

TESIS DOCTORAL

A Resource Theory for Approaching
Interpersonal Relationships in Percy
Wyndham Lewis' Fiction

*Intercambio de Recursos en la ficción
de Percy Wyndham Lewis*

Melania Terrazas Gallego



UNIVERSIDAD DE LA RIOJA

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**Melania Terrazas Gallego
Dpt. of Modern Languages
University of La Rioja
Ph.D. Dissertation
Term 2000/2001**

*For Carmelo and Helmut,
for their example and help.*

List of Abbreviations

| | |
|-------------|---|
| <i>ABR</i> | <i>The Art of Being Ruled</i> |
| <i>ACM</i> | <i>America and Cosmic Man</i> |
| <i>AG</i> | <i>The Apes of God</i> |
| <i>BB</i> | <i>Blasting and Bombardiering</i> |
| <i>CHM</i> | <i>'The Code of a Herdsman'</i> |
| <i>CHCC</i> | <i>Creatures of Habit and Creatures of Change: Essays on Art, Literature and Society, 1914-1956</i> |
| <i>CM</i> | <i>The Childermass</i> |
| <i>CYD</i> | <i>Count your Dead: They are Alive! Or a New War in the Making.</i> |
| <i>DOY</i> | <i>Doom of Youth</i> |
| <i>DPA</i> | <i>The Demon of Progress in the Arts</i> |
| <i>DPDS</i> | <i>The Diabolical Principle and the Dithyrambic Spectator</i> |
| <i>ES</i> | <i>Enemy of the Stars</i> |
| <i>FIB</i> | <i>Filibusters into Barbary</i> |
| <i>HC</i> | <i>The Hitler Cult</i> |
| <i>LF</i> | <i>The Lion and the Fox</i> |
| <i>LWOE</i> | <i>Left Wings over Europe: Or, How to Make a War about Nothing.</i> |
| <i>JATH</i> | <i>The Jews, Are They Human?</i> |
| <i>MF</i> | <i>Malign Fiesta</i> |
| <i>MDM</i> | <i>Mrs. Dukes' Million</i> |
| <i>MG</i> | <i>Monster Gai</i> |
| <i>MWA</i> | <i>Men without Art</i> |
| <i>MMB</i> | <i>The Mysterious Mr. Bull</i> |
| <i>OGNG</i> | <i>The Old Gang and the New Gang</i> |
| <i>OWS</i> | <i>One-Way Song</i> |
| <i>P</i> | <i>Paleface: The Philosophy of the 'Melting Pot'</i> |
| <i>PNS</i> | <i>'The Physics of the Not-Self'</i> |
| <i>RA</i> | <i>Rude Assignment</i> |
| <i>RL</i> | <i>The Revenge for Love</i> |
| <i>RP</i> | <i>The Red Priest</i> |
| <i>RQ</i> | <i>The Roaring Queen</i> |
| <i>SB</i> | <i>Snooty Baronet</i> |
| <i>SC</i> | <i>Self-Condemed</i> |
| <i>T</i> | <i>Tarr</i> |

| | |
|------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>THA</i> | <i>The Human Age</i> |
| <i>TWM</i> | <i>Time and Western Man</i> |
| <i>VS</i> | <i>The Vulgar Streak</i> |
| <i>WA</i> | <i>The Writer and the Absolute</i> |
| <i>WB</i> | <i>The Complete Wild Body</i> |

Nota explicativa

Debido al reglamento de estudios de doctorado de la Universidad de la Rioja, que contempla la redacción de tesis en idioma distinto al castellano, se ha incluido un resumen en español de cada uno los capítulos; asimismo, el índice, las conclusiones y todos los datos de la portada de la tesis están en lengua española. En virtud de todo ello, las páginas del índice y las de los *contents* no coinciden.

Índice

| | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Una visión enérgica y deformada de la realidad | 15 |
| 2. Teoría de los Recursos: un estudio de la ficción de Lewis | 58 |
| 3. Ficción Abstracta: <i>Tarr</i> | 105 |
| 4. Ficción Mecánica: <i>Snooty Baronet</i> | 181 |
| 5. Ficción Didáctica: <i>The Vulgar Streak</i> | 268 |
| 6. Ficción Autobiográfica: <i>Self-Condemedned</i> | 341 |
| Conclusiones | 431 |

Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| List of Abbreviations | 4 |
| Acknowledgements | 8 |
| Introduction | 10 |
| 1. A distorted shaping of an energetic mind | 20 |
| 2. Resource Theory: A Study of Lewis' Fiction | 67 |
| 3. Abstract Fiction: <i>Tarr</i> | 114 |
| 4. Mechanical Fiction: <i>Snooty Baronet</i> | 189 |
| 5. Didactic Fiction: <i>The Vulgar Streak</i> | 274 |
| 6. Auto-biographical Fiction: <i>Self-Condemned</i> | 349 |
| Conclusions | 475 |
| Bibliographic References | 515 |

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I also like to communicate my most warm love to my closest friends and colleagues for their constant support and encouragement. My greatest debt, however, is to my family, who provided love, patience and understanding.

An ethical system must, to have any meaning today, be tied to a theological system. The great chaos of values into which we have fallen makes this necessary. The spectacle of an ethical system adrift, wandering helplessly about in search of Authority, of a God, is not edifying: and it is absurd. And it is still more absurd to see it masquerading as a religion. (*MWA*, 170)

My conception of the role of the creative artist is not merely to be a medium for ideas supplied him wholesale from elsewhere, which he incarnates automatically in a technique which (alone) it is his business to perfect. It is equally his business to know enough of the sources of his ideas, and ideology, to take steps to keep these ideas out, except such as he may require for his work. When the idea-monger comes to his door he should be able to tell what kind of notion he is buying, and know something of the process and rationale of its manufacture and distribution. (*TWM*, 10)

The solution for him [the satirist] [...] will be [...] to bring human life more into contempt each day. [...] It will, by illustrating the discoveries of science, demonstrate the futility and absurdity of human life. That will be its ostensible function. (*MWA*, 183)

Four or five hundreds years ago it was the religious Absolute which was the writer's problem. Today it is the political Absolute. [...] But the place of honour, as I have never failed to recognize, is *outside*. Honours make any man suspect. At least of that I am blameless. (*WA*, 195-196)

Introduction

This study is an attempt to induce understanding of the modern social views shaped by Percy Wyndham Lewis in his early abstract narrative *Tarr* (1918), his humorous novel *Snooty Baronet* (1932), his social satire *The Vulgar Streak* (1941) and his auto-biographical work of fiction *Self-Condemned* (1954). American Resource Theory of social exchange by Uriel G. Foa is the sociological framework proposed to explore the idiosyncratic relationship between interpersonal behaviour and resource exchange in these four creative worlds.

