.

¹⁶ Gregory, 'Virginity and Erotic Liminality: H.D.'s *Hippolytus Temporizes*', p. 136.

in pencil and ‘which’ written with strikethrough in pencil. This is because of the sixth and seventh lines which have heavy editing by the poet. In Typescript A, line 6 reads ‘under the ~~white~~ flesh; [circumflex over the semi-colon pointing toward the word ‘are’ written in pencil] white’. Thus, it would read: ‘under the flesh are white’ which correlates with Typescript B and *Hymen*. Hence, the erotic thought of bones, of white flesh under the cloth and fleece has been poetically rendered during summer 1920 and September 1921. Each locative expression (based on the use of preposition; for instance, ‘of’ in line 3, ‘over’ in line 4 and ‘under’ and line 6) presents an X-ray image of the marble statue.

The first seven lines calcify the concepts of maternal eros within the parenthesis which mirrors self-possession of the first line; clarity of the parenthesis mirrors the clarity of the first line; awareness of status and priority mirrors awareness of thought and body. Cassandra Laity argues that this ‘enabled [H.D.] to write the vanishing sexual/textual body of maternal eros and homoeroticism absented from her contemporaries’ poetics of the single ‘concrete’ image/object’.¹⁷ However, the concentration on form, seen through the genetic approach to the text, suggests that H.D. is indeed creating a ‘concrete’ image as hard and transparent as diamond. It does not vanish but creates a crystalline projection of an X-ray image translating maternal eros between the animate, male virgin and the inanimate Artemisan statue.¹⁸

In the second stanza, lines 17-19 exemplify the richly dynamic genesis of the parenthetical ‘complex’ in an ‘instant of time’. Line 17 is heavily edited in Typescript A: ‘suddenly, wide ~~as the~~ [small circumflex] swart, hid’. The words ‘~~as the~~’ are written and stricken through in pen. The circumflex inserts ‘and’ into this sentence written in pencil. The comma after ‘swart’ is written in pencil and ‘hid’ is stricken through in pencil also.¹⁹ The line now reads: ‘suddenly, wide and swart,’ which is the same in Typescript B and *Hymen*. The use of ‘suddenly’ and ‘swart’ validates Robin Le Poidevin’s argument, that ‘the static conception of *change* [in the image], and the corresponding cinematic view of perception, need not obscure our understanding of the ... representation of [an instant of] time’.²⁰

H.D. did not want to ‘obscure our understanding’ but to create a crystalline object, a jewel-like prism. However, whilst creating the matrix of this crystalline object, H.D. was aware it could collapse as seen by line 17 of the *Hymen* version not correlating with Typescripts A and B – but with line 18 in those Typescript versions. In Typescript B there is an ‘L’ written in pen in front of lines 17 and 18 which reverse the order of ‘suddenly, wide and swart’ and ‘as the flower of Sidonian myrtle-flower’. In Typescript A, line 18 is written: ‘~~of~~ Sidonian myrtle,-flower’ with a box drawn in pencil around the majority of the line. Evidently, line 18 is a difficult line for H.D. In Typescript A, ‘~~of~~’ is crossed out in pencil with the words ‘as the’ written between lines 17 and 18. The comma between ‘myrtle’ and ‘flower’ is stricken through with pencil and turned into a hyphen. The word ‘flower’ itself is seemingly a later addition as it is written in pencil. The line now reads ‘as the Sidonian myrtle-flower’ corresponding to the *Hymen* version. However, line 18 in Typescript B reads ‘as the flower of Sidonian myrtle-flower’. The phrase ‘the flower’ was deleted with nine ‘x’ marks overlaid by the typewriter. The act of trimming, a feature of temporizing, is evident here, and thus clarity is restored.

¹⁷ Cassandra Laity, ‘H.D., Modernism, and Transgressive Sexualities’, in *Gendered Modernisms: American Women Poets and Their Readers*, edited by Margaret Dickie and Thomas J. Travisano (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), p. 54.

¹⁸ A good example of synecdoche i.e. *pars pro toto*: taking a part of the whole to represent the whole.

¹⁹ Arguably, words written out and stricken out in pen happen before alterations, expansions, revisions and deletions in pencil – in Typescripts A and B. See Appendix I and II.

²⁰ Robin le Poidevin, ‘Image and Instant’, *The Images of Time: An Essay on Temporal Representation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 140, my italicisation.

In conclusion, H.D. temporizes in order to capture 'an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time'. It can be seen in the form and structure of poem; as well as within the genesis of the poem. The translation of the image is essentially temporized by H.D. at every level of the text. The most successful device is the simple super-positioning of a pious, logocentric statement in the present tense and the parenthetical statement in a concurrent, but dislocated tense infused with longing and erotic desire. Time's linearity is displaced within the figural space of the poem; the stanza; and the parenthesis. The reader experiences an instant of time divided in two: the complex reflecting both emotional and intellectual aspects of the image: erotic longing in a maternal figure. H.D. is successful in capturing the image; yet, the translation of the image, importantly, has not been created in an 'instant of time' but over successive attempts. This conclusion has been reached by reading the texture of the erotics and poetics of 'Hippolytus Temporizes' as a 'genreader'. To greatly paraphrase Paul Valéry: 'a complete [analysis of 'Hippolytus Temporizes']] would be the [analysis] of a Poem starting from its fertilized embryo – and its successive states, unexpected interpolations, and approximations. That's real [Temporizing].'²¹

²¹ Paul Valéry, 'Poetry', *Cahiers/Notebooks*, ed. by Brian Stimpson, Paul Gifford, and Robert Pickering, translated by Norma Rinsler, volume 2 (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2000), p. 219.

