The Tragic (Modern) Stuttering Machine

Heather H. Yeung

Abstract: This paper attends to the formal, temporal, and material economy of the tragic machine in Modernity. The distinction between two forms of tragic transport and tragic caesura made by Hölderlin (the 'pure' and the 'terrible') allow us to distinguish qualitative differences between types of and approaches to the question of the tragic form (imperial vs. anti-/ante- imperial; metaphysical vs. machinic; vitalist vs. vital; closed vs. open etc.) through how we address the locus of the tragic transport and the poetology of the break.

Keywords: Friedrich Hölderlin, Paul Klee, Hilda Doolittle (H.D.), Sophocles, Euripides, caesura

Hast du schon Leute aus der Stadt beobachtet?
Das zwitschert unaufhörlich. Ist eine Reihe von ihnen
beisammen, so geht das Zwitschern von rechts nach
links und wieder zurück und auf und ab.
– Kafka[1]

1. ἡ γλῶσσ᾽ ὀμώμοχ᾽, ἡ δὲ φρὴν ἀνώμοτος: between the two[2]

Oft-quoted, but let us quote it again, is a phrase from Friedrich Hölderlin's enigmatic writings on tragedy, which is brought to serve as definition, condensed stand-in for, or summary (of Hölderlin's definition) of (tragic) caesura: as 'a counter-rhythmic interruption, a pure word',[3] which is marked, we later discover, for Hölderlin, in Sophocles' Theban dramas

....
1 Franz Kafka, 'Der Riesenmaulwurf'. The head turns guided by the ears, watching the invisible sound-sources move. Above I give Brod's alternative title (alt. 'Der Dorfschullehrer'). The Muirs' translation runs as follows (alternative tr. for *Zwitscher*: twitter, chirp): 'Have you ever watched city people? They chatter without stopping. When there's a whole lot of them together you can hear their chatter running from right to left and back again, and up and down, this way and that.' (Kafka (1933): 177).

2 Euripides (2005): 184. (LCL:185): 'my tongue swore, but my mind is not on oath'; the boundless mind and the tied tongue, and their opposites, might be seen as the governing principles of a classical tragic stuttering, a primal dislocation of the mechanisms of speech, with (and in) principle. Simon Goldhill remarks neatly on the apparent scandal caused by this line in Athenian audiences –suddenly, in the articulate disjunction between words and acts moral ambiguity arises, the state-sanctioned pronouncements are under question, the language itself subject (See Goldhill (1986):135): the 'divine injunction to mankind in mortal language cannot escape the tragic dislocation of that language, the tensions of sense and usage' (op. cit.: 194).

3 Hölderlin (2009): 318. The theoretically influential translation of and commentaries on Hölderlin by Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe is rendered into English by Christopher Fynsk with different emphasis in 'The Caesura of the Speculative' thus: "For the tragic transport is properly empty and the most un-bound. Whereby, in the rhythmic succession of representations, in which the transport presents itself, what in (poetic) meter is called the caesura, the pure word, the counter-rhythmic intrusion, becomes necessary in order to meet the racing alternation of representations at its culmination, such that what appears then is no longer the alternation of representations but representation itself." Lacoue-Labarthe (1989): 234. Evidently, 'intrusion' and 'interruption' at the very least carry different topographical force.

Oedipus Rex and *Antigone* absolutely and only by the speeches of Tiresias. Structurally, what this means is that what is translated for the most part into English as the 'tragic transport' (the (inevitable) vector of the plot as mediated through dialogue and action) has a counterweight in the 'counter-rhythmic interruption [or] pure word'. In this context, there are two directionalities, or two ways of operating against the flow, dependent on quality of plot (paradigmatically for Hölderlin *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone*), for which he draws two neat diagrams to accompany his essays: one with a horizontal line (the transport) with, at its centre, a vertical tipping diagonally left to right, the other with a horizontal line (the transport) with a vertical tipping diagonally right to left, as if two images of a car's windscreen-wiper (or, per. Hölderlin, moving from 'back to front', or 'front to back': *Oedipus*, *Antigone*).

The vertical meets but does not transect the horizontal, even as the temptation will be to imagine it to do so and creating thus a punctum, the danger of which even if slightly lateral in its composition is to push our reading of Hölderlin into anachrony and towards the late Heidegger, creating a fourfould (*Geviert*). Such a speculative metaphysical geometricization (it is all too easy to take the *Geviert* of the 1949 Bremen lectures – its gathering of earth, sky, humanity, and the divine – and posit this as structuration onto the (Greek) tragic mode as conceived by Hölderlin, and, indeed, more broadly) leads us to denature the rather simple diagrams of Hölderlin, and to forget the metrics from which Hölderlin's theory and diagram is a strange borrowing, a borrowing to which he even gestures. The paradigm of the (Classical) tragic 'caesura' for Hölderlin is twofold: one is a reality (the metrical operations of the poetic line, about which there are different rules dependent on the technics and nationality of the meter, particularly regarding the placement of the caesura, which in histories of prosody remains a clouded entity at best) and the other is a figuration (the adoption of the miniscule – the figure of caesura, and, indeed, the idea of the line and its rhythmic, machinic process – for the majuscule, to elucidate the rhythmic and explosive aspects of the unfolding of the plot towards and as tragedy (the former as event, the latter generic crystallization). In the miniscule, caesuring counter-rhythm is a *silence*; in the majuscule, *speech*. This blow-up is where we meet, then, the question of the *machine*, for which in both cases the diagrams are more of an elucidation. The machine which, for Hölderlin, creates meaning through paradox.[4] A paradoxical

formulation demands counterrhythmic impulse, but does not brook ambiguity (or, only that which the windscreen-wipers above would brook, which is to say an appearance of but no real ambiguity), as ambiguity would do something to the 'transport' whereas a paradoxical formulation, leaving the transport untouched neatly closes a system whilst allowing for a suite of sophistic speculation to result.

And so the infamous Theban doubles, so neatly contained: the tragedy of father/king (*Oedipus Rex*) who, travelling towards a birth right commits final actions are inevitable from a cursed beginning, and the tragedy of daughter/supplicant (*Antigone*) who, returning to the city of her birth commits initial actions which precipitate a cursed end. The 'pure words' of the Tiresian interventions, speculative counterrhythms beyond that offered by the chorus, moderate and make provocative the propulsion of the tragic transport towards the end of the play; the words 'pure' because hybrid: Tiresias in vatic persona, having been godstricken, both man and woman, already twice dead and yet present, and unrelated to the agonistic structure, is untouchable, unhearable, by those other active players in the plot. Without committing the infelicity of speaking directly to the audience, a counterpoint which is neither an epiphany, nor a chorus, nor an agonistic interchange, enters the fray, significantly unheard yet heard, dramatic but impossibly so, exposing the play's action for the poetic machinery, and the play's staging for the architectural machinery, that it is. Paradox: we have been moved by something that is nothing, or, even, less than nothing, in terms of action. We depart, noting it, in voices radically different from those which have just moved us through their performance. We depart, into time and out of it. We have heard the 'timeless' voice of the figure assumed to be fool or outsider expose a truth. All these are commonplaces of the sort of metatheatrical discourse that demands attention to (dramatic) effect (interior to the play) and aftermath (result – audience survey! – exterior to the play), whose earliest formulations interact with the question of tragedy with its use in state control of affects as catharsis-generating artifice. There is no room for ambiguity here, and no way out. The choice or question so often played out for its ethical dimensions appears to be one (to be *Oedipus*? to be *Antigone*?; within the latter, to be Antigone? to be Creon?, and so on) but is not (add: 'to be *unheard* (of)'), as we are neatly propelled in one, and then the other, direction (back to front; front to back) counter-rhythmic to the tragic transport's inevitable movement towards an already inscribed end by the figure which conceptually binds and propels these two plays, the figure whose relationship to death is also one of metamorphic rebirth: Tiresias. The rug is pulled out from under the neat mechanism, something the poet was eminently conscious of.[5]

....
5 The well-known letter to Böhlendorff (4 December 1802) demonstrates Hölderlin's pleasure in set-ting up an apparently instructive paradox and then indicating that the reason displayed only '*sounds*