This methodology defends that when individuals interact, exchanges of certain commodities such as material objects like a dress, money and equivalent forms of payment, a kiss, a newspaper, a congratulatory handshake or a punch in the nose take place. Thus Foa defines a *resource* as any item that can become the object of exchange among people. In this way, social interactions are seen as providing the means by which persons can obtain their needed resources from others, and thus, gain satisfaction, which

depends directly on the *effect* the outcome of these transactions has on them. Consequently, Resource Theory represents a broad conceptual framework that permits to understand interpersonal behaviour and the relationships conformed between individuals in everyday life.

In this dissertation, we follow the results of these and other various hypotheses proposed by Foa, which were tested in laboratory experiments and field studies, in order to describe their *impact* on the attitude and social encounters of Lewis' main *dramatis personae* in these four novels. Thus this study serves a double purpose: first, to discover the basic structure of their interpersonal relationships; second, to shed some *new* light on the numerous sociological and psychological implications derived from them, regarding varied aspects such as the ways of thinking of Lewis' characters about behaviour in reciprocal roles, behaviour change, quality of life, or even Machiavellism.

Following Lewis' critic Munton (1997: 5), we think that the writing and thought of the artist has been *misrepresented* in the last twenty years by some scholars who have used the apparatus of research to mislead their readers about the nature of certain ideas. The implications based on the arguments of these scholars have been obnoxious in many occasions because they aim to fulfil their particular, often distorted, desires rather than to illuminate Lewis' production. As a result, many recent critics and readers consider the artist as violent, anti-Semitic, misogynist and homophobic nowadays (1998).

Owing to these facts, this study follows Munton's, yet with various modifications as no socio-literary research of this type has ever been undertaken in Lewis' critic for studying his fiction. In our view, Foa's framework is a very powerful methodology because it permits to say many novel things about the artist and his work, illuminates the nature of the interpersonal behaviour and relationships of his characters and enables to do justice to his energetic social observations.

It is our contention that Lewis portrays the *wrong* ways in which economic and non-economic resources intertwine in modern Western society by experimenting with the English language in radical ways. Throughout the suggested fiction, the great majority of its citizenship is unable to function as competent members in their everyday dealings because their possession of resources, including love and status, fall below a minimum level. Thus most characters have enormous lack of these two resources, and this shortage influences their trends of behaviour and interrelationships in many negative ways. Due to these facts, they do not result socially attractive to their own species, and thus, their expectations, satisfaction, happiness, welfare and quality of life are very much impaired. As a result, they suffer a large number of well-known Social Psychology phenomena like anxiety, frustration, aggression, alienation, power, conformity, ingratiation and Machiavellism, all of them re-defined by Foa in his framework.

Owing to these facts, we consider that Resource Theory can be very helpful both to explore the idiosyncrasy of the *strange* fictional worlds and human relationships depicted by Lewis in his fiction and to elucidate the wide-range social criticism carried out by him here using extreme literary techniques. As a corollary, it is our aim to clarify: first, the trends of behaviour and relations whose distorted form and nature respond to his *aesthetic* desire to show and question contemporary social phenomena by using unconventional techniques; and second, to call attention to the specific resource seeking related events whose peculiar appearance and outcome respond to the idiosyncrasy of Lewis exclusively. Thus we try to demonstrate that these four fictional worlds are skewed due to his imperative desire to *reflect* the ways in which contemporary technological, scientific, political, economic and social doctrines influenced the *rules of practice* that governed interpersonal behaviour and relationships both in particularistic institutions such as family, love and friendship and in non-particularistic ones like employment, stores, restaurants and hotels in the modern Western world by turning out them to be very dehumanised in form and significance. By doing so, Lewis' fiction *offers* relevant critical insights into contemporary societal and psychological problems without being a distressing moralist. Thus it could be said that Lewis, as a creative writer and social critic, highlights an urgent necessity to perform drastic changes in Western culture and civilization so that they *improve* their deficiencies and evolve towards a meaningful goal.

In our opinion, these four novels can be taken as valuable contributions to twentieth century cultural studies. All of them are very innovative and energetic, and reflect that Lewis is as much a fascinating writer as an extremely perceptive social critic. For these reasons, we would like to shed some new light on the extremely personal nature of his fiction, and its dialogic idiosyncrasy, aspects that can be seen as examples of the great *energy* of his mind rather than of his *bias*, for they often prove him not wrong, but quite right.

1. Una visión enérgica y deformada de la realidad

Este estudio intenta aclarar las ideas sociales modernas contenidas en cuatro obras de ficción de Percy Wyndham Lewis. Más concretamente, nos referimos a su obra narrativa abstracta *Tarr* (1918), su novela humorística *Snooty Baronet* (1932), su sátira social *The Vulgar Streak* (1941) y su obra de creación de naturaleza extremadamente autobiográfica *Self-Condemned*. (1954) La Teoría Americana de los Recursos de intercambio social de Uriel G. Foa es el marco sociológico que nos permitirá explorar la relación idiosincrásica que existe entre el comportamiento interpersonal y los intercambios de recursos en estos cuatro mundos imaginarios.

Dicha metodología defiende que cuando los individuos interactúan tienen lugar intercambios de ciertas mercancías, por ejemplo, objetos materiales como un vestido, dinero y formas equivalentes de pago, un beso, un periódico, un apretón de manos o un puñetazo en la nariz. De este modo, Foa define un *recurso* como cualquier artículo que puede llegar a ser objeto

de canje entre las personas. Por tanto, Foa considera las interacciones sociales como *los medios* mediante los cuales los individuos pueden obtener recursos que necesitan de otros individuos, y obtener así satisfacción, algo que depende directamente del efecto que estas transacciones tienen sobre ellos. Por consiguiente, la Teoría de los Recursos representa un marco conceptual muy amplio ya que permite entender las conductas interpersonales, y las relaciones que se establecen entre las personas en su vida diaria.

En esta tesis doctoral aplicamos los resultados que se desprenden de las hipótesis propuestas por Foa, la cuáles se probaron en experimentos de laboratorio y sobre el propio terreno, con el fin de describir su *impacto* en la actitud y los encuentros sociales de los personajes principales que habitan estas cuatro novelas de Lewis. Este estudio tiene un doble propósito: primero, el descubrir la estructura básica de sus relaciones interpersonales; segundo, arrojar luz nueva sobre los numerosos aspectos sociológicos y psicológicos que se derivan de estas relaciones en asuntos tales como modos de ver el comportamiento en roles recíprocos, los cambios de conducta, la calidad de vida o incluso el Maquiavelismo.

