*CULT AND MAGIC: TWO READINGS OF THE FICTION AND THEORY OF WYNDHAM LEWIS*

by

Michael Nath


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I would like to dedicate this work
to my Family and to Sarah

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To Randall Stevenson, for patience, stimulus,
and inspiriting me with a lust to expand.

To the British Academy, for sponsorship.

To Edinburgh University, its libraries,
and the National Library of Scotland.

to Rena and Kathryn of Selectatype, Edinburgh.

I declare that this thesis is my own, unaided work.

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to break with the habit of much criticism of Wyndham Lewis, which has been to rely on the various classes of Lewis' non-fictional discourse in the interpretation of his fiction and satire.

To this end, Chapter 1 undertakes a short survey of the bulk of major Lewis criticism, and indicates the several limitations attendant thereupon, in the form of too restricted models of interpretation. This chapter ends with a brief account of the method that I myself will adopt. In essence, this will be to go 'outside' the confinement of Lewisian discourse, as it were, in order to bring external bodies of knowledge to the examination of his work.

In Chapter 2 (which occupies nine sections) I attempt to show how the anti-Christian heresies embraced by the term 'Gnosticism', and the conceptual structure of Persian dualism, informed Lewis' work both theoretically and imaginatively, and adduce evidence of his interest in these systems. Lewis' attitude to nature, his conception of good and evil, his aestheticized theology and the theory of satire (or satiric philosophy) expressed in Men Without Art can, in my view, be called Gnostic. That term might also be applied to the attitude of certain of his protagonists, to the allusive and imaginative syncretism of parts of The Apes of God, to an eschatological structure discernible in that novel, to a creation myth expounded in Malign Fiesta, and to other elements of that novel (though in a less positive sense than in Lewis' previous work).

In Chapter 3 (in six sections) I introduce a new way of looking at Lewis' satire. In his capacity as a satirist, I relate Lewis to the earliest manifestations of that genre (in Ancient Greece), when it was believed that the satirist had the potency to kill through the

word. Such a belief has persisted to the present, undergoing a transformation from a literal to a symbolic significance. Its presence, and the urges and intentions associated with it, I trace in Lewis' theory, polemics, verse and satiric fiction. In addition, I examine his affiliation with the figures of the railer and the Cynic, who, on account of the virulence of their utterance, have in some ways been associated with the proto-satirists. In a discussion of The Apes of God, I present Lewis as a 'revenge-satirist', motivated by an impulse to satirize to death the objects of his hate. Finally, I return to Malign Fiesta as the point at which, a Christian theology beginning to emerge in Lewis, attended by guilt over the character of his career as a satirist, a twin departure is signalled in his work, from the traditions expounded in Chapters 2 and 3.

CONTENTS

# CHAPTER 1

## A Short Survey of some of the Major Criticism of Wyndham Lewis

In this introductory chapter, I want to indicate what seem to me to be the types of limitation by which some of the major specimens of Lewis criticism are affected, by means of a short chronological survey. In doing so, I hope to adumbrate in some degree the approach I myself will take in subsequent chapters; but this I will give clearer notice of in my concluding remarks.

Hugh Gordon Porteus' Wyndham Lewis: A Discursive Exposition (1932) was written so close to the influence of Porteus' master (Lewis) that commenting upon it is an uncertain business. Porteus (an artist by training) produced elsewhere an amusing account of intimate sessions with Lewis;(1) and Lewis' biographer remarks that,'(Lewis and Porteus) had the earliest of many quarrels when Porteus refused to let Lewis write the book for him.'(2) But the evidence for Lewis' having interfered with the preparation of the book is considerable; for, quite aside from Porteus' very evident partisanship, his fluency in Lewis' unmistakable idiolect is so pronounced as to make one suspicious of Lewis' oral, if not literary, involvement; and that Porteus was Lewis' oracle, or his amanuensis, is suggested by almost every page. The diction of the following passage, for example, (where the sentence beginning with a conjunction is something of a Lewisian give-away) seems to anticipate the central chapters (on satire and the 'external' method) of Men Without Art (1934),

> Mr Lewis runs the rich raw stuff, the molten material, piping hot, into a carefully chiselled mould kept well below zero. The finished figures are lifted from their matrices and presented cool, clear-cut and firm. Or they crystallize with a frosty stellar click. (3)

as does the sentiment of this: 'And Satire is the fine hair-line that divides Humour from Tragedy.'(4)

The pervading of the text by this curious double voice is, in fact, forcefully precursive of one of the dominant strains of much

Lewis criticism to follow, namely, the excessive influencing of the critic by Wyndham Lewis' own ideas or precepts - Lewis is used to read Lewis. Here, however, there is an elaboration on this pattern, produced by the intimacy of the critic with his subject, namely Lewis' using Porteus to offer an interpretation of Lewis. Yet as an heuristic process, we need not of necessity set too much store by this. For how much the theoretical or critical Lewis reveals about the creative Lewis, it is not simple to assess - though much criticism seems to assume a simple relationship between his philosophical criticism, polemics, and so on, and his fiction (a matter to which I must return in this chapter)-; and Porteus is manifestly propagandizing throughout his study, on behalf of his subject, and his subject's dogmas.

What we get, once the matter of Porteus' small critical independence has been remarked, is a reduction of Lewis' satire to a supreme (in Porteus' view) technical performance, with scarcely any external, historical reference or psychological analysis of the satirist (except that Porteus does not believe Lewis capable of spleen (5)). Thus, having asserted that 'All Mr Lewis's creative works are satires of some kind,'(6) Porteus establishes the two poles of Lewis' satire: 'The Painter's Eye, I have called the "positive instrument" of Mr Lewis's satire. The "negative instrument" is of course his "sense of humour".'(7) Humour, however, where Porteus is concerned, derives from the way Lewis gets us to look at the world he portrays, namely with unsentimental detachment,(8) and his means of delivering this vision is what Porteus terms 'The Painter's Eye'. This instrument, therefore, is, it could be argued, for Porteus the controlling principle of Lewis' satire. Its modus operandi he summarizes thus:

> (Lewis') eye sees a coloured shape, matches it from stock (i.e., memory) with a different object having an approximately identical colour or shape, and hands it back. The reader, unless he is a painter and 'on duty,' will regard the resulting image with a human eye, alive to the functions and associations of the paired objects. In relating the two parts of the image, he will be forced to realize the essential shape and colour which the painter's eye sees; but he will also be shocked (agreeably or uncomfortably, according to his liabilities) by the incongruity. This shock will issue in laughter (or disgust) - but its effect will be to convey a very vivid impression of the object itself. (9)

Such a conflation of the Formalist concept of 'defamiliarization' with that of the metaphysical 'conceit' supposes that the reader (who is not a painter) will be surprised by the Lewisian method into seeing as a painter sees. It may well have been the case with Porteus (who was a painter); but as an account of how, in general, Lewis' descriptions work, it is probably too decisive, since a 'very vivid impression of the object itself' is, as Hugh Kenner later argued, just what we do not get from Lewis' prose-method;(10) rather, we receive an astonishing hail of disparate visual detail.

Beyond this, in arguing that Lewis is the visual writer nonpareil (which one may be disposed to agree with, without having to accept the doctrine of 'The Painter's Eye'),

> Blake was a visuel. But Mr Lewis brings the technique of the visuel to its logical extreme; there is no more vivid visual writing in the whole of literature, it is safe to say, than that which is to be found in The Enemy of the Stars, The Apes of God, The Childermass. (11)

Porteus is classing Lewis' satire as sui generis, as a 'phenomenon', that is to say, and cutting off all contact with any tradition of satiric expression, having, as pointed out above, reduced the body of satire in question to a matter for formal consideration, without regard to the ideas, energies or beliefs that may have motivated it. The model which he uses to account for Lewis' satire is too limited

and specific by far to reveal more than a fraction of the nature of that satire.

Hugh Kenner's short study of Lewis, Wyndham Lewis (1954),has acquired an aura of definitiveness that seems to have left the Lewisian critic struggling to say something new. Paul Edwards summed up the state of affairs when (writing as recently as 1986) he referred to 'the prospect of Wyndham Lewis criticism continuing to be not much more than a series of footnotes to Hugh Kenner.'(12) Why this should be might be ascribed to the éclat with which Kenner generally expresses himself, particularly as this manifests itself in his way of synthesizing or co-ordinating widely separated tracts of Lewis' work in a single statement, as:

> It is in Blast that the Wyndham Lewis who appeared in silence on Ford's stairway finds an appropriate tongue. It is explosive in principle as well as in strategy...It is, vastly elaborated, the style of its showpiece, the 1928 Childermass, and its mechanisms underlie the wonderfully expressive prose of Lewis's masterpiece, the 1937 Revenge for Love. (13)

Confined to the question of style, such broad assertions are relatively safe, and may be very illuminating (Kenner backs up the example given some pages on - 'vastly elaborated' is not the grand and idle opinion it might at first seem). (14) But we are again in the presence of the habit - initiated in Porteus, evident less impressively elsewhere in Kenner's book, and to harden among later critics - of using Wyndham Lewis as a self-expository principle; either within the same mode of discourse, or across different classes, Lewis is brought to bear upon Lewis. The limitations attendant upon such a method, I shall indicate in proceeding through the list of Lewis' critics. Here, Kenner has justified his treatment through the premise - not dissimilar to that evident in Porteus' study - that Lewis is sui generis: 'In 1914 he (Lewis) seems resolved

never again to write a phrase that will betray a hint of literary antecedents.' (15)

Yet when Kenner considers Lewis' fictional characters, we find that he adopts an analogous method. That is to say, he declares a prototype, here biographical-literary and emanating apocryphally from Lewis himself, and schematizes its subsequent appearances in Lewis' novels as reversions to type. Yet the dash of Kenner's formulations is effected at the expense of noticing what the novels actually say. Thus, from the legendary appearance of Lewis at the residence of Ford Madox Ford bearing the manuscript of "The Pole", Kenner produces a Lewisian emanation which he calls the 'Man from Nowhere':

> This mystery man without a past had before him in 1909 a lively future. He is the Wyndham Lewis protagonist who arrives from nowhere onto the pages of the book: successively Kreisler in Tarr, Ker-Orr in The Wild Body, Zagreus in The Apes of God, Kell-Imrie in Snooty Baronet, Hardcaster in The Revenge for Love, and Vincent Penhale in The Vulgar Streak.

and

> (Tarr)...is essentially the Lewisian Man from Nowhere

and

> (Kreisler) has made the Lewis entrance : fromnowhere, a total stranger and the only man present not in evening dress. (16)

But what, or how much, exactly, is this telling us? It seems significant - that, to put it perhaps too cynically, is Kenner's trick - but, on closer inspection, will be seen to be registering, merely, a superficial impression, and a rather vague one at that: many of Lewis' protagonists make dramatic entrances? they appear in mid-career, as it were, unlike the heroes of nineteenth century novels, whom we know from birth? they are not gradually and carefully introduced to us? But if that is all that Kenner's impression consists of - though he seems to be intimating more - he has a portentous

way of putting it. Yet if he does mean more than that, he is, simply, wrong. For to suggest that the Lewisian protagonist is as cut off from any semblance of a fictional past as Lewis, swathed in black on Ford's staircase, pretended to be from his past, is to supplant careful reading of the texts in question with a rather obsessive a priorism - as I have intimated above.

For although Zagreus does arrive with a sweep in the passage quoted by Kenner (17), it is quite wrong to characterize him as a 'mystery man without a past'. On the contrary, he is a veteran presence in the world of the Apes. Lionel Kein tells Dan Boleyn that he and Zagreus have been friends for 'longer than you've been alive', and '"Hallo Zagreus! Where have you been all this time?"' isn't the salutation you would normally offer to a 'man from nowhere'.(18) In fact, of all the characters in that novel, Zagreus alone is provided with the status of someone who, far from appearing from nowhere, has always been around, to which effect, the narrative furnishes much circumstantial detail: he has been a surveyor; he had a post in the Civil Service; his tricks are conversation pieces; he did this thirty-odd years ago, he did that two weeks ago, etc., etc...(19)

As with Kreisler. Only by ignoring what the novel tells us can Kenner decree that Kreisler's outrages at Fräulein Lipmann's house party and the Bonnington Club should be perpetrated by 'a total stranger'. The text (I am referring here to the 1918 edition of Tarr, which Kenner uses) reveals that before the events of this night, 'Kreisler came a few weeks running to the Lipmann soiree,' and that, 'On the preceding evening, he had paid one of his unaccountable calls on Fräulein Lipmann, the first for some time'. (20) Indeed, Kreisler has become sufficiently familiar with Lipmann and her ladyfriends to have been marked down by her as persona non grata, because he has stopped attending her evenings. (21)

To seek to deflate Kenner in this way may seem prosaic, or captious, or too literal-minded; but we ought not to have to accept as definitive assertions of the order of,

> The liaison between the puppet-fiction and the polemics is easy to discern. These people incarnate the ideas the polemics are directed against. The unfinished Childermass (1928) is simply The Art of Being Ruled dramatized. (22)

It is not 'simply' the polemic 'dramatized', a magisterially lazy reduction of the sort that echoes, rather more solemnly, through much writing on Lewis (for example, 'Difficult to read and to describe... the novel dramatized many of the political ideas of The Art of Being Ruled'.(23)) One knows, in a sense, that Kenner did not mean just that (though it sets a bad example), but he is himself tendentious here, since he does not want to applaud more than necessary a novel which disappoints his own humanist predilections: '...the marvelous verbal inventiveness of The Childermass doesn't compensate for a certain tedium consequent upon the replacement of persons by dialectical puppets.'(24) Yet even there, his qualified tribute is only to the conversations at the court of the Bailiff. What of the imaginative feats of the novel, such as the creation of the peons, the mobile landscape, the 'Time-trek' through an eighteenth century English Lilliput? (25) Even here, I suppose, Kenner might have referred Lewis' imagination back to Lewis himself by stating that such sequences 'simply' fictionalize certain ideas explored in Time and Western Man (as if imagination can 'simply' be referred to theory for its exposition). But nothing in Kenner's scheme can account for the visionary conception that is the Bailiff's first entrance, which 'fictionalizes' or 'dramatizes' nothing to be found in Lewis' philosophical criticism, but, as Fredric Jameson later well expressed it, ignites a flash of recognition in the collective unconscious; it is

grotesque, terrible, universal: 'The very appearance of the Bailiff... (is) as archetypal as all great character creation, yet as familiar as the household bogeyman...We seem to remember such a figure, which surely did not need to wait for Lewis to invent it.' (26)

It is not very far from that last statement of Kenner's (about the 'liaison between the puppet-fiction and the polemics') to the entire premise of Geoffrey Wagner's Wyndham Lewis: A Portrait of the Artist as the Enemy (1957); Wagner merely inverts the relationship of Lewis' theoretical and satiric productions:

> If it is true, then, that (Lewis') critical grew out of his creative work, it must make any consideration of his criticism especially interesting as illuminating his entire artistic genius. For it follows that if we resume Lewis' criticism, we resume the purpose of his satire. And as we inspect this criticism what we find is as representative a statement of contemporary neoclassicism as can be found in any English writer. (27)

Ergo - Lewis' satire is in essence neo-classical? But 'grew' is a shaky verb in Wagner's protasis, yet leads to the emphatic 'must' in the dependent clause. How did the one body of work 'grow' from the other, and in such a way, moreover, as Wagner implies, for Lewis' criticism to account exhaustively for his satire? A brief inspection of the dates of publication of certain works (in making which, however, one should bear in mind that Lewis was working on several books at once during the 1920's, which were to have composed the projected Man of the World opus) seems to invalidate Wagner's premise, even if he meant only that the need to be a critic developed somehow from the being an artist: The Tyro 1921 - 1922; The Art of Being Ruled 1926; The Lion and the Fox 1927 (but completed about 1925); The Enemy 1927; Time and Western Man 1927; The Childermass 1928; Paleface 1929; The Apes of God 1930. (Satire and Fiction and Men Without Art conform with Wagner's proposition, at least insofar as they were published

after The Apes of God: but how much the dissertation in Men Without Art reveals about The Apes of God - its vision, intention and animus, that is to say, not its formal qualities - is problematic, if dealt with more than superficially, as I will show in Chapter 3, section (v)). Furthermore, Lewis states that his criticism and polemics, rather than 'growing' from his satires in some way, in fact prepared a space in the public mind for those satires' accommodation:

> No Childermass (Part 1.) would ever have been written if I had not cleared the ground first. The Apes of God could not have been done at all if I had not, beforehand, paralysed all the most troublesome 'Apes' in my neighbourhood. (28)

Yet even if Wagner's initial proposition were sound, in what way does 'resuming' Lewis' criticism 'resume the purpose of his satire'? Undeniably, some of the debates and analyses of Lewis' philosophical criticism and polemics are carried over into his satire: the "Encyclical" in The Apes of God, for example, echoes some of the content of the chapter "Super-Freedom of the Revolutionary Rich" in The Art of Being Ruled (29); and the exposure of the cults of inversion and of the child in The Art of Being Ruled is one concern of The Apes of God, as is the monopoly of taste arrogated by the vulgar rich, an idea which Lewis used Benda's Belphégor to illustrate in the former. (30) But to point out as much is merely to acknowledge that among the totality of Lewis' interests as a writer was one set of isomeric concerns, which may find expression in different literary states; and it is to concede that sometimes in Lewis, the narrative voice falls away into the philosophical-didactic, which led to Pound's observation (upon The Apes): 'The orthodox Flaubertian groans when Mr Lewis springs an "encyclical" several pages of dogma or argument quite likely to be Mr Lewis' own;' (31) it is not to 'illuminate Lewis' entire artistic genius' - a phrase which suggests that in Lewis,

criticism and creation, or rhetoric and vision, run in the same circuit, differing only in degree, and separated merely by a few volts of imagination. Indeed, if Lewis' satire could be as readily accounted for by his criticism as Wagner supposes, then the former would be a very superficial business indeed, giving the lie to the following statement of Lewis' compositional habits:

> At the time (Lewis is referring to around 1927) I had a sort of rule, to the effect that one page of fiction should take anything from five to ten times as long as a page of non-fiction...Merely re-writing 'Tarr', I recall, took longer than it did to write a book named 'The Diabolical Principle'. (32)

Then what of the assertion in Wagner's third sentence, namely, that Lewis' criticism epitomizes neo-classicism in English letters? His criticism, as well as his satire, is <u>essentially</u> of a neo-classical disposition? But, arguably, all that is essential about Lewis' philosophical-critical position is its pessimism. And, moreover, as much in his critical as his creative work does the (platitudinous, I am afraid) image of the iceberg apply. That is to say, Lewis' significant theoretical debts are often unannounced or concealed (a process which he sometimes went about by attacking his creditors - Nietzsche, for example, who could not be cited as one of Lewis' neo-classical influences) in a manner somewhat analogous to that in which the sources of his fiction, his imaginative influences, are not necessarily dogmatically manifested in his aesthetic programmes or dissertations. The earlier of these two points, in fact, has been made in a doctoral thesis, by Alan Munton: '(Lewis') variety of impartiality is partly based on the refusal to adopt any position that might allow him to be identified with any faction or political group. On other occasions, Lewis deliberately obscures his position. It is difficult to believe, reading the chapter in <u>The Art of Being Ruled</u> entitled "Nietzsche as Vulgarizer", that Nietzsche was

also a major influence upon Tarr and other works...Such indirectness is the consequence of a general unwillingness, on Lewis's part, to identify the positive sources of his work. Again, further difficulties of interpretation follow from what may have been genuine doubts as to his position.' (33)

Accordingly, the classification of Lewis' satire and Lewis' criticism categorically as neo-classical, though here and there it may be apt, is bound to seem to be offering only a fraction of the truth when the basis upon which that classification is made is reversed or contradicted by Lewis. And Lewis' habitual (in Munton's terms, intentional) contradictoriness is a constant stumbling block for the critic who brings to bear upon his work a too narrow and decisive model of interpretation.

Thus, Wagner cites "The Code of a Herdsman" in evidence of the idea that 'Lewis has been typically neoclassical in hiding behind some fictional mask',

> The Herdsman is advised to adopt six different personalities to keep himself pure of the herd.
> It is necessary to stress this because, by adopting at least six such personalities himself, Lewis makes it hard to take much of his criticism directly.

and lists some of the personalities or alter egos (or does he mean personae?) adopted by Lewis in order to dramatize his criticism: Cantleman, Bland Burn, the Enemy, Rene Harding, and so on. (34)

But if Lewis was 'typically neoclassical' in adopting different 'personalities', in projecting fictional or dramatic selves, he recommended an opposite practice of self in the essay "Physics of the Not-Self":

> We have one, life, and we have one indviduality. It is a ration, as it were. It is an 'obligation'...to devote all our energies to that one self, and not to poach. We were not born twenty men, but one. (35)

As he did in that volume which Wagner regards as the core of his neo-classical criticism (The Art of Being Ruled):

> The more highly developed an individual is, or the more civilized a race, this discontinuity (Lewis means, for example, between the various stages of a person's life) tends to disappear. The 'personality' is born. Continuity, in the individual as in the race, is the diagnostic of a civilized condition. If you can break this personal continuity in an individual, you can break him. For he is that continuity. It is against these joints and sutures of the personality that an able attack will always be directed. You can divide a person against himself, unless he is very well organized....You can with luck cut men up so thoroughly that they become almost 'six-months men,'...rather than men of one continuous personal life - than 'life men.' It is only necessary to mention the central subject of the very effective and fashionable plays of Pirandello to show how...this segregation of the 'selves' of which the personality is composed can affect the public mind. (36)

Here, it is maintained that singularity or continuity is the condition of selfhood that marks the artist or intellectual, as it is the condition of order among groups or classes of men; the tendency to split or divide is a symptom of decadence or romantic disorder; any habit of the self that dissolves its own permanence in the interests of plurality is not an instrument of neo-classical detachment, but, conversely, a psychic flaw that makes the individual vulnerable (to satiric attack, for example). The psychological novelty of the multiple self is exploited in modern drama; and the reference to Pirandello is much elaborated in The Apes of God, in the passages where Zagreus explains that the common desire of the Apes is to acquire a second self, by being transformed into characters in one another's novels;(37) while the idea that when people pretend to more than one self they are particularly prone to satiric attack is also evident in the story "A Soldier of Humour", which I discuss in my third chapter.

Again, when Wagner comes to the question of style, he falls into the error of interpreting a position as definitive, as all there is to

Lewis . Thus, in Chapter 17, "The External Approach", he summarizes Lewis' "Philosophy of the Eye". This 'philosophy' Wagner associates with neo-classicism via Benda's Belphégor, and considers it an anti-Bergsonian attack on the faculty of intuition:

> It was in Time and Western Man that Lewis first adumbrated at length his "philosophy of the eye." It alone gave reality, unaffected by the "darkness" of the aural and tactile world. Untroubled by the lower senses, the optic sense placed the world of common-sense reality as directly as possible before the intellect. In fact, the eye is the intellect, "private organ" of the senses, the "person" in the human organism.

'Like Joyce's Shaun,' Wagner protests, '(Lewis) is an eyeman. How many times has he told us this?' (38)

Yet he does not pause to consider why Lewis is always telling us this, or asserting too insistently his bias, as:

> Dogmatically, then, I am for the Great Without, for the method of external approach - for the wisdom of the eye, rather than that of the ear. (39)

May it not be the case that the very reiteration of the concern with externality, with the outside, and of the predilection for the eye, is, in itself, a sort of psychological mask (as well as, or even more than, in Wagner's terms, a philosophical-aesthetic obsession)? Nietzsche's comments upon the choice of the superficies as the demarcation of the interests of a certain type of intellectual or artist, it may not be without point to cite here:

> He who has seen deeply into the world knows what wisdom there is in the fact that men are superficial. It is their instinct for preservation which teaches them to be fickle, light and false. Here and there, among philosophers as well as artists, one finds a passionate and exaggerated worship of 'pure forms': let no one doubt that he who needs the cult of surfaces (my italics) to that extent has at some time or other made a calamitous attempt to get beneath them. (40)

And the following observation from a most interesting essay by Martin

Seymour-Smith seems pertinent: 'Lewis worked consistently hard to keep his imagination under restraint, and transform it into polemical energy. He tried to ignore the non-cerebral elements in creativity. Perhaps he was afraid of his imagination in rather the same way as Swift (justifiably) was of his. Certainly the fierce hardness of outline that characterizes his painting and most of his prose may be seen as gaining its firmness from a need to curb and control a violent and wild passionateness of nature.' (41)

But Lewis, in a passage which I do not recall having seen discussed by any of his critics, and which was written before the "Philosophy of the Eye" was announced, seems to be offering the fuller conception of artistic expression which, it is here being supposed, the later dogma was intended to suppress. The passage occurs in the second number of The Tyro (it will be necessary to quote at length):

> It is more difficult to exercise our imagination when the eye is operating. (The ear, being blind, is in that respect better off.) The practical and very necessary belittlement accomplished for us by the eye at the same time invalidates its claim to priority as the king organ (my italics) where imaginative expression is concerned, although in every other sense it is so supreme. . . . In dreams, however, the eye is in every way supreme. Our dreams are so muffled (or are such dreams only a painter's?) that they are nearly as silent as the Kinema. There the mind, by arranging things as it requires them for its own delight or horror, can get the full emotional shock, the purely visionary quality. . . . In what does this 'emotional' quality, the stripping of things and people by the eye of their more significant and complete emotional vesture, consist? Simply in an incessant analysis of the objects presented to us for the practical purposes of our lives. We are given by the eye too much: a surfeit of information and 'hard fact', that does not, taken literally, tally with our completer values for the objects in question. To make up, from the picture presented to us by the eye, a synthesis of a person or a thing, we must modify the order for which the eye is responsible, and eliminate much of the physical chaos that only serves to separate us from the imaginative truth we are seeking. . . . The eye, in itself, is a stupid organ, or shall we say a stolid one. It is robust to a fault, where the ear is, if anything, hypersensitive. Everything received through the eye from the outside world has to be 'treated' before it can be presented to the imagination with a chance of moving it. (42)

It is unusual and fascinating to witness Lewis in this way estimate the ear over the eye, indeed, deprecate the latter organ. His doing so seems to suggest that, as Seymour-Smith thought, and as the passage from Nietzsche - if we may in some sense apply it to Lewis - explained, the constant attending to the shells and carapaces of things that is the salient trait of Lewis' satiric style was, in itself, a carapace of sorts. That is to say, though Lewis repeated that satire must remain upon the surface - where, alone, the eye can conduct its 'necessary belittlement' - as an artist, he did not want, in a sense, to take his position exclusively on the outside. Or, the external, objective, scientific truth of satire was not, for Lewis, essential; 'to set up the Shell as your shield, against the Dark Within' (43) was a rhetorical necessity, but, ultimately for Lewis, a false creed. We may state this if we allow an imaginative, as well as a hard, objective, component to Lewis' satires - and in The Apes of God and The Childermass, for example, the former is quite evident; (and even if Lewis gives back to the eye its dominance in the dream, that visionary faculty of the eye is categorically distinct from the common-sense function of the eye which Wagner designated a neo-classical, anti-intuitive instrument). The Apes of God, I shall concentrate on particularly in subsequent chapters within symbolic frames of interpretation, even as I comment upon the satire. Here, a short comment by L.P. Hartley may suffice, as evidence of his impression that the 'surfeit' of 'hard fact' dispensed by the eye was, in the composition of that novel, at least in some degree 'treated', to confer a strange, grotesque aspect:

> (Lewis') superb prose style...(is) somehow divorced from reality. He creates a world which has the same relation to our own as a landscape in the moon might have for a terrestrial landscape. It is terrifying and impressive and alien. (44)

And these comments might be concluded with the observation that the most mysterious passage in The Apes (which I shall discuss in Chapter 2, section (viii)) indeed shows something like an irruption of 'imaginative truth' past Lewis' externalist ordinance, the displacing of the "Philosophy of the Eye" or 'cult of surfaces' (in Nietzsche's phrase) by an impulse towards a deeper expressiveness.

Finally, to move from the theoretic to the personal level, there is no mistaking in Wagner a less than favourable spirit towards Lewis. Often, this manifests itself in swipes at Hugh Kenner, 'who verges on the uncritical in some of his opinions on Lewis,' and is Lewis' 'Catholic apologist.' Approving criticism of Lewis 'must remain opinionative,' while hostile critics are men of proven excellence: 'Irving Howe, author of some brilliant criticism in the contemporary field, writes: "When a charlatan like Wyndham Lewis is revived and praised for his wisdom, it is done, predictably, by a Hugh Kenner (Wagner killing two birds with one quote) in the Hudson Review".' (45)

In 1955, in a letter to Ruthven Todd, Lewis, who had seen parts of Wagner's book while it was in preparation, wrote: '...in certain writing of Wagner I remarked errors regarding my works which seem to me deliberate. He is, you know, a nephew of Fanny Wadsworth. He is a nice fellow but he may inherit family feuds.' (46)

The cause of these feuds is documented by Lewis' biographer. Edward and Fanny Wadsworth set up a relief fund for Lewis in 1923, the depending upon which made him resentful, causing him to behave with disgraceful ingratitude.(47) Probably on account of this affair, Lewis put them in The Apes of God, where they are treated very roughly indeed.(48) The dedication of Wagner's book might, therefore, be read as a rather oblique statement of the 'first principles' that Lewis thought the critic should be obliged to

announce, so that 'we should all know where we stood' (49) - the dedication reading: 'To the memory of my uncle, EDWARD WADSWORTH, who first introduced me to the work of Wyndham Lewis.'

To have mentioned this is more than a matter of incidental interest, since it indicates the as if radioactive quality that satire may possess, to contaminate with its own animosity criticism that has fallen within its field of force, even at some degree of remoteness, or indirectly. This point is not without bearing upon my discussion of satire as a symbolic form of vengeance, and Lewis as a 'revenge-satirist', in Chapter 3.

I will not dwell on William Pritchard's study Wyndham Lewis (1968), except to state that it is, in my view, the most attentive and observant work on Lewis to date. It is an antidote to all forms of reductive or a priorist Lewis criticism, to the selecting, or compelling, of data from Lewis' art to meet formulae, or conform to narrow models, derived by the critic on insufficient grounds, to the too confident acceptance of Lewis' dogmas as decisive, to excessive deference to Lewis' philosophical criticism as an informing influence over his novels. Rather than attempting to produce an essential Lewis, it recognizes and registers variety and discontinuity in the fiction, or where Lewis seems to be uncertain, or to be going against his own grain. It may suffice here to acknowledge, as exemplary, two instances in which Pritchard's attention delivers up passages of critical importance to our understanding of the nature and development of Lewis' satiric aesthetic.

The first is what Pritchard calls 'one of the strangest sequences in (Tarr)'. It is also one of the most revealing and awkward in all Lewis' writing, and occurs when Tarr is threatened by Kreisler (whom he has been pursuing for his own amusement) with a dogwhip. Tarr realizes that the satirist's attitude is always a matter of arroga-

tion, rather than of right, and that contempt for others must, in the end, corrupt the satirist himself.(50) Pritchard writes:

> The extraordinary thing about this passage from Tarr is the way in which that whole habit of mind is turned on, not in rejection, but in fuller understanding - with the recognition that the practice of such "humour", such satire, carries with it its own curse, and that it is faced in no trivial way by "life". (51)

'That whole habit of mind' (the satiric attitude) was for a long time Lewis' dominant humour, in all he wrote. Pritchard is correct to state that it is not rejected here, but a doubt is raised about it; there is the flickering of a moral misgiving, and the overbearing confidence of Lewis the satirist is briefly lifted away, to reveal something beneath. No critic apart from Pritchard seems to have dealt with this, the tendency being to deny those elements of Lewis' conflicting positions vis-à-vis satire which happen, themselves, to conflict with the critic's notion of what satire is. Pritchard does not go as far as to say that the doubt here expressed is ever erected into a refutation of satire in Lewis. It is, however, my view that it is, in the last book of The Human Age. That, and the passages in question from Tarr, I shall treat in Chapter 3, in, respectively, sections (iv) and (vi).

Then, Pritchard provides a fine analysis of that series of passages in The Apes of God (to my knowledge unnoticed by any other critic) which I alluded to in my comments on Wagner (and will deal with in Chapter 2, (viii)), where Lewis, through Horace Zagreus, makes extended and haunting use of the interior monologue. This occurs in Part IX, "Chez Lionel Kein, Esq.", (52) which, states Pritchard, 'stands out from the rest of the book by its serious dependence on some promptings from "The Great Within," and by the cumulative way that it hints of the strangeness and terror lying just behind social

relationships.'(53) The valuable point raised by Pritchard in his analysis, which is too long here to cite in full, is that Lewis' writing is at its 'strangest', or most fascinating, where it subverts, or acts against, Lewis' own conventions or terms of reference (principally, the non-moralist and externalist definitions of satire). So, of the passages in question, Pritchard continues:

> In fact, the analogy between character and creator is a very strong one: as Horace's objective analysis of the apes is qualified by his personal involvement with them - ... - so Lewis the "external" satirist seems to be imagining the great obstacle to such an art - an author's sympathetic identification with his characters....(The Apes of God) fascinates by the way it puts questions to the satirist that are not put by theoretical talk about "external" or "non-moral" satire such as is found in Men Without Art. (54)

Robert Chapman's study, Wyndham Lewis: Fictions and Satires (1973) 'concentrates upon the dialectics of Lewis's imaginative writing.' (55) '(Lewis') fiction of ideas,' considers Chapman, 'demands explication of a different order' (from what one would bring to a novel of Henry James or Virginia Woolf, for example), and 'to evaluate his fiction by means of a preconceived poetics of the novel does Lewis no justice.' (56)

Chapman's 'deliberate concentration upon (Lewis') fiction as philosophy' is a good counter to the customary complaints about lack of narrative interest in Lewis or the psychological shallowness of his characters, of the order of Kenner's remark about the 'tedium consequent on the replacement of persons by dialectical puppets'; or Timothy Materer's 'his characters cannot interest the reader for more than a few pages;' (57) or his biographer's '...the characters (in The Apes) lack both feeling and intelligence, and forfeit the attention and sympathy of the reader. Lewis was uanble to surmount the handicap of a self-defeating theory and a rigidly restrictive

technique which drastically diminished the effect of his satire.'(58) In addition, Chapman undertakes a chapter on Lewis' relations with Bloomsbury, "The Malefic Cabal", which is very welcome as a demonstration of how a certain sort of local history, of external facts, bears upon satire alone among literary genres, and of how the satirist depends upon a kind of reactive or negative intimacy with the people or institutions of his time.

One limitation - or, rather, inevitable effect - of a treatment of Lewis' art as a 'fiction of ideas' is the constant recourse to the philosophical criticism, particularly here The Art of Being Ruled, for exegesis of the novels (two of Chapman's favourite verbs, it will come as no surprise, are 'fictionalize' and 'dramatize'). That work, for example, is cited on page 100, twice on page 105, and twice on page 174; and when Chapman writes of Pierpoint's detachment, 'Again, like so many of the ideas in The Apes of God, this could almost be a fictionalization of one of the central concepts of The Art of Being Ruled' (59), one is either irritated - particularly by 'almost', glib and indecisive adverb, and by the implicit echoes of Kenner ('The Childermass is simply The Art of Being Ruled dramatized') and Wagner ('if we resume Lewis' criticism, we resume the purpose of his satire') - or challenged: what element, or elements, can we perceive in the presentation of Pierpoint that make him more than the mere 'fictionalization of a concept'?

Chapman's modus operandi, of necessity, precludes such investigation, establishing the criticism on a plateau of lofty generality, so that the particular suffers. For instance, he states that: 'Both Tarr and Kreisler are, on one level, ideas in action....Pierpoint's status in the novel, and the relationship with Zagreus, his mouthpiece, also dramatize an important Platonic concept. Just as Tarr/Kreisler dramatize the Cartesian dichotomy of intellect/emotion, so

Pierpoint/Zagreus represent the dualism between the perfection of the word and the limitation of the deed.'(60) While such classifications are schematically useful, they seem, at the same time, to sterilize the novels in question; the critic avoids dirtying his hands, as it were.

Why, for example, does Lewis name characters 'Zagreus' and 'Pierpoint'? Why does Tarr enjoy, at some points, such strange and violent powers of expression? Why are Tarr and Kreisler associated, here and there, with ancient figures of satire? Why does Kreisler have to die (beyond the explanation offered in Tarr's superficial dialectics (61)), and why does he give himself precisely thirty days to live? Why is it intimated that Zagreus is the possessor of mysterious wisdom, and capable of magic; and why is he subject to peculiar mental wanderings? Such questions (which I will address in subsequent chapters) cannot be answered by concentrating merely on the intellectual patterning Lewis employed in his creation, or on his balancing, and demonstration, of (Cartesian or Platonic) ideas. For to do so cannot account for the very detritus upon which imagination depends: such a critical method cannot register the traditions, models, themes, topoi - literary, religious, historical, psychological, mythic - by which Lewis' mind was fed in creation, or to which it referred; nor can it demonstrate the symbols, motifs, allusions through which his various fascinactions, compulsions or interests manifested themselves.

Moreover, Chapman's explanation of certain passages, even within the remit of a philosophical analysis of Lewis, may be too narrow or specific. When, for example, he writes of the astonishing description of Lady Fredigonde Follet's ascent from her chair and passage across a room (she is 93 years old) that 'Lewis, like a true Cartesian, is[he's] laughing at the ugliness of the body in decline,' and

refers to 'Lewis's abhorrence of the exaltation of purely physical life,' (62) he is neglecting the fact that there are dualisms older than the Cartesian, by which Lewis may equally have been influenced, that are defined by their aversion to physical life - that of the anti-Christian heresies, for example, or the Socratic kind. But to these questions I will come in my second chapter.

Furthermore, Chapman's approach compels him to depreciate the sense in which The Apes of God is a roman à clef, and exalt its ideal and timeless validity:

> The Finnian-Shaws/Sitwells are not important per se, but are part of a metaphorical statement, valid even if one is ignorant of those satirized. If The Apes of God is to be more than a historical curiosity, then the satiric fiction must be able to stand independent of its "social interest," and it does - Lewis has painted the portrait of a society in decay, and as such The Apes of God transcends the merely contemporary and personal interest of who's who. (63)

Yet in stating this, Chapman denies The Apes of God one of the traditional features of satire. The iambic poets (that is, satirists), Aristotle tells us, 'write about actual people' (as opposed to imaginary).(64) Histories of satire still record the names of the victims (and the offence they caused the satirist) of Archilochus and Hipponax, who composed lethal iambs over two and a half millennia ago. The most recent editions of The Dunciad or of MacFlecknoe divulge still the actual identities of those against whom Pope or Dryden inveighed, and why they did so. Chapman himself has produced a chapter on Lewis' fights with a certain set of people, some of whom are portrayed in The Apes; and Paul Edwards' "Afterword" on the novel identifies the actual models of many of the Apes. Chapman, however, is concerned that The Apes of God should never appear 'dated' - a decent concern. And he is probably correct to maintain that the novel can be read on a purely metaphorical level. But to read it that

way may be to omit something essential from the consideration of the satire. For it is my view that people will continue to demand to know (what Pound predicted would not be the case (65)) why certain persons, circa 1910-1930, deserved to be torn apart and humiliated in prose, in the way that the Apes are.

To put this another way, we may cite Chapman's observation, 'The castigation of his (i.e. Lewis') personal antipathies is not an end in itself.'(66) But, in a sense, punishment/vengeance may be, for the satirist, an end in itself, his other purposes being merely rhetorical ones (I will return to this point presently, then more fully in my third chapter). Equally, real animosities fuel the inferno prepared in The Apes of God; and knowledge of his relations with those who became the satirist's victims may illuminate the psychology of the satirist, his motives, the viciousness of particular portrayals, and so on. For what is essential about the satirist throughout the tradition of satire (if by 'satire' we mean punitive literature) is the nature, aim and psychology of his contempt or hate and the modes in which his desire for vengeance may express itself (this point I will address at large in my third chapter).

This, Chapman seems to disregard, or fails to appreciate, in his peroration:

> As a satirist, Lewis is in the tradition of Pope and Swift; he is, indeed, the only satirist of modern times who can stand comparison with these Augustans. Like them, Lewis attacked individuals as well as vices, and his most memorable satiric fictions are those - like The Childermass, The Apes of God, and The Revenge for Love - in which he sets up satiric victims and then, with imaginative viciousness, proceeds to destroy them.

Thus far, I concur fully with Chapman; but:

> Alongside this demolition work runs a strong sense of the satirist's duty to society....In addition to the castigation of the especially wicked or the peculiarly foolish, satire was for Lewis a way of looking at humanity. (67)

But responding to these comments leads us into some complications.

To take the simpler issue first: satire was 'for Lewis a way of looking at humanity.' Or rather, he developed a theory of satire along such lines (in Men Without Art), a theory which comes close to standing as a statement of religious pessimism. But when he wrote satire, he was not exactly enacting that theory: he was expressing something of a more personal order (in making this observation, I have principally in mind satire such as The Apes of God, rather than that contained in The Wild Body stories). These issues I must take up in chapters 2 and 3 (in sections (vi) and (v) respectively).

Then, there is Chapman's claim that through Lewis' work 'runs a strong sense of the satirist's duty to society'. Yet how are we to take such a statement in the light of Lewis' proposal (in Men Without Art) 'to consider the character, and function of, non-ethical satire; and if possible to provide it with a standing, alongside the other arts and sciences, as a recognized philosophic and artistic human activity'? (68) How can 'non-moral' satire, the idea of which Lewis devoted himself to considerably (though not always) in his dissertations on satire, include a 'strong sense of duty to society'? To support his argument, Chapman introduces the well-known passage from Rude Assignment (which I shall return to several times in my third chapter) where Lewis portrays himself as an extempore hangman, with a duty to lynch wrongdoers (Apes, in this case) on the spot.(69) But such images are topoi in the tradition of satire; and they express less a sense of public duty than the satirist's advertising of his own punitive or destructive potency. I do not wish here to digress too far, or to anticipate the material of the later chapters; so it will perhaps suffice to state that the case Lewis makes for non-moral satire is not the same as his practice as a satirist, which is non-moral also

(again, these issues will be explored in Chapters 2 and 3); but in neither case is a duty to society his motivation. That it has seldom been so for the satirist, apart from as a pretext, it is possible to maintain - on the side of the argument that the satirist is answering to darker, or negative, urges within himself. Chapman's association of Lewis with Swift is just, but only insofar as it recognizes in each an urge to destroy particular, or many, individuals (the intention to protect or reform certain conditions or institutions being a secondary question).

But it seems that scarcely any of Lewis' major critics has got properly to grips with such questions (Fredric Jameson I would exempt from that observation; and Pritchard is perceptive when he writes about Lewis and satire, though it is not his major interest).

Timothy Materer's study, Wyndham Lewis the Novelist (1976), devotes a chapter to Lewis and satire, "Satire and Self-Defense". It begins with much point by suggesting that, because he could discover no moral sanction for the satirist in modern society, Lewis

> adopts the satiric persona of the malcontent.
> In his use of the malcontent, Lewis is closer to Renaissance rather than Augustan attitudes toward satire... Although the Renaissance malcontent may penetrate the hypocrisy that gentler characters cannot, his savage hatred for it usually corrupts him. (70)

and that Tarr is a 'Timon-like protagonist'. These are most interesting observations, seeming, as they do, to find a place for Lewis within that tradition of satire expounded by Robert Elliott in his important book The Power of Satire (which I shall refer to in Chapter 3). Their value, however, crumbles away when it becomes clear that Materer has only a superficial understanding, in general, of the nature of satire; and that he intends to resort continually to an Augustan conception of that literary mode - even though he thinks that it is more apt to refer Lewis to a Renaissance model!

Thus, Materer explains:

> Satire traditionally ridicules fools or knaves for departing from society's norms of good sense or morality. In Jonathan Swift's words, satirists feel a sense of public duty, "prompting men of genius and virtue to mend the world as far as they are able." Lewis tended to reject such traditional conceptions of satire and the satirist. Since he doubted that his own society offered any moral norms, he saw no sure way to call the fools and knaves to account. (71)

Yet Pope's complaint in "Epilogue to the Satires", "Dialogue 1", is no different from that which, according to Materer, Lewis makes, namely that the satirist occupies a moral void:

> All, all look up, with reverential awe,
> On crimes that scape, or triumph o'er the law:
> While truth, worth, wisdom, daily they decry -
> 'Nothing is sacred now but villainy.' (11. 167 - 170) (72)

That may be purely rhetorical; but so, equally, may be Lewis when he issues that sort of sentiment - except that one cannot recall his putting the case as absolutely as Pope, which rather stands against Materer's argument. Then, Swift may have written that the satirist's duty was to 'mend the world'; but he also wrote in private (in a letter to Pope), inconveniently for Materer, that 'the chief end I propose to myself in all my labors is to vex the world'. (My italics) (73) That remark gives at least some grounds for the proposition that antagonism is the ruling desire in the satirist, rather than concern to correct, reform, and so on.

But that satire has long been affected by a tension between real intent (punishment/vengeance) and professed (reform, healing, etc.) it does not suit Materer to canvass - if he realized as much - since he wants to claim that it is Lewis' inability morally to justify it that 'helps to explain the failure of The Apes of God.' (74) For Materer believes, along with Geoffrey Wagner and Robert Elliott, that Lewis was impelled by a powerful moral sense:

> (Robert) Elliott concludes that Lewis is "utterly incapable of disguising the intense moral urgency underlying his whole literary enterprise," and concurs with Geoffrey Wagner that Lewis goes to "self-contradictory lengths to avoid seeming 'edifying.'"
>
> Wagner's speculation only partly explains Lewis's motives. Why should he wish to "disguise" his moral urgency? I believe the real problem was that he could not justify this urgency to himself. He thought seriously about his work, and could not practise successfully an art which he could not defend theoretically. (75)

The first part of that passage from Wagner is worth quoting here:

> Yet of course he is a moralist, in the sense that the urge to change the status quo, which avowedly prompts his satire, has a moral intention. One presumes that Lewis is exposing the evils in our society by means of satire in an effort to correct them. (76)

But what grounds are there for 'presuming' that Lewis is 'exposing evils' in order to 'correct them'? Is there a record of a satirist's ever having 'corrected' anything? Is not the exposing or punishing of evils what, in truth, fascinates the satirist? Pope may have written,

> Hence Satire rose, that just the medium hit,
> And heals with morals what it hurts with wit. (77)

but Robert Elliott is probably right to object that no one who has been damaged by satire has ever, subsequently, felt 'healed' by the lesson he has received at the hands of the satirist.(78) And - to answer Materer - if you are of a sufficiently pessimistic cast of mind, then, it might be argued, 'moral urgency' is not something that you are going to be affected by, let alone feel the need to 'justify'.

This takes us to Materer's next point. Writing satire against a background of Christian belief in the fallen nature of man saved Swift and Pope, for example, from despair, Materer suggests, and cites Louis Landa:

> Without underestimating Swift's despair, he proposes that Swift's traditional, Christian view of man as fallen and

> in need of redemption supported his satire: "The satirist and the divine tend to merge, or at the very least to come together in striking compatibility as they envisage man." Lewis believed that the satirist needed such support to avoid falling into incoherent despair or rage, and the works of classic satirists like Swift and Pope support his contention...Pope...can contemplate the severest evils without losing his balanced view of the status quo... (79)

Does this mean that unless a satirist be a Christian, he must end up subsiding into dementia? But this condition need hardly be applied to Lewis anyway; since, although Materer knows it not, something like an heterodox religious sense informs a broad range of Lewis' conceptualizations of satire, and of the nature of good and evil - I call that sense Gnostic, and it forms part of the subject of my next chapter. So, Lewis does possess a sort of (aestheticized and intellectualized) theological support for his despair. But beyond this - though not unattached to it - lies the point of view that as long as the satirist has a creed of sufficient value to refer to, then he will not collapse into nihilism. In Lewis, this is his estimation of art (for a long time, in a sense, his god); and it is manifested in The Apes of God (as I shall show in Chapter 2, (viii)) by recourse to mythic structure and allusion, and by installing a sort of divine agent in the midst of the satire. (That the satirist himself becomes a kind of god in the act of taking revenge, I will attempt to show in Chapter 3, (v).)

Here, however, it may be stated that Materer, as well as having only a thin and unquestioning understanding of satire, reverses himself on any point that will allow him to issue a fresh refutation of Wyndham Lewis. Above, for example, Pope could keep his balance of mind in contemplation of the worst manifestations of human nature. When, however, Materer comes to Lewis' theory of the 'scientific objectivity' of satiric truth, he offers us - Pope as Mr Hyde!

> Lewis's theory does not fit satiric practice. Whether expressing Dryden's amused contempt for Zimri or Pope's furious disgust (my italics) with Sporus, satire is scarcely objective. Lewis's theory is as contradictory as his claim that the satirist need not pass judgement on the person he attacks. (80)

Lewis' theory does not necessarily fit his own satiric practice either. This raises several points.

The contradictoriness of Lewis' discourses on satire, which Materer is correct in seeing as beset by 'doubts', and demonstrating 'uncomfortable sincerity', a 'strained definition' (of satire), 'unsuccessful juggling', 'an ambivalence that goes deep', and 'difficulties', and which raise questions that Lewis 'never satisfactorily answers', (81)he is, I think, wrong to criticize. He takes exception to them because they are not reliable, because they can frequently be refuted - by mutual reference, by reference to the tradition of satire, or by reference to Lewis' own satiric fiction.

But if we allow that there may be harboured by the satirist guilt about his profession (which is to attack others), then equally we might allow that - over his career - that guilt (or traces of misgiving intermittently experienced, if 'guilt' is too strong a word) might issue in uncertainty, manifested by apparently irresolvable differences of position (at one time, or at different times). Also, to attempt to define a genre from within (as a satirist, that is to say) is, perhaps, impossible, not least because changes in society over time call for adaptations of that genre (which is a living or continuous one in a way that epic or tragedy, say, are not - satire is always being created somewhere).

