

“Meaningless Energies”:
Satire of Hemingway in Wyndham Lewis’s
Snooty Baronet

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“I cast my eye up in the direction of Sol Invictus. That was a pretty broad hint! All in vain!”

The bullfighting chapters in *Snooty Baronet* have been usually described by commentators as a satire on Roy Campbell’s enthusiasm for the sport, with a side blow at D. H. Lawrence’s primitivism. Campbell, it is said, is the basis for Rob McPhail, the novel’s bull-fighting poet, and Lawrence the author of the fictitious *Sol Invictus: Bull Unsexed*, which Sir Michael Kell Imrie, “Snooty”, reads as preparation for a visit to Persia, where his literary agent, Humphrey Cooper Carter (“Humph”), intends him to study the remnants of the Mithradatic religion and write a money-spinning travel book. The point of the following discussion is not to deny these cases but to suggest that they can be regarded as subordinate to one of the novel’s governing topics, criticism of Ernest Hemingway’s fiction, a theme which has, in fact, been overlooked hitherto.

Hugh Kenner has authoritatively dismissed the book as “peppy and pointless”,¹⁾ an intuition which my argument will retain, only inverting its evaluation by placing it in the larger scheme of purpose to which the text often directs us by means of those “broad hints”. Before passing on to what I take to be *Snooty Baronet*’s satire of Hemingway it might be useful to list and comment on four items of circumstantial evidence which suggest that

this account is not wholly unrelated to Lewis's text. The fifth item is the broad hint itself.

I

- A. This was very bad! Old Val had been a V.A.D. —she converted The Bed into a hospital pallet for the occasion. (The sex appeal of The Nurse is well established.) 49/50.²⁾

Established largely, it could be said, by Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*.³⁾ It is worth adding at this point that Snooty's amputation chimes with the leg wound of Frederic Henry (and more faintly with the far from "obscure hurt" of Jake in *The Sun Also Rises*). Four paragraphs earlier Lewis had written "the next morning came, or the time when one wakes, and rises (one's own private sun, rising in one's own private calendar)", an association by juxtaposition which looks like evidence of Lewis's thought, though its semantic impact is small.

- B. Recently a book called "Babbitville" was written that vaguely was upon my lines. The author went and settled in a Middle West town, exactly as if it had been a settlement of Pueblo Indians. He compiled an account of the lives and habits of the inhabitants as if he had been studying a tribe of backward Indians. 66/85.

Lafourcade leaves this passage unglossed, so there is some point in saying that the book referred to is almost certainly Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrel Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in American Culture* (Harcourt Brace: New York, 1929), which is mentioned in the *Men Without Art* "Dumb Ox" essay on Hemingway (23/23),⁴⁾ though the reference is complicated with Sinclair Lewis' novel *Babbitt*, and perhaps with Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg Ohio*, also set in the midwest. (The fact that Irving Babbitt, the New Humanist, was born in Ohio is, presumably, irrelevant.)

- C. [Humph]"The cult of Mithras—You know the bull god—"
[Snooty]"Very slightly."
[Humph]"No but you know who I mean. The Spanish bullfights are the last vestige, that is all that is left of the, of the religion of—"

[Snooty]"Of Mithras." [...]

[Snooty]"That's fine that's peachy!" I bellowed back. [...]

[Humph]"How I do loathe the beastly american slang." 81-2/75

I suggest that this slide of association, from Mithras, who is also a sun god, to the Spanish bullfight, and then to the "modified *Beach-la-mar*" as Lewis, drawing on H. L. Mencken's *The American Language*, later called it in "The Dumb Ox" (*Men Without Art*, 24/24), is a significant indication of the materials which were being marshalled in his mind, though, again, this seems to make no great contribution to the novel.

- D. For Mithras (if that's who it was the castilian clown in plush tights stands for) to get it in his giltfrogged guts, at the hands of the animal (and to be torn down socially, de-pigtailed, or nailed up in a wooden overcoat) that caused me such solid satisfaction as a thoughtful young bull might get from hearing about it. 89/83.

The information concerning the pigtail and social status is to be found in Hemingway's "The Undeclared" but not in Lawrence's account of a Mexican bull-fight in *The Plumed Serpent*.⁵ It is quite possible that Roy Campbell gave Lewis this background information, or that it was derived from another source altogether. All the same, Snooty's remark "I leaned back against the barrera or whatever they call it at Faujas" (218/181) seems to strengthen the supposition that Lewis's knowledge was mostly of the Spanish rather than the Provencal ring of which Campbell could have told him.

- E. "Sol Invictus—Bull Unsexed" 91/84

Sol Invictus is a loose and riddling translation into Latin of Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, an optimistic title which he took from the *Bible* ("One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to the place where he arose." Ecclesiastes 1; 4-5) as a retort to Gertrude Stein's demeaning label "the lost generation". The sun sinks, but it also rises, it is not beaten, so Lewis can reasonably allude to it as *Sol Invictus*, the undefeated sun. "Bull Unsexed", then, refers to the emasculated condi-

tion of Hemingway's hero Jake Barnes. (Lewis stresses the unsexing of the bull on 93/86, and 181/153-4, referring to it again on 199/169. Lafourcade's notes are evasive, but his table of variants for this passage leaves no doubt: the manuscript for *Snooty Baronet* sometimes refers to the bogus Lawrence work as "The Bitten Testicle".⁶⁾) In addition it is curious to see that the word "peachy" recurs in this paragraph.

A reason for the Hemingway reference having gone undetected for so long (Jeffrey Meyers gets very close in his *Hemingway*,⁷⁾ but fails to make a specific connection) is that Lawrence is named so plainly as the author of this bull worshipping book. An early reviewer of *Snooty Baronet*, Hugh Gordon Porteus, seems to have found the association of Lawrence and the bull-cult plausible:

The link between Bagdad and Bulls is supplied of course by Mithras; and his well-known fascination for anthropology, folk-lore and D. H. Lawrence affords Mr. Lewis the opportunity for some fine burlesque, buttressed with characteristic "quotations" from an apocryphal Lawrentian *opus*.⁸⁾

However, the connection is obscure now: Lafourcade remarks in his notes (276-7) "Lawrence was never particularly conspicuous for his bulls", and "The bullfight (which does mention Mithras once) serving as an opening to *The Plumed Serpent* certainly exhibits no particular rapture over bulls". The only other mention of Mithras, and bulls, that I have managed to find is in *Apocalypse*,⁹⁾ the first edition of which was published in June 1931, making it conceivable that Lewis saw a copy whilst working on *Snooty Baronet*, which was not completed until January 1932,¹⁰⁾ but it is hard to imagine even Lewis's touchy inquisition being provoked to a satiric prosecution by so slight a reference:

The pagan mysteries of the sacrifice of the god for the sake of a greater resurrection are older than Christianity, and on one of these mysteries the Apocalypse is based. A Lamb it has to be: or with Mithras, a bull: and the blood drenches over the initiate from the cut throat of the bull (they lifted his head up as they cut his throat) and makes him a new man.¹¹⁾

