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“These (*The Wild Body*, *The Living Buddha*, *Love in Chartres*, *Flamingo*), are all regional novels, that is to say, they all are concerned with the effects of mixing one national type with another . . . it is left to Mr. Wyndham Lewis . . . to provide the only combination that blows up. . . . The romping colloquial gusto of the last two stories and the naphtha glitter of their artificial style, make them interesting studies in modern prose . . . witty, modern, sane, difficult and unpleasant.”—*C. Connolly*. *New Statesman*, Dec., 1927.

“The studies of French provincial life could scarcely be excelled for force and terseness. . . . He speaks with the voice of a master.”—*L. P. Hartley*. *Saturday Review, London*, Dec., 1927.

“Mr. Lewis has a reputation as a painter, and this carries over into his writing a peculiarly acute attention to people’s faces. To read Mr. Lewis’s description of a face is something of an adventure.”—*Lesta Sharof*. *Brooklyn Eagle*, 1928.

“Mr. Lewis . . . somehow succeeds in drawing an extraordinarily vivid picture of the human animal; he makes a certain type of characters live as they never lived before.”—*Malcolm Cowley*. *New Republic*, 1928.

“It is impossible to comprehend the progress of modern creative literature in English without reading *The Wild Body*. . . . Those readers who recognized *Tarr*, Mr. Lewis’s first and only novel, for what it was—an immensely important gesture and defiance . . . will not be too surprised by *The Wild Body*. They will find here again that mordancy of utterance . . . that entire lack of sentimentality in any form that make up so much of the writer’s attitude towards art. . . . The essential masculinity of Mr. Lewis’s work . . . implies . . . an impartial brutality in the face of life that is more philosophical than descriptive.”—*Hubert Gorman*. *New York Herald Tribune*, 1928.

“ . . . of a vigour beyond that of almost any writer one can think of. . . . The *Ankou* is perhaps the best thing of its kind since *The Masque of the Red Death*. . . . No need . . . to insist on the scope and vivacity of Mr. Wyndham Lewis's writing. What pictures! What manipulation of phrase! Three sentences, and a living, unforgettable creature leaps from the page.”—*Alan Kemp. The Sketch* (London Weekly), 1927.

“ Mr. Lewis is a man of unusually copious idea and a writer of quite extraordinarily forceful expression. . . . *The Wild Body* . . . is not to be taken up with any preconceptions of what should properly be found there, but with a readiness to submit to the wilful limitations of a strong and original mind. Our acquiescence has its reward.”—*Morning Post, Dec., 1927*.

“ We should be tempted to say that (Mr. Wyndham Lewis) sees men as trees walking, were it not that no tree which ever grew deserves to be compared with the bawdy and repulsive figures which move dizzily across their highly-coloured continental backgrounds.”—*Vera Brittain. Time and Tide, Dec., 1927*.

“ The author imposes his view of the world on the reader, and it is ludicrous in the midst of its horror. . . . You don't believe it, just as you don't believe in the pictures of Hogarth, Rowlandson, Cruickshank and El Greco? But can you deny that if occasionally you had their vision . . . life would be extremely entertaining?”—*A. M. Daily Herald, 1928*.

“ *Beau Sejour* is a delightful study of contending personalities in a small pension 'between Roznoen and the littoral.' For the first time in our literature, so far as we are aware, it does justice to the potentialities of that quaint character, the Pole. . . . All the stories are at the centre comic, although the writing is intense.”—*Glasgow Herald, Dec., 1927*.

“ Lashing himself into mirth, Mr. Lewis is a startling spectacle. Since, of course, his is no ordinary mind one or two of these sketches have a tortured power, like some of the interlinear patterns in his other books that look like scorpions stinging themselves to death.”—*Rachel Annand Taylor. The Spectator, Dec., 1927*.

“ As a writer of fiction (Mr. Lewis) is at his best thus far in *The Wild Body* . . . these puppets give the necessary illusion of reality. We shall remember them: Brotcotnaz, Bestre, De Valmore, Mademoiselle Péronnette . . . certainly as more than mechanical puppets contrived for a moment's amusement.”—*New York Sun, 1928*.

“ Much of this book is profound and worth many readings. . . . Mr. Wyndham Lewis has won fame as a critic and a philosopher. In *The Wild Body* he is a writer of short stories, whose distinction will be fully realised by critic and philosopher alike.”—*Birmingham Post, 1928*.

“ This point of view is not new, but it has seldom been expressed with such consistent pungency as by Mr. Wyndham-Lewis-Ker-Orr in these not particularly palatable stories.”—*Yorkshire Post, Dec., 1927*.

“ Mr. Wyndham Lewis has an unusually alert and subtle mind, and he has also a great gift for vivid, not to say violent, description. . . . His powers of description have never before reached such heights as in the story of Brotcotnaz.”—*Scotsman, 1928*.

N.B.—It will doubtless be of interest to both English and American readers of Mr. Wyndham Lewis's books to have some indication of their reception in America and England respectively. Many notices of *Time and Western Man* have appeared in the Press of America and are still appearing. We shall give extracts of these notices in *Enemy No. 4*. It is our intention occasionally to print longer passages from articles which give prominence to or discuss some particular point in or aspect of Mr. Lewis's writings.

TARR. A novel by Wyndham Lewis.

Phoenix Library. Chatto & Windus. 3/6.

Entirely rewritten for new edition.

He gazed at imaginary Bertha without a spark of humour. "Humour" he said "does" *I'm all for throwing off humour:*

OVERTURE 41

arrived in my life, as I consider it has arrived in the life of the country, to discard this husk, ~~and a corner~~ Life must be met on other terms than those of fun and sport, *now. The time has come. Otherwise - disaster!*

Butcher guffawed provocatively. Tarr joined him. They both quaffed their beer. *dangerous man*

"You're a terrible fellow," said Butcher. "If you had your way, you'd leave us stark naked. We should all be standing on our little island in the ~~same~~ state of the Ancient Britons *figuratively.*" He hiccuped. *With coracles on our backs and curlson our shoulders*

"Yes, figuratively." But in reality the country would be armed better than it ever had been before, ~~by the~~ *to which* sacrifices of these famous 'national characteristics' we cling *sentimentally,* and which are merely the accident of a time, we should lay a ~~solid~~ foundation of unspecific force on which new and *realer* 'national flavours' would very soon sprout. *more masculine*

"I quite agree," Butcher jerked out energetically. He ordered another Lager, *hiccuping toughly.*

"I agree with what you say! If we don't give up dreaming, we shall get spanked. I've given up my gypsies. That was very public-spirited of me?" He looked coaxingly *oldways at his friend, who patted his knee and went on from there.*

"If every one would give up their gypsies, their jokes and their gentlemen—'Gentlemen' are worse than gypsies. It would do perhaps if they reduced them considerably, as you have your Gitanos—I'm going to swear off Humour for a year. I am going to gaze on ~~you~~ *of mine* inhumanly. All the mock matrimonial difficulties come from humour. I am going to gaze on Bertha inhumanly, and not humorously, ~~to~~ paralyse the sense for Reality, ~~to~~ people in a phlegmatic and hysterical dream-world, full of the delicious swirls of the switch-back, the ~~drunkenness~~ *into xication* of the merry-go-round—screaming leaps from idea to idea. My little weapon for bringing my man to earth—shot gun or what not—gave me good sport, too, and was of the best workmanship: I carried it slung jauntily for some time at my side—you may have noticed it. But I am in the tedious

Throwing over.

really to the teeth I declare:

The humourist is not so masculine as he then has him self!!

I mean whooped. Look at me!

Beastly Romans.

To sit all Englishmen an example. Even after you, Guy, I shall

my finger, that's flat."

are apt by their sense of humour

A specimen of the MSS. of the revised "Tarr."

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THE ENEMY No. 3

A review of art and literature

~~~~~

*Editor* - Wyndham Lewis

Author of *The Art of Being Ruled*; *The Lion and the Fox*; *Time and Western Man*; *The Wild Body*; *The Childermass*, etc.



FIRST QUARTER, 1929.

~~~~~

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“ A MAN of understanding is to benefit by his enemies. . . . He that knoweth that he hath an enemy will look circumspectly about him to all matters, ordering his life and behaviour in better sort . . . therefore it was well and truly said of Antisthenes, that such men as would be saved and become honest ought of necessity to have either good friends or bitter enemies. But forasmuch as amity and friendship nowadays speaketh with a small and low voice, and is very audible and full of words in flattery, what remaineth but that we should hear the truth from the mouth of our enemies ? Thine enemy, as thou knowest well enough, watcheth continually, spying and prying into all thine actions. As for our friends, it chanceth many times that they fall extreme sick, yea, and die while we defer and put off from day to day to go and visit them, or make small reckoning of them ; but as touching our enemies we are so observant, we curiously inquire even after their very dreams.

The end of all those combats that our forefathers in the old world had against wild beasts was that they might not be wounded or hurt by strange or savage beasts ; but those who came after have learned, moreover, how to make use of them ; not only take order to keep themselves from receiving any harm or damage by them ; but (that which more is) have the skill to draw some commodity from them, feeding of their flesh, clothing their bodies with their wool and hair, curing their maladies with their gall and rennet, arming themselves with their hides and skins.

(*Plutarch's Moralia.*)

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Cover and other Designs by Wyndham Lewis.	



A recent photograph of the Enemy, Mr. Wyndham Lewis.

ENEMY BULLETIN. 1929 (FIRST QUARTER).

THE necessity for this paper arose in the state of the world of letters and art when it started, and the year or so that has elapsed since then has naturally brought no change in that. Our society being the opposite of concentrated and compact, there is nothing that happens anywhere in it that affects every part of it. Indeed, however well-managed and popular the disturbance that may occur, there must always be some important area that escapes its effects: all the more must that be the case when such a solitary voice as mine begins crying, so that it can reach in only the most erratic way the persons for whom it is intended. No *coup d'état* by a single hand or even a group, no quick revolution of opinion, is possible, even with the connivance of a majority.

As for me I do not need to tell you that I had no majority: I had not *a cat*, there was not so much as the shadow of a person beside me. If I am right, then so many people must by the same token be wrong, that I am not likely to be spoilt, for my job of "Enemy," by the successes I win in the teeth of a most sullen and numerous section of the assembly. If I had not been *successful* I should not be addressing you at all, about that there can be no mistake: but if you see my name in some conspicuous place or should you observe it bracketed with that of some star or hero—or, noticing that I get some mention suggestive that the description "Enemy" is out of date, you say to yourself that that title should be dropped, now that I am powerfully supported—against that you must put this: that in the course of two years and a half having published in quick succession *The Art of Being Ruled* (1926), *The Lion and the Fox* (1927), *Time and Western Man* (1927), *The Wild Body* (1927), *Paleface (Enemy No. 2, 1927)*, *The Childermass, Part 1*, 1928, there is surely no other English writer who could have retained as I have done every enemy I started with and even added to the list—even if I have also discovered friends. These individuals are many of them people personally disaffected, for I have not lived for so long in London for nothing. This statement is not at all qualified by the brilliant reception accorded to the books catalogued above by a variety of independent writers, and by people unknown to me in other countries or in the English Dominions, whom I take this opportunity of

ENEMY BULLETIN

saluting—namely that I have deserved my sobriquet by *sabotage* and by boycott, and could prove my contention up to the hilt—but there is no need. If you wished to measure the bitterness of this disaccord as shown by a single act, I could not do better than cite—I will not name—that case in which I have been the object of the meanest sort of attack, in which my personal honour as a writer has been assailed in such a manner that, were I with the inadequate means at my disposal to undertake my defence, I should merely advertise a libel and not secure the conviction in the mind of the public of the libeller, however crystal-clear my case—for “Enemies” do not secure convictions against eminent publicists entrenched in their positions who befoul them, rather (it is probable) they receive another handful of mud from the judge or packed commission. But there will come a time—if I may use the words of Disraeli in exhibiting to you the opposite of a dandy’s unsullied magnificence (actually I am showing you the stain of an unclean missile)—when I will drag out that libel from its shabby security and nail it upon the back of the person who wrote it, and send him, the most ignoble of sandwichmen, into posterity, to advertise to all future animals of his species the lesson conveyed (to take my valedictory image from the title of the book chosen by him for misrepresentation) by a *Lion* rampant above a *Fox* fixed in his own trap !

EDITOR.

THE DIABOLICAL PRINCIPLE.

by Wyndham Lewis



PART I. THE POLITICAL PHILISTINE.

PART II. NEW NIHILISM.

When the great Tao is obliterated, we have humaneness and righteousness. Prudence and circumspection appear, and we have much hypocrisy. When family relations no longer harmonize, we have filial piety and parental love. When the country and the clans decay through disorder, we have loyalty and allegiance. Abandon your saintliness, put away your prudence, and the people will gain a hundredfold. Abandon your humaneness, put away your righteousness, and the people will return to filial piety and paternal love.—Lao-tze.

PART I

THE POLITICAL PHILISTINE

(1) *EE-EE-EE-ee-arse.*

Nothing is to be gained by shielding a sluggish, a pretentious, or even an absolutely silent, person (the dead that live) so far as I know : but in this issue I am pricking no fresh bubbles dead or alive. First I have had to finish my considerable expedition against Stein and the *steinizing* foreign garrison in Paris, the familiars of the literary world of international writing in english.

For Miss Stein, as is well known, I have something that may be conveniently described as respect. When Miss Stein gets out of english I will actually join in the community-singing with the rest in her praise though in a way of my own, suggested to me by her Olympus. At present I can only think of her as a whale out of water. Because of the impediment she is deliberately absurd, she could not order a dinner without tickling the waiter to death—and that is her function, as it is, she is forging an instrument like Lear in his Nonsense-book, it is idle to pretend that it is anything but funny. “ A change, a final change, includes potatoes. This is no authority for the abuse of cheese. What language can instruct any fellow ? ” None, it is indeed not any language that is conveyed to other fellows by her, it is in the long run bluff to use our vocabularies except for comic purposes. She openly laughs now all the time at what she does, however. Miss Stein is a new phenomenon, a high-brow clown. It is as though, too alive to the jeers of the audience, she had started grimacing and winking at them : but to be so alive to their attitudes she must have some of their vulgarity.

When english was only written in England, it is true, it flourished up into a literature, one bearing comparison with any ; but I am not concerned about english especially, so much as pure speech : literatures in any event depend upon circumstances that do not exist now in England or in any country : if a universal tongue is being manufactured in Paris (at the sign

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of the transplanted *Swan of Avon* within cat-call of the Odéon or elsewhere) as the literary bagmen or big and little "drummers" of Letters and Art announce—in the most up-and-coming stale journalese of somebody else's mother tongue that I have ever encountered—why has that volapuk the anglo-saxon tongue as a main component at this time of the day?—what a foolish accident, or really serious mistake! That speech if it is a proper Ido should not be based upon anglo-saxon, and it would not perhaps (I have already contended) if Miss Stein (principally) had not been taught english as a child. The migrations and sudden shuffling of peoples has left english, in some places, up in the air, in fact. But speech itself suffers as a result, through english.

Again why when a person is "musical" probably or has that as a principal talent, should they have to express themselves in an art of Letters (above all in the Letters of another person's mother tongue, which he prefers but they do not, small blame to them) when he, or is it she, should be pouring their muddy *trop-plein* into the abstract medium of the sign-language of music? It is a mystery. There is no visible reason for this except that the musical profession is overstocked with that sort of high-average talent, and words are cheap, breath is cheap and ink not much dearer.

So really when I go to Paris upon my critical excursions, determined at all costs to suppress a stutter that echoes over the places and peuplades that speak english (and is applauded by all solemn professional suppressors of traditions and of articulate speech as language of the highest order) I do not need anyone to tell me that it is not *english* that is at stake. No, it is not english, the major history of that tongue is closed, I am prepared to confess or to allow as likely, for people will never have enough money again, or the artless high spirits so important in a patron, to pay a person to speak it as Shakespeare did, or Dryden or Nash: that I know perfectly and believe I am alone in so thoroughly knowing it, of those that speak that tongue. It is destined to become a dialect of ill-paid peons, no doubt, locked up in a large rainy island—for do the Icelanders now write Sagas? The English will shortly become as silent, it is probable enough. So it is with some genuine surprise that I exclaim that it is not *that* that is at stake at all, anything but, it is something quite different. For my part I care no more for Stein-english than for Bengalee or the muchy-muchying of the international Celestial or laundryman (all joking amusements of the superior and the tongue-proud and I am not of

those—I am not tongue-proud, so I take no interest) and of course if I wish to read english, almost a dead tongue I think, I know where to find it; it is not the english, then, that is in question but simply the *stutter* that I would stop—for it suggests that there is an idiot in Paris broadcasting who is talking and talking and talking english from habit but who does not *want* to talk english. I believe a system in which there is such muddle and all the tongues are in the wrong heads and the words like the people get mixed is certainly rotten: I, like Paul and Jolas deplore that system, though I am not a pious communist. It is that system which compels Joyce, Stein, *et hoc al.* to speak english as though it were metropolitan when it is not, that I go over and denounce—but as a *pastime*, purely and simply as a pastime, on the pattern of Paul. “*It is our purpose purely and simply to amuse ourselves*” Jolas-Paul wrote in one of their best manifestos (a most awfully interesting one, beautifully written) and that is what I do too.

So the stammer still goes on in english but Stein should scratch Joyce’s back as he has scratched her’s and repay him by taking a leaf out of his polygluttonous volume (always “in progress”—Continuous Present) and get out of english. *Miss Gertrude Stein should get out of english.* That is quite the first step. If Stein got out of english she would get out of english more thoroughly than Joyce (who is half in and half out) and she would then duly lead that able Dublin executant into a manner where together they positively might concoct not a bad new tongue. “Purely and simply to amuse themselves” of course and to pass the time they might do that together in Paris. The stammer would promptly die down—it is the english nothing else that causes it I feel certain—and english would be at peace. A new era of international friendship meanwhile could scarcely help dawning and what the sage of Weimar recommended and what I vote for would be brought about, we should have one tongue and not a hundred. But english does not belong to the New Stein Age at all: english is a mere part of the old bad patch-work quilt of tongues and nations which we all desire to see driven out or melted into one, like Goethe, for who is so dumm as to wish to say particularly either *ja, oui, yes, or si*—one more than the other—in reply for instance to the solemn question of Jolas, sent out from Transition to english and american writers (one of them showed me a copy) “Are you favourable to Communism?” (or something to that effect). Is not *Yarsy* the least compromising reply, for a writer not quite wishing to quit the fence, yet desirous of putting his

THE ENEMY

best foot foremost, in a respectable *fortschritt*, and of showing the "breadth" of his mind when the horrible frowning Moscow is brought up to him in this way.—"Is there one God and is Lenin his prophet?" *Answer* "Yarsy!"—or still better he could (slightly yawning and tapping his mouth) answer in a gentle stammer "EE-EE-EE-ee-ee-arse"—I alone should be heard emphatically to mutter "Nee-ee-eeen-Oce."

(2) "*The disciples of the Nazarene, as poet and philosopher, must feel that the burden of proof is on them.*"

I have no idea if I am allowed to employ sarcasm here but I risk that because I wish to be truthful about Paul and it is impossible without sarcasm to be truthful about Paul, or about Jolas. Many difficult arguments have occurred between myself and people of one kind and another on the subject of my choice of "enemies." Is Paul, is Jolas, or is Stein, worth wasting ink upon? Some of those who have asked this question have done so because they rather stupidly dislike such "innovators." In that case it is not I, but they, who do such people too much honour—in mistaking them namely for inventive persons. (I except Stein, who appears to me original, I defend my choice of her as an "enemy" at all times and in all places.) They should dislike me much more than they do them, and in fact that often has occurred.

What I think of course is that in themselves most of these "enemies" are of the most perfect unimportance; but in the influence they exert it seems to me that it is foolish to deny them "importance." On the other hand I hope not to have to draw attention to them any more, for they are certain to go on doing exactly the same things in the same way, and here I show very plainly why and how they are what they are.

Transition has now become a Quarterly: everybody is there just as before (Paul does not seem to be so prominent but perhaps he is resting). My notes "The diabolical principle" are drawn mainly from material I was at pains to gather before this change had occurred.

On p. 168 of its May number last year *Transition* chanted: "*Humanists cannot fail to realise they are now on the defensive. The disciples of the Nazarene, as poet and philosopher, must feel that the burden of proof is on them.*"

I am not a humanist, I am an outsider who has deliberately intervened out of pure malice to show up all Paul's tricks, and

what I consider often are Stein's: but no one could "fail to realise," who at the time perused the December number of that Review, that it had altered its tune: so much without immodesty the *Enemy* may claim to have achieved. (The suspension of *Transition* during the month of February last suggested even that some internal injury of a mortal nature might have been sustained by it.) The editor of the *Enemy* was at all events the occasion of *Transition's* editors collecting together into an alarmed editorial knot to defend their principles. Paul, Jolas, and Sage had all to get together to do it apparently, since they all signed what was written: it does not seem to me that considered as the combined effort of three editors it was a very outstanding performance.

I now go on with my wrecking of this puppet-game, showing all bystanders how, although these performers pretend to be lounging about against lamp-posts and enjoying the fun they are really confederates and have pieces of thread going into their pockets.

Sure enough they invariably are most concerned to demonstrate to everybody *that they all have absolutely no connection with one another*. That is in the nature of things their first trick. "Mr. Joyce and Miss Stein are at opposite poles of thought and expression" and Superrealism or Dadaism has not "anything in common" with these protagonists. So it *must* be a mere accident that they are all collected together between the covers of the same Review: there can be no other explanation—it is a kind of miracle, evidently. When "opposite poles of thought and expression" come together in this way, well it is simply one of those mysteries that it is "impertinent" (this is the lofty expression adopted by them) to enquire about.

In an advertisement some time ago *Transition* gave a list of writers from *seventeen different countries* who have contributed to its pages. The United States was the last country on the list. At the end of it, by herself, came *GERTRUDE STEIN*. It was written—

"Whenever she pleases, *GERTRUDE STEIN* contributes what she pleases to *transition* and it pleases her and it pleases us."

Such signal honours showered upon a person must awaken some misgivings and questionings in the best-disposed of the public. But I will not be "impertinent."

"Now, as to the *Enemy's* conjectures as to how Mr. Joyce, Miss Stein or the Superrealists happened to be among *transitions*

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contributors, they are impertinent" (p. 172). Enough! But oh the "deeply entrenched nobility" (who to a man, stand four-deep behind the editor of the *Enemy* we are told) are very superficially "dug in" compared to an editor of a Review of this order when an "impertinent" eye is cocked in a direction where eyes are not supposed to trespass.

The main trouble with all persons like these nothing-if-not "independent" editors, however, is surely that of the nature of their partnership. *At all costs* you must be made to believe that (1) they none of them have any connection with any of the others; and that (2) they are all semi-miraculously "detached" from everything but the purest interests of the mind.