Thus, in The Lion and the Fox, 'satire is essentially ethical, or it is difficult for it not to be',(82) while in Satire and Fiction, 'It could perhaps be asserted, even, that the greatest Satire cannot

be moralistic at all.'(83) And in Men Without Art, 'by stretching a point, no more, we can without exaggeration write satire for art...' (84), while in Rude Assignment: '"The Apes of God" is the only one of my books which can be described as pure Satire (unless we wish to speak of verse): there is much farce, comedy, and other things in there too, but as a satire it must generally be classed.' (85)

Yet the other major attempt to define comprehensively and at length satire (I can think of no example apart from Dryden's) in English letters suffers from a comparable unevenness. In the Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire, Dryden is unable to get ideals, tastes and practice in harmony:

> Folly was the proper Quarry of Horace, and not Vice: And, as there are but few Notoriously Wicked Men, in comparison with a Shoal of Fools, and Fops; so 'tis a harder thing to make a Man Wise, than to make him Honest: For the Will is only to be reclaim'd in the one; but the Understanding is to be inform'd in the other. There are Blind sides and Follies, even in the Professors of Moral Philosophy; and there is not any one Sect of them that Horace has not expos'd: Which as it was not the Design of Juvenal, who was wholly employ'd in lashing Vices; some of them the most enormous that can be imagin'd; so perhaps it was not so much his Talent. . . .
>
> How easie it is to call Rogue and Villain, and that wittily! But how hard to make a Man appear a Fool, a Blockhead, or a Knave, without using any of these opprobrious terms! (86)

The thinking in this passage, it will be noticed, Lewis adapted in Satire and Fiction: (1) satire is more ruinously effective when it is aimed at stupidity rather than vice; (2) there is more art to such satire.(87) And Dryden's artistic preference is for the deadly refinement of Horace; but his approbation goes to Juvenal, for totality of effect and moral severity:

> Horace means to make his Reader laugh; but he is not sure of his Experiment. Juvenal always intends to move your Indignation; and he always brings about his purpose. (88)

To account for this incompatibility of taste and ideal, Dryden enlists

the distinction between the comic and tragic modes of satire, Horace practising the former, Juvenal the latter. Dryden's own satire, in judgement upon which Lewis cites George Saintsbury,(89) conflates Horace's urbanity and Juvenal's severity in a disabling coolness of style. It may be remarked also that Lewis approximated satire to tragedy, to account for the bitterness of comic spirit that prevails in the former. (90)

Had Materer taken notice of this irresolution of Dryden's (and he knows Dryden's essay), or Dryden's wanting to have the best of both worlds, as it were, he might better have understood Lewis' various position regarding satire. Instead of holding against Lewis the fact that his 'critical statements about satire reveal the same doubts about its spirit as do his novels', (91) he might have recognized such doubts as a source of intellectual vitality - a doubtful satirist is more admirable than a complacent one! In addition, he might have discerned that the moment of critical uncertainty in Tarr's career (mentioned in my comments on Pritchard (92)) over the satiric attitude is an awkward interruption of misgiving on Lewis' part (and, of necessity, to be hurriedly suppressed), rather than complaining about Lewis' inability to keep to a coherent narrative point of view: 'This passage, at first, severely criticizes Tarr....Yet even on a single page Lewis cannot keep a consistent attitude toward Tarr.' (93)

It is apparent, however, that in considering Lewis' satire, Materer's intention is to deprecate him in every department as a second-rate descendant of Augustan forbears. Thus, he maintains:

> ...the prose style of The Apes communicates so overpowering and sometimes so oppressive a sense of Lewis' personality that one cannot believe in his objectivity. Even in the portrait of Dick Whittingdon, his anger tends to turn satire into mere denunciation. (94)

But (1) Materer has already told us that satire cannot be objective

(Pope's 'furious disgust', etc.), so he should not take exception to the absence of this quality in Lewis; (2) personal animus and its expression have played a central part in satire, ab initio; (3) it is wrong to give the impression that the satirist's only weapon is refined, cutting irony (even Pope's couplets can descend to very effective obscenity (95)), as Materer does here and elsewhere (96); accordingly, Materer's is a meaningless imputation - denunciation is not less satiric than neater forms of literary attack - and merely serves to refer Lewis to a tradition of savage satire; (4) but how crudely denunciatory is The Apes anyway? Is not the portrayal of Dick (97) so elaborate in its expression and funny in its effect that it could only be regarded as 'denunciation' by one without either a sense of humour, or the sense to realize that to be persistently satiric in prose requires considerably more in the way of verbal and imaginative resources than does the Augustan couplet?

I will conclude this survey with very brief reference to three other works of Lewis criticism.

Against Fredric Jameson's Fables of Aggression: Wyndham Lewis, the Modernist as Fascist (1979), I will make no criticism, since that seems to have been well accomplished by Alan Munton in a strict essay. (98) Three areas of Jameson's study, however, with which this thesis concurs are: (1) his understanding of Lewis' visionary potentiality and its mode of expression (99); (2) his accurate - in my view - opinion that satire was a compulsion for Lewis, rather than a genre chosen as most congenial from among several possibilities; and that, erected into a universal view - 'absolutized' - in Lewis, it 'recovers something of its primitive power and its most archaic vocation'; (100) his recognition, on the strength of that insight, that the practice of satire is, in essence, 'non-moral' (101) - in a more fundamental sense,

in fact, as I will show, than any Lewis offered in his theoretical definitions of his art, or dissertations on satire.

Other contributions of Jameson to this thesis, I shall acknowledge as necessary.

Thomas Kush's Wyndham Lewis's Pictorial Integer (1981) conflates the approaches taken by Porteus and Chapman. Lewis' literary art, he considers, should be read as the product of a painter and philosopher-critic; in addition, he regards the influence of Bergson on Lewis, especially of Creative Evolution, as paramount. To this end, chapters two and three are devoted, respectively, to Lewis' own criticism and Bergson, and to Lewis' painting. The project sounds comprehensive: 'An account of Lewis's career should emphasize the multiplicity of his creative and critical endeavours....It is, in fact, essential to understand Lewis's place in modern painting if we are properly to understand his fiction.' (102) Kush's display of the word 'multiplicity', however, gives the wrong impression of what he is about, namely, a rather limited and selective exercise in confirming a thesis. The only criticism he studies in depth (though exceedingly well) is Time and Western Man (alongside Bergson); and he concentrates on only four creative works: The Enemy of the Stars; Tarr; The Childermass; The Apes of God. It will be noticed that of Lewis' oeuvre, these texts alone meet the requirements of analysis in terms of painting.

From this narrow position, Kush produces some of the best Lewis criticism to date; and his improvement on Porteus is to use both art history and Lewis' paintings themselves in his commentary. The very persuasiveness and clarity of his arguments, however, awaken the reader to the exclusion from his critical scheme of the consideration of literariness. His bias, which is a productive one, prompts one to

look for, or register, an alternative that is based neither on the pictorial nor the Bergsonian model.

Of the "Prologue" to The Apes of God, for example, he states:

> It is especially significant that the layers of metaphor, description and epithet used to characterize Lady Freddy are, for all their diversity, gathered in support of a single pictorial image. The scene is in fact a genre painting, entitled "The Toilette of a Veteran Gossip-Star". This careful travesty features the conventional elements of a toilette - a woman of fashion, the boudoir, a servant, a simple act of vanitas, (later) a mirror. (103)

The urge to compensate for the pictorial bias here induces one to discover a 'single literary source', and Swift's "On a Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed" comes to mind: a woman at her toilette, and vanity contending with a painful spectacle of physical decay.

Kush is the first critic to present a constructive and really considered interpretation of Horace Zagreus (in The Apes). In him, he sees synthesized the painterly and Bergsonian aspects of Lewis' vision: 'Zagreus's costumes take up Lewis's Bergsonian equation of body with psyche...The novel's central passage, a long piece of Vorticist prose, describes Zagreus fully arrayed as the most heroic of Lewis's Abstract Figures.' (104) Kush is correct, I think, to regard the section "Mr Zagreus and the Split-man" as the symbolic core of The Apes of God. (105) Again, however, his models of interpretation exclude from scrutiny the total variety of significances in the thesaurus of religious and mythic allusions poured out by Lewis in the pages in question (if such a totality could be compassed by a single reading of the novel - and an entire thesis could usefully be devoted to analysis of this strange interlude in the novel). To reduce the passages in "Mr Zagreus and the Split-Man" to a sort of abstract anthropological-Bergsonian-painterly scheme, as here:

> Like many of Lewis's Abstract Figures and Creation Myths, then, Zagreus's totemic costume features the full scale of evolution, with animal and vegetative forms built up into a human icon, surmounted by the hard clear form of a "beak or horn", as a "symbol of undying creative energy". (106)

denies, perhaps, or evades, the historical import of these pages. Why, albeit fragmentedly, are certain definite references to various antiquities retrieved and presented, connoting older, more varied and more powerful influences over Lewis than can be comprehended in a conceptual application of Bergson to his imagination? Nor does Kush register the mysteriousness of this section: why is Ratner, seemingly on the verge of instruction in something awsome, teased, and knowledge ultimately suppressed? That may be an issue of the satiric pessimism - Ratner is not capable, by nature, of knowing certain secrets - which the vitalism of Kush's interpretation cannot accommodate. Such ideas I will later examine (in Chapter 2, (viii)).

Kush, however, should be applauded for essaying a positive construction of the figure of Horace Zagreus (my own view of that character is principally a positive one), and a definite interpretation of difficult writing. It may well be a dialectical strength of his sort of study, consistently bringing to bear bodies of outside knowledge (Bergson and art history) upon the texts, that it repels the reader towards other particular frames of reference, rather than involving him in the inertia of generality.

Concerning Reed Way Dasenbrock's part-study of Lewis, The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis: Towards the Condition of Painting (1985), I have not much to add to the criticisms levelled by Paul Edwards in an article on the book.(107) It seems to me, however, that Dasenbrock's premise marks not much of an advance on

that of Porteus (writing 50 years previously) or those of Kenner and of Wagner (30 years), insofar as it expects to reveal Lewis by means of Lewis - as his own model of interpretation, that is to say. Kenner, furthermore, was considerably more illuminating on the Vorticist component of Lewis' style than Dasenbrock ever manages to be.

One example of the inevitable, a priorist limitation of Dasenbrock's procedure may suffice. He states that:

> The circularity of Lewis' novels is the circularity of the vortex itself...What conclusively demonstrates that Lewis' formal model is the vortex is that these novels speed up as they approach their end, as if they were approaching the centre of the maelstrom; they do not slow down, as if they were simply approaching death. (108)

But since so much literary art 'speeds up as it approaches its end' - in its climax, or in its dénouement - it is hard to see the value of this observation; it is merely forcing facts to meet a formula. Of far more interest is Dasenbrock's opinion - not so self-evident as to have been grasped by a great many of Lewis' critics, it is surprising to say - that the creative Lewis is by no means a mere dogmatic echo of the theoretical or critical Lewis:

> His own practice as a novelist was much more flexible than the polemical rigidity of Time and Western Man or Men Without Art would indicate or seem to allow. (109)

## CONCLUSION

I think that what may have emerged from this short survey is, first, that Lewis criticism has rested too much on the relation of Lewis' theoretical, polemic or philosophic writing to his fiction. To a degree, such criticism was necessary (it would be stupid and ungracious to suggest otherwise), as Martin Seymour-Smith acknowledged over twenty years ago:

> Lewis's few admirers have until now...concentrated, and rightly, on the exposition of his ideas, and have interpreted his fiction largely with the aid of those ideas. Thus, his prose has hardly been looked at except in the terms of his ideas. (110)

Still, however, Lewis criticism seems inclined to follow the tendency described by Seymour-Smith; and it is not desirable that this should seem to be the only way of delivering Lewis' meaning, as if the literary critic who is not continually resorting to Lewis' non-fictional discourses is somehow omitting something. Then, it has sometimes been decreed that Lewis the pictorial artist is the key to Lewis the imaginative writer. Either of these ways of reading Lewis, if not casting his imaginative productions as somehow epiphenomenal, at least makes them seem too dependent upon other aspects of Lewis. Yet when efforts have been made to examine Lewis in the light of tradition (of satire), then his own theoretical dissertations on satire have been allowed to interfere with the project - and producing statements <u>about</u> satire is different intellectually and psychologically from <u>writing</u> satire, it is my view, even when the same man does both; or, the nature of satire has been allowed by the critic to be dictated by Pope- or Swift-centred conventions (if such could be held to exist in a clear sense anyway).

Now, in the chapters to follow, I will examine both Lewis' fiction (and verse and drama) and non-fiction, but more independently of each other, I think, than has hitherto been the custom. Where, however, particular issues or motifs, especially of a nature that seem to trouble Lewis, or to compel or obsess him, or to cause him anxiety or uncertainty, are common to both the classes of his writing, they will be noted. Yet this is no more, perhaps, than to say that I should hesitate to talk too readily of the novels' practising the theory, or of 'dramatizing' or 'fictionalizing' this or that - if

only because enough comments of that sort have been made already in Lewis criticism to be going on with.

But the condition of my adopting this guardedness is that I intend to present two traditions, one really a religious-philosophic current of thought, the other one of artistic practice and belief, to which, I think, the Lewisian corpus can substantially, though not conclusively, be referred. Where certain common or analogous areas in these traditions seem evident, I will indicate as much, without ever trying factitiously to unify the two readings of Lewis I am offering. Thus, to an extent not common in criticism of Lewis, I will be adopting an historical method, and in fact bringing to bear upon his work certain ideas of antique provenance. For it is my view that it is worth looking below the level of apparent dogma in Lewis (below, that is to say, the surface of reiterated and insisted upon predilections and antipathies), or below the body of statements that have seemed (superficially and reflexively) to explain his creation. And if there should be discovered certain cults, interests, concerns, motifs, patterns, certain shaping influences on his imagination, that is to say - which may or may not be oblique in their presence, but will be less forcibly advertised than certain of his opinions, or certain elements of his style - it will be necessary to account, somehow, for their presence and their affectivity. But I think that all this has been expressed more crisply by John Russell, in Style in Modern British Fiction, when he cites the critic Seymour Chatman:

> Chatman, while assured that "the analyst should limit himself to what is immanent in the work of art", is forced to the empirical conclusion that, after all, "our chief pleasure in reading modern fiction...depends radically, it seems to me, on outside knowledge." (111)

## FOOTNOTES

1 "A Man Apart: A Few Recollections of Wyndham Lewis", Agenda: "Wyndham Lewis Special Issue" Vols. VII, 3 - VIII, 1, 1969-1970, pp.172 - 179.
2 Jeffrey Meyers, The Enemy: A Biography of Wyndham Lewis, p. 203.
3 Wyndham Lewis: A Discursive Exposition, p.202.
4 ibid. p.193.
5 ibid. pp.261 - 262.
6 ibid. p.229.
7 ibid. p.178.
8 ibid. p.185.
9 ibid. pp.160 - 161.
10 Wyndham Lewis, p.106.
11 Wyndham Lewis: A Discursive Exposition, p.68.
12 Enemy News No.22 Spring 1986, p.52.
13 Wyndham Lewis, p.14.
14 ibid. p.20.
15 ibid. p.14.
16 ibid. pp.2, 32 & 39.
17 ibid. p.3.
18 The Apes of God, p.250.
19 ibid. pp.216 & 377 - 378.
20 Tarr (1918), pp.82 & 99.
21 ibid. p.82.
22 Wyndham Lewis, p.97.
23 The Enemy: A Biography of Wyndham Lewis, p.142.
24 Wyndham Lewis, p.99.
25 See The Childermass, pp.20 - 23, 41 - 43 & 90 - 108.
26 Fables of Aggression: Wyndham Lewis, the Modernist as Fascist, p.75.
27 Wyndham Lewis: A Portrait of the Artist as the Enemy, p.18.
28 The Diabolical Principle, pp.viii - ix.
29 See The Apes of God, pp.118 - 125, and The Art of Being Ruled (1926), pp.149 - 150.
30 The Art of Being Ruled, p.246.
31 "Augment of the Novel" (1941), repr. Agenda: "Special Lewis Issue", p.54.
32 Rude Assignment, pp.210 - 211.
33 Wyndham Lewis: the Relation between the Theory and the Fiction, from his Earliest Writings to 1941, p.44.
34 Wyndham Lewis: A Portrait of the Artist as the Enemy, pp.20 - 22.
35 repr. Wyndham Lewis: Collected Poems and Plays, p.198.
36 The Art of Being Ruled, p.229.
37 See The Apes of God, pp.293 - 294.
38 A Portrait of the Artist as the Enemy, pp. 270 & 269.
39 Men Without Art, p.128.
40 Beyond Good and Evil, Aphorism 59, p.66.
41 "Wyndham Lewis as Imaginative Writer", Agenda: "Special Lewis Issue", p.10.
42 "Essay on the Objective of Plastic Art in Our Time", repr. Wyndham Lewis on Art, pp.214 - 215.
43 Men Without Art, p.145.
44 From a contemporary notice in The Weekly Sketch, repr. Satire and Fiction, pp.34-5. This observation is cited again in part in Chapter 2, section (iii).

45 A Portrait of the Artist as the Enemy, pp.169, 264, 251 & 309.
46 Letters of Wyndham Lewis (ed. Rose), 2/4/1955, pp.560 - 561.
47 See The Enemy: A Biography of Wyndham Lewis, pp.112 - 113, for a very funny account of this.
48 In The Apes of God Part VI, "Ape-Flagellant", as Richard and Jenny.
49 Rude Assignment, p.59.
50 See Tarr (1928), pp.244 - 246.
51 Wyndham Lewis, pp.42 - 43.
52 See The Apes of God, pp.237 & 295 - 296 for these passages.
53 Wyndham Lewis, p.82.
54 ibid. pp.84 - 85.
55 Wyndham Lewis: Fictions and Satires, p.12.
56 ibid. pp.12 & 183.
57 Vortex: Pound, Eliot and Lewis, p.170.
58 The Enemy: A Biography of Wyndham Lewis, p.160.
59 Wyndham Lewis: Fictions and Satires, pp.104 - 105; Chapman is referring to The Art of Being Ruled, p.432.
60 Wyndham Lewis: Fictions and Satires, pp.79 & 105.
61 See Tarr (1928), p.314 - I employ this edition throughout, except in my comments on Kenner.
62 Fictions and Satires, pp.101 & 103.
63 ibid. p.103.
64 Poetics, "Poetic Truth and Historical Truth", Classical Literary Criticism, p.44.
65 In a comment quoted by Chapman, Fictions and Satires, p.103.
66 ibid.
67 ibid. pp.184 & 185.
68 Men Without Art, p.107.
69 Fictions and Satires, p.185.
70 Wyndham Lewis the Novelist, p.25.
71 ibid. p.24.
72 In The Oxford Anthology of English Literature, The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century (ed. Price), pp.381 - 393.
73 The Writings of Jonathan Swift, p.584.
74 Wyndham Lewis the Novelist, p.27.
75 ibid.
76 Wyndham Lewis: A Portrait of the Artist as the Enemy, p.213.
77 "The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace", The Poetical Works of Alexander Pope, p.321, 11.261 - 262.
78 The Power of Satire, p.111.
79 Wyndham Lewis the Novelist, p.29.
80 ibid. pp.77 - 78.
81 ibid. pp.25 - 26.
82 The Lion and the Fox, p.168.
83 Satire and Fiction, p.43.
84 Men Without Art, p.289.
85 Rude Assignment, p.56.
86 The Works of John Dryden Vol IV, pp.62 & 70.
87 Satire and Fiction, p.43.
88 Works of Dryden Vol IV, p.72.
89 Satire and Fiction, p.43.
90 Men Without Art, p.113.
91 Wyndham Lewis the Novelist, p.25.
92 See, again, Tarr, pp.244 - 246.
93 Wyndham Lewis the Novelist, p.64.
94 ibid. p.94.

95 As in the description of the public games and races in Dunciad II .

96 Wyndham Lewis the Novelist, p.28, where Materer writes: 'Under the pressure of his rage, Lewis often drops the delicate weapons of satire for the crude ones of denunciation.'

97 See The Apes of God, Parts I, "Dick", and VI, "Ape-Flagellant".

98 "Fredric Jameson: Fables of Aggression", Blast,3, pp.345 - 351.

99 Fables of Aggression: Wyndham Lewis, the Modernist as Fascist, pp.75 - 76.

100 ibid. pp.136 - 137.

101 ibid. p.137.

102 Wyndham Lewis's Pictorial Integer, pp.3 & 34.

103 ibid. p.104.

104 ibid. pp.110 & 111.

105 See The Apes of God, pp.327 - 345.

106 Wyndham Lewis's Pictorial Integer, p.112 - Kush's text reproduces plates of some of the paintings to which he refers.

107 Enemy News No.22 Spring 1986, pp.50 - 53.

108 The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis, p.168.

109 ibid. p.164.

110 "Wyndham Lewis as Imaginative Writer", Agenda: "Special Lewis Issue", p.10.

111 Style in Modern British Fiction, p.13.

# CHAPTER 2

## The Conceptual and Creative Influence of Gnosticism and Related Religious Systems on Lewis' Fiction and Theory

(i)

His theoretical writings and fiction yield up much evidence of Lewis' interest in the religious movements of late antiquity, of a non- or anti-Christian nature, which are embraced by the term 'Gnosticism'. I want in this chapter to examine the ways in which this interest is manifested in his work, and to show where it is attended,or underpinned, by a body of mythic reference.

To define Gnosticism is a difficult task, for several reasons. Doctrinally, it was manifold and syncretic. It was practised in scattered communities and little survives it in the way of scripture or documentation. The testament of contemporary Christian authorities and early Churchmen is biased and usually distorted. There is dispute about the relative importance of its Hellenistic, Judaic and Eastern components. The Hermetica (a collection of Greek and Latin religious and philosophic texts) give evidence of a pagan form of Gnosticism, separate from its manifestation as a Christian heresy. There are marked similarities between Gnosticism and certain forms of Persian religious thought, for example Mazdaism and Zoroastrianism (in which Lewis also showed considerable interest).

For the sake of simplicity, I am using principally in the account that follows Robert Haardt's Gnosis: Character and Testimony, which provides a fair, technical introduction to the Gnostic movement. Elsewhere in this chapter, I shall cite contemporary authorities and modern research when necessary for the development of my argument.

Gnosticism is considered to be roughly coeval with Christianity, and to have flourished in similar areas: Samaria, Palestine, Syria, Anatolia, Asia Minor, Egypt, Rome. Its crisis came in the second century AD, when it began to be broken by the Church, whereafter its sects were driven underground. In the third century, however, the

Persian Mani established Gnostic thought upon a cogent and fully developed cosmological basis. His system, Manichaeism, lasted until the sixth century in the West, but well into the second millennium in Eastern Iran and Southern China.

The Supreme Being or true God of Gnosticism is absolutely remote from the world and inhabits the Realm of Light or Pleroma. The Creation is the work of a Demiurge, subordinate to the Godhead, who wrought the world and mankind out of evil, malignity, recklessness or ignorance (the Demiurge is characterized differently according to the Gnostic system in question, and may be incorrigibly wicked and anti-divine, or redeemable). The issue of the Creation is to trap the divine spark of man's spirit-self in matter and exclude him from the Pleroma, in which, as a being of light, he had originally dwelt.

The various Gnostic sects are united by the concept of 'Gnosis' (in Greek, 'knowledge'), which is the means by which man may again know the Realm of Light and how it may be re-attained:

> Gnosis, as distinct from the rational type of knowledge, means knowledge which per se brings healing and salvation. The Gnostic may acquire it by an act of divine revelation, chiefly through the mediation of a Saviour or Messenger. Such Gnosis is knowledge of the benign acosmic Godhead; his emanations (Aeons); the Realm of Light (Pleroma) and simultaneous knowledge of the private, divine spirit-self of man, which has been imprisoned by the world of demons and the creator thereof. (1)

In their structure, all the Gnostic systems repose upon the dualism between (1) 'the acosmic, spiritual Godhead and its Aeons on the one hand, and the Creator of the World (the Demiurge) and his Archons, the Cosmos, matter and the human world on the other'; (2) 'the divine Spirit-Self of man on the one hand, and the Creator of the World, on the other, with his Archons and their Creations (cosmos, matter, Fate, time).' (2)

The concept of soteriology in Gnosticism is divided between those sects which believe all men to be in possession of the divine spark,

and therefore capable of salvation, and those which ascribe this divine particle to only an elect number, the rest of mankind being doomed to annihilation after death.

The conduct of the Gnostic sects took diametrically opposed forms. Some pursued 'extremes of radical asceticism' in diet, habitation and sexual abstinence; others engaged in 'extremes of antinomist libertinism', which took the form of systematic lawlessness and sexual promiscuity. These courses were thought to be of 'equal validity' as means of attaining Gnosis: 'Both attitudes agree in renouncing the Creator of the World, as well as the World itself, together with his Commandments, issued for the purpose of enslaving the light; and both practise the freedom of the Gnostic as being superior to the World.' But the attainment of Gnosis is personal, not communal or congregational: 'Emphasis is laid within Gnostic eschatology on the individual aspect...' (3)

Thus, the common antipathy of the Gnostic systems is towards matter. They believed that evil was created simultaneously with the material world, and their philosophy is one of determinism, over against that of the early Church, which taught that evil was the issue of man's sin, freely chosen. This being the case, the primary focus of Gnosticism is not on admission of sinfulness and the offer of redemption in Christ, but on the possibility of release from the imposed evil of physical incarceration: '...but whereas Gnosis delivers its possessor from this evil world of matter, to Paul the evil consists in sin, from which Christ by His death has set men free....The Gnostics laid more stress than earlier thinkers on the evil of matter, which made it impossible for them to accept a real incarnation of Jesus.' (4) The Gnostics' secret knowledge, 'born out of their own meditations or from the secret teachings which they claim to have had from

Jesus or from mythical ancestors, leads them to see the whole of material creation as the product of a god who is the enemy of man.' (5)

(ii)

A few critics have indicated connections between Lewis and Gnosticism; but deeper investigation, which this chapter will show to be fruitful in the study of Lewis, is notably absent. Thus, Hugh Kenner, C.H. Sisson, and Robert Chapman have characterized Lewis' theory of politics as in essence Manichaean. (6) Philip Head writes: 'Whether the gnostic element in Lewis was as powerful as the romantic, or whether either contributed enduringly as much as Stirner's egotist assault on the bases of authority, is something that deserves closer deliberation.' (7) Martin Seymour-Smith states of Lewis' prose: 'Its complex dialectic is undoubtedly Gnostic in spirit.' (8) Kenner stands on the brink of an interesting revelation, but is held back by erroneous terminology, when he accounts thus for Lewis' vision of aesthetic creation: 'But invention out of nothing is not for men, and a Manichaean bias deep in Lewis's psyche inclined him to doubt if it were even for God. To invent is to play the Demiurge, to shape chaos, a chaos with which one is intimate.' (9) Kenner is mistaken in conceiving the Creation, according to the system of Mani, as reckless or irresponsible. In most other Gnostic systems, the Demiurge is motivated by such qualities: but in Manichaeism, the Creation is, on the contrary, critically purposive: '...the Demiurge of the Manichaean system is a Light Divinity who creates the Cosmos on the instructions of the benign Godhead, for the purpose of delivering the Light swallowed up by darkness.' (10) Beyond that, what, exactly, is a 'Manichaean bias'? I want now to explicate, as far as is possible, the nature of the affinity, or affinities, in Lewis with the religious thought of antiquity.

(iii)

A parallel at once suggests itself with regard to the exclusion to which Gnosticism and Lewis have been subjected by their respective cultures. Gnosticism, suppressed, was driven to the underground transmission of doctrine and secret practice of ritual. Lewis, enduringly heterodox, is represented in most literary histories as a minor novelist, an addendum of Modernism, whose (i.e. Modernism's) standard is carried by Conrad, Joyce, Pound, Lawrence, Woolf, Eliot, etc., with whom he can be compared neither stylistically nor in taste. His stock remains low in most of the universities. The student of his work becomes accustomed to the ignorance or disapproval of literary people. As the early Churchmen reviled the rites of Gnosticism, so the authorities are often impelled to extremes of reaction in their judgement of Lewis - John Wain on the reprint of <u>One Way Song</u>: '...I <u>am</u> repelled by it, as I am by all Lewis's writings... it reads like a lot of hollow noise... like that of a man growling curses as he gropes along in a sewer.' (11) Fredric Jameson describes the continuing resistance of Lewis' work, a subcultural phenomenon, to academic canonization, writes of 'excellent and objective reasons for (his) neglect,' yet asserts that his texts merit 'unapologetic rediscovery'. They are an 'archaic survival' locked in a 'time capsule' in which their 'freshness and virulence' are preserved. (12)

The force of such rediscovery, in Jameson's terms, might be recorded on the same heuristic scale as that of the unearthing of the Gnostic scrolls at Nag Hammadi in 1947, buried in a cliff for close to two millennia. Or at least, there is a sense, in either case, of the sudden revelation of the forbidden, an access of thought that threatens the subversion of the established order of things.

The possibility of such a continuity or network of heretical

opinion, of a subterranean and illicit wisdom that runs beneath the main currents of the intellect and received thought, Alan Munton captures, though within a relatively limited chronology: 'Lewis's prose and thought refer back to what can be called the illegitimate tradition in nineteenth-century European writing: to Fourier, Saint-Simon, Max Stirner, Proudhon, Nietzsche and Dostoevsky. They all understand excess and their writing shows it....Placing him into relation with these illegitimate groupings makes it possible to grasp the transgressive and pleasurable nature of Lewis's work.' (13) Just before this passage, Muntonhas called Jameson 'tense and reserved' in the face of Lewis' exhilarating non-conformism and unrestraint, qualities which, were the 'illegitimate tradition' to be extended backwards, might be compared to the 'extremes of antinomist libertinism' and denial of the Commandments which were an element of Gnostic conduct.

Martin Seymour-Smith takes precisely this longer view when, in an essay already cited, he advances the thesis that Gnosticism actually adumbrates the concerns of Modernism. He thinks that all art that presents an ordered vision of the universe, that settles with conventional notions of what reality is, is either in bad faith or complacent. The test of the validity of the art of any era, he argues, is whether or not it registers phenomenologically the fission by which life is affected on every plane: 'There are four great early witnesses: Rabelais, Montaigne, Cervantes, Shakespeare. However much we may now reject the body-mind split in philosophical terms, we have to admit that it originates in a phenomenological truth: our minds seem, too often, to be split from our bodies. The 'good' seems too often to co-exist with the 'bad'. We even will this to be so. Reality is not that of the conventional English philosophers, who, pitifully, can never agree about what it is; it is what we experience.'(14)

With such irreducible and perplexing divisions, Gnosticism is equipped to deal. It is so because its doctrines are founded on the dualistic vision that Christianity resisted in the approaches of Greek philosophy, Neo-Platonism and Gnosticism itself, and dispensed with by means of the credo that Christ was a real man, as testified by His Passion and Resurrection. Such a refutation of dualism, however, issued in an optimism which, at its most excessively superficial, induced the Church to avoid the question of evil. So Caird writes: 'An optimism established without any difficulty becomes worse than any pessimism: an idealism that has not entered into all the differences and antagonisms of the real is futile. Even Christianity has tended to become an ignoring rather than a healing of the evils of life when it has not been based in the deepest consciousness of those evils.' (15)

For Seymour-Smith, Gnostic pessimism is unceasingly conscious of the 'differences and antagonisms of the real': 'But gnosticism, though persecuted and driven underground, provides a clearer picture (than does Christianity) of the true predicament of man; officially suppressed - it survives ir the teaching of Manes, and then in the persistent Cabbala.... gnosticism, though unrecognized as such, has permeated our lives. Perhaps, untidy and open-ended and fantastic and never organized into a single dogma to be perpetrated upon mankind, it always - at a secret level - did.' (16) And he considers Modernism a sign of this permeation, for Western culture at the end of the last century and beginning of this is certain of nothing but uncertainty. Existence is apparently purposeless, there is no basis for any system of morality, the earth is a wilderness and place of entrapment. Modernism thus discovers itself in recusancy from the 'authorized' view of how things are: the Newtonian universe; photographic realism; mimetic fiction; time as measured by the hands on

the clock. The first stirrings of this refusal are the reversion of interest to diabolism and the occult, with the sensational prospect of authenticity: 'Decadence has no set programme, as the Expressionists tried to have. What is most interesting about it, perhaps, is the way in which - by however crude and even vulgar means - it tried to revive that gnosticism which, though pagan in origin, had represented what might fairly be described as the rebellious 'modernism' of early Christian times....the object behind 'Black Magic' (Seymour-Smith is referring to Huysman's La Bas), however hidden from the frequently stupid people who indulge in it, is to explore the gnostic belief that men are under the rule of the Devil, and that God is infinitely remote, perhaps so much so that he is inaccessible.... The ancient notion, formulated in numerous ways, of the guardian angels (an import from the original Zoroastrianism - not present in its tamed, modern Parsee version) being cheats and tricksters who try to turn back the 'ascending soul', has a startling relevance to modern life, in all its over-sophisticated complexity.' (17) And, as has been noted, Seymour-Smith regards Lewis' prose as 'gnostic in spirit'.

The converse of Seymour-Smith's exaltation of Gnosticism is provided by Kenneth Cox's essay "Dualism And Les Autres", which is the only consideration of any length known to me of the relation of Lewis to Gnosticism. Cox thinks almost the entire Lewisian oeuvre characterized by the 'dualism of a complex mind', and identifies the four fields in which this dualism operates: the sense that the self is divided, which shaped Lewis' presentation of people, from The Wild Body onwards; the dialectic of Lewis' polemics, criticism and theoretical writing; 'the value he attached to politeness. To the extent that they are derived by emanation from the split self, opposed characters of his creation treat each other with punctilio'; Lewis'

snobbery, and the arrogance of his fictional principals, such as Tarr, Kreisler, the Bailiff, Hyperides.

Cox refers to evidence in Lewis' fiction and criticism of the latter's knowledge of the heresiarchs and cosmology of Gnosticism and Persian religious thought, and bases on this the induction of a larger parallel between Gnosticism and the practice of Modernism: 'The whole movement of gnosticism of which dualism is part may however have a bearing here broader than has so far been apparent.' (18) His thesis is that Modernism pursued a sacramental course, whereby its practitioners acquired enlightenment outside the academies and universities (whose orthodoxy is guaranteed by the establishment), through diligent focus of the mind on doctrine handed down in privacy or seclusion. Furthermore, the ability to receive such wisdom reposed on a quantum leap of consciousness, a readjustment of vision or, in fine, an incidence of gnosis: 'The modern or modernist movement in art, which arose in France about the middle of the nineteenth century and is now in its last throes, may be seen as a recrudescence of gnosticism. A succession of serious and talented men, in passive opposition to the established order, dedicate themselves from youth onwards to the attainment of insight and fulfilment, each following at first a teacher. The teaching, esoteric and obscure, demands not only devoted application to study and practice but some initial experience of a kind making the apparently difficult easy to accept: great sacrifices are made, some lives are lost. There are two main grades: the stage or group of passive receptivity - readers, spectators and listeners (auditores) and the elite of practising artists (electi). The latter are further divided, according to the degree of gnosis attained, into followers, critics, innovators and masters.' (19)

The BLAST manifestoes, it could be argued here, are a codex of

such teaching. Lewis' rubric is THE EXPLOITATION OF VULGARITY:

> Today the Artist's attention would be drawn...to anything particularly hideous or banal, as a thing not to be missed.
>
> Stupidity has always been exquisite and ugliness fine.
>
> But the condition of our enjoyment of vulgarity, discord, cheapness or noise is an unimpaired and keen disgust with it.
>
> A man could make just as fine an art in discords, and with nothing but "ugly" trivial and terrible materials, as any classic artist did with only "beautiful" and pleasant means. (20)

This defies exuberantly Keats' axiom that the commutability of truth and beauty 'is all/ Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know', and beyond that, Plato's strictures about the 'ugly fiction' and 'foul stories' that will have no place in his ideal State (unless told to a 'select few under oath of secrecy'), where 'Evil is to be kept out of sight, and, so far as may be, treated as an impossibility,' and 'Poetry is to tell its "noble untruth".' (21) It is an insight passed on to Lewis from Flaubert, whom he acknowledges as 'almost in a class by himself - perhaps the first member of a new class. For him human life in its entirety is composed of folly and crime in one degree and another.' (22) While the BLAST theorems are resumed by Yeats, almost a quarter of a century later, in "The Circus Animals' Desertion":

> Those masterful images because complete
> Grew in pure mind but out of what began?
> A mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street,
> Old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can... (23)

Art which relishes or transmutes stupidity, discord, terrible materials or refuse Cox doubtless has in mind, when he writes: 'The doctrine of modernism, that an artist can as well make work out of what he abhors as of what he prizes, and not merely in the way of satire or for the pleasure of excretion, but organizing them in patterns to take stress or complicating the play between them for pure

devilment, this is 'secret' doctrine. It does not commend itself to the masses, which say they like plain speaking, and it cannot be translated into action, which may be good or evil or neither, but cannot be both. Study of the one movement may deepen our understanding of the other. We know more about modern art and so have more to learn about gnosticism. Had this too a scandalous history?' (24)

Yes, insofar as its conduct was based in antinomianism and secret ritual; and it is over this that Seymour-Smith and Cox are diametrically opposed. For the former, the strength of Gnosticism seems to lie in its denial of moral law and gospels which could neither accommodate the conception of the positive presence of evil, nor man's bewilderment over the disjunction of mind and body; for Cox, this denial of obligation to any canon (and one should recall here Haardt's comment that 'emphasis is laid within Gnostic eschatology on the individual aspect'), which issues in a creed of personal revelation, of the sufficiency of knowledge alone, is the source of Gnosticism's decadence: 'One thing about gnosticism we do know better, we know more about its end. The weakness of a movement devoted to a search for knowledge, as of some associated Buddhist systems, is that it does not provide for the salvation of mankind. Various assertions are made: that, nothing being so important as fulfilment, the deprivation of the masses does not matter and may be ignored; that the fulfilment of one personality helps others to attain fulfilment or at least consoles them in the meantime; that those who attain enlightenment are able to advise or instruct the others. But these are spurious answers, not truths drawn from the heart of man or the nature of things but webs spun by ingenious reason to cover a hole.' (25)

What Cox writes here has consequences of the first magnitude for

his conclusions about Modernism. His criticism of Gnosticism on the grounds of selfishness is, in point of fact, reductive. Its gravamen is placed too squarely on the notion of individual revelation and salvation, which is to confuse the conduct of the Gnostic with the teleology of Gnosticism. The latter envisages ultimately as general a salvation as the terms of a particular Gnostic system allow, in the form of an apocatastasis of the divine spirit-selves of men to the realm of the Supreme Being. In Haardt's words: '... attainment of personal salvation of course is inseparable from the hope of a return of Light to the Pleroma, which shall be as all-encompassing as possible.' (26) The justness of Cox's criticism consists in the fact, mentioned in the preliminary section of this chapter, that the divine light-spark was attributed by some Gnostic systems to an elect only, the rest of men being barred from salvation; but it is only such systems that are careless of the 'salvation of mankind'. Furthermore, can it be stated with certainty that it was its secession from the world, its lack of engagement, that brought about the decline of Gnosticism (assuming, that is, that it ever did come to an end, for Seymour-Smith suggested its continuance to the present)? It could be proposed with as much reason that Gnosticism was destroyed through persecution, as by any innate flaw.

This proposal is not considered, however, since Cox wants to parallel the error of Gnosticism and the error of Modernism: 'In the same way the chief weakness of modernism has been its lack of social and political theory. This is not an unfortunate omission due to the men or the times but a necessary consequence of the artist's concentration on his art: unconcern for les autres. Theories of 'order' or of 'revolution' were entertained if compatible and adopted if conceivable extensions of his work, but his attention

was elsewhere. Hard as it is to take, both the structure of ideas and the history of individuals show an undeniable line linking Mallarmé's Tuesdays rue de Rome with Belsen and Auschwitz.' (27)

To recapitulate, Cox bases his moral criticism of Modernism on the 'recrudescence' therein of the Gnostic error which he formulates 'unconcern for les autres', a catastrophic lack of sympathy which has a causal relation to the ethos of Nazism, and which was, temporarily, apparent in Lewis' work: 'We harm ourselves if we ignore what is fascist in Lewis though he grew away from it: Cantleman's Spring Mate (1917) is far more fascist than The Revenge for Love (1937).' (28)

My first objection to Cox's criticism is that in representing Lewis as lacking 'social and political theory', he neglects the existence of The Art of Being Ruled, a work of profound, though elusive, engagement, and one in which the weight of analysis falls on Socialist, not Fascist, thought. (29) Nor, regardless of Lewis' confidence that dictatorships, Leninist or Fascist, would not practise physical coercion (30) (which confidence later events showed to be stupid), can The Art of Being Ruled be viewed as displaying 'unconcern for les autres'. Its pessimism, as was briefly noted in section (ii), has, according to Sisson, Kenner and Chapman, a Manichaean cast (and I shall show, in section (iv), how Lewis employs directly as a criterion matter from Iranian religious thought), but this pessimism does not tend towards indifference to the lot of men in general. A comment such as the following confirms this:

> The European poor become poorer every day: whatever the reason may be for this, you cannot, unless you are a heartless fool, do nothing. And there is an immense instrument to your hand (in socialism), especially organized for the correcting of this terrible situation... today you are compelled to be a socialist, at all events in anglo-saxon countries. In Italy fascismo provides you with a creditable alternative. (31)

The aim of The Art of Being Ruled is to reveal to the representative of the masses, the 'small man', how he is deceived and exploited by the obscure management of power in modern democracy; and to give notice of the disdain, even hatred, which those at the head of the democratic system - politicians and newspaper owners, for example - harbour towards their 'millions of "little charges"', whom they bewilder with assurances of the freedoms (increasingly silly or vacuous) which they enjoy, thereby consolidating their own power. (32) And it is with these duped millions that Lewis allies himself, as a fellow 'Inmate of the Power House':

> Now I am not one of the staff, I have never had anything to do with Management, have no taste for bossing. I have almost ostentatiously been a governee. I have had an active preference for the governed in contrast to the governing. (33)

This acknowledgement of shared interest, together with the didactic provision which closes The Art of Being Ruled, (from Parmenides): '"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"', I would employ in refutation of Cox's charge of "unconcern" and of the artist's 'attention being elsewhere'.

My second objection is to Cox's impression (unsupported by quotation) that 'Cantleman's Spring Mate' is 'fascist'. The theme of the story is Cantleman's antagonism to Nature, which arises from his reflections on the courtship of animals:

> The only jarring note in this vast mutual admiration society was the fact that many of its members showed their fondness for their neighbour in an embarrassing way: that is they killed and ate them. But the weaker were so used to dying violent deaths and being eaten that they worried very little about it. (34)

Cantleman's irony is a means of detaching himself from this spectacle of what Lewis called elsewhere 'the darwinian nightmare of the

struggle for existence' - sex may be a symbolic, or, in some insect and parasitic species, literal annihilation:

> 'I could <u>eat</u> you!' one lover says to another at the paroxysm of their lubricity. And indeed, if one were considerably smaller than the other, as in the case of the male of the epira, that no doubt would happen very often. (35)

Jacques Lacarrière, in his lyrical account of the Gnostics, supplements their rudimentary vision with biological horrors that have more recently come to light, in order to show their possession of a knowledge that anticipates Darwin, Lewis and Cantleman: 'What Darwinians were later to call natural selection and the survival of the fittest had already been observed by Gnostics and was in their eyes a flagrant proof of the fundamental depravity of the universe...For, in the last analysis, if this world were the work of a good and just God - and not that of an incompetent and profoundly malevolent demiurge - one would have to impute to that God the most infamous thoughts and imaginings, the most ruthless acts of repression...What warped mind could have invented the procreative act of the praying mantis, in which the female decapitates and then devours the male? What immeasurably sadistic being could have thought up the paralysing sting of the ammophilous wasp, which it sticks into the flesh of caterpillars, that they may be devoured alive by the larvae of the winged insect?' (36)

Perceiving the savagery of Nature, Cantleman makes it his project to outwit it, by matching its indifference - when he is copulating and, later, killing a German. Robert Chapman has shown that Cantleman fails in this project because he himself descends into the natural cycle of sex, birth and death - 'To be in life is to be tainted by life' - and that Lewis uses this failure to deflate the Nietzschean concept of the Superman (an <u>anti-Nazi</u> procedure, surely?) (37)

The moral of the story, however, is not that abstraction of the self from Nature is impossible, but that Cantleman chose the wrong alternative: action, over against an ascetic withdrawal from life earlier contemplated.

This does not invalidate Cantleman's philosophising:

> The miraculous camouflage of Nature did not deceive this observer. He saw everywhere the gun-pits and the 'nests of death'. Each puff of green leaves he knew was in some way as harmful as the burst of a shell. Decay and ruins, it is true, were soon covered up, but there was yet that parallel, and the sight of things smashed and corrupted. In the factory town ten miles away to the right, whose smoke could be seen, life was just as dangerous for the poor, and as uncomfortable, as for the soldier in his trench. The hypocrisy of Nature and the hypocrisy of War were the same. (38)

The pessimism of this insight could also be considered to have a Gnostic cast: Nature is substituted for the Demiurge as an actively evil creative force, operating behind a mask, here, of fair-seeming rural beauty. Its profusion conceals the decay which is the consequence of the processes it initiates, hence its 'hypocrisy'. It creates in order to destroy, or at the expense of forms of life already existing. Man, Nature's mimic, desires only respites from savagery and disorder. The 'factory town' (where a few men prosper at the expense of the poor, for whom, evidently, Cantleman's feeling is not of 'unconcern') provides the machinery of war, which, on the Western Front, is already obliterating such towns, the human species recoiling upon itself.

Nature - in Blast, a 'sterile Tyrant' (39) - as viewed by Lewis through the persona of Cantleman, is neither vital nor indifferent; or rather, to characterize Nature as indifferent is merely to use the sentiment of science in a vain attempt to neutralize a force of cosmic malevolence. What is demanded by this story, therefore, is the alienation of man from the organic; Lewis sets about instituting

a programmatic distrust of Nature, which Jameson has called an 'anticipation of the poststructuralist assault on the Romantic valorization of organic form'. (40)

Interpreted thus, "Cantleman's Spring Mate" - to resume the objection with which I opened this particular discussion - is antithetical to the philosophy of National Socialism. This abused Darwin to give licence to brutality, Nietzsche to legitimize conquest, apotheosized Nature over the moral traditions of two millennia, and embraced the 'Romantic dream of the one-ness of all things'. Thus, J.P. Stern: '...even today we are not clear enough to what extent the language, the thinking and the practice of fascist movements generally and of National Socialism in particular were determined by the 'Nature' vocabulary that has its roots in early nineteenth-century Romanticism . . .the Romantic exaltation of the natural being of man and of his Nature-given condition is the intellectual background against which, in the circumstances of lawlessness and anomie prevailing in the 'twenties and early 'thirties, a social <u>praxis</u> arises in which men are judged, condemned and eventually done to death, not for what they have done but simply for what they are.' (41)

The argument against Cox, presented above, constitutes a digression from the purpose stated at the outset of this section, namely, to discover, if possible, the nature of the affinity or affinities between Lewis and Gnosticism. It was necessary to conduct this argument, however, in order to deal with Cox's thesis that the parallel between Lewis and Gnosticism is a 'scandalous' or catastrophic one; and it has yielded as a valuable by-product an affinity in the attitude to Nature. Yet it is clear that the original purpose has not, so far, been satisfactorily advanced: Munton posited an 'Illegitimate Tradition', which was adapted to suggest the possibility

of an unbroken, subterranean current of thought; Seymour-Smith, that Gnosticism has 'permeated our lives', and 'always - at a secret level - did'; Cox, a 'recrudescence' of Gnosticism in Modernism. But the question remains to be asked in each case - what principle, or principles, control the continuance or re-appearance of Gnostic sentiment? That is to say, what is the condition of, or how may one qualify, the attraction of Lewis to Gnosticism - an attraction that is sometimes manifest, sometimes latent, in his theory and fiction?

The way to deal with this difficult question, I think, is to examine the efforts of researchers to discover the 'origin and essence' of Gnosticism. What I mean by this is that either the causes of Gnosticism may be identified with the causes of its re-appearance, or the conditions which sustained it in antiquity may be regarded as obtaining still.

Haardt writes that when such research is conducted according to the methods of religious history, that is, by the comparative study of Gnostic themes with their representations in antecedent religious systems (Iranian, Oriental, Judaic, etc.), an aporia is inevitably announced (related, typically, to 'lost' texts) when the phenomenon in question is found to have no definite prototype. This has led researchers to resort to models for the origination of Gnosticism outside the 'thematic historical method'. That is, concepts or structures of thought are posited which allow Gnosticism to be explained in terms of itself, and not as a derivative system. (42)

One such model is the 'existential-ontological analysis' of Gnosticism. This was conceived by Hans Jonas, who, according to Haardt, derived it from the 'problem horizon of Heidegger's philosophy, which suggested the idea of relating two phenomena belonging to different periods in spiritual history.' (43) The essence of this

model is an 'attitude to existence' which originates in a 'fundamental experience' that comes to men individually. It expresses itself, typically, in the myth of a 'Primordial Man-Redeemer', whose function is redemptive, and who, come to earth, reminds man of his original state of being, in The Realm of Light. (44) Haardt's survey here can usefully be supplemented by Christopher Nugent's account of Jonas' model: 'Hans Jonas...has brought out the analogies between the old Gnosticism and the new....They can be reduced to four. The first is the alienation between man and the world, the indifference of nature - what Jonas calls "gnostic acosmism". The second is in the alienation of God and man, applied to what Jonas calls the deus absconditus - more the absent than the hidden God....This implies a logical continuum of sorts between ancient Gnostic belief and contemporary unbelief, the "death of God" and the death of man. The third theme is in dread, which Jonas sees as a "recurrent theme" in Gnostic literature. A fourth and final is in Nihilism, that is, "gnostic antinomianism". The similarities between the old and the new derive from their being common responses to culturally contemporaneous periods of history.' (45) Nugent's last sentence meets the requirement of identifying the cause of Gnosticism with that of its re-appearance (though 'contemporaneous' is the wrong word, and should be replaced with, for example, 'similar' or 'comparable').

With the existential-ontological model described above, there are correspondences in The Enemy of the Stars, the theory of satire contained in Men Without Art, and The Apes of God, as I shall show in, respectively, sections (iv), (v) and (viii) The 'fundamental experience' in which this model is based may be seen to correspond with the ontological shock inflicted upon Lewis by the First World War (which he also held responsible for the death of his mother).

This, Bernard Lafourcade argued, issued in Lewis' 'exaltation of the absurd' in the essay "The Meaning of the Wild Body", which fulfilled his search for a 'philosophy to replace the superficial vitalism of "Our Wild Body"' (1910), and anticipated to a notable degree the details of French existentialism: 'Lewis seems to have been the first to use this word (i.e. 'absurd') systematically as a formal critical concept. The Lewisian "alternative" - this intuition of post-modernism - is closely associated with this exaltation of the absurd, which in many ways prefigured not only existentialism... but the formalist distortions of The Theatre of the Absurd..! (46)

The second model for the origin of Gnosticism is expressed in terms of sociological analysis. Haardt's authority here is G. Quispel: '"Astonished and fascinated, man confronted the depths within him. His place in the universe eluded him, and was lost: the cosmos became less and less divine and more and more demoniac. The polis and the Empire were no longer organic associations: the state became a planned bureaucracy, which took no account of the individual: and large cities made men unbearably lonely. There remained only flight into eroticism, and into the self. The culture in other words was dying, and doomed to extinction because it was no longer exocentric."' (47) Thus, faced by the spectre of centralization, man began to feel his individuality dwarfed, and to fear the abstraction of whatever concrete notion of self he possessed. A critical phase in this process, it might be speculated, was the development in Rome under Augustus, around the last decade B.C. and the first decades A.D. (supposedly the period of the birth of Gnosticism), of a civil service, symbol, to those in the provinces, of lost autonomy and dependence on a remote authority.

If we resume Nugent's/Jonas' argument that the new Gnosticism

has re-appeared in response to cultural pressures analogous to those which brought about the original form, we can adduce here a sociological premise for Lewis' attraction to Gnosticism. That is to say, the threat of imperial centralization is felt again, this time in the form of state-socialism, the realization of Marxian Communism. To continue the parallel, Lewis' approval of Proudhon's system, which is based on the establishing of small sovereign states, corresponds to the longing, in late antiquity, for the self-governing city states (poleis) of ancient Greece, whose decline (in Quispel's account) was one of the crises in human organization that created the conditions for Gnosticism. From The Art of Being Ruled:

> Proudhon is one of the two great socialists of the last century, Marx being the other. And it could be said that he stands, philosophically, for the small man - the hero of Part II of the present essay: whereas Marx stands for the great urban state machine, and is against the small man....
>
> (Proudhon's) idea for the working of federalism in France was that the country should be cut up into thirty-six small sovereign states....He was still ardently against any form of centralization. It was indeed really in order to avoid the danger of centralization that he was inspired to create his federalist theory. That is still his greatest bugbear. Had he lived to be a thousand he would probably only have gone on inventing escapes for humanity from this monstrous political dragon, this withering abstraction. (48)

Something of Lewis' horror at the prospect of centralized control is conveyed in the last sentence, which mythicizes the object of dread (a 'dragon'), and by the notion of Proudhon's heroic, millennial task ('Had he lived to be a thousand,' etc.).

