



THE MIND OF THE ARTIST, ABOUT TO MAKE A PICTURE, 1942

(and detail, above)

WYNDHAM LEWIS

SPACE, TIME AND THE ARTIST:
THE PHILOSOPHY AND AESTHETICS OF WYNDHAM LEWIS

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Summary of Ph.D. Thesis - P.J. Bracewell

My study, in Part I of this thesis, of Wyndham Lewis's philosophical principles outlined in Time and Western Man (1927), reveals a mode of thought which is inspired and determined by beliefs about visual art and its metaphysical significance. The ultimate rejection of the philosophies of Bergson, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche and the 'Space-Timeists' such as Spengler, Whitehead and Alexander, in pursuit of a 'philosophy of the eye' was, I argue, fashioned according to aesthetic objections. 'Time-values' are challenged by 'space-values', ideally expressible for Lewis in the static, spatial medium of visual art.

The aesthetics of Vorticism, discussed in Part II, was formalized in the two Blast journals (1914-15), and provides the key to an understanding of Lewis's later philosophy in its negation of Bergsonist-related doctrines. His aversion to 'chronologism' had emerged in various ways well before the public launch of Vorticism and had subsequently achieved a subtle, effective coherence in the 'logic of contradictions' which directed the theoretical strategies of Blast. But in modernism Lewis recognized 'empty' abstraction and thus the taint of the time-cult itself. As a method of working, abstraction was not abandoned, but was directed away from the sensational and emotional in the service of intellect and rational thought.

In order to clarify the interdependence of art and philosophy in Lewis's thought, I propose two schematic models. The first characterizes Lewis's philosophical principles and posits the concept of the vortex as Lewis's noumenon. The second superimposes the aesthetic values and form of the vortex symbol itself as a prior justification of the philosophical schema: each 'model' is clearly incomplete without cognizance of the other. Since, for Lewis, the essential character of Vorticism was first expressed in art practice, the findings of this thesis support Lewis's own retrospective view (1956), that Vorticism was a 'new philosophy' in visual form.

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ABBREVIATIONS OF WORKS BY LEWIS

TWM	<u>Time and Western Man</u>
WLOA	<u>Wyndham Lewis on Art</u> (edited by W. Michel and C.J. Fox)
WA	<u>The Writer and the Absolute</u>
B1	<u>Blast No.1</u>
B2	<u>Blast No.2</u>
CD	<u>The Caliph's Design</u> (edited by Paul Edwards)
WLA	<u>Wyndham Lewis the Artist. From 'Blast' to Burlington House</u>
RA	<u>Rude Assignment</u>
<u>Letters</u>	<u>The Letters of Wyndham Lewis</u> (edited by W.K. Rose)
ABR	<u>The Art of Being Ruled</u>
EOAT	'Essay on the Objective of Plastic Art in Our Time' in <u>The Tyro no. 2</u>

INTRODUCTION

In the work, Time and Western Man¹, Wyndham Lewis expounds his philosophical principles and beliefs, in response to what he regarded as the particularly virulent and culturally damaging 'time-philosophy', derived popularly from the ideas of the French philosopher Henri Bergson and his adherents. This work by Lewis is accepted in this thesis as central to the understanding of the whole of his oeuvre in the visual arts, criticism, aesthetics, creative literature, satire, political and polemical writings, in its statement of the basic philosophical assumptions and propositions which motivated and challenged him.

However, my study is focused on what I believe to be a fundamental relation: that is, the context of Lewis's philosophy and its aesthetic base from the point of view of the visual artist. In the preface to Book I, Lewis clearly states his position and interests as an artist and hence declares at the outset his purpose, which is to mount a criticism of the 'Time-view' 'from the position of the plastic or the visual intelligence'². Lewis's philosophical views are 'mobilized' therefore, 'in the service of the things of vision' and the expressed intention of the work is not to cast his 'mere artist's eye, like an impertinent bird's, into the awful machinery of Relativity'³, not to consider the causes in detail, but more legitimately, as a non-scientist, to evaluate the effects of a philosophy thus constructed, upon social life and the arts. Hence Lewis lays stress on his strengths as an 'outsider', and clearly outlines the extent of

his 'occupational' interests, commenting from the basis of a wider ground than the committed scientist or specialist philosopher.

In this thesis, I wish to argue that not only is the understanding of Lewis's philosophical views vital to any study which seeks to offer an analysis of the writings of Lewis on aesthetics and art criticism, but that the place of the 'plastic intelligence' in his thought is such that beliefs about art and its practice and Lewis's search for a coherent aesthetics were crucially influential factors in shaping and directing the tenor of his philosophical development and hence his position of opposition to the 'time-philosophy' and its variants in Time and Western Man. Indeed, it is argued that a full understanding of Lewis's philosophical principles depends ultimately on a parallel reading of his aesthetics. Hence Lewis's philosophy as articulated in Time and Western Man is seen as dependent, or contingent upon, the characteristic notions shaped and determined in respect of his prior role as practising artist and theorist. In addition, his view of visual art is such that it alone amongst the arts possesses the necessary spatial and flux-resisting qualities to provide the necessary impetus for renewal of the truly creative capacity that is of universal - and not ephemeral or relative - value.

In thus identifying aspects of Lewis's writings as 'art criticism', 'aesthetics' and 'philosophy', it is necessary to draw attention to the particular applications intended within the specific context of this thesis, and to acknowledge their limits. Lewis's personal aversion to the term 'aesthetic' is well noted, where it is used to refer to the professed emotive response to formal elements of art such

as those documented in the writings of Roger Fry and Clive Bell; such an emotion for Lewis would be the hallmark of the 'aesthete', the 'dilettante', the type of art critic whom he felt should be opposed and exposed as the parasite of the art world. In discussing 'aesthetics' with regard to Lewis therefore, definitions which are involved with questions of 'beauty' and 'taste' must be largely laid aside in favour of those which indicate general philosophical theories or conceptions about the nature of art, the description and explanation of its forms, subject matter and intention, and how Lewis sees the relationship of art with thought and prevalent socio-political conditions ⁴.

Where 'aesthetics' becomes for Lewis the generalized term which serves to signify the formulation of general concepts, 'art criticism' is intended to identify and characterize the application of such ideas in response to individual artists and movements, and specific issues in relation to the practices and concerns of the art market in Europe and its organization in England. It will be claimed in this thesis that, even whilst Lewis is thus occupied with specifics, he is always mindful of their relevance in cultural terms to his broad philosophical perspective. The encyclopaedic breadth of Lewis's concerns is never random in purpose, despite surface appearances, and as I suggest, the nature of his style and range of interests is more fully understood as a systematic undertaking and articulation of connecting principles when the fundamental links between Lewis's aesthetics and philosophy are affirmed.

Mainstream philosophical circles have never accepted Lewis into the

fold, and Time and Western Man has largely been ignored or disregarded as a work of philosophy⁵. His self-assigned place, the 'place of honour', has always been on the outside⁶, and lack of recognition by 'establishments' whether artistic or philosophical, whilst undoubtedly rankling with Lewis, did not divert him from the purpose in hand. It is clear that reviewers⁷ found it more appropriate to examine the book's general critical and cultural principles than its philosophy, either in a specific literary or artistic context. To one commentator however, Lewis's interdisciplinary ground was not problematical in defining the import of his philosophical thesis; he wrote

To Mr. Wyndham Lewis the vice we suffer from is that we close our eyes and open our ears, that we discard space and embrace time, and so, instead of standing still and contemplating, we are for ever moving on and exulting in the empty form of progress. This commendation of space-forms at the expense of music is not just the prejudice of a painter and draughtsman; Mr. Wyndham Lewis is using the example of his craft to embody a philosophic principle. ...Some critics have been unable to make head or tail of the book...⁸ but surely the philosophy implied in it is not obscure.

From his earliest formative encounters with the ideas and writings of European thinkers during his period of travel 1902-1908, to the end of his life, Lewis was deeply concerned with the areas of philosophical investigation that either supported or challenged his aesthetics intellectually. Abuse was piled high on the 'professional philosopher' in the essay, 'Physics of the Not-Self' whose 'scruples' to Lewis 'branded him a liar from the start'⁹. This is demonstrably more a product of over-magnified irony than an authentic critical assessment; Lewis took his philosophy and that of others whom he respected extremely seriously, although this gravity was often masked by a pointed, eccentric style and means of expression. What this

essay does emphasize however, if such an emphasis should be needed, is the central importance for Lewis of the intellect in perception and the ordering of knowledge, the critical intelligence wherein lies man's potentiality towards rationality and philosophical contemplation, temporarily freed from the vagaries of the flux and the unconscious, sense experience and irrational intuitionism.

Intellectual justification for the means of expression formulated in practical terms was essential to him, but it also brought problems of coherence and logical consistency. Lewis quotes Socrates' dictum of the Phaedo in support of the claim that 'philosophy gives freedom from the obscenities of existence'

...(it) endeavours to free the soul by showing that the view of things by means of the eyes is full of depression, as also is that through the ears and the other senses, persuading an abandonment of these so far as it is not absolutely necessary to use them, and to believe nothing else he hears... for that a thing of this kind... is sensible and visible, but what she herself perceives is intelligible and invisible. 10

For Lewis, this is the invitation to 'plunge into the "soul", the opposite of the plunge into life suggested by Bergson'. The paradox that Lewis is concerned to recognize and yet reconcile with his own position as a plastic artist concerns the isolation of the 'eye' from the other senses, in direct contradiction to Plato's exhortation. For Lewis, since the eye, which is 'mechanical' and useless without the organizing principle of the intelligence, functioning in order to record sense-impressions which, as I explore in Chapter 4, are integral to any kind of artistic activity, his position has to allow for a meeting of 'intellect' and 'mechanism' across the flux. In developing and maintaining the concept of a visually-specific fusion

of the physical and mental worlds, Lewis's agreement with Plato's position as expressed here soon evaporates.

Thus far, too, it is indicated just how closely Lewis had leaned towards and learned from Bergson's theories, necessitating a thorough repudiation in order to distinguish degrees of emphasis. Both Bergson and Lewis would agree on the nature of the paradox to be addressed: that is the simultaneous, necessarily complementary and yet opposing character of the values of intelligence and instinct¹¹. Differences in the approach to this paradox and, in addition, a profound acknowledgement of the nature and effects of the instinctive domain have to be articulated for Lewis in order to maintain the ultimate supremacy of the rational and critical intellect; the formulation of a Vorticist aesthetic provided him with the ideal opportunity to give a theoretical and visual hard-edge to those distinctions in a 'logic of contradictions' as discussed in Chapter 6. Time and Western Man accordingly attempted to outline the philosophical objections to the Bergsonian interpretation of the intelligence-instinct dichotomy. The refutation of a particular interpretation of reality was at stake, and it was all the more acute for Lewis the artist to establish an intellectual defence against a view which consigned art to the chaotic flux. Stability and definition, however they are perceived, could not flourish within such a philosophical world-view.

As opening discursive concepts, Lewis found the relationship of mind-matter and the nature of perception to be uppermost in formulating his own view of a reality that would accord with his aesthetic inclinations and artistic practice. Such a framework would

need to encompass and be consistent with a theory and practice of art that concerned itself with external appearances mediated by the specific interests of graphic visual means; line, plastic design, outlines, form and the analytical process by which the intelligence would hope to transform those externals into visual interpretations consistent with an articulated view of reality.

If Lewis's position as a practising artist disqualified him from fully embracing the extent of a Platonic idealism, he made a virtue of his sympathy with its general approach to 'nature' and the 'natural', and the crucial stress on the importance of rationality and the critical intelligence. He had found much to admire especially in the 'gimcrack world of façades' in Berkeley, regarding it, nevertheless, as 'one of the best of all possible philosophic worlds'¹². Any reservations about the applicability of such ideas, and with the early Plato's denigration of the value of sense-perception, are due to an artist's intimate relationship with those precise areas of experience that are peripheral to a thorough-going idealism.

Time and Western Man puts forward what Lewis explicitly calls a 'philosophy of the eye'¹³, elevating the operation of vision essentially in concert with the intellect, and not isolated from it, although a different function is stressed. Berkeley is thus pressed into service as providing a model of an 'extremist philosophy for surface creatures' whereby Lewis extracts the essence of philosophically conceived mental perception processes to accord with his own - artist's - view of a semi-idealist world of intellect that nevertheless admits to its ranks the sense of vision. Hence we find

the seat of a 'realist' core within the basis of Lewis's philosophy as a vital - but not 'vitalist' - organizing principle¹⁴.

The outline structure and organization of this thesis is therefore conceived in two main parts. Part I analyses relevant aspects of Book II of Time and Western Man, Lewis's detailed development and analysis of the 'time-philosophy', from Bergson's systematization of it to contemporary 'space-timeists', and in view of the 'awful machinery of Relativity' the exposure takes place, of the cult which had begun with Schopenhauer and von Hartmann, had reached systematic explication in Bergson, and popularization in Spengler. Both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche were regarded by Lewis as inveterate allies of Bergson, and were ultimately rejected as such by him, although it is clear that the influence of these thinkers on the development of Lewis's ideas is evident and highly relevant, since the rejection of basic metaphysical precepts did not preclude openness to their views on aesthetics.

A recognition of the complexity of Lewis's philosophical position, and the oppositional tensions which were pursued and maintained is an important dimension of this study. Accordingly, his strong attraction for varieties of philosophical idealism and the attendant problems for the artist who must acknowledge and celebrate the physicality of objects is therefore a potentially self-contradictory position, and requires exegesis. Since Lewis's expressed views amount to a virtual 'philosophy of the eye', the nature of his standpoint as developed in his book is considered in this light, opening up the enquiry in Part II of my thesis to the proposition that the origins of such a philosophy are to be found in Lewis's beliefs about aesthetics and the

role of the artist, beliefs which in turn were determined by the practice of art itself.

Book I of Time and Western Man, 'The Revolutionary Simpleton', was included by Lewis as a preliminary characterization of the effects in cultural terms of the Bergsonian philosophy. In this piece, he draws the reader's attention to aspects of art and social life which have succumbed to the philosophical virus; the notion of the 'romantic', herd-like adherence to fashion and low-culture, mass art 'movements', the Russian ballet, and cults of the child and the primitive. All such manifestations, for Lewis, demonstrate the pervasive and damaging nature of a mass interpretation, in diluted format, of the time-cult. That literature is seen as more deeply compromised than visual art - although art is endangered - is clear from Lewis's detailed analysis of the writings of Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound and James Joyce.

'The Revolutionary Simpleton' thus provides a framework for the material discussed in Part II of this thesis. Lewis's attitudes towards the much-vaunted concepts of 'Romanticism' and 'Classicism', are important in this context, and in Chapter 5, I examine the nature and extent of Lewis own professed 'romanticism' and how and to what extent personal and philosophical extrication was apparently accomplished by Lewis, expressed in the dichotomies 'art' and 'life' accompanied by the attendant philosophical issues which might be similarly represented in the debates of 'instinct' and 'intelligence', the 'mechanical' and the 'rational'. The limits of such oppositions are most often acknowledged by Lewis, but are occasionally not explicitly articulated, for specific reasons in connection with the

thesis he wishes to propound. Lewis's attitude to the 'romantic' has a close bearing on the wider thesis I seek to develop, and is clearly crucial to the formulation of particular theoretical strategies that Lewis developed to the full in relation to the aesthetics of Vorticism. Thus it is necessary to enter into a prior analysis of Lewis's own adherence to the 'romantic' and the reasons for needing to define limits for himself within the romantic tendency, and yet remain 'outside' it.

If Lewis was concerned to expose and critically examine the cultural, intellectual and social malaise that stemmed from the Bergsonian 'time-philosophy', we must note that the ardent assimilation of Bergson's theories by the young 'Romanticized' Lewis in Paris was matched no less by the rejection of this 'fashionable' philosophy. This rejection was, I argue, conceived primarily on aesthetic grounds, firstly in the context of Lewis's arrival on the English art scene, his dealings with Roger Fry and the 'Bloomsberries', and reaching its most public and visual form in the theory and practice of the Vorticist movement. It must be stressed that Lewis considered himself to be a 'professional', an intellectual 'heavyweight', but nonetheless his priorities were those of a practising artist. He was therefore not in the business of Kantian systematization, but of 'making art possible' in a society seemingly bent on its destruction and trivialization. Hence Time and Western Man should be understood as the philosophical contribution to that end, which always remained supreme for Lewis, and which should be read in conjunction with reference to Lewis's writings on art and aesthetics, and their context in the English art world.

My characterization of Lewis's Apollonian romanticism is useful in the task of posing a contrasting model with complementary forms in the aesthete and the traditionalist, who looked to the past for inspiration with true time-cult enthusiasm. The particular insularity of English art stemmed largely for Lewis from the legacy of Victorianism and its sentimental romanticism, a blind attachment to tradition and the dilettantism which threatened to stifle any truly innovative initiative in art. The intellectual legacy bequeathed prominently by Carlyle and Arnold achieved aesthetic confirmation in the promotion of craft values in art by Morris and Ruskin and in the Arts and Crafts Movement, and achieved contemporary allegiance in the shape of the highly influential art critic Roger Fry. Since many of Lewis's ideas about the nature and importance of the visual arts were formulated in response to the specific conditions under which English art was conceived and marketed, his relations with the English art establishment and Bloomsbury, symbolically represented in Lewis's view by the Royal Academy and Fry, are examined as crucial to an understanding of Lewis's developing aesthetic and art criticism, and in pinpointing the first systematic stirrings of resistance to the time-philosophy and its attendant cultural, social and artistic manifestations that he clearly identified within that context.

The idea of the vortex, which I identify as a guiding principle of Lewis's philosophy, was already fully worked out in terms of art practice and theory before the First World War. An engagement with the bracing example of Futurism, and the equally dynamic propagandist activities of its spokesman, Marinetti, had inspired Lewis to take action. In theoretical terms, Lewis's close contact with the

philosopher T.E. Hulme was seen to be influential on the developing aesthetics of Vorticism. The importance of this influence is fully acknowledged, but it is argued that the vehement disengagement of Lewis's Vorticism with Futurist ideas, Marinetti and vitalism in general, and with Hulme's Bergsonian aesthetics, surfaced as a result of an independent artistic impetus that recognized Bergson's philosophy - in all its intellectual and popular forms - as its mortal enemy.

The two issues of Blast¹⁵, in which Lewis published his first important writings on art, set out to clarify the position of Vorticism in relation to other contemporary art movements. In doing so, Lewis presented the nub of his case against Bergson. Cubism, which was for Lewis a form of 'congealed dynamism' or 'cubed-over' Impressionism was allied closely to the activities of Fry and the 'chronologism' identified in a line of direct descent from the late Victorians. Futurism was distilled Bergsonism: it could thus not be art, but encompassed Bergson's 'anti-art' in ostensible artistic form. In developing his ideas on aesthetics, Lewis claimed a priority for practice, and had regarded Vorticist art as a philosophy in visual guise¹⁶, formulated long before its explicit literary expression in Time and Western Man. The provocative presentation and idiosyncratic content of Blast masks a series of determined theoretical and intellectual strategies, and Lewis's lifelong attraction for the logic which emerges from the play and coherence of opposing dualities is seen most clearly in conjunction with his art practice. In examples of Vorticist work, and especially in an analysis of visually contrasting effects, the philosophical dimensions of the Vorticist

image can be unravelled.

The last chapter of this thesis surveys the range and scope of Lewis's writings on art and aesthetics after the first war in the context of his intellectual struggles with Bergsonism. Vorticism remained a central focus to the end of Lewis's career, but it became increasingly obvious to Lewis that the movement itself was inevitably tainted at root with 'timeism'. The uncompromising modernist obsession with 'abstraction' 'for its own sake' and an attitude of mind which elevated the irrational above the rational, and emotion and instinct above intellect, expressed for Lewis only too clearly the extent of an intellectual malaise which owed its allegiance to the claims of 'art for art's sake' in Victorian England, and to Bergson's popularization in Europe. In effect, Lewis, in extending a fervent interest in abstraction in his Vorticist work, and in attacking chronologism on obvious fronts, failed to realise in the heady days of rebellion that his activities were effectively leading art further towards the abyss of non-existence envisaged in Bergson.

A vigorous attack on the followers of 'empty abstraction' and 'primitivism' and the celebration of the 'irrational' in art was therefore an intellectual necessity for Lewis, begun immediately after the war, and was pursued single-mindedly throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The Caliph's Design of 1919¹⁷ represents an immediate attempt to put the house of modernism in order, and Lewis accordingly distinguishes between 'rationalist' and 'primitive' predilections. Alert to manifestations of 'chronologism' in popular culture, the 1920s see Lewis occupied with 'blasting' the 'apes' and 'tyros'

system of art in England, consisting of a two-tier arrangement whereby the cultured dilettante 'apes' pretend to be artists and experts who assume the position of superiority and knowledge over the 'tyronic' masses. The Apes of God¹⁸, Lewis's massive satirical novel, was published at the end of a decade in which he had hoped to 'frighten' the residual influence of Victorianism away.

In the 1930s, the collection, Wyndham Lewis the Artist. From 'Blast' to Burlington House¹⁹ confirms the importance of Vorticism for Lewis, reprinting the early writings on art drawn from the two editions of Blast, The Caliph's Design, and other essays published up to 1939. This book is important to the task of identifying the nature of Lewis's response to certain attitudes and approaches to art current at the time, and demonstrates how, from a position which had taken the image as a visual philosophical idea, he had now increasingly sought philosophical antidotes to the acute practical problems facing the creative artist. Attention is focused on Lewis's views on 'pure' formalism, Surrealism, and 'fashion-crazed' art critics, topics which in various ways demonstrated conclusively for him the prevalence of the peculiarly destructive impulse associated with timeism, and a general tendency towards the setting loose of 'intuition' at the expense of intellect. The institutionalization of this version of modernism that Lewis had resisted for over forty years was complete by the time he published the The Demon of Progress in the Arts in 1954²⁰. Misunderstood and mis-read by contemporary critics such as Clement Greenberg and Herbert Read, this short book shows clearly the mutual dependence and coherence of Lewis's ideas on

aesthetics and philosophy examined in this thesis. For him, where the image comes to mean nothing, and is enshrined as such, the pervasive influence of chronologist dogma is thus proven.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. Wyndham Lewis, Time and Western Man (London, 1927). Referred to here as 'TWM'.
2. TWM, p.4.
3. TWM, pp.8, 11.
4. Lewis notes fully the 'general' use of the term, 'aesthetic', and deviations from it, including his own, for the purpose of specific debates. See, for example, 'The Credentials of the Painter' first published in the English Review, April 1922. Reprinted in Michel and Fox, Wyndham Lewis on Art (London, 1969), p.223. Referred to here as 'WLOA'.
5. A contemporary exception to this is found in M.C. D'Arcy, 'A Critic among Philosophers', The Month, No.76 (December, 1927) 511-15, a favourable review of TWM.
6. See Wyndham Lewis, The Writer and the Absolute (London, 1952). Referred to here as 'WA'. 'Honours' Lewis further comments 'make any man suspect. At least of that I am blameless'. He adds in a note to this statement, 'I hope that being made a Doctor of Literature of the University of Leeds (15 May, 1952) will not be seen, by the watchful, as a symptom of demoralization. It is so lonely an honour that it may be forgiven by the most austere' (p.196).
7. See useful list of reviews in Morrow and Lafourcade, A Bibliography of the Writings of Wyndham Lewis (Santa Barbara, 1978).
8. From M.C. D'Arcy, The Nature of Belief (London, 1931, third edition), pp.21-22.
9. Wyndham Lewis, 'Physics of the Not-Self', an essay originally published in 1925, accompanying the 1932 edition of The Enemy of the Stars. Reprinted in Alan Munton (editor), Wyndham Lewis: Collected Poems and Plays (Manchester, 1979), p.196.
10. 'Physics of the Not-Self', p.201; quoted from Phaedo 83.
11. See discussion in Henri Bergson, Creative Evolution (1907). English translation by Arthur Mitchell (London, 1914), pp.142-145.
12. TWM, p.480.
13. TWM, p.418.
14. The distinctions, 'realist' and 'idealist' are generally understandable in the Lewisian context more properly in relation to an aesthetic application than with regard to traditional

philosophical distinctions. This is discussed in detail in Chapters 3 and 4, but like the term 'aesthetic' itself, Lewis puts into service whichever connotation suits his current purpose.

15. Blast No. 1 (June 20, 1914) and Blast No. 2 (July, 1915) originally published in London by John Lane, the Bodley Head. The facsimile reprints referred to in this thesis are published by Black Sparrow Press, 1981. Referred to in these notes respectively as 'B1' and 'B2'.
16. See Lewis's article in Vogue of September 1956 in which he refers to the role of Blast in announcing a 'new philosophy', Vorticism. Reprinted in WLOA, pp.454-458 (p.454).
17. The Caliph's Design (London, 1919). The edition referred to in this thesis is reprinted by Black Sparrow Press, 1986, edited by Paul Edwards. Referred to here as 'CD'.
18. Published by the Arthur Press, London, in June 1930.
19. Wyndham Lewis the Artist. From 'Blast' to Burlington House (London, 1939). Referred to here as 'WLA'.
20. Published by Methuen, London, in November 1954.

PART IPHILOSOPHY: TIME AND WESTERN MAN

CHAPTER 1

BERGSON: THE PROCESS OF DESPATIALIZATION

When Lewis 'began to get a philosophy' early in his career¹, European influences were paramount. He had studied contemporary French political writings, including those of Georges Sorel, Julien Benda, Charles Péguy and Jacques Maritain, and had read widely in German and Russian literature, philosophy and criticism. Ideas and discourse had fascinated Lewis, from his youth to the end of his life, and there is ample evidence that thinkers as diverse as Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Kant, Leibniz, Spinoza, Croce, Hegel, Worringer and Santayana were influential in respect of his own development and subsequent work. Lewis's self education may have seemed a haphazard and unsystematic affair, but it is this background which provided a rich, if eclectic basis for the formation of his aesthetics and philosophy.

It is the influence of Nietzsche and of Schopenhauer that Lewis readily admits of importance in his early years; these were thinkers who were, he felt, 'more immediately accessible to a Western mind than

the other Germans, whose barbarous jargon was a great barrier...², and although he is not named in this context, Kant was found equally accessible³ and continued to exert a powerful and active influence on aspects of Lewis's thought after both Nietzsche and Schopenhauer had been denounced as precursors of the time-philosophy.

Lewis stressed that he had never read Hegel, for the above reason, and had found him to be among the most obscure of German philosophers, but he nevertheless had explicitly acknowledged the inspiration of a Hegelian dialectical method in the meditation on systems of government in The Art of Being Ruled⁴. Although such a method is not employed in Time and Western Man, it is evident that the dialectical process, which aims to preserve the rational propositions of theses by cancelling out the irrational, and progressing accordingly towards synthesis, would have been attractive to Lewis, especially in view of the stress on the superiority of the workings of the intellect in the engagement with Bergsonism.

The deterministic implications of Hegel's 'political backwash' were exceedingly distasteful to Lewis⁵, but in matters of aesthetics, Hegel's view that thought culminates in art, religion and philosophy - that it is not just a sensuous means of expressing or evoking feelings, but a fundamental way of apprehending reality - must have been applauded. The view that art may operate in such a way is expressed variously and with different forms of emphasis by prominent philosophical minds, but it remains an important feature of many diverse systems, most notably in Schopenhauer, and including Nietzsche, Kant, and Bergson. For Hegel, art

...only achieves its highest task when it has taken its place in the same sphere with religion and philosophy, and has become simply a mode of revealing ... the Divine Nature, ('Das Göttliche') the deepest interests of humanity, and the most comprehensive truths of the mind. It is in works of art that nations have deposited the profoundest intuitions and ideas of their hearts; and fine art is frequently the key - with many nations there is no other - to the understanding of their wisdom and of their religion. ⁶

In Time and Western Man, Lewis argues for an elevated status for art, in the idealistic spirit suggested by Hegel if not in manner, but one essential difference between them lies in the definition of priorities; Hegel is a philosopher turning a searching light upon art as a medium for knowledge, whereas Lewis remains always the creative artist turning his light on philosophical discourse with a view of assessing its relevance to clearly defined aesthetic beliefs.

The formative influence on Lewis's thought of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche as conceded by Lewis, readily apparent in the style and content of Time and Western Man, is considered in detail in the next chapter. In the case of Henri Bergson, Lewis is less forthcoming in acknowledging a crucially important intellectual mentor, for the naturally good reason that Bergson's philosophy represented the central lynch-pin of the metaphysics so roundly denounced by him. The pervasiveness of the 'militant vitalism' that 'took the form of a reaction against civilised values'⁷ was rather hastily cast off, although some points of contact were harder to refute.

Lewis had first seriously embarked on a study of philosophy during his period of travel in Europe, and had attended Bergson's lectures at the Collège de France, sharing the philosophical studies of friends at the

Ecole Normale. 'Bergson' he wrote to a friend,

was an excellent lecturer, dry and impersonal. I began by embracing his evolutionary system. From that I passed to Renouvier and thus to Kant. When one is young on fait des bêtises, quoi! 8

Given the self-acknowledged openness and folly of youth, it is still apparent that important aspects of Lewis's aesthetics are reminiscent of Bergson's ideas on art. That such a formative influence might be identified, even whilst Lewis's reaction to 'chronological' thought takes precedence, is a measure of the complexities of Lewis's position, and the delicate balance which he attempts to maintain between competing systems of ideas, aided by a liberally conceived semi-Hegelian style of thesis, antithesis and synthesis.

For all that Lewis's case in Time and Western Man revolves around the challenge to Bergson's philosophy, there is no detailed or sustained analysis of specifically Bergsonian concepts until the last major chapter of the book. Certainly, Bergson's name is heavily drawn upon throughout as a source from which Alexander, Whitehead and Spengler proceed to develop as 'Space-Timeists', but whilst their work is quoted and identified, Lewis often leaves passages and statements from Bergson unacknowledged. Much of the material is indeed drawn from Creative Evolution⁹, but on the whole Lewis chooses to analyse the time philosophy at second remove, through the work of more recently-published theorists. This is consistent with a method that attempts to uncover a contemporary 'malaise', but it is perhaps surprising to find such an obviously oblique approach in Lewis, whose candour does not often go unremarked. Lewis's early and enthusiastic acquaintance with Bergson's influential and popular time-philosophy

cannot be sufficiently understated in a work which is designed to discredit those ideas at source. For Lewis then, Bergson nevertheless remained a formative influence whose philosophy continued to exert pressure on his thinking, notably in the area of aesthetics, even if the end result consisted wholly of a sustained attack on its basic propositions. This point has to be understood in the context of the debate with Bergson on the 'process of despatialization' that Lewis recognized and challenged in Bergson's philosophy, and in the notion of a 'visionary' role for the creative artist with which Lewis was explicitly in agreement.

'Time', for Bergson, stands as the fundamental reference point of his philosophy, and it is his characterization of time and its relation to self and the physical world that occupies Lewis. Bergson challenged the supporters of a scientific determinism which offered a spatialized understanding of time, and argued that the idea of time as a dimension misrepresents reality. The more we divide time up into fragmented instants, the more our self-awareness is distorted. In Creative Evolution, which was a widely read and popular work, and which was largely responsible for spawning a cult following, (including the young Lewis), Bergson accepted evolutionism as a base point from which the Darwinian theory of progress of species was interpreted as the continuous operation of an élan vital, or life-force. Bergson's criticism of biological evolutionism revolved around its failure to account for the uniqueness and continuous processes of life, the generation of new life forms; evolution is seen as essentially creative and dynamic in character, not mechanistic as suggested in Darwin. In his characterization of this life-process, Bergson

identified distinct types of evolutionary development. One of these operates according to the impulses of instinct characteristic of insect life, and the other accounts for the evolution of intelligence in man. Both types, for Bergson, were generated by the élan vital, a mysterious element which is the fundamental impetus of life.

The distinction that Bergson makes between the concept and the experience of time encompasses the spatial within its categorization. Our normal understanding of time, according to the measurements of physical science, represents the fragmented and separable units of time measured by clocks. For Bergson, this system of measurement is an inappropriate imposition since it is not essentially temporal in character, but spatial. It might be subjected to the kinds of analysis and investigation applied to the concept of space, and is designated as 'homogeneous time... the medium in which conscious states form discrete series. This time is nothing but space, and pure duration is something different'¹⁰. This ordinary, homogeneous time is merely a convention devised by the human intellect, and must be understood as such, subordinated to the intuitive insights of 'real time'.

'Real time', which is by contrast consists of 'heterogeneous' moments, will be known and experienced as 'true' or 'pure' duration (*durée*), apprehended by intuition; the operations of instinct and intellect are combined in that experience, and are not separable. Duration is not merely the means by which one instant succeeds another, for if this were the case, we should experience nothing but a 'continuous present' and be aware of no past, nor would we be able to anticipate the

projection of experience to come: duration stresses the open flow of time; it

is the continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances. And as the past grows without ceasing, so also there is no limit to its preservation...it follows us at every instant; all that we have felt, thought and willed from our earliest infancy is there, leaning over the present which is about to join it, pressing against the portals of consciousness that would fain leave it outside. 11

So for Bergson, the act of 'knowing' is dualistic. One strand is the intellectual, spatializing process, representing the 'portals of consciousness' the seeing of things in the world as static, solidified and mechanistic, and which attained its highest point of sophistication in positivist science. It functions most effectively in practical terms, in the way it facilitates decision-making, and can enable us to act in the physical, spatial world, but it cannot apprehend the 'real' since duration and flux, which are 'ineffable' may only be understood in terms of intuitive, sympathetic means. Thus intuitive knowledge reveals unconscious feeling and emotion, and reaches into the heart of the thing contemplated; it allows human beings to have inner knowledge of other selves and matter. Bergson's view of matter entails the incorporation of dead spirit in an organic whole, and therefore elevates objects accordingly to the status traditionally reserved for the 'subject', or the individual personality. Matter, being extinct spirit, is patently an obstacle for live and creative spirit, but it can also be the means by which spirit expresses, and thereby knows itself. Each subject is a 'personal' impetus which participates organically in the 'general'

impetus, for as spiritual beings we consist of creative change. Man is not a stable entity experiencing a process of change which operates outside him, not an essence subjected to the vagaries of movement through time, since the 'true self' is the movement through time itself. We exist most truly and dynamically as change, and we are most aware of our essential selves when we live by intuition, identifying with the élan vital. This 'life-force', by analogy, would seem to act very much like a priest is said to do, as an intermediary between God and man: it places us in touch with the absolute.

Art is a vehicle^{through} which, by means of free expression and creativity, the life force may be invoked, although music, which is temporal, is a higher form than plastic art, which operates largely in the spatial dimension. The philosopher, by contrast, may only work indirectly towards the understanding of la durée, mobile duration or the absolute, since his activity necessarily involves the exercise of the spatializing dimension of intellect, but he too, Bergson stresses, should draw upon intuition freely in conjunction with analytical procedures.

Hence the outcome of this initial understanding of Bergson is thus summarized; duration is the means by which the Darwinian thesis is transformed into a despatialized, dynamic theory of being and becoming, the élan vital being identified as the inexpressible spiritual and creative energy, the ultimate reality of the universe. Both space and time are temporal in character, under which concept they subsist; both instinct and intellect are combined in duration, under the aegis of a perpetual flow of time, encompassing matter and

spirit in an organic whole. The personality or 'self' does not exist as a stable concept, and any suggestion that it might seem so is the result of spatial illusionism, since the true self may only be known by intuition, by entering the inner regions of the unconscious and giving self up to the flow, the interpenetration and interfusion of heterogeneous elements of awareness. The inadequacy of intellect or 'consciousness' as a vehicle for apprehending experience is therefore outlined, and explicitly anticipated in the theory of 'real time', as duration is the notion of our experience of material bodies as characterized and determined by the perpetual flux of action and motion. The thrust of Bergson's work thus constitutes a detailed exploration of the notion of duration as the key to an understanding of the 'inner reality' of life; mind, matter, time itself.

Thus far, on each count of Bergson's theory Lewis strongly demurred. From the naming of space as temporally defined, he claims misrepresentation and construes active mischief on the part of the philosopher whose optimism in constructing a time-world was, for Lewis, an act of intellectual fraud which radiated insincerity and opportunism. Bergson's 'despatialization process' offended beliefs that were vigorously held and maintained by Lewis. The subjection of spatial qualities to the hegemony of time was anathema to him. Concepts such as thought, consciousness and intellect were held to take spatial form, functioning to operate primarily with the inert and the static; to abstract, separate and eliminate data with which they have to deal, and which for Bergson were accordingly inferior, 'characterized by a natural inability to comprehend life'¹².

Creativity for Bergson resided conversely as a function of the instinctive domain, moulded on the very form of life, drawing upon the deepest recesses of intuition and the unconscious in order to find its highest expression. So for Bergson, the intellect is a necessary but essentially uncreative element, treating and analysing the phenomena of the external world and 'things' in a mechanical fashion, but instinct is unbounded, operates organically, and without limitation; in this way the evolutionary process is perpetuated: as a living, acting, moving organism.

For the painter and 'classical intellect', the values associated with the spatial were fundamentally crucial in the process of comprehending 'life', and must be accorded a correspondingly high status, in direct contradiction to the view taken by Bergson. The radical differences between the standards and ideals of the 'relativist flux-philosopher' and his opponents were no more clearly apparent for Lewis than in the comparison with the plastic or graphic artist who was concerned to honour the forms and techniques of his medium¹³ and the dual source of creativity - both intellectual and instinctive - that Lewis believed to be operational in the process of producing art works. His furious defence of the spatial is best clarified with recourse to the concerns of the plastic artist, who would celebrate the forms, lines, outlines, surfaces and external appearances of things and attempt to maintain the objective hardness of material objects, not having them dissolve into the flux, where art may not be distinguishable in such terms - thereby ceasing to exist as a separate and distinct activity, a means of formulating a spatial reality. Bergson's world - and his view of reality - therefore reveals itself as devoid of distinct objects, an

...interpenetrating world of direct sensation...not our hated geometric world, of one space. It is a mental, as it were an interior world, of palpitating movement visually indistinct, electrical; not all arranged on the principles of surfaces and lines; and it is without a 'void' at all...The exterior world is where 'Space' is, or the mere conception 'external,' which is the prime 'spatial' one, is enough: to that concept Bergson, as Alexander, is extremely and temperamentally hostile. 14

The hostility of Bergson to 'pagan, spatializing instincts' is for Lewis encapsulated in the hostility towards rational thought of the relativist, the model for which ^{antecedent} is derived from the 'ancients', classical Greek thinkers and ^{their} _A emphases on the power and value of the intellect. In sympathy with Aristotelian and Thomist precedents, Lewis is able to draw upon ideas which provide a philosophical justification for his aesthetic stress on the externals, the 'outside' of things, and to which he can appeal for support. His philosophy, he asserted, 'will be as much a spatial-philosophy as Bergson's is a time-philosophy... If the painter's heaven of exterior forms is what above all delights you, then the philosophy of Time, with its declared enmity for "spatializing" mankind, will...please you as little as it does me'¹⁵.

The crux of Bergson's philosophy depends on the acceptance of a belief in the ultimate, supreme reality as consisting of 'time', to which all forms of life, intelligence and matter, are subject. This is clearly for Lewis a philosophy which undermines the notion of self and the individual in a universe determined by temporality, and is not acceptable if the overwhelming reality is believed to be that of self, and of individual consciousness. Bergson, in substituting time for

the unconscious, roundly propels the inner recesses of the mind into a public domain where all is accessible, and nothing is exclusive to the self, if indeed that concept may be maintained in a temporal universe; the individual is 'dwarfed' in the face of this 'colossal aggregate'¹⁶ that elevates matter to 'dead mind'. This levelling process retains no place for the spatial, classical intellect, nor would ^{it} tolerate the suggestion of unique creative personalities, since creativity itself is wrested from the individual and distributed universally, at the behest of the élan vital. All is alive, all is mental, and nothing that professes stability can have any profound value without subjection to the temporality of Bergson's world.

Lewis's opposition to Bergson's philosophy is crystallized by his outrage at the virtual abolition of the individual as a unique, creative being. This reaction could never be found couched in stronger terms than from a practising artist whose ideas and beliefs about the uniqueness of his medium and mode of expression is thereby placed under threat. But it is also precisely at this juncture where we find a fundamental measure of agreement with Bergson on the function of art as a means by which reality may be explored and revealed. The difference hinges, as Lewis is very well aware, on what is meant, of course, by 'reality'. Bergson, Lewis notes, believes that it is art that relieves the 'oppression of the crushing weight of the "stable" world; breaks it up and uncovers the intense reality'. He adds, 'that is M. Bergson's account of art, and it would also in effect be mine'¹⁷. Lewis agrees that the creative process of making works of art may operate by instinct, being brought about by intuitive insights, and that an ample element of mysticism, or even a kind of

hypnotic trance may be invoked as a result. The artist, he agrees, at the highest levels, functions as a visionary:

If you say that creative art is a spell, a talisman, an incantation - that it is magic, in short, there, too, I believe you would be correctly describing it. That the artist uses and manipulates a supernatural power seems very likely.¹⁸

The 'supernatural power' that Lewis speculates about is by no means an equivalent for an impersonal force on the lines of Bergson's time-universe; it does not encourage 'mystical', or 'specifically religious experience'¹⁹ which would lead towards the reinstatement of a dark, benighted primitivism. Rather, the power that art may invoke is analogous to the 'civilized substitute for magic' that the man-of-science provides; Lewis notes that an age which produces a flowering in the arts is apt also to foster scientific advances, and that to an extent art and science have that in common. He warns however, that to mix them up as the time-philosophers do opens up the danger of regression, to the superstition-ridden primitive magical practices in which both art and science have their roots. Clearly, this is a reference to the primitivism from which classical thought and rationalism provided a respite; to entertain any contemporary suggestion of reinstating primitive forces and superstitions via Bergson is to betray that civilised world.

On the level of the individual personality, what Lewis certainly cannot countenance is Bergson's claim that in addition, art's function is to "send to sleep" the resistance of the active personality²⁰. Not only do the plastic arts differ from others in terms of their inherent spatial qualities, which in order to function true to their

medium should not be subsumed in temporality, or placed lower in a hierarchy of the arts of which music is the highest expression, they are not produced by a wholly intuitive process, but depend on the operation of intellect in the organization and analysis of the spatial objects which are transformed into art. Most particularly, the personality of the creative artist is at stake in the appeal to restore stability and identity to the self. 'Surely' writes Lewis, 'the essence of a personality, or of an "individual consciousness" is that it should be stable'; how can this be so if, as Bergson suggests, 'its resistances are overcome, and if it is "sent to sleep" or 'reduced to "a condition of perfect docility"'?²¹. A view that values the critical intelligence for its uniqueness and independence is incompatible with these propositions. Above all, Lewis looks from here into a bleak time-future where no art is produced under those conditions, only the scribblings of children and subdued lunatics²². His conclusion is inevitably that 'no visual artist would have ever imagined...such a world as the bergsonian, relativist world'; and even if he had, would have 'turned in horror' from it²³.

The world of motion described by Bergson then, would have its artistic expression most properly represented by music, which is non-static and exists through time. It does not go unnoticed by a writer who finds his own illustrations for his philosophical discourse in visual art, that Bergson indulges in constant musical analogy which stresses the organic and chronologic nature of music. The elements, or notes of a piece are individually without meaning; it is only when they are combined in a unified whole that the parts assume significance, and when the whole becomes greater than the sum of parts. It would have

been instantly apparent to Lewis that this analogy approximates to the Bergsonian devalued view of the personality as entity, which may achieve fulfilment as such only in the relation to the wider context - Time and the operations of la durée, and not in terms of a self-ness.

The irreconcilable division between the relativist flux-philosopher and the plastic artist is demonstrated most compellingly for Lewis by those practitioners who embraced aspects of Bergson's ideas and attempted to express them in an essentially static medium. Rodin, the 'impressionist' sculptor is hailed as the 'plastic counterpart of Bergson',

(his sculpture contemporary with the doctrine of élan vital, and looking as though it had been done expressly to illustrate it), ...is to-day so remote from all the interests of contemporary artistic expression that it is impossible to be more completely forgotten... To artists he means to-day nothing whatever; but not so with philosophers, looking for illustrations for their space-time flux. ²⁴

Rodin is drawn upon by Samuel Alexander in Space Time and Deity²⁵ and is therefore perhaps to be considered as innocent of theoretical 'transgression', but not so the Futurists, who expressly claimed Bergson's philosophy as their own, attempting to construct an art movement according to their understanding of his philosophical principles. Futurism and the Vorticist response is discussed in detail in Chapter 6, but for present purposes, in the context of Lewis's central objections to the fragmentation of self by Bergson, it provides an illustration of the threatening consequences for the philosophical view of self and art that Lewis saw in the way the image of a living thing was opposed to its source.

Since the 'counters' deployed by Bergson's time-philosophy consist of the general tendency towards "life," "dynamism," "progress," "time",²⁶, the response of Futurist artists was a betrayal, amounting to the trading of what is fundamental to art for the sensuous pleasure yielded by elements of a cult philosophy. Futurist art, for Lewis, was to contemplate, in essence, no art at all; not only did he give a low rating to the skills of the artists as individuals²⁷, but their activities sacrificed the very spatiality and stability, outline and clarity upon which plastic expression depends. Art had become 'life', part of the organic flux within which no delineation is valid; indeed, the painted image was placed in direct competition with its subject, to the extent that, in keeping with vitalist enthusiasms, the loser had to be seen to be the static, dead image. Lewis uses one characteristically extremist jape of Marinetti's, the 'milanese showman', to illustrate his point: the Futurist artists, his 'painting, carving, propaganding ballet or circus' were set the task of creating moving statues

that could open and shut their eyes, and even move their limbs and trunks about, or wag their heads. The step from that to a living creature is a small one; and rivalry between the statue and the living puppet could be guaranteed to become rapidly acute. 28

Lewis identifies the necessary distinguishing characteristics which needed to be stressed in art for the Futurists in following Bergson. These included motion, movement, dynamism, interpenetration, all of which were essentially alien to the plastic and graphic arts. Such aims were simply not viable unless the static medium was abandoned, and with it would go the qualities which were seen to be unique and

fundamental to the practice of visual art. Art would be subsumed in 'life' as defined in Bergson, replaced by the time-specific form of music or its chronological literary equivalent. The individual personality would equally be subject to the demands of the greater whole, the puppet-master Time determining the experience and actions of his living marionettes.

Uniqueness and the nature of creativity for Lewis were the crucially-related points at issue in formulating his case against Bergson and the process of 'despatialization'. It is no accident, nor should we overlook the point, that this too, was Bergson's starting point in his interpretation of the Darwinian thesis of evolution. Lewis claims that the consequences of this process in action would be that the concepts of 'uniqueness' and 'creativity' will be undermined and disseminated by the time-cult, to the extent that their distinguishing characteristics - the qualities that are usually understood as constituting uniqueness, or creativeness - will be eroded to the point of non-existence. Through Bergson, the eradication, on a significant level, of the notion of exclusivity, results in the automatic attribution of previously highly-valued qualities to 'Everyman' in the levelling-down of both object and subject to the flux. The theoretical justification for this lies in the identification of 'uniqueness' with the operation of instinct, and 'creativity' with Time, or la durée.

The direct contradiction which follows is by now consistently articulated; that the concept of uniqueness depends on the operation of intellect, not instinct, which in its organizing and analytical

capacity, is able to make distinctions between the unique and the commonplace, without which the term has no meaning. Time, for Lewis, cannot be the ultimate source of creativity, not least because, although instinct may play an important part in the process, structure and stability must be imposed in order to achieve a level of significance, and this is found in the individual intellect, the personality, the entity which draws upon its intuitive recesses, but spatially organizes the insight thus gained. The corollary is that in the Space-Time continuum, thought takes spatial form and experience takes the Time-form, and that a critical intelligence, not a mystical and impersonal life-force, is for Lewis, the guiding principle in the creative process.

In this, as throughout, Lewis draws upon a large measure of what he terms 'commonsense', in that we each feel we are independent, rational beings, with private thoughts, feelings and emotions, acting alone, but this view has been traditionally claimed as a feature of certain strands in philosophical thought to which Bergson's work is often opposed. I leave it to following chapters to assess the more precise nature of Lewis's mature philosophical position, tracing back to the initial aesthetic sources of his rejection of Bergson and chronologism in Part II of this thesis. Here I am concerned primarily with outlining the major aspects of Bergson's thesis which occupied Lewis, and indicating the immediate basis of his objections as articulated in Time and Western Man.

The impetus which demands the analysis of alternatives, discarding the demonstrably irrational within a new synthesis of ideas characterizes

the outcome, if not the outline form, of Lewis's philosophical development. Whilst agreeing with Tomlin²⁹ on the largely unsystematic - but certainly not incoherent - character of Lewis's case in Time and Western Man, I would suggest that the lack of a 'rigidly trained philosophical mind'³⁰ meant that no barrier stood in the way of an undertaking which essentially substitutes an aesthetics as the centre of metaphysical enquiry. On this basis, we begin to understand not only why Bergson's chronological system should be challenged, but offers an outline explanation of how that realization might have been formulated and confirmed for Lewis. If, under the aegis of the time-philosophy, art cannot emerge from the 'flux of life', it cannot either assert the dependence on intellect so necessary for Lewis, who could never place at the back of his mind the growing fears for art's progress and indeed ultimate survival in a world that actively encourages trivialization, the hegemony of fashions, '-isms', mystic and mass cults, sameness, collectivity, amateurism, 'psychologism' and all its indulgent manifestations. All these were aspects of the temporalizing, determinist and relativist tendencies identified by Lewis as endemic to chronological thinking popularized by Bergson. Hence the metaphysical basis of the phenomenon must be questioned and examined in the interests of visual art as representative of an entire culture.

The 'intellectual fraud' of Bergson³¹ is therefore to be revealed in a view of reality that stresses the necessity of undermining the universality of the time-mind; Lewis does not, nor could he, bring into question the relationship of duration and flux, but asks whether that is all there is³². The answer, obviously, is emphatically 'no'.

The search for 'what there is' is equated with the access offered and insights supplied by art, against what for Lewis 'is vilely misnamed "reality"'³³, that is, the 'feverish emotionality' and intuitionism prevalent in a culture dominated by the time-mind. His quest for a philosophical definition of reality was to be undeniably influenced by the view that he, a visual artist, could endorse³⁴. Questions of philosophy and aesthetics were also firmly allied to the implications that sprang from the contextual, social, political and economic conditions which all artists have to face, and so accordingly Lewis's thinking was always anchored to a deep spirit of pragmatism, jointly in the service of his 'profession' and equally in deference to the methods of rational enquiry. 'I suppose no one would deny' he wrote,

that for the greatest achievements of the intellect, whether in art or in science, tranquillity and a stable order of things is required; ... And if you say... that people should not be philosophers, men-of-science, or artists - that they should give up all those vain things, and plunge into the centre of the flux of life - live and not think; that all that sort of life of the intellect has nothing to do with the social revolution. In that last contention, at least, you would be demonstrably wrong. ³⁵

It would thus be wrong, too, to charge Lewis with the simplistic separation of intuition and intellect, the arch-formalistic divorce of art from its conditions of production and context. He came strongly to believe that it is only when security and stability in both a physical and intellectual sense is achieved that art may truly become free and creative. I take this belief to be central to the analysis of the manner and purpose of Lewis's engagement with Bergson and his followers, and the attendant philosophical and cultural ramifications.

Lewis needed to extract from the eclecticism of his European philosophical education a view of reality that aligned with beliefs about 'things' and the world of the painter; a philosophical autonomy, if such were possible, from the flux. Clear but flexible - but certainly not mutually exclusive - distinctions were required, between art, life, mind, matter, - giving scope to the power of the creative artist to posit new 'realisms' by virtue of a transforming perception, and an eye/mind analogue dominated by rationalism as a guiding principle.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. See Wyndham Lewis, Rude Assignment (Santa Barbara, 1984), pp. 125 and 250-1. Referred to here as 'RA'. First published 1950.
2. RA, p.128.
3. See W.K.Rose, editor, The Letters of Wyndham Lewis (London, 1963). Referred to here as Letters. See p.489 of 'The Vita' (letter no. 431), where Kant is called upon as one of Lewis's formative philosophical influences.
4. Wyndham Lewis, The Art of Being Ruled (London, 1926). Referred to here as 'ABR'. In RA (p.183), Lewis refers to this work as having been 'inspired by the Hegelian dialectic, with its thesis and antithesis - to state, here and there, both sides of the question to be debated, and allow these opposites to struggle in the reader's mind for the ascendancy and there to find their synthesis.' He further notes that he 'did not take this very far: vestiges of it nevertheless exist, a source of occasional embarrassment'.
5. See RA, pp.66, 80, 219.
6. Quoted from The Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of Fine Art. Translated from the German by Bernard Bosanquet (London, 1905), pp.48-9, whose own work is discussed in TWM by Lewis.
7. RA, p.125.
8. Lewis, 'The Vita', letter no. 431, (1949) in Letters, p.489.
9. Henri Bergson, Creative Evolution. Lewis often quotes Bergson indirectly, that is as drawn upon by other authors; for example, see TWM, pp.190-192, which refers to Brémond's citations.
10. Henri Bergson, Time and Free Will (1889). English translation by F.L. Pogson (London, 1910), p.90.
11. Bergson, Creative Evolution, p.5.
12. Bergson, Creative Evolution, pp.172, 174.
13. For example, Lewis considered Rodin did not honour his medium, in the creation of Impressionist effects and techniques (see TWM, pp.155-156). Lewis notes Alexander's frequent references to this artist in his Space Time and Deity (see note 25) in the interests of illustrating his chronologist philosophical analysis.
14. TWM, p.435.
15. TWM, p.443.

16. TWM, p.241.
17. TWM, pp.191-192.
18. TWM, p.198.
19. TWM, p.199.
20. TWM, p.192.
21. *ibid.*
22. See the essay, 'Super-Nature versus Super-Real' in WLA (pp.11-64) for an exposition of Lewis's fears for art in the face of child-cults and renewed vigour for primitivism.
23. TWM, p.410.
24. TWM, p.156.
25. Samuel Alexander, Space Time and Deity (London, 1920).
26. TWM, p.217.
27. Lewis largely excepts Severini from this judgement, but with the qualification that his art achieved higher quality when he abandoned Futurism. See TWM, p.216.
28. *ibid.*
29. See E.W.F. Tomlin's essay, 'The Philosophical Influences' in the collection edited by Jeffrey Meyers, Wyndham Lewis: a Revaluation (London, 1980), pp.29-46 (p.33).
30. Jeffrey Meyers, The Enemy, A Biography of Wyndham Lewis (London and Henley, 1980), p.150.
31. TWM, p.193.
32. TWM, p.247.
33. TWM, p.289.
34. TWM, p.472.
35. TWM, p.164.

CHAPTER 2

PRECURSORS: SCHOPENHAUER AND NIETZSCHE

I.2.i Schopenhauer: A Philosophy of the Intestines

If Bergson's philosophy was an isolatable and unique approach to metaphysics, Lewis's argument as developed in Time and Western Man could not have been long sustained: his approach hinges on the pervasiveness of Bergsonism in the analysis of science and culture, and the variety of its manifestations. At no time does Lewis mount a detailed critique of Bergson's philosophy. It is taken, or rather its vulgarization is taken, as the notorious centrepiece, the soft underbelly of the time-mind, the base principles of which, Lewis persuades us, are present in much contemporary thought, but can also be traced back in the history of philosophy. The benchmark for Lewis's investigation lies in his analysis of contemporary writings in the philosophy of science, but he stresses no less the traditions from which these ideas were drawn. If Bergson was the 'soft underbelly', Schopenhauer was the intellectually rigorous armour-plating of the 'Time-god' whose manifestations of Bergsonian origin are thus equated with another deity, 'the god of positive science'. For Lewis, fully cognizant of Schopenhauer's atheism, they are identical:

The name changes, only, from a hypostasized Will to an hypostasized Time; it is introduced now with ecstatic rejoicings and new decorations... 1

Lewis's attitude towards Schopenhauerian philosophy, ultimately tied to the doctrines of intuitionism, mechanistic determinism and

positivism and the ascendancy of the unconscious 'Will' over the intellect and rational thought, is of a more respectful character than his approach to Bergson. His admiration for Schopenhauer, arising from a detailed study of his philosophical principles and aesthetics, impressed Lewis with his 'sincerity' that necessitated a deep pessimism in the contemplation of the fate of man. Bergson, by contrast, 'was not sincere, hence his optimism'. Lewis's conclusion, that Schopenhauer, and not Bergson 'is therefore a better guide to the true nature of this deity'² is of particular interest in this context, since it is in relation to Schopenhauer's philosophy that we find perhaps some of the most profound influences on Lewis's thought, and yet it is also the catalyst for an equally strong reaction by Lewis against fundamental aspects of it.

In connection with Bergson's ideas, a central concern of Lewis's has been noted: his championship of individualism and the intellect in the face of attempts to devalue the personality as entity, and the substitution of mechanistic theories which would herald its disintegration. Hence the discussion of Schopenhauer's philosophy in Time and Western Man is an attempt to locate it, in conjunction with other, identifiable 'time-philosophies' in relation to the scientific impetus that is obeyed and furthered in the provision of systematic metaphysical grounds. The 'god of positive science' is one that gains in stature by the diminution of the individual as an independent, self-conscious unity, and which requires a levelling-down process in order to maintain the superiority of object over subject, unconscious over the conscious mind, time over space, and a host of characteristic

dichotomies and oppositions that pepper the debate. For Lewis, Schopenhauer in 1818 was already a philosopher faithful to the teachings of physical science and perpetuated accordingly a certain conception of the human personality in response to its a priori subjection to 'Will', the underlying reality which governs and determines destinies from the cradle to the grave.

It is necessary to outline Schopenhauer's concept of the Will and Lewis's understanding of it, in order to continue to expand its meaning as a term which has major importance in the characterization of Lewis's philosophy and aesthetics, and in the analysis of 'Time' and the challenge to Bergsonism. I would suggest that there are thus two main areas of concern which can be identified in pursuing this line of enquiry. The first is Lewis's ultimate and decisive rejection of Schopenhauer in Time and Western Man as the first 'timeist', in company with Bergson and his followers. Secondly, many of Schopenhauer's ideas on aesthetics, central to the metaphysical system that Lewis attacked, have been isolated, transformed and incorporated into his own thinking about the nature and function of art, particularly in relation to Vorticism and its defiance of vitalist tactics. The nature of Schopenhauer's profound influence in the formulation of Lewis's philosophical principles must be outlined at the outset, in order to establish the ground for the claim that these principles were fundamentally derived from an aesthetics, and not a metaphysics initiated from either Schopenhauer or Bergson.

One key concept which enables us to make sense of and explain the contradictory strategies that Lewis seemed to follow, in accepting a

partial lead from Bergson, and a greater measure of guidance from Schopenhauer, whilst having nothing to do with their 'psychological' versions of metaphysics, is the notion of creativity and the processes undergone by the artist in conceiving and executing a work. For Lewis, as noted in the discussion of Bergson, the initial creative conception is an intuitive process, but its realization and concretization necessarily employs the services of intellect and rational thought in conjunction with intuition. The criteria which Lewis identified as governing creativity are those which also exert pressure on philosophical procedures, and which to Lewis would justify his repudiation of Schopenhauer's metaphysics whilst allowing for the influence of his ideas on aesthetics to surface, and to be appreciatively acknowledged. Indeed, Lewis's acceptance of the Bergsonian notion of creativity as an act of the human will - of intuition - is very likely to stem from a detailed acquaintance with Schopenhauer's philosophy, couched in a format and with an emphasis which accorded more closely to Lewis's own ideas on both aesthetics and metaphysics.

In general terms, it is not difficult to see why Lewis should be attracted to Schopenhauer's work; there are parallels which could be drawn in relation to character, temper and literary style - and as a philosopher, there is no doubt as to why Lewis preferred Schopenhauer's honest pessimism to Bergson's insincere optimism. E.W.F. Tomlin notes the 'lucidity' of thought and expression, the 'extreme diffidence' of much of Lewis's work, 'a sense of disillusion, and at the same time a veneration for timeless values - sometimes subsumed under aesthetic categories' which are characteristic traits

also of Schopenhauer's writings. For Tomlin, Lewis's thesis in Time and Western Man may well have gathered its initial impetus in response to a Schopenhauerian thought:

'Time' ... 'is that by virtue of which everything becomes nothingness in our hands and loses all real value.' That after all is Lewis's thesis in a nutshell. 3

Both Lewis and Schopenhauer shared a 'veneration for timeless values' and would have agreed on the ominous effects of 'Time', which immediately aligns them together against the Bergsonian view of duration as a positive life-force. Schopenhauer's view of reality, whilst affirming the ascendancy of a generic species of an élan vital, develops in striking contrast to Bergson's optimism, a desperately negative interpretation at its core. Proceeding carefully from the basis and critique of Kant's work, and accepting the notion that we cannot understand phenomena apart from space and time, Schopenhauer concluded that Kant's formulation of the idea of 'Dings an sich', or 'things-in-themselves' was indeed a primary categorization, but whereas Kant's notion took an essentially rationalist characterization, for Schopenhauer, it on the contrary denoted a blind, irrational, cosmic force, defying intelligence and rational analysis, a primeval entity that underlay all phenomenal existence. So reality for Schopenhauer consists of the duality between the Will, which represents this blind irrational force, and which corresponds to the true essence of the world, and the Will's objectification, which is what we know as our phenomenal existence and is only comprehensible with the aid of constructs of our intellect. Schopenhauer's seminal work, Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung (translated as The World as Will and Representation⁴), stresses clearly the nature of our

experience:

'The world is my representation': this is a truth valid with reference to every living and knowing being, although man alone can bring it into reflective, abstract consciousness. If he really does so, philosophical discernment has dawned on him. It then becomes clear... that he does not know a sun and an earth, but only an eye that sees a sun, a hand that feels an earth; that the world around him is there only as representation, in other words, only in reference to another thing, namely that which represents, and this is himself. 5

Therefore, all experience is subject dependent, and is filtered through the faculties, our sensory and mental apparatus. This being so, Schopenhauer argued, then we must have reference to time and space in order for those experiences to appear differentiated and distinct from one another.