Lafourcade's solution is to suggest that Lawrence came to figure in the novel not because of any particular work or link with Mithras, but through association with Campbell, who was interested in both bullfighting and Mithras,¹²⁾ and thought better of Lawrence's nature worship than did Lewis. There is probably a little more to the Lawrence reference than this; *The Plumed Serpent*, after all, concerns a revival of a primitive religion in which sun worship, admittedly not in a Mithraic form, is an important component.¹³⁾ Clearly the scheme of satiric allusion in *Snooty Baronet* is complex. I would just add that Hemingway figures here too and is, perhaps, deliberately obscured beneath the open, but comparatively insignificant criticism of Lawrence; indeed the weakness of that attack suggests that it is diversionary. Quite why Lewis should want to camouflage his satire in 1932 but later changed his mind sufficiently to write the famous "Dumb Ox" criticism I can't say, but it seems possible that he did not wish to disaffect the author of *Torrents of Spring*, his ally in combat against Lawrence and Anderson, but couldn't resist a stab at some of the same thing in Hemingway himself. Writing in another essay of 1934, "In Praise of Outsiders",¹⁴⁾ Lewis again paired him with Lawrence:

To match this champion of the mystical emotion, Mr Ernest Hemingway is, indeed, *heroically* superficial, except, of course, for that Stein-song that he croons to himself always! For the External World he, at all events, does surely stand. At his best, he has a better claim to be a writer of a "classic" temper than any I can think of.

Lewis may have thought of Hemingway as a fellow member of the external school of fiction, that devoted to the planes and shadows of the "great without" as against the dark "within" investigated in the internal monologues of Joyce and Stein. Given this he may have been unwilling to attack him publicly, but in that italicized word he insinuates in miniature his complaint, which I will suggest had been already been published in *Snooty Baronet*. Hemingway had been so heroically obsessed with the outside as to cut away even the intelligence of the narrating voice, and the result is su-

perfidiality and stupidity, a fault of which, Lewis grants, Lawrence was not entirely guilty:

I will not accumulate instances: these two representative men will suffice. Neither of them are perfect of their kind, for Lawrence is too deliberate a suppliant of his intestines; his phantasies of the Unconscious have too much of the cold-blooded Powder-play about them—they are too *conscious*. Whereas the author of *In Our Time*, for all his gum-chewing sang-froid, is not perfectly cold; he has the jazz neurosis bottled up in his he-man veins somewhere.¹⁵⁾

Hemingway is, then, though a man of the "external world", and in possession of the recaptured classical world view (which Lewis thinks is characteristically modern), in some way not as conscious as Lawrence. In yet another essay of 1934 Lewis asked "is not Mr. Modern as essentially stupid as the Dundreary Swell?", adding "We have been so busy with the objective world in which we set out to place him, that we forgot he could put this so different scene to the same uses, essentially, as the old scene".¹⁶⁾ In Hemingway's favour, Lewis holds, is the fact that he is devoted to the external world; against him it can be said that he "puts this so different scene to the same uses, essentially, as the old scene". The same uses being verisimilitude (the "how it was"), and sentiment (grace under pressure).

The turning point for Lewis was probably Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon*, which was published eight days after *Snooty Baronet*. This evidence that Hemingway was prepared to give the corrida such prestige in non-fiction as well as fiction may have persuaded him that all was not well, and in "The Dumb Ox" he wondered if there was some leaching between the fictional and real worlds:

Seen for ever through his [the Hemingway hero's] nursery spectacles, the values of life accomodate themselves, even in the mind of his author, to the limitations and peculiar requirements of this highly idiosyncratic puppet.¹⁷⁾

This explanation for Lewis's tact is given tentatively and in the knowledge that it happens to be thin. Nevertheless, though unable to explain with any certainty the reasons for its taking this form, I think the occult analysis is

certainly there.

II

To begin with what looks like a technical point, corroborating evidence for this decoding of the hints is to be found in the fact that *Snooty Baronet* is Lewis' only long fiction using the first person narrative, and articulates many of the *Men Without Art* (28-9/27-8) criticisms of this technique as it is used in Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, and *A Farewell to Arms*. One of his points in the later essay is that Hemingway's "I" seems to have a similar *curriculum vitae* to its author:

Evidently in this situation—possessing a First-person-singular that invariably copies you in this flattering way—something must be done about it.

Hemingway's solution provides Lewis with a choice jibe:

The *First-person-singular* has to be endowed so palpably with qualities that could by no stretch of the imagination belong to its author that no confusion is possible. Upon this principle the "I" of *The Sun Also Rises* is described as sexually impotent, which is a complete alibi, of course, for Hemingway.¹⁸⁾

Lewis's hero is quite as perfunctorily differentiated, with a wooden leg, and a head injury, from his author, who in many other respects resembles him, a point which his friend Porteus noticed by titling his review "'The Enemy's' Self Portrait". The choice of amputation, and of a leg in Kell Imrie's case, parallels, as has been suggested earlier, both the emasculation of Jake Barnes and the leg wound of Frederic Henry. Indeed, comparison of two love scenes, one from *Snooty Baronet*, and one from *A Farewell to Arms*, shows that Lewis was methodically answering, burlesquing and subverting the technical habits of Hemingway's writing, and thus the "politics of the intellect" (Lewis's phrase) that they canvass. The first quotation is from Hemingway, and describes Catherine Barkley's visit to the wounded Frederic Henry.

She came in the room and over to the bed.

"Hello, darling," she said. She looked fresh and young and very beautiful.

I thought I had never seen anyone so beautiful.

"Hello," I said. When I saw her I was in love with her. Everything turned over inside of me. She looked towards the door, saw there was no one, then she sat on the side of the bed and leaned over and kissed me. I pulled her down and kissed her and felt her heart beating.

"You sweet", I said. "Weren't you wonderful to come here?"

"It wasn't very hard. It may be hard to stay."

"You've got to stay", I said. "Oh, you're wonderful." I was crazy about her. I could not believe she was really there and held her tight to me.

"You mustn't," she said. "You're not well enough."

"Yes. I am. Come on."

"No. You're not strong enough."

"Yes. I am. Yes. Please."

"You do love me?"

"I really love you. I'm crazy about you. Come on, please."

"Feel our hearts beating?"

"I don't care about our hearts. I want you. I'm just mad about you."

"You really love me?"

"Don't keep saying that. Come on. Please, please, Catherine."

"All right, but only for a minute."

"All right," I said. "Shut the door."

"You can't you shouldn't—"

"Come on. Don't talk. Please come on."

Catherine sat in a chair by the bed. The door was open into the hall. The wildness was gone and I felt finer than I had ever felt.¹⁹⁾

A very spare description. Lewis, on the other hand, clutters his lovers with inconveniences and the transformations of simile and metaphor:

"Come Valley!" I muttered cordially.

She grappled with me at once, before the words were well out of my mouth, with the self-conscious gusto of a Chatterley-taught expert. But as I spoke I went to meet her—as I started my mechanical leg giving out an ominous creak (I had omitted to oil it, like watches and clocks these things require lubrication). I seized her stiffly round the body. [...] The bosoms and head settled like a trio of hefty birds upon the upper slopes of my militant trunk: a headless nautilus on the other hand settled upon my middle, and attacked my hams with its horrid tentacles—I could feel the monster of the slimy submarine-bottoms grinding away beneath, headless and ravenous. [...]

