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The Poetics of Mockery

Wyndham Lewis's *The Apes of God* and the Popularization of Modernism

MARK PERRINO

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J. R. WATSON

(*English*)

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PREFACE

It seems as though some explanation should accompany a study that focuses on a single work of an unpopular writer. This began as a comparative study of inter-war satire; when the Lewis chapter reached four times the length of the first, I decided not to summarize it into proportion. It had become apparent that a full understanding of *The Apes of God* in its generic and historical context required the kind of close reading that has been done, and often re-done, on some other modernist texts. To judge from some interesting recent studies, Lewis is finally being discovered, but much in his large and varied corpus deserves closer scrutiny. Key passages of *The Apes* had never been discussed; stray lines had the curiosity of Joyce's oddments; and the neglected matter of Lewis's use of myth was a convenient means of re-situating Lewis among his more celebrated colleagues. Since the book embraces all of the prime issues of modernism, in such a lively and unpredictable manner, it was difficult, in the face of both the academic canon and recent reformist tendencies, to resist the chance to adjust a chapter in a different way than usual. None the less, in presenting a new interpretation that makes great claims for this writer and contradicts much foregoing criticism, I have sometimes wondered whether I have been infected with Lewisian fanaticism or whether I have a weakness for Lewis's questionable sense of humour. Perhaps it was indeed that *outré* quality that was intriguing.

For their help with this study, I would like to thank first George Stade and Michael Rosenthal of Columbia University, who each taught me a great deal about critical argument and good prose. I must also note the generous encouragement given to me by Carl Woodring at an early stage of this project. I am indebted to Michael Ross for his perceptive comments on the entire first draft. I am also grateful to the staff of the Department of Rare Books at Cornell University, Lynne Farrington especially, for steering me through Lewis's manuscripts and offering a pleasant atmosphere for research. It is by the courtesy of Mark Dimunation, the Curator of Rare Books, Cornell University Library, and of J. W. Dolman of the Wyndham Lewis Memorial Trust that I quote from unpublished manuscripts and letters relating to *The Apes of God* and *Satire & Fiction*. Chapter 6, in a slightly different form, appeared as 'Marketing Insults: Wyndham Lewis and the Arthur Press' in *Twentieth Century Literature*; I thank the Editor, William McBrien, for permission to reprint it. I owe a particular debt to my editor at the Modern Humanities

Research Association, J. R. Watson, who has been most patient and generous with the uncertainties of my first published book.

I would also like to thank my professional (non-academic) associates — Louis Sciullo, Linda Vona, and Sandra Hayes — for their indulgence during the writing of this study. I am grateful to my parents, Mary Ellen and Tony Perrino, for gently nagging me to finish the project during a period when I had put it aside, and for preparing me for it long ago. My greatest debt is to my wife, Karin Nyenstad, who little suspected the ordeal that her encouragement would set in train and was still able to take issue with the text.

M.P.

TEXTS AND ABBREVIATIONS

The 1981 Black Sparrow Press edition of *The Apes of God* follows the pagination of the original 1930 edition; unless otherwise indicated, parenthetical page citations refer to this text. References to Lewis's contemporaneous non-fiction will be made under the abbreviations listed below. The Black Sparrow editions of Lewis's works have been used for the volumes of that series that have been completed.

ABR: *The Art of Being Ruled*, ed. by Reed Way Dasenbrock (1926; Santa Rosa, CA: Black Sparrow Press, 1989)
CWB: *The Complete Wild Body*, ed. by Bernard Lafourcade (1927; Santa Barbara, CA: Black Sparrow Press, 1982)
DP: *The Diabolical Principle and the Dithyrambic Spectator* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1931)
L: *The Letters of Wyndham Lewis*, ed. by W. K. Rose (Norfolk, CN: New Directions, 1963)
LF: *The Lion and the Fox: The Role of the Hero in the Plays of Shakespeare* (London: Richards, 1927)
MWA: *Men without Art* (London: Cassell, 1934)
P: *Paleface: The Philosophy of the 'Melting-Pot'* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1929)
SF: *Satire & Fiction: Preceded by 'The History of a Rejected Review' [by Roy Campbell]* (London: Arthur Press, 1930)
TWM: *Time and Western Man* (1926; repr. Boston: Beacon Press, 1957)

CHAPTER ONE

THE MODERN CARNIVAL: WYNDHAM LEWIS AND THE NINETEEN-TWENTIES

The Bête Noire *of Modernism*

Wyndham Lewis's career must be the most anomalous case in modern English letters, not only because of the singularity of his *œuvre*, but also because of his uncertain place in literary history. It is not simply that he is under-rated or that his critical fortunes have fallen; his work occasioned bewilderment and violent disagreement during his lifetime and continues to do so now among his limited readership. Called by T. S. Eliot 'the most fascinating personality of our time' and 'the greatest prose master of style of my generation', Lewis was considered by his colleagues, who have dominated the modern canon, to be as important as anyone to modern aesthetics and cultural criticism.[1] He was at the forefront of pre-World War One experimentation in writing and painting; he had provocative opinions on every major social, political, and philosophical issue of his time; and he left a diverse body of original fiction. Any reader of Lewis must sense a powerful talent and a fiercely independent mind. Yet while several modernist writers have been the subject of extensive and intensive criticism since mid-century, Lewis has scarcely been accorded the status of a significant minor novelist. Despite a modest revival of interest in his work in recent years, he is still generally dismissed as an inassimilable aberration of the modernist movement that he had helped to create. His books are difficult to find in libraries, bookshops, and university courses; to the general educated public, at least in the United States, he is virtually unknown; and even his fairly conventional novel *The Revenge for Love*, which most critics consider his best, has received little attention.

Lewis's fiction certainly poses barriers to a wide appeal: his style is often contorted and cryptic, his dramas are harsh and confrontational, and his character portrayals are brutally anti-humanistic. Most readers, like Northrop Frye, find him obsessive and strident or simply unpleasant — in a word, unreadable; and his work is treated by only a few as 'writerly texts' worth the effort that they demand.[2] Lewis's sometimes overbearing personality and his contrarious politics, quite palpable in his imaginative work as well as his polemics, account at least in part for this response. He seems to have alienated, at one time or another, nearly every cultural figure in London, including his own allies and patrons; and now he is known mainly by the caricature that he himself cultivated, as 'The Enemy': a fascist, misogynist, racist, bigot, and aggressive paranoiac. The description by his friend Ezra Pound captures the ambivalence that even Lewis's admirers feel: 'the man who was wrong about everything except the superiority of live mind to dead mind; for which basic verity God bless his holy name'.[3]

But among Lewis's self-defined rivals — Pound himself, Joyce, Eliot, Lawrence, and Stein — one can find more extreme instances of stylistic obscurity, misanthropy, and 'political incorrectness', which have not proved impediments to an appreciation of their work. Even if it were true, according to a common explanation for his standing, that Lewis produced no single masterpiece as did these writers, that should not prevent an interest in the energetic imagination of his prose and his incisive socio-political observations. It is likely that his neglect derives largely from his antagonistic stance towards the prevailing modernist aesthetic as well as towards conventional schools of art, a position that goes hand-in-hand with the emotionally-forbidding aspect of his work. The heavy element of satire in Lewis's fiction is fundamentally at odds with the romantic, subjectivist aspect of modernism. Besides being offensive to many humanist sensibilities, radical satire, with its mixture of topicality, didacticism, and fantasy, does not often satisfy the ideal of an autonomous, 'organically' unified work of art propounded by the school of American New Criticism which shaped the modern canon. In offering himself as the lone alternative to modernist impressionism, Lewis succeeded only in isolating himself, until his partial rehabilitation in Britain during his last, mellower years of illness and blindness in the fifties.[4]

The Apes of God, a lengthy *roman à clef* published in 1930, is Lewis's most controversial work of fiction and epitomizes the qualities that have led to his dubious critical status. An ambitious experimental narrative that represents the culmination of his idiosyncratic satiric method and dramatizes the ideas presented in his several non-fiction books of the preceding years, *The Apes* is mannered, virulent, congested, sometimes obscure, and belligerent both towards other contemporary art and towards broader cultural developments. Although it is not usually considered among Lewis's best novels overall, but rather an eccentric exercise in visual narration that suffers from personal animus and lack of plot, most readers concede that it contains some of his most brilliant writing. It is a complex work that deserves fuller consideration than it has received. In addition to its own aesthetic interest, the novel is valuable as a first-hand study of modernism-in-the-making. Indeed its artistic achievement cannot be separated from its socio-political analysis of the movement. It best illustrates Lewis's contradictory relation to his major contemporaries; Lewis turned Joyce's and Eliot's 'mythic method' upon the avant-garde itself and produced a prophecy of mass culture. The book is best understood as an allegory of the social function of modernist impressionism as well as a formal alternative to it. The present study grew into a complete explication and re-valuation — the first book-length treatment of any of Lewis's individual works of fiction — because a more detailed analysis than those available was necessary to reach an adequate interpretation of *The Apes* in historical context and in the context of satiric theory.

The Apes is an anatomy of British society according to its relation to art, a boisterous social anthropology of bad art. In an age often considered too relativistic for true satire to flourish, it fulfils the traditional satiric function, the ridicule of historical personages representing certain social forces.[5] The Apes of the title are wealthy dilettantes who pose as artists in order to justify a bohemian mode of life and who monopolize cultural life through their social and financial power. They are imitators of more radical writers living in Paris, and much of the satire is aimed at the contradiction between their rebellious posturing and conservative social objectives. Lewis's premise is that because the enormously destructive war had made suspect all institutions of authority — government, capitalism, patriarchy, the white race — a faction of the British gentry and professional class took refuge in the pretence of cultural revolution: anyone who could afford a studio or vanity publishing set up as an artist and cultivated celebrity. A gallery of specimens is shown in grotesque detail and given a running polemical analysis. In thinly-disguised portraits of the Bloomsbury group, the Sitwells, and others, Lewis attacks a variety of cultural phenomena — personal fiction, impersonal fiction, the *roman à clef*, literary eroticism, pulp thrillers, post-impressionist painting, primitivism, psychoanalysis, cinema, jazz, and the gossip column — as symptoms of a peculiarly modern complex of ideologies that he flippantly christens the 'time-cult', the 'youth-cult', and so on.

Lewis's characters are also simply raw material for an experimental representation of the human body. Along with the satire of the novel's historical models, Lewis's 'external method' of character portrayal is the feature that has received the most attention. Derived from what Lewis considered his primary vocation as a painter and buttressed with arguments that it represents a scientific, 'non-moral' kind of satire, this technique consists of a detailed treatment of the physical aspect of human life in visual imagery that often reduces characters to mechanical or animal movements. Just as important in creating the impression of a purely cynical and destructive operation is a virulent rhetoric of mockery used in conjunction with a mercurial treatment of social stereotype. But beyond the critical function of the satire, the external method itself presents a positive counter-aesthetic; indeed its emphasis on physicality and form is offered as the cure for what Lewis described as the chaotic emotionalism of modern art.

The quirky vehemence of its style and satiric onslaught overshadows the novel's subtle design. The plot seems very slight and whimsical for so lengthy a tale: Horace Zagreus, an eccentric disciple of the reclusive iconoclast Pierpoint (Lewis's alter ego who never appears in the action) introduces a beautiful young imbecile, Daniel Boleyn, to fashionable art society — as a 'genius'. Dan sees the Apes through innocent eyes, suffers their attentions, and listens to Zagreus's 'broadcasts' of Pierpoint's denunciations of this society in its midst, until he is replaced by another young 'genius', Archie Margolin. Since Dan is obviously unfit for the task, the purpose of his 'apprenticeship', except as an artistic device for observing the Apes and prompting the social commentaries, is mysterious. He also seems to be a device in an internal plot by the small anti-Ape faction, although Zagreus's own 'youth-snobbery' and his general behaviour ultimately make him as suspect as the Apes.

The Apes occupies a central place in Lewis's career. In it Lewis adapted certain themes and formal features of his earlier fiction to the subject of the cultural situation of the twenties, a situation that materially affected his career as a painter and that he studied extensively. He was born in 1882, the same year as Joyce and Woolf were, in the same decade as Pound, Lawrence, and Eliot; his writing took a different direction from theirs partly because of his early preference for the graphic arts. His first stories, from the years 1909–12, were by-products of painting excursions in provincial Spain and France; they are grim serio-comic studies of peasant antagonisms that evince an instinct for the primal contest that takes place beneath the level of 'manners and morals' treated in social satire. In writing them, Lewis formulated a theory of comedy that remained the basis of his external method of the twenties. Dismissing the distinction between the organic and the mechanical made by Henri Bergson, whose Paris lectures he attended, and inverting Bergson's definition of comedy as the conflation of persons and things, Lewis writes, 'The root of the Comic is to be sought in the sensations resulting from the observation of a *thing* behaving like a person' (italics in quotations are always from the original text, unless otherwise noted).[6]

In the years just preceding the Great War, when new continental art movements such as Cubism and Futurism met much resistance in England, Lewis was a vociferous cultural revolutionary and propagandist. He founded the multi-media movement Vorticism and its journal *Blast* (1914–15), whose manifestos maintained that the artist must shape a new consciousness for the machine age; and he saw the war, which aborted this movement, as a mordant confirmation of the power of technology and the 'religion of science'. His surrealistic closet drama, *The Enemy of the Stars* (1914), which depicts a Nietzschean struggle between the intellect and the mundane exigencies of existence, is a radical attempt to translate graphic values into literature. Although Lewis himself later felt that it was an impossible experiment, it has recently been called a seminal work of high modernism, responsible for turning attention from syntagmatic to paradigmatic organization — from the sentence to the phrase and from narration to pattern.[7] Lewis's first published novel, *Tarr* (1918), which is based on a similar dualism between life and art, explores the conflicting natures of the European powers that led to the war. The artist-observer Tarr negotiates an uneasy truce with his sensual impulses, while the inferior artist who cannot manage this task, the German Kreisler, plunges into self-destruction.

Frustrated that the cultural atmosphere of post-war Britain was dominated by what he viewed as parochial coteries of affluent dilettantes, Lewis, who ironically had founded *Blast* in order to free art from the academy, stopped painting and went 'underground' in the early twenties to write the extraordinary series of books that began appearing in 1926 (*TWM*, p. 38). These polemics on politics, social theory, philosophy, aesthetics, race relations, anthropology, and Renaissance drama, the chief among them being *The Art of Being Ruled* (1926) and *Time and Western Man* (1927), are sometimes marred by tortuous and paradoxical reasoning; none the less they are rare examples of scholarship committed to connecting the personal and the political spheres. In them Lewis interpreted the 'decadence' of contemporary art as a symptom of diverse ideological currents involving industrialization, relativity physics, socialist sentiment, and the rise of mass culture, and aligned himself against nearly every prominent literary figure, producing critical studies of Gertrude Stein's childish irrationalism, Joyce's preoccupation with mundane experience, Pound's insurrectionist bluster, and Lawrence's dreamy primitivism, many of which first appeared in his one-man journal *The Enemy* (1927–29). Several of these works were originally intended to comprise an encyclopedic study of post-war Europe, *The Man of the World* (*L*, pp. 136–39). *The Apes*, which was written over most of the decade (chapters appeared in *The Criterion* as early as 1924), is the climax of this project, a dramatization of the economy of the arts in the twenties.

Coming directly after the revision of his stories for the *Wild Body* collection (1927) and of *Tarr* (1928), *The Apes* and Lewis's other new work of fiction, *The Childermass* (1928), mark the furthest development of his narrative and stylistic experimentation. *The Apes* is the more important of these two mainly because of its comprehensive treatment of contemporary social life. *The Childermass*, which also examines the political and intellectual currents of the twenties, is a philosophical fable and dialogue, and part of a multi-volume work, *The Human Age*, that was not resumed until the fifties. *The Apes* examines these forces in a detailed portrayal of London society, with an expansive variety that makes *The Childermass*'s narrative seem austere and measured, and its debates seem abstruse. The scandal following *The Apes*' publication brings the issues involved in Lewis's satiric practice into sharp focus; his defence of the novel in the pamphlet *Satire & Fiction* (1930) indicates the importance that he attached to it. According to his later view, *The Apes* sums up 'the extreme decay of the bourgeois era, preceding the present socialist one' (*Rude Assignment*, p. 215). In the decade following, Lewis scaled down the scope of both his fiction and his political journalism and became embroiled in factional wrangling.

Admittedly, *The Apes* is an uneven, repetitious, and often exasperating novel. But it is arguable that its stylistic and formal experiments are as significant as those of any contemporary work of fiction; its political and historical interest concerning post-war Europe is unique in English modernism; and its artistic coherence is much greater than has generally been perceived. An obvious stumbling block in the novel's reception is its *roman à clef* dimension, which at publication made it seem a matter of private quarrels and which now might make it seem dated. Although it is true that Lewis's poverty and uneasy relations with patrons contributed to this satire of the upper class, and that Lewis protested too much that his characters were purely imaginary, the issue of personal attacks obscures the related and more important factor of the novel's topical and ideological nature. That the Apes are a representative type from this period of British social history is amply documented in memoirs and biographies as well as in other imaginative literature. It is the tendentious and litigious manner of Lewis's treatment of them that is troublesome. The stretches of discursive material that interrupt the action are alien to the usual expectations about fiction; the ideas themselves are sometimes gratuitously inflammatory and sometimes obscure; and the arguments can be puzzling because they are simultaneously dogmatic and slippery.

Although Lewis was always candid in declaring the principles upon which both his fiction and cultural criticism were based, there is an undeniably intransigent element in all of his work before the Second World War. He relished the image of an uncompromising crank and had a horror of being identified with any movement or pinned down to an easily-defined position; for example, in *The Diabolical Principle* he writes that his politics are 'partly communist and partly fascist, with a distinct streak of monarchism in my marxism, but at bottom anarchist with a healthy passion for order' (p. 126). The tone of his argument, with its rhetorical excesses descending to crude sarcasm, is likely to alienate many readers. Sometimes it is difficult to know how much to allow for posturing, as in his rejection of the charge of being a reactionary humanist made by the editors of the Paris journal *transition*: 'I am not a humanist, I am an outsider who has deliberately intervened out of *pure malice*' (*DP*, p. 10). Despite the fact that during this period Lewis certainly did not succeed in conveying his ideas to a significant public audience, his observations on the politics of mass society and his early criticism of modernist classics were nevertheless extremely prescient. His articulation of the common epistemological basis of modern science, avant-garde art, and popular culture will remain controversial since it leads to a wholesale condemnation of capitalist democracy; but a dismissal of this critique as a 'conspiracy theory' does not diminish the value of his hypothesis in relating a wide range of cultural phenomena. And while the historical specificity of his treatment makes it dated, many of the issues that he addresses are still relevant to our own period and are even more urgent now.

Nevertheless, one can accept the validity and importance of Lewis's ideas and still hold a low opinion of the technique of caricature employed in their service in *The Apes*, because it seems oppressively arrogant or simply repellent to ordinary human sympathies. 'Overkill', along with 'local brilliance, but . . .', is the notion found most often in the criticism on the novel, and this reflects the problems of reading *The Apes* both as a social commentary and as a work of art. Since Lewis studies are limited to a dozen or so volumes, it is possible to make a fairly brief survey of the novel's critical history.

The Critical Context

The Apes received several very good reviews and, as is satire's due, some equally disapproving ones. Roy Campbell's, which calls the novel a 'psychological encyclopedia' of the regressive tendencies of the age, became famous when the prominent literary journal the *New Statesman* refused to print it (*SF*, p. 15). This decision prompted Lewis to issue *Satire & Fiction*, which contains the 'Rejected Review', testimonials from other writers, and Lewis's own defence adumbrating his theory of satire. The novel's most prominent supporter in the years immediately following was Pound, who, comparing it to Flaubert's *L'Education Sentimentale*, stressed its documentary value.[8] Academic criticism of Lewis began in 1954 with Hugh Kenner's penetrating but somewhat casual study. Kenner, who considers Lewis's polemics prophetic, none the less views his 'puppet-fiction' of the twenties and early thirties as a strategic disaster — the 'squandering of an unprecedented talent' — in which Lewis slighted the human element necessary for effective fiction. According to Kenner, although Lewis developed a 'brilliant array of techniques for articulating the carapaces of the unreal', in *The Apes* he was unable to redeem the essential triviality of his subject.[9] A few years later, Geoffrey Wagner, in a sprawling study of Lewis's intellectual background, takes a position on the novel pointedly the opposite of Kenner's. He thinks that it is 'the English comic masterpiece of the first half of this century'; for him, the satire is salutary and effective throughout, and the smallness of its targets does not diminish their significance as symptoms of historical conditions.[10]

The next three surveys of Lewis's fiction consist of more conventional explications. William Pritchard's (1968) contains the harshest assessment of

The Apes. Pritchard sees the novel as a tedious series of pedantic character sketches that never converge in a plot-crisis, and finds Lewis's attempt at a non-moral satire simplistic, inconsistent, and evasive.[11] Robert Chapman (1971), focusing on Lewis's satiric aims, takes a more favourable view, distinguishing two types of satire in the novel, social and metaphysical, with the latter directed at mankind in general. To Chapman, the discursive commentaries in the broadcasts dramatize a Platonic dualism of word and deed, and establish a criterion by which to judge the degrees of truth represented by the various characters.[12] Timothy Materer (1975), in essential agreement with Kenner, finds the novel's style a brilliant reflection of mechanized modern life, but concludes that Lewis's obsession with 'spatial effects' and his personal animosity prevent him from creating an involving human drama.[13]

In recent years, with the appearance of Jeffrey Meyers's 1980 biography of Lewis, the Lewis journal *Enemy News*, critical editions of Lewis's books by the Black Sparrow Press, and collections of shorter pieces, more criticism on various aspects of Lewis's work has emerged.[14] The greatest boost to Lewis studies may have come from Fredric Jameson's challenging application of Marxist, psychoanalytic, and post-structuralist methods to Lewis's fiction (1979). While Jameson discusses *The Apes* only briefly and thinks that it is Lewis at his most 'unreadable', he considers it Lewis's 'most complex and reflexive satiric construction', which dramatizes the problem of the satiric observer's authority (pp. 5, 174). His general analysis of the use of figurative language in Lewis's 'expressionist' style is particularly pertinent to *The Apes*. In a 1980 essay, Paul Edwards, who also wrote the Afterword to the 1981 edition of *The Apes*, argues that the novel is 'one of the major pessimistic achievements of literary modernism' and that objections to it are objections to satire in general, which 'precludes any relaxed immersion in the created world' and the acceptance of 'life-enhancing' pretensions. According to Edwards, the plot amplifies the primary satire of artistic life into a study of the condition of England, and the broadcasts and satiric technique create a tension between verisimilitude and fictionality.[15]

The two most suggestive analyses of the novel are Thomas Kush's and Alan Munton's, both of which appeared in 1982. Kush's study of the relation between Lewis's graphic and literary work takes issue with the detractors of the external method, arguing that *The Apes* and *The Childermass* represent the maturity of Lewis's 'modern pictorial fiction'. In Kush's view, the 'metaphoric transformations' of Lewis's 'Cubist' method are not merely dehumanizing, but rather dignify the figures portrayed with symbolic and archetypal resonance. While Kush is prone to misidentifying details, his interpretation of the characterization and the climax, according to their mythological dimensions, is nevertheless the most explicit and productive; he concludes, however, that the novel ultimately fails to integrate its great visual, linguistic, and didactic ambitions.[16] Munton's essay on the carnivalesque in Lewis's fiction through *The Apes* contrasts his early comedy and his satire. Munton notes Lewis's consistent interest in grotesque realism, theatrical and banquet scenes, and other features of the Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin's formulation of literary carnivalization, and discerns a shift to a critical attitude towards carnival in the later work, in which the inversion of carnival values reflects cultural corruption.[17] This issue will be a major concern in the present study.

Finally, Reed Way Dasenbrock's recent study (1985) examines 'literary Vorticism' and its development in Lewis's and Pound's high modernist works. According to Dasenbrock, Lewis transferred his 'attack on time' from the sentence, in *Enemy of the Stars*, to narrative form in his major novels, including *The Apes*; these later works all have a circular pattern that depicts time grinding to a halt and isolates their failed heroes outside 'the stream of time'. Dasenbrock holds that *The Apes* is the only authentic modern *Inferno*, but that its satire produces a paradoxical 'bind' prevalent in misanthropic works in that it alienates its readers by implicating them.[18]

Despite the wider perspectives of the more recent studies, *The Apes* is still generally viewed as a savage *roman à clef* and the most eccentric instance of the external method, whose achievement seems out of proportion to its effort, if not completely misguided.[19] My own emphasis will be on other aspects of the novel: the plot, the character system, the thematic undercurrents of the drama, and the carnivalesque element. Plot is often considered the novel's weakest point; Kenner, for instance, writes, 'There is no necessary connection between doctrinaire concern with the *outside* of people and absence of plot' (p. 104). The structure of the novel is indeed merely an episodic tour of fantastic *poseurs*; but it is in the seemingly incidental unfolding of the relations among the anti-Ape faction that its interest ultimately lies. In the novel Lewis analyses the typical 'character system' of contemporary social satire; to an unusual degree in *The Apes*, the character system itself is the plot. The characters are aligned along axes of hierarchy and antagonism, and of sex and age; and the meaning of events is apprehended according to the shifting patterns of their relations. Only Kush has remarked, in passing, that Daniel Boleyn is 'symbolically slain'; and Archie Margolin, the second 'genius', has been uniformly taken for Dan's double when, except for being a young man, he is in every way Dan's opposite.

The main argument of this interpretation is that the plot, Dan's apprenticeship, consists of a practical joke that concludes in a parodic virgin-sacrifice. The climax, in which Dan is made to 'vanish' in Zagreus's magic performance, retrospectively colours the entire action as a single, or rather a double, ritual: the presentation and expulsion of a scapegoat for the Apes' abuses, or the cyclical succession of novices. Zagreus, who presides over this spectacle, is an ambiguous figure, neither simply Lewis's mouthpiece nor a foolish Ape himself, but a mad trickster in whom the conflicts of Apery are most exacerbated. The primitive themes of the shaman and the scapegoat are used to create a symbol of the Apes' fraudulence that embodies Pierpoint's analysis of the relation between artistic modernism and nascent mass culture. Jameson is correct that 'the work unravels itself and undermines its own first principles' (p. 175); but he does not specify fully how this is accomplished or note that the unravelling of appearances is precisely the novel's first principle. The main irony of the conclusion is that Margolin, another apparent victim in Zagreus's sadistic treatment of beautiful boys, conquers Zagreus by refuting the seemingly omniscient Pierpoint. This reversal makes Zagreus a much less static character than he is usually considered to be; and along with the dissension and laughable practical problems revealed among Pierpoint's following, it also alters the perspective of the interpretation of the London scene that has been painstakingly presented.

It is also through the plot that the satire reaches beyond the Apes. It is true that the Apes are only minor popularizers of modernist experiments; this is the later modernism of London, whose only major writers in residence were Eliot and Woolf. None the less, the Apes' masters are held accountable for an aesthetic that is conducive to their exploitation. There are allusion to the cults surrounding Stein, Joyce, Lawrence, and Proust that the Apes capitalize upon, but the role of the major modernists is most apparent in Dan's promotion, which dramatizes the issues involved in the dissemination of supposedly anti-social avant-garde art and produces a critique of modernism as it coalesced into an ideology. In the themes of imitation and publicity, *The Apes* raises questions about the role of artistic innovation in mass society alongside the parodic critique of modernist impressionism on the level of style; and Lewis's own radical prose technique itself offers an example of the problematic status of artistic experiment.

Another aspect of the novel that has been neglected, except for a brief remark by Edwards, is a recurring reference to various thematic dichotomies — words and things, self and 'not-self' — and certain associated imagery whose paradoxical reversals convey the precarious nature of the modern subject. In an oblique way, the treatment of these themes supports the meaning of Dan's ordeal and Zagreus's conjuring, which themselves in a complex fashion reveal the wider implications of the pervasive ridicule of the secondary characters.

It is true that Lewis's narrative technique in this novel was, in Kenner's words, a 'blind alley' (p. 112). His turn towards a more realistic fiction and then the composed style of the later *Human Age* instalments, however, does not prove that his satiric method was invalid or ineffective for its purposes. I prefer to see it as a self-consuming experiment. One could as well describe *Finnegans Wake* (to take one of Kenner's touchstones), which explores the threshold of intelligible language, as a blind alley. Like Joyce, Lewis in *The Apes* also undertakes a dismantling of the traditional conception of literary character, but from the opposite direction. I refer not only to his concern with visual representation, which as Kenner points out Lewis overstated, but to his scepticism towards language and a normative view of human identity. The emphasis placed on the physical plane of his cliché-ridden 'puppets', by both Lewis himself and his critics, has obscured the allegory of which the gallery of puppets is only a sort of negative chorus. Zagreus is both a mundane parlour magician and an adept in the mysteries; Lewis makes the distinction elsewhere between the 'technical trick-performer' and the real magician. *The Apes'* critics, who are often only too ready to endorse the moral jeremiad that Lewis himself discounted, persist in seeing him as just such a trick-performer without acknowledging his subtler artistic achievements.

In the remainder of this chapter I will outline the literary and historical context of the novel and the theoretical basis of this study. Chapter 2 contains an examination of some broad aspects of *The Apes*: the external method, the theme of Apery, and style. The next three chapters present a fairly sequential explication of the action of the novel. The third covers the first half, Daniel Boleyn's peregrinations, and the fourth, 'Lord Osmund's Lenten Party'. The fifth focuses on the climactic magic performance and the epilogue, and concludes with an analysis of the novel's thematic network. Chapter 6 concerns the scandalized reception of Lewis's private edition of *The Apes*, his theory of scientific satire, and the peculiar way in which his role in the controversy dramatized the issues of the novel. The final chapter presents brief general conclusions about *The Apes'* satire and Lewis's relation to his fellow modernists. This study is intended to serve both as a systematic guide and as an interpretative essay (as Lewis was wont to call his oversized polemics); since *The Apes* is largely a forgotten work and I pursue a full explication, I generally present synoptic overviews of the episodes and use quotations frequently to convey the novel's singular verbal flavour. I refer extensively to Lewis's non-fiction, not to show how the novel illustrates its arguments but to illuminate the novel. I also refer to Lewis's drafts, notes, and other unpublished materials relating to *The Apes*, primarily those pertaining to *Satire & Fiction*, which show that in impersonating his fictitious publisher, Lewis re-enacted the roles of two of the novel's main characters.

Literary Affinities

The Apes can be classed roughly with Huxley's and Waugh's social satires of the same period. They are all comic, pessimistic, and more concerned with collective British society and topical issues than with realistic or personal drama. They all depict a futile search for amusement on the part of a fashionable intelligentsia; often employ a circular plot and the party as a central image; and take place over a period of weeks or months rather than years or generations. *The Apes* combines the main tendencies of each of these writers, Huxley's towards ideological dialectic and Waugh's towards farce; but the schools from which they derived — of Peacock and Douglas for Huxley; of Firbank, Beerbohm, and Wodehouse for Waugh — have little bearing on Lewis. Lewis's association with earlier continental art movements and his participation in the war, among other things, give him a wider historical and cultural perspective on Britain in the twenties than is displayed by these younger satirists, and by Anthony Powell, whose early work shares some features with Waugh's.

Lewis may be seen as an exemplar of the social criticism that flourished in the post-war period, of which Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* (1918) was the first instance of the 'debunking' of British social myths. In the mood of 'disillusion' that Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) came to symbolize, Huxley exposed the hypocrisy of an outmoded sexual morality and the dangers of a naïve faith in scientific progress; and his more popular counterpart in the London theatre, Noel Coward, addressed such taboo subjects as drug addiction.[20] Towards the end of the decade appeared memoirs by Graves, Blunden, and Sassoon and novels by Ford and Aldington, all critical of Britain's handling of the war. Lewis's role in this tendency might be compared to that of Shaw, another intellectual gadfly and enemy of parliamentary democracy and big business, although Lewis dismissed him as a genial, ineffectual clown.[21] Lewis's closest contemporary as a social critic was probably Lawrence, whose primitivism Lewis also attacked: both were outside the Oxbridge literary fraternity, and the bourgeois liberalism that they arraigned included its dissident bohemian element. Insofar as Lewis's writings of the period grew out of a defence of his painting, his stance is similar to Whistler's a generation before; like Whistler, the author of *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies*, Lewis was also born in America.

The most important contemporary literary influences upon *The Apes*, however, were the monumental works of Joyce and Proust. Like Proust's *Recherche*, Lewis's novel exposes the treachery and machinations underlying high culture, and like *Ulysses*, it depicts a city in cross-section with a strong element of naturalism and experiments in verbal parody. But Lewis's response to these writers was largely oppositional: not only were they both obsessed with the past, they were also the avatars of literary impressionism, which Lewis saw as a pernicious epidemic as it spread into less skilled hands. It was in reaction to the prestige surrounding *transition*, in which Joyce's *Work in Progress* and Gertrude Stein's writing were the central exhibits, that Lewis began the broadsides in *The Enemy* against the subjectivist aesthetic, the interior monologue, and the 'musical' style.

The Apes' true antecedents lie farther afield. In English literature they include Ben Jonson's comedy of humours and various eighteenth-century works. In a glancing summary, one might say that the novel combines the moral energy of *The Dunciad* with the scorn of Swift, the eccentric digressions of Sterne, and the coarse reportage of Smollett. Lewis adduced the neoclassical satirists in defence of his own practice, but the application of their mode of satire to modern conditions and his own work is problematic. The traditional conception of satire, the kind exemplified by the strictures of Waugh referred to above, assumes a relatively stable, homogeneous society with a generally-accepted standard of conduct, and assumes deviance to be the satiric target. In the absence of such a consensus in the twentieth century, the basis of judgement is unclear. Lewis's various statements on the thorny question of moral versus non-moral satire are inconsistent. At times he claims the role of public censor, and at others he denies any social purpose, except, rather vaguely, for promoting an aesthetic found chiefly in non-Western graphic and plastic arts. His rather strained justification for *The Apes'* satire is probably responsible in part for narrowing the critical assessment of the novel.

The key to locating *The Apes* generically, in my opinion, is Alan Munton's designation of it (actually of its lengthy climactic chapter, 'Lord Osmund's Lenten Party') as an 'anti-Carnival'. As Munton points out, Lewis was deeply impressed by his experience of the Munich carnival in his youth, and he used the term 'carnival' on several occasions to describe the modern age (pp. 145, 141–42). *The Apes* displays obvious carnivalesque elements and bears a striking conformity to other features of Bakhtin's related genre of Menippean satire. But besides Munton's essay and Jameson's general discussion of 'dialogism' in Lewis, this aspect of Lewis's work has been ignored; *The Apes* has never been fully analysed in relation to the range of Bakhtin's theories.[22] In contrast to typical conservative satire, Menippean satire appears in unstable periods, attacks rather than defends social norms, is characterized by a 'joyful relativity' rather than an opposition between correct and deviant behaviour and belief, and climaxes in an ambiguous debasement of the hero. Munton's description is generally accurate but simplistic: he considers the novel in broad outline and does not appreciate the ambiguity of the plot. Although he acknowledges the paradox of a work that originates in the carnival impulse but turns against its essential meaning, he is too restrictive in interpreting the novel wholly as a negation. The very concept of anti-carnival is irreducibly ambivalent. If *The Apes* depicts a debased carnival, its exposure of the debased condition and its active debasement of carnival figures are themselves carnivalistic. The meaning of a given instance of the carnivalesque is wholly dependent on its historical context. If anti-carnival is a sub-genre of the carnivalesque (which should be more accurately described as the germ of a genre), we must consider whether its expression in *The Apes* is an appropriate or inevitable modern form of the carnivalesque.

While I do not propose here a rigorous or exclusively Bakhtinian reading of *The Apes*, Bakhtin's theory of Menippean satire does provide a key to understanding problematic aspects of the novel. Menippean satire, or the 'menippea', one of the Greek 'serio-comic' genres, derives from two sources, the carnivalesque element of holiday festivals and the Socratic dialogue and symposium. The carnivalesque is both a set of motifs and an attitude deriving from holiday practices in which a population is given temporary licence to flout and abuse normal customs and laws. Its values originate in what Bakhtin calls the 'folkloric chronotope', the epistemological system of an earlier agrarian culture in which time is collective and generative, and sex and death are connected to the fertility of the land. With the breakdown of this system came class differentiation; the separation of the spheres of production, consumption, and culture; and a severance of the personal from the historical. The cultic devolved to a debased, symbolic magic, and the scapegoat ritual lost its concreteness and became allegorical.[23] According to Bakhtin, folkloric consciousness is partially recovered in the holiday festival, whose prototypical form is a public gathering in the town square in which there is no distinction between performers and audience. A suspension of the social hierarchy allows free contact among all members of the populace; latent forces are unleashed, and eccentric behaviour is encouraged. Carnival motifs include disguise, misalliance, cursing matches, and the exchange of gifts; there is a profaning and debasing of status, most importantly in the ritual crowning and discrowning of the carnival king. All carnival images are oxymoronic or ambiguous: the slave as mock-king, his demise as a renewal, a ritual laughter that simultaneously disparages the sacred and rejoices; everything is set against its parodic form or comic aspect.[24]

While the primary objective of the Socratic dialogue is philosophical inquiry, its dramatic relations are influenced by carnival relativity. It involves a free juxtaposition of various points of view and a provocation of opinion by an interlocutor. In debates over 'ultimate questions', truth is discovered between people and in connection with the personality, as is not the case with a 'monologic', official version of the truth (*Problems*, pp. 109–11, 115). Bakhtin argues that the serio-comic genres, which favour the imagination over rationalism, bore a radical new relation to reality in the Greek tradition. Earlier epic discourse had been formal and authoritative: its action took place in an idealized past and portrayed national myths rather than personal experience and 'free thought'. The serio-comic genres are set in the present and concern ordinary life and topical affairs; both the world and the individual are subject to historical change. Instead of the affirmative pathos of the epic, they feature a laughter or parody that exposes or destroys a social hierarchy and its official discourse. They reject stylistic unity for discordance and multifariousness, and frequently appropriate other genres, including extra-literary ones. Dialects of social groups are set against one another in a struggle for authority over meaning. This clash of ideologies produces a free investigation of the world and philosophy, and a semantic indeterminacy and open-endedness. The characters' identities are problematic: there is a discrepancy between their internal and external experience, and their adventures serve to test their ideas.[25]

The menippea, then, is a carnivalization of dialogic relations in a narrative framework. It is intellectual, topical, publicistic, and sometimes encyclopedic; and at the same time non-realistic and fantastic, with a marked comic element. It uses and parodies other genres by both insertion and amalgamation, producing a variety of tones and styles. Its characterization explores abnormal psychology — eccentricity, insanity, split personality, suicide — and its dramatic scenes involve scandalous and unseemly behaviour. Its plot and action feature fantastic situations and events that defamiliarize ordinary experience and test ideas. A juxtaposition of ideologies produces multiplicity, not resolution, and discredits the possibility of a norm or an ultimate authority. The setting is often the thresholds between the hierarchical planes of existence, in classical works Olympus/earth/netherworld; and this hierarchy is disputed. The symbolism and imagery include sharp contrasts between crude naturalism and mystical-religious symbolism, and sometimes a social utopia (*Problems*, pp. 114–19).

Bakhtin holds that the menippea was the most adequate expression of its epoch because its plasticity allowed the content of social life to become the inner logic of the narrative (*Problems*, p. 119). In his broad survey of Western literature, he uses the term 'novel' very loosely to identify works that draw upon the Menippean features and spirit. The novel has eluded theorization, he maintains, because it has no fixed form; it is that contemporary genre that incorporates other genres and discourses, particularly colloquial language outside of literary codification. The essence of the novel, by this reasoning, is the objectification of language by a dialogic interaction of a culture's 'heteroglossia', or stratified dialects. The novel is generated by the tension between the centralizing, unifying tendency in language use, including the dominant mode of 'general literariness' of a period, and de-centralizing, heterogeneous discourses that discredit the myth of the former that language is unified and is capable of representing reality (*Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 270–73). According to this scheme, Bakhtin identifies works and movements that exploit the capacity of the Menippean repertoire to encompass the full range of cultural phenomena and especially marginal phenomena. His prime instances are Lucian; Petronius; Apuleius; the medieval narratives of the naïf, clown, and rogue and the picaresque novel that they anticipated; Rabelais; Cervantes; and Dostoevsky. Through the Renaissance, the folk carnival remained an effective counter-force against the Church's ascetic ideology and the feudal socio-political hierarchy; but later its kindred forms were no longer an expression of the whole people. An artificial court masquerade took its place, and the popular aspect continued only in debased forms such as the *commedia dell'arte*. In the modern period the carnival attitude appears as the banalized expression of bohemian cliques and assumes a second-order form in literature, in which the 'reduced laughter' of irony usually diminishes its radical potential. As dogma makes authentic dialogue impossible, modern relativism makes it unnecessary (*Problems*, pp. 130–32, 69).

At first glance *The Apes* does indeed seem antithetical to the spirit of dialogue and carnival. It does not accord opposed viewpoints equal play; its puppets are patently demonstrations of the social theory set forth, object-lessons rather than free human agents. It treats bodily experience and communal participation in a stringently negative manner, closer to Swiftian revulsion than Rabelaisian exuberance. Munton states that in *The Apes* costume is perfunctory, the magic performance is bogus, plain speaking is proscribed, and food (to which he might have added drink and sex) is disgusting (pp. 155–56). Yet the novel is thoroughly Menippean in form, and it accomplishes a striking permutation of the essential Menippean objectives. It abounds in ideological testing, and the reason it is said to have no plot is that its overall impression is that of a carnivalesque 'ritual-pageant' (*Problems*, p. 123). Its central characters are a roguish interlocutor and provocateur and a fool who is crowned a 'genius' and discrowned. To take only one of Munton's criteria, *The Apes*' quintessentially-carnivalesque themes of masquerade and imposture run much deeper than the Apes' trivial party costumes, and Dan's transformation into a girl by costume is not perfunctory but thematically central. The novel's fundamental purpose of contesting a hierarchy of social power is perfectly in accord with the carnival impulse. Its plot progresses towards enigma, not resolution; the climax is an ambiguous symbolic act that reveals the mock-ritual nature of the drama.

Many carnival themes appear in other modern English fiction, for example discrowning and androgyny in *Ulysses*, the disastrous party in Waugh's *Vile Bodies*, the confusion of the spirit and the flesh in Huxley's *Point Counter Point*. The prominence that it gives to all of them, combined with a degree of verbal inventiveness exceeded in contemporary literature only in the work of Joyce, makes *The Apes* a leading instance of the Menippean genre. Its signal difference from the carnivalesque model is a rigid dualism of body and mind that entails the imposition of a strict rationalism upon sensuous experience; but even here, many of Lewis's aims are typically Menippean — to defamiliarize experience, to explore abnormal psychology, and to expose the misrepresentations of language. Concerning the ultimate purpose of these tactics, an assertion of the status of the physical and the intellectual over the emotional in art, Lewis's own hierarchy of art over life does seem to contradict the carnival ethos; but this reversal must be considered in its historical setting. Lewis's subject is the same modern degradation of the carnival attitude that Bakhtin laments, or more precisely, a further twist in its devolution according to which banalized bohemian transgression is elevated to the official status of court masquerade.

A comparison with Rabelais is instructive: both writers pursued an ideological, non-mimetic fictional project with a reckless imagination and a great store of cultural reference. Rabelais attacked religious dogma and feudal politics with science, humanism, and folk naturalism. Four centuries later, Lewis fulfilled a similarly heretical role because he saw science, artistic naturalism, and democratic capitalism as a new orthodoxy that alienated people from concrete experience and selfhood. This historical reversal will become clearer as we examine, in the last section of this chapter, the situation of the nineteen-twenties. Bakhtin describes the period in which Menippean satire developed into the proto-novel, from Menippus (*c.* 300 BC) to Petronius (d. AD 66), as one of a decline in ethical norms and 'national legend', of an atmosphere of intense philosophical contention amid the rise of a new religion, Christianity. There is a devaluation of external social positions, which give way to provisional roles, and a 'destruction of the epic and tragic wholeness of a man and his fate' (*Problems*, p. 119). At the risk of over-simplification, an analogy can be drawn between the evolution of these conditions in antiquity and, in a shorter historical span, the changes in British society in the early decades of this century.

The Twenties

The historical factors to which Bakhtin attributes the rise of Menippean satire are important in Lewis's analysis of the twenties. They are also present in our general image of the decade: the 'new morality' of the 'jazz age', with its compensatory frivolity after the trauma of the Great War; cultural controversy surrounding the growing rift between the new mass media and arcane modern art; and political controversy concerning the rise of socialist and fascist alternatives to parliamentary democracy in the face of the economic cycle of 'boom and bust'. Britain saw the erosion of its Empire, its class system, and the national morale that characterized its entry into the war. The long stalemate of the war, with its heavy casualties and the gloomy atmosphere at home of food-rationing and emergency regulations, caused a distrust of figures and institutions of authority: the government for its diplomatic failures and the credibility gap in its reports, the military for its political infighting and incompetence, newspapers for their rabid propaganda, and business interests for their exploitation. These suspicions, combined with an awareness of the volatile historical forces that brought the fall of the central European monarchies, the Russian revolution, and the precarious new political configuration of Versailles, indeed devalued the significance of the individual and his or her personal moral code in the world at large.[26]

Britain's loss of export markets and financial influence caused the economic recession of the early twenties that led to industrial disputes and the rise of the Labour Party. While this last development seemed to threaten the Conservative-Liberal tradition with the spectre of Bolshevism, all three parties actually lost their distinct positions by adopting conciliatory and pragmatic roles. The Labour government was more cautious than the Conservatives, who enacted the most social welfare proposals; and the failed General Strike of 1926, depicted in *The Apes*, was a peculiarly mild act of broad protest that confirmed the course of gradualist reform. Socially, a shift from fixed class-positions to less defined roles was also clear. Suffering from a surtax and an inheritance tax, the landed gentry entered business and became less distinct from industrialists. With the growth of the lower middle class, many people became home-owners for the first time and enjoyed the benefits of new electrical appliances. But the housing developments along suburban bus routes offered little sense of community and were deplored for ruining the landscape; and the instalment plan, which made these advantages possible, also restricted workers' options in labour action. After their recruitment for war work, women kept their jobs and became less dependent on their families and domestic employment; voting enfranchisement and other legislation improved their social and occupational standing. The androgynous flapper, or 'modern girl', with her frank manners, boyish figure, bobbed hair, and reputation for promiscuity, made conservatives fear that the institutions of marriage and the family were breaking down. Youth in general assumed a new prominence in the press; Evelyn Waugh's Bright Young People cultivated a scandalous reputation with their open homosexuality, outlandish costume parties, hoaxes, and patronage of after-hours clubs. But the old moral code of course had not disappeared. The popularization of Freud, like recent anthropological discoveries and the caricature of Einstein's relativity theory as a nihilistic slogan, might have had a diffuse effect in opening questions about sexual mores and the notion of the stable ego. But for the general population the 'new morality', linked to communism in the censorship and purity campaigns, was primarily a sensationalistic publicity phenomenon that reflected the ambivalence with which the popular press, rising rapidly in circulation, treated many feature topics: gossip, scandals, spiritualism, technical inventions, speculation about the future, studies of primitive culture, dress fashions, and sentiments towards the government. What is 'modern' about the Bright Young People as celebrities of 'decadence' is their self-consciousness of, and boredom with, their notoriety.

The redistribution of income, the emergence of subordinate social groups, and the loosening of moral strictures, represent a decline of authority and the old social structure at the same time as egalitarian progress. A similar ambiguity obtains concerning the collectivization of experience by the newer mass media. The wireless, which became a nearly universal possession, kept people at home more often and began standardizing regional speech dialects; the technical improvements in film production drew large audiences to melodramas, slapstick comedies, and westerns. While these revolutionary inventions, along with the automobile, the telephone, and commercial aviation, were celebrated as evidence of technological progress, their ideological content was conservative; since they made cultural life more standardized and passive, the significance of this new collectivity was uncertain. As these new media were often viewed by intellectuals as a 'vulgarization of culture', modern art was in turn received by the public with mystification. The opinion of the prominent historian A. J. P. Taylor is probably representative: 'To judge from all leading writers, the barbarians were breaking in. [. . .] The writers were almost alone in feeling like this, and it is not easy to understand why they thus cut themselves off. By any more prosaic standard, this was the best time mankind, or at any rate Englishmen, had known.'[27] But even though a new literary style and tone had ousted Georgian verse and the realistic novel from prominence, radical artistic movements never really took root in Britain; experimental techniques imported from France were adulterated and somewhat outdated. Lewis was not alone in accusing cultural factions of using establishment publicity machinery to promote a superficial brand of 'avant-garde' art, nor in his estimate of the number of amateurs who took to art to affect a bohemian mode of life. According to George Orwell, writing in 1940, the 'cosmic despair' of the highbrow writers was made possible because the twenties were a very comfortable time:

> They were the golden age of the *rentier*-intellectual, a period of irresponsibility such as the world had never seen before. The war was over, the new totalitarian states had not arisen, moral and religious tabus of all descriptions had vanished, and the cash was rolling in. 'Disillusionment' was all the fashion. Everyone with a safe £500 a year turned highbrow and began training himself in *taedium vitae*.[28]

If we take an overview of Lewis's interpretation of the period, we shall see that his pessimism arose in response to romantic disillusion as much as to the forces that produced it. He was keenly sensitive to the cultural ramifications of technological progress, and the dialectical nature of his analysis is evident in the phrase that he used to characterize the era: 'the vulgarisation of disgust'.

'The present is of course a particularly "transitional" society', Lewis wrote in *The Art of Being Ruled*. He saw the basis for the period's revolutionary character in science: through its continual technical innovation, applied science accustomed people to change and to viewing life, including governments and themselves, as imperfect (pp. 23–25). The vulgarized 'religion of science', the ideology of progress that used science as a 'political weapon', produced a delusion of impersonality and the 'contemporary disbelief in the efficacy or importance of individual character' (*LF*, p. 287). In the mid-twenties Lewis regarded a transformation to some type of socialism as inevitable, and not necessarily negative as long as it gave a directive role to an intellectual elite. More important, he saw in mass media and the consolidation of industry a similarly-standardizing tendency and an insidious process of democratic 'educationalism', or citizenship by newspaper, that disguised the manipulation of power (*ABR*, pp. 105–06). He compared the 'transition from a *public* to a *private* way of thinking and feeling' to the same historical shift that Bakhtin cites as constituting the demise of social position and 'national legend':

> The great industrial machine has removed from the individual life all responsibility. [. . .] The obvious historic analogy is to be found in the Greek political decadence. Stoic and other philosophies set out to provide the individual with a complete substitute for the great public and civic ideal of the happiest days of Greek freedom: with their thought we are quite at home.
>
> [. . .] We have no common world into which we project ourselves and recognize what we see there as symbols of our fullest powers. (*P*, pp. 100–01, 108)

Lewis did not lament the loss of Victorian stability; he objected to the celebration of its disintegration as 'progress'. Individual emancipatory movements such as feminism, as well as artistic modernism and a fascination with technical novelty, which gave the period its atmosphere of controversy, he saw as a caricature of revolutionary idealism: 'Whenever we get a good thing, its shadow comes with it, its *ape* and familiar' (*ABR*, p. 196). Lewis believed that, ironically, these interests often served the capitalist status quo by distracting people from real political change; in practical terms, for example, the entrance of women into the workforce allowed business to pay lower wages. Since the war had discredited the principle of authority, people sought freedom in the traditional irresponsibility of the child, the woman, the bohemian artist, and the proletariat; and thus splintered into sub-groups that undermined the bourgeois family-unit, they were easier to control (*ABR*, pp. 134–37). In his discussion of the white race's inferiority complex in *Paleface*, Lewis defines this as a 'moral situation': 'a situation in which a society loses its organic structure and disintegrates into its individual components' (p. 77). The salient feature of the post-war situation is that power is no longer localized and identifiable, but systemic and unconscious. Political rule had become like fashion, theocratic and suggestive, and thereby more effective than coercion:

> We are in the presence, I think, of a religious rather than a political intelligence; or rather, as in all primitive societies these two things are one, in the presence of an unspoilt and primitive source whose will is so great that it clothes itself naturally in the form of a god. (*ABR*, p. 76)

Lewis's diagnosis of a new orthodoxy growing in the ruins of the old aligns him with the Menippean outlook; his view of modern history is neither relativist nor as dogmatic as it often seems. It is speculative, because the transformation that he discerned entails paradoxical and deceptive processes. The name that he most often gave to this new 'god' was 'Time', which comprehends both utilitarian science in industry as blind progress or change for its own sake and also the valorized experience of subjective temporality in modern literature. Relativism itself was the new religion, and it was dangerous because of the irrationalism beneath all of its various manifestations. Lewis saw a widespread attack taking place on the intellect, the will, and the individual in favour of emotion, intuition, and sensation. Freud's unconscious, Bergson's *élan vital*, and behaviourism formed the ideological basis of this tendency; and the new prominence of the woman, the child, the sexual invert, and the darker races exemplified its consequences.[29] This shift represented for him a loss of something akin to Bakhtin's 'tragic wholeness of a man and his fate'.