Schopenhauer set out, from the basis of Kant's notion of 'things-in-themselves', to determine the relation between the noumenal and phenomenal worlds, or the true reality underlying the world of appearances. Having accepted the idea of the world as indeed a representation, an objectification of that which consists of the true essence of reality, he proceeded to challenge the Kantian tradition of the noumenal world by proposing that Kant had overlooked a vital aspect of experience of which we have unique knowledge: our bodies, our physical and mental selves of which we have immediate, non-sensory knowledge from the inside. This, he argued, gives us a clue to the nature of the noumenal world, of the 'dings an sich' which we cannot reach through ordinary, sensory experience, but which is revealed as Will through its operations in and on the physical body, independently of representations and the operations of consciousness and intellect. In direct contrast to Kant, Schopenhauer, thus anticipating Freud,

identified a hint of the real nature of the noumenon within ourselves, the unconscious, irrational desires that lie beneath our external actions. 'Things-in-themselves' - the reality behind appearances - gave way, for Schopenhauer, to rather the thing-in-itself, for in proposing the Will as operating independently of intellect and rationality, of differentiations of time, space and causality, there can be no such differentiation. Where the Will manifests itself in every one of us, it follows that it consists of one nature, a whole, complete entity, independent of time and space-specific notions of multiplicity. Hence if our underlying reality consists of one element, and if it is shared by us, then we are in that sense all 'one'. Lying outside the principium individuationis which is time and space, the will is free from plurality, 'although its phenomena in time and space are innumerable'⁶. Schopenhauer thus dissociates the will from its phenomena, from conceptualization, spatialization and the effects of chronology, which characterize the phenomenal world; what we know as a result of these operations cannot approach the noumenon:

Only when all this has become quite clear to us through the following consideration of phenomena and of the different manifestations of the will, can we fully understand the meaning of the Kantian doctrine that time, space, and causality do not belong to the thing-in-itself, but are only the forms of our knowing. ⁷

There are perhaps two main points to be made here in relation to the views of Bergson and of Lewis. Bergson's insistence on the reality of 'Time' is included by Schopenhauer within phenomenal existence and is thus acquired knowledge. Lewis's own stress on the power of intellect and the 'outside' of things is similarly bound to conflict radically

with Schopenhauer's view that we may never reach the 'inner nature of things', that is the will, from without⁸. Yet it is not the differences between Bergson and Schopenhauer that concern Lewis, but the ways in which they both insist on the 'inside', the 'intestines', the psychological and intuitional as the key to reality. It matters little to him whether time is 'phenomenal' for Schopenhauer or 'noumenal' for Bergson, since his purpose is primarily to reinstate philosophy on the path that, in Schopenhauer's words, 'all philosophers before me have followed'⁹. That Lewis should wish to pursue this so avidly in the philosophical arena is clearly stated and maintained. He believed that an artist cannot function without a knowledge and appreciation of shape, outline, clarification, and differences of an external character. These are indeed gleaned by sensory perception, but organized by the intellect. Since perception and the role of rational thought is crucial to the plastic artist, Lewis's serious professional concerns for the future of the visual arts necessitated a vigorous defence in philosophical terms. The basis for such a defence was found surprisingly, from within Schopenhauer.

Schopenhauer's conclusions, that the will, our true reality, representing blindness, irrationality, devoid of cause, purpose, changeability, an enormous, amorphous chain of restless desires and drives, present in human and inert matter - expressing a continual struggle of higher forms against lower, an aimless insatiable striving at the end of which stands death - invites no other attitude but that of dark pessimism about our existence and eventual fate. He saw no respite, except finally in the rejection of reality, the denial of the

will encompassed in non-existence; his adherence to the Buddhist notion of Nirvana informed his meditations on the possibility of will-lessness, which could not be contemplated apart from a complete abnegation of conscious and unconscious desires and passions, summoning the seeker to value non-being more highly than being. Genuine liberation would come only from the breaking through of the bounds of individuality imposed by the ego; hence the saint is to be venerated on his way to the denial of the will to live, and true asceticism is the only goal. The notion of genius is akin, for Schopenhauer, to that of sainthood, and offers another path to relief.

The first two books of The World as Will and Representation present the will in an affirmative mode, whereas the last two, dealing with aesthetics and ethics, offer a means to surpass the stark picture that is outlined. The arts offer man a will-less respite in the activity of aesthetic contemplation, in which the play of the passions cease, desires are temporarily cast aside, and knowledge is hence delivered from its subservience to the will. This 'pure' knowledge, for Schopenhauer, is akin to apprehension of the Platonic system of forms that transcends the will, the Platonic Idea as 'persistent form of this whole species of things'. The artist of genius, knowing only the Idea and not reality,

clearly repeated in his work only the Idea, separated it out from reality, and omitted all disturbing contingencies. The artist lets us peer into the world through his eyes. That he has these eyes, that he knows the essential in things which lies outside all relations, is the gift of genius and is inborn; but that he is able to lend us this gift, to let us see with his eyes, is acquired, and is the technical side of art. 10

The eye, Schopenhauer claims, is 'innocent' in the sense that it has

no direct connection with the will, and therefore the sensations it brings us give rise to the purest kinds of knowledge. Light, for example, and the pleasure derived from it, is one of the most perfect kinds of knowledge from perception. This is corruptible by perception which arises from the understanding or the intellect which, in Schopenhauer's terms, 'lies in the relation of the object to the will'.¹¹

Lewis's reading of the Schopenhauerian case in Time and Western Man is a very different one from his readings in connection with art criticism and aesthetics. Schopenhauer's concept of 'will' is explicitly aligned with the élan vital, duration, life-force - the Time-god of science, Alexander and Whitehead. A philosophy of the intestines, Lewis calls it; Schopenhauer's will sometimes 'sounds like a blind animal bundling about inside him'¹² and the hostility to the processes of conscious thought manifest in the emphasis on the unconscious makes him no better than Bergson. That the eye - for the most part, less an 'innocent' than a 'stupid' or 'stolid' organ for Lewis - might be corrupted by the intellect, is unthinkable. The contradiction in Schopenhauer's thought that must have been most telling for Lewis is the duality of the will as the underlying reality which controls our existence, and the possibility of contact with the Platonic Idea through art which we are able to contemplate and comprehend aside from that reality. If the first is 'true' reality, then what of the second, the world as 'Idea', representing fixed, eternal patterns, the underlying, unchangeable forms of all phenomena? Idea as the objectification of reality is arranged by Schopenhauer into a hierarchy of definite 'grades' from matter to man, with regard

to the fullness and clarity with which they manifest the will. These grades are the immutable forms, the plurality of particulars which are conceivable through space, time and causality, unlike the operations of the will, and in addition, do not have multiplicity, nor are they subject to mutability, but transcend the principle of sufficient reason which governs perceptual science.

Schopenhauer would appear to occupy at one and the same time, the edifice of traditional Platonism, but persists, to Lewis's chagrin, in exalting the flux as a superior principle. There is no doubt that this problem - and its ironies - was not lost on Lewis. His reasons for the rejection of Schopenhauer's metaphysics in Time and Western Man are those of a practising visual artist, in defence of rationality, the organizing principle of the intellect and the importance of the visual sense as a vital factor in the creative process, and is accordingly valuable ammunition in the war with Bergson and chronologism. Yet Schopenhauer's emphasis on Platonism with respect to art and aesthetics opens a dialogue with Lewis's own adherence to classical philosophy, and which, I suggest, led him to a basic formulation of the beginnings of an aesthetic metaphysics incorporating the basis of Schopenhauer's world-view, but radically restructured in a way which substitutes art and creativity for the flux: a reversal of Schopenhauer's pessimism for a qualified theoretical optimism. The evidence for this view is to be found in Lewis's conception of the vortex and his writings upon art, ideas which were never far removed from considerations of the possible philosophical implications that would appear to follow from certain aesthetic beliefs.

In the Essay on the Objective of Plastic Art in Our Time, the debt to Schopenhauer is acknowledged; metaphysics, Lewis announces, is 'in a chronic state of flux and chaos'¹³, and fearing a similar situation in the fine arts, he sets out to outline his views and to suggest paths of progress. Anticipating the reader's conclusion that he is 'treading the road to the platonic heaven', the German adherent is immediately invoked:

You may know Schopenhauer's eloquent and resounding words, where, in his forcible fashion, he is speaking of what art accomplishes. 'It therefore pauses at this particular thing: the course of time stops: the relations vanish for it: only the essential, the idea, is its object.'¹⁴

'That', Lewis continues, 'might be a splendid description of what the great work of plastic art achieves'. Time is stopped, a sort of immortality descends, a coldness, immobility that is the province of art. The object, in Schopenhauer's words, is plucked 'out of the stream of the world's course, and has it isolated before it'. The still centre which results, that typified in the aesthetics of Vorticism, negates the philosophical flux by the application of rationality and the intellect to the intuitionism of creativity.

If, as Lewis agrees, with Schopenhauer and Bergson, the act of creation 'is always an act of the human will, like poisoning your business rival, or setting your cap at somebody'¹⁵, then that act of will, in order to become a work of art, immobile and timeless, requires the mediating organizing power of intellect in order to transform raw, gut-inspired intuition to the level of permanency and immutability promised by Schopenhauer's Platonism. Hence Lewis's solid conviction that Bergson, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche were wrong

in exalting music to the pinnacle of the hierarchy in the arts, since it exists only in time, is ephemeral and exalts the irrationalism and emotionalism of will. This for him would have seemed especially erroneous given Schopenhauer's characterization of the power of the plastic arts, which would appear to defeat or at least offer succour from the flux. If we consider comparative formulations of Lewis's and Schopenhauer's world-views, or characterizations of reality, the points of contact and difference are instructive.

The reality of will is already accepted by Lewis; it is of course, the source of artistic creativity and also its scourge where intellect is incapable or unable to transcend its demands. But where Lewis cannot agree with Schopenhauer is the animism it projects; the will, far from being confined to the human species, is present, not only in animals, but in inert matter, 'in stones, tables and chairs, anything which exists in short, and which can be affected by mechanical laws'¹⁶. The implication which clearly emerges is that, if the will is shared by humans, animals and inert matter, then the source of creativity must be present, too; why then do not stones, animals and chairs seek a human equivalent to art? The answer for Bergson is that, by means of their 'life' or 'animism', their existence, they do; life becomes art; art is life; hence art is subsumed under the heading, 'life'.

Schopenhauer's view creates initial confusion, and is bound to the notions of consciousness and unconsciousness, but, as Lewis reflects, he offers no clear-cut interpretations of the doctrine;

An imperfect, animal-like god, tries and tries - for something, for no assignable reason: and he comes out into self-consciousness in men... Yet our 'consciousness' ... is a less perfect thing than his less conscious instinct. But a bee has this marvellous instinct to the full; and yet we regard

ourselves as an improvement on the bee... In that we are evidently wrong. For, judged by the standard of this god, the bee is more god-like. 17

Do we then assume, asks Lewis, that our 'consciousness' is no more than a little bit of dead, or rotting will? That it is the 'deadest, and not the livest, part of the universe'? A valuation of man's consciousness, that places instinct above it, and operates a pantheism dominated by a will-god, as Schopenhauer's philosophy suggests, cannot be acceptable or admissable when part of the 'rotting will', as it is so characterized, may be capable of genius and of producing art that operates independently of will through conscious operation of intellect. Logically, to Lewis, the relative superiority of instinct and intellect must be, and is, reversed, and for him it is a conclusion which arises irrevocably on two main counts.

Schopenhauer's system, although admirable on aesthetic grounds, cannot be reconciled with its metaphysics; and all the 'characteristic semi-animistic, mystical-unconscious, present-day perplexities' emphasized in Schopenhauer¹⁸ are identifiable in no uncertain manner in Bergson's philosophy and the time-cult.

The Lewisian version of will, powerfully articulated by Schopenhauer, is equated with the notion of mechanism; it is an artist's formulation that proceeds, not from the insides of things, but from their external features, behaviour, and the social habits and tactics that betray its manifestations. It produces, for example,

Charlie Chaplin, the League of Nations, wireless, feminism, Rockefeller; it causes, daily, millions of women to drift in front of, and swarm inside, gigantic clothes-shops in every great capital, buying silk underclothing, cloche-hats, perfumes,

vanishing cream, vanity-bags and furs; it causes the Prince of Wales to become one day a Druid, and the next a Boy-Scout; it enables Dempsey to hit Firpo on the nose, or Gene Tunney to strike Dempsey in the eye, and the sun to be eclipsed;... 19

This 'aimless' and 'nonsensical' will finds its adherents ready to respond to the reflex actions demanded of them; these are largely unthinking and herd-like reactions, needing no intercession from the intellect, nor is this desirable, otherwise the mechanism is stunted, rendered inoperable. The mechanical, the automaton, Lewis found, exists in us all, constantly as a reminder of our animal natures. The body's mechanism may be outwardly observed in others, and its actions judged; the oneness of being that for Schopenhauer is implied in the will, and that to a certain extent is accepted by Lewis in the outward manifestations of herd behaviour, is nevertheless ultimately negated in the physicality of the body. Schopenhauer reckoned, Lewis concludes, 'without his stomach, legs, organs of generation, heart and liver'²⁰. Instead of indicating inner knowledge of a 'private' will, attached to a universal, 'great pan-will'²¹, it provides concrete evidence of the way in which we are pinned down 'to one unchangeable personality, from the cradle to the grave'²². Potentially, for Lewis, the intellectual affirmation of this physical fact mitigates against the automatism of the will; without the self-conscious operation of man's consciousness, he gives himself up to instinct, mechanism and the stream of material life. This, Lewis claims, should have been Schopenhauer's conclusion, but at the crucial moment, he was found wanting; instead of a champion of rationalism and the platonic heaven, Schopenhauer saw only degradation, despair and resignation, temporarily 'brightened somewhat by string-quartets'²³.

Rebelling against the blind executioner, Lewis has recourse, not to string quartets, but the permanence, coldness and immobility of plastic art, which provided him with both a metaphorical and practical impetus for his ideas, and enabled him to formulate an account which would offer a solution to the Schopenhauerian paradox. The will - or the mechanism of our animal natures - must be held in check, Lewis felt, by our ability to think and feel as rational beings; in its highest form, the activity of intuition guided by intellect results in artistic genius, so close to Schopenhauer's view, and yet so far from it in essence. Schopenhauer's idea that aesthetic contemplation enables respite is extended by Lewis to include the creative process itself, and the balance that is achieved in works of art. If the still centre of the vortex, the crystallization of art, is the culmination of the process, the origins of art are in the flux itself, life, nature, the unconscious, plucked out of the stream and immortalised, held in perpetuity. The word, 'abstracted' is substituted by Lewis where Schopenhauer translates as 'plucked'²⁴. The work of art, in becoming such, although abstracted from an organic principle²⁵ and which may not be isolated from it, would become a different type of thing in its potential apotheosis, 'conveyed to us as an object of contemplation'²⁶, to be paid for in principle in terms of death, or at least with coldness or immobility²⁷. It is important to realise that for Lewis, this apotheosis is never complete; the perfect work of art, following the dictates of the platonic ideal, cannot exist with its roots in the human will; to contemplate this would certainly be to contemplate its extinction. It is, he insists,

that particular thing, still, that it was in the stream.

For the distance it has traversed in the process of abstraction is insignificant if compared with the distances involved were it to reach an ultimate abstraction. 28

The game involved in producing art, the balance which must be struck in the re-ordering of both emotion and intellect, is in 'seeing how near you can get'²⁹ without the danger of extinction, or neutralisation either as matter - which, in Lewis's description is not animate, but inert in the same way that attained perfection in art would be - or as mechanism (will). In art, Lewis suggests, we are playing at being matter. We are 'entering the forms of the mighty phenomena around us, and seeing how near we can get to being a river or a star, without actually becoming that'³⁰. Art, unlike science, may be 'everywhere at its goal'³¹, but that does not imply stagnation, nor perfection. Science discards its outmoded theories when new ones appear to surpass them, but the achievements of artists endure. If, as Lewis suggests, we posit a realist or restricted view of the scope and nature of the human mind - and he does point this out as a reasonable assumption, rooted in an acceptance of the will and man's material and intuitional nature - then art will always be

its ultimate necessity: it is what the philosopher comes to out of the discomforture of his system; what, for the man in the street, cannot with impunity be divorced from the attitudes and very form of his religious belief; and it is the ideal check on the mechanical encroachments of science. 32

Not a philosopher, Lewis begins from the opposite standpoint, as a practising artist and critic, and his plundering of Schopenhauerian aesthetics and metaphysics has the practical aim of de-marginalizing his own profession, and also seeks the analytical and systematic basis essential to an intellectual recognition of art as man's 'ultimate necessity'.

I.2.ii Nietzsche: Diabolism and an Aesthetic Justification of Metaphysics

Some of the most influential and challenging ideas with which Lewis was to engage in the formulation of his aesthetics and in his philosophical meditations were derived from an early study of Nietzsche's writings. In particular, there is the thesis stated so vividly in Nietzsche's The Birth of Tragedy³³ that characterizes artistic creation as the result of a fusion of order and ecstasy, the rational and irrational, a duality polarized in the complementary opposites of Apollo and Dionysus. This accords in some measure to Lewis's own views about the origins and progress of the creative spirit, and is in a general sense everywhere present in Lewis's attraction for, and exploitation of, pairs of contradictory oppositions in the expression of his ideas.

Familiar strategies and attitudes adopted by Nietzsche are recognisable when reading Lewis, echoes which are too distinct to be accidental. Lewis, like Nietzsche, followed his investigations in a largely unsystematic manner, unlike Schopenhauer and his master, Kant, and also shared with him a breadth of concern and a willingness to enter the arena of any discipline which had bearing on current concerns. Both deplored banality, cloying sentiment, and mediocrity in any form which was regarded as a kind of 'death'. Distinctions between the minority, of superior intellect and sensibility, alive to the highest expressions of art, and the herd, or the crowd, dead and mechanical, who blindly follow current fashions, subject to mass persuasion and gratification, were as much a part of Lewis's strategy

as Nietzsche's³⁴. The surgeon's knife of satire called for by Nietzsche was applied with consummate skill by Lewis, forming in addition one of the cornerstones of Lewisian aesthetics, and Nietzschean critiques of philosophy and its practitioners³⁵ vividly recall the content of the 'Physics of the Not-Self' and the energetic ranging of polemical resources by Lewis against the fashionable metaphysic of chronologism.

The extent of what I categorize as Lewis's 'Apollonian Romanticism' is discussed in relation to cultural and art-critical contexts in Chapter 5. However, in view of my purpose in this section, which is to examine the specifically philosophical relevance to Lewis of Nietzsche's ideas and their pertinence to the case presented in Time and Western Man, it is necessary to initiate a selective discussion, since the relevance of Nietzsche's work to Lewis transcends the boundaries of particular ideas and notions on art, philosophy, politics and social theory and moves into the areas of style, attitude and personality. I wish to concentrate, therefore, on the main reasons why Nietzsche was named by Lewis as an arch-proponent of the time-cult, accused of exhibiting the same underlying tendencies towards the primacy of the unconscious and the irrational that characterized Bergson's and Schopenhauer's philosophy.

It is noted that the Nietzschean variation and optimistic reversal of the 'will', inspired by Schopenhauer's formulation, has certain affiliations with Lewis's use and understanding of the term, although important differences divide them. These philosophical differences, as I suggested in relation to Schopenhauer's influence on Lewis, would

appear to again stem paradoxically from a measure of agreement on the nature and importance of art between Lewis and Nietzsche. It is precisely because of that agreement that Lewis found it impossible to accept what he called the 'turgid satanism', 'moral inversion' and 'diabolism'³⁶ of Nietzsche's will to power. The Nietzschean emphasis on the Dionysian elevated music characteristically as the highest value of creative expression at the expense of Apollonian rationality, form and intellectual restraint, embodied in, and by, the plastic arts. The stress of 'time-philosophers' on the ascendancy of musical forms of expression became a recurrent theme for Lewis in developing his thesis. As with Schopenhauer and Bergson, philosophical ideas that had direct bearing on the arts - and in particular, the plastic arts - were found to be more congenial in Lewis's view, and were selectively drawn upon when they offered means of explanation and analysis which centralized these concerns. If the attendant metaphysical grounds and systems of belief were held to conflict with Lewis's views on aesthetics, or his strongly felt convictions about the importance of the plastic arts and their relevance in philosophical speculation, they were roundly censured.

The 'crisis of metaphysics' which culminates for Nietzsche in the equation of metaphysics, morality, religion and science with various forms of 'lies', necessary however, in order to exist³⁷, opened up a challenge which demanded an equally forceful response from those who would attempt a re-interpretation and re-statement of philosophical and aesthetic values specifically denigrated in Nietzsche's work. To Lewis however, although temperamentally and philosophically attuned to many aspects of Nietzsche's enterprise, much of which, of course, was

submerged in Time and Western Man, he was an extremist, the 'high-priest of self-conscious "faustianism"' ³⁸ that opposes Classical rationalism, and whose Darwinian thundering and screaming precludes an acceptance of the main substance of his ideas. Nietzsche, Lewis observed,

had very little in his composition of the health, balance, measure, and fine sense of the antique world... towards which he turned so often: he had much more of the frantic, intolerant fanaticism of a genevan reformer or an Old Testament prophet. 39

In the early work, The Birth of Tragedy, no undue preference was seen to be given to either of the elements Nietzsche identified as Apollonian or Dionysian; it is in later writings that Nietzsche begins to use Dionysus as the symbolic metaphor for his world-view and emergent philosophy. Book Four of the Will to Power confirms Lewis's view of Nietzsche's essentially Dionysian world,

the eternally self-creating, the eternally self-destroying, this mystery world of the twofold voluptuous delight, my 'beyond good and evil,' without goal, unless the joy of the circle is itself a goal; without will, unless a ring feels good will towards itself - do you want a name for this world?... - This world is the will to power - and nothing besides! 40

Hence the Nietzschean subordination of reason as the servant of life, Apollo subject to Dionysus, was totally unacceptable to Lewis, who advocated a reversal of these terms, invoking the unconsciousness/intuitional=Dionysian=musical analogy in direct opposition to that characterized by the complementaries of consciousness/rationalism=Apollonian=plastic arts. The justification for the reversal of these propositions is found by Lewis in the Nietzschean concept of 'will' as received by him from Schopenhauer and

radically adapted in the context of the concept of the 'will to power', casting aside its pessimism in an affirmation of man's potential for strength and mastery of the élan vital.

Inspired and influenced by Schopenhauer therefore, Nietzsche accepted the principle of will as a driving life-force. He further believed that mind is essentially an instrument of instinct to be used in the service of life and of power, that illusion for man is as necessary to him as so-called 'truth'. This being so, the will to power asserted the principles by which man might master his own being and his existence on earth, which of necessity would lead to conflict with others, self-assertion, and the eradication of weakness and self-indulgence. Nietzsche proposed a radical instrumentalist theory of knowledge and a perspectivist analysis of truth, whereby knowledge and experience is useful only subject to current purposes, and truth and falsity are judged not in absolutist or moralistic terms, but purely in relation to their effectiveness/ineffectiveness in context. Purpose in a pragmatic sense was thereby imposed on Schopenhauer's blind and irrational will, embodied in the Übermensch who, striving for the ideal generosity of spirit and enlightenment, is able to show the way out of darkness. The will to power is not the source of evil as feared by Schopenhauer, but in the hands of an elect few leading the mass of mankind, it is a means to the ultimate good.

From the Birth of Tragedy, Nietzsche emancipated himself from Schopenhauer's Buddhistic negation of the will, and his spirit of pessimistic resignation to the extent of posing what would appear to be a complete reversal of Schopenhauer's attitude. Appealing to the

model of pre-Socratic Greek tragedy, distrusting the rationalism and intellectualism of the later period, Nietzsche argued that it was possible to face up to the very real horrors of existence, and to affirm life in spite of this. Declaring explicitly that which was already implicit in Schopenhauer's thought, Nietzsche's division of artistic creation into the principles of Dionysian and Apollonian origins was affected, where music embraces the god of ecstasy, passion, and the senses, and the plastic arts become associated with order, rationality and restraint. Schopenhauer, for Nietzsche, had erred profoundly in his desperate pessimism, since art - Schopenhauer had acknowledged - promised a respite, but yet he had failed to recognize its importance, not as marginal relief, or an escape from the evils of life, but a central, life-affirming reason for existence, as well as a basis for a metaphysics. Art, Nietzsche declared, 'is the great means of making life possible, the great seduction to life, the great stimulant of life': it is the antidote to denial of the will to life, the redemption of the man of knowledge, the man of action, the sufferer, and is stronger than pessimism, 'more divine' than truth. Concurring with Wagner, art is confirmed by Nietzsche as 'the real task of life', 'life's metaphysical activity - '41.

It would be difficult to suggest general points with which Lewis would wholeheartedly disagree in relation to certain of these claims. At least the ultimate aim of Nietzsche's quest for an aesthetic metaphysics would be applauded, although the chosen route and methods might be deplored. Not surprisingly, where Nietzsche's name is directly invoked in Time and Western Man, Lewis is concerned to anchor him more firmly to the time-doctrine, but it is not his purpose to

support his attitude to the importance of the arts in the formulation of metaphysical precepts, in the interests of developing his philosophical thesis. Hence we are faced with a work which cannot declare its inspirational sources and origins, for fear of compromising its central position. Bergson and Nietzsche are duly united by Lewis in respect of a mutual darwinianism and evolutionism whereby the stifling processes of 'life' and the struggle for whatever is on offer is central to their world-views⁴². The struggle may be that of a threatened species for existence, or for man, the control of the sophisticated trappings and exertion of the means to power - cash, sex, territory, minds, influence, persuasion, coercion - the list, which may change in detail, if not in character, is compiled, not by the combatants, but the life-force which governs the evolutionary race. The man-of-action in any event, would take the lion's share of such prizes.

In Time and Western Man, Lewis is concerned to outline those aspects of Nietzsche's work that directly ally themselves with Bergson's thesis. 'The Romance of Action' to which Lewis dedicates a short chapter⁴³, and the 'man-of-action' are core Nietzschean concepts supported by the notion of 'superman' or übermensch, identified by Lewis as essentially subject to the operations of will, defined as mechanism, 'action' but operating paradoxically to cause the present inaction of current philosophical trends:

But the man-of-action (low-browed, steel-jawed, flint-eyed, stone-hearted) has been provided... with a philosophy. And it is some form of that Time-for-Time's-sake philosophy we have already briefly considered. 44

It is necessary for Lewis, in placing the Nietzschean tradition within the time-cult, to simplify its terms, and to make judicious use of the popularized version where it suits the purpose. Nietzsche's übermensch, far from the superior qualities envisaged, is endowed by Lewis with the attributes of the automaton, drunk with the romance of action, and mechanically determined by its own doctrines. There is no hope of independence of thought for this creature, in the equation of action with the dionysian and dynamical, which is its province. There is thus no room in Lewis's thesis for the consideration of Nietzsche's characterization of the übermensch as a fine, essentially 'good', non-evil and independent character. Lewis's own view of the true man-of-action includes such a possibility - although this does insist on the prior claims of intellect and rationality; the man-of-action who submits to the concept of a will to power may never be anything other than a slave to just those forces of will defined by Schopenhauer. Indeed, for Lewis, the übermensch is the prime example of a puppet mechanism - the 'low-brow' masquerading as a higher form of life, but easily mastered by the intellectual capacities of the 'high-brow'⁴⁵, the rational thinker to whom the prefix 'super-' might perhaps be more accurately applied, if it must be used at all, since its very form betrays its origins⁴⁶. The qualities of Nietzsche's man-of-action are thus outlined to accord with the vitalist philosophy which drives him:

But this mechanical, functional creature would implicitly possess such a philosophy in any case; since the dream-quality of pure-action must leave him virtually a child, plunged from one discontinuous, self-sufficing unit of experience to another; always living in the moment, in moods of undiluted sensationalism; the ideal slave and instrument of any clever and far-seeing person - who, of course, is the real man-of-action; for it is never the frantic servant of this doctrine of action who ever does anything, at least of any use to himself.⁴⁷

The terms, 'action', 'reaction', 'inaction' are all relational in the sense that they imply oppositions for Lewis. Although the relation of dionysian-apollonian might be described paradigmatically as a horizontally-conceived complementary opposite for Nietzsche, for Lewis, the equivalents of will or mechanism and intellect must operate on different planes of a vertical axis. In insisting the 'intellect works alone'⁴⁸, Lewis does not seek to deny the instinctual impulses of man, but would submit them to the controlling authority of rational thought that is essential to creativity. A rational awareness of the future, and a prophetic intuitive energy which appears, as it were, from another source to that of the Nietzschean man-of-action, and which is a characteristic of the creative artist, sets him apart from the Übermensch, whose actions are based on 'Presentism', present desires, struggles and contingencies, inherited from the past. Declaring that 'the present man in all of us is the machine', Lewis requires that

A space must be cleared... round the hurly-burly of the present. No man can reflect or create, in the intellectual sense, while he is acting - fighting, playing tennis, or making love... The farther away from the present, though not too far, the more free. So the choice must be between the past and the future. Every man has to choose, or rather the choice is early made for each of us. 49

It is this authority of intellect, the ability to reflect and to create, that is in grave danger of erosion by the 'mystical mass-doctrines' of which Nietzsche's 'romance of action' is a prime example.

Nietzsche, it is argued, takes individualism to its extreme point whereby it is itself not distinct from, but submits, in its extremism, into a merging of mass-doctrines. The darwinian law of struggle and

conflict would make of the Übermensch, not a master of his fate, but a victim of the élan vital; the only way to avoid the consumption of the individual by the mass will is to practice relative isolation, rationality and restraint in one's life decisions, to utilize intellect to its limits, and refuse to be swayed or influenced by, the enthusiasms of the crowd. In one sense, Lewis could be said to 'out-Nietzsche Nietzsche' himself in the identification of the dualistic divide which is so profoundly marked out for Lewis in English intellectual life between the 'high brow' and the 'low-brow', herdsman and herd. Reflection, not action, characterizes this intellectual elect, in many ways more benevolent and tolerant in the Classical Greek tradition than Nietzsche's Dionysian superman, but nevertheless as superior and remote from the crowd as the Übermensch professes to be. Lewis's argument is that such an isolation from the mass will of Schopenhauer, or the herd that Nietzsche identifies, may not be contemplated unless its governing precepts of irrationality, intuitionism, and collectivity are subjected to the controls of the analytical intelligence.

In order to explain more fully the role of Nietzsche's ideas in the context of the procedures of Time and Western Man, we need to have direct recourse to Lewis's essays, and his writings on art and aesthetics, which are an indispensable aid in understanding the content and intention of the philosophical work. Indeed, I would argue that unless we do this, the picture of Nietzsche's influence on Lewis's philosophical strategies is incomplete and obscured, subsumed in the prior interests of engaging in an intensive polemical challenge to the time-cult of Bergson and issues directly relevant to that

enterprise. In the context of the present chapter, the main point I wish to establish is that the notion of an aesthetic metaphysics so forcefully advocated by Nietzsche has direct bearing on the formulation of the general concepts and procedures in Time and Western Man.

In the essay, 'The Artist Older than the Fish', which raises a discussion on the roles and functions of art and artists, and the perception of those roles by 'instructed people', Lewis makes the following illustrative statement:

A German philosopher, living in the heyday of last century German music, accepted the theory of an aesthetic justification of the universe. Many people play with this notion, just as they play with Art. But we should have to disembarrass 'art' of a good deal of cheap adhesive matter, and cheap and pretty adhesive people, before it could appear a justification for anything at all; much less for such a gigantic and, from every point of view, dubious concern as the Universe! 50

Lewis does not name Nietzsche, but the form and expression is unequivocally that which can be traced to ideas first expressed in The Birth of Tragedy; 'Only as an esthetic product' Nietzsche writes, 'can the world be justified to all eternity...'⁵¹. The vision of an aesthetic justification of the universe, one which would alleviate the metaphysical hegemony of science, is immensely attractive to Lewis, but he is also intensely alert to the dangers of a less than serious popularization of this idea, a fate bestowed on much of Nietzsche's work. Lewis himself made use of this in relation to the popular understanding of the übermensch and the will to power. This would be an excellent reason why Lewis should not openly identify its origins, because he does take it seriously, requiring a like response from

others in the context of Lewis's own theoretical and philosophical position. Hence it would not be unreasonable to identify an attempt on the part of Lewis to dissociate from Nietzsche most urgently, from the popular notoriety his work had gained. I am not suggesting that Lewis was afraid of notoriety or censure by sections of the public; rather that, having made use of Nietzsche's popular reputation for his own purposes, it could compromise his own case if he were to quote approvingly and openly from this source. Nietzsche, and others who were allied to the time-cult, had to be confronted and actively disengaged from Lewis's philosophical procedures, to be denounced as major perpetrators of much that was superfluous even to Nietzsche's own exalted notions of art's metaphysical meaning. The notion of an aesthetic justification of the universe, if not prised loose from the time-cult and its manifestations, would bring nothing but the decay and dissemination of the visual arts, and would hold out no particularized metaphysical function to art. As a manifestation of the will to power⁵², it remains firmly subordinated to the flux, élan vital, and the blind purposeless wanderings of Schopenhauer's will.

If Nietzsche is thus precluded from offering a viable aesthetic system as an alternative to a scientific metaphysics, or to a system which takes its base point in Christian morality, on the grounds of the contaminatory matter of chronologism, the way forward for Lewis was clear. The Nietzschean notion of aesthetic justification primarily located in the temporary and emotional art of music was bound to be compromised for Lewis, but having studied Nietzsche, he was likely to be aware that the plastic arts were by no means excluded by him from the metaphysical heaven:

...the pictures of Raphael, the frescoes of Michelangelo, the Gothic cathedrals, presupposes not only a cosmic but also a metaphysical significance in the objects of art.⁵³

The arts which symbolized the calm and repose of Apollo were, Lewis believed, better equipped to aspire to the permanence of a world beyond the flux. Accordingly, an adherence to the idea of an aesthetic metaphysics could and did legitimately acquire centrality in the core of Lewis's own philosophy. The journey Nietzsche embarked upon was not so remote from Lewis's, but was certainly pursued by following a very different road.

In sum, the only force which for Lewis could supply a brake to the processes of the will, the only activity which holds out the promise of separateness, eternal form prised from the flux, solidity and stability, are those qualities which are common to the rational philosophic attitude and the plastic work of art. The symbolic ideal of Greek sculpture and a wide conception of the 'classical'⁵⁴ are benchmarks to which Lewis turns in order to illustrate the epitome of the alliance between art and philosophy, as part of platonic doctrine, to be discussed and regarded essentially as philosophy, rather than as art that is commonly regarded as of peripheral, not fundamental importance⁵⁵. The postulation of this relation is at the core of an antidote to the infinitely damaging affirmation of the Schopenhauerian will by Nietzsche that pre-dates Bergson's insincere optimism.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. TWM, p.334
2. *ibid.*
3. E.W.F. Tomlin, 'The Philosophical Influences' in Meyers, Wyndham Lewis: a Revaluation, *op cit.*, pp.36-37.
4. All references taken from Arthur Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Representation, (first published 1818), translated and edited by E.F.J. Payne in two volumes, (New York, 1969).
5. Schopenhauer, *op cit.*, I, p.3.
6. Schopenhauer, *op cit.*, I, p.113.
7. *ibid.*
8. Schopenhauer, *op cit.*, I, p.99.
9. *ibid.*
10. Schopenhauer, *op cit.*, I, p.195.
11. Schopenhauer, *op cit.*, I, p.199.
12. TWM, p.328.
13. In The Tyro no.2 (March, 1922) 21-37 (p.28). Referred to here as 'EOAT'.
14. EOAT, p.30.
15. EOAT, p.31.
16. TWM, p.329.
17. TWM, p.331.
18. TWM, p.330.
19. TWM, p.332.
20. TWM, p.334.
21. TWM, p.328.
22. TWM, p.334.
23. TWM, p.339.
24. EOAT, p.34.

25. EOAT, p.32.
26. EOAT, p.34.
27. EOAT, p.30.
28. EOAT, p.34.
29. EOAT, p.27.
30. EOAT, p.26.
31. Lewis quotes fully from Schopenhauer's World as Will and Idea (World as Will and Representation, Payne edition, op cit., I, p.185) in contrasting the operations of science and of art, and in contrast with Bergsonian impressionism. Lewis, surprisingly in the context of his argument, does not repeat Schopenhauer's idea that art 'stops the wheel of time', but prefers to develop his close analogy between art and philosophy, via Schopenhauer's analysis, of distinctions between types of Platonic and Aristotelian thought, but distinguished according to artistic criteria, notions of 'genius' and the contingencies of practical life, seen as the domain of science.
32. EOAT, p.25.
33. Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy, first published in 1872. References here are from the edition The Birth of Tragedy and the Genealogy of Morals, translated by Francis Golffing (New York, 1956).
34. See Lewis's Nietzschean pamphlet, 'The Code of a Herdsman', published in The Little Review (July, 1917) as the third instalment in a series entitled 'Imaginary Letters'. This consists of an 18-point series of rules 'sent by Benjamin Richard Wing to his young friend Philip Seddon inclosed [sic] with a letter'. Heavily ironic, but in keeping too, with many of Lewis's principles, the 'letter' instructs the young man to keep intact his 'herdsman' status by avoiding, for example, the seductions of 'herd-hypnotism' and the company of women; the entreaty to 'Exploit Stupidity' and to recognize that 'Yourself must be your Caste' seems to be pure Nietzsche, and surely deliberately so. The 'enemy' status advocated here as a necessary measure for retaining one's separateness from the herd, and from which Lewis's journal takes its name, recalls the theme of isolation from the crowd, who are typically characterized as the ignorant, base masses, incapable of displaying the finer instincts and intelligence of the herdsman. Lewis did not hesitate to endorse Nietzsche's dictum that 'One has to tyrannize in order to produce any effect at all' (The Will to Power, first published 1901; this edition translated by W. Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale, London, 1968, p.437).
35. In Nietzsche, The Will to Power, op cit., III. Critique of

Philosophy, pp.220-257. An unveiled and lengthy attack on the practice of philosophy and its procedures, including the work of Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Spinoza, Leibniz et al; he regarded German philosophy as a whole as 'the most fundamental form of romanticism and homesickness there has ever been' (p.225). Nietzsche deplores the search for absolute knowledge, concepts, and the 'dogmas of epistemology', and their reliance on the 'ulterior' moral elements that subsist within all kinds of knowledge. He calls for, instead, an 'absolute skepticism toward all inherited concepts' (p.221).

36. See 'The Diabolical Principle' in The Enemy, no.3 (London, January 1929). Here Lewis identifies a trend which he calls the 'New Romanticism', '...a return to the feverish "diabolism" that flourished in the middle of the last century in France, and which reached England in the "nineties," with Oscar Wilde and Beardsley as its principal exponents. Huysman's exploitation of the mediaeval nightmare and his Messe Noire interests; Nietzsche's turgid satanism and the diabolism of Baudelaire and Byron: the "Drunken Boat" of Rimbaud, and the rhetoric of Lautréamont, are its basis.' (p.30). The 'diabolical principle... reveals the motif of romantic, satanic revolt... a mystical revolution...' (p.69).
37. In The Will to Power, Nietzsche writes: '...there is only one world, and this is false, cruel, contradictory, seductive, without meaning - A world thus constituted is the real world. We have need of lies in order to conquer this reality, this "truth," that is, in order to live - That lies are necessary in order to live is itself part of the terrifying and questionable character of existence.'
- ... 'Metaphysics, morality, religion, science - in this book these things merit consideration only as various forms of lies...' (p.451; from a fragmentary draft for a preface for the new edition of The Birth of Tragedy).
38. TWM, p.304.
39. TWM, pp.375-376.
40. Nietzsche, The Will to Power, op cit., p.550.
41. Nietzsche, The Will to Power, op cit., p.453.
42. Lewis writes: 'But the actual source of all this half-century of propaganda of violence or of action, is, of course, the darwinian doctrine of "the struggle for existence."... Bergson's "creative evolution" is as darwinian as was the "will to power" of Nietzsche. It is Darwin's law of animal survival by ruthless struggle, and the accompanying pictures of the organic shambles through which men reached world-mastery;' (TWM, p.215). He failed to acknowledge Nietzsche's anti-Darwinism in making this assessment, for as J.P. Stern points out, Nietzsche was

consistently hostile to the theory, regarding Darwinism as 'true but lethal'; see the discussion in Stern of Nietzsche's anti-Darwinism, in Nietzsche (London, 1978), pp.73-75. See also R.J. Hollingdale's discussion, and assessment that Nietzsche accepted many of Darwin's conclusions, but regarded them as a disastrous picture of the world. In Nietzsche, (London, 1965), pp.88-90.

43. TWM, Chapter IV, in 'The Revolutionary Simpleton', p.36f.
44. TWM, p.36.
45. In his autobiography, Rude Assignment, Lewis explains his use of the terms 'highbrow' and 'lowbrow', popularly applied to 'intellectuals' and the 'Philistines' from which they are divided. That Lewis himself is described as a 'highbrow', which he recognizes as a slang term of ridicule, half abuse and half derision, cannot prevent him from acknowledging what he sees as descriptive truth revealed beneath surface vulgarity: 'Contemporary man is allergic to the masterpiece'. RA, Chapter II, 'The Highbrow, and the Two Publics', pp.15-18.
46. The prefix 'super' for Lewis, 'as in superman, or super-Dreadnought - gives the key to the state of mind involved'; any form of 'super-ism' is pronounced indicative of the doctrine of action outlined in relation to Nietzsche (TWM, p.36). In RA, Lewis claims for himself a measure of early immunity from Nietzsche's superman; 'The impulse to titanism and super-natural afflatus pervading German romanticism has never had any interest for me' (p.128). Yet Lewis makes conspicuous use of the prefix 'super' as a central concept in the essay 'Super-nature versus Super-real', in WLA, retaining the prefix in the formulation of his own case, and in respect of the Surrealism ('Super-realism') which he opposes. In Lewis's defence, it might be suggested that an alternative style of art which appears to offer a complete reversal, echoed in name and character, of that style it would supplant, is more likely to attract attention to its claims. Hence 'Super-nature' as a replacement for 'Super-realism' carries more journalistic 'weight' than a non-derivative juxtaposition.
47. TWM, p.36.
48. TWM, p.37.
49. EOAT, p.35.
50. CD, pp.65-66.
51. Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy, op cit., p.42.
52. See the chapter in J.P. Stern, op cit., 'Aesthetic Re-interpretation', p.127ff for a clearly-stated assessment of Nietzsche's theory of the aesthetic justification of the universe.

53. Nietzsche, from Human, All Too Human (1878), quoted in A Nietzsche Reader, selected and translated by R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth, 1977, reprinted 1984), p.129.
54. Lewis clarifies his definition of the classical in 'Paleface', Enemy, no.2 (London, September 1927): "Classical" is for me anything which is nobly defined and exact, as opposed to that which is fluid - of the Flux - without outline, romantically "dark," vague, "mysterious," stormy, uncertain. The hellenic age has no monopoly of those qualities generally catalogued as "classical"; so, according to me, the term "classical" is used in much too restricted, historical, a sense; in a word, too historically' (pp.99-100).
55. 'It is legitimate' Lewis writes, 'to regard greek sculpture as part of platonic doctrine, as philosophy rather than as art. That is, at all events, how I have always regarded it, and valued it, and in that sense discuss it here' (TWM, pp.306-307).

CHAPTER 3

SPACE-TIMEISTS: HISTORY, SCIENCE, RELATIVITY

I.3.i Oswald Spengler's World-As-History: Classical and Faustian Cultures

The critique of Spengler's massive work, The Decline of the West¹ occupies a great deal of space in Time and Western Man. Lewis is at pains to insist that this close attention to certain aspects of Spengler's book is not intended to suggest, as it often might, a respect for an opponent that one nevertheless wishes to demolish, but is held up to view as an archetypal 'concrete manifestation' or a representative example of timeist literary endeavour, surpassing in its adherence to the 'time-school' the works of fiction which Lewis draws upon in 'The Revolutionary Simpleton'². Spengler's historical survey and theorizing is for Lewis the 'perfect model of what a time-book should be'³ and the historical world it describes is a 'world of the second-rate'. 'Is not' Lewis asks us,

any average volume of history a long account of the triumphs and disappointments of the second-rate, of kings, bootleggers, bishops and merchants? It is the average life of England, France and America to-day, for instance, only past and treated flatteringly as 'history'. What part does any truly great achievement of the mind play in those historical feuilletons?⁴

Despite the attempt to persuade us of the mediocrity of a mindless, descriptive rendering of detail and anecdote in the writing of histories, it is precisely because Spengler has indeed applied an organizing theory to his work that arouses Lewis's acute concern. Spengler's is a time-mind which sees ultimately nothing in view but

politics and history⁵. For Spengler, everything is but a reflection of the Zeitgeist⁶. In such a world dominated by time and by power, there is no special place for art, for the creative individual, or the independent critical mind. All is subordinated to the familiar Darwinian struggle, the Nietzschean power-metaphysic and vulgar 'sleight-of-hand' that goes with an intoxicant designed for herd-consumption. Nietzsche's manifesto for the elect is grimly complemented, concludes Lewis⁷, by Spengler's popularism which, although he claims to be an anti-popular writer, nevertheless understands his audience well, and hopes to 'enlist the sympathies of what he knows quite well to be a large, popular, and for the most part extremely vulgar, audience.'⁸

Steeped in the 'Nietzschean power-metaphysics' which had 'long obsessed european ideology and speculation'⁹ therefore, Spengler, with 'pan-German pugnacity' had applied this obsession particularly virulently in Lewis's view to the genre of history writing. In rejecting traditional and unilinear accounts of historical development, Spengler had evolved an 'organic' history whereby the human past was presented as an account of essentially self-contained 'cultures'¹⁰ that conformed to quasi-biological patterns of growth and decay. Hence he contended that most civilizations would go through a virtual life-cycle, or as he terms it, would follow 'life-courses'¹¹ so that historians may not only reconstruct the past, but might predict, or even 'predetermine' history. But the 'spirit' which attends one culture can never be transferred to another. A 'Classical Revival', for example, follows the dictates of its own time, and cannot recapture an earlier period, except superficially. The

'Destiny' of the arts, having admitted them 'to be organisms of the Culture' are 'organisms which are born ripen, age and for ever die'¹². Civilizations follow a predetermined course of birth, growth and decay like the natural organisms, such as forms of art, which act as the microcosmic structures of the wider culture. This view was to be most energetically contended by Lewis in his defence of the uniqueness and endurance of the plastic arts. In doing so, the Spenglerian concepts of 'world-as-history' and the opposition of 'Classical' and 'Faustian' cultures had to be closely dissected.

Spengler's 'world-as-history' takes on particular significance for Lewis in the way it insists on the logic of 'time' to be paramount in all explanations of life, culture, history and creative endeavour. A short passage from Spengler's work does much to crystallize the issues with which Lewis is concerned. Taking an example of Kantian categorization as his starting point, Spengler makes his own distinction between what he calls the 'logic of space' which is 'the necessity of cause and effect' and the 'logic of time' which is 'Destiny'. This category is the key concept for him, and is one which utterly transcends its spatial counterpart: it is

a fact of the deepest inward certainty, a fact which suffuses the whole of mythological religions and artistic thought and constitutes the essence and kernel of all history... 13

Further, Spengler asserts, this 'logic' is 'unapproachable through the cognition-forms which the (Kantian) "Critique of Pure Reason" investigates'. Similarly in his critique of Bergson, Lewis finds in Spengler an equally clear aversion to the spatial domain, a 'time-jingoism'¹⁴ which downgrades the role of intellect and reason in an overall world-view, and which prefers the 'deepest inward

certainty' to the operations of an analytical intelligence. Like Whitehead's juxtaposition of the 'concrete' with 'inward thoughts', for Lewis, Spengler's 'inward certainty' is no certainty at all, since they are contradictory terms.

The Spenglerian outline of time-as-history and history-as-time dovetails neatly with Bergsonian philosophy, identical with the sensationalism of the élan vital, providing an 'historic' picture of the great 'Unconscious' encountered in Freud and von Hartmann, foreshadowed in Schopenhauer and Nietzsche¹⁵. His 'world-as-history' locates its roots in the social, cultural and political fields and he applies this term vigorously in an interpretation of historical data. Inspired by Goethe's idea of 'Living Nature'¹⁶, and his distinction of mechanism from organism - or from 'dead' nature to 'living' nature - Spengler renames it 'world-as-history', insisting that the living nature Goethe defined held the key to historical investigation, interpretation and classification. Out of biological science and the concept of the living organism Spengler found his terms of procedure in writing history, whereby the organizing elements of 'periodic structure' and 'organic logic' would emerge 'out of the profusion of all the challenging details'¹⁷. A thorough-going relativism that finds its varied outlet in Bergson and in Nietzsche is thereby revealed. For Spengler, no universals are possible; the dogma of process essentially roots out any possibility of absolutes¹⁸ and results, for Lewis in a political version of the same cardinal errors which are inherent in Bergsonism, via the medium of an historical rendering of an essentially crude Nietzschean power-principle:

...the idea at the bottom of Spengler's book is that all manifestations of art, mathematics, biology, physics, are political. The Theory of Quanta, the Evolutionary theory of Darwin, the music of Wagner and Weber, a Dresden Shepherdess, El Greco and Einstein - all for him are inventions of a particular time, produced in response to a culture-spirit, and they have no validity except as chronological phenomena. They are events of history merely, like the Battle of the Boyne or the Rump Parliament. At bottom there is really no physics, no art, no philosophy, only politics and history. 19

The Bergsonian errors which prominently result for Lewis as a consequence of Spengler's ideology include the erosion of personality and individuality, the subordination of mind to its prior role of organism, the animism of 'dead matter' and the determining processes of time-as-history which over-ride the essential distinctions between types of human activity - such as art and science - and consigns them to the flux of history, to bloom, develop, decay and be re-absorbed like natural organisms. In Spengler's terms, a fatalism is thus engendered whereby we as individuals, are subject to that 'Destiny' that history holds for us; we do not, Lewis points out, make history, but are on the contrary made by it²⁰, as simply passive instruments of the Zeitgeist, the 'homology principle' of Spengler's that makes us into slaves of time, of fashion²¹ and that insists, at the first and last analyses that 'we ourselves are Time'²².

By insisting on the 'when' of things, and not the 'what' or 'how', Spengler thus aligns himself firmly with the despatialization that gathers momentum as a result of Bergson's theories. That Spengler carries out, on the 'popular', literary plane²³ an analysis of culture which continues to develop and propagate its hostility to the

spatial²⁴, dedicated to the cause of the chronological as the only truth, makes him in Lewis's eyes perhaps even more dangerous than the time-philosophers he complements. The strait-jacket of historical determinism stifles any form of creativity of which man imagines himself capable since all thought, reasoning and decision-making is rendered useless under the hegemony of chronologism. It would, according to Lewis's reading of Spengler, be a naïve, futile act on the part of any artist to suppose his work might somehow endure or transcend his 'time'. Nor is he allowed to assume his work as an artist is in any fundamental sense 'different' to that, say, of the scientist; despite warming assurances that both, of course, work equally creatively and cognitively in order to 'progress' in their respective disciplines, Lewis cannot overlook the underlying threat which erodes what is distinctive to his profession in the so-called 'fusion' of arts and sciences. This is another way of asserting the superiority of the temporal and the determinism of 'organic logic' over all independent, rational and creative activities. The warning given throughout Time and Western Man is unrepentant and uncompromising: the swallowing of Spengler's 'inconsistent', 'fat and flabby' doctrine²⁵, means that 'people are being taught not to reason, to cease to think'²⁶. This, in regard to a doctrine designated as essentially political in character, was seen to be blatantly manipulative by Lewis.

If Spengler's theory of 'world-as-history' is the cornerstone of his edifice, then the characterization of civilization into the 'Classical' and the 'Faustian' is its concretization, which had to be roundly and conclusively challenged as the literary corollary of that

which, Lewis believed, was manifest equally - and as 'concretely' - in scientific theory. Lewis accordingly set out to expose their 'abstract' origins in the relevant theoretical areas. The 'abstractions' of Spengler's 'world-as-history' theory help to place in context the details of this in practice, as expressed in the opposing cultural tensions of Classical and Faustian Man. It is here that Lewis finds the most telling 'concrete manifestation' of Spenglerian dogma, and challenges its assumptions which for him reveal a destructively hostile attitude towards the plastic arts and, as already noted with regard to Schopenhauer, Bergson and Nietzsche, 'music' thereby becomes the favoured time-art. The difference in Spengler's case, given his political and historical bias, is the vicious way in which he sets "Plastic" and "Music" at each other's throats, in an eliminating contest'²⁷. Yet, as Lewis points out, we must pay attention to what Spengler intends to convey by the opposing terms. What was to Lewis the mark of a product of the worst kind of romantic mind, of German origins, Spengler's 'artificial' categorization of the arts of music and plastic expression submerges their differences in response to an overall impulse to subordinate all to a particular kind of 'Music', approximating rather to a 'late Beethoven quartet rather than a Bach fugue'; presumably the latter, Lewis notes, would offer too close an analogy to the 'Classical', the arts of form and structure, to 'satisfy the 'faustian', romantic, 'musical' ideal': he continues:

It is not really with the art of music, that is, or with the art of painting, that he is dealing, when he is contrasting Plastic and Music, but with a certain kind of nature that has expressed itself in one art or the other. 28

Thus interpreted as a result of Spengler's German romanticism, Lewis

concludes that 'any plastic art in Europe that is not greek or greek-influenced, he calls "music"'. No art may assert its independence of this 'music', nor develop its own philosophical or theoretical dimensions²⁹ under a tyrannical régime that would seek a literal organic systematization of Walter Pater's dictum that music is the supreme art form to which all other arts aspire³⁰. To a theoretician and practitioner of the visual arts, Spengler's sustained undervaluation of plastic properties was anathema.

The unrestrained attack which Lewis directs at Spengler's analysis is not softened, as it is even in the case of Bergson, by any explicit agreement of underlying principles or of detail. It is not difficult to imagine the effect on an artist, dedicated to the practice and theoretical justification of his craft as a medium with its own techniques and visual language, which he believes to rightly be distinct from other, complementary arts, to hear Palestrina lauded as the heir to Michelangelo³¹. The Renaissance, that 'disagreeable retrospective contretemps' for Spengler³², was similarly dismissed as a pastiche of a Classical art which was static and non-vital in its original format, and which was vastly surpassed by the age of baroque and polyphonic music which followed. Spengler has to destroy the prestige of the Renaissance since it celebrates the forms and spirit of the Classical past: in love with the plastic, it had to be regarded as a temporary 'aberration':

'Plastic' got its foot in for a moment quite by accident: Gothic, Western, European, 'Faustian' man soon drove it out, and reinstated Music and the gothic yearning for the infinite, the vague, that which has no outline and is innocent of either sense of locality or of any concrete value at all. 33

Hence Leonardo da Vinci is described by Spengler as a 'discoverer', an artist-scientist, who by the literal means of the dissecting knife, penetrated the 'inward secrets' of the body, not simply content to study external form; and whose invention of sfumato is described as the 'starting-point of Impressionism', the bête noire that haunted Lewis in the formulation of his aesthetics, and which was purloined by the 'space-timeist' Alexander as a cosmetic, popular veneer in an attempt to give his bleak biological and mechanistic theories a more palatable flavour³⁴.

The vigour with which Spengler pursued his historical view of aesthetics, setting art and artists irrevocably against one another, was for Lewis, mistaken and highly damaging to all concerned. There is, he notes sadly, 'no room upon the same earth for two such opposite things as Plastic and Music'³⁵, but that the one must eliminate the other, must gain aesthetic superiority and hegemony in the kind of political Darwinian or Nietzschean power-struggle that gives no quarter to the other side. The reasons for Spengler's uncompromising stance on this most vital of issues therefore, is accordingly identified by Lewis in the opposition of 'Classical' and 'Faustian' that structures Spengler's work.

The title of Spengler's The Decline of the West refers to its author's belief that the Western cultures had already passed through the organic creative stage of 'culture' into that of reflection and material comfort, and that the future holds out only the possibility of further, irreversible decline. Spengler compared classical antiquity with its modern Western descendant in order to demonstrate

his theory of organic life processes in the 'life' of civilizations. Spengler, in characterizing what he calls the 'soul of the Classical Culture', goes to Nietzsche for an appropriate term by which to describe it: the Apollonian. Its attributes, of which he helpfully lists examples, include the nude sculpture and statuary of Greek origins, 'mechanical statics', the painting that celebrates form and line rather than light and shade, and the 'Greek who describes his ego as soma and who lacks all idea of an inner development and therefore all real history...'³⁶. The Faustian soul, placed in direct opposition to its Classical counterpart, takes the fugue and polyphony as its major art-forms, and is predominantly Gothic-Dionysiac, anti-Renaissance and anti-Plastic. 'The Faustian', Spengler declares, 'is an existence which is led with a deep consciousness and introspection of the ego', and to qualify its place in this culture, painting is 'that which forms space by means of light and shade': Rembrandt is therefore preferred to Polygnotus, and the characteristic notions of merging, of indistinctness and mysticism are rehearsed. Thus Spengler, for Lewis,

is for the 'Faustian' Culture (which resolves itself into modern Western Romanticism). That is 'far-away' (or 'infinite' 'yearning,' etc.): that hates the line, that loves the 'perspective,' in which 'things' only exist in their relation to a misty, 'far-echoing' Whole, not for themselves: it is those attributes that he likes and teaches. 37

The simple statement that draws attention to Spengler's 'hatred of line' aptly characterizes, if any doubt were left, the total incompatibility between Lewis and his opponent, for as much as one despises the distinct and the delineated, the other is dedicated to it in its physical manifestations in art, and all that it symbolizes in thought and philosophical speculation.

Even language, which, as Lewis notes, has to be used by Spengler in order to communicate his doctrine³⁸, is qualified by its division into a duality of 'intellect-words' - which have clear meanings, are unambiguous, and are therefore 'Classical', to be despised - and 'sensation-words' which can become 'mystery-clouded, far-echoing sound-symbols'³⁹ and are accordingly Faustian. When the word appears to mean nothing, or anything, then, argues Lewis, Spengler is happy; 'it becomes material for music, and is no longer a part of human language at all'. One would assume Spengler intended his book to escape this rule, and would hope to utilize unambiguous communication techniques to convey its mystical message. To Lewis, however, Spengler's words did indeed follow their ideological directive, meaning 'nothing' or 'anything', except by default to those who had already succumbed to the call for irrationalism and non-intellectualism, and who were therefore unable to judge this 'time-book' critically. Indeed, Lewis pondered on whether Spengler might have inadvertently argued for the Classical, in the face of an excellent display of incoherence, light-hearted inconsistency, and the advocacy of a 'mechanical vision'⁴⁰.

In relation to the concept of 'world-as-history', Spengler claims Faustian-Western as the only inherently 'historical' culture, in which his theory of organic logic and historical life-cycles of epochs may be observed in operation. Other cultures foreign to this are deemed to be 'ahistoric', or static and non-organic, non-developing.

'Consider' writes Spengler,

the Classical Culture. In the world-consciousness of the Hellenes all experience... was immediately transmuted into a timeless, immobile, mythically-fashioned background for the particular momentary present;...

He continues:

But the Classical culture possessed no memory, no organ of history...

... the past is subtilized instantly into an impression that is timeless and changeless, polar and not periodic in structure - in the last analysis, of such stuff as myths are made of - whereas for our world-sense and our inner eye the past is a definitely periodic and purposeful organism of centuries or millennia.

Inevitably, then, the Greek man himself was not a series but a term. 41

An obsession with 'timelessness' and 'changelessness', and the favouring of opposing qualities is always, Lewis claims, a peculiarity of space-timeists. The perpetual judgement of art, philosophy, attitudes and states of mind in 'time-terms' is revealing. Classical man for Spengler is also will-less⁴², and though a difficulty in the precise definition of 'will' is acknowledged, he invests the term with the characteristic mysticism, the 'ineffability' which is the stock-in-trade of the 'Great Unconscious' of Schopenhauer, von Hartmann, Bergson, Freud et al:

Will - this is no notion, but a name, a prime-word like God, a sign for something of which we have an immediate inward certainty but which we are for ever unable to describe. 43

We have seen that, for Lewis, the notion of the will is far more precise, representing the characteristic intuition which precedes all creative activity, subject to the controlling intelligence. Classical Man, as defined by Lewis, cannot possibly be 'will-less', but is able and willing to accept the organizing principle of mind. All Lewis's aesthetic sensibilities revolt against the notion of the arts as blundering and running blindly⁴⁴ in the manner of the Schopenhauerian will, unmoderated by intellect, but neither does he concede the extinction of will as Spengler would suggest.

Yet because Lewis is concerned to dispute the whole theoretical basis and tenor of Spengler's analysis, this characterization of the static, soul-less and will-less Greek, whilst intended as an unfavourable comparison in relation to the Faustian spirit, also sustains for him a positive isolation of the art forms and types of philosophical speculation he most valued; for that he must have been grateful to Spengler. Questions of value and the attendant value-interpretations of terms like 'Western' and 'Classical' were the source of the most fundamental divisions between Lewis and the 'space-timeists', and in developing his case against them, it was constantly necessary to refine and define concepts where the variant interpretations reached the point of maximum obscurity.

In the conclusion to the analysis of Spengler, Lewis articulates his own 'values' in the case, making the point that what Spengler outlines in regard to 'Classical Man', whom he takes to be the Hellene, is just as applicable with reference to the 'static' and plastic cultures of the East, the Chinese, the Indian and the Ancient Egyptian; the only - and vitally important - difference is that they may be considered as even 'more static... than the Hellene'⁴⁵. In view of this wider - artist's definition of Classical Man - which takes in Eastern and Oriental cultures, Lewis is able to state his emotional and intellectual preferences for one tendency rather than another:

So, my 'Classical' is not the Hellenic Age, as it is Spengler's: and my Western is not his 'Western.' For me the contrast is no longer Modern Europe and Classical Greece. We can very well be the healthy opposite of 'romantic' (and all that entails) without being greek. On the other hand, if Time-travel were able to offer us the alternative of residence in New York or residence in Periclean Athens, I should choose the latter. 46

Indeed, it is not unexpected that Lewis should choose to outline a

rather curious and comprehensive concept of the artistic and philosophical tendencies with which he finds himself most in sympathy, united under the loosely-held banner of 'Classical Culture'. Held together in Lewis's analysis by the notion of spatiality and the non-dynamic, the linear artistic styles of Indian and Oriental art and the systems of thought which they symbolized had impressed him far more than the essentially Western plastic equivalent to the extent that he was more than willing to underline its superiority on the basis of linear quality:

It is a matter of fairly common agreement to-day that Asia has produced plastic art of a far higher order than Europe, in many ways more complex, mature, sensitive and beautiful. I don't think the Europeans generally realize how little original plastic art has come from Europe. If you could get rid of the Renaissance (as Spengler does) it would be very noticeable.⁴⁷

Spengler, of course, cannot simply 'get rid of the Renaissance' and the hated plastic values in which its finest art-forms find expression. In designating all arts - except those affiliated to German music as 'ahistoric', or akin, as Lewis observes, to the buddhist static and timeless haven of Nirvana, Spengler becomes an energetic ally of Lewis's cause since he describes and correctly assigns precisely those qualities Lewis would wish upon the art-forms he champions. The values placed upon the defined qualities of the respective arts are a different matter, and in this case, Lewis makes for the theoretical jugular vein of Spengler's discourse.