"Valley" I said (I always called her Valley when I was showing her my affection) "Valley" I said "I've often thought of this little Valley!"

"You are a liar Snoots" she whispered in hoarse tones.

"I've often thought of this pleasant Valley!"

That was the signal for us to go towards the folding doors. The double-doors lead directly into the chamber where old Val keeps her Bed—as the dentist keeps his dentist's chair in his operating apartment. (I should not be surprised to hear that some especially zealous dentists sleep in their dentist's-chairs.) [...] (148)

What Hemingway keeps clean, abstract, direct, and simple in so far as the range of diction is small, Lewis systematically pollutes with adjectives, most of them distracting, and outrageous metaphors which stack the page high with the bric-à-brac of comparison. In Lewis's narration the world around the romance intrudes, creaking like the wooden leg; it could be called a literature of expanded context. Where Hemingway's narrator is silent, Lewis's lets his "do a lot of extraordinary talking".²⁰⁾

In the two disjunctures, which Hemingway signals by slightly larger than usual paragraph breaks, the reader is invited to engage in a silent pact of knowingness with the narrator. We are to fill in the blank, but wordlessly, the suggestion being that this lovemaking is something that should not be talked about ("Don't talk"), because any account would be a travesty, Hemingway even going to the length of giving no verbal marker of omission, since that, little though it is, would be a step too far. Lewis's version also omits, but he blocks the space with tangentially related matter and then points at the inadequately filled gap, aggressively blaming the reader for the hiatus:

the folding doors met together with a determined click. —She had got me safely inside—I sat upon the Bed in the unlighted apartment. I awaited her to assist with my mechanical limb.

The room where we had been eating and conversing was empty at last, except for the robust solus behaviour of the coal-fire. That still discharged an occasional round for luck (and to prove it was there still and independent of our consciousness) at the high georgian ceiling, or sent up a flickering violet flare. (How well I understand the unique position of the carbon atom in our *Mysterious Universe*!)

Owing to that unaccountable feminine aversion for all that is direct (perhaps a hall-mark of our time) I am reluctantly compelled at this point to

break off my narrative. But it is only necessary to skip a matter of ten minutes, perhaps a quarter of an hour. No very long time had elapsed certainly, when the folding-doors once more came violently open, pulled from the inside on this occasion. A one-legged man hopped out. He was as naked as God ushered him into the world and as the Grave will take him back. Sitting down upon the end of the settee, and bending over the gilt-flowered slop-vessel, this man proceeded to be ill. [...] Repeatedly he carried his hand to that part of his skull where there was a silver plate. (/49)

During the mock squeamish interstice, while his body is busy with Val, Snooty's voice remains with us producing that apparently redundant paragraph. In Hemingway's text there is nothing but silence in that space since Henry's body and voice are so closely identified that they cannot be separated; he forgets the reader and the world in his lovemaking, and the narration necessarily ceases. This process of exclusion is already evident in the lovers's dialogue. Between the first mention of the bed, "she sat on the side of the bed", and the next, "Catherine sat in a chair by the bed", the only object existing outside the speakers is the door, and this is, doubtless symbolically, closed. Kell Imrie shuts the door too, but remains on both sides, so he can not only hear the cracks of the fire, which prove "it was there still and independent of our consciousness", but also *see* the "flickering violet flare" even though it is shielded from his body's view by the closed door. The universe of Frederic Henry is eclipsed by the figure of Catherine Barkley, which becomes an object of obsessional focus, while Kell Imrie retains a vision of multiple aspects and can see himself in relation to the envioning context, in which he implicitly gives his existence no more important a place than the carbon atom, appropriately enough the elemental basis of the animal life which his "wild body" is busy propagating beyond that indiscretely drawn veil. When the body returns to the outside, to rejoin the intelligence, it is convulsed with uncontrollable vomiting:

My head always gives me trouble at the moment of the climax, under the silver plate. *That* always lays me out. (/50).

Post coitum omne animal triste; the intellect punishes the body, perhaps, for

its desertion. Frederic Henry, on the other hand, had never felt better.

Lewis could have done little more to differentiate his narrator from the Hemingway hero, the "Dumb Ox"; where Hemingway's "I" is a passive and unreflective simpleton, or so Lewis claims, Snooty's monologue is self-observing, and wilfully resistant to the conditioning influence of his nature, a paradox which resembles, as so much in Lewis does, Schopenhauer's deterministic universe in which, however, the will is absolutely free. Jake Barnes and Frederic Henry are imbedded in the moments they describe, and lack what Lewis would have called objectivity, and what I want to say is the ability to think of time in spatial terms so that the individual is not limited to his immediate sensual contexts, but through memory, and extrapolation from memory, is able to see himself in relation to other things which are not at that moment perceptible. When the door shuts in *A Farewell to Arms* Frederic Henry forgets that there is anything else in the world but Catherine Barkley, but Snooty remembers, and contextualizes, which is a term synonymous with "satirizes", at least in Lewis, though are grounds for thinking this to be major technique in most satire. A reviewer of Lewis's first novel, *Tarr*,²¹⁾ noticed that "He is like a man trying to step off his own shadow, to see what it is like",²²⁾ which seems fair; the claim for absolute objectivity is hard to take seriously, however horrifying and irrefutable we find solipsism, but to accept this feature of our lives would be to surrender, to fail to resist. The German critic, satirist, and aphorist, Georg Lichtenberg has said "A book is like a mirror. If an ass looks in you can't expect an apostle to look out".²³⁾ The text has character, it can be a distorting mirror, after all, but no face. "A book is a machine to think with" wrote I. A. Richards,²⁴⁾ adapting Le Corbusier. A synthesis of these positions gives us "A book is a machine with which to think about ourselves, just as a mirror is a machine to enable us to inspect our faces". Human art, on this view, and in its most general definition (products of human artifice), is a way of getting off our own shadow, or of giving that impression. In his "Inferior Religions"²⁵⁾ Lewis ventures a definition of aesthesis which

is relevant: "Beauty is an icy douche of ease and happiness at something suggesting perfect conditions for an organism". It is "suggestion" only.

To return to the question of the first person narrative. *Snooty Baronet* is, in fact, Lewis's only lengthy fiction in this form, but it opens as if told by the the familiar omniscient author:

Not a bad face, flat and white, broad and weighty: in the daylight the worse for much wear—stained, a grim surface, rained upon and stared at by the sun at its haughtiest, yet pallid still; with a cropped blondish moustache of dirty lemon, of toothbrush texture: the left eye somewhat closed up—this was a sullen eye. [...]

