The High Wasteland, Scar, Form, and Monstrosity in the English Landscape: What Is the Function of the Monster in Representations of the English Landscape?

Michael Hugh Eden
M00693734

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Abstract

The High Wasteland, Scar, Form and Monstrosity in the English Landscape: What Is the Function of the Monster in Representations of the English Landscape?

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In this thesis, I explore themes and concerns that have arisen in my art practice, namely the relationship between landscape, monstrosity, and subjectivity. The tropes *scar* and *form* refer to features analogous in the subject and in the land which take on different specific meanings throughout the project, but in general terms, I relate them to trauma as a defining force. I suggest that monsters can be understood as embodying attitudes to time (a cause of trauma): those being fixity, which is resistant to temporality; and flux, which embraces temporality. Consequently, I define these categories and their opposition, presenting arguments for both *monsters of fixity* and *flux monsters*.

I examine the construction of false universals of ‘England’ (categories of fixity) in representations of landscape and how they come to dominate the picturing of Britain more generally, alongside a mode I refer to as dynamic-fatalism, which examines the polemics and aesthetics of Wyndham Lewis (1882-1957). In this regard, I look at Lewis’s monstrous *Tyro* and its role in eliciting dehumanisation as a defining value in conceptions of a stratified society. Emphasis on creative practices and representations related to England serve to dissolve ‘proto-fascistic’ fantasies of a heroic, mono-cultural, and pure base for nation, dependent on categories of fixity. I suggest these values are instead understood as patrician, sexist, class-based, and racially biased.

Given that landscape constructions are constitutive of our engagement with landscape, I conclude with a proposal for better ‘analogues’ of nature in the form of *virescent space* (a category of flux). I argue that *virescent space* is a phenomenon that sees the monster take on a specific role concerning the subject, one I define in relation to a wilderness destination in the poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (c.1370).

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Images of Wyndham Lewis’s work are shared by permission of the Wyndham Lewis Memorial Trust, a registered charity.

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Introduction

This thesis is concerned with an analysis of ideas related to subjectivity, monstrosity, and landscape. I explore the interrelationship between those categories focusing on constructions of Englishness, right-wing populism, and far-right nationalism – political and cultural phenomena that I will refer to in this thesis as proto-fascism. I investigate representations of Englishness with regard to landscape as a formative factor in constructions of national identity. To do this, I utilise a figuration of monstrous disruptions within this realm. This is of renewed importance in the contemporary political climate with the rise of right-wing populism and considerations of Brexit, alongside strategies employed in its realisation. These positions emphasise national identity, are concerned with centralised power (in the form of a heroic executive) and idealise notions of the past. As practice-led research, the thesis poses the question of how a contemporary art practice might respond to this context and contribute to its critique. To challenge proto-fascist constructions of identity and nation I draw on Arthurian imagery, specifically that of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (c.1370, hereafter referred to as *SGGK*) to explore fault lines at the heart of nationalist mythmaking. *SGGK* was penned by the anonymous Pearl Poet at a moment when English nationalism was being formed (Strayer, 2005; Black, 1971; Mortimer, 2010). Those early strategies drew on Arthurian myth to aid in centralising power around the monarch (Tuck, 1984; Ingledew, 2006 as I discuss in Chapter 3). However, *SGGK* a highly ambivalent text, was lost to that discourse, coming to light more than two hundred years later (Armitage, 2007:5). My sources of reference for *SGGK* are Simon Armitage's (2007) translation, which emphasises the alliterative form, and the side-by-side translation of Malcolm Andrew and Ronald Waldron (2015). As I draw on the poem frequently throughout the thesis, an exposition is offered below to aid the reader's comprehension.

The Green Knight, a green-skinned and green-adorned 'half-giant' (Armitage, 2007:11), interrupts festivities at the court of King Arthur, issuing a challenge to the assembled knights. The Green Knight asks whether anyone present would dare to strike him and be struck in return. The court is awe-struck, and Gawain (Arthur's nephew) takes up the challenge before the king is forced to accept. Gawain beheads the Green Knight. However, the Green Knight does not perish; picking up his head, he reminds Gawain of his oath; Gawain must receive the return strike in a year and a day's time at a remote location named the Green Chapel, which he must find.

The poem then describes Gawain's journey as he makes his way to the chapel through the wilderness. Gawain in some physical distress, comes to castle Hautdesert, the court of lord Bertilak. Bertilak is a generous and capable host, and his wife is a charismatic and beautiful woman, referred to as the lady. The couple welcome Gawain, reassuring him that he will be guided to the Green Chapel on time as it is close to his current location.

Bertilak's court is a happy and comfortable place where the remote figure of an older woman (revealed later as Morgan le Fay) appears as the utmost authority. Gawain is treated as an honoured guest. He enjoys feasting and deep conversation with Bertilak and the lady, and he is loath to leave them.

However, this period at Bertilak's court is not without significant psychological challenges, and Gawain's ideas, persona, and values are tested by the lady. As a sporting custom, Bertilak and Gawain engage in the exchange of winnings game. This entails giving to your opponent in the game whatever you have received that day. (The more you can give the better this reflects on you.) During the days Bertilak engages in lavish hunts, which result in three separate quarries: several deer, a ferocious boar, and finally an evasive fox. During these hunts, Gawain is visited in his bedroom by the lady; she is forceful and charming and defies the gendered norms of the time by being frank about her desire for Gawain. Gawain is put under pressure by his feelings of obligation to his host, and by the implied gender role reversal, combined with feelings of desire for the lady. At the end of the first two days of hunting Bertilak presents his animal prizes to Gawain, and Gawain, having received only kisses and attention from the lady, kisses Bertilak. However, during the third hunt, and knowing of Gawain's coming confrontation with the Green Knight, the lady presents Gawain with both a kiss and a green girdle, which she claims is enchanted and has protective properties. Gawain can resist the lady's physical advances, but he takes the girdle. During the exchange when Bertilak gives Gawain the fox, Gawain kisses Bertilak and retains the green girdle. The poet makes it clear that Gawain is motivated in his acceptance of the girdle by self-interest.

The time comes for Gawain to leave for the chapel, and Bertilak issues him a guide. The guide tries to convince Gawain that he should go home because no one would know and because the Green Knight will surely kill Gawain. Gawain refuses and presses on alone.

Gawain approaches the Green Chapel at night, sees that it is a natural formation, and has feelings of trepidation.

The Green Knight appears, and after a tense exchange, Gawain prepares to be struck. The Green Knight intentionally feints two blows, which upset Gawain's composure. The third blow is struck fulfilling Gawain's oath but only snicks Gawain's neck, which gives him a lasting scar. The Green Knight reveals that he and Bertilak are the same being and that the lady and he were testing Gawain on behalf of the sorceress Morgan le Fay.

Gawain is asked to return with the Green Knight to see Morgan le Fay (revealed as Gawain's aunt) and the lady, whom he is reassured is a real friend. However, Gawain refuses. He is disillusioned with himself and returns to Camelot wearing the green girdle as a sash and a symbol of his failing. Gawain's feelings are contrasted with both the Green Knight's positivity about Gawain, and the relief and celebration of Camelot upon his return. Gawain remains self-critical, a permanently changed individual.

Gawain's denial of Bertilak's offer to meet his aunt Morgan le Fay and be reunited with his friend lady Bertilak, with all pretences lifted (his own and theirs), is entirely ambiguous; it leaves the sense of a celebration without the guest of honour lingering in the reader's mind. Bertilak's court is a site associated with Gawain's most meaningful friendships, and with active and equal femininity in the persons of the lady and Morgan le Fay, who possesses a merit-based authority. Morgan is described in the poem as a woman 'so adept and adroit…who learned magic from Merlin' (Armitage, 2007:111). It is also a space where homosexual exchanges take place, and where plentiful nature provides fodder for lord Bertilak's generosity.

There is a lingering sense of ambiguity and monstrosity with the Green Knight. As Besserman (1986) writes, 'He then rides off "whiderwarde-so-euer he wolde" (1. 2478), still a "grene gome" (1. 2239) and a knight in "enker-grene" his identity remains a puzzle' (225,226).

There are three distinct spaces that affect Gawain, which are useful in this thesis as they present the effects of interior and exterior space on the subject. Firstly, the interrupted normality of the court at Camelot, where Gawain is in a state of naivety. Secondly, the alternative court of Bertilak, where Gawain's values are challenged by the lady. Thirdly, the wilderness: the liminal space described in the journey from Camelot both to Castle

Hautedesert and, more pertinently, to the Green Chapel. In that space specifically, Gawain changes his view of himself.

In this project, I contrast the disruptive presence of the monstrous Green Knight (hereafter referred to as GK), with the proto-fascistic figure of the *Tyro*. *Tyros* are monstrous incarnations of man, intended to engender predatory, armoured stasis in a sympathetic audience. This figure is drawn from the practice of Wyndham Lewis, an artist with whose oeuvre I have had an ambivalent relation and proto-fascism is a term applied to Lewis by Jameson (1979:15:23:129:184). Lewis informs his atavistic aesthetic (concerned with permanence and visual fixity) in relation to the late medieval period (the time of *SGGK's* conception). Lewis's armoured *Tyros,* represent an ethos of 'fixity' resistant to change, paranoidly closed against any opening wound, and linked to existing hierarchy, qualities visible in the classic figure of the knight.

The GK (who chastises Arthur's court and initiates Gawain's subjective development), represents flux and openness to otherness which resists this logic. I explore the tension between these two monsters, their shared economy, and an 'identity of opposites' drawing on Heraclitus, while using mixed media strategies drawn from an interest in William Kentridge (discussed later), and juxtaposing 'portrait' formats from Lewis's *Tyros* with landscapes in my art practice.

I present temporal nature, as an ultimately redemptive space concerning the subject and by extension to ideas of the past and present, through the metaphor of the 'High Wasteland'. The term 'wasteland', relative to nationalism, is shown as atrophying, and as linked to strategies of 'ideological darkness' (Mitchell, 2009:6) and 'imperial illusion' (Evans et al., 2004:15-16), which reinforce its premises concerning subjectivity insofar as they are tantamount to stagnation. 'High Wasteland' is alternatively seen as a metaphor for renewal in the relation of subjectivity to nature. I derive this term from the ambiguous fissure, the Green Chapel. This duality is drawn from the GK's real name, 'Bertilak Hautedesert', which refers to a sacred and simultaneously deadly wilderness, the '"High Wasteland" or "High Hermitage". It may also have an association with *desirete,* meaning "disinherited" (i.e., from the Round Table)' (Besserman, 1986:226). In *SGGK,* the sense of an eclectic, shifting, and multi-ethnic England, dependent on other cultures emerges, although this is obfuscated by conceptions of the landscape that seek to 'carry out a process of institutional and political legitimation' (Mitchell, 1994:3). Mitchell refers to this in relation to Kenneth Clark's (1949) *Landscape* *into Art*, as an ‘ideological, and political darkness that covers itself with precisely the sort of innocent idealism Clark expresses’ (Mitchell, 1994:6).

In the case of the Pearl Poet, continental Europe and ancient Greece emerge as key in the constructs of Gawain’s imaginary England. Jones (1953) emphasises the ‘many analogues’ the poem has to other works, listing: the 8th-century tale Feld Bricrend, the old French Livre de Carados, the 13th-century Perlesvaus, La Mule Sanz Frain and Romance of Hunbaut. Jones adds to those a discussion of linguistic and cultural eclecticism involving ‘the deliberate blending of three narrative elements and the unconscious fusion of three cultures: Irish-Welsh, French, and English’ (Jones, 1953:3).

Moreover, Jones highlights the extensive use of terms of ‘Scandinavian origin’ (1953:19). He writes, ‘An English author has written an English poem, and to England the glory thereof’ (1953:3). However, he was also sure it would be ‘barren’ and meaningless without understanding the importance of these cultures, as well as Christian and pagan influences – ‘glimpses of the unbroken cultural traditions of Highland Britain’ (5). We can add the framing of ancient Greek references that the Pearl Poet gives the text in the links to Felix Brutus: a descendent of Aeneas (Armitage, 2007:5,114). The focus on England here undermines notions of a fictive, pure, native base of Englishness in either the 14th-century context of the Pearl Poet or the early 20th-century interwar period of Lewis (who was looking back to this period to inform his work). A precise focus on England helps to dissolve this fiction. The poem includes a preface that places it as a meditation on a troubled island:

> on Britain’s broad hill-tops, Felix Brutus made
> his stand.
> And wonder, dread and war
> have lingered in that land
> where loss and love in turn
> have held the upper hand (Armitage, 2007:5).

The poet’s desire to connect their work to the mythic foundations of ‘Britain’, as a colonised and multi-ethnic place defined by conflict (Celtic, old French, Welsh, Christian, and pagan references) is present throughout the poem. The openness of the Pearl Poet’s creation contrasts with the defensiveness of Lewis concerning his influences and allies across Europe. Lewis was interested in being distinct from these influences, pointing out the weaknesses and limitations of all those movements that fed into his practice. For Lewis, difference, distinction, and masculine potency remained key, while in the medieval poem there is a greater opening to the Other both in the eclecticism of its construction and in the thrust of the narrative, which has a powerful feminine subtext (Heng, 1999; Cohen, 2019) and potentially Islamic antecedents (Ng and Hodges, 2010). This is also reflected in terms of the definition of the subject in time. The subject emerges over time in the imaginary of *SGGK*. In contrast, as it is expressed in Lewis, the emergence of the subject is through definition, or via distinction, in the context of a hierarchy and is a 'form of ego armouring [which] is the gist of "the new egos" proposed by Lewis before the war' (Foster, 2004:149).

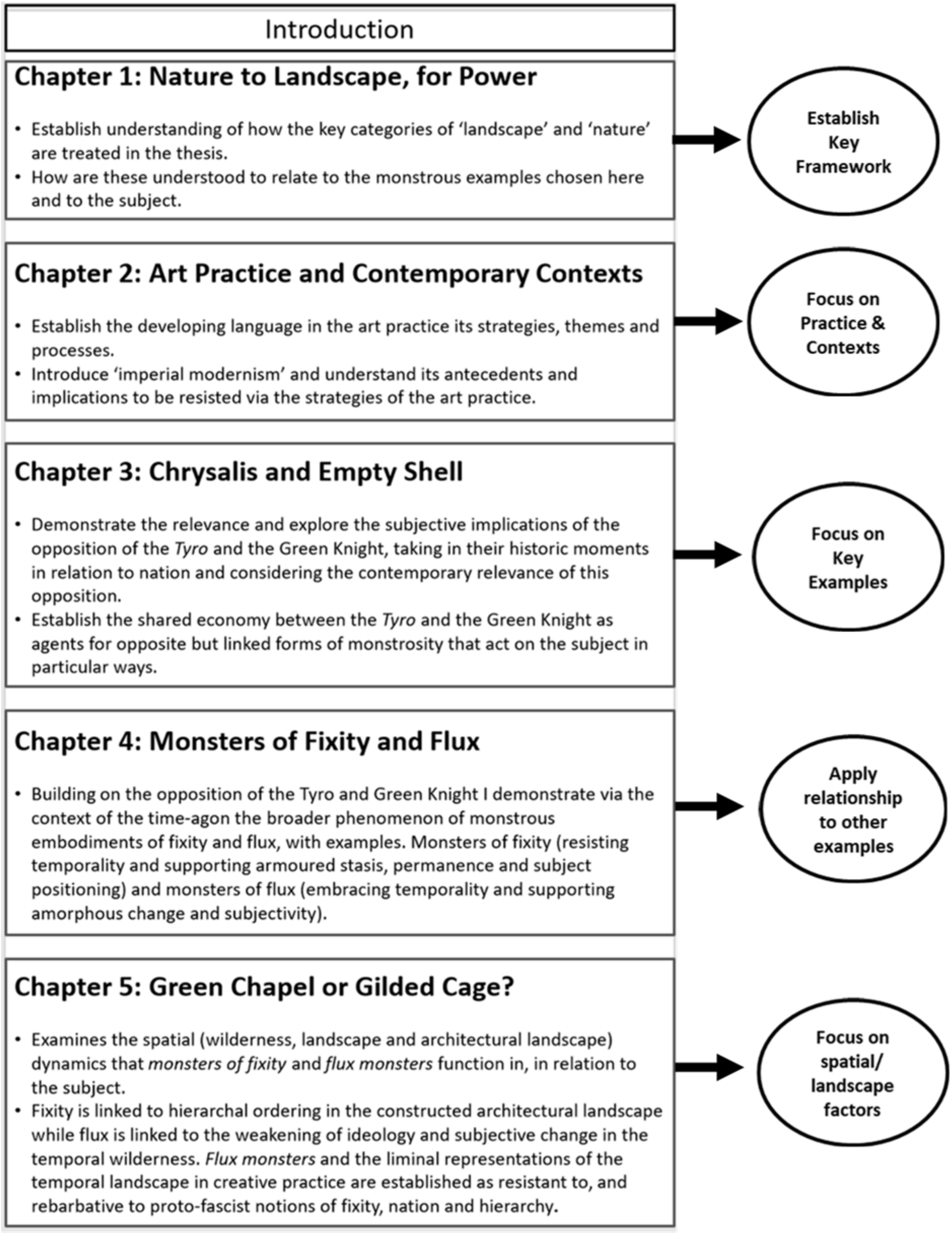
Furthermore, I argue that the figure of the monster can be understood as either an agent for this temporality or an agent in resistance to it. The two principal examples in tension here are the GK (an agent for temporality) and Lewis's *Tyro* (an agent of fixity and armoured stasis). These opposing functions of the monster relate to the duality of 'scar', another key term in the title of this work. This can entail fierce armoured resistance as exemplified in the *Tyro* (a point I argue in relation to excoriation practices in Chapter 1), which entails scar *as* form; or, in contrast, scar *in* form: bearer of emergent meaning, rupture and change. This is exemplified in the composite form of the GK where 'scar' is a rupture, a visual indicator of time in the subject or in the land. Scar by extension, also refers to configurations of subjectivity and to 'landscape' as ways to suppress or acknowledge this temporality.

Interdisciplinarity is a key feature of this project, which ranges across various disciplines: contemporary art criticism and its relationship to histories of modernism, medieval literature, theories of landscape and space, notions of national mythmaking, and monster studies. This will be a thesis that engages with and brings together these different discourses through the lens of my art practice in which the tension of fixity and flux, present in all those discourses, has been a key subject matter. The themes of monstrosity and landscape, and the ways in which those categories relate to, include and exclude one another in creative output, helps to ground the thesis disciplinarity (highlighted in Chapter 1 and discussed further below).

Outcomes and Aims of the Project

Additionally to this thesis and as a direct result of its themes, I produced various outcomes: paintings, many of which are discussed in this text, constructions (in wood and metal), and ceramic sculptures. In terms of contributing to public-facing discourse, I have produced a curatorial/research outcome in the form of a website, 'Representing Sir Gawain and the Green Knight' (Eden 2022), which archives and explores visual responses to the poem, and seeks to extend the poem's themes via newly commissioned works (initially five contemporary artists). The site was funded by Middlesex University and is listed at the Camelot Project (a research platform hosted by the University of Rochester in New York). I have also written an academic paper ‘The Reproachful Head of the Green Knight’ for the *Journal of Adaptation in Film and Performance* to be published in 2023 (which explores my sculpture of the same name). Those outcomes have helped me to understand and contribute to the life of the poem as a truly intertextual and dialogic work. I have also presented paintings from a series *Woodwose* (2022), in the exhibition ‘Verdant’ at the Mile End Gallery London. To see images of all outcomes related to the thesis, but not referred to in the body of the text, see Appendix 1.

Chapter Plan, Focus and Aims



Introduction

Chapter 1: Nature to Landscape, for Power

- Establish understanding of how the key categories of ‘landscape’ and ‘nature’ are treated in the thesis.
- How are these understood to relate to the monstrous examples chosen here and to the subject.

Chapter 2: Art Practice and Contemporary Contexts

- Establish the developing language in the art practice its strategies, themes and processes.
- Introduce ‘imperial modernism’ and understand its antecedents and implications to be resisted via the strategies of the art practice.

Chapter 3: Chrysalis and Empty Shell

- Demonstrate the relevance and explore the subjective implications of the opposition of the *Tyro* and the Green Knight, taking in their historic moments in relation to nation and considering the contemporary relevance of this opposition.
- Establish the shared economy between the *Tyro* and the Green Knight as agents for opposite but linked forms of monstrosity that act on the subject in particular ways.

Chapter 4: Monsters of Fixity and Flux

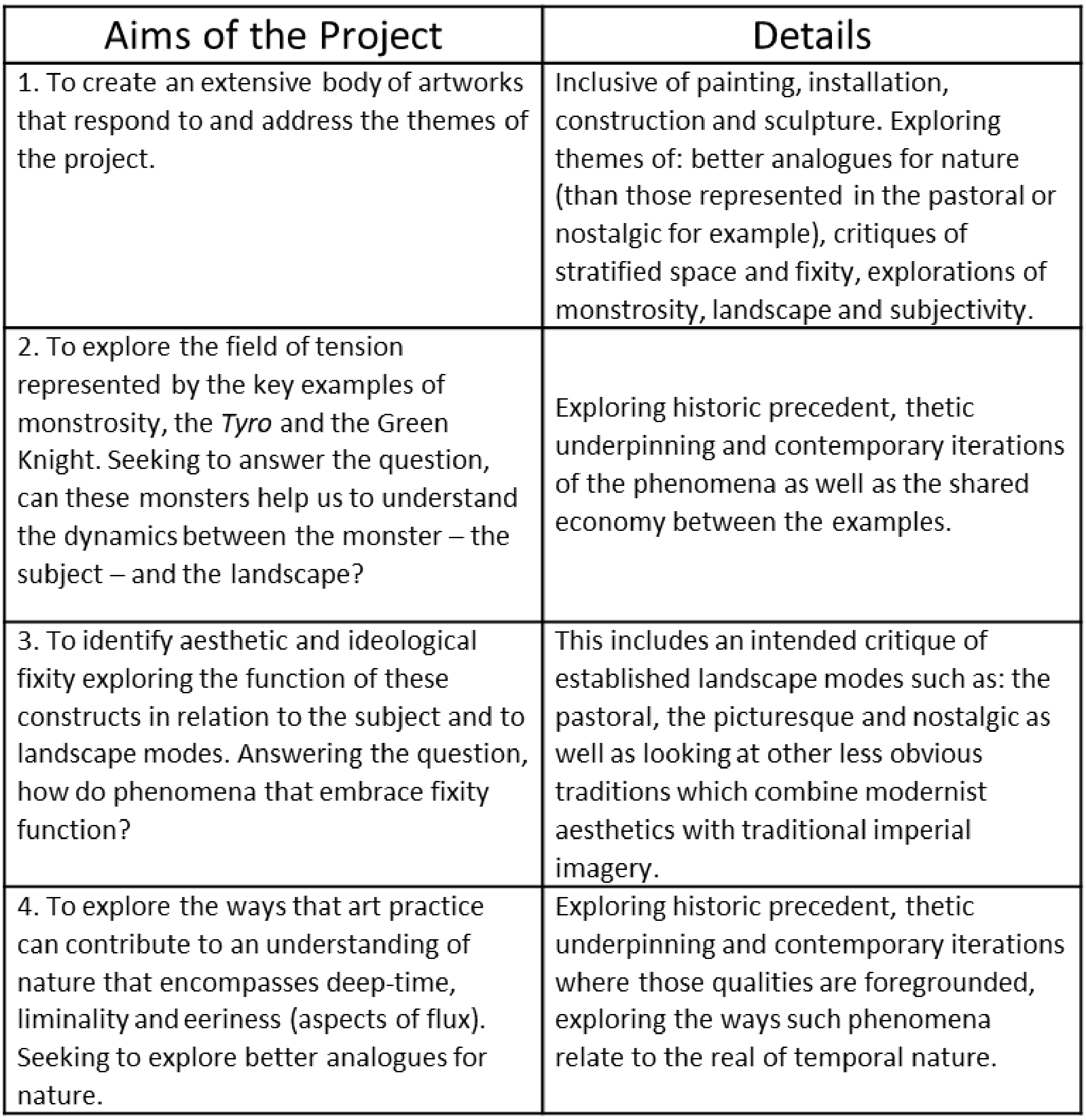
- Building on the opposition of the Tyro and Green Knight I demonstrate via the context of the time-agon the broader phenomenon of monstrous embodiments of fixity and flux, with examples. Monsters of fixity (resisting temporality and supporting armoured stasis, permanence and subject positioning) and monsters of flux (embracing temporality and supporting amorphous change and subjectivity).

Chapter 5: Green Chapel or Gilded Cage?

- Examines the spatial (wilderness, landscape and architectural landscape) dynamics that *monsters of fixity* and *flux monsters* function in, in relation to the subject.
- Fixity is linked to hierarchal ordering in the constructed architectural landscape while flux is linked to the weakening of ideology and subjective change in the temporal wilderness. *Flux monsters* and the liminal representations of the temporal landscape in creative practice are established as resistant to, and rebarbative to proto-fascist notions of fixity, nation and hierarchy.

Establish Key Framework
Focus on Practice & Contexts
Focus on Key Examples
Apply relationship to other examples
Focus on spatial/ landscape factors

Figure 1: *Chapter Plan and Focus* (2022).



Aims of the Project	Details
1. To create an extensive body of artworks that respond to and address the themes of the project.	Inclusive of painting, installation, construction and sculpture. Exploring themes of: better analogues for nature (than those represented in the pastoral or nostalgic for example), critiques of stratified space and fixity, explorations of monstrosity, landscape and subjectivity.
2. To explore the field of tension represented by the key examples of monstrosity, the *Tyro* and the Green Knight. Seeking to answer the question, can these monsters help us to understand the dynamics between the monster – the subject – and the landscape?	Exploring historic precedent, thetic underpinning and contemporary iterations of the phenomena as well as the shared economy between the examples.
3. To identify aesthetic and ideological fixity exploring the function of these constructs in relation to the subject and to landscape modes. Answering the question, how do phenomena that embrace fixity function?	This includes an intended critique of established landscape modes such as: the pastoral, the picturesque and nostalgic as well as looking at other less obvious traditions which combine modernist aesthetics with traditional imperial imagery.
4. To explore the ways that art practice can contribute to an understanding of nature that encompasses deep-time, liminality and eeriness (aspects of flux). Seeking to explore better analogues for nature.	Exploring historic precedent, thetic underpinning and contemporary iterations where those qualities are foregrounded, exploring the ways such phenomena relate to the real of temporal nature.

Figure 2: *Project Aims* (2022).

Landscape and Nature

As key (and related) categories in the thesis, landscape, nature, and the relationship of these to the subject are explored in detail in Chapter 1. Nature can be seen as an arbitrary, indifferent (but dynamic) material space. Following Mitchell (2009) the dynamics of ‘landscape’ as an interpellating (and inevitable) construct which attaches subjects to reality is explored, emphasising the need for ‘better analogues’ for nature, which as Gayton (2006) suggests, do not obfuscate: interruption, disturbance events, and deep time. Fisher’s ‘eerie’ (2016), is identified as a possible framework for understanding better analogues. I examine the relation of landscape to ideas of nation, space, and place in relation to Gupta and Ferguson (1997), Guldi (2011), Rendall (2009), and I unpack the intersection of scar and form with landscape. Nostalgia and the picturesque (strategies of fixity), which draw on and present landscape, are defined and problematised. Furthermore, I will ground these concepts in the broader context of three key texts, John Barrell’s *The Dark Side of Landscape* (1980); Robert Burden and Stephan Kohl’s, *Landscape and Englishness* (2006) – in particular, Burden’s introduction ‘Englishness and Spatial Practices’ (13-26) – and Ann Bermingham’s *Landscape and Ideology* (1989). These texts discuss the role of art in matters of power related to landscape and are considered canonical. They aid the reader in understanding how ‘landscape’, ‘imperial illusion’ and so-called ‘innocent idealism’ are interrogated in the project.

Exposition of Wyndham Lewis and Tyros

Wyndham Lewis

Wyndham Lewis (1882-1957) and his *Tyros* are key exemplars within a field of tension (fixity – flux) that I present in this thesis, and refer to in each chapter. It will therefore aid the reader in understanding Lewis and his *Tyros*. Lewis was a painter and writer; he was the leader of the Vorticist movement (1914-1918), the only Modernist art movement to emerge in England. Vorticism took elements from Cubism (1907) and Futurism (1909), but significantly altered these abstractions to celebrate a kind of dynamic classicism in opposition to what Lewis saw as forms of weak, feminised or deluded positions present in both these influences and alternative styles. This is important as although I do not agree with Lewis’s rationale for these rejections, I do see him as the only significant proponent of aesthetic fixity (an iteration of classicism) working, as Tickner (2000) saw it, ‘from a particular dissentient conflicted position’ within Modernism (note,137). For Tickner, Lewis’s painting is 'darker, fractured, and menacing' (79), embracing ‘something more imperious, but mechanical’ (106). For Edwards, Lewis was not interested in a specific period of classicism, but in a general strategy which ‘removes its objects to an ideal plane’ (2000:264). For this reason, his mythos is an important exemplar of aesthetic fixity.

Lewis is aware of the destructive aspects of modernity, viewing the condition as dehumanising rather than empowering and seeking to make that attack on human illusions into a defining ‘value of its own’. Contrasting Lewis’s approach to Marxism, Foster (2004) insists the Marxist ‘project to overcome’ technological alienation is elevated by a ‘potentially fascist desire’ (114) in Lewis to make alienation central in subjectivity. For Foster, Lewis is ‘potentially fascist’. This recalls Jameson’s descriptions of Lewis as ‘proto-fascist’ (1979:15:23:129:184). I consider Lewis’s turbulence actively ‘proto-fascist’ giving him a parallel to contemporary neo-fascist logics.

The relevance of Lewis’s proto-fascist imaginary is emphasised in the rise of ‘Postfascism’ (Traverso, 2019) in the contemporary western world, particularly Europe. While there are some differences (the emphasis on Islam rather than only Judaism as a key target), Proto- and Postfascism obey the same patterns. Proto-fascism in Lewis is referred to by Jameson as having a ‘complex ideological appeal’. This entails

> a shifting strategy of class adherences whereby an initially strong populist and anti-capitalist impulse gradually readapted to the ideological habits of a petty bourgeoisie, which can its self be displaced when, with the consolidation of the fascist state, effective power passes back into the hands of big business (Jameson, 1979:15).

This turbulence can be seen in the descriptions of ‘Postfascism’ in Traverso (2019) as ‘not yet crystallised’ (Traverso, 2019:8) movements which emphasise national identity rather than nationalism and concentrate power around perceived strong individuals, while also being concerned with adapting to respectability. Jameson’s description above could be mapped onto Traverso’s account of contemporary far-right parties (Traverso 2019:8). The strong personality and ideas of ‘biological filiation’ which grant ‘dynastic’ qualities and define Postfascism as a ‘heterogeneous and composite phenomenon’ (2019:6) mean that unlike neo-fascism or fascism proper, which Treverso is clear to link, Postfascism like proto-fascism has an ‘antinomic’ quality where ‘contradictory ideological content[s]…mix together’ (2019:7).

Consider Lewis's description of himself in *The Art of Being Ruled* (1926) as 'a man whose politics are "partly communist and partly fascist, with a distinct streak of monarchism in my Marxism, but at bottom anarchist with a healthy passion for order"' (Lewis quoted in Gasiorek, 2011:206). These composite aspects in Lewis are reactionary and conservative in emphasis. They obey hierarchical concepts inherited from classic conservatism, as echoed in Traverso's reading of Postfascism (Traverso, 2019:102), and are, as Jameson observes, as revolutionary as any populism where 'power passes back into the hands of big business' (Jameson, 1979:15). Both positions, proto/post emphasise the centralisation of power and attack the corruption of liberal democratic processes. Drawing on Talman (1970) in *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* Traverso understands the underpinning of post-fascist thinking as 'a monster whose two heads, communist and fascist, were equally holistic and messianic, and therefore opposed to empiric and pluralistic liberalism' (Traverso, 2019:171).

These aspects, Communism and Fascism, are also key for Lewis's proto-fascistic imaginary. 'Initially drawn to both political tendencies because of their shared desire to centralise power…he was nonetheless more sympathetic to fascism' (Gasiorek, 2011:206). Quoting Lewis in *The Art of Being Ruled* Gasiorek also observes Lewis saying, 'For Anglo-Saxon countries as they are constituted today some modified form of fascism would probably be best' (Lewis cited in Gasiorek, 2011:206). Furthermore, the concept of pluralistic, nebulous liberalism is the target for Lewis, just as it is for the 'post-fascist' movements that Traverso highlights. There is a trial-by-fire quality informing the rhetoric of the far-right and a mythic appeal to valorised pasts which in Lewis emerge in his totemic *Tyros* with their essentialist and predatory qualities, his interest in hierarchal visual organisation, and his general appeal to classic conceptions of order.

Tyros

Tyros are devil-like monsters: predatory, aggressive and grimacing; nothing more than armoured surfaces. They are akin to fetish objects, fierce pagan gods, and caricatures in their visual representation. Principle images of *Tyros* in paintings referred to here are *A Reading of Ovid* (1920-21) (fig. 42) and *A self-portrait, Mr Wyndham Lewis as a Tyro* (1921) (fig. 43). There are also images from the publications of *The Tyro* (1921 and 1922) including *The Cept (Tyro)* (Cover Design) (1921) (fig. 51), *The Broombroosh* (1921) (fig. 3), *Meeting between the Tyro, Mr Segando, and the Tyro, Phillip* (1921) (fig. 4), and *The Tyro Number 2* (front cover) (1922) (fig. 5).

Tyros have origins in both Lewis's earlier literary and visual works, most notably in *Inferior Religions* (1917) where a general satiric tone was developed. Both Klein (2004) and Edwards (2000: 256) relate this to Swift and to T.S. Eliot's *Sweeney* character (1918). Components are clear in the plans for *Kermesse* (1912) (Tickner, 2000:104), in *Design for Programme Cover* featured in *Blast* (1915:75) and in various related images where the *Tyro's* characteristic grimace appears, such as *Smiling Woman Ascending a Stair* (c.1911).

Tyros are depicted with the 'brash simplicity of comic posters' (Edwards, 2007:92). They are unsubtle grotesques with a 'totemic nature' (Burrells, 2010:75), something like a 'harlequin or Punchinello' (Lewis in Burrells, 2010:72). There is also a parallel between Lewis's Tyros and Eliot's Sweeney with the role of women, and sex to that of the *Tyro,* which has been seen by critics as problematic. As Smith argues, 'What Eliot expresses in this fragmentary play is both the agony of the saint and private anguish and rage of the man trapped in a world of demanding relationships with women' (Smith, 1985). I will relate this to the notion of a willed or preferred 'aphanisis' in attitudes of fixity, drawing on the psychoanalytic tradition (Jones, 1927; Durand, 1983). I will also relate it to sexual violence and predatory violence as it links to the *Tyro* (Quema, 1999). Furthermore, I will connect this to patriarchal hierarchy (hooks, 2004; Jenson, 1994) in Chapter 3.

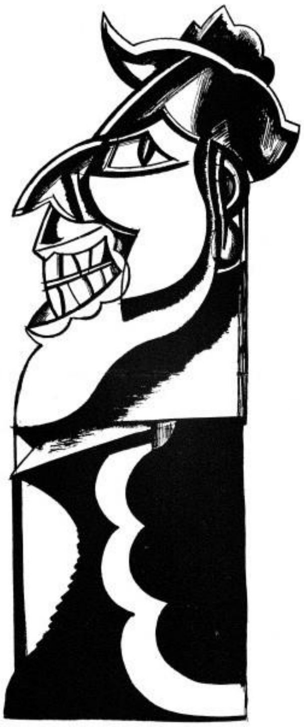
Three kinds of trauma inform these monsters: the slow burn of the 'Copernican turn' (the decentring of humanity) manifest in the implications of modernity, the more obvious and direct trauma of the First World War, and most significantly the emergence of the 'time god' in the work of Bergson. These are the perceived outside aggressions against the subject to which Lewis's own anger, in the form of the *Tyro*, is a response organised around a phallic ideal that seeks to remake subjectivity as weaponised alienation. This link to two directions of aggression (from the outside affecting the subject and then from the subject out into the world) echoes psychoanalyst Juliet Hopkins' (2011) contemporary understanding of monsters' function generally (discussed later).

Lewis presented visual representations of *Tyros* in April 1921 in the show *Tyros and Portraits*, at the Leicester Galleries (Edwards, 2000) and in parallel writing and images in the first edition of the magazine, *The Tyro* (1921). Edwards is clear that Lewis saw these works as paramount in his activity, as both 'intended as a major project' (2000:255) and representing for Lewis himself his 'strongest and most characteristic work' (2000:253). Edwards goes on to link the *Tyro* to Lewis's desire for modernism to be included in the politics of the time (Edwards, 2000:255). This motivation, along with Lewis's statements in *The Tyro* (1921) regarding the function of the *Tyro* and its relation to the public and Lewis himself, makes clear that the *Tyro* was an agent of his politics and philosophy as it extended beyond the gallery. This said, in the case of the large oil paintings, they were also made specifically to be considered by the art-going community.

> The figures are Lewis's means for waging war in the world of art by means of art, the gigantic monsters who created the cyclopean wall of the War replaced by the grotesque and naive beginners left in their place. The word "tyro," indeed, derives etymologically from the Medieval Latin *tiro*, which means a "beginning soldier" or "recruit" (Klein, 2004).

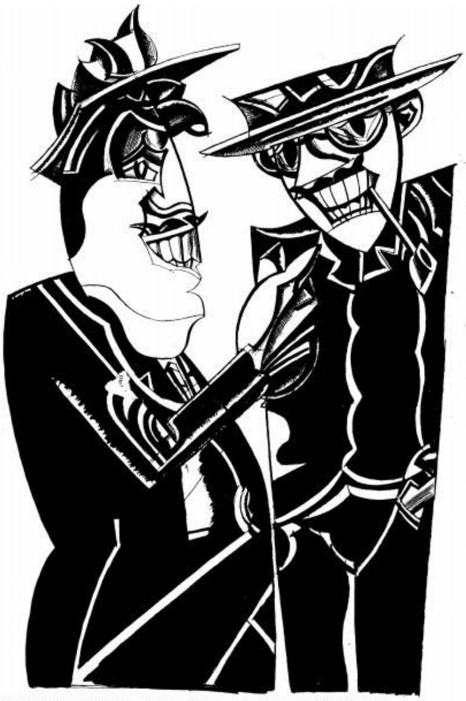
Further manifestations of the *Tyro* exist in the plans for an unpublished science fiction novel *Hoodopip* (1924-1925) set 20,000 years in the future on an off-world colony. The manuscript is held at Cornell University and describes the *Tyro's* world and caste system. Edwards (2000:259) confirms that this is a world which satirises and reflects post-war England, features for Edwards finding expression in later published works of non-fiction. Wagner (1956:222) also connects *Hoodopip* to *The Childermass* (1928). It was a previous title or conception for *The Human Age* (1928, 1955) and Wood sees it more generally as Lewis's drive to create 'entirely virtual realities' (2010:35) realised in the three published books of *The Human Age*. As such this will be explored as a related text, illuminating concepts around *Tyros'* fixity and Lewis's ideas of hierarchy.

In a telling quote of Lewis, where he states that the *Tyro* should be like us, but also different - 'more royal than the king' - Edwards explains that 'more royal than the king' is a translation from the French turn of phrase, meaning 'more like us than we ourselves are' (2000:558). This reinforces Lewis's essentialism, whereby identification with the *Tyro* is the first step or gateway to reclaiming 'tyronic' qualities, a base to progress away from the illusions and weaknesses of other art forms, subjective manifestations, and political organisations.



THE BROOMBROOSH.

Figure 3: *The Broombroosh* (1921) Wyndham Lewis.



MR. SEGANDO: The mood of nostalgia, our fancies, Phillip, is soon frightened off by the bombastic shadow of my hair!

PHILLIP: But I wonder why it ever comes.

MR. S.: Come it must, Phillip, like other moods. Three-quarters of my moods move about me like well-trained servants, and when they have gone I find a delicate polish on what was previously dull.

PH.: I have one mood that frightens me.

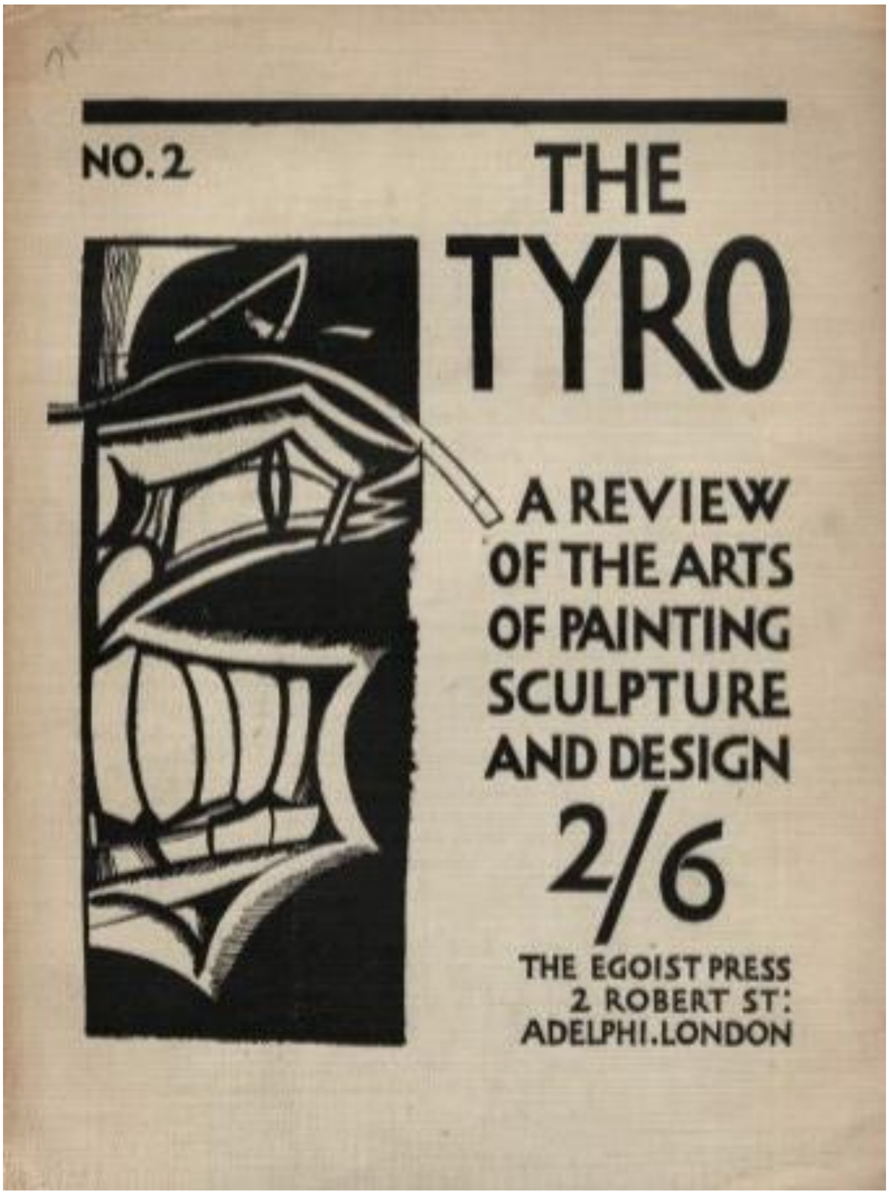
MR. S.: Indeed!

PH.: Yes. It is one that has one word, like Poe's RAVEN. It says, over and over again, CREATE! Create! Create! On one of its visits it threw me into such a state that I designed a hat for Phillipine. She wears it to this day.

MR. S.: Ah, yes, a charming contrivance. I have often remarked it.

NOTE.—Mr. S. at your left hand, Phillip with pipe.

Figure 4: *Meeting between the Tyro, Mr Segando, and the Tyro, Phillip* (1921) Wyndham Lewis.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THE
TYRO
A REVIEW
OF THE ARTS
OF PAINTING
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2 ROBERT ST:
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Figure 5: *The Tyro Number 2 (front cover)* (1922).

Key to my understanding of *Tyros* is placing them in the context of Lewis's other figurative representations and related literary antecedents, which suggest a clear hierarchy. The *Tyro* exists above the 'peon' or automata-man, the lowest rung indicative of the masses 'who are not distinct enough to remain more than what you see. Indistinct ideas' (Lewis, 1928:28). Visual manifestations of the automata-man include *Two Mechanics* (1912) (fig. 6), *Labour Deputation Marine* (1917) (fig. 7), and the Tetris-like figures of *The Crowd* (1915) (fig. 8), represented as indistinct cogs. Likewise, the *Tyro* exists below the superior, idealised, and statue-like representations of great individuals (in each case statue-like in literature and plastic media; Lewis's literary and visual representation of these types is analogous). The higher rung of this hierarchy, as I see it is exemplified in Lewis's *Portrait of T.S. Eliot* (1938) (fig. 9) and in a lithograph of 1932, *Self Portrait* (Ingram Collection) (fig. 10).

In his lecture at the Royal Academy (2018), Lewis scholar Nathan Waddell describes the Eliot portrait, which shows the poet seated and looking off to the left, as 'a work of admiration', making it clear that Lewis was depicting a great man in his estimation, a 'monument of modernism' and an image of a 'respected contemporary' (Waddell, 2018). The image is intense and pious. Eliot's rendering makes use of Lewis's peripheral facets that make up, as sheet metal might, a precisely sculpted, statue-like surface, only slightly humanised by the flesh colouration and naturalistic detail. Eliot appears as an intelligent and monastic presence, 'contemplative, thoughtful' (Waddell, 2018), impassive, and remote. I suggest that these are qualities that Lewis gives to subjects (in literary and visual art) that he considered superior. The 'Padishah' (Great King), the angelic administrator for example of *The Human Age* (*Malign Fiesta* book 3, 1955),

> thirty-seven or thirty-eight years old was of as tall and athletic an appearance as were all the angels…His face was of a perfect handsomeness, the mat, even pallor of the skin and large grey eyes giving him a statuesque beauty…The expressions that seemed to find their way most often into his face were ones of wariness and pain…A very severe young man indeed…but not weak…capable of great sternness (150)…the veil of this immortal, who passed his days in isolation, since there was no one good enough, or supernatural enough, for him to communicate with…The classic profile, the clam beauty remained in spite of everything…He governed this city as a god would govern a stinking swamp, or as a man would govern a cemetery full of ill-favoured spectres (Lewis, 1955:154).

This take on noble aristocratic dignity, which references classic sculpture, is also present in descriptions of ‘Hyperides’ from *The Human Age* (*Childermass*, book 1, Lewis, 1928) discussed in Chapter 4, and as aforementioned in his lithograph, *Self Portrait* (1932). Figures to whom Lewis is sympathetic he renders in this way.

Returning to the Eliot portrait, Waddell (2018) is clear such admiration fixes Eliot as ‘deadened’, as ‘a man on the cusp of becoming a shell’ and having a ‘face as if it were a mask’, giving the image an ‘alienated quality’. Again, this could also be said of the lithograph. Lewis depicted himself as a *Tyro* in 1921 and in the mode of this superior type, but never as an automata-man or peon. Waddell (2018) hints at this aggrandising as ‘doubling’ a form of greatness, applying for Lewis to both himself and Eliot. These images present the head as the seat of reason, and incidentally a character from the *Human Age* (Lewis, 1955) refers to the aforementioned Padishah’s ‘lovely head’ (154).

The outline (skin and clothing) in the Eliot portrait are like hermetically sealed armour (a refinement of the *Tyro’s* phallic-aggression), and most importantly he is unemotional and intelligent seeming. This hierarchy, as I see it, and its visual indicators have been informative for my own work, which re-presents power, drawing on this register to emphasise moribund authority, and is explored again in Chapters 3 and 5. Comparison to the Padishah, who is both a Lewisian ideal and ‘appears as a fatigued administrator’ (Lafferty, 2015:11) helps link this hierarchy to spatial elements. The Padishah rules a then-contemporary, post-war city with attendant angelic servants, soldiers, and administrators akin to corporate structuring. Nathan O’Donnell’s (2020) exposition of the unpublished *Hoodopip* (1924-1925), chronicling the *Tyro* caste system, sees a relation to ‘corporatisation’ and ‘industrial rationalisation’ (78) in England, and is the basis for my arguments in Chapter 3 that emphasise the contemporary relevance of the *Tyro* and its links to modern satire.

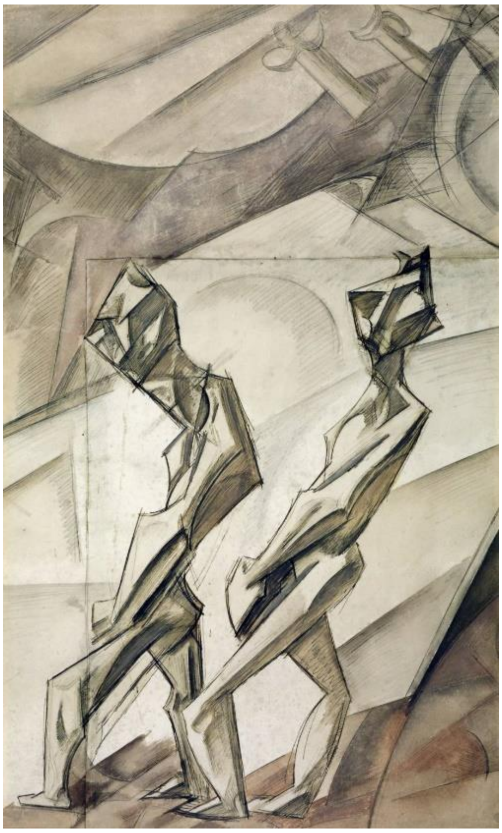

Figure 6: *Two Mechanics* (1912) Wyndham Lewis.

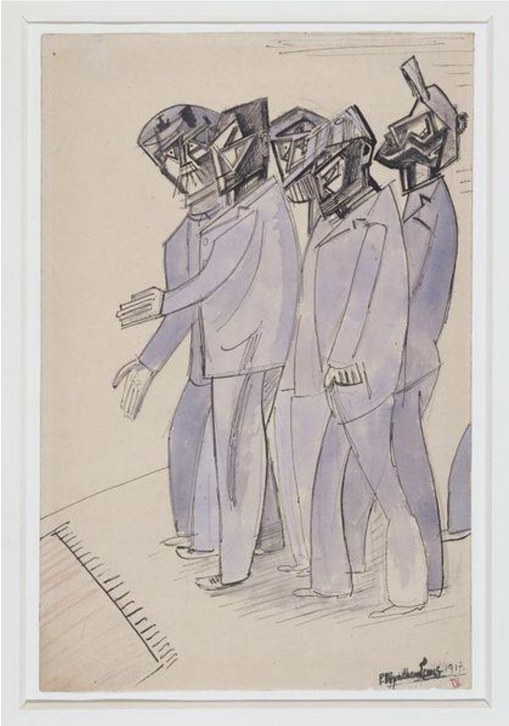

Figure 7: *Labour Deputation Marine* (1917) Wyndham Lewis.

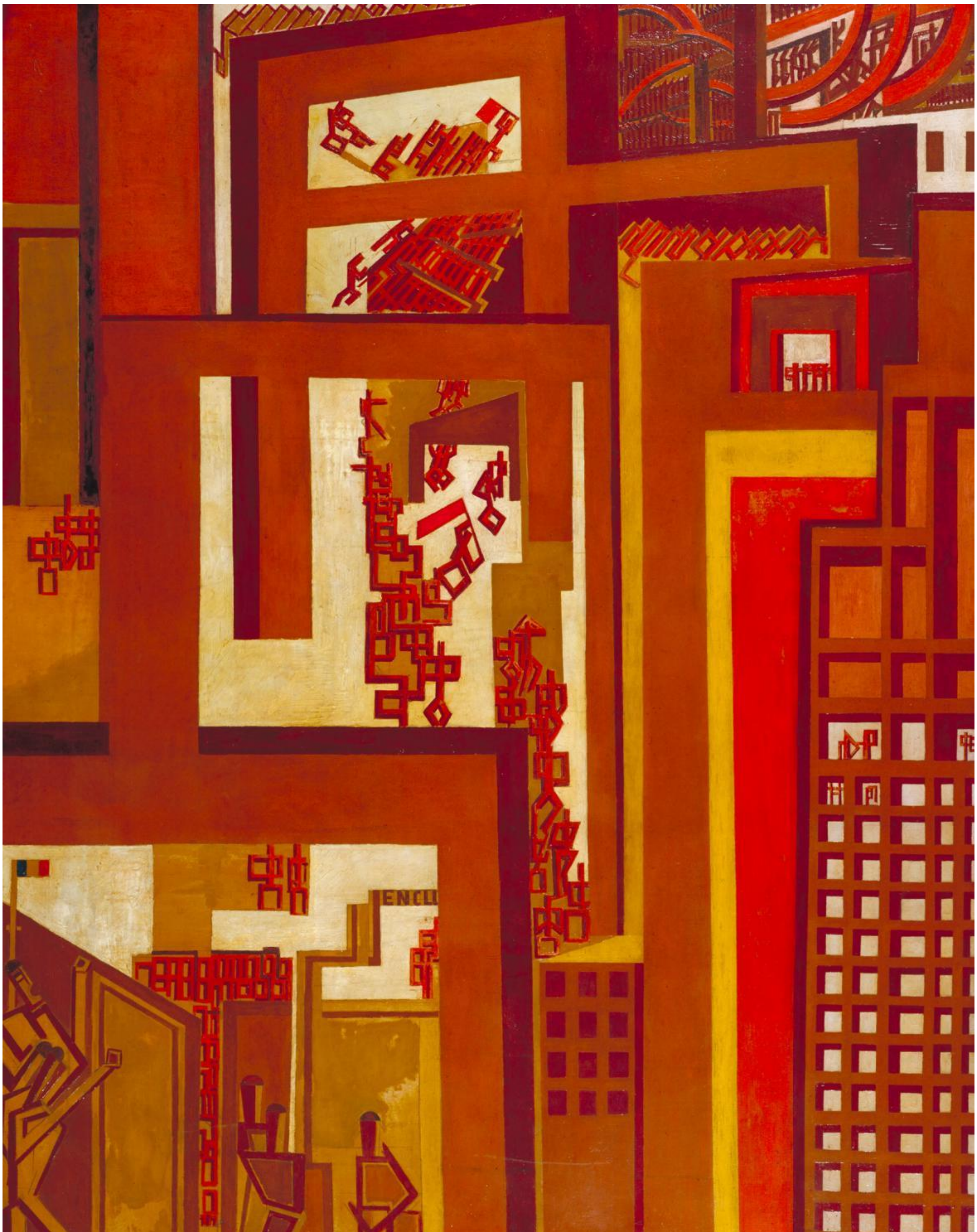

Figure 8: *The Crowd* (1915) Wyndham Lewis.

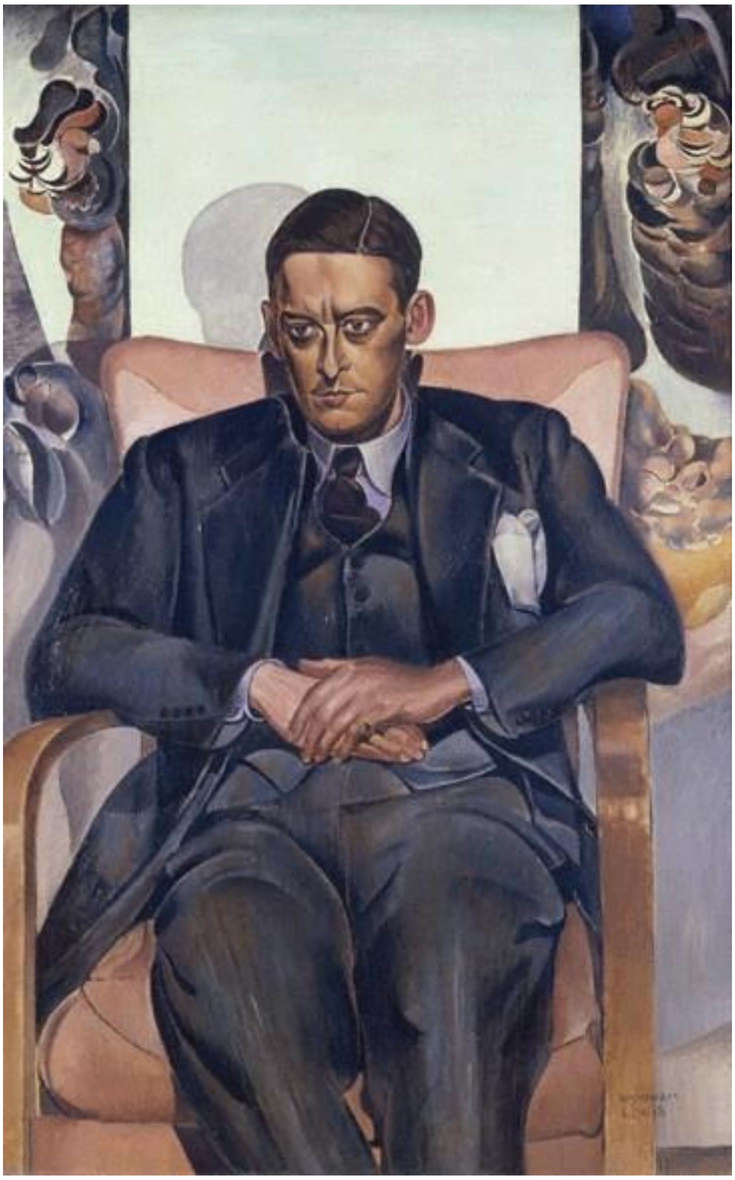

Figure 9: *Portrait of T.S. Eliot* (1938) Wyndham Lewis.

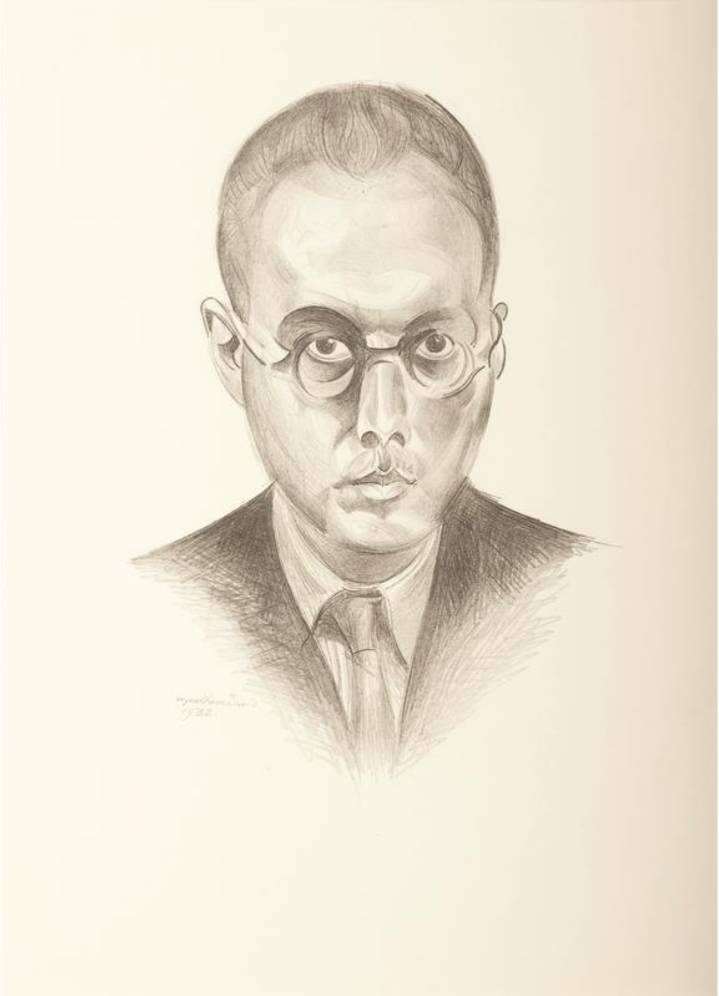

Figure 10: *Self Portrait* (1932) (Ingram Collection) Wyndham Lewis.

The Context of the Agon

To understand the field of tension (fixity – flux), the thesis explores the monstrous opposition of GK and *Tyro*, placing these in a broader historical context referred to as the 'agon'. This was a pre-Socratic conflict regarding subjectivity involving Heraclitus (espousing the doctrine of flux which will later influence Bergson and Whitehead) and Parmenides (arguing for an essentialist concept of subjectivity that embraces fixity) which was important to Lewis. 'Agon', which refers generally to struggle, is defined here with reference to its use in scholarship on Lewis and Bergson, and developed further in Chapters 2 and 3, while in Chapter 4 this context will be elaborated in detail. Jameson (1979:60) refers to 'agon' as a term recognising Lewis's aggrandising: Lewis removes himself from being merely an early modernist reacting to the war, seeing himself in a historic struggle (Lewis, 1927a).

Dootson observes, '[Lewis] believed that the artist should be constantly engaged in combat as stability was achieved when two opposing forces reached the highest point of tension – they did not cancel each other but created a highly charged deadlock' (2012). This term is also applied to Lewis in Quema (1999:35-52) where Lewis is said to critique 'flux' and problematise the lack of 'clear outlines' regarding the self, opposing among others 'Bergson' (39). Regardless of Lewis's success or failure in the endeavour to remove himself from being a 'mere' modernist, we can observe that his key opponents in this struggle, Bergson (1903) and Whitehead (1927-28), are aligned on the other side of this 'agon', the Parmenidean-Heraclitan struggle, with Heraclitus. Whitehead makes this link himself in *Process and Reality* by citing Heraclitus (1927-28:208-209) while Bergson is connected to Heraclitus by Russell in taking up opposition to the 'Eleatics' thinking (1914.18). To be clear, Parmenides founded the Eleatics school, so the use of the term 'agon' as it is used here, to refer to this philosophical debate, has precedent in Lewis, (1927a:544) Whitehead (1927-28) and Russell (1914) as well as with Jameson (1979) and Quema (1999).

Proto-Fascism: A Distinct and Turbulent Category

I use the term 'proto-fascist' to characterise works and ideas which depend on and further notions of fixity, in relation to the subject or viewer, and which intend to further a patrician and nationalist hierarchical society. This is not to say that fixity which I explain in part as relating to Parmenides is fascistic, but rather that proto-fascism depends on fixity. This includes techniques in art practice that draw on nostalgia, the picturesque, nationalistic imagery specifically of Englishness, on 'overorthodoxy' (Žižek, 2014), 'imperial illusion'

(Robins, 2007), ‘Ideological darkness’ (Mitchell, 2009), and on what I have termed ‘imperial-modernism’. Those strategies are discussed in Chapter 2, where they are seen as furthering a neo-colonial, racially and nationally prejudiced set of values and assumptions and allowing for their continuance into the foreseeable future.

Furthermore, these strategies are seen as dependent on the suppression of temporal nature and flux in monstrosity and landscape, so that their constructed illusory content can function. The term can be considered indicative of a forming threat in the prefix ‘proto’ which relates to a source, original state, or locus which is drawing on a set of authoritarian values (fascist) to form a strictly hierarchical and racially homogenous future society. Paul Peppis in *Literature, Politics, and the English Avant-Garde: Nation and Empire, 1901-1918* (2009) lists qualities of proto-fascism: ‘aggression, elitism, racism, anti-Semitism, misogyny, homophobia’ (1). These are qualities that I accept here with the addition of archaism (also mentioned in Peppis) and a dependence on fixity, order, and permanence that I argue throughout my thesis.

The hierarchal nature of proto-fascism is an aspect of the belief in self-evident, inert, superior, aspects of certain classes and of certain individuals, as Spackman (2008) observes: ‘In proto-fascism: political equality is figured as physical or spiritual equality, and thereby ridiculed and discredited’ (80). For Jameson (1979), proto-fascism is reactive to what may be seen as levelling politics in democracy and capitalism (184), and for Lewis (the subject of Jameson’s book) there is also a specific reaction to a perceived threat of this levelling in communism, making Lewis’s proto-fascism virulently ‘anti-communist’ (80). The threat from levelling and to empire is also confirmed in Stocker (2015), who refers to the first self-identifying fascistic and ‘proto-fascist’ organisations in Britain as offering followers a ‘“native” variant of fascism…[which] saw the British Empire as being threatened by various subversive forces, all ultimately linked to revolutionary socialism and the Soviet Union’ (Stocker, 2015:46).

Peppis (2009), drawing on Edward Said, sees the ‘historical avant-garde’ operating in the same period as functioning ‘like western culture more generally was… [and so as being] “manifestly and inconcededly a part” of the “imperial process”’ (5). Jameson (1979) is clear that defined strata and a flagrant pecking order differentiate proto-fascism from conservatism (which views itself as custodian of universally beneficial tradition): ‘the rights of privilege are openly affirmed’ (129). The term proto-fascism is also applied to Lewis by Klein (2002) who highlights concerns such as ‘revitalization of empire (an arguably “proto-fascist” political goal)’, also the individual against the state, and sees Lewis as embracing surprising aspects of ‘imperialist chauvinism’ (245). Klein emphasises what Peppis calls an ‘anarcho-libertarian’ belief in the individual, but this is a strictly elitist concept for Lewis epitomised in Shakespeare or the Shakespearian type (see Stockton, 1996). This type for Lewis is an impassive and superior manipulator who binds the whole of society together and confirms the idea that exceptional individuals drive events forward: even if they are foredoomed (see also Peppis 2009:18).

I consider Vilfredo Pareto and his theory of ‘the circulation of elite’ in *The Mind and Society* (1935) useful in accounting for these proto-fascist qualities. Pareto was influential on the fascism of Mussolini and viewed democracy as a fraud (see Di Scala and Gentile, 2016: 21; 86; 198). The idea of ‘the circulation of elite’ is one which sees human civilisation develop via the honing and domination of an elite caste that replaces a waning elite in cycles. The ‘great man theory’ of history attributed to Thomas Carlyle in *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and The Heroic in History* originally published in 1841 (see Carlyle, 2008) is also useful in understanding this phenomenon (where the hero is the emergent leader of the new elite). Keshinshyan (2021:2) and Landa (2012:162) both further link Pareto and Carlyle in regard to the notion of ‘elites’ as essential to good governance.

The revitalisation of empire is key here since Lewis’s efforts are seen as embarrassing for proto-fascist positions in their total clarity (Jameson, 1979:129). They threaten ‘exposure of an “unlovely image”’ (23); I link this quality to what Žižek (2014) terms ‘over-orthodoxy’ and as a result, over-orthodoxy is employed in my art practice where Lewis’s aesthetic language is drawn upon. Lewis’s aesthetics so embody his intentions in this matter (especially the *Tyro*) that they offer ways to strategically expose the ‘unlovely’ face of less obvious proto-fascistic output, the picturesque, the pastoral, false universals of Englishness, heroic agonism, etc., which I attach them to in my painting and constructions.

English nationalism, in its nascent state, is a revealing context in this vein. In Chapter 3, I build on this shifting base to include the founding of notions of Englishness in the court of Edward III establishing Englishness as, in part, a tool for the centralisation of power through the formation of borders and in the person of the king. The notion of emerging nationalism and the relationship between Edward III and Arthurian myth is confirmed in Downie (2019:44:61:62:77) while the concept of Englishness as centred on a monarch, a ‘growth of monarchical power' linked to specific English territorial 'boundaries' is confirmed in Seaton-Watson (2020:9:487).

Monsters

As I am seeking to make a contribution to the understanding of monstrosity, it is useful to have an idea of the foundations that inform my ideas. There are three linked ways in which the monster will be understood at the outset of this project: (i) as vehicles of propaganda generally, including the development of the monster from 'othering' indiscriminately (Lindquist and Mittman, 2018) to use as specific political metaphor (Neocleous, 2004); (ii) as embodied trauma, including the notion of the return of the repressed (Hopkins, 2011); and (iii) finally - my addition - is to trace the locus of monstrosity by placing monsters in the 'agon' as agents of conflicting notions of subjectivity, that is as agents of the Parmenidean or Heraclitan subject, which I propose the *Tyro* and the GK correspondingly embody.

Portents and Propaganda

Hensel praises Wittkower (1942) for his recognition of the importance of monsters' composite form (Hensel, 2012:35). Wittkower has the classical ancient world exporting its ethnographic concept of monsters into medieval England (1942:176). For Hensel, Wittkower is only interesting because he emphasises eclectic physical form (2012:35). However, Wittkower does also explore the use of monsters as portents (1942:168) and in religious propaganda (1942:193). Interestingly he emphasises a link in medieval Europe of the monster to redemption: in accepting the 'ethnographic' concept that monsters existed, Christian morality had to find a way to include them in the Christo-Judaic field of meaning 'as descendants of Adam…capable of redemption' (1942:176). This thinking came through St Augustine (1942:168). It is a quality of monsters that Wittkower discusses but is not mentioned in the later studies of Hensel (2012) or Lindquist and Mittman (2018) who concentrate on othering and propaganda, or as previously mentioned on physical properties. Redemption is pertinent here, especially concerning the ambiguity of the GK and the flexibility emerging in the medieval mind.

> [It is a] curious paradox that the superstitious Middle Ages pleaded in a broadminded spirit for the monsters as belonging to God's inexplicable plan of the world, while the 'enlightened' period of humanism returned to Varro's "contra naturam" and regarded them as creations of God's wrath to foreshadow extraordinary events (Wittkower, 1942:185).

Wittkower makes what is considered the first study of monsters beyond 'incidentals or ornaments' (Hensel, 2012:35), highlighting the importance of redemption and duality in monsters. For example, consider the way that headlessness and great size – pertinent attributes in my thesis – acquire meaning. 'In a 13th century Bestiary in the Westminster Chapter Library, for instance…the giant [stands] for pride' Wittkower (1942:177).

Wittkower sees an oscillation from 'mystical to moral' allegorizing monsters as 'moral prodigies' later informing us that 'headless monsters are the symbol of humility…Such late medieval moralisations…attach to the moral values of human society…the marvels as material for satirizing contemporary failings' (1942:178). Following Wittkower we can see that the GK (a giant green warrior who has his head removed) may have been as symbolically complex for its contemporary 14th-century audience as for us. Concluding, Wittkower draws on Freud (1916-17) in *Mythological Parallel to a Plastic Obsession* (see Wittkower, footnote 7) linking monsters to personal symbolism and subjectivity. These images shaped 'the daydreams of beauty and harmony of western man but created at the same time symbols which expressed the horrors of his real dreams' (Wittkower, 1942:197).

More recently Lindquist and Mittman (2018) propose monsters as tools of propaganda, pointing out the etymology of the term, and as Meier (2018) observes they emphasise 'othering' as the primary function of monstrosity, 'our tendency to morph those who are different into beasts' (Meier, 2018). The term 'monere' (to warn) clearly relates to portents that might be taken as personal or societal foreshadowing.

Political Metaphor

Considering the evolution of propaganda, Neocleous (2005) in *The Monstrous and the Dead: Burke, Marx, Fascism* builds on his earlier work *The Monstrous Multitude: Edmund Burke's Political Teratology. Contemporary Political Theory* (2004) to develop the concept that monsters relate to specific political leanings. 'Since Burke's work is saturated with images of fear (Corlett, 1993, 124), and since the monster appears to incarnate fear as such, it would seem that it is here that the monster needs to be situated' (Neocleous, 2004:75). Burke, for Neocleous, is a conservative who makes the proletariat (an emergent category at the time of

Burke) into a monstrosity. He reads ‘Burke’s “monster” as precisely a way of “naming” what was then politically unnameable’ (2004:84). Burke as imagined by Neocleous has some structural similarities with Lewis, who also makes his political opponents into monsters. Neocleous tells us that Burke in his own conception is defending a ‘natural order’ threatened by ‘artificial monstrosities’ which justifies (for Burke) his use of othering (80). This is extended in Lewis’s strategies where monsters are both a threat (The Bailiff of *The Human Age*, 1928-1955) and his agents (*Tyros*). ‘This political construction of fear, ideologically and culturally centred on an imagined monstrous assault and alien penetration of the social body, might be described as one of the foundation stones of fascist ideology’ (Neocleous, 2005:87). Neocleous is useful in observing the nuances of political othering common to figures like Lewis and Burke.

Trauma and Monstrosity

I consider trauma a key causal locus for monsters and relate monstrosity to trauma in two ways. Firstly, as peripheral, an invading force or point of disturbance relative to mounting anxieties. Secondly, as shock, an unpalatable wish-fulfilment which is fuelled by a specific superego injunction. Later, I will categorise monsters as those belonging to flux or to fixity: ‘the return of the repressed’ is treated as a category of flux and marked by its ‘id’ relationship (instinct) to be mediated and handled by the ego. Alternatively, unpalatable superego sanctions (the superego is primarily associated with established authority) are treated as a category of fixity where the ego is punished for failure to adhere to some impressed value, in this case related to atavistic fascistic fantasies.

Drawing on psychoanalytic notions of ‘condensation’ as developed by Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) and ‘the return of the repressed’ in *Repression* (1915), along with further comments in The *Dissection of the Psychical Personality* (1933) and *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), I accept the potential for individual and social (societal or collective) repression and subsequent ‘returns’. I take false universals of Englishness, represented in the pastoral ‘frame’, and proto-fascist narratives as acts of repression at the societal level which interpellate the individual and give rise to monstrous manifestations. They are reactions to trauma.

Freud (1900) defines condensation as an ‘impulse of combination’ (62) describing this aspect of dream-work as involving the processes of abstraction and distortion that material undergoes in the mind of the dreamer. Freud emphasises the conflation of normally distinct ideas, figures, or emotions in the unfamiliar or fantastical encountered in dreams. This can be useful in accounting for form when examining a monstrosity that has multiple antecedents. 'The degree of condensation is – strictly speaking – indeterminable' (94). Condensation and repression are linked in that the former is a result of or method of censorship, bringing what is repressed to the fore. Repression has a fundamental role in the mind in the form of 'primal repression' where 'instinct' is prevented from entering consciousness (Freud, 1915:4). This is achieved with effort drawn from another area of the psyche. 'Repression is the work of this superego and…is carried out either by itself or by the ego in obedience to its orders' (Freud, 1933:67-8). Repression's relation to experience is additionally described as 'something between flight and condemnation' (Freud, 1915:3). Non-normative (symptomatic) repression is referred to as 'repression proper', emphasising both aspects of repulsion 'which operates from the direction of the conscious upon what is to be repressed' and aspects of 'attraction' in the original repressed material (4). This makes repression an unstable process. Furthermore, Freud highlights repression as a form of aversion: 'the essence of repression … [involves] turning something away, and keeping it at a distance' (Freud, 1915:3).

