VISUALISING WYNDHAM LEWIS'S
ENEMY OF THE STARS
AS THEATRICAL NARRATIVE

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Abstract

Wyndham Lewis's *Enemy of the Stars* has often been considered an unreadable and therefore an un-performable play script from the time when it was written and published in *BLAST* in 1914 as part of the Vorticist manifesto. The play was not performed until 1980 and there was just one subsequent staging in 1982. However, both of these performances were based on Lewis's 1932 revision. Although the play appeared as a piece of written text in *BLAST*, it was considered by the Vorticists as visual imagery. With this approach in mind, this research sets out to investigate the visualisation of the 1914 version of the play as a work of theatrical art from a practitioner's viewpoint.

Because this is a practice-led research project, it involves creative art works that relate to, and collaborate with, the performance of the play itself. As it is argued here, the challenge lies in Wyndham Lewis's experimental expression of visualities in the conventional textually dominated field of play scripts. By applying a Chinese poetry-reading method and utilising the perspective approach to viewing paintings, a pictographic way of comprehending the written text is offered. Such an analytical approach helps to capture the spirit of the scenes of the play and informs its visual representation — a text-into-image issue.

In line with Wyndham Lewis's visual vocabulary, sets of artworks are created. These visual works — consisting of three imagined scenographies, including a number of games — constitute the inner or self-contained world of the two characters of the play. The narrative of the play unfolds through a sequence of three scenographic models: the solitaire chess-play simulates the frustrated 'self' being cornered by the *Will*; the rotating Tai-chi platform, where the debate between the two characters Arghol and Hanp takes place, symbolises the confused negotiation within the duality; and the hollow plastic construct represents the fragile, soulless dwellings where Arghol and Hanp struggle in realising their true independence. These are provided as a means of communicating the author's interpretations to the theatre practitioners, with each model acting as a vehicle conveying the meanings of the play.

Finally, the author reflects on the concepts of performance by displaying as theatrical narrative a group of mobiles with string-hung paper cut-out figures drawn from the play script and from Wyndham Lewis's visual oeuvre. Viewing the suspended mobiles as the 'actions' in the three Acts of the play while perceiving the multiple meanings embedded within, and associated with, the various cut-outs reflect and echo Lewis's written narrative.

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Acknowledgements

Author's declaration

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been previously submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material submitted for a degree.

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Brief foreword

This research has been undertaken as a practice-based study in line with the doctorate principles lay down by the University of Brighton. As a consequence, it contains references to stage models and scenarios that reflect the concepts of a real performance of a play and the visual aspects normally contained in a performance that are indicated in the text. This study is supported by such visual material in addition to literary sources and interpretation.

The attached CD-ROM contains photos of the visual works created by the author. All of these photographs were taken by the author herself and have all been archived as JPEG files.
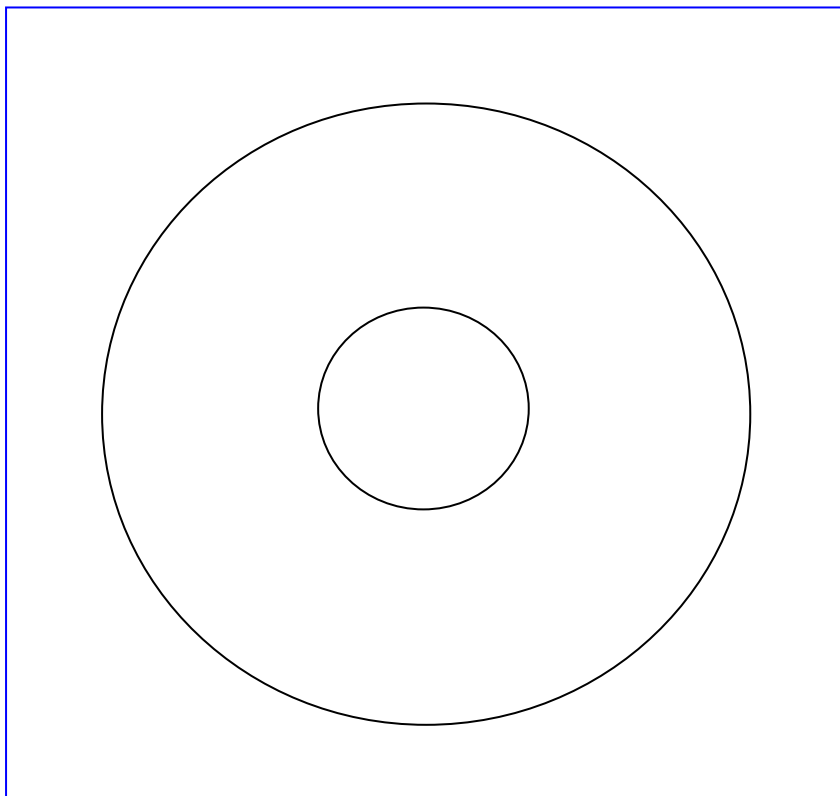
Chapter 1 Introduction

Is *Enemy of the Stars*, written by Wyndham Lewis in 1914, a performable play? For almost a hundred years, critics have often considered it as an unreadable, and therefore an un-performable, play script. Although in October 1980, the play was presented as a dramatised reading in a Wyndham Lewis symposium and one subsequent staging was produced in November 1982 as a participatory event in celebrating Lewis's centenary, neither of these performances was based on its original 1914 script. They both made use of the 1932 version of the play, which Lewis heavily revised with more conventional staging directions but fewer indexical visual elements than the first version.

The reason why many critics and theatre practitioners dispute that the 1914 version is a viable theatrical concept comes from their frustration in reading the script itself, due in large part to Lewis's experimental integration of visualities within its textual narrative. Claiming that the work is impenetrable, the critics even doubted its genre as a play for theatrical performance. Therefore, the first objective of this study is to define the nature of *Enemy of the Stars* through analysing its characteristics in conjunction with the principles of classical performance, as established in Aristotle's *Poetics,* which applied particular roles to the elements of the theatre. This serves to demonstrate that the script contains all the necessary components for forming a theatrical play.

By examining ways in which critics and theatre practitioners approach the play, the second objective identifies the problem of readability and its implications for the problems of accessing it as a play. To overcome this particular difficulty, this study approaches the play through the element of visuality. As part of the Vorticist

manifesto[1], *Enemy of the Stars* can be seen and understood as a piece of visual artwork instead of as a purely literary one. The play, which integrates visual elements within its printed pages and its written narratives, extends the boundaries between the visual and the literal[2]. Treating its visual elements as equally important as its textual narratives, this study also analyses the six images positioned as a visual overture of the script[3], which few critics have considered as an integral part of the play.

Created in the early 20th century, in a flux of accelerated cultural exchange on a global scale, the play has been influenced by Imagist poetry and perhaps by Chinese poetry — each of which are highly visual and concise in meaning. As a consequence, Lewis's *Enemy of the Stars* became the paramount Vorticist play using methods similar to those used in creating visual art in the construction of its syntax. Derived from methods of reading Chinese poetry, this study provides techniques for deciphering the text of the play – pictographic visualisation, visual association and what can be called 'stacking' (by which is meant the phenomenon of changes in meaning due to the association and juxtaposition of words and their indicative imagery). If this approach is adopted, the play can be understood and so be performable.

Instead of considering the play in Lewis's conceptual 'two scenes' or the eleven sub-sections[4], this study divides the play into three Acts, as it might appear in a conventional play script, through analysing the displayed images. Three themes are derived and further defined from three images: 'Plan of War', 'Timon of Athens', and 'Slow Attack', each standing for an Act. The theme of Act One is cornering the 'Self'; Act Two reflects the confused negotiations within duality; and Act Three can be seen as comprising true independence.

In order to develop a proper theatrical performance, while maintaining the virtue of visuality inherent in the concept of *Enemy of the Stars*, the study applies Richard Hornby's method of theatrical analysis because it is one of the few analytical techniques devoted particularly to preparation for performance which emphasises a play script's metaphorical meanings and aesthetic representations. According to Hornby[5], identifying 'the significant elements' of a play – the 'oddities' that are often obscured through confusion when reading a play script – is the first step towards understanding the complexity of a play's metaphorical meanings. He claims that all elements in a script must have reasons for being present, so as to identify a rationale for these seemingly 'odd' elements that can lead to a better understanding of a play. Therefore, the second step is to organise these 'oddities' into one 'unifying principle', which can be outlined from the text. He emphasises that although 'the unifying principle' emerges from those recurrences, it does not exist in a play script itself, but is a functional relationship between a critical approach and a particular script. By applying this unified principle, the theatre practitioner can then identify the appropriate aesthetic representation of a play. Though this technique is not necessarily original, it does provide a methodology that, in the case of *Enemy of the Stars*, is appropriate, given that the aim of this study is to demonstrate the play's performability.

Following this approach, chapters 4, 5 and 6 detail the development of creating stage designs for each Act. Chapter 4, cornering the 'Self', stressed the main concern Lewis expressed in Act One, that the artists were similar to the figure being cornered in the image 'Plan of War' (see figure 4.1), struggling to breathe, questioning whether its representative, Arghol (the main character in the play) is a ruler or the ruled. Is the artist also a ruler or the ruled? From further analysis of the play script, the study

discloses the artist's battle against an overwhelming situation from a potentially enigmatic textual narrative.

To reinforce this strong sensation of artistic frustration, the study provides the metaphor of solitaire or a form of a chess-like game. By playing this, theatre practitioners can experience not only the emotion of defeat from reading the text, but also the agitation aroused by the mental battle of struggling to survive. Traditionally, most theatre practitioners understand a play from reading it in textual form, although later they transform those understandings into actions, gestures, voices or colours; playing this game as part of the understanding process narrows that gap between textual interpretation and full sensory perception. This device is a vehicle of communication, the action or experience of playing the game which can make the process of learning and understanding in visualising a play script more vivid and effective.

Moreover, this same game is in fact designed for a stage setting, which actors will perform upon the enlarged chessboard among magnified moving pieces – 'the red walls of the universe'[6]. Following the playwright's directions in the script, the performance will be seen by an audience from the top gallery of a theatre, looking down to the arena below. In addition to facilitating the concept of the audience as part of the performance, this stage setting provides opportunities for the audience to determine the game rules for the performance below, whether they decide as participants to go down to the chessboard to experience being 'cornered', or stay where they are and imagine themselves as the '*Will*', who observes the 'world'.

Focusing on the image 'Timon of Athens' (see figure 5.1), chapter 5 first discusses the

affinity between Arghol, the main character of the play, and Timon in the context of Shakespeare's play *Timon of Athens*. Lewis had studied this play carefully and created a series of paintings presenting his visual interpretations of the play before he wrote *Enemy of the Stars*. As a result, he later drew a new image for this Vorticist play. This study sees the analogy of Timon and Arghol in that Lewis applies Timon's internal conflict and his dilemma in sustaining the true existence of the self to Arghol. By detailed examination of Act Two through the previously mentioned reading methods and techniques, a sequence of confused dialogues and actions can be deciphered from the enigmatic text and turned into meaningful embodiments.

To facilitate these confused negotiations between Arghol and his disciple Hanp, this study creates a platform to represent the wheelwright's yard of the play, which contains a conceptual multi-world where the misplaced objects and subjects discussed in the play by the characters can be revealed. The stage has the appearance of a harmonious Chinese symbol, Tai-chi, on a base of an octagonal field — an inoffensive and non-hostile shape in traditional Chinese culture, called the Ba-gua. This base is also the exact size of the chessboard of Act One. Moreover, to single out the paradox within the confused negotiations, this platform can be seen both from above as a harmonious world but also from the side as a dangerous vortex. It is designed further to revolve slowly whilst actors perform on it to reinforce the efforts of their negotiations, and to provide a further element of tension.

Completed with a canal, three trees and a hut, this stage design also emphasises the concept of multiple usage of space in a theatre, which is one of the advantages of a theatrical performance. This spatial practice draws the audience's attention to the relationship between the physical dimensions of performance and the characters'

mental worlds. For example, the curved line between the Tai-chi's Yin and Yang, where actors might fall, can be visualised as the muddy canal to symbolise the split world as well as reinforcing its uncertain connection; the three trees standing along the canal represent the sacrifice of the characters, whilst their hollow structure is haunted by their own ghostly shadows as if they were interacting; the simple structure of the hut means it can be carried and assembled on stage whilst facilitating Arghol and Hanp's actions. It represents indoor, outdoor and mental space at the same time.

All of the designs in Act Two, added to the actors' body movements on the revolving platform, expose the paradox of communication within a seemingly simple and harmonious world together with the added layers of concepts. They hint that the philosophical dialogues between Arghol and Hanp will be, in the end, a false communication.

The final Act comprises the idea of true independence. By analysing 'Slow Attack' (see figure 6.1), this study discusses Lewis's advocacy of violence but with paradoxical hesitations and representations of the uncertainty and diversity of the mind when at the point of taking action to conflict with, or respond to, others. Repudiating and being repudiated seems to be the characters' mental status in Act Three. Furthermore, within the structure of this image, this study identifies potential spatial structures in representing Arghol's dream and Hanp's ideal world; both are, in fact, soulless. In searching for their true existence, Arghol and Hanp take their journeys individually.

Their journeys are analysed by applying Hornby's techniques again. This analysis will reveal their efforts in struggling against the limitations of their physical and mental

abilities in the journey; these are disguised in variable scenarios. To present their

journeys, this study uses a macquette of plastic straws to create a tubular structure,

which symbolises the hollow identity of the two characters. The structure, similar to

the game for Act One, also allows practitioners to experience the intended or

accidental changes made by the players, which can cause various shifts in the

structure; this renders it unstable and unwieldy. These shifts also symbolise Arghol

and Hanp's decisions to do things in the play that have unforeseen consequences.

These neon coloured ('Day-glo') plastic straws represent a sense of the industrialised

world, including its anonymous mass-produced industrial forms of manufacture, and

the similarities of the flexibility of modern building material such as steel.

The same structure would be enlarged and becomes the tubular stage setting.

Standing on the rough ground, which is the same ground where the negotiating

Tai-chi platform stands, this stage setting not only accommodates multiple locations in

Arghol's dreams and Hanp's ideal world, but also contrasts Arghol's modern plastic

and Hanp's bleak rustic backgrounds at the same time. Moreover, in order to

emphasise Arghol and Hanp's efforts in breaking the physical and mental limitations

when fighting the overwhelming power of their surroundings, these tubular structures

are designed to be moved by mechanical power randomly unless they are moved on

stage by the two actors. However, because this stage setting also emphasises the

power of scale in a theatrical production, the size of the actors represents the

powerless status of humans when compared with the height of the structures, which

are also powered by a machine invisible to the audience. Therefore most of the time

actors need to negotiate ways of moving around this mobile tubular structure for their

own survival. When the actors walk upon, squeeze between, climb up, slide down and

jump among these tubes, they are similar to the wire-walker, acrobat or trapeze artist

in a circus. 'Two heathen clowns'[7], as the playwright states in the advertisement, refer to Arghol and Hanp. Their acts are part of the theatrical effects of the instability and uncertainty of the mental journey they go through in finding true independence.

After the possible stage designs demonstrated in chapters 4, 5, and 6 which address the question of whether the play is performable in a theatre, this study further examines the play within the context of both visual and theatrical art in order to reconsider the ideal representation by which the playwright's original intention can be fulfilled. As Lewis wrote this play as part of the Vorticist manifesto and also to demonstrate the creation of a piece of visual art in the guise of a written component with visual elements, it seems likely that he would not have been satisfied with merely producing the play as a traditional theatrical performance. Through analysing 'Decoration for the Countess of Drogheda's House', one of the images positioned before the textual narratives in the script, this study suggests that Lewis wanted *Enemy of the Stars* to be seen in a domestic environment rather than in a theatre arranged for entertaining. Furthermore, considering the play from a visual artist's point of view, a form has been chosen: the mobile. The final chapter looks at the way the mobile can be used as a representation for *Enemy of the Stars*.

The mobile has several visual characteristics: movement, counterpoise, weightlessness, and the attractive nature of innocent playfulness. The key difference between a theatrical production and a visual representation is action. With their kinetic ability, mobiles can move within the designed counterpoise expressing relationships such as tension, competition and harmony. The weightlessness echoes the anti-gravity concept of the play. Moreover, these weightless paper-cut objects would remind viewers of their playful childhood toys. The temptation to touch them and see

them move could cause a further chain effect in other adjacent mobiles. The interactions involved in viewing the mobile echo Lewis's ideas of using the audience as part of the performance. The design of the mobile itself and the diverse forces of gravity, wind and viewers' movements power the mobile in different ways, thus creating new and varied understandings of the play. Although it follows that the mobility, counterpoise, weightlessness and playfulness are not able to fully represent a play, these mobiles physically provide the ambience of a possible theatrical 'performance', which is an achievement that most art forms cannot accomplish.

Therefore, to help viewers understand the play better, this artwork of mobiles enhances the expression of the plot as well as the meanings of the play by using Lewis's own created images as the hung objects. These suspended images can exemplify the play's aesthetic characteristics and associated symbolic meanings as an expression of Lewis's thoughts and understanding.

By applying the previously defined themes of the play, this artwork is divided into three Groups in presenting the three Acts of the play by identifying the chosen images and turning them into silhouette form. Group One, *cornering the 'Self'*, literally places 'the Enemy' in a corner and positions a crowd of red elements. These have been extracted from Lewis's painting 'Red Scene', and placed into a visual situation where they are shown to be cornering their victim. Group Two, *confused negotiations within the duality*, is represented by nine pairs of figures devoted to delineating various personal relationships between Arghol and Hanp. The appearances and interactions among these figures and pairs convey potential layers of meaning and create combinations of contexts. Group Three, *comprising true independence*, not only constructs an artificial structure where Arghol and Hanp journeyed to, but also

emphasises the mental struggles in their conflict. The alien atmosphere of the man-made world echoes Arghol and Hanp's struggle in trying to pin down their ownership of Self to a particular location in the world. To comprehend the struggles of Arghol and Hanp in realising their true independence, viewers – unlike conventionally passive audiences in a theatre – need to observe mobiles from various directions in searching for the appropriate routes and connections within the display. Only by doing so can viewers then go through the mental and physical journey with them.

The mobiles can be seen as, literally, a spatial form of narrative. As one reads a literal narrative, it has an apparently logical structure, but it is shaped also by, in some cases, disjointed or disparate imageries, and seemingly random words or phrases. Such is the case with the 1914 version of *Enemy of the Stars*. However, the different arrangement of events within a linear flow of words converts a purely chronological sequence into a 'spatial' one. While containing a similar understanding of the plot, the spatial sequence can possibly recreate other stories. As viewers are proactive in viewing the artwork, the interpretations of the play solely depend on the viewer's perception and understanding. Thus, the narratives are extended both by the 'reading' sequence and the combination of the artworks, which are an analogy of the play itself as presented in *BLAST* in 1914. The play script is the starting point which leads to the interpretations of the play and to the development of the visual structures that extend the interpretations and create possibilities, though these structures are still ultimately based on the original format. Through a consideration of a disparate layout of elements and actions, this study provides, by exploring potential visual mechanisms, further possibilities for translating and interpreting the central core of Lewis's *Enemy of the Stars*.

Such an interpretation of *Enemy of the Stars* can be seen as derivative from Lewis's own aims and intentions as outlined in *BLAST*, and can also serve as a reminder of the dissatisfaction and anger with British society in this period experienced by Lewis and his artistic contemporaries.

[1] As the only art movement developed in England in the 20th century, Vorticism, established by Lewis and Ezra Pound between 1914 and 1918, published two issues of its official magazine, *BLAST* and held one exhibition at the Dor*é* Galleries, New Bond Street, London on 10 June 1915. *Enemy of the Stars* was published in the first issue of the magazine which was considered as the manifesto of Vorticism. Though some consider Vorticism as a branch of Futurism, founded in Italy in 1909 by the poet Marinetti, the Vorticists emphatically denied this connection. Vorticism means, as Lewis stated in the catalogue of the only Vorticist exhibition, '(a) *Activity* as opposed to the tasteful *Passivity* of Picasso; (b) SIGNIFICANCE as opposed to the dull or anecdotal character to which the Naturalist is condemned; (c) ESSENTIAL MOVEMENT and ACTIVITY (such as the energy of a mind) as opposed to the imitative cinematography, the fuss and hysterics of the Futurists.'

[2] This transgression demonstrates the spirit of Vorticism, which was intended to *blast* traditional forms of expression and *bless* new radical developments.

[3] Please see appendix for the facsimile of the original script of *Enemy of the Stars.*

[4] Please see appendix for the facsimile of the original script of *Enemy of the Stars.*

[5] Hornby, Richard. Script into Performance. New York, London: Applause, 1995 (1977). Also see chapters 4, 5 and 6 for its application in analysing *Enemy of the Stars*.

[6] See appendix, p.61 of the original script of *Enemy of the Stars.*

[7] See appendix, p.55 of the original script of *Enemy of the Stars.*

Chapter 2 The neglected demonstration

Wyndham Lewis wrote *Enemy of the Stars* in 1914 as part of the Vorticist manifesto in

BLAST[1]. Although the format of the play is a piece of written text, it was created by

Lewis as a demonstration of a new possibility of visual imagery as well as a

performable play script. However, since it was written, few critics have discussed it in

depth, compared with more substantial research into Lewis's other works. Yet most of

those who investigate the play choose to ignore the efforts Lewis made in extending

the boundaries between visual and textual presentations and appraise it mostly from a

literary view alone. They judge it as a failed attempt or a vain experiment to create a

new writing form, and assume it is not a play suitable for theatrical production.

As an argument for the achievement of *Enemy of the Stars*, this chapter critically

reviews the receptions of the play from a theatre practitioner's point of view, and

points out the problems of readability embedded within the play script. It then

examines the characteristics of play formation by applying Aristotle's six principles

from *Poetics,* as theatre practitioners do when adapting them in their analysis of a

play script in preparation for a performance. After this chapter has affirmed the validity

of the genre in which *Enemy of the Stars* exists in the context of a theatrical

production, doubts on its performability will be resolved later in chapters 4, 5 and 6,

which deal with the preparation for its staging.

2.1 Contemporary and present critiques of *Enemy of the Stars*

According to Morrow and Lafourcade's *A Bibliography of the Writings of Wyndham*

Lewis[2] — an invaluable catalogue which collects and organises of Lewis's textual

works and 'books and periodicals about Lewis' dated up to 1978 — there was only

one short article[3] (a single page) in *The New Age* in July 1914 discussing *Enemy of*

the Stars after it was published in *BLAST*. It described the play as 'an extraordinary work' which is 'full of almost grandiose ideas' and expresses the difficulties of understanding it through ordinary logic. Nevertheless, it also states that the play was better 'felt rather than thought', without recognising that this was a significant context for viewing this written play as a piece of 'visual artwork'. Lewis later recalled the purpose of writing *Enemy of the Stars* as a demonstration to his literary contemporaries of contributing to the visual revolution[4] (see chapter 3 for details).

After this single review, no particular comments relating to *Enemy of the Stars* were published until Lewis revised and re-published the play in May 1932, which was, as Hugh Kenner points out in his 1954 book *Wyndham Lewis*, 'issued in a luxurious, elaborate, but less intelligible form.'[5] Kenner explains this change by analysing Lewis's career development and life along with his writing maturity. However, one of the main differences between these two versions — that is, its language style — has not been examined in an appropriate context: a visual one. If it had been investigated in this way, the causes of the 'less intelligible' form would have been disclosed by a reduction in metaphorical visions in the new version, which was originally created in 1914 through layered visualities. Understanding these multi-metaphorical images is the key approach to the play (see chapter 3 for full explanation), whilst layered images enrich and enhance the context of the intellectual ambivalence of its staging (see chapters 4, 5, and 6 for further development and applications of this concept).

On the other hand, the 1932 version uses standard dramatic set description and dialogue and Lewis's changes make the play more accessible and also more immediate. It is, therefore, arguably a 'better' play, as it is closer to conventional expectations of a written piece for a theatrical production. However, if we overcome

the barriers of the appearance of the play's visuality, the original 1914 version can be

analysed fully using the conventional principles, as laid down in Aristotle's *Poetics*

(see next section 2.2 for a full examination).

On the whole, as Wendy Stallard Flory points out in her study *Enemy of the Stars*,

(published in 1980 as a section of *Wyndham Lewis: A Revaluation*) Lewis's changes

in 1932 do not correct the earlier version so much as amplify it, nor do they modify or

qualify what he originally wrote[6]. This made it clear that after the play had been largely

neglected for eighteen years, Lewis does not sacrifice his developed visuality of the

play by placating any criticism; instead, he tries to present the same characters and

basic ideas as forcefully, dramatically and accessibly as possible[7].

Following the new version's publication, five critiques were published within a year:

Stella Benson reviewed it with Lewis's two other books *Filibusters in Barbary* and

Doom of Youth in *Time and Tide*[8]; *The Twentieth Century*[9] also reviewed it with

Filibusters in Barbary; S.B. Simon maintains that the play is a collection of 'Shavian

tricks' in his article published in *The Adelphi*[10]; Douglas Garman, again reviewing the

play in conjunction with *Filibusters in Barbary* and *Doom of Youth,* states that there is

'slapdash carelessness in the writing'[11]; and the last critique, written by Stephen

Spender in January 1933, stresses the 'admirable integrity' obtained within the play's

complexity[12]. However, these critiques responded mainly to the later version of the

play and discussed it from a literary viewpoint alone.

Apart from the above, very few critics discussed the play until the 1970s. Within these

relatively recent critiques, three of them have recognised the strong association

between the written play of 1914 and visual art. Most of the others focus on the

revised 1932 version and pay scant attention to the original, let alone to the discussion of the visual affinity in the 1914 version.

The first critic to find Lewis's experimental style in the 1914 play akin to Vorticist painting[13] was William C. Wees, who recognised, in 1972 (almost sixty years after it was created), that *Enemy of the Stars* was successfully 'converting diction and syntax to a prose equivalent of the interrelated geometric facets of Vorticist paintings and drawings'[14].

On the other hand, Richard Cork, a leading writer on Vorticism and the visual arts, pointed out in 1975 that, although Lewis's *Enemy of the Stars* has mixed visual and literal presentations, it was only an 'attempt to inject fiction with some of the abstract economy, iconoclasm and taut vitality of visual Vorticism.'[15] Cork regarded Lewis's accomplishment of this creation was 'as a writer rather than an artist'[16] and it was merely Lewis's ambition to parallel the evolution of his art[17].

The third recognition of the play's visual integration is in *Wyndham Lewis's Pictorial Integer*. Written by Thomas Kush in 1982, the critique asserts '*Enemy of the Stars* has the look of Lewis's semi-abstract drawings and canvases. Its staging [narratives] is highly reminiscent of Lewis's drawings for *Timon of Athens*, and makes it the closest approximation to his visual art of any of Lewis's writings.'[18]

Although these three critiques recognise the visual affinity in *Enemy of the Stars*, they appraise it as a comparison between the play and Vorticist art. The value and techniques of the play's visual ability in forming a theatrical play has yet to be discovered (see chapter 3 for a detailed explanation of the techniques; see chapters 4,

5, and 6 for the further development of the play into a possible theatrical production.)

In terms of its genre, Wees and Cork do not consider that *Enemy of the Stars* is, as Lewis claimed in *BLAST*, a play. Instead, Wees sees it as 'a hybrid drama-short story,'[19] although he treats *Enemy of the Stars* as having an essential role within this unique British art movement and stresses it 'reworked *Blast*'s theme of the artist as individualist and mercenary…[and] dramatized the haughty egotism of Vortex.'[20] Overall, he regards it as 'Lewis's strange mixture of short story and closet drama[21].'[22] Similar to Wees, Cork introduced the play in his *Vorticism* as 'an ambitious thirty-six page piece of fiction called "The(*sic*) Enemy of the Stars", a hybrid cross between a play and a story which was as stylistically experimental as the paintings and drawings he chose to reproduce in the magazine.'[23] They are not alone in regarding *Enemy of the Stars* as not being a play. In actual terms, most critics — either those who praise the play from both literal and visual approaches or those who assess it within literary genres alone — judge it as a written experiment which cannot possibly be performed as a theatrical production. They have been mostly hindered by the play's highly stylistic language (see detailed investigations in section 2.3).

In contrast to this critical reception, Thomas Kush first assumes *Enemy of the Stars* is a 'proper' play and traces its possible models. He suggests that the play was influenced by the mythic plays of the German Expressionists, and by Kandinsky's abstract opera *The Yellow Sound*[24]. Although Kush agrees that, as in Kandinsky's work, all components in *Enemy of the Stars* would contribute to and extend the play's meaning, he could not see it presented as one theatrical production. He regards *Enemy of the Stars* as 'a constructive work, a composite of mime, painting-style tableau, poetic declamation and cinematic projection, and its mixed form became the

mode of Lewis's speculative fictions.'[25] In other words, despite his efforts in defending the essential strength of its visual integrity, he remained fixated on Lewis's unique language of visuality and was not convinced that *Enemy of the Stars* was a play for theatrical production. It is, he concludes, 'a transitional work in Lewis's career, establishing a rhetorical model for Lewis's large-scale satire of the 1920s.'[26]

Despite the fact that almost all critics assume that *Enemy of the Stars* cannot be performed as a theatrical production, in reality, it has been produced twice in the 1980s. Its world premiere was a reading on stage in the third Wyndham Lewis symposium in Manchester in October 1980 directed by Tom Kinninmont. The Tate Gallery invited a theatre company called 'Buick Sighs' to produce the second production on 27 November 1982 as a participatory event in celebrating Lewis's centenary. It was performed at the Bloomsbury Theatre[27] in London and was directed by Simon Usher.

Although Kinninmont had preferred the 1914 version when he had studied the play[28]; adapting it for the stage in 1980, he had used mostly the 1932 version, for it has a more conventional dialogue[29]. Yet, the play was not a fully acted performance; instead, four actors read aloud the scripts on stage – a dramatised reading. It was due to this reading style that most audiences in the symposium, though surprised how well it worked as theatre, felt that the play would be well represented as a radio drama or in a stylised form such as film[30]. It was also disturbing that actors, after performing the play, still did not understand it[31]. There is a need to study the play from both visual and theatrical perspectives in order to provide practitioners with access to a clearer understanding of the play. Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6 of this study have offered a full preparation from reading the text, and understanding its concepts and meanings to

performing the play.

After this dramatised reading, Richard Humphreys — head of the education department of the Tate Gallery, and a member of the Wyndham Lewis Society — invited Simon Usher and his theatre company 'Buick Sighs' to produce Lewis's plays: *Enemy of the Stars* and *The Ideal Giant*. Although the press release stated that the production was performing the 1914 version of *Enemy of the Stars* (see Figure 2.1), the actual performance was based purely on the 1932 version[32]. This was partly because of Humphreys' suggestion of using the revised version and partly because Usher evaluated the 1932 version and considered that it had interesting dramatic elements. Therefore, Usher did not study the 1914 version[33]. Humphreys valued *Enemy of the Stars* as 'instructive for understanding Lewis's art in a number of ways: thematically, technically and emotionally'[34]. However, he felt that some verses in the 1914 version 'often [seem] nearly impenetrable, yet it compels attention'[35]. This maybe the reason behind his suggestion to Usher.

Since the 1932 version has less metaphorical imagery and more conventional staging directions, the stage settings of Buick of Sighs' performance, though unusually daring and bold[36], did not fully operate as a comparable technique to the actors' performance in delivering Lewis's concepts and meanings. Adam Mars-Jones described the performance that, towards the end, 'seemed to be losing Lewis to a blizzard of gimmicks: smoke machines, wind machines, hand-held lighting and yearning Wagner'[37]. Paul O'Keeffe (who wrote *Some Sort of Genius: A Life of Wyndham Lewis*), though he enjoyed the performance, remembered it 'was a real mess, vaguely chaotic…. There weren't recognisable costumes. The characters were rolling around in elemental surroundings. It wasn't stylised…there was a lot of crawling around'[38].

As the audience of the performance was mostly those who attended celebrating events for Lewis's centenary on the same day (including the fourth Wyndham Lewis Symposium at the Tate Gallery), many of them were familiar with Lewis's works, especially his intellectual contexts. Therefore, when Buick of Sighs produced the play with limited contribution to delivering Lewis's concepts, the critics questioned whether the performance of the script in a theatre was an appropriate means in conveying a Vorticist play.

Re-produced copy of the Original Press Release from the Bloomsbury Theatre (part)

Two further critiques investigate *Enemy of the Stars* within this context. Scott Klein examined the play as 'the experiment of Vorticist drama' in 1991. However, in emphasising the contradictory attitude of Vorticism toward tradition and creation, Klein's approach to exploring the play is that it 'is within the tradition of Romantic "closet" drama, the philosophic form that "Enemy of the Stars" both repudiates and

obliquely follows.'[39] As a consequence of this, he explains that 'the very

unperformability of "Enemy of the Stars" is therefore a part of the aesthetic implication

of its narrative. '[40] Moreover, in order to justify the hindrance in accessing the play, he

insists that 'one must erect a language that can remain only theoretical,'[41] and

therefore claims that *Enemy of the Stars* belongs to 'mental theatre'. However, in his

study he heavily criticises the play's problematic implication without examining it from

a practical theatrical view, nor does the study understand the value of the embedded

visuality in the play's language. His critique maintains that the play is purely a literal

proposition.

In 1992 David Graver published 'Vorticist Performance and Aesthetic Turbulence in

Enemy of the Stars' in *Modern Language Association of America*, which in 1995

became part of his book *The Aesthetics of Disturbance: anti-art in Avant-Garde drama*

under a revised title 'Lewis: Performing Print.'[42] As the new title suggests, Graver

sees the play as indeed a performance, but not in the context of an actual theatre. His

intention in the study is to look for a practical application of *Enemy of the Stars.* By

turning its readers into an audience, formalising the lay-out of the pages as the

performance settings, and treating the text itself as a performing agent, Graver

develops what he called 'Lewis's theoretical pronouncements' into a performing print[43].

To be more precise, Graver still treats the original play script as one kind of ideal, or

rather a hypothetical written piece which, in his conclusion, can only be viewed as

what it is, a printed 'performance' which cannot be performed as a normal theatrical

production.

In 2000, the latest detailed study of *Enemy of the Stars* also discussed its possible

application from investigating its texts. In Paul Edwards's 'You Must Speak with Two

Tongues: Wyndham Lewis's Vorticist Aesthetics and Literature', he claims that *Enemy of the Stars* 'formally is as cinematic as it is literary, proceeding almost as a series of discrete "shots" in the form of isolated paragraphs that by gradual accretion create a narrative.'[44] Although he admits *Enemy of the Stars* 'belongs to a European Expressionist tradition to which it is the sole English contribution'[45], he also stresses that 'presenting itself as a play, it is strictly unperformable.'[46]

It seems that, in spite of the two productions, critics up to now, retain the argument that a truthful representation of the play in a theatre is impracticable. It is understandable that critics cannot regard these productions as proper representations of the unique Vorticist play, especially since those performances adapted the 1932 version. Therefore, the critics have a firm view that the 1914 version cannot possibly be performed as a theatrical production. The 1914 version, however, has all the necessary components for a theatrical play and has still to be fully explored. Through analysing its characteristics, using principles promoted in Aristotle' s *Poetics*, the ways of preparing it for an appropriate theatrical production can then be organised.

2.2   A play analysis in the context of a theatrical production

As has been discussed in the previous section, critics have serious doubts about whether *Enemy of the Stars* is even a play. However, they can be reminded that, despite the fact that some see it as a failure, Wyndham Lewis clearly showed, in *BLAST*, the Vorticist manifesto magazine in 1914, that it is deserving of the title 'play' (see Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2 Page 57 from *BLAST*.

Although plays continue to be predominantly written for theatrical performance, written play scripts can be divided into two categories: one written for performance and the other for literary reading purposes only. This separation was first established by Aristotle in his work of literary theory, *Poetics,* produced in 350 B.C. It examines the human need for imitative activities and points out how this need is met through various sorts of theatrical events to which he gives the generic name 'poetry'. Aristotle identified the elements common to imitative works and discussed the compositional principles behind theatrical events that communicate and influence human society. As it is the first literary theory concerning theatrical productions, almost all dramatic theories thereafter have been associated, in various ways, with Aristotle's propositions[47].

Although later literary criticisms about analysing a play script have been developed, theatre practitioners remain content in working with the basic principles that Aristotle categorised in the *Poetics*. This is mainly because of the different aims of the two groups: the critics, primarily concerned with the analysis, interpretation and evaluation of literary works in order to seek further understanding of their meanings[48], and theatre

practitioners, whose main task is to understand a play in terms of its story and themes in order to represent it in a theatre[49].

Many theatre practitioners' guide books, such as *The Director's Vision: Play Directions from Analysis to Production*[50], *From Page to Stage: How Theatre Designers Make Connections Between Scripts and Images*[51], and *Script Analysis: Reading and Understanding the Playscript for Production*[52], suggest that a working theatre practitioner is free to ignore literary debates about which critical theory is best as each play has its significant merits, and each production has its unique values and qualities. Furthermore, theatre practitioners are among artists who establish their practices and 'knowing' into individual theory and working methods[53]. This working process is the key that enables theatre practitioners to achieve a unique intellectual understanding of a play.

Since Aristotle's principles are derived from his observation of many actual performances – a categorised result of practicing processes – these principles can be used as tools that help practitioners present a 'well-developed' performance. Therefore many practitioners' guide books suggest or imply that applying Aristotle's principles when preparing a play helps not only define its story and themes more clearly, but also produces a representation of the script more easily. For this reason, this section uses the theatre practitioners' approach to clarify *Enemy of the Stars*'s theatrical characteristics and potential, examining the play through Aristotle's basic principles.

According to Aristotle's *Poetics*, there are six principles which define a good play:
1) plot – how a play is constructed,

2) character – the people of the play,

3) thought – the meaning of the play,

4) diction – the language of the play,

5) music – the sounds of the play and

6) spectacle – the visual aspects of production.[54]

Aristotle stated that 'the plot is the first and the most important thing,'[55] so we will start by examining the *Enemy of the Stars*' plot. Lewis first published it in a magazine which expressed the Vorticist manifesto, so the layout of the play is highly unconventional, as the Vorticists deliberately tested the boundary between the textual and the visual. The textual part of the play script is closer to conforming to the conventional definition of a plot, namely a story told by a sequence of actions. Although the visual part gives rise to debatable issues (in particular with reference to the fulfilment of Aristotle's six principles), *Enemy of the Stars* nevertheless has a clear plot. Thus, this section will focus on the textual aspects of the work, while the visual part of the play's structure will then be discussed in detail in the first section of the next chapter (3.1). Coming from the perspective of a practice-based researcher, this visual approach is one of the important aspects of this study.

Although the story in *Enemy of the Stars*, as Paul Edwards states, 'is simple to reconstruct',[56] the core issue here is how Lewis utilised events derived from actions, including dialogues between characters, to move the story forward rather then using narrative passages to proceed. As a theatrical play is to be performed in front of audiences, actions, according to Aristotle's principle, are the most essential part of a play's performance. 'Without action there cannot be a theatrical play.'[57]

In the *Enemy of the Stars*, the action beings with 'ARGHOL[58]' and moves through a further ten sections: 'THE YARD', 'THE SUPER', 'THE NIGHT', 'HANP I', 'HANP II', 'HANP III', 'HANP IV', 'HANP V', 'HANP VI', and 'HANP VII'. The following table shows the major events and actions in each section:

Sections of the play	*Major events and actions*
ARGHOL	-The 'Red Universe' attacks.
THE YARD	-The earth bursts. The yard is filled with volcanic light.
THE SUPER	-Arghol goes to the bank of the canal ready for the daily assault. -Hanp calls him for supper. -Arghol suffers from assaults. -Arghol loses consciousness after the assaults.
THE NIGHT	-The stars in the night sky shine 'heavily' above and wake Arghol.
HANP I	-Hanp goes to where Arghol is lying and asks him to have supper. -Violent sexual mating between Arghol and Hanp before supper. -Arghol and Hanp eat their supper in front of the hut. -Dialogues discussing the necessity for Arghol to be assaulted every-day.
HANP II	-Dialogues about the need for suffering and the conflict necessary for retaining individuality.
HANP III	-Arghol shows Hanp picture postcards of the city he came from. -Arghol becomes confused about the city's meaning and his relationship with it.
HANP IV	-Confusing dialogues about why they even bother to talk. -Arghol offends Hanp by ordering him to leave. -Hanp hits Arghol and Arghol fights back.

HANP V	-Arghol and Hanp fight. In the end, Arghol wins. Hanp passes out and Arghol goes to sleep. -Arghol goes to his city in dreams but is unable to recognise Hanp and himself there whilst at the same time he is told by his old friends that he is Arghol.
HANP VI	-Arghol finds himself in Hanp while in the transitional status between dreaming and awakening. -Hanp awakes from the blow and recovers his energy, whilst Arghol snores.
HANP VII	-In rhythm with Arghol's snoring, Hanp plunges a knife into Arghol and kills him. -Hanp cries after he realises that Arghol is dead. -Hanp jumps into the canal.

I have used this table to show more clearly how sequential events in the play combine to create a theatrical narrative. We can see that at the beginning Arghol was alone and abused by the 'Red Universe' and that after Arghol recovered from the attack Hanp and Arghol began to interact. They ate their supper together, 'mated', had long discussions about the need for suffering and the conflict involved in retaining one's individuality, and then chatted about Arghol's city. Then, the disagreement occurred between them and they hit each other. Arghol struck Hanp to the floor. While Hanp was unconscious, Arghol fell asleep and dreamed that he had returned to his city. At this moment, Hanp awoke and was annoyed by Arghol's deeds and by his snoring. He killed Arghol and then threw himself into the canal. These movement-based events established a clear sense of development of a plot. Although they might not provide a perfect story line, the plot in the play still satisfies Aristotle's principles.

The second important element, according to Aristotle, is that of character. There are

two major characters, Arghol and Hanp. Arghol, the main character in the play,

represents the intellectual authentic 'Self' fleeing from a city into an 'arctic'

wheelwright's yard in the hope of preserving his true self, whereas Hanp, a local

worker who cares only about daily life, represents 'Not-Self'. As Arghol flees from the

city to the yard and works with Hanp, they clearly show us 'what kind of things a man

chooses or avoids'[59]; thus they seem to agree with Aristotle's concept of a character's

duty in a theatrical play.

I now turn to the overall meaning, and what Aristotle considered to be the third

element of a good play – thought – that is, the faculty of saying 'what is possible and

pertinent in given circumstances.'[60] The expression of thought in the play is

accomplished through its highly philosophical dialogues and actions which are

symbolic of intellectual struggles.

In addition, the means by which the thought in the play is expressed is related to the

fourth element – diction. This thought is expressed in a unique language style which

unfortunately produces ambiguity in meaning (see chapter 3 for further explanation).

One might argue that *Enemy of the Stars* does not fulfil this fourth element, especially

because its diction is the cause of confusion and argument. However, the ambiguous

verses only exist in the narrative passages; the dialogue in the play is perfectly

understandable as standard English conversation. Moreover, these "difficult and

ambiguous" verses are Lewis's most significant contribution to breaking the boundary

between visual and textual representations. They give the play what can be described

as its "envisioning power". These verses will be explored in detail in chapter 3, in

which methods for envisioning the prose are also offered.

The fifth element is the music or the sound aspect of a play, which is not, however, a main strength of *Enemy of the Stars*. Nevertheless, there are descriptions of sounds within the play which add to its quality, such as the fact that the 'voice [is] raucous and disfigured with a catarrh...'[61] or in the final section that the rhythm of Arghol's snoring is an important factor in the performance. It needs to be borne in mind that in Aristotle's time the chorus played an important role in most performances, as they often acted as narrators or commentators, giving the audience additional information. In the modern theatre of the 21st century, except in operas or musicals, the role and function of the music seems to be shared with that of the visual. Few people today assess a play on its sound and music alone.

We have, so far, not considered the importance of the visual in performance today, an essential aspect of this practice-led doctoral submission. Aristotle treated this which he called 'spectacle', as the least important element. He commented, 'that is something merely added to the text', and said little about it. However, the visual aspects of the *Enemy of the Stars* are richly innovative and creative in 'spectacle'. Most of the 'spectacle' in the play will be discussed more fully in section 3.1 and in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Nevertheless, one aspect that should be dealt with here is Lewis's approach towards 'spectacle' – the visual aspects of a theatrical work. Lewis, already a successful painter in 1914, delineated the *Enemy of the Stars* using textual patterns – which focus on visuality. Readers can envision a total performance – not only the actions and dialogue, but also the ambiance as it would be in the theatre. One might argue that because Lewis is a visual artist, he wrote the play from a visual imperative rather

than in the textual tradition. However, in the theatrical world of the early 20th century, Lewis was not the only person interested in visual aspects. Edward Gordon Craig had published *On the Art of the Theatre* in 1911, in which he stressed the importance of the 'spectacle' in theatrical performance. He advised that after theatre practitioners study conventional play analysis and theatre skills, they need to remember that the most powerful sense when an audience is in the theatre is not hearing, but seeing and viewing.[62] In Craig's ideal, actors can be seen as live scale puppets which have movements within a space and follow a designed direction. Craig believed in the sculptural quality of the physical actor and felt that words sometimes failed to explain the dominant feeling of a scene. Therefore, he advocated a total stage picture with a painter's eye and a director's intuition.[63]

In addition to Lewis's achievement in visual art, as an exemplifying figure of the British avant-garde, he wrote on a wide spectrum of subjects, from poetry to novels, from art critiques to political pamphlets, and from literature debate to philosophical essays. All of these works are written in a popular language style except, however, *Enemy of the Stars*. Paul Edwards points out that 'the experience of reading the text [of *Enemy of the Stars*] is a frustrating accumulation of blocks of resistant ideas and imagery.'[64] This may be one of the reasons why many critics do not criticise the play or only touch upon it. Without fully understanding *Enemy of the Stars*, one can still confidently access Lewis's world. However, breaking through the enigma of the play can offer researchers a further piece of the jigsaw puzzle that helps them to understand Lewis better. Nevertheless, up to the present, many critics retain a negative view of *Enemy of the Stars* due to the difficulties experienced in accessing the play's text. The next section will be devoted to further investigation of how critics read the play in order to find a resolution to this problem.

2.3 The problems of readability and performability

In an earlier section (2.1), it has been shown that most critics writing about *Enemy of the Stars* have come to the conclusion that the play cannot possibly be suitable for a theatrical production. The particular problem lies in Lewis's experimental expression of visualities in a conventionally textual domain: a play script. Many critics have tried various approaches to decoding the text of the play in order to fully understand it. Others access it without analysing its texts, pronouncing the language of the play to be clearly 'impossible', or discussing only the 1932 version.