The face was on-the-lookout behind the window glass of the taxicab. The left eye kept a sullen watch: it was counting. Numbers clicked-up in its counting box, back of the retina, in a vigesimal check-off. When it had counted up to a thousand and forty—staring however at four hundred and eighty (a *fifteen-cent-tariff* yellow knickerbocker, as luck would have it) the taxi stopped. The face drew back. The door opened. Grasping the forward jamb, a large man thrust out one leg, which was straight and stiff. Pointing the rigid leg downwards, implacably on to the side walk, the big man swung outward, until the leg hit terra-firma. The whole bag-of-tricks thus stood a second crouched in the door of the vehicle. Then stealthily there issued from its door, erect and with a certain brag in his carriage, a black-suited six-footer, a dollar-bill between his teeth, drawing off large driving gauntlets. (/15)

Its actual fictive nature is only revealed in the next paragraph when the narrating voice blows the gaffe:

The face was mine. I must apologize for arriving as it were incognito upon the scene. No murder has been committed at No. 1040 Livingston Avenue—I can't help it if this has opened as if it were a gunman bestseller. — The fact is I am a writer: and the writer has so much the habit of the anonymous, that he is apt to experience the same compunction about opening a book in the First Person Singular (caps. for the First Person Singular) as an educated man must feel about commencing a letter with an "I". But my very infirmity suggested such a method. I could hardly say: "The taxi stopped. I crawled out. I have a wooden leg!" Tactically, that would be hopelessly bad. You would simply say to yourself, "This must be a dull book. The hero has a wooden leg. Is the War not over yet?" and throw the thing down in a very bad temper, cursing your Lending Library. (/15)

"The taxi stopped. I crawled out. I have a wooden leg", that is how Hemingway would have done it, on an off day. Neither *The Sun Also Rises* nor *A Farewell to Arms* opens so crudely, Hemingway is more ingenious than that, but Lewis's point, a *reductio ad absurdum* certainly, is that such fictions are caught in the First Person Singular. *Snooty Baronet* is remarkable because its narrator treats himself like a third person, and when describing his exit from the bedroom even reverted to that grammatical form, "A one legged man hopped out", deferring the revelation of the obvious until the next paragraph:

That one-legged naked man in the sumptous second-hand Chelsea arm-chair—carrying his hand, as if in pain, to a spot upon the rear portion of his skull—within his abundant corn-yellow crest-lines—was me. (Upon my opening page I had to introduce myself, as you will recall. This time again I have to perform that office, as you might otherwise not have recognized me unclothed.) (/49-50)

This speaker has so far objectified himself that he is in as much doubt about the sensations in his head as he might be about those of his wooden leg, and can only say "as if in pain". His somersaults of viewpoint make him an active and wilfull agent in his universe, one forever triangulating upon his personal position in order to be a critic of it. He could be said to resist the limitations of animal life, and to demand a multiocular appreciation of its spatial perspectives instead of the depthless subjectivism of the First Person. In this he is the complete opposite of the supine character, the "queerly sensitive, village-idiot of few words and fewer ideas"²⁶⁾ from which Hemingway makes his fiction.

This difference in affiliation is the major issue for Lewis. While discussing political ties in "Detachment and the Fictionist"²⁷⁾ he remarks:

The only important thing is to be on the side to which you belong, if you understand me. There is no right side or wrong side. That is nonsense. *Sub specie aeternitatis* both sides are equally right. But what is unalterable is that there is a right and a wrong side *for you*.

Hemingway has chosen to be on what, for him, is the wrong side, making the

"I" utter "the voice of the 'folk', of the masses, who are cannon-fodder, the cattle outside the slaughter-house, serenely chewing the cud—*of those to whom things are done*, in contrast to those who have executive will and intelligence."²⁸⁾ Not that Lewis has any objections to the first person narrative. As a writer, he said in "Detachment and the Fictionist",

You play at being yourself—and so are yourself; it is quite unnecessary to play at being anybody else to be completely the artist. If you cannot be "detached" with *yourself*, then there is nothing you can be detached with! And if you are so endowed as to wish to turn from the human scene to the less subjective material of nature, you will not find that playing Number One, or the First Person Singular, has cramped your style in a mode where that character is not wanted.

Hemingway's work is cramped, but this is a matter of choice, not something inherent in the First Person Singular, a point which *Snooty Baronet* is designed to prove, also adding a further recession of viewpoint. Firstly the author plays at being himself; secondly, the persona created in play, itself plays at being its own author. If you want to see the back of your head you need two mirrors. If you want to see the absurdity of yourself seeing the absurdity of sex you need a silver plate in the back of your head, as it were. The "Number One" of Hemingway is a simpler affair: an author engaged in the more traditionally approved game of the novelist, playing at being somebody else, a fictional goal that could be fairly described in Hemingway's case as "putting the new scene to the same uses, essentially, as the old scene". Lewis's complaint is not that this is unadventurous, though he would almost certainly have said that,²⁹⁾ but that Hemingway subdues his own intelligence to that of his heroes, and that this is quite simply *Trahissons des clercs*, to use Julien Benda's term.³⁰⁾ Lewis's case is never likely to be a popular one, when pitted against the sort of position summarized in Auden's poem "The Novelist":

Encased in talent like a uniform,
The rank of every poet is well known;
They can amaze us like a thunderstorm,
Or die so young, or live for years alone.

They can dash forward like hussars : but he
Must struggle out of his boyish gift and learn
How to be plain and awkward, how to be
One after whom none think it worth to turn.³¹⁾

In his defence it should be said that Lewis saw his elitism as a duty (*noblesse oblige*), just as Benda did. The intellectual's work is to resist his society and to be its critic, not its voice. Art is to be a "criticism of life", not a ratifying celebration. On both these counts Hemingway fails, and the group that he betrays is not that of the intellectuals, but, surprisingly, those "after whom none think it worth to turn", the folk whose song he sings. To make glorious the hopeless suffering of the cannon-fodder, to confirm their passivity by making it heroic, may be to play into the hands of their oppressors, who, naturally enough, will be happy with anything that persuades their citizens to be docile stoics. Of this political context Hemingway appears, as Lewis said in *Men Without Art*, quite oblivious :

He is interested [...] in war, but *not* in the things that cause war, or the people who profit by it, or in the ultimate human destinies involved in it. (18/)

The paradox is that the objectivity, the chilly distance of the Lewisian *clerc* is the duty of the intellectual who wishes to be "*engagé*".

III

Hemingway's books [...] scarcely contain a figure who is not in some way futile, clown-like, passive, and above all *Purposeless*. His world of men and women (*in violent action*, certainly) is completely empty of will. His puppets are leaves, *very violently* blown hither and thither [...]³²⁾

Like Bergson, Hemingway asserts the value of action, any action over the intellectual processes of reflection. This link with Bergson is an important one, since it explains the particular drive of the comparison that Lewis made in *Men without Art* between Prosper Mérimée and Hemingway, a comparison in which the violence apparently common to the works of both au-

thors is said to be in one case characteristically "personal", highly conscious, and directed by conceptual thinking to willed ends, while in the other, "purposeless violence, for the sake of the 'kick', is pursued and recorded, and the 'thinking subject' is to regard himself as nothing more significant than a ripple beneath the breeze upon a pond" (23/23). The sort of thing Lewis is complaining about can be seen in the description of Manuel in "The Undeclared":

He knew all about bulls. He did not have to think about them. He just did the right thing. His eyes noticed things and his body performed the necessary measures without thought. If he thought about it, he would be gone.³³⁾