Siguiendo al crítico Munton (1997: 5), creemos que los escritos y pensamiento de Lewis han sido distorsionados en los últimos veinte años por algunos estudiosos que han utilizado el aparato de investigación para inducir a sus lectores al error sobre de la naturaleza de ciertas ideas de Lewis. Las implicaciones derivadas de los argumentos de estos críticos han

sido detestables en ocasiones ya que, con frecuencia, sus objetivos han sido demostrar sus propias ideas parciales, más que iluminar la producción del autor. Como resultado, muchos críticos y lectores recientes consideran al artista como un hombre violento, antisemita, misógino y homo fóbico (1998)

Debido a estos hechos tan desagradables, nuestro estudio sigue la línea de discusión de Munton aunque con algunas modificaciones. Hasta ahora, jamás se ha realizado un estudio socio-literario de este tipo para estudiar la ficción de Lewis. Sin embargo, el marco teórico propuesto por Foa representa una metodología muy poderosa ya que hace posible decir muchas cosas novedosas sobre el artista y su trabajo, esclarece la naturaleza de los patrones de conducta y relaciones interpersonales de sus personajes, y permite hacer justicia a las observaciones sociales energéticas de Lewis.

A nuestro modo de ver, Lewis refleja las formas erróneas en que los recursos económicos y no económicos se entrecruzan en la sociedad occidental moderna mediante la experimentación artística radical. En las cuatro obras de ficción que componen nuestro corpus de análisis, la gran mayoría de sus ciudadanos es incapaz de funcionar como miembros competentes en sus asuntos diarios puesto que su posesión de recursos, incluidos el amor y el status, están por debajo de límites mínimos. La mayoría de los personajes de Lewis tienen carencia de estos dos recursos, y ello influye en sus conductas e interrelaciones de forma muy negativa. Debido a ello, estos personajes no resultan muy *atractivos* los unos para los

otros. Como corolario, sus expectativas, satisfacción, felicidad, bienestar y calidad de vida se ven enormemente afectadas. De ahí que un gran número de personajes sufra fenómenos estudiados por la Psicología Social, por ejemplo, ansiedad, frustración, agresión, alineación, deseo de poder, conformidad, congraciamiento y Maquiavelismo, todos ellos conceptos muy conocidos que Foa redefine en su marco teórico.

Debido a todos estos aspectos, consideramos que la Teoría de los Recursos es muy útil tanto para explorar la idiosincrasia de los extraños mundos imaginarios, conductas y relaciones humanas que aparecen en la ficción de Lewis como para dilucidar la amplia crítica social que el escritor realiza mediante la utilización de técnicas artísticas auto-reflexivas y extremas. Como corolario, nuestro objetivo es aclarar, en primer lugar, los códigos de práctica y contactos sociales cuya forma y naturaleza distorsionadas responde a su deseo estético por mostrar y poner en cuestión fenómenos sociales contemporáneos con técnicas poco convencionales; y en segundo lugar, llamar la atención sobre la forma y desenlace peculiar de ciertos acontecimientos sociales relacionados con la búsqueda de algunos recursos específicos protagonizados por unos pocos personajes ya que responden únicamente a la idiosincrasia de Lewis. De este modo, tratamos de demostrar que estos cuatro mundos creativos de Lewis están desfigurados debido a su deseo autoritario por *reflejar* los modos en que las doctrinas tecnológicas, científicas, políticas, económicas y sociales contemporáneas deshumanizaron los códigos de práctica que gobernaban el

comportamiento y las relaciones interpersonales en ámbitos particulares como la familia, el amor y la amistad, y en contextos menos íntimos como el trabajo, los grandes almacenes, los restaurantes y los hoteles en el mundo occidental moderno. Al hacerlo, las obras de ficción de Lewis *ofrecen* aportaciones críticas muy relevantes acerca de problemas sociales sin que éste llegue a ser un moralista angustiado e insoportable.

Podría decirse entonces que Lewis, como escritor y crítico social, recalca la necesidad de llevar a cabo cambios drásticos en la cultura y civilización de Occidente urgentemente para mejorar sus deficiencias y evolucionar hacia metas significativas. En nuestra opinión, estas cuatro novelas de Lewis podrían tomarse como contribuciones valiosas a los estudios culturales del siglo veinte. Todas ellas son novelas innovadoras y energéticas, y reflejan que Lewis es tanto un escritor fascinante como un crítico social tremendamente perceptivo. Por ello, esta tesis trata de arrojar luz nueva sobre la naturaleza personal e idiosincrasia dialógica de su obra; aspectos que demuestran la gran energía de su mente e imaginación, más que una visión parcial de la realidad pues sus comentarios acerca de la sociedad no suelen ser erróneos sino bien ciertos.

1. A distorted shaping of an energetic mind

The purpose of this project derives from an early triple interest: first, the extraordinary social perceptiveness and vigorous thought of Lewis displayed in his critical books; second, the unusual nature of the social functioning portrayed in his creative works; and, third, his heroic—yet unsympathetic—defence of the figure of the detached writer as a medium for ideas, “which automatically incarnated in a technique” (*TWM*, 10), contribute to give some *purposeful meaning* and *perfection* to life. These three unconventional aspects of Lewis’ production and personality, which seem to us to be very laudable, have often contributed to denigration, neglect and the disappearance of his books in unfair ways. In this regard, this thesis makes use of American Resource Theory of social exchange¹ by the Italian social scientist Uriel G. Foa² in order to clarify the peculiarity of social behaviour and relationships in Lewis’ fiction, and justify the

¹ Resource Theory was first promulgated by Foa in 1971.

² Uriel G. Foa studied in Parma. He co-founded with Louis Guttman (whose facet analysis inspired Resource Theory) the Israel Institute of Applied Social Research, and was its executive director until 1965. This same year, Foa immigrated to the United States, where he was a visiting professor at the University of Illinois, and professor of psychology at the University of Missouri in 1967. From 1971

numerous social and psychological occurrences questioned, and condemned by the artist in it by exploiting unusual literary techniques.

This study is an answer to the discussions of recent critics on the supposed biased fiction of Lewis, which we consider to be very unjust. For example, his views have often been defined as belligerently aggressive, contributing to create his general reputation as that of a quizzical and quasi-destructive—and to some extent warped and objectionable—observer of a long period past, who worked with a hatchet, rather than a pair of tweezers. In consequence, Lewis' genius has gone down in recent decades. However, we consider that it is our aim as his critics both to try to upset an applectart by illuminating his strange fictional worlds, and sharp social commentary and make his star shine again.³

The main interest of this socio-literary research lies in the fact that it is absolutely novel in Lewis critic. This analysis goes beyond the works of earlier scholars⁴ who have studied the interest of the writer in questions of status, love, services, information, money and goods in his major novels by providing new enlightening insights into his portrait of the world and human relationships in the four suggested works. As far as we are concerned, these critics seem to have missed certain shrewd critical implications derived from his extreme interest in, and *sensitiveness* to, human interrelationships.

until his retirement in 1982, Foa was professor of psychology at Temple University in Philadelphia.

³ We are very much indebted to Carmelo Cunchillos and Helmut Bonheim for helping us see some of these aspects of Lewis' fiction more clearly.