It would have been enough to attract Lewis's attention if Spengler's book were to be seen as herd propaganda, perpetuating the attendant mass values of novelty and fashion which serve to maintain docility and order; these 'intoxicants' or 'concrete' effects of the time cult

he believed, exist at every level of a society drunk with chronologism, and must be exposed, analysed and eradicated. This cannot be done without attending to the causes, the metaphysics and modes of thought which lie at the root of these outward effects in the arts and society. Lewis accordingly set out to expose their 'abstract' origins in the theoretical field, and matters which for him must be subjected to much closer analysis could be usefully highlighted in the more 'popular' form of Spengler's work, as a preliminary to more inaccessible writers, since the ideas expressed there clearly threatened the foundations of the aesthetic precepts upon which his own philosophical world-view is based. The question of a theoretical struggle between opposing combatants may not, ironically, be far from the Darwinian arena that Lewis eschewed; it is at least as intense a battle on the level of minds as Darwin envisaged between species, a struggle which had only begun with Spengler, and was to be carried into the rarefied atmosphere of the philosophy of contemporary science.

I.3.ii Modern Science, Philosophy and Plastic Art

The war of words with Spengler is but an essential preliminary to the primary task which Lewis sets himself. 'This spenglerian background' he writes,

is extremely useful to bear in mind if you wish to understand better the far more seemingly abstract notions of the philosophers with whom we now will have to deal.⁴⁸

Lewis thus believed that 'organic' theories like Spengler's consolidated the contemporary outbreak of Bergsonism on the popular,

cultural plane, but that it was post-relativity science, supported by relativist or 'timeist' philosophy that had injected Bergson's ideas with new life in the wake of Einsteinian physics⁴⁹. The new science had supplanted - in the best of scientific and progressist traditions⁵⁰ - the Newtonian notion of matter as inanimate, as distinct from the substance and the operations of live mind, and had encouraged a time-dominated conception of space that took time as the 'supreme reality'. In identifying such a general tendency, a massive scientific and philosophical orthodoxy manifesting its principles in the time-obsessions of Bergson and his followers, and in the 'timelessness' of relativity theory, which indeed merge with one another, Lewis knew that as an artist he would be censured by the specialists and experts in the field. Anticipating the objections of his critics, Lewis is aware that his linking of relativity physics with the manifestations of the 'time-mind' would cause difficulties for his case at the very least:

My critic, if he wished to be amiable, would say:
 'I agree that there is a time-mind, as you call it. I think you have proved in your "Revolutionary Simpleton" that such a thing as a "time-mind" may be said to exist. With your concrete analysis I am in agreement. But the existence of this "time-mind" has nothing whatever to do with Einstein, Bergson, or with Whitehead or any of the philosophers you mention, who depend on Relativity. Your association of Einstein with Miss Stein, of Swann and Stein, of Bergson and Bloom, of Miss Loos, Charlie Chaplin and Whitehead, is still to me meaningless. There is no connection that I can see. Such a connection, I protest, is not proved by you, nor can it be proved.' 51

The evidence that Lewis sets out to provide in answer to such objections comes from the testimony of the scientific relativists themselves, notably Alexander, Whitehead and Russell, who make explicit in their own writings the connections noted. The continuity

that is stressed, between the flux of Bergson and Einstein, and the relativists⁵² comes easily from 'minds of the same stamp': the quantity and extent of devotions to the time-god, Lewis claims, were not difficult to find, but plentiful. It follows that the selection of evidence therefore, which naturally accords to an artist's bias, may be freely acknowledged in the realisation that all have particular axes to grind, and that professional 'interest' in presenting one's ideas is but a common levelling factor.

Given the admission of a particular perspective, Lewis thus clears the decks for the development of his continuing analysis in the area of scientific philosophy. This analysis can usefully be examined according to specific areas of contention; the demise of the subject and individual consciousness, the parallel fate of the object in an organic philosophy, and an idea of reality based on a mentalist animism of matter, expressly articulated in Lewis's attitudes towards the 'space-timeist' precursors, Bergson, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. In addition, the role of science in general as the essential anchor of the time-mind, and the particular applications of popularist versions of relativity theory, are already implied in the analysis of those earlier thinkers, but are followed up in greater contemporary detail in the work of Alexander and Whitehead.

Lewis largely accepted Bertrand Russell's interpretation of Einsteinian physics as a basis for his own purposes. Russell's The ABC of Relativity⁵³, which attempts the formidable task of setting out the bare principles of Einstein's achievement in laymen's terms, in a

readable and entertaining fashion, may well have formed the nucleus of Lewis's understanding of the subject. There is no doubt, in Lewis's analyses of aspects of Russell's work, that he both respected and admired the philosopher, but he is nevertheless regarded as a fair target in view of what Lewis regarded as his fashionable philosophical, scientific and psychological 'enthusiasms'. The ABC of Relativity was accordingly censured for its romantic, primitivist and emotional nursery-rhyme approach, Lewis giving full rein to his talent for satire:

Indeed, in all exposés of Relativity Theory it is quite evident that the naïf... point of view is what we are being fed with. The spoon of Mr. Slosson or of Mr. Russell (in his 'A.B.C.' for little Relativists), held out invitingly, but firmly, towards the Public's little astonished mouths, is full of that particular treacle. Einstein-physics, too, are 'tremendous fun.' But the sort of nursery atmosphere that develops in the popular exposé of Relativity, the 'shut your eyes and Open-Your-Mouth!' ('you'll feel giddy at first! you'll soon get over that!') sort of attitude of the Relativity nurses and governesses, is due to this side of the matter, which I think has not, so far, been put in evidence. 54

Lewis had referred to Russell as a 'born entertainer' and a 'true and typical Western man', perhaps recognizing in an opponent certain shared characteristics. Russell however, had become a willing convert to the evolutionary creed of the time-philosophy⁵⁵ when woken 'from his dogmatic slumber' by his friend and colleague, Dr. Whitehead, and had declared himself ready to embrace the mechanistic model of man's nature propounded in behaviourist psychology. His presentation of the time-view in the revised edition of Our Knowledge of the External World was accomplished, in Lewis's view, according to the 'vigour, integrity and charm of this fine philosophic intelligence'⁵⁶, but

despite its 'pristine brilliance' was overshadowed by its 'naïveté', sensationalism and emotionalism. His saving grace, as far as Lewis is concerned, was that even after his 'conversion', Russell would not have Bergson 'at any price'⁵⁷, but Lewis is also not slow to point out that a position which advocates evolutionism and yet rejects the acknowledged high priest of that movement must be logically flawed. For Lewis, both Einstein and Bergson should be regarded as the 'river officials of the great River Flux, of its conservancy staff: they both, in different ways, administer it'⁵⁸. By accepting the science of Einstein, and the principles of evolutionary philosophy, Russell cannot but admit to Bergsonism.

Like Lewis, Russell had attempted to build his philosophy on perceptions of 'common-sense', but had tried to reconcile these with modern physics, and as a consequence, Lewis felt he had become too closely embroiled with the time-philosophies of Alexander and Whitehead to retain any sense of the spatial reality and the stillness present in our common-sense perceptions of things. The familiar displacement of ego and mind for organicism, 'fashionable primitivism', infantilism and a sensationalist world of 'neutral entities' was to be found in Russell's interpretation of timeist philosophy and relativity physics just as much in Whitehead's and Alexander's versions. With Russell, therefore, although Lewis agrees there are considerable points of disagreement with the more orthodox accounts of Alexander and Whitehead, nevertheless we 'arrive at the non-plastic, illusory, Alice-in-Wonderland world of post-einsteinian philosophy'⁵⁹. An examination of Russell's ideas in relation to the demise of the 'object' as discussed in Time and Western Man forms part

of my Chapter 4, but here it is necessary to stress his role as an interpreter and supporter of contemporary physics, and to note his relation to the space-timeist 'orthodoxies' of Alexander and Whitehead.

Lewis's concern with the illusory nature, world of images and the inherent mentalism of the time-cult finds its outlet in the recurrent discussions and refining of different notions of 'abstraction' and 'realism', or the 'unreal' and the 'concrete' which are found to be necessary in establishing his position. This, briefly stated, takes the opposite road to the 'abstract' philosophy of the so-called 'realist' philosophers. The 'death' of the ego, or the 'subject', fiercely resisted by Lewis and perpetuated in the accounts of Bergson, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, is finally traced to its cause; the development of science and its contemporary effects, brought to an extremist manifestation through the undoubted genius of Einstein⁶⁰. The concentrated attention placed by Lewis on scientific matters should not obscure his overarching intention, which is to defend his profession against any philosophy that would appear to threaten its existence or minimise its status. The analysis of scientific theory highlights his sympathy with the kind of mechanical world of matter as projected in the traditional, Newtonian conception which is considered preferable to the modern alternative only on the grounds of his prior interest as an artist. 'I am' he constantly insists, 'merely stating the case for art, as against what is vilely misnamed "reality"'.⁶¹ Art itself, or an aesthetically valid metaphysics, was for Lewis the vital issue here, not science⁶². In following through aspects of the main areas of contention that I have outlined in relation to Lewis's

discussions of Alexander and Whitehead - the extinction of the subject and the object, mentalism, and the vital role of science in underpinning the time-philosophy - it is necessary to point out the aesthetic character of the ground on which Lewis chooses to meet his adversaries. He will not be foolhardy enough to attempt an assault from a position of weakness, but whenever his quarry rashly strays even indirectly into his realm, Lewis is careful to plead his case selectively, from the basis of his own specific expertise.

Samuel Alexander's Space, Time, and Deity is taken by Lewis as a prime example of contemporary Bergsonism; indeed, Alexander's 'time-obsession' would appear to outdo his master's in its apparently uncompromising belief in time - or duration, or space-time (with the emphasis on the latter) as a basis for reality⁶³. Alexander's central thesis of 'emergent evolution' is, for Lewis, 'our old friend "Creative Evolution," under another name, and with a few additional attributes'⁶⁴. Thus Lewis's encounter with Alexander is sealed into a format that, if he had chosen to do so, would surely have informed any in-depth critique of Bergson, but which also concentrates on the 'extremism' that takes Alexander further on the timeist and organicist road, and which stands perhaps even more securely than Bergson's philosophy in direct opposition to Lewis's world-view.

Alexander's metaphysics attempts to develop according to a principle of 'emergent evolution' involving the definition of interrelationships that are manipulated by the familiar counters time, space, matter, mind and deity. His world-view posits a single cosmic process, with the idea of space-time as the basic cosmic 'matrix' from which

'emergents'⁶⁵, - gestalt-like formations or properties - arise and contribute to the formulation of higher syntheses and processes. Mind, according to Alexander's 'interpretation of the facts' is 'an "emergent" from life, and life an emergent from a lower physico-chemical level of existence'⁶⁶. Alexander's organic theory gives rise to the notion that space-time thus produces matter, which is prior to the development of mind or 'awareness' as a further, qualitative synthesis. Mind then, is a development, an emergent from, space-time via matter. This all-embracing metaphysics, that takes the notion of space-time as its primitive stuff, out of which everything 'emerges' thus moves along its evolutionary way towards deity which, although it is a still unrealized ideal, may nevertheless be approached by way of its most primitive origins. This hierarchy of change and progress towards an ultimate goal, that relies on an acceptance of flux, emergence and synthesis - complements, but may also compromise - Bergson's quite traditional dualism of intellect and instinct and the distinctions that he made between duration and spatialization, to the extent that not only does mind explicitly emerge from space-time, but that reason and operations of intellect are but 'outgrowths' from intuition. Intuition and reason are thus deemed to be different, yet one 'grows' somehow from the other⁶⁷. The balance of the space-time equation is tipped to its limits, and unequivocally distilled to its essence. Alexander reaches an early conclusion therefore, that

Space must thus be regarded as generated in Time, or, if the expression be preferred, by Time. For Time is the source of movement. Space may then be imaged as the trail of Time, so long as it is remembered that there could be no Time without a Space in which its trail is left... Time as it moves from past through present to future... is the occupation of a stretch of Space. ⁶⁸

The process of despatialization that Bergson sets in motion is confirmed by Alexander in no uncertain terms; in the bid to 'take Time seriously', space, and the qualities connected with it, are certain to be the main casualties for Lewis. In placing time at the bottom of everything, Alexander simply trades that which is 'concrete' for that which is 'abstract', and 'unreal', and that the propositions which follow, and upon which the intelligibility of his metaphysics depends, are built on nothing of any consequence. Both Lewis and Alexander, it must be noted, shared an aversion to the final application of philosophically vague terms like 'idealism' and 'realism', objecting to the over-simplification and confusion which attends the manipulation of mutually exchangeable concepts, and which act increasingly as umbrella hosts to a myriad of conflicting ideological and philosophical variables. Alexander nevertheless claims the label of 'realist' for his own theories, and since it is often similarly applied to the relevant work of Whitehead and Russell⁶⁹, Lewis is accordingly obliged to examine the basis for such claims. The grounds for their concerns, however, differ markedly. Alexander demonstrates the professional philosopher's careful awareness of the acute ambiguity of generalist conceptions. This motivates Lewis, too, but it also denotes for him a tendency, common, he feels, amongst time-philosophers, to actively encourage the fusion and interdependence of hitherto reasonably distinct concepts in keeping with the wider trend towards 'unanimism'.

In Chapter VIII of Time and Western Man, Lewis outlines a brief philosophical 'history' of the terms, 'idealism' and 'realism' and considers the Classical basis for understood differences. The

contemporary situation, as far as he is concerned, has resulted in the fusion of originally quite disparate concepts, with the resulting ambiguity of meaning that has hindered any clear thinking about the issues which lie beyond the question of semantics. The 'unanimity' that he describes, the 'meeting of extremes'⁷⁰ that is traced, not only in the unification of philosophical discourse, but in the traditional distinctions by which we live our lives, and which falsely unites the self and not-self, reason and intuition, science and art, is a direct result of organic theories like Alexander's, which will always submerge the particular in the whole, until we can no longer distinguish any remarkable properties of the unit. For Lewis, the merging of 'idealism' and 'realism' that is apparently accomplished, where an equal quality of reality unites all existence and an organic nature holds sway, heralds only a new absolutism that the relativists or 'realists' would appear to wish to avoid⁷¹.

In seeking to define more closely what it is that Alexander intends to convey by his 'realism', Lewis proceeds from aesthetics as his natural benchmark in developing his philosophical response. In order to illustrate the accuracy of this statement, we need to discuss more fully the implications of Alexander's use of the term, and Lewis's objections, in the context of the former's metaphysical projections. Alexander states, in the Preface to Space, Time and Deity that his work

is part of the widely-spread movement towards some form of realism in philosophy, which began in this country with Messrs. Moore and Russell, and in America with the authors of The New Realism.⁷²

Lewis acknowledges the differences and difficulties in attempting to

reconcile a 'commonsense', or 'plain-man's' view of reality with technical philosophical definitions, but is nevertheless prepared to set his 'plain-artist's' understanding securely against the scientist's contribution, as it is utilized by Alexander and Whitehead. Reality, for Alexander, Lewis notes, is Space-Time; that is the fundamental reality 'upon which a house of cards of emergent qualified relata are constructed',⁷³. Despite the space-timeist's propensity to stress the interconnected nature of all things, Alexander would appear to make a distinction between what is the 'real' and what is the 'true'. This, Lewis finds, illustrates most clearly the inadequacy, in his point of view, of Alexander's 'rag-time philosophy'. If we are to regard Space-Time as - paradoxically - Alexander's 'absolute', or the fount of his so-called objective reality, then what, Lewis asks, is the truth it offers? Alexander's truth, like Nietzsche's, is perspectivist; it is variable, it is 'what works', it progresses according to the theory of emergence, and it takes science as its model:

...what is 'unscientific' believing to-day is 'scientific' believing tomorrow. So it does appear that 'truth,' like Alexander's God, is variable. It expands and contracts. 'Truth' is only what is within our temporal purview. 74

The only 'truths' of this reality are seen to be variables, for as Lewis comments, what we find is that 'time and change are true - nothing else'. He concludes that, following on from the theory of organic growth and emergent principles that evolve from Space-Time, by in effect investing everything with 'reality', Alexander is unable to distinguish the 'real' from the 'unreal', and that as a consequence, his claim to be a 'realist' has no meaning, since it is based on an abstraction, and cannot claim any distinctive or stable identity.

Truth, similarly, is an abstraction, 'merely a coherence', a 'perspective' of an 'incoherent' reality. The uncharacteristic timeist separation of concepts such as 'truth' and 'reality' is totally false and unacceptable to Lewis, for to him they must cohere: 'for us truth is reality, and there is only one truth'⁷⁵. At the crux of the debate, Alexander's notion of reality stands divided, and the enemy of the flux and its operations appears to support a fusion of concepts. This is emphatically not, however, a compromise on the part of Lewis, since he draws attention to the essentially abstract nature, the mentalism that characterizes accounts like Alexander's which underlines the emptiness of its terms. Looking to Aristotelian traditions Lewis is able to justify his position by appealing to pre-relativist philosophy prior to the alleged fusion of idealist and realist sympathies. The clearest refutation of Alexander's realism and the basis of his belief in the 'one truth' however, is found in Lewis's aesthetics.

Taking up the notion of 'variable truths', Lewis considers its application on a matrix which runs from the 'most real' to the 'least real', or the unreal. Where a truth coincides with the highest measure of reality, it is there that Lewis's world-view originates. Conversely, in the case of Alexander and fellow space-timeists, the most unreal coincides with the most variable of truths. Wishing not to court undue abstraction in the explanation of his thesis, the archetypal philosopher's chair is pressed into service. 'In any armchair' he begins,

there is to be found side by side, (1) the 'truth' about it belonging to the artist who observes it as a factor in some picture he is painting: (2) the 'truth' of the upholsterer:

there is (3) the practical 'truth' appreciated by its possessor: and then there is (4) the 'truth' of the electronic mass of science. 76

Although many more 'truths' may be sought, these are sufficient to illustrate the point. The opposite ends of the matrix, the 'most real' is occupied by the truth of the artist, and the 'least real' is the electronic mass of scientific imagination which sees no mere armchair, but the molecular flux which accords to the Theory of Quanta and Alexander's reality, the 'early chaos' that attends progressist and evolutionary systems. The latter, by comparison with the artist's chair, has 'almost no reality', since it is a world of hypothesis, unending flux, and of images only. The reality of the artist is contrasted strongly with that of science in that it has the power to transform and to re-make the objects it ponders in new ways, confirming new realities, whilst the scientist dissolves and disperses them, giving no stable reality in the chaos of perpetual time and change. By this token, Lewis is able to lay claim to the position on the matrix that supports a unified concept of 'reality' and 'truth':

...the armchair of the artist is scarcely any longer an armchair, if the artist is a good enough one. It then goes out of reality at the other side, the opposite to that of science. 77

It is the most powerful basic notion that motivates Lewis in his dealings with the time-philosophers, since it enables him to exercise his artist's interpretation of the real in comparison with contrasting philosophical systems, to choose between what is congenial in them for his purposes, and to develop a coherent response to the formulations of rival metaphysicians.

It is clear that Alfred North Whitehead's Science and the Modern World⁷⁸ is selected as a necessary subject of analysis by Lewis on somewhat different grounds than those that led to his discussion of Alexander. Both are inevitably regarded by Lewis as 'Space-Timeists', hailing Bergson as their master, and are to be placed as one in their equal devotions to Time, the flux and fashionable scientific theorems, but within the brief of Time and Western Man, differing aspects of the time-cult are at issue. In the case of Alexander, despite his recurrent references to the Romantic poets, and to the sculptor Rodin, he offers no developed notions of aesthetics. This allows Lewis a free hand to concentrate his efforts on challenging the minutiae of the organic metaphysics that is put forward, in order that his own philosophy, derived from a freely acknowledged interested viewpoint, may gain sufficient explanatory power to support his version of aesthetics. Whitehead's book, however, influenced by Alexander's philosophy, purports to encroach directly upon Lewis's field. Bearing in mind the 'armchair matrix' that Lewis offers in explanation of his view of reality in contrast to Alexander's, Whitehead's aim appears to suggest a fusion of Alexander's end of the matrix with Lewis's, or a displacement of one with the other. Thus Whitehead, it is claimed,

...has been at the greatest pains to reinstate scientifically, as it were, the art-object... in place of the 'scientific object.'⁷⁹

This proposition may be fully understood only in relation to the undercurrents of the familiar time-philosophy to which Whitehead is indebted. The organic fusion of specific concepts like art and science that accompanies timeist metaphysics, and which occupies Whitehead in particular, is strongly opposed by Lewis in favour of

sympathy but disparity. Whitehead's version of this issue is for Lewis clearly formulated in the name of Bergsonism and it is what chiefly motivates his analysis:

It is indeed his determination at all costs to effect this reunion that is so much objected to here, and it is that that has made me single his particular doctrine out for criticism.⁸⁰

A theory which would claim to displace the scientific object for the art-object would appear, on first acquaintance, to favour art above science, but, as indicated in the extract from Whitehead's book at the opening of Time and Western Man, it is an organic, time-infested art that is likely to contain the 'inward thoughts of a generation'. I will return to this quotation, but we can note that here, in short, is what Whitehead understands by 'art'. His preference for the aesthetic properties of modern science and mathematics is exchanged for the static mind/matter dichotomy of traditional Newtonian physics and the reasoning of Hume's epistemology, and what art is left must conform to the demands of an organic metaphysics. To Lewis, Whitehead, (like Alexander, but to a much greater degree), appears to need art to add a kind of sophisticated and cultured plumage to mask a hard-nosed scientific outlook. Whitehead, the man-of-science, and his mystical accomplice Brémond both exploit the 'artistic consciousness and the methods of the artist' and '...neither of them at all in the interests of art or of the artist'⁸¹. This not unnaturally leads Lewis to contemplate the motives of those who require a cosmetic support from unrelated disciplines, and to ponder on the nature of inherent inadequacies that might necessitate such action.

For Lewis, Whitehead's urge to reconcile contradictory concepts and to attempt to fuse separate areas of activity under the banner of organicism is again the true mark of a time-mind. Although Whitehead professes to be 'all for the poets and the artists', he wishes to render what is distinctive in them inoperable and unfunctional according to, and in subservience to, the void of science, but persists in claiming a position of necessity for the arts, as long as they meet the conditions laid down by an organic metaphysics.

The distinction that is made by Whitehead, between the 'organic' and the 'mechanical' which he associates with the 'mechanical "deadness" of materialist science'⁸² is necessary, Lewis argues, if he is to try to avoid that 'deadness' and the pessimistic conclusions that follow. Therefore what emerges from a popular point of view from space-time doctrines, is 'organism' in place of the old 'matter', in tune with the 'great theory of Evolution - just to cheer us up!'. We are being offered something alive in place of something that we previously regarded as 'dead' and mechanical. This is pure fiction for Lewis, a philosophical confidence trick designed to fool the unwary:

For what the benefit to you, in this famous change from matter to mind, from 'matter' to 'organism,' is going to be, it is very difficult to discover. For it is not you who become 'organic'; you have been organic all along, no one has ever questioned that. It is your tables and chairs, in a pseudo-leibnizian animism, not you, that are to become 'organic.' As Professor Whitehead puts it, 'the things experienced and the cognisant subject, enter into the common world on equal terms.'⁸³

Whilst Whitehead distinguishes, as he must, between the principle of organism and the 'mechanical', for Lewis they are, of course, one and the same. What is organic, controlled from within a larger mechanism, must be mechanical itself. What interests Lewis intensely is how the

outcome of such a thorough-going animism inevitably leads to disastrous consequences for the individual, whose notion of uniqueness, or at least of relative independence from the matter surrounding him, cannot logically be sustained if the organic principle is accepted. The price to be paid for this belief is a 'phalanstery of selves', a fragmentation of the ego into constituent, atomic parts according to the relativist scientific version of matter. 'You lose', Lewis concludes, 'not only the clearness of outline, the static beauty, of the things you commonly apprehend; you lose also the clearness of outline of your own individuality which apprehends them'⁸⁴. The ordered world of 'classical common-sense' is replaced by Whitehead with the naïveté of the 'romantic nature-poet' whose pantheism subordinates his personality, the sentimentality and mock-innocence of the eternal Child who takes no responsibility for his own life, content to throw in his lot with a cosy organicism and determinism that absolves him from the difficulties of decision-making.

Clearness of outline, and distinctions between entities and objects are the values Lewis places uppermost in his debates with time-philosophers; it is no accident that these are also the qualities that characterize his aesthetics and art practice. We find accordingly, that the most striking incompatibility between Lewis and Whitehead is revealed in a head-on clash of opposing aesthetic values that is paralleled and complemented in each case by opposing philosophical, scientific and world-views. The main issue that needs to be highlighted in respect of Lewis's analysis of Whitehead, is that philosophical and scientific beliefs are conspicuously represented by

an appropriate aesthetics in the case of both writers, but whereas in Lewis's view, the plastic arts provide the justification and impetus for philosophizing, Whitehead's model of romantic nature-poetry provides merely an attractive and humanistic veneer to mask the darker purposes of an overweening organicism.

So art, for Whitehead, cannot be static, imbued with permanence, independent, nor distinct in its essential properties. Charged with the task of the 'fertilization of the soul', art must follow the organic road:

A static value, however serious and important, becomes unendurable by its appalling monotony of endurance. The soul cries aloud for release into change. It suffers the agonies of claustrophobia... Great art is the arrangement of the environment so as to provide for the soul vivid, but transient, values...

This element of transition in art is shown by the restlessness exhibited in its history. An epoch gets saturated by the masterpieces of any one style. Something new must be discovered. The human being wanders on. 85

Lewis notes that Spengler's urge to periodize cultures is unavoidably inherent in Whitehead's own notion of 'mental climates'; it is simply the spectre of zeitgeist under another name, keeping the individual entity securely wedded to a wider, historical and time-dominated controlling power. Whitehead, following Bergson, calls strongly into question the notion of the 'entity' and intellectualist divisions between subject and object, which are seen as false given their common origins, and must be abandoned. In this all-embracing view of reality, each of the basic elements, or what were previously regarded as separate entities, are now for Whitehead 'actual entities', but they are not self-contained or fixed, but consist of processes of

self-creation, by the selection and re-arrangement of the material provided for their backgrounds. The analogy, for Whitehead, Spengler and Alexander is to clearly be sought in the notion of life-cycles, of plants and animals underpinning the philosophy of organism.

Lewis cannot accept this principle in any guise, especially as applied to the arts, and given the implications for the individual ego.

Whitehead's scientific mysticism that elevates the electron as the basic unit of creativity, which 'blindly runs' but which derives its importance 'from the fact that it is an integral part of a whole greater than (though possibly as blind as) itself, and not a mere lonely, alien atom'⁸⁶, cannot embrace for Lewis the complex intuitional and rational processes of creating art. He seems almost to forgive Whitehead his 'honest sentimentalism' and 'naïveté' in his scientific enthusiasms, his devotion to the nature poetry of Tennyson and Shelley, and the allied romanticism that wishes to see a cosy, idealistic unity between art and science, but the clear influence of Bergson, 'the perfect philosophic ruffian' is not so easily overlooked.

It is therefore not insignificant that Time and Western Man opens its account by quoting from Science and the Modern World. In full this reads:

It is in literature that the concrete outlook of humanity receives its expression. Accordingly, it is to literature that we must look, particularly in its more concrete forms, namely in poetry and drama, if we hope to discover the inward thoughts of a generation.⁸⁷

Lewis's reasons for placing Whitehead's words at the head of his own

text, as the expression of a view which he is concerned to discuss and dispute, may be an expected or self-evident ploy in its polemical context. It is not obvious to the reader at this juncture, but what increasingly becomes clear as Lewis's case unfolds, is the realization that this quotation is an exemplification of what he regards as the ambiguous, misleading use of concepts and terminology that reverberate throughout those texts chosen as representative of the time-cult in contemporary thought: the modern equivalents of Bergson, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche that Lewis finds in Alexander, Whitehead and Spengler. Their common hostility to the individual personality or the 'subject', manifest in Alexander's and Whitehead's metaphysical allegiances, and chronologist attacks on 'Classical' ideals are seen as representative examples of the predominant tendency that pits time-values against space-values to the detriment of the latter.

Lewis's use of the term 'concrete' has important ramifications in respect of Whitehead's employment of the term here; it is also a term which necessarily takes a high profile in his version of metaphysics. Whitehead's narrow, specific use of the word in this quotation is crucially important to Lewis in developing his own main thesis in Time and Western Man, and a brief consideration of the implications of this key concept leads us squarely to the centre of the debate. One meaning that Lewis draws attention to at the beginning of his book is that it is used as a term of convenience and description when he wishes to refer the effects on the arts - the 'concrete manifestations' of the time-cult. In pursuit of this, Lewis widens it to include more generally the arts of fiction, poetry and painting, whilst Whitehead excludes visual art from what he characterizes as the

expression of the 'concrete outlook of humanity'. Whitehead's strategy might in effect elicit some approval from his opponent, since although Lewis considers that each one of these arts may all demonstrably suffer from the taint of chronologism, it is in literary forms of expression - including history, biography and autobiography - that those effects are most severe. Indeed, in omitting the visual arts from his analysis, Whitehead appears to add albeit unwitting testimony to the grounds of Lewis's own case that the visual arts alone may escape the fate of literary counterparts as convenient instruments used to probe the 'inward thoughts of a generation', or as Lewis might put it, to wallow in the fetid Schopenhauerian or Bergsonian 'stream of unconsciousness'.

Another interpretation of the 'concretè' which is important to draw attention to is that, for both Lewis and Whitehead, it is also a key term in the philosophical debate between the 'real' and the 'unreal', or the 'abstract' versus the 'concrete'. Whitehead's theory of the 'Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness' developed in Science and the Modern World attempts to point out the error, in the light of modern physics, of the 'abstract' separation of mind and matter that has 'ruined' modern philosophy⁸⁸. This strategy, Lewis argues, is

so fanatically directed to disintegrate and to banish the bogey of 'concreteness,' that it would be impossible not to receive the impression of a peculiar hostility to 'the concrete,' in its most inclusive sense, in favour of something abstract and mental... 89

Lewis's argument comes to rest on the paradox implied by the terms 'abstract' and 'concrete', a paradox which in turn characterizes the view of the 'space-timeists', writers of the 'time-school' for whom

'time and change are the ultimate reality'⁹⁰. For Bergson and the space-timeists, as an ultimate reality lies in the region of temporality, transience and mutability, the fusion or convergence of principles that had hitherto maintained clear distinctions - as in the traditional separation of elements of mind from elements of matter - is thereby metaphysically affirmed. Hence Lewis's position, which attempts to outline the ways in which the time-philosophy itself courts abstraction. His own philosophy, in sympathy with the so-called extremist idealism of Berkeley, may on the contrary, he would claim, be considered as a more likely candidate in the establishment of an accurate interpretation of the terms, 'concrete' or 'non-abstract', being in direct opposition to the notions of Whitehead, which are based on a temporal idea of reality. Such a philosophy as proposed by Lewis, meant for 'surface creatures', would naturally draw attention to the added contradiction in Whitehead's text between the alignment of 'concrete' and 'inward' which are, in Lewis's view, violently incompatible terms.

The quotation from Whitehead serves to illustrate the belief that motivates Lewis throughout the detailed analysis of contemporary time-philosophers. This belief, he tells us, was reached as a process of induction, from observing the effects of the time-cult on the 'concrete manifestations' that were closest to him in the arts, subjecting them to analysis, and consequently seeking theoretical confirmation of this 'great orthodoxy of thought' that was in the 'process of consummating itself'. He concludes:

The result of my investigation was that I found the same unanimity rampant throughout the contemporary theoretical

field. Point for point what I had observed on the literary, social and artistic plane was reproduced upon the philosophic and theoretic: 91

That unanimity, Lewis was convinced, had resolved itself into a 'cult of Time', and was not confined to the arts where it had first been discovered, but resounded from the highest levels of philosophy and scientific endeavour, to its most trivial manifestations in popular culture. 'There seemed no doubt' he continued,

that the more august of these two regions had influenced the lower and more popular one, and that the great principle of its cult, namely Time or History, had reproduced itself with a god-like fecundity, taking a multitude of original, hybrid, and often very grotesque forms upon the mundane plane of popularization and fashion. 92

The scale of Lewis's undertaking is thus revealed, but in his analyses of Spengler, Whitehead and Alexander, of the 'grand theories' of the historical development and decline of Western culture, and the equally forbidding territory of modern science, relativity and quantum mechanics, he never forgets his layman status, nor would attempt to enter into theoretical or technical areas which are clearly beyond his competence or interests. Neither, Lewis asserts, is this necessary, since he is concerned to point up the effects of such theories on the activities^{about} which he does consider himself to be knowledgeable.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

1. Oswald Spengler, The Decline of the West (German title, Der Untergang Des Abendlandes, 1918-1922). English one-volume edition translated by Charles Francis Atkinson (London, 1932, seventh impression).
2. Notably James Joyce, Ulysses, and works by the 'time-children' Anita Loos, and Gertrude Stein. Ezra Pound's interests and personality are critically examined by Lewis in this connection, and who indeed identifies him as the 'Revolutionary Simpleton' referred to.
3. TWM, p.133.
4. TWM, p.17.
5. See TWM, p.262: 'There is no person more persuaded of the political, or historical, nature of everything than is Spengler: and that is, of course, the "Time"-nature. That is his main source of argument: all his very long book is written to show, scientifically, how everything is a factor or creature of Time, and as entirely contingent upon the time-atmosphere or time-climate as is a fish or bird upon the presence and structure of its native medium.'
6. Drawing parallels between the devotion of Spengler and Whitehead for the notion of periodization or a 'mental climate', Lewis does not hesitate to recognize the operations of Zeitgeist. History, and the artistic cultural theories propounded by Spengler, and atomic science, as discussed by Whitehead, are thus united under one banner: 'So for Spengler logically, and as a matter of course, the conceptions obtaining in the art of the theatre are identical with the political conceptions of the same period, and the "discoveries" of science (whether the atom is envisaged as an aggressive "force-point," full of purpose, or is a little ball knocked blindly hither and thither by fate) are also reflections of the political and social ideas of the time. All the most abstract science as much as anything else, in politics, is Zeitgeist. The claim of the man-of-science to an absolutist status, to being a "discoverer," independent of the march of political and social events, is humbug, or at least self-delusion.' (TWM, p.278). If we read 'artist' for man-of-science in this passage, Lewis's reasons for advocating a status of relative autonomy for both art and science are illustrated.
7. Lewis carefully dissociates the intellectual power of Nietzsche's writings from Spengler's 'fat and flabby' doctrine; they are alike in their claims to be 'anti-popular' writers, but Spengler is 'only humbugging', lacking Nietzsche's 'initiatory genius or his thoroughness' (TWM, p.301).
8. TWM, p.302.

9. TWM, p.286.
10. Spengler was apparently prepared to fully accept all the social and biological connotations of the term, 'culture', which in the context of his book leads to the kind of semantic ambiguity to which Lewis most objected, and which was taken to be a characteristic mark of the contemporary time-mind.
11. See Spengler, The Decline of the West, I, p.3: '...for human history is the sum of mighty life-courses which already have had to be endowed with ego and personality, in customary thought and expression, by predicating entities of a higher order like "the Classical" or "the Chinese Culture," "Modern Civilization" -...'.
12. Spengler, op cit., I, p.281.
13. Spengler, op cit., I, p.7.
14. Lewis seriously questions the motives of both Spengler and Alexander with regard to the issue of superiority of race, periods and cultures, and in relation to the period-determination that transcends the individual mind and personality, drawing attention to Alexander's contention that 'not even the mind of Plato could be free from the habits of his age...' (TWM, p.229).
15. This 'picture' that is conjured by the Unconscious, Lewis is concerned to point out, is an image merely, an abstraction, without substance or concrete reality; as a characteristic of time-philosophy it builds its edifice on nothing. (See TWM, p.284).
16. Spengler draws upon Goethe's concept of 'living nature', which in The Decline of the West is characterized as a 'method of living into (erfühlen) the object, as opposed to dissecting it'. Such a method, claimed as non-scientific, is what Spengler declares he will apply 'to all the formations of man's history, whether fully matured, cut off in the prime, half opened or stifled in the seed' (op cit., I, p.105). The biological analogy is exploited to the full in support of his 'organic' approach to history; Goethe's world, Spengler assures us, was indeed an 'organism' in the first instance (op cit., I, p.96).
17. Spengler, op cit., I, pp.25-26.
18. The work of Einstein, placed at the base of time-philosophy by Lewis, is the catalyst or 'mathematical guillotine' in the rooting out of the principle of 'the Absolute' from the Cosmos. In effect, Lewis takes Newtonian science as the representative of this abandoned principle (see TWM, pp.15-17).
19. TWM, p.150.
20. TWM, p.230.

21. TWM, p.24.
22. TWM, p.233.
23. It was plain that Spengler's book, characterized by Lewis as 'the greatest highbrow best-seller of the last ten or twenty years' (TWM, p.263), first published towards the end of the First World War, touched a nerve in his public, and was, in any event, exceptionally widely read. His translator notes that this 'severe and difficult philosophy of history found a market that has justified the printing of 90,000 copies', a "popular," philosophical product of the German revolution'. The English translation of Spengler's title had undoubtedly influenced Lewis in the choice of Time and Western Man for his own work, conceived in direct opposition to Spengler's thesis and ideas in sympathy with it.
24. Quoting from Spengler, Lewis connects this hostility directly to Bergson: "We ourselves are Time," Spengler writes and italicizes; and he could say no more if he were Bergson. Time is the personal and organic; "Time is a counter-conception to Space." (TWM, p.268).
25. *ibid.*
26. TWM, p.303.
27. TWM, p.295.
28. TWM, p.296. Lewis places heavy emphasis on this passage by italicizing it.
29. Lewis observes that for Spengler, 'No art has a philosophy of its own for him: indeed all arts, the moment they really begin to understand themselves, show a tendency to melt away into "music" - into something intangible, abstract, non-plastic - "infinite."' (TWM, p.296). The overall purpose of Time and Western Man is dedicated to the strongest possible refutation of these propositions.
30. Walter Pater, 'the great nineteenth-century romantic and aesthete' is twice quoted by Lewis with inaccuracies of phrasing and transcription (see TWM, p.196 and p.296). Pater's text The Renaissance (1873; revised and enlarged edition, London, 1888) has 'All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music' (italicized), p.140.
31. Spengler, *op cit.*, I, p.277: 'With Michelangelo the history of Western sculpture is at an end. What of it there was after him was mere misunderstandings or reminiscences. His real heir was Palestrina.'
32. TWM, p.298.

33. TWM, p.407.
34. For Lewis, the 'fluid photographs in commercially-produced marble' of the 'famous impressionist sculptor, Auguste Rodin' provided plastic counterparts for Bergson's *élan vital*, and looked as though they 'had been done expressly to illustrate' the doctrine. Alexander, not surprisingly, had used Rodin's work as a vehicle which could furnish appropriate plastic illustrations of his own 'space-time flux' (see TWM, p.156). To Lewis, Rodin and Impressionist art illustrated the highly damaging effects of the time-cult upon the plastic arts, effects which must be eradicated if those arts were to achieve again their lost independence.
35. TWM, p.295.
36. Spengler, op cit., I, p.183.
37. TWM, p.292.
38. Spengler's attitude towards specifically defined types of words is discussed by Lewis in TWM, pp.273-274. Lewis notes that Spengler must express himself in words; 'such is the cross that the philosopher has to bear. He cannot be a philosopher or an historian in anything but words...the great god "Time" has to be adored in this inadequate manner; and Spengler has to keep up a running apology for his language to his resounding, inexpressible, sound-symbol of a deity.' (TWM, p.273).
39. Lewis quotes from Spengler's text: TWM, p.269.
40. TWM, p.280. '...is Spengler's whole book a subtle argument for the Classical, after all?' asks Lewis (TWM, p.295), obliquely taking advantage of what he regards as Spengler's ineptitude in argument and sheer intellectual incompetence.
41. Lewis quotes extensively from Spengler's text (op cit., I, pp.8-9) in TWM, p.227.
42. See Spengler, op cit., I, p.309: 'Classical man, belonging wholly to the present... is will-less. The Classical idea of destiny and the symbol of the Doric column leave no doubt as to that.'
43. Spengler, op cit., I, p.300.
44. Lewis refers to Whitehead's illustration of the 'blindly running' electron in order to make this connection with Spengler's brand of organicism, indebted to the notion of 'will' as characterized by Schopenhauer. See TWM, p.285.
45. TWM, p.306.
46. *ibid.*

47. *ibid.*
48. TWM, p.407.
49. 'The influence of Bergson' Lewis claims, 'went down beneath the wave of formal enthusiasm that immediately preceded the War.' That Vorticism had played a central part in this de-popularization of Bergson, Lewis would have had no doubt. 'But' he continues, 'the War and einsteinian physics have turned the scales once more. There is naturally no question of reinstating Bergson; there are plenty of others of the same sort, but with a more up-to-date equipment, without having recourse to him' (TWM, p.156). Principally, Lewis intends to cite as examples of the new time-philosophy, the work of Alexander, Whitehead and Russell.
50. Lewis required his readers to understand the essentially variable 'truths' that science offers, thus anchoring them securely to the shifting boundaries of a metaphysics that accepts time as its prior principle. He resisted strongly the suggestion that such truths were in any way inviolable, or should be accepted uncritically. An artist's truth, he argued, was more legitimate than the variable, 'progressive' contributions of science, since it endures, and is not compromised by succeeding generations. Leonardo's work was not surpassed, for example, by that of later achievements in art, but was different, and could not be compromised by other artistic truths. See Lewis's discussions of the 'variable' truths of science in TWM, pp.450, 466, 469ff.
51. TWM, p.218.
52. See TWM, p.102: 'The philosophy of the space-timeist is identical with the old... It is essential to grasp this continuity between the earlier flux of Bergson, with its Time-god, and the einsteinian flux, with its god, Space-time. Alexander, and his pupil Whitehead, are the best-known exponents, of philosophers writing in English, of these doctrines. It will not require a very close scrutiny of Space Time and Deity, for instance, and then of some characteristic book of Bergson's, to assure yourself that you are dealing with minds of the same stamp.'
53. Bertrand Russell, The ABC of Relativity (London, 1925), revised edition 1958, third impression.
54. TWM, p.431. 'Mr. Slosson' was Edwin Emery Slosson, the author of Easy Lessons in Einstein, (London, 1920). The text includes an article by Albert Einstein (reprinted from The Times), and a bibliography.
55. The 1914 edition of Bertrand Russell's Our Knowledge of the External World contains, Lewis notes, a strong critique of evolutionism, and Bergson's work in particular. This was later revised in the 1926 edition, and although Russell maintained his

attitude towards Bergson, he had become an enthusiastic convert. Lewis's references are largely to the later edition of this work.

56. TWM, p.422.
57. TWM, p.201.
58. TWM, p.414.
59. TWM, p.432.
60. Lewis generally accepts the ideological detachment of the work of Einstein from the metaphysical systems that he challenges, recognising the scientist's indisputable genius in his field. But, he argues, that it 'is mere superstition to suppose "a mathematician" to be a sort of divine machine. In any reasonable, and not romantic, account of the matter, we must suppose the mathematical physicist not entirely unaffected by neighbouring metaphysical thought. That Einstein... had not at least read the work of Bergson, and formed some opinion upon it, favourable or otherwise, is unlikely, to say the least.' (TWM, pp.13-14). Laying the blame securely at the door of metaphysicians who followed Bergson, Lewis largely exonerates Einstein from the taint of the time-cult, but nevertheless insists on the crucial importance of the general implications of his work in physics as a catalyst for the ideas of those philosophers.
61. TWM, p.289.
62. See TWM, p.427.
63. See TWM, pp.444 and 445: Alexander in effect 'out-bergsons bergson' in his insistence on the priority of 'time' over 'space', and in the phrase 'space-time', the balance is by no means equal.
64. TWM, p.103.
65. The notion of 'emergents', Alexander acknowledges, is indebted to the work of Lloyd Morgan (see Alexander, op cit., II, p.14 and note), whom Lewis also discusses briefly. See TWM, pp.103, 440.
66. Alexander, op cit., II, p.14.
67. See Alexander, op cit., II, p.147 on this paradox; he refers to the relationship of intuition and reason as parent and child, which are different, but able to develop out of the same body; they are for him 'empirical determinations' or 'legitimate children'. Such a difficulty occurs in the work of Bergson, but the problems are marked in Alexander's theory. Lewis felt that organism inevitably led to a kind of monism that would be detrimental to the individual object or subject, with no clear differentiation between entities or their functions.

68. Alexander, op cit., I, p.61.
69. Lewis recognizes certain vitally important differences between the ideas of Russell, Alexander, and Whitehead, particularly in respect of Russell's sympathy, with Lewis, for 'berkeleyan idealism' (TWM, p.476). If pressed for a label, he would prefer to attach the term 'idealist' in support of his argument regarding the mentalism and abstraction of the time-cult, and in the case of Alexander and Whitehead, is prepared to acknowledge their own advocacy of a kind of realism by characterizing their positions as 'idealo-realists' (TWM, p.257). But the emphasis, for Lewis, would always be on the first term in that equation in respect of the 'realism' they had proposed.
70. In this connection, Lewis cites the description provided by Bernard Bosanquet (TWM, p.244). See Bosanquet, The Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy (London, 1921).
71. Absolutism, which relativism had apparently abolished under the aegis of Einstein's theories, and which had superseded the old absolutes provided by Newton, was nevertheless, in Lewis's view, replaced by a new kind of absolute - that of time. Lewis makes reference specifically to the 'absolutist manners' of Alexander that are the result of the time-obsession (TWM, p.450).
72. Alexander, op cit., I, p.vi. The work Alexander refers to was a series of essays by Edwin B. Holt and five other authors, collected in The New Realism (New York, 1912).
73. TWM, p.467.
74. TWM, p.466.
75. TWM, p.469.
76. TWM, p.472.
77. ibid.
78. Alfred North Whitehead, Science and the Modern World (London, 1926).
79. TWM, p.204.
80. ibid.
81. TWM, p.194.
82. TWM, p.174.
83. TWM, p.175.
84. ibid.

85. Whitehead, op cit., p.283.
86. TWM, p.285.
87. This quotation (TWM, p.1), contains slight inaccuracies of transcription, from Whitehead, op cit., p.106.
88. See Whitehead, op cit., pp.78-79.
89. TWM, p.168.
90. TWM, p.169.
91. TWM, p.219.
92. *ibid.*

CHAPTER 4
A PHILOSOPHY OF THE EYE

I have recently worked out, with great care, a system. The present essay is its philosophic elaboration. 1

In the introductory section of this study, it was noted that contemporary reviews of Time and Western Man and assessments of Lewis's philosophy, whilst giving due weight to his interests as an artist, do not isolate those interests as centrally determining nor as a primary impetus in the process of acquiring and developing philosophical principles. Similarly, E.W.F. Tomlin's later essays on Lewis's philosophy² are informative and give much insight on the subject, but owe much to types of approach which explore aspects of the literary implications of the work, and thus do not penetrate to the deeper recesses of Lewis's psyche as a plastic artist, the consideration of which he stressed always dominated his thought. 'I am an artist' he wrote in The Art of Being Ruled,

and, through my eye, must confess to a tremendous bias. In my purely literary voyages my eye is always my compass. ...Nothing could ever convince my EYE - even if my intelligence were otherwise overcome - that anything that did not possess this simplicity, conceptual quality, hard exact outline, grand architectural proportion, was the greatest art. 3

Lewis may well be guilty here, as elsewhere, of self-conscious 'image-building', but taken with the determination to mount a sustained attack on Bergson and chronologism, his motives are revealed and are found to be unerringly consistent in purpose:

Bergson is indeed the arch enemy of every impulse having its seat in the apparatus of vision, and requiring a concrete world. Bergson is the enemy of the Eye, from the start; ...

But I can hardly imagine any way in which he is not against every form of intelligent life. ⁴

The defence of art, as revealed in Lewis's response to the philosophical ideas of Bergson, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and the contemporary theories of the 'space-timeists', must be closely followed by a defence of intellect; 'pure' instinct, or art which is produced without the conscious operation of the mind's capacity for reason will be, of necessity, bad art ⁵. Since 'good art' is Lewis's ideal, not only for himself, but other aspiring practitioners, a formula of thought freed of harmful notions is required. The theoretical position that results from this standpoint must therefore be carefully constructed and tailored to be consistent with these aims. The priority that Lewis's profession takes in the formulation of his philosophical views is explicitly stressed throughout Time and Western Man; my contention, that this work is indeed an 'elaboration' on a system already worked out from the viewpoint of art practice and aesthetics, requires that an analysis of the main philosophical principles Lewis adopted should be carried out, before the foundations of that body of thought may be traced and explored in the second part of this thesis.

It would be inaccurate, or at least misleading, to suggest that Lewis's philosophy, or any component of his output, is dedicated to the wholesale painstaking and logical elimination of all the paradoxical and contradictory propositions that tend to pepper his exposition. Evidence that would appear to count against Lewis's thesis is often simply ignored by him, or might perhaps be unceremoniously dismissed. Whilst the latter might be an academically

acceptable practice for the 'sober' writer, it becomes capricious in the light of Lewis's more unorthodox methods⁶. As a non-philosopher and artist, the excitement of paradoxical discourse is on the contrary, often openly acknowledged by Lewis, to be seen as enriching, and even to be celebrated, rather than suppressed, or sanitized: Nietzsche's example in this matter of style and approach was far more stimulating for Lewis than the prosaic style of Hegel could ever hope to be. Like Nietzsche, Lewis, in stressing the crucial factor of individuality and personality, could and would not retreat behind theoretical concerns to the extent of eliminating his essential self. Nor could he be even-handed with those accounts that would appear to contradict his own viewpoints, even to the acknowledged extent of his strong bias, for that which implies a failure of nerve or resolve did not endear itself to him. 'I have said to myself', he writes,

that I will fix my attention upon those things that have most meaning for me. All that seems to me to contradict or threaten those things I will do my best to modify or to defeat, and whatever I see that favours and agrees with those things I will support and do my best to strengthen. In consequence, I shall certainly be guilty of injustice, the heraclitean 'injustice of the opposites.' But how can we evade our destiny of being 'an opposite,' except by becoming some grey mixture, that is in reality just nothing at all? ⁷

A fierce resistance to the possibility of becoming some 'grey mixture' underpins Lewis's purpose; his greatest defence is to allow the contradictory elements of personality and thought to struggle towards a fixation of what he calls the 'most essential ME'; '...when it comes to the pinch, I will side and identify myself with the powerfulest Me, and in its interests I will work'⁸.

The interests that motivate Lewis in Time and Western Man are

therefore explicitly asserted. His 'philosophy of the eye' amalgamates those concerns in a theoretical form which demands a spatial viewpoint in order to achieve the 'painter's heaven of exterior forms'. Yet, true to Lewis's idiosyncratic methodology, it is a paradox which stands squarely at the base of a philosophy which claims the eye as its primary sense-organ. In claiming the rights to a 'philosophy of the eye', Lewis is yet fully aware that he needs to set down very precise conditions in doing so. The time-philosophy which he resists might, he acknowledges, be more accurately termed a philosophy of the eye in its insistence on sensation and not perception. This is a crucial distinction for Lewis: if the data offered by the eyes is accepted in its unmodified form, apparently isolated from the organizing influence of mind or intellect, then it is 'pure sensation', and the data which results is characterized as merely fleeting, non-concrete and mirror-like illusory imagery or purely optical sense-impressions, subject to the distortions of movement, both physical and chronological. The stick which appears to be bent in the water of a pond is claimed to be bent in reality, as Lewis observes⁹. Sensations of this optical variety, at the base of 'timeist' world views and concepts of reality have no intellectual meaning for Lewis, and therefore are more properly the domain of the instinctive and the unconscious, out of which our dreams and illusions are made. They have no prior place in definitions of the concrete reality which Lewis puts forward, since they are peripheral to the operations of conscious mind. He cannot countenance the division of eye from mind that sensationalist philosophy projects: in a strict sense, therefore, this is much more a 'philosophy of the eye' than Lewis's view appears to be, but the access it gives is to the 'unreal'

and the abstract only, barring the way to the perception of what is 'real' - and vitally, what is not. If, Lewis argues, some cognizance of concrete reality is the aim, then the full co-operative and relational duality of eye and mind must be recognized and given due philosophical weight. Hence the 'philosophy of the eye' for which Lewis searches comes to have its opposite meaning:

...if by 'philosophy of the eye' is meant that we wish to repose, and materially to repose, in the crowning human sense, the visual sense; and if it meant that we refuse (closing ourselves in with our images and sensa) to retire into the abstraction and darkness of an aural and tactile world, then it is true that our philosophy attaches itself to the concrete and radiant reality of the optic sense. That sensation of overwhelming reality which vision alone gives is the reality of 'common-sense,' as it is the reality we inherit from pagan antiquity. And it is indeed on that 'reality' that I am basing all I say. 10

In preferring to 'deal with what is directly in front of all our eyes', Lewis appeals, not to the optic sense in isolation, but to its insights in conjunction with our knowledge, or the 'common-sense' condition of the kind which has been inherited from classical thought, opposing contemporary scientific and psychological trends. A consistent emphasis on that tradition, as a means for positing and understanding self and the material world from an artist's point of view, is uppermost in Lewis's response to the modern theoretical challenge. In essence, the benchmarks for exploration that Lewis identifies involve the fundamental philosophical issues and debates relating to the subject, or self, deity, and the object (matter) and it is chiefly around these topics that the basis of his philosophy is constructed, and upon which my own discussion is based.

I.4.i Perceptual Reality and the Object

Lewis's 'common-sense' view of reality turns, therefore, on the data gathered by sight, emphatically not as isolated sensation, but in full perceptual co-operation with intellect, knowledge and previous experience. This being the case, he claims for himself the descriptive nomenclature of 'realist', with the proviso that his realism is to be understood in spatial terms - the strongest visual impression of the external world being that of stability, and not of change. The eye, in effect, concretizes and immobilizes objects clearly and distinctly, and the relation between retina and brain is such that it is this stable object which is recalled in the mind when the eye is no longer focused upon it. It does not move, nor does it change, but is static. Vision, in the service of intellect, may be raw and untutored, but never innocent¹¹. The objects upon which our eyes focus have already been anticipated by the mind and can thus be said to have been created there, the 'finished product of our perceptive faculty', the result of 'the organizing activity of our minds':

When we say we see them, in reality what we perceive is not the direct datum of sensation, but an elaborate and sophisticated entity, or 'object.' We do even in that sense 'create' them more than 'see' them. 12

The 'static' picture of the external world, the traditional, classical 'common-sense' metaphysical construct, out of which intellect creates the material world, and to which Lewis owes the basis of his philosophical position, is radically threatened by those in sympathy with the world-view of the time-mind. In defence of his own beliefs,

Lewis takes extended issue with the writings in particular of Bertrand Russell, whose idea of a fluid, moving and essentially dynamic mode of sense-perception directly contradicts the static order advocated by Lewis. Russell, argues Lewis, wishes to animate that picture, so that the hitherto static image is imbued with 'life', and the picture accordingly 'moves and lives inside its frame'¹³. The object itself does not make an appearance, but only the states of the object; our knowledge, that is, what we know about it is excluded in favour of what we see; for Lewis this is purely optical sensation and takes no account of memory and intellect. Perception is subordinated to sensation, in the manner of Bergson's evolutionism, with the result that the world-view constructed in this way must, for Lewis necessarily rest on data provided by the crudest optical sensation. The 'roundness' of an object, for example, is inferred by intellect when it is not seen by the eye, as any artist is aware; but as far as Lewis is concerned, if the eye 'alone' is to be trusted, an object seen as flat and two-dimensional is, according to Russell's view, exactly that 'in reality'. This results in a sham, unreal world which structures itself around images only, like those in a mirror or looking glass, and which are flat, insubstantial and ephemeral. In order to reach the point of perception where our common-sense begins, following Russell's view, it is necessary for us to

...move round the object, and as far as possible get inside it. With the thousand successive pictures we thus obtain we shall have - only successively, nothing all at once, except a punctual picture and momentary sensation - the perceptual picture of common-sense... But thought, perception, and indeed all the stationary acts of the observer of 'common-sense' or of 'naïf' realism, must be turned into movement. We must move and act, if we wish to apprehend anything, or to have a thing at all.¹⁴

Indeed, Lewis points out, there will be no need for thought at all, or even sight, if one can arrive at a rounded perceptual reality by means of action, movement and interpenetration, for by this measure the action itself stands in for, and becomes, the thought and the function of the eye, in the same way the object is, not 'itself', but its 'states' or its 'successive "effects"'. The entity, which was spatial, stable and distinct exists now only in relation to its effects, not its cause; it becomes, in essence, a multiple series of 'events'¹⁵. The impressions thus gathered are counted as reality, and appearances are seen as even more 'real' than the object itself¹⁶. The analogy which counts most with Lewis is that distinction which characterizes the plastic arts and music; knowledge of a picture, for example, is to be had statically, or all-at-once, whereas a piece of music unfolds in time and sequentially. The serial nature of Russell's successive sense-acts allies itself more with the art of music, whereas Lewis's spatialized world depends on the plastic for its inspiration and means of expression.

This paradox of conflicting 'realisms' in contemporary philosophy had arisen, Lewis is convinced, because modern thinkers had moved so far away from the 'plain-man's' view, supported by populist, sensationalist theories like Bergson's. It is, for him, a poor realism that depends on image and illusion for its basic elements, abandoning the concrete for the abstract. As he notes in his discussion of 'space-timeists', if sensation is the arbiter of the 'real', if matter is animated and infused with 'life', then there is no means of distinguishing between the 'real' and the 'unreal'. What Russell, Alexander and Whitehead take to be 'real' is more likely to

be understood as 'unreal' if the spatialist's view is considered. In any case, the interfusion of matter with 'time' indicates an integral monism, or a one-substance universe which implies either total reality or total unreality; no clear distinctions are possible beyond that.

What Lewis wishes to put forward is a means for establishing once again clear philosophical categorizations between the concepts of the 'real' and the 'unreal'. Mindful of the history of philosophy, and the difficulties attending this endeavour, Lewis's formulation is less dualistic than pluralistic; it is plural, not in the sense of timeist and relativist fragmentation and atomism, which is accompanied by the concept of organic monism (microcosm-macrocosm), but attempts to see entities as separate, distinct and independent of each other. The organizing principle of this universe is thought, which leads Lewis to the conclusion that matter (nature) may well be sensationally 'real' but since this mode of experience in itself implies that no organizing or creative thought is brought to bear upon what is experienced, it is therefore perceptually 'unreal', and if it can be shown that it is perceptually unreal, then that is its ultimate character.

If there is one thing more than another that is essential to provide a 'sense of reality' - our sheer sensation that there is something real there before us - it is the deadness, the stolid thickness and deadness, of nature... And it is because they know that this particular 'concreteness' can be shown to be unreal, that these philosophers wish it away. What is most sensationally 'real' (as ultimately it is, perhaps more than anything else, demonstrably unreal) is the deadness of nature, once more. And for any view of the world such as we are arguing for here to be successful, that deadness is essential. 17

So for Lewis, the 'realist' or the 'livest' concept is mind, the critical intelligence, and the 'deadest' is matter. The entire

physical world is, for him, as it is for Berkeley, manifestly 'unreal', imaginary and mechanical¹⁸ in relation to mind. By animating matter, and by 'pumping it full of time', by denying the 'deadness' of matter, the time-philosophers divest mind of its creativity and organizational powers. The world, according to Russell, is disintegrated and dependent for its 'reality' on 'compact series'¹⁹ and appearances rather than 'things'.

Lewis is aware his position contains within it the seeds of paradox and self-contradiction; he maintains the physical world is 'unreal', and at the same time insists that it is 'non-abstract', 'stolid', and concrete. The justification for this is revealed if we return to Lewis's discussion of Russell, and his characterization in Our Knowledge of the External World of 'common-sense' metaphysics²⁰. This view, claims Russell, is quite an 'audacious' piece of metaphysical theorizing, since it rests unaccountably upon the belief in the existence of objects without the benefit of mind or sense-perception. The former condition is a 'capital error' for Berkeley, as the latter proved to be for Russell, who saw a 'first departure from the immediate data of sensation'²¹. Insisting that this view is the product of the 'primitive' or 'caveman' who, 'dreaming in his cave, constructed the "world of common-sense" we inherit and currently use', Russell points out that he had imagined a mountain and a tree that 'were always there' whether or not they were being looked at²².

Lewis has recourse to Berkeley's Principles of Human Knowledge for clarification of his own view on the matter:

As to what is said of the absolute existence of unthinking

things without any relation to their being perceived, that seems perfectly unintelligible. Their esse is percipi, nor is it possible they should have any existence, out of the minds of thinking things, which perceive them. 23

The doubt on the absolute existence of objects in the external world is noted. The concept of 'unthinking things' however, is vital for Lewis's thesis. Time-philosophies, in imbuing matter with mind, where all is mind to an extent, do not recognize this categorization of 'things'. In sum, Lewis's primary metaphysical formulation is thus: thinking, the ability to think, and the functions of conscious mind is what constitutes reality. That which does not think, an unthinking thing, must be dead, and unreal by this token. But it is also undeniably and massively concrete because of the very power of the thinking mind which creates it:

And so the material world must... be imaginary: and the very effrontery of its superb solidness and the bland assurance with which it is camped before us, should actually help us to realize that. That air of being so perfectly at home, at rest and serenely unconcerned (of being 'unthinking,' in short, and without feeling) should be the greatest proof of its unreality... it is playing at being. And the more solid it is the more unearthly... 24

Against the flux of Bergson and Alexander, Lewis places the world of 'dead' matter, insisting, in direct contradiction to their formulations, that stability - inertness, death - is the goal and ultimate fate of organic life, not the perpetual motion produced by an obsession with time and its effects. He recognizes, too, that Bergson's and his own world pictures are both forms of mentalism, but maintains that these exist at opposite points of the matrix of abstraction and concreteness. When time and change are taken as the 'ultimate reality', the resulting position is a gravitation towards

the 'abstract', or a view which depends on sense-perceptions and appearances, rather than the 'thing itself', and hence the possibility of our understanding of the object is obscured. When we read a book, for example, as Lewis points out, 'what we notice is the meaning of the printed words: not the peculiarities of the print or paper. We "perceive," that is; we do not "sense." With all of the external world it is the same'²⁵.

In support of the 'concrete', Lewis cites Berkeley's work which, although often regarded as 'extreme idealism', nevertheless stands squarely for the solid, dead world of matter he wishes to outline. When dealing with self-styled 'realists' such as Alexander, Lewis is careful to make his position clear, aligning his philosophy with Berkeley's idealism and against the contemporary adoption of an 'abstract' philosophy from Bergson and which assumes a post-relativity, 'scientific' definition of the 'real' as fragmentation and atomism, controlled by the vagaries of flux:

All that I suggest should be borne in mind is that, with the 'realists' with whom we shall be dealing, their 'real' is the opposite of the concrete. And the position from which we are conducting this analysis - and which would come under some heading of 'idealism' - is in favour of a conception of reality that is as concrete as theirs is abstract. 26

Lewis's own claims as a 'realist' should be encountered and considered more accurately in relation to a Platonic, and not a materialist context, since the acid test of a belief in an absolute existence of objects without benefit of organizing intelligence finds as little support in Lewis's world-picture as it does in Berkeley's. Yet sensation and theories of instinct and intuition that have been put forward by Bergson and Schopenhauer as vitally important in the

process of artistic creation, and which have been accepted, in part, by Lewis, have been reconciled with the 'extremism' of Berkeley. Lewis's formulation concedes that it is the unconscious mind, responsible for the inspiration of creativity, for dreams, illusions and the imaginative capacity of man, that enables the possibility of the existence of objects independently of the active consciousness. Thus the mind, 'in its unconscious part, could be said to maintain the mountains, tables and chairs in imaginative sub-existence, when not directly objects of perception'²⁷. Such a possibility, for Lewis, highlights one major difficulty which prevents a full acceptance of the implications of Berkeley's philosophy, regarded in this respect as less than 'serious'. However, concerned less with labels than with the value a construction of reality offers, Lewis finds much to admire in Berkeley in pursuit of his specialized aims.

