

The Clown and the Über-Marionette: Performance Style in *Enemy of the Stars*

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Ezra Pound echoes his earlier remark about the unperformability of Joyce's *Exiles* in an account of Lewis's experimental play, *Enemy of the Stars*, first published in *BLAST* in 1914: 'it could not be presented in the theatre.'¹ Stage directions summon the mimetic body of the actor, only then to dismantle it, resisting Pound's definition of the 'medium of drama' as 'not words, but persons moving about on a stage using words.'² This resistance to performability, the negative critique of theatricality, is a key aspect, I will argue, of the play's aesthetic of anti-mimesis and the tension it generates between the body of the actor, constantly invoked as a point of reference, and a 'phrasal style' which seeks to explode the performative body into linguistic components.³ As Martin Puchner observes, modernist drama, while often seeking to 'interrupt and break apart any possibility for either an actual or an imaginary stage', nevertheless 'contains that which it resists'.⁴ By situating the play within the performance culture of its time, and by exploring the category of theatre which *Enemy of the Stars* violently resists, I will show how Lewis's attack on mimesis parallels a similar critique by figures at the forefront of a theatrical (rather than literary) tradition which privileges anti-naturalist, machine-like abstract gestures.

Vorticism's simultaneous representation of the natural and the anti-mimetic erupts in *Enemy of the Stars* into a radical new form which compels a critical reorientation towards acts of reading and spectatorship. *Enemy of the Stars* eludes the possibility of a staged production, and yet constantly refers to the performative body and the representational space of the theatre – the objects it seeks to resist – only to proceed with their negation. The action opens by invoking the dimensions of a staged setting – 'CHARACTERS AND PROPERTIES BOTH EMERGE FROM GANGWAY INTO GROUND AT ONE SIDE' (CPP 96) – and playfully modifying the scenography by writing the solitary reader of the play, in the form of 'Posterity' (CPP 98), into the

space reserved for the diegetic 'AUDIENCE', which 'LOOKS DOWN INTO SCENE' (CPP 97). The reader is also a spectator occupying a ring-side seat as the agon unfolds, a member of a collective audience, a paying customer: "THE BOX OFFICE RECEIPTS HAVE BEEN ENORMOUS" (CPP 98). In this sense, reading as an act of spectatorship is foregrounded against the impalpability of depersonalized phrasal abstraction. The perceptible body, conscious of the act of performing before an audience, infiltrates the attempt to dissolve the mimetic space into abstraction and dismantle the body into formalist components. The critique of the language of mimetic realism, considered the play's central achievement by David Graver, is only one side of a reciprocal transformative process which also reconfigures the perception of the theatrical body.⁵

Scholarship on Lewis's play tends, on the whole, to concentrate on the play's thematic and philosophical aspect, or its relations to the abstract formalism in contemporary visual art.⁶ Paul Edwards's elegant close analysis considers the play's lineage within the European Expressionist tradition, as an aspect of Arghol's 'Romantic quest for pure authenticity and transcendence' and a method which allegorizes Schopenhauer, Stirner, and Nietzsche.⁷ Andrzej Gašiorek amply extends and refines Edwards's argument about the 'use of gnostic dualism' and Arghol's 'desire to return to a Platonic transcendent origin.'⁸ I wish to develop this line of argument about Arghol's thwarted desire for transcendence, and the agonistic dispute which ends as a death-match between its two figures, by reading the play as a confrontation, overlooked in Lewis scholarship, between two kinds of performance style: the clown-like imitations of Hanp, which foreground the body's materiality, versus the mechanized, formalist, reflective body of Arghol.

The play itself stages an agonistic dispute which ends as a death-match between its two figures. Arghol's position is a defence of the transcendental self, and its impossible desire to avoid the corruption of what he calls the 'indiscriminate rubbing' of 'social excrescence' (CPP 107). He seeks not only to liberate 'each gesture and word' from its organic conditions, its 'degradation' and "souillure", and achieve authentic selfhood, 'the original solitude of the soul' (CPP 106), but also to demonstrate its unattainability. His gestures are slow, mechanical, anti-mimetic; every movement he makes is also an attempt to dissolve the movement into imperceptibility, so it cannot be appropriated by the crowds huddled round to observe him, or his opponent Hanp. Arghol