What first makes Hölderlin's thesis stutter in its application to tragedy more generally is an apparent avoidance of the third play which completes and complicates his sequence, even competing with the very idea of sequentiality he lays down, *Oedipus Colonus*, which is interestingly one of the first Sophoclean plays there is evidence of his translation engagement with (1796 translation of the choral address to the 'stranger' (ξένος), the blind Oedipus), and one of the last (towards the end of his full composition of *Antigone* and *Oedipus*, lines of the opening scene's dialogue between the blind Oedipus and Antigone).[6] It is that which, in his 'Notes on the *Antigone*' he disassociates from the characteristic 'Greek' drama he takes the other plays as representative of. In his writings on poetic genre, his schematizations of epic, lyric, and tragedy, Hölderlin does not reach the 'terrible word' of *Oedipus Colonus*,[7] or barely does, and whether this is with or without intent we can only speculate. We must forgive him, also, for the eccentricity of reversing the compositional sequence of the plays in his order of translation which he takes from their interior chronology, but we can see that this only allows us to exist further within the paradox artificially generated out of the existing material proofs – the one play (*Antigone* or *Oedipus Tyrannus*) leading both forward and back to the other, and so on – and for the neatness of this.[8] This is a paradox-practise also partaken of by his most influential translator into theory and into French, Philip Lacoue-Labarthe (Lacoue-Labarthe adds a third play, though – Euripides's *Phoenician Women*, which was composed around the same time as *Oedipus Colonus* – which he translates after Hölderlin's *Antigone* and before *Oedipus Tyrannus*, in an act of speculative re-mythematization akin to, for example, Anne Carson's move in her *Oresteia* – to combine Aeschyus's *Agamemnon*, Sophocles's *Elektra*, and Euripides's *Orestes* –; Lacoue-Labarthe also mirrors Hölderlin by first appending his own notes on tragedy, *The Caesura of the Speculative*, onto his *Antigone* translation).

---

paradoxical'. Hölderlin (2009): 207. My emphasis.

6 Both choices of parts to translate underline Hölderlin's ongoing poetological obsession with strangeness (cultural, lexical, metrical). Constantine (2011) provides for non-German-readers unsurpassed comments on the various and varied Hölderlin translation fragments, their chronologies of composition, and formal dimensions. Many of these are not translated into English and some are scattered across different translation-projects (for instance Hölderlin (2018) offers a selection of 'Translations from the Greek'; also see Hölderlin (1998) passim), indeed there is not yet any systematic English edition of Hölderlin, but all are collected across volumes of the 'Frankfurt' and 'Stuttgart' editions.

7 See Hölderlin (2009): 330. Beyond the limitations of the 'Greek', *Oedipus Colonus*, anticipating modernity, demonstrates how 'the word from an inspired mouth is terrible, and kills'.

8 Something about the poet's own schematic approach, his tabulations and 'tone theory' of literature, indicates that the neatness demonstrated at this point in the project (viz. by the two 'completed' play-translations) is only a step within a larger working through.

Both the ante-Romantic and the Contemporary thinker avoid to consider fully, that play which transposes the elegance of dramatic rhythmicity into something more contested, which ungrounds the transport, and exposes the imperial support offered to the tragic transport by the 'pure word''s caesuring mechanics: together and uncontested these mean that the play must go on, ping-ponging between *Rex* and daughter, *Oedipus* and *Antigone*, inevitability and choice, etc, etc. They avoid *Oedipus Colonus*, which activates, simultaneously *post hoc* (it is written substantially after the other two) and *in medias res* (its action takes place between the other two) a suite of alternative relations, a suite of alternative interpretations within the Sophoclean tragic figurations of Thebes, and does not even exist on common ground to the others: it is geographically an Athenian, not a Theban, play; the exodic vectors which propel the drama of interactions are at the very simplest reversed at the more complex utterly contested – it is a play that perhaps has more in common with Euripides's dramas of immigration and assimilation than with the rest of the Sophoclean corpus's dramas of the law; it hovers in the sacred grove and katabatic chasm of the Eumenides, the latter perhaps more familiar to us from the conclusion of Aeschylus's Oresteian cycle and the ultimate regime-dissolving regime-founding event of the *Oresteia* where the Furies become Eumenides, but who are, here, called many names at once throughout (thus calling up many, often contrary functions simultaneously, almost a practical or dramatic heteronomy, a proto-modernist mode beyond the simplicity of the poet's mask(s) that Hölderlin-Scardanelli would emphasise repeatedly). If there were to be a figure most appropriate as caesuring parallel to Tiresias's 'pure word(s)' it would be Oedipus himself, rendered through his articulate self-figuration as 'foreign', a stranger to and within each aspect of the stage-scene (the wilderness, the sacred grove, the two city's cultural matrices), estranged even from the force and condensation of his own name, and thus continually figured as 'untouchable' within the play. Thus, the origin of the modern (tragic) caesura; a sub-division of figure within the tragic schema is necessary, which also means that the figure which propels and is propelled by the 'transport' is also that which provides its necessary counterrhythm. The 'pure' word of fictional tragic form finds its 'terrible' counterpart in that work which engages the problems of the apparent representational self-enclosure, the anti-hybridity, of the 'Greek'.

With *Colonus*, radically, Sophocles might also be seen to make significant adjustments to the structure on the level of plot (he readjusts the temporality of the father's curse on his sons: the myth acceded to by both Aeschylus and Euripides is to precede the argument of Eteocles and Polyneices by Oedipus's curse, upping the metaphysical ante, whereas here Sophocles has the curse follow the argument, underlining in an almost Euripidean way the blood-drama, also altering significances

in the post-*Colonus* re-reading of *Antigone*),[9] character (there is for instance a flattening of the filial piety of Antigone and Ismene – another shock to the screen-memory of *Antigone* fans), and mechanics (an innovation cognate with the period of the play's writing of having four rather than three agonists speaking on the stage, reducing the amount of character doubling, materially increasing the distance between this and the two Theban plays though *appearance*). What then is the tragic mechanism if the 'pure' word is corrupt through excess of signification and its embodying figure disappears, according to the playtext, down a chasm towards the buried site of the fates rather than proving their death, and if the caesura and transport are sites of contest rather than condensation?[10] There is a problem of re-cognition. The catharsis-seekers are left without what they came for. The windscreen-wipers go haywire. Ambiguity rather than paradox enters the mechanics of the tragic drama, indeed, enters into from within the very chronological sequence of those dramas so often read as paradigmatic of tragedy itself, complicates what traditionally acts as concrete evidence for the definition of tragedy to be (not as Hölderlin outlines, a phenomenon whose meaning exists in paradox) the ultimate aristocratic, even imperial, artform.

Before we move to modernity (that strange space between the Romantic and Contemporary, our, as it were, third – *Oedipus Colonus* – and at the same time the site where the strangeness of the Hölderlinian tragic experiment was exhumed from the tomb of laughter in which it has been interred for a century, and recontextualized) we must attend briefly to a second stutter. For Hölderlin's machine operates also on the miniscule level, which, zooming back in from the grander outside of the tragic plot to which we have just attended, becomes better visible. We have established the borrowing from the poetological, but what happens when we read back into it? If we, following Hölderlin, attend to the difficulty of the transportation-mechanisms, the simultaneous differences at the heart of the act of *übertragen* – its existence in the translational and metaphorical senses, and (particularly in the poetic imaginary, perhaps) as both? If we remark, in line with this, the poet's insistence (in the realm of the tragic) on the 'difference between the ground of knowing and the real ground',[11] what might we then make of

....

9 Speculatively following Hölderlin's own logic from the 'Notes on the *Antigone*', what this may do is dangerous – it would destabilize the 'too equal' balance, the lyric characteristics, of *Antigone*, and, by the un-Greek nature of *Colonus*, bring it forward into Modernity's demands not of a tragic drama of the body's murder or death, but one of the vexed relation between body and word which represent also the immanence of oblivion.

10 *Oedipus Colonus* seems to evade the usual vectors and conventions of the stage machinery, and thus operates eccentric to their symbolicity. There is no clear line (of travel) for Oedipus, no direct mechanics or translation – the play baffles the line further.

11 Unfinished early essay 'On the Concept of Punishment' (ca. Jan. 1975). Hölderlin (2009): 230.

the comments on that other insistent metaphorology applied to the tragic mode, which, contra the lyric as a continual metaphor of (a single) feeling, the tragic is a metaphor of an intellectual intuition.[12] Tragedy thinks, through which thinking may come the possibility of doing, differently. But it thinks via transport (as lyric 'feels' in the same way), and the way in which such transport moves and Is disrupted; such disruption (i[nte]rruption) may be an underlining or an overcoming (the former, 'pure', the latter, 'terrible') of the prevailing rhythmic force or thinking/logic.