The fate of the 'object' as a result of an avid application of 'abstract' time-philosophies is for Lewis disintegration, a false animism of dead matter, and loss of outline, distinctness and definition. It is, in short, the artist's object which is vitally at stake in the challenge to the time-cult²⁸, and it is that object which ensures Lewis's adherence to traditional models of common-sense notions of reality at the base of his concept of matter. Attempts by contemporary philosophers to seek out a more 'vivid' reality have had the 'curious result of making it, in effect, less real... a mirror world'²⁹, against which is ranged Lewis's 'realism', in debt to notions of an idealism that supports mind, in its conscious and unconscious states, as the arbiter and creative force in the projection of a solid, concrete world of matter.

I.4.ii Self and Deity: Pictures of God

...God the artist is a more significant image than God the mechanic. 30

The challenge to the 'common-sense' basis from which Lewis builds and refines his particular philosophy, and the disintegration of the 'concrete' object under the time-doctrine has similarly devastating consequences for the self, or the subject, and its potentiality for rational thought, which had already been under attack from sources pre-dating Bergson's assault, in the ideas of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. The 'object', Lewis declared, suffers for the sins of the 'subject' in an organic universe that animates matter, and eliminates the 'mind, 'soul,' or 'psyche'³¹. When a wallpaper is imbued with a soul, as in Russell's formulations³², it is usurping a characteristic function that hitherto was regarded as the essence of uniqueness and individuality of self. The onslaught on both subject and object was for Lewis also an attack on the ordered classical, rational and commonsense world, of highly destructive romantic and fanatical proportions³³.

Whereas we find the notion of the unconscious mind accounted for in Lewis's definition of reality, alongside, but subordinated to, the functions of conscious mind, which produces our concrete knowledge of objects, the time-philosopher balances the equation in favour of the unconscious: 'a long time ago' Lewis notes,

a battle was engaged between the Unconscious and the Conscious: ...we have been witnessing the ultimate triumph of the Unconscious of recent years... the 'emotional' against the 'intellectual,' the Many against the One. So it is that the

Subject is not gently reasoned out of, but violently hounded from, every cell of the organism: until at last... he plunges into the Unconscious, where Dr. Freud... is waiting for him. 'Consciousness' is perhaps the best hated 'substance' of all.³⁴

The death of the person or the ego, as far as Lewis is concerned, is presided over by Bergson, aided and abetted by the contemporary passion for 'fashionable' theories in psychology. The behaviourism of Watson and Freud's psychoanalysis develop approaches to the individual psyche in ways which undermine and devalue to the point of extinction vestiges of intellect and independence, and the operations of conscious mind. The portrait of modern man which emerges, characterized and illustrated consistently in art by Lewis in visual and literary terms, and which is subjected to his stringent theoretical analysis, is the mechanical puppet of external forces, utterly determined, and blindly obeying the dictates of instinct and a powerful Schopenhauerian will.

In contemporary philosophy, enthusiastic support from William James is found by Lewis to encompass the final passing of consciousness; not only does 'all of behaviourism' reside in James, but it is he who is charged with the responsibility of pursuing its bleak conclusions to ultimate limits³⁵. Russell, too, is identified as a 'distinguished adherent' and avid supporter of Watson's theories³⁶; the celebrated 'Professor of Movement', in substituting his moving, changing picture of sensation for the static idea of the perceptual thing, displaces the mind and ego from the contract. Since movement, change and time is all, there is no requirement for an organizing intelligence, and object thereby becomes subject. The fusion of subject and object

returns to the notion of the one 'substance', the same 'primeval' stuff found in Bergson, Alexander and Russell, out of which mind and matter are said to emerge. Yet in the breaking down of distinctions already established, Lewis argues that, whatever your views on the origins of life and of matter, the effects remain the same³⁷. To attempt to re-merge, in theory, what had become separated in the course of organic development is surely to unduly falsify the world-view of common-sense reality, and to affect a return, to a primitive, infantile or 'naïf' state, which for Lewis is the hallmark of the relativist attitude. Indeed, Russell's appropriation of behaviourism is revealed in the establishing of a new orthodoxy, to replace the traditional and 'audacious metaphysics' of the 'savage ancestor'; the operations of habit and custom need to be cultivated, and brought into service in order to replace one out-moded world view with another.

The conceptions of the external world proposed by Russell are intended 'to supersede those of the classical intelligence and of the picture of the plain-man', utilizing every propagandistic means at his disposal, including the findings of psychological theory and research, and education to 'impose this picture upon the plain-man and the simple common-sense intelligence'. The common-sense of tomorrow, in order to become accepted without question must take advantage of any manipulative means it can muster. Aside from the political consequences of any such endeavour, the reader is allowed to assess the consequences for independence of judgement and action with no extended prompting from Lewis:

Mr. Russell stresses the impossibility of effecting this

transformation without the co-operation of the powerful influence of habit, of 'familiarity.' And, of course, there is nothing at all that once people are familiarized with it and taught to take it as a matter of course, does not seem natural, and that would not therefore assume the authority of a 'common-sense.' But a thing that has to appeal to this special discipline can hardly claim that it is its intention to 'free' the mind from prejudice. It is evidently introducing the mind only to another orthodoxy, which appears to have every practical interest of the average life against it, to go no further than that. 38

The exploitation of habit and familiarity that Lewis claims to identify in Russell's strategy is yet another instance of the doctrine which places the herding instinct in man above or equal to, his intellect, and would wish to manipulate the instinctive reaction 'for his own good'. Dispensing with intellect makes man rather more manageable, as the individual self is whittled away to nothingness in the group psyche. Where the self does persist, it is disenfranchised by becoming a multiplicity, a 'phalanstery of selves', denying the unity which we believe our 'self' to have. James, in doing for the self what Russell does for the object, considers the belief 'that the Me of yesterday is the same as the Me of today' is a mere 'subjective phenomenon', one to which we fondly but erroneously cling, convinced of its truth for us. The behaviourists and their philosophical supporters are of course, as Lewis archly points out, enlightened as to the 'real' state of affairs.

Lewis's uncompromising opposition to the developments in contemporary psychology rests on philosophical, social and political objections to the devaluation of the individual personality in every aspect of its operation and functioning. The presentation of behaviourism and

psychoanalysis, and their assimilation in popular forms, had perhaps aided Lewis's own cause since issues which were previously obscurely understood, if at all, were being openly pursued by radical enthusiasts to their extreme limits. The theories of behaviourism, in stressing the importance of physical and mental conditioning on the individual's actions, approximate to the caricatured 'Tyro' character, all teeth and no brain, that Lewis presented in the 1920s (PLATE I). Puppet-like and reacting to external stimuli like a kind of embodied, elemental and Schopenhauerian will, Lewis graphically illustrates the extreme consequences implied by Watson's ideas. There is too, a more subtle point to be made in relation to the Tyronic vessel, in that Lewis never denied our function as 'external', or 'surface-creatures', treating this aspect of our existence as indeed vitally important in the denial of the time-cult and its philosophical formulations, which would seek to submerge visual differences and outlines in one communal, visceral, internal mass. He drew particular attention to the ways in which the demands of personal will and sensuality, and mass conformity in the shape of habit and familiarity were constantly competing with the rational mind for control of the body and its actions.

Freudian psychology, concerned with revealing the domination of conscious mind and actions by the processes of the unconscious mind, accorded well with the emphasis on intuition in Bergson, and gave added impetus to the popular obsessions with 'primitivism', the 'naïf' and the child-ideal that Lewis examines in detail. A sensationalist, determinist and 'psychological', or 'internal' philosophy, like Bergson's is therefore complemented by Freudian and behaviourist ideas

of the 'self', cementing an impulse towards integration and interpenetration rather than solitary isolation, self-unity and intellectual independence.

One model of the 'self' which, within strict limits, Lewis found attractive in the indictment of Bergsonism and the 'space-timeists' was found in Leibniz's concept of the monad. Lewis does not describe, or explain this 'psychic genus', for its terms and characteristics as expressed by Leibniz are not easily compatible with his own philosophy³⁹. It is not necessary that Lewis should outline Leibniz's definitions, since it is a concept which Lewis converts in his own way, to serve his own purposes, interpreted as an entity which, in his own highly visualistic conception, approximated to the idea of the isolated individual that he envisaged, apart from the mass and confusion of other minds, and which are entities that are non-relational and separated from other substances. It was as a 'visually logical' being that the monad presented itself to Lewis⁴⁰, and in which terms it survives (PLATES II, III, IV, V).

It is the separation of the monad upon which Lewis places greatest emphasis in his employment of Leibniz's formulations against those of the time-philosophers. The universal animism which he saw as a fundamental error was censured too, by Leibniz; in support of his own position against the 'average space-timer of post-Relativity philosophy', he quotes a passage from Considerations on the Principles of Life, etc⁴¹ which ends: 'it must not be said that each portion of matter is animated, just as we do not say that a pond full of fishes is an animated body, although a fish is'⁴². Lewis concludes that the

self, to retain any vestige of the qualities with which it was endowed in 'common-sense' metaphysical systems, must strongly resist attempts to animate matter, or to call the pond itself in which the fish swims 'organic', or lose its own identity and perish in the conglomerated mass of collective 'life'.

Lewis does charge Leibniz with the 'invention' of the 'unconscious', in the wake of his epic struggle with the philosophy of Locke, but points out that its role in relation to the characterization of the thinking subject has become unbalanced in the hands of timeists and 'mystical psychologists'. The stress by Leibniz on the uniqueness of individual monads⁴³ would have interested Lewis greatly and the simple, or 'bare' monad that is described in The Monadology, as mechanistic and primitive, the 'divine machine' or 'natural automaton',⁴⁴ rather appropriately achieves visual form also in the Tyronic characters created by Lewis.

However, despite Lewis's regard for the Leibnizian monad as 'a marvellous, though imperfectly conceived... intuition of genius',⁴⁵ its explicit microcosmic relation with the universe was too organic and mechanistic to accord with the image of an independent, rational self that had power over its own actions⁴⁶. But in the Lewisian characterization of it as the 'smallest possible form of god', it provided him with a secure and elevated value-system from which the self could be judged. Leibniz had stated that

...souls in general are living mirrors or images of the universe of created things, but that minds are also images of the Deity ...capable of knowing the system of the universe, and to some extent of imitating it through architectonic ensamples, each mind being like a small divinity in its own sphere. 47

But it is the knowledge of necessary and eternal truths that distinguishes us from the mere animals and gives us Reason and the sciences, raising us to the knowledge of ourselves and of God. And it is this in us that is called the rational soul or mind (ésprit). 48

In direct challenge to those who would devalue the self, the 'walled-in' monad, whose loneliness is utter, whose form allows no windows on the world, 'through which anything could come in or go out'⁴⁹ and which has no communication with other substances, except directly with the supreme being, the mediator of relations on its behalf, is recognisably pressed into service by Lewis;

Human individuality is best regarded as a kind of artificial godhood. When most intensely separated from our neighbour and from all other things - most 'ourselves,' as we say - we are farthest away, clearly, from an Absolute, or any kind of Unity. Yet, in another sense, we are nearest to it. 50

Whatever reservations Lewis had about Leibniz's system as a whole, it provided him nonetheless with an assurance of a 'clearly-cut, individually-defined universe' in direct opposition to the 'impressionistic disorder' or the 'cheerless mechanism' of the behavioural scientist. Restoring identity and liberty to the subject, drowning or already lost in a sea in which all is mental, all is psychic and ruled by unconscious desires, is Lewis's goal. In the merging of mind and body with the world of matter, both are destroyed, and in the pitting of intellect against sensual desires, the unconscious against the conscious mind, the principles which hold our individuality intact are disintegrated.

The question of deity as a necessary concept in the formulation and

explication of a philosophical construction of reality, and a critique of rival metaphysics, is explicitly accepted by Lewis in Time and Western Man. There is, he notes, no attack on God in the time-philosophies he considers, and on the contrary, deity of a particular 'variable' and relational character in keeping with organicism is indeed positively affirmed, especially in the work of Alexander. Lewis does not simply discuss the timeist concept of God because it can be shown that it is typically a product of the tendencies that have already been identified and criticized by him, but the notion of an absolute in a humanistic form is more attractive to him than Bradley's 'perfection', the 'old darwinian, evolutionary nightmare'⁵¹ which dwarfs the potential of self and intellect and crushes individual achievement. The idea of God as a personalized concept presents Lewis with a means for consolidating his own principles and beliefs within a framework which offers a respite from the demands of the lower reaches of the unconscious and animal life, and offers a transcendental route to sublimity by means of thought. We are emphatically not, argues Lewis, God's children - this is implicit in organic doctrines, where the partnership between the all-powerful, protective and yet vengeful deity and the impotent subject is unequal - but we are his thoughts; the humanistic image of deity Lewis supports eliminates the Tyronic body:

God must be a sexless image, not the 'matrix' of Alexander, but a head and its mind; so the body goes, a better way than into the matrix of space-time. And so we shall be considered as originating in a mind, too, rather than in a matrix. Also God must be imagined as indifferent. We do not want a God that is a kindly uncle, nor do we wish to see a God 'in love.' Any interest taken in us can be nothing but an intellectual passion: and surely we should be satisfied to be 'thoughts,' rather than 'children.'⁵²

Lewis observes then, that most contemporary philosophies would appear to affirm, or support a version of deity. This tendency he attributes to the example of Kant, who, whilst hailed by Heine as a 'God-killer'⁵³, nevertheless finds a place for a God within his system, although Lewis notes - surprisingly perhaps without approval - that it is a rather chilling, pragmatical deity. Both Alexander and Whitehead, having 'discoursed empirically upon "Space and Time" ... still add "Deity," with a more or less kantian, pragmatical, gesture, at the end...'⁵⁴. The time-deity is far from Kant's conception of God, but Lewis's God is just as pragmatically conceived as is Kant's, in its stress on the intellect as the means and source of communication with the 'absolute'. Like Kant, too, Lewis had deemed it necessary to outline 'a rationale or "reason" of its own' in order that his primary purposes might be served. It is notable that the ambivalence of Lewis's attitude towards deity surfaces most strongly in his discussion of Kant's influence on the time-cult.

Kant's rational demystification of theology had been thorough, and for Lewis this was always to be preferred to the emotional alternative of the 'religionists'. The 'chilling' pragmatic deity of Kant had, in Lewis's view, gone so far towards the other extreme that a meeting of opposites was considered an inevitability. The monism of the timeists was for him paralleled rather too closely in the ultimate Unity made necessary by the conclusions of Kant's 'practical reason'. 'Oneness', wherever it originates from, is none other than the embodiment of the timeist predilection for merging, in theological form, and must be resisted in the interests of a plurality which must follow from a philosophy of externals and outlines for surface-creatures. In those

interests, Lewis warns,

we think it is most true and better to say there is no God. To us the practical requirements seem to indicate the contrary of Kant's pragmatical solution - to require the conception of a Many instead of a One... Evidences of a oneness seem everywhere apparent. But we need, for practical purposes, the illusion of a plurality. 55

There could be few more pragmatically-conceived statements of the notion of deity than this; Lewis shows that he is not unduly or necessarily concerned with any superfluous speculation about the existence of God. If God is an intellectual concept, then ideas of God will be experienced intellectually, rationally: 'God is for us something to think, not feel'⁵⁶. The reality attributed to intellect thereby reveals the paradoxical assertion that 'it is we who have to pretend to be real, if any one has to, not to pretend that God is':

For if He is real, He is so much realer than we that there is no need for Him to be bolstered up by our 'practical reasons': and if He does not exist, then there is no need at all to invent Him, with a voltairean gesture.⁵⁷

Rational belief in a form of God is therefore perfectly acceptable to Lewis, but he will not countenance the type of mystical belief which must obscure the processes of clear, rational thinking in order to promote any kind of mass religious hypnotism, and to subdue the self in relation to doctrines that demand unthinking responses. Turning to notions of deity in a pragmatic pursuit of his own definitions of reality, Lewis finds the idea of God practically essential to philosophical investigation in general, but it is also a concept which is closely and deliberately woven into the fabric of his own specialist version of metaphysics.

Differing notions of deity that are proposed are accompanied by attitudes towards the place of that deity within social and philosophical systems. Here Lewis makes a distinction between the 'secular' mind and the 'religious' mind, corresponding to the debate between spatialist and temporalist conceptions of metaphysics, that is between the concepts and ideas that Lewis himself draws upon, and those which he characterizes as typical of the time-mind. Both categories - 'secular' and 'religious' - refer to contradictory conceptions of, and attitudes towards, deity. For example, the secular, for Lewis, is characteristic of the kind of 'catholic consciousness', at the base of which he finds the Thomist, Catholic theology and the philosophy of 'commonsense' perception to which he adheres. This typically places stress on the 'division and separation of things'⁵⁸ upon independence of substance, and external relationships. The 'catholic consciousness' then, for Lewis, is secular and non-religious, or irreligious, retaining in matters of deity and metaphysics the 'objective hardness' that he demands from systems of thought.

If ideas of God may be constructed on a rational basis, free from emotionality and mysticism, then for Lewis the traditional Catholic model of St. Thomas and scholastic rationalism is preferred. Its direct antithesis is the 'religious' consciousness, which is 'constantly melting and hotly overflowing', and which cannot fix its theology on any semblance of an absolute. This describes the pragmatic deity of James and the variable, Time-God of Alexander. Whilst Thomism posits a world of movement that derives from an unmoved first Mover, a static, absolute 'uncaused' first cause, Alexander's

God hands over the problem of cause to the will, entering into the general flux where Time may be said to step 'into the shoes of Cause'⁵⁹, no more acutely so than in the case of deity. This God never courts stability, but is always in the state of Becoming; it is God the child, primitive and naïf, non-infinite and immanent; the God-of-action that is governed by the same evolutionary forces as terrestrial beings, yet is never to achieve an ultimate form.

Thomism, to Lewis, would appear to offer a measured, reasoned way of approaching the concept of deity, but it is made clear that he finds the sweeping historical viewpoint of St. Thomas to be in the same category as the ideas of Spengler, and has deep reservations about the more conservative and anti-modernistic elements of his doctrine; yet, he would side with Thomism in competition with the timeist for its emphasis on distinctness and rationality alone. Even Berkeley's theology is inherently distasteful to Lewis, being 'dim in its mentalism, and dark, definitely, sometimes'⁶⁰, leading to an imbalance of God in his philosophy, which Lewis nevertheless regarded as 'the best of all possible worlds'.

If Lewis regarded the 'self', in its purest, isolated form as the vehicle which is most likely to offer us the possibility of communication with what he calls 'an Absolute' or a 'Unity', the preservation of individuality as a unity in itself, as already noted, becomes a philosophical priority. Leibniz, as far as Lewis was concerned, in investing the monad with a direct line to God, might usefully be cited, but he was careful to clarify his own position. Lewis felt that Leibniz had liberally and enthusiastically attributed

'too much divinity' in the course of formulating his philosophy, and that there was also too great a hierarchical gap in the relationship between the simple monad and its maker. Lewis's 'self' would have had to be an extremely rich and superior 'compound' of monads, for he had envisaged a much more equitable relationship between subject and deity, in shifting the balance to the direct opposite of the Leibnizian hierarchy, by hailing the self, or rather the highest reaches of rationality and experience, as the constructor of a personalized deity.

In defining his notion of deity, Lewis laid strong emphasis on the concept of creativity, expressed as thought in the process of communication with earthly subjects, and mutually celebrated in the highest intellectual and artistic achievements of man. When Leibniz referred to the 'divine art' of nature ⁶¹, the analogy of God as artist was far from uncommon, but in Lewis's philosophy, the arts - and especially the plastic arts - vitally complete the equation which parallels divine creativity with the highest forms of expression to which rational man may aspire. Some of the most rarely elevated passages in Time and Western Man are devoted to the divine potentiality that Lewis sees in the creative artist. With Aristotle, he approves the construction of God according to 'what we possess in our experience', taking our raw material 'from the highest reaches of our own contemplative states' ⁶². This, he argues, is in fact all we have with which to create our God, and that it is 'completely adequate'. The following quotation illustrates the strength of conviction and the sheer intellectual pleasure that is displayed by

Lewis in describing his thoughts on the subject, whilst observing at the same time that this insight is sadly not available to all:

To at once be perfectly concrete, we can assert that a God that swam in ...the music of a Bach fugue, or the stormy grandeur of the geni in the Sistine Ceiling, or the scene of the Judgement of Signorelli at Orvieto, who moved with the grace of Mozart... - such a God would be the highest we could imagine; that God would be so perfect in power and beauty that, however much people may assert they find it possible to experience a greater God (to whom all human experience would be relatively imperfect)... we are entirely justified in not believing them. Such people, indeed, are usually those who are proved to be congenitally incapable of experiencing the things from which we draw our analogies... for them... it is quite sensible to fix the 'divine' upon some plane inaccessible to their senses. But we may without immodesty conclude that they are referring precisely to that plane that we have experienced in our enjoyment of our intellectual and artistic faculties. 63

This statement is made on both a personal and theoretical level; if, in the practice of his art, and the employment of intellect, Lewis had been led to experience of the 'divine' as described here, his Aristotelian personal construction of God is fully realised. It is certainly secular in an additional sense, since its origins are to be sought rather in the greek Logos and the pagan classical world than in conventional Christian theology. Given the framework of the 'catholic consciousness' and Thomism, and taking into account those ideas Lewis finds congenial in relation to contemporary philosophical tendencies, it is with Aristotle that the initiative and inspiration lies, whose world-view and whose 'contemplative God' Lewis places in direct opposition to the 'evolutionist God of Time and Action'.

Within the context of the purpose of Time and Western Man, the hierarchical distance between man and God must be virtually dissolved, in an equalising and connecting link of rational thought processes and experiences in order that art may be invested with its proper

metaphysical significance. For Lewis, if that means for some that such a God, constructed in this way, is accordingly devalued as a transcendental being, then the function of art is not properly understood, and will almost certainly never be in many cases. In equating divinity with the practice of an art, he does not easily countenance the evolutionist view, that God is in man, and that man is in God. This would be to affirm the merging process which is abhorrent to Lewis. Mediation between man and God, since a deity would be for Lewis transcendent and not immanent, and external to man's sensible life, is effected through the operations of not-self, which is pure thought, and separate from the Tyronic body:

It is in non-personal modes of feeling - that is in thought, or in feeling that is so dissociated from the hot, immediate egoism of sensational life that it becomes automatically intellectual - that the non-religious Western Man has always expressed himself, at his profoundest, at his purest. That is, of course, the heritage that is being repudiated in the present 'time'-modes.⁶⁴

The detachment from the animal body and 'pureness' of thought is the peak of man's potentiality, and is at the root of Lewis's picture of God; that 'picture' is a literal, as well as a metaphorical conception, since Lewis would claim that at the highest reaches of artistic endeavour, physicality and the sensual is transformed in conjunction with the spatializing processes of intellect, and is permanently crystallized into the forms of a concrete, static, and sublime world, far closer to the cognition of an absolute than any steamy, 'religious' or mystical experience, by virtue of the 'not-self'. This is indeed that cold, dead, portion of us which is Spengler's bête-noire, but for Lewis, it holds the key to the self, external reality and the transcendental rationalism he defends.

I.4.iii Metaphysics: the Debt to Idealism

Lewis leaves us in little doubt that his endorsement of the philosophy of Berkeley in Time and Western Man is conceived primarily from the plastic artist's point of view. He has scant regard for Berkeley's stifling, all-embracing theology, preferring to deify the processes of thought and intellect after the pragmatic example of Kant, and would rather develop a rationalistic notion of self communing directly with deity, in his admiration for Leibniz's monad, than accept the Berkeleyan's total dependency on the mind of God for his world of objects. Lewis's 'concrete object' is profoundly indebted to Berkeley's solid world of things, however, and enables him to develop the seemingly paradoxical formulation of 'concrete idealism' that is the basis of his attack on the Bergsonians. Both Bergson's and Berkeley's worlds are strictly mental conceptions, as Lewis concedes. Yet the whole edifice of his own 'philosophy of the eye' rests on his contention that these positions exist at extreme ends of a matrix, and are manifestly regarded as mutually exclusive world-views. Support for Bergson's philosophy is support for the abstract, for interpenetration, merging, and monism; it is for Lewis violently anti-art. A philosophy which is able to uphold and provide justification for a world of solid, concrete and clearly-divided objects, and which gives due consideration to the importance of surfaces and outlines and the prior role of the intellect as a vital organizing factor inevitably finds favour with a practising artist who has already defined the essential character of his aesthetics.

Apart from Lewis's obvious doubts about Berkeley's theology, the

Berkeleyan world of 'common-sense' which, he claims, comes so close to his own understanding of how objects should be conceived, evidently presents certain theoretical difficulties if a substantial acceptance of its terms are envisaged. Described by A.J. Ayer as 'subjective idealism', although 'very much more than a perverse affront to common sense'⁶⁵, Berkeley's philosophy is often categorized at the extreme of idealism that persists in the belief that to exist is either to be perceived or to perceive⁶⁶, and which is dedicated towards the denial of the absolute existence of matter without the benefit of mind. Like Lewis, Berkeley was convinced of the dangers of admitting 'abstract' ideas into philosophy; Locke's idea of independent, 'unknowable', matter was accordingly anathema to Berkeley:

For can there be a nicer strain of abstraction than to distinguish the existence of sensible objects from their being perceived, so as to conceive them existing unperceived? ⁶⁷

'Matter', the subject of the lifelong philosophical conflict of Berkeley with Locke, is precisely the concept which needs to be clarified further with regard to Lewis if his ideas are to be accurately represented, and located in relation to the traditions of thought he found congenial or otherwise. In consideration of Lewis's philosophical attitude towards the object itself, it is necessary to determine whether Lewis shared Berkeley's conviction that matter, as an inert, unreachable mass, or indeed as a collection of distinct 'unthinking things' has an absolute existence apart from the mind, or whether he inevitably clung, as an artist, to a world of 'independent' phenomena. This is a crucial question, which ultimately determines the way in which his philosophy is to be assessed. There is a case, depending on the reader's interpretation, for 'classifying' Lewis's

philosophy within either the basic range of 'idealist' or 'realist' traditions, and yet another for specifying a position somewhere in between. Such would be almost universally true in consideration of any complex philosophical exposition, and any attempt to impose a rigid classification, dubious as it undoubtedly is on the sole grounds of oversimplification and distortion, must nevertheless be considered in context, not least because it is ultimately widely used and understood as a shorthand method of indicating where sympathies primarily lie. Hence A.J. Ayer's 'subjective idealism', applied to Berkeley's philosophy, and by inference to those who accept his ideas to a significant degree, is a categorization that must be faced with regard to Lewis, who explicitly acknowledges that for such purposes his own analysis 'would come under some heading of "idealism"'.⁶⁸

However, whatever we call ourselves, Lewis claims, we are all 'realists'. This he bases on our 'common-sense' view which brings us in contact with a stable natural or external world; change is not the strongest impression we receive since we have to wait, to look, to detect it⁶⁹. The distinction that Lewis makes between perception and immediate sensation of objects would appear to be reversed in relation to this formulation; immediate sensation is apparently equivalent to stability, and perception or conceptualization approximates to time and change. But the idea which counts for Lewis is that of the strength of the impression received. What cannot be expressed in a complete, definite form, and perceived as such, belongs to the world of ephemeral sensations, however intensely the cognitive process works in order to take hold of those impressions⁷⁰.

Yet, Berkeley's 'common-sense' world does differ profoundly from Lewis's, if not primarily in terms of effect, then certainly on theological and causal grounds. Both worlds are built of solid, tangible objects, and Berkeley is very far from asserting that objects simply disappear when not perceived by us; they are emphatically not ephemeral illusions⁷¹. The strength of perception to which Berkeley refers is God-caused, however; if objects are not directly perceived by us, they are nevertheless ultimately perceived in the mind of God. For Berkeley, we can thus be sure of their concrete existence. Such a faith is beyond Lewis, whose notion of deity is not mystical or candid enough to support his external world of unreal, but tangible objects. Claiming to adhere more closely than Berkeley to the pagan world of Classical common-sense censured by Russell, Lewis points out that 'of course the plain man would scarcely recognize himself in the shape Berkeley attributes to him'. Lewis is ready to acknowledge a deity of pure thought, but cognition of the world is decidedly the province of man. Our strong impressions of nature are the work of the conscious mind, whilst the unconscious mind, given its due importance, rather than the timeists' falsely elevated view, is responsible for maintaining 'the mountains, tables and chairs in imaginative sub-existence, when not directly objects of perception'⁷². The concept of God does not enter into the equation at the same point as in Berkeley's philosophy, and it does not assume a central role for Lewis; its main function lies in the nature of the relation of deity to the separate issue of the primacy of ego, or self, not in the cognition of objects.

Lewis's aesthetic delight in laying claim on his own behalf to Berkeley's 'extremist' philosophy of façades and 'surface-creatures' is predictable, and consistent with his own aims. What is perhaps not so evident, is the opportunity it gives Lewis to reclaim for the self, in mitigation of extremism, the 'insides' that had been roundly denounced in Schopenhauer's 'philosophy of the intestines', and to re-shape them, not as blind, thought-less will, but as anatomical and common-sense 'facts' known to the dissectionist and artist, and simply reminiscent of the surfaces which surround them. But Lewis wishes to distinguish without a hint of compromise, his own complex position towards the function of our inner mental life from the formulations of time-philosophies. He may speak literally of physical organs and processes, but the core of his philosophy depends on how successfully he is able to restore a specific understanding of the processes of the unconscious self in the wake of a sustained attack upon the Bergsonian versions. Since "esse is percipi" forbids all entrails', and since Lewis's theoretical position is dependent upon a view of man's inner life which foregrounds the imaginative and creative functions of the unconscious mind, investing it with a vital part in our cognition of the external world, it is expedient that he should allow Berkeley to play the role of extremist. Lewis's own case, in appealing to the reason and sense of his reader, is made to occupy the position of moderation and plausibility by comparison:

...I think we should be justified in saying that by some analogical process the inside of an elm or a cedar, for example, could be said to be there, although it has never been perceived. When the food goes into the body we can feel it, of course, so that gives us back our own insides, even on the berkeleyan basis. 73

Another layer of 'common-sense' is in this way imposed upon the Berkeleyan structure and whilst Lewis is intent upon remaining faithful to its spirit as a 'surface-philosophy',^{he}_Λ cannot accept many of its fundamental assumptions in the interests of his own world-view.

Berkeley's opposition to the idea of a world of 'things' or 'matter' as distinct from the appearances of those things to us does not accurately characterize Lewis's attitude. Naturally hostile to 'matter' as undifferentiated mass, Lewis must nevertheless be able to distinguish differences between 'things'. This is not incompatible with Berkeley's view, but Lewis tends to favour a variant notion of the Kantian 'thing-in-itself' which serves to represent the true nature of what he takes to be reality, and which is non-material; but whilst for Kant, this will remain unknowable, for Lewis it can be approached through the transformations effected by the artist. Thus, to recall the mentalist matrix used by Lewis, comprising the strictly 'unreal' worlds of Berkeley versus Bergson, it is the artist's 'concrete' armchair that achieves the most profound degree of reality, and the scientist's molecular or 'abstract' version^{that}_Λ is the least real⁷⁴. The 'thing-in-itself' does therefore exist independently of appearance for Lewis, but it does not approximate to the will of Schopenhauer, nor to the élan vital of Bergson, nor to the transcendental idealism of Kant; and it is not represented by Locke's unreachable mass, or matter. It is related to the creative powers of artistic expression, a 'concrete', perceptual, but an emphatically un-mystical magic by which the 'supernatural sources and potentialities of our existence' are tapped⁷⁵. The intense activity

of the artist is paralleled for Lewis on an 'everyday' basis simply by the act of perception, which is intellectually creative and is able to organize, transform and concretize forms from a constant stream of sense-impressions:

To make things endure (to make something solid, relatively indestructible, like a pyramid) is of course, ... a sort of magic, and a more difficult one, than to make things vanish, change and disintegrate... Of these opposite functions of magic we daily perform one, in our sense-perception activity, better than magic could. This function we justly call 'creativity': ...The objects of our perception, with their mystifying independence and air of self-sufficiency ... are far more uncanny than the unity we experience in our subjective experience. These strange things, that stand out against a background of mystery, with their air of being eternal, and which really appear to be 'caused' by nothing that we can hold and fix, and from which we can see them being actually produced, ... are the finished product of our perceptive faculty... of the organizing activity of our minds. When we say we see them, in reality what we perceive is not the direct datum of sensation, but an elaborate and sophisticated entity... 76

Such entities for Lewis are created in the mind rather than passively seen, and cannot therefore be said to exist independently of it, which is in substantial agreement with Berkeley's formulation.

It is important to note that Berkeley rejects the absolute existence of 'things' or 'matter', but I wish to suggest that Lewis, in accordance with his stress on the physicality of the world, his 'open-air proofs' and his insistence on dealing with 'what is directly in front of all our eyes' and in his subsequent need to re-affirm the independence and solidity of his object in the absence of the Berkeleyan controlling deity, successfully maintains the concept of 'things' as a consequence of his aesthetic beliefs. In short, Lewis's idea of creativity has the concretizing force of Berkeley's God, and the practice of art enables an approach to a kind of noumenal reality

that is signally represented in the 'everyday' phenomenal object of perception or even more closely in the art-object. 'Phenomenal' for Lewis is still clearly an intellectually subjective and mind-dependent concept; the term, 'concept' must be emphasized for him, since in speaking of a 'concept' of the phenomenal world, the Berkeleyan denial of matter is retained. But the meaning of phenomenal is still for Lewis heavily dependent on that early Platonic distinction between the sense-appearance of an object in contrast with the 'real' object as apprehended by the intellect. As his position finally rests with the mentalism of Berkeley, Lewis is left with the apparent difficulty of reconciling the Classical model of 'common-sense' reality with the 'subjective idealism' of Berkeley, and with affirming his stance as a 'realist'.

However, as Lewis's view of perception is constructed around the operations of both the conscious and unconscious mind, which cohere in a mutually understood notion or idea of a 'common-sense' world where an independent world of things is the strongest impression received, it is perfectly acceptable to Lewis that he should maintain the seemingly contradictory stance that the physical world is both real (in the Classical sense) and unreal (in the Berkeleyan formulation) at one and the same time. In common-sense parlance, it is real, whilst philosophically it is manifestly unreal, in the same way he makes the distinction between nature as being sensationally 'real' and perceptually 'unreal'. This is thus not seen to be a problem for Lewis, whose claim to support a vivid realism and the kind of 'subjective idealism' found in Berkeley was not automatically to be

regarded as a priori incompatible with it; there would be no hesitation on the part of Lewis in accepting his characterization of perceptual reality as 'consistent seeming' and sensational appearance as 'mere seeming'⁷⁷, but to this Berkleyan construction of 'common-sense' perception, Lewis adds another view of the 'real' which brings into play the transforming power of art occupying the place of Berkeley's God.

What must be emphasized at every point is that the physical world is solid and dead, never animated or infested with a false sense of 'time'. This is what truly threatens Lewis's aesthetically conceived version of metaphysics. In his close concern for Berkeley's philosophy, Lewis was aware that his would be termed 'idealist'. This was of much less concern to him than what he identified as the modern tendency towards 'unanimity' that persisted in the merging of 'realism' and 'idealism', an impulse implicitly contained along with the 'common worship of Time and Change', and which Lewis traces to the example of Kant:

When Kant was woken from his 'dogmatic slumber' he proceeded to invent what he called 'criticism,' and since the main characteristic of that slumber was that it was 'dogmatic,' his 'criticism' was in the nature of things an undogmatical gesture. He became the greatest of all 'mediators' of the modern age... It is... highly questionable if this particular 'critical' gesture of Kant's was such a blessing... or even... so undogmatical: for an orthodoxy of a critical order, founded in the 'meeting of extremes,' has now become a dogma. 78

It would probably have been better, Lewis concludes, if Kant had not been woken from his slumberings after all, since in his view the problems he identifies as a consequence of contemporary chronologism are directly attributable to Kant's 'trick' of philosophical and

critical 'mediation'.

In postulating what I suggest is an essentially three-fold formulation of reality utilizing received distinctions between conscious perception, unconscious or motor-sensation and creative (imaginative, artistic) categorizations, Lewis has gone far beyond what Berkeley intended. In so far as the third category is concerned, I would argue that, despite Lewis's resistance to the Kantian systematization that he places at the root of crucial aspects of the time-philosophy, there are specific areas of Lewis's own thought that reveal deeply Kantian influences, both in metaphysics and aesthetics.

In Time and Western Man, the discussion devoted to Kant is cursory compared to the amount of space Lewis devotes to the 'space-timeists' and direct followers of Bergson. In respect of what there is, much of it is negative, and as indicated above, Kant is seen to play a major role in the process of philosophical unanimity that characterizes the time-cult itself. Lewis wants, and needs, clear distinctions between positions, whatever terms are used to describe them, so that chronologism may be easily identified by its characteristic elements and judged on its demerits. So it is for the mediating role, surely not for his critical systematization and clarification, that Kant is censured. There was no sensible justification for Lewis to include Kant in the opposing Bergsonian camp in the manner that was deemed appropriate to Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, who were nevertheless both thinkers whom he admired. If Kant's ideas were not seen by Lewis as destructive in the same way as the views of other precursors, there

were aspects which he felt were drawn upon and exploited by time-philosophers in pursuit of their analyses. According to Lewis, Samuel Alexander's principle of the 'emergent quality' from whence all life - including mind - is organically 'grown', owes its inception to Kant:

It is produced by the same manipulation of Kant's idea of 'intensive quality,' which is at the bottom of Bergson's conception of time - a use, it is hardly necessary to say, to which Kant did not anticipate its being put. 79

Although Lewis acquits Kant of blame in the matter, it is a central issue if Bergson's conception of time is attributed to a Kantian source.

The terms 'extensive' and 'intensive', in the context of Alexander's doctrine of emergence, may be taken to denote a general quality which either allows divisibility into spatial parts (extensive), or it does not (intensive). The application of the latter term does have relevance to the notion of a one-substance universe in which spatial divisions do not occur, or if they seem to occur, are manifestly false⁸⁰. Such is the 'timeist' position for Lewis, and it would appear to accord with Kant's own characterization of the 'schema of quality', which is

the synthesis of sensation or perception with the representation of time; it is the filling of time. 81

It is the interpretation of Kant's terminology to which Lewis objects; the 'filling of time' with actions or thoughts by man is a common-sense formulation, but the pumping of dead, immobile objects with the effects of time is a travesty of the plain-man's view. Indeed, Kant's notion of the value and function of time would have

found favour with Lewis: it is, Kant writes, 'nothing but the form of inner sense' nor can it be a 'determination of outer appearances; it has to do neither with shape nor position, but with the relation of representations in our inner state'⁸². Time, for Kant, is only the mediatory 'condition of outer appearances', and denies any claim that is made for time as a form of 'absolute reality', since it is 'nothing'. The chronologists' borrowings from Kant are strictly selective; although the concept of 'intensive quality' may be used in support of their ideas, an absolutist interpretation of the function of time must be substituted for Kant's valuation.

In relation to Berkeley's version of the 'common-sense' tradition, we find that Lewis was obliged to make quite wholesale readjustments of emphasis and content before it could be said to approximate to his own view. If Berkeley's philosophy, despite its stress on the 'concrete', represents a too-theological extreme for Lewis, then Kant may be placed in the opposite position. I would suggest that there are some direct correspondences between Lewis's common-sense world and Kant's empirical realism that are not revealed in a parallel comparison with Berkeley's philosophy.

Kant's concept of space is seen by Lewis as 'about identical with the popular or "common-sense" view'; it is as instinctive to man as the sensuous space inhabited by animals, 'installed at the very centre of our perceptive faculty', and is independent of the content which it supports. The empty space of man thus described, a place of distinct objects, is Lewis's, and is contrasted with the interpenetrating,

mental, inner world of direct sensation that comprises the space that creatures occupy: Bergson's world of durée. Both space and time, for Kant, are not included as concepts or categories⁸³, but are both forms of intuition. Time, which is the form of our inner senses and states of mind for Kant, is elevated by Bergson: space, that which Kant characterizes as the intuition, or form of our outer sense, is the realm of the external appearances of the world, of objective things, and is celebrated by Lewis. The mediation of Kant between these forms of intuition would not have found favour with Lewis, especially in view of Benda's assessment that Kant, like Bergson, tended to subordinate space to time⁸⁴. However Kant, in stressing the intuitive function within a rationalized systematization of space, to the extent that he hails the imagination as the intermediary between the functions of sense-perception and reason, provides Lewis with a solid philosophical model for his own interest in the intellectual control of the inner senses and creative impulses.

If Kant's philosophy is to be categorized in relation to the traditions of thought which preceded and followed it, it is useful to refer to the dual strands of empiricist realism and transcendental idealism which inform its procedures⁸⁵. In relation to Lewis, this classification helps to bring into view the complex strands of continental and British empirical thought which had been absorbed into his philosophy, and enables a clearer consideration of what may be regarded consequently as uniquely 'Lewisian'. Lewis would have had no basic quarrel with Kant's basically empirical formulation of the phenomenal world; in pointing out that the 'real' for Kant was that

which related only to us⁸⁶, contrasted with the fundamentality to the time-philosopher of space-time (with the emphasis, of course on the latter), Lewis was stating, in another format, his own beliefs. If the notion of 'real' at all is to be considered, he reflects, it has to be that which we can 'immediately know and of which we have some experience'⁸⁷.

Berkeley's philosophy is more congenial to Lewis than Kant's in respect of his adherence to his artist's world of solid objects, but the phenomenalism which was seen to be a necessary consequence of Berkeley's vision - a kind of Berkeley without God - could not support a philosophy that placed an emphasis on a reality which is projected beyond the immediate appearances of those objects. Lewis's idealism cannot be designated as 'transcendental' as defined by Kant⁸⁸, not because it stresses the concreteness of the external world, but in the way it assumes a connecting link, or two-way process of communication between types of phenomenal and noumenal worlds. The appearances of the external world, although ultimately subject to mind, are for Lewis the base materials out of which, subject to the transformations made in the creative process, the noumenal world may be approached. The relief that art offers for Schopenhauer, and the aesthetic justification of Nietzsche could not in any sense be ratified by Kant, who considered that aesthetic experience, (primarily of nature) does not supply a route to a transcendent world, but allows us only to consider the possibility of such a world⁸⁹.

Lewis is indebted to Kant for the systematization of the

'thing-in-itself', and the notion, contrary to the protestations of the time-philosophers, that in order for change to be possible, an unchanging substance must, a priori, be required⁹⁰. In the place of Kant's 'thing-in-itself' stands the 'vortex' for Lewis: they are schematically related notions, although their wider philosophical ramifications are remote, and the mirror images are reversed; Kant's noumenal world stands outside, or beyond phenomenal experience whilst the vortex is the still centre of the flux. The vortex, which is Lewis's noumenon, and is foreshadowed in the disembodied not-self, is similarly independent of time but is considered to be parallel to the empty, isolated space of common-sense, and true to the notion of an essential void, which must contain neither space nor time. It gives as much order to Lewis's intuitive account of creativity as Kant's systematic and transcendental method imposes an order upon an essentially intuitive account of morality. The outcome in each case accurately reflects the interests of the originator.

A schematic rendering, or summary of the main philosophical principles which emerge from Time and Western Man demonstrates the force of this point. If we seek to represent Lewis's three-fold notion of reality as a structure comprising two concentric circles, the second superimposed upon the first, and both sharing an infinite core, it is possible to identify the relationships between each layer in the hierarchy, for Lewis's philosophy assumes the possibility of interactive processes between the intellect, intuition and creativity. The band which forms the lower circle represents Time, the flux, the durée of Bergson, and the scientific, atomistic, interpenetrative mass

of Alexander and Whitehead, the evolutionist world-as-history of Spengler, and Nietzsche's cult of Dionysus. It is also equivalent to the will of Schopenhauer, the animal world of sensation, instinct and raw intuition. As the realm of the unconscious, it is replete with image and illusion, and the unreality of a dream-world. Yet the deepest stirrings of the creative urge originate in the flux, as Lewis is ready to acknowledge, but must await the transforming power of man's intellect in order that these might be concretized into art.

The second band of the structure, superimposed upon the first, is Space; Lewis does not seek to falsely isolate Time from Space, but wishes to claim theoretical priority for the latter in the face of undue and extreme contemporary stress on the former.

'Space-Timeists', as Lewis notes, should really have their terms reversed, since this would more accurately reflect that bias. Space therefore is not exclusive, but should be perceived as a 'superior' overlay to Time; it absorbs sensation, intuition and the unconscious, but subjects the elements of the flux to the controlling influence of intellect and the conscious mind. The equation of sensation and perception cements the notion of 'self' as a conscious, thinking, individual being, and objects, which are mere illusions and mirror-images as present to the unconscious, are rendered as concrete objects of perception in, and by the mind. Objects are still 'unreal' in the Berkeleyan sense, but are solid and tangible. The operations of the creative mind thus result in our external world of surfaces, outlines and separate things.

If the conscious mind plucks the images sensed by the unconscious out of the 'stream' and isolates them by rendering as concrete objects, then the artist, for Lewis, is empowered to immortalize them. The core of this tripartite structure is represented by the vortex itself, the still centre that alone lays claim to the 'real', which allows the object to be plucked from the confines of the unconscious, to transcend the limitations of the conscious life, and assume an independent status. We are able to construct therefore, a 'picture' of Lewis's philosophy that places realism as its ultimate goal, but assumes an idealist emphasis on mind or intellect as the essential creative enabling force. The art-object, as the symbol of this process, suffices to indicate the reality which is approached as a consequence of an essentially intellectual activity, shaping and transforming the raw materials originally presented in the region of flux. The vortex is thus the one concept which encompasses the complementary elements of Lewis's pragmatic thought-god, the not-self, Kant's noumenal reality and Schopenhauer's Nirvana, and is able to provide a schematized, philosophically-coherent formulation of the notion of an aesthetic justification of the universe that Nietzsche had somewhat vaguely envisaged.

This outline of Lewis's philosophy does run counter to the method of presentation in Time and Western Man, but serves two main functions. One of these is that it clearly reveals a coherence of thought that may have otherwise have been overlooked. In the text, the vortex has been all but named by Lewis as the guiding principle of his

philosophy; in a comment at the close of his exposition he reiterates the purpose of the work:

It has not been with a view to promoting any theory of my own, however, that I undertook the writing of this essay, but only to supply a fairly detailed analysis of the prevalent time-doctrine. To specify further or even to outline the particular beliefs that are explicit in my criticism would require another book. That I propose soon to publish. But, as far as this particular critical task is concerned, I now have completed it. 91

Lewis did not publish another detailed philosophical study with the purpose and scale of Time and Western Man, but many of the ideas expressed here had surfaced prior to this study in his critical writings and commentaries on art. I suggest that the content and purpose of Lewis's philosophy becomes much more intelligible if one always bears in mind his prior motives. In tracing through the various strands of Lewis's philosophy in the context of the major systems of thought which have informed and shaped it, one 'interest' remains paramount, and has determined which ideas should be censured, and which might lend a measure of support to the formulation of his theoretical scheme. At no time does Lewis accept propositions which could invalidate or compromise his world view in favour of that which would be deemed alien to the interests of the visual artist. If this much is clear, it is more difficult to pinpoint precisely what Lewis's aesthetically-defined metaphysics - if indeed 'metaphysics' is the correct term - amounts to. This is largely due to the method employed in Time and Western Man, reminiscent of an Hegelian thesis-antithesis progression which necessitates the rehearsal of opposing ideas and objections which do not always come from Lewis himself. He draws upon many different sources for his evidence, and may on occasion use the

same source in a different, sometimes contradictory manner. This ambivalence stems from these and other reasons, and a clear summary of the basic ideas is necessary here: my Chapter 6, on Vorticism, elaborates on the roots and purpose of Lewis's idiosyncratic methodology in identifying a specific 'logic of contradictions'. But the second function of my schematized version of Lewis's philosophical ideas works towards establishing the point that principally, a reading of Time and Western Man is partial if a parallel study of Lewis's aesthetic principles - derived from practice - is not made. If, as I argue, the philosophical work is in essence, an exploration of the consequences of adopting the essential characteristics of the vortex as the anchoring point of a world-view in the context of metaphysics, then its full meaning is obscured if this concept is de-centralized.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

1. TWM, p.38.
2. See Tomlin's essay, 'The Philosophical Influences', in Wyndham Lewis: A Reevaluation, edited by Meyers, op cit., pp.29-46. A longer study by Tomlin of Lewis's philosophy in the context of other writings is to be found in the pamphlet, Wyndham Lewis, Writers and their Work no.64 (London, 1955). In 'Reflections on "Time and Western Man"', in Agenda (pp.97-108), Tomlin examines the critical dimensions of Lewis's work, which he regards as the key to his whole oeuvre, in the context of the intellectual climate of his day.
3. ABR, p.391.
4. *ibid.*
5. 'Bad art' for Lewis would always emerge from practices which were allied to elements of chronological thinking. Hence Futurism, which directly espoused the tenets of Bergsonism, was already doomed. Similarly, the later Surrealist movement, dedicated to automatism, primitivism and the 'naïf', and to plumbing the depths of dreams and the unconscious for its artistic imagery, could never approach the coolness and external delineation of Classicism for Lewis. In response to Surrealism (or 'Super-Realism' as it was known), he coined the term, 'Super-Naturism' which was intended to oppose the employment of what he regarded as random, sub-conscious and indulgent imagery in art, preferring to lay emphasis on the intellectual transformations of the external world by the artist. See the essay, 'Super-nature versus Super-real' (WLA, pp.11-64).
6. A review by David Corbett of SueEllen Campbell's book, The Enemy Opposite: the Outlaw Criticism of Wyndham Lewis (1988) suggests an attempt to 'oversystemize' Lewis's criticism with regard to the 'Enemy' persona and Time and Western Man. Corbett argues that Lewis's 'discontinuities' should be allowed and recognised, as part of his intellectual development and conscious critical strategy. In relation to my study, and in the way in which I suggest Lewis's Vorticist aesthetics had been formulated and expressed (see Chapter 6), this is agreed. It is also perhaps necessary to add to this point the statement that methods should not be confused with aims with regard to Lewis, and that whilst he revels in surface 'discontinuities', his basic concerns as a practising artist and theoretician are consistently pursued. (See David Corbett, Enemy News 27, Winter 1988, pp.22-23).
7. TWM, p.6.
8. *ibid.*
9. See TWM, p.417: 'The most characteristic part of the theory is

where the 'sensus' is a stick seen partly in water, and so appearing bent. According to this theory it, of course, is bent.

...For the bent stick is an example of a sort of frozen movement.'

10. TWM, p.418.
11. The characterization of the 'innocent eye' which Lewis traces to Descartes, is brought to bear by time-philosophers in the 'Theory of Sensa'; it is, argues Lewis, 'of the nature of the cartesian return to naked, direct, vision. It implies to some extent the tabula rasa. It is temperamentally, and in time, still more nearly affiliated with Bergson's plunge into the sensational flux, or with Alexander's more recent bergsonian doctrine of "emergence"' (TWM, p.413). It is precisely this innocence which Lewis challenges.
12. TWM, p.373.
13. TWM, p.418.
14. TWM, pp.408-409.
15. This is Alexander's doctrine of 'event-fact', '...a sort of flock of spatial apparitions made up of pure instantaneous sensations, enclosed in a temporal pen or corral' (TWM, p.429). Lewis's example is from Russell's 'time-picture' of a wallpaper that is a different entity, not only from year to year, but in the smallest possible unit of time to the extent that it is never fixed.
16. See TWM, p.413, p.420.
17. TWM, p.212.
18. TWM, p.478.
19. See TWM, p.433.
20. Russell, Our Knowledge of the External World (1914). Second revised edition of 1926, sixth impression (London, 1972). Lecture IV, p.107.
21. *ibid.*
22. See TWM, p.423.
23. This passage from Berkeley is quoted by Lewis in TWM, p.473. In A.C. Fraser's edition (The Works of George Berkeley, 4 volumes Oxford, 1901) the passage reads, '...out of the minds or thinking things' (Of the Principles of Human Knowledge, I, 259) where Lewis has 'of thinking things'. There are some additional minor errors in transcription. In Fraser, Berkeley has emphasized the word, 'absolute' (which Lewis does not) and the emphasis on

'unthinking things' and 'thinking things' is Lewis's here. A few pages later, Lewis does explicitly acknowledge Berkeley's emphasis on the term, 'absolute', as he wishes to draw attention to it in the context of his own argument (see TWM, p.478).

24. TWM, p.478.
25. TWM, p.413.
26. TWM, p.170.
27. TWM, p.480.
28. Lewis himself, in a discussion of Whitehead, fields the idea from a detractor's point of view that this is his primary concern, and is aware that objections will be raised regarding his bias; his critic might claim, for example, that 'the machinery of the physicist is one thing, and the predilection of the artist for concrete objects is another, and that in my criticism it is only that predilection that is at stake' (TWM, p.204). Lewis cannot seriously claim to refute this charge comprehensively, since his concern for physical science amongst the philosophical interests he evinces are inspired by his wish to retain the 'concrete object', an artistic predilection, certainly, but it is also an intellectual choice. Instead, he goes on the attack; Whitehead, who is 'all for the poets and the artists' appears to have brought into the 'scientific' debate precisely the interests for which Lewis anticipates censure.
29. TWM, p.480.
30. TWM, p.381.
31. TWM, p.430.
32. See the extended discussion of Russell's ideas in TWM, pp.427 ff.
33. See TWM, p.406: 'We have shown the attack upon the Subject to be one of the ultimate phases of that universal attack upon "Substance," and upon the common-sense of the Schoolmen, or, behind that rationalist body of dogma, upon the beliefs of the Classical World'.

The fanaticism of the time-cult is thus outlined by Lewis: 'The disintegration of the world-picture of "common-sense" effected by the introduction of private and subjective time-systems, by the breaking up of the composite space of the assembled senses into an independent space of touch, a space of sight, a visceral space, and so forth: the conversion of "the thing" into a series of discrete apparitions - all this comprehensive and meticulous attack upon the very basis of "common-sense" (the term used in philosophy for the ordered picture of the classic world, and equally the instinctive picture we inherit from untold

generations of men) is as a spectacle impressive at first, no doubt, but it does not seem to bear the mark of a truth-telling or veridical passion, so much as a romantic and fanatical impulse of some description' (TWM, p.426).

34. TWM, p.320.
35. TWM, p.362.
36. See TWM, p.345: 'Professor Watson represents the most powerful movement of extreme positivism in american psychology to-day. And this movement is deeply influencing english work in the same field and in philosophy: Mr. Bertrand Russell being its most distinguished adherent, withholding his assent only on one capital point, that of the "image."'
37. Whatever world-concepts one supports, Lewis observes, the effects that we see every day are not altered; his theories of dead matter and the organic version give 'in all important respects identical results... From that point of view the whole argument is much ado about nothing. Where the great change occurs, or where is it sought to make it occur, is in our heads, only. It is our attitude to the external world that it is proposed to modify, not the external world itself, of 'materialist' practice, for that is impossible.' What is vitally at stake for Lewis is in the values or attitudes adopted, which depends on individual bias: 'It is art or metaphysics that is in question, rather than fact or natural science' (TWM, pp.426-427).
38. TWM, p.433.
39. Leibniz clearly explains the concept of the monad in The Monadology (1714), translated by Robert Latta (Oxford, 1898). 'The Monad...is nothing but a simple substance, which enters into compounds. By "simple" is meant "without parts"' (p.217). Lewis is inclined to read 'self' for monad, where Leibniz himself has 'substance'.
40. In the 'Introduction' to the Catalogue of the Tate Gallery Exhibition in July-August 1956, Lewis had written: 'I had at all times the desire to project a race of visually logical beings; and this I believe I attained in the constructions named Tank in the Clinic (PLATE II) and The Mud Clinic (PLATE III). Such pictures as The Stations of the Dead (PLATE IV) and even the Surrender of Barcelona (PLATE V) are an extension of this intention. Whether as a banshee, a strutting soldier, or the invalid inhabitant of a Mud Clinic, my creatures of that kind served a visual purpose. They were not created as we create characters in a book, but with some purely visual end in view. If I had given them a name it would probably have been monads' (WLOA, pp.452-453).
41. The full title of the essay to which Lewis refers reads: 'Considerations sur les Principes de Vie et sur les Natures

plastiques (Histoire des Ouvrages des Savants, 1705).'

42. TWM, p.323.
43. In The Monadology, Leibniz writes: '9. Indeed, each Monad must be different from every other. For in nature there are never two beings which are perfectly alike and in which it is not possible to find an internal difference, or at least a difference founded upon an intrinsic quality.' (op cit., p.222).
44. 'Thus the organic body of each living being is a kind of divine machine or natural automaton, which infinitely surpasses all artificial automata' (Leibniz, op cit., p.254).
45. TWM, p.309.
46. '62. ...each created Monad represents the whole universe...
63. ...Now this body of a living being or of an animal is always organic; for, as every Monad is, in its own way, a mirror of the universe, and as the universe is ruled according to a perfect order, there must also be order in that which represents it, i.e. in the perceptions of the soul, and consequently there must be order in the body, through which the universe is represented in the soul' (Leibniz, op cit., p.253). Although Lewis would resist the organicism of Leibniz, and he would put intellect in the place of 'soul', the characterization of man's animal nature was familiar to him.
47. Leibniz, op cit., p.266.
48. Leibniz, op cit., p.233.
49. Leibniz, op cit., p.219.
50. TWM, p.396.
51. See TWM, p.400 and accompanying discussion.
52. TWM, p.463.
53. TWM, p.15.
54. TWM, p.385.
55. TWM, pp.402-403.
56. TWM, p.397.
57. TWM, p.403.
58. TWM, p.404; Lewis is here quoting from the text of Edward Caird.
59. TWM, p.383.

60. TWM, p.480.
61. Leibniz, op cit., p.255.
62. TWM, p.394.
63. TWM, pp.394-395. The fugues of Bach and the intellectualism of Mozart are conspicuously more acceptable to Lewis's model of a measured 'plastic' and structured art form in music than what he regarded as the unashamed emotionalism and abandon of German Romanticism, which he not only found impossible to reconcile with his own views, but was taken as a prime example of the effect of the time-cult on the arts.
64. TWM, p.271.
65. A.J. Ayer is here commenting in an editorial foreword to G.J. Warnock's study, Berkeley (Harmondsworth, 1953).
66. Berkeley's famous formulation is 'percipi or percipere'; from Of the Principles of Human Knowledge (in Fraser's edition, I, Philosophical Works, 1705-21).
67. Berkeley, op cit., I, p.260. The editor adds a note to this passage: '1. "existing unperceived," i.e. existing without being realised in any living percipient existence - existing in a totally abstract existence, whatever that can mean'.
68. See TWM, p.170.
69. TWM, p.211.
70. Berkeley makes a distinction similar to that of Lewis's 'sensation' and 'perception'. Berkeley's category of 'sensible things', are those things which are perceived by the senses, but of which nothing is inferred. It is nonsense for him, explains Warnock (op cit., p.158), to say the senses infer; it is only people who infer. This would not be disputed by Lewis.
71. 'When in broad daylight I open my eyes', Berkeley reminds us, 'it is not in my power to choose whether I shall see or no, or to determine what particular objects shall present themselves to my view' (Berkeley, op cit., p.273), and he distinguishes between our own illusions, which are 'unreal' and the ideas of God, which have reality: 'The ideas imprinted on the Senses by the Author of nature are called real things: and those excited in the imagination, being less regular, vivid, and constant, are more properly termed ideas or images of things, which they copy and represent' (Berkeley, op cit., pp.274-275). For Lewis, the operations of art approximate to the functions of Berkeley's God, and the time-philosophies are those which hold sway over the images which for Berkeley are 'excited in the imagination'.
72. TWM, p.480.

73. *ibid.*
74. TWM, p.472.
75. TWM, p.199.
76. TWM, pp.372-373.
77. The distinction between 'consistent' and 'mere' seeming is made by Warnock, *op cit.*, p.181.
78. TWM, pp.251-252.
79. TWM, pp.440-441.
80. In this discussion, Lewis considers the Kantian phrase, 'intensive quality' as a direct equivalent to Alexander's 'emergent quality': 'This new, intensive quality, is the "meaning," however, of that^o which it is not a quantitative summation, but from which it has mysteriously "emerged" into a higher plane of things, leaving the group behind it on the lower level, in what seems a rather undemocratic way...' it has "emerged" in more and more complex "quality," and more and more intense meaning... according to this system, things will probably go on "emerging" and "evolving.'" (TWM, p.441).
81. From the 'Schematism' of Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (1781), translated by Norman Kemp Smith (London, 1929, reprinted 1963), p.185.
82. Kant, 'Transcendental Aesthetic', *op cit.*, p.77.
83. The reasons for Kant's naming of space and time, not as categories, but as intuitions, are clearly set out in Roger Scruton, Kant (Oxford, 1982), pp.28-31.
84. Julien Benda, in The Living Thoughts of Kant (London, 1942), writes that 'Kant, in his Transcendental Logic, sets up a difference between time and space, and even a certain subordination of the latter to the former' (p.7). A more detailed analysis of Kant's views on this matter can be found in C.B. Garnett, The Kantian Philosophy of Space (New York, 1939).
85. See the discussion in Kant by Stephan Körner (1955), reprinted (Harmondsworth, 1972), p.93.
86. See TWM, p.467.
87. TWM, p.465.
88. The terms, 'transcendent' and 'transcendental' are carefully distinguished and defined by Kant at length. For the purposes of this discussion, it is sufficient perhaps to draw attention to the general definition that 'transcendent' refers to principles which tend to transgress the limits of possible experience, and

that the 'transcendental' is thereby that which is independent of empirical principles. Neither definition would characterize Lewis's view. See Kant, 'Transcendental Dialectic', op cit., pp.298-299. M. Stockhammer's Kant Dictionary (New York, 1972) is useful in this context, but should be compared with Kant's own text to avoid over-simplification.

89. See Scruton, 'The Third Critique', op cit., pp.79-80.
90. 'Kant' Scruton observes, 'argues that all explanation of change requires the postulation of an unchanging substance, and uses this as proof of the validity of a fundamental "law of conservation" in science' (op cit., pp.37-38).
91. TWM, p.480-481.