⁴ For instance, Kenner (1954), Russell (1955), Chapman (1973), Jameson (1979), Parker (1980),

For these reasons, we try to describe and clarify them here in an attempt to demonstrate that Lewis is a particularly fascinating depicter of delicate human relationships, a vigorous commentator of his passing scene, a psychological and stylistic wizard and (probably unconsciously) a person sensitive to the kind of resource trading that Foa presents in his sociological framework. To carry out these tasks, we propose to take the despicable human behaviour and relationships that characterise his fiction world wide as a merit, as they constitute *illustrations* of the ways in which the doctrines that besieged the society that Lewis intellectually opposes in his novels pressured modern Western culture and civilization in his time unconstructively.

Naturally, these atypical aspects of Lewis' aesthetic and critical stance, and work have provoked other types of reactions on the part of his readers and critics. As his best critic Edwards (2000: 4) rightly says,

Lewis's Modernism explores with incomparable imaginative energy (the) doubtful condition of humanity in the modern world. On the one hand, its fierce scepticism seems to undermine all grounds of value, all attempts to find a 'grand narrative' in nature or in our technological extensions and substitutions for it. In particular, it rejects and satirizes other 'Modernist' attempts to locate in some deep psychological interior a redemptive nugget of authenticity. [...] It is a(n) [...] example of [...] nihilist mode [...] for it takes a 'style from a despair' – in satire, for example. **This is the side of Lewis's work that provokes an almost physiological response of fascinated wonder or shuddering distaste.** (our emphasis)

Meyers (1980a/b), Murray (1980), Normand (1992), Foshay (1992), Schenker (1992) or Burstein (1997) among others.

Notwithstanding, we believe that Lewis' penchant for depicting unpleasant attitudes and extremely conflicting social encounters in his fiction constitutes his particular way of making his urbane readers enquire and express disapproval of the origins of, and the loathsome social and psychological consequences that arise from such troubled functioning so that they *modify* their faults, and take greater *responsibility* in improving their situation.

This view contrasts with those of other critics who describe the markedly conflicting nature of Lewis' picture of human attitudes and relations as exemplification of his aggression. For example, Jameson, Ayers and Freud offer the first insights on Lewis' aggressiveness by working through a modelled textual 'psyche'. However, critics such as Corbett, Edwards, Normand, Munton and Wragg (1998: 6), whose arguments are alike in meaning to ours, object to the resulting complexities of the former because they consider that Lewis' work must be approached paying closer attention to history, that is, displacing Lewis' aggression within *historical* circumstances. As Corbett (1998: 13) says,

We need to recognise aggression in Lewis [...] within that totalising aggression and what it encapsulates, there is a struggle for **critique**, for **assessment** and **understanding** which informs the apparently **paradoxical virtues and vices** of Lewis as a writer, painter and thinker. (our emphasis)

In our view, the critical views of the last group of critics are right and need to be taken as the standard point of reference in debates about the overall

shape and status of the artist' work. Their views contradict the arguments of critics such as Trotter, Julius, Ryan, Gilbert, Foster, Scott, Blair, Mengham, O'Connor, Stevie Smith, and Hewitt among others who support Lewis' production bias, arguing that they do not follow a correct logic. In our view, Lewis is an individual with an extreme conscious awareness of history, the function of art and the artist in society. It is not strange then, that this extremism turns out to be aesthetically reflected in the patterns of conduct and the outcome of the social interactions conformed by his fictional creatures. Then, we think that the screwy features that define Lewis' fiction need to be taken not as overt signs of his personal aggressiveness as many recent critics have said, but as a *medium to provoke* a revolutionary ideological transformation in society's traditional understanding of institutions, modes of living, human attitudes, relationships and moral values. Following Wragg (In Corbett, 1988: 12-3), we consider that Lewis' historical self-consciousness is so vital that it ultimately makes his modernist fiction be

the expression of an ambition which was frustrated by a world war (but also one) [...] concerned with the modernist analysis of society, and with the workings of culture. In its frustration, Lewis's modernism is **marked and perhaps deformed by the pressures of warfare.** [...] Within the aggression that frustration engenders, the modernist ambition of critique repeatedly breaks through the violent surface to complicate Lewis's fables of aggression.' (our emphasis)

All things considered, we think that Lewis' work needs to be studied within a historical perspective. It is only in this way that we can understand much better that his powerful stance as a writer and social critic, and his over-all and very responsive vision of man merely reflect his never ending warning of the necessity to re-structure society's *mind* and *heart* in order to preserve the species.

These views contrast with those of critics other than those refuted by earlier scholars in their works. More concretely, we refer to T. S. Smith, who defines the modernism of Lewis as being rejective—he defines it 'anironic'—or lacking historical consciousness. For T. S. Smith, this rejective aesthetic posture of Lewis emerges because he feels "trapped within a society" whose socio-political and historical norms he finds unacceptable. T. S. Smith is correct in this appreciation, yet only to a certain extent. Lewis' creative production does reflect his "tortured relationship" "with modern society" as T. S. Smith says. As he (1984: 6-7) continues to argue,

Art can be interpreted as either responding to or rejecting other forms of human experience, such as the collective human experiences of the past that we conveniently term history. Art is responsive when it contributes to understanding a world outside the immediate boundaries of the artwork. [...] Art constitutes an aspect of experience separate from, yet capable of enriching, other areas of human behaviour. Art can help us "read" experience or history. [...] Dialectical interaction between an artwork's style and subject matter can stimulate the reader's own understanding of the world.⁵

⁵ Smith follows Dewey (1958) to support his arguments.

In this way, T. S. Smith concludes that Lewis' art neither provokes understanding, nor negotiates with its audience. Contrarily, we presume that if there is something that Lewis does, above all, throughout his production is *dialogue* and *enrich* many areas of human behaviour and relations. Lewis may adopt a rejective attitude towards history, as T. S. Smith posits. However, his creative work and views are peculiarly innovative, historically conscious and dialectical. In order to prove this idea, we make Munton's words ours (In Corbett, 1988: 7).

I shall present a view of the human psyche as Lewis conceived it. 'Contradict yourself', he wrote during the First World War. [...] In *Time and Western Man* he describes how he reaches his conclusions: I have allowed these contradictory things to struggle together, and the group that has proved the most powerful I have fixed upon as my most essential *ME*. This decision has not, naturally, suppressed or banished the contrary faction, almost equal in strength.... (I)n my case the two sides ... are so well matched, that the dominant one is never idle or without criticism.' The divided personality has certain advantages: 'This natural matching of opposites within saves a person so constituted from dogmatism and conceit.' In the personality so conceived, the differing selves are nevertheless related, and it is only when they fall out (quarrel) among themselves that the personality becomes damaged. Towards the end of his career, Lewis wrote: 'The two halves of a severed earwig become estranged and do battle when they meet. So with as "self", once it is thoroughly dissociated from other segments of the individual.' Dialogue between the elements of a personality is essential for its integration. This is the structure of the personality as Lewis conceives it. None of his critics has recognized this. Simplified models, which can be interpreted to Lewis's disadvantage, are preferred.

Thus what Lewis' work really aims at is to stimulating his reader's intellectual understanding of his situation and troubles so that he/she contributes instruments to improve his/her sense of identity, life and world.