Kenner reads the play, believing that 'the artist [Lewis] doesn't see and record, he registers phenomena and reconstitutes them with images.'[65] He accepts that 'Lewis's words emanate very decidedly from *him*.'[66] Therefore, Lewis' characteristic syntax is synthetic and 'serves to spice phrases together.'[67] He goes on to say that 'it is a style composed of phrases, not actions. The verb, inexorable the *time*-word, is where possible reduced to impotence ("shone and "stood") or else simply omitted.'[68] However, without any further discussion about how this visual make-believe method helps to decode the play, he explains that *Enemy of the Stars,* as part of Vorticist prose, is a 'brilliant and fascinating' abstract of philosophical reflections[69]. Then he elaborates further about what he calls the dream-play, calling it 'a sort of dream-literature of unexampled energy.'[70]

Wees sees the play as a prose style equivalent to the Vorticist visual style; and he stated that 'instead of logical and syntactically ordered sentences and paragraphs, Lewis tended to use isolated sentences and sentence fragments, and to replace exposition with clusters of incongruous images and metaphors.'[71] He reinforces the view that 'in place of the traditional story-teller's time-continuum, Lewis offered spatial

fragments, and gave those fragments the same feeling of compressed energy that he produced through the interlocked facets of his Vorticist paintings and drawings.'[72] However, he does not provide further methods in suggesting ways of digesting these 'fragments' into a meaningful integrity.

Cork ignored Lewis's statement 'that Vorticism was purely a painter's affair (as Imagism was a purely literary movement, having no relation whatever to Vorticism, nor anything in common with it) [73]'. He insisted on judging the play as Lewis's demonstration 'to show the Imagist the way'[74], leading him to read the play as a literal work with a 'terse stylistic system which divides most of the prose into isolated sentences, pares away at orthodox syntax within those sentences and dispenses with the linear narrative'[75]. Therefore, Cork understands the play as 'a baleful unity which signifies more than anything else the turbulence of Lewis's imagination, as he waits for the Armageddon Vorticism was determined to engender'[76].

Focusing on the play's wealth of visuality, Kush's critique does not mention how he decodes these texts in literal terms; instead, he demonstrates his own method of approaching the play in parallel with Lewis's images in his mind. Because the images he chose were consistent with the themes of the play, this method, possibly, would be too difficult for those who are not familiar with either Lewis's visual works or the play itself[77]. Besides, if one does not master Lewis's writing style, how can one identify the themes embedded within the texts and distinguish between the associated images to understand the meanings?

Graver has read the play from the point of view of the visual. Departing from Kush's interpretation, Graver tries to decipher the play within the physical presence of the

printed page, namely its lay-out, typography and illustrations. For example, he suggested the bold graphic design used in the layout of the advertisement as Lewis's confounding the territory of word and image that encourages its recipient to view as much as to read, which comprises parts of its unique performance on a page. Permeated with impressive descriptions, Graver productively stresses the analogy between the printed play and the form of a performance; however, he pays little attention to the discussion of the play. As a result, this study creates distractions for stage practitioners from further investigating it as a theatrical play.

On the other hand, Kinninmont, Humphreys and Edwards read the play, taking a much more philosophical approach. Before becoming a well-known director in theatre, TV and film production, Kinninmont surveyed the Lewis collection at Cornell University[78] and wrote more than ten critiques over the next few years. Within these, one was particularly concerned with discussing the play, "Max Stirner and the Enemy of the Stars"[79], published in *Lewisletter* in 1974. The intention of this critique was to examine the influence of the German book *The Ego and Its Own* on Lewis's play, but not to investigate it from a theatre practitioner's view or in a visual context. Humphreys's approaches in analysing the play derive from Lewis's visual art style and the philosophies which Lewis might be assumed to have read.[80] In Edwards's book *Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer*, he accesses *Enemy of the Stars* from Lewis's philosophical backgrounds in identifying the role of the play as part of the growth of modernism in Lewis's writing and painting. However, Humphreys judges that the play is 'nearly impenetrable' while Edwards concludes that it is 'Wyndham Lewis's prose-poem or dream play' which was 'avowedly placed in *Blast* as an example of what Vorticist literature ought to be.'[81]

Within all critiques, Reed Way Dasenbrock's findings are, in the author's view, the closest to the true resolution. Yet he comes to the same conclusion as other critics, that Lewis's *Enemy of the Stars* is a failed attempt to create a new literature form. Dasenbrock analyses the play's textual structures in *The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis: Towards the Condition of Painting*, pointing out that because of the language style of Lewis's *Enemy of the Stars* – one 'towards a new type of sentence (or perhaps non-sentence) in which the basic unit is the phrase, not the sentence'[82] – 'readers must puzzle over these sentences as beholders must puzzle over Vorticist paintings (if they wish to read them as representations).'[83] This is one of the key attitudes in comprehending the play (see chapter 3 for details). In spite of this visual approach to understanding, Dasenbrock has been trapped within his literary experience and complains of Lewis's usages of phrase instead of sentence, ungrammatical English, commas, and colons[84]. He further emphasises that Lewis supplies 'just enough semantic, syntactic, and punctuative clues'[85] in determining 'their relation to the world, and makes them fit into a coherent narrative sequence.'[86] But this 'free' association of individual words with the world is another crucial point to help readers fully understand the play (see chapter 3 for a detailed reading method). However, Dasenbrock does not develop his research further in this direction.

To understand the play, one has to be reminded that in early 1914, the co-founder of Vorticism, Ezra Pound had already launched the idea of Imagist Poetry and had begun to translate Ernest Fenollosa's study note on Chinese poetry, later published as *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*. The urge, and the necessity, to explore other non-European modes of language and communication was an avenue that Lewis, in his work of this period, was also beginning to explore. This aspect of the activity is outlined in the next chapter.

[1] Published by John Lane Company in June 1914, this is the first of two numbers of *BLAST*, founded and edited by Wyndham Lewis, intended to be issued quarterly for an annual subscription and to function as the 'official' journal of English Vorticists.

[2] Morrow, Bradford, and Bernard Lafourcade. A Bibliography of the Writings of Wyndham Lewis. Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1978.

[3] [Orage, A.R.]. "Readers and Writers." The New Age XV.11 (1914): 253.

[4] Lewis, Wyndham. Rude Assignment: An Intellectual Autobiography. Santa Barnara: Black Sparrow Press, 1984 (1950). p.139.

[5] Kenner, Hugh. Wyndham Lewis. London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1954. p.91.

[6] Flory, Wendy Stallard. "Enemy of the Stars". Wyndham Lewis: A Revaluation. London: The Athlone Press, 1980. pp93-106.

[7] ibid, pp93-106.

[8] Benson, Stella. "Wyndham Lewis." Time and Tide XIII.30 (1932): 819-20.

[9] [Unsigned review]. The Twentieth Century IV.19 (1932): 28.

[10] Simon, S.B. The Adelphi V.2 (1932): 155-56.

[11] Garman, Douglas. "A Professional Enemy." Scrutiny I.3 (1932): 279-82.

[12] Spender, Stephen. The Criterion XII.47 (1933): 313-15.

[13] Wees, William C. Vorticism and the English Avant-Garde. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1972, p.184

[14] ibid, p.184

[15] Cork, Richard. Vorticism and Abstract Art in the First Machine Age. Vol. I. Two vols. London: Gordon Fraser, 1975. p.291

[16] ibid, p.291

[17] ibid, p.291

[18] Kush, Thomas. Wyndham Lewis's Pictorical Interger. Ann Arbor, Michgan: UMI Research Press, 1981, p.63

[19] Wees, Ibid, p.160

[20] ibid, p.184

[21] Closet drama, a generic term for drama written to be read rather than acted. Most of the Romantic poets wrote at least one play of this sort.

[22] Wees, ibid, p.182

[23] Cork, ibid, p.243

[24] Kush, ibid, p.78

[25] ibid, p.86

[26] ibid, p.86

[27] It is ironic that the play was performed in the 'Bloomsbury' theatre, London. Since Lewis had quarrelled with Roger Fry in 1913, he was subsequently rejected by the Bloomsbury group.

[28] Kinninmont published "Max Stirner and the Enemy of the Stars" in the Wyndham Lewis society's newsletter, the Lewisletter in 1974.

[29] Cowan, Robert. "The Third Wyndham Lewis Symposium." Enemy News Summer.14 (1981): pp. 8-10.

[30] ibid. pp.8-10

[31] ibid, pp. 8-10

[32] Private conversation with Simon Usher in May 2008.

[33] Private conversation with Simon Usher in May 2008.

[34] ibid, p.32

[35] Humphreys, Richard. Wyndham Lewis. British Artists. London: Tate Publishing, 2004, p.32

[36] Described by Alan Munton, private conversation in 2005.

[37] Mars-Jones, Adam. "A savage worship and attraction." Times Literary Supplement (TLS). 03 December 1982, p1334.

[38] Private e-mail correspondence with members of the Wyndham Lewis Society, on 06 December 2005.

[39] Klein, Scott. "The Experiment of Vorticist Drama: Wyndham Lewis and 'Enemy of the Stars'." Twentieth Century Literature 37.2 (1991): p. 225-39.

[40] ibid, p. 225-39.

[41] ibid, p. 225-39.

[42] Graver, David. "Lewis: Performing Print." The Aesthetics of Disturbance: Anti-Art in Avant-Garde Drama. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995. 179-208.

[43] Graver, David. "Vorticist Performance and Aesthetic Turbulence in *Enemy of the Stars*." PMLA (Publications of the Modern Language Association of America) 107.Number 1 (1992): 482-96.

[44] Edwards, Paul. "You Must Speak with Two Tongues: Wyndham Lewis's Vorticist Aesthetics and Literature." Blast: Vorticism 1914-1918. Ed. Paul Edwards. London: Ashgate, 2000. 113-20.

[45] Edwards, Paul. Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000, p.142

[46] ibid, p.142

[47] Hornby, Richard. Script into Performance. New York, London: Applause, 1977, 1995, Chapter 4: 'What Aristotle Might Have Said'.

[48] Ingham, Rosemary. From Page to Stage: How Theatre Designers Make Connections between Scripts and Images. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1998, pp.102-116

[49] The story here is mainly concerned with who are the people in the play, where are they, what happened and when, and how does all this unfold?

[50] Catron, Louis E. The Director's Vision: Play Direction from Analysis to Production. Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1989.

[51] Ingham, Rosemary. From Page to Stage: How Theatre Designers Make Connections between Scripts and Images. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1998.

[52] Grote, David. <u>Script Analysis: Reading and Understanding the Playscript for Production</u>. Belmont: CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1985.

[53] Sullivan, Graeme<u>. Art Practice as Research</u>. Thousand Oaks, London and New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2005. pp. 69-184 (Part Two: Theorizing Visual Arts Practice).

[54] ibid.

[55] Aristotle. <u>Poetics</u>. Trans. Kenneth McLeish. London: Nick Hern Books, 1998.[350 B.C.], p.10

[56] Edwards, <u>Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer</u>. Ibid, p.146.

[57] Aristotle. <u>Poetics</u>, p.10

[58] Lewis's original title is ARGOL but he only uses this name in this page. In the rests of the play, the major character's name is Arghol. Here I follow Alan Muton's version, which also keeps only one name 'Arghol' throughout the play, to avoid confusing the reader.

[59] Aristotle. <u>Poetics</u>, p.13

[60] ibid, p.14

[61] Lewis, Wyndham, "Enemy of the Stars", <u>Blast</u>, 1914, P.63

[62] Craig, Edward Gorden. <u>On the Art of the Theatre</u>. New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1956.

[63] Walton, J. Michael, ed. <u>Craig on Theatre</u>. London: Methuen, 1999, p.103.

[64] Edwards, <u>Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer</u>. Ibid, p.142

[65] Kenner, Ibid. p.20

[66] ibid, p.20

[67] ibid, p.20

[68] ibid, p.15

[69] ibid, p.20

[70] ibid, p.17

[71] Wees, Ibid, p.182

[72] ibid, p.183

[73] Lewis, Wyndham. To the editor of <u>Partisan Review,</u> from Richard Cork's <u>Vorticism and Abstract Art in the First Machine Age</u>. Vol. I. Two vols. London: Gordon Fraser, 1975. p.261

[74] Cork, Ibid, p.260

[75] Cork, Ibid. p.292

[76] ibid, p.292

[77] Kush, Ibid, p.78-82

[78] The main collections of Lewis's unpublished manuscripts are held in the Division of Rare Manuscript Collection in Cornell University Library.

[79]   Kinninmont, Tom. "Max Stirner and the Enemy of the Stars", <u>Lewisletter</u>. Glasgow, Wyndham Lewis Society,1974.

[80] Humphreys, Ibid, p.32-33

[81] Edwards, "You Must Speak with Two Tongues", Ibid, pp 113-20.

[82] Dasenbrock, Reed Way. <u>The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis: Towards the Condition of Painting.</u> Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985. P.130

[83] ibid, P.130

[84] ibid, P.127-133

[85] ibid, P.130

[86] ibid, P.130

Chapter 3 Reading *Enemy of the Stars*

After having identified the major problems of understanding this unique play—its

readability and performablity — this chapter explores the visual approaches to reading

the script. This is of fundamental importance to a study with practice-led research as

its major driving impetus. Firstly, it indicates that the significant achievement of this

play is its rich visuality, which has an important role in guiding its readers and viewers

in their approach to the play. By analysing the visual elements positioned at the

beginning of the play script, especially the three drawings by Lewis, this study divides

Enemy of the Stars, which originally consisted of eleven sections, into three Acts.

Secondly, the chapter clarifies two possible origins of the play's unique narrative style:

Chinese poetry and Imagist poetry. The position is that Lewis was potentially directly

aware of Chinese poetry and was intentionally using this as a model. However, there

is no decisive evidence for this. But even this is not absolutely the case; there is

sufficient resemblance between Lewis's style and that of Chinese poetry for the

techniques of decoding Chinese poetry to be usefully applied to Lewis's writing.

Furthermore, this chapter provides detailed reading methods derived from reading

Chinese poetry, which can support and decipher the enigmatic prose in the play.

Following these suggested methods, the play will be accessible to most people.

3.1   The visuality of *Enemy of the Stars*

Lewis, as in the case of many of his contemporaries, cast his intellectual net across a

wide cross-section of poetry, prose and literature in general. The impact of new and

contemporary concepts of expression, created in the year before the outbreak of war,

encouraged a radical shift in the depictions of the visual and literal world. One

manifestation of this was the major exhibition of Post-Impressionist art held in London

in 1910[1]. Lewis was well aware of how literary and theatrical genres could also reflect

certain of the new visual innovations. As he wrote in the *Rude Assignment*:

> 'My literary contemporaries I looked upon as too bookish and not keeping pace with the visual revolution. A kind of play, "The Enemy of the Stars" (greatly changed later and published in book form) was my attempt to show them the way.'[2]

What the play does show is his energy and originality. Lewis's response to the modern art form is unique as well as extraordinarily bold. He made it clear that *Enemy of the Stars* was, in his mind, an experiment to break the boundary between textual and visual art. This gives a clue about how the play can be approached and understood to provide an awareness of many elements in it that provoke a strong response. For many literary people, it might have been something of a night-mare. Arnold Bennet wrote in the *New Age,* in December 1910

> 'that supposing some writer were to come along and do in words what these men have done in paint, I might conceivably be disgusted with nearly the whole of modern fiction... This awkward experience will in all probability not happen to me, but it might happen to a writer younger than me. At any rate, it is a fine thought.'[3]

The Vorticist group based themselves on the visual rather than the literary, and Lewis made his gesture by writing the *Enemy of the Stars* as a Vorticist example. There are many 'showcase sentences' in the play using visual images such as 'Rouge mask in aluminum mirror, sunset's grimace through the night'(p.62); 'Mastodons, placid in electric atmosphere, white rivers of power. They stood in eternal black sunlight' (p.64); or 'Two small black flames, wavering, as their tongues moved, drumming out thought, with low earth=draughts [*sic*] and hard sudden winds dropped like slapping birds from climaxes in the clouds' (p.66). When applying both the stacking and the two-dimensional pictographic visualisation methods (which will be explained in detail in the following sections), the play becomes a sequence of images entwined with

much more apparently conventional dialogue. These rather unusual combinations determine the tone of the play's narrative.

Moreover, Lewis does not apply the conventional play division of Acts, which usually contain two or more scenes. Instead, he announces on the stage arrangement page that 'there are two scenes' in the play. This reinforces his intention to emphasise the play's visuality. However, because Lewis does not clearly state where the scene starts or ends, arguably, these two scenes can be seen as the two characters in the play, Arghol and Hanp, as Lewis uses particularly large letters in the title of each character's introducing section (see pages 61 and 65 in Appendix: Facsimile). Following this, the scene labelled 'ARG[H]OL'[4] contains three further smaller letter-titled sections (THE YARD, THE SUPER, and THE NIGHT); the scene labelled HANP is divided into seven sections (I, II, III, IV, V, VI and VII). The play is therefore, in reality, divided into eleven sections.

In spite of these unusual divisions, the play can still be performed in the original format. However, from a theatre practitioner's point of view, in order to more fully deliver Lewis's concepts of the play with the help of 'spectacle', the play can be presented by re-dividing the play's sections into Acts. This approach will not conflict with a proper representation of the original script, since, for example, many Shakespeare productions today are based on the divisions in the printed script, though there is no proof that Shakespeare divided his plays into Acts[5]; the divisions were probably introduced by the editors in imitation of Ben Jonson (1572-1637), who introduced into England the division of a play into five acts[6].

In *BLAST*, where the 1914 version was published, Lewis positioned nine pages[7]

before the formal announcement. 'THE PLAY' appears. These comprise the title page *Enemy of the Stars*, the enigmatic 'synopsis in PROGRAMME' page, an advertisement page, five paintings and one decorative design (see Appendix: Facsimile). These nine pages play a crucial role in preparing the play's readers or viewers to understand and to envision the play from a visual approach.

However, few critics considered these as part of the actual play script. Most have considered the five paintings and Lewis's decorative design as irrelevant illustrations to the play. This is partly because their sequential page numbering is unrelated to the page of the written text into which they have been inserted, and partly because other articles in the magazine also contain unrelated illustrations. However, It should be pointed out that these six images are the only 'illustrations' positioned within a written work created by the same person who produced those images. Moreover, as Lewis was the editor of *BLAST*, when he positioned his own images in his play, as a trained visual artist he would have known the impact created by the conjunction of the visual and literal. If these images are treated as part of the play, they not only enrich Lewis's visual emphasis, but also underline the presentation of core themes.

The five paintings before the play are entitled 'Plan of War', 'Timon of Athens', 'Slow Attack', 'Portrait of an English Woman' and 'The Enemy of the Stars'. Among them, the 'Portrait of an English Woman' and 'The Enemy of the Stars' can be seen as Lewis's visualisation of the characters in abstract form. The other three paintings ('Plan of War', 'Timon of Athens' and 'Slow Attack') essentially depict the themes of the play, and each of them also indicates one of the major actions or events in the work. Therefore, *Enemy of the Stars* can be divided into three Acts, each of which reflects one particular image.

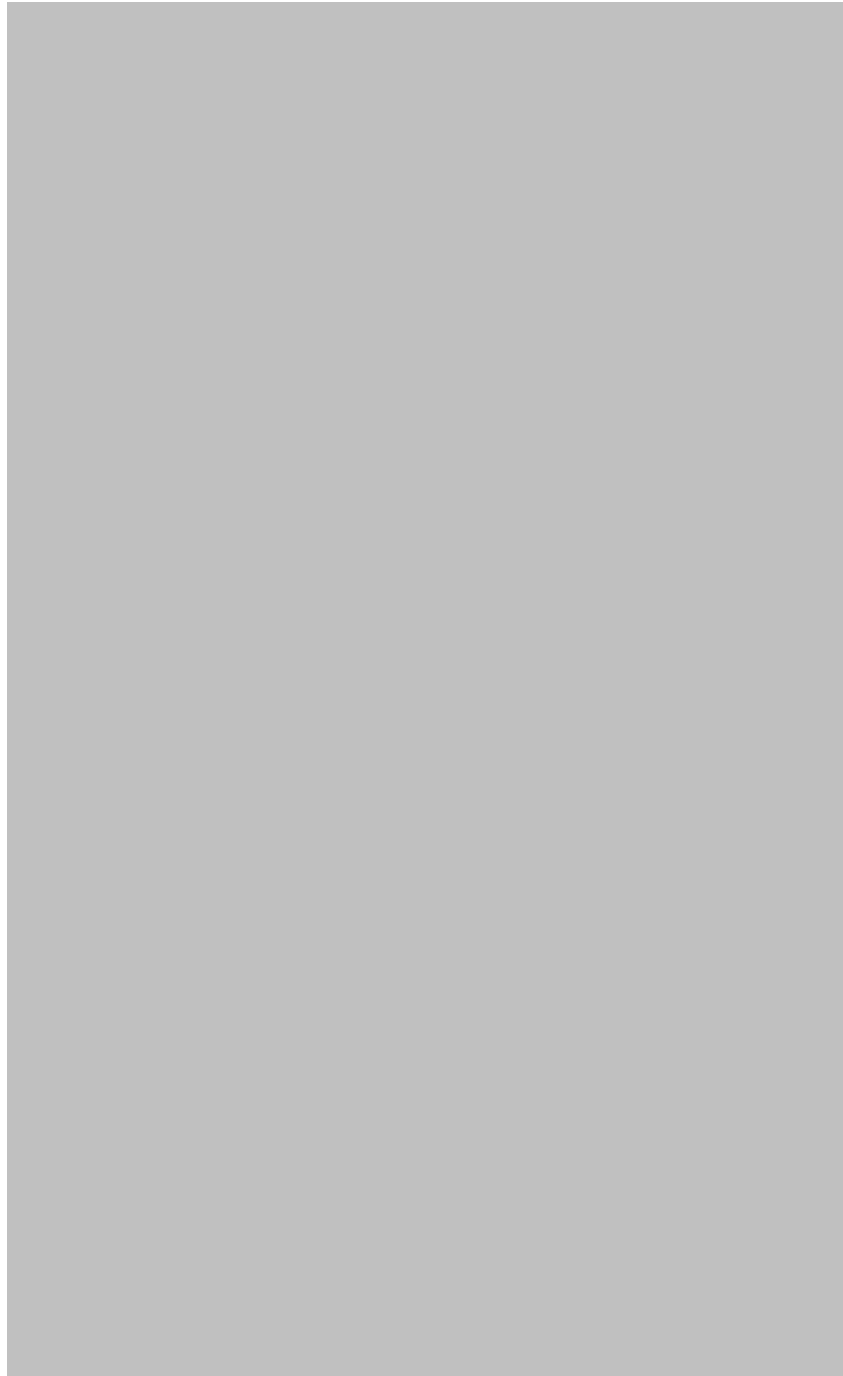***Figure 3.1*** *Plan of War,* Wyndham Lewis*, from p.va, BLAST*, 1914

The 'Plan of War' (Figure 3.1) depicts the almost breathless nature of survival and a representation of human suffering endured under the repression of systematic machinations. This is presented as Act One of *Enemy of the Stars.* It acquaints the reader with the situation and the atmosphere before 'the action opens' in the section entitled 'ARGHOL' (p.61).

Figure 3.2 Timon of Athens, Wyndham Lewis, from p.*v*, *BLAST*, 1914

The second painting, 'Timon of Athens' (Figure 3.2) can be considered to be Act Two, for it depicts dominant people energetically forcing a reluctant individual to communicate. A failed attempt at negotiation is the key event since Arghol has been constrained to interact with the *Will,* and since Hanp has responded to Arghol under the unexpected pressure of self-awareness happening in THE YARD, THE SUPER, THE NIGHT, HANP I, HANP II, HANP III, HANP IV and the first part of 'HANP V'.

Act Three, 'Slow Attack' (Figure 3.3), as its title suggests, conveys the outcome of the mental and physical actions which befall Arghol at the hands of Hanp in the last three sections of the play. This painting illustrates the 'victim', with a weakened will, disarmed in the corner of a constructed world. He no longer has the ability to move,

under the tension of the attack.

Figure 3.3 *Slow Attack,* Wyndham Lewis*, f*rom p.*vi*, *BLAST*, 1914

As previously mentioned, there are nine pages before the textual narrative starts[8]. To give a proper explanation of these pages is as important as 'translating' the play itself because they provide rich visualities of the combination of text and images. Lewis uses these to help readers and viewers prepare themselves to envisage the play. For these reasons, detailed explanations are presented here of each page from the beginning of *Enemy of the Stars*, as they appeared in the first issue of *BLAST*.

Lewis allocated pages 51 to 85 of *BLAST* magazine to *Enemy of the Stars*. This section begins with a conventional literary title page with inch-and-a-half-high capital letters, ENEMY OF THE STARS, printed across the middle of the page (see Figure 3.4, p.51). However, instead of setting out the actual content in the following page, Lewis arranged a rather unusual format, adding a heavy underline to a repetition of the title and
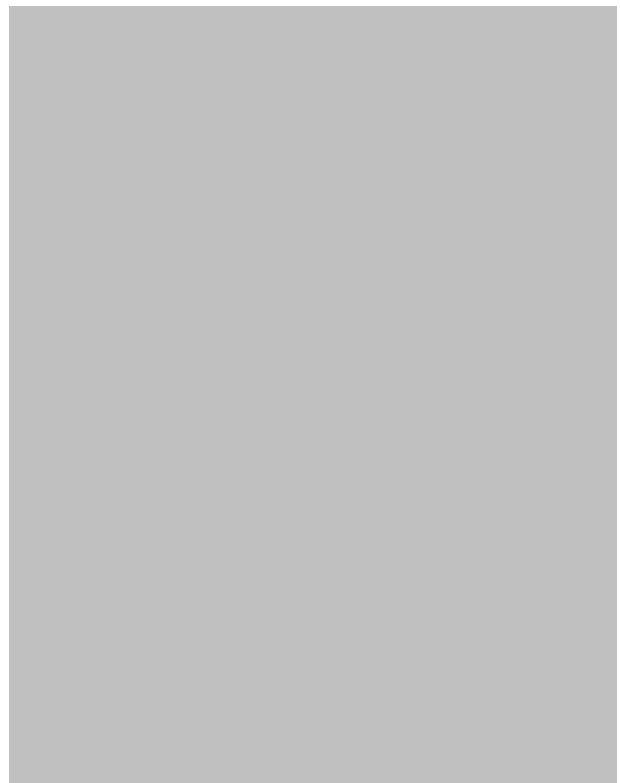
Figure 3.4   p.51 from *BLAST*

announcing underneath 'Synopsis in PROGRAMME' without giving any factual information about what the *Enemy of the Stars* is about (see Figure 3.5, p.53). We need to bear in mind that when readers read the magazine in 1914 they did not know that *Enemy of the Stars* was a play. The *BLAST* Table of Contents page only said '*Enemy of the Stars*, by Wyndham Lewis. 51', so when people turned to the third page in the sequence, only to find the poster-like 'ADVERTISEMENT' (Figure 3.6, p.55), their curiosity was aroused, or rather, their confusion increased.

Figure 3.5 p.52 & p.53 from *BLAST*

Nevertheless, this advertisement page provides its readers and viewers with an 'aesthetic preparation'[9] as it indicates that *Enemy of the Stars* can be viewed as a performance in a circus. Moreover, at the end of the advertisement, Lewis proclaims the performance to be 'VERY WELL ACTED BY YOU AND ME'[10]. The purpose of this declaration was not clear to the readers and viewers at this stage because they might, so far, have considered *Enemy of the Stars* to be a novel or other literary creation in relation to a circus performance. This powerful yet rather personal announcement suggests that *Enemy of the Stars* could be a play, although a theatrical script is only one of the possible options.

If we take the textual appearance of this advertisement alone (Figure 3.6), it shows that 'THE SCENE' is 'SOME BLEAK CIRCUS' at 'VIVID NIGHT' with 'TWO HEATHEN CLOWNS' — one was among the 'GRAVE BOOTH ANIMALS' and the other was one of the 'CYNICAL ATHLETES', dressed as 'ENORMOUS YOUNGSTERS'. Thus, we

understand that Lewis wishes to set the *Enemy of the Stars* in this rather unusual

arena or a similar performing environment.

Figure 3.6   p.55 from *BLAST*

So far we have reviewed the first three pages, and they provide us with a feeling of

ambivalence about something which is going to happen rather than related to a

tangible event or story or an intangible concept. Lewis arranged the following six

pages to be read with similar logic, each page containing one image. The six images, as explained previously, either represent an act, or are possibly visual renderings of the characters in the play. The only image not previously explained is the *Decoration for the Countess of Drogheda's House*, which will be further discussed in chapter 7.

Although the possible functions and meanings of these pages have been suggested, this kind of 'reading' is still strange in conventional literary and theatrical circles. Vorticism, however, was a movement to *'blast'* old traditions, whilst recognising new ones, as can be discovered from the manifestos printed in the first two parts of *BLAST* magazine. By breaking usual 'reading' behaviour, Lewis has constructed a set of new rules for 'reading' a play. In his thirties in 1914, Lewis questioned who set the rules in the world. He felt that managing the art of being ruled was reflected in his survival as an artist.

Figure 3.7   p.56 & p.57 from *BLAST*

Following this approach, we now arrive at the actual play script, although it is still highly unconventional. First we reach the declaration page 'THE PLAY' (Figure 3.7, p.57) which Lewis simply presents with a heavy underline in the middle of the page. In the 'ERRATA', Lewis pointed out that this page 'should come between Page 60 and 61.' This would position it after 'Stage Arrangement' page and before the first section, 'ARGHOL'. Lewis wrote this play in a hurry and as an editor tried to polish it later with last minute adjustments. Since the appearance of the page sequence affects our perception of the play, both reading sequences need to be discussed. First we should read it as it appears, because this is the arrangement which most readers would have followed, in spite of the correction at the beginning of the magazine. Therefore, the next page would be p.59 entitled 'ENEMY OF THE STARS' (Figure 3.8, p.59).

This page is not the usual list of characters to be found in a conventional script; it is, in fact, an introduction to some characters mixed in with descriptions for the preparation of a performance. At the end of this 'introduction', Lewis again invites us (the readers and viewers) to join the 'ceremonies' and this time he speaks to us directly:

> "Yet you and me: why not from the English metropolis?" – Listen: it is our honeymoon. We go abroad for [the] first scene of our drama. Such a strange thing as our coming together requires a strange place for initial stages of our intimate ceremonies acquaintance[11].

Although we do not receive the usual list of characters or information on where the scenes are, we have gathered more information from this statement, such as the characteristics of the leading role and his interaction with other characters. Also, Lewis provides in-depth contexts for this play through symbolic visuals.

Figure 3.8   p.59 from *BLAST*

Instead of telling us who is 'stupid and bad tempered', or 'young and educated', he tells us that one of the characters is deeply involved in philosophical thinking and cannot draw himself out as he 'BULGES ALL OVER' with 'CHRONIC PHILOSOPHY'. Furthermore, Lewis hinted that this leading character has a complex personality ('COMPLEX FRUIT') but a simple core[12] ('WITH SIMPLE FIRE OF LIFE'). Arghol's appearance is one of the great 'FEMININE BEAUTY', which Lewis calls 'MANISH', although this appearance may just be a 'MASK'.

Together with a sentence about the first character, a 'statue-mirage of Liberty in the great desert', Lewis introduces the second character with a similar description. He openly allows the reader to know that the second character is an 'aversion to Protagonist' and that there will be 'violent' expressions in their interaction. While calling him an 'APPALLING "GAMIN"', Lewis draws attention to his power of 'UNDERMINING BLATANT VIRTUOSITY OF SELF' among the 'BLACK BOURGEOIS ASPIRATIONS'.

Between the detailed profiling of the two characters, Lewis delineates the preparation of the play, which arouses our curiosity as to the settings and the theatre structure; for he states 'CHARACTERS AND PROPERTIES BOTH EMERGE FROM GANGWAY INTO GROUND AT ONE SIDE' as well as '[THE SUPER] RUSHES OFF, INTO THE EARTH'. What kind of theatre and stage could this refer to?

This leads us to the next page, the 'STAGE ARRANGEMENT' (Figure 3.9, p.60). Lewis set 'THERE ARE TWO SCENES' in a frame at the top of this page and followed it with a description of the stage arrangements. The question which was asked on the previous page of the script is now answered: the theatre that Lewis had in mind is an

unique one – 'AUDIENCE LOOKS DOWN INTO SCENE, AS THOUGH IT WERE A HUT ROLLED HALF ON ITS BACK, DOOR UPWARDS, CHARACTERS GIDDILY MOUNTING IN ITS OPENING.'
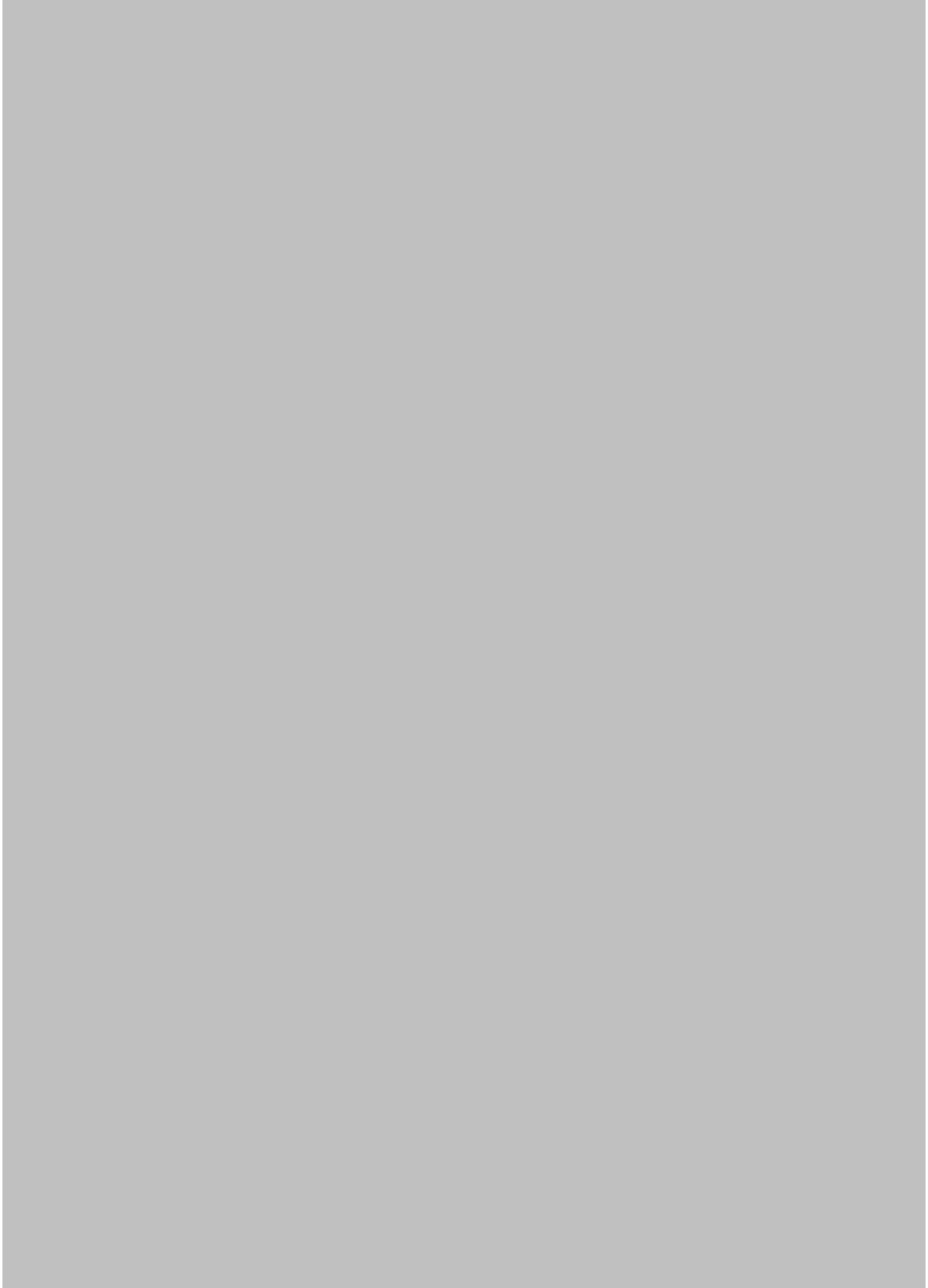

Figure 3.9 p.60 from *BLAST*

The stage setting of the play is, again, unconventional. At first, Lewis suggests

covering the whole arena with old sail-canvas, whereas in the third paragraph, he

mentions 'MASKS FITTED WITH TRUMPETS OF ANTIQUE THEATRE, WITH

EFFECT OF TWO CHILDREN BLOWING AT EACH OTHER WITH TIN TRUMPETS'.

A possible explanation for this mixture of decorative styles is that Lewis was trying to

invent a 'visual theatre' where all objects convey symbolic meaning as well as

communicating specific concepts which the artist (Lewis) wished to provoke the

viewer into thinking about[13]. Here we have reached page 61, 'ARGHOL' the first

section of the play, and are ready to begin its 'translation'.

One needs, however, before doing so, to return to the ERRATA, which states that the

correct version should place the page entitled 'The Play' in between pages 60 and 61.

If we read the *Enemy of the Stars* in this 'correct' sequence, we would meet the

statement-like page 'ENEMY OF THE STARS' immediately after the six images and

before entering into the 'Stage Arrangement' page. Followed by the announcing page

'The Play', the actual text begins at page 61 with 'ARGHOL'. This page sequence

supports the argument that Lewis's delivery provides more visual clues and

information to his readers and viewers than the traditional playwright. We have to

move through more than ten pages to see the play truly start and almost all of these

pages are related to visual work in either direct or indirect ways. These pages (51 to

60[14]) play a very important role in preparing the readers or viewers to comprehend

and to envision the play.

3.2 The play, Chinese poetry and Imagist poetry

With the intention of demonstrating what a written play can evoke, Lewis wrote this play in 1914 using syntax similar to that of Chinese poetry. As ethnical Chinese educated in Taiwan, when I first read *Enemy of the Stars* (1914 version), I was immediately struck by its affinity with Chinese poetry, a highly visual and concise form of literature. Examples include such expressions as 'Fungi of sullen violet thoughts, investing primitive vegetation' (p.65); 'Pink idle brotherhood of little stars, passed over rough cloud of sea' (p.67); 'Coaxing: genuine stupefaction: reproach, a trap' (p.68); 'The great beer-coloured sky, at the fuss, leapt in fete of green gaiety' (p.75); and 'The sky, two clouds, their two furious shadows, fought' (p.75).

When he wrote *Enemy of the Stars,* Lewis might have been influenced by the Chinese poems translated by Ezra Pound. Pound had received a package of manuscripts from Ernest Fenollosa's widow in 1913[15]. Although he published his translated Chinese poem, *Cathay,* in 1915, in his position as the founder of Imagist poetry[16] Pound was close to Lewis and co-launched *BLAST* with him in 1914. There is also a possibility that Lewis read Ernest Fenollosa's notes and his essay *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*[17] in manuscript form at that time. The use of Chinese poetic language and its characters was a major theme of the essay.

'The language of Chinese poetry is extremely concise and often dispenses with connecting articles.'[18] It also commonly overlays several objects or meanings at one time. Chinese is suited to capture the spirit of a place by using condensed phrases, whilst the English language is more easily a vehicle for conveying descriptions of relationships and details of scenery. 'Europeans excel in reasoning and judgment, and clearness of expression,' John Flyer[19] suggested, whereas 'Asiatics have a gay

luxurious imagination. Styles of writing mirrored styles of thinking. European prizes sober rational precision; the Chinese were fanciful and poetic.'[20]

An interesting exposition of the nature of Chinese poetry occurs in a classic novel by the Chinese writer, Cao Xueqin (曹雪芹), written in the mid-18th century. The novel is called *A Dream of Red Mansions* (紅樓夢)[21] and the following quotations are spoken by a character in the novel, Xianlin(香菱):

> ...the beauty of Chinese literature lies in something that can't be put into words yet is very vivid and real when you think about it. Again, it seems illogical, yet when you think it over it makes good sense. ...take that couplet in the poem on the northern borderland:
>
> *In the great desert a single straight plume of smoke;*
> *By the long river at sunset a ball of flame.*
>
> Of course the sun is round, but how can smoke be straight? The first description seems illogical, the second trite. But when you close the book and think, the scene rises before your eyes, and you realize it would be impossible to choose any better words. Or take the couplet:
>
> *As the sun sets, rivers and lakes gleam white;*
> *The tide comes up and the horizon turns blue.*
>
> The adjectives 'white' and 'blue' seem illogical too; but when you think about it no other words would be so apt, for read aloud they have all the savour of an olive weighing several thousand catties! Again, take the lines:
>
> *The setting sun still lingers by the road,*
> *A single plume of smoke ascends from the village.*
>
> It's the choice of 'lingers' and 'ascends' that I admire. On our way to the capital that year, our boat moored by the bank one evening. There was nobody about, nothing but a few trees, and the smoke from some distant cottages where supper was being cooked rose up, a vivid blue, straight to the clouds. Fancy, reading those lines last night carried me back to that place.[22]

The Chinese writing system maintains the meanings associated with its pictorial forms; hence, each 'character' represents a meaningful element, like a word or a morpheme, and its associated metaphorical significations. Because of this unique writing system, Chinese writers can play 'syntax games' by arranging visual elements on a canvas, especially in the writing of poems. At the same time, Chinese readers are accustomed

to looking at a piece of text much as one might look at a painting: not expecting immediate meaning but allowing sense and patterns to emerge from the procedure of looking. In other words, Chinese readers have been more patient in allowing themselves to look at a piece of text as viewers standing in front of a painting and try to understand the concept of it, or the meaning behind it, by envisioning the ambiance created through its visual arrangements.

Below I have reproduced an image of a cyclical and reversible poem "calligraphed" by the well-known Chinese painter and writer Feng Zikai (豐子愷1898-1975). 'The poem', as Feng stated on the plate, 'was copied from an engraving on an ink stone dating from the Qing dynasty. This five-word poem can be read starting with any character and in either a clockwise or a counter-clockwise direction.'[23] Thus we have here not only one poem but potentially forty poems.
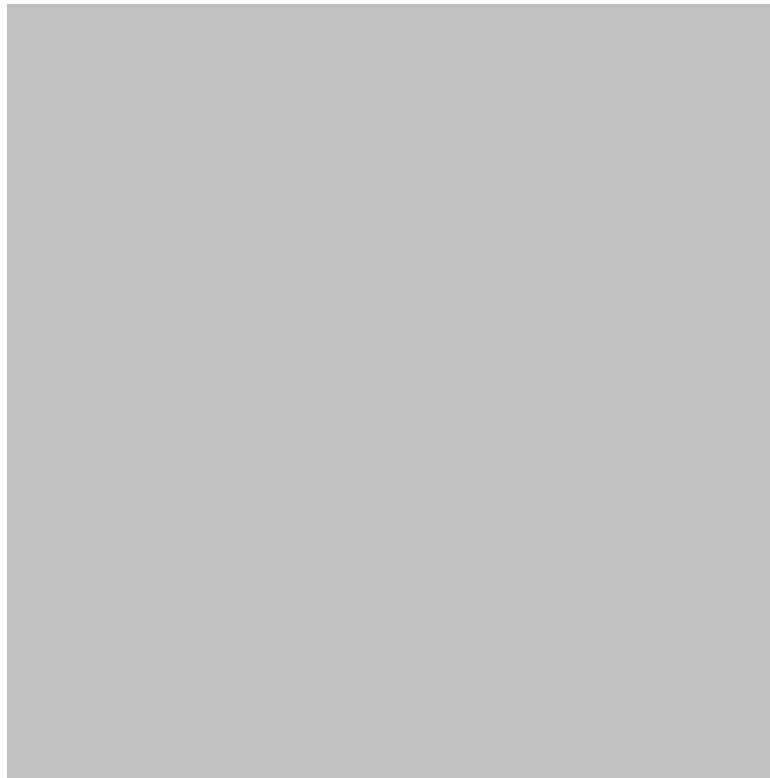
Figure 3.10. From the title page of *An Artistic Exile: A Life of Feng Zikai*

This flexibility and freedom of reading direction and the unrestricted entry points are made possible because a Chinese character can be understood as a noun, a pronoun, a verb, an adjective, an adverb, an object, or an auxiliary. Ernest Fenollosa explains that

> 'a true noun, an isolated thing, does not exist in nature. Things are only the terminal points, or rather the meeting points, of action, cross-actions cut through actions, snapshots. Neither can a pure verb, an abstract motion, be possible in nature. The eye sees noun and verb as one: things in motion, motion in things, and so the Chinese conception tends to represent them'.[24]

Also, each Chinese character has multiple significations; the definition of its most appropriate meaning is also anchored by the combination of the adjoining characters. The interpretation depends on these characters' relationships with each other and with patterns of composition; therefore Chinese usually delivers more than one meaning within the same sentence.

This power explains the multiplicity of Chinese uses; although we see forty poems all depicting winter scenes of beautiful flowers glimmering between trees under the misty moonlight, the messages in which they are delivered are not necessary similar to one another. A more detailed investigation of this device is given in section three (3.3).

It might be argued that in English poetry, writers tend to create conceptual scenes, whereas Chinese poets envision the ambiance of a scene. Wyndham Lewis has the ability to convey similar obscure evocative scenes using Western imagery, but in a condensed, abstract style of writing, reminiscent of much of Chinese literature. Consider for example, the following poem,

> *Taking Leave of a Friend*,
> by Li Bo[25] (701-762):
> *Green mountains lie across the north wall.*
> *White water winds the east city.*

> *Here once we part,*
> *Lone tumbleweed, a million miles to travel.*
>
>
> *Floating clouds, a wanderer's mood.*
> *Setting sun, an old friend's feeling;*
> *We wave hands, you go from here.*
> *Neigh, neigh, goes the horse at parting.*[26]

From Lewis's play *Enemy of the Stars* (1914 version), we read:

> *The great beer=coloured sky, at the fuss,*
> *leapt in fete of green gaiety.*[27]

These two verses are similar to the first two lines of the previous poem:

> *Green mountains lie across the north wall.*
> *White water winds the east city.*

In a scene describing subdued but tense emotions between the two main characters

in *Enemy of the Stars*, Lewis wrote:

> *Fungi of sullen violet thoughts,*
> *investing primitive vegetation*[28].

The description of the growth of these ill thoughts is redolent of the mood of the

traveller figure in *Taking Leave of a Friend*:

> *Lone tumbleweed, a million miles to travel.*

A further example from *Enemy of the Stars* is:

> *The sky, two clouds,*
> *their two furious shadows, fought*[29].

Again, compare the poem:

> *Floating clouds, a wanderer's mood.*
> *Setting sun, an old friend's feeling.*

Lewis, as previously stated, might have been directly aware of Chinese poetry and

was intentionally using this as a model, but there is no decisive evidence for this.

However, there are sufficient similarities between the art of Chinese poetry and the

mode of language that Lewis so effectively used in *Enemy of the Stars*.