However, repressed material does not disappear. It merges into the id (Freud, 1933:76) and retains the power to 'penetrate into consciousness' (Freud, 1939:152). To avoid a return of the repressed the subject must exert 'persistent expenditure of force' (Freud, 1915:7). Freud describes mounting psychic energy, which 'proliferates in the dark, as it were, and takes on extreme forms of expression'. For Freud, this draws 'the picture of an extraordinary and dangerous strength of instinct' (1915:5).

Looking through the Freudian lens the *monster of fixity* belongs to a different order, best understood as a superego agent related to order and resistance. Freud describes the ego in service of the superego, creating 'the scar tissue of repression' which bars the instinct's 'normal satisfaction' while the instinct, finding gaps via new situations and stimulus, 'renews its claim…gains at some weak point new access to a so-called substitutive satisfaction which now appears as a symptom, without the acquiescence and also without the comprehension of the ego' (Freud, 1939:200-1). The scarring gives the original repression longevity, but also generates blind spots, 'symptoms' which are 'the return of the repressed' (Freud, 1939:200-1). *Monsters of fixity* are superego sanctions, they shock and are intended to elicit a reaction formation in the subject, and they represent an unpalatable wish fulfilment (due to excessive authority). I will argue that in *flux-monsters* form is amorphous and emergent. Here, form carries evidence of time inclusive of scars just as the landscape shows natural and

Anthropocene activity: the layering of form includes shifting memory and uncertain becoming. *Monsters of fixity* are totalizers. Their form is a fierce scarified surface 'baked through' (Lewis cited in Foster, 2004:144) and their function is reactionary, defensive, and precipitant at once.

Hopkins (2011) directly uses Freud's concepts in explorations of personal trauma manifesting as monsters. The idea of trauma is linked to fear, but the disturbance is so great that it moves outside of the subject's ability to process it (Hopkins, 2011:61). The emergence of the monster for Hopkins manifests pressure from without and within and offers ways to examine the result of aggressivity as it occurs to the subject from both directions.

> Monsters appeared to represent a compromise between…terrors of real aggressive assaults and terrors related…to aggressive impulses…It means that details of monsters can often give us clues to the people or events which have aroused the terror and rage which the monsters represent (Hopkins, 2011:65).

These categories – representations of trauma, portents and propaganda, and political metaphor – form the basis for my understanding of the monster at the outset. Drawing on these identifications of the monster and its function, I will demonstrate that they connect directly to the theoretical conception of the subject in the 'agon.' I will extend the political and trauma-related locus of monstrosity to include underlying forces, those being the clashes and hostility between Parmenidean and Heraclitan conceptions of subjectivity in time. Looking through the Parmenidean/Lewisian lens we see the ultimate horror of the shifting and chaotic subject and its equally unstable background reality, 'otherness' as both out-there and within. From the Heraclitan/Pearl position, we discern the deadness and stagnation of certain cultural and psychic constructions as they cling to notions of fictive permanence and seek to enforce this hierarchically on the world around them. Each position sees in the other's optimism a traumatic and unbearable proximity that the monster embodies.

Art Practice: Destruction and Reconfiguration

Disenchantment

My art practice works against two strategies, one grouped as illusions that obscure temporal nature and further a nationalist, hierarchical worldview: 'ideological, and political darkness' (Mitchell, 1994:6) or the 'dreamwork of imperialism' (10). These strategies are called 'protective illusion' or 'imperial illusion' by Robins, reflecting on Britain and England (its de facto managerial centre) (2007). These illusory forces draw on the picturesque, the pastoral, and on nostalgia to naturalise authority and hierarchy, while they also, as Maynard's (2009) text shows, serve to 'other' non-white races.

Secondly, the practice works against Lewis's dynamic-fatalism: his implementation of visual aggressivity and atavistic totemism staged in the *Tyro* and related works. This is called 'overorthodoxy': Žižek uses the term in a discussion of Ayn Rand (explored in Chapter 2) to describe individuals who fully identify with a naturalised position which inadvertently reveals it as ideology, thus carrying out the 'exposure of an "unlovely image"' (Jameson, 1979:23). Rand, Lewis, Sir John Major and Richard II (examples of overorthodoxy in Chapter 2) believe their positions excessively. The application of 'overorthodoxy' as resistance is referred to alternatively as 'subversive affirmation' and 'overorthodoxy' in Arns and Sasse (2006) (where they draw on Žižek, 1993). Arns and Sasse (2006:448) apply subversive affirmation, described as the 'repetition' or 're-enactment' of ideological practice 'to bring to light' its tacit implications. My *Tyro*-knights and figures of authority are made in this vein. They perform a mimesis or re-presentation of Lewis's *Tyro* and related aesthetic register.

This intention locates my practice as one which would facilitate a managed disenchantment with proto-fascist narratives via 'bruising encounters with the otherness of external reality' (Robins, 2007:15-16). Disenchantment relates to the notion of illusion where sudden or traumatic opposition can engender defensive and aggressive resistance. Robins explores the 'regressive power of tradition' (15) drawing on Raphael Samuel (writing in the same anthology) regarding the 'pathology' of tradition. Robins argues that notions of national identity engender 'insular nationalism', 'racist paranoia', and 'cultural autism' (16). Robins sees these factors as resulting from deep-seated fears in an imperial mentality. Robins' writing is part of an anthology exploring 'allegiances to a cultural ideal' as Jessica Evens puts it in her introduction (Boswell and Evans, 2007:1).

A key distinction in this thesis from Robins is the emphasis of 'otherness'. For Robins the 'external reality' is best represented by 'other cultures, other states', i.e., from outside. In support of this he evokes Edward Said and Homi Bhabha and looks to avoid 'racist paranoia' and recourse to imperial 'illusions' (ibid). Here, external reality is best exemplified in nature, exposing the tension of time (flux) with proto-fascist and essentialist notions of subjectivity. 'Otherness' is emphasised as that which is within Englishness itself, inside its own narrative as constitutive of its component parts. These are parts requiring continued suppression via previously mentioned strategies. The project looks to the founding myths of nationalism in its first iteration in Edward the III's court as an example (drawing as he did on Arthurian myth) of a potential fault line at the heart of the English iteration of proto-fascist fixity (discussed in Chapter 3).

Reconfiguration

Furthermore, I make a positive case for temporal nature (otherwise a cause of trauma), attempting to find better 'analogues' (Gayton, 2006:8) for deep time (McPhee, 1981) in the landscape. The Green Chapel in *SGGK* can be seen as such a representation (a fissure in a rock face in the wilderness), a 'scar-like space of discontinuity' (Marshall, 2018:87), and thus a forerunner for a seam of landscape painting I explore in Chapter 5. I look to establish a thread of analogous intention and subject matter in historic art practice (John William North) and contemporary art practice (Hannah Brown, George Shaw, Mark Lecky among others) where liminal, eerie spaces reference deep time. My work including *Temporal Landscape I and II* (2020) (fig. 29, fig. 30) and *Green Chapel* (2021) (fig. 62) attempts to add to this vein by utilising randomness and chance in the composition to include unpredictable occurrences and working around these in various painterly registers to complete the images, with the intention that time as an interruption to planned outcomes is included in the work.

Influences and Methods

Artists Dexter Dalwood and William Kentridge have been important in establishing an approach in my creative work and maintaining confidence in the intentions and methods applied. In David Anfam's exposition of Dalwood for the *Tate Magazine* (2010) he highlights the context of the 1980s as 'the rise and fall of historical illusions' and the 'disturbingly mixed pictorial language' this influenced Dalwood to create, showing a preoccupation with 'irony, style and melodramatic moments' (Anfam, 2010). Born in 1980, these years were formative for me, and I relate to this duality (proliferation and collapse of illusions), glossy faux Englishness, Margaret Thatcher's odd overly performative public persona, and the use of atavistic imagery during the period which created a heightened mix of forces.

Regarding temporality, Staff (2021) in *Painting, History and Meaning Sites of Time* holds Dalwood's work as an example where 'two points on a chronological timeline are pulled together until they meet' (3-4), or as Anfam (2010) puts it 'history has collapsed into the present'. Dalwood in his book chapter 'What is the History in Contemporary History Painting?' for *What Was History Painting and What Is it Now* (Salber Phillips and Bear,

2019) discusses the influential practices of Rita Donagh, Jorg Immendorff and Richard Hamilton (all antecedents to his practice), stressing embedded references, ‘references that allude to subtle and inventive meanings that go beyond the image being presented’ (204). Dalwood highlights ‘restaging’ (213), ‘literary illusion’, ‘collage’, and ‘thinking about painting’s history of depiction’ to activate ‘the viewer’s memory to bring the viewer’s experience of looking into a conscious moment of recognition’ (214).

These qualities feature in Dalwood’s practice and are important to my own as I re-represent *Tyros*, pastoral landscape and hierarchy. In Chapter 2 (where contexts for my art practice are explored) I use the term ‘intersemioticity’ and account for the visual and written strategies I use as dialogical.

Kentridge is also a key exemplar for me, since his position can be understood as inhabiting a duality between iconoclast and illusion-maker (disenchantment and reconfiguration), Kentridge thus offers a way to negotiate my own concern with imperial illusion. In his work *Shadow Procession* (1999 see Tate 2018), an animation accompanied by an African folk version of *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*, figures are seen in silhouette carrying belongings, children, animals and equipment across the picture plane. Kentridge (2014) is channelling Plato here and working with the canonical allegory of the cave. The figures travelling across the picture plane have a specifically African reference; moreover, they have universal resonance as refugees, nomads or unsettled people fleeing war, famine or persecution, and the work is ‘about amplitude rather than the specific nature of a particular journey’ (Kentridge, 2014:9).

Furthermore, Kentridge takes a position on subjectivity, conflating the prisoners from Plato’s allegory with their captors, who pass them by casting shadows onto the prison walls. In *Shadow Procession* people are shadows. This captor – slave duality links Kentridge with Heraclitus and subjective flux. Plato expressed that Heraclitus’s position was ‘extreme’ leading to ‘logical incoherence’. Plato was critical of both ‘Universal Flux and the Identity of Opposites’. He outlined Heraclitus’s position as saying that ‘(1) everything is constantly changing and (2) opposite things are identical, so that (3) everything is and is not at the same time’ (Graham, 2020). Heraclitus’s ideas are key in dialectics and ideas drawn on here; they are seen as transgressing Plato’s law of non-contradiction.

People in *Shadow Procession* are shown in flux, ephemeral yet embodied, moving together and producing as they move an amalgamous unfixed community. Kentridge is specific about his attitude to Plato in his Norton lecture: ‘Plato’s philosopher-king became Robespierre’ (Kentridge cited in Lenfield 2012). What Kentridge intends is to highlight the totalitarian seeds in Plato’s thought by referring to Robespierre as tyrant. This is a problematic commonplace: for example, Hannah Arendt (1994:9,299,325,461,467, 469) attempts to explain Hitler and Stalin as arising from Plato. Kohen has thus argued that ‘the conceptual background of her thought is the different kinds of government as first formulated by Plato’ (Kohen, 2002:623). However, Arendt’s position is contentious since as Kenneth Reinhardt points out, Stalin was critical of Plato, and his ‘Soviet Dictionary of Philosophy’ defines Plato as ‘the ideologue of the slave owners’ (Reinhardt cited in Badiou, 2015:9). More specifically, what Kentridge objects to is certainty and absolutism, aspects of fixity as it is applied here: these are the qualities he sees in Plato’s philosopher king and which, as Jerome Kohen points out, is a feature of totalitarianism that Arendt explores describing ‘laws of motion whose function…to stabilize human beings that the predetermined course of nature and history can run through them’ (2002:623).

A better account of Kentridge’s iconoclasm is outlined in Michael Godby’s discussion of Kentridge's *The Head and the Load* (2018), ‘William Kentridge: the Barbarity of the “Great War”’ (2018). Godby sees the notion of 'World War' undermined as a vanity of European leaders and subsequent historians 'ennobling' tribal conflict to the status of *rising action* in the dramatic arc of western destiny. Godby draws a distinction between two kinds of iconoclasm in respect of the 'World War': on the one hand, the direct mocking of 'European pretensions' by the Congolese independence leader Patrice Lumumba (1925-1961) and, on the other hand, 'Kentridge attacks the idea from a different point of view' (Godby, 2018).

Godby sees Kentridge focus on those 'written out of history', in this instance the African support troops and porters. Kentridge's gesture is to make 'World War' into a more realistic term requiring ‘[the] destruction of the heroic ideal’ and our habitual ‘absolutist’ understanding of the term, the conflict and its legacy. This amounts to ‘bringing to light whole aspects of the past that have been ignored or suppressed’ (Godby, 2018). Kentridge's 'iconoclastic' quality comes from a willed 'indeterminacy' which allows for an investigative and interpretive 'opening'. This is seen as a direct result of influence from Dada’s 'fragmentary and provisional' strategies, what Krauss (2017) called 'parsimony' and then ‘fortuna’ in respect of Kentridge's process.

> Caught up within the quasi-automatism of the process, he is…left free to improvise and do this in the grip of agencies he characterises as "something other than cold statistical chance, and something too, outside the range of rational control" (35-36).

For Godby, Kentridge's use of Dada makes sense since that artistic language 'evolved at the time to critique it [the war]' (Godby, 2018). This language is eclectic, including irony and direct genuine sentiment, rigour and immediacy in making, a mixture of sound, text, animation, performance, and painting and drawing. For Godby 'indeterminacy' exists in Kentridge's practice in three key areas. Firstly, in the motivation, 'it makes clear that all history is inevitably fragmentary, provisional and partisan'. Secondly, in the idea-conception, 'indeterminacy that allows the artist to search for the appropriate response to his subject provides an opening, a point of entry for his viewer'. Thirdly, in the process, 'it has a profound moral dimension over and above any overt moral in the subject of his drawing or the narrative of his film' (Godby, 2018). I consider Kentridge’s process as being open, liminal, and uncertain. This 'moral dimension' in indeterminacy is key in the practices I contextualise in the 'flux' aspect of the 'agon' and is in total opposition to the 'absolutism' of fixity I see in Lewis’s practice, or in the work of Abraham Games, or the ideas of Prince Charles (which are examples discussed further in Chapter 2). Like Lewis, those voices are the English-centric kernel of an already wrongheaded Euro-centric perspective on history and identity that Godby sees Kentridge working against. Godby makes the connection between iconoclasm and indeterminacy, which I accept as being primarily and foremost in the process.

I suggest that the artist’s role is not simply to act as an iconoclast blasting at illusions but to take a role in moments of reconfiguration, illusion making, or re-making. Those activities are not undertaken to hold an audience in thrall but to thread and suture meaning, as I set out to do in my artwork. The redemptive space represented by temporal nature (the Green Chapel) opens the possibility for reconfiguration, change, and development to happen, in contrast to the armoured status or fixity championed by Lewis and his pyramidal notion of society.

Immanent Critique and Ekphrasis

I explore the relationship of landscape–monster–subject with a focus on fixity and flux, foregrounding time in nature as disruptive to the notions of permanence that form a key aspect of the proto-fascistic imaginary. I see this as an example of ‘immanent critique’. Titus Stahl describes the features of immanent critique as an approach that looks to uncover ‘unresolved internal contradictions’ (2013:19). I consider the dynamic of fixity and flux as such a contradiction internal to the categories pertinent in this project: generative and yet uncovered seams within the inter-relationship of landscape–monster–subjectivity. The rationale for this exploration has been to recognise ‘unrealised normative potentials’ characteristic of ‘social practices’ (Stahl, 2013:3). In this case ‘practices’ refers to the critiqued texts throughout the thesis. In the arguments put forward, I seek to ‘uncover better potentials within practices.’ The identification of and implications of ‘better potentials’ I outline throughout the thesis in an immanent critique of sets of oppositions, for example:

- The subjectively interpretive and critical emphasised in relation to intertextuality, intersemioticity, and dialogical approaches as well as my attempts to establish an aesthetic language drawing on these approaches, as opposed to a propagandist attitude, what I refer to as ‘imperial-modernism’ explored in Chapter 2.
- The distinction between the negotiating interior of the subject, as opposed to the perfect shell as I explore concerning masculinity as its seen through the *Tyro* and in *SGGK,* highlighting contemporary manifestations of this tension to evidence the continued relevance of *SGGK* and the *Tyro* as I explore in Chapter 3.
- The contrast between subjectivity opposed to subject-positioning, as those ideas relate to *monsters of fixity* and *monsters of flux*, which I explore as agents for particular comporting to temporality in Chapter 4.
- Finally, the spatial and landscape representations that relate to subjective development as opposed to those which inculcate individuals into a hierarchy and champion stasis, which I explore as ‘Green Chapel’ and ‘Gilded Cage’ respectively in Chapter 5.

The uncovering of ‘potential within such practices’, even ‘undesirable’ (20) potentials such as the *monster of fixity* represents, or the pastoral mode and proto-fascistic attitudes for example, are outlined throughout this project. The suitability of this approach (imminent critique) relates to the recognition of so-called internal features: that is, of features recognised through participation in the categories via the interpellation that a given text demands. The interlocutor is assumed to be: subject to landscape, subject to Englishness, subject to creative practice, and subject to monsters, rather than above or outside of these categories. The die is cast, so to speak and one is obliged to make sense of these categories from within. Immanent critique ‘is not committed to some form of questionably objective insight into normative truth’ (Stahl, 2013:7). To aid in this, the practice of ekphrasis is used as a form of immanent critique, in particular where painting is discussed in this thesis. Ekphrasis is ‘the verbal representation of graphic representation’ (Heffernan, 1991:299) which ‘activates’ the work narratively (299) ‘not by recreating its fixity in words, but rather by releasing its embryonically narrative impulse’ (307). As with immanent critique the ‘poet’ takes the interpretative plunge of their ‘invested’ interpretation. ‘Instead of pausing at a reflective distance from the work of art, the poet reads the painting as a text, rather than a static object’ (Davidson quoted in Heffernan, 1991:229). This allows for the mining of seams of potential in the work, since ekphrasis ‘commonly’ moves ‘well beyond what the picture by its self implies’ (Heffernan, 1991:300). Moreover, the strategy of pattern recognition (looking for like motivations, effects, themes, and motifs in texts) where time and subjectivity are concerned continues to be useful in establishing the validity of the categories discussed in order ‘to uncover better potentials’ (Stahl, 2013:20).

Chapter 1

Nature to Landscape, for Power

In this chapter, I outline the ways in which I treat landscape and nature in my thesis. I look at how landscape is critiqued and the relationship of landscape to subjectivity, inclusive of strategies of fixity. In particular, I look at nostalgia and the picturesque as examples of fixity. Finally, I anticipate the possible potentials offered by better analogues for nature addressed in subsequent chapters. The debate outlined here is a context that theoretically informs my work as an artist, and I propose that the landscape frame through which the subject attaches to reality does not need to be one defined by fixity. I identify and problematise modes of fixity as they represent an active field into which I see my artwork and thesis contributing.

Nature

I understand nature as a reality, components of which make up the landscape. Žižek (2015) drawing on McKenzie Wark (2015) explains, ‘We never encounter nature-in-itself: the nature we encounter is already caught in the antagonistic interaction with collective human labour’ (Žižek, 2015). Nature for Žižek, and Wark in her exposition of the ‘Anthropocene,’ is simply the ‘molecular flows’ underneath perception, ‘thick network[s] of invisible lateral links that sustain our reality’ (Žižek, 2015). Outcrops of these flows form the material of the land we encounter, which is never in a harmonious ‘cycle’ (Žižek and Wark, 2015): ‘Nature in-itself is already unbalanced’ (Žižek, 2015). As a result of this flux, better ‘analogues’ (Gayton, 2006:8 discussed later) for nature are required, such as those the Pearl Poet offers in their descriptions of nature and represents for us in the intrusion of the GK into Arthur’s court. I will discuss this by referring to Cohen’s (2019) insistence on ‘spiral’ (39) rather than repeating cycles in *SGGK* in Chapter 4. The context for these spiralling ‘molecular flows’ is ‘deep time’ or geological time as it accounts for ‘abyssal eons’ (McPhee 1981), an aspect of nature discernible in evidence of change wrought on the land (elaborated in Chapter 5).

Discerning the Difference

The difficulty of separating nature and landscape for perception is because landscape is a construct through which we see nature; as a result, the frame becomes invisible, and the framed scene appears natural. This is the insight of W. J. T. Mitchell (2009) in his introduction to the collected essays of *Landscape and Power* (2009). Therein, Mitchell and his contributors reflect on landscape's function in ideology.

> It naturalises a cultural and social construction, representing an artificial world as if it were simply given and inevitable, and it also makes that representation operational by interpellating its beholder in some more or less determinate relation to its giveness as a sight and site (Mitchell, 2009:2).

The frame disappears and masks its constructed nature while also providing a preordained dynamic 'determinate relation' for the beholder. This I consider a 'subject position' (Chandler and Munday, 2020:113). Mitchell describes a relational exchange of forces which account for the ways landscape and nature effect one another, 'what we are doing to our environment, what the environment in turn does to us' (2009:2). This is landscape as a verb rather than a noun, describing action that can 'silence discourse and disarticulates the readability of landscape in order to carry out a process of institutional and political legitimation' (2009:3).

Landscape includes natural features which are interpellated along with the viewer into a social construction which represents itself as natural. I will also be taking useful insight from Mitchell regarding the affirming qualities of landscape to the imperial mind-set, where landscape is used to 'naturalise the position of the colonial settler and to manage the experiential contradictions of exile and domestication, exoticism and familiarity' (2009:3). Mitchell terms this the '"dreamwork" of imperialism' (10), naming through this the tools which naturalise, manage and silence 'a vast network of cultural codes' (13). Such illusions work for a perspective committed to fixity, that is, to fantasies of permanence and inert pre-given qualities.

Interrogating Landscapes

Barrell (1980) indicates his study covers a period opened by Gainsborough and that ends with Constable (Barrell, 1980:6), namely 1730-1840. Barrell is useful in offering insight into strategies utilised by agents of fixity in art making, highlighting the creation of illusions which aid the functioning of power especially that of a certain aspect of Englishness critiqued here. There is a clear sense of the opposition I describe using the terms ‘fixity’ and ‘flux’ operating in Barrell’s insight. Above all it is ‘fixity’ as it is understood here, the visual sense of it, that prevents Barrell from endorsing what he infers is a ‘leftist’ humanist take on George Stubbs’ *Reapers* (1784) (fig. 11). For Barrell the image is not celebrating the ‘individuality’ of the figures in the landscape (a common argument). Rather they are ‘frozen’, are ‘anaesthetised’ (29), ‘entirely suspended’ (30). He goes on to say they are ‘automata, somnambulists’, making the distinction between that and what is ‘transient and contingent’ (31). This I suggest is an example of ‘the agon’ as I’ve characterised it – of the repeated contention between visions of reality as unchanging and as constantly in flux.

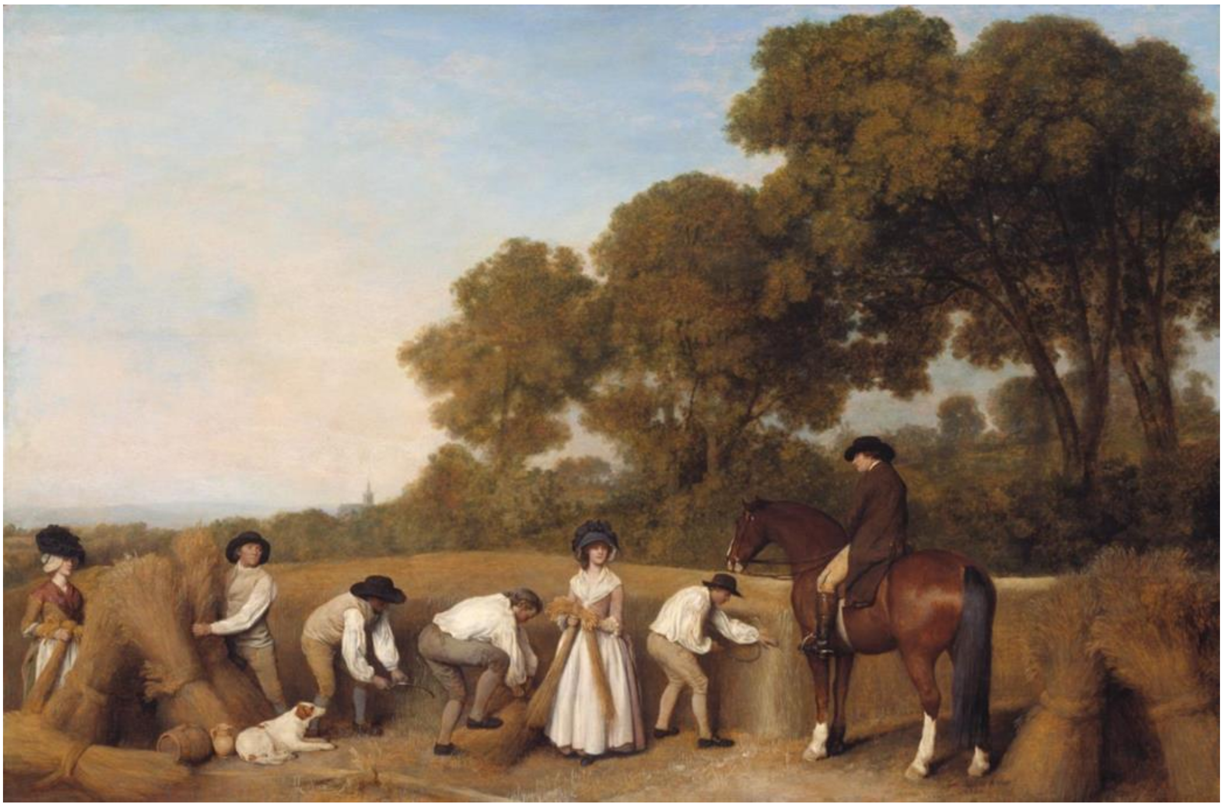

Figure 11: *Reapers* (1785). George Stubbs, Tate Collection.

Burden (2006) emphasises the role of landscape in relation to ‘nostalgia and patriotism’ (15), describing these categories as undergoing a significant upgrade in the 1980s. Burden directly targets ‘English nationalism’ and ‘virulent anti-Euro little Englandism’ as receiving a boost under Thatcherism. Landscape can be a key force which constructs and sustains ‘myths of a unified national identity’ making Englishness an ideology. Explaining ‘the narrative of a unified culture with its search for origins and traditions implies a false universalism that speaks in the voice of the white tribe (even when its history is full of discontinuities’ (Burden and Kohl, 2006:14). In the light of Brexit and the rise of right-wing ideologies which obey ‘neo-fascist’ logic (Traverso, 2019; Seaton-Watson, 2020; Robins, 2007), our current situation has not abated the problems Burden identified. Arguing that cultural realities are ‘the effect of discourses’ (Burden 2006:17) is pertinent here since the aim is to add to the discourse of Englishness and undermine the position highlighted above from within its founding mythos.

Bermingham (1989) links painting to ‘a class view’ highlighting the ideological qualities of the rustic landscape tradition, which is echoed above, clear that the nature of the ideology is to present an illusion which grounds itself by ‘alluding’ to reality (3). Bermingham nonetheless usefully acknowledges that artists have a complex relation to dominant class hegemony. Bermingham sees art as ‘capable’ of showing contradictions in ideology (3). To remain in the Arthurian mythos, this gives art practice the qualities of ‘the bleeding lance’ which wounded the Fisher King. The weapon used to inflict the injury may be used ultimately to heal (and redeem) the wound; it may seem grandiose to state this, but it is an assertion of this project that art has contributed to subjective ‘fixity’ and that it can contribute alternatively to the opposite goal.

Bermingham emphasises art’s ‘dialogical’ (4) quality. For example, ‘dialogics often do not lead to closure and remain unresolved’ (Harvard University GSD, 2012). This quality of abiding tension rather than closure is influential on what I refer to as the desired position of the layered subject. Bermingham also pioneers the use of unlike or seemingly incongruent examples acknowledged in her introduction, this approach emulated here intends a short circuit of understanding allowing the reader to register otherwise hidden relationships.

I intend to demonstrate that art practice can be effective in the recognition and critique of ‘fixity’ as it operates in false universals of Englishness explored throughout the research. I also hope that the threats to what I have referred to as the ‘layered subject’ from manifestations of fixity become clear, specifically in the effort to confront, resist or eliminate a potentially radical outside associated by agents of fixity with ‘chaotic’ (temporal) nature.

Landscape and Subjectivity

We can create better frames to experience and understand nature. I treat landscape as product of the subject and a site for dynamic action in the form of change on the part of the subject. As Pente (2010) argues, this is due to ‘continual exposure to images, both in virtual spaces and in physical places’. This influences identity, prompting analysis of the way landscape and subjective entanglement are ‘read’ and interact in reality (37).

Landscape and land are mutable in reality and in the aesthetic representations which influence our view of nature. Don Gayton in ‘Landscape and the Condition of Being’ (2006) describes the positive ‘entanglement’ of personal subjectivity, societal forces, and the shifting reality of actual land as ‘a condition of being’ (9). Gayton describes an aversion to this interconnectedness as a ‘western scientific habit of mind which…rejects…culture-based subjectivity’ (6). Rigid logical thinking for Gayton is burdened by ‘mindless bureaucratese’, ‘technologically indulged’ thinking, leading to ‘deficiencies in our current relationship to nature’ (9). This worsens the ecological problems we have by obfuscation.

Gayton highlights the agency of creative practice in presenting ideas to the public (6). To simplify Gayton’s insight: we do not live in reality, but in the symbolic constructs which attach us to reality. Creative practice is uniquely placed to continue the development of landscape as a clear ‘fusion of nature, artifice and aesthetics’ (9) and create better ‘analogues’ (8) for nature. Gayton also stresses a sense of place, not a bordered, clearly demarcated place such as those important in proto-fascist fantasies, rather a contingent sense of presence in time.

Gayton refers to a particular place’s phenotype and habitat (terroir) a material counterpoint to ‘genius-loci’ (spirit of place). The specificity of England in this project is applied in that spirit the practices discussed are interconnected responding to the idea of the English landscape continuing its current cultural construction and unconscious.

Landscape of Shifting Backgrounds

Gayton (2006) approaches the oscillations in the temporal landscape and its interconnectedness to subjectivity by tracing the semiotic accumulations of the term landscape. Gayton highlights the word ‘ship’ as it relates through old-German into ‘landscape’. We will see with Marshall (2018), drawing on Foucault’s ‘heterotopia’ (1994:18) (disturbing spaces of other ordering), that the ship is evoked in Foucault to delineate the landscape as an ‘alternate ordering of space, materials, time and people, which sit apart from the rest of the world’ (2018:73). This relates to the breaking away from oppressive forces where the subject escapes subject positioning and can change. These theories serve to make visible certain aspects of nature as it relates through landscape to subjectivity and hint at deeper dynamics at work.

Nature is not a refuge for the subject when society is stagnant to aid them in a convenient becoming. Rather, I propose nature as a catastrophe of enduring change that must find its way into our reality (constructs) through analogues that enable change and facilitate renewed comportment to the contingent present. Marshall (2018) and Gayton (2006) both accept this aspect. Marshall refers to the landscape as a materialisation of change. ‘Marks in the landscape encourage geological thinking, such that time emerges as a fissure, or yawning scar-like space of discontinuity within the mise en scene of the landscape’ (2018:87). In making this argument Marshall acknowledges time as *the* epic element in the wilderness. Gayton (2006) similarly condemns a ‘habit of mind’ which resists the inclusion of disaster within the natural process of land changes. He suggests that ecology takes account of ‘landscape-scale disturbance processes seeking to accommodate the minor ones and find less destructive analogues for the more devastating ones’ (Gayton, 2006:8).

Nature is temporal and changeable. It is not simply mortality which is at stake, with the landscape ‘rich in the loam created by bodies.’ Rather, it is a shift in perspective ‘in the now’ which is shocking (Marshall, 2018:84). In the ‘now’, perception receives input and is altered, or less usefully, trauma is produced and is resisted (as in positions of fixity).

What both papers skirt is that death is permanence actualised in visions of immovability and in bad ‘habits of mind’ shutting out temporality. It is in catastrophe where life attempts to reinsert itself into subjectivity, driven by creative practices and critical thinking. The wilderness can offer the subject the true gravitas of the contingent present in all its entropic magnitude. The prospect of death as mortality is not the ultimate cause of trauma. Rather, the movement of life as a series of disasters and perspectival shifts is what really engenders resistance on the part of the subject. Through such resistance, death as permanence intrudes via perspective into life.

Land as the Seat of the Nascent Nation: Theories of Place and Space

The understanding of space and place and their contemporary relation is explored in Gupta and Ferguson's *Culture, power, place* (1997). This draws together several key theorists in response to postmodern and feminist interventions, highlighting the necessity for a re-evaluation of the concept of place and space. Therein, Gupta and Ferguson argue that the relationship between space and place is flawed when clusters of interaction in space confer an identity (place) (36) and further a 'common sense' idea of separateness and distinctiveness that 'societies' 'nations' and 'cultures' (33) imagine is natural. These place-based identities are imagined as occurring naturally rather than being a construct and as inertly distinct, not overlapping (34). This is complicated by 'borderlands' and those who exist in a life of 'border crossings' (34). Furthermore, Gupta and Ferguson state that when space is made into place it is 'always implicated in hegemonic configurations of power' (8). Authenticity or 'legitimation' (Mitchell, 2009) is constructed, created by 'folklorists', 'anthropologists', and 'reporters' as well as those who live in space. 'Ethnographic representations' are not only about places but construct them in a continuum. This results in a call to understand how 'interconnected space' becomes a nation (1997:36).

Jo Guldi (2011) in 'What is the Spatial Turn? Spatial Humanities, a Project for The Institute for Enabling Geospatial Scholarship' stresses the potential duality of 'landscape', drawing attention to two important strands. Referring to Durkheimian sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, she observes, 'Landscape offered a diagnosis, a schema for unpacking the structures of modern culture' (Guldi, 2011). Alternatively, chiming with Mitchell (2009), landscape is seen as a 'tool for a civic cohesion' (Guldi, 2011) and Joshua Reynolds is used as an example of painting as an 'administrative task'. These forms of aesthetic construction are seen as 'nationalist'. They utilise representation of a supposedly 'unchanging' pastoral landscape as ballast for nationalist identity. Guldi explores nationalism via the example of the 1952 British Vernacular Architecture Group and the concept of the 'vernacular landscape,' especially as it adopted earlier constructions of identity (19th-century appropriations of the medieval era). Guldi claims vernacular studies 'typically freighted' the everyday landscape with a 'nationalist identity'. The freighted vernacular landscape, burdened by nationalist projections, is illustrated via the attitude of Hilaire Belloc (the Franco-English writer and historian), who is contrasted to Henry Rendall (a historian). Rendall claimed that culture was a 'montage' and a part of general culture 'in its many forms and aberrations' (Guldi, 2011). This dialogue highlights two world views and the role landscape representation plays in them. The one attitudes that embrace borders, permanence, and essence (fixity), while the other emphasises interconnectedness and contingency (flux).

Architectural historian Jane Rendell (2009) highlights 'unfixing' in relation to landscape. This unfixing is an intellectual tool, operating as critique that calls into question 'special qualities' of place when they are assumed as 'pre-given'. It emphasises instead 'the specifics of places… as parts of larger networks, systems and processes…physically and ideologically' (19). Taking into account Mitchell (2009), Gayton (2006) and Marshall's (2018) insistence on the interconnectedness of landscape with subjectivity, 'unfixing' can also be applied to the subject, releasing them from fixity. Rendell, like Pente (2010) draws on Kwon (2002) to complicate the 'freighted' (Guldi, 2011) landscape: 'relational specificity' (Rendall, 2009:20) is a way to think the specific as relational. In an associated text, Rendell emphasises 'temporality' as it relates to art practice: 'Remembering…can reconfigure a particular place in the present' (2008:57). Again, the difference between being positioned and made operational (subject-position); contrasted to a reflective changing subject (subjectivity) is clear.

Understanding Fixity

Nostalgia

Nostalgic formations of landscape form a potent context for the stratified dynamics of fixity discussed in subsequent chapters. Moreover, I consider the bolstering of a nostalgic attitude in the subject as the purpose of examples of fixity drawn on throughout the thesis (particularly chapters 3 and 5). I understand nostalgia as an active mode of behaviour in the present. Such active nostalgia 'can ground a person' (Wilson 2005:8), since 'nostalgia is less about the past than about the present' (Hutcheon and Valdes 1998:20). It is also not a 'passive' (Wilson, 2005:161) position, but a way of relating to the past in the construction of identity. 'When so many threats and obstacles to constructing and maintaining a coherent, consistent self abound…nostalgia may facilitate…coherence, consistency' (8). This mode is problematized in the thesis as a reactionary response to traumas that threaten stratified fictions and constructs. As an example, in the thesis Lewis explicitly sees the role of an idealised creative leader as one who would manage and suture meaning in a stratified culture after significant upheavals. He is ‘keen to account for and propose a “potentially benign settlement” for art in a “professionalised” society’ (O’Donnell 2020: 76). Lewis identifies traumatic upheaval in the Copernican turn, the end of empire (explored in Chapter 2), and the First World War, while O’Donnell (2020) sees Lewis’s utopian fiction as reacting to modernity’s ‘industrial rationalisation’ and ‘corporatisation’ (78) with a new mythos that retains the position of an elite caste. Roger Aden (1995, quoted in Wilson 2005:10), for example, ‘focuses on the role of nostalgic communication in escaping from “contemporary conditions that are perceived to be inhospitable.” This escape, then, provides individuals with a “secure place of resistance”’. Nostalgia as a consolation is a ‘by-product of cultural *modernity* – with its alienation, its much-lamented loss of tradition and community’ (Hutcheon and Valdes, 1998:23). There is of course a distinct difference between the nostalgia of the pastoral mode (with its depiction of gentle and harmonious landscape) and the incendiary iteration of that mode in Lewis, replete with violence and threatened from without by nature and within by enemy agents.

Hutcheon and Valdes (1998) account for such a dichotomy in ‘nostalgic irony’ (30). I suggest the Tyro smile (as I argue below), and more broadly the incendiary mode generally, can be understood using this idea. This is irony used to inject vitality into a flagging ideology, one meant to guarantee that core values (in this case stratification, hierarchy, and paternalism in society) are better incubated and carried forward by communicating them through new aesthetic qualities.

> The knowingness of irony may be not so much a defence against the power of nostalgia as the way in which nostalgia is made palatable…invoked but, at the same time, undercut, put into perspective, seen for exactly what it is—a comment on the present as much as on the past (23).

The conflation ‘nostalgic irony’ is based on the ‘utopian’ element in nostalgia and ‘aspects of ideology’ (30). In irony, ‘a utopian presentation is a projection toward an ideal future and, just as it assumes certain systems of values (i.e., ideologies) and rejects others, utopia itself becomes the aim and goal of the ideology it has accepted’ (31).

The Picturesque

A second strategy for producing fixity that I will be focusing on is the picturesque. I will first be understanding the picturesque as suppressing temporal nature: as Auerbach puts it, ‘The picturesque took as its starting point the idea that nature was imperfect and needed to be organised' (Auerbach, 2004:48). It also assuages potential rupture. Auerbach proposes that it 'took wild, seemingly inhospitable scenes and made them less frightening'. It made them 'moving rather than terrifying, with escape always assured' (52). Secondly, the 'picturesque idiom' functioned in art that 'was especially' instrumental in 'visualising' empire, homogenising what it depicted through the 'lens' of the picturesque. 'South Africa, India, Australia, and the Pacific Islands [were represented] in remarkably similar ways' (47). The homogenizing function of this tradition for Auerbach served to remove any troubling difference of places, 'making them conform to a set of supposedly universally applicable values derived from European art' (51). This was a familiar aesthetics functioning to make the world England. It offered 'homeliness, familiarity, and connectedness' (50) and even more pertinently a 'measure of coherence and control…refracting local people and conditions through a single, formulaic lens' (48). Importantly, Auerbach highlights that this mode, through new media, is continuing to exact influence within the contemporary era: 'the aesthetic framework continued to prevail so that the picturesque mode is easily recognizable in late-19th- and even 20th-century photography and advertisements' (Auerbach, 2004:52).

Intersection of Trauma, Scar, and Landscape

Having examined the problems posed by nostalgic and picturesque modes I will now go on to investigate the connections of the categories scar, landscape, and trauma. The motif of scar and form and the opposition I propose between *scar as form,* where trauma causes a reactionary response, and *scar in form,* where trauma is processed by the subject, are ways I differentiate subjective-fixity contrasted to subjective-flux. The practical categories of scar and form as I have developed them through the thesis and as concepts through which I have come to frame my own artistic practice relate to painting processes and themes which have symbolic associations. Scars are related to trauma, pain, and meaning, but to be registered as such they must be hewn onto a body or environment (form); in this way scars are at least homologous in relation to the accumulation of, and evidence of, experience in a person and in the landscape.

As I treat them here, the intersection of the categories trauma, scar and landscape is first subjective. The disjointedness that is caused in perspectival projections by 'scarring' is evident in both the 'landscape' and in the subject: scarring acts as an interruption in the clear transmission of perceiving. In this way scarring can be the *cause* of trauma, not simply the evidence of some past injury or traumatic event but also the prevention of the return to order manifest in the scar's undeniable physical form.

A second way I will treat the intersections is as thematic, relating to attitudes or approaches to trauma in the work of Lewis or the Pearl Poet. For example, while scars in *SGGK* relate to temporality, truth, and transformation, written into the land and onto the subject Gawain, in Lewis, the *Tyro* is a personified scar, sidestepping the implications of subjectivity and the time mind (cause of tension) by becoming the wound. The smile of the *Tyro* betrays the trauma of both the 'Copernican turn' (Lewis 1926:388) and World War I (1914-1918) (see Lewis, 1937:207).

As Foster (2004:110) points out, some 'returns to the figure' in modernism were conciliatory reactions against fragmentation, both in the physical world and representationally. This was so in 'cubism above all'. Other returns to figuration such as Lewis's were 'machinic modernisms' serving to 'make over' the body. The *Tyro* is a reactionary armoured surface responding to these 'upheavals' and their result, the 'time mind', by assuming the quality of hardening and inflexibility associated with scarring. They simultaneously play off the associations of fierceness which such scars offer. Indeed, the scar is a mask that cannot be removed or separated from what's underneath. Foster (2004) observes Lewis's thoughts regarding soft, malleable interiors. Here he is thinking of subjectivity, Freud's 'jelly fish' being 'baked through' and hardened, an admixture of classical strength and aggressive ruthlessness which the *Tyro* as monster and subject realises. 'He insists that the baking be total, the crust complete' (Foster, 2004:144). In Chapter 4, I will argue that *monsters of fixity* have a precipitant function to the subject which follows this logic, and I will look to examples both historic and contemporary to show the proliferation of this phenomena.

Scarring to the body is the result of 'injury'. This could be self-inflicted and purposeful, as in excoriation, scarification or a medical procedure, but more commonly is due to attack or accident. We do accumulate various minor marks and protuberances which evidence the passing of time and our living in the world (and the entry into it if we consider the navel). However, these contrast with 'traumatic scarring', which is more immediately visible and is considered the result of 'significant injury to the skin'. These are generally categorised in three groups: atrophic scars, which appear as indentations onto the surface of the skin, 'lower and thinner than the surrounding skin'; hypertrophic scars, which remain in the space of the initial wound, but are 'thickened and elevated'; and finally keloid scars, which are elevated while also ‘extend[ing] the boundaries of the initial injury’ (Jagdeo and Schumaker, 2017). These second two types of scarring recall Marshall’s (2018:87) description of the temporal landscape where ‘time emerges as a fissure, or yawning scar-like space of discontinuity’. Marshall describes natural disasters, fissures and entropic forces which are evidenced by what we might call ‘hypertrophic’ and ‘keloid’ scars in the land, ‘marked by harsh, jagged materials (stones and boulders) which materialise these breaks’ (Marshall 2018:87). The first category of scarring, ‘atrophic’, is paralleled by Gayton’s (2006) terminology of ‘anthropogenic’ effects whereby people leave scars on the land which indicate their presence, usually by wearing down through movement, mining, and farming. Marshall states that the ‘mise en scene’ of the landscape is interrupted by such breaks, making it harder to draw into our prefigured constructs. This is also the case with ‘traumatic scarring’ of the body or face, which interferes with the ‘mise en scene’ of the subject.

The intersection of these terms is also evident in both *SGGK* and in Lewis’s *Tyros*. The different manifestations of scarring are telling of the opposition between the two. ‘Atrophic’ scarring is the type which Gawain carries with him after his encounter in the Green Chapel, a fine scar on the neck which, as the Pearl Poet describes it, prevents his reassertion of ‘chivalric self’ and leaves him angry and regretful. The Green Chapel is not a building, rather it is place in nature, a ‘fissure’ in the crag or rock face. This I consider an example of a ‘scar-like space of discontinuity’ (Marshall, 2018). Gawain literally enters the space of the fissure, the manifestation of temporal nature, to receive the mark which not only recalls this specific trauma (potential beheading), but also prevents a return to ‘swagger in the saddle’ (Armitage, 2009:111) in its persistent physical presence. Gawain ‘grimaces’ in ‘shame’ at the site of it and feels ‘rage’ and ‘pain’ on reflection regarding its meaning (Armitage, 2009:113).

Scarring here is accepted as a result of wounding accidentally but also as a cultural practice which has deep historical associations with masculine power. This gives the idea of purposeful wounding or survival of wounding an atavistic quality which I will link to *Tyros*. Angulo, Garcia-Diez, and Martinez (2011) compiled evidence to support the existence of these practices, that is, excoriation with specific focus on genital decoration (via scarring) in the prehistory of Europe (Angulo, Garcia-Diez, and Martinez, 2011:1). To reinforce this association of scarring with maleness and with concepts of power we can look to Maynard (2009), who observes 19th-century (white culture) tropes and fantasies of ethnic potency. Maynard explores the importance of forceful maleness and an interest in the figure of the primitive male as a symbol of power 'often scarified or with decorated bodies…implying a potent form of maleness' (Maynard 2009:129). Maynard shows how image production (in that case photographs) served to distinguish bodies. The 'atavistic' non-western, where scarring is 'emphatically' stressed, was contrasted to the 'enigmatic, self-reflexive' civilised body of the colonial white settler. Both were constructs for an audience of the latter (Maynard, 2009:136). Maynard's study concerns the fantasies of the white colonials in the South Pacific, in particular Australia, the area of the empire which Mitchell (1994) identifies as the 'most dramatically vulnerable' to the 'dreamwork' of the empire. They were

> a place where European landscape conventions could work themselves out virtually unimpeded by "native" resistance, where the "naturalness" of those conventions could find itself confirmed by a real place understood to be in a state of nature (Mitchell, 1997:18).

The body of the peoples who lived in these places were taboo but nevertheless a cause of fascination linked to what Maynard refers to as an 'atavistic trope of blackness' (Maynard, 2009:136). The scar in this manifestation is associated with potency in the colonial fantasy of, in this case, the South Pacific male, as this group seem to embody older forms of potency possessed by European ancestors. The Scar resonates with references from wounding and injury in general perhaps leading to psychic trauma, to the predatory and ferocious associations it gives individuals (men) as a crystallisation of violence. Gawain is scarred, this much is clear, and its importance as an event in the text of *SGGK* cannot be overemphasised; however, some elaboration is required as to the association of the idea with Lewis's *Tyros*.

The symbolic association of scars with Lewis's *Tyro* is based on three points. In the first of these, the *Tyro* is a reaction to wounding or trauma in the form of the onset of World War One. This is argued by Foster (2004:110), who reads it as combined with the implications of the 'Copernican turn', a destabilising paradigm shift described by Lewis (1926:388). For all intents and purposes Hudson emphasises Lewis's description of the *Tyro* grimace as a scar. 'Lewis describes the fixed grin of the Tyro as the 'stoic smile typified by the British "Tommy",' which he is now unable to alter' (2013:45).

A second association of the scar in Lewis's *Tyro* follows from the way that this is an aggressive defence against the concept of transformation as it is conceived in the 'time mind' of Bergson (1914), making the *Tyro* akin to excoriation and scarification, playing on the phallic and fierce qualities of the violence of wounding as evidence of predatory power. For Quema (1999) *Tyros* have a 'canine aggression of cannibalism' (108). The concept of predatory power as a cause of excoriation is made in Rush (2005)

> Homo erectus, in my opinion had a very strong identity with predators, not as food items but as “beings” to emulate, much the same as we have sports teams named after wild, vicious, and predatory animals. Such identities are promising symbols for scarification or tattooing in some manner (9).

Connections may be made between the specificity of ‘phallic scarification’, as in excoriation of the actual phallus for the purpose of generating predatory power and the nature of Lewis’s *Tyro’s* in general. Think of Lewis’s original description ‘seed’; ‘bursting forth’ and the upright erect positioning of the *Tyro* figures in the publications of *The Tyro* (Lewis, 1921) (see fig. 3, fig. 51). If this phallic association seems spurious think also of *Tyro Madonna* (1921) (fig. 12), the Madonna of the title siting opposite what is undeniably a huge erect penis protruding from and defining the body of the *Tyro*. She is, partly defined by a cavity at her centre which runs from her dress to her neck corresponding to the outline of the male protuberance presumably awaiting her attention.

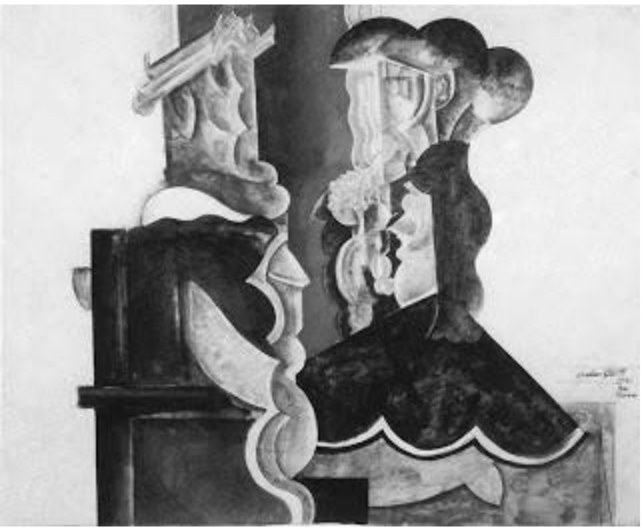

Figure 12: *Tyro Madonna* (1921) Wyndham Lewis.

In Chapter 5, as already mentioned, I discuss ‘deep time’ (McPhee, 1981) in relation to the Green Chapel and its role in defining that space as other and ‘liminal’ (van Gennep, 1960; Turner, 1969), as well as the role of the monster within this space. It will suffice here to say that the actualisation of ‘deep time’ in the physiography of spaces in nature disturbs the cover-over and orientation offered by ‘landscape’ (Mitchell, 2009) (the pastoral, the picturesque etc.). This actualisation occurs in disturbance events and where evidence of ‘deep time’ intrudes – chasms, fissures, and so on – these cannot be easily assuaged into the ‘mise en scene’ of either the resisting subject or their ideological scaffold (the pastoral, the picturesque etc.) – it is the trauma of ‘deep time’ (in the form of an actualised outcrop of nature’s reality) that acts as the catalyst for the psychic reactions contrasted here.

Eeriness: Flux Beyond the Frame

The idea of the ‘eerie’ as it is formulated by Mark Fisher in *The Weird and the Eerie* (2016) is useful in exploring the landscape beyond the frame or that which resists the frame of landscape. Describing the eerie, Fisher states, ‘It has…to do with a fascination for the outside, for that which lies beyond standard perception, cognition, and experience. This fascination usually involves a certain apprehension, perhaps even dread’ (8). This quality is one that will help to understand the treatment here of the Pearl Poet’s ‘Green Chapel’ (see Armitage, 2007: 6; 24; 37; 89) explored in Chapter 5. For Fisher, ‘the eerie’ is primarily an encounter with the indeterminate and a matter of the subject’s apprehension and unsureness. ‘What happened to produce these ruins, this disappearance? What kind of entity was involved?’ (Fisher, 2016:11). Fisher’s notion of ‘the eerie’ is also useful in accounting for the strange agency that the GK grants to the landscape as a personification of what is disinherited, repressed, and actively suppressed by the frame (represented by Arthur’s court and Camelot more generally). Consider Gawain’s approach to the site of his coming decapitation; the desolate winter land seems to speak before the unnerving sound is identified:

> he scrambled to the skylight of that strange abyss.
> Then he heard on the hillside, from behind a hard rock
> and beyond the brook, a blood-chilling noise.
> What! It cannoned through the cliffs as if they might crack,
> like the scream of a scythe being ground on a stone.
> What! It whined and wailed, like a waterwheel.
> What! It rasped and rang, raw on the ear.
> ‘My God,’ cried Gawain, ‘That grinding is a greeting.

> My arrival is honoured with the honing of an axe
> up there (Armitage, 2007:101).

The GK is present but unseen, a ‘camouflaged man’ (101) that in Gawain’s mind blends in with the wilderness. ‘[In] the failure of absence, the question concerns the existence of agency as such. Is there a deliberative agent here at all? Are we being watched by an entity that has not yet revealed itself? In the case of the failure of presence, the question concerns the particular nature of the agent at work’ (Fisher, 2016:63). Such a figure, entirely green and possessing ‘superhuman’ (Armitage 2007:99) power I suggest is ‘an agency that should not be there’ (Fisher, 2016:69). The personified aspect of this agency will be explored in Chapter 4, while the spatial aspect, the Green Chapel, will be the focus of the Chapter 5.

The thesis argues, and my art practice explores, the proposition that monsters represent (are embodied manifestations of) and act as agents for distinct attitudes to time. These attitudes are fixity, concerned with permanence, stasis, and hierarchy; and flux, concerned with breakdown and subjective change. The eerie GK, as we’ve encountered him above, I propose as an example of a *flux monster*.

Accepting that representations of the landscape are key in constructions of identity and nation, I argue that the breakdown in the effective functioning of the pastoral mode (due to social and political upheaval) gives rise to aesthetic conciliations such as imperial-modernism and the incendiary *monster of fixity.* These manifestations seek to re-establish the status-quo, giving force to fixity. In the case of England, this entails giving force via representation (and modelling, in the instance of literary and film media) to false universals of nation, constructions or projections that express racially-biased and class-biased desires for a stable, patrician, and stratified society, where power remains in the hands of an elite. However, as the thesis argues throughout, the weakening of the traditional hegemonic view (the nostalgic pastoral mode) also allows for the emergence of representations of landscape which communicate ‘liminality’, ‘eeriness’, and ‘flux’, combining in creative practice in a phenomenon I refer to as *virescent space* (Chapter 5), the agent of which is the *flux-monster*. *Virescent space* and *flux-monsters,* drawing from temporal nature, are rebarbative to fixity and the modes that depend on fictions of permanence, stratification, and order. By extension: nationalistic and proto-fascist conceptions of nation, which are both manifestations of these tendencies, must repress or other temporal nature, continually suppressing its radical subjective implications, which are concerned with a complex adaptable interiority (subjectivity) and ‘escape from the confines of what is ordinarily taken for reality’ (Fisher, 2016:13). The ‘pastoral’ mode, the ‘picturesque’, and ‘nostalgia’ are examples of repression through balm-like illusion, while othering nature I suggest is an aspect of the incendiary mode (linked to irony), where perceived fatal chaos *out there* in temporal nature must be resisted and dominated. The terms I put forward, *monsters of fixity* and *flux-monsters*, and the landscape mode I introduce in Chapter 5, *virescent space,* are useful as a means to generate new knowledge about our relationship to landscape, subjectivity, and national identity. This is especially important as these themes are pursued in my art practice, which seeks to resist the proto-fascist tendencies that inhere in this subject matter.

Chapter 2

Art Practice and Contemporary Contexts

In this chapter, I outline visual tropes of Englishness that represent ‘fixity’ via strategies introduced earlier, ‘ideological darkness’ (Mitchell, 2009) or ‘imperial illusion’ (Robins, 2007). Those strategies employ the picturesque and nostalgia to further a nationalistic agenda and privilege a hierarchical concept of space. This involves a suppression or othering of temporal nature in favour of what is presented as unified, permanent, and natural. Furthermore, I suggest those picturesque and nostalgic constructions are constitutive of a false universal of Englishness defined by a patrician and imperial character. I also argue those values are furthered in various visual works that I seek to recognise and critique.

This is of relevance since my practice is concerned with resistance against returning ‘proto-fascist’ perspectives (Traverso, 2019; Seton-Watson, 2020; Robins, 2007:15-16). What is of interest here is an obsession with borders, national identity, centralised power, and the privileging of (so-called) exceptional individuals. The thesis’s examination of proto-fascism in Lewis may offer itself as potentially useful within debates on post/neo-fascism and the rise of new forms of right-wing propaganda.

I follow Jo Littler (2006) and Ashley Maher (2013) in analysing the ways that art practice and modernism can work to continue a racially (and nationally) biased ‘sublimated discourse of neo-imperial mastery’ (Littler, 2006:23). Maher helps understand the development of imperial-modernism, its appropriation into mainstream architecture, and subsequently the intrusion into public/private space, creating ‘semi-public space’ which concerned Maher’s late-moderns (the subject of her paper), particularly Elizabeth Bowen (see Maher 2013). Imperial-modernism, I argue, reaches its apex in the ‘megaform’ (Frampton, 1999). This entails a construction conceived of as a ‘scar’ in opposition to chaotic nature, a feature the megaform has in common with other manifestations of the architectural landscape as it appears in representations of fixity, especially as a threat to a potentially radical outside (explored in Chapter 5).

I will look at the ways my artwork critiques 'fixity' via the use of visualisations of 'over-orthodoxy' (Žižek, 2014), overt 'visual aggressivity', and the 'deflationary gesture', utilising what has been referred to as 'intersemioticity'. Intersemioticity is a position which Lewis (my primary example of an artist who embraced fixity) resisted. 'Understood as the mixing or merging of semiotic codes or the creation of hybrid forms of art…(Lewis) revealingly equated "hybrid forms" with "monstrosities"' (Fitzgerald, 2016). Intersemioticity allows for privileging interpretation in the viewer via related works that draw on various registers and historical periods. I suggest this represents a blatant use of anachronism, as opposed to the escapist illusions presented in the critiqued examples. By its nature 'intersemioticity' is an impure approach, opposed to clearly defined rules that apply to distinct styles or schools of art making.

Intertextuality and Intersemiocity within a Dialogical Approach

'Intertextuality' is fitting as a methodological approach because of the emphasis on *SGGK* and Lewis's *Tyro* and related literature, also considering my practice with its various antecedents. I have purposefully used intertextuality drawing on the aforementioned to open different ways to view the original texts in both the thetic output and in the display of artwork. Julia Kristeva coins the term in *Desire in Language* (1981), drawing on Bakhtin's dialogism and Saussure's semiotics. Therein, the way meaning is communicated and created in texts is considered interdependent, in continual dialogue, and subsequently dependent on the viewer's interpretation based on their reading of codes established and/or embellished by other texts.

In *Intertextuality* (2011) Graham Allen draws on Wendy Steiner's 'Intertextuality in Painting' (1985). Allen explains that painting can appear as having an 'a-temporality' as well as being 'beyond semiology' or 'that it cannot "mean" anything more than its own immediate appearance' (171); both Allen and Steiner see these assumptions as 'naive'. For Steiner, 'there is a commonly held belief that paintings are texts whose closure and self-sufficiency are indisputable'. They are so-called 'arrested moments of visual perception' and the wrongheaded view that painting's 'primary semiotic mode is assumed to be iconic' (1985:57). These 'literal' understandings of painting are challenged in intertextuality. Responding to 'iconic' approaches, Steiner argues 'paintings can give rise to meanings that are propositional, tensed, and general' (Steiner, 1985).

Both authors emphasize intertextual techniques embraced here: ‘quotation’ of artists or styles in works, ‘parody’ (both self-evident in various works of the project), ‘work being completed by others’, ‘found material’, ‘the mixing of different media’, and ‘collage’ (Allen, 2011:171). I would add to this what Aktulum (2017:33) in his exposition of intertextuality refers to as ‘figures’ (tools/features): ‘allusion, quotation, calque, plagiarism, translation, pastiche, parody’. Here the site of intertextuality is (originally) my art practice and is expressed in the combination of works that emphasise or ‘quote’ different styles, utilising various registers, and combining painting, 3d construction, and sculpture which serves to foreground intertextuality in the context of the project’s themes. The simplest definition of the term I accept here comes from a statement of intent in Steiner’s abstract paintings, which ‘are always connected to each other and often to works of other arts,’ meaning that ‘pictorial meaning always is conditioned by these connections’ (Steiner, 1985).

To offer detail in the application of an intertextual approach we can consider the mixing, blending, layering, and cross-referencing of semiotic codes: intersemioticity. In his chapter ‘On Linguistic Aspects of Translation’ (1959) Jacobson explains the features of intersemioticity: ‘Translation or transmutation is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems’ (in Brower and Fang, 1959:233). I am writing about art, my own and other artists’, while also making artwork that responds to written work, poetry, prose, and to images and constructs. Jacobson’s explanation (in Brower and Fang, 1959: 238) emphasises the way that translations or transfers between lexicons change what was originally there.

Questions arise in the process of lexical transfers, and I would suggest that such a quality (evoking questions) allows for the privileging of interpretation in the viewer, rather than immersion in illusion, or the arresting (limiting) impact of what Steiner criticizes, the ‘assumed’ iconic role referred to above. Aktulum (2017) is useful in understanding what intersemioticity allows in terms of intertext. He explains that the shift of the suffix ‘text’ to ‘semioticity’ moves away from a dependence on ‘interlacing’ (direct conscious and unconscious relations of one text to another) to one of evocation between entirely different mediums (33-34). Aktulum clarifies this shift ‘Jacobson speaks about an "intersemiotic transposition" of a system of signs in another one; a passage from a system to another, for example, from an art of language (poem, novel) to music, dance, cinema, painting, etc.’ (2017:7).

Aktulum highlights the circular nature of intersemioticity as it is employed here between the practice as the locus of all the themes, itself intersemiotic and intertextual (taking in literary and visual influences, interlaced consciously and/or connected by evocation), and acting as a prompt to the writing, moving back and forth between these positions. Therefore, the practice extends to include the written thesis. ‘The main type of transposition is in the passage of a literary text to another system of signs and vice versa: this form could function quite reverse: we can thus talk about passing a painting…into a literary text’ (2017:7).

Regarding a dialogic approach and following Zhang (2018) I see intersemioticity-intertextuality-dialogism as interrelated. ‘Intersemioticity’ is listed by Zhang as one tributary of intertextuality (8), which is itself ‘dialogic’, ‘an open-ended concept of discourse’ (2018:9). Dialogic is the overarching term that accounts for the intertextual and intersemiotic approach taken in the artistic output and thetic explorations, it comes from Mikhail Bakhtin’s *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981). Bakhtin explains that the novel, unlike the epic poem, is structured by diverse forms of speech, is hybrid, and often involves switching between codes or styles. The novel is unlike the ‘authoritative discourse’ his examples include dogma and scientific theory, that kind of communication is hierarchical and demands unconditional allegiance; like the authoritative positioning of Lewis who Jameson (1979) reminds us ‘[forces] his readership to choose between himself and…everything else’ (3).

Bakhtin (1981:421) hints at the beginning of the layered subject in the Middle Ages, which in his view prepares the way for the novel (here *SGGK* is viewed as a poem which introduces and problematises the complex subject), and he cautions concerning the way we may look through the lens of a ‘reaccentuation’ when we consider output from distant epochs. Since my aim is to purposely make use of *SGGK* while mixing it with anachronistic features including those of an opposing ‘authoritative’ creative framework, there is little worry that my work would ever determine a fixed view of the poem or of Lewis’s aesthetics. Instead, I seek to contribute to an open conversation of types, attitudes, and themes therein with the reader where ‘images continue to…develop even after the moment of their creation; they are capable of being creatively transformed in different eras’ (Bakhtin, 1981:421-422).

Dialogism involves a conception of the audience as an active interlocutor and is emphasised in Margaret Meban’s ‘The Aesthetic as a Process of Dialogical Interaction: A Case of Collective Art Praxis’ (2009). Meban draws on Bakhtin’s notion of art as a conversation, ‘in which the ethical dimensions of relations between self and Other become a site of critical reflexivity, that have the possibility for personal and social transformation' (34). Transformation may seem grandiose. This simply applies to shifts in perspective and the active component of critical awareness in the audience: this is what I understood by 'conversation becomes an essential part of the work itself' (36). Meban makes an interesting point about subjectivity.

> [Which is] formed through discourse and intersubjective exchange itself. Discourse is not simply a tool to be used to communicate an a priori "content" with other already formed subjects but is itself intended to model subjectivity' (36).

The key element of this kind of subjective 'modelling' is that it is done in conversation with another subject who is responsible for constructing meaning alongside the creative output they are experiencing. This is opposed to Lewis's concept of the 'recruit' or to what Bakhtin describes as an authoritative transfer of information. A dialogic approach takes a position on subjectivity which is emphasised in its form: diverse – hybrid – layered.

In this framework my primary context 'the agon', an opposition concerned with models of subjectivity which embrace at one pole 'fixity' and at the other 'flux' is useful. Appropriate subjective comporting to time and nature is paramount in the examples I use, and the creation of, or continuance of, subjectivity which is either adapting (changing) or resistant (permanent) is what is at stake in the activity of the agents and examples I refer to. The use of the categories 'scar', 'form', 'landscape', and 'monster' as defined throughout the project and operating in the context of 'the agon' are utilised here.

Visual-Aggressivity and Talismanic Resistance

The classifications 'scar' and 'form' are explored in this chapter in their negative iteration, having observed scars as a reminder of experience, a literal mark on both the land or the individual and as subject to time (aspects of flux). Here instead, I will explore scar as form: working for subjective fixity. Scars in this mode are the result of scarification discussed concerning the imperial mindset in Chapter 1. This sees 'scar' as a phallic resistant eye spot that utilises 'visual-aggressivity' in the face of perceived chaos: 'scar' as a talisman or sign of aggressive resistance. 'Form' here is used to refer to my creative output, actualised examples that I have created of fixity and flux, in this chapter primarily explored as embodying 'fixity', these works are informed by the 'megaform' (Frampton, 1999), the dazzle warship (informed as it is by butterfly eye spots), and Maori 'pouwhenua' (decorated standing posts), these manifestations actualise ‘visual-aggressivity’ in space and in nature which is seen as a direct threat.

Consider the exchange between Jeanne Robinson, Curator of Entomology, and Neil Johnson-Symington, Curator of Transport and Technology regarding the use of dazzle camouflage.

> **JR**: It involves geometric lines and angular shapes that break up the outline so that the silhouette – the thing that helps its predator identify it – is disrupted…We can also consider another form of camouflage, where the insect prey startle their predators with their colouration, or disguise themselves as something inedible.
>
> **NJS**: Deceptive colouration.
>
> **JR**: Yes, something like the flashing of eye spots, when a bird is in pursuit of a moth or butterfly, and these big eyes suddenly appear on the insect’s wings. For a visual predator that’s fairly intimidating.
>
> **NJS**: That works so well with the dazzle ships, as some schemes appear to be designed so that the attention is drawn away from the most vulnerable parts.
>
> **JR**: The idea with the eye spots, as well as to deflect attack, is to get the predator to focus on the parts that are less vulnerable, away from the body (Hewison, 2015:9-10).

The sense of looking aggressive is common to both forms of camouflage: the geometric broken-lines and the eye spots that more obviously appear to look back. Of course, while this is a feature of natural selection in the animal, human uses of this, the dazzle-warship (which disrupts), or the Maori ‘pouwhenua’ which looks out on the landscape (and at possible trespassers) for example, are consciously employed by people. I also draw a comparison to the ‘megaform’ (Frampton, 1999) since while its scale is greater than that of ships and totemic standing posts its conception as an act of territorial dominance by its creators (discussed later) in the face of a threatening nature, is a shared feature with those other examples. I suggest the ‘megaform’ understood as a boundary maker and mark of ownership is also a form of defensive ‘visual-aggressivity’.

These examples inform my three-dimensional representations of the monstrous knight. Highlighted in these manifestations is the issue of ‘form’ relating to my art practice’s aesthetics, these pure forms: vorticist, historic, picturesque, and so on, are subsumed into the adopted ‘intersemioticity’ and the eclectic aesthetics of my practice. The multiple registers, mediums and various thematic subject matter are intended to avoid overbearing predetermination by myself or any one register/historic style, setting up instead multiple tensions for exploration by the audience. I intend this to appeal to the viewer as an interlocutor, as opposed to the Lewisian ‘recruit’ (Lewis, 1921) or the ‘quaint’ mutual reinforcement of nostalgia experienced in imperial illusion (Littler, 2006:32).

‘Landscape’ (following Mitchell’s notion of the frame, 2009) is relevant, featuring in my own work discussed in the chapter and in the examples I will go on to explore alongside it. Examples of nostalgic framing in relation to written and spoken evocations of a certain kind of England (discussed later in relation to Sir John Major, 2020) and in visual representations such as the work of Abraham Games and Augustus Earle’s paintings, as well as in the reality of Poundbury and the ‘megaform’ (Frampton, 1999) are all discussed. I argue that the ‘megaform’ continues the neo-colonial position discussed in Littler (2006) via the appropriation of imperial-modernism and actualizes architectural landscape in a way which totalises space.

In terms of a historical moment this chapter reflects on the post-war period, centring on The Festival of Britain (1951) and its imperial antecedents. (A rationale for the festival is a celebration of the commonwealth, problematised by texts examined.) This moment is relevant as an example of modernism and history coinciding in a mass public spectacle. Additionally, I look at the subsequent and gradual uptake of modernism into government policy in the post-war period: leading to an increase in the architectural landscape. Finally, I examine the theory of the ‘megaform’ (Frampton, 1999) a concept that was a direct result of the mega-structures and built-up cityscapes of the 1960s and 1970s that benefited from that uptake across Britain and which in of itself is a landscape made of one vast interior. I use this background to foreground my practice and that of Kentridge who I consider an appropriate influence on my art practice, especially concerning his use of anachronism, intersemioticity, and concern with post-imperial subjectivity. (Kentridge’s work that reflects on British interpretations of African involvement in World War One is examined.)

Contexts: Imperial-Modernism in the Post-War Period

The Festival of Britain (1951) and the work of Abram Games are influential on my understanding of imperial-modernism which my practice attempts to challenge and which provides a clear outline of strategies in contrast to my own; working as it were, in the other subjective direction towards fixity. This is not to say that Games is responsible for this phenomenon, imperial-modernism, or that his personal motivation was consciously marshalling for anything more than finding ways to portray positively, traditionally imperial tropes and aspects of national identity (as was his job in relation to the festival). Games' work spanned the transition from WW2 to the Commonwealth and beyond, and on a personal level as a Jewish man and son of first-generation immigrants in many ways, he was a complete outsider to the British establishment. However, his modernisation of these tropes in *The Festival of Britain* (1951) utilising his skill as a propaganda artist helped the festival to fulfil its purpose. Games' output is problematized below.

Reflecting on the festival Jo Littler (2006) in '"Festering Britain": the 1951 Festival of Britain, Decolonisation, and the Representation of the Commonwealth' is clear that it performed three purposes: (i) continuing a 'sublimated discourse of neo-imperial mastery', (ii) engendering a sense of 'national parochialism', (iii) conveying to the world a largely false 'commonwealth benevolence' (Littler, 2006:23). Furthermore, Littler makes the point that 'memories of Empire did not simply neatly disappear' (25). In Littler's analysis a specifically 'white', even an 'uncomplicated whiteness' with a centrally English identity (even when it came through ironically non-white non-British contributions see: 35, 36), was the image it reinforced and attempted to define. Burden similarly regards ideology working to define Englishness as 'a false universalism that speaks in the voice of the white tribe (even when its history is full of discontinuities)' (Burden and Kohl, 2006:14). Such 'discontinuities' are marginalised in favour of the white tribe by highlighting the 'Rustic past' (31) or by use of romanticised aesthetics which Games was key in defining, 'an image of little Britain…particularly little England "as a land of villages"' (32). There are links here with the concerns of Mitchell (2009) and Robins (2007) in the 'picturesque parts' (Littler, 2006:32) of the festival that Littler describes and the 'racialised representation of national identity as small and insular' (33) is starkly apparent. This combination of modernist militarism which glorified and incubated an idea of imperial power with 'national parochialism' is seen as having a specific appeal.

> It is too easy to think of Englishness as a self-enclosed category, magically reproducing a civilisation of never-ending insularity. Despite appearances, England has never been insular". It was rather the very production, the very generation of discourses of insularity that became significant as they were used as defence mechanisms against the loss of empire (Bill Schwarz cited by Littler, 2006:32).

This protective gesture is simultaneously combined with 'expansion' (26, 27, 30). Showing that its defensive nature is one aspect of an otherwise aggressive ambition. This strategy is an echo of Englishness's conception, at least the nationalistic proto-fascistic conception enacted by Edward III reacting to the threat posed by the loyalties of native lords and from the outside in the form of the French house of Valois during the 100yrs War (1337-1453). Paranoia at the possible loss of control over home territory and the actual loss of territory abroad common to both periods is a feature of these bordered iterations of Englishness, primarily evoked as a method of centralised power. I suggest that this aspect of Englishness is nothing more than a managerial tool consisting of gaudy tropes and hypnotic nostalgia. The use of landscape as a soft power management tool is a concern of Barrell (1983) who ends *The Dark Side of the Landscape* with a discussion of nostalgia concerning Constable (164). It is also a concern of Bermingham (see 1986:40; 77; 82; 136; 205) and Burden (2006:13; 207; 218). In each case, the potency of nostalgia to construct functional illusions is emphasised. This is seen as 'nostalgia for a unified organic English culture' (Burden, 2006:14), which places nostalgia in a Freudian *phantasy* context as the realisation of 'frustrated desires' (see Hayman, 1989), in this case for natural unity. Barrell's account is slightly more nuanced as he illustrates via Constable that 'the basis for his social harmony is social division' (1983:164). One aspect of nostalgia is the latent desire for a strictly hierarchical order where social division is a permanent and comforting reality.