PART II

ART THEORY AND THE CULT OF TIME

CHAPTER 5

OPPOSING FORCES: THE FOUNDATIONS OF AN AESTHETIC

If the development and statement of Lewis's philosophy in Time and Western Man can be traced to certain fundamental beliefs about the nature and function of the visual arts in an intellectual culture, an examination of the foundations and sources of those beliefs becomes a pressing priority. This is not solely an historical task in the sense of gauging or interpreting the perceived 'causes' which are said to lead to a determining influence of one discipline upon another, taking into account the evidence at hand which terminates at 1927 and the publication of Lewis's philosophical work, discussed in Part I of this thesis. It is equally important to emphasize the retrospective framework of much of Lewis's later writings on art and aesthetics, the basic elements of which had been initially measured in Time and Western Man against types of philosophical analysis, and which had proved to be confirmed and sustained by the juxtaposition.

Lewis's retrospective views of his earlier activities and statements on art are confidently affirmed, I would suggest, in view of the philosophical stance which was worked out in detail by 1927. No other in-depth study of philosophy was to follow, but the critique of the time-philosophy is to be found in various forms, expressed in Lewis's writings and meditations on art. Having found a congenial philosophical perspective, Lewis put it explicitly to work in the service of art and aesthetics, a theoretical perspective which could be brought to bear as an intellectually coherent defence against tendencies in art which he defined as universally destructive and personally abhorrent.

Therefore, to effect some kind of an historical closure at 1927 would be to distort the lifelong depth of Lewis's concerns about his profession and its practice, and it is evident that much insight is to be gained by considering writings which continued the aesthetics-philosophy dialogue after the publication of Time and Western Man, with Lewis refining his ideas in relation to a philosophical stance from which he never departed. It is important to stress however, that as modern art, and the values attached to it changed around him, his own beliefs did not remain static; but once convinced at an early stage of the evils of Bergsonism in all its recognisable cultural, aesthetic and philosophical ramifications, any manifestation in art that would appear to be based, wittingly or unwittingly, on chronological precepts, was to be comprehensively resisted by Lewis. This included so-called progressive or radical forms of modern art that depended on notions which could be explicitly equated with the

time-cult, such as 'primitivism' and associated ideas that purported to 'return' man to a primal, pre-rational state, free of the domination of rationality and intellect.

I would therefore argue in the light of this that the foundations of this counter-attack on irrationalism were already laid prior to Vorticism in respect of Lewis's experiences as a young artist in England at the turn of the century. These were subsequently visually and intellectually articulated in a Vorticist aesthetic which struggled to define itself in opposition to Futurist and Cubist interests, to be systematized in the critical writings of the 1920s and beyond.

II.5.i Legacies of Romanticism

The analysis of the 'Romantic mind' in Book I of Time and Western Man is a fundamental reference point for any undertaking which attempts to outline and assess early influences on the development of Lewis's aesthetic beliefs, and to place those beliefs in the later context of his declared philosophical 'system'. 'Romance', as Lewis defines it, in its many forms, represents in essence the types of cultural, social and artistic expression which are equivalent to, and paralleled by, the time-philosophy of Bergson and his followers. These are the 'concrete manifestations of the time-mind', the outward effects of an underlying system of thought which directs and sustains certain kinds of artistic practice. The importance of Lewis's attitude to 'Romance'

becomes clear if we consider his characteristic declaration that the outward effects of the time-cult in the arts are what drew him first to examine the possible theoretical underpinnings; that his analysis and questioning of philosophical precepts followed hard upon a formulation of aesthetic objections to those effects.

The foundations of such objections in Lewis's case rest on an intimate acquaintance with the traditions and attitudes that he attacks. As I have outlined in Part I of this thesis, Lewis's early involvement with the ideas of Bergson, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche reveal profound intellectual and emotional debts that are never entirely obscured by vehement repudiation. In terms of attitude, style, temperament and cast of mind, the romantic legacy that is deemed by Lewis to embrace the precursors of the time-philosophy is equally relevant to him. One who specifically recognizes and perpetuates a classical-versus-romantic dichotomy in whatever form, does not operate independently of the traditions he juxtaposes; on the contrary, Lewis's detailed concern with the composition of the romantic mind and attitudes which are associated with it is accomplished in the light of close personal knowledge and experience.

The period of travel in Europe, between 1902-1908, provides an historical context for any statement about the nature and extent of Lewis's residual romanticism. In his biography of Lewis, Jeffrey Meyers' account of Lewis's 'bohemian adventures'¹ testifies to the kind of company he relished, the café haunts frequented by earnest young artists and intellectuals; and Lewis's own letters and memoirs

recall the often hand-to-mouth existence that could cheerfully be borne by the young, but which is found to be rather less bearable - less 'romantic' - in later life². Augustus John, in recalling the acute paranoia of the young Lewis, and his habit of adopting various physical disguises, concluded that 'such behaviour could only be the desperate stratagems of an incurable Romantic in flight from himself!'³. This assessment by one close to Lewis is full of insight as to his character and temperament, but a clear distinction is to be made between the excesses of youthful behaviour, the carefree existence of the young, who would be bent on discovering the joys of travel and the stimulation of cosmopolitan society, and the conscious adoption of certain intellectual attitudes that are instrumental in formulating mature beliefs. Both these issues are relevant to Lewis, in view of the extent to which his emotional and intellectual development was most fully nurtured in the context of European social and cultural traditions.

'Romanticism', as a variously understood aesthetic tendency and a personally-worn icon, may have been emotionally, if not wholly intellectually embraced by Lewis at an early stage of his chosen career. However, in view of his associations with modern artists, intellectuals, and various avant-garde groups whilst abroad, and given that his studies had included attendance at Bergson's lectures at the Collège de France, Lewis would have been fully exposed to ways of thinking which were naturally predisposed to the aligning of certain types of artistic practice with the principles of sympathetic philosophical systems. Bergson's élan vital and the encouraged fusion

of 'art' with 'life' would have been too prominently advertised in the context of 'bohemian' romanticism to go unchallenged, or at least unremarked by Lewis.

In seeking a direct equation of the philosophy of Bergson and 'romance', given his own background, education and temperament, Lewis has to be most careful to define his terms, and to outline his own position as a result. In 'The Diabolical Principle', which continues the analysis of romanticism begun in 'The Revolutionary Simpleton', Lewis attempts to counter the kinds of charge succinctly characterized by John, that he is indeed a romantic 'in flight from himself':

...it has been objected that my own critical writing is full of storm and stress: that I am a counter-storm, merely, and that I do not set an example of Olympian calm to my romanticist adversaries.

That I have deliberately used, often, in my criticism, an incandescent rhetoric is true. But then, of necessity, rapidly executed polemical essays, directed against a tireless and innumerable people of termites, can hardly be conducted in any other way. The athenian draughts, at war with Sparta or Persia, did not provide a spectacle of hellenic grace and imperturbability, I think. Such an essay as Time and Western Man is not supposed to imitate in its form an attic temple. It is a sudden barrage of destructive criticism laid down about a spot where temples, it is hoped, may under its cover be erected.⁴

It is accepted that Lewis's method of undermining his opponents owes much to the spirit of that which he deplores; but this does raise certain difficulties of analysis for the reader, and problems of coherence for the author. What seems to emerge most strongly from this is that a clear differentiation between specific types of romantic temper is thereby made by Lewis himself. In the course of

identifying an oppositional duality of the 'classic' versus the 'romantic' mind, Lewis does not confine himself to an historically perceived Hellenistic culture, but presupposes a much wider definition of the 'classical' which approximates much more closely to his own methods and temperament.

For Lewis, the 'classical' is a universal attitude, and one which escapes the confines of historical categorization like that which is proposed by Spengler; it must be ahistorical, describing 'anything which is nobly defined and exact, as opposed to that which is fluid - of the Flux - without outline, romantically "dark," vague, "mysterious," stormy, uncertain'⁵. The terms 'noble', 'defined' and 'exact' which Lewis takes for his creed describe most accurately the Nietzschean characterization of the Apollonian origins of artistic creation that spring from the same source in Greek Tragedy, but which become subsumed for Nietzsche in the dark cult of Dionysus. The spiritual, philosophical and artistic followers of Dionysus are for Lewis those who oppose the plastic values of stability and definition, and who are the natural adherents of the time-philosophy and Dionysian 'romance'.

I would thus argue that, if Lewis's critical concerns and methods are to be accurately represented, it is especially useful to bear in mind the descriptive terminology of what we can regard as Lewis's essentially Apollonic romanticism. This phrase serves the function of foregrounding Lewis's concern with specific types of 'ahistorical' and 'classical' values which are necessary to the expression of his ideas,

and which reminds us too, of certain relevant details of biography, educational background, attitude and methods. Nor may the debt to precursors like Nietzsche and Schopenhauer be forgotten in analyses of Lewis's objections to the time-cult and its romantic concretization in the arts.

The attribution to Lewis of an Apollonic romanticism allows a clearly-drawn analysis of the essential elements of his case against the Dionysian-diabolical-Faustian effects of the time-cult, without sacrificing the complexities and subtleties of his argument. On a theoretical level, the romanticism that formed the backdrop to Lewis's experience referred strongly to continental models, thinkers and artists. But as a practising artist in England, the traditions and attitudes that most directly affected Lewis in pursuit of his profession stemmed from a more insular base: what he would have regarded as the 'flabbiness' of the arts at the turn of the century⁶ was manifested in English art as mediocrity, the result of the preponderance of sentimentalism and blind tradition, conservatism and dilettantism. The conditions prevailing upon the art market in England at the start of Lewis's career had been overwhelmingly influenced by the social, cultural and intellectual legacies bequeathed to the twentieth century by the arbiters of Victorian taste and aesthetics. Such dominant and serious figures as Ruskin, Morris, Carlyle and Arnold nevertheless loomed large for Lewis in relation to what he saw as the particularly cloying and popular blend of romantic nostalgia, fin de siècle decadence, 'snobbism' and above all, the stifling traditionalism that he recognised in contemporary academic

attitudes to art, represented in England by the Royal Academy. Combined, these elements became symptomatic of the underlying intellectual malaise which, as far as Lewis was concerned, had gratefully merged into timeist dogma in the first decades of the twentieth century.

The analogical equation of disparate historical, philosophical, social, artistic and cultural ideas and conditions by Lewis in order to arrive at a systematization of the theoretical and practical ramifications of the 'time-cult' appears idiosyncratic and untenable if the central unifying principle is marginalized. Lewis is concerned from first to last with the fate of art, and it is that concern which drives him to expose all possible manifestations of that which threatens it; Bergsonism provides the philosophical target, of which 'romance' is its wider cultural expression. Lewis is specific about the characteristics of the attendant baneful tendencies as revealed in the arts. In 'The Revolutionary Simpleton', 'some meanings of Romance' are explored; the main context from which the discussion is developed is not primarily European, but English. Lewis is concerned to trace the origins and character of 'romance' as it is manifest in the consciousness of the English public, to examine from his point of view the culture as a whole, to consider the role of traditional institutions like the Royal Academy and provision for the arts, the dilettante and 'moneyed' classes, self-styled avant-gardes, artistic and political 'revolutionaries', the 'low-brow' diversions of the man-in-the-street, and to illuminate the character of possible motives involved in the manipulation of a mass public mind by economic,

political, commercial and industrial interests.

For Lewis, the doctrine of 'What the Public Wants', a Bergsonian, vulgarized and commercial version of the Schopenhauerian will, had become a double-edged sword; mass persuasion and consumer power, congenitally hostile to the fine artist, restricted the means by which he could earn a living, and the odious spectacle of a mass mind represented at its basic level the pervasive effects of a philosophical dogma and an orthodoxy which allowed of no absolute distinctions between 'art' and 'life'. In both cases, art is attacked on the same front, materially and intellectually; professional artists would face the prospect of starving for their art, and the Bergsonian 'merging' process would soon ensure that the arts - and particularly visual art - as a distinct activity would be non-existent.

So the 'romantic', in Lewis's formulation, is as much an equivalent for the 'unreal' as Alexander's molecular armchair proves to be. It is not uncharacteristic that he should suggest an opposition between the 'romantic' and the 'real' would be likely to have greater explanatory force than the usual 'romantic-classical' dichotomy, since for him, the term 'classic' must be re-defined to include his own specialized concept of the 'real'. The only reality inherent in the romantic would be that of yesterday, the historical, or of tomorrow, not of the 'here and now', but of somewhere else.⁷ It would approximate to the Spenglerian 'homology principle', of a world-as-history, subject always to the periodic, the circular and notions of timelessness. The time-denying mind reveals a seemingly

contradictory romantic obsession which is nevertheless a vital identifying factor:

The profession of the 'timeless' doctrine...always seems to involve this contradiction: that he will be much more the slave of Time than anyone not so fanatically indoctrinated.⁸

The vagaries of changing fashion, too, whether in art movements or in ladies' clothes are likewise allied to the Spenglerian theories of periodicity:

An obsession with the temporal scale, a feverish regard for the niceties of fashion, a sick anxiety directed to questions of time and place (that is, of fashion and of milieu), appears to be the psychological concomitant of the possession of a time-theory that denies time its normal reality. The fashionable mind is par excellence the time-denying mind - that is the paradox.⁹

From this idea, Lewis is seen to develop the theoretical basis of his analysis of romantic culture in 'The Revolutionary Simpleton'. For the purposes of my thesis, in attempting to trace the aesthetic origins of Lewis's reaction to the time-cult, and in the context of my characterisation of his Apollonic romanticism, it is necessary to take into account the type of 'romantic' intellectual from which Lewis wished to distance himself, and why he found it essential to do so. In an aesthetic context, Lewis's nineteenth century precursors were perhaps most notably Ruskin, Morris and Arnold, in whose precepts and ideas early twentieth century English artists were inevitably schooled. In 'The Revolutionary Simpleton' one of the meanings of 'romance' for Lewis describes the 'dreamer', one who yearns nostalgically for lost eras, and who would wish to encourage present-day adoption of the values, ethics, aesthetics and morals of a past life¹⁰. Such a 'dreamer' was William Morris, and indeed Ruskin, his master; although Lewis had a far greater intellectual respect for

the latter, acknowledging his importance to English art and criticism¹¹, and sharing his devotion to the vision of the artist and his belief in an ultimate metaphysical function for art, there could be no mistake that their fundamental beliefs must inevitably prove to be incompatible.

The clear basis of that temperamental and aesthetic incompatibility, to be hardened later into a theoretical and philosophical response to a particular manifestation of the 'romantic', had emerged at an early stage in Lewis's artistic career. Before he left the Slade in 1901, Lewis, who was known as the 'best draughtsman' there since Augustus John¹², had already discovered that stylistically, morally, politically and socially, he was unable to tolerate as the basis for his own art, any version of aesthetics which was indebted to a rigid and fossilized academicism inherited directly or indirectly from the Royal Academy. This included that which he regarded as the equally stale academic impressionism of the Slade¹³, an art which depended on weak and utopian sentimental-romantic programmes of nostalgic medievalism and slavish devotion to opticality or 'nature', in the spirit of Ruskin and his followers¹⁴. The increasing tension between Lewis and those in authority at the Slade did not testify only to the extent of his fierce individualism and the imminent development of a distinctive hard-edged style, but it also reveals the stirrings of a revolt against certain 'romantic' attitudes and aesthetic beliefs transmitted and perpetuated through orthodox academic training establishments such as the Royal Academy and the Slade, which in his view remained essentially conservative in teaching methods and

attitudes, although originally conceived as an alternative to the official Academy salon.

Ruskin, as the first (Oxford) Professor of Fine Art at the Slade¹⁵, had exerted an enormous influence on the teaching methods of the school, originally founded in 1871 to counter the traditionalism of the Royal Academy of Arts. As the latter represented the English equivalent of the Paris Royal Academy of the period, its members were influenced by, but far less tightly bound to, the demands and strictures of hierarchical subject matter and history painting¹⁶ and the French methods of teaching drawing. Students who sought a French academic training began, not by drawing from 'life' in the first instance, but by copying from antique sculpture and plaster casts. However, the strong 'naturalist' line of tradition in landscape and portraiture had prevailed in English art through the Academy, and had remained unbroken by the formation of the Slade, but it latterly had become more aligned with naturalist-romantic models of inspiration and procedure than on neo-classical frames of reference. Ruskin's stress on the close observation and accurate, detailed rendering of natural objects in art was internalized by many Slade teachers and their pupils; notably, Henry Tonks and Frederick Brown, who were both on the teaching staff at the Slade during Lewis's studentship, who may be said to have owed their allegiance to Ruskin and the Pre-Raphaelites rather than to Courbet and Monet, and that this was the specifically English tradition which inspired their own 'reverence for nature'¹⁷. In relation to Ruskin, regarded perhaps as the most prominent aesthete of his age, the nature and extent of Lewis's reaction at

a formative point in his career indicates the prior importance of unsystematized but already deeply-held aesthetic beliefs.

Like Lewis was to do later, Ruskin had proposed a practical programme for art, but he imbued his aesthetic with an attendant moral, social and religious aspect that subordinated the 'truths' of the artist to the 'truths' of nature. The doctrinaire naturalism which emerged, along with the belief that an artist is a recorder, not a creator, of nature, would not have endeared itself to the young Lewis who, although ready to submit to the discipline of draughtmanship and design in order that his fertile talent might be given clear, powerful form, had perhaps already begun to gravitate towards an altogether different, but still romantically-inspired idea about the importance of art as a means of communication and a vehicle for the expression of complex, even philosophical ideas, coupled with the role of the individual and more particularly, the artist, as innovator, and essentially, an outsider. The image of a mysterious, cultured, and independent artist-bohemian which characterizes the familiar inclinations of a dyed-in-the-wool romantic could be fully exploited in the continental setting, and provided a model for the persona which Lewis could adopt and develop in the course of mounting his 'assault' on the English art establishment.

The artist might well be a prophet and teacher, as Ruskin envisaged, necessarily and closely involved with the theory and practice of his profession in connection with its wide-ranging human implications, but the fusion of art with social and economic life that Ruskin advocated,

and an underlying religious pantheism were clearly, in sum, to be found highly unacceptable by Lewis. A writer who could declare, in an uncanny, and totally unwitting anticipation of Futurist aesthetics, that the ultimate 'play and power' of imagination 'depend altogether on our being able to forget ourselves and enter, like possessing spirits, into the bodies of things about us'¹⁸, would inevitably have been ranged by Lewis alongside the particular brand of romantic gratuitous emotionalism and timeist thinking he opposed. The 'penetrative' imaginative faculty that Ruskin identifies here was to become all too familiar to Lewis in his later philosophical investigations, and which was to lead to the naming of Ruskin as a 'naïf', a dreamer, and an abberant romantic¹⁹, at home amongst the more doctrinaire specimens of the time-mind. Ruskin's theories of the 'unity' of matter and spirit and his stress on the organism of creation, read in the light of Bergson's 'creative' and Alexander's 'emergent' evolutions, appear strikingly pertinent to Lewis's assessment:

...there is not any matter, nor any spirit, nor any creature, but it is capable of a unity of some kind with other creatures.²⁰

Not only may creatures and spirits participate in a communal unity, but matter also is explicitly attached to a notion of its 'purity' which for Ruskin is bound to 'vital and energetic connection among its particles', an 'active condition of the substance':

Thus the purity of the rock, contrasted with the foulness of dust or mould, is expressed by the epithet 'living,' very singularly given to rock, in almost all languages (singularly, because life is almost the last attribute one would ascribe to stone, but for this visible energy and connection of its particles); and so to flowing water, opposed to stagnant.²¹

From Lewis's point of view, it would be hard not to associate these ideas with animism, the imbuing of 'dead' matter with 'life' in the

manner of Bergson, Alexander et al. Art too, for Ruskin, as in Bergson's schema, is ultimately subject to 'life' and to a view of an energizing force; for the élan vital of the Bergsonian, we read a specific, 'ineffable' deity - God - in Ruskin²². Drawing, as Whitehead does, on the romantic poets for his illustrative material, Ruskin, in a treatise on the visual arts - which he, unlike Spengler, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, regarded as supreme - would seem, nevertheless, to be treading the same path as those timeist adherents, led by a sentimental medievalism that would impose the myths of one age upon another.

Despite all this, Lewis publicly objected far less to Ruskin's aesthetics than to the ideas perpetuated by his followers. He would have agreed most strongly with Ruskin about the professional status of art, and endorsed wholeheartedly his stern exhortation:

Art, properly so called, is no recreation; it cannot be learned at spare moments, nor pursued when we have nothing better to do. It is no handiwork for drawing-room tables, no relief for the ennui of boudoirs; it must be understood and undertaken seriously, or not at all. ²³

The William Morris world of the amateur²⁴, where all are encouraged to act the artist, was anathema to Lewis, and represented all that was vulgar and vague in popular romanticism, directly responsible in art for the 'merging' process that encouraged audience to become artist, a 'utopist dream' in which everyone becomes a 'genius', the 'Feudal Age' of the 'romantic craftsman' in which a 'light-hearted "communism" should reign in the midst of ^{an} idyllic plenty'²⁵. Morris, inspired by Ruskin's vision, nonetheless envisaged a socialistic, democratic role for art, and reacted against the plea for professionalism where this

would extend to the separation of the fine arts from craft and its social and historical roots; for Morris, such categorizations were false and harmful to a practice which is most adequately expressed in terms of the usefulness of what is produced. The implications of this background for the young Lewis, convinced of the intellectual profundity of his chosen profession, and of his personal commitment to it, would have been striking. What he was to later describe as the 'unreality' of the Victorian milieu is given added significance in the philosophical context, the 'unreality' of the time-doctrine and its artistic manifestations.

The line of descent into what Lewis increasingly regarded as a vulgarized tradition of English art, which had begun nobly if misguidedly with Ruskin, was vulgarized and distorted by late Victorianism, 'saturated with William Morris's prettiness and fervour,' and 'Art for Art's sake' aestheticism²⁶, and had been intellectually supported by such as Matthew Arnold, whose notion of 'philistinism' had rooted itself in popular romantic culture and had found a renewed continuity in the Bloomsbury circle in the early twentieth century. Although Lewis was critical of Arnold's 'deep mentalism', his adherence to 'art for art's sake' principles, and his advocacy of an educational system that was named as instrumental in fostering the intellectual malaise, social snobbery, coarseness and illiteracy²⁷ clearly demonstrated in the pursuit of popular 'romance', he was nonetheless ready to quote Arnold copiously on these matters, acknowledging with approval his criticism of Victorian insularity and complacency, and of mindless machine idolatry. Arnold, like Lewis,

was concerned to pinpoint the deep cultural maladies of his own age; in a review of the Art of Being Ruled, Edgell Rickword claims Lewis's book should stand in the same relation to his generation as Arnold's Culture and Anarchy did to the generation of the 1870 s, since both writers intended to arrest the 'degradation of the values on which our civilization seems to depend... and of re-asserting the terms on which the life of the intelligence may regain its proper ascendancy over the emotional and economic existence'²⁸.

In 1951 Lewis had written to Julian Symons, who was preparing a study of Thomas Carlyle, that in his view, no writer belonged 'so narrowly to the century of Victoria as he. I am sure you will score a goal with this football - this windbag...'²⁹. Lewis's strong assessment reflects the power of Carlyle's personality and influence, which had been widely acknowledged by fellow Victorian critics, including Arnold and Ruskin. Carlyle's insistence on a new intellectualism would certainly not have been censured by Lewis, but his parallel devotion to Goethe, to music above all arts, to Darwin's 'Progress of the Species' theory³⁰ and to a dynamic interpretation of historical data which pre-dates Spengler and other specific manifestations of timeism, would have received the strongest condemnation. A characteristic time-obsession and worship of 'ineffability' is thus fully revealed:

That great mystery of TIME, were there no other; the illimitable, silent, never-resting thing called Time, rolling, rushing on, swift, silent, like an all-embracing ocean-tide, on which we and all the Universe swim like exhalations, like apparitions which are, and then are not: this is for ever very literally a miracle; a thing to strike us dumb, - for we have no word to speak about it... Force, Force, everywhere Force; we ourselves a mysterious Force in the centre of that. 'There is not a leaf rotting on the highway but has Force in it: how else could it rot?' 31

It is not untenable that Lewis had recognized a fellow-romantic in Carlyle, especially in view of his reputation which presents a picture of a formidable personality who dared to think and act independently of his peers. There is no doubt, however, that Carlyle, as with Ruskin and Arnold, would have been judged according to Lewis's definition of a florid romanticism which was evidently tainted with the unmistakable workings of the time-cult in the wider cultural context.

At the early, pre-Omega and pre-Vorticist stage of his career, Lewis would not have been consciously aware of the connections between the background to his art education and the philosophical theory that was to emerge as a result of it. However, an in-depth study of Bergson and continental thinkers was to begin the process of alerting him to basic equivalences of thought between the legacies of his educational background and artistic training, and certain types of systematic philosophical ideas, and explicit connections in this respect were indeed made with mature reflection. I would suggest that Lewis's own temperament, prior inclinations and his developing ideas about the function of art meant that a rejection of certain tendencies later acknowledged as 'timeist' was manifest long before it became possible to locate them philosophically. A 'thoroughly British' mode of thought to which Arnold had drawn attention in Culture and Anarchy, closely read by Lewis, characterizes this process succinctly:

'Art is long,' says the Times, 'and life is short; for the most part we settle things first and understand them afterwards...' 32

For Lewis, the late Victorians presented a peculiarly English, romantic counterpart to the essentially European philosophical tendencies and orthodoxies he had uncovered; if it were possible, it would have been preferable for artists to bypass this period for their models and creative precursors in order to claim the work of Hogarth, Rowlandson and their contemporaries as more properly the arbiters of a healthy English pictorial tradition³³. The closed formula of 'art for art's sake', heard in relation to Morris, and echoed by Roger Fry, was an equivalent and pejorative slogan that for Lewis was paralleled by an equally inane and destructive 'time for time's sake', or 'sensation for sensation's sake', which were ultimately traceable to the same roots, and outwardly demonstrated in popular art and culture.

II.5.ii The Omega Quarrel and its Context

If it is reasonable to cite John Ruskin as one of the major English critics of art in the nineteenth century, in the first decades of the twentieth century, the name of Roger Fry might spring more readily to mind than that of Wyndham Lewis. The reasons for this are revealing: after Fry's death in 1934, the mantle was to be carried by faithful adherents of his aesthetics and approaches to the study of art, such as Clive Bell, Herbert Read and Kenneth Clark. The latter statement carries with it a distinct suggestion of clique or fraternal coterie; for Lewis, it would be put much more strongly. Writing in an introduction to the catalogue of his 1949 Retrospective Exhibition Lewis explicitly identifies the 'conspiracy' against him, led by Fry

and dating from 1913, Lewis's secession from Fry's Omega Workshops. Fry and his followers however, were seen by Lewis at that time as 'front men' for the real struggle: the conflict of the dissenting individual and the many, the lone voice against the collective power of the establishment, the outsider versus the insider. 'I hustled the cultural Britannia, stepping up that cautious pace with which she prefers to advance' he writes; 'for that one is never forgiven'³⁴. Specifically, Lewis's role in the hustling of the cultural Britannia, by offering what to him seemed to break out of the 'English-Victorian' mould, was effected in practice by Vorticism. More generally, his attitude reflects his position in opposition to an art establishment which had settled into a bastion of blind tradition and habit, represented by the Royal Academy of Arts, which continued, in his view, to impose its dead values on embryo avant-gardes, stifling originality, obstructing experiment and true creativity in the name of its own image. The Academy was for Lewis the influential force and baneful model of an institution which dominated the local artistic context within which Lewis began to develop his practical, critical and philosophical responses to the 'state of the arts' in England, and to ponder the consequences for that art in view of the European revolution in the visual arts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Opposition to the domination of the Academy, and the pervasive influence in the art world of academicians, is richly documented in Lewis's writings on art to the extent where the reader is acutely aware that the attack is not simply a result of 'sour grapes' on the

part of an artist who was disowned³⁵, but was an important impetus for the development of a philosophy of art which includes amongst its concerns the cultural and social restraints, including the perpetuation of 'traditions' which prevent and debilitate the free operation of creativity. We are reminded of the intellectual controls that Lewis identifies and outlines in 'The Revolutionary Simpleton', brought about by the mechanical operations of habit and familiarity, whereby the creative artist is deprived of his independence, pre-programmed to follow the dictates of others. Hence an Academy Exhibition, Lewis tells us, will yield all this up to popular sight, 'translated into terms of pictorial art',

the worst insipidities of our degenerate stage, the dreary foolishness of the novel of the month, that is sold at twopence one year later on the dusty bookstalls, or the cheap and sugary music concocted for the palate of the servant girl....

And yet this official State-endowed affair, it is claimed, is the guardian of tradition! What tradition, in heaven's name, may we ask? 36

The connection between Fry's progressive circle, his vigorous championing of modern European art and the conservatism of the 'cultural Britannia' as represented by the Royal Academy, may still not be fully sketched, but continues to emerge more clearly as a consequence of analysis which examines the circumstances and effects of the Omega quarrel both on Lewis's personal artistic career, and the subsequent development of ideas about aesthetics and the role of the artist in society which were later systematized and placed in philosophical and theoretical context. These ideas were thus profoundly affected by an explicit aversion to coteries,

collectivities, or socially restricted groupings which closed ranks when attacked, conferred power and status on favourites, and ruthlessly outlawed their critics: thus the 'Enemy' was first conceived.

On 14 June 1913, Roger Fry wrote a letter to his mother which included the following comments:

My Omega Workshops are hard at work and keep me at it pretty continuously. There's a great deal of interest shown everywhere in the scheme and I hope I may be able to pull it through. If I do I shall I think have done something to make art possible in England. It would be of course almost to accomplish a miracle, but I have hopes. Certainly the people I have got have an extraordinary amount of talent. My problem is now to harness it to practical purposes. There's no doubt that it is a difficult thing to do and perhaps that is why almost all manufacturers give it up and go to the patient hack instead of the artist for their designs. ³⁷

The 'people' Roger Fry had working with him at the Omega included the founder members ³⁸ Duncan Grant, Clive Bell, Frederick Etchells and, until October of 1913, Wyndham Lewis. Lewis's breaking of a close association with Fry and the 'Bloomsburies' was initially occasioned as a result of the acrimonious exchange over the work commissioned for the Ideal Home Exhibition of that year. The exact details - and interpretations - of the causes and outcome of the quarrel remain obscured by the individual bias of those involved in reporting them, but it is clear that its effects included a virtual schism in the English artistic avant-garde. There are various accounts which attempt to reach the 'truth' of the dispute on the 'facts' of the matter from contemporary accounts ³⁹, but as Jeffrey Meyers points out in his biography of Lewis, whoever was at fault, the outcome was to be judged

purely in terms of 'character' and 'integrity', not on evidence or scrutiny of 'fact'. Fry had power, influence, funds and a fiercely loyal band of Bloomsbury allies; Lewis had none of these, but possessed instead the added misfortune of an intransigent temperament.

Since it was Lewis who took the aggressive stance in the affair, publicly denouncing Fry as dishonest, it is perhaps inevitable that the decision Fry and his Bloomsbury associates took, to ignore the possibility of libel action against Lewis, and to resist retaliation and refutation, would lead to a measure of moral ascendancy, actual or imagined. In Quentin Bell's partisan account of the origins and character of Bloomsbury, he notes the pacifism of the group which was 'not merely uncharitable but positively insulting'. The 'wounding contempt in the refusal to return blow for blow' was evidence of a 'conscious superiority'⁴⁰ which to Lewis would have been unbearable.

The charges made against Fry were detailed in the 'Round Robin' letter, composed by Lewis, and co-signed by Etchells, Wadsworth and Hamilton. This was sent to the press and to those connected with the Omega, with the intention of maximising public awareness of the dispute, the discreditation of Fry and the exposure of the 'shabby trick'. The main charge against Fry was

...That the Direction of the Omega Workshops secured the decoration of the 'Post-Impressionist' room at the Ideal Home Exhibition by a shabby trick, and at the expense of one of their members - Mr. Wyndham Lewis, and an outside artist - Mr. Spencer Gore. 41

Meyers details the facts which were not ultimately disputed by either

of the parties; firstly, that the Ideal Home commission was originally intended for Lewis and Gore, with Fry responsible for furniture decorations. The commission itself was inspired by the much-admired work for the Cave of the Golden Calf, on which Gore and Lewis had worked together. It is accepted that a message asking Lewis and Gore to do the work was left at the Omega Workshops for Lewis⁴². That Fry received the message, and Lewis did not, was also evident. It is at this point that interpretations differ as to the intentions behind actions; Lewis immediately accused Fry of appropriating the lucrative commission for himself, employing deceit and dishonesty in doing so, resulting in an angry scene and a walkout by Lewis and those artists at the Omega who supported him.

In reply to a letter from Gore, Fry gave his own version; that the sponsors for the exhibition, The Daily Mail, had approached him directly, and had not mentioned Lewis's name⁴³. A slightly different slant is taken in another letter to Gore where Fry obliquely admits a message reached him but that he 'never got it with sufficient clearness'. Fry made little effort to answer the charges fully and with precision, but turns it into a matter of personality, prestige and 'respectability';

Of course, if you really believe the fantastic and gross nonsense that Lewis and Co. have written about me... But ask yourself honestly which theory is more likely: that I am an almost incredible monster not only of iniquity but of folly (for what the devil have I to gain by it?), or that there has been a quite absurd misunderstanding produced by Lewis's predisposition to believe himself the object of subtle antagonistic plots. 44

The reference Fry makes to a paranoid and unstable Lewis is remarkable in its complacency, particularly as Jeffrey Meyers points out, even

Fry's closest friends and associates were prepared to comment freely on the major flaws they had observed in Fry's character. Clive Bell, for instance, Fry's most loyal and avid personal supporter, in the Omega affair and in theoretical matters in art, wrote of his friend:

He was open-minded, but he was not fair-minded. For though... he was magnificently unprejudiced, he was not unprincipled; and he had a way of being sure that while all his own strong feelings were principles those of others, when they happened to cross his, were unworthy prejudices.

...But suspicious he was, and in his fits of suspicion unjust. He could be as censorius [sic] as an ill-conditioned judge:45

Leonard Woolf, too, noted Fry's 'ruthlessness' and 'unscrupulousness' in business⁴⁶. The eagerness of Lewis to court libel action, and the refusal of Fry to respond, proved to be, not the triumph of the injured, but provocative in the extreme, thereby casting the volatile Lewis as villain and outsider. The Omega affair was to be the first, or at least most serious symbolic skirmish between Lewis and the established avant-garde, for it was the only time when Lewis was in a position to attack as an insider. Following on from this incident, the aftermath of 'moral superiority' affected by the Bloomsbury group provided some protection from the broadsides directed by Lewis, at least until the publication of his novel, The Apes of God in 1930, which succeeded in denting the sensibilities of those who claimed to recognize themselves as objects of satire.

Apart from a public statement of grievance and a concerted personal attack on Fry, the 'Round Robin' is a statement of intent on the part of Lewis which is of particular interest in this context, as it clearly prefigures and prefaces the development of an aesthetic polemic

tangentially opposed to that adopted by Fry and those who remained loyal to the ideals and traditions actively encouraged in the Omega Workshops. Already Lewis had made links between certain trends and tendencies in art, and was anxious to strongly dissociate himself from the sentimental-romantic traditions of Ruskin, Morris and 'art for art's sake' aestheticism, amateurism and dilettantism that he now recognized at the Omega Workshops. 'As to its tendencies in Art', Lewis wrote,

they alone would be sufficient to make it very difficult for any vigorous art-instinct to long remain under that roof. The Idol is still Prettiness, with its mid-Victorian languish of the neck, and its skin is 'greenery-yallery', despite the Post-What-Not fashionableness of its draperies. This family party of strayed and Dissenting Aesthetes, however, were compelled to call in as much modern talent as they could find, to do the rough and masculine work without which they knew their efforts would not rise above the level of a pleasant tea-party...

The reiterated assurances of generosity of dealing and care for art,... (have been) conspicuously absent in the interior working of the Omega Workshops. This enterprise seemed to promise... emancipation from the middleman-shark. But a new form of fish in the troubled waters of Art has been revealed in the meantime, the Pecksniff-shark, a timid but voracious journalistic monster, unscrupulous, smooth-tongued and, owing chiefly to its weakness, mischievous.

No longer willing to form part of this unfortunate institution, we the undersigned have given up our work there. ⁴⁷

For Roger Fry, his colleagues and apologists, it was Lewis himself who was to become their 'Pecksniff-shark'; Lewis's subsequent career as painter, novelist, critic, philosopher and polemicist was centrally dedicated to the cause of making 'art possible in England', a wish complementary to Fry's, but with diametrically opposed means and goals.

Lewis's art criticism, in all its forms, whether it was concerned with general aesthetics, speculative polemic, specific works of art and

movements, or the social and economic conditions for art production, was founded and informed in the light of multiple and complex concerns and viewpoints. His background, of travel and study in Europe in the decade prior to Vorticism, enabled him to speak and operate both as cosmopolitan European and English artist, writer and intellectual. This multiplicity of concern and vision, whilst broad and comprehensive, was wielded critically, and too often negatively by Lewis in support of his beliefs, which in itself would have been enough to have precluded sustained involvement with any one movement, faction or institution.

Whatever discrepancies and disputes arise over the details of the Omega quarrel, it is at least evident that the self-effacing anonymity of the medieval-style craftsman would not have suited Lewis for long in any event, and a split was therefore made inevitable. I would suggest, however, that in the symbolic and actual reaction to certain 'Bloomsbury' positions, both in the areas of ethics and aesthetics, Lewis had found an ideal catalyst and target for his energies, both creative and critical. Although it is accepted that the feud which resulted must have limited Lewis's status and reputation, this situation in itself, and the reaction to Fry's aesthetics and the 'popular chronologism' of the Bloomsbury set⁴⁸ provided an ideal oppositional impetus for Lewis in the task of defining his own beliefs, proving to be an enabling factor which led to the multi-media formation of an individual vision of the world with plastic art at the centre. Lewis himself, however, recognized that his 'vision' would very likely be unacceptable in the artistic - essentially timeist - climate which

prevailed. 'Without immodesty' Lewis was to write in 1947,

... I substituted for what Roger Fry proposed that England should have (a diluted and sentimentalised 'post-impressionism') something so much more severe as to be as a matter of fact out of its element in England. This action of mine naturally displeased Fry and his 'Bloomsbury' friends. 49

Fry's dual and powerful role as critic and dealer had, Lewis claimed in 1937, directly militated against his pictures being bought institutionally in the past, but that he found himself still 'completely unrepresented' after Fry's death⁵⁰. The prevailing influence - or less charitably, the stranglehold - on art criticism and history became the province of Roger Fry and his followers.

II.5.iii The Aesthete and his Own; Chronologism, Fry and a 'Utopia of the Amoeba'

So it does appear that 'truth,' like Alexander's God, is variable... But it comes about in the opposite manner to that involved in the 'collective' doctrine of Alexander. It is always 'heretical'; and it is always the truth of a minority, or of an 'isolated mind,' that to-day is regarded as 'a victim of error,' and is found to-morrow to have been possessed, against the general belief, of the purest truth... the truth-bearing individual is always ahead of the rest of the world, although no one could claim that they willed him, and strained towards him, in order to reach his higher level. Rather he drags them up by the scruff of the neck. 51

Lewis's role in the Omega affair had opened his career as the kind of 'isolated mind' that struggles against the contingent 'truth' of the majority. That the 'majority' in this case was also a radical minority in the eyes of the general public, meant that Lewis had effectively removed himself even further from mass interests, and had

sacrificed any vestige of support that he might have expected from an 'official' avant-garde. But the active cultivation of personal detachment from the narrow circle of the then English avant-garde had served the purpose of clarifying some crucial matters with regard to his own attitudes and aesthetic beliefs upon which a philosophy was based. The quarrel with Fry, and Lewis's self-imposed ironic detachment both from the 'official' avant-garde and the wider society, led him to certain conclusions from the standpoint of an artist concerned for the character and practice of his profession. These became centred around the interests and pursuits of bourgeois intellectuals like the Bloomsbury set, and the popular effects of such activities, especially in the arts, as developed in 'The Revolutionary Simpleton'. The connecting link, for Lewis, is the time-mind.

Therefore, in this section, I want to outline the genesis of his analysis as it is seen to develop in reaction to important aspects of Fry's aesthetics and his social-cultural personality, as mirrored in the artistic and philosophical enthusiasms of the Bloomsbury group and their associates, drawing attention to the wider context of the legacies of Victorianism, romanticism and 'Englishness'. That Victorian context, which in Lewis's eyes became provocatively conspicuous in the person of Roger Fry, was crucial to Lewis's later explicit recognition of the cult of 'timeism', and in practice the revolt against the time-mind was effectively initiated in the light of particular social, artistic and aesthetic differences which were brought to a head as a result of the Omega quarrel itself.

Prior to the final split with Fry, relations had been at times quite genial, if never entirely cordial. It is evident that Lewis and Fry had entered into deep discussions on matters of aesthetics, on which Lewis had apparently led the way. In a letter to Lewis in April 1913, Fry had written:

I'm very much interested by what you said about the need of some big belief outside of art. I must talk it over with you. The situation of the artist becomes more and more hopelessly paradoxical the more one gets to some idea of what art is. ⁵²

Both Fry and Clive Bell had expressed profound regard for Lewis's art ⁵³, and without doubt respected his searching intelligence, but it became increasingly clear that the Omega Workshops and its ethical and aesthetic roots in the craft system and Victorian sentimentalism, could never have satisfied the 'imperious longings' of Lewis ⁵⁴. In the years following the Omega split, public hostilities towards Lewis were not sustained by Fry, who, in keeping with his chosen stance, maintained a silence which had the effect of enraging Lewis even further. The tone of Fry's attitude had rapidly changed from 'My Dear Lewis' ⁵⁵ to 'I suspect that Lewis has never been in the Omega except for what he could get out of it' ⁵⁶, and 'Lewis's vanity touches on insanity' ⁵⁷. Fry, for whatever reason, soon refrained from any direct references to Lewis in his writings ⁵⁸, preoccupied with his own interests and problems at the Omega and the war ⁵⁹.

In order to assess certain baseline differences between the version of aesthetics proposed by Fry and those advocated by Lewis, and in order to locate those differences in relation to the philosophical principles later developed by Lewis, we must have recourse to general

collections of writings, some of which were published long after the immediate period of the Omega affair. This is advantageous in the sense that a certain distance from the personal animosities prevailing at the time is thereby made possible, and the examination of each writer's mature reflections on art and aesthetics is more likely to uncover the seeds of diverse theoretical predilections and beliefs that were perhaps obscured at the time in a welter of personal recriminations.

Roger Fry's Vision and Design consists of a collection of essays, either given as lectures or published in various journals between 1901 and 1920. Presenting, as it does, a wide selection of Fry's writings, it has come to represent the essence of his contribution to the study, history and aesthetics of art. The scope of Fry's concerns, from the consideration of general principles involved in the encounter with works of art, to discussions of culture and time-specific manifestations, revealed in primitive/naïf, ancient, oriental, 'Old Master' and modern art, would have placed his art criticism, as far as Lewis was concerned, securely within the compass of an implicit chronologism as it applies to methodologies that naturally gravitate towards an untheorized pragmatism and contingency as guiding principles.

Whilst Lewis did find for himself the basis for 'big ideas outside art', Fry could only take his tentative cue from a peer group which attached itself to 'fashionable' - timeist - philosophies conceived and sustained by relativism. In the 'Retrospect' on his essays in

1920, Fry commented that he felt he had been always 'groping... towards some kind of a reasoned and practical aesthetic'⁶⁰. The implications at the time this was written seem to indicate that such an aesthetic was, for Fry, far from fully developed or systematic, and would never be so, since by definition it attempted to find guiding principles for the history of art in toto, and those principles would always be vulnerable, shifting according to the variable nature of the phenomena they attempted to encompass. The impulse towards generalizations and 'logical co-ordination' is attributed by Fry to his own personality and 'scientific curiosity'⁶¹, and a 'desire for comprehension'. 'On the other hand', he writes,

I have never worked out for myself a complete system such as the metaphysicians deduce from a priori principles. I have never believed that I knew what was the ultimate nature of art. My aesthetic has been a purely practical one, a tentative expedient, an attempt to reduce to some kind of order my aesthetic impressions up to date. ⁶²

Fry's 'tentative expedient', and the resulting 'mobile' aesthetic is replete with the language and assumptions of a faithful Bergsonianist; even whilst he acknowledges that nevertheless, despite his efforts to remain open and receptive, a 'system' of sorts, a 'provisional induction' had in fact arisen from his speculations, but that even this required a particular vigilance lest it form 'too solid a crust' to 'stop the inlets of fresh experience'. Fry will therefore not concede to the naming of any rigid or systematic principles on the grounds of impropriety of subject-matter, nor will he allow himself to be driven to the kinds of extremist subjectivism which, he feels, lends itself ultimately to a form of mysticism. 'On the edge of that gulf', he insists, 'I stop'. By openly entertaining neither

metaphysical nor mystical criteria in the characterization of his formulae for critical analyses of works of art, Fry, in Lewis's view, would have laid himself increasingly open to the persuasions of relativism, where nothing may be affirmed with any degree of conviction.

The extent of Fry's latent chronologism in matters of aesthetics may be approached directly in respect of a central thematic basis to which other important ideas and resonances are related. In establishing the Omega Workshops in deference to the ethics and aesthetic principles of Ruskin, and the practical example of William Morris, Lewis considered that Fry had inevitably succumbed to a version of vitalist dogma that would spell doom for the visual arts as a distinct practice and profession. Morris's craft system, and the political and social naïvety of 'art for art's sake', perpetuated by Fry at the Omega, embraced for Lewis a complex myriad of 'soft' or vague values that would trivialize art to the status of a pleasant pastime, a children's game. In Morris's utopia, Lewis notes, all would be artists, all would be capable of genius:

...no one would have to work too much;... every one would 'have scope to develop his personality,' everybody be a 'genius' of some sort;... every one would be an 'artist' - singing, painting, composing or writing, as the case might be, and in which a light-hearted 'communism' should reign in the midst of an idyllic plenty. 63

Thus Fry's devotion to what Lewis regarded as the romantic medievalism of a rejuvenated craft system was directly linked with the encouragement of amateurism in art and the merging of the spectator/performer that for Lewis was a central facet of time-cultism. In

Fry's view, artists would ideally hang up their individualist hats and succumb to a cosy anonymity in a collective group system. As an amateur artist himself, Fry's aversion to 'hard-nosed' professionalism was indeed personal, and perhaps a symptom of social and moral snobbery as Lewis maintains, but most importantly, as Lewis was to show in his analyses of chronologism in its various forms, the practical implications of amateurism and collectivism were profoundly linked to theoretical and philosophical positions, such as Bergson's, which threatened the survival of art as a distinct, specialist discipline. The return to a 'Feudal Age' as a 'romantic craftsman' was a return to a primitive past, where simple, childlike, innocent values would prevail; no one would need to think hard, or to reason out, logically and rationally, one's difficulties, since responsibility ideally would pass from the individual to the supporting group. This, for Lewis, meant that inevitably, no absolute responsibility would be shouldered at all. Worse, the instruments and functions of the intellect would not be needed once the individual is cosily embraced in mass warmth, and could be discarded, rendered obsolete.

Although Lewis, at the time of the Omega quarrel, would have naturally been arguing his case from a highly 'interested' standpoint, in seeking to carve out a distinctive career for himself, he was soon to discover that his personal objections to Fry's position conjoined closely in theoretical and philosophical terms. It became increasingly clear to Lewis that Fry's aesthetics, emotionally modelled on the theoretical, ethical example of Ruskin and the

practical collectivism and medievalism of Morris's ideas, were part of a continuously related historical chain anchored in what he regarded as the sentimental romanticism of the late Victorian period, and which was represented contemporaneously by the active relativism of the kind flourishing in Bloomsbury intellectual and artistic circles long after Fry's death. The issues which arose as a result of 'Victorian' allegiances were also those most likely to have alienated Lewis from Fry's position most strongly during his brief time at the Omega.

Various conceived ideas which attempt to articulate the nature of relationships between notions of 'art' and 'life' were a constant preoccupation of modern art theorists such as Fry. It was clear that such ideas had also engaged the interest of Lewis from the earliest stages of developing his theories about art and are recognizable as the opening priorities for his own serious philosophical investigations. What Fry and Lewis each understand and define as 'life' determines the total thrust and direction of their general approaches to art and matters of aesthetics. Fry's 'life', articulated in his essay, 'Art and Life' is, like Spengler's 'life', predominantly historical-chronological; it refers to specific periods and 'turning points' in history, the 'general atmosphere' and 'ethos' of an age.⁶⁴ For Fry, the 'historical motive' is that which can interest those with little 'aesthetic feeling' for art in itself. He thus corners at once the basic emphases of the time-cult: 'life' is self-consciously time-specific and the functions of art are to be best grasped by emotion, instinct and sense-perception, not cognition, or the operations of reason and intellect. The 'imaginative life' which is

the province of art, is clearly emotional and instinctive: art, he states, 'appreciates emotion in and for itself'⁶⁵, it is an 'expression of emotions regarded as ends in themselves'⁶⁶ and we are therefore, in our perception of art, 'not at all interested in knowledge'⁶⁷. Fry advocates, as Lewis does, a separation of 'art' from 'life', but his lack of theoretical systematization in this matter, and the influence of sensationalist ideas enthusiastically embraced and disseminated by his Bloomsbury friends work together to render this proposal logically inconsistent. For Fry, the non-identity of what he calls the 'animal', or 'actual' life, and the 'imaginative life', to be enjoyed in and through art, are to Lewis but two sides of the same coin. Openly, Fry affirms such an assessment in accepting the contemporary sensationalist, Bergsonian view of man's nature:

The assumption that man is a mainly rational animal has given place to the discovery that he is, like other animals, mainly instinctive. ⁶⁸

This 'discovery', claims Fry, has immensely modified the attitude of the rationalist, giving him a 'new charity and a new tolerance'. But for Lewis there can be no such compromise if the leading principle is subordinated to 'instinct'. Fry's conviction that art, led by 'science', which has 'turned its instruments in on human nature and begun to investigate its fundamental needs' has encouraged art to turn 'its vision inwards' and is clearly reminiscent of Whitehead, Alexander, Russell and Freud, whilst an insistence upon 'internal forces', the parallel movement of the 'rhythms of life and of art', and the 'rhythmic sequences of change'⁶⁹ recalls Spengler's 'world-as-history' analyses.

If Fry's tentative distinction between 'life' and 'art' is to be

challenged by drawing attention to its overall stress on emotionalism unmodified by reason, then his emphasis on the 'amateur' status of the artist compounds that challenge, as a concept which is bound up irrevocably for Lewis with the idea of a 'primitive', 'innocent', 'naïf', 'collectivist' and non-intellectual approach to art. In its extreme form, a sentimental attachment to the idea of the amateur craftsman is indicative of the attempted erosion of distinctions between 'performer' and 'audience' characteristic of adherents of the time-cult, and of Fry's Bloomsbury acquaintances, the Sitwells and Gertrude Stein, the true 'children of time' pilloried in 'The Revolutionary Simpleton' and The Apes of God.

This 'merging' of specialist functions in a society where art is the province of everyone, all are capable of genius, regardless of age, sex, class, or mental condition reflected Bergson's philosophical subordination of art to the élan vital. The enthusiasm for the art of children and of the mentally infirm, and a nostalgic yearning for a 'return to the past' is symptomatic for Lewis of a similar longing by beleaguered modern man to return to the relative safety of the womb, the fluidity and darkness of Schopenhauer's animal life of the soul, relieved from intellectual duress. Childhood, sought again vainly by those who had physically and intellectually left it behind, was a fool's utopia built on pretence and self-delusion; for Lewis, the hankering after lost 'innocence' was symptomatic of a profound cultural malaise which had lost faith in the power of intellect and individual courage. The true image of the child which would be defiled and destroyed by the misappropriation of its fundamental

characteristics was explicitly joined to the similar fate of the artist. The 'privileges' of childhood and those of the artist, 'coveted by the mature and the rich' were in danger from a widespread doctrinaire primitivism which threatened to erode the status of the painting professional. Philosophically, the child and the primitive or amateur artist were related to Alexander's God as a symbol of the 'Becoming', representing the continuous struggle to 'be', and to develop towards a goal, although that goal may never be reached.

Fry's central role in the introduction and dissemination of modern European - 'Post-Impressionist' - art in England, and his function as critical spokesman for the new tendencies in style and technical interests exhibited in the work of Cézanne, Matisse, Rousseau, Picasso and Braque, ensured a prominent place for the interpretations he offered in explanation of that art. Fry, like Bell, wasted no time in stressing the essentially 'primitive' nature of this work in outlining its 'expressive' effects; this was not confined to the use of explicit imagery, such as African masks and sculptures, but ranged over a variety of interests and values, both formal and emotional, that would be seen to open up man's buried 'inner' or 'imaginative' life, his repressed longings and desires. Since connotations of the 'primitive' and the 'childlike' had been already securely attached to the new formal conceptions in modern art, it was not unexpected that Fry and Bell should continue to emphasize these connections.

Lewis's early rejection of the tenor of Fry's aesthetics was thus in part a rejection of certain dominant ideas in modern art criticism,

which were explicitly related to the operations of the time-cult, and for which viable alternatives had to be sought. Fry's personal support for exhibitions of 'primitive' and children's art - at the expense of 'professionals', as Lewis was quick to note - demonstrated conclusively to Lewis that Fry had concurred with the philosophical collectivism of many of his peers, and thus represented the core of English art criticism: 'child and "naïf" art', he claimed, 'are two of the principal mainstays of dilettante criticism in this country'. Fry was therefore dubbed by Lewis as the 'great apostle of British amateurism',

who was all for the amateur, all for the eternal Child,
and who wished to make of the painting-world of London a
tight little right little world, safe for the amateur to live
in. 70

All manifestations of amateurism were thereby equated directly with the phenomenon of the 'gifted eternal-child'⁷¹ and the 'merging' of spectator and performer that for Lewis is a kind of technical definition of 'amateurism'. In this, Fry's 'progressive' Omega set-up and the Royal Academy had more in common than was immediately apparent, for the latter, judged Lewis, relied overwhelmingly on exhibits submitted for exhibitions by amateurs, with a 'sprinkling of "professionals" to make it look a real and serious affair'⁷².

The case with regard to Fry's aesthetics in relation to Bergsonism need not be laboured; the ultimate test for Lewis is simply understood: Victorianism and the romantic sentimentalist mind may also provide equivalents for particular manifestations of a 'primitive', or 'naïve' mentality; the equation produces 'unreality' as he defines it. If intellect, knowledge and reason are not predominantly brought to

bear in our theoretical equations, the resulting analysis is thereby bound to fall heavily within the compass of the attitudes and influences instantly recognizable as characteristic of chronological modes of thought. A 'dilettante' critic such as Fry may well be 'entirely engrossed with himself, and his own sensations'⁷³, but in matters of aesthetics, he is betrayed as the willing pawn of the wider, collectivist orthodoxy.

Art, under the conditions suggested by Fry, was for Lewis, impossible; recognizing the artist's strength in his whole-hearted professionalism even at the time he left the Omega, Lewis later concluded that a craft-based amateurism of Omega proportions was indeed no art at all. In Lewis's view, the 'true' professionals were soon to realize the effect that continued association with such a group would be likely to have on their careers, and thus fled from the taint of amateur status. It was left to Lewis to characterize a practical expedient in theoretical and philosophical terms.

If Fry's aesthetics were not explicitly advertised in the notional context of the time-cult at the time of the quarrel, the ideas that were put into practice at the Omega were sufficiently contrary to Lewis's inclinations that a rival systematic aesthetics in the form of Vorticism became a priority. In the wake of the active encounter with the core of Bergsonian philosophy in Futurism, it was later to become clear to Lewis that Fry's beliefs were indeed strongly reminiscent of the popular sensationalism, emotionalism and anti-intellectualism 'endemic' to timeist thought. Lewis thought that what was ultimately

damaging for the artist was a situation where 'diabolics' were seen to be 'locked up in the edifice of "morals"',⁷⁴: the passion of a Dionysiac romanticism that flourished under a Victorian claim to propriety and restraint: and specifically in the case of Fry, and in respect of the Omega dispute, a similar claim to 'ethical' right despite, as Lewis shows, an adherence to the emotional chaos and fluidity so representative of a thorough-going relativism.

A centrally posed criticism of Fry's thought raised the question of the dangers of an aestheticism divorced from art practice, an aestheticism which trivializes and renders impotent the creative intelligence of the artist himself. Fry's advocacy of a modern craft and guild system, whereby the artist would essentially be a humbled amateur, working in spare hours from his main occupation of clerk, critic, civil servant or postman⁷⁵, would produce, according to Lewis, a 'giant amateurism and carnival of the eclectic sensibility'⁷⁶. Thus in his brief association with Fry and his circle as an 'insider', Lewis had evidently discerned a particular virulent devotion to old versions of the sentimental romanticism 'saturated with William Morris's prettiness and fervour, "Art for Art's sake," late Victorianism'⁷⁷, that had already been rejected by the young artist at the Slade, however 'modern' and 'progressive' those interests had claimed to be.

There were perhaps in this context two major consequences of the split with the Omega and the mainstream. The first was a realization by Lewis that art in England ('English' being equated directly with

'Victorian'), to all appearances, was being practised as a dual concern. It possessed a vital avant-garde, as evidenced by Fry's introduction of modern European art in the Post-Impressionist Exhibitions, and the equivalent of the French official salon, the Royal Academy, where artists might choose to either measure their work against that produced by academicians, or to react against that tradition. An adjunct to this system was of course provided by the annual Summer Exhibition where budding amateurs might hang and sell work. Lewis, on the contrary, saw no dualism; nothing but variations of the same Victorian institutionalism and social snobbery that had persisted, via the Academy, into the twentieth century, and which had quickly absorbed the 'new' into the system, sanitizing it in the process. Even modern continental art when it arrived, steeped in the traditions of European philosophy and aesthetics, was somewhat overlaid and transformed by the 'Victorian Englishness' of its adoptive parents. Hence Fry's 'Post-Impressionism', which proved to be 'shocking' and 'new' to a general public who had been indulged for generations on Victoriana, nevertheless was quickly allowed to occupy the allotted place for an 'official' avant-garde. For Lewis, the terms 'official' and 'avant-garde' were both logically and aesthetically incompatible; it followed that the differences between Academy and Omega art were describable as differences of degree, and not of kind.

In addition, the secession had initiated the process of self-isolation that was to characterize Lewis's subsequent career. Since it was demonstrated in the local context of English art that an art

establishment could live in reasonable accord with the 'right kind' of avant-garde, and specifically, in view of his reaction against the view of aesthetics perpetuated by Fry, Lewis began in earnest a search for the deeper causes of the 'orthodoxy' he felt was emerging in all facets of the culture in which the visual arts were embedded.

Although 'modern' on the surface, Lewis had discovered in Fry a direct line to romanticism, Ruskin, Morris and Victorianism, and thus to the 'unreal' as it was defined in respect of timeism. A corollary of this was that this 'direct line' existed in the most up-to-date and radical, progressive European art via notions of primitivism, expressionism and the 'inner struggle' that demanded an emphasis on emotion, and not intellect. Like Fry and his contemporaries who offered analyses of the new styles in modern art, Lewis attached a whole range of different values to the idea of the 'primitive', but for him those values were negative, posed within a false, naïve and romantic optimism that must be exposed.

Thus not only is Lewis's reaction to Bergsonism traceable in the context of past art and culture, but is contained in his attitude to the kinds of modernism perpetuated at the Omega. He therefore attacked initially from a general position calculated to expose various related ideas centrally attached to a regressive 'primitivism' taken as a panacea for the ills of modern life and art; but this was soon revealed as the 'utopia of the amoeba' once the insidious chronologism inherent in notions of 'returning to' a prior, primal and essentially non-cognitive and anti-individualist state was recognized.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

1. See Meyers, The Enemy, Chapter Two, 'Bohemia and Augustus John, 1902-1908'.
2. Lewis's letters to his mother during this period (see Rose (ed), Letters), testify to the kind of lifestyle he expected whilst 'abroad', and are replete with detailed accounts of food and accommodation bills, and requests for clothes and money.
3. Augustus John, Autobiography, 'Finishing Touches' (London, 1975), p.411.
4. 'The Diabolical Principle', The Enemy, no.3, pp.24-25.
5. 'Paleface', The Enemy, no.2, p.100.
6. Rose, 'Preface' to Letters, p.xvii.
7. See TWM, p.22.
8. TWM, p.24.
9. *ibid.*
10. TWM, p.21.
11. On the William Rothenstein memorial exhibition at the Tate, Lewis had written: 'In the history of English art Will Rothenstein should be ranked with Ruskin'. Lewis's respect for Ruskin's achievement is significantly qualified in favour of Rothenstein, however, as Lewis notes with some irony that the latter 'would never have mistaken Whistler for a cockney nor missed out on his "Nocturnes"' (WLOA, p.415).
12. See Meyers, The Enemy, p.10.
13. Lewis's objections to Impressionism, and the reasons for these have already been outlined in the philosophical context (Part I of this thesis). In respect of Lewis's aesthetics, the issue is further examined where relevant, in the following chapters.
14. In Lewis's view, the Slade was responsible for the eclecticism, the 'grandiose' and 'sentimental traditionalism' that he identified as embedded in English art practice. See B2, 'A Review of Contemporary Art', p 41.
15. Ruskin's appointment as the first Slade Professor at Oxford was paralleled by Matthew Digby Wyatt at Cambridge.
16. The hierarchy of genres was maintained by the French Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture (founded 1648) and observed by the official school for artists, the École des Beaux-Arts. In order of importance, the traditional genre forms consisted of: 1.

history painting, 2. portraits, 3. 'genre' scenes, 4. landscape and still-life paintings. Specific reference to the hierarchy of genres is made by Lewis in the Blast article, 'The Six Hundred, Verestchagin and Uccello' (B2, p 26).

17. See Richard Cork, Vorticism and Abstract Art in the First Machine Age, two volumes (London, 1976), I, pp.63-64.
18. Ruskin, Modern Painters, sixth edition, two volumes (Orpington and London, 1896), II, p.127.
19. TWM, pp.21-22.
20. Ruskin, op cit., I, p.126.
21. Ruskin, op cit., I, pp 199-200.
22. Ruskin, op cit., I, p.337.
23. Ruskin, op cit., I, p. 4.
24. This 'world' was clearly characterized in the political context in The Art of Being Ruled: Lewis viewed it as a world 'gay with promises... the happy valley, the eternal spring, of an electioneering poster...the democratic humbug of the What the Public Wants system. A sort of sugar-sweet misinterpretation of the period of mediaeval rebirth, when everything was happy and the workshops were full of songs, and craftsmen jostled with amateur masons...' (ABR, p.159).
25. See TWM, p.145.
26. See 'Roger Fry's rôle of Continental Mediator', The Tyro, no. 1, p.3.
27. See Lewis's letter, for example, to John Slocum (Letters, no. 261, November 21, 1940).
28. Edgell Rickword, The Calendar of Modern Letters, III (April 1926-January 1927), 247-250 (p.247).
29. Letters, no. 481, June 9, 1951, p.539.
30. The Darwinian theory of the 'Progress of the Species' Lewis notes, is indeed what 'Carlyle thundered about...' (TWM, p.305).
31. In The Works of Thomas Carlyle, 30 volumes (London, 1901), V, 'Heroes and Hero-Worship', p.8.
32. Matthew Arnold, Culture and Anarchy (1869), reprinted (London, etc., 1909), p.340.
33. See 'The Coming Academy' in WLOA, pp.191-192 (p.192).