A submission to the flux of the moment, Lewis argues, simply extinguishes the subject (*TWM*, pp. 351–52). The vaunted pursuit of freedom only confuses people because the great majority of them always prefer conventions. *Words* are what make people happy, and 'the word "free" is merely, as it were, a magical counter with which to enslave us, it is full of an electrical property that has been most maleficent where the European or American is concerned' (*P*, p. 73). When people are encouraged to 'express their personality', it is a 'group personality' that they express; when they 'rebel', it is only in the mechanistic conformism of mass recreation, a '*trance of action*' that serves to banish reflection.[30] This new range of experience is ultimately debilitating: the quintessential product of an ideology of subjective truth and immediate sensation is advertising, by means of which industry pacifies the population with 'toys': 'In the democratic western countries so-called capitalism leads a saturnalia of "freedom", like a bastard brother of reform. With its *What the Public Wants* doctrine it enervates the populations.' In short, Lewis believes that capitalism is Circe, conferring happiness on its subjects if they are willing to be reduced to animals; and this condition agrees with the myth of impersonality in science 'by virtue of which persons are enabled to masquerade as *things*'.[31] This is an extreme version of Bakhtin's description of the change from social positions to '*roles* played out [. . .] in accordance with the wishes of blind fate' (*Problems*, p. 119); and it is one of the rationales behind Lewis's portrayal of people as things and machines in *The Apes*.

While Lewis acknowledged the great individual works of art produced by the 'time-cult', he viewed its elevation of subjectivity, emotion, and temporality as the solipsistic dead end of romanticism, a self-defeating capitulation to precisely the reified public world that the modernists sought to repudiate. In their submission to accidental and random association in the interior monologue, the other modernists ironically produced a mechanistic model of the mind enslaved to time. What distinguishes Lewis's critique from a relativistic one is his consistent advocacy of the sweeping (and dubious) aesthetic principle that space is a greater reality than time and that the eye is an organ superior to the ear (*TWM*, pp. 8, 429). He credited this 'classical' aesthetic of concreteness and form for his particular insight upon the period's malaise, and indeed described his role in 'religious' terms: 'I am perhaps the nearest approach to a priest of the new order', by which he meant not a proponent but an interpreter (*P*, p. 81). The plot of *The Apes*, a parodic initiation into artistic society, permitted Lewis to examine a confluence of these various forces: the cult of the child behind that of the amateur; the political decline of the British aristocracy to a social role governed by the feminine principles of the salon; and the process by which, as industry betrays scientific revolution, social life betrays artistic invention.

I intend not simply to overlay Menippean satire upon *The Apes* to see how closely the specific instance fits the model, but to engender a more reciprocal relationship. Bakhtin and Lewis, near contemporaries, both thought in global concepts; wrote in a loose, colloquial style and meandering patterns of argument; were strongly influenced by Dostoevsky and a variety of Futurism; and emphasized laughter, after language, as the distinctive trait of humanity. The irony is that Bakhtin, living in hardship under a repressive regime, was the optimist, and Lewis, free to abuse the 'modern carnival' of the West, was the pessimist. Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson conclude their recent study of Bakhtin with the caveat that Bakhtin's 'benevolence' led him to neglect the violent and destructive aspect of carnival; that inasmuch as he insisted that the experience of vestiges of carnival in everyday life was a greater influence on a writer than earlier literary carnivalization, he really thought in terms of an idealized 'carnival-symbolic' rather than anarchic, iconoclastic behaviour in all of its ramifications. In this light, perhaps the destructive aspect of *The Apes* may appear not merely an exception but a partial corrective. The novel illustrates Nietzsche's statement: 'Without cruelty there is no festival: thus the longest and most ancient part of human history teaches — and in punishment there is so much that is *festive!*'[32]

NOTES

1. T. S. Eliot, '*Tarr*', *Egoist* 5.8 (1918), 105–06 (p. 106); 'A Note on *Monstre Gai*', *Hudson Review* 7 (1955), 522–26 (p. 526).
2. Northrop Frye, 'Neoclassical Agony', *Hudson Review* 10 (1957), 592–98 (pp. 592–93).
3. 'On Wyndham Lewis', *Shenandoah* 4.2–3 (1953), 17.
4. A survey of the critical 'boycott' has become a customary introduction to Lewis studies. For fuller treatments, see Fredric Jameson's Prologue, 'On Not Reading Wyndham Lewis', in his *Fables of Aggression: Wyndham Lewis, Modernist as Fascist* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), pp. 1–23; and Giovanni Cianci's Introduction to the anthology of essays *Wyndham Lewis: Litteratura/Pittura*, ed. by Cianci (Palermo: Sellerio, 1982), pp. 17–22.
5. Another satirist of the period, Evelyn Waugh, writes, '[Satire] is aimed at inconsistency and hypocrisy. It exposes polite cruelty and folly by exaggerating them. It seeks to produce shame. All this has no place in the Century of the Common Man where vice no longer pays lip service to virtue.' See 'Fan Fare', in *The Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, ed. by Donat Gallagher (London: Methuen, 1983), pp. 300–04 (p. 304).

6. *Comedy: 'An Essay on Comedy' [by George Meredith] and 'Laughter' [by Henri Bergson]*, ed. by Wylie Sypher (New York: Doubleday-Anchor, 1956), p. 97; Wyndham Lewis, 'The Meaning of the Wild Body', in *CWB*, pp. 157–60 (p. 158).
7. Wyndham Lewis, *Rude Assignment: An Intellectual Biography*, ed. by Toby Foshay (1950; Santa Barbara, CA: Black Sparrow Press, 1984), p. 129; Reed Way Dasenbrock, *The Literary Vorticism of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis: Towards the Condition of Painting* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), p. 135.
8. 'Augment of the Novel', *Agenda* 7–8 (1969–70), 49–56 (p. 52).
9. *Wyndham Lewis* (New York: New Directions, 1954), p. 93.
10. *Wyndham Lewis: A Portrait of the Artist as Enemy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 250–54, 288.
11. *Wyndham Lewis* (New York: Twayne, 1968), pp. 78–85.
12. *Wyndham Lewis: Fictions and Satires* (London: Vision, 1973), pp. 101, 104–05.
13. *Wyndham Lewis the Novelist* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1976), pp. 83, 94–97.
14. Jeffrey Meyers, *The Enemy: A Biography of Wyndham Lewis* (Boston: Routledge, 1980); further references to the author in the text refer to this source. In addition to D. G. Bridson's study of Lewis's politics, *The Filibuster: A Study of the Political Ideas of Wyndham Lewis* (London: Cassell, 1972), there are two recent studies of his criticism: SueEllen Campbell, *The Enemy Opposite: The Outlaw Criticism of Wyndham Lewis* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1988); and Ravendra Prakash, *The Literary Criticism of Wyndham Lewis* (Jaipur, India: Pointer, 1989).
15. '*The Apes of God*: Form and Meaning', in *Wyndham Lewis: A Revaluation*, ed. by Jeffrey Meyers, pp. 133–48 (pp. 147, 133, 141–42).
16. *Wyndham Lewis's Pictorial Integer*, Studies in the Fine Arts: The Avant-Garde, 19 (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981), pp. 87–89, 101, 115.
17. 'Wyndham Lewis: The Transformations of Carnival', in *Wyndham Lewis: Litteratura/Pittura*, ed. by Giovanni Cianci, pp. 141–57 (pp. 154–55).
18. Dasenbrock, pp. 165–68, 175–79.
19. See, for example, Bernard Bergonzi's sceptical review of Edwards's article: 'Coming to Terms with the Enemy: Some Recent Studies', in *Wyndham Lewis: Litteratura/Pittura*, ed. by Giovanni Cianci, pp. 246–59 (p. 252); and Julian Symons's commentary in the recent Lewis anthology *The Essential Wyndham Lewis: An Introduction to His Work*, ed. by Symons (London: Deutsch, 1989), p. 308. Additional critical studies on Lewis have appeared since Dasenbrock's, for example Dennis Brown's *Intertextual Dynamics Within the Literary Group* (1990); the volumes surveyed in this section are the only book-length treatments that have been consulted for the present study.
20. Both Huxley and Coward also satirized the Sitwells, in 'The Tillotson Banquet', in *Mortal Coils* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1922), pp. 113–61; and *London Calling!* (1923) respectively.
21. *Blasting and Bombardiering*, ed. by Anne Wyndham Lewis (1937; London: Calder, 1967), p. 3.
22. Jameson, pp. 38–47. As an example of Lewis's marginality, two recent Bakhtinian dissertations on the fiction of this period involve themes central to *The Apes* but omit Lewis: Christopher Ames, 'The Life of the Party: Festive Vision in Modern Fiction' (Stanford University; abstract in *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 45 (1984), 01A); and Carlanda Green, 'The Bohemian Milieu in the Novels of Huxley, Waugh, and Lawrence' (University of Alabama; abstract in *Dissertation Abstracts International* 41 (1979), 01A).
23. M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. by Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (1975; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 206–17.
24. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, ed. and trans. by Caryl Emerson, rev. edn (1963; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), pp. 122–28.
25. Bakhtin, *Problems*, pp. 107–08; *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 23–28.
26. The broad summary in this section draws upon several social histories of the period, including Robert Graves and Alan Hodge, *The Long Week-End: A Social History of Great Britain, 1918–1940* (1940; repr. New York: Norton, 1963); Douglas Goldring, *The Nineteen Twenties* (London: Nicholson, 1945); and Martin Green, *Children of the Sun: A Narrative of 'Decadence' in England after 1918* (New York: Basic Books, 1976). I do not cite them individually here since I am concerned with what they have in common rather than their distinctive interpretations.
27. *English History, 1914–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 180.

28. 'Inside the Whale', in *Inside the Whale and Other Essays*, rev. edn. (1940; London: Penguin-Secker & Warburg, 1950), pp. 9–50 (p. 29).
29. *TWM*, pp. 181–82, 333–35
30. *ABR*, p. 148; *TWM*, p. vii.
31. *TWM*, pp. 11–13, 124; *ABR*, pp. 105, 369–70, 34–35.
32. Gary Saul Morson and Caryl Emerson, *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Creation of a Prosaics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), pp. 469–70; Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, ed. by Walter Kaufmann, trans. by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 67.

CHAPTER TWO

IMITATION-MAN: THE EXTERNAL METHOD AND THE POETICS OF MOCKERY

The External Method

Before beginning an explication of *The Apes* in the next chapter, I would like to examine some general aspects of the novel. The 'external method' has been considered by Lewis and most of his critics to be its most radical and distinctive feature. Isolating this technique, however, does not lead to an adequate account of the novel's mode of characterization. The latter must also be seen in the context of Lewis's idiosyncratic style and his use of social stereotypes, which is closely related to the central theme of Apery. The novel contains several passages designed to serve, more or less directly, as guides to understanding its subject and technique. One of these is an indirect exposition of its approach to characterization in a speech attacking the *roman à clef*. The novel of course belongs to this genre itself; in 1930, many of the Apes were easily identified with actual persons, some of whom, at least formerly, were Lewis's friends, colleagues, and patrons.[1] But *The Apes'* difference, this passage implies, is that it does not attempt to represent 'life'. In this first 'broadcast', Horace Zagreus presents Lionel Kein, a fervent admirer of Proust and an author of novels about his own social circle, with Pierpoint's theory of contemporary fiction as personal propaganda.

Echoing Swift's preface to *The Battle of the Books*, Zagreus says that people enjoy Proust's satire for malicious reasons, for the vicarious feeling of dominating the disparaged characters, but modern man has grown so insensitive that 'no one ever sees *himself* in the public mirror. [... F]lesh and blood will not stand *that!*' (p. 255). An accurate portrayal of a person would be intolerable, because '*every* individual without exception is in that sense objectively unbearable'. The main school of contemporary literary fiction besides the 'unabashed personal' school, the impersonal, Flaubertian type, is mistakenly associated with scientific truth; but impersonality is '*a wonderful patent behind which the individual can indulge in a riot of personal egotism*' (p. 260). The product of the pseudo-scientific school of Proust-imitators is a system of heroes and villains based not on the old moralism but on the *social* slur, the 'disciplinary voice of *the pack*', whose values are drawn from the salon, the world of women. Only the villains are drawn objectively: 'Just as time is made for slaves, so scientific "objectivity" of treatment is made for *others*.' Since society altogether is a 'defensive organisation against the incalculable', in the salon the old hero or Lion, the great primitive who threatens the pretensions of the clique, becomes a villain and pariah and takes on 'a dark, a ridiculous, a disreputable hue'. Meanwhile, the writer and his friends are treated with 'the most time-honoured, most subjective romance', except that they are each given a pinch of malice lest they become too heroic and thereby villainous: 'Everything conspires to an, in appearance, impartial distribution of *dis*qualifications. [. . .] It is the "neatness" with which this is done that assures the success of the "serious" Fiction-writer' (pp. 261–63). Lewis seems to be referring mainly to Huxley's novels;[2] but Zagreus also stresses the similarity between Proust and Harlein's *Lipstick-Lagoon* (Michael Arlen's popular and mildly scandalous *The Green Hat*), 'a hairdresser's assistant romancing about a musical comedy duchess'.

Thus, Zagreus continues, this type of fiction is largely 'the private publicity-machinery of the ruling Society', '*weapons of vanity*' used in private rancours; and it is inferior fiction because it draws too closely on its originals. Since truth 'cannot exist in the midst of the hot and immediate interests of "real" everyday social life', art should 'be sufficiently removed from the real world so that no character from the one could under any circumstances enter the other (the situation imagined by Pirandello), without the anomaly being apparent' (pp. 265–66). The result of confusing life and fiction is that the Keins' guests are '*the people who are unable to become Fiction*' (pp. 293–94). They have obtained a welcome celebrity from flattering portraits in their friends' novels, but since they furnished a 'poor reality' for fiction, they remain '*fictional mongrel facts*', neither distinctive persons or characters. Likewise the guests at the Lenten party are costumed as characters in fiction; their impersonation of artistic creations is analogous to their Apery of serious artists.

The Apes attempts to expose, condemn, and transcend this fictional gossip-feud that it participates in. It portrays the critical revenge of the Lion Pierpoint, through the agency of his disciple Zagreus, upon the salon that he can no longer bear. It differs from society novels that support the status quo or the code of a pack by attacking everyone; even the secluded Pierpoint, who pronounces judgement on the Apes, must finally be seen ironically. The issue of the portrayal of actual people became the crux of *The Apes*' reception and later a prime factor in negative critical judgements on the novel. The external method, which we will presently examine, is the most obvious means that Lewis uses to make his characters different from 'life'. Although its fidelity to appearance yields a more vivid representation of people than is obtained by the biased society novel, its defamiliarization of perception also makes the portrayals alien to the images that people usually hold of themselves. The question of truth in fiction raised in the broadcast is not settled, however. Pierpoint doubts the possibility of impersonality or absolute objectivity: 'What we call a judge is a successful partizan.'[3] But, implying that the 'disreputable hue' of the Lion is objective, he does not dismiss the possibility of truth in art that is removed from everyday 'reality'. In *Satire & Fiction*, disregarding the distinction between art and science made in the broadcast, Lewis argues that satire is 'often nothing else but *the truth*, in fact that of Natural Science', as opposed to 'the "truth" of the average romantic sensualism' (p. 48).

Leaving aside for the present the question of hyperbole or plain inconsistency in this claim to science, the crux of the matter is the operative meaning of objectivity in the external method. For Lewis, objectivity is not judicious impartiality; it is a radical vision untainted by social and romantic assumptions about humanity, for example in an undiscriminating acceptance of stereotypes and an adherence to casual perception in much literary realism. But such a vision is an unattainable ideal that cannot be separated from the perceiving personality. However valid Lewis's generalizations may be, in practice the principle of objectivity is implemented quite literally as the treatment of human characters as objects like any other. One character behaves 'as if some Rowlandson had come back to earth to spread the view that human beings were worth nothing more than *things*' (p. 440).

The external approach is showcased at the outset of the novel in the dense, entirely-italicized Prologue, 'Death-the-Drummer', which begins in a gothic atmosphere of shadows and gloom, with 'a dark whisper of infernal presences' and a 'dead domestic, sneezing'. The Follet mansion is a house of the dead, where its mistress, Lady Fredigonde, at ninety-six the oldest 'ex-Gossip-column belle' alive, is undergoing her toilette. Haughty Fredigonde, wheezing and straining at her ear-trumpet, browbeats her servant with surprising reserves of energy. The most extreme reduction of a person to physical traits probably occurs in the section entitled 'The Body Leaves the Chair':

> She directed peremptory injunctions throughout her ruined establishment, to the entire vasomotor system beneath — bells rang hot-temperedly in every basement and galley.
>
> A local briskness, of a muscular nature, was patent, in the depths of the chair. The massively-anchored person shook as if from the hidden hammering of a propeller, revolving at her stern, out of sight. A determined claw went out and grappled the alpenstock. It planted it at a forward cant to obtain the preliminary purchase.
>
> Without fuss the two masses came apart. They were cut open into two pieces. As her body came away from the dense bolsters of its cyclopean cradle, out into space, the skimpy alpaca forearm of the priestly Bridget, a delicate splint, pressed in against the small of the four-square back. It was applied above the region where the mid-victorian wasp-waist lay buried in adipose.
>
> The unsteady solid rose a few inches, like the levitation of a narwhal. Seconded by alpenstock and body-servant (holding her humble breath), the escaping half began to move out from the deep vent. It abstracted itself slowly. Something

> imperfectly animate had cast off from a portion of its self. It was departing, with a grim paralytic toddle, elsewhere. The socket of the enormous chair yawned just short of her hindparts. It was a sort of shell that had been, according to some natural law, suddenly vacated by its animal. But this occupant, who never went far, moved from trough to trough — another everywhere stood hollow and ready throughout the compartments of its elaborate animal dwelling. (pp. 22–23; all italics in text)

This passage illustrates the principle of the comic that Lewis presented in the essay 'The Meaning of the Wild Body': 'the observation of a *thing* behaving like a person'. Her mind extinguished in the arduous effort of walking, Fredigonde is portrayed by turns as an inanimate object, a broken machine, and something made of sundry animal parts, which has mechanical or abstract spatial relations to its surroundings. By inertia, she has become part of the chair, whose movements (yawning) are as human as her own. As a 'ruined establishment', her body is identified with her house, another museum of Victoriana. The extended metaphor of the ship, perhaps deriving from 'her ladyship' (a term emphasized soon afterward), prompts associations with England's former naval glory. Fredigonde is a lost, empty vessel buffeted by other objects, incapable of navigation. The animal she resembles most often is a crustacean, whose mechanical movements Lewis adduced to deny Bergson's organic/mechanical distinction. Animalism, or a hybridization of human and animal features, is the surest sign of the literary grotesque. According to the two types of the grotesque in Ruskin's famous definition, the terrible and the sportive, this instance clearly belongs to the latter, which tends towards the ludicrous rather than the fearsome end of the spectrum.[4]

The minute portrayal of physical gesture is indeed one of the richest aspects of the novel and justifies it at the least as the vast sketchbook of a practised draughtsman. The slow-motion narration avoids synoptic simplifications of action and generalizations about the characters' experience; the fragmentation of the body into semi-autonomous parts prevents the illusion of a fully conscious experience. Various instances of defamiliarization, such as 'the spotlight shot in a shaft computed to be ninety million miles from the solar projector', cumulatively shrink the significance of humanity on the landscape of nature and evolution. With his microscopic attention to the subjects' physiognomy, posture, and bodily movements, Lewis seems to be challenging impressionism and its derivative Apish sect on the literary and graphic fronts simultaneously. Kush points out that several scenes derive from genre painting, such as the 'toilette', with its theme of vanity, here (p. 101). It is as though Lewis the portrait-artist were settling accounts with his aristocratic clients who wanted him to make them look good.[5] It is apparent now why he claims that to be objectively factual is to be personal. The personal element pertains to the object under scrutiny, not the narrator's or analyst's personality, although the latter is implicit in the description. Bodily habits, though seemingly accidental, are in a sense the most intimate aspect of a person, because they particularize the subject and define its relation to nature, not least in its sexuality, which is given prominent treatment in portraits of several Apes.

The scientific status of such portrayals is highly questionable, however. The painstaking catalogue of appearance and physical behaviour suggests a pitilessly factual mode of observation, but this is only one component of the narrative. As well as being more concrete and profusely detailed than most realistic descriptions of persons, Lewis's portraits are also more abstract and stylized. Materer applies to Lewis's style Alain Robbe-Grillet's dictum, 'Nothing is more fantastic, ultimately, than precision' (p. 95). As much as it offers a fresh vision of human corporeality, the precision of Lewis's analysis of the body into discrete parts and movements also produces a fantastic, artificial creature that serves a propagandistic end of its own, although it is a propaganda of one. The preliminary outlines with which Lewis often sketches these characters — such as the opening image of Fredigonde's head, 'trapezoid in profile — an indoor model of the Maya Pyramid' — follow directly from the rigid geometry and partial abstraction of the human figures in his Vorticist painting style. As Michael Levenson's study *A Genealogy of Modernism* shows, the progress of modernist theory was rather wayward until Eliot emerged to take control of it after the war. Its early phases follow roughly the revolutions in T. E. Hulme's thinking: from an individualistic, anti-traditional Bergsonian vitalism; to a 'classical' aesthetic that favours tradition over individualism; and finally, before his death in the war, to a Worringerean abstraction that rejects even Western classical humanism for religious authority and hierarchy. Pound's Imagism illustrates the tension between the impulses towards individual expression and impersonality during this period. With its hard, clear, isolated moment of perception, Imagism emphasizes empiricism over conventional poetic sentiment and rhetoric, but rejects scientific rationalism; it suppresses personality in an objective treatment of local details, but an individual vision is apparent in the work as a whole; it avoids social commentary and moral purpose, except in its own manifestos.[6]

Lewis's role in this movement was that of a painter experimenting in new continental modes more radical than anything in British painting and writing. Also indebted to Worringer's recent study of anti-naturalist art, *Abstraction and Empathy*, and Kandinsky's treatise on non-representational art, Lewis's Vorticism, a hybrid of Cubism and the more dynamic Italian Futurism, froze the chaotic energy of modern urban life in semi-abstract shapes. Lewis formulated an artistic theory of non-mimetic form that took such expressions as, 'Dehumanization is the chief diagnostic of the Modern World.'[7] Both Lewis and Eliot, mutual foes of the 'Inner Voice', advocated reason, objectivity, and form;[8] but these meant different things to each of them. To Eliot they entailed a measured synthesis of contrasting elements, while to Lewis they concerned the local image. Eliot rejected both extremes of romantic individualism and anti-humanist formalism and resolved these conflicting tendencies in his comparativist, historicist theory of tradition and impersonality (Levenson, pp. 184–86); Lewis, who adopted the shock tactics and rhetoric of cultural revolution of Marinetti's Futurism, combined them. He rejected purely abstract art throughout his career, however; and the partial abstraction of *The Apes*, in which the human figure teeters between mimetic representation and stylized design, is consistent with his early graphic method.

Besides concrete detail and abstraction, there is also a more volatile element in the narrative, a verbal fantasy. Lewis's fanciful rhetorical and figurative embellishments are incompatible with any semblance of scientific description. The abstract diction lends the passage quoted above an air of disinterested objectivity; but the physical image is inseparable from the jocular colloquialisms and various figurative attributions of a human element that continually interrupt a detached tone. These figures, like the literal level of the narration, are also external insofar as they keep Fredigonde in the realm of things; for example, as she begins to walk, her gait acquires 'a slight roll, as though in liveliness — to rollick, to dance, a little, after the manner of a dying top' (p. 23). Even something as intangible as her 'personality' undergoes a grotesque reification: after she is seated again, 'gradually however her personality made its appearance. Fragment by fragment she got it back, in rough hand-over-hand, a bitter salvage' (pp. 23–24). Because of these competing factors in Lewis's style, the external method, despite the invocation of scientific truth, is really a parodic, not earnest, version of scientific perception, as the parenthetical remark 'This was an all-puppet cast' seems to admit. With a pseudo-scientific discourse that is also biased and personal, Lewis seeks to demonstrate Pierpoint's somewhat contradictory pair of contentions that an objective portrayal of someone would be unbearable and that absolute objectivity or impersonality in fiction is impossible. That is, he would expose the myth of verisimilitude by presenting figures that are both more accurately drawn and more fantastic than typical *roman à clef* characters, figures sometimes based on the authors of *romans à clef* themselves. This delicate strategy resulted in his later denying that the characters represented actual people, justifying his portrayal of the offended people, and speculating on the causes of their indignation (*Rude Assignment*, pp. 57, 215).

Another way that Lewis distinguishes his creations from 'life' is the typically sweeping and provocative tactic of making death one of his prime subjects. Frederick Tarr, his earlier fictional spokesman, states that 'deadness is the first condition of art'.[9] This principle is first a reminder to humanists of the realist and impressionist schools that art is a formal manipulation of inorganic media. In *The Apes* it is extended to a preoccupation with and thematization of the 'dead' aspects of life: repetition, replication, fixity. This thematic emphasis is consistent with the external method, since what is dead has no significant interior. The principal metaphor used for death is mechanization, a dehumanizing reduction of behaviour to predictable patterns. This treatment is obvious on the physical level, with the close study of nervous tics and compulsive mannerisms; it also comprehends habits of personality, well-rehearsed gossip, 'newspaper' ideologies, and derivative modes of art. Even the young lovers in the park, the very image of desire and passion, are lifeless and inter-changeable: their 'faces glued together', the many couples 'lay quite still, as though struck dead' (p. 54). In portraying the characters' immersion in the flux of immediate experience as an automatism, *The Apes* offers an alternative to, and an implicit critique of, the psychological novel, with its privileging of emotion, subjective perception, and the subconscious over the critical intellect.

Despite his rigid doctrine of externality, however, Lewis's portrayals are far from being exclusively external. In regard to the theme of death and in general, Fredigonde is not a typical example. She is the deadest character in the novel, a *nature morte* with special thematic significance. Her deadness is primarily 'natural', a matter of enervation rather than mechanization; she is not satirized for her decrepitude. Her inextinguishable vanity about her person is treated with conventional comic satire, as in her triumphant comment on the ordeal of walking: 'There will come a time Bridget when I shall not be able to move about like that!' (p. 24). But more importantly she is symbolic, doubly, of England's historical decline and of mutability or death itself, against both of which the untoward endeavours that follow are to be judged. Another difference is that, unlike the case with the other characters, with the important exception of Daniel Boleyn, her thoughts are shown; she is thus used to parody the 'inner method'. Her thoughts also elaborate the theme of people as things; here she muses upon the difference between words and things:

> But we survive by *words* [Zagreus] says — *things* perish.
>
> [. . .] 'All language whatever is a dead tongue.' How true that is! But that is how they catch us live ones dash it, the old devils — those life-coveting dead 'uns, to live upon us *All-alive-ohs* — as second-rate succubuses. (p. 15)

This dichotomy between the symbolic and the organic pervades the novel and is often expressed in paradoxical reversals. Language is dead but is the medium of survival: the dead live by possessing the living through their words. Language and thought are independent of the individual, not an accurate representation of things but phantasmal presences, which collectively make society a tenuous network of gossip and rumour.

As Fredigonde's vitality wanes, the more exclusively a matter of words and hallucinations she becomes (when not engaged in physical exercise), as in her memory of the words quoted above, which were transmitted by Zagreus from Pierpoint: she 'nodded to the air, curtseyed clumsily with her skull to Its

Emptiness'. And words are invariably at odds with one another, even within one body:

> Fredigonde passed most of her time in her mental closet, a hermit in her own head. Sometimes she would Stein away night and morning to herself, making patterns of conversations, with odds and ends from dead disputes, and cat's-cradles of this and that — a veritable peasant industry, of personal chatterboxing and shortsighted nonsense. It had been at the allotted span that the great reversal had been completed, of outside into in — so all that is external was become nothing but bursts of dreaming, railed through and fought out foot to foot upon the spot. (pp. 13–14)

The non-coincidence of internal and external or of mind and body, established by the external method, is responsible for much of the novel's broad farce; but the view of language that it entails, as a sort of ghostly parasite, also reflects upon the Apes' artwork and social ambitions. Fredigonde's dreaming, associated with physical decay and dementia, is the stuff of the time-cult's impressionism and expressionism. The verb *to Stein* of course refers to Gertrude Stein's 'witty nonsense', which Lewis maintains is 'closely related, through her whimsical vein, to the doctrinaire *Amateur* of London art-circles' (*ABR*, p. 350). In *Satire & Fiction*, he criticizes D. H. Lawrence for having 'abandoned the sunlit, pagan surface of the earth' for a dark interior similar to the Platonic cave to which he compares Fredigonde's apartment and mind; her 'second-rate' existence among emotions and conceptions connoted by words, the effects of things rather than concrete things themselves, resembles the emotional narcissism that he ascribes to the time-cult.[10] The Apes' public reputations as well belong to this dubious symbolic order.

Fredigonde's reveries also generate the narrative frame for the central action of the Apes' parties. While her body represents historical evolution over generations, her memory of Zagreus's remarks leads in contrast to an odd presentiment of political revolution. As she listens to the jazz of approaching street-musicians, which is called *Death-the-Drummer*, Fredigonde panics at the thought of inhabiting her servant, by her words, after death; she latches on to the fantasy of surviving as her lace cap instead and serving as its pedestal in a museum. But visiting children from the 'Red Sunday-School' smash the museum cabinets and riot, turning her into a terrified fugitive. Jazz, described as the primitive, visceral, communal music of the proletarian masses, represents the future and therefore the death of the old regime or of European rationalism altogether: 'jazz is *fate*, Zagreus insisted'. In trying to escape from Pierpoint's theory of words, Fredigonde ironically proves that her thoughts are not under her control. The image of being reduced to the abuse that she herself has heaped on her servant returns as a spectre of class resentment that seems to attack her from without, with all the covetous aggression that she understood Zagreus to ascribe to words. Fredigonde does not reappear in the novel except to expire in the epilogue, six hundred pages later, as the General Strike causes a temporary death of British commerce and foreshadows the demise of her and the Apes' class.

I have discussed Fredigonde at some length because she furnishes the purest example of the external method and also because of her prominent thematic place in the Prologue, but, as I have said, she is not representative. The other characters' external treatment is less extreme than hers. The split between spirit and matter is not as sharp: it is apparent that there is a mind directing their bodies, even if it is not represented and its direction is flawed. The first Ape to appear, Dick Whittington, is an amateur artist who keeps a block of empty studios and has just quit his painting lessons. Named ironically after the three-time Lord Mayor of London whose rise from humble origins became legendary, Dick has inherited wealth and schemes to inherit more. He presents a perfect contrast to his Aunt Fredigonde's lethargy; at his entrance he is described as a more up-to-date machine, on the model of his Bugatti: a bundle of mindless energy, blustering, sputtering, fumbling with the door, crashing into furniture, and belching freely.

> An enormous bronzed and flannelled figure burst in, exclaiming in deafening point-blank discharge:
>
> 'Hallo Aunt! May I come in?'
>
> A lush vociferating optimism, hearty as it was dutiful, was brutally exploded in her direction: a six-foot two, thirty-six summered, army-and-public school, Winchester and Sandhurst, firework — marked 'boyish high spirits' — simply went off; but only as a preliminary demonstration, as a benefaction by-the-way to the world-at-large. (p. 27)

The passage in which Lewis defines the comic as 'a *thing* behaving like a person' continues:

> But from that point of view all men are necessarily comic: for they are all *things*, or physical bodies, behaving as *persons*. It is only when you come to deny that they are 'persons', or that there is any 'mind' or 'person' there at all, that the world of appearance is accepted as quite natural, and not at all ridiculous. Then, with a denial of 'the person', life becomes immediately both 'real' and very serious. (*CWB*, p. 158)

This position is a prescription for *The Apes*, in which the 'person' being denied or denigrated, the characters presume themselves real. With the external method, the body's existence is 'natural', real, and serious to the character, but it is ridiculous to the observer because the reduction of the character to a body reveals a discrepancy between thing and person or a mechanistic reification of the person.

As in the case of Fredigonde, Dick's physicality is not an end in itself; it is also as much thematic as tangible: 'firework' is a metaphor; 'boyish high spirits' is a self-consciously conventional 'marker', not a concrete image. Dick represents blind and purposeless vitality; he is a clumsy, obtuse thing because of his petulant refusal to see himself 'objectively': his arrival is a '"here-I-am" joke, concerning the unquestionable oddity, so pleasing to others, of being "Dick" — of just getting, hit or miss, from spot to spot' (p. 29). His relation to Fredigonde suggests the antipathy of life towards death. Dick finds Fredigonde's bodily decay loathsome, but he suppresses his disgust in order to kiss her and ingratiate himself. He is anxious for her imminent passing, since her legacy will help to prolong his irresponsible 'youth' (the parodic inheritance-plot is not fully revealed until the epilogue, when Zagreus, another nephew, is shown to be Dick's rival for the Follet fortune).

In this typical scene, while external features are not always given sustained attention, they crop up frequently in odd details. Dick's interview with his uncle contains examples of less palpable experiences, such as glances and feelings, rendered in physical images: 'A rheumy sideglance struck the outsize health-advertisement [Dick] like a wet ghost'; the mutual thought of Fredigonde's violent temper 'conspired to compel their minds together in what was almost a caress' (p. 39). The most important aspect of physical action is the person's relation to his refractory body. The smallest gestures are often inscribed with class indices, which are also apparent in the materiality given to utterances: '"Yes I've just left her ladyship!" Dick threw in a slight growling laugh to keep the snobbish epithet (used in snobbish servant-mockery) company, as was expected of him' (p. 38). A human quality, keeping company, is attributed to the reflex action of a certain laugh, while the mockery of servants is less than humane. The class hierarchy is encapsulated in Dick's intonation: he declares his aristocratic credentials, or requisite snobbery, for the sympathetic audience of his uncle by distancing himself from servants by parody, by *possessing* the servants' semantic repertoire. But his superiority is questionable because, even if he recognizes his mockery afterwards, the reflex that satisfies his uncle's expectations was not produced intentionally. His body obeys the word 'ladyship' as the servant obeys her mistress's order.

The element of conventional satire is clearly evident in the portrayal of Dick. He is ridiculous and perhaps evil not because of an ineluctable condition such as Fredigonde's aging, but because of specific traits: he is foolish, pretentious, selfish, and hypocritical. He embodies the malignant attitude of a portion of a certain social class, and he also resembles a particular historical person, Richard Wyndham, a wealthy amateur painter and Lewis's former patron.[11] Dick's identification with his car also evokes the Futurist cult of action, speed, and machinery, a movement that Lewis derogatively called 'Automobilism' ('Vortices', p. 144). The character has a broader significance as well in exemplifying Lewis's central myth of modernity, 'the Man of the World', a figure that does not appear in his major polemics that were to be gathered under that title: 'he is mankind hardening and mechanizing himself *in order not to feel* and in order to avoid suffering. [. . .] He sits on the fence of being and non-being. [. . . H]e is not an agent, he is an amateur strategist.'[12]

For the present, I will raise only a few questions about Lewis's explicit theory of satire. Lewis justified his 'philosophy of the eye' in several ways: he is a painter; the visual sense is most in accord with common sense; it is the one best suited to satire, for which the writer chooses characters who are unreflective and machine-like, as modern people are increasingly; and the internal method is 'barbaric'.[13] He sought a 'non-moral' satire, one not dependent on the passing moral standards and social customs of a given culture. If everyone is equally ridiculous when considered objectively, then the external method, by focusing on physical data, should limit faulty inferences of a biased morality as well as inexact descriptions of private experience. But the garrulous narrator of *The Apes* does not refrain from inference; the body and its mechanisms are a palimpsest displaying traces of psychological principles. The physique is often used like a dressmaker's dummy for hyperbolic verbal embroidery; the pseudo-scientific inventory enlists extended and subordinate metaphors for the same object.

Later in the novel we find another explanation: Zagreus says that satire must keep to the surface because morality is superficial and the audience of satire can understand only superficial images (pp. 451–52). This contradiction in Lewis's various formulations, between surface as avoidance of morality and as the face of morality, might be explained by distinguishing physical surface from superficiality as a metaphor for a simplification of character traits. But the issue is complicated further by another remark by Zagreus about surfaces: modern people's 'skins are too thick' for them to be affected by satire. Lewis's attempt to square his bias towards graphic representation with satirical canons, and his satiric theory with his practice, is not persuasive. He maintains that he is concerned not with whether 'time-philosophy' is 'viable as a system of abstract truth' but with its aesthetic ideology (*TWM*, p. 112); in *The Apes*, however, Kenner notes, Lewis adopts the same behaviourist conception of humanity that he spent much effort attacking in his polemics (p. 107). Lewis's interpretation of vitalist and pragmatist philosophy might be to some extent a rationalization for his own predilection for the graphic arts and burlesque. SueEllen Campbell shows how, in the elaborate 'structure of oppositions' in his psyche and work, Lewis often attacks his own traits in others and is dogged by the 'domestic Adversary' of his own antithesis.[14] I will consider these issues more fully in chapter six.

The external method may be the most distinctive feature of this novel that is easily labelled, but despite Lewis's emphasis on visual imagery, the characters are not portrayed exclusively as physical entities or even predominantly in many cases.[15] Physical description is often subordinated to characterization by biographical information, social attribute, or improbable metaphor. Other factors besides externality must be considered in order to explain the kind of characterization deployed in *The Apes*. The pliable form of the comedy of manners and the material of contemporary social life both lend themselves to a play of colloquialism, and the tension between verbal prolixity and the dogmatic rigidity of the external method produced the most open-ended and multifarious of Lewis's stylistic experiments. I will examine more examples of Lewis's character-drawing later in this chapter. First it is necessary to define the nature of Apery and its relation to carnival.

Apery

The most important of what I have called the internal guides to *The Apes* is the 'Encyclical' of the 'painter turned philosopher' Pierpoint, which Zagreus passes on to young Daniel Boleyn. It is one of the two chapters that appeared in *The Criterion* in 1924, where it was entitled 'The Apes of God'.[16] According to Pierpoint, the title-characters are a novel type of group-phenomenon: wealthy people, of the sort that traditionally patronized the arts, who now expropriate the studios from serious artists and spread a degenerate impressionist aesthetic. In their 'cult of the amateur — the child-artist', all who qualify financially are accounted geniuses; and their 'organized hatred of *living* "genius"' has accomplished a '*societification* of art'. The Apes range from simple hobbyists to neurotic entrepreneurs; the most malignant type wages aggressive publicity campaigns to celebrate his or her coterie and disparage others. The Encyclical continues:

> These masses of Gossip-mad, vulgar, pseudo-artist, *good-timers* — the very freedom and excess usually of whose life implies a considerable total of money, concentrated in the upkeep of this costly 'bohemian' life — are the last people, as any artist will tell you, from whom support for any art can be expected. [. . .]
>
> *They are more damaging for the very reason that they are identified, in the mind of the public, with art and with intelligence.* Their influence is brought to bear invariably in the propagation of the second-rate — for that does not challenge their conceit, and it fraternizes with the fundamental vulgarity with which they have not parted, in their new surroundings. [. . .] They are the *un*paying guests of the house of art: the crowd of thieving valets who adopt the livery of this noble but now decayed establishment, *pour se donner un air* — to mock, in their absence, its masters.
>
> [. . .] It is to what I have called the Apes of God that I am drawing your attention — *those prosperous mountebanks who alternately imitate and mock at and traduce those figures they at once admire and hate.* (pp. 121–23)

On the dust-jacket of the original edition of *The Apes*, the title is said to derive from the early Christian belief 'that the world swarmed with small devils who impersonated the Deity'.[17] I have been unable to trace Lewis's source. The Ape of God is a recurring figure for the devil, as in Samuel Hieron (1607): 'The diuell is Gods ape, and seekes to counterfeit Him almost in euery thing.' The image of smallness and multiplicity was well-suited to Lewis's views of modern democracy; it implies both a lesser portion of godliness in individual devils and a greater travesty because of their number.[18]

By posing as cultural rebels, the Apes are able to disguise their privileged financial status, which has grown suspect in the atmosphere of socialist reform. Obscure modern art abetted the romantic image of the artist as a wild revolutionary; and the popular interest in primitivism, or at least the exotic, and the preoccupation with youth in the British press both supported an aesthetic of naïveté, as did certain interpretations of Bergson, Freud, and William James, notably Gertrude Stein's. The Apes are spectators who by assuming the role of performers have created a 'Paradise' for themselves. Despite the 'democratic' attitude towards talent implicit in their subjectivist aesthetic, they have imposed an unusually restrictive financial hierarchy upon artistic production, and their superficial 'rebellion' has become officialized. The carnivalesque element that their disruptions might have mobilized is compromised by their vested interest in their prestige: they are in effect attempting to buy a permanent carnival licence, a contradiction in terms. Carnival play is always false insofar as it is a self-conscious violation of normal customs, but the Apes' carnival is false altogether because they do not acknowledge the falsehood of its derangements.[19]

Lewis's most explicit analysis of the phenomenon of participation appears in 'The Dithyrambic Spectator' (1925), one of the first pieces of the *Man of the World* series published; most of it is a critique of Jane Harrison's *Ancient Art and Ritual.* Lewis rejects the theory that Greek drama arose spontaneously from the dance in Dionysian fertility rituals, and upholds the distinction between art, whose highest effect, catharsis, depends on detached contemplation, and the ecstasy and fusion of communal magic and religious practices.[20] He derides Harrison's optimism about a contemporary return to collective participation in, for example, community singing, which for him is merely symptomatic of the eclipse of the individual and does not accomplish a recovery of anything comparable to primitive belief (*DP*, p. 234). In the present '*critic*-stage' of art history, Lewis writes, 'The critic is, on the one hand, enough of an amateur performer to take a part; and, on the other, enough of a passive and voluptuous spectator to get a thrill of sorts.' But this 'uprising of the audience' is simply communal play that dilutes the artistic product (pp. 171–72).

The Apes' usurpation of the priestly role that Lewis accords the artist follows the carnival pattern of parodic subversion. But in the present, Lewis contends, the arts are not enriched by this mingling of outside elements in their domain since the purpose of such activity is more social than artistic, and more conservative than revolutionary: the aristocracy manœuvres into the cultural field in order to preserve or recapture the prominence that it traditionally enjoyed. The satire of the Apes (as distinguished from *The Apes of God*, the satire) may therefore be described as an anti-carnival insofar as the Apes' status is not relativized; they are not subject to violent shifts of fortune and remain entrenched as social figureheads at the end of the novel. But they are debased for the reader in the narrative and in Zagreus's pronouncements, where their presumption is revealed as a profanation of artistic standards that is not redeemed by any critical purpose. The key factor is their unawareness of impropriety, or of the real nature of their impropriety. This blindness curtails the dialogic potential of the carnivalesque drama, renders the Apes a static element in the plot, and contributes to the impression of the novel as being plotless. The true 'carnival attitude' is subterranean, as it were: it is present in the critical light thrown upon the Apes by the Pierpointians, and in the psychological aspect of affectation shown as the root of its social manifestations.

The Apes' imposture represents more than certain individuals' conceit; it is only the featured term of an endemic fracture or discrepancy between mind and body, words and things, self and 'not-self'. Everyone, including the anti-Ape faction, is caught in a web of mimicry and dissimulation. The novel's essential subject is not the gaudy and chaotic pageant of the Apes' masquerade but its psychological dimension, which is summed up in the conflict of impulses listed in the last clause of the Encyclical quoted above: 'those prosperous mountebanks who alternately imitate and mock at and traduce those figures they at once admire and hate'. The ambiguity of the concept of mockery, as figured in this line between 'imitate' and 'traduce', is operative throughout the novel. Mimicry, like parody, is always an indirect, fictional expression: it defines neither the performer nor the persona alone. When successful, it exposes the mechanisms of a personality or a performance and robs the target of its illusion of freedom and autonomy. But imitation may also be the expression of resentment: competitive but insufficiently challenging, and therefore ultimately parasitic. The Apes' mixture of admiration and hatred for real artists is the same 'contempt for the thing imitated' that Lewis elsewhere ascribes to effeminate male homosexuals (*ABR*, p. 242). The Apes' self-promotion encourages an idolatry of the false or the poor replica, of image over substance, of a representation rather than a force of carnival transgression. Their lack of integrity (psychological more than ethical) makes them prey to floating ideological forces, and this psychic dissociation is portrayed as a general social condition.

One of Lewis's most Bakhtinian non-fiction passages is a fragment of *The Art of Being Ruled* manuscript that was not published until the 1989 edition, 'The Social and the Private Person'. Lewis distinguishes here between Machiavellian, utilitarian dissimulation and the romantic, personal sort — childish play intended to deceive *oneself*. Describing the impulse to deception as a universal one, Lewis approximates Yeats's theory of the mask and the anti-self: 'In order to be happy, men want under all circumstances to be the Not-self, the different or opposite' (p. 386). Although the two types of dissimulation are usually mixed in 'average humbug',

> The intellectual pleasure of deceiving someone else — in the process of which dramatic gifts of course have to be brought into play — is as different a thing as possible from the emotional mimetic of a self-deceiver, like Madame Bovary. It is however seldom found in a pure form; but is usually corrupted and deteriorated with an infection caught from the role that is being played. (*ABR*, p. 386)

The Apes are a deleterious force because they thus 'combine business and pleasure': they dignify their play with public significance and come to believe in their own fraud. Elaborating on the distinction between person and thing in his earlier essay, Lewis continues: in 'the great system of make believe' that is 'civilized life', one might ask 'in what exactly the difference may consist between the person and the player — if indeed there is such a thing as a *person* at all'. The 'worldly attitude' is to regard oneself purely as a '*functional* entity' in the series of norms around which social life revolves, and to neglect 'the existence of the great environment of an alien universal life': things, the 'menacing abstract world of ideas, the "abysses" above which the sleepwalkers wind' (pp. 387–88).

The salient point here is the paradox that expression requires an antithetical persona, but the *maintenance* of the dissimulation is corrupting. When socially ratified, the performance is further conditioned by a repression of the abysses or ideas that would unmask it. I call this line of thought Bakhtinian because of its view of the self as being constantly re-created by its interaction with the world. But Lewis is a more dualistic than dialogical or dialectical thinker; he abstracts the principle of an evolving process. This concern with imitative behaviour as a sociological axiom, however, is what makes *The Apes* more than simply a gargantuan libel. The novel is first a professional artist's defence of the standards of his guild by a mimicry of people mimicking artists: it undoes the impostors' pretensions by showing a discrepancy between their claims and their accomplishments. More important, the Apes' adoption of roles at the expense of the 'person' exemplifies the dissolution of the subject in modern life altogether. The novel's characterizations encompass a welter of social stereotypes, and their pathological aspect derives from the process in which these stereotypes function as magnetic forces that engulf the 'person'.

Lewis's view of the time-cult as an irrational glorification of sensation and flux merges with his painterly hypothesis that the proper subject of art is the physical surface of things, particularly the human body, to produce a gallery of time-cultists depicted as defective mechanical contraptions. These caricatures convey Lewis's argument against two types of imitation — the imitation or impressionist transcription of life in art, and the imitation of creative artists by philistine 'life'. By volunteering diabolically to be the 'real author' that the Pirandellian 'fictional mongrel facts' await, Lewis has placed himself in a bind. He must create fictional characters who are unable to become fiction, who are suspended between life and art in the insubstantial typology of gossip-celebrity. If art should be a realm separate from life, the real author ought to lift these characters out of life somehow, but their particular significance resides in the fact that they cannot transcend life, though they wish to.

This dialectic of life versus art is presented principally in the relation between the body and mind of the secondary characters. Although Lewis's Cartesian premise prohibits an integration of these components, his emphasis on human physicality none the less prepares the novel's carnivalesque disorientations, in which sensuous experience over-rides and unmasks social convention. The impression of an anti-carnival results from the fact that the characters' energies are thwarted or perverted by neurosis, yet the narrative itself displays a typically carnivalesque exuberance. Lewis's variety of the grotesque, however, is not based solely on physical representation; it depends equally on the theory of social imitation outlined above. Assuming there to be no autonomous 'person' beneath the role or image, Lewis endows the roles themselves with a motive force. Between the body, with its instinctual drives and involuntary habits, and social existence, with its demands for a fictional consistency, the 'person' is lost in a dizzying shuttle.

The Puppets

Further instances of Lewis's character portrayal illustrate a range of effects beyond physical description. Many of the minor characters are exercises that stake out a particular sociological or historical field: clusters of familiar imagery as well as verbal idioms, either in their own speech or the narrator's inflection with it (what Bakhtin calls 'character-zones').[21] Harry Caldicott is a bravura piece, a 'period-illusion' of the nineties rake, whose appearance and mannerisms are matched by his speech, a florid rhetoric of seduction directed at Dan in drag:

> 'But allow me Madam so far to presume!' fell the brazen drone of the old period-piece of a painted man-harlot upon the eardrum of Dan 'the irresistible charm — if I may venture to impute to myself — some *feeble* proportion of *unconvincing* discernment — of *the grace*!' he threw a thunder of wonder into this long-drawn syllable, 'with which Madam you with such infinite sweetness discover — your *partial* displeasure' — the snuff-box snapped, as the hideous pretence of exalted coxcombry swept his body towards the ground, and he waved his hand with an awful fatuity — 'is more pon honour than mere mortal Madam — is able entirely to withstand!' (pp. 463–64)

Although Caldicott is described entirely externally, he is a more mythical than concrete presence. Edwards traces this scene, which takes place in the Finnian

Shaws' imitation of the Vauxhall gardens, to a similar one set in the gardens in Fanny Burney's *Evelina.*[22] It is as though Caldicott materializes as part of the tawdry scenery, displaying his lineage from the eighteenth-century fop. This is the closest that Lewis comes to stereotype, a simplification or uniformity of impression; with his quirky embellishments, he generally parodies stereotypes themselves. The characters are machines of language more than of physical components, and language does not abide by Lewis's graphic precept of sharp outline. The catalogue of clichés here, the full *costume* of them, mocks the vogue for the nineties among some writers and bohemians of the eclectic 'period-period' of the twenties. For such characters, being trapped in the flesh means being trapped in history and its sediment, language. For this reason I would avoid the notion of 'metaphysical satire', as opposed presumably to a moralistic sort, in defining Lewis's approach. Except for Fredigonde, these characters are rarely seen *sub specie aeternitatis*, as we might think of, say, Kafka's or Beckett's; the degree to which they are products of their milieu is the limitation for which they are derided.

The Apes retains the paradigm of the comedy of manners, which takes the customs of a specific society as its frame of reference; but it explodes the usual proprieties and structure of the genre to such an extent that, even if its satire cannot accurately be called 'metaphysical', it does not seem primarily moralistic either. '"I object to nothing", Zagreus protests, "I state."' The point of this incident is not the coxcombry of Caldicott's lecherous assault on Dan but the robotic routine that blinds him to Dan's sex, or makes him indifferent to it; as artificial as Caldicott is, he is constructed for the pursuit of animal pleasures. Dan tries to tell Caldicott that he has mistaken his sex: 'I am not a —'; but Caldicott interrupts him, 'Oh Madame there is no NOT' (p. 465). The banishment of NOT stands for Caldicott's disregard of the prohibitions pertaining to chastity, and also for his horror that language could deny, or deny him, the attractive body before him. It might also be taken for a denial of morality altogether; but it is a logically doubtful proposition that there is *not* a *not*. Lewis does not entirely escape moralism, but he respects the variety of codes of behaviour by grounding them according to age as well as class. *The Apes*' heteroglossia produces a historical depth as well as a spectrum of contemporary mores. The morals involved resemble a Nietzschean genealogy of the period 1890–1930, a study of the inscription of social power in values, rather than the fixed standard of conservative satire; and the generations in the novel thus portray history as a collective machine (a 'colossal mechanical trap', as Pierpoint puts it). We shall see that there is a glimpse of an existential dimension in Lewis's conception of humanity in *The Apes*, but it arises from a bewilderment with social imitation, a surplus of imitation, rather than an isolation of individual experience.

