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The Electric Desert

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This essay examines the occurrence of technological imagery in the work of P. Wyndham Lewis, with specific reference to his novels The Apes of God and The Childermass, and elucidates such imagery by juxtaposition with historic records and contemporary literary, philosophic and scientific documents. The study concentrates particularly on the radio medium, which Lewis has used as single structural paradigm in building an extensive myth of technics for the society which he observes emerging in the western world after the great war.

The characters of Horace Zagreus from The Apes of God and the Bailiff from The Childermass are related to a Lewisean mythic type, the Filibuster or profiteer-intruder into cultures not his own. This figure then merges in that of the Broadcaster, a fusion of managerial, popular-scientific and specifically radio characteristics, producing a mythic "monster", the "Engineer in human plastics". Lewis uses these flexible devices (which he calls "his puppets") to investigate transformations underway in modern society.

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A Study of the Myths of New Technology
in the works of Wyndham Lewis, with
particular attention to The Apes of God
and The Childermass.

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C O N T E N T S

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Textual Note

The punctuation and spelling in the literary works of Wyndham Lewis are at times idiosyncratic. Except where the irregularity was clearly a typographic error, such idiosyncracies are preserved exactly in the present essay, since they are sometimes due to deliberate manipulations of language for oral effect, meaning, and word-play.

1. Introductory.

The principal novels and much of the best visual art of Wyndham Lewis dates from the period "between the wars" - roughly 1918 to 1938 - which is the temporal environment of what is now referred to as "the moderns". Lewis's novels during this interval cannot be grouped as to technique or subject; he produced in these years work as dissimilar as the second edition of Tarr and The Revenge for Love. The two novels which concern the present investigation are themselves quite dissimilar, although written nearly simultaneously. The Apes of God and The Childermass do share a single concern, however, from the point of view of this discussion. The problem which Lewis examines in those two "big books" of 1928-30 is difficult to define in a word. They deal with an influence or pressure toward an alteration in society, which the author believed he detected in all quarters, affecting even the most insular of groups and individuals. Lewis saw this tendency as involved, in a complex way, with the technics of his age, and in particular with the new media known commonly as "mass media" today. In The Apes of God he begins his scrutiny using a "puppet" (Lewis's own description) named Zagreus, who is introduced as "the broadcaster", to explore the possibilities in the influences at work. Partly because of its rapid rise to intense and general popularity, radio thus becomes a symbol - or rather more, a complex and adaptable image - for the technics, or popularized sciences of Lewis's time. There are

several "broadcasters" in The Apes; in The Childermass we find a mythic landscape structured on technical images, principally of radio technology. The meaning of such terms as image and myth, as used here, will I believe become evident in the discussion, by the examination of their operation in the novels.

In neither The Apes nor The Childermass is broadcasting a simple familiar operation; the broadcaster and his medium have for Lewis a significance, due to the variety of general and specific application of the image, which might be termed "archetypal" or, as I refer to it here, mythic. No other single area of technical development offered such possibility for artistic development. This great vitality of the broadcaster-image can be attributed, in large part, to the nature of the broadcaster's role and of the radio medium. On the one hand radio is a technological development; at the same time it is the medium by which it has popularized itself, or brought itself into public awareness - and this in a very short time and on a vast scale. Lewis's technique for examining technics and his social environment has been, then, to observe the features of that interface or contact between pure science and public life, and to produce a novel which combines in single images the multiple possibilities of the resultant impact - a "myth" of technics. This technique has enabled him to transform and combine a great many apparently separate fields and unrelated facts into a unified structure; the result is an artistic product with great energy and mythic reality.

The present essay is intended to examine Lewis's mythology and to show it, wherever possible, in direct comparison with historical, philosophical and scientific fact. Only by such a close parallel secutiny or

juxtaposition can the validity of Lewis's claims be assessed. The work's usefulness to our understanding of modern technological society cannot be judged without this "objective" investigation. The claim of the present study to objectivity must of course be qualified. I have however taken no specific commitment to Lewis's conclusions about the material which he used. To do so would be to enter into a critical exegesis of his work _in totum_; the present investigation is intended as background only to that much more general critical undertaking, which would require a serious and exhaustive treatment of the problem posed by Lewis's own critical work _vis-à-vis_ his novels. I have taken the stand here that the critical books, especially _Time and Western Man_ and _The Art of Being Ruled_, with their apparently clear statements of Lewis's position, bear only indirectly on the novels under examination, and that the "conclusions" to be drawn from the novels are not necessarily those made by Lewis in his critical works. This assumption is admittedly in opposition to those of some Lewis critics, notably Kenner and Pritchard. It is given some legitimacy however by Lewis's own view of his technique as one of objective observation of the "outsides" of his subjects, expressed at length in _Men Without Art_ and elsewhere. The present analysis of _The Apes of God_ and _The Childermass_ as operations in myth-making attempts to accommodate Lewis's self-expressed aesthetic, while not accepting it completely as a necessary basis for appreciation of his work.

The problem of Lewis's working techniques would occupy, in itself, an essay like the present one in size. Without a well-established terminology - and without a social "environment" whose features we all can agree upon - any serious artist is in the position of Pound who, in his _Gaudier-Brzeska, A Mémoir_, complained of "people... making fun of the clumsy odd terms that

we use in trying to talk"[1] of the contemporary arts. Eliot, with his "objective correlative" was searching like Pound with his "images" for a bit of terminology that might serve. In view of the relationship between Pound and Lewis, especially in the early Blast days (1914-15), it is not surprising that Pound's attempts to define "the image" should share much of Lewis's working of that "image" into literary art. Nor is it unusual that the "vortex", in which they both were involved, should bear remarkable resemblances to the "image" of Pound's literary theories. Pound attempted to define his "image" in the memoir on Gaudier, cited above:

> The image is not an idea. It is a radiant node or cluster; it is what I can, and must perforce, call a VORTEX, from which, and through which, and into which, ideas are constantly rushing. In decency one can only call it a VORTEX.[2]

It will be clear to readers of this essay that what I term Lewis's "myth" shares this quality of the "radiant node or cluster"; but I have felt that to define verbally Lewis's technique is less desirable than to show it, as clearly as possible, in action. To do so it is necessary to engage in what Sheila Watson, in her Wyndham Lewis and Expressionism, calls "icon-recognition". A remark by Rolf Fjelde, from his article "Time, Space and Wyndham Lewis", clarifies this need somewhat:

> The pattern in Lewis's work is not the reflection of a system, in the sense that Eliot and Pound have adopted metaphysical or economic systems. Rather, it is one of recurrent themes in the realm of ideas. These express the basic trends or conditions he has observed in his studies of contemporary life....[3]

These "recurrent themes" are - or are associated with - certain icons or images which reappear so often as to be symbols in Lewis's work. They

are not, however, to be regarded as symbols, at least in the sense by which "symbol" was understood to Ezra Pound:

> The symbolists dealt in "association", that is, in a sort of allusion, almost of allegory. They degraded the symbol to the status of a word.... The symbolist's symbols have a fixed value, like numbers in arithmetic, like 1,2 and 7. The imagiste's images have a variable significance, like the signs a, b and x in algebra.[4]

Whether one accepts the "moderns'" terminology - and criticism is fragmented, now, upon that subject - one must accept the attitudes expressed by their terminology. Clearly, for Pound and Eliot and Lewis a multi-linear or non-linear interpretation must be put on the structural components of their art. In view of this fact, to select a single interpretation of, say, the Bailiff from The Childermass, and to assume it as formative to the novel's meaning, is to regard the work essentially as "allegory". The implications of the allegorical mode must be resisted. The error in this method will be evident if we reflect that "the Bailiff as Technics" alone, shorn of the social, literary and managerial images, produces a picture of mere technological determinism. The criticism available on Lewis's literary work tends unfortunately to this oversimplification of character and of allusion.

The body of Lewis criticism is as yet, however, relatively small. Much of what exists is too cursory to be useful to a discussion such as the present one. Apart from a few articles and special-issues of literary magazines, there are perhaps five books, of which two are brief monographs, covering the entirety of this author's very considerable literary production. Hugh Kenner's Wyndham Lewis, written in Lewis's late years, is a disastrous example of the folly of a "romance" or autobiographic approach to the novels.

Kenner has no evaluation of the critical works, and is of the opinion that The Revenge for Love was the zenith of Lewis's literary output.[5] There is no doubt that this novel is one of Lewis's finest - and the most nearly a romance novel. But to evaluate - as Kenner does - a work like The Childermass or The Apes of God as an attempt by the author at The Revenge for Love (in which he finally "succeeds") has no critical merit whatever. And Kenner's summation of the novels, in which he uses a figure of speech drawn from the latter work, betrays that critic's sense of what Lewis ought to have been doing when he wrote his earlier novels. Kenner remarks:

> In retrospect we can see that Lewis has always specialized in unreality. His people - Tarr, Kreisler, the Bailiff, Horace Zagreus, Snooty Baronet - have "explained" the universe in some way or other and behave accordingly, until their behaviour (the translation of theory into action) betrays them by dropping them over the precipice that surrounds every theory.[6]

The precipice alluded to is of course the one which kills Margot and Victor Stamp near the conclusion of The Revenge for Love. In the above quotation, and elsewhere in his work, Kenner sees Lewis's earlier novels in terms of The Revenge (originally entitled False Bottoms); that is, as gruelling exercises in rational nihilism. He has chosen to illustrate this nihilism, peculiarly, in a novel where the main character is not a product of a too "rational" approach to life, however - as the present name of the novel implies. Kenner's view of Lewis's novels is illustrated by a number of comparisons such as the following:

> By an aficionado of Tarr or The Childermass, the dialogue of which is almost continuously Lewisian, The Revenge for Love might be taken at first sight for a relapse; its dialogue seems largely taken from the neighbourhood cinema....[7]

The identification of Tarr and Childermass as "Lewisian" in contrast to Revenge for Love will not of course bear close scrutiny; dialogue and narrative fragments from almost any Lewis novel, when isolated, read like those of other sources. It is in fact quite remarkable how little Lewis's prose needs to deviate from that of a Bennett, a Huxley or an Orwell in order to become distinctively Lewis. This of course is true only of fragments in isolation. The energies created by Lewis's images, and conjunctions of images, are his own. Even Tarr, a novel with which Lewis took great care in organizing language to conform with aesthetic predilection, can be read - if Mr. Kenner wishes to do so - as a romance in which Conrad and Forster operate, perhaps at a disadvantage, with the material of Henry James. But the Kenner invitation to make such a critical error must be ignored, and a new effort of understanding made, if Lewis's literary art is to be understood at all comprehensively.

It is perhaps curious that Kenner with his predilection for a "romance" view of the novels, should overlook the element of romance which is uppermost in Lewis - the romance of the machine. It takes little additional engagement with the works, beyond that given by Kenner, to see Lewis's concern with men as the machines of dangerous or absurd or superannuated idea. The machine-romance is then a pathetic or sinister flirting on the part of such characters as Kreisler, Bestre, Ker-Orr and Kell-Imrie, with what is no longer - or never has been - the business or "reality" of life. The self-destructiveness of many Lewis characters is not entirely unconnected with that of Don Quixote, putting on the rusty armour of past convention and challenging present conventions with his superannuated weapons. Such romance, amounting sometimes to sentimentality

of a murderous kind, is castigated by Lewis with much less whimsy than it is by Cervantes. We can more readily infer a jovial acceptance of Quixote and Rosinante by their maker - and by the reader - than we can an acceptance by Lewis of the grimly destructive man-of-action Kreisler, or the human-puppeteer Kell-Imrie. But the more "humanist" stance of Cervantes does not negate the severer one of Lewis, who replaces pity with laughter, an equally legitimate and "lurid" emotion. That Lewis refused to acquiesce to the "gentler" view of men seems to be Herbert Read's complaint, when he comments in a review of the Letters[8] that Lewis's energies did not lead "to any permanent achievement". Read found Lewis unwilling to "cooperate" and this cooperation was, Read argued, "only the active love of humanity".

Perhaps the only thorough investigation of Lewis's writing to date is that of Dr. Sheila Watson, submitted as Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Toronto in 1964. This work, Wyndham Lewis and Expressionism, is unfortunately not easily obtainable; if it were, a good deal of the groundwork on Lewis's material and his methods of building iconic and formal structures would be referrable to it. Prof. Watson has touched upon several aspects handled in the present discussion, including that of the Radio-myth in The Childermass, and has pointed the way toward an evaluation of Lewis as observer of technologic change.

Marshall McLuhan, in a too-brief article from his review Explorations, has written on "Third Program in The Human Age".[9] While aspects of this article suggest, broadly and vaguely, some such investigation as the present one, the primary virtue of McLuhan's note is to indicate a connection between BBC and the Lewis trilogy. He does not concern himself

with Lewis's art, only with the imagery of technics to be found there. Such an approach produces vast oversimplifications. The present thesis must unfortunately suffer to some extent from the same complaint, since it ignores or obscures the great comic energy involved in creating the myth under examination.

In the period with which this essay chiefly deals, from 1922 to 1930, Lewis was writing The Apes of God and The Childermass, as well as Time and Western Man, The Art of Being Ruled, The Lion and the Fox, and several other lesser works. At the same time England was undergoing political and economic difficulties which found open expression in The General Strike of 1926. Contemporaneously, the British Broadcasting Company was formed (1922) out of a background of massive research, commercial and amateur, in the field of electronic communications. In the four years after 1922 the Company established a monopolistic broadcasting service which served almost without adaptation as the organizing principle of the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation), to which the Company was converted in 1926. When the Corporation came into being, broadcasting (the programming, its tone and scope) was mostly established procedure.

Concurrently with radio development on a public scale the pure sciences followed their own rapid enquiries, into relativity theory and quantum mechanics as well as the empirical exploration of subatomic phenomena. The French physicist Paul Langevin has summarized, in his article "L'Evolution de l'espace et du temps" (1911), what in his opinion were the prevalent tendencies of this great scientific industry. That these tendencies were for him of a fundamental nature he makes clear in his introductory remark:

> L'Attention des physiciens s'est trouvée récemment ramenée vers les notions fondamentales de l'espace et du temps que de nouveaux faits expérimentaux les obligent à remanier; rien ne peut mieux montrer l'origine empirique de ces notions que leur adaption progressive, non terminée encore, aux données de plus en plus subtiles de l'expérience humaine.[10]

For Langevin it is the empirical which leads to a review and revaluation of the theoretic; this theoretic operation affects the "données de plus en plus subtiles de l'expérience humaine". Langevin quickly identifies the nature of this all-pervasive influence, infecting ordinary life as much as it does that of science. It is "electromagnetism" Langevin asserts, coming into conflict with the established intellectual and social structures of "the rational mechanic" of eighteenth-century science; "L'électromagnétisme" he identifies as a primitive influence in contrast to the Newtonian mechanic, or "Mécanique rationelle":

> L'Electromagnétisme est aussi remarkablement adapté a son domaine primitif que la Mécanique rationelle a pu l'être au sien.... L'Electromagnétisme constitue une discipline, un mode de pensée tout à fait à part, tout à fait distinct de la Mécanique....[11]

Further, this "quite distinct way of thinking" inherent in electromagnetics is "doué d'une force d'expansion étonnante" in as much as it has already "assimilé sans aucun effort l'immense domaine de l'Optique et de la valeur rayonnante". "L'Electromagnétisme a conquis la plus grande partie de la Physique, envahi la Chimie et groupé un nombre immense de faits jusque là sans forme et sans lieu."[12]

Not only Langevin but other qualified observers, and not only in the sciences but in other fields as well, have sounded this tone of prodigious change. It is the contention of the present essay that The Childermass (not to exclude other Lewis novels) figures such change, its apparent

causes and nature. Many of the following chapters examine in some detail the evidences of the observers alluded to above.

The question of Lewis's access to specific and accurate information on his subjects, especially that of BBC development, needs some comment. Of the histories and memoirs on broadcasting, one very significant work would have been available to him at the time of writing of Childermass. This is J.C.W. Reith's Broadcast Over Britain, published in 1924. Two further works on the subject appeared in the same year: C.A. Lewis's Broadcasting From Within, and A.R. Burrows' The Story of Broadcasting. (Burrows was first Director of Programmes of the Company; Lewis his "deputy"). Apart from these sources, the press-coverage given to early radio must have been little less enthusiastic than the coverage given to recent American Moon exploration. The BBC archives contain nineteen volumes of press-clippings from the period 1922-26. There were in addition several periodicals devoted to radio news in that interval, including the BBC's own Radio Times. This "house organ" and a periodical entitled Wireless World carried, from their inception, stories ranging from the highly technical to the popular and social aspects of the medium. Little material on broadcasting included in this study was beyond Wyndham Lewis's reach.

Lewis's access to material raises a secondary question however, that of the dating of his two novels under discussion. Although it appeared as the later of the two, The Apes of God would appear to present the "broadcaster" in a more primitive, or an earlier, conception of that figure. In fact, The Apes of God in spite of its publication date (1930) seems to have been conceived and written rather earlier than The Childermass,

published in 1928. A section of The Apes, entitled "The Apes of God", appeared in the Criterion for April 1924, and a second, "Mr. Zagreus and the Split Man", was published by the same review even earlier in that year. Mention of The Apes precedes by several years that of The Childermass in the Rose collection of Letters. According to the letters, too, Lewis had difficulty in publishing The Apes, so that he finally brought it out himself in 1930. The present essay treats The Apes as a precursor, in one sense, of Childermass for chronologic as well as artistic reasons.

When Lewis began work on The Childermass about 1924-25 he had in mind, according to the evidence of his letters [13], the production of a literary complex under the title The Man of the World. The Childermass was to be a portion, as was Time and Western Man, etc., of this creative/critical opus. By 1928 however the project seems to have been dropped, so that Childermass was published in that year as The Childermass; Section I. Later, when Lewis with the aid of the BBC Third Programme came to complete Books II and III Childermass had become the name for Book I only, and the trilogy was combined under the title The Human Age. With the publication of this work, in 1955, Lewis did very slight revision to the original 1928 version of Section I - one of these changes was of the name "Pullman" in many earlier references, to "Pulley". Final paragraphs were also added to provide a liaison with Book II. This spareness of correction and emendation suggests that Lewis was still, after almost thirty years, convinced of the viability of the novel. I have referred throughout my discussion to the later, 1955 edition due to its ease of access.

Between the Childermass of 1928 and its sequels in the nineteen-fifties however, a great deal had happened both to Lewis personally and

to the world which he figures in the novels. Although the coherence of the three books is great despite intervening years, certain obvious changes in Lewis's predisposition and in his material must be pointed out. Marshall McLuhan has made mention of the difference in Lewis's style before and after his blindness, and has used excerpts to illustrate what he calls a transition to "narrative ease" prompted by the blind writer's use of the dictaphone.[14] Whether or not one accepts McLuhan's causal analysis, one is forced to acknowledge a definite alteration. In earlier novels, beginning with Tarr in 1918, Lewis had, as Kenner points out, taken definite measures to prevent the "easy flow" of a conversational style. The use of the signs = and - in that novel to denote stops and pauses (removed in the second edition of 1928) assisted the author by providing a clear visual interruption upon which it would be difficult to impose a flowing auditory rendition of the language. The eye, for the reader, is the more immediate and powerful instrument for establishing rhythms, at least where silent reading of a novel is concerned. The fact that Lewis dropped the visual apparatus of Tarr in his later revision, and that his style in The Apes of God and Childermass is more "aural" or conversationally rhythmed than that of Tarr, might lead us to conjecture that he was for some reason preferring by that time a less totally visual language - that he was, in brief, allowing the ear its say. Lewis did not in other words require blindness and his dictaphone to make him aware that he was moving into a world of increased auditory - and perhaps of decreased visual - emphasis. In fact, a good deal of his work takes account in one way or another of this fact, and while he proclaimed himself always "a man of the eye", he was neither immune nor entirely hostile to

the claims of the ear. The subject of this visual-audile bias plays an important part in Childermass, where Lewis explores the qualities of those two senses and assesses the argument, current in the 1920's, between proponents of the one and supporters of the other "mode of experience". A chapter in the present essay on The Dispute of Eye and Ear suggests that Lewis saw this argument as a spurious and corrosive one.

2. Broadcasters Private and Public.

That period, known as "the trough between the wars", which is the temporal setting for the present essay has been popularized by T.S. Eliot as The Waste Land, and called by some historians such as William McElwee Britain's Locust Years. The locusts may in fact have eaten all the years, for there is often today the uneasy sense that aspects of the 1920's and thirties are being repeated, re-explored, not merely by the fashion industry. As if revisiting a childhood neighbourhood or an old home-town, many people are today undergoing in an odd manner what should theoretically have been concluded, once for all, by World War II. Perhaps this intensive revaluation of the period is necessary. It may be argued that the two decades comprise the beginnings, the original appearances of technical, economic and social forms, of the present. This conjecture might explain how it is that, forty-five years after the fact, The Childermass of Wyndham Lewis seems so important to contemporary understanding. It seems, still today, to be an exploration of very close country indeed.

The same cannot, I think, be said of Lewis's other "big" novel of the time, The Apes of God. Whatever its merits as a work of literary art - a question not at issue here - its matériel appears quaintly dated. The depiction of character might be objected to as realist caricature to the present eye, not essentially satiric. Nevertheless it is in The Apes of God that the "broadcaster" is first met with in Lewis's great vortex. The focus in

The Apes is not upon the qualities of radio as medium; that specific subject is handled more fully in The Childermass. The Apes concentrates upon character, and it is the "behaviour" of the broadcaster, and his effects on his human environment, for which the novel is useful to the present discussion. Lewis's working of character into form is not entirely unlike that of Henry James, who with his story "In the Cage" (1898) provided what may be the first example of a prose exploration into popular electrical communications. In that work James portrayed a young woman telegraph-operator living a large part of her life in the small wire cage from which telegrams - the telephone calls of the time - were sent and received. James shows the intensification of the girl's fancy as she attempts to provide detail to the tiny incomplete scraps of other, more interesting lives which pass through her hands daily. Lewis too, in The Apes, exposes a "virgin" intelligence (Dan Boleyn) to the broadcaster Horace Zagreus. But for Lewis the effects of this encounter are not the only ones of interest. Rather, he focuses on the "broadcaster" and finds him a paradigm for diverse figures and values in his society.

The term "broadcast" as used by Lewis requires some investigation. Certainly Horace Zagreus is not a "disk-jockey" - and Starr-Smith or Blackshirt even less so - nor does either of these characters have any visible connection with organized radio. Lewis obviously uses the word in an expanded sense. We might question his right to do so, and his accuracy in selecting the images which he chose to include in his broadcast metaphor. It would be impossible to trace the derivation of the word "broadcast" with any fruitful result. However, a remark by the telephonic engineer Frank Gill, in the preface to Baldwin's History of

the Telephone in the United Kingdom, is significant. Gill wrote of the telephone that it "has some of the properties both of the letter and of the newspaper: it can be clothed with privacy, given to one individual only, or it can be broadcast to millions simultaneously.[15] This remark, made in the early twenties, suggests a ready familiarity with the notion of "broadcasting", and a usage distinct from radio. Asa Briggs, in his study The Birth of Broadcasting, finds the concept appearing considerably earlier than this however. "In one obscure branch of entertaining," Briggs writes, "there were intimations of 'broadcasting' before 1900." These intimations too concerned the telephone. "As a technical instrument," Briggs reports, "the telephone was first demonstrated by the transmission of music, frequently organ music," and "in 1892 performances at the Lyric Theatre in London... and other places were transmitted 'with entire success' to an Electrical Exhibition at the Crystal Palace."[16] Briggs notes also the formation of a company in London "to provide 'listening facilities', including four pairs of headphones and an answer-back 'hand microphone' for every subscriber".[17] By these telephonic (wire transmitted) arrangements, listeners were served in a manner quite like that of the later crystal set, with "musical performances, public lectures and addresses, and church services".[18]

In spite of these apparently valuable precedents for wireless broadcasting, the technics of radio were not immediately adapted to organized broadcasting, even when the technical apparatus itself had been proven by private and public demonstration. For the first two decades of this century, radio as a commercial enterprise meant, if anything, radio-telegraphy. Many of the men who worked with the new

medium saw it as an extended - and sometimes magical - form of telegraph. J.A. Fleming, the inventor of the vacuum diode, wrote that "no familiarity with the subject removes the feeling of vague wonder" with which one sees a telegraphic instrument operating without wires.[19] And Briggs notes that "businessmen also thought of radio in terms of dot and dash: their interest centred on what might be described as its private use, as a means of point-to-point communication".[20] The fact that radio was not seized upon by commercial interests, but rather that it forced itself into the commercial as into the social consciousness, is significant to Lewis's imaging of the broadcaster Zagreus, who is continually entering suddenly or forcing himself abruptly upon groups and individuals, when he makes his "magical" appearances in The Apes.

In the pre-war years, and after until 1920, radio development was in the keeping of two different private groups: the companies, like the Marconi Company, who sought to perfect and bring it to economic fulfilment, and a "motley group of people, mostly boys and young men, working all alone on crude apparatus in the isolation of their own homes",[21] as G.L. Archer wrote in his History of Radio to 1926. These amateurs were by no means entirely isolated, however. As the scientific and technical research advanced toward an easily accessible speech transmitter, many of them followed the larger companies into the field of radio-telephony or "radio". Asa Briggs notes that even prior to speech, "the word 'radio' was beginning to be used more widely between 1908 and the war".[22] The operation of the amateurs, whom we would now call "hams", was at first code broadcasting, for those who could afford transmitters. It is important to remember that, with the experimental programs from the Marconi-BBC transmitter, the number

of these amateur individuals and societies had increased enormously, so that they received hearings, in the nineteen-twenties, before boards-of-enquiry which listened also to the claims of Marconi Co. and equipment merchants. The amateur played, in other words, a prominent role during the formative years of broadcasting. He was even liable to become a competitor with the large stations, causing a type of electromagnetic interference called "oscillation". Threats of force and legal action were occasionally needed by the Post Office to control the oscillation from the sets of over-enthusiastic experimental - and at times deliberately obstructive - "listeners-in". It is vital to an understanding of broadcasting development that these amateurs be placed adequately in the growing hierarchy of radio - which included the big companies, the navy, and the amateurs or "experimenters". For, to begin with, the "motley group of people" learning radio on their own was the British listening public, the avant-garde for what is now Radio Audience. It was a paying public - except of course for those delinquents who would not buy licences from the Post Office.

Asa Briggs notes that, by the date of the "second conference of wireless societies" in March 1921, "the Post Office had issued 150 transmitting and 4,000 receiving licenses". The major manufacturers too were offering for sale a variety of primitive apparatus. "There was usually at least one 'wireless enthusiast' in every village," Briggs comments, "if not by 1922, certainly very soon afterwards."[23] Before the first British broadcasts went out from Writtle transmitter in February 1922, there had been a period of experimental transmission from Chelmsford in Essex. The Chelmsford emissions had been designed primarily as exploratory ones by the Marconi Company, who of course wished to

inaugurate a regular broadcasting system, but needed at that time a good deal of experimental knowledge about transmitter-design, power and range, etc., before regular broadcasting could commence. The Chelmsford operation was stopped by the Post Office in 1920, before significant results of a social or technical nature had been achieved. The Writtle transmissions of 1922 were, as Briggs notes, in the nature of an "assignment to 'broadcast' a weekly half-hour 'programme' for amateurs with no sense of what the future was to contain".[24] Although the British Broadcasting Company was to become a reality in less than a year, it was still "for amateurs" as audience that the sole broadcast venture in Britain was operated. It was at Writtle, and with the sense of "audience" in mind, that the BBC engineer P.P. Eckersley delivered one of the earliest radio "patters", however. Ignoring the phonograph records which were supplied for his program, he simply talked. He had, he recalls in his book The Power Behind the Microphone, "a certain ebullience, which often overcomes me when I have an audience". This ebullience "prompted a less formal attitude towards the microphone than was customary".[25] Listeners' response in the form of mail asked for more. When regular broadcasting brought the Childrens' Hours into prominence, this taste for "chat" became almost eipdemic.

Against the background just briefly sketched of growing "broadcast" awareness, Wyndham Lewis's concern with broadcasters in The Apes of God takes on relevance, if not a clear meaning. The relevance is to be found equally in Lewis's use of the term "broadcast" and in his accurate estimate of the proliferation of this activity. The clarification of his meaning in the novel can only come from a clear recognition of the work's formal intentions.

Horace Zagreus, as broadcaster, indulges in both the private and the public or indiscriminate forms of that activity. But his is a specialist role, the "loudspeaker" for the invisible Pierpoint. At Lord Osmund's Lenten Party the Blackshirt, Starr-Smith, tells Dan Boleyn:

> All this taking you about to show you The Apes! Well of course they are Apes. What however in Jesus' name are you but an Ape and Horace Zagreus himself is the worst Ape of the lot! Does he not take all his ideas from Pierpoint? [26]

Zagreus willingly admits this relationship; he will broadcast Pierpoint to a private audience of one, or at large to the community of "Apes". Following a broadcast at the home of Lionel Kein, Zagreus is complimented on his performance by the Keins. "Bravo! Bravo! Couldn't have been better done!", Kein applauds, "I congratulate you on your wonderful memory." Zagreus accepts the ovation with a nauseating modesty: "At all events," he finishes, "there is our great and dear friend Pierpoint's text - orally preserved, quite in the primitive manner."[27] The effect of Zagreus's broadcasts for the invisible Pierpoint is not a laudable but a highly destructive one. The broadcasts turn Pierpoint into a public property - the Keins, like other members of Zagreus's community, readily recognize the plundered speeches for his. The broadcasts alter or deform Pierpoint by a process of outering and vulgarization; Pierpoint becomes "Zeitgeist", or a common "unconscious". Lewis clearly recognized this corrosive and "psychoanalytic" outering of the Zagreus broadcast, for he gave it another metaphorical expression in the activities of the analyst Dr. Frumpfsusan. The description of the Doctor is at times reminiscent of the Bailiff in The Childermass. Frumpfsusan "chums it" with his patient Matthew, and engages in a patter that evokes both the stream-of-

consciousness of James Joyce and the mass-intimate patter of Children's Hour Uncles. The doctor is specifically referred to as "the Analytical Uncle-of-the-children's-hour"[28], making Lewis's intended association with the BBC complete. The suggestion contained in this allusion to the "analyst-uncle" seems strained perhaps. Yet even a brief study of the Children's Hour and its operations brings some interesting corroboration to light. Asa Briggs remarks often upon the popularity of Children's Hour, which by March 1923 was "the most regular 'speech and music' programme of any length". This length, though not rigidly fixed, was at that time about three-quarters of an hour, and "it played a somewhat disproportionately large part in the early life of the broadcasting stations".[29] Its techniques - if they can be called that - included a deliberate attempt to involve and "bring out" the child-listeners (and no doubt many adult listeners also).

The Children's Hour was unlike other broadcasts of the early period in a number of ways. Its informality and participative qualities were particularly noticeable. C.A. Lewis, "Uncle Caractacus" to the child-audience, early in BBC development in his book Broadcasting from Within, wrote "I wonder if there is anyone in the world who has such a jolly mailbag as a broadcasting uncle".[30] The remark suggests a high degree of response from the children. In fact, the programs were carefully oriented to elicit much response. A.R. Burrows, Director of Programmes for the Broadcasting Company, records that "there is no section of our programme work upon which more time and thought is spent than that termed the Children's Hour".[31] The intention of this planning was, Briggs notes, that the children identify strongly with the broadcasts. He quotes the

Radio Times of Oct. 15 1926, which stated that the children "realize that the programmes are theirs, not ours".[32] The degree of intimacy established was great. "The organizers of Children's Hour took the children into their confidence," Briggs records, and "the radio circles of child listeners.... were among the most effective of listeners' pressure groups."[33] The Children's Hours encouraged what was called back-chat, or at least the illusion of this two-way communication. They were intended to draw the children out. It is not difficult to detect the basis, in this process, for Lewis's use of the "analyst-Uncle" image in The Apes of God. Dr. Frumpfsusan's "diagnostic of the truly civilized person", as given to the new patient Matthew, was that this individual "be prepared... to discuss himself, to have himself discussed, with a freedom quite staggering to the mind of the uneducated".[34] That outering of the inner man, which Lewis found disturbingly frequent in contemporary society, had been given he felt a new impetus with the encouragement of children by radio to respond to even the least intelligent of appeals. The appeals were of a more emotional than an intellectual nature, Lewis suggests in his imagery. The "child" rather than the "adult" was stressed. Briggs makes a note of this pandering to disorganization and irresponsibility of the child-temperament when he records that

> There was one point about Children's Hour which always had to be stressed to children: it had never to be 'like school'. [35]

Very early in radio's development the criticism of its effects had begun on all hands. By 1926 the Radio Times had aired many of these opinions, some of which Briggs has brought back to light in Birth of Broadcasting. One such objection was that "radio would make people passive.

It would produce 'all-alike girls'". Another was that it would "contaminate" children who would be "lulled into listening... instead of learning to fend for themselves".[36] In both The Apes of God and The Childermass Lewis identifies broadcasting closely with children, and with the child-cult which he explored in his critical book The Doom of Youth. It was not only the children, Lewis saw, who might be "lulled into listening instead of learning to fend for themselves". It is however these over-stressed and fatalist predictions, as well as the potential dangers of the medium, which Lewis castigates in his comic treatment of the subject. The qualities of an adult responsible life, with its resistance to environmental fluidities, are shown by Lewis to be losing ground everywhere to a prolonged infancy. The analyst Dr. Frumpfsusan in The Apes of God is one of the perpetrators of that infancy; as he tells Matthew, "scale my dear boy... is too often disregarded by us. For successful extroversion you must dominate the scene".[37] Pursuing this technique for manipulation of "the scene" - peopled with human materials - the doctor advises Matthew that he must "be a Gulliver in Lilliput".[38] It is this role which Zagreus plays. Zagreus, in short, is as broadcaster a "big gun" and not one of the amateurs. He allows little "back-chat". This is suggested by his willful deafness, and becomes clear in a telephone conversation between Mélanie, Dan's would-be protectrice, and Zagreus. Mélanie has telephoned Zagreus to upbraid him for his treatment of Dan. Challenging in this way the big-time broadcaster, she makes difficult headway against his "power" and his refusal to hear a response.