As a friend of Ezra Pound and James Joyce, Lewis was also sympathetic to Imagist thinking at the time of writing the play. Imagism is the first movement in English literature to focus on purely visual depictions. Though no manifesto was published, F.S. Flint distilled in 1913 some rules of Imagist poems, which were 'drawn up for [Imagists'] own satisfaction only...They were:

1. Direct treatment of the "thing", whether subjective or objective.

2. To use absolutely no word that did not contribute to the presentation.

3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of a metronome.'[30]

The first and second rules are similar to the methods of Chinese poets for depicting objects, although their implications are different. Chinese poets would use 'the thing' and 'the presentation' in comparison or juxtaposition in order to (as Pound suggested in *A Few Don'ts By An Imagiste*) 'present an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time'[31] and 'give the sense of sudden liberation'.[32]

However, many of the early Imagist poems are describing a scene rather than depicting its ambiance, or, they express intentions in conceptual words rather than visual nouns or adjectives: by doing so, the presentation of 'the thing' becomes difficult to envisage in the reader's mind. Even Pound himself did not follow his own suggestions all the time. In *Des Imagistes*, he wrote the *ΔΩΡΙΑ*

> *Be in me as the eternal moods*
> *   Of the bleak wind, and not*
> *As transient things are –*
> *   Gaiety of flowers.*
> *Have me in strong loneliness*
> *   Of sunless cliffs*
> *And of grey waters.*
> *   Let the Gods speak softly of us*
> *In days hereafter,*
> *   The shadowy flowers of Orcus*
> *Remember thee.*

Because there is a clear logic and concept in the poem – that the poet wants to

remember his beloved – the reader would receive the concept more strongly than the ambiance which the poet provides. This is the case with most of the Imagist poems.

If we now return to Pound's translated Chinese poem in *Cathay*: *Taking Leave of a Friend,* having already seen its word-for-word translation, we can see that Pound had stated his 'interpretation' of one of the scenes in the poem (which was originally constituted through images of floating clouds, a youthful wanderer, will, the setting sun, old friends and sentiment) as

> *Mind like a floating cloud,*
> *Sunset like the painting of old acquaintances.*

Viewing this poem in its original Chinese form, readers are free to arrive at their own perceptions as these images form themselves into various abstracted or associated concepts. One recalls that this process is reminiscent of viewers looking at a painting; the same groups of objects may have created diverse meanings depending on the viewers' background and these are often open to viewers' interpretation. Nevertheless, because Pound was translating Chinese poems into English, it is understandable that he needed to make the poem 'readable' for English readers, because the English language requires a strict correspondence between word/sentence and meaning. The meaning of each sentence in English, structured by its grammar, is clearly indicated through its syntax. Although poetry is relatively loose in syntax, compared to essays, novels or other written forms, it still needs a 'rational' interpretation by its readers.

If one can read a Chinese poem not only as a piece of 'meaningful language', but instead envision it as a sequence of 'meaningful images (or re-presentations)', deciphering the message and the significance of Chinese poems would be similar to

decoding paintings. Thus we can say that the enriched or rather complicated meanings within the text of *Enemy of the Stars* can be associated with the 'envisionable' syntax of Chinese poetry. In this context, Lewis's use of imagery as expression, through his unique textual expression, can be deciphered and defined as integral to his intentions contained within the play's syntax and meaning.

3.3 Chinese poetry and pictographic visualisation

At this point I want to consider more closely the operation of Chinese poetry and in particular three elements: pictographic visualisation, visual association and what I have called 'stacking', by which I mean the phenomenon of changes in meaning due to the association and juxtaposition of characters (Chinese words). As discussed in section two, Chinese poets are able to utilise the significance of pictographic language. Unlike English verses, which often consider a central concept, Chinese poetry is likely to create multi-layered images along with their metaphorical meanings. These kinds of verses are commonly seen in *Enemy of the Stars*. It is my contention that an adequate reading of *Enemy of the Stars* requires a rudimentary understanding of Chinese poetic technique. Therefore, it is essential to help readers to understand how to read Chinese poems, thus providing them with instruments for reading the play.

To start with, a detailed demonstration is needed of how, in Chinese written compositions, a visual noun can be equally used as an adjective or adverb. Because this kind of writing method is common in Chinese poems, we can see this, again in Pound's translation of 'Taking Leave of a Friend' in *Cathay*.

It is further exemplified by two verses in the second half of the poem which Pound translated as

> *Mind like a floating cloud,*
> *Sunset like the painting of old acquaintances*

The original Chinese verses are as follows:

浮*(fu)*	雲*(un)*	遊*(yio)*	子*(zi)*	意*(yi)*
Floating	*clouds*	*wanderer*	*youth*	*will.*

落*(luo)*	日*(zhi)*	故*(gu)*	人*(zen)*	情*(chin)*
Setting	*sun*	*old*	*friend*	*sentiment;* [33]

In the first verse, the last character意 (yi) has a multiplicity of meanings which would be bewildering to the English reader. It can be translated as will, wish, intention, mind, desire, interest, aspiration, idea, view, opinion, objection, meaning, mood, feeling, tone, atmosphere, aura, spirit, consciousness or temperament. Of these, 'will' is the most appropriate meaning because it fits in with my interpretation of the poem, but I suggest that this is not necessarily the 'right' one. For example, Pound chose to use 'mind' in his translation of this verse. In a similar structure, the last character in the second verse 情(chin) also has multiple meanings, including emotion, mood, feelings, sensibilities, friendship, situation, condition, circumstance, atmosphere, sight, congeniality and affection. How does a reader decide which meaning he or she should choose?

Readers can make use of the Chinese stacking system to choose the meaning of a word. Each Chinese character contains certain meanings, and the adjoining character can define its most appropriate meaning. For example, in the second verse the first character 落(luo) has meanings related to fall, drop, decline, lower, fail or lose. Because the second character 日(zhi) means the sun, the Chinese reader would naturally know that the poet was depicting the setting sun (the sun goes down to the earth).

Inspired by Kenner, who used mathematical equations in explaining Pound's creation of 'purer' language, which Eliot referred to as a 'formula'[34], here I provide a method for decoding the 'unusual' syntax in *Enemy of the Stars*. In a verse constructed from five characters, ABCDE, the reader could read them as A+B+C+D+E. However, the meaning and concept of this verse lie in the multi-layered conjunction of the characters.

Take the previous example of the setting sun. 落(luo), as A, is related to both physical and mental decline; 日(zi), as B, conveys the concepts of sun or sun-related themes. When we put A and B together, the reader becomes aware of a third concept, X, the setting sun. So now the verse reads as X+C+D+E plus the original senses of A+B. Thus X can help us to define C 故(gu).

A + B + C + D + E

Key concept
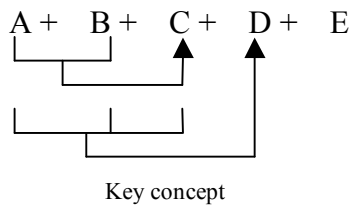
故(gu) again has multiple meanings, most of them related to past, old, native, or hometown. Because of X, readers know that they should read C故(gu) as something related to beautiful times in the past, because the setting sun indicates the passage of time as well as sublime beauty. Thus, when C故(gu) is conjoined with D 人(zen), a person, the meaning of C and D becomes clear; they refer to someone in the good old days. Therefore, when the reader needs to define the last character E 情 (chin), he is able to interpret the string of characters as a whole as sentimental friendship.

This stacking method can also provide an approach to understanding painting by making associations between (or among) objects as metaphorical concepts. It is often used in decoding symbolic paintings – the 'visual association' technique. These layers of metaphorical objects make the Chinese poem significantly different from early 20th century Imagist poems. Readers need to be familiar with this technique when reading *Enemy of the Stars*, especially in reading 'THE YARD', 'THE SUPER' and 'THE NIGHT'.

The Chinese language has long traditions of combining text and image as part of its artistic practice, and especially of cross-interpretation between paintings and poems, since the emperors of the Song dynasty (960~1279) asked the Imperial Art Academy to routinely illustrate lines of poetry.[35] The most influential scholar Su Shi[36](朱熹 1130-1200) famously commented that 'there was poetry in the painting of Tang artist and writer Wang Wei (王維701-61) and painting in his poetry'. Hence, the visual approach to understanding Chinese poetry has long been established. These practices have never been superseded and Chinese people still treat the visual approaches as primarily a reading of Chinese poems whilst the poets take the achievement of 'painting in the poem' as the highest attainment.

Fen Zikai (豐子愷1898-1975), a well-known painter and writer in 20th century China once described the relationship between the mind of a painter and that of a poet:

> 'When I read landscape poems by ancient writers, I often discover that they have a clear sense of perspective, even if it is intangible. It is evident that both painters and poets observe nature from the same angle, the only difference being that the former use forms and colors while the latter use words to express themselves.'[37]

This echoes the famous remark of the Greek poet Simonides (556-469B.C.) that painting is dumb poetry and poetry a vocal painting. Chinese poetry is not only a means of 'vocal' painting but is itself imagery painting. Interestingly, it has similar perspectives to Western painting.

Feng Zikai first explained the pictographic visualisation method of understanding poetry in *Painting and Literary*, published in May1934 by Kaiming Shudian, then a leading progressive publishing house in China. He pointed out that although the traditional Chinese painting has applied anti-perspective methods for a long time, the

narratives in Chinese poems follow the same perspective as they would in the West.

The most important technique in Chinese poetry is how to transform the

three-dimensional world (the reality) into a two-dimensionalised image (a pictorial

vision) in the reader's mind. He gave examples in the essay of how Chinese poems

deploy depicted objects into its two-dimensional composition by indications obtained

from within the verses.

For example, Li Bo's famous verse *Bring in the Wine (將進酒)* says, 'the Yellow

River's waters move out of heaven'[38] (黃河之水天上來), which can be literally

translated as 'the Yellow River's water comes from the sky'[39]. The Yellow River is the

longest river in China, and of course we all know that it is impossible for water to flow

from the intangible heaven or the sky. Li Bo simply applied the perspective method to

depict a scene so that when an object is located below the viewer's viewpoint, it is

because the object is at the farthest from the viewer. Therefore it should be positioned

as high as possible on the canvas to imply a long distance between the object and the

viewer. Given this understanding of the perspective method, when we read 'the

Yellow River's waters come from the sky', we can almost see a framed painting in

which the river meanders from the top down towards us.

We can take another example from *Cathay, Old Idea of Choan (長安古意)*, by Rosoriu

(盧照鄰) to show a similar application of perspective in a poem. 'Riu's house stands

out on the sky, with glitter of color'[40] (梁家畫閣天中起) is literally translated as 'Riu's

colorfully painted penthouse rises in the middle of the sky.'[41] This is like a person

standing away from a beautiful building and looking through a framed glass panel in

front of their eyes, where the tallest building within the frame looks as if it has risen

into the sky and divided it into two separate segments. These kinds of application are

common in many Chinese poems, especially where the poets depict a scene.

I suggest that, by applying the 'stacking' method along with two-dimensional pictographic visualisation, much of Lewis's prose in the play can be understood, and the failure of most of his critics to approach his text with these resources has led to unnecessary confusion. Here is an example from the play:

> 'Throats iron eternities, drinking heavy radiance, limbs towers of blatant light, the stars poised, immensely distant, with their metal sides, pantheistic machines.'[42]

Dasenbrock described this sentence as 'ungrammatical', 'ambiguous' and 'confusing' to its readers[43]. This is perhaps a legitimate comment from an English reader's perspective. However, if we now take this 'sentence' as a Chinese poem, I am able to display the 'secret' of the first two verses:

> Throats iron eternities,
> drinking heavy radiance,
> limbs towers of blatant light,
> the stars poised,
> immensely distant,
> with their metal sides,
> pantheistic machines.

Throat is possibly related to throttle, narrow passage, strangle, crimson, warm, and suffocated if following the visual association. Iron has meanings related to cold, hard, heavy weight, rigid, tough and machine (non-human). If we apply the stacking method, then 'throats' should be able to determine the most appropriate meaning related to 'iron'. I would choose a suffocated narrow passage made of iron. And then we can start to look at the relationship between the passage and 'eternity'. Eternity has connections to timeless, immortality and the afterlife. So we can link it to the concept of a passage that will last forever. The next phrase is –'drinking heavy radiance'. Referring to the title of the section 'THE NIGHT', we can guess that the iron passage

which is drinking heavy radiance is actually the shining stars. However, by practising visual association, this action could be more like pouring crimson magma into the passage, which can also weigh heavily on the reader's mind while picturing this narrative.

Lewis purposefully used 'throats' to express the sentiment of being suppressed and 'iron' to represent the severe situation of Arghol in the play at the time. The whole sentence not only depicts the starry night but also represents the mood and the physical status of Arghol. Using a method similar to that of Chinese poetry, Lewis successfully manages what his Imagist contemporaries struggled to achieve, the creation of 'an "image" that presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time'[44]. He has wholeheartedly embraced Pound's suggestion that we should 'never consider anything as dogma'[45]. Beyond this achievement, Lewis has not only demonstrated his visualisation abilities in the written medium as an artist, but has also installed such visuality throughout the play.

[1] The actual title of the Post-Impressionist exhibition was 'Manet and the Post-Impressionists', an exhibition organised by Roger Fry at the Grafton Galleries, London in 1910.

[2] Lewis, Wyndham. Rude Assignment. Santa Barbara: Black Sparrow Press, 1984 (1950), p.139

[3] Bennett 'Neo-Impressionism and Literature' (8 December 1910) from Wees, William G. Vorticism and English Avant-Garde. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1972. p.182

[4] In the 1914 edition, Arghol was called Argol on page 61. The section was also titled ARGOL. However, this name is only used within this page. In Allan Munton's *Wyndham Lewis: Collected Poems and Plays*, Munton used the name Arghol throughout the whole play, including the first section title. He seemed to consider that Argol was a typing error made by Lewis or the publisher. For a detailed explanation please refer to the *Collected Poems and Plays*.

[5] Hartnoll, Phyllis [ed.]. The Oxford Companion to the Theatre. London, New York, and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1951.pp.8-9.

[6] ibid.

[7] These pages are located between page 50 and 57 (not included), in which, the pages with images are not given standard numbers. *Plan of War* is on page iva, *Timon of Athens* on page v, *Slow Attack* is on page vi, *Decoration for the countess of Drogheda's House* is on page vii, *Portrait of an Englishwoman* is on page viii and *The Enemy of the Stars* is on page viiia.

[8] In the ERRATA, Lewis pointed out mistakes in *Enemy of the Stars*, including 'the wrong placing of Page "The Play," which should come between Page 60 and 61.' However, the discussion here is based on the appearance of the magazine, in which the page "The Play" is placed at page 57.

[9] Graver, David. "Vorticist Performance and Aesthetic Turbulence in *Enemy of the Stars*." PMLA (Publications of the Modern Language Association of America) 107.Number 1 (1992): 482-96.

[10] Lewis, Wyndham. "Enemy of the Stars." BLAST June 20th 1914: p.55.

[11] ibid, p.59.

[12] In this play, Lewis deliberately creates an inverted world where many things are the opposite of the real world. For example, when describing the colour red he is actually depicting green.

[13] These symbolic meanings and concepts will be further discussed in 4.2 and 4.3.

[14] Those pages with images are not given standard numbers. *Plan of War* is on page iva, *Timon of Athens* on page v, *Slow Attack* is on page vi, *Decoration for the countess of Drogheda's House* is on page vii, *Portrait of an Englishwoman* is on page viii and *The Enemy of the Stars* is on page viiia.

[15] Zhaoming Qian, Orientalism and Modernism, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1995

[16] Pound left the movement after its first year. From Jones, Peter [ed.]. Imagist Poetry. Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1972., p.13

[17] Pound, Ezra [ed.]. Ernest Fenollosa: The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1968.

[18] Liu, James J.Y. The Art of Chinese Poetry. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962, p.41 &104. (Professor James J.Y. Liu,1926-1986).

[19] John Floyer proffered this crisper view, because he discerned that in Chinese pules writings there was the voice of an alternative mindset. Floyer was one of the first researchers to recognise and support Chinese Medicine. He published *The Physcian's Pulse Watch* in 1707.

[20] From p.62, Shigehisa Kuriyama, The Expressiveness of the Body and the Divergence of Greek and Chinese Medicine, Zone Books, New York,1999

[21] *A Dream of Red Mansions* is one of the most famous Chinese novels (sometimes under the title of The Story of the Stone), written by Cao Xuegin (1715 ?- 1763). In the 19th century, people in China would say: "One can not call himself erudite without touching upon *A Dream of Red Mansions* in his conversation." The academic study of this novel is called Redology. There are research institutions of Redology around the world.

[22]   From chapter 48, Cao Xueqin, A Dream of Red Mansions: translated by Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, 1994

[23] Image and the quotation are from the title page of *An Artistic Exile: A Life of Feng Zikai (1898-1975)*, written by Geremie R. Barmé, published by University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 2002.

[24] Pound, Ezra [ed.]. Ernest Fenollosa: The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry. p.10.

[25] Li Bo is one of the most important poets in Chinese history. His poems were widely read by all Chinese people. When Ezra Pound first wanted to introduce Chinese poems to English readers in the 1900's, this

poem, *Taking Leave of a Friend*, was selected from hundreds of influential Chinese poems. Pound translated it and published it in his *Cathay*.

Here is Pound's version of the poem:

> *Blue mountains to the north of the walls,*
> *White river winding about them;*
> *Here we must make separation*
> *And go out through a thousand miles of dead grass.*
>
> *Mind like a floating cloud,*
> *Sunset like the painting of old acquaintances*
> *Who bow over their clasped hands at a distance.*
> *Our horses neigh to each other as we are departing.*

from Zhaoming Qian, <u>Orientalism and Modernism</u>, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1995, p.66

[26] Word-for-word translated by Wai-lim Yip, Ezra Pound's *Cathay*, Princeton, Princeton UP, 1969: from Zhaoming Qian, <u>Orientalism and Modernism</u>, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1995, p.66

[27] Lewis, Wyndham. "Enemy of the Stars." <u>BLAST</u> June 20th 1914: p.75.

[28] ibid, p.65

[29] ibid, p.75

[30] Peter Jones [ed.], <u>Imagist Poetry</u>. Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1972, p.129

[31] ibid, p.130

[32] ibid, p.130

[33] Word-for-word translated by Pei-ying Wu

[34] Kenner, Hugh. <u>The Pound Era: the age of Ezra Pound, T.S.Eliot, James Joyce and Wyndham Lewis</u>.

London: Faber and Faber, 1975 (1972). Part one —toward the Vortex.

[35] Barmé, Geremie R. <u>An Artistic Exile: A Life of Feng Zikai (1898-1975)</u>. California & London: University of California Press, 2002., p.99-104

[36] Classical Chinese literature was interpreted by Su Shi and every emperor since the Song dynasty had stipulated that, if they wished to pass the State's examinations to become a civil worker or officer, intellectuals were to read only Su Shi's version. China finally abolished this stipulation and ruling in September 1905, but Su Shi had dominated almost all Chinese intellectual thinking and mentality for over 700 years.

[37] Feng, Zikai. <u>Painting and Literary & the Introduction to Painting</u>. 2001., p.3 [this paragraph is a translation from Barmé's An Artistic Exile: A Life of Feng Zikai (1898-1975), p.105]

[38] From *The 300 Selected Tang Poetry,* <u>http://www.chinapage.com/poem/300poem/t300b.html#085</u> (downloaded on the 08 July 2007) translated into English by *China the Beautiful: Classical Chinese Art, Calligraphy, Poetry, History, Literature, Painting and Philosophy,* edited by Dr. Ming L. Pei

[39] Word-for-word translated by Pei-ying Wu

[40] From *Cathay,* translated by Ezra Pound.

[41] Word-for-word translated by Pei-ying Wu

[42] Wyndham Lewis, "Enemy of the Stars", p.64

[43] Reed Way Dasenbrock, <u>The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis: Towards the Condition of Painting.</u> Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1985. p.128-129

[44] Peter Jones [ed.], <u>Imagist Poetry</u>. p.130

[45] ibid, p.131

Chapter 4 Cornering the 'Self'

In chapter 3, I provided resolutions in overcoming the difficulties encountered in the

reading of *Enemy of the Stars* and clarified the importance of 'visualities' in Lewis's

technique. As a consequence, three Acts, which are defined by the application of

themes extracted from the three paintings at the beginning of the script, have been

organised within Lewis's original structure of eleven sections. Therefore, the next

three chapters will be devoted to exploring each Act to show how the play can be

rendered more readable and workable as a theatrical performance.

As will be seen, each chapter will consist of four sections. The first section explores

the meaning of the paintings — 'Plan of War' in section 4.1, 'Timon of Athens' in

section 5.1 and 'Slow Attack' in section 6.1— as a way of providing a deeper

understanding of Lewis's intentions. Given the importance of these works as

presented in *BLAST*, they have remarkable values that clearly define the staging of

the play. The second section applies the reading techniques explained in chapter 3 for

a more detailed explanation of the play's text and its possible interpretation. The third

section concentrates on discussing possible stage designs derived from Richard

Hornby's methods of play analysis, because his main aim is to analyse a play script

for the preparation of theatrical productions whilst retaining the emphasis of the

play-script's metaphorical meanings and aesthetic representations. The latter

approaches are particularly important for understanding *Enemy of the Stars* since it is

a highly visual and emphatic piece of 'artwork'. Besides, from a theatre practitioner's

point of view, to analyse a play for performance (as Catron, Ingham and Grote have

indicated in their theatre practitioners' guide books[1]) the main function of an

appropriate play analysis technique is to promote the play's significant merits and

needs, as well as expressing the practitioner's individual interests. The fourth section

focuses on demonstrating designed settings in a real theatrical performing context, including pointing out the possible technical difficulties in an actual staging.

4.1   The ruler and/or the ruled

To fully understand the importance and meaning of the visualities Lewis provides in the written script, it is necessary to be aware of his particular concept of Vorticism. It could be argued that the theme of Act One needs to be understood through the painting 'Plan of War' (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1   Page *va* from *BLAST*

My approach to the explanation of this image is a particular interpretation of iconography. With this in mind, figure 4.1 (page *va* from *BLAST*) is a black and white print of the original. Although the original painting is in colour (Figure 4.2), it is a monotone. However, because readers were presented with the black and white version of the painting when reading *Enemy of the Stars* in *BLAST*, I will analyse it as if it were black and white.
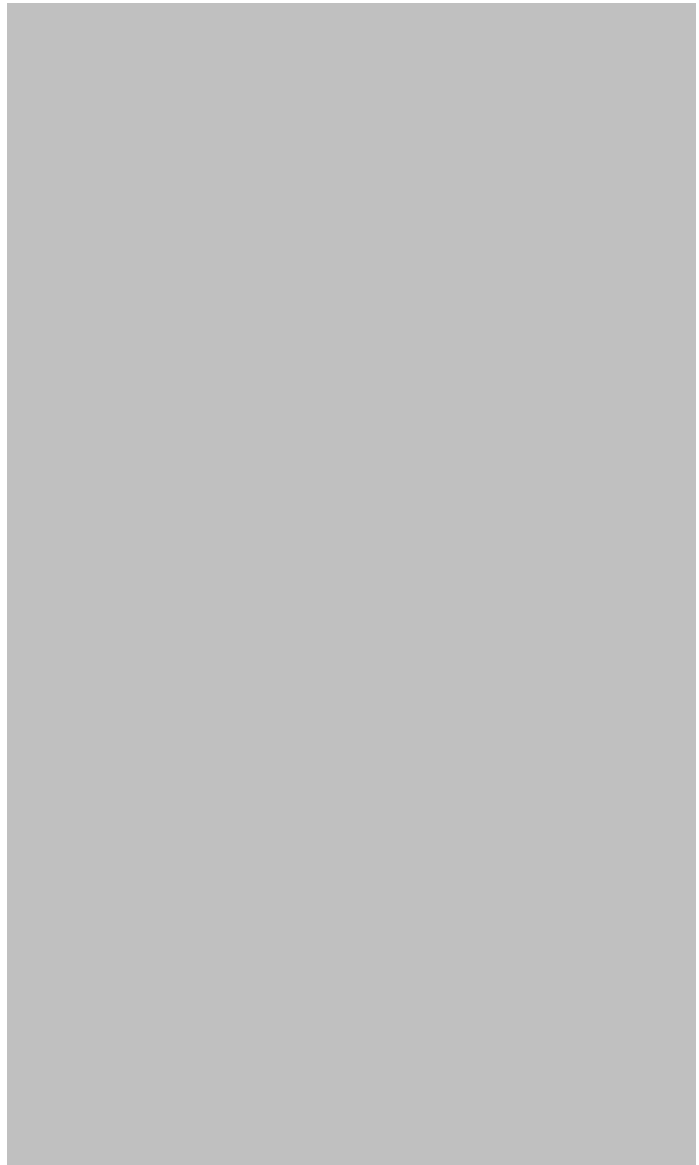

Figure 4.2 *Plan of War,* Wyndham Lewis, 1913, oil on canvas, 255x143. Whereabouts unknown.

Lewis's friend and contemporary, the art historian Frank Rutter recalls that Lewis himself saw in 'Plan of War' 'a battle plan of the type used in military textbooks' but represented 'in the large canvas',[2] while Paul Edwards reminds us that 'the references to machinery have often been noticed'[3] in the painting. Furthermore, if we consider detailed composition analysis, we can see that more than one third of the area at the top is much darker and heavier then the lower area. This seems against the usual rules of composition, as human eyes are used to "the gravity rule" which says that the heavier part is usually positioned in the lower area of a painting. This is the first hint that Lewis gave his readers and viewers that Act One of the play

challenges the usual rules of both theatre and spatial gravity.

Moreover, as Lewis and his Vorticist contemporaries stated in their manifestos (the first two parts of *BLAST*)*⁴*, the Vorticists were aiming to *blast* the old establishments and to replace them with Vorticist principles. 'Plan of War' may be seen as the intellectual design of an artist opposed to the existence of authentic rules. Furthermore, Lewis conceived the artist's destiny in terms of engaging with and resolving a personal battle or predicament.

There are two brighter areas in the lower part of the painting. The left one is enclosed while the right-hand side is more open. They are divided by a systematic obstruction constructed from a series of blocks piled diagonally. The enclosed area can be seen as an oppressed person being forced into a twisted position where he can only see the blocked future (see Figure 4.3 and the red outline around the highlighted
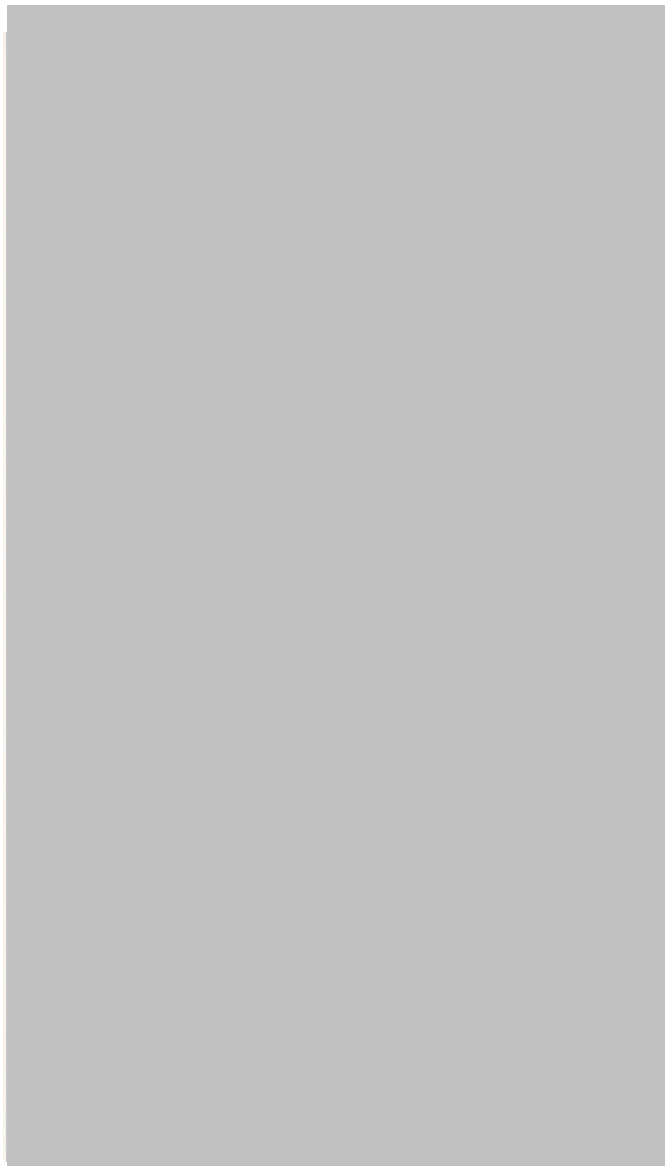
figure), whereas behind this figure there are open spaces. However, the forcing system, which is constituted from the geometric blocks would appear to make sure the 'victim' cannot turn by pressing hard on his back with what might be considered as a stave of a blunt axe; the victim therefore is not viable to notice the open area behind him. In this image, Lewis appears to be asserting the view that it is a part of the human condition to endure oppression which prevents obvious means of escape.

If we consider the human figure oppressed by the heavy darkened force in the painting (Figure 4.3), and compare it with 'The Vorticist' (Figure 4.4), which Lewis painted in 1912, both depict a solitary person's struggle to survive under attack. The bodies are twisted by overwhelming force: in the 'Plan of War', the forces are presented as dark segments; in 'The Vorticist', they are invisible. In both paintings Lewis delineates a similar expression of what it is to
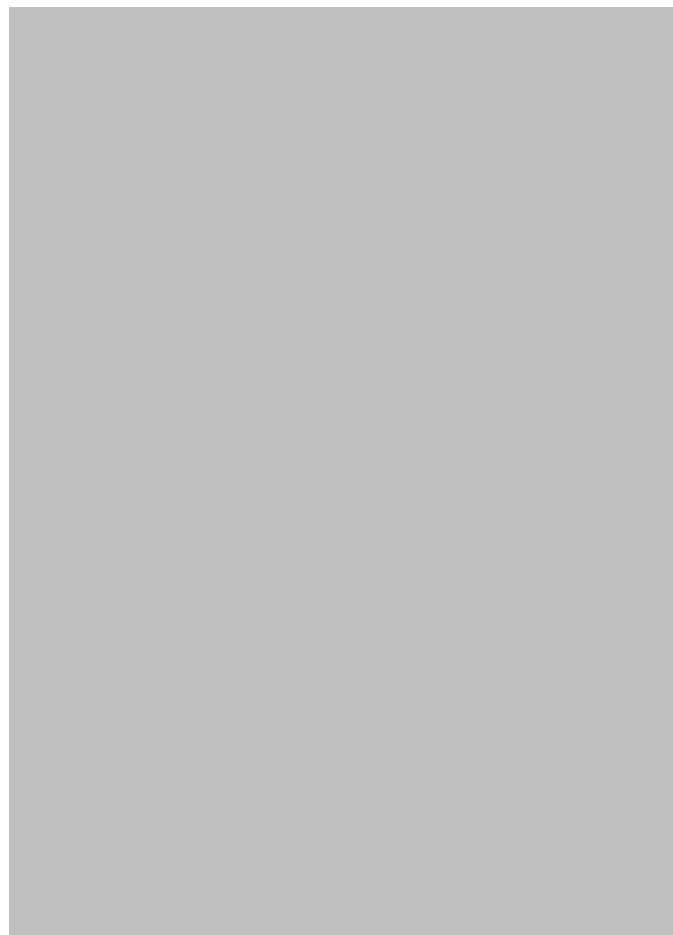
Figure 4.4 *The Vorticist,* Wyndham Lewis, 1912
watercolour, ink chalk on paper, 41.4 x 29.4 cm
Southampton City Art Gallery

be the oppressed - screaming in silence, with a stiffened body, seeking self-protection. Although under attack, the figure is poised as if his task is to balance the forces which are against him.

Lewis once explained Vorticism by saying 'at the heart of the whirlpool is a great silent place where all the energy is concentrated. And there, at the point of concentration, is the Vorticist.'[5] This may be interpreted as a re-statement of Lewis's concept of the artist's task.

Lewis's three major artistic concerns were to find answers to the questions: what is an artist? what is his social role? and how is he to establish the task of creation[6]? For Lewis these kinds of questions could never be entirely personal. Even before his style had matured, his concerns were always social as well as artistic.

As Richard Cork points out, Lewis and his contemporaries were 'confronted with the excitement of this great phenomenon [the industrial revolution / modern society]. It was obviously the artist's duty to incorporate it in his work, draw inspiration from its visual splendour and bring British art face to face with the realities of twentieth-century life.'[7] Lewis felt this duty intensely. In addition to creating paintings and drawings, he wrote many articles discussing issues of role and responsibility especially in *The Art of Being Ruled* (1926) and the *Rude Assignment* (1950), which also particularly address the functions of the intellect in society.

Lewis must have been very much aware of a feeling which made him and the other Vorticists declare in *BLAST*: 'WE ONLY WANT THE WORLD TO LIVE, and to feel its crude energy flowing through us.'[8] We see Lewis depicts 'an artist' both in the 'Plan of War' and in the 'Vorticist', struggling to survive against visible or invisible forces, yet immobile in that framed situation. As Lewis reminds us in *The Art of Being Ruled*, it takes two to make a quarrel; therefore it takes two parties to persecute and to survive.[9] To be the ruler or to be the ruled is not a question of choice, but of a

character's destination.

In Act One (ARGHOL), the main character Arghol is the 'INVESTMENT OF RED UNIVERSE', which stated that his status is 'the ruled'; Lewis told us in the statement-like announcement (p.59 of the play) that Arghol is a 'TYPE OF FEMININE BEAUTY' and 'CALLED "MANISH"' but he is biologically a male in the play. Lewis categorises 'the ruled [as] the females and the rulers the males, in this arrangement...and the relation of the ruler to the ruled is always that of a man to a woman, or of an adult to a child. (By "man" here is meant any ruler-like person, of whatever sex, age, or class.)'[10] We can imagine that Arghol's position is similar to the artist's struggles in 'Plan of War' or as the 'Vorticist' - that although 'EACH FORCE ATTEMPS TO SHAKE HIM', he still positions himself as a motionless central point ('CENTRAL AS STONE') like a 'POISED MAGNET OF SUBTLE, VAST, SELFISH THINGS.'

Figure 4.5
The Vorticists' Vortex
Illustration
from *BLAST*

These first three sentences of Act One (ARGHOL) describe Arghol's characteristics as well as delineating the Vorticists' Vortex as it was conceived in *BLAST* (see Figure 4.5). Pound announced in the magazine that 'The Vortex is the point of maximum energy' while Lewis declared 'The Vorticist is at his maximum point of energy when stillest.' As we learnt from the two paintings 'Plan of War' and the 'Vorticist', the holding of maximum dynamic energy by the artist in his stillness is not a comfortable experience. If we take Lewis's own belief that 'to rule is a painful, dangerous and arduous duty' and that those who are ruled will be 'believed concretely...full of kind, protective illusions...full of nicely arranged flowers, little presents, and meaningless courtesies...all tied up in a

little neat bundle with a comfortable personal vanity'[11], we need to ask whether Arghol

is a ruler or the ruled. Is the artist the ruler or the ruled? This question is the theme

throughout Act One, and hence represents Lewis's major concern.

4.2 The overwhelming invisible opponent

Lewis's answer to the question 'is the artist the ruler or the ruled?' lies at the core of

the play and, as such, challenges the role of the play's main character, Arghol. Is

Arghol the ruler or the ruled? To answer this question we have to understand Act One

(ARGHOL)[12], using play analysis. In this section I shall use Richard Hornby's method

of play analysis to "translate" the play into more accessible English, thus enabling the

reader to see *Enemy of the Stars* as a performable piece of drama.

Before undertaking this task, there is a need to clarify the role of my "translation". The

methods I apply, as a practising artist and designer, are visual association, the

'stacking' technique and pictographic visualisation pertinent to the reading of Chinese

poetry (explained in detail in chapter 3). All three methods involve envisioning the

visualities. As 'visuality is vision socialised'[13], the envisaging of the visualities in the

verses of *Enemy of the Stars* is likely to be influenced by the reader's personal

background. Therefore, the "translation" I will provide should be considered as an

example and demonstration of an appropriate technique, rather then as an ideal or

definitive translation.

In addition to demonstrating the readability of the play, the main purpose of

"translating" it is to find possibilities of performing it. Therefore the "translation"

concentrates on decoding the show-case verses, and not on re-explaining every

verse in the play. As there are few show-case verses in Act One, this section will pay

more attention to play analysis.

As already mentioned, some critics have taken the view that *Enemy of the Stars* is a

closet drama while others have suggested that the density of its philosophical and

psychological content renders it un-performable. Even a sympathetic reader such as Paul Edwards has suggested that it is more suitable for film than for stage production[14]. However, I would assert that it is necessary to perform the play to bring intangible concepts from the written text into visually explicit forms. Thus, I would like to outline the possibilities for bringing *Enemy of the Stars* to life as a play: a performance achieved by bringing out the rich visualities of the script into stage settings. The details of the visualisation processes and their functions within the performance will be fully examined in the second half of this chapter (in sections 4.3 and 4.4).

After clarifying the role, the methods and the purpose of "translating" the play, the next step is to identify the approaches to analysing it in order to understand and prepare it for a proper theatrical performance. As explained in chapter 2, much of play analysis is based on Aristotle's *Poetics* which mainly focuses on the plot and characters. We read, for example, Beckerman's *Dynamics of Drama,* in which he claims that play analysis should not focus on the plot or characters alone. We learn that the major element of analysis he suggests is 'units of time: what occurs within these units and how they relate to one another'[15], but this is still within the context of the plot and characters. Or we can read the much later published book, Longman's *Page and Stage,* which says the key element for a successful theatrical production is 'organized tension'. This is, again, generated from the plot.[16]

Richard Hornby diagnosed the problems of traditional script analysis[17] when applied to the works of major contemporary dramatists Stanislavski, Brecht, Artaud and Schechner (whom Hornby regards as 'performance theorists')[18]. Hornby argues that for such dramas, plot-oriented analysis is usually inadequate. He suggests that the

involvement of 'analyzing the metaphorical or aesthetical meanings of the script' can subsume and enrich traditional play analysis more than the sole plot approach[19]. He seeks to make theatre practitioners 'see plot as only a *part* of the whole artistic network that underlies the play'[20]. Although Hornby is not alone in suggesting that a play should be considered as a whole, he is prominent in his insistence that metaphorical and aesthetic meanings centrally inform analysis.

When Lewis published *Enemy of the Stars* in 1914, three years after Craig had published *On the Art of the Theatre*[21], no theatre practitioner was interested in staging it, because, apart from the difficulties of understanding Lewis's verses, most people were not familiar with the use of visualities as main principles in a play script. We can see how the traditional approaches have limited the practitioner's imagination and ability to apply the visualities provided in the play into a metaphorically and aesthetically challenging production. Despite a growing consciousness of the importance of spectacle in the theatre in the early 20th century (associated with the early work of Adolphe Appia and Edward Gordon Craig), there was no concomitant development of the possibilities of discovering fresh visual meanings in dramatic text. Both Appia and Craig were designers who understood the spectacle as the lead principle in a theatrical performance and converted it from pictorial realism into modern staging, using a range of symbolic devices. Since then, despite the flourishing of theatrical and performance theories in the first half of the 20th century, main-stream play script analysis has remained close to traditional principles, reflecting its origins in literature studies.

A different approach is required when dealing with *Enemy of the Stars*. Richard Hornby provides such an approach in *Script into Performance*, which draws attention

to the importance of visualities, especially to their rich and complex meanings. The

core of Hornby's method is to identify 'the significant elements' and to search for 'the

unifying principle' in a play script. In his own words, 'the significant elements' are 'the

oddities that one usually slides past out of embarrassment or confusion', whereas 'the

unifying principle' forms out of '*recurs* in the text'[22].

Following his suggestions, the added challenge in "translating" and understanding

Enemy of the Stars is to identify the 'significant elements' as we read it through. The

search for 'the unifying principle' is left until the next section of this chapter (4.3) as it

is concerned more with design styles and aesthetic meanings.

Reading from the first page of the play, so far we have understood the meanings of

'Plan of War' as an abstract to Act One, its association with the artist's responsibilities

in Lewis's time, and the Vorticists' aims. We have also recognised the connections

between the first part of Act One and the Vortex icon (see Figure 4.5).

Act One of the play (ARG[H]OL)[23] is divided into three parts by two short but heavy

lines (Figure 4.6). The first part depicts, as described in 4.1, the status quo of the main

character Arghol. The second part sets the scene of the performing arena and the last

part consists of only one verse: 'THE ACTION OPENS'.

Since the second part of Act One moves forward to describe the scene and the

situation in the performance location before 'THE ACTION OPENS', and as the

depiction of the performing area is important in visualising the play, we should look

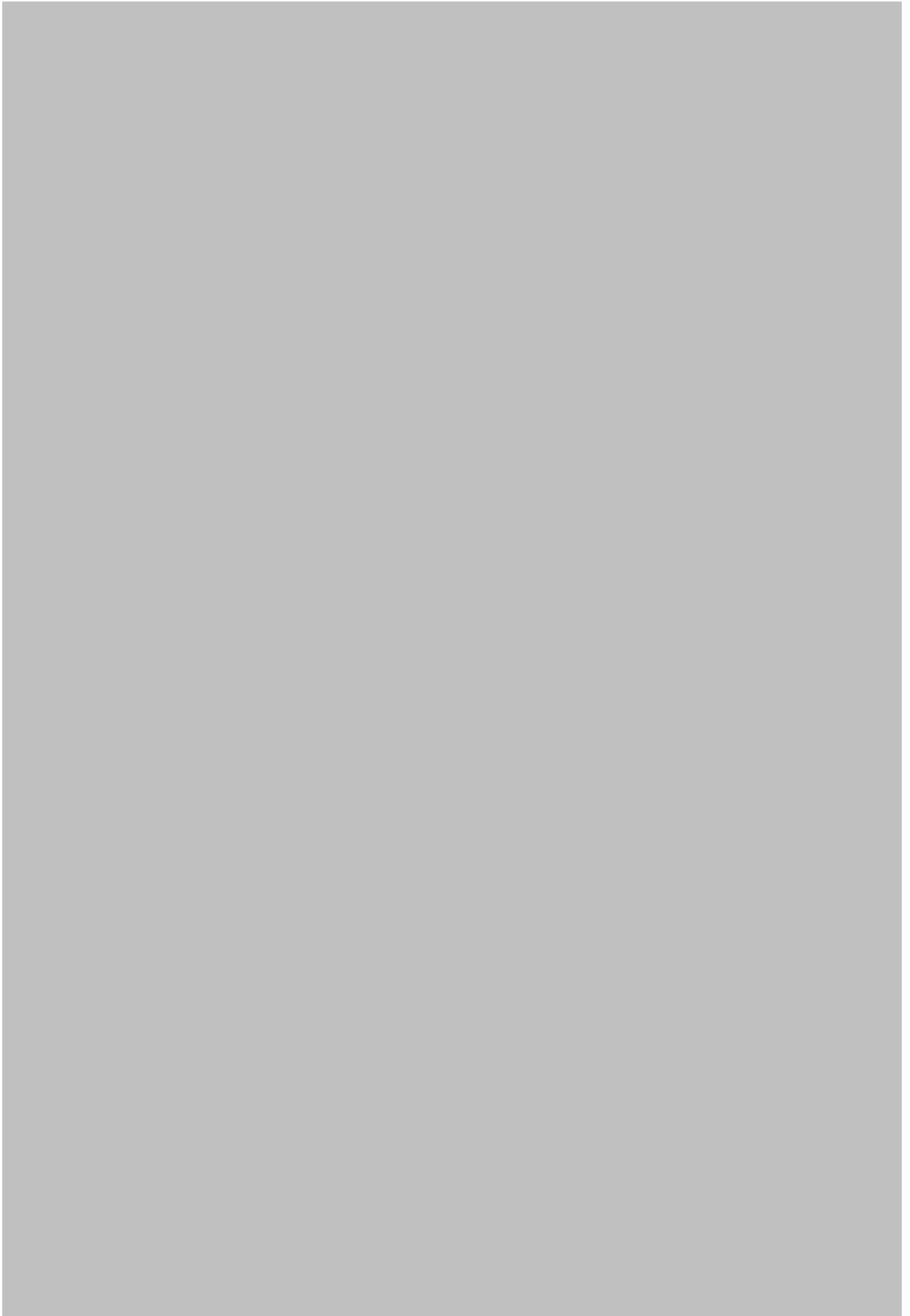carefully at the detail of this section.

Figure 4.6 p.61 from *BLAST*

The second part of ARGHOL divides, yet again, into two narrative themes: Arghol enters the arena and the cornering action of the red walls (of the Red Universe). The first narrative mainly focuses on Arghol and gives us his role in the arena, a gladiator who fights a ghost – Humanity. Also in this part of the narrative Lewis reminds us that this play is not happening in our time, as he describes 'one hears the gnats' song of the Thirtieth centuries.'[24] The following paragraphs are a full quotation of the narrative:

> The first stars appear and Argol comes out of the hut. This is his cue. The stars are his cast. He is rather late and snips into it's [*sic*] place a test button. A noise falls on the cream of Posterity, assembled in silent banks. One hears the gnats' song of the Thirtieth centuries.
>
> They strain to see him, a gladiator who has come to fight a ghost, Humanity – the great Sport of Future Mankind.
>
> He is the prime athlete exponent of this sport in it's [*sic*] palmy days. Posterity slowly sinks into the hypnotic trance of Art, and the Arena is transformed into the necessary scene.

One might consider the possible symbolic meanings of these descriptions of Posterity, the gladiator, Humanity, the Sport of Future Mankind or the hypnotic trance of Art and visualise them with some associated metaphorical images. However, according to Hornby, a play should be treated as if it 'has been submitted to you anonymously for possible production'[25]. Therefore the metaphorical images which are associated with the symbolic meanings should be read and formed within the text itself, not from the historical or social knowledge of the writer or anything else other than the script itself. 'The significant element' will display itself within the play text.

To examine the narratives further, there is a need to clarify 'the oddities' (Hornby's 'significant elements') because they are those that have often been explained 'as "flaws" or historical oddities...the very disruptive effect such elements have is a key to the *activity* of the work, the way that it affects the reader or audience.'[26] Many plays have narratives in different times and places, and this is acceptable as long as they form their own world on the stage and can provide viewers with a logical meaning or sense. The strange or unfamiliar time and space of a theatrical narrative should not be odd enough to be 'the significant elements', unless the coherence of the logic is so disturbed and is so unreasonable as to confuse the audience.

There is, however, a rather unusual description in the narrative: it relates to the actions of the audience. The way in which Lewis pre-determines the minds and the actions of the audience ('they strain to see [Arghol]')[27] runs counter to theatrical tradition. Usually audiences come to a show to see actors perform on the stage. They might be attracted to a particular actor-star, but a prescribed 'duty' fixed on the audience is an innovative requirement. In other words, Lewis makes the audience part of the production. We should remember, though, that he hinted to us in the painting 'Plan of War' that the play challenges the usual rules (see 4.1).

When Lewis defines the main character in the first part of ARGHOL, he announces Arghol's status as the 'INVESTMENT OF RED UNIVERSE', then describes his situation in that 'EACH FORCE ATTEMPTS TO SHAKE HIM'. After this briefing, Lewis gives us the unexpected reaction of Arghol, describing him as 'CENTRAL AS STONE' yet as a 'POISED MAGNET OF SUBTLE, VAST, SELFISH THINGS'. The 'oddities' in these first three sentences took upon Arghol's unusual response to the Red Universe and to the assaults. We are reminded that the depiction of the

oppressed figure in 'Plan of War' is poised under attack while remaining the balancing power of the forces (see 4.1).