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wills his own imperceptibility. The stars, which appear as he comes out of the hut, ‘strain to see him’, and Lewis mobilizes the phrasal abstractions which describe him toward this end, purifying his gestures of their mimetic resemblance to organic life. His immediate struggle is to preserve his integrity against, as T. S. Eliot puts it, ‘the eyes that fix [him] in a formulated phrase’, especially Hanp’s, whose eyes search for ‘a companion for his detached ailment of a self’ (CPP 109).⁹ His attempt to imitate Arghol’s performative style represents the organic, imitative, naturalist body: the body of an actor who ‘becomes’ himself as he ‘imitates and assimilates that Ego until it is no longer one’ (CPP 102). It is this process of imitation, as Hanp’s gestures mirror his, which Arghol seeks to escape, to preserve his distinctiveness against the violent masquerade which finally supplants him. Once he realizes Arghol is an immovable object, envious hostility drives Hanp, incapable of overcoming, or fully imitating him, to kill him in his sleep. Arghol, poised at the centre of the ‘RED UNIVERSE’ (CPP 97), and the object of murderous imitation, maintains an integrity, though it proves to be his undoing, which his clown-like opponent lacks: the play closes with Hanp’s suicide as he leaps off a bridge ‘clumsily [...], his heart a sagging weight of stagnant hatred’ (CPP 119).

Arghol’s gestural style belongs to a modernist theatrical tradition which negates the living presence of the actor, and which seeks to estrange gestural mimesis by mechanizing the actor’s performative style. In this respect, *Enemy of the Stars* resides at the forefront of a tradition which privileges machine-like gestures, and which encompasses the major practitioners of modernist theatre, from Edward Gordon Craig and Yeats, through Meyerhold, Brecht, and Beckett. Modernist anti-naturalism in the theatre begins with nineteenth-century Symbolism’s advocacy of marionettes in place of actors, and a subsequent style of acting whereby actors aspire to the condition of marionettes. Its initial pre-eminent Anglophone spokesman, Arthur Symons, incorporates a remark by Eleanora Duse, that ‘the actors and actresses must all die of the plague’, in an account he gives of Maeterlinck’s plays for marionettes.¹⁰ The depersonalized gestures of Symbolist theatre, divested of their naturalist tendencies, strive for a self-reflexive formality, as distinct from a mimetic identification with the bodily ego-object, or the character, in the manner of the naturalist actor. This disavowal of identification – as Symons puts it, sounding Brechtian before the fact, ‘I like to see my illusions clearly, recognising them as

illusions'¹¹ – begins with the Maeterlinckian notion that Symbolist theatre, with its emphasis on imperceptibility, 'will not tolerate the active presence of man'. Maeterlinck wrote plays for marionettes with the conviction that the actor's physical presence, or mimetic representation, held captive by its own materiality, interferes with the imperceptibility available to the solitary reader of the play. The plays for marionettes are an aspect of this desire to transcend the materiality of the body. This recurrent emphasis in Symbolist theatre – Symons discussing 'inner essence', and making 'the soul of things visible', and Yeats's 'invisible essence' – is not exclusively privileged in the Lewisian performative body, although they share a hybrid sense which returns theatrical spectatorship to the act of reading, where gestures always in a sense remain 'invisible'.¹² For Symons, 'gesture on the stage is the equivalent of rhythm in verse, and it can convey, as a perfect rhythm should, not a little of the inner meaning of words, a meaning perhaps more latent in things.'¹³

Symons spoke of Maeterlinck's drama as a 'theatre of artificial beings, who are at once [...] more mechanical than the living actors whom we are accustomed to see', observing their 'grave, regulated motion'.¹⁴ Arghol conducts his movements according to this performative style: he 'shift[s] his legs mechanically' (*CPP* 102); his hands are a 'thick shell' (*CPP* 101); he 'lies in deliberate leaden inanimation' (*CPP* 104); he is 'CENTRAL AS STONE, POISED MAGNET' (*CPP* 97), and when he moves it is 'LIKE WARY SHIFTING OF BODIES IN DISTANT EQUIPOISE' (*CPP* 97). His gestures are possessed of a multi-dimensional ease, control, and restraint which are thoroughly marionette-like. Yeats described the marionette style of actors moving 'slowly and quietly, and not very much, and there should be something in their movements [...] rhythmical as if they were paintings in a frieze'.¹⁵ Symons also foregrounds this concern to freeze movement, and the 'sense of motion which it is the business of painting to arrest'.¹⁶ This theatrical style is one way of grasping the 'frozen constellations' of Lewis's Vorticist syntax as they capture the force of gesture without motion. Arghol's mechanized body in *Enemy of the Stars*, statue-sque, caught between movements, a performative effect achieved by suppressing temporal continuity between phrasal sequences, correlates with the frozen tableau effects in his painting of this period, as seen in such works as *The Domino* (1912), *The Courtesan* (1912), and *Smiling*

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Woman Ascending Stair (1913), where gestures stiffen into arcs and sharp lines, attitudes which resemble the symbolic body of the marionette.