> 'Horace I have a bone to pick with you!'
> A staccato muttering came from the instrument. Those were the very vibrations of Zagreus!...
> 'Can't you hear me? Where is your ear-trumpet? But you are not so deaf as all that!'
> She was pulled up, there was the waxing of a contradictory rattle. As she listened her foot tapped out a morse tattoo upon the parquet.[39]

The tone of the lengthy conversation suggests the amateur Mélanie - whose "foot tapped out a morse tattoo" while Zagreus broadcast - challenging and being overpowered by the larger "station". There are several intervals of "staccato jabber" and several times the mouth of Mélanie "made a dart for the transmitter, but withdrew again". Abruptly, Zagreus hangs up.

The paternal broadcasting of Zagreus is a more formal mode than the Children's-Hour behaviour of Dr. Frumpfsusan; it is a lecture delivered to the masses, not a friendly chat. But in important respects Zagreus possesses the child-mind to a greater degree than do his "radio-uncle" relatives. Like Blackshirt, the revolutionary rushing breathlessly about at Lord Osmund's Party, Zagreus exhibits a childlike fascination with event. "It is enviable, don't you think it is?" James Julius Ratner (the Split Man) asks, "to be able to regard everything as terribly momentous, as Horace does."[41] The remark is reminiscent of Lewis's description, in Time and Western Man, of the Revolutionary Simpleton. This commonly-met phenomenon, whom Lewis describes in his critical book, "opens all doors, as it were - whether there is anything inside or not". Like Zagreus who is breathlessly interested in "everything", the Revolutionary Simpleton "exclaims, he points excitedly at what he believes to be the herds of wild horses that are constantly pouring out of the doors flung dramatically open by him". But when we examine the discoveries of this aged child, Lewis suggests, we "occasionally observe a moke or an old hack crawling forth".[42]

Against the powerful executive broadcaster Zagreus are played, throughout The Apes of God, the "radio-Uncle" factions. Starr-Smith ranges himself with Zagreus. Lionel Kein, like the analyst Dr. Frumpfsusan, associates himself with the Uncles. At the meeting of Kein with Zagreus's

latest prodigy Dan Boleyn an important connection is made by Lewis. Kein drawls, "pitiful and nasal", he speaks "with a senile titubation of the tongue, exploiting the death-rattle", he acts the "pierrot Vieux". He plays "poor Uncle Punch of the Children's Hour, the most popular grown-up ever broadcast". Again making the connection between the youth-cult and radio, Lewis terms Kein "the old pet of the Pan-nursery".[43] The liaison of radio-uncle and Punch will have special meaning in the discussion of The Childermass and its protagonist the Bailiff.

3. The Apes of God - The Marriage of Private Broadcast and Public Gossip

As a myth of broadcasting The Apes of God may be understood by examining its formal organization. It must be stressed that broadcasting is by no means the only material contributing to its structure. The preceding chapter has indicated a number of its prominent radio personalities, of which the magnate-broadcaster Zagreus is principal. At the beginning of the novel we meet Lady Fredigonde Follett, an ancient Brittania described as a "veteran gossip star".[44] She is in some respects a female counterpart to Zagreus. Moving with difficulty, attended by her maid Bridget and her ear-trumpet, she nevertheless dominates a house whose masculine principle is at least as feeble with "folley" as she. Heirs-apparent to the house of Follett arrive at the beginning of the novel to pay their respects. The first of these is "Master Richard Whittingdon" whose approach cannot be mistaken; he comes in a Bugatti. The connection of Whittingdon with machinery in general, and with the petroleum industry in particular, by this super-car of the time, is reinforced by his movements which are as quick and erratically futurist as his machine. The Bugatti was a car originally produced without brakes - it was "made to go, not to stop" by its manufacturers. Whittingdon besieges the house of Follett; Zagreus, who appears moments after him, also bursts into that victorian world.

The implications of this action against the house of Sir James Follett

are plain. Sir James himself is of a generation attacked and eclipsed by that of his heirs; their "machinery" is quite outside his experience. He meets them with his traditional impeccable civility, "holding his eyes wide open", and with the automatic "civil smile frozen absent-mindedly upon his face".[45] The face is a death-mask of old England, and the industrial interests of Whittingdon as well as the broadcast ones of Zagreus close in on the dying figurehead. Zagreus is the more energetic of the two contenders in spite of Dick's mechanical connections, and Whittingdon "stepped back, his expression at its crossest - as the two tall interlopers... stormed the threshold of the study at a gallop."[46]. But Dick-at-a-remove storms the other characters with mechanical affrontery. As master of a thoroughly sophisticated machinery, he is evoked by the "farting" vans and cars which assault Matthew Plunkett after his meeting with Dan. A "clown-van" explodes in exhaust next to him: "it rushed past him with its bomb. SHELL IS SO DIFFERENT!" Matthew, himself an amateur collector of shells, "grinned after it, it was a thing that was a music-hall turn, the clown-van".[47] This clowning of the machine alludes perhaps to Whittingdon's own boyish clownery. It is not necessary to pursue the metaphors of these figures, however, to see Lewis's purpose in them. The rivalry of the machine-clown - throw-back to music-hall days - Dick Whittingdon, and the broadcaster Zagreus resolves itself at the novel's end when Zagreus, arriving at the Follett home to discover Sir James dead in his chair, is offered the empire in the hand of Lady Fredigonde. "I think I had better tell you Zagreus," she informs him, "that I believe I have killed Sir James." She has done so by taking away the bell with which he rings for his servant. "For once he was compelled to listen to

what I had to say. And he died of rage at what he heard!"[48] She has done this, she tells Zagreus, because "I desire to be your bride!" He accepts. The marriage of the albino broadcaster and the gossip-star Brittania is agreed to in an embrace: "Their lips met, and the love-light softened the old discoloured corneous surface of the fredigondean eyeball."[49] In the midst of this ludicrous love-scene "the mechanistic rattle" is heard of "Death the Drummer", and Fredigonde dies in the arms of the giant pseudo-magnate. As the British eye, "old discoloured", closes the ear picks up from the street "crazy instruments" playing a "sentimental jazzing one-time stutter - gutter-thunder". A voice wails

Whoddle ah doo
When yoo
Are far
Away [50]

Lady Fredigonde's is not the first eye that Zagreus has been instrumental in closing. In sending Dan Boleyn, the "virgin", on a tour of the London "apes" he has blinded that naive young man a priori with his instructions on the observation of apes. As magician, again, Zagreus concerns himself with the apparatus of the trompe-l'oeil. His role, as a broadcaster or radio-invested power, is to close the British eye and to cultivate its virgin ear, of which Zagreus throughout The Apes is a keeper or manipulator.

4. Early Programming and Bloomsbury Art Dilettantism.

Before proceeding to an examination of Zagreus, a brief note must be made of the role of Bloomsbury in The Apes of God. The Bloomsbury Group - with the Sitwells, Roger Fry, Clive Bell, Virginia Woolf, etc.- Lewis saw as an art coterie existing meaninglessly in the forefront of the London art scene. This Group figures so strongly in the novel that various critics have studied The Apes as a social document on that milieu. "The Apes of God", Hugh Kenner remarked, "attempted to assimilate the multiple but, as it proved, too trivial unrealities of Bloomsbury."[51] He compared the novel to a bomb which Lewis gave "the proportions of an artillery missile", and released first in an edition "limited to 750 copies - just enough to saturate Bloomsbury".[52] Yet Lewis himself in a letter to his publisher C.H. Prentice, remarked emphatically "as to your believing that you detect a likeness in some of my personnages to people in real life, in that you are mistaken". Lewis admitted that he had "here and there used things", but he stated that for all of his characters he supplied "suits to measure from my own store".[53] In the same letter to Prentice Lewis replied to a complaint against the "collaboration" which he shows his Bloomsbury characters indulging in. "That" Lewis said, "I could not take out. It marks the Bloomsbury and all similar types of invention." This collaboration depicted in The Apes of God has its metaphoric use with respect to broadcasting.

As Briggs has recorded in his Birth of Broadcasting, the earliest radio transmissions were impromptu affairs calling upon the concerted efforts of the technical staff of the station. Briggs quotes a note by R.T.B. Wynn, a Chief Engineer for the later BBC, in which Wynn recalls that he and other technicians would do their "programme planning... at the 'Cock and Bull' up the road, about half an hour" before broadcast time. Wynn continues, "We had artistic ambitions - for example we put on Cyrano de Bergerac". It was in this atmosphere of group-creation that the "star" P.P. Eckersley began his popular monologues, mentioned earlier. "In such ways," Briggs comments, "engineers were transformed into script writers and producers." From these beginnings, especially the informal chats by Eckersley, a "remarkable series of programmes" developed, "some of which were later to be developed in regular form by the BBC."[54]

The Apes of God contains various forms of this collaborative type of creation. Lionel Kein's wife Isobel, it is suggested, writes some of his books for him. Ratner's "muse" and Ratner himself "were separate persons: two abstractions very sympathetic to each other, but strictly dual-personalities". Ratner's prose reads like group writing for it comes with "deadly family-likeness" from this "split-man". Ratner recognizes a piece of his own work by this "ratnerish and lifeless" style, as though he had not written it himself.[55] But the major collaboration in the novel is obviously that of Zagreus and Pierpoint. The giant albino broadcaster confides, during preparations for Lord Osmund's Lenten Party, that the script for the evening's activities has been written by Pierpoint. "Our conversation - that was his creation!"[56] The encyclical which

Zagreus gives to Dan Boleyn, and Zagreus's many broadcasts, all are products of the joint power-complex Zagreus-Pierpoint. But Zagreus is not merely a performer for the invisible scriptwriter. His broadcasts "in the oral tradition" must be suspect in view of his apparent deafness. And he admits to altering, and to improvising on the hidden Pierpoint's themes - again in "oral tradition" of his radio-techniques. In Zagreus's techniques, the "methods" of Pierpoint become obscured. At Lionel Kein's Zagreus ends a "peroration" with an aside to Dan, "I was using Pierpoint's methods. Those were the methods of Pierpoint!"[57] Starr-Smith is revealed as another collaborator with Pierpoint. At the Lenten Party, he gives the bored and mystified Dan Boleyn a running commentary, like a broadcaster describing a sports-event. "The Fascist warmed to his task", and "began expounding". It is evident that "no follower of Pierpoint was proof against this docte enthusiasm". Dan is a child and captive-audience. "It reminded Dan of a 'broadcast'. Only this figure seemed always to be 'broadcasting' more or less."[58] But Starr-Smith's intentions when he makes use of Pierpoint are rather clearer than those of Zagreus. The Blackshirt is ruled by a political passion, simply. He is a specialist Ape - Zagreus a total one. The novel collaboration between Zagreus and Pierpoint has both comic and sinister possibilities never succinctly resolved by Lewis. The lesser collaborations, between the Keins, the various elements of the Finnian Shaw ménage, and between the members of Zagreus's troupe, are all pictured as groups busy, like those of the BBC staff mentioned in a Radio Times article, "herded together in one small room",[59] for the purposes of group-creation.

Collaboration, for Lewis, was not necessarily productive of an inferior thing. In his letter to C.H. Prentice, already quoted, he pleads "surely

work done in collaboration has in the past often been of a high order, and there is no stigma attached to such a method of production?"[60] The importance of collaboration as it appears in The Apes is not a "high order" of production, but it is also not merely a castigation of art cliques. It is image for - or a "field" in which to set - the new and perhaps "primitive" techniques by which the radio-medium handled its material task of organization and presentation.

5. Zagreus: The Broadcaster as False Magician.

There remain other simultaneous aspects of the broadcaster in The Apes of God which also deserve exploration. It is interesting to note, in the histories and memoirs of broadcasting and of electrical communications generally, the frequent allusions to the medium as "magical" or "miraculous". P.P. Eckersley records, in The Power Behind the Microphone, one such remark: "'I always feel that's a miracle' said a friend, waving towards a chattering box in the corner".[61] This is echoed in many quarters. Even Briggs uses the allusion when he speaks of the "powerful spell" cast upon "the first British radio 'public'".[62] By the mid-twenties, when Reith felt the public "turned from its wonder to a more prosaic, but more fruitful consideration of its potentialities",[63] the radio medium had already developed its own mythos, or acquired its rather complex image, in the public sphere. The magic eventually was absorbed in this image and appears to have vanished. But in the form and the background of the medium and the programming there remain the qualities which evoked those epithets "magic" and "miraculous". Still in 1923, Lord Riddell in a Radio Times article referred to broadcasting as "Modern Witchcraft". There are several reasons for the comparison with magic. Initially, the transmission without wires of telegraphic messages (noted earlier) was thought an almost supernatural event. Very soon however ships were equipped with wireless and wireless operators, and the instrument was

being used in other applications as well. As early as 1906, according to radio-historian A.F. Harlow, a further leap was made when an American, R.A. Fessenden, succeeded in sending the human voice over some hundreds of miles. On Christmas Eve, 1906,

> Wireless operators on ships within a radius of several hundred miles sprang to attention as they caught the call 'CQ CQ' in morse code. Was it a ship in Distress? They listened eagerly, and to their amazement heard a human voice coming from their instruments - someone speaking! Then a woman's voice rose in sound. It was uncanny! [64]

The rapid and continual addition of electronic feats to the list of possibilities kept people aware of the amazing, the potential for the unexpected in the early development of the medium. In another and less sensational way, an element of magical technique entered the field. Even in Harlow's account of the first radio broadcast there is a hint of this; the method of programming used by Fessenden in his experimental broadcast, like those of the later BBC, was a polyglot of items. First the wireless operators "heard a human voice", then "a woman's voice rose in sound". Following this "someone was heard reading a poem", after which "there was a violin solo; then a man made a speech".[65]

We have become so used to this assemblage, in sequence, of unattached events that we may find it difficult to accept the "magic" of its programming-organization. Yet it is the emotive magic in unexpected sequence, not the initial "uncanny" fact of radio, which persisted into later BBC broadcasting. A taste for the magical treat of this sequence of surprises is one strong identifying feature of a radio public.

The "performance" given by Zagreus and his group at Lord Osmund Finnian Shaw's Lenten Party is, as noted earlier, a dramatic broadcast

and show, done to a script apparently by Pierpoint. Before the party Zagreus, Ratner, Dan Boleyn and others examine the plans and accoutrements: "Who was your Clarkson for this party?" a businessman asks. Zagreus responds, "Pierpoint. He made it up. I have his inventory", and observes that "our conversation - that was his creation". The costumes too are of Pierpointean origin: "my very fly-buttons are allusive."[66] The polyglot costumes are a melting-pot not only of class but of national and temporal characteristics. The scene in which they are described is a fine farce. Its metaphorical uses are by no means confined to our present interpretation. The magics of Arabia, Japan, Greece, Turkey and Israel are alluded to in conjunction with modern "sorceries": "I have two wings of an air-pilot's jacket in my pocket.... So I get my caduceus... if Hermes Trismegistus is in the wind."[67]

The entertainment which the troupe supplies for the Party, as suggested by the costumes, is a bag of tricks of polyglot origin, although rather more mundane than the costumery. Beside "decanters and glasses for conjuring" are handkerchiefs for common "vanishes". With "crates for the live-stock", which is "rabbits and pigeons", are "a few gasketted paper-bags".[68] Zagreus is a specialist in "the vanish", and the entertainment finishes with the disappearance of Dan Boleyn, dressed as a young lady, in a magician's closet with false back. Zagreus's specialty, it is suggested, is involved with the fooling of the eye. While Ratner reflects that "to be seen" is "one of the satisfactions of power" since "all power that is real... shall be visible",[69] Zagreus performs the magic which as a trompe-l'oeil fools, by "blinding", the spectator's eye. As magician, he works against the clearer interests of the eye. A continual patter of diverting spoken-word assists him in these stunts.

Zagreus works his ultimate "vanish" on his genius or "virgin" innocent, Dan Boleyn, who is injured by the mis-firing of the trick. It is not difficult to recognize the formal implication: the effect of Zagreus's blundering fake-magic is to bewilder and maim the nineteen-year-old infant, Dan. The "injury" is a mock one, as is the mummery of Zagreus; Dan, who is subject to nose-bleeds, is struck at that weak point by a section of the trick cabinet in which he is to "vanish".

It must be remembered, in evaluating Lewis's concept of radio's role, that he worked at the beginnings of broadcasting, when effects were largely exaggerated by those who speculated upon them at all. Lewis's myth of the broadcaster is not however merely an exaggeration. The Apes of God, although it gives radio a place of almost inflated importance for its time of writing, has the social "novelty" or "gimmick" as its foreground. At present, with the idea of wireless communication a commonplace, it is too easy to ignore the comedy and exaggerate the aspect of social influence. Certainly, by the time The Apes was finished, this alteration from magical event to commonplace had begun. But as Lewis correctly states in his novel, the radio's propensity for social alchemy, though great, is also comic, a fact to be considered in any estimate of the medium. Zagreus's Pierpointean, hidden and mysterious, magical or alchemical trappings cannot be mistaken; they are not simply "subliminal" effects of the "magical" medium but a more or less deliberate hiding of intention and identity.

The allusions to technologies in conjunction with Zagreus's magic should not be overlooked. As a science alchemy is of course regarded with suspicion, a piece of quackery. Lewis used this fake element of the black

arts to point more clearly at certain modern technology as a "black art" also. The reference is perfectly specific. Zagreus shows Ratner a "wiry growth upon his jerkin, raising one of the hairs from beneath with his finger-tips", and exclaims, "Medusa's locks! Kaohuang - the electrical radiations of the Buddha".[70] The allusion to hairs or whiskers is one of many to be found both in The Apes of God and in The Childermass. It is so standard in Lewis as to be a symbol, representing the cat's whisker or tuning device of the early crystal sets - in this quotation identified spuriously by Zagreus with "the electrical radiations" of the Hindu god. The other half of the tuning combination, the crystalline lead or gallena, Zagreus produces from his pouch. It is "of the size of a barley-corn", and Zagreus introduces it to Ratner as "the electrical stone-worm", which is "the unscientific radium of the Mittelalter's fancy".[71] The "unscientific radium" makes Lewis's meaning plain even if the careful alchemical imagery did not. Unlike radium, which at that time remained in the hands of "true" science, radio moved out of those hands - if it had ever been in them - and into the grasp of technology, an amorphous and undisciplined area with neither scientific disinterest nor artistic perception and responsibility to recommend it. In The Lion and the Fox Lewis made the complaint in critical terms; at the birth of western science, the renaissance, "the Italian man of science was an artist as well", Lewis commented, "but the people to whom he taught his science... usually were not. They became men of science, but did not become artists - which is very unfortunate, as, in the sequel, has been proved by the Anglo-Saxon and the German."[72] It was the mistaken or "false interpretation" which the "north European gave to science", Lewis declared, "that made him

separate it from its 'artistic' envelope or social skin: that part of science that gives science a meaning, in short".[73] It is science without form - without "social skin" - that Zagreus extols under the name of magic, or technics, when he displays his "electronic stone-worm" to Ratner. The object has no intrinsic or "aesthetic" value, its usefulness is relative. "You call him a devil or the opposite according to the estimates you form of his intentions - whether you regard him as a responsible power."[74] At the time of writing of The Childermass Lewis was still not content with this relativistic and questionable standard of judgement.

6. Electronic Intruder: The Radio Filibuster.

Lewis's development of his technical mythology cannot be understood without at least minimal reference to certain other works, in which he appears to have outlined for himself an approach to the social phenomena which he saw developing around him. In the stories from The Wild Body, which he refers to as his "primordial literary backgrounds", and in his "travel book" Filibusters in Barbary, are to be found germinal notions which recur in quite unexpected forms throughout his other work. His Filibusters in Barbary (1932) gives an account of Lewis's journey into the south of Morocco, where he encountered a number of foreign elements in the act of profiteering at the expense of the natives. These intruders he referred to as filibusters. Their activities, even when legal in nature, drew Lewis's notice because of their manipulation of the people and the society as though it were so much dead matter to be exploited. In addition to the political and economic filibustering which Lewis described, was an interesting piece of exploitation of another type, carried on by the film filibuster.

These film-production groups were common in Morocco, Lewis claims. On his journey south, he "fell in with a huge caravan of them at Fez".[75] Later, at Marrakech, he encountered a second group "in much grander form - juvenile-lead and magnate rolled into one". The economic victims of the film-filibuster are not of course natives - "the gulls are in the distant

theaters, they are in such centers of civilization as Chicago or Glasgow, much more than among the natives of Barbary". The film-filibuster is engaged in "throwing up shoddy mirages... of the desert life".[76] But in another way he is also busy with "the filmable populations" of the natives - he "degrades them as he does everything he touches". He may also "put many a lightly earned peseta into their pockets", while supporting in large part "the Italian hotels of Barbary" built for hordes of tourists that do not exist. But his degradation of the native was particularly significant to Lewis. So was his pillaging of the landscape (or cityscape) in the name of photographic realism, the "shoddy images" being "so falsely selected as to astonish into suspicion sometimes even the tamest robot".[77] Like the "electrical stone-worm" of Zagreus which is "able to break you up", the film "sharpshooter" fragments men and places quite indiscriminately: "Fez had been ransacked scenically."[78]

Watching the "film-magnificos" in action Lewis thought he witnessed an important social plundering from a position which revealed several of its meaningful possibilities at once. First, he saw the artificial dismemberment of landscape and natives, with attendant potential for disorientation or reorientation of those small Moroccan groups brought into the influence of the motion-picture. Then he remarked the principle of operation of the film-maker, who in his personal life forced "the normal everyday reality, as it were... to what was certainly a vulgar average".[79] This was done while "modelling a lie <u>from the life</u> - upon the breathing original - in an odd process of deliberate misrepresentation". It was an act which Lewis compared to the making of "propaganda".[80] It appears to lend organization to the material of <u>The Childermass</u>, as will be seen in

a later note on the filmic aspects of that novel.

Lewis made little of the social disorientation by the film-filibuster. But in his earliest works of literary art, the stories collected in The Wild Body, he had already provided substantial groundwork for his own thinking on the group and the intruder. Without a review of this background The Apes of God and The Childermass cannot be fully discussed. Lewis himself records that his "literary career began in France" where he had gone to paint. On the coast of Brittany he observed the originals of his characters Bestre, Brotcotnaz, and the Breton travelling entertainers. In Rude Assignment Lewis recalls that

> What I started to do in Brittany I have been developing ever since. Out of Bestre and Brotcotnaz grew... the aged 'Gossip Star' at her toilet, and Percy Hardcaster.[81]

In order to handle this raw material Lewis adopted a persona, Ker-Orr, himself a kind of showman, who is an intruder-from-elsewhere into the circumscribed life of the Breton community. Ker-Orr is perhaps the least malign of Lewis's filibuster-showmen, but he is nevertheless disruptive. At the beginning of the story "Brotcotnaz", Ker-Orr descends after long absence upon the débit home of the fisherman Brotcotnaz and his wife Julie. Wearing "noiseless espadrilles" he approaches to find Julie just turning into the door of their débit; he "sprang quickly in after her" to surprise her taking a secret drink from a hidden bottle. The description Ker-Orr gives of the débit or inn, and of Julie herself, suggests that he is a detached and privileged observer. But on entering the Brotcotnaz dwelling he abandons that position, it is obvious. He urges Julie on in her little private sin. "Could we have a little glass together, do you think?" he begins and when she offers him a glass, "you Madame? You will take one

with me, isn't that so?"[82] The first drink taken he presses her to another. His purpose becomes plain later when he admits,

> I had seen a boat round the corner, with folded sails, beneath the cliff. That was no doubt Brotcotnaz. As I passed, they had dropped their oars out.
>
> He should be here in a moment.
>
> "Fill up your glass, Madame Brotcotnaz," I said.[83]

In brief, Ker-Orr begins by attempting to create a "show" between Julie and her husband, who arrives the next moment. Ker-Orr as "Soldier-of-Humor" is the showman-proponent of a machine or Bergsonian humour. When thrust into the already charged situation of the Brotcotnaz home - the fisherman beating his wife and the wife baiting him to violence - he causes, or attempts to cause, a peculiar disruption of the Brotcotnaz world. In this story it is however a runaway milk wagon, not Ker-Orr, which causes the disorientation. Brotcotnaz, who is used to seeing his wife in bandages suffering from the "erysipelas" after each of his beatings, returns to find her so without the normal cause. He is jealous. He imagines a lover, who has beaten his Julie. The lesson for Lewis in this tale is the relative ease with which an unfamiliar situation can disorient the mechanically "conditioned" mind of the individual. Brotcotnaz suffers "a moment of great weakness and lassitude", in which he "remains powerless", and "his mind succumbs to torpor, it refuses to contemplate" the rival cause of his wife's injuries. When a friend explains the accident with the milk wagon, Brotcotnaz is rescued from the torpor. Still, "the vacuum of his mind, out of which all the machinery of habit had been momentarily emptied", did not completely refill. Or rather, it "filled up again with its accustomed furniture", but the "furniture did not quite resume its old positions".[84] As a "closed-circuit", Brotcotnaz has been shocked out of his "habits of

thought" by the abrupt intrusion. For Lewis the habit is a physical one, it is the body thinking. The Wild Body is the individual in whom some intrusion has disrupted the smooth mechanics of habit, to create a brief (or, in The Childermass, more prolonged) fragmentation or disorientation. The brief eruption suffered by Brotcotnaz results in a slight rearrangement of mental "furniture". In the two major novels under discussion, a considerably greater but gradual and prolonged disarray of the person and of the group is involved.

When Zagreus makes his first appearance in The Apes of God it is as broadcaster-filibuster, an habitual pose itself, that he bursts into the "victorian" privacy of the Follett home. "The door opened to swallow a room."[85] Zagreus, displaying the "habit" of the broadcaster, greets uncle James Follett, "his mouth often in violent pantomime, as if conversing in dumb-show: on occasion his lips would move, too, without any words coming to account for it".[86] Zagreus as filibuster penetrates not only the Follett but other traditionally closed nineteenth-century "victorian" groups - that of the Lionel Keins for example. These groups, based upon the family and its privacy, are often found to be sham families upon examination; the Finnian Shaws make it a kind of business to "open" to the outside world, displaying themselves as social curiosities. Everywhere in The Apes, the decline of traditional human groups is imaged next to the onslaught of some filibuster. Zagreus is not the only one of these characters; as has been noted, Dick Whittingdon penetrates with mechanical and youthful vigour the same Follett household. Dick however is greeted by Sir James in a rather different manner. "Sir James did not look at Dick at all but gazed ahead, holding his weak eyes wide open, with the civil smile frozen

absent-mindedly upon his face." That Whittingdon and Zagreus are both filibustering there is no doubt:

> They all stood looking now at the old man for a moment, hesitating: where attack this deafness and remoteness next? With resignation Sir James awaited the onslaught of their tongues. The cost of the responses they might require of him, in terms of energy, he gently computed.[87]

Unlike the showman-puppet Ker-Orr, these later filibusters do not enter with their weapons bared and obvious. Ker-Orr had carried for "calling-card" his teeth, signal of the Tyro, and his instrument was laughter. Whittingdon on the other hand enters in an automobile without brakes; his gestures and his actions are his weapon. Similarly with Zagreus; these interlopers <u>are</u> the technics by which a society represents itself, and is penetrated. When Zagreus dresses for the performance at Lord Osmund's Party, his costume as has been noted is a peculiar concoction of borrowed technologies and mythologies. About the identity of this elaborately costumed or "shelled" personage there is no doubt allowed. "My name for to-day Ratner", Zagreus lectures the Split-Man, "as it always is but to-day especially, will be Zagreus and no other".[88] In declaiming upon the "electrical stone-worm" he attaches himself to it when he tells Ratner, "see that you get one the next time you go prospecting with Fortunatus into Purgatory - or Mr. Zagreus, my name".[89] There is allusion throughout to Zagreus as an economic entity. He has, it is hinted, <u>bought</u> his material from Pierpoint. The reference to Zagreus in connection with Fortunatus as a source for the "stone-worm" links that character both to the filibuster-profiteer and to radio interests.

Hugh Kenner in his book <u>Wyndham Lewis</u> has remarked on the peculiar appearance in many Lewis novels of a "mystery man without a past"[90] of

whom Zagreus is an example. One of the marks of this character is his sudden almost magical appearances, Kenner points out. Another is his peculiar lack of personal background. Kenner points to the scene, early in The Apes, in which Zagreus and Boleyn meet an old Zagreus protégé, Francis Dallas, on the street. Zagreus deals with this "mean genteel figure" - standing "legs straddled in a middle-class, a middle-aged, jauntiness";[91] in the most abrupt way possible to dismiss him. This scene does of course suggest a rejection - Zagreus has shifted his affections from the "middle-class, middle-aged" Francis to the "youthful" Dan, in a gesture which Lewis thought he discerned behind the attitude and programming of the BBC. The tendency to devote disproportionate time and energy to "Children's Hour" has already been discussed.

Kenner is correct then, in a sense, about Lewis's "man from nowhere". This habit of popping-up as though he had no past is that of the filibuster as Lewis had observed him exploiting the economic and political situation of Morocco. The surprise-entrance is also a basic feature of the radio-medium itself. Programs, with no apparent connection to each other, and with no discernible "past" of a technical or an historical sort, pop onto the air and off again as abruptly as Zagreus meets and leaves his fragment of "middle-class, middle-aged" past: "'Well, goodbye!' Horace exclaimed hastily", cutting into a remark by Francis. "Is that all?" Francis asks, stupefied by the suddenness.[92] The identification of Zagreus - and later the Bailiff - with the actual technical aspects of radio, are discussed elsewhere in this essay. Lewis's clear and frequent resort to the "man from nowhere" figure in order to indicate the technical intruder needs further exploration.

Zagreus makes his entrance to the Finnian Shaws' Party with a typical gesture of the filibuster. "The door burst open and a tall masked figure... holding in its hand a six-foot long yellow cane-wand, surmounted by an ear of wheat... entered."[93] The manner is similar to that of Zagreus's first appearance at the Folletts'. It seems to be a manner reserved exclusively for intruder-filibusters: Starr-Smith, the Blackshirt, is observed charging energetically into various groups at the Osmund Lenten Party, without however making the impression that he would like. In frustration, this small-scale political filibuster steals the Finnian Shaws' volume of Donne and drops it in the fountain. Although Starr-Smith indulges in broadcasts like those of Zagreus, it is as a literary filibuster that he comes to the Lenten Party. He is editing a poetry anthology; the Finnian Shaws are all poets. Lady Harriet Finnian Shaw "did not want her poems left out of the anthology!"[94] The Blackshirt is allowed into the inner sanctum. The scene in which he is admitted is of interest, since it clearly suggests the amassed publishing-interests which Blackshirt represents:

> 'We really can't have any more people in here, it is quite impossible - we can't breathe as it is!' Lord Phoebus looked at the fascist, for he was surprised that by pushing he had not advanced in his intention of pushing the interloper out.
> 'This is private!' Lord Phoebus bayed in aggrieved protest at that. 'This is private! I thought everyone knew this was private! You can't come in!'[95]

Blackshirt shows a card issued by the Finnian Shaws themselves:

> The Fascist produced the card for A Coachful. He thrust it under the nose of Lord Phoebus, with a frigid brutality, who looked askance at it. But A Coachful was A Coachful - Lord Phoebus was impressed and put down his arm - Coachful was the sign that meant 'Gossip' - the Press, publicity, Fame....[96]

Like Ker-Orr breaking into the family unit of Brotcotnaz, Starr-Smith

the "interloper" breaks into a closed, "a private" family group. Lord Phoebus stresses the aspect of privacy, yet the Finnian Shaws themselves have provided for this interloper a key - the card admitting "A Coachful". The Starr-Smith group - "Six persons! A Coachful"[97] - is a rather more primitive group than the family unit. Lewis shows the intrusion of this rather tribal unit (it is difficult for six people to be private in a coach) into the traditionally civilized privacy of the Finnian Shaws. Starr-Smith is not the first to penetrate that illustrious "society" in fact. When he arrives the room already evokes "a picture of a world swarming with the coarse hordes of Demos... with side by side, in dazzling contrast, another picture - that of an intensely exclusive, aristocratic family - shrinking from publicity".[98] The splintering of the Finnian Shaw "exclusive, aristocratic family" by the primitive "hordes of Demos" suggests what Lewis called, in The Childermass, the "doomed european Family",[99] disintegrated not by the broadcaster but, originally, by the "Machine". The family "face" erected by the Finnian Shaws is a relic merely, arranged for social purposes.

Zagreus is the first - and perhaps also the last - of Lewis's great filibusters, the Electronic Intruder. The Bailiff of The Childermass is, if a filibuster, then a transformed one. Zagreus exists in a "culture... dead as mutton"[100] but the Bailiff moves and operates freely in an electric desert apparently of his own making. The "society" there is not only dead, but decomposed into temporary groups and units; the Bailiff is the filibuster who has acquired the power of the magnate or potentate, without however accepting that official's responsibilities.