At the core of this apprehension is the sense that Marxian Communism will invade all spheres which previously have benefited from individual activity, eventually creating a climate - and assisted in this by science and philosophy, operating as tools of the state - in which mind, as much as property, is arrogated by centralizing and communizing forces:

> We live a conscious and magnificent life of the 'mind' at the expense of this community.... But in sympathy with the political movements of today, the tendency of scientific (in which is included philosophic) thought is to hand back to this vast community of cells this stolen, aristocratical monopoly of personality which we call the 'mind'. 'Consciousness', it is said, is (contrary to what an egotistic mental aristocraticism tells us) not at all necessary. (49)

It is from the prospect of such a condition, it might be argued here, that Lewis is repelled into a Gnostic position. If the acquiring of gnosis was a matter for the individual, so is the Lewisian equivalent - the satisfactions emanating from the free life of the mind.

The third model for the origin of Gnosticism which circumvents the aporia in proving derivation from earlier religious systems is the psychological one, described thus by Haardt: '(It) neither ignores nor denies the production and potentiality of historical affiliations, but does go beyond them insofar as it proceeds to indicate thematic religious concepts, between which there is no historical link. It bases the existence of similarity or identity of themes on recourse to a general 'spiritual' structure in mankind, whatever form this may take. In recent years the psychology of C. G. Jung has achieved widespread recognition in connection with an understanding of Gnosis...the essential factor in the origin of Gnosis (is regarded) as being "the mythical projection of the experience of the self."' (50)

By comparing this theory of the origin of Gnosticism with Jung's theory of the source of visionary literature, we can, in fact, propose the existence of a Gnostic modality among Lewis' creative faculties.

There is an intimation in Jung's essay "Psychology and Literature" that the eternal patterns of the unconscious mind which are

revealed in gnosis - and subsequently framed in appalling and sublime creation myths and cosmogonies - are similar to the obscure psychic manifestations to which the visionary artist is prone. The 'mythical projection of the experience of the self' which is the origin of Gnosticism, in the model in question, can be equated with that 'primordial experience' which, according to Jung, engenders visionary art: '(in) the visionary modesof artistic creation... the experience that furnishes the material for artistic expression is no longer familiar....It is a strange something that derives its existence from the hinterland of man's mind - that suggests the abyss of time separating us from pre-human ages, or evokes a super-human world of contrasting light and darkness. It is a primordial experience...' (51)

From The Caliph's Design:

> The artist goes back to the fish. The few centuries that separate him from the savage are a mere flea-bite to the distance his memory must stretch if it is to strike the fundamental slime of creation. And those are the conditions - the very first gusto of creation in this scale of life in which we are set - that he must reach, before he, in his turn, can create! (52)

For Lewis, the act of psychic reversion described by Jung is imperative. Aesthetic creation can only occur on a new or authentic level when it partakes of the proto-evolutionary energies that attended the genesis of life itself. That is to say, the artistic imagination must undergo the Jungian 'primordial experience', arrived at by a powerful faculty of retrospective intuition, if its product is to be anything more than mere imitation, however elaborate, of the forms of life.

That the 'primordial experience' is close to, or synonymous with, the 'mythical projection of the experience of the self' is strongly suggested by the lines from The Caliph's Design. To

stretch the memory back to a time before time itself began to be recorded as history is a means both of recovering creative energy and of forgetting - of forgetting, that is, the prosaic (the notation of history and the daylight world). In effect, the artist reverts to a point where there is nothing to remember, where he must resort to fabulizing whatever the psyche yields up. This becomes his only material, as it was for ancient man, who mythicized his own history therefrom.

The psychic data upon which the 'primordial experience' draws are, according to Jung, archetypes or patterns of such antiquity and obscurity that, emerging in visionary art, they have all the force of the most formidable novelty: '(This experience) arises from timeless depths; it is foreign and cold, many-sided, demonic, and grotesque.' (53)

What Lewis evokes has been characterized in similar terms. Thus, L.P. Hartley of The Apes of God: '(Lewis) creates a world which has the same relation to our own as a landscape in the moon might have for a terrestrial landscape. It is terrifying and impressive and alien.' (54) And the following portrait of the Bailiff exemplifies the attributes of the Jungian 'primordial experience':

> Uncle Punch amongst his jolly children! - the solemn mask is off, the satiric on. He is all grinning vulpine teeth, puckered eyes, formidable declination of the ant-eating nose, rubicund cheeks, eyes of phosphor. The goatee waggles on the glazed bulbous chin; it is the diabolics of the most ancient mask in the world exulting in its appropriate setting. (55)

This hybrid fiend is composed of features which pre-exist any remembered source. The association of Satan with the goat is biblical, but earlier on, the followers of Dionysus (who are here alluded to by 'satiric') - the god of frenzy - took half their form from the goat. (Later on, the Bailiff masquerades as Bacchus/Dionysus, and

at one point, his assailant, Macrob, is torn apart by the Bailiff's votaries - the fate of those who fell foul of Dionysus's priestesses, the Maenads.) Nevertheless, the demonic associations of the goat are probably even pre-Dionysian, since the goat-mask goes back to the Bronze Age. (56) Other animal forms are present in the figure, however, which conjure up an older demon still. This is Setek (Set), the embodiment of evil, and unique in the animal pantheon of Ancient Egypt in that he resembles no known animal, but is himself a hybrid. Depicted with an elongated snout, cocked ears, a greyhound's body and erect tail, he re-appears partially here in the Bailiff's mouth of a fox and 'formidable' proboscis.

The retrieval of such archetypes, the oldest figurations of the imagination, Jung clearly regards as a form of gnosis. It is a knowledge of origins which the visionary artist shares with other seekers after wisdom, and which experiences as real those mysteries against which civilization erects structures of faith or reason: 'It is not alonethe creator of this kind of art who is in touch with the nightside of life, but the seers, prophets, leaders, and enlighteners also....However dark this nocturnal world may be, it is not wholly unfamiliar....It is only we who have repudiated it because of our fear of superstition and metaphysics, and because we strive to construct a conscious world that is safe and manageable....Yet, even in our midst, the poet now and then catches sight of the figures that people the night-world - the spirits, demons and gods.... he has a presentiment of incomprehensible happenings in the pleroma. In short, he sees something of that psychic world that strikes terror into the savage and the barbarian.' (57)

On the strength of the three models presented above, it could be suggested that Lewis' Gnosticism is in part ectogenic, and in

part inherent. To the latter should be added Cox's premise, namely, that to be very decisively a dualist is to approach a Gnostic position. It should also be acknowledged that Gnosticism is apt to be congenial to a pessimist of Lewis' cast.

Having offered these considerations - all of which will be resumed where necessary in later sections - I think that an observation must be made. To refer to 'Lewis' Gnosticism' is to imply that he merely acquired or inherited a certain habit of mind, as if involuntarily. Such an implication, unnecessarily reductive in our case, is the effect of citing analyses such as that of Jonas, which expresses itself in terms of 'neo-Gnosticism' and the 'new Gnosticism'. There is, however, no aporia involved in showing that Lewis had read up on Gnosticism and related religious systems. What, therefore, is apparently at issue is whether Lewis researched religious history, having recognized in himself a certain propensity, or whether his reading reinforced in him a propensity of which he was less certainly aware.

This, however, is to reduce to a too simple circularity the complex relation of psycho-spiritual affinity to the conscious selection of historical information. What I propose to do, therefore, in the following sections is both to demonstrate direct reference to Gnosticism, Persian dualism, and so on, and to elicit as much as possible from implicit, or less conscious, indications of the presence of Gnostic themes and concepts, and related patterns of myth.

(iv)

In Lewis' diagnosis of the current decadence of Western culture, Gnostic and ancient Persian thought provide criteria which are exalted over the general slippage of the European mind from logical or exact methods of thinking.

Concomitant with Lewis' aesthetic preference for classical, hard and clear definition, over against blurring, impressionism and exoticism, (58) is his estimation of the intellectual clarity which can be sustained by a firmly demarcated dualistic arrangement of principles. Only within such a structure of thought can exist the 'permanent values and metaphysical truths' which are Lewis' concern, and which are threatened by the 'religion of impermanence' imposed on society in the present day. The murky processes of excitation by which the European mind is currently affected, the sensationalist philosophies which confuse useful change with malignant change, or change for change's sake, would be prohibited from flourishing, were the distinction of what is good, what bad, to recover its ancient dualistic prominence. Against the intellectual tendency, inculcated by modern science and philosophy, to view any manifestation of progress as a good thing, no matter how violent its conduct, Lewis invokes the principal spirits of late Zoroastrianism, Mazdean dualism and Manichaeism:

> The virtues that we are apt to confuse in our excessive officially promoted pragmatism are the disruptive and the creative ones: or rather, katabolism comes too much to be described as life....
>
> In our society two virtues are baldly contrasted, that of the fighter and killer (given such immense prestige by nineteenth-century darwinian science and philosophy) and that of the civilizer and maker. But the ancient and valuable iranian principle of duality is threatened. We confuse these two characters that we violently contrast. The effort in this essay is to separate them a

> little. It is hoped that certain things that have flown a grey and neutral flag will be forced to declare themselves as Ozman or Ahriman, the dark or the light. (59)

The Lord Ormuzd/Ormazd (not 'Ozman'), who incarnated truth, righteousness and order, and Ahriman, who incarnated the lie, unrighteousness and disorder, stood, in the systems cited, opposed in the eternal and irreducible opposition of good and evil. (60) In the face of this eternal and constant dualism, revolutionary amelioration of man's condition is scarcely feasible, since the quantity of evil cannot be diminished; and, furthermore, because the evidence suggests that revolutionary activity (social, political or scientific), conducted for its own sake, performs Ahriman's work by creating a society in which prevails a cult of disorder, an expectation of chaos: '..a very complete and profound inundation is at hand. After us comes the Deluge.' (61)

Having stated (in these opening pages) as one of his premises a pessimistic metaphysical conservatism, it is difficult for Lewis to make any progress on the positive, as opposed to the analytic, side. Consequently, towards the end of The Art of Being Ruled, there comes the admission: 'No logical future has taken pictorial shape in these pages.' Following this, there is a clear re-statement of the Manichaean theme, a return to premises: prevailing over the quotidian wickedness of man, on the one hand, and his inconsiderable attempts at ethical conduct, on the other, is the metaphysical opposition of evil and good - the former preponderating, since earth lies within the realm of Darkness, by which the principle of Light is constantly assailed:

> But in spite of all the evidences of deliberate maleficence in the modern world, when you have reckoned all that is deliberate, there still remains a great amount of automatic evil. In spite, similarly, of the small evidence

> of effort to produce any good, automatically a surplus of good comes into the world every year. For all the organization designed to convert it into evil with great despatch, there is still left over a respectable amount, which has either escaped attention or been found intractable to present methods. (62)

It might be inferred from the discussion presented above that what draws Lewis intellectually to the ancient dualisms is the fact that they are unequivocal about where man stands, namely, in the midst of evil, with good unattainable on earth. (There is a degree of resemblance between this and what attracted Lewis to the Leninist and Fascist dictatorships, namely, their 'frank' acknowledgment of the fact that 'All rule is evil'. (63)) The corollary of this is a radical diagnosis of the metaphysical flaw in Western culture, which has been confounded by equivocation since the Advent.

Lewis' authority in this is Marcion, author of the Antithesis, and the only Gnostic, apart from Mani, to establish a church, the theoretical foundation of which consisted in rejection of the Old Testament. Lacarrière provides the following account of his system: '...it is impossible that Jesus, who is the Son of God, should be the son of Jehovah the exterminator, or that the latter could be the Father whom Jesus claims...Jehovah is not the true God. The latter is the Unknown God, a stranger to this world, the true Father whose son is Jesus Christ.... The implication of Marcion's ideas is thus seen to be simple but revolutionary: the Bible is not and could not be a work of revelation, nor a Holy Scripture. The opposition between the Old Testament and the New is total and it is expressed at all levels....what the Bible describes is not the immense and grandiose work of God, but the stultifying creation of Evil.' (64)

Invoking Marcion, Lewis claims that because Western culture has been diverted by the character of the New Testament from a logically

consistent pessimism - all is for the worst in an evil world: Jehovah is, in fact, the Demiurge - yet has been compelled to accept both books of the Bible, it has developed a split personality. The necessity of accommodating the antinomies of cruelty and mercy associated with, respectively, the Old and New Testaments unbalances the European psyche, causing it to project both a ferocious and a pacific self:

> The student of the early christian age will recall that the great heretic Marcion found it impossible to reconcile the god of Justice with the god of Mercy: his gentle master, Christ, he found represented such an opposite doctrine to that of the supreme member of the Trinity, that he was compelled to repudiate the latter, or at least to distinguish radically between them, a very difficult and ticklish operation, but, for him, essential.
> The sacred books inherited by the christian European were in two contradictory parts. One was a very 'realistic' account of things indeed - as barbarous and 'pessimistic' as Darwinian theory - namely, the Old Testament. The other part was the exact opposite: it was an extremely 'idealistic' book of humane injunctions, full of counsels of perfection - namely, the New Testament: the existence of this mad contradiction at the heart of his intellectual life has probably been the undoing of the European. The habits induced by the pious necessity of assimilating two such opposed things, the irrational gymnastic of this peculiar feat, installed a squint, as it were, in his central vision of the universe. (65)

One of Marcion's enormities (as reported by the Churchman Irenaeus) (66) was the 'pruning' and 'abridging' of the New Testament, notably the contributions of the Apostles Luke and Paul, in order to adapt it to his own system. We find also that Lewis conducts a revision of New Testament theology, in order to accommodate it to his own pessimism.

This comes about in Lewis' approving, though strangely sarcastic, resumption of T.E. Hulme's 'discovery' of the Pauline doctrine of Original Sin (that is, the disobedience of Adam, through inheriting which, all men are fallible). Lewis considers 'the importance of

Original Sin, as a doctrine,... is that it puts man in his place,' and thereby provides a useful rebuttal of the Utopianism and exaltation of the human that Lewis finds in, for example, H.G.Wells. What emerges, however, is that Lewis wants to remove Original Sin from its theological, or Scholastic, context, and to propose instead what could be considered a Gnostic redaction of the doctrine:

> Rousseau...taught that Man was essentially good. Mr Wells, Mr Shaw, and most people in fact in England, believe that.
> Christian theology teaches the opposite. For it, Man is essentially bad. But, in theology, there is a reason for Man being bad. He is bad because he 'fell'. The doctrine of Original Sin is the doctrine, of course, of 'the Fall'.
> You may believe that Man is bad without being a theologian. And then of course you mean something different by the term 'bad'. (67)

Robert Chapman has called this a notion of a 'secular Original Sin' (68) which, terminologically, is a contradiction (since temporal misconduct is not sin) and, moreover, fails to grasp, I think, Lewis' particular apprehension of man's 'badness'.

This can be illuminated by comparison with the Gnostics' conception of the inherent badness of man, which accepted Original Sin, but as a curse or imposition, and not in terms of inherited depravity. For them, the validation of the doctrine rested upon material evidence, rather than moral or spiritual assumptions about the transmission of fallibility: '...our world...is the domain of evil. This term is to be understood not in the moral but in the biological sense....In this unending circle, the simple fact of living, of breathing, feeding, sleeping and waking implies the existence and the growth of evil....But (the) inherent vice, which the Hebrews and Christians saw as the stamp of original sin, and therefore wholly the responsibility of man, appeared to the Gnostics, on the contrary, as a statute imposed on man.... the one who is truly responsible is the sadistic and perverse demiurge who dared to dream up such a cruel world in all its minute detail.' (69)

A similar pessimism, based in a conception of the 'biological' horror of human existence, its confinement in its own materiality, is conveyed by the following passages from, respectively, The Art of Being Ruled and The Apes of God:

> Prostration is our natural position. A worm-like movement from a spot of sunlight to a spot of shade, and back, is the type of movement that is natural to men. As active, erect, and humane creatures they are in a constantly false position, and behaving in an abnormal way. (70)
>
> They (i.e. the Keins) were blottis in a furnished paralleloped with all required by the human worm for its needs. (71)

More specifically, these passages echo the teaching of the Gnostic Saturninus: man was created prostrate, owing to a failure of energy, at a critical stage, on the part of the demonic angels; the subsequent intervention of the True God rendered him 'active, erect, and humane'. In Irenaeus' account: 'When this creature had been formed, and was unable to rise up owing to the Angels' lack of strength, but crawled around like a worm, the Power Above took pity on him - it had, after all, been created in his likeness - and emitted a spark of life, which raised man erect, provided him with limbs and made him alive.' (72)

Lewis' account of "'Hulme of Original Sin'" concludes with an allusion to Gnostic soteriology: '(The proponent of Original Sin) is denying that the average man, left to himself, has a divine spark, which will eventually enable him to become a god...' (73) Such a sentiment recalls the teaching of Valentinus, who expounded a system of selective salvation, and identified three classes of men: pneumatics (who possessed the divine spark, and would re-ascend to the Pleroma); psychics (capable of comparative salvation); and hylics (material men, or, in Lewis' phrase, 'the average man', who were condemned to perish at the conclusion of earthly life). (74)

Since Lewis' pessimism derives from the recognition of biological exigencies, it cannot, ultimately, be moderated by practical prescription of a better way of life. Nature, in the form of 'our enormous physical and intellectual handicaps...those drastic limitations - of gestation, metabolism, hunger and thirst, courtship, reproduction, and all the rest of it,'(75) is not susceptible to ethical improvement (asceticism being a form of protest, or a means to an end, rather than an end in itself). Consequently, he attempts to educe from the ancient dualisms a 'non-ethical basis for the definition of goodness' (76). This he discovers, in the essay "Physics of the Not-Self", in the Socratic conception of the 'highest philosophical goodness' (philosophike arete), and distinguishes it from 'popular' or 'ethical' goodness. Such 'philosophical goodness' is a form of transcendent, as opposed to practical, wisdom, and, once attained, abstracts one from the demands of the body, giving 'freedom from the obscenities of existence'. (77)

In this can be observed the nature of the Greek contribution to Gnosticism, since the concept of philosophike arete plainly anticipates that of gnosis. It is clear, furthermore, that Lewis was aware of this relation, since he points to Manichaeism's comparable exaltation of spiritual enlightenment over ethical goodness, as the means to release from the chain of being:

> The fusion of the idea of goodness with that of knowledge we see in the teaching of Mani, for that matter; with his Persian ontology, the principles of Dark and Light, he taught that as the mind of a person contains increasingly more light, so it contains correspondingly more goodness. Socrates held that it was impossible for a man to understand and to be evil. (78)

Finally, I want to mention two more explicit references to Gnosticism, these occurring in Lewis' aesthetic, as opposed to philosophic, criticism. The first is in The Lion and the Fox, and comes

about when Lewis is describing how the Renaissance recaptured the pagan vitality of ancient Rome:

> The last great pagan goddess, descended ultimately from Helena, the mistress of Simon Magus, a gnostic aeon, can still be worshipped in the pictures of Leonardo or Luini. There she is "imprisoned" in the loveliest matter that has been discovered for a northern goddess. (79)

The second occurs in The Dithyrambic Spectator, where Lewis complains that 'Civilization', by which he means the product of man's highest endeavours, no longer pays its dues to those (principally artists) on whom its condition depends:

> 'Civilization' having become brazen in her new rôle of Whore of Babylon, she has a malignant squint for her traditional retainers and wears her high-brow ornaments with an unconcealed impatience. When she was a Madonna and claimed her descent from Simon Magus, she was the friend of every art. (80)

I want to avoid anticipating here material from my discussion of The Apes of God, in section (viii), where Simon Magus again appears, as does Helena. Now, however, it should be pointed out that Simon was reputed to be the first Gnostic, and claimed that Helena issued from him by autogenesis. Subsequently, she underwent reincarnation many times on earth. (81)

The passages quoted are further evidence of Lewis' technical knowledge of Gnosticism, which is testified by the allusion to '"imprisonment"' in matter, and to the concept of the aeon (an emanation of the Supreme Being), as well as by the reference to Helena's 'descent'.

Beyond this, however, one gets the impression of a peculiar fascination on Lewis' part. This derives, I think, from the observation that the two variations on the theme of Helena are cameos of a notably reverent nature, rather than logical or discursive elements of Lewis' analysis. The lyrical tone of the first quotation ('wor-

shipped' seems to be employed with some feeling), and the elegiac air of the second, reinforce this impression.

Evidently, Lewis is drawn to the story, put about by Simon, that Helena was the universal feminine principle embodied, and, inspired by the myth of her reincarnations, considers her to be apparent, by metempsychosis, in the female subjects of Western art at the highest point of its achievement. Technically, this commits him to blasphemy, for to see Helena in the Madonna is to substitute a common prostitute (Helena's trade before Simon discovered and mythicized her) for the Virgin Mary. Yet what emerges from this is that, in addition to the congeniality of Gnosticism to Lewis in respect of its dualism and pessimism, it possessed for him an iconic affectivity.

Now, since Simon Magus professed to be the Supreme Being (82), and that Helena was of him, Lewis' exaltation of Helena through art gives him, it might be ventured, an intimation of divinity - though not that of Christian tradition. To put this in more general terms, I shall cite the passage in Time and Western Man where Lewis expresses belief in the possibility of 'a first-hand experience of the divine in human life', and implies that such experience is most likely to be religio-aesthetic, gnosis coming through contemplation of man's most consummate creations:

> (Aristotle) says that if all we had to make our idea of God with were what we possess in our experience (what we could take from the highest reaches of our own contemplative states), then that God would be 'worthy of our admiration'. What we are suggesting here is that that is exactly all that we have, indeed, with which to construct our God; and that, further than that, it is completely adequate. To at once be perfectly concrete, we can assert that a God that swam in such an atmosphere as is produced by the music of a Bach fugue, or the stormy grandeur of the genii in the Sistine Ceiling, or the scene of the Judgement of Signorelli at Orvieto, who moved with the grace of Mozart... such a God would be the highest we could imagine. (83)

Those who do not possess 'intellectual and artistic faculties' of the necessary order cannot, as it were, know God in themselves, through contemplation. Having fixed 'the "divine" upon some plane inaccessible to their senses', they must be satisfied, Lewis implies, with faith alone.

(v)

One antidote to the curse of bodily existence, presented in the last section as a form of Original Sin, is, as Lewis was eventually to propose, laughter.

Such a recourse is not available to Arghol, in The Enemy of the Stars, whose attitude to existence calls to mind the existential-ontological model of Gnosticism, and is articulated as a cry of anguish:

> 'The process and condition of life, without any exception, is a grotesque degradation, and "souillure" of the original solitude of the soul. There is no help for it, since each gesture and word partakes of it, and the child has already covered himself with mire.' (84)

A development on Arghol's lament is provided by Benjamin Richard Wing, in "The Code of a Herdsman". He is, as it were, the spirit of Arghol abstracted from the 'mire'. He observes the corruption in human existence, but is not of it:

> You will meet with this pitfall: at moments, surrounded by the multitude of unsatisfactory replicas, you will grow confused by a similarity bringing them near to us.= ...That group of men talking by the fire in your club... that party at the theatre, look good enough, you will say. Their skins are fresh, they are well-made, their manners are good. You must then consider what they really are. On closer inspection you know, from unpleasant experience, that they are nothing but limitations and vulgarities of the most irritating description. The devil Nature has painted these sepulchres pink, and covered them with a blasphemous Bond Street distinction. Matter that has not sufficient mind to permeate it grows, as you know, gangrenous and rotten. (85)

This "Imaginary Letter" was composed in the same year as "Cantleman's Spring Mate" (1917) and views Nature similarly: it is malevolent, the devil or Demiurge responsible for man's evil condition, and, once again, a hypocrite, one that paints 'sepulchres pink'. Wing's dicta can be considered Gnostic, and I would cite here Christopher Nugent's formulation: '(Gnosticism) stands for spirit alone, and demonizes nature'.(86) Yet in its idealization of spirit lies the rhetorical weakness of "The Code of a Herdsman".

Its thesis depends upon the acceptance of an illusion - that of Wing's disembodiment, as if, de facto, he had attained the Socratic philosophike arete. He thinks that a vigilant asceticism is means enough to dissolve the contingency of the physical, of organic life. For him, reality is divided into monistic, discrete regions - on the mountain, pure mind, in the valley, dead matter. This leads him to adopt Gulliver's fallacy: by withdrawing from man, he assumes that he expels the Yahoo from within himself. (87)

Schematically speaking, by abstracting in turn from Wing the principle of the observer, and installing it within Arghol, the latter can learn to laugh at his condition, where before he could only feel its tragedy. Hence, Lewis gets Ker-Orr, the "Soldier of Humour":

> This forked, strange-scented, blond-skinned gut-bag, with its two bright rolling marbles with which it sees, bull's eyes full of mockery and madness, is my stalking horse. I hang somewhere in its midst operating it with detachment....I explain everything by laughter. (88)

And hence, he gets the theory of the Comic expounded in the essay 'The Meaning of the Wild Body':

> First, to assume the dichotomy of mind and body is necessary here, without arguing it; for it is upon that essential separation that the theory of laughter here proposed is based...we...have to postulate two creatures, one that never enters into life, but that travels about in a vessel to whose destiny it is momentarily attached. That is, of course, the laughing observer, and the other is the Wild Body. (89)

That is to say, Lewis' comic axiom reposes upon that dualism that was, for the Gnostic, both an expression of and refuge from pessimism, insofar as it distinguished his essence from his corruption, and supported his consciousness of his enveloping badness.

Thus, as defined above, the function of the Comic is to make of the Gnostic/Lewisian conception of Original Sin a matter for appreciation:

> The soul lives in a cadaverous activity; its dramatic corruption thumps us like a racing engine in the body of a car. The finest humour is the great play-shapes blown up or given off by the tragic corpse of life underneath the world of the camera. (90)

And it is to aestheticize pessimism, to turn the self into a spectator of the terrible difference between the existence of the spirit and the sensory world:

> Laughter is the climax in the tragedy of seeing, hearing, and smelling self-consciously. (91)

(vi)

The theory of satire expounded in Men Without Art presents Lewis' most thorough examination of the nature of man's badness, and considers again the function of laughter. Central to it is the proposal of a new, 'non-moral' mode of satire. The feasibility of this, it was demonstrated in Chapter 1, Lewis' critics have been unwilling to accept, and there some attempt was made to answer them. Some of the considerations offered in those pages, and certain of Lewis' statements regarding satire, it will be necessary here to repeat, or cite again, in the interests of the present discussion. The purpose of this is to show that the essence of Lewis' proposed innovation is consistent with a Gnostic vision of man's condition, and how laughter is exalted above the aesthetic function assigned to it in "Inferior Religions" and "The Meaning of the Wild Body", in such a way as to be regarded, finally, as a faculty whose quality approaches the religious.

Lewis' first requirement is a purifying of satire from its traditional ethical purpose, so that it can be provided with 'a standing, alongside the other arts and sciences, as a recognized philosophic and artistic human activity, not contingent upon judgements which are not those specifically of the artistic or philosophic mind'. The first reason Lewis gives for this requirement is that the victim of moralistic satire is likely to revel in the charge of wickedness. The second is that a judgement cannot at the same time be moral and wise, since the artistic or philosophic mind has a different end in sight to that of the moralist: the former wants to attain truth, the latter to bring about correction or practical improvement:

> It could perhaps be asserted, even, that the greatest satire cannot be moralistic at all: if for no other reason, because no mind of the first order, expressing itself in art, has ever itself been taken in, nor consented to take in

> others, by the crude injunctions of any purely moral code. This does not mean that the mind in question was wanting in consciousness of itself as a rational subject, which is never absent in an intellect of such an order: but that its abstract theory, as well as its concrete practice, of moral judgements, would differ from the common run, and that their introduction would merely confuse the issue. (92)

Such sentiments are similar to those expressed in the essay 'Physics of the Not-Self', where 'philosophical goodness' was exalted over 'popular goodness'. That is to say, the most abstract form of intelligence is to be substituted for reference to any system of morality, or precepts of right conduct, as the basis and criterion of satire. There is an analogy, in turn, between this and the antinomianism of Gnosticism, for which knowledge alone was goodness.

The terms of reference of satire thus defined, what, according to this theory, is to be its subject? Not, obviously, the vices of man, nor the deficiencies of a particular society, nor the immoral trends of a particular time, but the condition of humanity itself:

> It is with man, and not with manners, that what we have agreed to describe as 'satire' is called upon to deal. It is a chronic ailment (manifesting itself, it is true, in a variety of ways) not an epidemic state, depending upon 'period,' or upon the 'wicked' ways of the particular smart-set of the time. (93)

This 'chronic ailment' corresponds to what Gnosticism viewed as the general evil in which man exists, the Original Sin of bodily life and the envelopment of the spirit in matter. The correspondence is made clear by what Lewis has to say about the common phenomena of physical existence, which, objectively regarded, have their own evil pathology:

> It is unnecessary to enumerate the tragic handicaps that our human conditions involve - the glaring mechanical imperfections, the nervous tics, the prodigality of objectless movement - the, to other creatures, offensive smells, disagreeable moistures - the involuntary grimace, the lurch, roll, trot or stagger which we call our walk - it is only a matter of degree between us and the victim of locomotor-ataxy or St.Vitus's dance. (94)

If the character of man's Sin is biological, then the satirist finds his vocation alongside the empirical scientist. He records facts without deference to man's illusions, his 'soft conceit':

> Satire in reality often is nothing else but the truth - the truth, in fact, of Natural Science. That objective, non-emotional truth of the scientific intelligence sometimes takes on the exuberant sensuous quality of creative art: then it is very apt to be called 'Satire,' for it has been bent not so much upon pleasing as upon being true. (95)

As Lewis, in the essay 'The Meaning of the Wild Body', adapted Bergson's theory of the Comic, so does he here. In that essay, Bergson's optimistic conception of the function of laughter - a social corrective applied when life shows signs of descending into mechanism - was inverted to suit Lewis' pessimism - laughter is occasioned by the spectacle of a thing's struggling to be animate.(96) Here, Lewis' association of the satirist with the scientist is anticipated in many details by Bergson's division, in Le Rire, of satire into an ironic and an humorous mode. The satirical ironist, in Bergson's account, corresponds to the satirist as traditionally conceived (as one in whom the moral vision burns strongly), the humorist to the satirist of Lewis' specification:

> Humour...is the counterpart of irony. Both are forms of satire, but irony is rhetorical in its nature, whilst humour partakes of the scientific. Irony is emphasized the higher we allow ourselves to be uplifted by the idea of the good that ought to be: thus irony may grow so hot within us that it becomes a kind of high-pressure eloquence. On the other hand, humour is the more emphasized the deeper we go down into an evil that actually is, in order to set down its details in the most cold-blooded indifference... humour delights in concrete terms, technical details, definite facts. If our analysis is correct, this is not an accidental trait of humour, it is its very essence. A humorist is a moralist disguised as a scientist, something like an anatomist who practises dissection with the sole object of filling us with disgust; so that humour, in the restricted sense in which we are here regarding the word, is really a transposition from the moral to the scientific. (97)

Bergson's terms - 'an evil that actually is', 'cold-blooded indifference', 'concrete terms', 'technical details', 'definite facts' - describe exactly the methodology of Lewis' satiric portraits, of their unmoved presentation of loathsomeness and precise research into the physical iniquities of being, as in the description of Julius Ratner awakening:

> And now the morning eye-glue of yellow-lidded, sleek-necked Joo, was attacked by the tear-glands which he had. This was but a dessicated trickle because Joo was a parched wilderness of an organism so much more colloid than aquatic. But still a few gouts gushed in the yellow rock and his mouth held that taste of dry decay that was the invariable accompaniment for Ratner of waking, presage of the disappointments of a gastric order ensuing upon the coffee. (98)

Yet, and this is the point where Lewis' practice diverges from Bergson's analysis, such a 'deep going down' into matutinal vileness is not the covert operations of a moralist. There is no disguising of an urge to edify here, or merely simulated detachment. These lines meet precisely the requirement Lewis makes of the satirist who works without 'an obvious moralist sanction':

> It will be his task ...,like science, to bring human life more into contempt each day. Upon the side of the ascetic, in the interests of other-worldliness, it will carry on the good work of such pioneers as Swift. It will, by illustrating the discoveries of science, demonstrate the futility and absurdity of human life. That will be its ostensible function.... And should it encounter the moralist ... why Satire will then simply refer this ill-bred individual to the theologian! (99)

Thus, satire, by causing in man a physical revulsion from himself, will cause him, perforce, to be thrown back on that resort which has been obscured from him by his concentration on, and immersion in, the organic cycle of life ('gestation, metabolism, hunger and thirst', etc.), namely, his inner life, soul or spirit. This is not the task of a moralist, because if life in itself is bad, as was suggested in the discussion of "Physics of the Not-Self", or if it

is futile and absurd, then it is not susceptible to reform or improvement. The 'other-worldliness' which this sort of satire will bring about in man has a clear correlation in the Gnostic's contemplation of the Realm of Light from which he is descended, and his vision of the salvatory release from the body that he desires; and for both Lewis and Gnosticism, asceticism is one route to the understanding which dissolves physical contingency.

That is not meant by this the kind of asceticism enjoined in 'The Code of a Herdsman', which was a means of creating a safe distance between the enlightened man and the masses, is clear from Lewis' qualification of the nature of laughter in Men Without Art.

First, laughter is the expressive medium of the recognition (recognition in the Aristotelian sense, that is, of tragic discovery, or anagnorisis) of man's predicament, which is the worse for being the effect of an evil that man has not incurred or willed upon himself. But such laughter, while holding human life in contempt, draws the human essence to itself. It is not 'inhuman':

> Our deepest laughter is not, however, inhuman laughter. And yet it is non-personal and non-moral.... there is laughter and laughter. That of true satire is as it were tragic laughter. It is not a genial guffaw nor the tittilations provoked by a harmless entertainer. It is tragic, if a thing can be 'tragic' without pity and terror, and it seems to me it can. (100)

'Pity' and 'terror', the elements of the Aristotelian concept of pathos, are absent from such laughter, because its affectivity is not emotional, but intellectual. The recognition which this laughter attends is that although man knows that his reason distinguishes him from the ontological condition of an animal, the reason which grants him this knowledge also tells him that his essence must always be constrained by his animal limitations. (101)

This perplexity over the very intractability of being brings the theory of satire in question very close, philosophically, to the existential-ontological model of Gnosticism. Of the latter, Haardt cites the fundamental, or originating, experience proposed by W. Schmithals: 'Schmithals too...uses the concept of attitude to existence as a reductive form. "The decisive switch to Gnosis lay in the fact that man recognized his own self, his soul, as part of the God 'Man'."' (102) Between this and Lewis' second qualification of laughter, there is an analogy.

In the "Conclusion" to Men Without Art, laughter is conceived as the means by which man knows the 'divine spark' in himself. Or it is itself his portion of the divine. By repelling the spirit from the organism, and thereby intensifying the life of the spirit, satiric laughter, momentarily, apotheosizes man. Whereas in "Inferior Religions" laughter was the expression of aesthetic appreciation, man regarding himself from a distance, here it is an expression of religious, even mystic, wisdom, man regarding himself from a transcendent height. And finally, since Lewis sees satire, of the kind he is specifying, as the dominant characteristic of all great art of the present day, he exalts satire into a religious philosophy, or, as it were, a new form of Gnosticism: (and the time seems to require it):

> ...we must not encourage the god in us to laugh too much. This transcendental viewpoint which is explicit in laughter, must be in one sense, sparingly employed. . . .'Satire,' as I have suggested that word should be used in this essay (applying to all the art of the present time of any force at all) refers to an 'expressionist' universe which is reeling a little, a little drunken with an overdose of the 'ridiculous' - where everything is not only tipped but steeped in a philosophic solution of the material, not of mirth, but of the intense and even painful sense of the absurd. It is a time, evidently, in which homo animal ridens is accentuating - for his deep purposes, no doubt, and in

response to adverse conditions - his dangerous, philosophic, 'god-like' prerogative - that wild nihilism that is a function of reason and of which his laughter is the characteristic expression.... by stretching a point, no more, we can without exaggeration write satire for art - not the moralist satire directed at a given society, but a metaphysical satire occupied with mankind. (103)

(vii)

Given that there is some relation between the antinomianism of Lewis' theory of satire and the religious antinomianism of the Gnostic systems, I want here to compare the behaviour and attitudes of some of Lewis' fictional protagonists with the conduct of the members of the Gnostic sects.

Gnostic conduct, as was stated in the short account provided in section (i), took the form of 'extremes of radical asceticism and antinomist libertinism'. Such opposite types of behaviour were considered to be equally valid as means of denying the authority of the Creator of the World and His Commandments, and as preparations of the soul for gnosis. Furthermore, among the members of a particular sect, either course of conduct may be countenanced and adopted: 'The radical attitude adopted towards the flesh permits, without prejudice or preference, the exercise of a rigorous asceticism or an equally rigorous "debauchery", for both are roads leading to liberation.' (104)

The purpose of Gnostic asceticism is, however, more simply conceived. It is the denial of matter, of the body, with the intention of purifying the spirit for its future release. And beyond this, it is the refusal to perpetuate the existence of matter through human reproduction. Thus, Augustine reported that the Manichaeans abstained from meat, eggs, milk and wine, and lived on vegetables (the least 'animate' food) which were got for them by acolytes, so that they should have no part in the process of cultivation; and Alexander of Lykopolis wrote of the Manichaeans' prohibition against 'marriage, sexual intercourse and procreation, so that the (Divine) Power may not dwell in matter still longer, in the succession of generations.' (105)

The purpose of Gnostic libertinism and disobedience was twofold. First, the belief in the transmigration of souls from body to body until every type of life and action had been experienced meant that the immersion of the soul in sin would free it the more rapidly from bodily confinement. Thus Irenaeus on the Carpocratians, in the Adversus haereses: '..their souls ought to have tasted of all acts in life, and left nothing outrageous undone or lacking, once they depart (from their bodies), so as to avoid being forced into another body...Souls go on being incarnated until they have run the gamut of all sins: and when there is nothing more lacking, the soul is freed and departs above to the God who is superior to the world-creating angels.' (106) Then, the belief that the Archons or world-creating angels had perverted and caused to be regarded as sinful the desire for coitus which the True God had inculcated in man led to the ritual practice of immoralism. The Commandment against adultery was systematically flouted. (107)

Common ownership of women, love-feasts (or agapes) and orgiastic rites became, therefore, a form of ceremonial defiance of the constraint perpetrated by the Demiurge and his agents. At the same time, the strictest measures were taken against conception, for to procreate was to mimic the work of the Demiurge. Accordingly, communal coitus and the free exchange of partners were accompanied by ritual contraceptive practices. Epiphanius, the Bishop of Salamis (on Cyprus), documented these (tendentiously, in the opinion of recent scholarship) as including coitus interruptus, fellatio, spermatophagy, and, as a last resort, manual abortion, the embryo subsequently being consumed as a symbol of Christ's Passion. 'They are also emboldened to commit another act as terrible as any that exists...they smear their hands with the ignominy of their seminal

ejaculation, and rise and pray with polluted hands, completely naked, as if to achieve by such conduct sincerity before God.' (108)

Whereas, however, the early Churchmen observed (or reported) only rank depravity, Lacarrière, throughout his essay on Gnosticism, stresses that the carnal excesses were in fact elaborations of an ascetic rationale: 'However, the Gnostic deviations are different in kind from those the sexologists study in that they are perfectly conscious and deliberate, and are carried to their uttermost limit as a form of liberating and ascensional asceticism.' (109) Furthermore, the essence of Gnostic libertinism lay in its indifference. Neither amatoriness, nor affection, nor personal sentiment were permitted to distract the gaze of the spirit from its object: '...if the Gnostics were able to magnify sex and at the same time reject love as a sentiment, if they achieved a total and radical dissociation between these two domains, it was because all the force of their love, their sense of fusion and identification, was turned towards the true God.' (110)

One way of interpreting the conflict between asceticism and carnality in four of Lewis' protagonists - Cantleman, Tarr, Kell-Imrie and René Harding - is by referring it to the Gnostic polarity discussed above. Each of these men conducts himself according to a rationale, or tries to establish a theoretical or systematic control over his personal life. The secret knowledge he professes or acquires, or the special understanding he lays claim to, is reflected in some way in his sexual habits.

Cantleman has 'a more human, as well as a little more divine understanding, than those usually on his left and right.' (111) At one point, he anticipates the concluding pages of Men Without Art, when he reflects that man's consciousness of his animal condition is

something he would be happier without: '...and human beings anywhere were the most ugly and offensive of the brutes because of the confusion caused by their consciousness.' Since this complication of the spirit with the body cannot be remedied in the normal course of things - 'That they could not reconcile their little meagre streams of sublimity with the needs of animal life should not be railed at.' - Cantleman proposes for himself an ascetic retreat into the life of the mind alone, where he may cultivate his 'divine understanding':

> Well then, should not the sad amalgam, all it did, all it willed, all it demanded, be thrown over, for the fake and confusion that it was, and should not such as possessed a greater quantity of the wine of reason, retire, metaphorically, to the wilderness, and sit forever in a formal and gentle elation, refusing to be disturbed?

But the possibility of retiring thus - the course which, it is implied ultimately, he had better have followed - he rejects, since he thinks that, on the strength of his superior 'human understanding', he can achieve some sort of liberation from his animal confinement, or 'produce the human entirely' by more direct means.

Since man is persecuted by Nature (a demiurgic force, as it was put in section (iii)), which, it seems to Cantleman, deceives him into observing its rites (principally procreative and destructive) as automatically as if he were a simple animal, Cantleman resolves to deny life, Nature and the flesh by engaging in their processes with a detached fury:

> The thing was either to go out of existence: or, failing that, remain in it unreconciled, indifferent to Nature's threat, consorting openly with her enemies, making war within her war upon her servants. (112)

The purpose of this declaration of war might be interpreted in terms of Irenaeus' account of the conduct of the Carpocratians: to escape from the cycle of life by exhausting life through outrages

perpetrated thereupon. Lacarrière calls this an 'homeopathic ascetism': 'For the Carpocratians, the Gnostic's first task was... to use up the substance of evil by combatting it with its own weapons, by practising what we might call a homeopathic asceticism. Since we are surrounded and pulverized by evil, let us exhaust it by committing it.' (113)

Taking his theoretical and defiant libertinism to a country girl, Stella - 'a more methodless matter' -, he seems to be on the brink of the required dissociation of the sublime and the animal, as he stares indifferently up at the stars:

> As their two bodies shook and melted together, he felt that he was raiding the bowels of Nature: he was proud that he could remain deliberately aloof, and gaze bravely, like a minute insect, up at the immense and melancholy night... (114)

But nothing higher beckons him; or rather, he does not desire to penetrate the enclosing darkness (beyond which, for the Gnostic, lay the 'Pneuma', the boundary of the Realm of Light); the firmament,

> with all its mad nightingales, piously folded small brown wings in a million nests, night-working stars, and misty useless watchmen

has become as trivial as the girl Stella ('star').

His pride, and the 'smile of severe satisfaction' with which he walks home, indicate Cantleman's downfall. Having dispensed with the divine in him, in favour of a ferociously humanistic project, all he attains, momentarily, is a state of colossal egotism, an exaltation of the self, rather than the spirit. This corrupts him quickly. In creating with Stella a child (whose existence he refuses to acknowledge), and in beating out the brains of a German soldier with 'impartial malignity', he becomes an extremely effective subscriber to Nature's scheme, and so remote, in his indifference, from other-worldliness as to be indistinguishable from a brute.

Tarr reflects thus on his relationship with Bertha:

> The whole meaning of his attachment to stupidity became more clear and consistent as he persevered, indeed: his artist's asceticism could not support anything more serious than such an elementary rival: when he was on heat, it turned his eyes away from the highest beauty, and deliberately it dulled the extremities of his senses, so that he had nothing but rudimentary inclinations left. (115)

The opinion expressed here recalls Lewis' comments on the religio-aesthetic apprehension of the divine, in Time and Western Man. Since Tarr's asceticism is cerebral rather than practical, he is worried about his soul's slipping into sex, which will distract him from gnosis, turn his 'eyes away from the highest beauty'. The attraction exercised on him by the flesh causes him to announce repeatedly and axiomatically, though with a confidence that is less than complete, the passionless and indifferent libertinism of the artist. Thus, to Hobson:

> "...one by one his (i.e. the artist's) powers are turned away from the usual object of a man's personal poetry or passion and so removed from the immediate world. One solitary thing is left facing any woman with whom he has commerce, that is his sex, a lonely phallus....
> To sum up this part of my disclosure: no one could have a coarser, more foolish, slovenly taste than I have in women." (116)

As the Gnostic, in Lacarrière's account, displayed a sexuality from which all spiritual feeling had been discharged, so Tarr proposes to exclude all finer feelings from his personal affairs. The emphasis on sheer physicality liberates those energies customarily dedicated to love to the benefit of the immaterial side of man, that he may better apprehend, respectively, the divine, or the divine in art. The character of Tarr's art, he tells Hobson, is 'ascetic', distinguished by an 'invariable severity' and free of the 'slop of sex'. (117) And when he goes to Bertha, it is with a mind to practise the 'famous feeling of indifference', a cold seduction ensuing: 'He drew her un-

graciously and roughly into his arms, and started kissing her mouth with a machine action.' (118)

Tarr's prescription of asceticism for the artist in him, and indifferent, coarse libertinism for the rest of the man, is threatened by his attraction to the superb Anastasya:

> ...in the interests of his animalism he was about to betray the artist in him: for he had of late been saying to himself that he must really endeavour to find a more suitable lady-companion, one he need not be too ashamed of. 'Life' would be given a chance.
> Anastasya's highly artistic beauty suggested an immediate solution. (119)

The last sentence is sophistical, an attempt to make amends to his betrayed asceticism. Tarr dissembles emotional, intellectual and physical attraction as aesthetic pursuit (the adverb in 'highly artistic beauty' is desperately specious).

This temporary desertion of his creed, Tarr corrects when he tells Anastasya herself that life cannot harbour the aesthetic - '"Anything living, quick and changing is bad art always; naked men and women are the worst art of all..."' (120) - and refreshes himself with an outburst against the world (a 'bad spot') and the flesh (Anastasya's):

> "Ha! Ha! We're in life my Tarr: we represent <u>absolutely nothing</u> thank God!"
> "I realize I'm in life, but I don't like being reminded of it in that way. It makes me feel as though I were in a 'mauvais lieu.'"
> "My confession has been unavailing I observe."
> "To cut a long story short, you disgust me!" (121)

It has been suggested that Tarr's asceticism and sexual conduct have a Gnostic cast. Given that Gnosticism prohibited, for religious reasons, procreation, the issue of Bertha's child draws one's attention to an ambiguity in the narrative of the novel.

When Tarr is first shown with Bertha, her body is 'strung to

heavy motherhood. Another baby could not long be delayed. To look at a man should be almost enough to effect it.' (122) The first phrase implies that Bertha is pregnant, the following sentences merely that she is ripe for, or desirous of, pregnancy. When Tarr learns towards the end of the novel that she is enceinte, he is 'crestfallen at once', but rallies when she tells him that the child is Kreisler's. This may be the case. On the other hand, it may be that the child which is, in fact, Tarr's is foisted on Kreisler to damn the latter further, by associating procreation with the destructiveness and degeneration that he symbolizes. The possibility of the child's being Tarr's is clear from his initial reaction; and the time-scale of the novel is not sufficiently clear for the reader to be certain about paternity, both Tarr and Kreisler having had Bertha as mistress (a Bohemian flouting of morality which echoes the Gnostics' common ownership of women). '"We can get married and it can always pass as mine"', Tarr generously and suddenly disinterested tells Bertha, whereupon Bertha reflects that he is 'denying reality!' (By offering to pretend that the child is his? Or by accepting her story at face value?) Bertha, naturally concerned for her and the child's well-being, is sparing with the truth in these passages: 'She could have told him at this juncture the actual circumstances under which the child had come. But the idea having occurred to her she had the presence of mind to refrain.' (123) If Bertha herself can be certain of paternity, either she is unwilling to reveal Kreisler's assault on her, or, conversely, fears that revealing Tarr as the father would cause him to act with less impartiality, and 'immediately take back' his generous offer. Cantleman refused to acknowledge his child, and, it seems, a narrative complication - or sleight - absolves Tarr of responsibility. When the child is born, it bears 'some resemblance

to Tarr' (124), which may be socially convenient (since it is not his), or biologically inevitable (since it is his). Certainly, the children whom Tarr later fathers, the narrative dismisses with despatch in the last five epitaphic paragraphs of the novel, in order, probably, to keep the impression of the ascetic Tarr largely intact.

In Kell-Imrie (in Snooty Baronet), ascetic carnality evolves through three stages. The first is to view the prospective sexual act scientifically, as a piece of biological research, so as to place himself at a distance that makes sentiment or passion impossible:

> If I have to converse for a stated time with such a giggling fantoche as old Val, before we get down to business, I find it best, more rational, not to begin with a juicy close-up of the specimen I shall be compelled, in spite of myself, to do a bit of field-work on...(125)

Then, grotesquely, he disencumbers himself, becomes less material than he was, literally takes himself away from sex - he removes his prosthetic leg. (126) Since, however, his whole being is complicated in his body - as a behaviourist, he cannot divide himself as conveniently as Tarr could - revulsion still ensues from the carnal act, ejaculation entailing emesis, the body emptying itself still further:

> ...the folding-doors once more came violently open...A one-legged man hopped out. He was as naked as God ushered him into the world and as the Grave will take him back. Sitting down upon the end of the settee, and bending over the gilt-flowered slop-vessel, this man proceeded to be ill. (127)

This marks Kell-Imrie's third ascetic expedient: having distanced himself emotionally, then physically, he now removes himself ontologically, by adopting the third person: 'That one-legged naked man...was me.'

When Kell-Imrie displays affection for another mistress, Lily, the body initiates its own ascetic mortification, attempts to forestall the consummation of desire, and he feels 'uncommonly sick' and has to lie down in the darkness for half-an-hour'because of the beating

in (his) eyes.' 128) To continue thus in libertinism with the body in painful revolt is an element in a larger pattern of amoral licentiousness that is to be observed in Kell-Imrie.

Another aspect of Gnostic disobedience, conveyed in Ptolemaeus' account of the Valentinians, was the notion that he who had gained gnosis could sin with impunity, since he was already guaranteed salvation. (129) The enlightenment for which Kell-Imrie, in his study of "Behaviour", has long been preparing himself comes before the dummy in the shop window, when he discovers that, according to his system, his 'complex inherited technique', an automaton and a man share a reciprocal reality:

> 'Behavior' had as it were turned round upon me as well. As the man at my side observed me putting on my hat, I was for the first time placed in the position of the dummy! I saw all round Behavior as it were - for the first time. I knew that I was not always existing, either: in fact that I was a fitful appearance. . . . I saw that I had to compete with these other creatures bursting up all over the imaginary landscape, and struggling against me to be real - like a passionate battle for necessary air, in a confined place. (130)

Confirmed in the knowledge that existence is a Berkeleian struggle (that is, to be is to be perceived), Kell-Imrie, in an attempt to establish a relatively more permanent reality for himself, conceives the plan of eliminating his associates from competition. He murders Humph with hilarity, threatens to push Val from a tower, and eventually deserts her when she contracts smallpox. (131) These outrages are perpetrated not so much out of wickedness, or any inherent evil that hasbeen noted in Kell-Imrie, as from confidence that anyone who follows his system can reasonably behave in this way: 'If you are a true behaviorist, and not merely a sham one, you behave as I have behaved!' (132)

The knowledge possessed by René Harding is that all of human

history, as conventionally presented, is a record of the evil and destructive use of power. This form of historiography exalts the (essentially unscrupulous) ruler, politician and statesman over the rest of mankind, and it is in order to expose this idolatry of the powerful that Harding has written The Secret History of World War II. His position is that the saving of the human race will only come about by the transcending of the 'brutal plane of automatic life' by the creative, the intelligent and the wise, and by the re-interpretation of the concept of history in their terms. (133)

'"History"', in the words of Harding's 'disciple' Rotter Parkinson, '"à la René Harding is an essentially pessimistic narrative."' (134) It is so, in part, because he has a religious, Manichaean conception of evil as an active, positive principle. If, as was proposed in section (iii), metaphysical dread and the recollection of archetypes were among the originating impulses behind Gnostic thought (the positions of Jonas and Jung respectively), we can possibly regard as regulated by similar impulses Harding's expression of fear of the darkness that now prevails in the European mind, with the dictatorships stirring up war (the time is May 1939):

> ...a dragon has made its appearance in this century. It is not a reptilian animal about fifty yards long which spits fire. It is a far bigger animal than that, and a far more subtle one. It is, if you like, a mental animal: one may identify it, almost see its fiery being in the minds of men. I have seen it, I have felt it. For a long time now I have known of its existence. I know why it is here, I am afraid of it....
>
> We are little, powerless, shortlived creatures. What I am speaking about is supernatural, of vast powers, and ageless. We cannot possibly know why, at certain periods, these monstrous things appear among us and then disappear again. (135)

Harding's desideratum, it would seem, is that history, as he wishes it to be written, should enlighten humanity sufficiently to

prevent the reappearances of such a monster. In bringing 'idealism' and 'perfectionism' (Rotter's terms (136)) to historiography, however, in proposing an alternative history (a monument to wisdom rather than power), Harding fails at first fully to take note of, and is finally confounded by, the evidence of his own nature.