The specific cant of "detachment" (the attitude stolen by art, journalism, advertisement, etc., from Science) the twin of "anonymity," is the arch-fraud; it is one of the routine tasks of the *Enemy* to explain it. Except that I have no intention of continuing to advertise the transactions of this particular Review, much exercise for that self-imposed commission would be forthcoming for me among its editors.

(3) *The answer of the massed editorial cast of "Transition" to the "Enemy."*

In their massed answer to my criticism Paul Jolas and Sage presented themselves to their readers as good romantic american "radicals," confronted with a deep-dyed conservative "Britisher": national prejudice was invoked, that is to say, for the occasion, though America would scarcely be stirred very deeply I imagine by that jingo device in this instance. But that was soon forgotten: for what was written on pp. 163-165 to a stirring patriotic air, redolent of tea in Boston harbour and other events in which Paul's ancestors participated (his revolutionary burgher forebears hurling the tea in, while mine, in full uniform straddled upon the bridge of the nearest british frigate an outraged eye observing the behaviour of this primitive Paul with martial indignation) did not quite agree with what came immediately afterwards.

"We believe that only the dream really matters." (Good old "dream" how handy you are.) "We believe that there is a universal eternal link binding the nations and which has nothing to do with limitations of a Western Psychology. . . . *The dream has no racial characteristics.* There is a fundamental correspondence between the nations that has nothing to do with the frontiers.—But that is almost a platitude."

Well nigh !—but it is a strange platitude to plunge ecstatically into after attempting to discredit an opponent upon the ground that he is a “ Britisher ” !

On p. 166, after remarking that the *Enemy* proposes “ to defend the West against the dark powers of the East,” *Transition* said in its reply to me :

“ What is this much vaunted Western World which Mr. Lewis regards as of such high historic importance ? Is it the catholic tradition ? Is it Græco-Latin historic civilisation ? Is it the Anglo-Saxon Hegemony ?—It seems to us that Mr. Lewis’ attempt to defend the West—that tottering bastard concept—is a *bourgeois* impulse. *It is the Anglo-Saxon superiority mania*, which in America has glorified the ignorant and the philistine into the belief of his racial superiority.”

I of course never have had any intention whatever of “ Defending the West,” not even against itself—only of annoying Paul, Jolas, Sage, and Stein perhaps, a little, and so “ amusing ” myself. As to defending it against the *East*, I have never been guilty of such a fantastic notion : at most I thought I might protect it against a few almost extinct mexican tribesmen, and a few good-natured Negroes (very much nicer persons than Paul I hasten to add—Harlem is far more interesting than Montparnasse). I was even engaged in the opposite task in *Enemy No. 2*, namely in defending “ the East ” (the whole of Hindu India in fact) against Miss Mayo—a Westerner like the rest of us, who—after the Philippines—had vomited quickly upon everything south of the Himalayas—upon all those “ dark-skinned ” peoples, whose record, upon the whole, has been so much nobler and more intelligent than ours and at which offence there was not found a single voice in the West, except my own, (and in this I am not boasting but stating a fact) to give expression to its abhorrence of such behaviour. It does not appear to me, on the face of it, that I can be accused of hating, or of seeking to “ victimise ” the “ dark skin.”

But when my friend Paul says that an impulse is “ bourgeois,” how naturally the epithet comes to him !—you’d think he’d been associating with communists. (The Superrealists are “ communists ”—on that “ inescapable point Mr. Lewis is correct,” I am glad to see ! It recommends them to Paul and it recommends them to me, and if it pleases him it must please all of us. It is good, it is fitting. It is true—it is *correct*.—above all, correct !) And what is so “ bourgeois ” as that “ narrow-minded,” philistine, Anglo-Saxon resolve

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to remain *oneself*—of which “self” assuredly a part is what is inherited from the White generations?

I have no intention of pressing my friends of *Transition* too hard—Miss Stein might burst out into a stutter that would never end—but I read upon p. 175, as follows:

“If we have a warm feeling for both (the Superrealists) and the Communists, it is because the movements which they represent are aimed at the destruction of a thoroughly rotten structure . . . we are entertained intellectually, if not physically, with the idea of (the) destruction (of contemporary society). But . . . our interests are confined to literature and life. . . . It is our *purpose purely and simply to amuse ourselves.*”

Many a true word is spoken in earnest, but all are not equally true. It is the purpose of these gentlemen “purely and simply” to “amuse” themselves, but they have a “warm sympathy” with *anybody* who aims at the destruction of Western Civilisation (so they *have* a political interest in Western Civilisation, and the problem of its political destruction). The Communists seem to have a sporting chance of affecting this destruction; they have started well: so for them “warm sympathy” is felt by Paul and presumably by everybody else concerned at all deeply in *Transition*.

Now I do experience great difficulty in seeing how this statement of theirs (as a typical example) helps them to show that I was wrong. The fact that Paul and Jolas are not Communists “should not be construed as an attempt to wash our hands of the Superrealists.” No: and a “warm feeling” is experienced by Paul for the Communists; and the Superrealists are Communists. They improve upon what they allege to have been my syllogism.

I abandon the attempt to follow how near Paul or Jolas can get to a Communist without having anything whatever to do with him—being in fact “his opposite pole,” no doubt.

In this pamphlet I touch here and there, as I must, upon the pros and cons of Communism: Communism is for me a doctrine like another, having its faults—I am exterior to it, but not for that reason a “Britisher” or even an oil-magnate or his servant—merely in fact an artist disliking in Communism what is mechanical and what, as the name “communism” alone suggests, threatens to regularize too much the individual’s duties to his neighbour. But here I am only trying to fix Paul down to something or other. He wont be a Communist: he wont have the “tempo of the mind,” the “specific manner

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in which a Communist" or a Superrealist "reacts to events and things": but he *will* have "a warm feeling for Communists," he prints thirty-one contributions by Superrealists, he tells us, although their "opposite pole" (at the same time he finds their work "especially worth translating and presenting to American readers"). Paul is surely one of the most many-faceted mortals that it could ever fall to the lot of a restless analyst to give a coherent account of, for the benefit of a very easily muddled world!

On p. 173 the Paul—Jolas—Sage—Stein—Beach faction remarked in its reply to me:

"It is extremely interesting to note . . . that . . . Mr. Lewis has quoted not one word from *transition* in his criticism." That omission, wounding no doubt to their editorial susceptibilities, I now propose to remedy. So I ask your indulgence if this time in my article called "The Diabolic Principle," there is a little too much of the text of the doctrine of *Transition*—for because they call me a "barbarian" (October 1928 issue) that does not succeed in blinding me to the barbarous tongue in which I am described as barbarous. These publicists will never be able to escape in future on the score that their personal evidence has not been taken this once at least.

(4) *The Political Philistine.*

A printed form exploding with a dozen or more caustic questions is often sent out by any advanced Review of high standing to a select list of advanced writers of high standing. These are asked a variety of facetious questions: else, as with the questionnaire of *Transition*, put through a solemn catechism; or the modes are mixed. Perhaps if I borrowed that device and wrote one myself upon the spot, or imagined an interview with a personal canvasser, I should clear up with the sort of emphasis adapted to the "hurried man" some pressing difficulties of certain readers. Confusions attend necessarily upon the working of a critical system so complex as mine. Here then is such a dialogue, in which an inquisitorial political art-journalist attempts to extract all my critical teeth one by one. (*Question* "P. A. J." and *Answer* "L").

Scene.—A poor quarter of the town. I appear in the mouth of my tub.

P. A. J. "Are you there Lewis?"

L. "Ay Ay sir—your obedient humble servant!"

P. A. J. "Are you a communist?"

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L. "Not to-day thank you: I have a warm sympathy for your movement but I'm amusing myself, thank you very much. *Strictly Pleasure*, that's my watchword."

P. A. J. "Why are you not a communist, Lewis?"

L. "When you truly communise, your worship, so will I: meantime I keep the few sous I can wring out of the bourgeois in my stocking."

P. A. J. "That is immoral."

L. "Perhaps—I have always admired your high moral tone but have never ventured to imitate it."

P. A. J. "You often have claimed, Enemy, that you belong to no party. But you must be something! You must be something!"

L. "I may be an anarchist, I don't know—I always get the labels mixed. To quote your favourite philosopher—the *Erziehung des Einzelnen—c'est l'important*, what he called *Fingerzeige zu einem neuen Leben—MITTAG UND EWIGKEIT!*"

P. A. J. (with visible disgust). "An anarchist!—A Tolstoyan anarchist?"

L. "A Lewisite begging your pardon."

P. A. J. "That is a new poison-gas you have named."

L. "For a gas-fan it may mean that, I don't know."

P. A. J. "Why are you an anarchist of all things—that is a fine thing to be!"

L. "For the same reason that you are, excellency!"

P. A. J. "What do you mean! *Anarchist!* I am a communist—no—you've made me say the wrong thing curse you!—what I am is simply a poet with a deep sympathy for Communism, I hate anything that is not destructive to everything but I am only a broad-minded Chicago gentleman *amusing* myself you follow me, with poetry and painting—I am not a poet, I am a gentleman, you understand, not a poet, a progressive man about town, but about any town, you get my meaning?"

L. "A strange amusement sir, under correction! Communism is an original amusement, sir, is it not? Does not its literature require a great deal of erudition and of moral fervour, sir—a great deal more moral fervour than is 'amusing' sir—if I may make so bold as to use your word, sir?"

P. A. J. "Don't keep calling me sir, please, I'm a worker."

L. "I beg your pardon sir—I am a poor worker as a matter of fact—long hours and little pay; when I'm with a boss like you—big or little—I say 'sir' I don't know why. I know you love the poor worker and would die for him if possible and the least I can do is to call you sir."

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P. A. J. "Its a bourgeois habit; also how dare you describe me as a boss! What are you, did you say, then, that I may get it correct?"

L. "Still an anarchist, illustrious sir, still an anarchist, I cant see my way to being a communist at the same time but it is lack of practice I am sure."

P. A. J. "Why aren't you a communist with a warm sympathy for anarchism, catholicism and matriarchy, also anglo-catholicism and Mrs. Eddy, determined to take over Capitalism and run it non-democratically by way of dictatorship, with power of life and death added to that of sacking and confiscation, so becoming a super-capitalist, but actually being a worker of the world, *an artist*, you know, and very artistic, living a little drunkenly (one must forget!) in the heart of a luxury centre—Paris, New York or what not? Why not? You stand out because you have something up your sleeve, or so you think."

L. "I dont stand out—I am simply not ambitious. Also I look at one thing at a time."

P. A. J. (bluffly). "Thats all very well——! But why after all do you hold these peculiar opinions?"

L. "Because I was born free but everywhere I am in chains."

P. A. J. "How could you be born free?"

L. "I had that sensation shortly after birth: but please overlook it, it was only a sensation!"

P. A. J. "Insubordination in the cradle!"

L. "It culminated three years ago in an enormous sensation. I saw red, white and black all together!"

P. A. J. "You were in 1914 a revolutionary artist who advocated the destruction of the Bank of England and Buckingham Palace?"

L. "No, the Royal Academy—it is different."

P. A. J. "You told the mob in your virgin oration to *Kill John Bull!*"

L. "Yes, but *with art*—to *Kill John Bull with Art* is what I said."

P. A. J. "Since then you have altered your mind?"

L. "Not at all—other things have killed John Bull and art at the same time and in the same place, so where would be the sense in talking about either in that connection?"

P. A. J. "You are a White Guard?"

L. "No."

P. A. J. "You are a Swiss?"

L. "A Swiss? A *Senn* is it? No."

P. A. J. "You are a Tory?"

L. "What is that? Is it something to do with a Macaroni? Is it Major Pendennis or Lord Benjamin Wyndham Lewis?"

P. A. J. "You wish to preserve the British Empire, keep what is left of the Squires of the Manor in their ancient country seats, abolish super-tax, and secure the capital of the Banks and Trusts to the great money magnates forever?"

L. "No."

P. A. J. "That is what your teaching would lead to, if followed!"

L. "You misinterpret that teaching perhaps for some purpose, I cant say."

P. A. J. "How can it mean anything else?"

L. "Well it does not mean that, your excellency—under correction! I have only met one authentic aristocrat and he was a bank clerk in Portugal. He was an english aristocrat, he was in Portugal. I do not wish to agitate to maintain him in his position. As to the Squirearchy, I have never seen a fox but I dislike the idea of pursuing it with dogs and horses: most good old english Squires are of an immemorial jewish stock, I know three or four, they are hale and hearty and sturdy, and are quite capable of taking care of themselves without my assistance—there is really no occasion for me to be a conservative on their account, therefore. The great money magnates you mention occupy a world remote from my interests: you are far nearer to them than I am. As to the British Empire, it is no doubt a great business enterprise—economically very interesting to a born economist and perhaps well organised, and I daresay the envy of outsiders, or perhaps I should say was—it began with the capture of plate-fleets, how it will end I cannot guess: but it is a concern quite outside the scope of my very specialized interests. Who owns it at present I have not the least idea—few English like myself have any stake in it, I think, at least I do not believe that the red paint upon the world-map makes me any richer, in the way, for instance, that the 'Red' complexion of your mind might very conceivably put a little money in your pocket."

P. A. J. "So you are not a conservative you say!" (penetratingly): "are you sure, Lewis?"

L. "If you will tell me what I am supposed to wish to *conserve* I could perhaps answer you more easily."

P. A. J. "You are 'a *status-quo*-upholding brittanic monarchist,' in the pay of the Duke of Newcastle?"

L. "No. Not of the Duke of Newcastle."

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P. A. J. "Why do you attack Negroes in your books?"

L. "Attack Negroes? I have never done that. I respect all the Negroes I have met for their unaffected high spirits."

P. A. J. "Then why have you written 'Paleface'?"

L. "I laugh at Whites for allowing you to persuade them that Negroes are their superiors in everything. I knew it would annoy you and the poor Whites wouldn't know what I was talking about."

P. A. J. "Why do you attack radicalist Reviews which give opportunities to artists and writers to experiment?"

L. "Because there is no occasion to be radicalist or to hold any political creed to patronize or to practise experiment in an art."

P. A. J. "By your attacks you are betraying those innovators to the Philistine."

L. "But you are the Philistine, can't you see that, all your self-contradictions come from your being that. I can see from the lowering of your right eyelid that you are smiling, you old reprobate—you are the most fanatical Philistine on the earth that is all—my compliments!"

P. A. J. "How is it then that we alone support original art?"

L. "Intellectual power is always *power*, is it not, and you wish to make it your monopoly. It is your idea to harness it like a river and make it do work. I, on the other hand, believe that that exploitation, because of the peculiar nature of our minds, will injure and impoverish the intellect. Also you are the declared enemy of 'the Intellect'; that is a bad look out, is it not?"

P. A. J. "What do you mean by Philistine?"

L. "There are two Philistines, as I see it, and I will do my best to make clear how that is: there is you and there is the Philistine part of the public. Left to yourself you would betray the art you patronize: but you say that by pointing this out and suggesting that already your influence has left a disagreeable trace upon most art which (because 'advanced') has had to accept your patronage, I betray it to the other Philistine. It is the choice of two evils. I regard you, the Political Philistine, as the more dangerous Philistine of the two, because you are scientifically equipped for your war upon the mind and because you pass yourself off as its friend, patron and impresario. If you were what you pretend I should have no objection to your politics—one politician is much the same as another to me."

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P. A. J. "What is a Political Philistine? I should like to know what you mean by a Political Philistine. I am not a politician."

L. "All politicians are Philistines—as all plumbers dream of drains and all doctors of death and epidemics."

P. A. J. "But I am not a politician."

L. "Were that the case you would be a pure Philistine, there would be no excuse for you—but you do yourself an injustice. You could account for everything that is vulgar self-contradicting and disingenuous about yourself by the following candid statement. 'I am a politician' you could say 'disguised as a poet. (A politician has to disguise himself as much as a detective or actor.) As I have no respect for art or for the artist except in terms of his political or economic usefulness, it is natural that I should use him as a broom to *balayer* that portion of the political field allotted to me. I urge him to disintegrate his material (of articulate language or of plastic form) because that material is of vital importance and its disintegration has a reaction upon the human plane. Also his violences of self-expression, the more tortured the better as far as I am concerned—all the romantic storm and stress in brief—can be made to second the political interests I serve and, further, into this feverish chaos of his thought I am enabled to insinuate as a subject-matter, or what not, ideas and tendencies that are congenial to me as an agent of catastrophic political reform.'—If you said that it would be all right. But of course you cannot, therefore from my standpoint you are in the nature of a perpetual problem for the free artist."

At this point we will suppose that the politico art-man departs, flinging a few sarcastic remarks at my head as he does so. But I now of course have to deal with the crowd of readers I have collected. In the nature of things a brisk little dialogue of this sort cannot clear up everything. I will at once address myself to the task of answering one of the main questions that puzzle, it seems, many of the Enemy's friends.

(5) *The New Philistinism.*

To the political art reporter I spoke of "Violences of self-expression, the more tortured the better." But it has been objected that my own critical writing is full of storm and stress: that I am a counter-storm, merely, and that I do not set an example of Olympian calm to my romanticist adversaries.

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

But, beyond this, the temple I might design is not a greek temple, as it happens. "Classical," for me, is not necessarily hellenic. And I am not filled with a deep contempt for Shakespeare because he wrote such a stormy and "chaotic" piece as *King Lear* instead of a piece observing the classical canon for dramatic art.

I need not go over in this place what I understand by the term "romantic," since I have devoted a great deal of space to that elsewhere. Also when I come to deal with the "diabolic principle" it will be clear what I mean by romantic and its opposite, for what the people whose propaganda I am analysing explicitly state is that they wish to promote a *romantic* point of view, nothing less nor more.

Next I come to a very serious difficulty for some of my readers. They have taken me, I think, for a "defender of the faith" in a way that I am not: consequently they have been shocked to find designs and decorations within the covers of the *Enemy* that did not satisfy them as illustrations of what I had to say in my critical text or did not tally with the rôle they had assigned me. Some have believed, I am afraid, that I was disposed to defend against all that they (but not I) regard as "ugly" in art all that is pleasant innocuous and sweet. That is of course not the case. I am afraid that in actual fact my revaluation of the european world, were I given *carte blanche* to build it in conformity with my view of perfection, would be very much more fundamental than that contemplated by *Transition*. And that is even one of my main objections to these particular transitionist radicals. They are, for me, false revolutionaries, and they wish for a *transition* into a New Philistinism (smeared over with a debased intellectualist varnish) and accompanied with a quite needless material violence, and not a *transition* of a more truly revolutionary order, into an order of things radically different from the "capitalist state."

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For it is precisely a capitalist state of mind that the Russia of to-day is often with some reason accused of. The *violences* of expression I spoke of disparagingly are violences that are deliberately sought and which are artificially entertained and exploited, as *violences*, for violence sake. They always are given an as it were physical connotation. It is almost as though, when a persian or chinese artist dislocated the arm or leg of some figure in a composition, for the purposes of his design, a critic had applauded this device on the ground that it symbolised the artist's desire to put upon the rack half the population of Persia or of China, as a punishment for being such terrible *bourgeois*. Whereas in fact the artist might not relish his countrymen being such deeply-ingrained *bourgeois*, but, once he started painting, in order to paint well he would have to banish his political sensations altogether or so I believe.

I do not of course suppose that the majority of those people interested in the *Enemy* have fallen into the mistake which led to this further definition of my position. But I have on either hand two sets of interested people, neither of whom I regard as likely to further the interests of art. On the one hand there are the "radicalist" Philistines, interested in the same things as myself for motives quite alien to those things. Upon the other hand there are the more obvious Philistines, interested in nothing I am interested in, who simply dislike anything that is "difficult" or "not beautiful," and who are the average sensual public, defending their vulgar appetites, their sugar sticks and the gods of their embattled mediocrity. I can assure any member of that public who has strayed into this discussion that the editorial staff of *Transition*, or of the *Figure on the Carpet*, or any similar organ, are much more of their kidney than am I (and a quotation from Irving Babbitt or from St. Thomas Aquinas stuck as an epigraph at the head of their articles does not convince me of the classic composure of their minds).

The doctrinaires that I am thinking of are then, for me, on the side of the "romantic"—sensual average—majority, and must sooner or later, as the night follows the day, betray the artist whom they use to that majority, for they are as Philistine as it. It is not their politics, but this fact, to which I primarily object. And it is owing to this philistine affinity of the professional false-revolutionary (however much disguised beneath a *fard* of intellectualist fashion) that I am the critic of those other Philistines.

(6) *Evening dress.*

It is of course at this point that my criticism of what I have called the "High Bohemia" of the Revolutionary Rich comes in. A Savile Row evening dress suit is the symbol of this absurdity, to which it is always necessary to draw attention. Put across with enough aplomb anything goes: and a Savile Row dinner-jacket in itself supplies all the aplomb that is required for this simple operation. (If any reader immediately would inquire "Do you object to evening dress?" I shout "NO!" to him and pass on.) A person in a well-cut twenty-guinea evening dress suit is, as a militant communist, nothing short of a logical monstrosity: the human reason shies at such a spectacle and a laugh bursts or should burst from your throat to greet that walking incongruity.

Lenin in a top hat and frock coat would be a far greater anomaly than the Grand Lama of Thibet or a Zulu chief in that costume. But most communists are not so passionately logical as to be unable to ignore that sort of fundamental propriety of their faith, though Lenin was. The merely symbolical obligations of their religion, or of their "red" complexions—these tiresome little questions of mere taste—are easily overridden. What *anti-noblesse* obliges a man to is the last thing that this new "proletarian" nobility considers. In the theatres of Leningrad evening dress has once more made its appearance, we learn: but that is not such a striking fact as immaculately dressed persons here in the West, of the same creed. "Revolution" has become a sort of violent and hollow routine: obviously the less art mixes itself up with such a political machine the better, for else it will run the chance of becoming as unreal as it.

(7) *My Bill of Rights.*

It is not a political interest at all that drives me to this critical activity. I advance the strange claim (as my private *Bill of Rights*) to act and to think non-politically in everything, in complete detachment from all the intolerant watchwords and formulas by which we are beset. I am an artist and my *mind*, at least, is entirely free: also that is a freedom that I hold from no man and have every intention of retaining. I shall act as a conventional "radical" at six this evening if that seems to me appropriate to the situation, and at ten a.m. to-morrow I shall display royalist tendencies if I am provoked by too much stupidity or righteous pomp from some other quarter.

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Yet if an art has for its function to represent manners and people, I do not see how it can avoid systematising its sensibility to the extent of showing some figures much as Molière, for instance, did, as absurd or detestable. But the *bourgeois*, or the *bourgeois-gentilhomme*, in the work of Molière, is not an advertisement for "bourgeois" civilisation exactly. So to-day such a creation would be serving a political end, since the "bourgeois" is the favourite comic Aunt-Sally of the communist.