34. WLOA, p.450.
35. The public wrangle over the Academy's rejection of Lewis's portrait of T.S. Eliot (illustrated as the frontispiece of Wyndham Lewis the Artist) is briefly documented as a conclusion to WLA. Here Lewis reprints three letters sent by him to The Times of May 2, 4 and 7, 1938 (pp.374-380). He concludes; "There is only one observation I have to make. The Royal Academy is the snobbish commercial symbol of British indifference to the arts of painting, sculpture, architecture and design. It is how our particular plutocracy expresses its patronizing contempt for the things of the mind, when those things take a visual form. So long as that crushing and discouraging symbol of malignant and arrogant mediocrity is there, a good artist in England will be an outcast..." (pp.373-374). Augustus John, in support of Lewis, had resigned from the Academy in protest at the action.
36. WLOA, p.192.
37. Letters of Roger Fry, 2 volumes, edited by Denys Sutton (London, 1972), II, no. 337.
38. See Elizabeth Anscombe, Omega and After : Bloomsbury and the Decorative Arts (London, 1984) for an account of the formation and membership of the Omega.
39. These accounts of the affair are summarized and evaluated in an article written jointly by Quentin Bell and Stephen Chaplin, 'The Ideal Home Rumpus', in Apollo, LXXX, no.32 (October 1964), 284-291. Although principally favourable to Fry, the authors agree that there was fault on both sides. Lewis's belligerence and Fry's 'implacable placability' were not only incompatible, but mutually flammable.
40. Bell even makes the 'mistake', in the index to his book, Bloomsbury (London, 1968), of confusing Lewis with D.B. Wyndham Lewis, his namesake, of whom Lewis wrote: 'He was one of those humble Press clowns who cut a few humdrum verbal capers every morning' ('What's in a Namesake?', The Enemy no. 1, 19-23 p.19).
41. Letters, no. 47, 'The Round Robin', pp.47-50 (p.48).
42. The name of the bearer of this message was disputed - see Meyers, The Enemy, p.41ff.
43. Letters of Roger Fry, II, no. 340, October 5, 1913.
44. Letters of Roger Fry, II, no. 344, October 18, 1913.
45. Clive Bell, Old Friends (London, 1956), p.68, p.89.
46. See Meyers, The Enemy (p.45) and Leonard Woolf, Beginning Again; An Autobiography of the Years 1911-1918 (London, 1964) pp.94-97. Also, an earlier quarrel between Lewis and Fry, regarding

payments for the Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition, caused an initial rift; see also Letters of Roger Fry, I, p.43 (Editor's Introduction).

47. Letters, no. 47, 'The Round Robin', pp.49-50.
 48. Lewis characterizes this as a certain 'pattern of thinking' (RA, p.155), the counter-polemic of which is taken up in TWM.
 49. Letters, no. 363, to James Thrall Soby, April 9, 1947.
 50. Letters, no. 251, to Oliver Brown, February 11, 1937, p.243.
 51. TWM, pp.466-467.
 52. Letters of Roger Fry, II, no. 335, April 5, 1913.
 53. The depth of regard for Lewis's art was undisputed; Bell had bought a 'large work', probably The Laughing Woman from Lewis in 1912. In independent reviews of an Allied Artists' exhibition at the Albert Hall in July 1912, both had stressed the unity and coherence of design of Lewis's work, though Bell typically had doubts as to whether the artist had succeeded in 'expressing' himself, consequently identifying a 'laboriousness' which he felt stemmed from Lewis's vain struggle to realise his 'mental conception' in paint (see The Athenaeum, no. 4422, July 27, 1912, p.98). Bell was perhaps more ready to hail a promise of greatness in Lewis, rather than a present manifestation.
- Far less grudging in his praise of Lewis's work, Fry wrote that he was the only artist represented at the Albert Hall exhibition who had 'risen to the occasion' and scale of the venue, seeing his design as the only 'Post-Impressionist work of importance' in the entire show (The Nation, XI, no. 16, July 20, 1912, p.583). Reviewing a later exhibition by the Allied Artists, Fry finds Lewis's 'Group' 'remarkable' and 'more completely realised than anything he has shown yet. His power' continues Fry, 'of selecting those lines of movement and those sequences of mass which express his personal feeling, is increasing visibly... the mood is Michaelangelesque in its sombre and tragic intensity' (The Nation, XIII, no. 18, August 2, 1913, 676-677, p.677).
54. See Cork, op cit., I, p.87.
 55. Letters of Roger Fry, II, no. 335.
 56. Letters of Roger Fry, II, no. 343 to Duncan Grant, October 1913.
 57. Letters of Roger Fry, II, no. 347 to Simon Bussy, December 28, 1913.
 58. A quite generous review of Lewis's work does, however, appear in Fry's article, 'Two Views of the London Group' in The Nation (XIV, no. 24, March 14, 1914, 998-999).

59. See Letters of Roger Fry, II, no.s 354, 355, 356, 359, 361. In no. 354 to Rose Vildrac (August 14, 1914) Fry writes; 'I shall try to carry on (at the Omega) for a few months in the hope of a rapid end to the war. It can't go on because of the financial ruin of Germany... we want... to denounce militarism and diplomacy, which have led us to this abyss'.
60. Roger Fry, Vision and Design (1920; Harmondsworth, 1937), p.231.
61. Fry's background was a scientific one; he had studied biology at Cambridge until his interest in art superseded his interest in science. See Virginia Woolf's biography of Fry (London, 1940) and Denys Sutton's introductory biography in Letters of Roger Fry.
62. Fry, op cit., pp.229-30.
63. TWM, p.145.
64. 'Art and Life' in Fry, op cit., pp.11-22.
65. Fry, op cit., p.32.
66. Fry, op cit., p.33.
67. Fry, op cit., p.20; my emphasis.
68. Fry, op cit., p.21.
69. Fry, op cit., p.18.
70. WLA, p.85.
71. TWM, p.146.
72. WLA, p.35.
73. WLA, p.313.
74. TWM, p.34.
75. See Fry, op cit., 'Art and Socialism', p.70: 'Our poets are, first of all, clerks, critics, civil servants, or postmen. I very much doubt if it would be a serious loss to the community if the pure graphic artist were in the same position. That is to say, that all our pictures would be made by amateurs'.
76. See WLA, p.313. Lewis probably also had in mind Fry's own paintings.
77. 'Roger Fry's rôle of Continental Mediator', The Tyro, no.1, p.3.

CHAPTER 6

VORTICISM

In postulating the notion of the vortex as a central, guiding principle of Lewis's mature philosophy, and in the light of an interpretation of Time and Western Man which stresses its function as essentially an elaboration of a system already worked out in terms of art practice and theory, it is essential, in order to lend support to this thesis, to examine the theoretical provenance of Vorticism as it was defined and developed by Lewis, in response to rival ideas and movements. This is not the place to seek a generalized, historical or art-historical characterization of an art movement which, although led strongly from the front by Lewis, was nevertheless ostensibly a collective enterprise; this task, and the overall assessment of the part played by others in shaping Vorticist aesthetics, has been undertaken elsewhere¹. The primary objective here is to identify the specific sources and influences which encouraged Lewis to formulate and refine the aesthetic principles which informed his first writings on the theory of art, and to specify and explain, in the philosophical context of the vortex, those elements he came to reject so vehemently. Lewis's Vorticist principles, despite advertizing in no uncertain way his readiness for aesthetic combat, nevertheless laid positive foundations for a set of beliefs which in essence were deepened and refined, long after the demise of the organized movement itself.

II.6.i. A Prime Mover; Marinetti and Automobilm

The influence of Italian Futurism on the embryo Vorticist movement has been widely acknowledged by Lewis himself, and has been explored in depth in later critical studies. Some accounts have tended to focus on the marked similarities of presentation, style and approach, in terms of the visual work produced, the literary manifestoes which announced a 'new art' with such an excess of verve and energy, and have concentrated on identifying links between the clearly unorthodox personalities of the 'front men', Marinetti and Lewis.

There is little doubt that, in the wake of Marinetti's first visit to London and the showing of Futurist work², artists like Lewis, who were already straining hard against the legacies of Victorian taste and the 'flaccidity' of contemporary Impressionism, would be inspired by the example of a vibrant, iconoclastic and anti-passeist movement, loudly and 'vulgarly' proclaimed in Marinetti's lectures and 'Futurist' evenings. In an early article, 'A Man of the Week. Marinetti', Lewis openly applauds Marinetti as 'one of the personal landmarks...' '...the intellectual Cromwell of our time'³. His 'witty and violent' demonstrations are seen as a much-needed tonic to modern English artists and a fine antidote to 'Victorianism' in 'this home of aestheticism, crass snobbery, and languors of distinguished phlegm...'. Lewis was perfectly able to recognize and welcome Marinetti's antics as a means by which an initial stirring of activity might be accomplished, and was initially ready to embrace -

temporarily at least - the 'genial tag' of 'Futuriste' in so far as it may be adapted to an 'Anglo-Saxon' concept of modernity. In regarding Marinetti and the Italian Futurist painters as 'foreign auxiliaries' in the already uncompromising fight to overcome the English artistic and cultural 'establishment' however, Lewis is still careful to distinguish between the iconoclasm which exists at the level of attitudes and methods, but clearly distances himself from any practice which would, in his view be ultimately harmful to the continuing practice of art; the Museums and 'past art', a high-profile target for Marinetti, should not be destroyed, but seized, and 'kept as the private property of the Artists'. The true 'Futurist', claims Lewis, 'will not destroy fine paintings in Museums, because they will belong to him exclusively one day'.

Clearly, whilst accepting - gratefully - the positive example of Marinetti's energy, Lewis at this juncture was evidently far from being 'bowled over' by the entire package of Futurism, but was concerned to identify a specifically 'English' or 'Anglo-Saxon' strain of modern art that would accord more closely with the 'Northern character'. Once Marinetti's 'ice-breaking' was accomplished however, his usefulness was limited; Lewis preferred to lead, not to be led, and was aware that if a new English art movement was to establish itself, a separate identity and aesthetics must be outlined, distinct from Fry's Omega operations and the European manifestations of Cubism and Futurism. This required careful thought, planning and promotion, and to this end the Rebel Art Centre, opened in March 1914, was dedicated.

The months following the Omega split, and prior to the publication of Blast on June 20 (which Lewis had begun to plan in December), constituted a crucial period of experiment and consolidation for Lewis as an artist and writer. The hard core of the rebel group of artists included Etchells, Hamilton and Wadsworth, who had left the Omega in support of Lewis, and associations were quickly formed with those broadly sympathetic with the need to revivify modern English art. Nevinson had been invited into this circle following the Omega affair, and T.E. Hulme had joined with Lewis and his group in first welcoming Marinetti on his return to London in November, but the constant barrage of the Italian's noisy and attention-seeking rhetoric soon palled and united the group in action.

In Blasting and Bombardiering, Lewis describes one 'counter-putsch' whereby a 'determined band of anti-futurists', including Epstein, Hulme, Gaudier-Brzeska and Wadsworth contrived an energetic heckling of Marinetti at his lecture at the Doré Gallery; on that occasion, claims Lewis, the 'Italian intruder' was worsted⁴. The decisive distancing from Marinetti was accomplished in response to the provocative article, 'Vital English Art. Futurist Manifesto' published jointly by Nevinson and Marinetti, which pledged the allegiance of modern English art to Italian Futurism⁵. The final outrage, as far as Lewis was concerned, was that Nevinson had seen fit to write this document using the Rebel Art Centre address, and had actually named Atkinson, Bomberg, Epstein, Etchells, Hamilton, Roberts, Wadsworth and Lewis himself as co-signatories - and by strong implication, as faithful satellites - of Marinetti's Futurist

movement. If Lewis had been content to be loosely described as 'Futurist' prior to this act, it was now emphatically no longer the case. Nevinson, who had been invited by Lewis to join his circle following the Omega affair, was considered evidently traitorous, and thus another splinter group was formed, for although Lewis had been planning and working towards the definition and announcement of Vorticism as a specifically English phenomenon, clearly distinguishable from Futurism and Cubism, a strong and public reaction was precipitated by the publication of this Manifesto. This was most effectively accomplished by the publication of Blast⁶, but in a coldly-worded letter to the press a disclaimer was made:

There are certain artists in England who do not belong to the Royal Academy nor to any of the passéist groups, and do not on that account agree with the futurism of Sig. Marinetti. An assumption of such agreement either by Sig. Marinetti or by his followers is an impertinence. 7

There is little doubt that Marinetti's behaviour and attitude, and Nevinson's actions in supporting him, rankled deeply with Lewis, and necessitated an unequivocal response. But, as Lewis's article on Marinetti as 'Man of the Week' illustrates, Futurist methods could be found congenial and useful, but an acceptance of vital aspects of their aesthetics was already beyond him, even prior to the publication of Blast 1. In the heat and heady excitement of the Futurist assault on London, Lewis had perhaps neglected to think too seriously, or to look closely into the personal ramifications of assuming too close a connection with Bergsonian or vitalist aesthetics, at the root of Futurist painters' manifestoes. At this stage in his career, Lewis was centrally concerned with developing his style as an artist, and

producing work which would justify the declaration of a new direction. Lewis had written very little on art prior to the publication of Blast, but from the evidence of the art produced, it is clear that the theoretical principles which were articulated later were already prefigured in visual form.

Unlike Marinetti's Futurism, which had outlined an aesthetic programme to be carried out, much of Lewis's Vorticist work preceded its theory, and had thus determined its general character based on spatial values, stillness, definition and outline, and not, as in Futurism, a celebration of dynamism, interpenetration and the 'insides' of things. As a consequence of his art training and studies, and in view of his experience at the Omega Workshops, Lewis knew which elements and ideas he wanted to be associated with his art, and which should be avoided at all costs. Futurism, arriving in the guise of its most vigorous ambassador, Marinetti, was accordingly applauded by Lewis and his English colleagues for its vitality, but in the course of shaping a coherent and distinct Vorticist aesthetics, Lewis became increasingly aware of a glaringly obvious mis-match between his practice and Futurist theory which was not formally articulated until the summer of 1914. Nevinson, who, prior to the Observer manifesto, had worked closely with Lewis throughout the planning stage of Blast⁸, had protested in his own defence that Lewis had described Futurism as a 'vital form of art', and that he had 'no idea' that Lewis had 'felt so strongly' about it⁹. 'Vital', it certainly was, to those involved with the rebel artists at this time, in providing a model example of art promotion, polemic and propaganda: but the unacceptability of its

'vitalist' theoretical implications became evident to Lewis as a result of closer investigation.

In a short article, 'Automobilism'¹⁰, the substance of an attitude which was to become a distinctive feature of Lewis's Vorticist aesthetic was clearly outlined against the challenge of Futurism. In stating his depth of regard for Marinetti (he tended to blame Nevinson for the Observer article), Lewis nevertheless publicly deplores the Italian's sentimental and 'childish' attachment to a romantic notion of 'machinery' and the 'mechanical', the element of 'automobilism' which renders Futurism obsolete. Indignant that Marinetti should 'presume to advise' the 'English nation... in the matter of Art', Lewis aims to point out Marinetti's error in assuming that the English had failed to notice the 'virtues' of a material civilization in a country which had 'practically invented' that civilization, whilst Italy was still a 'Borgia-haunted swamp of intrigue'. Nor, he observes, are Marinetti's automobilist enthusiasms unique either, for England's 'black years of overblown Victorianism' produced arch machine-sentimentalists such as Wilde and H.G. Wells, who had 'out-Marinettied our automobilist friend in his Melodramas of Modernity'. The clear link Lewis establishes between Marinetti's attitude and late Victorianism is early evidence of how his own ideas began to be systematized and clarified; it is also apparent that Lewis had already worked out an idea of 'Reality' that he wished to distinguish from the contingent, vitalist properties of 'Romance'. This passage from 'Automobilism' of 1914 would not be out of place, or inconsistent with, the mature analysis of the 'Revolutionary Simpleton':

Sentimental consciousness of our surroundings is a diagnostic of indigestion. It is Romance and not realisation; dreaming and not living. We want to-day the Realism and not the Romance of our peculiar personal life. Marinetti is a Romantic and not a Realist... He appeals essentially to just the romantic and passéiste sensibility he chiefly abuses.

Although Lewis obviously admired Marinetti's skill as an effective operator, the public exposure achieved by Futurism and the level of media attention that Marinetti attracted had the effect of subsuming all 'new' English art under that category. This suited Lewis's purposes until he was ready to launch Blast. On June 20, the projected date for its publication, 'Automobilism' announced his purpose: 'it is time' wrote Lewis, 'for definition'.

II.6.ii Attraction and Antipathy: Hulme's Theory of Art

One of the main reasons for the existence of philosophy is not that it enables you to find truth... but that it does provide you a refuge for definitions... a fixed basis from which you can deduce the things you want in aesthetics. The process is the exact contrary. You start in the confusion of the fighting line, you retire from that just a little to the rear to recover, to get your weapons right... it provides you with an elaborate and precise language in which you really can explain definitely what you mean, but what you want to say is decided by other things. The ultimate reality is the hurly-burly, the struggle; the metaphysic is an adjunct to clear-headedness in it. 11

T.E. Hulme's statement on the relation between philosophy and aesthetics accurately characterizes Lewis's experience of the 'process' of working out the 'definitions' that he sought to outline in Blast and which were revised and refined later. Instead of starting, however, as Hulme did, from the standpoint of philosophy,

Lewis takes his stimulus from the process of making art. In the encounter with Hulme's ideas, the metaphysical implications which began to emerge for Lewis were indeed an adjunct to aesthetic principles, but in the characterization of Vorticism, his 'ultimate reality', unlike Hulme's, is the permanence and immobility of art, ideally able to transcend the 'hurly-burly' and struggles of 'life', which for Hulme, remain fundamental.

Lewis's 'definitions' were rooted and reflected in the on-going debates which occupied the rebel artists from the Omega secession. In particular, Hulme's ideas had a profound formative effect on Lewis, for he had delivered some highly influential public lectures on art from a philosophical viewpoint early in the new year, and had already worked out in detail his version of the main principles of 'rebel' aesthetics before Lewis published in Blast. Despite a promise to Lewis to pen an article for Blast¹², this never materialized. By the time the 'puce monster' appeared, Hulme had dissociated himself from the rival aesthetic of Lewis¹³, since it was evident that fundamental differences in their beliefs¹⁴ rendered further close association untenable.

In this section, I propose the notion that the relation between Hulme and Lewis is central to an understanding of vital aspects of the theories and ideas which underpinned Vorticism, and to the contextualization of views expressed in Blast. Not only can fundamental points of contact be deduced, but the differences between them strongly suggest that it was in the encounter with Hulme's

aesthetics and philosophy that spurred Lewis specifically into action against Bergsonism in all its forms, and which achieved formal expression for the first time in Blast. Art, for Lewis, determined his philosophical principles, and it is thus not unexpected that these were initiated by his critique of Futurism: Bergson's philosophy in practice. Before embarking on an analysis of the relevant articles in Blast, however, it is instructive to examine the main substance of Hulme's aesthetics, and the essential points of agreement with Lewis in order that important variations may be identified.

Hulme's writings on art and philosophy are largely confined to a series of papers which he published between December 1913 and March 1914¹⁵. One of these, published in Speculations as 'Modern Art and its Philosophy' delivered as a lecture before the Quest Society on January 22, 1914, is described by Richard Cork as an 'astonishingly accurate forecast' of Vorticism¹⁶. As a response to this assessment, and bearing in mind Lewis's open acknowledgment that Hulme's ideas constituted a much-needed theoretical impetus for what he was trying to do in practice, the analysis of Hulme's aesthetics as they relate to Lewis and Vorticism is centred on this important text, and other writings are drawn upon where it is necessary to illuminate or expand further.

It appears that Hulme and Lewis had met in 1912 through the mediation of Pound¹⁷, but contacts between them were intensified after the Omega affair, as like-minded individuals joined forces against what they

regarded as the light-weight dilettantism and 'romantic' sentimentality of Fry and his colleagues. The depth of Hulme's contempt for the Bloomsburys, whilst emanating from a different source of irritation, bears comparison with Lewis's tirades against Fry: Clive Bell's attack on Epstein in the Athenaeum is censured as 'merely spiteful', and Fry and his group are ruthlessly pilloried in the wake of the Omega secession:

But the departure of Mr. Wyndham Lewis, Mr. Etchells, Mr. Nevinson and several others has left concentrated in a purer form all the worked-out and dead elements in the movement. It has become increasingly obvious that Mr. Fry and his group are nothing but a kind of backwater,... 18

Hulme's description of the kind of work produced at the Omega could have indeed been written by Lewis:

As you enter the room you almost know what to expect, from the effect of the general colour...pallid chalky blues, yellows and strawberry colours, with a strong family resemblance between all the pictures;... (an) anaemic effect showing no personal or constructive use of colour...the whole familiar bag of tricks - the usual Cézanne landscapes, the still lifes, the Eves in their gardens, and the botched Byzantine.

In a landscape painted by Fry, Hulme notes that the colours, which are 'sentimental' and 'pretty', accomplish the 'extraordinary feat of adapting the austere Cézanne into something quite fitted for chocolate boxes'.

In this matter alone, Lewis had found an ally¹⁹; in addition, the distinction between Omega work and that of the rebel artists was mirrored in Hulme's aesthetic theory, his strongly couched anti-romanticism and anti-humanism, and in his adoption of Worringer's analysis of 'abstraction' and 'empathy' as opposing tendencies in art²⁰. Thus Hulme's abhorrence for any form of 'feeble romanticism'

and Rousseauism would have attracted Lewis's interest, and his championing of 'abstract' art, stressing its latent permanency as compared to humanistic, contingent or naturalistic art, was perfectly in accord with Lewis's aims as an artist. 'Hulme and myself' wrote Lewis, preferred

something anti-naturalist and 'abstract' to Nineteenth Century naturalism... both he and I preferred to the fluxions in stone of an Auguste Rodin (following photographically the lines of nature) the more concentrated abstractions-from-nature of the Egyptians. 21

'We were', Lewis concedes, 'a couple of fanatics', wanting art to be 'metallic' and 'resistant', preferring a 'helmet to a head of hair' and a 'scarab to a jelly-fish'. There was no other of whom Lewis could write:

My contacts with this contemporary is one of the best ways of reflecting myself. I am describing myself in describing him... 22

We find in Hulme therefore, the most complete, coherent general exposition of the emerging principles of a 'new art' which Lewis was to develop and refine in the guise of Vorticism. Hulme's own reaction against Bloomsbury artists was a symptom of his anti-romantic convictions, roused against the 'state of slush in which we have the misfortune to live'²³. In opening a general theoretical and philosophical account on modern English art of a particular type and intent, Hulme recognized he was breaking new ground, and had hoped to correct misguided, 'muddle-headed' attempts to provide a clear schematization of the philosophical basis of artists' efforts.

The 'new art', for Hulme, differed in kind, not degree, from the art which had preceded it: not only does he follow Worringer's

categorization of art, he concedes his account is 'practically an abstract of Worringer's views'²⁴. Hence Hulme defines the difference as that between 'geometrical' and 'vital' or 'organic' art. He makes an absolute distinction between the two types of art which, he claims, 'pursue different aims and are created for the satisfaction of different necessities of the mind'²⁵. Alongside 'vital', Hulme places a general attitude which for him culminates in the concept of humanism, characteristic of the deification of the human body, the 'soft' and 'vital' lines to be found in Greek Classical art, the Renaissance, and the 'Age of Reason'. Such is 'naturalist' or 'realist' art²⁶.

'Geometrical' art, accordingly, posits a clear opposing tendency: present in Archaic, pre-Classical Greek art, the hard, angular lines of Egyptian, Indian and Byzantine work where 'curves tend to be hard and geometrical', representations of the human body are 'often entirely non-vital, and distorted to fit into stiff lines and cubical shapes of various kinds'²⁷. Most obviously, Hulme notes, this art 'exhibits no delight in nature and no striving after vitality. Its forms are always what can be described as stiff and lifeless'²⁸. For Worringer, as Hulme explains, this tendency towards 'abstract' or 'geometric' art may be a positive response in the need to counter deep states of anxiety that are occasioned by a powerlessness in the face of the 'varied confusion' of existence and the 'feeling of separation in the face of outside nature'²⁹. In a statement which clearly echoes Schopenhauer, and which accurately anticipates Lewis, Hulme outlines the aesthetic ramifications:

In art this state of mind results in a desire to create a certain abstract geometrical shape, which, being durable and permanent shall be a refuge from the flux and impermanence of outside nature. The need which art satisfies here, is not the delight in the forms of nature, which is a characteristic of all vital arts, but the exact contrary. In the reproduction of natural objects there is an attempt to purify them of their characteristically living qualities in order to make them necessary and immovable. The changing is translated into something fixed and necessary. 30

The 'necessity', in Hulme's judgement, is contained in 'rigid lines' and 'dead crystalline forms', which are remote from the 'messiness', 'confusion' and the 'accidental details of existing things'. The difference, therefore, between 'naturalist' or 'vital' art and geometric art is the difference which arises from either man's acceptance of the prevailing 'spirit of the age', giving rise to harmonious relations (cohesion), or a reaction to it: challenge and disharmony, 'separateness'. Vital art, which is the result of a 'happy pantheistic relation between man and the outside world'³¹, constitutes a superficial, harmonious acceptance of that relation, however it is defined at a particular juncture. Geometric art, on the contrary, attempts to subvert and minimise the anxieties of existence through the permanence of art.

In defence of the new modern work, which Hulme connects with the idea of a re-emergence of non-vital art, he outlines a basic premise: that the creation and perception of works of art depend ultimately on a commonly understood, particular view or attitude to the world and an 'interpretation of life'. The 'desire' or 'need' for a particular kind of art is stimulated by this world-view, prevailing

Weltanschauung, or interpretation of life³². Thus, certain periods associated with the Renaissance or Classical Greece fostered particular 'expectations' in art, and that if these were violated, if 'desires' were unfulfilled, then new art would have been rejected - at least until expectations had changed.

Hulme's claim is that the emergence of the new geometrical art is symptomatic of a change in general attitude and sensibility, the Weltanschauung that will supersede the intimate, optimistic and harmonious humanistic tendencies which have dominated since the Renaissance, replaceable by a kind of inhuman, pessimistic world view which acknowledges the burdens of existence and the inescapable sins of man, finding partial solace not in a rejection of the world, but in art. The grounds for this view in contemporary art are found in the strong move away from existing, established modes of artistic expression, a negative reaction which fosters 'a new direction, an intenser perception of things striving towards expression'³³. Such an intensity is for Hulme paralleled in 'certain archaic arts', characteristic of pre-Classical Greek art and oriental manifestations, which offer permanent formulae to the seeking artist. Cézanne's 'solid' and 'durable' art provides an obvious point of reference for Hulme in the task of tracing to its roots the 'tendency to abstraction' which he sees in the reaction to the 'fluidity' and 'impermanence' of impressionism. In addition, it is claimed that some form of 'archaism' is an 'almost necessary stage in the preparation of a new movement', no matter if the artist himself later rejects it.

In thus defining the new, austere, clear cut 'modern art', Hulme was careful to insist on clear distinctions:

I don't want anyone to suppose... that I am speaking of futurism which is, in its logical form, the exact opposite of the art I am describing, being the deification of the flux, the last efflorescence of impressionism. ³⁴

Hulme also excludes from his characterization those aspects of 'cubism' which, like futurism, depend on theories of 'interpenetration' ³⁵ and the celebration of machine forms. Cubism, which Hulme sees as 'experimental' and 'embryonic' ³⁶, constitutes a promise, not a culmination. The development out of Cubist analysis was currently illustrated for Hulme in a comparison of Metzinger's work with that produced by Epstein and Lewis. Cubism, in their hands, 'ceases to be analytical, and is transformed into a constructive geometrical art' ³⁷. The emphasis thus lies with a clean, clear line, which eschews the messy, organic or indistinct, and expresses pleasure, not in the vital or anthropomorphic, but in the mechanical, and machine-orientated structures and constructions. In a description of one of Lewis's works, Hulme writes:

It is obvious that the artist's only interest in the human body was in a few abstract mechanical relations perceived in it, the arm as a lever and so on. The interest in living flesh as such, in all that detail that makes it vital, which is pleasing, and which we like to see reproduced, is entirely absent. ³⁸

Hulme is aware however, that despite his 'absolute' distinction between abstract/geometrical and 'vital' art, the relation is perhaps not so clear-cut, and it is significant that the problem is crystallized in front of a Lewis work.

What you get in Mr Lewis's pictures is what you always get inside any geometrical art. All art of this character turns the organic into something not organic, it tries to translate the changing and limited, into something unlimited and necessary... However strong the desire for abstraction, it cannot be

satisfied with the reproduction of merely inorganic forms. A perfect cube looks stable in comparison with the flux of appearance, but one might be pardoned if one felt no particular interest in the eternity of a cube; but if you can put man into some geometrical shape which lifts him out of the transience of the organic, then the matter is different. 39

In this essay, Hulme is unsure what the relationship between 'machine forms' and the new art is likely to be, since the nature of that relation must be left with the 'creative capacities' of the artist, but he is certain that it will be distinct from the Futurist tendency to 'beautify' or to 'reflect' machine forms⁴⁰, and will place the artist in an active, defining role, rather than a passive, admiring one. The inevitability of this art, represented in Lewis's and Epstein's work, was for Hulme not in doubt. The implications, however, went much further than a new 'style', for Hulme had preceded Lewis in strongly articulating what he saw as the fundamental, determining relation between art and modes of thought, believing the new artistic direction to be 'the precursor of a much wider change in philosophy and general outlook on the world'⁴¹.

In the act of recognizing the formative influence of Hulme's theories in a characterization of Lewis's Vorticist aesthetic it may be the case that the profound differences between their positions are unexplored. Whilst agreement on certain aspects of aesthetics was ensured, Lewis's reaction - as an artist - to what he saw as Hulme's ultimately passive acceptance of art dominated by the Bergsonian notion of flux, generated the beginnings of a lifelong philosophical struggle. Hulme's lecture on 'Modern Art and its Philosophy', when placed in parallel with Lewis's later writings, is seen to contain the

substance of an insurmountable contradiction for Lewis.

At the time when Hulme's writings on aesthetics were formulated and presented to the public in lectures and published papers, Lewis was actively and deeply concerned with developing his own theoretical perspectives on art, and that although he found many of Hulme's discussions highly relevant and worthy of careful study, on close inspection he found a deeply troubling disjunction. Despite Hulme's attraction for 'geometric' or 'abstract' art, 'which, being durable and permanent shall be a refuge from the flux and impermanence of outside nature' and functions to translate that which changes into something fixed and necessary⁴², he nevertheless persists in a strange adherence to Bergson's theory of art and philosophy which does not give credence to such a possibility. Lewis had keenly recognized a head-on theoretical collision threatening when he saw one; Hulme's attachment to the modern, Bergsonian notion of a fundamental Heraclitian flux and his contradictory, Thomist yearning for permanence had condemned him, Lewis felt, to 'suffer perpetually, to all appearance. This awful stability of things appalled him'⁴³.

In providing a philosophical analysis of modern art at all, Hulme of course lays himself open to an immediate logical inconsistency, which would not have been lost on Lewis. If the 'romantic' in any loose, but characteristic interpretation, may stand for 'slush', 'sentiment', 'self-expression', 'creativity', 'intuition', the 'irrational', then Hulme's corrective, which is an intellectual exercise in itself, runs counter to such values. Hulme also accepts - unreservedly - the

Bergsonian philosophy which celebrates intuition as prior to intellect⁴⁴. This view identifies intellect, or 'extensive multiplicity' as severely limited, able 'only' to analyse in a mechanical way, baffled when faced with a need to formulate syntheses, and functions fully only when directed by intuition⁴⁵. Hulme, following Bergson, sees reality ultimately as flux, which intuition alone may grasp; conceptualizations, and the operations of intellect, which separate and analyse, cannot approach the élan vital, and thus distort what is known as 'reality'⁴⁶. The 'romantic' values censured by Hulme were equally resisted by Lewis, but it became evident to him, as it apparently did not to Hulme at this time, that they were intimately related to Bergson's philosophy in a popular guise.

The tribute paid by Lewis to Hulme in Blasting and Bombardiering⁴⁷, despite his somewhat volatile relationship with the brawny and aggressive philosopher, testifies to their closeness: 'his mind' wrote Lewis, 'was sensitive and original...' but that 'he was a journalist with a flair for philosophy and art, not a philosopher'. As to Hulme's prowess in philosophy, Lewis finds himself in agreement with Bergson's testimonial⁴⁸, that 'Mr. Hulme should do useful work in the field of art-criticism'. He continues:

It was mainly as a theorist in the criticism of the fine arts that Hulme would have distinguished himself, had he lived. And I should undoubtedly have played Turner to his Ruskin.

All the best things Hulme said about the theory of art were said about my art... The things to which his pronouncements would not apply - or to which my own pronouncements, which influenced him, would not apply, may quite well be more important. We happened, that is all, to be made for each other, as critic and 'creator'. What he said should be done, I did. Or it would be more exact to say that I did it, and he said it.⁴⁹

Lewis is understandably keen to claim priority as a 'creator' and practitioner of the new art; after all, Hulme was commenting on the work he had already seen, and whilst Lewis accepts Hulme's personal preference for Epstein's work to that of his own, he nevertheless measures his own art against Hulme's characterization. It is clear that he is less ready to acknowledge any extended precedence in matters of aesthetics, insisting that his own 'pronouncements' had in fact, influenced Hulme. Lewis's reticence in this matter, and his statement that the differences of opinion between them 'may quite well be more important' does not effectively obscure the evident complexities of a theoretical debt to Hulme. He accepted the 'best things' Hulme said as applicable to his own work and inclinations, but strongly rejected aspects of his aesthetics which necessitated an explicitly self-contradictory allegiance to Bergson's philosophy. For Lewis, however, the rejection of Hulme's world-view, derived from Bergson, was a consequence of his reaction to, and challenge of, key points in Hulme's art theory, and was not initially asserted on philosophical grounds. This point can be demonstrated by reference to aspects of Hulme's criticism in respect of Lewis's art, and to important departures from Hulme's aesthetics that had surfaced in Blast, and which were later refined.

In a review of the London Group Exhibition on March 26, 1914⁵⁰, Hulme's criticism of Lewis's art illustrates clearly enough the ambivalence of the position he attempted to maintain, and how the work itself, and Hulme's interpretation of it, led to the formation and recognition of a strong philosophical divergence of approach and

opinion which had previously been submerged in the interest of joint ventures. In this context, it is possible to justify some speculation about the effect Hulme's analyses would have had on Lewis, since they would certainly have been read with close attention. Of Lewis's canvases, the overwhelming judgement by Hulme was that they lacked 'coherence', 'wholeness' and 'completeness'. 'In Mr. Lewis's work' writes Hulme,

there are always certain qualities of dash and decision, but it has the defects of these qualities. His sense of form seems to me to be sequent rather than integral, by which I mean that one form probably springs out of the preceding one as he works, instead of being conceived as part of a whole. His imagination being quick and never fumbling, very interesting relations are generated in this way, but the whole sometimes lacks cohesion and unity. 51

It would not be difficult to outline the kind of rejoinder Lewis might have made in response to such a criticism of his work. Fully in agreement with Hulme's earlier call for a 'permanent', 'rigid' and 'hard-edged' art, Lewis might indeed have been surprised by what would have seemed to be an 'obsession' with vaguely expressed ideas about 'unity', 'wholeness' and 'coherence'. If such terms applied, the notions of 'sequential' and 'separateness', used perjoratively by Hulme, would for Lewis, on the contrary, constitute a positive description of the particular qualities he sought in his art. It was, after all, the notion of a 'separation in the face of nature' that had for Hulme, encouraged the artist to seek solace in the permanence and isolation of the geometric art which he so energetically supported. Lewis also might well have been puzzled to find Hulme looking for the approximation of elements which, they would have both agreed, were counted as undesirable in Futurism and Cubism: 'interpenetration', by

which means objects lost their distinctness, and the 'insipid' impressionism which sought to capture 'wholes', rather than explicit details. 'Integration' and 'interpenetration' were like terms in Lewis's vocabulary, and Hulme's insistence on this anomaly highlights with clarity some of the reasons why Lewis, driven by what he regarded as artistic necessity, embarked on his campaign of anti-Bergsonism.

As an artist, Lewis was jealous of his professionalism, and believed that no non-artist could speak authoritatively about the inception and creation of a work. Hulme's assumption, that 'one form probably springs out of the preceding one as he works' may or may not have been accurate, but it would have been the assumption itself that would have rankled with Lewis. No uncritical supporter of 'form for form's sake', Lewis would nevertheless have insisted that, whatever the origins of a creative process were seen to be⁵², the control of the process nonetheless lies with an artist's intellectual capacities, and does not spring, 'unconceptualized' from the 'general haze', as Hulme maintained⁵³.

Hulme's 'absolute' distinction between 'geometrical' and 'vital' art would have been roundly challenged by Lewis on grounds which penetrate deeply to their differences. Hulme's anti-humanism, mirrored in the distinction between pre-Classical, Archaic and certain Indian and oriental arts as 'geometric' and Classical Greek, Renaissance and those forms dependent on a deification of the human body as 'vital', was not shared by Lewis where that distinction was derived from a rigid separation between 'abstract-geometrical' and anthropomorphic

forms. Also, Hulme's argument that one kind of art stems from cohesion, and the other from disharmony, was an over-simplified account, since the history of art was peppered with innovators and those who challenged prevailing styles and standards, Leonardo being a particular favourite of Lewis's⁵⁴. Unless artists tested out the limits of popular tolerances, Classical Greek art could not have evolved from the Archaic, nor the Renaissance from Cimabue and Giotto.

Hulme's period-specific concept of Weltanschauung that underpins his analysis of Classical Greece and the Renaissance would have held comparison in Lewis's analysis with Spengler's notion of world-as-history and the wider implications of chronologism. But types of subject matter, for Lewis, unlike Hulme, were not fundamental in an analysis of artistic precedents. No form or type of subject - whether it becomes 'abstract' in practice, or declares 'natural' origins - is the exclusive recourse of one type of artist or another. Hulme himself is aware of the problem:

I admit that the artist cannot work without contact with, and continual research into nature, but one must make a distinction between this and the conclusion drawn from it that the work of art itself must be an interpretation of nature.⁵⁵

Hulme clings precariously to the notion that 'abstract' art somehow springs from a different 'source' to the 'Neo-Realism' of Ginner which he censures here. For Lewis, Hulme's difficulty would have persisted as a corollary of his non-practitioner status. The hole which Hulme digs for himself is unnecessary and misguided, for his 'problem' rests with a mistaken, rigid distinction⁵⁶ between the 'representational' and 'non-representational', or between 'naturalism/realism' and 'abstraction/geometrical'. Art, Lewis insists, always represents, and

representational implications may not be avoided, however 'abstract' the work may appear⁵⁷.

The key difference between Hulme's view of 'interpretation' and Lewis's acceptance that an artist's work will always represent something can be further explained in terms of their radically different attitudes towards artistic creation. These are clarified by analogous reference to the kind of philosophical gulf which emerges in a comparison of Bergson and Berkeley. Hulme's theory of artistic creativity follows Bergson most closely; the function of the artist accordingly, is to pierce through to 'reality' - the flux -, to break down by means of intuition the spatial barriers which prevent an immediate, direct access to that reality. It is a process of discovery for Hulme, and what there is to be 'discovered' by the artist is already pre-determined. If we could indeed 'break through the veil which action' (intellect) 'interposes, if we could come into direct contact with sense and consciousness, art would be useless and unnecessary'⁵⁸.

Lewis's view is, on the contrary, based securely on what Hulme and Bergson would take to be the main stumbling block to this process of discovery. Whilst Hulme's understanding of artistic creation is largely passive, Lewis, who was almost certainly already attuned to a Berkeleyan concept of reality, stresses the active role of the artist in organizing and re-creating stimuli through art. The artist does not render 'unorganized life'; although his material may derive from the flux, it is emphatically re-created and re-conceptualized by

intellect in the distinct, stabilizing process of making art. 'The best creation' Lewis was to assert in Blast 2, 'is only the most highly developed selection and criticism', and the finest artists are those 'who are so trained and sensitized that they have a perpetually renewed power of DOING WHAT NATURE DOES'⁵⁹. The idea of artist as creator, not discoverer, which was first articulated in Blast was more fully stated later, supplanting Hulme's two kinds of art for two kinds of artist:

There are two attitudes towards the material world that, one or other manifesting itself in him, an artist may very roughly be distributed on one side or the other of a creative pale... An artist can Interpret or he can Create. There is for him, according to his temperament and kind, the alternative of the Receptive attitude or the Active and Changing one. 60

Hulme, who openly acknowledged his role as a mediator of knowledge, rather than as a formulator of ideas⁶¹, is an interpreter, in these terms, even though much of his work was highly respected, not least by Lewis. Such a characterization aptly summarizes the major divisions of thought between Hulme and Lewis which, whilst arising from disagreements about the nature of art and its processes of creation, also makes philosophical agreement impossible. For Hulme, art is a means to an end, which could be dispensed with if direct contact with the élan vital was possible; for Lewis, art is the end product since it is actively creative. Although in agreement with Hulme that one's world view is crucial, Lewis took the Berkeleyan road in his belief that conceptualization - and in particular for him, the conceptualization of the artist - determines that view.

It would thus be inaccurate to regard Hulme's lectures as

substantially constituting the particularly Lewisian interpretation of the salient aspects of Vorticism, since there are profound material differences in their respective approaches. If a writer such as Hulme, in a position to influence and shape the ways in which artists thought about their art, was to be guided by what Lewis had come to regard as an 'anti-art' philosophy, the consequences would be intolerable. Schopenhauer's notion of art as a means to transcend the flux has central connections with both Hulme's and Lewis's views, but yet Hulme here claims philosophical priority for Bergson. His aversion to futurism⁶² was publicly declared at a time when Lewis was reasonably content to be so amorphously described, and when Marinetti's feats of self-publicity inspired onlookers with their audacity and bravado. The description of futurism as the 'deification of the flux', and the 'last efflorescence of impressionism' was a judgement which was to be heartily endorsed by Lewis, whose art may have been influenced by the Italian movement, but who had also insisted - loudly - on vital differences, when the implications of not doing so had been realized. Already becoming increasingly wary of Futurism in its 'automobilist' machine-glorifying tendencies, and of Marinetti's opportunism and iconoclastic, tub-thumping activities, Lewis could not reconcile Hulme's commitment, after the example of Worringer, to a stable, defined and static geometric art, with his equally strong devotion to the vitalist theories of Bergson. Lewis's obvious respect for Hulme's thought and his flair for aesthetics would most probably have encouraged a closer study of the implications and ambiguities involved than if the reverse had been the case.

Hulme had thus achieved a statement of aesthetics which Lewis was able to partly endorse. What Hulme failed to stress, and what Lewis now fully understood, was that Bergson's philosophy was the theoretical lynch-pin which held Futurist aesthetics together. Lewis had found a contradiction in Hulme of such proportions that if a campaign of definition and clarification had been desirable before, it had now become most urgent.

II.6.iii Cubism and Futurism: Blast against Bergson

Blast had promised definitions and explanations: theoretical justification for the visual art which had already been produced, and a programme for the future of English art. The apparent difficulties which attend any attempt to clearly define the tenets and principles of Vorticism are due in part to the style and method of approach favoured by Lewis and his colleagues, which owes much to Futurist and Cubist precedents⁶³. The revolutionary impulse to severely jolt the delicate sensibilities of the English artistic fraternity took precedence over the need for a well-argued, 'logical' and coherent exegesis. A liberal helping of provocation, a heavy reliance on satire, irony, and plain rudeness ensured the magazine's combat status, but worked against an acceptance of its content in sober terms - at least on a surface level. But it is precisely the content of Lewis's writings in Blast that requires analysis if the implications are to be fully realized in relation to the apparently more systematic texts which followed later. We should, however, always be mindful of

the explosive context of these early articles, for their style of presentation owes much to the character of the visual art which is thus illuminated.

In a study of both issues of Blast, it is evident that an overridingly serious mission for Lewis was to distinguish the new movement, Vorticism⁶⁴, from the main European rival movements of Futurism and Cubism. In this way - by default, almost, the principles of Vorticism would seem to emerge. Lewis was indeed absolutely clear in his own mind how Vorticism was to differ from its rivals. From an acquaintance with Hulme's aesthetics, and from a basis of paintings and drawings that were already completed, Lewis was now ready to undertake the theoretical commitment and exposition that was necessary. On a technical and stylistic level, he knew even if critics and observers were prepared to herald a new, innovative and specifically English art movement, a family resemblance with Futurism and Cubism would be obvious. For Lewis, this was accepted as unavoidable, since he was always ready to acknowledge such influences and cross-fertilizations as essential to art practice. What mattered most was that the public should understand that the ideas which underpinned, supported and sustained various forms of art were crucially important, and that in the case of Cubism and Futurism, these were both artistically and philosophically unacceptable.

It is in Blast 2 that we find the first most comprehensive and systematic survey of tendencies in art by Lewis, and it is useful to refer to this article as a base point for examining other relevant

statements. In 'A Review of Contemporary Art', Lewis names Vorticism as a 'certain new impulse in art' and proceeds to identify 'three distinct groups of artists in Europe', comprising Cubism, Futurism and Expressionism. The most important of these, claims Lewis, is Cubism, mainly by virtue of containing the most 'important' and influential artist, Pablo Picasso. If Futurism, as identified by Lewis, is the practice for which Bergson conveniently supplies the theory, it is not surprising to find a constant thread of resistance in this respect recurring throughout Blast 1 and Blast 2. Yet Cubism - in both its 'analytical' and 'synthetic' phases - appears 'static', hard-edged, and unsentimental enough - but suffers almost as much at Lewis's hands as Futurist 'Automobilism' does.

The case against Cubism seems inappropriate if it is not fully understood that the early distinction that Lewis makes between Futurism and Cubism precedes, and corresponds closely, to what later became the distinctive characterization of the theory and effects of the time-philosophy. In Futurism, Lewis read the attempt to render dynamism in plastic form - a distillation of Bergson's philosophy as applied to a programmatic formulation in the practice of art. In Blast, Futurism and Cubism were clearly imbued with some of the cultural values of 'Romance' that are critically examined in 'The Revolutionary Simpleton'; Lewis had outlined elements which would later be allied to the 'effects' of chronologism in Western Culture. It is therefore fitting that France, and the French, should be both 'Blasted' and 'Blessed', for Lewis (an honorary Englishman), and his English colleagues, were deeply indebted to the example of Picasso (an

honorary Frenchman), and French expertise in 'technical' matters. Yet at root Lewis had diagnosed a virulent cultural disease that had so affected English art and its practitioners that it had to be denounced in the strongest terms in the early pages of Blast 1.

The outcome of this affliction had in no uncertain terms produced a sentimentalist, 'GALLIC GUSH', a 'FUSSINESS' and 'prettiness', 'pig plagiarism' and 'PARISIAN PAROCHIALISM'⁶⁵. It is no accident that the terms in which Lewis attacks French art and Cubism are precisely those which had applied to the art and critical interests supported by Roger Fry and his Bloomsbury friends. They were to Lewis the French enemy within, but their weak pastiches of Matisse, Cézanne and Picasso lacked the technical credentials of the 'best' French art. The point is explicitly made:

We assert that the extreme languor, sentimentalism and lack of vitality in Picasso's early stylistic work was a WEAKNESS, as definite a one as consumption or anaemia, and that therefore his reaction, and the character of this reaction, should be discounted as a healthy influence in modern painting, which it is not....

The placid empty planes of Picasso's later 'natures-mortes' the bric-à-brac of bits of wall-paper, pieces of cloth, etc., tastefully arranged, ...wonderfully tastefully arranged, is a dead and unfruitful tendency....

The most abject, anaemic, and amateurish manifestation of this Matisse 'decorativeness,' or Picasso deadness and bland arrangement, could no doubt be found... in Mr. Fry's curtain and pincushion factory in Fitzroy Square. 66

Whilst Lewis admired Picasso's skills and inventiveness immensely, it was precisely the mastery of his artistic media that rendered him dangerous to those who would seek to break away from his influence. The 'cloud' which is Picasso, is 'exquisite and accomplished', but must be dispelled forthwith: 'We must' Lewis concludes, 'disinculpate

ourselves of Picasso at once'.

The issue which lies at the heart of Lewis's exhortation is one which exercised Hulme and many other theorists of 'modern' or 'abstract' art, and in Lewis's thinking was to have a determining influence on the philosophy which was adopted to support those ideas and which was formulated primarily in response to aesthetic problems. Cubism, for Lewis, equalled, albeit in modern format, the essence of a detrimental naturalist approach to the object - the artist's object - which came to be very much at stake in the struggle against the time-cultism of Bergson. The modern version of such a naturalism followed its origins through closely; from a basis in Manet, Impressionism and Cézanne, it was nevertheless no more 'revolutionary' than a kind of 'cubed-over' Impressionism. The stabilized appearance of Picasso's compositions could not, and should not, bear any comparison to Vorticist pictures for they were based on 'dead' nature - 'natures-mortes', on the appearances insisted upon in Impressionist works, 'pulled about' by an overlay of Cubist technique. The invention of Picasso was thereby founded upon the traditional posed model, or the posed still-life which to Lewis was admirable technically, but was ultimately only a transitional strategy in the search for a method which would uncover reality in artistic terms.

In Blast 1 and Blast 2, Lewis proposes three intimately connected variations of the concept, 'life'. The first two describe the commonly-conceived relationship between 'life' and 'art'. 'Life' in this sense adheres to the flux; nothing profounder than a 'good

dinner, good sleep, roll-in-the-grass category'⁶⁷, the animal life of the senses, the constant bane and companion of the intellect. The artistic response to this is naturalism, another kind of 'life' in which an attempt is made to synthesize the primitive life with creative art: it is a life of 'blessed retreat... for those artists whose imagination is mean and feeble, whose vocation and instinct are unrobust'⁶⁸. The copying of nature, the 'tasteful arrangement' of motifs by the artist, allows the flux of 'life' to dominate art; thus even Picasso's cubic excursions are so determined.

There is also for Lewis the concept of artistic life, which lives by plastic values, and which is central to Vorticist art. Cubism is stable, it is static, but it is also dead in terms of plastic values. The analogy of Cubist composition as a plastic formula for a stone or brick house is placed beside the Vorticist adoption of the machine motif⁶⁹. The house is still, but it has no energy, actual or implied; the machine may be still and motionless, but its static form and implied, not explicit, dynamic and purposive potential typifies the complex relationship that Lewis needed to establish in Vorticism, between plastic 'life' and 'actual' life - that which is representative of the flux. An artist must find a way to accommodate the demands of both, if an acceptance of a 'creative instinct' is to be established in any way as a logically coherent proposition. Artists who, like Cézanne and Picasso, depend closely on 'dead' nature for their child-like 'copyist' exercises produce a passive, imitative and flux-directed art that even in its most highly inventive phases succeeds only in re-creating itself⁷⁰.

Lewis argues with particular relish his case that Nature, if worshipped slavishly, is a particularly sterile kind of 'Tyrant', that could make an 'idiot' of Cézanne, an 'amateurish carpenter' and boot-maker of Picasso⁷¹ and which dangerously insists on the subordination of the artist's eye to 'shadows' and the ever-changing vicissitudes of appearances. The central place of Picasso, his predecessors and imitators, and the adherence to a literal or even a 'conceptual' or 'profound' naturalism⁷², is unmistakably identified by Lewis as timeist; 'With Picasso's revolution in the plastic arts' Lewis wrote in Blast 1, 'the figure of the Artist becomes still more blurred and uncertain. Engineer or artist might conceivably become transposable terms...'⁷³. The idea of a merging of the artist's profession with that of others was firmly resisted by Lewis throughout his writing career, but it was in the first issue of Blast, and in relation to what he saw as a threat to his profession as an artist that he had begun to draw the connecting links of Bergsonism and art theory and practice together. Thus, Cubism came to represent a kind of congealed dynamism; their static was passive, not active, and it was made up of dead elements, natures-mortes (still lifes), and the art for art's sake romanticism typified in Victorian aestheticism, primitivism and the child-cult, latterly embraced by Fry, Stein⁷⁴ and Bloomsbury.

Had Marinetti chosen the term, 'Dynamism' instead of Futurism⁷⁵, the problems of definition and explanation that Lewis and his fellows faced may have been somewhat diminished. We know that Lewis was reasonably content, at various times, to accept the title of 'English Cubist' or 'English Futurist', until events demanded clarification.

Even in Blast 1, he was ready to accept such a description if it was designed to characterize rebellion, or renovation in art, but reacted in the strongest possible terms to any element which was directly or indirectly derived from Bergson's world-view. Dynamism was the metaphysical concept which underlay the superficialities of 'Automobilism', the attempt to render in rather literal terms, the 'whirling life of speed' which Marinetti and the Futurist painters placed at the artistic and philosophical centre of 'modern life'. This was clearly articulated in the first Technical Manifesto of Futurist painting of 1910:

The gesture which we would reproduce on canvas shall no longer be a fixed moment in universal dynamism. It shall simply be the dynamic sensation itself.

Indeed, all things move, all things run, all things are rapidly changing. A profile is never motionless before our eyes, but it constantly appears and disappears. On account of the persistency of an image upon the retina, moving objects constantly multiply themselves; their form changes like rapid vibrations, in their mad career. Thus a running horse has not four legs, but twenty, and their movements are triangular. 76

By March 1912, the first exhibition of Futurist painting in London, the catalogue statement re-affirmed the painters' loyalties to these principles⁷⁷. This document, which would have certainly been carefully read and discussed by avant-garde artists and critics in England, is a typical example of the copious writings and manifestoes produced in defence of Futurist art. It provides a useful summary of the ideas against which Lewis reacted so strongly in Blast, and demonstrates the influence of Bergsonism in the formulation of Futurist aesthetics⁷⁸.

The characteristic call, prefaced energetically by Marinetti⁷⁹ for a renunciation of 'past' or academic art is echoed here; an attachment to past art is equated with the 'motionless', 'frozen', 'static aspects of Nature' - the dislike of 'petrification' in art is linked with academicism, to be supplanted, as never before by a 'style of motion'. To start afresh, to constantly extol individual intuition, and to begin from an 'absolutely modern sensation' that accepts the terms 'painting' and 'sensation' as inseparable, is the Futurist's intoxicating aim. A repudiation of Impressionism is accompanied by a desire to surpass it through development and adaptation; divisionism, 'innate complementariness' is 'essential and necessary' to this process⁸⁰. 'What must be rendered' in Futurist painting 'is the dynamic sensation' or its interior force:

In painting a person on a balcony, seen from inside the room, we do not limit the scene to what the square frame of the window renders visible; but we try to render the sum total of visual sensations which the person on the balcony has experienced;... This implies the simultaneousness of the ambient, and, therefore, the dislocation and dismemberment of objects, the scattering and fusion of details, freed from accepted logic, and independent from one another... the picture must be the synthesis of what one remembers and of what one sees. 81

Placing the spectator in the 'centre of the picture', making him 'live' in that centre, in a participatory role, is a recurring motif in Futurist theory; the wish to merge spectator with the work itself, via the means of depicted force-lines, which must 'encircle and involve the spectator so that he will... be forced to struggle himself with the persons in the picture'. The continuity of such force-lines is measured and ensured by intuitional means, but most importantly, the Futurist painters stress the necessity of subordinating 'one's

intellectual culture', to deliver oneself up, 'heart and soul' to the work of art; to lose one's 'self' in the experience of entering into the work. Declaring themselves accordingly as the 'primitives of a completely renovated sensitiveness', they seek to unite, through the operations of instinct and intuition, what is exterior and concrete with what is interior - the 'abstract', spiritual, emotional and mystical. The new conceptions of painting which are thus claimed by the Futurists attempt to invoke a collectivity or synthesis of states of mind in excited communion with objects, emotions and experience, aspiring to re-write the activity of aesthetic contemplation in a new, dynamic, and violent mode. It is evident enough from the paintings and drawings produced by Lewis at this time that a profound critique of the art of Futurism was under way in practice, to be supported by a sustained attack on its theoretical and philosophical implications.

The 'blasting' of Bergson himself in Blast 1⁸² was accompanied by opening statements about the 'romantic' and 'sentimental' gush of the Italian artists, and the boring 'AUTOMOBILISM' of Marinetti. Immediately the familiar parameters of the time-cultist debate are established: the Futurist, in his naïve enthusiasm for machinery and the 'modern', parodies Wilde and Gissing, 'a sensational and sentimental mixture of the aesthete of 1890 and the realist of 1870'. Lewis's terms are not always used entirely consistently⁸³, but it is unequivocally intended that, as with Cubism, the implications of an uncritical, or passive Impressionism and naturalism should be raised in pursuit of the artistic 'credentials' of Futurism. The rejection of Impressionism that the Italian painters were anxious to stress held

no weight for Lewis, for he saw little fundamental difference in the naturalist aims and methods of 1870's Impressionism and the arbitrarily named Post-Impressionist movement, of which Divisionism was a variety, and which was claimed as an essential element of Futurist aesthetics.

In the essay, 'The Melodrama of Modernity', Lewis explicitly identified Marinetti's Futurism as 'largely Impressionism up-to-date' to which is added 'his Automobilism and Nietzsche stunt'⁸⁴. No less is Bergson the philosopher of Impressionism in 'Futurism, Magic and Life'. He is the chief culprit in the popularizing of 'this new prescience in France', the 'merging' of 'life' and 'art' in a synthesis which must favour the former, and devour the latter. Of the three 'levels' or meanings of the term 'life' already outlined, the problem is clearly an artistic one, for as Lewis explains in 'Futurism, Magic and Life', what he means by 'Life' here is not the dark, primitive, unconscious life of the senses, but concerns the succeeding stage of consciousness which is most affected by the primeval state, and which finds its form of artistic expression in the kind of passive naturalism encouraged by Impressionism and Futurism. The outcome of a Bergsonian coupling of the artistic impulse with this level, or synthesis of life/art (i.e., naturalism) is in no doubt for Lewis: 'There is rather only room for ONE Life, in Existence, and Art has to behave itself and struggle'⁸⁵. The balance is, however, very fine indeed, as Lewis recognizes, for 'The finest Art is not pure Abstraction, nor is it unorganized life':

The Artist, like Narcissus, gets his nose nearer and nearer the surface of Life.

He will get it nipped off if he is not careful, by some Pecksniff-shark sunning it's [sic] lean belly near the surface, or other lurker beneath his image, who has been feeding on it's [sic] radiance.

Reality is in the artist, the image only in life, and he should only approach so near as is necessary for a good view. 86

However the artist approaches 'life', Lewis is insistent that this should be primarily determined by plastic values rather than the 'illustrative' and 'copyist' aims of the 'pedantic' naturalist. Only in this way might the terms of the Bergsonian impact on aesthetics - 'Everywhere LIFE is said instead of ART' - be reversed.

For Lewis, the Futurists' theoretical glorification of Heraclitean flux was accompanied by inevitable mechanical formulae and cheapness in art. Their stress on 'simultaneity', 'innate complementariness' and the 'dynamic sensation' itself, and their attempts to reproduce in a static spatial medium the effects of time and movement, were inappropriate at best. The worst excesses of 'Automobilism' were encapsulated in the idea that a running horse has 'not four legs but twenty...' and the literal way in which the painters tried to realize this in practice. By the time Blast 2 was published, Lewis had refined further his theoretical response to Futurism. The 'Romance about Science' and criticism of the formulaic products of Futurism that found a prominent place in Blast 1 was shaped into a more coherent argument in Lewis's 'Review'. By comparing the Futurist doctrine of maximum fluidity and interpenetration with other contemporary tendencies in art, Lewis observes the links between modern science and artistic expression, in direct anticipation of his critique of space-timeists in Time and Western Man. The Futurists

were, he felt, too 'observant, impressionistic and scientific', and too 'banally logical in their exclusions'; instead of the artist dominating his subject matter, Futurist art allows the content ('life') to direct the art.

Contrasted with Cubism, which for Lewis had at least some semblance of 'plastic' (artistic) 'life', for Lewis, Futurist work had nothing but life in their compositions; not of an artistic kind, but of the animal, contingent life which, related to Bergson's notion of the élan vital and Schopenhauer's will, in excess, destroys the art. Vorticism was pledged to reject the 'deadness' of academic art that informed most contemporary work in England, and the nature-mortes of Cubism, but equally, in the process of investing art with the qualities of 'flashing and eager flesh, or shining metal' as the Italian Futurists wished to do, Lewis wanted to make it understood that art itself would undoubtedly be ousted as a consequence⁸⁷. This was the essence of Lewis's case against Futurism; for him, it was revealed as Bergson's anti-art campaign bottled up in an ostensibly artistic form, and this deception had to be identified and refuted.

The opening statement in Blast 1, 'Long Live the Vortex!' outlines the aesthetic parameters of the debate:

We do not want to change the appearance of the world, because we are not Naturalists, Impressionists or Futurists (the latest form of Impressionism), and do not depend on the appearance of the world for our art.⁸⁸

Lewis wants to re-define and explain the Vorticist position with regard to art-historical labels such as 'naturalism', 'Impressionism', 'Cubism', 'Futurism', and 'Expressionism'. We can note with interest

how aesthetic and philosophical assumptions are explicitly related: reality is to the artist what truth is to the philosopher⁸⁹; that is, the artist's 'OBJECTIVE' is reality, whilst the philosopher's is truth⁹⁰. Thus Lewis was able to appropriate the label, 'realism' for Vorticism, distinct from a perjorative use of 'naturalism' for those forms of art against which Vorticism had reacted. These forms and tendencies, and the ways in which they had potentially ranged themselves against Lewis's own ideas on aesthetics were crucially important to meditations on the philosophical implications of claiming the objective of 'reality' for art.

It would be difficult not to recognize in these first writings on aesthetics the beginnings of a consistent case against Bergson and chronologism. In view of the basic objections to Cubism and Futurist art and theory, and in conjunction with a reading of the two editions of Blast in the context of Lewis's background and education, including his relations with various sections of the English avant-garde, the art establishment and Hulme, the outline of an aesthetics such as that underwritten by Lewis had established its terms in a wider cultural and intellectual field of reference.