Littler makes an interesting point about the mutual reinforcement of individuals and communities in this conception of Englishness with the state. She reminds us of the personal as well as state aspects of participation and avoids the assumption that a lofty power elite managed the situation from above. The representation of English or British regional communities differs from the way foreign peoples were represented in earlier imperial times.

> The 'human zoos' in colonial spectacles were examples of forced subjugation and exhibitions of 'bizarre' or 'underdeveloped' difference, whereas the Essex spectacles foregrounded 'underdeveloped' difference as a quaint example of all that was good about the past which would hopefully continue into the present (Littler, 2006:32).

Littler supports this point in reference to self-deprecating displays and romanticised pessimism also at the festival, as evidence of the symbiosis between the marginalised 'quaint' people and the state. Referring to the 'parochial nationalism' of the aesthetic Littler speculates about what this might encourage.

> However, these Pleasure Gardens, around which 'the island races' of quaint 'little Britain' lived, were also a place in which the far-right white supremacist organisation the Ku Klux Klan thought it an appropriate place to have a meeting later on in the

> year of the festival…this should tell us something about what such meanings could signify (Littler, 2006:33).

Littler is clear that this kind of blatant white racism present in the KKK was one of various 'sporadic attempts throughout the twentieth century to establish a presence in Europe' (42). This blatant aggression never got a sure foothold in Britain despite its efforts – the political, racial, and moral agenda was too overt. Games' aesthetic following a 'softening' of its hard militarism, works better as an accompaniment to the soft-power imperialism that Littler describes.

> As the personification of the country formed after the Roman invasion, Britannia had come to represent an idea of Britishness that was fashioned around white classical origins and imperial conquest. This idea was represented abstractly through the familiar trope of a woman as 'invulnerable epitome' of the nation (Littler, 2006:24)

The term proto-fascist then is apt to describe the kind of strategies that the festival employed where broad consensus from the public is gained as a result of an inclusive, but hierarchical and 'patronising' (28) agenda which reinforced stereotypes, and where 'racialised discourses of national greatness were rearticulated under the cover of introspective modesty' (38). Furthermore, it made a specifically white Englishness central to its conception and alleviated post-imperial melancholy by continuing an imperialist agenda. Games' aesthetic informed as it was by war propaganda, militarism, and idealism in the silhouette of the ennobling Britannia is also proto-fascistic aesthetically.

> The stark four points of the compass are repeated around the outside of the piece, accentuating the military modernism of the image. One commentator at a conference I attended suggested that aesthetically this gave it something of a family resemblance to a swastika (Littler, 2006:40).

The design borrowed from modern abstraction is an example of the kind of static dynamism that Lewis utilised in *Blast* (1914; 1915), *The Tyro* (1921-1922), and *The Enemy* (1927-1929). Their aesthetics are linked in *Militant Modernism* (2010) by Owen Hatherly if only by that designation. Games' poster, *Your Britain Fight For It Now* (1942) (fig. 13) is seen as 'modernism-as-propaganda' (Hatherly, 2010:141), displaying ruined terraces. On their right-elevation a modernist 'progressive' building is displayed. The title is present as a slogan making clear the promise of reform and rebuilding following war. This marks an opportunity for a different Britain and the potential adoption of modernism as a model for the British urban landscape to which Games later contributed to in the Festival of Britain through among other outputs the logo.

As Littler puts it, ‘Imperialism is divested of some of its heavy grandiose swagger and portrayed instead through clean modern lines’ (Littler, 2006:25). Barrell’s example of the lessons learned by painters from pastoral poetry in terms of imitation and realism are pertinent here, as we have some insight into the role such creatives play in the functional illusion of the false universal of Englishness as adapted for contemporary purposes. Describing the advice of Thomas Tickell (1713), Barrell explains:

> That ‘Cornucopia of foreign fruits’ which decorates so much English Pastoral, must give way to native delicacies; the hyacinths and ‘Paestan’ roses must be replaced by king-cups, endives and daisies; the classical gods must give place to English fays; and the superstitions, proverbial sayings, names, customs, sports, language, must all be those of the English peasantry (Barrell, 1980:14).

The function of this shift from classical to local imagery is intended to make the illusion more readable by attaching itself to the familiar, while also offering ‘the ballast which allows the pastoral balloon to manoeuvre’ (Littler, 2006:15). Littler adds a key point that ‘any more weighty problems and it would never get off the ground’ (2006:15). Games’ role in the festival of Britain works according to the same logic, in that instant some of the ‘ballast’ the ‘grandiose swagger’ is ‘divested’, thrown overboard while the ‘balloon’, the illusion that carries imperialism into the next age, is functional under the modernist revision. In both instances, the functionality of an illusion that supports a specific worldview is in question, and in both cases, this is a matter of stylistic and thematic choices of the artist in support of the hegemonic power.

Ashley Maher (2013) addresses this opportunity announced by Games in his poster (also referred to in Maher see: 276). Maher investigates ‘Britain’s post-war social reorganization …which saw architecture as a means of establishing – symbolically and literally – a new Britain after the war’ (251) and looks at the specific and politically complex ‘institutionalisation’ (253) of modernism into mainstream policy.

> The cultural integration of modernist style…greatly resembles that proposed by Wyndham Lewis in *The Caliph’s Design: Architects! Where is Your Vortex?* Originally published by *The Egoist* in 1919. Lewis called on modern artists and engineers to envision new architectural forms to replace the “silly antique fakes” built by architects of the day. Lewis’s vision was one of “complete reform … of every notion … on the significance of the appearance of the world” (Maher, 2013:253).

The idea of problematic, that is, totalitarian and fascist elements in modernism that played into a possible Lewisian vision worried the thinkers that Maher discusses, although for Lewis the Festival of Britain, which was a part of that integration, was something he saw as entirely flawed 'a simple extension of the Attlee government's policy of tax and spend' (see Atkinson 2012:62), reflecting on the government's uptake of modernist principles as not going far enough to anglicise or vorticise its tributaries (Hatherley, 2010:28).

Nevertheless, while it may have appeared a pale imitation for Lewis of what he envisioned the shadow of his project remained, coinciding with government policy. 'What Lewis envisions is amazingly, nothing less than a cultural integration of modernism' (Maher 2013:254), and architects of the state looked to see 'how modernism might be nationalised' (263). The aspects of this integration retained the martial overtones that appealed to nostalgia for the war and neo-colonial soft-power expansion. 'The style becomes inescapably linked to the militaristic destruction summoned by its very materials' (268). Indicative of a strangely gravid quality, 'high modernist style, instead of representing formal innovation, could imply a corresponding aesthetic conservatism' (272). Reflecting on Games' poster series (figs. 13, 14) Maher states: -

> Games posters present "Britain" as something rooted in the architectural landscape, an abstract entity that can be transferred from one set of representative structures to another, but more importantly, even the example of domestic architecture is a semi-public space' (Maher, 2013:276).

Semi-public space is significant in the ways that Maher understands the concerns of his examples: George Orwell, Christopher Isherwood, and (of interest here) Elizabeth Bowen. For Bowen this is seen as a way that 'individuality and private space submit to public space and the collective' (276). This is significantly seen as a 'loss of individuality', and specifically 'bourgeois individualism' (277) is threatened.

Maher's reflections on Bowen are highly relevant here. He shows us how Bowen sees interiors in this semi-public mode. They 'become almost fascistic' (270), reflecting that the 'conservatism Bowen attributes to [the] preservation of traditional interior design elements, [is] a conservatism that is both aesthetic and social' (270). This helps us to understand why the transformative experiences referred to in this project, in for example the Green Chapel, happen outside, in wild nature.

> Bowen writes of authentic but unoriginal feelings that "the strongest compulsions we feel through life are no more than compulsions to repeat a pattern: that pattern is not of our own device" (Maher, 2013:273).

Placing these experiences outside of such interiors are attempts to escape the compulsions, internal and validated in a patrician society to repeat patterns, effectively an effort to seek agency by moving away from atrophying space. In support of this consider Maher drawing attention to the end of Bowen's Novel *The Heat of The Day* (1948) where this overbearing tendency is resisted. 'That novel ends with Louie standing in open space' (Maher, 2013:278) (significantly on a destroyed site where a house used to be) an act of refusing these new forms and resisting the integrated modernism becomes a 'political statement'. This also attests to there being something useful about the layered/negotiating subject as a site of resistance to the conservatism and proto-fascistic elements incubated in imperial-modernism.

> It is this adaptation of modernism to national politics that distinguishes Britain and that illuminates why Britain's literary scene moved not towards postmodernism but to the bourgeois individualism of realism as a way of countering the alliance between modernism and a state – administered collectivism, an allegiance rendered visible in Britain's very landscape (Maher, 2013:279).

These observations regarding Games, Lewis, The Festival of Britain, and the anxiety of Maher's late modernists, highlight the integration of modernism into national policy as clearly linked to the 'architectural landscape'. In the classic sense controlled outside spaces designed for social cohesion and cooperation are seen in the service of imperial-modernism as contributing to the suppression of nature. This is acknowledged in Littler (2006:30) where 'the realm of nature', a site of primitivism, is one of the 'enemies' of a civilising, benevolent Britain with a patrician English attitude.

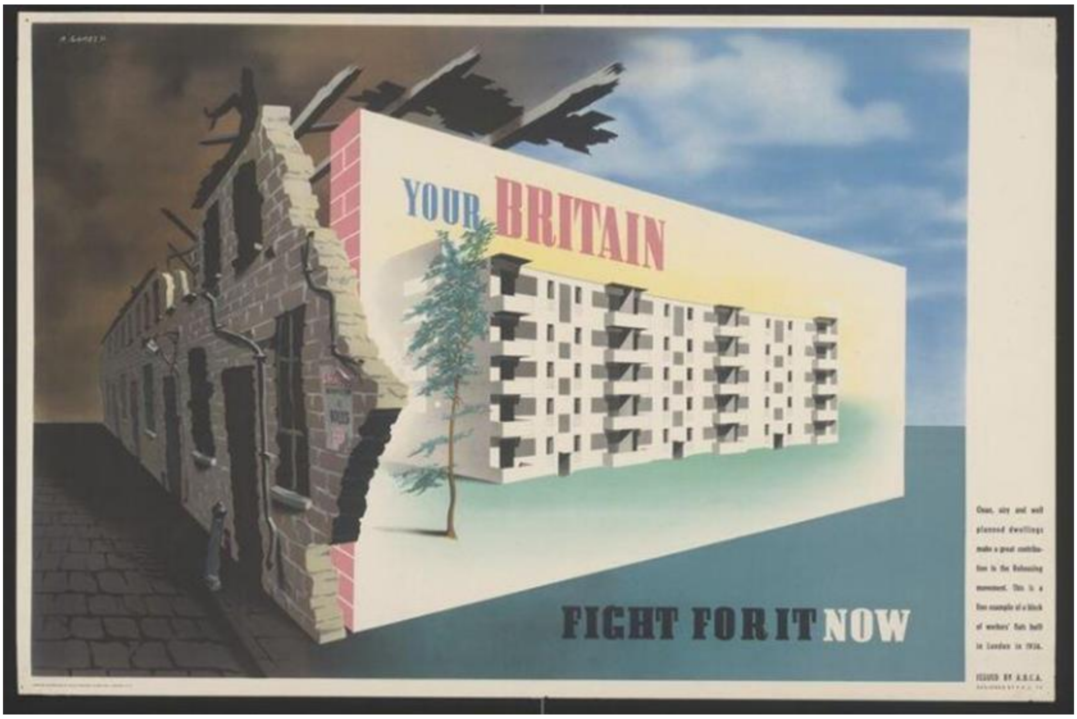
YOUR BRITAIN
FIGHT FOR IT NOW
Clean, airy and well planned dwellings make a great contribution to the Rehousing movement. This is a fine example of a block of workers' flats built in London in 1936.
ISSUED BY A.B.C.A.

Figure 13: *Your Britain Fight for It Now* (1942) Abram Games. Collection of the V&A London.

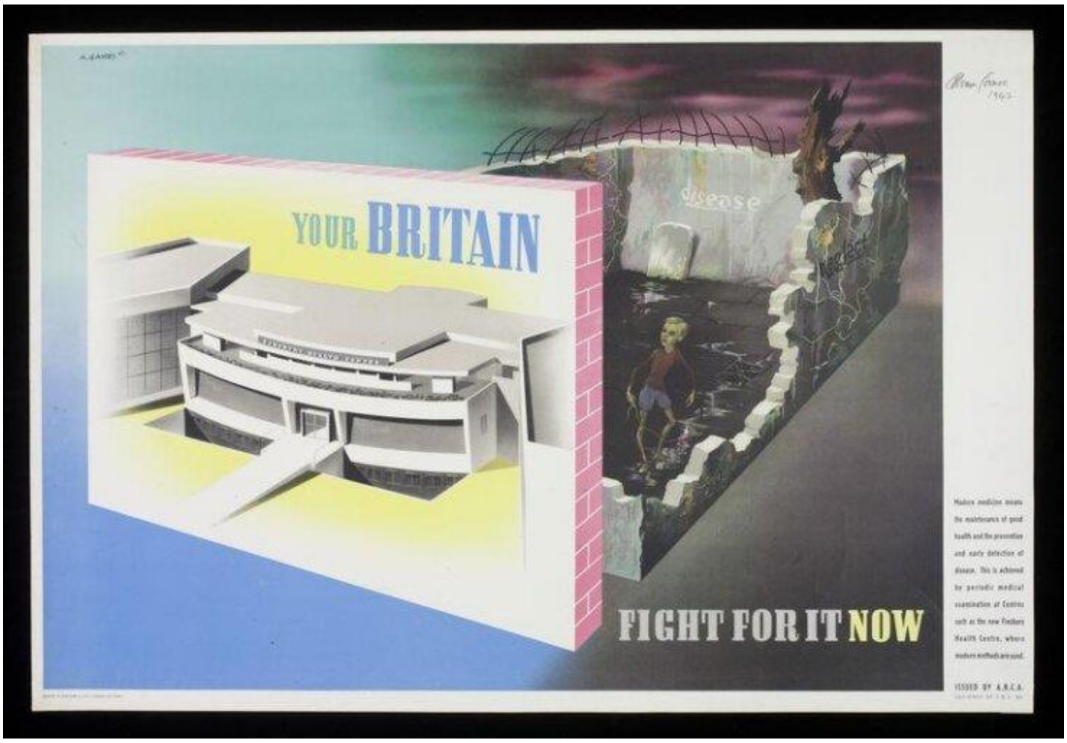
YOUR BRITAIN
disease
neglect
FIGHT FOR IT NOW
Modern medicine means the maintenance of good health and the prevention and early detection of disease. This is achieved by periodic medical examination at Centres such as the new Finsbury Health Centre, where modern methods are used.
ISSUED BY A.B.C.A.

Figure 14: *Your Britain Fight for It Now, Variation* (1942) Abram Games. Collection of the V&A London.

The Great Scar: Getting Rid of the Radical Outside

I suggest that the ‘megaform’ is ideologically directed as an act of visual-aggressivity against nature generally and positions nature in a negative dualism. It scarifies the land into one defensive eye spot against the outside, against the ‘realm of Nature’ as Littler describes it, or against apparent ‘chaos’ as demonstrated in the controlled and managed spaces of ‘architectural landscape.’ This is highlighted also in Kenneth Frampton’s *Megaform as Urban Landscape* (2009). The ‘megaform’ is a colossal expanding building and Frampton defines it thus:

> A form capable of inflecting the existing urban landscape as found because of its strong topographical character…a form that is not freestanding but rather insinuates itself as a continuation of the surrounding topography…a form that is oriented towards a densification of the urban fabric (Frampton, 1999:20).

I propose this as a huge Anthropocene and Keloid scar, motivated by fantasies of domination and resistance and akin to the eye spots of butterfly wings, or fierce scarification (discussed in Chapter 1).

> Vittorio Gregotti asserted…"The origin of architecture is not the primitive hut, but the marking of ground, to establish a cosmic order around the surrounding chaos of nature" now we have made a new nature (Frampton, 1999:42).

The ‘hut’ recalls the primitivism that Littler (2006) sees the supposed civilising post-imperial society, benevolent Britain, will swap for mastery that it can teach to simple natives. An idea of progress that side-lines any insight a foreign or indigenous culture might have in favour of a project directed by architects.

> Megaform – as an element…has the capacity to inflect the surrounding landscape and give it a particular orientation and identity…returning us to a time when the prime object was not the proliferation of freestanding objects but rather the marking of ground (Frampton, 1999:40).

This notion is also observed in Xavier Van Rooyen’s, ‘Megaform versus Open Structure or the Legacy of Megastructure’ (2018) when discussing Superstudio (a group of Italian architects), and the notion of the ‘Continuous Monument’ an idea of fixity par-excellence. Van Rooyen highlights their faith in the ‘creative act’ as an ‘alternative to nature’ and the desire to settle upon a ‘single design’ which would clear away alternatives ‘clarifying once and for all the motives which have induced man to build dolmens, pyramids, and lastly to trace (ultima ratio) a white line in the desert’ (Van Rooyen, 2018:38). See also, ‘Megaform as architectural permanence' (40). While I do not question the role of the building to provide warmth, shelter, and a sense of orientation, or the role of the architect in this, I do question the notion of nature as an entirely malign anti-human 'chaos'. This seems to echo a triumphalist and paranoid domination-based mentality as wrongheaded as the 'mother nature' trope. These are projections onto nature: father to overcome, mother to nurture us.

Both arguments are inverses of one another which depend on man as either an outside invading force upsetting balance; or as a heroic master overcoming limitations placed on him by nature. In either formulation, the contingency of the here and now is not highlighted, and the requirement for change or quick adaptability is lacking. Eternal, lasting, and monumental are the crucial factors, resistance and domination are the motivations with nature and primitivism as the targets. Van Rooyen gestures to the alternatives to 'the static rigidity of the structural grid' (desires for permanence) such as 'dynamic cellularism' which is 'akin to patterns of crystal formations or biological divisions' concerned with time, adaptability and emergence, taking cues from nature at its base. Quoting James Stirling (1957), he emphasises the ways that 'basic geometrical elements' (considered inflexible) are replaced by 'variability found in nature' (2018: 32). Furthermore, he proposes the 'open-structure', which requires a temporal, rather than idealised permanence-based understanding, 'architecture not as a finished object, but as a perennial support enabling temporary appropriations that are sustainable' (Van Rooyen, 2018:39). In this respect see also 'aesthetic of change', 'open form' and 'endless architecture' (49). All those concepts emphasize temporality and change as the key elements, aligning approaches in the 'agon' on the side of flux in opposition to the fixity of the 'megaform'.

That humans are inexorably linked to nature makes the domination of the 'megaform' not offensive, as a rape or imbalance of 'mother nature', but simply a surface illusion of a human mind that believes itself as distinct from nature in ways that are simply deluded, and I suggest amount to no more than a scaled-up termite mound. The 'megaform' is no doubt a 'new nature' and one that we could potentially dominate, but if we did that, I suggest we would be avoiding a relation to reality. 'This technological urbanized region which is the new chaos - but as architects…we still have the same task' (Frampton, 1999:42). Domination, 'the same task', would simply be the equivalent of supremacy over the 'map' in Jean Baudrillard's (1994) allegory from the opening of *Simulacra and Simulation* (see:1,2).

The example is well known, an empire constructs a great map and as the cartographers continue to obsessively work at the map the actual empire crumbles, the people go on living in the map, which has become a monumental simulation of the empire. Baudrillard points out, ‘this imaginary of representation which simultaneously culminates in and is engulfed by the cartographer’s mad project of the ideal coextensivity of map and territory disappears in the simulation’ (1994:2). We may be able to literalise the ‘cartographer’s mad project’ the ‘megastructure’ is a material and literal attempt to do what ‘ideological darkness’ or ‘protective illusion’ do with the use of the frame of landscape. They are ways to set up a false conflict with time that in its own terms heroically pits man’s will against nature.

Whether or not this is an inadvertent result of the drive to provide shelter etc., it is also effectively a way of creating an expanding and eternal interior, the kind which Elizabeth Bowen imagined as destroyed so her protagonist could be free, and the kind which Lewis in *Count Your Dead: They are Alive!* (1937) imagines as a pyramid. ‘Vilfredo Pareto’s theory of a social pyramid with an intellectual clique at its zenith, a structure that echoes Lewis’s later approval of democracy “more like a pyramid, and less like a morass”’ (Miller, 2018:91), and his assertion that ‘hard exact outline, grand architectural proportion, was the greatest art’ (Lewis, 1926:338). Nature is characterised again as the enemy: a damp, slimy, and possibly engulfing, morass.

Tributaries and Themes of the Art Practice

Having outlined these phenomena, I will look at the way I have responded to visual-aggressivity, imperial-modernism, and false universals of Englishness in my art practice. Drawing representations of fixity into a mode of flux, that they resist, encourages the possibility of other meanings emerging beyond the authoritative discourse (dogmatic transfers of information) to which examples of fixity belong.

Anachronism has been a growing feature of my practice. The deliberate use of anachronism or frame-breaking is a post-Barthean device frequently found in writers and artists influenced by semiotics. Two famous examples of anachronism used in this way are Derek Jarman’s film, *Caravaggio* (1986) and John Fowles’ novel *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* (1969). The technique can be understood as a form of authorial intrusion whereby the constructed nature of the artwork is suddenly foregrounded. David Lodge (2011) explains regarding Fowles’ protagonist Charles from *The French Lieutenant’s Woman* ‘his state of mind is described, with deliberate anachronism, as “like a city struck out of a quiet sky by an atom bomb"' (133). Referring to this 'metafiction' Lodge sees anachronism exposing 'the artificiality of historical fiction' going to state that this also foregrounds 'the artificiality of all fiction' (133). Jim Ellis (2014), reflecting on Jarman's use of anachronism, highlights the influence of Caravaggio's practice, where biblical figures were depicted in contemporary dress and indicated as religious figures via association with objects. 'What we get in these works is a layered time or palimpsestic temporality' (377). Ellis points out that objects for Jarman are participants in the drama, adding that Jarman builds on the shock of frame breaking to draw the audience into awareness of artifice as it applies to the presentation of the past (2014, 378). I have utilised the photocopier (fig. 15) as an anachronistic object following Fowel and Jarman, an intruding force that breaks illusionistic frames and encourages the audience to observe more critically. This is different from the affirming propaganda utilised in some of the sources for the work. The Festival of Britain (1951) for example, where history meets modernism, is the antithesis of my project. The festival included design, art, and events. It was conceived as a 'tonic for the nation' (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2020) and illustrates the ways modernist semi-abstraction, graphics, and design were put to work idealising the past and ideas of mythic England (knights, processions, heraldic abstraction).

I am thinking specifically of *Festival of Britain* by Abram Games (1951) (fig. 16) which had various iterations. 'His designs…incorporated heraldic imagery and angular geometry to create a modern portrait of the national character' (Victoria and Albert Museum, 2020). Games, a propaganda artist during the war brought his graphic skills to the publicity for the festival. While nostalgia for this kind of imagery persists, it was problematised at the time. 'Former colonies and Dominions…refused to partake in an event that idealised a modernity that rested only in Britain' (Heinonen 2015:76).

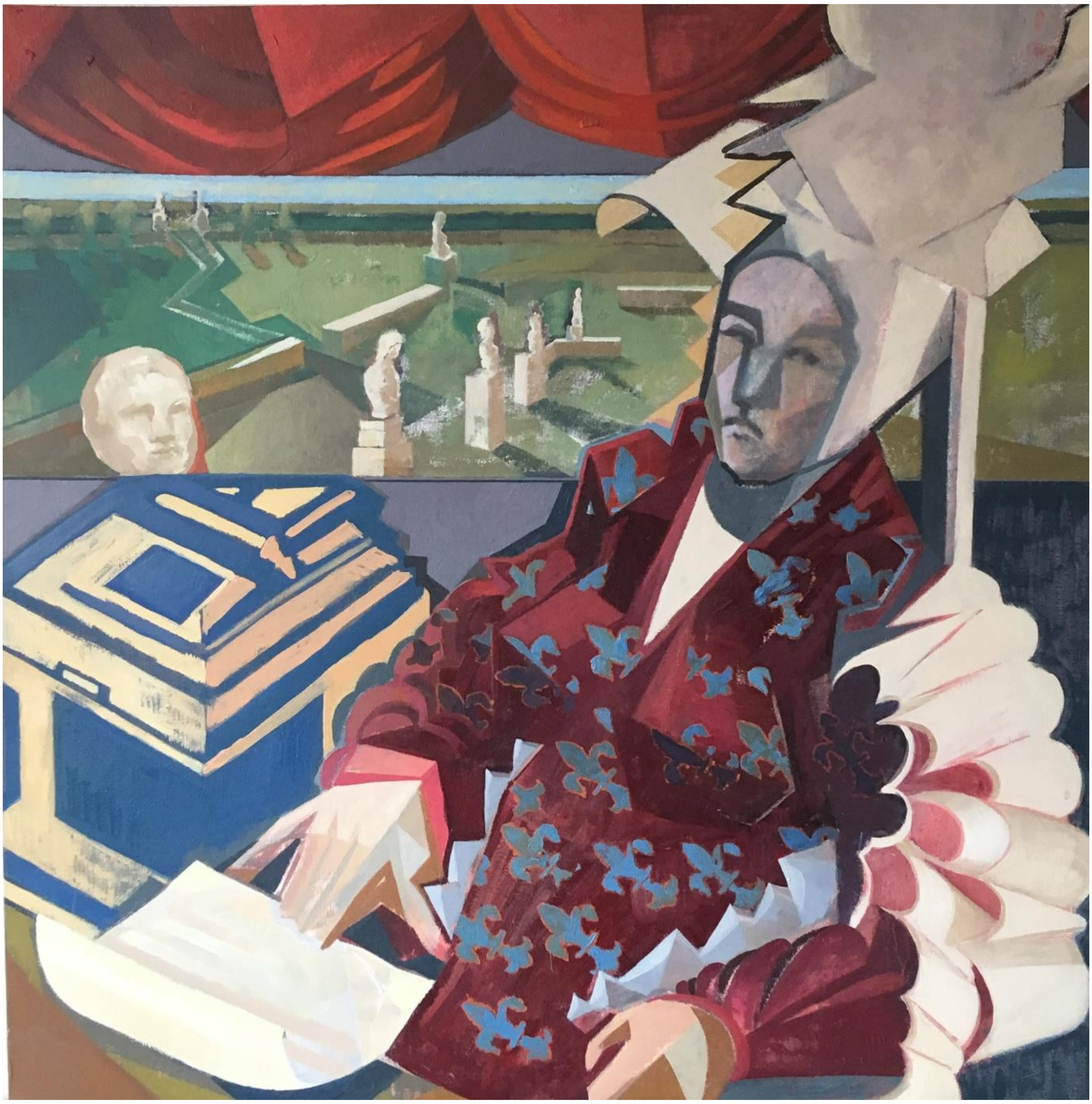

Figure 15: *Lady with Photocopier* (2019) Michael Eden.

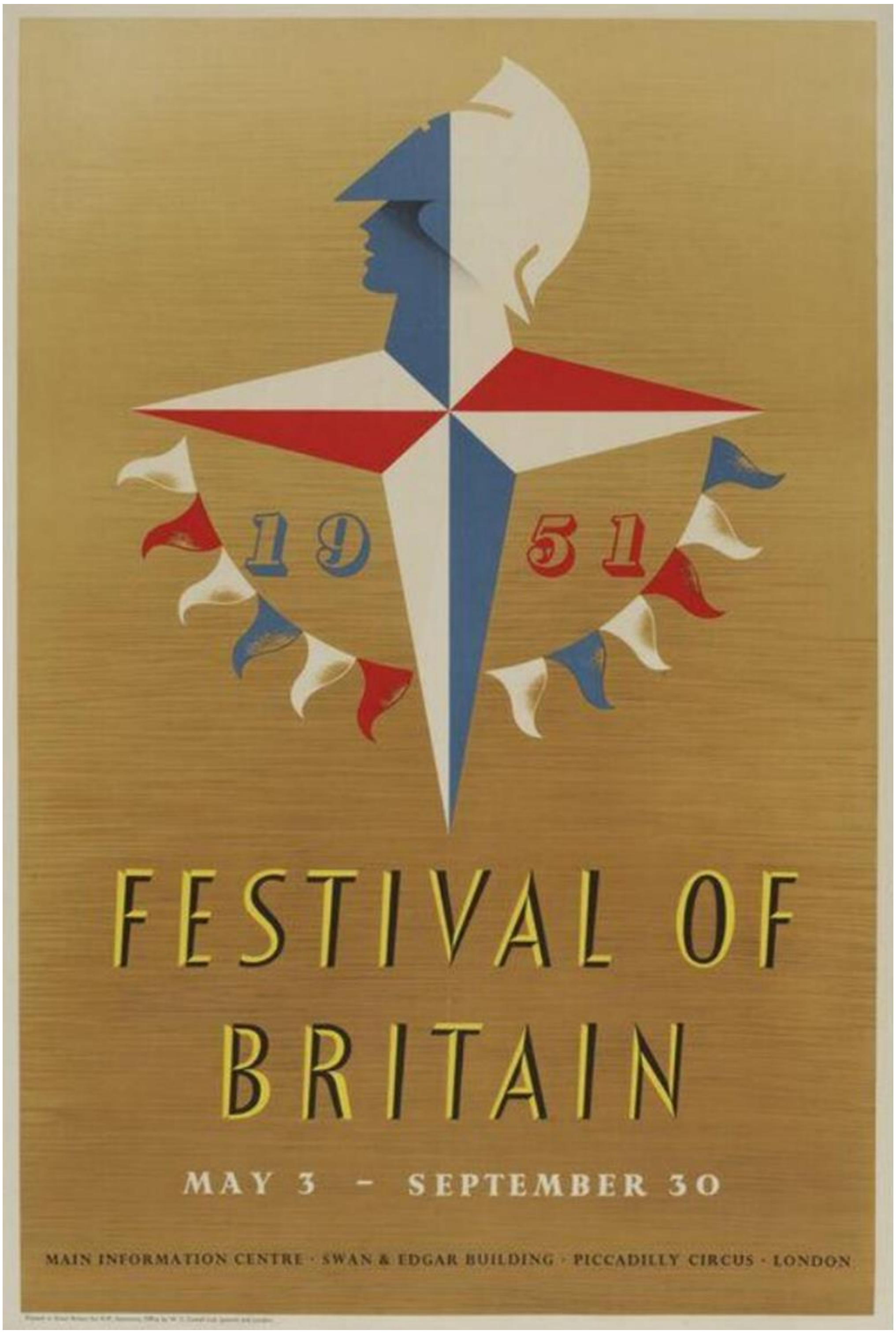
1951
FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN
MAY 3 – SEPTEMBER 30
MAIN INFORMATION CENTRE · SWAN & EDGAR BUILDING · PICCADILLY CIRCUS · LONDON

Figure 16: *Festival of Britain, Poster* (1951) Abram Games, in the Collection of the V&A London.

Approaches in the Practice

Experiencing Kentridge's eclecticism of media – drawing, painting, assemblage, time-based media, and sound – as aspects of immersive shows or experiences, installations as such, has helped to validate my sympathies for heterogeneous practice and bolstered enthusiasm for making 3d constructions and sculpture to expand on established painting methods. Dalwood has been influential on vistas within the picture plane that foreground ideological framing. Kentridge's approach to historic and contemporary ideas, the combination of written and made outputs makes Kentridge an apposite counterforce to Lewis. Viewing Kentridge's work, *I Am Not Me, the Horse is Not Mine*, 2008 (see Barson, 2011) (Tate Modern) was an influential experience and subsequent reading of *Six Drawing Lessons* (Kentridge, 2014) has confirmed the artist as a key model in the development of my studio practice.

Painting: Establishing a Language for the Project

Initially the paintings produced for the project have three categories. Firstly, there are portraits. Their titles reference the Arthurian mythos. Three are specifically named such as *Gawain* (fig. 17), *Dagonet* (fig. 18), or *Morian* (fig. 19), while others have a more general allusion: *Guinevere's Lady* (fig. 20), *Treasurer* (fig. 21), or *Soldier at Court* (fig. 22). The figurative form in the paintings allows me to explore the visual tension between naturalistic and abstract representation, mixing painterly registers as an analogue for the tension between subjectivity and subject-positioning. These portraits are oil on canvas, 70cm by 70cm square and feature the head and shoulders close to the foreground, centrally placed.

Secondly, there are Tyro-paintings: *Sir Percy the Knight of Human Resources* (fig. 23), *Sir Ector* (fig. 24), *Gallahad* (fig. 25), *Red Knight* (fig. 26), *White Bishop* (fig. 27), *Barbershop Boor* (fig. 28) and *Lady with Photocopier* (fig.15). This series constitutes my re-presentation of Lewis's *Tyro* altered by anachronistic references and combined with background vistas that draw on various historic periods, nostalgia, and the pastoral landscape tradition (with its otherwise managed or controlled spaces). *Galahad* (fig. 25) for example includes an overbearing form in the foreground. This *Tyro* is formed by conflating the figure with machinery, aspects of a World War II helmet with a colonial moustache, a knight in the mode of an automaton. For these references to function some development of form is necessary, through simple drawings and recourse to secondary images. These figures of supposed power (generals, managers, knights) retain references to the *Tyro* via morphed or surrealistically formed grins, vorticist forms, and via an emphasis on their armoured surfaces. There are frequent visual references to stratified society (positioning the viewer before a desk, hierarchies of buildings, and the inclusion of automata or dehumanised workers as a contrast with overbearing *Tyro* figures). These paintings are all oil on canvas, 1m by 1m square.

Thirdly, there are large format landscape paintings such as *Temporal Landscape I* and *II* (fig. 29 and fig. 30). These are my attempts to represent time in the painting. They utilise chance via pouring, folding, and unfolding, and in contrast to the portraits and Tyro-paintings they are not planned. They are improvised from memory and painted ‘with no overall plan in mind’ (Krauss in Gehman and Reinke, 2005: 98) as a negotiation with each application of paint, reacting immediately to what went before. This is a form of practice that Krauss observes in Kentridge’s making, which she reads as ‘at all times complete and at all times in flux since…he moves across the floor to make an infinitesimal modification in its surface, only then to retreat’ (Krauss in Gehman and Reinke, 2005:98). I would similarly ‘retreat’ to contemplate the next move when improvising, which inevitably becomes more focused and ‘infinitesimal’ as the work progresses. Krauss recalls Kentridge referring to this as ‘stalking’, describing Kentridge ‘walking backwards and forwards…raising, shifting, adapting the image’ (98). These landscapes have references to fauna, rock, and land formations as well as weather events, factors which litter the canvas, to my mind as collapsed attempts to frame nature, making up a wasteland of barely adequate forms. They are densely layered, utilising oil and household paints to increase the unpredictability of the outcomes and accelerated drying (via a heat gun) further enables that.

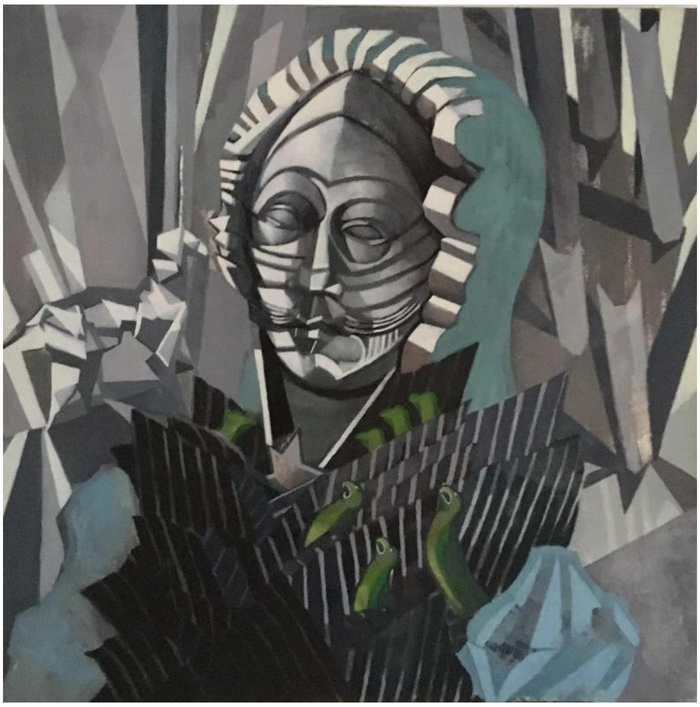

Figure 17*: Gawain* (2019) Michael Eden.

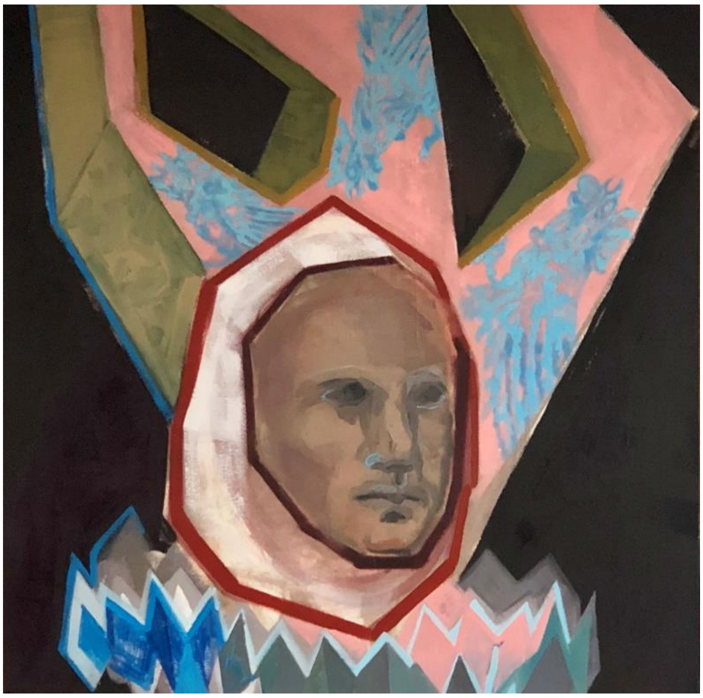

Figure 18: *Dagonet* (2019) Michael Eden.

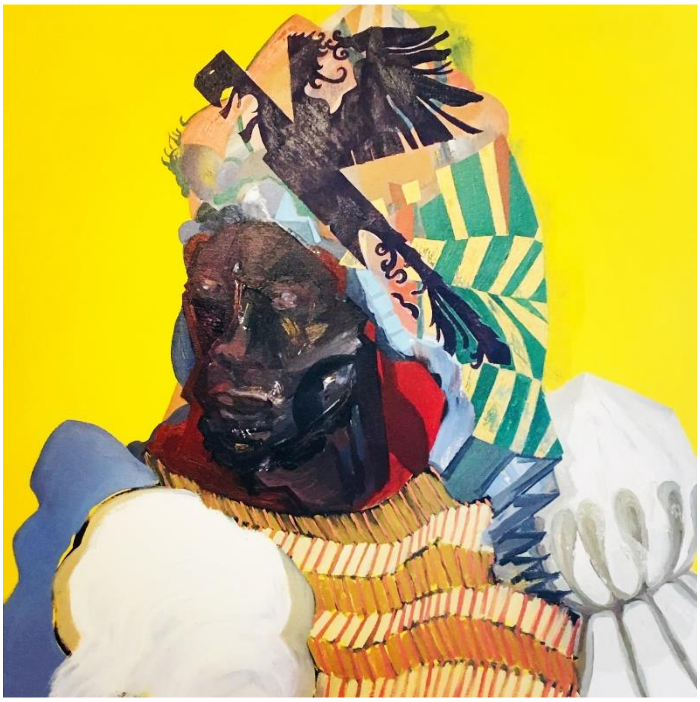

Figure 19: *Morian* (2019) Michael Eden.

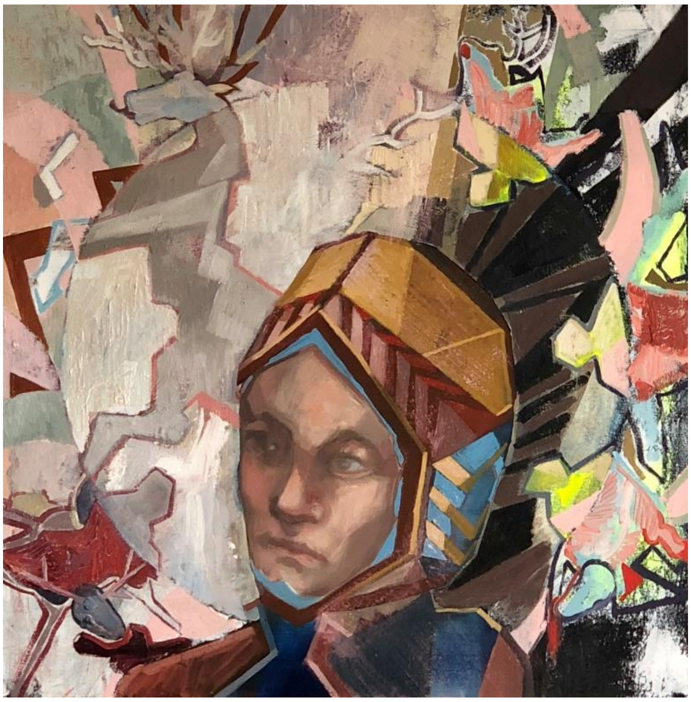

Figure 20: *Guinevere's Lady* (2019) Michael Eden.

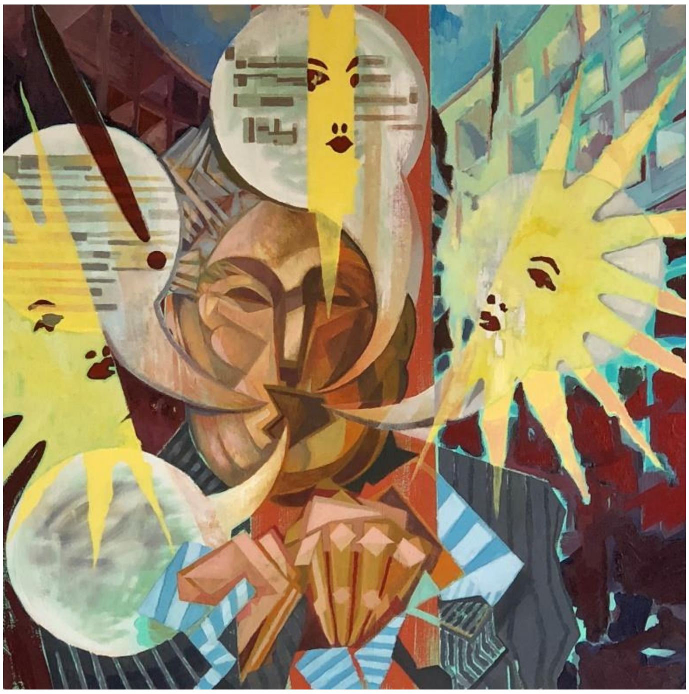

Figure 21: *Treasurer* (2019) Michael Eden.

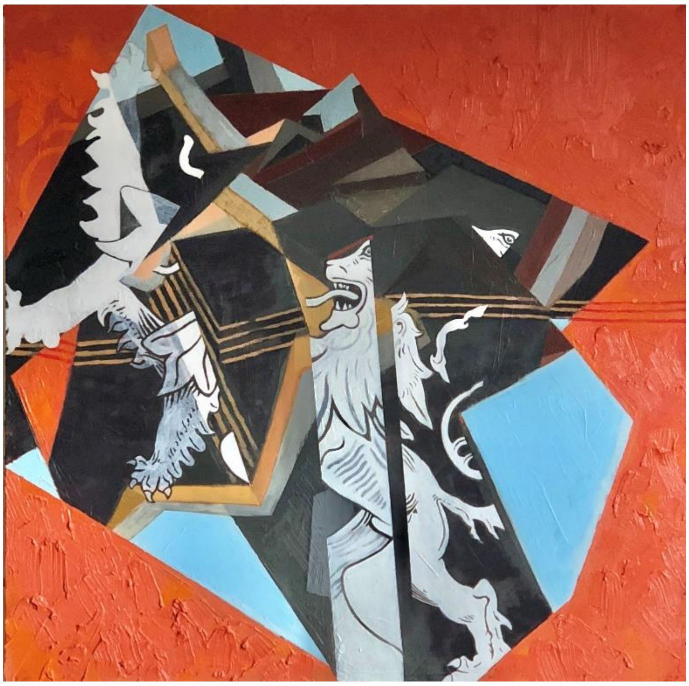

Figure 22: *Soldier at Court* (2018) Michael Eden.

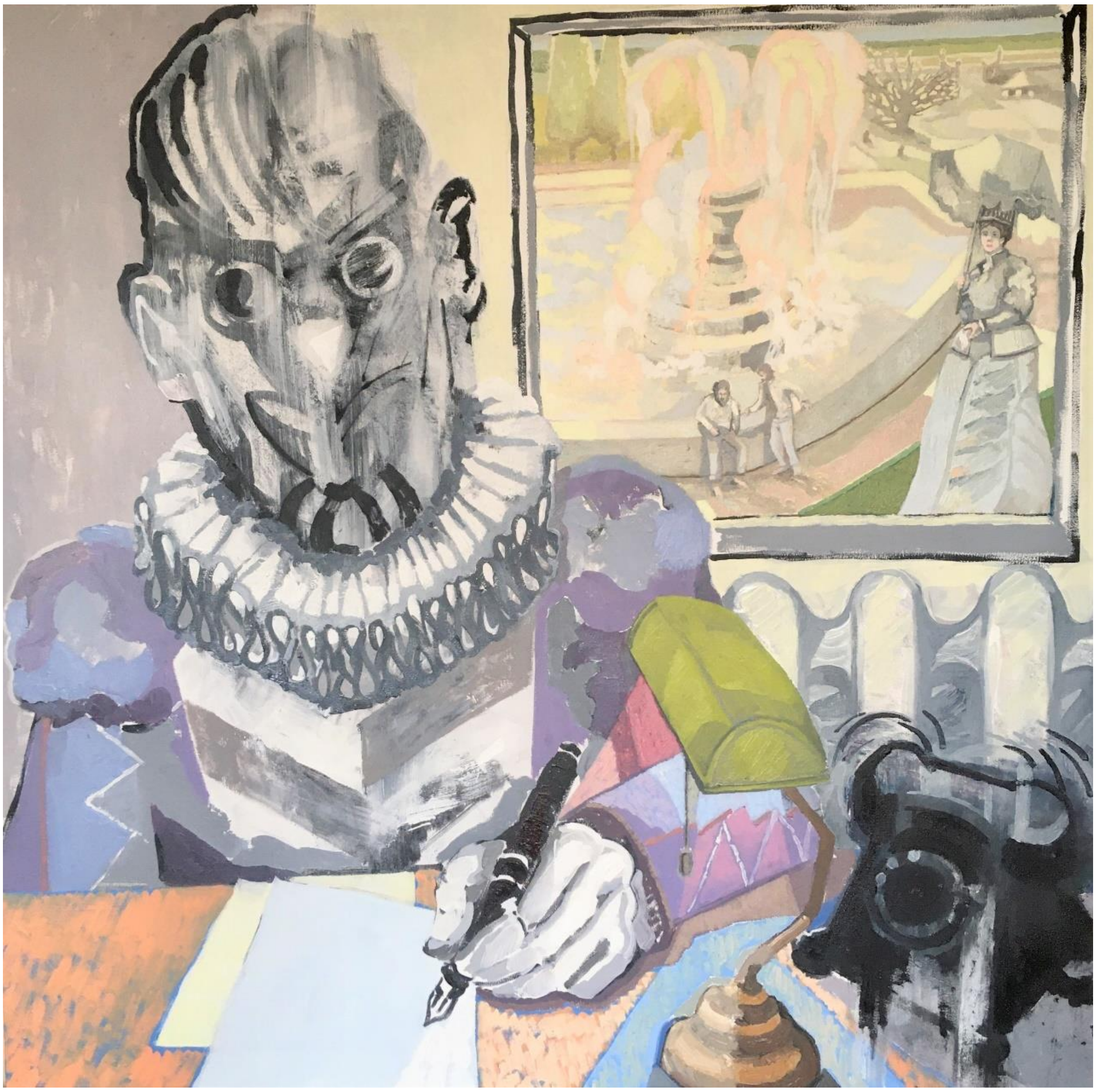

Figure 23: *Sir Percy the Knight of Human Resources* (2021) Michael Eden.

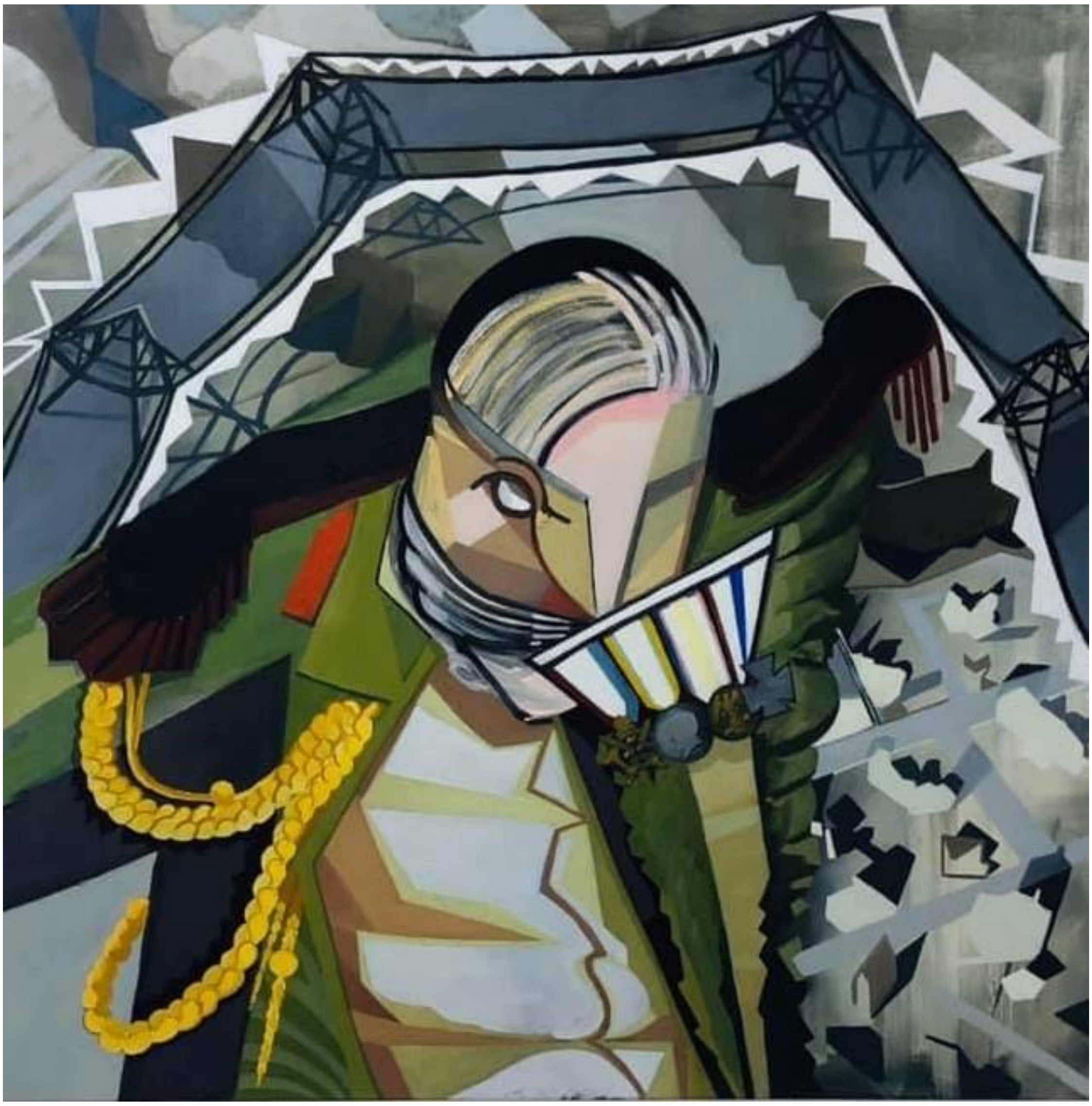

Figure 24: *Sir Ector* (2019) Michael Eden.

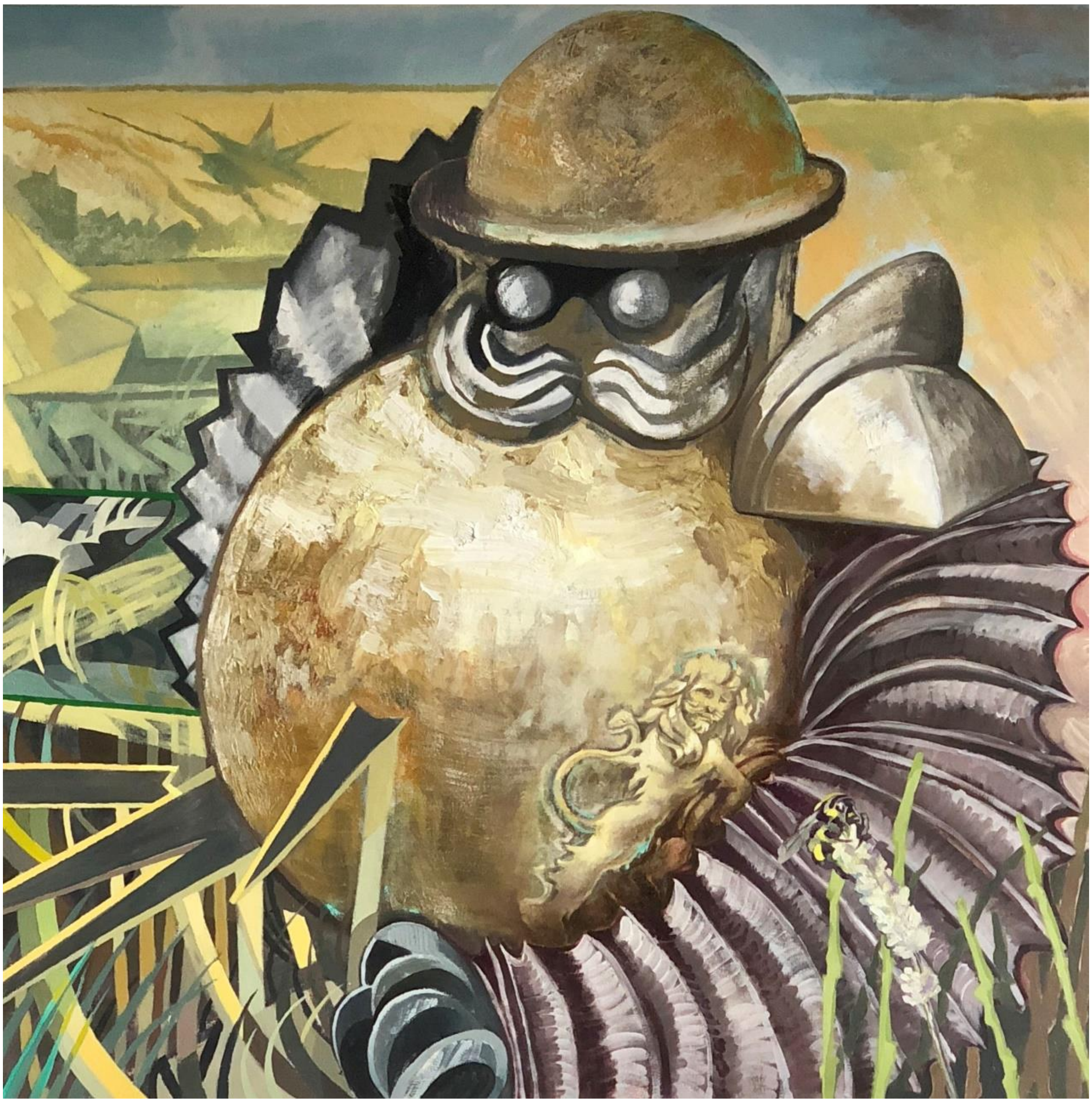

Figure 25: *Gallahad* (2018) Michael Eden.

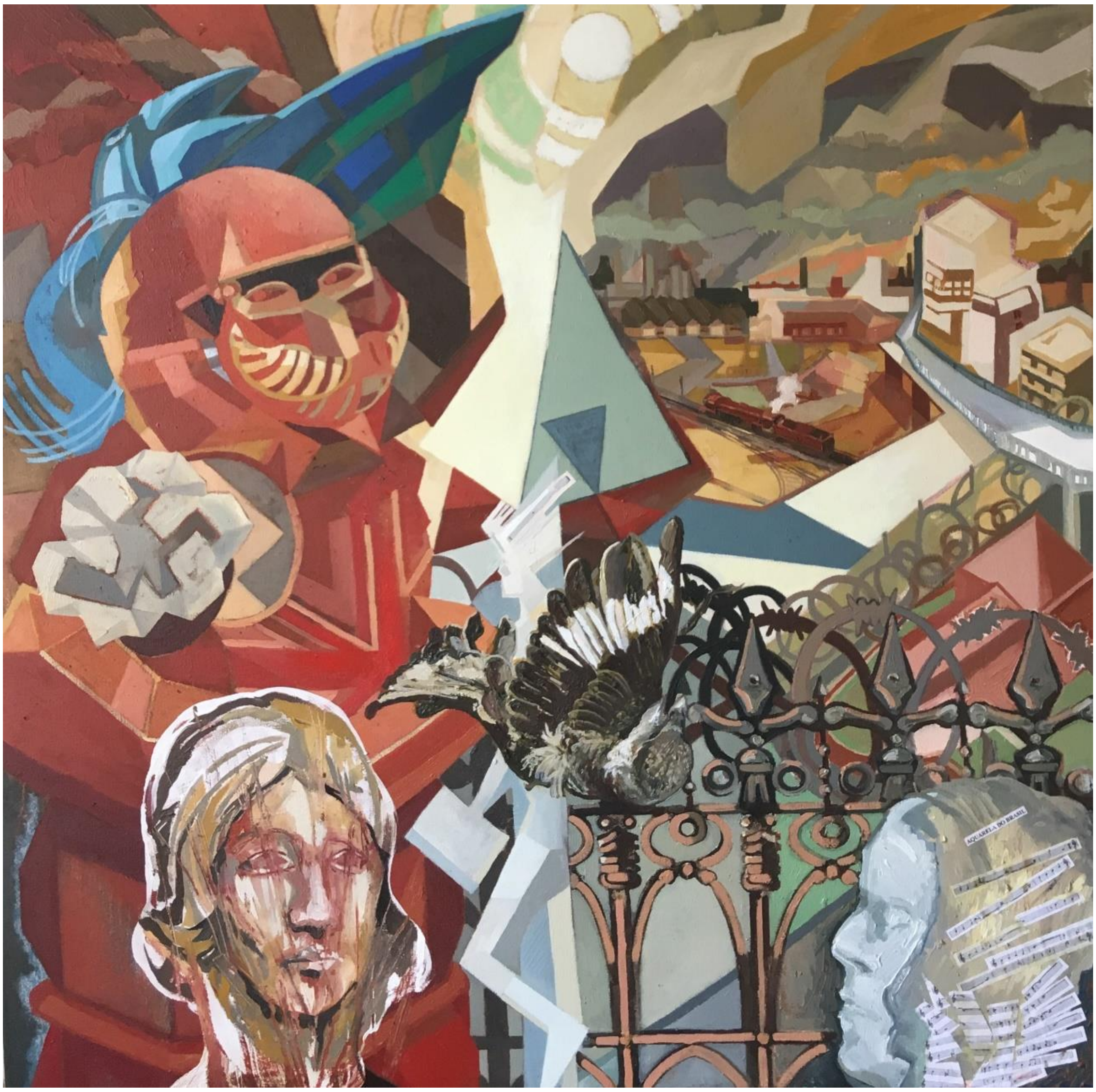
AQUARELA DO BRASIL

Figure 26: *Red Knight* (2020) Michael Eden.

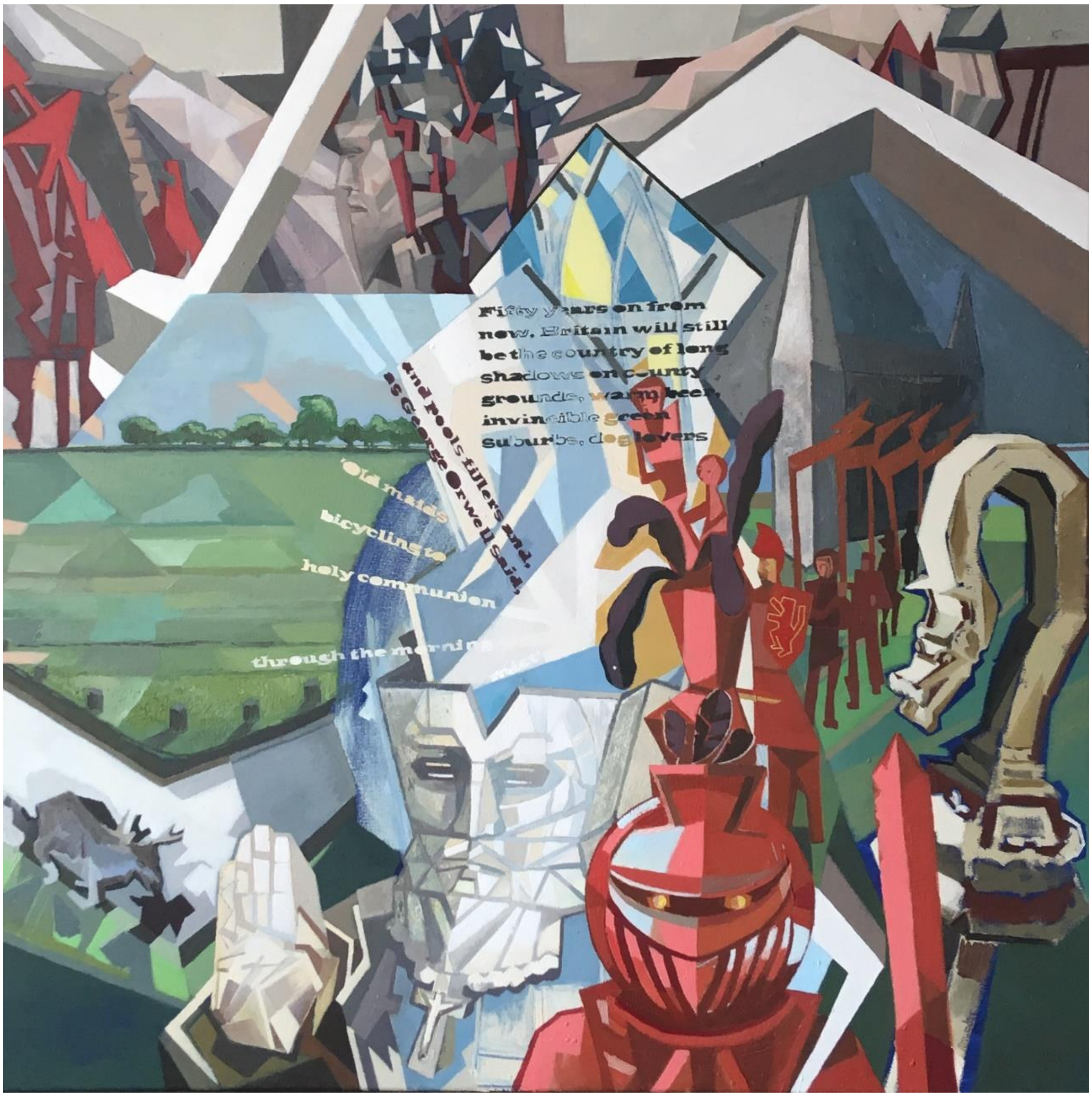
Fifty years on from
now, Britain will still
be the country of long
shadows on county
grounds, warm beer,
invincible green
suburbs, dog lovers
and pools fillers and,
as George Orwell said,
'Old maids
bicycling to
holy communion
through the morning
mist'

Figure 27: *White Bishop* (2019) Michael Eden.

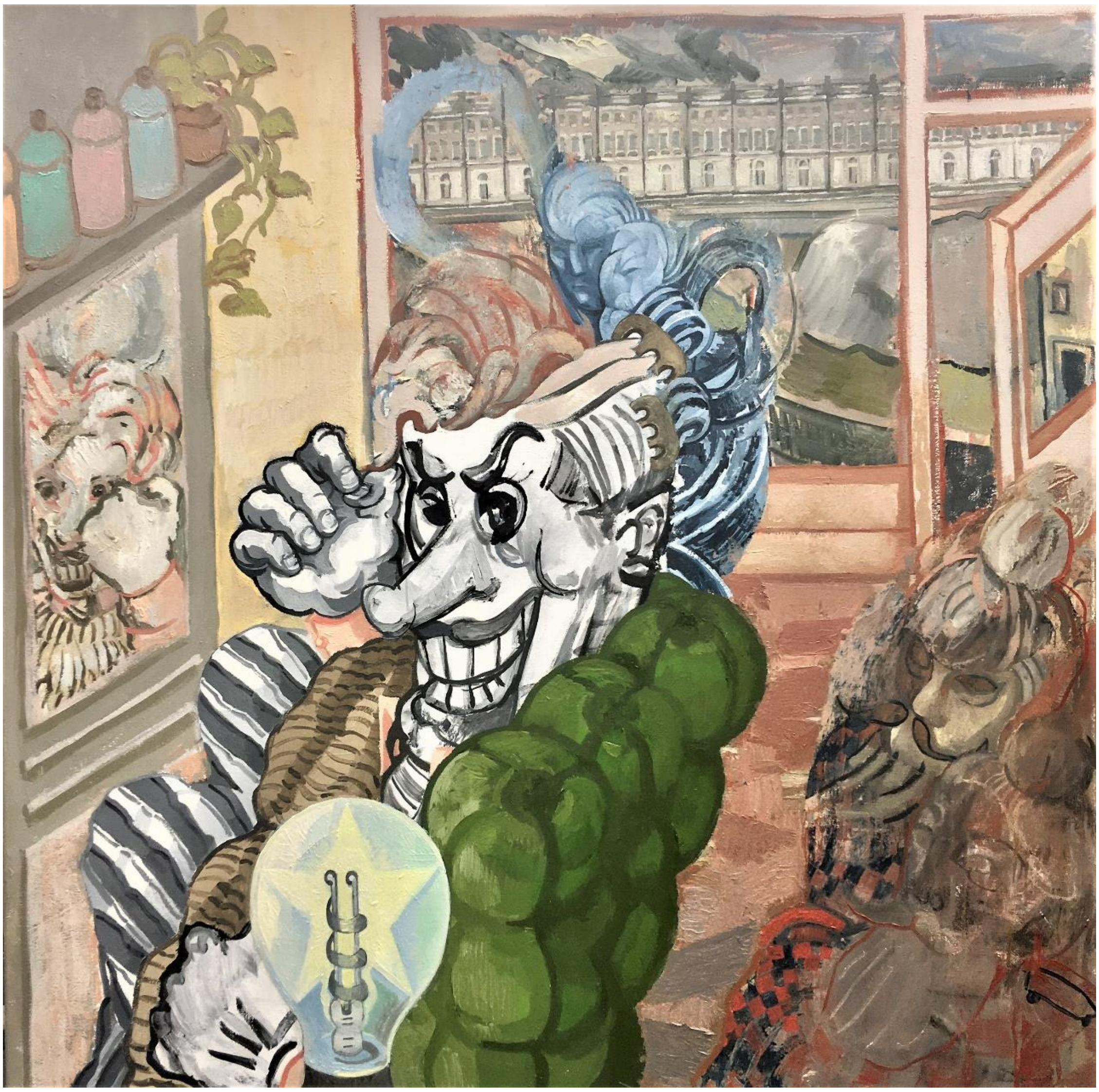

Figure 28: *Barbershop Boor* (2022) Michael Eden.

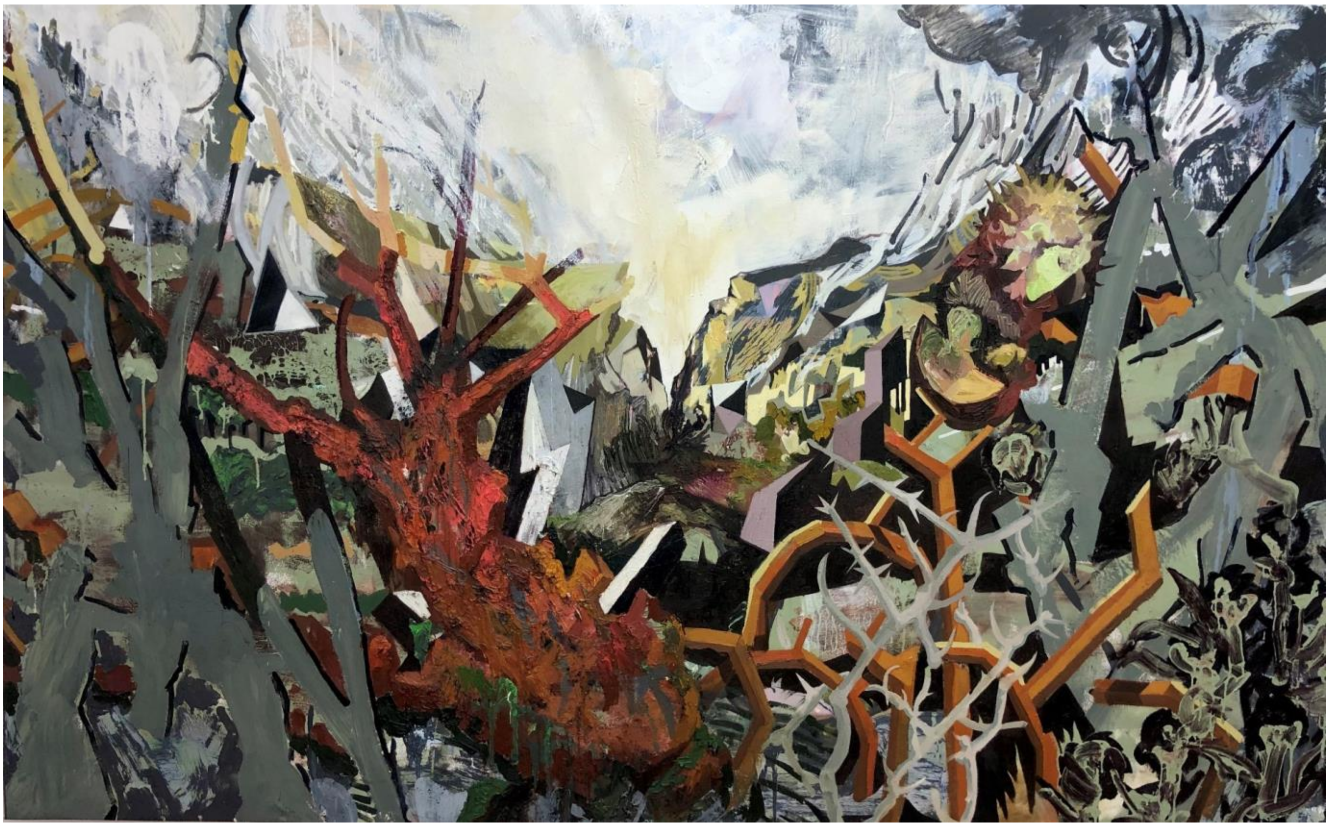

Figure 29: *Temporal Landscape I* (2020) Michael Eden.

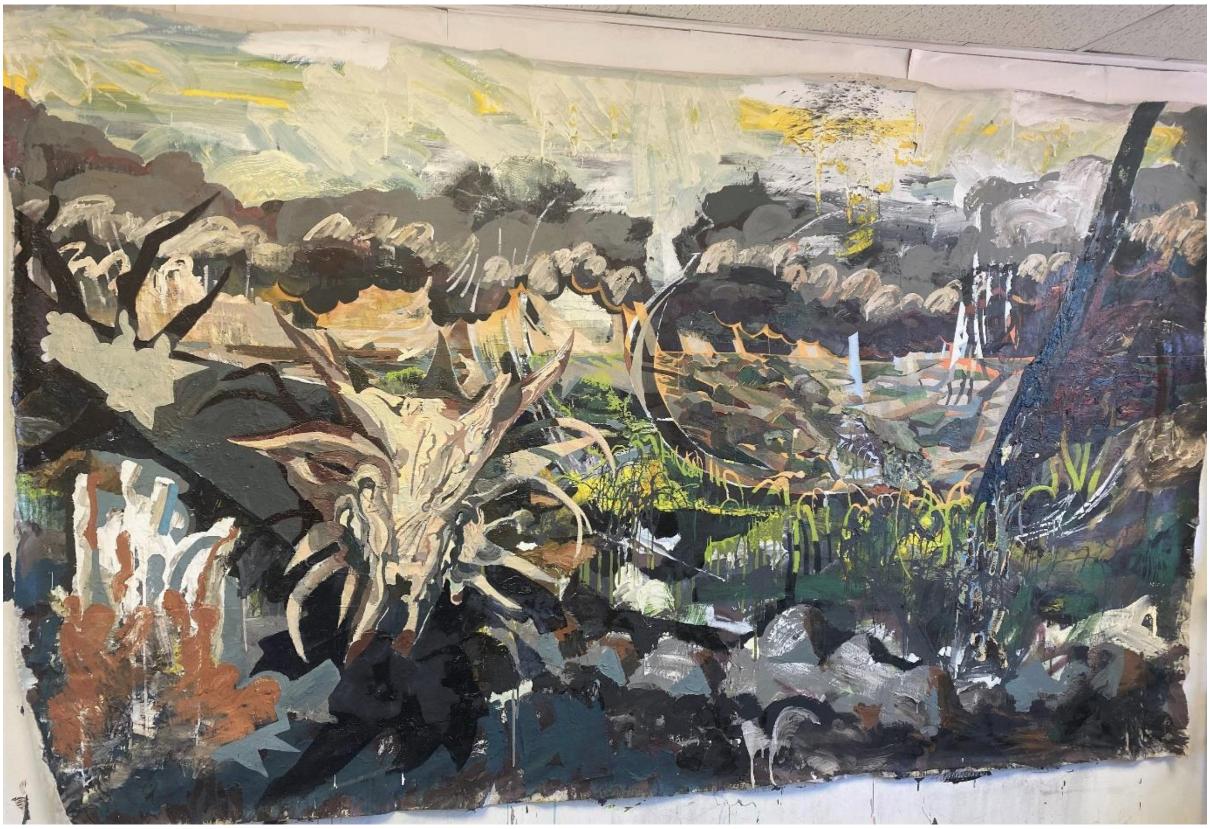

Figure 30: *Temporal Landscape II (studio shot)* (2020) Michael Eden.