But here is the point that is essential to my argument. Molière would have done you a *bolshevik* with as much relish as a *bourgeois*, for his *Précieuses* were equally *ridiculous*.

Plomer is probably the best novelist in South Africa to-day. D. H. Lawrence in England and Sherwood Anderson in America, are among the very best writers produced by those countries recently: and as to Paris, is it necessary to say that almost all that is good, in formal tendency, or in actual achievement, as either painting or writing (and there is not much) is to be found here and there between the covers of *Transition*? You may not accept this as true, but it is what I believe and it is upon that basis that I am arguing. In the anglo-saxon world, that is to say, all the best artists are engaged in some form or other of political revolutionary propaganda as much as was Tolstoy in Russia in the last century. Almost the only conspicuous exceptions to this rule are to be found among artists of pronounced theological bias.

In anglo-saxon countries to-day then a first-rate or very talented artist or man of letters or philosopher is invariably (with the exception of the theologian) a destructive political revolutionary idealist. In their several ways these persons are as fervent propagandists as was Tolstoy. So it seems to me we get back, in one degree or another, with all of them, to the problem of Tolstoy—of the artist who is at the same time a fanatical politician.

Is it possible to launch and develop this criticism without being accused of bias of an opposite sort—in a word, of being a "reactionary," of the nature of Thomas Carlyle? My answer is that it is impossible. But that does not make the accusation necessarily true. You may object to Tolstoy, as an artist, on the ground of his politics, without that charge being levelled at you: but it is not possible to make the same criticism of a contemporary without it being said that you are a politician (of opposite sign) as much as the people you arraign.

Yet surely to root politics out of art is a highly necessary

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undertaking : for the freedom of art, like that of science, depends entirely upon its objectivity and non-practical, non-partisan passion. And surely you should be able to employ the same arguments for a living artist that everyone has always been allowed to employ for one that is dead !

PART II

NEW NIHILISM

(1) *The "New Romanticism"—New Nihilism.*

As to the account given by the editorial staff of *Transition* of themselves and their purposes, no equivocation is possible as to the main principles of their doctrine—repeatedly they have underlined and formulated them. When they print a piece by Joyce, Fargue, Lautréamont, La Rochelle, or Sternheim, they often accompany it with a special mention, wax eloquent about it, and explain it to their readers.

Next as to their willingness to be classed as "romantics": about that, fortunately, too, there is no question. "In plain and direct words . . . *we believe in a new romanticism.*" They suggest that this statement would not have taken such a "plain" and "direct" form but for my criticism. But everywhere the fact it defines is so explicit that, even without this special effort at "directness," it would have been "unescapable."

Romanticism is a word that covers a great quantity of things differing among themselves very widely indeed. Spengler, with his "faustian" philosophy of catastrophic fatalism: Chesterton, the poet of the "beer-drinking Briton can never be beat" frame-of-mind: Edgar Allen Poe, Doughty of *Desert Arabia*, Hoffman; Nietzsche and Longfellow, Browning and Mr. Theodore Hook, are, severally, examples of *romanticism*. But it is possible to narrow down the "New Romanticism" in question here. First of all, therefore, a definition of the sort of "romanticism" that is at stake is required.

In the first place it is not new; it is a return to the feverish "diabolism" that flourished in the middle of the last century in France, and which reached England in the "nineties," with Oscar Wilde and Beardsley as its principal exponents. Huysman's exploitation of the mediæval nightmare and his *Messe Noire* interests; Nietzsche's turgid satanism and the diabolism of Baudelaire and Byron: the "Drunken Boat" of Rimbaud, and the rhetoric of Lautréamont, are its basis. All

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that is new, therefore, is that a band of communising journalists, living in Paris, have chosen to found a political school for middle-class anglo-saxon and french students, mainly art-students, and *fils de papas*, upon the diabolic text of the famous authors mentioned above.

This romanticism is in fact that of the Communes and the minor revolutions which followed in the wake of the great Eighteenth-century eruption in France—that epoch to which the revolutionary aristocrats, Byron and Shelley, and, later on, Swinburne, belonged, in England, and which produced, in the french mind in violent reaction against the traditional academic restraints, a wild flowering of literature, that threw up a number of poets of the greatest power. If you add to this the “illumination” of german mystics, of the order of Weishaupt, throwing in the theory of Einstein as a congenial late-comer, you obtain what is “super-reality.” It is merely a flowery cocktail, but it has a grand name. What is most remarkable about it so far is that, swallowed whole, it leaves things just as they were before: it does not enable anyone to write anything except criticism of a not very original order.

In the May 1927 number of *Transition* (Miss Beach of the Shakespeare-Joyce bookshop has stopped sending me *Transition*, so I must rely on the numbers I have got—I have about ten) Mr. Paul had an interesting pronouncement, called “The New Nihilism.” By reading it those interested will be able to connect up the “new romanticism” with the “new nihilism.” The “romanticism” of Paul will then be seen to be a *nihilistic* “romanticism.” That will isolate it, at least, from all the jolly, antiquarian, tender-patriotic, lachrymose etc. etc. varieties.

Nihilism (to the discussion of which term I shall return a little later) is “the desouling of the human being” according to Oswald Spengler, who is a chronological “nihilist” having a great deal in common with *Superrealism* and such beliefs as those of Paul. The sort of “Nihilism” that Nietzsche envisaged in his “Coming of Nihilism” (it had already come when he wrote) was the same sort as Paul’s “New Nihilism.” It has been, throughout Europe, conspicuously, in full flower, for a very long time; and, as with “romanticism,” Paul only calls it “new” to “hot it up” a little. Nietzsche provides another clue for Paul’s “Nihilism,” for Paul may be said to be a *nietzschean* nihilist. On behalf of his protégés all connection with Nietzsche is eagerly denied—some of Nietzsche’s criticism it is true would be found rather awkward if applied to them: but their debt is too obvious to require stressing here.

(2) *Paul's own account of his "new nihilism."*

"While the Dostoeffski, or the Christian, spirit, if you like, has been given over to a few recluses to guard for a more propitious age, its *converse* is beginning to find expression, and a literature completely dehumanised and functioning in a sphere which knows neither morals nor compassion, is coming out into the open. . . . There can be no more doubt as to its existence and scope. It goes way beyond the Russian Nihilism of Turgenev's time."

That is the new Nihilism and that is also the New Romanticism. It is the New Paul's creed.

But the above Pauline pronouncement is historically inaccurate. (I shall revert to this inaccuracy later on, when I take up other points of his article.) *The Possessed* of Dostoeffski describes exactly the same sort of "nihilists" as Paul is concerned to advertise. The strictly "inhuman" or rather anti-human vindictiveness that makes possible the massacres of the various contemporary Revolutions, is a "nihilism": it has to its credit a holocaust. But substantially it is the same as the demented doctrine of universal destruction which Dostoeffski despairingly observed, and put on record with such clairvoyance. By calling the "inhumanity" of to-day or of the "October Revolution," a *super-nihilism* you do not change or intensify its character: but you do describe its latter-day scale—for it has now become universally effective and has multiplied its power many times. Civil War in this is like its sweet-flavoured sister, Nationalist War: in *scale* it can indeed claim to go "way beyond" all former efforts of the same sort. So this paralysis of our civilised or human instincts, which now has crept over the whole of humanity, instead of over only the Russians, is *extensively* a super-nihilism.

The anæsthesia and mechanization involved in the nihilistic orthodoxy is represented by its adherents as a liberation. Thus Jolas says: "we owe an incalculable amount of things to the influence of the Russian Revolution. . . . The *stimulus of the emancipation* which we gain from the Cyclopean effort of the October Rebels has been our constant encouragement." But who are *we*, to whose account this "incalculable" debt is to be set? This new breath of "emancipation" that has come into the world already stinks. The Great War was a war of "freedom" from the oppression of military force, a war "to make the world safe for democracy." But can one colossal welter of brutality, neighbouring another so remarkably,

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escape comparison, and disguise its discreditable family likeness? As usual, having thrust this "New Nihilism" forward as admirable, or at all events ineluctable, Paul proceeds to throw himself into a posture of "detachment"—as follows: "It is not necessary to accept this perfect inhumanity in order to acknowledge its importance." Similarly Jolas assures his readers that the tremendous "stimulus" he personally has received from the Russian Revolution has absolutely no trace of politics in it. (Politics? Why, how absurd!) Paul and Jolas remind me of gods: they are both of them *absolutely* "detached" observers of *everything*. They get a tremendous lot of "stimulus" from the contemplation of the wholesale massacre of masses of other people, and the strikingly "free" condition of the Russian Mass-Democracy to-day "encourages" them ever so much: they admit their immense debt to Lenin and Trotsky, they feel "warm sympathy" for the Communists, or anyone who promises "to destroy Western Society." So much enthusiastic support, and such responsive thrills of a tonic order, should constitute them something remarkably like what they so much affect. But no: they are gods. They enjoy, they do not participate. They "purely and simply" *amuse* themselves! Of course they may be right, and certainly, like their masters, must possess many virtues that I do not, but beyond question they are very like a couple of pagan gods.

But there is a sense, I believe, in which, as dogmatically *romantic* nihilists, they do enjoy that "nihilism" in a rather different way from the practical "nihilist," as it were—the gunman-anarchist, for instance. There is an "aesthetic," of sorts, visible in their attitude: and that is where the "romance" comes in. From brooding upon the romance of destruction these particular journalist-nihilists, in touch with painters and other artists, do feel themselves a cut above the simple honest "revolutionary." They are not *that*, they protest. They are "au dessus de la mêlée" they "purely and simply amuse" themselves.

(3) *The communist prose-poet, Isidore de Lartréamont.*

The nihilistic character of their "new Romanticism" being in this way established (by combining what they say about Nihilism, and what they say about Romance), we can take that analysis of their "romance" a step farther: or rather, now, it will be their "romantic nihilism." We will turn to the editorial advertisements of Jolas. In their October 1927

number they printed a translation of the *Lay of Maldoror*, by Isidore de Lautréamont, a mid-nineteenth-century romantic prose-poet. On p. 114 Maldoror is apostrophising the ocean, and he exclaims :

“ that is why, because of your superiority, I would devote all my love to you . . . if you did not make me think painfully of my fellows who form the most ironical contrast with you, the most comical antithesis . . . I cannot love you, I hate you. Why, for the thousandth time, do I come back to your friendly arms, that half open to kiss my burning brow, which sees its fever vanish at their contact ! I do not know your hidden destiny ; but everything which concerns you, interests me. Tell me then if you are the dwelling place of the Prince of Darkness. Tell . . . tell me, ocean, only to me . . . whether the breath of Satan makes the tempests which lift your salty waters to the clouds. You must tell me, because I would be happy to know hell so near mankind.”

The *Lay of Maldoror* and *Zarathustra* have this much affinity, that they are both byronic declamatory and romantic prose-poems. Both their authors are “satanists.” But Lautréamont is very far even from an Ossian. He is, as a matter of fact, a kind of happy mixture of the Marquis de Sade and Frederick Nietzsche, but without remarkable talent. His “lays” are full of the juiciest machinery of inverted dope-diabolics : wild animals drag naked snow-white virgins across moonlit mountains, tearing their tender flesh upon the jagged rocks and leaving a trail of blood. (I may say I get nothing for this from the London publisher of Lautréamont,—but he has “a few copies left” : *vide* advert).

I can give you a few specimens of Lautréamont translated from *Transition*—they are not the best Lautréamont can do, but they are typical of his outlook and save me the trouble of translation. The “satanic” flavour prevailing throughout his *Lays* is fully presented for your inspection. It is the order of satanic romanticism popularized by Huysmans in *Là-Bas*. Had Victor Hugo become enamoured of the philosophy of the Marquis de Sade and gone to work in the same gothic spirit (shown perhaps more fully in his remarkable drawings than in his writing) you would have got something of the sort. It is a very tiresome and monotonous bellow.

“The wind moans through the leaves with languorous notes and the owl recites its solemn lament, which makes the hair of those who hear it stand on end. Then the dogs, made savage, burst their chains, escape from distant farms; fly through

the countryside in all directions, a prey to madness. . . . Their prolonged baying terrifies nature. Woe to the belated traveller! The cemeteries' friends will cast themselves upon him, will tear him, will eat him with blood-dripping fangs; their teeth are not decayed. Wild beasts, not daring to approach and take part in the meal of flesh, fly trembling out of sight. After some hours, the dogs, harassed by running in all directions and half dead, their tongues hanging from their mouths, without knowing what they are doing, fall one upon the other with incredible swiftness and tear each other into a thousand pieces. They do not behave thus from cruelty. Once my mother said to me, her eyes glassy, "When from your bed you hear the baying of dogs in the countryside, hide under the blankets, do not mock their behaviour; *they have an unquenchable thirst for the infinite*, like you, like me, like the rest of long and pallid-featured humanity. I even permit you to stand at the window to observe the sublime spectacle." Since then I have respected the dead one's wishes. Like the dogs, I too feel the need of the infinite. . . . I cannot, I cannot satisfy the need! According to what I have been told I am the son of man and of woman. That astonishes me! I thought more of myself. For the rest, what does it matter whence I came? For myself, if it had depended on my own will, I would have wished to be rather the son of a female shark, whose hunger is the friend of the tempests, and of the tiger, of well known cruelty."

"I feel the need of the Infinite!" wails this mephitic Byron of Paris and Montevideo. "I am supposed to be *human*, born of woman and all the rest of it! That is false. Nothing short of a shark or a man-eating tiger could possibly have produced such a perfect monster as I am!"

For the next passage we must wrap our winter coats about us, and shiver, to be warmly sympathetic with the bleak scene, like a sort of inverted christmas-card, with the maledictions of the season and a peep of the Messe Noire, genre 1840, into which we are to be plunged.

"When during stormy nights I prowl round the habitations of mankind, eyes burning, hair whipped by the storm-wind, solitary as a stone in the middle of the road, I cover my withered face with a scrap of velvet, black as soot which fills the insides of chimneys: it would not do for eyes to witness the ugliness which the Supreme Being put upon me with a smile of mighty hate. Every morning, when the sun rises for others, scattering joy and salutary heat to all nature: while no one of my features

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moves, gazing fixedly into the space filled with shadow, crouching in the depths of my beloved cave, *in a despair which intoxicates me like wine, with powerful hands I tear my chest to shreds.*"

The frenzied Isidore, in sepulchral tones, next beseeches you not to picture him as anything humanly pleasant, but as a hundred per cent Walpurgis-night authentic nightmare demon.

"imagine . . . some monster before you whose face I am glad you cannot see : but that is less horrible than its *soul* !"

Isidore is very like Paul or Jolas, however, for he immediately adds : " All the same, I am no criminal ! "

But he is more brusque and bustling, for he " breaks off," after disowning " criminality."—" Enough on this point ! " Paul is never gruff with you in that way.

Isidore at this point is beginning his apostrophe of the Ocean. He warns you to be prudent and to take steps " to protect yourself against the painful impression " which his " strophe cannot fail to make."

He begins with the Octopus. That is an ugly fish. Or rather, human beings who, heaven knows, are not much to look at themselves, agree in regarding it as ugly. The octopus should make a " painful impression," if any fish could ! So he will begin with that. And to be resolutely, *romantically* superior, to the human canon of what is fair and sweet, he will praise the Octopus for its *beauty*.

" O, Octopus with silken stare ! You whose soul is inseparable from my own, you the most beautiful of the inhabitants of the terrestrial globe, lord of a harem of four hundred suckers, . . . why are you not with me, your mercury belly pressed to my aluminium chest, both resting upon some rock by the shore ? "

In contrast with the captivating Octopus, written up by Isidore in the last passage, here is humanity.

" Ancient Ocean, your harmoniously spherical form which delights the solemn countenance of geometry, but too well recalls to me the tiny eyes of mankind : similar to those of grice for smallness, and to those of night birds in circular perfection of contour. Nevertheless mankind has thought himself beautiful in all ages. But I imagine that mankind only believes in his beauty out of conceit, and that he is not actually beautiful and suspects it ; for, why does he look at the faces of his fellows with so much scorn ? "

These extracts will suffice to give you an idea of the powers of *Le Chant de Maldoror*.—That this simple-hearted satanism,

transparent as the vindictive day-dreaming of a rather vulgar child, in its infallible inversions, but presented with the leering pomposity of an eager stylist, smiling behind his pasteboard mask of conventional "hideousness," boasting as he goes of his *effects*, of the sensational reactions he is competent to produce in his listeners—that this bric-a-brac should be seriously presented as the exemplar of the best or newest seems impossible. That it should be translated by Roth or some similar person (actually the above translation is by a gentleman rather similar to Roth) and published to catch *L'homme moyen sensuel*, on account of its blood-dripping fangs associated with the milk-white bodies of virgins, is as natural and harmless as that *Fanny Hill* should never be quite out of print, or that the *History of a Flea* or even the "bourgeois" pornography of Paul de Kock's *Ten Pairs of Drawers* should remain scandalous best-sellers. But there, you would suppose, the joke would end, once the gull's money were safely transferred from his bank to that of the sagacious literary reprint-publisher (to whom of course the best of luck). But that is not the case. Another and a still higher destiny has been reserved for Isidore.

(4) *Give the Devil his due! Enter, from trap-door, the "diabolical principle."*

The task of prising wide open (with amazement and delighted horror) the big silly mouth of the select ("well-read and sensitive" is the way Paul usually refers to it) public of "daring" high-brow wares, and stuffing *Maldoror* into it, is allotted to Jolas. He acquits himself handsomely (p. 157 of the October 1927 issue of their paper), in an article entitled *Enter the Imagination*. (That means the "romantic-nihilist" imagination, of course.)

At the risk of having my readers swept off their feet by his eloquence and the charm of his style, I will quote a considerable piece from his article.

"It so happens" Jolas says "that two books published in France this year seem to posture two important antinomies in modern poetry." One of these is a book of Maritain's (a catholic notable from the enemy camp) the other is that of our friend Isidore, namely *Maldoror*.

"The publication and re-edition of the *Oeuvres complètes du Comte de Lautréamont*, with commentaries and notes by Philippe Soupault, emphasizes, once more, *the spirit that has profoundly influenced and is influencing the modern poets. . . .*

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The antithesis of these two viewpoints is the antagonism of two philosophies of life. One follows a mystic intelligence which has as its chief substantiality the concision of faith. . . . Against it stands *the conception of conscious revolt, the assertion of the negative—or as the theologians would say—the diabolical principle*. It is the real essence of an attitude of mind that sets no limits to its flight towards eternity. . . . I find myself in utter disagreement with Jacques Maritain. . . . There are no saints among us. A renaissance of dogmatism is impossible. . . . This orientation needs an epoch more quietist than ours, more fanatically sure of itself than ours. We of this age have no faith in anything, save in anguish and despair, save in being suspicious of a humanity that has betrayed all our ideals and is becoming more depressing every day.

The poet in whom the modern spirit of conscious revolt against the current ethos has found its greatest florescence, and in whom magnificent volcanoes stirred, was Isidore Ducasse, Comte de Lautréamont. In his introduction to the carefully edited cantos, Philippe Soupault traces the life of this South-American iconoclast . . . M. Soupault tries to prove that he was identical with an agitator famous under the Third Empire for his revolutionary activities.

The striking character of Lautréamont's work is the conscious preoccupation with so-called 'evil' functions of life . . . when it is an organic expression of a nervous system attuned to it, a miracle occurs. The 'evil' has been neglected in poetry far too long . . . Lautréamont, . . . with magnificent courage chose to hymn the satanic. . . . In tremendous accents he glorifies the impulses which a stupid society fears, evokes the logic of pathologic terror, and shocks the bourgeois morality to its foundation.

The American poet needs the immense impulsions of a Lautréamont. With few exceptions, *our poets heretofore have merely expressed a feeble echo of pseudo-revolt. . . . Why not give the evil its measure of attention as much as the good?* "

Yes, why not? Give the Devil his due! Be a sport. Come on you red-blooded guys, let's set the Thames on fire with Adelphi brimstone, let's storm the Bastille and Kremlin not only at the same time, but *in the same place*: let's—let's:—Oh hell! rescue Loeb and Leopold, give the silly worms a good dose of Isidore, and then let them loose for an afternoon among the children in the Luxembourg and put them on their mettle, and after that, if they don't let us down, elect them the first twin-lord-mayors of Chicago, with a commission to get up a ten-

million-dead war between America and England, and after that let's couple Loeb with a female shark and Leopold with a female octopus, with a harem of four hundred suckers, and then stage a battle between the two in a million-gallon tank, naphtha-lighted throughout, and give the gate-money to the widows and orphans of the next civil war in any state of over fifty million certified inhabitants, in which more than five million were certified massacred in a month. That's the way you red-blooded guys to show you're alive and up to Old Scratch and on top of the weather, not to say on top of the world. Join the Army, and See the World! Join the Boy-Scouts and have an annual picnic! Join the jolly old Red Revolution and call yourself a devil for a couple of weeks! That's the idea, and up and at them! Over the top! Down the side! Right away!—The little squinting chaplinesque man-child leers and laughs to see such sport and the cow (the public, the citizenry, the mass, the proletariat, the whatever you like to call the fool-lump) jumps over the moon! That at least is the idea but the trouble is that it won't always jump when required.

Oh but that is of course not *at all* what is meant by Mr. Jolas, or by Mr. Paul, who are two dignified literary gentlemen, *purely and simply engaged in amusing themselves* and advertising quite incidentally Miss Stein, and so "detached" from every reality in their super-super-superiority, in short, and super-reality and all that, so that only a wilful misconstruction such as must always be expected from such a person as the present writer (so *distrustful* and so unwilling to accept everybody at their own valuation and all that) could ever turn their *words* into disgusting dull and meaningless *facts* in that way, or their *dreams* (to put it in another and more romantic way) into *realities*. And life is an opium-dream in any case, and there *is* no reality so that settles that.

Still from Jolas's article certain things do ensue. Isidore-Maldoror is "the poet in whom the modern spirit of *conscious revolt* . . . has found its greatest florescence." You must *consciously*, deliberately, embrace the revolutionary principle, if you wish to be "a poet"—in that you have no choice, oh anglo-saxon *publicum*! In real life Isidore was a famous agitator and revolutionary under the Third Empire. What is most "striking" about his work is his preoccupation with so-called "evil" functions of life. And, as we have seen, it is characterised by a spirit of demented hatred of other men, and an obsessional attachment to apocalyptic images of horror and destruction.