Metapoetically, the 'line', in relation back to the Greek tragic plot which is so often a blood drama, is, too, the 'line' of (usually imperial) inheritance (both of lineage – throne, polis – and stain – the inheritance of corrupted tendencies which precipitate the continued movement of the transport), following which the (silent) caesura's metaphorical transfer into the (spoken) 'pure word' makes more sense. But here something odd arises, since, if we consider the poetic line the tenor for the tragic transport, and the caesura the 'caesura or [...] pure word', we realise that whereas at the majuscule level (the metaphorology of this tragic machinery) for Hölderlin the transport is that which is at once unquestioned in its rhythmic impulse and disrupted effectively by caesura, the line is something with which this poet is absolutely concerned, which this poet disrupts and makes strange even as the (poetic, metrically organised) line follows a rather classical logic really up until the Modern inasmuch as it yet holds within it our expectations of a middle (a caesura – a pause, or, as Philip Sidney metaphorizes, 'breath' near or at the centre of the line). Naturally, then, if we assume that the tragic machine's operation is the dynamic connection of transport to 'pure word' and their interdependent definition, through any process of change for the line, the dimensions of the caesura also shift. And poetically, as well as in linguistic experiment, the innovation of Hölderlin's line – a part of the profound strangeness of his poetic project from its inception through to the period of the poetry 'from the tower' – is how his work in *metrical* translation, the import of Greek (and Latin) (quantitative) meters and verse patterns into German (accentual syllabic) meters and verse patterns, is a (soft) mode of denaturing the line itself, and destabilizing therefore also the counter-rhythmic expectation and the dominant ideologies of the line.

Another way of looking at this, through Hölderlin, is that it is a way of *strengthening* the line, through its very denaturing; getting closer, thus to 'das Lebendige' ('liveliness' - the word he will use in letters to Wilmans regarding for the drive and innovations of his full-length Sophocles translations[13]), a true (poetic) nature – neither 'truth'

....
12 Hölderlin (2009): 302.

13 Particularly those of 28 September and 8 December 1803. See Hölderlin (2009): 215-6.

nor 'nature'. Translations from the *Stift* period onwards may be read as preparation for not only the full translations of Sophocles, but also come closer and closer in formal and figurative modalities to such more explicitly lyric poems as 'The Archipelago' and 'Mnemosyne': we read incorporation into German of Latin hexameters (lines from Lucan), translation-substitution from Latin hexameters incorporated into (in German) *ottava rima* (Ovid, Virgil), into German elegiac couplets (Ovid), into experimental meters (Horace), prosodic prose (Ovid, Homer), and line- and verse-shapes (Athenaeus), Greek dramatic hexameters into German pentameters, or dramatic trimeters into analogous German trimeters (Euripides), idiosyncratically measured lines which are not directly one thing nor another (Sophocles), already-obscure lyric into prosimetra (the 'Pindar-Fragments'), all also carrying different levels of distance from or proximity to the word-order of the Classical originals, and interacting with or rejecting the further formal structuration afforded by end-rhyme (which sonorous organization Hölderlin leave as he 'left' the influence of Schiller, and would subsequently return to in his own writings from the tower).[14] We read a German forced in ingenious ways to a different count or measure, a different accounting, and out of this any logic of caesural placement is disrupted – the line moves with caesura out of, against, a variation of caesarisms – we stutter between anticipations of a Germanic placement (as with the English, for the most part slightly off-centre, but flexible withal, and dependent on accent of words) and what archaeological, or academically instituted anachronistc, metrics teach us to be a Classical one (a harsher set of proprieties and substitutions of lexis, rhythm, and syllable, dependent on syllable length); each option become a stranger within itself to itself as we hear them together in the same line: hybrid, both and neither, there can no longer be a neat simplicity of two options, no unambiguous classification – a speech (in its lexis, sound-patterns, pauses and breaks) neither fully lost in its wanderings and part-assimilations 'abroad', nor, after this, entirely recuperated as it was before; a poetic practise undermining a motion towards a classificatory simplicity expressed through a poetic metaphor. The more-than-double-bind is a practical eccentricity:[15] to retain an 'original' caesural position (an 'original' 'pure word') in a 'new' ('original') work, one must alter its transport, or the progress (lexical, rhythmic) of the line; to retain the movement of the transport or progress of the line, the position of the caesura (or, the composition of the 'pure word') must

....
14 Constantine's lecture and *Selected* (vide supra) are again indispensable for English readers here. In my own listing of examples I have relied on Hölderlin (1975-2008) vv.15-17.

15 In Hölderlin's sense this conceptually and practically means the deviation from a central, centrist, or normative central point. His letter of 2 April 1804 to Wilmans outlines the principle and aim of this 'eccentricity', and a determination to continue 'even if that means exposing more boldly that was forbidden to the original poet, precisely by going in the direction of eccentric enthusiasm' (Hölderlin (2009): 220).

change; each move by necessity also alters and progresses the other. The line itself generates an exposing disfluency in its reader - becomes impossible to read from a singular presuppositional stand-point.

Let us zoom out momentarily to the unkindest cut of all, the *un*true word: we must not forget that Hölderlin's Sophocles translations provoked not the awe but the laughter of his peers. The voices cluster around the corpus – Voss, Easter 1804, with Schiller and Goethe: 'Is the man really crazy or does he only pretend to be? [...] You should have seen the way Schiller laughed' – Schelling, July 1804, to Hegel: '[the translations show'] he is a complete degenerate'.[16] Biographically, the period of their writing is often accounted for as the zenith of Hölderlin's poetic career, which fast afterward careened into a different stage, the writing 'from the tower', for whose process there is only patchy material evidence, all of which nonetheless was read and for the most part continues to be read, as writing 'out of madness', as scholars seek biographically grounded reason for the poet's apparent break with his previously articulated ambition and trajectory.[17] Philosophically, we see the contemporary interlocutors of the Hölderlin happy to take a certain brute Aristotelian or Kantian tack – the translations of 'tragedy' acting as a concrete proof of the poet's descent into a lower state, the translations processed as a part of a joke, evidence of which is their provoking laughter and allowing the readers an exercise of wit,[18] the poet, no longer (serious) poet but, as subject to ridicule and seen to be mad is a fool acting as a poet, with the laughing group his audience or diagnosers; turn this on its head, Platonically we see instead a group suffering from scornful abandonment, and the location of the self-ignorance reverses from subject to audience, and the pathetic aspect of the tragic re-settles on the tragedian, but further evident is the very (civic) danger of laughter that Plato warns against,[19] as, much later, Mikhail Bakhtin's extended study of the comic foregrounds, via the figures of the grotesque, of the carnival, and extends to questions of class hierarchy,

....
16 Note that even this response is unoriginal: cf. Wilhelm Waiblinger's visit of 1822 to Hölderlin, an attempt to give proof of the madman behind the 'mad' poetry. Pierre Bertaux mobilizes this story in his revisionary biography (Bertaux, 1983).

17 Perhaps the most recent example of this mode of dramatic reading is Giorgio Agamben's *Hölderlin's Madness*. Judith Balso's *Ouvrir Hölderlin* is an attempt to re-set the balance and systematically re-read the full corpus.

18 See across the *Nicomachean Ethics* (book 4) for instance, the movement from the question of wit's value in conversation to its derisory force as laughter (as scorn) and jest (as mockery). All possess a difficult relation (to say the least) with truth.

19 In *Philebus*: the 'admixture of pleasure in our malice produces a mixture of pleasure and distress'; such assumption that what is observed is comedic is a 'delusion of intelligence' Plato (1974): 49-50. In *The Republic*: people 'must not be too fond of laughter, either. Abandonment to violent laughter, generally speaking, is a violent agent for change' Plato (2003): 75. In the latter case the move appears to be to resolve the issue of any potential divide between action and word which literary forms might complicate (see n.2 above for how *Hippolytus* directly also engages this problem).

and social structures.[20] A – bad, dangerous – form of too-distant reading, born from being or feeling somehow too-close to the unspeakable event, or the systematic questioning of the tragic machinery and of the inherent Caesarism and – once such caesarism is recognised as a form of (rhythmic, counter-rhythmic) caesuring and acted against, the potentially regime-dissolving attributes – the eccentric (signifying) potentialities – of the line.[21] Recall a line from Hölderlin's letter to Sinclair of 24 December 1798: 'The first condition of all life and all organization is that no force is monarchic in heaven and on earth'.[22] The life-line we are looking for (or at) is the cut of the cut itself.