More unusually, in the last paragraph of part one Lewis tells us Arghol 'LIES LIKE HUMAN STRATA OF INFERNAL BIOLOGIES. WALKS LIKE WARY SHIFTING OF BODIES IN DISTANT EQUIPOSE. SITS LIKE A GOD BUILT BY AN ARCHITECTURAL STREAM, FECUNDED BY MAD BLASTS OF SUNLIGHT.'[28] Lewis proclaimed that Arghol is an unusual kind of human, or even questioned whether he is a human. Arghol's movements are not those of a normal body. We recall that in the painting 'Plan of War', it is difficult to see the figure clearly as it is under unbearable pressure. This leaves us rather confused as to what kind, or combination of kinds, of human Arghol could be.

Arghol's unusual reactions echo the last paragraphs in the second half of Act One.

> THE RED WALLS OF THE UNIVERSE NOW SHUT THEM IN, WITH THIS CONDEMNED PROTAGONIST.
>
> THEY BREATHE IN CLOSE ATMOSPHERE OF TERROR AND NECESSITY TILL THE EXECUTION IS OVER, THE RED WALLS RECEDE, THE UNIVERSE SATISFIED.
>
> THE BOX OFFICE RECEIPTS HAVE BEEN ENORMOUS.

The Red Universe becomes visible whereas its depiction in the first part are described as invisible 'FORCES'. Visible or not, the action of the attack now turns into 'shut them in'. Further 'oddities' emerge: who are 'them'? We know that there is only Arghol in the centre of the arena, the rest are the audience. Therefore Lewis is again including the audience in the performance. He pushes this inclusion even further to demand that

'[the audiences and Arghol] BREATHE IN CLOSE ATMOSPHERE OF TERROR AND NECESSITY TILL THE EXECUTION IS OVER...' Lewis tests the willingness of the audience to participate as well as their limitation within the performance. This novel approach to treating audiences as the 'property' of the stage was unprecedented in Lewis's time, and is still challenging us nearly one hundred years later.

Further 'oddities' occur in the second part of Act One. The last sentence reads 'THE BOX OFFICE RECEIPTS HAVE BEEN ENORMOUS', although this again challenges theatrical conventions. Comparing it with the inclusive demanding of participation by the audience, Lewis's control extends to the box office. This is also another 'oddity' because it reinforces Lewis's attention towards renewing the methods and the understanding of a performance. The depth of confusion felt by Lewis's contemporaries may be gauged fully when one remembers that they (unlike us) would not have had experience of post-war avant-garde drama.

Bearing these confusions in mind, the reader/viewer reaches the last part of Act One, the last verse – 'THE ACTION OPENS'. This appears designed to cause further confusion. What does it mean? Surely we have already been watching or reading the play. Why does the action open now? And why does the action need to 'open'?

The purpose of identifying these 'significant elements' is to develop an overall understanding of the play within the context of the script by envisioning it as 'a wide range of overlapping meanings', not a single, allegorical interpretation of what it means or how it works[29]. From within the significant elements identified in Act One, a 'wide range of overlapping meanings' emerges. These further enhance the visualisation of the play and the requirements of the performance.

The overlapping meanings of these 'oddities' proceed from the non-response of

Arghol under the invisible attack of the Red Universe and its arbitrary execution both

of the audience and Arghol. Lewis's concern over whether Arghol is the ruler or the

ruled is elaborated by these unusual actions. The meaning embedded in the actions is

revealed through Arghol's response, which recalls the depicted figures in the 'Plan of

War' and 'the Vorticist'. Arghol, as 'the self', settles in tranquillity under the forceful

movement dominated by the Red Universe. In this Act, the overwhelming Red

Universe becomes the invisible opponent, while the 'authentic self' represented by

Arghol is a small man.

4.3 Playing chess with the *Will*

By identifying 'the significant elements' in the previous section (4.2), we learnt that the invisible opponent overwhelmed Arghol through various oppressive actions: by announcing that Arghol is its 'investment'; by attacking him with invisible forces; by making him fight as a gladiator; and by ordering the Red Walls to perform the execution. These similarly violent and repeated actions are what Hornby looks for – something 'that *recurs* in the text.'[30] However, Hornby suggests that through these recurrences the reader can find 'the unifying principle', which is not, as one might think, an element of a play script.[31]

'The unifying principle is a functional relationship between a critical approach and a particular script; it does not exist in the script itself.'[32] Therefore, to synthesise the identified 'significant elements' into 'the unifying principle', one needs not only to analyse the play in detail but also to read between the lines in order to conceptualise its possible metaphorical or aesthetical meanings. The supreme function of 'the unifying principle' is that it 'enables a person to grasp the significance of a play script as a whole'[33]. Hornby suggests that this is possible in the form of a diagram, a formula or a phrase.

The repeated actions of the Red Universe in Act One can be envisaged as one authority desperately wanting the 'subject'—Arghol— to be 'cornered'. As Arghol represents the oppressed (which the paintings 'Plan of War' and 'the Vorticist' make clear) and as the essence of the Vorticist artist is the 'authentic self', so 'the unifying principle' of Act One can be conceived as expressing the 'cornering' of the 'self'.

This 'unifying principle' can be utilised as the core concept to help theatre practitioners

understand the play. Moreover, if 'the unifying principle' is presented as a stage

setting, it can benefit not only the practitioners but also the audience who look at it

during the performance. They can learn more about the play by appreciating the

connections between it and the explicit visual presentations of the same concepts.

Also, as we have seen in the first section of this chapter (4.1), the theme of Act One is

the adapted question asked by Lewis and his contemporary Vorticists: is the artist the

ruler or the ruled? By presenting the main character Arghol as 'the prime athlete

exponent' Lewis seeks to answer this question. To make this theme correspond with

'the unifying principle' – cornering the 'Self' – I have designed a chess-like solitaire

game, which simultaneously fulfils two functions: the presentation of the theme of 'the

unifying principle' (to help theatre practitioners, through playing it, to understand the

play) and turing this game into a stage design that will deliver most of Act One in

visual form. I will first explain my design of the game and the process of visualisation –

turning the visualities of the play script into visual forms. After this, the next section

(4.4) will be devoted to fully explaining its transformation into a stage setting.

One of the reasons for representing 'the unifying principle' as a chess-like game is to

expose the contradictory positions of the ruler and the ruled, especially in playing

solitaire. Who are you playing with? Are you playing with the *Will* or playing with Will?

Who rules and who acts? Does the *Will* set the game's rules and control everything?

Is the rule itself the *Will*? When a player is in the game, does he or she invariably play

as 'the ruled'? I hope that through playing this solitaire game theatre practitioners can

start to consider their relationship to the game, to the game pieces, to the game board

and especially to the rules by which they move. Traditionally, when a man fights death,

we visualise it as 'playing chess with death'. Ingmar Bergman used such imagery in

his film 'The Seventh Seal' (Figure 4.7). The same analogy was suggested by Flory, that Arghol is involved in playing a similar game in the play. She considered that 'the fear of mortality lies at the heart of all Arghol's problems'[34] yet that 'Arghol knew, that the fact of death should only be reacted to intellectually.'[35] This affirms that once the action starts, the game has been set up.

film *The Seventh Seal*, released in 1957.

Another reason for using this game is the nature of solitaire itself. Designing a solitaire game for one person to play parallels the traditional theatrical experience: a rather lonely journey of the self. We do not, for example, discuss the play with our neighbours during a theatrical performance. What you perceive, what you receive is all kept in your mind. Everyone tries to understand what he or she has been seeing or listening to in their own minds and tries to derive an understandable, contextualised story. This is a similar experience to playing a solitaire game. Furthermore, playing this game helps practitioners to experience the feeling of 'being besieged', just as Arghol or the audience are, because the game asks the player to fight for their own space in which to survive.

A physical space as an arena or a battlefield
needs to be allocated before the action of
'cornering' can be performed. By applying visual
association and pictographic visualisation, the
action of 'cornering' may be associated with the
tactics deployed in playing the Japanese /
Chinese game *Go*. This is a rule-based
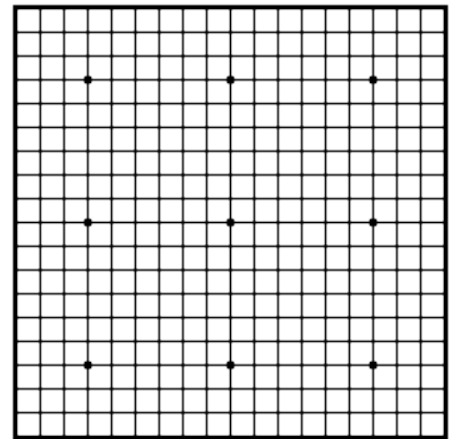chess-like territorial game. The board, usually

Figure 4.8   A traditional *Go* board

marked with a grid of 19 lines by 19 lines (Figure 4.8), could be thought of as an arena

where the two protagonists fight. This metaphor is similar in most board games

represented in art works, such as Samuel Bak's 'Intruder' (Figure 4.9), in which the

landscape is a giant chess board where a fight has occurred. He presented the

question of survival in a series of such paintings[36].

Figure 4.9   *Intruder,* Samuel Bak, 1998-2001, Oil on Canvas, 18"x24".

However, unlike the chess set, *Go* does not have individual pieces (queen, king, knight etc.) but black and white tokens, called stones. The stones are placed on the intersections of the lines rather than in the squares. Once played, stones are not moved. They may, however, be surrounded, cornered and so captured, in which case they are removed from the board as prisoners
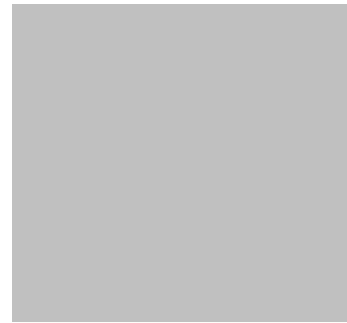
An example game of *Go*, in which the black stones are cornered by the white stones.
From http://www.britgo.org

(Figure 4.10). Since these stones have no characteristics, they are acting on orders, just as the Red Walls attack and corner Arghol on the command of the Red Universe. In Act One, these visible 'RED WALLS' and the invisible 'FORCES' are the persecutors attacking Arghol yet without the capacity for individual thought. In other words, they are part of the anonymous units which follow the directions of the *Will*.

Although the concept and the tactics of playing *Go* are very close to the action of the Red Universe, because the stones cannot be moved after they are placed on the board, I have designed a game which reinforces the movement of 'cornering' with visually explicit actions. In my game, inspired by *Go*, the rules have been modified along the same lines as a game of draughts. A piece needs to jump over its neighbours to gain spaces in which to survive, whilst the piece which has been jumped over is removed from the board. This action of jumping makes the attacks of the Red Universe visually distinguishable.

Interest in the visualisation of movement increased during the later part of the 19th century with the advent of photography. A contemporary of Lewis, Marcel Duchamp, was one of the first visual artists to appreciate the pictorial possibilities of the

movement involved in a chess game. He was, throughout his career interested 'in movement, system and process'[37]. Michael J. Thomas discusses Duchamp's interests in the visual quality of movement, possibly derived from his passion for playing chess games (Duchamp was a well-known chess player). In Duchamp's view, 'a game is something plastic. You build it. It is a mechanical sculpture'[38]. As the first artist to create the artform of the 'game-as-art', Duchamp conceptualised the non-visual nature into explicitly visual productions. Many of his works require intellectual tactics, as do games of chess with an opponent.

However, he 'never presented an originally designed game as art'[39]; and more often applied the visuality which was related to the chess game in his creations. The constrained use of the chess game was challenged in the 60s and 70s, when many artists investigated it as an artform by modifying the traditional game in terms of its visual appearance as well as its rules. Following on from these investigations, the game I invented for presenting 'the unifying principle' has a much more innovative board than traditional chess or *Go*.

Figure 4.11
Two overlapping squares as the first step in designing the performing arena as a game board; designed by Pei-ying Wu.

Figure 4.12
Two squares forming a star; the second step in designing the performing arena as a game board; designed by Pei-ying Wu.

Figure 4.13
The third step: colouring the board to create two separate areas: the outer red star and the green enclosed octagon; designed by Pei-ying Wu.

To enhance the message and to supply visuality to the ambience of the arena, I have overlapped two squares to create the basic shape (Figure 4.11). This also suggests the oppressed state of mind due to hard / brutal restriction. These overlapping squares form a star (Figure 4.12). As indicated by the title *Enemy of the Stars* and knowing the relationship between Arghol and the Red Universe, 'Enemy' to 'the Stars', this format reinforces the concept of the players being in an arena, the persecuted within the boundary of the stars.

To emphasise the conflict between the Red Universe and Arghol, I have coloured the board to create two separate areas: the outer red star and the green octagon (Figure 4.13). The eight red triangles indicate shining star rays as well as aggressive forces absorbing energies from eight directions and pushing the green octagon, which represents the arena and remains closed; a similar concept to the painting 'Plan of War.'

The octagon (Ba-gua), an inoffensive form in Chinese culture, corresponds to the situations of Arghol and the audience in the arena. By this "unhostile" octagon being enclosed within aggressive star spikes, the board represents an unusual balance of the dynamic powers between the oppressed and the invisible persecutor, once more recalling 'the Vorticist'.

In Act One, Lewis pictures the unusual relationship between the audience, Arghol and the invisible *Will* (the Red Universe) through narrative. In this game, the grid on the board is designed to symbolise the interactive rules in the play (Figure 4.14). The design of the grid system corresponds to the Red Universe in the play, representing

Arghol's fate. In the second part of Act One, the Red Walls perform the execution on the orders of the Red Universe. This is reminiscent of a pre-arranged world as if everyone in the world has been programmed. Each of us has a specific way of reacting, acting or responding to certain deeds and matters. The grids on the board are

Figure 4.14
A draft drawing of the grid system on the game board; designed by Pei-ying Wu. Coloured pencil and pencil on paper.

representative of the limitations that confine us. It is fate that fixes the world and is immutable. Therefore, to answer the question whether the player is a ruler or ruled, one first needs to examine the role of being 'ordered' to fight, as Arghol was in the arena.

In addition to the cornering actions, Act One also conveys an atmosphere of being besieged. While the audience and Arghol experience the terror of being besieged, the Red Universe 'experiences' the same action as 'cornering'. Therefore, in the game design I organised twenty pieces painted in red to represent the Red Walls of the Red Universe spreading within the arena (octagon) except at the central post, where Arghol and the audience are able to breathe (Figure 4.15). The aim of this game is to find solutions which make the Red Walls of the Red Universe recede, as happens in Act One (Figure 4.16). Each player can choose a role to act: the overall controller (the *Will*), the Red Walls, Arghol or the audience. Playing the game provides players with

opportunities to encounter events in the play. The challenge of the prelude before the

action is as with Arghol to defeat the attack from 'the Red Universe'. This part of the

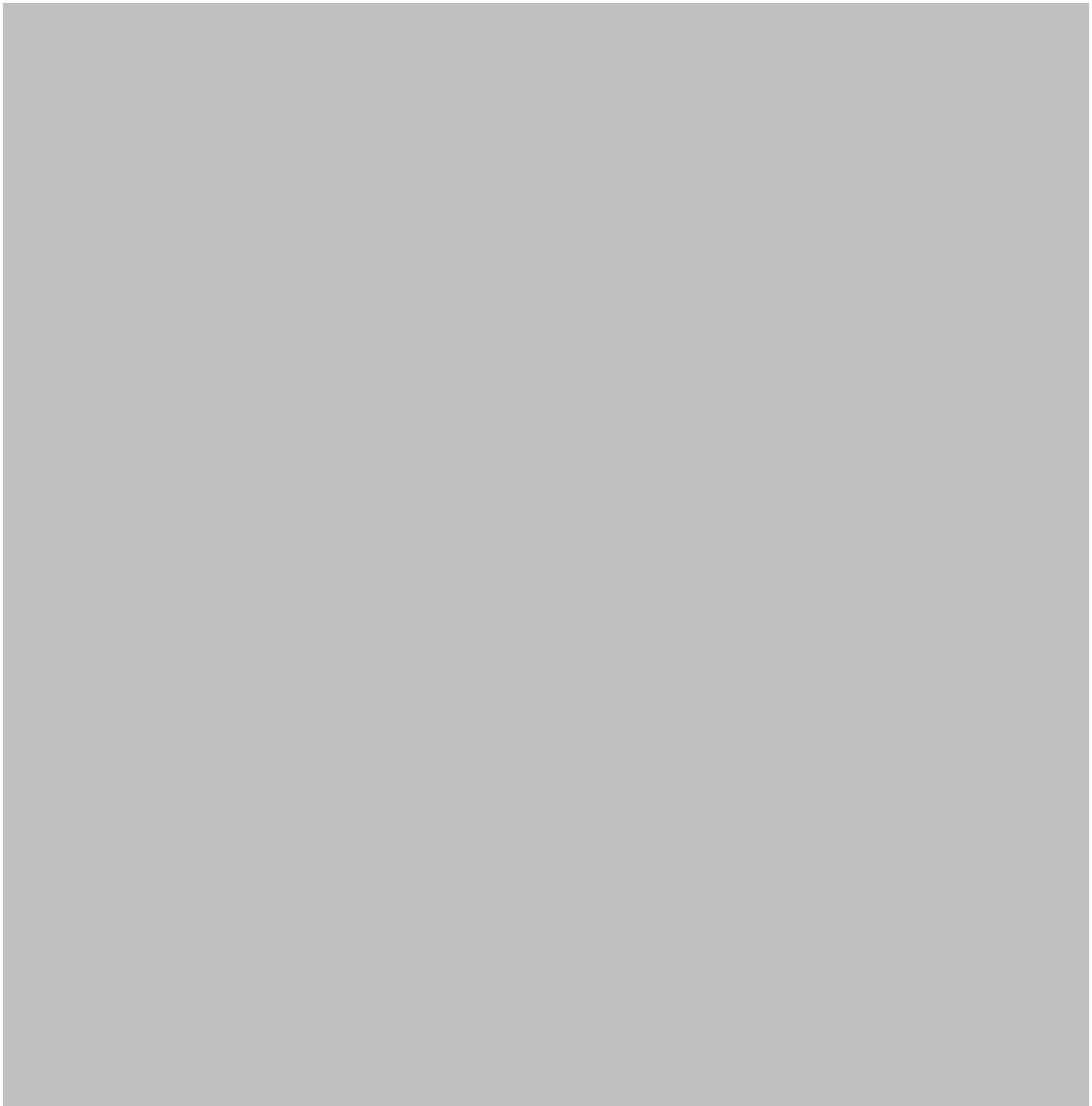game is designed to symbolise the ability of the human mind to fight for freedom.

Figure 4.15   A game board shows the starting situation, with 20 'Red Walls' occupying the octagonal arena, except for one post in the centre. This represents the cornering actions of the Red Universe. Designed and created by Pei-ying Wu.
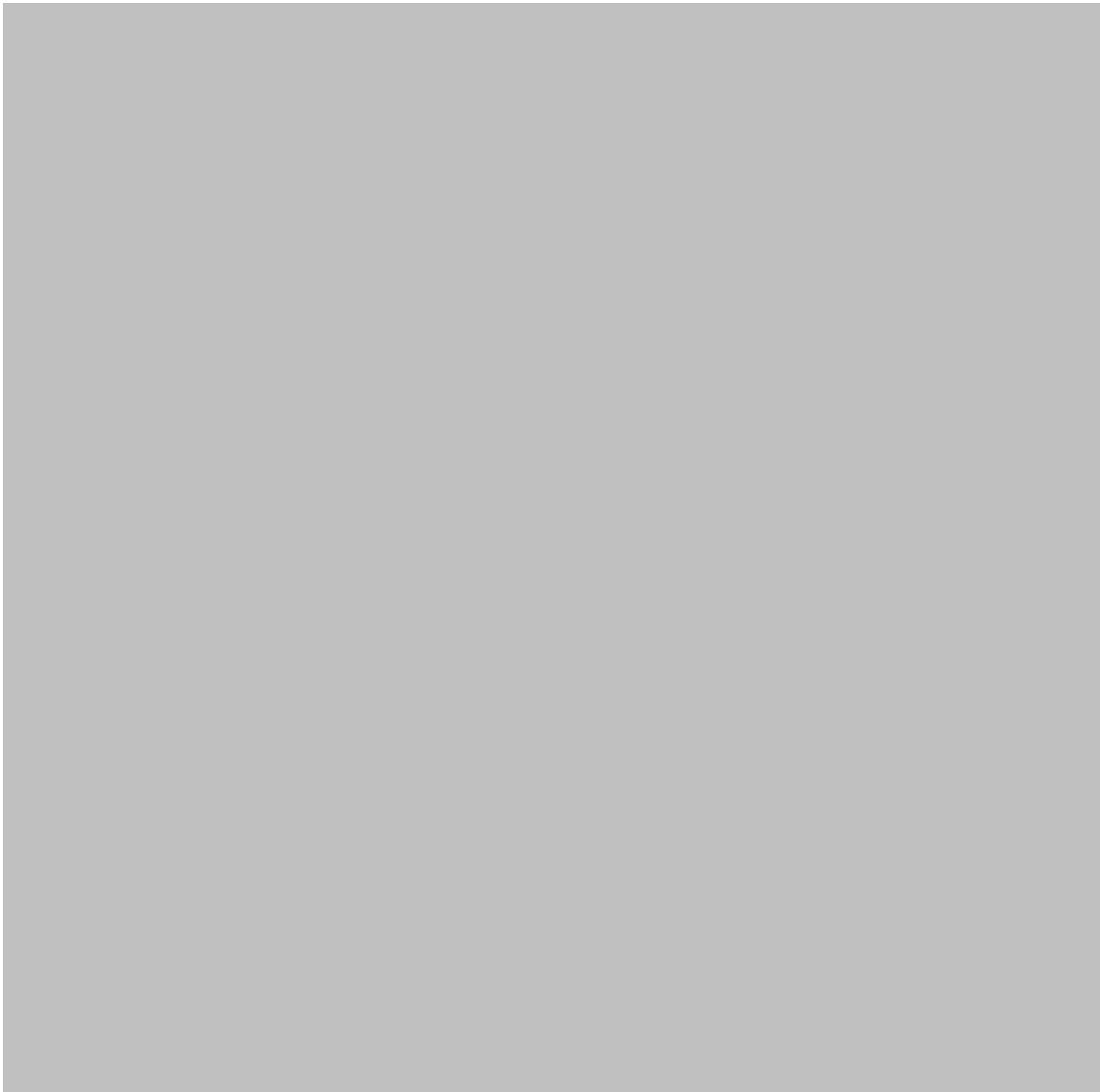
Figure 4.16 A game board shows the finished situation, where most of the 'Red Walls' have disappeared after the player has fought them. However, eight of them remain, where receding into corners of the Red Star, which symbolises the player gaining limited freedom. This game has been designed and created by Pei-ying Wu.

Although it might appear contradictory to visualise the ambience of being besieged and the exciting action of 'cornering' in a single scene, this works to reinforce the question that Lewis asks throughout the play and emphasises the importance of who rules and who is ruled. The cornering depicted in Act One happens in the arena. It is interesting to note that in the 'Advertisement' (p.55) Lewis suggests that the play is to be performed in 'some bleak circus', while in the 'Stage Arrangements' (p.60) he requests that 'the audience' looks down into the scene. This recalls the game, as both indications represent the mind behind the visualisation.

Traditionally, most theatrical practitioners (directors, actors and designers),

understand a play from reading it in textual form. Although they later transform those

understandings into actions, gestures, voices or colours, the process of interpreting

text informs the initial conception and how to make this process of understanding

'visible'. By visualising the game we can narrow the gap between what is happening in

the mind and what is happening in reality. We need to reflect on the relationship

between the playwright's intention (what happens in his mind) and what results on the

stage. When your hand moves a game piece, what happens in your mind? When you

play the game, what you are seeing in reality are the solitaire pieces. The twenty red

pieces represent the moving Red Walls, while in your mind these could be a miniature

or invisible simulation of Arghol and the audience fighting with the Red Walls. This

communication vehicle, the action or experience of playing the game can make the

learning and understanding involved in visualising a play script more vivid and flexible.

The performance and aesthetic issues related to how to present 'ruling' in visual forms

are addressed in Lewis's *The Art of Being Ruled.* Lewis observed that the best ruler

appears amongst those he rules because no one can distinguish him from his

subjects. When you play chess, are you the ruler or the ruled? We might borrow the

answer from Duchamp, who painted a series paintings on the theme of 'chess' in

1911, of which, 'The Chess Players' (Figure 4.17) depicts the rather disturbing

aspects of a player's experience: psychological, emotional and intellectual. The

'Portrait of Chess Players' (Figure 4.18) represents the circumstances of their

complex concerns with taking advantage on the battlefield while remaining motionless.

The 'Portrait of Chess Players' is more structured and systematic in terms of the less

ambiguous profiles of the players: the bright tones surround the figures, and the

figures of the players contrasting with the much smaller elements, which represent actions in the mind. Compared with those in 'The Chess Players', the figures are ambiguous, as they are embedded in groups of brown/yellowish colours with limited distinguishable facial depiction.

Figure 4.17 The Chess Players,
Marcel Duchamp
1911, Oil on Canvas.

Figure 4.18 Portrait of Chess Players,
Marcel Duchamp,
1911, Oil on Canvas.

We can see that Duchamp presents the differences in the appearance of the chess players and the possible disturbances involved in taking control. Duchamp believed, as a chess player, that 'a game is something plastic. You build it. It is a mechanical sculpture'[40]. The role of the artist as a player in a chess game is that 'you build it' under the agreed rules. Therefore, artist and player are both ruler and ruled at the same time. 'Who rules', 'who acts', and 'how do the ruler and ruled act upon rules'? They are all playing chess with *will* and the *Will*.

4.4 The art of being ruled

Having demonstrated and explained the solitaire game 'Playing with (the) *Will*' as a bridging tool to help theatre practitioners to visualise and understand the play, I would now like to consider the possible stage design of Act One for the purpose of a theatrical production.

As the previous section explained, the solitaire game offers the player a chance to model the atmosphere of being besieged. In *Enemy of the Stars*, Lewis creates a claustrophobic atmosphere through the use of scenographic devices such as moving Red Walls. These walls physically squeeze Arghol and the audience into a tiny space, making them breathless. Lewis called the atmosphere created by this scenography the 'Red Universe'. However, the question we have already asked is: where does the power or the energy of the Red Universe come from? Is it from the *Will*? How can one survive under persecution? Or does one need to act as the oppressed?

To heighten the atmosphere of insecurity and terror on stage, I replaced the Red Walls in the solitaire game with monstrous organic objects, a group of amorphous clay pieces

Figure 4.19 Model of the monstrous organic pieces, made of clay, which will be painted in red and to represent the Red Walls on the stage. Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu.

(Figure 4.19). None of them present recognisable figures but all these game pieces visualise the forces of the Red Universe. I intend to present them as part of an intellectual world, like the world of the Artist in Lewis's mind, which was unlimited by

any fixed or familiar framework. Therefore the use of free organic forms is more appropriate than geometric, mechanical or other pre-existing forms. When these pieces are on the stage, they will be painted red and will be larger and taller than the actors to create a threatening and frightening presence (Figure 4.20).

Figure 4.20   Model of the stage setting with miniature figures representing Arghol and the audience. Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu.

Despite returning several times to the question of the artists' fundamental identity (including the 1932 version of the play and the discussions in *Physic of Not-Self*), Lewis appears never to have resolved his thinking into a definite view. However, in attempting to answer his own question, Lewis provided his readers and viewers with an insight into his fusion of visual and textual thinking which has in turn led to the possibility of further dramatic innovations.

For Lewis, 'the visual faculty is the most intellectual, for it operates in terms of space, the category proper to the geometric and rational mind. But its material is also emotive'[41]. As a play replete with visualities, *Enemy of the Stars* exemplifies the ideas of Vorticism. Wyndham Lewis wrote in his Tate exhibition catalogue in 1956: 'As regards Visual Vorticism, it was dogmatically anti-real. It was my ultimate aim to exclude from painting the everyday visual real together....The colour green would not

be confined, or related, to what was green in nature – such as grass, leaves, etc.; in the matter of form, a shape represented by a fish remained a form independent of the animal, and could be made use of in a universe in which there were no fish.' 'The "Real Thing" is always Nothing' he famously declared in *BLAST*.[42]

Strange parallels exist between Duchamp's declared intentions to 'place painting at the service of the mind'[43] and Lewis's similar conception of purely visual aesthetics in favour of a hybrid form capable of expressing revolutionary ideas. Lewis was also one of the experimentalists who considered that existing junk or 'found art' such as stained copper, overturned cases, collections of clay-loam and brick-dust, and up-ended egg-boxes could be 'channels' for expressing his ideas visually. In Lewis's works, these take the form of elements of stage design.

However, his dreams as a theatrical innovator did not end here. He also proposed that the performance should happen at 'SOME BLEAK CIRCUS, UNCOVERED' (p.62). If this kind of visual representation were seen as a piece of art, it happened at almost the same time as Marcel Duchamp's use of ready-made objects. If we see it as a theatrical style, it pre-dates what we know today as the site-theatre and the poverty theatre. Even though this performing environment appears similar to a junk yard, Lewis referred to it as 'EDEN'. If this is so, it is a rough Eden. Perhaps this inversion of customary language and meaning can be seen as a further example of Lewis's urge to indulge in the creation of 'opposite worlds'.

Lewis created an entirely opposite world in *Enemy of the Stars*. In the play script, he unsettled the usual expectations of readers and audiences, and gave an impetus to theatre practitioners, at a time when realism was still dominant, to produce a play

which was not associated with ordinary life. He observed that 'Everything of which our life is composed, pictures and books as much as anything else, is a means only, in the sense that the work of art exists in the body of movement of life'[44]. This paradoxically assigns to art both a supreme and a humble status, and in its contradictoriness is entirely characteristic of Lewis.

As movement is the most essential element for a theatre production, according to Aristotle, *Enemy of the Stars* is Lewis's experiment with synthesising visual, textual and performable art into one. Its textual appearance, as Scott Klein mentioned in *The Experiment of Vorticist Drama*, 'distorts expected structure and connotation, much as [Lewis] rejected shapes in his canvases'[45]. In the world of *Enemy of the Stars*, many elements conspire to confront our experience, enforcing Vorticism's rejection of realism. The play broke the rules of natural gravity, making the audience lose their depth-sight in this flattened perspective. Although in the early 20th century many Western theatre practitioners urged the abolition of the Proscenium stage, in favour of new visual illusions (or disillusion) to create modern theatre, none were brave enough (or imaginative enough) to break natural gravity.

Although the idea of a theatre where the audience stands on the top to look down onto the stage seemed far too innovative in 1914, cylindrical shape buildings with a top floor gallery were not unknown in Lewis's day. Consider the space in the Royal Albert Hall in London (Figure 4.21), which was built between 1867 and 1871: the building structure is capable of hosting

Figure 4.21
With its cylindrical shape, Royal Albert Hall in London is one of the potential performing venue for staging *Enemy of the Stars*.
Image from
http://www.remuseum.org.uk/corpshistory/part12/royal_albert-hall.jpg

Enemy of the Stars with all its spatial requirements. First of all, the hall has a circular

gallery above the boxes and the balcony. This

is almost as high as the hall itself, which

stands at 140 feet (Figure 4.23). Figure 4.22

shows that there is a performing area at the

bottom of the hall, which is like the space

Lewis described in the play: the arena or the

circular 'BLEAK CIRCUS'. Astonishingly, the

venue has the potential to be the perfect arena

for Arghol.

Figure 4.23
The Interior of the Royal Albert Hall in London
Image from
http://www.bbc.co.uk/london/content/images/2
007/04/24/rah_interior203_203x152.jpg

In fact, Lewis was not the

only person who thought

to stage a play for his

audience on top of a

theatre. The Russian

artist El Lissitzky

designed a theatre for *I*

want a Child in 1928,

which had a similar

theatre structure to

Figure 4.24
El Lissitzky, Maquette of stage and auditorium of *I want a Child*
(reconstructed by N. Kustov)

Lewis's (Figure 4.24)[46]. Its ramps, in particular, are almost perfect for the stage

descriptions on p.59 which state that the 'characters and properties both emerge from

gangway into ground at one side'.

Figure 4.25   *Circus Scene,* Wyndham Lewis, 1913-14, Pen and ink, watercolour, 24X31, Private Collection

As well as stressing his special requirements of the performing spaces for the play, in 1914, Lewis also painted a top-view perspective of the circus scene, entitled 'Circus Scene' (Figure 4.25). The painting was an aerial view of a circus, where the figure standing in the middle was similar to Lewis's version of Arghol (Figure 4.26).

Both paintings depict three-dimensional objects, a circus and a solid person. The 'Circus Scene', especially, would traditionally be required to define the depth of the performing space. However, there are two-dimensional graphic qualities in both paintings. Lewis painted both the 'Circus Scene' and 'Arghol' at around the same time as he was writing the play. Therefore the painted scene can perhaps be seen as Lewis's vision of the possible staging
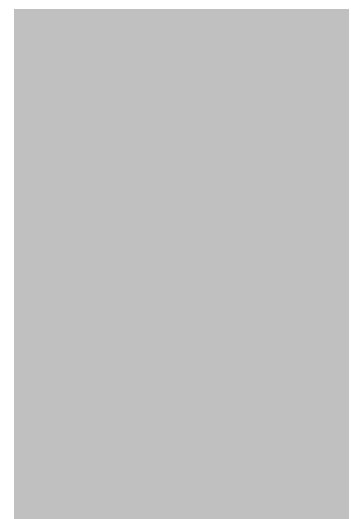

Figure 4.26, *Arghol*
Wyndham Lewis, 1914

arrangements and the possible 'actor' of Arghol. Nevertheless, the graphical

presentation of a space expressed Lewis's intentions. As he commented in his article,

Beginnings, his written creations were 'the waste product' of his paintings[47], therefore,

we can surmise that while Lewis wrote the play, he might have had the

two-dimensional images in mind before he began to describe them in his texts.

Figure 4.27   The Stage Setting Model (viewing from top) with miniature figures as Arghol and audience. Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu.

Consider the possible sights when the audience looks down to the stage from the top

gallery (Figure 4.27). Act One for the audience is similar to a player playing a game of

chess. The floor of the arena is covered with stains, following Lewis's descriptions of

the stage, but the grid on the game board is still visible. The stage or arena is

designed as a battle field or a chessboard with its metaphorical presentation of the

world of rules. We also need to remember that in the bird's eye view of the

performance each person's identity will be minimised to a moveable object, such as the moving tokens on a chess board.

The gap between the two-dimensional graphic thinking in Lewis's mind and the flattened imagery of a theatrical performance as a chess-like game set was bridged by the methods of understanding the play which have been explained in chapter 3: the two-dimensional pictographic visualisation and visual association. The solitaire game was designed based on an understanding of the play which was derived by applying these methods.

The solitaire game was then applied to the stage to determine the game rules for the performance. The audience can decide whether, as participants, they go into the arena to experience the 'execution' suggested by the game which simulates being cornered or besieged in a hostile world by an invisible opponent. Alternatively they might imagine themselves as the '*Will*', who alone observes the 'world' - as Lewis quoted in the *Physic of Not-Self* from Socrates - 'to act upon but not involve in'. Or, the viewer might investigate the 'truth' of the scene, in line with inspiration drawn by Lewis from *The Art of Being Ruled* by the Chinese philosopher Kwang-tze[48]: 'that view involves both a right and wrong...are there indeed, or are there not, the two views, that and this?'[49] In this way, the performance of this act is envisioned as solitaire or a version of chess-play.

Although the scenographic model (Figure 4.28) inherently provides hard information which enables practitioners to understand the play and its possible production, we need to remember that a theatre production is unlike other visual forms – easel paintings are in two-dimensions and sculpture is in three. The theatrical performance

needs to be considered in terms of a fourth dimension, the passage of time[50].

Therefore, the benefits of playing the solitaire game as explained in the previous

section, in preparation to visualise the performance, can be fully explored at this

stage.

Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu.

As Wyndham Lewis said in 1956, green is not green; in the play, red cannot be seen

as what we associate with red. We all know in the real world, when the sun sets

sometimes the sky turns to a beautiful pink-orange colour. Lewis is not a disciple of

Romanticism although the play starts with a sunset. He would not have created a red

universe for the mere purpose of beauty. The Red Universe is a machine of powerful

force for cornering the one who uses intellect in life, the authentic artist. Therefore, to

play with the rules which exist in the 'arena', both Arghol and the audience need to

play as the artists would do, to solve the problem that the 'self' encounters while

playing with the '*Will*'. As Lewis might suggest, when the hostile Red Universe prevails

with an invisible collaborator in the game, the artful player recedes and perseveres in

the corner.

[1] Please also see chapter 2; these guide books are:
Catron, Louis E. <u>The Director's Vision: Play Direction from Analysis to Production</u>. Mountain View, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1989.
Ingham, Rosemary. <u>From Page to Stage: How Theatre Designers Make Connections between Scripts and Images</u>. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1998.
Grote, David. <u>Script Analysis: Reading and Understanding the Playscript for Production</u>. Belmont: CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1985.

[2] Edwards, Paul. <u>Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer</u>. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000. p.125

[3] ibid, p.128

[4] As the *Enemy of the Stars* is the third part of *BLAST* with short intervals of Pound's poetry and Wadworth's paintings, some critics view the play as part of the manifestos.

[5] Wees, William C. <u>Vorticism and the English Avant-Garde</u>. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1972, p.161 original quote from Hunt <u>I Have This to Say</u> p.211

[6] Edwards, Paul. "Lewis's Myth of the Artist: From Bohemia to the Underground." <u>Volcanic Heaven: Essays on Wyndham Lewis's Painting & Writing</u>. Ed. Paul Edwards. Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1996. 25-39.

[7] Cork, Richard. <u>Vorticism and Abstract Art in the First Machine Age</u>. Vol. I. Two vols. London: Gordon Fraser, 1975, p.245

[8] Lewis, Wyndham. "Long Live the Vortex!" <u>BLAST</u> June 20th 1914.

[9] Lewis, Wyndham. <u>The Art of Being Ruled</u>. Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1989 (1926), p.92
The full paragraph is 'As it takes two to make a quarrel, so it takes two categories of people to rule a state; and however artificial at certain points the division may be, you must have a ruling caste, if only to satisfy the profound instinct and wish of the great majority of people to be ruled'.

[10] ibid, p.92

[11] ibid, p.93

[12] In the 1914 edition, Arghol was called Argol on page 61. The section title was also ARGOL. However, this name is only used within this section. In Allan Munton's *Wyndham Lewis: Collected Poems and Plays*, Munton used the name Arghol throughout the whole play, including the first section title. He seemed to consider that Argol was a typing error made by Lewis or the publisher. For a detailed explanation please refer to the *Collected Poems and Plays*.
Munton, Alan, ed. <u>Wyndham Lewis: Collected Poems and Plays</u>. Manchester: Fyfield Books, 2003 (1979).

[13] Chaplin, John A. Walker & Sarah. <u>Visual Culture</u>. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997, p.22.

[14] Edwards,<u>Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer</u>. Ibid, p.142

[15] Beckerman. <u>Dynamics of Drama: Theory and Method of Analysis</u>. New York and Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1970, p.37

[16] Longman, Stanley Vincent. <u>Page and Stage: An Approach to Script Analysis</u>. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2004.

[17] Richard Hornby was only 'saying that theatre people in America do not know how to read classical scripts closely' in page 201 of <u>Script into Performance</u>, published by Applause (New York, London) and his book was to suggest a more appropriate course in play analysis for the theatre students in universities in the states.

[18] ibid, p.40

[19] ibid, p.201

[20] ibid, p.201

[21] Craig, Edward Gorden. <u>On the Art of the Theatre</u>. New York: Theatre Arts Books, 1956 (1911).

[22] Hornby devoted a chapter to explaining his methods. Please refer to chapter 11: 'A Course in Play Analysis' in Hornby's <u>Script into Performance.</u>

[23] See footnote 11

[24] Lewis, Wyndham. "Enemy of the Stars." <u>BLAST</u> June 20th 1914: pp.51-p.85, p.61

[25] Hornby, p.203

[26] Ibid, p.204

[27] Lewis, Wyndham. "Enemy of the Stars." <u>BLAST</u> June 20th 1914: p.51-p.85. This sentence is from p.61

28 ibid, p.61

29 Hornby, p.205

30 ibid, p.205

31 ibid, p.120

32 ibid, p.120

33 ibid, p.120

34 Flory, Wendy Stallard. "Enemy of the Stars." Wyndham Lewis: A Revaluation. Ed. Jeffrey Meyers. London: The Athlone Press, 1980. 92-106.p.96

35 ibid, p.97

36 Langer, Lawrence L. "Chess in the Art of Samuel Bak: A Question of Survival". Minneapolis, 2006. Chess in the Art of Samuel Bak. Ed. Center for Holocaust & Genocide Studies. University of Minnesota. 14 September 2007. <http://www.chgs.umn.edu/museum/responses/bak/chess.html>.

37 Thomas, Michael J. "The Game-as-Art Form: Historic Roots and Recent Trends." Leonardo 21.4 (1988): 421-23.

38 Yves Arman, *Marcel Dupchamp plays and wins joue et gagne* (Paris: Marvel, 1984) p.87 quoted from Thomas, Michael J. "The Game-as-Art Form: Historic Roots and Recent Trends." Leonardo 21.4 (1988): 421-23.

39 ibid, pp. 421-23.

40 Yves Arman, pp.421-23.

41 Kush, Thomas. Wyndham Lewis's Pictorical Interger. Ann Arbor, Michgan: UMI Research Press, 1981, p.76

42 Lewis, Wyndham, ed. Blast. London, New York and Toronto: John Lane, the Bodley Head, June 20th 1914, p.139

43 Marzona, Daniel. Conceptual Art. ed. Uta Grosenick. Koln, London, Los Angeles, Madrid, Paris and Tokyo: TASCHEN, 2005.

44 Lewis, Wyndham. Wyndham Lewis the Artist - from Blast to Burlington House. London: Laidlaw & Laidlaw, 1939, p.323

45 Klein, Scott. "The Experiment of Vorticist Drama: Wyndham Lewis And "Enemy of the Stars"." Twentieth Century Literature 37.2 (1991): pp.225-39, from p.234.

46 *I Want a Child* is a play written by Sergei Tretiakov. This production, planned for a 1928 premiere at the Meyerhold Theatre, Moscow, did not take place. Lissitzky worked on his design from 1928 to 1930.

47 Lewis, Wyndham. "Beginnings." Wyndham Lewis on Art: Collected Writings 1913-1956. Ed. Walter Michel and C.J. Fox. London: Thames and Hudson, 1935. 291-96.

48 Lewis's quotation is from Chuang-tze. Kwang-tze was the name when James Legge first translated *The Sacred Books of China: The Texts of Taoism* in 1891. Legge was the first professor of Chinese at Oxford University (1876–1897).

49 Lewis, Wyndham. The Art of Being Ruled. Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1989 (1926), p.16

50 Payne, Darwin Reid. Theory and Craft of the Scenographic Model Revised ed. Carbondale and Edwardville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985. From the introduction: Why the Scenographic Model?

Chapter 5 Confused negotiations within the duality

This chapter follows a similar sequence to that of chapter 4: to investigate the relationship between Lewis's drawing 'Timon of Athens' and the visualities in Act Two of the play, moving on to an understanding of the script of Act Two arrived at by applying a further analysis of Lewis's layered visualities in his narratives and Richard Hornby's play analysis method. After defining 'the significant elements' in Act Two and synthesising them into 'the unifying principle', the chapter then demonstrates the application of the principle to stage design.

Act Two provides a further understanding of *Enemy of the Stars* in terms of its philosophical issues and the aesthetic concerns of a theatrical performance. The unique narrative style embedded in the lines of the dialogues between Arghol and Hanp is the key to comprehend their situation.

5.1   Arghol – Timon's modern artistic embodiment

In 1913, Lewis published a portfolio of artworks (*Timon Portfolio*). He had been commissioned to draw for a new version of Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*. He worked on these between 1911 and 1912 and, although the book remains unpublished, Lewis had finished his visual interpretation by October 1912. The experience of visualising *Timon of Athens* enlightened and inspired Lewis to create the play *Enemy of the Stars*, which Paul Edwards recognised as '[Lewis's] own Modernist version of what he understood Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* to be'[1] – though the *Timon Portfolio* was Lewis's only major engagement with a literary text in his visual art.

In Lewis's time, criticism of the play was unfavourable; people either followed the

romantic line of approach regarding Timon as 'the idealist and much wronged man'[2] or took the 18th century view that Timon was represented as 'an inadequate human being, if not a foolish one.'[3] These were the common understandings of the play until the mid-20th century. In 1946, A.S. Collins wrote *Timon of Athens: A Reconsideration* in which he offered a possible approach to solving the puzzle of 'the continued neglect and misunderstanding of *Timon of Athens.*'[4] Since then, the literary world has begun to access 'Timon' from different angles and approaches.

However, Lewis recognised the general viewpoint of late 19th century industrial society, regardless of the overwhelming conventional influences of his time. He proposed in his book on Shakespearean tragedy, *The Lion and the Fox* (1927), that figures like Timon were among the sufferers but had their own 'insights' into happenings, which effectively made them voluntary 'scapegoats'[5]. The BBC's 1981 Shakespeare series director, Jonathan Miller, has similar views about Timon's true understanding of human nature. To him, Timon 'is more reasonable and moderate and occupies the middle ground of human experience, neither expecting humanity to be exorbitantly grateful and virtuous nor on the other hand giving reason to suspect that human beings are immoderately vicious and mean. They are in fact a mixture of both but Shakespeare presents us with a character who only knows the extremity of both ends.'[6]

Although Lewis again approached the theme of Timon in his play *Enemy of the Stars*, this play is not a re-presentation of Shakespeare's work. If we read *Timon of Athens* carefully, we find that Timon's speeches change in tone in Acts IV and V. These two Acts are the fundamental settings for Lewis's *Enemy of the Stars*, especially after Timon goes into the woods in Act IV, scene 3.

Enemy of the Stars can be considered as a sequel to *Timon*: the outcast woods have been transformed into a hostile, arctic wheelwright's yard. This transformation was possibly derived from the highly 'emblematic and iconographic lines'[7] in Shakespeare's text. Lewis would have known different meanings could obtain within an image since he had trained as a painter and was well established in that field; he would also have utilised the attainable richness of image while creating a particular scene. Such visual aspects really need greater attention when reading *Enemy of the Stars*. Moreover, the markedly similar atmosphere and issues discussed between the churlish philosopher Apemantus and Timon throughout the play can be transformed as the verbal and visual 'dialogues' between Hanp and Arghol, but shifted into the future – 'the Thirtieth century'[8].