II.6.iv A Logic of Contradictions and the Primary Pigment: Aspects of Theory and Practice

Retrospective views by artists of earlier work and enthusiasms are obviously 'interested', and should be handled with care. In this case, however, it would be a myopic analysis that did not take into account comments central to an enquiry which seeks to elucidate matters relevant to an entire career. Lewis, in an article entitled 'The Vorticists' for Vogue in 1956, gives a 'potted' version of what all the 'fuss' was about; it benefits from hindsight, but issuing from the pen of a painter who could no longer see to work, is devoid of the more blatant elements of self-aggrandizement found in Blast. In this context, some remarks deserve particular attention, for they stress with vigour and clarity, at the end of Lewis's career, the main characteristics of Vorticism that, I would argue, had contributed most positively to the formation, development and expression of his mature philosophy. Indeed, as Lewis describes it, Vorticism was a 'new philosophy', a visual one, which had to be essentially regarded and understood in visual terms: it was

an intellectual eruption, productive of a closely-packed, brightly-coloured alphabet of objects with a logic of its own. The doctrine which is implicit in this eruption is to be looked for in the shapes for which it was responsible. 9]

What I hope to make explicit in the course of this discussion, is the relation between the emphasis on intellectualism, which has been named as a guiding factor in Lewis's thought from the outset, and the formal means available to Lewis the artist that could be construed in terms

of a specific 'logic'. In Lewis's Vorticist works, the required intensity of expression is powerfully achieved by the manipulation of form in terms of colour effects and contrasts. Philosophical and mystical debates in art, about the nature and symbolic value of colour had drawn upon the influential 'romantic' views of Goethe and Schopenhauer and these had acted as a backdrop to Lewis's art practice. Largely unsuccessful experiments with fashionable ideas about 'correspondences' in the arts and an increasing distaste for emotionalism, coupled with a philosophical uneasiness about the process of merging 'art' with 'life', or even 'art' with 'the' arts, had led Lewis inevitably towards the affirmation of at least a relative autonomy for the plastic arts. He had begun to recognize fundamental differences between his own yearning for a conceptual, intellectual approach to art and its means, and the particular emotionalist and vitalist indulgences that he discerned in others. His support for an art which could approach 'a visual language as abstract as music'⁹² depended on the attributing of analogies between the arts, rather than an endorsement of a process of merging, with music as the supreme arbiter.

Ezra Pound's Vorticism had laid greater emphasis on the dynamic and time-specific than was suited to Lewis's 'static', 'spatial' version⁹³, and this was to become a profound division between them - at least in so much as Lewis was concerned. Clear links, therefore, which began to bind Lewis's aesthetics and developing philosophical views are readily discernible in the differences which emerged in Lewis's and Pound's attitude towards the issue of colour symbolism in

the visual arts. Pound, with his 'sentimental' archaism, and clear endorsement in Blast of the emotionalist theories of colour in art put forward by writers like Kandinsky, was to become immortalized by Lewis as the archetypal 'time-mind' in 'The Revolutionary Simpleton'. The ramifications of this are highly significant. As is the case with Lewis's anti-romanticism, what I show is the extent to which important factors in the early revolt against what was to be identified as chronologism in Time and Western Man were already clearly implicated in his attitude towards debates which centre around artistic or art-specific matters. These had arisen and had been worked upon in practice, and were articulated by means of the Vorticist aesthetic in Blast. The point is underlined by reference to the distinctions made in theory and practice between an 'emotionalist', or 'inner' approach to colour and form and the 'conceptual', or 'outer' attitude characteristic of Lewis. It is thus a necessary task to initiate an examination of matters which had informed and determined vital aspects of both the intellectual and practical dimensions of Lewis's aesthetic, in order that the particular visual and philosophical logic of Vorticism to which Lewis refers may be disclosed.

It will be evident from earlier sections of this chapter that the specific terms, principles and meanings of Vorticism that Lewis put forward in Blast do not emerge with sufficient clarity as a sole consequence of examining the assumptions and the forms of art and philosophy that are critically censured. The 'sum' of Vorticism is not a negative position between dynamism and dead nature; it does not

tamely mediate between Cubism and Futurism, nor does it simply provide a convenient 'synthesis' between the two, a position often drawn upon in general art histories, although influences may be detected and freely acknowledged. If the most positive and complex character of the aesthetic which Lewis somewhat idiosyncratically introduced in the two issues of the magazine, was already essentially worked out in visual terms, its theoretical significance may not thus be understood fully in isolation from art practice. The 'theory' attempts to 'explain' the art, however, and must therefore be outlined in its general application before an approach to relevant aspects of practice can be usefully formulated.

Vorticism is not, principally, defined or explained in the pages of Blast in a conventional sense; 'conventional', that is, for example, by the Futurist artists' standards whereby clearly related principles and strategies to be adopted are signposted for the reader. In a sense, such 'logic' anticipates in theory a temperamental contradiction to the kind of 'emotional' practice that was envisaged for Futurism. In Lewis's case, I would suggest that a far more appropriate, powerful, and essentially intellectual process of exegesis is put to work that is able to characterize and exemplify the Vorticist 'attitude', aesthetics and philosophical principles, and which is equally relevant to practice and appropriate methods of interpretation. The areas of application and operation of Vorticism are marked out according to what Lewis calls the 'logic of contradictions' that explicitly attempts to exploit the explanatory power of oppositional propositions. By proposing an intellectual

concept of the vortex Lewis was thus able to develop a sophisticated aesthetic theory which could allow the operations of time - the flux, emotionalism, sensationalism - to be rehearsed and acknowledged, as indeed they must, in the interests of artistic creation, but were at the same time firmly subjected to the controlling organization of spatial parameters.

The relationship between vortex and flux as defined by Lewis has to be described in terms that favour the former concept for clarity, and as a recognition of his ultimate priorities, but as these are expressed in Blast, the balance is an extremely delicate one, and often, in the juxtaposition of contradictory statements, may appear to undermine the central thesis. Some propositions just are provocative, like the conspicuous blasting and blessing of notions associated with 'England', 'France', and 'Humour', but the fabric of Lewis's strategy achieves deeper significance than this. The notion of a zeitgeist, for example, was particularly associated by Lewis with the attitude later associated with the typical time-mind, and which was evoked to characterize a passive, unthinking subservience to the fashions and fancies of the day - whether in clothing, art, music, dance, science, behaviour or philosophy. Yet in both Blast 1 and Blast 2, art is exhorted to become 'organic with its Time'⁹⁴ and the call for a 'renewed conception of aesthetics in sympathy with our time'⁹⁵ appears to lend no obvious logical support to an anti-Bergsonian, anti-Futurist and anti-Spenglerian thesis. The logic, however, is found in the balance between opposing ideas, although it is not always articulated as explicitly as this:

... the best art is always the nearest to its time, as surely as it is the most independent of it. It does not condescend to lead. But often, an artist, simply because he takes hold of his time impassively, impartially, without fuss, appears to be a confirmed protester... 96

The difference that Lewis requires, between his own attitude towards his 'time' and that of timeists is essentially that between the pragmatic observer and the besotted worshipper, but it is a difference which may be revealed more profoundly if allowed to emerge from a position which acknowledges, with insight, mutually dependent characteristics and assumptions. In this case, the effects of his 'time', his 'age' and the flux of 'life' on the artist and his work are accepted as inevitable, but not overwhelmingly so. 'Art' may be 'time-ful', but the stillness, deadness and 'timelessness' which characterizes its essential nature sets it apart from the flux.

It is precisely at the heart of contradictions like this that the concept of the vortex is applied by Lewis, and functions most effectively. Contrasts and oppositions continually fascinated him because he implicitly understood the paradoxical character of dualities; that the one stands in opposition to the other, cancelling out the other, but may not operate in the other's absence: each requires the presence - and absence - of the other in order both to reveal and negate the contradiction. This 'harmonious and sane duality' was to be made possible only through intense, unremitting intellectual effort:

You must talk with two tongues, if you do not wish to cause confusion...
 You must give the impression of two persuaders... with four eyes vacillating concentrically at different angles upon the subject chosen for subjugation.
 There is nothing so impressive as the number TWO.
 You must be a duet in everything...

No clear outlines, except on condition of being dual and prolonged.

You must catch the clearness and logic in the midst of contradictions: not settle down and snooze on an acquired, easily possessed and mastered, satisfying shape. 97

This interdependence implies duality and entity: the conceptual arena of dualities was therefore to be defined in relation to mutually shared characteristics whereby each entity, or proposition, would achieve extremity from the other at precisely the same point where the always-present, but suppressed elements of cohesion have maximum applicability. Such a strategy is perfectly understandable - and justifiable if the object of the exercise is to attempt to exist beyond contingencies, at the logical 'edge', or the 'space between' sense and non-sense in order to avoid over-simplification and crass emotionalism.

The recognition of this purpose is an essential adjunct to the reading of both volumes of Blast, where Lewis attempts to illustrate by using words as visual deeds more often than the practice of adopting the sanitized methods of intellectual discourse; the 'MANIFESTO' of Blast 1 is characteristic in both style and content:

MANIFESTO.

1. Beyond Action and Reaction we would establish ourselves.
2. We start from opposite statements of a chosen world. Set up violent structure of adolescent clearness between two extremes.
3. We discharge ourselves on both sides.
4. We fight first on one side, then on the other, but always for the SAME cause, which is neither side or both sides and ours... 98

For Lewis, this characteristic of contradictory elements - where dualities must be opposing and complementary at the same time - was an

immensely attractive form of 'logic' which had, in the pages of Blast, posed provocatively as its own opposite. Under the aegis of the 'logic of contradictions', Lewis had pursued to the very limits an apparent ambivalence with regard to key ideas. These include the frequently rehearsed and interdependent dualities of 'art' and 'life'; 'action' and 'thought'; 'imagination' or 'abstraction' and 'nature/imitation'; 'energy' and 'stillness', both properties of the machine and the mechanical; and properties of the 'plastic' (art, the visual, anti-human), and the 'poetic' (literary, human). Throughout, we can read statements which at the same time tend to encourage, and yet work against the setting up of simple, contrasting dualities upon which we can hang our neat definitions of 'Vorticism'. In true dualistic fashion, complexity was advertized by Lewis as a necessarily explicit concomitant of simplicity in the theorization of an art which could be sophisticated enough to provide a complete world-view within its compass - art, metaphysics, physical and mental life, reality, truth.

The coherence of Lewis's art practice and his theoretical justification is remarkable, given that rival movements such as Futurism had to try to 'catch up' with their ideals, and that the 'official' Cubism of Picasso and Braque left such matters to others. Analyses of the works which survive often tend to focus on the degree of abstraction which had been pressed to unprecedented limits in English art, and consequently cite the 'inconsistency' of Lewis in repudiating such 'extremism' in later work and critical texts. The

issue of abstraction and its relation to 'primitivism' and 'extremism' is taken up more fully in the following chapter, but in this context it will suffice to outline the attitude adopted in Blast. Lewis had explicitly affirmed that he recognized the representational functioning of all art, no matter how 'abstract' its appearance. Accordingly, from the outset, an account which attempts to foreground the issue of non-representation in relation to Vorticism is considered unfruitful here, not least in terms of Lewis's expressed aesthetic and philosophical beliefs.

In his discussion of Lewis's Red Duet (PLATE VI), Richard Cork rightly pinpoints the visual operations of Lewis's dualistic logic, and realizes the conceptual and ordered basis of the work. He writes:

Red Duet may appear to be the most extreme abstraction Lewis ever executed, but its implacable emotional impact sums up his underlying aesthetic philosophy as well. 99

Cork's overall judgement, that paintings like Red Duet are capable of schematizing in visual form Lewis's 'underlying aesthetic philosophy' is fully accepted here, but I would suggest that the supporting terms offered are either inappropriate or misleading in the context of Lewis's intellectualism. Firstly, it will be taken that a discussion of the interdependent elements of Lewis's visual 'logic' - form and colour - would have greater value in this context than a close concern with the subject-specific implications that attend the issue of 'abstraction'. 'I had at all times' Lewis wrote in 1956, 'the desire to project a race of visually logical beings'¹⁰⁰, and even at his most 'abstract', the paintings and drawings are adamantly figurative, but

not in accepted naturalist terms. In addition, attention needs to be paid to the terms which purport to describe the 'emotional impact' of Lewis's work, and which, in accordance with his developing attitude towards chronologism at this time, must be distanced from any overwhelming emphasis on non-rational or sensual indulgence¹⁰¹.

Ezra Pound's notion of the 'primary pigment', introduced in Blast 1, was, despite its obvious connotations, intended to apply to any art form which could hope to aspire to the criteria envisaged for Vorticism: economy of means, energy, intensity, emphasis. Nothing other than a distilled essence of expression, one Vorticist work would encompass in its sparse medium the concentrated efforts of many works:

It is the picture that means a hundred poems, the music that means a hundred pictures, the most highly energized statement, the statement that has not yet SPENT itself it [sic] expression, but which is the most capable of expressing. ¹⁰²

As a description of what he was trying to do as an artist, Lewis would have heartily concurred with this, and there was no reason why he should not equally have been ready to accept Pound's identification of colour as the 'primary pigment' of painting¹⁰³. There can be no doubt that, from his earliest paintings and drawings, up to and including specifically 'Vorticist' works and beyond, colour effects and contrasts were of 'primary' concern to Lewis: the literal significance of this term is deliberately invoked, since the Newtonian colour system which recognized three primaries - red, yellow and blue - and therefore enabled a systemization of contrasting values and complementary tones - was expertly handled and exploited by Lewis, technically and symbolically¹⁰⁴. At a basic external level, without

plumbing the depths of the 'soul' in the way that Kandinsky's notion of synaesthesia demanded, Lewis appears to put into practice, without fuss, a colour system of his own. It is, however, rather less idiosyncratic than might be expected, in the context of Blast, for it is indebted to the conviction propounded by Goethe, accepted in principle by Pound, and taken to its limits by Kandinsky, that a commonly understood 'language' of form and colour may be identified and used to convey meaning in visual art.

An early example of this in Lewis's art is provided by The Celibate (PLATE VII). The warm background and 'earthy' tones of the painting are challenged by the cool blues of the figure's flesh, and thus Lewis is able to simply and effectively balance the duality of hot 'life' and materiality, associated with varying tones of red and yellow, and the contest with the opposite values suggested in the cool (blue), restrained operations of intellect, the war of flesh and mind which was the familiar battleground for the creative artist. The obvious parallel between the opposing chromatic values of the primaries red and blue, and the symptoms of flux and rationality, or of time and space, was not likely to be missed by an artist who claimed contrasts as the 'principle of creation'. Yellow, with its associations of light and sunlight as the giver and sustainer of physical and material life, may be ambivalently 'cool' or 'warm', depending on strength or weakness of density and tone, and may alternatively act as the 'space' between will and thought, the arena of materiality which enables and limits human activity¹⁰⁵.

Pound had rightly identified the source of the power of Lewis's visual art in his own Blast piece, but did not fully acknowledge the essential difference between Kandinsky's 'inner', 'emotional' emphasis in the tradition of Goethe and Schopenhauer, and Lewis's 'outer', conceptual and philosophical approach to visual art, which had to reaffirm elements unique to the medium in extricating it from what he regarded as the essentially 'timeist' yen for 'correspondences'. Whilst Lewis was perhaps willing to draw upon loosely understood symbolizations that were characteristic of an emotional 'language' of colour, it was still evident to him at the time Blast was published that the visual arts would appear to function according to a particular 'logic' of their own; the 'primary pigment' for Pound could indeed describe the unique qualities peculiar to each art form, and yet, whilst affirming these qualities, would insist on the notion of brotherhood, of profound correspondences between the arts as sought by Kandinsky, following Pater's dictum that 'all arts approach the conditions of music'¹⁰⁶. Lewis's own experiments with the idea of 'transposition' between the visual and literary arts are conspicuously evident in the visual form, lettering and arrangement of the magazine itself, culminating in the self-conscious play-synopsis 'Enemy of the Stars', an attempt to match the 'ideal' in the manner of Pater¹⁰⁷. But the failure of such experiments had the effect of focusing Lewis's attention on the essential differences between literary and plastic modes of expression, and the ways in which language, like music, is time-specific and time-governed whereas the plastic adheres to the spatial and the static.

As a result, although Lewis had agreed to the inclusion in Blast 1 of Wadsworth's 'Review' of Kandinsky's book, 'Inner Necessity', he expressed grave doubts in the second issue about the desirability of 'spiritual values and musical analogies', 'feasible' though they might seem¹⁰⁸. Pound, in support of Kandinsky, had affirmed the possibility of an emotional language of form and colour¹⁰⁹, and had denied any suggestion of a simplistic allegorical or symbolical application, but it was still too 'literary' and introspective for Lewis, who had discovered that musical and literary analogies could not be tolerated if the purity and independence of the plastic arts was to be maintained. So Kandinsky's 'feasible' colour-theory system was attractive and of use to Vorticism if it could be purged of sentiment, mysticism and 'too-hot emotion'. Lewis preferred the necessary duality of art and physical life rather than art and the psychological-supernatural, as Kandinsky envisaged. Wadsworth's analysis of Kandinsky's thesis, which stressed the profound 'emotional significance of form and colour as such'¹¹⁰ was purposefully challenged by Lewis in order to reaffirm the values and oppositional tensions which motivated him as an artist:

My soul has gone to live in my eyes, and like a bold young lady it lolls in those sunny windows. Colours and forms can therefore have no DIRECT effect on it. That, I consider, is why I am a painter, and not anything else so much as that. 111

From the early 1920s, Lewis had readily acknowledged Schopenhauer's influence on the ways in which the general aesthetic of Vorticism was formulated¹¹², and there are strong indications that the German philosopher's views on light and colour as pure, will-less perceptions

were found to be of equal relevance to the movement. Schopenhauer's insistence that the pleasure of colour is 'won for knowledge without any excitement of our will'¹¹³ and that thus we enter 'into the state of pure knowing', - freed from the operations of will/flux - is indeed relevant to an interpretation of Lewis's somewhat cryptic remarks here. Based on an understanding of the active nature of sight, and the passivity of hearing, Schopenhauer's judgement, that 'the thinking mind lives in eternal peace with the eye, and at eternal war with the ear'¹¹⁴ lends more support to Lewis's case against the primacy of music-dominated theories than it does to his own thesis.

The characterization by Lewis of the eye as a 'superficial' organ, dealing in 'externals', dependent on physical significance rather than internal, psychological stimuli is indirectly anticipated and justified in Schopenhauer. If the ultimate domain of colour perception is the route to 'pure knowledge', offering a respite from passive, animal nature and the operations of the flux, then the avoidance of 'inner', will-dominated and governed activities is amply supported. It is important for Lewis, however, to recognize that the eye 'alone' is like an optical instrument, and would depend on the organizing power of the intellect before it might contemplate a role in furnishing 'pure knowledge':

The eyes are animals, and bask in^{an} absurd contentment everywhere...
They will never forget that red is the colour of blood, though it may besides that have a special property of exasperation. 115

So for Lewis, the 'superficiality' of the eye does not rule out the identification of a system of simplistic, universal symbolization to which 'animal nature' might conceivably respond. Indeed, on the contrary, such a system is required. The exact alternative to the

(time-dominated) 'inner' emphasis was to insist on the importance of the external and physical reception of visual stimuli, shaped and re-organized by the intellect.

The basis of Lewis's working hypothesis was as follows: white and black were the fundamentals from which all other colours sprang, and into which they were absorbed. The vortex symbol itself  testifies directly to this principle, and its meaning reverberates in both aesthetic and philosophical spheres of discourse: in a 'Note' on German Woodcuts in Blast 1, Lewis outlines the implications:

White and Black are two elements. Their possible proportions and relations to each other are fixed. - All the subtleties of the Universe are driven into these two pens, one of which is black, the other white, with their multitude. 116

An understanding of the philosophical function of colour, light and shade can be enlightening in the encounter with Lewis's Vorticist works, and is indeed of continued relevance in the analysis of art produced throughout his career. In this connection, it is important to recognize that, for Lewis, the hierarchy of 'colours' and 'non-colours'¹¹⁷ had little significance when a pencil drawing could furnish as forceful an example of opposing visual relationships as any painting. Red, which is the colour of blood, and which, as Lewis indicates, symbolizes on a simple level associated concepts of life, and by extension the flux itself, is absorbed in the black/white vortex, the logical resolution of the relation between the individual and the universal, art and life, and the infinite variety of dualistic pairings that may be conceptualized.

It is necessary to stress the complexity and subtlety of the

possibilities that emerge, for it is not too implausible to arrange a set of symbolic attributions or equivalents against which Lewis's paintings might be read: as I have noted, and in the spirit of Pound's 'primary pigment', the literal primaries of red, yellow and blue can be duly matched with relevant philosophical concepts. Thus red and its derivatives are symbolic of the operations of flux; yellow shades, the material world; and blue (the complement of red) recalls through direct opposition the operations of intellect, thought, stillness and contemplation. An infinite variety of shades and tones, from orange to green, purple, pink, brown and so on, can be aligned with the primary which dominates them, and yet allow speculation about other meanings and values which, in accordance with the dualism of Lewis's contradictory logic, will be both fluid and fixed. Black and white, the values which amalgamate all colour variations, and all possible oppositions, and which contain the vortex itself, are fixed, and held fast in the most extreme of relations. Yet complexity co-exists and depends on simplicity, as Lewis would be keen to reaffirm, and it would be the fundamental intellectual principle of oppositions that could conceivably prevent a degeneration of such a theory into crude allegorical symbolism. This principle itself militates against rigid or non-relational categorizations, encouraging, if appropriate, interpretations which allow for the interchangeability of elements: red, blue, yellow, white, black, do not irrevocably and permanently 'stand for' the kinds of states and ideas I have outlined, but it is the individual, specific relation determined uniquely within each example of visual art that dictates the possible range of ideas evoked.

A detailed analysis is inappropriate here, but if paintings such as The Crowd (PLATE VIII) and Workshop (PLATE IX), which are central to the Vorticist canon, are reconsidered in terms of the colour relationships and values I have noted, an added dimension of meaning may be uncovered. These two works are dominated by contrasts between warm colours on a white background. In The Crowd, the theme is made explicit by the title/s given, and the suggestion of figuration is retained. Deep oranges, golds and browns, defined intimately by elements of red, are barely contained by black outlines; the vortex is implied, but does not overcome the vision of physical mass, materiality and corporate will¹¹⁸. In Workshop, the mood is cooler and less intense, achieved by more broken, ordered areas of warmth, and is almost controlled by the sharp, black lines, but the striking difference between this and the previous painting is the piercing area of blue which anchors and dominates the surrounding elements, the power of which has little to do with volume or quantity. If it is rash to imply that the vortex is made fully visual here, it is at least clear that the tone and balance of each work is powerfully directed by colour relationships and how contrasting elements are organized in each case.

Composition in Blue (PLATE X) is an example of repose, not stridency, and functions in a very different sphere of colour values: it is hard not to associate pictures of this type with the values of thought, contemplation and stillness, but the areas of contrast ensure that the notion of still energy is not excluded, and the eye is drawn irrevocably towards the central receding axis. Again, on a

superficial level, in Lewis's Portrait of an Englishwoman (PLATE XI), we are able to note that warm, earth-bound colours are not dignified with blues of any description: Lewis's much-publicized view of women as frivolous, sensual, non-intellectual creatures, preoccupied with the physical, material details of life dovetails rather neatly with the tones which dominate the picture. If caricature was intended by Lewis, this would in no way limit its more serious - philosophical - implications, and might serve a purpose in both instances.

An examination of other works could yield further interesting speculation; but I am concerned to indicate generally the subtlety and depth of Lewis's ideas in this area. The characterization, for example, of 'sinister' black as a 'sort of red' in the article 'Fêng Shui and Contemporary Form'¹¹⁹ makes implicit use of the paradox that marries the 'stolid', 'stupid' eye with the flexible, virtuoso operations of intellect. In Red Duet (PLATE VI), we see the contrasting forms of black, red, white, pink, grey, and these are visually fixed elements. Further, we might understand these elements in simple symbolic terms - for example, that red symbolizes blood, life, or more abstractly, the flux - and that black traditionally ushers in thoughts of death, stillness, immobilization, annihilation. Noting the Chinese custom of associating white with death, Lewis brings into play the notion of opposing cultural interpretations of colour-concepts and testifies to the ways in which the intellect is able to assimilate the idea of radically opposed significations without necessarily requiring the elimination of one or the other set of values. If, in Red Duet, sinister black may also be a sort of red

- then death and annihilation is implicated in the 'sort of red' which is the flux. This is a formulaic reading of the work, but it is by no means 'closed' if it is placed in conjunction with the proposition that Lewis is intent to exercise our intellect by inviting us to consider the kinds of data perceived by the eye and how the intellect is capable of balancing contradictory physical and conceptual evidence. In this case, red, and its 'customary' symbolic connotations may be similarly interchanged with those 'normally' associated with black. The eye functions to literally separate the disparate elements it recognizes, whilst the intellect, in full possession of the stimuli offered, is nevertheless exercised by the possibility of interchangeability in the face of conflicting visual or perceptual evidence.

Written and visual sources declare openly the operation by Lewis of some kind of implicit theory attached to colour symbolization, which might be more aptly characterized, in contradistinction to 'emotionalist' views, as 'colour conceptualization'. The particular values outlined in the article 'Fêng Shui and Contemporary Form' are given priority, albeit perhaps tongue-in-cheek priority, over major scientific advances like Newton's discovery of gravitation. Indeed, both editions of Blast abound in the celebration of colour, visually and verbally; the puce cover of Blast 1, thereby inevitably associated with flux, life, will, emotion, is radically cut through and challenged by the black lettering common to the text itself and the vortex symbol. The white and black of the contents proclaim loudly the anchoring thesis of the vortex as the space between contingencies,

the sum of mutually contradictory and interdependent elements. It is significant, perhaps, that the text which suggests most strongly that some kind of colour-theory is relevant to Vorticism is 'The Enemy of the Stars', with its sustained reliance on vocabulary intended to evoke as explicitly as possible the 'red universe' which directs the tragedy of Arghol and Hanp, the 'red walls' which literally and metaphorically enclose the action. It is indeed a 'red' play, the colour of blood, evocative of madness and the hollow triumph of the flux, of animal nature (Hanp) over thought (Arghol).

The concept of the vortex provided an intellectual rallying point, and an appropriate visual symbol, able to stand-for and encompass the entire range of Lewis's Blast strategies, some of which I have outlined. These are governed by a structural, yet highly flexible ordering of human thought and experience which meets at the point described as the 'clearness between extremes', the still centre of implied energy which exists at the heart of the flux, at maximum force when 'stillest', the 'clearness and logic in the midst of contradictions'¹²⁰. In view of the schematic rendering of Lewis's philosophical principles outlined in Part I of this thesis¹²¹, it would require little adjustment to formulate a development of this model on lines which are derived from Lewis's Vorticist aesthetic. The vortex symbol  could be substituted for the projected system of superimposed, concentric circles, or layers, with the additional value that comes from the way in which this symbol easily adapts itself in the representation of the necessary dimensions of movement and energy in the equation, and in its stark black-and-whiteness

absorbs possible contingencies in the symbolic shape of colour-values. A more accurate, complete model is therefore available. The lower circle, which was envisaged and named as time/flux and the constituents of chronologism, corresponds aptly to the black outer shell of the vortex symbol, whilst its white centre, represented by the second band of the concentric philosophical structure, claims conscious thought, space and intellect as its contrasting sphere of reference. The core of the vortex which, in the philosophical context, was superimposed upon the 'layers' of time and space, and was seen to represent the 'real', now becomes interchangeable with 'art', the rod which cuts through flux and materiality. The whirling, spinning cone that is time and space revolves around a still, rod-like core that absorbs energy in the process of creation, is surrounded by the flux and the physical world, and is intimately, irrevocably connected to 'life', but is not itself governed by its dynamics, belonging to the inhuman realm of the 'plastic'.

If such a schematization is able to illustrate with some clarity the relationship between Lewis's philosophy and aesthetics, it is useful enough, but the implications, as indicated, run deeper than this. The first - philosophical - model, I would argue, depends on the aesthetic precursor for its terms and inspiration; that, in turn, was formulated as an adjunct to practice. Here the theoretical principles which inform Lewis's 'logic of contradictions' first achieved visual form, conspicuously pre-dating the pronouncements in Blast. The heart of the matter is controlled by an artist's devotion to the basic elements of his profession: form, line, colour, composition. But this devotion

for Lewis was characterized by the tension generated between contrasting elements that was seen as ultimately the supreme arbiter and principle, not only of artistic creation or philosophy, but was relevant to a discussion of any sphere of human activity. The recognition and exploitation of this principle was thereby hailed as a function of Vorticism, obliged to operate in a modern, less-than-ideal physical and social world, faced with motifs and subjects that did not lend themselves to traditional ideas about 'beauty' and 'harmony' in art. Yet, as Lewis recognized, the concept of harmony depends on discord, that of beauty upon ugliness, and modern art, no less, depended on these dualities. Contemporary artists, however, had to redistribute these values in order to respond positively to the motifs of discord and ugliness around them: the beauty would reside, not in the subject, in naturalist terms, but in the art itself¹²².

The modern revolution in painting, of which Vorticism was a part was to be therefore, for Lewis, a make-or-break affair, survival signifying renewed strength and potency, 'suppleness' and 'extension', an art which would be capable of 'containing all the elements of discord and "ugliness" consequent on the attack against traditional harmony'¹²³. In his view, the 'modern' was necessarily concerned with the discordant, and should therefore fasten itself to the possibilities offered to the artist in the elements of 'colour, exploitation of discords, odious combinations'. Lewis's own analyses and judgements of fellow artists' work in Blast are dominated by a keen sense of colour values, contrasts and effects. In his review, 'The London Group', aspects of the paintings shown by Wadsworth,

Roberts, Nevinson, Adeney and Kramer are noted and considered. Of Wadsworth's Blackpool, 'one of the finest paintings he has done', Lewis writes:

It's [sic] striped ascending blocks are the elements of a seaside scene, condensed into the simplest form possible for the retaining of it's [sic] vivacity... The striped awnings of Cafés and shops, the stripes of bathing tents, the stripes of bathing-machines, of toy trumpets, of dresses, are marshalled into a dense essence of the scene. The harsh jarring and sunny yellows, yellow-greens and reds are especially well used, with the series of commercial blues. 124

In William Roberts' Boatmen, Lewis notes how the limbs and heads have become in the composition a 'conglomeration of cold and vivid springs bent together in one organized bunch':

The line of colour exploited is the cold, effective, between-colours of modern Advertising art... The wide scale of colour and certain juxtapositions... suggests flowers, as well.

A work by Kramer similarly shows 'fine passages of colour, and many possibilities as a future luminary. Several yellows and reds alone, and some of it's [sic] more homogenous inhabitants, would make a fine painting', and Adeney's landscapes are described as 'pale green meditations in form'.

Thus the 'exploitation of discords' and contradictions were vital factors for Lewis in the struggle to differentiate between Vorticist aspirations and those of other modern artists and movements. In particular, this principle was also closely linked, in Lewis's theory and practice, to contemporary debates on the symbolic value, nature and use of colour and colour contrasts in art, in the way that discords were conceived and articulated. Spurning the deep pessimism of Schopenhauer, and the psychological solipsism of Kandinsky, Lewis's

art was directed outwards, in order to provide 'blueprints' for a 'new civilization': 'at the time' he recalled in Rude Assignment,

I was unaware of the full implications of my work, but that was what I was doing... It was more than just picture-making: one was manufacturing fresh eyes for people, and fresh souls to go with the eyes... A necessary part of this work was of course propaganda... 125

If Lewis considered his work as a set of 'blueprints' that would be capable of indicating the way forward in the task of a profound renewal of civilization and culture, the painter's means will be symbolic, not in Kandinsky's psychological sense, but as functioning in a similar way to a plan of architecture¹²⁶. The emphasis for Lewis, as always, would be on the intellectual organization of ideas whereby colours in an abstract environment may be representative of, but not necessarily imitative of, physical phenomena. This enables freedom from the physical world too, for art might function at its most profound level, as indicative of ideas. If 'art' (creative organization) is known conceptually through form, and 'life' is to be transposed in plastic terms as colour and tone, these elements in a work operate in different ways and are yet interdependent to the extent of existing in a non-separable relation, but without merging: thus the logic of contradictions demanded by Lewis is fully perpetuated. Colour, in Lewis's most 'abstract' Vorticist works is one of the chief means by which he might introduce 'life' into the painting, thus stripped of contingencies and imbued with sufficient plastic significance in order to complete and perpetuate the duality of 'art' and 'life' in the most profound terms available to the artist.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

1. The most comprehensive account of the background, circumstances and aesthetics of Vorticism is to be found in Richard Cork's two-volume work, Vorticism and Abstract Art in the First Machine Age. A shorter but extensive 'critical history' of the Vorticist movement is Vorticism and the English Avant-Garde (Manchester, 1972) by William C. Wees. Charles Harrison's English Art and Modernism 1900-1939 (London-Indiana, 1981) offers a detailed view of Vorticism in the general context of English art history. Of recent publications, the collection of essays published by ICSAC under the title, Vorticism as Cahier 8/9 (Brussels, 1988) provides further useful source material for various aspects of the genealogy of the movement, Lewis's philosophy and aesthetics and the impact of Futurism in the period.
2. Marinetti first visited England in April 1910, during which time he gave his 'Futurist Speech to the English' at the Lyceum Club of London (see R.W. Flint ed., Marinetti. Selected Writings, London, 1972, pp.59-65). An exhibition of Futurist paintings from Paris arrived in London in March 1912, and attracted much attention from the press, artists and critics.
3. 'Marinetti', The New Weekly, I (May 30, 1914), 328-9.
4. See Blasting and Bombardiering, ^{Part I,} Chapter II, 'Mr. W.L. as Leader of the "Great London Vortex"', and Richard Cork's account, op cit., I, p.232.
5. See Cork, op cit., I, p.233. This manifesto was published in The Observer, Sunday June 7 1914, and also in The New Weekly of 13 June and The Egoist on 15 June.
6. Blast was dated June 20, but did not appear until 2 July 1914. For an account of the events leading up to its publication, see the article by Paul O'Keeffe, 'The troubled birth of "Blast": December 1913 - June 1914' in Vorticism (Cahier 8/9), op cit., pp 43-62.
7. Letters, no. 57, to the Editor of The Observer, June 14, 1914, p.62.
8. Nevinson had claimed the name 'Blast' as his own suggestion. See Cork, op cit., I, p.231.
9. See Cork, op cit., I, p.233.
10. The New Weekly, II (June 20, 1914), 13.
11. T.E. Hulme, Speculations, 1924. Second, reprinted edition edited by Herbert Read (London, 1987), p.130.
12. See editor's note in T.E. Hulme, Further Speculations (Minneapolis, 1955), p.107.

13. See Cork, op cit., I, pp.213-214.
14. The differences between Hulme and Lewis were of an intensely personal nature, too, coming to a head in respect of Kate Lechmere's favours. Hulme had supplanted Lewis in Kate's affections, and later became engaged to her. See Meyers' biography of Lewis for a detailed account of the quarrel (pp.52-54).
15. Many of these papers were also delivered as public lectures, thereby adding to the immediate impact of Hulme's ideas.
16. Cork, op cit., I, p.141.
17. See Cork, op cit., I, p.139.
18. Hulme, 'Modern Art 1. The Grafton Group' in Further Speculations, pp.114-115.
19. Lewis had not hesitated to go into print in support of Hulme's defence of Epstein's work. See Letters, no. 52, 'Epstein and his Critics, or Nietzsche and his Friend', pp.54-55.
20. Hulme had explicitly acknowledged his direct debt to Worringer's ideas as outlined in Abstraction and Empathy (Abstraktion und Einfühlung, first published in 1908).
21. Blasting and Bombardiering, p.103. Note the profound objections to Rodin's 'impressionist', 'timeist' sculpture done 'expressly' to illustrate Bergson's élan vital that Lewis had drawn attention to in TWM (pp.156, 185, 189, 250).
22. Blasting and Bombardiering, p.107.
23. Hulme, Speculations, p.80.
24. Hulme, Speculations, p.82.
25. Hulme, Speculations, p.77.
26. Hulme, Speculations p.84.
27. Hulme, Speculations, p.82.
28. Hulme, Speculations, p.85.
29. ibid.
30. Hulme, Speculations, p.86.
31. ibid.
32. Hulme, Speculations, p.26.

33. Hulme, Speculations, p.99.
34. Hulme, Speculations, p.94.
35. A useful collection of writings on and theories of, Cubism is found in Edward F. Fry, Cubism 1966 (London, reprinted 1978).
36. Hulme, Speculations, p.103.
37. *ibid.*
38. Hulme, Speculations, p.106.
39. Hulme, Speculations, pp.106-107
40. Compare Hulme's characterization of Roger Fry's 'verbose sentimentalism' on this point (Speculations, p.105).
41. Hulme, Speculations, p.109.
42. Hulme, Speculations, p.86.
43. Blasting and Bombardiering, p.106.
44. It is noted that Hulme did move away from Bergson's influence after these essays were written (see Alun R. Jones, The Life and Opinions of T.E.Hulme, London, 1960, and Michael Levenson's chapter on 'Hulme: the progress of reaction' in A Genealogy of Modernism, Cambridge, 1984). This would seem to add weight to Lewis's claim that his own views had indeed influenced Hulme in this matter and in other areas (Blasting and Bombardiering, p.100).
45. In the essay, 'Romanticism and Classicism', Hulme writes: '... the characteristic of the intellect is that it can only represent complexities of the mechanical kind. It can only make diagrams... whose parts are separate one from another. The intellect always analyses - when there is a synthesis it is baffled. That is why the artist's work seems mysterious. The intellect can't represent it... Now this is all worked out in Bergson, the central feature of his whole philosophy. It is all based on the clear conception of these vital complexities which he calls "intensive" as opposed to the other kind which he calls "extensive," and the recognition of the fact that the intellect can only deal with the extensive multiplicity. To deal with the intensive you must use intuition' (Speculations, p.139).
46. This is explained in the essay, 'The Philosophy of Intensive Manifolds', in Hulme, Speculations, pp.173-214.
47. Hulme was killed in action September 28, 1917, in France.
48. Hulme had met Bergson at the Philosophical Congress at Bologna in 1911. On seeking readmission to Cambridge University in the

following year, Hulme had produced a letter of recommendation from Bergson (see editor's 'Introduction' to Speculations, p.x)

49. Blasting and Bombardiering, p.100.
50. Hulme, Further Speculations, pp.129-134.
51. Hulme, Further Speculations, p.132.
52. Lewis, as already discussed in Part I, Chapter 1 of this thesis, was willing to accept Bergson's lead on the question of the origins of creativity.
53. See Hulme, 'Bergson's Theory of Art' in Speculations, pp.143-169 (p.150).
54. Leonardo, Lewis had insisted in 'Futurism, Magic and Life', 'MADE NEW BEINGS, delicate and severe, with as ambitious an intention as any ingenious mediaeval Empiric' (B1, p.132).
55. Hulme, Further Speculations, p.127.
56. This was characteristic of Clive Bell's view in Art (1914), and had to a certain extent troubled Roger Fry. The entrenchment of distinctions between 'representational' and 'non-representational' disturbed Lewis at this time and for the rest of his career, and he fought fiercely against the implications that art might eventually signify 'nothing'.
57. 'A Review of Contemporary Art', B2, p.42-43.
58. Hulme, Speculations, p.147.
59. Lewis, B2, p.46.
60. Lewis, CD, p.123.
61. The editor of Further Speculations writes: 'It is perhaps too severe to dismiss Hulme, as Wyndham Lewis does, as a "mere journalist with a flair for philosophy and art," but one must admit that at his death he was still a philosopher manqué. Hulme's contribution to English thought lies in the shape and currency he gave to ideas which were not new, but which needed restatement, rather than in any "new philosophy." He made no claims to original thought: "This, then," he wrote, "is the only originality left to a philosopher - the invention of a new dialect in which to restate an old attitude"' (p.xv).
62. Hulme's contempt for 'Futurism' was shown - as was Lewis's - by the deliberate employment of a small-case letter in written references to it.
63. The style and typographical layout of the Futurist magazine

- Lacerba (1913-1915), and the manifestoes, were influential on the approach and appearance of Blast. Apollinaire and the apologists for Cubism, Gleizes and Metzinger, had also sought to achieve a visual typographical impact with many of their articles.
64. The term 'vortex' was first used in connection with the new art movement by Ezra Pound (see Meyers, The Enemy, p.63).
 65. 'Manifesto', B1, p.13.
 66. 'A Review of Contemporary Art', B2, p.41.
 67. 'Life is the Important Thing!', B1, p.129.
 68. B1, p.130.
 69. B2, p.43.
 70. See 'Relativism and Picasso's Latest Work', B1, p.140.
 71. 'Futurism, Magic and Life', B1, p.135.
 72. The distinction between a 'profound' and a 'superficial' realistic impulse is suggested in Gleizes and Metzinger's essay, 'Cubism' (1912). They identified a 'realistic impulse', derived originally from Courbet, which 'runs through all modern efforts' (reprinted in H.B. Chipp, Theories of Modern Art, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1968, pp.207-216). Whereas for them, Impressionism is 'superficial' and the work of Cézanne 'profound', Lewis would see no difference.
 73. 'Futurism, Magic and Life', B1, p.135.
 74. The 'spurious child-language of Miss Stein' (TWM, p.62) is employed in her 'cubist' prose-portrait of Picasso written in 1912. It begins, 'One whom some were certainly following was one who was completely charming. One whom some were certainly following was one who was charming. One whom some were following was one who was completely charming. One whom some were following was one who was certainly completely charming...' (E.F. Fry, Cubism, p.55). For Lewis the 'deadness' and mock-childishness of such language illustrated with interest the attitude he was concerned to expose.
 75. As Marianne Martin points out in her book, Futurist Art and Theory 1909-1915 (1968, reissued New York, 1978), it was a distinct possibility that the term 'Dynamism' would be chosen in the interests of stressing the philosophical influences on the Futurist movement, but that the more 'picturesque' term was ultimately preferred (pp.40-41).
 76. From 'Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto 1910', reprinted in Umbro Apollonio (editor), Futurist Manifestoes, (London, 1973), pp.27-28.

77. Reprinted in Apollonio, op cit., pp.45-50.
78. If the only evidence of Lewis's acquaintance with the Futurist manifestoes was Blast itself, in terms of format and style alone, that would be sufficient to assume a working knowledge of the main principles assumed by the Futurist painters at this time. We know that Lewis had read Marinetti (a short story of his had appeared in the same issue as an extracts from the manifesto of 1909 by Marinetti in The Tramp - see Cork, op cit., I, p.22) and would be aware of the content of his 'Futurist Speech to the English' given at the Lyceum Club in 1910 (reprinted in Flint, op cit., pp.59-65). In addition, the impact of the London exhibition of Futurist work in March 1912 ensured an eager readership for Boccioni's ideas as expressed in the catalogue.
79. 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism 1909', reprinted in Apollonio, op cit., pp.19-24.
80. 'Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto', in Apollonio, op cit., p.29.
81. 'The Exhibitors to the Public 1912', in Apollonio, op cit., p.47.
82. 'Manifesto', list of figures to be 'blasted', B1, p.21.
83. The reasons - and explicit justification for the employment of 'inconsistencies' by Lewis as part of a deliberately conceived theoretical strategy, are explored in the next section (II.6.iv).
84. 'The Melodrama of Modernity', B1, p.143.
85. 'Futurism, Magic and Life', B1, p.133.
86. B1, pp.134-135.
87. See 'The London Group', B2, p.77: 'Several of the Italian Futurists have this quality of LIFE eminently: though their merit, very often, consists in this and nothing else'.
88. 'Long Live the Vortex!', B1, p.7.
89. 'Relativism and Picasso's Latest Work', B1, p.139.
90. The 'objectives' of the artist and the philosopher were seen by Lewis later to cohere in a specific way. See my discussion in Part I, 3.ii, p.101, and TWM, p.469, 'for us truth is reality, and there is only one truth'.
91. 'The Vorticists', in WLOA, p.455: my emphases added to the text.
92. 'The 1956 Retrospective at the Tate Gallery', in WLOA, p.452.
93. Pound's emphasis on the 'dynamic and creative' aspect of Vorticism in direct comparison with the Futurists' attachment to

motion is confirmed in an interview with Donald Hall. See C. David Heymann, Ezra Pound : The Last Rower (New York, 1976), p.24.

94. 'Manifesto', B1, p.34.
95. 'A Review of Contemporary Art', B2, p.46.
96. 'The Art of the Great Race', B2, p.70.
97. 'Wyndham Lewis Vortex No.1', B2, p.91.
98. B1, p.30.
99. Cork, op cit., II, p.338.
100. 'The 1956 Retrospective at the Tate Gallery', WLOA, p.452.
101. Pound had commented in an article that 'Mr. Lewis's painting is nearly always emotional' and goes on to compare the effect with Bach's and Mozart's music 'before it went off into romance and sentiment and description' ('Vorticism', in The Fortnightly Review, DLXXIII, September 1, 1914, 470-471). This helps to illustrate the ground which Lewis and Pound had agreed upon, - namely anti-romance and sentimentality - but Pound's enthusiasm for likening music (even that of Bach and Mozart) to visual art would have no doubt helped to convince Lewis of the need to stress the basic differences between these 'chronological' and 'static' arts. In addition, a description of his work as 'emotional' in such terms, without an equally strong emphasis on rationality, would have been unacceptable to Lewis.
102. 'Vortex. Pound.', B1, p.153.
103. See Pound's discussion in 'Vorticism', Fortnightly Review, op cit., p.466.
104. Newton's theory of colour, and his characterization of red, blue and yellow as the 'primary' colours persists, despite challenges from others - notably in this context, Goethe (Theory of Colours, 1810) and Schopenhauer (On Vision and Colours, 1816).
105. A fragment found amongst Lewis's papers meditates on Van Gogh's L'Arlésienne: '...Here is this human being, who has been a young girl... - Now she sits huddled up, with a face like a fish: with eyes moist with a melancholy emotion, staring into the terrible mystery in front [sic] her... A blank yellow glare behind her is symbolic of the feverish emptiness upon which her meditations are unrolled. - Or it is the cruel honey in which this human fish is embalmed' (WLOA, p.459).
106. Pound directly quotes Pater in 'Vortex. Pound.', B1, p.154.
107. Lewis describes in Rude Assignment the 'failure' of such

experiments, and the reasons why: '...it became evident to me... that words and syntax were not susceptible of transformation into abstract terms, to which process the visual arts lent themselves quite readily' (p.139).

108. 'A Review of Contemporary Art', B2, p.44.
109. Pound, 'Vorticism', The Fortnightly Review op cit., p.470.
110. 'Inner Necessity', B1, p.122.
111. 'A Review of Contemporary Art', B2, p.44.
112. My discussion in Part I.2.i of this thesis refers to this: see in particular, Lewis's 'Essay on the Objective of Plastic Art in Our Time' (EOAT) in The Tyro no. 2, for a specific acknowledgement of Schopenhauer's influence.
113. Schopenhauer, The World as Will and Representation, op cit., II, p.375.
114. Schopenhauer, op cit., II, p.28.
115. 'A Review of Contemporary Art', B2, p.44.
116. B1, p.136.
117. Or 'chromatic' and 'achromatic' colours - the latter including white, grey and black (which form the extremes and middle of the achromatic scale). See A. Macmorland, Colour Theory and Practice, second edition (London, 1934) pp.19 ff.
118. Pound had realised the extreme difficulty of what he, Lewis and the Vorticists had set out to do, but stressed that some works would attain expression as '"criticism of life" or of art' and that 'no artist can possibly get a vortex into every poem or picture he does. One would like to do so, but it is beyond one...' ('Vorticism', Fortnightly Review, op cit., p.471, note.)
119. B1, p.138.
120. 'Wyndham Lewis Vortex No. 1', B2, p.91.
121. See Chapter 4.iii, pp.164-166.
122. Lewis declares 'fields of discord untouched' in 'Orchestra of Media', B1, p.142, and in 'The Exploitation of Vulgarity', he notes that 'A man could make just as fine an art in discords, and with nothing but 'ugly' trivial and terrible materials, as any classic artist did with only 'beautiful' and pleasant means' (B1, p.145).
123. 'Orchestra of Media', B1, p.142.

124. 'The London Group', B2, p.77. Both Blackpool and Boatmen are now lost: the former painting, reproduced in the Daily Mirror (11 June, 1915) is illustrated in Cork, op cit., II, p.372.
125. RA, p.135.
126. See Cork's discussion of Lewis's work in conjunction with the ideas of the Futurist architect, Sant'Elia, op cit., II, p.338 ff.

CHAPTER 7

FROM THE VORTEX TO THE GREAT BLANK: LEWIS AND MODERNISM

Lewis knew the war would effectively 'kill off' Vorticism as a collective art movement, but the body of his art criticism and aesthetics produced later testify to the importance of the ideas, strategies and visual images conceived pre-war in the context of his work as a whole. This was recognized by Lewis himself in the reprinting of many key Blast documents in the important collection Wyndham Lewis the Artist in 1939, the copious discussion of Vorticism and its implications throughout his writings on art. On a deeper level, Vorticism, Lewis acknowledged later, had been years ahead of its time - at least as far as English art was concerned. But in pushing visual expression closer to the edge of sense and meaning, it was also in a very profound historical sense a child of its 'time' and the prevailing zeitgeist, and open to exploitation by the Bergsonian evolutionary god of progress that made no distinction between the arts or women's fashions: all is contingent, temporary, to be swept aside by the next phase of development. The reaction against Bergsonism that was inherent in the theory and practice of Vorticism could never be total, as the statement it offered was corrupt, too. In accepting the modernist brief which committed itself to abstraction, radicalism, 'extremism', and the 'progressive' in art, Vorticism was tainted with the time-cultist sensationalist aesthetics and philosophical values that it had sought to avoid.

A distinction between the contingent historical aspects of the art movement itself and the enduring aesthetic and philosophical implications is necessary. Historically, Vorticism existed as a brief but explosive enabling force, known to us via Blast and the paintings which survived, such as Workshop, Red Duet, and Composition in Blue (PLATES IX, VI, X). But the concept of the vortex, as I have already claimed in Part I of this thesis, is central to an understanding of Lewis's philosophical position in Time and Western Man, and may also be understood as the ultimate driving force of Lewis's art practice post-Vorticism, whether 'abstract', 'figurative', 'expressionist', or 'naturalist'¹. 'I can think of dozens of drawings', Lewis wrote in 1956,

which would not be the original things they are if it had not been for their 'Vorticist' ancestry. Even an oil portrait like the Hedwig (PLATE XII)... coming as it does quite near to another convention, is nevertheless, in its massive design, a creature of the Vortex. 2

The distinction between the specific and wider ramifications of the movement would seem to parallel Lewis's own attitude towards Vorticism in later years in terms of his devastating critique of modernism in the visual arts. Once an 'extremist' himself, to his detractors, he was at best considered hopelessly inconsistent, and to the less charitable, a veritable traitor to the modern movement. But characteristically, those elements which were explicitly associated with timeism were those Lewis singled out for condemnation. These were expressed in forebodings about the demise of art in following a headlong path dictated by the dictum of 'progress for progress's sake': the 'zero' or the 'Great Blank' described so graphically in The Demon of Progress in the Arts in 1954. Cries of 'reactionary' are

clearly unjust if Lewis's writings on art are read in conjunction with his analysis of Time.

Thus, in this chapter, I examine the terms and implications of Lewis's anti-modernism as it developed in the years after the war, and consider how some of his important essays on art and aesthetics inform, continue and deepen the general critique of Bergsonism after the appearance of Time and Western Man.

II. 7.i The 'Abstract' and the 'Primitive': 1915-1920

Lewis in 1915 had seen Vorticism as one of the means by which English art, in particular, could be liberated from the 'load of sugary, cheap, anecdotal and in every way pitiable muck', the 'refuse that has accumulated for the last century or so'³. The revolt against Victorian legacies needed to be stark and extreme in order to extricate art from the mire, but two years - and a war later - caused Lewis to reflect carefully on the open trap that loomed before innovators, including himself. 'The Bee in the Bonnet about Modernity' he wrote to John Quinn early in 1917, 'seems to me an imbecility'⁴. Although the 'Nature Mortes, Dialectics and Delicacies' must be infinitely preferable to Rossetti's Grail or Blake's 'Hell World', Lewis's objections to specific manifestations in modern art had been reflected in his own work and in thoughts about how this should develop post-Vorticism. The emergent doctrine of 'progress for progress's sake', outlined against the backdrop of bloody war in

Europe, had a particularly ominous ring for Lewis. In an essay published in The English Review of April 1919, entitled 'What Art Now?', his fears are most clearly articulated. Art is not 'improvement', or 'progress', subject to vulgar fashion or irrational whim: you cannot improve upon a Corot, an Ingres, a Gauguin, and neither can you hope to reach the heights of profound creativity by means of radicalism or innovation alone. It must involve more than the motions of empty 'formalism', and if the revolution was necessary, there must be a time for consolidation:

The innovations in painting, pressed everywhere before the war, have by their violence and completeness exhausted the scope of progress on that point. That America may be considered as not only discovered, but crossed and cross-hatched from side to side, with the surveys and trekkings of its invaders. Expressionism, Cubism, Vorticism, all these movements now have to set about construction and development, and evolve a new world of art out of the continent their enterprise has acquired. 5

'Abstraction' was a key term which for Lewis had been wildly misunderstood and promoted in the debate. The notion of abstraction as 'superior' or 'preferable' to other modes of visual expression, as an end in itself, rather than a means, was categorically refuted by Lewis in his Note on Wadsworth's exhibition of woodcuts in 1919⁶. Stressing the value of multiple modes of working, including naturalism and abstraction, he sets out to publicly repudiate the basis of views - such as Clive Bell's⁷ - which appear to encourage the setting up of oppositional relations between what to Lewis, were essentially different types of technical method, chosen to best express certain ideas in visual form. In outlining his position, Lewis notes that there are 'things you cannot do in one, things not in the other' and

that the value of working in the 'abstract' must be understood in order to live in peace with the 'monster', a 'sincere' but 'pacific' beast. Abstract art, as Lewis noted in the Foreword to his exhibition, 'Guns', might be a 'fanatic' interest, but is nevertheless a 'perfectly sincere insistence on the fundamentals of design or colour'⁸. This degree of emphasis on the importance of form and technique is made clear, and is fundamental to Lewis the artist, but the 'fanatic', egged on by bandwagon critics, must be checked in his enthusiasms lest art itself be irreparably damaged. So immediately after the war, Lewis had decisively called for a halt to the kind of formalism, supported by such as Bell and Fry, that declares subject matter of little or no importance, and which elevates 'significant form' above all other considerations. This provided a basis for disagreement and controversy between Lewis and modernist critics for over three decades, when to openly advocate 'literary' values in painting was 'unpopular' and 'unfashionable'. But as Lewis's argument insists, taking the 'popular' and 'fashionable' path had philosophical as well as aesthetic consequences, and if modern art was to survive and prosper, it had to rid itself of the outward manifestations of 'bad' philosophy.

The immediate post war period to the middle and late 1920s was a crucial time of discovery, definition and consolidation, particularly in respect of the relation between Lewis's aesthetic and philosophical beliefs, and the kind of visual art he wanted to produce. The pamphlet The Caliph's Design, first published in 1919, and characterized later by its author as 'another Blast'⁹, carried the

rousing sub-title, Architects! Where is your Vortex?, and illustrates aptly the difficult theoretical position Lewis was attempting to develop and sustain. The text develops and operates according to an explicit categorization of the 'rationalist' and 'primitivist' strains present in the modernist enterprise and upon the distinction between them which Lewis's case will rest in the future. It is typical of Lewis that he anticipates the rationalist modernism of the architecture of the 1920s and 1930s led by Le Corbusier, and presents the central parable of the Caliph as a modernist salvo directed towards the 'backward' and 'indolent' architects and town planners charged with redevelopment of the post-war urban environment. The case which characterizes architecture as the weakest of the arts is clearly anti-Bergsonian; it is the art which is 'most dependent on the collective sensibility of its period'¹⁰. The example of Vorticist painting, which has far greater autonomy, could provide the key to a renewed, vibrant environment - that is, for Lewis, a more rationalist, individualistic arena - if only the liberation of one medium could be allied to that of another. The potential, Lewis argues, is staggering.

The bulk of the pamphlet, however, is concerned, not with the outlining of a vision, but an examination of present circumstances in art and culture. 'Primitive' modernism, like the term 'classical' is understood by Lewis in both its narrow sense and in a broader, philosophical definition. Explicit modernist borrowings from so-called primitive art forms and styles, such as tribal masks and figures, the emulation of the art of children and the insane, the

constant repetition of the 'trivial' compositional device of the still-life that focuses intense interest on form and method, and the attendant encouragement of amateurism, are all attempts to compromise the integrity and originality of art, an impoverishment which, pushed to its inevitable conclusions, can only end in zero. This death-impulse is initiated in the basically timeist precepts which direct cultural operations, and is blindly running in the peculiar outlets which affect the production, reception and consumption of work. The problem stems from the fusion - and confusion - of vitality in art with vitalism:

The spirit that pervades a large block - cube, if you like - of the art of painting to-day is an almost purely Art-for-Art's sake dilettantism. Yet you find vigour and conviction... Picasso, Matisse, Derain, Balla... are very considerable artists... So you get this contradiction of what is really a very great vitality in the visual arts, and at the same time a very serious scepticism and discouragement in the use of that vitality.¹¹

The vitality which is so obviously present to Lewis in the work of the painters he admires here is blighted at its roots by bad philosophy which is by definition dedicated to the extinction of the visual arts. Nothing of permanent interest can follow from a fashionable obsession with formal values cut loose from ideas, from 'nature-mortes', mock 'child' or 'naïf' and amateurist art, for these are the outward manifestations of the deeper cultural malaise.

The chief culprit in this essentially philosophical scenario is the unlikely figure of the dilettante, or art-critic, an offshoot of Victorian aestheticism who - perhaps unwittingly - compounds the damage. Lewis's direct and uncompromising attitude towards Roger Fry and Clive Bell combines personal invective with serious theoretical

aims in pursuing his analysis. As outlined in my Chapter 5, the basic terms of the critique of aesthetics are at root philosophical. In the piece, 'We Fell in Love with the Beautiful Tiles in the South Kensington ^{Museum} Refreshment Room' the satirical intent and attack on Fry via Picasso is rudely provocative, but aims right at the heart of an aestheticism divorced from artistic practice which trivializes the contribution of the artist himself. If a man's head, in Fry's and Bell's version of modernism, is seen 'simply' and trivialized as no more and no less important than a pumpkin, and the product of 'despised' periods allowed to set aesthetic standards at the behest of a 'cultured' few, then art as a creative activity and intellectual discipline faces a lean time indeed. 'Should art connoisseurs and dilettantes all turn painters' Lewis observes,

the sort of art movement they would like to find themselves in the midst of (we are supposing them fashionably-minded, as many are) would be such a giant amateurism and carnival of the eclectic sensibility as we are in for, if the dealers' riot in Paris succeeds, and if the votaries of Nature-mortism and the champions of the eclectic sensibility here, are to be believed. 12

'Primitivist' modernism is thus characterized in Bergsonian terms for Lewis. The artist-type image which prevails with the public is 'formally identified with the savage or the school-boy to a disobliging extent'¹³, and is a difficult view to dislodge when so firmly rooted in popular belief. The sometimes 'festive' philosopher, he reasons, in the essay, 'The Artist Older than the Fish' might even be 'a bit of an "artist" of that sort himself' from which 'regions and hobnobbing', firm convictions on the nature of 'artists' and their 'abode in time' is derived. The evolutionist cycle is perpetuated whilst those anxious and adventurous enough to challenge this

'sententious belt of savage life' become renewed in conscious isolation from the 'dense herds of a manifestly different and falsely labelled species'¹⁴.

Lewis concludes his pamphlet in a spirit of sincere and unwavering support for the modernist enterprise in its widest sense but equally, he is concerned to identify and expose the representative signs of the pervasive flux within. In view of these already highly developed beliefs about art and society, and the role of philosophical influence on aesthetics, it is a qualified formalism which emerges from The Caliph's Design as the result of an analysis of contemporary art and criticism as he sees it immediately after the war. In visual art, if a man's head is no more and no less important than a pumpkin - and Lewis concedes the indication of a 'considerable truth', - he is also anxious to underwrite the limits and context of that truth¹⁵. Any enterprise, however well-meaning or initially beneficial, is for Lewis highly compromised when it professes to exist solely for 'its own sake', taking little or no cognizance of contextual elements on which its own character depends. This is in effect just as damaging as, for example, the view which would theoretically consign all the arts to an amorphous mass of irrationalist or mystical 'creativity', with separate elements indistinguishable from one another. Thus Lewis opens his account on the varied manifestations of 'extremism'.

II.7.ii Some Tyros, Apes and Enemies: the 1920s

The first edition of The Tyro which appeared in April 1921 coincided with the Leicester Galleries exhibition of paintings and drawings by Lewis. The visual Tyros (PLATE I), which as Lewis explains in the 'Foreword' to the catalogue¹⁶, have many equivalents, and are will-dominated elementals, abominable 'natures' with the undeveloped self-ish intellect of children, and the cunning of mature hobgoblins; puppets with screaming voices underneath. These creatures are conjured in the hope that the spectre of Victorian romanticism and 'art for art's sake' that would have art degenerate into a snobbish game, might be frightened away once and for all. The self-portrait as a Tyro (PLATE XIII) which was shown at this exhibition, illustrates Lewis's point that the Tyros are also indicative of fundamental philosophical generalizations¹⁷. The need to 'wake art up' is strong, but the depiction of the artist-philosopher as Tyro draws graphic attention to the dualism of intellect and will, or the metaphysical not-self and the elemental self¹⁸. Lewis hopes to fight his enemies on all fronts by constructing a visual weapon which is capable of functioning on the same basic level of the opponent.

If the Tyro is essentially a polemical, satirical tool, but which at its deepest level is replete with philosophical ramifications, the 'naturalism' which Lewis avidly pursued at the time of this exhibition represented a practical way forward, out of the modernist cul-de-sac that critics like Bell and Fry were leading artists towards.

Realising that, as a hitherto 'extremist' artist, this departure might be problematic, he explains:

Most of the drawings are drawings from nature. It is important for an experimental artist... to demonstrate that these activities are not the consequence of incompetence, as the enemies of those experiments so frequently assure the public... 19

The utilization of 'working from nature' as a self-conscious justification of skill in this way does not do much to dispel the popularist (and modernist) separation of 'representational' and 'non-representational', nor do the remarks on abstraction, 'at its best when its divorce from natural form of environment is complete' as in Kandinsky or Vorticism, approach the far more complex and subtle arguments in Blast that question the whole notion of 'non-representation'²⁰. In the fully-blown strategy of a 'return to nature' in the 1930s, Lewis was to draw heavily upon the ideas expressed in Blast for the basis of a mature art theory. The Tyro was thus dedicated to the renewal of English art, a liberation from Victorianism, with critical reference to the European modernist movement as an intellectual and technical inspiration. The article which argues against Roger Fry as a 'Continental Mediator' in this enterprise, is based on the point that if new developments are selectively filtered through the elegant sensibilities of a latter-day descendant of Morris, the statements provided will be corrupt, and perpetuated in English art. This was Lewis's main fear, and he saw the fruits of stagnation all around him.