The unusual use of "gone" here to mean killed inverts Cartesian expectations. To think is to be present, but in the universe of action, it would seem that the thinker absents himself and disappears. There is also a curiously revealing ellipsis—"the right thing"—that confronts the reader with the lack of purpose singled out in Lewis's critique in *Men Without Art* (and *Snooty Baronet* if my hypothesis has anything to it). In what way, we might ask, is the act "right"? Clearly the local context is all that the narrative invokes. The right action is the necessary measure in the "tragedy" (see *Death in the Afternoon* passim) of the bull; the correct movements appropriate to this bull in order that the crowd may generate the proper "emotion" (Hemingway's term, which Lewis translates above as "kick"). The instinctual Manuel is "time bound", entirely and complacently locked in his local context, the abject victim of his society and the universe; and without any more complex notion of "right" than of obeying their immediate demands. Whether it is just to father this off-spring on Bergson is not pertinent to the limited aims of this discussion, since to do so was one current form of hostile interpretation. Bertrand Russell provides a representative specimen:

The good which Bergson hopes to see realized in the world is action for the sake of action. [...] Those who desire some prevision of the end which action is to achieve are told that an end foreseen would be nothing new, because desire, like memory, is identified with its object. Thus we are condemned, in action, to be the blind slaves of instinct: the life-force pushes us on from be-

hind, restlessly and unceasingly. There is no room in this philosophy for the moment of contemplative insight when, rising above the animal life, we become conscious of the greater ends that redeem man from the life of brutes.³⁴⁾

That is very much Lewis's position, though he would probably not have allowed himself the "uplift" tones of the last sentence. For Kell Imrie, the *corrida* in which he watches his friend, the poet Rob McPhail, perform, is just the spectacle of blind slaves of instinct being pushed on by the life force. He tells us "I paid no more attention than I should to the uneasy play of the shadows of leaves upon a whitewashed wall" (214/179), a statement which recalls those other leaves blown hither and thither.

Bored by the mindless proceedings Snooty yawns and while his eyes are closed McPhail is fatally injured. When he opens them again the "action" has taken place:

Even from where I sat I could see a dark bloodsplash upon the wood of the *barrera* above his head. —I was amazed. So much so that for a moment I could do nothing but sit and look as if perfectly indifferent to what I saw. I was indifferent as a matter of fact. 215/179-80

Up to this point the whole fight has appeared to be a continuation of the Charlotade, trivial in the extreme, but suddenly McPhail's head (presumably chosen by Lewis because it houses the seat of the intellect) is crushed against the ringside, and this local context so trivializes the death by association that Snooty is "amazed", in the non-colloquial sense of "confused". Lewis sets a trap for the reader with this word, for on first encountering it we read it as "very forcibly struck by", the proper feeling for one who has just seen his friend badly injured. The sentence following expands on this by introducing the idea of shock, the extremity of which is described by comparing it to indifference, a trope that achieves its power because indifference, conventionally speaking, is not an appropriate human response. Kell Imrie's sudden and outrageous truth—"I was indifferent as a matter of fact"—sends us back, shocked, not merely to its preceding sentence, but to "amazed", which we now have to read as "confused", and "uncertain how to

respond". While he continues in this state he appears, and is in fact, "indifferent". (Lewis's further trap here is to show that an obsession with the truth of the "inward" prevents us from seeing that not all seemings are contradicted by actualities.) The events leading to the injury of McPhail are so pointless that they have infected their consequence with a triviality which precludes the proper response. The idiocy of the accident checks the realisation of its horror, he is denied the opportunity to grieve, so meets the situation with a frustrated anger, seeing the audience, and himself by implication, as accomplices:

Indeed the attitude of *everyone* towards this ridiculous accident irritated me. The wife's kneeling figure (a fatuous Hollywood wax-work it seemed to my irritated senses), the physician's frowning fuss as he made his examination—I made *no* exceptions! One was a bad as the other. Seeing that beforehand they had all consented to it—seeing they had assisted to promote these pretty results—since they were part of a system of life committed to encourage such meaningless energies—their behaviour (looked at from the standpoint of the profession of "Behaviour" was only calculated to induce contempt. 216-17/181.

The contamination prevents Kell Imrie from regarding the accident as anything other than "ridiculous", yet the sarcastic "pretty" (somehow suggesting "petty" at the same time), shows that he is aware of his error, but is unable to correct it. McPhail becomes a target because he has let Snooty down (McFail) in that he too, the great poet, consented to this event by taking part, and thus allows himself to die "stupidly" (232/193), a significant word when used of a "Lord of Language" since its slightly archaic sense of "dumb" is operative here. Kell Imrie has praised McPhail's decision to live in Faujas on the grounds that "To register the roar of storms you must yourself be just beyond their deafening circles, you catch my drift? That *just* beyond is the word to fasten on. (I am tracking for you the Artist, the Spectator, as against the blinded and deafened participant. [...]). Participation in action, joining in the bullfight, is a form of treason; *Trahi-son des clercs* again, in fact. By insisting on the value of McPhail's life as poet, his death is seen in an expanded context, and becomes a real loss to

the world of men, making the artificial dangers and honours of the bullfight seem wasteful and self-indulgent melodrama. In the Lewisian aesthetic Hemingway's treason is that, as has already been noted, although himself a *clerc*, he writes fiction which glorifies the blind and deaf victim of the life of action, though Lewis can see why Hemingway might have come to feel this way about his characters:

this constipated, baffled, "frustrated" — yes, deeply and Freudianly "frustrated" — this wooden-headed, leaden-witted, heavy-footed, loutish and oafish marionette—peering dully out into the surrounding universe like a great big bloated five-year-old—pointing at this and pointing at that—uttering simply "CAT!"—"HAT!"—"FOOD!"—"SWEETIE!"—is, as a companion, infectious. His author has perhaps not been quite immune. Seen for ever through the nursery spectacles, the values of life accomodate themselves, even in the mind of his author, to the limitations and peculiar requirements of this highly idiosyncratic puppet. (29/)

The values of life have accomodated themselves in Hemingway's fiction so that the bull ring is the only source of human dignity; negligent of the world of values that surrounds it he treats the *corrida* as if it were a self-contained absolute, or one divine event to which the whole creation moves. Such a fatalistic subjection to its magnetism is the principal subject of "The Undefeated"; Zurito, a retired picador, attempts to persuade Manuel to abandon his career as a torero:

"Why don't you cut off your coleta, Manolo?"

"I don't know," Manuel said.

"You're pretty near as old as I am," Zurito said.

"I don't know," Manuel said. "I got to do it. [...] I got to stick with it Manos."

"No, you don't."

"Yes I do. I've tried keeping away from it."³⁵⁾

Such helpless stubbornness is, Hemingway invites us to think, admirable, for though imprudent it is opting for the life of "action", but Lewis replies that this is only to "celebrate [...] a spirit that suffered bodily injury and mental disaster with the stoicism of an athletic clown in a particularly brutal circus".³⁶⁾ The emphasis here is on the word "suffer" (not only in the li-

mitted, and common, sense of "receive, or be in, pain", but also "allow its reception"; these people are in action, and the complicit victims of it, but are not themselves active. Marshall McLuhan has suggested that Lewis called these figures "dumb oxes" as an allusion to "the presumed gesture of the doomed ox as it reaches to lick the hand of the butcher with his up-raised ax".³⁷⁾ Certainly the unintelligent passivity of the ox is famous from the Bible: "He goeth after her straightway, As an ox goeth to the slaughter, Or as a fool to the correction of the stocks: Till a dart strike through his liver: As a bird hasteth to the snare, And knoweth not that it is for his life." (Proverbs: 7; 22-3). The heroics of these figures are the result of ignorance, they knoweth not that it is for their life, and Hemingway's recurring character is seen to be the strong martyr of the moment which he has been too intellectually feeble to avoid. Moreover, there is nothing at issue to justify admiration, for this stoicism has value only within the abstracted ring, which may be futile enough, as at the Bouches-du-Rhône of *Snooty Baronet*.