He professes an ascetic view of sex, marriage and procreation, as impediments to the life of the mind:

> ...his mind flashed back to the figures of Mr and Mrs Harding, père and mère, as lifelong inhabitants of a handsome four-poster; for the nocturnal half of life Essie and he at night had beds that were twins. Same thing, same idea, but less oppressively barbarous. Why did he and Essie live together? Same idea. Nothing would have induced him to live with a man of Essie's disposition and mediocre intellect... Their marriage had been a bus-accident. No offspring had resulted. A good thing. (137)

Within a page, however, he has become extremely lascivious with the woman just now the object of such cold reflections:

> In the taxi he behaved like an amorous student. And once or twice, when the sterner side of his nature had attempted to intervene, he pushed it away with a ho-ho-ho. (138)

Harding is aware of the struggle in himself between the ascetic and the libertine:

> Being a man of great natural severity, an eroticism which did not live very easily with it was instinctively resented: and the mate who automatically classified under the heading 'Erotics' was in danger, from the start, of being regarded as a frivolous interloper by his dominant intellectuality. (139)

Rotter, in his essay on Harding's thought, also refers, genially, to this contradiction (his articles on Harding customarily containing some mention of the latter's personality, which he is always asked to excise from the second draft):

> "I should perhaps say, however, that this implacable perfectionist is, in his personal life, gaily capable of unregenerate behaviour. He must not be visualized as a bloodless and solemn ascetic." (140)

Unable to detach himself from sex, or to rationalize his personal life through systematic indifference (as Cantleman, Tarr and Kell-Imrie could), Harding identifies his sex drive as a manifestation of the absurd:

> Eros was a factor he always left out of his calculations and when he first remarked that the above pressures were resulting in the same warmth on his side as he had intended them to induce on hers, he was traversed by what almost amounted to a shudder. The absurd was happening. (141)

That his theory of history is complicated by this sense of absurdity, he does not yet perceive.

Exiled on account of his secret knowledge to an hermitical existence in a Canadian hotel, material considerations begin to press upon Harding. His principled resignation of his professorship is eventually compromised by the necessity of acquiring an academic post, towards which he embarks upon a new historical volume.

Now, however, what had occurred to him previously as a perplexing personal absurdity is transformed into a radical observation, tantamount to the Gnostic conception of organic, material Original Sin. Contempt for the vulgarization of history turns into contempt for life itself. The vitiation of the exercise of the intelligence by the exigencies of the physical make history and human life reciprocally futile:

> This problem of problems can be compressed as follows: if one condemns all history as trivial and unedifying, must not all human life be condemned on the same charge? Is not human life too short to have any real values, is it not too hopelessly compromised with the silliness involved in the reproduction of the species, of all the degradations accompanying the association of those of opposite sex to realize offspring? (142)

Harding had wanted the new history to be created by the enlightened, but the view expressed above makes the recording of such history in good faith impossible. The animal in humanity prevails over the consideration of an 'idealist' or 'perfectionist' interpretation of

history, and man (unless he be, in Rotter's phrase, 'a bloodless and solemn ascetic') can never rise very far above the 'brutal plane of automatic life'.

Since Harding has so often observed himself gravitating to this plane, and since, critically, his asceticism has not led him to countenance sex as sacramental or ascensional, but has caused him, rather, to regard it as a succumbing to the absurd, self-reflection on the personal level should earlier have drawn him to the general conclusion that his model of history, based on a notion of secular intellectual brilliance, could not be sustained. For Harding is precisely the type of man around whom such history would be composed, a process which has already been initiated, in little, by his disciple Rotter. The logical consequence of the new pitch of pessimism to which reason has taken Harding would be a retreat into other-worldliness, the adopting of a religious position (which he briefly considers, in the Catholic Seminary, after the death of Hester (143)).

In a manner which reminds one of Cantleman, however, he presses on, his work becoming marked by 'excesses of virulent expression'. Dispensing, on account of its impracticability, with the ideal of raising and saving mankind through the exalting of wisdom and creativity, Harding turns to the advocation of super-humanism, the eugenic breeding of superior beings, as the only recourse left mankind. (144) This entails a corruption of Harding's inner being, depresses him spiritually:

> His life altogether was being mechanized upon a lower level - in everything expediency counted more with him...He was writing a book ever so slightly too much as part of his new plan of life, from which the old integrity and belief were missing. (145)

Both Cantleman and Harding pursue remorselessly a humanist theory,

namely, that man alone can 'meet and overcome' the 'dragon' (146) of man's nature, of Nature itself. The difference between them is that Harding persists in doing so even after his conviction has faltered - a point which Cantleman is never permitted to reach. Harding's motives are ordinary: financial ease and academic applause. His soul thickens as he becomes 'dedicated', finally, 'to the ideal of material security'.(147) From a state of rare enlightenment, he has fallen to that of the hylic of Valentinian Gnosticism, and become 'a glacial shell of a man', unredeemable.

(viii)

It is in The Apes of God that Lewis' interest in Gnosticism finds its fullest imaginative expression. On the thematic, structural and allusive levels, the acknowledging of the existence of a Gnostic current of thought provides an hermeneutics that opens up previously impenetrable or difficult areas of the novel. It should be stated immediately, however, that in places, Lewis' imagination exceeds in its scope the limits of a simple correspondence with the systems of Gnosticism, going over into other ancient, non-Christian theologies - whose philosophical relation with Gnosticism may, nevertheless, be close. There is a doubling, multiplying or complication of the significance of images, incidents or characters, fusing the mythology of Gnosticism with earlier mythologies. Archetypes are sought. Like Gnosticism itself, The Apes of God is syncretic.

The non-character Pierpoint may be interpreted on one level as figuring the Supreme Being, the occupant of the Realm of Light, the sole source of absolute wisdom.

Discursively, the novel devolves from Pierpoint; when sense is spoken, it is referred to him. Thus, after a brilliant disquisition on satire and modern fiction, Zagreus acknowledges, '"At all events, there is our great and dear friend Pierpoint's text - orally preserved, quite in the primitive manner."', and, having overcome in disputation a guest of the Keins', he exclaims: '"I was using Pierpoint's methods. Those were the methods of Pierpoint!"' Blackshirt's attribution of knowledge is exemplary: '"I have heard this from Pierpoint."' (148)

Then, like the True God of the Gnostics, Pierpoint is remote to the point of absence, a 'brilliant' (Isobel Kein's term) abstraction who has no agency in the world of men. Prosaically, he is kind and

unworldly, '"too good hearted...but so impractical...and very un-business-like."' (149) This entails a cluster of acolytes, an enlightened elect - Zagreus, Blackshirt (Starr-Smith), Ratner - some of whom 'broadcast' Pierpoint's theses, and who act as his fund-raiser, political secretary, financial assistant.

But Pierpoint's absolute seclusion makes him impotent, and - anticipating the benign angel (the Padishah) of Monstre Gai in this respect - though he is the repository of the true wisdom, Pierpoint is not clever. This eventuates in a kind of theological power struggle, since Zagreus has been recruiting Pierpointeans according to his own judgement, and then initiating their fall from grace. A demonology is introduced into the novel. Thus, Dan Boleyn is cast as Lucifer:

> The paper was a letter from Mr. Zagreus. It was to Dear Dan. Horace had written! The Son of the Morning shouted for joy, this letter was manna! He was on his feet at Dear Dan in a bound as if it had been a word of command from High Heaven. (150)

Zagreus' communication contains a document from 'Heaven', as it were, in the form of Pierpoint's "Encyclical". 'Son of the Morning' is the periphrastic appellation for Lucifer from Isaiah (Chapter 14, Verses 12-14). On good terms with the divine here (as Lucifer originally was), Dan is finally precipitated from Heaven after the Lenten Party, when he learns in a letter from Zagreus that Zagreus and Blackshirt have blamed him for the violent chaos in which that function concluded. (151) Pierpoint, apparently, is susceptible to lies. The same leter refers to the ejection from favour that is the fate of Ratner, who is also represented as the Devil:

> "In talking the matter over with Archie Margolin, he agreed with me that Pierpoint's estimation of Ratner was in some ways fallacious, and Pierpoint has now come to be of my opinion. . . .(Ratner) was a minor Satan perverted by

> his little literary vanity, and so really a sort of Ape of God rather than a minor Satan."

And now Zagreus has a '"new tame devil"' (he is Margolin's cousin) ...'"a perfect minor Satan of the first water."'

Lewis' imagination seems to be working syncretically in these passages, and in a manner that is rather difficult to interpret. It may, however, be of assistance to cite Wilson's account (in The Gnostic Problem) of the sources of Gnostic demonology: 'The cosmic powers, angels, and demons of Gnosticism derive from a view of the world such as that which lies behind the New Testament...The Gnostic Demiurge plays a part analogous to that of Satan in Jewish and Christian theology...the Demiurge in Gnosticism is...a distorted image of the Old Testament Yaweh.' (152)

Now, Dan Boleyn and Julius Ratner may, as fallen Lucifers/Satans, be intended as figurations of the Demiurge, or, more probably, of his agents - demonic angels, Archons, world-creating devils - since to dabble incompetently in art - as they do - is to indulge in demiurgic activity (and Pierpoint's "Encyclical", his '"review of this society"', has paid special attention '"to its reaction upon art"' (153)). Thus, Zagreus' '"new tame devil"' is redeemed by the fact that he has '"no pretences whatever of intellect"' (154) - that is, he does not dabble. Why, however, should Zagreus be cultivating the company of devils, 'minor Satans' or Archons, contending in knowledge with Pierpoint and telling sinister lies, unless he himself is to be viewed as the Devil or Demiurge (a representation of him that is not, however, consistent throughout the novel, as I shall show)? Possibly, Lewis' interest in diabolical archetypes, as manifested in the passages quoted, as well as in the very title of the novel, cannot be schematized straightforwardly. And, incidentally, to call the Jewish Ratner a 'Satan' is

to suggest a spirit of evil who is both pre-Biblical and pre-Gnostic, since it is suggested by Wilson that 'Judaism seems to have drawn its demonology ultimately from Persia, Satan being modelled on Ahriman' (155) (and Lewis' interest in that figure will be recalled from section (iv)).

Yet, on a more general level, there may be elicited from all this an archetype of satire, already glimpsed in the characterizations of Dan and Ratner. The allusion (present in the decline of Dan and Ratner) to the fall of the Demiurge or his agents from the Realm of Light, or of the Son of Morning from Heaven, contains the idea of the first showing of evil or recklessness in the cosmos, and consequently the first instance of the sin of excessive ambition, pretence and pretentiousness. That is to say, in the first fall, the fall of light, exists the primordial satiric spectacle. This reappears in satire such as that exemplified by The Apes of God, or The Dunciad, whose object is the bad or stupid creation that ensues from the aping of the divine by the Devil, Demiurge or a related principle of darkness (Pope's 'Dulness', for example).

As time advances, however, the availability to the satirist of the Christian Satan as the archetype of the malign or foolish creator evanesces. Where the Devil of the Old and New Testaments had once personified evil, theology has come to qualify it as a mere absence, a principle of disorder or emptiness - the Church has taken the person out of Satan, as it were, or it has dematerialized evil. This has induced in lesser satirists an optimism about the prospect of straightening out or correcting the disorder, or filling up the emptiness with ethical exempla and decent advice (it is apt to recall Lewis' comments on 'non-moral satire' here, from Men Without Art). I have been following the argument of Alvin Kernan, who pro-

poses that all satire of the first order must, ultimately, repose on a Gnostic, ratherthan a Christian,basis, since only thus can it recognize evil as a positive, metaphysical force that expresses itself through creation, rather than as a void into which dunces stumble. The fallen and malign Demiurge, accordingly, becomes the arch-opponent of the satirist: 'After a good deal of bloodshed and strong coercion, the Christian community was at last made to understand that evil and its personification, the Devil, are not positive forces existing in their own right, but are rather negatives properly defined only as the absence of good. Satire has most often been regarded from the same orthodox perspective and treated as a negative literary genre which shows not the action of some essential force - as comedy, tragedy and epic do - but rather the bumbling confusion which occurs in the absence of good sense and with the loss of traditional values. The better authors of satire, however, have been literary Manichees who have shown an ancient and powerful force operating constantly and expressing its own nature through all lands and times.' (156)

If Pierpoint, in terms of the present reading of The Apes of God, symbolizes the divine, Horace Zagreus at once represents the Gnostic teacher on earth and constitutes a figure of mythic and syncretic complexity. Part XI, "Mr. Zagreus and the Split-Man", is the religio-mythic core of the novel. A colossal iconolatry, a vast, allusive confluence of ancient cults, fragments of doctrine and secret lore is presented, a strange and eclectic pantheon invoked.

In these pages, Zagreus, clad in a symbolic costume of outlandish and sacerdotal ornamentation, instructs Julius Ratner (the 'Split-Man') in the mysteries of the Hermetica, Neo-Platonism, Orphism, ancient Egypt, the Talmud, the Old Testament, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, the rites of Dionysus and the phallic ceremonies.

The hermeneutic effort required of the reader in this chapter - circumvented by an early critic of The Apes of God, when he wrote that '("Mr. Zagreus and the Split-Man") is...nothing more than an extravaganza, of, however, extraordinary power.' (157) - constitutes in itself a kind of search for gnosis. Reading is replaced by exegesis of the cryptic, and understanding comes in speculative fragments - as one inspects, for example, the composition of Zagreus' get-up:

> Round the neck hung an Anguinum - egg composed of saliva from the jaws, and froth from the bodies of snakes....
> Below this came a gilt necklace of twenty hearts.
> Below this hung the disk of a monstrance, only in place of the cross was a thermuthis.
> The mantle of Graziano - corrugated like a peplum - fell from the shoulders and swept the ground.
> A black fustian jerkin, with large silk buttons like plovers' eggs. (158)

Two deities are very obliquely revealed here, making of Zagreus, in his regalia, an Ape of gods, as it were: the 'monstrance' is the dish used in Roman Catholic ceremony to contain the host, for the adoration of the transubstantiated body of Christ - but this becomes cryptic again, with the replacement of the 'cross' by a 'thermuthis' (which is not to be found in the Oxford English Dictionary); then, a specially embroidered peplos (a woman's cloak) was offered in tribute to Athena in the ceremony of Panathenaea, in ancient Athens. A more fruitful line of interpretation, I would suggest, proceeds from enquiring why Zagreus' disguise is surmounted by 'a pergamene mask of coarse malignity'? (159)

'Pergamene' etymologically is associated with the Latin pergamena ('parchment'); there was also, however, a Pergamene school of Neo-Platonism. Caird explains that the pessimistic influence exercised by Neo-Platonism on the early Church was intensified by the teachings of the Gnostics, and that Plotinus, foremost among the Neo-

Platonists, concurred, in spite of himself, with the Gnostic dualism of soul and body, and the conception of the body as the means of evil's introduction into the soul. (160)

Accordingly, Lewis' use of the word 'pergamene' might be seen as bearing upon - as a sort of historical counterpoint - the recurrent satire in The Apes of God on Ratner's bodily condition, of which he is more painfully the victim than any other character (as demonstrated in section (vi), and worse still is p.160, where '(Ratner) doctored the crater left by a blackhead and inspected a yellow fang, to rescue it from tartar, that encrustation of saliva.'); for Plotinus, like the Gnostics, considered that the only escape from evil was by the release of the soul from the body - something which Zagreus has also considered for Ratner: '"I should have liked, Julius, to have fitted you out as a homunculus, a disembodied mind. Or as the Holy Ghost..."' (161)

Beyond this, the phrase in question intimates, possibly, a cause of the fascination to which Ratner grudgingly yields in the strange presence of Zagreus ('"What are you doing?" sneered Ratner sheepishly.' ... 'His countenance was lighted with the sultry covetousness of the dung-fly.'... '"I think it very interesting, like everything about you Zagreus!"' (162)). The Pergamene School was remarkable for the revival of mythology, philosophy and superstition in its teaching (and Zagreus, in this chapter, undertakes a similar revival of obscure arts). Its most celebrated convert from Christianity (which earned him the name 'the Apostate') was the Emperor Julian, around 360 A.D. (163) Ratner's forename is cognate with that of the Emperor, and he is ripe for a conversion from his faith, from which he has inherited a 'bitter Conscience' that makes him 'uneasy' about his sham literary endeavours. (164) That we are intended to appreciate the trace of a mock-heroic reincarnation in Ratner might further be inferred from the

fact that Zagreus informs Ratner of the Roman and imperial associations of his name: '"Of course Ratner is not your name at all I suppose - any more than Julius which you have stolen from Caesar!"' (165) More than the dictator may be implied here, since after him, emperors for some time took the name 'Caesar', and it was given to Julian at the time of his military command in Britain and Gaul. The significance of Zagreus' ordering Ratner to '"Go to Bath..!"' (166) is unclear, unless it has to do with the status of that town as a resort for prosperous Romans and a provincial centre of paganism where a healing-cult flourished (Julian's apostasy having consisted in an attachment to paganism, as well as in his later conversion).

Zagreus' abstruse pedagoguism, together with his accretively emblematic costume - '"salute this strange shell I have grown!"' (167) - in which various times and cultures coalesce, makes of him an archetypal figure. An exhaustive rhetoric is assigned him which professes omniscience; and in him is comprehended instantaneously and allusively something of the spiritual life of the Egyptian, the pagan, the Jew, the Christian, the Hindu, the Arab, the Ethiopian, the Mexican, and the Buddhist. (168) The calling up of this wise man, universalized through affinity (intellectual or symbolic/ornamental) with a totality of cultures, brings to mind the statement which occurs at the end of The Wasteland: 'These fragments I have shored against my ruins'. It is a response to a cultural exigence, to the spectacle of society on the ebb, or of 'a moronic inferno of insipidity and decay', as Lewis was later to describe the world of The Apes of God. (169) In this archetypal role, Zagreus constitutes a 'primordial image' of redemption, of the kind here characterized by Jung: 'The archetypal image of the wise man, the saviour or redeemer, lies buried and dormant in man's unconscious since the dawn of culture; it is

awakened whenever the times are out of joint and a human society is committed to a serious error. When people go astray they feel the need of a guide or teacher or even of the physician. These primordial images are numerous, but do not appear in the dreams of individuals or in works of art until they are called into being by the waywardness of the general outlook. When conscious life is characterized by one-sidedness and by a false attitude, then they are activated - one might say, 'instinctively' - and come to light in the dreams of individuals and the visions of artists and seers, thus restoring the psychic equilibrium of the epoch.' (170)

One thing Zagreus teaches Ratner is the mysterious power of nomination:

> "Why was I named Zagreus?". . .
>
> "I didn't think you were called -" Mr. Zagreus stopped him with a menacing hand. . . .
>
> "Never change the barbarous names given by god to each and all - you read in the spurious AVESTA compiled in Alexandria: Because there are names possessing an unutterable efficacity!' ...
>
> "But in any case the Hebrew god would keep his real name up his sleeve - he would be afraid to leave that lying about where anyone could get hold of it! I prefer some of his Shoan names to the tetragram: Ililfarsangana-el for example: Telk-el Walib-el Bel Mel. Or his secret ones - Coltekolcol (like a mexican god). Gohatjir is a good one. Hajirji: Gorgovajir: Corooking."..
>
> "What is the real name then of Pierpoint?" Ratner asked.
> "Ah!" Mr Zagreus exclaimed. "That! - Pierpoint! No."
> "Pierpoint? Is it?"
> "Ah."
> "Why, is it a secret?" Julius limply coaxed..."You are so mysterious Horace!"
> Dr Mysterion wetted his naphtha-eyes and flashed up two liquid sparks to our firmament. (171)

The 'efficacity of names' is explained by Wilson in The Gnostic Problem: 'Return (of the soul) to its true abode in the higher regions was secured . . . by a magic knowledge of the names of the ruling powers and of the passwords which were the keys to unlock the gates which

barred the way... true being belongs to God alone, and to those whom He deigns to endow with the knowledge which alone can save. Only to some it is given to realize their true state, and to appropriate the saving (gnosis), upon which great stress is laid. In some cases, it is no more than a crude magical knowledge of spells and passwords, for to know the name of a god gives power over the owner of the name.... Thus it was customary to invoke a god by every possible title, and even to guard against any omission by use of some such formula as "or whatever thou dost choose to be called".' (172)

Zagreus' incantatory recitation of names culminates in gnosis - the image seems quite explicit: '(he) flashed up two liquid sparks to our firmament' (the divine spark of the spirit-self of Gnostic doctrine, that is). And the long list of obscure (or invented?) Ethiopian ('Shoan'), Mexican and Vedic-sounding deities certainly show him 'guarding against any omission'. Purposely, however, the name of Pierpoint (the True God) is kept from Ratner, and consequently divine enlightenment denied him. Satirically, this might imply that Ratner is (still) too much contaminated by his material condition to be redeemed. But Lewis' interest in the Gnostic Marcion (whose Church, as was explained in section (iv), rejected the God of the Old Testament on account of His wickedness) also comes to mind, for Zagreus tells Ratner that Ratner's God tricks His people, and, presumably, refuses them salvation, by 'keeping his real name up his sleeve'.

It will also be noted that Zagreus has forbidden Ratner to utter his own name - '"I thought you were called -"'. Now Zagreus, discussing the Lenten Party with Ratner, has already told him of an identification of himself with a self-proclaimed Gnostic deity,

> That fool Kit Hanna has told them that, like Simon Magus, I can walk through walls, and that Helen of Troy is my mistress. (173)

and it will be necessary here to amplify and supplement some of the remarks made on Simon Magus previously.

Simon Magus, a native of Samaria in the second century A.D., is held by many sources (as stated in section (iv)) to have been the first Gnostic teacher. Justinus, in the Prima Apologia, reports that Simon has set himself up as the True God: 'And almost all Samarians, with some amongst other peoples, recognize that (Simon) as Supreme God and worship him.' (174) The Apostle Luke describes Simon's occultism and wizardry: 'But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.' (175) To Irenaeus, Simon was a fantastic and blasphemous self-aggrandizer: 'He stated that he was the Supreme Power, however, i.e. the Father who stood over all and who allowed men to call him by whatever Name they pleased.' (176) Traces of such a polyonymous self-apotheosizing, we see in Zagreus, for example: '"You can address me as Mfumo, Bassar, Tabib, Bomor, Mganga."' (177)

Luke also charges Simon with circulating the rumour that the Apostles had performed miracles and healed the sick through magic, rather than by communion with God or the Paraclete, and with trying to bribe the Apostles to share their power: 'This Simon now professed to be a believer, meaning thereby that even the Apostles had healed the sick by magic and not by the power of God; and that by laying on of hands and faith in God, they had filled (persons) with the Holy Ghost through Jesus Christ, whom they had foretold. Even then he suspected that it (only) happened as a consequence of a knowledge of magic

superior (to his own), and offered the Apostles money in order to obtain for himself the power to communicate the Holy Spirit to anyone he wished. Then he heard the words of Peter: "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money."' (178)

The charge that Zagreus, like Simon Magus, is a charlatan who exchanges money for Pierpoint's wisdom, to feel within himself the power of Pierpoint, is made with fervour by Blackshirt:

> "...Horace Zagreus himself is the worst Ape of the lot! Does he not take all his ideas from Pierpoint? Is he not essentially a rich dilettante? Is it not owing to his money - not that he always pays! It is absurd!" (179)

Hugh Kenner calls Zagreus 'completely sterile' and a 'fraud' and Robert Chapman considers him 'just another ape' and a 'mere imitator' (180) - on account of Blackshirt's accusation, and on the strength of the fact that Zagreus' 'broadcasts' and other discourses replicate exactly Pierpoint's words, as when Zagreus informs Ratner, after his bravura performance in Part XI:

> "It was Pierpoint...who said" he paused and struck up his moustache, "all that I have said to you!"
> "Figuratively Horace?"
> "No -." (181)

But it seems to me superficial to condemn Zagreus thus, and to insist on seeing satire where it is not necessarily intended. For a start, Blackshirt is not on good terms with Zagreus (182), is inclined to denigrate him (183) since he resents his authority, and, moreover, issues 'broadcasts' himself (which makes his attack on Zagreus somewhat hypocritical) (184). Then, Zagreus is too complex a figure either to be approved of wholly, or to be bracketed dismissively with the other Apes. Throughout the novel, his presentation hovers ambiguously between the admirable and the ridiculous. Certainly, more

imagination is expended on it than would be merited in the portrayal of a mere mimic with no ideas of his own. But beyond all this, why is he a 'fraud' or 'mere imitator'? He does not attempt to pass off the knowledge of another as his own - which would be typical apish behaviour - but rather, on every occasion, insists (often with exaltation) that his brilliant monologues, or rhetorical methods, are the medium of Pierpoint's wisdom. There is some humility involved in this, since Isobel Kein reminds Zagreus of an occasion when he had argued successfully against Pierpoint, and Zagreus replies: '"I only did that to give him the obstacle he required to display his mind"!' (185) Thus, Zagreus is capable of intellectual independence, but is content, on the one hand, to play Plato to Pierpoint's Socrates (186), and on the other, to view himself as an oracle: '"Well, I am but the instrument!"' (he tells Isobel (187)). The impression he gives of speech divinely inspired (by the God Pierpoint) is intended to call to mind, I would speculate, the linguistic afflatus of the Apostles (which Simon Magus coveted): 'And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.' (Acts, Chapter II, Verse 4)

Simon Magus' reputation as a magician who brought 'amazement to many' (188) is shared by Zagreus, who is known as an accomplished conjuror and performer of elaborate party-tricks:

> "He is a magician now," said O. (i.e. Lord Osmund Finnian Shaw) with rounded eyes, to welcome magic. "They say he can walk through walls. He learnt to do so in the Orient where he has spent many years - he is an adept of afghan magic."
> "Is he going to put us under some spell this evening?" S. made haste to ask.
> "No, he will not this evening," O. disappointed S. "He says it is not worth while. He has promised however to cut one of his assistants in half: also he will make a flagstone float upon the surface of the bath-water..." (189)

There follows a discussion of how Zagreus lately caused 'Lady Shuter'

to vanish into thin air, leaving '"nothing...but a rather dirty stain on the floor"', and, having spirited her away, found it difficult to bring her back.

It is tempting for the reader to gloss all this in a rather knowing manner, by identifying it as another element of the fantastic, nursery play-world of the Finnian Shaws, as a joke at the expense of their gullibility, and as more evidence of Zagreus' charlatanism. Yet to do so is again to insist on seeing everything connected with Zagreus from an exclusively satiric perspective. It should be borne in mind that Lewis stated that although this novel was his only 'pure Satire', there were 'other things there too'. (190) And it might reasonably be conceded that the facility in illusion (if not the supernatural potency) required to make someone disappear through the floor and come back through the ceiling ('"regarded by several people ...as the best trick they had ever seen"' (191)) is, in Lewis' own terms, proto-aesthetic, an expression of the older form of the creative principle: 'For me art is the civilized <u>substitute</u> for magic....That the artist uses and manipulates a supernatural power seems very likely.' (192)

Lewis' treatment of Zagreus, however, swings to the farcical pole in the scene in which he performs his trick, and provides what might be interpreted as a variation on one of the stories of Simon's end.

Lacarrière relates that Simon, having set magic over faith (and having fascinated potential converts of the Apostles), was challenged by the Apostles to a miracle-contest. One version of his death has it that having been called on to fly, Simon, airborne, was brought to the ground and smashed to pieces by a prayer uttered by Peter. In another account, Simon, having claimed that he could repeat Christ's

Resurrection, was shut up in a coffin by the Apostles and buried underground for three days, whence he was never to emerge. (193) Zagreus, essaying a piece of magic cruder than those of which he is reputedly capable, shuts Dan in a box with a partition, which makes it seem that that latter has vanished. When Dan's nose begins to bleed, leaking copiously through the side of the box, the astonishment of the audience turns to 'horrid laughs with a great deal of stamping and rude calling.' (194)

Zagreus' reference to Kit Hanna's statement ('"...like Simon Magus, I can walk through walls...and...Helen of Troy is my mistress"') involves, in a complex literary allusion, Zagreus' homosexual consort Dan.

Now, in the previous discussion of Simon Magus and his partner Helena, it was noted that Simon claimed to have brought forth Helena from himself. That is to say, Helena embodied a thought of Simon's, the first conception of his mind - she was an emanation of the Supreme Being (whom Simon professed to be) - and incarnated, according to him, the cosmic feminine principle. As such, she gave birth to the angels and archangels, then to the world-creating angels, who, through envy, incarcerated her in flesh, in order to prevent her from returning to Simon. In the words of Irenaeus: 'He himself (Simon) was completely unknown to them, yet his Ennoia (Thought) was held in bondage by the powers and angels emitted by her; and they subjected her to every form of humiliation to prevent her from hastening back to her Father. So far did this go that she was confined in a human body, and for centuries, as if from one vessel to another, transmigrated into other female bodies. She (Ennoia) was also in that Helena for the sake of whom the Trojan War began.' (195)

Zagreus, too, has 'created' or 'brought forth' Dan Boleyn, as it

were - not only because he has introduced Dan into Ape society, but also because Dan is his 'genius' (this being a term applied fairly indiscriminately to young men to whom Zagreus has taken a fancy (196)): 'genius' etymologically is derived from the Lagin gigno, genui, genitum ('to bear, beget, or bring forth'). Then, at the Lenten Party, Dan is kept away from Horace by Mrs Bosun and Willie Service (wicked angels, as it were) who invest him in the costume of a woman. (197) In this ravishing incarnation - 'A lovely tall young lady it was,' with 'a neck of ivory, nipples of coral, a jewelled ankle of heart-breaking beauty-line...' (198) - Dan is accosted by an orotund and lascivious popinjay, who believes him to be a girl, and will not let him escape. Towards the end of his ordeal, Dan again yearns for his absent partner, would 'hasten back' to him, as Helena to Simon: 'His heart was weighted with a heaviness against which no effort of his could prevail and which could only be expressed - if at all - by the one ponderous word never far distant from his loyal lips - namely HORACE.' (199)

The validity of proposing these parallels would seem to be confirmed by the fact that Dan's first entrance in his female incarnation is accompanied by an authorial comment on the Bluestockings and feminists, who deny woman her traditional role as adorner and beautifier of self:

> What has not been the lot of girls since the first sombre circles of Bluestockings assembled . . . that was embodied once more in Dan - as if to say "You must come to poor defeated Man if you desire to find what was once the Eternal Feminine - ... - by Man invented, by Man never betrayed!" (200)

First, Simon's Helena was the eternal female principle, 'invented' by him as Dan, Horace's 'genius', is 'begotten' by his adored master. Then, the reader is intended to note, I think, the allusion to the

last lines of Goethe's Faust: 'Das Ewig-Wiebliche zieht uns hinan (variously translated as: 'The Eternal Womanly/Feminine draws us upward'/ 'The Eternal, incarnate/ In woman, leads on' (201)). Dan's duress, his incarnation as a woman, into which is introduced a Faustian theme, furnishes an echo of Helena's. And one of the 'vessels' into which Helena transmigrated was Helen of Troy, whom Faust conjures up to be his mistress in the drama.

Reciprocally, this makes of Zagreus a Simonian-Faustian complex, adding literary, historical and religious dimension to his characterization. Later, it is revealed that Zagreus (like Faust) is 'always reading...''books of demonology' (202); and, interestingly, Nugent identifies Faust as a type of mediaeval Gnostic: 'Faust is a figure of Gnosticism and can suggest its affinities with the demonic.' (203)

The symbolic potentiality of Zagreus, Lewis intimated, when he called him 'a central myth'.(204) His patronym is taken from a god, and explication of the mythic element in his composition not only suggests further germane Gnostic themes, but also assists in interpretation of two of the most mysterious passages in the novel.

In the creation myth of Zagreus (also called Dionysus Zagreus), he was the son of Zeus and Persephone, and given the rule of the world. At the instigation of Hera, the Titans murdered and ate the boy, leaving only his heart. From this, Zeus remade Zagreus, and implanted him in Semele. Hera, jealous once more, persuaded Semele to pray to Zeus to visit her in the panoply and brilliance of a god. When he did so, she was destroyed by his lightning. The unborn child, however, Zeus rescued from the ashes, and placed in his thigh, whence he was later born as Dionysus. This myth of genesis in the midst of light, Lacarrière parallels with the anthropogenetic myth associated with the Gnostic Valentinus. According to this, Sophia, one of the

lowest Aeons, desired to behold the Pleroma and the Supreme Being. On entering the Realm of Light, she was dazzled and fell to earth, but not before she had been made 'pregnant by the Plenitude, the numinous'. The issue of her foolish desire and passion was a 'formless substance,' an 'inhuman monster,' from which 'man was born, after certain modifications, corrections additions and retouchings had been carried out with the help of the Aeons of the Pleroma.' (205)

In bright sunlight, a peculiar psychological transformation is undergone by Zagreus. Memory begins to work in a disturbing way. There is an impression of an unusual pitch of understanding's being within his grasp. This feels to him like madness, or perhaps fugue, since he has once literally been too much in the sun, and suffered sunstroke. (206) Here, he and Dan are waiting outside the residence of the Keins (aficionados of Proust), and Zagreus imagines his and Dan's shadows, cast on the door, stretched out in succession on the other side:

> Were they inside the door as well, in further projections of still less substance - their stationary presences multiplied till they stretched out like a theatre queue?... He saw the horse, black and primitive "like a pompeian fresco," that drew the mortuary chariot from which Proust peeped. That processionary fresco extended from Pompeii to Kein's door.... And so back to the modern environment, to the theatre queue. The sun struck him with its hot shaft upon the back of the neck. He shifted his hat. "My place in the sun," he muttered, not expecting an echo - always the sun made him madder as he knew. (207)

Zagreus' mysterious comment about belonging (?) in the sun is a solitary incidence of direct speech in a passage which renders consciousness by a peculiar resort to indirect free discourse, or the 'internal method'. It is peculiar because discussing The Apes of God in Satire and Fiction and Men Without Art, Lewis makes trenchant remarks about the vogue for stream-of-consciousness and interior monologue, which he regards as a symptom of literary decadence: such

techniques for conveying the thoughts of a character should be strictly confined, he states, to the portrayal of infants, idiots, animals (?) and the senile.(208) Since Zagreus is none of these things, it might be speculated that his creation was fed by sources in Lewis' imagination deeper than the level of the self-imposed technical dogma which, elsewhere, is consistently observed (except in Fredigonde - senile, as Lewis points out - and in Dan's vision, another anomaly, though he is, anyhow, presented throughout as a 'half-wit' (209)).

Following this passage comes Zagreus' observation about the Keins' place being furnished with 'all required by the human worm for its needs' (which echoes the doctrine of the Gnostic Saturninus, as was pointed out in section (iv)). Then, during lunch, the motifs of the 'theatre-queue', the 'shadows' and the sun's beating down recur, Lewis again going over to the 'internal method':

> The sun was upon his neck - the same sun, or another, that had struck him, the young bematist, swinging a plumb-bob, in the plantations where the De Castro factory now stood.... The theatre-queue had come to life, now: here, all about him, in solid ranks, it chattered and ate. He had imagined a queue. But here it must be - less and less resembling the original - shadows upon the walls of Pompeii, of Paris, the hot andean plains - a horrible family of shadows. An ape-herd, all projections of himself, or he of them, or another - gathered from everywhere, swarming in after him, or collected to await him...Or the queue had started acting - for want of an author, as he had just said - after a fashion. When their eyes met his, it was always himself, in some form, at some time. The intensity of this truth, like a piercing light, often compelled him to turn his head away from people, as he might from the image in a mirror. (210)

What is to be observed here in Zagreus is that the memory of an incident in the sun, the going back of consciousness into another time and another bright region, the more recent recollection of the sun on his neck outside the Keins', all these things induce another illumination, an 'intense' and 'piercing light' of truth, or gnosis. Given Zagreus' name, and his function as a 'central myth', there is

the suggestion of a memory of origins, of the dazzling of Semele by Jupiter, or of Sophia by the Realm of Light, at the genesis of the first man.

This might call to mind the proposed essence of the psychological model of Gnosticism (discussed in section (iii)), which consisted in 'the mythical projection of the experience of the self'. At the same time, Zagreus' intuition that the Keins' guests are all 'projections of himself', that 'when their eyes met his, it was always himself, in some form, at some time', that, in fine, his relation to them is, in some degree, ancestral, may suggest that at some level these complex passages are informed by the Orphic creation myth, or the Gnostic myth of the 'Primordial Man-Redeemer', or both.

In the Orphic mystery religion, man was considered to have a part-divine, part-evil nature, since he had been formed of the ashes of the Titans, who had devoured the divine infant Zagreus - whose essence inhered in the ashes. It might be mentioned here that one of Zagreus' accoutrements in "Mr. Zagreus and the Split-Man" is a 'gas-filled follicle at the end of a string', painted with a serpent as an 'emblem of the Orphic egg' - this being an element of Orphic cosmogony.

The 'Gnostic Redeemer Myth' is formulated thus by Haardt: '"From the Realm of Light a divine figure is sent down to earth, which is ruled by demoniac powers, in order to free the Light-Sparks which originated in the World of Light, and owing to a Fall in the Primeval Age have been exiled in human bodies. This envoy assumes human form, and does the work entrusted to him on earth by his father, so that he is not 'cut off' from his father. He reveals himself in his sayings ("I am the Good Shepherd", etc.) thus completing the separation of those who can see from those who are blind, to whom he

appears as a stranger. His own listen to him, and in them he awakens the memory of their Home of Light: helps them to recognise themselves, and teaches them the way back home, whither he himself, a Redeemed Redeemer, once more ascends."' (211)

Regarded in terms of this myth, Zagreus comes from a remote 'place in the sun', and more recently from the dazzling sun outside the Keins', to do 'the work entrusted by his father', represented by Pierpoint. This work is the 'broadcasting' of Pierpoint's analyses of art and society, and the gathering together of those who Zagreus believes 'can see' (Margolin, Ratner, but above all Dan, who is 'fey' (212)). These 'listen' to Zagreus, accompany him regularly, and to them he 'reveals himself' by his 'sayings' (as, for example, in the chapter "Mr.Zagreus and the Split-Man"). Those who are 'blind', the 'horrible family of shadows', the 'ape-herd', Zagreus indicates to Dan throughout luncheon at the Keins', and, eventually thrown out of the house for daring to do so, exits, or returns once more, with Dan, to the light: 'Zagreus looked straight into the sun, for now it was bright'. (213)

Finally, what has been said about Zagreus' visit to the Keins' residence might usefully be supplemented by the introduction of Plato's simile of "The Cave".

The image of a cave is propounded, in which a number of prisoners sit in chains, and are unable to look in any direction but ahead. Behind them are fires, and an elevated shelf, on which objects are placed and moved about from time to time. The prisoners behold the shadows of these objects cast on the wall in front of them, and believe them to be the 'real things'. When a prisoner escapes from the cave to the world above, he is at first dazzled by the light of the sun, then begins to perceive reality, the concrete form of things. Having forced himself to return to the cave for the enlightenment of

his fellows, he is blinded by the darkness, sees things even less clearly than they are as a consequence, and is unable to convince the prisoners of their delusion, seeming to them to be a fool.(214) The purpose of the simile is to illustrate the ascent from delusion (the general condition of mankind) to philosophical understanding (in which goodness inheres), the obligation to communicate this understanding, and the difficulty of doing so.

With certain modifications of sense, the Keins' house - into which Zagreus steps from the bright light of the upper world, whither he later returns - might be seen as figuring Plato's cave. Therein, he is confounded, as is the philosopher in the simile, and unsure of what he sees, as he feels again the 'sun upon his neck': the people amongst whom he sits and delivers wisdom over lunch move out of focus, becoming 'shadows upon walls', 'less and less resembling' some distant or original reality. In their delusion, however, they give the impression of a complacent reality, 'chattering and eating' in 'solid ranks', fulfilling a common desire by acting as if characters in each other's novels. Then, in a flash of truth, Zagreus sees that, having returned to the cave, he has become indistinguishable from them - 'When their eyes met his it was always <u>himself</u>' - and, hence, cannot enlighten them; or worse, he is taken for a fool,gossiped about as someone who has had too much of the sun: '"He has had sunstroke - he was in Panama or some country in the tropics as a young man. Sometimes he is very peculiar indeed."' (215)

This interpretation, compassing as it does Plato's light of philosophical goodness, Zagreus' association with the world of sunlight and his apprehension of truth like a 'piercing light' calls to mind the essay "Physics of the Not-Self", where, it will be remembered, Lewis adduced for comparison the Socratic identification of goodness

with wisdom and Mani's quantifying of goodness in terms of the light contained in a person.

On the manifold figure of Horace Zagreus, this attempt at a Gnostic analysis of The Apes of God has centred. In his complex performance, two roles remain to be identified - those of guide and judge. These are alluded to in the following passage, where Zagreus is explaining his costume to Ratner:

> "I have two wings of an air-pilot's jacket in my pocket, wired and united in a socket which fits on the end of this. So I get roughly my caduceus, if necessary - if Hermes Trismegistus is in the wind, and you have enough fancy to see the gilded olive wood in place of calamus."
>
> Replacing the staff in the corner, Zagreus picked up from the table a small beam and scales, its brass dishes suspended from chains.
>
> "Thoth. It is a small balance - but too large for the hearts that we shall be called upon to weigh." (216)

The 'air-pilot's' wings allude to the wings traditionally portrayed as surmounting Hermes' staff (his 'caduceus'), while 'calamus' is a writing-reed, of the sort employed by the scribe in antiquity. The Greeks identified Thoth with their god Hermes; the Neo-Platonists conferred upon Thoth the title 'Hermes Trismegistus' ('thrice-great Hermes'), and regarded him as the author of the Hermetica, a collection of mystical and sacred writings in Latin and Greek, which has been used as evidence of an Hellenic species of Gnosticism, though its content is principally of a Neo-Platonic nature.

Among the Gnostics, Hermes was an highly esteemed deity: '... Hermes is one of the favourite gods in their pantheon...Since Hermes was also the god who acted as...a"psychopomp" in ancient mythology (that is to say, one who accompanies souls through the kingdom of the dead, guiding them to the tribunal of the three infernal judges), he became known as the one who keeps his eyes wide open, like a living being, even in the realm of shadows, and who stays awake in the very

heart of death.' (217) In Egyptian mythology, Thoth, too, plays a role in the underworld, where he weighs the hearts of the deceased at their judgement, and informs Osiris and his fellow arbiters of the results - as Lewis put it elsewhere, discussing the art of mummification: 'Thoth, in massive trutination, is weighing life against death.' (218) Furthermore, Zagreus was associated in the Orphic cults with the underworld, where the souls of men, regarded as bearing the guilt for his death, were punished and required to make atonement as a condition of rebirth.

Such considerations help the reader to discover an eschatological structure in The Apes of God. Intimated as this is by Lewis' reference to the world of the Apes as a '(moronic) inferno' (my italics), it is somewhat surprising that no critic of Lewis has registered its presence (preferring, typically, to regard the novel's episodic form in terms of the 'peregrinations of..a naif' (i.e. Dan), or of a picaresque 'grand tour' (219)). Accordingly, what I want to suggest here is that to an extent, The Apes of God might be interpreted as a mock-heroic passage through hell, and that it shows certain symbolic correspondences with accounts of such a journey in classical literature. (I would mention in passing that this raises the possibility of comparing Lewis' and Joyce's respective modifications of classical themes (Lewis' admittedly more oblique), since in Ulysses, the episode in which Bloom attends Dignam's funeral parallels Odysseus' journey through Hades.) In the ensuing discussion, I shall use as a model Aeneas' descent into the underworld, in Book VI of the Aeneid.

Zagreus (as the 'psychopomp' Hermes) functions as Dan's guide, in a relationship corresponding to that of the Sibyl and Aeneas: and like the enigmatic and oracular Sibyl, Zagreus explains to Dan as they go the features of the underworld and the condition of the ghosts.

The gloom of the great entrance hall of the Follets' mansion, with its 'night cast by a cluster of statuary', described in the first lines of the novel, corresponds to the cave near Lake Avernus through which Aeneas and the Sibyl begin their descent into Hades, and to the dark and empty halls of Dis through which they subsequently pass. (220)

Having entered the Follets' residence, Zagreus and Dan are, symbolically, across the threshold of the netherworld. A spectre from Zagreus' past advances on them:

> They turned into the wide thoroughfare...At that moment (Zagreus') eye fell upon an approaching figure....Taking Daniel's arm, he turned them into the road...As they mounted the opposite pavement he sighed.
> "What - is the lapis manalis off this morning? That's the second ghost I've seen." (221)

The image of the lapis Manalis is of critical importance with regard to the present discussion. In Roman myth, it is the stone which blocks the mouth or entrance of Orcus (the underworld), and which, when moved, allows the exit of the inferni ('those below', that is, the souls of the dead) to the world above. The particular ghost who catches up with Zagreus and importunes him is a former homosexual acquaintance, Francis: '"...aren't you going to ask to see me?"... the old companion's claim to recognition for things dead and gone.' (222) This might be read as echoing satirically (and with some modification of respective roles) Aeneas' meeting with his old companion Palinurus, on the banks of the Styx. The latter, helmsman of Aeneas' ship, was lost at sea, and eventually slaughtered by barbarians. He begs Aeneas to take him across the infernal river, but the Sibyl prohibits such a favour, for his corpse has not received a proper burial. (223)

The Latin umbra can mean both 'shadow' and the 'shade', or ghost,

of a dead person. Zagreus' vision at the Keins' luncheon (previously discussed), which revealed the Apes to be not real beings but 'shadows', is a second indication (after '_lapis manalis_') that Dan is being conducted through the realm of the dead, the _inferni_.

These are displayed to him in postures of ironically voluntary stasis, trapped in time, frozen at a point in life, as occupants of a limbo of vanity. As such, they present a degraded version of the heartrending spectacle beheld by Aeneas on the banks of Cocytus (tributary of Styx), where the ghosts of heroes, matrons, boys and unwed girls wait interminably to be ferried across to judgement, or, worse still, wait in vain, since, like Palinurus, they have not received the rites of burial.(224) Thus, the guests at the Lenten Party are of three sorts.

There are the relics of the fin de siecle, who in manner, conversation, memory, want forever to be in that time. One of these is the Sib, who 'belonged to a distant generation', and supplies Lord Osmund 'with tit-bits of Gossip arranged with his favourite sauces, the old yellow sauces of the Naughty Nineties.'(225) Her companion (the old Don) still professes, in his decreptitude, the decadence of that decade: '"I think all people of character must be cruel", said the old Don with ferocity, sad sadic embers smouldering up in his owlish glances at her....(he) fiercely sighed - an empty old blood-thirsty homosexual sigh.' (226)

A larger group is composed of the men who, modelling themselves on the Finnian Shaws, refuse to grow up, clinging to the style and habits of youth or adolescence, and enthusing over toys and fairy stories: they are a manifestation of the 'Child-Cult', against which Lewis frequently inveighed.(227) Here, they are presented in a parody of the epic-heroic catalogue of names:

> Jasper Summerbell, Freddie Parsons, Nicholas Compton, Theodore Goddard, Julian Casbolt, Clement Glenny, Frank Brunner, Stephen Boyce, Martin McGregor, Raymond Charrington, Peter Runacres, Raymond Freedlander, Cecil Dawson and Ronald Shafarek, although all pigmented differently and of various height, age and build (some were wide and some narrow, and the heads of some were small and of others large) yet they all conformed to the osmundian canon but had the air in most cases for preference of an impossibly early undergraduate life - as if just turned out in spick and span, passionless, lisping rows by Eton for Oxford Colleges and Inns. (228)

Finally, Dan observes a group of aged military and naval officers, 'tomato-pink veterans', who, parading before the other guests in full dress, are turned upon in an access of anti-militarism, mocked and bullied.(229) The satire here is twofold. The 'Old Colonels' deserve to be vilified (because they are unthinking agents of war), but not by the Finnian-Shaws and their baying guests. For the privileges in life enjoyed by these aristocrats and their coterie are the fruits of Britain's imperial position, which was created, and is maintained, by precisely the sort of men whom they are now taunting.(230) As defenders of the Empire, the 'Old Colonels' are burlesque counterparts of the martial heroes displayed in pageant to Aeneas, on whom the future glory of the Roman Empire rests.(231)

Vergil's abode of the blessed is also burlesqued in the Lewisian eschatology. In the Elysian Fields, Aeneas watches the souls of the virtuous disport themselves on grassy plains in dance or athletics. (232) Dan Boleyn loiters miserably outside Hyde Park, envying the courting couples who sprawl on the 'dirty field of grass', then enters to step among their bodies that lie so still as to seem 'struck dead'. (233)

Dan, however, is not only led through the inferno as a spectator; he is also there to be judged. As Thoth, Zagreus weighs Dan in the balance, as it were, and informs Pierpoint, here figuring as Osiris, of the results. And, finally, Dan is found wanting. This judgement

is conveyed in Zagreus' last letter to Dan, in which it transpires that the latter is to be abandoned, because he is an intemperate and violent drunk (the falsest of all judgements in a world in which sham values have been consistently exalted): '" - well Dan I think you must agree that it is high time I separated myself from a person who...in such a striking degree betrays that notorious failing of your race. With such intemperate habits even the greatest genius cannot go far."' (234) Dan is consigned to the inferno, is to finish up in a very 'hot place' indeed, as the artist Mélanie Blackwell plots to take him to the South of France, bent on seduction. (235)

The eschatological structure is completed, and the cycle of passage through the underworld simultaneously recommenced, when Zagreus passes once more through the threshold of the Follets' mansion, this time with Archie Margolin. This building is situated in a private street, at each end of which stands a gate. The image of the pair of gates calls to mind the twin gates, of horn and ivory respectively, portrayed at the end of the sixth book of The Aeneid, the one allowing the exit of true dreams, or shades, the other of apparitions, to the world above. (236)

(ix)

I want in this last section of the present chapter to indicate the extent of the Gnostic influence in Lewis' last novel in the trilogy of afterlife, Malign Fiesta, with some further reference to The Apes of God.