7. The Childermass: Approach to the Magnetic City.

Lewis tells us in the Foreword to Filibusters in Barbary that when he wished for "some relief... from the daily spectacle of those expiring Lions and Eagles" of European politics and society, he chose the edge of the Sahara as his retreat. "I said to myself that I would go to the highest mountains in Africa and look down upon the mirages of the great electric desert."[101] He might in fact have been referring to his novel The Childermass rather than to the Sahara. The novel opens upon a desert leading to "the magnetic city", an enormous metropolis, walled and obscure, separated from the desert by a river. On the near side of the river, at a kind of oasis also "in a shimmering obscurity", is the camp-village at which appellants collect upon arrival. "The approach to the co-called Yang gate", Lewis writes, "is over a ridge of nummulitic limestone."[102] This geological feature is one associated with oil-bearing strata. The Yang gate suggests the entrance for men; in fact, no women are to be found in this camp. It is hinted that a second "Yin" gate exists for women. Everywhere in the landscape "the 'pulse of Asia' never ceases beating". Only around the camp-oasis "the outer Aeolian element has been worsted". The landscape is in fact an unstable one: a "tract of mist" two miles across separates the ridge from the city. In the west is "a mist that seems to thunder. A heavy murmur resembling the rolling of ritualistic drums shakes the atmosphere". This is the "investing belt

of Beelzebub, threatening heaven from that direction, but at a distance of a hundred leagues".[103] In the air above the road "the frittered corpse of a mosquito may be borne", and here and there "a dark ganglion of the bodies of anopheles, mayflies, locusts, ephemerids". When "hurled down upon the road" these vanish in "a whiff of plague and splenic fever", accompanied by a "diabolic flame".[104] Into this landscape "with the gait of Cartophilus some homing solitary shadow is continually arriving in the restless dust of the turnpike", to be "challenged at the tollgate thrown across it at the first milestone from the water-front".[105] These figures, "like black drops falling into a cistern" come to "feed the camp to over-flowing ".[106] This image, more strongly than the one of "nummulitic limestone", shows Lewis working with the petroleum metaphor, found earlier in The Apes of God.

At this point the protagonist, Pullman, is introduced. He stands, "a frail figure planted on the discolored stones", by the ferry-station. His "sandy-grey hair in dejected spandrils strays in rusty wisps". The moustache, which Lewis is so fond of using in signification of radio broadcast or receiving operations, is "a thin rank" one, "pressed by the wind". Even the wind is unstable, as wind, for it comes "first from one direction then another".[107]

Pullman watches a boatful of peons disembark, and "a longshoreman fidgets at the movements of the small observer". This individual eventually gets into his boat, "a giant clog whose peaked toe wavers as he enters its shell", and paddles off, "an offended aquatic creature". Away from shore, he pauses to examine the "man-sparrow" Pullman. The description of Pullman at this point is vital. The peon stops,

> studying sombrely in perspective the man-sparrow, who multiplies precise movements, an organism which in place of speech has evolved a peripatetic system of response to a dead environment. It has wandered beside this Styx, a lost automaton rather than a lost soul.[108]

The machine-imagery is significant. Pullman - whose name suggests the railroad coach - "multiplies precise movements" as if he were a watch mechanism. He is "a lost automaton rather than a lost soul". The allusion to the machine, particularly the railroad, in connection with Pullman, is a continual and subtle one. In the time-tracts beyond camp Satters "presses against Pullman, forcing him off the track in panic".[109] Pullman moves always "with precision";[110] his movement creates "the effect of a statuesque figure in flight". He very early repudiates the electromagnetic media: on meeting Satters he says "the moment you spoke I knew you.... Before I saw you I said 'Satters!' It's like knowing who's speaking on the telephone - not one of my accomplishments." And he adds, "Thank Heaven for small mercies they've no telephones here!"[111] Yet, attached as an intimate part of this precision machine is the sign of the radio-receiver or "listener-in"; his "moustache wires gallantly fluttering", he guides Satters, with school-master's commentary.

The meeting with Pullman's old school "fag" Satterthwaite follows directly the observation of the longshoreman who was disgruntled at Pullman's scrutiny. When the two school-buddies move into the desert with its time-tracts beyond the camp, they encounter a second boat putting in to shore, one which suggests a reason for the longshoreman's discomfiture. It is a scow with an ape-mascot chained to the tiller, and bearing the insignia "SHAM 101" in "garnet-red" upon its hull.[112] As Pullman and Satters move into the surrounding electric desert, full of the technics of mirage, the

"SHAM" becomes increasingly evident. Later, the Bailiff alludes to the mountain ranges, "a fringe of crystals to the heavenly north",[113] explaining their engineering problems. "They are as a matter of fact from Iceland",[114] he tells the assemblage on one occasion, and later, "it was no easy matter to get 'em to make their appearance as you now can see them and settle down in the reliable way they have as pukka mountains, as they are". And he is forced to admit, "once in a way they vanish even now".[115] Pullman and Satters cannot ignore the instabilities of the electric landscape. Passing by a bazaar in what Pullman believes to be "the city of the dead", a wall disintegrates: "the lambent grain of the wall falls into violent movement, then it collapses, a white triturated dust puffs into the bazaar. Satters plunges into the dissolving surface."[116] Everywhere similar phenomena occur, solid objects atomize into a "red vapour", landmarks shift and vanish. "'That's a good tree', Pullman assures Satters", navigating toward the object. "It has endurance. It would take something to make that cave in or - move away you know." But, "as they reach the tree it vanishes, like a reflection upon the air".[117] For Satters, "Pullman is the iron girder supporting these delicate unstable effects, refusing collapse".[118]

The origins of this instability are generally revealed early in the novel, as the two wanderers begin their time-ramble in the prohibited desert. Satters sees "the dark needle of a gothic spire, surmounted by an emblematic cock", rising from the magnetic city. It appears as "a gold point that glitters in the sky". Simultaneously, "there is the faint pulsation of a bell". Pullman identifies the church as "the English Church", the sound as "the sanctus bell".[119] Satters begins to undergo an odd transformation. Pullman first notices "a pungent smell", "the sticky vegetable odour of

small babies", and he hastens Satters away into the technical phantasms. Satters however has been affected. "He only has eyes for the abyss. Intoxicated with the spaces plunging all round them, in passionate distances expressed as dizzy drops, let in at spyholes or thrown up as reflections, he walks upon air." The transformation involves a return to babyhood, to "greedy mouth and lush eyeball", he is referred to as "backslider". "He has had a revelation starting at the gold point occupied by the cock."[120] There is no doubt allowed about the nature of the cause: Pullman hustles his charge away, "leeward as regards the magnetic attack".[121] This is only the first of several such "magnetic attacks" from the city. Late in their time-tour, the two intruders are subjected to a sudden, brief thunderstorm. "That's meant for us", Pullman warns.[122] The storm strikes, then ceases as quickly. Satters remarks,

> 'It's going back.'
> 'What do you mean?'
> 'Why, the way it came.'
> 'How do you mean?'
> 'That's where it came from - didn't you notice?'
> 'I can't say I did.'
> 'Yes, it came from over there.'
> He indicates the city.[123]

Pullman admits, "They say the Bailiff sends a storm every morning to clear the atmosphere so that he can be comfortable", but he belittles this explanation. The Bailiff himself however in a harangue tells Hyperides "I am in league with the hurricane",[124] and he banters with the appellants, referring to his "stormdrum".[125]

The storm signals the arrival of the Bailiff, whom Satters and Pullman go to hear. They see his cortège depart from the Yang Gate of the city, descending to the barge "with the wavering stealth of a serpent". When the barge approaches, "its transit is as static a progress as that of the minute

hand of a clock". The visual effect is a filmic one, "it expands rather than advances".[126] From the docking on the camp-side, the procession moves into "a large auditorium on the model of the antique theatre". Here, tiers of "white limestone" are run in "a hemicycle of wide shallow seats". It is on these that the petitioners take their positions, "sitting or half-lying".[127] In contrast to this attic theatre stands the Bailiff's stage, "a bema" for the magistrate "in the form of a lofty tapering Punch-and-Judy theatre". Lewis attaches to this structure a nautical allusion, referring to its "hull". A fitting-out for navigation of fluid media is implied. The appointments of the bema are reminiscent of Zagreus's costume for the Lenten Party; they are all religious but of a ploy glot or pastiche, in which a taste for eclecticism is the only noticeable religious property common to all. A "six-pointed star" has been adorned with "mithraic horns after the pattern of the statue of Moses".[128] "Doric palmets" alternate with "idalionic amulets of fecundity" on the brocaded lintel of the Bailiff's box. The detail is elaborate, and includes a negro wielding "a winnowing fan", whose purpose Lewis explains is "emblematic of the Justiciary", and of a fan for beating "flies from the sacred elements". Lewis alludes here to one of his frequent broadcast-images when he observes an official's hair responding to "each oscillation of the fan".[129] Lewis attaches a primitiveness to the court when he remarks that "notwithstanding the pretentious symbolic devices", it is merely "an African bentang or rough moot". It is, however, "<u>deliberately</u> provincial and primitive".[130]

When the Bailiff appears in his box, it is as a "dark-robed polichinelle" hanging over the ledge to observe the work of his staff of peons. His first intelligible words, after he "bursts into a deafening gloch-gloch-gloch!"

are a call for Mannaei, his Samaritan executioner, and for a bodyguard named Jackie, who "rolls forward" to his customary position "with the slow shimmering volutes of black velvet muscle of the coloured pugilist".[131] The destructive power which the Bailiff holds just in the background of his operations is the more frightening because it is personified by robotic or somnambulist and will-less energies. Mannaei upon being called "springs up", and advances, "his eyes discolored with sleep". His appearance is that of "a carved totemic shaft". Jackie falls into position, "folding his arms, that sleep henceforth, bloodgorged constrictors".

The petitioners assembled, the Bailiff's court begins. The Bailiff congratulates the appellants on their personal clarity: "It is remarkable how distinct you all are this morning. My warmest congratulations." He is glad, he says, to find them all "looking so much yourselves... irrespective of what your particular version of self may be".[133] Lewis earlier had stated the purpose of the court. It is to the "adjusting of the niceties of salvation" that this "administrative unit" is devoted.[134] The Bailiff advises appellants that the "heaven" to which they have come is "a system of orthodox post-humous... post-human life".[135] As he prepares to hear petitioners, yet another trumped-up mirage appears, "a large bird of unusual size holding something in its beak". The bird is of course the phoenix, and is accompanied by "two ponderous sounds" which "enter the atmosphere along with the image".[136] The syllables "Bab and Lun, of the continuous Babber'ln", which "echo in the brains of the lookers-on", signify the "tumultuous name of the first giant metropolis". The bird performs in what might be described as cinematic technique. An onlooker remarks "It's a cinematograph", and is refuted immediately by another, "No, it's not a

cinematograph".[137] In fact, there is a second though less obvious interpretation of the scene, and one which would suggest closer connection with radio than does the motion-picture. Asa Briggs, in his Birth of Broadcasting, remarks that "John L. Baird had demonstrated television" as early as January 1926, the year of the General Strike. "Three years before that," Briggs adds, "a listener had written to the Radio Times suggesting that it would not be long before football cup ties would be televised."[138] The American electronics experimenter Francis Jenkins, in his monograph of 1925 entitled Vision by Radio, Radio Photographs, Radio Photograms, stated that, whereas he had for some time concerned himself with "radio as a service to the eye", the idea was not at date of writing a new one: "The earliest attempts to send pictures and to see electrically date back some fifty years," he comments.[139] His book includes a number of schemes, already under development in 1925, for transmission of moving images, one of which is quite similar to the general system in present use.[140] As Briggs points out, "the 'wireless revolution' and the 'television revolution' are twin halves of the same revolution in 'multiple transmission'".[141]

Lewis's description of the phoenix-event with images of Babylon is in some ways more suggestive of television than of film. An appellant remarks that the scene is "like smoked glass",[142] an accurate description of the image even of some recent TV receivers. Pullman warns Satters, "It's getting worse... I shouldn't stare too much if I were you. It's a great strain on the eyes." The Bailiff, however, refers to the "event" as "film".[143] The dual interpretation must be kept in mind.

As the bird completes its performance, a voice explains the event as the "saluting the nest of the Phoenix" by the angelic host. The voice

continues, declaring that the place where they find themselves is "Heaven. It is the New Jerusalem".[144] The remark recalls a number of allusions, from Yeats to Lewis himself. Yeats in "The Second Coming" had asked, "What rough beast, its hour come round at last, slouches toward Bethlehem to be born?" And in his autobiographies he had voiced the fear that the New Jerusalem would be under the aegis of "the savage gods". Lewis too discussed the creation of a "New Jerusalem". In The Mysterious Mr. Bull he expressed concern, and some forboding as Yeats had, about the architects of this new Paradise. Who he asked will "proceed to build our society 'nearer to the heart's desire?' Whose 'heart's desire' would it be that would raise the New Jerusalem?"[145] In The Childermass Lewis's answer, and his "savage god", appears to be the Bailiff. An appellant asks this dignitary, in a voice "piping to appease him", suggestive of the school-boy, "Please sir, is it a real bird?" And the Bailiff replies, "No, not real, but quite real enough".[146] The same degree of "reality" seems to be accorded every feature of the electric desert.

At the appellants' camp on the edge of the electric desert, and which is the link or approach to the Magnetic City, the Bailiff carries on his Punch-and-Judy-show court enquiry. The greater and more dramatically significant part of this hearing is occupied by a debate between the Bailiff and a pseudo-classical polyglot group whose leader is called "Loudspeaker". Hyperides, as his proper name is given, has been termed "archaic" by Sheila Watson in her essay, in opposition to the Bailiff whom she sees as "primitive".[147] But the primitive aspect of the Bailiff must be suspect; it is "deliberately primitive" as noted earlier. And the relationship between Bailiff and Hyperides is a complex one; no explicit clarification

of it is given by Lewis. The two interpenetrate, as two cultures might do. Hyperides' first appearance and words suggest a kind of interdependence. He speaks in "a voice so deep that it seems to fill the air with some thickening oil as it rolls out", an image which again evokes the petroleum interests. The voice "begins tolling", and at the end of Hyperides' first remark, "the Bailiff is electrified... and he lights up all over".[148] This relationship will be explored more fully in a separate note. It tends to obscure the less assertive situation of the appellants or petitioners not attached directly to either of the principal figures. This situation must be understood before the basic theme of the novel, "The Massacre of the Innocents", becomes clear.

8. The Massacre of the Innocents and The Bailiff-as-Crowdmaster.

When Wyndham Lewis discussed the novels of Ernest Hemingway in Men Without Art, he criticized Hemingway's characters as glorifications of what Lewis regarded as "the Dumb Ox". By a romantic falsification, Lewis claimed, the author of The Sun Also Rises had heroized the dull and passive "man-of-action", whose role in any act was that of object, rather than subject. It is, Lewis complained, "of those to whom things are done" that Hemingway writes, but representing them as "those who have executive will and intelligence".[149] Lewis's novels, as much as his critical works, are concerned with this confusion between crowd and crowdmaster. His treatment of the subject suggests that he saw everywhere a distortion, like that of Hemingway, but deliberately fostered for manipulative purposes. Especially is this so in The Childermass where the crowdmaster Bailiff identifies himself with his crowd of appellants. "Le mob c'est moi!" he tells Hyperides.[150] As "those to whom things are done" the appellants bear a certain resemblance to Hemingway's heroes; Lewis however does not obscure their position with respect to the "executive will and intelligence" responsible for these actions. The name "appellant" is itself evocative of a man without specific rights or identity. The Bailiff refers to them variously as "my children", or "my clients" and "my friends", when generously disposed toward them. When a question of rights cannot be avoided, he addresses the crowd with fake concern: "Your rights,

gentlemen, can be summarized in one word, Petition. You are Petitioners, for better or for worse." He is specific about the conditions of "Petition" and about the authority to whom petition must be directed:

> I am ashamed to have to tell you that no appellant is entitled to his Habeas Corpus... there is no Rule of Law for us, you are absolutely without rights independently of my will: that is the situation: a sorry one, an un-English one, one I am heartily ashamed to have to stand here and expose to you.[151]

The "executive will" is according to the Bailiff his own, to which, he tells the appellants, "for your share you shall have the rights of petitioning!"

> You are here exercising your right of petitioning: that no one not even I can take from you. You can petition and petition and petition! you can do so till you are black in the face and the worms eat you up. There is practically no limit to the amount you can petition![152]

This harangue on the idea of petition, and the Bailiff's manner while he delivers it, are suggestive of an authority or power so self-assured as to be contemptuous of concealment. "I touch you with an opium-wand", the Bailiff addresses his audience, "and you sleep obedience".[153] The speech is delivered in full view of the recently decapitated body of Barney, at which the Bailiff "looks down significantly".[154]

Against this apparent blatancy of the power figure and open admission of "un-English" authority the Bailiff plays a continual emotional appeal, however, as though he were in fact not so certain of his ability to command and control. He exhorts the appellants, "I don't regard you as my clients but as my friends".[155] Clearly the appellant "half-men" or nanmen are, with the possible exception of Hyperides and some of his faction, a human materiel to be worked on by the Bailiff-will. More than

once Lewis refers to the handling of appellants as an "engineering in human plastic". Later in the sequel-novels, when Pullman visits the punishment centre of Dis as guest of Sammael, he meets the arch-engineer of the lot, Dr. Hachilah, whose hebrew name means "destroyer". But even early in The Childermass the destructive rather than the creative or regulatory aspect of the human engineer is apparent. The off-hand anihilation of Barney, from the "carnegy group", by the Bailiff's headsman Mannaei, suggests the degree to which a temperament of unheavenly fallibility presides at the court. The Bailiff is proud rather than ashamed of his destructiveness - even boasting of the fact when he ends a joycean diatribe, "I'm the wrecker get me? this is my stormdrum that's my wicked light".[156] The aim of these wrecking activities, a luring of human cargo onto the rocks in the image cited, seems to be to break up the individual: "you'll sure get a shock in your humdrum your centre," the Bailiff expresses his purpose to Hyperides, pretending to speak to the average appellant. "And all your world will go down snap", he concludes the harangue.[157] The result of this break-up, according to the Bailiff, is a group of dull "all-alike girls", an "absolute flat unanimity", in which the Bailiff seems to include himself. "What ideas have we? Whatever they may be they are today everybody's so we must be all right!"[158] As a part himself of the crowd he manipulates, the Bailiff resembles a figure found elsewhere in Lewis's work, one which Sheila Watson has called the "Hooded Paladin" or Masked Ruler. In The Art of Being Ruled Lewis deplored the habit of the politician to merge himself and identify with his subjects:

> It often occurs (and we have even today a unique picture of this in contemporary western society) that the ruler becomes a confirmed practitioner of one of Haroun al Raschid's most objectionable habits, namely, that of spending his time disguised amongst his subjects as one of them. [159]

"No good has ever been known to come" of this tactic, Lewis suggests, "and such arrangements should always be resented and resisted by the ruled". In combination with this "habit of Haroun al Raschid" the Bailiff represents, as was mentioned earlier, a kind of legislation by personality. He governs or rules his court not by fixed and recognizable social or legal rules but by personal "Petition".

One need not search too deeply to discover what claims personality had to regulation of the BBC from its earliest days. Asa Briggs' history of BBC development provides some pointed parallels with Childermass in this respect. Writing of British radio's director-general, J.C.W. Reith, Briggs found that this moving-force in the early radio community could not be extricated, as personality, from the historic events which Briggs set himself to document. "During the four years with which this volume is concerned" Briggs states at the beginning of The Birth of Broadcasting, "there is a strong element of personal history also". Briggs is careful to separate Reith the executive intelligence from technical origins of radio: "Reith did not make broadcasting, but he did make the BBC." And he adds, using a metaphor employed often by the developers themselves, that Reith "commanded during the four years in the same way that a captain commands a ship".[160] Reith himself had spoken, in his book Broadcast Over Britain, of the "uncharted seas" upon which the broadcasters were embarked, and added that they had had "no sealed orders to open".[161] The degree of power which this situation puts at Reith's disposal is, from various points of view, almost without limit. The early Chief Engineer of the BBC under Reith, P.P. Eckersley, has stated in his book The Power Behind the Microphone, that "the form, content, and influence of the broadcasting

service as we know it today is the product of one dominant mind". This mind was Reith's.[162] Briggs' history shows explicitly the impact of personality generally upon the radio medium under development - and on other allied organizations. For the BBC was not the only official structure influenced by "personality", nor was Reith the only personality contributing to the radio monopoly. "Reith and his colleagues had values of their own," Briggs remarks, assessing the BBC in terms of radio development elsewhere. The Company adopted the techniques of American and European broadcasting, "but resisted many of the values which often went with them".[163] There were "many lively tussles about the personality of Reith and the constitution of the BBC"[164] but "by the end of 1923" - a year after the inception of broadcasting - "in most people's eyes [Reith] was the BBC".[165] If he "was the BBC" administratively, for many people the personality of the "Radio-Uncle" or the Eckersley with his informal patter was a much more intimate one. The stress on personality cannot be attributed to Reith only. Evidence shows that in other departments of British government the individual - or a peculiar persona of that concept - was coming more into prominence. At a meeting of BBC and Post Office officials to discuss broadcast policy, it was charged that "if official etiquette were swept on one side", the Post Master Mr. Brown was "the official policy of the Post Office".[166] Speaking of the position of Post-Master General, Briggs observes that "temperament has usually been more significant than political persuasion in this particular office".[167] The substitution of personality, with its criterion of temperament, for official function or office, figures strongly in Lewis's creation of the court for Childermass. "My personality is really the main factor in the whole thing," the Bailiff advises his "children".

And he adds, "you need go no farther than me, I am your shepherd".[168] The court itself is a mechanism by which fragments of "personalities" are sorted and sifted for acceptability. As court-of-enquiry, the Bailiff's activity is a carefully ambiguous argument of the criteria for acceptance of these human components. The half-living materiel meanwhile has its own problems of survival and identity.

The Bailiff's appeal to "my children" and "my friends" is a gently coercive invitation to appellants to view themselves collectively as under his patronage. His paternal and permissive, sometimes spuriously magical performance bears much resemblance to the tone of certain BBC broadcasts, especially those of the Children's Hour. The relationship fostered by that program - of the "jolly Uncle" vis-à-vis the listeners - is only one aspect of this patronizing by the Company. For our discussion it is the most important one, however; we have seen already how popular the Children's Hour became with adults as well as children. In The Childermass Lewis's handling of the audience at the court is evocative of early reservations about the radio expressed by Lord Riddell and others, who felt they saw vast possibilities for misuse inherent in the medium. The fear that children would lose themselves in listening and not learn to fend for themselves is translated by Lewis into a deliberate manipulation of men as children, when he works with the image in Childermass. The Bailiff disputing with Hyperides ends a "broadcast", in which he claims to voice the opposing opinion to his own, with a mock invitation to appellants. "Listen to the sad song of the waterfall", he calls to them, "as you sit blinkered with earphones little listenerin".[169] The term "listener-in", though by 1928 it had become officially shortened to "listener", was still

fresh in the minds of many as a distinctively radio expression. That Lewis refers to the listener-in as "blinkered" by the listening apparatus or earphones indicates explicitly that the medium has "blinded" the appellants. Thus impaired, in a state of shock which to Lewis was a sort of death, the appellants are worked upon by energies and powers not all of which are easily detectable. As he wrote in the Preface to Time and Western Man, "People feel themselves being influenced, but their brain and not their crystal set is the sensitive receptive instrument."[170] It is to that instrument that the Bailiff broadcasts, embodying in a total or mythic way the attributes of a variety of executive, technologic, and public "powers". But the appellants too have a more complicated nature than could be embodied in a single metaphor or analogy. Their "massacre" must be analyzed with this complexity in mind. Pullman, walking in the "time-tracks" beyond camp with his "fag" Satterthwaite, supplies a parable or image for the general condition of the appellants. Satters broaches the question of their existence in that precarious place and state. He admits that thinking about the subject makes him "giddy" and Pullman replies,

> 'Yes, I suppose you never in your life have thought of anything of that sort.' Pullman muses at Satters. 'Now that things are apt to force you to, it comes as a shock.'[171]

This shock of "thought" leads Pullman to relate a story from his "school-mastering days" about the "celebrated physicist, a man of science, called Professor Tyndall". The parable concerns a lecture which Tyndall gave on electricity, at which he used a battery of Leyden jars for demonstration. "Through some carelessness in handling them he received a very severe electric shock. It was so severe that it knocked him out." Pullman

expands upon the analogy to his bored fag:

> Well, when Professor Tyndall came to, he found himself in the presence of his audience. There was he, there was the audience, there were the Leyden jars. In a flash he realized perfectly what had happened: he knew he had received the battery discharge. The intellectual consciousness, as he called it, of his position returned more promptly than the optical consciousness.... He was able to address the audience and reassure it immediately. But while he was reassuring the audience, his body appeared to him cut up into fragments. For instance, his arms were separated from his trunk, and seemed suspended in the air.[172]

Over the yawns "without intermission" of Satters, Pullman presses his parable, the importance of which is not merely the disorientation of Tyndall, but his reaction to the experience. Tyndall "was able to reason and also to speak as though nothing were the matter". His reason allowed him to over-ride what his visual sense urged: "His optic nerve was quite irrational.... Had it been the optic nerve speaking it would have said, 'As you see, I am all in pieces!'"[173] Pullman makes the analogy perfectly explicit for the inattentive Satters:

> When I got here the story came to my mind. Shall I tell you my reasoning? I said: Tyndall when he was addressing the audience was really disembodied. He had no body at that moment, only bits. Do you see the train of thought or not? On the physical side we are, at present, memories of ourselves.... We are fragments, as it were, or anything you like. We are not normal, are we? No. Conscious - we are conscious, though.... We behave as we do from memory, that's the idea. [174]

Pullman reveals that he has suggested this parallel to the Bailiff. The response of that dignitary is significant: "Now the murder's out," he tells Pullman. Patronizingly he assures Pullman that he has "grasped an important truth". Later Pullman overhears the Bailiff repeating the analogy as if it were his own. "I was exceedingly flattered," Pullman admits.

This paradigm for the murder or disorientation of the appellants clearly associates their condition with an attack upon the senses. The electrical aspect suggests a link between the "murder" and the electric technology of the Magnetic City. The lecture is lost on Satters, however, who merely yawns. Later, he recalls the parable. He undergoes himself a similar dissociation: "Satters hears the well-known Satters-voice, disjoined from him as were the limbs of the Professor." At the first intimation of this experience, "the story of Professor Tyndall comes to his mind in an electric flash".[175] Satters realises his experience is "a magnetic occurrence", he endures it. The parable, become meaningful at least in this special case, has had its value.

The Tyndall experiment with Pullman's gloss has another significance when applied as analogy to the appellants' case, however. Tyndall, after his experience, bridges the gap following the shock by his "reason". The appellants must resort, Pullman suggests, to a "memory of ourselves". But the novel throws into relief the question, what criteria shall in fact be used to bridge the gap caused by this shock of experience? What principle shall we take to be the real? Professor Tyndall in his momentary condition denied the eye in favor of his reason. In the vacillations of the Childermass's total-field, all of the material of sensory perception seems at one time or another deranged and untrustworthy. Thus the question of will - the formative and executive will - becomes paramount.

"I stand to you in the capacity of will", the Bailiff tells Hyperides. "You would all be somnambulists in this concentration camp of dead fish except for me and live in dreams like the animals." Hyperides responds,

> Go on old mesmerist. You have just described your opposite, you have not sent me to sleep. You will have to deal with me awake. [176]

The implication of both speeches is that the Bailiff has a profound control over the appellants; what is at issue is the type of control he exerts, and the nature of this "mesmerist" in whom resides such power.

The physical power for destruction of the Bailiff has already been noted, in the characters of Mannaei and Jackie. But his retinue is as mixed a pastiche as his symbols or as the symbolic costume of Zagreus. With the barbaric Mannaei and the crude machine Jackie are servants from quite other spheres of existence. When Mannaei in a robotic rush beheads the unlucky appellant Barney, the Bailiff wails "I am so upset!" and calls in upper-class tones, "Jenkins, a glass of water!"[177] The tone and language of this dignitary alter according to the manipulative needs of the moment. So, too, does his face, which he operates as a gamut of stock masks, again drawn from various quarters. When he arrives at the court, and throughout the "film business" of the Phoenix, he "remains impassible", lecturing on the pattern of a film narrator or radio commentator. Occasionally the face is bent by a smile "till his nose-tip touches his humped chin", an image stressing the Punch mask which he wears habitually. Immediately, however, he returns to his "impassible" official countenance, "snapping his smile to in the manner of a telescope".[178] There are periodic allusions to the Bailiff's masks; when the Bailiffites or Bailiff's chorus of supporters gives him a round of cheers, flinging caps and other articles, the Bailiff too throws his hat into the mélée. He watches "with evident pleasure", he is "Uncle Punch amongst his jolly children!" His "solemn mask is off, the satiric on". The effect is that "diabolics of

the most ancient mask in the world exulting in its appropriate setting". Finally, "with an effort he repudiates the satiric grimace".[179] Sheila Watson in her thesis Wyndham Lewis and Expressionism comments on this "image of the masked ruler" which, she finds, "haunts Lewis's work as it haunted the contemporary landscape". The contemporary mask, she points out, "is often simply identification with the crowd",[180] the "habit of Haroun al Raschid" noted earlier in this chapter. While it is clearly a technique of the Bailiff - one with which he seems at times to have a problem of control - the strength of the magistrate's diabolism as Lewis constructs it depends upon a mixing of roles, rather than on a single power-habit. The force of a physical kind, represented by Mannaei, Jackie and the haiduks, is a backdrop for more modern, and quite un-primitive methods of manipulation. The human physical force is a paradigm for the mass-technologic force behind the Bailiff's threat, "I touch you with an upium-wand and you sleep obedience".[181] The Bailiff appears as "monster" at moments of integration of two or more masks ; when his appeal to the "child" produces "telepathic salvoes of sympathy and admiration" he deliberately evokes "a greatly enlarged mask of Chaplin, but deeply-pigmented, in sickly-sweet serio-comic mockery" above the audience. Pullman, reacting to this particular persona, remarks to Satters "Now that is the real Bailiff".[182] But Satters declares that he prefers "the Bailiff" to "that poseur". The masks available to the crowdmaster are diverse and appeal each to a different faction of appellants, according to predilection and sophistication.

The least human group in the electric desert under the Bailiff's command is that of the peons. These creatures reduced to sub-animal existence seem almost a link between the appellants arriving in the camp,

and the "frittered corpses" of insects which drift in dark ganglia through the air, to be consumed on touching ground. The "stumpy spouts"[183] of the peons' mouths recall entomologic structures, and their movements or bodily life evokes only a minimal mechanical facility: they "stand rigid an archaic waxworks".[184] They are referred to as "human shells"[185] but their words, like their speaking organs, imply an insect-chirp or buzz. "Zuuur! I say... zuuur!"[186] In a confrontation with one of these, Satters is spat upon by a "frog-figure", who "shoots out a reptilian neck" and projects a "dart of black spittle".[187] The reference to the black spittle links these creatures with the pervasive but subdued image of petroleum. The appellants, too, it will be recalled, arrive singly like black drops into a cistern. The suggestion is that the human being has become, in the Bailiff's system of human-resource exploitation, a crude or raw and natural resource to be processed into acceptability. Certainly, that is the sense of the procedure at court. In The Apes of God Lewis had created such a situation between Zagreus and Dan Boleyn, whose role was as raw material to be developed or not according to Zagreus's notions of expediency. The exploitation of Dan can be read as one carried on by monied interests, Zagreus being the possessor of the fortune. But the Bailiff's manipulations are not merely that. The Bailiff protests that he is poor, despite the rings with which his fingers are "accoutred".[188] Power, not money, is the exploitative principle where the Bailiff is concerned. His is a will-to-domination without specific economic or political motives. The Bailiff works in an all-inclusive field, in contrast to the specialist urge-to-power of Zagreus. This will-to-power has meaning with respect to the BBC, as Asa Briggs shows in his history of that Company's first four years. The group of companies which, headed by

Marconi, collaborated to form the BBC, had only insignificant economic aspirations for the Company. They accepted readily a Post Office restriction by which capital gains were not permitted and "dividend restricted to 7½ per cent".[189] Baldwin, Prime Minister at the time of the conversion of the Company to a Corporation, "said at the valedictory dinner, they had not been mercenary".[190] The Company received a share of licence revenues from the Post Office based on a sliding scale. So much did the economic advantages of the situation seem weighted on the side of the Post Office - which controlled without economic risk - that newspapers occasionally sided with the Company, or criticized Post Office "profiteering". Briggs quotes The Financial Times as saying, "in a leader headed 'Grab'", that the Post Office apparently regarded "'listening-in' as nothing but a means of obtaining revenue for a department which 'did nothing in return'".[191] It is true that Marconi and the participating companies stood to gain by their sale of radio receivers. But the British Broadcasting Company was soon established as an agent virtually independent of these companies, and answerable to the Post Office; its own interests were not economic. Its autonomy was of greater concern than its economic potential to its directors. It was, in short, power of a kind much more general than economic power which was at issue with the BBC. And Briggs' account of the first four years shows a variety of power struggles. One of these was with the press, for the freedom to broadcast news. At various meetings with the Post Office and representatives of the Press, Reith and his associates tried repeatedly to have approved an entry into the open "news market", but the BBC was repulsed at each attempt, the Post Office siding usually with the press "Lords".[192] When Pullman and Satters, wandering in the time-tracks of the

electric desert, come under the influence of the magnetic fluxes, there is one occasion when Pullman too lapses into a somnambule trance. He is heard by Satters intoning "in a strange voice... in apostrophe", a diatribe against a "tempter", and asking "No news?"[193] The passage is a curious one, coming as it does from the momentarily "possessed" Pullman. The source of the possession is of course a Bailiff's "broadcast", the "No news?", italicized by Lewis, refers to the continual news embargo which the medium suffered until the General Strike.