Caldicott's 'period-mists', ironically, provide him with more autonomy and solidity than most of the other characters possess; his dandy ethos is an engine that requires no metaphor such as the ship and the automobile in the earlier examples. The other characters are also compendia of imagery and idioms associated with social types, but they are usually assembled in a jarring, haphazard fashion. As Jameson states, Lewis's 'collage-composition' draws upon all of 'the junk materials of industrial capitalism, with its degraded commodity art, its mechanical reproduceability, its serial alienation of language' (p. 73). Lewis's characters are loose concatenations of traits battered with a fulsome rhetoric of mockery, and the narrator is as much a presence as they are. The style careens from parodic abstraction and elegance to scabrous slang and repetitious name-calling. It employs heavy sarcasm, freakish figurative language, and awkward, dissonant prosodic effects. Characters are often epitomized by particular phrases from a lexicon of hackneyed expressions past and present. This is Colonel Ponto being kicked across the room by Pierpoint's 'political secretary', Blackshirt:

> Not omitting to *keep-smiling* (true *sportsman* even when in the part of the hunted instead of hunter — oh a 'good loser'! — a *gentlemanly* domestic — a first class old whipping-boy — the world's easiest blockhead to bleed — the gull for which every shark must have prayed since the world began) Ponto looked back over his shoulder in the act of bucking, into the enormous shining morning-face of Monty Mayors (who had honoured him, in his belief, with a roguish sub-rosa accolade). With that full-fledged full-moon smile following him — a gigantic red lunar threatening satellite — his own timid *keep-smiling* smile, of pained reproach, did mingle — signalling about that root in the B.T.M. — an *it's-not-done-old-man* look from one public-school-boy to another went with it. [. . .]
>
> Ponto shook himself like a mangy old dog to shake out the kick he felt there sticking to him. (p. 524)

Ponto is another stock British type, the military man as superannuated public-school boy: a complacent administrator of the Empire who stumbled through the war and survived into a world where his gentlemanly code renders him defenceless. He is part of the 'Old Colonels' exhibit at the Lenten party, where he is flattered only so long as he performs, by telling tall war-tales to the Finnian Shaws, the trio of literary siblings resembling the Sitwells, and their guests. Ponto's facial expressions are defined by ideologically-charged verbal ones — 'keep smiling'; 'it's not done old man' — which bring to mind further, unstated examples: the 'stiff upper lip'; the obsolete 'playing fields of Eton' view of British imperialism. It is Ponto's conscription to this script that renders him a logical and easy scapegoat: his 'offence is to be the summit of a hierarchy'. Such dead slogans reflect the petrifaction of any hierarchy.

A social type may be amplified into an archetype. Most of the servants in the novel are robots, and Mrs Bosun, the childish Finnian Shaws' old nurse, is the most vivid. Like her social opposite Lady Fredigonde, she is described in nautical metaphors, but she belongs to the crew upon the aristocratic vessel. Her occupational proximity to the flesh has also made her into a figure of

Mother Nature, and a particularly rough one. It is her office to change Dan into a girl's clothing; oblivious to Dan's discomfort and silent panic, the 'intolerably cheerful' Mrs Bosun is delighted with the exercise in fashion: 'This young gentleman will make a lovely girl.'

> This egregious period-matron gloated upon his great maidenly damaged fleshlings, with professional fish-eyed sex-banter born of a seafaring past.
>
> *[... E]veryone* whatever, for her, as a matter of professional pride, was simply a tiny tot, or else a poor young person, born into a bosunic universe with a silver tit stuck into its pout as a matter of course. [...] When one came in touch with these hearty persons of primitive culture, it was awful! — who had about as much sixth-sense (that is, sex-sense) as a knock-about comic or a lousy sheep-dog in the street, but just plunged through life like a bull in a china shop seeking the exit, death in their eyes!
>
> [...] Pawing and fingering she was the fearful cylinders of senseless silk, smoothing out the sprigs of the best Honiton, testing the tautness of the rigging of the stays, counting the scollops, locating the buttonholes. [...] (pp. 435–40)

Mrs Bosun seems at first simply to augment Zagreus's cruelty to Dan in this transformation, a symbolic mockery of his feminine passivity. But her great energy, in its blind quest for death, makes her something akin to a natural force, restrained only by the manners of a salty late-Victorian sailor. She is the character who treats people as things *à la* Rowlandson, and as such she embodies the attitude of the narrative. Her lack of 'sex-sense' oddly must mean a lack of delicacy about sex, that she treats it the same as any other condition or experience. She becomes an unconscious priestess of nature performing a mystical rite, especially in retrospect, since Dan's change is the key term in his initiation. He is a pseudo-shaman, made privy to the other side of sexuality; though initially horrified by his 'attractive undie-outfit', he grows into it.

An archetypal image need not comprise a whole character, however; it may be a momentary impression, such as Fredigonde's 'impersonating Any-Woman-Flattered'. This provocatively sexist allegorical figure is merely a trick of condensation; more interesting is the infectious nature of impersonation, according to which Fredigonde's response reciprocates the falsehood of flattery. Everyone is liable at any moment to metamorphose into something else. The novel is a bestiary (throughout, not simply regarding the 'Apes') because of its metaphors. The frequent animal imagery, seen in the references to dogs in the last two passages quoted, is often more whimsical than a simple comparison of human to animal movements: Zagreus is shown 'drawing back his lips as if his lips were cats and they were in the act to spring' (p. 343); while he follows his girl-friend, Matthew Plunkett's 'eyes ran before him on the floor-boards, like two scuttling rats in leash' (pp. 80–81). Recurrent references to sex, which have a similarly-dehumanizing effect, also occur in figurative expressions: one of the Keins' guests wears a 'moist perpetual smile giving his mouth the official status of a sex-gland' (p. 278). Sexual arousal is conversely veiled in a metaphor that characterizes it as an alien and intrusive sensation: 'The burglar of his electricity meantime got shocks from the handle of the machine' (p. 108). Elsewhere sex is the subject of a pithy, alliterative generality couched in a sly pun: in his dress, Dan is 'the most modest of *Merveilleuses* that ever stepped upon a palpitating planet screwed into position by a cruel polarity of sex' (p. 455).

It is evident as early as the Prologue that much of the novel's most striking imagery occurs on the figurative rather than the literal level. In some figures, the vehicle dwarfs the tenor, taking leave completely of the primary, physical level of representation. Nothing comes in for more abuse than the sentiment of compassion, momentarily personified by Julius Ratner, the 'eternal imitation-person', who innocently asks Zagreus, 'What has happened to Dan?' (and who Zagreus had said lacks a heart):

> Slipping into the part of the agitator, at the service of all oppressed classes — women, miners, children, Jews, horses, servants, negroes, frogs, footballs, carpets during Spring-cleaning, Zoo-reptiles, canaries and so forth — seeing all that might be got-the-better-of and got-even-with thereby — all the husbands his feminism could give horns to — fathers to rob of their disaffected children, riders to be thrown off their rebellious horses, civilised habits to be suppressed — where no man would be willing to serve another — libraries to be bonfired on the ground that the care of books competed with the care of babies, carpets caused to flap round and hit housewives in the eye. [. . .] (p. 454)

(If this half-sentence makes us wonder that this is a writer who tirelessly defended 'classicism', we can weigh a remark that he made in another context: 'Under more normal circumstances I should probably be ranged upon the other side of the argument. I am really driven into the position of Devil's Advocate to some extent.')[23] The external method, as a description of Lewis's mode of narration and characterization, needed to be supplemented by the techniques of abstraction and stereotyping, but these factors are also insufficient to explain examples such as the last. Ratner's supposed conformity to a type, the 'agitator', is overwhelmed by an anarchic vision of hierarchy exploded. The figurative element and linguistic play in Lewis's descriptions require an analysis of less easily definable features of his style.

Narrative Sarcasm

Most of the examples shown above, a rather arbitrary selection, involve minor figures, historical colour as it were, not the Apes and the core of the satire. But the gamut of effects surveyed, from the sluggish matter of Fredigonde to Ratner's wholly imaginary chivalry, allows some generalizations to be made about Lewis's stylistic manner, or mannerisms (I am using the term 'style' not in the strict sense of a quantitative description of syntactical patterns, but more informally to include diction and tone). Several factors disturb the usual readerly expectations. The sentence style, with its superfluous and dropped commas, interjections, odd locutions, and sometimes confused syntax, by turns speeds up and slows down comprehension. To an unusual degree, the prose rhythm is determined by the relative emphasis given to individual words by typographical alterations — capitalization, italics, quotation marks, and hyphenation. The style is extremely varied semantically and tonally: a page of flat, singularly earnest description of the primitive symbols and icons covering Zagreus's hieratic costume for the magic performance is deflated in a parenthesis: 'There were also a few palmers' shells in the pouch, and a toothbrush (in case he should get on toothbrush terms at all)' (p. 335). Lewis uses different idiolects, as Joyce did in *Ulysses* — the scientific, the clichéd, the telegraphic — but he mixes them at random instead of compartmentalizing them in separate chapters. The narrator saturates the characters with redundant descriptions — Dick 'shuffled', 'tossed a huge foot out', 'charlestoned', 'danced a hornpipe', 'corkscrewed', 'performed a shambling war-dance' — himself favouring Dick's 'super-crashing heartiness' over the 'neatness' recommended for success in polite fiction. In the passage concerning Ratner, the narrator has become a machine run amuck like the characters, relentlessly hectoring them and burying them under a mass of emblems like Zagreus's costume. In addition to reflecting the character being described, the prose sometimes shifts its perspective to another, observing character: Ratner's mock-heroism embodies Zagreus's cynicism, and the impression of Mrs Bosun derives from Dan's fear.

Much of the novel's abrasive fantasy results from the havoc it plays elaborating on idioms and slang and making their figurative elements more substantial than their referents. Dan, who mimics this feature of the narrative, is sometimes physically affected by words: he is alarmed at a line of advice from Ovid, 'And free your Arm-pits from the Ram and Goat' (p. 135); the broadcasts give him indigestion; and 'Oh how that dreadful word *peel* left him not only naked, but skinless!' (p. 225). The texture of the prose, with its excessive verbiage and far-fetched allusions, is a prime cause of the novel's disrepute. The combination of an intensive, idiosyncratic style and an extensive treatment of negative characters and noxious behaviour has proved tedious even for many Lewisians. The impetus of the style seems to derive from a personal animosity that approaches pathological wrath and from an obsession with countering the impressionist aesthetic with an impossible Cubist prose. Lewis goes to such lengths of mocking oratory, subjecting incidental motifs to verbal crochets that go beyond sufficient description and threaten to disintegrate into nonsense, that he seems to be deliberately testing his audience's patience with the 'riot of personal egotism' that Pierpoint accuses impersonal writers of indulging in surreptitiously. Kenner remarks that this wilful eccentricity has defeated the aims of the external method and produced rather 'the occultation of the object' (p. 106).

The difficulties of Lewis's style derive partly from a dilemma often found in satire: how to make dullness interesting. Lewis attempts to do this by making, like Ker-Orr, the narrator of *The Wild Body*, 'a drama of mock-violence of every social relationship' (p. 101). His hyperbole and venom are an exaggerated reaction against, and a parody of, the mild defensive satire analysed in the first broadcast, a mode that seeks monologic stability and social sanction. Completing the satire of the disputants in parochial quarrels is a demonstration of the primitive power of unbridled, indiscriminate invective and sarcasm beyond the bounds of socially palatable fiction. Part of its comedy derives from Lewis's self-conscious enthusiasm for the devil's advocacy that he feels forced into. But even at its most unhinged, the prose is not as difficult as that of the contemporary Stein and Joyce; although it requires deciphering, it always contains or implies a dramatic referent. The difficulty results from the fact that the referent often seems a mere pretext for the obscure insinuations of Lewis's associative flights. *The Apes* could have used substantial editing, for its redundancies more than its wildness, but it is in the nature of this sort of work that no firm measure of the fitness of its parts can be determined.

Fredric Jameson has analysed very subtly Lewis's distinctive use of figurative language, particularly his 'imperceptible substitutions of literal and figurative levels for one another' and the primacy of metonymic proliferation over metaphor and symbol, which were valorized by the romantic movement and its modernist followers. Lewis's method, Jameson writes, 'is to pit clichés on the level of gestural images against the verbal clichés with which the sentences themselves are hopelessly corroded'. Jameson identifies a four-term process in which a literal referent is postulated, then fragmented into components of a second allegorical narrative, which the reader must construct before deducing from it the literal situation, which is nowhere explicitly stated.[24] In a similar analysis, Bernard Lafourcade, borrowing a historical scheme from David Lodge, characterizes Lewis's style by neither metaphor (typical of modernism) nor metonymy (typical of the anti-modernist realism of the thirties), but by the post-modern practice involving a 'short-circuiting of metonymy by metaphor, and vice versa'.[25] The diatribe on Ratner, which can be described as a metonymy of metaphor, illustrates the extremity of this process. A more frequent sort of dislocation can be seen turning upon the barely noticeable word *perhaps* in the following line: Dick 'looked round with the near-sighted surprise of a rogue elephant who had perhaps burst into a parish church' (p. 27). The uncertainty of the elephant's location seems unnecessarily coy since the imaginary creature is being used only for the purpose of comparison; it must be either in or out of the church. But the qualifier *perhaps* fittingly reflects the elephant's bad eyesight. So Dick's disorientation is even greater than that of an elephant in a church, even though that is the image that remains with us; it is that of an elephant that might have mistaken another place for a church. The endowment of the animal with the capacity to recognize the signs of human religion, although this capacity is denigrated, makes the resemblance to Dick at once closer and more absurd.

According to Jameson, the shuffling of various dialects across the literal and figurative levels produces a 'delirium of metonymy':

> The point to be made about these subcodes and idiolects is not their hierarchy but rather their multiplicity, their jealously respected inconsistency with one another. No effort is made to fuse them into some more personal unity of tone. On the contrary, their very function is to interfere with one another. (p. 33)

This process is comparable to one that Bakhtin emphasizes in Rabelais: the destruction of habitual linguistic matrices by their combination with others usually considered incompatible. New 'associative matrices' are created by crossing scholarly or theological language with obscenities connected with the 'grotesque bodily series' — birth, death, sex, food, and defecation (*Dialogic Imagination*, p. 170). Whereas in Rabelais this unwieldy fusion restores the primacy of corporeality, in Lewis, Jameson argues, a 'dismemberment of the external world and of gesture' imitates the discrete mechanical processes of industrial machines, the fragmentation of shared codes of social life, and the 'inescapable contamination of the collective mind and of language itself' by debased and alienated conceptual categories. He sees Lewis's practice as a demystification of the creative process, which is usually associated with an ideology of inspiration and natural beauty (pp. 31, 81). Echoing Bakhtin's designation of the serio-comic by its use of language as an object as well as a means of representation, Jameson identifies Lewis's mode of 'satire-collage' as a modern form of artificial epic, which 'takes as its object of representation not events and actions themselves but rather the describing of them' and which relies upon fancy more than imagination in a reworking of exhausted materials. He calls this 'an antitranscendental, essentially democratic option', in contrast to the mythopoeic projects of the dominant modernism.[26]

Among the modernist writers' signal achievements are the dense, nuanced, often fragmented and lyrical styles that reflect a concern with individual experience over plot and dramatic action. Lewis attacked their concentration on subjective perception and the immediate flux of consciousness — the psychological emphasis in Lawrence's descriptions of unconscious impulses, Stein's hypnotic meditations, and Joyce's and Woolf's interior monologue — for two reasons: a representation of the confusion of lived experience is not as powerful aesthetically as a well-defined physical image, and this narrow focus is symptomatic of a withdrawal from the bewildering complexity of contemporary social problems. Although *The Apes* employs a more conventional, declarative sentence and a more continuous sequence of physical action than the others' work often does, the material of its sentences, which are not literally fragmented but are rather over-stuffed, sometimes coheres even less than do the other writers' fragments, which are unified in some character, consistent lyric tone, or structural device, such as the mind of Tiresias in *The Waste Land*. Even in Joyce's late style, with its intensive paronomasia, quotidian consciousness is dissolved into recurrent psychic patterns.

In *The Apes* Lewis rejects the possibility of refuge in authentic personal experience that the other writers set against social anomie; his satiric project remains within the degraded public sphere, multiplying its falsehoods without developing a compensatory subjective vision. The volatile relation of the literal and figurative elements in Lewis's sentences that Jameson analyses does not admit of a traditional perceiving subject. There is a disjunction between the external method and psychological metamorphosis, and each of these techniques separately also produces a fragmentation, of the body and the mind respectively. Characters are unstable assemblages of physical tics and received ideas, processed in an anarchic Futurist machinery that does not pause for a synthesis. Between the de-personalized, concrete level of the external method and the trans-individual stereotypes is a gap where the subject ought to be. Strong individual identity is implicitly a necessity to survive public confusion, but the subjective pole is a problematic supposition that does not exist in the work itself. The strong characters in *The Apes*, Pierpoint and Zagreus, are critical negations of the collective situation rather than autonomous agents. The external method, which entails both a modern, quasi-scientific mode of perception and the archaic primacy of physical existence, produces a spurious 'objectivity' that mirrors and exaggerates social reification. One anomaly of *The Apes'* modernism is that the dislocations of its style also produce a chaotic image of experience, but without the subject that Lewis considered the source of this image. The ostensible subject of much of the narrative, Daniel Boleyn, parodies the phenomenological tentativeness of impressionism, but the narrative more often transcends Dan's limited perception and vocabulary. To satirize modernist impressionism itself, Lewis uses the external method to portray subjectivism objectively, by its social, personal, and artistic effects. In regimenting Bergson's *durée* into its opposite, clockwork or factory-time, he compromises his own ideal of the well-defined image for the sake of his critical objective.

It is worthwhile to compare Lewis's technique to that of the only prominent later practitioner of an external method, Alain Robbe-Grillet. Like Lewis, Robbe-Grillet uses a painstakingly-detailed, objective visual technique as a direct challenge to psychological fiction. Robbe-Grillet's concentration on physical objects, however, points up how much Lewis's external method, in contrast, is directed towards persons, and how contradictory to his stated 'scientific' objective is Lewis's impulse to caricature. The peculiar opacity of

Robbe-Grillet's world, in which things are bereft of emotive associations, limits the play of comedy and satire. Although Robbe-Grillet's method cannot be called a personal one, the cumulative force of his tightly-controlled narrative gaze nonetheless has a personal effect; the very indifference of the material world, the intrinsically meaningless text of objects and surroundings, conveys the plight of characters caught in the grip of circumstances. Lewis approaches such austerity in *The Childermass*, but in *The Apes* he cannot resist turning the refractory nature of matter into a joke. Perhaps, in light of this comparison, this tendency can be seen as a scrap of humanism.

More than any other of Lewis's novels, *The Apes* thematizes the machine and the artificiality of society. Since it is his most ambitious attempt at a summation of a particular historical moment, it also has the widest range of cultural reference and the most heteroglot treatment of language. Lewis's heteroglossia is not simply an exhibition of discrete dialects but an unpredictable mixture of them that undermines their respective authority and makes the possibility of determinate meaning altogether problematic. The clue to the function of his style in this novel, I believe, lies in Zagreus's intermittent remarks on language, such as the one on the deadness of words reported by Fredigonde. During his exposition of his magician's costume, Zagreus stops Ratner from uttering his real (that is, his original) name:

> The name you utter is not the name. The UNNAMED is the principle of heaven and of earth. But the name is an abortion and a tyranny.
>
> [. . .] Our names are our slave-marks. We should *name* not be *named*. [. . .] I have never been able to imagine a name abstract enough for myself. (pp. 341–42)

The name thwarts and paralyses 'life' or the real by a reductive conception.[27] In the compulsive descriptions — a machine-gun attack, to continue the metaphor of killing — the narrator is making sure that he is the namer. But the multiplicity of names that he produces for the same object, the cacophony of mixed metaphors and twisted clichés, is an implicit admission that none is sufficient or final. The quotation marks that enclose many words in the narrative and in Zagreus's speech warn that the word's meaning is not endorsed: Isabel Kein 'performed a glockenspiel arpeggio, and airily tossing her curled-out, hard, painted lips to the right, repeated her performance upon that side, with defiant "happiness"' (p. 256). The bracketed word has taken on a debased meaning whose currency must be acknowledged: it is the character's meaning, not the narrator's. Quotation marks are used in this work as the typographical sign of sarcasm, as is made obvious by the harping on 'genius'. It is particularly positive terms such as these two, 'truth', and 'real' that Lewis thus qualifies; even an identity, such as 'Dick', may be designated as illusory. We are told that the 'Lesbian-Ape' faces Dan 'in the manner that is indicated by the word *roundly* and by the word *squarely*' (p. 223). If these contrasting images have the same meaning, then language is a faulty instrument, not an adequate representation of experience or the world. Language is presented as virtually the realm of error, a matter of conventions that serve partisan causes. Since this tainted language is the medium of consciousness, the human subject is reduced to an ideological and historically-determined construct, and the social sphere as a whole becomes an immense lie of convenience.

Its unreliability is what gives language its power, its capacity to mislead, mystify, and stifle thought: 'Words, however, certainly make people happy' (*ABR*, p. 324). Of the one authoritative voice in the novel, Zagreus says, 'All Pierpoint's words are tricks'; and Pierpoint himself calls his bombastic persona 'my opposite' (p. 125). The arsenal of stylistic effects in *The Apes* is channelled into the service of sarcasm, a 'trick' by which the application of a hyperbolic or fantastic name or image to a character reveals what the character represses. If this mode of narration cannot be called predominantly 'external', it is difficult to find another name that does it justice, especially one claiming the consistency of a 'method'. 'Classical', whatever it might mean in this context, is a very inapt term for *The Apes'* style, which is much closer to rococo. In order to acknowledge the rhetorical as well as the representational aspect of Lewis's mode of characterization and narration, I suggest that *The Apes* exemplifies a virtual poetics of mockery. Not only is sarcasm, the trope of mockery, the dominant feature of the local details, shaping both the rhetorical and figurative aspects of the prose; mockery is the overall purpose of the novel, pursued as single-mindedly as in *The Dunciad* and in much greater detail. It is inherent in the theme of Apery, in which characters are mocked for mocking others; and it is also, as I shall argue in the next chapters, the basis of the plot, in which Zagreus's mockery of Dan serves to mock the Apes. The larger patterns of *The Apes* — the revelation of Zagreus's madness; the ironic complications and the partial failure of his schemes; and the collapse of the plot into a ritual that inverts the stated role of the nominal hero, Dan — recapitulate the immediate process of unmasking the Apes' titles to prominence, the background characters' titles to a 'person', and the stylistic subversion of stable meanings in language generally.

To return to the theme of carnival, the metaphoric level in Lewis's characterizations may be compared to the presumptuous role of artists adopted by the Apes. The external method provides a concrete ground (the equivalent of everyday life in this analogy) against which the characters' fantastic posturing and the narrator's fantastic description stand in relief: the whimsicality of the narration approximates the absurdity of the Apes' pretensions. The volatility of the prose and its promiscuity of meaning are equivalent to the mingling and misalliance in the carnival crowd. Though the narrative's parodic collocations may be oblique and spurious, they trigger a new awareness of the limitations of the usual categories of understanding. Lewis's 'laughter' seems to have all the hallmarks of Bakhtin's conception of conventional satire as a reduction of carnival universality and celebration — negative, authoritative, and 'one-directional'. But the range of figures presented in *The Apes*, their constant kaleidoscopic metamorphoses in 'a language of symbolic concretely sensous forms', and the provisionality of the multiple names that they bear, have a different effect. They do create the impression of a properly carnivalesque openness and 'unfinalizability', in which any identity is tenuous and any fixed social position is corrupt.[28] In the aggregate, the characters constitute a version of Rabelais's 'collective ancestral body', with its folkloric roots. It is a dystopian, post-Freudian version, however: the body's impersonal proclivities take precedence over the individual ego, but its vitality is not liberating for the characters. Its energy runs through constricted patterns of social behaviour and exposes their fictive foundations, fragmenting culture, including the tyrannical effects of language, for the benefit of the spectator, although the spectator is not granted a dramatic catharsis.

In this chapter I have considered only the atmosphere of the novel. The portrayals of the Apes, which I will take up shortly, are also pertinent to the question of the representation of the body; but more important than their particular physical imagery is their treatment of neuroses, which inevitably entail physical symptoms. Much of the following explication focuses on the more specific process in which the theme of imposture is dramatized by the two protagonists, Dan and Zagreus. Dan's is the main body in the novel, because of its suffering and its symbolic value. The premise of the plot consists of the application of a false name, 'genius', to this creature who is silent and ignorant of the language of society.

NOTES

1. Lewis's notes for the novel include two lists identifying the originals of minor characters in the chapters 'Chez Lionel Kein, Esq.' and 'Pamela Farnham's Tea-Party'. In a letter to T. S. Eliot, Lewis expressed some doubts about using the name 'Stillwell' for Lord Osmund (*L*, p 139), and in another note the climactic party is held at the home of the 'Sweetwells' (*The Apes of God*, ms. [notes, fragments, 192–(?)], Wyndham Lewis Collection, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY [henceforth referred to as 'Cornell WL Coll.']). Meyers's biography contains extensive information about Lewis's relations with the originals and also a detailed account of the 1913 Omega Workshop incident, which began Lewis's lifelong feud with Bloomsbury (pp. 158–83, 39–50). Paul Edwards's Afterword to the 1981 edition of *The Apes* (pp. 629–39) offers another, overlapping 'key' (pp. 635–36).
2. One of Kein's novels is entitled *Frederick Aldous*; in *Satire & Fiction* Lewis chose *Point Counter Point* as an example of a sentimental melodrama that was taken for a 'landmark' work of fiction' (pp. 59–60); and Huxley had portrayed Lewis, at least partially, as the 'poor degraded "Lion"' Lypiatt in *Antic Hay* (1923).
3. p. 118. Lewis also endorses this view in his polemics. In his critique of Eliot's doctrine of impersonality, he writes, 'But since none of us can lay claim to possession of this perfect instrument of truth — we are all only dealing in different degrees of falsity — is there to be an embargo upon all our utterances?' (*MWA*, p. 71).
4. *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. by E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (London: Allen, 1903–12), XI *The Stones of Venice*, III, p. 151.
5. See 'Evidence of a Changed Outlook from the Portraits of the Past', in *Rude Assignment*, pp. 52–54.
6. Michael H. Levenson, *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine 1908–1922* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 84–98, 112–14.

7. 'Vortices and Notes', *Blast* 1 (1914), 127–149 (p. 141).
8. See T. S. Eliot, 'The Function of Criticism', in *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. by Frank Kermode (New York: Harcourt-Farrar, 1975), pp. 68–76 (pp. 72–73).
9. *Tarr*, rev. edn (1928; repr. London: Calder-Jupiter, 1968), p. 279.
10. *SF*, p. 48. A passage from Stein's *Composition as Explanation* that Lewis cites might help to dispel some suspicion that time and the groping investigations that it inspired were entirely Lewis's own obsession: 'There must be *time*. . . . This is the thing that is at present the most troubling and if there is the time that is at present the most troublesome the time-sense that is at present the most troubling is the thing that makes the present the most troubling' (*TWM*, p. x).
11. See Meyers on Richard Wyndham, pp. 178–79.
12. 'The Foxes' Case', in *Creatures of Habit and Creatures of Change: Essays on Art, Literature and Society 1914–1956*, ed. by Paul Edwards (Santa Rosa, CA: Black Sparrow Press, 1989), pp. 120–36 (pp. 129–30).
13. *TWM*, pp. 138, 403–04; *SF*, p. 45; *ABR*, p. 125; *SF*, p. 53.
14. SueEllen Campbell, pp. 117–22, 140–45.
15. In apparent contradiction to his own criticism of the novel for its externality, Kenner estimates that half of the text is dialogue and another quarter describes 'internal' experience (p. 103).
16. *Criterion* 2 (1924), 300–10. At this stage, Zagreus was the author of the Encyclical; Pierpoint apparently did not exist yet, although in the other early piece, 'Mr. Zagreus and the Split-Man', Zagreus makes reference to a character named Joint, whom Pierpoint later replaces in the passage (*Criterion* 2 (1924), 124–42). Joint is the main character in an unfinished contemporaneous narrative; sections of the manuscript were published in 'From *Joint*', ed. by Hugh Kenner, *Agenda* 7–8 (1969–70), 198–208.
17. Cornell WL Coll.
18. Samuel Hieron, *Works*, I (1617) 1620 (p. 360), in *OED*, 'ape', sense 3.
19. Although Lewis alludes to it only briefly in *The Apes* as 'Lady Harriet's operette', Edith Sitwell's and William Walton's *Façade* is perhaps the best historical example of what he implies is Ape-art, because of the Sitwells' attitude toward the public regarding it as well as its nature. It was a performance combining music with nonsense verse — irreverent, silly, and derivative, of Cocteau's and Satie's *Parade* (see Edith Sitwell, *Façade and Other Poems 1920–1935* (London: Duckworth, 1950), pp. 82–118). In a memoir Osbert Sitwell describes its first public performance, beset with hissing and threats of assault, as a scandal to the philistines and the establishment press (*Laughter in the Next Room* (New York: Little Brown, 1948), pp. 215–23). Others present reported that it was badly performed and received with indifference (see John Pearson, *Façades: Osbert, Edith and Sacheverell Sitwell* (London: Macmillan, 1978), pp. 183–84). *Façade* might have been the single most important catalyst of *The Apes*, since Lewis's first reference to the novel in his letters appears soon after he had attended this performance, on 12 June 1923 (L, 133–35).
20. *DP*, pp. 208, 237. Some sections of Lewis's polemical books first appeared, shortly before, in journals, usually his own *Enemy*. I do not identify the earlier source in my references, except in the case of this one, which antedated its book publication by six years ('The Dithyrambic Spectator: An Essay on the Origins and Survivals of Art', *Calendar of Modern Writing* 1 (1925), 2–107, 194–213).
21. *Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 315–16.
22. 'Augustan and Related Allusions in *The Apes of God*', *Enemy News* 24 (Summer 1987), 17–21 (pp. 17–18).
23. *P*, pp. 19–20.
24. Jameson, pp. 28, 73, 66.
25. 'Metaphor-Metonymy-Collage', ed. by Paul O'Keefe, *Enemy News* 25 (Winter 1987), 6–11 (p. 9).
26. Bakhtin, *Problems*, p. 108; Jameson, pp. 76, 30.
27. Lewis's notes contain additional instances of this principle: a quotation from Kwang-Tze, 'The name is but the guest of the reality'; and 'What Hermes Trismegistus says, "I don't believe that a name, however complex it may be in its composition, can convey the principle of almighty" and so forth' (Cornell WL Coll.). This line of thought was developed by Maurice Blanchôt, who also saw 'naming' as a sacrifice of reality: 'Death alone allows me to grasp what I want to attain; it exists in words as the only way they can have meaning' ('Literature and the Right to Death', in *The Gaze of Orpheus and Other Literary Essays*, trans. Lydia Davis (New York: Station Hill Press, 1981), p. 43; quoted in Astradur Eysteinsson, *The Concept of Modernism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 198).
28. Bakhtin, *Problems*, pp. 126, 122, 117.

CHAPTER THREE

LIFE AS A GAME: TWO GENIUSES AND THEIR PATRON

Daniel Boleyn

Probably because their development is indirect and understated, the plot and character system of *The Apes* have never received adequate critical attention. Although the action reaches a dramatic climax, it does not progress to any substantial transformation or resolution. In this chapter I will examine the novel's initial dramatic situation, which does not begin to change until the second half. Daniel Boleyn, the tall, beautiful, ignorant, fearful, and dim-witted nineteen-year-old from whose point of view most of the action is seen, is presented to fashionable art society by his white-maned patron, Horace Zagreus: 'Mr. Daniel Boleyn has a very great future — of course as yet he is too young to have done much, but he has written one most lovely poem' (p. 40). Dan is sent through salons and studios that as an artist he 'must understand or perish'; but he understands little of what he sees, remains speechless, and flees whenever he is able to. He undergoes a thorough degradation, from sore feet to molestation by both sexes, until Zagreus abandons him after the culmination of his apprenticeship.

The first half of the novel is purely episodic; it consists simply of Dan's visits to various Apes. Zagreus accompanies him on the last of these, and the long dialogue that ensues contains important revelations about Zagreus's relation to the other characters and about his madness. The survey of the Apes, the broadcasts, and Dan's suffering are essentially constant elements that do not figure in the plot. The novel's complication takes place in the second half, at the crowded Lenten party, whose hosts, the Finnian Shaws, represent the apotheosis of Apery. Zagreus's interest shifts to Archie Margolin, and his youth-madness is confirmed; something of Pierpoint's following is revealed, and that following disintegrates in bickering; Dan is symbolically despoiled and expelled before the assembled Apes in the magic performance, which concludes in pandemonium. The surprising twist in the cyclical pattern of genius-mongering is that Archie constitutes a substantive, not merely a functional, change from Dan, and his social origins are symbolically significant in the frame narrative.

Dan is anonymity itself, a poor Irish boy staying in London with family friends who care for him mainly as a sex-object. Since he is hardly equal to his apprenticeship, he seems to have been chosen for it merely because of the accident of his commonplace good looks and the presumption of his having written a poem. His first name suggests a trial in a lions' den (society lions in this case);[1] and his last evokes the short tenure as a figurehead of Queen Anne Boleyn (especially since he becomes a transvestite 'queen'). Dan is a bystander thrust into the role of performer: 'Life was a lottery!' he sighs, after he has been changed into a girl (p. 455). Passive, vacuous, and self-pitying, Dan reluctantly obeys the gruelling schedule of visits assigned to him only because he wishes to please Zagreus and be in his presence. If Zagreus's laborious instruction were meant to encourage Dan's artistic development, the effect is ironic because Dan cringes whenever he hears a broadcast beginning. Dan's continual whining and blushing are occasionally interrupted by pathetic longings for Zagreus to make him an artist and by bathetic resolutions of enmity towards the Apes. Hyper-sensitive to cruelty and rudeness, he cannot understand why Zagreus keeps forcing him into painful, absurd situations. He also hates Pierpoint, who preoccupies Zagreus and in whose name he suffers. Dan's terror makes the bulk of the novel a mock-adventure.

Lewis uses the naïf premise in a complex way. Dan is first the lens of a walking tour through Ape-society, an innocent whose perceptions reveal the artificiality of society because he does not share its habits and conventions, and whose treatment at its hands reveals its corruption. He is an exaggeration of this type of protagonist, not simply a detached witness but a completely helpless cipher. He also has a specific historical significance, and he is the vehicle by which some major modernists are drawn into the satire. In *The Caliph's Design* (1919), Lewis defines a naïf as a 'doll-like dummy that the trader on sentiment pushes in front of him in stalking the public'.[2] He is not referring here to the satiric naïf, such as Candide, who does not serve the cause of sentiment, but to a characteristic type in the post-war London art world. Around the same time, he wrote that Roger Fry, the Bloomsbury art critic who promoted the painter Duncan Grant, 'loves too well to unearth some tiny personality and call him a genius for a while, some personality that is quiet and obedient and does not interfere with his dream'.[3] This phenomenon became more pronounced as the twenties progressed. The Sitwells 'discovered' Harold Acton and Brian Howard, associates of Waugh and the Bright Young People, while they were still at Eton.[4] Martin Green, in his study *The Children of the Sun*, credits these two young men for defining the 'dandy-aesthete' temperament that was prevalent among their generation's intellectuals and socialites. Green includes the naïf role as a subordinate feature of this tendency, and uses Lewis's term 'cult' to describe the idealization, in this period, of the young man as the 'supreme form of life' (pp. 3–15, 139). It was not until 1932 that Lewis wrote the series of articles on 'Youth-Politics' that were collected in *Doom of Youth*, which was withdrawn from publication because of a libel suit (see

Meyers, pp. 215–16). But these sarcastic commentaries on newspaper clippings add little to his analysis of the 'cult of the child' in the earlier polemics, in which he identifies it as the basis of the various other cults. The evidence that he presents there, such as 'Young Again', a *Daily Mail* piece about English tourists in France playing like children, as well as other events of the period, such as the Bright Young People's 'Second Childhood Party', in which guests arrived in baby clothing and prams, do indicate a marked tendency.[5]

Dan is a caricature of this type of young protégé, a parodic Trilby whose oxymoronic combination of idiocy and acclaim complicates the conflicts that the naïf premise creates. In a recent essay, Antonio Feijó argues that the character of Zagreus is based on Ezra Pound, because Pound styled himself as a youth-leader and 'an expert in genius'; I will consider this theory in detail later in this chapter.[6] The premise of the apprenticeship given in the text points more explicitly towards Gertrude Stein. Lewis later called Dan an 'authentic *naïf*', presumably in contrast to what he saw as the *faux-naïf* tendencies in contemporary writing, particularly the work of Stein (*Rude Assignment*, p. 214). In *Time and Western Man* he compares the narrative voice of Anita Loos's *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* to Stein's as evidence of the congruence between highbrow writing and popular culture (pp. 56–59); Dan, who is glad that there are only twenty shillings to the pound because he can count only to thirty, far surpasses Lorelei Lee in stupidity. At the Lenten party, Zagreus is said to like Dan because he is the justification of Stein: Dan thinks in the same stammering, simple-minded way that she writes. Since Stein was touted in some quarters, and quite loudly by herself, as a genius for what Lewis called her 'sham-idiot' persona, the genuine idiot Dan is given the same honour. His 'stream of consciousness', which illustrates the child-mind, is a caricature of Bergson's *durée*, and his terrified pathos is set in contrast to the puppets' automatism. Since Dan is a penniless Irish would-be poet, his coupling with Zagreus also contains allusions to Joyce's Stephen and Bloom.

Dan tests the Apes' aesthetic standards by confronting them with an image of their own pretensions to genius and of the naïveté that they admire. He mirrors the young protégés in the art world whose promotion serves to enhance their promoters' influence. As an enigmatic nullity, a 'hard nut to crack because of its extreme softness', Dan provokes the Apes to various responses. A few accept him as a genius, with the consequent misunderstandings one expects from the naïf premise, but even these people have little interest in his putative talent; others are concerned only with his body. Most, perceiving that he is not a genius, are puzzled, guarded, or hostile, and explain him as a manifestation of Zagreus's passion for boys. Of course none recognizes him as the embodiment of their own subjectivist aesthetic, since he rarely speaks. His one poem, which is never read, is written in a traditional mode: 'Cynthia do not spoil my hair, | Harp-tongued tigress — Cynthia' (p. 126). Dan himself does not suppose that poets can be geniuses and is simply waiting for Zagreus to take a studio for him and teach him to paint. Michael Seidel, in *Satiric Inheritance*, argues that satire explodes the pretensions of the normative narrative of historical continuity by exposing the degenerative potential in temporal progression: 'If [. . .] history is the encoding of violence, satire is the decoding of violence.'[7] *The Apes'* treatment of the theme of apprenticeship illustrates this theory in an interesting manner: Zagreus's parodic exaggeration of a systematic transmission of culture to his protégé exposes the way in which the Apes usurp cultural authority and pervert their artistic legacy; moreover, the only knowledge that Zagreus has to transmit to the next generation is a knowledge of this cultural degeneration, a knowledge that is wasted on Dan.

As Dasenbrock points out, our sense of which characters are important in the novel is constantly shifting (p. 165). After Fredigonde's Prologue, Part I, 'Dick', focuses first on Dick Whittington and his protégé, Archie; then we follow Zagreus and Dan out of the Follets' until Dan is deserted by Zagreus, who does not reappear until several episodes later. In Part II, 'The Virgin', we see Matthew Plunkett with his shell collection, before Dan, Plunkett's first cousin once removed, comes to him in despair. The action of the novel takes place on five days separated by indeterminate intervals, as the scenes advance into the heart of Apery. On the remainder of the first day, before Dan is formally recruited as an apprentice for Pierpoint's teachings, he merely seeks refuge with his former local guardians. In some episodes, like the one concerning Plunkett, his part is mainly to introduce the other characters, who are shown in separate action or given biographical sketches.

The Plunkett section is a pastiche of Joycean and Bloomsburian motifs and a send-up of psychoanalysis. Plunkett, a 'swan-wristed' aesthete of Bloomsbury, the home of 'rich middle-aged sluggish students', is a caricature of Lytton Strachey, whose brother James translated Freud for the Woolfs' Hogarth Press. He is not an Ape proper but a private fetishist. Shells have a mystical quality for him: they take the form of coins, as in *Ulysses*, and in a Joycean coincidence, the word 'shell' appears on a petrol van. They are dead, like the eminent Victorians who Lewis thought were easier to satirize than the living (*MWA*, p. 169). Edwards notes the parody of the modernist leitmotif and of the endowment of trivial occurrences with momentous significance.[8] The episode is also a clear example of the 'unfair' manipulation of source material that Zagreus maintains is necessary to good satire (p. 452). Plunkett's predicament is a hypothetical explanation, based on their oddly-contrasting physiques, of the lanky, homosexual Strachey's relationship with the diminutive young art student Dora Carrington.

Plunkett, who was in love with Dan, is impatient with Dan's silent sulking and gives a 'vixenish shriek' at Dan's ingratitude, yet he invites Dan in. When Dan confesses that he is miserable because 'Zagreus *hates* me', Plunkett flies into a rage and orders Dan to leave because he has an assignation after lunch. A flashback shows Plunkett's visit to his bearded, Jewish psychiatrist in Zurich 'to discuss himself, to have himself discussed, with a freedom quite staggering to the mind of the uneducated'. Dr Frumpfsusan diagnoses a 'scale complex' and tells Plunkett, 'For successful extroversion you must dominate the scene — you must contrive a Lilliput. *[. . .C]hoose your friends small!*' (pp. 81–82). He explains that it is normal to 'falsify nature, to one's personal advantage'; this is in fact Nature's secret. Persuaded that 'body was mind's big brother really' and eager to 'affect a jaunty demeanor' and '*learn how to bully*', Plunkett has chosen the 'doll woman' Betty Bligh for his therapy:'nothing outwardly real or discomfiting. The flow of libido from him to her would not be disturbed or frustrated by surplus escapes of imperfectly introverted libido in her' (pp. 86–87). Yet he is still puzzled by her 'lower class naturalness and assurance' and by the book that she carries, *The Hard-boiled Virgin*. With awkward mechanical movements, he treats her as a shell, grabbing her head and finding 'nothing there'. When he finally carries her to the bedroom, he is surprised by a cry from Dan, who had been too distraught to leave, and drops Betty on the floor.

In *Paleface* Lewis criticizes Freud for *promoting* the 'complex': 'Freud and his assistants, who, along with the idiotic word, have supplied the idiotic thing — have helped in short to build up the full Idiot, as he is emerging today' (p. 238). This episode makes psychoanalysis seem ridiculously simplistic by conflating it with behaviourism. For the several inferiority complexes mentioned — against which Frumpfsusan claims that his Jewishness functions as a vaccine — the recommended cure is always to cultivate a blind self-interest and to replace one misconception with a more advantageous one. Nature's secret, hidden from the effete intellectual, is predation and expediency. The body rules the mind, but not according to innate qualities; in a circular process, mental habits induce bodily habits that in turn reinforce the mental habits. This is the same principle, discussed in the fragment from *The Art of Being Ruled*, in which deception of others becomes self-deception; here it is parodically assisted by the auto-suggestion of nascent pop-psychology. Although Frumpfsusan's mechanistic view of behaviour is maligned, it is actually consistent with *The Apes'* external treatment, in which the characters' bodily habits reflect an unwarranted pride; the Apes are examples of fairly successful bullies who have turned their complexes into publicity assets. Nature's capacity to falsify itself is consonant with Lewis's aesthetic, which held that art should seek not to reproduce nature, but rather to remake it. In *The Caliph's Design* Lewis compares biological mutation, as well as the transformations in appearance that certain species undergo for purposes of survival, to a genuinely creative, rather than an interpretive or a decorative, work of art (p. 65). The anti-social Pierpoint is said to be 'in league with Nature, almost *against* Man' (p. 297).

Dan is devoid of interfering flow of libido, so his size must have been the obstacle to Plunkett's desires. Since homosexuality is associated with an inferiority complex, Plunkett's therapy appears to be a desperate attempt at heterosexual adjustment. This is a misrepresentation of Strachey's and Carrington's unconsummated affair, in which the romantic initiative seems to have been entirely on Carrington's side;[9] but sex-choice is never mentioned in the analysis. Despite some cheap laughs at Plunkett's affectation of 'manliness', the scene is less a disparagement of homosexuality than one of male heterosexuality, a supposedly natural process, as an easy opportunity for bullying.

Frumpsusan's vision is fulfilled in the next scene, in which Dan proves to be the actual 'virgin victim' of the chapter. He flees Plunkett to Mélanie Blackwell, who is another amateur painter, another friend of Dan's father with whom Dan had stayed, and apparently a drug addict. When Mélanie learns that Zagreus is the cause of Dan's unhappiness, she assumes that Zagreus is only flattering Dan in order to seduce him. Jealousy overcomes her, but confers upon her a ruthless guile. With maternal solicitations that slip in and out of a sham-brogue, she tries to coax Dan into going to France, where she will teach him to paint: 'You need a mother you know you're such a great baby — I declare it's not safe at all for ye to be at large in this wicked city' (p. 96). She assures him of her honourable intentions by citing nature: 'See — there is a large white hair Daniel! Let that be your chaperone!' Since Dan remains indifferent to her, Mélanie becomes impatient — 'Yes what you want is a thorough caning on that big bold bottom of yours young man and then to be put to bed like a naughty child!' — and leads him to bed with coddling baby-talk (p. 100). As she undresses him, this sophisticated, sweet-tempered widow turns into a furiously wheedling 'boa-constrictor'. In a passage from which I have already quoted, she rapes him with her kid-gloved hand, and sexual stimulation is portrayed as nauseating torture:

> The other mouth came after him as if it had been hungry.
>
> [. . .] The burglar of his electricity meantime got shocks from the handle of the machine and she shuddered at her mad devotions, her blind head stretched out in keening prayer.
>
> A painful throbbing filled Dan's body at these unaccustomed contacts: shortly, there were icy needles that tore a passage. He was jumping clean out of his skin he was with alarmed sensations! Almost he shot his bolt of terror in one agony after another.
>
> [. . .Dan] desired to vomit upon the whole machine, so fell and rhythmic and untiring. (pp. 107–08)

Dan's innocence apparently has nothing to do with being close to nature. He does not understand what has happened to him and wonders whether he has been sick; he can only exclaim (inwardly), '*Was this hospitality?*' Nor does nature, as Mélanie demonstrates, have anything to do with innocence. The more affectionate she becomes, the more machine-like. Her aggressiveness belies the 'pretty' muddle of impressionist clichés with which she treats nature in the landscape on her canvas. Yet while she is an embodiment of voracious lust, her own erotic pleasure seems to consist wholly of domination: Dan makes 'a grimace of disgust that pleased her'. This episode seems as misogynist as the last one seems homophobic, but a similar ambiguity is present. The reversal of roles here defamiliarizes the usual scenario in a way that is not flattering to the male, and also portrays mothering as the male's point of vulnerability. The preceding episode managed to ridicule male heterosexual domination at the same time as homosexuality; in this one, while Mélanie herself may be a fright, her success is a further mockery of the timid Plunkett. Her cunning falsification of a natural desire as an unnatural one proves more effective than the clumsy male violence prescribed for him.

Some Minor Apes

It is at this point, in Part III, 'The Encyclical', that Dan receives from Zagreus Pierpoint's letter on Apery and begins his guided tour of some three hundred specimens. Zagreus installs him in a 'spartan garret' and sends him a daily itinerary. The second day, covered in Parts IV through VIII, is a sampling of Dan's visits. His rounds as a novice genius are often described as comprising the entire plot, but this is the slightest section of the novel.

In Part VI, 'Ape-Flagellant', Dan listens as Dick Whittington bickers with the formerly lower-class wife of an industrialist, dogged in her aesthetic opinions, about whether a house in his painting is too red. In contrast to the garish fantasy of the episode just discussed, this is a realistic scene that portrays what Dan perceives as the 'authentic Ape-feeling'. Dislodged from his 'lofty modesty' by a rich vulgarian even more ignorant than he is, Dick retreats, with a moody vanity, into an air of being offended and at the same time of being indifferent to the offence. Showing off his collection of exotic whips, which frighten Dan, allows him to enjoy his guests' admiration again. According to Zagreus, after Dick's wife left him, when he was too old to possess any homosexual allure, he 'cast around for some recognized vice that might compensate for this social handicap', and being an amateur flagellant enabled him 'to hold up his head in a universe of dogmatic perversion' (p. 138).

Sexual perversions always accompany artistic mediocrity, although they do not require it. In a funny but perfunctory episode, 'Lesbian-Ape' (Part VIII), Dan misreads a studio address and is mistaken for an artist's model. A severe, balding, masculine figure in khaki shorts and a monocle, waving a long cigarette holder, gruffly commands him to strip and pose with another whip as 'a Roman soldier threatening Our Saviour'. Terrified, cold, uncomfortable in the modelling position, berated for his feminine modesty, and thinking of

Zagreus's unkindness, Dan finally faints; as he wakes he hears the woman joking with her girl-friend about *its* (as they refer to him) trying to vamp her.

In Part VII, 'Pamela Farnham's Tea Party', Dan encounters a rival society-pet, Jimmie. He arrives during a conversation about whether men should marry, a traditional occasion for satiric misogyny, which is accomplished here by praise. One man, Novitsky, scandalizes the elderly women by arguing that a man needs a wife because 'Life disgusts him. [. . .] The wife knows everything — she is afraid of nothing. She enjoys all that the man hates. She loves the carrion. [. . .] She represents him, in the market-place, the kitchen, the latrine' (p. 199). The real issue is whether the flighty hostess will keep Jimmie, who is also shadowed through the salons by a sullen male critic. The women titter over Dan's being slightly younger than the tiny Jimmie; and Pamela asks Dan whether 'somebody has *made you* — that you have been manufactured like the — Hoffman doll' (p. 205). Dan blushes with pleasure at the thought of being Horace's plaything, but leaves abruptly. Afterwards Jimmie, denying that Dan is dangerous and would hurt anyone who insulted Zagreus, becomes feisty and assumes a boxer's stance to alarm Pamela, who gobbles her brandy-chocolates frantically. Novitsky begins a tirade against 'these women and their Pekineses!'. The implication is that society's fascination with youth derives from misplaced maternal instincts that promote childishness in both parties; Mélanie represents the ultimate meaning of surrogate mothering.

Although these episodes contain telling portraits of certain types, there is nothing significant at stake in them. Lewis's style, unfortunately, is most congested and digressive in the first third of the novel, as he attempts to supply what he calls in his notes his 'unproductive Apes' with interest.[10] He is labouring to make banality comical. Dan's reactions have become repetitious already, and the scenes all end in an anti-climax as Dan simply leaves in order to keep to his schedule and to escape his hosts. There is one fuller treatment in this section, of the most complex character in the novel after Zagreus, Julius Ratner.

Ratner, presented in Part V, 'The Split-Man', is too divided even to be clearly an Ape. He is displayed to Dan as an Ape, but he is also the Pierpointians' money-lender and printer. He attends the final party as a member of Zagreus's troupe of conjurers, then is dismissed from Pierpoint's circle along with Dan. Ratner is not a typical British Ape but one with 'no frontiers', who is 'intelligent in a misbegotten way' and who has peculiar problems of identity. He has the 'keen disillusioned mind' of the Jewish race, in contrast to the 'dull sentimental' Anglo-Saxon type, but lacks faith in the 'bitter Conscience' of Judaism. Physically and temperamentally he is rather repulsive,'with his craven smirk, his self-torturing mind — half-bald lizard's stony head, that saurian skin, squalid stature' (p. 165). He is a successful publisher of highbrow pornography, a propagandist for the 'back to the (g)Land' movement, and a writer himself. He 'manœuvred sexually' through the cafe-world, married money, was divorced, and spent time in a mental hospital developing a hundred complexes that have given him 'an ingenious web of cheap glamour'.