Over-orthodoxy: Re-presenting Ideology in Visual Works

The following pieces of writing have been identified for inclusion into visual works: an excerpt of a letter from Ludwig von Mises regarding Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* (1957), a quote from Richard II dated 1381 from the close of the Peasants Revolt (Saul, 1999), and an excerpt from a speech by John Major to the Conservative Group for Europe 1993 (Sir John Major KG CH, 2020) (fig. 27).

Written text has been incorporated following the style of *The Festival of Britain* (1951) discussed above and according to Games' poster design. The use of various text is employed much like any other iconography; the text has meaning and must be read, understood, and interpreted. Further to this it helps to link the *Tyro* to the work, a figure first appearing in magazine publications and later depicted as reading (see *A Reading of Ovid*, 1920-21). In my *Tyro*-inspired constructions (fig. 36, fig. 37) the use of monochrome, the shape, and positioning of the figures references typology, so text is present as a symbol with resonances to communication, instruction, and language in general. Additionally, the inclusion of text is meant to aid in a feeling of over-orthodoxy: '[the] Ruling ideology can only function if it doesn't say it all…but Ayn Rand goes to the end… [Becoming] an embarrassment for the ruling ideology. Precisely by bringing out its secret perverse core' (Žižek, 2014).

The quality that Žižek attributes to Rand is also what Jameson sees in Lewis (1979:21). This 'over orthodoxy' prompted the economist Ludwig von Mises in a letter in 1958 to praise Rand's work *Atlas Shrugged* (1957). 'You have the courage to tell the masses what no politician has told them: you are inferior and all the improvements in your conditions which you simply take for granted you owe to the efforts of men who are better than you' (Mises, in Burns, 2009:177). A simple statement from which a perverse core of superiority, elitism, and atomised separation can be understood: great people make themselves and do so in spite of the masses. The choice of that piece of text chimes with another much older statement of Richard II at the close (and defeat) of the Peasants Revolt (1381).

> You wretches, detestable on land and sea; you who seek equality with lords are unworthy to live. Give this message to your colleagues. Rustics you were and rustics you are still: you will remain in bondage not as before but incomparably harsher. For as long as we live, we will strive to suppress you, and your misery will be an example in the eyes of posterity (Richard II c. 1381, Saul, 1999:74).

The display of written text helps to draw a line between these sentiments, both embarrassing and perverse in the denial of collective endeavour, community, and interdependence, and both overtly and vengefully hierarchical. In 1993 John Major evoked an equally perverse, but entirely less violent sentiment (at least at the surface). His contribution was more like the 'ideological darkness' highlighted by Mitchell (2009).

> Fifty years from now Britain will still be the country of long shadows on county grounds, warm beer, invincible green suburbs, dog lovers and pools fillers and – as George Orwell said – "old maids bicycling to Holy Communion through the morning mist" (Sir John Major KG CH, 2020).

This vision of England, hopelessly antiquated and wholly unrealistic, is a vision of an idyll. This attitude uses a similar strategy as that discussed by Mitchell (2009) concerning Clark (see introduction). There, Mitchell is referring to an 'ideological, and political darkness that covers itself with precisely the sort of innocent idealism Clark expresses' (6). We find this expressed also in the architectural ideology of Poundbury (Prince Charles's antiquated faux-Georgian village in Dorset), an example of English nostalgia, driven directly by 'Charles's theories' (Evans et al., 2007:222), This is another vision seemingly 'innocent', but with a clear 'patrician vernacular' (Guillery, 2017:13), a sensibility which is authoritarian and steeped in similarly nationalistic affirmation such as those evident in Major's speech (1993), The Festival of Britain (1951) and, as Mitchell observes, Kenneth Clark's *Landscape into Art* (1949). Robins offers a robust analysis of this position referring to Poundbury and Prince Charles' 'personal vision'.

> The revival and re-enchantment of our rich national heritage…his invocation of so-called traditional and spiritual values is again intended to restore the sense of British community and confidence that has collapsed...This prevailing concern with the comforts and continuities of historical tradition and identity reflects an insular and narcissistic response to the breakdowns of Britain (Robins, 2007:15-16).

Robins uses the term 'protective illusion' and 'imperial illusion' to describe this strategy. Confronting these post-imperial symptoms, he evokes the psychoanalytic notion of 'stable disillusionment' and sees this process as one which requires 'bruising encounters with the otherness of external reality' (16). For Robins, 'otherness' and specifically that of other cultures is key, specifically how we comport ourselves in those relations. My focus has been on the otherness within Englishness itself, evoking the GK and Gawain's failed quest as an 'other' myth, entirely unaffirming to nationalistic illusions, existing at the very time of Englishness's solidification and one very much used as a symbolic bearer of external reality in the form of temporal nature. These texts help to understand ‘over-orthodoxy’ as it combines with a specific ‘imperial illusion’.

Constructions: Surfaces Without Interiors (The Knight as Monster)

My constructions are concerned with the representation of power and subject-positions, they are figurative and have taken three distinct forms: Gawain himself, a flawed, but potentially redeemable subject; the *Tyro*-stand as a representative of Arthur’s court which serves as a perverse Greek chorus (giving a wry smile to the viewer); finally, the *Tyro*-knight which conflates the idea of chivalric power with the monstrous aspects of the *Tyro*.

Gawain Sleeping in Armour (2020) (fig. 31) is an empty suit of armour utilising the iconography developed in my paintings: imperial moustache, interconnecting steel rings (fig. 17), and anthropomorphised machinery. It was conceived following observations of insect carapaces, specifically the woodlouse to present a shell-like form and undercut its otherwise fierce presentation (larger than life-size, steel protrusions), by informing the head and back in reference to a benign and commonplace insect (a deflationary gesture like the worker bee in *Galahad*, fig. 25). Furthermore, the figure is recumbent, recalling a moment in the poem where Gawain is vulnerable and where he is reliant on his armour for warmth (Armitage, 2007:38). It is a sympathetic presentation that contrasts the overt idealisation of his actual armouring-up at court (where he is constructed as if a machine).

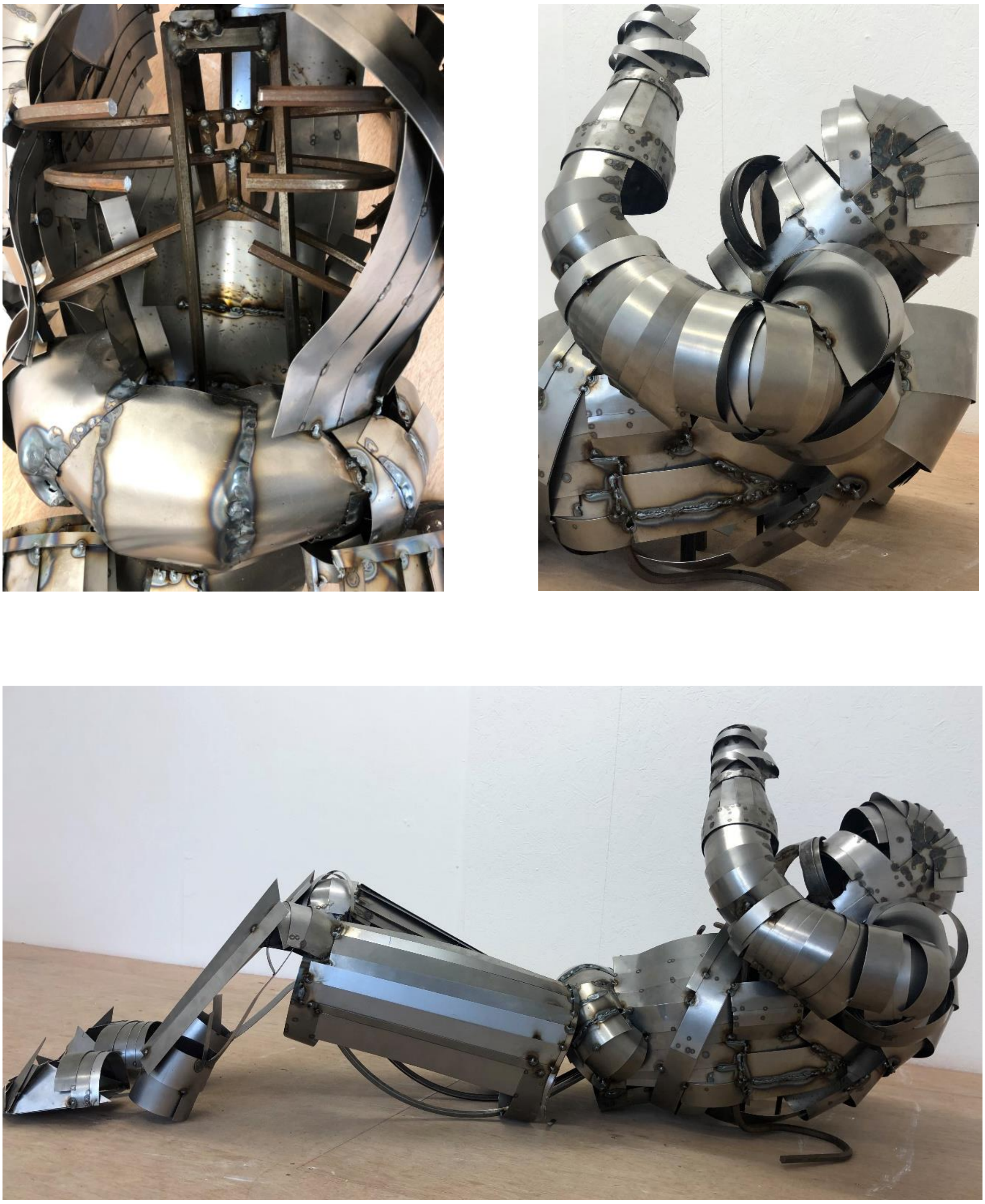

Figure 31: *Gawain Sleeping in Armour* (with details) (2020) Michael Eden.

The notion of surface pertinent in the project is emphasized in the hollow aspect of the armour conflated with skeletal aspects and a central cavity. The work is influenced by *Rock Drill* (1913), an example discussed in my research (in Chapter 4), and by Calvino's description of Agilulf in *The Nonexistent Knight* (1959), who is a reverberating voice and will inhabiting a set of armour. The construction was made from three main components. Firstly, rectangular lengths of 2mm mild steel and intersecting circles of mild steel, finished by bending and joining the ends with a spot-welder, the use of which allowed for scar-like joins to be made around the torso, welding and crushing sheets of steel together. All evidence of making is retained to highlight the duality of body and armour, scar and form.

The most important decision in making this work was the choice of simplistic components, allowing for playful whim in construction (doing it as you go along). With this I intended to recall childhood play and making with Lego or Meccano (construction toys). The result is a tension between the grandiose intentionality, depicting a recumbent knight (in the round) tossing and turning in his sleep while traveling to his death for the sake of honour, and the reality of a large construction that might have been scaled up from a child's output. This is not to say that the piece was made ironically, but in trying to make the work using what skill I have, the result is an object that is at once grand and ridiculous, a position which I claim as a result. The piece is modular, the head and gauntlets are removable for display separately and the torso detaches from the legs increasing the potential for transport and display in a range of settings. The cavity serves as a space to incorporate an object (glass has been considered) and where lighting and sound could be housed for display purposes.

Rosalind Krauss in her essay, on *The Head and the Load* by William Kentridge (2018), is useful in understanding the intentionality that motivated my construction. *The Head and the Load* is an animated projection regarding forgotten black workers, played out on a palimpsest (a collage of newspaper cuttings and war reports that Kentridge has drawn on provides the backdrop) (fig. 33). This work is typical of Kentridge's historical rethinking. It centres on the 'conscription of Africans into the colonial armies fighting in World War I' (Krauss 2019: 171). Krauss's consideration is useful in respect of the representation of dehumanisation.

> How to create the chaotic scene of an army at war? Kentridge formulates two ways: the mechanization of the human body into surging weapons and the layering of figures into the density of troops. Corporal mechanization is achieved by live, whirling bodies bent into the openings of metallic protrusions, like the conic speakers of gramophone players (Krauss, 2019: 171).

Krauss places Kentridge's strategies alongside Picabia and Picasso; specifically, the use of anthropomorphised objects and readymade editions to figurative works. The emphasis as she sees it is on collective degradation: 'Layering then coagulates the bodies into the surge of troop movement'. Here I see resonance with my attempts. However, I have placed an emphasis on the atomised individual in my larger Tyro-paintings and constructions. Discussing Kentridge's representation of dehumanised bodies, Krauss uses the term 'mechanamorphic' (2019:175) a term that I appropriate for the constructions and Tyro-paintings. Krauss describes the Africans 'impressed into the labour of transporting weapons' (175), ill-equipped, unsung, and forgotten; at least part of Kentridge's purpose is redemptive: their 'anonymity [is] cancelled at last' (175).

If Kentridge's 'mechanamorphic' figures (fig. 32-35) suffer from the abjection that comes from a lack of agency – that which is done to them – then, *Gawain Sleeping in Armour* (2020) and the *Tyro*-stands and knights are concerned with the abjection that the subject does to itself with power; hollowed out, ridged, and excoriated into fierce, but nevertheless wounded and ridiculous figures.

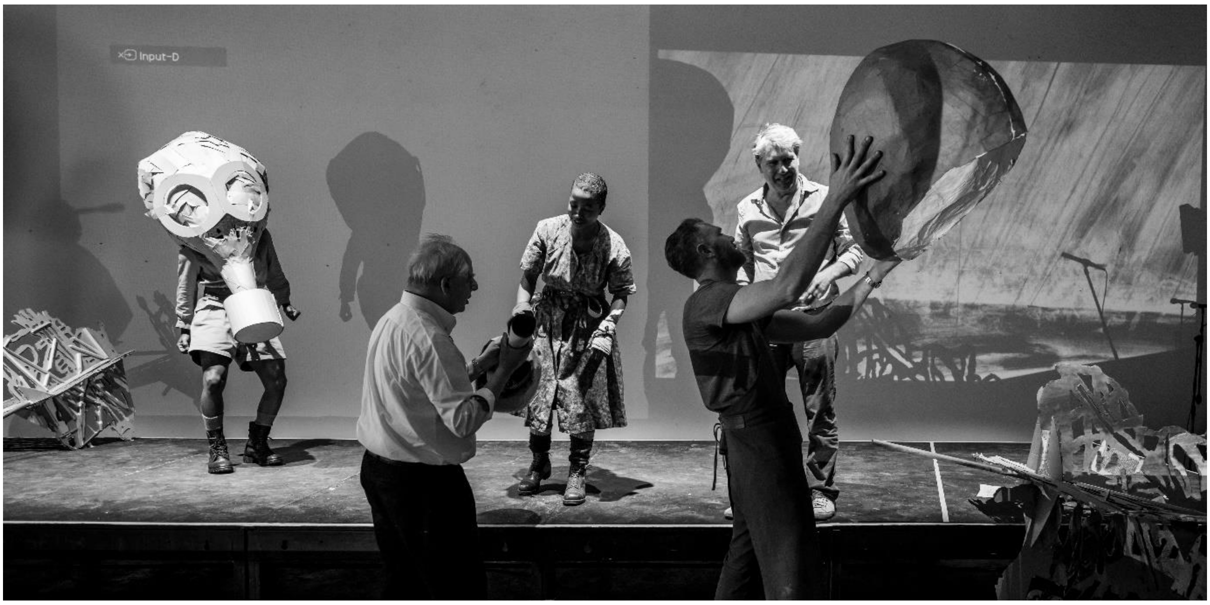

Figure 32: *Head and the Load, Workshop Shots Featuring Kentridge* (2018). Image courtesy of photographer Stella Olivier.

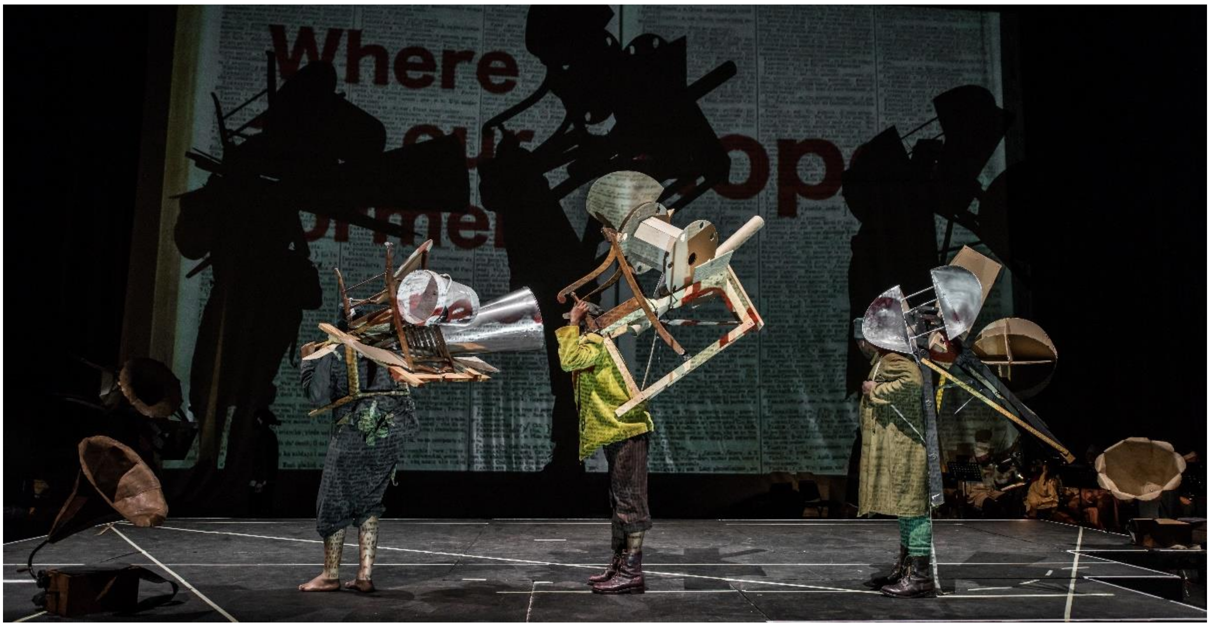

Figure 33: *Head and the Load, Tate Stills* (2018). Image courtesy of photographer Stella Olivier.

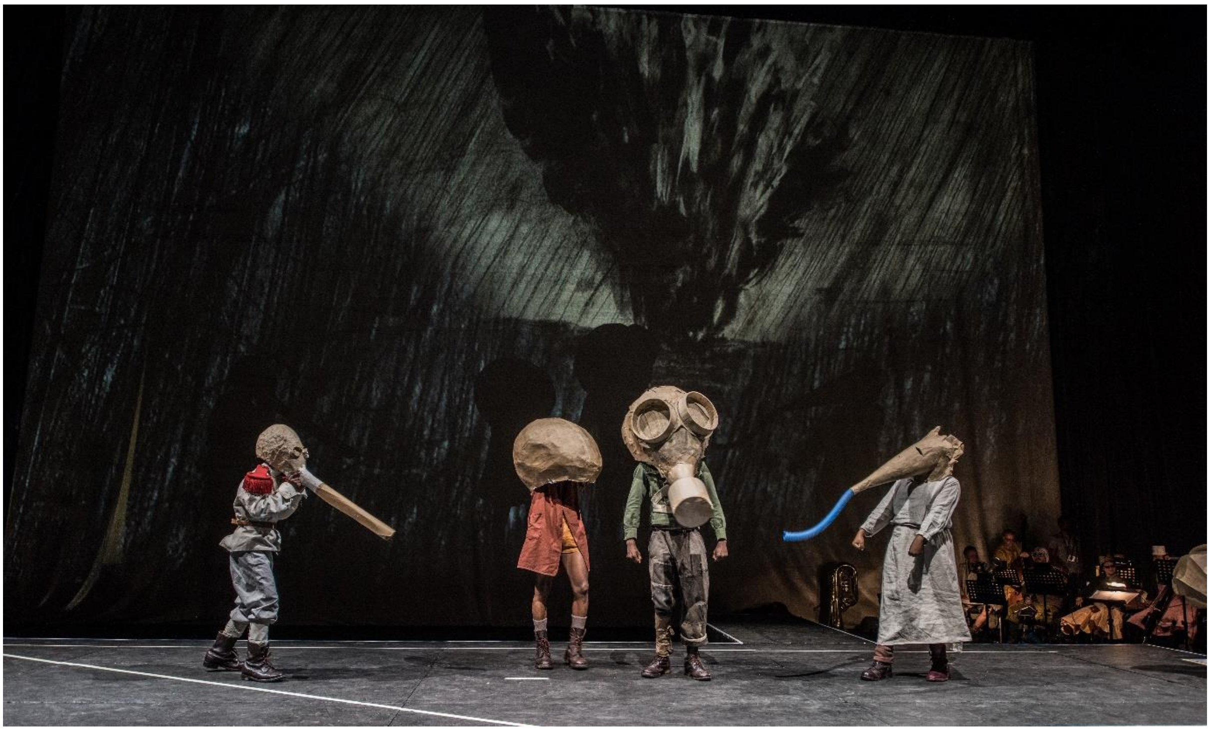

Figure 34: *Head and the Load, Tate Stills* (2018). Image courtesy of photographer Stella Olivier.

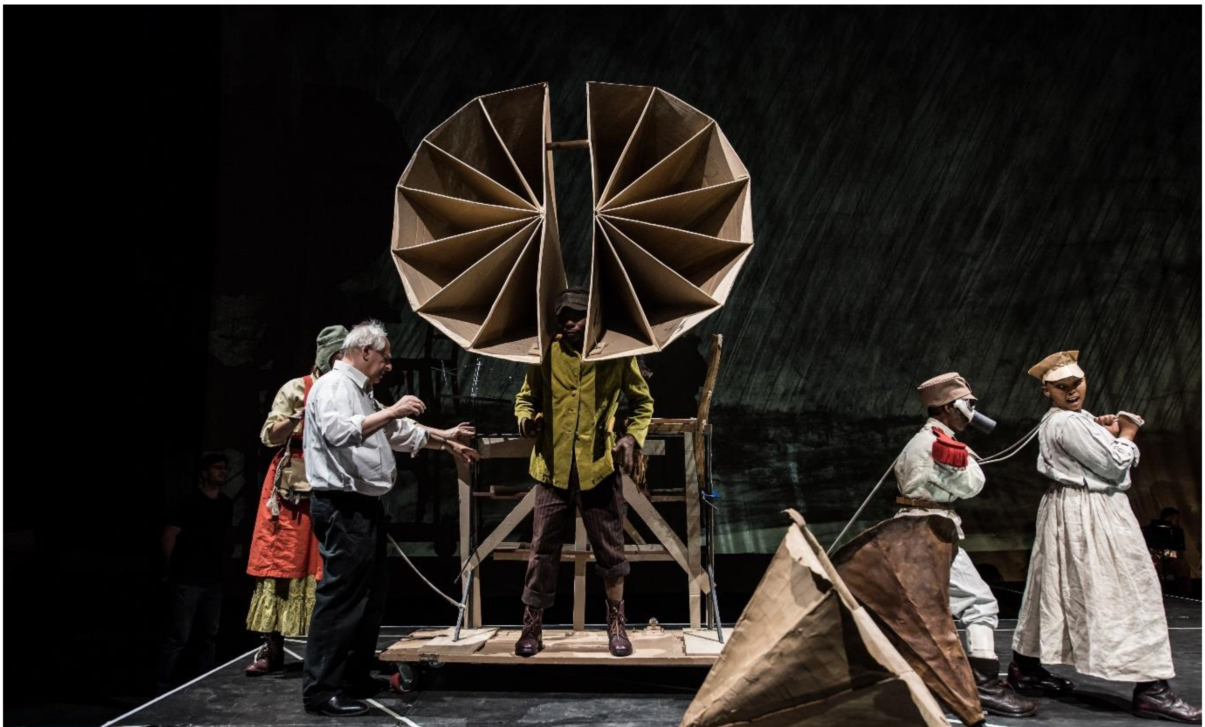

Figure 35: *Head and the Load, Tate Stills Featuring Kentridge Directing* (2018). Image courtesy of photographer Stella Olivier.

The *Tyro*-stands (fig. 36, fig. 37) I conceived as simplified figures potentially carrying or propping up other objects (the portrait paintings were considered, or representations of the architectural landscape). They are monsters in the way that Lewis intended the *Tyro,* ‘more royal than the king’ (Edwards, 2000:558), actualisations of an essentialist kernel of man (to Lewis’s mind): aggressive, predatory, and self-knowing, intended here to embody an ‘over-orthodoxy’ (Žižek, 2014).

The idea of these stands being separate identities, *Tyros*, which carry the figures about occurred while studying Mitchell’s (2009) exposition of painter Augustus Earle (discussed later) and Kentridge (2014, 3-32), specifically concerning his exploration of Plato’s Cave and the metaphor of the shadows on the wall. The idea of a flawed society powered by illusions that should be done away with is a notion present in Plato’s original work, one which Kentridge questions through works such as *Shadow Procession* (1999) and his Norton Lectures (2012).

Plato’s allegory presents prisoners seeing shadows cast by passers-by and in the specific context of their prison perceiving these as a substantial life world. Kentridge questions the rightness of this contrast. The world of shadows and the real ‘utopian’ alternative proposed by Plato (see Plato, Spens and Garnett, 1911). As such the ironic presentation by the Tyro-stand of paintings or other objects, indicated by their maniacal grin, is meant ambiguously.

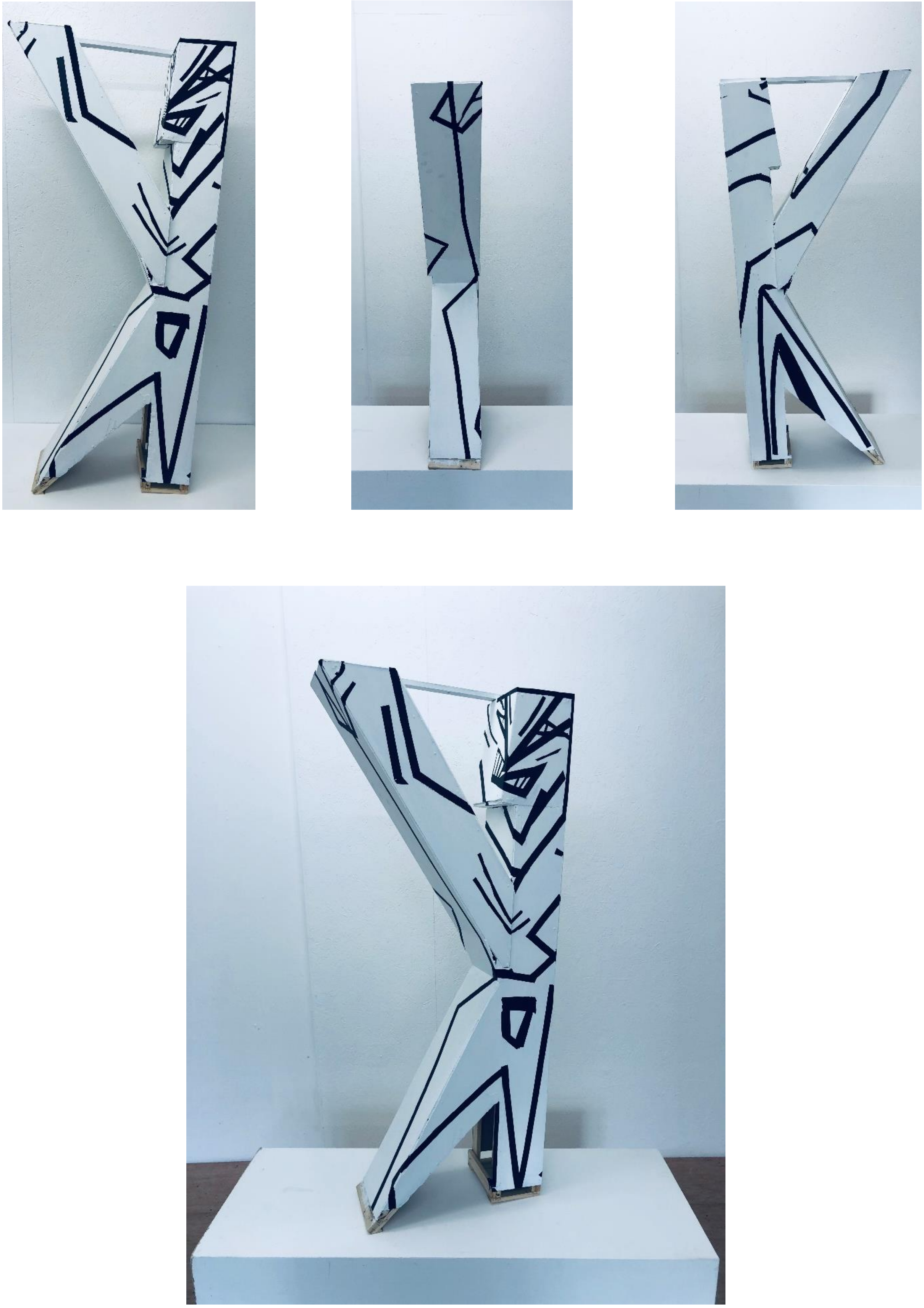

Figure 36: *Tyro-stand I* (2020) Michael Eden.

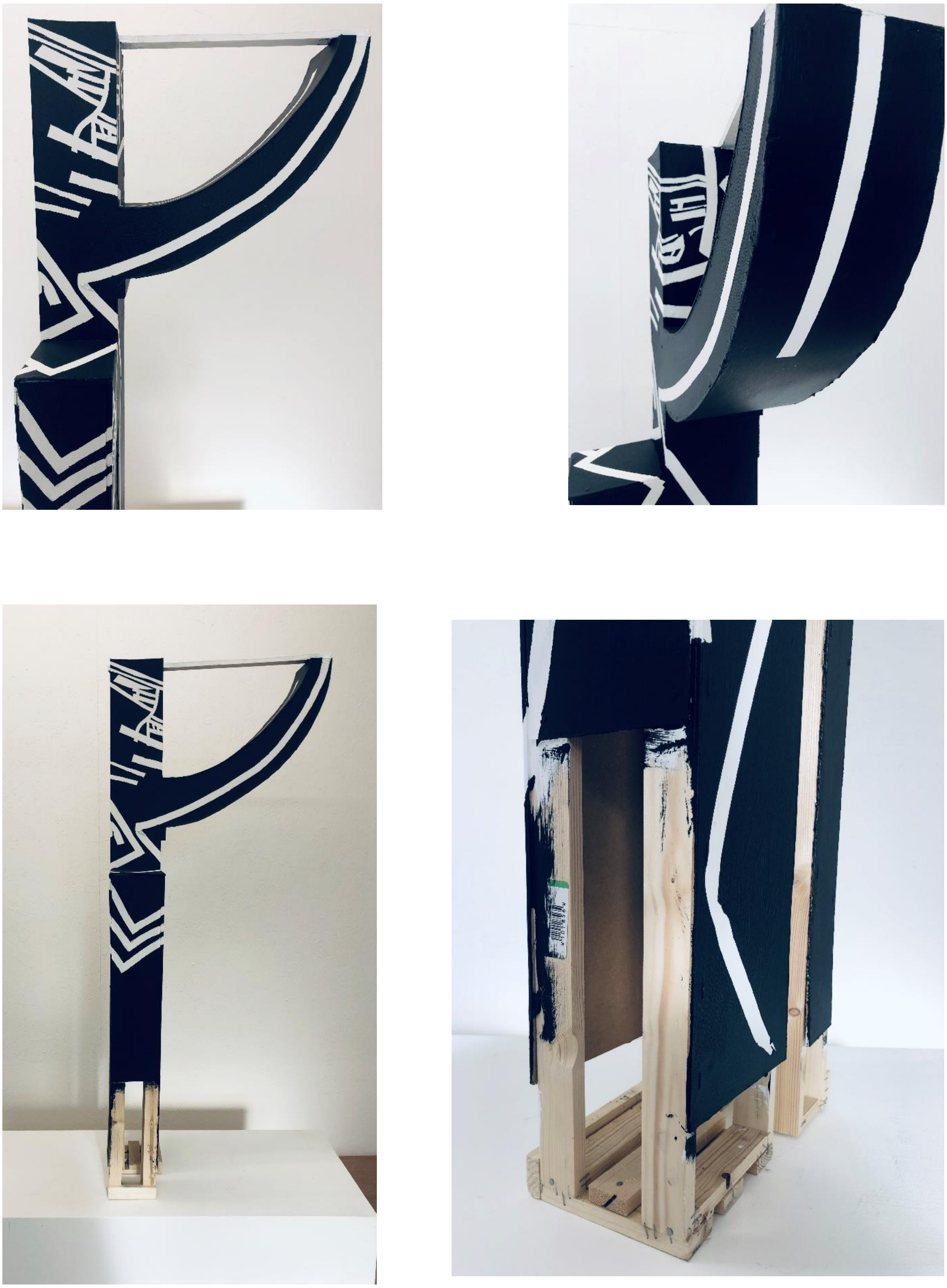

Figure 37: *Tyro-stand II* (2020) Michael Eden.

The form is additionally informed by totemic references to pouwhenua (Maori standing posts) (fig. 38) which demarcate territory. ‘Pouwhenua/carved posts which tell particular stories and act as land markers’ (Lerihan, 2009:5). ‘They symbolise the ancestral ties of the people of that region and tell stories of greatness and survival’ (Johnstone 2009). An example of such a post in painter Augustus Earle’s *Distant view of the Bay of Islands* (1827) (fig. 39) is analysed by Mitchell (2009), who refers to it as a ‘carved form’. However, it is identified in Moon (2010:87) as pouwhenua, ‘a carved post that was used by Maori communities to demarcate boundaries, and which has a distinct totemic appearance’ (Moon, 2010:87). For Mitchell (2009) the image follows many European conventions of the picturesque but offers some ‘resistance’ and ‘ironic’ (24; 25) commentary on these in the form of the pouwhenua. ‘It is a hazard, an emblem of an alien vision that stares back into the space of the beholder’ (25). Mitchell elaborates on the function of these standing posts: ‘The function of the figure in Maori culture is to stand guard over tabooed territory, to separate the sacred, forbidden landscape from the territory surveyed and traversed by the European traveller’ (Mitchell, 2009:25).

Mitchell goes on to explore what this stare embodied in the pouwhenua is. He argues it comprises a different ‘convention’ in contrast to the picturesque or romantic one that Earle ‘carries as a picturesque traveller’ (25). In the Maori experience, the pouwhenua surveys the land. Mitchell uses the term ‘surveillance’. The contrast he insists on is one between the Maori ‘taboo’ with its religious and territorial layers and the European ‘prospect’ with its view to an ever-expanding horizon. The effect of the pouwhenua in the painting is one of ‘decentring’ (27), opening a liminal space between these two habits of perception. Mitchell acknowledges the violence of both these positions, European and Maori, the ways they set up and reinforce hierarchy, the one colonial, the other tribal and religious. If the violence of the Maori position is in doubt, consider Skinner (1916:161) where the term pouwhenua is revealed as interchangeable with ‘light, elongated clubs…for fighting’. Similar faces adorn many Maori clubs used in actual warfare. A further resonance of the *Tyro* to these objects comes from their phallic associations, a point I have made regarding the *Tyro* in my introduction.

Moon, quoting Wilkie, ponders the phallic resonance of such artefacts. ‘Earle seems to…posit himself in Distant View as erect, strong and central…it is likely that he understood the usage of vertical forms to denote power. From a Freudian point of view, these structures are penile replacements, and the penis can denote male power and dominance’ (Wilkie, 2003:36). Moon reflects, ‘Earle’s use of phallic imagery to represent power – subconsciously or not – bore a close resemblance to the Maori use of male genitals in carvings as symbols of strength and dominance’ (Moon, 2010:88).

The validity then of this reference in my practice is based on the function identified by Mitchell (2009); the positioning of the face of the pouwhenua by Earle (1827) i.e., facing and confronting the viewer pre-dating Lewis’s use of the *Tyro*; and the observations of Moon as to the phallic quality of the pouwhenua which supports my arguments about the *Tyro* as a hyper-masculine scarification.

To make the *Tyro*-stands I used wooden under-structures (frames) with panels of MDF or other processed wooden panelling, then painted these in high contrast. The construction is sturdy but retains an imperfect if energetic overall feeling (stapled and nailed together in an ad-hoc manner, areas of inside visible and/or unpainted areas of bare wood left visible). The objects have ‘feet of clay’ the phrase’s relevance is more than descriptive since it relates to the dream of the biblical figure Nebuchadnezzar, a king who sees an imperfect vision of a figure – a man, possibly himself, constructed from various ill-matching materials. The dream is subsequently interpreted by Daniel (a biblical prophet) as a portent of the fall of a kingdom; king-body-nation are conflated there.

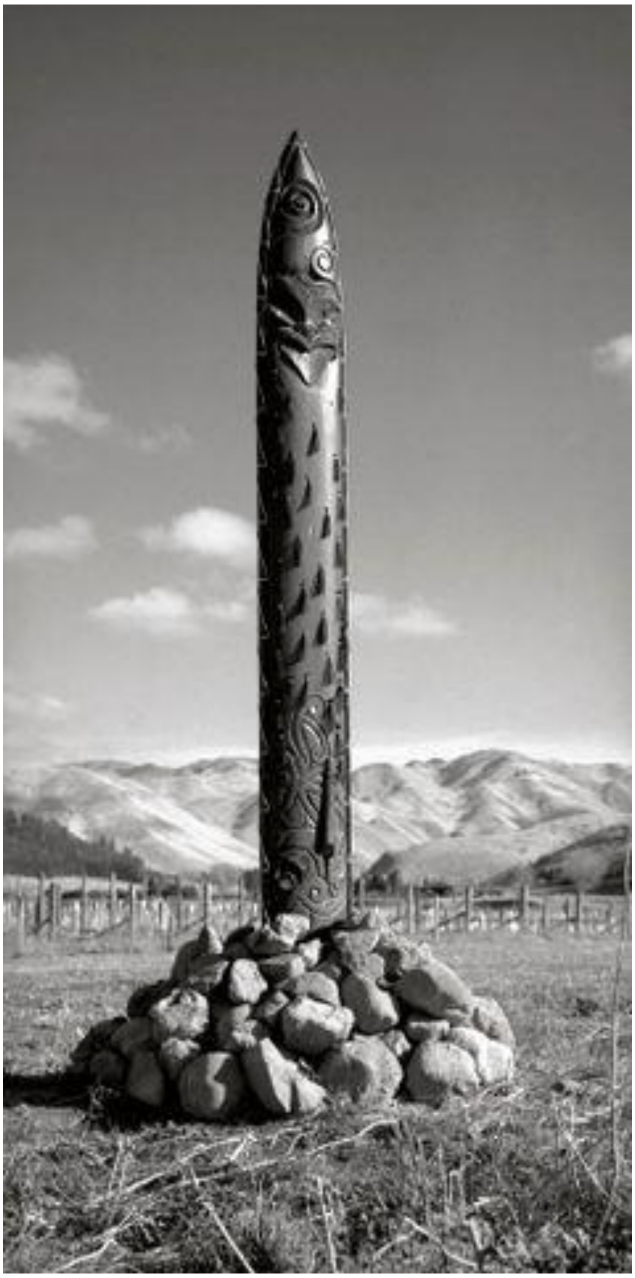

Figure 38: *‘Pouwhenua’ Maori Standing Posts*. Museum of New Zealan Te Papa Tongarewa. Michael Hall (2002).

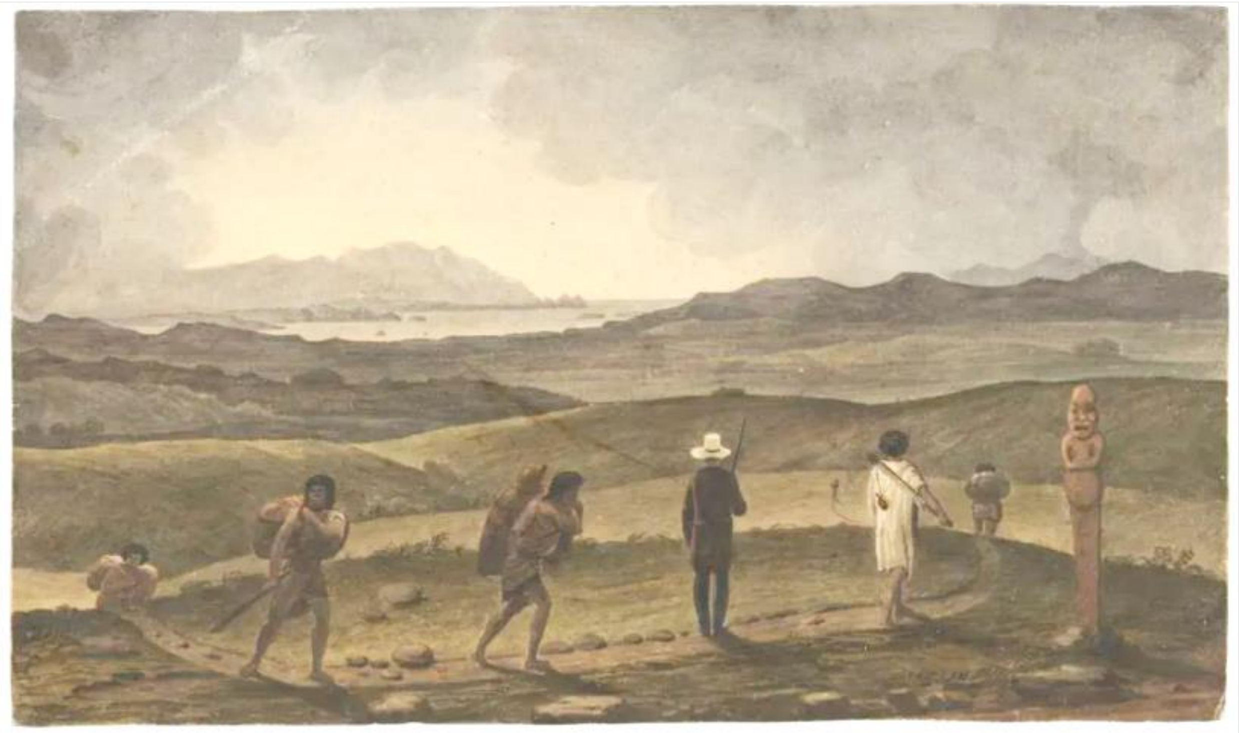

Figure 39: *Distant View of the Bay of Islands*, Augustus Earle (1827-28). Collection of the National Library of Australia.

Tyro-knight I and *Tyro-Knight II* (2020) (fig. 40, fig. 41) attempt to combine the themes of made-imperfection (feet of clay) which emerged from the *Tyro*-stands with the paternalistic authority explored in the *Tyro*-paintings. The experimental nature of these figures meant that no specific plan was in place, but forms that could be made from the leftover wood, panelling and sheets were used in the ways the materials allowed, to create shapes. These shapes would be fitted together to construct a figurative work. The Tyro-knights echo the methods used in *Gawain Sleeping in Armour* (2020) and the painting and construction of *Tyro-stand I* and *II* (2019-20).

In the process of making the Tyro-knights, problems of attaching shapes required tools such as hole-punchers, eyelet pliers, and riveters, such as those used in garment construction, to facilitate techniques previously carried out in metal, working with welding guns, guillotines, and roller-benders. This gradation of surfaces according to hardness: sheet metal and sheet wood as well as the quality of attachment (welding is stronger than riveting) fitted well in the overall themes of copy, worsening, and hierarchy explored in the project while adornment helped accentuate this.

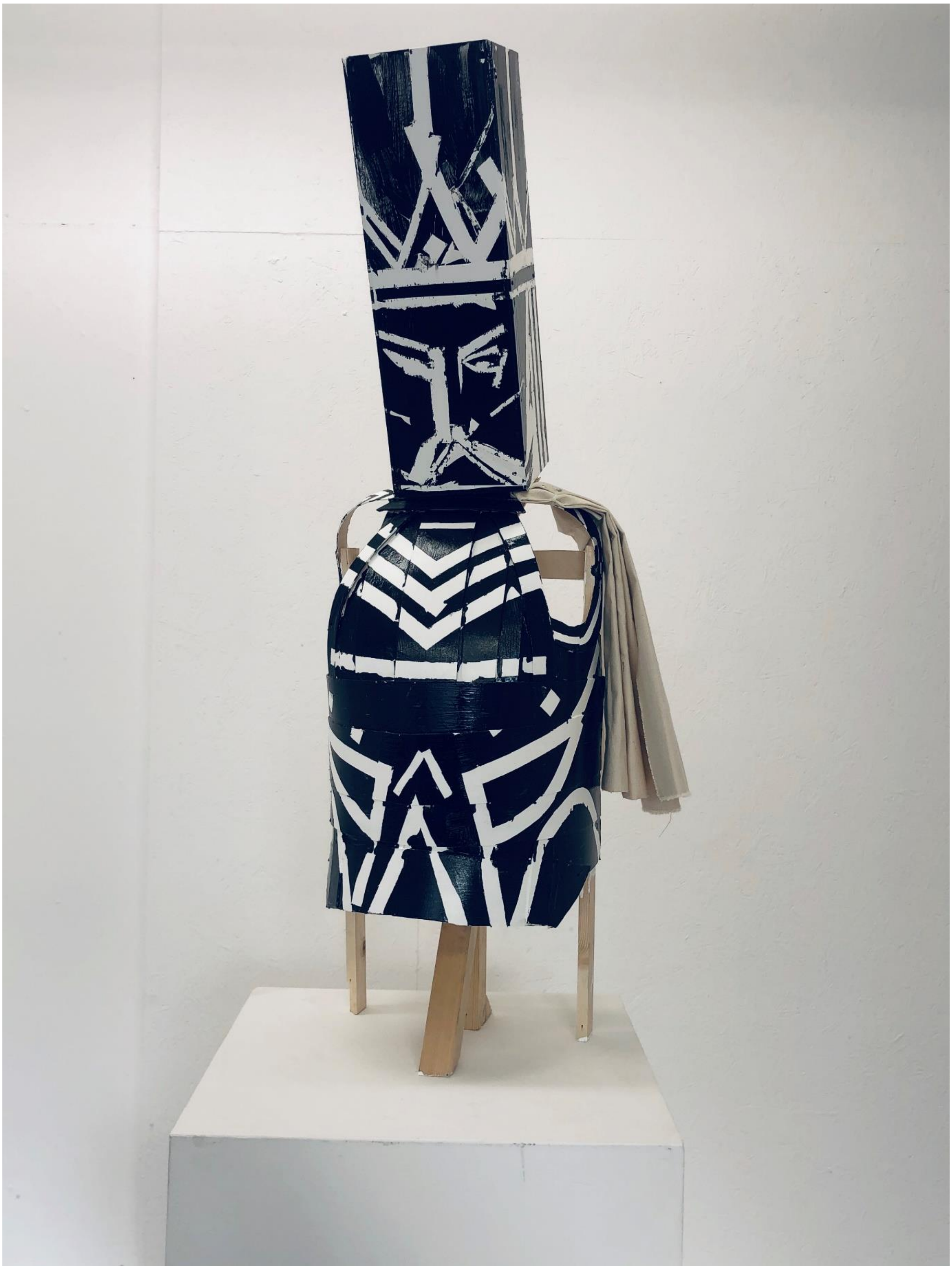

Figure 40: *Tyro-knight I* (2020) Michael Eden.

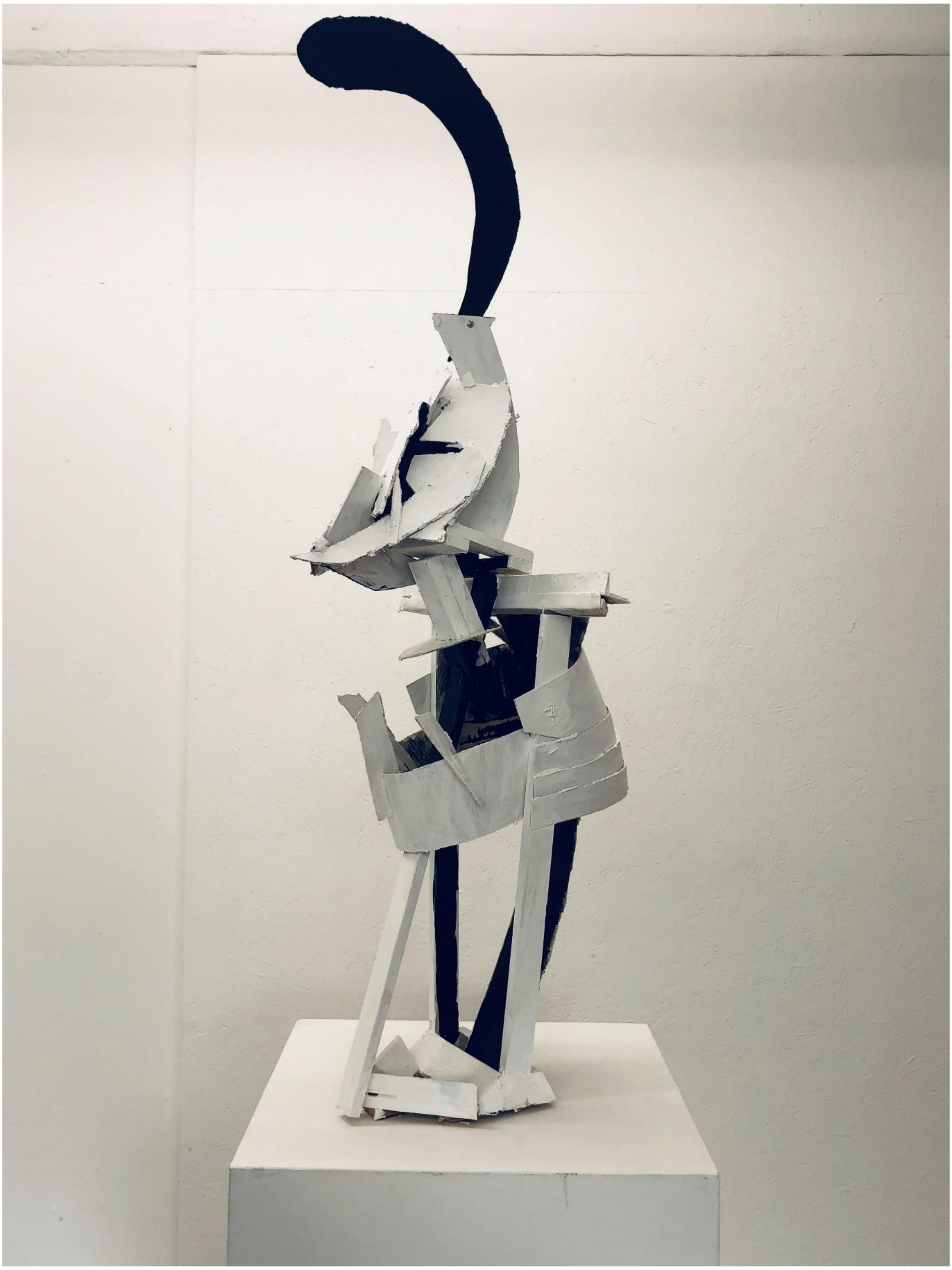

Figure 41: *Tyro-knight II* (2020) Michael Eden.

Tyro-knight I (2020) (fig. 40) was improvised according to a Napoleonic-era soldier with a bearskin-type headwear and an attempt at a pelisse such as those worn by hussars (small over-shoulder cloaks). Additionally, the painted surface I emblazoned with dazzle-camouflage like that used on ships in WW1 and WW2: subsequently I discovered this technique is a result of work by Norman Wilkinson (1878 – 1971), an English artist who coincidentally employed the vorticist artist Edward Wadsworth while developing this technique for the war effort. 'Wadsworth's transformation of dazzle painting into art represents a rare synthesis between the destruction of war and the creativity of culture' (Hewison, 2015:7). This reference to ferocious surfaces and war is something I liken to the tyronic-grin or show of teeth, making a homologous connection to butterfly eye spots and scarification practices. Robinson and Johnson-Symington (cited in Hewison 2015:9, 11, 12) confirm the link to butterfly eye spots with dazzle-camouflage supporting my comparison to this natural function of a purely visual-aggressivity, designed and/or evolved to unsettle, subsequently finding its way into vorticist representation. 'Diagonals and inverted "L" shapes recall Wadsworth's works from 1915 such as *Abstract Composition*, are a Vorticist invention' (Hewison, 2015:7).

Tyro-Knight II (2020) (fig. 41) was more directly influenced by Calvino's Agilulf in, *The Nonexistent Knight* (1959), again exploiting studio ephemera. Calvino describes him thus:

> The King had reached a knight entirely in white armour; only a thin black line ran round the seams. The rest was light and gleaming, without a scratch, well finished at every joint, with a helmet surmounted by a plume of some oriental clock, changing with every colour in the rainbow... "I," came a metallic voice from inside the closed helmet, with a slight echo as if it were not a throat but the very armour itself vibrating…Agilulf seemed to hesitate a moment, then raised his visor with a slow but firm hand. The helmet was empty. No one was inside the white armour with its iridescent crest (Calvino, 1959:3-4).

I felt my burgeoning ad-hoc method utilising leftovers and simple tools would allow me to simulate another Agilulf: now subject to entropy and disintegration. The white finish references Agilulf and fossilised bone. Recalling my allusion to childhood construction methods (Lego and Meccano) I used what is referred to as a cut-and-slot technique: usually used in relation to making with card. Experiencing Kentridge's *That Which We Do Not Remember* (see Artgallery.nsw.gov.au, 2019), where this method is used on a small scale in *Four Heads* (2007) helped to validate this basic method which I applied to thin sheets of leftover and repurposed wood, making slots with a jigsaw, and building the form gradually reinforcing later with wood glue, staples, and nails.

The strategies used have seen power, presented in the *Tyro* figures, as atrophied and robotic. That is a particular feature of the constructions discussed above. In the *Tyro*-paintings the aggressivity of the *Tyros* depicted contrasts the familiar stultifying landscapes they are shown in. The frame of sentimentality, of the picturesque or nostalgic, is broken and space is opened for interpretation. Games' retrenchment of fascist modernism, in a softer form, surfaces in paintings such as *Lady with Photocopier* (fig. 15) or *White Bishop* (fig. 27), while *Red Knight* (fig. 26) is haunted by the built-up 'megaform' (Frampton, 1999) in its imperial transport links and layers of bordered structures. Moreover, the architectural landscape has become a symbol of control over the land, this is also true of the parks, farmland, and village greens that refer to this covering-over of nature employing idealised imagery. Alternatively, the large oils, *Temporal landscape I* and *II* (fig. 29 and fig. 30) attempt to show the ultimate failure of this covering to account for nature which indifferently persists. I intend in the works presented, because of the competing registers and incongruent symbols, that the viewer is faced with an incoherence that they must make sense of. This relates to the dialogic conception discussed earlier, where the audience is in a conversation with the work rather than receiving an absolute message. Thus, my work seeks to appeal to the complex subject, demanding from them an engagement in critical reflexivity.

Chapter 3

Chrysalis and Empty Shell

This chapter is concerned with a comparative discussion of surface, taking account of the subject positions of Lewis's *Tyros* and subjectivity represented in Gawain and in the GK, with reference to formative work related to both monsters. I explore their differentiation as agents with opposite effects on the subject, closure and armoring in the *Tyro*, opening to the other and subjective change in the GK. Moreover, I suggest there is a shared economy between these monsters defining a field of tension. The Pearl Poet's poem emerges in late mediaeval culture anticipating concepts of imagined nationhood *avant la lettre*, whilst Fascism (including a Modernist one such as Lewis's) can be seen as a fictive memory of nationhood through the *après la lettre* lens of an imagined pre-capitalist golden age. Lewis's position is a particularly fulsome example of a proto-fascist imaginary looking back to a time when society was supposedly more formally structured, *a place for everything and everything in its place.*

To understand this relationship, I will consider 'the unity of opposites', a key classification in the dialectics of Heraclitus (whose underpinning theory is key throughout the thesis). It outlines a condition whereby the identity of a system (situation or phenomena) is dependent on opposite conditions which delineate a field of tension. As Graham summarises this,

> (1) Everything is constantly changing and (2) opposite things are identical, so that (3) everything is and is not at the same time. In other words, Universal Flux and the Identity of Opposites entail a denial of the Law of Non-Contradiction (Graham, 2020).

In this chapter, I will be using these ideas to explore this tension in the popular culture situation comedy *The Office* (Gervais and Merchant, 2001-2003). I will establish the contemporary relevance of the *Tyro*-mythos and the link of *The Office* (2001-2003) to the *Tyro* in more than an illustrative way. I will further explore the ideation and antecedents of the *Tyro*, its intended function concerning Lewis's kin-group (white western males), shedding light on predatory references and the reduced role of women and femininity in Lewis's ideation.

In the examples explored in the chapter subjectivity is in contention, linked to the formation of particular kinds of persona. *Tyros* present self-knowing abjection and aggressivity in relation to assuming a place in a hierarchy. I explore this concerning Lewis's paintings *A Reading of Ovid* (fig. 42) and *Mr Wyndham Lewis as a Tyro* (fig. 43). *Tyro* potency comes through 'mimesis of the mechanical' as in 'epic ideal' (Jameson 1979 referring to Lewis). In *SGGK* Gawain is in tension between an idealised version of himself, one I argue is exemplified in his armour, and his imperfect but nevertheless complex psychic interiority. *SGGK* is a 14th-century romance, and its radical qualities come in its ambiguity and its representations of the GK who embodies various older and disavowed concepts such as matriarchal authority, paganism with what is radical in then-contemporary Christianity: redemption and the fall linked to otherness and self-knowledge. In *The Office* (2001-2003) these kinds of persona, tyronic and complex-subject, are brought together, the tyronic figure of Chris Finch figures alongside the flawed but sympathetic David Brent, highlighting critically the difference between types of subject.

The principal rationale for taking Lewis's *Tyro* mythos and *SGGK* is that both are concerned with surfaces in ways that are suggestive of authentic subjective experience. Lewis in *The Tyro* (1921) identifies the affinity of these time periods (the 14th-15th century, and his own, the 19th-20th century) where distinctive subjective shifts occur.

> We… [are] the creatures of a new state of human life, as different from Nineteenth Century England, say, as the Renaissance was from the Middle Ages…Are the next few generations going to produce a rickety crop of Newcomers, or is the new epoch to have a robust and hygienic start-off?' (Lewis, 1921:3).

Between these periods is the emergence of the contested complex subject, the Pearl Poet anticipating *avant la lettre* bourgeois subjectivity: Woods (2002) sees Gawain as 'a prototype…[or]early symptom of bourgeois sensibility' (Woods, 2002:226). Lewis repudiating this mode via an *après la lettre* lens, imagines a 'desirable dehumanisation' (Tickner 2000:112) enacted to become a 'contemporary manifestation of an atavistic masculinity' (Tickner, 2000:87).

I will present first Lewis's position, its stakes and underpinning, and then in light of these consider the Pearl Poet's characterization of Gawain, the one offering insight into the other. Psychoanalytic terminology is used to draw comparisons between these positions. Freudian categories are useful since they are intertwined with what Lewis was resistant to and regularly repudiated. Lewis is critical of the 19th- and early 20th-century bourgeois sensibility, while the Pearl Poet, by anticipating the emergence of the bourgeois subject, Freud's primary source for the development of psychoanalysis, allows for comparisons to be made. I draw on Žižek's exploration of subjectivity (2000; 2001; 2003; 2004; 2006) and his understanding of redemption in Christianity. The shift in literary criticism to Lacanian categories makes his theory useful when looking critically at Gawain and *Tyros*.

The Fall of Empires and the Nation State

National identity is pertinent to both Lewis's *Tyros* and to the *SGGK*, although the circumstances in the 14th century and the later 19th and early 20th centuries do not initially seem to offer opportunities for comparison. However, taking in this background helps to illuminate the stakes of both Lewis's position as an exemplar of the proto-fascist imaginary at work at the end of the British Empire, repudiating the bourgeois class, and the Pearl Poet's position at the formation of ideas of nationalism and the centralisation of power at the end of the Middle Ages (defined by the end of the Roman Empire, c.410 and the emergence of the nation-state, c.1300). Here I am emphasising the role of the Arthurian mythos in the origin myth of the state.

Strayer (2005) highlights the period 1300-1450 (the period where the poem was written) as key in the emergence of the nation-state. He makes examples of England and France as important instances of state-building that other European communities followed. He emphasises the position of the King and the law: 'By 1300 there were men who devoted almost all of their time to the law; the judges of the central courts of England under Edward I were as highly trained in the English common law as any professor at Bologna was trained in Roman law' (Strayer, 2005:35).

On the matter of what came first the nation or the state Hobsbawm (1992), using France as an example, is clear that the 'state' emerges first (1992:62). He suggests it grows out of earlier loyalties and while he places its solidification relatively late (19th century) the rationale for its coming about is pragmatic as with Strayer. Strayer emphasises the use value of nationalism in allowing the King to increase in relevance whereby this office acted as the final say in matters of legal dispute. It also meant that building an army was easier as the population had an idea of identity which went beyond the local baron.

> The rule requiring a royal writ probably grew out of the doctrine that all lands and rights possessed by free men in England were held directly or indirectly of King, and that therefore he had responsibility for protecting lawful possession (2005:43).

These insights are supported by Black (1971), confirming the importance of 'centralization' and the 'ideology' of the nation as a soft power tool for governance (Black, 1971:1171-2).

Just prior to the time of the Gawain Poet's work (c. 1370-1400), Edward III, whose reign stretched from 1327 – 1377, had created The Order of the Garter (1344) to generate a sense of fraternity among powerful regional leaders. Edward had also made plans to revive the famous round table. 'In 1334...the king took an oath to establish an order, of Knights of the Round Table as it had existed in the days of King Arthur' (Tuck, 1984:133). Tuck stresses that various other important lords took the same oath. While this did not come to fruition, The Order of the Garter did and carried connotations of the Arthurian court in its circular form. Ingledew (2006) has made a study of the links of *SGGK* to the founding of The Order of the Garter. What is important here is the highlighting of the significance of Arthurian myth in the strategies of the 'Plantagenet' kings[1],

> whose rule over the period of a century (1272—1377) was fluctuatingly shaped by the Arthurian regnal and royal precedent, and at the same time itself worked on that precedent, so much so that this period of rule helped to constitute Arthurian discourse (Ingledew, 2006:4).

That the disjointed and amalgamous reality of regional loyalties and characteristics is the context in which Arthurian legend becomes a valuable instrument in the early development of national identity also meant that the stories grew in relevance offering furtive opportunities for subversion as I suggest are present in *SGGK*.

Lewis's work emerges at the decline of the British Empire (The end of the imperial century, 1815–1914) and during a period of tumult and growing nationalism across Europe.

> By the turn of the 20th century, fears had begun to grow in Britain that it would no longer be able to defend the metropole (homeland) and the entirety of the empire while at the same time maintaining the policy of "splendid isolation"(O'Brian, 2004:1).

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[1] For an extended discussion of the role that Edward III had in an 'unparalleled' English nationalism see Mortimer (2010:255) in particular the relevance of Arthurian myth (55, 88-89) and the conception of the English flag in relation to Saint George and its legacy in modern practices (398).

The position of his ‘kin group’ the white western male, as a central protagonist in this tumult is a cause of anxiety for Lewis. ‘Darwin appeared on the White horizon and the White conqueror began regarding himself as a kind of monkey, no longer so very little beneath the angels, but wholly out of animal creation. Darwin was like another and worse Old Testament’ (Lewis, 1927a:294). Lewis sees the white male attacked from without and within, primarily due to a lack of conviction and a gradual weakening from *chattering classes* who for Lewis have emboldened the weak (women, homosexuals, socialists). ‘Hitler’s program (for Lewis) is exemplary as a defence of Europe, at a time when Europe’s intellectuals are at work undermining its legitimacy’ (Jameson 1979:181).

In *Fables of Aggression* (1979) Jameson’s main point in his many arguments is to stress that Lewis’s activity and various strategies are driven by a ‘libidinal apparatus’ (Jameson, 10:11:122) which is concerned with nationalism and specifically with proto-fascism. This for Jameson is Lewis’s motivation, guiding his conscious efforts and evident at the level of unconscious habits in form and style. Lewis emerges as an essentialist who glorifies concepts of stability and permanence, especially evident for Jameson in the angels of *The Human Age* (1955) (discussed in the Introduction). We will see that this is also clearly apparent in *Tyros*. That such a ‘libidinal apparatus’ should be active in seeking forms of permanence at the closing years of the British Empire under pressure from one World War and anticipating another (the end of a multi-ethnic, multi-national power) shows us that Lewis’s is a reactive position, looking to stitch together from modernist archaism a remade nationalism elevated into art and philosophy, one which longs for an age where people have clearly defined roles that are distinct and distributed according to personal worth and inherent ability. The two wars bookend Lewis’s first mature artworks – as Tickner argues, ‘Lewis dated his maturity as a painter to 1912, to Kermesse…In 1916 he considered it the touchtone of his pre-war achievement’ (Tickner, 2000:80). They can also be understood to increase pressures around nationalism, inspiring his flirtation with Nazism in *Hitler* (Lewis, 1931). Lewis’s *Tyros* are a compromise that attempt to reintroduce stratification inspired by his perceived stability of medieval society which Lewis locates in the spatial visual works of the time (Johnson, 2014; 2016) with concessions to secularism: one does not need to be an aristocrat, but simply be one of the strong after bourgeois illusions are removed. That is the offer Lewis makes the public in the form of his *Tyro*s, this is Lewis’s ‘remaking’ grounded in a partial abstraction of the past.

Duality and Synthesis versus Ever Greater Crystallisation

Lewis is uncomfortable with eclecticism generally. *Tyros* represent a concentration of values that are apparent in all his visual and many of his written works. They are purified totems that like advancing chess pieces go into battle for their master. 'He believed that the artist should be constantly engaged in combat…Stability was achieved when two opposing forces reached the highest point of tension' (Dootson, 2012). Jameson calls this Lewis's 'agon' (struggle) and is clear to distinguish this from Hegelian dialectics and synthesis. 'The Hegelian struggle for recognition becomes in the pseudo-agon a mere vicious circle' (Jameson, 1979:60). Lewis sees polemics and impervious resistance as a superior position to synthesis. The idea which resolves the thesis–antithesis contradiction in synthesis is a sign of weakness and obfuscation.

Lewis represents a 'remaking' (Tickner, 2000:112) one which seeks to eliminate form under the surface of appearances, to reveal an essential self, perfected at the surface via polemical conflict, causing ever greater crystallisation of that surface. Scar and form held in a dialectical relationship, such as the relationship negotiated by the ego between superego and id, in *Tyros* becomes a wilful scarification. In this case, it is represented with an idealised surface that has taken its form from the injunctions of a superego: wherever a changeable (weak for Lewis) form exists, it must be excoriated into an ever-harder surface.

Bergson and Lewis

Lewis's ideation includes rejection of Henri Bergson's theory, 'I cannot escape the objection that there is no state of mind, however simple, that does not change every moment' (Bergson, 1912:44). Emphasising change is for Lewis an obfuscation of the natural order (Lewis, 1926:338). This attitude led Lewis to reject Futurism, otherwise a source of inspiration 'as "Romantic" for fetishizing time, while he lauded "Classism," which emphasised the hard-edged forms of space' (Klein, 1994:42). These statements make Lewis's essentialism clear, his belief in 'essence' as opposed to 'being' and to 'becoming', a disputed category of 'being'. This is also reflected in Lewis's preference for Parmenides (c. 515 BC) over Heraclitus (c. 535 BC- c. 475 BC). The belief that the ancient philosophers were reacting to each other's thought may be the source of Lewis's 'agon' (detailed in Chapter 4). Heraclitus was famous for the proposition that 'No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man' (Heraclitus). Heraclitus's idea of ever-present change is rejected by Parmenides:

> It is necessary that being either is absolutely or is not. Nor will the force of the argument permit that anything spring from being except being itself. Therefore, justice does not slacken her fetters to permit generation or destruction, but holds being firm (Parmenides in Mark, 2011).

Lewis refers to Parmenides briefly in *Time and Western Man* (Lewis, 1927a), but a quote from one of his fragments ends *The Art of Being Ruled*: 'I wish to communicate this view of the world to you exactly as it manifests itself: and so no human opinion will ever be able to get the better of you' (Parmenides cited in Lewis 1926:375). Parmenides is employed by Lewis to bolster his view that compromise or synthesis is weakness, a result of a chink in otherwise armoured thought that could be exploited by an enemy to 'get the better of you'. 'Being' as 'becoming' is emphasised by the philosophy of Bergson, credited by Whitehead (1978:33:209) as influential on his concept of process philosophy. Lewis criticises Bergson and Whitehead most notably in *Time and Western Man* (1927a), where he refers to Bergson's thought as a 'time-cult', linking his and Whitehead's thought to Heraclitus (Lewis, 1927a:544). Lewis is keen to emphasise space as opposed to time and the values that he associates with the eye. Bergson's approach for Lewis is false, as Edwards observes in his commentary for the 1993 edition of *TAWM*. For Lewis, 'What happens is that we surrender what control we have over our lives by consigning ourselves passively to the flux of events' (Edwards, 1993:469). This concern, which may seem highly abstract and theoretical, will reinforce Lewis's conviction in the inert–superior essence of certain types, as opposed to less distinct personalities.

> Lewis condemned the demonising of 'space' due to… 'time-mind'…Bergsonian time stood for all that is degenerate in art: flux, change, romanticism, the crowd and the unconscious, whereas space represents all that is desirable: stability, fixity, classicism, the individual and consciousness (Dootson, 2012).

Lewis sees art as defending the sovereignty of the self from dissolving in the flux. Dootson's claims that Lewis glorifies stability, fixity, classism, and the individual are confirmed by Klein (1994), while the opportunity for synthesis of these positions is impossible in Lewis. 'Temporal flux was the ultimate acceptance of fragmentation as man's authentic condition' (Klein, 1994:44).

Gawain's characterisation by the Pearl Poet is representative of an emerging 'time mind': his egoistic negotiating between his ideals and instincts, his movement through the temporal landscape into distinctly different spaces that affect his behaviour, and his ultimately changed perspective of himself at the close of the narrative. These are notions that are in the ether of the late medieval period seeking materialisation, as Ingledew (2006) observes.

> What lies at the root of both medieval romance and medieval historiography, namely, desire… [is] an empty vessel of an idea, to be filled by constructions of space and time that range from the eschatological or ecclesiastical, through such terrestrial formations as the imperial or national or such other community-based formations as the city-state or city, or a plenitude of constructions of the local, all the way to the constitution of the family, the couple, or, finally, the self (Ingledew, 2006:24).

Gawain will reflect negatively on this complexity within himself as a source of shame, while the poem is left radically open and ambiguous.

As a template to devise his aesthetic and inform his 'eye', Lewis drew on the shallow, hierarchical space in medieval painting. We see this confirmed by Johnson (2014) who has made a detailed study of Lewis's plans for *The Crowd* (1915), linking this to a painting by the 14th-century Italian master Duccio di Bouninsegna, *Christ and the Woman of Samaria at the Well* (1310-11) and to Uccello's – *The Battle of San Romano* (c. 1435–1460). These formed important components of Lewis's approach (Johnson, 2014:51). Lewis proclaims, 'the philosophy of the eye' through the use of 'shallow space' (2014:22). Johnson goes on to state that 'people [are] reduced to objects, activity [is] expressed as objectified shapes' (23) and he sees Lewis as an exponent of a similar tendency in modernism generally. Johnson conceives this as deployed visually, reinforcing Lewis's attack on Bergosian concepts of time and replacing his flux with stability (87). More significantly we return to a common theme in Lewis, whereby Bergson disappears, and we are left with Lewis's fundamental problem, one which the 'time cult' embodies. Lewis instead pursues 'the retreat from organic nature towards stability, harmony and order' (106). Lewis is conceiving that 'a degraded present is judged and repudiated in terms of this or that image of a valorized past' (Jameson, 1979:125). Lewis's oeuvre is an intricate and highly walled last castle in defence of a haute-couture proto-fascism, of which his artistic and literary skills are the ballast.

Tyro: An Anti-Ego Monster (Scar as Form)

The general rejection of psychoanalytical insight is revealing in terms of Lewis's opposition to psychic interior-dynamics and his focus on surfaces. 'The stable subject or ego which could alone "entertain" such opinions has in Lewis been dissolved' (Jameson 1979:21). Freud's ideas from *The Ego and the Id* (1923) emphasise the function of the ego relative to the demands of reality and in mediating between the instinctual drives coming from the id and the injunctions coming from the superego.

> From the point of view of instinctual control, of morality…the id…is totally non-moral, of the ego that it strives to be moral, and of the superego that it can be super-moral and then become as cruel as only the id can be (Freud, 1974:44).

Freud observes features that are relevant in grasping the possible libidinal locus of *Tyros,* concerning the dynamics of the *psyche,* emphasising 'totemism'. Lewis's exposition of the *Tyro* as 'partly religious explosions of laughing Elementals' (Lewis, 1921:2) used to stimulate his readership and bind this audience repeats the ancient function of totem: according to Lang (1911) differentiation of groups was also the original purpose of totemic practices and for McLennan (1869-1870) all human groupings went through this 'totemic' stage. Freud connects the forming of the 'superego' as key in the rise of totemism. 'The superego, according to our hypothesis, actually originated from the experiences that led to totemism' (Freud, 1974:28).

The nature of the *Tyros* has implications for the kind of group that Lewis wants to bind or differentiate in his hierarchy, i.e., the strong distinct individual who acts rather than negotiates. Negotiation and compromise emerge as the 'ego's' function in Freud, once people acquire a 'superego', and of course concerning the demands of reality as opposed to the demands of the id. Lewis's strategy (the use of totemic personifications) through the lens of Freud confirms Jameson's (1979) claim that Lewis is 'proto-fascist'. The binding of a kin-group which is the role of totemic spirituality can easily be used by a proto-fascist agenda, via Freud we might locate the motivation for this in the 'id'. The newness or novelty of Lewis's creations are archaic, id-driven, and as such have features of 'super-egoic' assuredness.