By 1914, Lewis was already an established painter but had only published ten short articles. It is probable that he had a sequence of pictures in his head and transformed them into text – the play *Enemy of the Stars.* However, Lewis did not use any of the paintings from his *Timon Portfolio*; instead, he drew another, entirely different image and entitled it 'Timon of Athens' (Figure 5.1). He placed this as one of the images at the beginning of the play script.
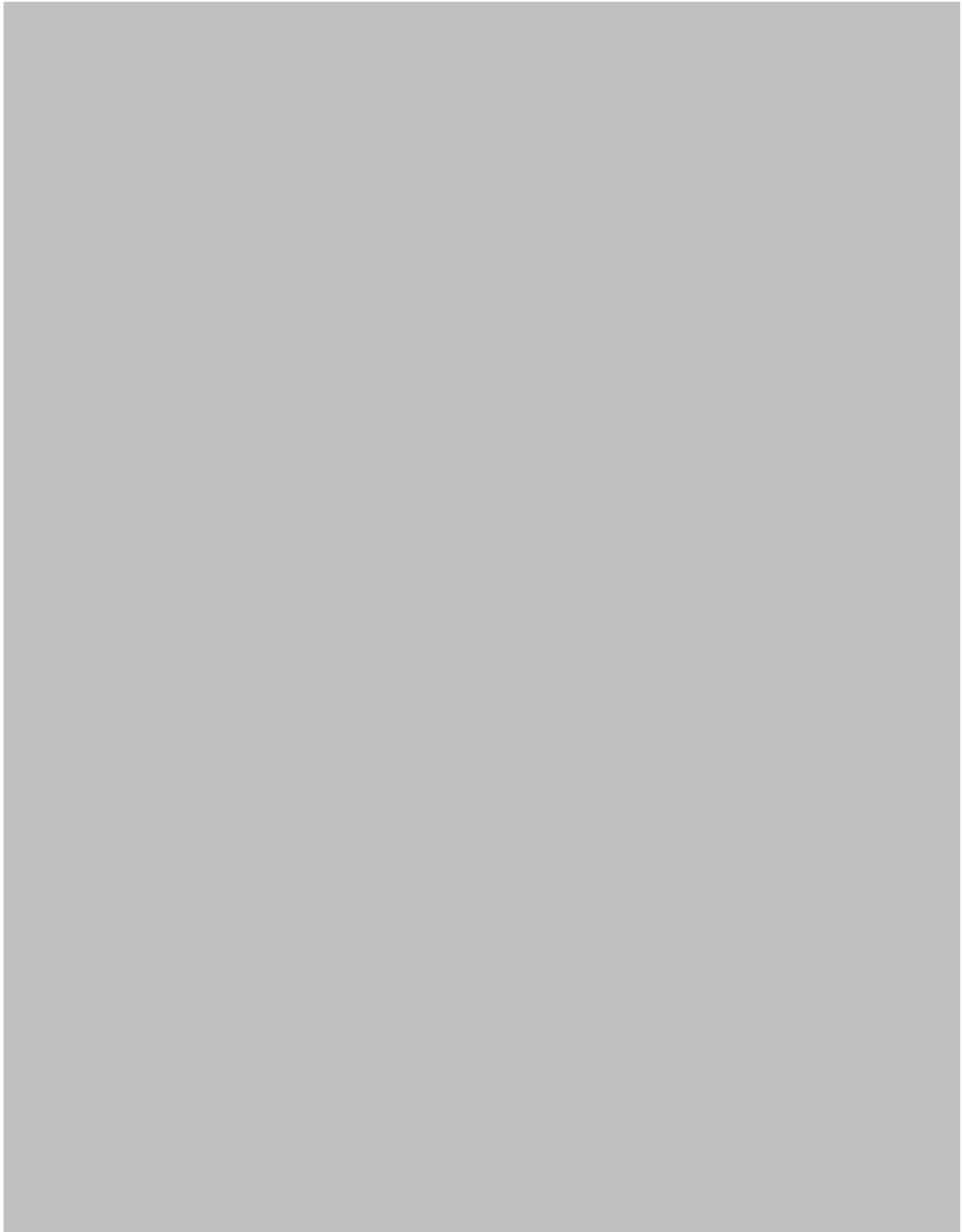
Figure 5.1 *Timon of Athens*. Wyndham Lewis, 1913. Pencil, pen and black and brown ink, wash 34.5x26.5. Private collection

This image was drawn in 1913, a year after Lewis had finished the sequence for the *Timon Portfolio*, in which several paintings delineated each Act of *Timon of Athens*. The styles in the *Timon Portfolio* are consistent; Lewis often uses partitioned composition to deploy the actions from the play. Within each 'partitioned cell', viewers

can learn about different activities with visual connections to other parts of the painting. This is similar to a 'show-and-tell' technique where the viewer can learn about or create a story from the painting. Take as an example from the *Timon Portfolio*, 'Masque of Timon' (Figure 5.2). The painting, entitled by Wyndham Lewis himself, depicts Act I of the play *Timon of Athens.* Comparing it with the *BLAST* drawing 'Timon of Athens' (Figure 5.5), we can see that the latter has a very different style from the series. In the drawing, Lewis
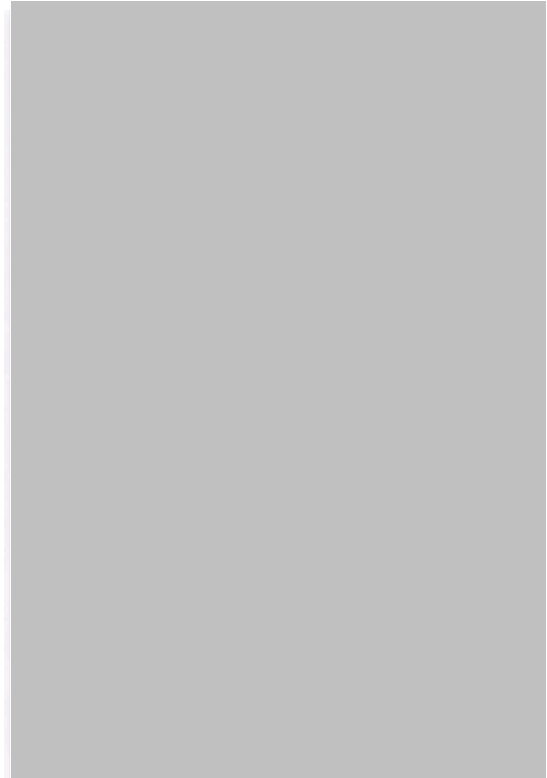

Figure 5.2 *Masque Athens*
Wyndham Lewis, 1912
Reproduced from *Timon of Athens* portfolio. Private collection

pictured two hard-edged figures in complex visual focus while the composition of the 'Masque of Timon' requires the viewer to pay attention and explore all the details.

Thomas Kush suggests that the compositions in the *Timon Portfolio* in which Lewis depicts Timon, 'A Feast of Overmen' (Figure 5.3) and 'The Thenaide' (Figure 5.4), indicate that 'Arghol loses the boundaries of his self'. He points out that 'The figures who assail the hero are scarcely distinguishable from the material flux, but they in turn have invaded and weakened him'[9]. His theory reflects Act One's invisible 'cornering' and Act Two's 'shadowing boot' (see 5.2 'THE SUPER' for details).

Figure 5.3 *A Feast of Overmen*
Wyndham Lewis, 1912
Reproduced from *Timon of Athens* portfolio. Private
collection

Figure 5.4 *The Thebaide*
Wyndham Lewis, 1912
Reproduced from *Timon of Athens* portfolio. Private
collection

As the drawing (Figure 5.1) was created for *BLAST* after all the paintings in the Timon

project were complete, it appears to reveal the thoughts that Lewis considered

important so that he created another, entirely different image. The original image is

brown in colour with black ink and pencil lines, but in *BLAST* Lewis printed it in black

and white (Figure 5.5). Of the two figures, one stands diagonally and the other sits in

the corner, making this a triangular composition. With the lighter and more open area

in the top right-hand corner, the image's weight is set at the base of the sitting person.

It seems the figure is thoughtful but also sorrowful; this contrasts with the standing

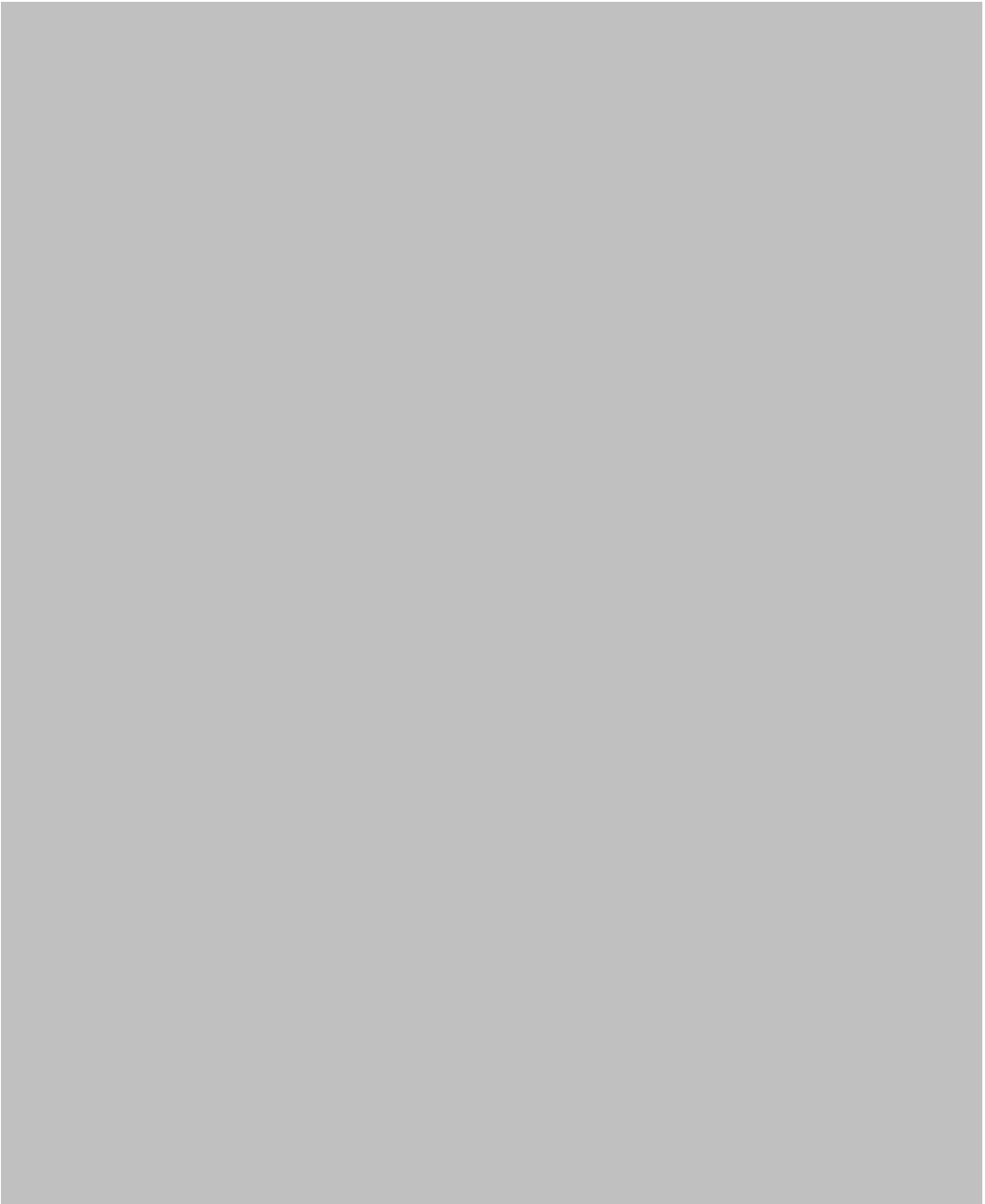one who is energetic and hugging his heart to his chest.

Figure 5.5 *Timon of Athens,* Wyndham Lewis, 1913*, from BLAST*, p. *v.*

The drawing presents a man's internal division. The standing figure in the drawing can be considered as Timon in Acts I, II and III whereas the seated one is Timon in Acts IV and V. The standing figure represents the generous, naïve and kind-hearted Timon, offering his wealth to the world, in contrast to the inactive, dull and careless Timon, with folded arms, his head buried and with a look of emptiness. Lewis expresses his concern with the possible divisions within an individual. In addition, he displays the

dilemma of sustaining the true existence of the self.

This division echoes the duality existing in Arghol and Hanp, as Hanp first appears in Act Two of *Enemy of the Stars* and interrogates Arghol about the nature of true self or existence. Moreover, the dilemma reflects the undesirable condition between the material world of the body and the intellectual world of the mind in Act Two. As the drawing was created for *BLAST* by Lewis, it envisions the separation of the two personas: there are no direct connections or interactions between the standing and sitting figures. In Act Two of *Enemy of the Stars*, the dialogues between Arghol and Hanp are frustrated, as they have almost opposing concerns. The interactions between them, the visualised dilemma, were evident in the visual depictions in their conversations.

5.2 Changes in concept caused by displaying words

This section aims to follow a similar approach to the understanding process used for

Act One in the previous chapter. Therefore Act Two will be interpreted through

Hornby's play analysis and by applying the methods of visual association,

pictographic visualisation and 'stacking' (see 3.3 for details).

Hornby has pointed out the limitations of the traditional play analysis (see 4.2 for

details) and offered additional steps for identifying 'the significant element' from the

'oddities' of the play script following the conceptualisation of 'the unifying principle' in

order to understand a play in a more appropriate context. Hornby recognised the

value of visualisation in a play script and, due to his device for identifying 'the

significant elements', practitioners such as directors will no longer waste the treasure

of 'textually odd' but visually significant indications. Instead, they can conceptualise a

'unifying principle', like the thread of a pearl necklace, and establish a play with an

integrated presentation.

This section of the chapter – the result of reading Act Two through and applying the

methods provided in chapter 3 as well as paying attention to Lewis's special,

innovative styles – aims to identify 'the significant principle' in Act Two of *Enemy of the*

Stars. Act Two has five sections: THE YARD (p.62), THE SUPER (p.63), THE NIGHT

(p.64), HANP I (pp.65-69) and HANP II (pp.70-71). The following details the decoding

of each section of the play.

THE YARD (p.62)

After the horrific cornering in Act One, Lewis introduces us to the world where Arghol

lives by outlining the environment of the wheelwright's yard. The whole section, THE

YARD, is composed of sentences which are structured by visualities. Lewis divided this section into two parts: the first contains almost all the sentences of THE YARD, but the second part has only one sentence. The highly visual emphasis of these sentences offers readers and viewers an idea of what Lewis's imagined world looks like.

In the first part, Lewis uses four kinds of sentence structure. The first kind depicts directly with immediate meanings, such as 'A wheelwright's yard. Full of dry, white volcanic light. Full of emblems of one trade: stacks of pine, iron, wheels stranded.' The second kind displays a representational object, and then follows with another object or a descriptive phrase to expand the richness of the visual ambience. These sentences are:

'The Earth has burst, a granite flower, and disclosed the scene.'

'A canal at one side, the night pouring into it like blood from a butcher's pail.'

These are similar to paintings, where a major object is frequently accompanied by a minor one or a group of smaller objects, which help either to identify the meaning of the main object or to deepen the meanings of the painting (refer to 3.3, methods of 'stacking' and visual association). The third kind of sentence structure arranges an indexic object followed by symbolic descriptions to envision an overall picture of a scene, such as:

'Rouge mask in alluminum [*sic*] mirror, sunset's grimace through the night.'

'A leaden gob, slipped at zenith, first drop of violent night, spreads

cataclysmically in harsh water of evening. Caustic Reckett's stain.'

The fourth structure Lewis uses in THE YARD is personification. He stresses the visual similarities between objects in the last three sentences of the first part. The shaking trees are personified as acrobats and the waving shadows of trees are 'the

toy crocodiles' which were 'sawed up and down by infant giant'.

So far I have analysed all sentences except one. The four kinds of sentence structure above convey meanings through visualities. In a conventional play script, this part would possibly be set as stage directions. However, Lewis's *Enemy of the Stars* treats visualities as equal to textual dialogues. Following Hornby's analytical methods (see 4.2 for a detailed explanation), this would be the 'oddity' and therefore the first 'significant element' to be noticed.

The remaining sentence from the first part is,

'Rough Eden of one soul, to whom another man, and not EVE, would be mated.' This is not a sentence structure with visual emphasis. It provides us with the information that Lewis treats 'the wheelwright's yard' as Arghol's 'rough Eden', but he will be in the company of another man, whose name we do not yet know, instead of a woman (EVE). However, Lewis hinted that Arghol would 'be mated' in the yard. Here we have two 'oddities'. The first is that Lewis's announcement is not delivered in the usual way. A conventional script would have made this the narrator's job, but Lewis inserts it between 'A wheelwright's yard. Full of...' and 'A canal at one side...'. The second 'oddity' is the way in which Lewis introduces the second character. Unlike with usual actions or descriptions, Lewis only gave a hint. This is the second 'significant element' in THE YARD.

The last sentence, the second part of THE YARD, is positioned at the bottom of the page and is separated from the other sentences by a short heavy line.

'Gollywog of Arabian Symmetry, several tons, Arghol drags them in blank nervous hatred.'

With the application of pictographic visualisation and visual association, this sentence can be understood by us as a description of the hated, repetitive work which Arghol does every day. A gollywog is a dark-skinned figure and, in England, the sale of the toy was not encouraged in the mid to late 20th century because of the racist issues involved. In Lewis's time, the darkened figure also indicated the inferior. 'Arabian Symmetry' is evocative of iconic Arabian patterns which are usually symmetrical and have repeated designs. Therefore 'Arabian Symmetry' is the visuality that Lewis chooses to represent the daily routine – repetitive, designed pattern.

In the whole play, this sentence is the only one in which Lewis mentions how Arghol works. A conventional play script would possibly use stage directions to let the director know how to deploy the actors on the stage and to portray the working scene, but Lewis, again, uses visualities to communicate. Thus this is another 'significant element' which is worthy of note.

THE SUPER (p.63)

A super is a 'player who is required for the action of a play but has no lines to speak'[10] and Lewis entitles the next section THE SUPER to indicate where the focus lies – on the actions of 'the super', Arghol's uncle, owner of the wheelwright's yard.

THE SUPER is a section full of action. It starts with 'Arghol crosses yard to the banks of the canal: sits down.' and finishes with '[ARGHOL] lost consciousness'. There are detailed depictions of Arghol's actions, including an extensive representation of the characteristics of Arghol's voice:

'His voice raucous and disfigured with a catarrh of lies in the fetid bankrupt atmosphere of life's swamp: clear and splendid among Truth's balsamic hills,

shepherding his agile thoughts.'

However, in the script, 'the super' is nowhere to be found. We only discover 'The figure rushed without running' then 'A boot battered [Arghol's] right hand ribs' and 'The boot, and heavy shadow above it, went', and finally 'The second attack, pain left by first shadow, lashing him, was worse.' In other words, Lewis uses 'pictorials' to present the person as a 'boot' with its attacking 'shadows'. Arghol actually interacts with a non-representational 'super' in the play. This theatrical 'design' is highly unusual or, to use Hornby's word 'odd'. So, the pictorial substitution – using a boot with shadows to represent a solid person – is 'the significant element' in this section.

THE NIGHT (p.64)

This is an important section for understanding the position of Arghol and his initial reactions to the attacks. Viewers and readers are invited to share what goes on in Arghol's mind through the visualities in the sentences of THE NIGHT.

There are only two sentences in this section related to physical action: '[Arghol's] eyes woke first, shaken by rough moonbeams' and '[Arghol] rose before this cliff of cadaverous beaming force, imprisoned in a messed socket of existence'. These two sentences can be regarded as the frame of a painting because the lines in between describe the scene after Arghol has been 'kicked' and woken by moonbeams.

From the first three sentences, we perceive the ambience through words such as 'rough', 'crude', 'brutal', 'bleak', 'wild' and 'emptiness', as well as the image of white, blazing light from the words 'the immense electric advertisement of God'. Further down the page, Lewis inserts more visual clues, three of them being the show-case

sentences:

'Mastodons, placid in electric atmosphere, white rivers of power. They stood in eternal black sunlight.'

'Tigers are beautiful imperfect brutes.'

'Throats iron eternities, drinking heavy radiance, limbs towers of blatant light, the stars poised, immensely distant, with their metal sides, pantheistic machines.'

Applying the methods provided in chapter 3, 'stacking', 'visual association' and 'pictographic visualisation' (see 3.3 for details), these three sentences can be understood as depicting the overwhelmed Milky Way (Mastodons), the heartless moon (Tigers) and the heavy stars (Throats iron eternities). Lewis uses these hostile, inhuman and almost alien objects to express Arghol's vision of the night.

Within these highly visual sentences, Lewis uses the intangible concept in the same way as the tangible object. For example, 'Hard weakness, a flea's size, pinched to death in a second,' and 'imprisoned in a messed socket of existence'. Although the re-interpretation or re-presentation of a natural phenomenon in a totally different 'vision' is normal (as a performance usually constructs its own world), the visual utilisation of concepts is not a common practice. The conventional methods of introducing concepts on stage are usually embedded in the character's dialogues or through the presentation of a sequence of actions.

Moreover, despite Lewis's intention to present the external world in which Arghol positions himself, viewers and readers are made aware of Arghol's internal fear as well as his external existence. This kind of ambiguous presentation is 'the significant element' in this section, and it transforms an ordinary night scene into an image of

threatening forces.

There are two more paragraphs in this section. In one, the playwright asks questions for Arghol about the possibilities of his surviving in the future. In the other, the playwright tells us that Arghol is 'intact' despite the violence he suffers. This is similar to Act One (ARGHOL), in that the writer speaks directly to the audience. It constitutes one of 'the significant elements' in this section.

HANP I (pp.65-69)

HANP I consists of five pages of script which can be divided into four groups: the physical actions of Arghol and Hanp; dialogues between them; depictions of their actions, the scene or the weather; and the conspiring proceedings of Fate. The first three groups are entwined while the fourth group stands alone at the end of the section, which Lewis separated from the others with a short heavy line.

Lewis weaves the first three groups together by arranging their sequences. In so doing, readers and viewers receive interesting insights into the pattern of the script, which add layered meanings to understanding. The following is one example, with the action group indicated by *italics*, the dialogues <u>underlined</u> and the depiction set in **bold** (standard descriptions are in normal type):

> <u>'"Was it bad to=night?"</u> a fierce and railing question often repeated.
>
> *Arghol lay silent, his hands a thick shell fitting back of head,* **his face grey vegetable cave.'** (p.65)

We can see from the above that instead of using adjectives to describe situations or circumstances, Lewis uses a verse of visual depiction to portray and add associated meanings to the action. With the visual associations readers and viewers might be

familiar with, Lewis defined Arghol's gestures (action) in response to Hanp.

Taking another example from HANP I:

> '"Can't you kill him, in the name of God? A man has his hands, little else. Mote and speck, the universe illimitable!" Hanp gibed. "It is true he is a speck but all men are. To you he is immense."
>
> *They sat*, **two grubby shadows, unvaccinated as yet by the moon's lymph, sickened by the immense vague infections of night.**
>
> "That is absurd. I have explained to you. Here I get routine, the will of the universe manifested with directness and persistence. Figures of persecution are accidents or adventures for some. Prick the thin near heart, like a pea, and the bubble puffs out. That would not be of the faintest use in my case."
>
> **Two small black flames, waving, as their tongues moved, drumming out thought, with low earth=draughts and hard sudden winds dropped like slapping birds from climaxes in the clouds.**'(pp.65, 66).

This time, Lewis applies the same method to the extended paragraphs, not only to describe the actions of Arghol or Hanp, but also to portray their mood and relationship. This method is repeated throughout HANP I, especially on pages 67 and 68, where Lewis uses many paragraphs to convey the changing atmosphere between the two dialogues.

The 'oddity' here is Lewis's ambition to depict more than one scene at a time. The above example seemingly describes Arghol and Hanp's chat at the door of the hut with a bonfire beside them. The descriptions of the fire, however, indicate their true mood and the potential for possible conflict in the near future. Conventional scripts would normally convey these hidden conflicts within the conversations, not in – what

Aristotle considered to be the least important element – the spectacle.

Now we come to analyse the fourth group, the conspiring proceedings of Fate. Lewis visualises Fate as a person and, in previous sections, describes him through three visuality paragraphs, as a seafarer, his soul leant on by the ocean and the sky[11]. However, here we have an issue which is even more 'odd' than the visuality paragraphs, that Fate has mysterious powers with which he can influence the situation: '[Fate] egged God on: then egged on Arghol'. Another possible explanation is that Fate is part of the Red Universe, or perhaps Fate is the *Will*. This is unclear so far in the play. Using Hornby's method, this kind of inconsistency is considered one of the 'oddities' – 'the significant elements.'

There is still one more 'oddity' in this section: the unsuccessful communication between Arghol and Hanp. Although Lewis uses much visuality to remind us of the ineffectual dialogue, the actual conversation is paradoxical. Hanp is a practical man and asks logical questions about the material world, while Arghol lives in the mind of the individual 'self'. Their conversations run like two parallel lines, which only appear to have crossed each other from a particular perspective. Lewis has not given us answers in the play we have read so far: therefore, according to Hornby's method, this is another 'significant element'.

HANP II (p.70-71)

Lewis divides HANP II into two parts: the first consists of a conversation between Arghol and Hanp where Hanp asks three questions and Arghol answers them; the second starts with a laugh from Hanp, which is followed by his fourth and final question in the section. Before Arghol answers, Lewis uses depictions again to

visualise their relationship. After Arghol answers, the script turns into the style of a narrator.

The first part follows a similar pattern to the previous section (HANP I) that Arghol and Hanp use the same language but talk about things on different levels. In the second part the conversation continues, with inserted visual descriptive material which again uses visual objects as adjectives.

The 'oddities' come from the last part of the section. Lewis turns from the dialogues between Arghol and Hanp to write a narration. Furthermore, he talks directly to the audience again, as he did in the 'ADVERTISEMENT'. This was quite usual in theatrical performances of Lewis's time. Although the practice became more common after the mid-20th century, those kinds of play would have had a consistent style of communicating with the audience.

It is now possible to identify several 'significant elements' in Act Two: the use of visualities as a means of communication, and their treatment as equal to the textual dialogues; the substitution of 'a super' with a pictorial image; application of the visual utilisation of concepts; the ambiguous presentation of both Arghol's internal fear and external existence; depiction of more than one scene at a time; the playwright talking to the audience directly; Arghol and Hanp communicating on two different levels, using the same language and with the involvement of the mysterious 'Fate'.

Following Hornby's method, the merging of overlapping meanings is the key to the further development of visualising the play. Lewis has created, in Act Two, a conceptual multi-world where the two characters confusingly act together, yet at the

same time live in their own parts of the world. These repeated actions – Arghol works, Arghol has been 'booted', Hanp (the Not-Self) asks and Arghol (the 'Self') answers – unfold as a series of paintings, their world showing layers of communication enclosed with contradictory stillness and revolving activity.

5.3 A 'potpourri' reality

This section of the chapter aims to conceptualise 'the unifying principle' from Act Two and uses it to prepare a practical stage setting. Based on Hornby's play analysis method, 'the unifying principle' is synthesised from the identified 'significant elements' by taking a critical approach to the script (see 4.3 for detail). In other words, Hornby emphasises the importance of generalising the conceptual context for an appropriate understanding of the *recurs* (recurrences) in the text.

The major *recurs* in Act Two are the repeated appearance of one object or scene to explain another visual scenario. Due to the nature of the visuality, a wide range of connections to the viewer's or reader's social and conceptual background will influence the decoding of the meanings.[12] Therefore, these visual texts have, in the end, enriched Act Two with layers of extended meaning. By synthesising these meanings and the routine actions contained within the texts, and by approaching these *recurs* with the insight of the drawing 'Timon of Athens' (see 5.1) and the understanding of 'the significant elements' (see 5.2), 'the unifying principle' of Act Two can be summarised as the confused negotiations within the duality – Arghol and Hanp.

To single out the paradox within the confused negotiations, as a practising artist and designer I have visualised a world where everything has more than one meaning yet has a direct visual reference to a representational object. If one takes only the surface meaning (the appearance) of an object, it is possible to misunderstand it and believe that one has understood the thoroughly.

Before I begin to explain the set design in detail, there is a need to remind the reader

that the purpose of this section is to demonstrate the process of visualisation –

envisioning the visualities of the play script. The actual stage setting will be explained

in the next section (5.4).

In Act Two, there are several essential stage elements: a wheelwright's yard, a canal, three trees and a hut. Here are detailed explanations for each of the elements. First, I chose the concept of a Chinese traditional symbol as the base of the wheelwright's yard. I decided to use a Tai-chi inlay

A Ba-gua map
Image from http://www.windwatrcanada.com/whatisfs.htm

within an octagon as the main image (see Figure 5.12). The

previous chapter explained that the stage design for Act

One is a star containing an enclosed octagonal area, which

is known as 'Ba-gua' in Chinese culture. The Ba-gua

(Figure 5.10) is an energy map based on the concepts of

Yin-Yang, which most Westerners know as Tai-chi (Figure

Figure 5.11
The Tai-chi symbol

5.11). On the whole, Ba-gua (with a Tai-chi inlay) is a mystical representation of all the

various combinations of Yin-Yang energy. The heavy-lined trigrams in Ba-gua

symbolise every aspect of nature and can ascribe all emotions, physical matter and

spiritual qualities to an eternal energy flow. 'Ba-gua' can be seen as a symbol of the universe in Chinese culture.

Figure 5.12
A bird's eye view of the stage model designed and made by Pei-ying Wu, representing the seemingly harmonious world of the Wheelwright's Yard in Act Two of *Enemy of the Stars*. Multiple materials: card board, hemp fabrics, black paint, sponge, Blu Tack and Yellow Pages.

Figure 5.12 is a model I made from cardboard with rough hemp glued to part of it to indicate the difference between the Yin and the Yang. The rough part also indicates the material world where Arghol and Hanp live, while the smooth part represents the 'mind' area where Arghol goes at dusk. The base, the octagonal field, has exactly the same outline as the chess board in Act One. This simple representation of the Ba-gua

does not limit its indicative meanings. On the contrary, it contains messages of conflict and harmony at the same time.

The Tai-chi represents harmony in most situations. However, it also symbolises a dynamic world where energy never stops moving but there is a balance among its forces. To emphasise this paradoxical characteristic, I have designed the Tai-chi setting with a blade-like orientation (Figure 5.13). In other words, when the audience watch the performance from directly above, they see only the harmonious world of the Tai-chi (Figure 5.12), but if they go to different positions in the theatre, they might begin to realise that the stage setting is actually tilted with gaps between the blades.

Figure 5.13
A side view of the model of the stage setting for Act Two, which shows a blade-like positioning of the Tai-chi plates. These blades are designed to rotate slowly, driving the actual performance. Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu by using multiple materials: card board, hemp fabrics, black paint, sponge, Blu Tack and paper from the Yellow Pages phone directory.

Figure 5.14
A top-angled view of the stage setting model for Act Two, which shows space between two blades, Yin and Yang, representing a muddy canal. Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu.

Figure 5.15
This photo was taken to particularly show the curving nature of the space between Yin and Yang, which indicates a curved canal. Designed and created by Pei-ying Wu.

The curved line between the Yin and Yang can also be seen as a muddy canal running through the yard, especially since its position is the border between two opposite flows of energy (see Figures 5.14 and 5.15). As the canal in the play is the place where Arghol has been beaten by the shadowing 'boot', the presentation on the stage of a 'non-material' canal is more appropriate than an actual one. The concepts of true and real are tested using this canal. Is Arghol physically beaten? Is the 'shadow boot' real? The audience will be guided to think about this issue by viewing players using the empty space as a solid material setting; this is also a concept which refers to the nature of the Yin-Yang exchange.

Moreover, the levels created by the tilted blade-like Tai-chi enhance the ambience of uncertainty. There are almost no flat areas on the floors of the Tai-chi. The overall structure is intended to make it difficult for the actors to balance, although these physical difficulties might not be seen by the audience. This might be challenging for

the actors, yet the concept is to make a statement that what your eyes receive is not quite the same as what you think you see.

Figure 5.16
Photos taken from various points to show stage spaces created by angled blades. Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu.

The next important element on the stage is the three trees in the yard. Although they do not perform or act in physical terms, they are, however, an important indication of the character of the world of Arghol and Hanp. In the script Lewis describes the trees as acrobats who 'drive leaf flocks with jeering cry' and their shadows are like 'toy crocodiles sawed up and down' across the canal (p.62).

In addition to the personification of these trees as if they were actors, the number of trees – three – caught my attention. In Act One, we learnt that Arghol is a gladiator, who fights mankind for the self. His opponent is the invisible Red Universe. As Lewis

names the Yard 'a Rough Eden', and he 'planted' three trees in it, it is possible that

the three trees are related to a religious scene: the crucifixion. We know that in the

Bible Christ was crucified with two other men. Therefore the complete scene of the

crucifixion, which many artists have depicted over the centuries (see Figures 5.17 and

5.18 for two examples) has three crosses. However, it is possible that the number of

trees chosen in Act Two gives them meanings over and above 'tree' or 'acrobat'. They

represent the prophecy of Arghol's sacrifice.

Figure 5.17 *Crucifixion*
Gaudenzio Ferrari, 1513
Fresco
One of the scenes of Christ's life from the church of
Santa Maria delle Grazie in Varallo Sesia, Italy.
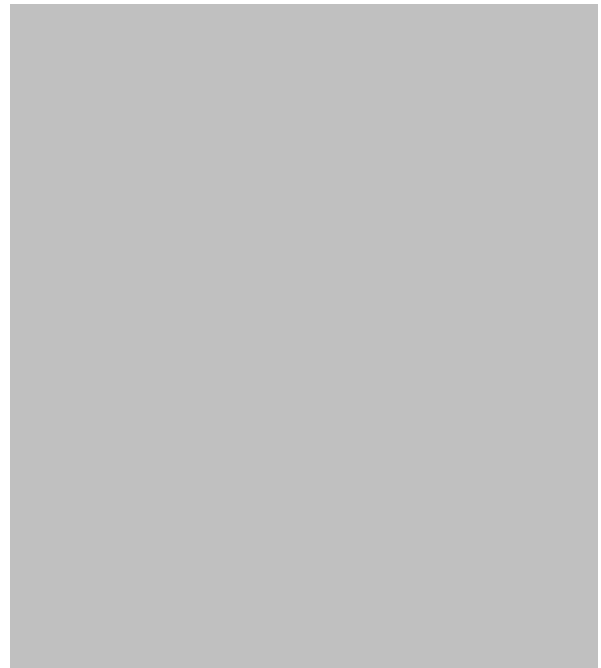
Figure 5.18 *Crucifixion*
Emil Nolde, 1912
Oil on canvas
220.5 x 193.5 cm

To consolidate these meanings into representational trees, I conceived three different

size cross-like objects (Figure 5.19) made of core wires covered with green thread to

indicate the character of a tree. These figures are made to look like ghostly monsters

or giants. Although these trees do not perform or take part in the action, their silent

appearance can be associated with the visuality

of Lewis's description. Through this, audiences

can create their own understanding based on

their personal interpretation of the objects.

Each of the trees is attached to its 'shadow' on

the ground (Figure 5.20). We are used to

shadows on the earth. Wherever there is light,

there are shadows attached to objects. However,

the world I create for Arghol and Hanp may not

follow the same rules; or may do so in different

Figure 5.19
Three monstrous figure-like trees, representing three crosses were designed to be part of the stage setting of Act Two. Made of green cotton thread and core wires. Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu

ways. The attachment of a shadow which mirrors the object symbolises the

relationship between Arghol and Hanp and also indicates the interaction of the 'self'

and the 'not-self'. These shadows are not solid and the 'trees' are hollow. You can see

through trees. As Lewis treats them as people, so can we 'view' them as individuals.

Nevertheless, each person's shadow can be overlapped by another's, which thus

intrudes on their own shadow. When the shadow hovers over the other trees, it

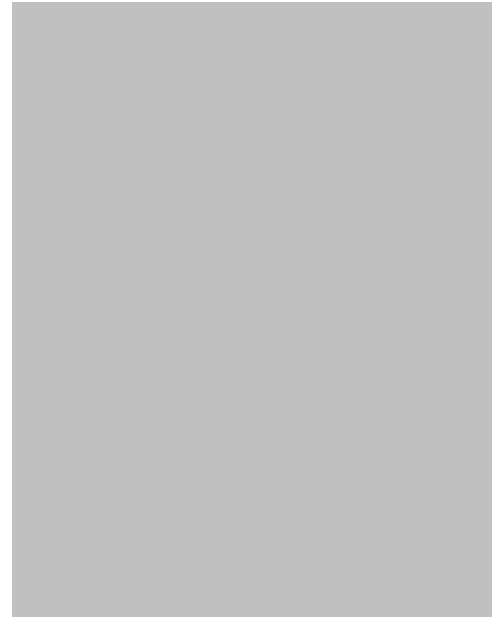signifies that each of us can easily be influenced by others.

Figure 5.20
Two of the three trees for the stage setting of Act Two standing on their own 'shadows' while positioned as if they were about to interact with each other. Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu.

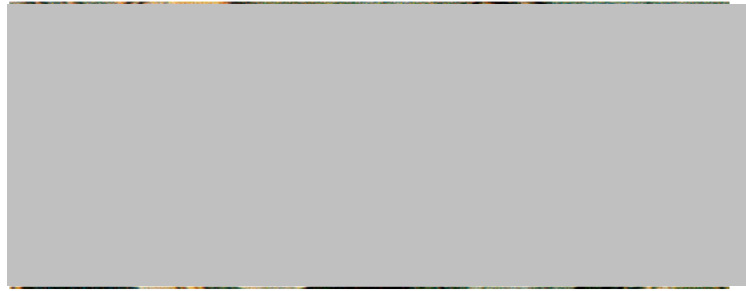Lewis painted 'a hut rolled half on its back' (p.60) in his 1913 painting 'Circus Scene' (Figure 5.21) and this can be thought of as one of the images he may have had in mind for the play. It is a simple hut, and because of Lewis's requirement in the play script, in which he stated that the hut needed to be carried by actors to the stage. I designed a foldable structure for this element of the stage setting (Figure 5.22). The hut is made from cheap-looking paperboards, and this will be apparent to the audience. It is important to keep the hut looking shabby to emphasise the barren lifestyle in the harsh and deserted tundra.

To fulfil its functions as well as the needs of the script, this hut can be folded into flat boards so that the

Figure 5.21 A hut in Wyndham Lewis's painting *'Circus Scene'*, 1913-1914

Figure 5.22
The hut designed to be part of the stage setting for Act Two, made from card board, paper straws and white paper. Designed and constructed by Pei-ying Wu.

Figure 5.23
Viewing the hut from above. The changeable walls create a sharp angle to present the performing area as an indoor space. Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu.

actors are able to carry and assemble it on stage. In addition to this physical function,

I designed it to serve as two different worlds at the same time on stage.

Figure 5.24
This photo shows the hut, positioned with wide angled walls, which indicate an outdoor space. Designed and created by Pei-ying Wu

The first world is the space used by the actors. They act inside or outside the hut,

which is the physical world in which they exist. The second world is created by the

view of the audience. They see the hut as a roof attached to a changeable space.

They cannot see through the roof, which means that all action happens either outside

the hut or within the changeable walls. When the walls are actually angled (Figure 5.23), the space is small, which indicates that this is an indoor scene and the audience can sense that the situation is more intense. When the space is
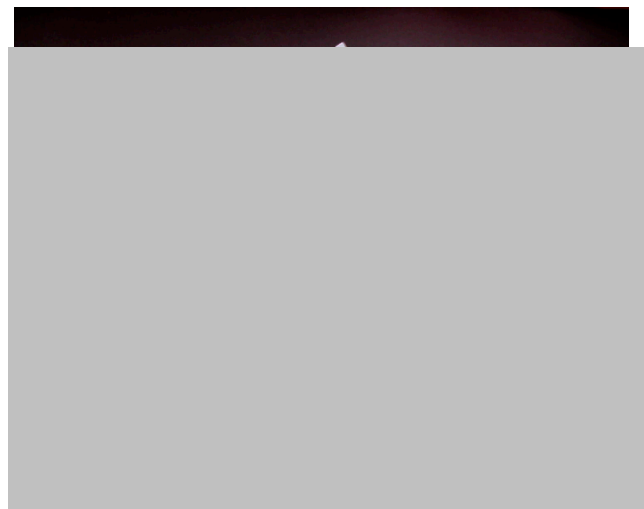
With the walls enclosed to the roof, the performing space is transformed into ambiguous definition of its surrounding space. Designed and created by Pei-ying Wu.

opened out (Figure 5.24), the area can be seen as an outdoor place which feels much more comfortable for the actors. Outdoor scenes, such as clouds, can be projected onto the wall. When the two walls are close to the roof (Figure 5.25), the space becomes ambiguous and clear at the same time. The audience might regard this object as more than a hut since the triangular door acts as the division between, for example, reality and dream. At the same time, the whole performing area represents the space inside the hut.

The use of space indicates that each person is like the physical space of the hut, which has its limitations; however, everyone at the same time has multiple 'worlds', which only the mind of 'the person' can decide. Furthermore, because of the nature of the performance, every action on the stage can be observed from above except where they are conducted under the roof. This symbolises the human desire to hide the worst from others and our tendency to show the best of everything. This is the cause of the confused communication in Act Two, where Arghol eagerly expresses his point of view without concern for Hanp's interest and understanding. Hence, the actions happen around the hut which, for Arghol, constitute an experience of a different world, but which for Hanp are only physical movements around the hut.

All of the designs in Act Two are intended to expose the paradox of communication within a seemingly simple and harmonious world. The process of the confused negotiations in the play is embedded within the set design: the uneven Tai-chi, the trapping canal, the hollowed crosses (trees), the unshakable shadows and the multi-dimensional (multi-worlds) hut. They have hinted that the philosophical dialogues between Arghol (the 'Self') and Hanp (the 'Not-Self') will be, in the end, a false communication.

5.4 A revolving world

Although the pictographic style Lewis applied in writing the play is not usual, its application is commonly seen in theatrical production. In fact, the ability to envision a scenario on a proscenium stage is essential to a stage
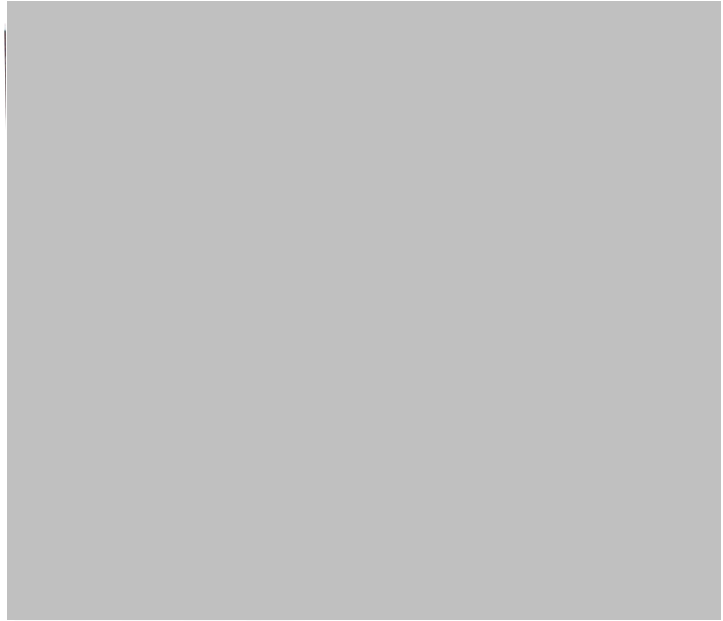
Figure 5.26 Set design by Alexandra Exter for *Famira Kifared*
The Maquette is a 1987 reconstruction of the 1916 original.
The setting is framed by the Proscenium Arch.

designer. Since the Renaissance, the proscenium stage has been the most common form in Western theatres. Due to its visual appearance, it is sometimes referred to as a 'picture frame stage'. Its 'proscenium arch' is like a frame through which the action can be seen (see Figure 5.26).

Figure 5.27 Edward Gordon Craig's first model stage, 1907

Stage designers in Lewis's day, such as Edward Gordon Craig, thought in terms of framed pictographic images. Figure 5.27 shows Craig's first model stage which he made in Florence in 1907. The figures were cut from thin boards of natural-coloured wood (see Figure 5.28 for other examples) and the backcloth was made from dark brown paper streaked with charcoal and deep blue paint.

Figure 5.28
Psyche's Sister (articulated) and Nun with Book (static)
Image from p.28, Craig, Edward Gordon. Black Figures. Wellingborough: Christopher Skelton, 1989.

Although the model is three-dimensional, it has a unique pictographic quality. He created the famous two dimensional 'black figures'— cut from wood or sometimes paper, or produced with the aid of printmaking techniques (see Figure 5.29 for an example) — to help him and his teams understand the stage design.

This kind of two-dimensional thinking was widely applied in theatrical design as well as in the traditional training of painters. Lewis had been well trained as a painter at The Slade School of Art between 1898 and 1901. Also, since he announced that the play *Enemy of the Stars* was a Vorticist play, its pictographic style is not a coincidence. He created a visual work with a textual appearance.

Figure 5.29
Ophelia with Flowers
Edward Gordon Craig Image from p.73, Craig, Edward Gordon. Black Figures. Wellingborough: Cristopher Skelton, 1989.

However, the challenge of visually constructing the play lies in transforming Lewis's proscenium imagery from the usual painting perspective to a top-down, bird's eye view, flattened stage setting. There is a significant difference between these two space devices, though they both appear to use two-dimensional imagery. The traditional painting perspectives make the distance on the stage deceptive, whilst the top-down perspective gives the illusion of 'non-depth'. For these reasons, I have designed a setting with a Ba-gua form and Tai-chi inlay to investigate the nature of depth on stage.

The stage seen from above is like the still image of a Ba-gua inlaid with a Tai-chi (Figure 5.30), but from the actor's point of view (a side view), the stage has many layers, including tilted 'hills' (Figure 5.31). Moreover, I have created a visible yet intangible canal between the Ying and Yang parts of the Tai-chi, which offers possibilities for the director's and audience's imagination. When the audience sees the stage from

Figure 5.30
A bird's eye view of the stage model of Act Two of *Enemy of the Stars*, designed by Pei-ying Wu.

The same stage viewed from the side shows a different spatial structure which creates a different atmosphere. Model designed and made by Pei-ying Wu.

the top, they can only see the crack between the two panels, but the actors are able to utilise the 'canal' space to become visible or invisible within seconds, and with little physical effort. This device will also be beneficial for projecting the shadow of the 'boot' as it roams around the canal.

Because the audience can only see the top of the stage, the tilted Tai-chi layers create excellent platforms for the actors, who can be seen on the surface one minute and the next minute might disappear and pass underneath to be later seen on the other side of the stage. The stage has no obvious indication of direction, so the usage of these layers might cause confusion in the audience's mind. This disorientation is the visual indication of the confused negotiation between Arghol and Hanp.