This is what America (and no doubt even more so England) needs! exclaims Jolas. So far, says Jolas, american poets have merely expressed feebly an echo of "pseudo-revolt," caught from the stimulating events that have occurred on this side of the Atlantic. Here is their chance! Why not give "evil" a trial? he pleads. Why not take Lautréamont as a model? Just once! Just for fun—one vacation, or one-week-end.

But what more does the *New Masses* ask of its readers? What is the difference, spiritually, between these two ventures, except that one is labelled "communist" quite frankly and the other coming at it from the art-angle, calls itself art-for-art's sake (it "purely and simply amuses itself") though obviously it is art-for-revolution's sake in fact, and not at all for art's. I, as a doctrinaire of art independent of life, very naturally resent these obsessing politics: that, once more, is what this dispute is about. It is not about politics.

The tenor of the philosophy of *Transition* is then a romantic nihilism, and the springs of its action are to be sought not in any specific doctrine of art, but, as its name suggests, in the political chaos of this time, and in a particular attitude towards that chaos. That attitude is manifestly so extremely similar in feeling to the communist's purely political impulse, that I can see no reason in the editors of *Transition* protesting so much. They exult in the romantic chaos around them and seek to intensify it. That does not please us but it pleases them. But what's wrong with being a communist and having done with it? I'll promise to proclaim myself one if they will—"just to amuse myself." But I won't be a poor bloody communist so long as Paul and Jolas are two Chicago gentlemen merely "amusing themselves"—that is too much to ask.

(5) *The "merging" of dream and reality, also of art and of life.*

The nihilism *Transition* professes, again, is definitely rooted in some concept of destructive hatred, or, as Jolas puts it, in "the conception of conscious revolt, the assertion of the negative . . . the diabolical principle."

But the cultural message of *Transition* is still further defined by the incorporation of the *dream-aesthetic* of the Surrealists into a body already reeking of "romance," indeed putrid with the excessive decomposition of that condition.

Sage, the third editor, supplies us with all that it is necessary to know on that head. In their May 1927 number he wrote as follows:

“Aragon concludes . . . ‘Nothing can assure me of reality. Nothing, neither the exactness of logic nor the strength of sensation, can assure me that I do not base it on delirium of interpretation.’ . . . André Breton . . . remarked in *Manifeste du Surrealism* : ‘I believe in the future resolution of those two seemingly contradictory states, dream and reality, into a sort of absolute reality, a *super-reality* if it may so be called.’ . . . (Superrealist) reality supersedes that of the realists, for it merges the internal and the external.”

I am not here criticising these doctrines in detail : it is not necessary, except by implication, to offer an opinion of the “nihilistic” creed. Still, at this point it will be better to provide the reader with a few indications of my attitude to the *dream-aesthetic* of “*Super-reality*,” especially as that must affect the “Romantic Nihilism” of Paul and his group.

The actual merging of the dream-condition and the waking-condition must result in a logical emulsion of the forms and perspectives of life as we know them, and, translated into an art-expression, will approximate most closely to the art of the child. That is, of course, what has everywhere occurred with the theorists of that persuasion. The infantile is the link between the Superrealists and Miss Stein, as it is between Miss Stein and Miss Loos.

(6) *The objective truth and the private mental world of the isolated mind.*

Then if you take “the merging of the external and internal,” that dogmatic subjectivism would manipulate the objective truth, of necessity, in favour of some version of the private mental world of the isolated mind. But what in the superrealist account is omitted, is the fact that all reality is a merging, in one degree or another, of the external and internal : all reality is *one* reality to some extent, saturated with our imagination. Even more is that the case with the reality of art, or myth. And this dogmatic *imagism* or dream-doctrine merely wishes to make a sort of official “reality” of what, in art, is always, in every case in which a great creative fancy is operating, actual.

Super-reality, in short, is not so much a doctrine for art as for life. It is a sort of cheap and unnecessary, popularised, *artistic-ness* of outlook that is involved. The creative faculty, released into popular life, and possessed by everybody, that is really what “Super-reality” means—it is merely a picturesque

phase of the democratisation of the artistic intelligence and the creative faculty. It would result in practice, and in everyday life, in a radical shifting of the normal real towards the unconscious pole. If thoroughly effective it would result, even, in a submergence of the normal, conscious, real in the Unconscious.

But it is not a specifically *art* doctrine, that is a doctrine that issues from the problems of the arts of expression: for all art worth the name is already *super-real*. To say that it should be more so—or so very much more so as is implied in super-reality—is to pass over into the living material of all art, its ground and what it contemplates, and tamper directly with the cézannesque apples, for instance, before the painter has started his picture, or modify the social life which the artist interprets or reflects.

(7) *The political exploitation of the magical power of art.*

So here again it could be shown that we are not in the presence of an æsthetic phenomenon, but of something else. The dream, indeed the opium-dream or the coke dream, of the super-realists, is to be imposed upon the living material of life: it is “art” going over into life and changing it, so that it shall conform to its fantasy. But it is art become life as it were, prior to its translation. And as an art it is a feverish, untrue, dehumanized, exceedingly artificial art. And it is artificial because it has fed upon a life falsified with doctrine, and merged in dream. Or, if we call it *a dream* instead of *an art*, then, as a dream, it is evidently a sort of static nightmare, of the *Maldoror* order. It is its avowed programme “to evoke the logic of pathological terror” and to shock human society “to its foundations.” And that is also one of the avowed objectives of the communists in their Films. But horror, or “pathological terror,” however useful in politics, is not of the same standing in art.

It is in formulas and arguments of the most superficial sort (about “reality” and so forth such as you have just read in the quotation from Sage) that such a movement clothes itself. The more shallow and obvious they are, of course, the better they serve the propagandist purpose. But this subject is of great importance for a full understanding of the various affiliated theoretic groups involved in this analysis. The “reality” in question is a religious or semi-religious reality—the *religion* behind it in the case of the Super-realists being the religion of Communism. It is not a “reality” of art. Indeed

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it is the opposite of that : for it must have for its result not the “merging” of the external in the internal, but the *merging of art in life*. And by “art” here is meant something much more generally important than merely current water-colour paintings or polite fiction. Art at its fullest is a very great force indeed, a magical force, a sort of *life*, a very great “reality.” It is *that* reality, that magic, that force, that this “dream-æsthetic” proposes to merge with life, exactly on the same principle as the Producers of Moscow theatres to-day merge audience and performer, stage and auditorium.

(8) *The Infinity-phobia of Super-reality.*

There is another aspect of the dream-psychology that it will be worth investigating a little further. I refer to the sort of scale-madness that finds expression in a sentimentally expansive attitude towards *Infinity*—“Infinity” in its most mellow, popular and sentimental significance, that is.

In the midst of the decadence (the result of War and unremitting social disturbances of every nature—a decadence that would justify any number of hundred-million-dead Wars, followed by civil wars even more catastrophic, Jolas assures us) there are “a few men” here and there, who “create a universe of their own in dreams and evocations of infinity. In a medium-istic trance, a new mythos is hammered out that is definitely a revolt against the burden of orthodox prejudices, and that creates a solitude of immense splendors.”

(9) *How surrealists are “faustians.”*

This is at the start of *Enter the Imagination*, leading up of course to the latter-day romantics, the Lautréamonts. But this ecstatic dream-language, describing “evocations of infinity” and “solitudes of immense splendors,” bears a striking resemblance to Spengler. Already in my earlier notes on Miss Stein and her friends I have insisted that their vein is peculiarly germanic, in the bad sense of that term. But Spengler also can be made to provide, from his *Decline of the West*, excellent descriptions of *transitionists*, who are in any case so much at one with him. Paul and Jolas are perfect “faustians,” in the spenglerian idiom. I will quote a few passages from Spengler’s account of the “infinity-worship” of “Faustian Man,” and you will at once recognize these affinities—even to the translation into slovenly english of a bad and clumsy post-war german book.

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“Everything that is Classical is comprehensible in *one* glance, be it the doric temple, the statue, the Polis, the Cults ; backgrounds and secrets there are none. . . . Consider what it means that every one of our epoch-making works of poetry, policy and science has called forth a whole literature of explanations. . . . (These) are in fact symptoms of Western life-feeling, viz., the “misunderstood” artist, the poet “left to starve,” “the derided discoverer,” “the thinker who is centuries in advance of his time,” and so on. These are types of an esoteric Culture. Destinies of this sort have their basis in *the passion of distance in which is concealed the desire-to-infinity and the will-to-power*. . . . What does it mean that no german philosopher worth mentioning can be understood by the man in the street, and that the combination of simplicity with majesty that is Homer’s is simply not to be found in any Western language ? The Nibelungenlied is a hard reserved utterance. . . . We find everywhere in the Western what we find nowhere in the Classical—the exclusive form.”

There is no occasion to accept this account of Spengler’s ; I have gone to him for evidence because he belongs to the same side of the argument as Paul or Jolas, and to use him is like convicting Paul or Jolas out of his own mouth. Spengler, for instance, attributes to some mysterious, radically *different*, Western soul (which he names “Faustian soul”), what I should attribute to various systems of habit. The urge to the “faustian” Infinite is exemplified in Lautréamont, and, says Jolas, in all writers today worth considering.

This “desire-to-Infinity” Spengler associates with the “Will-to-power,” quite correctly, no doubt. And a mind entranced with power, or possessed of a “power-complex,” is surely revealed in the *Lay of Maldoror*, if anywhere. That is the main reason why other people, themselves in the grip of the power-complex, like him so much. And what takes more “inhuman” forms than this hungry appetite for “power ?” It is by way of the more recent and most chilling analysis of the Nietzsche “Will-to-power” conception that you can best arrive at an understanding of the highly emotional nature that bathes voluptuously in the maledictions of a Lautréamont.

(10) *A world of “difficult authors.”*

Again, surely the mysterious stammering of Miss Stein, and the mirthless formal verbal acrobatics of Mr. Joyce, with all the “philological” pretentiousness complicating more and more

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barrenly his work (cf. Paul, in his article on Mr. Joyce's more recent fragments), have something to do with an ego relentlessly attacked by "power-complexes." And Super-reality—has not that in the same way a lot to do with a sickly passion for Superiority (in spite of *Transition's* disclaimers, on behalf of Super-reality, of any power-complex or superiority-complex)? It depends of course whom the power-wish seizes what form it takes. With Joyce it merely takes the form of being very "difficult": but in a less well-constituted and less gifted person it is not so inoffensive. Paul's protégés or patrons are often examples, there is little doubt, from that standpoint, of a romantic superstitious vanity. Paul calls "the servant girl epoch" (that is an unsophisticated period in which a writer can be widely understood) what he might with equal reason call "the Homer epoch." The word "Homer" would not arouse the same contempt as "servant girl!" However it is quite possible to express yourself with the greatest lucidity, and yet for no "servant girl" to want to read what you write, any more than she wishes to read Miss Stein: or it is possible to smash up a page of a "servant girl's" novelette into a typical Miss Stein composition, and it is none the better for its transformation, but all the same no "servant girl" will then wish to read it, but on the other hand every Paul and Jolas will salaam at sight—so why, in any case, "servant girl?"

It is very much more difficult (Homer and the servant-girl aside) to achieve anything in a lucid and simple utterance, than in an utterance that is very complex and wrapped up in a thousand protective sheaths. This is obvious enough: for a writer with nothing at all to say can still say and say and say, but if there is no canon by which what he says can be checked, he can claim the highest distinction for the manner in which he chooses to speak, if the meaning is recognized to be negligible. This in no way invalidates a good "difficult" author, so long as the difficult author is an exception. But the "difficult" author must be an exception. Were *all* authors "difficult"—or were a great number so—then you could be quite certain that they were most of them *bad*; for we know that few people have anything at all worth saying (though that, for me, is not a reason to destroy them, as it would be for Paul or for Jolas). I merely remind the reader of all this to show how the "power-complex," if nietzscheanly encouraged, must cause in literature a great many difficult authors "to come out into the open," or rather to hurry into a fierce obscurity: and how most of

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them, under such circumstances, will certainly be negligible, as we should then be able to see if they were not too clever to allow that to happen.

(11) *Hatred as a necessary drug.*

But connected very intimately indeed with the urge to "Infinity," and the relation that it bears, in many cases, to the "power-complex," is another question. You will recall above how the posturing of Isidore mainly turned upon a loudly-advertised malevolent scorn of other men? He praised the Octopus and told it how "beautiful" it was, and pointed out to that marine "monster" how exceedingly vain and smug it was of human beings to call themselves "beautiful" and it a "monster"—a thing to point at. First they should point at *themselves*!

This vein of rage and hatred against mankind is an essential ingredient in all "nihilism," and therefore in all "new romanticism." That is what is meant by the "new," that it is "romanticism," that is peculiarly given over to an intolerant exclusive hatred of the rest of the world. It is worth while to examine it, for evidently it has a great deal to do with "giving Evil a chance" or devoting yourself to the "diabolical principle," as Jolas recommends.

In the world of militant communist thought this is a familiar subject. Obviously before you can persuade a mob to give itself up to wholesale massacre you have to arouse its *hatred*. In order to persuade a man to join a revolutionary organization the quickest method, practice has shown, is to pump him full of *hatred* for everybody and everything within sight. The training of a citizen soldier, even, during the War, also involved a good deal of "working up" of that sort. The officer supervising bayonet exercises would scream at Mr. Citizen dressed up in khaki "Remember the Lusitania!" to induce the poor mild awkward Tom Thumb before him to jab the sandbag with more zeal.

There is the "creative hatred" of Jaurés for instance. Hatred has everywhere, in the communist text-book, quite naturally been erected into the great principle of all violent revolutionary action. For it was recognized that men in the mass are dreamy creatures of habit, and require some sort of mental corrosive or powerful poison to set them going in the murderous sense required. The psychology of hatred, then, has been carefully studied—by the militant communist as it

applies to the insurgent "worker" being prepared for the Civil Armageddon, and in a more amateurish way as it regarded the citizen-soldier by the military and the political intelligence concerned with Nationalist War.

But with the "intellectual" it is a different matter. And such a paper as *Transition* is aimed of course at a select audience of "intellectuals." Because that audience is numerically small and is "intellectual" it is not therefore politically unimportant: quite the contrary. If you can gain the "intellectualist" minority—just as if you can destroy it, when that is advisable—you have accounted for a very important component of revolt, or on the other hand of resistance to oppression.

(12) *Hatred as prescribed for the "Intellectual" and as prescribed for the Mob.*

But if you have set out to give an "intellectual" a dose of hate-poison, to get him into the required destructive fever, you cannot achieve this by the same methods that you would employ with an unskilled labourer or a street hawker.

In the first place, in order to have become an "intellectual" at all, he is usually an individual who has been accustomed to some degree of well-being. Many advantages not shared by the majority have been his, and as a consequence he is not so susceptible to crude appeals to his hating-faculty. His vindictiveness, which it is desired to stimulate, cannot be aroused and organised so easily as in the case of a workman, who, throughout his life, has had to suffer humiliation and discomfort. You cannot treat the high-spirited well-fed self-satisfied university student as you can the average potentially resentful underdog. Yet the student as the middle-class man is a valuable recruit: so that is the problem.

It is solved in the following way. With the "intellectual" it is much more his *vanity* than anything else that you must drive for and secure. It is in a sense *an opposite sort of hatred* in his case that must be assailed. When you have succeeded in secreting *hatred* in him, it is always a very artificial sort and it is a costly affair to keep it at a suitable tension. The "hatred" of the "Intellectual" may be regarded as the orchid among "hatreds." (Such papers as *Transition*, or more frankly political organs, are from that point of view, hot-houses.)

All the processes of this intellectualist stimulation to "revolt"

are essentially and from the start *unreal*. Some habit, such as a drug-habit, is exceedingly useful, as might be expected. For that impairs the stability and independence of the individual in question and *separates* him, somewhat, from other men—the *vulgar herd that does not drug*. Then homosexuality may also be made to serve this purpose of *separation*, and that of a self-defensive hostility. (This separatist psychology of the homosexual has been excellently described by Proust—the intense “outcast” *esprit de corps* of the born pathic.)—This is merely a very rough-and-ready indication of the methods suitable for jockeying an up-till-then member of some normal majority into the minority-position of defensive hostility, and subsequently of universal hatred, which is needed for Apocalypse, of the more drastic civil sort.

(13) *What draws Transition.*

Isidore de Lautréamont we have already glanced at. Leon-Paul Fargue and Pierre Drieu La Rochelle are two of the writers that Paul and Jolas especially recommend to their readers. These names probably represent, added to those of Stein and Sternheim, what *Transition* most exactly stands for.

Starred upon a page by itself is the following heart-cry from the pen of Leon-Paul Fargue :

“ Plus je vais, et plus je vis, plus j'écris, plus je monte, plus je vois les choses d'haut, a vol d'oiseau ; et plus j'ai besoin de ne plus voir en face moi la bricole humaine avec ses affaires, ses sales yeux qui vous trompent, sa sale voix syphilo-cognac qui vous raconte des blagues, son machinisme, son mechanisme, ses rots, son portefeuille, ses expropriations et ses contributions. D'en haut je vois les choses comme un gateau lumineux extrêmement riche, ou je peux choisir mes capres et mes grains de raisin. La morale de ça est que plus je vis plus je monte. Il faut monter. On a été trop horizontal. J'ai envie d'être vertical.”

Roughly translated :

“ The farther I go, the more I live, the more I write, the more I ascend, the more I see things from above, get a bird's-eye-view ; and the more I experience the need of seeing no longer always in front of me the human *bricole*, with his business, his dirty treacherous eyes, his dirty syphilo-cognac voice, that tells you a pack of lies, his machinations, his mechanical nature, his belches, his *attaché case*, his expropriations and contribu-

tions. From above things appear to me a luminous cake, from which I can pick the plums at will. The moral of that is that the longer I live the higher I go. One must ascend. One has been too horizontal. I should like to be vertical."

That is a mild enough expression of dissatisfaction with the human species, but it is in the right direction, namely the misanthropic; so it is singled out and printed in rather larger type upon a page by itself.

(14) *The Popularization of Disgust.*

That I should dwell, in this analysis, upon such a perfectly fundamental question as the intensive manufacture of hatred needs no excuse: in one form or another it is a capital ingredient wherever the type of feeling represented by Lautréamont, Superreality, or "Transition" becomes articulate.

A treatise like *The Art of Being Ruled*, does not, in the nature of things, receive the same publicity as more amiable and inoffensive books. Many people, in consequence, are still unaware of the contents of this key-book though they are familiar with its name. It appeared at the beginning of 1926 and the natural public for such a comprehensive statement had not expected anything of the sort—it was the first of the present writer's series of books devoted to the work of radical analysis of the ideas by which our society has been taught to live. As it shocked the more popular type of reviewer, the public in question was not adequately informed at the time. That I have always regarded as a pity. The best way to remedy this state of affairs, it seems to me, is, instead of restating what has already been said there once and for all, to quote occasionally from its pages.

Upon the question of the "popularization of disgust"—or the vulgarization of hatred—*The Art of Being Ruled* has a chapter that affords the fullest enlightenment. And that is the subject to which we have arrived in following the tendencies advocated by the Stein-Paul group. I therefore propose to quote a few pages from *Part III.* of my book, the title of which part is *The Small Man*. The title of the chapter (most of which I am not reproducing) is *The Vulgarization of Disgust*.

"The critical dissatisfaction of the scientific and philosophic mind where human capacity is concerned is not novel. Vulgarization is the novelty.

"Philosophers or men of science, witnessing the popular miscarriage of their thought, are disgusted or resigned, as

the case may be. The democratic ruler (who alone is responsible for the worst and most calamitous miscarriages) associates himself with them; and in chorus they all abuse the poor plain man. What has happened is that *disgust has been vulgarized*. This is more deadly in its effects than the vulgarization of knowledge. The natural insolence and desire for a feeling of superiority of those who are superior in nothing but money and the power it gives, is thus provided. And the noble pessimism of the speculative mind is at once translated into acts, and employed as a sanction for exploitation.

“The whole of this new system of governmental metaphysics can be best defined as the philosophy of *What the Public Wants*. The form that government in the western democratic countries takes being publicity (suggestion, persuasion, and ‘education’), the full significance for the community of this cynical dogma cannot be exaggerated.

“I will attempt to formulate more explicitly than one of its adepts would be able to do, or would care to do, probably, the principle of the dogma of *What the Public Wants*. Its similarity to the philosopher’s cry of despair from which it derives will in this way be brought out.

“Let us imagine, then, an adept of this dogma summarizing his principles for the benefit of some budding publicist. In the candour of the confessional, heart to heart with a secure postulant, they would run as follows:—

“‘Take the poorest and most abject moron in the community (eighty per cent. of which resemble him very nearly). Say to yourself, ‘There is nothing too simple and inhumanly stupid—the sort of thing that gives you that empty feeling in the pit of the stomach—for this low-grade fool. It would take you five hundred centuries to teach him to frame the simplest abstract notion. He is permanently and for ever an infant; the Infants’ Class always absorbs eighty per cent. of the personnel of our famous terrestrial training school, or technical institute, which we call ‘mankind.’ The eternal alphabet A, B, C, D is the music that, in one form or another, would greet a visitor from another planet come to see how we were getting on. This re-partition of the fairy’s gifts, leaving this vast human surplus practically moronesque, you must accept. It is not your doing, you did not make the world. You can do nothing to modify it; and even if you could, are you sure that you would not be going against Providence? There is a possibility that a wisdom superior to yours arranged things in this way. Abandon, therefore, all those queer

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attempts to 'educate' this dense throng of *inapertiva* mankind: or rather, canalize your educative efforts in such a way that only the simplest instruction is provided, nothing that will tax those truly infantile intelligences. (For they are as truly infantile as what more technically is an infant, and the same rule not to overtax and overstrain this undeveloped brain applies to them as to the child.) So, A, B, C, D: *Two and two make four—Donkey tap the door. Three and three make six—Lamps, not tramps, have wicks* (compare the american army tests of Yerkes and others): whatever you consider it possible or desirable to impart to them, let it be on that system.

"From these ineluctable premises and observations, as you will see, a vast system of government ensues. Although we have called this prodigious mass of people 'infantile,' they of course outwardly grow up. They do not call themselves infantile as a community. They claim to be treated as responsible, accomplished, intelligent beings. They want to have official bulletins every morning of all the accidents, fires, murders, rapes that have occurred throughout the night and part of the preceding day. They wish a detailed account of how their agents and ministers of state have 'fulfilled their trust,' as they call it, in the conduct of that great and sacred affair, the commonwealth. And they wish to be informed punctually of the results of all racing, ball games, paper-chases, bull-fights, and other similar events.