Ratner is discovered being awakened by his charwoman, for whom he plays the sluggish, naughty child and whines about his sexual entanglements, 'a martyr of the fastness of the New Age'. When he looks into the washstand mirror, he sees an alien creature:

> He gazed at this sphinx, which he called self, or rather that others called that, not Ratner — at all events it stood there whatever it was. Impossible to question it. Anything but that could be interrogated, but one's self, from that no one could get an answer, even for Julius it was a sort of ape-like hideous alien. [. . .]
>
> Examining steadily his terrible life-partner, doctoring his mask — 'You beast, you beast!' darkly Joo thought, giving it glance for glance — how well it knew its deadly power. [. . .] It was the scrutiny of a rival, woman against woman. And it said 'hag!' But frightened at its expression of murderous rage, Julius began to change his tone. He went about to flatter it, in the cheap words of this or that past a bit of skirt. (pp. 154–55)

Ratner's fascination with mirrors symbolizes his schizoid impasse. Later, after we are told that 'one of his really capital Complexes related to his face', he 'sought to confer a natural touch upon this transaction by picking his nose in the glass with a thoughtful eye' (p. 449). He also 'sneered at himself' without the prompting of a mirror, when he said that Zagreus was his oldest friend. Ratner does not have two or more personalities; his mirror-image, that is, his body, seems to have a life independent of him. He is split between the social identity that his body signifies (like 'Dick' in quotation marks) and his self or personality; he is unable to believe in either the effect of the quotation marks or what is left without them. He is conscious of being a 'player' and doubts the substantiality of the subjective 'person' that he is nevertheless trapped in.

Ratner's confusion makes him difficult to define, but his condition is further revealed in its literary manifestations. He is more significant than the Apes previously discussed because the correlation between his life and his art is made explicit. An untalented writer of sentimental autobiographical fiction, Ratner is 'the eternal imitation-person in a word, whose ambition led him to burgle all the books of Western romance to steal their heroes' expensive outfits for his musty shop' (pp. 143–44). His morning composition, shown at length, vents the emotional froth that he stirred up with Mrs Lochore. The story is a melodramatic love intrigue, with a self-portrayal as a '*sickeningly* sensitive young Lothario'. Written in a fragmented style, with non sequiturs, stream-of-consciousness pathos, a trite 'epiphany', and 'few stops or caps', it begins:

> Her face came from far away, it was a clouded autumn night. Should he take up the question with her? Why not? It had to come. Better now than when they were in the train. The suspense would be intolerable. (p. 156)

Ratner eventually pauses to notice that the passage is full of clichés, rhetorical questions, and 'continual impassioned asides'. The mirror-face of automatic writing sickens him because it is '*personal* prose':

> It had seemed to him distinctly that the Old Muse had wanted to excrete a little, but it was a misunderstanding.
>
> [. . .] All Self. And freshness only comes he knew from contact, when there were *Not-Selfs* in touch, and things — not *nothing* but feverish conscious people. Continuous Self — Continuous Present: and where self is strong, why there art is weak and that's all the world over.
>
> [. . .] And the sly frantic-eyed old hack-highbrow daimon — not the Muse of a *faux-naïf* for nothing! — had given him the dirty slip! Here he had been left face to face with this obscene diarrhœa of ill-assorted vocables, upon the foolscap. (p. 159)

The minor novelist John Rodker is said to be his immediate model, but Ratner's aesthetic implies an eclectic dilution of the major modernists. The heroes of Western romance suggest Joyce's mythological backgrounds (Lewis also called *Ulysses* 'a monument like a record diarrhœa');[11] the 'continuous present' is Stein's Bergsonian doctrine; and the glandular politics indicate Lawrence. Ratner represents the other tendency that Lewis identifies in contemporary literary fiction besides gossip-satire, the solipsistically trivial 'personal' school. Self and 'not-self' comprise the most enigmatic of the thematic dichotomies in the novel. The term 'not-self', derived from Matthew Arnold's 'Eternal Power not ourselves', appears intermittently in Lewis's polemics and is the subject of a particularly obscure essay, over whose meaning Lewis's critics disagree. The concept seems to represent the impersonal aspect of intellect comparable to the Hindu atman and a faculty whose development paradoxically creates a stronger 'personality'; but it may also encompass the common-sense connotation of 'the outside world', except that it includes one's own body.[12] It is the not-self that Ratner is split off from, apparently because of his immersion in the flux of self, either in impressionist prose or sex. Ratner's awareness of self-division puts him a cut above the other Apes, but it also makes him ineffectual and resentful both towards 'highbrow canons' and towards more successful Apes. His complexity foreshadows the conclusion that must eventually be drawn from Zagreus's ambiguity, that there is no clear border between Ape and non-Ape. Ratner is the butt of Zagreus's and Blackshirt's abuse: '*He is my anti-genius!* Zagreus says. *It is a good thing to vomit at least once a day*' (p. 508). He unexpectedly turns out, however, to be the most reliable character in the novel. Dan is merely an observer in this episode. Ratner disgusts him by enumerating his complexes and demoralizes him by mentioning Zagreus's previous young men. The rumours about Zagreus in nearly every episode prepare for his reappearance. With his presence, the pace of the novel quickens considerably and the action acquires greater significance.

Horace Zagreus

At first glance, Horace Zagreus's role is very similar to that of the main character in Lewis's other satire of the literary scene, *The Roaring Queen*, which was written concurrently with *The Apes* but only published, posthumously, in 1973. The critic Samuel Shodbutt, modelled on Arnold Bennett, is a 'book-dictator' whose effusions about the 'genius' of the author of his latest 'Book of the Week' selection, an effeminate young man, are often very close to Zagreus's flattery of Dan. The narrative comments also indicate a deliberate fraud: 'the "genius" was really the critic's. [. . .] The magic lay in the *puff*.'[13] Shodbutt is simply an Ape concerned with maintaining his power and prestige, however; Zagreus's nature, motives, and dramatic function are much more complex. Because Dan's apprenticeship is Zagreus's scheme, Dan's unfitness for the task creates uncertainty about Zagreus and the scheme. Zagreus often flatters Dan's 'genius' and accepts his silence and dullness. He is reputed to be the worst 'youth-snob' in London, who believes that all beautiful boys of twenty are geniuses. But in his first appearance he introduces Dan with 'fine frenzy of *false* fierceness' (my emphasis). He can suddenly turn curt and indifferent to Dan, and ignores him for weeks at a time during Dan's arduous round of visits. When we learn later that to his associates he refers to Dan as 'my idiot', the entire enterprise appears to be a hoax, although he is more assiduous in his guidance and commentaries than a joke would warrant.

Although most of Lewis's critics conclude that *The Apes* has little plot, one indication that it does have an interpretative puzzle is their differing descriptions of the novel's central relationship, between Zagreus and Dan, and beyond that, the relations of these characters to Pierpoint on the one hand and the Apes on the other. Kenner's statement that 'Pierpoint instructing Zagreus on the techniques for initiating the hopeless "genius" Dan into the Higher Apery is wasting as much time and ingenuity as any of the Apes' does not make clear whether Zagreus or Pierpoint knows that Dan is 'hopeless' and does not distinguish between earnest, cautionary, and bogus initiations. Pritchard, who sees that Zagreus is 'the chief ape tormentor and director of the revels', also sustains the latter uncertainty about Dan's 'instruction in the ways of apery'. Chapman recognizes that the apprenticeship is a hoax, but also believes with Kenner that 'by means of Zagreus, Pierpoint masterminds Dan's entry into society', as does Dasenbrock. Materer writes that Zagreus introduces Dan to the Apes 'in order to alert him to the danger they pose for the true artist', as though Zagreus took Dan's 'genius' seriously, then unaccountably adds, 'Since Zagreus is a fool himself, he cannot recognize the pretensions of his brother apes.'[14] The confusion that Dan causes in the salon with his title of 'genius' is reproduced in the critics' quotation marks around that magic word. Edwards states that Zagreus is 'captivated by the youth and "genius" of his protégé'

(*'The Apes*', p. 134); does this mean that Zagreus really believes in Dan's genius, or that he is captivated by the preposterous *image* of him as a genius? Kush identifies Zagreus as 'The Enemy — one who refuses to accept sham values, and who abrasively puts forth his insights before the pretenders', but notes that his behaviour is ambiguous: 'Whether or not Zagreus actually believes that Dan is a childlike seer, he is willing to compromise his principles and speak of him that way because of his sexual interest in Dan' (p. 108). Contrary to these accounts, there is no evidence that Dan's initiation is Pierpoint's scheme: the only testimony on the subject maintains that Pierpoint rather disapproves of Dan. Zagreus appears to abuse Pierpoint's confidence, and his relation to Dan is strictly platonic. Besides these interpretative problems, the critics, except for Kush, omit the key factors of Zagreus's madness and his role as a magician.

Horace Zagreus is an archetypal trickster figure, whose identity and motives are mysterious. He is often called handsome and robust, and he looks younger than his sixty-odd years because he is an albino. He is partly deaf and sometimes speaks in 'violent pantomime'. He has been a famous practical joker since the nineties, when he is said to have disarmed the palace sentries and kidnapped Oscar Wilde. His given name suggests that he is partly modelled upon the prankster Horace de Vere Cole, who instigated the 'Dreadnought Hoax', in which several Bloomsbury figures masquerading as Abyssinian dignitaries received a cordial welcome from the British Navy.[15] His surname, associated with Dionysus and the cult of enthusiasm, is assumed and is often misunderstood ('Thug Rust', 'Egg Roost'). His past and his character are the subject of many rumours: he had shown great promise at Oxford; by profession he was a surveyor and a member of the Diplomatic Service; he was once wealthy but is now a 'disappointed man'; a former 'hearty', he has lately 'gone high-brow', become a 'New Thought crank', and devoted himself to magic; he must have been an actor because of the way he recites Pierpoint verbatim. He is regarded with suspicion by everyone but Dan and the senile Follets, the relatives whose fortune he covets. His behaviour is disconcerting; he seems in a continual hurry and over-excited, especially in the presence of boys. Explanations vary: his Follet blood; his being an albino, one who moreover suffered sunstroke; his having 'kissed the Blarney Stone and everything to him is a joke'; his simply having 'a screw loose' or being 'incredibly vain' and needing the limelight. Ratner, who believes that Zagreus is 'sincere', diagnoses 'a clear case of surplus thyroid stimulation':

> 'I mean everything is enormously *important* to Horace.' [. . .]
>
> 'One would scarcely know oneself, one would never be bored, it must be won-der-ful!' [. . .]
>
> 'There must be *some* explanation for Horace' Ratner protested, with veiled indignation. (pp. 167–68)

Although Zagreus plays the part of a flamboyant sugar-daddy, it is not certain that he is sexually active. He meets an old acquaintance in the street who with his 'sly sex-appeal' insinuates a past affair and assumes a similar interest on Zagreus's part in Dan: 'You old succubus! Let's have a look at your latest suffix! [. . .] your favourite word, do you remember?' (p. 53). But Zagreus, reminded of 'the unhealthy days of long-ago', reacts to him with contempt, and later remarks incidentally that now 'homosexuals are as common as dirt'. Zagreus in fact shows no narrowly sexual interest in Dan; Dan, who is tormented by sexual overtures and by the mere mental image of Plunkett and Betty together, certainly would have remembered such an experience. He is probably attached to Zagreus because this is the most non-sexual interest that anyone has ever shown in him. Ratner, who himself made 'homosexual love to the rather attractive fakir by proxy [the fakir's plain wife]', thinks Zagreus a repressed homosexual, which would account for his enmity with Wilde. The likeliest explanation for Zagreus's behaviour is the one given by Willie Service, Pierpoint's chauffeur; Service, who accosts Dan himself, calls Dan Zagreus's 'homosexual decoy'. Dan is Zagreus's stalking device: a pretext for appearing in salons and a practical joke that tests and confounds Dan's hosts.

Zagreus's nature is the mystery at the heart of this rather heartless (in two senses) tale. He is an instance of the eccentric character that is prevalent in satire but is rarely a novelistic hero. He does in fact have a strange malady that manifests itself in an identity crisis and a genuine weakness for boys; and by the end it is apparent that on a mundane level he is a con-man. In the whispered, abruptly broken-off conversation with the lawyer in the opening scene, he was conspiring for the Follets' money. His first remark to Dick, 'I didn't see you', after we have been shown Dick's bulk and obtrusive restlessness, is a bald lie, a sort of sympathetic magic intended to make Zagreus's rival for that fortune 'vanish'. But we must see Zagreus in sequence to understand his role in the drama. Dasenbrock describes the structure of Lewis's later novels as a series of 'false bottoms', an explicit theme in *The Revenge for Love* and an early title for it (p. 165). This effect occurs in *The Apes* primarily because of the various impressions that we receive of Zagreus. As the explanations for his eccentricity contradict and supersede one another, they become comic speculation rather than corrections. Zagreus's character and his relation to Dan, the Apes, and Pierpoint are most fully revealed in the last episode of the first half, Part IX, 'Chez Lionel Kein, Esq.', which occupies the third day of the narrative. This luncheon at Zagreus's friends' home is the first scene since the opening one in which Zagreus accompanies Dan, and it is the occasion of the first broadcast, the only one made directly to the Apes (and the one discussed in the preceding chapter).

Kein, the privately-published novelist and Proustian, is also a devoted admirer of Pierpoint, who he thinks does not appreciate his friendship. Kein shows a sentimental affability, a 'naïf histrionic affection', when he feels that he is on friendly terms with Zagreus, but he soon becomes puzzled and suspicious. Kein's wife, Isabel, 'a "beautiful woman" of great breeding and charm', is not as obtuse. She perceives Kein's perplexed brooding, Zagreus's condescension towards him, and Zagreus's 'stupid, pretentious boy [. . .] always these ridiculous boys!' (p. 251). Zagreus's behaviour towards the Keins, whom he has not seen in a year, and later towards their other guests is a concerted provocation. He is by turns ingratiating, capricious, blunt, cryptic, and playfully derisory. He speaks by innuendo and indirection, insults the salon with backhanded compliments, and frequently dissimulates his behaviour, as when he makes 'the pretence of reflectively stroking his chin, and offering all the other signs of musing abstraction' (p. 247). When Kein denies flattering Zagreus, Zagreus answers, 'No I daresay you weren't, you impudent old whore!', and later insists, in the midst of contradicting Kein, 'you're always right Li'. The familiar shortening of Kein's leonine name to a homonym of *lie* is itself a continual affront. It is here most clearly that Zagreus plays the role of trickster and comic interlocutor. He is 'only speaking jokingly', as he admits after he baits Kein about Kein's not having seen Pierpoint lately: 'We rich men have to put up with a great deal from these artist-fellows' (p. 247). In this typical rhetorical tactic, Zagreus, by identifying with his addressee, can chide Kein, who regards himself as a proponent of the arts and a modest artist himself, for philistinism and hypocrisy, since Pierpoint is in financial difficulty. Kein evades the issue by denying his wealth, while it is Zagreus's finances that are doubtful. To 'speak jokingly' is Zagreus's technique for conveying the truth with a chance of impunity.

He uses the same indirect approach in touting Dan's 'genius'. This time he introduces Dan as a bio-chemist who cannot speak when he feels such admiration as he does for Kein; it is 'the shyness of true genius'. Kein humours Dan like 'poor Uncle Punch of the Children's Hour', and Isabel says noncommittally that Dan will learn better someday. Zagreus demurs, hoping that Dan will not lose his illusions; embroidering upon the conceit, he says anxiously that it is up to them, '*as illusions*', to see that Dan does not lose them:

> 'But you seem to have thrived on the death of your illusions, Isabel — I've never seen anyone look so well. I believe you murdered all yours in your cradle, and have been living on their corpses ever since!' [. . .]
>
> 'Li, on the other hand, has artificially preserved all he started with, and he collects a dozen new ones every day. *I* am one of his illusions, too, I've just discovered that — he described its appearance to me. But when I tried to escape from that responsibility he was extremely upset — weren't you, Li?' (pp. 252–53)

This metaphor, which neatly contrasts the members of the couple as a cynic and a sentimentalist, follows two recurrent tendencies in the narrative: to take words literally and to view things in terms of death. It twists an ambiguous compliment into another personal accusation; and it also implies a social theory of identity: people are illusions to others and compacts of their illusions about others. The opposition between killing and preserving illusions is characteristically unstable. Zagreus began by praising the value of Dan's illusions, but concludes that Kein is the worse for keeping his. This discrepancy might be explained by Kein's illusions' being debilitating because they have been *artificially* preserved: they are wilful rather than natural illusions. This view of identity is related to the principles of gossip, from which Kein's brand of fiction derives. Public gossip is an industry of artificially-preserved illusions that have a tyrannical effect on 'life', and society is a composite, or a contest, of such falsehoods. Zagreus seems intent upon demystifying this process, but with his conceits, Kein's 'slippery friend' produces further mystification; for example, in the passage above he ends up abjuring the responsibility of being an illusion that he had urged upon the Keins.

This exchange typifies Zagreus's manner. He keeps on fairly good terms with the Apes by his compulsive geniality and dispatch, his 'artificial shavian good-nature', by commanding a more manipulative etiquette than they do; and behind his banter he is able to take liberties with them. His main devices in this campaign are his two dissimilar 'geniuses', Dan and Pierpoint. If he believed that Dan had poetic genius, he would not introduce him as a scientist. The fact that Dan's poetry is never mentioned after the opening scene makes it clear that his 'genius' is purely a social role. As a mock-image of the Apes' ideal of the beautiful young poet, Dan exposes the arbitrary manner in which London's geniuses, who are really promotional stunts, are anointed. He is formally introduced as a candidate for Ape-society, but his aspirations are so artless and feeble that he is closer to the opposite of the Apes. He is not 'manufactured', as Pamela Farnham suggests; he is a 'natural', the *un*manufactured, who has merely been put on display in the Apes' midst as a sort of blind spy. Zagreus has told Dan to study the Apes not only in order to avoid becoming one but also to be able to wield power over them; since Dan is obviously incapable of this, he is also a travesty of a Pierpointian enemy of the Apes.

As a stalking horse or decoy, Dan functions like the deliberate falsehood, the figural or fictive element, of the remarks behind which Zagreus accuses the Apes. If the Apes accept Dan as a genius, as Kein the illusion-gatherer does, they demonstrate the fraudulence of their standing as artists or critics. If they doubt his genius, they dismiss this claim as an effect of Zagreus's sexual passion or suspect a prank and try to fathom its meaning. Zagreus's adoration of youth is in itself an implicit criticism of older society: youth is natural rather than artificial; it is change and difference; it has not yet been compromised by the necessity of upholding social institutions for the sake of one's own status. In any case, Zagreus forces the Apes into some interpretation and is prepared to defend the fiction of Dan's genius, as in his excuse for Dan's shyness. If the

Apes take offence, they betray their inability to play with the joke because of its implications about themselves. Isabel therefore, 'frowning and smiling', caught between her scepticism and her unwillingness to be candid, endures an uneasy fencing with Zagreus that can stand for the dishonesty or fictiveness of etiquette altogether. In one famous practical joke of his, Zagreus, upon the pretence of an urgent surveying project, induced two gentlemen on a busy sidewalk, around a corner from each other, to hold a string for hours after he had disappeared. He is doing the same with Dan, presenting the Apes with the fiction of Dan's genius in order to see how long they accept it.

The Broadcasts and Pierpoint

The broadcasts are a tactic that is complementary to the discovery of fresh 'genius'. It is uncertain whether they serve Pierpoint and his renown or rather are made for Zagreus's own advantage, and whether artistically they motivate Dan's apprenticeship or vice-versa. The speech on Proustian satire is a pointed indictment of Kein's own fiction, yet it is presented as a disinterested literary theory. It begins after Zagreus, saying that he owes Kein a compliment, argues that the best means of flattery is to describe people as they think of themselves; one would therefore call Kein '*a great "psychologist"*' or '*a perfect Proust-character*'. But, he adds mischievously, Proust's models were insulted by their portraits. Kein, who has a 'fairy-prince' butler for Proustian atmosphere, attests that he would have considered the criticism '*well worth the privilege*' of being drawn by Proust. He must either maintain this uneasy position as a 'blessed martyr transfixed with the arrows of Truth' or confess a bluff. In the middle of the conversation, Zagreus becomes rigid and inexpressive, and speaks to Isabel as though through a telephone; he fixes 'a glittering eye above Kein's shoulder [. . .] with the manner of a person interrogating an entranced medium' (p. 256).

The broadcasts have a ritualistic quality, a ponderous declamatory tone, although in the exchanges Zagreus leavens this cool, lucid analysis with comic, ironic verve. Kein does not follow the argument well, and tries to derail Zagreus's insinuations by testifying to their long friendship. When he recognizes Pierpoint's words, he applauds the clever stunt, and apparently because it is a stunt, instantly forgets its content. But he is still confused because when Pierpoint made the same speech on another occasion, Zagreus disagreed with it. Zagreus replies that he had only been drawing Pierpoint out, and that they should continue the re-enactment in their new roles. He keeps asking Kein whether their master's theory does not apply to him and quibbles with every attempt at evasion. Since Zagreus's accusations are indirect, the Keins are able to deflect them; but since the issues are never resolved, they remain a source of uneasiness and of Zagreus's further insinuation. Kein is unable to reject the charges completely because he will not give up Pierpoint: '"I will yield to no one" Li blustered and bristled, bloodshot and bulldog-jawed "— *no one whatever* in my admiration for Pierpoint!"' Zagreus finally relents when Kein excuses Zagreus's misunderstanding by flattering his naïve 'hero-worship', and celebrates the similarly extravagant generosity of Isabel.[16]

The later broadcasts serve to transmit Pierpoint's views to disciples; this one, like Dan, tests the Apes. As a staged dialogue, it resembles those in the journeys to Olympus and the netherworld in Lucian. Zagreus, like Lucian's hero, Menippus, debates the creatures of a utopia or a land of the dead; the complication in this version is that the utopia of wealth is at the same time a realm of death, the death of the imagination. Using the broadcast material for ideological warfare, Zagreus presumes to deconstruct the social protocol that his audience is blindly governed by; he mystifies the Keins, provokes them to self-exposure, and offends them without their quite knowing what the offence consists of. The broadcasts are one of the distinctive features of this novel, a body of discursive commentary that has a general application beyond the fictional society within which it is set. They are not satiric themselves; they rarely possess the requisite quality of indirection. They present the understanding of society and the metaphysic upon which the satire and the narrative method are based. Like the external method, the broadcasts are troublesome for conventional expectations about fiction, because they reduce the characters' autonomy in advance. The characters seem to be obeying Pierpoint's description of them as much as they do the dictates of fashion that Pierpoint diagnoses, especially when, in the dialogues that he has designed, they react according to his prediction. Therefore the novel often seems less an exploration of social issues than a demonstration of foregone conclusions.

Related to this question is Pierpoint's unique status in the novel as an absent authority. The hearsay about him creates an image of a composed misanthrope who has taken the measure of the world and no longer has any use for it. His avoidance of society lends credibility to his sincerity; he holds these views for no interested worldly reason, as cannot confidently be said of Zagreus. But Pierpoint's resemblance to his author — they share the same ideas; Lewis withdrew from society during his prolific writing in the twenties; and he was often 'socially impossible' — encourages a suspicion that Pierpoint's absence is a defensive trick to insulate Lewis's cranky theories from criticism. If Pierpoint appeared, it is said, he would be shown to be as corrupt as everyone else.[17] Aside from the later reports from Pierpoint's associates that suggest that he is less than infallible, this hypothetical question seems more distracting than illuminating. Pierpoint's absence does more than imply that detachment is a pre-condition of understanding: it also creates the peculiar set of relations through which social dissimulation is explored.

First, it raises the question of what Zagreus's ventriloquism signifies about himself, a mystery complementary to his treatment of Dan. At the least, Pierpoint provides Zagreus with an excuse for criticizing people like Kein without apparent malice or responsibility, an excuse for his 'double-talk': 'Well, I am but the *instrument!*' The revelation of the first broadcast produces an odd displacement of authoritative knowledge in the novel. As Pound observes, whatever the value of the ideas, as Zagreus persists in propounding them he becomes a tiresome pedant, but when we learn that he is *reciting* someone else's ideas (that he is a false bottom), our view of his character changes ('Augment', p. 54). He is simultaneously diminished because the ideas are not his own (as most opinions are second-hand — Pound's point) and enlarged because he performs a successful trick. The existence of Pierpoint also sets a hierarchical social model, the master-disciple relation, against both the Apes' sneaking imitation of artists and their indiscriminate 'democracy'. We are never meant to doubt Zagreus's reverence for Pierpoint's teachings. He is scarcely offended at being called by Kein a set of borrowed qualities (an allusion to another of his models, the eccentric Victorian linguist and travel-writer George Borrow); he turns the notion into a histrionic confession: '"I wish other things were as easy to borrow as words are," Horace Zagreus said, moulding Kein with a heavy eye' (p. 266). Zagreus is not merely a disciple but also an unnervingly blatant simulation;[18] this fact eventually compels a comparison of him to the Apes, whom he despises. If he is imitating an artist, as the Apes do, the imitation itself is the art, a sort of living theatre. Zagreus's art is precisely to expose the Apes' own surreptitious imitation: their poor performance is his opportunity. Besides confronting them with a mocking reflection of their patronage of genius, he is literally the medium of an accusation that cannot be spoken directly.

The relation between Pierpoint and Zagreus raises the question of the relation between social criticism and action, and of the two men's ultimate purpose, separately or together. Kenner first identified 'Pierpoint' as the name of Britain's official executioner in the 1920s (p. 100). Pierpoint's categorical denunciation of the Apes implies that they should be publicly discredited if not destroyed. But there is no concerted programme of action or any real attempt to threaten the Apes' hegemony, much less to improve society in general; there are only Zagreus's obscure insinuations, which impart a puzzlement and anxiety. No material motive for this behaviour is apparent; Zagreus seems to pursue provocation for its own sake. After this broadcast he is anxious that the Keins approve of his appended peroration as being worthy of the body: his pleasure in the act of impersonation seems equal to his devotion to the ideas expressed. He seems as ready as the Keins are to forget the embarrassing implications of the broadcast for Kein, although he might be mocking Kein even thus. There is no sign that he is following instructions in broadcasting Pierpoint or in promoting Dan; the later report that Pierpoint objects to Zagreus's 'cruelty to young men' explicitly contradicts this interpretation of

Dan's initiation. Zagreus's treatment of Dan raises questions about his relation to Pierpoint, and vice-versa. The practical joke with the string can be reinterpreted: the two men kept in ignorance of each other are Zagreus's two 'geniuses' who never come in contact, and Zagreus himself is the string suspended between them; but the joke is less on the two men than on the observers, the Apes, who can only pretend to be amused.

The next broadcast, in the luncheon scene, exacerbates Zagreus's ambiguity considerably. One of the guests, Kalman, tells of a journalist friend's success with his 'Youth-stuff'. The journalist has 'made a corner in a certain brand of flattery' by extolling the 'eminence' of youth and health. His angle is the syllogism that if all artists are considered noble and if 'every man is a poet in his youth', then all the young are noble; women were the weak spot in his system until he found the solution by making all women young. People at the table laugh at such cynicism; and Kein, thinking that as a youth-snob Zagreus would be offended, draws Zagreus, who has remained silent, into debate. Zagreus proceeds to question Kalman with Socratic scrupulousness, then slips into declamation: It is not true pride, this eminence of impersonal, common possessions. 'In our democratic society flattery does take the form of saying to people that they are *like* other people.' Such '*crowd-eminence*' is really the opposite of pride: it is 'the last ditch of a ruined society'. With the break-up of social, racial, and family snobbery, snobbery is distributed to the crowd and must devolve to what is taken for granted, simple vitality. This is really 'misplaced bolshevism, or bolshevist perfidy' (pp. 283–85). Kalman recognizes Pierpoint, and again the debate ends with the ideas ignored.

This speech is consistent with the broadcast on impersonal fiction: the fashionable *roman à clef* is also a fraudulent romancing of ordinary qualities. But in this case, Zagreus raises questions about his own interest in Dan, nearly suggesting that Dan is a hoax. Then, 'imitating the confidential manner adopted at this point by Isabel', he tells Dan that he was using Pierpoint's method of debate 'to expose his opponent's argument without taking the least account of his own private views' (p. 287). Kalman, this coterie's clown, was 'looting'. He 'is nothing if not bluff and honest', Zagreus says, 'but I imagine he is as fond of provoking conflicts and disputes as is Kein himself':

> Pierpoint would have pretended that the looter was a disguised enemy. Then he would have proceeded to encircle him with flags of truce, from those marked down as belligerents. Having made him return his booty, he would have handed it over, like a conjurer, to the lookers-on. (p. 287)

The convolutions of this explanation suggest both a garbled paradigm of deconstruction and a possible rationalization for *The Apes*: The Apes are looters whom Lewis pretends are enemies in order to liberate the booty for the benefit of the public, the 'lookers-on'. But the analogy falters at the 'truce', which does not fit Lewis's portrayal of his models. Zagreus later concedes that

Pierpoint is mad, 'but with such *method*'. Although the method of debate might be sound, its metaphor hints at the distortions beneath the civic altruism often claimed by satire. If Zagreus is less fond of provoking conflicts than Kein, it is only because he, like Lewis, does not consider his accusations open to dispute.

At any rate, Zagreus disavows the view that youth is insignificant; he may have objected only to the journalist's spurious logic, his exploitation, or Kalman's satisfaction with his success at the table. But then he continues to Dan: Youth without Health and Wealth is meaningless: these are all merely 'things'; real health is *energy*, such as was possessed by the physically infirm Dostoevsky and Flaubert. Pierpoint is such a 'fountain of life', a primitive source of nourishment upon which the Apes feed, and they are now resentful at 'Its removing Itself as It has done'. Here Zagreus does plainly deny any eminence to youth, but his conclusion is puzzling again: '"You I feel will be — are! — one of those *fountains of life!*" Zagreus boomed at Dan, in a sort of ecstasy' (p. 288). This ecstasy may be genuine or as false as the frenzy of fierceness at the Follets'; that is, it may serve to present a mystifying spectacle for the Apes and to prompt Dan to performance. It would reconcile the contradiction in Zagreus's preceding statements — Dan is a genius because of his exceptional talent, not his youth — if Dan were a genius. The future tense, dismissed as a qualification here, is consistent with an 'Irish legend' explaining Dan's idiocy that Zagreus supplied in Dan's 'dossier': A boy was born with a gift of prophecy, which he would retain only if he were not asked a question until his fourteenth year; by accident, he was questioned and lost the gift. Zagreus claims that Dan is also a thwarted prophet who may yet recover his gift (pp. 478–79). But this theory seems promotional hype intended to amuse Pierpoint more than to persuade him of Dan's worthiness.

This is the first time that Zagreus's two geniuses with nothing in common (Zagreus would not concede to the Keins that Pierpoint is 'young') have been compared. Zagreus coaxes Dan, inwardly rejoicing but also embarrassed by the attention and the responsibility of genius, into speech; and Dan finally stammers, 'A thing, a thing. [. . .] It cannot be *a genius!*' (p. 291). Zagreus flatters him profusely for this forensic tactic and gazes at him admiringly, luxuriating in his favourite axiom, *beauty is truth, truth beauty*. Dan's reaction is to congeal into a paralysed '*thing* — such as men have invariably worshipped'. Since this characterization of Zagreus appears in the narrative, it is not play-acting directed at either Dan or the Apes; he is truly a prime exponent of the youth-cult, which his promotion of Dan seems intended to mock. Yet at the end of this chapter, when Dan asks to meet Pierpoint, Zagreus brushes him off callously, 'That's impossible. But you wouldn't get on' (p. 316). Despite his disclaimer about the youth-broadcast, Zagreus's idolatry of both Pierpoint and Dan cannot be reconciled except by the conclusion that Zagreus is truly youth-mad, or mad generally, at least in fits.[19] The most important revelation about him follows directly from this ecstatic communion.

Shamanism

Isabel, increasingly annoyed by Zagreus, begins gossiping to her neighbour about his boys, his sunstroke, his fall from fortune: he is 'a sort of Roudine', a *raté* or fraud who moves about restlessly and always leaves when he is found out. He was always expected to do something great, but he 'just goes on talking and talking'. After her mention of his stays in Italy, Zagreus has a strange reaction. At the beginning of the chapter, as he and Dan waited outside the Keins' house, he meditated on their shadows on the door:

> Dan's shadow, as well, waited upon him, not upon its original. Dan was there like a shadow too, on and before the door. 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? Was there anything after the shadow (as was there anything behind the man)? [. . . A]lways the sun made him madder as he knew. (p. 237)

Mixed in with this reverie is a 'pompeian fresco' connected to Proust's mortuary chariot (*sic* — Lewis puts adjectives formed by proper nouns in lower-case type). At the table now he has a *déjà vu* involving Pompeii and the 'theatre queue', which has 'come to life' as the Keins' guests:

> 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. [. . .] 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. He lifted up his head — he would look these apparitions in the mirror-like depths of their eyes! A life-time of these machines — he knew them by their factory marks: it was not a task beyond his powers to take their 'movements' out of their cases — it was a *human* task — that great mechanic Pierpoint had been his master. But he who was 'fey' disdained it — he dismissed those phantasies now and fixed his frowning eye upon Isabel. He might be irritated or *irritate himself* into assuming his place more fully in a relaxing reality — at all costs he must fly this tension! An immediate interest must be taken in these relationships! Make the most of Isabel's manifest desire to insult — put it to himself! Remember *albino — remember albino!* (p. 296)

Zagreus, who had until now been portrayed externally, is finally revealed here, hovering on the verge of madness. He is being drawn into a vortex of multiplicity from his safe vantage at the still (Pier)point. This identity crisis or vertigo of selfhood definitively internalizes the metaphor of the Ape: Apery is not merely a form of social posturing prevalent at this historical moment but a universal condition. Zagreus had just before remarked on the unreality of these people, the 'fictional mongrel facts'; they are the 'illusions' he is made of, although he is conscious of their being illusions. William Pritchard notes the singular shift in tone of these two passages, virtually the only ones in the novel that he likes, and identifies in the second a crisis in Lewis's attitude towards his characters: Zagreus's susceptibility parallels the Proustian narrator's involvement with his characters, a sympathy that would pose an obstacle to Lewis's external satire; so here the sympathy takes the form of a 'horrified guilt-by-association' (pp. 84–85). This is a valuable insight, but perhaps an incomplete one.

Zagreus's inner dissolution is caused by Isabel's triggering his subjective memory of past selves, which he projects on to the multiplicity of guests present, and also by her stigmatizing him as a singular eccentric, a deranged albino, according to the satirist's proclivity for seeing others objectively. He is nettled that his character should be explained by physiological factors, including his very skin, the most obvious sign of his difference or otherness. In *Blasting and Bombardiering* Lewis uses the term 'fey' to describe W. H. Auden, who was also 'absurdly fair' (p. 250). The term may have a specific connotation of homosexuality for him, since its general meaning of 'other-worldly' or 'conscious of doom' is consistent with his denomination of male homosexuality as 'shamanism' (*ABR*, pp. 259–61). The revelation of his vulnerability in this passage modifies our perception of Zagreus as a purely manipulative liar or joker; his malady will be conclusively linked to youth with the adoption of Margolin. But the weakness of his proper self, as with the primitive shaman's access to the feminine side of nature, is also the source of his versatility. He *has* imitated Pierpoint's disassembly of the Apes' mechanisms: here it is as if Pierpoint's vision of a second-hand existence recoils upon his own psychological integrity. He is compelled to wear masks, play roles, and 'speak jokingly' because of the volatility of his personality. He effaces himself in Pierpoint, in his admiration for youth, and in the guise of an impresario to ward off the abyss beneath the roles mentioned in the preceding chapter. His solution here — to 'irritate himself', paradoxically, into a more relaxed reality — is an imperative to engage in a Pierpointian analysis of specific personal 'factory marks' as a distraction from his own fragmentation. The memory of 'albino' urges him to respond in kind to Isabel, and the result is the primal scene of satire, a contest of insults.

Having maligned her guests according to her custom, Isabel turns her gossip on Pierpoint, saying that he is 'altogether unbalanced' and disparaging his poverty and Zagreus's patronage of him. There should be a '*genius-house*, at a Zoo', her confidante adds, for people like him who are 'in league with Nature, almost *against* Man' (p. 297). Zagreus tells Dan that these are lies, and begins to imitate Isabel's practice. He explains how the mild critic Keith was 'swallowed' by his wife and put in an 'erotic-maternal trance'; when Keith became Kein's one literary admirer, Kein rewarded him with a cottage. Framing his opinion of Isabel as a compliment, Zagreus confesses a sneaking regard for her good sense in handling her personality; she has had nineteen facelifts not for reasons of vanity but for those of simple hygiene. She actually writes Kein's sentimental romances by using Kein as a medium; his *Primrose*, for example, comprises all the compliments she had ever received. 'A certain brazen contempt for themselves — that I think is the secret of the strength of such people', says Zagreus (p. 306). By elevating the volume of his speech above Isabel's surreptitious whispering while pretending to speak to Dan, Zagreus exposes the nature of gossip by turning it on its axis and directing it publicly towards its subject. When Isabel finally objects to Zagreus's remarks and insists that he leave, she corroborates the theory of contemporary satire in the first broadcast: the standard of values is determined by the ruling society and enforced by the hostess; and it renders the scandalous Lion ridiculous. Since Zagreus refuses to leave, protesting that he was merely following the manifest tribal custom, the others go upstairs, and he puts a curse on the house.

Pritchard's observation concerns the occupational hazard of the satirist, the risk of self-projection in the ills that he attacks or of being engulfed by his hatred and its objects. Some purpose similar to Zagreus's, as he escapes his disorientation, might be ascribed to *The Apes* in general: the parasitic mockery, by diminishing the autonomy of others, implies the author's. After leaving the Keins', Zagreus has an odd lapse. He tells Dan that Pierpoint disapproves of class-abuse such as was indulged in by 'that little Belgian'. Although he immediately excuses himself for this obvious contradiction, which might be explained by his having been discomfited by the 'tension' and his expulsion at lunch, the lapse seems almost Lewis's confession of an intolerance that belies his own satiric principle of objectivity. Robert C. Elliot, in his study of the relation of primitive magic to satire (which includes a chapter on Lewis's satiric theory), identifies the pattern of 'satirist satirized' as one in which a fictional satirist-figure is ultimately shown to be liable to the charges that he makes against others.[20] This pattern is certainly pertinent to the character of Zagreus; it becomes steadily more pronounced as the novel progresses. Zagreus's 'guilt-by-association' might represent Lewis's crisis, but it may also be a *solution* to this crisis, the development of an internal figure that incorporates a self-criticism of the satire. Zagreus's ambiguity makes *The Apes* less monotonously 'one-directional' than it would otherwise be, and his awareness of his own insubstantiality makes his character fundamentally comical.

Antonio Feijó's reading of Zagreus deserves consideration because it proposes the most specific derivation for this central character, clarifies the theme of the parasitic impresario, and encompasses the ambiguity of Zagreus's intermediary role. In addition to being based on Pound, Feijó argues, Zagreus also embodies certain traits in Nietzsche's, Pater's, and Jane Harrison's accounts of Dionysus; these two sources reflect two distinct stages of *The Apes'* composition. In the first, Zagreus is 'a god in the throes of individuation', 'rent asunder', as the infant Dionysus was by the Titans, in his hallucination of the Ape-herd; his name 'stands for the fragmented nature of everyone in present-day society' (pp. 5–6). Another likely source of the Dionysian characteristics is Sir James Frazer's *Golden Bough*, which Feijó does not mention.[21] In the section of that study devoted to the god, Frazer writes:

> Zeus in the form of a serpent visited Persephone, and she bore him Zagreus, that is, Dionysus, a horned infant. Scarcely was he born, when the babe mounted the throne of his father Zeus and mimicked the great god by brandishing the lightning in his tiny hand. But he did not occupy the throne for long; for the treacherous Titans, their faces whitened with chalk, attacked him with knives while he was looking at himself in a mirror. For a time he evaded their assaults by turning himself into various shapes.[22]

A pair of horns figures among the features of Zagreus's costume, many of which are probably drawn from Frazer. With his several mysterious careers, Zagreus changes shapes like Dionysus; and while wearing his magician's costume, he also dwells on his god-like image in a mirror: the sight 'recalled to him his unreal personality' (p. 336). The image of a god 'dismembered in effigy by his worshippers' does, as Feijó points out, reflect Lewis's view of the artist; but I believe that Feijó's conclusion is overstated. Zagreus is not 'lying scattered in the hope of rebirth'; psychic fragmentation does not represent progress towards 'individuation' in this novel (pp. 5–6). Zagreus's only worshipper is the imbecile Dan; and it is he who would 'dismember' the Apes, as Pierpoint does, in analysis. Pierpoint himself is the character who best fits the description of a sacrificed god: a 'fountain of life' whom the Keins feed upon. But it is Dan who fulfills the scapegoat role in the action, and Zagreus is the agent, not the object, in this event. Dionysus's mimicry of Zeus's powers is more pertinent to Horace Zagreus than is his demise; Zagreus's imitation of Pierpoint and his impersonation of a god in his costume resemble very closely this image of aping a god.

In the second stage of the novel's composition, Feijó continues, after the addition of Pierpoint, Zagreus is adapted to the role of an impresario and a 'radical parasite'. Feijó's identification of Zagreus with Pound, based on Lewis's characterization of Pound in *Time and Western Man* as a 'revolutionary simpleton', is persuasive. Lewis saw in Pound the two most pronounced traits of Zagreus's social life: he was a parasite of stronger artists, both in his poetic translations and adaptations and in his participation in Vorticism ('the most gentlemanly, discriminating parasite I have ever had, personally'); and he was an enthusiastic patron of young 'genius', such as the composer George Antheil.[23] Feijó's clinching point is that Pound had identified himself with the god Zagreus in 'The Little Review Calendar' in 1922. Pound proposed that a new era be reckoned from the date on which *Ulysses* was completed, 30 October 1921, which was also the date of the Feast of Zagreus and his own birthday.[24] There is even stronger evidence for this view in an unpublished draft of a preface for a reprint of *The Apes* that Lewis wrote in the fifties in which he describes Pound thus: 'Then he played the Master [. . .] it led him into flattering a thousand little nobodies, which secured him a following of the most inferior kind — but still a *following*. [. . .] It was his plan to rope in the young. [. . .] He became a would-be youth leader.'[25]

Despite the validity of this theory, Horace Zagreus is not limited to Pound's character. He contains elements of Cole, Borrow, and other impresarios besides Pound, such as Fry and the Sitwells. Moreover, he seems to owe more to Proust's Baron de Charlus, to whom Jameson compares him in passing, than to any actual person (p. 175). Lewis's notes indicate that this was part of his plan: 'Zags. intonation, mannerisms, mind-pattern etc. (cf. the mannerisms etc of the "coterie" des Guermantes).'[26] Like Zagreus, Charlus is an intimidating, gossiping snob with a fixed gaze and a distinctive laugh; he also offers the young protagonist an apprenticeship in a mysterious freemasonry and warns him against high society. The uncertainty of Zagreus's sexual proclivities recalls Charlus's duplicity: Charlus also disparages sexual inversion and is thought to be a sentimentalist regarding boys, but he is revealed as a hypocrite whose own inversion has a sadomasochistic intensity. It is Charlus's intense hidden conflicts that fit Zagreus's Dionysian psychosis of dismemberment. However, certain of Zagreus's characteristics, such as his propensity for magic, which I shall take up next, transcend all of his human models. His name is also exploited simply for its association with the cult of Dionysus as a force disruptive of established society, as in Euripides' *Bacchae*, and the general association of platonic homosexuality with its Greek provenance.

The importance that Feijó attaches to the Poundian characteristics of Zagreus is misleading. This view ultimately reinforces the prevailing opinion in Lewis criticism that Zagreus is fundamentally a negative figure, merely another object of the satire. But he is not a hollow surrogate of Pierpoint or a love-stricken admirer of Dan's 'genius'; he is an even more complex and inclusive figure than Feijó describes. To a degree, Zagreus is a vehicle for the satire of youth-impresarios like Pound, but more importantly he himself deliberately parodies this role. He is the apotheosis of Apery and at the same time the instrument of its deconstruction. While Feijó sees in the compositional alterations of the novel a demotion of Zagreus from a god to a means of personal attack, Zagreus's simultaneous adoration and exploitation of Dan seem a more important inconsistency in his character; nevertheless, Zagreus's increasing unreliability expands both his dramatic function and his social significance.

The issue of Zagreus's reliability and his relation to Lewis is crucial in his role as a magician, the final aspect of his character that I shall discuss before my conclusions about the first half of the novel. In a brief chapter that serves as a prelude to the Lenten party, Part XI, 'Mr. Zagreus and the Split-Man', Zagreus undergoes his toilette (as Fredigonde did to open the first half) and works up a proper mood for his magic performance. Zagreus's parlour tricks might seem like something akin to his practical jokes, at best symbolic commentaries. His 'investiture' of Kein's drawing room, which, with the closing curse upon the house, frames the long dialogue, might be simple posturing. But in this chapter he styles himself as a full-blown sorcerer. The emphasis in the scene is on Zagreus's costume, designed by Pierpoint and 'bristling with emblems', and its accessories. Zagreus carries spiritual symbols and magical tokens from many primitive and ancient cultures: the beak of the Ibis, the hair-rays of the Buddha, the testicles of the archigallus, the Nest of the Mantis, and so on. He also presents Ratner with the costume of a demonic African Half-man and gives a gloss upon its meaning according to Taoist doctrine. He utters an invocation to the moon and performs animistic rites: he makes Ratner perform a lustration, spits in Ratner's face for luck, and cleans his ear with spittle to dispel the presence of a person of whom they spoke. As he leaves the apartment, he sees his clothes hanging in a human shape and disarranges them so that no magic could be practised on them: he 'battered them out of human shape as far as he could. Some were recalcitrant and seemed to cling to their second-hand life' (p. 345).

Most critics believe that Zagreus's outfit merely satirizes fashionable poetic symbols;[27] I lean towards the interpretation of Thomas Kush, who takes seriously Zagreus's imitation of a demigod who has tapped the powers of nature, although he does not refer specifically to the legend of Dionysus. It is true that Zagreus is called a 'bogus magician' and 'the great surgeon of these claptrap mysteries' (p. 587); but these epithets pertain specifically to the magic performance, which involves 'technical' tricks. Kush holds that Zagreus 'escapes his personal failings and becomes the artist-as-hymenopter, generating a shell that reflects his interior life. [. . .] Zagreus represents the Imagination incarnate' (pp. 111–12). Although he attacked certain brands of primitivism, Lewis, like the other modernists, was strongly influenced by the mythological and anthropological studies of the period. In 'The Dithyrambic Spectator' he discusses the origins of art in magic, a practical activity that respected the *numina* in things, as opposed to the subsequent anthropomorphism of religion, which signified man's separation from the Not-Self. Despite his defence of rationalism, Lewis viewed artistic composition as a trance-state: his argument with the *transition* editors was that their campaign for the unconscious was unnecessary because art *always* involves the unconscious.[28] The metaphysic of *The Apes* is in fact a rather magical one. Both the external method and Zagreus's promotion of Dan involve the manipulation of simulacra. The perception of events in the narrative seems to reflect the influence of

Zagreus's study of demonology. There are many brief animistic moments; in this scene Ratner's reluctance to enter Zagreus's apartment is rendered thus: 'A vegetative eye fastened upon the handle. Adhering, a fungus growth of moody displeasure sprang up and multiplied itself in a moment' (p. 327). This is the scene in which Zagreus anathematizes names as an abortion and a tyranny, and adds, 'All Pierpoint's words are tricks.' It is *because* words have the power to falsify nature that they must be used with a measure of deceit. Zagreus's playful, and occasionally desperate, manipulation of the Apes' vanities and fears, it is implied, is an attempt to master the foundations of their consciousness, perception, and identity.

I believe, however, that Kush romanticizes Zagreus as an artist-priest and overlooks the comic treatment of this theme, for example in the recurrence of spittle. Zagreus is both an esoteric and a vulgar magician; he himself confesses that 'bad managers' must resort to magic. Since fictional objectivity is impossible, Lewis resorts to mimicking the reduction of people to animals by the Circe of capitalism; likewise, knowing that human control of the elements is limited, Zagreus does not scruple to employ fraud. From a report of one of his performances (in which rumour excuses the element of fantasy), it appears that Zagreus is a powerful but not a finished magician. Once, by mistake, he made Lady Shuter vanish instead of his assistant, and after a few trials found an Indian elephant-spell that brought her shooting back out of the ceiling; far from being angry, she was eager to do it again (pp. 378–79). This anecdote suggests that, despite his eventual success, Zagreus is not in full control of his resources. When Ratner says that Zagreus's dress is 'out of proportion to the occasion', Zagreus replies, 'After all the occasion is what one makes it'; and Ratner concedes, 'You, my dear Horace, see occasions everywhere' (p. 336). This is his dramatic office, to see occasions and make them. In his arrogation of magical powers, Zagreus may not plumb the mysteries of nature and human existence, but the fiction of such powers is itself an instrument with which to contend with the realities of others. If he falls short of the stature of a magus, he is perfectly suited to the role of carnival mock-priest.

The Clown

The survey of Ape-culture is enabled by the fantastic nature of the two main characters: Zagreus's wild and partly false enthusiasm and Dan's extreme stupidity and shyness. They are functional characters, strategically placed between Ape-society and the hidden knowledge of that society's fraudulence. Dan observes that world without its conventions and hears Pierpoint's analysis; Zagreus delivers the analysis and improvises instructive dialogues. Their characters and roles are far-fetched in order to present these things, which are obviously lost on Dan, to the reader. Zagreus's youth-snobbery and his promotion of Dan as a genius are plausible, albeit improbable, motivations for their appearance in society. But these motivations, the means of viewing the Apes, become problematic themselves and more interesting than the Apes. While Dan's apprenticeship is invalidated by his idiocy, it is perhaps explained by Zagreus's erotic intoxication or madness. If the genius-scheme seems likely to be a practical joke, its motivation is still uncertain: Zagreus's simple mischievousness, his animosity towards the Apes, a plot by Pierpoint, or a more complex madness.

Dan and Zagreus are an instance of what Jameson, after Beckett, calls Lewis's 'pseudo-couple': two males yoked by continual bickering, complementary figures who define themselves against each other (pp. 58–60). These two are a more extreme version of the laconic Pullman and the childish Satterthwaite in *The Childermass*, so extreme, in fact, that they do not really change, but only excite, each other.[29] Dan is the body; Zagreus the mind. Dan is a passive thing; Zagreus is the word of Pierpoint incarnate (the *word* itself, since his boys are 'suffixes'). Dan is transparent and internally gibbering, but understands nothing; Zagreus is opaque (except for the glimpse of the Apeherd within), harbouring ulterior designs. (They also parody Stephen Dedalus, another paralysed poet, and the worldly Bloom, who reach a modest communion; Dan's father in Dublin is named Stephen.) The pairing of naïf and rogue gives the novel a double vision, quixotic and picaresque. Zagreus is actually closer to the Bailiff of *The Childermass* than to Pullman; the Bailiff, the ruler of the afterlife, is a shape-shifting, Punch-like demagogue who also claims to serve a higher power, God. Zagreus's similar relation to Pierpoint produces a triplet, then, instead of a couple; Pierpoint is the most purely functional character of all. As Dan is Zagreus's stalking device, Zagreus is Pierpoint's, whether intended as such by Pierpoint or not. The hierarchy Pierpoint-Zagreus-Dan orchestrates a varied apprehension of the Apes. Between Pierpoint's omniscience and Dan's innocence, Pierpoint's sardonic resignation and Dan's terror, which are not effective agents in the action, fall Zagreus's negotiations with the Apes in direct address and symbolic theatre. When the narrative leaves Dan's point of view, as it does erratically, its sarcastic acceptance of the Apes' world, based on Pierpoint's conclusions, resembles Zagreus's voice.