Interlude: *so geht das Zwitschern von rechts nach links und wieder zurück und auf und ab*

Paul Klee's 'Zwitscher - Maschine' (1922) is a prime example of the artist's oil-transfer method (developed in 1919). The work, made in a period when debates over the artist's *oeuvre* veered wildly from considerations of genius, to accusations of childishness, extending to diagnoses of the apparent schizophrenic madness of the artist, is currently held in MOMA's collections, made the transatlantic move in 1939 after it had been labelled, in 1933, 'degenerate art'.[23] The work, now interpreted popularly much like many of other Klee's works from this period onwards as playful-sinister experiments in his concept of the line, peculiar depictions of unbuildable toys or games, is an exposure of an engagement with a minimal distance between the cute and acute (or cutting) forms in which a bio-machinic materiality expose to us through the de-naturalizing move the ongoing vitality of the tragic subject in the apparently comic guise it takes on in modernity. One examines the mechanics depicted in the picture, following the lines which guide the implied movement, and we initially see something that is a clear advancement on the satisfyingly simple mechanics of the 'pickende Hühne' toy (where, when a hand holding a board turns from side to side, a rope swinging weighted below the board circles, makes toy hens

....
20 Bakhtin (1984): passim.

21 It is Freud, after Hevesi, in his 1905 text *Der Witz und seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten*, who makes an extended comment on the relation of the (tragic, imperial) caesura with the figure of the (dissident, or innovative) poet's mis-read parapractic-formal re-alignments of the caesuring machinery of the line. With Frank Ruda I have elsewhere expanded on this (seminar 'Caesura or, the M(O)ther of Invention', Harvard Mahindra Humanities Center February 2023; seminar 'Cutting Remarks: Thinking the Poetics of Rupture', Dartmouth College May 2023).

22 Hölderlin (2009): 117.

23 For the fullest provenance information publicly available to date see MOMA's *Provenance Research Project* https://www.moma.org/collection/provenance/?locale=en

attached to the rope peck the board): a handle cranks a horizontal line directly related to the bird-like figures, which in turn turns a vertical pole which is anchored in a seemingly transparent stage below. The implication is that turning the handle might make the twittering occur, and that the twittering occurs in the bird-like figures collected along a wire-like line, with the other parts of the mechanism a stage-set for the twittering to occur. The cranks from front to back (or back to front), turning the horizontal line one ways, which in turn, turns, the vertical line another way (handy proof of the vertical line's turning are a bow-tie-shaped apparatus in its top third, and a four-part anchor in the table-like four-legged plate below). There is an anti-gravitational structure (which is also its anchoring in the appearance of a real space) which allows for the horizonal line to weightbearingly float, on the left side of the image. We turn the pickende Hühne toy and a pecking movement and pecking sound results; we imagine turning the handle of the 'Zwitscher - Maschine' and a imagine the twittering result; we laugh, tickled and shocked at the nature of the toy's work against nature, by the shocks that the movement of the machine brings back to the hand.

One could find analogies between the set-up of the 'Zwitscher - Maschine' and those of the tri-levelled and triply-deep Attic stage: the *mechane* being that which not only lifts but moves the figures, the line on which the figures stand the roof of the *skene*, the pivot-line and bow-tie-like propellor the opening-out space of the central doors and (secondary mechanism) *ekkyklema*, the stage the table-like construct that the vertical line is anchored in, which stops before the *orchestra*. The message here, perhaps, that the odes of the so-called gods are machinic twitterings, supported in their ascent ex machina only by the (semi-visible rigging) machine itself, that there is or can only be the machine *ex machina*, nothing else (what does this do to the tragic transport?): the (literally) eccentric representation of a de-re-naturalization of the already un-naturalized. We might even see as rough companions to the 'Zwitscher - Maschine''s *ex machina* structural/staging commentary the 'Brauende Hexen' the inevitable Eumenides (here with a Shakespearian cast), the Fates-provoked protagonist 'Der Narr als Prophet', and the 'Gespenst eines Genies' the (notorious) residing spirit of the tragic drama.[24] But an initial *frisson* of interaction with the 'Zwitscher - Maschine' is that even though it carries some of the visual rhetoric of a blueprint via the line's transfer-process, it is impossible (impossibly blurred, and impossible structuration), which is to say, fictional. We cannot crank the handle (which is the most recognisable single aspect of the picture). We cannot (from this) build

....
24 All of these are oil-transfers of 1922, with graphite or ink sketches often dated prior, waterco-loured not necessarily immediately after; there is inbuilt into each work an imprecision of origin. The works of this period often interact with theatrical stock figures, jongleurs, itinerants, puppets, and staging machines – the analogizing above is not wild. Klee often takes on the figure of the harlequin or fool, uniting it with tragic and mechanical devices.

the machine. And the very method of the work is that of this stutter: the stutter which is both in- and towards the machine. We are presented, then, with a dedoubling of the machinic: the stuttering (material properties) is the aesthetics of the twittering (projective effects) machine. And we are presented with this not through what the picture presents but its method, which presents simultaneously a distancing from and a bringing closer to our notice the hand of the artist, and its tools.

The work we respond to is in-itself flat, but this is a creation of a compression of a multi-layered multi-process exposure: a blank sheet is placed on top of a sheet covered in part-dried oil paint or printers ink, on top of which a third sheet with an original drawing, which is transferred by the tracing pressure of a stylus through the pigment-holding sheet onto the blank sheet. Subsequently the image would be water-coloured. The completed work carries with itself thus echoes of the unoriginality of the two photosensitive chemical reproduction technologies of modernity: the blueprint (though the first transfer process offering a simultaneously blurred but finely sharp line) and the hand-tinted early film (the work, after its exposure undergoing a secondary process of colouring); it carries with it the influence of two pioneers of chemical etching / hand-tinting techniques, William Blake and Francisco Goya. But rather unlike these two forms that it echoes (one technical one theatrical), or the prior processes, it is a very simple tracery process, the stylus being the only technical instrument needed. This apparently primitive move leads to the obviation of the necessity of plates from which to print – a privileging of the dynamism of the line (the fluid or tremulous hand-touch of tracing leaving its mark on both original sketch and transfer image) and its progress over a total impression, or impression of a totality – and thus also an increased potential of seeing impress not from the stylus only, but also the hand of the tracer and its inadvertent too-hard impress as it makes the tracing, not to be washed away or dulled in the later hand-colouring process, after which we look through to the transfer-image as if through a screen. The spotty haze in the 'Zwitscher - Maschine' is the impress of the artists hand more than the stylus-mediated stronger or weaker presences of the line – chiasmatic to Dante's hand of the poet[25] – the evidence of the work of the work as part of the work itself. A significant part of the work is a demonstration of the mechanics, and the eccentricity of the non-totalizing, unequilibrated modality of the (oil transfer/tracing) machine, a calling attention to the stages of its own untimeliness, the pauses within its production; Klee does what the image demonstrates, makes the twittering picture through a stuttering method, an image of the (literary-linguistic) Delezuian stutter: the 'dynamic combinations in perpetual disequilibrium'.[26]

....
25 'similimente operando a l'artista / ch'a l'abito de l'arte ha man che trema' - [Nature] working / like the hartist who has the habit of art but a hand /that trembles'. Dante (2011): 270-1.

26 Deleuze (1998): 109.

2. <u>φεῦ: / εἴθ᾽ ἦν ἐμαυτὸν προσβλέπειν ἐναντίον / στάνθ᾽: in the machine</u>[27]

It was not until 1913 that Hölderlin's *Antigone* was performed, and not until 1921 that saw performance of *Oedipus* (Tyrannos), both stagings coincident with a more general revival of interest in Hölderlin's work in the early 1900s through Norbert von Hellingrath's project of a collected edition of the *oeuvre* (1913–1923 (vv.IV-VI completed posthumously)) and publications and lectures of the 1910s hinting and working through the secrets of an essential Germany contained in the late poetry, and swiftly taken up by Stefan George and his circle. Between this moment, and Heidegger's by now infamous lecture series (1934/5) further taking up Hölderlin for a specific, autochthonous, cause, or the re-moval of Hölderlin's *Antigone* into a secondary dramatic context by Brecht, placing importance on a version of the radical speech-forms (1948), Hölderlin, revived, becomes variously untimely, and in the most part becomes echoes not of Hölderlin but an Attic impulse: across this time we bear witness in various ways to tragedy used as a 're-writing machine' of epic for the *polis*.[28] This is short but a war-marked hiatus; a hiatus in which the very materiality of the tragic machine – at the level of the line itself – is, across Europe, debated in an intensity unseen since the writings surrounding the French Revolution a century prior. The line exposed once again as either untimely, within itself to itself, or as a centralizing, normative force; or, the normalizing force of the latter had again come to a point where there exists a poetological demand for its breaks. At the same time, the mechanics of the stage shift, incorporating the screen. And, at quite the same time are published first in French and swiftly into English Henri Bergson's ground-breaking essays on the comic, early conceptual reflections on the new alliance between previous cultural reflections and a new cinematic imaginary.[29] Reflect back on the tale of the 'unkindest cut', now, under the light of Bergson's diagnosis of a key aspect of the comic as a 'mechanical inelasticity', a certain rigidity of figure (form and gesture) which makes of the comic subject something more machinic than human, as Bergson writes, a 'jointed puppet', see-through; a 'set up mechanism' in which the originality lies in the conjuncture of the appearance as person and transparency as machine.