> When the ego forms its superego out of the id, it may perhaps only be reviving shapes of former egos and be bringing them to resurrection. The way in which the superego came into being explains how it is that the early conflicts of the ego with the object-cathexes of the id can be continued in conflicts with their heir, the superego (Freud, 1974:28).

The notion of uncompromised fidelity to the 'id', instinctual drives, via the injunctions of the 'superego', which has become 'cruel as only the id can be' (Freud, 1974:44), eliminates the negotiating ego, rather than lending it the power to control the 'id'. This framing of Lewis's motivation as 'anti-ego' is possible via Freud and Jameson (1979). Negotiation and compromise are arch weaknesses for Lewis, whose *Tyros* have the function of a superego in the mode of destruction. Freud defines the superego as arising from an ‘identification with the father’ which entails a ‘desexualisation’ (relevant to my later arguments regarding preferred aphanisis) and leads to ‘an inclination to aggression and destruction… the general character of harshness and cruelty exhibited by the ideal—its dictatorial “Thou shall”’ (Freud, 1974:45). Lewis refers to Freud as ‘that old magician’ (Lewis, 1927a:101) who provides an ‘Aladdin’s cave’ for the chattering classes. Freud’s ideas are seen as too similar to the ‘time cult’ (Lewis, 1927a:314); his interior psyche should be ‘baked through’ (Lewis in Foster, 2004:144).

Tyro: Lewis’s Perfect Shells

The concept of the *Tyro* appears early in Lewis’s career, Tickner sees Lewis’s *Kermesse* (1912), the subject of her chapter on Lewis, as an early template for the *Tyros*. Lewis’s activity is partly focused on contributing to the breeding grounds for the ‘new subject’. The connection between *Kermesse* and *Tyros* is fleetingly made by Tickner when she notes the ‘tyro-like dentistry and up-flung arm’ of a figure in the former (Tickner, 2000:104), but the association is accurate. Tickner has Lewis drawing on the ‘Dance of the Apaches’, conceived in terms of sexual combat and ‘gleaming mechanical’ masculinity. *Tyro* appearance has ‘a rectilinear geometric aesthetic’ which involved ‘heavily outlined forms and…a refusal of depth’ (O’Donnell, 2020: 82). Tickner’s observation of Lewis’s semi-abstraction as a refusal to adopt ‘the fleshiness’ of salon nudes and as embracing ‘something more imperious but mechanical’ (2000:106) applies here: the *Tyros* are men, and in all representations, they have a quality of self-satisfaction communicated in their persistent animal grimace.

Lewis directly references surfaces. This is where the *Tyro’s* activity takes place, not in a reflective or neurotic interior, but ‘at the gate of the organism’ where its power to take hold of others is the most potent. It is an animalistic spectacle: they ‘brandish their appetites’, predatory in nature, and the first hint at a clear hierarchy, an ‘advantage over you’. Lewis valorises surface in general with poetic references in celebration of his creations.

> Every child has its figures of a constantly renewed mythology. The intelligent, hardened and fertile crust of mankind produces a maturer fruit of the same kind. It has been rather barren of late. Here are a few large seeds (Lewis, 1921:2).

This way of writing is typical of Lewis’s *call to arms* dynamic and his view of his function as that of a perfect surface, the ‘intelligent, hardened... fertile crust’. These are the properties that Lewis sees in the *Tyro* and it's this position he wishes to reveal as the natural or inert subjectivity that belongs to superior personalities, which he, as the provider of 'seed' identifies with directly. In *The Reading of Ovid* (1921) (fig. 42) Lewis elevates his graphic *Tyros* into large-scale devil-red contemporaries giving them proper equivalence with the viewer; they are intimidating figures, betraying a mocking attitude in their 'reading of Ovid', the poet most famed for his reflections on transformation and metamorphosis. The tension is in their entirely unsophisticated posturing and lack of connoisseurial insight. Those are qualities that Lewis is attacking, and whether we are 'in on' that reference no one could fail to appreciate their menace and the implied violence in their exchange. Lewis's *Tyros* upset sensuous aesthetic experience. They belong to another order (imperious, mechanical). How could such creatures be improved by Ovid's art? Or by any art? They are too purely made, un-dilutable, and for Lewis, better than the myth of self-betterment.

In, *Mr Wyndham Lewis as a Tyro* (1921) (fig. 43), Lewis's head and torso loom into view from the right of the picture. He is wearing a black suit, reddish shirt, and tie with a structured hat, described as missile-like (Spalding, 1980:859). It points into the top corner giving the impression of a large predatory bird to his outline. Set against a block yellow background, the form is pushed forward, and it appears that the image is lit by an unnatural (interior?) light source, giving his face a jaundiced complexion. Turning to the viewer with an expression of disgust, clear in a cocked eyebrow and raised upper lip revealing a half snarl, *Tyro*-Lewis seems to ask, *well, are you one of us*? This image represents Lewis's identification in his own iconography, with the active, defined, and potent personality.

The *Tyro* is both a penetrative weapon and an armoured exterior. *Tyros* undermine other concepts of subjectivity and seek to pull away their illusions revealing them (for Lewis) as what they always were. Identification with the *Tyro* may seem self-deprecating, but not when it's clear that for Lewis all positions are ultimately traceable to one of these two modes, automaton or *Tyro*. Lewis sees his intervention as daring us to face our true nature in *Tyro*-form (monstrous parvenu); or reveal us as the paper dolls we are, automatons under bourgeois obfuscation. The interruption of this seemingly natural order, of the strong and weak, is the function of the contrast between these two types of human subjectivity.

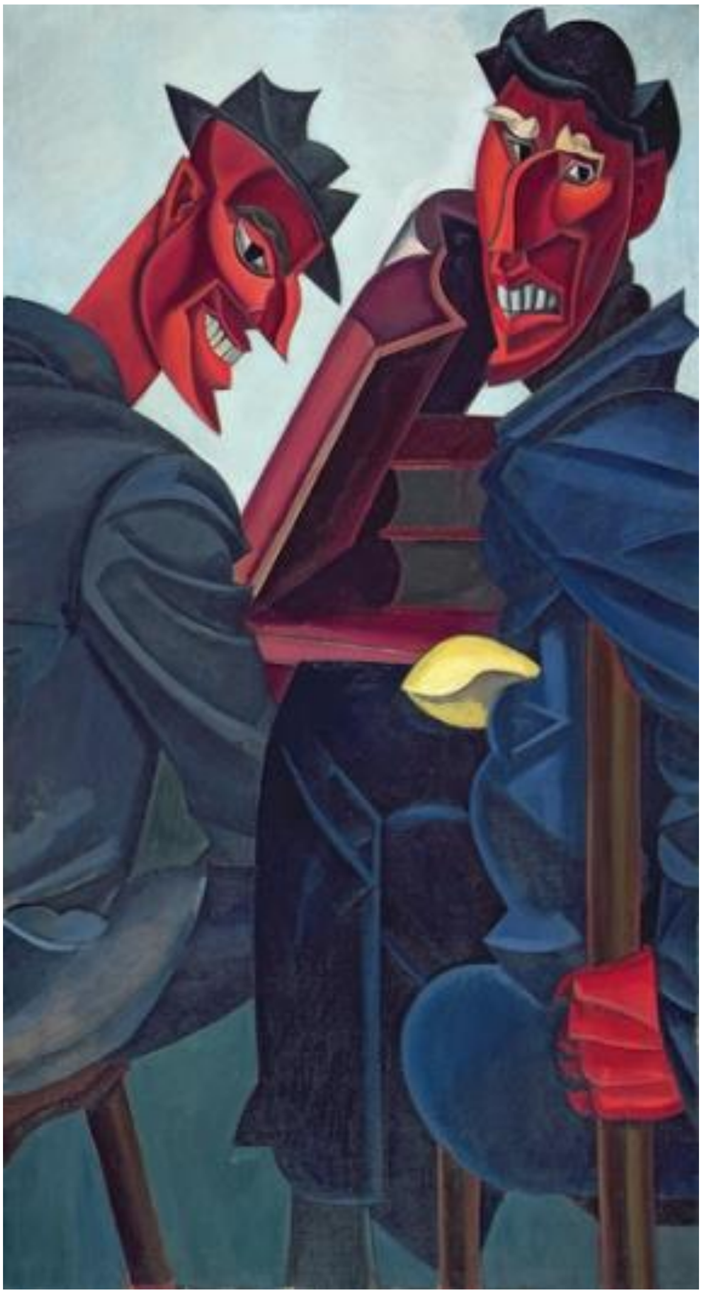

Figure 42: *A Reading of Ovid (Tyros)*, 1920-21 Wyndham Lewis, image courtesy National Galleries of Scotland.

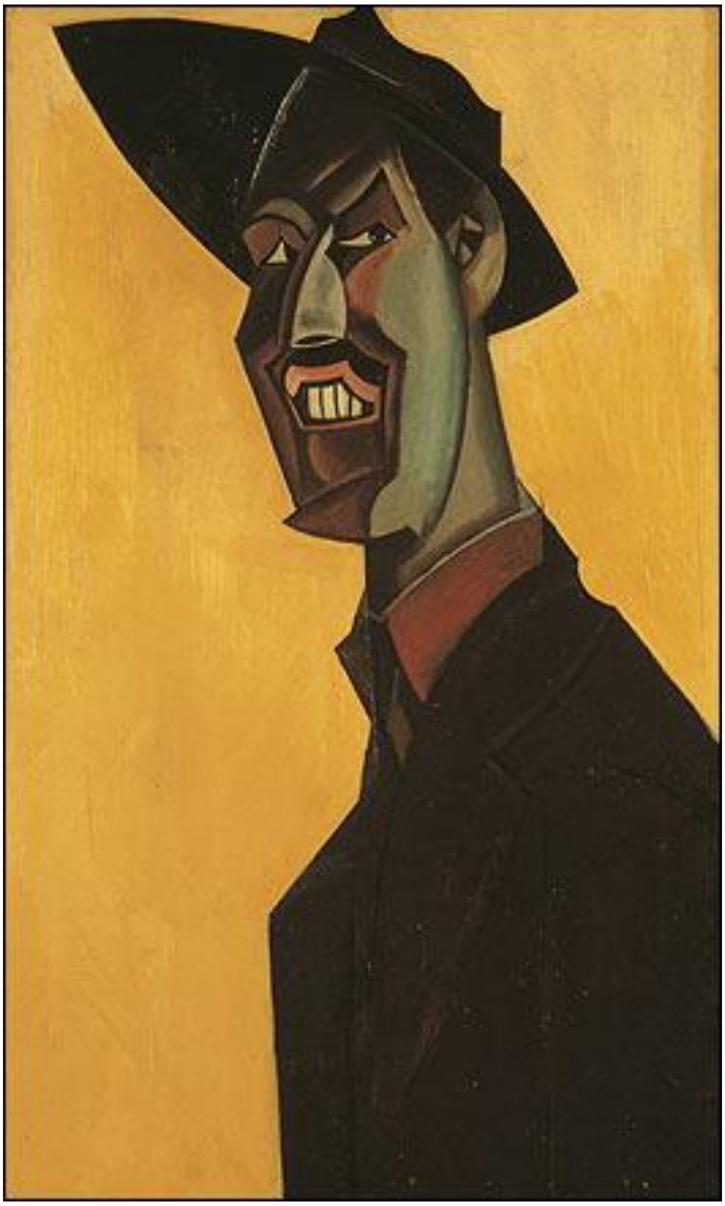

Figure 43: *Mr Wyndham Lewis as a Tyro*, c.1920-21, Wyndham Lewis, image courtesy Ferens Art Gallery, Hull Museums.

Gawain: Where Surface Has a Subject (Scar and Form)

I have characterised the *Tyro* as having an id – superego emphasis which champions surface over internal psychic dynamics. By way of contrast, I will now go on to discuss Gawain in *SGGK*. In Gawain, the Pearl Poet maintains a separation of a surface-ideal and interior self, which I suggest gives Gawain an ego emphasis and is the cause of continued psychic tension in him.

References to surface in *SGGK* explore ideas of subjectivity represented by Gawain 'by associating him with a series of surfaces and spaces, each drawn from a descriptive register dedicated either to exterior or interior experience' (Woods, 2002:209). Gawain, for Woods, is 'revealed as if in shadow by the surfaces and spaces that create his presence in the narrative' (Woods, 2002:210). This is possible because he has moved away from the dehumanising and overbearing presence of the court, with its fixed idea of perfect beauty and order.

The two most contrasting images of surfaces are alternative images of Gawain as he is armoured-up ready for his journey on Gringolet (his horse) fulfilling and identifying with the image of the surface of his armour in all its dazzling glory, as in the excerpt below. Later this ideal so vividly rendered remains in our mind, as it does in Gawain's, offering a dramatic dissimilarity with his final insights into himself:

> First a rug of rare cloth was unrolled on the floor,
> heaped with gear which glimmered and gleamed,
> and onto it he stepped to receive his armoured suit.
> He tries on his tunic of extravagant silk,
> then the neatly cut cloak, closed at the neck,
> its lining finished with a layer of white fur.
> Then they settled his feet into steel shoes
> and clad his calves, clamped them with greaves,
> then hinged and highly polished plates
> were knotted with gold thread to the knight's knees.
> Then leg-guards were fitted, lagging the flesh,
> Attached with thongs to his thick-set thighs.
> Then comes the suit of shimmering steel rings
> Encasing his body and his costly clothes:
> Well burnished braces to both of his arms,
> good elbow guards and glinting mental gloves,
> all the trimmings and trappings of a knight tricked out
> to ride:
> A metal suit that shone;

> gold spurs which gleam with pride;
> a keen sword swinging from
> the silk belt to his side.
> Fastened in his armour he seemed fabulous, famous (Armitage, 2007:32-33).

The poet continues to describe Gringolet (Gawain's horse) as similarly kitted out and armoured before finally Gawain's exoskeleton is completed with a prised head covering.

> Then he holds up his helmet and kisses it without haste;
> it was strongly stapled, and its lining was stuffed,
> and sat high on his head, fastened behind
> with a colourful cloth to cover his neck' (Armitage, 2007:33).

There is a distinction between this and the unarmoured fabric of the GK's 'vestments'. Despite his alarming and monstrous status, he is decorated with butterflies, a symbol of change, transformation, and renewal. Nazari (2014) explains the ancient foundation of this symbolism as it related to Greek and Roman mythology. Butterflies are seen 'as personification[s] of Psyche's death and resurrection cycle' (Nazari, 2014:228). By the medieval period this symbolism had gained a Christian layer, where notions of rebirth and the soul were associated with Christ. 'Butterflies maintained their status as the iconic representations of the soul…Butterflies [as a] symbol of resurrection in medieval marginalia is a representation of Christ' (Nazari, 2014:229). Unarmoured and covered in symbols of transformation, the GK is in contrast with Gawain in his armour. Gawain's symbol is the parrot, and he is adorned in 'painted parrots perched among periwinkles' (Armitage, 2007:33). Images of this bird are close to the neck where he will receive his blow. The parrot is a mimic, saying things it does not fully understand. Gawain has just come from prayer at an altar when the design is mentioned. The medieval mind was acquainted with this bird. Pliny records the following about the parrot: 'It can be taught to speak; it greets its master and repeats words said to it' (Pliny, 1st century CE Natural History, Book 10, 58). The animal was an exotic pet in the era and was thought to automatically know the word 'Ave' (hail) according to Isadore of Seville (7th century, CE, *Etymologies,* Book 12, 7:24). The parrot's place at the neck of Gawain, near the throat, where speech is generated, suggests an artificiality to his prayer and by extension his faith, something he will come to regret in himself when his actions confirm this subtle foreshadowing. Woods comments that 'armour is a steel skin for the man who wears it. And because each piece covers a part of his body, arming is, in effect, an anatomisation of the hero, in which the armour and the man [are] assembled in order' (Woods 2002:215). This surface completes Gawain's identity and is bound to his person. He even sleeps in this covering.

> With nerves frozen numb he napped in his armour,
> bivouacked in the blackness amongst bare rocks,
> (Armitage, 2007:38).

It is this surface that Gawain identifies with both times he sets out, first from Camelot and later from Bertilak's court to seek the Green Chapel. Gawain is again in armour at the close of the poem, just as glorious as before.

> No man shone more, it seemed
> from here to ancient Greece (Armitage, 2007:93).

Despite that, the poet is clear that Gawain is projecting a false front to the GK. This front is associated with Gawain's self-image bound up with his status and his armour. Nevertheless, the rigidity of this position is a source of tension in the man.

> loath to look afraid,
> He feigned a fearless state (Armitage, 2007:103).

Previously, in response to the GK's initial entrance, the knights of Arthur's court themselves have been likened to inanimate objects, 'statues', reinforcing the lack of action in the face of the intruder.

> Yet several of the lords were like statues in their seats,
> left speechless and rigid, not risking a response (Armitage, 2007:15).

The reaction to the GK's appearance at Camelot is prolonged dumbfoundedness, and Gawain along with all members of the court has been associated with the rigidity and formality of a chess board. They are arranged formally, and the order corresponds with the character pieces of the second line of the board: Stalwarts, Bishops, and knights on either side of King and Queen (Armitage, lines 110-120:10). This rigidity makes the GK's entrance the more dramatic. Woods observes that 'Arthur, at the beginning of the banquet scene, is described as if he were about to enter battle' (Woods, 2002:211).

The use of game symbolism in *SGGK* is well established and Thomas Rendall has made a study of the use of chess symbolism and terminology in *SGGK* (1992:190). This metaphor of a closed and predictable system, chess, highlights the fixity and rigidity of the court into which the unpredictable *other* in the form of the GK erupts. For Rendall this symbolism sees the king get more than he bargained for since the GK is associated with a trickster who can take advantage of less experienced players. ‘The Green Knight loses the first round of the beheading contest, so the chess shark advises his readers that “in the first *partitum* we ought to play indifferently and to lose… because this way men are induced to play’ (Rendall, 1992:189).

Rendall’s observations of the repetition of the chess motif throughout *SGGK* are linked similarly to other key exchanges, although here I’m concerned with the initial association this gives to the knights as a static objectified cohort and to the stultifying court that has formed Gawain and their order. It is out of this entirely ignorant and wholly fallible position that the ‘fabulous, famous’ armoured knight in the person of Gawain emerges, the ‘pride’ (‘gold spurs which gleam with pride’, Armitage, 2007) before the fall. Gawain’s identification with the ‘image’ of the knight is intertwined with his armour. He reflects later, on this image of himself.

> sign of my sin – I’ll see it as such
> when I swagger in the saddle – a sad reminder
> that the frailty of his flesh is man’s biggest fault,
> how the touch of filth taints his tender frame.
> When my pulse races with passion and pride
> one look at this love-lace will lessen my ardour (Armitage, 2007:111).

This new image represents a characterisation and change in Gawain. He has gained an insight into himself, but he associates the flesh which enacts and registers this change as the weakness atrophying his passion. Gawain is unable to see the weakness in the unrealistically hyper-brittle image of the armoured knight. Gawain has opened the space of redemption with his fall from naive and imperfect stagnation, but this is not how he sees it. ‘Redemption resides not in following the immortal passion to its self-destructive conclusion; one should rather learn to overcome it via creative sublimation’ (Žižek, 2004). The super-egoistic nature of ideals is unreachable. Gawain is unable to comfortably assume his new identity and accept this. His continued desire to be an ideal is the cause of his pain. Furthermore, and to put it more explicitly, we can recall *The Puppet and the Dwarf* (2003), Žižek’s earlier investigation of Christianity. We see the value of ‘fall’ and ‘redemption’ not as opposites, but as different subject views of the same thing: redemption is the fall; the fall opens the space for redemption to occur.

Gawain is simply unable to fully identify with that ideal image as he once did. This halfway insight is marked by the poet in a highly ambiguous interaction. After being absolved of blame by the GK, Gawain is implored to return to Bertilak's court where his aunt, the sorceress Morgan le Fay (matriarch of castle Hautedesert) wishes to speak with him. 'No way would he go' (Armitage, 2007:112). The GK has already reassured Gawain that a warm welcome awaits him at the castle and that Bertilak's wife, who Gawain held so highly waits there also (109). Gawain's refusal is marked by an anticlimactic rebuttal. He leaves to return to Arthur's court, scarred and with a strong sense of his personal failure,

> parted in the cold,
> that pair
> Our man, back on his mount
> now hurtles home from there.
> The green knight leaves his ground
> to wander who knows where (112).

If there was any doubt about Gawain's inability to process his experience, and the continuation of this tension, it is banished by his reaction when explaining the strange occurrences to the other members of Arthur's court upon his return.

> And he showed them the scar at the side of his neck,
> confirming his breach of faith, like a badge
> of blame.
> He grimaced with disgrace,
> he writhed in rage and pain.
> and showed his smarting shame (113).

Gawain is too overly invested in his ego-ideal, too rigid in his thinking to grasp his own development: the tension of this emerges as shame, and regret at not being able to be that ideal. To put it another way, Gawain cannot see that his imperfect subjectivity is superior to the superficial and one-dimensional ideal which only has a place in an equally static court. Woods, reflecting on the stagnation of the court, shares that feeling of inertia and rigidity with Rendall and gives us some insight into its background: 'Their idealized vitality dwindles to the equivalent of a still life' (Woods, 2002:210).

For Woods, Guinevere (Arthur's Queen) is the 'initial surface' who frames the way we see the court, 'brilliant' but 'fixed and passive as a crown jewel' (2002:210). Guinevere is associated with Gawain. To continue the chess motif, Gawain is sitting at her side as queen's-knight. For Woods, 'Consequently, we are encouraged to see him too as a sheltered presence…his identity coloured to some extent by the association' (Woods, 2002:210). The Queen's nature is that of an impassive icon, 'amplified and muffled' (Woods, 2002:210) there is a similarity here to Littler's description of Britannia as an image of 'woman as "invulnerable epitome"' of the nation (Littler, 2006:24). In positions of fixity this is an acceptable iteration of femininity. Guinevere is privileged and aristocratic, a perfect example of the ideal lady. This has important subjective implications. Commenting generally on the function of the lady of the medieval court, Žižek observes, 'The Lady indicates the abstraction that pertains to a cold, distanced, inhuman partner – by no means a warm, compassionate, understanding fellow-creature' (Žižek, 2000:34). For Žižek this has a parallel in the strategies of totalitarian power, the medieval lady is a precursor of later forms of domination and as such she is the first victim of it.

> Terrifying…inhuman…If she is described as wise, it is only because she embodies an immaterial wisdom or because she represents its functions more than she exercises them. On the contrary, she is as arbitrary as possible in the tests she imposes on her servant (Žižek, 2000:34).

Here I am interested in the effect of this power on the subjectivity of Gawain. He will struggle with ideas of himself and lament his weak flesh and inconsistency. It is important to acknowledge that these attacks on Gawain are self-inflicted psychic injunctions, super-egoic in character which come from identification with monstrous alienation embodied in the person of Guinevere. As Žižek argues, 'The price…for his elevation into the sublime object of beauty is his radical 'alienation': as with the Lady, the 'real person' is effectively treated as an appendage to the fetishized and celebrated public Image' (Žižek, 2000:35).

Guinevere and the GK are the only two figures for Woods that are properly shown to us. They contrast one another as formal organised religion is contrasted by Christ for Žižek.

> Legend has it that when, in 1804, the Pope approached Napoleon to put the Emperor's crown on his head, Napoleon took the crown from his hands and put it on his head alone; the Pope quipped: "I know your aim is to destroy Christianity. But believe me, Sire, you will fail—the Church has tried to do this for 2000 years and still hasn't succeeded (Žižek cited in De Sutter, 2015:225).

What we see here is that for Žižek it is the radical potential of Christ that the formal institution of the church seeks to repress. The court serves this purpose in *SGGK*. It is there that in the person of the GK, Christ is signified and intrudes into the site of repression. For all the institutionalised Christianity that Arthur's court stands for, the radical categories of fall and redemption are excluded, returning as the monster. This is because radical Christianity is not hierarchical (represented in the person and teachings of Christ) while in its institutionalised form, the church with its internal ranks and its relation to state power maintains a new (Christian as opposed to pagan) procedure of the old social strata.

Gawain sees the monstrous presence of the GK in all his extremity, the interrupting force opposing the formal rigidity of the court, the surface of terrible and disavowed references (pagan, nature, Satan, and otherness in general), but he does not see what we are allowed to contemplate, the monstrous, alienating, and brittle surfaces which seek to make his burgeoning subjectivity an *appendage* to his glorious armour. Gawain does not hide his shame or failure. As stated, he makes it public in both his use of the green girdle, worn like a sash, and by recounting his failings with the king and the other knights. Gawain's reactions – he 'grimaced', 'writhed', was 'smarting' – recall the blood rushing from the wound when it was fresh and are a sign of his interiority and the pain it causes him. His body and mind are sites of active conflict.

Effectively Gawain longs, in part, to be his perfect armour and to assume its imagined values, eliminating this tension. His insight has given him no comfort, but it has separated him from the other knights who in comparison are one-dimensional and who now ape his actions assuming the green sash as their symbol. In doing this I suggest that the knights miss the point of Gawain's personal and painful self-knowledge: for them, it represents only man's fallibility in the face of God and so they are happy to adopt it and co-opt its radical meaning. It is a kind of quiet compliment paid to oneself, representing humility before the deity. This is not how Gawain feels: his experience has not reinforced or affirmed his identity. He was found wanting in the face of values which elevated him into a place of privilege in society. His failure as the best of the knights has severely undermined his worldview and his body records this experience in his scar. Gawain's reflection on the girdle and his outburst regarding women which recalls Gawain's exchanges with lady Bertilak is a retroactive attempt to locate his *fall* in relation to women and to contain the trauma within a Christo-Judean framework. His body though is not a perfect surface, but subject to reality, combined with his reasoning, negotiating mind, will simply not allow him to do this.

Concerning Gawain's potential execution and subsequent failure:

First, Gawain is too ethical to retreat and lie. Second, Gawain is too human/animal to give up his shining blood easily. Third, he is too intelligent to throw off the implications of the journey. That he laments this combination held as it is within him is not simple self-deprecation, but a longing for a less complex subjectivity with fewer facets.

We appreciate these facets as being the result of our literal and material connection to reality, ‘revealing human nature as inextricable from its own elemental matrix’ (Woods 2002:209). This matrix is made of dualities for Woods: inside/outside, nature/culture, courtly language/direct speaking. Woods places an emphasis on the body in space and it’s this ‘inextricable matrix’, a hard reality sustaining and attacking the human body, which rather than a trap, guarantees Gawain’s presence in the moment and prevents him from fully identifying with the brittle outer shell that represents an ideal image of himself. That ideal image is ‘super-egoic’ in a way that the GK is not. Note the absolution and humility of the GK and his confusion at Gawain’s grief. He laughs and embraces the self-flagellating man, encouraging Gawain’s recognition of his own qualities.

In contrast, Gawain’s commitment to the armour-superego follows the oft-quoted logic that the more you obey the more it makes you guilty and recalls ‘the cruel and sadistic ethical agency (Freudian superego) which bombards us with impossible demands and then gleefully observes our failure to meet them’ (Žižek, 2006:79). Žižek is thinking of Freud’s (1923) original conception of the superego, describing ‘the excessively strong superego’ as one defined by ‘sadism’ towards the ego, ‘a pure culture of the death instinct’ which could destroy the ego if it is unable to ‘fend off its tyrant’ (Freud, 1974:43). Woods observes that *SGGK* is a question posed by the anonymous poet, ‘asking “modern” (fourteenth century) medieval people to reacquaint themselves with the challenges of their human nature’ (Woods, 2002:226). This is a nature which Woods – though Woods himself does not acknowledge a link to Freud – describes through a phrase evoking a strikingly Freudian trinity: ‘the old debate over man—ape or angel?’ (Woods, 2002:226). It is not difficult to see in these categories the interplay of ego, id, and superego. Woods sees Gawain as ‘a prototype of late-medieval individuality, or as an early symptom of bourgeois sensibility’ (Woods, 2002:226). His duality is the cause of discomfort as he is unable to simply embrace a fundamentalist mindset, the closest thing I suggest to becoming an ideal.

The lesson here is that our spontaneous frustration with the concrete obstacles of reality, and how these obstacles force our ego to negotiate the ‘superego’ and the ‘id’ is not a Darwinian trap contra Lewis, but the site of our freedom. The mind represented by Gawain is counter intuitively prevented from trapping itself in a ‘superego’ ideal by harsh material reality; both reality as an interrupting force, the GK, and reality as a struggle and space of bodily and mental negotiations with the outside, the landscape (Green Chapel).

Subjective Implications of Tyroism (Contemporary Iterations: The Office's Chris Finch and the Green Knight)

I will now explore the contemporary relevance of the *Tyro* as a manifestation of monstrous masculinity embodied in the aggressive, gesticulating misogynist of *The Office* (2001-2003), Chris Finch (Ralph Ineson). Both the British sitcom and the *Tyro* mythos are a specific result of contemporary hierarchical dynamics rooted in the modern workplace. To explore the shared economy of the *Tyro* and the GK, I will explore links between each monster (whose opposite qualities are argued throughout the chapter). In particular, I will highlight their function in relation to the subject.

These monsters act as agents for opposite attitudes, fixity, the proto-fascistic, hierarchical, subject-positioning of the *Tyro*; and flux, subjective change and development as represented in the GK. However, they nonetheless have a shared economy including a lack of interiority, they are reactions to deep time, they are psychic functionaries to the subject, and are atavistic in form (I will return to the shared economy shortly).

High culture in the form of great works of literature haunts the pop-culture sitcom, *The Office* (2001-2003). There are references to Geoffrey Chaucer, John Betjeman, Dostoyevsky, and Shakespeare. This makes the programme intertextual and significant as a commentary on history in culture beyond its purpose to be funny. Likewise, *SGGK* is punctuated by ordinary (but equally important) unheroic moments: being dressed, praying, sleeping (and pretending to sleep to avoid confrontation), friendly chatter, and memorable images of animal butchery. The poem's central quest takes place within the realm of the ordinary. (I will return to the resonances of *SGGK* and *The Office* shortly).

Finch is not referenced because his characterisation is simply *Tyro*-like. He is a *Tyro,* a construct based on the same characteristics as a *Tyro* and existing in a context (The late 20th-century corporate world of *The Office,* 2001-2003) concerned with the same societal dynamics, and the same paradigm shift that Lewis is concerned with in his unpublished 'Hoodopip' (1924-1925) (the subject of which is *Tyro* society). These shared dynamics include a 'model presented as a kind of prototype [of England]' (O'Donnell, 2020:83). A reaction to 'corporatisation', 'industrial rationalisation' and 'white-collar professional managers' (78) provides the basis for comedy. This is a society that is supposedly 'meritocratic' replacing the apparently organic class-society of pre-war England, but where 'stratification of "types"' (83) is celebrated, and the lower castes experience a 'confused desire for the life of the nature' ('nature' in that context is Lewis's name for the superior caste) (84). O'Donnell acknowledges Lewis's ambivalence (81) but is clear he is 'allied' with *Tyros* and argues that while 'conflicted' Lewis's 'anti-humanism held sway' (2020:83), favouring strict stratification of types drawing from his essentialism to imagine 'harmonious social order' (81) in a changing world (87). Furthermore, his imaginary is an amoral 'non-ethical satire' (89) due to its brutality and exalting of predatory values. 'This occupational utopia (or dystopia)' (84) reflected modernity, imagining it in terms of the 'grotesquery, or phantasmagoria of professional society' (85). Regarding subjective wounding, O'Donnell acknowledges modernity's levelling in *Tyro* 'social mobility' and the dehumanisation of the war. 'The Tyro's grin is, as Lewis puts it, the expression of the same "ineffable cheerfulness" of the British Tommy, commanded to "stick it" – "the throb of this slang alone would suffice" – on this planet, as he had been during the war' (77). While *Tyros* are 'dressed in the trappings of the professional: the suit, the tie, the buttoned collar and bowler hat' (89), they also represented 'shell shocked' veterans ill-adjusted to polite discourse and normal life. In his discussion of the apocalyptic/utopian subject, Timberlake uses the phrase 'outwardly self-important and inwardly devastated' (2018: 95) drawing on Stephen Frosh's *Politics of Psychoanalysis* (1999). This is a fitting description of the *Tyro*-subject that Finch presents in *The Office* (2001-2003). Frosh accounts for this change and why it resonates: 'Over the post-Freudian period there has been a gradual shift in the nature of the typical analysand, from someone needing to liberate her/himself from unconscious conflicts to someone desperately seeking for a secure core of self' (Frosh, 1999:287). The inwardly devastated generations to come would inherit this wound in the form of continued dehumanisation represented in a 'division of labour' wherever greater specialism (replete with limitations) is seen as an 'inevitable outcome of the complex societal organisation refigured for political stability' (O'Donnell, 2020:83). In short, the levelling of modernity is defined by (new) brutal stratification, which Lewis supports in his imaginary as inevitable, while in *The Office* (2001-2003) escape remains possible.

A point of departure with O'Donnell is in the place of 'mass man' in Lewis's mythos and the differentiation of mass/automata man (also referred to as peons) from the *Tyro* (O'Donnell conflates these based on his analysis of Hoodopip). As I have argued in the introduction, I understand the *Tyro* in the extended context of Lewis's art practice and related texts where this distinction: peon, *Tyro*, superior-intellectual (or aristocrat) is made expressly clear.

Chris Finch's Tyro Qualities

I suggest Finch represents the narrativisation of a *Tyro* in a contemporary work setting. I argue that this link is beyond illustrative parallels because it shows that the defining trauma which the *Tyro* is a reaction to has been reproduced in iterations reaching at least from Lewis's conception of that type into contemporary culture. Furthermore, these iterations speak to Frosh's broader concerns for the 'nature of the typical analysand'. As such, the *Tyro,* a relatively obscure niche of Lewis's oeuvre, casts a long shadow, marking the impact of a paradigm shift: hysteric-repressed subject to traumatised-narcissist. That the *Tyro* is also a term for a recruit (which Lewis emphasises, Klein, 2004) helps us to recognise the political implications of that position. The desperate need for inner stability makes such a subject vulnerable to fascistic fantasies of permanence and militarised notions of self (strength, aggression, and disdain for difference) and of the nation, as well as providing a pure (that is undiluted) monstrous manifestation of that type.

The figures of the GK and Chris Finch are characterised by a lack of interiority which renders them properly monstrous. This is their shared trait; they are psychic functionaries to the subjects proper of Gawain and Brent (with the latter two's self-questioning and moments of subjective change). Finch and the GK are hollow men, which is revealed in pivotal moments: for example, in *SGGK* when the giant warrior is beheaded picks up his head and speaks his portentous reminder to Gawain (Armitage, 2007:23). At that moment it is clear that the GK is inhuman, without the interior (mortal) physicality of a vulnerable living person. In no less memorable a moment, Finch, the tyronic predatory chauvinist of *The Office* (2001-2003) is revealed as psychically (subjectively) hollow when Brent (his hitherto lackey and confidant) finally stands up to his bullying sexism and tells Chris to 'fuck off'. Finch's aggression, his domineering of Brent, mockery, and competitiveness, all well established in the previous episodes, are overcome. The absence of a riposte from Finch and his clear deflation reveals the hollowness under the tyronic surface. He is an empty shell, lacking 'a secure core of self' (Frosh, 1999:287).

By contrast, the subjects Gawain and Brent have something real to contend with, characterised by interiority and psychic change. For Gawain it's a significantly upgraded sense of self, characterised by doubt and self-questioning (symbolised by the scar on his neck); for Brent, it's a real connection with another person. Agency is presented in these examples as a simple choice, a contingent aspect of the subjective yes and no, Gawain's yes (his acceptance of the GK's challenge) and Brent's no, his rejection of 'the masculine circle of innuendo and sleaze' (Brabazon, 2005:116). There is an important detail regarding the confrontation between Brent and Finch which is relevant to the way I characterise *monsters of fixity* and the *Tyro*. Brent's 'no', that is his moment of separation from Finch (in the final episode) is not an overcoming on Finch's terms, according to the *Tyro*-like qualities of sexism, violent intimidation, mockery, and so on, which would accomplish in the terms I set out in Chapter 4 the function of the *monster of fixity* which is to define the subject in the name of those values. Brent does not make a more sexist or better joke, he simply (psychically and literally) walks away from that social relationship and its hierarchical implications. This is key, because, overcoming by assuming the qualities of the *monster of fixity,* especially of armoured aggression, is fated and self-defeating.

While developing this argument and emphasising the opposition and shared economy of the GK and the *Tyro,* a striking and opportune piece of casting occurred, as if to confirm the common qualities noted above and to highlight the differences explored. *The Green Knight* (2021) a film adaptation of *SGGK* by David Patrick Lowery sees Ralph Ineson, the actor made famous by playing Chris Finch, take on the role of the GK. Moreover, Lowery explained to me, 'I watched a lot of him [Ineson] in *The Office* leading up to working with him' (Lowery, appendix 2), and Ineson commented to me regarding the casting of *The Green Knight* (2021).

> Interestingly, Robert Eggers cast me in The Witch because he was a fan of Chris F and saw parallels between my performance in the Office and the pride/lack of self-awareness needed for William the father in The Witch (appendix 2).

Ineson's comment speaks to the 'outwardly self-important and inwardly devastated' wounded nature of the *Tyro*, Frosh's (1999) aforementioned subject lacking a 'core of self' (287) which characters like Finch and William share. Finch's overbearing qualities, his misogyny, grimacing, and aggressive gesturing combined with Ineson's height and strong features make the character properly monstrous, and strangely over-present even when he is absent from scenes in *The Office.* (Frequent mythologizing references to him and his lurid phone messages occur throughout the series.)

This monstrous over-presence is perfectly illustrated in a famous scene where an employee of the paper merchants, suspected to be the amiable Tim (Martin Freeman) has circulated a satirical pornographic image that includes Brent's severed head. Brent's masculinity (and his place in the hierarchy as an efficient white-collar manager) is questioned by his superior Jennifer (Stirling Gallacher), who demands he deals with the issue directly: 'If you're not man enough to do your job I will do it for you' (*The Office,* 2001–2003). After an excruciatingly embarrassing confrontation with Tim witnessed by Jennifer, and various other employees it transpires that the guilty party was in fact the absent Chris Finch, Brent's 'great mate'. As Brent attempts to backtrack he is instructed firmly by Jennifer, 'I trust you'll be telling Chris Finch he won't be working with us anymore?' (*The Office* 2001–2003). Brent tries to avoid this, but again is challenged by Jennifer, whose instruction (and Brent's trepidation) is equivalent to, *go and behead the Green Knight!* (More generally, it is a command to *face this monster*). He then stages a phone call where he confronts Finch but is exposed as actually speaking to a talking clock when Jennifer presses the speakerphone button. This failed castigation of Finch (echoing Gawain's beheading of the GK) foregrounds the actual confrontation in the final episode.

Misogyny: Consolation for all Tyros

The Nature of misogyny in the *Tyro* is a result of the desire to be free of dependency on the other or to put it another way, a desire to be self-enclosed, separate, and distinct. Sexual violence and valorisation of predatory qualities which would otherwise indicate satisfaction of an appetite (for women, their bodies and interaction in straight dynamics), becomes a desire instead for a willed aphanisis, that is, for a purging of sexual desire where belittling, consumption, and violence are the tools of the flagellant on their way to a form of perceived purity. If predatory and violent qualities separate the peon from the *Tyro,* then aphanisis separates the *Tyro* from the angel or superior-intellectual. Durand (1983:864) draws together various strands contributing to the meaning of the term aphanisis, discussing its emergence in the work of Ernest Jones (1927), where its connotation is quite specific. It refers to 'the disappearance of all sexual desire'. Durand also discusses the 'sleight-of-hand' performed by Lacan whereby the concept is 'cannibalised' into the 'fading of the subject' (Durand, 1983:865), and its appearance in the work of Baudrillard, where it becomes 'one of the names for the "desertification" of meaning' (1983:869). Jones conceived of a deeper fear upon which castration anxiety rests, the total loss or disappearance of sexual desire, and he defined aphanisis as 'the total, and of course permanent, extinction of the capacity (including opportunity) for sexual enjoyment' (Jones, 1927:461). What Jones could not conceive at that time is how such a position might be willed as a preferred condition of supposed superiority, where one is freed from the dynamic of sexual interdependence with another subject, such as we have with the example of Lewis's angels and Padishah (see my introduction).

Quema (1999) and Tickner (2000:108) both place sexual aggression toward women as key in the *Tyro* (visual and textual) and its antecedents. Quema, referring to the *Tyro* grin as having 'canine aggression', sees this as an outcrop of a 'painful obsession of Lewis's where the 'substitution of food for sex' in his fiction is 'cannibalistic' (1999:108). Supporting the hierarchy I propose, of peon (lowest), *Tyro* (middle), and angel/superior-intellectual (highest), and its relation to sex, Quema explains that angels were 'maintained in a state of physical purity' (51) and that 'the elite of Angel City is supposed not to take part in sexual activity' (108). Tickner (discussing *Tyro* visual antecedents) makes it expressly clear that this attitude in Lewis is about the suppression of a particular feminine authority/sensibility. Lewis rejects 'naturally expressive and spontaneous femininity' both interpersonally (i.e., for Lewis himself) and generally as a direction for society, which should instead (for Lewis) embrace the mechanical and the 'sexual [as] combat' (2000:108).

A useful generalisation to account for this would be to name the attitude as a modernist-inflected 'patriarchal violence' and to understand it as a problem for masculinity (this would chime with Tickner's, 2000 estimation of Lewis). As bell hooks points out, 'to take the inherent positive sexuality of males and turn it into violence is the patriarchal crime that is perpetrated against the male body' (hooks, 2004:84). Discussing Robert Jenson (1994), hooks emphasises the pathology of this aggression, a reaction to society failing 'to make good on its promise' (84) to stabilise the subject. Sexual violence 'reaffirms' self-hood in a hierarchy by subordinating women, fixing them in a clear position in the dynamic as objects (conciliatory prizes). Jenson (1994) highlights violence where 'sex is fucking' (91) in a hierarchy that privileges 'white, male, heterosexual' (94) concentrations of power. In a proto-fascist, essentialist modernism like Lewis's nothing should permeate the hermetically sealed shell of masculinity.

Conclusions

Lewis's work forms an oeuvre that it is difficult to interpret due to 'a particular overdetermination by political as well as psychic impulses' (Jameson 1979:43). For Tickner it's a totalisation which is represented in the lack of background and the ways that surface is propelled into the face of the viewer by the flat surfaces. There is 'no "background," only intersecting planes where in contrast to cubism proper, the manner of intersection is rendered violent' (Tickner, 2000:104). For Žižek, this need to 'say it all' is generally thought of in his writing as a retreat from the void of the subject, both in the 'Other' and in otherness within us. Žižek sees this in postmodern art forms 'by way of 'filling in the gaps' and 'telling it all' what we retreat from is the void as such, which…is ultimately…the void of subjectivity' (Žižek, 2001:148).

We can apply a similar logic to the difference between the Pearl Poet's Gawain and the position of Lewis's *Tyros*. Gawain and the poem, are *subjectively* open, allowing various interpretations to exist and permitting active participation on the part of the reader; Lewis's *Tyros,* wherever these 'new subjects' find themselves, are *objectively* acting for Lewis's hierarchical agenda. Lewis's beholder is forced to accept or deny this. If the potency of the work is so great that it overwhelms critical faculties then it would act much like propaganda: offering a dogma to be taken on as the truth, or else it finds new enemies. The desire for recruits and a valorising of the past, as well as forceful polemics, all confirm Lewis's proto-fascism. In utilising medieval shallow space, Lewis celebrates a return, not to feudalism or monarchism as such, but a new version of hierarchy rooted in an updated aesthetics which takes the modern 'fairy desert of modern life' (Lewis cited by Tickner, 2000:79) as its contemporary subject matter. The controllable architectural landscape is preferable in attitudes of fixity to temporal nature.

Prisms of Vision

The Tyronic Prism

This ephemeral media-saturated interior space is the site that Lewis opposes to the outside or nature. 'This enormous, jangling, journalistic, fairy desert of modern life serves him as nature did more technically primitive man' (Lewis cited in Tickner, 2000:79). This is a site where the rigidity and absolute surface of the human-animal in pursuit of a super-egoic ideal surface struggles to become ever more armoured and toughened. I suggest that the subject's choice for Lewis, is between a hyperbolic stagnation of the self, spectacular but ultimately stilted (tyronic predatory status); or a muffled half-life where predators and prey are forced into equivalency like a saccharine cartoon, but with the horror of absurd comedy since the potential *Tyro* is convinced out of their natural superior essence. They become akin to fighting bears, de-clawed, their teeth pulled by the values of a sick bourgeoise.

Pearl Prism

I propose that Gawain is the primary source of his own suffering; the GK and Arthur's knights are not judgemental of his 'failure'. It is his own psychic economy which gives force to the writhing sense of shame and rage that he feels, in contrast to Lewis, who sees everywhere weakness and enemies. I suggest the sequence of events following Gawain's testing at the Green Chapel is significant to his becoming present in time. Gawain jumps forward after being nicked by the GK's axe, the sequence of events is something like a symbolic birth: at the first threat of coming mortality, 'Gawain shrank at the shoulders' (Armitage, 2007:104), then as another attempt comes, 'Gawain was motionless' (105,) and finally, after an aggressive outburst at the GK, the final blow is struck.

> Hoisted and aimed, the axe hurtled downwards,
> The blade bearing down on the knight's bare neck,
> A ferocious blow, but far from being fatal
> It skewed to the side, just skimming the skin
> And finely snicking the fat of the flesh
> So that bright red blood shot from body to earth.
> Seeing it shining on the snowy ground
> Gawain leapt forward a spear's length at least (106).

There is tension, breaks, or failed pushes then quiet resolve, followed by blood, pain, and screaming. With his paternal cut, the GK delivers Gawain back into the reality of the moment, there he feels happier than ever before. It is a powerful analogy explicitly named by the poet.

> Because never since birth, as mother's babe,
> was he half as happy as here and now (106).

In the chivalric world of Gawain it is the landscape and the harshness of the natural world (the site of Lewis's hard Darwinian crust), not the courts of Arthur and Bertilak, that constitutes the very arena of subjective growth. Material reality holds open the room for change since the nature expressed there is a temporal one (here and now) with not only mental consequences, but bodily ones. The poem leaves the subjective experience open, forcing back onto the reader the responsibility for the meaning that's read into the narrative. This has a strong materialist slant and while there is much made of the supernatural and the religious in Gawain it is this spontaneous relationship with the wild dangerous outside which redeems man, protecting him/her from the congealing forces of totalisation and identification with ideals.

Chapter 4

Monsters of Fixity and of Flux: The Legacy of an ‘Agon’

Monsters

Having outlined qualities of monstrosity in my principal case studies in the previous chapter, I will now look at how this contrast and economy can be developed into categories, *monsters of fixity* and *flux-monsters*, which contribute to an understanding of monstrosity. Additionally, I examine a range of examples drawn from art practice that I propose represent said categories, responding to the same trauma in divergent ways. I revisit ‘the way conservative ideology conceptualizes order and the threats to that order’ (Neocleous 2004:72) focusing on otherness in fascistic thought as ‘amorphous’ (Neocleous, 2005) to help to understand the way *flux-monsters* are understood from a position of fixity. Furthermore, notions of ‘eerie’ and eerie-agency which disrupt the ‘self-possessed’ will help to explore the function of *flux-monsters* as those representing ‘forces that fatally disrupt…interiority’ (Fisher, 2016:80). Since I suggest fixity is necessary for proto-fascism, I will argue that *flux-monsters* are figures of resistance to both fixity and proto-fascistic ideas of self and nation, disrupting illusions which sustain those positions. Lewis’s *Tyro* serves as the principal example of a *monster of fixity* while the GK serves as the epitome of a *flux-monster*.

Jeffery Jerome Cohen’s text ‘Monster Culture (Seven Theses)’ (1996) has been useful to me in conceiving *monsters of fixity* and *flux-monsters*. In this canonical text of contemporary monster studies, Cohen offers seven theses that elaborate on monstrosity. Thesis one, ‘the monster’s body is a cultural body’ is concerned with emergence. Cohen explains that monsters are ‘born’ from cultures as responses to upheavals in certain ‘moment[s] – of a time’ (4). Thesis two, ‘the monster always escapes’ (4) is concerned with the function of monster studies, there Cohen argues ‘“monster theory” must…concern itself with strings of cultural moments’ (6) and be prepared for the ways contemporary social relations can shift meanings around the monster. Thesis three, ‘the monster is the harbinger of a category crisis’ (6) presents the first of two theses that I relate to my conception of *flux-monsters*. In thesis three Cohen emphasises the monster’s ability ‘to smash distinctions’ (6). In thesis four, the second thesis that relates to what I term monstrous flux, ‘the monster dwells at the gates of difference’ (7), Cohen emphasises Otherness and proposes, ‘[the monster’s] function is dialectical' (7), highlighting alterity and mutability as a threat to rules and structures (12). In thesis five, 'the monster polices the borders of the possible' (12), Cohen presents the first of two theses which I relate to what I refer to as monstrous fixity. Cohen discusses the monster as an entity that 'reifies' making the complex or abstract concrete, so that meanings are 'insistently readable' (13). In thesis six, the second thesis I relate to monstrous fixity, 'fear of the monster is really a kind of desire' (16), Cohen emphasises the way that the extreme form and/or actions of the monster form a wish fulfilment on the part of the subject, particularly as 'a temporary egress from constraint' (17). Cohen highlights punishments, violence, and 'control [in the]…traffic of women' (13) to keep 'patriarchal society functional' (13). Finally, in thesis seven, 'the monster stands at the threshold of becoming' (20), Cohen offers us his interpretation of the potential of monster studies, which I relate to my understanding of the contrast between subjectivity and subject-positions (discussed below). Monsters, Cohen explains, are entities that dwell in the 'recesses of our mind' (20) and are concerned with re-evaluations and 'perception[s] of difference' which aid us in acquiring 'self-knowledge' (20).

Defining Interiority Apropos 'Subject Position' and 'Subjectivity'

Subject Position

I draw on concepts of subject-position and subjectivity to describe the relationships between ideas, situations, and intentions as they relate to notional concepts of the subject. At the outset it can be made clear that I understand Lewis as interested in subject positions as they are defined in basic general terms by Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday (2020): 'In theories of textual positioning, [a subject position is] a role which a reader is obliged by the structure and codes of a text to adopt in order to understand the preferred meaning' (2020:161). Lewis's habit of 'forcing his readership to choose between himself and virtually everything else…in the modern canon' (Jameson, 1979:4) leads us to the idea of an 'ideal reader' where 'a reader of a text is positioned as a subject through the use of particular modes of address' (Chandler and Munday, 2020:113). I define fixity as an attitude favouring subject positioning and, I would suggest, a particular form of subject positioning that is lacking in mobility or ambiguity.

Such intention, conscious or otherwise from a text's author allows us to see this key way in which a text *can be* read by another subject, reinforcing particular attitudes. In the examples I give, *monsters of fixity* reinforce ideas of permanence, hierarchy, and order. Escape from such intentions cannot be guaranteed and, as I argue later, these emerge due to analytical and heuristic approaches of the subject to a text. Escape from subject positioning can be seen to be encouraged by texts such as Cohen's (1996) or in dialogic art practice: the intention of the practical element of this thesis. In my works, I seek to stage a monstrosity that is aligned with flux rather than fixity – or even which draws the fixity involved in a series of previous monsters (my *Tyro* paintings and constructions) into a mode of flux that always still haunts them, even as they seek to deny it.

Subjectivity

A useful general definition of subjectivity is offered in Hendrik de Smet and Jean-Christophe Verstraete's 'Coming to Terms with Subjectivity' (2006). Their detailed analysis of the vague term subjectivity leads them to three categories: pragmatic, ideational, and interpersonal. Of these, two – 'ideational' and 'interpersonal' – fall into what is referred to as 'semantic subjectivity' (see useful diagram on 387) concerned with perceptions and forming attitudes and the subsequent 'enactment' concerning interlocutors. To be clear, ideational subjectivity relates to 'the description of a content "situated in the speaker's subjective belief-state/attitude toward the situation"', and interpersonal subjectivity is concerned with the 'positioning of the speaker with respect to this representation and his or her interaction with the interlocutor' (385). These two 'semantic' categories are related and as aforementioned, they stand for the subject's forming of perceptions, attitudes, and subsequent enactment. When I refer to subjectivity I refer to that 'semantic' base. Later, subjectivity will be further connected to heuristic experience and interpellation evoking a connection to the psychoanalytic discourse.

Monsters and the Subject

I argue monsters have a specific relation to time manifested in their form and in the landscape that acts as their setting. As a result of looking through this lens (and in particular that of the time-agon, described below and as already explored above in discussions of Lewis and *SGGK*), monsters are either agents of flux or fixity. By agent, I refer to the monster's function as a catalyst for particular attitudes in the subject defined by fixity or flux. I relate these positions to Malcolm Quinn's 'The Plot Against the Future' in *Memories of the Future: On Countervision* (2017). In his chapter, Quinn explores the idea of the time machine, drawing on Sigizmund Krzhizhanovsky's story 'Memories of the Future' (circa the 1920s; see Krzhizhanovsky and Turnbull, 2009) to develop the notion of a time traveller as a person who, rather than operating a 'bizarre' machine (apropos HG Wells), is one 'who talks about and uses the things of this world in a different way than everyone else' (Quinn, 2017:32). The comparison between these types of time travel allows the so called 'plot against the future' to be discerned: 'The plot against the future is a restriction on the possibility for the occurrence of the future within the present' (32). As such, Quinn is concerned with ways in which true change is prevented in a stagnant eternal present. Comporting to time and perception are key in maintaining what is referred to as 'pseudo-future' (2017:41). Quinn connects this particular subjectivity to time and the prevention of the new/change occurring in the present, referring to 'intellectual automata' who adopt 'counter temporal' (45) positions. This is analogous to the working of imperial-modernism, as already encountered in examples in this thesis such as The Festival of Britain (1951), Abraham Games's posters, and mega-forms (see Chapter 2). It also connects to the strategies of 'ideological…political darkness' (Mitchell, 1994:6), since they are perspectival frames 'representing an artificial world as if it were simply given and inevitable' (Mitchell, 1994:2).

George Hartley in *The Abyss of Representation* (2003), drawing on Althusser (2001), describes the sense in which interpellation calls into being the egoic/imaginary/sense of self (as in Lacanian thinking) as a constantly renegotiated gap between the Real and the Symbolic. 'Subjects are produced by interpellation, which is precisely the function of ideology: the injunction for us to take upon ourselves our symbolic mandate, to assume the subject-position provided for us by the ideological call' (Hartley, 2003:8). Hartley explains such an operation is predicated upon the 'subject-as-radical-negativity. Subjectivisation-interpellation is nothing but the attempt to cover over the traumatic recognition of the abyss of subjectivity as such' (10). Such an abyss is constitutive of what is behind 'gaps' which figure in Fisher's formation of the eerie: 'Gaps and inconsistencies are constitutive of what we are' (2016:72). Any form of reconfiguration or change in the subject is founded on the possibility of confronting such gaps since, as Althusser points out, 'interpellation has always already produced individuals as subjects: "Before its birth, the child is therefore always-already a subject, appointed as a subject in and by the specific ideological configuration in which it is 'expected' once it has been conceived"'(Althusser cited in Hartley, 2003:8-9).

Subjectivisation has two directions; one is 'crystallization' (2003:147). In that instance, Hartley refers to Jameson's (1979) discussion of Lewis as an example of this formation that links 'national allegory to libidinal apparatus'. It involves something outside the subject which through interpellation becomes an internal driving force. The second direction is the weakening of these preconceived moulds (subject-positions) whereby a situation or an agent calls out to the gaps and inconsistencies and as a result renegotiation (or change) is possible.

For Quinn, ‘The pseudo-future arrives when someone points at something like a building, an object, a new technology… and declares it to be the harbinger of things to come’ (2017:41). Like heraldic geometry in imperial-modernism and the commonwealth discussed in Chapter 2 (‘neo-material mastery’, Littler, 2006:23), we get ‘an updated version of our world, a mere future condition of the present’ (Quinn, 2017:42).

Following the logic above I suggest that proto-fascism using strategies of fixity reproduces current power dynamics. Peppis’s qualities of proto-fascism (see introduction) included ‘aggression, elitism, racism, anti-Semitism, misogyny, homophobia’, and archaism (2009:1). These can be considered ‘pseudo plots’ as Quinn describes such provocative and supposedly disruptive positions (2017:41-42) since they are reactionary defensiveness, which in fact works to prevent change. Lewis’s ‘anarcho-libertarian’ attitude, described as ‘imperialist chauvinism’ (Klein, 2002:245), produces such ‘visions, or threats’ (Quinn, 2017:41-42). Enabled by fixity these attitudes depend on the continuation of ideas adapted superficially to contemporary dynamics in the name of a ‘pseudo-future’.

I differentiate monsters from ghosts and other supernatural tropes such as haunted houses, which are spatial and will be explored in Chapter 5 since it is a term used by Gawain to describe the Green Chapel (see Armitage, 2007:101). Monsters are embodied, can be touched, fought with, communicated with, and destroyed. For Neocleous this ‘must include its nature as a living being (there is no such thing as a mineral monster or mechanical monster)’ (Neocleous, 2004:80). Accepting some of this logic, I say instead that a definition of monsters includes their status as embodied, tangible, actualised in space, with physical form and presence. I insist there are mineral and mechanical monsters. The Golem, ‘the Jewish “mud man”’ (Koven, 2000:217), for example, is ‘inorganic’ matter, mud or clay. ‘The signifier “golem” clearly exists as that kind of monster, neither living nor dead, and human in form but without a soul. The golem legends ask that we meditate on those paradoxes’ (227).[2]

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[2] Regarding mechanical monsters see also Mann (in Wenger Bro, O'Leary-Davidson and Gareis, 2019). That thesis sees the mechanical monster as embodying dehumanisation.

The Time Agon

The term ‘agon’ – which I have already used in other contexts – is here used to place monsters in a pre-Socratic philosophical context that has endured into the present, defined by differing accounts of time in Heraclitus and Parmenides. The rationale is to foreground time in relation to monsters and subsequently the relation of time, monsters, and landscape as explored throughout the project.[3]

Regarding the extent to which the opposition of the time-agon defined here is rooted in divergent accounts of reality, time, and subjectivity in Parmenides and Heraclitus, McCormack tells us that ‘in the nineteenth century, Heraclitus featured as a comic character, often partnered on stage by Parmenides’ (Mc Cormack, 2016). The familiarity of this opposition was universal enough to act as a fertile site for satire.[4] Hoy explains they ‘expressed contrary views of time’, both thinkers defining this conflict for ‘2500 years’, highlighting the longue durée of the time-agon and emphasising the contemporary conflicts it inspires. They expressed ‘views of time so different and provocative that philosophers and scientists can find themselves still wrestling with the same issues and in effect taking sides’ (2013:9).

Parmenides and Heraclitus both believed that the common-sense experience of individuals makes their ideas appear wrongheaded (Hoy, 2013:10). This is shown by their popular comic appearances. Furthermore, they depart from and find fault (for different reasons) in ‘tensed language’ and the evolutionary ‘tool kit’ (sensory perception) that appears inconstant when exposed to analysis (11). Heraclitus emphasises the struggle of opposites, the exchange of energy, and change in general. He sees as ‘divine’ (eternal) the site of these exchanges. ‘Heraclitus has used the pairs merely to point out the ever-present flux ongoing between the pairs. What is eternal (what is divine) is just flux’ (14). ‘Identity conditions’ for Heraclitus are in radical flux (ceaseless change). Not simply the ‘cosmos’ but people too are constantly changing. ‘Logos tutored perception (and technology enhanced science) reveal what is flux, not the endurance of identity preserving things!...“No thing endures – the only immortal is flux”’ (15). Flux is explained as ‘transition or change’ (13), for Heraclitus the condition of all things. This condition ‘is the same for all’. Hoy explains, ‘ordinary thing language’ is insufficient to describe reality, so Heraclitus embraces ‘poetry’ and ‘paradox’. Hoy thus concludes, ‘He *seems* to embrace contradiction’ (16).

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[3] The term ‘Agon’ is important to three canonical writers: Roger Caillois in *The Structure and Classification of Games* (1955), Harold Bloom in *Agon: Towards a Theory of Revisionism* (1982) and to Chantal Mouffe’s *Agonistics* (2013), only the most obvious common factors are relevant to my thesis, including notions of struggle and opposition.

[4] For a full account of the opposition between the thought of Parmenides and Heraclitus see Ronald C. Hoy’s *Companion to the Philosophy of Time* (Bardon and Dyke, 2013) while the necessity of Heraclitus as agonistic counterpoint for Parmenides is addressed in Boodin (1943:584).

Parmenides, in contrast, emphasises logic, seeing reality as still and eternal. ‘What exists is…completely “frozen” in time… [The] change that we perceive…only occurs at the superficial level of appearances’ (Huggett, Vistanni, and Wuthrich, 2013:244). Explaining the ‘majority’ view of Parmenides, Matson (1980) clarifies:

> Reason proceed[s]…from the indubitable premise that what is, is and what is not is not…Existence, Being, Reality … consists of one homogeneous thing, never generated, never to be destroyed, never moving or changing…but people are deluded into supposing they perceive many different, generated and perishing, moving, changing things (345).

For Hoy (2013), Parmenides is a ‘champion of fixed time transcending logic’ (16). For Boodin, ‘Parmenides created the first absolute monism, what William James called “a block universe”’ (1945:582). Parmenides sees only one route to truth characterised as paths or perspectives that people take in relation to reality. Other views are ‘backward turning’. This includes the everyday view of tensed language and the position of Heraclitus. Furthermore, what is divine or eternal for Parmenides is ‘incapable of perishing’ and ‘is not subject to any change’. Moreover, Parmenides is clear, there is ‘no becoming – no transition from future to past for it’ (17). For Provencal, this opposition is characterised as one between an already whole-complete cosmos and an uncertain-open one. ‘They represent the opposition of the Heraclitean indeterminate to the Parmenidean absolutely self-determinate’ (1999:5).

We have two models of reality, including identity conditions for the subject. These are radically opposed between an indeterminate flux base, which allows for temporal passage, the ‘flux’ of change; and another which privileges ‘fixity’, continuance, and the eternal, where there’s no temporal passage or becoming.

As a principal example in the thesis, Lewis effectively places himself in this agon by aligning with Parmenides (as cited by Lewis 1926:375 and referred to in *Time and Western Man*, Lewis, 1927a:236) and by working against the Heraclitean position (Lewis, 1927a:544: 1926:338). Lewis identifies the Heraclitean position as present in Henri Bergson’s thought (see *An Introduction to Metaphysics* 1903) and in Whitehead’s *Process and Philosophy* (1978, first published in 1929). A detailed account of Lewis’s exposure and attitude to Bergson is the subject of Charlotte de Mille’s ‘Blast…Bergson?’ in *Understanding Bergson,* *Understanding Modernism* (Ardoin, Gontarski and Mattison, 2013). De Mille explains Lewis had early exposure to Bergson and attended Bergson's lectures. Based on annotated copies of texts showing Lewis took great care to understand what he was grappling with, she argues that Bergson was key in his development (142).

De Mille highlights Lewis's play, *The Enemy of the Stars* (1932) as a response to Bergson. 'Lewis's methodology comprises a complex manipulation of Bergson's system' (145). Lewis opposes the spatial to the temporal while strategically 'appropriating [Bergson's thought] ... to an objective spatial realm' (145). To understand what's at stake in the agon, Lewis sets his main protagonist Arghol against nature (see Klein, 1991:228). For Toby Foshay in *Wyndham Lewis and the Avant-Garde* (2014), Arghol is a celebrated but 'foredoomed' character, Lewis's 'Prometheus figure'. Foshey explains, '*Enemy of the Stars* reconstructs spatial and temporal coordinates to evoke in the audience awareness of a crisis…physical and spiritual…at the heart of modernity' (Foshay, 2014:27).

Lewis advocated a position in the agon for his audience: fixity opposed to the flux of Bergson's oeuvre. 'Lewis was clearly under the conviction that he was addressing matters of objective importance, that his main character's agon was also his own and that of his readers' (26). The narrator *in Enemy of the Stars* addresses the audience directly (Foshay sees this as Lewis speaking):

> Yet you and me!' I hear you – What of you and me? 'Why not from the English metropolis' but in this mad marriage of false minds, is not this a sort of honeymoon? We go abroad. Such a strange place too for the initial stages of our intimate ceremonious acquaintance. It is our 'agon' too. Remember that it's our destiny! (Lewis cited in Foshay, 2014:25).

I suggest the agon for Lewis is struggle with the 'time mind' advocated in Bergson. Bergson (1903) and Whitehead (1927-28) are aligned in the 'time agon' with Heraclitus. Whitehead makes this link himself in *Process and Reality* (1927-28:208-209), while Russell (1914:18) connects Bergson to Heraclitus. Further to this, Bergson's attitude to Heraclitus is ambivalent. In a nuanced discussion of this, Lacey (2010) explains that Bergson (unlike Heraclitus) does 'accept some…substantiality' (78), although this position of Bergson is seen as an overreaction to Heraclitus. Despite the caveat of Bergson's ambivalence, Lacey is clear that Bergson is a process philosopher along with Heraclitus and Whitehead (9). For Hoy (2013), the description of Bergson's critique of sequential mathematical time follows Heraclitus.

> Henri Bergson is the best example (inheritor of Heraclitus). Though a mathematician, he complained that any “geometrical” or mathematical or logical-conceptual analysis of time is a falsification of time…he advocated a purely intuitive (non-conceptual) experience of the flux of Duration [or Absolute Becoming] as the only way to know the reality of time’ (22).

With this history in mind, as I will be using it, the term ‘agon’ refers to this opposition between Heraclitus and Parmenides, between fixity and flux and the divergent emphasis placed on time in nature and subjectivity.

Fixity, Flux and the Eerie

Following the parmenidian–heraclitian emphasis, ‘fixity’ refers to the eternal, to continuance, and to order. Furthermore, it resonates with a desire for clear boundaries, strict hierarchies, and categories of order. Fixity in attitude privileges spatial rather than temporal reality and exalts visual representations of an idealised past in the name of a hierarchical present and future. Flux describes change, is indeterminate, and embraces paradox and the temporal; its agents ‘cut’ into or disturb ‘normal consciousness’ (Quinn, 2017:41) through interruptions and breakdowns. Flux is ‘eerie’ and concerns the passing of time and the impossibility of knowing (Fisher, 2016). An agency understood as ‘eerie’ disturbs the normal functioning of ‘the very structures of explanation that…made sense of the world’ (Fisher, 2016:66). The self is seen as changeable and constructed; identity is linked directly to the indeterminate. ‘Unity and transparency which we ordinarily ascribe to our minds are illusory. Gaps and inconsistencies are constitutive of what we are’ (Fisher, 2016:72).

Agents of Flux

Establishing the GK as a *flux-monster,* I emphasize the relationship to time written into his form. The foliate properties of this figure ‘convey a materiality and a temporality that far outlasts the human – and yet to which the human is intimately, materially bound’ (Cohen, 2019). We can add to observations of giants in Whittkower (1942:177-8, see introduction) a temporal aspect, as Susan Stewart emphasises.

> The giant is represented through movement, through being in time. Even in the ascription of the still landscape to the giant, it is the activities of the giant, his or her legendary actions, that have resulted in the observable trace. In contrast to the still and perfect universe of the miniature, the gigantic represents the order and disorder of historical forces (2003:86).

In *Plant Horror* (2016) Dawn Keetly and Angela Tenga characterise the GK through the pagan green man, insisting the green man represents '[the] assimilation of wild nature' into Christian myths. This may recall my discussion of the pagan elements of the poem in my introduction (see also Jones 1953:5). Keetly and Tenga (2016) propose that *SGGK* is germane to current 'ecocritical' environmental concerns, an observation shared by Cohen (2019:25) and Ralph (2017:431; 436; 441). Those readings reference the changing seasons, renewal, and the GK's position as a representative of temporal nature. Most pertinently, Cohen sees the GK as a 'foliate intrusion' (2019:25), observing the way that the poem emphasises the contingent moment 'here and now' (52). Cohen stresses the uncertain relationship with the environment: 'The poem insists that seasons spiral rather than circle back or merely repeat' (39), highlighting the fear of the end of nature (see also Clark and Wasserman, 1986).

Furthermore, Keetly and Tenga (2016) emphasize the GK catalyses change, causing Gawain to undergo a 'transformative experience' (61). Finally, the argument that people are 'neither separate from nature or above it' (55). However, Keetley and Tenga insist fear of death, mortality in general, is the locus of horror represented in the GK, seeing him and 'plant horror' generally as green memento-mori. I would suggest, drawing on Neocleous (2004; 2005) and Ben Woodard in *Slime Dynamics* (2012), that it is life that Gawain fears, evidenced in references to blood, both his own and that of the GK, to his lingering sense of failure (subjective change) and continued references to cycles of life (environmental change).

If Gawain seems afraid to die at junctures in the narrative, he is more fundamentally afraid of change, of life. Death would make the image of the perfect knight (unassailable masculinity) permanent. 'The cult of death' as Neocleous elaborates concerning fascistic thought (2005:99), is a way of living centred on the sacrifice of self for nation and state. Woodard argues, the plasma of life itself, 'slime' equated to various 'life-generative and semi-solid substance(s)', is a cause of apprehension, even 'disgust of life' (2012:1). In *SGGK* blood is first the GK's, where it is linked to renewal (the removal and reattachment of the head). It is figured in the blood of animals in cycles of survival, hunting, and butchery. Finally, it is Gawain's blood, when he is cut and returned to reality, away from the delusional aspiration of perfect manliness. Woodard associates culture with the suppression of this life-giving substance. 'Both religious and cultural discourse assert that either we are not slimy or, if we are, we can escape our sliminess through culture, aesthetics, juridical systems, piety, abstinence, or the next life' (2012:2). Plasma is related to underlying reality, and 'Slime is the smudge of reality, the remainder and reminder of the fact that things fall apart' (67). The GK possesses powerful alterity since things that fall apart reform and are changed: otherness without and within.

Visualising Flux in Art Practice

Trees as Cyphers of the Greenwood and Nature apropos Flux

Counterintuitively it's in the sessile, fixed form of the tree that flux will be elaborated in art practice. Tree movement is anthropomorphised in *SGGK* to indicate the strength and size of the GK, who 'trudges towards them on those tree trunk legs' (Armitage, 2007:23). Tree-like characteristics are aspects of many visualisations of the GK for example the figuration of a foliate green figure in the opera *Gawain* (Birtwistle, 1991), the arboriform overtones in David Patrick Lowery's film *The Green Knight* (2021) and *The Green Knight's Head Lives* (2016) by Clive Hicks-Jenkins (who worked with Armitage to illustrate his translation). Hicks-Jenkins's image (fig. 44) makes a reference to strength: trees and branches are visible in the dress of the Knight. However, more strikingly, blood from the knight's severed head appears to form a tree at the neck, an emergent eldritch form linking to the shocking regenerative spectacle that follows his beheading at Arthur's court.

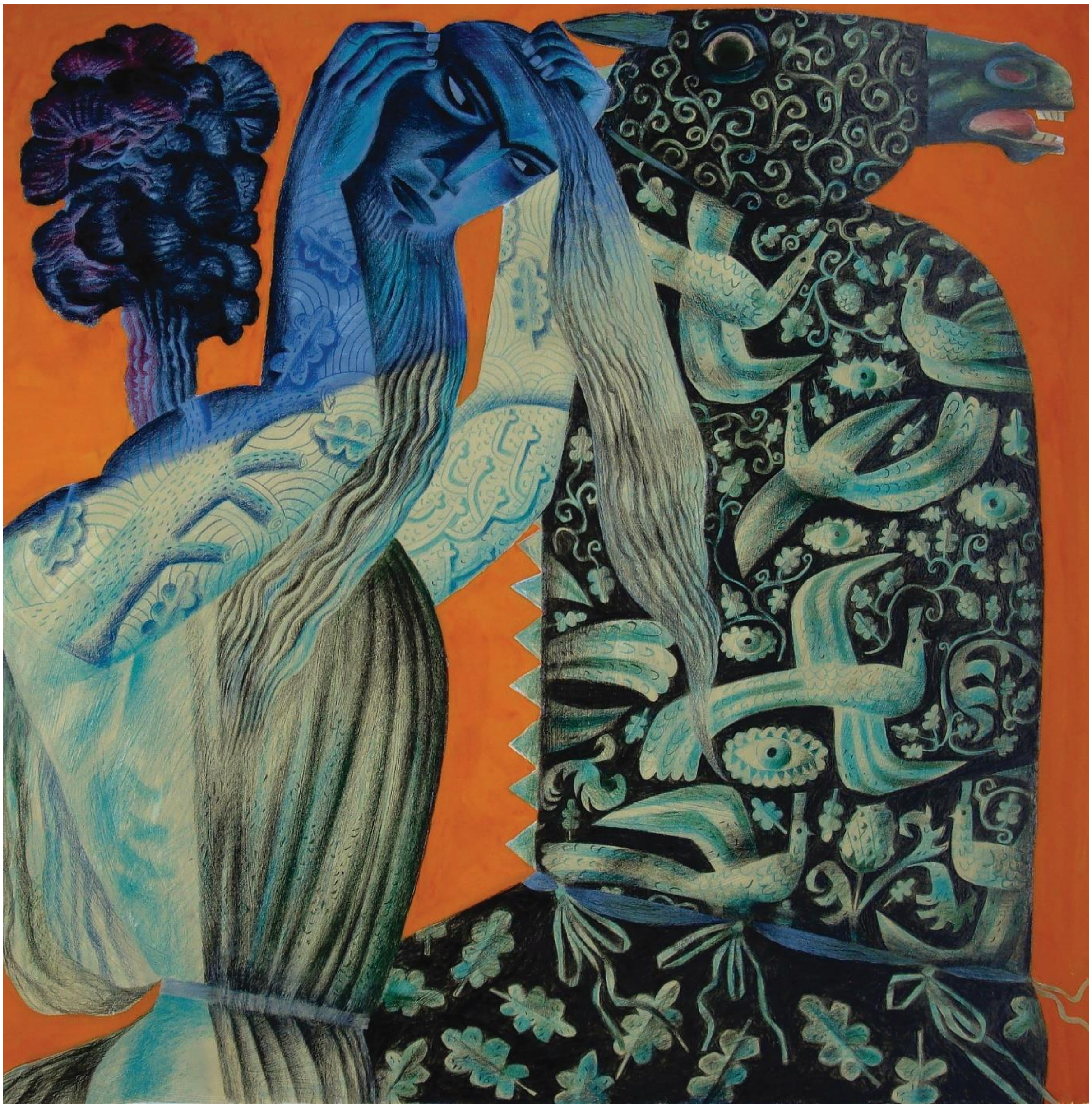


Figure 44: *The Green Knight’s Head Lives* (2016) Clive Hicks-Jenkins, image courtesy of the artist.