Discussing the Bailiff on their walk, Pullman and Satters have a disagreement concerning his identity, or at any rate his personality. Pullman insists upon taking the Bailiff's case and tells Satters, "Professor of Energy what Stendhal called himself that's what he is".[194] As "Professor of Energy" the Bailiff-figure hints directly at another of the BBC's power disputes - that of the permissible broadcasting power of its stations. As Briggs states, "questions of power were to dominate the talks between the radio companies which led up to the formation of the BBC".[195] Later too, the Company had consistently to plead for higher-power stations, and in this was opposed by the Navy - the other broadcast interest in Britain at the time - as well as by the Post Office. The power-output of even the major stations was small by present standards. But in England, where distances are also small, "power" did not need to be measured in kilowatts to obtain its effect. Briggs notes that "'More extensive broadcasting' was the dream of everyone connected with the BBC" in its initial years; "very soon it became the demand of the public". And he continues,

> It is one of the essential characteristics of the 'mass media' that they never stop growing until they have obtained what is usually called 'universal coverage'. Throughout 1923 and 1924 continuous lines of wireless aerials became a familiar feature of the urban landscape.[196]

What the BBC lacked in permissible electric-power output it made up for wherever possible by multiplying installations and building "relay stations". In the name purely of research, high-powered transmitters were also built which would give coverage much more inclusive than the small, 25-mile-radius stations could do. The question of station-power then is not a straightforward electric-power problem, but one of "coverage", of the number of people or communities reached by the medium. Blanket or complete coverage, which of course means blanket influence, was the goal as Briggs has explained. This urge to domination appears to motivate the Bailiff. In fact, he is associated with Dossennus, who according to Francis Cornford in The Origin of Attic Comedy is the "hunch-back" herder of men, himself a kind of ambiguous figure, with primitive masks.[197] The Bailiff flaunts his primitiveness. He has he says an identity or "ego" impervious to his attackers, "virgo intacta". Mockingly he puts this "virgin ego" up for sale; it is, he advertises, "guaranteed... because it is so primitive!"[198] "Primitive and proud of it, that's my motto", he tells the crowd of appellants.[199]

In a harangue to Hyperides, the Bailiff refers to "the work of your great crowd-masters, those great engineers in the human plastic".[200] He appears to associate Hyperides and his followers with these crowd-manipulators. He questions the methods by which Hyperides has induced "a snarling pack of herd-men" to follow him. "You got them to follow you by vulgar appeals", the Bailiff charges.[201] But the argument obscures the "vulgar appeals" by which the Bailiff has organized his own group of supporters. The same image that suggests the association with Dossennus of the early Greek theatre, is metaphor for the Bailiff's own brand of appeal. He

carries, we are told at first meeting, a "pivetta used by the atellan actors to mimic the voices of the mimes of classical tragedy". Seated in his box, he puts the pivetta in his mouth, "idly sucking it, a baby with its dummy, his eyes expanded to their fullest blankest and blackest". The baby- or child-cult to which the Bailiff thus attaches himself as member (as well as paternal dictator) has already been mentioned as the subject of Lewis's critical work The Doom of Youth. The child-appeal is treated by Lewis as a kind of "dope" - a word he also used to describe the smooth-flowing vocables of much stream-of-consciousness writing. The Bailiff in his box awaits the beginning of proceedings, "the lymph of a bottomless obtuseness appears to invade his beaked heavy and shining mask, anaesthetizing it even to the eyes".[202] The reference to anaesthetic is only one of many in The Childermass, as we have seen. Hyperides refers to the Bailiff as "old mesmerist", and Pullman at the first mention of the Bailiff's name "withdraws into a hypnotic fixity of expression".[203] Even when spoken to, he responds with "eyes still hypnotic". The Bailiff is so thoroughly identified with this image that even his name is at times "an opium wand" which makes the hearer "sleep obedience".

In the argument between Hyperides and Bailiff over power and its uses, the latter observes that "with the average human herdman it is only through the promise of stupid action that we crowdmasters can get results".[204] The Bailiff has already suggested that Hyperides secures his following through such measures. "When you accuse my administration of barbarous practices cannot I convict you of hypocrisy, for the animating principle of yours is barbarous certainly." The effect of the Bailiff's rebuttal is to deflect rather than to answer the criticism of Hyperides. These are

two power-figures in the act of exchanging places - or the one absorbing the other - each haranguing the other in familiar political dispute. At all times the Bailiff avoids questions of his right to power, or of its origins. Hyperides makes a summation of the situation: "Individually," he tells the Bailiff, "that is in the flesh and to talk to, you do not seem very powerful." He brushes aside the tricks of "storm" and "tired electricity" with which the Bailiff is apparently "in league". Yet, he continues,

> a pull somewhere in a very high or it may be a very low place you certainly seem to possess and you come in and out of that unpopulated-looking place that confronts us yonder and you appear to have bought or stolen the secret of our fate and you hold the necessary sanctions to farm us. 205

The power of the Bailiff-herdmaster and his "sanctions" are imaged by Lewis not as two separate notions, as cause-and-effect for example, but as integral to the Bailiff and his actions. The Caliph in Lewis's parable The Caliph's Design is a priori a "potentate" and "absolute ruler". It is by this established authority that the Caliph holds his power. The Bailiff on the other hand represents a kind of "instant power" over "instant automata" which he creates in act of creating the power. His operation consists of a reduction or vulgarization, such as Lewis noted in both The Art of Being Ruled and The Diabolical Principle. The material to be vulgarized is the mass or crowd of appellants. Asa Briggs, in his study, makes an important observation concerning the idea of "masses":

> We have become so used to the language of 'mass communication' that a leap of the imagination is needed to understand the sequence of events between 1896, the year when Marconi arrived in London, and 1922, the year when the BBC was founded. What now looks massive and dominant in our society was then tentative and experimental.

> The term 'mass communication' itself is misleading not only because it rests on social fallacies about the 'masses' but because it confuses transmission and communication. [206]

Yet, Briggs assures, "Reith and his colleagues" were not among those who thought in mass and crowd terms. "They did not hesitate to oppose tendencies which are now thought to be 'inevitable'" and "sought neither to drift with the tide of 'mass culture' nor, in the modern idiom, to treat people as 'masses' and 'manipulate' them."[207] Briggs prefers the word "clientèle" to describe the growing radio audiences. It is reminiscent of the Bailiff's claim that "I don't regard you as my client but as my friend."[208] In spite of the protestations of Briggs to the contrary, his own documentation of the early BBC suggests a close parallel between the Bailiff's operations and the behaviour of radio in England of that time. "Reith and his colleagues had values of their own," Briggs remarks.[209] "Wireless to them was an instrument of public good, not a means of handling people or of 'pandering to their wants'."[210] Contrasted with this view is the one conveyed by Briggs - and by Reith himself in his writings - of a tremendous concern with "what the public wants". Briggs observes that Reith "used the listeners' letters as much to acquaint himself with minority opinions as with the views of the majority".[211] Reith admitted that "if there has been any fault in this matter it may be that of over-punctilious attention to correspondence".[212] But the "pandering" to public wants appears most blatant in the handling of the Children's Hour programming, where as we have seen, children were invited to write in their opinions for broadcasts. There were "good children", Briggs recalls, who "took a definite share in trying to make the programmes better. 'They realise that

the programmes are <u>theirs</u> not ours.'"[217] As a part of this induction of the children into group participation, "there was one point about Children's Hour which always had to be stressed to children: it had never to be like 'school'".[214]

"You're not at school! Don't hold up your hand!" The Bailiff admonishes one of "a group of diminutive figures" putting a question to him. Yet as has been remarked earlier, he lapses often into terminology of the "mass-average" type. "Was my view of the human average, as just developed, so different from your own?" he asks Hyperides after a dissertation on the subject. Hyperides replies, "I should not indulge in the descriptions of averages in which you delight".[215]

The reduction of groups of individuals to "masses" and "averages" is, as Lewis remarked elsewhere, a process of vulgarization. In "The Diabolical Principle" he referred to the vulgarization of hatred. "<u>What the Public Wants</u>", he stated, italicizing the doctrine which he attacked, is in the nature of "a vast organization to exploit the weaknesses of the Many", in place of one "for the exploitation of the intelligence of the Few". It is, especially with regard to "Cinema, Wireless, and Theatre", a matter of following "the golden rule, namely: <u>You cannot aim too low</u>."[216] Such accusations are today a cliché. Lewis however wrote at a time when first the cinema and then radio appeared to him to be creating the values - or lack of them - which he deplored. As a Radio-Uncle of the "Punch" variety, the Bailiff clearly represents the process of vulgarization which Lewis thought should be avoided. So successful is his use of power that the Bailiff can refer to his audience as "my children", "my dears", etc., without protest from any but the Hyperidean faction. These childish

panderings are in fact reciprocated. The Bailiff plays his role to such perfection that he himself has acquired many of the attributes of his human materiel. He sits, the "pivetta buried in the pulp of his mouth", like a baby with its teether or pacifier. The image - a multiple one - implies that the disguise has for the Bailiff become a reality, a part of his shell. The Bailiff not only uses his techniques of "vulgarization", he has become those techniques as well. Similarly, the Bailiff as crowd-master, or as paradigm for power in general, is himself "a herd". "Le mob c'est moi!" he roars at Hyperides, who is also a kind of crowd-in-a-single-skin.

The power derived from vulgarization is, as the Bailiff's case suggests, a dangerous or double-edged one Lewis felt. For the crowdmaster dealing in the "vulgarization of hate" and in violence can easily become one of the targets of that hatred. The crowd of Hyperides, the Bailiff warns that minor crowdmaster, "would turn upon you if your star set or it suited them or if there were nothing else there outside themselves except you". Like animals or the Bailiff's own automata, "they don't care who it is they tear to pieces".[217] The indiscriminate incitement to violence or hatred has its counterpart, as has been noted, in the crowdmaster's indiscriminate choice of "power tools". Hyperides alludes both to moral and to psychoanalytic interpretations of the urge-to-dominate, when he tells the Bailiff, "power is your vice we are well aware, it is your complex; with you sex like money is merely a congenial instrument in its service, and quite secondary".[218] In all arguments with the Bailiff about power and manipulation, however, Hyperides refuses to acknowledge that the kind of influence used has a formative and decisive effect on the results. Hyperides is, like his

followers, a mechanism of his own techniques. So of course is the Bailiff, as has been pointed out. In Lewis's mythology of the technologic society, the crowdmaster is a type of "shaman", or fake magician, of which Zagreus is the immediate example. The operation of "vulgarization" by which the crowdmaster proceeds is a transformation of the raw human material at his disposal. The end result of this transformation, as Lewis creates it in The Childermass, is a kind of logical extention, to a comic extreme, of the effects the artist has observed in the life around him.

9. The Appellants as "Masses of Human Average".

Asa Briggs reproduces in his Birth of Broadcasting a newspaper cartoon in which a fashionably dressed couple is about to depart for an evening, leaving the child with a "nanny". The caption reads,

> Mother (to nurse): Let the little darling listen to the Children's Hour, and then, when he's had his supper, the Radio Band can play him to sleep.[219]

The cartoon is reminiscent of the Bailiff's warning to appellants, "I touch you with an opium-wand and you sleep obedience".[220] In the cartoon however, a single child is depicted; in Lewis, the Bailiff implies a kind of collective reaction to his "opium-wand" such as is described by terms like "mass-hypnosis," "mass-reaction," etc. Briggs places the beginnings of radio and of "mass" theories about the end of the nineteenth-century. "It is easy to see in retrospect," he writes, "that the 1890's, when critical radio discoveries were being made, were also a critical decade in the development of what have come to be called 'mass communications' as a whole."[221] Even at this time, Briggs suggests, "individuals were being conceived of (artificially but often profitably) in large numbers as 'masses'". One of the marks of this process was, he accurately observes, that "local differences were being ironed out".[222] The year 1895 marks the first appearance of Gustave Le Bon's study, The Crowd, which is subtitled "A Study of the Popular Mind". Le Bon's opening remarks, in his preface, are of utmost significance. "The whole of the common characteristics with which heredity

endows the individuals of a race constitute the genius of the race." And he continues,

> Organized crowds have always played an important part in the life of peoples, but this part has never been of such moment as at present. The substitution of the unconscious action of crowds for the conscious activity of individuals is one of the principal characteristics of the present age.[223]

Le Bon grants what he refers to as "the extreme mental inferiority of crowds".[224] But he advises against attempting to tamper with crowd action, as one might decide not to assault the tides. His deferral to crowds is, Lewis might have objected, a blow to the intelligence in favour of the "racial genius" with its "extreme mental inferiority".

Briggs' history of the BBC's first four years is, in spite of his apparent intentions, a history of deferral to the crowd. Some examples of this "pandering" have been noted. The tendency of Reith to examine the mail of "listeners-in" has the appearance of concern for public taste. Even more so, the "jolly mail bag" of the Radio Uncle, which indicated to broadcasters the degree of participation they had achieved. Briggs states, however, that in the concern over mail and "statements of listeners' wants", the BBC "did not always get what it most needed to have". The result of the mail bag was, he records, "better public relations".[225] Reith himself makes a similar admission in Broadcast Over Britain: he remarks on "the establishment of some degree of confidence and intimacy between the broadcasting organization and the public". He concludes, "we know this to be of the highest importance".[226] It is odd, first of all, that Reith and his executive, who "had values of their own" and "did not hesitate to oppose tendencies" such as the "tide of 'mass culture'", were nevertheless so concerned with "the

mailbag", the indicator of what-the-public-wants. But the concern of these men for the development of "confidence and intimacy" with the listening public is stranger yet. Briggs has remarked in various places on the impromptu or informal nature of the early BBC, identifying it with the desire for "intimacy". It is clear from his discussion that the need for confidence was involved with the need for support from the listening public.

The Bailiff's frequent assurances that his "clients" are his "friends" show the unmistakable mark of the same intimacy. On reflection, such intimacies bear a certain resemblance to friendships with automobiles or inanimate objects. The Bailiff treats his crowd at times as inanimate or at least non-human. Hyperides is quick to point this out; he accuses the Bailiff of playing "the god to these drivelling fragments".[227] But Hyperides makes clear the Bailiff's role in the reduction or transformation of these "fragments", as well. "What is your object," he asks, "in reducing all these creatures to the dead level of some kind of mad robot of sex?" And he answers his own question, "you would drive back mankind into the protozoic slime for the purposes of your despotism where you can rule them like an undifferentiated marine underworld or like an insect-swarm".[229] Lewis encapsulates the transformation or "driving back" into the "protozoic slime" in an image, already noted, at the beginning of The Childermass, in which Pullman and Satters come under "magnetic attack" from the city. Referring to Satters' "revelation starting at the gold point" of the cock, Lewis observes that Satters "walks on air, truant in mind from the too-concrete circuit". Satters has broken into an "ether" of flux. Of the "too-concrete circuit" Lewis continues, "it is ancestral, as all order is".

The nature of the occurrence is "a mellow effulgence" which comes from the city:

> When the bird was exploded - that the effect at least of its sudden disappearance - a mellow effulgence became evident to Satters. The gold dust generated from the destruction of the clock-work cock thickens the air with reddish particles. It gilds the clouds on whose cambered paths they stog and plod, leg and leg. [230]

The image must be analyzed from various points of view to appreciate its mythic or "total-field" quality. The "clock-work cock" suggests the "ancestral order" of mechanical universe. Its "explosion" or "destruction" - or simply "its disappearance" - suggests the breaking up of that order by some exterior agent, the nature of which is alluded to in the reference to "magnetic attack" and in the fact that the destruction occurs in the Magnetic City. There is a strong resemblance between "Magnetic City" and Magnet House, the BBC's early centre of operations in London. The religious significance of the exploded cock will be explored more fully in a later note.

The explosion of the "clockwork cock" in a sudden broadcast of magnetic emanations turns Satters childlike. He must learn once again the rudiments of walking and speech. He quickly reaches a stage, however, comparable to that of the majority of appellants. Their emotional condition is everywhere apparent. At the completion of the "film business with the Phoenix", as the Bailiff calls it, the dignitary asks for opinions on the spectacle. "It was <u>lovely</u>! - <u>Rather</u>", are the responses of the juvenile adults, and "eyes everywhere are dutifully lighted up, hands clapped, everything is one writhing spasm of appreciation".[231] Lecturing on the purposes of his court the Bailiff advises in school-masterly tones that "we have now to be very serious for a short while: for the main problem of salvation - namely,

what or who is to be saved - has to be canvassed at this point". What the Bailiff means by existence he outlines "without splitting hairs" in a reference to "personal existence" as opposed to "mere individual existence". The latter, he suggests, "would not be worth troubling about, would it?" A chorus of "No!" answers his rhetorical question, evoking the schoolchild literal response. That the appellants are being led blindly through a discussion of a subject incomprehensible to them is suggested when one of the more forward appellants asks, "Please, what is the difference between a person and an individual?"[232] The Bailiff's answer is reminiscent of Reith's remarks on "audience sympathy" quoted earlier; the Punch-Uncle replies, "All the difference in the world, and out of it, all the difference between me and you my sympathetic little fellow!"[233] Lewis has permeated the Bailiff's speeches with appeals to the crowd, usually to the child-crowd. "You know I'm a good old sport?" he interjects at one point;[234] a little later, he is described as reacting "in mockery of guilty-schoolboy" to a jibe by Hyperides, and speaking "downwards upon his nearest listeners" with the tone of "a confederate under the eye of the dominie".[235]

The Bailiffites or Bailiff's chorus - the "intimate" supporters of that "magistrate" - are the most extreme example to be found of the transformed crowd. That they are at best "human average" Lewis leaves no doubt. They are described, as has been noted, in terms of "the dithyrambic choreutæ", and their appearance in the novel is often a choral one, the voice <u>en masse</u>. As Chorus they respond immediately to the Bailiff's tones, and when he lapses into "negro" or "joycean" prattle, they echo his technique:

BAILIFF. 'Dat's my oozy swatch-cove patter!'
TWO BAILIFFITES. 'Is dat your swatch-cove patter?'
'Say, is dat your swatch-cove patter?'

The Bailiff, before these responsive front-row instruments, acts out the role of conductor, or of orchestrator. The followers of Hyperides, who also respond in chorus, admonish the Bailiffites, "It is not music you are listening to. Take his words and weigh them, you will find they are all short weight!"[237] But this mass of schoolchildren lacks an important and distinctive element of the child. It shows no curiosity of a critical sort. It is all reaction. When the Bailiff is attacked by Macrob and his nose pulled, he complains pathetically "in a muffled whine" to his supporters, "I wish all of you well from the bottom of my heart! You have if you only knew it the best friend you'll ever have in me!"[138] The crowd reaction at the finish of this harangue again evokes the BBC concern with sympathy: "A murmur of sympathy rises on all hands."[239]

Lewis's image of the crowds - that of Hyperides as well as that of the Bailiff - is at variance, as an image of radio-audience, with the impression that Reith apparently had. Reith wrote in his book Broadcast Over Britain that the BBC was at times charged with "apparently setting out to give the public what we think they need - and not what they want - but few know what they want and very few what they need".[240] The remark, as Briggs has noted, is similar to one of Gilbert Seldes, who in The Great Audience observed,

> It is right to let people have the chance to get what they want. To talk of giving them what they want is nonsense unless we know the capacity of the giver to satisfy wants and - the essential question - how people come to want what they want. [241]

Reith's comment veils a cynicism which he would no doubt have denied; it suggests that "people don't know what they want anyhow". The comment of Seldes, on the other hand, leads to a question which was of vital importance to Lewis. It is the question of "how people come to want what they want". Lewis indicates, in The Childermass, that it was the medium - its technical, administrative and public or broadcast "personality" - which created the "wants", and further that these wants were generally scaled, as the Bailiff himself remarks, to a very mean denominator. Lewis's passages on the crowd-as-audience are often of an excessively severe tone, one which it is now difficult to approach critically. He refers to "a massed babydom, scheduled fused and set to touch off at feather-trigger-contact".[242] The massed public is described as "billions of bitchlettes on one Ford pattern". In contrast, Briggs emphasizes that Reith never spoke of "masses" in his work. In fact, Reith refers in Broadcast Over Britain to "the public" and to various "publics" which are sub-units of a "great audience" - terminology which has little to differentiate it from that of the "mass communications" kind. The basis of his thinking on "publics" Reith has not examined. Whatever his intentions, the results of his thoughts and activities appear, even in Briggs' sympathetic account, not so far removed from Lewis's contentions.

Leading his schoolchildren through the discussion, mentioned earlier, on "personal" versus "individual" existence, the Bailiff betrays succinctly his politics. He lectures the appellants, "individuality then is identity without the idea of substance. And substance we insist on here".[243] The personal existence which it is the Bailiff's intention to provide for the appellants is a physical one: "Substance, then, it is our aim to secure."

The implication of this doctrine he encapsulates in a brief dictum, "there is no mind but the body".[244] The argument is one over the body and the soul, but in relativistic terminology. And the Bailiff insists upon the survival of the body, dismissing "mere individual existence". "Until things touch and act on each other they cannot be said to exist for each other", the sermon continues.[245] It is an elaborate argument for the relativistic necessity of the crowd, the mass of people "in touch" and acting on each other so as to "exist for one another". That this existence lacks "individual" quality - a non-concrete and a differentiating identity - seems to be Lewis's critical conclusion. It reduces all who succumb to its influence to what the Bailiff himself terms a "general-run-of-little-averages".[246]

The methods by which the crowdmaster "engineer in human plastic"[247] achieves his ends are, as has been observed, an extreme version of the filibuster's techniques combined with those of the Hooded Paladin. Briggs supplies, in Birth of Broadcasting, a wealth of support for Lewis's image of the radio filibuster as disguised plain-man. Briggs stresses that Reith "was proud of the fact that listeners could describe the BBC as a 'friendly thing'".[248] The Bailiff appeals to the petitioners, his "children", to "rapturous applause" from his supporters, "all we ask is a little love! It is not much!"[249] Yet there were a great many individuals who, on closer examination, obviously did not find the BBC "a friendly thing". Lewis examines some of these, in various stages of transformation, with the characters of particular appellants.

10. Some Individual Appellants.

An important aspect of early broadcasting experiments in England was what Briggs calls "listener-in groups". In the period of development between 1922 and 1926, although the number of families owning radio sets increased enormously it was far from a "one-per-home" level; organized or casual listeners' groups accounted for radio's reaching a vast area of small-town and rural England. Briggs notes that a spirit of comradeship grew up around the village or local radio receiver. One national group, too, took advantage of this type of listening. On occasions the Boy Scouts were brought together in their local sectors; in 1922, when the Prince of Wales broadcast an address to the Scouts, "wireless societies organized 'listener-in' groups" to hear the speech. "Programmes of this kind were given the utmost possible publicity in the Press", Briggs states.[250] Lewis need not have been thinking of the Scouts however, for the basis of his groups in The Childermass. "At the time of the General Strike in 1926", Briggs observes, "there was a great deal of communal listening." The family, he suggests, formed the core of listeners and "there were thousands of other people who 'dropped in' to listen" on a non-organized basis.[251] Whether or not Lewis had specific groups for models is of little importance to his work. His attention had been drawn, years before on the coast of Brittany, to human groups. This scrutiny had continued in such works as Snooty Baronet, the novel of the "behaviorist" filibuster

Kell-Imrie. The same interest drew Lewis, it may be charged, away from "the individual" or component of such groups, in some of his work. But it led him also to create a new individual, the crowd-in-a-single-skin, of which the Bailiff and Hyperides are examples. In The Childermass, one of whose basic images is the transformation by absorption of the individual, it should not be surprising that individual characters have often the appearance of dependent components, with almost machine-like habits of response. As has been pointed out, the creation of crowds involves more than the simple amalgamation of individuals. Lewis was particularly interested in the effects of "grouping" or "clanning" upon his characters, and in the origins of the urge to group. Against the chorus of "undifferentiated humanity" present in all of the court scenes, individuals in various stages of transformation or resistance to alteration have their moments. Something can be learned from Lewis's handling of these characters.

With the exception of Pullman and Satters - who have placed themselves beyond the court - the individual petitioners are few. The first to appear is Barney, a member of a clique known as "the Carnegy batch" - its name, taken from that of its leader, suggesting a school of social behaviour after the teaching of the author of How to Win Friends and Influence People. The social veneer of Barney's group has been cracked when this character is confronted by taunts of "cissy!" His response is a violent one in the tradition of the school-tough fed on movie-heroism. When called to account for his behaviour, Barney extends his vituperations to the Bailiff, who also taunts him with a lack of masculinity. "Yew jest cum darnalongoveer an I'll lern yew witch is the man alongov us",[252] Barney rages at the magistrate. That dignitary, after prodding the unfortunate Barney into a verbal

assault, unleashes Mannaei who beheads him on the spot.[253] The unhappy Barney has shown too much "individual" identity, and that of a masculine, undesirable sort. Everywhere in his speeches the Bailiff appeals to the child and to the feminine. On more than one occasion the Bailiff's chorus cries or chants "Bloody Male", shortened familiarly to "B.M."[254] The result of the death of Barney is an instant panic of the appellants, who faint or escape in large numbers, and a scene of instant-remorse performed by the Bailiff. The Carnegy group has vanished, and is brought back in chains by the haiduks. The Bailiff, in atonement, passes them in: "Take Alfred right in, and place him on the right hand of the Master of Heaven. Amen."[255] The gesture restores order and confidence, in spite of the body and head of Barney lying in full view. This piece of administrative or manipulative leger-de-main has parallels everywhere in the Bailiff's open treatment of the appellants as retarded children. It is, as image, a rather chilling paradigm not only for the Bailiff's monstrous capacity to use his human materials; it indicates also how willing under such pressures the materiel becomes.

The individual appellant who appears immediately following this scene provides an alternative or correlative for this piece of brutality. The appellant is Joseph Potter, "painter", who comes speechless into the arena, and even before the questioning of the Bailiff soon "is busy with the head of Barney the wonderful Cézanne cocoanut or super still-life".[256] Potter does not speak; "half-closing his eyes, balancing his body backwards, he focusses his professional peepers" and examines his new surroundings, in which is the trunk and head of Barney. The living and the inanimate as well as the dead come in for their share of Potter's visual impersonality.

A negro chef's assistant appears, Potter "gets down to him on the spot, cutting him up in packets of zones of light and shade, bathing his eyes in the greasy tobacco-black".[257] The Bailiff approves Potter, saying "you certainly answer to the stock requirements of 'the painter' as that figure is understood at the present time". The allusion contains reference to the formal theorists like Roger Fry and his associate Clive Bell, who were fond of comparing a turnip or a mackerel favourably with a man, in the value-world of the visual artist. For Lewis "a kettle" as he expressed it, could not be "a finer thing than a man" nor could formal theory ever rid objects of their significance to the extent that a man assumed no more value than an inanimate object. The parallel between the theories of Bell and the Potter incident is clear however. The paradigm of the Carnegy group suggests that Lewis saw the purely aesthetic observation with which Fry and Bell began, extended and become a political slogan accepted by large numbers of those who would themselves be treated as "kettles". The theory of Fry and Bell, as approach to the visual arts, is in fact closely involved with art as <u>technics</u>. Lewis saw the validity of such theory to the painter; he saw also its dangers when popularized. In place of paint and pencil, Bell by his "doctrine of significant form"[258] regarded the object, devoid of its potential for human value, as <u>materiel</u>. "The <u>meaning</u> of anything it is almost his creed not to trouble about," the Bailiff says of Potter; "He's a little technical fool in short."[259] Lewis objected to any such destruction of value. The confusion which resulted from detached "significant form" was a merging of object and technique in a manner like that by which the two are fused in the Bailiff's activities.

There is another application of the Potter incident, more directly

concerning the radio medium. Asa Briggs provides the background for this image when he remarks on the early treatment of "artistes" - primarily musicians - by the Company. In 1922, when the BBC began to pay nominal fees for its performers, the Musical Director was told "the time has come when we should dictate to the artists in a diplomatic way what style of song it is in the interests of all that they should sing".[260] The Bailiff's injunction to Shelah, that artists should "be despatched or embrace the counting-house", need not have been written with these precise orders in mind; Lewis was well aware, as he stated in Rude Assignment, of the growing influence which monied-interests were acquiring upon art. The Bailiff's gesture, in which he sends the artist to "embrace the counting-house", had a number of distinct parallels in the business world; Potter's fate can be seen as an image for the activities of business and industry wherever these interests came in contact with the artist.

The figure of Tormod Macrob, as his name implies, is as individual a group-member of a very old order. He is a fragment of family clan origin, who is separated from that background - apparently an organized and prestigious one - and torn from the corporate body for examination by the Bailiff. "He has swung to his feet at the crying of his name as though struck in the centre of a dream with a potent impersonal watchword to awaken him."[261] The "Macrobe", coming "as if it had stepped out of the sombre ranks of its clan", appears in "a cadaveric decadence", a "dogmatic decay".[262] The separation from clan has occurred at Macrobe's "death"; he has become merely a member of the body of appellants. When called, he "leaves the body of the audience" to answer the summons. Macrob is monolithic, "a drab monument of a hero which has been cast too impractically

colossal", he is a "brawny bristling hybrid" standing alone like "the lofty Phineas".[263] The reaction of the bailiffites - the "harpies" surrounding this "Phineas" - recalls their taunts and jibes against the "bloody male" mentioned earlier. This "new male-animal" endures in absolute silence and stillness the shouts of the audience, however. There follows an interrogation of the Bailiff by the Macrob. "What sort of object are you?" he enquires of the Bailiff.[264] When the Bailiff does not satisfy him, he pursues, "Here everything depends upon the degree of your reality", reasoning that "if you are not so real as I am, then you cannot injure me". With this the Bailiff does not agree. "You can take it from me I'm real, devilish real" he warns. Macrob persists in his hunt for reality, in which the Bailiff dodges and evades him. Macrob asks,

> When I contemplate myself from outside I see one thing:
> when I pass inward to my centre I experience another.
> Which is the true, the impersonal or the personal? [265]

The question is central to The Childermass, and forms the basis for the extended and more elaborate episodes between the Bailiff and Hyperides. In the case of Macrob it retains its personal and specific nature however. Macrob is the individual attempting to retain individual identity against the Bailiff's onslaught. Macrob wishes to "contemplate" from outside what the Bailiff wishes to consolidate as pure insides. "It is your own affair," he tells Macrob, "if you insist on being impersonal as you call it with yourself. Your fellows here are much more sensible. They are not impersonal about themselves."[266] The interior contemplation however is made by the light of "a divine spark" the Bailiff suggests, a "little lantern" which glows inside "the vessel of an idea of Deity". Clearly the Bailiff urges the internal and "divine" stance.

The condition of these completely "personal" appellants to whom the Bailiff alludes as "more sensible", is that of creatures mesmerized, in the words of Hyperides. It is a condition very like that of Lewis's early Breton fisher-folk. Sheila Watson states in an article "The Great War, Wyndham Lewis and the Underground Press", that in these characters as Lewis portrayed them, "the self and the not-self were as completely merged as it is possible for such identification to take place at the human level".[267] It is this merging - of "self and not-self" or of the individual into an undifferentiated group consciousness - that the Bailiff urges upon Tormod Macrob. The Macrob is stubborn in his refusals. The image of the Bailiff becomes increasingly one of the tempter. "His head up under the eave of his narrow chamber, in shadow, the Bailiff's eyes shine in his blood-red face with the beginnings of a mystical afflatus."[268] He is an "alien menacing spectre" to Macrob, he suggests "the red beast set there to mock and madden, at the gate of What?"[269] Macrob reacts eventually in the manner of a Barney to the Bailiff-tempter. He leaps at the dignitary in his box, seizing him by the nose. Macrob, like Barney, is immediately dismembered by the Bailiff's haiduks. "A large executioner's basket is brought out, and the fragments of Macrob are stuffed and stamped into it."[270] Like Barney, whose childish and aggressive "spark" drove him in the name of his masculinity against the Bailiff, Macrob is "fragmented" physically when his "spark" proves too powerful for the Bailiff's inducements. The process of fragmentation, or of "breaking down", of the appellants is necessary to their acceptance into "heaven". It is the technical-reductive process preparatory to reassembling them as "undifferentiated Mass". "He'll come together within the magnetic walls,"

the Bailiff gloats, "How angry he will be!"[271]

The description of Macrob, and the Bailiff's image of the "divine spark" of the individual man, suggest that a further interpretation of the clansman can be made, one in specific reference to the development of radio in the early 1920's. A brief background is required for this examination, in which some of the appellants can be compared closely with the case of the radio-amateurs in conflict with the BBC.

11. The Appellant-Victims and the Radio Amateur.

According to Asa Briggs' account of early broadcasting, the medium was beset from almost its first moments by disputes between interested factions. As has been noted already in this essay, the BBC had to contend with two major critics, the Armed Forces being the more powerful. On August 25 1920 The Financier carried a story describing the difficulties of a radio-equipped aircraft attempting to find its way to land in thick fog; the pilot succeeded only in receiving "a musical evening" from the Marconi Company transmitter on his radio. Briggs comments that such experiences raised criticism to the effect that radio "was being treated as 'a toy to amuse children'".[272] The BBC, as Briggs' account shows plainly, had always to deal with the complaints of the services. In a number of cases, the Post Office acted as mediator. But disputes arose from another quarter as well. In a chapter entitled "Amateurs and Professionals", Briggs introduces the problem of the radio amateur with the remark that

> By the summer of 1920 there were large numbers of wireless 'amateurs' whose enthusiasm for wireless could not easily be contained within a mesh of bureaucratic regulation. It was their enthusiasm, indeed, which filled the gap between the cessation of the Marconi Company's experiments [in 1920, by Post Office edict] and the authorization of short regular broadcast programmes of words and music in January 1922.[273]

It was in fact the wireless societies - the amateurs referred to by Briggs - who were chiefly responsible for having the Post Office ban rescinded.

In December 1921 a petition was put before the Postmaster-General "signed by representatives of sixty-three wireless societies with over 3,000 members".[274]

These societies of amateurs consisted of a variety of people ranging in knowledge from the "enthusiasts who were content to dabble with simple crystal sets" to those, "a small minority", who "were both knowledgeable and lavishly equipped".[275] Of these amateurs Briggs makes a strange and interesting observation; the amateur "could never be a completely solitary creature", he says, "he always needed the cooperation of others". For this reason as well as others, the amateurs were quick to see that "an amalgamation of wireless societies would be useful". One of the earliest acts of this amalgam of amateurs was to agitate for the loosening of government restrictions on radio. Commander Loring, Post Office Inspector of Radio Telegraphy, spoke to a meeting of the societies, to explain the government position on such restrictions. As Briggs describes the talk, Loring pointed out that "everybody, soldier, business man, or amateur, was working in the same 'laboratory' and it was necessary, therefore, to restrict the operations of the experimenters" according to their "fitness" to operate equipment. "The policy of the Post Office was not yet stereotyped", so that no specific hard rules might be stated. "Transmitting sets with a power of ten watts or less would be licensed" where no interference was encountered with government installations. Loring's promises, Briggs states, "allowed for a very substantial measure of Post Office discretion ".[276] Not only the government, but soon the BBC also, came into conflict with the amateurs. These small operators often indulged in broadcasting of their own; "The 10-watt 'amateurs' were

unwilling to experiment in words only: they spoke in music,"[277] Briggs writes. The BBC drew a few of its technicians from the amateur groups, and as has been observed, many of its earliest supporters. Yet when the BBC began to feel economically and "personally" the problems of "ether crowding" and "power", Reith was quick to react against the amateurs. "Is the hobby of a few to interfere with the pleasure of thousands?" he asked in a letter to F.J. Brown in 1923.[278] The immediate cause of this remark was, as Briggs terms it, the "restiveness" of the amateurs who, like the growing BBC, were looking for more "broadcasting room" (more wavelengths) and more electrical power-output. They felt the BBC monopolizing both, and "resented the BBC's increasing 'dominion of the air'".[279] The history of broadcasting in the years 1920-26 was, for the amateurs, one of dwindling powers and increasing restrictions, in the face of the rapidly encroaching BBC monopoly.