Lewis's movement towards angular machine gestures in his painting crystallizes between 1912 and 1914, reinforced during his attendance of T. E. Hulme's lectures on the art historian Wilhelm Worringer. As Reed Way Dasenbrock has commented, this comparison of primitive art, such as the Egyptian pyramids or Byzantine mosaics, 'directly opposed to the empathy impulse', with modern machine-based art, coincides with Lewis's own activity as a painter and writer.¹⁷ Hulme and Worringer identify the primitive with the modern by exposing a common impulse: the desire to extract a living object from conditions of accident and relativity, to form an abstract of the object, providing it with a refuge from those conditions finds its expression in the geometrical, crystalline regularity of machine art. The Vorticist position is expounded towards the end of *Tarr* (1918) in the disquisition on painting given by the novel's hero:

"The lines and masses of the statue are its soul. No restless, quick flame-like ego is imagined for the *inside* of it. It has no inside. This is another condition of art; *to have no inside*, nothing you cannot *see*. Instead, then, of being something impelled like an independent machine by a little egoistic fire inside, it lives soullessly and deadly by its frontal lines and masses." (*T1* 300)

Art which imitates the organic "pulsing and moving of the soft inside of life" (*T1* 299) also imitates the conditions of life's decay. On the one hand, according to Tarr, "*deadness* is the first condition of art [...]; *that* opposed to naked pulsing and moving of the soft inside of life" (*T1* 299), and yet art is "ourselves disentangled from death and accident" (*T1* 299). Hulme's view of 'the geometrical line as something absolutely distinct from the messiness, the confusion and the accidental details of existing things' finds its counterparts in Tarr's art theory, Arghol's view of bodily movement as liberated from its organic conditions, and the depersonalized gesture in the theatre of marionettes.

Lewis's Vorticist reformulation of European movements in the visual arts parallels the development of the 'Über-Marionette' by Edward Gordon Craig, described by Michael Walton as 'the one English [theatre] practitioner and theorist of the Edwardian era who could be said to have possessed a genuine European outlook'.¹⁸ Given Lewis's

close observations of contemporary developments in the European avant-garde – his sharp awareness of the progress of Futurism and Expressionism are key instances – it is highly unlikely he would not have encountered Gordon Craig's journal, *The Mask* (1908-29), its accounts of Futurism and Cubism, and their relation to modern theatre. Futurism was in fact a significant preoccupation of Craig's from 1911-14; the journal published the first English translation of the Futurist Manifesto on the theatre in 1913.¹⁹ Both Craig and Lewis shared a suspicion of Futurism's deification of speed, vitalism, and technology, and both demonstrated intellectual affinities with the Expressionism of Kandinsky and the Blue Rider group, with their tendency towards an abstraction partly derived from Woringer.²⁰ Lewis mentions Craig in *The Art of Being Ruled* (1926), giving a brief account that is relevant to his conception of Arghol: 'the influence of the Gordon Craig school had been in the other direction. They sought to make the actor more remote, masking him, robbing him of personality, so that he should seem isolated, a creature of a different birth' (*ABR* 158).

Arghol's contempt for the contingent accidents of 'organic conditions' resembles the polemical anti-naturalism of Gordon Craig: 'in the modern theatre, owing to the use of the bodies of men and women as their material, all which is presented there is of an accidental nature'.²¹ For Gordon Craig, as for Arghol, the actor's materiality, his mimetic presence, 'the actions of the actor's body' (Craig, *OT* 82) obscures the formal constructedness of theatre and the attainment of the complexity of immanent relations, necessary criteria for any artwork. The unmediated live presence of unregulated actors on stage exposes the work to the accidents of naturalist performance; Craig declared that 'art can admit of no accidents', what Arghol calls 'souillure', and that the actor, as an intentional agent, 'must go' (Craig, *OT* 83). The figure which replaces him, the depersonalized 'Über-Marionette', purges the actor's movements of haphazard, unregulated emotion, and by extension, vanity: 'the actor plus fire minus egoism' (Craig, *OT* 84). Arghol's performance as a Vorticist Über-Marionette, desiring the absence of phenomenal subjectivity, is the actor freed from personal vanity, unlike Hanp, hidden beneath his 'Mask of discontent, anxious to explode, restrained by qualms of vanity, and professional coyness' (*CPP* 95).