Furthermore, in the actual performance I would like to make the stage rotate. As has been explained in the previous sections, the aim of designing this setting is to add visual indications of the confused negotiation between the two characters. As the Tai-chi has no obvious direction, viewing the rotating stage from the top of the theatre will increase the difficulty for the audience of recognising positions and the acting locations. The rotary movements will also add physical difficulties for the actors, who will need to adjust their body movements accordingly to maintain their balance. Although the actors' physical reactions to the rotating stage might not be observed by the audience, the atmosphere of being cautious and alert will equip the theatre with the necessary ambience.

With the rotating stage in mind, I have also planned that the trees should be of various sizes, from normal to enormous. This is to create a feeling of aggressiveness on the stage. They need only to be visible under moonlit-like conditions to fulfil the scene

descriptions in the play. This can be achieved with special paints, especially since the trees are hollow wired structures and can be easily camouflaged to match the floor colouring. The audience can only see the stage from the top, so the trees will not draw the viewer's attention.

The hollow structure of the trees is potentially another space for directors and actors to play with. The empty space occupied by the tree and its shadow can be passed through. This offers an opportunity to create another meaningful world, as well as to intrude on the unexpected domain. In addition to this, the trees can be pasted with special fabric, which will be seen only under certain lighting conditions. If the director wishes to express more about identity issues (discussed in detail in chapter 6), these trees already provide a designed medium for communication.

The last element of the stage setting is the hut, in front of which Arghol and Hanp eat and in which they sleep. The hut was originally conceived in Lewis's mind as a half cave structure as described in the 'stage arrangement': the 'hut of the second scene is suggested by characters taking up their position at the opening of the shaft leading down into mines quarters' as well as the description 'as though it were a hut rolled half on its back, door upwards, characters giddily mounting in its

Figure 5.32
A close view from above showing the roof of the hut in the stage setting of Act Two. With different lighting effects, the texture of its roof will also vary. Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu.
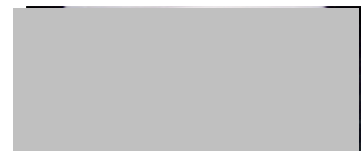

Figure 5.33
The hut is designed to be folded into a pile a few inches high.

opening' (p.60). Due to this unusual perspective, the hut I have designed can be immediately recognised by the audience and is light enough for the characters to carry it onto the stage. The hut is made of foldable paperboard with paper tubes pasted onto its surface, and will be carried on and assembled on stage by the actors. When it is folded, it looks like four flat boards piled together (Figures 5.32 and 5.33).

Although Lewis intended the hut to be positioned at the opening of the mine, the place I have allocated for it is at the top of the Tai-chi hill. Lewis uses the invisible mine as the mysterious world of Arghol, and to indicate that he is a deep thinker, whilst positioning the hut in the obvious place, the yard, to show that Hanp's world is situated in a material world. According to Lewis's device, as the rotation of Yin and Yang symbolises the harmony as well as the dynamics of energy flow, the hut on the top of the hill indicates the solid world of Hanp, whilst the empty space – the hole and the canal – indicates the intangible world of Arghol.

Figure 5.34
A view of the hut showing the triangular-shaped opening beneath the roof that can act as a gate leading to other spaces. Designed and created by Pei-ying Wu.

In addition, the hut has solved the identical problem of Lewis's play: making the actors visible to the audience from above as they act inside the hut. The triangular shaped opening acts as the door to the space (Figure 5.34). Whenever an actor goes into the hut, the audience sees his figure passing underneath the roof and shortly reappearing in the space defined by the two panels. As has been explained in the previous section (5.3), the two wall panels create an indoor space, an outdoor space and Arghol and Hanp's inner mind space. The impression given will depend on the degree to which the walls are opened as well as on the lighting. The directors might also choose to project some images onto the empty wall.

With its design of concealed tilted panels which also rotate, the stage is a visualisation of a revolving world in parallel with confused interactions. The Tai-chi platform symbolises a seemingly harmonious world yet presents the confused debate which takes place between Arghol and Hanp. The visualisation of the stage setting presents a underlying mood of tension cause by the confused negotiation within the duality. Added to the actors' body movements in the actual performance, the stage provides the simulated frustrations of the effort and the uneasiness of seemingly false communication. Yet, the meaning in this action suggests that the balancing of role and character is often a confused negotiation in a revolving world.

[1] Edwards, Paul. <u>Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer</u>. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000. p.94

[2] In the 'Further Reading' section, G.R. Hibbard, the editor, introduced the general understandings of the Critics through history.

Shakespeare, William. <u>Timon of Athens</u>. The New Penguin Shakespeare. Ed. T.J.B. Spencer. London: Penguin Books, 1970 (1623).

[3] ibid, p

[4] Collins, A.S. "Timon of Athens: A Reconsideration." <u>The Review of English Studies</u> 22.86 (1946): 96-108.

[5] Lewis, Wyndham. <u>The Lion and the Fox: The Role of the Hero in the Plays of Shakespeare</u>. London: Grant Richards, 1927, p.135-145

[6] Quoted from Fenwick, Henry. "The Production." <u>Timon of Athens</u>. London: The British Broadcasting Corporation and The Contributors, 1981, p.20

[7] Mr. Hunt regards *Timon of Athens* to be the most visual script within Shakespeare's plays. He discussed the consequences of its visualities from text to the stage.

   Hunt, John Dixon. "Pictura, Scriptura, and Theatrum: Shakespeare and the Emblem" <u>Poetics Today</u> 10.1 Art and Literature I (1989): 155-71, from p.158

[8] Lewis, Wyndham. "Enemy of the Stars." *BLAST* June 20th 1914: p.61

[9] Kush, Thomas. <u>Wyndham Lewis's Pictorical Interger</u>. Ann Arbor, Michgan: UMI Research Press, 1981, p.83

[10] Taylor, John Russell. <u>Dictionary of the Theatre</u>. Third ed. London: The Pengun, 1993 (1966), p.308

[11] The original sentence is 'His soul like ocean=town; leant on by two skies'. The 'two skies' here indicates that the sky and the ocean are often of similar colour, therefore, an ocean town may appear to be positioned at the join between the two.

[12] Chaplin, John A. Walker and Sarah. <u>Visual Culture</u>. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997.

Chapter 6 Comprising true independence

This chapter addresses the similarities between the visualities in Lewis's drawing 'Slow Attack' and the narratives in Act Three by applying 'stacking', pictographic visualisation and visual association methods, and elucidates the meaning of Act Three using Hornby's play analysis method. Finally, it demonstrates a synthesis of the 'significant elements' into a 'unifying principle' and applies it to the stage design process.

6.1 Repudiating

**   and being repudiated**

The third image in the pages at the beginning of the play script is entitled 'Slow Attack' (Figure 6.1). This title implies a tardy action – the opposite of the usual understanding of attack, which normally indicates something quick, strong and aggressive. However, Lewis's intention can be understood by considering the previous two drawings—'Plan of War' and 'Timon of Athens'. In 'Plan of War', Lewis questions the war by presenting its planning as an action which
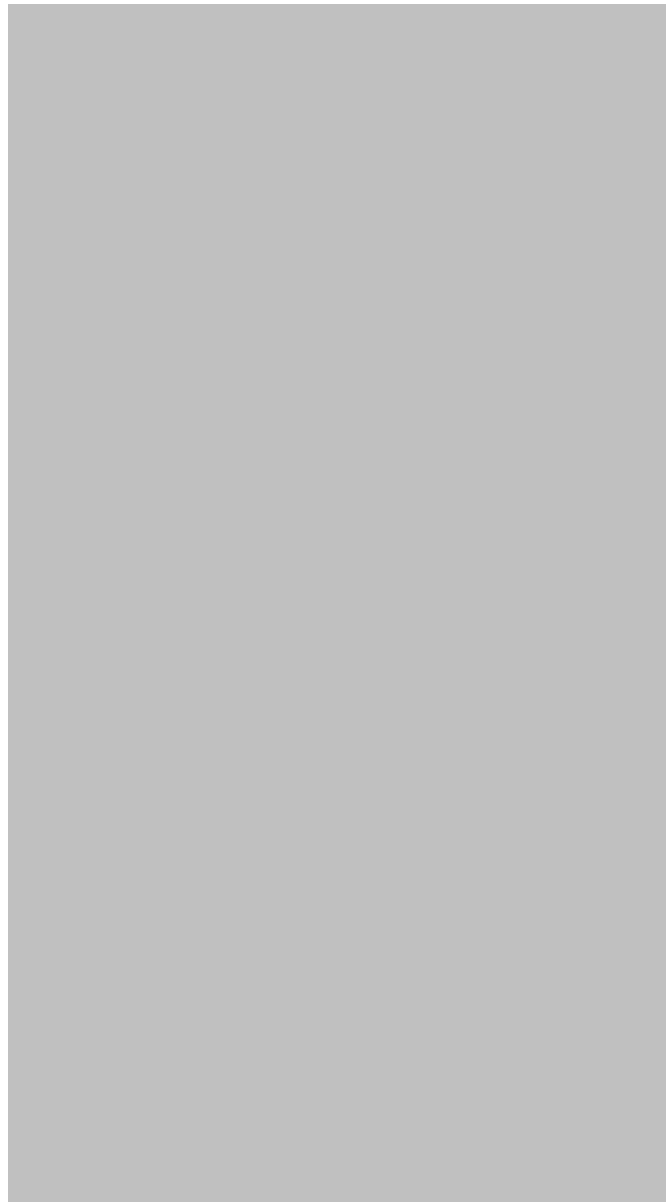

Figure 6.1 *Slow Attack*, 1913-14
Wyndham Lewis, from *BLAST*, p.*vi*

oppresses the victim (see chapter 4); in 'Timon of Athens' he exposes Timon's dilemma as a way of symbolising the conflict between being oneself (while earnestly striving for good), and submitting to fate (see chapter 5). Moving on from these, the third drawing 'Slow Attack' delivers Lewis's advocacy of violence but with paradoxical hesitation. It also presents the uncertainty and diversity of the mind when at the point of taking action to approach, or respond to, others. In a way, Lewis has successfully 'performed' Act Three through 'Slow Attack' as Paul Edwards points out: although 'Lewis wanted his painting to suggest or draw the viewer into imagining that other world, his whole critique of transcendence (elaborated in *Enemy of the Stars*) ruled out the possibility that the work of art can belong entirely to it'[1].

In Act Three, Arghol experiences a crisis of self identity in his dreams and also has difficulty recognising his companion, Hanp. In the narrative, Lewis positions Arghol either among his 'friends' or facing the changeable Hanp. The communications between them are confused and frustrated because Arghol (the authentic Self) has deliberately repudiated himself as well as having been repudiated by his friends, including Hanp (the Not-Self). All of this is eventually manifested in the fate of Arghol, who dies at Hanp's hands, and ultimately in the death of Hanp.

These scenarios can be seen in the drawing 'Slow Attack' (Figure 6.1). The outlines in Figure 6.2 show that one person lurks in the lower left-hand corner and only his masked head can be seen. In the lower right-hand corner, we see a series of layered, soldier-like figures positioned as if spreading up and to the right in an anti-clockwise direction. These shielded, armed figures only have one obvious face (see orange outline). The masked face and the group of figures who share a face both indicate the identity crisis which Arghol experiences in Act Three. In addition, the single masked

head avoids the posturing of the multiple figures of the right-hand side and is representative of Arghol's relationship with and attitudes towards others, including the images of Hanp which emerge in his dreams. Apart from this, from the gap between the masked face and the layered figures and the way they move in opposite directions, the composition also shows the limited communication between Arghol and others. The masked face looks to the left whilst the figures seem to be moving up and towards the right. They leave, without any intention of interacting further with the masked one.

Figure 6.2 *Slow Attack* (with outlined figures)
Original image from Wyndham Lewis, *BLAST*, p.*vi.*

The same composition (Figure 6.2) can also be interpreted as if Hanp (the masked person in the lower left-hand corner) sullenly and indignantly reflects upon Arghol's actions (the multiple figures). From the beginning of the play, Arghol is the major character and the thinker. Most of the interactions between Arghol and Hanp are either initiated by or prompted by Arghol. Therefore, when Hanp recovers from their fight and starts to consider the situation, this is the first time that he takes the initiative. The drawing displays this precious moment by portraying Hanp as if he were in a cinema: where his mind (the masked head) recalls and projects the memories of Arghol's brutal actions. To Hanp, Arghol is protected by many shields and carries a

sharp spear. It is because of Arghol that Hanp finally knows that he has been repudiated. He sees the advantage of a 'Self' and starts to seek it. Hence, regardless of any other interpretation, we can say that the play *Enemy of the Stars* mixes the confrontational state with the exchanging and emerging processes of the Self and the Not-self, regardless of the results of the exercise. Therefore Lewis emphasises both the physical and mental actions of trespassing into the twilight zone to express the theme of Act Three.

Lewis skilfully uses geometric partitions of the canvas to indicate the various spatial and mental locations visited by Arghol and Hanp in Act Three. Although Arghol and Hanp are both physically stationed in the hut throughout the Act, in the course of their dialogues both travel mentally to Arghol's city. In addition, in Arghol's dreams, Arghol shifts between his room in the city, a street in his native town, a café and his home, whilst Hanp remains at the site of their violent fight.

Although the divided segments of these partitions appear similar to Lewis's Timon project (see chapter 5.1), they are very different in their appearance and composition. Lewis uses each partition in the Timon series as if it were a presentation stage where viewers can read the story, whereas in 'Slow Attack', the partitions exist in simple yet abstract form which presents multi-dimensional time and space for viewers to envision the energies of forces.
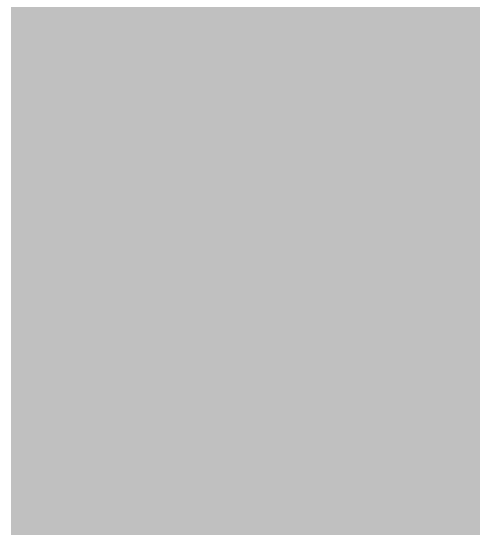

Figure 6.6 *Slow Attack* (part)
1913-14
Wyndham Lewis

At about the time Lewis was writing *Enemy of the Stars*, he was interested in delineating abstract structures and in presenting spatial compositions, such as 'New York' (Figure 6.3), 'Composition in Blue' (Figure 6.4) and 'Workshop' (Figure 6.5). These spatial compositions are similar to the upper-right parts of 'Slow Attack' (Figure 6.6). Although, due to the loss of the original drawing, we only have a black and white photographic copy of 'Slow Attack', the power of the vortex in transcending space is distinctly depicted. Lewis excels in overlaying geometrical outlines at calculated angles to optically create dimensions in-depth. With an intent gaze, it is possible to experience the spaces, created by hard-edged lines and geometrical coloured patterns, shifting and moving within the canvas. Each of these paintings has different energy dynamics and flows through the defined yet ambiguous spaces.
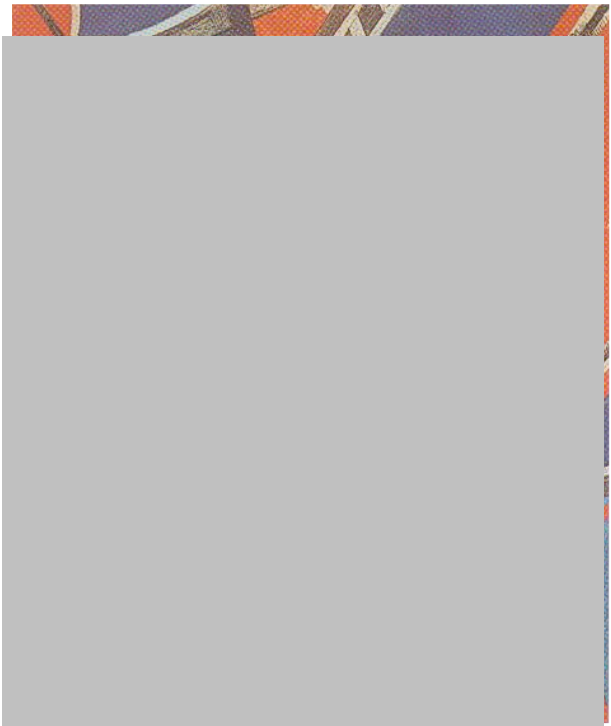
Figure 6.3 *New York*
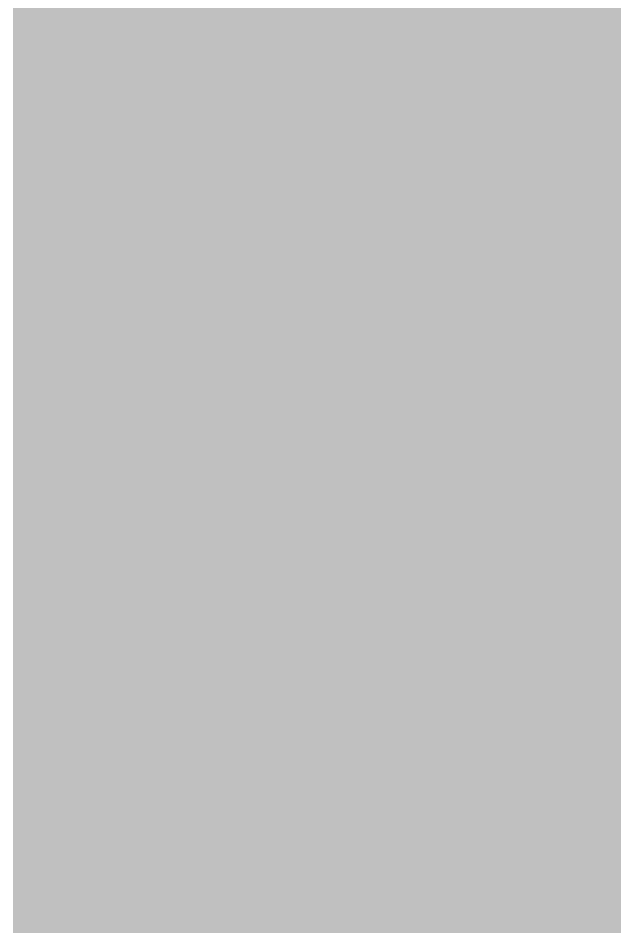Wyndham Lewis, 1914, Pen and Ink, Watercolour.

Figure 6.4 *Composition in Blue*
1915, Wyndham Lewis, Chalk and Watercolour

Also in this period Lewis painted 'Red Duet' (Figure 6.7), which has many similar elements to 'Slow Attack': the piled soldier-like figures sharing only one face (head), the geometric background and the utilisation of the human figure as a part of spatial composition. We see this similarity more clearly when comparing the lower half of 'Slow Attack' (Figure 6.8) with 'Red Duet'. Both paintings have two major
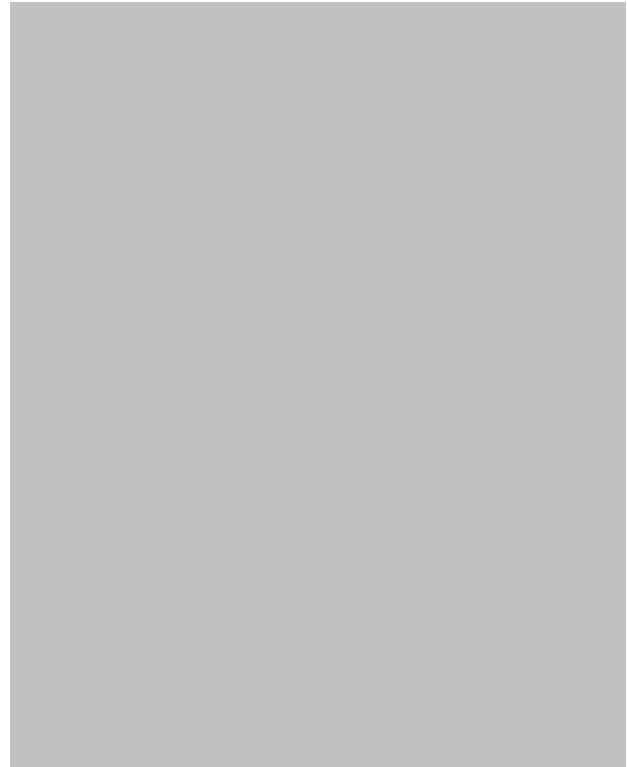

Figure 6.5 *Workshop*
Wyndham Lewis, 1915, Oil on Canvas

groups: on the right-hand side are the layered figures, while the left-hand sides are comparatively more dense and simple. Considering the similarity between 'Slow Attack' and the 'Red Duet', and comparing their titles, we may surmise that Lewis intended to portray the action (or rather, the interaction) between two 'individuals'.

However, the grouped figures' facing directions show us unusual connotations of Lewis's own distinction between attack and duet.

Figure 6.7 *Red Duet,* Wyndham Lewis, 1914, Black and coloured chalks, gouache

The title 'Slow Attack' leads the viewer to expect a depiction of the action of attacking or the aftermath of an attack or at least an attacking atmosphere. Lewis, however, positions the group of soldiers moving outwards instead of taking up positions to attack, whilst the singular body (the masked head) is situated as if inactive

Figure 6.8 *Slow Attack* (details), Wyndham Lewis, 1913-14

within his territory (world). The disengagement of the two groups is enhanced by geometric structures which formulate ambiguous twilight zones. The symbol of the attack – the spear (see Figure 6.1) – is embedded in the lost dimensions and itself becomes part of the border lines. Lewis seems to suggest that the attack could be considered as an action which takes place whilst trespassing in the twilight zone.

On the other hand, the layered figures in the 'Red Duet' are all facing the opponent on the left despite the fact that there is no 'head' of the opposing group. This could be seen as another kind of disengagement. However, Lewis creates the duet, not by emphasising the conflict between the groups, but by portraying the entwined colour patterns. This suggests that, in Lewis's mind, communication using direct dialogues between two groups may not be necessary. Similar to the situation between Arghol and Hanp in Act Three, true communication will occur when the individual crosses the borderline towards the awareness of true self. Therefore, the theme of Act Three lies in the actions of trespassing in the twilight zone.

6.2 Revelation in disguise

Act Three of the play is from Hanp III to the end of Hanp VII (p.72 - p.85). This section contains even fewer 'showcase' sentences, but is a more thoughtful or psychological narrative. Hence, the use of Hornby's play analysis to identify 'the significant elements' (the oddities) is the major focus of this section.

In chapters 4 and 5 (Acts One and Two) we learnt that: Arghol and Hanp worked in a hostile wheelwright's yard; Arghol was struggling from being cornered by the Red Universe, and despite the efforts that Arghol and Hanp put into communication, they were prostrated by the results. Although Lewis seems to offer readers / viewers a sequence of actions, all we have learnt so far are superficial facts without the underlying reasons. In Act Three, however, Lewis provides us with background information related to Arghol and Hanp. This background allows the reader to derive possible reasons for Arghol and Hanp's behaviours and thinking.

The following paragraphs are a section-by-section guide to Act Three. They identify possible reasons behind Arghol and Hanp's actions and further explain the play. At the same time they expose the 'oddities' in the script, which are the major elements needed to define 'the unifying principle' in the next section (6.3).

HANP III (p.72)

Hanp III is short. In the first paragraph, Lewis points out the reason behind Arghol's ascendancy: that he was once a city dweller[2]. Then, Lewis depicts the scene where Arghol shows postcards of the city to Hanp. As he explains the postcards, we learn that Arghol was proud of 'his city' and that he introduces it to Hanp with comments that show his disillusionment with his experience of living there[3].

Within this scene there are two unusual 'elements', which, applying Hornby's method, might be 'the significant elements' we are looking for: the first is the indistinguishable subject 'he', and the second is the last sentence 'He sat down to invest it, Arghol its wall.'

Lewis seems to have deliberately introduced confusion with the word 'he' in the middle section of HANP III. The whole 'confused' section of HANP III is as follows:

> 'Then Arghol said: —
>   "Wait a moment."
>   He whispered something in his ear.
>   "Is that true?"
>   "Aye and more."
>   He supplemented his description with a whole life of comment and disillusion. —The young man felt now that he left the city. His life was being lived for him.—But he forgot this and fought for his first city. Then he began taking a pleasure in destruction.
>   He had got under Arghol's touch.
>   But when he came to look squarely at his new possession, which he had exchanged for his city, he found it wild, incredibly sad, hateful stuff.'[4]

After the sentence 'then Arghol said', Lewis uses 'he' to indicate both Arghol and Hanp, as if they were one person. Although one might read, in sequence, that Arghol and Hanp speak or act alternately, it is possible for a director to make one of the characters perform all the lines and actions, whilst the other character remains silent and motionless. Perhaps ambiguity is what Lewis wanted to achieve, although the indistinguishable subject in a theatrical production is unusual. Most playwrights would clearly indicate who says what. Instead of using conventional speaking indications, throughout the whole play Lewis has clearly indicated who says what in the dialogues, and even in the narrative. Therefore, this ambiguous section could be defined as one of the oddities – 'the significant elements'.

The second 'element' appears in the last sentence of Hanp III: 'he sat down to invest it, Arghol its wall'. On first reading, this makes no sense at all for 'Arghol' is not a verb. What is the meaning of this 'Arghol its wall'? Applying the pictographic methods mentioned in the previous chapters, it may be possible to resolve this issue. We can only surmise that Lewis wants to express Arghol's feeling of ownership towards the city so much that he invents a usage for the word 'Arghol' to be used in the sense of construction, building, development, assembly, or mounting.

Figure 6.9 *Arghol*
Wyndham Lewis, 1914
Pen and ink, watercolour

Lewis painted 'Arghol' (Figure 6.9) in 1914 whilst the play was being written. His Arghol is a machine-like person with a metal structure. If we think about this image when considering the presentation of the sentence 'He sat down to invest it, Arghol its walls', it seems that the action 'invest' has a parallel meaning to the verb-like word 'Arghol'. Since in the picture Arghol represents a robot like steel structure, thus, to 'Arghol its walls' can be understood as to make the wall stronger, to be like a robot, or with steel structures. There may be other interpretations, as everyone reads an image very differently.

Yet, there is still a problem here for the reader / viewer. Lewis did not include this painting in *BLAST*, so they would have had no idea what Lewis's ideal 'Arghol' would have been like and to have come to a similar conclusion to that above would have been quite a challenge. This is a good reason not to count it as one of 'the significant elements' as there are so many other 'clueless' sentences in the text where the reader has to rely on their own vision and interpretation to arrive at an understanding of the play.

Despite this, however, I would consider it to be one of the 'significant elements', because of Arghol's unusual attitude towards one specific thing. Since the beginning of the play, Arghol has seemed careless, calmly accepting and following whatever happens in front of him. Conversely, his focus on the postcard images of his city is not consistent with previous presentations of his character. This is an unusual, and rather 'odd', turning point. Therefore the action of investing or 'Arghol'ing the city is one of 'the significant elements'.

HANP IV (pp.73-74)

HANP IV is divided into three parts. The first and major part is Arghol's monologue. The second is Hanp's response and the third consists of the narratives describing Arghol's consideration of (or hesitations about) the action of fighting.

The monologue, following a short depiction of Arghol's situation, starts with "Why do I speak to you?" and ends with "Get out! Here! Go!"[5] In its flow, it delineates Arghol's quality of voice and the atmosphere when the monologue ends. Arghol says that Hanp is created from Arghol's ego. Lewis clearly states the relationship between

Arghol and Hanp – at least from Arghol's point of view – in terms of 'Self' and 'Not-self'. The Self (Arghol) repudiates his own birth and asks the Not-Self (Hanp) to 'go back to our Mother and spit in her face for me'[6]. Furthermore, the Self orders the Not-self to leave at once. At this point, because of the self-repudiation of the Self and the leaving of the Not-self, we might ask what would be left on the stage? – Self? Not-self? the Red Universe? Or something else?

In the second part, Lewis makes Hanp (Not-self) speak vividly with 'his own voice' for the first time in the play. He also acts in accordance with his own mind for the first time. Hanp (Not-self) is angry with Arghol (Self) and attacks him. Later, in the third part, Lewis depicts Arghol's (the Self) hesitation about the fight because Arghol considers fear, the anti-manhood, belief and the ideal life, as a 'self' would naturally do.

Because Lewis did not make the monologue clear with dialogue marks, some critics consider this kind of description constitutes psychological narrative, and suggest that, because of this, this play is not suitable for performance as a theatrical production.[7] They are limited by the appearance of the text. From the narratives, one can understand the thoughts of Arghol, as if listening to his self-confession in a monologue. There are many similar monologues in famous plays, especially those of Shakespeare, who excels in using lengthy monologues to express various emotions, issues or plots. It was then common for a character to voice his or her psychological thoughts on stage through a monologue.

Nevertheless, the omission of dialogue marks can be seen as one of the oddities. The significant element is the assumption that Lewis did this on purpose and that there must, therefore, be a reason behind it.

Lewis created a lengthy interaction between the two characters in HANP IV, but one of them speaks for so long that it appears as if the whole section is a combination of one long monologue, one vivid action and one invisible, rather thoughtful, response. This kind of narrative is unusual in a play. Although it is not unheard of in a play script that the characters launch into long monologues, very few of them would form three distinctly different and individual theatrical features (monologue, physical action and mental consideration) in one scene or act. For this reason, I consider this device to be one of 'the significant elements'.

HANP V (pp.75-79)

The first section of HANP V (pp.75-76) is a description of Arghol and Hanp's fight, which follows the conflict in HANP IV. Lewis uses direct depiction, symbolic presentation and indexical delineation to portray the fight, almost all of which are visual expressions. The section presents the fight as a sequence of images. As in a conventional play, this section might be substituted by two words: 'they fight', or by the words: 'they fight fiercely'. Lewis's depictions provide many visual references for theatre practitioners to use when designing the theatrical performance, as the audience goes to the theatre to 'see' a play. Proper visual expression on the stage is usually the task of designers and directors; Lewis has helped them by describing the scene through images. This is consistent with Lewis's experimentation in expressing visualities.

The second section is Arghol's dream (pp.76-79). In the dream, Arghol shifts from space to space. He visits his room in the city, his native town, and a café and meets various friends and acquaintances from his past. However, by the action of throwing out Stirner's book (*The Ego and Its Own*), Arghol (the Self) repudiates his ego and his

ownership of Self. By his ordering off of Hanp, he repudiates the Not-self as he did in section HANP IV. Towards the end of the dream, Lewis creates situations in which no one recognises Arghol, in order to point out that he has been repudiated by others; in actual fact, the authentic-Self repudiates the Not-self first, then the Self is repudiated by the Not-self.

Lewis made one strange little mistake: the book's German title. He quoted it as 'Einige und Sein Eigenkeit', which means 'a few and Eigenkeit' (there is no such German word, Lewis invented it). The actual name is *Einzige und sein Eigentum*, and the English version's title is *The Ego and Its Own*. One of the meanings of *Einzige* is 'the only' and *sein Eigentum* means 'absolute ownership'. This was a famous book in Lewis's time. He lived in Germany for two years and the book's title is important to the interpretation and understanding of Arghol, the authentic Self. I do not think that Lewis translated it incorrectly by accident or mere carelessness. It is more likely that when Arghol, the authentic self, threw the book out of the window, he had expressed the belief that there is no such thing as 'the only' nor 'absolute ownership'. Arghol had already acknowledged that an individual in the world is just one of 'a few' and is a part of 'being nothingness'. To use a false name for a book is odd. Again, it is one of 'the significant elements' for further defining 'the unifying principle', which will be discussed later.

I am also interested in the three locations where Arghol had been in the dream: the city (where he went to university), the native town (where he is working now) and a Café, for which Lewis uses a capital C but without telling us what kind of place it is. Why these three places? Why not others? Although changing places in a play is very common and a dream is also a common scene in theatrical production, the question

here is not totally related to the production but to the meaning of the play, because before this dream, all of the settings are located within the wheelwright's yard and its surroundings. The three places in the dream broaden the context of the play as well as becoming an oddity. Therefore these locations become one of 'the significant elements'.

HANP VI (pp.80-82)

There are two parts to HANP VI. The first is rather short. It depicts the moments before Arghol awakens from the dream and the half-awake state of his mind. All the puzzles are solved in this strange state and he finally understands that Arghol and Hanp (the Self and the Not-self) are 'always a deux'. A name, such as Arghol, is only like a commercial label, which needs repeated advertisement to become fixed in the memories of other people. An authentic Self can only exist when there is also a Not-self.

The second part focuses mainly on Hanp's reactions, thoughts and considerations. This is the climax of the play – at least in my interpretation – because all the conflict between Arghol and Hanp has finally had a significant impact on Hanp.

However, this is also the first major section in which Lewis uses lengthy reasoning rather than visual expression or dialogue-style narrative. This section is indeed a challenge for theatre practitioners. It is reminiscent of a narrator's job, voicing the changes, thoughts and actions which Hanp might take next. This is dull on a theatre stage and likely to be more appropriate for a radio drama than as a theatrical production. As Lewis has successfully delivered so many visualities in the previous sections, we can believe that he has the ability to express HANP VI using similar

methods, but he chooses to do the opposite. The 'significant element' therefore lies in this: as this is the climax of the play, the reader's/viewer's expectation is that it will display the most significant presentation; instead, the delivery of the play is plain and un-visual.

HANP VII (pp.83-85)

The whole of HANP VII depicts the action in which Hanp kills Arghol. It starts with the visual expression of Arghol's snore. Lewis uses visible images to express the invisible sound of snoring, and wisely uses these snoring images to symbolise the tension in Hanp's mind. At the peak of the tension created by the snore, Hanp takes action and Arghol dies as his snore falls away. Then Hanp commits suicide by jumping into the canal. It seems that all the narratives are normal and fluent; however, we must ask why Hanp wants and needs to die.

The awoken 'inferior', Hanp decides that to kill the authentic Self (Arghol) is the only way to redeem himself (the Not-self). The reader / viewer already knows, however, that in HANP VI Arghol had already understood his existence in relation to Hanp's (the Not-self's); in other words, the hero of the play, the authentic Self, has already decided that he will co-exist with the Not-self (Hanp) and accept that they are actually equal. Unfortunately, in the play Hanp will never know this, because he kills Arghol as he snores (whilst he is still in the transitional phase between waking and sleeping). Following Hanp's way of thinking, he should be relaxed and even happy after Arghol's death because he has finally freed himself from the bully and the unbearable insults.

Incongruously, Lewis wrote that Hanp sprang from the bridge with unhappy and stagnant hatred. This ending is inconsistent with Hanp's characteristics. In his first

appearance in HANP I, he expressed the view that problems can be solved by violent action, that killing Arghol's uncle is normal (p.66). Also in HANP II he says to Arghol that he disagrees that one should 'be kicked to death' just because of one's beliefs (p.70). These views lead to Hanp's aggressive response when he recognises Arghol's unfair treatment in HANP IV (p.74). They fight in HANP V and Hanp thinks over everything in HANP VI, ultimately making the decision to kill Arghol in HANP VII. All these fit Hanp's characteristics, except that in the end he kills himself through unhappiness and hatred. This is one of the 'oddities' Lewis created and it is also the last, but important, 'significant element' in the play.

6.3 The hollow identity

Eight 'significant elements' of Act Three were identified by applying Hornby's method of play analysis. Following his methods, this section aims to synthesise these 'significant elements' into a 'unifying principle' and design it into a possible three-dimensional visual form. The next section (6.4) will be devoted to fully explaining its transformation into a stage setting.

As explained in chapters 4 and 5, to define a 'unifying principle' is to find the major *recurrences* within the 'significant elements'. Also according to Hornby, 'the unifying principle' does not exist in the script itself; it is a functional relationship between a critical approach and a particular script.

The eight 'significant elements' in Act Three are: 1) the indistinguishable identity of 'he'; 2) 'Arghol its wall'; 3) the long monologue which has no speech marks; 4) the combination of three individual factors: the long speech, one action and one invisible, but thoughtful response; 5) the misspelling of a book's title; 6) the three places in the dream; 7) the climax, which has few visualities; and 8) Hanp's suicide due to unhappiness and hatred.

Of these, 3), 4) and 7) reinforce the feeling that *Enemy of the Stars* is a highly unusual play and that its writer was determined to remind us of its uniqueness because these three elements display both unusual play structure and Lewis's own writing style. On the other hand, 1), 2), 5), 6) and 8) are devoted to further understanding of the development of an independent identity. They revisit the theme again and again, and thus it becomes one of Hornby's major *recurrences*.

At the beginning of Act Three, the identities of Arghol and Hanp begin to blur (element 1). When Arghol suddenly recognises his attachment to the city, he begins to consider, though unconsciously, that the city is part of his identity. He tries to strengthen this identity through the action of 'Arghol'ing its walls (element 2), whilst Hanp also develops an understanding of his own existence. The misspelled book title (element 5) emphasises the struggle and confusion involved in the clarification of a true independent identity and its absolute ownership. Following Arghol's search for a true independent identity in places which are familiar to him (element 6) he understands that the root of his struggle is in repudiating the 'Not-Self' – Hanp. To free himself from the limitations of dividing 'Self' from 'Not-Self', Arghol now realises that true independence comes after true freedom. Thus he accepts the existence of Hanp as part of himself.

However, Arghol never has an opportunity to share this with Hanp. While Arghol journeys, searching through his dreams, Hanp has developed into a free-thinking person. Without realising that Arghol has learnt about the independent 'Self', which possesses a more tolerant attitude to others, Hanp decides to kill Arghol in revenge for his insults, while hoping to become a powerful authentic 'Self'. Yet the expected peace and absolute freedom do not come when Hanp finally stands alone in the yard; instead, he is unhappy and full of hatred. Hanp finally realises that, as a solitary, truly independent being, he has acquired more than the freedom to think, fight and kill. The cost of true independence involves responsibility for the consequences of those free actions.

Without Arghol, Hanp does not know what to do next; he does not know how to return to his original routine life or how to structure a new life pattern. In the end, he chooses

to jump into the canal (element 8). Metaphorically, jumping into water usually symbolises purification, but the canal in the play is muddy and unstable (see Act Two). Therefore, jumping in this case might be interpreted as escaping into a black tunnel towards renewal, and into either better or worse unknown worlds. This ending echoes Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*, where no one knows that Timon actually dies, because we do not know whether his body really is in the grave (see 5.1). The above analysis generates 'the unifying principle' of Act Three; that true independence involves both freedom and responsibility.

Seeking independence suggests that the original status is dependency, as is usually the case for weak and vulnerable people. These include a large group of immature humans – children – who rely on adults and usually do not have independent power or points of view with regard to the world. Although the development of independence is not visible in the material world, one can use an analogy with children's activities to illustrate the situation.

Following this line of thinking, I researched a number of children's playground activities dating from the late 19th century. I decided to use 'Jungle Gym' as a key reference for presenting the theme of Act Three. A Jungle Jim is a steel pipe play climber (see Figure 6.10), which changed the face of the playground from traditional Victorian wooden structures to permanent installations of

Photo from
http://prontofitness.com/childrenplay.htm
Downloaded on 04 Feb. 2008

manufactured equipment leading to more elaborate steel pipe climbers[8]. This hollow cubic structure is not only indicative of changes over time, but also symbolises

children's passion for gaining power by climbing upwards – their desire to stand alone at the top. Playing on the equipment acts in the child's imagination as a form of tree-climbing, where the steel 'branches' form a maze to negotiate. The form of the equipment echoes the geometric steel frame of the city skyscraper. Lewis and his contemporaries, including the Futurists, were intensely interested in the new industrialised world of the early 20th century and created many paintings around urban subjects such as the city itself, crowds, height and speed. For example, Lewis's 'Workshop' (see Figure 6.4) delineates city spaces, which are similar in structure and feel to a Jungle Gym.

I designed a hollow construction using plastic straws (see Figure 6.11) to present the theme (see 6.1) and 'the unifying principle' of Act Three and to host the events Lewis described in the play. The plastic indicates a feeling of industrial manufacture. New materials at the beginning of the 20th century, unlike traditional stone, brick and wood, could be cast and constructed in various shapes and forms, almost as a plastic form of art. Lewis and his contemporaries were particularly fascinated by the flexibility of steel.
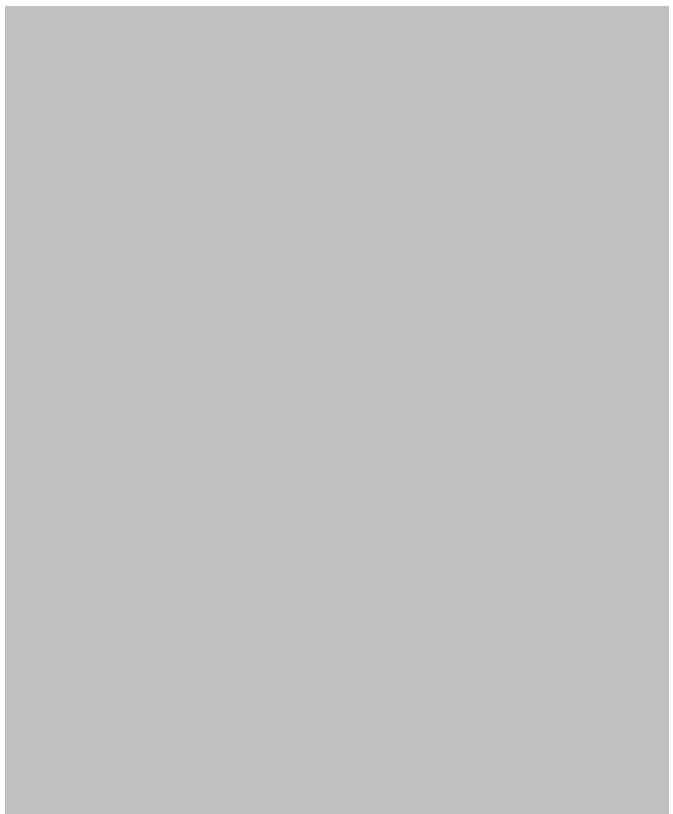
Figure 6.11
A view of the tubular stage setting for Act Three of Enemy of the Stars. Made by plastic straws. Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu.

Moreover, the neon colouring of these straws is close to that of *BLAST*'s cover, in which Lewis selected 'pink' to induce feelings of nausea in his readers. In Lewis's time, neon colours were rare (used only by industry) and most people were unfamiliar with their hues, so its use by Lewis was indicative of industrialised society. As well as representing industrialisation, the straws symbolise the geometric structure of the city space because of their straight format and limited folding ability which is similar to the properties of steel. Many early 20ᵗʰ century modern buildings are made of steel.

Figure 6.12
A bird's eye view of the stage setting for Act Three shows that the structure can be viewed as city buildings. Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu.
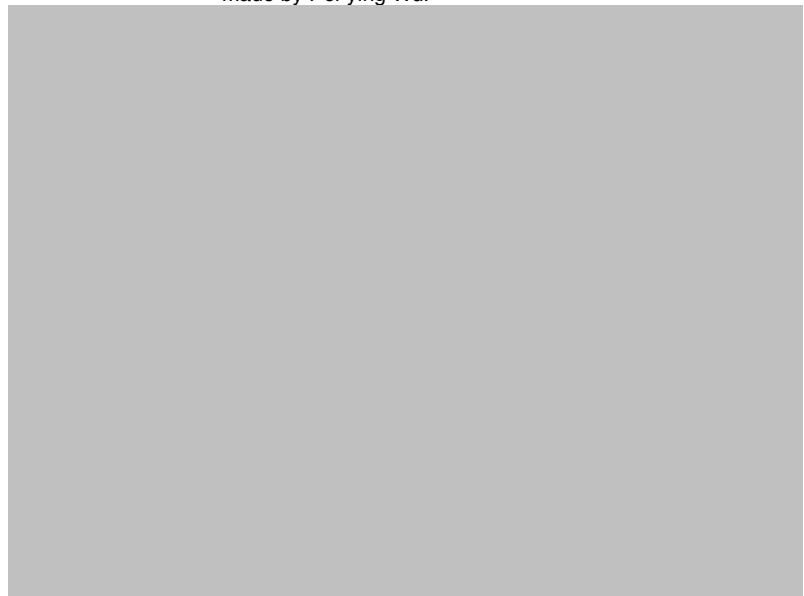
Figure 6.13
The stage setting for Act Three shows one of the possibilities for presenting mysterious neon structures, which might appear in one's dream. Designed and created by Pei-ying Wu.

The ability to be flexible and changeable is crucial for the stage setting. Arghol visited several places in his dreams and the straws can be shifted into various shapes to represent these places (see Figures 6.12, 6.13, 6.14 and 6.15). These shifts also represent Arghol and Hanp's unstable mental states. Both are undergoing a change in

their understanding of 'Self', where Hanp begins to develop his own thinking and

actions whilst Arghol understands that his true existence should be to accompany

Hanp. They have difficulty in staying 'still' during Act Three.

Figure 6.14   Viewing the stage setting for Act Three with lighting, which shows its industrial aesthetics on an earthy textured ground (wool carpet) against a reflecting anonymous industrial-like back-drop. Designed and created by Pei-ying Wu.

Given these uncertainties, I used the

hollow straws to construct a hollow

city to present Arghol and Hanp's

self-doubts. On one hand, the hollow

straws symbolise a lack of

confidence, although they had built

'the city' already; on the other hand,

the emptiness of the city is

constrained by the straws. When

self-doubts meet belief, the hollow

structure becomes self-limited.

Arghol and Hanp have difficulties in

Figure 6.15   A close view of the stage setting for Act Three, which shows its spatial atmosphere with light and shadows. Designed and created by Pei-ying Wu.

seeing the strains and stresses

created by their particular

understanding, which also forms their worlds.

In addition, these neon colour straws are anonymous, made from mass-produced

industrial forms. There are no obvious differences between one and another.

Therefore the structure also has no identifying features. Although the shifting spaces

confined by the straws are of different shapes, these shapes have no names. Viewers

only know that they are representative of different locations or spaces.

There is one very important function of this straw maquette – it allows the theatre

practitioner to play with ideas. The model is similar to the solitaire game for Act One.