Zagreus, like Ker-Orr of *The Wild Body*, is a 'showman'; he presents the Apes to Dan and vice-versa. But he is more complex than Ker-Orr because he participates more fully: he is an interlocutor who sermonizes and provokes the Apes to self-exposure with riddles. He is the pivotal figure of the novel not only because he transmits Pierpoint's teachings to Dan, but because of his ambiguous relation to all parties. His denunciation of the Apes is as suspect as the Bailiff's judgements upon the subjects of the time-cult, whose impotence he seems to foster himself. In his impersonation of Pierpoint he is the most literal

Ape on the scene, but according to Lewis's fundamental rule of social organization, the mutual hatred between the individual and the crowd, this also makes him the scourge of his rivals; nevertheless, he seems amused by the absurdities that he reproaches. He is an artificial youth-snob, but he is truly youth-mad; he is both a swindler and an adept. When he is adoring Dan at the Keins', we are told that 'never otherwise than emotionally had he been able to apprehend truth' (p. 292). Yet he explains why Ratner's costume has only the right side in this way: 'The heart is a superfluity. The whole left side is useless — embarrassing and really far beyond our human means' (p. 332). Zagreus's madness has a special function in the novel. Although his inconsistency may be viewed as an artistic flaw, it gives a greater depth to the drama; his studied ambiguity makes him a posited element of unpredictability.

Zagreus answers the description of the Bakhtinian clown, a rogue who plays the fool in order to gain a licence to abuse the social order and its figureheads. Lewis's attribution of roguish 'clowning' to Gertrude Stein shows his awareness of this type of duplicity (*TWM*, p. 49). Zagreus does not always endure the fool's humiliation by laughing at himself with others; his response to Isabel's banishment of him is scrupulously frank but civil. But neither does he hide his designs as carefully as a true rogue would. According to Bakhtin, all three of these figures, 'life's maskers', enjoy a special privilege: 'the right to be "other" in this world' and to perceive its falsehoods. They have a metaphorical, not a direct, significance: 'their existence is a reflection of some other's mode of being'. Their being does not exist outside their role, which is to 'externalize' things and to 're-establish the public nature of the human figure' (*Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 159–60). Dan's reflective function is quite obvious, and Zagreus is also a reflection of others, not simply because he recites Pierpoint. His use of Pierpoint exaggerates the Apes' imitation of artists (he apes their Apery, if you will). He is a *conscious* Ape, whose performance overshadows the Apes' to such an extent that he becomes a stigmatized and persecuted Lion, if a partly parodic one. This exposure by mimicry of what the Apes do surreptitiously is similar to the function of gossip (and Zagreus is the worst gossip-monger in the novel); the rule of gossip is almost defined by Bakhtin's description of the clown's 'right to betray to the public a personal life' (*Dialogic Imagination*, p. 163).

In *The Lion and the Fox*, Lewis relates the special vantage of the clown figure to those of the 'public vituperator' and the shaman and to madness generally in literary character.[30] He discusses 'shamanisation' more fully in *The Art of Being Ruled*. The pattern of the 'transformed shaman', or the primitive magician who adopts a feminine sexual and social role, that Lewis gathers from ethnological studies is more applicable to Dan than to the masculine Zagreus, but certain traits are pertinent to him as well: his hypnotic trances, his skill at ventriloquism, and his volatile relation to the spirit world (pp. 260–63). These shamanistic traits in Zagreus, however, have little to do with overt sexuality. Lewis also discusses intellectual snobbery in the male invert, which he maintains becomes anti-intellectualism as it is 'converted to the purposes of *sex*' (pp. 244–46). Although he is captivated by Dan's 'grecian profile' (the equation of the Irish and the Greeks is another allusion to *Ulysses*), Zagreus remains in the sphere of intellectual snobbery, the platonic aspect of Greek *paiderastia*. His attraction to youth may give him an anarchic impulse to champion pure change and the destruction that change entails; but it may be his contradictory knowledge that his series of boys are mere replicas, that change in itself is empty, which causes his madness. He may truly love Dan for his stupidity; Dan may seem a genius as a *perfect* fool. Unlike the neurotic Apes, Dan does not have a mind that would interfere with his beauty: his stupidity is the measure of his beauty, his freedom from imposture and deceit. The sadomasochistic aspect of Zagreus's relation to boys, evident in Dan's enjoying the image of himself as Zagreus's doll, will become more pronounced and less 'one-directional', that is, less like conservative satire, with the next 'genius'.

The more alien and mysterious Zagreus is, the more he disturbs the Apes, and his character is even more puzzling than a typical clown's because of his apparently genuine fits of madness. The over-determination of parodic causes, such as sunstroke and thyroid surplus, might make his madness seem a cheap motivation. In *The Art of Being Ruled*, Lewis writes, 'The *willed* sickness of the modern man is connected also [besides to the child-cult and amateurism] with the atmosphere of revolution and approaching chaos — it could even be taken as a measure of precaution against the crowd-atmosphere.' He goes on to compare Stein's 'picturesque dementia' to Joyce's Bloom, 'the half-demented *crank* figure of traditional english humour' (pp. 346–48). Zagreus is a worse crank than Bloom, although he is not the traditional English type, and his sickness does seem a deliberate precaution against the confusion around him. In a more serious discussion of the subject, however, Lewis attaches the greatest significance to the role of madness in fiction, and sees in it a meaning very close to Bakhtin's conception of the three maskers mentioned above. 'The functioning of the normal mind', Lewis writes, 'does not offer the same opportunities for (often dramatic) diagnosis as the insane' (*LF*, p. 288). The madness of Shakespeare's tragic heroes, caused by suffering, is 'for an Englishman the necessary excuse. Such wildness would have seemed unnatural if it had not been labelled pathologic' (p. 248). When these heroes go mad they become philosophers, and madness in great characters is 'the most evident testimony to the dependence upon *untruth*, in every sense, in which our human nature and human environment put us' (p. 215):

> It is as outcasts, as men already in a sense out of life, and divested of the functional machinery of their roles (which would necessitate their being *objects* only — things *looked at* and not *looking*), that [they] speak objectively — an objective, and not a

> functional, truth. [...] Their 'truth' is an angry one usually, but they have the advantage of having no 'axe to grind'. (*LF*, p. 248)

Zagreus is no tragic hero; but he has shed many functional social roles and is not easily classifiable. The parodic causes of his madness reflect the English tendency to label something alien as pathological. It is of course Pierpoint's 'truth' that Zagreus speaks, and Pierpoint is the one who is truly 'out of life'. Since Zagreus has gone out of life into Pierpoint, he is not completely 'objective'; but the axes that he grinds are usually facetious, at least in tone.

Zagreus is best described as being half-mad; the 'half', or the uncertainty of madness, is his carnival licence and his technique: the measure of his play, his freedom from social norms, and the fictiveness of his persona. As a wise fool he is the opposite sort of oxymoron from Dan, the cipher called genius. Dismissals of him as an insubstantial character because he is Pierpoint's mouthpiece are beside the point; he is more contaminated than 'sterile' (Kenner, p. 100). His self-conscious agitprop constantly explores social dissimulation — as the external narrative method dissects the Apes' physical infirmities, his dialogue names their ploys and affections — and gradually he is revealed as the prime embodiment of the contradictions that he analyses. The Apes stage a poor, stale carnival because they want to naturalize it. Zagreus's mockery as it were activates the dormant carnival that they, by making it an orthodoxy, have betrayed. In the carnival metaphysic, the Apes have killed the carnival, but it will always be resuscitated.

The version of 'Mr. Zagreus and the Split-Man' that appeared in *The Criterion* is prefaced by a note that contains a cryptic line: 'Mr. Zagreus is an important ghost; he, however, remains attached to his disguises, a central myth' (p. 124). If the myth is the ghost's attachment to disguises, or to the phenomenal shapes that it assumes, this suggests that Zagreus is enchanted by the roles he has deliberately adopted, as 'the person' is infected with the social roles he or she plays. This interpretation is consistent with Zagreus's ultimately comic fate: in order to disrupt the Apes, he must become ensnared in the same confusion as they are. Yet it is still uncertain whether this is a structural myth of the novel or a broader cultural one, perhaps a pagan version of Joyce's scholastic theme of the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son. In any case, in accordance with Feijó's interpretation, Zagreus is meant to be a supernatural figure, at least at this stage of the composition. His fantastic nature is still being emphasized in the very last scene of the novel, when he is summed up as a 'circus-oddity' and compared to 'a wild horse that had consented to the rules of a circus — always with the air of being destined, at a pistol-shot, to rush away, returning to its savagery' (p. 621). The paradoxical role that the Bailiff confesses to his main antagonist, Hyperides, offers another version of the conundrum of the ghost's disguises: 'I am not an impostor. [...] But I am anxious that no one but you should know. It is essential that they should believe me to be an impostor — that is what was once called the plot.'[31] The Bailiff wants to create not only a false impression, but a false impression of falsehood; and of course this statement cannot be taken at face value either. Zagreus's performance is similar. He relishes his bad reputation as an eccentric youth- and Pierpoint-snob, but he is really mad after all. The appearance of madness that his 'homosexual decoy' obtains for him covers his genuine madness, which transcends sexual passion. The 'plot' of *The Apes* is the unravelling of the truth of his character and of the meaning of his actions; but in a world that consists wholly of degrees of mockery, such truth is scarcely possible to determine.

Lewis concludes *Men without Art* by recommending that not only art but life itself, 'the "peculiar situation" in which we find ourselves' as *homo animal ridens*, should be regarded as a *game*, 'in the sense that no value can attach to it *for itself*, but only so far as it is well-played or badly-played'. This is his way of getting around to saying that the 'symbolic discipline' of art should be taken as seriously as life is (pp. 290–91). Zagreus adheres to this game theory. The value placed on the technical mastery of a performance, by Zagreus and in the novel in general with its detailed catalogue of grotesques, makes hermeneutic questions of meaning secondary or parodic. Pierpoint's theories are not objective truth but an instrument with which to intervene among concrete particulars. Zagreus exemplifies another statement by Lewis: 'But the transition society of to-day, no doubt inevitably, is essentially an actor's world' (*TWM*, p. 351). Lewis also deals with this theme in a short piece published in 1924, 'A Strange Actor'. There he sketches out the essence of the trickster character for his major fiction of the twenties. A problematic psychology distinguishes this figure from the usually simpler picaresque rogue; even his ambivalence towards sex anticipates Zagreus's attitude:

> I agreed, if you can agree with anyone who assembles words to frame what seems to you a truth, but who you feel is far from one of truth's purest servants (a comic servant, in fact, at the best, with a thieving role), and who ends by giving truth an air of buffoonery even. [. . . F]or he was not angry or offended at detection, and even accommodated himself to your vision of him as it cleared, and seemed prepared to *clown* as much as you could *see*; as though it were a game, or had been a bet between you. And all the time he was serious about something: but not about what he pretended to be.
>
> [. . .] He is compelled to desire and attempt frantically and even radically to possess what he neither loves nor admires. [. . .] Obsessed with 'Sex', the fundamental process of this life, in which he does not believe, and all its pageantry and stupid corollaries, with hysterical fatigue he pursues, and it eludes him.[32]

As he plays Pierpoint and Dan against the Apes, Zagreus is not a proper 'person' who communicates a message but a medium of relations among others. He is the central 'eternal imitation-person': his self consists of his knowledge of the falsehood or the fictive nature of his selves. Since he epitomizes the polyvalence of mockery as tribute, ridicule, and theft, he is the prime factor that creates a carnivalesque 'symbolic pageant'.

NOTES

1. One of Lewis's notes for *The Apes* reads, 'Daniel in the Apes [*sic*] den' (Cornell WL Coll.).
2. *The Caliph's Design: Architects! Where Is Your Vortex?*, ed. by Paul Edwards (1919; Santa Barbara, CA: Black Sparrow Press, 1984), p. 51.
3. 'Notes on Current Painting ii: Roger Fry's Role as a Continental Mediator', *Tyro: A Review of the Arts of Painting, Sculpture and Design* 1 (1921), 3–5 (p. 3).
4. Edith Sitwell wrote to the sixteen-year-old Howard, 'You are undoubtedly what is known as a "born writer"' (Pearson, p. 174).
5. *ABR*, pp. 162–64; Martin Stannard, *Evelyn Waugh: The Early Years 1903–1939* (London: Dent, 1986), p. 180.
6. 'Wyndham Lewis's Knotty Relationship with Ezra Pound', *Enemy News* 32 (Summer 1991), 4–10.
7. *Satiric Inheritance: Rabelais to Sterne* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 21.
8. Other allusions include a pub scene reminiscent of Joyce's 'Lestrygonians' episode; Plunkett also watches an insect on his windowpane cross paths with a cloud at the moment that his doorbell rings — a mixture of Joyce's parallax and Woolf's 'mark on the wall' (Afterword, pp. 636–37).
9. See Michael Holroyd, *Lytton Strachey: A Biography*, rev. edn (London: Heinemann, 1973), pp. 645–50.
10. Lords Osmund and Phoebus are given, in contrast, as examples of 'productive Apes' (Cornell WL Coll.).
11. *TWM*, p. 92.
12. 'The Physics of the Not-Self', rev. (1932) version, in *The Complete Poems and Plays*, ed. by Alan Munton (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1979), pp. 193–204. For a reading and a summary of the criticism, see SueEllen Campbell (pp. 60–62, 210n.7).
13. *The Roaring Queen*, ed. by Walter Allen (London: Secker & Warburg, 1973), p. 82.
14. Kenner, p. 102; Pritchard, pp. 78–79; Chapman, p. 100; Dasenbrock, p. 165; Materer, p. 86.
15. See Quentin Bell, *Virginia Woolf: A Biography* (New York: Harcourt-Harvest, 1972), pp. 157–60. Lewis himself was drawn to practical jokes; for example, when invited to a luncheon party including the Prince of Wales in 1917, he quietly laid a small revolver beside his plate (see Meyers, p. 82).
16. The British Proust-cult is in evidence in the same issue of *The Criterion* (2.8) in which 'The Apes of God' appeared. The short story 'Celeste', by Stephen Hudson (a.k.a. Sydney Schiff and Lionel Kein), is a preciously adoring recollection, told from the point of view of his maid, of an unnamed, asthmatic aesthete who writes obsessively, keeps objects in his cluttered room in odd places because of the way that they catch the light, and expires contentedly after writing *FIN* at the bottom of his masterwork. It should also be said that Schiff, the translator of *Le temps retrouvé*, was not one of the 'unpaying guests of the house of art'; he was generous to Lewis even after the publication of *The Apes* (Meyers, pp. 126–28, 175–77).
17. Kenner, p. 101; Edwards, Afterword, p. 637.
18. Two of Lewis's unused notes reinforce this relation. The first reads, 'A Chapter with Mr. Zagreus "trying out" conversation with different people (practising things to say, ways to act [?], ways to look — repeating [?] studying gestures). Cf. Alis S. Also does 1/4 hour's practising Pierpoint's manner (with photos of Pierpoint all round).' The other note is a fragment of dialogue in which Zagreus presumably answers the question 'But has he written anything?': 'No *books*, no he does not want to write books. He prefers to set things for people. *I* am one of his books — a very humble one; he has *written* me!' (Cornell WL Coll.).
19. The line from Keats, seen in conjunction with a note of Lewis's under the heading 'Greek "Beauty"', suggests that Zagreus's interest in Dan is indeed 'sincere', but is also deluded: 'This again seems to have been more intellectually understood. The sentimental-sensuous pseudo-greek so beautifully exemplified in our romantic revival (Keats etc) was of course a fiction. [. . . W]it, fitness, elegance and usefulness would be much nearer together than with us' (Cornell WL Coll.). A line from the prospectus for the private edition of the novel also supports this interpretation: 'Mr. Horace Zagreus sentimentally pursues such embodiments of "genius" [as Dan], with eyes that never may be wholly unsealed, longing for a world that is no longer there.' Although this description, written several months before the novel was completed, was reprinted on its original dust-jacket, it appears to reflect an earlier stage of Lewis's conception of the novel. Zagreus never 'pursues' Dan; it is rather Dan who is

hopelessly in love with him. In my opinion, Zagreus's inconsistencies indicate that his character grew steadily in complexity over the novel's composition.

20. *The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), pp. 134–40.
21. In *The Lion and the Fox* Lewis cites Frazer's accounts of human sacrifices, and Lewis's notes for *The Apes* include quotations from Frazer on sympathetic magic labelled '*very important to use*', which, however, he did not use (Cornell WL Coll.).
22. *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, abr. edn (1922; repr. London: Macmillan, 1957), p. 511.
23. Feijó, p. 7. This derivation would make Pound's dismissal of the uproar over the *roman à clef* in *The Apes* extremely ironic: 'In eighty years no one will care a kuss whether Mr X, Y and Z of the book was [*sic*] "taken from" Messrs Puffun, Guffin or Mungo' ('After Election', in *Pound/Joyce: The Letters of Ezra Pound to James Joyce, with Pound's Essays on Joyce*, ed. by Forrest Read (New York: New Directions, 1967), pp. 238–41 (p. 241); quoted in Feijó, p. 4). Lewis and Pound corresponded cordially about *The Apes* both before and after its publication (see *Pound/Lewis: The Letters of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis*, ed. by Timothy Materer (New York: New Directions, 1985), pp. 144–75).
24. Feijó, p. 8. Feijó makes an additional, though not very clear, reference to Lewis's having mistakenly identified Pound's 'Canto XVII', the one in which Zagreus appears, as 'Canto XVIII' in *Time and Western Man* (p. 9). The case for Lewis's taking the name from Pound still rests, however, on the assumption that Lewis knew of 'The Little Review Calendar', since Lewis's Zagreus appeared, in *The Criterion*, before 'Canto XVII'.
25. Although this passage occurs in a fragment of the manuscript that contains no reference to *The Apes* and that was not put into typescript form as the main body of the preface was, it is written in the same hand (in the short, widely-separated lines of Lewis's writing technique during his partial blindness) as the body. Pound is not named in the fragment either; but his identity is apparent from the subject's having begun his career writing 'first-rate verse' and from the following line, in which Lewis gets the state wrong but the region right: 'His sham toughness was, and is, laughable. [. . .] But I wish to remind you that he was born in Colorado' (*The Apes of God*, ms., [introductory material, 195–(?)], Cornell WL Coll.).
26. Cornell WL Coll.
27. For example, Wagner, p. 171, and Materer, p. 88.
28. *DP*, pp. 201–06; *TWM*, p. 34; *DP*, p. 64.
29. Examples of reciprocal relations are Ratner and his charlady, and Jimmie and Pamela Farnham; in both cases the male, by exaggerating his childish recklessness, makes the older woman more anxious and maternal.
30. *LF*, pp. 130–32, 221–27.
31. *The Childermass* (1928; repr. London: Calder-Jupiter, 1965), p. 268.
32. 'A Strange Actor', in *Creatures of Habit*, pp. 89–95, (pp. 94–95).

CHAPTER FOUR

THE COLOSSAL MECHANICAL TRAP: HIGH APERY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

The Finnian Shaws

In Part XII, 'Lord Osmund's Lenten Party', an episode of two hundred and fifty pages, the earlier visits to London houses are succeeded by visits to various *rooms* of the Finnian Shaw manor, a museum of 'every correct minor mania of the post-Ninety aestheticism of the Chelsea English'. The action gathers pace in a vortex of *The Apes'* prime satiric targets: the aristocracy, literary amateurism, the age-war, gossip, publicity-mongering, period-nostalgia, and jazz. The party also reveals more of Pierpoint's following and its disarray, and it is the occasion of the demise of Dan and the rise of Archie Margolin.

The organizing device of the country-house party had been used recently by Norman Douglas in *South Wind* (1917) and Huxley in *Crome Yellow* (1922) and *Those Barren Leaves* (1925) and in parts of Lawrence's novels. Lewis also uses this setting exclusively in *The Roaring Queen*, which is in every respect a lesser work than *The Apes* but has several features in common with it.[1] The symposium form, even though it might not take this physical setting, is obviously the basis of the Kein episode and is also discernible in all of Huxley's novels through 1930, as well as Waugh's, and Powell's of that year; for example in Waugh's *Vile Bodies*, the Cavendish Hotel houses an odd mixture of Edwardian clubmen, displaced persons, and aimless young men; and Lady Metroland's party is distinguished for being the only one patronized by both the older and younger generations.[2] This structure is initially used in these satires for the purposes that Bakhtin describes as the carnivalesque — to produce misalliance, extraordinary experience, testing of personality and ideas, and so on — but nearly every one of these novels ends in some failure or catastrophe. The premise of conviviality is given an ironic expression: the free exchange of ideas ends in miscommunication or a lack of communication. It therefore appears that this loosely-defined historical genre that treats society collectively, often by using stereotypical characters in a more superficial manner than is typical of realistic treatment, reflects a sense of crisis. The very attempt at an image of collective society suggests that a shared sense of community is in doubt, as does the uneasy co-existence of disparate segments of the population in them.

In *The Apes* the party is also used to characterize the arrogance and self-protectiveness of Apery. Its perverse and anti-carnival nature is indicated by its taking place during the Lenten period of traditional austerity rather than just before it, the usual time for carnival festivals. This reversal does not so much represent a liberating breach of religious custom as it reflects the niggardly and mean-spirited attitude of the hosts. The Finnian Shaws, says Zagreus, have descended from a wealthy chandler who bought their noble name, creating a 'waxwork dynasty'; they have the 'push of the new rich. All the boastfulness of a usurper!' The banquet is held in a 'hastily-converted norman grange' characterized by a 'quaint, shabby lavishness'. The eclectic decor of the manor creates a grotesque incongruity, as in for example the 'Queen Anne and cubist apartment': a 'strange embrace of Past and Present — of so casual a nature as to produce nothing but an effect of bastardry [*sic*]' (p. 491). The party is not intended to be an open forum: the hosts attempt, without complete success, to barricade their private company in the dining room against the rabble, of whom they constantly complain. This party differs from most of the other country-house gatherings mentioned, which develop philosophical dialogue and dramatic complication from their seclusion from the world. The crowd at the Finnian Shaws, both invited and uninvited, is much larger, wilder, and more variegated than the sets of guests in the other symposium novels; rather than a retreat for intellectuals, this party, like many of Waugh's, is a target for all of London's social climbers.

Lord Osmund, the eldest of the three siblings, is described as a large 'pouter-pigeon' of a 'carefully-contained obesity' and a 'grand-master-craftsman of all branches of Ape-work whatever'. He plays a prominent part in the theme of the figurehead as scapegoat. Zagreus explains how Osmund reached his celebrity. He has been 'adapted, by malignant Nature, to the dishonoured seat of priority' in his family, and he had wanted to be hunted as a Lion by society hostesses. But they saw that he was only 'an Ape in "lion's" clothing' and asked him to bring them Lions. To avenge his injured vanity, he lampooned the hostesses, hoping to destroy both Lions and their huntresses: 'It was a case of discouraging those sports in which he was not qualified to participate as the sacrosanct victim' (p. 387). Osmund still loves society, though he says that it bores him, and has made himself a fake Lion by publicity: 'With hard cash it is, My Lord Gossip pays the columns, the mentions.' But he hates real Lions such as Pierpoint as much as Britain does generally. This view is echoed by Pierpoint's other spokesman at the party, Blackshirt, who describes Osmund as a scheming hostess who attacks his rivals in 'trench-warfare in the mud of Satire': 'This, properly analysed, is a sort of blood-sacrifice — on paper. The god of whom Osmund is the terrified priest demands it. He feels the god might have *him*, if he should present himself emptyhanded! So. *Blood-sports* in books' (p. 562). Osmund wished to be sacrificed in the hostesses' flattery; but rebuffed and 'emptyhanded', he fears to meet this social god alone, so he must settle for the role of 'priest'. He satisfies the god's appetite for the eminent safely at two removes from 'blood': by attacking other priests or priestesses rather than the objects of their veneration, and 'on paper'. Polite society is portrayed as a hierarchical series of displacements, in simulated violence, from the source of power; but the displacements themselves, though they disparage the fountainhead, constitute the fiction of the power.

Osmund presides over a clannish entourage. His boyish wife, Robinia, is an 'entirely devitalised instrument of post-Ninety satisfaction'; a musician, 'like Dan she is a GENIUS' (p. 351). His brother, Phoebus, is a 'pleasant spoken young lady' who writes romantic historical treatises; lives in a tower, like W. B. Yeats, 'to show he is a poet'; and collects exotic toys such as a Hottentot tricycle. Their sister, Harriet, writes childish verse and is subject to splenetic fits. Most of the family's private guests are young Oxford men who are 'physically identical: and the pattern is a pallid chorister of seventeen — gelded or drained of all the grossness of sex' (p. 351). Osmund's reigning pet is the Sib, an emissary from the Naughty Nineties who, according to the premise of having been his old cook, serves 'tit-bits of Gossip arranged with his favourite sauces'. The Finnian Shaws hold a *soggetto* or *commedia dell'arte* in which family enemies make up a cast of Pantalones: 'a blight of unrelaxing gossip and of stale personal allusion descended upon the entire table. [... I]t was accepted by all as the business of the evening' (p. 354). The absence of the principals of this ritual, in contrast to Isabel Kein's ridicule of her own guests, indicates the dilution of 'blood-sports' to a 'business' of farcical narrative and mimicry that consolidates the self-importance of this faction. Another mascot, Knut, a drunken Finnish poet who spills wine on his neighbour and booms out verses from Boileau, furnishes 'the factor of scandal, required for the occasion'. Knut, with his 'voice for the apocalypse', represents a merely annoying version of the 'Red Principle', the complement of Osmund's 'anachronist' gossip: 'All Revolution is preceded by "Gossip"' (p. 386). Knut has a 'trinity complex': he believes that a pigeon attached to his umbilical cord will escape if he does not cover his mouth. He later turns out to be 'the Bonassus', a bogus exotic animal.

Lewis's letters to Eliot about his *Criterion* pieces show that he had begun writing about the Sitwell family — Edith, Osbert, and Sacheverell — by 1924 (*L*, pp. 40–41). When *The Apes* was published, in 1930, the Sitwells had attained a legendary status in London as publicity-hounds and Lewis's treatment of them was less startling than it would have been earlier. But Lewis was accurate in predicting their partial eclipse during the politicized mood of the next decade, when F. R. Leavis made his famous remark 'The Sitwells belong to the history of publicity rather than of poetry' (quoted in Meyers, p. 171). John Pearson's family biography shows that the portrayal of them in *The Apes* captures the essential contradiction of their careers — their posing as cultural rebels while seeking prominence in established society. Unlike Edith, Osbert, to whom Renishaw, the family manor, was entailed in 1925, never had great artistic ambitions, but he took a vigorous role in promoting experimental art and vilifying the British philistine. The most striking features of the two elder siblings' careers are their jealousy, hyper-sensitivity to slights real and imagined, and vindictiveness; when their poetry did not receive the serious consideration that they expected, they were quick to blame reactionary forces (pp. 144–48). The Sitwells' notoriety probably derived largely from the peculiar phenomenon of a family banded together in an aggressive self-promotional campaign. Although they were something of a joke, they were nonetheless a formidable party in literary London; Osbert's social graces and contacts in particular gave them an air of glamour to Waugh's generation of writers. Their relative lack of success with the literary establishment probably led them to cultivate the young.[3]

To Lewis, the Sitwells epitomized the mixture of amateurism and snobbery that subsisted upon and degraded serious art. Much of the Finnian Shaws' scenes is taken up with long stretches of querulous and repetitive dialogue. The dinner company endow trivial matters with hysterical interest. They speculate anxiously about the source of a mysterious noise, which might be the wireless, a storm too violent to be an English one, or the rude conversation of three interlopers, who turn out much later to be Hungarian gossip-pioneers who have come to England to learn the trade; and about the cause of Mrs Bosun's fit beside a loudspeaker, where she might have been listening either to propaganda from Moscow or to the Savoy band. They play at imaginary threats. As Edwards notes, Osmund's simulation of choking to express his displeasure with the servants, 'a besetting world of supernatural underdogs, who were in league with the fire and smoke', exemplifies the Apes' estrangement from even their own experience ('*The Apes*', p. 138); it also shows the class martyrdom that Osmund, failing to attain true Lionhood, contrives for himself.

A good example of this inane jabbering occurs when Harriet steps on and tears off the elderly Lady Truncheon's train. The image of the mortified matron stripped conveys the function of clothing in falsifying nature, as Dr Frumpfsusan advised: 'Dignity was impossible. The world of without, irreverent eyes, were made privy to hindquarters lately ennobled.' This is the siblings' reaction:

> 'I do believe I've pulled Lady Truncheon's train right off!'
> 'I think you have!' Lord Phoebus cried.
> 'How terribly careless of me — I do hope Lady Truncheon will excuse me, it was particularly clumsy of me.'
> '*I* shouldn't if *I* were Lady Truncheon!'
> 'I could hit myself!' the offender bayed at herself.
> 'I'm sure she could!' crashed back Lord Phoebus.
> 'If I had only known you were there Lady Truncheon!'
> 'Couldn't you see that Lady Truncheon was there Harriet!'

'I know!'
'You must I think have been *blind* not to see that Lady Truncheon was there!'
'I believe I must Phoebus!'
'I'm quite positive you must Harriet!'
'I know, mustn't I?' (p. 488)

The many such deliberately trying passages capture a particular accent of cloying emotionalism and petulance in upper-class speech, an accent that is evident even in a 'pokercraft' sign posted on the wall: 'DO BE CAREFUL PLEASE.' This aim is underscored in one of Zagreus's first observations at the party. He leads his conjurers into the dining room with great ceremony and entertains the hosts with some slight magic tricks, but he sits at the side of the room with his troupe and maintains a running commentary on the scene. He coaches Dan in a yogic discipline to perceive the essence of the gathering; Dan is to squint at the scene to reduce it to abstract shapes, and likewise to hear the conversation as '*idiot-waves*':

> Make yourself into a vessel a *retort* that will trap that thunder of pure folly. [. . .] But attend! they are approaching their stupid orgasm. It is they who will have the fit! Watch them excite each other, see how they whip one another in perfect time with drawling tongues, they quite lash out — it is a slow approach to the delicious crisis — a heaven of small hate constructed of small-talk will explode as the joke bursts. [. . .] Imagine for instance the good Osmund is an intestine. Yes *an intestine*. He has been reduced to a percussion music by your discipline your *asanas*. [. . .] All this company is but *one unit*. [. . .] Ennui is the ballast of the drone. [. . .]
>
> As to the subject of the song, it is unquestionably self-pity. (pp. 382–85)

Zagreus compares the effect of this discipline to that of one of Pierpoint's poems, which sounds like 'nonsense':

Multimark of the cliff-breeding species, to cormorants
Next allied
Were apses. (p. 385)

As Dennis Brown has noted, Zagreus's instructions support the identification of him with Pound, the patron of musicians and leader of Imagism: 'I impart a musical art. The last thing you must look for is the message of an orderly sentence — the significance lies in the impact of the image.'[4] But instead of acquiring 'the power to create and destroy', which the yogic technique promises, Dan merely repeats to himself, '*why oh why*' is Horace so unkind, 'a verbal squint of sorts'.

This 'reverse-yoga' is consistent with the external method of reducing people to semi-abstract objects. Zagreus's comment on the conclusion of the dinner offers another aspect of this principle: 'Never omit to pay especial attention to the *breaks* — when a society breaks up — for that matter either for the shortest time or for good and all it is all one — that is the moment for the restless analyst' (p. 394). As a specific conversation may be distilled to its fundamental tones and gestures, the form of its dissolution presents a microcosm of larger social patterns. The premise of exaggeration in apocalyptic satire follows a similar principle; or more precisely, it reverses the sequence in which the 'breaks' are analysed. A society is imagined to be breaking apart; a crisis is projected from various tendencies in social life. This vision reduces a society and history to abstractions in order to put their outlines in sharp relief; in *The Apes* it is explained in Pierpoint's analysis of social 'levelling', which is often taken as representative of Lewis's 'conspiracy theory' and which the Finnian Shaws illustrate in nearly every respect.

Blackshirt, so called because he has come to the party as 'Signior Mussolini, the italian potentate in the political Dime Novel of Modern Rome — that boy-scout Caesar', is a vociferous young man named Starr-Smith. He says that he chose the costume only because it was inexpensive to dye khaki, but he does often act the part of a violent fascist. He got into the party, with two confederates, by posing as the editor of a verse anthology and promising the Finnian Shaws an extra poem each. Later to Dan he describes the Finnian Shaws as a middle-aged youth movement, a subject he knows well because he was the secretary of the Communion of British Youth, from which he had to repel middle-aged men who wanted to join, as no actual youths did. He explicates the 'family-jest called "Cockeye", a typical nursery-persiflage', in which the Finnian Shaws' father is the butt of their entertainment. They often re-enact the ritual story of 'the Gilhooter': In order to tease their father, Cockeye, the Finnian Shaws pretend to hear a bird, the Gilhooter, crying because it has lost its young, and feign puzzlement because people do not mind losing their young; this confuses Cockeye, whose own nose had been making Gilhooter's song. In the allegory Cockeye is 'the wicked Giant who tried to kill them during the big bad naughty World War' (p. 565). By mocking their father, the Finnian Shaws, childless themselves, are able stay young. They rebelled against authority, Blackshirt says, because of 'the dangers of the War', then discovered that their youth 'coloured with a desirable advertisement-value their special brand of rich-man's gilded bolshevism' (p. 565). So they made a profession of being young rebels and became 'God's Peterpaniest family', even though they are now aging and turning sadly into Cockeye themselves. Harriet's companion, the fifty-year-old Julia, whom by a 'miracle' Harriet will not give up, is resented by the brothers for spoiling their youthful image.

While investigating the library with Dan, Blackshirt discovers another factor in this youth movement similar to one that explains Zagreus's peculiarity. He opens one of Osmund's novels at random and like an 'anatomist' conducting a dissection proclaims that Osmund suffers from a Thymus surplus, an imbalance of the 'child-like Endocrine': 'Hence the obsession of that fat Old Maid.' Like a typical society hostess, Osmund is terrified of aging: '*He suffers from the bane of Spinsters*' (p. 561). The youth-snobbery of the Finnian Shaws differs from

Zagreus's in that they want to *be* young themselves. It runs into contradictions because of the principle stated by Zagreus that Youth without Wealth is meaningless. For the Finnian Shaws, whose estate is rather dilapidated, the clearest claim to social prestige is their ancestry, fraudulent though it may be. Although they ridicule the older generation, they are obsessed with their past and the past in general. Osmund is dressed as a Restoration ancestor, and the library abounds in treatises on the gothic and baroque. Everything that Blackshirt observes confirms for him Pierpoint's diagnosis: 'Heraldry a favourite subject. [. . .] History, and so *family*. With that, apotheosis of *period*. It is a pure case of the *chronological state of mind* — the Time-craze' (p. 558). After a revolution these 'showmen of the Past' could be museum curators in a soviet, he says elsewhere; that is what they amount to now, although they survive by exploiting their tenants. They depend on the 'remnants of Order', which they have turned into 'an eclectic historical playground', in order to be rebels.

The ambivalence of the Finnian Shaws' position in the age-war is shown most clearly in their treatment of the Old Colonels, who are kept in a locked room until they are all assembled for 'time-sport'. The Colonels, with their identical toothbrush moustaches and ruddy complexions, represent the 'Dark Backward and Abysm' and are hunted on the '*dark-continent* of Time': 'Their offence is to be the summit of the hierarchy. As the last ridiculous survivals of a military caste they are driven and manhandled' (p. 529). The Colonels perform various pratfalls; for example, when Ponto runs into General Walker Trotter as he is trying to recall crossing the Khyber Pass with ten picked men, each man assumes that he was at fault, with 'a great deal of throaty *I'm-sorry-sirring*!'. Although the Finnian Shaws enjoy such comedy, they themselves do not abuse the Colonels but rather flatter them in earnest. They clamour childishly for stories of bloody adventures among the dark races, then plead with the Colonels to kill the jazz band downstairs. As they settle down on the floor for a story from Commander Perse, another officer exposes him as an impostor, a club porter named Percy, and Osmund is angry that his prize exhibit has been spoiled. (Percy is Lewis's discarded given name; with some self-mockery, Lewis seems to imply here that he had been a successful interloper at the Sitwells' parties.) Blackshirt's observation is that the Finnian Shaws are 'rehearsing their own destruction'. Rather than attacking the social hierarchy, they are feeding off it, as Zagreus described the Keins' having done to Pierpoint. They are 'rejuvenated' by the spectacle of the Colonels as they are by mocking their father.

The Sitwells' rebellion, as well as their strong alliance, certainly began at home, in reaction to their mismatched parents, the eccentric, tyrannical Sir George and the frivolous, irresponsible Lady Ida. Pearson repeatedly notes that the habits of Osbert's and Edith's later years were formed in opposition to their father's erratic impositions of authority: they learned to find refuge in books, use a retaliatory wit, and pursue furtive revenge. The outbreak of the war in 1914 coincided with the family's public disgrace in a legal battle in which Sir George stubbornly let Lady Ida go to prison for unpaid debts. Slighted for being female and plain, Edith left home early to live in poverty in a shabby London flat with her former governess. Osbert identified his father with the conservative establishment that prosecuted the war, even with Kaiser Wilhelm, whom Sir George resembled physically. When he was at the Western Front, he associated its dreary monotony with the austerities and regimentation that his father had forced upon him. He resolved then upon a life of self-indulgence, and his first writing was anti-war poetry. His squibs against the philistines and the 'squirearchy' have the same cast as his expressions of resentment towards his father. Like the Finnian Shaws, the three Sitwells referred to their father by a jocose nick-name and often told favourite anecdotes of his eccentricities. The genealogical collections in the Finnian Shaws' library derive from one of Sir George's manias; but the influence of his obsession is evident in Sacheverell's becoming an art historian and Osbert's becoming an avid collector of Victoriana.[5] By emphasizing the Finnian Shaws' 'family complex', Lewis belittles the possibility of any positive political significance in their 'rebellion': they are subjects of a private trauma, not independent social critics. Since they define themselves as children, their difference from the past is merely an accident of time, a matter of novelty rather than substantive change.

The Conspiracy Theory

The climax of Blackshirt's broadcasts, during the Colonels' appearance, concerns the succession of the age-war to the sex-war, and it contains more bluster than matter. The most comprehensive broadcast in the novel comes in the dialogue between Zagreus and Ratner that follows from the mention of Willie Service's devotion to the world of crime depicted in Edgar Wallace's popular detective novels. The new cult of the detective novel is 'symptomatic of high-brow capitulation, in the face of universal pressure', Zagreus begins.

> Thanks to Western training-for-war, the anglo-saxon infant-mind has always resembled the inside of a criminal mad-house. It has been full of drugged potions, sawed-off shot-guns, arsenic, hairbreadth escapes, blackmail.
>
> [. . .] As a man he *did* try to escape. But the War was every anglo-saxon schoolboy's dream-come-true. (p. 402)

The 'warmakers' — politicians, arms manufacturers, financiers — had read Dime Novels, since 'Oppenheim or Wallace holds up a mirror to their will-to-power in all its cheapness'. But now even highbrows read Wallace; there is no fraction of opposition to the falling standards of taste. The war was 'the leveller'. The cinema, 'animated photographs of plays written for children', is another sign: 'The film-play of Post-War is the homologue, upon the mental plane, of the War "gasper" [cheap cigarette], from the standpoint of palate.' Because of its ubiquitous distribution,

> Edgar Wallace is what the government gives you to read. It amounts to that. [. . .]
>
> The official stamp as well is upon Jazz — the approved mass-article. Jazz is the folk-music of the metropolitan mass — slum-peasant, machine-minder — the heart-cry of the city-serf. His masters sing his songs — they even write them for him! [. . .]
>
> The same laws, such as the american Dry-laws, which make every citizen into a potential criminal, watched by an armed federal agent, provide Everyman with his Dime Novel up-to-date.
>
> [. . .] *The criminal mentality is forced upon him* — the furtive tricks of the underdog and underworld taught him, through unnatural laws. Almost some criminal ruler might have *wished for company!* — it is the sensation that these laws suggest.
>
> [. . .] It is dangerous not to be some sort of criminal, or outlaw, or *out-caste*, so that you come beneath the protection of those penal principles involved in the motto, *Honour among thieves*.
>
> [. . .] So this tax-crushed post-war puppet of the *megalopolis* has the energy demanded — no more — to a nicety, to tickle his pale fancy with a blood-and-thunder article of the writer's art — did he display more it would be taxed, it would be taxed! (pp. 404–05)

The broadcast is illustrated and assisted by a blatant coincidence in which a rich lesbian ex-debutante in a 'cowboygirl' outfit sneaks into the dining room to steal some cutlery (purchased at Woolworth's). From his fieldwork for Pierpoint, Zagreus has learned about the fashion for crime, which French artists have had to resort to for prestige since homosexuality has become 'as common as dirt'.

> Well there it is — if within a decade and a half you massacre ten million people in war and another ten million in civil war, it is not easy after that to return to a morality that regards it as wrong to pocket a salt-spoon. [. . .]
>
> The universal return to the mentality of childhood and of savagery — Nursery after Army, and dugout-canoe after dugouts in trenches — that seems to ensue. [. . .]
>
> And there will be more upheavals. [. . .]
>
> People had better keep their hands in with a little pilfering.
>
> [. . .] We have this immense background of War and of Revolution. That is enough — the blood is gratis! [. . . W]ars and communes have cheapened murder. [. . .]
>
> Both sides [communism and capitalism] wish us *criminal* — both invite us to a carnival of bloodshed accompanied by universal loot.
>
> [. . .] No one would get anything out of homicide, unless he first proved that in minor ways he was a hardened criminal. He might after all just be a regimental sergeant-major out of job or a dull marxist-doctrinaire, might he not, a theorist of 'catastrophe'! — That would prove nothing. (pp. 411–12)

The party crowd illustrates the levelling that Pierpoint describes. It is portrayed primarily *en masse*, as 'the coarse hordes of Demos' crowding up to the American Bar in 'Period the Present' and tossing to the Dionysian, 'marxistic' rhythms of jazz. Jonathan Bell, a fellow publisher and friend of Ratner's (and a plain reference to Clive Bell, the Bloomsbury art and literary critic), typifies the confusion in the ascendancy of the common man. He has come as the figure of Democracy in Dryden's masque *Albion and Albanius*, from which he recites two passages. The first concludes 'For every man's a king!', but the second makes clear that Democracy is satirized in the piece. But Bell, in an inappropriate 'senatorial garment', does not realize this; he likes the verses simply because they 'rolled well' (pp. 547–48).

Lewis's reading of modern history should now be apparent. He views the Great War as the expression of a collective European death-wish, and the culture that succeeded it as representing a fatalistic acceptance of the individual's loss of significance in a public world whose workings have become inscrutable. The enormously destructive war exposed the malevolent potential of political power and the impotence of liberal ideals in the twentieth century, destroying the credibility of traditional morality and making citizens cynical. The age-war and the sex-war arose from the soldiers' generation's distrust of the older male establishment that mismanaged the war; while advancing the lot of women, feminism also represented a general social inclination towards feminine passivity and irresponsibility. The British Parliament tentatively negotiated a course between the old patriarchal controls and reform; acquiescing to market forces that undermined traditional values, it was reduced to an appearance of government without a clearly responsible party. The line 'Edgar Wallace is what the government gives you to read. It amounts to that' evokes the ban on *Ulysses* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* at this time and implies a more insidious process than official indoctrination, namely an unconscious surrender of public life to a gaudy but soporific caricature. The various 'rebellions' were co-opted by the commercial media: youthful resentment was defused in a nostalgic celebration of innocence; popular culture such as crime fiction and jazz offered a vicarious participation in the disintegration of the older social structure and had a compromising effect upon originally-oppositional artistic experiment. As SueEllen Campbell notes, Lewis saw a systematic, mystifying falsification in social phenomena ranging from 'artificial nationalism', while nations grew more alike, to modern art, with its aggressive novelty:

> There is no department that is exempt from the confusions of this strategy — which consists essentially in removing something necessary to life and putting an ideologic simulacrum where it was able to deceive the poor animal, who notices it in its usual place and feels that all is well, but which yet perplexes and does not satisfy him.[6]

Pierpoint might seem here to be just such a 'theorist of catastrophe' mentioned in the broadcast. Despite his prediction of 'more upheavals', however, he resembles more closely a prophet of what Jean Baudrillard, following McLuhan, has recently called 'implosion', a self-absorption or a collapse of various social phenomena into one another, a blurring of the distinction between actuality and media simulacra: '*Pierpoint is convinced there is no issue!* We are all rats caught in a colossal mechanical trap.'[7] Pierpoint is concerned as much with the consolidation of cultural levelling as he is with the decline of traditional culture. What distinguishes this critique from a true conspiracy theory is the absence of specific conspirators or of any directing agency at all. Blackshirt warns that Ponto is only a surrogate villain, 'the gilt-edged serf of an anonymous System', and that scapegoating Cockeye, who is of the same type, serves only to 'screen the actual villain' of the war, whom he does not name (p. 556). The anti-obscenity programme is a further instance of manufacturing a surrogate social villain and another measure that turned harmless citizens into criminals. Pierpoint implies that the war itself was a symptom of a broader, unconscious levelling: 'Was not the War fought to that end — to make the World safe for Democracy, and free of disturbing "Lions", for ever more? It is the Paradise of the Apes of God, we are to understand' (p. 264). Lewis suggests that the war was a sacrifice of millions of lives for Demos, or freedom from authority; thus the Lion, banished and hunted, becomes an ambiguous and salutary 'disturbing' influence. Mussolini, with his spectacular rise, is merely a 'character in fiction'.

Lewis's antipathy to jazz, and the undeniably racist overtones that go with it, seems a clear sign of a reactionary temperament. With its derogatory images of blacks, women, Jews, and homosexuals, *The Apes* is a veritable catalogue of political incorrectness. Although these portrayals indicate a genuine intolerance, they are not quite as crude as they seem; they are based on an objection to 'group rhythms' of any sort that function as a substitute for individual thought. What Lewis attacks in jazz is a disguised expression of guilt in the white race's infatuation with 'primitive' experience: the band 'regarded with cold pity the mob beneath them, which danced to their music, masses of white fools!' (p. 459). He favoured a primitive sort of art himself and condemned the colonial exploitation of cultures that he considered superior to Europe's; *The Apes* is harder on white males and the wealthy than any other segments of the population, although this does not excuse his obstreperous and gratuitous insults. Lewis's stereotypes are a means of exploring the pressures on the individual in mass culture. A ridicule of conformist behaviour or of values that have attained an ideological predictability seems to be his instinctive response to any social phenomenon whatever, and it is difficult to separate his personal bigotry from the artistic function of such images. For example, his summary of 'the arguments used against the normal procedures of sex by the invert or misogynist' is such a witty and incisive piece of misogyny that it is hard to doubt that Lewis himself was attracted by the attitude that he criticizes (*ABR*, p. 245). In this caricature, by speaking at a double remove, adopting the role of the gay 'bitch' attacking his rival, he acquires expressive advantages from the very conditions that he attacked in the cults of the twenties, freedom and irresponsibility. He does the same in *The Apes* in playfully attributing anti-Semitic sentiments to two fools, Dan and Dick: he can simultaneously lampoon the speaker and the class that the speaker attacks. As Joyce, who considered Lewis's overly negative assessment of *Ulysses* to be the best criticism that the novel had yet received (and who repaid Lewis in kind in *Finnegans Wake*), understood, Lewis was at least an independent and principled mocker. Of course, Lewis's dogmatism is also the weakness of his criticism, a tendency to reduce everything to a predetermined scheme. Insofar as he needed something to react against in order to achieve full expression, he is another sort of parasite. Nevertheless, his portrayal of the dynamics of socialization is more valuable to the ultimate objectives of political correctness than his stereotypes are damaging to them. His perception of mass culture and its effect on the individual have turned out to be prophetic.

It is interesting to compare Lewis's view of jazz with that of a prominent leftist writer, Theodor Adorno. Adorno's brief essay 'The Perennial Fashion — Jazz' explains Lewis's position more clearly than Lewis ever did himself, and indeed seems almost an outline of the cultural aspect of *The Art of Being Ruled*. Adorno's prime concern is also not the derivation of jazz from black culture but the enthusiasm for it among whites, including intellectuals. Adorno describes the subservience of the 'unruly' elements of jazz, syncopation and improvisational 'frills', to a standardized form:

> Its rebellious gestures are accompanied by the tendency to blind obeisance, much like the sadomasochistic type described by analytic psychology, the person who chafes against the father-figure while secretly admiring him, who seeks to emulate him and in turn derives enjoyment from the subordination he overtly detests.[8]

This characterization could be applied to the Finnian Shaws' relation to the social establishment. The masochistic aspect of this attitude is evident in the dinner party's alarm at the prospect of a police raid:

> So the world-hush of the universal *Speak-easy-soul* of the Post-war, was in this company prolonged until the knocking abruptly ceased. [. . .] The World that had become fashionably Underworld wilted deliciously at the bare prospect of wholesale detection: half-amorously it fluttered at the shadow of Authority (a child shrinking from the birch-armed Dad) — all breathing one big bated breath of fond fellowship of romantic Revolt, of elect Criminality. (p. 376)

Adorno compares the commercial manipulation of superficial variations of musical fashions to totalitarian state controls, and identifies the deceptive appeal of jazz in pseudo-individualization, a 'caricature of untrammelled subjectivity':

> Terrified, jazz fans identify with the society they dread for having made them what they are. This gives the jazz ritual its affirmative character, that of being accepted into a community of unfree equals. With this in mind, jazz can appeal directly to the mass of listeners in self-justification with a diabolically good conscience. (p. 126)

The anarchic origins of jazz become repressed as its followers are 'intoxicated by the fame of mass culture' and obtain a sense of belonging: 'Merely to be carried away by anything at all, to have something of their own, compensates for their impoverished and barren existence. The gesture of adolescence [. . .] is now socialized' (p. 128). Concerning the basis for the popularity of jazz in 'typical conflicts between the ego and society', Adorno's references to similar aspects of film and fiction are remarkably close to Lewis's:

> What first comes to mind, in quest for that moment [in the subject], is the eccentric clown or parallels with the early film comics. Individual weakness is proclaimed and revoked in the same breath, stumbling is confirmed as a kind of higher skill. In the process of integrating the asocial, jazz converges with the equally standardized schemas of the detective novel and its offshoots, which regularly distort or unmask the world so that asociality and crime become the everyday norm, but which at the same time charm away the seductive and ominous challenge through the inevitable triumph of order. [. . .] The aim of jazz is the mechanical reproduction of a regressive moment, a castration symbolism. 'Give up your masculinity [. . .] and you will be rewarded, accepted into a fraternity which shares the mystery of impotence with you.' (p. 129)

Adorno's essay concludes with the same blunt mockery that is Lewis's hallmark: the subject of jazz expresses himself, 'I am nothing, I am filth, no matter what they do to me, it serves me right.'[9] These passages, which show the affinity between the disreputable Lewis and an eminent social and aesthetic theorist, elucidate several strands of *The Apes*. Both writers saw a necessity for a political analysis of art and viewed popular culture as the revenge of the profane upon art. In Apery, Lewis depicts the awkward attempt to adapt a genteel tradition of artistic patronage and aristocratic guardianship of culture to the incipient 'culture industry' studied by the Frankfurt School. The Apes' bohemian identification with the underclass in their patronage of jazz — portrayed as the last resort of a superannuated segment of society — is particularly symptomatic because it illustrates the manner in which populist or dissenting social elements are absorbed, or bribed, by capital. Lewis saw in stream-of-consciousness fiction the same 'caricature of subjectivity', an ultimately defeatist alignment with naïve experience, and saw a similar confusion in Lawrentian eroticism, which he portrayed as Ratner's 'glandification': 'Sex was really all bluff — *power* the thing' (p. 542). The Sitwells and others satirized were not as directly harmful towards what Lewis considered genuine artistic innovation as were the philistines whom the Sitwells themselves opposed; their significance lies in their being representative of an unconscious erosion of cultural distinctions. The fact that the Sitwells gained more opportunities as well as notoriety from Coward's earlier satire of them than they did from their own productions demonstrates the public relations axiom of 'absolute celebrity'. Such an indiscriminate effect, or a disjunction between intrinsic qualities and market value, is what leads Zagreus to call this period 'a time without art'.