If The Apes of God offered a symbolic eschatology (a portrait of a world of dead minds), Malign Fiesta presents an actual one - it is "Not Ideas about the Thing but the Thing Itself". It is the final account of the career of a dead man, James Pullman, for whom, 'torn away from his earthly life, and finding himself in a nightmarish existence ... the supernatural (has become) real...a death-life full of traps.' (237)

As Pullman, Satterthwaite, the Bailiff and two colleagues arrive in Matapolis, there is the suggestion of a Gnostic geography:

> The five figures were exchanging hollow buffets, and it was with the actions of a dance that they delivered them, darting hither and thither in an unreal way.... Was this a stick-up by Asiatic thugs, in an Alexandrian suburb, or outside the modern Antioch? (238)

Lacarrière writes that, 'the Gnostic communities developed in the only cities of that period (i.e. the first centuries A.D.) which were cosmopolitan in character: Alexandria, Antioch and Rome.' (239) Saturninus, whose system was mentioned in section (iv), was an autochthon of Antioch, as was Basilides, who went between there and Alexandria; and in Alexandria, Valentinus first taught, and thither Simon Magus brought his system. (240) Of all cities, Alexandria was the most fecund for the growth of Gnostic thought: here, all cults and religions were represented, and philosophers and exegetists convened:

> At just about the time of Hadrian's visit to the city - approximately 130 A.D. - we find several of the most

> renowned Gnostics teaching in Alexandria: Basilides, Carpocrates, Valentinus....Henceforth, Gnosticism is established... in the City, Alexandria, where it finds a rich and fertile soil. For here all systems meet... Egyptian, Greek and Roman paganism, Coptic Christianity, Judaism, Neo-Platonic philosophies, Hermetism . . . Basilides, Carpocrates and Valentinus take whatever they find good from wherever they may find it....Christianity, Judaism, Neo-Platonic philosophy, Stoicism, Epicureanism, Cynicism and Hermetism have all served Gnosticism. (241)

The visionary eclecticism of the Alexandrian Gnostics constitutes an historical model which is evident, after a fashion, in the composition of some of the Zagreus passages in The Apes of God. Similarly, the demonology and theology of Malign Fiesta partake of the sort of syncretism and adaptation described by Lacarrière. Beyond this, however, the reference to Alexandria on the first page of the novel is a satiric topos: recalling a city where thought was endlessly refined in the interest of the spirit and intellect, it holds up for an instant, before the descent into cacatopia, the image of a Golden Age. For in Matapolis,Lewis' Satan vulgarizes current philosophy in the service of a sinister vision.

Strangely, the first steps into Hell in Malign Fiesta take one back to The Apes of God. The details of the gateway to the inferno - this is the impression given - were, for Lewis, of the nature of a recurring dream. (Elsewhere, Lewis states that the 'true character of artistic creation' is oneiric. (242) He also titled a painting "Inferno", in 1937. (243)) In both novels, moreover, a wise man and a booby - Zagreus and Dan, Pullman and Satterthwaite - enter the mouth of Hell, and the first personage encountered therein is an extremely aged woman of lofty mien.

In The Apes of God:

> A CAT like a beadle goose-stepped with eerie convulsions out of the night cast by a cluster of statuary, from the recesses of the entrance hall. A maid with matchless decorum left a door silently, she removed a massive copper

> candlestick. She reintegrated the gloom that the cat had left.
>
> The cat returned, with the state of a sacred dependent, into the gloom. Discreet sounds continually rose from the nether stair-head, a dark whisper of infernal presences.... A mighty canvas contained in its bronze shadows an equestrian ghost...
>
> In a room upstairs a dead domestic, sneezing behind his hand because of the chill he had received as he entered the vast apartment, placed heavy chiselled blocks of coal within the well of a grate... (244)

Here is an unfamiliar, inspissated darkness, 'reintegrated' by silently-stepping beings, cat and maid, along with suggestions of the underworld, in the adjective 'nether', and the 'dark whisper of infernal presences'. A ghost on horseback threatens to disturb the deathly stillness, and another servant, already, in a startling metaphor, 'dead', is a spectre stoking the fires of Hell.

The motifs reappear in Malign Fiesta: a great house with a gloom-filled hallway; a darkness that is preternaturally thick, and absorbs bodies; deathly-quiet domestics; and something making its way from a recess. Pullman and Satterthwaite are conducted in by the Bailiff:

> He was almost in the dark, but he knew his way, and stepped out briskly in this carpeted well, in this lofty black hall of his ancestral dwelling. Two domestics moved in the darkness....A sound of a lift was heard. When it stopped an old lady came out of it in a recess of the hall. An anonymity reminiscent of the windowless front of the house marked the falling black segments of her robe.
>
> ...
>
> The servant...made his way quickly into the great opacity, retraced his steps towards the front door, which he opened slightly, and beckoned to the four figures...Seemingly it was the idea not to allow too big a slice of daylight to dispel the gloom of this windowless tower which resembled another medium than air...
>
> Pullman appeared to be adapting himself to this unknown medium, with great unsteadiness following the servant into the black hall...He could...see nothing, but followed the silently moving figure ahead of him. (245)

The accumulation of variants on the theme of darkness establishes the leitmotiv of a novel whose Stygian obscurity is only dispelled in the closing pages; it also foreshadows the mythic origin of Lewis'

Satan, and underpins the complex genealogy of the old lady just glimpsed.

Her prototype, however, is Lady Fredigonde Follet, of The Apes of God. The latter is associated by metaphor with the grave,

> Trapezoid in profile - an indoor model of the Maya Pyramid, the building for which that structure is the blank pedestal represented by her savage head - Lady Fredigonde Follet received the combing at first with immobility. (246)

as is the old lady of Malign Fiesta (Madame Heracopoulos, the Bailiff's mother),

> This progress, kept on its course owing to the forward movement of a grey silhouette, terminated in Pullman's stumbling into the room where the sepulchral lady and her shadow, the ex-Bailiff, awaited him. (247)

and her abode is a 'mausoleum'. (248) Then, each having recently completed her toilet, the two women are similarly framed:

> The elements of the arrangement proposed were as follows. Three distinct zones were involved. There was that of the white arcs in perspective of the cap, there was the green region of hair, and there was the pallid copper of the skin. (249)

'Three distinct zones' are presented again in this portrait of the Bailiff's mother:

> The metallic silver of the hair, as though of a false white, the awful pallor of the face, the deadly black of the tight mantilla... (250)

But the head of Fredigonde is done in an artist's polychrome: it is a painter's description. In contrast, the bust of Madame Heracopoulos is cruder and more direct (one need not here, like Fredigonde, await the 'synthesis' (251)). It is a monochromatic struggle of light and dark, with dark prevailing. The description continues:

> ...and the rest of her person suggestive not of a human body concealed by layers of black cerements but of some kind of form crouching there perhaps, a bejewelled claw at times bursting out, she was an evil apparition. (252)

In the second inferno, formal considerations (the 'resistant and finely sculptured surface, of sheer words' that Lewis had aimed at in The Apes of God (253)) are replaced by an urgent moral vision (such a transition of charge from expression to content, Jameson sees as a general consequence, in the late novels, of Lewis' blindness (254)). This modification of style is marked by a going over from the concrete to the abstract: the exact word has become less important ('sepulchral' will now do for 'Maya Pyramid'), as has solidly specified evocation: in spite of their thematic resemblance, there is far less to catch the eye in the hallway of the Bailiff's 'ancestral home' than there is in that of the Follets'. A much smaller lexis is employed: the reiterated motifs of darkness and blackness (as evidenced in the passages cited above) are substituted for the superabundant terminology that served the taxonomies of the 'external method' in The Apes of God.

The declining interest in the compelling surfaces of life that is indicated by this recourse to a more restrained, conceptual prose might be accounted for by reference to the enlightenment which comes to Pullman, towards the end of Monstre Gai. Here (in passages whose importance Lewis brought to Kenner's notice (255)), Pullman begins to understand that, in the presence of the supernatural, everything, beneath the superficies, is revealed to be stark black or white, to be comprehended by the categories of good and evil. Earthly life merely sophisticates these distinctions with a veneer of urbanity:

> "What is, in the first instance, responsible for these extraordinary confusions, is the introduction of the supernatural into the play, as performed in Third City. What here are archangels or disguised demons, were on Earth simply men and women like ourselves. It may be that they were angelic or diabolic. But this was not visible. So, when you were transported to the scene of Third City, these inoffensive persons with whom you

> had been associated on Earth were suddenly transformed into supernatural beings, with a strong suspicion of diabolic origin. Or, on the other hand, the most prominent figures on your side in the earthly struggle were transformed into archangelic personalities." (256)

The choice between good and evil with which these reflections confront Pullman 'must sound (absurd) to a human ear':

> It would not do so, however, were the Powers for ever in conflict on the earth to be visibly supernatural. If any side you took on Earth were certain to condemn you to take some prearranged rôle in a highly ethical play in a scene in Third City, then all our actions as living men would be indulged in less lightly. (257)

T.S. Eliot called this a moment of 'high tragedy': 'here the supernatural reveals itself, and Good and Evil can no longer be disguised.' (258) I would add to this the observation that, just as the Gnostic's otherworldliness existed in a reciprocal relation with his sensitivity to good and evil - the one augmenting the other - so, with Lewis, it requires the realization of the supernatural, the projection of the imagination into other worlds, for the moral vision to emerge. Thus, whereas moral ideas were deprecated in Men Without Art as a 'source of interference' 259), and it was maintained that the artistic mind was so refined or complex as to be super-ethical, it is now averred (by Pullman) that:

> ...there was no such thing, for a man, as "Beyond good and evil". That was merely the self-advertising eccentricity of an intellectual. (260)

So, in The Apes of God, an old woman's mutterings about the flavours of Hell are conveyed with a sinister playfulness that is neither admonitory nor affective, and, above all, has no referent - a ludicrous unreality is propounded:

> She sniffed without nostrils a disembodied odour that was not there.
>
> So far at least that abominable stench had kept away that was something! It was a disadvantage there was no

> denying, that disgusting mouldering scent - a little bit too near corruption! No sooner had the eyes ceased to function than the nostrils announced it. Like a whiff of Pluto's pantry, on an inner wind blown against the inside of the senses, filling the brain, it was there, almost immediately. (261)

'Pluto's pantry' is a fine burlesque alliteration.

Contrastingly, in Malign Fiesta, predicative statements register the immediate presence of evil - on the sensibility,

> "She is not the kind of person that I would wish to see by moonlight or by sunlight, alive or dead, anywhere in the world or out of the world." (262)

or on the senses,

> ...his new environment - its colour, its smell, its absence of sound...was of course not to his taste - he did not like the windowless hall, lit by two small hooded lamps. The eyes of the domestics were like those of animals existing in the darkness; and there was that faint trace of an odour which he recognized; its association was demonic...(263)

Nor is any distancing or mockery allowed by the narrative, even when Pullman's fancy goes to work on the terrible being to whom he has been introduced,

> ...the thought of this old being, moving with the speed of light across the universe, elicited the picture of a flashing witch, clutching a metaphysical broomstick in an astral night (264)

or on her hallway,

> What had been vaguely sinister was now plain sailing! This was the towering ante-chamber to the domesticity of an ogress. (265)

Like Fredigonde, she endures a sort of living death, but with a malignant vigour: like the Sibyl of The Aeneid, she ages and shrivels, but cannot die. And in a further resemblance to Vergil's prophetess, she is Pullman's first source of information about the ways of the inferno. With appalling merriment, she explains the regime of 'Dis' (here, the Punishment Centre): by surgery, the tongues of the

loquacious are cut in ribbons, the noses of the inquisitive sliced off, and (something in which Madame Heracopoulos has herself assisted) the cuticle of female sinners stripped away.(266) In a moment which makes the heart sink, Pullman himself is jovially threatened:

> "If you were a Sinner, and I were your guardian, I would tickle your pretty feet, and draw out your banter....I could shorten your tongue for an inch or two if it seemed to me too long." She fell into a paroxysm of sadic mirth. (267)

The darkness which surrounds and emanates from this old woman - who exists in a 'black immobility', and 'on either side of (whose) nose were two deadly cold black eyes' (268) - is not only a symbol of her wickedness, but also, I would suggest, its source. In his conception of Madame Heracopoulos, I want to propose, Lewis' imagination acted in parallel with, or intuitively reverted to, a specific Gnostic creation myth (the discussion of Jung's essay and the psychological model of Gnosticism in section (iii) has some bearing upon the ensuing analysis).

She offers the following genealogy of herself, the Bailiff and their kind:

> "We are known as Nephalim," Madame Heracopoulos told (Pullman). "That is a Hebrew word, of course. You perhaps have heard how a great many angels grew tired of the sterility of their life in Heaven, and, when they had established themselves, in some sort, on the Earth, according to the view of God Almighty (as you call him), most improperly had carnal intercourse with women. Eventually a race of giants came to pass. We poor little square-nosed persons were the outcome. We have enough of the angelic and the supernatural in our blood to cause us to differ from men. We live much longer, to begin with." (269)

The prototypical version of this family history occurs in Genesis, Chapter 6:

> 1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,
> 2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.
> 3 And the Lord said, My Spirit shall not always strive

with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.
4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.
5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
6 And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

Interpretation of these verses depends on the construction placed upon the phrase 'sons of God'.

Milton (in Paradise Lost XI, 11. 556 - 637) takes the phrase to mean the descendants of Adam (i.e. men), and presents what Alastair Fowler calls a 'de-mythologized' account of the story from Genesis 6: Adam's vision, before the expulsion from Eden, is of how men, distracted by pride in their own arts and by the allure of women, become forgetful of their duty to God, and are subsequently punished by the Flood. (270)

The Genesis story was also treated of in the exegeses of Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and Philo, the last of whom, according to Wilson, too ingeniously employed it as the basis of his anthropogony, and as an account of the ascent and descent of angels, in his De Gigantibus. (271)

Several Gnostic systems also utilized Genesis 6 as the basis of creation myths, and, in common with the exegetists cited above, understood 'sons of God' to mean angels or supernatural powers. The Ophites and the Valentinians were among the sects to adapt this chapter from the Old Testament (272): though their interpretations do not here concern us technically, what is of interest is the fact that both Christian and Judaic exegetists and Gnostic teachers went to the Genesis story as a source of explanation, this testifying to its mythopoeic power; and that, taken together, they demonstrate a consensus

over the meaning of 'sons of God' which accords with Lewis' description of angels' mating with mortal women. One Gnostic document, however, seems to be particularly close thematically to the demonology that Lewis devised for Madame Heracopoulos and her son, and, beyond this, to the central subject of Malign Fiesta.

This document is the Apocryphon Johannis (The Apocryphon of John), referred to by early commentators on Gnosticism, but assumed to have been lost. It was re-discovered among the documents of the Gnostic library unearthed at Nag Hammadi in 1947, the full text becoming available in 1955 (by curious coincidence, the year of publication of Malign Fiesta). (273)

The text (putatively an account of the system of the Barbelognostics) contains the vision of John, the son of Zebedee, and Wilson writes of it that: 'One striking feature is the reinterpretation of the Genesis narrative which forms so large a part of the treatise.' (274) In the system described therein, the true God does not reveal himself, and dwells in 'pure light'. Its revision of Christian theology is in essence Marcionite: '...the God of the Old Testament has been degraded into the chief of the rulers of this world'. (275) He is represented as the Demiurge, or satanic figure, of this system, Ialdabaoth, who 'set Adam in Paradise, to deceive him,' its superficial bliss inducing in him forgetfulness of the Realm of Light/other world; and by means of the serpent in Eden 'implanted in man sexual desire; procreation increases the number of men in the world, and therefore the number of divine sparks in the power of Ialdabaoth, and so serves his purpose.' (276) Thus, The Apocryphon of John interprets Genesis 1 - 3.

Now, to the sixth chapter, alluded to in Madame Heracopoulos' account of her origins: 'A question from John about the origin of the

ἀντίμιμον πνεῦμα ('"Antimimon Pneuma" ("Imitation-Pneuma"), a demoniac force which is to rule over the divine Light-Spark in Man, by the will of the Powers.' (277)) leads to a continuation of the re-interpretation of Genesis. Ialdabaoth and his powers brought εἱμαρμένη (fate/destiny (278)) into being, and by times and seasons fettered the gods of heaven, angels, demons, and men, but then he repented and resolved to destroy his creation by a flood. The Epinoia of light warned Noah, who told the other men, but they did not believe him. Noah and a few elect companions covered themselves with a cloud of light, and so were delivered from the darkness which Ialdabaoth poured out over all things. The powers then sent their angels to the daughters of men, but at first had no success and so resolved to create the ἀντίμιμον πνεῦμα, which they implanted in the women. Their offspring were children of darkness, in whom the ἀντίμιμον πνεῦμα was so strong as to prevent them learning the truth.' (The emphasis is mine.) (279)

Haardt gives the text itself, and I will here quote an extract which contains a detail omitted in Wilson's paraphrase, but bearing upon the present discussion: 'They (Ialdabaoth and his powers) sent their angels to the daughters of men to generate descendants from their bodies, for pleasure. At first they did not succeed in their purpose. They all came to a decision, to create the Antimimom Pneuma in memory of the Pneuma which had descended, and the angels changed their (outward) appearance into the shape of their (i.e. the women's) husbands. And they impregnated them with the Pneuma which filled them with darkness....They led them into temptation...And they seized them and begot children out of the darkness.' (280)

The following parallels now emerge between Lewis' reading of Genesis 6 and that given in The Apocryphon of John. First, both take it that it was angels that had sexual intercourse with women (regard-

ing which the Bible is ambiguous, Milton opting for the prosaic alternative). Then, absent from the Old Testament story, but present in both of these interpretations, is the idea of the issuing of a being of darkness (represented by, respectively, Madame Heracopoulos or the 'children of darkness') from the alliance of wicked angels and women. Finally, while Genesis 6 is unclear with regard to the change of stature in the angels which precedes their sexual union with women (though Verse 4 does refer to 'giants'), both The Apocryphon of John and Malign Fiesta describe explicitly a transformation to human dimensions - Madame Heracopoulos' account continues:

> "...the angels, who are titans of enormous size, can reduce themselves quite easily, and must have done that to have sexual intercourse with a woman. The 'giants', who were the earliest offspring of these, would assume for good the height and habits of an average man, and so they would arrive at us." (281)

Two possibilities, by no means mutually exclusive, now suggest themselves.

On the one hand, Lewis may have been unconscious of these parallels, and have had no knowledge of The Apocryphon of John: the matter of Genesis 6 provided him with the inspirational archetype for a demonological creation myth, as it inspired the author of John's vision and, in the passages of Malign Fiesta in question, he was, like Jung's visionary artist, directed by intuition.

The other possibility is that Lewis was cognizant of some form of the vision of John (though not, of course, of the full text, since it was published in the same year as Malign Fiesta). That he could have possessed such knowledge is not out of the question, since Wilson points out that reconstruction or summaries of The Apocryphon of John were published in the works of Schmidt and Sagnard in, respectively, 1907 and 1947. These summaries are based on Irenaeus' account of John's

vision in the Adversus Haereses, which is extant. Lewis may have looked up any of these sources, though most likely the last, since Wilson does not indicate that Schmidt or Sagnard exist in translation (from the French or German). (282)

I have been prompted to raise this second possibility by a detail in Malign Fiesta which either indicates Lewis' knowledge of secondary sources of The Apocryphon of John, or else is of a purely coincidental nature. This is that, after his life is spared by Sammael, the Bailiff begins to be called 'Zoë'. Sammael, for example, says to Pullman: '"I ...contacted your friend Zoë...you still think of him, of course, as the Bailiff, don't you?"' (283)

Now, in The Apocryphon of John, the true God sends Adam a 'Thought' ('Epinoia') of light, who advises him of his true home, of how the divine-spark is trapped within him, and of how he may re-ascend to the Realm of Light. This 'Epinoia' is named 'Zoë': 'Ialdabaoth and his powers brought Adam down to the material world and fashioned for him a body from the four elements; this is the grave of light that is in him, and fetters him to the material. The supreme God, however, in his mercy sent him a helper, the Epinoia of light, whom he called "Zoë"; this was hidden in Adam, that the archons might not become aware of it.' (284)

If Lewis intended anything by the use of this name, it was, possibly, a twisting or inversion of the vision of John. The Bailiff is the helper of man in the midst of evil, insofar as he secures for Pullman a safe and important position (though it is he who has brought Pullman to Hell in the first place). Then, in the capacity of head of the Secret Service (after his reprieve by Sammael), the Bailiff is again of dubious assistance to man, insofar as he plays a central part in Sammael's scheme to exalt humanity over the divine.

Finally, an allusion in The Apes of God may have some bearing upon the question of Lewis' familiarity with the Gnostic myth of Zoe". Wilson notes that Till's commentary on The Apocryphon of John sees Zoe" as prefiguring, or corresponding to, Eve, and refers to the 'tradition of the creation of a woman before Eve' in which 'Lilith' is the name of another such forebear of Adam's mate. (285) Zagreus, explaining to Ratner the amulet he is wearing around his neck, says:

> "There are three names on it, you see: Senoi, Sansenoi, Sammangelof. It is a charm against our bad mother, Lillith. The three names are of the three protecting angels who flew with her in conversation as she hovered with her illicit wings above the Red Sea." (286)

Like Madame Heracopoulos, Sammael (Lewis' Satan) is associated with darkness, but it is, in his case, pre-Biblical in its essence. Christians, he explains to Pullman, have the wrong impression of their Devil. For a start, he is not God's creation, has always existed, or at least, his customary characterization is a product of the syncretism of Judaism, Christianity and an older religion:

> "I am pre-Genesis, whether in Rome, Canterbury, or Geneva. But, as far as the created earth is concerned, my origins are Mazdean, or shall we say Persian. The language which I, and all other angels, first spoke, proto-Iranian. Now, in speaking to a Christian I must tread warily, but the Jewish God (and subsequently the Christian God) came from Iran, too. The language we spoke when we first knew one another was Iranian: when the Hebrew selected God, his new God learned Hebrew: and that subsequently was the language we spoke - with a strong Persian accent." (287)

Mazdaism (mentioned in section (iv) in connection with The Art of Being Ruled) was a late phase in the development of Zoroastrianism. It was founded on the dualism of Ormuzd (Ahura Mazda) and Ahriman, the good and evil principles, who embodied, respectively, eternal light and darkness. Gnosticism (of the Iranian species, and, later, Manichaeism) incorporated within its system this dualism, and the divine being and proto-Satan attached to it. Sammael's version of the evolution of

religion is sound: the Jewish Satan (as was noted in reference to Ratner in the last section) is very probably derived from Ahriman; and Wilson writes that the Judaic hierarchical theology 'with God as supreme' seems to have been influenced by 'Persian angelology'. (288)

Sammael himself has been modelled on Ahriman, or, rather, has had that role foisted on him, he maintains:

> "I have had no purpose in saying all this - I have no diabolic desires to debunk God - except to demonstrate how it came about that Christianity has a Counter-God, as it were, an Anti-Christ, a Devil. The fact is that the Iranian dualism is at the bottom of God's mind. There was from the first a hankering after an Ahriman - a desire to have 'His Darkness' - to use Byron's expression - to balance 'His Brightness'. There was no one in sight who was a suitable opposite of sufficient weight, impressively hideous, out of which to make an Ahriman. And then I appeared, with my historical opposition to Man. He installed me - a most unsuitable personality, a 'Son of the Morning' and all the rest of it - as his official Opponent, his Ahriman. To conceal my objectionable beauty, a monstrous myth was built up by his publicity agents. And so it is that every Sinner confronted by me as the Devil is looking for my horns and tail....
>
> The Jewish Religion is, of course, very parochial compared with the Iranian. So its derivatives, Christianity and Mohammedanism, are mainly mythological (indeed, often homely), whereas Iranian thought, in comparison, is conceptual. Iranian divinity certainly had geographic roots, but Mazda is not a national God in the way that Yaweh was..." (289)

Sammael's complaint is that he is the victim of the propaganda that is the instrument of God's ambition to transform Christianity from a narrow, derivative religion into an ideal, or universal, system, to recast it in the form of the eternal Persian dualism of light and darkness, good and evil. In order to aggrandize Himself, God must seem to have a worthy opponent, hence His putting it about that Sammael is the very principle of darkness. What Sammael's initial comment about his origins being Mazdean 'as far as the created earth is concerned' implies, I think, is that, just as in Iranian Gnosticism or Manichaeism, the Supreme Being created the world in order to have a battlefield to fight for the release of the portion of divine light that has be-

come mixed up with darkness, so the Christian God wants to give the impression that he is involved in such a struggle with Sammael. This, in Sammael's view, shows in God a taste for melodrama: in the Persian systems referred to above, (in Haardt's phrase) 'The cause of Light's imprisonment in darkness is an attack by Darkness on Light'; (290) but no such primordial assault has occurred here, merely a 'disagreement':

> "This piece of history in which I have been indulging may be summarized as follows. Into an essentially tribal, 'chosen people' religion, a phoney cosmic dualism has been introduced, in which I play a ridiculous part. I am where I am as a result of a disagreement with your God, not because I am a malignant promoter of disorder, or because I was born bad. There are plenty of people who are by nature evil, but I am not one of those. Therefore, in the Christian system, I am miscast and, naturally, a weakness has ensued from that." (291)

To make of Satan a lecturer in comparative religion was a brilliant means of providing the 'Father of Lies' with a new veneer of plausibility. All of Sammael's knowledge is employed in the service of deception, and perfectly calculated to appeal to an intellectual such as Pullman, who:

> allowed a few observations to form, such as these. Were these two Iranian titans, one an angel, the other an unattached gentleman, supposed to meet in the mists of the early world? On what basis did they form an association? ... This long discourse had interested Pullman extremely. (292)

In denying that he is evil, and in disowning with weary scholarship the dark roles with which he has been identified - 'Ahriman', 'Asmodeus', 'Counter-God', 'Anti-Christ', 'Devil', 'His Darkness', 'Son of the Morning' - Sammael is, of course, behaving true to form: he is displaying the classic Satanic skills of policy and dissembling. Of the character(s) of Satan, Nugent writes: 'The "prince of this world" (John 12:31) is not political in the conventional sense - excepting deceit. He is more what we might call the elemental political

personality , that is, a manipulative and power-oriented being obsessed with controlling others. Through fear and deception. The Bible helps further to embody this personage by calling him "the father of lies" (John 8:44). Seduction he has made into a fine art. The Scriptures he can quote to his own purposes. One of his oldest tricks is in denying his very existence. He is not necessarily interested in "evil" - he simply makes of it a virtue...He is protean and polymorphous, and his face is sure to change with the fashions of time.' (293) Thus, Sammael 'resents' the job of punishing man (294) and is sick of the manipulating of his image by God (grand manoeuvring this: impute your own worst trait to the enemy):

> "I have played the villain for him, a part he cannot do without - or so he believes...No - this is the point - I wish to cease to be his Devil." (295)

Through fear, deception and seduction, Pullman is induced to assist him in his scheme.

This is to annul his relationship with God by changing the ontological and physical status of himself and his angels from supernatural to human. Pullman is beguiled by this, since the blending of angels (stupid, as Sammael has owned (296), but immortal) with men (intelligent, but of short span) seems to promise a race of beings who, conferred with a limited immortality, will realize the full creative and intellectual potential of humanity (in preparation for which, Pullman is entrusted with the important work of establishing a university for the angels (297), and seduced by the privilege of special quarters in 'Haus Europa'):

> "In proposing to my fellow angels to change themselves from angels into men I am planning a liquefaction, as it were, of those titanic immortal units - their immortality will dissolve into mortality, their vast individual shapes will be cut up into thousands of facsimiles of themselves. There would be everywhere a swarming of ephemeral units in place of a world of larger and more stable things."

> "Yes, sir. There is lethargy in that vast stability. You prefer to sacrifice individuality for the mass mind of man, a thousand minds, each possessing the freshness and creativeness of a momentary existence - accumulating in itself the knowledge of millions. You are proposing a Human Age." (298)

In thus proposing to tamper with the stability of angels, Sammael is introducing into the supernatural realm a variation of the 'time-philosophy', the popularizing of which Lewis attacked in Time and Western Man:

> Dispersal and transformation of a space-phenomenon into a time-phenomenon throughout everything - that is the trick of this doctrine...A crowd of hurrying shapes, a temporal collectivity, is to be put in the place of the single object of what it hostilely indicates as the 'spatializing' mind. The new dimension introduced is the variable mental dimension of time. (299)

Lewis' metaphysics is now, however, the subordinate of a moral intent: if Sammael's adherence to the 'Time-Cult' is a sign of his wickedness, there is an implicit approval of God's predilection (disparaged by Sammael) for Iranian dualism, which, in its eternal and universal consistency, is, as it were, 'spatially' defined.

His project, Sammael informs Pullman, '"is a most revolutionary idea."' (300) It is so not least because it calls for the introduction into Angeltown of large numbers of women, 'daughters of Eve',(301) who previously were in Matapolis only to be punished (the spectacle of Sammael's treatment of a woman guilty of sexual sin (302) was what frightened Pullman into falling in with the Devil). Now, women will be required for the perpetuating of the new race:

> "...a permanent change to human stature might...modify many things, such as the length of our lives. That would mean that as a race we should gradually die out....Then you see to what such a change might lead: namely, the introduction of the female into the picture.... one would have to envisage a situation - if most of our angels take wives - in which thirty thousand patriarchs, who have lived for thousands of years, will find themselves in the midst of swarms of people who

> have just come into the world, and, my dear counsellor, the question of Government will have to be decided." (303)

Comparing the polemics of the 1920's with The Human Age, Kenner has remarked that an insight of Lewis' that remains consistent is that, 'power is always wielded by vulgarians.' (304) In the picture of Sammael that emerges from the passages quoted above is perceptible the exponent of 'destructive revolution', of the 'religion of impermanence', who had been the object of Lewis' animadversions in The Art of Being Ruled. In section (iv) was presented Lewis' argument that such figures flourish by flying 'a grey and neutral flag', when they should be 'forced to declare themselves as Ozman or Ahriman, the dark or the light' - then we could see the danger. Sammael, of course, has already been declared to be Ahriman; but he has taken pains to simulate a far more modest reputation, and, under the flag of a sufficiently sensational revolution, assumes that his true nature and true purpose will be overlooked. This fools Pullman for a while, but not God, who is both more penetrating and less avid of progress, or change for change's sake, then the average citizen.

Beyond this, Sammael's scheme is, as revolutionary thinking, quite unoriginal. It is based, once again, on the story from Genesis 6 (which might be regarded as the scriptural key to the novel); and it partakes of the Gnostic interpretation of the Biblical account. Sammael, like Ialdabaoth in The Apocryphon of John, is causing his 'black angels' (305) to mate with the daughters of men; and, like the Gnostic demiurge, he is proposing a humanizing of the angelic form in order to facilitate such intercourse.

To encourage the angels to take women, a carnival (the 'fiesta' of the title) is organized by Pullman. Female sinners are to be released from the Punishment Centre to provide a supply of sexual partners, and 'on the backs of the invitation cards' is printed:

BRING YOUR WIVES
AND GIRLS (306)

A few angels demur:

> The protests of the reactionary angels sounded antediluvian, when they sometimes bobbed up, with armchair arguments, in the midst of this irresistible flood of popular enthusiasm. (307)

The validity of the parallels suggested above (with respect to Sammael's project, Genesis 6 and John's vision) is again substantiated by a particular detail (as was the case with 'Zoe"'). The conscious use of scriptural knowledge or external sources is signalled by the pairing of 'antediluvian' and 'flood'. 'Antediluvian' (literally, 'existing or happening before Noah's Flood') surely alludes to Genesis 6, where God punishes the wickedness that results from the union of the 'sons of God' with women by sending the Flood that destroys all but Noah and his family. Furthermore, as was seen in Wilson's account, the theme of the Flood is also incorporated in The Apocryphon of John, where, however, it is Ialdabaoth who, in a moment of repentance, sends the Deluge, in order to destroy the corrupted creation. The dissenting angels may be old-fashioned, their archaic opinions easily overwhelmed ('bobbing up' in the midst of a figurative flood of vulgar, sex-crazed fanaticism); but their dissent is prophetic of the revisiting of God's punishment in Genesis 6 upon Matapolis, at the climax of the novel.

Then, 'antediluvian', as well as indicating outside sources, intensifies, with hindsight, Lewis' foreboding about the effects of 'destructive revolution' (also quoted in section (iv)):

> ...a very complete and profound inundation is at hand. After us comes the Deluge...Meantime, we have a duty where the officials of the Flood, as they might be called, are concerned. (308)

This is not to suggest that Sammael 'dramatizes' some of the apocalyptic

concerns of The Art of Being Ruled (or, elsewhere, of Time and Western Man). Rather, Sammael-Ahriman occupies Lewis' imagination as the archetypal agent of covert practice and deception, whose short-term purpose is control of the masses, and ultimate aim the bringing on of chaos, destruction or darkness. That is to say, he pre-exists both The Art of Being Ruled - where the Devil's work is sociologically and philosophically identified - and The Human Age, where, an even more 'profound inundation' than Lewis had dreamt of having come down in the two preceding decades, Sammael, having accreted something of Hitler, is produced in the flesh.

In the midst of the fiesta, Pullman finally is struck by the enormity of Sammael's plans, and by terrible guilt at his part in them:

> In Sammael's heart there was no great purpose, but the old, cold pride. He was resolved to explode the supernatural, ultimately to make an end of God. He wished to bring Heaven crashing down. He was now arranging for the contamination of the angel nature - for the destruction of something which had endured since the beginning of time. He was going to mix it up with the pettiness and corruption of mankind....To save his skin, he (Pullman) had been actively assisting at the annihilation of the Divine. (309)

Of this passage, Chapman writes: 'The master-plan to "humanize" the angels is an attempt to terminate the servility of Hell to Heaven by ending the supernatural role of the diabolic powers. Sammael conjectures that by abolishing one half of the Manichean dualism, he would ultimately bring about "the annihilation of the Divine." (310) It is not Sammael, however, who 'conjectures' this, but Pullman; and to base an analysis of the novel on Pullman's analysis of Sammael is unreliable.

It must be so - unless it were a convention of infernal literature that the Devil reveal all to a selected confidante. That is to

say, Pullman's only source of information about Sammael and Sammael's motives has been Sammael himself - the 'Father of Lies'. Thus, Pullman's estimation of God's dependence on Sammael (the one cannot exist without the other) is not necessarily either accurate or veridical, since it is based on what Sammael has told him (in passages where, anyway, Sammael kept rhetorically playing with the idea of his own status). Beyond this, it is theologically unsound to suppose either that God needs Satan (who, in Revelation Chapter 20, Verse 10, is thrown into a pit of fire for eternity at the second resurrection), or that 'abolishing one half of the Manichaean dualism' will 'bring about the "annihilation of the Divine".' In Manichaeism, the principle of light contends with that of darkness in order to recover fallen light. If, therefore, the dark powers retire from the struggle, the restitution of fallen light is merely made easier. Then, by what means could Sammael 'contaminate' the heavenly angels, and thereby 'bring Heaven crashing down'? What he does to his own angels, who are fallen anyway, is of more questionable importance than Pullman (whose faculties are unbalanced by fear and guilt) allows: why should modification of the nature of fallen angels constitute a threat to Heaven?

It is more reasonable, I think, to suggest that Sammael's designs are upon man rather than Heaven, or at least that an offence against Heaven is only indirectly meditated. That is to say, just as The Apocryphon of John envisioned '(a) struggle for the soul of man between the world of light and the world of darkness',(311) so here, Sammael, like Ialdabaoth, by mixing human nature with that of the dark angels, intends to erect a new barrier between man and salvation, to isolate man further from Heaven. Indeed, Pullman and Sammael have at one point (312) discussed the removal of the new race to another planet, where, it is to be presumed, the 'children of darkness' would be conclusively shut off from the divine light.

Thus, Sammael's 'Human Age' is merely a grand lie, manufactured in the service of a new scheme to ensnare the human spirit in darkness. In the interests of this scheme, he is prepared to sacrifice his angels; yet all his talk about transforming himself into a human is, evidently, another deception. Though he is attended at the fiesta by a beautiful 'octaroon', he tells Pullman that, '"Naturally, there will be no actual marriage;"' and the fabricated denunciation of her as a 'triple-murderess', along with Sammael's decision to have her shot as soon as the fiesta is over, is not a good start to the 'Human Age'. Sammael, it seems, is to remain supernatural, unsullied by the complication with humanity to which he has condemned his angels. (313)

Nevertheless, Pullman's fears about his part in the 'humanization of the Divine' (314) are as groundless as Sammael's assurance that God will never mount a full-scale assault on Matapolis.(315) Heaven can as easily spare Pullman as it can overwhelm Sammael. The images of the Flood which here recur are salvatory, as well as punitive. A huge 'cataclysmic foot' crushes Satters' cherished peony, while:

> The light blazed outside. An ocean of light seemed to have settled down around the lair of the lord Sammael...(Pullman) was now in the divine element. (316)

## FOOTNOTES

1 Gnosis: Character and Testimony, p.3.
2 ibid. pp. 4, 5, 6.
3 ibid, p.9.
4 Robert McLachlan Wilson, The Gnostic Problem, pp.76 & 104.
5 Jacques Lacarrière, The Gnostics, p.10.
6 See "The Trial of Man" by Hugh Kenner, Malign Fiesta (Calder and Boyars), p.232; "The Politics of Wyndham Lewis" by C.H. Sission, Agenda: "Wyndham Lewis Special Issue", 1969-1970, Vols.VII, 3 - VIII, 1, p.110; and Wyndham Lewis: Fictions and Satires, p.66.
7 "Lewis and the Split Man", Enemy News, Spring 1986, No.22, p.36.
8 "A Climate of Warm Indifference", Bananas, p.99.
9 "Excerpts from the Man of the World", Agenda: "Special Lewis Issue", p.181.
10 Gnosis: Character and Testimony, p.5. See also The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol.VII, pp.153-161.
11 The Spectator, 3/4/1960, p.328.
12 Fables of Aggression: Wyndham Lewis, the Modernist as Fascist, pp.1 - 6.
13 "Fredric Jameson: Fables of Aggression", Blast 3, p.351.
14 "A Climate of Warm Indifference", p.87.
15 The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers, Vol.II, pp.370 - 371.
16 "A Climate of Warm Indifference", p.87.
17 ibid. p.89.
18 "Dualism and les Autres", Agenda: "Special Lewis Issue", p.136.
19 ibid.
20 Blast,1, p.145.
21 See The Republic, pp.130-132, and The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers, Vol.I, pp.149-150.
22 Rude Assignment, p.51.
23 The Faber Book of Modern Verse, p.69.
24 "Dualism and les Autres", p.136.
25 ibid. pp.136-137.
26 Gnosis: Character and Testimony, p.9.
27 "Dualism and les Autres", p.137.
28 ibid.
29 As Reed Way Dasenbrock shows in his "Afterword" to the new Black Sparrow edition, pp.432 - 445.
30 The Art of Being Ruled (1926), p.98.
31 ibid. p.341.
32 ibid. pp.71 - 75 & 85 - 90.
33 Rude Assignment, p.181.
34 "Cantleman's Spring Mate", repr. Blasting and Bombardiering, p.305.
35 The Art of Being Ruled, pp.253 - 254.
36 The Gnostics, pp.24 - 25.
37 Wyndham Lewis: Fictions and Satires, p.63.
38 "Cantleman's Spring Mate", pp.309 - 310.
39 Blast,1, p.129.
40 Fables of Aggression, p.30. Jameson's context, however, is different from my own.
41 Hitler: The Führer and the People, Chapter 6, "The Language of Nature", pp.49 - 56.
42 Gnosis: Character and Testimony, p.19.
43 ibid. p.22.
44 ibid. pp.22, 23, 24, 26.
45 Masks of Satan: The Demonic in History, p.178.

46 "Afterword", The Complete Wild Body, pp.412 - 413.
47 Haardt cites Quispel's Gnosis als Weltreligion (1951) in Gnosis: Character and Testimony, p.21.
48 The Art of Being Ruled, pp.342 - 343.
49 Time and Western Man, p.318.
50 Gnosis: Character and Testimony, pp.19 - 20. Haardt cites Quispel at the end.
51 "Psychology and Literature", 1930, repr. Twentieth Century Literary Criticism, p.178.
52 The Caliph's Design, Lewis' 1939 revision, repr. Wyndham Lewis on Art, p.152.
53 "Psychology and Literature", p.178.
54 From The Weekly Sketch , repr. Satire and Fiction , pp.34 - 35.
55 The Childermass, p.151.
56 See The Childermass, pp.184 & 236, and Masks of Satan: The Demonic in History, pp.15 & 38.
57 "Psychology and Literature", p.182.
58 See, for example, Men Without Art, pp.126 - 127.
59 The Art of Being Ruled, pp.14 - 15.
60 I have benefited here from the article on "Dualism" in the Encyclopaedia Britannica .
61 The Art of Being Ruled, p.16.
62 ibid. pp.413 - 414.
63 See, again, pp.74 - 75 ibid..
64 The Gnostics, p.101.
65 Time and Western Man, pp.311 - 312.
66 Haardt presents extracts of the Adversus haereses of Irenaeus in Gnosis: Character and Testimony, pp.64 - 65.
67 Blasting and Bombardiering, p.102.
68 Wyndham Lewis; Fictions and Satires, p.56.
69 The Gnostics, pp.24 - 25.
70 The Art of Being Ruled, p.281.
71 The Apes of God, p.237.
72 Cited by Haardt, Gnosis: Character and Testimony, p.40 .
73 Blasting and Bombardiering, p.103.
74 See Gnosis: Character and Testimony, p.8.
75 Men Without Art, p.288.
76 The phrase is Alan Munton's, Collected Poems and Plays of Wyndham Lewis, p.223.
77 "Physics of the Not-Self", 1932, repr. Collected Poems and Plays of Wyndham Lewis, pp.200 - 201.
78 ibid. p.202.
79 The Lion and the Fox, p.46.
80 The Dithyrambic Spectator, p.163.
81 Haardt cites the Prima Apologia of Justinus and the Adversus haereses of Irenaeus on Simon Magus and Helena, in Gnosis: Character and Testimony, pp.31 - 34.
82 ibid. p.31.
83 This and following quotations, Time and Western Man, pp.394 - 395.
84 The Enemy of the Stars, Blast 1, p.70.
85 "The Code of a Herdsman", The Little Review, Vol.4, 3, July 1917; rpt. 1967, p.5.
86 Masks of Satan: The Demonic in History, p.49.
87 Gulliver's Travels, The Writings of Jonathan Swift, p.254.
88 "A Soldier of Humour", 1927, repr. The Complete Wild Body, p.18.
89 "The Meaning of the Wild Body", ibid. p.157.
90 "Inferior Religions", 1927, ibid. p.152.
91 ibid. p.151.

92 Men Without Art, pp.107 & 108.
93 ibid. p.124.
94 ibid. p.114.
95 ibid. p.121.
96 See Laughter (tr. from the French Le Rire), p.88, and "The Meaning of the Wild Body", p.158.
97 see Laughter, pp.127-128.
98 The Apes of God, p.144.
99 Men Without Art, p.226.
100 ibid. p.113.
101 ibid. p.288.
102 Haardt cites Schmithal's Die Gnosis in Korinth (1965) in Gnosis: Character and Testimony, p.26.
103 Men Without Art, p.288 - 289.
104 The Gnostics, p.51.
105 The "Synopsis of the Entire System (of Manes) According to Augustine", and extracts from the "Against the Dogma of Mani" of Alexander of Lykopolis, are given by Haardt in Gnosis: Character and Testimony, pp.341 - 349 and 336 - 339.
106 Cited by Haardt, ibid. p.59.
107 The Gnostics, p.74.
108 Haardt cites Epiphanius' Panarion, in Gnosis: Character and Testimony, pp.69 - 73.
109 The Gnostics, p.90.
110 ibid. pp.94 - 95.
111 This and the following four quotations, "Cantleman's Spring Mate", pp.305 - 306.
112 ibid. p.310.
113 The Gnostics, p.76.
114 This and next quotation, "Cantleman's Spring Mate", pp.310 - 311.
115 Tarr (1928), p.213.
116 ibid. pp.20 & 21.
117 ibid. p.21.
118 ibid. pp.44 & 54.
119 ibid. p.213.
120 ibid. p.312.
121 ibid. pp.317 - 318.
122 ibid. p.47.
123 This and quotations above, ibid. p.325.
124 ibid. p.334.
125 Snooty Baronet, p.44.
126 ibid. p.47.
127 ibid. pp.47- 48.
128 ibid. pp.123 & 127.
129 Cited by Haardt in Gnosis: Character and Testimony, p.137.
130 Snooty Baronet, p.163.
131 ibid. pp.290, 301 & 305.
132 ibid. p.309.
133 Self-Condemned, pp.82 - 85.
134 ibid. p.88.
135 ibid. pp.133 - 134.
136 ibid. p.82.
137 ibid. pp.30 - 31.
138 ibid. p.32.
139 ibid. p.41.
140 ibid. pp.96 - 97.
141 ibid. p.44.
142 ibid. p.351.

143 ibid. pp.386 - 389.
144 ibid. p.356.
145 ibid.
146 ibid. p.351.
147 ibid. p.402.
148 The Apes of God, pp.267, 287 & 501.
149 ibid. pp.509 & 514.
150 ibid. p.116.
151 ibid. pp.607 - 611 for this and two quotations following.
152 The Gnostic Problem, pp.200, 190 & 192.
153 The Apes of God, p.118.
154 ibid. p.611.
155 The Gnostic Problem, p.192.
156 The Plot of Satire, p.3.
157 Montgomery Belgion, "Reader's Report for an American Publisher", repr. Satire and Fiction, pp. 30-31.
158 The Apes of God, p.334.
159 ibid.
160 The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers, Vol.II, pp.343, & 365 - 366.
161 The Apes of God, p.330.
162 ibid. pp.329 & 340.
163 The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers, Vol.I, pp. 44 - 45. Wilson, The Gnostic Problem, p.67, writes: "As Dodd has put it, 'there is a sense in which orthodox Christian theologians like Clement of Alexandria and Origen, on the one hand, and pagan writers like the Hermetists and Hellenistic Jews like Philo, on the other, should be called Gnostics.' Bultmann and Jonas would add Neo-Platonism despite the attacks on the Gnostics in the pages of Plotinus."
164 The Apes of God, pp.160 - 161.
165 ibid. p.342.
166 ibid. p.341.
167 ibid. p.337.
168 See, for example, ibid. pp.331, 334, 335, 337, 338, 341, 342.
169 Rude Assignment, p.183.
170 "Psychology and Literature", p.187.
171 The Apes of God, pp.341 - 342.
172 The Gnostic Problem, pp.69, 70 & 88.
173 The Apes of God, p.329.
174 Cited by Haardt, Gnosis: Character and Testimony, p.31.
175 Acts, Chapter 8, Verses 9 - 11, cited by Haardt, ibid..
176 Cited by Haardt, ibid. p.32.
177 The Apes of God, p.339.
178 Acts, Chapter 8, Verses 20, 21 & 23, cited by Haardt, Gnosis: Character and Testimony, pp.31 - 32.
179 The Apes of God, p.481.
180 See Wyndham Lewis, pp.100 - 101, and Wyndham Lewis: Fictions and Satires, p.105.
181 The Apes of God, p.343.
182 They argue in public, ibid. p.594.
183 ibid. p.476.
184 See, for example, ibid. p.483.
185 ibid. p.258.
186 ibid. p.316.
187 ibid. p.258.

188 The words of Irenaeus, cited by Haardt, Gnosis: Character and Testimony, p.32.
189 The Apes of God, p.377.
190 Rude Assignment, p.56 .
191 The Apes of God, p.378.
192 Time and Western Man, pp.199 & 198.
193 The Gnostics, p.53.
194 The Apes of God, p.592.
195 Cited by Haardt, Gnosis: Character and Testimony, p.33. See also The Gnostic Problem, p.101.
196 See, for example, The Apes of God, pp.474 - 480.
197 ibid. pp.434 - 442.
198 ibid. p.455.
199 ibid. p.468.
200 ibid. p.455.
201 The Second translation is Bird's, Faust Vol.II, pp.339 - 349.
202 The Apes of God, p.480.
203 Masks of Satan: The Demonic in History, p.49.
204 Cited by Wagner, Wyndham Lewis: A Portrait of the Artist as the Enemy, p.232.
205 The Gnostics, pp.35 - 36. See also The Gnostic Problem, p.129.
206 The Apes of God, p.294.
207 ibid. p.237.
208 See, for example, Men Without Art, pp.119 - 120.
209 For Dan's vision (further evidence of the presence of the supernatural in The Apes) see p.418.
210 The Apes of God, pp.295 - 296 .
211 Haardt cites this typical model, proposed by R.Bultmann, in Gnosis: Character and Testimony, pp.23 - 24 .
212 The Apes of God, p.480.
213 ibid. p.311.
214 The Republic, pp. 316 - 321 .
215 The Apes of God, p.294.
216 ibid. p.337.
217 The Gnostics, p.23.
218 The Dithyrambic Spectator, p.180.
219 See, respectively, Chapman's Wyndham Lewis: Fictions and Satires, p.100, and Kenner's Wyndham Lewis, p.102.
220 Aeneid, VI, 11.268 - 269.
221 The Apes of God, pp.51 - 52.
222 ibid. p.53.
223 Aeneid VI, 11.337 - 383.
224 ibid. 11.305 - 326 (No allusion to Paradise Lost III was meant by 'limbo of vanity'.).
225 The Apes of God, p.353.
226 ibid. p.496.
227 See, for example, The Art of Being Ruled, pp.180 - 183.
228 The Apes of God, p.492.
229 ibid. pp.516 - 537.
230 As explained to Dan, ibid. p.529.
231 Aeneid VI, 11.760 - 885.
232 ibid. 11.635 - 665.
233 The Apes of God, pp.54 - 55.
234 ibid. p.609.
235 ibid. pp.617 - 618 .
236 Aeneid VI, 11.893 - 896 .
237 Malign Fiesta, p.457.
238 ibid. p.309 .
239 The Gnostics, p.30 .

240 ibid. p.31, and see also The Gnostic Problem, pp.176 - 177.
241 The Gnostics, pp.59 - 60.
242 Time and Western Man, p.198.
243 Plate 110 in Michel's Paintings and Drawings.
244 The Apes of God, p.7.
245 Malign Fiesta, pp.310 - 312.
246 The Apes of God, pp.7 - 8.
247 Malign Fiesta, p.312.
248 ibid. p.330.
249 The Apes of God, p.13.
250 Malign Fiesta, p.315.
251 The Apes of God, p.13.
252 Malign Fiesta, p.315.
253 Satire and Fiction, pp.45 - 46.
254 Fables of Aggression, p.34.
255 In a letter, 29/8/1955.
256 Monstre Gai, p.222 - I am referring to the Calder edition.
257 ibid. p.223.
258 "A Note on Monstre Gai." Hudson Review, Vol.VII, No.4, 1955, pp. 524 - 526.
259 Men Without Art, p.106.
260 Monstre Gai, p.221.
261 The Apes ofGod, p.16.
262 Malign Fiesta, p.316.
263 ibid. pp.316 - 317.
264 ibid. p.315.
265 ibid. p.330.
266 ibid. pp.325, 326 & 335.
267 ibid. p.324.
268 ibid. p.323.
269 ibid. p.335.
270 Paradise Lost XI, pp.592 - 596. Fowler's note is on p.595.
271 The Gnostic Problem, pp.199 - 200.
272 ibid. p.200.
273 I am following Wilson's account, ibid. pp.149 - 155.
274 ibid. p.154.
275 ibid.
276 ibid. p.152.
277 I have taken this translation from Gnosis: Character and Testimony, p.197.
278 ibid. p.203 for this translation. Here and above, Wilson only gives the Greek.
279 The Gnostic Problem, p.153.
280 From The Apocryphon of John, Gnosis: Character and Testimony, pp.203 - 204.
281 Malign Fiesta, p.338.
282 The Gnostic Problem, pp.149 & 164.
283 Malign Fiesta, p.537. See also pp.521, 540 & 552.
284 The Gnostic Problem, p.152. See also Gnosis: Character and Testimony, p.196.
285 The Gnostic Problem, p.166.
286 TheApes of God, p.340.
287 Malign Fiesta, pp.463 - 464.
288 The Gnostic Problem, p.41.
289 Malign Fiesta, p.464.
290 Gnosis: Character and Testimony, p.7, whence, also, the account of Iranian Gnosticism.
291 Malign Fiesta, p.465.