Quotations from a Hemingway novel or story are very poor substitutes for the whole. As Lewis puts it, "the cumulative effect" is "impressive".³⁸⁾ The Hemingway ethos—it cannot be called a philosophy—must simply be deduced from the affective response of the reader to the whole narrative. Giving this as an excuse for sparse quotation looks like laziness, but there is really no option but to direct those who doubt that *Snooty Baronet* contains satire on this ethos, back to the books. No study of this kind can hope to prove the case it argues, though it may succeed in providing an arena in which aspects of two warring texts can be seen to engage; a fuller view of the battlefield can only be obtained in the process of rereading. The following quotations are token specimens of the sort of comparisons that would be involved:

I sat beside Brett and explained to Brett what it was all about. I told her about watching the bull, not the horse, when the bulls charged the picadors, and got her to watching the picador place the point of his pic so that she saw what it was all about, so that it became more something that was going on

with a definite end, and less of a spectacle with unexplained horrors. I had her watch how Romero took the bull away from the fallen horse with his cape, and how he held him with the cape and turned him smoothly and suavely, never wasting the bull. She saw how Romero avoided every brusque movement and saved his bulls for the last when he wanted them, not winded and discomposed but smoothly worn down. [...] Romero never made any contortions, always it was straight and pure and natural in line. [...] Romero's bull fighting gave real emotion, because he kept the absolute purity of line in his movements and always quietly and calmly let the horns pass him close each time.³⁹⁾

The bull was dashing about and a dozen people were after him in all directions: several caught him by the horns, three to a horn, and a serious wrestling-match took place. The prime-mover hung on to his head. Then the bull shook them off all at once, all but the latter. This was the signal for the climax. In a moment with a great shout from the audience the bovine young spanish stable-lad was flung down upon his back: the bull butted away, it hammered him with its padded horn, it put its head to his ribs and pushed, while all the others darted round the animal to rescue their champion. —The audience bellowed with delight—it distinctly heard ribs cracking, it had seen a smear of blood. Dust, thuds and shouts. It was the *ruée* of the Boche at Mons for the french crowd, or else Verdun. [...] After a little sparring, with quick rushes here and there (Rob stalking it like a cat and offering it a frail fawn-like body to toss, but side-stepping its responsive attack, old hand that he is, and other sportsmen scuttling about, and causing it to be highly confused but not apparently very angry), two flying forms catapulted off from the sides of the arena simultaneously. [...] I could not tell you how it happened, but the next thing McPhail was running like a lamplighter, in an unexpected spurt, in his characteristic crouch, without looking to right or left.⁴⁰⁾

Hemingway's reverential diction, drawn from the abstract terms of formalist aesthetics, is replaced in Lewis by a jocular tone which sees the performance as one of cracks, thuds, shouts, scuttling, spurts, and crouches. The relation between the two accounts is largely the same as that between the two love scenes already discussed. What Hemingway rigidly excludes, the great world outside the arena, Lewis assiduously introduces, so that as well as the bull and the bull-fighters the arena is also packed with cats, fawns, lamplighters, two major battles of the first war and the whole French nation looking at them. In order to give the fight some teleological

justification Jake teaches Brett to watch the "picador place the point of his pic so that she saw what it was all about, so that it became less of a spectacle with unexplained horrors". Lewis regards this as insufficient; for him, to find what the fight is all about, you must first see what is all about the fight. This broader evaluative context is smuggled in under cover of Snooty's banter, so that when he comes later to make his explicit statements—"meaningless energies"—we are prepared and have already related the injuries of the bullfight, and the blood-lust of the spectators, with those of the Great War. (This technique could be contrasted with the straightforward denunciations in Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent*.) As brutal circuses go, the *corrida* is not even the most significant.

Hemingway, like Romero, keeps the "absolute purity of line", and makes no confusion between the items of his description. He would not, for instance, link the "real emotion" of the crowd with the bloodlust of the bull in the way that Lewis does: "The audience bellowed with delight". Of course, it is Lewis who is famous for wishing art to be a static arrangement of discrete objects and persons; when asked by Marinetti to join the Futurists in 1914 he had replied from Baudelaire: "Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes." In his *Childermass* he gave a satiric description of the Bergsonian world in a region of limbo, the "time flats", where his protagonists change sex, age, and personality, and where people are in danger of becoming objects and where objects are on the point of becoming people. But this had always been happening in his own prose, and even his drawings seem to contradict his demands for geometrically precise form, often demarking a contour with several shuddering, repetitious lines. Bearing this character of his work in mind a reader is inclined when reading *Time and Western* (Chatto & Windus: London, 1927), his major indictment of the flux mentality in art, to say "Physician heal thyself". Hemingway seems far more able to keep to Lewis's rules, indeed he is heroically superficial and clean. But Lewis had never denied the fact of flux, he just said that it should be opposed, and his satire is drawn again and again to such transmutifica-

tions as evidence of the absurdity of experience. Hemingway's heroism presents the fight in ideal terms, people and bulls remaining distinct, but in Lewis they are moving together; the stable lad is "bovine", the crowd "bel-lows", even Rob is "fawn-like", one moment and "like a lamp-lighter" the next. The cost of action is dissolution, something which Hemingway conceals, or denies. In one book to think is to be "gone", and in the other to act is to lose integrity.

Snooty Baronet, as several critics have noted, is a novel concerned with consciousness, action, and purpose, partly as they are treated in Watsonian Behaviourism. The argument of this essay is to supplement that reading by suggesting that it is also a programmatic satire of Hemingway, part parody, part inversion. Kell Imrie, for instance, is occasionally the slave of instinct, and occasionally the self-conscious intelligence; Goethe's "puppet" and "nature" by turns, a mixture, just as his artificial limb makes him a mixture of man and machine. At the climax of the book Kell Imrie uses a mock kidnapping as a cover for the murder of Humph, whom he shoots twice. It seems as if there were two Snooty Baronets, each responsible for one shot:

I cannot tell you upon what impulse I acted, but lifting my rifle I brought it down till it was *trained just short of the rim of his white pugaree, and fired*. In the general confusion my action went unnoticed. I saw Humph pitch forward upon his pony, he was hit. Then I fired a second shot, and you may believe me or not, but of all the shots I have ever fired, at all the game I have ever hunted (and this includes the hippopotamus) I don't believe that any shot ever gave me so much pleasure as that second one, at old Humph's sham-myleathered, gusseted stern, before he rolled off his pony and bit the dust. (The first was not great fun—it was almost automatic. I scarcely knew I was doing it. But I knew all about the second.) 290/235.