"The *What the Public Wants* method of meeting these demands is the best and only one (see our advert.). It is run on the lines outlined above. Something in the form of the enthralling adventures of *Bo Peep and Patsy* is essential to wreath all their rosy faces in happy smiles. Then a hush will come at the sight of a heading, *War-cloud in the East* or *War-cloud in the West*. Father will frown, exclaiming: 'I say! things look serious!' Then the Infants' Class will be let into the deepest and dirtiest secrets of the underworld of Westminster in a column of the most wildly indiscreet gossip. 'It is an open secret—among those in the know—it is freely whispered in the lobbies and closets of the Talking House—that Mr. Chamberlain will shortly make an announcement that will surprise three of his colleagues and most intimate cronies very much indeed, unless—as may of course happen—it comes to their ears: for there is always the chance that they may get wind of it.' Mr. Citizen looks very knowing at this. He has indeed got his penn'orth!

"The same great principles laid down above apply to the

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Cinema, Wireless, and Theatre. Unless you wish to give yourself quite unnecessary trouble, involve yourself in a considerable money loss, and become very unpopular, in these occupations, as in everything else, you must follow the golden rule, namely: *You cannot aim too low*. The story you present cannot be too stupid. It is not only impossible to exaggerate—it in itself requires a trained publicist to form any idea of—the idiocy of the Public. In general it can be said that no confidence trick is too transparent to dupe them; no picture of life is too unreal or sugary for their taste; no mental effort is too slight not to arouse an immediate and indignant protest from them.

“That, I suppose, would be the main statement. But associated with the stupidity of the public is also its malignity.

‘There is a further point,’ this credo can be imagined as proceeding: ‘this great mass with which you have to live and deal as best you can is not either reliable, truthful, possessed of the slightest magnanimity or kindness, or any of the things that would make it easy to get on with. However much you trick it, it will not fall short of you in cunning, but only in ability: you will never trick it as much as it would like to trick you.’

“*(Cf. : ‘Because this is to be asserted in general of men; that they are ungrateful, fickle, false, cowards, covetous, and as long as you succeed they are yours entirely, they will offer you their blood, property, life, children, as is said above. . . . Friendships that are obtained by payment, and not by greatness . . . are not secured . . . ,’ etc., etc. Machiavelli.)*

“So, ethically, even, your adherence to the doctrine of *What the Public Wants* is justified by the *méchanceté* of human nature; just as intellectually you are forced to the procedures laid down in that doctrine by human stupidity.

“The most bitter philosopher (Machiavelli, just quoted, as an example) would not speak very differently to this. But the doctrine of *What the Public Wants* begins where philosophy leaves off. And in the case of this belief it is not so much the truth of what it states, as of the uses to which this discovery is put, and the spirit in which it is held. Nothing useful to the world was ever accomplished as a result of such a belief steadily held—nothing at least but a work of hatred, which has its ‘creative’ uses, no doubt, as Jaurés thought. What on the analogy of the dyer’s hand it usually produces, except for

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the moments during which it is engaged in epic destruction, is something inconceivably common and barren.

“Hideous and undesirable as is the caricature of the private thoughts of the philosopher contained in *What the Public Wants* theory, yet the pessimistic original cannot be neglected.

“If the creative minds of the world are indeed for ever cancelled and rendered ineffective by the agency of the ‘unprogressive’ mass of men, then they should be protected and rescued. This is of more importance than the gratification of the vanity of the human average: the human average would get more out of such a salvage than out of those satisfactions for which it pays the expert of *What the Public Wants* so dearly. Left at the mercy of this vast average—its inertia, ‘creative hatred,’ and conspiratorial habits where ‘the new’ is concerned—we shall always checkmate ourselves. The more we ‘advance,’ the more we shall lose ground. In the ultimate interest of all of us we should sacrifice anything to the end that this most priceless power of any (the intellectual power by which, as a kind, we express and illustrate ourselves, precisely because of which we are conscious of our poor organization and the fatuity of our record up to date) be put in a position finally to be effective. . . . Instead of the vast organization to exploit the weaknesses of the Many, should we not possess one for the exploitation of the intelligence of the Few ?

“Again, *What the Public Wants*, as it is practised to-day, must lead its practitioner into lunacy or some form of imbecility, or else, with the stronger-minded and more cynical, into a mood of *hatred* where their millions of ‘little charges’ are concerned. *Hatred of stupidity* must result, where it is not succumbed to, in those whose business it is to be incessantly isolating and exploiting it. But a great specialist in stupidity (like one of the great original newspaper kings) could only become what he does thanks to the clairvoyance of hatred of some sort. The great journalist and publicity figures with which everybody is familiar probably started with an intense irritation and dislike of the stupidity out of which subsequently they made their great fortunes. What started in hatred and contempt, passing to mastery and fortune, has been seen sometimes to end in madness. *Hatred of stupidity* is a most dangerous thing to encourage in yourself or others. It must have as a policy, or widely-indulged-in practice, the most diabolical results.

“Then, again, *to hate stupidity* is really to hate failure, for stupidity is that. And although the christian attitude on this

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point does not of necessity recommend itself, it is better than what we are familiar with under the form of the *worship of success*.

“ But *to love stupidity* would be even worse, no doubt. Self-sacrifice in the interest of the lame, the halt, and the blind is the extreme theoretic, christian, form of that. It cannot be said to have *succeeded*—in that sense it has practised what it preached.

“ An entirely different attitude either from that of christianity or from *What the Public Wants*, towards the majority of mankind, having no trace of disgust or dislike, hatred or impossible unreal ‘love,’ seems to suggest itself as necessary for the new ruler of the world.”

(15) *The vulgarization of the vision of genius to political ends.*

In the chapter from *The Art of Being Ruled* from which I have just quoted you will find a true account, I believe, of the *vulgarization of disgust*, as I called it, for the benefit of the magnate-class and their servants. But with our friends Paul Jolas and Sage you have another sort of *vulgarization of disgust* even more disgusting. I refer to the vulgarization of the authentic and lofty “detachment” of the “supermen”—of a Shakespeare, a Pascal, or a Machiavelli—and of the penetrating truth of their vision of life (which made matchwood of all human disguises and embellishments) for the use of a swarming “intellectualist” and artistic tribe of sub-supermen. This swarming and restless minority, I would argue, has no right whatever to these things: moreover it is neither one thing nor the other; it is half “mass,” and half “master”: and in consequence it is the bridge or corridor by which the high and dangerous civilisation of the masters can be fed (in whatever manner required) to the masses.

In this process what is constation for the master of men—a scientific registration of fact, even possessing its beauty when considered as a part of a great natural plan—becomes something very different on the lower plane. To illustrate what I mean: Molière would not *hate* his “bourgeois” of *Bourgeois-gentilhomme*. But this picture of the “bourgeois,” filtered through the practical intelligence of the receptive “intellectualist” machine, becomes an engine of hatred, or of malignant contempt. So often what Art has produced in order *to purge*, has come into the hands finally of people who wish not to “purge,” but to poison and murder.

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It does not, however, require a gigantic intelligence to perceive that life is ugly and foolish in a quantity of ways. This or that person, almost anyone (there are not in the nature of things many exceptions) regards himself as awfully kind, or intensely "attractive." Yet, where the eye observing him is for some reason dispassionate, he is of course seen to be none of these things. The whole of our civilized behaviour reposes upon an immense and carefully-fostered tolerance of the *You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours* order. That *tolerance* is the human secret: but let there be established in our midst a proselytising religion of *intolerance*—and that is of course what now has happened; let any person who promotes intolerance be heavily remunerated, and let it be known that anyone discovered defending the human canons of tolerance will be discouraged and attacked, and you soon will get all the frantic hatred that you require. Today you get it: and of course it calls for exceptional patience and good humour in the clear-sighted not to add—For your stupid helplessness you deserve it, and I hope you like it!

When the average person casts this dispassionate eye over his fellow creatures, however, it is usually a phase of acute rage or disappointment that has brought him to it. He does not at all seasons gaze in that clairvoyant fashion upon other men. And even when he does so his picture is distorted by passion. It is in consequence of this shortcoming in "detachment" on the part of the human average that their picture is not convincing.

It is only the intellect, in its highest incarnations, that gives the really convincing "detached" scientific picture of squalor ugliness or fraud. There lies the use of the intellect, or of the man possessed of a great intellect, to the agent of political disintegration. And one of the things, it is noteworthy, that that agent invariably affects is "detachment," though that semi-divine "detachment" is the last thing he in reality possesses.

No one, then, not even such mighty intelligences as Paul or as Jolas, could appreciate better than, let us say, Socrates or Pascal or Machiavelli, the vulgarity and stupidity that forms the major component of a great majority of human beings. I daresay that one of these famous men, observing impartially what seems to us the brilliant and striking intellectual equipment of our Mr. Paul or that of Mr. Jolas, would see little difference between Paul or Jolas and the small "bourgeois" against whom the former so bitterly and passionately inveigh.

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I say "daresay," for I admit that it cannot but be difficult for us, situated as we are in the midst of such admitted decline, to understand how such illustrious leaders of thought as Paul and Jolas could possibly be confused with a Babbitt or a Robot. So I only, with uneasy diffidence, suggest that such a possibility must be taken into account, however unlikely that assimilation may appear to us.

(16) *The happiness of the greatest number or What Civilisation must mean.*

One of the epigraphs I used for the part of *The Art of Being Ruled* from which I have quoted is as follows. (It is from the *Notes for Erewhon Revisited* by Samuel Butler.)

"to arrange our system with a view to the greater happiness of sensible, straightforward people—indeed, to give these people a chance at all if it can be avoided—is to interfere with the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Dull, slovenly, and arrogant people do not like those who are quick, painstaking, and unassuming; how can we then, consistently with the first principles of either morality or political economy, encourage such people when we can bring sincerity and modesty fairly home to them?"

To apply this quotation to the case of the persons whose outlook I am attempting to lay bare, first of all it is evident to me that we have in Paul and Jolas a kind of man with whom Butler, in his day, was totally unfamiliar. Butler's "dull, slovenly, and arrogant people" were the usual British representatives of the conceited dull and treacherous herd—these characteristics applying, obviously, to *any* herd whatever. The more people know, and the finer the senses they are endowed with, the more essentially *modest* they must be; and (in spite of that great majority who ridicule the well-known Socratic pronouncement) the more *straightforward* they generally are (the "better," as Socrates said). The "crooked roads," in that sense, at all events, are *not* "the roads of genius," unless it amuses you to talk of the "genius" of the company-promoter or bookmaker.

This, I am aware, must sound the most irritating nonsense. But I think that is so only because, in the confusions of our democratic canon of "greatness" or of excellence, the pioneers of the popular newspaper, or a meat or soap-king, would be classed with Socrates or Archimedes. The statement of Socrates is misunderstood today because it reposed upon Hellenic stan-

dards ; which is to say standards that had not been consistently degraded to the point that some common and piratic personality, who has the simple taste for and the low knack of raking in the shekels (necessarily in "ruthless" competition with masses of people of the same tastes as himself) is exalted into the same class as the philosopher or the pure inventive intelligence.

You see, I hope, my point? I mean that a consummate barbarian of the type of the great business magnate, or supreme revolutionary demagogue, differs in nothing but in a little extra unscrupulousness, a degree or two more narrowness, a dash more of native conceit, from the lowest and dullest of those whom he victimises: for "vitality," as we all know, means nothing very interesting. It is a thing like money—it merely gives a person the power to be more, and more, and still more, disgusting (according to the endowment).

It was the big-wigs of the herd, the crowd-masters, who first "got even" with what was *noble*, in the most absolute sense, in mankind. The rest, the millions, followed.

Samuel Butler, a very discerning person in his modest way, never, as I have said, had the pleasure of observing such personages as Paul and Jolas, so we can only guess what he would have thought of them. But we have noted how, in the passage quoted above, his words could not apply to them. They would not apply because in Butler's day the only person who abused the "philistine," or the "bourgeois," was Arnold or Butler himself. Whereas today everybody does—who is "anybody": such highly sagacious "philistines" or "bourgeois" dressed in carnival "red," as Paul and Jolas, do! I hope this excursus will have helped to make clearer what I wish to convey. It was because Butler's remarks did not apply to the people with whom he had to deal that this was necessary. To paraphrase Butler, here is what he says in the above quotation: "The majority are barbarian. Their "greatest happiness" consists in lying, swaggering and doing as little work as possible, especially as little mental work, the worst of all from their point of view.—Civilisation, therefore, means the conquest of this barbarian majority by the energetic, truthful, and modest (that is scientific) minority."

Since Butler wrote, the barbarian majority has been handed back more and more its freedom, or its "greatest happiness" namely its barbarity. It has been encouraged on a vast scale and by every engine of retrogression and mass-corruption, to *uncivilise* itself. It has been praised to the skies for its

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instinct, where that exists, to be brutally cruel ; and if it gives proof of a radical extremism, that is better still : to lie (and so, by *untruth*, to make a *dream-world* of its environment—for what else is the Super-real “dream-æsthetic” at bottom but an anti-scientific doctrine of lies ?) ; to be as conceited and overweening as it is possible to be (in the face of a total absence of anything to be conceited about, indeed in the face of a situation of desperate misery) ; and to regard as a virtue its stupidity.

How often has the Englishman not been informed that it was by his stupidity that he “conquered the world ?” This he has *stupidly* believed, quite neglecting the fact that it could hardly be by the means of stupidity that he would keep it, though in a lucky moment he might obtain it in spite of it. And Jolas tells his readers that “A certain kind of barbarism (is) the only solution etc.” But Jolas and his friends are only monotonously carrying on the good work ; for on all hands for half a century the European has been invited to throw over those masters who had disciplined him, and who had interfered with his “greatest happiness.” From every megaphone in the world it has been howled and whispered that we should go back to a natural savagery, back to Nature, back to a “barbarous” condition. All doctrines, claiming to be “revolutionary” or to be “conservative,” can only be judged by us according to their proved ability and intention to defeat this retrogression.

(17) *The New Nihilism : the text of Paul.*

I have left till last my most handy quotation from the good Paul. Some sentences from it have already been used. It is an article entitled *The New Nihilism* ; and it was instigated by the appearance in his paper of the first chapter of a book called *The Young European*. I shall quote a few passages from the latter masterpiece after I have quoted Paul’s panegyric. I need only say here that it is the thinnest, least resourceful, dullest fragment of matter, injected with the mildest of daredevil doses of Rimbaud-cum-Nietzsche, that it would be easy to discover. My point in quoting it, and what Paul says about it, is because Paul’s statement contains a valuable credo, and because I do not think that anyone could believe that La Rochelle’s book was taken such notice of on literary or indeed any grounds *except* that it fits in perfectly with Paul’s gospel of violent hatred, and robot revolt. In this way it can only prove what I contend : namely that what attracts Paul and

his friends to a work of art is mainly whether, by a fevered and violent attitude, it conforms to their requirements or not ; it at all events is not the art that sets them off, it is something different to art. And my objection to them is because of that only, again : as in art, purely, it happens that we in many cases admire the same things. It is indeed in the contemplation of this strange similarity in our ostensible tastes, combined with the profound difference in our critical standards, that this Argument has its source, and from that contradiction it draws its meaning.

“ *The New Nihilism.* ”

“ In the years immediately following the war there was some surprise, and considerable dismay, that such a cataclysm could have taken place without correspondingly violent reactions upon art and literature. Many of the older men seemed to lose their grip and either succumbed to a profound discouragement or took refuge in a mysticism tinged with hysteria. The work of the young men had been interrupted in its formative stage and it became necessary for them to begin again when a fresh start, in an environment of disillusionment and misery, was particularly difficult.

“ It was evident that old values had become meaningless. The importance of the individual seemed to have dwindled ; the practicability of concerted action appeared still more futile. Pity had been exhausted by the unreasonable demands the war years had placed upon it. Cynicism had proven itself inadequate when measured with realities. . . . Great books were not forthcoming . . . up from the wreckage which littered all Europe. Thought was sluggish, oratory insupportable. On all sides the question arose, ‘ Has this unspeakable farce been played for nothing ? ’ There was no response.

“ For a decade preceding the war, English literature and particularly American literature was pervaded by the influence of the Russians, Dostoieffski, Chekhov, Tolstoi, Turgenev, Gogol, Gorki, Andreyev. The ideals of the humanists, of those who believed human brotherhood could be realised by the awakening in each man and woman of their unselfish and kindly instincts, were expressed most profoundly by Dostoieffski. There were Ivans who, unequal to their intellectual torments, wished to ‘ hand God back his ticket. ’ There were Dimitris who, containing all the extremes of violence and of generosity, were the temporary victims of their own passions. But the

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force for which Alyosha stood, juvenile and unworldly as it was, could be considered as universal and significant, wholesome and experimental.

“Much of this was swept away by the War. Dostoeffski, who looked deeper into his fellows than any other man of his time and who none-the-less remained hopeful and humble, was repudiated first in his own land. Elsewhere his influence continued a while, like a boat in which the engine has stopped, then drifted to standstill. The result of the carnage and despair were negative. No successors moved into the dwellings the departed sages had left vacant. Stars fell, but no new star appeared.

“But perhaps the watchers for fresh guidance have been impatient, or have been facing in the wrong direction. It has become evident that the race is to continue for a while and that blunders lying ahead may have the virtue of novelty. While the Dostoeffski, or the Christian spirit, if you like, has been given over to a few recluses to guard for more propitious ages, its converse is beginning to find expression, and a literature completely dehumanised and functioning in a sphere which knows neither morals nor compassion, is coming out into the open.

“It may be a mark of French courage that this tendency which has been whispered about as sinister by those who do not dare accept the consequences of a thorough modernity, has crystallised in France. It must not be confused with the superman conception. The new hero neither feels nor shows superiority, only an utter amorality and a clear head which finds futility everywhere and accepts it as a natural law.

“‘Man need never have left the forest. He is a degenerate, nostalgic animal.’ The human race no longer exists. One man alone is concerned with a world which is contained within his own cravings and satisfactions. Never does it appear that he is aware of another’s joy or pain. Communication is elementary, companionship non-existent, love ‘precise’ like a surgical operation.

“Consequently, ‘The young European,’ by Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, is a disturbing and enlightening document. It represents the opposite pole to Dostoeffski. . . . ‘The Young European’ is a frank and lucid and convincing statement of a world intellectual tendency which is in its ascendancy. It renounces Christ and Nietzsche as if both were schoolboys. No illusions as to the revival of Europe’s past greatness can live in its atmosphere, and America’s noise and activity, the

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glitter of the dollar and the whirr of the machine, are stripped of constructive value. . . . Russia appears as a 'nation of beautiful savages' led by a group of Jews who are trying to become American, but 'like the Germans in 1914, go, at it clumsily.' La Rochelle's young man finds Europeans cannonading one another, the Americans cannonading nature, Russia, India and China trying to imitate the preposterous activities of the Occident.

" 'The violence of men,' he says in the midst of battle where he finds only a temporary distraction. 'They are born only for war, as women are made to bear children. All the rest is a tardy detail of the imagination which has already shot its bolt.'

" Even the sense of bravado, so strong in old-time warriors, has disappeared. When Dos Passos, in 'Three Soldiers' depicted Chris killing a sergeant because the latter has 'got his goat,' there were complaints of exaggeration, morbidity, disloyalty and what not, all the usual phrases with which uniformed persons protect the rickety shelters of their complaisance. La Rochelle's hero kills a man to get a false passport and "also" to feel the difference between killing a uniformed soldier and a civilian. He turns his wife over in bed and admires her muscular limbs with utter objectivity and 'one evening he fails to return home.'

" It is not necessary to accept this perfect inhumanity in order to acknowledge its importance. There can be no more doubt as to its existence and scope. It goes way beyond the Russian Nihilism of Turgenev's time. (Compare the 'young European' with Bazaroff, in 'Fathers and Sons'). Humanists cannot fail to realize they are now on the defensive. The disciples of the Nazarene, as poet and philosopher, must feel that the burden of proof is on them, that they are offering no new brand of goods but an old one which has proven disappointing in many important respects.

" ELLIOT PAUL."

(18) *My gloss on Paul.*

I will run through this article paragraph by paragraph, offering you a kind of paraphrase as commentary.

People were surprised that such a colossal event as the War (and I suppose Paul means the Russian Revolution, too, of which the War was but a gigantic episode), had no visible reflection in literature. They were even "dismayed" to find how little effect it had. And, with more reason, it may be

justifiably added, many of us have been "dismayed" at the absence of intelligent response, and violent protest, evoked by such things outside of literature, in every-day life. I think I may claim that these books and pamphlets of mine are one of the *only* responses of the sort.

People were stunned: they just sat down and ceased reacting or thinking at all. "The older men . . . lost their grip" and "succumbed to a profound discouragement." Those whose active life was mainly behind them naturally could neither grasp in their full scope, nor were they competent to meet, these novel catastrophes. But "the young men" whose work "had been interrupted in its formative stage" were, we are told, in no better plight. They had to begin all over again, but in an atmosphere of profound disillusion.

But what did Paul expect? Did he expect those whose "work had been interrupted" immediately to sit down, the War just over, and "respond" to these events like so many machines? And exactly what sort of "response" did he anticipate? The War for me, as a soldier, was an interminable nightmare, and I did not the instant it was over sit down pencil in hand (as Mr. Dunne recommends) to get on to paper its prophecies. So "Great books were not forthcoming." Paul is careful not to say that had great books of the kind he has in mind been forthcoming, Paul would have been the last person to welcome them.

"On all sides," he goes on to say, "a great Question was echoed: '*Has this unspeakable farce been played for nothing?*' There was no response."

But Paul's account is not exact—in this respect: No such Question, in fact, *was* asked, nor has ever been asked. Any such question was so heavily discouraged both by those who "Won the War" and those who "lost it," that it would have been fairly difficult to ask it effectively. There was a conspiracy of silence, in the wake of the war—it was understood that *that* was to be forgotten and never mentioned. This held good until about a year ago, when everybody began talking at once, writing memoirs and composing films, in the most genial manner possible, but with the curious affectation that the War was a very distant event, which another species had taken part in, and that it could be treated on the same terms as the napoleonic campaigns or even remoter histories. That has fallen rather flat: the public did not see through it of course but it was quite impossible to interest them in the genial manner desired.

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“ the old values had become meaningless . . . the importance of the individual seemed to have dwindled. . . . Pity had been exhausted by the unreasonable demand (of) the war years.” Indeed all this was so and it still is so. It is only in what we are going to do about it that Paul and I differ, and in the particular twist that Paul gives to these progressive events.

Now before the War, says Paul, Europe was “ christian.” In Dostoeffski “ the christian spirit ” of the “ unselfish and kindly instincts ” found its profoundest expression. But all the great men of pre-war Europe were of that order, apparently. They were all “ christian,” humanitarian or “ humanist,” as he calls it. They all believed that men could and should be civilised, and live in peace and plenty.