....
27 Euripides (2005): 226. ('Oh! Oh! Would that I could stand apart and look at myself')

28 See Simon Goldhill (2020): 71, on the importance of beginnings and (re)beginnings "Sophocles' *Antigone* – tragedy is a machine for rewriting Homer for the fifth-century *polis* – opens with *Ô koinon*, 'O shared': and the play goes on obsessively to dramatize not just the conflicting claims of commonality in the city and family, but also the dangerous power of the appeals to such commonality".

29 The early publication history of these essays is interestingly disjointed: first as a suite in the *Revue de Paris* (1900) whose foreword (by Bergson) is redacted and replaced for a second publication in 1924, in the interstices of which the (first) collection is translated and published in English (1911).

Film technology allows for this shift in perspective and dimensionality; our digression to Klee's multi-layered multivalent 'Zwitscher - Maschine' is illustrative also here.

Such transparency in modernity is a disguise, a cloud or eidolon, a screen, for (and of) the tragic, the stuttering into voice of the question posed by the imposition of the by-now-again stuttering imperial machine and its alliances or otherwise with what the tragic machinery has become (a vehicle for the perspective-twisting vital promise that is comic cruelty). We must not forget to note how Bergson's apparently simple mechanical comic perception (a seeming-person is also a machine-seeming-person that moves with quite some neatness from A to B and back again) has an additional layer: the see-though mechanism which allows us to 'see through' the, well, see-through guise to the thing that is to be seen. There are three things which can be broken down into twos: two subjects: the human, the puppet (this is the illusion); two mechanisms: the puppet, the 'transparency', glass, or screen (this is the device). The puppet is the illusion of a 'true' device which, through the comedic mode, through its own taking-the-human-as-mask, masks the mask itself. To assume the machine's reversals to be something between human and puppet (dramatized as human-become-puppet-like, or human-in-puppet-carapace), whose increasing closeness, as Bergson writes, increases the comedic potential of the work, is to lose sight of the *other* mechanism at play. It is the transparency demands a reversal of the perspective we take, by which reversal we begin to observe the medium again from that other side in which the set-up turns upset. A reversal which is strictly not peripeteia, which bridges the inside and the outside of the 'tragic' line, or machine; the transparency as alternative caesura, or new 'true word'. The screen becomes the exposure mechanism of and protection medium from the tragic which is masked by the comic's partisan cause; it is the unheard interlocutor of the (apparently comic) scene – the (new) 'true word' (which is terrible). What happens to the tragic machinery, then, in these (cinematic) years between the Hölderlinian revival and its most clear Nazification? When the 're-writing machine' of tragedy meets a re-vived questioning of the imperium or singularity of the line – both its (poetic) mechanics and its metapoetics –? Where another interaction with the question of the cut, the 'true word', is stutteringly exposed?

Through its existence as a light medium, through the minimal differences made animate in a chiaroscuric aesthetics of absolute restraint, 'the screen can rise to the ecstatic level of the poetic and religious ideals of pure Sophoclean formula' – thus, the writer Hilda Doolittle (since 1912 also 'H.D.' in her public Poundian figuration, as well as 'Delia Alton', 'Helga Doon' and others), in one of a series of three essays published in 1927 in the pioneering, and short lived, film magazine *Close*

Up.[30] The cinema, the screening of film, carries with it the complex of elements, the hypermediation and mechanization, the distance from any pure 'origin' whilst being marked by and (silently) marking this process (of having been translated), which allows for it to – in H.D.'s Hellenophilic idea – vie with a sense of the 'Greek' tragic mode in both its ideal poetic and political functions, without simply repeating in an anachronistic or revivalist mimesis. The 'Greek', or the 'Sophoclean' (here) is the possibility of a prototype for the screen. But, as H.D. goes on to write, cinema rarely realizes this, rather, its dominant tendencies even in the inter-war years (what H.D. elsewhere calls the 'period of [...] dispersion'[31]) is to over-narrativize too quickly, to get bound up in processes of fetishization masquerading as hollow signification –[32] paying insufficient attention to the light, the screen, the process of puppets and dolls (the projected characters), and, beyond vulgar *Schattenspiel*, the (rhythmic, counter-current) cuts made and stitched between them; anticipating the critique of cinema's development by Francesco Cassetti - what he has named the 'optical spatial dispositif' (a 'protection/projection complex') of screen technologies, marking their developed complicity with heterogenous mechanisms of state power rather than their puncturing.[33] H.D. in her cinematic writings is conscious of and pays particular attention to the shuddering, stuttering, effects of timing in the cut and the montage, the presence of the stutters and exposure of the work of the machine (and the machine workers), allied to questions of statelessness, of the psyche, and the 'borderline'[34] (tragic stuttering misconstrued as comic madness), and a literal ek-stasis, or animation of the previously motionless artwork. But the cinematic, for her, has not yet advanced into its full expressive potential, and before it has been able to do so, its dominant mode descends into noisy chatter, even as it is the modern medium of

....
30 Doolittle (1927): 39.

31 Doolittle (1950): f.1122.

32 H.D. is writes of a broad (Euro-Russo-American) cinema culture here. Her aesthetic sense in cinematic writings is (interestingly) *against* the synchronizing of sound with speech (i.e. is against the 'talkies'), and *for* films which expose and make use of the medium itself before and in the process of making and of projection (Macpherson, Eisenstein...). The two poems 'Projector' that H.D. also publishes in *Close Up* foreground the importance of light, the cut (or line-break), and the arche-type, as well as the projector as both machine and speculative-future-think (light-projection also becomes essential in her analysis with Freud). Cinema *is* 'Attica', and light a synthesizing, redemptive, force. Or at least H.D.'s version of 'Attica'. This is elaborated in the descriptions of film's function in *Borderline* (pamphlet): a necessary (light-based) 'welding' of 'past static art conceptions in direct line with modern problems' (Doolittle (1930), 15-16). In this (pardon!) light, it is telling that her *Hippolytus*, which we will soon discuss, adds at the opening of the third act an address by Helios: the light cuts through, shapes and is shaped by, the very action of the play.

33 Cassetti (2023): passim.

34 See Doolittle (1930): pp.20-24 particularly on the necessary rhythmicity of film, in juxtaposition and montage, p.13 on the very idea of 'patria' and national belonging as (only ever productive if it is only ever) a 'no-man's land'.

expression that, partly because of its technical attributes, may yet allow for the re-writing of the 'true word' and a re-exploration of the 'terrible word', for modernity, (then H.D.'s 'now'), a re-casting of the line.

We must therefore turn, rather than to the cinematic, back to the dramatic to gain a sense of the relation of H.D.'s ek-stasis and the Hölderlinian 'pure' and 'terrible word'. But as cinema was the proto-re-Sophoclean medium for H.D., the dramatic was Euripidean. We return slantways, then, to *Oedipus Colonus* – the Athenian eccentricity of the Theban trilogy, its un-grounding force – which leads us first one way via the Eumenides to Aeschylus, but then another via Theseus to Euripides, or, via the 'outsider drama' displayed in the *Colonus* again, to Euripides. Euripides being the name given to a body of work whose aesthetics and politics of form comes to us as sitting at generic borderlines rather than paradigmatically centrist, troubling the conventions of signifying regimes;[35] who, having been taken up by Victorian poetry as a medium through which to articulate dissident modes (poetic and civil),[36] gathers a tradition of being taken up in modernity to articulate an outsider poetics,[37] and often doing this in plain sight – via a metapoetics of *form* whose imperfect (signifying) interaction between form and meaning leads to a foregrounding of the structural, mechanical, aspects of the tragic mode and the immanence of history within its force, the wave from the mechanical god of the extimate play-form.[38] The dis-ordering relation of form and meter to the symbolic is important as an aspect of this transportation, as much as is the incomplete inheritance of the *corpus*. And this is the Euripides who H.D., in her work towards poetic versioning, transposing the classic Aristotelian mimetic move (as from praxis to muthos) into a move which articulates out of a conceptual 'real' (as from logos to muthos), nominates as the paradigmatic translator for the people of high philosophical principle into dramatic-poetic

....
35 See the brilliant study of Wohl (2015).