Yet Gordon Craig's Über-Marionette remained an ideal which he never fully realized, as he found he could not entirely abstract the mimetic presence of the actor, nor eliminate all accidents and

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contingencies of the actor's body from the live event. His failed project of anti-mimesis is partly enacted in Lewis's (conscious) failure to approximate abstraction in visual art by purging language of reference in *Enemy of the Stars*: '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" [...] was my attempt to show them the way' (RA 139). Lewis's 'kind of play' is his most concerted attempt to find correlatives between prose style and visual anti-mimetic or abstract 'planes in relation': 'Throats iron eternities, drinking heavy radiance, limbs towers of blatant light, the stars poised, immensely distant, with their metal sides, pantheistic machines' (CPP 100). Clusters of static non-representational phrases, 'frozen constellations', as Vincent Sherry puts it, suppress clauses which indicate temporal relation, dispensing with continuity and ordinary syntax.²² These phrasal abstractions acquire their own integral significance, as William Wees observes: 'events are broken down and reconstructed like the interrelated fragments of Vorticist pictures.'²³

The intensive abstraction of Vorticist art, organized and governed by the principles exemplified in machinery, replacing the rounded contours of the human figure with crisp diagonal lines, fixing motion in an abstract geometry, finds a textual correlative in Lewis's stylistic inventions. Yet these phrasal clusters are composed of indivisible units which, in themselves, remain unavoidably referential – 'throats', 'iron', 'eternities' – and so the style, as Lewis recognized, could never attain pure abstraction. While other painters associated with Vorticism often tended to break definitively from figurative references and develop exclusively mechanical forms, Lewis maintained a technique which never quite dissolved the figurative body, even within his most abstract pictures, remarking: 'the finest Art is not pure Abstraction, nor is it unorganised life' (B1 134).²⁴ In *The Vorticist* (1912), the human figure is expressed in a staccato vocabulary of taut linear shapes and frenzied diagonals; *Vorticist Design* (1914) intersperses saw-tooth edges, levers, pistons, and even gun barrels among anatomical components: each of these elements can be identified either as a section of anatomy or as the fragment of a streamlined machine. The Vorticist collision of muscular physicality with hard edges and abstractions in *Enemy of the Stars* is presented in *BLAST* alongside a drawing by Lewis bearing the same name, in which the mechanical shifts and starts of a wildly angular head and barely figurative torso are stretched downwards into curvilinear

calves and thighs, described in the play as sinewy 'EXPLOSIVE MUSCLES' (CPP 95).

This tension between the abstract and the organic is enacted in the struggle between Arghol and Hanp. Hanp represents the materialist and mimetic body. In contrast to Arghol's entrance as a 'POISED MAGNET', Hanp 'comes out of hut, coughing like a goat, rolling a cigarette. He goes to where Arghol is lying. He stirs him with his foot roughly' (CPP 100). The action of the play is described as occurring in 'SOME BLEAK CIRCUS' (CPP 95): Hanp is the comic servant, the acrobatic trickster, and his performative style belongs to the tradition of the grotesque. He is the 'clown in the circus' (CPP 116). Hanp's chthonic movements – he springs 'out of the ground' (CPP 110) – frequently resemble the knockabout mime routines of clowns: 'a handful of furious movements: flung himself on Arghol' (CPP 110). An established routine in *commedia dell'arte*, the 'lazzi suicide', where the First Zanni clown, the servant, having failed successfully to plot against his superior, mimes his own suicide as part of a comic interlude, is echoed in Hanp's actual suicide and in the murder of Arghol: 'Arghol rose as though on a spring, his eyes glaring down on Hanp, and with an action of the head, as though he were about to sneeze. Hanp shrank back, on his haunches. He over-balanced, and fell on his back' (CPP 118).²⁵ Arghol keeps his centre of gravity and strikes an elegant contorted pose in his final moment, not a dying fall but a rising upwards. Hanp gracelessly mistimes and tumbles over, a classic buffoonish pratfall. These routines of low grotesquery, clown-like and therefore deliberate, account for Hanp's 'BLATANT VIRTUOSITY OF SELF' (CPP 95), and his attempts to mime the actions of Arghol, both defining features of the circus clown. Albert Fratellini, performing with the Fratellini Brothers at the Medrana Circus in Paris, described by the mime artist Jean Copeau as 'muscular perfection in the service of a spontaneous and sincere feeling', would frequently imitate, in order to parody, his more earnest counterparts.²⁶ Having observed Arghol as he 'strains and stretches elegantly' (CPP 100), Hanp himself is later seen 'stretched and strained like a toy wound up' (CPP 118). Though in *Enemy of the Stars* Hanp's imitative tendency is not parody, it is riven with murderous envy at his stiff, indifferent counterpart.