The comparison of these amateurs with Lewis's appellants has perhaps already suggested itself to the reader. The case of Macrob is the most defined example of the radio amateur "bucking" the large interests. The character of the "Brawny clansman" bears many of the Lewisean marks of the broadcaster. At his first appearance Macrob, wearing the kilt, approaches with an "oscillation of the short skirt". The usage of the word oscillation has already been noted in connection with radio-receiver tuning. This "oscillation" in Macrob is "so much a part of him that a massive time is introduced into the forward churning of his legs".[280] The Macrob advances "to a wailing music privy to its ears as the tom-tom of the surf pulses in the revolutions of the shell". As radio-amateur, Macrob is of course "privy to" the mysterious "music" of the ether, radio-waves. This forceful figure,

a "brawny bristling hybrid", suggests the original radio-enthusiast. The allusions to "bristles" are not only signs of masculinity, but Lewis's habitual reference to the cat's-whisker tuning apparatus mentioned in connection with Zagreus. The term "hybrid" marks Macrob as a creature neither "audience" nor BBC. As he appears before the Bailiff, Macrob is covered with "the mud in which he has lain since his arrival in deliberate neglect".[282] During his questioning of the Bailiff Macrob demands, "Why have you made me into a beggar?"[283] The Bailiff replies that "the process" has spewed him out in that form. The image of amateur as beggar is significant however to the comparison of Childermass and BBC development. It evokes Lewis's earlier image of the appellants as "petitioners". The radio-amateurs, as has been noted, were themselves without clear official status, and operated by petition - as in the case of the petition which reinstated Company broadcasts in 1922. Later, when the amateurs were attempting to maintain their own rights - earned largely through petition - against the BBC, they were again cast in the role of petitioners but against the Company they had helped to re-establish. One of its own workers and promoters, C.A. Lewis, described the BBC as "A most terrible and insatiable monster!"[284] He noted, in his book Broadcasting from Within, that he and the BBC group "had been appointed guardians of the most voracious creature ever created by man - a microphone".[285] This voraciousness was to lead to a series of attacks from all quarters with charges of monopoly and tyranny of the air.

The Bailiff, then, stands plainly in relation to Macrob as monopolist to radio amateur. The "divine spark" which the Bailiff attributes to all appellants, and to Macrob in particular, is an ironic reference to the electric ingredient of the amateur's "nature". The Bailiff urges Macrob

to accept a place in the Magnetic City: "I find you have reached the proper point of crystallization", he says, alluding with that term once again to the basic amateur's equipment, the crystal set. Enraged at last by the Bailiff's tyranny, the Macrob leaps at the "Gate-Beak" and seizes him by the prominent nose. "With a rattle and shock" Macrob crashes against the Bailiff's bema. Again evoking the Scot's amateur-clan status, Lewis describes particularly Macrob's hair, "the fletched topknot oscillating like an instrument set to register such upheavals".[286] The combination in this image of the term "oscillation" with the "instrument set to register" leaves no doubt about the intention of the author.

Macrob, as "bona-fide" amateur, is the most powerful of the individuals appearing before the Bailiff. His weight moves the bema "half-a-foot upon its socket in the volcanic rock".[287] Briggs has noted various criteria by which the amateur was to be recognized under Post Office regulations. Ten-watt transmitters might be licensed "to approved applicants who can satisfy the Post Office that their qualifications, apparatus, knowledge of the subject and objects, are sufficiently good to justify the grant".[288] The Bailiff's court can without straining the interpretation be seen as a court-of-enquiry for deciding upon individual and group entries into the broadcaster's "heaven" and domaine, the Magnetic City. Not all of the appellants are as fully-equipped as Macrob to take a place in that New Jerusalem. Macrob's unwillingness to enter puts him in fellowship - to a minor extent only - with Hyperides. However, Hyperides' relationship to the broadcast-imagery of <u>The Childermass</u> - as will be seen later - is one of opposition or nearly complete rejection. When Lewis refers to Macrob as "hybrid" it is in part to position him between the Hyperideans and the

bailiffites in a non-linear scale of transformation. On the side of total acceptance - to which the Bailiff urges his "children" - are the "nanmen" or non-individuals, members of the Bailiff's chorus. Unlike the robotic peons - who have come completely under the "spell" of the fake magic of technics and are its slaves - the child-appellants constitute "audience" as opposed to "amateurs". The Bailiff himself occasionally refers to them as "listeners-in", a term which, in its origins, suggested eavesdropping and therefore could be used to insult. The crowd is identified with this term in the radio sense, but there is reference to the disapprobation expressed by it, as well. While Pullman and Satters watch the "film" show accompanying the arrival of the Phoenix, Pullman is moved to complain about the heads blocking his view. A retort to this complaint comes from the anonymous crowd, "Listeners-in at large as usual! If people would mind their own business it would be so much nicer."[289] The use of the term "listener-in", Briggs tells us, was soon dropped from official BBC usage because of this suggestiveness, and the simple term "listener" substituted. The word suggests an early distinction between those who were professionals or "serious amateurs" in radio, and those who simply picked up whatever they could from the "ether". The early use of radio as private, point-to-point communication would automatically render the indiscriminate radio-listener an "eavesdropper". In fact, the distinction between types of listener or radio-audience was very difficult to establish. Briggs notes that no one, either in the Post Office licensing agency or in the BBC itself, had any strict criteria by which to decide when an amateur was "serious" and to be regarded as an "experimenter". In the disputes between the societies and the BBC however the casual audiences eventually sided with Reith in asking,

"is the hobby of a few to interfere with the pleasure of thousands?" Reith's emphasis here on pleasure, despite his many protests against the use of radio for purely entertainment purposes, might make any observer wish to examine the situation further. Lewis clearly saw the casual audience as "a friendly thing" toward the BBC, when he made the bailiffites side against the monolithic Macrob, crowing and protesting at his unsophisticated appearance. "He's riding for a fall," a Bailiff's supporter cries, "I can see the brazen brute being suppressed quite soon thank goodness."[290] It is these "radio-babes" who note with enthusiastic horror the Macrob's leg-hair. "I thought it was... bristles!" sighs one "in a dying dreamy accent".[291] The massed chorus, as audience, stands in relation to Macrob as "mock energy".[292] His own energy is put out: "The eyes are the purest Highland amber, but they gleam ambushed in the cavities beneath the square earthen brow which is lifeless and unlighted."[293] The whole image evokes things electrical, from the amber - one of the earliest sources of electrostatic charges - to the "square earthen brow" which is "unlighted". Lewis has used electrical metaphor to startling purpose in creating this face.

In the confrontation between Bailiff and Macrob, the "monolithic" clansman's individuality is at issue. The image is of the attempted effacement or absorption of one "personality" by another. His "personality", the Bailiff had informed the petitioners, was the important thing at this court. To Macrob, whom he beckons close - "I don't want the children to hear" - the Bailiff states, "you are quite intelligent enough to know that the importance of your personality is very slight indeed".[294] The inference, if we recall the BBC emphasis on its own "personality", is that both amateurs and "children", or general audience, are eventually expected to merge their

personalities in that of the mysterious one represented by the Bailiff. "All is in the melting pot."

That the Bailiff has no simple allegorical "personality" has already been pointed out. As crowd-master he has been shown to exhibit many aspects of the BBC as Lewis saw that organization manipulating individuals into "mass audience". But the Bailiff, like Zagreus, can be read in a variety of interpenetrating or simultaneous interpretations. Of the many possible, those related to technics in general most concern the present discussion.

12. The Bailiff as Technics.

To refer to Lewis's characters as raw "technics" is to impute to them a number of attributes of the media or of the technological developments with which they are involved. It is already evident, I believe, that Lewis used specific technical allusion - the crystal-set and cat's-whisker, for example - in a structural way to create certain of his characters or "puppets" as he himself calls them. A survey of the various technologies with which Lewis identifies these characters and by which he assists himself in creating specific action and appearance, will reveal the extent to which he observed technology in all its popular forms at work on the contemporary scene.

That the Bailiff shares with Zagreus many qualities of the fake-magician is no doubt obvious without further demonstration. The Bailiff is representative of an organized industry or group of technologies, where Zagreus had been rather a dilettante. But the Bailiff's magic is no less fake than that of the huge albino broadcaster. It is effect, cleverly detached from its physical machinery so as to impress and influence. Hyperides refers on several occasions to the Bailiff's "magical philosophy". He explains, "I use magician in the ordinary sense of illusionist hypnotist or technical trick-performer". It is he continues, a "futurist or time-obsessed alchemy", an affair of "convex and concave mirrors", and a "witches' cauldron, Time, into which you cast all the objects of sense,

softening and confusing them".[295] Hyperides insists on the connection between this magic and technics: it does not matter, he charges, whether the "approach be that of mathematics, biology, medicine, epistemology or moralistics". An identification of the Bailiff's magic with radio has already been made, to a great extent, in the course of previous discussion. There are however other technical images which are of lesser magnitude. The Bailiff's first appearance in the novel - his approach in the barge bringing him from the Magnetic City - contains the hint that he is also associated with motion picture technics. The barge "expands rather than advances"[296] as it nears the camp, in a manner suggestive of the motion-picture trucking (now zoom) shot, whereby an object seen flat, with the single and static viewpoint of the lens, expands to fill the view. The Bailiff himself gives further reason for such identification when, at the conclusion of the Phoenix episode, he tells the audience "they always do that film business when the Phoenix comes".[297] Description of the magistrate and of his actions sometimes associates him with the film or with the mechanics of light, in corporate metaphor. For example, he is described as looking round at his audience, his "large unwinking roaming orb"[298] seeking out his favorites with a lens-like fixity. Again, "his graphic right eye yellow and dilated, discharging a muddy fountain of images"[299] like a film projector, he spews forth a speech at the appellants. Or, when he laughs, his eyes close and "an amused contemptuous light" is "squeezed out of the luminous slit".[300]

Although this essay is not directly concerned with Lewis's relationship to contemporary art movements, an aside must be made here in connection with futurism. For the Bailiff as film-technics shows certain correspondences

with the manifestoes and experiments of early film-futurists. There are in fact striking similarities between the writings of de Amicis, A. Ginna, Emilio Settimelli and Paulo Bruzzi, and the Bailiff's use of, or attitude toward, technics. As early as 1907 Edmondo de Amicis, a "non-futurista" or pre-futurist, had written of "Cinematografo cerebrale", or "cerebral film". In his book Cinema e letterature del futurismo, Mario Verdone remarks of this "mental cinema" that it "è un racconto che narra una 'rêverie' e in quanto tale segue le leggi della logica onirica e non quelle della logica obiettiva o aristotelica".[301] Verdone quotes A. Ginna, an early futurist and signee of the film-manifesto with Marinetti and Settimelli, as declaring that "ogni sogno e ogni realtà sono cinematografie del mio cervello."[302] These "motion-pictures of [the] brain" which for Ginna form "all dream and all reality" might be the Bailiff's reconstructions or mirages in the electric desert. They are snapshots of a highly mechanical and realist brain, at best. Verdone remarks upon the futurist interest in "simultaneità e compenetrazioni di tempi e luoghi"[303] made possible, or even automatic, by the film medium. It is such interpenetrations which confront Pullman and Satters in the time-tracks during their explorations. Perhaps the most interesting concern of the futurists however, with respect to the Bailiff-as-film-technics, is their immediate reaction to the "stream-of-consciousness" technique of Joyce and their connection of it to the film. Verdone, in a section headed "Letteratura futurista e cinema; Reciproche influenze", states that "il 'pensiero continuo', per es., è lo 'Stream of consciousness' (o 'monologo interiore') che verrà sopratutto da Joyce."[304] Lewis, as his remarks in Blasting and Bombardiering attest,[305] was not only versed

in futurist theory, but was, to an extent, interested in the futurist adoption of new media. Their treatment of the technologies, and the philosophy behind which - or before which - they operated were in opposition to his own. The Childermass' treatment of the futurist technologic habits is not merely a critique of that movement however. Lewis saw the fate of any such purely technical and "revolutionary" philosophy reflected in that of the futurist movement perhaps - but his working of futurism into a more universal image in Childermass is a non-partisan gesture.

The vignettes or scenes through which Pullman and Satters move in the time-swamp are to be viewed, from one standpoint, as the filmic counterpart of literary stream-of-cousciousness. As they watch the magnetic metropolis from a distance "the whole city like a film-scene slides away perceptibly".[306] Farther on they encounter a situation whose technical qualities seem mixed from film and even television. They find themselves in a kind of "tunnel" whose sides are "cliffs of sunlight":

> These solid luminous slices have the consistence of smoked glass: apparitions gradually take shape in their substance, hesitate or arrive with fixity, become delicately plastic, increase their size, burst out of the wall like an inky exploding chrysalid, scuttling past the two schoolboys.... Or figures at their side plunge into the glassy surface of the light.[307]

The "solid luminous slices" which elicit "smoked glass" are those of the film-show at the appearance of the Phoenix, which a viewer describes as "like smoked glass".[308] The viewers of these phenomena disagree about their nature. Two appellant-witnesses to the Phoenix incident are overheard to argue:

> 'It's a cinematograph!'
> 'No, it's not a cinematograph.'
> 'Very well, have it your own way!' The speakers fall out.[309]

Even the term "cinematograph" is suggestive of the futurist manifestoes - the words "film" and "cinema" were in constant use in England when Lewis wrote. The effect of these cine-sequences in the novel appears to be that of the futurist "interpenetration" ("compenetrazione"); Lewis's characters pass into and out of the glassy medium, becoming shadows in it and then, again, literary characters. This interpenetration is significant as a symbol, almost, of the Bailiff's activities, which are - as the character itself is - a fusing or confusing of technical and of sensory boundaries.

In passing it is worth remarking that the futurists very early turned to radio as one of the "scienzarte" or technical arts worthy of their special attention. The futurist term "immaginazione senza fili", or "Wireless imagination", is well known. Mario Verdone, in his work previously cited, notes the appearance of a "manifesto del Teatro Radiofonico" in which such authors as A. Ginna and Marinetti himself had a hand. The manifesto discussed at length the special qualities of "L'arte della radiofonia", which was to be "liberi da reminiscenze di altre forme d'arte", in typical futurist tradition, and would attempt to "convergere tutta la sensibilità e tutta la tecnica negli effetti di pura essenza fonica".[310] The futurist radio-art or radio-theatre would in other words separate for special development the strictly audile sense-appeal of radio.

The presence of "Shell Oil" in The Apes of God has already been noted, as has the image of petroleum-bearing "nummulitic limestone" in the opening landscape of Childermass. In The Apes of God the petroleum industry appears in the guise of the brakeless, futurist Bugatti, and in the explosions everywhere of "clown-vans" which upset the "innocent" Dan Boleyn. On his walks through the London streets Dan is roared at visually by signs

advertising "SHELL IS SO DIFFERENT!"[311] and aurally by the militant noises of "a Shell-van full of petrol-tins".[312] The existence of these Shell images is attached only remotely, if at all, to the broadcaster Horace Zagreus. In Childermass however the petroleum metaphor comes under the aegis of the Bailiff. It is his "peon" or "minion" Shelah who is appointed to dispatch "all artists" after the interview with Joseph Potter, "Painter". The Bailiff declares,

> 'I will see no more artists! You hear me Shelah? That's the last. Send them back or better still despatch them as soon as they present themselves till further notice!'
>
> He laughs heartily with lazy heaving of the belly.
>
> 'Shelah! You understand me eternal one, tell them they have either to be despatched or embrace the counting-house one or the other....'[313]

Shelah, "a swift-moving sleek-footed clerk", takes note of this order and "drops slickly back into the dark booth". The connection of "Shell-ah" with artists becomes immediately apparent if we review some of the Shell Oil Company's advertising activities of the period. The petroleum company - Britain's largest - had commissioned a number of contemporary painters to do posters for a campaign; the reproduced paintings of Graham Sutherland, John Armstrong, Paul Nash and E. McKnight Kauffer, among others, appeared over the Shell mottoes, "You Can be Sure of Shell", etc. Some of these "affiches" are reproduced by Cyril Connolly in his article "The New Medici" for the Architectural Review of July 1934. The coupling of the petroleum company with that great family of art-patrons needs no further explanation. A graphic by Hans Feilbusch was imprinted on one poster under the caption "Architects Prefer Shell" and over the Shell motto noted above.

The image of the appellants as drops of crude oil - "black drops

falling into a cistern" - has a number of allied implications, among which is that of life as a material or product of process. The fluidity of the image has its counterpart in the flux of "all the objects of sense" in the electric desert. The Bailiff uses uncertainty and instability as techniques for control. As "refiner" of human material - the suggestion in the petroleum image - the Bailiff is allied to the engineers-in-human-plastics whom Pullman encounters in the punishment centre of Dis. The Bailiff himself has however identified with "the crowdmasters, those engineers in human plastic", in an argument with Hyperides, who early in the court-scene relates the Bailiff's magic to that of biological tampering. The magistrate seems to admit to the charge later, when he advises the appellants, "you may be said to resemble a company of veterans whom we have monkey-glanded".[314]

That the Bailiff is involved with technology generally, as an executive or managerial principle, is evident from his allusions to his responsibility for the scheme of the camp and landscape. "The mountains were an idea of mine!" he exclaims to his audience. "Yes, I thought of them one day as I was sitting here!" A few moments later he remarks of them that "They're there, I liked the idea when I was told about it".[315] The degree of his responsibility, like the degree of his control over his peons, seems uncertain. At a later point in the court-proceedings, he again mentions the mountains, explaining their origins with reference to a Scottish engineer . This explanation does not clarify the extent of his authority over his technological servants:

> It was no easy matter to get 'em to make their appearance as you now can see them and settle down in the reliable way they have as pukka mountains, as they are. I went

> into the whole matter with our principal engineer as it happens a Scot - a Scot - a very able person: he was dispatched to iceland and he brought back the mountains with him or I should say their appearance. Once in a way they vanish even now, but they're a fairly dependable landmark on the whole as certain as most things. Don't look too hard at them, I didn't say they were to be taken too seriously. [316]

The mountains - whatever the Bailiff's exact responsibility - do fall under his jurisdiction, as he is associated in some way with all of the technics involved in landscape and camp. The reference to Scots engineers, which occurs more than once in The Childermass, may be read as an allusion to Reith in particular, or to the BBC engineering staff; Reith was originally a "Scottish engineer" and a number of his engineers or technicians were of the same origin. Briggs notes in fact that Reith, on making application for a position with the BBC, used the fact of his Aberdonean origin as persuasion in his letter.[317] Needless to say, these facts need not have been available to Lewis to validate his composite image of the Bailiff. But they help to clarify the "Scottish presence" in The Childermass.

The Bailiff's bema suggests a further correspondence with BBC history; the early broadcast booth was a small, bema-like affair - Briggs describes that of Magnet House, built in a cinema which was still occasionally in use, as "a teak cabinet"[318] - glassed on at least one side to afford a view of the studio-area. From his own "broadcast booth" the Bailiff like an announcer extends himself to his "great audience". "Alas," Hyperides complains during one of these broadcasts, "I hear you, everybody hears you, no one is able to stop his ears against your tongue."[319] The references to the pervasiveness of radio are profuse, as are direct allusions to the Bailiff-as-radio; on one occasion the Bailiff is described as "frowning upon the setbacks of his morning's programme".[320]

Hyperides in his arguments with the Bailiff establishes as succinctly as possible that character's general involvement with popular technics, or "inexact science". "Are not your kind betraying us", Hyperides demands, "in the name of exact research to the savage and mechanical nature we had overcome?"[321] Accepting the identification with "exact research", the Bailiff replies, "We are on the contrary providing you with more rigorous methods in your battle with nature." Hyperides persists, "you say that your physics of 'events', and the cult of the 'dynamical'... is an 'advance' for 'us'. But an advance in what? An advance for whom?" The Bailiff retorts, "An advance for science". It is also, he claims, an advance "for the mass of men".[322] Later, when the dispute is taken up by the hyperidean Polemon, the Bailiff rages,

> These subversive doubters call in question <u>everything!</u>
> All that marvellous edifice of Progress, those prodigies
> of Science, which have provided us moderns with a new soul
> and a consciousness different from that of any other epoch....[323]

The hyperideans would, he complains, negate "all that staggering scientific advance that has made modern man into a god, almost".[324] In these passages the technics of radio drop into the massed background of "science" - a popularized science "dominating nature in a manner beyond the wildest dreams of Antiquity".[325] There is good reason that electromagnetics, as the "science" chiefly responsible for the popularization, is the dominant one in Lewis's mythology. At the appearance of the Phoenix a cry goes up - perhaps from the Bailiff himself - "Who was the God of Babberl'n?" To which the response comes, "'Bell'. Bell was the god, Bell was the god."[326] The reference to the inventor of the telephone is unmistakable; it is perhaps odd, as well, in a place where the telephone is not to be found. The Bailiff reinforces this electronic godhead when he refers to "the

Omnipotent Abstraction" which has been "set up here by us as an immense awful magnet to engulf all souls to Itself".[327]

Writing in America and Cosmic Man (1948), Lewis observes that "the earth has in fact become one big village with telephones laid from one end to the other".[328] Hyperides tells the Bailiff, "The whole universe except at night is brilliantly electro-magnetically illuminated."[329] Hyperides' statement, written in the mid-1920's, reminds us that at that time broadcasting, in the British Isles at least, was a day- and evening-time affair. The "electromagnetic illumination" needs no explanation; a group of images related to it does require investigation however. Some of them have been quoted in connection with the Bailiff's broadcast activities. "I am in league with the hurricane", the Bailiff warns Hyperides, making the threat against a background of storms and other atmospheric effects attributed to the magistrate. The references to "wind" of one sort or another form, in fact, a bloc metaphor by which Lewis provided another direct association between Bailiff and radio. "The wind" is an ancient cliché applied to communication, as the expression "something's in the wind" will testify. The word was very early taken up by radio experimenters to denote "the ether" or the medium for radio waves. Reith, in 1949, published a mémoir, partly on broadcasting, entitled Into the Wind; the metaphor does double-duty as nautical and broadcasting reference. Lewis uses the term unmodified at various points, as noted. He also supplies it, later in The Childermass, with variations of meaning to a specific purpose. In the exhaustive argument with Hyperides on the philosophy of technical exploitation, the Bailiff explains to "Loudspeaker" how he handles the radio-amateur; "I set up this whispering across the lines and routes of his strategies," the radio-Punch

says, referring in part to the damping of low-power broadcasts by other transmitters when two areas of emission overlap. The Bailiff continues, "his orders contain nothing as to the indiscretions of the wind which he regards as a fourth dimension of space".[330] This speech is rich and diverse in allusion. As a purely technical image it refers to deliberate or accidental interference in the "ether" of "battling" stations. For the Bailiff, the battle is a deliberate one and is fought by subterfuge, a "whispering across the lines and routes" of the opposition's strategies. As applied to the general audience, and no doubt to many amateurs, the reference to "indiscretions of the wind which he regards as a fourth dimension of space" indicates the habit of the appellant to regard the highly-contrived "magic" around him as "natural". The "indiscretions of the wind" - which are the Bailiff's responsibility - are made to seem ordinary and accidental phenomena. There is obviously a further interpretation, related to relativitistic physics, possible in the "fourth dimension of space" to which the Bailiff lays claim. And the statement invites comparison with Reith's remark, in his mémoir of broadcasting, that on taking up the task of radio development he "had no sealed orders to open".[331]

The entry of relativity physics - at least in its popularized version - into the image-complex of Lewis's Bailiff is not surprising if we reflect that Lewis worked, almost simultaneously, on Childermass (1928) and Time and Western Man (1927), the critical book in which he examined the background to twentieth-century science and philosophy. The Bailiff's exegesis upon "Time" and "Event" finds in Hyperides an unsympathetic listener; "there is only one reality" the Punch-figure explains to an appellant, "and there is no reality without contact. Until things touch and act on each

other they cannot be said to exist for each other."[332] Hyperides observes that in the Bailiff's "Physics of 'events'" and his "cult of the 'dynamical'" there is "an ideal of restless movement" which is an "empirical sensational chaos".[333] He relates this chaos to the flux of which Lewis wrote with respect to the "Time deists" in Time and Western Man. Although his discussion there is relevant in many respects to The Childermass, it does not directly concern the present essay, except as it establishes the link which Lewis definitely saw between the Bailiff's techniques and relativistic theory. "I have very little to do with Relativity physics," Lewis wrote, "I am only concerned with their effects." He claimed to be "justified" in this attitude by "recent scientific method", which he saw as dealing no longer with causes but with effects. "A great many effects... come out of einsteinian physics," he pursued, referring to these physics for the common man as "a vague something that produces, in the observable field of philosophy, a chain of effects, or of mysterious happenings".[334] It is this turning-away from "Causes" to "mysterious happenings" which characterizes the Bailiff's view, as he impresses it upon the appellants, of the "new life". And it is this "event" philosophy which Hyperides seems at all points to challenge.

13. Hyperides.

Previous mention of Hyperides has identified him with what Sheila Watson in Wyndham Lewis and Expressionism calls "the archaic". He is, in the Bailiff's scheme of progressive evolution or transformation, a recalcitrant. He resists, the Bailiff informs the court at large, "our proceedings in this charmed circle of regeneration",[335] including the appeals of emotional or sensory fluidity and "event" philosophy. Hyperides' arguments with the Bailiff pretend at least to strict and perhaps mechanical rationality, in the face of the prevailing sentiments. And the Bailiff confides that on several occasions Hyperides "has escaped from over there",[336] indicating the Magnetic City. As the sham-greek leader of a militant mob of sham-greeks, Hyperides is the chief spokesman for what seems to be an opposing schema to that of the Bailiff. The argument between the two which dominates the second half of Childermass is based at any rate on the inference that "Loud Speaker" refuses and attempts to refute the proffered New Jerusalem of the Bailiff, standing as it does for the "new electromagnetic" as against the "old mechanic" of Hyperides. Indicating the hyperideans en masse the Bailiff says, "observe them hark back to their saints and heroes under the very shadow of the great Unity, the Omnipotent Abstraction in person".[337] The abstraction of godly proportion to which he refers is magnetic in nature, an "awful magnet" under whose patronage and domination the Bailiff presides at the court.

To create Hyperides, Lewis resorts to "archaic" or militant machine-imagery extensively, it is true. The first appearance of the hyperideans is "suggestive of the passage of a circular stage-army",[338] which moves repeatedly about the arena like a wheel. One of this "phalanx" points "a pistol-like hand"[339] at the Bailiff. Another "clamors mechanically" and many "thrust their bearded muzzles"[340] at the rows of bailiffites. "They carry on as if we had not set up" under the auspices of the magnetic god, the Bailiff complains.[341] The power of these mismatched and ragged forces is clear, whether they are "archaic" and mechanistic or not. They "seem able to master this dancing deformity in the seat of justice" or at least "are not mastered". They "blot out everything with their vitality".[342]

The importance of Hyperides to our present investigation is limited to his association with the mechanical, or the machine. If, as the Bailiff repeatedly suggests, Hyperides is technically the machine placed in opposition to a new society invested with a technologic "god", represented by the Bailiff, then Lewis has in fact imaged an archaic-modern polarity in his extended arguments between the two characters. But to see Hyperides merely as "archaic" against the Bailiff's "new" technology is I believe to misread Lewis's intentions. We are told that "the Bailiff is electrified at the impact" of Hyperides' voice, and that "he lights up all over"[343] at that character's appearance. The voice "staggers his senses", it is "a hail from the contrary pole". Again the militant imagery appears in Lewis's remark that the call resembles one of "battle from the positions of a legendary enemy".[344] The effect of the sham-greek on the Bailiff is a significant one. In private conversation the Bailiff refers to Hyperides' "vitality" as "magical". "Whether you will or not you infect people with it. When you're

here I feel twice as alive too much so sometimes."[345] If the two characters are thought of as representatives of "old" and "new", then these images suggest at least an interdependence rather than an opposition. There is, in many of Lewis's allusions to the pair, the strong suggestion of an "energizing" of Bailiff by Hyperides. This sense can be traced and made more specific in the imagery. The god described by the Bailiff as his own is a pastiche of magnetic and mechanical metaphor. "Against the puny humanism of the Greek," the Bailiff declares, "we set up God, that great theologic machine."[346] Hyperides recalls that "you described your god as a magnet some time since".[347] The Bailiff claims that his deity "possesses a constitution of iron".[348] An inference implicit in all these images is the inclusion or absorption of the hyperidean world into the Bailiff's. The hyperidean, and for the Bailiff "discredited, european world"[349] is merely technical material in an acquired world-picture. This general suggestion is given explicitly as an accusation by the hyperidean Polemon, who claims that the Bailiff's entire Weltanschauung is a stolen one. "The whole picture was pinched," Polemon reminds the fake potentate, and "it was from us as it happens that you were so good as to steal it."[350] He neglects to add that the mechanistic Hyperides has "pinched" his own humanist philosophy from the Greek, attaching it to his mechanical predilections and techniques.

The image of the "pinched picture", twisted into the Bailiff's instant-pastiche, makes explicit the magnate's debt - and the debt of his "world" and "philosophy" - to a world which he at all times repudiates and refers to as "discredited", "past", "old" or merely "degenerate". The same image is one of several such allusions to the particularly visual technics of Hyperides, whose name as Dr. Watson notes in her thesis, is associated with

the term "hypo" from photography. Certainly, Hyperides in his dispute with the Bailiff over the merits of the eye and the ear, takes pains to associate himself with the visual, as if that predilection put him in opposition to the audile sense. The inference contained in the photographic "fixer" or hypo image is not merely photographic - relating to that mechanical-visual medium - but suggests fixity or reluctance to change; hypo is the agent which stops all further sensitivity to light in the emulsion being developed. In his opposition or resistance to the Bailiff's influence, Hyperides would seem to represent that "pole" which is opposed to the Bailiff's technique and philosophy of flux.

If the claims of those two disputants, Hyperides and Bailiff, to representation of factions or poles are taken seriously, then from the point of view of the present essay, they are the philosophies in opposition of two huge technologic "gods". Each character argues his own technics as though it alone were decisive in creating and sustaining a world picture, a distinct society, with all the implications of those abstractions. This impression - of representation and opposition - is clear in the words of the two characters, but is belied by Lewis's handling of their actions, and by his descriptions of them. Hyperides, who claims to resist change and the Bailiff's flux, is himself the centre of a militant rabble in continual motion; while he argues the visual over the audile sense, Hyperides' voice "electrifies" those who hear it. The Bailiff, who pretends to represent flux, or change, in fact is merely master of a group of technical illusions, which suggest if any transformation in his appellants, merely a passive and never a willful, active one. "Willing must occur during your terrestrial life," he tries to convince Macrob, "there is no more willing here."[351] The falsity of this

claim is evident with even a brief examination of Pullman, who by effort of will resists the illusory desert.

The opposition of Bailiff and Hyperides is, I believe, that of two wills-to-power, simply. The philosophic polarity, although it cannot concern us here, is largely a spurious one, itself a crowd-handling technique; this will be more evident from a specific examination of their dispute. But Hyperides, as machine-technics, serves Lewis in the capacity also of a purely technical image. As machine, he is the energy or power for the Bailiff's technics - a power which the Bailiff is unable to assimilate as he does the appellants - and one which he in fact appears unwilling to absorb, since he is dependent upon it. That these two monstrous "enemies" are in fact fellow showmen and crowdmasters Lewis leaves no doubt. The impression which they create, that two "worlds" - or the future of one - hangs in the balance of their "battle", is only showmanship. The Bailiff's mob-techniques are rather more "primitive" - because more abstract - than those of Hyperides, whose self-declared preference for the concrete or "plastic" seems at least partly genuine.

It will be obvious that a much deeper study, not restricted to the technical imagery, of the Bailiff-Hyperides polarity would be necessary to clarify this aspect of the Childermass myth. Certainly, there are genuine opposing predilections to be noted in the two characters; the Bailiff's insistence upon "Unity" against Hyperides' apparent preference for his group's ragged diversity may be cited, and the reader cannot fail to note a difference in "temperament" between the two. But as they image, or contribute to the myth of, the technics in Childermass, these two engineers in human plastics must be understood by their similarities rather than by

their differences. The crowd-handling mask of Hyperides, like that of the Dossennus Bailiff, is that of "the philosopher"; the hyperidean pretensions to represent machine-man in a deadly last-ditch battle with the "new" are part of the extended Childermass illusion.

The effect of the Bailiff's schema upon the machine-man, or product of the "discredited, european world", is evident not in the case of Hyperides, himself a kind of Bailiff, but in that of Pullman. Unlike Hyperides, who participates by "energizing" the Bailiff, Pullman resists the flux of the electric desert, while coming in spite of himself under the influence of the potentate's personality. It is in Pullman that a genuine resistance of the Bailiff and his effects is set up by Lewis, for individual examination.