36 Prins (2017) is a wonderful and precise guide here, particularly the *Hippolytus*-focussed chapter pp.152-201.

37 See for instance Maria Stadter Fox, (2001). Fox concentrates on so-called 'Phaedra' dramas, and a very different line (via Seneca and Racine) can be traced here which is for the most part not salient to H.D., however with regard to the question of the machinic stuttering line, and a more general po-etological-civil concern against 'patria', Tsvetaeva's *Phaedra* makes a not dissimilar stuttering move in metrical/conceptual innovation as H.D., and indeed the play sees publication in Russian just one year after H.D.'s *Hippolytus Temporizes*, as well as being a continuation of an earlier lyric sequence (see Tsvetaeva 2012; note also Tsvetaeva's letter to Rilke of 1926, 'No language is the mother tongue [...] Orpheus bursts nationality, or he extends it to such breadth and width that everyone (bygone and being) is included.' (Pasternak, Tsvetaeva, Rilke (2001): 221)).

38 Wohl (2015) passim, but ultimately reflecting the book's final sentence: 'Instead, that [historical, contemporary] context is immanent within them, as their dramatic form gives form in turn to the outside world and reality is conjured for the audience, with a wave of his hand, by the play's me-chanical god', p.131.

form.[39] So, to H.D.'s Euripides (through the frame of the cinematic as Sophoclean mode): the translator of the 'pure word', through the mode of the 'terrible', becomes (tragic) commentator), in whom she reads a sense of the modern, a contemporary charge ('Euripides lived through almost a modern great-war period'[40]), who she writes of as being like Leonardo Da Vinci an inspired mechanic,[41] and in her version of whose *Hippolytus* she interprets the work as being, and containing inside itself, a projection-machine (or, more strictly, is the mechanism of projection and projected subject).[42] In Act 3 of H.D.'s work the light (Helios), brought in as foil and fuel for the crystalline projection-machine (Hippolytus), an articulate counter-rhythm to our expectations of the tragic form being an embodied universal rather than *ex machina*, stuttering 'None, none is pure / and none, none is alone...'[43]

It is, therefore, with H.D.'s *Hippolytus Temporizes* (1927) that we take up again the question of the mechanics of the (modern) tragic stutter, its doubly de-naturalizing effects,[44] that collision between transport and pure word under the question of the line, and the question of the co-incidence of the dedoubled double economy of the tragic transport; a play which H.D. describes as 'reflect[ing] the original Euripides *Hippolytus*.'[45]

This apparently simple, even unnecessary (since we intuit it, or even know it to be something of a translation), description of *Hippolytus Temporizes* is in fact a condensation typical of H.D., in which both the 'reflection' and the question of 'original' carry a heavier weight than the sentence might at surface value imply, regarding which it is perhaps instructive to begin at a beginning: the 'original' – what H.D.'s poet's-work 'reflects'. Which is of course debated as much as it is exceptional, and is cast into further debate via the Euripidean *Hippolytus*'s own debatable and non-singular originpoint which becomes starting point of H.D.'s

....

39 Doolittle (1982): 23. Here she writes 'the Attic dramatist', but subsequently in the essay Euripides is the most frequent example (of a Tragic poet).

40 Doolittle (2003): 277.

41 op. cit., passim.

42 as 'theme and centre, the portrait or projection of the intellectualized, crystalline youth'; this contains the germ of the projector/eidolon structuration H.D. will carry into her late work out of Euripides, *Helen in Egypt*. Note also the (projection-)machine/figure and the crystalline/figure coming together in a formation similar to that which we have seen in Bergson.

43 In the notes for her 1955 re-reading of this play, H.D. marks these lines (see Doolittle (2003): 143).

44 The move of the 'stutter' of tragic machinery definitively against either its appropriation as echo-chamber (stutter as echoic (non)repeition or disembodied bounce-back from a distinct enunciating figure) or the re-naturalization or embodied move of the 'stutter' qua physiological phenomenon and apparent symptom (of madness, illness, etc) or dis/ability.

45 Doolittle (1950)

project. As Simon Goldhill writes, 'The *Hippolytus* is unique among extant tragedies in that what we possess is a second version by the same writer. The first *Hippolytus* has not survived except in a few fragments and in some reports of its lack of success. In this first version, it would seem that Phaedra made an explicit attempt on stage to seduce her stepson, who fled covering his head in shame – an act which gives the play its title, *Hippolytus Kaluptomenos* ('Hippolytus veiling himself') [...] It was the second *Hippolytus*, with a virtuous Phaedra, which won first prize.'[46] We encounter both and neither of these precursor Hippolytuses in H.D., and must remark that the fact of the (debated) original is certainly an aspect of the play that would have drawn H.D. to it; 'original' itself takes on a different meaning (eccentric rather than singular point of origin) as much as *the* 'original' is debatable ground. And thus the 'reflection' of this an active contemplation of unsynthesizable precursors – two points in a reverse-parallax relation – , and H.D.'s Hippolytus becomes a pro-ject, screen, a location-mechanism, that is also condensation, a crystallization, of these as well as her own precursor works on Hippolytus – a bouncing of the already double reflection back – machine to conjure, and take measure of distance, delay, hiatus, of those eidolon-exposing eidolon-exposed tricks of the cut of the light.[47]

Next, the temporizing of the title is not primarily the sort of temporizing made famous by Shakespeare's *Hamlet* – the use of rhetorical excess supported by the dramatic convention of a poetics of an half-foot extended 'feminine' line, productive of an 'out of jointedness' and (existential, ill-fated) negotiation towards a gaining of more time[48] when the measure has already exceeded itself, or an over-reaching, moving from intransitive to transitive in a first and failed meaning switch almost contemporaneous with *Hamlet* itself: temporizing as the negotiation towards a result (rather than with a person).[49] Rather, H.D.'s 'temporizing' condenses, negotiates, and moves beyond a sentimental history of tragic temporization through its transitive and intransitive, still-current and obsolete variants, leapfrogging the intrigue of the Hamletian hapax

....

46 Goldhill (1986): 131. It is worth noting H.D.'s interaction with this alternatively titled work, as its presence haunts *Hippolytus Temporizes*: passages in H.D.'s 'Notes on Euripides' are a direct answer to, and some an explicit re-writing of Walter Pater's 'Hippolytus Veiled: A Study from Euripides' (Pater 1894). H.D.'s references to 'Hippolytus' often condense reference to both Euripidean plays.

47 As with Hölderlin's Sophocles, H.D.'s Euripides appears passim across her full *oeuvre* in verse (translations and versionings) and prose (both fiction and essays) and reaches its most radical extension in the prosimetra *Helen in Egypt*; with relation to the forms and figures of the Hippolytus drama in particular, in 1919 appear choruses (translated from Greek to English), in 1921's *Hymen* a rehearsal of the figures and relations to eros including a poem of the same title as the verse play, parts of all which are incorporated into the 1927 *Hippolytus Temporizes*.

48 'Temporize, v 3' (1991) *Compact Oxford English Dictionary* – current from 1587.

49 'Temporize v. 4b' – from 1596, now obsolete, rare.

as representation of bourgeois stuckness,[50] and adding a final distinctly modern sense which points strictly to the mechanics of the play itself – a third sense, or (successful) transitive shift where to temporize is a *provision* of time, an improvisation, *ex*temporization[51] – a move away from the pre-determination of the enclosed convention of the too-invisible tragic machine. H.D.'s *Hippolytus* (both play-form and character-screen) stutters, but towards the transitive, the ex-centric, the locative, whose direct object is the transparency, the transformative break, between the two, and thus its uprooting and modal translation. And indeed, belied by the apparent youth and historied outsider-complexes of both princes, H.D.'s Hippolytus could not be more different than Shakespeare's Prince Hamlet – the latter swithering but swearing vengeance and out-of-joint because of the self-generation of an inability to choose, a principle of un-choosing trumping a principled decision; the former acting towards a fixed principle eccentric to the positions of dominant belief-system, state, and kinship, and a refusal to engage with the question of the line (of inheritance). Indeed, H.D. is something of a reactionary to those writers considered comfortable masters of the (or a) poetic line, one example being the choice of Euripides over Sophocles or Aeschylus, another being the interweaving of the mother-line into the Shakespearean intertextualities of her novels and project to 'remember *differently*'[52] of *On Avon River*, and yet another an interesting re-lineation of Goethe in the manuscripts of *Tribute to Freud*. This latter point is instructive, as it, as do the writings on cinema, demonstrates another aspect of H.D.'s making-stutter of the tragic machinery rather than the projected image, whilst also showing us, through a series of breaks, a critical reading of *Hamlet* and its figure(s) which anticipates Adorno's embedding of the play within a certain bourgeois culture of sentiment and stuckness, and which is a mirror-move to her choice of the Euripidean over the Sophoclean tragic drama here, and elsewhere, to translate.