Through playing with the structure, the player experiences the cause and effect of the

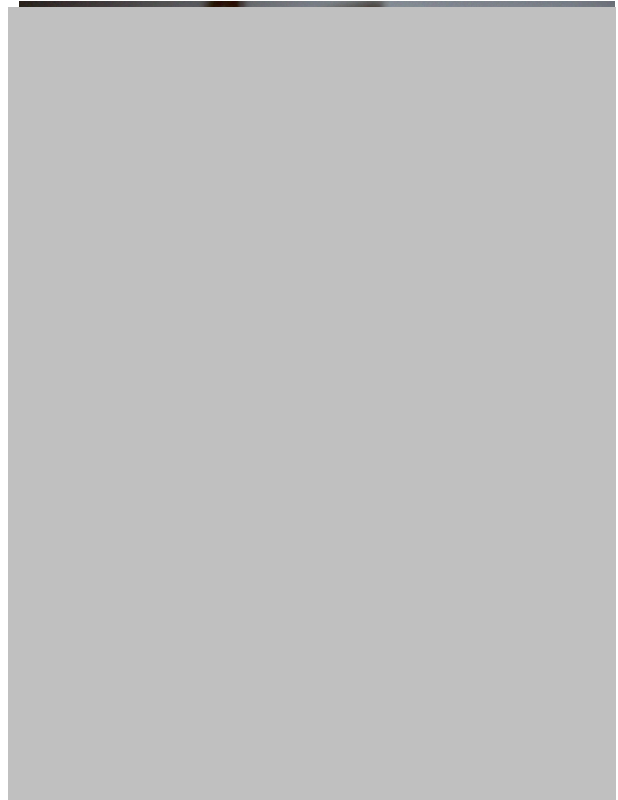three-dimensional construction of the model. The intended or un-intended changes

made by the players can cause various shifts in the structure which, for some of the time, may not be able to support itself due to adverse strains and lack of support. This is similar to events in the play where Arghol or Hanp decide to do things but actually cannot foresee what the end result might be. They may eventually fail (as in the final scene). What they are able to do is to develop their ownership of 'Self' by trial and error. Only the observer – the Red Universe in the play, the viewer / reader when reading the play or the audience in the theatre – sees the full picture. Thus, the meaning and understanding of the play lies in each individual's mind.

6.4 Struggling against the limitations

This section extends the previous section's discussion and aims to demonstrate the staging possibilities of Act Three of *Enemy of the Stars*. Although the model in 6.3 has been provided at a playable size for the convenience of theatre practitioners' usage (see Figure 6.16), when staging the play, the plastic straw structure will represent places in Arghol's dream: his room, the city, the town and the café; and will allow actors to talk, walk and perform within it. In other words,

Figure 6.16
The author demonstrating that the model can be 'played' with as a toy. Such playing can help a practitioner to experience its closely connected structure. Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu.

Figure 6.17
A view of a miniature figure representing Arghol to show the scale of the setting. Designed and created by Pei-ying Wu.

the straws will be magnified to tube size and the staging will be based on these moveable tube structures (see Figure 6.17 for the scale). Thus, the application of transforming the model into a full-size stage setting not only facilitates the performance, but also illustrates the power of scale in theatrical production.

Figure 6.18
This photo shows the tubular structure standing on the octagonal ground, which is the same ground as that on which the Tai-chi platform stands. Designed and created by Pei-ying Wu.

Figure 6.19
A possible scenario of Hanp lying on the ground whilst Arghol explores worlds in his dream. Designed and created by Pei-ying Wu.

One of the major challenges of staging Act Three is the representation of various locations in Arghol's dream while keeping the connection to the yard, where they fight and later where Hanp lies unconscious. To emphasise the visual connections between the plastic modern city and the rustic bleak yard, I have designed the structure standing on rough ground (see Figure 6.18), which is the same ground where the negotiating Tai-chi platform stands (see sections 5.3 and 5.4 for details).

In addition, the mobile tube structure solves the spatial challenges in the play script. As the model is presented in 6.3, the structure can be shifted into various shapes, which allows the stage to accommodate more than two locations at one time, depending on the combination of the tubes. Moreover, as it appears in Figure 6.18, the structure covers almost all of the staging area, whilst in Figure 6.19 the building-like structure only occupies two-thirds of the stage. This shifting design facilitates the stage presentation of Arghol's dream and Hanp's reality at the same time.

Furthermore, because of the contrasting appearance of the smooth and rough, colourful and monotone, complex structure and simple platform, horizontal and vertical, the audience would notice these differences in shape and scale and recognise the distinction between the mass-produced industrial city and the primitive, handicraft life in the yard.
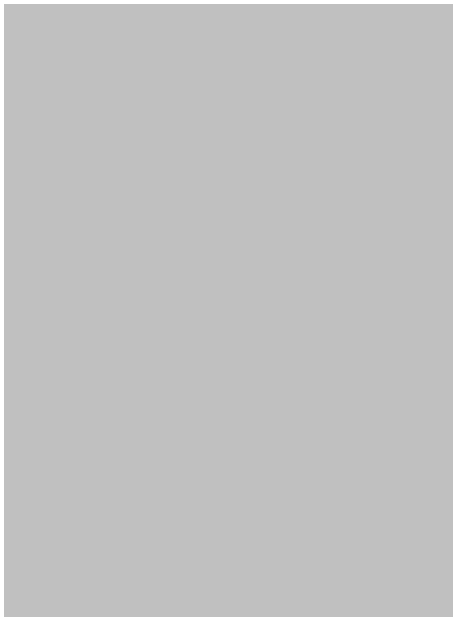
Figure 6.21
Lloyd's Building (part) image from
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:N2_Lloyds_Building.jpg
Downloaded on 20 February 2008

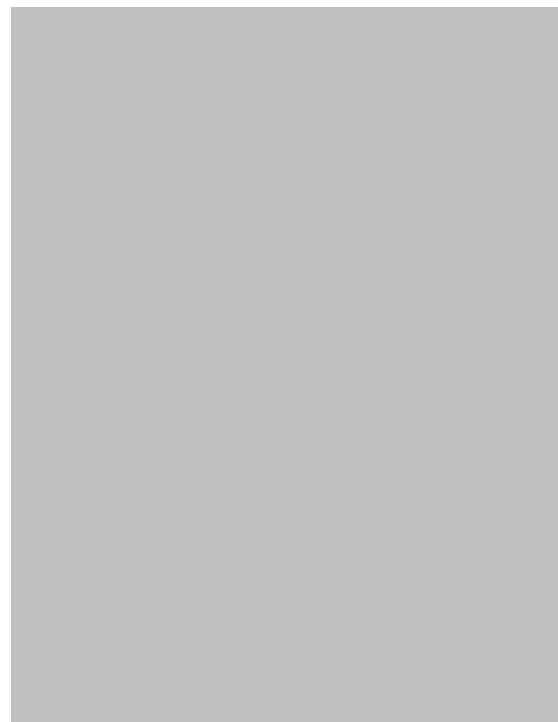**Figure 6.20**
Pompidou Centre (part) image from
http://www.centrepompidou.fr/informations/prati que/architecture/archi07.html
Downloaded on 20 February 2008

To build a tube structure stage might be a challenge for the stage designer, but made possible by contemporary technology. There are buildings using tubing as major elements of construction such as the Pompidou Centre (Richard Rogers, Renzo Piano and Gianfranco Franchini, 1977) (see Figure 6.20) and the Lloyds Building (Richard Rogers, 1984) (Figure 6. 21).

Figure 6.22 *The Slide,* Carsten Höller
Tate Modern Gallery 10 Oct 2006- 15 April 2007 Image from
http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/carstenholler/ photos2.shtm
Downloaded on 20 February 2008

The visible tube structure on the outside of the buildings is similar to that involved in stage installation. Carsten Höller recently also designed his latest artwork 'The Slides' (see Figure 6.22) with a tube structure, which is an installation suitable for both indoor and outdoor space.

Although tube structures can be produced on a stage with the support of modern technology, the next difficulty of performing Act Three is the moving of these tubes on stage both by mechanical power and by the efforts of the two actors. The actors represent humans fighting the overwhelming power of their surroundings (the universe), which moves of its own *Will* (mechanical power) and does not particularly care about the fate of survivors, if there are any.

Therefore actors need to negotiate ways of moving around tubular structures; this is similar to Arghol and Hanp struggling to find 'ownership' through battling with both their physical and mental abilities. Moreover, regardless of the results of machine power, the actors will force the tubing structure to change shape to meet their own needs by pushing or pulling hard on the tubes; this echoes the scenarios of Arghol and Hanp, who are using their strength in breaking through their physical and mental limitations in their search for true independence. Furthermore, it reflects Lewis's concern about the Artists' battle against industrial society. They may or may not succeed in finding appropriate routes to take in order to survive. However, the situation helps them to see the restrictions on their ability caused by a variety of constraints.

The appearance of actors on the stage is similar to that of an acrobat in a circus when bending their bodies to squeeze through shifting tubes; when they subvert and distort

the space, they also perform as clowns would act in a circus. Moreover, under the

lighting illusions, actors can move swiftly as if they were wire-walkers or trapeze

artists apparently transcending gravity, suspended as they are by almost invisible

supports and only reliant on their balance to maintain their performance. This staging

of the mobile tubing structure provides opportunities for the audience to ponder the

advertisement of the play in *BLAST*: 'some bleak circus'[9]. Replete with its changing

and enclosing spatial structures, a circus is full of the familiar repertoire of acts – the

acrobat, the clown, the wire-walker, and the trapeze artists.

Mixed media: wire, wood, cloth, yarn, paper, cardboard, leather, string, rubber tubing, corks, rhinestones, pipe
cleaners and bottle caps.

Complete with these characters, the artist Alexander Calder, predominately working in

areas of kinetic art, has also created a working model circus (see Figure 6.23). The

circus is a mobile performing place, usually a temporary structure, which only provides

an illusion of permanence and stability, being a tented construction capable of being

dismantled and moved with a minimum of labour and effort. The stage design of Act Three is a mobile structure which provides theatrical effects of the instability and uncertainty of the mental journey that Arghol and Hanp take to find true independence. Being a specially designed tubing installation, it can also be moved on stage by just two people.

These similarities between the transient stage design and a circus provide parallels in both their metaphorical meanings and their aesthetic appearance. In the next chapter, these parallels will be discussed further with the development of spatial concepts through the medium of mobiles with their ability to float and move freely in space.

[1] Edwards, Paul. Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000. p.128

[2] "[Arghol] had returned some months only from the great city of their world." (Lewis, Wyndham. "Enemy of the Stars." BLAST June 20th 1914: p.72)

[3] Lewis, Wyndham. "Enemy of the Stars." BLAST June 20th 1914: p.72

[4] ibid, p.72

[5] ibid, p.73

[6] ibid, p.73

[7] See chapter 2 for details.

[8] 'Evolution of the Park: Why the Playground is the Heart', from http://www.landdesigncollaborative.com/news/newsArticle2.htm by James C. Gamble Land Design Collaborative, Inc. Article appeared in the January 2006 Park and Recreation Design Issue of *elevation*, newsletter of the Illinois chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

[9] Lewis, "Enemy of the Stars", p.55

Chapter 7 *Enemy of the Stars* as theatrical narratives

So far this thesis has demonstrated the possible stage designs which address the question of whether the play is performable in a theatre. However, in order to examine the ideal representation following Lewis's original intention, this chapter re-considers the play within the contexts of both visual and theatrical art. A form has been chosen – the mobile – and the chapter looks at the way in which it can be used as a representation for *Enemy of the Stars*. Furthermore, because of the nature of theatrical narrative and its analogy with the characteristics of the mobile's visual appearance, this chapter finally investigates the viewing sequence of mobiles, which re-composes *Enemy of the Stars* as theatrical narratives.

Moreover, because of their variable meanings – a result of their own nature – the suspended mobiles are an innovative method of expressing and interpreting the essence of *Enemy of the Stars* as a performable concept. The use of mobiles has the advantage of being independent of the staging of the play itself, whilst still retaining the qualities of the script in an individual and conceptually acceptable form.

7.1 Mobiles and *Enemy of the Stars*

The previous chapters (chapters 4, 5 and 6) have demonstrated achievable stage designs for *Enemy of the Stars.* They were intended to be as true to the original play script as possible. Although these designs have already contested traditional theatrical expectations, in terms of their approaches to challenging natural gravity and audience perspectives, they are still within the conventional realm of staging – which is usually (though not always) the best representation of a play script.

Nevertheless there is a need to ask whether staging the play in a theatre is the most appropriate 'performance' of *Enemy of the Stars*. As mentioned in chapters 2 and 3, Lewis wrote this play as a demonstration of Vorticist art. Since the play was originally a novelty of the visual arts, it seems likely that Lewis would not have been satisfied with merely producing the play as a traditional theatrical performance.

Five years before Lewis created *Enemy of the Stars*, Futurist artist Marinetti had started presenting ideas through performance, which critics later named 'Performance Art'[1]. On

20 February 1909, Futurists made their first 'attacks on the establishment values of the painting and literary academies'[2] through their first manifesto. In the following years, Marinetti and his Futurist friends not only produced artistic productions, but also gathered painters to organise performance. They treated these kinds of productions and performances as means of disrupting the public. 'It gave artists licence to be both "creators" in developing a new form of artistic theatre, and "art objects" in that they made no separation between their art as poets, as painters or as performers'[3]. Lewis seemed to be so influenced by such thoughts that he created the Vorticist play as a piece of visual art.

However, *Enemy of the Stars* is different from the Futurist's performance art. Marinetti stated in the *Variety Theatre Manifesto* that the ideal model for Futurist performances is 'the whole gamut of stupidity, imbecility, doltishness, and absurdity, insensibly pushing the intelligence to the very border of madness'[4]. Yet *Enemy of the Stars* has a clear story line and intellectual debates in dialogues. In addition, the syntax Lewis used in creating the play is both highly visual and logical (when applying visual association and 'stacking' methods). Indeed, Lewis's *Enemy of the Stars* is a revolutionary creation using literal form and style in such a visual way that it at the same time delivers artistic ideas and invents a new visual artwork. As analyses in previous chapters have shown, however, this play also 'qualified' as a conventional theatrical production. Thus, we need to examine the play again in both its visual and theatrical contexts.

Lewis left one more clue as to his ideal performance of the play, the only image in the script which I have not explained in the previous chapters: 'Decoration for the Countess of Drogheda's House' (see Figure 7.1). This is a mirror with a surrounding frieze placed above the dining-room fireplace which Lewis completed in 1913. He was invited by Lady Drogheda to redecorate the dining-room and the drawing-room at 40 Wilton Crescent, London and he designed the dining-room 'primarily as a means of leading the viewer beyond the physical limits of the room, towards the realm as "the Polar regions of our psychic existence"'[5].
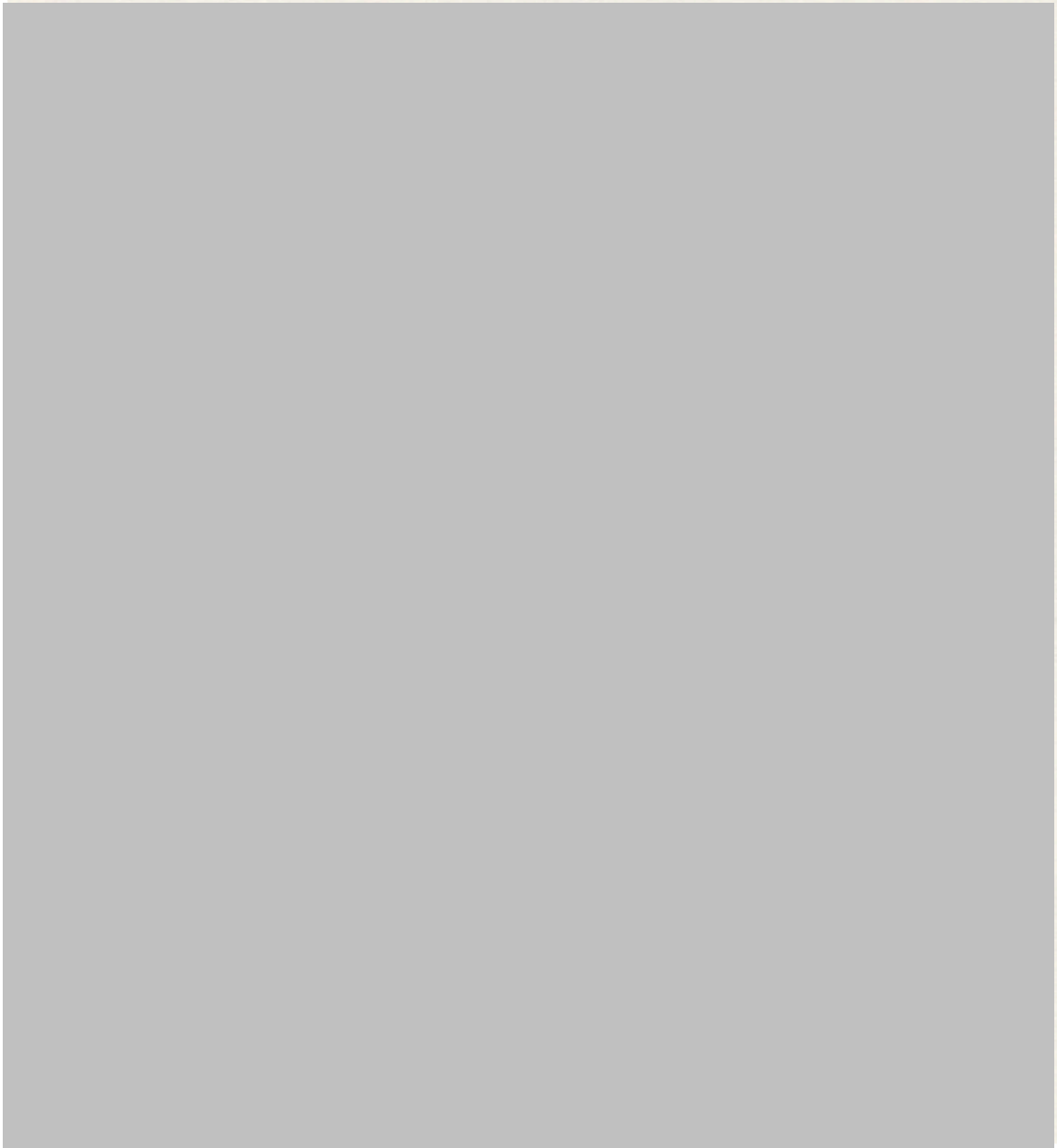
7.1 *Decoration for the Countess of Drogheda's House, page vii* from *BLAST*, 1914 (enlarged)

The reasons why Lewis placed this image in the script right after the three abstract images, 'Plan of War', 'Timon of Athens' and 'Slow Attack', and before the two figure images, 'Portrait of an English Woman' and 'The Enemy of the Stars' should be considered in detail. The three abstract images are the 'abstract themes' of the three Acts of the play and the two figure images indicate the possible appearances of the two characters. Assuming all images contained within the script have a role in helping to

prepare the performance, the image of an interior decoration of a residential house might possibly indicate the preferred performing environment, a domestic environment, such as the Drogheda's dining-room, rather than in a theatre arranged for entertaining.

"Life is the important thing!"[6] Lewis states in the section entitled 'Vortices and Notes' in *BLAST*. This section contains twelve articles in which Lewis repetitively emphasises the role of life and its affinity with the arts. Furthermore, according to these articles and the themes of the play, Lewis was clearly interested in exposing the artist struggling against a predictable environment as a representation of a 'theatrical' play. It seems that the play *Enemy of the Stars* has two simultaneous roles: one is a theatrical play script which could possibly be staged in a theatre; while the other is a piece of visual artwork which is intended to be seen in an everyday situation, as an exposition on the hardship of art or the artist working in a hostile environment. Therefore, the ideal representation of the play script is one that can be appreciated as an artwork and, in addition, understood as a theatrical production.

Considering *Enemy of the Stars* from a visual artist's point of view, there are several key features in its narratives: iconic descriptions of actions, symbolic meanings embodied in the visualities, contradictory duality in the characters, and apparently rebellious and playful ambience. To derive an artistic form which represents all these as well as the theatrical meanings identified in the three Acts (see detailed analysis in chapters 4, 5 and 6) is not an easy task. One especially wants to maintain the full sensory representation of a theatrical performance and this does not take the screen-based aspects into account.

Many art forms fulfil the requirements for conveying meaning, presenting contradiction and displaying playful ambience, but are not able to *move*. Yet, action is the most important factor in a theatrical performance; an art form which physically moves has an empowering capacity as representative of a play. Therefore, I have used the mobile, a form of kinetic art, to encapsulate actions as one

Figure 7.2
Pixies in Xmas forest
From http://www.flensted-
mobiles.com/start.html
Downloaded on 15 March 08

of the key characteristics of the representation.

Mobiles are often thought of as children's toys; paper-cut hanging objects, which can be found in many family homes since the Victorian era (see, for example, Figure 7.2). The term 'mobile' was first used in connection with a type of kinetic art when Marcel Duchamp described the early mechanised creations of Alexander Calder in 1931 (see Figure 7.3). Although these works were constructions consisting of two or three wire elements capped by small wooden frames, and at the time only had the potential to be kinetic, Calder later developed many mobile artworks and became famous for their creation (see Figure 7.4). The 'childish' form of mobiles then became widely accepted as a meaningful visual artistic creation.

Figure 7.3 *Red Frame,* Alexander Calder, 1931
Image from http://calder.org/images/work/full/a01854.jpg

In addition to its physical characteristics, the term 'mobile' can be associated with the presentation of art using everyday objects. Duchamp used the same term in 1913 as an optional name for his 'Bicycle Wheel'[7] (Figure 7.5). This was the first time the ready-made artwork had emerged as a demonstration claiming that art in life can be a contradictory and radical element evoking intellectual
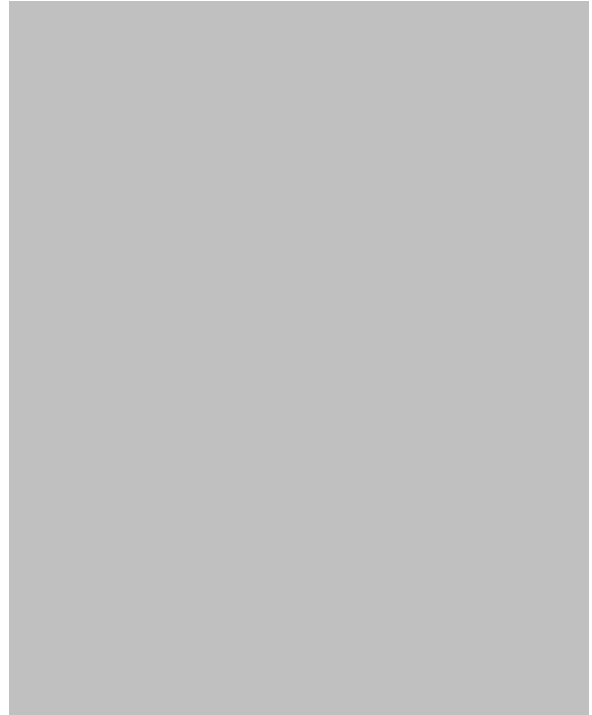
Figure 7.4 *Red Lily Pads,* Alexander Calder, 1956 at Guggenheim Museum, New York.

debates. The next year, 1914, the Vorticists published *BLAST*, in which they belaboured daily subjects, just as Duchamp did to everyday objects; they blasted some and blessed others.

As part of the manifesto, Lewis wrote the play *Enemy of the Stars,* exposing the struggles of art and artists in daily life by locating the main characters working in an 'arctic' wheelwright's yard: "England is just unkind and inimical to Art as the Arctic zone is to Life"[8]. Working with wheels in the arctic yard, Lewis had already hinted that the wheels (equivalent to the mobile in the arts) made in a hostile environment represent the struggle of creativity in this particular situation.

The suggested places for displaying these mobiles could be offices because working in offices is a major part of modern city life. However, when a member of an audience goes into a theatre, he expects to see a performance, whereas when a person goes to his office, he is ready to perform his work tasks. Therefore, when a person sees sets of mobiles visually displayed against walls in an office (Figure 7.6), this could be regarded as similar to the way in which an audience sees stage settings in a theatre.
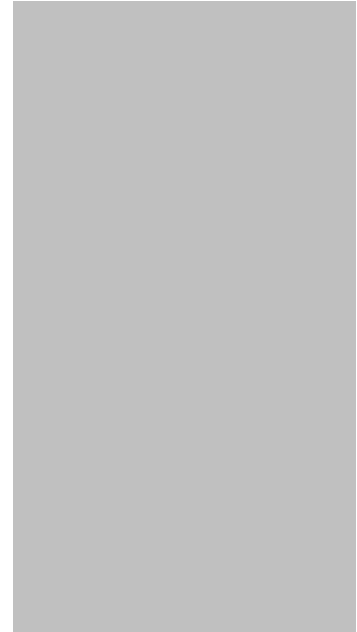
Figure 7.5 *Bicycle Wheel (Roue de bicyclette)*, New York 1951 (third version, after lost original of 1913). Marcel Duchamp
The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Figure 7.6 The sets of mobiles, as they were displayed in an existing contemporary environment, representing *Enemy of the Stars*. Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu. Paper board cut-outs, lead wire and fishing line.

However, the prospect and the emotion generated would be very different. Considering Lewis's intentions, a representation of *Enemy of the Stars* in an office can catch the spectator's attention by interrupting life patterns as Lewis did in writing *Enemy of the Stars* by evoking unusual language patterns. It also emphasises the question of why arts need to – and how artistic productions can – survive in the overwhelming modern office environment.

7.2 Co-ordinating visual appearances and meanings

After identification of the mobile as an appropriate form for representing *Enemy of the Stars*, the development of mobiles then becomes the centre of attention. There are two major steps in transforming a play into this form, similar to the process of staging it in a theatre. The first is to identify the themes of the play and then to visualise them in an appropriate manner. Because in the previous chapters the themes have been identified through text and visual reading as well as by play analysis, this artwork follows these themes. Thus the mobiles can be divided into three groups representing three Acts. To avoid the misunderstanding that these mobiles are part of the designed stage settings, the sets of mobiles will be called: 'Group One' representing 'cornering the 'Self''; 'Group Two' portraying 'confused negotiations within the duality'; and 'Group Three' rendering 'comprising true independence'.

The next step is the practice of visualising the play in mobiles. The mobile has several characteristics in its visual appearance: movement, counterpoise, weightlessness and with the affection of innocent playfulness. As the previous section pointed out, the key difference between a theatrical production and a visual representation is action. This is one of the reasons why mobiles are chosen as a form of representing the play—because of their kinetic ability.

However, in a theatrical production, after the visualised stage had been produced, the story will then be told by a sequence of events performed by actors. In the case of mobiles, these events will be presented by mobility, which is the sum of the hung objects moved by forces. The form of mobility tells less of a story than actually performing actions does. The mobiles are vehicles for providing viewers with 'communications'

among the hung objects by means of their position, distance and height, especially the designed counterpoise exhibited in the mobile which expresses relationships such as tension, competition and harmony. However, mobility alone cannot tell a story, though it provides surrounding areas with a theatrical atmosphere.

In addition, the kinetic properties of a mobile come from forces provided either from the design of the mobile itself or from forces such as gravity, wind, and human action (when viewers influence it). Diverse forces power the mobile in different movements, thus creating various understandings of the 'story'. This part will be discussed further in the next section.

Weightlessness is another characteristic of the mobile's appearance echoing the uniqueness of *Enemy of the Stars*. Mentioned in the previous chapters, Lewis creates the play with an ambition to challenge conventional theatrical perspectives. It forces the audience to look down to the performing area from the top gallery of a building. Suspended mobiles reflect this anti-gravity concept.

Moreover, these weightless paper-cut objects will remind viewers of their playful childhood toys. The temptation to touch them and see them move could cause a further, chain effect in other adjoining mobiles. Because these mobile objects are poised in calculated positions, when a person moves, the air currents caused by body movement will influence the mobility of these weightless paper-cuts. The viewers need to be careful of adjusting their body gestures in order to avoid unwanted disturbance, although any movement caused by the viewers is considered as part of the artwork. The interactions involved in viewing the mobile echo Lewis's ideas of using audiences as part of the

performance. Although the weightlessness and the playfulness do not tell stories, they provide the circumstances that allow viewers to become part of the artwork. The interaction between artworks and their viewers will be discussed further in the next section.

It follows that mobility, counterpoise, weightlessness and playfulness are not able to fully represent a play. Instead, they physically provide the ambience of a possible theatrical 'performance', which is an achievement most art forms cannot accomplish. Yet an art display is received differently from a theatrical performance; to help viewers understand the play, this artwork (mobile) needs to enhance the expression of the story as well as the meanings of the play.

Based on the viability of the mobile form, I use Lewis's own created images as the hung objects to exemplify the play's aesthetic characteristics and associated symbolic meanings. As one of the Vorticists (and a Modernist), Lewis was involved in a problematic relationship between the 'Self' and the exterior (the 'Not-Self'), social world[9]. As he already expresses his thoughts and understanding in paintings and drawings, applying his own visual art images in creating the mobiles would be appropriate for presenting the play.

7.2(a) Group Two: confused negotiations within the duality

The following is a detailed explanation of how I designed these hung objects and how I arranged them within each mobile Group to 'tell' the story of each Act. I would like to take Group Two, 'confused negotiations within the duality', as a first example of

explaining the process of transforming Lewis's images into meaningful suspended

objects.

As unravelled in chapter 5, Act Two is devoted to delineating various personal

relationships between Arghol and Hanp. A mobile is an important vehicle for exposing

the delicate balances between the two objects or actors; therefore, the presentation of

negotiations within the duality is easily achieved by the appearance of its component

parts. However, the kinds of relationships and the tension between the two will also need

to be considered.

Containing nine pairs of figures, Group Two is intended to display various human

relationships, especially those that happen between Arghol and Hanp. These nine pairs

are from "Two Nudes" (1903, Figure 7.7), "Two Soldiers" (1912, Figure 7.8), "Second

Movement" (1913, Figure 7.9), "Lovers with another figure" (1920, Figure 7.10),

"Wrestling" (1929, Figure 7.11), "Boxing at Juan-les-Pins" (1929, Figure 7.12), "Count

Your Dead" (1937, Figure 7.13), "Heroic" (1937, Figure 7.14), and "Hamlet and Horatio"

(1941, Figure 7.15). In order to extract the spirit of these images whilst maintaining the

visual association with their meanings, I decided to make them paper-cut silhouettes
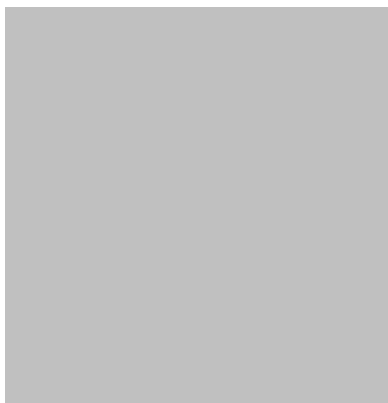
(see Figures 7.16 to 7.24).

Figure 7.7 *Two Nudes,*

Figure 7.16
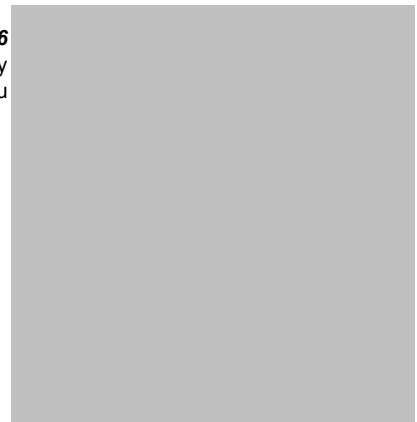Silhouette made from *Two Nudes,* by Pei-ying Wu

Figure 7.8 *Two Soldiers*
Wyndham Lewis, 1912

Figure 7.17
Silhouette made from *Two Soldiers,* by Pei-ying Wu

Figure 7.9 *Second Movement*
Wyndham Lewis, 1913

Figure 7.18
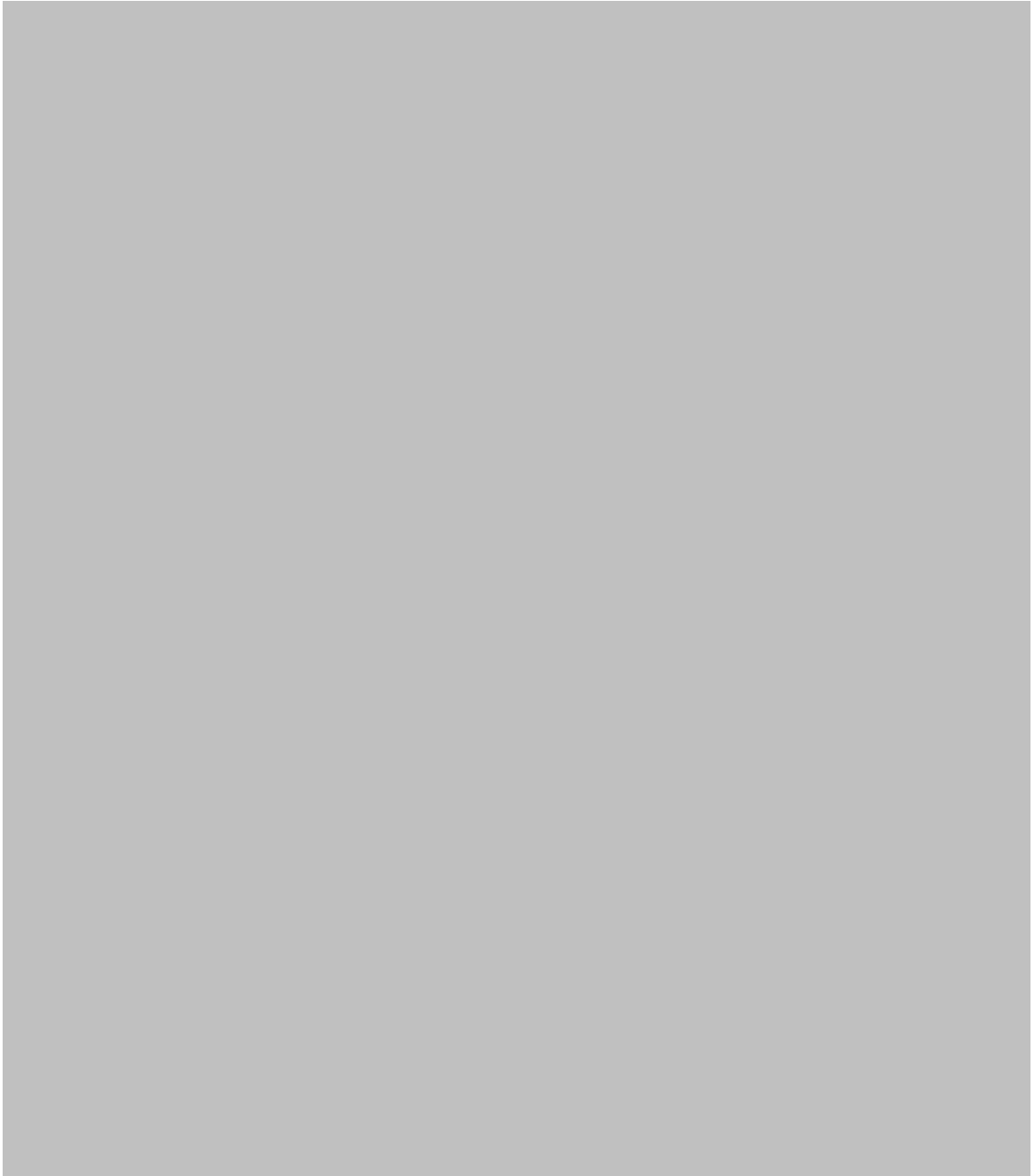Silhouette made from *Second Movement*
by Pei-ying Wu

Figure 7.10 *Lovers with another figure* (part)
Wyndham Lewis, 1920

Figure 7.19
Silhouette made from *Lovers with another figure*
by Pei-ying Wu

Figure 7.11 *Wrestling* (detail)
Wyndham Lewis, 1929

Figure 7.20
Silhouette made from *Wrestling*
by Pei-ying Wu

Figure 7.12 *Boxing at Juan-les Pins*
Wyndham Lewis, 1929

Figure 7.21
Silhouette made from *Boxing at Juan-les Pins*, by
Pei-ying Wu

Figure 7.13 *Count Your Dead*
Wyndham Lewis, 1937

Figure 7.22
Silhouette made from *Count Your Dead*, by Pei-ying Wu

Figure 7.14 *Heroic*
Wyndham Lewis, 1937

Figure 7.23
Silhouette made from *Heroic*, by Pei-ying Wu

Figure 7.15
Hamlet and Horatio (detail),
Wyndham Lewis, 1937

Figure 7.24
Silhouette made from *Hamlet and Horatio*,
by Pei-ying Wu

Visually, these silhouettes unify nine different styles into one and develop the mobile as an artwork. Besides, each painting has its original context, so each pair of figures tells a story by its visual appearance. By transforming them into silhouettes, the essence of each pair retains their meaning without unnecessary visual contexts attached (compare the side-by-side images from Figure 7.7 to Figure 7.24). They provide viewers with the capacity to imagine the relationships between the two figures.

These figures are cut away from their original titles, the textual contexts, such as "Hamlet and Horatio" (Figure 7.15). If a viewer does not know these two figures are those characters, he or she would not necessarily gather that these two persons are the most truthful and confident friends. They might be possibly understood as two friendly acquaintances meeting on a street. These kinds of uncertain personal relationships are the extended meaning that the mobile can achieve, since when viewers ask questions about the possible relationships, they deepen their understanding of this issue.

On the other hand, for those who are familiar with Lewis's images, the silhouette of "Hamlet and Horatio" (Figure 7.24) might have enough visual distinctions to recall the painting's title and these figures would become symbols representing Hamlet and Horatio. Although a symbol is one of the best ways of keeping visual appearance simple whilst gaining further layers of meanings from it, it is like another kind of text; they are both languages, and one does need training to understand a language. Therefore, understanding through symbolic decoding can develop meanings beyond mere appearance, but at the same time limit them within the existed perspectives.

Viewers might take one of these approaches so as to understand Group Two, or they might follow their own wish to take another, different interpretation. As a result, the simple appearances of silhouettes convey potential layers of meanings. Moreover, for most viewers these silhouettes are simple human figures with fixed gestures, which are an element of universal body language. In "Two Nudes" (Figure 7.7), it is clear that the person on the right has power over the person on the left. When I made them into silhouettes, I exaggerated the power imbalance by presenting the person on the right hand side as a little bigger (Figure 7.16). "Two Soldiers" (Figure 7.8) is another example

of two persons in a conflict of power, but this time they are clearly equal. They are abusive to each other and neither seems willing to concede.

In addition to the body language generated within the original figure composition, because each pair of figures is hanging as one mobile, the rotating paper-cut, the position, the distance between them, and their height also offer opportunities for viewers to create various meaningful relationships.

Figure 7.25 is a photograph of an actual mobile, with a suspended pair developed from "Count Your Dead" (Figure 7.13). In the original image these two persons are holding daggers and trying to kill each other. Because of the rotating nature of the hung objects, these two enemies could, at some times, become comrades-in-arms rather than 'killers'.
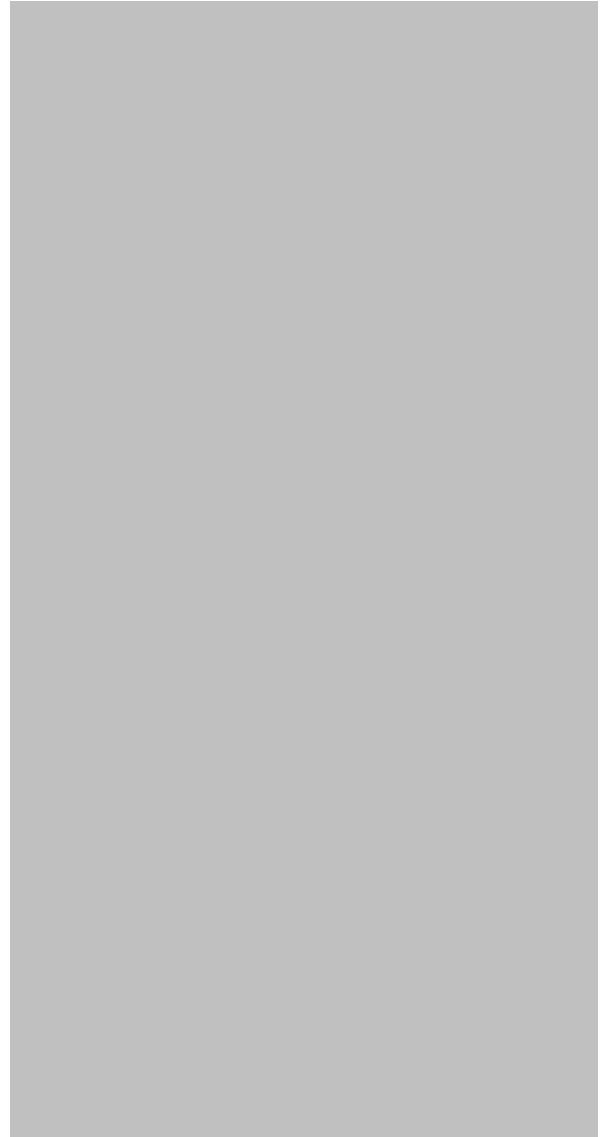

Figure 7.25
A silhouette mobile in Group Two (this photo is taken to show the set is moving)
Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu

The mobile also makes the relationship between two persons more vivid. Two people suspended at different angles and heights (see Figure 7.26) indicate an oppressive power possessed by the right-hand person. With the rotations, the scenario can also show that the right-hand person cannot tolerate the left-hand one, turning his/her head away and almost fleeing (see Figure 7.27).

Figure 7.26 A silhouette mobile in Group Two, designed and made by Pei-ying Wu

The biggest difference I made in changing the original relationship by emphasising their heights is illustrated in figure 7.28. The original pair are wrestling on a stage (see Figure 7.11). But instead of placing them against each other, shoulder to shoulder, I transformed them into perpetrator and victim to reinforce the tension between the two.

Figure 7.27
The same silhouette mobile as figure 7.26 but rotated into a different position. Photo taken by Pei-ying Wu

Apart from all these possibilities of interactive relationships, when putting nine pairs together, there might be other new relationships created through the interactions. For example, the "Two Nudes" (Figure7.7) originally had nothing to do with "Count Your Dead" (Figure 7.13) or "Heroic" (Figure 7.14). However, we can see that, in Figure 7.29, because the viewer sees them overlapping from their viewpoint, the 'reading' of these figures develops into a possible killing scene. One person holds a dagger high and is about to kill the one whose head is already lowered. The person on the victim's left cannot bear to watch it and tries to turn away, whilst the person on the right hand side seems to know nothing about this happening or seems unlikely to prevent others from intruding on the killing. Meaningful scenarios created through the combinations of the nine figures would only be limited by the viewers' imagination.

Figure 7.28
The silhouette mobile presents a scene of possible 'falling' in Group Two Designed based on Lewis's *Wrestling,* by Pei-ying Wu

Figure 7.29 A view of *Mobiles,* Group Two Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu

As the suspended objects move by different forces, they can create theatrical scenarios similar to those on a stage. These 'actions' are designed to move within the 'calculated' directions, which is also similar to real actors who follow the director's well-planned instructions on stage.

Although the theme, the negotiations within the duality, and the personal interactions happening in the play would be received by viewers due to the visual appearances of the mobiles, because the silhouettes are visually creating a social context only in relation to the figure profiles and the interactions within, they are able to adapt to any existing context within the viewers' minds. On one hand, they create more theatrical narratives than the actual performances; on the other, the understanding of the play will be highly reliant on the viewer's own interpretations of these visual appearances.

7.2(b) Group One: cornering the 'Self'

Because of this, the other two Groups of the mobiles will focus on providing more specific contexts in order to help viewers to construct the story of the play as nearly as possible to the original. The theme of Group One is cornering the 'Self', which relates to the scene

Figure 7.30 A close-up of Group One of the mobile displayed in a corner of an existing office. Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu

where Arghol, the enemy, is ambushed and assaulted by the Red Universe. To deliver a more accurate context, I decided to put 'the enemy' literally in a corner and position a crowd of red elements into a visual situation of cornering their victim (see Figure 7.30).

Lewis had already prepared the image of the enemy. He painted "The Enemy of the Stars" (Figure 7.31) in 1913 and printed it as part of the play in *BLAST* (see chapter 3 for details). Again I transform it into a silhouette (Figure 7.32) in order to make it function as a piece of kinetic art as well as associating it with the 'negotiating' figures in Group Two. For those who are not familiar with Lewis's works, they
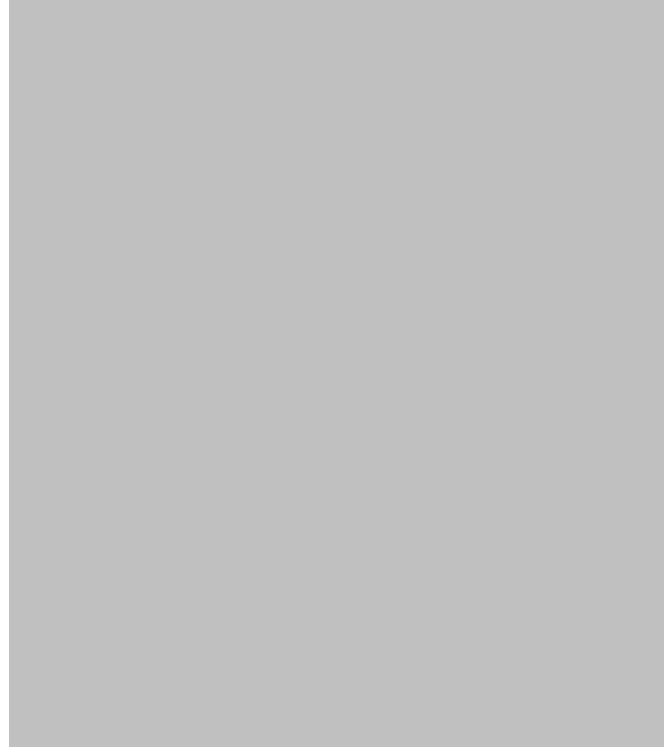
The Enemy of the Stars
Wyndham Lewis, 1913

Silhouette made from *The Enemy of the Stars,* by Pei-ying Wu

may not know that this machine-like figure represents the enemy, but can still understand Lewis's intended characteristics of 'the enemy' through its appearance. Firstly it looks more like a machine than a human, which would arouse the viewer's curiosity about who it is and what it represents. Secondly, he stands stiffly as if he is transfixed within the surroundings and does not know how to react, or rather, does not want to act. Positioned facing the corner of a room, this weightless
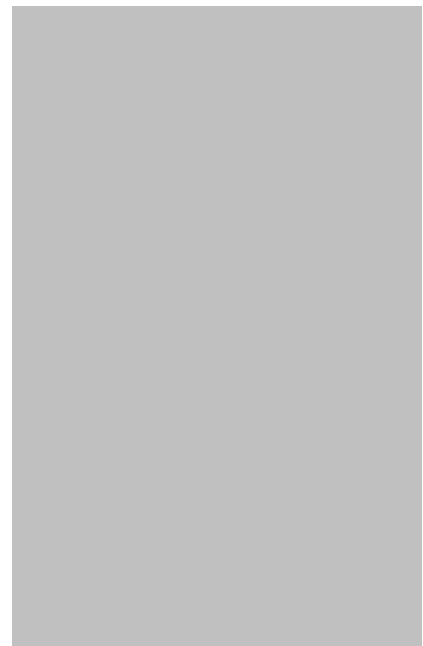
Figure 7.33
The enemy silhouette faces into the corner of an existing office.

paper-cut figure seems to be hopelessly facing its doom (see Figure 7.33).