T. S. Smith (1984: 5) also argues that Lewis does not provide any instrument to alleviate contemporary social reality.

Absolute ironists adopt a rejective sensibility, which attempts to transcend, **rather than provide temporary alleviation from, social actuality.** (our emphasis)

However, we think that T. S. Smith is wrong in this point as well, since Lewis never contemplates or confesses his intention to *actively* involve himself in sorting out society's deficiencies. Far from this Lewis (*TWM*, 10) views the figure of the artist as that of an isolated figure who *proposes ideas* to give some firm significance to life in the following way:

The role of the creative artist is not merely to be a medium for ideas supplied him wholesale from elsewhere, **which he incarnates automatically in a technique which (alone) it is his business to perfect.** It is equally his business to know enough of the sources of his ideas, and ideology, **to take steps to keep these ideas out, except such as he may require for his work.** (our emphasis)

Therefore, it could be said that the *unusual* qualities and *contradictoriness* that characterise his fictional social functioning must be taken as his *essential* contribution to make Western culture perfect its condition. Lewis' peculiar fiction has to be considered as evidence of a fundamentally *new* style in the arts that constitutes, in itself, an intellectual opposition to past forms of understanding art and life. Thus it could be said that Lewis shapes

the world, behaviour and human relationships by using peculiar aesthetic forms of opposition because they seem to him to be *essential* for speeding social change. With regard to opposition, the social scientist Blau (1964: 304) posits,

Opposition activates conflict by **giving overt social expression to latent disagreements and hostilities, but it also helps to remove the sources of these conflicts.** It is a disturbing and divisive force that **ultimately contributes to social stability and cohesion.** (our emphasis)

Following these assumptions, T. S. Smith's last views are wrong, as Lewis' unusual modernist techniques *do* provide "temporary alleviation from social actuality." (T. S. Smith, 1984: 5) In this regard, we consider that our Resource Theory study of the imaginative conflicting characteristics of Lewis' fiction permits to explain that it is *essentially* its screwy and absurd nature that provides such stability and cohesion. As Lewis (*ABR*, 59-65) states,

If we wish to improve our conditions as animals [...] we must banish violence from life. We put a "value on life," a *violence value*, [...] **Where violence is concerned the aesthetic principle is evidently of more weight than the "moral"**, the latter being only the machinery to regulate the former. [...] **As measure is the principle of all true art, and as art is an enemy of all excess, so it is along aesthetic lines that the solution of this problem should be sought** rather than along moral (or police) lines, or humanitarian ones. (our emphasis)

Thus this thesis concentrates on these aesthetic lines and their ultimate critical purposes. Lewis' constant insistence on exploiting different literary techniques akin in manner and significance to the new⁶ conditions—Meyers (1980a: 227) describes them as abstract in *T*, mechanical in *SB*, satirical and didactic in *VS* and naturalistic in *SC*—are the means utilised by the artist to translate “into a delectable form the pernicious and unsatisfactory principles of conduct of his audience” (*MWA*, 157) so that this re-values its motivations and ways of thinking about behaviour in various ways, and thus, modifies them. Lewis' stance and production may appear biased at first sight.⁷ Nonetheless, this socio-literary study will demonstrate that these skewed aspects of his work, like the aggression displayed by his fictional population are essentially a mark of the ways in which the artist is as much a post-modernist social critic as he is an enormously original and perceptive modernist writer.

The theoretical value of Foa's integrated methodological tool for this project lies, thus, in the fact that it provides an adequate framework for understanding the unconventional social behaviour and structure of the relationships of his *dramatis personae*, the critical implications anchored in

⁶ Materer (1979: 115) proposes this idea in his work, saying that Lewis invents a literary technique akin to the 'Machine Age' in which he lives.

⁷ As Kenner (1954: xii) suggests,

The notion of domination, and of the struggle for domination, obsessed him. It may have been because this very complex and sensitive man was so responsive to the claims of violence [...] that **he understood its opposite as well**, essentially, because he was also obsessed by the refinements of the intellect, which cannot co-exist with the struggle for existence. (our emphasis)

them, and the close relationship between these aspects of his fictional picture of social experience and his eccentric posture as a writer and social commentator.

As we said, Resource Theory is based on the idea that man is a social creature that seeks companionship. Accordingly, individuals depend on one another for the *material* and *psychological* resources necessary to their well being which drives them to associate and exchange these two different types of commodities through interpersonal behaviour. Thus Foa (1974: 36) views interpersonal behaviour as “a channel for resource transmission” because when two or more people interact, usually, exchanges of certain resource categories take place. In this regard, a *resource* is defined as “any commodity, material or symbolic, which is transmitted through interpersonal behaviour.”

One important implication of this theory is that social interactions are seen as providing the means by which individuals can obtain their needed resources from others. Thus extending this notion of exchange to include all interpersonal experiences, Foa (1976: 99) offers an apparently simple framework for analysing social behaviour. As the sociologist says, people tend to describe their interpersonal encounters in terms of emotions and attitudes. For example, after a party we may remark: “It was an interesting evening,” or “I felt left out.” As the sociologist says, these statements do not describe what happened at the party; rather, they refer to the *effect* the party had on us. Expressions of mood, important in themselves, lead Foa to

conclude then, that “our satisfaction or dissatisfaction with an encounter depends on the outcome of these transactions,” which occur in all types of institutions in everyday life. For instance, we exchange money for goods in shops, services for money at work, information for status with our students, and love for love with our partner. In other situations the exchange is less obvious. Thus if we show our respect for another by expressing friendship, admiration and knowledge, we are respectively exchanging love, status and information. In consequence, all interpersonal encounters can be perceived as transactions, and thus, “a party is no less a marketplace than is the stock exchange.” (100)

Before Foa contemplated these types of issues, other psychologists and sociologists had already undertaken various projects to find out answers to them.⁸ It was Foa, however, who first suggested that the money-merchandise is only one of many ways of exchange that take place among people in everyday life. More subtle resources such as expressions of gratitude, admiration, respect, esteem or affection are transacted on many occasions when people interact as well, but professional specialisation had often ignored that the same pattern of conduct is influenced by both economic and non-economic factors. As Foa (1993: 13-4) puts it,

One may, for example, prefer a less paid but prestigious job to another where salary is higher but status is lower; and a small shop may attract customers by giving them the individual attention they miss at the less expensive but more impersonal department store.

⁸ For example, Maslow (1967).