In an eccentric prosimetric stichomythia between verse and prose, song and narration, H.D. (in prose) unpacks the analyst-analysand / Master-pupil / Psychoanalyst-Poet relation of herself to Sigmund Freud and (in verse) quotes from 'Mignon's Gesang' from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre*.[53] The obvious biographical analogy here is H.D. (articulately conscious of the translation of 'Meister' to 'Master') casting Freud as Wilhelm Meister and herself (Freud's 'perfect psychic bisexual') as the parentless exotic androgyne Mignon. But we must note how much

....
50 cf Adorno (2000): 112. ('at the very outset of the bourgeois age' the play demonstrates the 'irreconcilable contradiction' between 'right consciousness and right action')

51 'Temporize v. 5' – from 1880.

52 Doolittle (2016): 31.

53 Doolittle (2012): 108-111.

Goethe's Wilhelm Meister (obsessed with the dramatic corpus of his Renaissance namesake, increasingly focussed on *Hamlet*) also shows us the *Bildungs* of the machinery of the play form: he moves from puppet-plays to the circus, to the theatre itself, in which economic expedient calls for brutal modifications of an already unoriginal (and translated) playscript, and he sees the 'time is out of joint' as the line which is the key to a full interpretation of the play, a neat mirror to his own never quite being on time. Against this, and against the prose deconstruction by the poet of Freud, we have lines of 'Mignon's Gesang', beginning in a middle verse of the song and circling around through the end to the opening, as if, in the background of the prose is, all along, this song, on a loop; an act of 'creative stuttering'.[54] Goethe as author of Mignon, and all the famous *Lieder* of this lyric, are exposed as a smoothing over of a violent process of making foreign (let us recall that Mignon stands as a modern equivalent of a spoil of war; at the point of this song in the novel she has been bought our of indenture by Wilhelm Meister, and the song is a plea to return to a lost homeland).[55] And, as H.D. will not preserve Goethe's linear form, nor does she, in manuscript versions of this work, preserve his lineation, which she continutally idiosyncratically breaks into two shorter lines at the point of the caesura ('Kennst du das Land / Wo die Zitronen Blühn' etc),[56] following her first quotation ('Es stürzt der Fels [...] und über ihn die Flut') which is divided across and divides a passage of prose (at the caesura: 'the rock breaks or falls in ruins, and indeed this is our very present predicament; but')[57] – de-instituting the 'major' (iambic pentameter) line of which Goethe is cultural upholder[58] after Shakespeare, but also debunking the primacy of 'out of jointedness'

....

54 Deleuze (1998): 111. ('Creative stuttering is what makes language grow from the middle [...] Being well spoken has never been either the distinctive feature or the concern of great writers')

55 Following further H.D.'s tendency to condense or crystallise multiple (analagous) figures into a single name-form, it is clear that there is a divergence at play between the Hamlet-figure (associated with Wilhelm Meister, Shakespeare, Goethe, Freud, 'The Master', the Husband) and the Hippolytus-figure (associated with Mignon, Ophelia (via the 'Hamlet' plot), made analogous also to Phaedra, and H.D. herself).

56 See Yale TS not published book of the work: these breakings are editorially smoothed over (or 'corrected') into single iambic lines, which 'corrections' appear to be in Norman Holmes Pearson's hand. We can only assume the correction is with H.D.'s consent or resignation to 'correctness' of 'quotation' (even as elsewhere she is meticulous about the retention of apparent parapraxes). But the 'broken' (or re-lineated) lines are evidence of a different – anti-iambic – poetic 'memory' at work. It is worth noting that the archive of correspondence demonstrates that H.D., earlier, took it upon herself to explain the anti-iambic idiosyncrasies of her metrical innovations to Pearson, going so far as to mark up poems with scansion markings, and that she was similarly strict with herself – marking up components of the script of *Helen in Egypt* that she was to read for a recording.

57 Doolittle (2012): 107.

58 There is insufficient space here to extend this, but it is worth noting that Deleuze (1998) figures Goethe as 'the greatest representative of the major language', or of linguistic equilibrium, who would have been horrified by Kleist's making-stutter, making-minor, or turning out from the inside, of German.

as the dominant line or screen-memory, of the tragic mode. H.D.'s *Hippolytus* project, too, shares these anti-caesaral lineation tendencies, this necessity of a different measure (demonstrated for instance in Prins's re-lineation of one of the choruses of *Hippolytus* into longer lines to prove their break with Swinburne[59]). Look back to the two lines from Helios quoted above: note that the regular caesural point in a (feminized, here) pentameter line is the line-break, allowing for a completely different post-break rhythm, for the lines (rhetorically) to not only effect different approaches to their subject but also internally re-define these approaches and subject-definitions; and throughout the third act of *Hippolytus Temporizes* the stichomythia are rendered in this way. The line (already) out-of-joint (by alternating speech) is further disjointed, from its centre-point outwards; the important counterrhythmic locus in the tragic transport is visibilized in the very action of its being broken. The 'pure word' (caesura) dissolved into the infinite of the line-break.[60] A different rhythmicity opens up. The stutter, the terrible word of the modern tragic machine.

In H.D., we note a rejection of a Hamletian 'untimeliness', or 'disjoint' via a condensation of reference in the very breaks of her poetic line and this move, the breaking of the breaks, is a caesural movement in the mechanism itself to de-caesar the tragic machine, to question through its titular central point the ideas of what might be classical 'reflection' and origin-point, (poetic) inheritance, or line. And, as did the eccentricity of Hölderlin's transformative metrical and lexical changes provoke his (comfortable) readers into a certain diagnostic, H.D.'s *Hippolytus Temporizes* exercised and divided its critics, but has since been read with close attention an experimental innovation of form, a novel transformative move, an 'allegory of meter'[61] defined and materially defended in Yopie Prins's virtuoso reading of the play and its related poetic precedents in H.D.'s *oeuvre*, where 'temporizing' is re-cast and cast into the very lines of the play itself, which in moving 'through and beyond iambic meter into a more expansive sense of metrical time' creates 'a different idea of metrical time'.[62] The play begins with cuts, superimpositions or simultaneities of voice (a precursor effect to the prosimetric overlapping of *Tribute to Freud*'s 'Mignon' section) and consistently foregrounds questions of song, rhythm, meter, and 'feet'. It begins with an erasure of the address ex-machina of Athene who opens Euripides's second (complete) *Hippolytus* play. For H.D.: first, an

....
59 Prins (2017): 189-190.

60 See Doolittle (2003): 139 where the 'Note on the Text' quotes H.D. in 1955 reflecting on *Hippolytus Temporizes*: 'The stanzas and lines run on and into the infinite – '.

61 Prins (2017): 187 (transformation); 197 ('allegory of meter').

62 Prins (2017): 199 (expansive meter); (different ... time) 193.

invocation, or ode, dated 1920, Greece[63]; then, a list of 'People of the Play', an 'Argument'; then the first act, 'Below Troezen. A wild gorge or ravine cuts through the trees onto a flat, sandy beach' (the shore for H.D. is the point of encounter with the infinite, the stage set-up more easy for a cinematic lens than a theatre).[64] Then, the voice of Artemis, anti-Athenian and in disgust at the human imperial ascriptions of totalizing rhythmic form: 'I heard the intolerable rhythm / and sound of prayer', with a desire for their 'efface[ment]' (this is significantly reincorporated into the body of the play in Artemis's final, closing speech).[65] The play is, immediately, an attempt to uncouple the tragic mode from the radical self-enclosure of an Attic (or any nation-state-based) Imperium. Enter onto this scene of anti-imperial terror-pronouncement Hippolytus, 'stumbling forward, uncertain in the half-light'.[66] Evening comes to the coast, and Act 2 opens, on Phaedra, inadvertently echoing the anti-Athenian lines of Artemis: 'O how I hate / radiant, cold and drear / Greece...', 'O how I hate / this world, this west, this power [...]/ the tyranny of spirit / that is Greece'.[67] Act 3 (remaining on the seacoast) gives us Helios, articulating and turning around a divided singular form: 'I / I who lead the sea-men on the ship...'.[68] And, following H.D.'s own Hippolytan logic, 'Hippolytus' is in fact a figure, and a (crystalline) mechanical unit, a part of the machine-impulse of the work – it is Hippolytus whose refracting mechanisms will bring together in an eccentric orbit these three presiding figures, Artemis (deity), Phaedra (foreigner), and Helios (sun); it is Hippolytus in H.D.'s play who dies in an encounter with the infinite that is not the wrath of a machinic God or Hero (H.D. rids the play of Theseus, Poseidon, sea-monsters); Hippolytus who exists apart, dies, is revived, and dies for a second time, multiple selves and actions refracted and renounced within the play-action multiple times. Lines of the play echo and repeat, calling out their measure. This, then, the

....