APPENDIX I: Typescript A – Transcription first and second stanzas of ‘Hippolytus Temporizes’ from H.D., *Poems (early) [III] Typescript, corrected by H.D.*, Folder 914, 2003356 (Yale University: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, undated) http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/dl_crosscollex/brbldl_getrec.asp?fld=img&id=1014316 [accessed 08 December 2009].

Hippolitus <u>Temporizes</u>	Hippolitus	3
	<p>I worship the greatest first— (it were sweet, the couch, the brighter ripple of cloth over the dipped fleece; the thought: her bones are ^{which} under the white flesh is ^a white xxxxxxxxxx where as a shell where the sand, over it, covers but keeps the print, of the crescent. shape beneath: I thought: between cloth & the crimson fleece white (so) her- body lies.)</p> <p>I worship first, the great – (ah, sweet, your eyes, what God, invoked in Crete, gave them the gift to part and suddenly, wide-as-the [^] swart, hid- as the of the Sidonian myrtle, flower then, suddenly swiftly, the eye-lids having provoked our hearts— as suddenly heat and close.</p> <p>as sand where along the beach</p> <p>as sand which along the beach</p>	
		<p>NOTE: Grey text, lines and boxes signify H.D. utilising a pencil. Black text, lines, and boxes signify utilising a pen. The logic is that since the text was first written in pen, all modification in pen was done crafting the poem. The pencil is used at another event specifically for editing, expansion and deletion.</p>

APPENDIX II: Typescript B –Transcription of first and second stanzas of 'Hippolytus Temporizes' from H.D., *Poems (early) [IV] Typescript, corrected by H.D. "Hippolitus temporizes ... "*, Folder 915, 2003357 (Yale University: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, undated) <http://beinecke.library.yale.edu/dl_crosscollex/brbldl_getrec.asp?fld=img&id=1014212> [accessed 08 December 2009].

Hippolitus

Hippolitus temporizes

I worship the greatest first –
(it were sweet , the couch ,
the brighter ripple of cloth
over the dipped fleece
the thought : her bones
under the flesh are white
shell when when sand
sand as where sand which along a beach
covers but keeps the print
of the crescent shapes beneath :
I thought :
Between cloth and fleece,
So her body lies.)

I worship first , the great -
(ah sweet , your eyes -
what God , invoked in Crete ,
gave them the gift to part
suddenly, wide and swart,
as the ~~floweors~~ Sidonian myrtle-flower ,
then swiftly ,
the eye-lids having provoked our hearts -
as suddenly beat and close .)

NOTE: Bolded grey text, lines and boxes signify H.D. utilising a pen.

Grey text or lines which are not bolded signify H. D. utilising a pencil.

Black text, lines, and boxes signify the colour of the typography from the typewriter.

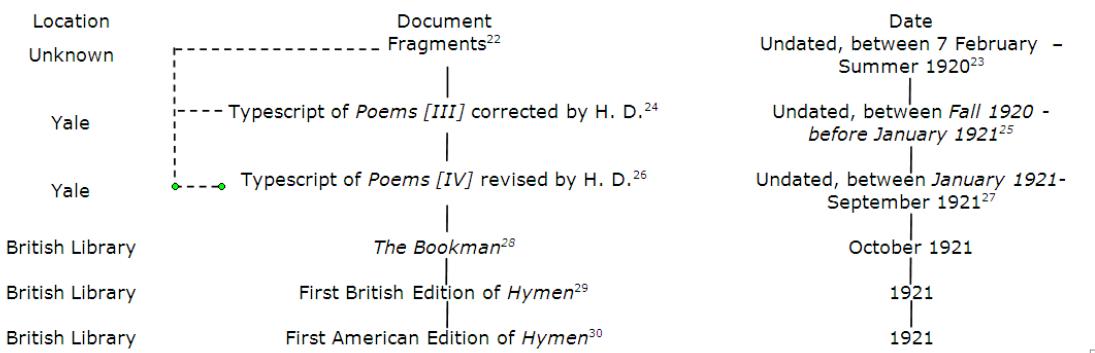
The logic is that since the text was first typed, all modification in ink was done whilst crafting the poem. The pen is used at another event specifically for editing, expansion and deletion. The pencil is used at another event for the same reasons too.

APPENDIX III: Transcription of first two stanzas of 'Hippolytus Temporizes' from H.D., 'Hippolytus Temporizes', *Hymen*, first edition (London: The Egoist Press, 1921), p. 24.

Hippolytus Temporizes

I worship the greatest first—
(it were sweet, the couch,
the brighter ripple of cloth
over the dipped fleece;
the thought: her bones
under the flesh are white
as sand which along a beach
covers but keeps the print
of the crescent shapes beneath:
I thought:
between cloth and fleece,
so her body lies.)
I worship first, the great—
(ah, sweet, your eyes—
what God, invoked in Crete,
gave them the gift to part
as the Sidonian myrtle-flower
suddenly, wide and swart,
then swiftly,
the eye-lids having provoked our hearts—
as suddenly beat and close.)

APPENDIX IV: Stemma and genealogy of 'Hippolytus Temporizes' indebted to Jackson R. Bryer and Pamela Roblyer, 'H. D.: A Preliminary Checklist', *Contemporary Literature*, Vol. 10, No. 4, [Special Number on H. D.: A Reconsideration] (Autumn, 1969), pp. 632-675 as well as pages 149, 151-153 and 174-175 in *Richard Aldington & H.D.: their lives in letters, 1918-61*, edited by Caroline Zilboorg (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).



Note: Italics and broken lines indicate hypothesis.

The poem 'Hippolytus Temporizes' was collected in the following editions (excluding *Hymen*):

Collected Poems of H. D. (New York: Boni and Liverwright, 1925 and 1940).

Hippolytus Temporizes (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1927)

Selected Poems of H. D. (New York: Grove Press, 1957; Toronto: Collins 1957).

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