To strength and regeneration, we can add the tree's other experience of time, its longevity. As Kentridge explains in his 2013 lecture, 'Three Stories About Trees', these forms are simultaneously 'botanical specimen…repository of knowledge…displaced self-portrait', as well as a form with multiple symbolic associations (Kentridge, 2013).

A convincing example of what Kentridge refers to exists in the work of Samuel Palmer (1805–81), *Ancient Trees, Lullingstone Park* (1828) (fig. 45). Palmer's studies are realistic documents of observed trees serving as evidence of botanical specimens. They were also the perceived locus of transcendent knowledge: Palmer made these works pursuing his interest in William Blake while responding directly to John Milton, holding in his mind's eye an 'image…which had been planted there by a single phrase… "Pine and monumental oak"' (Owens, 2020:1). Finally, the works possess a quality of portraiture. The artist emphasises trees as entities that look back 'to bring out their individual presence – a manner that he referred to as "my wonted outrageousness"' (Vaughan, 2020:170). Owens recounts Palmer's conviction: the artist never simply describes but also makes the environment (2020:1). This seam of meaning drew Nicholas William Johnson to Lullingstone Park in an ongoing project begun in 2011 to make evocative Super 8 films (fig. 46) of the trees that Palmer studied. The environment takes on fretful and uneasy qualities akin to horror film. They are at once eerily empty of sentient presence while seemingly densely populated with huge, ostensibly anthropomorphic trees.

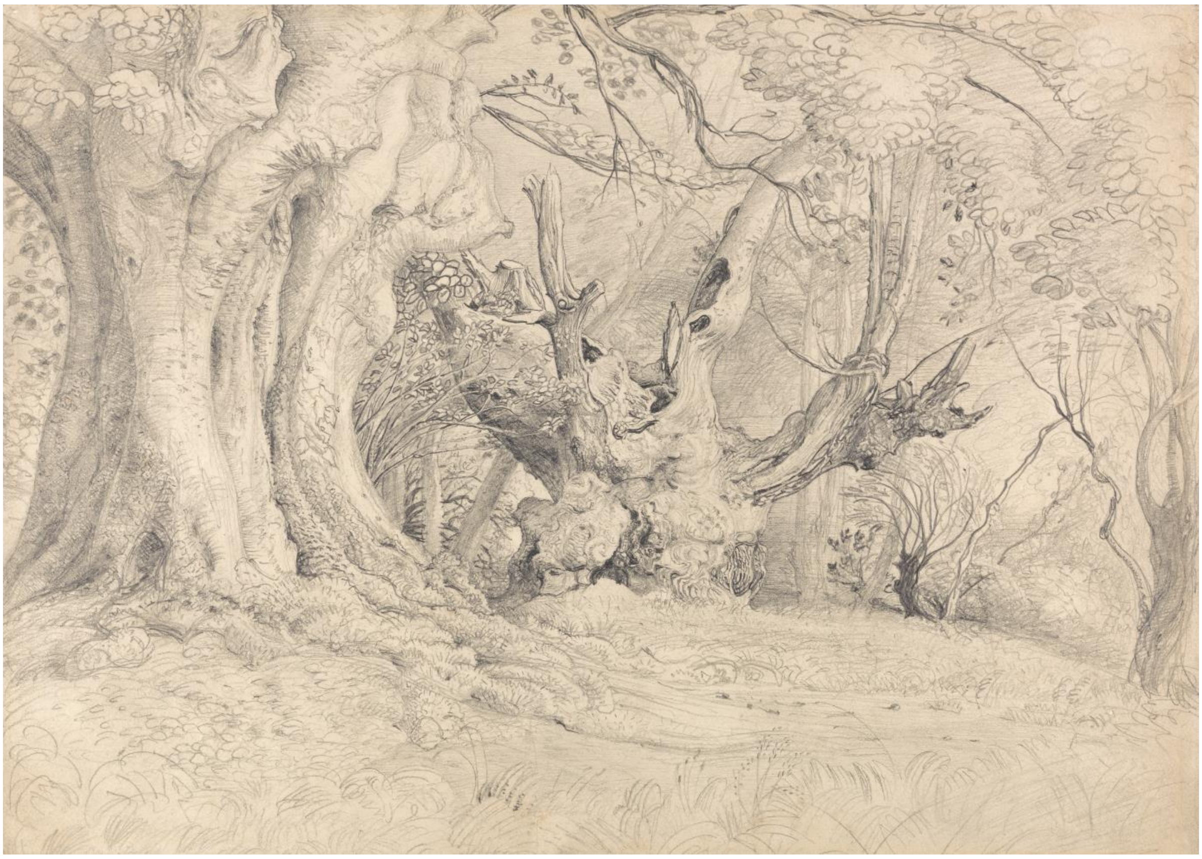


Figure 45: *Ancient Trees, Lullingstone Park* (1828) Samuel Palmer. Image courtesy of Yale Center for British Art.

Because of this ‘overdetermined’ (Freud, 2010:301) layering of meaning, trees are a potent heuristic device, apt for triggering personal interpretation. Kentridge addresses the symbolic associations of their longevity in a segment of his lecture, ‘Shrapnel in the Wood’, referring to German trees full of remnants of World War II: he talks of ‘the sense…of the trees ongoing as a kind of witness to a history that has passed by’, describing events being held as fragments in the body of the tree. Kentridge continues by referring to their bodies as ‘strange traces and places in which history embeds itself’ (2013).

Trees are a theme of four contemporary exhibitions, Among the Trees (2020) at the Hayward Gallery, featuring Kentridge’s, *Untitled (Lacking the Courage of the Bonfire)* (2019); The Botanical Mind: Art, Mysticism and The Cosmic Tree (2020) at the Camden Arts Centre, featuring conceptual contributions from Nicholas William Johnson (aforementioned); and This Muddy Eden (2020) at the Broadway Gallery, featuring the work of Hannah Brown, which will be discussed in Chapter 5. These shows draw on the status of the tree as an indeterminate, multifarious conflation of meanings and on their potentially anthropomorphic presence and longevity; in that vein, the tree-being can be considered a *flux-monster*.

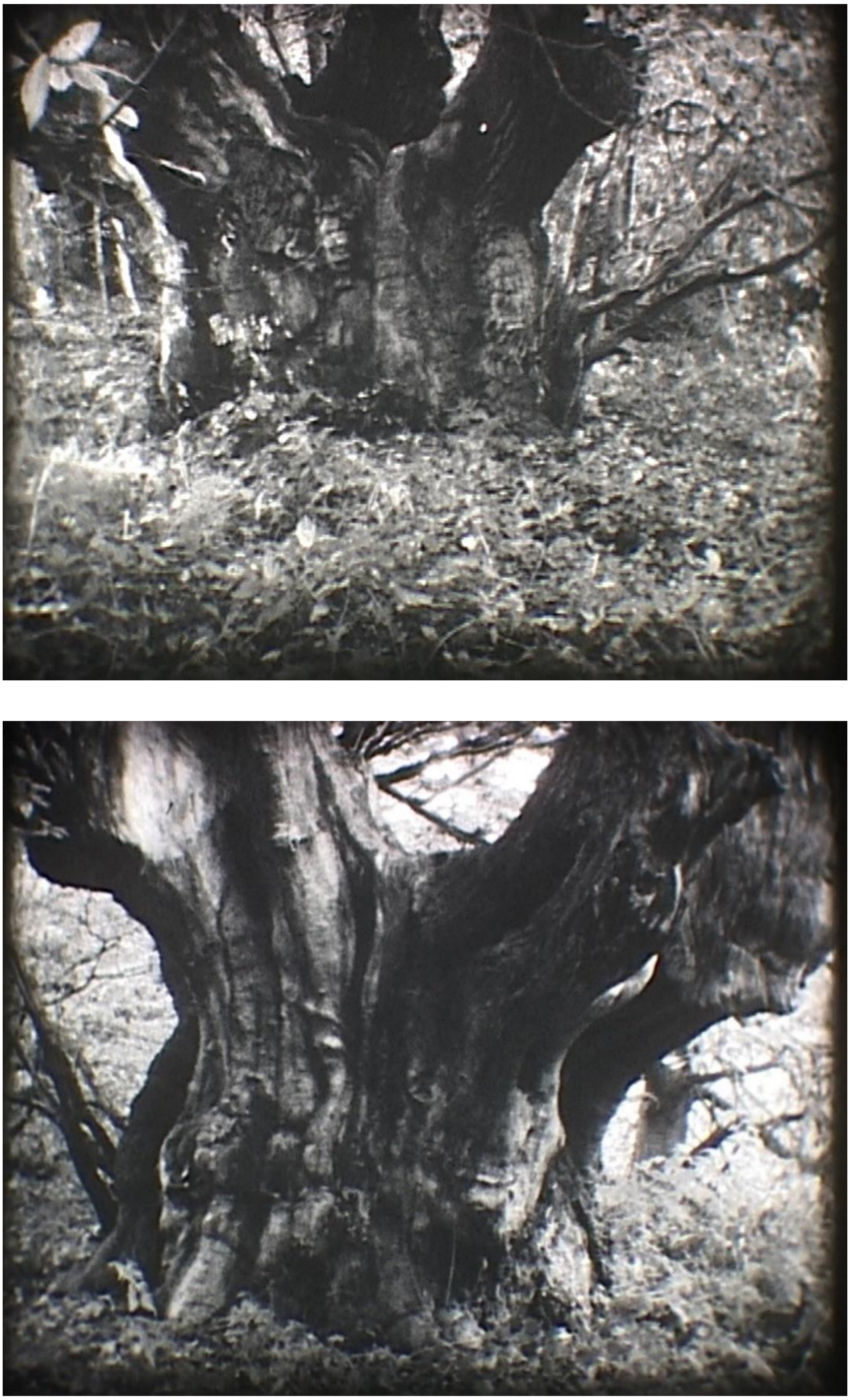


Figure 46: *Oak Trees in Lullingstone Park (2012-Ongoing)* Nicholas Johnson. Images courtesy of the artist.

Productive Incoherence in the Gaps

Creative misunderstanding and subsequent creation of meaning is one advantage of the tree's multiplicity. Kentridge describes mishearing the answer to an inquiry regarding a friend's activity. 'He's making a T-shirt' as 'He's making a tree-search', describing his split-second instinct upon being confronted with unfamiliar terms to invent a research tool 'tree-search' complete with methodology (a main central topic, the trunk, from which related categories branch off into connected subject matter), prompting Kentridge to ask, 'what is he researching?' (Kentridge, 2013). This is an example of an inventive imagination confronted with ambiguity. Kentridge insists this is a human quality engendering '[a] desire to push through incomprehension and an irrepressible will to make sense of fragments' (2013).

Inter-semiotic strategies and the use of anachronisms, of different painting registers and methods (sculpture, construction) in my art practice depend on this quality in the viewer, to make sense of what they encounter, confounding the idea of one coherent meaning. *Flux-monsters* likewise confront the spectator with an incoherent and disruptive presence, emphasizing gaps which, while disruptive, also call into action subjective interpretation.

For example, Kentridge links the presentation of written and visual material in his work as potentially creating such opportunities, terming this 'a jump across' gaps towards meaning. Referencing Ovid, Kentridge connects the 'panic' of not understanding to metamorphosis, which is often a solution to a crisis. 'Our understanding often has to do with incomprehensible fragments or contradictory elements that we try to think as best we can as if it could mean the following' (Kentridge, 2013).

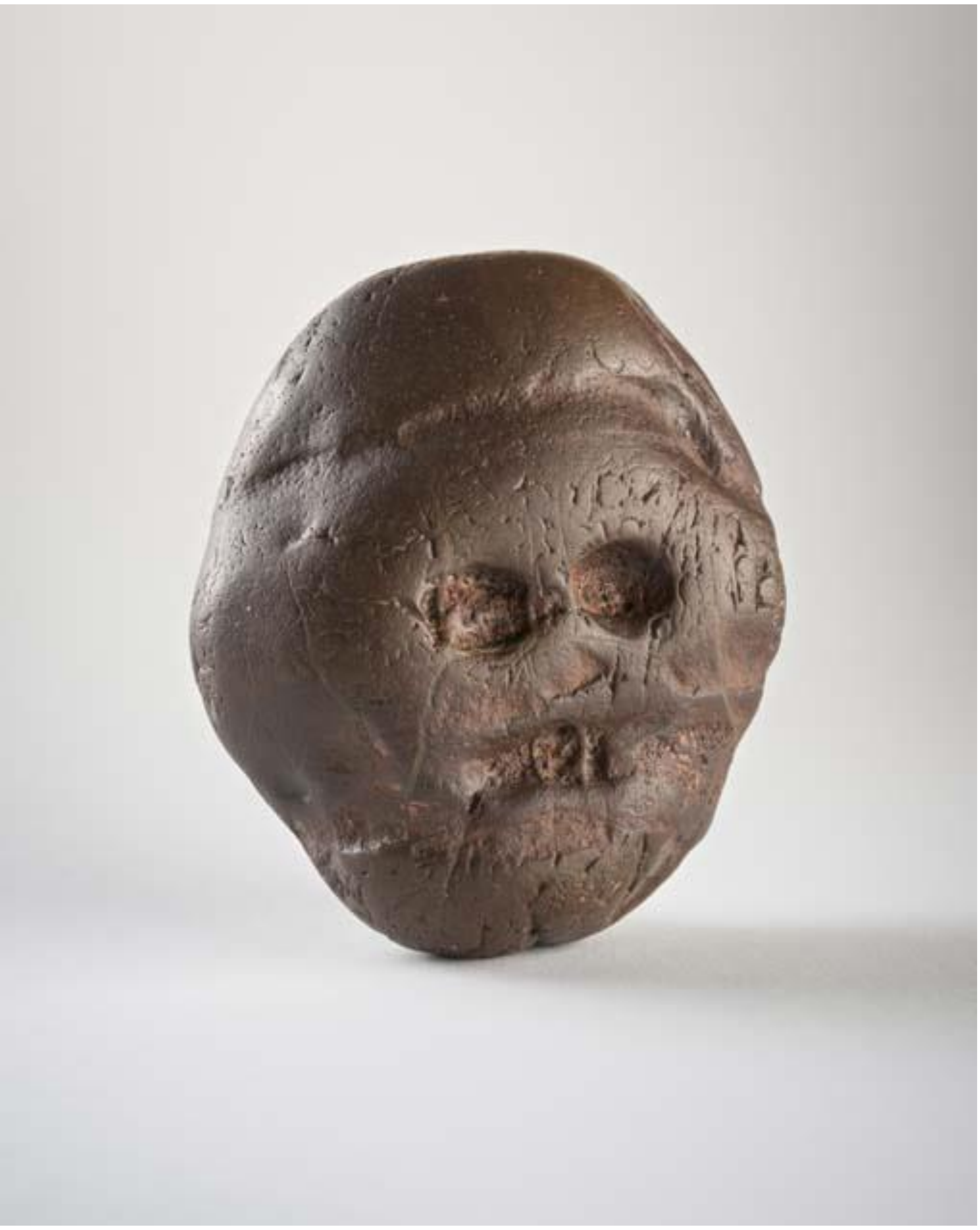


Figure 47: *Makapansgat Pebble* (c. 2.5 million) Nasher Sculpture Centre (2018).

The response to flux (conflation of meaning, incomprehension) can be a productive heuristic one. Further precedent for this can be accounted for in pareidolia, ‘the tendency of the brain to create a pattern where no pattern exists’ (Opstrup, 2017:50). Opstrup, writing of art, sees this linked to illuminating the unconscious for surrealism. ‘Pareidolia is intimately connected to a sort of magical thinking: the brain handles complexity by pattern recognition’ (51). Ambiguity and indeterminism are key aspects of surrealism, as Breton explained: ‘This uninterrupted becoming allows the…witness to consider the images of the external world unstable and transitory, or suspect’ (Breton, 1934:15). Research suggests that early hominids possessed this ability. Lee (2016:4) discusses the ‘*Makapansgat Pebble’* (fig. 47), a naturally occurring ‘face’ on a rock, and its ‘purposeful relocation’ by hominids three million years ago in South Africa (see also Dorin, 2013; Bednarik, 2017:103 and Oakley 1981). Lee (2016) suggests the phenomenon has relevance beyond restless probing, highlighting the place of ‘process and metaphor for the generation of meaning and interpretation, a method which opens up routes for critical and creative work’ (6). This quality predates the perspectival ‘frame’ that seeks to direct our comporting to landscape, a result of cultural conditioning, which we have seen for Mitchell (2009) is linked to hierarchy and naturalising power dynamics. Pareidolia speaks to an awareness of presence and absence that is ‘eerie’ in its implications for the self: ‘Why is there something here when there should be nothing? Why is there nothing here when there should be something?’ (Fisher, 2016:12). To attempt an answer to these questions is to be aware of other ‘modes of perception…modes of being’ (Fisher, 2016:9). Uncertainty creates the gap that a creative subject fills.

The experience of eeriness, the metaphorical and/or anthropomorphised tree, and the face of *Makapansgat Pebble*, accounted for in pareidolia, are the result of an analogous relation to nature. They require an indeterminate account of nature, one which is accepting of at least one other interpretation of what is out there when we look at the land and the natural forms in it. These are qualities *flux-monsters* embody: bringing doubt, disruption, and destabilising pre-existing certainties about self and environment. Pareidolia is useful because it allows for the resultant productive incoherence to be grounded in an evidenced prehistoric hominid practice which must predate all perspectival ‘frames’ mentioned in this thesis since it is a behaviour occurring before Homo sapien civilisation. The ability to make sense of fragments and construct meaning across gaps is a heuristic circular practice called into being by the land and its uncertain natural forms.

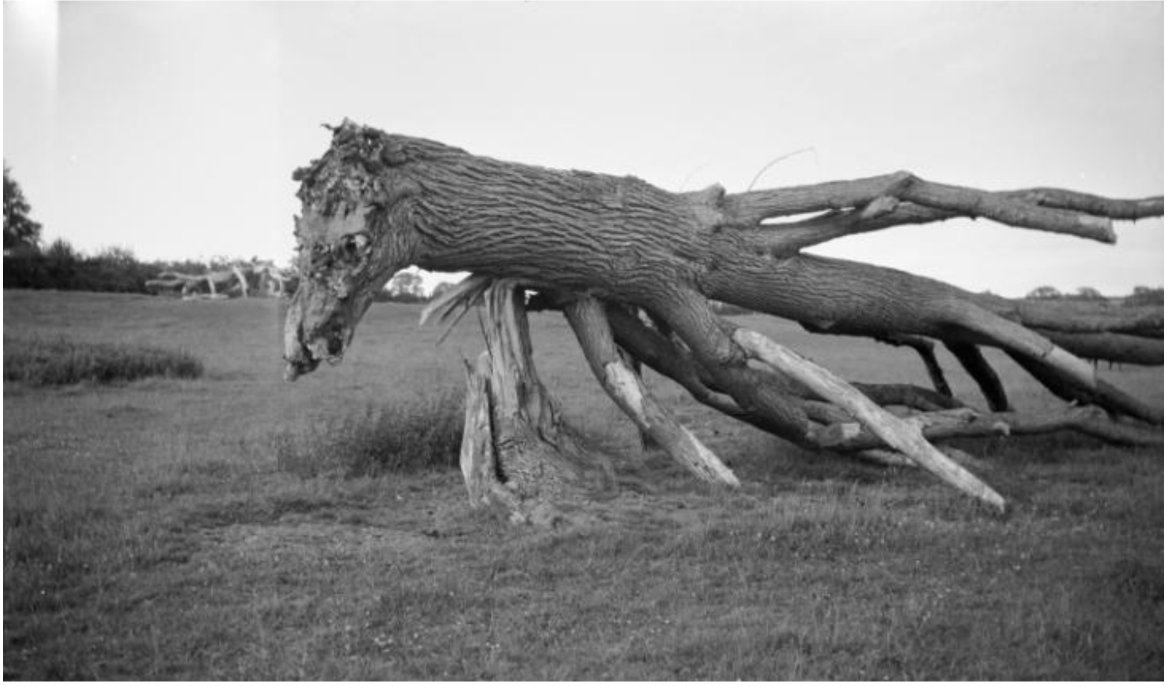


Figure 48: *Black and White Negative, ‘Monster Field’* (1938) Paul Nash.

Pareidolia was also of interest to Paul Nash, and associated with the figure of the monster, as is evident in his work *Monster Field* (1938) (fig. 48). The monsters represented by Nash, like the *Makapansgat Pebble*, were created by chance. ‘Fallen trees appeared to Nash as “objects alive in another world”. Like many artists of the time, Nash was deeply interested in the idea that prehistory revealed the primitive psyche’ (Macarthur, 2009:393). In establishing the importance of these works, Macarthur emphasises Nash’s depictions of temporality and concern with an ‘estranged relationship of time and place’ (392). He refers to *Metamorphosis* (1938) (fig. 49), which displays a dense Proustian image of objects, an interior, and a landscape, recalling a flood of lost memory returning.

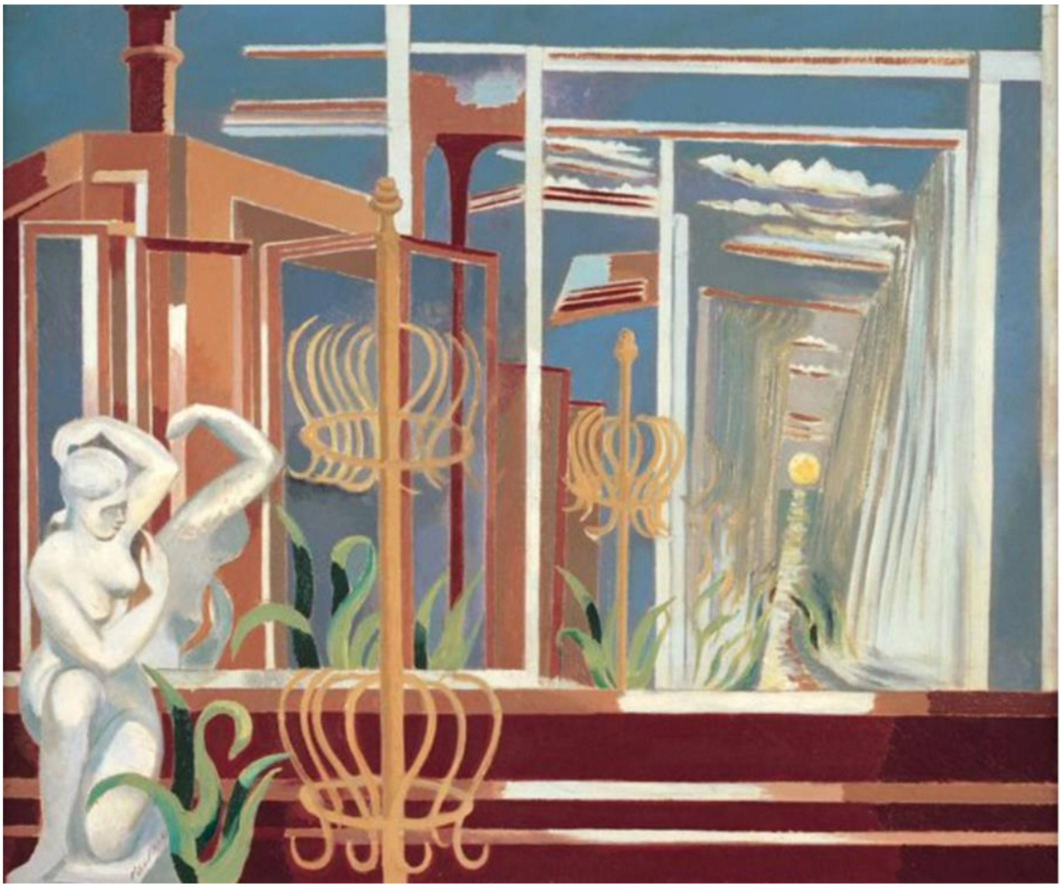


Figure 49: *Metamorphosis* (1938) Paul Nash.

In *Temporal landscape II* (2020) (fig. 30) I incorporated references to pareidolia and Nash by including an observation of upturned tree roots, drawn from an overturned stump (depicted bottom left in white). The roots present what can be read literally as the extremity of the fallen tree which stretches into the background or as a fierce beast-like head looming into the foreground. It is an overt gesture, but one which emphasises the tension between presence and absence, ‘agency that should not be there’ (Fisher, 2016:69).

The indeterminate relationship with nature demands from the proto-fascistic position the effort to suppress this with strategies of fixity (ideological/political darkness, othering, etc.). For Neocleous, nature is connected in Burke’s work (his principal example of conservatism) to ‘fear, horror and terror’ (2004:72). Furthermore, ‘order’ (2004:78; 79) and ‘fear of change’ (2005:28) are seen as fundamental to conservative ideology, linking acceptable conservative thought with fascism (28). These qualities are common to the proto-fascistic thought of Lewis (Jameson, 1979: 15; 23; 129; 184), where nature as a sight of flux must be resisted through control and mastery. Hierarchy and stable categories make this possible in society and the psyche. Threats to stable order become threats to society, the nation, and the individual. The nation becomes a ‘frame’, a way to suppress threats to order in both directions: from inside ‘interpellation’ (Mitchell, 1994:2) and through othering nature and agents of change generally. Neocleous thus writes of ‘this idea of an amorphous monstrous enemy…the combination (ever-shifting, mimetic, chameleon-like)’ (Neocleous, 2005:76). *Monsters of flux* are truth-monsters and truth is the becoming of the subject, an experiential quality, a process in time. Forgotten memory, the return of the repressed, and shifts in perspective become threats to order since they pertain to subjective change and personal creativity and threaten hierarchical frames that require the individual to eschew both in the name of one perspective.

Cohen (1996:7) applies qualities of ‘evasion’ to monsters and sees the effect of monstrosity as undermining categories. This is useful in accounting for their anti-hierarchical function. ‘In the face of the monster, scientific inquiry and its ordered rationality crumble’ (Cohen, 1996:7). The perception that the tree is simply a tree dissolves. In place of certainty is uncertain questioning: What does this mean? How do I make sense of this?

Flux-Monsters as the Demons of the Proto-Fascist Imaginary

A common iteration of the *flux-monster* is in a negative or unsympathetic form, especially in the discourses of conservative and proto-fascistic thinkers. For example, Neocleous (2004) identifies this in Edmund Burke’s thought, where monstrous ‘mobs’ (Neocleous, 2004:82) preoccupy his writing. Likewise, in Lewis’s mythos *The Human Age* (1928, 1955), the shapeshifting Bailiff, an amalgam of Bergsonian flux and Chaplinesque mimesis, is the primary grotesque who represents everything Lewis abhorred (Wagner, 1956:224). This figure, while an individual, is directly linked to the masses as an agent and organiser of millions of ‘peons’. Lewis, in an agonistic mode, opposes the Bailiff to the heroic and classically presented Hyperides.[5] Hyperides is not a subtle piece of characterisation. As Lewis’s tragic-heroic figure, ‘a champion of [a] “contrary pole,” Hyperides, a Greek, is described as the “legendary enemy” of the Bailiff and “the last Aryan hero”’ (Wagner citing Lewis, 1956:225). Wagner informs us that Hyperides is associated with Michelangelo as a figure. As well as his art, he has a similarly broken nose and is carried about like

---

[5] As well as the other less defined, strangely elegant ‘white’ angels who are disgusted by man (see Lewis in Jameson, 1979:155).

‘Michelangelo’s famous athlete’ (1956:225). Wagner acknowledges that ‘the proto-fascist Hyperides’ (1956:226) voices Lewis’s own ideas.

More generally, the opposition of a dignified authority figure and a chaotic monster that represents the upstart masses is identified in *The Many-Headed Hydra* (Linebaugh and Rediker, 2000), an account of the dispossessed and poor of the 15th to 17th centuries, who were an essential, if loathed part of Atlantic expansion. In his review of the text, David Armitage is clear about the Hydra as a symbol: ‘The self-regenerating swamp-monster attacked by Hercules provided an apt emblem for rulers’ fears rather than an inspiring object of self-identification for subjects or servants’ (Armitage, 2001:482).

With the exception of Lewis’s Bailiff why should I call these *flux-monsters*? Firstly, the inclusion of time in those iterations is a matter of scale and the logic which applies to the giant (aforementioned in Whittkower, 1942:177-8 and Stewart, 2003:86). That being, the giant, embodies geological time moving through space. The same applies to the ‘mobs’ of Burke’s writing and the symbol of the Hydra applied to the poor and dispossessed. According to Linebaugh and Rediker, the ‘groups [Burke] named embodied a monstrous many headed hydra’ (2000:40). Secondly, in these instances, resistance to change and maintenance of the status-quo is the underlying purpose both for the ‘architects of the Atlantic’ who embraced the figure of Hercules – ‘a symbol of power and order’ (Linebaugh and Rediker, 2000:40) analogous to Lewis’s Hyperides – and for Edmund Burke reacting to ‘Revolutionary France’ and its feared influence on Englishmen (Neocleous, 2004:76).

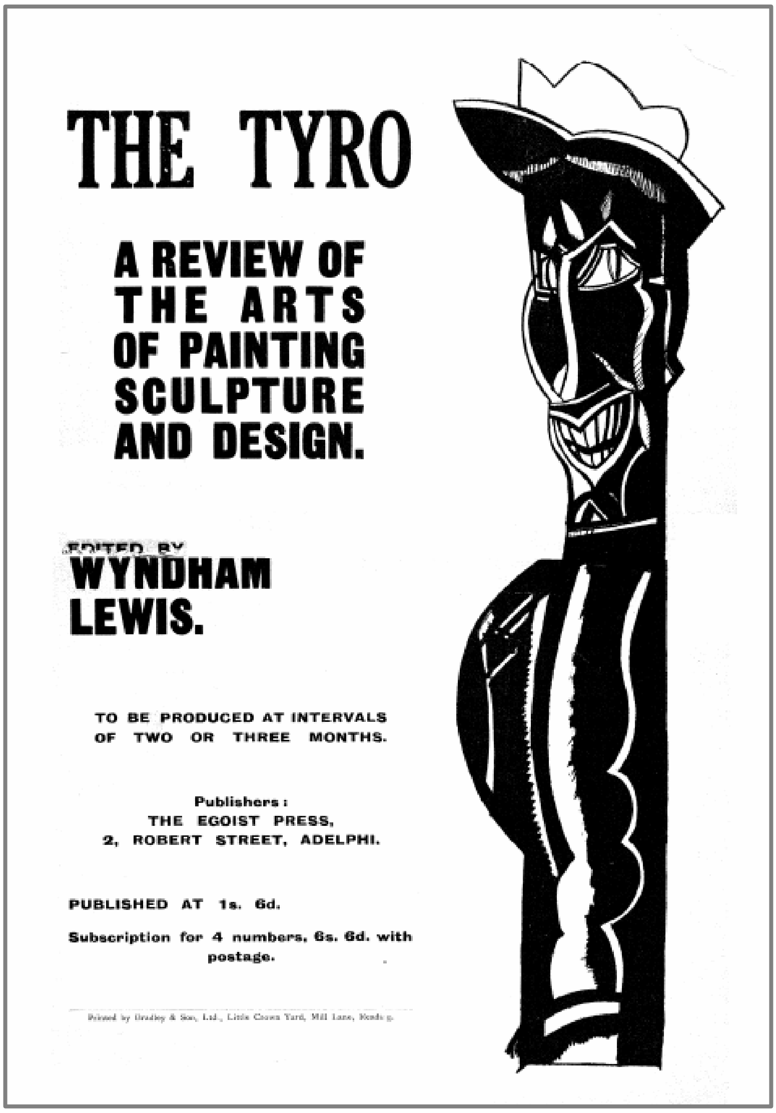
Nazism and its racist conception of Jewishness is equally concerned with changeable individuals and threatening masses. These are ‘pseudo plots’ (Quinn, 2017:41-42) and elicit reactionary defensiveness, in this case in favour of a supposed indigenous German middle class. The Nazis’ monstrous conception of Jewishness always hints at the inherent weakness of Nazism’s overall myth (there was no perfect Germany) and can be explained by the logic Cohen refers to as that of the ‘Scapegoat’, whereby ‘elements are extracted’ from marginalised groups to form monsters that ‘unite every private body to the public world’, but which can therefore reveal that ‘delicate matrix of relational systems’ (12) as false, resulting in the re-emergence of ‘possibilities of escape, resistance, disruption’ (Cohen, 1996:11). *Flux-monsters* are defined as those which represent time, change, and the return of the repressed; in these instances, they are likewise agonistically paired with idealised representations of order and permanence.

Symbols of order and permanence	**Symbols of mass change**
English Imperialism	Barbarous mobs
Hyperides	The Bailiff
Hercules	The Hydra
Aryan Germans	Jewish stereotypes

Figure 50: *Agonistic Pairings and their Analogous Relations*.

Agents of Fixity

As discussed previously the *Tyro* is described by Lewis as a ‘kernel’ from man, a pure seed (Lewis, 1927a:2) which becomes an armoured scarified surface showing us what we are. According to Lewis’s logic, they are predatory, surviving but compromised beings, naturally and beneficially hierarchical. For Lewis, these compromises – psychological depth, time-mind, Heraclitian change – can be resisted. The *Tyro* is a tool for this other direction of subjective movement toward fixity, with a solid base, as we have seen, ‘baked through’ (Lewis in Foster, 2004:144), avoiding a ‘jellyfish’ interior world he associated with Freud.



THE TYRO

A REVIEW OF
THE ARTS
OF PAINTING
SCULPTURE
AND DESIGN.

EDITED BY
WYNDHAM
LEWIS.

TO BE PRODUCED AT INTERVALS
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Figure 51: *The Cept (Tyro) (Cover Design)* (1921) Wyndham Lewis.

I suggest that Cohen (1996) provides useful insight for defining *monsters of fixity,* in his discussion of ‘political expedience’ (1996:13) and ‘abjected fragment’ (19-20). The monster that is a champion of permanence, the eternal, of order, and hierarchy, coherently phallic and resistant to any transformation that specifically induces change. These determinates cohere in *monsters of fixity*.

I propose that a monster can function as a ‘precipitant’, to borrow the scientific term for ‘forming a solid from a solution [which] is called *precipitation*. A chemical that causes a solid to form in a liquid solution is called a *precipitant*. The solid that is formed is called the *precipitate*’ (Helmenstine, 2020). This provides me with a simile for what the *monster of fixity* does. In *the monster of fixity,* ‘precipitation’ – making solid, or as Lewis would have it ‘baking through’ – is the function in relation to the subject. The monster is the ‘precipitant’ a symbolic rather than chemical catalyst. The subject is ‘precipitate’, reformed in accordance with core predatory qualities.

In fixity, processes associated with change become processes that describe instead a realisation of self: transformation (as I have argued previously) becomes a matter of revealing what you were all along. The monstrous appearance or transformation is permissible in fixity when it does not equate to psychic change (the new), but to a realisation of inner quality: the kernel, such as Lewis intends the *Tyro* to represent in relation to man, as highlighted in the Introduction. Fixity intensifies qualities present in the person which the monstrous surface attests to.

There is precedent for qualities being visualised as core attributes of a figure. *The Ghost of a Flea* (c.1819–20) (fig. 52) by William Blake sees the ferocious, greedy qualities of man become totalising features represented in the anthropomorphised, armoured, thirsting flea. Blake proposed that this grinning fiend was the combination of animal and man, who appeared to Blake in a vision and ‘who told him “Fleas were inhabited by the souls of such men as were by nature blood-thirsty to excess”’ (Kuijsten, 2006). Man as flea has changed nothing in the psyche. Following Blake’s description above, zoomorphism is a better term for the direction of the precipitant function of a *monster of fixity* – the animalisation of a human, rather than the humanisation of an animal. As Julia Kristeva points out ‘the abject confronts us…with those fragile states where man strays on the territories of animal…imagined as representatives of sex and murder’ (Kristeva, 1982:12-13).

The ‘precipitant’ function of the monster can be related to Cohen’s thought on political monsters: ‘Monsters born of political expedience and self-justifying nationalism function as living invitations to action, usually military’ (Cohen, 1996:13). Cohen states, regarding monstrous abjection:

> The monster is the abjected fragment that enables the formation of all kinds of identities—personal, national, cultural, economic, sexual, psychological, universal, particular (even if that "particular" identity is an embrace of the power/status/knowledge of abjection itself) (Cohen, 1996:19-20).

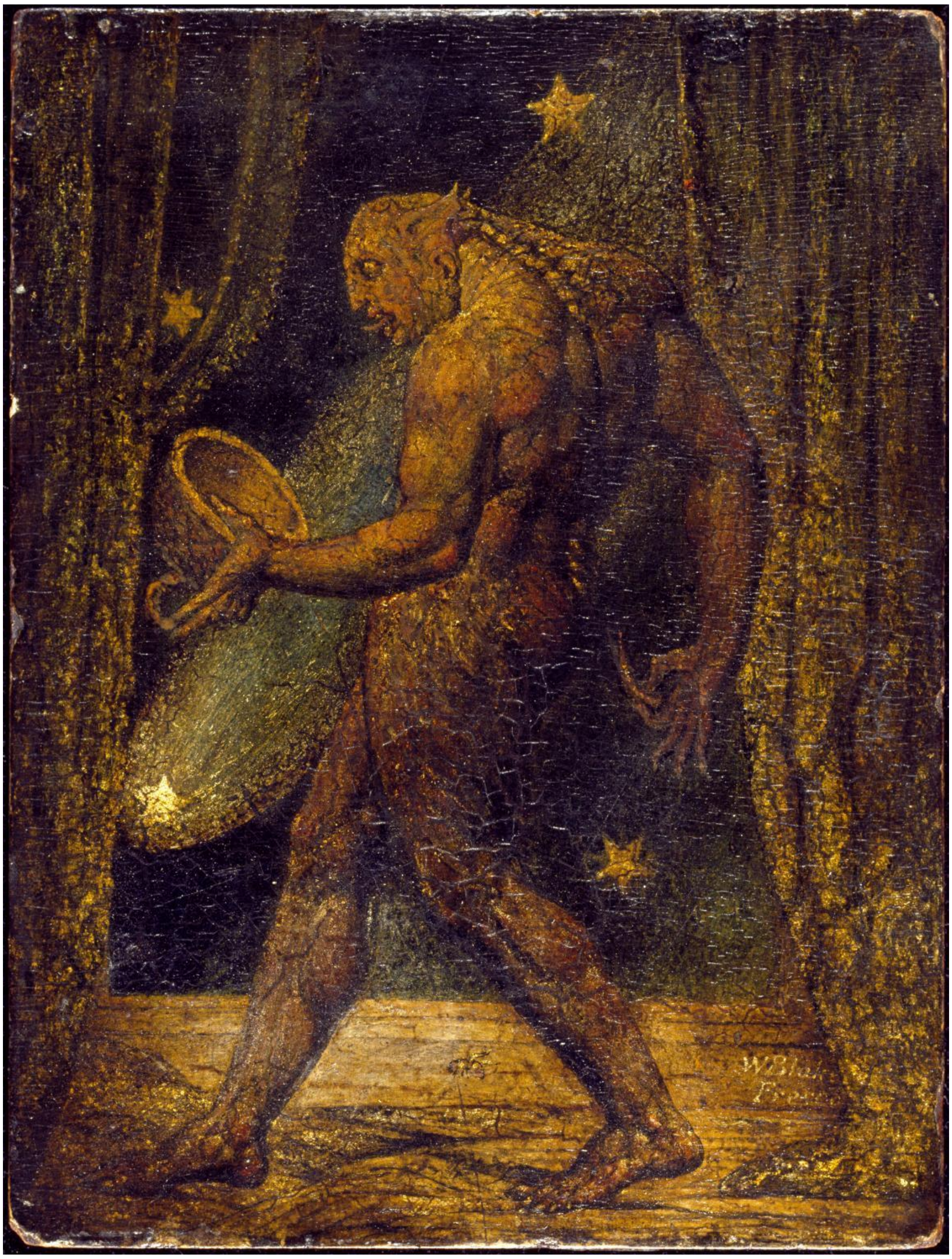

Figure 52: *The Ghost of a Flea* (c.1819–20) William Blake.

The vorticist sculptures of Jacob Epstein, *Rock Drill* (1913) and *Female Figure in Flenite* (1913) (fig. 53; fig. 54), present three-dimensional manifestations of monstrous fixity which embrace abjection. Moreover, they evidence the same phallocentric reaction to the paradigm shift discussed in the previous chapter. These sculptures are linked to one another in *Blast* (1914), specifically the drawings, *(Epstein, Jacob): xv-xv* and *(Epstein, Jacob): xvi-xvi,* and in Epstein's themes and method. According to a report by the Tate Gallery, 'Epstein was intensely preoccupied with themes of sex and procreation at this time, often violently'. We also find them linked in his planning materials, 'a sheet of notations of ideas connected with "The Rock Drill" which includes embryonic Venus and "flenite" figures' (Tate Gallery Report, 1975). The *Tyro* shares the same genealogy with Epstein's sculptures, that being, a lack of autonomy and general dehumanisation brought about by the stratification of working practices in the 20th century, but covered over by the seemingly heroic gesture of assuming those qualities. In Epstein that identification is defined by a menacing and anonymous figure, the whole body in an act of penetrative work; in Lewis's *Tyros*, the focus is on the head and the way its representation describes a personality: the *Tyro's* grin is a mark of self-knowledge and a predatory threat. Art historian Jeanne Willette describes *Rock Drill* (1913) as 'emphatically phallic… [signifying a]…masculine drive towards violence and destruction and perhaps procreation' going on to call the sculpture 'hyper masculine' (Willette, 2016). Willette (2016) links *Rock Drill* (1913-15) to Taylorism while O'Donnell (2020:78-90) links the *Tyro* to both Taylorism and Fordism. In both Willette, discussing *Rock Drill* (1913), and O'Donnell, discussing *Tyros* generally, the shared motivation for the works is as O'Donnell puts it, the effects on subjectivity due to 'the ideological transformation of mass-industrial modernity'(88).

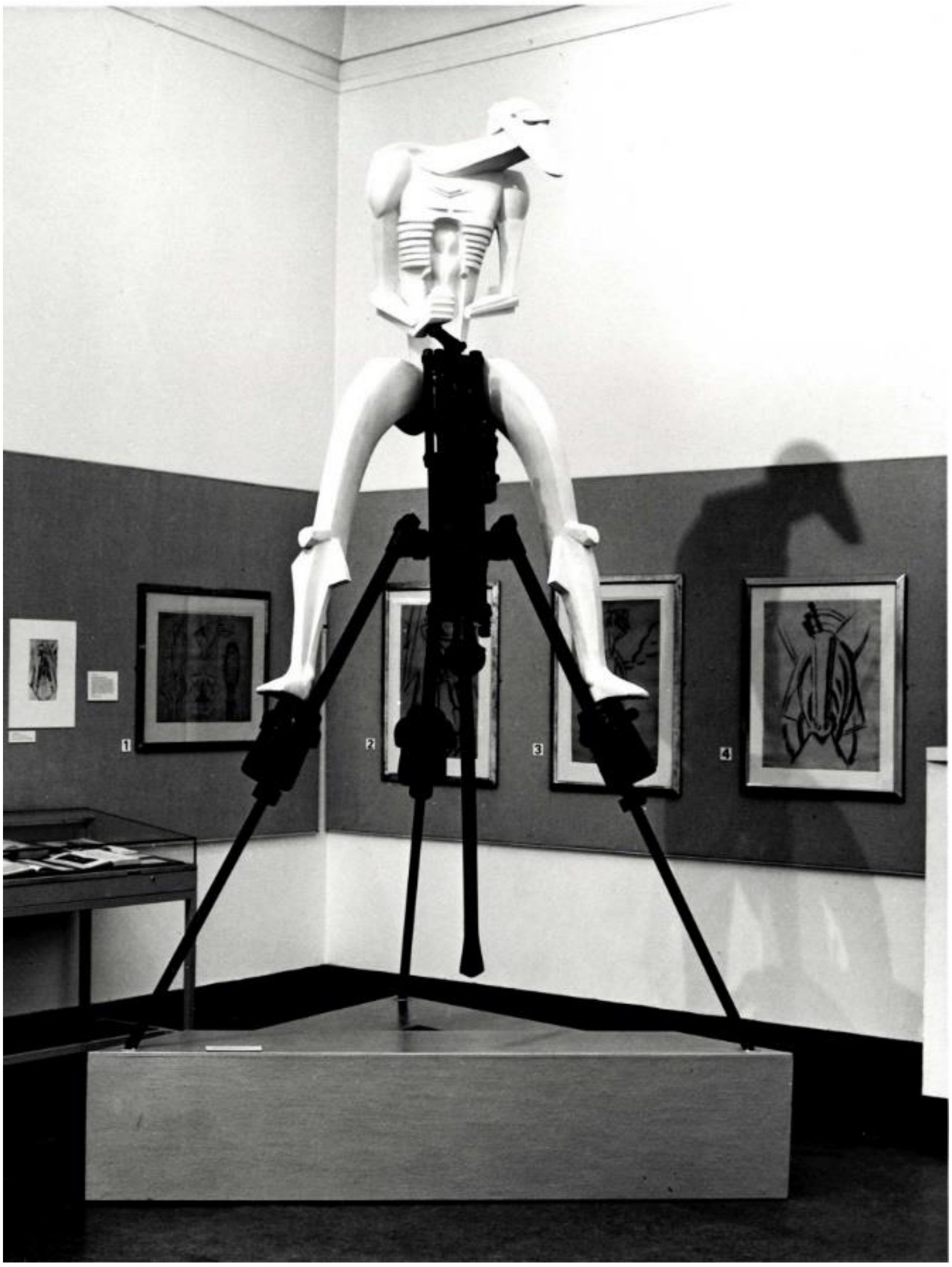

Figure 53: *Reproduction of 'The Rock Drill' at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery (1913 – 1915).* Image courtesy The New Art Gallery Walsall Archives.

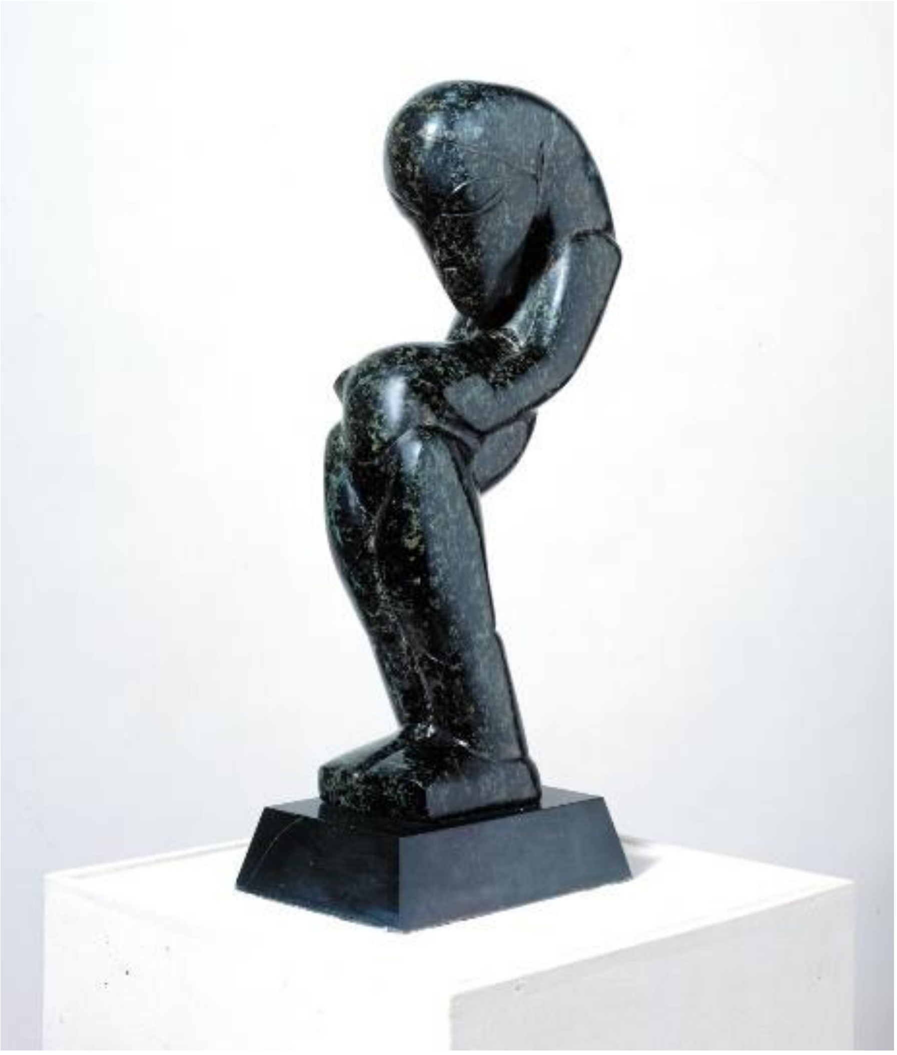

Figure 54: *Female Figure in Flenite* (1913) Jacob Epstein.

Anthony Gormley (2009) sees *Rock Drill* (1913-15) as a ‘terrifying embodiment of machinery’, emphasising its message about subjectivity, and he regards it as one of the most important works of the 20th century. The sculpture engages simultaneously with the formal strategy of found objects and critical shifts in European history, specifically violence and technology related to dehumanisation. Gormley is clear he considers this a monstrous figure, expressing a ‘form of becoming with unknown completion’ (Gormley 2009). Furthermore, as a manifestation of potent masculinity which, through its ‘extended phallic end’, genders nature, which it seeks to ‘split’ as penetrable and female. Like Lewis’s *Tyros* Gormley sees the work as having ‘innate power’, and he refers to it as an idol and as emblematic: ‘A conflation of industry and sexuality, it’s totemic…It’s a magic object…[and] also a warning about technology as an extension of anatomy, as amplification of human potential’ (Gormley, 2009).

Lewis similarly thought it Epstein’s finest work, ‘one of the best things he [Epstein] has done. The nerve-like figure perched on the machinery, with its straining to one purpose, is a vivid illustration of the greatest function of life’ (Lewis, 1915:78).

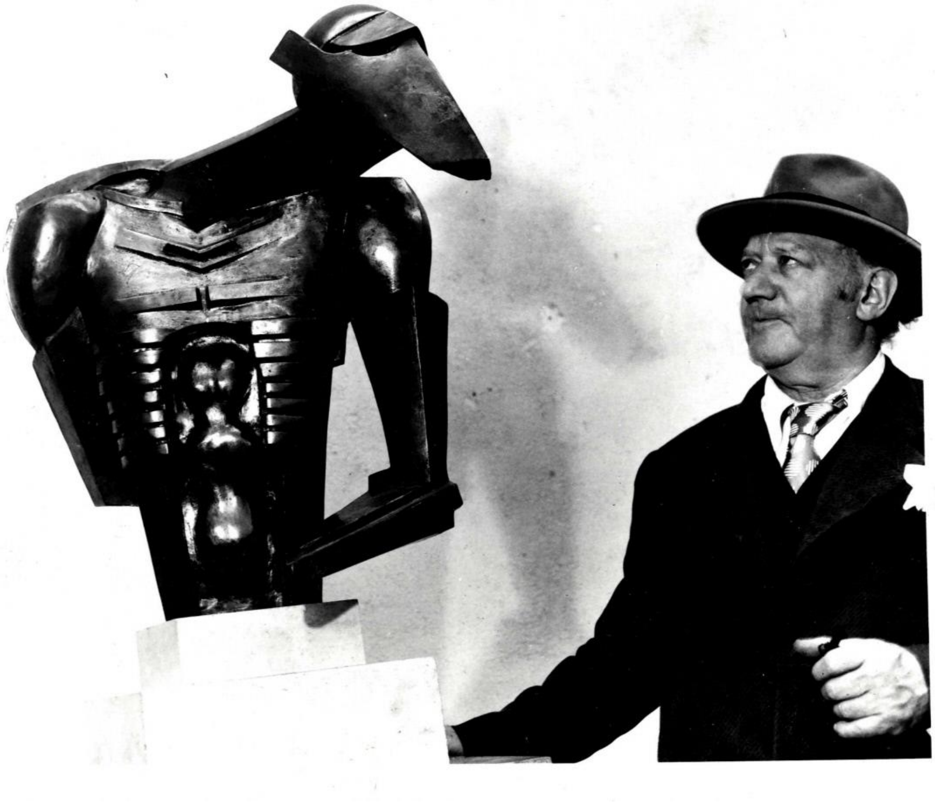

Figure 55*: Black and White Photograph of Jacob Epstein with 'The Rock Drill' (1913-15)* (c 1952). Image courtesy The New Art Gallery Walsall Archives.

This enthusiasm contrasted with Epstein's reflections following WW1. Having at first greeted the machine age enthusiastically, at this later point he writes: 'It was in the experimental pre-war days of 1913 that I was fired to do the rock-drill, and my ardour for machinery (short-lived) expended itself upon the purchase of an actual drill' (Epstein, 1940:56). Only later, following the sculpture's partial destruction by Epstein (fig. 55), the dehumanisation took on a darker, less triumphal feeling for its maker.

> I made and mounted a machine-like robot, visored, menacing and carrying within it its progeny, protectively ensconced. Here is the armed sinister figure of today and tomorrow. No humanity, only the terrible Frankenstein's monster we have made ourselves into (Epstein cited in Walker, 2019:164).

This is the making concrete of anti-humanist subjectivity which Epstein couldn't sustain following The Battle of the Somme (1916) and which Lewis could. 'The very stake of high modernism at this time involves wagers with reification and death' (Foster, 2004:149). Also consider the phallic nature of both the figure and the drill in Epstein's *Rock Drill* (1913): 'The drill protrudes from between the legs and suggests an enormous mechanical phallus' (Walker, 2019:164). *Rock Drill* (1913), I propose, is coherently phallic.

Observe that Epstein's masculine-seeming figure is 'sheltering an embryo' (Walker, 2019:164): since for Gormley (2009), Willette (2016), and Walker the sculpture is phallic, it carries within itself something like Lewis's kernel – hermetically sealed, phallic humanity, which is self-reproducing. 'An alien, robotic faceless figure…Humanity has metamorphosed into this alien that, with its faceless unseeing head, seems to have no engagement with the present and no interest in the future, accepting, blindly determined and hopeless' (*Rock Drill* described in Walker, 2019:164-5).

Lewis's addition to this kind of subjective zoomorphism is to paint a face onto the faceless head, one which acts as an aggressive eye spot or show of teeth which his *Tyros* present as a scarified mask of fury and mocking contempt. Willette (2016) sees the figure in *Rock Drill* as having a 'working class' inflection informed by an interview where Epstein talks about his time as a labourer in New York, 'drilling foundations for the buildings to come'. As a result, I think of *Rock Drill* as (initially) a celebratory sculptural alternative of the peon or worker which in Lewis's paintings and drawings (see figures 6, 7, and 8) are rendered less menacing or purposeful. Lewis's interest is in the tension generated by the upwardly mobile parvenus that *Tyros* represent and the managerial subjects they will become in a 'stratified professional society' (O'Donnell, 2020:86).

I would extend the comparison of Flea, *Tyro*, and *Rockdrill* to include the idea of self, armed and armoured: the toughened exterior which each manifestation visualises. Epstein was sensitive to the aspects of modernism which involved ‘reification and death’ (Foster, 2004:149) since the post-human thingness he explored so potently in these works has resonated into contemporary culture.

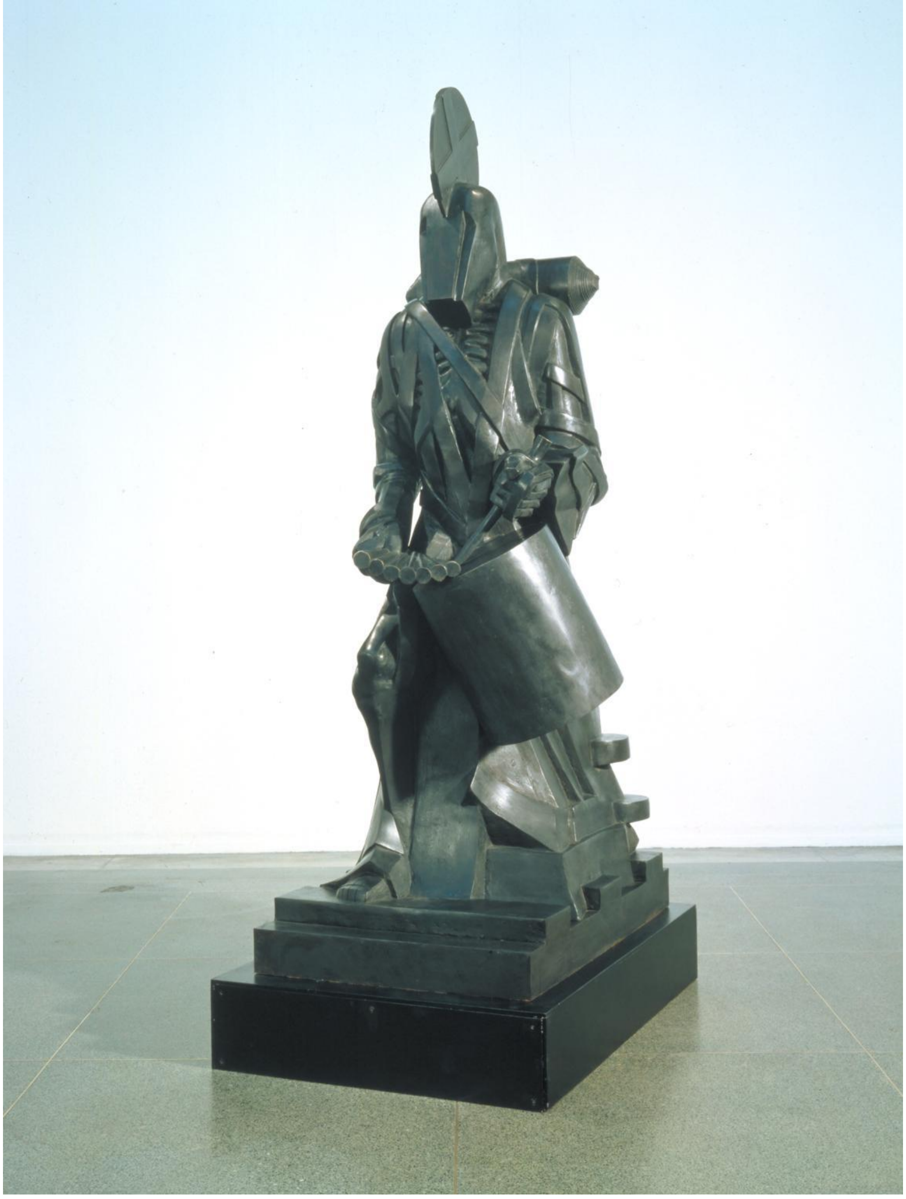

Figure 56: *Der Trommler* (1985) Michael Sandle.

Visualisations of anthropomorphic fixity highlight armour and animalistic dehumanisation such as the mechanamorphic figures discussed in Chapter 2; this is also an attribute of *Der Trommler* (1985) by Michael Sandle RA (fig. 56), a strange, robed figure beating a drum and marching menacingly forward. The face is described as reminiscent of a horse's muzzle or ancient armour; the anonymity of the helmeted head and exposed rib cage is evocative of *Rock Drill* (Moses, 2020:159). However, incidental features are of interest. A 'study for *The Drummer*…shows the figure walking on a crenelated surface, an element retained in the final sculpture…This surface is in fact a row of truncated railway sleepers. There is a subliminal hint of a railway line as a result' (*Der Trommler*, Tate, 2020). The fatality of train tracks and their predetermined route describes the march of the 'pseudo-future' (Quinn, 2017:41). An intentionally morbid symbol, Sandle stated they reference death camps (*Der Trommler*, Tate, 2020). The blinkered foreordained march of the figure actualises subjective fixity. 'Normal consciousness behaves like a clock that once wound, ticks on and on and prevents the emergence of the actual future' (Quinn, 2017:41). The treatment of time, motion and light in Sandle's works is of interest. Specifically, the beating of the drum in *Der Trommler* captures motion as fully realised separate solid states, much like the vorticist strategy of removing the interconnected blur of motion that is a quality of futurist movement or cubist visual space. That blur visually references the flux of time, the primary cause of vorticist antipathy to its antecedents (see introduction). This view of time is problematized in the 'counter temporal' attitude described by Quinn (2017:45): 'Institutional automata are lacking a condition in the present because their members project their will into the future according to the rules that were established in the past' (43). This *monster of fixity* marching down a railway realises that depressing notion.

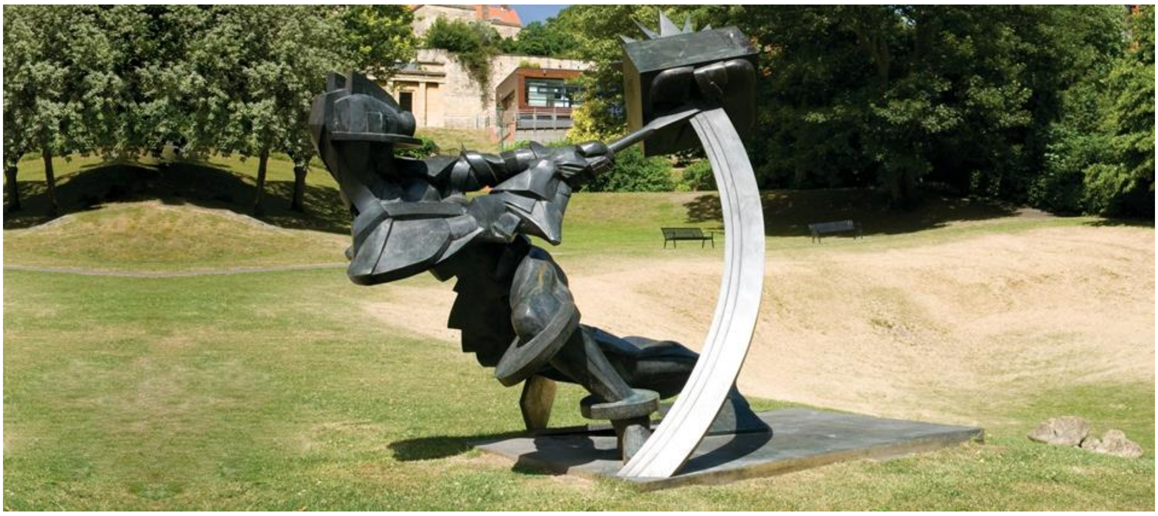

Figure 57: *A Mighty Blow for Freedom – Fuck the Media* (1988) Michael Sandle.

I relate Quinn’s ‘counter temporal’ mindset and Sandle’s visualisation of motion to Parmenides and the idea of ‘Block Time’ (or the B theory of time), a contemporary development of Parmenides’s thought (Gomes, 2017; Romero, 2012; Boodin, 1943). According to Gomes, ‘We experience “one instant at a time”, so to say. We of course still appear to experience the passage of time, or perhaps more accurately, we (indirectly) experience changes in the spatial configuration of the world around us, through changes of the spatial configuration of our brain states’ (Gomes, 2017:13). Similarly, as it’s developed by other Eleatics (Parmenides’s followers), ‘The world is full ... In this full world, there is no room for motion’ (Kirk and Stokes, 1960:1). This is a position attributed to Melissus (Makin, 2013). In a ‘Block Universe’ and in Parmenides thought, ‘There can be no “coming into being”’ (Boodin, 1945:581). This is essential for fixity. Life and death must be the same subjectively – that is, not inducing subjective change, but confirming the eternal reality behind these phenomena. As Neocleous puts it, ‘Death that is non-relational, certain and as such indefinite …not to be outstripped’ (Neocleous, 2005:99). Death, to attitudes of fixity, is far less threatening than the implications of life where subjective change is possible. For Neocleous fascistic thinking makes death a way of life (100). I do not suggest that Sandle is fascist, he anecdotally protests the label of fascism that he is confronted with in Read (2016), and he is justified in doing so.

Sandle’s work however, I would suggest, is proto-fascistic in that it is concerned with fixity ‘war and death’. It is significantly affected by his experience of nationalistic fervour during World War II and asserts a ‘Roman’ quality, a specific ‘neoclassical’ influence. These are all referents Sandle claims himself (Mey 2002:31-37). His interest in aesthetic Nazism, in particular praise for Albert Speer and the monumental architecture of the Third Reich, is probably the source of fascist labels – in an interview, he said, ‘I find it rather irritating that people get very emotional about Nazi art, but they won’t actually look at it. It wasn’t all bad’ (37). These factors, along with his self-claimed ‘reactionary’ attitude (37) and condemnation of media and capitalism, give Sandle much in common with Lewis, who is ‘one of his heroes’ (McEwen, 2007). Valorisation of death is hinted at in Sandle’s recollections of the rationale for *Der Trommler*, which he casts as ‘“a symbol of Time, the power of Time to wipe the slate clean” …Sandle envisaged the drummer heralding the approach of death, an accompaniment to the “march” of time’ (Sandle quoted in *Der Trommler*, Tate, 2020). Time as death versus time as change is a repeated motif in the ‘time-agon’. In fixity time is death.

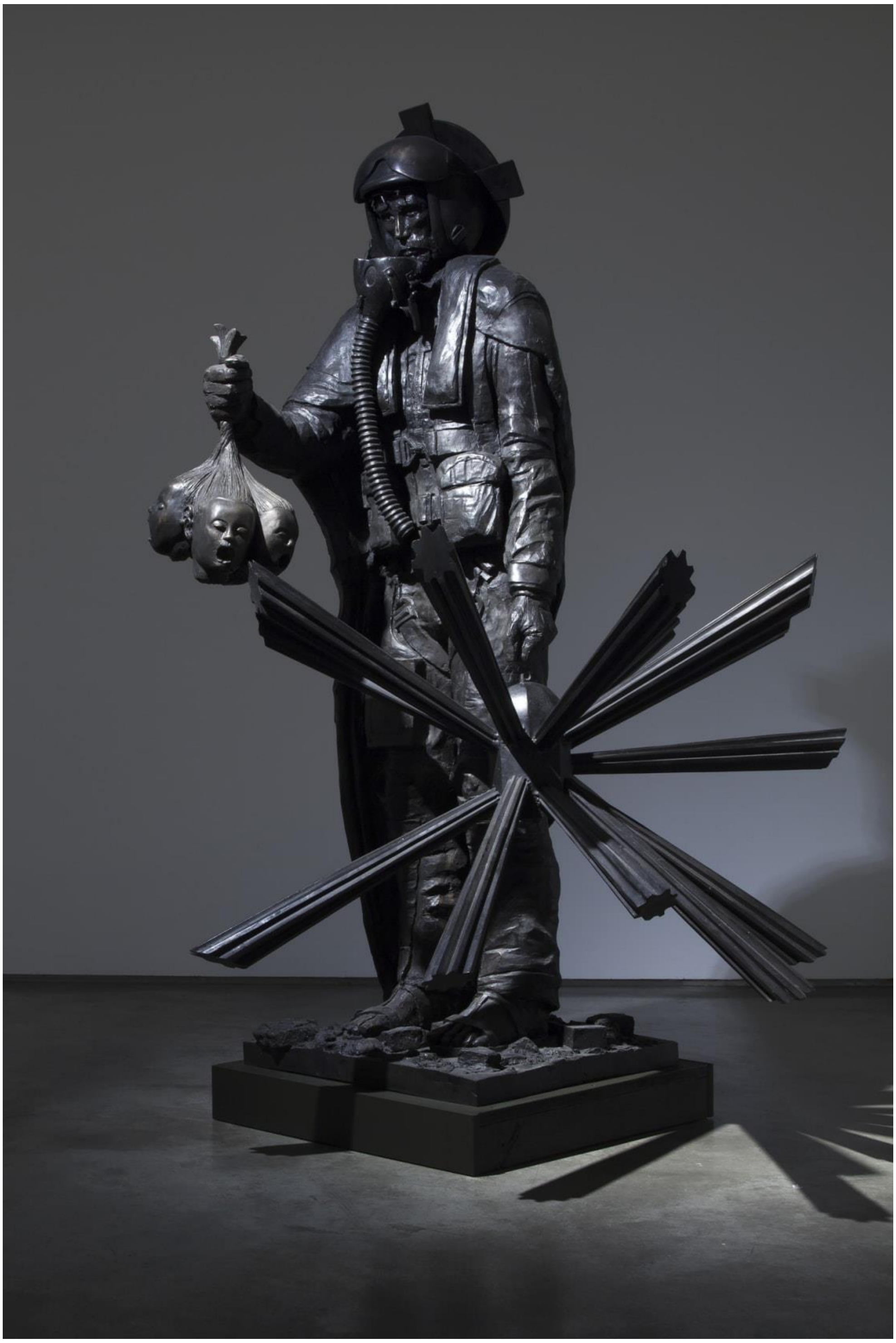

Figure 58: *As Ye Sow So Shall Ye Reap: An Allegory (Acknowledgements to Holman Hunt)* (2015) Michael Sandle.

Time is also a feature of *A Mighty Blow for Freedom – Fuck the Media* (1988) (fig. 57) by Sandle, represented in the swing of a cudgel. The swoop of the cudgel is held in stasis by the very visualisation of movement that tracks its arc through space. Furthermore, *As Ye Sow So Shall Ye Reap* (2015) (fig. 58) shows a portentous figure holding a lamp; an incidental feature of the work but a striking one. From it, rays of light are rendered as reified fossils. Sandle renders phenomena that are intangible or uncapturable physically solid extending the 'precipitant' function of the *monster of fixity* from the subject to reality. (For this light motif see also *Death on a Train,* 2002; study for *The Suicide,* 1994-95; *Study for Trafalgar Square* 2002). In Brandon Taylor's review for *Art Monthly* (1988) in which *Der Trommler* is pictured, reflecting on the exhibition 'Sculpture and Drawings 1957-88', he warns the reader, 'We must not be persuaded into seeing history as a fixed immutable catalogue…as if it were authoritative for all time' (1988:12). Gnomes (2017), who champions the Parmenidian view of time, is aware that this relationship to time robs us of 'continuously evolving and self-determining conscious experience' (16), the same condition that Quinn describes as 'clockwork' behaviour bringing about a 'pseudo-future' that is merely a 'future condition of the present' (42). While Quinn maintains the possibility of 'cutting into' this habitual relation to time, the proponents of Parmenides' thought (both the conscious and unintentional examples discussed here) don't believe there's any alternative but delusion.

Landscape and Fixity

While it may seem a difficult task to account for landscape in the examples of visual fixity given, it is possible to trace the totalising 'precipitate' function from the *monster of fixity* into landscape from the marginal, secondary, or fragmentary landscape features of the work, for example the astrological reference in Blake's *Ghost of a Flea* (c.1819–20) hinted at in the starry sky and falling comet. (The work was produced while in conversation with and in part made for an astrologer, John Varley, see Kuijsten, 2006 and Bentley, 2003.) This gives the image an accent of determinism or fated-ness echoed by the flea's status as condemned, while the falling star attests to the hostility of an environment to be resisted and survived, as I argue in Chapter 2 concerning architectural fixity and its tension with othered nature (see Frampton, 1999:40; Van Rooyen, 2018:40).

For attitudes of fixity, wild land is a force to be tamed, resisted, and dominated. The penetrated land in *Rock Drill* (1913), before the sculpture's mutilation, is the most obvious characterisation of the natural environment as an entity to be dominated violently. The railway line in *Der Trommler* (1985) cuts through the landscape differently, in a manner reminiscent of industrial power and empire. The heraldic figure with overtones of heroic seriousness combined with industrial technology is an example of imperial-modernism (recall the geometric abstraction mixed with Britannia in The Festival of Britain). Similarly, Sandle's public sculpture *Saint George and the Dragon* (1988) 'retains its currency as an image of the masculine lust for power… (Which divides, rules and kills, and has become in many ways our worldview)' (Miles, 1991:161-2). In Malcolm Miles's reading, there's a repetition of nature (the dragon) as a temporal beast to be suppressed because it 'unleashes chaos periodically, or [functions according to] primeval instinct' (2). The juxtaposition of 'imperial' and 'modernism' in an exhibition at Ludlow Castle (2007) has an obvious spatial aspect; a medieval fortress in Shropshire (originally built to resist the Welsh) saw Sandle's work ensconced against the surrounding land, a fitting combination of the over-orthodox *monster of fixity* with what's become a pastoral ruin rented out to wedding parties. The presence of sculptures like *Der Trommler* inadvertently makes us aware of the original intent a castle has, to suppress and intimidate the surrounding land. In that combination (*monster of fixity* and pastoral illusion), Sandle's sculptures unintentionally 'precipitate' this aspect of the castle away from the romanticised totalising frame which otherwise dominates the perception of managed pomp.

This is a potential of the over-orthodox *monster of fixity,* used against type dialogically. It is a strategy I employed in *Sir Percy the Knight of Human Resources* (2020) (fig. 23). Any 'heroic seriousness' that the status 'knight' offers is immediately undercut by the jocular grimace and compact puppet-like torso. Simultaneously, I intended the figure to retain menace by virtue of his manic expression, size, and position in the picture. The landscape, a public park with an idealised and exaggerated gushing fountain is further problematized by a clear class dynamic: two romanticised tramps in conversation sit in the mid-ground while a figure in an ornate Victorian dress passes closest to the knight's window. Anachronistic paraphernalia confuses the possibility of a standard homogeneous reading, so the viewer is left to make sense of the combination and interpret a possible narrative that would bring one before such a figure.