14. Pullman: "La Mécanique rationelle" in Service of Electromagnetic Technics.

The antipathy of Pullman for the telephone has already been commented upon. "Thank Heaven for small mercies they've no telephones here",[352] he tells Satters at their first meeting. The imagery by which Lewis makes Pullman is nevertheless a combination of the mechanical and the electrical. The stress is on Pullman as machine, however, or as member of what Langevin called "La Mécanique rationelle". The mechanical is his traditional and preferred habit; the electromagnetic an encroaching influence. The machine-imagery of Pullman suggests often the worn out or cast-off; his hair in "dejected spandrils" floats on the wind in "rusty wisps".[353] At his introduction early in the novel he stands contemplating his surroundings, indulging in "speculations" on waterfowl and "chemistry of waters".[354] With Satters he walks like a "light-limbed machine".[355] His name evokes the epitome of the machine, the railroad's Pullman coach; like it, he is ultra-civilized and always smoothly graceful. Once, on the time-tracks, he "rattles... slowing them down to an easy pace".[356] "His law of existence" is "to rattle along these tracks".[357] His name suggests a second attachment to the mechanical; it evokes that of Pelmanism, a rather mechanical method of mental discipline and control - which Pullman can at times be said to use - and at least once Lewis alludes to this possibility. He describes Pullman as continuing, "with the dogmatism of his great class of business-like pelmanic seers"[358] along the track. His speech occasionally is

machine-like as well; in a "nondescript brevity of clattering morse" he "hammers out on his palate"[359] words of instruction to Satters. The image suggests at once the two modes, the mechanical and the electrical. Satters too comes under the influence of Pullman's mechanic; when Pullman stops ahead of him the fag "pulls up with the reversed iron-horseshoes of his heels".[360] The two move in a kind of shell which is their "normal posthumous relationship".[361] Pullman's mechanism is the hard protective surface of this organism, giving partial immunity to the "magnetic attack" from without. Yet Pullman is himself not totally immune to these attacks.

Lewis's term "clattering morse" to describe the speech of Pullman combines in one image the mechanical and the primitive, or early, electric medium of the telegraph. Such images of electrical or electronic media attached to Pullman - and by extension to Satters - suggest a sensitivity to the new media rather than a conscious involvement. The effect upon Satters of the "exploded cock" has been discussed; Pullman throughout The Childermass masters these reactions and influences by an effort - alluded to often as mechanical - of will. His mastery is often connected with his stance, or the fact that he keeps his feet well grounded. He habitually "stands fast" with his "small calves in inflexible arcs".[362] He is frequently seen "stamping his foot" and when Satters comes under the spell of the magnetic attack Pullman advises him urgently, "Stamp! Stamp your feet!"[363] The firm footing seems to be a socratic habit born of necessity with Pullman: he "comes to a stop, his feet firmly set side by side in the worn slippers, pushing down, shovelling into the hot sandy nap".[364] It is the act of the thinker or observer, providing himself with a solid ground from which to carry on his activity. But it suggests also the stern gesture of one used

to ruling his senses in a firm manner. The connection with Pelmanism is clear. At several points however this technique fails him. When he and Satters "cross a patch of soggy ground" they find they "cannot talk, picking their way".[365] Again, Satters finds that his companion's "ears do not function; he has disconnected them for the present".[366] While Satters stumbles and wavers under the influence of the Magnetic cock Pullman moves apparently without difficulty, "his face stares in unrecognizing passivity ahead".[367] There is in these references, and especially that of the soggy ground, a sense of temporary disconnection from full awareness, as though Pullman's self-imposed stability cost him in perception as well as in energy. And Satters, infuriated, compares him to "some stupid machine". Yet, while the movements and speech are mechanical, "they proceed in an electric silence".[368]

Already at the beginning of The Childermass the mechanical Pullman has come under the influence of Bailiff and Magnetic City. At first mention of the magistrate's name he "withdraws into a hypnotic fixity of expression".[369] He shows indications of unconscious influence in his explanations of the peons which Satters observes on their tour. Three times he recites in precisely the same language, that the peons are "the multitude of personalities which God has created... and is unable now to destroy". At the third recitation he "mumbles under protest, saying his lesson".[370] He like Satters lapses, although rarely, into a peonic imbecility or trance. His remedy is to place "his slippered feet, as he advances, with additional firmness".[371] But his adoption of the Bailiff's stance Pullman cannot or has not resisted by a stamp of the foot. In discussion with Satters he argues the Bailiff's case. "He's really not so black as he's painted,"

Pullman expounds to his fag, "when I feel a bit under the weather I go there. He cheers me up remarkably."[372] Later, Satters refers to his guide as a Bailiff's "spy" and jeers "who licks the Bailiff's boots?"[373] As if detected in some deceit Pullman "takes on the expression of a spy". Eventually, it is Pullman who insists that they go to witness the arrival of the Bailiff's barge. The court scene is punctuated sparsely with his comments to Satterthwaite, most of which are in support of the Punch-magistrate.

Pullman exists in the fluid Electric Desert as a kind of willful peon or automaton. To the irrational or intuited warnings of his satiric image Satters, his "response is an absolute denial of the existence of anything abnormal, within and without".[374] His insulation against the environment is only partially a willful one; it is reinforced by nuances in Lewis's description of him from the first meeting at the appellants' camp. He wears "old leather slippers" whose instep is prolonged in a "japanned tongue of black".[375] Lewis occasionally returns to these slippers in later narrative. Their importance as footwear is obvious if we consider the great dependence of Pullman upon his feet for his stability. The elements of leather and "japanned tongue" may perhaps allude to materials used as insulation in early electrical apparatus. Japanning is a coating with japan lacquer - a thin highly resistent enamel or lacquer similar to those used on copper wire and other conductors as insulation. This coating, unlike leather, was used until recently for some forms of electrical insulation. With his imperviousness to the environment - or perhaps in a cause-and-effect relationship - Pullman attaches no <u>personal</u> significance to the events in the desert and the court. When they are beset by a sudden

storm in the desert, Satters and Pulley disagree about its origin:

> Satters brandishes a finger at the departing storm-cloud.
> 'It's going back.'
> 'What do you mean?'
> 'Why, the way it came.'
> 'How do you mean?'
> 'That's where it came from - didn't you notice?'
> 'I can't say I did.'
> 'Yes, it came from over there.'
> He indicates the city.
> 'Did it? I don't see how it could. I think it came from that direction.'[376]

But Satters insists, "No, I saw it coming up." Pullman is equally blind when the Bailiff chides those appellants "who are inclined to disregard formal injunctions" and stray into the forbidden time-tracks. Satters' "head bows before the silken storm for he understands which way the wind is blowing". But Pullman sees no personal implication in the Bailiff's remarks. "He meant us", Satters insists, and Pullman wonders at his fag's "capacity for misunderstanding everything".[377] Pullman's willful resistance of the environment by personal detachment, amounts at times to a stubborn obtuseness; the exaggeration of his insensitivity to the Bailiff's criticism was perhaps meant by Lewis to make unavoidably clear this aspect or effect of Pullman's technique for survival in the electric desert - an aspect not explicit in the characterization to that point.

Pullman has lapsed into, or placed himself in, the service of the Bailiff; he moves through the scenes of The Childermass like a rational and highly knowledgeable peon. He seems even, in the time-tracks, to be broadcasting for the Bailiff unintentionally. As mechanical or rational man Pullman is obviously not in his element among the fluid illusions of the desert, but he attempts wherever possible to translate what his senses tell

him into rational terms. Lewis's treatment of him indicates that, while he is not - and cannot be - immune to his new environment of "event", his survival as Pullman is significant. His explanations of the electric phenomena, his insistence upon causality, are those of a man used to dealing with natural event. Pullman does not look for the causes of phenomena in the human will of the Bailiff, as Satters occasionally does. Pullman bends this environment of event to the tenets of his rational predilection; he has at hand an explanation, in exterior and causal terms, for all that Satters regards as "fearfully weird". The similarity between Hyperides and Pullman is I think obvious; they are both, in the Bailiff's scheme of things, from an extinct culture. Unlike the hyperideans who cry "Delenda est Europa" and exult in "lost causes", Pullman carries the "dead" tradition over into the service of the Bailiff, with uncritical determination. As has been noted, it is Satters who questions the personal significance of both Bailiff and future existence.

Once inside the Magnetic City - later called Third City evoking the BBC's "Third Programme" - Pullman is moved toward an increasing involvement with the diabolical establishment. He is eventually taken into the confidence of Sammael, for whom he does a kind of PR work, re-forming that dignitary's dark angels in human image, providing them with human hungers and desires. The sequels to Childermass are however still 25 years in the future when Lewis establishes Pullman as the mechanical intellect serving the Bailiff. This service is of a tutorial rather than a physical type. Pullman is everywhere "Miss Pulley, schoolteacher". Combined with his analytical intelligence is a sentimentality in some ways no more discerning than that of the Bailiff's other, more childish supporters.

Pullman responds, for example, to the Bailiff-as-Chaplin; the magistrate presents from his box "a greatly enlarged mask of Chaplin, but deeply pigmented, in sickly-sweet serio-comic mockery, it shakes above the audience". Pullman confides to his companion, "now that is the real Bailiff!" and adds "I think he's extraordinarily handsome don't you?" Satters "gazes with astonishment", he is not taken with this "very much too exotic mannequin".[378]

The mask, like the Bailiff's other disguises, is a piece of trompe-l'oeil which appeals to Pullman but is suspect to Satters, who remarks "I prefer the Bailiff to that poseur!"[379] Not only his disguises but his trick effects are a fake magic in which the Bailiff appeals to the naive eye. Pullman's embracing of the Bailiff suggests that the former is subject to such tricks; and in fact it is to the strict visual sense that Lewis has turned for character-images of Pullman. At their first meeting Satters discovers him, "a small observer" noting the movements of a peon. During their traverse of the time-tracks they find that an image will occasionally succumb to the "pressure" of the "full-blown human glance".[380] This "pressure" is applied often by Pullman to prevail upon the shifting fluidities of the electric desert with its time- and space-mirages. At such moments Pullman must shun speech; Satters often "wonders if he is a little deaf".[381] As a member of the extinct machine culture Pullman is a severely and determinedly visual example of that type. His is, under stress, the isolated visual intellect eschewing sound and touch, and subject to the errors of a naive, or too intense, sensory specialization. In view of this fact the Pullman-Satters relationship is a mutual dependency, but with Pullman refusing to recognize Satters' non-visual and

non-intellective capacity. The failure to do so results in or is responsible for Pullman's failure to detect the will behind the life of random effect or "event" which he and the appellants lead in camp.

The exaggerated visual bias which is a characteristic of Pullman with his "Mécanique rationelle" in the electric desert forms the basis for the protracted argument between Bailiff and Hyperides. Pullman, in spite of the uncertainties of the time-tracks, has preserved his visual habit, one which the Bailiff attacks with religious fervor. But the argument between Bailiff and hyperideans on the merits of ear and eye - a long and largely specious philosophic abstraction - reveals on examination the pitfalls of such sensory partisanship.

15. The Dispute of Ear and Eye.

Writing in The Radio Times of 21 December 1923 Lord Riddell, an enthusiastic early critic of radio, asked "What effect is radio going to have on life?" In his brief article, entitled "Modern Witchcraft", he enumerated some of the questions popular among social observers and the public of the time:

> Are people going to read less? Are they going to talk less? Are they going to be better or worse informed? Are they going to the theatre and music less? Are those who reside in rural districts going to be more or less satisfied?[382]

"So far as the present generation is concerned," he suggested, "I believe that those who are accustomed to read and who like reading will continue to read whether they use the radio or not." But for the "next generation" Lord Riddell posed a question which Marshall McLuhan might have found perceptive; will those "brought up on radio" turn to "information through the medium of the ear" as opposed to "that through the medium of the eye?" Asa Briggs answered that "few people have had the chance to choose. The eye has it."[383] His reason for this choice was the demonstration by John L. Baird of television, in January 1926. But Briggs' reply is, even if correct, one made in retrospect; many concerned observers feared for or anticipated the eclipse of the eye, as Lord Riddell's article indicates.

Wyndham Lewis did not see the problem in such simple and refined terms. Yet he presented, in The Childermass, what appear to be the two sides of

this eye-ear argument, as a dispute between Bailiff and hyperideans. "It is not music you are listening to", one of Hyperides' faction crows at the appellants. "Take his words and weigh them,"[384] he shouts, over the voice of the broadcasting Bailiff. "I hear you, everybody hears you," Hyperides laments, referring to the Bailiff's aural appeal.[385] "When you begin thinking you lie down and close your eyes,"[386] he accuses. Hyperides prefers the visual or "plastic" which is the "solid". "You gibe at my predilection for the solid," he remarks to the Bailiff; "the less plastic senses serve your turn better." He refers to the Bailiff as "a religionist" whose appeal, like that of music, is to the more fluid senses. He calls the Bailiff "old mesmerist" and, unlike Pullman, sees the Bailiff's electric or technologic hand everywhere behind the fluxes of the landscape. The Bailiff for his part points to Hyperides' own crowd-organizing activities and suggests to him, "it is your voice that awakens the religious response" in the hyperidean crowd. That accomplished, he tells Hyperides, "your plastic pagan philosophy is blindly accepted!"[388]

Hugh Kenner remarks upon the "dialectical puppets" in The Childermass. His impression of the novel is that "Lewis's views... don't differ essentially from those of the Bailiff".[389] Martin Seymour-Smith, in an article "Wyndham Lewis as Imaginative Writer" declares, "Actually, Lewis is examining his own fascination with such arguments" as those of Bailiff and Hyperides.[390] And William H. Pritchard, in his Wyndham Lewis, associates Lewis with the arguments of Hyperides. It is true that the argument in The Childermass bears great resemblance, in many specific points, to Lewis's own critical opinions as expressed in such works as Time and Western Man. In that book he made a close connection between the non-visual appeal of "stream-of-

consciousness" writing and the "Time" philosophers Bergson, Alexander, Whitehead and Spengler. Both are, Lewis explained, heavily indebted to the kind of visceral reflection or emotion aroused by music. The visceral or "inner organic" was not a new approach for Lewis, however, but a disguised mechanic:

> The inner meaning of the time-philosophy, from whatever standpoint you approach it, and however much you paste it over with confusing advertisements of 'life', of 'organism', is the doctrine of a mechanistic universe; periodic; timeless, or nothing but 'time', whichever you prefer; and, above all, essentially dead. [391]

Lewis concluded his chapter "Analysis of the Mind of James Joyce" with a typical declaration, "I am for the physical world."[392] It is easy, in view of Time and Western Man, to see a direct correspondence between Lewis's thought and that of the two "enemies" Hyperides and the Bailiff. This temptation must be resisted however if Lewis's myth-making activities in The Childermass are to be appreciated.

In the closing pages of The Childermass each of the two disputants is identified with "the less plastic senses"; the Bailiff correctly accuses Hyperides of mesmerizing his followers with the voice, and Hyperides with equal veracity condemns the Bailiff as "a religionist" for whom the visual sense is too precise and critically discerning. These are truths - or rather half-truths - which might easily fool an appellant or even a Pullman. They are however superfluous. The argument seems to be meant to obscure for their "audience" the nature of these crowd-masters. Pullman himself supplies a parable for this camouflaging technique when he recalls to Satters, in the time-tracks outside the camp, the effects of a French thunderstorm during a wartime bombardment: "It was rather loud", Pullman observes of an "instant" thunderstorm they have just come through. "It

completely stunned me for the moment," Satters admits. Pullman refers to the French storms, saying "They used to wipe out the bombardment. Once I was passing an eight-inch How in action during a storm. It sounded like a pop-gun." Satters shouts back, "I'm as deaf as a post!"[393] He later suggests that the Bailiff has been responsible for the freak storm. Although Pullman supplies the explanation of the storm-as-camouflage, it is Satters who makes the connection of storm with Bailiff.

The parable which Pullman supplies and from which he refuses to benefit is applied by Lewis in a number of different ways in The Childermass. The Bailiff's masks for example raise the question of the magistrate's true identity - which is to say his degree of responsibility for appellants and landscape - a question which is never explicitly resolved in that novel. The argument with Hyperides, in which the visual and aural factions seem to be at odds, similarly disguises what was, for Lewis, of greater concern. For he saw in contemporary society the tendency toward a fragmentation or dissociation of sensory life, comparable to that of the "half-men" or "nanmen" at the appellants' camp, by which the total sensory experience was dissected. When the Bailiff explains the phenomenon of the mountains to his "children" he ends by warning, "don't look too hard at them, I didn't say they were to be taken too seriously".[394] Like the phantoms seen by Satters and Pullman beyond camp, these isolated visual effects cannot stand the "pressure of the full-blown human glance". They are illusions which, as the Bailiff says of the appellants themselves, are "not of that perfection" to be found in real life; "we don't pretend to turn out the real thing,"[395] he admits. The extent of isolation of sensory experience is suggested when "the large unwinking roaming orb" of the Bailiff is cast upon his child-audience:

"the ball of the detached eye," Lewis writes, is operated "like a ball on a cord".[396] The absurdity of any such exaggerated detachment appears evident in a group of similar scenes, one of which finds the Bailiff showing the audience "his insides" by taking and directing "the light of an electric torch" toward his open mouth. "Come now and I'll show you how it is that the words get melted," he calls in fake-negro singsong. Hyperides points out this habit of the Bailiff on several occasions; he speaks of the "convex and concave mirrors and... witches' cauldron" into which the Bailiff has "cast all the objects of sense, softening and confusing them". It is, Hyperides suggests, the magistrate's "time-obsessed alchemy"[397] which prompts these manipulations. In spite of the accusations of Hyperides - which appear in context as just - that the Bailiff is representative of the aural world of flux, the Punch-like dignitary has under his control a whole gamut of technics, visual as well as auditory, with which to work. Radio obviously is an aural and isolating medium; the motion-picture on the other hand is visual and also isolates or deforms. The common characteristic of these media is not the single sensory appeal, but their innate and mechanical habit of fragmentation of experience, coupled with their concentration upon experience - a result of fragmentation - as "event" or isolated scenes joined for "aesthetic" purposes. These fragmenting habits apparently built into the media relate them to the behaviourist or relativist doctrine of "event" with which the Bailiff identifies himself, and which he in turn relates to a peculiar tactile sense. "There is no reality without contact",[398] he declares in a lecture or sermon already quoted. Examined closely, this claim to tactility appears to have very little to do with sense, however; it is merely a rejection of thought or reflection in

favour of "pure" experience. Its debt to the "Time-philosophers" whom Lewis attacked in Time and Western Man shows in such remarks as that by the Bailiff, that "time commences for anything when it is in touch with something else".[399] The insistence upon "Time", "contact" and "action" is reminiscent of existentialism as Lewis saw that philosophy popularized by Sartre. But its origins are clearly in Bergsonian thought. As a design for human life, this philosophy is one of passivity; he who experiences is acted upon - in the manner of the Dumb Ox - by the "events" of experience. The Bailiff expostulates:

> Things are bearing down on us from all directions which we know nothing about at this moment, when they shall have struck us we shall term that an event and it will possess a certain temporal extension. All the times of all these potential happenings are longer or shorter paths that are timeless until they touch us, when they set our personal clock or proper measure of time ticking, measuring the event in question for us.[400]

This passage if compared with several in Time and Western Man illustrates, by a certain exaggeration of terminology, the debt of the Bailiff to the "Time-deists". The purpose of the present essay is however to stress the non-sensory nature of the Bailiff's "philosophy". For "touch" in his terminology means experience, which is an emotional and not necessarily a sensory activity. "Touch" refers not to the skin and its sensory capacity, but to the emotive qualities of any sensory experience, deprived of critical reflection. The distinction is an important one to The Childermass and to an understanding of the great philosophical argument perpetuated by those two "enemies", the Bailiff and Hyperides. None of the Bailiff's effects - nor of Hyperides' militant activist theories - stand up when put to the test of touch.

When Hyperides attacks the Bailiff's sensory "wizardry", by which "all the objects of sense" are "softened and confused", he does so as representative of a culture or system apparently governed by the eye. If however the visual sense is cast into doubt as a "touchstone" for "reality", then what or who is real? Polemon, spokesman for Hyperides, ends the discussion with the shouted challenge, "who is to be real - this hyperbolical puppet or we? Answer, oh Destiny!"[401]

The two disputants leave unstated and unresolved what seems evident. The softening and confusion of "all the objects of sense" by those media and philosophies represented by the Bailiff depend in the first place for their effect upon an isolation of the various senses, a habit for which Hyperides - as representative of the "machine culture" - is responsible. Prof. McLuhan has made much of the Western scientific isolation of the eye for purposes of establishing "reality". In Lewis's time, Roger Fry among others had voiced the belief that it was our "sense of sight" which "gave prophetic knowledge of what may affect the inner fortifications". People can, Fry assured his readers in his essay "The Artist's Vision" for The Athenaeum (1919), always see the "minute visual characteristics that distinguish margarine from butter. Some of us can tell Canadian cheddar at a glance."[402] The Childermass isolates in Fry's manner not only the eye but the ear as contender for single sensory supremacy, to explore human capacities for "inner fortification" against a double attack. Lewis may even have thought of Fry's remarks, for the Bailiff's film-show accompanying the arrival of the Phoenix is compared by one spectator to "a colossal cheese".[403] It is the sort of allusion to which Lewis was particularly attracted.

Lewis, as has been pointed out, always associated himself with the sense of sight; in Men Without Art he referred to himself as "a man of the outsides" of things.[404] But his preference for the eye did not carry him to the visual absurdities of a Fry. He did not attempt to substitute that organ for his tongue in judging the reality of cheese or butter. The dispute of Hyperides and Bailiff has the eventual effect of fragmenting or confusing him who attempts such sensory substitutions. The argument is in other words an absurdity; like the child placed in the ring by Solomon, the appellant or "common man" is torn apart by his two would-be parents, both more barbaric than those of the Solomon parable, and neither of whom has as much right to ownership, nor any intention of relenting for the child's sake.

16. Religion and the BBC.

Early in its short broadcasting history the British Broadcasting Company under J.C.W. Reith established contact with the religious element of society, Briggs tells us. In 1923, "Reith met Davidson, the Archbishop of Canterbury". Reith recorded in his diary that the Archbishop was "very much interested in the possibilities of wireless". This meeting was, according to Briggs, a "fascinating" one "not least because of Reith's sense of having quickly won the support of a major figure in what would now be called the Establishment".[405] Davidson's wife accompanied the Archbishop to the dinner engagement at which Reith entertained; the lady asked if it were "necessary to leave a window open" while listening to radio. The Archbishop, Briggs remarks, was "entirely amazed, thunderstruck" at the reply. Reith gave further evidence that evening of what Briggs often calls fondly "the delightful informality of early wireless", when he telephoned to the broadcast studios and had the announcer play Schubert's "Marche Militaire" for the distinguished churchman. The result of this meeting, Briggs records, was that, the following day, "Davidson summoned a meeting of ecclesiastical leaders in his room in the House of Lords" which formed the basis of the Religious Advisory Committee.[406] The first formal meeting of this committee "included representatives of the Church of England, the Free Churches, and the Roman Catholics". It "soon established itself as an important body" in the BBC broadcasting of religious programs, although

"it did not take as much initiative as Reith wished".[407]

The history of these committees is not carefully documented in The Birth of Broadcasting. Their actual, effective influence was not great, as Briggs implies. Their existence was a tentative one at all times, and many members belonged to them without ever being given the chance to "advise". The "Board of Governors" found itself in a similar position with respect to BBC management and the Post Office, when the Company received its corporate status in 1926. The plight of these committees is reflected by a remark of the Bailiff in The Childermass. "In certain cases", he advises the appellants, while discussing their rights, "I am supposed for form's sake to appoint a Jury of Inquest: in practice I never do so".[408] The Bailiff's speech will have special significance when we consider the question of Monopoly in BBC and Childermass. It would appear, from the treatment of its committees by the BBC as outlined implicitly in Briggs and the Company's own documents, that these groups or "juries" representing social opinion existed very much for form's sake. Beyond the formal recognition of its committees the BBC appears to have gone elsewhere for its public opinion and advice.[409]

Several observers of the 1920's have remarked, as Briggs does, that religion shared with politics a controversial position. The controversy was felt and reflected in BBC quarters too. Reith had, in the matter of religion as in other concerns, pronounced "feelings and beliefs of his own".[410] In Broadcast Over Britain Reith discussed, in what has the tone of a defense, the Reith-BBC policy on Christianity: it "happens to be the stated and official religion of the country", he declared, adding that this fact "may be given as an actual justification" of the BBC policy.

In a curious defense of Christianity Reith berated those who attack the creed itself rather than "the patent limitations and deficiencies of its presentation and practice".[411] The statement can be read as an ungraceful criticism of the church and clergy. Yet Briggs, who quotes some of Reith's opinions on the subject, notes that "not only he but the Religious Advisory Committee as a whole was unwilling to give freedom of the air to those who wished to attack or question the religion of large numbers of people".[412] Reith's book Broadcast Over Britain shows clearly his assumptions concerning the unquestionable veracity of the established Christian values of the time. He deplores "the secularising of Sunday". Briggs suggests that Reith operated on the principle, "if the Christianity which was broadcast was unassociated with any particular creed or denomination, all would be able to profit from it".[413] And he adds, in a most significant observation, "the fact that the growth of the BBC coincided in time with a period of declining social and moral influence of the churches necessarily made Reith's position a difficult one".[414] For Briggs as for many people in the 1920's "the BBC was capable of influencing large numbers of people who were already outside the effective range of the churches". In such a situation, Briggs believes, BBC "success" would depend not upon how it "reflected the secularist tendencies of the age", so much as on its resistance of these tendencies.

When a test-broadcast was made in January 1924 from St. Martin's-in-the-Fields (London), "letters of congratulation showered on the BBC" according to Briggs, and the experiment was extended into a series of "undenominational services".[415] A number of churches and of denominations subsequently participated; one stubborn exception was St. Paul's, whose "Dean and Chapter", Briggs claims, were prevented by "a blind intransigence"

from "realizing the full possibilities of the medium". Reith felt it necessary to state, as he records in Broadcast Over Britain, that "attendance at a church while excellent and desirable is not necessarily a criterion of any religious or spiritual virtue".[416] The statement, if separated from what appear to be Reith's "good intentions", is like his remark on "deficiencies of presentation and practice" a badly-managed and thinly-veiled criticism. Reith's intentions are in fact not always clear in Broadcast Over Britain, nor does Briggs supply as sufficient an apology as he apparently would like, in his Birth of Broadcasting. Whatever Reith's intentions, however, his actions are not always appropriate to the good will he expressed. As Briggs' work will bear witness, Reith's attitudes - which were essentially those of the BBC - were not shared by everyone; the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's clearly objected to his pot-pourri religious broadcasting, while from secular quarters, "there was always considerable opposition to his view that the Sabbath should be treated differently" from the rest of the week.[417]

The issue of Reith's intentions versus his effects must be kept in mind throughout the present discussion; for obviously the attitude which one takes toward this subject is of paramount importance to an assessment of Lewis's myth of The Childermass. An aspect of the BBC's involvement with religion must be stressed here although it has been mentioned already. It is "the fact that the growth of the BBC coincided in time with a period of declining social and moral influence of the churches". Especially in the light of Lewis's myth-of-technics, we may be forgiven for wondering if the simultaneous growth and decline is entirely coincidental. No statistical or historic answer, of any exactness, is possible to this question. It

would appear that the decline in influence of the churches was already well developed before the BBC arrived. Briggs indicates this supposition in his comment that "the BBC was capable of influencing" many of those "already outside the effective range of the churches". When Lewis takes up the problem of religion and technics in The Apes of God and in The Childermass, he appears to have seen before him, ready-made, a melting-pot of creeds similar to his "witches' cauldron of the senses". It is not a decline of church influence which he observes in The Childermass, but a dispassionate boiling-down of all creeds to a uniformity like that of the appellants. And the religion which is imaged in both these novels is already ensconced as a power-toy or tool of managerial technologies.

The mixing of religious symbol in The Apes of God need not be dwelt upon a second time. That of The Childermass can be surmised from the description of the Bailiff's "bema" or box, upon which as we have observed is the Star-of-David to which are added "two mithraic horns" and, in the center, "a conventional eye". Beneath this "symbol of the Maha-Yuga" is appended a "representation of a goat-hoof". The covering of the bema is "in miniature, the stone bonnet of the tomb of Absalom", but worked in canvas with paint. "A life-size figure of the Thracian Bacchus" appears behind the Bailiff in the interior. Decorations of "doric palmets and figures from idalionic amulets of fecundity" adorn the lintel.[418] The list is extensive, and is not evocative of religions only. Prominent among these symbols is "the hieroglyph of the cone, the cylinder, and the sphere" from the tomb of Archimedes. The influences betrayed in these trappings are diverse but all lend weight to the Bailiff's claim that "God is primitive".[419]

The primitiveness of this mixed god is in direct contrast to the traditional "English Church" which, at the beginning of Childermass, is the central or focal religious image. It is from this "dark needle of a gothic spire" rising out of the Magnetic City, "surmounted by an emblematic cock", that Pullman and Satters suffer their "magnetic attack". The inference is plainly that, whatever the strange or savage gods of the Bailiff, the English Church is at back of the religious pot-pourri encountered later. As Briggs noted, it was Archbishop Davidson of the Church of England who formed the backbone of the BBC's ecclesiastical public-image. The order which the church represents is "ancestral, as all order is",[420] Lewis observes. But his image is one of destruction or fragmentation of the "ancestral order". The gold cock atop the church-spire is "exploded - that the effect at least of its sudden disappearance", and in its place a "gold dust" is "generated". This explosion of the "clockwork cock" into a "magnetic attack" is referred to by Lewis as "apocalyptic".[421] The result is "a revelation" for Satters, who "has reached chaos, the natural goal".[422] In the opening pages of The Childermass, then, Lewis supplies the metaphor of the destruction of the ancestral church, which is of the mechanical or "archaic" culture (the "clockwork cock"), and its reduction to energy in the service of the falsely "primitive" and pastiche Bailiff. The Magnetic City, like its representative the Bailiff, is a "witches' cauldron" of influences:

> The sheer profile of the city is intricate and uneven. Above the walls appears, naissant, armorial, and unreal, a high-hatched outcropping of huddled balconies, black rufous brown vermilion and white; the upper stages of wicker towers; helmet-like hoods of tinted stucco; tamarisks; the smaragdine and olive of tropical vegetations; tinselled banners; gigantic grey sea-green and speckled cones, rising like truncated eggs from a system of profuse nests; and a florid zoologic symbolism - reptilian heads of painted wood, filled-out tinfoil or alloy.... [423]

The Magnetic City, like the Bailiff, is indeed "primitive", if we understand Lewis's interpretation of the primitive as the undefined, the obscure and indeterminate.

There is, in this notion of the primitive, a strong suggestion that the physical world has been melted out of recognition, and once melted, kept in its fluid state of flux. We have already noted the flux-imagery in another context. If we examine it in connection with the religious aspect of the Bailiff however we encounter a curious contradiction. "Substance", the Bailiff informs the unwary appellants, "it is our aim to secure". When he expounds his theory of "event" it is physical contact which he stresses. More than once he states with great emphasis that "there is no mind but the body". His doctrine suggests that "to be unique - no one quite like us", is the aim of this "after-life" in preparation. "That substantial uniqueness" ought to have a solidity "so that we can pinch it, pat it, and poke it".[424] While the appellants inhabit with terrifying insecurity the physical world of the electric desert, they are being prepared for an existence of soulless material existence inside the Magnetic City. That the Bailiff himself plays a pivotal or clerical role in this extirpation of the spirit is often hinted. "I stand to you in the capacity of <u>will</u> which is conscience too,"[425] he tells Hyperides. Toward the general run of appellants the Bailiff stands also as spiritual leader or god-head. But it will be evident to the reader that the Bailiff has - or has provided himself with - a complex and allusive theological identity, as he has those of crowd-master and of pure technics. None of these identities is in fact separable - they are interdependent totally in Lewis's mythology. For the purposes of the present essay they must be considered as distinct, however. The Bailiff's "spiritual self" is obviously the mask of Punch.

17. The Bailiff as "Uncle Punch".

The Bailiff's association with the Attic Dossennus has been noted previously. F.M. Cornford, in his work The Origin of Attic Comedy, recognizes Dossennus from what Aristophenes calls "vulgar comedy", the origins of which are ultimately unclear. The Dossennus figure is the Hunch-back, one of a set of stock masks from that very early "vulgar" or popular drama. "So far as we know," Cornford writes, "the characters in these plays never had personal names, but were always called after their mask."[426] One of these constant and stock masks is "Dossennus, the 'hunch-back', who is none other than the Learned Doctor" of Aristophanes.[427] In Wyndham Lewis: A Portrait of the Artist as the Enemy, Geoffrey Wagner notes certain similarities between The Birds and The Frogs of Aristophanes, and the Childermass' structure: "The manner of meeting between Satters and Pulley recalls... The Birds. Here we have two characters, Pithetaerus and Uelpides, entering an unknown and eccentrically peopled landscape far from the usual world."[428] Both the image of the ferryman in Childermass and the "absurd master-slave relationship between Pulley and Satters" remind Wagner of The Frogs. There is clearly some ground for a parallel, although it may be partly incidental to the novel. The important aspect of this parallel is the Dossennus figure of the Bailiff, who in the Attic or Atellane farces was a mixed sinister and comic one. In Aristophanes, Cornford tells us, he is the "Doctor as Philosopher".[429] Cornford remarks

warily on further development of the character in more recent times:

> Many writers have speculated as to the possibility of an historic connection between the Atellane plays and the Commedia dell'arte of modern Italy.... Cautious scholars limit themselves to pointing out the extraordinarily close resemblance of the two forms.[430]

Whether or not a linear link can be established in fact between the Atellane masks and the Commedia, Lewis has clearly utilised both possibilities, in combination with the later British Punch, for the realization of his Bailiff. The comic figure from the Punch and Judy shows is without question a derivative of Pulcinella, from the Commedia dell'arte. Allardyce Nicoll states, in The World of Harlequin, that "Punch ranks with Harlequin among the most prominent and influential characters" of the Italian Commedia. "Stress must be laid on the fact that his position both in the plays themselves and in the popular mind differs entirely" from that of Harlequin, however; for "he makes his entries not in one set role or position but in dozens".[431] Nicoll observes that, under such circumstances, "there could be but little opportunity of presenting him consistently as an individual". The audiences of Naples were however "not interested in his character", but rather "in listening to the gross blunderings and crude comparisons" uttered by this creature who presented himself "one day... as a cowardly credulous fool and the next as a bold, vicious and successful rogue". Nicoll's conclusion is of special significance to the present discussion. "In effect," he declares, "Pulcinella was a characterless dummy which could be dressed up in any way", according to the tastes of actor or public.[432] Punch is then a Neapolitan not only in origin, but in the universality of his interpretation and appeal.