Lewis wrote an account of his own spectating of circus clowns at Quimperlé, on the south coast of Brittany, in his 1909 short story, 'Les Saltimbanques' (CWB 237-47). The 'heavy tight clothes' and 'DULL

EXPLOSIVE MUSCLES' (CPP 95) of Hanp recall the 'bulging muscles' and 'painted faces' of the Breton clowns in his story (CWB 241). The night at the circus in Quimperlé begins with the head showman introducing the proceedings, 'his movements [...] followed with minute attention' by the crowd (CWB 239). As he asks them to take their seats 'with an expressive gesture, they riveted their eyes on his hand'. The clown then bursts into the circle: "B-o-n-soir, M'sieurs et M'dames," he chirped, waved his hand, tumbled over his employer's foot' (CWB 239). Waving his hand, the clown imitates the gestures of the proprietor, his master, in an effort to undermine his authority and assume the role of mock-ringmaster. The gesture works, 'the benches filled as by magic' (CWB 239); the audience understands the established convention of 'comic familiarity' (CWB 239) between them, along with the expectation that the master should demonstrate a 'physical superiority' (CWB 240) over the clown and rapidly turn the tables on him. The audience howls with delight as the master, 'woken to the sudden violence of an automatic figure set in motion. [...] [H]e sprang nimbly backwards and forwards as though engaged in a boxing match, and grinned appreciatively at the clown's wit, as though in spite of himself, while nearly knocking his teeth out with delighted blows' (CWB 239).

The idea of the clown as an 'automatic figure set in motion' testifies to the influence of Bergson. In *Laughter*, which Lewis read on its publication in 1903 while attending Bergson's lectures at the Collège de France, Bergson puts forward 'the tricks of the circus clowns' to exemplify the theory that imitation is a version of automatism, of the 'momentary transformation of a person into a thing'.²⁷ Lewis's statements that 'any autonomous movement of matter' is 'essentially comic' (CWB 159) and '[t]he root of the Comic is to be sought in the sensations resulting from the observations of a *thing* behaving like a person' (CWB 158) are derivations of Bergson's machine-gesture theory, as Robert Murray and Bernard Lafourcade have observed, although specific instances of these gestures in Lewis, particularly during the Vorticist period of 1912-14, tend towards negative critique of Bergson's propositions.²⁸ Lewis concurs with the view that gestural imitation posits a structure of automatic repetition, an excess of which generates mechanical uniformity: 'to imitate anyone is to bring out the element of automatism he has allowed to creep into his person' (Bergson, *L* 29). According to Bergson: 'wherever there is repetition or complete similarity, we always suspect some mechanism at work behind the living'

(Bergson, *L* 34). Mechanical repetition, implying a standardized ‘manufacturing process’, confers upon gesture an automatic quality. Arghol ‘strains and stretches elegantly’ (*CPP* 100); when Hanp imitates him, he ‘stretched and strained like a toy wound up’ (*CPP* 118). Lewis’s paintings and drawings of this period, such as *Two Figures* (1912), *Two Vorticist Figures* (1912), and *Two Mechanics* (1912), bring out this element of automated similarity by depicting pairs of identical machine figures, pulled down to earth by heavy ballast, each a simulacrum of the other, ‘two copies cast in the same mould’. Gesture becomes mechanical through repetition: the more thoroughly imitated, the less observable presence of mind in the gesture. The master’s ‘wave of the hand’ in ‘Les Saltimbanques’, imitated by the clown, is already a standardized, ritual gesture, signalling an invitation to the audience to take their seats. Rigid and lifeless, emptied of the Bergsonian *élan vital* from an excess of performative repetition, the gesture ceases to function. The audience do not take their seats until the clown’s mock-imitation. Foregrounding its explicitly automatic quality, the clown, intentionally mechanizing his hand, just as his master does without realizing, makes explicit the comedy in the gesture, to which the audience then reacts. As Lewis observed, after Bergson, ‘[a] comic type is a failure of considerable energy, an imitation and standardising of self, suggesting the existence of a uniform humanity’ (*CWB* 316). The master is jolted from the version of himself which is comically imitable – as Bergson puts it, ‘the attitudes, gestures and movements of the human body are laughable in exact proportion as that body reminds us of a mere machine’ (Bergson, *L* 29) – into the version of himself as ringmaster, his authentic self.