Therefore, there seems to be a close interplay between economic and non-economic resources in the conduct of human affairs, which implies that social problems cannot be solved by material means alone. Many other social scientists had tried to extend the economic model to include all forms of interpersonal transaction earlier than Foa. Nonetheless, they failed in their projects because they interpreted every instance of interpersonal behaviour as an exchange characterised by profit and loss.⁹ On the contrary, Foa acknowledges that resources such as information and love are given to others without reducing the amount possessed by the giver, while this effect does not occur in transactions of money and goods. Thus this problem, which formerly raises some difficulties for Foa's social exchange theory, is sorted out when he understands that "love is not less rational than money, it just follows a different logic." In this sense, it appears to him (1976: 381) that "different resources follow distinct rules of practice". From this moment onwards, he begins to develop a conceptual framework that conveys a way out of this dilemma and reveals order in this diversity. As Triandis (1993: xiii) states, "he directs all his research towards discovering the basic structure of interpersonal resource exchanges". Notwithstanding, he does not only set the basis of his theory and provides its structure; he also discusses its applications to social problems.

⁹ See Blau (1964), Homans (1961), Longabaugh (1963) or Thibaut & Kelley (1959).

Needless to say, Resource Theory has some shortcomings as well, but these limitations do not invalidate its usefulness for studying Lewis' fiction completely. Firstly, Foa's framework fails to explain the artist's whole system of thought, and even, falsifies some elements of his *Weltanschauung* that result ludicrous for us. For instance, some Lewisian artists such as Tarr in *T* or René in *SC* find valuable resources like *intellectual integrity* and *love* as absolutes, that is, neither to be taken, nor exchanged for love, status, information, money, goods or services.¹⁰

Secondly, Foa's sociological framework does not permit to explain Lewis' fiction entirely because his values are aesthetic, political, moral and psychological as well. The artist often makes use of certain cultural notions and practices in order to justify the meaning of many behavioural trends and social encounters in his fiction, and these values cannot always be sold for money or exchanged for other resources.

Thirdly, there are certain exchanges of particularistic resources such as love and status, which cannot be talked of in absolute terms because their rules of practice follow patterns whose logic is different from that followed by concrete ones like money and goods. In this regard, our observations concerning the last types of exchanges are not so precise as those involving transactions of love or status. This is why we analyse the latter by

¹⁰ These are the six resource classes that appear in Foa's circular order (see ch. 2, p. 60). Artistic integrity, faith, honour and altruism are not resource categories contemplated by Foa. However, a few Lewisian characters behave and interact (exchange resources) with their own species following these principles. This fact implies that Foa's framework fails to explain a few resource transactions that appear in the suggested fiction.

concentrating on the frequency, rather than on the quantity of their occurrence in Lewis' fiction.

Despite these restrictions, Resource Theory, as a methodological instrument that extends the economic model to explain non-economic types of social interactions, results very accurate and fruitful to describe and elucidate the atypical form and meaning of the patterns of conduct and relationships of Lewis' main personages. Foa's circular order of resources provides an adequate empirical background for describing the structure of their social encounters, their exchange outcomes and the influence of environmental circumstances on them. In this sense, we believe that this sociological framework permits to clarify the ultimate purpose behind the outlandish rules of practice that govern human interactions in Lewis' fiction.

In our view, Lewis shapes the ways in which modern institutions and constructions produced a radical shift in people's exposure to one another. Individuals began to be open to an enormous barrage of social stimulation, and thus, small and enduring communities began to be replaced by a vast and ever-expanding array of relationships. All these modern and progressive doctrines and values set the stage for radical changes in people's daily experiences of self and others. In this regard, this analysis of the unconventional creative portrait of behaviour and relationships of the artist can throw into prominence these transformations, and their economic, social, emotional and moral consequences.

In *CHCC*, Lewis describes “fiction” as “mainly drama, or descriptive of social life” (226). Here the artist follows the cultural tradition of thinkers such as Arnold, who defines (1960: xvii) literature as “criticism of life”. In this regard, the selection of *T*, *SB*, *VS* and *SC* for the purposes of this study is not arbitrary at all. Far from this they are very representative of the modern reality that is criticised by Lewis by *deforming* it.

Thus *T* is of utmost interest because its representation of social behaviour and interactions in terms of resource-seeking related events recreates many aspects of Lewis’ early world-view and artistic theory that we think are peculiarly Lewisian. Moreover, as some of these aspects appear with various modifications in his later fiction, the exploration of their evolution throughout this study clarifies many of the *humane* traits that characterise *RL*, *VS*, *SC* and *RP*. However, before we carry out this examination here, there are some autobiographical aspects of the artist’s life and formation that need to be commented on first briefly.¹¹

Lewis was born in a ship in Nova Scotia (Canada) in 1882. After a few years living in America, the young Percy is taken to Great Britain, where he attends various schools, only shining as a painter. Since very early, Lewis makes up his mind to go to the Old continent, where he comes to share the thrilling atmosphere of testing and innovation that surrounds the avant-garde artistic Isms. Thus Lewis stays in various parts of Europe, where he experiments in *textual*, *pictorial* and *sexual* terms.

The obnoxious nature of his personal attitude in this early time contrasts with the positive energy of his creative mind. On the one hand, his love relationships usually end in very bad terms, as he abandons more than a couple of pregnant girlfriends, leaving his mother to mind his love affairs in financial terms. These facts have made that critics like Freud (1993) accuse Lewis and his work of misogyny. However, we wonder whether we should describe the attitude of his girlfriends and mother rather than his own as obnoxious because, knowing his eccentricities still approved of his cynicism, only because Lewis was a fascinating genius, a persuasive flirt and an infatuated son.

On the other hand, Lewis' early passion for images makes him test with the formal mechanisms of the English language. In this regard, the extremely absurd form of the patterns of conduct, and tragic significance of the social encounters established by the fictional *dramatis personae* that inhabit his pre-war stories must be taken as his revolutionary aesthetic means both to re-assert the individuality of his opinions and expose social experience in brilliantly novel terms.¹²

¹¹ For further reference on Lewis' biography, see Meyers (1980b) and O'Keeffe (2000).

¹² Lewis recompiles these short stories in a single volume titled *WB* in 1928. They narrate how itinerant circus families travel the Breton coast performing their artistic suffering of being. The title of these stories called the 'wild body' series makes reference to the tragicomic fact that the mind, the very seat of being, the place where all the energy of the intellect is located, is irrevocably trapped inside the treacherous human body. Thus these comic performances of *WB* show the disjuncture between mind and body, the latter being identified with a clumsy human machine. In this regard, the 'wild body' short stories signal both human fallibility to achieve full consciousness of being, and failure of the human 'will' to transcend this tragic situation.

The tragicomic quality of this premature social functioning is systematised later in a new philosophy known as Vorticism. This artistic movement, whose Manifesto appears in *Blast* I, is the first British avant-garde Ism.¹³ Vorticism aims at contributing a *new* view of art that is, in turn, a *new* way of understanding life. The Vorticist is someone who uses the energy of his mind and its products, that is, his own ideas and work to cause *a real advance of thought* in society. Thus Lewis' Vorticist dramatic contribution to *Blast* I *ES* (1914), and novel *T* (1918) intend to undertake this constructive task.¹⁴ In this sense, the unusually abstract form and abusive contents that characterise *ES* and *T* represent the techniques utilised by the artist to accomplish his particular subversion of the doctrines proposed by the Establishment in this time.¹⁵ In other words, these two works represent two examples of *creative rebellion against* linguistic and mimetic forms of shaping reality, and the traditional contents and values of Romantic literature and Edwardian England.