The *monster of fixity* is a dehumanised, scarified emblem, thriving in agonistic relation to temporal nature. This is the limit of agonism which helped to define distinct partisan positions through chiaroscuro but not to resolve or move past them. For that, the dialogic combination of competing registers, narratives, and symbolic devices is necessary because it both creates incomprehension and gaps and triggers the will to push through these, offering ways to emphasise and create circumstances for heuristic interpretation. Multiple tensions are created between registers while the presence of contradictory, inter-semiotic indexes prevent the collapse of this tension as they struggle to cohere into a single totalising aesthetic.

Chapter 5

Green Chapel or Gilded Cage?

Having outlined the characteristics and implications of *monsters of fixity* and *flux-monsters* in Chapter 4, I will look at the spatial–temporal backgrounds these entities are bound to. This entails exploring the relationship and function of exemplary spaces as they pertain to the subject and the broader community. Furthermore, how they help us understand iterations of fixity (false universals of Englishness), and flux (emergent heuristic thinking/subjective change) in art practice. I look at ways art practice symbolises and problematises these spaces, helping us to see the landscape in new ways. Spatial forces are treated as either those which pertain to totalising perspectives or negotiating perspectives, since space forms a circuit with the subject.

I oppose the 'virescent' landscape space exemplified in the Green Chapel, the indeterminate location of Gawain's testing (outlined later), to the proto-fascistic logic of closure, represented in the shallow space of Lewis's aesthetic, which seeks to produce a fully 'stratified' (O'Donnell, 2020:76) society with a 'clique at its zenith' (Miller, 2018:91). I have, for example, emulated this aesthetic in *Red Knight* (2020 fig26), combining it with representations of pastoral landscape, and anachronistic images of empire. Lewis's 'over-orthodoxy' (Žižek, 2014 see Chapter 2), as evidenced in visual works, can be used to identify, and criticise stratified society and its technological features since it eschews the mystifying 'protective illusion' (Robins, 2007:15-16 see Chapter 2) of the pastoral mode and exposes the underlying stratification and its dehumanising potential. Hal Foster calls such forms 'new emblems' (1996:105) and he understands them as actualizations of furtive power. Combining pastoral illusions with Lewis's dynamic-fatalism offers ways to problematize 'subject-positioning' (Chandler and Munday, 2000:161; Jameson, 1979:4) and lack of agency – which is a factor of the gilded cage (stratified society) – by prompting questions from a viewer who is confronted with the tension between two languages, each giving force to ever greater stratification and paternalism. Dynamic-fatalism exposes the brutality of the pastoral illusion and pastoral illusion exposes the sentimental conservatism of a supposed revolutionary shift, which is nothing more than the present in new clothes. Like Quinn's 'pseudo plots', they are provocative and purportedly disruptive positions (2017:41-42) that reinvest the status quo with energy (as discussed in Chapter 4).

Alternatively, building on the theorisations of the Green Chapel, I identify art practice that presents representations of space that advocate separation from subject-positioning via emblematic representation of liminality and eeriness. Those works prompt a heuristic reading (that I discussed in Chapter 4). An example of such an approach includes openings for the experiential and personal interpretation of the audience, to construct meaning across gaps. Examples of this are drawn principally from John William North and Hannah Brown and supported by references to George Shaw and Mark Lecky (also noted are: Juliette Losq, Joanna Whittle, and Paul Smith). These artists all present deserted and marginal threshold spaces. I explore the qualities of the Green Chapel and its tension with a subject in *The Slime of Life Clings to Sir Gawain* (2020 fig. 61) incorporating the figure to play up the critique of flawed masculinity separated from its sustaining illusions. This painting along with the *Tyro*-paintings share a concern with a relationship between figure and landscape.

Green Chapel

Form and Re-form: Haunted Houses and the Breakdown of Boundaries between Subject, Structure and Land

On his approach to the Green Chapel Gawain sees his destination 'This is a haunted house – may it go to hell' (Armitage, 2007:101). It is strange and specific terminology to describe a natural space.[6] This evocation is useful in accounting for what is disturbing about the Green Chapel. Moreover, what makes the Green Chapel a 'haunted house' for Gawain is echoed in the familiar contemporary trope of the haunted house. Gawain has reluctantly and against his oath protected himself from physical harm, by keeping and wearing the green sash. The closer he comes to the site of his testing, the closer he comes to the moment of his own deceptive behaviour, thereby betraying his (albeit flawed) code and his faith in favour of his life. It is the very challenge or cognitive dissonance that the space initiates that heightens the Green Chapel's unsettling atmosphere (subjective change, not death).

Haunted houses have qualities as sites of 'compressed time' and memory, mediating between 'geological time and human time' (Curtis, 2008:33). This also locates haunted houses as spaces defined by flux. Reflecting generally on the haunted house and because of this quality,

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[6] This is an acceptable conflation by Armitage (2007) and is drawn from the section 2185-2196 of SGGK (see Andrew and Waldron, 2007:404; 405 for side-by-side translation). Gawain describes the Green Chapel as a place where the Devil might recite matins at midnight 'Dele his matynnes telle!' (2188) and furthermore states 'this is a chapel of doom; ill fortune befall it!' (Andrew and Waldron, 2007:405) using the term 'corsedest' as in accursed. Armitage has taken the semi-structural, semi-landscape features of the Green Chapel and evoked a haunted house to communicate the disturbing properties of the interior aspects and its effect on Gawain. Armitage's evocation of the haunted house also chimes with readings of the chapel resembling an ancient tomb and the presence of ancestors (Jones, 1953:5).

Bailey sees ‘a prism through which social and economic issues are explored’ (Bailey, 1999:57). More pertinently, for Curtis they ‘have a particular relationship to memory’ (Curtis, 2008:15), specifically to trauma and ‘older, usually crueller times’ (Curtis, 2008:32). This recalls Gwyn Jones’s (1953:5) observation that the Green Chapel implies the presence of pagan ancestors. Curtis tells us that haunted houses are spaces that are ‘reactivated by some act of intrusion or disrespect’ (Curtis, 2008:24), and this is relevant to Gawain’s approach, seeped as he is in self-doubt, and carrying both a sense of obligation and deception (also considering his actual insults). I will argue here that this implies a mode of connectedness exemplified in *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839 see Poe, 2021), which is considered an exemplar of the haunted house genre.

In Poe’s story, an anonymous narrator travels to his friend Roderick’s home in response to a letter asking for help. The narrator reflects on how extremely miserable the land is in its very being and arrangement, appearing like ‘an utter depression of soul’ (Poe, 2021:3). He subsequently reflects on the house as a decaying, but nevertheless solid entity, and on Roderick Usher (a painter who obsessively depicts the house and land) as a depressed and weakening person. The interconnectedness of Roderick, the house, and the surrounding land is shown in unsettling scenes where the house seems to echo thoughts and sounds from a story spoken out loud between the men. Furthermore, it’s the power of the land and tarn which leads the men to consider ‘the sentience of all vegetable things’ (Poe, 2021:15) while the weakening of boundaries between the subject and structure is done in anthropomorphising the house’s ‘vacant eye-like windows’ (Poe, 2021:3:4). I propose that when Roderick dies, subject and structure are subsumed into the land as the narrator escapes.

> I saw the mighty walls rushing asunder—there was a long tumultuous shouting sound like the voice of a thousand waters—and the deep and dank tarn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments of the “House of Usher” (Poe, 2021:25).

Curtis, drawing on Gaston Bachelard, comments that haunted houses are spaces in which ‘imagination [is] often at odds with structural fabric’ (Curtis, 2008:32). This is a confrontation that the narrator in *The Fall of the House of Usher* escapes, while Roderick does not. In Gawain’s journey, the imagined aspect can be considered Gawain’s delusions (perfect masculinity revealed as banal misogyny) which Gawain as a redeemable subject survives as a changed person. Gawain describes the Green Chapel as a haunted house, and it is this tripartite dynamic between the subject, the structure, and the land – and the weakening of boundaries between these categories – that I understand account for his discomfort.

Gawain’s Journey and Liminal Space

In relation to temporal nature and the Green Chapel I will explore the concept of the ‘threshold experience’ or ‘liminality’ as discussed in Arnold van Gennep (1960) and Victor Turner (1969) to understand the subjective affect of representations. Furthermore, those ideas offer an understanding of Gawain’s journey as an unofficial (non-institutional) threshold experience underpinned and defined by nature.

Van Gennep (1960) developed the idea of a rite of passage in 1909 whereby a subject moves from one significant identity state, position, or status to another: typically, a version of the transition of childhood to adulthood or initiation into a higher status. Van Gennep explains this as a process in three stages: first separation ‘from a previous world’; second, liminality ‘the transitional stage, liminal (or threshold) rites’; and finally, aggregation, or ‘ceremonies of incorporation into the new world’ (Van Gennep, 1960:21). Liminality is described as an ambiguous state. It is indeterminate and as Turner points out, ‘It transgresses or dissolves the norms that govern structured and institutionalized relationships’ (1969:372). I will draw a comparison (and key distinctions) between ‘ascetic space’ and what I will term *virescent space* both forms of representation that draw on liminality. This comparison draws on James Goehring’s, ‘The Dark Side of Landscape: Ideology and Power in the Christian Myth of the Desert’ (2003). Goehring’s paper is based on the function creative representation can have on incubating new subjectivity by interrupting existing or established, normative representations of space.

Green Chapel and Green Knight as Mythic Space and Idealising Sign

Goehring explores the way in which the mythic space of the desert and the ‘ideal sign’ (ascetic individual) helped to create and cement new ‘individual and social subjectivities’ (Goehring, 2003:445). This was bolstered by a concerted effort from various writers, real ascetics (urban and desert) as well as the Nicene church. If such a myth in service to a specific institution and defined ideology can serve to create and bolster a new subjective position which interrupted an existing hegemonic ideology, then it is a small step to consider the combination of effective space (wilderness) and effective agent (GK) aligned to an indeterminate temporal nature could serve to weaken ideological hold over a subject.

By placing the location of Gawain’s ultimate confrontation outside either Arthur’s court or Bertilak’s (in service to Morgan le Fay) and opting instead for a remote natural location beyond the authority of both, the Pearl Poet effectively disempowers both the courts’ holds over the subject of Gawain, who neither fulfils his oath to Arthur's court (here, a symbol of hegemonic normality); or accepts the offer of kinship from Bertilak (here, thought of as a utopian alternative). Instead, Nature is emphasised. The Green Chapel is an indifferent space, and there is even a sense of separation implied between Bertilak the man and the GK: while Bertilak is clear he is just a man enchanted, the GK is later said to leave his ground 'to wander who knows where' (Armitage, 2007:112). The obvious assumption is that Bertilak would return to his house and wife (especially as he invites Gawain there after the testing). The indeterminate nature of the GK is preserved in this simple statement. The GK and the Green Chapel are distinct from institutional power. In the subsequent sections I will discuss how the Chapel is described and why we should see it as characterised by flux. Temporal indeterminate nature is the force that makes Gawain's choices possible. This space serves as a model example of what I will call *virescent space* and the 'high wasteland' of the project title. It is a space defined by the weakening of subject-positions, which calls out to the gaps that are constitutive of both the incompleteness of the land and of the subject. *Virescent space* is liminal and eerie, a textual (in the broadest sense written, visual, and so on) representation of flux-nature, often taking the form of a threshold between distinct territories. *Virescent space* actualises what the pastoral tradition covers over, and what is always there: the radical implications of being in time.

The Green Chapel: A Virescent Space

Goehring (2003) describes the ascetic desert and its topology: 'mountains' (446), colour ('red soil') (439) and 'remoteness' (443) all served to offer a spatial context for the ascetic priest's self-discipline, and together this gave early Christian communities a tangible example of lived praxis according to their emerging values. Alternatively, virescent (greenish) space takes the traumatic reality of nature in flux, and instead of responding by covering this over (as with pastoral and hierarchical representations), or othering it as hostile nature, it represents its spatial potential as a zone of transfiguration, 'a scar-like space of discontinuity' (Marshall, 2018:87). As I discussed in the Introduction, this undermines the hold over the subject of inherited or learned subject-positions. This is achieved by representing indeterminate space with a deliberate use of ambiguity. However, as with ascetic space it includes real ingredients: 'By alluding to the actual conditions of the real landscape, the mythical landscape remains believable' (Goehring, 2003:440). In the case of *virescent space*, this link relates to the force of the idea represented and activates a heuristic interpretation. I propose the Green Chapel as a liminal and eerie threshold space, sharing qualities with its guardian the GK. Van Gennep (1960) describes 'guardians of the threshold' in rituals of liminality as 'monumental'. Guardians are seen as guaranteeing that 'spiritual passing' takes place. 'The act of passing no longer accomplishes the passage; a personified power ensures it through spiritual means' (21). This idea of a guardian as an obtrusive thing affecting the subject relates to Fisher's (2016:9) concept of weird things in relation to eerie spaces[7].

Deep Time and Duration in the Green Chapel

Destabilization (referred to optimistically as liminality here) in *virescent space* occurs due to the effects of deep time (McPhee, 1981) and its representation, such as the Green Chapel. It is followed by spiritual (or subjective) change, made possible by the 'idealising sign' of the monstrous presence (in this case the GK, or the *flux-monster* more generally). Various terms are used to describe the Green Chapel: 'bald knoll' and 'bizarre hill' (Armitage, 2007:100), 'strange abyss' (101), and in fitting with its moniker, 'a ghostly cathedral overgrown with grass' (Armitage, 2007:101). The clearest description comes on Gawain's approach:

> it had a hole at one end and at either side,
> and its walls matted with weeds and moss,
> enclosed a cavity, like a kind of old cave
> or crevice in the crag' (Armitage, 2007:100).

Despite this description, it retains a quality of the indeterminate. As the poet tells us in direct reference to the Green Chapel, 'It was all too unclear to declare' (Armitage, 2007:100). What is clear, is that this space is a natural one defined by 'crags' that appear to cut the passing clouds and a cave since the GK enters through a 'cave-mouth' (102). Real landscape spaces as inspiration have been suggested by various scholars. These include Wetton Mill and Ludchurch (Hill, 2009:103), as well as Thirst Hole at Deepdale Cave (108). Furthermore, the artist and author Michael Smith has proposed that such spaces form a 'conflation' of realities. 'It is most likely that the Gawain poet, who knew well these lands, in all probability combined the features of Wetton Mill *and* Lud's Church; much in the way of a modern filmmaker in creating a complete, morphed, sensation for the viewer' (Smith, 2017). Each of these potentially inspirational spaces combined with the content of the poem gives us loose parameters of the Green Chapel, which emerges as a distinctive natural space where geological forces over many hundreds of thousands of years have wrought a focal point made from features that exist in various registers of time: the green aspects which flourish and die, and the rock itself representing geological time or 'deep time' (McPhee, 1981). Deep time refers to the reality of 'abyssal eons' (128) of change and development evident in the land and its topology, that which is so great as to undermine and affect one's sense of self (McPhee, 1981:20:104:127:128). Furthermore, describing geological field research and the way it informs attitudes, McPhee explains 'that above all else [it] is physio-graphic, a journey that tends to mock the idea of a nation, of a political state, as an unnatural subdivision of the globe, as a metaphor of the human ego sketched on paper and framed in straight lines' (1981:15).

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[7] Furthermore, deep time (flux) is given as one example of 'real externality' considered essential for the weird. Fisher refers to a black hole as an example of how the 'natural-material cosmos' is beyond our 'local' human understanding (Fisher, 2016:9). I have connected time to the GK throughout this thesis, related to his size, movement, and foliate properties.

Reconfiguration via the Idealising-Sign: Deep Time as a Context for Duration

Next, I will move on to consider the way that subjective change is initiated by an encounter with the *flux-monster* (as an idealising-sign) and its implications for self-knowledge through memory and embodied presence in the moment. The monstrous guardian guarantees the 'spiritual passing' (van Gennep 1960:21) which is effectively subjective change. In the case of the *virescent space* of the Green Chapel, this is achieved in the maximum tension of impending death, prompting self-reflection and the activation of memory. It is pertinent to recall what Quinn describes as 'institutional automata…lacking a condition in the present because their members project their will into the future according to the rules that were established in the past' (2017:43). At the close of the poem, Gawain is acquiring a 'condition in the present'. The process can be elaborated by evoking the thought of Henri Bergson. Bergson's concept of flux and duration undermines linear clock time and any understanding based on it. He thus asks, and answers, 'What is duration within us? Qualitative multiplicity, with no likeness to number' (Bergson, 2012:1). Instead, there is a call to the present moment: 'To be conscious, at least in the sense in which the finite individual is conscious, is just to be in time' (Bergson, 2012:526). This call implies what is explicit in Quinn's (2017) thought. Gawain is taken out of automata time by his encounter with the GK and brought into duration, into subjective time. This is signalled when the Pearl Poet writes, 'Gawain stood speechless for what seemed like a century' (Armitage, 2007:108). Gawain's perception is affected, and automatic action is interrupted by thought. In Bergson, we also see a caution against what I describe as the self, acted out, as received subject-position. Gawain has assumed this attitude concerning chivalry. Summarising this automatised mode of subjectivity, Bergson writes, 'Our life unfolds in space rather than in time; we live for the external world rather than for ourselves; we speak rather than think; we "are acted" rather than act ourselves. To act freely is to recover possession of oneself, and to get back into pure duration' (Bergson, 2008:231-2). We see Gawain as he recovers himself in the present: 'He tried to talk, and finding his tongue' (Armitage, 2007:108), he can speak truthfully, revealing in uncharacteristically blunt terms the sexist underbelly of chivalric conditioning (110). It is a rare moment of true sentiment with lasting psychic effect, akin to those described by Bergson: 'The moments that we grasp ourselves are rare, and that is just why we are rarely free. The greater part of the time we live outside ourselves, hardly perceiving anything of ourselves…a colourless shadow' (Bergson, 2008:231). The genteel Gawain was this shadow. Despite his initial angry blaming of Lady Bertilak (and women more generally), it is he who bares the greater self-condemnation. The memory of his fallibility acts as the force that interrupts automatic actions in the form of 'swagger in the saddle' (Armitage, 2007:111) taking him over.

Thresholds

Van Gennep defines threshold spaces as 'neutral zones' (1960:18), what Turner calls the 'limbo of statelessness' (1969:361). Van Gennep explains these spaces have precedent in various cultures like Greece where they were used for sacred rituals, battles, or trading. Neutral zones, he tells us, 'are ordinarily deserts, marshes…virgin forests where everyone has full rights to travel and hunt' (1960:18). Furthermore, regarding neutral zones van Gennep is clear: 'Today, in our part of the world, one country touches another; but the situation was quite different in the times when Christian lands comprised only part of Europe. Each country was surrounded by a strip of neutral ground' (1960:17). The disappearance of this liminal neutral zone, which 'shrinks progressively' (van Gennep, 1960:19) as territories and states became more expansive and precisely drawn, accounts for eeriness – especially in places such as England, where laws limit the free movement of people through the land. Abberley (drawing on Fisher, 2016) refers to England as having a particularly powerful eeriness because of this: 'Although the eerie is not an English phenomenon the landscape of England is a potent conduit for it because of its many layers of human history and the violent struggles of ownership and access' (*Into the Eerie*, 2019). Eeriness is the glimpse of what is there through the illusion of totalised space: liminal nature. Eeriness is the spectre of that liminality or flux which remains after being covered over by other modes of seeing the landscape. We might think again of scarring as it is combined with form. Scars are wounds that are covered over (by new dermal growth), but where an indication of trauma remains. Van Gennep describes how neutral zones in wilderness spaces diminished and became represented in ‘portals’. Doorways and arches in public spaces encompassed transitions like entering households (1960:18). This created a kind of urban-liminality in built-up places such as a ‘village, a town, a section of a town’ (19).

The (liminal) urban desert of Britain, included as vignettes of modern life, is the subject of T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* (1922) its April flowers, springing from dead land, are an example of eerie ‘virescence’ that painfully triggers a memory. The narrator of the opening paragraph has the voice of Bergson’s subject speaking as a ‘colourless shadow’ (2008:231), agonizingly coming back to life with its implications of responsibility and judgement (which is also the subject of the poem’s close). Nature’s indifferent renewal is uncomfortable for the melancholy narrator compared to the ‘forgetful’ stasis of the winter.

> April is the cruellest month, breeding
> Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
> Memory and desire, stirring
> Dull roots with spring rain.
> Winter kept us warm, covering
> Earth in forgetful snow (extract of *The Waste land* see Eliot, 2021).

This combination of wilderness and the urban is echoed in the ascetics who were also divided, Goehring (2003) tells us they were separated into desert and urban ascetics. Goehring further explains that the desert space, through its spiritual remoteness (443) and dramatic natural features, entailed a ‘visible, sharp separation of the black (fertile) and red (desert) land’, and that these ‘supplied the natural ingredients of the [Christian] myth [of the desert]’ (439). In the *virescent space* I propose as a motif in creative practice (see *The Winter Sun*, 1891 and *Hedge 4*, 2018 discussed later), it is the damp, ominous, unspectacular margins of the English landscape with a sense of envelopment or immersion, which is accompanied by urban-virescence; the reference to virescence remains when referring to the urban iteration as it literally remains in the background of the images or the title as a motif in examples of urban-virescence. Examples of urban-virescence would include the commonplace empty, liminal spaces of George Shaw’s oeuvre, such as *Trespasser (2)* (2019) and *The World Turned Upside Down* (2019) or Mark Leckey’s installation *O’ Magic Power of Bleakness* (2019-2020), a recreated section of the M53 motorway flyover bridge in the Wirral, which incorporated projected films that recall childhood experiences and a supernatural encounter.[8]

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[8] Other examples of urban- virescence in contemporary British art include several works by Juliette Losq, notably *Proscenium* (2017) and *Equilibrium* (2020); various works by Joanna Whittle such as *Citrine blink* (2019) and Wonderland (2019) and works by painter Paul Smith,

This pairing of the urban and wilderness is not hostile or competitive in either case. As Goehring argues, ‘the point is not that the myth purposefully ignores the urban ascetics, but rather that it finds in the desert ascetic a more fitting exemplar through which to promote its ideological goals’ (Goehring, 2003:440). Nature can be understood as being in flux. Liminality is already a term for that flux, which relates it in a humanistic way to subjectivity. This subjectivity is affected by liminality in the weakening of ideological holds on the subject, allowing the subject to see these (ideologies) as separate from themselves. The eeriness describes the spectre of that flux that haunts or breaks through the gaps in totalised space, such as that of the pastoral mode; its eeriness is the illusion weakening.

Virescent Space, Liminality and the Threshold Experience in Art Practice

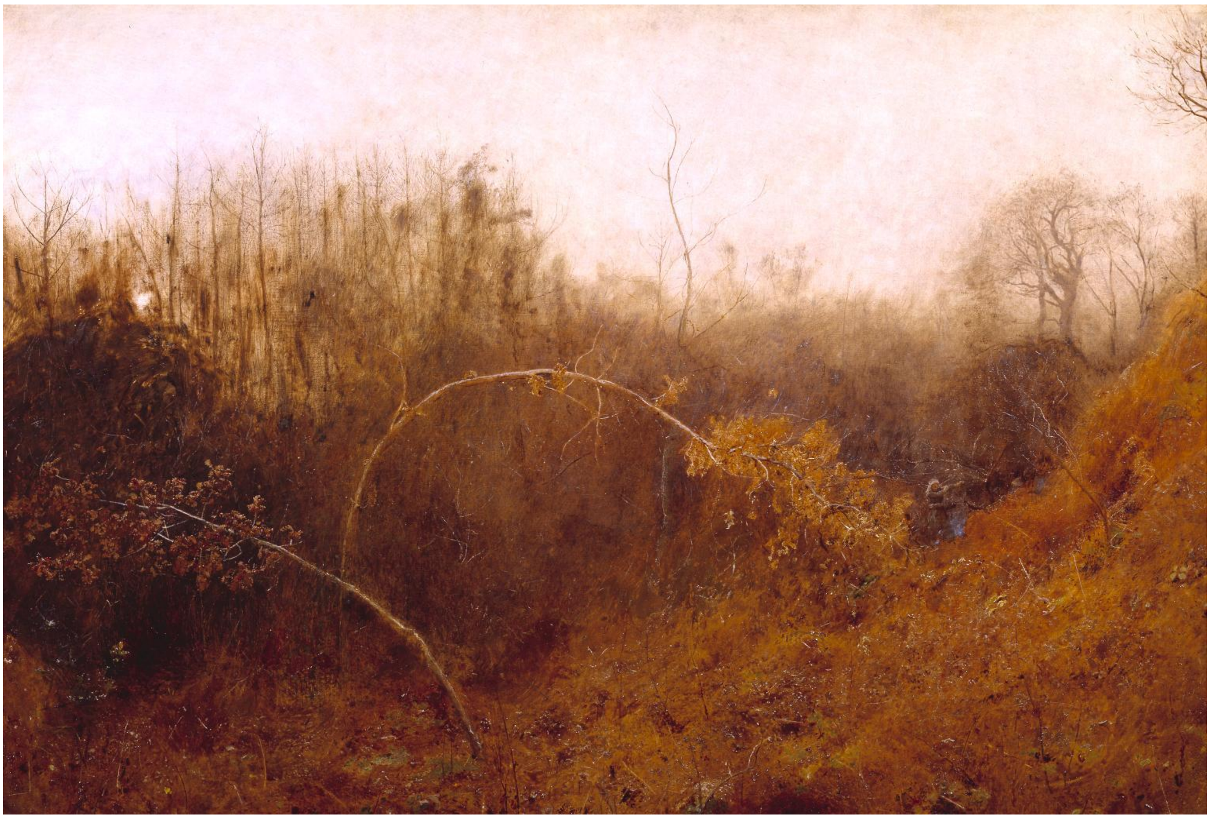

Figure 59: *The Winter Sun* (exhibited 1891) John William North.

There is a precedent for *virescent space* in the work of John William North (1842–1924), a landscape painter and prominent member of the Idyllists (who were active circa the late 19th century). His political and moral leanings are relevant in so much as they confirm a concern

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for example *Rushmore* (2020) and *Club Country* (2019). Many of these artists also produce works which could be defined as *virescent space.*

for a less-bordered land and the mistreatment of poor workers. North opposed the enclosure of common lands and was a liberal considered ‘a sturdy champion of the poor’ (Alexander, 1928) who also criticised the British Empire’s presence in South Africa. North’s work has been described as ‘touched by mysticism’ (Alexander, 1928) and concerning ‘communion with nature’ (Billingham, 2012). In terms of a quality of flux, consider the description of his technique from fellow artist Herbert Alexander: ‘Multitudinous form is conjured by finding and losing it in endless hide-and-seek till the eye accepts infinity’ (Alexander, 1928). His work *The Winter Sun* (exhibited 1891), shows a damp and inhospitable morass of tangled branches, bare trees, and a cold loaded sky overhead. While there is a quality of beauty in the painting it is the sense of immersion into the land that is of interest here: the viewer is positioned low with muddy, overgrown banks on either side and a dense thicket of closely standing and enmeshed trees lying straight ahead. That space is framed by a sapling tree bent over in an arc in the mid-ground separating the viewer with a symbolic threshold from the brown and orange haze at its centre.

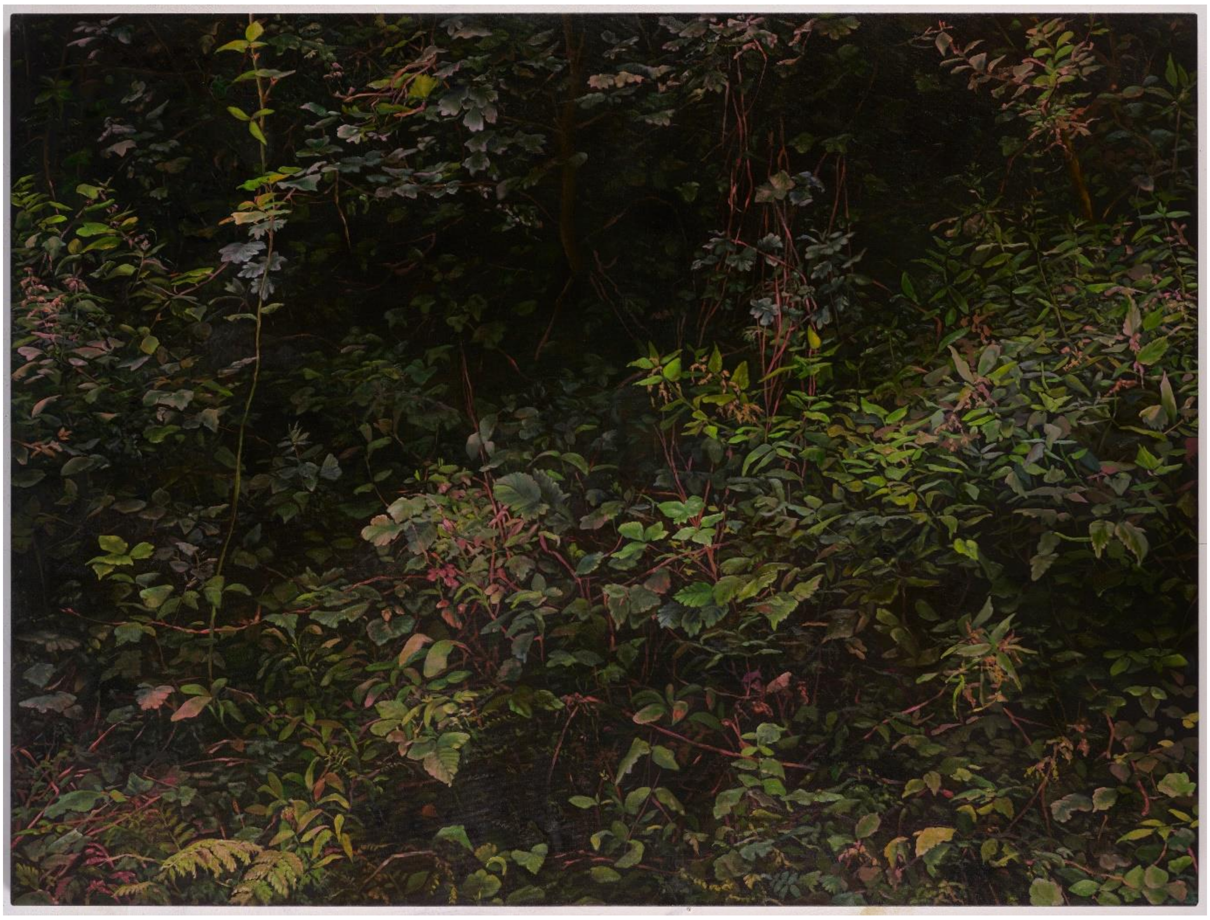

Figure 60: *Hedge 4* (2018) Hannah Brown. Image courtesy of the artist.

A contemporary example of *virescent space* exists as a recurrent theme of Hannah Brown's practice. *Hedge 4* from 2018 (fig. 60) is an oil painting on linen canvas at 1.5m by 2m. It presents in heavy dark tones a close view of intermingled foliage, a dense vigorous image of plant life. The leaves of the ferns, vines, and shrubs that stretch across the entire picture plane are lush and closely packed in a range of green tones and at least two distinct verdant colours; the one is slightly bluer and more plastic in the overhanging flora, while from the right of the image lighter yellow-green leaves push forward and down to the ferns and grasses of the ground. An insubstantial hint of a grate or perhaps part of a woven basket offers a barely noticeable constructed form, entirely overcome by fauna. What appears to be the reddish-pink shoots, vines, and stems of *Cornus alba* 'Sibirica', better known as dogwood, reaches through and around the image, loosely stitching the dense plants into an effective boundary. The stems are tendril-like, and the hue adds to the life of the scene, not light in any traditional bucolic or pastoral sense, but heavy with life, robust, and ominous. On the latter point, shadows created by the plants' canopy are dispersed throughout, separating each precisely rendered leaf and vine and giving the sense of a fading light at the end of the day.

Nevertheless, at the centre there is a darkening where the space drops back under the awning formed by the plants all around, confronting the viewer with an empty furtive space, too dark for the observer (who is positioned close to this opening) to be sure that there is nothing looking back. This is the kind of sight we might expect to see had we walked under John William North's arced sapling tree in *The Winter Sun* (1891). Brown has given us a view too close to tell without doubt if this is a native hedgerow – a natural phenomenon formed over many years and without human intervention – although the loose organisation and thoroughly overgrown quality points to this. A hedge is a pertinent entity, marking the border between two spaces, those that people make themselves to separate territory – an act of ownership and a result of civilisation. Additionally, those which as aforementioned form naturally are the result of stubborn long-worn living things cohering indifferently into emergent forms.

The sense of absorption and immersion into the land depicted is key to these works making them distinct from other categories of landscape, most obviously from the 'stasis' of the pastoral mode (Abberley, in *Into the Eerie*, 2019), but also from categories such as 'the sublime' (see Kant and Goldthwaite, 2003). There is a sense of going down into, of looking into, which is 'eerie' and is defined by the tension of what is lacking (an agent looking back/what is behind or beyond). It is a 'failure of presence' (Fisher, 2016: 27, 28). Additionally, we are faced with what is 'unheimlich' (Freud, 1919), that is, familiar but also unfamiliar, such as the meaning conferred on uncanny objects, experiences, or sights by Freud. Regarding the sublime, the paintings are not reinforcing a 'totality', in the name of rationality, a quality of the sublime described by Iris Murdoch drawing on Kant. She defines this as:

> a feeling which "renders inevitable the supremacy of our cognitive faculties on the rational side over the greatest faculty of sensibility." That is, reason imposes upon us as a law the comprehension of what is before us as a totality. Reason for Kant, and also for Hegel, is the faculty which seeks for systematic wholeness and abhors incompleteness and juxtaposition (Murdoch, 1959:45).

Neither do they arouse 'awe', as defined by Kant (Kant and Goldthwaite, 2003:18, 48, 63). Any 'admiration' (Kant and Goldthwaite, 2003:18) is conferred more in the act of representation such as the highly detailed rendering in *Hedge 4* (2018) or the layering of washes in *The Winter Sun* (1891), resulting in the wet heavy atmospheric effect, rather than in the subject matter. Murdoch reminds us of 'the objects of nature' that are potentially sublime: 'a mountain range, the starry sky, the stormy sea, a great waterfall, these things give us the sublime' (1959:45). Hedges and muddy banks are not what comes to mind when we imagine a sublime scene.

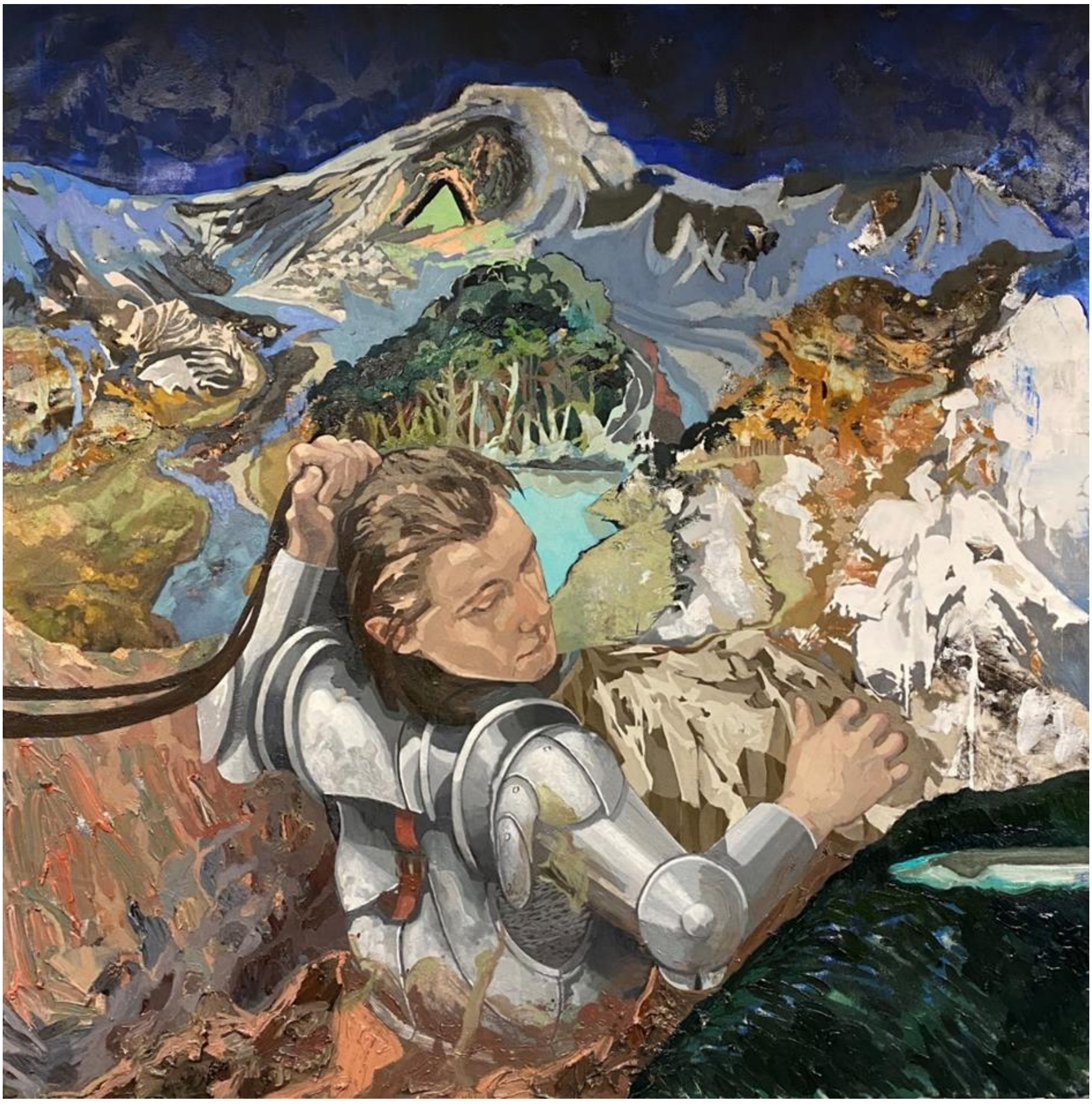

Figure 61: *The Slime of Life Clings to Sir Gawain* (2021) Michael Eden.

In the painting *The Slime of Life Clings to Sir Gawain* (fig. 61) I have tried to convey something of the hero's journey. Gawain as 'neophyte' (initiate), a term that also has a particular relation to the term 'tyro' which means '"young soldier," "new recruit," or more generally, "novice"' (Merriam-Webster, 2022). A neophyte is one who 'wavers between two worlds'. Van Gennep calls this a 'threshold' through which an individual is transformed (1960:18). Timothy Morton characterises the 'eerie' as significant to subjective change, entailing 'the sensation that you might be going to go through a possibly distressing cognitive upgrade' (Abberley, in *Into the Eerie*, 2019). Gawain is shown as a young man retaining in his bearing and armour the reminder of one world, the courtly world of civilised hierarchy, while rising above him is the eerily verdant Green Chapel. The composition was conceived in reference to 1980s film posters where characters and scenes are juxtaposed in a kind of still montage. I did this with the intent of maximising the sense of failed seriousness that is already present in the tin-plated knight. Gawain is seen wading into the temporal landscape, which is depicted in thick impasto near to the foreground; on the left of the figure is a collapsing mud bank that merges into the swamp. To the right, damp and persistent moss clings to a rock face, two indicators of life at other, less familiar registers. The painting aims for 'an eeriness of the environment', which Rob Saint John argues can be understood as a result of our inability to perceive this. 'We don't perceive its changes, its losses, its fluxes' (Rob Saint John in *Into the Eerie*, 2019). Gawain is looking back over his right pauldron, still concerned with cleanliness despite being waist-deep in mud and slime. When he turns back in the direction he's traveling, he will see the unsettling land whirling above him; still and moving water, barren and persistently green hillsides, to the right the winter snow moving in. Observing that the poem shifts between high detail and schematic description, the landscape space was made at the beginning of the picture by pouring paint onto the canvas closing and opening it like a large Rorschach test and then working over the resultant stain to form mountains, rivers, and trees while maintaining something of the chance occurrence and randomness of the initial gesture.

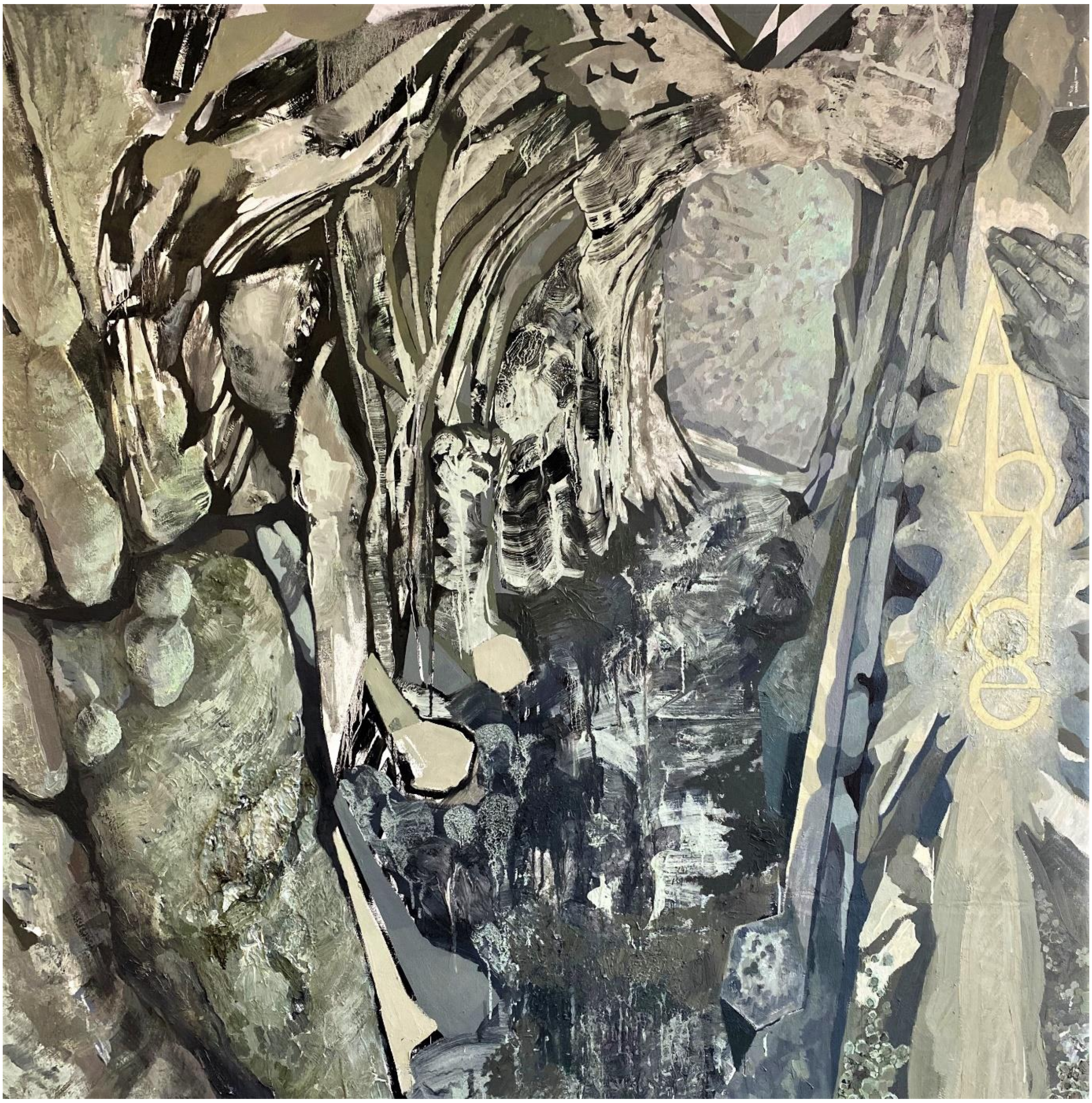

Figure 62: *Green Chapel* (2021) Michael Eden.

In *Green Chapel* (fig. 62), my most direct attempt to produce a *virescent space*, there is an intended narrative continuation from *The Slime of Life Clings to Sir Gawain*: the triangle emitting green light in that painting is the subject of *Green Chapel*. As a result, I hope that the viewer will link these spaces and construct the requisite distance/time between them psychically. I have tried to enhance the eeriness of the space with an unknown light source and the overall form of the interior was made using chance: pouring, folding, and then working with the resultant shapes.

There is a blatant intertextual link made to *Belshazzar's Feast* (1636-8) by Rembrandt: the painting shows the eponymous king as he is astonished by a supernatural hand (thought to be the hand of God) as it produces the famous *writing on the wall* from the Book of Daniel. The inscription (in Aramaic) interpreted by the prophet Daniel reads ‘you have been weighed in the balance and found wanting’ (The National Gallery, 2022).

The reasoning for this reference is twofold: firstly, to give the moment of approach by Gawain an accent of portentous dread (Belshazzar was judged and died); and secondly, to link to the intertextual nature of the Pearl Poet’s codex (which includes the poems *Pearl*, *Patience*, and *Cleanness* as well as *SGGK*). In *Cleanness*, the same moment appears and is illustrated. Reichardt (1997:125-127) argues this centrepiece is purposefully reflecting on the act of textual creation and of ‘consumption’ by active interpreters. The word ‘Abyde’ in my painting is the Middle-English spelling of ‘abide’ (Armitage, 2007:102) with its religious overtones. It is the word spoken by the GK as Gawain demands his appearance, however, it’s included here in its more literal, but no less significant meaning, to wait.

My interpretation of this moment is abide/wait, as it were in your discomfort, this is the most alert, the most alive you have ever been and yet you simply want it to end, to return to your living death as an icon of chivalry.

Gilded Cage

Having explored the *virescent space* of the 'Green Chapel' I am moving on, for the second part of the chapter to look at its opposite, the spatial logic that I characterise through the term 'gilded cage'. A 'gilded cage' is a luxurious environment defined by a lack of freedom. Examining and extending this metaphor helps us understand what is at stake in the hierarchical space advocated for by *monsters of fixity*. A cage is a trap of course, but also a protective covering and often a little eco-system unto itself in which the inhabitants are catered for. This relates to the concept of the 'megaform' (Frampton, 1999) as discussed in Chapter 2 as a structure made in opposition to chaotic nature. Moreover, Lewis conceived the imperfect, but controllable modern city and its attendant technology as opposed to nature: he writes, 'This enormous, jangling, journalistic, fairy desert of modern life serves him as nature did more technically primitive man' (Lewis cited by Tickner, 2000:79 see Chapter 2). This space is a trap because it relates totalising, to subject positioning, and hierarchal organisation. Its gilding is an extension of the pastoral 'frame' that makes subjects 'operational' (Mitchell 2009:2), something I have problematized throughout the thesis. In the upcoming section, to pursue this 'framing', I examine the current emphasis on or shift to screen-based media featuring reproducing capabilities that serve to promulgate the pastoral frame and stand for reproduction symbolically as reproductive of the status-quo. Finally, as 'cage' implies being trapped or cut off from some mode of independence I will explore the ways hierarchy, totalisation of space, and being made 'operational' (excepting a preordained subject-position) limits the potential of the individual subject and how this is problematized in my art practice.

The Great Scar: Nation as Pyramid and Tyronic Mobility

Lewis's notion of an ideal leader in Shakespeare, of the pyramid as a symbol for society (Lewis, 1927a:350), and the hierarchy he uses in *The Human Age* (1928; 1955) is useful in helping to explore how a proto-fascistic frame functions. The idea of the Tyro-type is the lynchpin that works to prevent criticism of the frame or pyramid, by offering a limited form of social mobility. Those at the bottom of the pyramid must be prevented from questioning the hierarchy (the frame, the social order) and instead focus on resentment or emulation of the next rung in the ladder, the monstrous *Tyro*. I have already drawn a link between the *Tyro* and the representation of the monstrous middle manager of the contemporary workspace (Chapter 3). The creative leader is a version of Shakespeare for Lewis as Edwards notes, 'He stated that "the services that such a writer as Shakespeare renders a community in stabilizing its consciousness and giving it that rallying ground of thought and illusion which it requires to survive, are immense''' (Lewis cited in Edwards, 2010:1). This figure is the idealised mediator of society who guarantees meaning and serves to reproduce the status-quo into perpetuity. Lewis thus sees 'Shakespeare as a pivot between the old world of Feudalism (with its sanctified and 'enchanted' social order) and the new world of capitalism and 'disenchanted' scientific enquiry (the immediate model for this being the disillusioned political philosophy of Machiavelli)' (Edwards, 2010:2). In O'Donnell (2020:78), this model becomes the stabilising corporatisation of industrial post-war England. Its stratification and 'ideology of efficiency' (79) is a guarantor that elites will retain control. This reflects Lewis's sympathy for the 'great man theory' of societal development (Jameson, 1979:30), an elitist position whereby exceptional individuals are viewed as responsible for moving history forward (as discussed in the introduction). I characterise Lewis's creative leader, and superior types in my work, as machine-like and responsible instead for a stultifying present. Nature and the relationship with landscape from inside the 'cage' is a destructive temporal space from which we must be protected. I suggest this is exemplified in the dynamic-fatalism celebrated in Lewis's over-orthodoxy. From inside the cage, nature must be resisted in general or else it is co-opted into pastoral representation/illusion. These are the twin strategies of proto-fascist fixity: trial-by-fire fantasies in which superior individuals emerge, or nostalgic screens that obfuscate social tension.

The contemporary relevance of this dynamic concerning obfuscation via a specific English nostalgia is outlined in Rosalía Baena and Christa Byker's account of the pastoral frame in television and film, in 'Dialects of Nostalgia: Downton Abbey and English identity' (2015). The context for the paper is the notion of an 'intense English nostalgia' present in numerous popular 'heritage films' covering the period of the 1960s to 2015, which are seen as having an ideological function that is 'essentially conservative' (260). I propose this is a continuation of the function discussed in Barrell (1980) where 'honest and labourous' (2) poor people embody 'workaday actuality' (13) in a harmonious and prosperous (stratified) coexistence. Baena and Byker argue, 'All of this points to the fact that in our flexible modern environment, with all its attending fragmentation, we see an increasing reliance on popular media narratives for negotiating our social and cultural identities' (2015:267). Drawing on Higson (1993), they see the function as obfuscating current tensions in favour of an 'imperialist and upper-class Britain' (260) and working for a contemporaneous desire for the 'status quo' (267). Furthermore, they argue that these iterations are key in notions of 'national identity' (261). The screen in this instance is an updated iteration of pastoral oil painting, it reproduces the dynamic of the 'subject position' (Chandler and Munday, 2020:113), propagating Mitchell's (2009:10) '"dreamwork" of imperialism'. In Lewis's jangling fairy desert of modern life (which is a city), the peon or automata men are at the lowest rung and are fully 'operational' (Mitchell, 2009:2) via the suturing of the creative master. In actuality this is machine-like reproduction of the status-quo akin to Mitchell's viewer who is interpellated by the frame.

Lewis does provide a template for the kinds of automata-men or peons at the lowest rung in his visual lexicon also. Depicting the masses and their agents unsympathetically in *Labour Deputation Marine* (1917), *The Crowd* (1915), *Two Mechanics* (1912) (masses), and *The Psychologist* (Which had the previous title *The Great Vegetarian*, 1917) (agent). These images stress the inferior nature of the masses and the lack of distinction and individual character present in them, while the figure in *The Psychologist* (fig. 63) looms overhead, peering blankly at the viewer. The dehumanisation in the images does not appear to have any sense of tragedy or social conscience. In fact, it appears that critique is directed at the figures; consider the comically vacant expressions in, *Labour Deputation Marine* (fig. 7) or the cowed and hunched figures of *Two Mechanics* (fig. 6) and the insect-like revolutionaries of *The Crowd* (fig. 8). The term 'vegetarian' is clearly a reference to lacking the predatory qualities Lewis deemed important in the figure of an agent for the masses, a psychologist who convinces the inferior they have worthwhile interiority. These images display the lowest order of Lewis's hierarchy, the masses or peons. These visual expressions chime with Lewis's attitude to 'mass man' (O'Donnell, 2020:80) in literature also where he is 'dismissive' and 'gleefully malevolent' of those he considers 'herd like' (81).

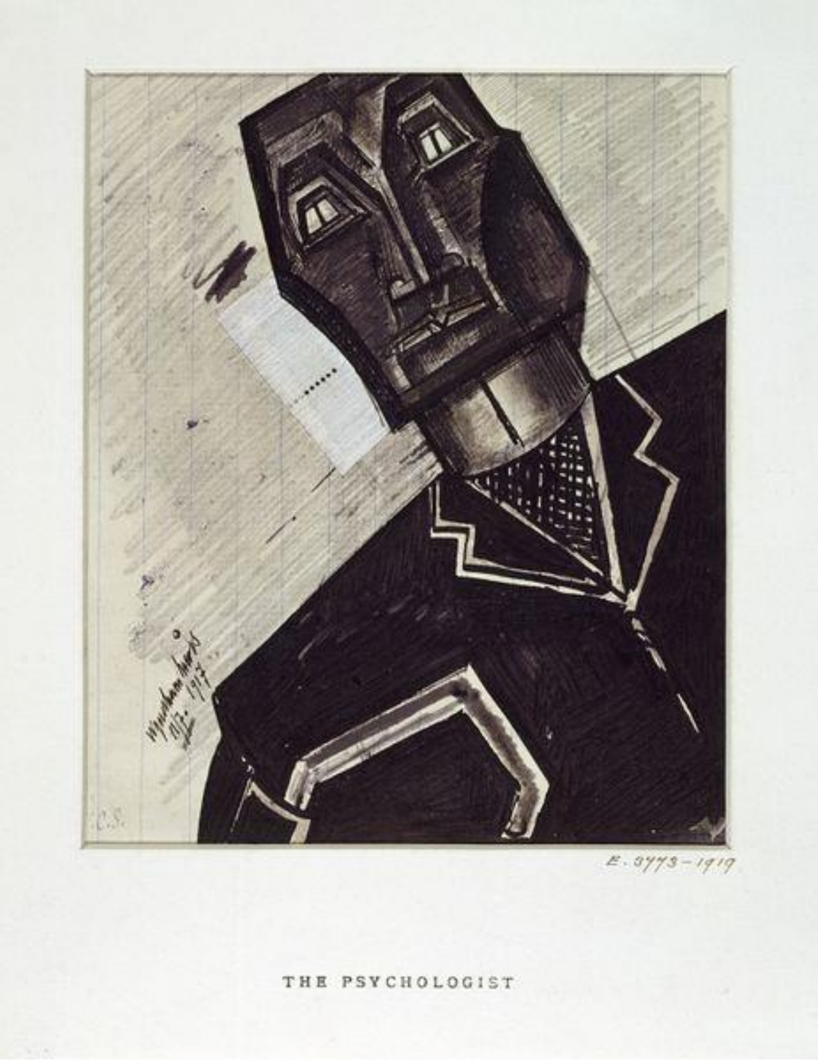
E. 3773-1919
THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Figure 63: *The Psychologist* (with a previous title *The Great Vegetarian* 1917) Wyndham Lewis.

I understand Lewis's hierarchy of subject types from research into the *Tyro*-type and its mythos as represented in *The Human Age* (including *The Childermass*, 1928, *Monstre Gai*, 1955, and *Malign Fiesta* 1955). That trilogy is related to the 'Tyro' type as described by Edwards (2000:259) as coming from Lewis's earlier attempts to write about a world inhabited by 'Tyros'. It presents a hierarchy that betrays a revulsion to life. This is expressed in the complex relationship of 'phallocentricism'[9] and 'aphanisis' (as discussed in Chapter 3) a duality I would argue is a feature of other proto-fascist thinking. In terms of the revulsion of life, this is discussed by Neocleous (2004; 2005), who pursues this argument concerning right-wing conceptions of monstrosity, and in Woodard's *Slime Dynamics* (2012), which explores it in relation to natural processes and perceptions of plasma (focusing on disgust). Lewis professed his idea of a pyramid of England in *Blast* 1 (1914) writing, 'Bless England, Industrial Island Machine, Pyramidal Workshop, its apex…discharging itself on the sea' (Lewis, 1981). He follows this up in *Tarr*, where he writes, 'All the world's a workshop, I should say' (Lewis, 2010:264), and in *Time and Western Man* (Lewis, 1927a:350). The pyramid emerges as a symbol of permanence and an example of fixity posed against the changing human body. (It is also a visualisation used to illustrate the ideal society.) For Miller, this represented an 'authoritarianism' linked to Pareto's theories of the social pyramid (Miller, 2018:91). To problematize this, we can look to Barrell (1980) who offers a vision of an ideal created by the collective illusion of English rural life as 'honest and labourous' (2) having a 'workaday actuality' with 'industrious' rustics (13). For Barrell, the depiction is an injunction, set up in the symbolic world. They (the rustic poor) are shown 'as they should be' (for the audience of the painting), functioning in society. A pyramid idea of society is one where clear division between types are adhered to, with limited mobility offered in the call to become more ruthless and exploitative of the naturally weaker in society. Freedom is a consequence of position in the hierarchy not a result of individual subjective reasoning.

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[9] The term 'phallo-centric' was coined by Ernest Jones (1927:459). Phallocentrism is an ideological position which sees the phallus as key in the ordering of the social world.

In *Red Knight* (fig. 26) I have arranged a hierarchical space inspired by my reading of Lewisian types. I have combined images of dehumanised power alongside automata-men. The eponymous *Red Knight* is represented as 'mechanamorphic' (Krauss, 2019:175 see Chapter 2), a conflation of imperial symbols and decorative armour. The central figure, resembling a corporate logo, has the final musical note from 'Aquarela do Brasil' (1939) forming part of his head, linking that operational figure with the profile, bottom right. Stylistically, these two elements reference Dada and Surrealist representation respectively. The music is a key component of Terry Gilliam's *Brazil* (1985), in which a Kafkaesque vision of England is presented with special attention to bureaucratic abjection. The intention is to offer a sense of general development of the figures in the image in the direction of ever-greater dehumanisation. The face on the bottom left is a romantic reference to Gawain in the style of a woodcut print that is being erased. The background is intersected with man-made boundaries and transport links. Colonial motifs include the central pyramid and railway track. (Robert Stephenson 1803–59, an English civil engineer, was contracted to build Egypt's first railway, see Hughes, 1981). To avoid any hint of celebration in such a scene, a naturalistic representation of nature (a bird) is seen to be tangled in the barbed wire of the stratified space.

Another attempt at hierarchal flat space, *Sir Ector* (2019), implicates a figure of authority into the predetermination that space represents (fig. 24). This figure is framed by three mouths. The largest one is formed by the electric pylons arcing around the figure's shoulders and engulfing the depicted dwellings below, while shark-like teeth formed by the high-voltage electricity hint at the violence involved in being made operational. The second mouth is formed from the aiguillette on the figure's left breast. The shape of the manic open grin is influenced by Looney Tunes cartoons, particularly racist depictions of islanders from the 1930s (see Crowley, 2021). The cruelty of that imagery visualises the imperial gaze, and a subtle/partial accent of that is present as a result. The final mouth conflates a row of medals with the figure's own mouth in a diagonal tyronic-grin. The figure draws on my memory of General Melchett (Stephen Fry), a caricature and satire of World War One leaders from the television programme *Blackadder Goes Fourth* (1989). The tension between that satire and continued investment in patriarchal figures associated with wars in UK popular culture such as Colin Thackery (a Korean War veteran and winner of *Britain's Got Talent* 2019) and Captain Sir Tom Moore (a World War Two veteran and media phenomenon of 2020). The importance of the uniform in each case is to convey power and authority, and the display of medals is common to both the fictional satire of power and the pop-culture veterans. The uniform as a nationalist symbol is functional despite satire and is reproduced via popular sentimental television. Without questioning the intentions or individual characters of Thackery or Moore, their popularity as paternal, nationalist, media symbols is regressive and cloying. The emphasis on Melchett (handlebar moustache and looming presence) as a model for *Sir Ector* is an attempt to show that figures of authority with supposed agency are trapped in their dynamic: their agency is operational-agency, cogs in the machinery of power.

One of the strategies I have employed throughout the project is to take the motifs and form related to dehumanisation present in Lewis's oeuvre and apply it to figures of power and those who possess a visible distinctiveness. This distinctiveness, when treated to vorticist-style abstraction, results in the qualities of monstrosity present in the knights, generals, and aristocrats I have represented.

The painting *Gawain* (2019) (fig. 17) is an attempt to tread the line between those we see as victims of totalised space – automata men, marionette-like peons – and those who are its agents, the *Tryo*-types, figures of order and authority. Thinking of Gawain at Camelot, with its stratified organisation and subject-positions, I have conflated human form and armour; steel rings are enclosed in a heavy stone-like frame. The torso is broken into pointed shards intersected with popinjays (after a medieval image), a reference to Gawain's attire (Armitage, 2009:33), and his mental state at court (as I discussed in Chapter 3). The pin-stripe pattern is an anachronistic reference to sedentary power in the business class of the emerging 19th century (which persists as the uniform of political and corporate power today). Finally, a unicorn, a mythical creature associated with purity and truth wanders through a diagrammatic woodland: clearly informed by the origami portent left by Gaff (Edward James Olmos) in Scott's, *Blade Runner* (1982). Gaff's unicorn has become synonymous with the questioning of agency and the reliance of subjectivity on memory. I include it here to foreshadow the subjective journey that Gawain begins at court, and the potential fatality that he returns to if a change is not achieved.

Scar as evidence of trace in time versus scar as resistance to time has been a consistent theme. The symbolism of the scar and its duality as a metaphor in the project is useful in understanding the stakes of the thesis. Any scar is caused by injury, in this case, the destabilising notion of deep-time and underlying flux is the trauma that negative constructs (fixity) are grappling with. In that iteration, the scar becomes a cover, such as the mark of fierce resistance represented in the *Tyro's* grin or phallic-masculinity more generally, or of a nostalgic covering such as pastoral landscape or national myths offer the subject. Such covers are akin to scarification (an idea I discussed in Chapter 1) – they make an illusion out of trauma in order to maintain a position – I have tried to show that this underlying wound and its remainder (the scar) can be characterised as a space of radical de-ordering, re-ordering, and collapse, which is potentially beneficial as anathema to iterations of fixity and the way they come to dominate the subject.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have acknowledged the implications of creative output regarding the role representation and art practice more generally have in the construction and bolstering of notions of totalised space and subject-positioning (the gilded cage). I characterised that as being informed by fixity (a world view that celebrates and takes comfort in permanence) and subsequently to stratified society (as previously introduced via Mitchell, 2009, Barrell, 1980, and Bermingham, 1989) (see Introduction and Chapter 1), with its attendant types and limited dehumanising dynamics.

In the thesis I have articulated and critiqued the ‘dissentient conflicted position’ (Tickner, 2000, note 137) within modernism that Lewis represented. Lewis dissented from flux generally and specifically the time-mind of Henri Bergson, which other modernisms embraced. He did this in the name of an elitist machinic modernism, that would seek to remake the subject and society in a new and stable hierarchy that favoured aggressive masculinity. This is ‘modernism as propaganda’ (Hatherley, 2010:141) where people ‘are reduced to objects’ (Johnson, 2014:23) and it is a modernism that would, as Lewis had wanted, find its way into government strategies ‘answer[ing] the mass sensibility of our time’ (Lewis cited in Edwards, 2000:255). I argued that Imperial-modernism, described and critiqued in Chapter 2, is an aesthetic consolation and stabilising ballast for the proto-fascist imagination, it is modernism used to give us ‘an updated version of our world, a mere future condition of the present’ (Quinn, 2017:42) which I suggested The Festival of Britain was a pertinent example.

I demonstrated the ways art practice can act as a bleeding lance (I introduced this symbol in Chapter 1). This metaphor addresses both the wounding that is a key aspect of the problem (the layers of perceptual reinforcement that representation and art practice give to stultifying ideas), and subsequently also addresses the healing that in art practice is an important way in which these dynamics caused by its negative application can be counteracted. This is predicated on the central idea that the problems described here – totalised space, subject positioning, and pastoral illusion – exist in perspectival constructs arising from stratified society. These subsequently attach the subject to reality (requiring consistent reproduction to be affective) through the dynamic of interpellation, rather than existing in reality as a foregone conclusion. In fact, I argued the radical implications of liminal wilderness must be continually suppressed, which in my reading, is what othering and idealising does. In my works alongside the thesis, I have made a case for contemporary artmaking with its engagement with landscape and national identity in the context of post-Brexit politics. I have articulated a sense of the relation between the monstrosity of flux and the ways that a proto-fascist imagination counters these with monstrous images of armoured fixity. By drawing the aesthetics of fixity into an intersemiotic mode of flux, in my own practice. I have attempted to open a different relationship of the viewer to the anxieties of temporality (both natural and political).

I have shown this positive application of the bleeding lance (art practice) in two distinct ways:

1: through recognition of dehumanisation, drawing on Lewis's aesthetic (in which dehumanisation and dynamic-fatalism are especially potent) to help to represent the negative aspects of being made operational, and of lacking a condition in the present due to fixity and proto-fascist (or false) universals of Englishness.

2: by highlighting underlying liminality, eeriness, and flux in ways that trigger recognition of this in reality and encourage a heuristic experiential reading of work (gaining a condition in the present).

By way of answering the thesis's question 'what is the function of the monster in representations of the English landscape?' I argued that monsters act as agents for a spatial-temporal worldview: either fixity, linked to stratified space, and subject-positioning; or flux linked to liminal-eerie space and subjective change. I have made a case for these monsters in the context of the time-agon in various examples, and explored the contemporary relevance of the pairing, their shared economy, features, and subjective implications.

In relation to the field of monster studies, I have proposed that deep-time, and temporality in general, is a locus to which outcrops of monstrosity are related. My argument is that armoured *monsters of fixity*, like the *Tyro*, are always a kind of reaction to and against the threat of temporality and change evoked in a prior monstrosity of flux, which nature is a primary example. That dynamic of a reaction formation, based on a poorly processed trauma, is one way in which monstrosity is related to nationalistic constructions of identity: they, like the *monster of fixity*, are concerned with so called essential inner qualities, with permanence, and the propagation of a hierarchy. *Flux monsters* alternatively give form to temporality in ways that are either perceived negatively, manifesting in fantasies, images, and narratives which are illustrative of breakdown, destruction, and collapse; or they have an ambiguous status related to subjective development, such as that the GK has in relation to Gawain, and can be thought of as agents of subjective development.

The proto-fascist position in the mode of dynamic-fatalism throws up in front of itself the *monster of fixity* as a line (fascist) not to be crossed, but nevertheless this monster elicits a seductive pull at one pole of the proto-fascist imaginary to be resisted by the proto-fascist band of worthies and/or the heroic executive (thus maintaining proto-fascism as a position). This I propose explains the turbulent field of tension that makes the mode dynamic.

False universals of Englishness, which have come to dominate visions of post-imperial (Commonwealth) Britain, are constructs lurching between nostalgic illusions and proto-fascist phantasy in desperate attempts to stabilise and propagate these values. The *monster of fixity* in the 20th century actualises destructive qualities in the wake of two world wars, horrors such as violence, brutal hierarchy, and masculinity in rage, coinciding with a paradigm shift in social organisation. However, our apparent disgust at dehumanisation is also a fascination, incubating those qualities, and helping maintain the energy of the tension described above.

Lewis has a contemporary relevance that is directly linked to the way that his abstraction in general, and the *Tyro* specifically, communicates dehumanising aspects of modernity. In particular, the dynamics of modern social relations that are dominated by workspaces, the modern city, and the architectural landscape. In my interpretation of Lewis’s *Tyro* project, there is an attempt to offer an unsentimental solution for the subject: assume this dehumanisation as a more accurate expression of human nature and take your place in the hierarchy it offers. This dehumanisation in Lewis is explored in his various outputs, in narratives, and visual works, offering us a coherent language of un-becoming which is framed as a demystification of social relations: as an alternative to what is seen as wrongheaded progressive movements. It is a dehumanisation complete with its version of social mobility, based on gendered aggression and predatory superiority to peons (weaker, lesser men). Those qualities make Lewis a precursor to the dynamics explored in contemporary creative output such as *The Office* (2001-2003) wherein the terrible presence of the *Tyro* is manifest in the figure of Chris Finch. In Lewis then we can locate the formative traumatic shifts that give rise to a subject like Finch as the breakdown of guaranteed class and gender relations in the aftermath of world war, and the rise of corporate structures to replace those.

Flux-monsters belong to the legacy of what is called the bourgeois subject (I prefer complex-subject). At one pole of flux, there is breakdown and collapse. This risk is explored in negative iterations of the *flux-monster*, especially in conservative imaginaries (Lewis, or Burke as discussed in Chapter 4). At the other pole, this monster catalyses painful moments of personal change linked to reconfigurations of the self. That legacy is an aspect of an other-Englishness, which unlike positions of fixity, that offer the subject a place in a hierarchy, instead offers the subject realisation of a position in temporal reality.

Additionally, I have made the case for ‘The High Wasteland’ of the title in my interpretation of the Green Chapel and the landscape representation it prefigures in my supposition of *virescent space*; a form of representation that via motifs of liminality, eeriness, and deep time, processes the real (and potentially traumatic) aspects of nature in flux into an aesthetic experience for the subject, offering the Green Chapel and *virescent space* as better analogues for nature than those realised in nostalgic, picturesque or othered representation.

Landscape practices that draw on fixity have been thoroughly problematized, and through my understanding of the time-agon, have been critiqued as counter-temporal, revealing moreover, a counter-temporal fault line in nationalistic conceptions of self and community. The connection between landscape and the subject through perspectival frames has serious implications for personal agency. The initial metaphor from the title of this thesis, scar and form, is drawn from *SGGK* a text which I have argued has important implications for notions of personal and national identity: in both cases, ideas of a pure, stable, fixed base for identity are undermined. In this medieval text, scarring as an image is applied not only to the body (Gawain’s neck), but also to the landscape (the Green Chapel), becoming a device where each becomes a kind of metaphor for the other, interweaving subject and space, and subsequently the subject and time. This is in stark contrast with the armoured resistance to nature, that is favoured in examples of fixity (both personified and architectural). In the liminal eerie landscape space of wild nature, the subject Gawain is free to confront himself away from the bolstering of the court and its ideological framing of his world: he is prompted to act and delivered into the present by the GK, the active agent of that space. Based on this interpretation, as previously mentioned, I have argued for the positive framing of liminal eerie landscape spaces which process temporality in ways that offer better analogues to the subject.

I have defined and argued against fixity, where it is manifested in creative practice and ideological constructs. I have shown links between this foundational attitude and what has been termed proto-fascistic thinking, which finds expression in false universals of Englishness.

Concerning nature, I proposed that the subject is faced with a choice between ‘scar’ and ‘form’: between closing off to change by embracing the subject-position of scarified ferocity – as in the *monster of fixity* and the hierarchical space it advocates – or taking up a position enabled by a negotiating subject able to retain the tension between fixity and flux and enact a reconfiguration of ‘form’ (acquiring a position in the present and undergoing subjective change, such as the *flux-monster* advocates). In this iteration, scars become indicators of being in time, linked to memory.

My art practice, wherein the themes and concerns of this thesis were incubated, has influenced and been influenced by the thetic exploration. I started with an encounter in the studio between seemingly divergent thematic stimuli and subject matter.

The tension between the influences of the artist Wyndham Lewis and the poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* were formative in developing the work. On the one hand, Lewis has exerted an influence on elements of my abstraction, an aspect of which was the lasting effect on me of his *Tyro* creations. On the other hand, my long-worn obsession with *SGGK* began in childhood, resulting from a nonplussed response to Gawain’s failure, which gave rise to the motivation for this project. A resonance occurring many times in the exploration of these themes is that death is not only something that ends life, but also an intrusion into life through a habit of mind (fixity) that comes to define perception. Such perception is embraced because the entropic magnitude (flux) behind our illusions threatens us with shifts in constructions we have interpellated and mistake for our core of self.