Arghol and Hanp are both automata, though radically different in kind. In his strained mechanical slowness, Arghol is a deliberate automaton, poised and self-aware, like one of Symons’s ‘marionettes who are living people; living people pretending to be those wooden images of life which pretend to be living people’.²⁹ Hanp’s movements, on the other hand, frequently take the form of involuntary outbursts, neither deliberate nor reflexive: the ‘strain of this mock life [...] was tremendous on his underworld of energy and rebellious muscles. [...] It was twitch of loud bound nerve only’ (*CPP* 109). As Arthur C. Danto observes, ‘if someone’s arm just flew up, because of a spasm, the description of it as an action would be false [...] we see bodily movements as actions only against the assumption that certain unobserved conditions hold: we see them “in terms of” intentions,

motives.³⁰ Hanp's gestures, propelled by haphazard, unregulated emotion and vanity, always appear 'false' in this sense; his constant sudden emissions of tension and crisis are like accidental 'muscular spasm[s]' (*CPP* 99). He carries his limbs around with him, in Bergson's words, as 'an isolated part of [him] expressed, unknown to, or at least apart from, the whole of the personality' (Bergson, *L* 143). This unspent friction finds an outlet in his attempt to imitate Arghol and become his 'sunken mirror' (*CPP* 107). Hindered by his cheap materiality – the 'toy wound up' – and stagnant incompleteness, he sinks into mechanical obstinacy, his body transformed into an unwitting third-person object.

Hanp sees Arghol as a more authentic version of 'another HIMSELF' (*CPP* 109). Arghol tells him he is 'amazed to find that you are like me. / I talk to you for an hour and get more disgusted with myself' (*CPP* 109); when Hanp flings himself onto Arghol to attack him – he 'brought his own disgust back to him. [...] He felt himself on him' (*CPP* 110) – and when he finally puts the knife in – '[h]e could hardly help plunging it in himself' (*CPP* 118) – there is a momentary suspension as to whom 'himself' should refer. The reflexive pronoun ceases to correspond exclusively to Hanp; it drives a wedge between the body that expresses a first-person idea of action, and the body that is the subject of the idea of action. As Elizabeth Anscombe comments, 'it is part of the sense of "I" that utterer and subject should be one and the same', yet in these instances, the pronoun does not refer to an agency which could utter, without serious misgivings: 'I am the thinker of these thoughts', or 'I am this body'.³¹

A similar pronominal doubling effect occurs in *Tarr*, a novel which further develops Lewis's ongoing project to reorientate outdated habits of reading and spectatorship by staging a violent collision between the natural and anti-mimetic performative body. It pitches, once again, the figure of the detached observer, mechanized but self-reflexive, the character of the title, against the mimetic figure of Kreisler, described as 'clown-like' (*T1* 241), who moves, like Hanp the 'toy wound up', with the 'dead weight of old iron, that started, must go dashing on' (*T1* 107). Lewis told Hugh Kenner, echoing the declaration that *Enemy of the Stars* was 'keeping pace with the visual revolution' (*RA* 139), that he wrote *Tarr* as 'a piece of writing worthy of the hand of the abstract innovator [...]. Anyhow it was my object to eliminate anything less essential than a noun or a verb. Prepositions, pronouns, articles – the small fry – as far as might be, I would abolish' (*L* 552-53). This

attempt to streamline parts of speech which indicate subjective agency, in particular, the reflexive pronoun 'himself', informs a technique concomitant to his innovations as a Vorticist painter and playwright. The Lewisian frontal assault on the line again explodes the phenomenon of the body's intersubjective agency. The aggressive dislocation of the movement of limbs from intentionality is manifest in *Tarr*, as in *Enemy of the Stars*, in fissures and overlaps between perception and readability, and the complex dispositions of deictic referents and reflexive pronouns.