It is of the greatest moment to point out that such a picture is not a true one (it is by no means the property of Paul). We can neglect the question of whether the oriental form of christianity proper to Russia should be classed as “ christian,” without qualification, and we can accept the humanitarian fervour of Tolstoy for instance as a specifically christian attitude, I suppose. But Nietzsche, and a great deal of german thought, was quite the opposite from this russian christianity. Moreover it enjoyed an influence at least equal to that of the “ christian ” and humanitarian writers. There is no romantic advocate of tiger-like carnage who is likely to outdo the famous “ blond beast ” myth of Nietzsche. George Sorel, the french disciple of Nietzsche, preached exactly the same thing as *Transition* has set out to preach. Ever since Darwin men have doubted the christian premises and tended to regard themselves as animals rather than “ humanists,” and ever since the French Revolution they have dreamed spasmodically of universal armed proletarian revolt to put back a bit of the jungle where it was badly needed in the centre of the artifices of very imperfectly humane life.

But the russian writers whom Paul cites were themselves surrounded by “ nihilistic ” thought, as I have already said, at least as feverish as any Paul can show.

Therefore there was no break at all as a consequence of the war, of the sort he would have us believe. It is only the russian writers whom he mentions who were “ christian humanists,” and it was only they who disappeared beneath the red waves of bolshevist revolution. Elsewhere in Europe there was no “ christian humanist ” literature of that sort. It was confined to Russia. Elsewhere such influences as Nietzsche, Strindberg, D’Annunzio, Oscar Wilde or Shaw were the order

of the day. And they were natural forerunners of Paul's pick, as also they were the natural agents and instruments of the forces preparing for Apocalypse.

It is of significance to pin down Paul to this little misrepresentation.

"But" next exclaims Paul "the watchers for fresh guidance"—those whom, he supposes, were on the lookout for a swarm of Dostoeffskis, of "christian humanists"—"*perhaps have been impatient!*" They've been looking in the wrong direction. At last the saviours are arriving: but—lo and behold!—instead of "Christian humanists," they are all devils or robots! Instead of arriving like benevolent pilgrims, a sort of Magi, from the Russian East, as the naïve expected (just as they expected the Russian Revolution to turn out a realization of tolstoyan and humanitarian dreams, and were correspondingly horrified at the tyrannic reality), the messiahs spring out of the ground at our feet—up out of some fourth-dimensional trapdoor in the parisian pavement—clothed from head to foot in melodramatic *red* (equally the colour of conventional Hell and of Communist revolt) with pitchfork and cloven hoof, spitting hatred, with bomb and poison cup. What a disappointment! What a *scandal*, too!

But this is a tremendous novelty! exclaims Paul. For nothing of the sort has ever been known in Europe before!

"While the Dostoeffski or the Christian spirit, if you like, has "disappeared," its *converse* is beginning to find expression, and a literature completely dehumanised and functioning in a sphere which knows neither morals nor compassion, is coming into the open."

All this is *just* "coming into the open!" But oh that "modern spirit" that "knows no compassion," that dear old friend of every sensational journalist or "servant-girl" feuilletonist in any *Smart set* or *Saucy Story* type of paper for so very long now, surely Paul is not going to ask us to take that as an innovation—not the soul that "knows neither morals nor compassion!" That it is difficult to believe! But that is in fact Paul's intention.

(19) *The bourgeois non-super democratic Pauline Superman.*

This *diabolical* "tendency" which "has been whispered about as *sinister*" by those cowardly philistines "who do not dare to accept the consequence of a *thorough modernity*"—this insidious and hair-raising "tendency" to dispense not only

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with "morals" (oh Paul!) but with "compassion," has, as perhaps might have been expected, "to come out into the open" in France, *la belle France* to be more accurately vernacular, and especially gay and wicked Paris. This is a testimony to "*la bravoure française*," and to french "naughtiness" combined—the soul-that-knows-no-compassion, the ruthless tiger, is a testimony to the "bravery," the soul that "knows not morals" to the "naughtiness" which is responsible for *La Vie Parisienne* and the nude show-girls of the *Folies Bergères*.

But this "new hero" is *no superman*! Oh no. Please don't run away with that idea, says Paul. No. He feels superior to *nobody*. He is perfectly democratic. He only can be distinguished from the bourgeois by "an utter amorality." Otherwise he is not out of the way at all. You would think you were talking to a "bourgeois" till he pinched your watch or just for the fun of the thing *purely to amuse* himself perhaps slit your gizzard.

Next we come to the actual words of the new-hero (as found in La Rochelle's book). One of his tremendous innovating epigrams is this:

"Man need never have left the forest. He is a degenerate nostalgic animal."

Here's another of his astonishing novel and iconoclastic darts:

"Men are born only for War, as women are made to bear children. All the rest is a tardy detail of the imagination."

He also says that "the group of Jews" who are running Russia, that land of "beautiful savages," are like the Kaiser. They are clumsy.

Yes: they are not the only people who are clumsy: but it is all very wonderful, and its novelty simply knocks you back! It's evidently the french wit that does it—though the new hero, and I daresay his creator, admits that he doesn't know if he's french, russian or what. (He says that probably his wit is french, if nothing else about him is). Still, the book was *written* in France, and it has the advantage over *Transition* that it was written in french. So it throws its lustre upon the whole french nation, who should be exceedingly proud I think if they're not.

This epoch-making work "represents the opposite pole to Dostoeffski." I should have said that a book to represent anything so positive—or negative—as the opposite pole to the immense "humanism" of the author of *The Idiot* would

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have had to have been a pretty "sinister" affair. This thin fanfaronading piece of salon-wickedness scarcely fills the ticket. But, as you can see from the epigrams, quoted by Paul, it is an overpoweringly original, *and* daring, piece of work. "The disciples of the Nazarene, as poet and philosopher, must" tremble in their shoes.

CONCLUSION

(1) *The worst of all possible Philistias.*

A person who calls his stuff the "new" this or the "new" that (like a person who should always refer to himself as "the handsome Mr. Brown" or "Brown the original") ought immediately to be able to convulse us with boredom, fling us into compulsory sleep or the most absolute inattention. Luckily this little verbal convention—characteristically employed by Jolas-Paul (as it is—in the well-known and time-honoured "super" form—by the "super-realists") only has its full effect in these days upon the most rustic of adult-infants (mainly the cases of arrested development, the village-idiots in fact) in the most remote "outposts of civilisation": at Ponds Inlet among the polar policemen or in Pitcairn the eye might joyously brighten at the word "new" upon the sodden "transitional" page—the eye, that is, of the dullest of those present. In the "centres of civilisation" a certain low-cunning fortunately prevents anybody at all from getting really excited at Paul or anybody else's little "new," if for no other reason because, however stolidly traditional or just blankly nothing, each is his own "new" upon his visiting card.

But I think the "new romantics" might lay claim to something *novel*, if they only knew where to look for it. I will give them the following tip, expecting of course no special thanks. Without too much exaggeration, it is my belief, they might refer to themselves as the "New Philistines." That form I think could be used with as much appropriateness as "New Rich" was used for the War-profiteers. Let us at all events humour them and pretend that they are "new," merely substituting "Philistine" for "Romantic." The Philistine *is* a romantic all right, but "Philistine" in this case is actually more accurate, and has the advantage of being more "new." If we do not fall out over the "new" then I feel sure we shall never come to blows over what it qualifies.

That having been satisfactorily arranged, we may start by saying that the "New Philistine" is the counterpart in art—but (agreed! agreed!) very very artistic art—of the Philistine that is rampant elsewhere throughout our national life

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in every land. "Philistine" alone however would not describe him (Arnold's moron is not ours). When I said a short while ago "*political philistine*" I put my finger on it—I almost felt it jump. And ours is the worst of all possible Philistias—since for an artist to be a politician is the worst of all possible philistinisms, and where a politician *pretends* to be an artist the effect is the same.

The problem of art, or of the intellect, and of its relation to politics, has, since I, as an artist, first propounded it in my *Revolutionary Simpleton* and in *Time and Western Man*, become popular. Mr. Julien Benda in France has taken it up. M. Benda, whom I quoted in my book, is a man of resource. In his latest work (*La Trahison des Clercs*) he makes an effective use of my writings (by some oversight he has forgotten to mention my name, but that is just as well, for he arrives at conclusions very different from mine or appears to misunderstand what he has read: it is for that reason no doubt that he abstains from any mention of his sources).

But for an artist the central problem of this intensely political time is *the political artist*, or, better, *the politician as artist*. The moralist attitude imported into the discussion by M. Benda helps only, I think, to obscure it; it is rather as an offence against taste than against any ethical canon that artistic politics, or political fine-arts, should be regarded—and thinking is of course first and foremost an art, and not an instrument of brutal coercion nor an evasive political technique.

(2) *The tolstoyan philistinism and that of Paul.*

The certain philistinism in Tolstoi (and in a much ranker form the same must apply to the less interesting mind of Shaw) caused him to mistake his problem and to moralise his excellent and humane observation to such a degree that he was led into the most fantastic thesis on the subject of art. He became a sort of a Russian Bunyan, and art for him eventually appeared under the form of an endowment in the service of ethics, a purely utilitarian activity and nothing more. It is against this conception of art (only in a form neither humane nor noble but injected with all the jealous passion of a gospel of *hatred* instead of a gospel of *love*) that I am writing.

The *politicisation* of art is a human catastrophe of the same order as the politicisation of science. The lip-service offered to the man of science is associated with his achievements as an inventor of venomous gases or ironclads, or because of the

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immense economic value of his technical genius. If he had never invented anything but economically useless and physically inoffensive things he would never have been heard of, naturally. Art cannot compare with science on those grounds. But it is not politically negligible. It is to prevent the organisation of art as a political instrument, either on behalf of a benevolent idealism such as Tolstoy's or one subserving the "diabolical" interests of a Paul, that I am engaged in my present critical task.

Further, it is necessary to insist (over and over again, since there are so few to do it) that the, in the popular sense, "moral" interests of Tolstoy—great credit as they do him as a citizen and I do not mean to laugh at that—are not so far removed as is supposed from the "diabolical" enthusiasms of Lautréamont, for example. Such men as the latter are in fact inverted moralists, as was well seen in the case of Nietzsche. The "wicked," the "naughty," "perverted," "masochistic," the sentimentalism or snobbery of the "bad," is the other side of an obsession about some wooden "virtue" of the german protestant mind. From that there is no escape. The "daring" Ballet or the "daring" book would no longer be "daring" if there were nothing there to be "daring" about. It would just be an interesting creation of art or a dull one, and there would be no incentive to insist out of proportion to its place in normal life upon this or that, if there were not an absurd Censor standing ready to advertise it with anathema, or a persecutory puritan upon the spot to exclaim and point.

The *politicisation* of art, then, in modern Europe usually takes one of two forms: either in its milder and more benevolent form it results in Tolstoy's puritanic bias: or otherwise it issues in *diabolism*—when it becomes automatically Nietzsche's "Anti-Christ," or Lautréamont's hymns of hate against mankind, or Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal*. "Messe Noire" must always be the mystical counterpart of a too fanatically conceived White Mass.

Why the notion of *the diabolical principle* affords such a useful insight into the meaning of what we have been discussing is because it at once reveals the motif of romantic, satanic *revolt*. A Commune directed at the rule and order established not by men but by a god is involved. It is, in short, a mystical revolution that is proposed, against a spiritual Power, to match the other revolutions of a more prosaic type against Capitalism or Kingship. Definitely as a twin of armed politi-

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cal revolt it presents itself: it seems to assert "It is no use being a *revolutionary* in every other way—it is idle to be in the van with the feminist, on the barricade with the communist, in the Black ranks against the White, and so forth—if you are not also a revolutionary in the spiritual sphere. You must not forget Heaven however much you fix your insurgent eye upon the Bastille!" That is what the Diabolical Principle means upon the lips of Paul, or what "giving Evil Functions a chance" is intended to convey.

(3) *Art as a bomb.*

The *politicisation* of art is not a new idea, then: Tolstoy had it, and half-ruined a splendid talent with it. But art has only recently, I think, with the organising passion peculiar to this Machine Age, been the object of an almost official solicitude, as a department of Black-shirt or Red-tie insurrection. Every interested party to-day being equally anti-tolstoyan, it naturally is conceived as an aggressive, fiery, instrument of battle, potentially "diabolical" and destructive. My phrase *Kill John Bull with Art* was, I fear, far too near what is meant, or it had the air of being: for a poem or a picture is looked upon under the circumstances as a potential bomb or cylinder of poison gas or a pocket Automatic.

Now disregarding if you can whatever your political views may be (and mine are partly communist and partly fascist, with a distinct streak of monarchism in my marxism, but at bottom anarchist with a healthy passion for order) you should certainly ask yourself is that the way to regard the fine arts or not perhaps. If you are not an artist yourself, poor chap, you have to put yourself in his shoes in this instance: exact an eye or no from yourself.—Would you be best pleased if you found your day's work being inspected or looked over from that angle *only*, and all that you produced praised or condemned solely with regard to whether your work would destroy or would not?

What artistic workers of the world (it is my Communism that flames up here) must attempt to secure to themselves at the present juncture is political freedom—that is of course freedom from interference from rival political factions, from bosses either red or white, and their however disguised agents. To *have* to write a book to show that the Negro was "better than" a White, would be just as absurd as being compelled

always in your writings to prove that "beer-drinking Britons can never be beat" or that the Nordic Blond was the finest man who had ever existed, having the Chinese and Indian utterly beat, or something equally mad.

(4) *The hunting-down and destruction of "the great."*

There have been communities which have depended upon the genius of a single individual for their existence (their Chief or some peculiar leader) but in no modern nation could it ever have been said to have mattered (disregarding the question of the destruction of an intricate tradition and its symbols) if a handful of court personages, with the Prince and his family, were eliminated. No one again could seriously claim that the politician as generally found today is irreplaceable. But nature does in every generation endow a handful of people with invaluable and mysterious gifts, in the special fields of science, and of art, or in character and general ability, making them fertile and inventive where other people are for the most part receptive only (and who indeed unless stirred up to argument ask nothing better than to receive and receive and receive, naturally docile if properly fed): and when the herd-animus that it has been necessary to arouse, aimed originally at social privilege and wealth alone, is turned against this other type of man, privileged by nature according to some law that, until its secret is revealed, must be accepted by all of us, however unpalatable when given too much attention and sadly undemocratic—but one who has robbed nobody in order to live, who requires nothing of other people except freedom to work in the way that is best suited to his special endowments—then you can see how the very rationale of true Revolution or salutary change is exploded, since radical change must depend, for its birth and for its fulfilment, upon the existence and leadership of just this type of person—unless a mere Gunman's Republic, resulting in a new aristocracy on the old violent European pattern, is all you are to get, or only a series of immense and aimless brawls.

So it is a vicious cycle through which we have arrived at length in our interim, "transitional" society at this big-game-hunting in which our philistine-apes, armed with "pink" university educations and a fine back-stair acquaintance with the ways of genius (which as Blake said are "crooked"), indulge. It is called "a passion for biography" but of course it is in truth a system of destruction. All the "great men"

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of our race live in our consciousness, as noble exemplars. That common consciousness has now been converted into a big-game preserve. There is no person who can hold a pen or push a typewriter, however contemptible his prowess, but can, without taking out any licence, go and hunt his Dickens, his Marlowe, his Rossetti, his Byron—there is no close season for that game—but this “happy hunting-ground” is extensive and up till now it has been a forbidden paradise. What a slaughter! The small valley-ape has arms invented for him by the very people he goes out to shoot.—In the Cerdagne last summer it was noticed that men were going up into the mountains with machine-guns to hunt the izards or wild-goats that are found there—they fetch three hundred francs a head at the local butchers—it is worth it. This was stopped. It became obvious that in a season or two there would be no goats left. Will the three-hundred-pound-a-head bags of the literary gunmen of our Parnassus be dealt with? Why, no, for who is to stop them? Are we not all free to go where we will? All we can do is to hope piously and patiently that some will break their necks, some enfilade each other or mistake each other for goats or “greats” (but the last is a chance in a thousand, for they recognize each other’s stature and gait without difficulty at a considerable distance, and a “great” they can scent a mile off and would never take for one of themselves—at least no “great” will ever be saved by being confused with his posthumous Boswell).

Yet all true *revolution* depends, as I have said, upon these exceptional creatures, these “individuals” we are taught to mistrust and hate, to hobble, clip, hunt and wipe out. A great revolution of opinion has been effected in two hundred years in Europe. But it has been dogged by another mock-revolution, like a false sun beside the real one. The mock sun is now at its Zenith.

(5) *Our pink millenium of the West.*

But how can this colossal mess, into which the majority have been conducted by popularisation and democratic rule, have anything to do with our highly intellectual friends of *Transition* or *Super-reality*? The connection is not at once apparent, that is why it is necessary to point it out. Since the New Philistine for preference dresses like an artist, plays readily on musical instruments, lives in a studio if possible and so on—in short, since he has disguised himself as that which he wishes

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either to tame and to put to some vulgar use or else to destroy, in the way that the Esquimau gets under a seal-skin to hunt a seal—to dissociate these masses of sham practitioners from the real ones is particularly difficult.

There is, too, the factor of quantity—of the great numbers of people involved. For whereas it is not difficult to show that there are not today, figure for figure, more individuals than formerly of the importance say of Proust or Stendhal (there is about the same quota of such stars at any given time) yet for every “poet” or man occupied with letters contemporary with Stendhal in France, there are certainly a hundred now: and in addition to the crowds of literary jobbers, dealers, reporters and generally breadwinners, there are the even more troublesome hordes of monied amateurs, who, because there is no longer any public life worth engaging in, and as riches are best camouflaged in such a revolutionary world, become “bohemians” and adopt one art or another—and in so doing quite naturally become competitors in a mild way instead of patrons; and, as I have pointed out elsewhere, the patron-turned-artist is no more exempt from envy than is the professional artist or writer.—The picture of the handicap of the “new-great” (shall we say) would not have been complete without this last figure taken out of the High Bohemia.

But it is not the magnate-bohemian-amateur that I have been tracking here, of course (though I think it is part of the same story, in which all that is “great” must suffer), but the political polemist disguised as a “poet” or art-impressario—or as a leisured gentleman settled in Paris for a time, simply and solely *amusing* himself!—in our pink millenium of the Western World, our semi-communising semi-capitalising society. “This is Liberty ’All” I heard the Mayor say in his scarlet robe of office, “this is Liberty ’All!”—referring to the official precincts, where a ceremony was taking place. Europe and America are “Liberty ’All” at the moment, so that, among other agreeable licences, in an intermittent, cross, incredulous way, intellectual independence and anything that can be interpreted for the public as a “novelty” are encouraged. There is no greater novelty than to gaze without illusion before you at the contemporary scene at any time: and I suggest that we take the Red Mayor, in his plutocratic robes, at his word, as it were: neglect “romantic” compromises of these merging worlds of “idealism” and Big Business, and throw all the voting forms that inundate us, of whatever political complexion, into the waste-paper basket.

(6) *Pure Revolution.*

Try as you may to simplify these matters for a fairly large public, there remains a great variety of traps into which, upon the slightest inattention, some of the more naïf or impulsive fall: it takes usually all the King's horses and all the King's men to get them out of these more serious man-traps or pits. The greatest confusion perhaps of all centres round the term "revolutionary." It is absolutely necessary to make an absolute distinction between (1) *political* revolution (and further political revolution of a certain hard and fast orthodox contemporary brand) and (2) on the other hand, all thought and activity that is certainly revolutionary, and so disturbing to the comfortable average, but not committed to any particular *political* doctrine—that is to say to any practical programme of change. And it is clearly the duty of some people to occupy themselves mainly with official programmes and ways and means, and that of others to occupy themselves with the pure stuff of revolutionary change, irrespective of practice. I am of that latter kind, but not of the former.

The general run of parliamentary socialist thought is not today revolutionary in any sense (in the manner of Cobden, for example)—that is recognised by everybody who has any political discrimination at all. But it is generally believed that in this respect Communism differs from Socialism. I am not qualified, nor is it necessary for me, to question this effectively: but I believe from what I know that people may be mistaken who think official Communism to be more radically imbued with a passion for *pure change* (which is pure "revolution") than is Socialism. It aims at such social change as it postulates by much more violent means (as violent as that of the militarists and nationalists) but it is quite likely, I think, that its main difference lies in that, and in a general air of energy and meaning-business which the official socialist lacks. Its *physical* violence it would almost seem exhausts its energy.

Political "revolutionaries" are essentially opportunists, that is to say they do not create the conditions of change, but they make use of circumstances that do not owe their existence to political energy at all, in the first place, but to pure creative energy of a much more formidable sort.

Before there can be *political* change there must have been some other more fundamental change, that is,—such as is involved in some great material discovery, for instance. What Communism at its best must aim at, I suppose, is already

fully possessed by a restricted number of people (in a rather vulgar and over-opulent way in the Ritzes and Astorias, and in "Bloomsbury" in a rather sentimental and "reactionary" way). The transition from one set of values to a more scientifically accurate one which the Communist wishes to effect in the minds of the majority, has already been effected in the minds of a minority. So all popular revolutions, of whatever nature, have always, before they occurred, virtually existed in the consciousness and behaviour of a minority, and often, visibly, in phalansteries and colonies.

The merely political revolutionary is thus, for the most part, an *interpreter* only of a creative mind. And he is, of course, very often, a very bad and corrupt interpreter; often he is a startlingly vulgar, peculiarly unscrupulous and self-seeking, one. Is not that quite natural? Like other popularisers, he tends to degrade and cheapen systematically the "message" of which he is the bagman or Bashibazouk.

(7) *The "adolescent state-of-mind" and revolutionary views.*

You often hear it said that Communism or "revolutionary" opinions is "merely an adolescent state of mind": and so it is dismissed. That of course indeed does describe the spirit in which such opinions are often held. But what is truly revolutionary (in the sense of imbued with the imagination for a great human transformation) can have nothing to do with adolescence (as a human average of mental immaturity and emotional sentiment, if that is what is meant). For the *Republic* of Plato, for instance, which is certainly a "revolutionary" document, is scarcely an expression of adolescent opinion, even hellenic.

This typical remark, about "the adolescent state of mind," is used by people not favourably disposed to politics of the Left. And adolescent or immature can equally well apply to the merely uneducated, or the intellectually immature. For most people clearly remain children to the end (to-day they do not become so much "old boys" and "old girls," in the old style, as old infants, which is much more disagreeable).

But the objection which I think could be brought against many communists is that that is their attitude, as well, towards their doctrine: their appeal is too persistently to the great mass of *immaturity*, whether physiologically "adolescent" or not, and to its values, or at all costs to the crudely emotional, with a concomitant antagonism to "Intellect" and all its works.