The Apes presents the first extensive treatment of the culture of modern celebrity and its genres, hype and gossip.[10] Marshall McLuhan, who turned Lewis's pessimism about the social ramifications of technological progress on its head, wrote, in his casually cryptic late style, 'Electrically, man's struggles are with principalities and powers. Lewis presents the struggle more vividly than any writer of the twentieth century.'[11] Although Lewis's view of an inexorable levelling in modern culture was hardly unique, Lewis perceived acutely the tendencies comprising the syndrome now known as 'post-modernism'. His central observation on the modern body politic is that it has become an autonomous, impersonal force beyond the control of the state or even a corporate oligarchy. The Apes' strategy of imitation, adulation of youth, cultivation of gossip, and celebration of a 'lifestyle' all prefigure the course of popular Western culture. Lewis identified the process in which mass media invest novelty with charisma, confer a short-lived mythic dimension upon celebrity, maintain a parasitic relation to traditional culture, and possess a self-ratifying capacity that nearly reduces taste to a function of distribution. He also perceived the virtual inversion of the meaning of 'popular culture', from folk practices involving free participation and sensual experience to the passive consumption of technological novelties whose prevalence and uniformity give them an official function, in Hollywood parlance, as 'the lowest common denominator'. As the arts become steadily more commercialized, the techniques involved in replacing talent with simulacra themselves attain the status of artistry and render the question of authenticity moot. The satirical metaphor of the artist as Ape, whose biological relation to the human suits a period of anthropological discovery, still connotes the traditional conception of individual performance; but its imitative aspect anticipates the principle of 'cloning' central to the late-twentieth-century entertainment industry of sequels and spin-offs, in which the actual artistic agent is a corporate entity and the human performer approaches the status of a commodity.

At the personal level, the Apes' glorification of psychological 'complexes'—neurosis as individuality and its glorification as evidence of broadmindedness—is a prescient image of the eclipse of the public individual by a narcissistic caricature that makes a virtue of its ineffectuality.[12] The two themes of celebrity and neurosis converge in the Apes' premise that random self-expression is both therapeutic and artistic. Modernism, although arcane and elitist, consorted with the post-war levelling of cultural standards insofar as it represented a challenge to established culture and encouraged experimentation, which was taken to be beyond objective evaluation and to be politically progressive; the image of the romantic cultural outlaw of course flourished afterwards in the commercial media. As Matei Calinescu has observed, avant-garde art and kitsch tend to parody each other; *The Apes* concerns the ambiguity of instances of the former that are not clearly distanced from the latter by a critical purpose, before the concept of 'camp' came to signify this ambiguous mode of appropriation.[13]

A recurring argument in Lewis's polemics is that art requires a social stability that is not attainable in modern capitalism, and that modernist art reinforces the confusion that it mirrors. But Lewis did not subscribe to the conservative reflection-theory of modernism developed by Georg Lukács, which rejects subjectivism in favour of the realistic portrayal of a shared social world by normative communicative language.[14] Like the other modernists, Lewis pursued an anti-bourgeois aestheticism that problematizes the relation of the individual to social institutions. Yet he is concerned less with the modern disintegration of community than with the spurious impersonal order that is replacing it, and in his work the subject is not often valorized in opposition to the social realm but is usually a conflicted microcosm of social forces. His own aesthetic of a hard and cold 'classical' line, however, seems to have been shaped by the *Zeitgeist*, in reaction, as much as it dictated his criticism of it. Formulating such a syndrome was for Lewis an effort to stand outside or transcend his milieu, even its greatest achievements. He argued for a scrutiny of the ontological and aesthetic repercussions of the theories of relativity and flux, and advocated artistic qualities produced by the epistemological assumptions of other eras; and he was disposed to find even in *Ulysses* an artistic 'plainmanism' that abetted the relativist 'What the Public Wants' doctrine of capitalist democracy. His postulation of cultural homogeneity enabled him to secure a patent on its antithesis; to counter relativistic, 'romantic' impressionism, he adopted not only an anti-humanist aesthetic but also the absolutist premise that whatever is generally accepted must be wrong.

Lewis's politics are not simply fascist or authoritarian, however; Lewis sees a greater possibility for radical individualism in a less bureaucratic state than modern democracy was developing into by parliamentary stalemate. There is a contradiction between the need for political hierarchy that he sometimes invokes and his belief that truly revolutionary minds, such as his own, are always oppositional, and it is the latter that his fiction derives from. *The Apes* satirizes simultaneously established culture, both for its deterioration and for its residual strength; the impersonal forces that it is succumbing to; and even its avowed enemies, portrayed as the Pierpointians. The restless energy that the novel possesses results from its abandonment of the positive alternatives that the polemics entertain. Lewis is caught in the ambivalence of mockery himself; he often seems more obsessed with the ideological currents that he diagnoses than their putative agents are. To give significance to his protest against the time-cult, he ascribes to it an influence so pervasive as to make the protest seem futile. The satirist often finds himself in an odd position regarding his civic outlook towards the future: he presumably writes to dissuade the public from the disaster that would vindicate his supposedly inhuman cynicism.

Like the later prophecies of invisible conspiracy by Baudrillard and William Burroughs, Lewis's is more important as a cautionary image, a *malign* sort of 'carnival-symbolic' in contrast to Bakhtin's, than a verifiable description. But one need not subscribe to the wholesale delirium of Baudrillard's 'hyperreality' and 'cyberblitz', in which the real is entirely obfuscated by systems and codes, to acknowledge the ascendancy of the simulacrum that Lewis foresaw. This broadcast's flirtation with a conspiracy theory is also qualified by Zagreus's intoxication with the discovery of Archie Margolin: when Zagreus rises abruptly to follow Archie after these pronouncements, Ratner observes, 'Horace is really mad I believe tonight!' But Zagreus's peculiarities do not negate the diagnosis; his and Pierpoint's madness represent the vanishing point of a totalizing satiric perspective. The implication is that something approaching paranoia is the appropriate response to the conditions of the day: the hypothetical web of causation and homology made by the paranoiac's imagination is almost necessary to ascertain the deceptive forces operating in modern public life. If Lewis in *The Apes* is a malign Bakhtin, then Baudrillard is a malign McLuhan: the madness of Baudrillard's demonic mysticism of the electrode and the computer chip is Pierpoint's contemporary analogue.

Archie Margolin

That the new genius is a factor of Zagreus's social criticism is made clear in his next scene. If Dan's ambiguous status as a joke leaves some doubt as to whether Zagreus is truly youth-mad, Zagreus's reaction to Willie Service at the party helps to dispel it: '"He is *young!*" agreed Horace with a bustle of alacrity but an eye touched with pathos, the difficulty of associating *no-genius* with *youth* causing him a passing sensation of impotence' (p. 399). Archie Margolin confirms this weakness, even as he completes the cyclical pattern of protégés that confirms Dan's role as a joke. His replacement of Dan makes the plot a single ritual, the temporary reign of a simulacrum of genius intended to mock Ape-society. Since Archie's rise is Dan's fall, Archie also heightens Dan's suffering. But he also contradicts the pattern. He is uniformly seen by critics as 'an interchangeable part in a machine' (Materer, p. 93); but Archie turns Zagreus's relation to Dan on its head and gives the novel a new viewpoint that challenges Pierpoint's. Archie is Dan's opposite physically, emotionally, and intellectually: small, shrewd, mischievous, and impudent. He does not have Dan's conventional good looks; he is a doll-boy like Jimmie. No pretence is made of his being an artistic genius; his talent is for duplicity and manipulation. He is therefore Zagreus's true apprentice: a keen observer of Apes, a liar, and a joker, perhaps a superior joker. This twist, signalling a change in Zagreus's series of boys, if not the end of it (Archie must after all age), takes Zagreus, the conscious Ape, by surprise. It is not quite clear that it produces an ironic happy ending, which in any case is mitigated by the failure of Zagreus's financial scheme.

Archie appears in the opening scene at the Follet mansion, awaiting his patron, Dick Whittington, and their differences in class and character are emphasized. He is a 'pygmy' in the large drawing room, 'oppressed and contemptuous: this culture was dead as mutton but its great carcass offended him — it would take a hundred years to melt. He grinned and yawned' (p. 43). When he thinks of the house's servants, 'a sewer-people his soul sang, in marxist fierceness'. Archie humours Dick's condescension and draws out his vulgarity. For Dick, the 'happy dupe of this stock figure of Old Comedy', Archie plays a ghetto Jew 'with his cheapest mass-production grin, for the part of the Sham-Yid' (p. 47). He advises Dick to warn the servants against buying his brother's cheap watches, and stares until Dick feels guilty. Dick answers awkwardly that servants are queer and one must know how to handle them, and Archie is able to disarm him by beaming, 'We all are!' Zagreus notices Archie as he hustles Dan away from Dick, but Archie does not appear again until the party. During his apprenticeship Dan sees occasional signs of Archie's progress: Archie once accompanied Zagreus, and Zagreus wrote to Dan that Archie might have 'a *touch* of genius'.

Archie attends the party as an assistant to Zagreus and wins Zagreus's admiration as a 'practical-joker-born', partly by throwing matches at the guests. When he hears that the Finnian Shaws bought their noble name, he thinks *better* of them. He has a fondness for word-play; when Zagreus speaks of Phoebus's not changing until his dying day, Archie responds, '*Till his dying day*. The day for dying, same as day *for drying*, Horace — clothes on the line' (p. 396). He perceives things in the yogic manner without instruction:

> And Arch's eyes seemed to cast everything that was present back into diminishing distances. Abstract and empty blocks made up his foregrounds. Life's funny flux only existed as it were at the end of a telescope reversed to make objects insignificant. He shot his Match — it flew for him down a perspective of Chirico. (pp. 537–38)

Archie's most important trait is his lower-class background. The crucial exchange comes in the kitchen, when Zagreus observes Osmund's butler, a mixture of 'impatient contempt and slovenly obedience', and cites Pierpoint's prognosis of imminent revolution from the present unmanageability of servants. Subjected to a personal tutorial for the first time, Archie, 'the horse's mouth' in this matter, who 'refused hospitality to any political shadows whatever', contradicts the voice of Pierpoint:

> 'There won't be a revolution not in Old England Horace!' [...]
>
> 'Not in *our* time Horace!' Arch said — he threw an overpowering leer of the most lurid mischief in, at the sarcastic possessive before 'time', also at the further english idiotism and the thought of many more, with which he was furnished. (pp. 429–30)

Zagreus is stung with fresh admiration for young genius; his obsession is genuine, and Archie takes advantage of it by baiting him about his enmity with the rich:

> Margolin was crystallizing into an oracle rapidly, for each time with Horace this came about with greater speed. [...] Archie felt he must keep a straight face. Turning towards what now was obviously a new patron, out of the same family as Dick, he tucked him up under his proletarian wing with the lightheartedest splutter. [...]
>
> 'Don't listen Horace to *alarmists!* That's alaaarm-ist!' Archie was delighted with the pomp of this big foolish newspaper word he had found inside his little head, burlesquely he swelled to utter it — all words were potential toys, big mouthfuls especially, to be batted over when talking, by his little tingling tongue, at such as Horace — *talking* a great indoor sport, *batting the winged word* captured in a newspaper over the net.
>
> '[...] You must have got in with a lot of communists Horace!'
>
> '[...] Revolutions — Old England won't stand for them, not the Briton Horace — you don't know them — I know Britons, they won't stand for them, not the British.' (p. 431)

Zagreus maintains that the banks are also predicting a crash, and is enthralled that Archie continues to mock him: 'lip-reading with great relish — he was trying out this new machine, but he had made up his mind to have it as an oracle, whatever came he would have it as an oracle, it was too perfect' (p. 432). When he says 'That lot upstairs has to go *somehow* Arch!', Archie replies that 'old Osman and Pheebie' are really harmless. As Zagreus 'sentimentally' concedes that 'Osmund is his own worst enemy', he feels himself starting to broadcast *Kein*; he falls abject, admitting to communism and alarmism. As Zagreus played Pierpoint at the Keins' and turned Kein into a baffled dupe, here Archie turns Zagreus into Kein by stealing Zagreus's mystifying powers. The striking thing about this dialogue is that Zagreus seeks out a delirium that resembles his panicked dissolution into an Ape-herd: 'One more step and he would no longer be able however mildly to keep his end up he plainly foresaw, he would be prostrate' (p. 433). Zagreus fully assents to Archie, though he seems to misunderstand him, then slides back into a broadcast. Archie yawns and interrupts him to change the subject. Afterwards at the bar they celebrate a 'grotesque honeymoon of the mind', in which Zagreus booms, '*You* are champagne!' Soon Zagreus recovers his 'microphone personality' and puts on another 'Pierpoint Record' for Ratner.

At the Keins', Zagreus's swoon over Dan's genius was not directly connected to his psychotic episode; here his madness is clearly related to boys. His alarmism about revolution, via Pierpoint, seems to be bound up with his enthusiasm for youth, which is devoid of the ruling class's corruption. Archie, as a proletarian, exacerbates Zagreus's apocalyptic vision and leads Zagreus to romanticize the lower classes. The obvious irony is that Archie, the potential revolutionary, rejects this prediction: he mocks Pierpoint's abstraction and corrects it by introducing the realistic factors of the proletariat's apathy and persisting deference to the aristocracy. The deeper irony is that this refutation of Pierpoint is what captivates Zagreus. Archie is the only character in the novel who silences Pierpoint. Zagreus discovers genius in someone who denies his previous conception of genius; being caught between them makes him dizzy.

Bakhtin stresses that, in the serio-comic genres, philosophy is not allowed to remain abstract; as it comes into contact with practical affairs any academic or logical trappings are destroyed. Zagreus combines two complementary satiric types: the enthusiastic pupil, whose automatism consists of 'philosophy', and the crank mentor, whose automatism in this case is his attraction to boys. Zagreus's philosophical automatism is purged in two 'extraordinary situations' that each follow an accession of his sensuous one: the scene at the Keins', after his rapt gaze upon Dan, when he unwittingly applies Pierpoint's analysis of the Apes to himself; and this dialogue, in which Archie contradicts Pierpoint and reverses the usual pattern of Zagreus's manipulation of his protégés.

Although Archie's opinions cast some doubt on Pierpoint's authority, they really only qualify his conclusion, which may reflect Zagreus's intoxicated exaggeration. If Pierpoint believes that there is no issue from the trap, then he doubts the benefits of revolution even if he expects it to occur. Zagreus is correct that there will be a rebellion, although curiously the long-planned General Strike is never mentioned here; but at the same time Archie is correct in implying that the rebellion will be ineffective. As in the Plunkett episode, which played homosexuality and bestial male heterosexuality against each other, here on a larger scale, is a dialogue that ridicules the upper classes, militant socialists, and the lower classes all at once. Lewis employs as a satiric strategy the same policy of *divide and conquer* that in his polemics he accused mass publicity organs of doing and that he argued fomented a 'moral situation' of social fragmentation.

As important in the dialogue as the political opinions expressed is Archie's tactical performance. He is simply duping Zagreus as he did Dick earlier, but by more subtle means than flattery. He charms Zagreus because he surprises him by dismissing Pierpoint; as a trickster, Archie is really Zagreus's double, not Dan's. Like Zagreus, he mocks his own class, concealing his earlier 'marxist fierceness', and views the corrupt social hierarchy only with amusement and for his own advantage. Since Dan was a fake genius, and Zagreus's fake, all of Zagreus's behaviour as an impresario was marked with an ambiguity that enabled him to laugh at society. Archie has enough real genius to impersonate just the sort of naïve oracle that Zagreus craves: 'To be a *genius* took it out of you, the false as well as the true' (p. 512). By manipulating the same duplicity himself that Zagreus did with Dan, by plying Zagreus with his store of 'idiotism', Archie reduces Zagreus to a more ordinary person who exhibits *genuine* admiration (only *more* ordinary because the flicker of Kein in Zagreus's submission keeps present his volatile multiple-personality). Archie talks this way 'at *such* as Horace' (my emphasis); Zagreus, the mystifying eccentric, is now one of a class, which must be of Apes.

The fit of weakness that overcomes Zagreus confirms his 'fey' nature. If he is a repressed homosexual, the sexual repression does not repress *him*; rather it projects him into a compensatory performance to escape the memory of the replicas of which he is made. The 'sincerity' of his idealization of youth that sets him apart from common social posturing is also the sign of his susceptibility. Boys of unformed character may represent for Zagreus not only a contrast to corrupt society but also a personal nostalgia: their inexperience is the opposite of his own history of inner Apes. While homosexuality in general in *The Apes* may originate in this attraction to innocence, it also suggests a predatory narcissism or Pygmalionism, a desire for a copy that would complement and ratify the older man's own Apery; it affords an escape from heterosexuality, which in the novel is wholly antagonistic and alienated. But Zagreus is exempt from this sort of manipulation; he adores boys who seem too naïve to change at all. It is ironic, therefore, that he falls hardest for one whose resemblance to him he does not recognize. It is as if Zagreus, having pretended so insistently that he had found a genius, has become vulnerable to one who can fake it; or as if his sadistic exploitation of Dan has prepared his own masochistic prostration and recoiled upon him. Zagreus seems to love Archie for subjecting him to the same sort of mockery that he himself has administered to Dan. In a variation of the pattern of 'the satirist satirized', Archie plays a joke on the joker.

The Pierpointians

The appearance of Blackshirt, the last major character introduced at the party, is the first indication that Pierpoint has any other followers besides Zagreus. Although Pierpoint designed the conjurers' costumes and the tricks, the troupe seems to have been assembled by Zagreus for the occasion. Blackshirt and Ratner each offer another view of Pierpoint, Zagreus, and each other. These two 'businessmen', one choleric and one phlegmatic, emerge as the bitterest rivals of the novel; the only thing that they agree on is that Dan, whom they each tell their side to, is doomed to be a victim. Since the cyclical succession of

Zagreus's 'geniuses' is inevitable, the piecemeal and inconclusive disclosure of Pierpoint's loose organization is the only real collective dramatic complication of the novel.

Blackshirt is called Pierpoint's 'political secretary' and 'business manager'. He is the only character besides Pierpoint whom Zagreus takes seriously, but he is Zagreus's opposite as a disciple — blunt, earnest, and truculent. He moistens his lips in imitation of Pierpoint as he reaches an oratorical climax just as Zagreus does; but, lacking Zagreus's comic wit and anarchic temper, he is a pure, disgusted railer and no interlocutor. He tells Dan, 'It is your duty *to laugh!*' at the Finnian Shaws, who exemplify the principle '*Life justified as Joke*', although he thinks that they are really too expensive to be a joke (pp. 503–04). Blackshirt brings a new factor, money, into the consideration of Zagreus's behaviour. It is one reason that they — Blackshirt speaks freely for Pierpoint — object to Dan: they must curtail Zagreus's 'genius expense-account'. They can do nothing with Zagreus because he is an incurable youth-snob; he cannot understand that he can no longer afford his boys. They have told him that Dan must be the last 'genius' or else they will drop him, but now he has found a Jewish one who would cost even more. Aside from the money, the 'geniuses' interfere with Pierpoint's work, and they 'object to Horace Zagreus's cruelty to young men — egged on by Ratner' (p. 473). 'Zagreus himself he is the worst Ape of the lot', Blackshirt continues. He is a rich dilettante with nineties 'period-prestige', another Peter Pan who wastes money on social amusements and likes dressing up for the salon. He distorts Pierpoint's ideas for purposes of self-aggrandizement and takes advantage of his impracticality and generosity; for instance, he has not paid for the costumes for the magic show. Pierpoint recommended Ratner to Zagreus as joke, Blackshirt explains, but Zagreus did not understand because he has no sense of humour. Now Zagreus is under Ratner's control because he has taken a big loan. Ratner over-charges and complains to Pierpoint that Blackshirt is rude and violent; he encourages Zagreus's cruelty to boys because he is jealous of them. This all makes Blackshirt's job difficult; 'exclaiming against his destiny', he declares, 'it was *I* saved [Pierpoint] from bankruptcy' (p. 510).

So we are told not only that Dan is not Pierpoint's project, but also that Dan's treatment is against Pierpoint's interest and his stated wishes. Blackshirt is not a trustworthy observer, however, although he seems honest. He is obviously wrong about Ratner, who is the only major character sympathetic to Dan; and far from appearing to be under Ratner's control, Zagreus treats Ratner indeed as a contemptible joke. One wonders why Blackshirt thinks that Zagreus has no sense of humour, unless Blackshirt, who unlike Zagreus is not allowed to reproduce Pierpoint's laugh, has none himself. Dan thinks that Blackshirt must be under strain from 'forever adding up'. Although Chapman believes that he is 'nearer the ideal than anyone else', most critics see him as a fool or a fascist thug because he physically assaults Ponto and Ratner.[15] But his most unaccountable lapse is allowing Dan to get drunk. Blackshirt is alarmed at Dan's desperate solution to his unhappiness, but, surprisingly, does nothing to stop him: 'If only he had been *told* how — it was vexatious!' (p. 572). This man of great dispatch and physical courage turns out to be someone who can only follow orders, and he is consequently subjected to slapstick pratfalls as he chases Dan through the garden. Blackshirt's limitations, particularly his glaring misperception of Ratner and Zagreus, reflect poorly upon Pierpoint, because Pierpoint apparently trusts Blackshirt and also because Blackshirt attributes some misapprehensions to him. But there is no evidence, except some measure of respect from Zagreus, that Blackshirt really does speak for the disengaged and impractical Pierpoint. Pierpoint might have given this version of the situation to Blackshirt himself 'as a joke'.

Zagreus offers a different story of his financial dealings with Pierpoint. After the short broadcast on satire, he tells Ratner that he *buys* the speeches: 'What would you suppose I paid him for that. *Roughly!*' (p. 453). Some critics have seen this arrangement, which Isabel Kein also suspected, as evidence of Pierpoint's corruption (Edwards, Afterword, pp. 637–38). It is comical that even supposedly disinterested knowledge should be treated as a commodity; but I believe that Lewis, who depended on the custom of patronage, probably endorsed Zagreus's remark 'I pay Pierpoint for *everything* I get. The labourer's worthy of his hire.' Yet the purchase suggests that the broadcasts are not so much abstract knowledge, personal accusation, or political analysis as they are scripts for amateur entertainment. It is during the magic performance that Blackshirt's resentment towards Zagreus's alleged thieving produces the novel's climax; and even the ensuing violence is viewed by Zagreus as entertainment. The possibility of Zagreus's double-dealing remains, however, since he told Ratner that he had settled the expenses for the performance with Osmund.

For his part, Ratner, although he is Pierpoint's friend, thinks that Pierpoint is vain and likes Blackshirt because Blackshirt treats him as a 'tin-god'. He feels that Pierpoint is unwise to trust Blackshirt, who is a poor businessman and is confusing Pierpoint's affairs. He also believes that Zagreus has changed for the worse under Pierpoint's influence; whereas previously, he hoaxed the nation, now he does 'practicaljokes [*sic*] with us'. Ratner agrees with Blackshirt that Zagreus likes socializing with the same wealthy set as Osmund, from which he came, but adds that Zagreus has seen through them and wants to prove his independence out of vanity. Zagreus is a vamp who picks people's brain, Dan's as well as Pierpoint's: 'He is after your genius!' Ratner tells Dan: 'You are Horace's plaything — When he talks about your "genius" — Pulling your leg — That's to get your "genius"! — *People always pull other people's legs when they want to get hold of their genius!*' (p. 421). It is puzzling that Ratner does not seem to believe in Dan's genius, yet says that it can be stolen. By a sort of alchemy, the joke that such genius exists is the means of obtaining it. Leg-pulling is a fair description of *Archie's* technique; Archie captures Zagreus's genius by accusing him of being a communist and being too hard on Osmund.

From Blackshirt's and Ratner's reports a larger but more confused picture of Pierpoint's following emerges. Despite the arcane and militant nature of Pierpoint's strictures, his sect seems ultimately a parody of a pulp adventure-novel gang, like the Actor Gang of swindlers in Lewis's first and posthumously-published novel, *Mrs Dukes' Million* (a gang whose method is, like Zagreus's, impersonation). They are a bumbling cadre of agitators at odds with one another who cannot implement their brilliant theorist's ideas. Their accusations against the establishment portend some momentous objective, but their operations recall the 'schoolboy' melodrama that Zagreus derides: Blackshirt has a map of the secret passageways in the Finnian Shaws' house; after the party they sneak about with a flashlight and tools like burglars. Their bickering about money, competence, and loyalty — the 'business' aspect — in the face of Pierpoint's dire assessment of things, makes them comical. Since Pierpoint may be excused from his followers' practical problems by his theoretical detachment, their disarray does not really negate the force of his observations. Although he designed the magic performance, in which Dan is the main prop, it appears that Zagreus has acted alone in sending Dan into society as a genius, whether or not the idea came from Pierpoint's analysis of the youth-cult. Dan also throws the Pierpointians into further confusion. Ratner tries to befriend him, but only disgusts him. Dan develops affection for Blackshirt, but Blackshirt is merely irritated. It is during Dan's portion of the magic performance that the rivalry between Zagreus and Blackshirt reaches a crisis.

Not surprisingly, Zagreus is at the centre of the confusion. Pierpoint's prime exponent is the troublesome element among the Pierpointians as he is among the Keins' guests; he is as unmanageable as his drunken idiot Dan. It is uncertain whether he is wealthy or broke. He claims to keep Ratner and Pierpoint; but Blackshirt, who reports that the only time that Zagreus blushed was when Pierpoint said he was too rich, says that Zagreus is controlled by Ratner and that he robs Pierpoint. These contradictions can possibly be reconciled by the inference that Zagreus once patronized Pierpoint but has now spent his fortune. Ratner is more correct than Blackshirt: Zagreus is not a typical Ape; he apes Pierpoint openly, celebrates him, and pays him occasionally. Yet Apery is Zagreus's domain; although he says that he cannot bear to listen to them any longer, he returns to the Finnian Shaws. He is an Ape so compulsive that he turns on the other Apes. He is the arch-Ape, a renegade Ape, a renegade Pierpointian, and finally a con-man, one of the post-war criminals-by-necessity. The surprising effect of the revelation of Zagreus's financial problems and the confusion that they cause is that, although he attempts to ignore them, they finally humanize him a little. The mention of money in *The Apes* is almost always accompanied by comedy. Money connotes some sort of corruption or stupidity; all of Zagreus's statements about the Apes imply that it destroys art and the imagination. The Apes purchase culture: they collect art and protégés, and buy a reputation of genius for themselves. Yet Zagreus also requires money to keep on an equal footing with them and to keep his own pet genius, and he is willing to cheat his revered master in order to do so. His comic predicament, which he never acknowledges, is that he is no longer able to afford the hobby of tormenting Dan, who also fears losing this treatment. And because he has abused his expense-account on fake geniuses, he will not be allowed the more authentic one that he has just found.

Despite their enmity towards the society of gossip, the Pierpointians' own squabbling and rumours mirror the Apes' petty feuds. The Finnian Shaws and Isabel Kein represent the classical, malicious sort of gossip, remarks with the power of the taboo that must be spoken behind someone's back; it is their true artistic medium. But the fact that the Pierpointians, who revere the single sacred text of Pierpoint, also live in a conflicting dialogue of partial views, underscores the universality of gossip. Everyone defines him- or herself by a representation of others in opinion, narrative, or mimicry. Pamela Farnham's guests are called 'heterogeneous pockets of negative reality'. Because of the indirect manner in which people relate to one another, not in truly mutual dialogue but by mimicry and parody, collectively they make a vast network of distorted reflections with no concrete ground, individual identities, or direct perception.

The Scapegoat

The truest voice in this labyrinth is the one that does not participate in the dialogues but still dominates the narrative. Dan, the perfect opposite of his author, is not paranoid but simply fearful; to him all of these commentaries are simply malevolent noise. Before the party he discovered that Willie Service had forged an entry in his log vilifying Zagreus as an Ape. His panicked solution was to tear out the pages and claim, if necessary, that Apes had broken in and destroyed his scathing exposure of them. The oddity of this slight joke is its extrapolation of false premises: Zagreus would not think that Dan wrote the passage, nor be displeased if Dan had; the Apes would not spy on Dan's opinions, nor be enraged by them. Dan, despite his stupidity, is unconsciously learning the essential social art, lying. Fear of appearing disrespectful, however, is an unlikely route to the self-image of a successful satirist. The mocking attitude towards Zagreus that Dan is afraid to be seen as holding is exactly the trait of Archie's that captivates Zagreus and ensures Dan's dismissal.

Dan attends the party as one of the conjurers, costumed as a 'renaissance exquisite' in silk tights, but he is generally ignored by Zagreus and left among the others. He grows even more deaf to the broadcasts. Edwards remarks that Dan's boredom with them mocks the reader's probable response ('*The Apes*', p. 134); but towards the end of the novel his reactions have become simply monotonous, although they are appropriate and sometimes funny. Concerning Osmund's Old Maid complex, Dan understood only that 'someone was terribly unhappy (though not technically a virgin)'; when he is asked why he is dressed as a girl, 'to cut a long story short Dan said nothing'. Since seeing Archie's favour with Zagreus, he has become even more demoralized. He was bewildered before, but he had a hope of Zagreus's attention in their sadomasochistic bond: 'to be *Horace's idiot* was all he asked' (p. 473). His torment increases as he realizes that his suffering is for naught: he is subject no longer to simple mistreatment only but also to the 'pathos of shifts and changes' that Bakhtin ascribes to the mock-king of the carnival (*Problems*, p. 124). The party is the climax of his apprenticeship ostensibly because at it he completes his tour by seeing the leading Apes; actually it is his last association with Pierpointism because after serving in the magic performance he will no longer be needed.

Dasenbrock writes that the central paradox of *The Apes* is that it can have no readers because its readers are implicated in the satire: If we accept Lewis's view that people are Apes and that Apes are blind to their condition, then how could we, as Apes, understand that we are Apes? (pp. 178–79). This neat formulation relies on rather abstract notions of the reader and the Ape, who both encompass degrees of understanding and identification. The paradoxical reader, Dasenbrock, is roughly comparable to the 'conscious Ape', as I have called Zagreus. Even the reader who, like the readers of Proust characterized in the first broadcast, does not recognize him- or herself in the satire is implicated in a more subtle way by Zagreus's treatment of Dan. For example, Zagreus mocks Dan for not keeping the yogic posture at the same time that he praises Dan's will as his strongest point. But Dan already perceives things in a manner similar to the yogic one, in shapes and tones; he is not distracted by the symbolic codes that Zagreus wishes to purge. Such fruitless instruction, again, is given for the benefit of the reader, who receives it at the price of watching Dan's degradation. The reader is implicated as a voyeur of Dan's abuse, in his or her amusement at this spectacle of an innocent's suffering and hopeless attachment to his suffering: 'it was *his cruelty* that made him love Horace' (p. 473). The party becomes Dan's *Walpurgisnacht*, and the reader is turned into part of the crowd at a scapegoat ritual.

After Zagreus leaves the dining room, Dan endures Ratner's explanation of Zagreus's treatment of him and other boys. He finally musters the initiative to follow Zagreus into the kitchen, which is a chaotic 'domestic inferno' where among the wild servants a drunken chef throws a knife at a pig: 'masses of bitten and half-swallowed rubbish of animal and of vegetable. The refuse of stomachs. How these armed maggots crawled in this garbage, with heavy voices, overcome by fumes. A World of bowels. Synecdoche!' (pp. 423–24). This underworld is the appropriate setting for stripping Dan of even his effeminate trappings of manhood. His 'puffing' catches fire, and he is promptly sent to Mrs Bosun to become a transvestite. Despite his horror at 'such humiliating leg-bags and breast-sacks, stomachers and calf-hose, that were contrived to make a mockery of existence, or why else have invented them at all!', Dan already wishes that he *were* a girl so that he would not be treated so roughly (p. 441). He is sent back into the crowd a shy, shrinking, old-fashioned girl, the kind who existed before

> the rampant feminist denied The Sex the bland receptive idiocy of does — *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 — alas only in Man is now to be found the true-blue Ladyhood or Girlishness — by Man invented, by Man never betrayed!' (p. 455)

In this description, the traditional courtly relationship in which Man honours and protects Woman is so sorely tested by the feminist's injunction that Man's only recourse, to preserve femininity, is to fill the role himself. Although the voice of feminine 'idiocy' in this passage mourns the decline of ladyhood, this view of the traditional feminine social role (in the oxymoronic phrase, 'once the Eternal Feminine') as Man's creation is of course a feminist one. Thus Lewis the rampant misogynist may claim that his criticism of women concerns their submission to a socialized standard, and that it is no different in that regard from his view of conventional masculinity, which, he writes, is deemed 'natural' because it is 'profitable' (*ABR*, p. 249).

Now 'an outcast of sex', Dan wallows in self-pity, especially when he realizes that he cannot use either lavatory and sees Zagreus, who calls him 'a girl in a thousand', joking with Archie in the men's. His outfit encourages him to feel spurned and helpless, and Caldicott's assault reveals how well his customary behaviour fits this attire. It is then, as Dan is breaking into tears, that Blackshirt first appears, with a 'voice of the coldest command, in accents that immediately dispelled the treacherous mists of period-illusion'. Blackshirt has seen Dan's dossier and knows all about 'Horace's idiot'. He is annoyed at having to guard Dan until the magic show, but he takes charge of him because, Zagreus says, Pierpoint wishes it. At first Dan is afraid of Blackshirt's contemptuous bearing, but against such harsh masculinity he gradually succumbs to his costume. He worries whether he is being 'too missish' and whether Blackshirt is so quiet because 'perhaps the young man did not like girls'. During Blackshirt's 'anatomy' in the library, a chance word thrills Dan because in it he feels 'the perfect presence of Zagreus'. Blackshirt is suddenly 'dear to him' because he is a conduit of the same voice of Pierpoint through which Dan learned to love Zagreus: 'He even would have been capable of crying *Long Live Pierpoint!*', who was the pretext for his suffering (p. 559). Although Blackshirt, his rescuer and protector, is some consolation to Dan after Zagreus's desertion, at his first taste of champagne Dan conceives an over-powering urge to drown his depression in drink. His drunkenness reduces him further to a passive thing; and when Blackshirt helps him from the ground and tries to lead him back into the house, their intimacy makes Dan's girlishness even more pronounced: 'ah these men (he smiled) they're all the same!'; 'Well! he would not like to be married to a man like this who was *jealous* into the bargain' (pp. 574, 578).

Like the bifurcation of the critical intelligence in this drama into Pierpoint and Zagreus, and like Zagreus's ambiguous relation to Apery, Dan's role is also complex. Dan combines aspects of two archetypal figures, the shaman and the scapegoat. In his discussion of shamanism in *The Art of Being Ruled*, Lewis carefully avoids either endorsing or dismissing the existence of occult powers and the possibility of harnessing them by magic. The determination of a shaman is ambiguous: shamanism might be either the genuine vocation of a preternaturally sensitive young man or a refuge from the rigours of active life sought by some who failed the male initiation rites. These latter, 'despised and rejected', call on the supernatural for help: by feigning femininity they may acquire at least the formidable appearance to their tribesmen of possessing occult powers (pp. 362–63). The argument in his dossier for the possibility of Dan's prophetic powers is not persuasive, but it does indicate Zagreus's reasoning concerning Dan's initiation.

Although Dan is not positively effeminate, he has the 'fey' characteristics of a typical shaman: shyness, hyper-sensitivity, and dislike of action. From the promptness with which he is sent to Mrs Bosun and from the fact that a piece in the magic performance presents him as a maiden, in retrospect it appears that Zagreus had intended him to become a girl. That the circumstances in which Dan's costume catches fire are not shown makes Archie's matchstick-throwing suspect. As a girl or hermaphrodite, Dan first symbolizes the docile nature of the young London protégés that constitutes the real appeal for their patrons; his change may also indicate that he has failed his initiation into the severely masculine discipline of Pierpoint's teachings. His 'genius' is as mythical as are the shaman's occult powers. In a surprising passage, however, Dan does have a visionary experience, which ironically brings him close to repudiating Zagreus. His darkest moment occurs when Zagreus's chatter produces in him a terrifying flashback of the Irish Easter Rebellion. In this hallucinatory sequence — 'glimpses of a country that was beneath this land — in which they were locked' — he hears, according to the yogic method, a fundamental anger in Zagreus's voice and passes judgement on the entire scene: 'Nothing could live thought Dan, or *love* thought he and sighed, where he had been looking' (pp. 416–18).

In *The Lion and the Fox*, Lewis quotes a description of an Aztec scapegoat ritual. A captive is given the name of the god to whom he will be sacrificed and is treated for a period with all of the honours due to the god. He is 'carefully chosen [. . .] on the ground of his personal beauty', and after his death in the May festival, another takes his place (pp. 139–40). Dan is also chosen for his beauty; given the name of the god of the society to which he is presented, 'genius'; and if the Strike in the novel occurs at the same time of year as the historical one, is also replaced in early May, soon after Easter, the Christian version of the primitive scapegoat 'holiday'. Lewis's citation leads to an interpretation of Shakespeare as an 'executioner' in his tragedies. Pierpoint, named for Britain's hangman, is usually considered the *Apes'* executioner, although no Ape besides his own associate Ratner is ever threatened; the name is actually the only indication that Pierpoint has planned Dan's role. The combination of Zagreus's Pierpointism and his fondness for youth is Dan's 'mechanical trap'. We turn now to the magic performance, featuring Dan's 'vanish', a parodic scapegoat ritual that symbolizes the meaning of his entire apprenticeship.

NOTES

1. Besides the similarity of the critic Shodbutt to Zagreus and of the stupid young 'genius', Donald Butterboy, to Dan, many scenes and dramatic relationships resemble those in *The Apes*: Sir Titus's interest in young Osorio Potter matches Caldicott's in Dan; the assault of the lascivious Baby Bucktrout on the gardener recalls Dan's experience at Mélanie's; Baby's rough nurse, Miss Corse, is another Mrs Bosun; Mrs Wellesley-Crook's promotion of Butterboy extends Pamela Farnham's indulgence of Jimmie. Features of the Lenten party that I will discuss presently also have their analogues: the chatter at the party resembles the Finnian Shaws' querulous speech; there is a similar ridicule of the nineties' reputation for vice. Altogether the novel appears to be a hasty draft in which Lewis is at his slackest and most careless as a stylist; the crudity of its sarcasm at least serves to show by contrast how thoroughly the theme of mockery is developed into a structural principle in *The Apes*.
2. *Vile Bodies* (1930; repr. Boston: Little, Brown, 1958) pp. 40–43 (Chapter 3), 131–32 (Chapter 6).
3. Pearson, pp. 190–92. Lewis alters certain biographical facts, probably to avoid libel charges: Sacheverell (Phoebus) was married, not Osbert (Osmund), who preferred young male companions. The 'pets' are imported from the Continent. The Sib is modelled on Ada Leverson, the confidante of Oscar Wilde, who called her 'the Sphinx'; Osbert visited her in Italy and collected lore of the nineties (Pearson, pp. 163, 199). Knut, who I do not think has been identified before, resembles the excitable Russian painter Pavel Tchelitchew, who lived in Paris and whose career Edith made her cause (pp. 233–42).
4. In a Letter to the Editor (*Enemy News* 33 (Winter 1991), 26–27), Brown summarizes the discussion of the issue in his *Intertextual Dynamics Within the Literary Group: Joyce, Lewis, Pound & Eliot: The Men of 1914* (London: Macmillan, 1990).
5. Pearson, pp. 53–55, 90–103, 69–73, 131, 154.
6. *TWM*, p. 80; quoted in SueEllen Campbell, p. 137.
7. *The Apes*, p. 405. See Baudrillard's discussion of the demise of history and subjectivity in 'transpolitical' transparency and ecstasy in *Fatal Strategies*, ed. by Jim Fleming, trans. by Philip Beitchman and W. G. J. Niesluchowksi (1983; New York: Semiotext(e)-Pluto, 1990), pp. 7–24.
8. 'The Perennial Fashion — Jazz', in *Prisms*, trans. by Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981), pp. 119–32 (p. 122).
9. p. 132. Some students of Adorno see this essay as an unfortunate aberration; it should be remembered that both writers were treating primarily New Orleans-style, or 'big-band', jazz. We may think of jazz, in light of its later developments, as a relatively esoteric or highbrow, rather than popular, genre; a closer analogue today to their concerns is rock music.
10. *Vile Bodies*, which features a publicity hoax involving the gossip column, also does this in a more brisk and light-hearted manner.
11. 'The Lewis Vortex: Art and Politics as Masks of Power', in *Wyndham Lewis: Litteratural Pittura*, ed. by Giovanni Cianci, pp. 167–70 (p. 170).

12. Lewis's scandalous argument that the freedom of modern democracy would produce a fetishization of the very psychopathology of everyday life has a particular resonance today, when the Apes' preoccupation with youth and cultivation of neuroses have reached a perfect reductive synthesis in the 'wounded inner child' of the 'recovery' movement. The fantastic mechanization of the external method, which depicts the alienation of the industrial subject from the rural Wild Body, does not seem far-fetched when compared to the present fatalism of the addictive body that necessitates a mechanistic 'de-programming'.
13. Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism*, rev. edn (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987), pp. 230–32, 254–55.
14. *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism*, trans. by John and Necke Mander (1958; London: Merlin Press, 1963), p. 24; quoted in Eysteinsson, p. 28. For a summary and discussion of Lukacs's position on modernism, see Eysteinsson, pp. 26–30, 192–97.
15. Chapman, p. 105; Materer, p. 90; Edwards, Afterword, p. 633.

CHAPTER FIVE

CROOKED MIRRORS: THE DEMISE OF INNOCENCE AND OLD ENGLAND

The Vanish

I have referred to Zagreus's magic performance, the climax of *The Apes*, as a mock virgin-sacrifice, but this is a convenient shorthand expression. There are at least three planned highlights in the event before Blackshirt's even more dramatic disruption. Ratner and Dan share the spotlight, with Ratner's parts framing Dan's. Neither piece involving Dan is completed, and the role of scapegoat is unexpectedly transferred to Ratner. In the first trick, which passes smoothly, Ratner, the Split-Man, is cut in half and restored. We see him, through Dan's eyes, as he comes offstage with a 'drugged look of stupid power', 'a cruel look'. Although he was only '*the victim* — as it were of a peculiar magical street-accident', he has 'tasted one of the satisfactions of power — *to be seen* — since does not all power that is *real* exact that it shall be *visible* — does not God always desire to manifest Himself!'. Ratner is intoxicated from having participated in 'a flesh and blood *event* — a *time-truth*. [. . .] It was a description of miracle — upon the historical plane of visible truth' (p. 587). The great significance attached to a commonplace piece of technical illusionism in this passage reflects Ratner's resentment at his social obscurity as well as his complex about his appearance. The passage is also an archetypal description of ritual, the spellbound attention of a crowd upon an act that does what Lewis maintains that tragic or ritual art should do: it threatens death, or makes 'the salutary pretence of doing so' (*ABR*, p. 350); the trick is called a 'mock-execution'. The necessity of power's manifestation also has implications concerning the conspicuous concealment of 'that invisible magnifico Pierpoint'. That the source of authoritative knowledge in this society requires secrecy suggests that overt expressions of power, such as the Apes like to brandish, are nothing but technical tricks. On the other hand, one may see Zagreus's performance, particularly the next tricks involving Dan, as manifesting symbolically the 'real' meaning of the devious practical joke that he has been pursuing all along.

Still drunk, and distraught with sorrow that Zagreus is kinder to a rabbit than to him, Dan has remained backstage while Archie helps with the props and studies such devices as a fishing line from Zagreus's sleeve. For the featured 'vanish', Zagreus coaches Dan to press a button in the cupboard that drops and raises a partition. Dan practises it eagerly like a happy pet: finally given a task that he is equal to, he *plays*, as the Apes and Zagreus have done throughout, for the first time in the novel. But at his moment of truth on the stage, his nervousness causes a nosebleed of such fantastic proportions that it leaks through the cupboard floor; cries of 'Blood!' arise from the audience, and the trick is spoiled. Dan is hastily wiped up for the next piece, which is called simply 'the play'. It consists of Dan sitting before a mirror while Zagreus recites an encomium of him as a beautiful maiden, a compact of the fairest body-parts found in all the regions of Europe, as in a sonnet from the period when boys represented women on the English stage. Zagreus gets only as far as the line 'after she hath been married a small while and the black ox hath trodden on her toe, she will be so much altered thou wilt not know her' (p. 593). Dan's embarrassed blushing bursts a blood-vessel and the nosebleed resumes; then his 'blackshirted deliverer' in the audience raises his fist in a fascist salute and stops the performance.

The vanish is a metaphor for Dan's dismissal from his apprenticeship; as such, it resembles the disappearance through a trapdoor of Dryden's Mac Flecknoe, who was also, like Dan, 'confirmed in full stupidity'. Its basic purpose, as Wagner says, is to show what should be done with the Apes (p. 249). As a 'genius', Dan represents the Apes — the idiocy of their child-art and their imposture. Only one other critic, Thomas Kush, sees Dan's role as a 'symbolic death', but his reasons for doing so are entirely different from mine.[1] The precise meaning of Dan's two 'tricks' is difficult to ascertain because Dan is a hybrid and oxymoronic figure, with a different relation to his 'executioner' from that to his audience.

In the passage on the Aztec sacrifice in *The Lion and the Fox*, Lewis notes the ambiguity of the scapegoat's function: the death of a surrogate god may be a purgation in which the misfortunes and sins of the people are conferred onto him and borne away; or his death at the peak of his vitality may ensure the continuation of a natural or supernatural power. Lewis traces the parallel function of the king in primitive and medieval cultures and the modern analogue. The primitive king is a creature of a different order from his subjects, endowed with supernatural powers; his sacrifice is a payment for his 'semi-divine eminence'. The medieval king played 'the game of the One and the Many' with his nobles: he was the 'screen' behind which they sheltered and the object of their 'jealous solicitude and disguised hatred' (pp. 122–23). This universal propensity in people to cast their troubles upon some 'responsible principle', to make a '*herd-war against the head*', and to destroy or corrupt the divine is expressed in the modern age by a 'universal organized revolt against authority' in which the 'common man' of democracy or the socialists' proletariat serves as the protective 'screen': 'Human beings are congeries of parasites subsisting on The Individual. [. . .] And anything representing the principle of individuality they attack' (pp. 135–37).

We have seen that Pierpoint plays the role of the simultaneously revered and resented Lion for the Keins' circle, and that Osmund has a parasitic relation to Lionhood similar to the Keins. The Apes' presumption of genius is essentially an attack on authentic genius, the Lion or the individualistic artist. Dan is inserted into this situation as an ambiguous symbol of both the god that the Apes pretend to serve, genius, and the one that they use as a 'screen', 'genius' in quotation marks. But he is not a true scapegoat; he is not killed or even beaten in earnest. In the vanish he was to be restored, as the Split-Man was. Lewis wrote in *Time and Western Man* that while most magic tricks are vanishing tricks, it is a more difficult magic to make things endure. The vanish symbolizes the specious nature of the Apes' 'genius' and also the 'Great God Flux' of the time-cult, whose subjectivism makes the material world vanish (pp. 359–60). The 'play' is closer to a sacrifice, although there is still no pretence of death; it presents rather an image of soilure or despoliation. A mock-scapegoat is a reflexive notion, since a scapegoat is a surrogate figure or a mock-god to begin with; but it comprehends the ambiguity of Dan's spectacle, and it is a fitting description of the fate of the carnival king.

Carnival discrowning differs from the scapegoat ritual insofar as the mock-king is not actually killed but is only ridiculed and symbolically beaten in the spirit of 'joyful relativity'. The carnival king does resemble the primitive scapegoat in that he is part of a cyclical pattern: his 'ambivalent' and 'constructive' death celebrates 'all-annihilating and all-renewing time' and 'the very process of replaceability, and not the precise item that is replaced'. Like the scapegoat, the king of misrule is the 'antipode of a real king, a slave or jester' (Bakhtin, *Problems*, pp. 124–25). Dan is Zagreus's captive and slave, but Zagreus himself is the jester. Although Dan, unlike the king of misrule, is ignorant of his role and wields no temporary authority, his impression that he is being 'killed with kindness' by Zagreus illustrates the ambivalence of carnival discrowning. Bakhtin writes, 'If carnivalistic ambivalence should happen to be extinguished in these images of decrowning, they degenerated into a purely negative *exposé* of a moral or sociopolitical sort' (p. 126). Because of Dan's dual capacity as a pseudo-genius and an actual youth, his humiliation includes both a negative or satiric function and a more universal significance. Despite the purgative dimension of the act, Zagreus does not exhibit the bitterness of Kein and Osmund towards their scapegoats; he uses Dan to reveal the comedy of Apery. Similarly, Zagreus can be distinguished from the Apes by the inflections that they each give to the secondary carnival rituals — disguise, mystification, flattery, hospitality, and verbal agon; while theirs is earnest and selfish, his is playful and sociable.

In these two tricks, Dan 'perishes' artistically, as Zagreus said that he would *without* Pierpoint's guidance, in two senses: his brief career as an artist ends, and he perishes in an artistic capacity, symbolically. 'Genius' is either wealth or youth, and for Zagreus, youth is a true god rather than a screen. With Zagreus's series of boys, and with Archie waiting literally in the wings, Dan is an apt figure for an annually dying and reviving god. Zagreus honours Dan during his reign in accordance with the custom of the primitive scapegoat; his elaborate vitalist costume supports the impression of a true sacrifice that celebrates youth and life. But, as Zagreus of course knows, Dan resembles the Apes, mock-geniuses, not true genius. Zagreus mocks him, and indeed previously abused him before the hour of this ritual, as a surrogate for the Apes. He promotes Dan to 'eminence' not to honour the Apes' god but to expose it as a sham.

Since at the culmination of his apprenticeship into the masculine spirit of Pierpoint, Dan is treated as an innocent maiden, he suggests a shaman as a rejected male. By making Dan a girl, Zagreus has extended the youth-journalist's scheme, which assumes all women to be young, to portray youth as feminine, thereby insinuating the actual qualities that the Apes seek in their protégés. The image of soilure represents what Zagreus has done in sending Dan among the Apes, although none of them succeeded as well as Mélanie. The description of sex in the play as degradation and ruin also reflects the neurotic fears of the many epicene or asexual Apes themselves, including the two Finnian Shaw brothers. After bearing the illustrious name of genius, Dan, the king who refuses to perform and rule, has become purely a body. Earlier he lamented that he had 'nothing left but a name'. As the slave is the prototype of the king of misrule, the name 'genius' is the 'slave-mark' by means of which Dan was paraded about; the degradation of 'genius' exposes the illusory nature of language. In this scene he is reduced unequivocally to a prop, a mere thing, which even he knows cannot be a genius. He turns from a subject, a lens upon the Apes' world, to an object in a ceremonial display. He is a hollow symbol, the phantom 'Its Emptiness' to which Fredigonde curtseyed. The demise of a purported genius reflects the Apes' hostility towards real artists; and the temporal succession that Dan is part of, with Archie, is set in contrast to the Finnian Shaws' spiteful abuse of the older generation. But Dan's masquerade is only the novel's focal parody. All of the local satire is based upon the discrepancy highlighted here between public image and private character. The Apes are also effigies immortalized by the spectacle of the novel.

It may seem strained to attribute a mythic dimension to these acts when little significance is given to them in the narrative or by the participants in the drama, certainly none of the order accorded to the Split-Man trick. The vanish is received only as mystifying technical trick, until the blood belies Dan's supposed disappearance and provokes laughter. This trick, which was always spoken of as the essence of the performance, passes anti-climactically. The absence of emphasis in the narrative results partly from its being presented from Dan's point of view and partly because both tricks are interrupted; still, although we do not know how the play would have ended, it is doubtful that Dan's treatment would have attained any communal symbolic meaning. The Apes might recognize Dan as the young man presented to them as a genius, but they scarcely noticed anything unusual about that at the time. Many are familiar with Zagreus's habit of adopting and dropping boys, but this ritualization of the process is never acknowledged.

Besides the intrinsic nature of the acts in the context of Dan's earlier treatment, however, there are secondary reasons for suspecting an intended meaning of a mock-scapegoating. The tricks are designed by Pierpoint, all of whose words are themselves tricks. It is unlikely that Zagreus would give the performance, or even attend the party, unless these 'gimcrack mysteries' had some ulterior significance. He describes the party as the grand culmination of Dan's apprenticeship in 'the Gentle Art of Bearding the Ape' (p. 322); and there was no bearding, such as transpired at the Keins', earlier in this party. Zagreus's designation of Ratner as 'the devil of my Morality' also indicates an allegorical meaning in the performance. The tricks resemble his practical jokes, which pass into legend even if they are ridiculed, as when Jimmie says, 'But you have to say over and over to yourself *he once gave the end of a tape to man in a street*, and so on [. . .] it simply doesn't help you to bear up — he *is* such a crashing bore' (p. 217).