Tarr is the artist Kreisler aspires to be, although Soltyk, who supplants him as chief recipient of money from Volker, and as Anastasya's escort, is also an 'efficient and more accomplished counterpart' (*T1* 90). When Soltyk, provoked by Kreisler, breaks out in suddenly accruing fury to attack, 'Soltyk tore at *himself* first, writhing upright, a statue's bronze softening, suddenly, with blood' (*T1* 272). The reference-field of '*himself*', which Lewis italicizes, doubles up to include both men, an effect which continues during the fight scene: 'hands flew at Kreisler's throat. [...] Kreisler was hurled about. He was pumped backwards and forwards. His hands grabbed a mass of hair; as a man slipping on a precipice gets hold of a plant' (*T1* 272-73). In this instance, 'his hands grabbed a mass of hair' could refer either to Soltyk attacking, an extension of his hands which 'flew at Kreisler's throat', or Kreisler's defence, 'as a man slipping on a precipice gets hold of a plant'. This pronominal doubling effect is also a feature of Dostoevsky's *The Double* (1846), a story which Timothy Materer has noted as an influence on *Tarr*.³² Golyadkin is a split personality, threatened by an identical simulacrum who shares his name, as intelligently varied and supple as the authentic Golyadkin is monotonous and mechanically inflexible. When Golyadkin 'looked as though he wanted to hide from himself, as though he were trying to run away from himself, or when he becomes 'mistrustful of himself', the reference is to Golyadkin, and his double, in equal measure.³³ Living at a distance from their own bodies, Kreisler and Golyadkin become reproducible when they cease to be themselves. Automatism, in the form of a mimetic double, exceeds them, whereas Hanp in *Enemy of the Stars*, unable to become 'himself' by imitating Arghol, expires in a mimetic double-bind: he is his opponent's failed double.

Arghol's fear of being assimilated and reproduced until he is no longer exclusively himself, registered in the dream in which he meets a version of Hanp and accuses him of "'masquerading as me'" (*CPP* 114),

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propels his anti-mimetic stance. In his resistance to the repetition of himself, and contempt for Hanp's professional vanity, Arghol is also an Enemy of the *Stars*, of actor-stars, and the phenomenon of star personas, which Lewis regards as the consequence of an excess of vanity and repetition in which the star persona, having acquired an automatic life of its own, overtakes the particularity of the actor. Arghol's opening stage direction declares, 'HE IS NOT EVEN A "STAR"' (CPP 96); he is rather the actor who resists the process compelling him to conform to a standardized version of himself. By 1870, the star system in theatre had been fully established; the US had been manufacturing star performers in theatre since George Frederick Cook's extensive tour across America in 1810 generated a maximum of publicity and exposure for its actors.³⁴ Hanp's process of appropriation, as his opponent's 'self-centred and elemental shadow' (CPP 99), overcome with 'qualms of vanity' (CPP 96) and indignant at 'Arghol ACTING, he who had not the right to act' (CPP 115), mimes a standardized misrepresentation of a persona Arghol refuses for himself. The 1932 revision of the play clarifies Hanp's status as a 'bad actor – or else one in violent disagreement with his part' (CPP 191), unable to imitate and supplant Arghol in the eyes of the audience, the '[f]aces following stars' (CPP 103). The struggle in *Enemy of the Stars* is also between the standardized artificial reproducibility of the actor-star persona as a commodity, versus the irreducible authenticity of the anti-mimetic self. The consequence for Arghol in permitting even a single imitation of himself – 'two reproductions of the same negative' – would be to invite a 'manufacturing process' for multiple autonomous reproductions (see Bergson, L 34). This nightmare vision blazes over him in an 'electric atmosphere' (CPP 100): gazing up at the 'dry, white volcanic light' (CPP 98), he sees a 'furious mass of images' (CPP 103), flashes of a '[h]undred idols to a man' (CPP 104). The real Arghol watches images of possible appropriations of himself which threaten to consume him.

Notes

¹ Ezra Pound, 'D'Artagnan Twenty Years After' (1937), in William Cookson (ed.), *Ezra Pound: Selected Prose 1909-1965* (London: Faber & Faber, 1973): 422-30, 424.

² Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading* (London: George Routledge, 1934), 26.