292 ibid.
293 Masks of Satan: The Demonic in History, p.11.
294 Malign Fiesta, p.461.
295 ibid. p.466.
296 ibid. p.431.
297 ibid. pp.431 - 432.
298 ibid. pp.479 - 480.
299 Time and Western Man, p.181.
300 Malign Fiesta, p.439.
301 As they are referred to, ibid. p.374.
302 ibid. pp.374 - 378.
303 ibid. pp.439, 470 & 471.
304 "The Trial of Man", p.232.
305 They are described thus on pp.436 & 562 of Malign Fiesta.
306 ibid. p.494.
307 ibid. p.496.
308 The Art of Being Ruled, p.16. See also section (iv) of the present chapter.
309 Malign Fiesta, p.511.
310 Wyndham Lewis: Fictions and Satires, p.181.
311 The Gnostic Problem, p.152.
312 Malign Fiesta, p.480.
313 ibid. pp.517, 519, 527 for Sammael's treatment of the woman.
314 ibid. p.566.
315 ibid. p.467.
316 ibid. pp.562, 565 & 566. The 'cataclysmic foot' belongs to one of Sammael's angels, which confuses the Biblical parallel somewhat, though the image is still scripturally resonant.

# CHAPTER 3

## The Hangman in Lewis' Satire, with some Observations upon the Presence of the Railer and the Cynic

(i)

In the previous chapter, it was suggested that Lewis' theoretical and imaginative work gave evidence of a cult of that religious body of thought that may loosely be defined as 'Gnosticism'. Now, I want to make some suggestions about Lewis' relation to a magical tradition, in his capacity as a satirist and satiric theorist. My general purpose in doing so is based on Lewis' statement in Time and Western Man:

> For me art is the civilized substitute for magic; as philosophy is what, on a higher or more complex plane, takes the place of religion. (1)

It is to complete this thesis by demonstrating that, to a considerable degree, the Lewisian corpus can be accommodated within two traditions. That is to say, Lewis' interest in, or affinities with, Gnosticism provided him with a religio-philosophical basis in his theory and fiction (as well as working in the service of the imagination), while a particular current of belief, of still older provenance than Gnosticism, supplied his satire with a magic-aesthetic basis (the aesthetic component, arguably, never fully displacing the magical).

I will begin by citing, in this section, some observations made by Lewis upon the relationship of art and magic. It will be necessary to suggest a little of the general intellectual background of such remarks, which are, in some degree, in character with my principal authority in this chapter (whom I shall present in section (ii)). It is to be hoped that, from these remarks, will immediately emerge one or two ideas which may be of significance in the consideration of Lewis' satire itself.

Lewis asserts, prior to the statement quoted above:

> If you say that creative art is a spell, a talisman, an incantation - that it is magic, in short, there, too, I believe you would be correctly describing it. That the artist uses and manipulates a supernatural power seems very likely... The poet

> or philosopher in the non-religious greek states occupied, we are told, much the same position as the priest or witch-doctor or magician in a more religious or superstitious community. It was for that reason that a poet or philosopher was held responsible for his slightest or most casual utterance in the way that he was. He was recognised as the custodian of the spiritual consciousness of the race. The productions of art assumed somewhat the rôle of sacred books.
>
> It is the appreciation of this magical quality in artistic expression - a recognition that the artist is tapping the supernatural sources and potentialities of our existence - that composes a good deal the attitude towards him and his creation that so often comes to light, and at some periods in a manner so unfavourable for his function. (2)

What is principally to be noted here, with regard to the general direction of this chapter, is Lewis' comment about the supernatural powers of articulation of the antique poet, and the import attached by society to his utterance. Throughout history, as we shall see, the practice, beliefs and reputation of the satirist are, to a varying degree, implicated in such thinking. Aside from this, the passage expresses a remarkable personal credo vis-à-vis the powers constrained by, or inspiring, (Lewis) the artist, and the quasi-primitive condition of artistic creation. Behind it, at some level, may possibly be sensed the influence of the Cambridge school of anthropology. Their work, initiated by Frazer's Golden Bough, Lewis discusses in the second part of The Dithyrambic Spectator, acknowledging the importance of Frazer's encyclopaedic researches in the field of magic and primitive religion (3), and undertaking a critique of Jane Harrison's Ancient Art and Ritual (1913) - not of her basic material, but of her endeavour to dissolve the distance between art and spectator. Certainly, when Lewis, following the passage cited above, states,

> And though the artist is certainly not devoid of religious emotion, it is exercised personally, as it were; and he is in temper the opposite of the religionist. The man-of-science is another sort of transformed magician. He, too, is opposite in temper to the religionist. The truly scientific mind... is as 'detached', as we say, as is the artist-mind. (4)

one is reminded of Frazer's argument that science shares the same assumptions as primitive magic - though its premises are different -, that it evolves from magic, 'displacing' or sidestepping religion. (5)

Then, when Lewis describes the 'magical quality in artistic expression', and states that,

> The artist is definitely, for the fanatical religionist, fabricating graven images, or tampering, in a secular manner, with sacred powers. (6)

there is entailed, on one level, a connection between the Aristotelian tenet, expressed in the Poetics (and to which Lewis refers in The Dithyrambic Spectator), that the originating principle of art is that of imitation, and Frazer's theory that the principle of magic is imitation or mimesis (an effigy or picture is made of that over which one wants to exert some influence). (7) Indeed, The Apes of God might be viewed as providing a concrete demonstration of such a principle: the artist makes portraits of those whom he wishes to destroy.

Further, those images which the artist fabricates are for him, Lewis asserts, as 'real' or as 'alive' as living people. His consciousness is of the

> sort that realizes that Don Quixote or the Widow Wadman is as real, to put it no higher than that, as most people ostensibly alive and walking the earth today. (8)

Consequently, it might be tentatively proposed, any harm the artist qua satirist does those images is, in his imagination at least, in the nature of 'real' damage. Certainly, the picture which emerges from that statement of the artist's simultaneously occupying two worlds, or a world where the imaginary or the supernatural is constantly transcending the 'real', calls to mind passages from Nietzsche's Birth of Tragedy (which, evidently, cast a considerable influence over Jane Harrison's book). In Section 8, Nietzsche declares:

'At bottom, the aesthetic phenomenon is simple: let anyone have the ability to behold continually a vivid play and to live constantly surrounded by hosts of spirits, and he will be a poet; let anyone feel the urge to transform himself and to speak out of other bodies and souls, and he will be a dramatist.' And 'magic transformation,' asserts Nietzsche, 'is the presupposition of all dramatic art.' (9)

The particular relationship of satire and magic, which Lewis' comments in Time and Western Man point indirectly to - as I have suggested above here and there -, has been studied at length by Robert Elliott in The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art (1960). This work, whose contribution to the theory of satire is probably the most important of any this century, I intend to make my main secondary source of reference in the present chapter. I will begin by providing a brief summary of Elliott's thesis.

(ii)

In order to account for the origins of satire, Elliott goes to Aristotle's description of the Phallic Songs that were a feature of the fertility rites practised in Ancient Greece, and elsewhere in Europe and Asia Minor. To such rites, incidentally, Lewis alludes when Horace Zagreus (describing his costume to Ratner) says:

> "At my belt, upon this bootlace you see a phallus, such as was worn by the phallophoroi at the Dionysia." (10)

During these rituals, an effigy of the god (Dionysus/Zagreus) was borne upon a pole; and there was a general licence for the abuse of parsimonious or tight members of the community, these being the object of invective delivered in improvised iambs by the leaders of the rite. The magic function of the phallic ritual was twofold: 'The ceremonial had two aspects, as it were: the invocation of good influences through the magic potency of the phallus, the expulsion of evil influences through the magical potency of abuse.' (11) It was in such fertility ceremonies, concludes Elliott, that belief in the supernatural power of violent language was first systematically manifested; abuse was considered to be 'apotropaic'.

On this consideration, Elliott bases his analysis of the key figure in his study, namely, Archilochus, 'the first individual satirist of record,' who, evidently, marks something of a modification of the apotropaic magic of invective: 'Archilochus' verses had demonic power; his satire killed. Indeed, all satire "kills," symbolically at any rate, and Archilochus is the archetypal figure in the tradition.' (12)

Briefly, the history of Archilochus is this. He was a poet and priest of Demeter in the seventh century B.C., and was descended, on the distaff side, from slaves. Having been betrothed by Lycambes to

his daughter Neobule, Archilochus was enraged when the compact was broken (putatively, on the grounds of the circumstances of his birth). Subsequently, he 'composed iambics against the father and his household,' and, these verses having been sung or recited to Lycambes and Neobule, they committed suicide by hanging themselves. (13)

Some preliminary speculations about the lethal efficacy of Archilochus' iambics, Elliott now offers: 'Whether the iambics of Archilochus were believed to have magical potency because of his own personal command over the Word, which was magical in and of itself, or whether his power derived from his ability to bring about divine intervention, it is difficult to say. But Hendrickson's thesis is convincing: Lycambes and his daughter were driven - or were believed to have been driven - to suicide by the preternatural power of Archilochus' poetry.' (14)

A third possibility might here be added to those advanced by Elliott. This is suggested by G.L. Hendrickson in the essay "Archilochus and the Victims of His Iambics" (1925), where he compares the verses of Archilochus with the curses of classical tragedy: 'The idea of the magical potency of a curse is one of the oldest possessions of the human race, and it is manifested among nearly all peoples and at all times...If we seek to discover the underlying element of truth or efficacy - for there is some - beneath the hocus pocus of words, rites and mechanism, we must attribute whatever power they seem to possess to the exercise of one will upon the will or emotion of another. Suggestion and suggestibility, active and passive, this is the residuum of mystery, and it need not be denied that this residuum is large enough and mysterious enough to embrace phenomena baffling to the untrained and inexperienced mind, and therefore apparently supernatural.' (15) From Elliott and from this passage, we have,

therefore, the possibilities that: (1) the power to cause death resided magically in the character and ability of the poet - his word was actually a weapon; (2) the poet achieved his effect by afflatus or invocation; (3) he killed by the power of suggestion, the will of the victim playing a part.

Lest we should assume that the third is in any way a modern or 'sophisticated' explanation, it will be as well to quote a further passage from Hendrickson, in which he states that the ancient Greeks rationalized this possibility from the first: 'The character of the harm wrought by a curse or malediction was conceived of primitively as direct - a physical emanation, the word itself, which carried the force of a deadly weapon. But just as the Greeks had for the most part rationalized, or "moralized," the curse into a means of redressing outraged right, so also in some degree they qualified its direct efficacy. They thought of it as working rather on the mind, disturbing its balance, and so producing a defect of reason, a madness, in which the victim becomes the agent of his own destruction.' (16)

Based on the model of Archilochus, the idea of the mortal power of the satirist grew, sometimes issuing in apocryphal stories. Thus, Elliott refers to Pliny's account of the career of Hipponax, who, in the sixth century B.C., invented the choliambic metre. Sensitive about his dwarfish appearance, he composed invective rhymes against two sculptors, Bupalus and Athenis, who had made a derisive statue of him. According to some reports (disputed by Pliny), the sculptors, shamed by these venomous verses, hanged themselves. (17) Hendrickson cites the poet Simonides (of Amorgos), whose victim was 'a certain Orodoecides.' (18)

With regard to such stores, Elliott implies, it matters not, in essence, whether death in every case occurred (though the evidence

suggests that the consequences of Archilochus' satire were real), or what the cause of death (did it occur) may have been. Indeed, from a distance of nearly 3,000 years, one can no more than speculate (in the manner of Elliott and Hendrickson above), as Elliott concedes: 'It is most difficult, perhaps impossible, to be precise about the nature of those powers.' (19) What is of importance to literary history is, first, the belief that grew and held in the possibility of a person's being satirized to death; and, then, the influence these stories (with their problematic mixture of fact and legend) have had, both over the satirist's conception of the power of his art, and over the way the satirist is publicly regarded, up to the present day: '...the iambic verses of a major poet, expressive of his hate, his will to destroy, his mockery, were believed to exert some kind of malefic power. The power seems to have resided, not in secret, esoteric spells or in the mechanics of sympathetic magic, but in the character of the poet himself - in his command over the word. The word could kill; and in popular belief it did kill. This is the essence of Archilochus' story. It is crucial for an understanding of the image of the satirist as it develops over the centuries, as it exists in our own day.' (20)

Thus, around 600 years after Archilochus, Horace (in the sixth Epode) likens the virulence of his own satire to that of Archilochus and Hipponax (21); and around two millennia after Archilochus, Ben Jonson invokes the poet, in the Epilogue to Poetaster: 'I could do worse,/ Arm'd with ARCHILOCHUS fury, write Iambicks,/ Should make the desperate lashers hang themselves.' (22) Jonson's threat to his enemies, writes Elliott, 'has two roots...one extending back over two thousand years to Archilochus and the beginnings of Western Civilization,

the other stretching back in cultural (as opposed to chronological) time a distance beyond calculation. Both roots draw upon "primitive" beliefs which have had remarkable vitality throughout the entire history of satirical literature. The principal belief, of course, is that satire kills (or at least causes death), that magical power inheres in the denunciatory and derisive words of a poet whose function is to blame as well as to praise.' (23)

In illustration of the idea that the killing power of the satirist is restricted to neither a certain place nor a certain time, Elliott presents accounts of the cultures of pre-Islamic Arabia and ancient Ireland. There, too, death was preferred to the shame that ensued from being the victim of satire - or in some cases of spells or curses which, in their animus and formal elaborateness, were scarcely distinguished from satire. Indeed, in such awe were held the Irish poets (filid) that some - Aithirne the Importunate provides a notorious example of this - stooped to extortion, exacting largesse from kings and princes who feared being satirized. (24) (It is not, perhaps, flippant to suggest that there can be observed a much diluted trace of this in the funding of Lewis by those who would forestall his satire (the Wadsworths), or, even, by those who had been cruelly satirized (the Schiffs). (25)) Much later comes the Welsh poet Dafydd Ap Gwylim, 'almost a contemporary of Chaucer,' writes Hendrickson, 'of whom it is related that he killed a literary antagonist by the virulence of his verse;' (26) and nearer still to the present day are two Irish poets of the early fifteenth and late seventeenth -early eighteenth centuries, Hugh O'Higgins and Egan O'Rahilly respectively, who, reputedly, killed by lampooning. (27)

Nevertheless, the power of the satiric threat to kill wanes, on the literal level, as belief in magic diminishes, 'the further in

time we come from Archilochus and the beliefs of his age,' writes Elliott. Symbolically, however, the threat enjoys a sinister and enduringly compulsive effect. Thus, though Jonson and, for example, Roy Campbell, 'whose verse will drive hated rival poets to their doom,' expect to have no actual effect, though 'the satirist no longer wields overt magical power, the old tradition remains vital, still exerting a strenuous attraction on our imaginations.' (28)

Furthermore, suggests Elliott, there is a sense in which the reputation of actual figures, such as Archilochus or Hipponax, has worked a reciprocal enrichment of history and literature. Literature returns repeatedly to the figure of the railer, the disreputable, slanderous trouble-maker who, at the same time, is possessed of an irresistible, almost fanatic, urge to deliver truths which those around him are loath to hear. His archetype is Homer's Thersites; thereafter he appears in the form of the Norse god Loki, as Bricriu Poison-tongue in Irish saga, in Shakespeare's Thersites (in Troilus and Cressida), and in the many malcontents of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama - Jaques (in As You Like It), for example, or Marston's Malevole (in The Malcontent). Such figures, Elliott interestingly proposes, may recur, and enjoy licence to rail, or inveigh, because of a residue of the belief - generally held in antiquity, as we have seen - in the apotropaic magic of abuse. His central point, however, is that the literary figure of the railer acquires dimension by absorbing characteristics of 'real' satirists, 'gains depth and resonance from its assimilation of historical figures, particularly when to their poetry has been attributed the malign efficacy of which we know.' Concomitantly, the historical figure of the satirist is invested, by legend, with something of the character of the railer, so that there emerges, in time, a twofold picture of Archilochus, for example, as both railer and magically-inspired poet-priest. (29)

A 'comparable development', states Elliott, involves the railer and the Cynic philosopher Diogenes. The systematic rudeness of the latter caused him to be viewed, with the passing of time, as a sort of satiric railer with licence to abuse, John Lyly's Campaspe (1584) casting him in this role. Reciprocally, the railer of low birth, for example, Apemantus, the 'churlish philosopher' of Timon of Athens, comes to be represented as a Cynic: the appellation 'dog' - for example, 'Thou wast whelped a dog, and thou shalt famish a dog's death.' (2/2) -, which is liberally applied to Apemantus, connotes an association between the literary railer and the intemperate anger and calculatedly rough manners of the school of Antisthenes, since 'cynic' means 'canine' or 'dog-like'. (30)

Timon of Athens, in fact (as Lewis, who was fascinated by the play, seems to have realized - as I will show in section (iii)), is a paradigm for the study of the various forms of the satiric voice. In part it is so because its satiric figures, Timon and Apemantus, represent the differing characteristics of the Archilochian legend. For although, as Elliott points out, their tone and rhetoric now and then converge, Timon, essentially, is a 'satirist-curser', while Apemantus is a 'satirist-railer in the tradition of Thersites.' (31)

Towards the end of his book, Elliott devotes half a chapter each to, respectively, Lewis as a theorist on satire, and Roy Campbell's practice as a satiric poet. Where Lewis is concerned, Elliott's approach does little (does not, in fact, seem interested) to contribute to, or amplify, that tradition he has been following: namely, that based in ancient belief in the magic of invective, all satire intends to kill (symbolically or otherwise).

First, Elliott inspects Lewis' theories that satire is, or should be, an art of external expression, and that satire partakes of the

objective truth of natural science. (32) But since Lewis' many statements on these themes are of the nature of formal, stylistic or rhetorical desiderata, they tell us nothing about the impulse to satirize lethally in Lewis (nor, apparently, does Elliott expect them to, which would be understandable if he were trying to show that Lewis represents a break with that tradition Elliott is interested in - but he isn't).

Then, Elliott gets entoiled in Lewis' series of contradictory statements about whether satire should operate according to ethical sanction, or whether it should be 'non-moral'. This is a question, as I showed in Chapter 1, that has exercised several of Lewis' critics, and is too inclined to be answered on the strength of the dubious assumption that, because all satire is morally motivated, Lewis' must be also. Since I do not want to digress, I will merely state here that such an assumption shows no regard for the psychology of satire, and excessive regard for the excuses or reasons that satirists always give for their art. Elliott, anyhow, evidently out of confusion, resorts to this assumption: 'Manipulate these terms as he will, however, Lewis is utterly incapable of disguising the intense moral urgency underlying his whole literary enterprise.' (33) My personal view, expressed in the last chapter, is that nothing that could be described as 'intense moral urgency' is perceptible in Lewis' fiction until the end of Monstre Gai. Had Elliott accepted Lewis at his word on the subject of 'non-moral' satire, the effect must have been, whether Elliott realized this or not, to have brought Lewis to the heart of the tradition of magical satire. Fredric Jameson, in a fine passage vis-à-vis Elliott and Lewis, intimates as much. (34) These, however, are complicated issues - for Lewis' practice as a satirist (in which Elliott ought to have interested himself) is 'non-moral'

in a way quite separate from that in which his theory of satire propounds 'non-moralism' - and I will postpone their further discussion until I deal with The Apes of God in section (v).

At one point, Elliott considers certain remarks of Lewis' which take up, with sinister joviality, the antique notion of the mortal power of satire, and which, one assumes, would have been of great interest to Elliott. Such remarks I must return to in later sections. Elliott (I find this most surprising) consigns them to a lowly place in his scheme. Here, he is discussing that passage in Rude Assignment (35) where Lewis compares the duty of the satirist (in The Apes of God) to that of the mediaeval apprehender of a horse-thief, namely, to lynch the miscreant on the spot: 'In this image the satirist is a hangman, as elsewhere in Lewis he is a dissector, a surgeon, an executioner, a prophet - his function being in each case that which from the beginning satirists have arrogated to themselves... Low (Lewis remarks) is said to have killed a statesman by his satirical portraits; but although he is in no way disposed to deny the power in Low's extraordinary art, he dismisses the story as probably a "pleasant exaggeration." Lewis himself claims to have "paralyzed" by the violence of his pamphleteering the most troublesome "Apes" in his neighbourhood....But these are only incidental remarks, linking him with the tradition we are interested in, to be sure, but not consciously at the heart of his enterprise.' (My italics) (36)

Later, Elliott states that, in The Apes of God, Lewis was not 'all out for the kill,' that he had 'no intention of demonstrating' the reputedly lethal powers ascribed to the cartoonist Low. (37) That no such intention is manifested in The Apes of God, I would dispute strongly, as, again, I will show when I discuss that novel.

Indeed, I am of the opinion that Elliott is quite mistaken in placing Lewis in only an 'incidental' relation to the tradition he has been discussing. In my view, many of the characters and incidents in Lewis' fiction, Lewis' personae and satiric voices, and the forms his satire takes, reflect stongly Lewis' interest in that tradition, and even, in some cases, can only fully be accounted for by reference thereto. Certainly, over the 'heart of Lewis' enterprise' the inter-relationship of the figures of Archilochus (of the lethal satirist, that is to say), of the railer and of the Cynic exercises a compulsive attraction. Such a compulsion issues in Lewis' satiric fiction, in his poetry and polemics, and in his criticism also. Sometimes, it expresses itself subliminally, sometimes, self-consciously. It manifests itself most notably in a recurring impulse - which Elliott would deny - to bring about, or to see brought about, death (literally or symbolically, within the frame of fiction) by satire, or by related forces or forms of expression. Sometimes, even, we shall notice in Lewis a fascination with the concept of putting to death, or execution, which is possibly, in respect of its ritual element, or ceremonial significance, obliquely associated with the idea of satire's ultimate satisfaction being death.

In the next section, I will show how Lewis' verse attempts to restore an archaic magic potency to satire, and, in doing so, reflects the spirit of composition of BLAST. On the premise that BLAST was motivated to destroy the objects of its contempt, I will make some remarks about how such an urge is manifested, particularly by way of the image of hanging, in Lewis' comments upon satire. From this, I will go to the theme of execution as it issues elsewhere in Lewis' non-fictional work. Following this, I will examine the nature of Lewis' satiric personae in relation to the figure of the railer and

that of the Cynic, the lengths to which he went, particularly in The Lion and the Fox, to justify or exalt such personae, and a particular problem that arises from self-identification with the Cynics. Although this will necessitate a somewhat discursive treatment, it will at least have the virtue of compassing within a single space the salient points of that tradition, described by Robert Elliott, which has been reviewed in this section.

(iii)

In One Way Song ("The song of the Militant Romance"), the Lewisian persona announces his predilected metre:

> I shall not take 'limping' iambics, not borrow from Archilochous
> His 'light-horse gallop',...
> I know with my bold Fourteener I have the measure that suits us best. (Canto ii) (38)

But whether or not the Archilochian iamb is going to be employed, an association with the first satirist has been suggested, and a tradition called to mind. As in the ancient ritual displays of invective, the satiric voice is to be improvisatory; and it will work a spell:

> Let me abound in speeches - let me abound! - publicly polyglot.
> Better a blind word to bluster with - better a bad word than none lieber Gott!
> Watch me push into my witch's vortex all the Englishman's got
> To cackle and rattle with - you catch my intention? - to be busily balking
> The tongue-tied Briton - that is my outlandish plot! (Canto i) (39)

Then, a conjuration is made. An archaic power is called upon. The ancient magical energies of satire can only be recovered by an invocation of disorder, of modes of expression which pre-date the civilizing principles of grammar, prosody and calmly regulated sense (such as the heroic couplet of Augustan satire), and flout the lexis itself:

> Set all our mother-tongue reeling, with the eruption of obsolete vocables,...
>
> Break out word-storms! - a proper tongue-burst! Split
> Our palate down the middle - shatter it!
> Give us hare-lip and cross us with a seal
> That we may emit the most ear-splitting squeal!
> Let words forsake their syntax and ambit -
> The dam of all the lexicons gone west! -
> Chaos restored, why then by such storms hit
> The brain can mint its imagery best.
> Whoever heard of perfect sense or perfect rhythm
> Matching the magic of extreme verbal schism? (Cantos iii and vi)(40)

Canto vi also looks outward from the poem, and defines, retrospectively, the railing energy of BLAST ('a periodical consecrated to blasting and blessing in a magically-charged prose worthy of an archaic prophet,' notes Elliott (41)). Here, the ordering principle of syntax and punctuation, and the containment of the standard line of prose, having been renounced, the collocation of hates - phrases and sentences typographically engorged to form paragraphic storm-clouds of words -

gains in force from the uncivilized presentation. Modern notions of decency or measure are violated. At the same time, however, the curses are elaborate in their organization (as curses must be, in order to be effective), artfully barbarous and overwhelming. The size of the lettering (which I am unable properly to replicate here) is frightening:

CURSE (3)
WITH EXPLETIVE OF WHIRLWIND
THE BRITANNIC AESTHETE
CREAM OF THE SNOBBISH EARTH
ROSE OF SHARON OF GOD-PRIG
OF SIMIAN VANITY
SNEAK AND SWOT OF THE SCHOOL -
ROOM
IMBERB (or Berbed when in Belsize)-PEDANT
PRACTICAL JOKER
DANDY
CURATE (42)

Hendrickson, we saw, associated Archilochus' satiric verses with the curses of classical tragedy; in a manner somewhat analogous thereto, passages such as that quoted above are both curse and satiric poem, as Geoffrey Grigson rightly stated: 'The Blasts and Blesses of that magazine (all of them written by Lewis himself) would go, if there were anthologists acute enough to recognize their nature, into any survey of English poetry of the last fifty years. They were satirical poems, though no one has ever remarked as much.' (43)

Furthermore, the proscriptions in BLAST - beginning 'BLAST' and followed by a list of names, for example, 'Lionel Cust C.B. Fry Bergson Abdul Bahai Hawtrey Edward Elgar', involve a retrieval of an ancient concept of name-magic. We saw a religious form of this in the last chapter (in the discussion of "Mr Zagreus and the Split-Man", in section (viii)), where the Gnostic belief was adduced that to know the name of the god was to have power over the god. By analogy, Elliott informs us, to name a person, in archaic satire, in a curse or in an incantation, gave power to entrap and harm that person. In Augustan Rome, apparently, - during a period of relative sophistication, that is to say - the belief in this power was sufficiently strongly held for the naming of individuals in satire to be prohibited on pain of death. (44) The most rudimentary form such a belief took has been demonstrated by the archaeological discovery of curse-tablets, on which was merely inscribed the name of the victim whose death was desired: 'Many of these small tablets...contain only the name of the enemy with a nail driven through it. The magical principle operative here we have already considered: the name is no mere sign distinguishing one person from another; by a magical process of identification, the name is the person, and he who controls the name controls the man.' (45) It is this most primitive form of name-magic that is recovered in BLAST. All that is required, it is implied, is one word expressive of hate ('BLAST', in huge majuscules), with the names of the victims written beneath.

Having noted so far in Lewis an association of magic with satiric, destructive intent, I shall now proceed to the principal image in Lewis' comments on satire of that intent, namely, the image of the satirist as hangman or executioner. Such an image indicates an assumption of the power of the satiric utterance to kill which

consciously recalls the power that the first satirist (Archilochus) exercised with his killing iambs. Although the power is no longer considered to be real, the intent behind it may well be real enough; it is, at least, simplistic to describe that intent as 'symbolic' solely. This difficult question, anyhow, I will postpone until the final section of this chapter.

In Rude Assignment, Lewis casts himself (in a passage referred to in the last section) as a summary executioner:

> As once upon a time, according to English law, it was the duty of any man, observing another rustling a horse, to apprehend him (if he could) and to hang him (if he had a rope) to the nearest tree (if there were one thereabouts): so it was incumbent upon all good citizens to turn satirists on the spot, at the sight of such as those exhibited in 'The Apes of God' - if they had any *S*atire in them, of which I happened to have an adequate supply. (46)

The rhetorical purpose of this simile, with its echo of the 'hue and cry' of mediaeval England (47), is to conceal the passions or rage of the satirist by legalizing them, by pretending that the satirist is no more than the servant of a penal code. Over the centuries, writes Elliott, that is a typical and consistent feature of the satirist's apologia (and Grigson called Rude Assignment Lewis' apologia (48)): '...the satirist is a public servant fighting the good fight against vice and folly wherever he meets it; he is honest, brave, protected by the rectitude of his motives.' (49) Thus, Lewis claims that the violent exaction of a penalty is, in fact, a civic duty. Simultaneously, however, such a claim is undermined (is, in a sense, intended to be) by the very obsoleteness of the code Lewis chooses for illustration, which serves to emphasize, rather than conceal, the barbarousness of the impulse to punish, and constitutes a transparent excuse for the expression of the satiric will to destroy.

The image, or modifications thereof, recur sufficiently for one to incline to the view that it expresses something essential, rather than 'incidental' (Elliott's word) about Lewis' conception of satire. For example:

> ... in Swift, in Dryden, in Pope, it is not the 'natural' 'bubbling' laughter of Shakespearean Comedy that you would expect to find, any more than you would look for jovial heartiness in a surgeon at work, or, if you like (to take a romantic illustration), in an executioner. (50)

> There is Satire pretty comfortably fixed up, I think you will concede - with all its passports in order, and with a great big carte blanche to execute all and sundry at sight! (51).

> Molière could kill with laughter as effectively as the headsman with his axe. (52).

That such sentiments may be drolly couched should not necessarily induce one to regard them as flippancies; indeed, there is something impressive and disturbing about such smiling cruelty; and satire is itself, of course, a mode of comedy. Then there is that comment on the story that 'by his satirical portraits Low actually killed a certain statesman,' of which Lewis (as one professional complimenting another) suggests, 'this was no doubt a pleasant exaggeration.' (53) 'Pleasant'? Only to one given chronically to contemplating the possibility (or, more likely, lamenting the impossibility) of shaming someone else to death.

That manner of thinking outlined above either led to, or stood in a dark parallel with, a tendency in Lewis to view putting to death as art's purpose and consummation. In The Lion and the Fox, Lewis describes the guise of detachment with which Shakespeare despatches the heroes of the tragedies:

> The innocent-looking, compassionate representation of an agony and death, like that of Othello, with its catharsis by means of tears and pity, is thus, as though in a dream,

> revealed as something else. It is a show of the same nature as a public execution. . . . Shakespeare was in this sense a public executioner, a quiet and highly respectable man, as might be expected. His impassibility was the professional mask of the hangman. For dramatic effect the dramatist, like the hangman, must be impassible. His attitude to the many kings and heroes who were done to death by him was not conveyed by - that is the idea of this contention - the impassible, impressive, dramatic, "unmoved" mask of the executioner. But actually the mask was incessantly convulsed with the most painful unprofessional emotions... (54)

This startling analysis occurs in the context of a discussion of Frazer's theory (in The Golden Bough) of the 'Scapegoat', that is, the human or mock-god who, in the rites of many primitive or ancient cultures (in the Roman Saturnalia, for example), reigned for a limited term, then was put to death, to ensure fertility, a good harvest, and so on, in the coming year. (55) Thus, the death of the hero is viewed by Lewis as a magical requirement (or related to the magical purpose of primitive sacrifice), and not a psychological necessity (by means of which, in Aristotle's terms, the emotions of the audience are vicariously purged). This, Lewis apprehends 'as though in a dream', and what prevents us from following the 'connexion', he suggests, is that 'every murderous instinct' of which the '"tragic" and dramatic instinct is composed,' is, in us, 'translated into, and compressed in, civilized reserve'. (56) The implication of this is that, had we the visionary faculty of Lewis to revert to, or 'dream', primitive modes of understanding, we would grasp, like he does, the imaginative nexus of magic, art and death (which subsumes, it may be speculated, the desire to see death result from satire). But is what is here revealed to us really of the nature of a trans-cultural truth? The anthropology is sound enough, yet is it not rather, at some level, being adduced to give a technical coherence to a personal compulsion to kill through art? - in the additional service of which, it might be

suggested, Shakespeare (as the highest propagandizing authority possible) is cast as that (a hangman) which Lewis wishes to be. (Elsewhere in The Lion and the Fox, as I shall show later in this section, Shakespeare is adapted to the Lewisian satiric scheme.) As Jameson has suggested, satire (satire in terms of the lethal tradition described by Elliott, that is) was no option for Lewis, but the essence of his art. (57) But if it was no option, then the urge to kill associated therewith was equally compulsive (an urge which issues in the obligatoriness of death in Lewis' fiction), and ways of legitimizing it must constantly be sought. One way, as we will have come to realize, is to give the killing a judicial frame, or to figure the agent of death (whether it be Lewis or Shakespeare) as an executioner. This achieved, gratuitous killings can be made simultaneously to seem necessary (since the executioner is not the law, merely its servant). Thus, the death of Arghol (murdered by Hanp (58)) in Enemy of the Stars is at once meaningless and entailed by the instructions with which the play commences:

> THE RED WALLS OF THE UNIVERSE NOW SHUT THEM IN, WITH THIS CONDEMNED PROTAGONIST.
>
> THEY BREATH IN CLOSE ATMOSPHERE OF TERROR AND NECESSITY TILL THE EXECUTION IS OVER, THE RED WALLS, RECEDE, THE UNIVERSE SATISFIED. (59)

But if Lewis is going to represent himself/the satirist as an executioner - in order to give legitimacy or licence to the impulse to kill in art - he must, surely, at a level beyond this seem to countenance capital punishment itself? (Did he not, then the animus of his satire would seem to be unreal, its threats playful, merely, or fantastic.) Here, we must follow Lewis into deep waters. He can allow no ethical or practical justification for capital punishment, and he abhors its cruelty, yet he strives to justify it anyhow (in The Art of Being Ruled):

> To attach, as the humanitarian does, a mystical value to life itself, for its own sake, is as much a treachery to spiritual truth as it is a gesture of 'humanity.' We execute a criminal for a variety of frivolous reasons, and often kill the wrong one. The manner of the administration of our law is thoughtless and brutual usually. But the theory of capital punishment (if the 'punishment' of the too-just god of the law could be abstracted from it) is as humane as possible. A higher value than all he can allege in his favour - namely, the fact that he is alive - we consider is threatened by the most violent and extreme criminal. It is his 'violence' that we are seeking to eliminate by destroying him. It is the principle of non-violence that he menaces by his existence : which is a superhuman one.... The assassin or poisoner cannot plead that he should live because he is alive, when it is life, and in addition the only thing that gives life a super-natural value, that he is attacking. (60)

What sense we can disentangle from this is that capital punishment is symbolically justified - though for no other reason -, and, indeed, that Lewis would be better satisfied with it as a concept if it could be symbolically effected - without physical cruelty, that is. That, of course, is precisely the option available to the satirist, but meaningless vis-à-vis the actual question of putting to death. Probably apprehending as much, Lewis moves hastily on from the issue:

> The intricate problem of capital punishment cannot be dealt with, of course, here, in a few passing observations. For my purpose, however, it is enough to say that the rhetoric of death and of the law, devised as a 'punishment' and a deterrent, is one thing, and the question of regarding the loss of life itself (apart from the needless tortures of trial and execution) as inhuman or not, is another. (61)

One Way Song, with its reference to Archilochus and summoning of magical powers of expression, intimates the will to destroy in Lewis' satire - and Lewis wrote of the poem:

> In its essence the purpose of satire - whether verse or prose - is aggression. ... Satire has a great big glaring target. If successful, it blasts a great big hole in the centre. Directness there must be and singleness of aim: it is all aim, all trajectory. (62)

But the poem also presents a Lewisian persona in which can be observed elements of the railer, that figure who, in the tradition of satire, as Elliott showed, overlaps with living satirists, such as Archilochus or Hipponax, on account of a common reputation for raging utterance.

This persona is called the "Enemy". Like Thersites in Troilus and Cressida (whom Ajax beats, and whose tongue he threatens to cut out, for Thersites is bent on revealing the stupidity of the Greek heroes (63)), the "Enemy" is ostracized, his books boycotted, because the truths he expresses are inconvenient to those in high places. It is not 'safe', either for himself, for the literary world, or for the world of politics, for the "Enemy" to go about inveighing as he does. Thersites is called, in the dramatis personae, 'a deformed and scurrilous Grecian', and 'scurrilousness' is, more than once, the charge laid against the "Enemy":

> What is it that men fear beyond everything?
> Obviously an open person. Bring
> One of us 'truthful ones' too near, their nests
> Would be unfeathered. Experience invests
> Us with such terrors, us whose tongues are clean,
> It is rarely in the high-places we are seen....
>
> The man I am to blow the bloody gaff
> If I were given platforms? The riff-raff
> May be handed all the trumpets that you will.
> Not so the golden-tongued. The window-sill
> Is all the pulpit they can hope to get,
> Of a slum-garret, sung by Mistinguette,
> Too high up to be heard, too poor to attract
> Anyone to their so-called 'scurrilous' tract....
>
> If I am armed with bright invective, rare
> That is I agree - but mine is a dangerous affair....
>
> ... "the rage" c'est moi! (Enemy Interlude", Cantos xiii, xiv, xxvi and xxvii) (64)

A stichomythic 'flyting' (a satiric bout) takes place between the "Enemy" and 'Jack Horner' (a 'second shade/Dwarfish and fat'), who, in the manner of the Greek heroes with Thersites, attempts to return the railer's fire, and threatens him physically (with hanging) - the only way, evidently, that he can be silenced:

> The"Enemy": 'Mine is a dangerous errand, do you hear?'
> Jack Horner: 'Enough of these insults, you intolerable seer!'
> 'I shoot from the hip, but can you really wonder?'
> 'You scurrilous pastmaster in blood and thunder!'
> 'Mine is a grim affair - I'm not a thug.'
> 'How dare you raise this most unseemly fug!...
>
> 'You'll swing for this - your wife's a merry widow!'
> 'Maybe. But still I'll have with you a bet.'
> 'That I'll be even with your rude tongue yet!'
> 'Why no, but that you must, being but half-real,
> 'One fine day overreach your crazy zeal!'
> ("Enemy Interlude", Canto xxviii) (65)

Like Thersites, however, the "Enemy" has always the last word. As his antagonist exits, 'boiling and freezing with indignation', the "Enemy" derides him with the obscenity typical of the railer:

> He had a waggle of his hinder parts
> As if shaken by the combustion of dud farts. ("Enemy Interlude", Canto xxix) (66)

And a striking image suggests that in Lewis' imagination, railing, as a category of satire, is magically potent. The "Enemy" is possessed of a burning power of utterance, literally:

> (The Enemy spits,and a small green flame darts up from the gothic parquet. He looks at the spot where the flame has emerged, and then spits again. A second flamelet gushes from the floor.) (67)

Rather as Lewis represented Shakespeare as a hangman in order, it was proposed, obliquely to account for the necessity of killing in his (Lewis') art, so also he goes to Shakespeare (again, in The Lion and the Fox) to vindicate his own compulsive concern with the figure of the railer - or, that, in my view, is at least one motive behind the brilliant but tendentious Shakespeare criticism contained in the passages in question.

The gist of Lewis' argument is this. When Shakespeare's tragic heroes - Hamlet, Lear, Timon, for example - suffer their reversal, they begin to rail against life as Thersites does, and in such a way as to seem indistinguishable from the railer in tone, expression and sentiment. In illustration of this, Lewis quotes two pairs of passages, in the first of which, Thersites and Lear inveigh against lechery, in the second, against pride and authority:

> The personalities are not the same, but the voice beats out its repulsion in the same way. Thersites is the black sheep of the altofronto type: but when any shakespearian figure is approaching his pathos he drops into the altofronto type of gibing. Lear's is bellowed and Thersites' spat. (68)

Because Shakespearean critics have been perplexed or embarrassed that the fallen heroes begin to sound like railers (who are despicable, according to the general view), they have used dementia (brought on by peripeteia) as an excuse: 'Their "madness" is for an Englishman the necessary excuse. Such wildness would have seemed unnatural if it had not been labelled pathologic.' (69) But, asserts Lewis, it is rather the case that the railing protagonists have not gone mad, but have gone out of character - their spirits have departed the play, as it were - to become the messengers of a universal, disillusioned, satiric truth, a truth which Thersites has always, congenitally, uttered:

> Thersites, as a horrible clown, is allowed to express without embarrassment a great and neglected vein of truth, the nihilistic truth of what we see, looking with our ears or otherwise. It is as outcasts, as men already in a sense out of life, and divested of the functional machinery of their rôles (which would necessitate their being objects only - things looked at and not looking), that speak objectively – an objective, and not a functional, truth. Lear, Hamlet, Timon, Thersites, and so forth, are in the position of disincarnate spirits, but still involved with and buffeted by life. Their "truth" is an angry one usually, but they have the advantage of having no "axe to grind." (70)

From these comments, we may infer an interest in exalting the railer from his reputation for scurrility to a position of satiric-philosophic priority in Shakespeare's intellectual scheme, and in doing so, to make of the Shakespearean railer an agent of the sort of satiric, objective truth that Lewis esteemed in Men Without Art. (71) (To such a position, the fallen protagonists do not, in a sense, attain - where Lewis is concerned - as will transpire when we come to his comments on Apemantus and Timon, towards the end of this section.) Such an inference is confirmed when, later, Lewis represents Thersites as the intellectual centre of Troilus and Cressida:

> The reigning attribute of Thersites is intellectual pride: and it is from the point of view of this intellectual pride that he views his heroic associates, scorning their simple satisfactions, and the naïve view of themselves that pushes them to their martial antics. (72)

It might also be noted in passing, bearing as it does upon the premises of this chapter, that Thersites tries magic (conjuration) as a means of fortifying his scorn (a power given to the "Enemy", with his green flames, and self-identification with Faust (73)):

> How now, Thersites! what, lost in the labyrinth of thy fury! Shall the elephant Ajax carry it thus? He beats me, and I rail at him... 'Sfoot I'll learn to conjure and raise devils, but I'll see some issue of my spiteful execrations ... O thou great thunder-darter of Olympus, forget that thou art Jove, the king of Gods, and, Mercury, lose all the serpentine craft of thy caduceus, if ye take not that little little-less than little wit from them that they have! (2/3) (74)

The attention Lewis gives to the railer in Shakespeare is, as was suggested above, not disinterested.

First, it provides, in my view, a way of rationalizing the abusive or scurrilous propensities (the issue, possibly, of an intuitive or atavistic sense in Lewis of the magic of invective) of a great many characters close to Lewis, in his writing, or Lewisian personae, for whom, the "Enemy" was a sort of collective mask. Two of these, Tarr and Horace Zagreus, I shall discuss in the next section. Typical is the minor persona, William Bland Burn, of the "Imaginary Letters" of 1917, here outlining to his wife a satiric view of human nature:

> (At this point I interject: "It is nevertheless more comfortable for me, in the long run, to be rude than to be polite. It is a physical discomfort not to show, after a time, my feelings.") (75)

Then, if we recall Elliott's argument that the historical satirist (the actual satirist, such as Archilochus, that is) is augmented in reputation, or becomes legendary, by identification (in terms of wrathfulness) with the literary railer who comes before him in time, we will discern that Lewis, by giving attention to the Shakespearean railer, is, as a satirist, building his own reputation. He is advertising the tradition in which he wishes to be accommodated.

Part of such a process - legend depending upon unquantifiable mixtures of fact and fiction - was the bizarre article (in a solid enough daily newspaper) titled "What it Feels Like to be an Enemy", in which the habits of the modern railer were revealed to the public. He breakfasts on vodka, blood oranges, raw meat and root ginger, following which, he abuses at random unknown people over the telephone. Then, donning the Stetson 'at the angle that intimidates,' he boards a bus in search of other 'enemies,' over whom he pours 'Broadsides of "vitriol" or of "invective" (you have of course provided yourself with bandoliers full of both).' (76) Then, there was a letter to the editor of the "Evening Standard", in which Lewis deplores the fact

that, on the personal level, 'Contemporary man' has no outlets for 'his instincts of competitive violence.' As a remedy, Lewis suggests a reintroduction of the word "enemy":

> If you find a person distasteful to you, be rude to him whenever you meet him as a matter of course; do not refer to him as "my friend So-and-So"; other people would then be compelled to refer to you both as "the enemies So-and-SO". (77)

Such examples of self-advertisement, despite their levity, project an image (part illusory, of course) of the satirist which may well be intended to soften up, intimidate or, even, cast a spell over the reader who goes to the satires with such public articles in mind.

Sooner or later - Lewis, it is to be presumed, must have hoped - the legend would begin to be established. And,indeed, it appears to be in a passage in Augustus John's autobiography, which provides a most interesting application of Elliott's thesis that, 'The historical man... is mythologized into a type whose lineaments pre-exist and, as it were, await his coming.' (78) Remembering the Lewis of over 40 years before (his knowledge of Lewis' subsequent activities quite possibly confirming the impression), John casts him as Loki, the Norse railer descended in type from the Homeric Thersites (as we saw), and a god of slander: 'In the conspiratorial world of the Montparnasse, P. Wyndham Lewis played the part of an incarnate Loki, bearing the news and sowing discord with it. He conceived the world as an arena, where various insurrectionary forces struggled to outwit each other in the game of artistic power politics.... our new Machiavelli sought to ginger up his friends... by a whisper here, a dark suggestion there.' (79)

The "Enemy" characterization takes us, by way of the periodical entitled The Enemy, to Lewis qua Cynic. From the front cover of No. 3 :

> The "Enemy" is the notorious author, painter and publicist, Mr. Wyndham Lewis. He is the Diogenes of the day: he sits laughing in the mouth of his tub and pours forth his invective upon all passers-by, irrespective of race, creed, rank or profession, and sex. This paper, which appears occasionally, is the principal vehicle of his criticism.

Two years before (1927), Lewis offered a fuller comparison of himself to the Cynics. In the preamble to Time and Western Man, in order to illuminate,and show a precedent for, the necessary narrowness, sharpness and illiberality of his own criticism, Lewis quotes Caird on the Cynic philosophy. Therein, writes Caird, progress took the apperance of reaction, since the Cynics fanatically represented and insisted upon certain 'aspects of thought or life' which formerly had been neglected, in order to force them into prominence. Such a method depended upon an imbalance of view, that it might convey with maximum force the truths in which it was interested:

> Such individuals produce their effect by the very disgust they create among the ordinary respectable members of the community... Their criticism of the society to which they belong, and of all its institutions and modes of actions and thought, attracts attention by the very violence and extravagance of the form in which they present it. And the neglected truth, or half-truth, which they thrust into exclusive prominence, gradually begins by their means to gain a hold of the minds of others, forces them to reconsider their cherished prejudices, and so leads to a real advance of thought. In this fashion the Cynic seems to have acted upon the ancient... world, as a disturbing, irritating challenge to it to vindicate itself.... (80)

The tendentiousness of his own criticism is analogous to that of the practice of the Cynic philosophers, Lewis suggests. Yet what strikes one with great force in these passages is that, in making the association, Lewis seems anxious simultaneously to dissolve it, or, at least, to hedge it about with so many qualifications as to make himself remote from it. From such an identification,

Lewis keeps telling us, he may suffer (but he made it in the first place!):

> I should be sorry to give you the idea that I regard myself as a sort of Antisthenes... Still, in giving Caird's account of the virtues and vices attendant upon the Cynic revolution, I shall be furnishing you with a hint (against myself, as I say) that may serve to enlighten you as to my intentions, unless you proceed to apply it too literally. (81).

There follows the quotation from Caird, given above.

Lewis continues:

> Now I have supplied you with an analogy against myself for practical reasons, although it has no literal application, as I remarked above. I am doing a very different thing from what the Cynic was doing, and I am very differently placed. But certainly I am issuing a 'challenge' to the community in which I live. I am 'criticizing all its institutions and modes of action and thought.' I 'create disgust', that I have proved, 'among the ordinary respectable members of the community,' that is to say among the established orthodoxy of the cults of 'primitivist' so-called 'revolution': what I say is 'violently resented,' and I very sincerely hope will 'awaken thought'... (82)

There is some affinity between this and the satirist's traditional apologia: principally, of course, it is a philosophical justification of method; but the protestation that he creates 'disgust' (and, unwillingly, assumes the ethos of a rebarbative sect of old) in the interests of the cause of intellectual englightenment might fairly be applied to his satiric practice also. Indeed, some of the literary criticism in Time and Western Man - the analysis of Gertrude Stein's prose, for example (83) - is very close to satire.

But why the hesitance - over the adopting of a neo-Cynic position - which reaches a pitch of nervousness that is really uncommon in Lewis? Evidently, the identification with the Cynics was compulsive, since Lewis sensed that it is ill-advised, and, after these passages, makes no more of it.

For, followed through, the identification may well be seen to redound to the disadvantage of its maker. Though Lewis does not proceed to Caird's comments against the Cynic school, he surely had them in mind: 'But in the Cynic expression of these truths there is often a crudity and violence which seems to show that they were not appreciated in their highest meaning, that they were grasped as weapons to throw at the enemy rather than as expressions of positive truth. "Follow philosophy until you regard the generals of armies as leaders of asses."... "The most noble of all things is... the power to speak out freely what we think." Are these sentences (Caird cites more than those given here) expressions of righteous horror at war, of genuine temperance and self-control, of a regard for humanity which reaches beyond patriotism, of a simple resolve to speak the truth at all hazards? Or are they the utterance of a bitter wrath against the pleasures and ambitions of others, of a vulgar hatred and jealousy of superiority either in birth or culture, and of a desire for the utmost license of intemperate speech?' (My italics) (84)

Thus, the negative aspect of Cynic philosophy consisted in its tendency to reject everything but the self-regard, pride and conviction in his own righteousness of the Cynic himself; and to subject everything the Cynic envied to a systematic reductionism that must, in the end, make it seem base. Even, to put the worst construction upon that school of philosophy, Cynic teaching gave morally unbalanced men a justification for railing, for systematized vituperation. (While we are occupied with this point, it is worth noting, with regard to the content of the last chapter, that negative criticism of Cynic philosophy is comparable to negative criticism of Gnosticism, in respect of the contempt for life shared by these systems. Gnosticism took some of its thought from the Cynics (85))

The moral criticism of Cynic philosophy can also, it would seem, without much modification, be adapted as an argument against satire. Accordingly, Lewis ran a double risk (both as philosopher-critic and as satirist) - and seemed to perceive as much - in employing the analogy between himself and the Cynics.

The argument runs thus. Ostensibly, the Cynic or the satirist rails at, or attacks furiously, other men, in the service of a higher truth than that currently popular, or to castigate, or to reform (any of these motives may be professed). In truth, he does so because he is compelled to vent or rehearse gratuitously his own pathological bitterness, psychic discontent or the obsessions of a nasty mind.

This, in essence, in an old argument, and one that exercised Lewis more, I think, than is generally appreciated. His defence of Thersites is one attempt to answer it. And his nervous attitude to the Cynics shows him obliquely aware of it, as does a certain passage in Tarr (as I shall show in the next section). Very simply put, the question amounts to this: is the satirist a wicked man, and to be disregarded, or a righteous man, and to be attended to? (86) Such moral ambiguities are not easily resolved, and, hence, another reason for Lewis' attempts to get a 'non-moral' definition of satire becomes evident.

Still, we are, as has been suggested in this section, in the presence of attitudes which exerted a compulsion over Lewis (a compulsion which might be accounted for in terms of a residual belief, or faith, in the magic of invective), and which must, by some means, be defended. And the difficulty intimated in Time and Western Man is resolved by recourse, once again, to The Lion and the Fox, where Lewis contrives to secure Shakespeare's stamp of approval for the Cynic.

The play over which Lewis here revises critical tradition is Timon of Athens:

> It is usually said that Apemantus is introduced by Shakespeare, with his invariable resourcefulness and tact, to contrast Timon with this cynic philosopher, to the disadvantage of the latter, and to enable us to see how superior Timon was to such people, and to relieve our minds on a point on which they might have been uneasy. For otherwise we might have said to ourselves that after all Timon is only a cynic philosopher! - and "cynic" is an unpopular word. (87).