The first shot was an action on the model of Bergson or Hemingway, the second a passionate, revengeful killing, of the type of Prosper Mérimée. There is a moral vacuum in the text here, since Lewis has so disposed it that outrage, amusement, approval, or compassion are impossible. We are "indifferent as a matter of fact". Neither shot is endorsed, or tagged in an

acceptable way so as to locate it in the conventional human sphere, as had happened with the death of Rob McPhail. Instead the event is placed in an inappropriate context, that of big-game hunting, and to reject this we are forced either to shear it of all context whatever, which would be going back to Hemingway, or to continue to expand it infinitely, the bias of Lewis's prose being in that direction anyway. The result, for this reader at least, is that the narrative seems to be precisely as Kenner says, "peppy and pointless", only that is as it should be, for this turns out to be a satire of action itself. *Sub specie aeternitatis*, that of the non-moral mocker, no action is "good" or "bad", though it might prompt us to the "bleak laughter" for which Swift was blessed by Lewis in *Blast*. *Snooty Baronet*, unlike *The Apes of God* (rather a moral book, taken as a whole), is a quietist satire.

- 1) Hugh Kenner, *Wyndham Lewis*, (New Directions: Norfolk Conn., 1954), 109. The point of contradicting Kenner here is not part of a grand plan to save every piece of Lewis's work from its detractors, but rather to counter, somewhat, the prevailing desire amongst aficionados to map the career on the basis of an optimistic doctrine of progress. These critics, following Kenner's lead, see the oddly styled satiric fiction of the 'twenties and early 'thirties as inferior, and with relief bill *The Revenge for Love* as the first clear note in a crescendo which peaks with *The Human Age* (no one except Martin Seymour-Smith, in his cranky and bristling *Who's Who in Twentieth Century Literature*, has had the nerve to suggest that *The Red Priest* continues the ascension). It may be comforting to feel that "Every day in every way Wyndham got better and better", and it is hard to resist the legend of the blind Lewis's refusal to stop writing, but the cost is the devaluation of his outstanding achievements, which lie outside the fields covered by the "plots" and "characters" of novel criticism, in order to exalt efforts in genre where Lewis was noticeably less able, and into which he ventured from a feeling of financial desperation mingled with a conviction that he might one day hit the bestseller formula. The result is a battle between his integrity and his will, and the products are awkward hybrids like *Self Condemned*. It's certainly a better novel than *The Childermass*, as everybody points out, but to think that this is an important statement is to make a category error, to complain that a cat is a bad kind of dog, as the philosophers might put it. Those who disparage the earlier fiction presumably wish to avoid meeting Lewis on his home ground, the rhetoric of metaphysical satire, a way of writing that shows no respect to the proprieties of the forms which it uses, even treating the language itself as a dispensable tool, "overloading" the prose, as the *TLS* reviewer of *The Childermass*

said (*TLS*, 19 July 1928, p. 534), as if he didn't care whether it collapsed under the burden. The belle-lettrist conventions which approve Joyce are outraged by Lewis; Malcom Cowley said of *The Wild Body* (London, 1928), "In general, Mr. Lewis disregards the sound of words; he partially disregards their sense; and one feels that he would have been more successful had he sketched these peasants, innkeepers, and tramps in the medium of paint, which he respects, rather in this verbal medium for which he exhibits such a seigniorial contempt" (*The New Republic*, 54/697 (11 Apr. 1928), 253). Lewis is unacceptably deviant, and as for Joyce's bravura, too many critics have taken him at his word:

In any event this was terribly daring. A transparent sheet separates it from madness. [Quoted in Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1978; Routledge: London, 1978), 31]

There is, judging from this, very little separating Joyce from Mr. Arthur Waugh, who pronounced Eliot a "drunken Helot", or any of the contemporary commentators who thought *Ulysses* "mad". Yet the author and the critics are both wrong; that book is a picture of madness as seen from within sanity (even the apparent wildness of *Finnegan's Wake* is reason's construct, and only, indeed, accessible to those prepared to expend a lifetime in equally rational exegesis). Lewis's prose is different; it undergoes the experience of madness. Coleridge once remarked on the alignment of "genius" and insanity:

Great wits are sure to madness near allied, says Dryden, and true so far as this, that genius of the highest kind implies an unusual intensity of the modifying power, might conjure a platted straw into a royal diadem; but it would be at least as true, that great genius is most alien from madness—yea, divided from it by an impassable mountain—namely, the activity of thought and vivacity of the accumulative memory, which are no less essential constituents of great wit. [*Table Talk*, 1 May 1833, quoted in I. A. Richards, *Coleridge on Imagination* (Routledge: London, 1934), 74.]

Adding a further gloss a year later when trying to explain his distinction between Fancy and Imagination:

You may conceive the difference in kind between the Fancy and the Imagination in this way, that if the check of the senses and the reason were withdrawn, the first would become delirium, and the last mania. [*Table Talk*, 23 June 1834. Quoted as above.]

In Lewis's writing imagination very often escapes from the check of the senses and reason, as if the "activity of thought and vivacity of accumulative memory" breached the "impassable mountain" to raid that zone where its modifying power can operate at its full capacity:

The yard is full of dry, white volcanic light. It is compact with the emblems of one trade; there are tall stacks of pine—ribbons of iron, wheels stranded. A canal bank traverses one side of the allotted octagon. The night is pouring into it like blood from a butcher's bucket—a red night.

[*The Enemy of the Stars*, Alan Munton (ed.) Wyndham Lewis: *Collected Poems and Plays* (Carcenet: Manchester, 1979), 146]

Lewis's successes in this mode are remarkable, but Swift retains his position as the defining example:

it is the Opinion of Choice Virtuosi, that the brain is only a Crowd of little Animals, but with Teeth and Claws extremely sharp, and therefore, cling together in the Contexture we behold, like the picture of *Hobbe's* Leviathan, or like Bees in perpendicular swarm upon a Tree, or like Carrion corrupted into Vermin, still preserving the Shape and Figure of the Mother Animal. [A. C. Guthkelch and D. Nichol Smith (eds.) *A Tale of a Tub* (OUP: Oxford, 1920; 2nd ed. rev. 1958), 277]

The grammatical error here ("cling" agrees with "Animals", not "Brain") providing further evidence, if that were really needed, that this is an utterance making the experiment of madness; and it is worth recalling that Lewis is often reproved for faults of grammar. But in both cases the madness is temporary, reason withdrawing only for a while, conniving. I would say, in these cross-border foragings which seize the means to turn a platted straw into a royal diadem, or the other way round.