63 Doolittle (2003): 3. This is one of H.D.'s 'Hippolytus' works previously published; the anachronic presentation of *Hippolytus Temporizes* is inscribed in its presentation even before the play's beginning proper.

64 In line with the 'Zwitscher - Maschine''s un-doing of the metaphysics of the Greek theatre, its gods and heroes, H.D.'s setup here implies Troezen as what is at the roof of the *skene*, the stage – land – divided by a ravine (exposing as if by the mechanism of the *ekkyklema,* an interior space of the 'stage', and an exposition of the lack of the Eumenides), and the beach as the *orchestra*. H.D.'s play obliterates the gods as well as the emperors *ex machina*, replacing Gods with figures – and cuts the stage into two – all action is situated in the *orchestra*, a third space, total ex-position, which is eccentric to the entire technics and mechanics of the stage set. Hippolytus's crystalline figure, stumbling onto the strand, obsessed with rhythm up to breaking-point, is the cast of the (new) tragic machinery.

65 Doolittle (2003): 3-9.

66 op cit. 9.

67 op. cit. 48-49.

68 op. cit. 99.

macrostructure of temporization of the work. And it is Hippolytus who is brought into the world-stage-shore of the play holding through the action of his body even as it is young *Oedipus Colonus* – he stumbles; he is in 'half-light' – the second Hölderlinian tragic caesura (the 'terrible word') which is beyond the 'Greek', which, stripped of a young generation as guide and representative of the continuation of a line, can only be differently counter-rhythmic, eccentric, modern.

Nicole Loraux's *La Voix endueillée*, following and updating the Hölderlinian schematic, remarks on the ways in which the (classical) tragedy's enactment of a state injunction to forget is punctured by lyric utterance and lamentation, as this latter mode exceeds the totality of the state and provokes formation of different communities whose formation brings the potential for different universals or breaks of dominant racinations, of xenophobias. Exceeding this diagnosis of tragedy's potential to exceed and puncture the imperial, H.D.'s modal absorptions (it is far too simplistic just to indicate that H.D.'s verse drama is written in 'lyric' forms) re-calibrate in a Hölderlinian modality, through a pre-Deleuzian minoritarian stutter, the 'pure word' of (both tragic and lyric) caesuring mechanisms, through the encounter with an absolute which the (anti-caesaral) broken (caesaral) break of the line effects; there are no lamentations here except those which puncture the metapoetics of other established genres; we move on, must move on, as much from 'song' as from the Attic tragic form, and the mechanics of the 'stutter' in and of the line allows for a constancy of this movement. A physics of reading becomes internally self-referential, as well as conjuncturally extimate. The stuttering machine (the stutter in (the) machine) is a demand for recognition, a re-cognition that passes through an initial stage of reactive similitude-making toward a more effective reading protocol which eschews group-think, or untroubled comic artistry, or madness-diagnostics. The trap of the (first) Hölderlinian tragic complex of the 'pure' word is punctured by the (second) Hölderlinian tragic complex of the 'terrible' word – the hearing of the 'stutter' *as* word, its carrying-over of the infinite – that terror that the eloquent Hamlettian mode, the post-facto Heideggerian-inflected readings of (mad)Hölderlin-who-is-not-Hölderlin apparently excels in its avoidance of, in its always-present plea for there to be an intervention ex machina which re-sets the regime-form; the eccentric machine-scene where in incorporating into the tragic comedy's (vitalist) horrorshow can be enunciated the 'terrible' word which is the pass-word when known which leads to recognition and resistance. Start to notice and *das zwitschert unaufhörlich.* The (second) cut of the (first) cut is the exposition of (modern) tragedy's (stutter and life-) line.

Adorno, Theodor 2000, *Problems of Moral Philosophy*. tr. Rodney Livingstone, Stanford UP.

Agamben, Giorgio 2023, *Hölderlin's Madness: Chronicle of a Dwelling Life, 1806-1843*. Tr. Alta L. Price. Kolkata: Seagull.

Alghieri, Dante 2011, *The Divine Comedy V.3: Paradiso*. Tr. Robert M. Durling. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Aristotle 2000, *Nicomachean Ethics*. Tr. Roger Crisp. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bakhtin, Mikhail 1984, *Rabelais and his World*. Tr. Helene Iswolsky, Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Balso, Judith 2022 *Ouvir Hölderlin*. Paris: Nous.

Bertaux, Pierre 1983 *Hölderlin ou Le temps d'un poète*. Paris: Gallimard.

Carson, Anne 2010, *An Oresteia*. London: Faber and Faber.

Casseti, Francesco 2023, *Screening Fears: On Protective Media*. New York: Zone Books.

Constantine, David 2011, 'Service Abroad: Hölderlin, Poet-Translator (A Lecture)', *Translation and Literature* 20,1: 79-97.

Deleuze, Gilles 1998, *Essays Critical and Clinical*. Tr. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco, London: Verso.

Doolittle, Hilda (H.D.) 1927, 'The Cinema and the Classics: part 2, Restraint' *Close Up* 1.: 30-39.

– – 1930, *Borderline* (pamphlet), London: the Mercury Press. Digitized at https://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/10256857

– – 1950, 'Notes on Recent Writing', YCAL MSS 24, Series II, Box 44, f.1122, H.D. Papers, Beineke Library, Yale.

– – 1982, *Notes on Thought and Vision & The Wise Sappho*. San Francisco: City Lights.

– – 2003, *Hippolytus Temporizes and Ion: Adaptations of Two Plays by Euripides*. New York: New Directions.

– – 2012, *Tribute to Freud*. New York: New Directions.

– – 2016, *By Avon River*. University Press of Florida.

Euripides 2005, *Children of Heracles, Hippolytus, Andromache, Hecuba*, Tr. David Kovacs (LCL 484), Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Fox, Maria Stadter 2001 *The troubling play of gender: the Phaedra Dramas of Tsvetaeva, Yourcenar, and H.D.* Selinsgrove: Susquehanna UP.

Goldhill, Simon 1986, *Reading Greek Tragedy*. Cambridge: CUP.

– – 2020, *Preposterous Poetics: The Politics and Aesthetics of Form in Late Antiquity*. Oxford: OUP.

Hölderlin, Friedrich 1975-2008, *Sämtliche Werke: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe* (20vv). Ed. Dietrich Sattler et al. Frankfurt-am-Main: Verlag Roter Stern/Stroemfeld.

– – 1998, *Selected Poems and Fragments*, Tr. Michael Hamburger, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

– – 2009, *Essays and Letters*. Tr. Jeremy Adler and Charlie Louth, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

– – 2018, *Friedrich Hölderlin Selected Poetry*. Tr. David Constantine, Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Bloodaxe.

Kafka, Franz 1933, *The Great Wall of China: And other pieces*. Tr. Edwin and Willa Muir. London: Secker.

Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe 1989, *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics*. Ed. Christopher Fynsk, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Loraux, Nicole 1999, *La voix endeuillée: essai sur la tragedie grecque*. Paris: Gallimard.

MOMA, *Provenance Research Project*. Online. www.moma.org/collection/provenance/?locale=en. Accessed 24 September 2023.

Pasternak, Boris, Marina Tsvetaeva, Rainer Maria Rilke 2001, *Letters: Summer 1926*. Tr. Margaret Wettlin, Walter Arndt, Jamey Gambrell, New York: NYRB.

Pater, Walter 1985, *Greek Studies: A Series of Essays*, London: Macmillan.

Plato 1974, *Philebus*. Tr. J.C.B. Gosling. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

– – 2003, *The Republic*. Tr. Tom Griffith. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Prins, Yopie 2017, *Ladies Greek: Victorian Translations of Tragedy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Tsvetaeva, Marina 2012, *Soul and Passion: Marina Tsvetaeva's Classical Plays: Ariadne & Phaedra*. Tr. Zara Martirovska Torlone and Maria Stadter Fox, Oxford Ohio: Staroe Vino.

Wohl, Victoria 2015, *Euripides and the Politics of Form*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.