Lewis, however, takes the view, 'contrary to what it is usual to affirm,' that Apemantus 'has the best of the argument.' (88) It is not at all the case, asserts Lewis, that the low, churlish cynicism of Apemantus shows up, in magnificent relief, the passionate and demented cursing of Timon. Rather, Apemantus reveals, by his presence, the puppet-like quality of Timon, and of the other fallen protagonists who curse and storm. Such characters (Timon, Lear, Hamlet) develop their railing, disillusioned, misanthropic eloquence as a matter of formality - it is a mechanical necessity of the drama. They are, or become, philosophers, but of a perfunctory sort, while Apemantus (or Thersites) is, because Shakespeare created him the way he is - as a teller of bitter truths, independent of the machinery of the tragedy - closer to Shakespeare's heart (89)

Lewis' conclusion is that, because Shakespeare made characters such as Thersites or Apemantus the sources of the highest truth (for Lewis, a satiric truth) - a truth which the heroes come to deliver by accident, and not by nature - , there was a good deal of the railer or Cynic in Shakespeare himself: the accents of the 'scurrilous' Greek and the 'churlish' philosopher were those for which Shakespeare had the greatest predilection:

> ... it is easy for such a poet as Shakespeare to manoeuvre with great freedom...to be both Apemantus and Timon. His attitude to his characters was that of the actor: it is evident which characters he enjoyed most playing: and as he was in a sense playing to himself it is possible also to know which sort of character he most professed to be - or was. Although wonderfully supple and detached, there is a voice that is Shakespeare's and there is a character that is his. His greatest heroes gibe like Thersites (the altofronto type), and his most embittered chorus-work is grandly direct and stings like truth. It is the overdoing of the impersonal mirror notion, as we started by saying, that has obscured this fact. (90).

Quite plainly, this is tendentious: at risk of repetition, let it be stated once more that, in The Lion and the Fox, Lewis used Shakespeare to authorize - or to make respectable - Lewis' own interests, whether these relate to the hanging theme, to railing or to the Cynic attitude. Whether it is wrong, whether, that is to say, Lewis is foisting in Shakespeare certain casts of his own mind, need hardly concern us. If, however, Shakespeare 'enjoyed' creating the railing type, and furnishing him with a capacity to tell uncomfortable truths, he also - it should be stated against Lewis - harboured doubts about such characters. Such doubts echo the classic argument against satire, sketched above, and are dramatized in As You Like It (2/7 and 3/2), when Jaques, who wants 'leave/ To speak my mind, and I will through and through/ Cleanse the foul body of the infected world', and wants to 'rail against our mistress the world', is severely rebuked by the Duke and by Orlando. (91) This, however, is of the nature of a digression, and the reader interested in this debate should look up those passages.

In the next section, I will examine Lewis' fiction in the light of issues raised in this and preceding sections, with further reference, where necessary, to Elliott's The Power of Satire.

(iv)

Throughout the early stages of Tarr, the spirit that animates Tarr himself is that of Thersites; but the characters at whom he is going to rail are in no sense epical - this is intimated by Tarr's abstruse first paragraph. The Thebaid (to which Lewis seems to be alluding) is a Latin epic poem, based on Aeschylus' dramatic account of the mission of the Seven Champions against Thebes:

> PARIS hints of sacrifice. But here we deal with that large dusty facet known to indulgent and congruous kind...It is not across its Thébaïde that the unscrupulous heroes chase each other's shadows: they are largely ignorant of all but their restless personal lives. (92).

Rather, the camp through which Tarr moves, spitting his contempt, is the art-world of Bohemian Paris.

He opens with a curse (against Hobson), sotto voce:

> ("I wish you'd go to hell from time to time instead of Cambridge, as it always is, you grim dog!" Tarr wished behind the veil.) (93)

What Hobson represents is an army of individuals who, affecting not to be so, are in fact as regimented in their ethos as - to continue my opening comparison of Tarr and Thersites - the Greek warriors:

> "What is your position? (Tarr demands) you have bought have you not for eight hundred pounds at an aristocractic educational establishment a complete mental outfit, a programme of manners: for four years you trained with other recruits: you are now a perfectly disciplined social unit, with a profound ésprit de corps. The Cambridge set that you represent is, as observed in an average specimen, a hybrid of the Quaker, the homosexual and the Chelsea artist." (94)

Hobson is determinedly anti-heroic. Although 'very athletic', he 'slouched and ambled along, neglecting his muscles.' This arouses Tarr's 'elaborate contempt' as much as the muscular stupidity of the Greeks did that of Thersites. (95) Physically languid and chronically inactive - like the indolent Greeks of Troilus and Cressida, who won't leave their tents to fight - Hobson and his kind (Lowndes is another (96)) loiter daylong in cafes, bars and studios, being artists, painting nothing. Tarr:

> "You are not an individual: you have, I repeat, no right to that hair and to that hat: you are trying to have the apple and eat it too. You should be in uniform and at work, not uniformly out of uniform and libelling the Artist by your idleness. Are you idle?" (97)

Tarr, however, is no mere modern man in a fury. His anger, indeed, his whole social being, is somehow, 'behind the veil', archaic or primitive:

> ...for Tarr had a gauche puritanical ritual of self, the result of solitary habits. Certain observances were demanded of those approaching him, and were quite gratuitously observed in return. The fetish within - soul-dweller that is strikingly like a wood-dweller, and who was not often enough disturbed to have had the sylvan shyness mitigated - would still cling to these forms. Sometimes Tarr's crafty daimon, aghast at its nakedness, would manage to borrow or purloin some shape of covering from elegantly draped visitor (98)

A 'fetish' is an 'object believed to procure for its owner the services of a spirit lodged within it.' 'Wood-dweller' and 'sylvan shyness' may remind us of Timon, and/or of the 'satyr' the shaggy, half-human attendant of Pan, wherefrom came a false, but long enduring etymology of the word 'satire', which led to the belief that satire ought to be rough (like the beast) in composition (99); or those phrases may call to mind Faunus (from whom, fauni (fauns)), the Roman pastoral god (identified with Pan) 'who revealed the future by dreams or supernatural voices in sacred groves' and made 'spectral appearances and terrifying sounds...in wooded places.' (100) 'Daimon' is divine power, not attributable to a particular god, or it is personal fate; or, 'an individual's character is his daimon' (Heracleitus) (101); or, finally, it is a being half-way between god and man (Plato). From this very difficult image, we may perhaps extract (while hardly doing justice to the poetry of expression) the idea that Tarr's character ('daimon' used in that sense - evidently a famous one) is of a wild, satyric/satiric cast that, like a fetish, can be used (as if by magic) to provide him with a protective spirit of invective against those who intrude upon his solitariness, as Hobson has.

Certainly, Tarr is different from other men, his powers of expression uncommon. Even, he is an awesome local spectacle when he starts railing. People are actually attracted to him to hear themselves abused (as they are to Thersites):

> As Tarr's temperament spread its wings, whirling him with menace and mockery above Hobson's head, the cantab philosopher did not consider it necessary to reply. He was not winged himself. Tarr looped the loop and he looked on. A droll bird! He wondered, as he watched him, if he was a sound bird. People believed in him: his exhibition flights attracted attention. (102)

He is also, like Thersites, a nuisance to those around him. The 'veil' having dropped, he is an uncivilized, vituperative pest, whose truth Hobson cannot escape. It is a comic picture:

> "No I am responsible for you. - I am one of the only people who see: that is a responsibility." Tarr walked down the boulevard with him, speaking in his ear almost and treading on his toes (103)

Following this, Tarr threatens to throttle Hobson, an image which foreshadows the fatal action and death by hanging of Part VI, "Holocausts", then symbolically decapitates him. There is also something of the motives of the Cynic in this: extreme methods are resorted to, to bring Hobson to Tarr's way of thinking, to make him see, to elicit some reaction from this sheep:

> "I would seize you by the throat at once if I thought you would black my eye. But I feel it my duty at least to do this for your hat".... Tarr knocked his hat off into the road, and stepping after it propelled it some yards farther with a running kick. (104)

Not only as a model for Tarr's intellectual scorn, but also for his voice (when railing), Lewis may have had Thersites in mind. Patroculus' vain command, 'No more words, Thersites; peace!' (105), describes quite as well the modus loquendi of the Lewisian railer as it does that of the Shakespearean. The compositional principle in either case is that of prolificacy or copiousness which, phrases feeding off their antecedents, endlessly regenerates the venom of the origininating observation. Variations on a theme are tirelessly sought, not so much for

precision's sake - to discover the basest possibility -, but to enfilade the target/victim/object of hate. The sheer quantity of words is as much part of the attack as the disgust or contempt behind it. Whence all these words? - Tarr is like a man possessed. One is reminded of the BLAST curses, and of the conjuring voice of One Way Song - 'Break out word-storms!':

> "Sex is a monstrosity. Sex is a monstrosity... But consider all the collages marriages and affairs that you know, in which some frowsy or foolish or some doll-like or log-like bitch accompanies everywhere the form of an otherwise sensible man; a dumbfounding disgusting and septic ghost! Oh sex! oh Montreal! How foul and wrong this haunting of women is! - they are everywhere - confusing, blurring, libelling, with their half-baked gushing tawdry presences! (106)

Epithets, nouns and participles triple or even quadruple, less to 'suggest' or 'convey' an inexhaustible animus behind the invective than because of it (the same applies to the rude punctuation - omitted commas, spat exclamation marks). Briefly, we are out of the world of mimetic fiction. This is railing, not a representation of it. Tarr has gone over momentarily to a primitive form of utterance, by which he would drive the evil of femininity away; in doing so, he becomes Lewis' oracle, as, Lewis thought, Thersites and Apemantus were Shakespeare's. Together come to mind Lewis' statement (in Time and Western Man) about the import attached to the utterance of the antique poet or philosopher (thought to be magically inspired) and Hobson's reflection that 'people believed in' Tarr.

Formally, the passage quoted does not suffer from comparison with any of Thersites' great railing sequences (Troilus and Cressida (5/1 and 5/2), for example), and in subject may well remind us of:

> Nothing but lechery; all incontinent varlets!... Patroclus will give me anything for the intelligence of this whore: the parrot will not do more for an almond than he for a commodious drab. Lechery, lechery! still wars and lechery! nothing else holds fashion. A burning devil take them! (107).

It is also worth noting here, in passing, that narrative, just as much as monologue, in Lewis is apt to develop the railing voice. This is a favoured satiric method in The Apes of God; and the following example, from that novel, is instructive and amusing, since it shows Lewis' using the technique that Thersites employs against Agamemnon and Menelaus, in which the subject is put through a series of ridiculous transformations (with Menelaus, it is animals (108)):

> In this bath of unpleasant light Ratner lay blinking, rattish and cross... This highbrow-sub-sheik of the slum had been the triste-est Tristan... - the shoddiest Don Giovanni - the most ludicrous Young Lochinvar - the most squalid Sorel, he had been the most unprepossessing sham Rätnerskolnikoff...- he had been the Judas without the kiss... - he was the Childe Harold without the Byron collar... - the Childe Roland without the Dark Tower.... (109)

And so on.

When, however, a threat is presented to Tarr - when Kreisler takes a dog-whip to him - he retreats, 'with a feeling of primitive dissatisfaction':

> There was something mean and improper in everything he had done, which he could not define. Undoubtedly he had insulted this man by his attitude, his manner often had been mocking; but when the other had turned, whip in hand, he had - walked away? What really should he have done? He should, no doubt... have humorously struggled with him...But at that point his humour had stopped. Then his humour had limitations? (110)

This and the two quoted below are the critical passages of the novel, insofar as satire is concerned. Having gone to considerable length to suggest uncommon powers in Tarr, Lewis seems suddenly to turn against him, having him run away from a bully. And Tarr cannot rationalize his way out of this. Persistently, for his own enjoyment, he has treated Kreisler in a satiric spirit; but:

> Once and for all no one had a right to treat a man as he had Kreisler and yet claim, when turned upon, immunity from action on the score of the other's imbecility. In allowing the physical struggle any importance he allowed Kreisler an importance, too: this made his former treatment of him unjustified. (111).

Kreisler, refusing to recognize Tarr's licence (observed by Hobson and others), has broken the satirist's magic circle - that is one way of interpreting these proceedings. Or, though Tarr is fitted out with what seemed archaic powers of expression, they are obsolete in this time (neither really apotropaic, nor malefic). (The magic power of satire disappears, as Elliott stated, lingers on with vitality as an idea, but not as a fact). Those people Tarr attracts to his 'exhibition flights', it now seems, who 'believe in him', are very impressed aesthetically by what they see as performances - appreciation replacing the primitive's awe at the utterances of his poet or philosopher. As far as injuring his enemies is concerned, Tarr has been barking in a void - Hobson didn't look like being shamed to death. Against an unrestrainedly primitive being like Kreisler (Tarr's primitive impulses being, paradoxically, contained by his painting and railing), Tarr is impotent. As, perhaps, the satirist always is against the truly violent or the truly stupid. (Thersites, too, has to flee in the end, when challenged to fight - Troilus and Cressida (5/7). Then there is the belief (described by Elliott) that satire unjustly applied redounds to the embarrassment, or worse, of its agent. That takes us beyond the present mixture of considerations to the moral question.

What right had Tarr to go on treating Kreisler like that? In this sense, these passages are, for Lewis, self-critical, or, at least, self-questioning. Tarr, the bubble of his humour having been burst, cogitates over that which seemed to be worrying Lewis in the opening pages of Time and Western Man:

> His contempt for everybody else in the end must degrade him: for if nothing in other men was worth honouring, finally his own self-neglect must result, like the Cynic's dishonourable condition. (my italics)... he - unlike Quixote - instead of having conceived the world as more chivalrous and marvellous than it was, had conceived it as emptied of all dignity, sense and generosity... The curse of humour was in him, anchoring him at one end of the see-saw whose movement and contradiction was life. (112)

For an instant, the satirist's attitude is seen to be, at root, intolerable. But not acting upon this insight was to sustain Lewis' thought and fiction for a long time to come.

Now, however, a way is found to circumvent Tarr's impotence in the face of Kreisler's real threat, while keeping within the tradition of satire's magical efficacy. Paradoxically, Kreisler's very primitiveness (he is a mighty and indiscrimate progenitor, sexually violent, a brawler and a homicide to-be (113)), the source of Tarr's discomfiture, provides the means of his satirical despatch.

To illuminate my thinking here, I will again quote Robert Elliott, here on the mortal power of ridicule in primitive shame cultures. He has been discussing the Ashanti culture of West Africa, where 'suicide... was justified... to avoid the ridicule of one's companions.... In the enormously complex relation of primitive man to his society, ridicule functions primarily as a social weapon, as an omnipresent threat against violation of social order and custom. Its power is frightful, for it can sever the delicate lifelines which bind man to the social body, outside of which he can conceive of no life for himself. Under the rejection of ridicule he dies; and while his death may be by his own hand, the mechanism is actually one of public execution. (my italics) Thus it seems likely to me that the magic attributed to various archaic satirists may inhere in part in the power of ridicule to effect psychic damage. Ancient Greeks were not Ashanti; but we recall the tone of Archilochus' verses against Lycambes .... The threat is essentially this: I will laugh at you, and because I laugh, society will laugh. To be a laughing stock in Ancient Greece was presumably intolerable; Lycambes, says the story, hanged himself.' (114)

Clearly, in one such sense, it is ridicule that leads to Kreisler's suicide by hanging. At the party at the Bonnington Club, he is transformed into those beings earlier associated with Tarr - a 'satyr', an 'uncouth faun', a cynic, a railing Hamlet, a 'rough figure of comic mystery', (115) - archetypal elements, evidently, in Lewis' conception of fictional character. But whereas with Tarr - to return to that difficult image - these were internalized spirits or fetishes, guardians of Tarr's solitariness and aroused only when approached, Kreisler (whose 'veil' is perpetually down, as it were, who knows no control) they possess in a frenzied and antic actuality. Pursuing flappers in and out of the conservatory, he is an unaccustomed physical danger to the 'bourgeois-bohemians'; and the request that he leave (116) (in primitive terms, a tribal banishment) is, for Kreisler, a hardly necessary formalization of the ridicule he has already incurred.

For when Soltyk and Anastasya (ardently sought after by Kreisler) 'look at him with embarrassment', Kreisler's shame is terrible in its corrosiveness, and, for him, I think, ultimately lethal:

> Inactive, he was ridiculous: he had not reckoned on being watched. This was a fiasco: here he was posing nude for Anastasya and the Russian... The sensation of standing neck-deep in horrid filth beset him... He allowed her laughter to accumulate on his back, like a coat of mud. In his illogical vision he felt her there behind him laughing and laughing interminably. Soltyk was sharing it of course. More and more his laughter became intolerable: the traditional solution again presented itself. Laugh! Laugh! He would stand there letting the debt grow, they might gorge themselves upon his back. (117)

That the ridicule is imaginary is not the point - Anastasya and Soltyk having left while he had his back to them - or rather, it is the point. For Kreisler knows that his behaviour, not just here, but chronically, is shameworthy. Now, intensified by emotional confusion, his shame reaches a peak. Eventually, he challenges Soltyk to duel, kills him by accident, and hangs himself from the bars of his prison cell - shame inducing him, finally, to resign to a fate which is also imaginary; for he could, evidently, have fled France and evaded capture, but hangs around on the borders for five days, physically and emotionally dead already:

> ... in the course of his spiritless and brooding tramp he questioned if it were not he that had died, and not Soltyk at all, and if it were not a ghost who was not wandering off nowhere in particular. (118)

Kreisler's death is not merely an endogenous necessity - in the sense that he is affected by an atavistic notion that, because of his disgraceful behaviour before Anastasya and Soltyk, he deserves to die (a form of execution, wrote Elliott, resulting from the satiric power of ridicule). Lewis' Archilochian impulse to kill his characters is given a penal justification also: Kreisler must die in revenge for the killing of Soltyk (a manslaughter which is, in essence, a pre-meditated murder, since he has brooded upon the victim for so long). He constitutes that threat to the principle of 'non-violence' which, Lewis wrote in The Art of Being Ruled, merits capital punishment - and Kreisler's is the only form of suicide that mimics capital punishment.

Curiously, however, - the urge to do away with Kreisler becoming acute - the justification is established in advance of its cause. For Soltyk himself is commissioned to do the job (though pulled off Kreisler when near completion). In this capacity, Soltyk is provided with something like a preternatural power (induced by drugs - he is normally timid), and the image is of death by hanging:

> (Soltyk's) hands were electrified: will was at last dashed all over him, an arctic douche and the hands become claws flew at Kreisler's throat. His nails made six holes in the flesh and cut into the tendons beneath... (Kreisler) collapsed upon his back and the convulsive arms came with him. The strangling sensation at his neck intensified. (119).

This may remind us of Tarr's threat to Hobson; Kreisler recalls it as he strangles slowly in his cell:

> A sort of heavy confusion burst up as he withdrew the restraint. It reminded him of Soltyk's hands upon his throat. The same throttling feeling returned: the blood bulged in his head: he felt dizzy - it was the Soltyk struggle over again. (120)

By this point - the reasons for the necessity of Kreisler's despatch having been made clear - the satirist-hangman can devote himself to the minutiae of death, describing Kreisler's preparations:

> (Kreisler) tore several strips off his shirt and made a short cord of them...He measured the drop from the bar of the ventilator with puckered forehead calculating the necessary length of cord.... (121)

'The drop' is not just the distance between the bars of Kreisler's cell and the floor. It is also hangman's jargon, denoting the length of rope required to execute a criminal cleanly - by dislocation - (it is calculated by dividing a set figure in foot/pounds by the weight of the criminal). The phrase percolated dreadfully and fascinatingly into the lay mind, Lewis' included, it would seem (122).

Finally, certain passages in the novel imply that a second atavism is leading Kreisler inexorably to the hangman (Lewis). We will recall, from The Lion and the Fox, Lewis' characterization of Shakespeare as a public hangman, presiding over the deaths of heroes which were, obscurely, a magical requirement, the heroes themselves being, at some level, connected with scapegoats of the type described by Frazer, mock-kings or mock-gods who reigned for a short period, then were put to death to ensure fertility. With this in mind, Kreisler's almost supernatural fertility, a marvel to his associates, becomes particularly significant:

> The picture of Otto as universal papa was the last straw, this misdirected and disordered animal capacity made him into a vast Magog of Carnival, an antediluvuan puppet of fecundity for his compatriots. When he appeared that night everybody turned towards his historic figure with cries of welcome... a small society had been founded in Bavaria to care for Kreisler's offspring throughout Germany. (123)

As does Lewis' comment in Rude Assignment that Kreisler, not Tarr, was the protagonist of the novel, that Kreisler, in fact, was the 'condemned man hero'. (124) For Kreisler, like the mock-god of the Roman Saturnalia, knows that his 'reign' is to be a brief one, and subject to a cruel determinism. In a letter to his father, he writes that,

in exactly a month, he will kill himself (if the paternal coffers remain sealed). (125) The time he gives himself contains, I would suggest, a rather decisive allusion. For Frazer writes of the term of the human scapegoat of the Saturnalia: '...he went about in public with full license to indulge his passions and to taste of every pleasure, however base and shameful. But if his reign was merry, it was short and ended tragically; for when the thirty days were up and the festival of Saturn had come, he cut his own throat on the altar to the god whom he personated.' (126) Frazer also points out that during the Saturnalia, there was a general licence for the low to revile and rail against the high, slave against master. (127) With these considerations in mind, is this why, in the novel's curious first sentence, 'Paris hints of sacrifice,' the condemned hero, Kreisler, proceeding to death, through the clatter of Tarr's railing?

Before proceeding to instances in Lewis' fiction where the magic-satire relation is more self-consciously or more explicitly presented than in Tarr, it will be necessary, in the light of the death of Kreisler, to make a few comments upon the demise of Vincent Penhale, in The Vulgar Steak.

Again, the fatal mechanism employed against Penhale depends upon shame and ridicule (making of his suicide, in Elliott's terms, an execution). His origins, imposture and shady activities having been made public,

> POOR BOY PASSES HIMSELF OFF AS BARONET...
>
> "I am pukka working-class. I was born, as they say, in the gutter. I had intended to tell you. But not like this." (128)

he is induced to hang himself:

> There, hanging from the disued gas-suspension...was Mr. Penhale, his tongue protruding, and his face black. (129)

His death, in fact, casts a double reflection of that of Kreisler. The hanging of Kreisler, it was suggested, was socially justified (as well as psychically a necessity) on account of his violence - and Lewis later compared the career of Kreisler with those of Hitler and Goebbels. (130) A similar justification, in the case of Penhale, is advanced by Penhale himself:

> "My main trouble," he told Martin with finality, "is that I am all made up of action.... The arch-type of that sort of man who is all action," Vincent continued, "is to be found in Berlin - or that bloody little Jack-in-the-box up in his balcony, at the Palazzo Venezia.... Our epoch finds its highest expressions in those dynamical puppets - with little names full of a stupid percussion, like Hitler." (131)

This, really, however, is of the nature of an excuse for killing Penhale, rather than a justification, since he has nowhere been presented as violent, nor with the cold, satiric scrutiny that was used in the portrayal of Kreisler. Throughout the novel, moreover, Lewis seems to have been on the side of this man who defied the class-system (which Lewis himself deplored (132)), making his shame an equally transparent pretext for his death. Such considerations demonstrate that the Archilochian impulse in Lewis could scarely be moderated - a sympathetic protagonist, an essentially non-satiric novel, but the outcome inevitable.

In the Wild Body story "A Soldier of Humour" (a periphrasis for 'satirist'), a combat in words (or, to be more precise, tongues) is described between two men, Ker-Orr, the soldier of the title and a Lewisian figure, and a Frenchman, de Valmore. As the tale progresses, the enmity of the two men acquires an intensity which can only be accounted for by reference to the archaic conception of satire as an instrument of death; their words and insults are weapons; and the power of ridicule and the effects of shame are demonstrated no less impressively than they were with Kreisler, though they issue only in psychic, and not physical, destruction.

The feud is occasioned by two slights, trivial but of precisely that order of insignificance that, in the neo-primitive atmosphere of these stories, is apt to give rise to chronic, unappeasable and irrational irritation.

Travelling through Spain with the purpose of learning Castilian, Ker-Orr encounters, at a pension, de Valmore. The latter affects the accent and mannerisms of an American with such conviction as to have undergone (in his own mind) a racial transformation. His (New York) English is, in fact, barbarous (133), but he derives a peculiar power from exercising a Yankee brogue:

> ... the powerful consciousness of the authentic nature of his accent made him still more insolently heedless of the faults of his speech, it seemed, and rendered him immune from all care as to the correctness of mere english. (134)

When, over dinner, he discovers that Ker-Orr is English (and not American, as he had supposed) de Valmore assumes an equally peculiar racial ascendancy over him. The first weapon is hurled:

> "England! ha! England! England!" he repeated, as though hypnotized by this word; as though pressing me harder and harder, and finally 'chawing me up' with the mere utterance of it. (135)

Ker-Orr's riposte is merely to remind de Valmore of what he actually is:

> "Why mon vieux!" I said suddenly, getting up, "how about the South of France, for that matter - the south of France! the South of France! The bloody Midi, your home-land, you poor bum!" I gnashed my teeth as I said this. (136)

The particular power of this not very fierce piece of invective (its triple insult mimicking that cast by de Valmore) resides in Ker-Orr's use of the Americanism, 'bum'. Ker-Orr puts a 'spell' on de Valmore, by assuming his cherished and illusory idiom:

> ... the word 'bum' lay like a load of dough upon his spirit. My last word had been american... his face passed through a few degrees of the compass in an attempt to reach me in spite of the spell I had laid upon him. (137)

The efficacy of Ker-Orr's word-magic is startling, de Valmore seemingly becoming trapped between two selves (the affected and the real). 'Continuity, in the individual as in the race, is the diagnostic of a civilized condition. If you can break this personal continuity in an individual, you can break him,' wrote Lewis elsewhere. (138) In de Valmore, incoherence ensues:

> Sounds came from him, words too - hybrid syllables lost on the borderland between french and english, which appeared to signify protest, pure astonishment, alarmed question. (139)

This flyting having passed off to Ker-Orr's satisfaction, he leaves for another town, assuming the 'dream' of the encounter to be concluded. The 'dream', however, is to become a 'nightmare' (140), two nouns which convey very well the uncanny atmosphere of the story, its ominous triviality, the appearances and accidents which are of the nature of supernatural opportunities.

Having arrived in Leon, Ker-Orr begins making acquaintance with the natives, in order to further his education in Castilian. After a few days, however, having regrouped, de Valmore, to Ker-Orr's horror, appears, newly malefic and formidable:

> On the fifth evening, I entered the Café as usual, making towards my most useful and intelligent group. But then, with a sinking of the heart, I saw the rectangular form of my ubiquitous enemy, quartered with an air of demoniac permanence in their midst. (141)

What de Valmore now inflicts upon Ker-Orr is banishment - in primitive terms, tantamount to death. The latter is expelled from the community he has lately joined, which, prior to the arrival of de Valmore, had been full of good will to him. The shame that has been cast upon Ker-Orr is of preternatural virulence:

> The gradual cooling down of the whole room towards me, the disaffection that swept over the chain of little drinking groups from that centre of mystical hostility... all this, with great vexation, I recognized from the moment of the intrusion of his presence... I expect that it was a meaningless blast of disapprobation that he blew upon me, an eerie and stinging wind of convincing hatred. (142)

Ostracized, Kerr-Orr determines to leave Leon and, much discouraged, to try Coruna. Now, however, three American acquaintances of his - Blauenfeld, Taffany and Morton - turn up in town. (143) This isn't quite the deus ex machina it at first seems, being as much of a piece with the dream-logic of the tale as the mysterious appearances of de Valmore (who, before the incident in the cafe, was the object of another sighting by Ker-Orr, descending a flight of stairs, the latter developing the sensation of having to deal with a 'phantom' or 'ghost' (144). To Ker-Orr, their arrival is a visitation, a 'miracle.' (145)

Now, Ker-Orr has secured the means of victory over de Valmore. This is simply a matter of getting the three Americans to befriend the Frenchman, who takes to these members of his adopted race with enthusiasm. Then, his defences having been lowered, the Americans (feigning ignorance of their association) introduce to de Valmore Ker-Orr as a friend of theirs - it being revealed that his enemy is friends with the genuine article, as it were, de Valmore is confounded.

Petty as this operation seems in the description, the psychic shock administered to de Valmore by the ridicule of his ethnological illusion would seem to be fatally violent: the picture of death by electrocution actually occurs to one from the following:

> My enemy pulled himself together as though the different parts of his body all wanted to leap away in different directions, and he found it all he could do to prevent such a disintegration. An attempt at a bow appeared as a chaotic movement, the various parts of his body could not come together for it. It had met other movements on the way, and never became a bow at all. An extraordinary confusion beset his body. The beginning for a score of actions ran over it blindly and disappeared. (146).

Impaled on his own spear, as it were, it is now de Valmore's turn to be expelled (or exorcized):

> During the next two days I on several occasions visited the battlefield, but Monsieur de Valmore had vanished. (147).

Expulsion also features in Part IX of The Apes of God, "Chez Lionel Kein Esq". Here, too, the outcome of the attempt to banish is that the agent of the original expulsion falls victim (here, obscurely) to a higher power.

As might be expected from the attention given to his uncommon abilities in the last chapter, Horace Zagreus is again at the centre of the stir. Here, to the list of divine associations noted previously with regard to Zagreus, might be added the Norse god Loki, feared for his propensity to cause discord and contention (curiously, Zagreus is referred to as a 'viking' in this section, his eye described as 'baltic-blue' (148)). Elliott refers to the Lokasenna, a poem of the tenth century, which tells how Loki (to whom John compared Lewis) is ejected from a feast for his insulting behaviour - though this railing god has always the last word. (149) We might also usefully call to mind - though he makes the statement later in the novel - Zagreus' reference to the 'phallophoroi' and the 'Dionysia' (noted in section (ii) of the present chapter), where, as we know, invective was directed at meanness.

Meanness, in fact, is a fault which Zagreus imputes to Kein at the beginning of this episode, in a scene which gives some intimation of the public slander of his hosts that is to follow. '... the magical satires are often occasioned by, and treat of, the same vices and follies which preoccupy Horace and Wyndham Lewis, Rabelais and Pope: stinginess, inhospitality, pride..!, writes Elliott. (150) Kein's fireplace is backed by an iron plate which, by reflection, gives the appearance of a large blaze:

> "You see, mean old devil! By reducing the rate of combustion he reckons to save himself three bob a day - yet at a moment's notice he can appear to have a cheerful and expensive fire." (151).

Then, over luncheon, Zagreus (in response to a steady commentary against him from Isobel Kein at the head of the table: he is justified to that extent) begins to talk loudly about the assembled party, even endeavouring to turn Kein's protégé, Keith, and other guests against him.(152) The embarrassing cross-fire of chat reaches a fine climax when Zagreus pays noisy flattery to his hostess vis-à-vis her plastic surgery and the way she carries her embonpoint:

> "It is on the same principle that persons wash their faces with care that she gets hers surgically refitted, it is hygiene rather than vanity. Good-sense everywhere corrects and as it were makes all right what in a less intelligent person would be repulsive and comic." (153)

Such colossally ironic commendations are the last straw:

> "That's enough Zagreus! Take your latest boy somewhere else if you wish to slander people!" Isabel exploded, her breast heaving. (154)

To this, Zagreus responds with a piece of cod anthropology:

> "It has always been among the habits of the ingaevonic and in a less degree of the celtic tribes, when at lunch, for the hostess to discuss all her guests in a loud voice, with some person selected for that purpose. But also and from time immemorial it has been the inalienable right of every tribesman (if he so wished) to discuss - with anyone he might select for that purpose - his hostess or any guest or guests he might choose - or indeed all together, one after the other. I have merely availed myself of our ancient british custom - obsolete, it is true, but recognized wherever men of our race foregather - as a precious and jealously-guarded privilege..." (155)

In one sense, this reads like a clever parody of Frazer, and, indeed, the sort of custom it describes is, as Elliott shows (156), observed trans-culturally among primitive peoples. Yet since, beneath the mimicking of anthropological conventions, there is a core of distant truth, relating to the sacredness of the rite for low to abuse high, the 'tribesman' his 'hostess', and since, also, strange powers have been ascribed to Zagreus (to make people disappear, for example - powers which are carefully kept at the level of report (157)), who,

in name, is explicitly identified with the remote past, there is the suggestion of an idea that the Keins are really in transgression. To see this, it is, perhaps, necessary to hold in the mind simultaneously the possibilities that Zagreus' diction is facetious and that it is adjuratory - 'inalienable', 'discuss' (a choice euphemism!), 'availed', 'foregather', 'privilege, 'immemorial'. Certainly, the outcome of this incident is sinister, Zagreus (having the last word) turning back the expulsion upon Kein in the form of a curse, which transfixes his host. Kein watches over the bannisters as Zagreus departs, and

> - remained a moment as though commanded to stand still by some supernatural agency (my italics) - immobilized to gaze inscrutably down into the twilit well of the hall.
> "Basilisk. Pecksniff!" Zagreus shouted with a gesture of banishment and dismissal. "Acabada la comida! Finished!" (158)

If we wish, we can rationalize, or otherwise account for in terms agreeable to our time, some of the aspects of Lewis' satiric fiction reviewed above (as the ancient Greeks, in Hendrickson's essay, were described as rationalizing the killing power of satire and the curse, and psychologizing the magical force of those forms of expression). Sometimes, the fiction allows us, without compelling us, to do so. For if for Lewis (in Time and Western Man) there was a 'magical quality in artistic expression', and the 'artist (was) tapping the supernatural sources and potentialities of our existence', art was also, for him, the 'civilized substitute for magic'. That is to say, 'civilized' or 'up-to-date' interpretation of Lewis' satire is a possibility that runs alongside interpretation in terms of a magical tradition - without, in any sense, suppressing Lewis' place in that tradition, and, indeed, providing sometimes a pale shadow of the opportunities for interpretation provided by examination thereof. In another sense, as Elliott wrote, the magical power of satire fades as civilization

advances, but sustains the satirist as an idea: to such an idea, the satirist must, perhaps, seek to attach a non-magical layer of plausibility. Thus, the contempt of a Lewisian artist-figure such as Tarr might be seen not as conveyed by a spirit voice (as Lewis referred to the utterance of the railer in his Shakespeare criticism), nor yet as 'tapping supernatural sources' and so on, for its energy, but as artful, queer, brilliant exhibitionism; and the death of Kreisler might be viewed not in terms of the magical potency of ridicule to kill, but as the action against himself of a manic-depressive at his nadir (his mania occupying most of the novel).(159) I would be less happy still about rationalizing the strange battle between Ker-Orr and de Valmore: it might perhaps be viewed as disorganizing operations carried out against a schizophrenic. With Zagreus, the narrative hovered between suggestion and predication, and parody played a part; the incident was a simile's distance from magic (Kein 'remained...as though commanded...by some supernatural agency', and so on).

Things are different in The Human Age. In the midst of the supernatural, concessions to twentieth-century versions of reality are unnecessary. Where the laws of physics and biology are no more obeyed than they were understood by primitive man, magic becomes an unexceptional, or accepted, condition of existence.

Thus, in Monstre Gai, in the tumultuous scenes in Tenth Piazza when the opposing forces clash, there is a reappearance of the little flames which the "Enemy" caused to rise from the ground, in One Way Song:

> When they had walked for about a hundred yards, Pullman noticed what he thought at first was something alive jumping; he then saw that it was small flames, which were springing about on the ground, a few feet ahead of him. (160)

On 'phoning the Phanuel Hotel to ask the Bailiff about the flames

(such a combination of the quotidian and the outlandish is typical of the novel), Pullman is informed that they are signs of a tutelary spirit, sent by the Bailiff to attend Pullman.(161) If those flames were, in "Enemy Interlude", magical symbols of the "Enemy's" vituperation, and apotropaic, insofar as they saw off his assailant, 'Jack Horner', here too they are part of the supernatural weaponry of a figure equipped with terrible powers of invective.

For in the next scene in Tenth Piazza, with Hyperides' forces lined up against him, the Bailiff voices the most dreadful satire to be found in the pages of Lewis' fiction:

> "You have told more lies about me than you can remember...
> Now, Iam going to act - to act in so dreadful a way that,
> could you live to see it, your eyes would drop out of your
> head....
>
> If I cannot whirl you from this world,
> If I cannot crack your skull,
> If I cannot wrench your entrails out and wind them on a stout pole,
> If I cannot fill what is left over with benzine and put a match
> to it, -
> Then I'm unstuck, throttled, and corked up for keeps....
>
> You have only a handful of countable seconds to live.
> Ask for forgiveness of your stupendous Nothingness of a God,
> you microscopic rat who learnt in Pontypridd how to blow
> yourself up into a pestiferous obstruction....
>
> Ask for Heaven, and p'r'aps he'll give you an ice-cream.
> Goooo-bye-bye-bye-bye-<u>eeee</u>....
>
> And for your scurvy slanders and your inventions about my
> diabolical pacts with the ruffianly Satan.
> May you burn to a cinder upon the grills of Dis." (162)

Here are conflated all the elements of the tradition of magical satire. In form, this is at once an improvised poem, a curse, and a carefully worded spell, at the opposite pole of elaboration to the name-magic of <u>BLAST</u>. In the ancient curse (when it is stylized and complicated), writes Elliott, 'the formal elements are the source of power; the curse must be letter-perfect (as in magical spells the world over) or it will fail or perhaps, like some unjust magical satire in Ireland, re-

dound upon the head of the curser'. Furthermore, 'the curser must exhaust all possibilities as he searches for the essential agency of power', whether that be a god, or, for the semi-divine Bailiff, himself.(163) Thus, the four savage protases, each beginning 'If I cannot...', rehearse possibilities of destroying Hyperides, and are concluded by the line 'Then I'm unstuck . . .', which is of the nature of what is technically known as an 'over-curse'. This, Elliott explains, is a provision made in cursing for the contents of the curse, or death at least, to recoil upon the curser, if he should in any way fail in, or break, his oath.(164) The satire's horrible, mocking malevolence and burning desire for revenge reveal the Bailiff transformed into an Archilochian poet of hate. Indeed, the "Strassburg Papyrus" of Archilochus' curses, from which both Elliott and Hendrickson draw illustration (165) contains, on the evidence they give, nothing that approaches in virulence or ferocity the Bailiff's lines, even though Elliott writes of 'the total conviction of hate (carrying) down undiminished through twenty-five centuries: we sense the force of the implacable will behind the words.' That Lewis could conceive such verbal hatred intimates something of the reserves of venom in the satirist's imagination (as it did, in a milder degree - relatively -, in the portrayal of Tarr's railing). The archaic depths of those reserves might possibly be revealed by adduction of Hendrickson's comment on Fragment 75 of the Strassburg Papyrus, where Archilochus invokes Hephaestus (the Greek god of fire) against an enemy: 'At the favor which is prayed for we can only guess, but it lies nearest at hand to think of fire as a means of destroying his enemies, their homes and lands.' (166) That is the agent of death envisaged by the Bailiff ('benzine', 'burn to a cinder upon the grills of Dis'); and when Hyperides' end comes - caused for the only time in Lewis' fiction,

directly by the power of the word itself, by the Bailiff's 'filthy magic' (167) - black smoke engulfs him:

> Practically unnoticed at first in the dazzling orange light, a small black cloud began to grow in the air around the figure of Hyperides...suddenly the black smoke parted, exactly like two long black curtains being pulled aside. Within, and now visible to all, was the figure of Hyperides, his beard sheared off below the chin, an enormous nail driven through his throat, behind entering the thick board against which he had stood; on his head was stuck a white pointed hat tied beneath his chin. FOOL was painted on it. (168)

(v)

I want in this section to treat The Apes of God as the most sustained symbolic expression of the satiric impulse to kill in Lewis' fiction, as, in fine, a 'revenge-satire'. The necessity of using that term will, I hope, become clear in the comments appended to this section. Here, I should say that I have employed it partly on the strength of certain observations made by Robert Chapman in his study of Lewis: Chapman points to the Omega affair of 1913, and the commission withheld from Lewis by Roger Fry, as the seed of Lewis' vendetta against Bloomsbury, the most prominent episode in which was the publication of The Apes of God.(169) It will be necessary, first, to offer some remarks about the concept of revenge.

In a discussion of 'vengeful destructiveness', Erich Fromm suggests: 'It differs from normal defensive aggression in two ways: (1) it occurs after the damage has been done, and hence is not a defence against a threatening danger; (2) it is of much greater intensity, and is often cruel, lustful, and insatiable...'(170) If I am correct in stressing the element of revenge in The Apes of God, then those characteristics attributed by Fromm to the desire for vengeance ('intensity', 'cruelty', 'lustfulness', 'insatiability') dispose conclusively - to an extent that Lewis may well not have appreciated, or at least did not reveal, when he theorized about the possibility of 'non-moral' satire - of that notion, held by Wagner and Materer, and put thus by Elliott, that Lewis' satire is marked by an 'intense moral urgency'. It is not. Its principal characteristic, when we have The Apes of God in mind, is an archaic, non-ethical, irrational passion to destroy; and the foisting therein of modern conceptions of morality is, in my view, as much an anachronism as it was in the time of Archilochus, of which Hendrickson writes: 'In reality however the

problem of justification intrudes an ethical point of view which need not enter in. For in the age of violent passions and individual conduct to which Archilochus belonged, together with reinforcement of his own hot temperament, a man's enemies were per se in the wrong and the just gods would punish them.' (171) (I would again, here, direct the reader to Jameson's comments on Elliott and Lewis, since he seems to know what Elliott makes some shift to obscure: '...Elliott's work suggests that the archaic impulse of satire was rigorously nonmoral.' Elliott, however, tries without very much conviction to affix the idea of 'moral mission' to Archilochus' satire. (172)) Thus, the emotions identified by Fromm with vengeance help to account for the sheer length of the novel (insatiability) and for the extreme cruelty of many of the portraits (Dick Whittingdon, Matthew Plunkett, Ratner, Richard and Jenny, the Finnian Shaws, the Keins, for example); and on the strength of Fromm's analysis, there becomes available to us an explanation for what baffled so many early reviewers of the novel, namely, the colossal expenditure of hostility on (objectively viewed) the little and unworthy. Thus, S.P.B. Mais: '...The Apes of God is one long howl of derision at the asininity of certain unimportant sectors of the modern pseudo-intelligentsia. Why Mr Lewis...should... waste his giant strength and venom on such unworthy adversaries, is one of those mysteries that are incapable of solution.' (173)

Next, Fromm distinguishes 'blood revenge' from the simple instinct to punish: 'Blood revenge is a sacred duty that falls upon the member of a family, clan,or tribe who has to kill a member of the corresponding unit if one of his people has been killed. In contrast to simple punishment, where the crime is expiated by the punishment of the murderer or those to whom he belongs, in the case of blood revenge the punishment of the aggressor does not end the sequence. The puni-

tive killing represents a new killing which in turn obliges the members of the punished group to punish the punisher and so on ad infinitum. Theoretically, blood revenge is an endless chain.... Not only blood revenge but all forms of punishment - from primitive to modern - are expressions of vengeance...The classic example is the lex talionis of the Old Testament.' (174) If we use such a theory to account for the repeated pattern of attack and counter-attack involving Lewis (and associates) and the 'family' or 'tribe' that may, in the first instance, loosely be labelled 'Bloomsbury', then we may establish as the initial injury in the 'endless chain' Fry's treatment of Lewis. Subsequently, Fry's 'clan' was punished in The Apes of God. A further link in the chain was the refusal of the New Statesman to publish Roy Campbell's favourable review of the novel, Bloomsbury closing ranks against Lewis. Immediately, Lewis avenged this neglect with the pamphlet Satire and Fiction, prefaced with the laudatory essay of his supporter (Campbell), and containing articles and reviews favourable to Lewis. Nor does the force of the reciprocated impulse to revenge abate with time. It was suggested in the first chapter of this thesis that the often bitter tone of Geoffrey Wagner's study of Lewis may at least in part be imputed to Lewis' behaviour, over 30 years before, towards members of Wagner's family, and to the cruel portrayal of those people in The Apes of God. Yet, as Fromm's comments imply, the original injuries and their motives are apt to become obscure with time, or, as here, to be 'forgotten'. Viewing the chain of revenge - he was quite conscious of its existence - from a distance of twenty years, Lewis, it seems, was satirizing a 'class' of 'preposterous parasites', his satire was 'political':

> The violent abuse of which I am the object still, even today, must, I surmise, belong to the aftermath of this book (i.e. The Apes); although it was first published a decade and a half ago.

> I should be the last person to expect the satirist to be allowed to pass his life in peace. If I aim a blow at a class (the 'upper class', in this instance...) I expect retaliation. One must expect literally anything from the outraged nobodies or their buddies, whose class is dying and they with it. In their death-agony they are capable of delivering some nasty kicks. (175)

To introduce politics into the picture, of course, is another way of legitimizing the impulse to revenge, of rationalizing the non-ethical.

Finally, Fromm accounts for the compulsiveness of the desire for revenge by proposing that it may be of a magical nature: 'Why is vengeance such a deep-seated and intense passion? I can only offer some speculations. Let us consider first the idea that vengeance is in some sense a magic act. By destroying the one who committed the atrocity his deed is magically undone...Vengeance may be said to be a magic reparation; but even assuming that this is so, why is the desire for reparation so intense? Perhaps man is endowed with elementary sense of justice...But there must be more to the cause of vengeance. Man seems to take justice into his own hands when God or secular authorities fail. It is as if in his passion for vengeance he elevates himself to the role of God and of the angels of vengeance. The act of vengeance may be his greatest hour just because of this self-elevation.' (176)

First (on the assumption that, at some level, the satirist wishes to kill, whether symbolically or otherwise, as Elliott put it), we might perhaps infer from this analysis that Lewis' satire resides in a magical nexus of agency (Elliott's thesis) and intent (Fromm's - the destruction of the Apes will have an erasing effect). Indeed, reliance upon such an effect may well be what sustains the satirist, ancient or modern, through his punitive career - and 'all forms of

punishment - from primitive to modern - are expressions of vengeance,' Fromm stated.

It may be what sustains him because always, it would seem, the satirist, like Fromm's avenger (on the condition of the absence or failure of divine or judicial authority), 'takes justice into his own hands'. Thus, Hendrickson, vis-à-vis Archilochus' 'blood-feud' against Lycambes and his daughter, and the vengeance exacted, writes: '...he has not yet emerged from the crude passions of a social and political middle age, an age of cruelty, hatred and self-help in lieu of law.' (177) But, in a constitutionally more elaborate age, Donne, in the obscene Satire 2, protests that he is compelled to satirize outside the law: '...but my words none draws/ Within the vast reach of the huge statute laws.' (11. 111-112) (178) While Lewis (still on the 'aftermath' of The Apes of God) prefers a rougher justice to that the law provides:

> I have made it my habit never to go to law, but to shoot back when shot at, and frighten them (i.e. 'the outraged nobodies or their buddies') away, once in a while. (179)

From all these cases, however, we might extract the general point that the satirist does not want the law - did it or did it not have the power to implement his hatred or his complaint. Archilochus' satisfaction resides precisely in the 'magic' of personal vengeance. Not only can the laws not press home the charges Donne makes against a rotten poet who becomes a bent lawyer; more to the point, the laws of the time are encroaching upon Donne's liberty to write satire. (180) Even if Lewis could have gone to law (for what? - libel? - a law from which, anyway, he suffered), we know that, figuratively at least, he regards the satirist as the law - for on the page following the lines quoted is that image (discussed in section (iii)) of the satirist

as an extempore hangman, with the mediaeval dispensation to take justice into his own hands. Consequently, we may propose that, in general, the satirist's intent is (unconsciously or obscurely, perhaps) the 'magical' satisfaction afforded by personal vengeance - a satisfaction that the law, had it power to grant him redress, could not provide. This may be one reason why satire, typically, attacks that which the law cannot prosecute - inanity, arrogance, meanness, for example - things which cannot be arraigned.

Then, we may enquire in what ways, if any, the act of vengeance 'elevates' - as Fromm speculates - the satirist to the 'role of God'. Here, we may resume the eschatological interpretation of The Apes of God offered in thelast chapter. Then, the preliminary act of vengeance, it will be seen, is to kill off the Apes by presenting them as dead, as the populace of an 'inferno', that is to say. Here, Horace Zagreus, as the pre-Gnostic Orphic god Zagreus, as the Gnostic deity Hermes, and as Thoth, is a guide and sometimes judge, a minor agent of retribution. But beyond this, it will be seen that (1) to present a set of people as dead, but (2) still to have power of determination over their fate (like inhabitants of classical models of afterlife, Lewis' Apes, though 'dead',still await judgement and punishment), reflects a divine power onto the satirist, or onto some persona or projection of the satirist.

Thus far, our position is that: (1) as an avenger, the satirist (Lewis), through some residual belief in the magical power of satire, iskilling his enemies (symbolically); (2) such vengeance may offer him magical satisfaction - it is a 'magic reparation'; (3) the issue of the desire for vengeance is, reflexively, the apotheosis of the satirist.

Condensing the propositions advanced above leads to the following

question: can The Apes of God in any way be said to project, or to reveal the presence of, what might be called a 'killing-god'?

It is my view that it can, in the complex relation of Lewis and Pierpoint, whom Kenner calls a 'Lewis-avatar'. (181) Indeed, consideration of the figure referred to as Pierpoint in such terms is what confirms, if I am right, The Apes of God as the most complete expression of the punitive impulse in the Lewisian corpus, revealing the novel to be the point of convergence of all Lewis' references elsewhere to satire, hanging and execution, and in itself a symbolic scaffold and gallows.

Some ideas were advanced about Pierpoint in the last chapter, where it was suggested that on one level, he figured the divine, the infinitely remote Supreme Being of the Gnostic systems. That sort of identification has been made also by many of Lewis' critics. Thus, for Wagner, 'Pierpoint...must remain obscure.' Chapman states that, '...above all, reigning supreme, invincible, untouchable, unseen, is Pierpoint...Pierpoint functions as disembodied mind.' Jameson considers Pierpoint 'absent but all-powerful.' Paul Edwards writes that Pierpoint 'like God (and also like Godot) (is) absent from the scene.' (182)

Yet Pierpoint can only be viewed as the figuration of the apotheosis of Lewis through revenge by recognizing that he oscillates between a spiritual or supernatural significance and one that is concrete. If he has godly traits (or non-traits), he also has a source in the real world that is quite as historically solid as that of any of the Apes. Indeed, in spite of dispute as to the importance of the roman-à-clef status of the novel, the historical identity of Pierpoint is a 'key' whose significance, in respect of the tradition of satire that is here being discussed, cannot, in my view, be disputed.