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And although that may be a necessity for the securing of its power, it nevertheless does force a great deal of nonsense to be written and talked by it; and it is questionable whether, if it is only strategy, the human average of which it is composed is strong-headed enough to resist its own fumes of political deceit. As to its famous gas of *hatred*, that must be very bad for the most hardy, and I do not believe that even the most impartial person is able to go about the world (however thoroughly masked) without deploring the protracted scent of all this accumulating insecticide or the stink of this gathering homicide.

But whatever your ideas may be with regard to the official arrangements made by communists to popularise and make an established fact of the simpler forms of philosophic thought and scientific thought (and Communism and Fascism are the only two practical schemes within sight), revolution *tout court* remains to be dealt with. And the pure stuff of "revolution" whatever it may be is very different from the travesties of it which historically appear at regular intervals, and which will gradually, perhaps, involve a new world-order.

Speaking as anything but a politician—strictly and even a little fanatically as an artist—whatever end the means may be guaranteed to secure, the "transition" by which we arrive at that universally advertised end is unnecessarily hideous and foolish. But how can "transition" be anything else? you may exclaim. And the doctrinaires of "transition" indeed seem to be none too convinced of the beauty and advantages of a period of "transition" (for they refer to "more propitious ages" and so forth). But would it not be better, one is at least at liberty to ask, simply as artists (and simply, that is, in the process of "amusing" yourself) not to deliver yourself of so much purely "transitional" imbecility?—*necessary* perhaps to "destroy Western civilisation" but not in itself very significant or beautiful. Why, in short, make a virtue of necessity—why make *anything* of necessity, above all a virtue. Why not *confess* (not *boast*) that you are "romantic" and the rest: or better still—and that is what I am recommending here—take no notice at all of politics, since you cannot be a politician and an artist too, and if you have the chance, the latter is the better thing to be.

(8) *An individual in politics is impossible to-day.*

It is not an easy task to bring home to an anglo-saxon audience the sort of truth I am here concerned with: this is

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on account of the lack of political sagacity of the English and American, the result no doubt of a prosperous past and the immense material advantages ensuing from expansion and conquest. Here however is a rough statement adapted for a shrewd man of the world who is, unfortunately, politically immature.

I, the editor of the *Enemy*, am not a destructive political revolutionary idealist.—From Shelley to Shaw in England it has been rather the rule than the exception for a writer to be a destructive political revolutionary idealist. Most Russian men of letters prior to the revolution were that. But the revolutionary idealism of that long line of literary prophets, for a full century, was the product of very different circumstances from those in which we live to-day. That sort of revolutionary idealism, in the world of the War and of Post-war, would be strangely unreal. Our society is no longer a class-society, and our nationalisms are the merest retrogressive make-believes. People to-day in Europe and America either have money or they have not ("class" in any other sense is meaningless): they no longer believe that all "foreigners" are devils, they have lost almost all their political superstitions of fifty years ago, or rather those superstitions are kept alive only by incessant mass-suggestion: the belief in the subtle significance of the White or the Black skin is dead: otherwise of course the White would not flock to plays showing the Black-man as a superior being to the White, or dance exclusively to the Negro's music instead of his own, or make a fashion of "afroamerican" spirituals and so forth. You could say with some reason that the White would not behave in this way if he realised how absolute this racial reversal was becoming: he still instinctively *patronises*. But his belief in himself as the elect is *also* dead.

It is absolutely essential to take into account, in considering the attitude peculiar to these critical essays and what are alleged to be their topsy-turvydom or "inconsistency," these very novel circumstances, brought about by the vast technical development of Science, the decay or extinction everywhere of the remains of feudalism (which means the end of "class" in the traditional sense and so in the sense in which it is generally used), and the entire change in the complexion of things for all of us consequent upon the terrific organisation of the great Capitalist Trusts, and that of that other great and peculiar semi-religious Trust, with its highly-organised monopoly of obvious political decency (anti-militarist, international, and the rest, as it is)—namely, the Soviet.

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The truth of the matter is that there is no place to-day for any *individual*, politically, at all, either upon the Right or upon the Left. The *person* is a thing of the past, in public life, much as he is in commercial life, or in military life. Just as there are no longer any "great" figures in what remains of conventional parliamentary life—no Gladstones, Brights or Pitts—so in that other World of Revolution there is no place for their prophetic, altruistic, rebellious, counterpart—for such sages as Tolstoy or Shaw. (Shaw to-day is merely an amiable survival, who, with considerable good sense, has decided to end his days in a mellow spot-light, as a sort of freak-society-beauty, or with the agreeable publicity of a very fortunate lion in a very luxurious Zoo, surrounded by crowds of jostling Yahoos, at whom he gazes with a certain lazy sentimental surprise.) Both political concerns (that of the Left and that of the Right) are too immense and too intricate for "personalities" to be any more than resounding nonentities: *personal* influence must to-day be nil in the political sphere: a political "personality" either satisfies some vast and nebulous anonymous Interest, or he does not. The late Lord Curzon, a peculiarly unadaptable man it would seem, living completely in a past that was out-of-date even when he began his career, is reported as exclaiming with great bitterness on one occasion (when he was asked to use his power to secure the passing of some measure) "Power! I have not enough *power* to send an office-boy across Whitehall!" or words to that effect. He recognised at last what sort of world he had been born into, it would appear from this: but it would also seem that he was naïvely astonished and unable to reconcile himself to an absence of personal "power," a desire for which he automatically inherited.

(9) *The assumptions that underlie my criticism.*

Certain assumptions underlie anything that is written here, and I have perhaps sometimes taken it too much for granted that things which are so plainly visible to me, must be also more or less seen by my readers. Yet I know that it is necessary to make an almost unlimited allowance (1) for the habits of the ostrich and a hatred of unpalatable truth, and (2) for a romantic traditional outlook, which results in most men living in an historic past, and still thinking in terms of institutions and of emotional appeals that no longer possess the slightest rationale or basis in fact—in terms of *anything*, in short, except of that

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present reality that flatly contradicts all those formal or empty survivals, which to them appear "the things that matter."

To show by a concrete example that this is so, you only have to consider marriage as still practised to-day. Men are liable to a woman they have "married" (to the extent of a forfeiture of a third of their goods) as though no sex-revolution had ever occurred, with its total revaluation or reversal of all the sex relationship. That "revolution" was not marked by a slaughter of the males, it has been a revolution in the general state of mind, and so leaves our society in two contradictory pieces (one of which goes on behaving as though nothing had occurred), which is neither satisfactory from the point of view of the rebel hordes of Feminism nor from that of the bloody task-master and slave-driver, poor little *Man*. So that revolution having no formal and legal status, as it were, the archaic machinery of marriage, with all the injustice it takes with it where the man is concerned, still grinds on like a cracked and disconsolate hurdy-gurdy. *Son siempre los pobrecitos hombres que pagan!* And in a thousand minor ways the "master" who is no longer even a "mate," is made a fool of, abused for the possession of things he never dreamed of claiming, and generally made to pay, as he no doubt richly deserves, for his little bourgeois "home" and for his greater slowness in transforming himself and throwing off, with a revolutionary gesture, *all* responsibility. And yet people are surprised or shocked (so that they will not even allow you to say how prevalent it is) at the homosexual cult, which is a direct outcome of this situation. The man *escapes*—he ceases to be "a man." The game is not worth the candle!

I will not touch upon the many absurdities that accompany a Nationalist War of gas and bomb, but there you could find an even more fruitful illustration of how men have collectively to pay with wealth, health and blood for the extreme slowness with which they are able to seize the essentials of a novel situation.

It is not even, then, that I have no beliefs that could be described as "political," but that no single individual can, as things are, effectively, *be* anything, politically, at all, except quite simply a "capitalist" or a "communist." Politically, if you do not thrill at the thought of the modern Capitalist State and all that it entails, then you must be a communist—for who believes that for long Socialism can avoid merging with the energetic communist minority? So there is no question of purely political identity at all. And there is no margin

in which the individual can exist, *effectively*, outside these gigantic organisations.

(10) *The eventual success of Communism? Will its most characteristic form resemble an eternal "transition," or democratic "progressiveness?"*

Your "politics" are settled for you, then, once and for all. Physical forces of such magnitude wither those delicate playful illusions that, each in his way, the Shelleys and the Shaws have enjoyed and have got so much innocent amusement out of. As one of the assumptions that underlie what I write, I believe in the eventual success, in one form or another, of Communism. *Open* "Capitalism" as it exists to-day cannot endure. But as Capitalism becomes more and more abstract and "collectivist," and as political ideas of a "revolutionary" order permeate the so-called Capitalist States (the universities, the Press, even the religious communities) and prepare the way for an ultimate transformation, is it not possible that the world may all melt into one super-state, without the rigmarole of "revolution" or "catastrophe," just as Germany dropped its Emperor and became a "bourgeois" republic without much fuss?

Since, then, in one form or another, the eventual success of "radical" ideas seems to me assured, I do not see why, in books such as mine, and those in which I am interested, the "transitional" pretences cannot be dropped. It is of far greater importance to influence a minority in an intelligent direction, quite outside the parrot-cries of "Left" or "Right" altogether, than for any intelligent person to do the hack-work of "revolution," which can be performed by one man as well as another. It is a machine-minding job; it is not an intelligent occupation.

As a consequence of all this, it is surely very sensible to hold, as I do, that the only thing that is left even to criticise is the revolutionary machine. (One is not asked seriously to discuss, I suppose, the Albanian Dynasty, the future of the Spanish Royal House or the prospect of a restoration in Russia or Poland?) The machine that is the only ostensible political machine that even pretends to be intelligent, that is the machine to be intellectually perfected, if you are to take a hand in these things at all. And far from salaaming and bawling approval of all the rather squalid details of its "transitional" working and its interim manifestations, it is better, I think, to advance

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a few technical suggestions that look beyond its "transitions" to something static and harmonious. In this I may be quite wrong, but revolution-for-revolution's sake appears to me irrational—or change-for-change's: for is it not the fashionable philosophy of the worst sort of "bourgeois," or better "bourgeoise?" I cannot believe it to be even an authentic principle of the most enlightened Communism.

(11) *The "sensual average" super-realist.*

I will take this definition of the artist's or the philosopher's position a step farther.—I see that it is impossible for an artist, confronted with such a waste-land as is found on all hands (of commercialised professional expression, both in books and in paintings) not to appear "destructive:" and it would be idle to pretend that any energetic mind ever has left life as it found it, or is ever likely to be satisfied with the standards of the "average-sensual" majority. Hence every artist is a "revolutionary," unless he is born into a period of universal exquisite fruition and political peace. Any philosophic intelligence, likewise, is what in America is described as "radical," to that there can be no exception. It is no use ever looking for repose and comfort from such people.

But the "average-sensual" majority is more or less what the bolshevik means when he uses his unfortunate word "bourgeois." So it must be confessed that the bolshevik and the creative genius do mean to that extent the same thing. The difference between them lies, and that I have been endeavouring to make clear, in the fact that Communism is, as its name implies, a gospel of the Average: and then that the "average-sensual" communist—or the "average-sensual" super-realist or transitionist—is as a rule not much of an artist, that he is seldom an inventive person at all, that in the nature of things he is not a "philosophic intelligence" but—how shall I express it?—it is to be feared just a "bourgeois" after all. It is perhaps a consciousness of all these facts that would prevent anyone at the present time from being what could be described as a destructive political revolutionary idealist. Tolstoy to-day would have taught something very different. Even Shaw has shown tendencies in the last stages of his career to correct something in the picture, with which he has lived long enough to recognise its essential falsity.

But to-day there is not the same temptation (as I have just shown) coming from the side of the vanity, for an artist like

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Tolstoy, or even such a half-artist as Shaw, to make that mistake—the mistake, namely of not seeing that art can effect more, even politically, in the most fundamental sense, than any pure propaganda or popular sociological moralist religion. For since to-day the political intelligence is (both upon Left and Right) far too perfectly organised to allow any effective interference on the part of a too dangerously intelligent man, it is possible for such a man to recognise the second-rate character of all that is in its essence “political,” and without regret to leave such activities to those for whom they are the breath of life. As a consequence of this bankruptcy of intelligent politics (and the coming into its own of the political mind pure and simple—the practical, managing, domestic mind) art *must* be the gainer—the temptations in the way of the artist are so much fewer.

(13) “*Beyond Lenin.*”

By way of Appendix to these remarks I will print the following observations in connection with two contemporary pronouncements. For the shrewd business man (but who is unfortunately on the political side a bit immature—a little sentimentally pinky-pinky, strictly “impartial,” but all for gradual “evolution”) there will probably remain an indefinable sensation that he is being fooled. Such sense as can be extracted from the terms “radical,” “revolutionary,” “reactionary” and so forth, as employed in our “pink” Western society, is, I believe, in outline, to be found above. I believe there is no more—and I do not believe there is less. But of course much more might be said upon the subject, for which I have not the space in this place. However, here is a statement by the eminent universal-biographer, Emil Ludwig, which may fill you with a certain confusion at first, but which has a plausible sound. I take it from his essay upon Bismarck in his *Genius and Character* (authorized english translation) :

“Bismarck’s first word to a king was a rebuke, as was also his last: March ’48 ’98. . . . At bottom Bismarck was a thorough revolutionary. His first appearance as he came out of the oak forests of his birthplace and threw himself with fury into the narrow machinations of party politics—his attitude towards the kings and princes of his own country, and later towards foreign kings and emperors; the bold and simple No which he hurled at the political maxims of his time; his insistence upon ruling without interference from

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others; his continual threat of resigning; the splendid clarity, informality, and newness of his diction—all these defiant traits of a freedom-loving temperament belong to a man who, had he been born in the submerged classes, would have advanced behind the red flag.”

Whether this account of Bismarck is true or not, it throws into relief the difficulty to-day in fixing the labels for “revolution” or “reaction,” which I believe it is not at all so easy to do as most of us suppose.

Some of my opponents or critics seem to jump from one end of the scale to the other, even where I am concerned. I will give you a striking example of this in a quotation from a book which recently appeared (*Anarchy is not Enough*. Jonathan Cape). My work is one of the subjects treated in that book and its author ends by despatching me into a limbo beyond Lenin, where I disappear into the nihilistic shades of a super-bolshevism. (All this appears to me to be in some way mixed up with a pair of gloves, rather like a picture by Max Ernst)—Laura Riding, the author of *Anarchism is not Enough*, has been discussing the novel:

“Mr. Lewis is . . . a distracted and disaffected roughneck. He has no more real connection with aspects of the novel than Nietzsche with any of the numerous æsthetic revivals of his time. Like Nietzsche, his politics and philosophy are æsthetic only in the sense that they are personal. . . . Politeness, God, reality, these are all Mr. Lewis in kid gloves embracing himself. His rightness consists in his embracing himself, his wrongness in his wearing kid gloves. For anarchism is not enough. It is obviously not enough for Mr. Lewis. The kid gloves which enable him to rush into society confuse the dualism on which selfhood certainly depends. When he takes them off (as it is probable he will in time for he does not seem to be happy in them) and shakes himself by the bare hand, his enthusiasm over his own unreal individuality will have a bare-handed social concomitant more like Bolshevism than anarchism. Or, rather, Mr. Lewis will find that not even Bolshevism is enough.” (*Anarchism Is Not Enough*. L. Riding).

Miss Riding is not so bad as some “admirers,” being on the honest side, and is, need I say, not to be confounded with Ludwig. Herr Emil Ludwig and Miss Riding call Bismarck and myself respectively “revolutionaries.” Can it be that these two widely separated critics are right?—Most great or little

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feudatories, it is perhaps worth observing, dislike the kings they have to do with : most kings on the other hand have felt far more warmly towards "the people" than towards the nobles who have immediately encompassed them. So Bismarck's rudeness to monarchs means nothing. Had Bismarck been a blacksmith instead of an iron chancellor and war-leader, would he have fomented revolutions ? I think it might never have occurred to him as an alternative. Or I think that had he, as a blacksmith, become a professional agitator, he would have been that out of ambition. And if ambition is all that "Revolution" or "advancing behind the red flag," is to mean, then that certainly simplifies matters, but that is not the interpretation given to it by the doctrinaire revolutionary. Miss Riding's paradox contains more subtly confusing suggestions than that of Herr Ludwig : but that may be only because I lend myself to mystification more readily than does Bismarck. —There I must leave the subject for the present.



Sentinels. Wyndham Lewis.

POEMS

THE ALBATROSS

STRETCHING white wings in strenuous repose,
Sleeving them in the silver frills of sleep,
As I was carried, far from other foes,
To shear the long horizons of the deep,

A swift ship struck me down : through gusty glooms
I spun from fierce collision with her spars :
Shrill through the sleety pallor of my plumes
Whistled the golden bullets of the stars :

Loose on the gale my shattered wreck was strewn
And, conquered by the envious winds at last,
A rag upon the red horns of the moon,
Was tossed and gored and trampled by the blast.

Flapping the water like a sodden flag,
No more to rise, shot down by stormy guns,
How heavily these great sprained sinews drag
That bracketed my purpose with the sun's . . .

To the dark ocean I had dealt my laws
And when the shores rolled by, their speed was mine ;
The ranges moved like long two-handed saws
Notching the scarlet west with jagged line :

Swerved like a thin blue scythe, and smoothly reaping
Their mushroom minarets and toadstool towers,
My speed had set the steel horizon sweeping
And razed the Indies like a field of flowers :

Feathered with palm and eyed with broad lagoons,
Fanned open to the dimly-burning sky,
A peacock-train of fierce mesmeric moons,
The coast of Africa had rustled by :

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The broad curve of the west, with nightward tilt,
Wheeled down, and nations stood upon their crowns :
Each tower a crutch, each chimney-stack a stilt,
Across the nether sky, their fog-red towns

Went striding—while up far opposing seas
I, by earth's sunward wheel was steeply borne
To see the green foam-heaved antipodes
Capsize their thousand islands on the morn.

Then through the gloom wherein like tiny spiders
Webbed in their flimsy rays, the systems spawn,
Up dim blue rocks of cloud, with scarlet fibres,
Crawled the gigantic lichens of the dawn ;

Striped with the fiery colours of the sky,
Tigered with warpaint, ramping as they rolled,
The green waves charged the sunrise letting fly
Their porpoises like boomerangs of gold.

Exploding from white cottonpods of cloud
I saw the tufted gulls before me blow,
The black cape-hens beneath me, and the proud
White gannet in his parachute of snow.

The cliff-ringed islands where the penguins nest
Sheltered their drowsy legions from the foam
When evening brought the cormorants to rest,
Gondolas of the tempest, steering home :

To sleep or cackle, grouped in homely rings,
I left them roosting warm in their own dung,
And while they fattened there, with homeless wings
The great harp of the hurricanes I strung :

Towering far up amid the red star-sockets
I saw deep down, in vast flotillas shoaled,
The phosphorescent whales, like bursting rockets,
Bore through the gloom their long ravines of gold.

Far coral islands rose in faint relief
Each with its fringe of palms and shut lagoon,
Where, with a running fuse of spray, the reef
Set off the golden crackers of the moon.

By nameless capes, where the slow thunder prowls,
I dared the shapeless phantoms of the night,
Relentless as the noon to dazzled owls,
Inflicting beauty on their hate of light.

POEMS

Squelching like sodden shoes, with rifted planks,
Doomed vessels swung their tetering yards on high,
Sucked the grey surges through their stoven flanks
And thrashed their loose propellers to the sky.

I read my doom in those great, shattered ribs
Nor with vague fancies drugged my truth-of-sight,
I knew the stars for momentary squibs
In the perpetual horror of the night :

I saw how vile a thing it is to die
Save when careering on their sunward course,
The strong heart cracks, the shivered senses fly,
Stunned by their own expenditure of force.

Erect, unterrified, though robbed of breath,
In those wild hours of triumph had I died,
The shades around, as in a meteor's death,
Had seen annihilation glorified.

My stiff quills made the hurricane their lyre
Where, pronged with azure flame, the black rain streams :
Huge brindled shadows barred with gloomy fire
Prowling the red horizon of my dreams,

Thick storm-clouds threatened me with dense eclipse,
The wind made whirling rowels of the stars—
Over black waves where sky-careering ships
Gibbet the moon upon their crazy spars.

From bow-bent wings, I shot my white resilience
Grazing the tempest like a shaft of light,
Till through the gloom, cascading into brilliance,
New leagues of azure circled on my sight.

Through calms that seemed the swoon of all the gales,
On snowy frills that softest winds had spun,
I floated like a seed with silken sails
Out of the sleepy thistle of the sun.

I had been dashed in the gold spray of dawns,
And hit with silver by the stars' faint light,
The red moon charged at me with lowered horns
Buffalo-shouldered by the gloom of night ;

Broidering earth's senseless matter with my sight,
Weaving my life around it like a robe,
Onward I draw my silken clues of flight,
Spooled by the wheeling glories of the globe.

THE ENEMY

The world revolving like a vast cocoon
Unwound its threading leagues at my desire :
With burning stitches by the sun and moon
My life was woven like a shawl of fire—

Clashing the surf-white fringe that round it runs
Its giant mesh of fire-shot silk, unfurled
And braided with a chain of flashing suns,
Fleeces the craggy shoulders of the world :

How dimly now its threads are ravelled out,
Its gorgeous colours smoulder from my brain,
While my numbed memory the world about
Rays forth its thin meridians of pain.

My eyes with wild funereal trophies blaze
Like dying torches—spoils of azure nights
And the slain suns my speed has shorn of rays
And dashed to bleed upon the western heights.

Night surges up the black reef of the world,
Shaking the skies in ponderous collapse,
I hear the long horizons, steeply hurled,
Rush cataracting down through starless gaps.

No more to rise, the last sun bombs the deep
And strews my shattered senses with its light—
My spirit knows the silence it must keep
And with the ocean hankers for the night.

ROY CAMPBELL.

FINE FELLOW SON OF A POOR FELLOW

Every poor fellow reminds me of my father
With worse luck than that
He reminds me of my father
With worse luck than he had.
Which means me
Who has worse luck than my father had
Because it is not so bad.

Every fine fellow reminds me of me.
Good luck is hard come by.
It is not that innocency
Of how luck befalls.

POEMS

It is a bad luck weary,
A worse luck turned into vanity,
A knowledge of bad luck
And with bad luck seamy.

A poor fellow knows a poor fellow.
A fine fellow knows a poor fellow and a fine fellow
A poor fellow and a poor fellow.
Every poor fellow reminds me of me.
Every fine fellow reminds me of my father.

And it is not to be forgotten.
It is not to be reminded.
Every thing must be applauded with a sigh.
All luck is luck,
My father or I.

He was a poor fellow.
His bad luck was perhaps no luck.
I am a fine fellow.
My good luck is perhaps no luck.
All luck is perhaps no luck.
All luck is luck or perhaps no luck.