¹³ *Blast* I, an innovative pink review of big bold letters and polemic content announce a new philosophy called Vorticism. This term describes "a movement springing in the brain of one man", Lewis, as he considers himself to be the "Great London Vortex." Its origin is the idea of "a mass of excited thinking, engrossed in a whirling centre." Vorticism represents the ideas of a time in the Western corner, with its immediate influences, concentrated by an individual energy into a doctrine. In this way, *Blast* I represents a programmatic Manifesto of the future revolutionary plans of Lewis and the Vorticist group of artists conformed by Helen Saunders, Jessica Dismorr, Edward Wadsworth, Etchells, C. Hamilton, W. Roberts and Gaudier-Brzeska. (Lewis, "The Vorticists," in Ed. Edwards 1989: 378-383) This Manifesto reflects suspicion, disregard and antagonism of the past. We think that de Man's words could be used to express their idea of modernity, which was embodied in the "desire to wipe out (blast) whatever came earlier." (Berman, 1983: 331, quoted in Gergen, 2000: 32)

¹⁴ *ES* (*Blast* I, 58-85) is a Vorticist play that depicts the mystery and terror of the human condition in the world. This abstract piece of work constitutes an attempt to destroy the restrictions imposed upon man, and implement his tragic situation in the world in this way.

¹⁵ We use the term "subversion" in Kristeva's (1980) sense, that is, as an intertextual (carnavalesque) challenge to official linguistic codes. For further reference on this same use of the term subversion, see Jackson (1978), whose assumptions shed great light on Lewis' aesthetic purposes in his fiction.

In any case, the curious conduct and relations of Lewis' main characters in *T* cannot be understood without the influence of Nietzsche's *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1872).¹⁶ In this work, the German philosopher conceives life as *conflict* and *art* as the only *justification for life*. These two notions condition the view of the world and relationships of the artist in *T*, and the rest of his production. Accordingly, Lewis uses *opposition* as a device that underlies formal, structural and thematic aspects of his writing and thinking. The artist makes of antagonism a dynamic force in his work, creating tension in the behaviour patterns and outcomes of his characters' relationships.

In our view, the nature of this aesthetic method of Lewis based on opposition used in order to resist the Establishment arises because he, as a cultivated civilian and artist, feels subject to it in unfair manners. This is why Lewis experiences anger, disapproval, and antagonism against those held responsible for them. As far as we are concerned, Lewis is intellectually hostile towards the Establishment in his critical and creative production by using extreme methods as a means to call attention to the fact that Western urban institutions were greatly responsible for impairing the social, economic and emotional situation of its citizenship. In this way, Lewis highlights their need to take an active part in perfecting it by following the advice of thinkers like him who were not involved in economics, morals or politics.

¹⁶ For an accurate study of the influence of Nietzsche's work on *T*, see Davies (1980).

This desire of Lewis to oppose the liberal institutional apparatus turns out to be stronger, when the artist views that the modernist ideas, aesthetic projects and expectations that he, and the rest of Men of 1914 had before the outbreak of the Great War had vanished with it.¹⁷ Like many of his contemporaries, Lewis was in the front. This fact caused him to reject the use of force and violence for their own sake or as a means to achieve further goals throughout the rest of his life. As Normand (In Corbett, 1998: 43) defends, Lewis did not approve of war because he viewed this generalised aggression as “senseless”. For Lewis, war displays qualities in men, which are “ugly and inhuman” and “exposes the failure of human society to mature into human civilization.” Thus Lewis makes use of violence in his fiction in order to expose “the collapse of all reason.”

This recurrent use of absurd aggression turns out to be translated in the interpersonal behaviour and relationships of his characters in *T* and his later novels. This literary device exemplifies Lewis’ own form of opposition to the Establishment, and a structural technique through which he shapes its negative influence on modern social functioning. All things considered, we believe that Lewis utilises this screwy technique as the social scientist Blau (1964: 302) thinks many other intellectuals do.

As a regenerative force that interjects new vitality into a social structure and becomes the basis of social reorganization [...] as a [...] starting mechanism of social change [...] against [...] institutional rigidities, rooted in

¹⁷ For a very accurate description of the relationship between, and the career development of, the ‘Men of 1914’: Pound, Eliot, Lewis and Joyce, see Brown (1990). Here the scholar deals with the intertextual parallels of their books and their mutual influence.

vested powers as well as traditional values.

In our opinion, Blau's words indicate the motivations that lie behind Lewis' systematic use of opposition throughout his production very accurately. Lewis conceives that there is only *genuine* reality where there is resistance. It could be said then, that conflict becomes a formal, structural and thematic device in the artist's fiction, first, to maintain the flow of narration, second, to avoid all possible identification with modern reality and, third, to question and criticise a widespread number of social issues.

Contrary to Nietzsche, however, Lewis believes that it is aesthetic *detachment* rather than the Dionysian immoderate indulgences of the mass that guarantees man's highest dignity. At the same time, Lewis discards the ideal human being of romanticism, that is, a creature who is guided by moral feelings, loyalties, nurturing instincts, or a sense of spontaneous joy, replacing this conception of the person with a modernist view of personality in which reason and observation are the central ingredients in human functioning. In this way, Lewis forms his own conception of the ideal artist, that is, a male intellectual who needs to separate himself from the mass and its sentimental practices because these aspects imperil his rational ability and will to create. In this way, the artist creates a new form of narrative that helps him transcend reality. As Schenker (1992: 48) suggests, Lewis constructs the figure of his ideal artist as one who takes "art as an alternative, and an escape from, the commercial spirit of the modern age."

Thus Tarr is an elitist male character that tries to forge a unique identity in constant struggle with the rest of characters, only by exploiting the creative energy of his mind. Tarr is an artist who refuses to involve himself in life affairs because he hopes to bring to his fictional world an ideal self whose existence outside man's social constructions permits him to attain recognition and stability in this way. As a result, his interpersonal attitude and relationships with his fellow men are always conditioned by this rational and aesthetic determinism, which results contemptuously utopian and derisory to us.

This notion of the romantic role of the artist as part of an elite of individuals who are exiled from society converts Tarr into a Stoic indifferent truth-teller. Tarr needs to contemplate life around him solely, if he wishes to maintain his *creative integrity* intact and his work objective.¹⁸ Unless he behaves in this *distorted* manner he will turn into a bourgeois-bohemian artist, that is, someone who produces representative works of art, and deals with art as a business rather than a pure activity of the mind. This aesthetic principle becomes so much of an *absolute* for Tarr throughout the story that he avoids expanding his love relationship with his German fiancée Bertha Lunken, and initiating associations with her artistic circle of doctrinaire dilettante friends. Tarr considers all of them as being exponents of a sentimental and mass-oriented type of life, whose unique motivations for

¹⁸ This stance of Tarr is quite post-modern. His search for truth, objectivity and sense of progress is understood by Lewis as change for improvement of the common good rather than as change for change's sake or fashion.

acting and associating are materialistic in nature. In other words, Tarr views his own species as personifications of the degenerating religious, moral, social and moral values of Victorian Puritanism and Edwardian England.