 As to the representation of the Red Universe, I decided to use a human form as a major visual presence. In the play the Red Universe is invisible. However, its forces influence the whole surrounding space and become an area of ambush (see chapter 4 for details). Therefore, by using human forms as the elements composing the Red Universe, its visual appearance can help viewers to understand the major action of Group One – 'cornering'.

Figure 7.34 *Red Scene,* Wyndham Lewis, 1933, Oil on canvas.

In addition, Lewis himself used the human form as a representation of supernatural forces. In "Red Scene" (Figure 7.34), a painting of Lewis's image of Hell[10], he depicted a group of empty animated figures gliding through the land of the inferno representing

those 'guardians' driven by purposeless power (see Figure 7.35). This is similar to the

delineation of Act One in the play. Therefore I transform these four 'guardian figures' into

red coloured silhouettes (see Figure 7.36).

Figure 7.35 *Red Scene* (detail), Wyndham Lewis, 1933
Human figures Lewis depicted in representing the inferno guards in Hell.

Figure 7.36
Red silhouettes made from these 'gliding figures' in Lewis's *Red Scene,* made by Pei-ying Wu. Paper-cuts.

Figure 7.37
The bottom of the red silhouettes are similar to the form of axes. Designed by Pei-ying Wu

Figure 7.39
One of the red silhouettes look like carrying a knife and a hidden dagger. Designed by Pei-ying Wu.

Figure 7.40
One of the red silhouettes seems to carry a sword. Designed by Pei-ying Wu.

To assist viewers to understand the theme, I designed these red silhouettes with three special intentions. First, I deliberately extended the gliding foot into a killing weapon by making them resemble medieval beheading axes (see Figure 7.37). Because these figures will be suspended in mid air, viewers will visually sense the threat when they observe them (see Figure 7.38). In addition, I also made some of these figures appear to carry a sword, a knife or a dagger (see Figures 7.39 and 7.40), to emphasise their aggressive and attacking force of these figures.

Figure 7.38 A view from below of Group One of the mobiles showing the threat of the suspended figures. Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu.
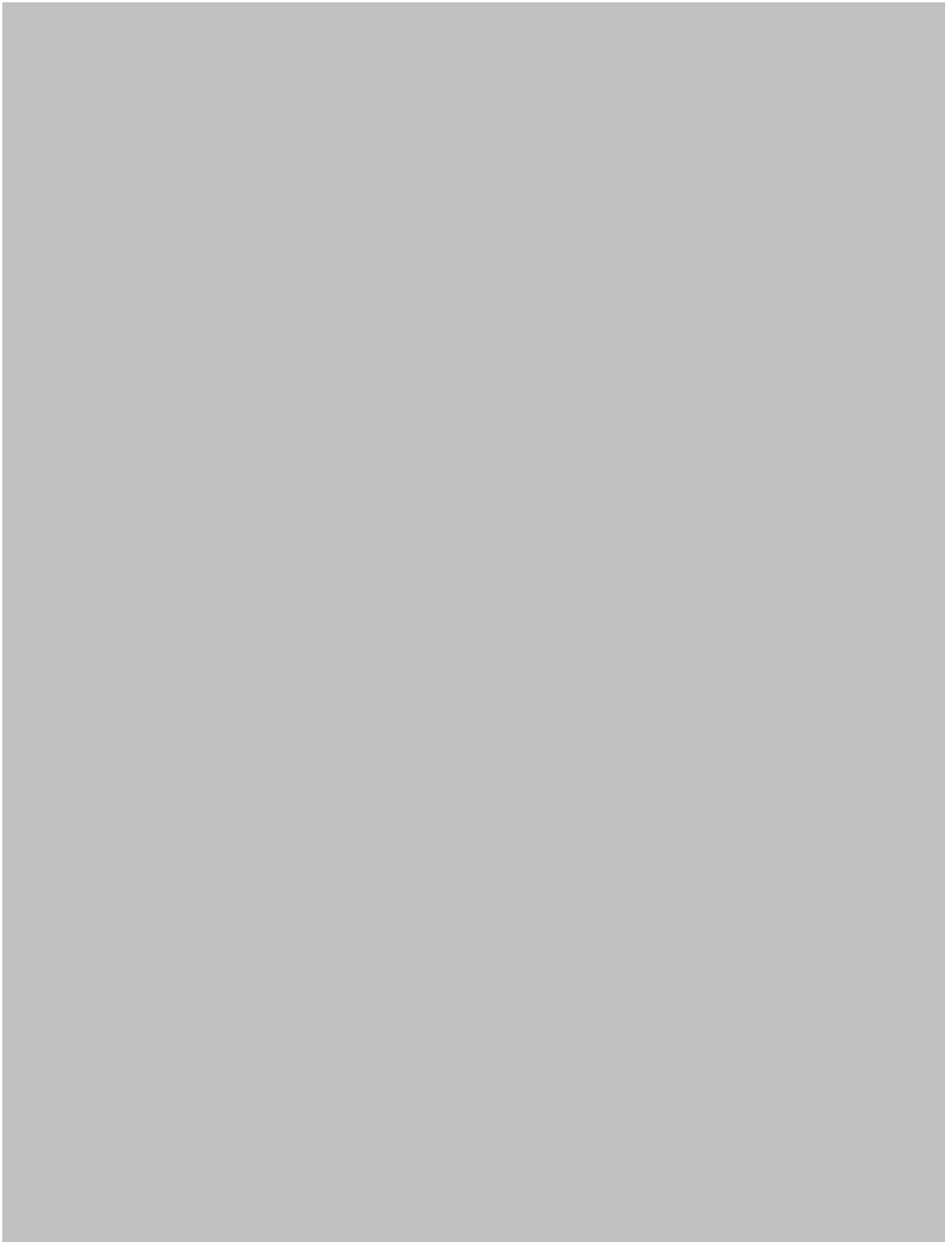
Figure 7.41 A full view of Group One of the mobiles suspended in an existing office. Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu. Multi-materials: paper-cuts, fishing line and lead wires.

Secondly, I made these figures of two different scales: some are of a similar size to the enemy, and others are much bigger. Differing sizes also provide a number of variable scales to emphasise the three-dimensional quality of the piece. This is to represent the threatening forces (see Figure 7.41). By surrounding the enemy with various red figures at different heights, viewers would understand the situation of a 'cornering' and will not mistake the scene as a mere figure display.

Thirdly, instead of using two figures balancing on one mobile, in Group One each mobile consists of at least four figures. The visual appearance of these figures is similar to soldiers on parade. They move in groups and in line with each other instead of being isolated individuals. This characteristic is a strong visual contrast to the lone figure of the enemy (see Figure 7.42).

Figure 7.42
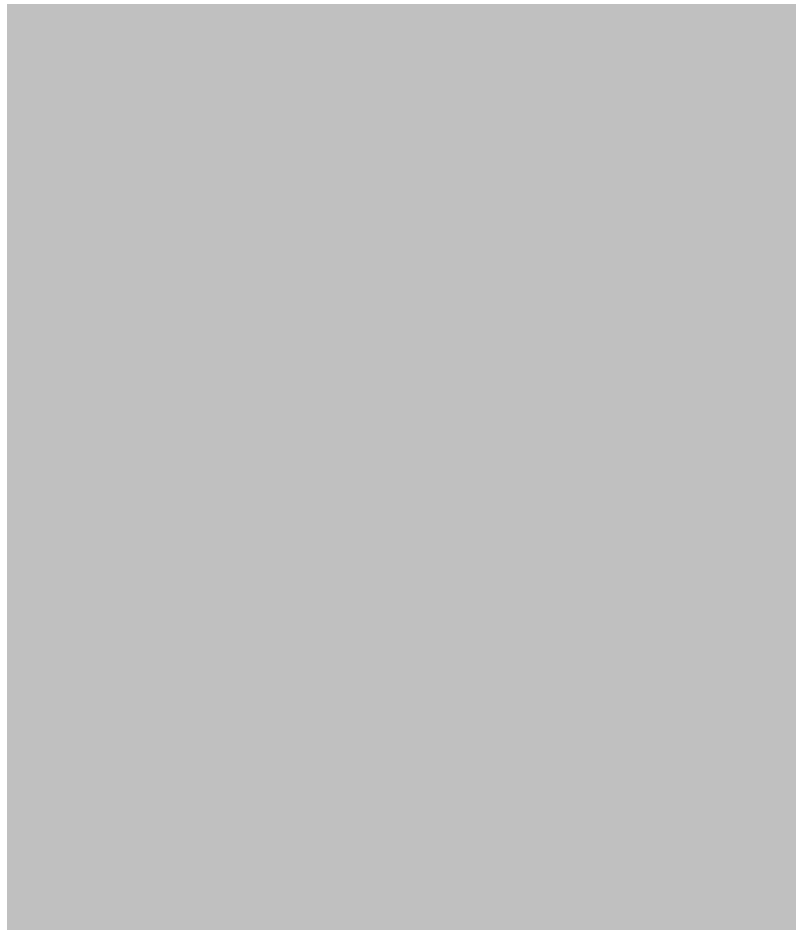A close-up view of Group One showing red figures moving as if they were parading soldiers. Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu.

By emphasising these figures' positions and the direction of their movements, the theme of Group One, 'cornering', is clearly displayed. However, the interpretation of cornering the 'Self' depends on the viewer's interpretation of its affinity to the human (or artists')

condition. The limitation of a mobile display is its ability to explain philosophical concepts, such as the black figure of the Enemy — which equates to the human condition – which can be regarded as equalling the 'Self'. At the same time, it also opens up the possibility for viewers to imagine interpretations of the scene. Although they might not fully comprehend the intended concept, the display would at least arouse attention to the conditions of being trapped or cornered.

7.2(c) Group Three: comprising true independence

If the concept of cornering the 'Self' cannot be delivered as a guaranteed single understanding, the next theme – 'comprising true independence' – will be an even bigger challenge. As chapter 6 has discussed, Act Three of the play emphasises both the spatial and mental. Arghol and Hanp have conflicts both in the yard and in Arghol's dreams. Within the dreams, the locations shift suddenly and swiftly from one to another. Their battles in these locations are rather self-developing actions rather than a competition to survive. To visualise these involves two steps: the first is to make material the spatial spreading of the scenes and the struggling against the protagonists' own limitations; the second is to create the 'action' of comprising true independence. Because the second step solely depends on the audience's understanding and interpretation, it will be discussed in detail in the next section (7.3). The following paragraphs are devoted to explaining the first step.
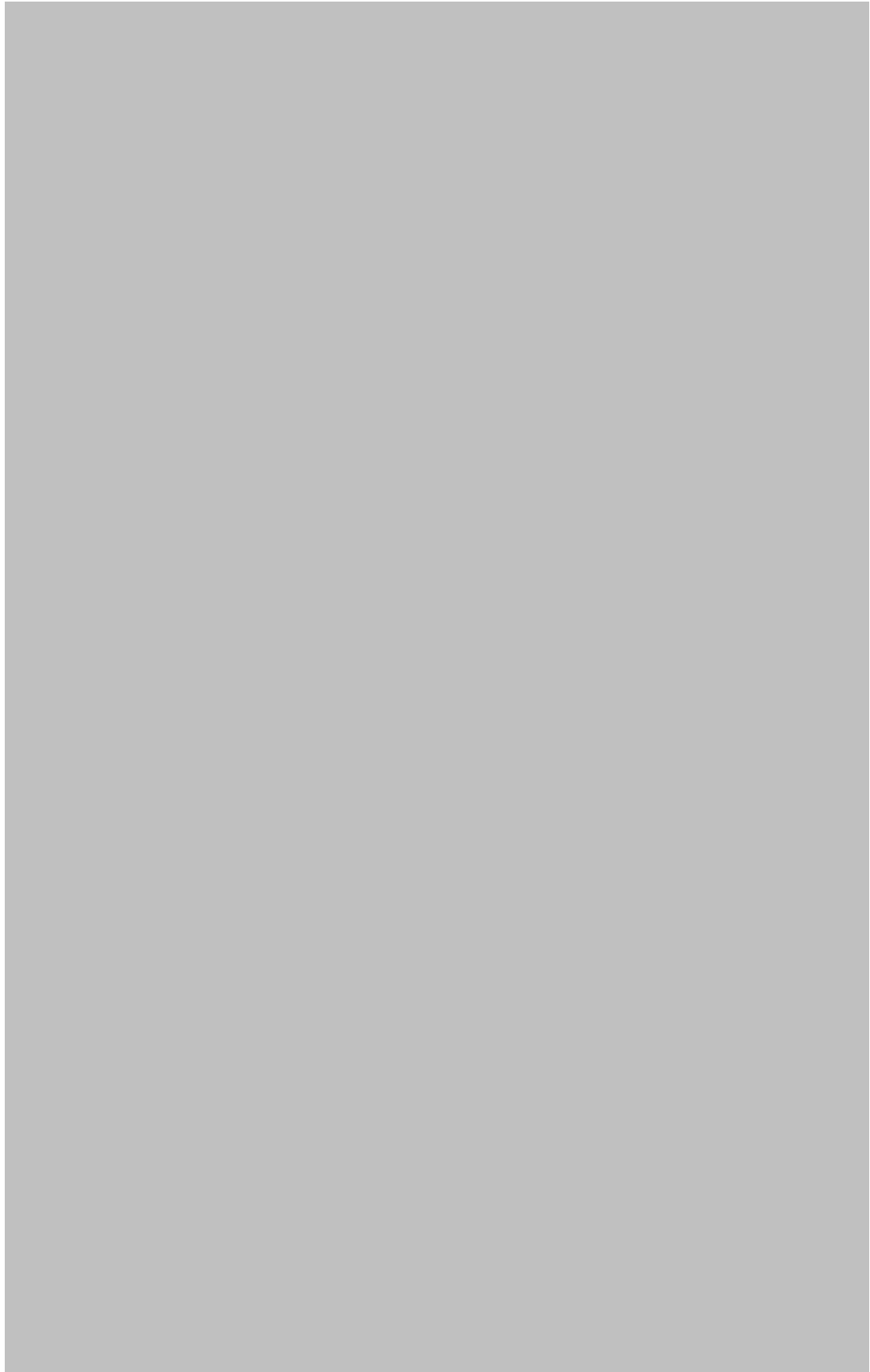
Figure 7.43 A view of suspended Group Three in an existing office, which reflects to the theme of Act Three, comprising true independence. Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu

Between 1913 and 1915, Lewis was particularly interested in depicting the industrial world as abstract structures and delineating these spaces as optical illusions (see chapter 6). As the yard in the play is one kind of industrial location and those in Arghol's dreams are either in the big city or extended town, I decided again to use Lewis's own created images to represent these shifting places. Rather than represent these places as identical locations, I decided to display them as fragments of an industrial scene. I took parts of Lewis's compositional elements from five of his paintings and constructed them into kinetic mobiles (see Figure 7.43). These five paintings are: 'New York' (Figure 6.3), 'Workshop' (Figure 6.4) 'Composition in Blue' (Figure 6.5), 'The Crowd' (Figure 7.44) and 'Dragon in a Cage' (Figure 7.45).

The aim of creating Group Three is not to reconstruct a city or industrial scene; the main objective is to create the atmosphere of an alien man-made world, which provides
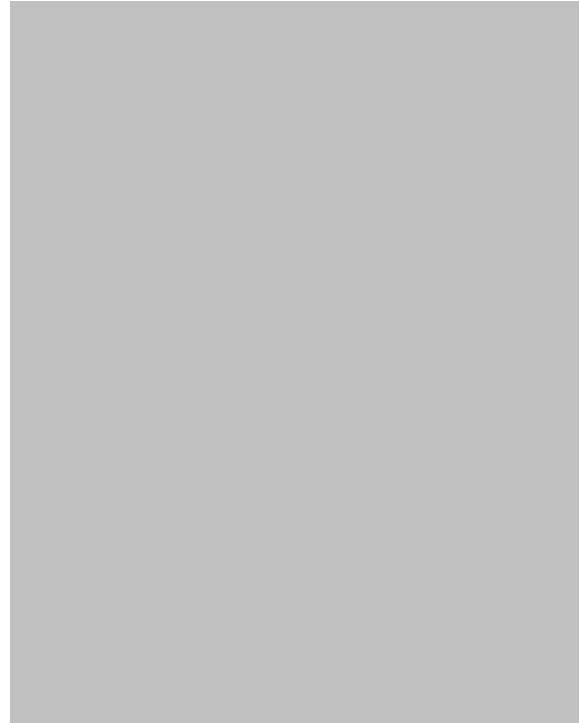
Figure 7.44 *The Crowd*
Wyndham Lewis, 1914-15, Oil on canvas

Figure 7.45 Dragon in a Cage
Wyndham Lewis, 1914-15, Oil on canvas

the central realm of human activities in modern society. By displaying these fragments in three-dimensional terms, Group Three raises the question of where human characters stand; it echoes the situations in the play, where Arghol and Hanp struggle in trying to pin down their ownership of Self to a specific location.

The suspended angles of these compositional elements are also designed to emphasise the spatial nature of the mobile's display to reflect the numerous shifting scenes of Arghol's dreams. When viewers walk around them, the 'scenario' changes due to differing perspectives (see Figures 7.46, 7.47 and 7.48). In dreams, the scenery always responds to what is in the dreamer's mind, consciously or unconsciously.

Figure 7.46 A view of Group Three showing one of the possible architectural compositions presenting the atmosphere of a town or city. Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu.

Figure 7.47 Photo taken to show one of the scenarios of Group Three of mobile, which contains dynamical spaces within its suspended elements. Designed and made by Pei-ying Wu.

Moreover, the way of displaying these fragments actually makes it difficult for

viewers to walk through or within the Group, especially if they want to have a good scenario of Group One or Group Two from the location of Group Three (see Figure 7.49). However, with careful negotiation, viewers can still move around within the space. It symbolises the struggles of Arghol and Hanp in breaking through their own limitations and their past, and in seeking to find possible routes into the future.

Figure 7.49 Viewing Group Two from the location of Group Three. Designed and Made by Pei-ying Wu.

To comprehend the struggles of Arghol and Hanp in realising their true independence, viewers need to observe mobiles from various angles in searching for the appropriate routes and connections within the display. Only by doing so can viewers then go with them through the mental and physical journey with them. Therefore the next section will be devoted to a detailed exploration of the sequencing orders of these mobile groups and the possible access for viewing them.

7.3 *Enemy of the Stars*: building a 'Tower of Babel'

The presence of the mobiles in the presentation of *Enemy of the Stars* implies different interpretations that illustrate the emotional and psychological forces constrained by and physically limited by the rigid structures indicated in the artworks, similar to the situation created by a 'Tower of Babel'. Although a 'Tower of Babel' in the present context would seem to imply a host of discordant voices and elements in a partly built construction and therefore to some extent a chaotic structure, it is a structure in the process of being built that will be torn down by the forces it ostensibly contains. This provides an analogy in visualising *Enemy of the Stars* – exposing tension between human diversity and exploration, and the rigid controls within limitations of a constricted man-made universe. It can also be suggested that the images and metaphors evoked in the writings in and around the play provide a context for the conflict of ideas that extend in many directions, despite the constraints of conventional literature and theatre. In this way, the staging of the play, reflecting the disparate nature of the struggle it contains, can be broken down and analysed in a number of ways.

Apart from a theatrical performance that unfolds the story through time, the artwork mobiles can be seen as a spatial form of narrative. When these suspended mobiles (Figure 7.6) are first seen, they can be compared to the way in which an audience sees stage settings in a theatre before the actors enter the stage (see Figures 4.20, 4.27 and Figure 7.50 for examples), but there is a major difference between them. The audience that enters a theatre can only see the first part of the settings that, in actuality, represents little of the story, whereas the viewer, experiencing all the settings at one time through the mobiles, can sense the play more comprehensively. The viewer can see the mobiles as the play, but the audience would not treat the first stage setting as an equal representation of a play. For the audience, the scenario is unknown and they are engaged in seeing the actors display the intentions and course of the action, whereas the viewer by observing mobiles and their changing positions can form different possible scenarios. The time sequence of the play itself and the spatial sequence of the mobiles overlap and interact to provide a further dimension and significance to the play's development.
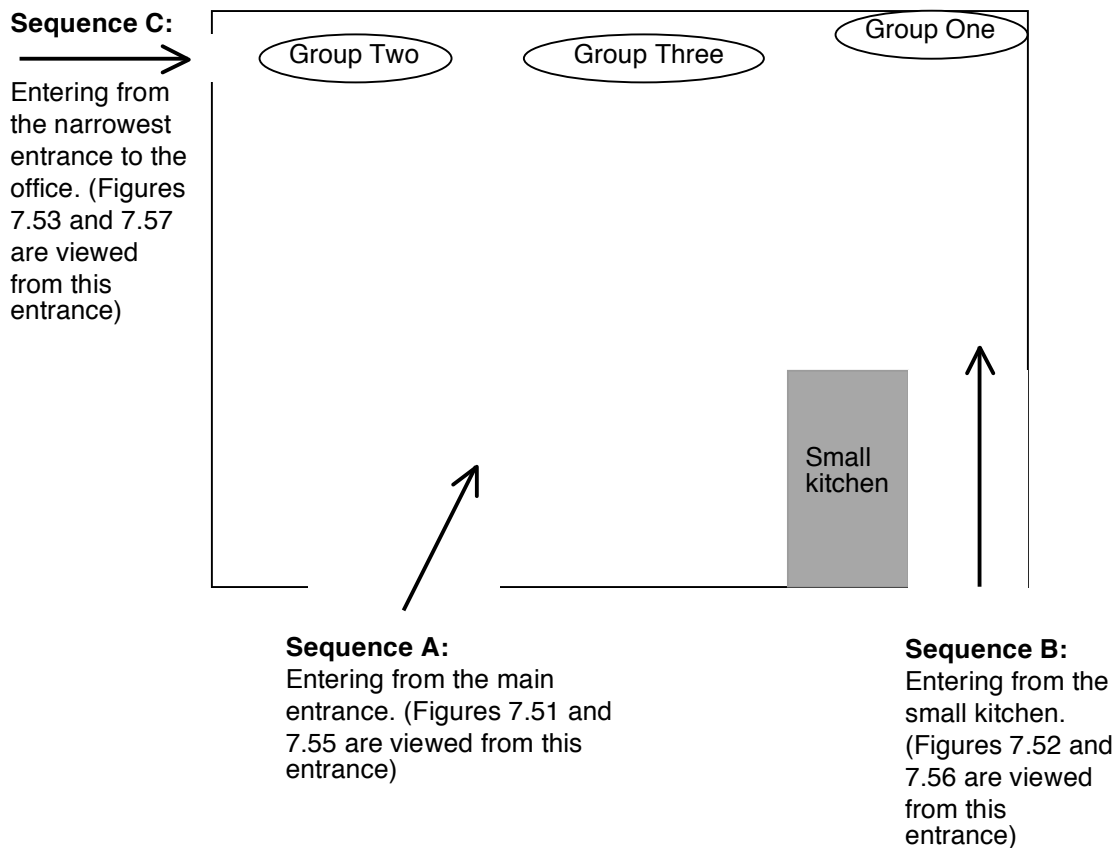
Figure 7.50
Raymond Gubbay's Madam Butterfly performed in the Royal Albert Hall in February 2003
Stage designed by David Roger (directed by David Freeman with Peter Robinson conducting the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra)
Image downloaded on 18 April 2008 from http://www.voiceofacity.com/londen/?p=156#more-156

The play script is the starting point which leads to the interpretation of the play and the development of the visual structures that extend the interpretation and create possibilities, though still ultimately based on the original format. From a consideration of a disparate layout of things and actions, this study provides, by exploring potential visual mechanisms, further possibilities for translating and interpreting the central core of Lewis's *Enemy of the Stars*.

Lewis wrote the play in the sequence of Act One, Two and then Three; in the display of the artworks, three Groups of mobiles represent one Act each. Because of its spatial nature, the best location for Group One is in a corner of the room in order to represent

the scenario of Act One of being cornered. In addition, because the mobiles are displayed in an existing office[11], the viewers can enter that meeting place from three entrances (see Figures 7.51, 7.52 and 7.53). Each viewer will experience his or her 'first scene' depending on the route taken. Therefore, there is no need to follow the fixed sequence in Lewis's time-based play script. Furthermore, this display also aims to echo Lewis's intention to break the patterns of the written language as demonstrated in *Enemy of the Stars*. The final display of each Group is, if one enters the office from the main entrance, facing the long wall, seeing the mobiles from left to right, Group Two, Group Three and then Group One (see Figure 7.54). Figures 7.55, 7.56 and 7.57 show the three possible views viewers might experience when they enter from three different entrances. For the readers' convenience, the route taken in Figure 7.55 will be called Sequence A; the one in Figure 7.56 Sequence B and in Figure 7.57 Sequence C. (Please also see the diagram below for the floor plan of the office.)

Sequence C:

Entering from the narrowest entrance to the office. (Figures 7.53 and 7.57 are viewed from this entrance)

Group Two   Group Three   Group One

Small kitchen

Sequence A:
Entering from the main entrance. (Figures 7.51 and 7.55 are viewed from this entrance)

Sequence B:
Entering from the small kitchen. (Figures 7.52 and 7.56 are viewed from this entrance)

The Diagram
This diagram shows the office floor plan, including the indications of three viewing sequences.
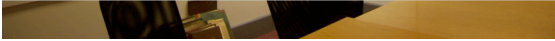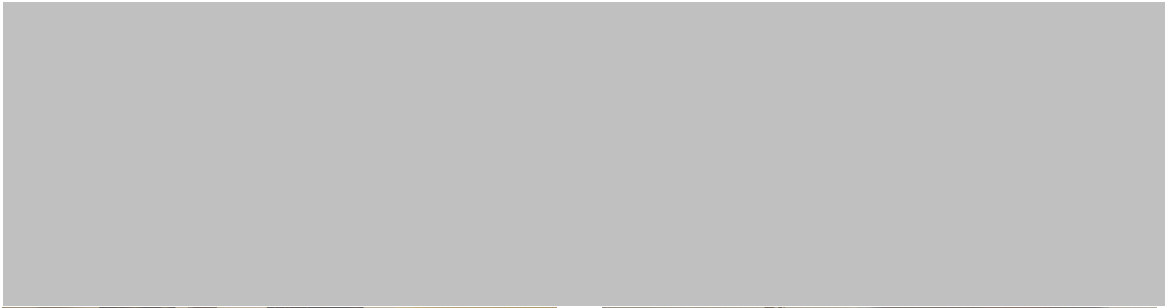
Figure 7.51
View of an existing office when entering from the main entrance.
Photo taken by Pei-ying Wu

Figure 7.55
First view of Mobiles when entering from the main entrance.
Mobiles created by Pei-ying Wu.

Figure 7.52
The first view of an existing office when entering from the small kitchen. Photo taken by Pei-ying Wu

Figure 7.56
First view of Mobiles when entering from the small kitchen.
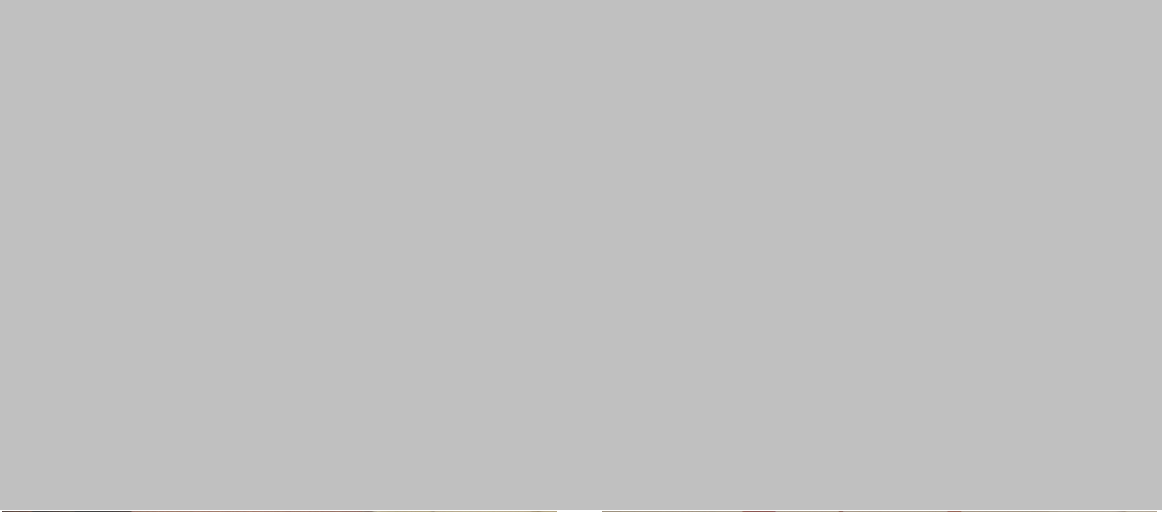Mobiles created by Pei-ying Wu.

Figure 7.53
The narrowest entrance to the office, which usually is not in use.

Figure 7.57
First view of Mobiles when entering from the narrow entrance to the existing office. Designed by Pei-ying Wu.

Figure 7.54
Seeing mobiles when standing in the centre of the office and facing the long wall of the office. Created by Pei-ying Wu.

Although most viewers might see the mobiles in Sequences A and B on the route from the main entrance or the small kitchen, they have further sub-sequences of viewing combinations. Therefore, Sequence C can be most easily explained first as it is the only single route and has no further sub-sequences in it. Sequence C is Group Two, Group Three and then Group One. After viewers come in through the narrow entrance, they would first see sets of mobiles with suspended silhouette figures with other colourful paper-cuts in the background (see Figure 7.58). 'What and who are these people?' they might ask. After
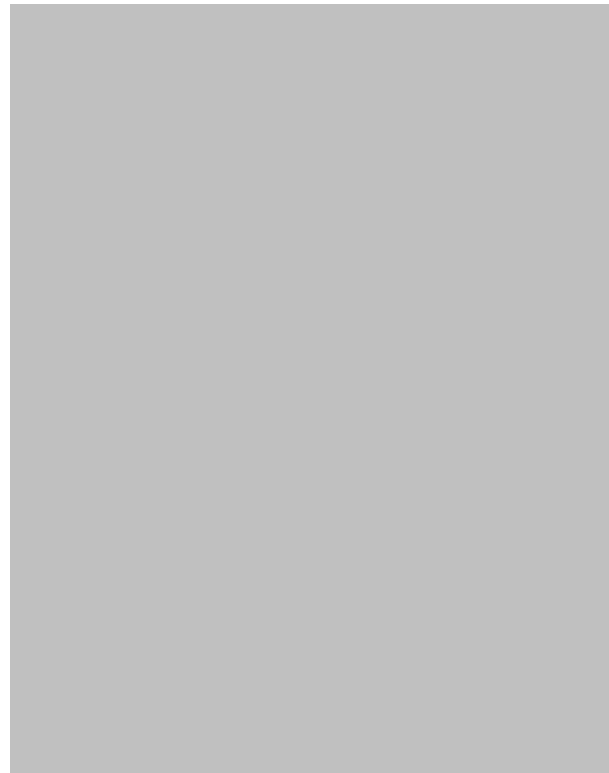

i u e . 8
Sequence C: entering the office from the narrow entrance, the view sequence will be Group Two, nine pairs of black figures, then Group Three, the colourful industrial architecture, and at the far end Group One, in which red figures are cornering 'the Enemy'. Designed and created by Pei-ying Wu.

careful movement amongst and through them, viewers would observe various personal relationships, especially between the fighters, and perpetrator and victim. Through these figures, the colourful paper-cuts of Groups Three and One will catch the viewers' eyes and attract them to investigate further.

When viewers come to Group Three, the architecture of the silhouettes comprises a bright, colourful but empty man-made atmosphere. 'What does this represent? A city or a town?' 'Is this the place where those black figures live?' 'Why are the colours so saturated, as if these structures are not real?' The viewers could start questioning the relationship between the architectural settings and the figures. They would then particularly notice its empty structure and its vivid colour, representing a man-made environment (see Figure 7.59), compared to the crowded black figures of Group Two they have just visited. So far they have received two separate kinds of information: one is about personal relationships and their actions, the other is about an artificial environment constructed from fragments of man-made structures. Although they might surmise the possible connections between these two, they can synthesise these into an appropriate understanding when they finally observe Group One.

Positioned in the corner, Group One visually represents the scenario of being cornered by crowded red figures. Visually the cornered victim is the same colour as those figures in Group Two. Thus viewers might connect the two and come to an understanding that whoever those black figures are, they are the victims of their overwhelming surroundings. Without knowing the plot of *Enemy of the Stars*, viewers may come to a

Figure 7.61
A full view of Group One after visiting Group Three from the route of the narrowest entrance (Sequence C). Designed and created by Pei-ying Wu.

conclusion that the black figures represent modern workers, who have complex personal relationships with each other. The colourful yet controlled structures symbolise the city they cannot escape from. Hence, Group One shows an emotional situation which can be experienced in everyday terms.

When the viewers enter from the small kitchen, they immediately see Group One (Figure 7.56). But after only a few steps, before they can carefully observe Group One, they are also able to see Group Three and part of Group Two (Figure 7.63). Therefore, Sequence B can be multiplied into several possibilities. One is that they could carefully observe the mobiles from Group One, then follow the display to Group Three and in the end arrive at Group Two. Or the viewers can observe the mobiles from right to left as they move into the centre of the office and choose one of the Groups for detailed investigation. Similar
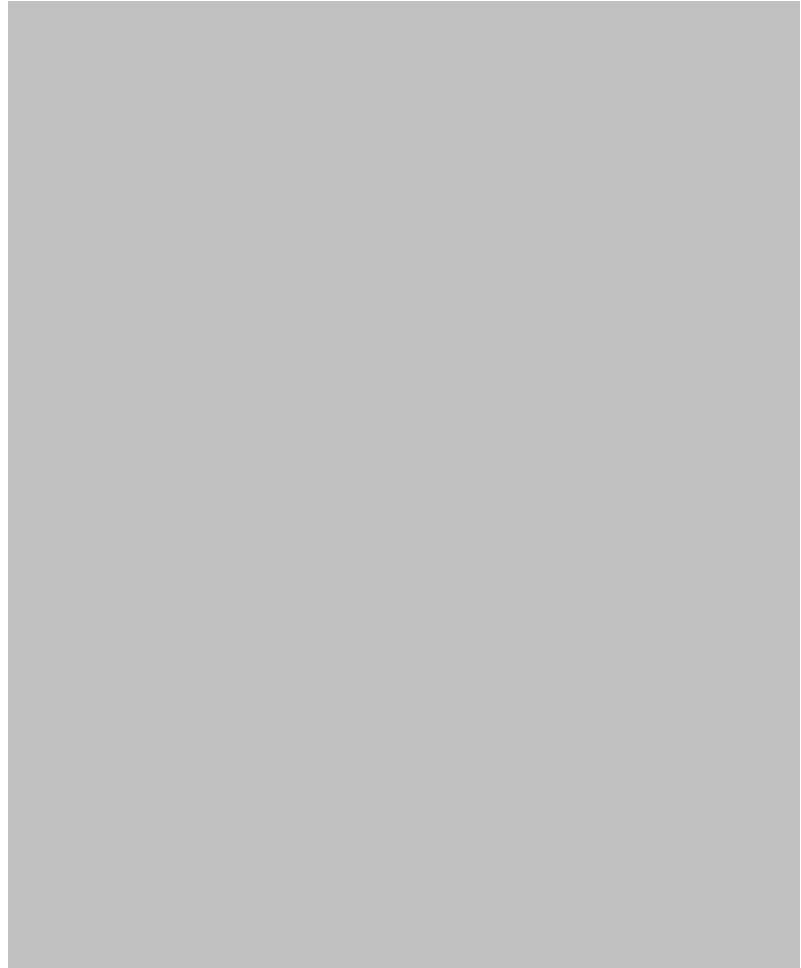
observations could occur in Sequence A, when people come in through the main entrance (Figure 7.55).

Figure 7.62 (Sequence B)
 Seeing mobiles after entering from the small kitchen entrance, which shows that viewers can see more than one Group of mobiles at the same time. Therefore viewers have their own choice of seeing mobiles in their own created narrative. Designed by Pei-ying Wu.

Nevertheless we shall first take Sequence B as if the viewers had decided to see the mobiles one by one, starting from Group One, the cornering scenario. When they approach this Group (see Figure 7.63), the crowded red figures with their axe-like feet and sword-like gestures parade their strength in front of the viewers. This emphasises the environment in which one struggles to survive. Therefore when they move to the next Group, the fragmented

Figure 7.64
A view from standing behind one of the architectural paper-cuts of Group Three, and looking towards Group Two. Created by Pei-ying Wu

architectures, it is possible for them to surmise that this soulless city was caused by the perpetrators. Thus the black suspended figures of Group Two, as last seen by the viewers, could possibly be a representation of the dead or of their memories in their fight for survival. The light from the narrow entrance transforms it as a passage to redemption (see Figure 7.64).

Figure 7.63
A view of the crowded red figures with axe-like feet and sword-like gestures parading their strength in front of the viewers when approaching Group One from the small kitchen entrance. Designed by Pei-ying Wu.
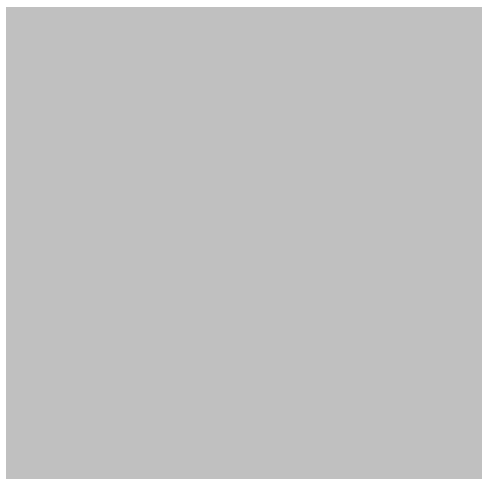
On the other hand, if viewers decide to investigate the mobiles by taking an overall view, and then decide further to observe one of the Groups, such as Group Three, they will see it first from the centre of the office as if it were a changing two-dimensional composition of a geometric structure (see Figure 7.65), as these panels move slowly. On their approach, they would find that these

Figure 7.65 A two-dimensional quality of Group Three when seen from the centre of the office.

colourful mobiles not only move but also rotate as if they form a mechanical world. The spaces they create exist in physical and mental dimensions. Their floating and rotating characteristics enhance irrational and dream-like scenarios, whilst their bold and hard-edged panels reinforce the concept of the man-made universe. Furthermore, when viewers position themselves in Group Three, the strings which 'support' the structure are also a control for their movement. In this manner, these strings that suspend the mobiles can determine the viewer's reaction.

Standing in Group Three to look at Groups Two (Figure 7.66) and One (Figure 7.67), it is comparable with spying further into this universe which was not built for comprehension but for irrationality and uncertainty. Partly because viewers have seen the overall settings before they choose to view Group Three and partly from what they can see

Figure 7.66
A view of Group Two from Group Three. It causes a feeling that the view is hindered by these fragments of architecture. Designed by Pei-ying Wu

from standing in the Group, they receive the ambiance of human conflicts: tension, oppression and the struggles involved in surviving their surroundings. The random ways in which the mobiles can be viewed allow maximum flexibility of understanding. This also echoes the concept of the Chinese cyclical and reversible poem discussed in chapter 3. When one can 'read' the images starting from any point amongst the displayed objects, the possible results of the sequences multiply, but remain appropriate to the viewers' interpretations. The narratives are extended both by the 'reading' sequence and the combination of the artworks, which are an analogy of the play itself as presented in *BLAST* in 1914.

Figure 7.67
Seeing Group One from Group Three at a steeper angle. Designed by Pei-ying Wu.

Seeing the parts of the mobiles individually whilst being receptive to the ambiance of the complete display allows a more detailed and vivid scrutiny. When viewers interrogate the embedded meanings and concepts associated with the mobiles, they can simultaneously deconstruct the play's original structure and recreate similar yet diverse stories of the play. The described sequences exemplify this. Although these sequences seem to have created different stories from the original play, they retain the core concept that the human being as a whole, or those that live in the modern world, suffer in a hostile, artificial universe and fight for survival.

However, as already mentioned, because the interpretation of the play will be dependent on the viewer's own context, the limitation of its philosophical communication will also be determined by the viewer. Thus, as with the Tower of Babel, on one hand the mobiles create the possibilities of understanding and extending the meanings of the play; on the other they restrain the depth of Lewis's conceptual discussion contained within the two

characters' dialogues. This can be interpreted as a problem with the purely visual representation of a theatrical script.

A written play script has the advantage of conveying an abstract debate, whereas an artwork can provide a wider contextual understanding. A conventional theatre production is a theatrical presentation of a play script which combines literal and visual techniques such as verbal speech and communication embedded within settings and costumes. However, in conventional terms, the theatre audience can be passive and relatively inactive in relation to the performance itself; the viewer of the mobiles plays a more proactive role than the audience in a theatre. In a theatrical performance, even if the audience is invited to be part of the play, they are usually confined within certain performing areas and the story of the play remains the same as the original, the production reliant on its actors' performance, regardless of any audience's participation. In contrast, since the viewers can move freely in viewing the mobiles, they are freer than the theatre audience to choose the observation perspective. They have not only the encouragement but also licence from the artist to make personal judgements. Therefore a *viewer* has more freedom in understanding mobiles – the re-presentation of *Enemy of the Stars* – as a piece of artwork in his or her chosen context and perception.

In seeing the mobiles as a representation of *Enemy of the Stars*, viewers are intrinsic to, and integral with, the components of its performance: the movements of the mobiles, the viewers' observation and the consequent actions derived from these relationships between the viewers and the mobiles, which lead to a further interaction amongst the suspended images enhancing the actors' performance in a conventional theatre. In addition, seeing the display of the mobiles crosses the borderline between a social activity of theatre, which works by consensus established between the theatre practitioners and audience, and a self-assertive 'game' of 'hide and seek': seeing the mobiles and finding their embedded meanings. The game rules are defined by players — the artist and the viewer[12].

In line with this thinking, the rule of seeing the mobile display considers non-human movement as equally important to human activities. Although the embedded meanings

are understood by the viewers from their observation, the mobiles are moved by various forces, not necessarily reliant on the viewers. Moreover, replacing human actors and actions by suspended mobiles echoes Lewis's contemporary Gordon Craig's 'the Uber-Marionette', which was written between 1905 and 1906. Although it was not the first to imply that the actor can be replaced by puppets[13], it was the first to suggest a concept that the Uber-Marionette is a super-puppet which 'moves and feels all sort of emotions' therefore 'which moves, and sometimes else which speaks and the only emotions *felt* are those felt by the audience.'[14] And most importantly, Craig wanted the instrument of movement to be a work of art in itself[15].

Though the mobile is a different form from the puppet, it is an artwork and has suspended figures powered by the mobiles themselves, the gravity, the wind and the viewer's movement. Furthermore, the suspended images of mobiles are in silhouette form, which do not necessarily belong to a fixed situation and can be adapted into a variety of contexts. These demonstrate the complexity of the work itself and their potential in creative and artistic terms of realising and rendering a play often thought to be impossible to perform. In this way, Lewis was setting a challenge to his own artistic community, one that deliberately set out to confuse and confound.

In contrast to the suspended mobiles' role as 'performers', the viewers also have wider parts to play when experiencing the display: as observers witnessing an artwork, as viewers judging the 'happenings', as an audience receiving the information created in the artistic landscape, and as performers activated by the nature of the action. Similar to the metaphor of the Tower of Babel, the mobiles reflect the many interpretations of *Enemy of the Stars* and allow the possibilities of extending a communication of its meanings in a construction, which by its very nature may never be completed. This, in turn, also develops the play's core concept that the battle for survival against overwhelming odds may never be accomplished.

This study not only confronts the challenge Lewis sets by demonstrating the possible stage settings as the preparation for a real performance, but also extends its theatrical context to become part of a wider game: a struggle for survival. By considering the written text from a visually orientated approach, this research bridges the visual and the

literary aspects of *Enemy of the Stars*. Wyndham Lewis set himself to rally support for what he perceived as the artist's identity in a modern world. By transforming and creating new visual imagery for *Enemy of the Stars*, it is possible to cross conventional boundaries to provide a wider and valuable interpretation of the human struggle for survival that Lewis identified with and portrayed in his play.

Enemy of the Stars, born of its time, has far-reaching implications in that it succeeds in encompassing the human condition, allowing it to be performed and engaged with all the possibilities of both theatre and the visual arts. This thesis has achieved its overall aims through practice-led research. Designing three stage settings for *Enemy of the Stars* allows the author to develop a further visual concept of the mobile both as an art work and as a vehicle of interpretation for the play. The mobile can be seen as a visual culmination of this approach. The final analysis of this study of the original version of *Enemy of the Stars* reveals the multiplicity of interpretations inherent in its performability. A predominantly visual analysis based both on theoretical interpretation and theatrical practice provides rich possibilities for the staging of *Enemy of the Stars* as a 'real' play, rather than purely as a literary metaphor. This thesis has demonstrated the feasibility of *Enemy of the Stars* as an appropriate and accessible theatrical creation.

[1] Although performance became accepted as a medium of artistic expression in its own right in the 1970s, it can be traced that the Futurists' especially Marinetti's Manifestos on performance encouraged and led artistic expression in a wide range of performance art

[2] Goldberg, RoseLee. Performance Art. London: Thames and Hudson, 2001 (1979), p.11

[3] ibid, pp.14-16

[4] Marinetti, F.T. "The Variety Theatre 1913." Futurist Manifestos. Ed. Apollonio, Umbro. Trans. Robert Brain, R.W. Flint, J.C. Higgitt, and Caroline Tisdall. Boston: MFA Publications, 1973. pp.126-131.

[5] Cork, Richard. "Wyndham Lewis and the Drogheda Dining-Room" The Burlington Magazine Vol.126.No.979 (1984): 610-19.

[6] Lewis, Wyndham. "Life is an Important Thing!" Blast. Ed. Wyndham Lewis. Vol. 1. London, New York and Toronto: John Lane, the Bodley Head, 1914. 129-31.

[7] Serraller, Francisco Calvo. "Calder: Gravity and Grace." Calder. Ed. Carmen Gimenez and Alexander S.C. Rower. London, New York: Phaidon, 2004. p.27

[8] Lewis, Wyndham. "The Improvement of Life." Blast. Ed. Wyndham Lewis. Vol. 1. London, New York and Toronto: John Lane, the Bodley Head, 1914. 146.

[9] Edwards, Paul. "The Growth of Modernism in the Writing and Painting of Wyndham Lewis 1908-1917." University of London, 1994. p.194

[10] Edwards, Paul. Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000. p.411.

[11] This display was installed in an office environment in the University of Brighton.

[12] Schechner, Richard. Performance Theory. London and New York: Routledge, 2005 (1977). This concept derived from Schechner's 'performance space', ibid, pp. 14-19

[13] As early as 1890 Maeterlinck had proposed this idea.

[14] Craig, Edward Gorden. Uber-Marions. Berlin, 1905.1906. p.17 from Eynat-Confino, Irene. Beyond the Mask: Gordon Craig, Movement, and the Actor. Carbondalte and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987. p.89

[15] ibid.

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Appendix

The following pages are a facsimile of *Enemy of the Stars* (1914 version), including the title page of *BLAST*, errata and list of contents.