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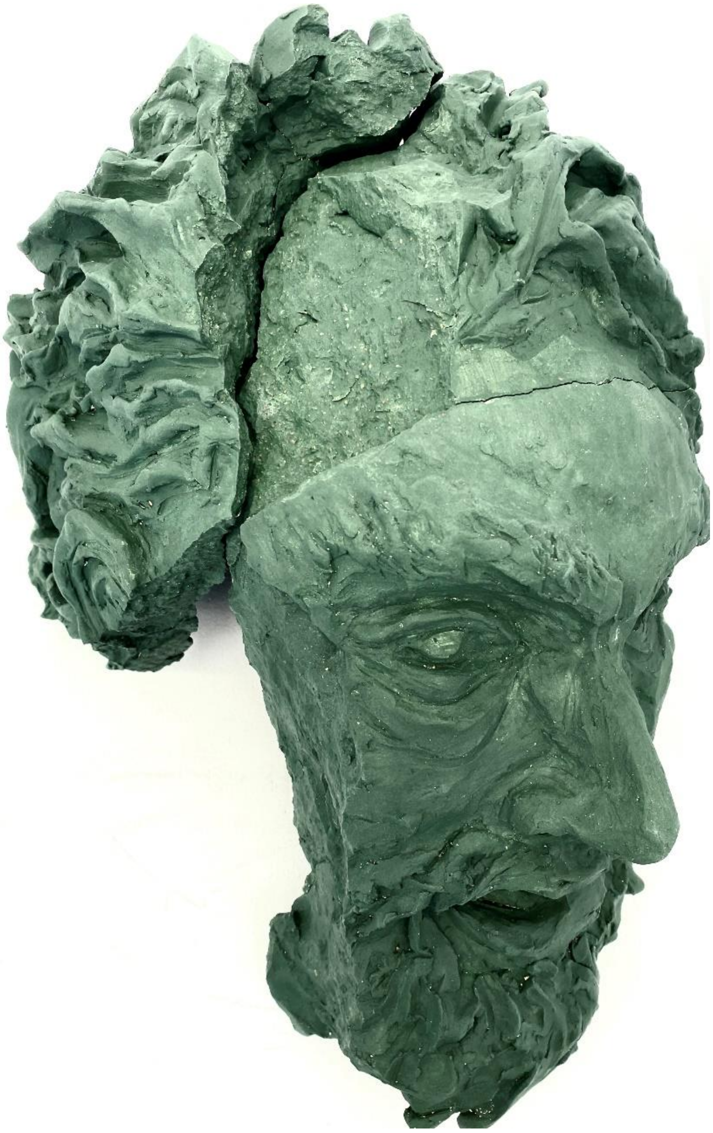
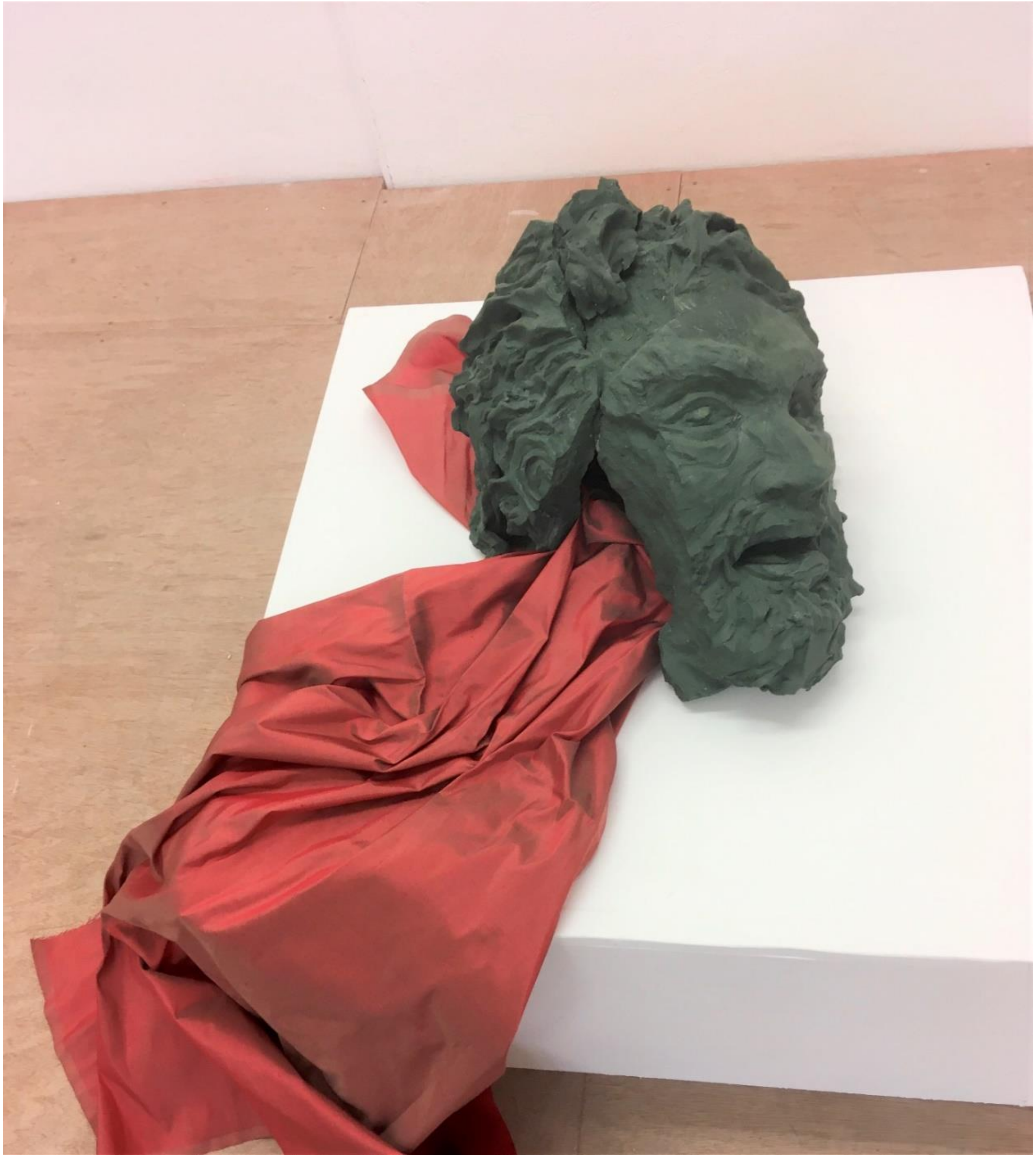
Appendices

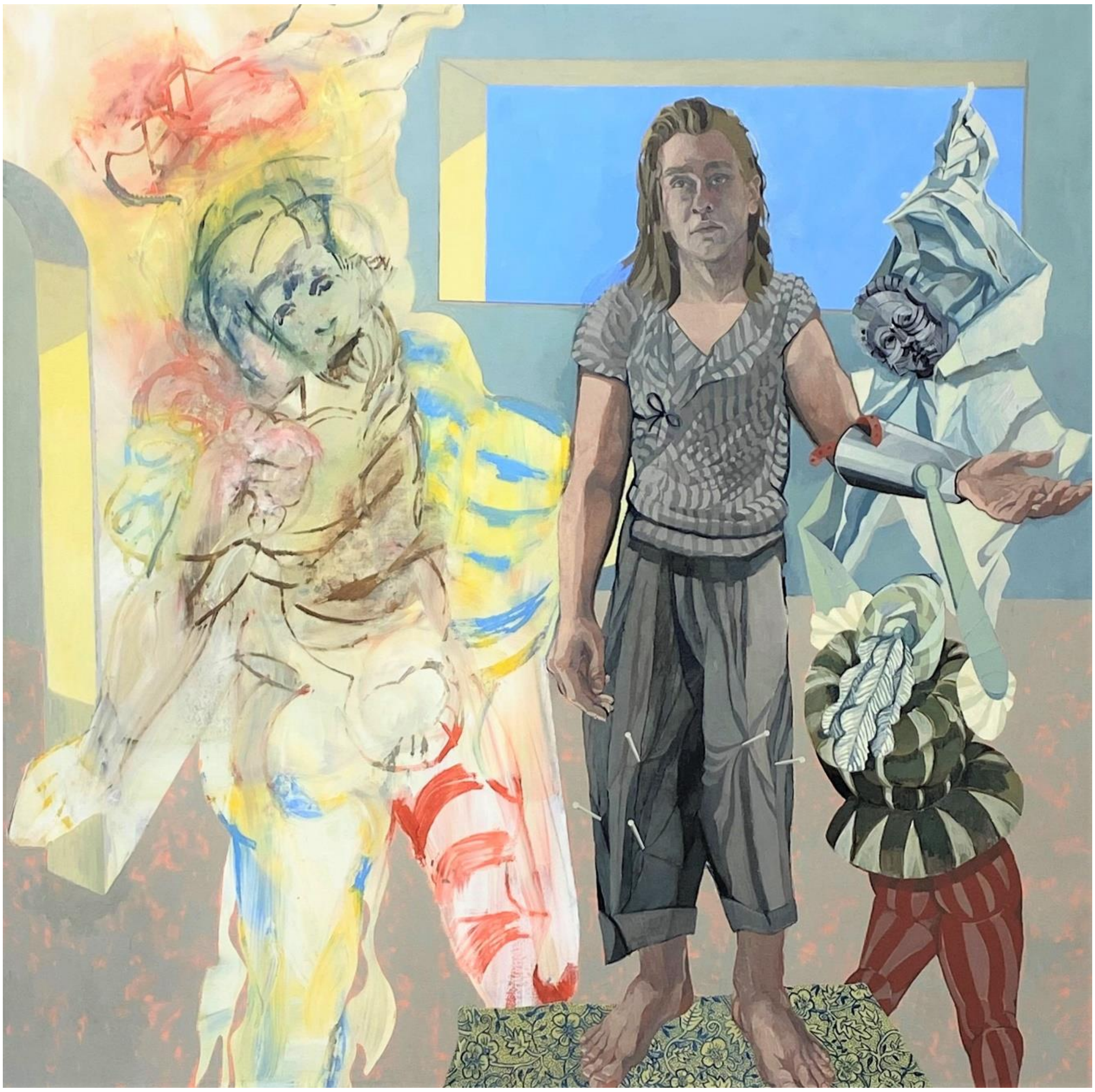
Appendix 1: Images of works completed in the art practice, but not directly discussed in the text. These works are a direct result of the project and its themes. I present ten images here of eight works ordered numerically. In each instance I took the photographs of the artworks. Additionally, I include 7 diagrams that I have come to see as digital drawings, produced as ways to think through some of the complex ideas in the thesis.



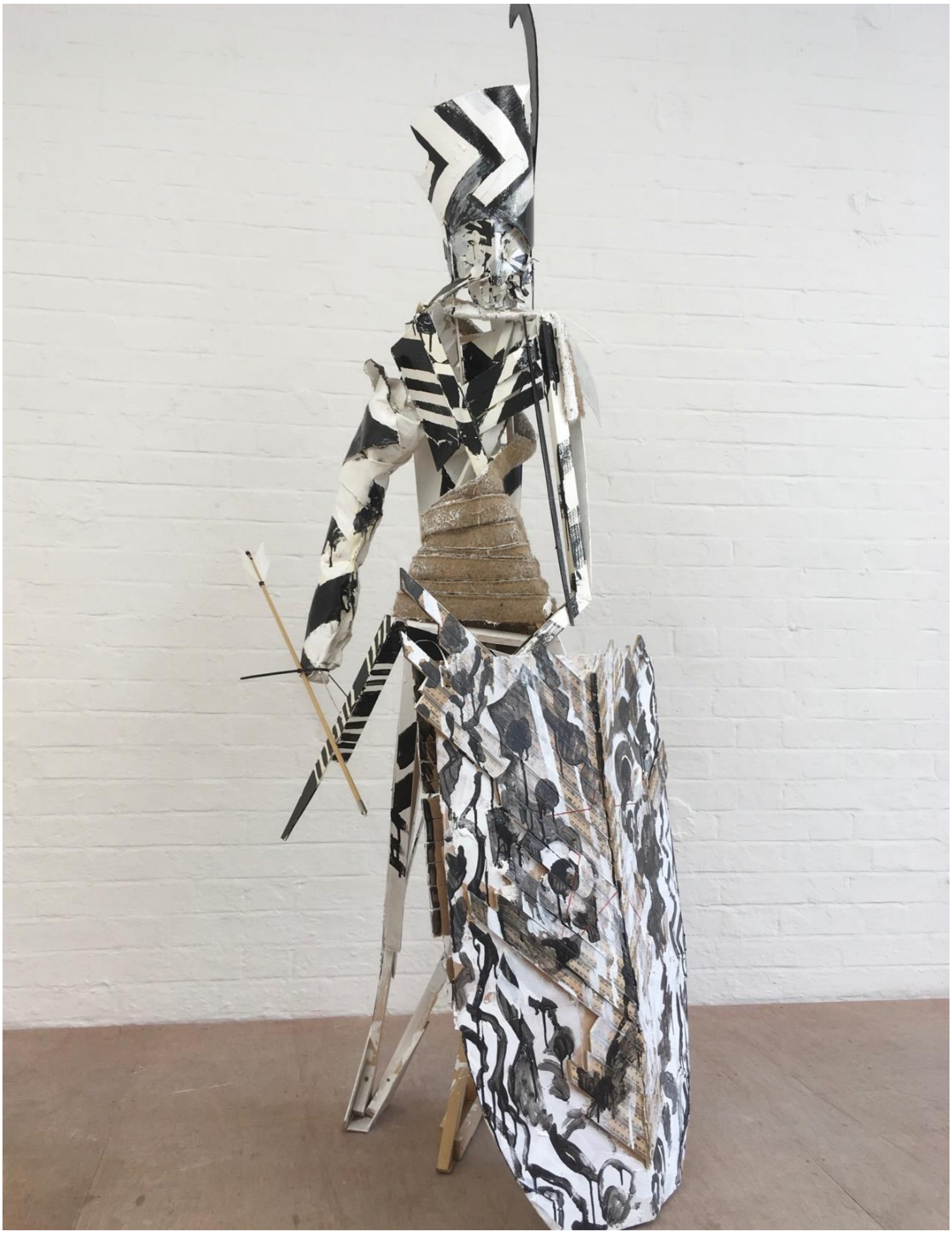
1. *The Reproachful Head of the Green Knight* (2020) [top view] fired ceramic Michael Eden.



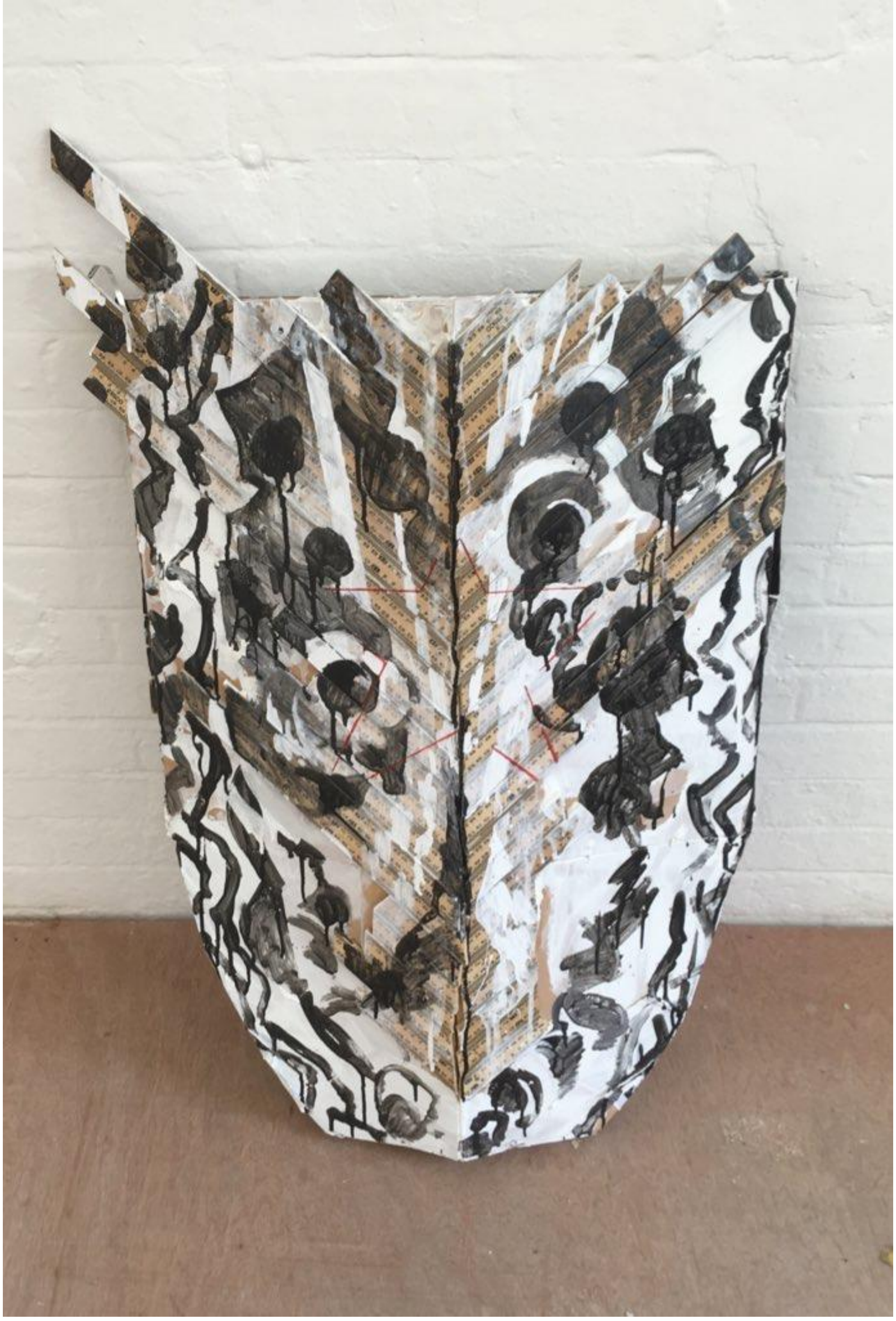
2. *The Reproachful Head of the Green Knight* (2020) fired ceramic and red silk [installation shot] Michael Eden.



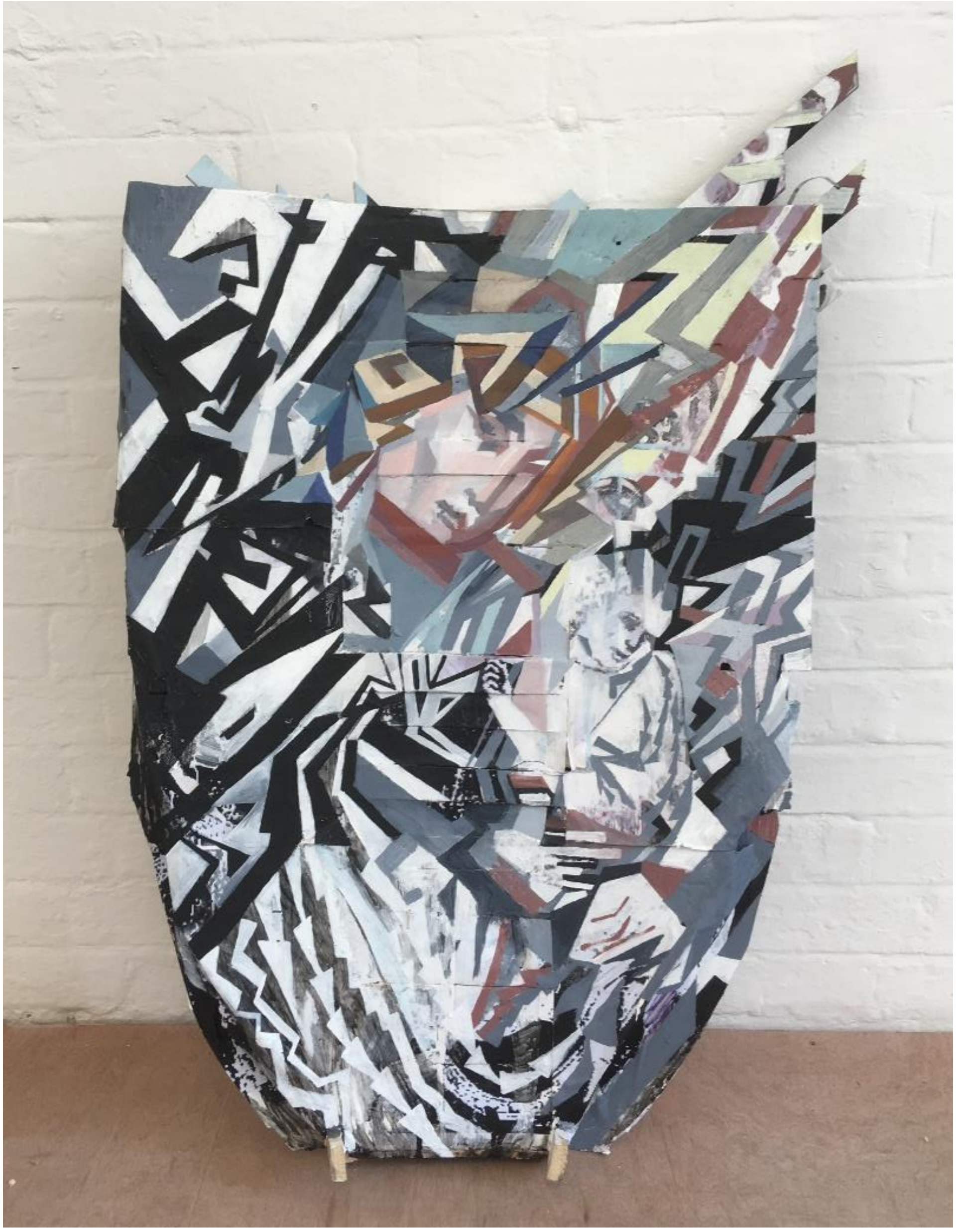
3. *Attendants Dressing and Armouring Gawain* (2021) 2m x 2m, oil on canvas, Michael Eden.



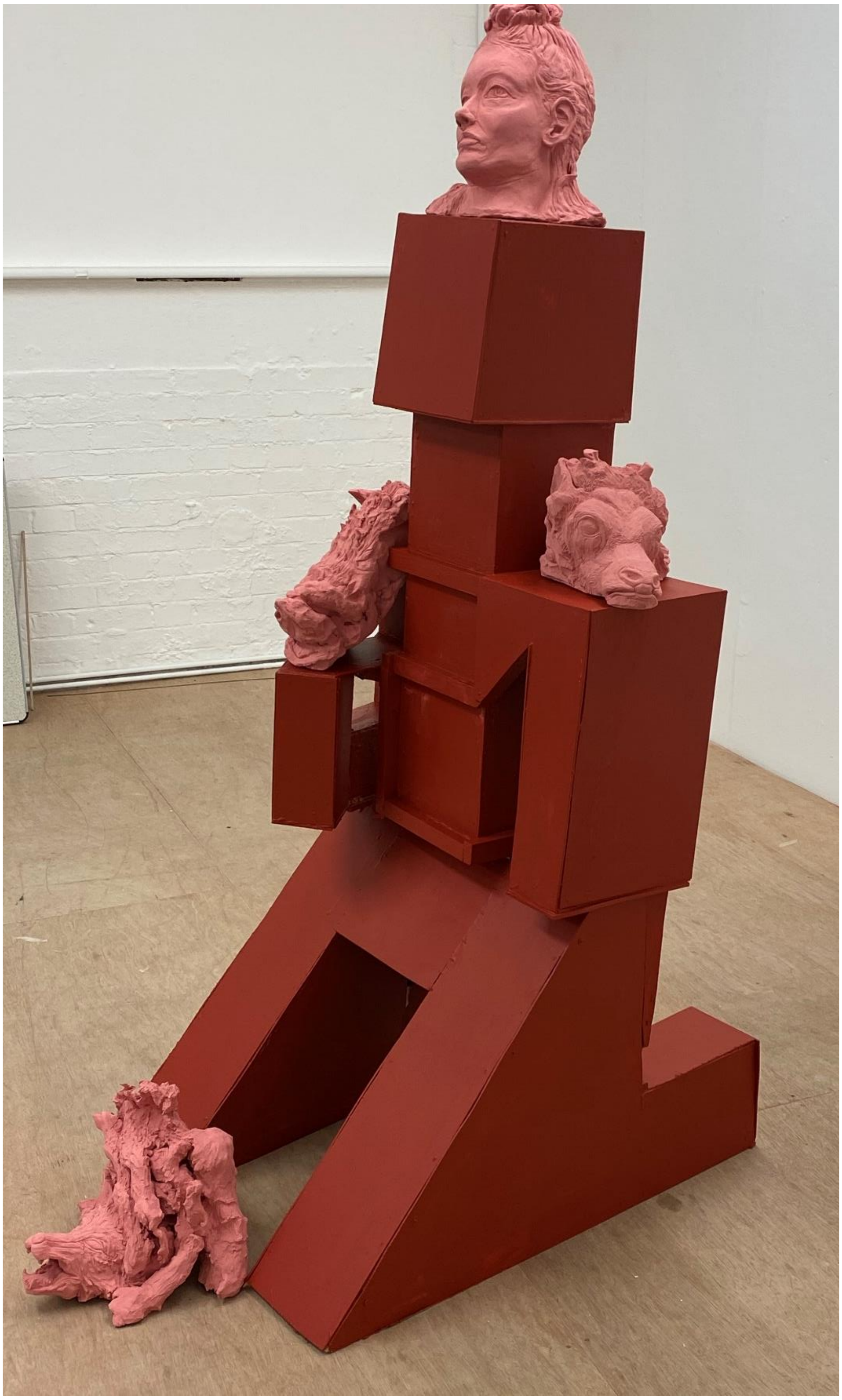
4. *Tyro-Knight III & Shield* (2020) 5ft, 10’ painted wood construction, Michael Eden.



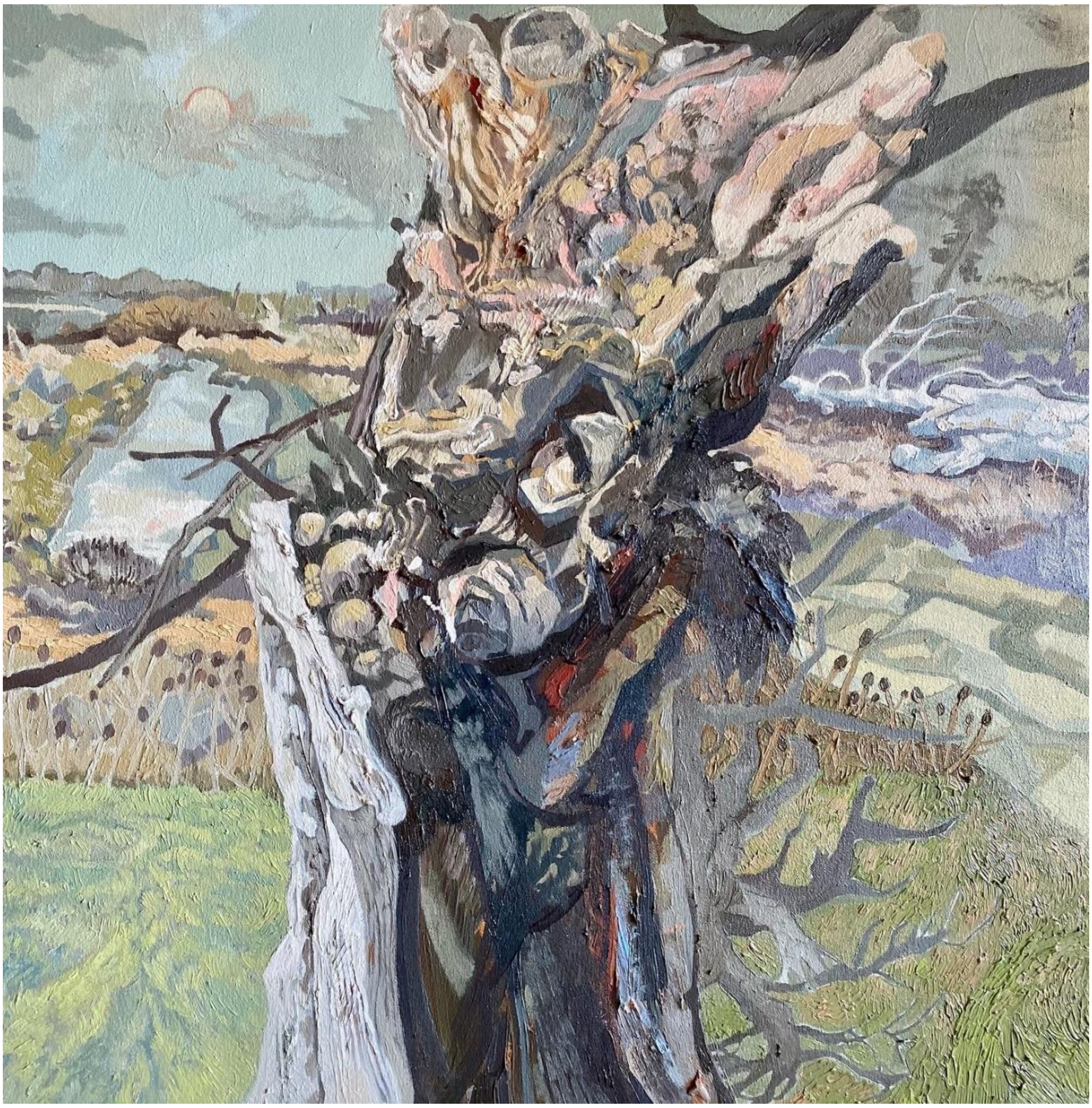
5. *Deflector* (2021) 1m x 70cm, metre rules and painted wood construction, Michael Eden.



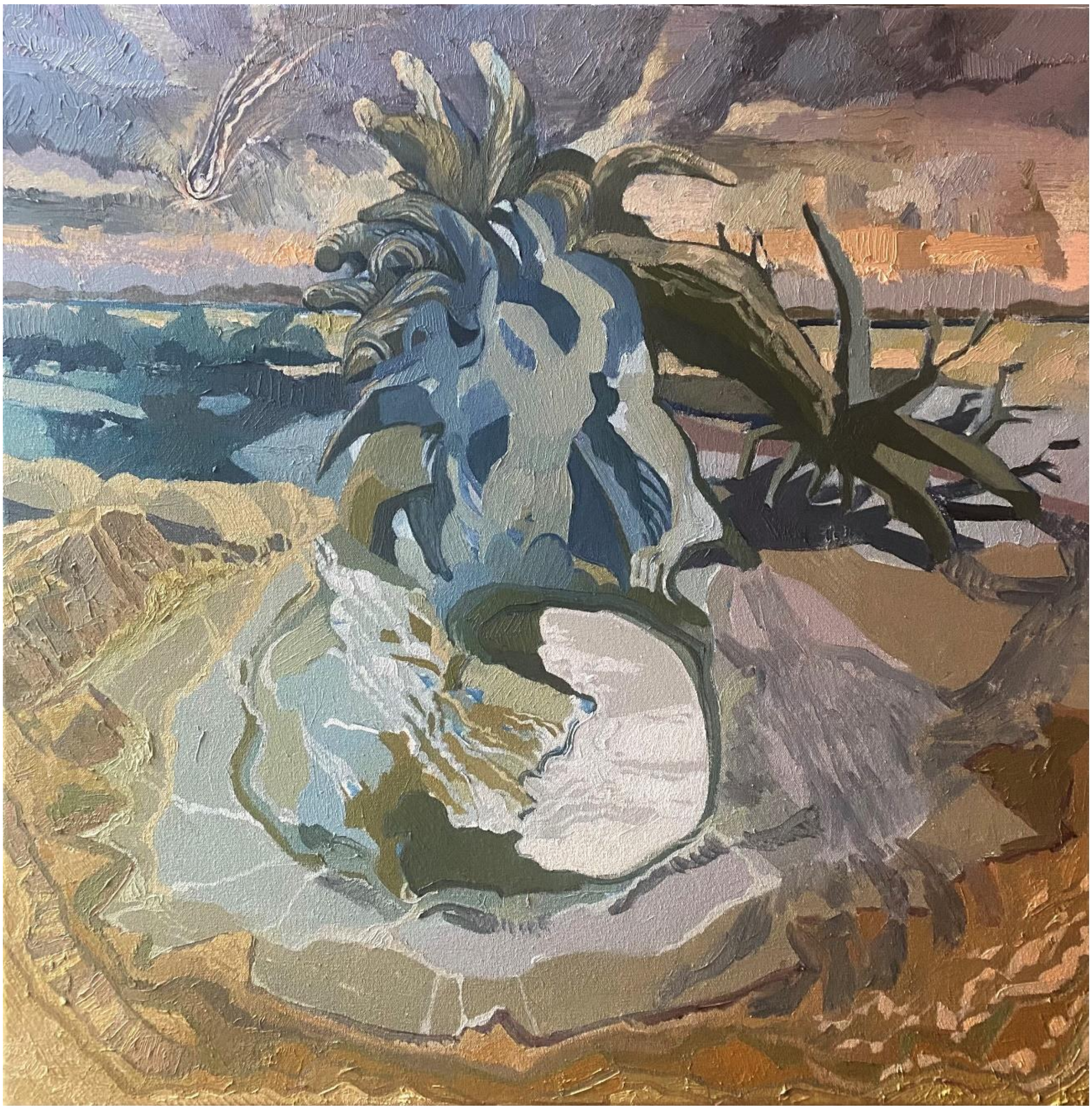
6. *Deflector [Inlay]* (2021)1m x 70cm, vorticised Madonna and child, oil on wood with photo-copy elements, Michael Eden.



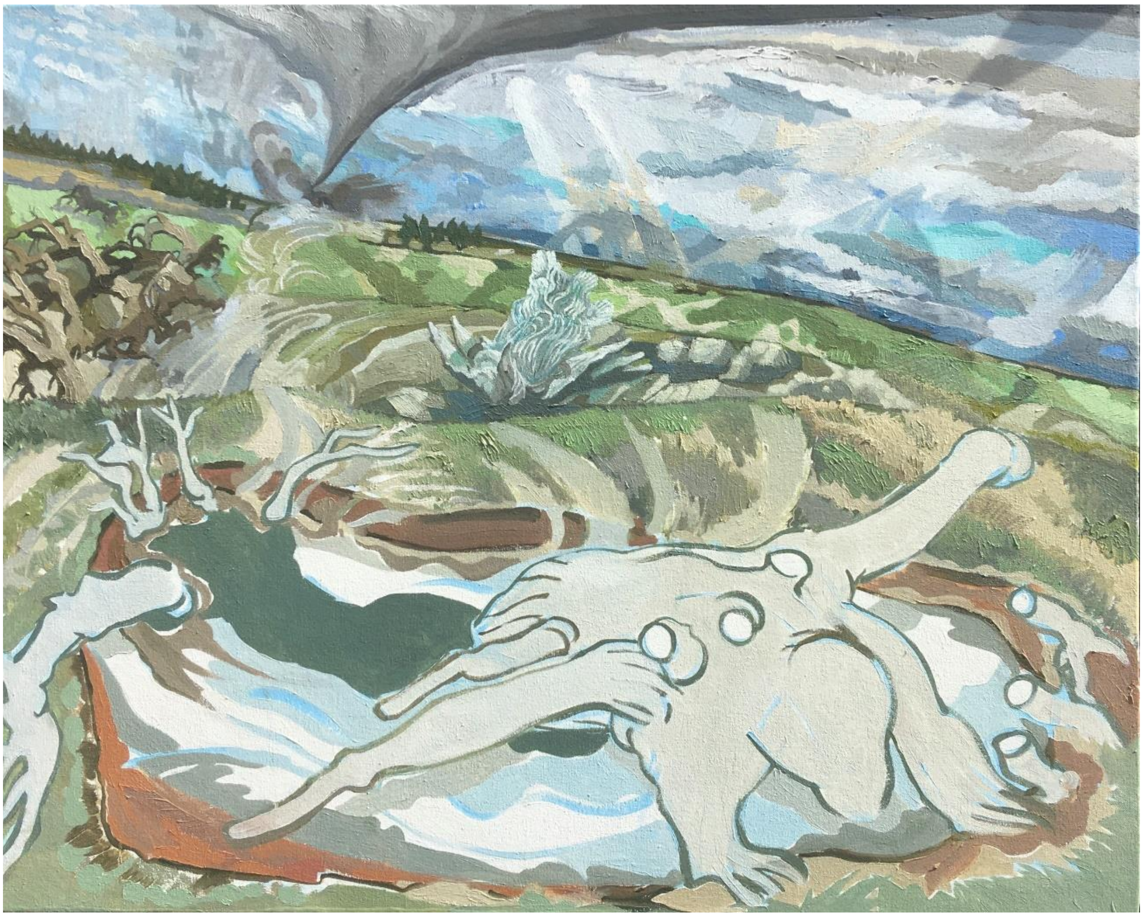
7. *Waymarker* (2020) 2m x 1.5 m, four ceramic sculptures on painted wooden construction, Michael Eden.



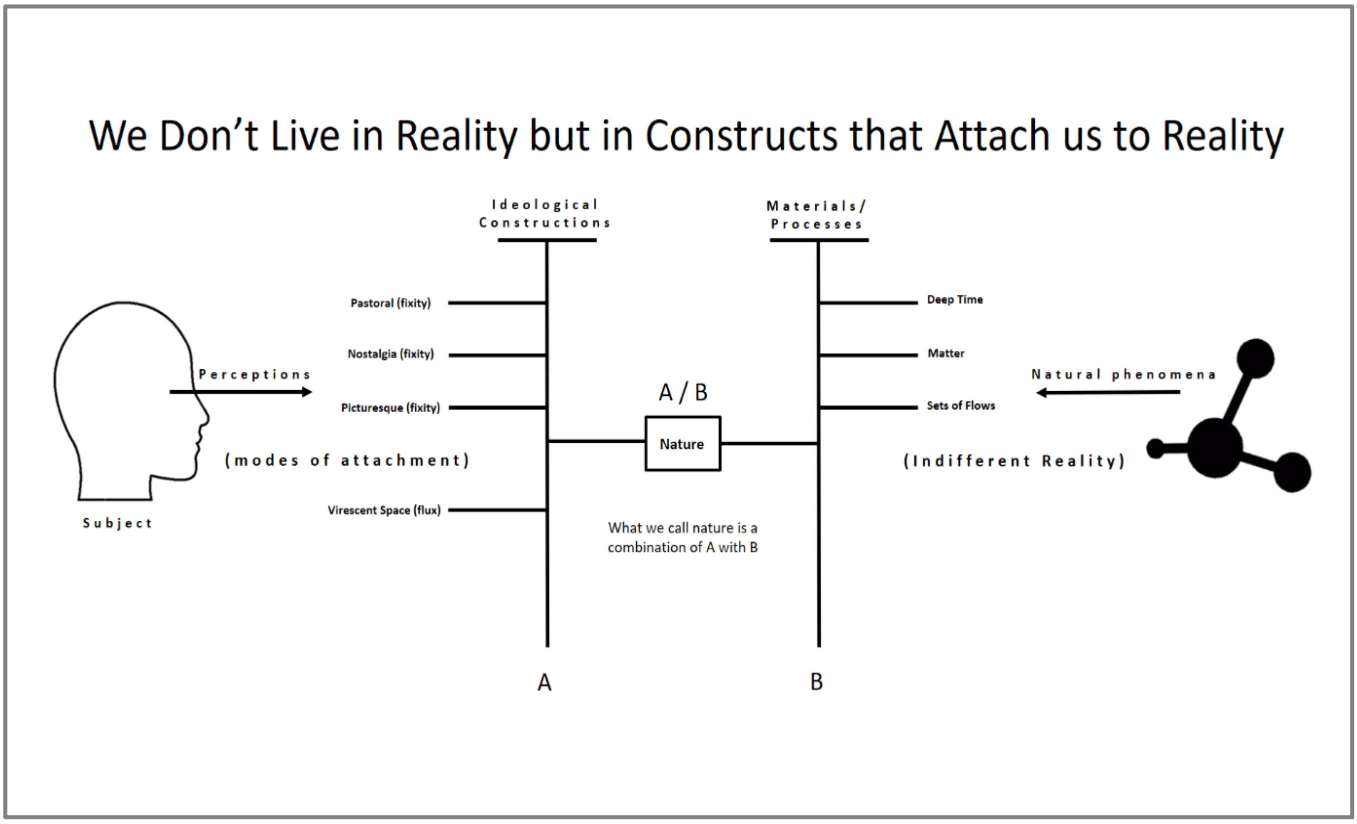
8. *Woodwose I (Sentinel)* (2022) 60 x 60cm, oil on canvas, Michael Eden.



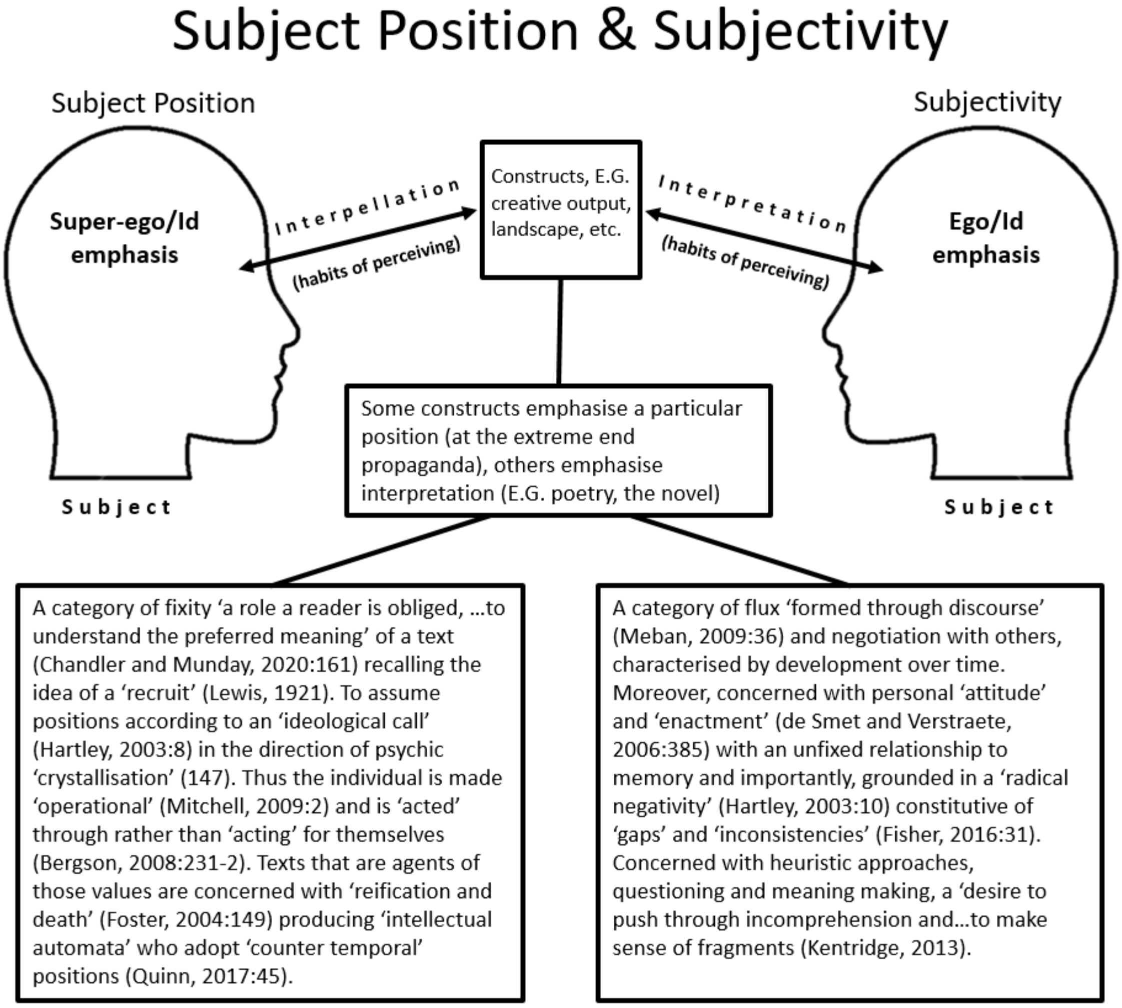
9. *Woodwose II (Storm Coming)* (2022) 60 x 60cm, oil on canvas, Michael Eden.



10. *Woodwose III (Psychodrama Landscape)* (2022) 61 x 76cm, oil on canvas, Michael Eden.


We Don't Live in Reality but in Constructs that Attach us to Reality
Ideological Constructions
Materials/ Processes
Pastoral (fixity)
Nostalgia (fixity)
Picturesque (fixity)
Virescent Space (flux)
Deep Time
Matter
Sets of Flows
Perceptions
(modes of attachment)
Subject
A / B
Nature
What we call nature is a combination of A with B
Natural phenomena
(Indifferent Reality)
A
B

11. *Digital Drawing: Thinking About the Ways That Constructs Such as Landscape Attach the Subject to Reality* (2020) Michael Eden.

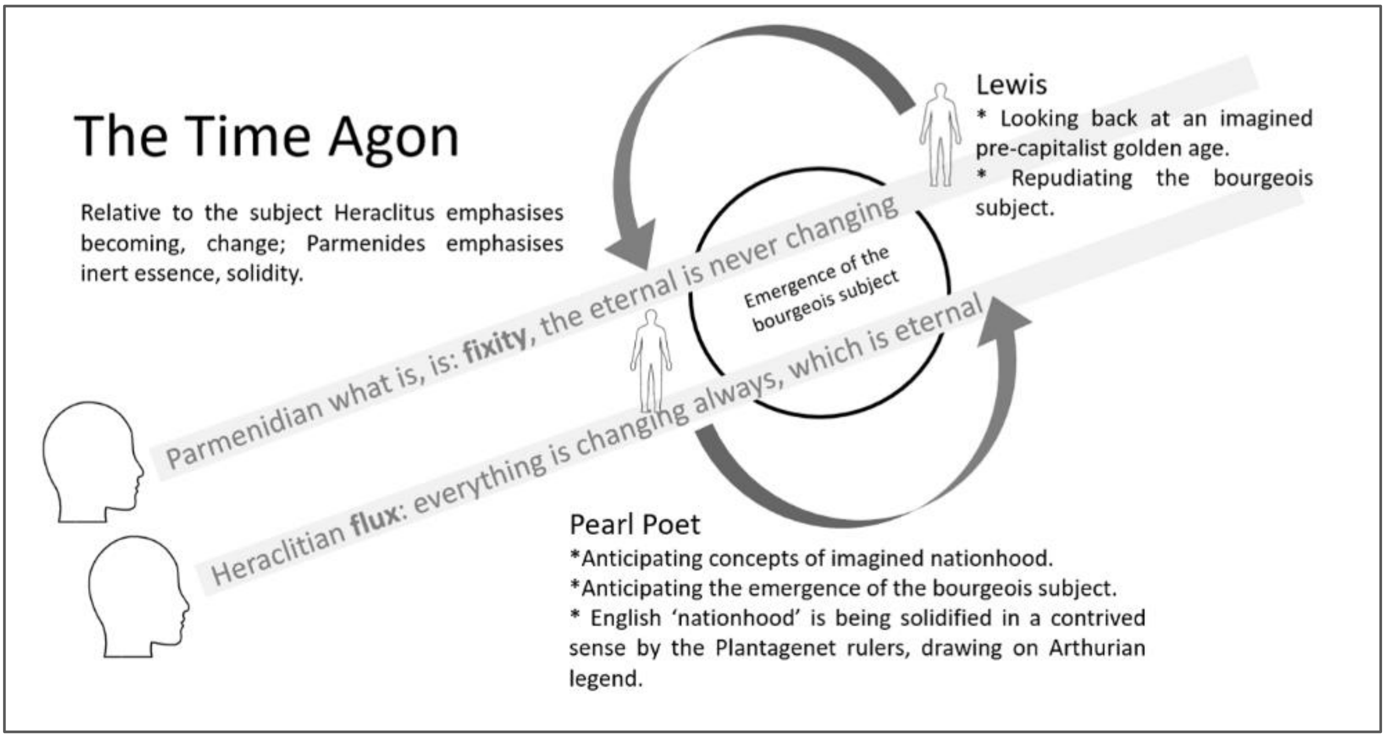

Subject Position & Subjectivity
Subject Position
Subjectivity
Super-ego/Id emphasis
Interpellation
(habits of perceiving)
Constructs, E.G. creative output, landscape, etc.
Interpretation
(habits of perceiving)
Ego/Id emphasis
Subject
Subject

Some constructs emphasise a particular position (at the extreme end propaganda), others emphasise interpretation (E.G. poetry, the novel)

A category of fixity ‘a role a reader is obliged, …to understand the preferred meaning’ of a text (Chandler and Munday, 2020:161) recalling the idea of a ‘recruit’ (Lewis, 1921). To assume positions according to an ‘ideological call’ (Hartley, 2003:8) in the direction of psychic ‘crystallisation’ (147). Thus the individual is made ‘operational’ (Mitchell, 2009:2) and is ‘acted’ through rather than ‘acting’ for themselves (Bergson, 2008:231-2). Texts that are agents of those values are concerned with ‘reification and death’ (Foster, 2004:149) producing ‘intellectual automata’ who adopt ‘counter temporal’ positions (Quinn, 2017:45).

A category of flux ‘formed through discourse’ (Meban, 2009:36) and negotiation with others, characterised by development over time. Moreover, concerned with personal ‘attitude’ and ‘enactment’ (de Smet and Verstraete, 2006:385) with an unfixed relationship to memory and importantly, grounded in a ‘radical negativity’ (Hartley, 2003:10) constitutive of ‘gaps’ and ‘inconsistencies’ (Fisher, 2016:31). Concerned with heuristic approaches, questioning and meaning making, a ‘desire to push through incomprehension and…to make sense of fragments (Kentridge, 2013).

12. *Digital Drawing: Thinking About the Difference Between Being Positioned and Developing* (2020) Michael Eden.



The Time Agon

Relative to the subject Heraclitus emphasises becoming, change; Parmenides emphasises inert essence, solidity.

Parmenidian what is, is: **fixity**, the eternal is never changing

Heraclitian **flux**: everything is changing always, which is eternal

Lewis

* Looking back at an imagined pre-capitalist golden age.

* Repudiating the bourgeois subject.

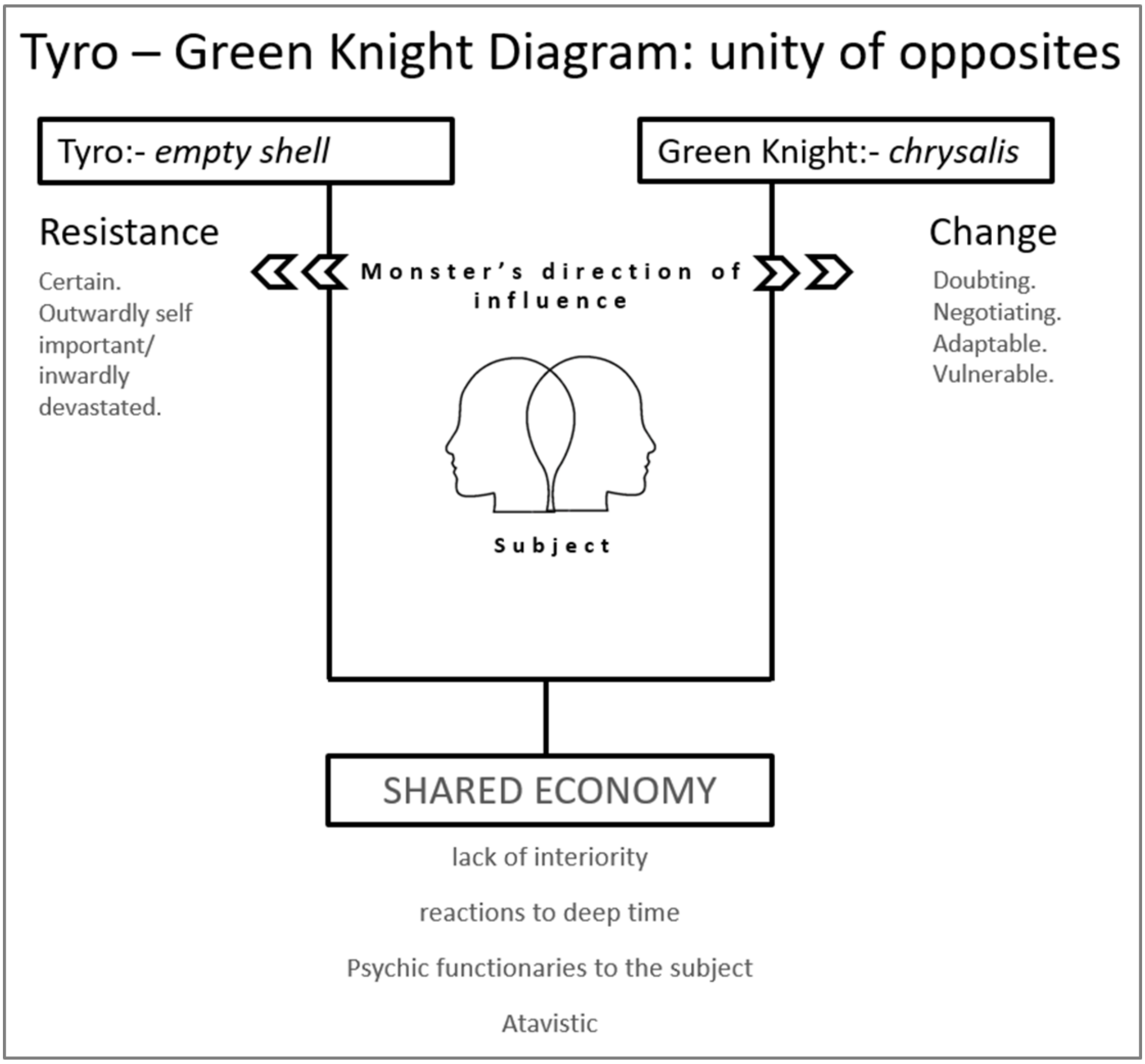
Pearl Poet

*Anticipating concepts of imagined nationhood.

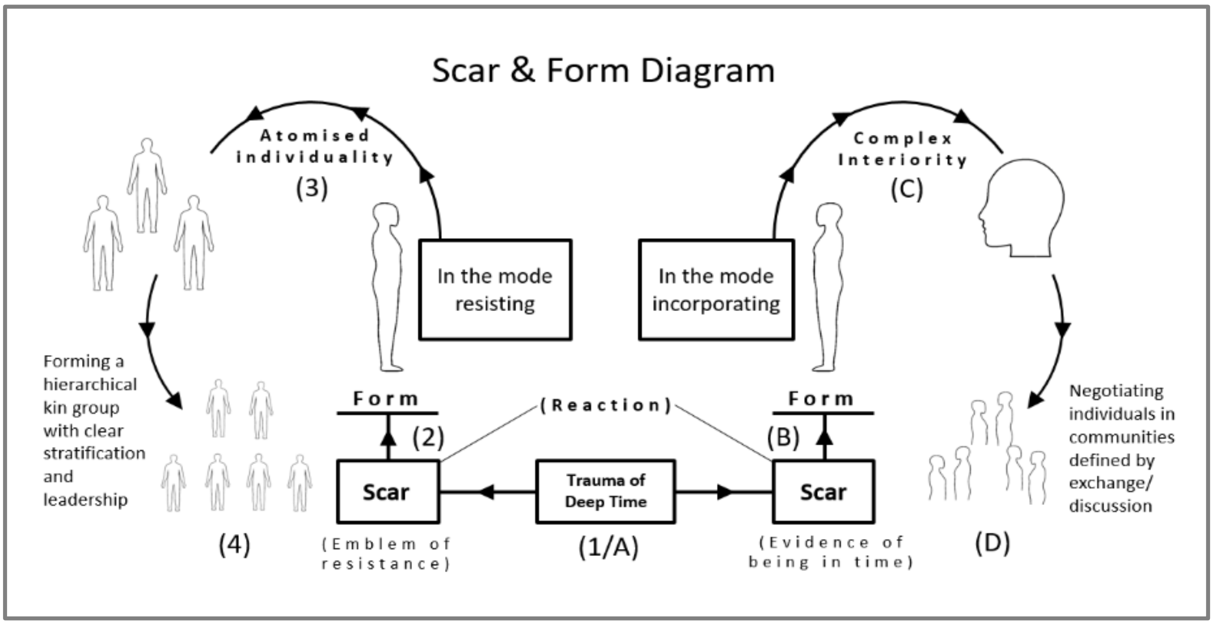
*Anticipating the emergence of the bourgeois subject.

* English ‘nationhood’ is being solidified in a contrived sense by the Plantagenet rulers, drawing on Arthurian legend.

13. *Digital Drawing: Visualising the Players of the Thesis in Relation to One Another* (2020) Michael Eden.

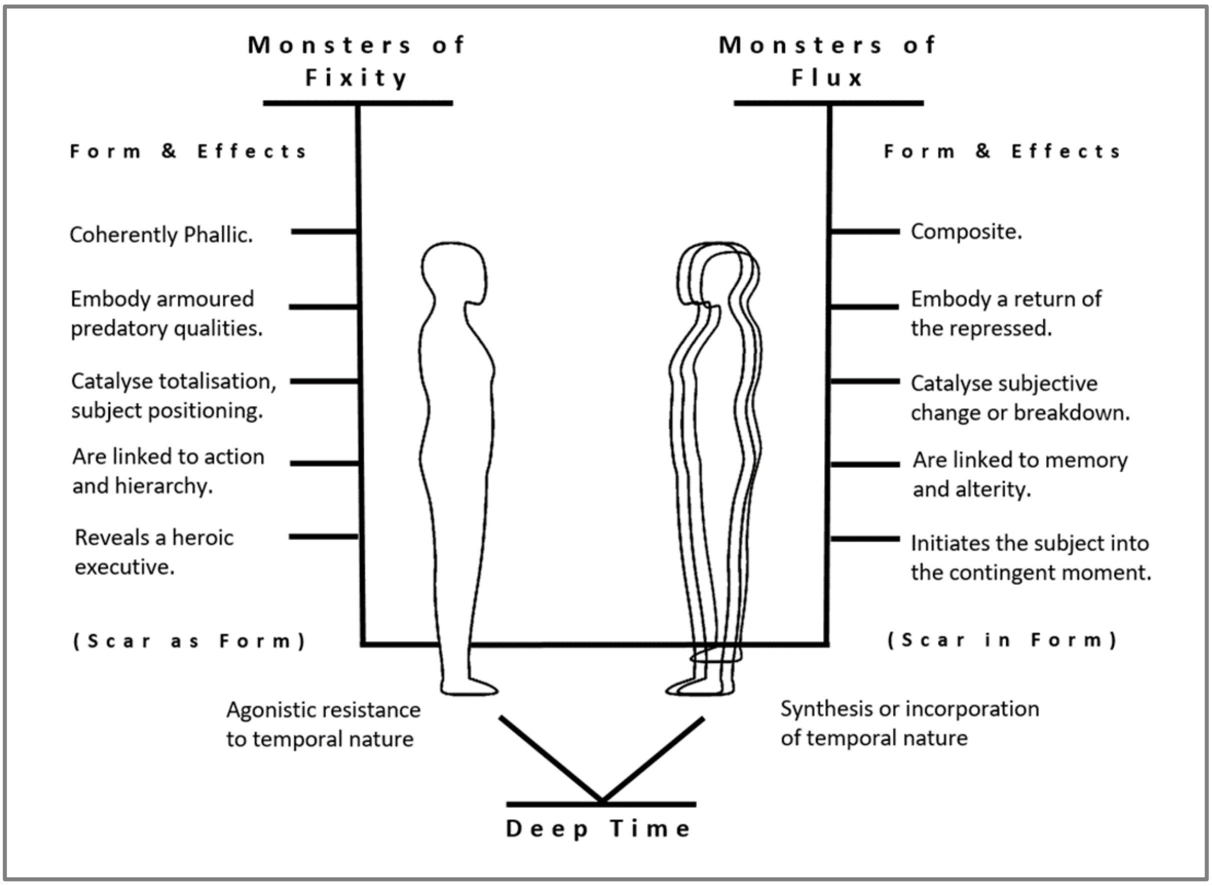

Tyro – Green Knight Diagram: unity of opposites
Tyro:- *empty shell*
Green Knight:- *chrysalis*
Resistance
Certain.
Outwardly self important/ inwardly devastated.
Monster's direction of influence
Change
Doubting.
Negotiating.
Adaptable.
Vulnerable.
Subject
SHARED ECONOMY
lack of interiority
reactions to deep time
Psychic functionaries to the subject
Atavistic

14. *Digital Drawing: Working Through Ideas Around the Opposite and Shared Qualities of the Key Exemplars* (2020) Michael Eden.

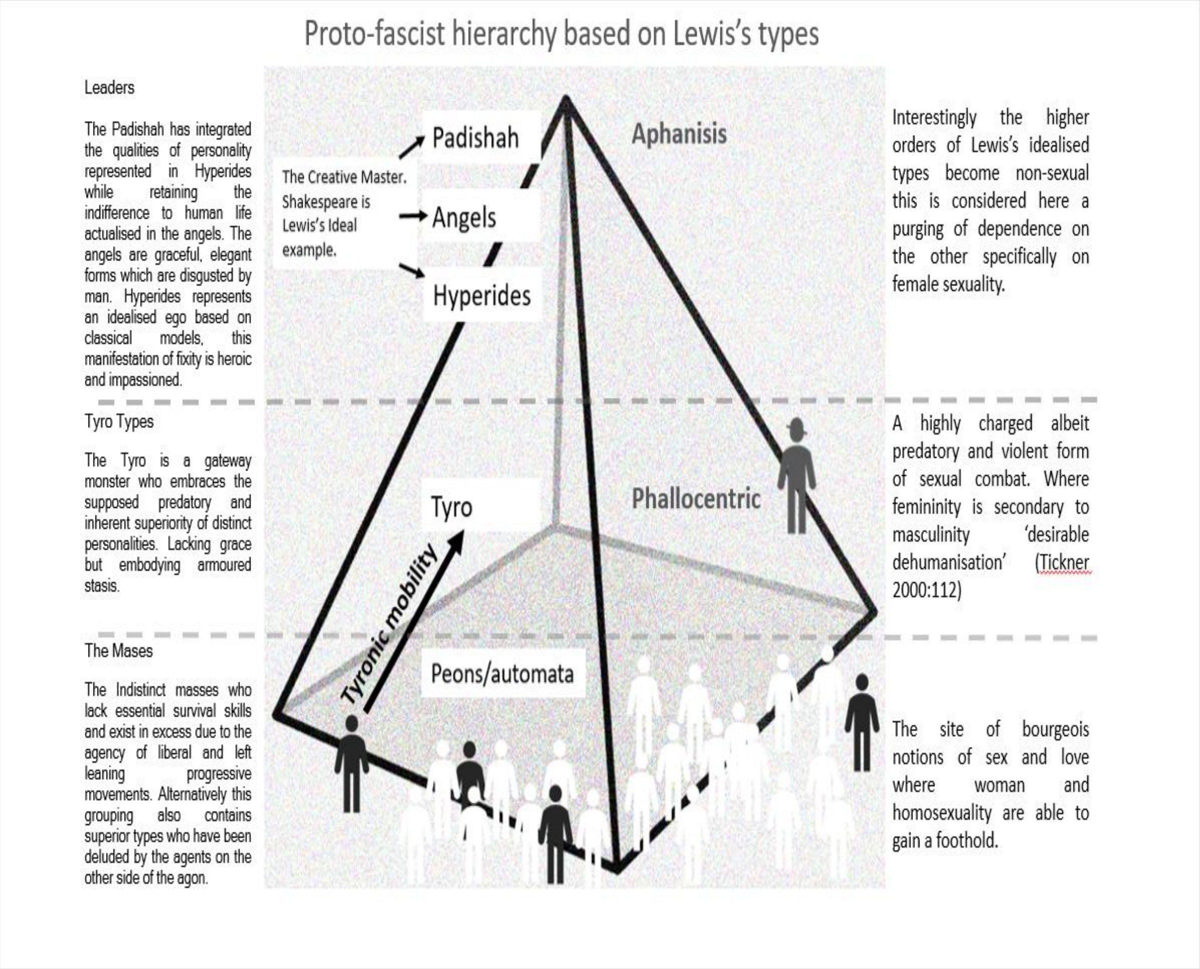

Scar & Form Diagram
Atomised individuality
(3)
Complex Interiority
(C)
In the mode resisting
In the mode incorporating
Forming a hierarchical kin group with clear stratification and leadership
Form
(Reaction)
Form
(2)
(B)
Negotiating individuals in communities defined by exchange/ discussion
Scar
Trauma of Deep Time
Scar
(4)
(Emblem of resistance)
(1/A)
(Evidence of being in time)
(D)

15. *Digital Drawing: Thinking Through, Scar in Form and Scar as Form* (2020) Michael Eden.

In the mode ‘resisting’ shown at position 2, scar is emphasised. In the mode ‘incorporating’ shown at position B, form is emphasised. The difference is scar as form (1/A-2-3-4) or scar in form (1/A-B-C-D) with implications for the individual and the communities they produce.


Monsters of Fixity
Monsters of Flux
Form & Effects
Form & Effects
Coherently Phallic.
Composite.
Embody armoured predatory qualities.
Embody a return of the repressed.
Catalyse totalisation, subject positioning.
Catalyse subjective change or breakdown.
Are linked to action and hierarchy.
Are linked to memory and alterity.
Reveals a heroic executive.
Initiates the subject into the contingent moment.
(Scar as Form)
(Scar in Form)
Agonistic resistance to temporal nature
Synthesis or incorporation of temporal nature
Deep Time

16. *Digital Drawing: Thinking Through a General Conception of Monsters of Fixity and Flux, Developing the Key Exemplars* (2020) Michael Eden.



The Creative Master. Shakespeare is Lewis's Ideal example.

Leaders

The Padishah has integrated the qualities of personality represented in Hyperides while retaining the indifference to human life actualised in the angels. The angels are graceful, elegant forms which are disgusted by man. Hyperides represents an idealised ego based on classical models, this manifestation of fixity is heroic and impassioned.

Interestingly the higher orders of Lewis's idealised types become non-sexual this is considered here a purging of dependence on the other specifically on female sexuality.

Tyro Types

The Tyro is a gateway monster who embraces the supposed predatory and inherent superiority of distinct personalities. Lacking grace but embodying armoured stasis.

A highly charged albeit predatory and violent form of sexual combat. Where femininity is secondary to masculinity 'desirable dehumanisation' (Tickner 2000:112)

The Mases

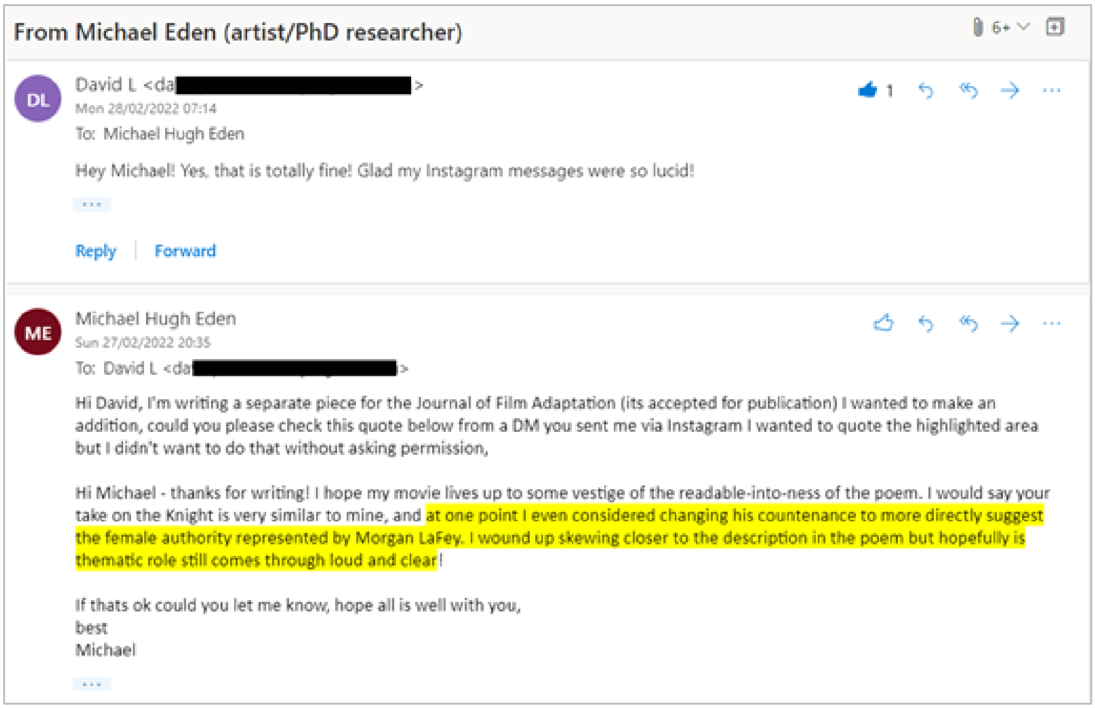
The Indistinct masses who lack essential survival skills and exist in excess due to the agency of liberal and left leaning progressive movements. Alternatively this grouping also contains superior types who have been deluded by the agents on the other side of the agon.

The site of bourgeois notions of sex and love where woman and homosexuality are able to gain a foothold.

17. *Digital Drawing: Thinking about Lewis's Types Their Position in a Hierarchy and Their Inter-relation* (2020) Michael Eden.

Appendix 2: Correspondence with David Lowery and Ralph Ineson.

Correspondence from director David Patrick Lowery on 28/02/2022 confirming the content of an Instagram message he sent in 2021.



From Michael Eden (artist/PhD researcher)

David L <da[redacted]>
Mon 28/02/2022 07:14
To: Michael Hugh Eden

Hey Michael! Yes, that is totally fine! Glad my Instagram messages were so lucid!

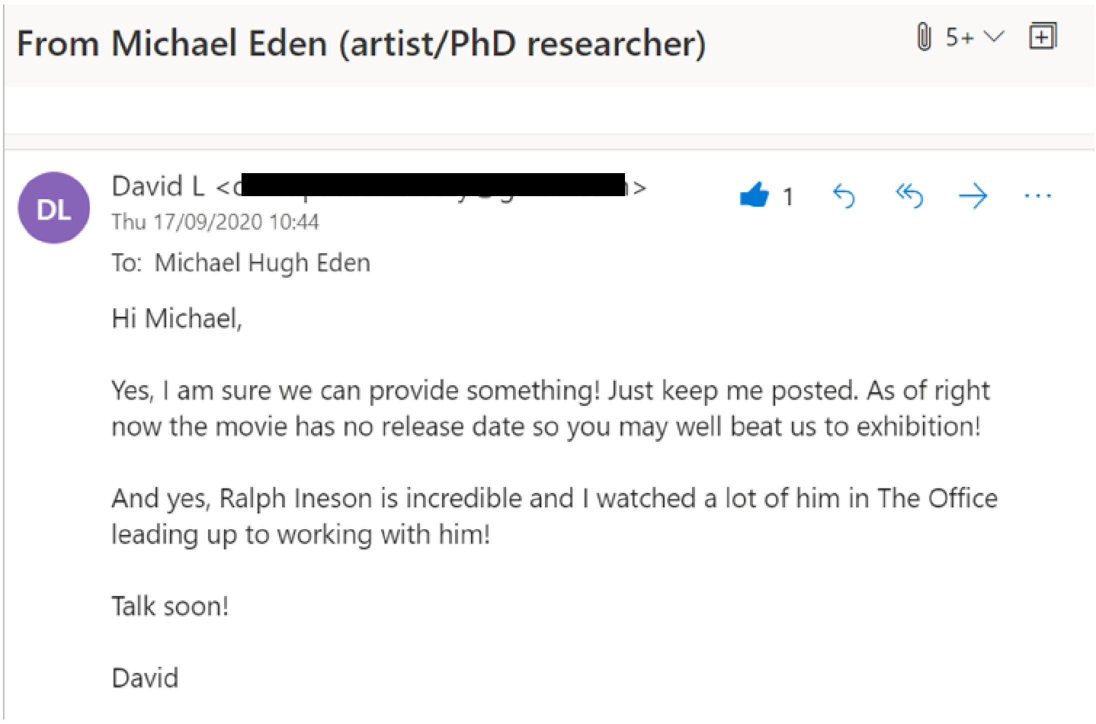
Michael Hugh Eden
Sun 27/02/2022 20:35
To: David L <da[redacted]>

Hi David, I'm writing a separate piece for the Journal of Film Adaptation (its accepted for publication) I wanted to make an addition, could you please check this quote below from a DM you sent me via Instagram I wanted to quote the highlighted area but I didn't want to do that without asking permission,

Hi Michael - thanks for writing! I hope my movie lives up to some vestige of the readable-into-ness of the poem. I would say your take on the Knight is very similar to mine, and at one point I even considered changing his countenance to more directly suggest the female authority represented by Morgan LaFey. I wound up skewing closer to the description in the poem but hopefully is thematic role still comes through loud and clear!

If thats ok could you let me know, hope all is well with you,
best
Michael

Correspondence from David Lowery 2020.



From Michael Eden (artist/PhD researcher)

David L <d[redacted]>
Thu 17/09/2020 10:44
To: Michael Hugh Eden

Hi Michael,

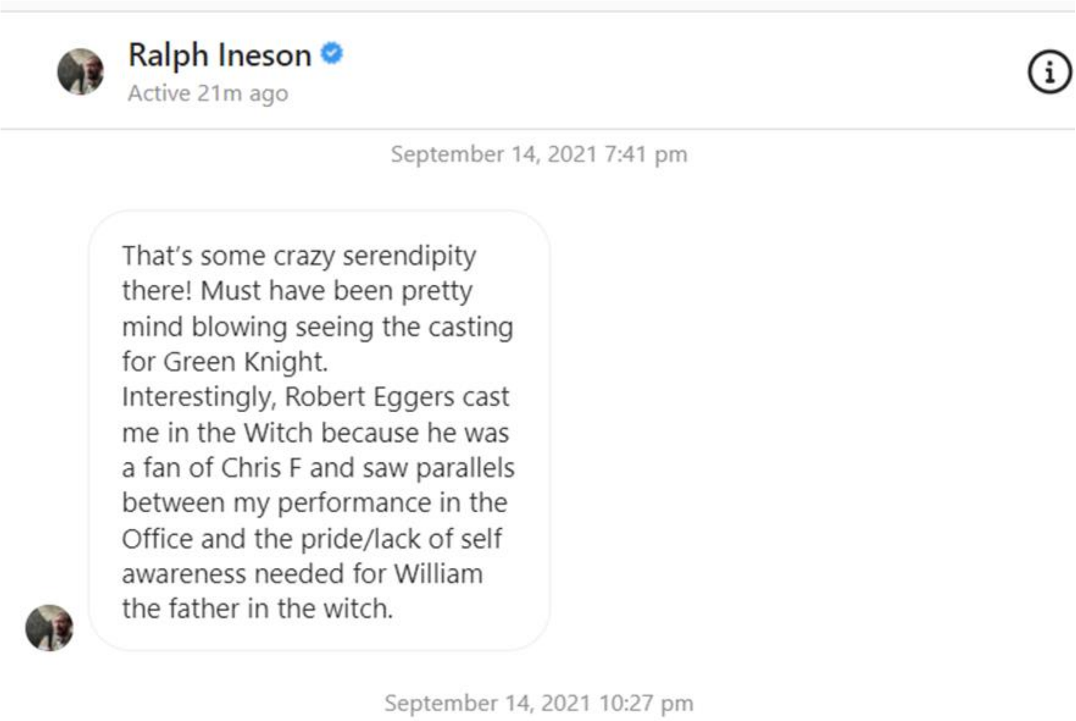
Yes, I am sure we can provide something! Just keep me posted. As of right now the movie has no release date so you may well beat us to exhibition!

And yes, Ralph Ineson is incredible and I watched a lot of him in The Office leading up to working with him!

Talk soon!

David

Correspondence from Ralph Ineson in 2021 via Instagram.



Ralph Ineson

Active 21m ago

September 14, 2021 7:41 pm

That's some crazy serendipity there! Must have been pretty mind blowing seeing the casting for Green Knight. Interestingly, Robert Eggers cast me in the Witch because he was a fan of Chris F and saw parallels between my performance in the Office and the pride/lack of self awareness needed for William the father in the witch.

September 14, 2021 10:27 pm