- 2) The first number is a page reference for the first edition (Cassell: London, 1932), and the second is to Bernard Lafourcade's edition (Black Sparrow Press: Santa Barbara, 1984). Subsequent references will be given in this form. quotations are from Lafourcade.
- 3) *A Farewell to Arms* (Scribners: New York, 1929). All quotations are from the re-set Jonathan Cape edition (London, 1955, repr. 1970).
- 4) The first number is a page reference for the first edition (Cassell: London, 1934), and the second to Seamus Cooney's edition (Black Sparrow Press: Santa Rosa, 1987). Subsequent references will be given in this form. Quotations are from Cooney. *Middletown* was also cited in Lewis' "The Future of American Art", *The Studio*, 98/438 (Oct. 1929), 687-90.
- 5) *The Plumed Serpent* (Martin Secker: London, 1926).
- 6) *Snooty Baronet*, ed. Lafourcade, 294.
- 7) Jeffrey Meyers, *Hemingway* (Macmillan: London, 1985), 288.
- 8) "The Enemy's Self-Portrait", *The Bookman*, 83/494 (Nov. 1932), 123. This article is not recorded in section F of Bradford Morrow and Bernard Lafourcade, *A Bibliography of the Writings of Wyndham Lewis* (Santa Barbara, 1978).
- 9) *Apocalypse* (The Orioli Press: Florence, 3 June 1931), 30-35.)
- 10) See Bradford Morrow and Bernard Lafourcade, op. cit., 72.
- 11) *Apocalypse*, ed. Mara Kalnins, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1980), 99. The editorial note to this passage makes no reference to Mithras as being a figure of importance for Lawrence, neither does L. D. Clark's edition of *The Plumed Serpent* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1987), which glosses the reference to "the great Mithraic beast" (p. 17) with a brief anthropological account and a cross reference to *Apocalypse*.

- 12) See Peter Alexander, *Roy Campbell* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1982), and Campbell's volume of poems, *Mithraic Emblems* (London, 1936).
- 13) *The Plumed Serpent* (London, 1926) is, a useful, probably essential, text for understanding Lewis' response to Lawrence. Consider, for example, the description of the peons given by Lawrence's Kate, the sceptical white individualist: "Their eyes have no middle to them. Those big handsome men, under their big hats, they aren't really there. They have no centre, no real I. Their middle is a raging black hole, like the middle of a maelstrom" (L. D. Clark (ed.) *The Plumed Serpent*, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1987), 40). Or "They crouched like people not quite created" (op. cit., p. 77). Both recall the condition of the "scarcely material" peons in *The Childermass* (London, 1928, p. 13): "the masses of personalities whom God, having created them, is unable to destroy, but who are not distinct enough to remain more than what you see" (p. 20). Moreover, a great part of Lawrence's book is an excoriation of the visual sense, ever dear to Lewis the painter, who designated himself the "philosopher of the eye"; Kate, who is being won round to the Mexican way of life, remarks "they have got rid of that itching of the eye, and the desire that works through the eye. The itching prurient, *knowing*, imagining eye, I am cursed with it, I am hampered up in it" (op. cit., p. 184, ll 25-28).
- 14) *The New Statesman and Nation*, 7/168 (12 May 1934), 709-10.
- 15) *Ibid.*
- 16) "One Picture is More than Enough", *Time and Tide*, 15/41 (13 Oct. 1934), 1252-3. repr. in Paul Edwards (ed.) Wyndham Lewis, *Creatures of Habit and Creatures of Change* (Santa Rosa, 1989), 231-5.
- 17) *Men Without Art*, 29/.
- 18) *Men Without Art*, 29/.
- 19) *A Farewell to Arms* 84-5.
- 20) Wyndham Lewis, *One Way Song* (Faber & Faber: London, 1932), Alan Munton (ed.) *Collected Poems and Plays* (Carcenet: Manchester, 1979), 29.
- 21) *Tarr* (Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 1918).
- 22) F. H., "Purple Cows", *The New Republic*, 15/193 (13 July 1918), 322-3.
- 23) Quoted from W. H. Auden and Louis Kronenberger (eds.) *The Faber Book of Aphorisms* (Faber: London, 1963), 288.
- 24) *Principles of Literary Criticism* (Routledge: London, 1924), p. 1.
- 25) Wyndham Lewis, "Inferior Religions", *The Little Review*, 4/5 (Sept. 1917), 3-8. Repr. in *The Wild Body* (Chatto and Windus: London, 1928).
- 26) *Men Without Art*, 29/.
- 27) Part 2 of this essay appeared in *The English Review* 59/ (Nov. 1934), 564-573, part 1 having appeared in October. Both pieces are reprinted in *Creatures of Habit*, 214-230.
- 28) *Men Without Art*, 40/.
- 29) Ford Madox Ford records a conversation with Lewis in 1914:
 You and Mr. Conrad and Mr. James and all those old fellows are done.... Ex-

ploded!... *Fichus... Vieux... jeu!... No good!... Finished!... Verisimilitude* — that's what you want to get with all your wheezy efforts...But that isn't what people want. They don't want vicarious experience; they don't want to be educated. They want to be amused...By brilliant fellows like me. Letting off brilliant fireworks. Performing like dogs on tight ropes. Something to give them the idea they're at a performance. You fellows try to efface yourselves; to make people think there isn't any author and that they're living in the affairs you...adumbrate, isn't that your word?...What balls! What rot!...What's the good of being an author if you don't get any fun out of it; ...Efface yourself!...Bilge!" (Ford Madox Ford, *Portraits from Life* (New York, 1937), 290. Quoted in Jeffrey Meyers, *The Enemy* (Routledge: London, 1980), 29).

Up to 1937 Lewis worked to this programme, despite overwhelming evidence that his analyses of the taste of the audience were quite wrong; they did not wish to be amused by a stuntman, much preferring that despised verisimilitude. One of the first reviewers of *Tarr* (F. H., "Purple Cows", *The New Republic*, 15/19 3 (13 July 1918), 322-3) reproved Lewis for writing a book which "committed the offense of failing to imagine itself inside the other fellows flesh and blood", a remark that has been made since in various forms, with reference to nearly all Lewis's work, by almost every hostile critic. Joyce, on the other hand, for all his scandalous eroticism and unintelligibility, never transgressed this part of a code of artistry which in the English speaking world might be called Jamesian. Reviewing *Tarr* (*The Egoist*, 8/5 (Sept. 1918), 105-6) T. S. Eliot said "[...] it is only in part a novel; for the rest, Mr. Lewis is a magician who compels our interest in himself; he is the most fascinating personality of our time rather than a novelist. The artist, I believe, is more *primitive*, as well as more civilized than his contemporaries, his experience is deeper than civilization, and he only uses the phenomena of civilization in expressing it." It would be easy to dismiss such remarks on the basis of their confidence in the position of the author, but a more compassionate approach will see that the articulation remains intact even if we prefer to say that "Mr. Lewis" is a phantom, or something we construct from the speaker who tells *Tarr*.

Rather than look to Lewis as a novelist, Eliot seems to be suggesting, perhaps we should regard him as something more primitive merely using the realistic novel, that arch-product of civilization, to carry something older. He is the province of the Department of Poetics rather than Narratology.

30) Julien Benda, *La Trahison des clercs* (Paris, 1927).

31) W. H. Auden, *Collected Shorter Poems 1930-1944* (Faber and Faber: London, 1950), 54.

32) *Men Without Art*, 21-2/22.

33) *Men Without Women*, 46.

34) *A History of Western Philosophy* (Simon and Schuster: New York, 1945), 810.

35) *Men Without Women*, 16.

- 36) *Men Without Art*, 21.
- 37) Marshall McLuhan, "Wyndham Lewis", *The Atlantic*, 224/6 (Dec. 1969), 94.
- 38) *Men Without Art*, 36/33.
- 39) *The Sun Also Rises*, (Scribners: New York, 1926), 173-5.
- 40) *Snooty Baronet*, 205-9/173-6.