We have already examined some of the Bailiff's Punch-masks. In the

guise of the comic fool he is, like Falstaffe, pregnant with fun: "Holding his paunch in two-handed midwifery" as he enjoys the court spectacle, he "continues to be delivered of a litter of artificial-antique outsize laughs".[433] But his "vicious and successful" mask is more often disguised. He is made by Lewis to stand observing "with a stolid satisfaction, his staff hugged in the canonical Punch-like position proper to puppet-sleeves with no arms inside or hands to direct it".[434] It is the peculiar and frightening autonomy of this puppet which contributes the sinister mask, as much as it is the satanic facet of the popular Punch figure. Not only is there no hand to direct the puppet, in this image, but there are no arms to the sleeves, which suggests a peaceful, non-active role. In fact, as we have seen, the arms and the hands of the Bailiff are very much in evidence at camp and throughout the "timescape" of the electric desert. The benign, handless mask of the Bailiff is created by Lewis with much assistance from the BBC Radio-Uncle who from the earliest Children's Hour broadcasts, was the "personality" of the British wireless. By 1923, Briggs tells us, "the most regular 'speech and music' programme of any length was the Children's Hour".[435] It drew upon "the first officers of the BBC both in London and the provinces" to play the role of "uncles and aunts". A.R. Burrows, who was for a time "Uncle Arthur" to child and adult audiences, recalled later that perhaps no one had "such a jolly mailbag as a broadcasting uncle".[436] Terms, like "jolly" used by Burrows, from the Children's Hour became for Lewis clichés of the program: "I am a respectable jolly Punch-like person who is sadly misjudged," the Bailiff complains to Hyperides.[437]

It is important to note Briggs' repeated assertion that "the first officers" of the early BBC were pressed into the service of the Children's

Hour. They, like the Bailiff, occupied a position of technical-administrative-artistic nature, in which the role of administrator was not always distinct from that of commentator or Radio-Uncle. It would appear from the memoirs of broadcasters like Burrows and Eckersley, as well as from Briggs' Birth of Broadcasting, that the personnel prided themselves upon this ability to play mixed roles. Reith himself, although he minimized the importance of Radio-Uncles, took on a number of quite varied tasks, including programming and announcing. In general, Briggs summarizes, "there was no clear-cut distinction between performing and administering".[438] Reith and his officers were "a strange mixture" in a strange situation - one which it proved difficult to resolve. As has been noted earlier, attempts to alter the Children's Hour brought vast resistance from the mixed adult and child audiences. "Perhaps it was the fact that the Children's Hour was one of the earliest programmes," Briggs suggests, "which made people cling to its fantasy world as long as they could."[439]

There are indications, however, that the sort of fantasy which Children's Hour offered was well-suited to a more general taste of the period. Every recent writer on the subject of the British punch-and-judy show has remarked on the strong resurgence of that form after the turn of the century. Exact dates of this revival are unclear - George Speaight, in his History of the English Puppet Theatre, states that "in the first decade of this century the puppet theatre in England was, indeed, on the verge of extinction". But, as on several previous occasions, Speaight tells us, "once again this phoenix art has risen anew".[440] In her study of the recurrent puppet-characters, such as Harlequin and Punch, Thelma Nicklaus also notes this strange reappearance. Her Harlequin Phoenix,

or the Rise and Fall of a Bergamask Rogue adds that the "modern descendants" of these traditional folk-dramatic characters have "exchanged magic for science".[441] As early as 1897, however, Julian Symons had written - in The Saturday Review for July 17, 1897 - pleading the case of the puppet-theatre. His article, entitled "An Apology for Puppets", included the remark,

> I am inclined to ask myself why we require the intervention of any less perfect medium... this is nothing less than a fantastic, yet a direct, return to the masks of the Greeks....[442]

Symons' association of the popular puppets, particularly of Punch, with the Greeks, would appear to support Lewis's staging of the Punch-Bailiff's court in a pseudo-Greek amphitheatre among sham-Greek trappings. This however is a minor aspect of the Bailiff's Punch-identity. It is difficult to speak of this character without minimizing one or the other of his two major simultaneous aspects, the comic and the sinister. To forget either one is to distort Lewis's artistic purpose, and to obscure the odd ambivalence of the folk-character, the British Punch. Like Punch the Bailiff has a superhuman or extra-human quality about him and yet is himself not a divinity, as becomes clear in Monstre Gai. This mixture of human and angel is complicated, in both characters, by an association with the devil. The "mithraic horns" and the "goat's hoof" of the bema's design have a significance in this regard, as well as in respect to the religious myth (of the Maha Yuga) evoked. "I'm devilish real, see?" the Bailiff warns Macrob (although earlier he has incanted for the massed audience, "We are phantoms!") The satanic aspect of the Punch-puppet has its direct parallel in that of the Bailiff. One of the most popular punch-and-judy routines, as reported by Dion Clayton Calthrop in his brief book on the street-corner puppet-performances, began with the murder by Punch of a baby. The manner of the crime

is of interest; Mr. Punch throws the baby - the innocent - into the street. He is caught at the act by Mistress Judy, who cries "oh dear, oh dear, Mabel!", an expression used occasionally by the Bailiff. Lewis clearly plays on this scene, and on the lines from one of its versions, when he has the Bailiff, confronted by Pullman's tale of the Leyden jars, declare "now the murder's out".

The Childermass is made by Lewis, usually unobtrusively, as a combination of puppet-show with other dramatic or even film forms. Hyperides' references to the Bailiff as "puppet" are not only vilifications. The Bailiff's "show" or court is conducted as a kind of vulgar performance; he mounts at the outset his punch-and-judy box with a thespian as well as a magisterial pomp. After the confrontation with Macrob, while the Bailiff nurses his injured nose, "an attendant mounts into the Punch-and-Judy theatre and draws the curtains".[443] Pullman at the beginning of proceedings is depicted "peering at the massive business of the show as it unfolds itself at the centre of the stage of the Miracle heralded by the sudden detonation of a solitary furious trumpet".[444] The time-travelling of Pullman and Satters is given a conventional drama- or cinema- length, more or less: "just a little over an hour", Pullman says as they return to camp.[445] The allusion might also be to certain radio programs, including the Children's Hour, which on the early BBC lasted approximately forty to sixty minutes. At this remark by Pullman, Lewis moves his two characters aside in deliberate dramatic manipulation: "two characters who have occupied the opening scene, they conventionally stand aside to observe the entrance of the massed cast in stately procession".[446] This attention to the technics of theatre, cinema or radio-drama is reinforced by the presentation of many court-scenes in a

classic dramatic form - again, often unobtrusively. It is perhaps significant that Geoffrey Wagner in his study should remark "we do not... find a showman (unless it is Hyperides) in The Childermass".[447] Wagner's comment suggests, I believe, the extent to which Lewis's comic showman Bailiff can be regarded as a "realist" or serious dramatic character.

Lewis relates the Punch-mask of the Bailiff first to satire and secondly to the Uncle of the Children's Hour. "Uncle Punch amongst his jolly children!" he observes, "the solemn mask is off, the satiric on."[448] An ironic footnote to the image of Bailiff as Uncle Punch is provided by Briggs in Birth of Broadcasting. He notes that Miss W. Sayer, who as an early radio singer "undoubtedly had the distinction of being the first British radio soprano", insisted upon referring to the medium as "this punch and judy show".[449] Whether or not Lewis knew of this incident is unimportant; what is significant is that the relationship of early radio to Punch-and-Judy had been made in other minds than his. Lewis's Bailiff, as we have seen, must be understood as the result of an artistic necessity for a character of mythic proportions and diversity. Punch - even in his popular, dilute form as viewed by street-corner audiences - is already a combination of possibilities including the diabolic. The Children's Hour had in fact at least one counterpart to this comic-diabolical character, called "The Wicked Uncle".[450] The wickedness is to be taken lightly; but the Bailiff, in an aside to Hyperides, confides "I am not an impostor.... But I am anxious that no one but you should know". For the success of his herding operations, the crowdmaster finds it "essential that they should believe me to be an impostor". And Hyperides, himself unaware of the extent of the Bailiff's self-established "reality", declares "no one will ever suspect that you are not".[451]

Like Punch, the Bailiff is a kind of "monster", to use Lewis's term, by virtue of his diabolical activities in the guises, or disguises, of common man. Lewis's creation of the monstrous is an application of old mythic possibilities to a new social situation, in which the technocrat assumes the various roles and powers of which Punch, with his deceits and magics, had once been master.

18. The Bailiff and Monopoly as Monster.

If the Bailiff makes light of his "real" identity in The Childermass he makes much of his power and his authority. "I am one of the ten Princes of Time,"[452] he boasts to Hyperides when a question of time arises. Challenged by the sham-revolutionaries under their sham-Greek leader, he terms their disagreement a "revolt" which they have "aimed... at the infallible throne of the one and only God".[453] During one of his panegyrics upon science and its virtues, he pauses at the word "power" and "licks his lips as though there were a great 'sexual appeal' in the word".[454] As Hyperides points out in a passage already cited, the Bailiff concerns himself with the sexual, the economic and the philosophical only in the interests of this power. It is not merely the Bailiff's appetite for power, however, but his apparent monopoly of it which makes him monstrous. "You appear to have bought or stolen the secret of our fate," Hyperides charges, "and you hold the necessary sanctions to farm us."[455]

The power of the Bailiff's "monopoly" and "sanctions" is clearly based on that character's inclusiveness - he absorbs or distorts social, technical and philosophic diversity into his single, personal "field" or system. Lewis's technique for establishing and maintaining this inclusiveness is the polyglot of images which in the Bailiff are a convergence of identities - the technocrat, the administrator, the crowd-herding Hunchback, the radio Uncle. The element of monstrosity in technology must have seemed a strong

one to Lewis. For the comic, satanic Bailiff is not merely a dramatic device in Childermass, nor is it the only allusion to monopoly of one kind or another in Lewis's work. One need only consider the proliferation of allusion in Apes of God to Shell Oil, to conclude that Lewis sees the Shell Corporation "taking over". All of the machine or motor iconology in The Apes converges upon the single Shell icon. "SHELL IS SO DIFFERENT" pursues Dan Boleyn down London streets, and reaches out to disturb or attack him in the form of the vans and automobiles "exploding" around him. It is obvious that two factors are at work in the Shell iconography; one is the monopolization of a general industrial image by a specific Shell archetype or symbol. The second is the social observation by Lewis of the Shell company's monopolization of an industry and, indirectly, of an aspect of society. It is true that Shell Oil commanded a large portion of the petroleum industry in Great Britain during the 1920's and 1930's. It would be difficult to argue the case for a Shell monopoly however. In the indirect social control which petroleum exerts upon an industrially-oriented society it is foolish to deny a monopoly by the industry in general, on the other hand. Two sorts of economic "tyranny" are to be observed in Lewis's novels; the actual or perhaps "legal" monopoly, by which a single corporation dominates an industry; and the domination of society by an industry through the creation of necessities which that industry provides. The distinction, in the case of Shell, is a vital one; it legitimizes Lewis's use of the Shell symbol as one of a general social (industrial) tyranny. In the case of the BBC as imaged by Lewis in The Childermass, the two tyrannies become mixed as one.

Asa Briggs' study of the early BBC leaves no doubt that the Company was viewed from its beginnings as a monopoly in some quarters. "Between 1922

and 1926," Briggs records, "discussions about 'monopoly' usually began with a consideration of technical factors and ended with a discussion of social and administrative factors."[456] The reason for this priority was simply that the BBC consisted of an amalgamation, at its inception, of the "Big Six" producers of components; their first interest was to guard their patent rights. "The word 'monopoly' itself was very loosely used," Briggs points out; "in 1922 and 1923 the BBC was at some pains to argue that it was not a monopoly."[457] In spite of the fact that BBC monopoly was at issue, the question of <u>what</u> was being monopolized was not very clear. Since the Company was a "club" or open group of manufacturers - open to any manufacturer who wished to pay a fee and join - the BBC could argue that it "was not a monopolistic combine of the biggest radio firms", but inasmuch as the BBC represented the <u>only</u> public broadcasting agency in Britain, the charge of monopoly could not well be denied. And in fact a great shift in public attitude was noticed between 1922 and 1926, when "the case for monopoly was stated without equivocation".[458] J.C.W. Reith was most vocal in defense of a broadcasting monopoly, as he had been, prior to incorporation, for a British Broadcasting Corporation (public) as opposed to a private Company.

Technical considerations, as Asa Briggs shows, "drove the Post Office to press for monopoly before the BBC came into existence".[459] These technical problems concerned the number of wavelengths available without interference in an area as small as that of, say, greater London or southern England as a whole. Although the government sponsored the monopoly, and the BBC nurtured it, "it was the cause of many disputes between different contestants in the 'battle of the ether'", as Briggs expresses it. At least one good cause for dispute will be evident with only a little reflection; whereas control of

"the ether" was in the hands of a single Company - composed of private interests - the economic support came in the form of licence-financing. The public paid through the Post Office a direct tariff to the BBC. And while theoretically any bona fide manufacturer might join the group of controlling firms behind the BBC, the amateurs - who as we have seen were then a major group of radio-developers and experimenters - had no say in the matter, except by "petition" - a right of dubious nature and one which they shared with the general listening audience. An American economist at the time stated the problem (for the U.S.) as one of "Who shall control and how? and who shall pay and how?" In his Economics of the Radio Industry, this writer, H.L. Jome, praised the "superior" solution to these problems which the BBC had adopted.[460]

A second, non-economic, argument came into prominence later in the dispute. It is well summarized by a cartoon, mentioned by Briggs in Birth of Broadcasting, in which a radio listener in a railway carriage is attacked by the pipe-fumes of a gentleman opposite. The smoke is labelled "Muddle, restrictions, licences", and the caption to the whole reads, "Mr. listener-in: 'Excuse me, do you mind if we have a little air?' "[461] Newspapers were quick to attack the monopoly of the BBC. Cartoons of all types showed the "little listener-in" beset by the BBC monster. One caption, an especially succinct one, read simply "Our air, I believe." The argument was plainly that "the ether" was public property.

The conversion of the BBC, in 1926, to a public Corporation was no doubt partly a response to the amassed criticism of private monopoly. Although he does not state the fact, Reith appears to have felt that a public corporation had every right to monopolize the "public ether" for "public good".

Whatever his reasons, Reith was amenable and even influential to the move.[462] Eventually, he had the backing even of newspapers like the Daily Telegraph, The Times, and - as Briggs writes - "most of the popular newspapers".[463] A review, in The Times, of Reith's first book, Broadcast Over Britain (1924), made a plain and unabashed case for the BBC's singular control of the air:

> The worst that can be said of this book is that it is an apology, or rather an apologia for monopoly. But in this case we have to consider the alternative to monopoly: it would be, almost certainly, confusion, and quite certainly the debasement of an influence far too permeating to be allowed to be vulgarized.[464]

Broadcasting "is now a monopoly", the reviewer pursued, "but in generous and humane hands the interest of the majority will probably be in its continuing to be a monopoly". The fruits of the BBC's labours to appear "a friendly thing" are evident in the Times reviewers' reference to "generous and humane hands" operating the BBC. Obviously, as with any such issue, partisans may be found to support the contention that the "hands", whomever they belong to, are not "humane". That this is not the implication of Lewis's Bailiff must be stressed. But in order to appreciate the function of the Bailiff we must understand Lewis's conception of "the monstrous" as applied not only to the Bailiff-Monopolist but to literary character in general.

It is in connection with the characters of Shakespeare, and with the state of society that produced them, that Lewis makes his most explicit observations about what he terms "the monsters of art". Lewis refers in The Lion and the Fox to the "time of transition" which was the renaissance. In this transition, he suggests, "an entire society" was translated "from one set of values to another". It is this translation which, for Lewis, "is responsible for all the monsters and angels produced by the renaissance". The monstrous, in short, is "the result of this release of vitality in all

directions".[465] In the "meeting of... two different ages, with their respective passions and characteristics", the offspring, culturally speaking, is "a sphinx" or some similar monstrosity, "half angel and half devil".[466] The description, with allowances for a highly material and secular social background, could be used of the Bailiff. He is the logical deformity of a "past" age - the rational - operating upon existing materials with the techniques of a "present" age. As a mélange of technics - especially of those electromagnetic technics represented in 1928 by radio - he is at once the butcher of the old and the herald of its replacement. His techniques are hybrid ones, since he must work with the machine, a symbol of the past. The appellants as we have noted are processed mechanically; Hyperides and his group of reactionaries are depicted as machines; Pullman is in all respects the machine-bred citizen of a nineteenth-century school-room.

In his role of monopolist-monster the Bailiff is as contradictory as he is in any of his masks. He is "a strange mixture",[467] as Pullman admits, of responsibility and irresponsibility. His vulgarization, or flaunting, of his power has already been noted. "I am not only the supreme officer of this administration," he warns Macrob, "that appointment in no way derogates from the long-established sinecure of Gate-Beak."[468] In describing the appellants' rights of petition, he declares "Call it a Bill of Wrongs, I cannot help you! I am not the legislator."[469] This paradoxical approach to his position - "supreme officer" yet "not the legislator" - is reminiscent of Reith's position in the BBC. Although his personality - and his decisions - were the ruling factor in British Radio, Reith could turn and state "I had nothing to do with the constitution of the BBC or with licence conditions".[470] Such confusion of structure admits of no attack on the

"system" by petition or otherwise; it is by design a closed, impenetrable position which the Bailiff holds against his "clients". It destroys Macrob when that unfortunate individual tries to penetrate its workings. Asa Briggs might have been writing of the Bailiff rather than of Reith when he observed that the "brute force of monopoly was in his keeping".[471]

The parallels between the monopolist Bailiff and the BBC are too numerous to catalogue fully. Briggs writes that "Reith gave prior attention to this facet of broadcasting... its lack of dependence on the profit motive".[472] We have already noted the Bailiff's insistence upon his poverty, and Hyperides' comment to the effect that money, like sex, is to the Bailiff merely a means to his acquisition and manipulation of power. The dictating of standards which is always an aspect of monopoly also has its place both in Briggs' history and in Lewis's Childermass. The specific image used by Lewis to suggest this tyrannizing is the spoken language. The Bailiff, chatting with a favorite appellant, relates an anecdote to that effect:

> I had a man here yesterday from the Appalachian Mountains, he tried to talk to me in yiddish of the time of Elizabeth! I sent him over to our Berlitz for a spell. [473]

Briggs makes a passing reference to the influence which BBC announcers exerted upon the public: "We are daily establishing in the minds of the public the idea of what correct speech should be," the announcers were told. They were given from time to time correct BBC pronunciations and usages. Such usages were "drawn from upper-class or upper middle-class life". Briggs quotes "Memorandum on Programme Presentation" which stated that "highly individualized announcing in the American style"[474] was expressly forbidden. Certain expressions were also tabu, among the earliest being the term

"listener-in". Not only the Bailiff, but Pullman too, has his dictatorial moment when Satters calls the Punch figure a "poseur". "Don't use that word I meant to tell you," Pullman snaps, "only very stupid people use it." Satters replies "Right Ho", and is again rebuked, "Try not to say Right Ho - it is so stupid!"

The Bailiff's tyrannies in The Childermass cannot be confused with Lewis's personal prejudices. Monopoly automatically creates a tension of the type expressed by the Bailiff, whether the monopolist is a self-established dictator or a corporation bearing the public name and sanction. Lewis's Bailiff is an objective probe devised to explore and establish the conditions under which the second type of monopoly exists. The Bailiff is the representative of the new rule for the new society which the Bailiff himself, as technics, has created. It remains to examine the "new society" or as much of it as Lewis depicts, and the citizens who people it. The BBC's corporate identity is indirectly of utmost importance to The Childermass myth in this respect.

19. The General Strike and Reorganization of Society.

The potential and implications of BBC "unified control" reached a climax, for British society as well as for Lewis, in 1926 with the General Strike. In a number of ways the strike reinforced the position and influence of the Company. The BBC for the first time in its brief history had a relatively free hand in the dissemination of news. Until the workers' walk-out silenced the press, that gigantic publishing interest - itself a monopoly in a sense - had resisted every effort of the Company to establish regular newscasts. In May of 1926 that situation came to an enforced conclusion; as Briggs records, Britain "first learned from the BBC that there was a strike; it also first learned from the BBC that the strike was over".[476] The conduct of the Company in the interval between those two announcements must arouse some curiosity. Briggs himself, in his Birth of Broadcasting, plainly supports the Company's actions. Julian Symons in his survey The General Strike is more hesitant. Although Symons devotes minimal attention to the BBC, he questions certain aspects of the strike-reporting, in particular what he called the public impression that the BBC recorded "what was really happening".[477] Even in Briggs' careful account, the unavoidable "personality" which is an aspect of every monopoly can be observed. "A perusal of all the news bulletins sent out by the BBC during those hectic nine days," Briggs claims, "suggests that what was included was usually right, although much news was excluded."[478] As far as Briggs was concerned,

"on the whole the programmes were impartial". There was "no fabrication, no attempt to twist or distort". What distortion one can detect from the present vantage-point is in the nature of the "much news" that was "excluded", in fact.

The exclusion of news is as positive an act as the fabrication or distortion of it, especially where no second opinion can be canvassed, or where there is "unified control" as Reith called monopoly. The general strike enforced BBC unified control by making the Company the only source of regular news and commentary during the blackout of the press. The various social effects of this situation are evident everywhere in the diaries and accounts of contemporary observers. G.H.G. Strutt, for example, summarized one important implication of the monopoly in a Memorandum to Reith after the strike. Strutt had been one of the men in charge of BBC news coverage; on the question of what news ought to be broadcast Strutt recommended "what those in control of the BBC think listeners should hear (a responsibility greater than any that has arisen since Adam's fateful choice)".[479] Monopoly meant something other than control to the large part of the radio audiences however. Symons in The General Strike quotes Beatrice Webb as writing, in her diary, that "the sensation of a general strike, which stops the Press... centres round the headphones of the wireless set".[480] And Briggs generalizes, "certainly many people listened to radio programmes during the general strike who had never listened before". Even those who did not listen got their news via radio: "In many places wireless bulletins were copied out by hand and posted up in public places."[481]

Long before the strike, as has been noted, group-listening was a generally-practiced fact, among families, adult and children's groups such

as the boy scouts. The "general public" in most smaller centres also indulged in communal-listening. Briggs records that Mrs. Nugent Harris, of the National Federation of Women's Institutes, praised the way in which "the wireless had encouraged neighbourliness in the villages".[482] Not only Briggs but most other historians of the strike note the habit of the strike-bound English to gather at pubs or other centres to listen to the latest broadcasts. "More usually it was the local radio shop,"[483] Briggs suggests. He describes the merging of participants and non-activists in these groups: "Some of the local lock-out committees were very hostile to 'public wireless broadcasting', but pictures soon came in from all parts of the country of strikers and non-strikers alike clustering around their radio receivers."[484] The impression given by various accounts of the strike is that it broke down certain aspects of social reserve in a sudden and startling way. William McElwee, in his chapter "The General Strike" from Britain's Locust Years, recalls with some gusto "the most bizarre - and sometimes the most exciting" experience of those nine days. "A great silence descended on the country," he remarks, "and the streets running into all the great cities were crowded with walking, bicycling, or hitch-hiking office workers."[485] Lewis, who was especially sensitive to the strike and its implications, has used the break-down of individual transport to comic effect in The Apes of God. In the final chapter of that novel the virgin Dan Boleyn, unaware of the strike, has his social mechanism continually upset by the "advances" of passing drivers who attempt to pick him up. For Lewis however the strike was only the climax to a long process of social disintegration; in The Apes the once civilized and distinct families of the Keins, the Finnian Shaws, and the Folletts, are depicted in process of disruption and decay from within

and without. The Broadcasters Zagreus and Starr-Smith, principal among the intruders into those ancient sanctuaries, are as we have seen closely identified with radio technics.

Even in his earliest stories, those collected as The Wild Body, Lewis had been concerned to show the disruption of one society or culture by another. Ker-Orr, the laughing showman, was sketched as a rough filibuster shocking the small private world of the Brotcotnaz débit. Zagreus in The Apes is a showman of a much larger calibre, but one lacking the multiplicity of energies with which Lewis supplies the Bailiff. The Bailiff, as filibuster, is the sort of disguised ruler that Falstaffe might have been, if Shakespeare's great comic puppet had had the power. In the Childermass the result of a total social intrusion is examined. The Bailiff, like a Prospero "in league with the hurricane", has been given or has created a human tabula rasa by his filibustering, and is in the course of that novel shown preparing his New Jerusalem upon that human waste-land or desert. The step from the society imaged in The Apes of God to that of The Childermass is a short one, then. The general strike which ends The Apes is Lewis's image of social death or destruction, in a sense preparatory to the Bailiff's activities.

The reasons for Lewis's dismay at the general strike would be difficult to detail. They are in part involved with his feeling that the workers were betrayed by their own negotiators as well as by other and opposing forces - an opinion shared to a great extent by McElwee.[486] Only a restricted aspect of the problem involves us here, fortunately. That is, the effect of the BBC upon the strike - an effect which it will never be possible to evaluate certainly. Briggs has, we have noted, admitted the error of

omission in BBC news broadcasts. Just how serious these errors might have been to the workers is indicated by a further comment in Birth of Broadcasting. "Occasionally," Briggs writes, "misleading reports were broadcast, probably because of failures in the news collecting and checking system." It should be interjected here that the BBC had minimal news reporting facilities, since it had never been allowed to enter the news field. But these "failures" were at times of enormous importance to the workers relying on radio. "Typical examples were accounts... of enginemen and firemen returning to work at Oxford, of the breakdown of the strike at Salisbury, and of the discharge of food ships near Grimsby."[487] Both Briggs and Symons point out that "although the BBC was informed of these mistakes, the corrections were not broadcast".[488] The use of the BBC in these instances at least was, deliberately or not, to demoralize the workers by "fragmenting them" - giving them the impression that they were divided rather than united in their efforts. No official position was taken by the BBC on this matter, except, as Briggs notes, that "nothing calculated to extend the area of the strike should be broadcast". Briggs' summary of the matter, in view of his BBC sympathies, is an important one: "There is little doubt," he says in retrospect, "that BBC news assisted the government against the strikers." Just how it did so is a matter of dispute however. Briggs suggests that "it had a steadying effect on opinion", and that "it helped... to dispel rumours".[489] Yet as we have seen - and as Symons was perhaps more aware - the BBC operated by rumour at times during the strike. And "no attempt was made... to depict the realities of working-class life, the sense of solidarity, struggle, and occasional triumph which the strikers felt".[490] This in spite of the fact that much BBC broadcasting was given over to "spreading good cheer" against "strike depression".

Lewis in the last pages of The Apes makes reference to the rumour-mongering - "the absence of newspapers fostered every report of disorders" - and he cites completely factual rumours noted also by historians Symons and Briggs. But his most powerful, and compacted image of the strike is that already mentioned, of a kind of death. "It was a death of life - the throbbing circulation of incessant machines, in thunderous rotation, in the arteries of London was stopped."[491] It was, in short, the death of the machine.

The demise of Sir James Follet with which Lewis terminates The Apes suggests a social and personal parallel to, or a special aspect of, the general passing of the machine. It is a powerful image of the decline of masculine responsibility, the death of the father. Over his corpse, the broadcaster-powermonger Zagreus marries the widowed "gossip star". Early in The Childermass Pullman hails the passing of the father from the mythic landscape:

> I consider the father a side-show a mere bagatelle - they are like the reason, overrated and not essential at all, that is the fathers - the male at all if it comes to that. [492]

At this burst of antimasculinity, "exit fathers like a cohort of witches". Pullman here seems to be broadcasting for the Bailiff - no accommodation can be made either for "the reason" or for "the fathers", who represent "executive will and intelligence" openly and plainly as structural elements of society; the Bailiff, whose philosophy is anti-rational, is as we have seen also anti-masculine and encourages his followers to be so. What he erects in place of the plain family-structure with its paternal authority is a subversive "executive will" which, as will-to-power, has gone underground. Or it has appeared disguised - and needing a new Machiavelli to unveil it - as a

"bristling righteous phalanx of incestuous matrons" who "guard the child-herds".[493] The hyperidean Alectryon is blunt in his statement of the case: "The Machine-age has doomed the European Family" he informs the Bailiff.[494] Like so much of the Bailiff's "picture" which he has pinched from the past in the person of Hyperides, this dooming of the family and of the masculine in the Bailiff's schema is an aspect of industrialization - the mixing of traditional human structures with more modern power techniques. It is in his association with technics as technique that the Bailiff must bear responsibility - of a managerial or executive kind - for the destruction of "the family", and the subverting of his spurious feminizing appeals to manipulation of human materials.

The "machine" of Lewis's works is "la Mécanique rationelle" of Langevin, if one ignores the difference that Lewis does not in fact see the machine age as ending at the appearance of a new, electromagnetic culture. The Bailiff in a harangue informs the hyperideans that the "Modern Men" who are "the humble children of Progress" have made "a prince of the mechanic".[495] In other respects, too, the Bailiff's "new" society is like that seen by Langevin. The French physicist notes, in his essay "L'Evolution de l'espace et du temps", the passage from that "old" system of thought to the "new"; what is new is in fact the synthesis of physical and social components created by the older world-picture. It is a synthesis in which time has a special role. "A la synthèse nouvelle, de plus en plus puissante, que représente la théorie électromagnétique des phenomènes physiques, correspondent un espace et un temps, un temps surtout, autres que ceux de la Mécanique."[496] At the time of writing (1911) Langevin was able to identify some general characteristics of "l'électromagnétisme", one of them being, as we have seen, the merging of

hitherto clearly defined areas of thought and experience; "L'Electro-magnétisme... est doué d'une force d'expansion étonnante puisqu'il s'est assimilé sans aucun effort" a wide range of discreet subjects, including "la Chimie" and "une grande partie de la Physique".[497] A second characteristic, and one which elicits echoes from The Childermass, is the "primitive". "L'Electromagnétisme," Langevin observes, "est aussi remarquablement adapté a son domaine primitif que la Mécanique rationelle a pu l'être au sien."[498] This primitiveness the Bailiff seizes for his own; "Primitive and proud of it" is his motto.

The views of many leading scientists working in the first quarter of this century correspond to those of Langevin. Max Planck, who has been called "the father of quantum mechanics", has written on the difficulties encountered by "classical physics" in the domains of "heat radiation, later in that of light rays, and finally in that of electro-mechanics".[499] In his book The Philosophy of Physics Planck notes that "at the beginning of the present century... the classical theory... is faced by an insurmountable barrier". The "classical theory" of Planck is the Newtonian mechanic, or "mécanique rationelle" of Langevin. For Planck it was a method of division, "the principle of divide et impera". He explains, "bodies were divided up into molecules, molecules into atoms, and atoms into protons and electrons. Simultaneously space and time were divided into infinitely small intervals."[500] But the "insurmountable barrier" met by this technique, and which led to the development of extenuating theories like that of relativity and of quantum mechanics, was that in the extremes of size, duration and velocity the classical mechanic broke down, due to a confusion of observer and event observed. Planck gives an example, now the classic one, which may help to elucidate:

> In order to calculate the movement of an electron, classical physics must assume that its state is known, and this state embraces its position and its velocity. Now it was found that every method permitting of an exact measurement of the electron's position prohibits an exact measurement of its velocity: and it was further found that the inaccuracy of the latter measurement varies inversely with the accuracy of the former, and vice versa. [501]

The reader acquainted with Special Relativity will note that this, on a microcosmic scale, is a general statement of Einstein's basic dilemma in the macrocosm, applicable however to subatomic "inertial systems". In his book The Meaning of Relativity Einstein shows clearly how Special Relativity works to preserve as much as possible of the Newtonian mechanic.[502] Yet he too prefaces his book with the remark that "physicists have been obliged by the facts to bring down from the Olympus of the a priori" the commonly accepted "concepts of space and time".[503] A peculiar situation thus appears; one in which all seems "in the melting pot" but about which Planck warns "it would be incorrect to speak of a breakdown of theoretical physics in the sense that everything achieved hitherto must be regarded as incorrect".[504]

It will perhaps be more evident from the remarks of these influential thinkers, what Lewis's concern with space and time in The Childermass has to do with the "death of the machine" and the peculiar "rebirth" figured in that novel. The fragmentation of the appellants by an irresponsible technology is, in Lewis's mythology, an effect of the application of Planck's classical law, "divide et impera", to human rather than to inanimate materials or subjects of observation. The subsequent deformations of this human material according to philosophies of event and the emotive unconscious are again applications of, or practices based on the same theory as, that of relativity physics and quantum mechanics with their attempts to preserve

or modify the treatment of inanimate nature as machine. In the process of vulgarization by which the abstract metaphysical thought becomes part of technics, the material - the human being - is forced to assume the aspect more and more of machine. The use of "event" and manipulation of time in pure scientific thought like that "which culminated in Einstein", Lewis admits in Time and Western Man, was "as innocent as that... of any human arrière-pensée".[505] But, he continues, it is as unlikely that Einstein "had not at least read the work of Bergson, and formed some opinion on it", as to suppose that "Newton remained entirely uninfluenced by the english platonism by which he was surrounded".[506] It is this influence, direct and always potentially conscious, which Time and Western Man posits between the "Time-school" of philosophers and the relativity and quantum physics of 1900-1925. In the Bailiff such originally pure scientific thought has undergone a severe metamorphosis due to the difference in subject-matter and in predilections of thought and purpose. Where Einstein had "been obliged by the facts" to review the "a priori" nature of "space and time" as understood in classical physics, the Bailiff in a purely emotive harangue claims to be "one of the ten princes of Time". Hyperides asks "is not your Space-Time for all practical purposes only the formula recently popularized to accommodate the empirical sensational chaos?"[507] The Bailiff in rational discourse parries these accusations. But in a fit of temper or fervour he cries "we are factors of Time factors of Time!"[508] Yet, in spite of his philosophy of event, Macrob finds him "as customary as the average advertisement for causal reality".[509]

The Bailiff's claims to represent a thoroughly new culture - with "a new soul" to match - are thus questioned by at least one individual in

Childermass other than Hyperides. If we examine these claims of the Bailiff in fact, and compare them to the profuse imagery such as that of death and rebirth attached to that dignitary, we find of course a considerable and varied background accumulated in the "present" of this "man without a past". He does not in other words convince entirely that he has suddenly appeared on the scene, new and primitive, as he claims. He represents rather, as previously stated, a peculiar transformation or absorption - but emotionally disguised - of old into new, or of tradition into technique. The machine is in evidence everywhere in the electric desert. Pullman, as a kind of survival of the Newtonian world has become unwittingly a servant of the Bailiff; Shelah, who suggests the petroleum industry, is a peon almost of the crowdmaster. The filmic effects in the electric desert exist, as mechanism, beside and interdependent upon the Bailiff's primitive court, occasionally - as at the dignitary's first appearance - interrupting his "show". The process by which the stunned and fragmented appellants arrive at the camp - in the Bailiff's "charmed circle of regeneration"[510] - is "quite mechanical and absolutely impartial",[511] the magistrate tells Macrob. Through this process appellants pass "out of an organic system into an inorganic life". The rites of passage according to the Bailiff constitute "an entrance, as well as, or even rather than, an exit".[512] It is the Bailiff himself who stresses this image of the transformation from an old mechanic to a new "electromagnetic". Men in his scheme become machines, as Pullman does.