The question of *intended* meaning in Dan's role is important because the vanish is not so much a literary symbol as a symbol internal to the drama, a mystifying symbol to the Apes. Dan's symbolic function is thus similar to the function of the internal 'plot' against the Apes, which creates the novel's intrigue more than its repetitious quixotic structure does. Dan's portrayal and treatment in this scene symbolize the plot, the promotion of a simulacrum. The ritual confirms that Dan's entire apprenticeship was a practical joke, and that the apprenticeship was itself the ritual. It is precisely the obscurity and confusion in the meaning of these events that make them carnival derangements, which scatter riddles rather than establish definite meaning. The Apes' blindness to their significance confirms the condition for which they are mocked through Dan. The very impossibility of a collective understanding of this symbolic representation defines this society. The overall effect of mystification might be similar the impression that Lewis felt in the negligible reception of his polemics. SueEllen Campbell surveys Lewis's problematic relation to his audience, because of his sarcastic rhetoric, as revealed in his second-person remarks; by the last of his books on the twenties *Zeitgeist*, he is writing, 'Heaven knows to what public it is addressed.'[2]

But ironically, the dominant impression made on the audience by Dan's two tricks, although it is unintended, is fitting. It follows from the accidental event that ruins the tricks and in which Dan himself provides the essential and most vivid feature of the scapegoat ritual — blood. The mock-sacrifice of the mock-woman failed because she bled in actuality, as real women do. The main impression that results is of Dan's suffering, and of Zagreus's repeated subjection of him to unseemly display, which are in fact the most accurate characterization of Dan's experience. This image conveys Dan's treatment as a scapegoat more directly and forcefully than the tricks, exposes Zagreus's sadism, and creates a sense of misrule. An innocent is sacrificed not for the sake of a community but for Zagreus to undermine one.

All of these possible implications, however, are eclipsed for the audience of the performance by the sequel. Blackshirt leaps to the stage and declares that Zagreus 'cannot treat Pierpoint in this way!': 'If it rested with Pierpoint he would allow himself to be plundered by anybody. They would pick his brains — and then not pay!' (p. 594). One expected Blackshirt to protest the cruelty to the fake genius, not a material theft from the real one. Blackshirt accuses Zagreus of betraying Pierpoint: 'You are playing the same game Zagreus as the people whom he denounces — and whom *you* denounce.' Quite casually Zagreus stops the play: 'I will see Pierpoint tomorrow and explain. It doesn't matter.' He continues to banter 'good-naturedly' with Blackshirt, and Blackshirt righteously maintains his loyalty to Pierpoint. Zagreus declares, 'Starr-Smith! [. . .] You are the only man in this room that I like!', giving Dan another wound. He reminds Blackshirt that he has explained his 'difficulties' to him in confidence. When Blackshirt asks, 'Then tell me why you have not —', Zagreus stops him and calls for the curtain. This entire exchange, not only the truncated question, produces only mysteries. It is uncertain whether Blackshirt believes that Zagreus has made a doctrinal error by distorting Pierpoint's script or has fallen deeper in arrears by appropriating it faithfully. It is uncertain what Pierpoint meant by the play if he objects to the cruelty to young men and if by presenting it Zagreus acts like an Ape.

Because of another complication, these issues are never resolved. At this point Ratner directs the full force of his practised smirk at Blackshirt, as though mocking Blackshirt's earnestness or his difficulties with Zagreus. Ratner keeps grinning at him testily after Blackshirt objects: 'Ratner's eye had the better of the argument. Steadily it milked away at [Blackshirt] in puissant glances of seductive insult — drawing that famous *violence* out of him' (p. 596). Blackshirt finally gives him a pummeling, and it is Ratner who 'vanishes', over the edge of the stage. Blackshirt's real violence supervenes upon the mock-violence of Zagreus's ritual. Ratner, the only one who sympathized with Dan, becomes the scapegoat in Dan's place, although not for Dan's sake. His motivation seems simply his 'fierce disdainful masochism' and his having had his taste for being a starring victim whetted by his own trick. He is a true scapegoat, as Dan was not, a scapegoat for Blackshirt's frustration in managing his rival Zagreus and the entire Pierpointian enterprise. He is beaten because he is an Ape who has become entangled in Pierpoint's affairs.

During the assault, Zagreus mysteriously turns his back to read a letter that is never heard of again. Afterwards he checks Ratner and tells the audience that Osmund will sponsor Blackshirt against Dempsey, concluding that a 'resourceful member of the audience, in substituting his own melodrama for mine, has proved an excellent entertainer'. Zagreus's indifference and even amusement at the disruption indicates that for him it has not spoiled but has rather improved the performance; it created a more 'real' and dramatic image of 'the pictorial integer' of executioner and victim than the symbolic sacrifices and even Dan's blood had. Blackshirt is the dithyrambic spectator with a vengeance: he is drawn into the dance in his attempt to curtail it. While he is an amateur who supplants the formal, if not professional, art of Zagreus, he also redefines the performance as a theft: he is a gangster bookkeeper who thrashes a loan shark. If Dan's symbolic significance was obscure, the meaning of the argument between Zagreus and Blackshirt, and of the beating of Ratner, who is more directly representative of the audience than Dan is, must be wholly lost on it. The overall impression left is of the Pierpointians' comic disintegration in internal feuding; their own 'art', this theatrical performance, is as vexed with jealousy and parasitism as that of the Apes.

The broadcasts at first appeared voluntary and extravagant acts of devotion to Pierpoint and his ideas. In setting a price on Pierpoint's text, Blackshirt has turned Zagreus's relation to Pierpoint upside down. The image of Pierpoint is also inverted: he is now someone as unworldly as Dan who does not know or mind that he is being exploited, despite the class credentials that should make him more wary: Isabel Kein had said, 'One of his relatives was convicted of embezzlement the other day. [. . .] Yes I suppose you'd call him a gentleman' (p. 297). Blackshirt's vigilance makes Pierpoint's affairs a caricature of the financial dilemma of the avant-garde. Esoteric artists such as Pierpoint depend upon patronage and risk being compromised by their association with wealth. In this case the wealthy patron, Zagreus, involved with an alleged usurer himself, begins stealing back the product. This dispute is comical because the sums involved are small and Pierpoint's ideas are so unwelcome that they have virtually no commercial value, as neither Lewis's polemics nor *The Apes of God* had. The upshot of the polemics is usually taken to be a recommendation of an authoritarian political structure in which an intellectual elite governs cultural life. But as Jameson and SueEllen Campbell observe, Lewis's novels belie any such possibility.[3] In this one, the authoritative vision of Pierpoint is distorted as it is disseminated among and by his subordinates. SueEllen Campbell argues that the more prevalent social model in Lewis's criticism is actually three-tiered: creative individuals; the uncritical masses; and, between them, a class of exploitative 'middlemen', whose flourishing is the truest sign of a decadent society. Zagreus is a parodic middleman; although he is not blatantly avaricious or demagogic, his lack of responsibility is evident in the freedom that he takes with Pierpoint's material.

Neither the symbolic nor the actual scapegoating is cathartic; Blackshirt's violence has a contrary, sympathetic effect on the audience. The crowd departs in a pandemonium, stealing one another's furs, cars, and husbands. When people complain, the Finnian Shaws indignantly deny responsibility and suggest that they steal things back from the others. This brief scene fulfills the prediction of a regression to savagery in the broadcast on crime. The anarchic travesty of a collectivization of property among the wealthy suggests that the Apes' destruction will not require a revolution. Zagreus's own theft from Pierpoint has led indirectly to the audience's spontaneous imitation of it. The specific nature of the tricks becomes less important than their presentation of an image that provokes a powerful response. Although the result is accidental, it seems as though the tricks were actually a goad to audience participation, producing a collective, carnivalesque performance 'without footlights', a bacchic frenzy (Bakhtin, *Problems*, p. 122).

The indiscriminate mixing of the signs of social identity in the crowd — possessions, clothing, and mates — is properly carnivalesque; that it is done in earnest and atomizes the crowd is not. Yet it is unclear what it means to call this climax an *anti*-carnival, as Alan Munton does the party as a whole. Carnival creates an image antithetical to normal society; the opposite of carnival is everyday reality. Earlier in the party, when Ratner engages in small talk with Jonathan Bell, he thinks, 'This was normal life'; the entire foregoing action, during his association with Zagreus, was not. Whatever the value of its transformations, carnival is inevitably perverse, not idyllic or utopian. This scene portrays a violation of the official basis of the social hierarchy, private property, but it is perhaps rather only an exaggeration of its true basis in theft. In a society whose reality is based on a belief in costumes rather than the physical existence that they disguise, the role of the carnival agents, or Lewis's intellectual elite, must be oppositional and subversive. The hierarchy remains intact, and the efficacy of the carnival element is limited to exposing corruption without diminishing it.

Afterwards Zagreus leads his troupe through the corridors to remove one of the Great Saloon doors from its hinges, despite Osmund's feeble protest. Outside in the dawn, for a brief, surprising pastoral moment, Zagreus plays the flute while the others dance upon the door until a shot rings out. This symbolic violation of the threshold explains the purpose of the Pierpointians' attendance; it also recalls the indignity that Zagreus felt while waiting outside the Keins' door. Zagreus told Osmund that the door is 'essential': the symbol is essential; the action to which it gives a meaning — the infiltration of the Apes' stronghold — requires this clue. The power resides in the emblem, the visible sign.

The General Strike

In Part XIII, 'The General Strike', Dan is dismissed and Zagreus takes Archie to the Follets'. In a letter to Dan, Zagreus claims that he must reduce expenditures and that Dan has proved that he is not 'fitted for these severe exercises of the intellect' by his violent, overbearing, 'insubordinate spirit'. Dan is blamed for assaulting Ratner, breaking Blackshirt's rib, kicking Colonel Ponto, and damaging Osmund's door, all of which resulted in bills. Pierpoint is reportedly anxious for Zagreus's personal safety because Dan is a dangerous bully, unsuited to a parliamentary democracy, in which everyone must act small whatever his or her size. Zagreus adds that he has convinced Pierpoint to get rid of Ratner, who is not a minor satan but only a bourgeois Ape. Since Zagreus still needed an anti-genius to serve the function of the '*catharsis* of the attic drama', he has taken on Archie's uncle, a specimen of 'one of the *worst* and *most diabolical* sephardic stocks in all Galicia' who is not merely 'humanly bad' but is completely 'topsy-turvy'. Zagreus concludes by cruelly praising Margolin as the greatest genius but one (pp. 608–11). As Dan was praised for a quality he lacked, genius, now he is blamed for another, belligerence. The twin scapegoats, Dan and Ratner, are replaced by a real genius and a real devil. Wagner writes that in this letter Zagreus is capitulating to Pierpoint and proving 'an obedient party disciple' (p. 250). But Dan's dismissal seems to have been planned in advance; with the advent of Archie, Dan, who has served his purpose, became expendable. This pack of lies rather reinforces the impression that Zagreus had been using Dan all along: it is a last trick to make Dan vanish.

Owing apparently to alcoholic amnesia, besides his undiminished gullibility, Dan sadly concludes that he has been 'found out'. He is frightened of the powerful muscles in his hand and has a sensation of madness. Mélanie has sent for him, and as he walks to her house, he is puzzled by the picketers and the policemen riding buses, then accosted by gentlemen in cars, whom he does not know are citizen-volunteers taking people to work while public transport is out during the Strike. He pretends to window-shop, but the nude mannequins embarrass him. At Mélanie's he learns that he is to meet her in France because the Strike has made London unsafe.

In the absence of newspapers, there are rumours of riots and killings, but no evidence of them: the city was 'up in arms and as silent as the grave'. In the wealthy neighbourhoods 'all was dead and pleasant. But it was a death of life — the throbbing circulation of incessant machines, in thunderous rotation, in the arteries of London was stopped' (p. 619). There is no suggestion of militant action or a real threat to the social order. Two representatives of the working class, a gatekeeper and a constable, guard the Follet mansion indifferently; they are royalist and 'rothschildean', although the latter is also 'languidly muscovite' to be on the safe side. The historical strike was planned long in advance and was the subject of much publicity. That the fictional one was never mentioned before suggests the degree of the Apes' narcissism and removal from ordinary life, their obliviousness to a national industrial crisis and to their own exploitation. The British miners struck, and got support from other unions, not for better terms but to protest against wage cuts and longer hours; and it is suggested that the Finnian Shaws' money has come partly from mining, as the Sitwells' did. But the Strike still should have appealed to the Apes' love of rumours and their thrill at the prospect of police brutality. Zagreus ignores the Strike as well, even in this episode; he and Archie are interested only in capital for themselves. This disjunction between the main narrative and the frame contributes to an overall effect of anti-climax: Pierpoint never appears; no direct confrontation between the Apes and anti-Apes occurs; the magic performance is not completed; Zagreus's relation to Pierpoint becomes steadily less certain; and Dan, whose 'genius' is virtually ignored throughout, makes an ignominious exit, as naïve as ever. This sense of inconsequence makes the sudden reversals of fortune in the last scene the more striking.

The significance of the Strike as a sign of the end of an era is strengthened by the death of Lady Fredigonde in an improbable conclusion that combines parodies of unexpected inheritance *and* marriage plots. A repetition of the situation in the opening scene, with Zagreus arriving with another 'genius' ('I really believe this time there is no doubt about it!'), completes the cyclical pattern of the plot. By a shift of perspective towards the new protégé, the action now seems to be framed as much by Zagreus's first sight of Archie and Archie's official presentation at the seat of the family money as by Dan's enlistment and dismissal. The irony is that by chance this time Zagreus's claim is not fantastic.

Fredigonde tells him first that Sir James, sitting in her room, is 'shamming sleep', then that he is dead. She killed her husband in the manner of a primitive satirist. She stole his bell so that he could not call a servant, and 'for once he was compelled to listen to what I had to say. And he died of rage at what he heard!' (p. 622). Zagreus had asked her for ten thousand pounds, and she has thus 'circumvented' Dick Whittington, Sir James's preferred heir. She proposes marriage to Zagreus, who promptly accepts with the ambiguous declaration 'There is no woman I would sooner marry!'. As Fredigonde's crippled stumps 'clip' Zagreus and her eyes close in the manner of a conventional virgin's for their nuptial kiss, there is a 'dark spasm' within her and *Death-the-Drummer* is heard again in the street. She dies of passion or happiness while the song playing outside — 'Whoddle ah *doo* | Wen *yoo* | Are *far* | *Away* | An *I* | am *bloo*' — expresses Zagreus's financial predicament with the loss of his 'bride'. The last image is of Margolin, his 'elf-like nigger-bottom-wagging' to the music, smiling at himself in the 'mighty victorian looking glasses'.

This preposterous parody of the conventional happy ending of the comedy of manners, in the most extreme misalliance of the novel, reveals the meaning of certain events in the first chapters: Zagreus's whispering to the Follets' lawyer in the hall; his icy courtesy to his rival Dick; his misquotation to Dan, 'Tread softly because you tread on my dreams'; and Fredigonde's contemplated recourse to a 'compulsion of words'. Fredigonde, near-dead, wanted to possess Zagreus by words as the dead possess the living; doing so kills her (allowing for the additional strain of killing her husband with words). In retrospect it also appears that Zagreus's cavalier attitude towards Pierpoint's accounts, and perhaps towards the Apes generally, was based upon his prospect of Fredigonde's gift; Blackshirt was wise to doubt his promised explanations. As the Strike was primarily a nuisance to British commerce, not a political revolution, Fredigonde's death is a financial setback to Zagreus. His roguish scheme prospered so far beyond his expectations that it backfired. After being pressured for fifty pounds for the party costumes, he managed to wrest the family fortune from Dick, whose protégé he had also stolen, only to lose it because he succeeds too well in winning Fredigonde's favour. Instead of the ten thousand pounds, he would have acquired the entire Follet estate by marriage; but he ends up with nothing except Fredigonde's ridiculous words. Throughout the survey of the Apes, money was identified with the death of the imagination, a death symbolized by covert imitation. Here wealth is portrayed as living death; and after all his mania for youth and life, Zagreus, whom Ratner called a vamp, grabs at it enthusiastically by imitating a heterosexual.

Although he has found a better disciple, Zagreus's larger designs are thwarted. He is not as simple a satiric butt as the Apes are, but he is comical in the end for making love to death to no avail. He might only be using the duplicitous social graces required in polite society in order to obtain money to contest that society: the only possible connection between his exploitation of Dan and this stratagem is that perhaps he appealed to Fredigonde to finance his boys' training; that is, the boys also serve a simple mercenary function for him. The unverifiability of such explanations, which I have also ventured earlier, however, might indicate that standards of realistic fiction are inapplicable to this novel and this 'circus-oddity', Zagreus. Zagreus's very inconsistency makes him, more than any other character, the true apotheosis of this society, because he embodies all of its contradictions. He serves both 'philosophy' and a critical civic function, and he preys upon genius, the helpless, and the plutocracy equally. He is also the prime figure of misrule: he enjoys a period of whimsical tyranny while imitating the true authority of this society, Pierpoint; he throws the Apes into chaos at the party; and in this scene he undergoes the most sudden and extreme 'shifts and changes' of fortune in the novel. Having manœuvred his way to the verge of practical success, he is undone not by hostile social forces but by nature. Death outwits him: a corpse is the one thing that he cannot cheat. After the argument for the superiority of art to nature, Zagreus's failure, in accordance with the carnival ethos, portrays the triumph of nature over art.

In the opening scene Fredigonde told Dick that the passion of hate was as unbecoming as that of love in the elderly. In this scene she exhibits both; and her grotesque demonstration of senile romance indeed results in the ultimate sort of 'unbecoming' manners — to drop dead, a literal unbecoming in the Bergsonian sense. The coincidence of the paralysis of the nation and Fredigonde's seizure suggests the end of her class's rule and of Archie's 'Old England', but the symbolic correlation is intricate. The Strike validates Pierpoint's criticism of the Apes and historically contextualizes their indulgence in fantasy by showing its material consequences. Revolution would be the definitive subversion of the social hierarchy that the Apes enjoy. As their personal pretensions invite Zagreus's taunts, their economic and social abuses foment insurrection; with their faddish patronage of jazz, they mock the threat of class antagonism. The refusal of labour to obey the government's order to work may be compared to the failure of Fredigonde's heart (the physical organ) to support the demands made by her fancy. But for a moment after her spasm, Fredigonde is still able to produce 'the chirping accents of first-love'. In a comparable manner, Britain continues to function during the Strike with the aid of gentleman- and student-volunteers, and indeed will live on afterwards as a rotting 'carcass' while industry makes gradual concessions to labour.

Since the Strike was less violent than Fredigonde's passion and failed, it is itself more a symbol than an actuality, the symbol of an eventuality or an evolution rather than revolution. The failure of the Strike allowed British politics to maintain the appearance of stability. The successful defence by the government and the mine owners, which corresponds to the Apes' resistance to Pierpoint's indictments, furnished Lewis with a ready-made symbol of the ambiguity of this historical moment: an anti-climactic preservation of the status quo that was nevertheless prophetic. In the long run the Strike did produce sympathy for the workers and sped the reforms that led to the welfare state of the forties. But the suspension in which *The Apes* concludes allows no thematic resolution, neither a return to stability nor a transformation. While the Strike draws attention to the inequities of the 'anonymous System' and the dissatisfaction with them, its failure confirms the effectiveness of the political mystification that permitted the Apes their prominence. The Follet money, with Dick, stays among the Apes. In the Prologue Fredigonde symbolizes death as an excruciatingly slow decay; her unseemly end here suggests that, if the working class does not have the will to dislodge its masters, the latter will commit suicide by a residual lust that their vitality is no longer equal to.

Dasenbrock's interpretation of the novel's action as leading to a stillness signifying failure seems in accord with Seidel's view, mentioned earlier, of satire's typically enacting a 'perverse neutralization of historical progression' (p. 21). But in *The Apes* this theme is complicated considerably across the levels of Fredigonde's contested inheritance, the General Strike as a merely temporary interruption of historical continuity, and the emergence of a worthy but subversive disciple. If, as Dasenbrock states, the characters are 'spun or taken off the stream of time' and into immortality, 'from life to the death of art', it is difficult to see how these figures' literary immortality differs from that of other fictional characters. Zagreus's indiscriminate appetite for boys creates an expectation that Archie is only an arbitrary replacement and that Zagreus has therefore merely returned to the beginning of the cycle but is now bereft of 'hopes, plans, and plots'. But I believe Dasenbrock forces the plot too tightly into a pattern that he discerns in Lewis's other late novels when he states that we cannot imagine any action taking place after this point (pp. 167–68); he might be hypostatizing time himself a little. Zagreus's *success* would have been more likely to result in 'the ending of plots' than this situation, in which even his meagre expense-account is threatened. Dasenbrock's interpretation usefully explains how the connection between the cessation of activity in Britain as a whole and in Zagreus's scheme reflects the continuity of the image of the vortex, with its 'still point' outside of time, in Lewis's work. But the concept of the still point applies more clearly to the detached position of Pierpoint than to a temporal moment. The concluding 'immobility' is a transition: the cycle of protégés implies continuation, not death. The other novels to which Dasenbrock compares *The Apes*, *The Revenge for Love* and *Self Condemned*, do conclude with 'corpses littered across the stage', and in them 'no Fortinbras arrives to provide an illusion of continuity and renewal' (p. 169). But *The Apes* is not a tragedy; its only death, Fredigonde's, is in fact a cheerful, Rabelaisian one. The main problem with this reading, as with most of them, is that it overlooks Archie.

After such a detailed study of the upper classes, the closing emphasis on Archie is a dramatic shift that underscores the political allegory of *The Apes*. Archie is precisely a comic Fortinbras. He represents the future, the working class attuned to the mass music of jazz, and also the decline of the aristocracy. After all of the local satire, Archie delivers the final blow to the Apes simply by showing them to be out of date. His dance, which takes place figuratively on Fredigonde's grave, mitigates an impression of stasis. He is the figure who most clearly links the main action to the framing narrative: he is 'born' from Fredigonde's symbolic death as well as from Dan's. A higher synthesis of the clown since he combines attributes of both Dan and Zagreus, he represents the 'creative power of shift-and-renewal' of the carnivalesque (Bakhtin, *Problems*, p. 124). One does not imagine that his future relations with Zagreus, Blackshirt, and Pierpoint would be static (nor, for that matter, would Dan's reunion with Mélanie). On the personal level, Archie, not Fredigonde, is Zagreus's true bride, but this makes their marriage completely unpredictable. To judge from the 'alarmist' dialogue, Archie's apprenticeship would be entirely different from Dan's. Although Archie does represent the lower orders who will supplant the Apes, he is no revolutionary; like Zagreus, he is a con-man, who switched his allegiance from Dick to the probable Follet legatee of the moment. Even if he is able to keep Archie, Zagreus, in discovering his double, is in danger of being reduced to Archie's idiot.

Mirror and Shadow

The Apes is saturated with thematic oppositions, both conventional ones and others with special importance in Lewis's thought. Obvious biological and social dichotomies — old/young; male/female; rich/poor — are fundamental to the novel's dramatic relations. In the various 'wars' between these respective camps, in the antagonism between Apes and Pierpointians, and in the ambivalent relations between masters and disciples, the characters constitute a type of differential system, in which individual identity is a function of its position among terms in a scheme. Several other pairs of terms are also thematically prominent:

life	death
art	life
mind	body
objective	subjective
space	time
not-self	self
words	things

All of these themes have been mentioned earlier. The purpose of this section is to recapitulate and synthesize the treatment of these various themes in the light of the conclusions that I have presented about the novel's patterns of plot and characterization, and thereby to examine its philosophical basis. Also pertinent to this scheme of oppositions is a curious pair of images, the mirror and the shadow, that recur throughout the novel and hold a special relation to the more abstract binary oppositions. These two images are not strictly oppositional, but they are complementary. Each separately entails a dichotomy, and both are symbolic of relations among characters and among the multiple selves within characters.

The dichotomies in the novel are unbalanced or hierarchical, but the relation of dominance is unstable and often overturned. To take the biological divisions mentioned above, the old venerate youth, and male and female become like each other or reverse roles: Dan is certain that the lesbian-Ape is a woman because of 'the indefinable something that could only be described as "masculine"' (p. 222). The central theme of the novel, mockery, encapsulates these relations. The image of mockery falls between the imitator and the imitated; since people desire to be something other, 'the different or opposite', there is no social stability. Childishness, effeminacy, and 'gilded bolshevism' are imitations of the opposite that represent attempts to escape the appearance of hierarchical dominance; but they succeed only in producing confused oxymorons, for which Dan, the moronic genius, is presented as a counter-mockery. The way in which these divisions generate the novel's dramatic conflicts is evident in the manœuvring along the axis of money. The wealthy imitate the social customs of the dispossessed, but do not forego their own privilege, which still insulates and blinds them. Poverty allows a detached vantage on wealthy society, a vantage given different expressions in Dan and Pierpoint, and in the cases of Zagreus and Margolin it inspires pragmatic energy and cleverness. (Zagreus, a bankrupt aristocrat, is the opposite sort of oxymoron from the Apes and hence their rival.) The form that this energy takes, cheating, the classic motif of the picaresque, defines the relation between the poor and the wealthy. The poor, in lieu of the public challenge of class warfare, concoct a 'trick' to counteract the institutionalized cheating of the wealthy, a trick that exploits the latter's purported abnegation of their advantage.

Dramatic relations in the novel are often reduced to overt expressions of antagonism; when they are not, the sublimated expressions are analysed into conflicting impulses. An ambiguity similar to that of the characters' social roles is present in the slightest details of the imagery, and this ambivalent fusion of contrasting elements applies as well to emotional states: the hostile courtesy in which Zagreus and Isabel Kein regard each other with a mixture of smiling and frowning; the cheerful scorn with which Matthew Plunkett's 'eyes in a blaze of derision affected to laughter, as a dark half-cousin' (p. 64). These conflicts can usually be derived from the opposed principles listed in the table above. Generally the term in the left column is valued over its counterpart; but the oppositions are not always parallel, and they are often subject to paradoxical reversals. For example, 'life' appears in both columns, and 'words' would correspond with 'time' rather than 'space'.

Life, in the sense of natural energy, is represented in *The Apes* primarily by the youth and beauty that Zagreus idolizes; his elaborate vitalistic costume indicates that his obsession differs from the casual manifestations of the popular youth-cult. Pierpoint, as a 'fountain of life', also represents vitality as intellect, creativity, and autonomy. Death is represented first naturalistically by Fredigonde's enervation; her death symbolizes the passage of generations and history. Fredigonde signifies not only stifling Victorian values in particular but also the general social inertia of tradition, property, and propriety; her passionate death marks a protest against these things as the Strike does in class terms. The Apes represent a spiritual death or a death of the imagination. They have a parasitic relation to the life of creative art and of youth; they are sterile because they desire merely the image of the artist in order to obtain social freedom. The Keins' guests prefer to be fiction instead of life, and they are consequently lost in a limbo. The Bonassus is a nuisance to its master, Phoebus, because it is 'too much alive'.

Yet art is associated with death rather than life. The view, expounded in the first broadcast, that art should be distinct from life, that is, non-mimetic, is extended to equate art with death. Art confers the stillness of death upon its subject. In 'The Dithyrambic Spectator', Lewis bolstered this theory by citing a study of Egyptian mummification that identifies the origin of Western art and civilization in this practice. The Egyptian belief in the immortality of the soul and in the double, Lewis concludes, was especially propitious for the production of art. Since the subjects' immortality depends on the accuracy of the portrait statue, 'they do not want so much to be *beautiful* as to be *like themselves* — terribly and truly like' (*DP*, p. 194). Their freedom from vanity in the face of such stakes gave the artist 'a chance of perfection':

> Indeed, in dynastic Egypt, *art* comes nearer to being *life* than at any other recorded period: and apparently for the reason that it was *death*. [. . .] The *living death* that is represented by egyptian culture is the very atmosphere for the sculptor and painter to thrive in. (p. 180)

'A vivid materialistic life', in contrast, produces the sort of 'feeble gibberish' that is found in popular modern magazines. In *The Art of Being Ruled*, Lewis contrasts the Egyptians, 'the greatest enemies of Death', with the moderns, who, although they think themselves the '*friends of Life* par excellence, [. . .] may be its most notorious enemies', because of their preoccupation with childishness, dementia, and spiritual corruption (p. 350).

Although its subject is the modern 'feeble gibberish', *The Apes* is not 'imitational and vitalist', as Lewis calls Egyptian mortuary art. His external, freeze-frame approach to anatomical movement follows the contrasting strain of abstract and geometrical Egyptian art. The Apes are not dead in the sense of being physically lethargic, as Fredigonde is. Some, such as Dick and Harry Caldicott, have great energy, but it is channelled into mechanistic patterns of behaviour. Insofar as they are reduced to the condition of animals or machines, their consciousness is deadened or obliterated by repetitive action. The defamiliarizing, 'scientific' descriptions present them as dumb matter: the Keins' guests 'launched their verbal symbolizations upon the puffs of deoxidized air' (p. 272). Lewis explodes the conventional opposition between nature and culture by presenting nature as being mechanistic. In the fracture between mind and body, the mind, to the extent that it is detached and executive, as in the case of Pierpoint's disembodied voice, is alive in contrast to the unconscious body. But the rationale for the external method is the body's precedence over the shifting speculations of the mind. In the satiric gallery, the mind is a fitful presence that is subject to the dictates of the body; it is also a mechanistic, albeit chaotic, bundle of received ideas or conditioned social reflexes.

The sharp theoretical division between mind and body is also evident in the novel's shifting alliances. Dick and Zagreus, an Ape and a Pierpointian who are the two claimants to the Follet wealth, represent respectively the body and the mind, while their respective protégés at the outset, Archie and Dan, represent the opposite. The action effects the proper match of Zagreus and Archie, 'a grotesque honeymoon of the mind', as in *Tarr* the hero leaves the docile Bertha for the intellectual Anastasya. The feminine Dan is shunted off upon the ultra-masculine Blackshirt, then left to the voluptuary Mélanie. Blackshirt, who, unlike Zagreus, enforces Pierpoint's disapproval with his body, punishes the character caught between body and mind, Ratner.

The relation between subjectivity and objectivity is similar to that between body and mind, even though the body is obviously an object and the mind the subject. To the degree that the Apes are dominated by bodily imperatives, they are limited to a subjectivist aesthetic, that is, the spontaneous expression of personal emotion without an intellectual discrimination of value. Objectivity is represented by Pierpoint's reverse-yoga, the purging of symbolic conventions and the reduction of sensations to abstract designs. In the Proustian school of fiction, a measure of objectivity is attained only in the portrayal of the villains, because the author is distanced from them; enmity, which preserves independence, is truer than alliance. Yet Pierpoint concludes the Encyclical by confessing that he is a partisan and that there is no absolute judge. As SueEllen Campbell shows, in his criticism Lewis holds that the expression of personality leads paradoxically to greater detachment. Personality differs from subjectivism in that it constitutes individuality; the subjectivism that Lewis identifies with impressionism involves a dissolution of individuality in sensation (p. 55).

The relation between the previous two pairs of terms also holds for the master-principles of Lewis's criticism, space and time. Time is identified with subjectivism, interiority, and illusion. Ratner's stream-of-consciousness fiction is a submission to subconscious flux, the random flow of association and projection. Although the body is a spatial entity, it is the subject of time; the youth-cult is a manifestation of anxiety at the process of aging. In its historical dimension time is responsible for the similar though superficially-opposite cults of novelty and nostalgia, which both attribute a significance to mere change; the confusion of this relativism is evident in the Finnian Shaws' abuse of the ancestors to whom they owe their prestige. Space, on the other hand, is associated with surface, solidity, permanence, and the real. Insofar as the mind can be detached from the body's temporal rhythms, its perception of space produces common sense and objectivity, as in the yogic exercise.

Self and not-self are the creatures of subjectivity and objectivity respectively. The self is a loose, unwieldy cluster of impulses, ideas, emotions, and reflexes. Ratner's self-disgust results because he has neither identity nor detachment; he is promiscuously scattered into his complexes and fictional heroes. The 'continuous present' of his writing involves 'too much self' and occludes the world; he envies Zagreus's thyroid surplus because under its influence 'one would scarcely know oneself'. Isabel Kein's success derives from treating her self with 'brazen contempt'. The self is an accident and a liability: Zagreus's self, left in the shape of his clothing on a hanger, is vulnerable to manipulation; the most effective flattery is to reproduce a person's self-image. The not-self, in contrast, is the intellectual internalization of the world. It represents the universalizing capacities of the mind as opposed to the constraining conditions of the body. Thus Pierpoint's method of debate is to disregard his 'private views', and the bombastic persona of his Encyclical is his 'opposite'.

Words and things have a relation similar to that of mind and body. The characters are portrayed as things with phantom minds made of the cultural refuse of words. Dan, like Betty Bligh, is treated as a thing — manhandled by Mélanie and Mrs Bosun and referred to as 'it' by the lesbian-Ape. 'A thing [...] It cannot be *a genius!*' he says; yet men worship things, as though they *contain* a genius, presumably because they are not corrupted with words. The silence of Dan, who likes the image of himself as Zagreus's doll or plaything, makes him an object of worship. Words, in contrast, exist upon a different plane than the physical one, a plane that Lewis calls death. They possess a power to control and negate things, as in Fredigonde's assault on her husband: 'Name a cat and you destroy it!' (p. 341). They have the effect of things upon Dan: the broadcasts give him indigestion; he is frightened by the literal meaning of figurative expressions; and he is repelled by the scientific sound of the word 'homosexual'. Other words also have a similar effect on Zagreus. The word 'Pierpoint' excites him, and the word 'albino' disorients him by placing him in the category of things. 'Albino' dislodges him from the insulated world of his 'real author' Pierpoint's words, into the insubstantiality of the other 'fictional mongrel facts'. Zagreus's recognition of this power, and that Pierpoint's words are tricks, is part of his magic. His and Pierpoint's real names are taboo to him; he chooses a new one for its mythic abstractness; and he lays a curse on the Keins' house. Archie's distinction is that to him words are 'potential toys': his derangement of their meaning in nonsensical word-play restores to things the power of the 'unnamed'.

In society, words are organized illusions: opportunistic journalism, romantic psychological fiction, the highbrow 'diarrhœa' of the stream-of-consciousness method, the sublimated paranoia of crime fiction, the self-validating ritual of the Gilhooter performance. The magical property of words is nowhere more evident than in the institution of gossip. In the private realm, gossip is information used maliciously for personal power; its public manifestation attains a more decorous ambivalence between voyeuristic admiration and the resentful satisfaction of seeing the eminent fall. The traditional cult of ancient names, which, as in the case of 'Finnian Shaw', can be purchased, gives way, as it enters the machinery of modern media, to the values of commerce and popularity upon which the media depend. Words are false, and their artificiality constitutes their power. The relation between words and things may be summed up by saying that the word mocks the thing, reduces and thus possesses it.

What the orchestration of all of these concepts amounts to is a world dominated by the disparaged side of the opening table, the false and the unreal. Such phenomena — lies, deception, and hypocrisy — are the staple material of satire. The Apes are pseudo-artists; Dan is a bogus genius and girl; many characters have assumed names; Zagreus's personality is unreal and his words are borrowed. Archie plays the sham-Yid; Isabel has had nineteen facelifts; the Bonassus is really a man; and Frumpsusan holds that it is natural to falsify nature. Mélanie seduces Dan with false maternal concern; Zagreus lies to him most obviously in the last letter. The Finnian Shaws buy gossip notices; Blackshirt gets into their dining room with a lie and disavows his fascist outfit; Jonathan Bell dislikes truth and change because scepticism requires energy. Impersonal fiction is propaganda, and the Keins' guests are half-baked fictions; people are illusions to others, which may be cannibalized or embalmed. Pamela Farnham's guests are a 'heterogeneous set of negative pockets of reality': identity is a specific negation of reality, and falsehood is the coin of public life and its ideological fabric. If society is 'a defensive organisation against the incalculable', the unreal is appealing and manageable because it consists of abortive names, that is, stereotypes or counters that are not 'too much alive'. Zagreus recognizes that personal and social controversy is not a question of the true versus the false but of the relative strength of various falsehoods. He favours whatever might disrupt entrenched customs that others profit by; and since these customs are hardened against the truth, they can be penetrated more easily by an exaggeration of their falsehood.

The images of mirror and shadow situate the subject in this scheme of dichotomies. They can only loosely be called proper images, since they are replicas of other images, projections of things on to a two-dimensional surface; it is in fact their status as second-order phenomena that produces their particular resonance. From its title onwards *The Apes* is pervaded by the process of imitation and replication. In the social sphere, it is characterized as an unconscious absorption in an unthinking mass or a calculated presumption that inevitably falls short of its model. These two images convey an ontological condition, the non-identity of the self. I have already examined key instances of these images in Ratner's washstand meditation and Zagreus's hallucination of shadowy self-projections. They both appear frequently, often in passing comments. In 'The Dithyrambic Spectator', Lewis chooses the primitive attitude towards these two images to define magical epistemology:

> To regard the image in the mirror, or the thought or image in the mind, as being as real as its original — or the shadow as the substance — has characterized everywhere the primitive mind. [. . .] The *Ka* was a double. And the statue of the portraitist was in the nature of a shadow. (*DP*, p. 186)

Although he dismisses the Egyptian 'longing for some stupid promise of perpetuation' as superstition, he adapted this epistemology to his own purposes in *The Apes* (*DP*, p. 191). To a great extent it still represents a delusion, but it also serves a critique of bourgeois conception of the stable ego.

In *The Apes* the mirror does not have the conventional symbolic meaning of identity or recognition but rather the opposite: mystery, alienation, inscrutability, lack of identity. It connotes the myth of identity and the fiction of a self, a misrecognition or failure of recognition. People do not see themselves in the 'public mirror' of Proust's satire. Edgar Wallace 'holds up a mirror to [the warmakers'] will-to-power in all its cheapness'; the warmakers like it, of course, because they recognize themselves but not the cheapness. When the mirror is used in the Prologue as a traditional symbol of vanity about physical appearance, its illusory character is underscored by the fact that its subject, Fredigonde, is the most grotesque figure in the novel. Ratner's mirror-complex represents a dissociation of mind and body; his image is a hostile enigma to him. At the bar he watches his eye 'crawling' on the glass with disgust; when he catches Zagreus watching him in the mirror, he 'grinned angrily back in contempt, at this fatuous attempt to spy' (p. 445). He subscribes to the same animism as Zagreus does regarding the 'second-hand life' of his clothing: the image contains his spirit or *ka*, which thus at large is more vulnerable than the thing it represents. The 'mirror-face' of Ratner's automatic writing also signifies a solipsistic claustrophobia in subjectivist art, which is merely 'excretion'. Concerning his relation to the fool Jonathan Bell, we are told parenthetically, 'Your friend is your mirror — take care!' (p. 542). Here the mirror is used to connote the usual meaning of reproduction, but the concluding warning undermines any possibility of a reliable or stable reflection. The statement implies that, as in fiction only the villains afford objectivity, the compromises involved in friendship corrupt the subject: the 'mirror', the friend, not only distorts the image of the subject but changes the person materially. Some variations on the theme of misrecognition defy definite interpretation themselves, as though to intimate an impossibility of certain knowledge. In the opening chapter Dick and his uncle exchange a glance: 'For a moment they grinned in each other's eyes — the animal, which has suddenly caught sight of its own person in a glass, and for a moment, before it thinks it has happened on another dog, perceives itself' (p. 39). Within the vehicle of this metaphor the sequence of the dog's perceptions is the opposite of normative: it is first correct, then lapses into error. The application of the image to the two men is even more problematic because they are indeed perceiving 'another', not themselves.

The characters who are more comfortable with the instability of their images are the tricksters. Zagreus's sight of himself in his elaborate theatrical costume 'recalled to him his unreal personality'. While the act of seeing himself from outside gives him a sense of identity, this identity is not definite but amorphous; the costume reminds him of the mysterious elements of which he is composed. Like the legendary infant Dionysus impersonating Zeus before a mirror, Zagreus looks in the mirror for a transformation into something *other* than himself. The novel closes upon Archie 'smiling at himself [. . .] in the mighty victorian looking glasses'. In his first appearance, Archie is also looking in the same mirrors at the Follets': 'He approached another mirror and observed his face, inclined to burst out laughing as it watched him slyly in the polished surface' (p. 44). As in Ratner's case, the usual relation is reversed: the double, the image and not the subject, is the agent. But the measure of Archie's superiority is that he (or his reflection) finds the situation comical. His closing smile is partly ironic if it reflects his confidence in Zagreus's obtaining the Follet fortune; but in any case it marks him, a representative of the lower class, as Britain's future. His impish stature set against the room's over-sized furniture in the mirror suggests the shrinkage of the Victorian Empire.

The meaning of the shadow image is closely related to the central metaphor of the Ape. A shadow is an outline, a simplification, an inanimate husk. Shadows appear in physical settings with the traditional connotation of death and decay: the dark Follet and Finnian Shaw mansions reflect the decline of the aristocracy. The Prologue closes as Fredigonde watches objects out her window 'as if they had been shadows upon the ceiling' (p. 24); her diminishing sensory apparatus reduces the world to a Platonic cave. The stuffed tiger on the Follets' wall is a 'vivid shadow of life'; the petrified image of a creature that symbolizes powerful and efficient energy, a 'swift restless clockwork', suggests that the physical vessel of an organism is merely a form that the spirit requires. The characters are called shadows of one another: Dan is a shadow of Zagreus, Zagreus of Pierpoint, Robinia of Osmund, Osmund of Cockeye. The shadow-half of the couple is a weak copy, a diminution, or a parody. The shadow is the relation of apprentice to master and also of the Ape to the real artist; Zagreus's 'horrible family of shadows' is also an 'Ape-herd'. But the shadow may pass for the original and capture some of its 'life'; thus the Apes' prominence and Zagreus's panic.

The shadow conveys a truer notion of the self than the mirror. In Zagreus's case, the Ape-herd represents his infection with a corrupt society, with the lies and deceptions that he has required in order to participate in it. The deceptiveness and uncertainty of shadows are the source of their power. The most important characters at the Finnian Shaws' dinner are absent, the 'shadowy cast' of family enemies to whom the conversation is devoted. At the knocking at the door, the company shudders at the 'Shadow of Authority'; the shadow conveys the imaginary nature of their masochistic anxiety. Archie's shrewdness is indicated by his refusal of 'hospitality to any political shadows whatever'. In Fredigonde's hallucination, the museum patrons are 'TIME-SHADOWS of spatial beings', projections upon the future. Their destruction of the museum, and symbolically of England's past, is comparable to the Apes' effort to usurp the studios of the artists whose shadows they are. In *The Lion and the Fox*, Lewis states that great art is always utopian and notes that a canon of Japanese pictorial art forbade the use of shadows:

> All the greatest art is inclined to refuse or to discipline into something less hot and fluid such shadows as are cast every day by the half-witted excesses of the puny frantic animal crossed in his appetites, and flying for a moment above life's surface in isolated uncontrol. (p. 114)

Although he may argue that his own *portrayal* of the Apes is not 'hot and fluid' (whether or not shadows fit that description), this dystopian novel is certainly preoccupied with 'half-witted excesses' ('feeble gibberish' again). It appears that, in adopting the 'frantic animal' as his subject, Lewis thought it fitting to bathe the figure in shadows in order to indicate a psychic fragmentation.

The relation of mockery implicit in the figure of the Ape has a function in the novel similar to that of this pair of images, mirror and shadow: it is a means of rendering correspondences among social and natural phenomena both by similarity and by contrast. For example, the tulips on the Finnian Shaws' dinner table are more alive than the people:

> Their pistils are trained point-blank upon the guests. The human cryptogams in front of them (the carefully bled Osmundian sucking pigs) — vegetative, secretive — grown from spores, without true seed, stamen-and-pistilless, were obscenely mocked at by those chasmogamous growths — the tactless table-ornaments. (pp. 352–53)

Similarly, the devious historical path of the image is illustrated by the servants' aristocratic dress:

> Standing in full farce of his powdered hair, plush and knee-breeches — stuffed into a stuffy state-suit (in mockery, so it must feel to have that on your back) — a gentleman's braided costume in 1750 or thereabouts, today reserved for the underdog. (p. 519)

The Apes' preoccupation with resemblance and analogy according to a hierarchical scheme is reminiscent of Renaissance cosmology, as the novel's ending upon a masque-like tableau, in which a failed magician holds Death in his arms, evokes that period's allegorical drama. Of course in this case the hierarchy is 'topsy-turvy' and crumbling. Bakhtin characterizes carnival as a 'system of crooked mirrors' (*Problems*, p. 127). These two sets of doubles, mirror and shadow, in demonstrating the instability of the social structure and the discrepancy between form and essence, reinforce the sense of a carnivalesque labyrinth of parody.

The mirror promises identity but beguiles; the shadow undermines the thing that hides it from the light. The mirror is associated with the visible, space, the literal, the external method; the fiction of the self, it is actually an intimation of the not-self, the animal that the self happens to inhabit. The shadow is a more accurate image of the self: a dark interior, a flickering accompaniment, the subconscious truth of posture, the diminished and standardized quality of borrowed traits. The mirror-image is a horizontal projection: the wall, society, the world; the shadow connotes a vertical series: the floor, the earth, youth, succession. The mirror suggests a narcissistic trance, inter-changeable copies; the shadow suggests hierarchy and occult initiation. The Apes are the reified publicity images; the Pierpointians are obscure and arcane. These are the axes on which Dan is sacrificed. The cheapness of his 'genius', obtained simply by the naming of it, allows him, the least capable of Apery, to portray the hollowness of the image. Archie, with his gutter cunning, is in contrast the most real character in the novel. He mirrors rather than shadows Zagreus, and thereby possesses him. The two images are used in combination only once, when Zagreus's 'family of shadows' resembles 'the image in a mirror' (p. 296); this moment foreshadows the gradual resemblance to his antagonists, the Apes, that Zagreus's character acquires over the remainder of the novel. He seems to backslide, but it is the other way around. He was a dilettante who became intrigued with the highbrow hobby of Pierpointism, but he cannot fully escape his Apish habits. Archie assumes the impression made by Zagreus at the opening, of being uncorrupted with the identity of others.

NOTES

1. Kush writes that in the vanish Zagreus

> shows the promise of the Imagination to redeem the body. [. . . Dan] is rescued by Zagreus, the artist-priest, but during his imprisonment Dan typifies the fates of those around him. The descent of human life into inertia that is symbolized by the blood-covered box threatens all those who live by the comforts of nature and all those who are immersed in an increasingly mechanical world. (pp. 112–13)

2. *Doom of Youth* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1932), p. 233; quoted in SueEllen Campbell, p. 42.
3. Jameson, p. 56; SueEllen Campbell, pp. 122–23.

CHAPTER SIX

MARKETING INSULTS: THE ARTHUR PRESS AND SCIENTIFIC SATIRE

The Scandal

Many of the modernist writers had to resort to unusual measures to publish and distribute their work. While the publishing history of canonical works is fairly well known, that of the failures is not; and *The Apes of God* is probably the strangest case of modernist independent publishing and the most spectacular failure in comparison to its ambitions. Its publication and publicity campaign make an especially interesting study of the role of private patronage and self-promotion in this period because the novel's subject is these very phenomena and Lewis's handling of the affair recapitulated the issues that the novel explores. In addition to the book's idiosyncratic style, density, obscurity, and satiric venom, all of which diminished its potential audience, its denunciation of the literary world from which it needed support posed another liability that led Lewis into some dubious publicity tactics. His marketing strategy included making very economical use of his satiric victims: he sold them an expensive 'collector's edition'; used them to promote it; and during the novel's scandalized reception, blamed them publicly for unfavourable reactions, always maintaining that he had not written about them. In simultaneously denouncing and fomenting the scandal, he continued the novel's satiric attack. He impersonated his fictitious publisher to assemble a record of the reception, the pamphlet *Satire & Fiction*, in order to prove that it was really he who was being maligned; and in its title essay he formulated his theory of scientific satire, one of whose functions was to absolve him from charges of personal malice. In this ploy he reenacted the roles of his main characters and surreptitiously confirmed the contradictions of Apery that the novel unmasks. The outcome, like the failure of his hero's confidence game, typified the unhappy fate of Lewis's reputation.

This episode presents a striking instance of satiric paranoia. *The Apes* was a 'blind alley' for Lewis partly because it was a relative failure commercially, and it was a failure partly because in his over-zealous promotion Lewis actually hindered its distribution and directed the critical discussion towards narrow aspects of it as well. The marketing of the book adds another paradoxical layer on to this already complex tale. Lewis staked more on the book than any of his others, and he was the sorest of losers. This chapter concerns the peculiar way in which his promotion elaborated the novel's drama, and it demonstrates how Lewis's own diabolical cleverness and pride contributed to his marginalization in literary history. I will focus on *Satire & Fiction* (now out of print and difficult to obtain, although the title-essay is available in revised form in *Men Without Art*); the pamphlet was part of *The Apes'* brief social history and also an effort to prolong that history. I will also refer to Lewis's manuscripts, publicity materials, and correspondence relating to the reception, which throw the issues into even sharper relief than does the public record. The critical reception of the novel was mostly favourable, if sometimes puzzled, and the reaction of the Apes' originals is not surprising. What is of greater interest is Lewis's own behaviour, his enthusiastic embrace of the public role of the persecuted satirist.

Since the heady days of *Blast*, Lewis had had much experience in independent publishing and controversy. In that period he collaborated with others, including Pound, although by all reports he was a difficult partner. Earlier in the twenties he had published short-lived journals consisting mostly of his own writing, but with *The Apes* his role was expanded even further. In the novel Julius Ratner is lampooned for the convenience that he obtains by being both an author and a publisher, as well as a bookseller. This is another aspect of his 'split':

> Since Mr. Julius Ratner kept a highbrow bookshop, a certain Mr. R. was able to sell his friend Joo's books — and because as well Jimjulius was a publisher, Joo was luckily in a position to publish his particular pal Ratner's novels and his poems — and on account of the fortunate fact that J. Ratner & Co. were the Publishers and distributors of a small high-brow review called simply *Man X* it was possible for Juliusjimmie to puff and fan that wan perishable flame of the occasional works of his old friend Jimjulius. It was a concatenation of circumstances such as every author whatever must sigh for. (pp. 150–51)

The last sentence is not altogether facetious, since *The Apes'* publication put Lewis in a very similar position. In addition to editing and writing for *The Enemy* at this time, he became his own publisher and even his own shadow publicity agency.