This is no way to be divided,
By poorness and fineness.
Better to say there is
Nothing in which to be prided,
And then say
Every fellow reminds me of every fellow,
My father reminds me of my father,
I remind me of me,
And then say
A poor fellow and a fine fellow
And bad luck and good luck
And father and son
Are no fellow, no luck, no blood
But a false life-line
Between what is more than poor
And what is less than fine.

LAURA RIDING.

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Details regarding publication and distribution.

(1) The long interval between nos. 2 and 3 of *The Enemy* was a consequence of the editor's inability, owing to pressure of work, to put aside the few weeks necessary to attend to the exacting task of publication. Readers are recommended to neglect any remark they may at any time hear re *The Enemy* not emanating from this office: there are many persons everywhere for whom such a publication as this is a personal insult, it must be remembered: the only reliable information, the reader can take it, is this—that the editor has every intention of continuing *The Enemy* and developing still further its offensive critical potentialities, in a great variety of directions. He has however many calls on his attention, and it is impossible to fix any regular date for publication.

(2) It was explained in *Enemy* no. 2 that it had been found necessary to raise the sale price from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. A publication upon such a scale could not cover its expenses, except by an unusually large circulation. There is no question but what the *Enemy* could have, for such a publication, an unusually large circulation: but to cope with that, either (1) considerable capital would be required—a staff and distributing machinery that we do not possess; or (2) it would be necessary to place the *Enemy* in the hands of some existing trade organisation. The latter step, for various reasons, we have not wished to take, preferring our present system. But in order to enable us to publish without risk of loss, we shall have to confine each number to about 100 pages, priced at 2s. 6d. And, as we said in a similar announcement in our last issue, it may be found advisable from time to time to come out rapidly with some shorter and more concentrated Number, priced accordingly.

(3) Copies of *Enemy* no. 2 (including the long essay *Paleface* by Mr. Wyndham Lewis) may still be obtained from this office.

(4) The next number of the *Enemy*, which it is hoped will be available early in the New Year, will contain a long essay by Mr. Wyndham Lewis. It will deal with contemporary literature in England, with regard especially to its technical evolution: or if the notes for that are not completed in time, it will be the essay on the *Youth Movement*, already announced in no. 2.

(5) We have received very many interesting contributions, stories, poems, and articles. But this paper is primarily a critical organ. It is also intended to promote, in as intensive a fashion as possible, a certain system of ideas. Under these circumstances it is no slight at all if we do not accept for publication some piece that a reader has been kind enough to send in to us. This is almost as much a specialist publication as an *Engineers' Gazette*, or a *Psycho-analytic review*.

The management is, however, very glad to get into touch with readers; it invites correspondence on the topics discussed. Letters, if not printed in an issue of the paper, will be given careful attention. We shall be obliged to our readers for the name and address of people likely to be interested in *Enemy* publications.

(6) It has not so far been possible to undertake the publishing of the pamphlets or books announced in the first issue. But we hope shortly to be able to do so, and readers whose addresses have been sent us will be duly informed.

(7) The management cannot be responsible for any manuscript sent in, with or without stamps for return.

(8) Our advertisement rates can be obtained on written application to *The Enemy* office.

(9) All requests for the despatch of single copies addressed to the *Arthur Press* must be accompanied by a postal or money order for 2s. 6d., with, in addition, the necessary postage (6d. for England, America, and European countries). No cheques on banks abroad can be accepted, owing to heavy cost of collection.

(10) Mr. Wyndham Lewis cannot consent to give his signature unless after written request. If books of his are sent to be autographed without previous arrangement, return cannot be guaranteed, whether they are accompanied by stamps or stamped label or not.

(11) The *Arthur Press* has six copies of the *Timon* portfolio of drawings, Mr. Wyndham Lewis's earliest published work, now very difficult to obtain.

NOTES

Note 1. My disciple, Mr. Bernard Shaw.

At the time of Mr. Bernard Shaw's letter in favour of Fascism, I thought from extracts that found their way into the Press, or comments, that I would henceforth have to reckon with a new disciple. I do not follow Mr. Shaw's utterances very closely, but I came upon an article the other day (*Time and Tide, November 16th, 1928*) which confirmed my earlier impression. There I found him in full possession of what was unquestionably a confirmed habit: I found him teaching the *Art of Being Ruled*, as though to the manner born. Here is what my astonished eyes fell upon, as I began reading his article against the Irish Censorship.

"It is a convention to assume that there is nothing people like more than political liberty. As a matter of fact there is nothing they dread more. Under the feeble and apologetic tyranny of Dublin Castle we Irish were forced to endure a considerable degree of compulsory freedom. The moment we got rid of that tyranny we rushed to enslave ourselves. We gave our police power to seize any man's property and to put upon him the onus of proving that it belonged to him. We declared that as prison would not deter Irishmen from evil-doing they must be savagely flogged; and when the evil-doers were flogged they were imprisoned for long periods lest the flogging should provoke them to commit fresh crimes."

Here the generalisations end; the remainder of the article is specifically about the censorship.

To have such a World-famous effigy as Mr. Shaw for a disciple is not unlike what it would be to have St. Paul's Cathedral for a scullery: I have not yet made up my mind which way to take it. What concerns me of course is this: the *Art of Being Ruled*, as interpreted by Mr. Shaw, will probably find itself involved with a motley of doctrines. Or as he will be an occult disciple (a secret drinker of the wisdom of the *Art of Being Ruled*) the indoctrination may assume some violent and unnatural form. One thing I am sure about, however: that is that my new disciple will always be upon the winning side, or sides (and so to some extent he will be a security for my opinions):

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also that he will never commit any *gaffe* or make any scandal (so through him my teaching will never get into trouble but remain eminently respectable as far as he is concerned). With him my doctrine is *safe* and that is something. But still I am doubtful whether I should repudiate him, or, on the other hand, allow him silently to take his place in proximity to a book that contradicts so flatly what he has taught himself all his life.

Note 2. "Fiction"—Should not "fiction" of a certain order be treated on the same footing as scientific fact?

No critical book of mine has been published this year (1928): in these notes I shall have nothing to say upon the subject of the progress made by my critical writing. At brief intervals it is my intention to publish a series of books of from two to three hundred pages, each treating in some detail of the various questions that I have now brought forward, and whose unsuspected relations I have made plain. In *The Diabolical Principle* in this issue of *The Enemy* a further critical study has been added to that series which opened in 1926 with *The Art of Being Ruled*: No. 4 of *The Enemy* will contain a first draught of an essay of roughly the same length. It will be upon some aspects of contemporary English Letters that I shall there endeavour to direct my best attention. The starting-point will be different from that of *Paleface*, for instance, involving more definitely technical issues.

Last July (1928) part one of *The Childermass* appeared. Until the whole book has been published I do not propose to make any references, here, to its reception in the english world of Letters, or answer certain criticisms—which have been, in any case, provisional, and have for the most part suggested that until the entire text is available it is not possible to estimate the extent of the offence (for there can be little doubt that my "fiction" is a graver offence than my criticism; though I believe it will be found that when some of my pals have got over their first sullen astonishment and found their tongues, and seen the termination of what is so far my major work, they will agree that if it is undesirable that I should write "fiction"—as it is undesirable that I should write criticism, or indeed that I should write anything at all—or indeed that anybody should write anything any more, thereby drawing attention to their own painful, desiccated condition, almost quite shut-up—or stuck half-way in the process of some arcane

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inversion, poor fellows, by one influence and another—they will probably agree, I say, that undesirable as utterance is from me at all—apart from the objectionable fact that commonly a “creative” work may be regarded as potentially more offensive, on the score of popular prestige, than a mere “critical” work—*nevertheless*, once the new offence has been officially overlooked if not pardoned, and as far as possible indexed, put out of bounds, recognised as an indecent subject for polite, or politic, conversation, it then may almost be allowed to exist upon the same footing as the former offences against the Shaman, say, or Splitman, than which it is no better, but, at least—regarded in a proper perspective—no worse).

There is however one thing I have to say, with regard the general question of the fate of that “fiction” that is not “fiction”: and I will, for the purpose, especially address myself to those readers who have complained to me: they have objected that *The Childermass* was misinterpreted in most quarters, that *The Wild Body* (a collection of short stories) was not adequately noticed. That kind of complaint really has to be answered a little roughly: for who on earth expected the average “fiction” critic (I am not now speaking of those certain “pals” referred to above) to do anything but what he did when his editor sent him, as routine demanded, *The Childermass* for review? I think on the whole he did quite well. Have you ever considered what the average “fiction” critic must of necessity be? However, let me give you a few bearings, for use in these preposterous shallows—this kindergarten pond for paper-ships and a few skiffs drawing perhaps an inch at most, that is the mimic ocean upon which all that must be catalogued as “fiction” is launched. I must confess that I find it perplexing that such protests should be made, though I appreciate the interest displayed by the reader.

First, then, there are some things that should be perfectly obvious to anybody who has followed my career with certain attention, on the one hand, and who, on the other, is able to fix a dispassionate eye upon the situation of Letters, and of Art, to-day in England. I am the last person to overlook the existence of “enemies,” but there are other factors—besides that provided by *persons*, or by competitive groups or sets—which I think the readers in question have overlooked.

My critical books (beginning with *The Art of Being Ruled*) received a great deal of generous and intelligent attention, both in England and America, about that there can be no dispute. But it is a fact, one, I readily admit much to be

deplored, that any work of imaginative literature, in prose, which is not criticism, science or philosophy, automatically becomes for the book-trade and for review purposes, "fiction." The intelligent reader must see what this simple fact signifies.

Is not such a reviewer of "fiction" as say Mr. G. (to be specific—though I may not employ more than an initial, because of the papers he writes for, for which I have a great respect)—is not such a "fiction" critic as Mr. G. calculated, in any newspaper in which he functions, to maintain a cast-iron standard of Best-seller vulgarity and dullness: with such a critic is it not out of the question that any rational comment upon a book of "imaginative fiction" that does not conform to the exact commercial requirements of the largest of Library Publics, should ever be received?—Yet the reader must know or can conjecture that every book that is a "story" (and so technically, alas, "fiction") goes to that gentleman (as far as the particular papers he works for are concerned). And that he acquits himself conscientiously of his gloomy part, that of informing the largest possible aggregate of readers where to find unadulterated their dreary fodder—where to be cautious (because they must expect to find it adulterated with a little good sense) and what book absolutely to avoid (because it is not their brace of pigeons at all, or such indeed as a truly commercial Library should stock) who can dispute?

What is to be done, you are concerned to know? It depends in what sense that is meant. I have before me a suggestion that certain books, not FICTION in the Best-seller sense, might be deflected to some other type of reviewer, whose brain is not rotted by the incessant consumption of popular novels. Could not some system be devised for the guidance of the literary editor—could certain books not bear a sign or chalk-mark by which the literary editor would know that they were not suitable for Mr. G.—or Mr. G. G., not to say hack—but for some calm, instructed, and mettlesome person, who could be relied upon not to mislead the Public (equally as Mr. G. can be relied upon in his way not to do that), but who would inform the important minority desiring such information what the exceptional book was about?—That question I cannot answer, for I do not know enough concerning the organisation of newspapers or their relations with publishers, but I agree it would be an excellent thing if some system of that nature could be hit upon—and that extremely soon, for in a month or so another work of "fiction" of mine is to make its appearance and unless something is done quickly it will in one impor-

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tant instance, at least, go to Mr. G., who tells the largest reading herd in England what to guzzle in its spare time, without tears and without reproach.

Here and there of course you will find intelligent people reviewing "fiction"—that most of the readers with whom I am in communication seem to neglect: there is every reason why there should be, for that matter, since, if "fiction" is worth reviewing at all, it deserves as careful attention as any learned treatise, and there are a sufficient number of interesting attempts of one kind or another to justify the existence of an intelligent critic. It is no superstition to suppose that you require an idiot to review "fiction": but it is a mistake to suppose that a square peg does not sometimes by accident find its way into a round hole.

In my own case, I must add (but only for the ears of my more militant readers) there are many complications. I am an "enemy" after all; what I have to say is not very pleasant, from the standpoint of the nursery-governess and of her middle-class mistress, you will agree: and for my part I do not expect either justice or good will, nor in my case is that genial expansive exaggeration of small virtues by which reputations come so easily, possible: and there are not yet a great assemblage of people who are prepared to admit that the author of *The Art of Being Ruled*, *Time and Western Man*, *The Childermass*, *The Wild Body*, possesses anything enviable whatever, or if you like anything they have not themselves in a far superior degree. So to those readers who have displayed an anxious interest in the fate of my books, and who chafe at these obstacles, I must point out the *physical* difficulties, almost, where my "fiction" is concerned. *The Wild Body* you say was received and reviewed as a philosopher's notebook, a philosopher it was said with a very questionable but disconcerting "sense of humour." But bring to mind the dense mass of almost unimaginable nonsense that, in "fiction," has to come first, because it sells best, through which such a book must force its way out into the light: then too, consider that *The Wild Body* did inevitably present itself as the "fiction" of a philosopher—and what sort of "fiction," my god, are we to expect of a *philosopher*? must not the mistrustful Everyman have bawled to himself as he saw it dangling beneath his nose—so really you have no justification in complaining that *The Wild Body* was not treated in the same sumptuous way as some book that is rather a social event than a pure literary event. So there is a limit to what you must expect on the spot, and

for a mere "book of short stories" as well: and (although I have no wish to discourage you from manifesting your displeasure) I have still to insist that "fiction" is "fiction" and no nonsense—that there are many people who have a corner, as it were, in "fiction" (and a comfortable lucrative little corner too)—far more than in the unlucrative trade of the essayist; and then, too (though I agree with you entirely in the main principle of your objection) that with "fiction" after all there is far more commerce mixed up than there is with poetry or philosophy: "fiction" is Big Business, straight away—we are no longer our own masters to the same extent (we are not *chez nous* but definitely *chez Everyman* and are expected to behave accordingly) and in short the publishing of a work of "fiction" is a much more serious and ticklish affair than that of a mere volume of essays, of philosophy or criticism—so a *Wild Body* gets caught up into the commercial machine, whereas a *Time and Western Man* exists outside it.

Finally, that in its time and place I will attend to all these matters, and the people connected with them, upon that you can absolutely rely. But I must still mildly contend that you have not allowed sufficiently for the rather different *physical* circumstances under which a work of "fiction" comes into the world from any other description of literary work. And in England that is much more the case than in France or Germany, for mass-production in "fiction" is a much older story here than in those countries.

Appendix to note 2.

Just as the foregoing statement was going to press (*January 16th, 1929*) a copy of the *Bookman* has reached me which somewhat complicates the subject, as I had thought satisfactorily dealt with above.

The *Bookman*, it appears, sent out a note to various eminent writers—Mr. Galsworthy, Mr. Alec Waugh, Mr. Ian Hay, Mr. Stacy Aumonier etc. Among others Mr. J. D. Beresford was interrogated. The question appears to have been what "new books" ought "to be better known," or had not received adequate attention. But Mr. Beresford is not only himself a distinguished novelist, but one of those rare critics who make it their business to write intelligently about books. So instead of answering how terribly overlooked *Orlando* had been—or how scandalously few and scant had been the notices attending the unassuming and almost furtive entrance of *The Intelligent*

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Woman's Guide to Socialism into the world, he gave the following reply :

"I would gladly help you with some comment on a recent book that in my opinion had been under-estimated, but honestly I cannot think of one ; and short of doing a review of Wyndham Lewis's *Childermass*, which has been treated respectfully but with a singular lack of understanding, I do not know what I could say.

J. D. BERESFORD."

This of course says substantially what I have said in *note 2*. But it does pick out or suggest *The Childermass* as being a book, through "a singular lack of understanding," not so well known as it otherwise would be. It does imply that there has been something wrong—quite apart from the fact that, in the nature of the case, as Mr. Beresford is probably aware, my "enemies" in many quarters could not be expected to notice any book at all of mine, if they could help it, or, if they did, say anything pleasant about it, especially where that book is a work of "fiction," with all the special opportunities at their disposal for treating it according to different standards than those applying to any other type of book. I have not the time now to reconsider what I said above : but before the next number of the *Enemy*—and that I hope on this occasion will not be long delayed—I will myself collect a few valuable opinions ; further, I will carefully go through the reviews up-to-date of *The Childermass*, part one, and if I find it necessary return to the matter in *Enemy* No. 4.

Note 3. South Wind.

In *Enemy* No. 2 I announced my intention of reading *South Wind*—"responsible for the sophisticated school of literature—Aldous Huxley, Ronald Firbank, Carl Van Vechten, Michael Arlen et al," it was said in a Library Catalogue. Since then I have often been asked if I have done what I said I would do, and I am happy to be able to announce here that *South Wind* has been read by me. What I read, however, has not had the effect I expected. I enjoyed *South Wind* in fact very much : I am (not heart and soul, but rather) for it—to the last trouser-button lost by the jewish cave-man in the grotto—no farther than that ; I like it in the way that I enjoy Anatole France, and think Douglas has been very sensible (with France's example before him) not to repeat this success. If the writers

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catalogued above indeed derive their inspiration from its pages, all that need be said is that all the South Winds that have blown since have been inferior Zephyrs. It was a distinguished gesture on the part of Norman Douglas to write such a weak book as *In the Beginning*; when I had read *South Wind* it occurred to me that he might make the fatal mistake of giving it a buxom brother, or even a brood. *South Wind* has an ill-deserved reputation for evil; it is, I should say, a perfectly harmless production (of obvious Ninetyish sensibility but of a rather burly cut), that could be placed in the hands of the weakest of the pure without causing him to interfere with other people as a consequence of reading it, more than would dipping into *Little Dorrit* or toying with the *Vicar of Bullhampton*. My peace made in this way with Mr. Douglas, I pass on to Peacock. I hope he may be more profitable, from a critical standpoint.

Note 4. Approximate publishing dates for Mr. Lewis's next books.

Many inquiries reach the office of this paper with regard to the date for completion of *Childermass*, of the appearance of *Apes of God*, of the essay announced in No. 2 on *Youth Movements* etc. This note will bring the time-table of these books up-to-date.

In order not to hasten over the completion of the *Childermass*, according to present arrangements the following books will be published meantime: first in about a month or six weeks (beginning of March) *Paleface* will be published in book form by Chatto and Windus. The *Paleface* essay as it appeared in *Enemy* No. 2 has been somewhat revised and is now preceded by an essay of about the same length, entitled "A Moral Situation."

This will be followed, at intervals of about a month or six weeks, by *The Apes of God* and *The Diabolical Principle*; (or it may be that the order of the appearance of these two books will be reversed). *The Diabolical Principle* will appear in book form as it stands in this number of the *Enemy*, and to it will be added *The Dithyrambic Spectator* etc. *The Apes of God* has been for upwards of five years in preparation. Certain portions of it appeared some years ago in *The Criterion*. This, therefore, is not a new enterprise, interrupting the progress of the *Childermass*: rather what has been done is that the *Apes of God* has been finally concluded, and the other two books

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have been expanded and finished and prepared for publication, so that they should not be held up too long should work upon the *Childermass* be protracted.

In addition to these three books, however—to appear this Spring—two or three more books may appear in the course of the year, of approximately the same length as *The Diabolical Principle*. This will depend upon how rapidly it is possible to get out Nos. 4, 5 and 6 of the *Enemy*.

Note 5. *Time and Western Man and New York University.*

In a current course of lectures in the University of New York an analysis is being undertaken by Associate Professor Philip E. Wheelwright of “tendencies in society in art and literature, in science, and in metaphysics.” It was announced that “various contemporary writings will be discussed, notably the novels of Proust, Joyce, Mann and Gide; the critical essays of Valery, Benda, I. A. Richards and Wyndham Lewis, and the philosophical contributions of Bergson, Whitehead, Nietzsche, James and Fite.” The “books suggested” for the students following this course were as follows: H. Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, W. Fite, *Moral Philosophy*, N. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirico-Criticism*, Wyndham Lewis, *Time and Western Man*, I. A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism*.

Note 6. “*A Moral Situation.*”

The reader is recommended to read, in connection with *The Diabolical Principle*, the new section of *Paleface* entitled *A Moral Situation* (which, as indicated above, should be published in a month or six weeks' time). The problems by which everyone to-day, in Europe and America, is beset, are much more ethical problems than economic ones. Indeed, the economic “problem”—having regard to the immense technical advances that have been made during the last century—is virtually a sham “problem.” It is in short, not a “problem” on the same physical and essential footing as the supply of sun-power or the supply of coal. But the ethical problem is, in its pure form, as real as the other is false.

On the other hand there are many varying brands of ethics—there is that sort which evolves the present Irish Censorship law (with its definition of “moral” as “anything liable to excite to sexual passion”), there is the “moral” problem

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connected with the "vartue" of the victorian "skivvy" (bequeathed, for their sins, to our Police Force and Home Departments), and there are more complex and redoubtable varieties than those. Most of the cheaper forms of social revolution are strictly based upon some moral thesis or other; and the more coarse and declamatory the kind of "radicalism" involved, the greater is the intermixture of puritan morality in the solid material supporting its molten and violent imagery.

No student of these questions can begin to understand what impulses exactly have been set in motion, and how they are developing, who has not given his best attention to this *moralist* character of the present scene. That dark and hysterical gloom that has settled down over everything is essentially of the same origin as the howling and breast-beating of the Salvation Army and the wailing and mourning of the Negro Spiritual. I do not go very deeply into this—I feel that it is unnecessary to do more than open the eye of the attentive and intelligent with a brusque gesture, and leave it at that. But I think that by supplementing *The Diabolical Principle* with that part of *Paleface* (as it will shortly appear) entitled *A Moral Situation*, the reader will get a clearer view of my meaning; and, taken together, these essays should indicate as much as is necessary the true character of these problems. They should show how the diabolist and the puritan play into each other's hands, or indeed are often the same person.

THE EDITOR.

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by WYNDHAM LEWIS

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(Edgar Wallace and
Edgar Allan Poe—
Trotsky at Pooh Corner).
Mr. Lewis's Bill of Rights.

The "New Romanticism" =
The Old Romanticism =
The New Nihilism =
The Old Nihilism.

Isidore de Lautréamont
the communist prose-poet.

"Give the Devil his Due!

Be a sport!"

Ha! Ha!

The merging of dream and
reality.

(The dream-aesthetic of
Super-Reality).

Infinity-phobia.

The magical power of art.

(1) Hatred as prescribed for Intellectual.

(2) Hatred as prescribed for Mob.

Hatred.

The popularisation of Disgust.

The Art of Being Ruled.

The Vulgarisation of
the vision of genius by
the political philistine.

The bourgeois non-super Pauline Superman.

POEMS

The Albatross

by ROY CAMPBELL.

Fine Fellow, son of a poor fellow

by LAURA RIDING.

EDITORIAL

(1) My disciple Mr. Bernard Shaw.

(2) "Fiction."

(3) South Wind.