In the manipulation of machine culture to his own ends which the Bailiff undertakes in Childermass, the human will has as we have seen been temporarily relinquished. As an aspect of the soul, which is an individual quality, the

Bailiff makes little of this lost will. He suggests, even, that this soulless will-less condition which he urges on appellants is a natural result of progress, referring to "those prodigies of Science, which have provided us moderns with a new soul and a consciousness different from that of any other epoch".[513] In place of that vital function, the individual Will, appellants are given the Bailiff with his retinue, his court and trappings. "I stand to you in the capacity of _will_," he informs Hyperides. He occupies this position in a number of masks at once, the popular-scientific being rather less effective than that of Uncle Punch, whose paternal role with respect to his "children" has the advantage of being - as "Uncle" - at a convenient remove. And as a mob in a single skin he gives a type of corporate image to that of the ruler, as opposed to an individual one. His paternal jurisdiction includes the suggestinn of a vague sort of economics, in fact; at his initial appearance in the court he informs appellants, "business first is our motto gentlemen", and adds the ever-present one, "our customers are our _friends_".[514] The corporate nature of the Bailiff as a group of significant masks or roles suggests the interpretation, voiced by Wagner and Pritchard, of _Childermass_ and Magnetic City as a study in state socialism. These critics have pointed to the "red haze" issuing from the City as one indication of Lewis's intention. There is no doubt that the City - referred to in _Monstre Gai_ as a place of subsidized futility - has such nuances. In fact, since the earliest experiments in electrical communications, the medium has been associated in the minds of many with a socialist order. W.H.G. Armytage, in his _Rise of the Technocrats_, records that the nineteenth-century electrical researcher and pioneer of the telegraph, C.P. Steinmetz, "saw

electrification as the chief agency of Socialism".[515] Steinmetz went so far as to write to Lenin, on his seizure of power, offering technical assistance. In the field of economics, as we shall see, some observers have noted a similarity between state socialism and the corporation. Armytage reports that Lincoln Steffens, an avid traveller in Russia and chronicler of events there, "saw clearly that the leaders of the Russian State trusts were of the same mind as the Vice-President of General Motors...."[516]

For our present purposes however, attaching the name Socialism to the social structure which Lewis portrays is of little value. It is the significance of the corporation as an economic, social and political structure which concerns this essay. It would be difficult to find agreement between economist-theorists of corporate finance, as to the exact nature of a "corporation". Briefly, the background to the growth of contemporary corporations is closely involved with electrical communications. Carleton Mabee, in his book The American Leonardo: the Life of Samuel F.B. Morse, notes the rapid development of - and within - American communications corporations out of rude beginnings at mid-nineteenth century. The largest of these - it is still perhaps the largest corporation anywhere - was AT&T (American Telephone and Telegraph). Although the expansion of electrical communications did not "cause" the corporation phenomenon, it contributed greatly to what, for many economists, is a difficult problem in structuring and interpretation. Andrew Hacker, editor of the collection of essays under the title, The Corporation Take-Over, writes in his introduction to that study, "since the end of the second world war the corporate form has emerged as the characteristic institution" in western business.

His opening remarks will give some notion of the innovation which corporation implies for the economist: "Its rise has rendered irrelevant time-honored theories of politics and economics, and its explosive growth has created new breeds of men whose behavior can no longer be accounted for by conventional rules of conduct."[517] This observation recalls one of Lewis in The Lion and the Fox; he referred to some writings of Villari which deplored the strange conduct of certain renaissance men in their personal lives. This was, Lewis remarked, more easily understood by a writer living at a time of vast social change like the present. Villari had written of "men who speak and think like ourselves" and who at the same time "abandon themselves to the most atrocious crimes, the most obscene vices".[518] "Today," Lewis insisted, "we are in the midst of a 'transitional' period, on a vast scale, and which provides us... with contradictions just as notable."[519]

That corporation as we know the term is a feature of this particular transition there is no doubt. The economist Gardiner C. Means, in an essay "Collective Capitalism and Economic Theory", suggests that "the modern corporation has undermined the preconceptions of classical economic theory as effectively as the quantum undermined classical physics at the beginning of the twentieth century".[520] To define corporation precisely is clearly difficult. R.W. Boyden, in "The Breakdown of Corporations", a recent essay (1964), generalizes that "the major corporate types have been autonomous".[521] This autonomy implies, as Andrew Hacker states it, that "the large firm of today has no theoretical linking power, purpose and responsibility".[522] A.A. Berle, in "Economic Power and the Free Society", gives an anecdotal example of how the autonomous corporation becomes a socialist or oligarchic and apparently meaningless entity:

> The Sears, Roebuck pension fund... undertook to buy Sears, Roebuck stock and presumably now has a controlling interest in the company. As a result Sears, Roebuck is socializing itself via its own pension trust fund, and is discovering that it is running into the same difficulty which a socialist or any other form of oligarchic government has - it has self-contained control, and management is thus responsible to itself. [523]

This "responsibility to itself" in the governing of the large corporation is a potential or a realized fact in most western economies, and a facet of it has begun to appear in many governments. It was the objective of the public British Broadcasting Corporation, as Briggs' account reveals. It is the position of the Bailiff in the Childermass myth, who must be thought of as an oligarch where political interpretation is concerned. The Bailiff's "vice is power" as Hyperides observes; for in the peculiar social state of the electric desert, as in the Magnetic City later, neither money nor politics - as we understand that word, associated with "party" - play a role of much influence. R.W. Boyden's essay "The Breakdown of Corporations" indicates that these structures, like that of The Childermass, turn to "power" as a "vice"; when money and productivity are no longer at issue, Boyden states, "the corporate leaders turn to the exercise of power". He continues:

> Power is unlimited; the bigger the corporation the more powerful. It can even afford to be inefficient in the interests of power. In fact, as the power factor becomes dominant the significance of the other variables virtually disappears. Great power seems to be the basic justification for the most enormous of our corporate giants. [524]

The sort of power intended, and the manner of its manipulation, have something in common with, on the one hand, the family or clan patriarch and on the other, the political state. A.A. Berle, in his essay already cited, remarks

of large corporations that they "are units which can be thought of only in somewhat the way we have heretofore thought of nations".[525] Some economists, faced with the task of defining historically the corporation's origins, have concluded vaguely that they are connected with the organization of the Roman family.[526] Scott Buchanan's "The Corporation and the Republic" surmises, upon this basis, that the corporation - as its name implies - is endowed with a kind of "personality", or with the attributes of an individual, whereas the classical "institution" of the west is impersonally and "mechanically" structured in theory. The BBC's continual emphases on personality, on its listeners as friends, and on being "a friendly thing", come immediately to mind, as do the protestations of the Bailiff in Childermass: "all we ask is a little love" and "our clients are our friends". Unlike the individual, the Bailiff - and the corporation - are "immortal". Scott Buchanan quotes the opinion of Justice John Marshall that, among the characteristics of corporation, "the most important are immortality, and, if the expression be allowed, individuality".[527]

Under the social order imposed by a proliferation of the corporate mode, the nature of the individual is called into question. As Buchanan states,

> The great community imagined by the Stoic, the Christian, and the eighteenth-century philosopher-citizen is a community in whose membership the individual can identify himself as a whole man. The communities and sub-communities of which we are now members are communities to which we distribute ourselves in parts, in which we dismember ourselves, and then shrink to one of these congested parts. We become identified with aspects of ourselves. [528]

Buchanan might be describing specifically Lewis's appellants "cooked in this posthumous odyssey"[529] in the elctric desert. For Lewis the dismemberment is

temporary - the Magnetic City which is the goal of the Childermass journey will restore a kind of unity to the characters, as we have seen. It will, however, be a unity shrunk "to one of these congested parts" of the self.

There is a second aspect of the corporate individual about which Buchanan and Lewis are in fair agreement; Buchanan suggests an alteration in the notion of privacy which in The Childermass Lewis portrays as under the heaviest attack. The appellants' camp, and their habits, are group or tribal regressions. The pressure to regiment themselves in groups is physical as well as emotional. The quarters are huts; the petitioners are called to appear as, and branded by the stigma of, clique-names or factions like "the Carnegy batch", the "hyperideans", the "bailiffites". There is, in particular, no trace of familial relationship if we except the homosexual nuance. "The Machine-age has doomed the European Family and its integrating", the hyperidean Alectryon cries. This structure into which appellants "die", or rather are "reborn", is "the ultimate corpus of the mother church", which receives them, as the BBC hastened to do its audience, with "friendly intimacy".[530] Pullman, in repudiating "the Fathers" early in Childermass, merely echoes a cry already raised by the Bailiff and his techniques. That is to say, Pullman broadcasts for the Bailiff, although perhaps quite innocent of the Bailiff's intentions while he does so.

As the Bailiff suggests, the breakdown of the European family is in Lewis a rebirth or re-organization like that of the physical world-picture, rather than a Spenglerian extinction. The transformation is one from the civilized Family of tradition - as nucleus of social organization - to what might be described as a corporate or tribal family. If tribal, however, this social organ is quite unlike the primitive groups under observation

everywhere by anthropology. Lewis interested himself in human groups as early as 1909 or 1912 when, in Brittany, he observed his showman Ker-Orr disrupting the closed ones of the "archaic" Breton fishing village. In The Art of Being Ruled he states,

> It is round the question of the family that all the questions of politics and social life are gathered. The break-up of the family unit to-day is the central fact of our life: it is from its central disintegration, both in fact and in our minds... that all the other revolutionary phases of our new society radiate. [531]

Further, "the child obsession", which Lewis images in Childermass as that of the child-radio-audience, or child-technics-consumers, is "a flight from responsibility" which "would naturally result from the decay of the parent, in the old sense of a symbol of authority".[532] The familial decay which Lewis and others have seen as resulting from the industrial or mechanical regimentation, leads to a reformation or regroupement under magnetic attack in The Childermass and its sequels. Lewis pointed to such primitive re-groupings in The Art of Being Ruled when he examined the anthropological findings concerning social order among the "maritime Chukchee" who formed "crowds" of nine men called "attwat-yirim" or "boatsful".[533] This grouping appears transformed in The Apes of God where the Finnian Shaws issue printed tickets to their friends for "a Coachful". The boatful is everywhere in The Childermass: Bailiff and retinue comprise a boatful, peons disembark from boat-units having apes as mascots, the appellants - when finally they are granted entrance - approach the Magnetic City in boatsful of various sizes, driven by a steersman across that styx. The appellants at camp, as we have seen, waste no time in forming-up under one "boat-master" (Attw-ermecin) or another. "It is easier," Lewis notes with justification, "to be nine men than one."[534]

The purpose of the Bailiff's court is to process or prepare those "shock victims" the appellants for what is represented as the ultimate human group, inside the Magnetic City. In The Childermass little information is given concerning that Heavenly society. But the Bailiff himself declares that his function is "to expound the laws of this new existence" and to admit appellants when they "have reached the proper point of crystallization".[535] This crystallization is of a fragment only of the original, living person; Macrob charges the Bailiff with "extracting the creative principle" from the individual and "collecting" the "dead shells".[536] Certainly, the Bailiff is associated with death to a greater extent than he is with any visible regeneration. His symbols, as drawn on the decoration of the bema, include those from the tombs of Archimedes and of Absalom. The complex symbol based on the Star of David, which Lewis calls "the symbol of the Maha-Yuga", is one of social and spiritual decline. E.W.P. Tomlin in his study, Wyndham Lewis, explains the Maha-Yuga as follows:

> The Maha-Yuga is the name in Vedanta doctrine for a complete cycle of history. Divided into four separate Yugas, it implies the successive decline in human righteousness, culminating in the Kali-Yuga in which righteousness reaches its nadir. The representation of the 'goat-hoof' underneath the sign in question, together with the recurrent imagery of the serpent's head... seems to imply that the world brought to judgement has reached its final phase.[538]

The Phoenix suggests also that a final - and hence a new - phase of some cyclical order is at hand. The Bailiff's assumption of the mask of Punch has, as we have seen, an element of cyclic order to it as well. But the aspect of Punch upon which the Childermass myth dwells is that of Punch's murder - the throwing of the child into the street - which prefaced one

of the most popular of the Punch and Judy acts. Hyperides refers more than once to the Bailiff's "murderous bias"[539] and charges him with being preoccupied with the dead. The Bailiff admits to this but points out that "the dead" are his "clients".

Geoffrey Wagner's study Wyndham Lewis: A Portrait of the Artist as the Enemy singles out a further image of decline not only in The Childermass but in Lewis's novels generally. Referring to the "nanmen" or half-men who crowd the court, Wagner notes that "the idea of continuity, which this element of society is revoking", is "the diagnostic of a civilized condition". He points to Eliot as a powerful exponent of the "neo-classicist" notion of continuity: "For Eliot continuity of culture is virtually wisdom",[540] and he cites Eliot's Christian Society as example of this argument. "The more highly developed an individual is," Wagner notes, "or the more civilized a race,.. discontinuity tends to disappear." Discontinuity, it is true, is a feature of the Childermass iconology. The discontinuity of time, place and physical feature saturates the first part of the novel, while Pullman and Satters explore the Time-tracks. The physics of event, by which Hyperides refers to relativity physics, is one of discontinuity also. The Bailiff, at his first appearance, preaches this fragmentary gospel:

> ... there is neither Space nor Time, now. There is only the one reality: and there is no reality without contact. Until things touch and act on each other they cannot be said to exist for each other.... Things are bearing down on us from all directions which we know nothing about at this moment, when they shall have struck us we shall term that an event and it will possess a certain temporal extension.[541]

The idea of continuity must not be confused with contiguity, as it is in the "physics of event" and in the concept of the "melting pot". The latter, which is in the Bailiff's ménage of images, is a fusion rather than a

continuity of influences. It was just such a difficult bombardment of influences which Roger Fry faced when he came to accommodate primitive and oriental art-forms in his aesthetic theory. His essay "Negro Sculpture" (1920) begins with the comment, "What a comfortable mental furniture the generalizations of a century ago must have afforded!" The comfort and continuity of that furniture has become disarranged for him however and he laments, "now, in the last sixty years, knowledge and perception have poured upon us so fast that the whole well-ordered system has been blown away". In the face of this discomfort "we stand bare to the blast", Fry observes, "scarcely able to snatch a hasty generalization or two to cover our nakedness".[542] Lewis was himself concerned with the disruption of mental furniture even to a terminology like that of Fry, from the earliest of his Breton stories, as has been remarked. In "Brotcotnaz" he describes the Breton fisherman of that name reacting to a severe shock and its aftermath:

> The vacuum of his mind, out of which all the machinery of habit had been momentarily emptied, filled up again with its accustomed furniture. But after this moment of intense void the furniture did not quite resume its old positions, some of the pieces never returned, there remained a blankness and desolate novelty in the destiny of Brotcotnaz. [543]

When, early in Lewis's sequel to Childermass, Pullman endures a violent storm at the home of his host Mannock, he undergoes an experience similar to that of Brotcotnaz, but in which the continuity of his mental furnishings disappears altogether for a time in a "congealed" and robotic state. This fusion of the separate and distinct mental processes into a primitive singularity has its social or mass counterpart in the type of family which the appellants join upon entering the Magnetic City. There, individuals become undifferentiated mass, the mechanical furniture of a social mechanism

such as a Hobbes would have rejected out-of-hand.

Both Lewis and Fry had seen clearly, by 1920 if not earlier, that a whole social furniture was in state of rearrangement, with no "hasty generalization" available to "cover the nakedness". In The Childermass Lewis converted to myth the cause and the effect, in a single protracted comic imagery, of this massive social discontinuity.

20. Wyndham Lewis and the Childermass Myth.

While Roger Fry - and many other observers of the early twentieth-century scene - attempted to locate generalizations in the flux created by the cultural and social intrusions to which they were witness, Wyndham Lewis appears to have carried on a simultaneous critical and creative operation. In critical works like The Art of Being Ruled, Time and Western Man and The Lion and the Fox, he stated the case for a society which he believed he saw plundered and beleaguered by ill-advised or ill-intending opportunists. Much of the argument of the Bailiff and Hyperides in The Childermass, not to mention Zagreus's broadcasting of Pierpoint in The Apes of God, contains Lewisean critical thought. Many writers have consequently identified Lewis with those characters. The irony of some critical opinions has been noted already: while Kenner finds Lewis in the Bailiff, Pritchard finds him in Hyperides and Martin Seymour-Smith sees Lewis "examining his own fascination with such arguments"[544] in the two characters. I.A. Richards in his "Talk on 'The Childermass'" prepared for the BBC Third Programme, is highly circumspect; his caution does not prevent him from referring to Bailiff and Hyperides as "utterly authentic - representatives in exelcis of what we have known about ourselves".[545] There is no single critical resolution to this problem of Lewis's characters. But it cannot I think be denied that they are all artistic examinations of the result of mis-application and misdirection of ideas, Lewis's own as well as those of

others, when such specialized material is turned into folk-culture or made popular and public property. Lawrence Lipton's review of Walter Michel's Wyndham Lewis, Paintings and Drawings, which appeared in the Los Angeles Free Press, begins with an appreciation of Lewis's exploratory or myth-making activities:

> Few artists have had the daring to create a private mythology in words and graphics. Blake comes to mind, of course, but Blake, in his time, still had the Christian mythology to draw upon.... Wyndham Lewis had no such advantage.... The Christian mythos had already begun its decline, riddled as it was on the one hand by the Higher Criticism of textual Bible scholarhip and, on the other hand, the demythologizing trend which was as inimical to his private myths as it was to ancient myth.[546]

It is not entirely true, as we have seen, to infer that Lewis made his myth without the assistance of traditional and contemporary social myth. He had in fact Christianity, but one which, as he viewed it, was in process of self-degradation; he had the social dogmas which are the effluvia or by-product of the pure sciences, and he had the pure sciences themselves, which he saw inseparably alloyed with quite non-scientific interests in the form of the Bailiff. "I am an alkahest", that old alchemist shouts in delight to his inquisitor, Alectryon.[547] As such the Bailiff is the solvent to a past myth, that of popularized Newtonian mechanics, with all the social and religious cultural riches which that name conceals; the Bailiff's function a propos of any of his numerous identities is to soften, liquify and dissolve like a film-scene the heritage of the "old" into the techniques of the "new". "I have a very ancient liturgy in my office" he declares, "which disposes at least of any Theory of the Presence involving objectivity and the annihilation of the substance of the outward elements."[548] The European myth of "objectivity" and of "substance" - or material reality -

it is the Bailiff's business to metamorphose. In any of his guises he is power without grace; government and science without art.

Intruding upon the decay of the civilized European world, the Bailiff brings his "primitive" and instant cultural equipment - a mythology in every way less stable, yet more suited to maintaining the flux, than the superceded one. The two mythologies are contrasted in Childermass not by the rational arguments of Hyperides and Bailiff, which as we have seen obscure more than they reveal of the problem, but by Lewis's playing of the rational against the irrational. The irrational in this case is a contrived one - the Bailiff's fabricated apparatus for emotional instability; its sole purpose is to maintain itself, as the corporation's aim is its own autonomous powers, self-contained and closed. In Lewis's myth, when the instability of the electric desert gives way to the full closure of the Magnetic City a stability asserts itself - one of monotonous "all-alike girls" assembled in street-cafés, leading a life far from primitive. The word "primitive" in fact assumes a vulgarity and impotence on the lips of the Bailiff, like the term "reality" as he uses it; the primitive of the tribal culture is far from that condition, observed by Lewis in contemporary life and commented upon in his Time and Western Man, of severe abstractions for which men might find no concrete paradigm. In the mythology of Newtonian society this paradigm had taken a causal form - perhaps too much so on occasion, but to good purpose where the origins of men's natural distresses were concerned. In the abstraction of the "New Primitive" no similar comfort is available. Lewis noted the result of such abstraction when he wrote:

> Some art form - as with popular music - suddenly takes a new and unexpected turn. Jazz is such a mode. Purpose is betrayed in this event: but the average man marvels, and if he asks himself Why? seeking to account for this appearance, he always has the Zeitgeist to fall back on, if he has no other answer. Cross-word Puzzles, Community Singing, and so on, flower for him, for no reason. They are 'Nature', Fate, Zeitgeist, not the work of man. He who is prone to personalize everything, never sees a human activity expressing itself in these things, for some reason.[549]

A specific and deliberate position is evident in Lewis's remarks here and in his approach to the electromagnetic myth of Childermass. Whether it is a correct posture or not, it concerns our study of the work, since it is formative to that work. Lewis, as his literary mask of "The Enemy" suggests, chose to see "a human activity" behind all of the effects which he examined, the technics of radio, the manipulation of time-space and of the unconscious, the "flowering" of the Children's Hour, and so on. The Bailiff is that mythic - because all inclusive and versatile - human will; included in the character of Bailiff is not merely the quality which Lewis detected in the masked ruler, the "jolly Uncle", the radio-medium itself, but the possibilities or potential of such qualities for development if given the freedom to progress in the direction to which they appeared to have committed themselves. Lewis does not at any time suggest that such tendencies as he observed were inevitable. The opposite is in fact true; the Bailiff's enticement to appellants to regard him as their will is an obvious target of all Lewis's satire.

When Lewis chose to see human will behind human activities, he expressed himself in favour of the conscious as opposed to the accidental or unconscious life. The Bailiff himself quips to his audience, "Our acts our angels are".[550] A "humanist" critical attack might be made against Lewis on the

grounds that, for example, the Children's Hour does not intentionally condemn its audience to a child-condition. But it is clearly Lewis's contention that the "executive will and intelligence" ought to take the responsibility for its executions. If all, in The Childermass, is endowed with conscious intention, that is a condition basic to myth; the gods, the elements, Fate, have all, in mythology, an aspect of will and of intention a propos their human subjects or materials. It is this gesture which frees men from a dumb, impersonal and unresponsive existence.

I have referred often to Childermass as a myth of technics. Through its technologies the twentieth-century Will and the potential power of human activity express themselves most clearly and profusely. Technics as myth is at once the "monster" or "demon" and the medium by which the monstrous presence makes itself felt. This simultaneity is, as we have seen, fundamental to Lewis's myth; a similar simultaneity of vision is I believe observable in all myth. By following the simultaneous interpretations, we expose not merely a personal view or opinion expressed by Lewis, but a number of alternative views with a certain claim to objectivity. "I have to say everything one side and another," the Bailiff tells Hyperides while taking "both sides" of an argument; "no one else will so two sets of dirty work fall to me."[551] He refers not only to his monopoly of "the truth" but to the ambiguity of his mythic nature. It is this ambiguity which separates The Childermass from a work of technological determinism such as O'Neill made in his Dynamo, or - one suspects strongly - such as C.P. Snow promulgates in his novels. Because Lewis's mythic technique has potential for extension of the actual situation to its ultimate, and sometimes absurd, possibilities, it appears at times to partake of the

magical or the visionary. But the clairvoyance of such art is not mystical future-gazing; it is a clear view of the present, some of whose possibilities will never be realized, some of whose potential passes too immediately and unexamined into the world of action and idea.

21. The Magnetic City: an Afterword.

Discussing the difference of approach and tone between The Childermass and its two companion novels, William Pritchard's Wyndham Lewis states:

> In 1955, when Lewis finally published under the title of The Human Age, Parts Two and Three of the projected four-part work, its impulse and expression had altered so radically from what could be perceived in Childermass alone that the relationship between the two creations, separated by almost thirty years, is an extraordinarily thin one. [552]

Certainly, a reader passing immediately from Childermass to Monstre Gai must note a difference in the energies, of language and of image, between the two novels. Thirty years cannot fail to make a difference to any artist's work. But there is another distinction, more important to the present essay, between the earlier and later novels. A brief examination will reveal why, on grounds quite removed from literary consideration, Monstre Gai and Malign Fiesta do not enter into this discussion.

The beginning of Monstre Gai finds Pullman and Satters alone on the steps to the Yang Gate of the Magnetic City. They have crossed the water and, near to the source of those magnetic impulses felt at the appellants' camp, they shiver in the starlight while awaiting the Bailiff's party in order to enter the city itself. Once inside, they discover a great discrepancy between the exterior appearance of the city and its interior: "The dimensions of what enclosed this place at least were unreal, were enormous. But that was the extent of the departure from the norm."[553]

Pullman is soon picked-up by a figure named Mannock, who offers lodging for the night. Walking through the city they discover vast side-walk cafés peopled by "the faces of nonentities" all wearing "chapeaux melons".[554] In the company of Mannock, and under his hospitality, Pullman discovers something of "Third City" as it is here called. Mannock explains the political system as "a Sultanate, social life centering in the Palace, and around the person of the Sultan.[555] This potentate is called "the Padishah"; Pullman learns from an ancient and disaffected "youth" named Rigate that "the ostensible ruler, the Padishah, is a supernatural being of great charm, but devoid of the slightest trace of gumption".[556] The population is composed entirely of men, the women banished to a far level of the city. As social order, the city represents a "subsidized futility" in which no one works, unless by choice, and each is given a monthly stipend by a central bank. Some of the inhabitants may, Mannock admits, once have had some intelligence, "but thirty years at that café...."[551] Third City, an aged citizen tells Pullman, "has been called the Heaven of the Young"[558] and the majority of its occupants are interrupted at a youthful stage, as The Childermass suggested. "Old age shines shoes, that is the hell of the withered and moth-eaten," Pullman hears.[559]

The two newcomers have not even time to explore and settle into the Bailiff's promised New Jerusalem however. While they are still guests of the strange Mannock, the city is beset by "storm". As Pullman discourses with his host in the livingroom "with the utmost suddenness the room became as dark as night". Pullman, assuming a power-failure, enquires whether this often happens. "Never in my experience," Mannock swears. Then,

> A blast, rather than a flash of lightning, a hundred times brighter and colder than any day, stamped out everything in blinding black and white upon the human retina. Pullman looked clearer and calmer than ever to the exasperated eye of his host. Pullman, too, had the sensation of being unspeakably distinct, but his calmness was, of course, more apparent than real. [560]

With the manner perfected by him for handling the infirmities of the electric desert and its mirages, Pullman carries on a cool and detached discourse with Mannock; this objectivity has "the same effect upon Mannock" as if Pullman "had personally stage-managed the turning off of the light".[561] But Pullman's composure is smashed abruptly when, "as if the blackness had spoken there was an enormous shock: the house they were in rocked backwards, and then with equal violence it seemed to right itself."[562] After these preliminaries comes "a world-embracing Hiss", and "a storm of such force... violently rushing into every crevice, that there was not a scrap of glass left in the window-frames".[563] A second blast interrupts the hissing. But Pullman, who at the first one had gone rigid - "Only tensed could he meet the appallingly unexpected" - now loses consciousness. "If anything lived in Third City it lived as a congealed and armoured mechanism as Pullman did."[564]

The allusion to atomic energy in these passages is plain. Robert Jungk, in his history of nuclear-weapon development Brighter Than a Thousand Suns, records the reaction of Robert Oppenheimer to the first experimental device ever exploded:

> A passage from the Bhagavad-Gita, the sacred epic of the Hindus, flashed into his mind.
>
> > If the radiance of a thousand suns were to burst into the sky, that would be like the splendour of the Mighty One. [565]

Oppenheimer, apparently an admirer of the Hindu texts, thought of another line of scripture when he witnessed the "sinister and gigantic cloud" following the flash: "I am become Death, the shatterer of worlds."[566] The impression of the attack or storm in Third City is that

> something like a star must have been hurled at the metropolis. Or it was stunned by a rushing world. Or it was smothered by a hostile universe. [567]

Like the blast in Magnetic City which "stamped out everything in blinding black and white upon the retina", the military detonation of the nuclear bomb over Hiroshima impressed "the shadows of human beings and objects... in the wood of some of the walls". The blast's "dazzling light had bleached and scorched everything"[568] within visible reach. In the wind accompanying the storm in Magnetic City was "a blistering heat"; the sound was that "of warfare in the twentieth-century sense, so magnified as to be aurally unmanageable".[569] Pullman's impression upon regaining consciousness was that "henceforth there was going to be less light in the world".[570]

As Lewis's sensory imagery suggests, the inception of atomic energy once more rearranges the balance of whole societies. The storm is in no way a despairing gesture intended to blow up a world. It is the announcement precedent to the eclipse of a dynasty of men, often disguised like the Bailiff and impersonal behind their alchemical working of technics into power; in their place appears a dynasty of raw power, just beginning to congeal into human or other shapes, which even the gods of that new machinery have not yet learned to control.

FOOTNOTES

1. Pound, Ezra. Gaudier-Brzeska. A Mémoir. (New York: New Directions, 1970) 87

2. Ibid, 92.

3. Fjelde, Rolf. "Time, Space and Wyndham Lewis". Western Review, 15.3, Spring 1951. 202.

4. Pound, Ezra. Gaudier-Brzeska. A Mémoir, 84.

5. See Kenner, Hugh. Wyndham Lewis. (New York: New Directions, 1954) 118 ff.

6. Ibid, 130.

7. Ibid, 124.

8. See Read, Herbert. Review of Letters of Wyndham Lewis, ed. W.K. Rose. (in Saturday Review, April 4, 1964.)

9. See McLuhan, Marshall. "Third Program in the Human Age". Explorations No. 7, Oct. 1957. 16-18.

10. Langevin, Paul. "L'Evolution de l'espace et du temps." La Physique depuis vingt ans. (Paris: Bibliothèque d'histoire et de philosophie des sciences, 1923) 265.

11. Ibid, 269.

12. Loc. cit.

13. See Rose, W.K. Letters of Wyndham Lewis. (London: Methuen, 1963) 137 ff.

14. See "Milton had His Daughters I have my Dictaphone". Explorations No. 7, Oct. 1957. Section 13 (n.p.)

15. See Briggs, Asa. The Birth of Broadcasting. (Oxford University Press, 1961) 42.

16. Ibid, 43.

17. Ibid, 42.

18. Ibid, 43.

19. See Ibid, 30.

20. Loc. cit.

21. Archer, G.L. History of Radio to 1926. (New York: American Historical Society, 1938) 100.

22. Briggs, 29

23. Ibid, 53

24. Ibid, 69

25. Eckersley, P.P. The Power Behind the Microphone. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1941) 38-9.

26. Lewis, Wyndham. The Apes of God. (Penguin Modern Classic No. 2313) 502.

27. Ibid, 280.

28. Ibid, 90.

29. Briggs, 258

30. Lewis, C.A. Broadcasting from Within. (London: Newnes, 1924) 101.

31. Burrows, A.R. The Story of Broadcasting. (London: Cassell, 1924) 121.

32. Briggs, 262.

33. Ibid, 261.

34. Lewis. The Apes of God, 89

35. Briggs, 262.

36. Ibid, 14-15.

37. Lewis. The Apes of God, 89.

38. Ibid, 88.

39. Ibid, 110.

40. Ibid, 111.

41. Ibid, 178.

42. Lewis, Wyndham. Time and Western Man. (Beacon Press paperback BP/44) 27.

43. Lewis. The Apes of God, 261.

44. See Letters, 191: Apes of God, 11.

45. Lewis. The Apes of God, 45.

46. Lewis. The Apes of God, 47.

47. Ibid, 80.

48. Ibid, 647.

49. Ibid, 649.

50. Loc. cit.

51. Kenner. Wyndham Lewis, 93.

52. Ibid, 100.

53. Letters, 167. Letter to C.H. Prentice dated April 12 1926. No. 157.

54. Briggs, 70-71.

55. Lewis. The Apes of God, 169.

56. Ibid, 352.

57. Ibid, 301.

58. Ibid, 502-3.

59. Radio Times, 28 Sept. 1923.

60. Letters, 167.

61. Eckersley, P.P. The Power Behind the Microphone, 14.

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> GADGETS AND CONTRAPTIONS.
> "Wonderful James" and "Genial Jemima" will be very much to the fore.
> "Prelude" - the Story of a Motor-Cycle Let Loose (Tony Galloway).
> "Some Up-to-Date Gadgets (with illustrations)", by THE WICKED UNCLE.

Specific program information on The Children's Hour survives in single typescript copies of some programs and a few "full" scripts of which examples were made available to the present writer. "Very few early scripts have survived and it is clear from the one or two we have that the 'patter' varied in style and content for each programme." (Letter, dated 27.10.71, to the author, from Mary S. Hodgson, Written Archives Officer, BBC.)

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