Like its story, *The Apes'* publication was a protracted and complicated affair; Meyers's biography does not give a full account of the manœuvring that Lewis's private edition occasioned (p. 158). Lewis had begun working on the novel by September, 1923, when he wrote to Eliot about 'Mr. Zagreus and the Split-Man'. Since the two brief chapters published in *The Criterion* in 1924 were labelled as excerpts, it was known that he was working on a satire of the artistic scene; but they contain no allusions to actual people and Lewis was careful to keep the manuscript hidden. He submitted a draft of 'Pamela Farnham's Tea-Party' to Eliot in March, 1924; and in January, 1925, apparently because

Eliot could not print the entire 'Dithyrambic Spectator', he withdrew 'Lord Osmund's Lenten Party' (which then must have been much shorter than the final version), warning Eliot that he would regard it as 'treachery' if the manuscript fell into other hands.[1] The following April he wrote to Pound about dividing *The Man of the World* into separate books, and stated that *The Apes* would consist of two volumes, the first of which was 'nearly done'. By April, 1926, he had submitted sections to C. H. Prentice, his editor at Chatto & Windus. Responding to Prentice's concerns about his using actual people in the Kein episode, Lewis denied the resemblance but nevertheless enjoined Prentice to secrecy. The next year he also submitted three of these sections to an American publisher, whose glowing reader's report appears in *Satire & Fiction*.[2]

Lewis worked on the book intermittently during the years that he published his lengthy polemics and revisions of earlier fiction. Obviously the narrative frame, involving the General Strike of 1926, was not part of the original plan. In January, 1929, he expected the novel to be completed in two months.[3] Since Chatto, which had lost money on all of Lewis's books, was reluctant to publish a limited special edition of the novel, Lewis conceived of a plan to publish both a trade edition with Chatto and a private one through the Arthur Press, the imprint that he was using for *The Enemy*, which was financed by his patron Nicholas Waterhouse (*L*, p. 196). Later in 1929 the Arthur Press distributed a prospectus for a private edition, due in October, to be sold by subscription at a price of three pounds, six times that of the eventual trade edition. In it Lewis misrepresents the plot and assures readers who might have been apprehensive of his polemics that *The Apes* 'can be read by anyone who has learnt to read and write'. The publication continued to be delayed, probably because Lewis kept revising the manuscript. In November, after he had begun collecting subscriptions, some of them from 'Apes', Lewis stated that the book would not be ready within a month. His negotiations with Prentice, which continued through September, 1930, indicate that Chatto was still planning to publish the novel.[4]

The collector's edition of 750 signed copies, with Lewis's designs on the cover and chapter headings, was finally published in June, 1930, thanks to Waterhouse again. Sacheverell Sitwell later bitterly called the novel 'a huge time-bomb', which is an apt description of a volume the size of a metropolitan telephone book that was written during Lewis's continued commerce with some of the 'Apes' (Meyers, pp. 158, 168). To add insult to injury, heading the score of dust-jacket blurbs is a compliment by Osbert Sitwell.[5] The reception bore the same relation to the book, in a milder form, as the riot at Lord Osmund's party does to Zagreus's magic performance. Lewis reported that he had received much abuse 'by telephone and letter' and that his life had been threatened by an airman. A newspaper paid a settlement for identifying someone as an Ape. Richard Wyndham responded by advertising the sale of

Lewis's paintings by the square foot. Edith Sitwell sent him telegrams consisting of gibberish, and later wrote a novel that contains a caricature of him, as did Osbert, who had tried to dissuade him from publishing *The Apes*.[6]

Most of the reviews, however, were favourable (thirteen of the twenty excerpted in *Satire & Fiction*, with three more being neutral), and some were extravagantly so. Even while the reviewers wondered whether the author's talents were well employed, they endorsed *The Apes'* criticism of dilettantes, complimented its technique, and called it the most powerful English satire in two centuries, comparable to *Ulysses* and Swift. Richard Aldington wrote that it is 'one of the most tremendous farces ever conceived in the mind of man. For comparisons one must fall back on Rabelais and Aristophanes' (*SF*, pp. 32–40). Nevertheless, the stipulation of a revision of Roy Campbell's enthusiastic review by an interim editor at the *New Statesman*, R. Ellis Roberts, who had not been the one who commissioned it, was to Lewis evidence of a cabal and a 'boycott', even though Campbell, Lewis's friend of several years and a satiric poet himself, was hardly a disinterested judge (*L*, pp. 190n.1, 198). In a later draft about the novel's reception, Lewis advances further evidence of a conspiracy: the two most important Sunday papers, *The Observer* and *The Sunday Times*, did not review the novel at all; and most literary journals, which 'collectors' rely upon, were slow to respond and negative or tepid.[7] In the novel the conclusion of Knut's verses suggests that Lewis had foreseen difficulties:

'MUSE, CHANGEONS DE STYLE, ET QUITTONS LA SATIRE!
C'EST UN MECHANT METIER QUE CELUI DE MEDIRE!
A L'AUTEUR QUI L'EMBRASSE IL EST TOUJOURS FATAL—
LE MAL QU'ON DIT D'AUTRI NE PRODUIT QUE DU MAL!'[8]

But Zagreus's response, to refer this message to Osmund, prefigures Lewis's position that the 'Apes' were the offenders and the novel was an evil that they had brought on themselves.

While Lewis had probably thought nothing of signing the prospectus 'The Arthur Press', the *New Statesman* incident called forth all the resources of his publicist alter ego. For 'The Arthur Press' was simply Lewis. In 1927 he had obtained the use of a typist's office, but by 1930 he was conducting all of the Arthur Press business from his own flat on obsolete stationery. Even though at publication he told the London *Star*, 'I decided to be the private press myself', the copy in the publicity materials for the novel was attributed to anonymous representatives of this fictitious publisher (Meyers, pp. 150, 158). Although in this arrangement Lewis closely imitates Ratner, the split Ape 'with no frontiers', an even more salient analogue in the novel to Lewis's tactic is the relation between the aloof genius Pierpoint, played by Lewis the author, and his aggressive spokesman Zagreus, represented by the Arthur Press Editor. This division of labour certainly added to the drama of the novel's reception for Lewis.

The Arthur Press sent out an indignant circular letter protesting against the *New Statesman's* censorship and soliciting support for the novel in the interest of its future sales (*L*, pp. 191–92); it published the resulting survey, which includes statements by Yeats and Wells among others, in *Satire & Fiction* in September. The precarious nature of Lewis's double role is evident in the false indecision of a letter to one potential advocate: 'If you would write a short article I should be delighted, or a long letter, to The Arthur Press, or to me, would be equally good no doubt. I cant [*sic*] decide which would be the best' (*L*, p. 197). In the 'no doubt' one hears the typically Lewisian gratuitous flourish of bogus rhetoric. The Arthur Press also issued a broadside about Richard Wyndham's ad in the agony column: 'ENRAGED 'Ape of God', believing that he caught sight of his own features in the crowded mirror of *The Apes of God*, sends up a cry of AGONY!' The flier purports to reprint a story about the incident in the *Daily Express*. The first section, which includes an interview with Lewis, appears to be authentic. In the interview, Lewis expresses amazement at the number of people who claim to be his foolish imaginary characters. He also says that he taught Richard Wyndham to draw eight years before but more lately 'he seems to be cross with me', omitting the fact that Wyndham had contributed to a monthly stipend for Lewis from 1922 to 1924, which ended when Lewis quarrelled with his patrons about the promptness of the payments (Meyers, pp. 112–13, 178). The final paragraph, which states,'the object of this advertisement has been to injure the reputation of Mr. Wyndham Lewis', and goes on about the 'infantilism' of the rich, was obviously written by Lewis. It was either supplied to the reporter or simply appended to the article. Another broadside quotes a 'Chorus of Apes of God (offstage)': 'Mr. Wyndham Lewis *must* not write novels!'; and gives extracts from 'reviews': '"This is a gross and tedious book." — *The Simian Sentinel.*'[9]

The garish cover of *Satire & Fiction*, 'Enemy Pamphlets No. 1', announces a rich miscellany in several bold subtitles, such as '"THE APES OF GOD" explained by the author'; and 'SCANDAL OF AN ATTEMPT TO SABOTAGE A GREAT WORK OF ART!'. Part I, 'Have with you to Great Queen Street!', includes, besides Campbell's 'Rejected Review', the testimonials, and excerpted reviews, also Campbell's commentary on the *New Statesman* incident, a facsimile of Roberts's handwritten letter to Campbell (torn in halves by Campbell), and two 'editorial' pieces. Roberts's main objection to the review is indeed that he differed with Campbell's estimate of the book and of Lewis's writing in general; his additional protests, for example against Campbell's incidental denigration of Chesterton and Barrie, do, as Campbell notes, sound evasive (p. 11). The editorials are the pamphlet's most curious feature. Written in the first person plural and unsigned, they refer in flattering terms to the unshakable independence of 'Mr. Wyndham Lewis'. Manuscript fragments in Lewis's hand survive, although the identity of the author should have been obvious since the abusive tirade against the Chelso-Bloomsbury 'log-rolling' syndicate is identical in tone to passages of *The Apes*. Nevertheless, the writer mentions Lewis the artist's double, 'Wyndham Lewis the pamphleteer', without indicating himself; states that Bloomsbury's custom of 'mutual-admiring' would 'abash anyone not quite accustomed to it — as the present writer is and as also is Mr. Lewis'; and 'beg[s] leave to quote' the Editor of *The Enemy* (acknowledged to be Lewis) on the advantages of being an outsider, a 'solitary schism' (pp. 17–20).

The thrust of the editorials is that a faction, which Roberts represents, has conspired against a courageous individual; yet in the pamphlet Lewis has gathered a faction of his own and fabricated its cheer-leader, the Arthur Press Editor. The Editor echoes Campbell's observation that, whereas in the eighteenth century satire was answered openly and vigorously, Lewis's enemies can only try to *silence* Lewis by behind-the-scenes chicanery; he also suspects that these people object more to *The Apes* than to Lewis's polemics, which made similar criticisms of them, because, as fiction, it violates their domain. The persona of the Editor is a bizarre response to this situation: another fiction, through which Lewis speaks less than openly, and a role that he probably embraced because it was an editor who had offended him. It was, besides, a rather transparent fiction in the centralized British literary community of London, where people could recognize Lewis's distinctive voice as easily as they did Osbert Sitwell's features in Lord Osmund. But this factor did not deter the Editor from gloating over the positive review that the *New Statesman* eventually published, written by Roberts himself. His only awkward task was *silently* countenancing a letter of support that Yeats had forbidden to be edited; it included praise for Edith Sitwell's recent poem, *Gold Coast Customs*, equal to that for *The Apes* (*SF*, p. 29). One wonders where the officious Editor was when this sometimes carelessly repetitious novel was being revised and proofread. The painter Augustus John, one of Lewis's oldest friends, made a fair assessment of Lewis's half-anonymous outrage: '*He* [Campbell] was right to make a fuss — but *you*! Its [*sic*] a good job you had *some* disgraceful notices. Unanimity is suspect' (*L*, p. 195). Thus did a novel that is one of the most unlikely candidates for a study guide acquire a 'casebook' within three months of its publication.

The zeal with which Lewis the pamphleteer leapt to action suggests that the 'Rejected Review' furnished a pretext for him to continue the novel's attack on the 'Apes'. Much like a campaigning politician who indignantly 'regrets' his opponent's disgraceful behaviour, Lewis must have welcomed the event that he called deplorable. That he realized the advertisement-value of strong disapproval is apparent from his inclusion in the press-clippings the remark

'This is not literature. It is insolence' (*SF*, p. 35). Such reactions are the classic trophies of serious satire. The suppression of his publicity gave Lewis an opportunity to multiply it by insinuating why the novel had been 'unjustly treated' (*L*, p. 198). Roberts's decision became evidence of *The Apes'* potency and a corroboration of its portrayal of poetasters, and kept the book in the news. In defending it, Lewis used a fiction to attack particular people, ironically, for objecting that he had done so in fiction. Only one brief remark in the miscellaneous materials is attributed to 'The author of *The Apes of God*'. 'An Alibi' cites a review in which Frank Swinnerton states that he could not identify the originals of the Apes; Lewis comments that he had met Swinnerton in the company of Osbert Sitwell (p. 40). Lewis must have been wary of libel charges, but his stance denied the evidence of his most indisputable talent, his eye for visual detail. It was also difficult for him to dismiss the claims of being his Apes made by people who behave exactly like the Apes. This predicament produced the line of reasoning presented in the pamphlet's main exhibit, the essay 'Satire and Fiction', by Wyndham Lewis himself.

'Satire and Fiction'

Lewis's publicity might only have reinforced the suspicions held by some reviewers of a pathological element motivating *The Apes*. Nevertheless, although it is a slippery, roundabout argument, resembling the polemics in miniature, 'Satire and Fiction' is a noteworthy manifesto with provocative insights on the tension between aesthetics and didacticism in satire. It is a last broadcast, or a meta-broadcast, as if Pierpoint had stepped before the curtain. In using Lewis's criticism to illuminate the premises and aims of *The Apes*, I have often taken Lewis on his own terms, citing his views on 'subjectivism', for example, somewhat uncritically; in this section I will analyse these concepts more closely. Since the pamphlet is hard to find, I offer the following synopsis of the essay.[10]

Lewis begins by advocating a non-moral satire that attacks dullness rather than vice, first because moral censure is ineffective with people who pride themselves on their wickedness; second, because the true artist does not subscribe to 'the crude injunctions of any purely moral code'. Lewis denies that he wastes his time in attacking insignificant people, first by fooling: those who say this (who later included Eliot) are themselves insignificant, and insignificant people waste the time of more interesting people anyway. Bridling at the comic 'paradox of the satirist defending his victims', he adds that subject-matter is not a sound criterion for judging a work of art: the prejudice against 'low company' arises because society, when offended at a disregard for its morality, seeks revenge on its detractors by identifying them with the disagreeable things that they point out (pp. 43–45). Next Lewis cites Hazlitt, who objected to Ben Jonson's characters' being 'machines, governed by mere routine' and thought that they should 'provoke pity or disgust, instead of laughter'. Lewis calls this a legitimate 'tragic laughter' and argues that a mechanistic quality is appropriate to satire, as is visual, rather than psychological, presentation. *The Apes* epitomizes this 'philosophy of the EYE': 'no book has ever been written that has paid more attention to *the outside* of people'. The 'inner method', he continues, has been executed ineptly in recent times; Lawrence and Joyce, for example, sacrificed 'all contour and definition' for the 'troubled impulse of the lyrical afflatus' and a 'dreamy and disordered naturalism'. The 'thought-stream' is only fit for abnormal characters and comic purposes; Lewis used it parodically with the character of Fredigonde to expose the dogma of the interior monologue as a 'universal method'. The 'non-human outlook' of great 'externalist' art is necessary 'to correct our soft conceit' (pp. 45–48).

Lewis then offers a definition: 'Satire in reality often is nothing else but *the truth*, in fact that of Natural Science'; it is 'based rather upon the "truth" of the intellect than upon the "truth" of the average romantic sensualism'. No work of fiction is all satire; much of *The Apes* is 'objective', but it appears distorted and grotesque from a romantic viewpoint (p. 48). Hazlitt's contention that satire is suited to later, more refined civilizations sentimentalizes the past, Lewis argues: folly is a chronic, not an epidemic, ailment, beyond the sphere of manners. Yet in the 'great discontinuity' and fatality of the present it is more difficult to be magnanimous than it was formerly, because behind the reactionary 'façade' of the bourgeois cultural machinery of publicity, best-sellers, and the 'period-game', there threatens a '"catastrophic" *tragedy of blood*' to 'satisfy this roaring Pit'. Lewis closes with a list of reasons why the external approach will become increasingly prevalent; but they only repeat that, in contrast to the healthy 'masculine formalism' of ancient Egyptian and Chinese art, the naturalistic approach is barbaric, and assert that the age requires his classical approach (pp. 50–53). In the 'Fiction' section Lewis proposes a 'taxi-cab-driver test', in which one examines a random page of fiction to ascertain whether or not it is 'an intellectual object'. His point is that fiction is the '*folk-prose* of the Middleclasses of Western Democracy', and its patronage by dishonest critics for commercial reasons has led to a decay of literary standards. He compares the opening pages of Huxley's *Point Counter Point* and James's *The Ivory Tower*, and finds the first rife with the dull, sentimental, vulgar accents of serial melodrama (pp. 54–62).

The moral basis of satire has always been the crux of the discussion of the genre, and 'Satire and Fiction' demonstrates the difficulty of dispensing with it. Lewis's non-moral category is perhaps an impossible distinction to pinpoint or sustain. Lewis suggests that any code of values, by its formulation as a code, is implicated in the legitimation of social power, and that the remote historical origins of his aesthetic principles give them precedence over the entire Judeo-Christian conception of morality. Conservative and revolutionary satire may be broadly distinguished according to whether the values of a society are defended or attacked. But conservative social criticism usually turns out to favour values of the past (social values, as opposed to Lewis's primitive artistic values) and may be accused of nostalgia, as in the cases of Yeats, Eliot, and Waugh; and on the other hand, dissent, without the advantage of political power, more often relies upon a moral appeal. Lewis attempts to steer between these poles, or to ignore them, but since he considers moralism a subterfuge, it is unclear what he thinks is '*purely* moral' (my emphasis). His double recommendation of non-moral satire, as more effective criticism and superior art, is questionable since a pure art should presumably be above considerations of practical effectiveness. While he denies any moral value in reproving dullness and in producing this 'true' art, his aesthetic justification of satire really subsumes rather than replaces the moral one: the aesthetic end excuses what may be thought immoral, cynical, or nihilistic. The critique of moralism might also be less necessary than Lewis implies, if it is true, as he writes at one point, that his society 'luckily does not stand upon its moral dignity very much' (p. 43). But he does suggest a moral factor when he emphatically concludes, 'Satire is *good*' for correcting 'our soft conceit'. More important, any taxi-driver test of *The Apes* yields the impression of a strong dose of moral censure. If the Apes' sins against art are more grievous than their banal social machinations, they are still premised on a cultural ideal. Lewis's appeal to science might have clarified the moral question, but as it is presented, it muddles the issues. The status of a 'truth' of sensualism is unclear if it is a *lesser* truth than that of the intellect; and it is uncertain how the objective element of fiction differs from satire proper, if the latter is scientific truth and if the former is taken for satire anyway. Aside from these problems, the argument for scientific treatment baldly contradicts the assertion in the novel's first broadcast that the pretence of impersonality in fiction is a hoax.

Lewis's defence of 'insignificant' victims is valid but somewhat irrelevant. The Bloomsbury group and the Sitwells were indeed prominent figures in London, and Lewis's essays on Joyce and Pound excuse him from the general charge of seeking easy targets. Besides, the perception of the Apes as insignificant could be a sign of the satire's success. The more probing question that reviewers raised concerns the sadistic relish that Lewis took in hectoring his wooden figures, but he avoids the issue of personal factors in his selection of characters. The argument for graphic Jonsonian 'machines' likewise begins upon a sound concept of generic specialization; as Lewis defends this kind of fiction against the more popular inner aesthetic, however, he slides into advocating his own as a 'universal method'. It is a dubious extension from the premise that satire requires external portrayal to the claim that language can represent visual images better than it can thoughts and emotions. The question of moral versus non-moral satire is neither identical nor clearly homologous to that of psychological versus visual presentation, yet by a sleight of hand, Lewis has shifted his terms and substituted pictorial values for moral ones. It is also curious that his condemnation of the inner method, 'a tumultuous stream of evocative, spell-bearing vocables', emphasizes the verbal nature of the experience presented, and his plea for his own technique concludes on the same note: 'a resistant and finely-sculptured surface, of sheer words' (pp. 52, 46). After the complaint that the inner method holds a monopoly, Lewis's final justification of the external method as the wave of the future is quite strained; it virtually requires that some 'tragedy of blood' destroy both the fiction industry and avant-garde impressionism. For all his denigration of romanticism, his attempt to sell the grotesque as a potentially dominant tendency is hopelessly quixotic itself. The grotesque, which is based on a disfigurement of the normal or average, is inherently a minority phenomenon and taste.

Lewis was the last hold-out from the Vorticist aesthetic of abstraction, but on other occasions he recognized that it was even harder to devise a formalist approach to narrative than one to poetry, in which the demands for mimesis, continuity, and a consistent point of view are not so great. Despite his strictures, he was hardly able to avoid the representation of subjective experience. The passage in which Zagreus sees himself as a crowd of Apes is crucial to understanding his relations with his protégés and Pierpoint and also the phenomenon of Apery portrayed from the outside. Although this mental state is more abstract than those in realism, it implies that there is a greater truth in consciousness than in the world of surfaces that the novel carefully catalogues. Lewis's first novel, *Tarr*, derives its considerable power largely from extensive psychological analyses; and his later tragic novel *Self Condemned*, a portrait of intellectual claustrophobia that is concerned primarily with private experience and self-consciousness, seems almost a recantation of the external method. As for the critique of 'fiction', it is true that Huxley wrote in a conversational prose sometimes padded with unnecessary repetition and explanation, but the salient, hidden factor in Lewis's supposedly random exercise is that in one review *Point Counter Point* was called a better satire than *The Apes*.[11]

This essay at least makes clear the extremely self-conscious and self-reflexive nature of *The Apes*. It is a satire of a particular aesthetic school by means of a method antithetical to that school's: a book based on '*externality*, in a world that is literally inundated with sexual viscera and the "dark" gushings of the tides of *The Great Within*' (*SF*, p. 49). It offers a corrective perception and attacks Lewis's rivals at their blind spot. Lewis's joke about usefully wasting his time destroying the insignificant recalls a statement in an earlier essay: 'In a well-ordered state there must be artists to prevent the majority of people from taking to being artists.'[12] That is, the social function of formal art is to satisfy the need of the masses for an imaginary life and thus prevent the confusion that would result from the inferior products of their own imaginations. *The Apes* fulfils this policing function; it is art intended to shame amateurs out of art.

Although 'Satire and Fiction' contains shrewd observations, it is not entirely satisfactory either as theory or as a guide to *The Apes*. The most telling feature of the essay is that it treats only one aspect of *The Apes*, the criticism of fools by close, dispassionate observation. It contains no reference to the principal characters, the plot, or the abundance of verbal parody. Although Lewis argues that satire should be judged by aesthetic criteria only, he is concerned here with a narrow range of aesthetic factors, and not 'purely' aesthetic ones: pleasure in the visual representation of unpleasant truths. As I have shown in the preceding chapters, there is more to the imagery of *The Apes* than 'the *outside* of things' and more to the story than a means of witnessing Apes. While my reading of the novel as a Menippean satire presents stronger claims for it than even Lewis made, it also dictates an interpretation of Lewis's promotion of the novel. I have stressed the scapegoat archetype beneath the carnival motif of discrowning. The Arthur Press Editor accuses Chelso-Bloomsbury of contriving a 'martyr's-crown' for themselves by courting the gossip columns that they complained of (*SF*, p. 19); the Editor's case for Lewis's persecution can be considered in the same terms.

Lewis the Pamphleteer

In 'Satire and Fiction' Lewis desists from the Arthur Press Editor's name-calling and remains on the detached theoretical plane of Pierpoint, but his exclusive concern with the visual seems symptomatic of a distorted perspective. The doctrine of the external method might be a rationalization for his painterly approach to writing; his *promotion* of this nearly inimitable technique, even though he admits to an extreme prejudice for the graphic, bespeaks some anxiety about its appeal. It would be a more serious displacement if this were a rationalization for avoiding, at this juncture of his career, a serious portrayal of emotion. Lewis's insistence upon the abstract nature of his treatment serves too neatly a denial of the *roman à clef* when he could have more plausibly maintained that traits of individuals were used to develop an image of a social *class*. Although I have chosen not to pursue a biographical interpretation, Lewis's personal relations with his models cannot be discounted. These relations, as Meyers's biography amply shows, almost always reached a crisis over money. The fatal crime for which these people were satirized might have been simply not buying enough of Lewis's paintings. Pathological is not too strong a term for the manner in which Lewis repeatedly alienated his patrons when it appeared that their financial support was not unconditional, then attempted to arouse guilt in them for betraying him. He was often a genial companion and a generous friend; but he was also unpredictable, suspicious, and manipulative, and he eventually turned on nearly everyone who tried to help him. Lewis shares some traits with Frederick the Great, whom he discusses in *The Lion and the Fox* as a 'half-modern Machiavelli'. This autocrat had a habit of making 'ill-natured pleasantries' (Lewis's misquotation of Macaulay's essay on Frederick) to both his servants and courtiers. He loved deceit, scandal, and horseplay, and was equally sarcastic when being domineering or ingratiating. Admitting Frederick's sadism, Lewis calls him 'verbally a considerable artist', whose duplicity mocked 'the ineradicable falsity of the world' (*LF*, pp. 98–101). This streak is evident in Lewis's personal life;[13] but of course Lewis could not afford all of a monarch's caprices. It is most palpable in the manner in which he wrote of his associates and others in both *The Apes* and the polemics.

The aesthetic of objectivity would render the personal history behind *The Apes* less significant, since this history suggests the one motive in satire that clearly does not take its sanction from morality, namely the exercise of personal power over others. As Elliot's study shows, this 'visceral' factor is truly the most primitive impulse in satire, although it may clothe itself in either moral or aesthetic argument. I believe that Lewis promulgates his denial of moral purpose and his insistence on the self-justifying nature of the graphic element in order to obscure the most offensive aspect of the novel (especially to his contemporary audience), the insulting portrayal of actual people; that is, that these protests constitute a *covert* denial of the novel's personal dimension, a denial that ironically attests to some measure of guilt. Lewis blocks the avenues to this conclusion too thoroughly: laughter is healthy, so it is no crime to laugh at people; but his characters are not people anyway. Equally ironic is the fact that the novel itself maintains that all fiction is personal. Pierpoint's characterization of impersonality in art — '*a wonderful patent behind which the individual can indulge in a riot of personal egotism*' — turns out to be as applicable to Lewis as to anyone else. *The Apes* is not simply an expression of misanthropy or a vendetta, but neither is it a disinterested defence of the public from charlatans.

The omissions and lacunae in 'Satire and Fiction' evidence a conflict in Lewis's attitude towards his material, a dilemma that in fact is responsible for the novel's extraordinary turbulence. Lewis himself is the central scapegoat behind the novel's allegory. If he were not acknowledged as London's artistic king, he would still make himself the centre of attention with an 'Arthurian' flourish. The persecution that 'The Arthur Press' felt after the publication of *The Apes* is the same factor that inspired the book. Lewis's attitude towards the novel's reception was not much different from Osbert Sitwell's paranoid interpretation of the failure of *Façade*: 'Have with you to Great Queen Street!' is his true conspiracy theory. Lewis later called the novel 'a handsome target'

(*MWA*, p. 118); that he should consider *himself* the victim of this episode of British literary history would be comic if it were not tragic. The terrible irony of his destiny is that his 'victims' had great admiration for his talent; they were discouraged from demonstrating it by his personality.[14]

Of course Lewis had more will and ingenuity to redress slights than the Sitwells; he had too much of both. The invention of Pierpoint after the *Criterion* chapters, which split the critical intelligence in the novel into the analytical recluse and the pragmatic Zagreus, was recapitulated in the invention of the Arthur Press Editor. Campbell was as passionate an advocate as one could want and probably would have prepared *Satire & Fiction*; but Lewis could not resist doing it himself because, ultimately, he loved the intrigue of fiction. Pierpoint says, 'The UNNAMED is the principle of heaven and of earth. But the name is an abortion and a tyranny.' By remaining 'unnamed', the Editor, who repeats his own name with ponderous emphasis, gave Lewis a dissimulating persona to continue in Zagreus's artistic medium, agitprop, and to advertise 'Mr. Wyndham Lewis' as a scapegoated genius on whom the Apes gladly fed until he exposed them. It was not a job for the first person point of view; whatever the justice of the claim, it would have sounded like Apish whining. Lewis's preferred public pose was that of the genial, detached author interviewed by the *Daily Express*, who is amused at the 'Storm in That Tea-Cup Called London', as one editorial heading puts it. A true scapegoat does not wrangle; he is not a participant among others at his own execution. That would make it merely 'personal'. The Ratner-like contortions that Lewis needed to produce his own mocking apostle show that Apery is indeed a matter of degree and that self-promotion is inevitably self-parody. In order to inform the public that the satirist is the sacrificial messenger of the truth, Lewis needed a lie. It might be that such lies are required to counter public falsehood, that like sarcasm they expose the latter by exaggeration; this is the basis of Bakhtin's figure of the 'gay deceiver'. But according to Lewis, the persona is also a drug. Zagreus is a potent adversary because no one knows *how* mad he is. In Lewis's analysis of madness in fictional characters in *The Lion and the Fox*, it is the Lions who go mad. The fictional Editor is a fox, but a Lion playing a fox, making the mistake of trusting him when foxes must attempt to destroy Lions.

Satire & Fiction probably helped the private edition's sales by generating interest in the very aspect of the book that Lewis denied, the *roman à clef*, although some potential readers must have been discouraged to learn that such a lengthy novel was written according to a theory, especially one that treated people as laboratory creatures. Lewis wrote in February, 1931, that it had sold out from a single bookshop, probably Arnold Zwemmer's.[15] But the significant boost that *The Apes* might have given to Lewis's readership and reputation was thwarted by a rather obvious fact: the book was not readily available. Lewis was too preoccupied with its honour to attend to its material survival. The sequel also supports the scapegoat interpretation.

In October, 1930, Lewis's plan to publish a trade edition with Chatto & Windus fell through; he had neglected to discuss financial terms until after the appearance of *Satire & Fiction*. He was insulted by the firm's offer and told Prentice that he was haunted by the possibility that it was a 'joke' (*L*, pp. 195–96). The alternative that he pursued was to publish his own popular edition. The need for fresh financing produced the strangest manifestation of the Arthurian persona, the unctuous voice of a salesman of advertising. Here is Lewis, who in his polemics had derided advertising as the worst excrescence of modern culture, imitating that ad-canvasser Leopold Bloom:

> We are including adverts. of Steamship Lines, tooth-pastes, and lawn-mowers.
>
> [. . .] It will be *a unique event in the publishing world*. It is certain to arouse a great deal of interest and result in a wide publicity: and at the above price the book is certain to be widely read.
>
> [. . .] We hope you will take this *unusual opportunity* of advertising in *a more permanent* form than the newspaper or the magazine offers — which once read is thrown away. (*L*, pp. 196–97).

Ads for lawn-mowers in a literary work might have been the brainchild of Ratner or another Ape. The flattery of the institution of advertising is Zagreus's. Although the letter concludes, 'the time is short before the date fixed for our going to press', this edition never materialized.

More than one reviewer had urged the publication of a popular edition of *The Apes*; *Satire & Fiction* had attracted more attention; and now this excoriation of the upper class existed only in a shape so imposing that no one but wealthy collectors, such as Apes, could afford it. If as much interest in the book had been generated as the Editor claimed, the size of Chatto's advance would have been immaterial. Lewis rejected it on principle, though few writers had been so indulged by a publisher. He held out for recompense for the artistic value of a book that asserts that contemporary market values inevitably contradict intrinsic ones.

Such self-destructive blunders were common in Lewis's career, and this one began a series of publishing frustrations. In the winter of 1930 Lewis began to look for another commercial publisher for *The Apes*, but it was a busy time for him. He did his first society portrait in years, of Lady Glennap. It dragged on; they quarrelled over Lewis's fees; and her estate later sued him. He married Anne Hoskyns, with whom he had lived secretly for ten years, falsifying the information on the marriage certificate. He did it so that they could travel to Germany together on a journalistic assignment. The trip, in November, resulted in the series of articles that became *Hitler* (1931), the book that secured his reputation as a fascist. He was also preparing *The Diabolical Principle* for publication with Chatto and submitting *The Roaring Queen* to various publishers; it was later accepted by Jonathan Cape, but withdrawn because of the danger of libel.[16]

During this period Lewis continued to work on his essays on *The Apes* and its reception, and the voice in these drafts grew even more desperate and bitter. Apparently for a possible reprint of *Satire & Fiction*, he revised the editorials and, in February, 1931, wrote another editorial preface. The piece gives even more fulsome praise to 'that literary gladiator' Mr Wyndham Lewis, who surmounted 'the most determined opposition that any work of satire has ever had to face, in the whole history of English letters'. Another piece, written in the first person, appears to be a preface to an edition of *The Apes* that would use advertising. It contains a bizarre combination of a blunter justification of its 'innovative' advertising — 'Let us see if we can be as vulgar as they can be' — and an unusually personal passage about Lewis's decision to write a novel about the Peace rather than the War, his memory of which was coloured by his mother's death from pneumonia in the post-war epidemic: 'If I lay my heart bare, O Public, it is only in the interests of truth.'[17] Neither of these editions was published: the first Enemy Pamphlet was also the last. In April, Lewis finally obtained a contract for *The Apes* with Grayson & Grayson, and it reappeared in November, nearly eighteen months after the private edition.[18]

After *The Apes* Lewis gradually moderated the external-mechanical element of his fiction. He may have decided that his style ought to be more accessible and his characters ought to be more human or ordinary, but there were other factors involved that mitigate a conclusion that he simply repudiated the technique that served this singular narrative. His prospects for favourable treatment both from publishers and from the public were hurt greatly by *Hitler*. He also must have been disappointed that, despite some immediate enthusiasm, *The Apes* did not alter his practical circumstances or bring him the critical reputation accorded Joyce. With serious health problems now added to his chronic poverty, he could not invest the time necessary for another project as ambitious without the hope of success. He had a contract with Chatto & Windus for a sequel to *The Childermass*, but he postponed writing it, without repaying the advance, in order to write a travel book, *Filibusters in Barbary* (1932), for Grayson & Grayson. In 1932 Chatto sued him for breach of contract and withdrew from the market another book, *Doom of Youth*, because of libel charges. Probably because of his publicity initiatives, *The Apes* was by far Lewis's most commercially successful book of this period (although that is saying little, since his royalty statement from Chatto for 1933 recorded total sales of only 355 copies of nine books since 1926). It was the only one to earn out its advance; it went through three impressions and was in print until 1938. But typically, even *The Apes*' relative success was marred: Grayson deducted expenses for a libel suit against *Filibusters* from its royalties (Meyers, pp. 207, 217–18). Like Zagreus, who after much sport with Apes succeeded so well in winning his senile aunt's favour that she expired for joy before his deal was consummated, Lewis also outwitted himself.

NOTES

1. *L*, pp. 134–35, 141, 149; Meyers, p. 119.
2. *Pound/Lewis*, p. 145; *L*, p. 167; *SF*, pp. 30–31.
3. Letter to Kenneth Marshall, 22 January 1929, Cornell WL Coll.
4. Arthur Press, Prospectus for *The Apes of God*, [1929]; letter from Sydney Schiff to Lewis, 29 October 1929; letter from Lewis to Jessica Dismorr, 5 November 1929; letters from Lewis to C. H. Prentice, 15 August 1929, 22 September 1929, 15 April 1930, 26 September 1930 (Cornell WL Coll.)
5. *The Apes of God* (London: Arthur Press, 1930), Cornell WL Coll.
6. Arthur Press, Broadsides [concerning reactions to *The Apes of God*, 1930], Cornell WL Coll.; *L*, p. 190; Lewis, *Rude Assignment*, p. 214; Meyers, pp. 178–79, 170–73.
7. *Satire & Fiction*, ts. [variant essay, 1931], Cornell WL Coll.
8. p. 396.

   Muse, let us change our style, and quit satire!
   It is as evil a métier as cursing someone!
   To the author who embraces it, it is always fatal —
   The evil that one says of others always produces evil (upon oneself)!
   (my translation)
9. Arthur Press, Broadsides, Cornell WL Coll.
10. In *Men Without Art* the essay is expanded into three chapters and an appendix (pp. 103–28, 295–304). Robert C. Elliot, who selects the argument as the most important modern writing on satire, refers to this source (pp. 223–37). I choose to examine the original since the immediacy with which it followed the novel ought to give it more authority in regard to Lewis's reasoning.
11. Lewis's rivalry with Huxley also involved, around the time of Huxley's satire of Lewis in *Antic Hay*, their both having been lovers of the notorious Nancy Cunard. See Meyers, pp. 93–97.
12. 'The Politics of Artistic Expression', in *Creatures of Habit*, pp. 114–19 (p. 119).
13. See, for example, the account of his request for a secret meeting with Strachey in Meyers, pp. 108–09.
14. Toward the Schiffs, whom not even the book was able to alienate, Lewis acted as though *they* had offended him. Sydney told him, 'Zagreus has not succeeded in extinguishing my admiration for Pierrepoint [*sic*]', thus disproving Pierpoint's contention that Kein could not bear being portrayed objectively in fiction, as well as recognizing the 'split' between the two characters that I have analysed in Lewis's handling of the novel's publicity (letter to Lewis, 8 April 1931, Cornell WL Coll.).
15. *Satire & Fiction*, ts., Cornell WL Coll. On Zwemmer, see Meyers, p. 153.
16. Meyers, pp. 209–10, 186, 224.
17. *Satire & Fiction*, ts., Cornell WL Coll.
18. Meyers, p. 211; Grayson & Grayson, Ltd, Statement of Account with Wyndham Lewis, 23 December 1933 (Cornell WL Coll.).

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION: MADNESS AND THE VEIL OF ART

Although the foregoing analysis of *The Apes'* reception shows Lewis in an unflattering light, it furthers an understanding of the novel's preoccupation with rhetorical contests, dissimulation, and plots. In focusing on the external method and the destructive satire, in the long run 'Satire and Fiction', lightly revised for *Men Without Art*, may have hurt more than helped a critical appreciation of the novel. Lewis took various positions on the nature and social function of satire from the twenties onwards. At times he doubted the efficacy of any social criticism; at others he adopted the conventional moralistic view.[1] In his 1950 autobiography, *Rude Assignment*, he called *The Apes* his only 'pure satire', but a symbolic one rather than the more severe naturalistic kind (pp. 56–56, 215). In the later, unpublished preface, he no longer regarded it as pure satire because of a 'light-heartedness' that reflects 'something carnivalesque' about London in the twenties.[2]

Lewis had in fact discussed the carnivalesque dimension of his work, in a different vein, in his *Wild Body* essays, particularly 'Inferior Religions' (1917; rev. 1927), a poetic meditation composed with a gnomic density. He describes the characters in his stories as hypostatized ideas whose physical existence is emblematic of psychological truths and whose governing principle is Laughter: 'the mind sneezing'; 'all that remains physical in the flash of thought, its friction'.[3] He postulates an ontological dualism from which laughter arises: beneath material existence, 'our legitimate and liveried masquerade', is a primordial, inaccessible reality, a 'tragic organism':

> The chemistry of personality (subterranean in a sort of cemetery, whose decompositions are our lives) puffs up in frigid balls, soapy Snowmen, arctic carnival-masks, which we can photograph and fix.
>
> Upwards from the surface of existence a lurid and dramatic scum oozes and accumulates into the characters we see. The real and tenacious poisons, and sharp forces of vitality, do not socially transpire. [. . .]
>
> In this objective play-world, corresponding to our social consciousness, as opposed to our solitude, no final issue is decided. [. . .] But so much correspondence it has with its original that, if the cadaveric travail beneath is vigorous and bitter, the dummy or mask will be of a more original grotesqueness. [. . .] In order to evade life we must have recourse to those uniforms, but such a choice leaves nothing but the white and ethereal abstraction of the shadow of laughter.

> So the King of Play is not a phantom corresponding to the sovereign force beneath the surface. The latter must always be reckoned on: it is the Skeleton at the Feast, potentially, with us. That soul or dominant corruption is so real that he cannot rise up and take part in man's festival as a Falstaff of unwieldy spume. [. . .]
>
> But life is invisible. [. . .] Beauty is an icy douche of ease and happiness at something *suggesting* perfect conditions for an organism: it remains suggestion.
>
> [. . .] We can aim at no universality of form, for what we see is not the reality. (*CWB*, pp. 152–54)

This war-time essay, with its macabre vision of sacred grotesques intimating an 'invisible' reality, presents a more compelling non-moral aesthetic than does the argument for the visual in 'Satire and Fiction'. Although Alan Munton correctly identifies a shift in Lewis's treatment of his characters between the stories and *The Apes*, there is also a continuity. The Apes, like the Wild Bodies, are 'little monuments of logic'; the 'religious fanaticism' depicted in the stories translates, in the cosmopolitan milieu of the novel, into a collective neurosis, the time-cult. The Apes' fetishes are dignified as 'complexes' because of their comfortable wealth, the obvious source of the vanity and concomitant chicanery for which they are satirized. The provincial peasants could be eulogized, albeit perversely, because of their political inconsequence, which made unnecessary the legalistic denial of libel that envelops 'Satire and Fiction'. But the principles of the earlier essay also apply to *The Apes*, and it is they, more than the 'religious fanaticism' of the external method, that give the novel the metaphysical depth of the serio-comic classics.[4] If the carnivalesque is a heuristic device for exploring ancient conflicts among nature, society, and culture, then it is evident that this symbolic ensemble was an integral, sometimes dominant aspect of Lewis's outlook.

We have seen that *The Apes* exhibits all of the basic features of Menippean satire — a fantastic, scandalous adventure dramatizing ideological controversy, a cacophonous mixture of naturalism and philosophy. It is less apparent that the novel portrays true dialogue or possesses philosophical universality. Most of the dialogues are one-sided and argue themselves that truth is individual and the manifestations of any collectivity are illusory. But *The Apes* does raise 'ultimate' epistemological questions about the nature of art and ontological ones about the relation of mind to body and self to experience. Although the gallery of satiric butts plainly illustrates Pierpoint's diagnosis, the narrative also tests such cryptic remarks as 'the name is an abortion and a tyranny'. Likewise the novel includes all the motifs of the carnivalesque, but appears to contradict its spirit, if not to be spoiled by bile. The Apes have dissolved the distinction between spectators and performers and 'live a *carnivalistic life*' (Bakhtin, *Problems*, p. 122); but they take their 'carnival-masks' seriously. Lewis writes, 'Madness, for us, is to be *real*. The reality, without its veil of art, would be insupportable' ('Politics', p. 116). Despite his intention to deride, to prosecute a premeditated laughter, however, Lewis retained a deeper predilection for the indiscriminate, 'anarchist' laughter described in 'Inferior Religions', his equivalent of Bakhtin's half-affirmative 'ritual laughter'. The Apes' fault is not violating a standard of civility but betraying both art and the 'fountain of life'. Although Lewis writes with political urgency, in the face of 'the madness of our life, [. . .] at the root of every true philosophy', the Apes' social malignancy, in the 'objective play-world' where 'no final issue is decided', is secondary to the psychological mechanisms of their characters and the process in which these mechanisms are continually undermined (*CWB*, p. 157). What bedevils the Apes is the 'sharp forces of vitality' and 'poisons' of the 'invisible' realm, which bear a suspicious likeness to Bergson's *élan vital* and are indeed celebrated.

This 'sovereign force' acts on both the body and the mind, or, as the latter is thematized, language. The external method shows the body dominating the person, as in Rabelais. The body and laughter are the main analytic categories of both Bakhtin's theory of the carnivalesque and Lewis's essays on satire. Laughter is inarguable because it is corporeal and sub-verbal: the grotesque shocks consciousness out of the uncertainties of language. Laughter discharges the energy that the fetish circumscribes; it is the recognition of the 'play' of sublimation, or rather of its futility. Mockery is Lewis's 'reduced laughter', the form that laughter takes in language. In *The Apes*, language, a spirit-world that communicates fitfully with physical existence, has taken over the metaphors of death from the Wild Body's 'dominant corruption': it tyrannizes, possesses, aborts, and kills. Like sarcasm, it dominates things by misrepresentation. Caricature is both greater than its model, magnifying certain features, and false. The narrative extends the Apes' proclivity for impersonation through a disparate host of traits drawn from the 'uniforms' of social life, with a verbal exuberance that obscures the object by a surfeit of names. Lewis's mixed metaphors and haphazard imagery function like carnival costumes and titles that confer freedom because they are consciously temporary, imparting Bakhtinian 'laughter in all directions'. The incommensurability between object and description produces the common impression of 'overkill'; overkill is the network of verbal and imagistic associations triggered by the individual paradigms that illustrate the infection of personal life with tradition, fashion, stock emotions, ideological clichés, anything static or derivative. At the basis of the scapegoat theme is the ambiguity that, on the one hand, whatever is truly original is attacked, while on the other, whatever seeks permanence is repressive.

Lewis's image of the 1920s as a carnival derives from his view of the Great War. To draw a final analogy from 'Inferior Religions', the trauma of the war is the rotting soul beneath the 'play-world' of the jazz age. Lewis's deployment of the carnivalesque sets the carnival attitude against a public *caricature* of carnival. It may be difficult to conceive of a parodic carnival, since carnival itself travesties normal social behaviour; but this in essence how Lewis saw impersonal social forces eclipsing the individual and the intellect: the contradiction of carnival normalized and sanitized of its gravity, a simulation of carnival that bribes the public to forget its folkloric basis in mutability. Bakhtin's 'carnival language' is the 'language of the marketplace', a raucous billingsgate.[5] The new language of the post-war market-place was the standardized imagery of mass media and advertising, which offered vicarious experience or a disoriented malaise rather than contact with unvarnished life. Despite the rage for order in his polemics, Lewis's artistic response to this situation was an exaggeration of disorder, a salvage of the play of fancy in a critical inventory, in accordance with Tarr's pronouncement, 'My passion for art has made me fond of chaos' (*Tarr*, p. 217). In contrast to the Apes' bitter scapegoating of the Lion, Dan's discrowning, which joins a parody of the Apes' imposture with a carnivalesque celebration of change — a perverse tribute to time in the psychological abuse of beauty — symbolizes the relativity of authority in a society that banishes authority.

Modernism has been characterized both as a chaotic reflection of twentieth-century history and as an ahistorical, impersonal formalism.[6] The crux of these conflicting interpretations in modernist studies is the concept of myth derived from the work of Joyce, Pound, and Eliot — the writers whom Lewis, despite his differences with them, linked himself with as 'the Men of 1914'. This approach uses patterns of action rather than temporal progression to organize a literary work and likewise treats history paradigmatically. Its most famous description is Eliot's 'mythic method': 'It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.'[7] This concern with history and the past is the other main feature, besides immediate sensation, that Lewis attacks in the time-cult. According to the present explication, the dramatic structure of *The Apes* also follows mythic patterns: the cycles of initiation and the scapegoat. But unlike the modernist mythographers, Lewis uses myth neither to create analogous and contrasting patterns according to which the modern appears an ironic distortion, nor to develop historical or anthropological objectivity or a vision of the collective unconscious. The carnival-symbolic is a means of representing the deformations of the scapegoat ritual in historical eras; Lewis uses it to articulate a specific instance of profanation, the 'societification of art', and his treatment looks towards the future rather than the past.

He agrees with the other writers that modern life is deracinated and psychically impoverished; but his view of earlier cultures is generally less idealistic than theirs, and his treatment of primitive materials is accordingly less formalist. As his work lacks the romantic element of some canonical modernist styles — a faith in subjective perception and emotion — it is also without an ideal of an organic culture, a 'golden age' such as Eliot's English Renaissance. The folkloric chronotope may be seen as another instance of modernist nostalgia, although for Bakhtin, as for Lewis in *The Apes*, the only contemporary role for earlier cultural models is in deconstructing political domination, not offering a viable alternative. The most Nietzschean of the Anglo-American modernists, Lewis identifies art with primitive magic and its violence. *The Art of Being Ruled* applies Nietzsche's slave-ethic to fully industrialized society, and the Apes epitomize civilized *ressentiment*, the proclivity of the weak and sick to organize an underhanded assault on the strong individual. Because the novel as a whole enacts the aggressiveness of Nietzsche's warrior caste, the mythic 'shape' that it gave to contemporary anarchy has not been clearly perceived. One of the central problems of Lewis's work is that he insisted on the autonomy of art while he had very strong and complex social, political, and philosophical ideas to express. But he rejected the notion of impersonality that is usually associated with modernism, arguing that the artist should rather exaggerate his or her personality.[8] His concept of detachment is, like Nietzsche's 'objectivity', a matter of knowing both sides of an issue, not of reserving judgement or eliminating perspective and will.[9]

Although *The Apes* features a scathing attack on a specific faction, the erosion of its antagonists' credibility precludes a clear political moral. *The Apes* is a work of anarchism in which no positive social programme or course of action is favoured, or scarcely plausible: the fascist is as foolish as the gentry and the bourgeois characters are, and the conclusion simply predicts British socialism. The novel's careening style alone, as 'jazzed' as Stein's, implies the futility of authoritarian designs on this society. While closer in temperament to Pound and Lawrence, who were also impatient, contrary, and possessed by a violent animus on social issues, Lewis, like Joyce, who avoided both politics and aesthetic theory, valued the artistic transformation of material life over any theory of social organization. His singularity among the modernists is that he combined a radical aestheticism with a journalist's immersion in the issues of the day. Because he avoided both the restricted purview of impressionism and historical abstraction, his work is more open to contemporary socio-political questions than the other writers'. *The Apes* is the one modernist anatomy of post-war society and the fullest treatment of the social phenomenon of modernism itself, the avant-garde already caricatured in the popular culture that it disdained. Neither ahistorical nor merely a reflection of modern anarchy, it casts cultural politics in a mythic perspective, yet it is also a personal intervention in local controversies.

Lewis's low critical standing and lack of influence may be attributed to several factors. His portrayal of the individual lacks emotional appeal, and his image of society offers no grounds for optimism or equanimity. His graphic bias proved inimical to the abiding need for a personal voice in fiction, while his voluble 'personality' often seems an embattled conceit. The difficulty of his prose, with its hard and jagged texture, does not have the compensating appeal, for an academic audience, of a systematic reference to literary tradition, although Paul Edwards's essay on its Augustan allusions demonstrates that *The Apes* does have such an inter-textual dimension. Altogether the novel seems to mystify more than to offer the satisfactions of decipherment, especially when read impatiently under the influence of its reputation. If Lewis is to be judged an experimenter and a critical force rather than a finished literary artist, then, while discussing the 'extreme conventionality of Joyce's mind', he wrote his own epitaph:

> Daring or unusual speculation, or an unwonted intensity of outlook, is not good for technical display, that is certain, and they are seldom found together. The intellect is in one sense the rival of the hand, and is apt to hamper rather than assist it. It interferes, at all events, with its showing-off, and affords no encouragement to the hand's 'sedulous apeishness'; or so would say the hand. (*TWM*, pp. 95–96)

Both Lewis's life and work were full of contradictions; the peculiar virtues, as well as the flaws, of *The Apes* do indeed depend upon animus and megalomania. Lewis certainly had a personal stake in the issues he treated, but these tensions gave his fiction its power and incisiveness; greater sympathy and humanity would have diminished its wit. He was not nihilistic or despairing, however, only obsessive and ruthless. In presenting an extreme and concentrated vision, *The Apes* clarifies a particular viewpoint that is available in few literary works of any period. If the novel is judged in its proper generic and historical context, it can be seen less as a defective artefact or a paranoid harangue and more as a complex interrogation. In it Lewis plays the devil's advocate against liberalism, with all the inconsistency that the role demands. In his later work he is not a particularly distinguished or convincing humanist; but in his prime he was a good monster.

NOTES

1. Compare his comment on the imitation of the artist and the child by the rich, 'It would be presumptuous, and indeed mad, to suppose that anything could be done, by even the most eloquent disquisition, to change this situation' (*ABR*, p. 136), with '[Satire] is criticism undertaken with the deliberate purpose of changing what is criticized' (*The Mysterious John Bull* (London: Hale, 1938), p. 144; quoted in SueEllen Campbell, p. 200n.9).
2. *The Apes of God*, ts. [introductory material, 195–(?)], Cornell WL Coll.
3. I quote from the revised, 1927 version of 'Inferior Religions', in *CWB*, pp. 149–54 (pp. 151–52).
4. A full account of Lewis's development would require a consideration of *Tarr*, which was written and revised over the same period as *The Wild Body*. This novel marks an interesting intermediate stage between the stories and *The Apes* partly because it portrays an Ape, Kreisler, tragically and a serious artist, Tarr, in person. The difference in the prose styles of the two versions, the first telegraphic and emotionally-charged and the second analytical, also parallels the change in tone from 'Inferior Religions' to 'Satire and Fiction'.
5. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. by Helene Iswolsky (1965; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968), pp. 166–68.
6. See Eysteinsson, *The Concept of Modernism*, p. 16.

7. T. S. Eliot, '*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth', in *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, pp. 175–78, (p. 177).
8. Using I. A. Richards' term, Lewis mocked Eliot as a *pseudoist* for supposing that personal beliefs could be kept out of art. See '"Detachment" and the Fictionist', in *Creatures of Habit*, pp. 214–230 (pp. 228–29).
9. See Nietzsche, *Genealogy*, p. 119.

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THE POETICS OF MOCKERY reconsiders Wyndham Lewis's adversarial role in the modernist movement through a close reading of his prodigious satire of 1920s cultural politics. It presents a new interpretation of *The Apes of God* as a Menippean satire, with attention to its style, characterization, allegory, and historiography, and to Lewis's polemics of the period.

Previous studies have emphasized Lewis's 'external method' of visual narration and the personal attacks on the London art world. This one delineates also the rhetorical and parodic elements in his mechanistic caricatures of literary impression and its proponents, besides the theory of participation and the 'player' behind his schizoid image of the modern subject. The study reinterprets the apprenticeship plot as a carnivalesque discrowning based on the primitive themes of the shaman and the scapegoat. It explores the ways in which the discursive 'broadcasts' — on the social exploitation of a subjectivist aesthetic, publicity as imposture, cultural levelling — are dramatized in the sado-masochistic bond between impresario and naïf and in the contradiction of carnival institutionalized. Lewis is shown using his rivals' 'mythic method' to implicate the avant-garde itself in nascent mass culture.

The study includes an analysis of the scandal surrounding Lewis's private edition of *The Apes* and the defence of 'non-moral' satire presented in his subsequent pamphlet *Satire & Fiction*. Drawing upon unpublished manuscripts and correspondence, it demonstrates how Lewis's own devious publicity campaign re-enacted the crux of the novel and epitomized his conflicts with his contemporaries.