General support from both T.S. Eliot and Herbert Read is evident in this first issue of the journal, and it is the kind of sufficiently like-minded support which almost redeems Lewis from his increasing

position of isolation. Eliot on 'The Romantic Englishman, the Comic Spirit, and the Function of Criticism' subjects John Bull and Charlie Chaplin to a brief drubbing that declares itself as a possible point of reference or inspiration for the more detailed analysis of 'The Revolutionary Simpleton' and The Mysterious Mr. Bull. Read, who was later to be revealed, as far as Lewis was concerned, as an archetypal disciple of fashion and 'progress' in modern art, became an prominent art-critical adversary in the battle against chronologism; but in his piece for Tyro 1, 'Critics in Arabia', he accurately characterizes the specific philosophical worries that motivated Lewis. Read begins:

The symptoms of the mental torpor from which we suffer to-day are so numerous that only by recording them as they appear can the intelligence comprehend them. All rational categories vanish in this state, and are replaced by emotional 'blurs.' The general blur of thought evident, for example, in the neo-mystical philosophies of 'intuition' and is there a well demarcated symptom to which a good deal of treatment has already been accorded. But the blur extends over every action and expression of modern life, and it is no less essential to remove it from the imagery of art than from the concepts of philosophy. 21

'We live', Read concludes, in an 'intuitional age' when the 'torpor' of the common mind is at its zenith, and calls for the restoration of a rational critical assessment to cut through the emotionalist 'blur'.

One of the most fully worked out statements of Lewis's aesthetics and philosophical views of the early 1920s is printed in Tyro 2. This is the lengthy 'Essay on the Objective of Plastic Art in our Time', which takes up Read's challenge by attempting to set some ground rules for the debate, in the way that art relates to other disciplines such as philosophy, science and psychology. The unbridled emotional element of life which Read draws attention to, is, as Lewis admits with Bergson,

essential to art, but as this element is essential and necessary to artistic functioning, it may be the discipline most fully equipped to effect control. Art, of course, as the 'ultimate necessity of life' thereby finds itself at the point where it may be said to transcend philosophy to the extent that 'it is what the philosopher comes to out of the discomforture of his system'²².

That this essay has the relation of aesthetics to philosophy at its base is evident: Lewis's analysis of art and games, the function of the artist, conditions of perception, and standards in art is conducted with reference to the fundamental critique of Bergson's Impressionist philosophy, whereby life supersedes art, and to his own endorsement of Schopenhauer's 'cold and immobile' idea of artistic creation. The statement offered here is supplemented by 'The Credentials of the Painter' which appeared in The English Review early in 1922, which attempts to outline in more detail the technical and methodological implications resulting from a commitment to anti-Bergsonism and the attendant critique of aspects of modernist painting. The 'abstract' picture is thus destined to take its place 'side by side with other forms of pictorial expression on which it will heroically react, but with which it will not interfere'²³. The tendency of modernist art, which leads to the implication that the 'latest' movement is thereby 'better' than the previous one is an insidious falsehood for Lewis and is occasioned by an 'unconscious leaning on the ideas released by relativity and other theories of our time'²⁴.

Lewis's profound interest in portraiture which emerges very strongly in this period is emphatically revealed as not merely a means of demonstrating the possession of traditional skills, but as a medium which holds out to man the means of a 'peculiar immortality', a strategy adopted to defeat the effects of time and flux, the human equivalent of the vortex:

There is not one immortality, evidently, but several types, and this one is the painter's; a sort of death and silence in the middle of life. This death-like rigidity of the painting or statue, when a living being is represented, this silence and repose, is one of the assets of the painter or sculptor. If pictures made a noise... the unique character of the destiny of plastic art would be impaired. 25

Lewis argues, accordingly, that the fundamental claim of the visual artist is that he alone is able to render the visual fact of existence, that it is the 'coldest', the most 'intellectual' and direct of the arts. It is a strategy more immediately accessible to any ordinary human, and is fully and instantly understood by those to whom the complex metaphysical implications of the vortex, for example, would always be obscured. The 'direct' nature of art is such that any philosopher who attempts to 'decorate' his system of thought with a veneer of aesthetics will not penetrate to the essential nature of visual art: thus Lewis's own priorities - vis à vis philosophy - are firmly established.

Lewis's identification of the 'primitive' character of modernism is a preoccupation which recurs in almost all of the important critical writings in the 1920s. The short article, 'The Apes of God' which appeared in The Criterion in October 1923, preceded by several years the publication of the massive satirical novel of the same name, the

scourge of Bloomsbury and self-styled 'romantic', 'bohemian' populations. It is a particularly crucial piece of writing in relation to the equation that singles out aspects of contemporary life and culture, modernist art and criticism, and seeks to demonstrate their philosophical and theoretical underpinnings. The essay does much to initialize the intense character of much of the criticism produced in the 1920s, including the major books, The Art of Being Ruled and Time and Western Man, culminating in the publication of the novel itself.

Lewis introduces us to a class of puppets far superior to the simple Tyros, who were indeed their (the massed public's) masters and intellectual leaders, an active collective minority who 'ape' - play the role of - the 'artist'. As 'moneyed descendents of Victorian literary splendour' they make a cult of the amateur, the child artist and any 'imperfectly equipped person'. This group of parasitic 'geniuses' were for Lewis modelled perfectly in all particulars by Fry and the Bloomsbury circle, and represented a seriously damaging influence on the idea of art in the minds of the public, being naturally identified by them as an intellectual élite, to whom admiring heads might turn: the pseudo-high-brow and minority 'crowd' cavorting and performing for its mass audience, obscuring the possibility of truly original or creative thought. The characterization of the 'Apes of God' deepens and crystallizes in vivid form the particular elements Lewis identified as timeist in contemporary art and criticism, and provides a devastating, caricatured portrait of the primitive 'modern'.

The writings which followed, including in particular an 'Art Chronicle'²⁶, and 'The Dithyrambic Spectator'²⁷, pursue in various directions the original themes and problems that the 'Apes of God' raised, in view of Lewis's conviction that the burgeoning of collectives and a mass audience for art would lead to further corruption of the quality of work produced. Public 'participation' via amateurism is inevitably for Lewis a devastating levelling down process, but ironically, the future of art, its continuation and consumption, rests upon the shoulders of the apes and their puppets. Lewis wryly concludes that the public might render the greatest service to art 'by not encouraging any art at all'²⁸. By this, he intends to advocate a particular kind of specialism whereby the 'professionals' should be left in peace to do their work.

In 'The Dithyrambic Spectator. An Essay on the Origins and Survivals of Art', Lewis concentrates on the construction of a two-phase examination of aspects of vitalism in art, linked closely to the views on the 'public' and collective coteries characterized in the 'Apes' piece. The relation of 'life' (or death) and 'art' and ritual are central preoccupations of the two texts - one by a doctor and anatomist, the other an anthropologist - that are analysed. Both viewpoints owe allegiance to scientific or social scientific pursuits rather than to aesthetics, and the consequences are revealing. In each case the different 'scientific' theoretical frameworks are obliged to subordinate the idea and practice of art in the service of each discipline, and thus invariably arrive at an essentially vitalist interpretation of its character and function that has direct

philosophical implications:

We hear that our art to-day, under the impulsion of science, is an art of the background: and that the individual no longer exists. 29

It was not only the artistic disciplines which were being strangled in this way, for Lewis was convinced of the pervasiveness of the propaganda of collectivism: philosophy too, is thus 'obediently harnessed to physics and psychology, circumscribed to a fashionable and purely political role'³⁰.

The absorption of one activity by another has a familiar Bergsonian ring about it, and one needs no reminder of a Spenglerian world-as-history to project the consequences for those interested in the survival and prosperity of contemporary art:

But to-day none of the pictorial and plastic arts, at least, are any more than an adjunct to the critical and historic faculty. The contemporary audience is essentially an audience of critics, that is to say, they are as active as the performer, who, indeed, exists chiefly in order that the critic may act - as a Critic. The only rationale of the professional artist to-day is to provide the critic with material for criticism; it is no longer to give delight or to serve any useful end. And were it not for this, the whole elaborate pretence that the fine arts are still an effective part of our life would be immediately abandoned. There is, of course, the other motive for clinging to this pretence; the motive of respectability; it is felt that the public demise en masse of every art would be the crowning scandal of all. The fine arts are the last rags of a by now hardly even laughable respectability. 31

It was a bleak picture that Lewis saw, and it is one which he felt was already heavily entrenched in the portals of modernism, with the rise of the critic or 'art-expert', ready to interpret for mass consumption the incomprehensible meanderings of the 'extremist' artist.

The 'religion of impermanence' which had imposed itself on thought,

culture and society required analysis on all fronts: The Art of Being Ruled, the companion volume to Time and Western Man, outlined the influence of chronologism in respect of social and political perspectives. As Lewis notes with a grim humour, it is difficult to treat of anything permanent - like art - where the flux reigns, and suggests that in this 'fluid world' we would be more appropriately engaged in building boats than houses. The significance of the diverse strands of Lewis's analyses is here clearly outlined. The 'Trinity' - of God, Subject and Object is pronounced at an end, and its collapse heralds the 'evolution of the subject into the object or of the child back into the womb from which it came', the 'ideology of childhood' which pervades the mature 'bourgeois' world³².

The first edition of The Enemy journal, a 'review of art and literature' appeared in January 1927. Numbers two and three followed in September of that year and in January 1929. In refusing to claim the customary and, by definition, temporary modernist status of a 'movement', Lewis declares his independence as a 'solitary outlaw and not a gang', as a necessary strategy if the effects of the time-cult are to be identified and analysed in the arts. 'Time' is unequivocally taken to be the principle of the machine and the unthinking mechanism: this philosophical idea governs each stage of Lewis's analysis, whatever subject or discipline is under scrutiny. Together, the three numbers of the journal present the case for the identification of a literary and critical chronologism, which was for Lewis so rife that a wealth of supporting evidence could be easily accumulated.

The bulk of the first issue prints 'The Revolutionary Simpleton' ahead of the combined volume of Time and Western Man, with its in-depth analysis of the time-cult on literature, history and popular culture. The sole contribution dedicated to the visual arts is not from Lewis, but its discussion of crucial issues confronting modern artists and critics would have found ample editorial support. Writing on the artist's 'horror of abstraction', Gibson's essay 'Giorgio di Chirico' describes a mind and a version of art practice that is not unfamiliar. We should, Gibson notes, ask ourselves why, given Chirico's metaphysical sphere of reference, he should refer to the 'material' or the 'concrete' at all. The reason for this, he concludes, is a quirk of psychology:

Chirico has a horror of the purely abstract as of something terrifying in its emptiness, from which he can only be rescued by a contact with concrete things... And yet he is a metaphysician, interested in the reactions and processes of the mind; and to him material forms are valueless for their own sakes, deprived of an ulterior metaphysical significance. Consequently in his art he attempts to make use of material forms to express the non-material, to the end that by that means he may avoid the horror of pure abstraction and yet express something outside of the material world. ³³

That there are certain parallels in this characterization with Lewis's beliefs and art practice is evident enough, although a dependence on the terms of 'inner' psychology would be unacceptable. But in relation to the major concerns which occupied Lewis during the late 1920s and beyond, two specific issues are highlighted. In the context of Lewis's critique of a modernism which insists on extolling the virtues of zero, Gibson's article is an interesting point of reference. It is also suggestive of the terms which dictate the very limited extent of Lewis's sympathy with elements of Dadaism and

Surrealism (or super-realism). De Chirico, cast as the metaphysician, would approach Lewisian appreciation: but in respect of the collective Surrealist enterprise of which he was a precursor, and the practice of investing art with the functions and imagery of dream-psychology, he and others of the same ilk must for Lewis attract censure in the name of art's survival. Thus the artistic context for the second and third numbers of The Enemy is established, and shows its comprehensive roots in literature, philosophy, ethics and politics. The 'critical system' which Lewis had set in motion in the first issue with 'The Revolutionary Simpleton' had found an ideal target in Dada and its metamorphosis into Surrealism, which had inherited the artistic timeist mantle in the wake of Futurism. The critique of the literary review, transition³⁴, which had, significantly for Lewis, published material by James Joyce and Gertrude Stein in the company of 'Dadaists' and 'post-Dadas', is a focus for both these issues of The Enemy.

In issue two, Lewis defines the essentially political, specifically communist character of Dada and Surrealism, and argues that any artistic pretensions are thus irrevocably compromised as a result. He shows how the terms which are typically associated with modernism, such as 'radical', 'extremist', 'revolutionary', 'communist', 'progressive' - are now revealed in relation to 'super-realism', the kind of generalized, anti-individualist and 'convulsive tendency' that proves itself to be the equivalent enemy of art, the outcome of a 'dogmatic sensationalism, and not of the vital qualities that make the artist'³⁵. That a political dogma of this kind will not hesitate to

use art to further its ends is to be expected:

Joyce, or Picasso or Chirico, are called in to advertise something that is not primarily art, just in the same way as the Soviet leaders very sensibly employ 'advanced' artists to advertise their régime... or as the Medicis used artists to advertise their munificence... 36

Surrealism, for Lewis, typified the impulse which had initiated a headlong move towards what he called the 'new romanticism', linked to the old cult of Dionysus, but with its equivalent Nietzschean characterization as the 'new nihilism'. 'The Diabolical Principle', the major essay published in The Enemy No.3 is devoted to an analysis of the theoretical implications which follow from a collective devotion to the most extreme manifestations of timeist dogma. The merging of dream-states and concrete realities in order to posit a kind of 'absolute' or 'super-reality' that would transcend both states has but one consequence for Lewis, and must result in

a logical emulsion of the forms and perspectives of life as we know them, and, translated into an art-expression, will approximate most closely to the art of the child. That is, of course, what has everywhere occurred with the theorists of that persuasion. 37

The infantile in art is thus the link which heralds a submerging of the 'normal, conscious, real' in a celebration of the 'Great Unconscious'. For Lewis, the doctrine of Surrealism is indeed the Faustian, diabolical principle related by Spengler, the 'dark night of the soul'³⁸ settling on the 'arts of formal expression', which owes its overall allegiance, not to art itself nor aesthetics, but to fluid 'life', mechanistic will, and the politics of the flux. Lewis, in the late 1920s, saw the dilemma clearly enough, and identified the essential elements of the task ahead: the 'revolutionary impulse' which inspired Vorticism had to be sustained, but must not fall victim

to the extremist subjectivism of 'sur-reality'.

His call for a 'new, and if necessary shattering' criticism of modernity and the modern, in the article 'The Values Behind the Doctrine of "Subjective" Art' of July 1927, had been made according to the view that linked bad art to bad philosophy, and in a challenge to the 'mental world of the subconscious, in which we naturally sink back to a more primitive level'³⁹. The necessity of scrutinizing the intellectual principles which lay behind a work of art was fully acknowledged. Ironically enough, having fully worked out his own philosophical beliefs in relation to art in Time and Western Man and other key writings of this period, Lewis found himself in a position similar to that of the pre-war Futurists who had the task of aligning practice with theory. The vital difference between them and Lewis, as I have already suggested, stems from a cast of mind which had already put painting first.

II.7.iii Art Criticism and the Time Factory in the Thirties

The early 1930s were for Lewis dominated by his articles on politics collected in his ill-fated book Hitler⁴⁰ and the controversy surrounding the publication of The Apes of God. Lewis was to recant the position taken in these earlier Hitler articles⁴¹, and by the end of the decade had leisure to reflect on the undoubted damage the expression of unpopular political views had on his career as a whole. The Apes of God was a very different proposition, a literary blast

aimed towards Bloomsbury and its satellite amoebae, with the purpose of exposing and holding up to ridicule the 'pseudo' artists, 'intellectuals' and 'hangers-on' who passed themselves off as genuine. But reaction to the book, by those who claimed to recognize themselves as characters, was just as explosive, provoking much anger, libellous noises and even death threats⁴². Despite an unwavering commitment to its underlying theoretical principles, the furore surrounding the novel itself probably did Lewis's career as much harm as the Hitler book if success is measured by degrees of mainstream acceptance. As far as art and aesthetics were concerned, the reputation of these books, as Lewis became aware, would negatively colour audience response to what he had to say, and his normally abrasive writing style becomes markedly and self-consciously defensive during the 1930s.

The continuing influence and importance of the issues arising from Vorticism dominates the critical essays written in 1934 and 1935. However, 'Art in a Machine Age'⁴³ takes a wider political and philosophical brief than specialized aesthetic quarrels about subject matter and abstraction⁴⁴. For Lewis, the 'Machine Age' is the result of the 'general intellectual paralysis' of the politics and philosophy of fusion. His interest proceeds from its malign influence on art:

...what is quite certain, I think, is this: that if art, along with the mind of man, goes to live in the heart of the Machine - goes, as it were, to live over the shop - then the arts will ultimately cease to exist as we have known them up to now... By the substitution of a quantitative for a qualitative norm, the very meaning of art indeed must become lost. 45

The effects of the 'Chronologic Philosophy' which in Lewis's view had beset art and its cultural base for well over twenty years must be

firmly resisted by the independent mind, aggressively if necessary, lest one becomes a passive, unthinking follower:

...the best manner to keep Time in his place is to take Time by the forelock - not to allow Time to drive you along like a flock of sheep with a pack of ideologies barking at your heels.⁴⁶

The link between Vorticism and the renewal of architecture that was raised in The Caliph's Design fifteen years previously is reaffirmed in 1934⁴⁷. But the modern architect, Lewis argues, having finally 'got his Vortex at last' by courtesy of the painter, is in the process of excluding pictures altogether from his 'dogmatic or cubist walls'. The 'bitter pill' of modernism having been swallowed and thoroughly digested by the new architects now works against those pioneers who fashioned it. Yet Vorticism itself takes a share of the blame, infested and corrupted by its own extremism. This Lewis accepts, but points the finger also in the direction of a modernism which had pursued regression in the guise of 'progress' in its embracing of child-like art and the 'worship of the Fool'.

By the time the collection of essays, Wyndham Lewis the Artist, from 'Blast' to Burlington House was published in 1939, the fears that Lewis had voiced about modernism during the previous ten years had, in his view, been realised. 'Pure formalism' and Surrealism in English art by the late 1930s had been paraded as 'new' and 'revolutionary' methods when in effect both were seen as merely re-dressed revivals in terms of the Vorticist 'cul-de-sac' or the highly literary dream-worlds of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood⁴⁸. 'The Brave New World', Lewis writes in 'The Skeleton in the Cupboard Speaks', 'was a mirage - a snare and a delusion'⁴⁹. Lewis may not have foreseen some

of the more positive implications of some minimalist and conceptualist art as it developed during the decades after his death, but was nevertheless prophetically fearful for art's survival if it had to depend on the example of extremist abstractionists or the Surrealists for development and inspiration: art was being propelled towards literal and physical extinction. The 'primitive modernist' was engineering his own demise by pressing on towards nothingness and meaninglessness, aided and abetted by the fashion-crazed art critic. In declaring 'highly experimental modern art' at an end, Lewis discounts the rearguard action of the abstract extremists who affect to be advancing, but who are actually in retreat⁵⁰. Surrealism, despite protestations and advertisements, was a reinstatement of the old, and was anti-modern with its feverish roots in academicism and the libidinous unconscious uncovered by Freud. A world without the kind of art Lewis envisaged would be lightened only by the scribblings of children, accompanied by an appropriately vitalist theoretical, religious and aesthetic framework dedicated to the furtherance of an 'organized savagery'⁵¹.

The purpose of Wyndham Lewis on Art is centrally dedicated to proposing a solution to this alarming situation, demonstrating paradoxically the volte-face that led to the labelling of Lewis's views and practice as 'reactionary'. This was particularly ironic in view of the rejection in the previous year by Burlington House of Lewis's 'modern' portrait of T.S. Eliot. The resignation of Sickert and Augustus John over the affair, and the controversy which raged in the press could not have been about a 'reactionary' artist. For

Lewis, the action of the Royal Academy was ample proof, if needed, of the 'dead order' which stifled creative and living art, the 'ignoblest mechanical travesty of nature' that went hand-in-hand with philosophical and cultural conformity. For himself, Lewis accepted that a charge of dogmatism might be conceded, as an indication of strength of belief, but 'chronological parochialism', the 'merely fashionable', or 'absolutism that has not its roots in some creative necessity', as demonstrated by the 'potboiling orthodoxy of Burlington House', is outlawed⁵².

The new essays, 'Super-nature versus Super-real' and 'The Skeleton in the Cupboard Speaks' are important in the context of art theory and practice at the end of the 1930s⁵³, with Lewis providing also an interesting critical review of his artistic career and interests to date. The 'abstract extremist' of Blast becomes as heated about a 'return to nature' campaign as he was in attempting to throw off the limiting shackles of imitative or naturalist art. Inconsistent and contradictory this seemed, but it was nevertheless a philosophically defined development which did not seek to chain the artist to the mimesis of visual appearance, as Lewis's objections to both Impressionism and Surrealism make clear, but to free him in order to bring new insights to bear on the visual world. Lewis knew that art needed the public to survive, but had to make itself directly accessible. For painting to be popular with the majority, Lewis argued, it must approach popularity⁵⁴. If this meant consorting with types of imitation, and natural appearances, then it must be so. Lewis had always claimed, from his Blast days, that his own art was

never fully divorced from nature. The position, being desperate, calls for desperate measures, but there is a crucial difference between this strategy and the profound critique of 'popular culture' in 'The Revolutionary Simpleton', and it depends on an understanding of the conjunction of the 'concrete' and the 'abstract' in both aesthetic and philosophical terms:

...I never deserted the concrete for the abstract... To-day I am a super-naturalist... I am... never unconscious of those underlying conceptual truths that are inherent in all appearances. But I leave them now where I find them, instead of isolating them in conceptual arabesques. 55

The mechanical passivity of time-cult popularism does emphatically not apply: Lewis feared that if extremism of the kind described was allowed to flourish, it would provide a haven for 'inferior' or unskilled artists, with reflected suspicion on the 'genuine' experimental artists.

The only way out, therefore, would be to work in a manner which would immediately expose the amateurs and charlatans. The return-to-nature that Lewis advocates is not a surrender to the automatic or the irrational, to vicarious 'realism' and psychological sensationalism devoid of intellectual understanding, but must stress conceptual, not perceptual observation. Nature alone 'is not enough', and can be 'just as dead as academicism'⁵⁶. Surrealism, Lewis argued, was closer to photography than painting, and the statements it made offered the observer vicarious psychological emotion, an 'eternal world of sense', which must be enjoyed on that level, rather than an objective, formal, aesthetic, or pictorial involvement that has potential to function outside the temporal order altogether, isolated from the flux⁵⁷.

Hence the 'popularity' of this 'movement' (an especially meaningful term for Lewis in this context) with the public, and its status in the philosophical debate. Lewis had no illusions about the limited extent of 'the public's' capacity to fully enjoy and appreciate works of art, and did not believe his function was best served by attempting to dilute his ideas for mass consumption. Wyndham Lewis the Artist was primarily aimed at the 'intelligentsia', the controllers of the apes-and-tyros system whereby art-critics, standing to art and the masses as priests to God and his flock, act as intermediaries and 'experts'. Professing a superfluity of inside knowledge and understanding in cases of artistic 'extremism', Lewis argued that a stranglehold on modern art and its reception was effected.

In 'The Skeleton in the Cupboard Speaks', Lewis provides a list of 'fundamental' questions and issues which must be asked and answered by artists, irrespective of period, style, attitude or philosophy. His analysis here is abstracted from the specific context of Vorticism, but these are defined as general artistic problems, and are familiar in the context of the time-debate: they include

- (1) the non-identity of life and art; (2) the certain 'deadness' and lack of inventive imagination that is inclined to dog the French School; (3) the place of literary imagination in pictorial art; (4) the rôle of subject-matter in the art of the painter; (5) how far nationality must influence the painter; (6) what is the value and meaning of 'originality'; (7) whether the Machine Age is incompatible with the visual arts - all these and many more considerations belong to the permanent material of critical investigation. 58

What Lewis pinpoints here are problems which are raised and debated in respect of a specifically modern consciousness, and it is also clear to him that the way these are approached determine an artist's or

critic's overall theoretical orientation, and thus the kind of art which is encouraged and produced. The 'stranglehold' of the critic in contemporary terms is crucially important in the attitude taken towards these problems. The influence of Fry and Bell has been discussed, but after Fry's death in 1934, it was Herbert Read who emerged as the champion of 'extremism', an active promoter of a 'utopia of the immature' engaged in 'making the world safe for the Child'⁵⁹. Read's position as 'extremist art-critic' is as hollow to Lewis, if not more so, than the art it purports to describe and interpret, for it entails 'writing about something that does not exist, except for a handful of monied dilettantes, amusing themselves by being childish in public'⁶⁰. Child art, though, has its uses, observes Lewis, being reminded of 'Mr. Fry... the great apostle of British amateurism', for then the 'limited, the immature, majority-person should be compelled to paint primitive'⁶¹, leaving the 'professionals' to their serious work.

Herbert Read's 'profession' as the spokesman of the current 'intellectual circus' is thus empty, non-existent: and no amount of 'sincerity' on his part may compensate. So Lewis notes, with regret, Read's gravitation towards the 'sensational and sentimental quarter of the philosophic compass', and in taking the authority of the historian-philosopher Vico⁶², and in rejecting art as a 'rational ideal' but 'conceived as a stage in the ideal history of mankind', is thereby caught fast in the vitalist, Spenglerian world-as-history camp⁶³. Such a conception, observes Lewis, typifies his own prediction of the apotheosis of the child as artist. Despite a

genuine personal attachment and a strong measure of respect for Read, Lewis is merciless in his judgement of the critic who could speak of the aesthetically impaired, 'negative and destructive' aspects of Surrealist art, and yet within the space of a year could become its enthusiastic spokesman in England⁶⁴. For Lewis, this was theoretical opportunism of the worst kind:

Mr. Herbert Read has an unenviable knack of providing, at a week's notice, almost any movement, or sub-movement, in the visual arts, with a neatly-cut party-suit - with which it can appear, appropriately caparisoned, at the cocktail-party thrown by the capitalist who has made its birth possible...⁶⁵

So devoted had Read become to the 'progressist' cause that Vorticism had become a profound embarrassment to him, occurring long before its 'time': he would, Lewis claims, 'far rather have had nothing happen in 1914', so that 'abstraction' could have been 'discovered' at the 'right' time in the 1930s⁶⁶. But it is also clear to Lewis that the function of the 'abstract' at the time of writing appeared to have a very different emphasis than in 1914. Vorticism, in aiming to be 'cheerfully and dogmatically external', did not prostrate itself before machines and the mechanical in the manner of Italian Futurism, nor did it turn away from the mechanical world, but accepted it as such. Read's emphasis on the 'inner world of the imagination' as an appropriate means of inspiration for the modern artist, attempts to provide 'an asylum from the brutality of mechanical life', an escapist, self-delusory doctrine that on the contrary achieves the opposite effect, becoming identified with that brutality. Clearly enough, given Lewis's understanding of the Schopenhauerian will and the Bergsonian view of life and the flux, Read's notion of the

'abstract' as a panacea for the sordidness and flatness of 'everyday life', taking refuge in 'inner imagination' and the 'unconscious' is seen to be highly suspect. Lewis saw Read's abstract artist, the 'primitive' modernist, in flight from the very same demon of progress he clasps in an incestuous embrace.

Lewis's views as expressed in his earlier writings, and confirmed in the two new essays here, are evidently based on a belief in the heightened and profound perceptual powers of the artist, who is able to transform visual and cognitive 'actual life' experiences into meaningful works of art which are essentially different in kind from the stimuli which may have spawned those creative ideas in the first place: hence the concept of the artist's 'super-nature' rather than the passively imitative 'super-real':

The super-naturalist... is aiming - at the opposite to the super-realist. The emphasis would be upon nature, not upon the real... Art... involves a banishing of that kind of reality. The spectator is offered sensations, as if on the switchback at a fair, among the scenes of nature, by the super-realist. The sensations provided for him by the super-naturalist would be of a quite different order. Nature would be predigested for him... transformed by all her latent geometries into something outside 'the real' - outside the temporal order - altogether.⁶⁷

The 'real' of Surrealist art thus connects with the space-timeists' philosophical 'real'; it merely offers a sensationalist, temporal and psychological subject matter, utilizing the techniques of trompe l'oeil and illusion⁶⁸, and cannot hope to approach genuine 'pictorial interest'. The choice for the artist, according to Lewis, is quite a simple one, and follows clearly from the acceptance of certain philosophical principles: he can choose to interpret the material world, or to create it. Invention is undoubtedly the key concept, and

is one which he found too infrequently in artistic practice and theory⁶⁹.

This conviction, that where true invention is identified, significance cannot be denied, was the driving force behind the very explicit condemnation of 'abstraction' in the 1940s that was to characterize Lewis's aesthetics to the end of his career⁷⁰. But his objections have to be read in conjunction with his theoretical views, for he found much to praise in the particular work of many artists who persisted along that road, and continued to produce such work himself. This is only puzzling or inconsistent if a parallel study of Lewis's philosophical views is not made. In a letter to Lord Carlow early in 1939, Lewis voices his fear that the 'theoretic basis' of the time-philosophy had been lost sight of, and 'has now everywhere passed into action'. Since the writing of Time and Western Man in 1927, Lewis explained that he had been trying to 'translate this analysis into more popular forms'. This aim clearly includes his many general commentaries and specific critical articles on artists, art and aesthetics, and in particular underpins his convictions about the mis-use of abstraction and regressionist tendencies associated with aspects of modernism that would elevate 'empty' abstraction to the place reserved for truly inventive work. This necessitated a strong rejection of any move towards absolutism in formal terms. Lewis was fully aware, however, that the 'popularization' of such matters was rather a vain hope, and that the philosophies in question at the bottom of timeism must be examined 'to master the structure of the contemporary mechanical Juggernaut'⁷¹.

II.7.iv Absolute Zero: The Demon of Progress in the Arts

Lewis's short book, The Demon of Progress in the Arts, published in 1954, is more of a summation of theory and belief than a significant addition to it, but it confidently re-affirms the substance of earlier work. Lewis sets out the terms and effects of the cultural disease of extremism affecting the arts from the point of view of the 'prime mover' Vorticist. Enthusiasms which attempt a transmutation of the visual arts into something akin to musical expression - the exchanging of the concrete for the abstract - are unceremoniously jettisoned once and for all. Thankful for a personal - and narrow - escape from an unthinking acceptance of Bergsonian cultural ideology, Lewis sets out to reiterate and explain his basic objections to what had already become a dogma: institutionalized modernism and 'everywhere the beginnings of nothing'. In support of his case, Lewis cites examples of 'extremist' pictures from a Réalités Nouvelles exhibition in Paris⁷². The 'deadly monotony' about such canvases, Lewis notes, makes further citations superfluous.

Lewis's 1946 appointment as art critic for the Listener was probably as near to the 'mainstream' as he was ever likely to become. As Jeffrey Meyers comments, despite his 'ogriish' reputation, he was to be a most 'benign' critic who lavished generous praise on younger artists, whichever mode of working - 'abstract' or 'naturalist' they preferred⁷³. In The Demon of Progress, the work of Francis Bacon, Michael Ayrton, Robert Colquhoun and John Minton is singled out for

illustration and approbation. What mattered to Lewis was the quality, originality and inventiveness of the art itself, not a set of rigid categorizations according to either 'modernist' or 'non-modernist' terminologies, although most of the works and artists praised by Lewis fitted unquestionably into the former, rather than the latter categorization. His detractors tended to discount the evidence where it interfered with preconceptions of 'reactionaryism'. In these matters Lewis showed a far more open and tolerant attitude than some of his critics and those who had become influential apologists for the modern movement, the ideological descendants of Roger Fry and Bloomsbury.

One of these, Lewis's old friend Herbert Read, led the field against Lewis's position with an article criticizing 'negative', 'reactionary' doctrines in art and politics called 'The Lost Leader, or the Psychopathology of Reaction in the Arts'. He would not openly name Lewis in the article itself, but in case the connection is not made by the reader, he adds a note on the title:

It may be no accident that these thoughts came to me after reading The Demon of Progress in the Arts, an attack on the contemporary movement in art by Wyndham Lewis. It should be obvious, however, for reasons given in the course of my essay, that my observations have no application to Mr. Lewis himself. 74

Even without such an express - and self-conscious - qualification, this essay is indeed a thinly disguised criticism of Lewis's book.

Read's characterization of the 'pioneer', the 'born schizoid', who deserts the brave front of exploration, and who would brand and revile former collaborators with the label of 'extremist', is supported,

surprisingly, by the example of Wordsworth, not Lewis. Read is denied, by his own subterfuge, the opportunity to mount a direct examination of Lewis's case in detail, and instead has to fall back on a general defence of vitalism that is based on crude and over-simplified interpretations of the opposing arguments.

'Reactionaries', Read announces, 'are always anxious to deny the existence of progress'⁷⁵. 'Progress' is initially equated with standards of living and material benefits for our comfort, and then becomes identified with change itself, and the inevitability of repetitive, 'cyclical change'. Lewis neither denied the 'existence of progress', nor the inevitability of change in his philosophy and writings on art. His task would have been simpler if that denial was possible, but as he was fully convinced of the pervasiveness of the flux, time and change, Read's protestations invalidate themselves before they are launched. Lewis would certainly not disagree with the view of the fundamental principle contained in an 'aesthetic consciousness', but would profoundly challenge its alleged basis in a vitalistic schema. Similarly, Read's discussion of the nature and application of man's powers of reason demonstrates an emphasis on passivity which Lewis could not have accepted, whilst he may well have concurred with the characterization of the intellectual relationship with the flux. Read writes:

...reason is fed, as from an underground source, by metaphors and symbols grasped in their sensuous actuality by a sensitive organism. 76

For Lewis, reason does not passively 'feed' on, but on the contrary, organizes and shapes 'sensuous actuality'. A critique which purports to be unspecific, but which nevertheless attempts to counter a case which it cannot cite, is inadequately furnished with debating power.

In the short and brutally dismissive review of The Demon of Progress in the Arts⁷⁷, Clement Greenberg, the new guru of Modernism⁷⁸, launched an attack on Lewis's 'antimodernism' that rivalled Read's in its superficial treatment of the terms of his argument. At least Read's position stemmed from a reasonably well-informed acquaintance with the particular theoretical and philosophical background of Lewis's views, but Greenberg's obvious dislike of Lewis's style and aversion to his argument - 'nothing, whether on the place of reason or that of imagination, gets developed in his writing' - suggests a sketchy knowledge of Lewis's work. Indeed, from judgements made on the basis of the Listener articles, and in comparison with the 'incompetence' of Herbert Read, Greenberg's concession that Lewis 'has taste' and is a 'superb critic when confining himself to the past' - i.e., Michelangelo - is a very small one, given the modern orientation of Lewis's writing. Greenberg complains, inappropriately, therefore, that none of Lewis's 'usual keenness as a critic enters into his polemic against abstract art'. Leaving aside the charge of 'incoherence' which is, as Greenberg is aware, a matter of 'taste', the complaint about Lewis's own 'amateurism', in matters of art and criticism, reveals an amusing irony in discussion of a professional artist and critic of over forty years' standing. Greenberg either ignores - or is unaware - of the ways in which the concept of 'amateurism' links closely to Lewis's aesthetic theory and philosophy. If Lewis 'dishonestly' states the point that extremism may be a hiding ground for the incompetent, it is not deemed an objection of such importance that it requires further commentary or exegesis.

It is evident that Greenberg must field fundamental objections to Lewis's book in order to defend his own formalist critical position, at once related to Clive Bell's cruder formulations, but at the same time, infinitely more sophisticated and theorized. This was seen to be effected by appropriating the idea of an explicitly Kantian 'specialism' in the service of an art criticism which insisted on the overwhelming importance of medium, materials and technique over subject matter, ideas and 'literary' significance. Thus Lewis is seen as only one of many crabby detractors of 'extremism', who insist on the attribution of 'a priori' and 'categorical' judgements before a work is even created. This is perhaps a deliberate misunderstanding of Lewis's position, which, as I have noted, depends on the distinction between abstraction as a method of working, and 'empty' abstraction - extremism - as a non-original and potentially damaging indulgence. For Lewis, lurking not too far behind the extremist's claim to 'individualism' and 'creative freedom', is the 'small well-disciplined group' to which the individual personality is surrendered. The 'obligation to be free' which is imposed in this way is no freedom at all:

It will be obvious from this that the individuality of the artist is the last thing you are likely to find. Each artist conforms to one or other of the violent orthodoxies of the moment. Women are obedient to the annual fiats of fashion from Paris, and an artist has no more individuality than has a woman, whose only desire is to conform to the fashion. So when I speak of the freedom of the artist... it cannot mean that the artist is personally, or individually, free. That is not a thing that could possibly happen anywhere today. 79

On the basic issue of autonomy, the difference between Greenberg and Lewis is wide, and concerns the head-on clash of respective beliefs

about the fundamental functions of art: put simply, for Lewis, art must be a vehicle for conceptualization and ideas, and for Greenberg and Bell, 'form' - perceived sensuously and emotionally as the 'aesthetic' - comes first. The philosophical duality of the intelligence and the senses conspicuously applies in the context of chronologism. When Greenberg says that 'results are all that count', there would be no argument from Lewis, but the 'results' may be very differently interpreted and understood. Both positions depend on a kind of a priori categorization that will determine approaches to a new work before it is brought into existence: Lewis, at least, openly acknowledges the determining role of theoretical predilection in his own criticism. It is predictable, he observes, that those deeply concerned with art should favour the claims of the artist as a 'law unto himself': in many ways, it is how he defines his own position, but the step towards 'absolute autonomy' implied in the defence of extremism is a very different matter. Thus he re-affirms the conviction that some kind of relative autonomy for art should be envisaged, a position which is fully compatible with a philosophical emphasis on thought and rationality:

... the painter and the sculptor think... they read books... And all artists of this century have been catered for by an unflagging stream of books about themselves... The modern artist may be said to find the literary atmosphere as necessary as is oxygen for the mountaineer engaged in high-altitude climbing.⁸⁰

The review by Greenberg is revealing in the ways in which it demonstrates, in 1955, the hold of formalist modernism - and the links with Lewis's analysis of philosophy - upon art and culture. When the image comes to mean nothing, for Lewis, it is a sign of the influence

of chronological dogma. It also explains in some measure the attitude of influential mainstream critics and commentators towards Lewis that was perpetuated long after his death in 1957. Because Lewis did not live to see the enshrinement of the concept that a work of art's reference to itself as a work of art may constitute a particular kind of meaning, and the later socio-materialist challenge to Greenberg's formalist critical principles in the form of a 'new art history'⁸¹, he could only see a pessimistic ending to the situation in the 1950s, lightened only by too few young, creative artists. Despite the obvious relevance of Lewis's views to 'Post-Modernist' critical perspectives, his writings on art, aesthetics and philosophy are still marginalized. There is little hint, either in Read's oblique and superficial critique, nor Greenberg's dismissive account, of any attempt to acknowledge the complexity of Lewis's relationship with modernism and its theoretical underpinnings. From the basis of such hostile and even indifferent representations are reputations won and lost. Lewis could never be anything but an enemy to those who, as he saw it, consciously or unconsciously gravitated towards the sensationalist or emotionalist end of the philosophical spectrum.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 7

1. It is accepted that if the relation between theory and practice is to be fully articulated, a detailed examination of a wide range of Lewis's art should be attempted. This enterprise is clearly outside the scope of the present theoretical study, but it is evident that from the limited range of examples chosen for discussion in this context that an explicit analysis of the relation between practice and theory - and specifically, philosophical theory - is desirable. This is an area that I hope to explore at a later date.
2. 'The Vorticists', Vogue (September 1956), in WLOA, p.455.
3. See the Note for the Catalogue of the Vorticist Exhibition held at the Doré Galleries in June 1915 in WLOA, p.97.
4. Letters, no. 81, January 24, 1917, pp.86-87.
5. 'What Art Now?', originally published in The English Review, April 1919. Reprinted in WLOA, p.113.
6. In Art and Letters, II, no.2 (Spring 1919), 85-89.
7. Bell's famous distinction, in 'The Aesthetic Hypothesis', between 'descriptive' painting and 'aesthetically' or formally 'significant' work anchors the opposition between 'representational' and 'non-representational'. He wrote: 'Let no one imagine that representation is bad in itself; a realistic form may be as significant... as an abstract. But if a representative form has value, it is as form, not as representation. The representative element in a work of art may or may not be harmful; always it is irrelevant' (in Art, reprinted edition, p.25). Lewis, fully aware of the dangers should such a view be taken to extremes, became dedicated to the battle against a formalism which led towards an imbalance of concerns and an impoverishment of ideas - subject matter in art.
8. This one-man show was held at the Goupil Gallery, London, February 1919: the Foreword is reprinted in WLOA pp.104-106 (p.104).
9. See 'The Skeleton in the Cupboard Speaks', in WLA, p.87.
10. CD, p.43.
11. CD, p.9.
12. CD, pp.133-134.
13. CD, p.69.
14. CD, p.71.
15. CD, p.141.

16. In WLOA, pp.187-190.
17. See the text of an interview with Lewis, 'Dean Swift with a Brush. The Tyroist Explains his Art', originally published in The Daily Express of April 11, 1921. Reprinted in The Complete Wild Body, edited by Bernard Lafourcade (Santa Barbara, 1982), p.359.
18. Reed Way Dasenbrock's article, 'The Metaphysics of the Not-Self' discusses this concept in the context of Buddhism. Lewis's interest in Eastern religions is manifest strongly in his idea of the vortex, 'inner stillness' in the midst of flux. See Enemy News, no.29, Winter 1989, 11-14.
19. 'Tyros and Portraits', WLOA, p.187.
20. 'A Review of Contemporary Art', B2, pp.38-47.
21. The Tyro, 1, p.12.
22. EOAT, The Tyro, 2, p.25. See my Chapter 2i, p.57.
23. 'The Credentials of the Painter', reprinted in WLOA, pp.216-225 (pp.216-217).
24. WLOA, p.225.
25. WLOA, pp.218-219.
26. In The Criterion, II, no.8 (July 1924), 477-482.
27. This appeared in two parts in The Calendar of Modern Letters, nos. 2 and 3 (April and May, 1925).
28. 'Art-Chronicle' (July 1924), p.480.
29. 'The Dithyrambic Spectator', Part II, p.207.
30. See Letters, no. 142 to Charles Whibley, March 1925, p.155.
31. 'The Dithyrambic Spectator', Part I, pp.93-94.
32. See ABR, p.16, p.17.
33. The Enemy, 1, p.11. Emphasis mine.
34. A paper edited by Eugene Jolas, Elliot Paul and Robert Sage, the 'obscure' 'adulators' and 'imitators' of Joyce and Stein (see Meyers, The Enemy, p.211).
35. The Enemy, 2, p.xxvii.
36. The Enemy, 2, p.xxvi.

37. The Enemy, 3, p.41.
38. 'The Values of the Doctrine Behind "Subjective" Art', p.8.
39. 'The Values of the Doctrine Behind "Subjective" Art', p.12.
40. These articles were published in Time and Tide under the general title, 'Hitlerism - Man and Doctrine' and published in book form by Chatto and Windus in April 1931.
41. In The Hitler Cult (London, 1939).
42. See Meyers, The Enemy, Chapter Ten, 'The Apes of God, 1930', pp.158-183 for a full account of the 'Apes' controversy.
43. 'Art in a Machine Age' appeared in The Bookman, LXXXVI (July, 1934), 184-187.
44. A treatment of this theme geared towards specific artists and movements appeared in Time and Tide in October 1934. 'Power-Feeling and Machine-Age Art' is reprinted in WLOA, pp.286-290.
45. 'Art in a Machine Age', op cit., p.187.
46. 'Power-Feeling and Machine-Age Art', op cit., WLOA p.287.
47. 'Plain Home-Builder: Where is Your Vorticist?' published in The Architectural Review, November 1934. Reprinted in WLOA, pp.276-285.
48. In particular, Lewis counted Burne-Jones as a 'dazzlingly successful' pioneer Surrealist: see his Listener review 'The Brotherhood', reprinted in WLOA, pp.429-430.
49. WLA, p.73.
50. See WLA, p.19.
51. WLA, p.26.
52. See WLA, pp.373-380 and Letters, no.s 239 and 240, To the Editor of The Times, dated May 17/2 and May 3, 1938, pp.253-257.
53. Charles Harrison's book, English Art and Modernism 1900-1939 provides a useful independent guide to the activities of prominent English artists such as Nash, Moore, Nicholson, Hepworth and the critic Herbert Read's role at the time Lewis was writing. In particular, Chapter 11, 'The Later Thirties: Surrealism, "Realism", Romanticism' (pp.294-331) outlines the main trends noted by Lewis in his analysis of chronologism. Ignorance amongst English artists of the political dimensions of Surrealism was rife, as Harrison observes: only Lewis had

correctly identified the 'revolutionary' aims of Breton and his close followers. To English artists, blinkered in their misty enthusiasm for formal and 'psychological' borrowings, the original intentions of Surrealism were lost, misunderstood or discounted. Such delusion, for Lewis, was an extremely unhealthy state of affairs which urgently needed correction.

54. WLA, p.45.
55. WLA, p.59.
56. WLA, p.75.
57. See WLA, p.64, p.62.
58. WLA, pp.75-76.
59. WLA, pp.27-28.
60. WLA, p.43.
61. WLA, p.85, p.84.
62. Giambattista Vico (1668-1744), an Italian philosopher of history was well known for his 'cyclical' theory of history. Despite his affirmation of the equality of intellect and imagination, he placed them in negative opposition to one another, with the balance tipping decisively towards the latter. The links with Bergson's and Spengler's contributions and an unbridled romanticism were clearly present to Lewis who, unlike Vico, considered conflict and opposition as necessary and enabling to the creative artist.
63. WLA, p.28, p.27.
64. See Read's article, 'What is Revolutionary Art?' of 1935, reprinted in Frascina and Harrison (editors), Modern Art and Modernism: a Critical Anthology (London, 1982) pp.123-127. Read unambiguously subordinates Surrealist art to the claims of a 'plastic', 'pure' and formalist art practised by such as Mondrian, Nicholson, Brancusi et al.

In 1936, Read's edition of Surrealism was published, by which time he had become the champion of the movement in England.
65. WLA, pp.26-27.
66. WLA, pp.71-72.
67. WLA, pp.61-62.
68. The aesthetic debate connects interestingly with Lewis's philosophical objections to Russell on the role and nature of

- 'illusion'. See my Chapter I.4.i, 'Perceptual Reality and the Object', pp.128 ff.
69. See WLA, p.77 and the reprint of The Caliph's Design in WLA, pp.304ff.
 70. Two articles in particular can be cited: 'The End of Abstract Art' in The New Republic, 102, no.14 (April 1, 1940), 438-439, and 'After Abstract Art', also originally published in The New Republic on 8 July 1940, reprinted in WLOA, pp.358-361. See also Letters, no. 254, to the Editor of The New Republic, May 20, 1940, pp.271-272.
 71. See Letters, no. 245, to Lord Carlow, January 1939, pp.261-262.
 72. Lewis illustrates work by Bombelli and Engel-Pak as Plates 1 and 2 in The Demon of Progress in the Arts.
 73. Meyers, The Enemy, p.291.
 74. Herbert Read, The Sewanee Review, LXIII, no.4 (Autumn, 1955), 551-566 (p.551).
 75. Read, op cit., p.552.
 76. Read, op cit., p.558.
 77. Originally entitled 'Polemic Against Modern Art' in The New Leader, 38, no.49 (December 12, 1955), 28. References are to the reprinted version in Art and Culture (1961), first published in Great Britain (London, 1973) pp.164-166.
 78. The use of a capital letter for 'Modernism' achieves significance in terms of Greenberg's criticism, influential in the post-1960s use of 'Modernist' to characterize, not just 'contemporary' or 'new' art, but consistent critical approaches inspired by the example of Fry's formalist principles. In the essay, 'Modernist Painting', originally published in Art and Literature in 1965, Greenberg widens the term to include the 'whole of what is truly alive in our culture', the 'self-critical tendency that began with the philosopher Kant'. It is a means for criticizing disciplines from within; 'What had to be exhibited and made explicit was that WHICH was unique and irreducible not only in art in general, but also in each particular art. Each art had to determine, through the operations peculiar to itself, the effects peculiar and exclusive to itself. By doing this each art would, to be sure, narrow its area of competence, but at the same time it would make its possession of this area all the more secure... Modernism used art to call attention to art... one sees a Modernist painting as a picture first...' (reprinted in Frascina and Harrison, op cit., p.5, p.6).
 79. Lewis, The Demon of Progress in the Arts, p.25.

80. The Demon of Progress in the Arts, p.84.
81. Advertized on the back cover of the collection of essays The New Art History as a 'convenient title for the impact of feminist, marxist, structuralist, psychoanalytic and social-political ideas on a discipline notorious for its conservatism'. The collection is edited by A.L. Rees and F. Borzello (London, 1986).

POSTSCRIPT

In this thesis, I have drawn attention to the interdependency of Lewis's philosophy and aesthetics in the face of intimately related tendencies in thought, art and action with repercussions in every detail of life and in the deepest metaphysical speculations. A study which foregrounds the function of the visual image in an account of theory is necessarily confined to analysis in generalized terms, lest it deviate from the chosen course. It is clear to me that in the light of the findings of this thesis, a close parallel examination of the visual art that Lewis produced would be highly desirable in order to fully outline the relationship between practice and theory.

As one example of the possibilities of such a study, in addition to those already discussed, I cite the 1942 work, The Mind of the Artist about to make a Picture (FRONTISPIECE). The head of the artist on the left is closely aligned with the book image, which is well known in iconographical studies as a symbol of learning. The central importance of intellect in the act of creation is quite openly declared here. The images which proceed from this process are shown in varying stages of abstraction, and appear to be other-worldly. I would suggest that this kind of creation-myth drawing, of which Lewis made many, comes as near to a direct visual exposition of philosophical belief as it is possible to envisage. Through the intellectual means of selection and organization of visual data from life, the artist creates a unique world of plastic images. The

complex mutual dependence of image and idea may thus be described as a fundamental and structural characteristic of Lewis's unique working methods.

Two months prior to the publication of Time and Western Man, Lewis had published his pamphlet, 'The Values of the Doctrine behind "Subjective" Art'. In this article, Lewis examines the notion of a 'subjective' art which follows the principles of the philosophical positions he was concerned to attack in Time and Western Man. He argues strongly that art is intensely and irrevocably a philosophical activity: more attention, he urges,

should be given to the intellectual principles that are behind the work of art: that to sustain the pretensions of a considerable innovation a work must be surer than it usually is to-day of its formal parentage: that nothing that is unsatisfactory in the result should be passed over, but should be asked to account for itself in the abstract terms that are behind its phenomenal face. 1

In the course of identifying and eradicating what he sees as 'bad' or subjective art, the underlying philosophical principles and 'intellectual shoddiness' must first be rooted out and held up for examination. The bad art, for Lewis, is the phenomenal face of the time-philosophy, and it is what first draws our attention. The initial impetus and purpose of Time and Western Man is nowhere more clearly stated:

And I have suggested that many subjective fashions, not plastically or formally very satisfactory, would become completely discredited if it were clearly explained upon what flimsy theories they are in fact built: what bad philosophy, in short, has almost everywhere been responsible for the bad art. 2

Lewis must write as an artist in defence of his work and his profession, which necessitates a re-statement of the philosophy which he sees as the principal factor heralding art's decline into

subjectivity, the 'telling-from-the-inside, fashionable method', the 'dark night of the soul' familiar from Bergson, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche.

As a work of philosophy, Time and Western Man may be criticized as unsystematic and idiosyncratic in terms of received notions of what a philosophical text could or should be, but as E.W.F. Tomlin has observed, it returns

to the great metaphysical tradition: a tradition preserved in the oriental wisdoms and transmitted to the western world through Aristotle (who speaks of the 'divine intellect'), and present in the scholastic thinkers, only to be driven underground during the last few centuries. 3

That tradition is certainly integral to Lewis's thinking, but in Time and Western Man, a systematic metaphysics is not on offer: it is at once much broader and narrower than this. It is broader in the sense that it does not confine itself to perennial questions of existence, the meaning and nature of the universe, and man's experience of reality, but considers, with pragmatic vigour, the practical effects and nature of the modern world and its philosophical predilections, in addition delving further into microcosmic and 'trivial' areas of life that would not be traditional fare for the metaphysician to explore in detail. Here, its narrowness also lies, if there can be nothing more extensive than a metaphysics, and if Lewis's area of concern does not attempt to construct a systematic account of a metaphysics. What Lewis does attempt to construct, however, is a critical system, which is designed to seriously challenge and refute the time philosophy at its metaphysical roots and its more superficial manifestations from a standpoint developed from, and according to, an aesthetics derived

from the practice and theory of a visual artist. In its attempt to expose the philosophy of Bergsonian origins, it also meditates unfavourably on apparent alternatives that would exclude the creative power of the artist from the primary metaphysical equation. Thus the philosophical content and attendant polemic is developed centrally towards the analysis of popular cultural and intellectual trends that, to Lewis, threatened the survival of the arts.

At the heart of Lewis's aesthetics and philosophy stands the symbolic concept of the vortex: the inevitability of flux is always locked into its terms of reference (compare FRONTISPIECE), constantly ready to re-assert a malign influence if not subject to control. With increasing intensity, Lewis's writings on art after the war up to the writing of Time and Western Man were to form the vanguard of a resistance to those timeist aspects of modernism which threatened art's very existence. Lewis, we know, emphatically did not abandon 'abstraction' as a mode of working at any time, but made clear his objections when form ostensibly claimed to supplant meaning or significance in art. Originality and 'progress' for Lewis were distinct terms, and characterized the different artistic priorities arising from his own philosophical values and those connected to chronologism. Both the philosophical and aesthetic implications of 'empty abstraction' coincide. The 'mentalism' or 'abstract' nature of Samuel Alexander's system 'underlines the emptiness of its terms'⁴, just as the impoverishment of art proceeds from empty abstraction, or extremism, which is anchored, accordingly, to timeist philosophy.

Time and Western Man, in my view, does nothing less than offer the reader a means by which to disembarass art of its 'cheap and adhesive' satellite matter by constructing a philosophical cleaver without which this could not be attempted.

NOTES TO POSTSCRIPT

1. From 'The Values of the Doctrine behind "Subjective" Art', published in The Monthly Criterion, VI, no.1 (July, 1927), 4-13 (pp.12-13).
2. 'The Values of the Doctrine behind "Subjective" Art', p.13.
3. E.W.F. Tomlin, Wyndham Lewis (1955), op cit., pp.15-16.
4. See my Part I, Chapter 3.ii, p.101.

PLATES

Works by

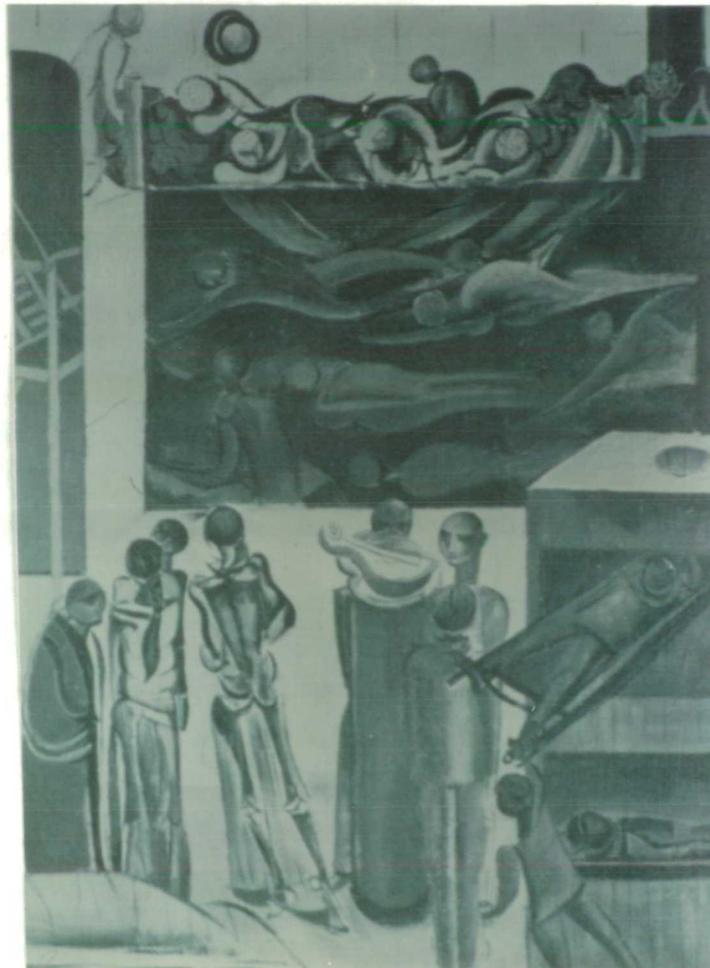
WYNDHAM LEWIS

PLATE I



A READING OF OVID (TYROS), 1920-1

PLATE II



THE TANK IN THE CLINIC, 1937

PLATE III



THE MUD CLINIC, 1937

PLATE IV



ONE OF THE STATIONS OF THE DEAD, 1933

PLATE V



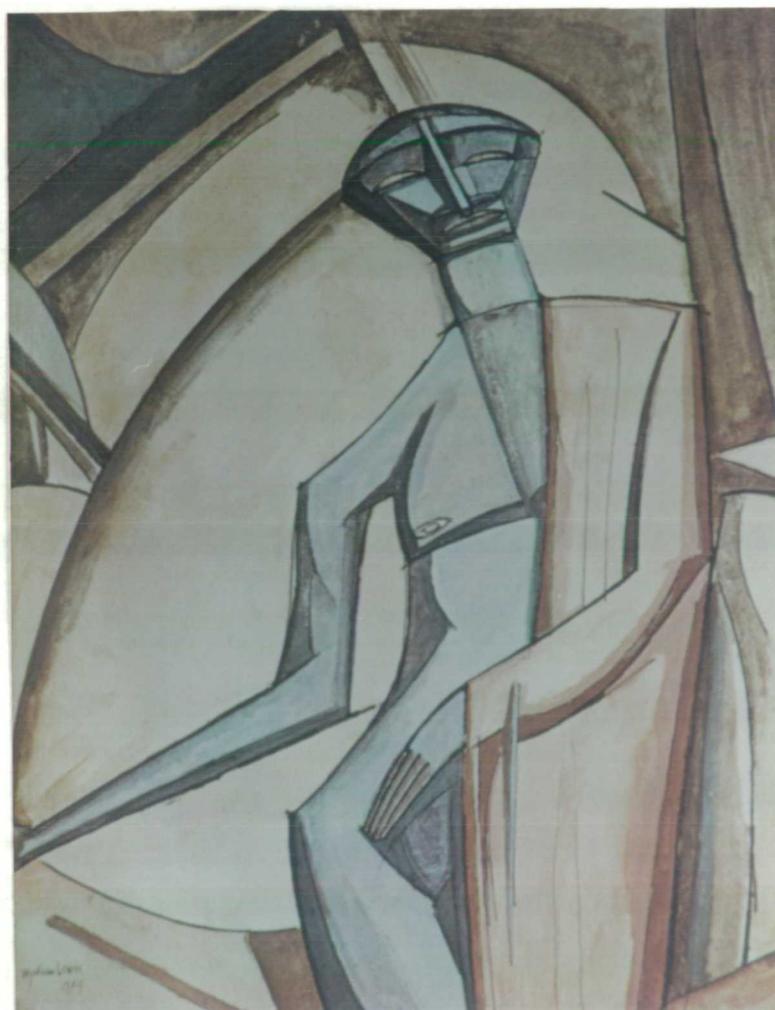
THE SURRENDER OF BARCELONA, 1936

PLATE VI



RED DUET, 1914

PLATE VII



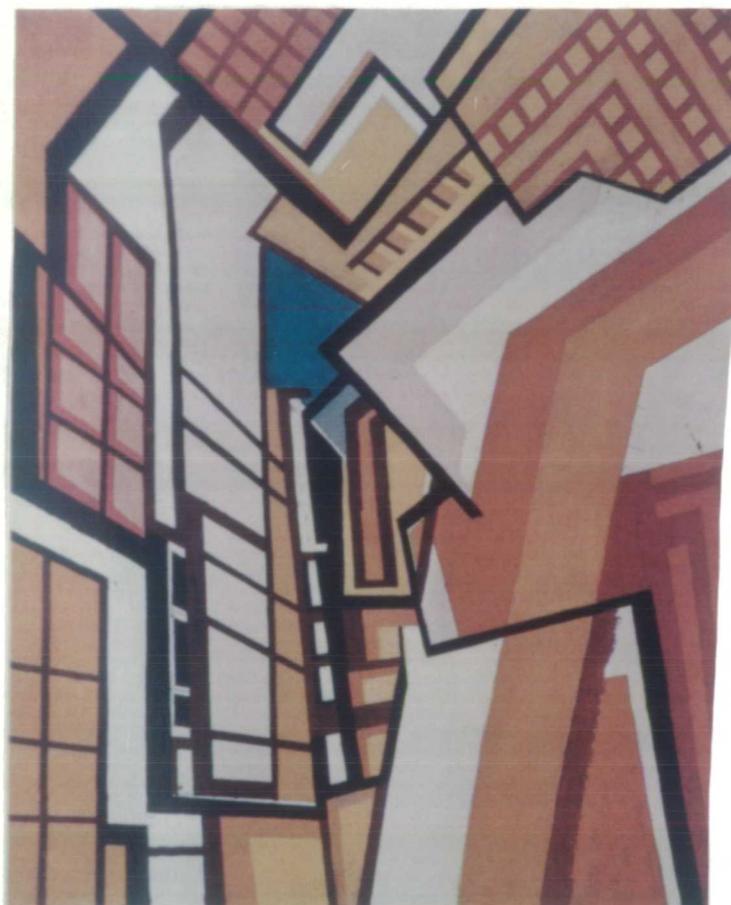
THE CELIBATE, 1909-12

PLATE VIII



THE CROWD, 1914-15

PLATE IX



WORKSHOP, 1915

PLATE X



COMPOSITION IN BLUE, 1915

PLATE XI



PORTRAIT OF AN ENGLISHWOMAN, 1913



PLATE XII
HEDWIG, 1938



PLATE XIII
MR WYNDHAM LEWIS AS A TYRO,
1920-1

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This bibliography lists all works directly referred to in the main text and notes, and those consulted for general reference purposes in the preparation of this thesis.

Works and editions by Lewis are arranged separately, in ascending chronological order.

Secondary texts are arranged alphabetically; in addition, where more than one work is cited for an author, these are listed in ascending chronological order.

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