- ³ Hugh Kenner, *Wyndham Lewis* (London: Methuen, 1954), 56.
- ⁴ Martin Puchner, *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-Theatricality and Drama* (John Hopkins University Press, 2002), 26.
- ⁵ David Graver, 'Vorticist Performance and Aesthetic Turbulence in *Enemy of the Stars*', *PMLA* 107. 3 (May 1992): 482-97.
- ⁶ For illuminating accounts, see Scott Klein, *The Fictions of James Joyce and Wyndham Lewis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Reed Way Dasenbrock, *The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound & Wyndham Lewis: Toward the Condition of Painting* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1985); Michael Beatty, 'Enemy of the Stars: Vorticist Experimental Play', *Theoria* 46 (May 1976): 41-60.
- ⁷ Paul Edwards, *Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 143.
- ⁸ Andrzej Gąsiorek, *Wyndham Lewis and Modernism* (Tavistock: Northcote House, 2004), 17.
- ⁹ T. S. Eliot, 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' (1917), in *Collected Poems, 1909-1962* (1963; London: Faber & Faber, 1989): 13-17, 15.
- ¹⁰ Arthur Symons, *Studies in Seven Arts* (London: Constable, 1906), 34.
- ¹¹ Arthur Symons, *Cities and Sea Coasts and Islands* (London: Constable, 1908), 169.
- ¹² Arthur Symons, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (London: Constable, 1899), 5; and W. B. Yeats, 'William Blake' (1896), in *Selected Criticism*, ed. A. Norman Jeffares (London: Pan Books, 1976): 21-24, 22.
- ¹³ Arthur Symons, *Plays, Acting and Music* (London: Constable, 1909), 7.
- ¹⁴ Symons, *The Symbolist Movement*, 153 and 168.
- ¹⁵ W. B. Yeats, *Explorations* (London: Macmillan, 1962), 179.
- ¹⁶ Symons, *The Symbolist Movement*, 168.
- ¹⁷ Dasenbrock, *The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound & Wyndham Lewis*, 53.
- ¹⁸ Edward Gordon Craig, 'The Actor and the Über-Marionette', *The Mask* (1908): 3-11; and J. Michael Walton, 'Craig and the Greeks' (2000) <www.cssd.ac.uk/dramforum>. Accessed 20 May 2013.
- ¹⁹ Olga Taxidou, *The Mask: A Periodical Performance by Edward Gordon Craig* (London: Routledge, 1998), 54.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, 56-59.
- ²¹ Edward Gordon Craig, *Craig on Theatre*, ed. J. Michael Walton (London: Methuen, 1983), 82. Hereafter cited parenthetically as Craig, *OT*.
- ²² Vincent Sherry, *Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, and Radical Modernism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 108.
- ²³ William C. Wees, *Vorticism and the English Avant-Garde* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972), 48.

²⁴ For instance, David Bomberg's *Composition* (1914) and *In the Hold* (1913-14). See Richard Cork, *Vorticism and Abstract Art in the First Machine Age – Volume 2: Synthesis and Decline* (London: Gordon Fraser, 1976).

²⁵ Donald McManus, *No Kidding!: Clown as Protagonist in Twentieth Century Theater* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003), 13.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

²⁷ Robert Murray, "'Our Wild Body': Lewis's Forgotten Essay", *Enemy News* 14 (1981): 15-17; and Henri Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, trans. Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell (London: Macmillan, 1911), 29. Hereafter cited parenthetically as Bergson, *L*. Originally published as *Le Rire: essai sur la signification du comique* (1900).

²⁸ Murray, "'Our Wild Body'", 15-17; and Bernard Lafourcade, 'The Wild Body, Bergson, and the Absurd', *Enemy News* 15 (1982): 23-25.

²⁹ Symons, *Studies in Seven Arts*, 374-75.

³⁰ Arthur C. Danto, 'Description and the Phenomenology of Perception', in Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith Moxey (eds), *Visual Theory: Painting and Interpretation* (Cambridge: Polity, 1989): 201-16, 206.

³¹ Elizabeth Anscombe, 'The First Person', in Samuel Guttenplan (ed.), *Mind and Language* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975): 45-67, 47.

³² See Timothy Materer, *Wyndham Lewis the Novelist* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1976), 54 and 172.

³³ Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Double*, trans. by Constance Garnett (1917; New York: Dover Publications, 1997), 95 and 33. Originally published as *Dvoynik* (1846).

³⁴ Richard DeCordova, *Picture Personalities* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 39.