Yet Lewis' critics, when they have mentioned it at all, have consistently dealt with the historical import of the name Pierpoint apropos, triflingly. Thus, Kenner, after the remark about Pierpoint's being a 'Lewis avatar', continues: 'In prolongation of the analogy between Lewis/Shakespeare and the provincial hangman, Pierpoint bears the name of the British executioner.' (183) To this, Wagner responds: 'Hugh Kenner points out that Pierpoint was the name of the public hangman in England at the time, so that Lewis presumably thought of him as the executioner (and a Fascist one) behind the moribund society of the work. However, the executioner who has recently received such publicity in England was Pierrepoint (sic); Lewis spells his character either Pierpoint or Pierpont....One could easily continue to involve oneself in these amusing obscurities.' (184) The scant attention Elliott pays to this point (he reduces it to a footnote) is particularly surprising, since it is in his field, as it were: 'According to Kenner...the name of the public executioner in England was Pierpoint. The literal signification of the name ("peer", "point"), together with the association with the executioner's office, would clearly be attractive to Lewis...Kenner identifies Lewis with him.' (185)

On account of the importance to my discussion of the points I am presently to make, it will be necessary to get the history straight here. It is this. Britain's Official Hangman was, at one time, Albert Pierrepoint, who gained much attention at around the time Kenner and Wagner were writing on Lewis, on account of the fact that, between 1949 and 1953, he testified to the Royal Commission on Capital Punishment, and resigned amid much fuss in 1956 (after the execution of Ruth Ellis). It rather looks as if Kenner (published in 1954) and Wagner (1957) may have been influenced in their comments by these facts (Wagner, incidentally, is captious about spelling, since con-

siderations of libel meant that the name of every character had to be modified before it went into The Apes of God). Albert Pierrepoint, however, did not begin his training as a hangman until 1931, which made it impossible for Lewis to name a character after him. (186)

But Albert Pierrepoint was the last in a family line of executioners Pierrepoint. Whether Kenner (an American yet unborn for much of the period when they practised their craft) was cognizant of the family connection is uncertain. Wagner is certainly wrong to regard as the same 'the executioner who has recently received such publicity' and 'the public hangman in England at the time' (of composition of The Apes).

Now, Albert Pierrepoint's autobiography informs us that his father, Henry Pierrepoint, began his career as executioner in 1900, and was the Official Hangman, or 'Number One', from 1906 to his retirement in 1916. His brother (Albert's uncle), Thomas Pierrepoint, he encouraged to take up the work around 1904; subsequently, Thomas became the Official Hangman on the lists of the Home Office in 1924, retiring around 1946.

Accordingly, the name 'Pierrepoint' may have impressed itself on Lewis' imagination at any time before the composition of The Apes of God, newspapers commonly naming the hangman in reports of executions. Furthermore, in the summer of 1922, Henry Pierrepoint (a literate man) published in the popular periodical "Reynolds Weekly Newspaper" a serialized account of his work as an executioner. It might be conjectured that Lewis either looked at, or subscribed to, this paper, not least because that short section of The Apes of God (namely,"Mr Zagreus and the Split-Man") that appeared in T.S. Eliot's Criterion in February 1924 contains, in the final version, nine references to Pierpoint.

The point of this digression is not only to show that there are sufficient grounds (Lewis' critics fail to show this), historically, for the proposition that Lewis took the name of his character from an executioner of the time; it is also to show that Lewis is following a precedent (Dryden's) for the satirist's identifying himself with a specific executioner (as, I am suggesting, Lewis is doing - Pierpoint being a projection of his own impulse to punish or revenge).

As basis for this second proposition, it should be stated that Dryden is about the only satirist upon whose spirit, Lewis gives any indication of modelling himself, notably by way of George Saintsbury's eloquent praise of Dryden (in A Short History of English Literature). Thus, both Men Without Art and Rude Assignment quote and allude to Saintsbury's remarks; and, if it is not stretching a point, that image of Tarr at the height of his satiric powers ('Tarr's temperament spread its wings, whirling him with menace and mockery above Hobson's head') may well have been inspired by Saintsbury's picture of Dryden aloft on wings, punishing his adversaries beneath. (187) The "Envoi" to One Way Song, furthermore, declares:

> These times require a tongue that naked goes,
> Without more fuss than Dryden's or Defoe's. (188)

The passage with which we are concerned occurs in Dryden's Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire (an essay which Lewis uses at the beginning of his attempt to define satire in Rude Assignment). Dryden is referring to his Absalom and Achitophel:

> A man may be capable, as Jack Ketch's Wife said of his Servant, of a plain piece of Work, a bare Hanging; but to make a Malefactor die sweetly, was only belonging to her Husband. I wish I cou'd apply it to myself, if the Reader would be kind enough to think it belongs to me. (189)

Jack Ketch was the public executioner in the second half of the seventeenth century, and of this passage, Earl Miner (who duly

acknowledges the researches of Robert Elliott) writes: 'As Dryden well recognized, satire inflicts death in varying ways....In this example, Dryden's image for satire is that of a minister of justice, the public hangman. What is remarkable is that the poet would like to apply the image of such a role and such a skill to himself'.(190)

As would Lewis (the role at least, if not the skill), though obliquely, where Dryden is explicit - Lewis never states the self-identification, but makes sufficient reference elsewhere to satire and the hangman for us to posit it. It may also at this point be suggested that paraleipsis plays a part in Pierpoint's continuous absence; by never presenting him, Lewis causes him to loom large and ominous. It is almost too neat to add that the condemned never see the hangman anyway, since they are hooded.

The psychological function of the association - whether explicit or oblique - with a specific executioner may be accounted for by reference to comments made in section (iii) of the present chapter: it legitimizes the impulse to kill, gives a judicial frame to the punitive urge - it 'civilizes' the desire for (symbolic) blood revenge. In essence, however, and if he is candid, the satirist will acknowledge to himself that it is not Ketch, or Pierrepoint, with whom he is identifying himself, but Archilochus (as Jonson, Horace and other satirists have done). Rhetorically, the identification is a means of striking fear into the satirist's enemies.

That the Apes are, thus, 'condemned', as it were, - in a sense, Dan's tour is a series of visits to cells, almost the whole novel being composed of interiors - entails their total punishment; they are satirized fatally (not correctively, sanatively, reformatively, and so on); they have no right of appeal. Ab initio, therefore, they are presented in the worst light - Ratner, for example, as a revolting

lachrymose failure, Kein, a blustering, bitter failure - there is no satiric bathos: bubbles of good repute are not burst. (Wagner has tried to show the contrary, suggesting that the portrayal of Dick Whittingdon, a successful, wealthy young man who is revealed eventually to be a pervert, achieves a 'genuine satiric effect.' This, however, overlooks the fact that Whittingdon is introduced as a farting, fidgetting, childish hearty, which is fairly satiric in itself. (191))

Such portraits, however, constitute an easily recognizable mode of the satire, and are an integral part thereof. But as if Lewis considered it too oblique to entrust to the mere repetition of the name Pierpoint, throughout the text, the connotation of the hangman behind the satire, or as if he was compelled to supercharge the text withreference or allusion to the tradition of lethal satire, other devices are employed.

One such is the extra-fictional 'broadcast' in which satire is discussed; a notable example - all broadcasts issuing from Pierpoint (they are his words supposedly) - is that in which Zagreus declares that,

> "True satire must be vicious...The venom of Pope is what is needed...Shakespeare employed simple laughter too much, when he was not handling tears, to be a satirist...Or his laughter had not the metallic bark that kills." (192)

Another is to impose on, or foist in, the thoughts or talk of characters - in a manner that sits uneasily and threateningly with surrounding dialogue, highly mannered though that is - a sort of knowingness with regard to the tradition of satire in question, or even an awareness that retribution is nigh.

A contrived passage of this sort is initiated by Ratner's question (in the midst of the Lenten Party),

> "All right Horace! - What has happened to Dan?" (193)

There follow 18 very humorous, paratactic lines (the effect lost if not quoted in full) in which that hyper-energized, railing narrative voice discussed in section (iv) projects revolutionary gestures onto Ratner's direct question, then imposes on it an elaborate hypocrisy:

> - Ratner frowned, as he asked where that poor young man Absolom might have got to, and grinned at the same time to make it worse - the grin struggling in vain with the frown, the frown stronger -

The biblical allusion supplies us with the hanging motif: in 2 Samuel (Ch.18, Verse 14), Absolom, the son of David, is found hanging by his long hair from a tree after the Battle of Ephraim, and slaughtered by the followers of Joab. Yet though the allusion was the result of the narrative's forcing a certain construction upon the mind of Ratner, it is, in the subsequent dialogue, made to seem to have <u>originated</u> in him - a sleight which enables Ratner himself to be faced with the prospect of death by hanging. Zagreus replies to his question:

> "Yes where is Dan! How do I know Julius!"
> "I think we ought to find out."
> "Why Julius?"
> "Oh I don't know!"
> 'Don't you Julius?"
> "I think he's a very sensitive young man - he might hang himself from a tree!". . .
>
> "Your sympathy for others does you great credit - why should Dan hang himself from a tree?". . .
> "Depression leads to suicide" Ratner muttered. "The awkward age."
> "<u>Yours</u> is a far awkwarder age Julius.... It is <u>you</u> Ratner who may be found hanging from a tree!"

The implication of the last line may be that, since Ratner has been satirized so unendurably since he made his appearance in the novel, his suicide, through shame, must soon result; and since this passage follows closely that broadcast, referred to above, where the killing power of laughter was canvassed, such thinking is very much in the air, as it were. That a faint allusion is meant to the suicide, by hanging,

of Absalom's counsellor Achitophel/Ahitophel, there would not appear to be sufficient grounds to maintain.

A somewhat stronger possibility, though one which I should be less inclined to address had not Paul Edwards indicated the extent to which Lewis deploys allusions to Dryden in the novel (194), is that the reference to Absalom is meant to call to mind, in a general rather than a specific sense perhaps, and in order to underpin the punitive theme of the novel, Dryden's Absalom and Achitophel - the poem to which he was referring when he compared himself to the public executioner.

In Dryden's satire, which recounts the Popish Plot of 1680-81, and is represented biblically, David, Absalom and Achitophel figure as, respectively, Charles II, the Duke of Monmouth (his son), and the Earl of Shaftesbury. The poem itself occupies a point in a most interesting sequence in which art/satire and history alternately imitate each other: Dryden conceives the Plot as resembling Absalom's revolt against his father in the Bible; he satirizes the Plot (and Absalom/Monmouth) in his poem of 1681; Jack Ketch actually executes Monmouth in 1685 (after the Protestant uprising against James II (195)); Dryden, in the Discourse on Satire of 1693, identifies himself with the executioner (Ketch) who put to death that man whom he had previously satirized (though, in the passage where he makes the identification, Dryden does not refer to Absalom).

If we can draw nothing specific from this, it at least gives a precedent for the supposition that, in the satirist's imagination (Lewis'), the association with an executioner (Pierrepoint) adds to the symbolic urge to kill the notion of a real fulfilment. That an earlier representation of Zagreus as the 'Merry Monarch' (i.e. Charles II, the father of Absalom in Dryden's poem) is in any way

connected with the characterization of Dan as Absalom is too uncertain to be worth more than a passing note (though the idea that, in a sense, Zagreus has begotten Dan, his 'genius', was explored in the previous chapter).

That image of Zagreus referred to above occurs in the midst of more talk whose purpose is to show Ape society impelled towards the gallows:

> "What is the issue? Pierpoint is convinced there is no issue! We are all rats caught in a colossal mechanical trap."
> "Ah" exclaimed Ratner . . ."if we are all rats!"
> "That makes you less of a one!" Horace lightly called out and with the manner of a Merry Monarch he struck Julius gracefully upon the shoulder. "Do not crow over us all the same, you old bottom-dog popped up from your gallows-pit." (196)

Since here, Zagreus is actually 'broadcasting' Pierpoint-Lewis (with obligatory questioning from Ratner - he understands the form), the monologue, on one level an analysis of a current trend, might also be viewed as desiderative (vis-à-vis the novel's revenge-impulse). For what Zagreus and Ratner are discussing is what might be termed a 'Crime-Cult'. In reaction to over-restrictive laws, an artistic criminal fraternity is emerging, which glamorizes and intellectualizes law-breaking.(197) Local evidence of this is provided when Zagreus and Ratner observe an aristocratic Ape stealing the Finnian Shaws' silverware (198); and the phenomenon is epitomized by Jacques Coq d'Or (Cocteau) and his associates, for whose club '"no one is eligible who has not his thumbprints at the Sûreté Générale."' (199) Not only writing, asserts Zagreus, but life is coming to depend, among such people, upon crime for its frisson - Coq d'Or stole 'pourboires' in order to be thrown into jail, and

> " . . . the Grain Qui Meurt leads to the Faux-Monnayeurs. An outcast-status leads to a brotherhood - reaching from the gallows to the rubber-shop. Laws against sex-perversions like dry-laws make criminals of harmless sex-oddities. But everybody is driven into the league against Law." (200)

The Apes' characteristically cultish behaviour is, thus, expediting their inevitable retribution: if it is against the element of cult itself that Lewis' satiric vendetta is directed, over the issue of that craze (crime) impends the shadow of Pierpoint (the official hangman); and it would seem that, at some level, that 'colossal mechanical trap' is of his own devising, with room enough for all the Apes - who are going there anyway, but sooner than expected if (the satire again legitimizing itself) their cult leads them to murder for art's sake. Ratner asks Zagreus:

> "Have any of the new French school of literary-pickpockets yet dabbled in homicide? Are you informed about that?"
> "Ah there is the difficulty!" Mr. Zagreus passed his finger lightly across his neck, where the chicken got the chopper.
> "There was Loeb and Leopold in Chicago. But you have to be under age, rich, and one thing and another, else you swing, that is the difficulty." (201)

(Loeb and Leopold were the two students who, in 1924, intoxicated by Nietzsche, murdered a boy. They escaped the death sentence, evidently on account of their respectable backgrounds. (202))

The trap, however, is not ready merely for the Apes. Though the primary stimulus to satirize (it has been proposed) issued from Lewis' outrage at the Bloomsbury-type, the satire's demand for vengeance destroys also characters peripheral to the Ape world. Such a development might be interpreted roughly in terms of Fromm's definition: blood-revenge is a self-regenerating form of aggression which, as it grows, adds fresh targets to the preliminary incitement to avenge. This is certainly not to say that revenge upon the Apes ever becomes less important for Lewis as the novel proceeds - it is his principal motive; but it would seem to be the case that types whom, elsewhere, Lewis has designated fit for destruction are here dragged to the scaffold by the strength of the revenge-impulse. Ultimately, therefore,

cause is provided to condemn even those who have observed critically the Apes (Zagreus, in my view, being excepted from this process - he seems to know the secrets of satire; and he emerges from the inferno, it was proposed in the previous chapter); and Jameson has referred, aptly, to 'the execution of the satirists themselves'. (203)

As much is demonstrated in the case of the Blackshirt (Bertram Starr-Smith), who is one of Pierpoint's agents and spokesmen. He appears to have inherited some of the chromosones of Kreisler; and he anticipates, though without the pathos, the self-analysis that made Vincent Penhale's death, for Lewis, a necessity. Introducing himself to Dan, he refers six times in two pages to his violent reputation, then predicts:

> "One day I shall be violent <u>on purpose</u>. I shall <u>accept</u>." (204)

From this point on, the Blackshirt's course is as fatally set as was Kreisler's on the day when he set himself thirty days to live. Each man has a <u>bête noire</u> (Soltyk for Kreisler, Ratner for Blackshirt), who is the object of the current violent urge; and in each, violence is a force that stiffens the body into a weapon which must snap, unless the force is vented (an exteriorized image of the psychic crisis within). There is a similar treatment of what Tarr witnesses,

> At this moment Kreisler sprang up. His head was thrust forward, his hands were in rear, partly clenched and partly facilitating his swift passage between the tables....Tarr saw the party of young men he had been observing in a blur of violent motion: Kreisler was in among them, working on something in their midst. There were two blows - smack - smack... (205)

and Dan, shrinking, beholds:

> And it was all over with poor Blackshirt, for he leapt up as he started to move forward - for he had not understood how his body had acquired a peculiar rigor - the shock was considerable.

> "I will show you what violence is, that I will quickly show you too - you will tell me when you know - I wonder! Take that for your violent now - take that too look you - when next - and that now! Ah!" (206)

According to the terms of Lewis' supernaturally legitimized revenge system (sketched in the comments on capital punishment in The Art of Being Ruled), the fascistic Starr-Smith should be put to death (as Kreisler and Penhale were, in effect), since he threatens the principle of 'non-violence' in life. Symbolically, such a demand might be seen to be satisfied by Starr-Smith's sudden jump from the stage (here figuring a scaffold) on which he has just assaulted Ratner, and which was the scene of the "Vanish" performance. Before his jump/drop, Starr-Smith makes a 'confession', this being his final appearance in the novel:

> "Yes! Violent is just what I am!"...Blackshirt was leaning out of the stage...He looked up and as he saw the moving curtain he jumped off the edge. The curtain came down to the floor. (207)

If Paul Edwards is correct in drawing a tentative parallel between the "Vanish" episode and the 'concluding stage vanish of Flecknoe in Dryden's MacFlecknoe (208), there may even be a very tenuous punitive connection between this conclusive disappearance of Blackshirt and the end of the poet Dryden ridiculed, who falls through a trap-door to hell. (209)

To complement that symbolic reading of Bertram Starr-Smith's despatch, it might be noted that the penal history of this century not only provided Lewis with a real hangman to serve as the retributive spirit of the novel, but offered also a real model (or two) for the furious Blackshirt. The name Lewis gave to this violent character may, of course, have nothing more than a coincidental relation to the criminal(s) in question. But I would venture that, uncannily, Lewis may have retrieved the information that on 29th December 1903, one

Henry Bertram Starr was hanged at Walton Jail, Liverpool (for stabbing to death his wife), and that on 9th March 1904, Sidney George Smith was hanged at Cheltenham Jail, for the murder of his sweetheart. These executions were reported in "The Times", on, respectively, 30th December 1903 and 10th March 1904; and the first name is sufficiently striking to have risen, perhaps, (and perhaps in combination with the second) through Lewis' memory, to provide him with a source/sources (at least in name and reputation) for his character. Such an ability to filter from distant memory material required for imaginative creation should not be doubted in Lewis: Augustus John's autobiography remarks that Lewis could even recall with exactitude quite trivial phrases from conversations that had occurred decades previously. (210)

Finally, it may be observed that a literary convention outside the Archilochian tradition casts the shadow of the hangman over The Apes of God.

There is, as Edwards has noted (211), an intrigue involving Horace Zagreus and the Follet family that constitutes the neglected story of the novel, neglected, that is, for around 600 pages. In Part I, Zagreus forestalls Dick Whittingdon by taking aside the Follets', and Dick's family lawyer:

> They went into the hall and found Horace Zagreus talking in a low voice to the lawyer..."That's how it stands. I will ring you up tomorrow morning" Zagreus said to the lawyer, leaving precipitately as he saw Dick approaching. (212)

In much fiction, the stealth conveyed by this tête-à-tête would be the seed of a very furtive tale indeed. When it is considered in relation to other statements in the opening pages, such as Lady Fredigonde Follet's remark,

> "Horace has the most charming eyes...Why has he not married?" (213)

and her husband's observation,

> "I'm sure she'll outlive me" Sir James grinned in bland repose, the death's head sweetened with the faintest irony. (214)

a plot is intimated, only to be suppressed.

Or, rather, held in abeyance until Part XIII, the last of the novel. In between, we are spared a couple of hints that Zagreus is in straits financially, his resources dwindling.(215) Then, during Zagreus' interview with nonagenarian Lady Fredigonde, the material of the suspended plot, at once conventional and wildly grotesque, is rapidly disposed, as the novel draws to a close.(216) Zagreus, it transpires, is an inheritance-hunter, and has written to Fredigonde for ten thousand pounds. This she is now able to give him, since she has just murdered her husband (also in his tenth decade). She confesses to Zagreus that by hiding from Sir James the bell he used to summon his nurse (to remove him, when Fredigonde's tongue became too much for him), she has brought about in him a fatal apoplexy - this done, quite evidently, with malice aforethought (express).(217) But the money is to be a dowry, to be Zagreus' on the condition that he marry her!:

> "I love you Horace! I desire to be your bride!" ... "Done!" he exclaimed. "There is no woman I would sooner marry!"

Thus, by means of a fantastic distortion of the stock theme of domestic murder, Lewis conceives a sort of gerontophilic ménage à trois which even evokes such causes célèbres of the early '20's as the crime passionel involving Bywaters (the younger man) and the Thompson couple, over whose conclusion Thomas Pierrepoint presided. And, as is proper, the murderous couple are cheated of their desires (money/love), Fredigonde's death-rattle commencing as Zagreus takes her in his arms to kiss her.

But we are entitled to wonder how real are those desires, and, indeed, what may be the purpose of this preposterous dénouement. Punitive satire requires deaths. The close of the novel provides deaths. Yet it does so by a contrivance, by framing the revenge satire with a conventional crime story (whose hideous and entertaining rendering at once draws attention from and foregrounds the contrivance involved). The killing urge of the satirist is fulfilled, but not by the agency of the satire itself. If, therefore, these deaths may be considered to occur outside the satire, at the edge of the novel proper, then Jameson is probably correct when he writes (of The Apes of God): 'The satiric impulse has found a purely symbolic vehicle in which to inscribe its figures and invest its dynamism and does not require the ultimately self-destructive symbolic representation of "real" death.' (218)

## Excursus: Men Without Art

To refer to The Apes of God as a 'revenge-satire' is to suppose in Lewis a satiric attitude quite different to that he himself expressed in Men Without Art, which was discussed in the previous chapter (I have in mind principally p.226 and the Conclusion of that volume, not the comments on the 'external method', and so on). There, Lewis' theory of satire was regarded as founded on a premise of Gnostic pessimism, and aimed at the biological original sin of the human condition in its entirety. Above, however, The Apes of God has been discussed in terms of a personal, 'magical' vendetta against local, historical enemies. Necessarily so, I think; for I concur with William Pritchard that it is hard to see how The Apes of God continually and concretely practises a theory that occurs in a work written after the novel.(219) For although the satire in The Apes of God

grows to exceed the terms of a local vendetta, vengeance being exacted from other types, the Blackshirt for example, and although that vendetta might, on one level, be eschatologically represented, the human condition per se is not what, principally, occupies it. Rather is it the case, in my view, that the often painful physical satire of The Apes of God was conceived by Lewis, by the time of Men Without Art, as the grounds for a theory of universal application (the morning routine of the unfortunate Ratner was cited, in such a context, in the previous chapter). And when Lewis, having set out the terms of reference (in Men Without Art) of the 'non-moralist' satirist, stated that it would be his task to 'bring human life more into contempt each day' (p.226), he was inducing from just one of the satiric tactics of The Apes of God a world-view, or philosophy. But when, in the same passage, Lewis announced that non-moral satire, its dispensation established, now had 'carte blanche' to execute all and sundry at sight', he was expressing a residue of the animus that dominates The Apes of God in a place where it does not really fit - or, if meant as anything more than a rather dubious Swiftian pleasantry, where it must come close to being construed as evil (and that is a possibility which ought to be kept in mind, in view of the nature of the discussion in the next and final section). For, in Men Without Art, the ultimate end of 'bringing human life more into contempt each day', and so on, was to give rise to satiric laughter, which Lewis conceived as the only means by which man could transcend the absurdity of his physical, animal condition: the end was not punitive, that is to say. But in The Apes of God, as we saw in one of Pierpoint's broadcasts, the purpose of satiric laughter was to kill. Thus, to conclude, the theory of satire expressed in Men Without Art is a self-sufficient, metaphysical or existential statement of pessimism (of a Gnostic cast). The Apes of God, however, is a revenge-satire,

> fulfilling the time-honoured functions of the satirist - consisting of the dropping of molten metal or administering of punitive buffets to the fatuous, the overweening, or the crooked. (220)

particularly where those 'fatuous, overweening or crooked' people behave in such a way as to cause offence (real or imagined) to Wyndham Lewis, and over whom he erected himself as the law. And another comment, from the same volume of autobiography, could apply only to The Apes of God:

> For being a satirist...is in the nature of a personal matter...(221)

(vi)

Such a device as that last examined in The Apes of God (the Zagreus-Follet intrigue, that is) may have served to satisfy vicariously, or by proxy, the desire for revenge, circumventing, in doing so, the guilt that (it is to be supposed, or hoped) is entailed in the urge to satirize people to death (vengeance, it was suggested, having no moral sanction). But this raises the difficult question of how genuine that urge may be in the modern satirist, and whether it is troublesome to him. When Elliott wrote that the intent to kill one's enemies through the power of the word had been sublimated (with the disappearance of belief in magic) from something that actually could be prosecuted to something that could only symbolically be expressed, he was not implying that the intent itself was any less real now, or in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries, than in the seventh century B.C... But does this mean that the modern satirist (modern as opposed to ancient, that is) apprehends, or responds to, that intent he harbours in a manner distinct from that of his antique predecessor? Does he, for example, indulge it the more lightly, because he knows it cannot be effected? Such questions, perhaps, are best responded to by the sort of paradox employed by Claude Rawson, when he discusses Jonson's boasting of 'Archilochan powers or the bardic gift of rhyming to death', and Swift's statements that 'he would gladly exterminate this or that person or group', namely: '...the satirist cannot in such places be said to mean literally that he can kill, or would if he could: but he does not not mean it either.' (222)

How troubled for most of his career as a satirist Lewis may have been by that mortal intent referred to above, and how far he may have suppressed such concern (did it exist) are uncertain issues. What is clear is that in Malign Fiesta, there emerges a remarkable retro-

spective guilt. It does so in such a way as to make Lewis' habits as a satirist impossible any longer to sustain.

One cause of this guilt has been proposed thus by Jameson. He sees the violent deaths that recur in Lewis' fiction, Lewis' 'aggressivity' itself, as in some way deriving from the primitive aim of satire as defined by Elliott, namely 'to blast its victim with the magic of the curse'.(223) Throughout most of his fiction, suggests Jameson, Lewis could put people to death without any qualms, because he worked from the premise that the majority of his characters were, in a sense, not real at all, or not 'personalities' in terms of the estimation Lewis gave to personality. Accordingly, their deaths were unreal also.(224) In The Human Age, however, and especially in Malign Fiesta, where Lewis conceived an afterlife where the already dead could indeed die again (absolutely and for eternity), death suddenly was revealed to him as a real state in his fiction, and not something for the satirist to play symbolic, inconsequential variations upon (I am placing the clearest construction I am capable of upon Jameson's thesis). This, seemingly, was of the order of a tragic reversal and recognition for Lewis qua satirist: 'For if the second death is an imaginative possibility, and death can become real after all, then the satirist bears final responsibility for what are now real victims, and the guilt inherent in his aggressivity must at last be confronted undisguised.'(225) Alan Munton has taken issue with this conclusion, objecting that Jameson simply decides that, in The Human Age, Lewis' concerns as a satirist are dislocated from symbolic modes of expression 'into the real world'.(226) Yet whether or not one agrees with Jameson's notion of the 'second death', his argument is worth citing: it is aware of the important connection between Lewis and that tradition described by Robert Elliott; and it is correct in its impression

(in spite, perhaps, of the assumptions it makes) that a radical recognition occurs in Malign Fiesta.

A second, and more concrete, reason for Lewis' guilt has been propounded by Hugh Kenner. It is this. In writing Malign Fiesta, in the portrayal of Dis (the Punishment Centre) and, most of all, in the conception of Sammael, Lewis came to realize that satire was the Devil's work. The blueprint for satire that Lewis produced in Men Without Art was also a preliminary sketch of the mind of his Satan: '...Lewis had much invested in Sammael; if the Bailiff is all that in the old days Lewis had opposed, Sammael is very nearly the Lewis who had opposed it, in satire which he described in Men Without Art (1934) as a metaphysical, not a moral, criticism of man.' (227) Worse still, if we recall, once again, that Lewis wrote, in Men Without Art, that the task of the non-moralist satirist would be to 'bring human life more into contempt each day', it seems that we are not far from the rationale that made possible the horrors of Stalinism and Nazism: 'This strict being (i.e. Sammael), proud in his angelic estate, calmly punishes man for being man. That, by implication, was what Lubianka and Dachau were invented for; no crimes, nothing less than a state of being, could inspire such horrors, or justify them in the minds of those who administered them, doing, it would seem, Sammael's work on earth... "On principle," says Sammael, "I approve of punishing Man just for being Man".' (228)

Against this it might be pointed out that the definition Lewis gave of satiric laughter in Men Without Art (as we saw in section (vi) of the previous chapter) specified that it was 'not inhuman'. That is to say, it was to provide a means of transcending man's animal condition (an absurd one), rather than of 'executing' anyone (as was pointed out at the end of the previous section). But against this, in

turn, it might be alleged that, first, bringing life into contempt, and so on, is a dubious enterprise, even if 'otherworldliness' be its goal, and that, furthermore, it is an evil project, if the contempt become an end itself - otherworldliness, existential, transcendent laughter, and so on, gradually disappearing from the satirist's scheme (and traditional doubts about the psychology of the satirist, referred to earlier in this chapter, make that a possibility). Hence, there is justice to Kenner's observations.

At the same time, however, I would suggest that there is as much of Lewis the revenge-satirist in Sammael as there is of the pessimistic, religious philosopher who emerged from the pages of Men Without Art. The at once quasi-divine and historical agent of death projected by the Lewis-Pierpoint/Pierrepoint relationship - who subsumed the hanging and capital compulsions that occupy so much of Lewis' fiction and theory, themselves the residue of archaic belief in the killing power of the word - is also a foreshadowing (Lewis seems to be discovering) of the Devil and his subordinates in Dis, in the conduct of their daily business. Personally, as well as conceptually, the Devil is a satirist.

He takes pleasure, for example, in reducing an unsavoury acquaintance (the Bailiff) to a pile of shame and terror:

> "And I am not very fond of a filthy little rat like yourself, sir, who combines the lowest vices, the blackest crimes of the descendants of Adam and Eve, with the longevity and some of the magical potentialities of ourselves...I would take over Third City, if that were possible...You I should hang by the neck in the middle of Tenth Piazza."...
>
> The Bailiff stood there, like a schoolboy, weeping: he made no noise, except for an occasional gulp. (229)

Merely exercising invective and observing its effect before an audience (Pullman) is Sammael's source of satisfaction (he later reprieves and

honours with a new job the Bailiff, having in this scene despatched him to Dis). When killing comes too easily to the satirist (Sammael, of course, may do whatever he will), then sadism finds its way into the satiric impulse.(230) The threat to hang the Bailiff in the middle of Tenth Piazza is particularly poignant (for him), since he has lately killed an adversary (Hyperides) by satire in that place.

Then we might recall a certain tone Lewis adopted when discussing his role as a satirist and The Apes of God: disavowing, grumbling about the invidiousness of his task, protesting (too much, perhaps) that the punishment of the 'fatuous, the overweening, or the crooked' was a necessary but minor aspect of his work, and certainly not his raison d'etre as an artist. That tone is repeated in Sammael, the satirist's apologia glibly taken up by the Devil. Thus, in Rude Assignment:

> ...Satire must be received (by Lewis' 'tender-minded' contemporaries ) as an instance of the intervention of the Fiend in human affairs...(Yeats) seemed under the impression that I was embarked upon a career as a satirist. But that was far from my intention. Indeed I should be very sorry to have nothing but that mode of expression to my credit, as it is not my favourite one. (231)

Despite his having been 'plastered from head to foot with slander' as a consequence, it was his 'duty', 'incumbent' upon him, to hang the Apes 'from the nearest tree'. Sammael, similarly, (as observed in section (ix) of the previous chapter) has been slandered, his reputation ruined for good, by taking on a task which, in truth, he would much rather not be in charge of:

> "I agreed, a long time ago, to administer tortures...to the men and women who had failed to keep his (God's) commandments...I resented being offered a job of that kind, but I accepted nevertheless...I have never relished my job as executioner...I do not enjoy playing the bourreau." (232)

If Sammael is what Lewis was, the Pullman of Malign Fiesta is

what, in a sense, he is becoming. Whereas Pullman, in the other books of The Human Age, has been referred to merely as an author in his mortal career, here he is described as having been a satirist on earth.(233) As a sounding-board for his dawning disaffection with satire, Lewis presents the 'spirit' of a satirist in Hell.

Such an experiment in self-observation is concomitant with that awakening of a vivid moral sense in Pullman that was commented upon in the previous discussion of this novel.

Initially, Pullman is more ready to recognize evil than he is to shed the satirist in him. To cling to being a satirist in the midst of the horrors all about him is, in fact, a means of allaying his intense fear - he translates those horrors into the satirist's idiom. Thus, when Madame Heracopoulos (who has sometimes been employed in Dis, the Punishment Centre) expresses puzzlement over why, when she was once removing the cuticle from the buttocks of a female sinner (local anaesthetic having been administered), the woman died, Pullman explains the victim's abrupt decease by recourse not to anatomy, but psychology. Scarification is as much a principle of satire as it is of surgery, and, accordingly, can kill through shame (Pullman seems to be saying), as well as by physical trauma:

> "It may not have been shock, but the will-to-live may suddenly have ended; especially if she had been a woman for whom having the skin peeled off her bottom maliciously was so unlike anything in her experience that there was nothing left to live for. - Not only is our nervous system very dissimilar from yours, but also our psychology is profoundly different." (234)

This is the satirist's expertise used defensively, desperately even, rather than aggressively, used as a screen, that is to say. But it invites us to recall, to his disadvantage, the Lewis who was once as addicted to surfaces as that Swiftian persona who saw

> Last Week... a woman flay'd, and you will hardly believe, how much it altered her Person for the worse. Yesterday I ordered the Carcass of a Beau to be stript in my presence; when we were all amazed to find so many unsuspected Faults under one Suit of Cloaths. (235)

Again, Pullman resorts to the satirist's training when, at the Punishment Centre as a guest of Dr Hachilah, he observes a German sinner burnt alive. The engine employed is an inverted sledge that runs down aerial rails over a vast grill:

> The Doctor's flask contained rum of a high alcoholic percentage, but all that was not the only cause of his relative detachment. In so large a place, curious mechanical accessories of this atrocious kind emasculated the horror: the darkened atmosphere, the absence of sound (no cry came from the victim) gave it much more the effect of an operation than of an execution. A very odd, upside-down operation. (236)

Such a horrible spectacle can be withstood, it would seem, by observing it coldly, technically, as the satirist has frequently affected to regard his victims (the satirist having been for Lewis both surgeon and executioner). But it can only be withstood by attending critically, objectively, to the victim and the means. When Pullman's attention goes to Hachilah himself, this detachment - all that is left of the satirist in Pullman - cracks. And, hence, one of the two cardinal discoveries in Lewis' fiction:

> "In ten minutes the Sinner will be totally destroyed?" Pullman inquired.
>
> Hachilah did not answer, his eyes were greedily fixed upon the slowly dissolving object...It was a spectacle that affected him (Pullman) very deeply.
>
> A new Hachilah was glaring at him in the foreground of his consciousness. He imagined Dr Hachilah at a conference where it was being decided whether to destroy a man by fire or not. He could see him shifting excitedly about on his chair, his fiery eyes feasting upon the living flesh of the man for whom frying seemed practically certain. He could imagine, too, how the victim felt sitting there, and his eyes suddenly resting upon the man-eating eyes of Hachilah. He felt, the length of his spine, and down to the soles of his feet, what the man would feel for whom life was in the balance. (My italics.)
>
> He was electrified by this new disquiet. (237)

For the first time, Lewis invites the reader to look into the eyes of the avenger/executioner, rather than through those eyes. In an astonishing access of sympathy, Pullman, and by implication Lewis, suddenly feel what it is like to be the victim - of Archilochus, of Dryden or Swift, of Wyndham Lewis, of any concentration camp guard or doctor. Whether the satirist's desire to cause death is real or imaginary, or whether it can be effected actually or only symbolically, is not really the question; for what, it would seem, is being suggested, or conceded, now is that the desire itself is infernal, and that the cold, indifferent temper that has been the satirist's rhetorical boast is, in truth, a consuming hatred.

In his final days, Kenner writes, 'Lewis's mind...was taken up with Pullman, with whom his imagination had now identified itself. Sammael interested him little, as did satire.' (238) Such a transition of interests, Kenner suggests, had its source in Lewis' suspicion (aroused by what he himself had discovered in the writing of Malign Fiesta) that 'the whole Lewisian system of values is wrong. And Lewis actually braced himself to consider the latter possibility. It is the most extraordinary deed in his long career. At the age of 73 he commenced to re-examine, at long last, the premises on which he had conducted all his writing.'(239) And at the root of this renunciation is that insight of Pullman's which, Kenner thinks, 'challenges the whole of the preceding work' (everything, that is, that Lewis had ever written):

> God values man: that is the important thing to remember. It is this valuing that is so extraordinary...The only value for Sammael is solipsistic. I, Pullman, am acting in a valueless vacuum called Sammael. (240)

Such a revelation was to have been the subject of The Trial of Man, the fourth book of The Human Age, of which Lewis completed only a

synopsis, which, evidently, he later rejected. But on the strength of the conversion apparent in Malign Fiesta, of Pullman's radical enlightenment, and of the synopsis itself, it is possible to state that, at the end of his career, a twin departure was being made by Lewis. He was casting off not only the malignantly destructive system of desires of the satirist, but also those philosophic and imaginative frames of mind that had predisposed him to criticize, and to envision nature, as the Gnostic did.

The two aspects of such a departure from the traditions in whose terms this thesis has regarded Lewis are concomitant. For if God values Man, then to satirize Man, or to satirize particular men, is, obliquely, an insult to God. While in his credence in this valuing, in God's interest in Man, in going from satire and Satan to God, Pullman is acting on the strength of that faith that the Gnostic lacked, sufficient in itself to bring salvation. Thus, whereas in Time and Western Man (as was observed in Chapter 2, section (iv)) Lewis had insisted that God could only be apprehended through a sort of aesthetic gnosis, which must make Him unattainable to all but a few, towards the end of Malign Fiesta, Lewis is no longer concerned with such esoteric notions of communion with the Divine. No special intellection is required in Pullman, at the end of that novel, for him to be lifted up into the divine light, simply faith (and heartfelt prayers).

> In the last book of all the hero, Pullman, is at last in Divine Society. He favours the Divine. I favour the Divine.

Thus, Lewis in a letter to Kenner.(241) It is, in a sense, in answer to this statement that God (for the Gnostic, infinitely remote) reveals Himself in the synopsis of The Trial of Man, gently catechising Sammael's nurse, 'delighting' her for reasons she cannot discover:

> The Sister had by now become familiar with the magnificent geography of this superb face: the broad forehead, surmounted by heavy blue-grey hair, the light lines not seemingly drawn there by nature, but by the man himself - they had so voluntary an appearance...(242)

Yet the quality approaching awe that, for the first time, Lewis here displays in physical characterization:

> This old magician of the cloudy wastes of Heaven! How <u>fresh</u> he looked...(243)

is also, perhaps, a self-delivered riposte to his long, troubled debate with material being, nature and life. Likewise, God's refusal to be aroused by the foul-mouthed railing of another 'magician', the now mutilated Sammael, and His 'consideration' for His enemy in his suffering,(244) reveal vengeance to have become a defunct imperative in the Lewisian scheme.

## FOOTNOTES

1 Time and Western Man, p.199. Cited also in Chapter 2, section (viii).
2 ibid. pp.198 - 199.
3 The Dithyrambic Spectator, pp.172 & 199.
4 Time and Western Man, p.199.
5 The Golden Bough, pp.50 & 712.
6 Time and Western Man, p.199.
7 See Poetics, p.33, The Dithyrambic Spectator, p.213, The Golden Bough, pp.11 - 13.
8 Time and Western Man, p.199.
9 The Birth of Tragedy, p.64.
10 The Apes of God, p.339.
11 The Power of Satire, pp.4 - 5.
12 ibid. pp. 7 & 4.
13 ibid. p.7.
14 ibid. p.9.
15 "Archilochus and the Victims of His Iambics", American Journal of Philology, Vol.XLVI, 2 (1925), pp.106 - 107. Elliott also refers to this essay.
16 ibid. p.118.
17 The Power of Satire, p.13.
18 "Archilochus and the Victims of His Iambics", p.103.
19 The Power of Satire, p.50.
20 ibid. p.15.
21 ibid. p.106.
22 Cited, ibid., p.3.
23 ibid. p.47.
24 ibid. pp.15 - 36, and see "Archilochus and the Victims of His Iambics", pp.124 - 127.
25 On such sponsorship, see, for example, Meyers' The Enemy: A Biography of Wyndham Lewis, pp.112 - 113 & 126 - 127.
26 "Archilochus and the Victims of His Iambics", p.126.
27 The Power of Satire, pp.34 - 35.
28 ibid. pp.12 - 13.
29 ibid. pp.130 - 134, for this account of the railer.
30 ibid. pp.133 & 164 - 165. The quotation from Timon is from Shakespeare's Tragedies (Everyman's Library), p.320.
31 The Power of Satire, pp.162 & 166.
32 ibid. pp.225 - 227.
33 ibid. p.228.
34 Fables of Aggression, p.137.
35 Rude Assignment, p.57.
36 The Power of Satire, p.231.
37 ibid. pp.235 - 236.
38 Wyndham Lewis: Collected Poems and Plays, p.29. Lewis spells Archilochus as printed.
39 ibid.
40 ibid. pp.30 & 31.
41 The Power of Satire, p.224.
42 Blast,1, p.15.
43 A Master of Our Time: A Study of Wyndham Lewis, p.8.
44 The Power of Satire, pp.124 - 125.
45 ibid. p.287.
46 Rude Assignment, p.57.

47 See The Roots of Evil: A Social History of Crime and Punishment, by Christopher Hibbert, pp. 28 – 30.
48 A Master of Our time, p.6.
49 The Power of Satire, p.265.
50 Men Without Art, p.113.
51 ibid. p.226.
52 Creatures of Habit and Creatures of Change, p.173.
53 Rude Assignment, p.49.
54 The Lion and the Fox, pp.144 - 145.
55 ibid. pp.139 - 144; and see, for example, The Golden Bough, pp.577 - 587.
56 The Lion and the Fox, p.145.
57 Fables of Aggression, pp.136 - 137.
58 Enemy of the Stars, BLAST 1, p.84.
59 ibid. p.61.
60 The Art of Being Ruled (1926), p.56.
61 ibid. p.57.
62 Quoted, from The Penguin Book of Contemporary Verse (1950), in Wyndham Lewis: Collected Poems and Plays, p.208.
63 Troilus and Cressida (2/i), Shakespeare's Tragedies, pp.20 - 22.
64 Collected Poems and Plays, pp.44, 45 & 55.
65 ibid. pp.56 - 57.
66 ibid. p.57.
67 ibid. p.58. Elliott, Power of Satire, p.224, notices this, but doesn't comment upon it.
68 The Lion and the Fox, p.248.
69 ibid.
70 ibid. The second sentence is ungrammatic.
71 See, for example, Men Without Art, pp.121 - 122.
72 The Lion and the Fox, p.258.
73 See "Enemy Interlude", Collected Poems and Plays, pp.57 & 59, for Enemy as Faust(us).
74 Troilus and Cressida, Shakespeare's Tragedies, p.28.
75 The Little Review, Vol.4,1, May 1917; rpt.1967, pp.19 –23.
76 "Daily Herald" 30/5/1932, repr. Wyndham Lewis on Art, pp.266 - 267.
77 6/5/1927, in The Letters of Wyndham Lewis (ed. Rose), pp.168 - 169.
78 The Power of Satire, p.133.
79 Chiaroscuro, p.73.
80 Quoted in Time and Western Man from The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers, Vol.II, pp.56 - 57.
81 Time and Western Man, p.4.
82 ibid. pp.4 - 5.
83 See, for example, ibid. pp.77 - 81.
84 The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers Vol.II, p.67.
85 See, for example, Caird on the Cynics, ibid. p.65, and Nugent on Gnosticism, Masks of Satan: The Demonic in History, pp.48 - 49. In thelast chapter, section (ix), Lacarrière was cited on the Cynic influence in Gnosticism.
86 I am condensing Elliott, Power of Satire, p.266.
87 The Lion and the Fox, p.250.
88 ibid. p.249.
89 ibid. pp.250 - 255.
90 ibid. p.256.
91 See Shakespeare's Comedies (Everyman's Library), pp.534 & 544.
92 Tarr (1928), p.11.
93 ibid. p.12.
94 ibid. p.25.

95 ibid. p.13.
96 See, ibid. pp.39 ff. for an amusing visit to Lowndes' studio.
97 ibid. p.26.
98 ibid. pp.12 - 13.
99 See, for example, Elliott, Power of Satire, pp. 102 - 104, on this error, which persisted until well into the seventeenth century, and is not yet extinct.
100 See The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature, p.232. Throughout this thesis, I only cite this work (acknowledged in the bibliography) in footnotes when direct quotation is made.
101 ibid. p.167.
102 Tarr, pp.17 - 18.
103 ibid. p.26.
104 ibid. p.27.
105 Troilus and Cressida (2/i), p.22.
106 Tarr, pp.17 & 23.
107 Troilus and Cressida, pp.67 & 72.
108 ibid. 5/i, p.66.
109 The Apes of God, p.143.
110 Tarr, p.245.
111 ibid.
112 ibid. p.246.
113 See, for example, ibid. pp.86, 93 & 193.
114 The Power of Satire, p.77.
115 Tarr, pp.153 & 155.
116 ibid. p.160.
117 ibid. p.159.
118 ibid. p.287.
119 ibid. pp.280 - 281.
120 ibid. p.293.
121 ibid.
122 The figure, incidentally, is 1260foot/pounds, given by Albert Pierrepoint in his autobiography, Executioner: Pierrepoint. I seem to recall that Ossipon, in Conrad's Secret Agent, is haunted by the phrase 'the drop given was...'
123 Tarr, p.93.
124 Rude Assignment, p.165.
125 Tarr, p.164.
126 The Golden Bough, p.584.
127 ibid. p.583.
128 The Vulgar Streak, pp.197 & 201.
129 ibid. p.229.
130 Rude Assignment, p.165.
131 The Vulgar Streak, p.225.
132 As he wrote in the earlier draft of a letter to H.G.Wells, concerning The Vulgar Streak - see Letters, pp.332 - 333.
133 "A Soldier of Humour" (1927), repr. The Complete Wild Body. See p.24 for de Valmore's bizarre Americanisms.
134 ibid. p.25.
135 ibid. p.28.
136 ibid.
137 ibid. p.29.
138 See The Art of Being Ruled, "The Piecemealing of the Personality", p.229.
139 "A Soldier of Humour", p.29.
140 Ker-Orr refers thus to his experience on pp. 32 & 46.

141 ibid. p.38.
142 ibid.
143 ibid. p.40.
144 ibid. p.35.
145 ibid. p.39.
146 ibid. p.45.
147 ibid.
148 The Apes of God, pp.243 - 4 & 299.
149 The Power of Satire, p.131.
150 ibid. p.39.
151 The Apes of God, p.239.
152 See, for example, ibid. pp.300 - 306.
153 ibid. p.305.
154 ibid. p.306.
155 ibid. p.307.
156 See, for example, The Power of Satire, pp.79 - 80.
157 This thesis is disposed, in general, to take seriously Zagreus' mysterious aura, rather than to regard him as a fraud, which seems to be the more common line (a superficial one, in my view). Moreover, some of the analysis of Zagreus offered in the previous chapter seems, even, to place him outside the satire.
158 The Apes of God, p.310.
159 Rebecca West thought Kreisler Dostoevskyan, and Lewis liked that opinion - though didn't want to push it too far; see Rude Assignment, p.161.
160 Monstre Gai, p.211.
161 ibid.
162 ibid.pp.230 - 231.
163 The Power of Satire, pp.288 - 289. The second quotation is from an extract given by Elliott of Cumont's The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism (1911).
164 ibid. pp.285 - 286.
165 The Power of Satire, pp.10 & 14, and "Archilochus and the Victims of His Iambics", pp.116 & 115.
166 "Archilochus and the Victims of His Iambics", p.116.
167 Monstre Gai, p.237 - 'filthy magic' is Michael Devlin's phrase.
168 ibid.
169 Wyndham Lewis: Fictions and Satires, pp.86 - 94.
170 The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness, pp.362 - 363.
171 "Archilochus and the Victims of His Iambics", pp.123 - 124.
172 See Fables of Aggression p.137 and The Power of Satire, p.11.
173 A Daily Telegraph review, repr. Satire and Fiction, p.34.
174 The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness, p.362.
175 Rude Assignment, pp.56 - 57; evidently, Lewis composed the passage in 1947.
176 The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness, pp.364 - 365.
177 "Archilochus and the Victims of His Iambics", pp.113 - 114.
178 John Donne: Complete English Poems, pp.158 - 161.
179 Rude Assignment, p.56.
180 See A.J. Smith's annotations, Donne: Complete English Poems, pp.469 & 480.
181 Wyndham Lewis, p.100.
182 See, respectively, Wyndham Lewis: A Portrait of the Artist as the Enemy, p.249, Wyndham Lewis: Fictions and Satires, pp.104 - 105, Fables of Aggression, pp.174 - 175, The Apes of God, "Afterword", p.637.

183 Wyndham Lewis, p.100.
184 A Portrait of the Artist as the Enemy, p.232.
185 The Power of Satire, p.234.
186 Since The Apes of God was published in 1930. The dates above and all following information regarding the Pierrepoints and their profession are taken from Albert Pierrepoint's autobiography, Executioner: Pierrepoint.
187 See Men Without Art, pp.107 - 108, Rude Assignment, pp.56 & 215, and A Short History of English Literature, pp.474 - 475.
188 Collected Poems and Plays, p.91.
189 The Works of John Dryden Vol.IV, p.71.
190 "In Satire's Falling City", The Satirists's Art, pp.23 - 24.
191 See A Portrait of the Artist as the Enemy, p.248, and The Apes of God, pp.27 ff..
192 The Apes of God, pp.449 - 453.
193 This and two following quotations, ibid. p.454.
194 See "Augustan and Related Allusions in The Apes of God", Enemy News, 24, Summer 1987, pp.17 - 21.
195 See Roots of Evil: A Social History of Crime and Punishment, p.95.
196 The Apes of God, p.405.
197 ibid. pp.403 - 405.
198 ibid. pp.406 - 407.
199 ibid. p.409.
200 ibid.
201 ibid. pp.411 - 412.
202 See The Roots of Evil, p.436.
203 Fables of Aggression, p.175.
204 The Apes of God, p.511.
205 Tarr, pp.251 - 252.
206 The Apes of God, p.596.
207 ibid. p.597.
208 "Augustan and Related Allusions in The Apes of God", p.17.
209 MacFlecknoe 11.212 - 215, in The Oxford Anthology of English Literature, The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century (ed. Price), pp.83 - 89.
210 Chiaroscuro, p.86.
211 "The Apes of God: Form and Meaning", in Wyndham Lewis: A Revaluation, p.135.
212 The Apes of God, p.50.
213 ibid. p.15.
214 ibid. p.39.
215 See, for example, ibid. p.475.
216 ibid. pp.620 - 625 for all following references.
217 'The actus reus of murder is an unlawful homicide with (express or implied) malice aforethought (mens rea). Malice aforethought is either: (i) an intention to kill the deceased; or (ii) an intention to cause grievous bodily harm to the deceased'. A letter from Mr. T.Nayager (solicitor) is the source of this information.
218 Fables of Aggression, p.142.
219 Wyndham Lewis, pp.77 - 78.
220 Rude Assignment, p.215. The image of dropping molten metal is from Saintsbury on Dryden.
221 ibid. p.55.
222 "Introduction", English Satire and the Satiric Tradition, pp.vi - vii.
223 Fables of Aggresssion, pp.172 - 173.

224 ibid. p.162.
225 ibid. p.172.
226 "Fables of Aggression", Blast, 3, p.349.
227 "The Trial of Man", p.238.
228 ibid. p.234.
229 Malign Fiesta, p.394.
230 Evidently, Stalin's sadism regularly took precisely this form: send a man to torture, release him, then promote him. See Anatomy of Human Destructiveness, pp.380 - 384.
231 Rude Assignment, pp.55 - 57.
232 Malign Fiesta, pp.461 & 377.
233 ibid. p.343.
234 ibid. p.336.
235 A Tale of a Tub. The Writings of Jonathan Swift, p.352.
236 Malign Fiesta, p.421.
237 ibid. p.422.
238 "The Trial of Man", p.238.
239 ibid. pp.234 - 235.
240 ibid. and see Malign Fiesta, p.528.
241 29/8/1955, Letters, p.562.
242 The Trial of Man (Synopsis), pp.217 - 218.
243 ibid. p.226.
244 ibid. pp.217, 219 & 223.

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