This erosion of principles noticed by Tarr represents for Lewis the cause of the nihilism of the modern man. This nihilism has its origin in the announcement of the death of God made by Nietzsche in *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, a nihilism whose basis is the disappearance of traditional religious ideals such as faith, love, honour, altruism, or goodness. Accordingly, the Western man and woman view themselves thrown at an uncomprehending world without knowing from where they come, and to where they go. For these reasons, the patterns of conduct of most of Lewis' characters, except for those of Tarr and Anastasya, are absurd in form and their interpersonal relationships tragic in outcome. In this regard, it could be said that the principles that motivate them to act, *but not* cooperate with their own species spring from their sense of fatalism, apathy, abnegation and hedonism; values that seem to be the result of their being devoid of *magical* doctrines that give personal significance to their own selves and lives.

Within this context, Tarr and Anastasya differ from the rest of characters for various reasons. On the one hand, Tarr needs to be in a constant process of self-creation and finds in art rather than love all the real passionate experiences he needs to achieve his goal. On the other hand, Anastasya has in her work as an artist the necessary means to fulfil her private and social interests, that is, personal independence, social prestige,

financial security, and thus, freedom to choose her partner/s. The rules of practice that govern the interpersonal behaviour and relationships of Tarr are determined by a pathetic unbridled individualism based on an extremely rational and aesthetic determinism; those of Anastasya are conditioned by an imperative desire for total independence.

In our view, the figure of Anastasya responds to Lewis' awareness of the big efforts made by females in his time in order to achieve social and professional equality. This social change represents an important sociological alteration in this historical context. Despite the fact that right-wing ideologies and social forces praised her role as a mother, and confined her to the house, while the figure of the man as breadwinner remained prevalent, the female figure gained much importance in society. This occurred, essentially, after revolutionary feminists, and intellectuals complained about the enormous inequalities that existed between men and women in Western society, and above all, when factory owners (taking advantage of this situation because women mean cheap labour force) promoted their validity as workforce after the Great War.¹⁹ Thus personal independence, professional satisfaction, economic welfare, social power, or acquisition of knowledge became imperatives not only for men, but also for women, who began to have major interests in attaining their individualistic goals.

¹⁹ For further reference on these ideas on feminism, see Beauvoir (1949).

For these reasons, the traditional roles of the woman as submissive partner, altruistic mother, caring child-minder and diligent housewife started to be questioned by women themselves, and in doing so, the idea of the role of the man as *paterfamilias*, that is, as family provider and protector, went down the tubes. To make matters worse, men were demonised as wife-beaters, deadbeat dads, child abusers and criminals without whom the world would be a better place. In consequence, females started to feel that they needed men less and less, the myth of masculinity turned out to be in crisis, and with it, the figure of the family as structural pillar of society were replaced by that of the State, that is, the institution which is harshly rejected by Lewis throughout his production.²⁰

Throughout his critical production, Lewis is for the syndicalism of Proudhon rather than the centralised state purported by Marx. Lewis prefers the theory of federalism of the former because this gives prominence to, and represents the interests of the individual rather than the mass. In other words, Lewis considers that Proudhon favours a society conformed by *conscious* individuals, while Marx promotes a civilization of *passive* types that comply with mass marketed doctrines.

²⁰ In support of Lewis' rejection of the State, see Munton's works. As the critic (1997: 8) rightly says, Lewis was not a fascist; he was

an intellectual who did not admire the state, and indeed makes a radical critique of state ideology in *The Art of Being Ruled*, the book above all which Jameson does not, and cannot, read. Jameson himself occupies the position of the ideological critic, whilst refusing that position to Lewis; and when he occupies the utopian position of hope, he again refuses it to Lewis.

We think that Lewis is aware that, within this context, very few professional, social or political paths would be opened for women really. Rather, new forms of discrimination, at times, surreptitiously and, under the protection of ideologies proclaiming their equality would appear instead. These facts caused Lewis to view Liberal Capitalism as promoting the idea that men had to give way to women not to improve their quality of life, but to cover the enormous lack of male workforce that existed after the Great War. Thus the active role of women in society began to be enhanced further and further by the Establishment, only for economic interests. As a result, power, money and pleasure became the genius of the new world, and the traditional roles and personal situation of both males and females in both intimate and large contexts suffered many negative modifications. As a result, the whole structure of society and their functioning experienced great and numerous transformations that affected the nature of their interpersonal behaviour and relationships in considerably deteriorating ways. In this regard, we consider the distorted aesthetic picture of social experience depicted by Lewis in *T* and in his subsequent novels largely account for all these historical circumstances and his energetic critical view of them.

Accordingly, Bertha and Anastasya answer to the figures of altruistic and independent woman respectively. Both of them exchange resources with Tarr in love relationships in order to gain their needed requirements, and obtain satisfaction; his interpersonal resource transactions with both

females, however, are scarce, misshapen and often motivated by extremely egotistic drives.

Bertha feels unable to find self-rewarding activities that engage her in normal circumstances. Thus she makes use of her sex as a means to attract him *privately* and adopts his opinions *publicly* as a catalyst. In this way, she enhances her self-esteem and re-asserts her individuality. However, she also becomes far too dependent on Tarr, which he cannot stand. As a result, Tarr refuses to *expand* his love relationship with her. This artist needs to maintain his mind pure for art because he considers that art is *at war* with reality. Consequently, Bertha represents an encumbrance for him. All things considered, we think that Tarr rationalises love as *sentiment* and as *eroticism*. Tarr decreases his exchanges of love with his fiancée Bertha as the story evolves, making sure that his interpersonal behaviour and relations always remain superficial. It could be said then, that he calculates his exchanges of love with Bertha in his visits in order not to be attached to her. Otherwise, he would vulgarise his artistic gift and will to create. All things considered, Tarr views *artistic integrity* and *love* as *absolutes* rather than as resources that can be taken away from him, or given to someone for other resource categories, like money or information.

Nonetheless, his resource exchanges with Anastasya are high in quantity, good in quality and very frequent. The outcomes of their relationships are more satisfactory for Tarr because Anastasya is an *independent* woman figure. In fact, it is only when Anastasya challenges his

intellectual superiority, makes his irrational sexual attraction to her obvious to him and refuses to have sexual relations with him later, that things change. By behaving in this way, Anastasya turns all rational and aesthetic principles of Tarr upside down, as she not only questions his self-consistency and artistic integrity, but also ridicules his male superiority. As a consequence, their love relationship terminates in very bad terms.

In our opinion, Lewis reflects the trends of behaviour and relationships of Tarr in these *twisted* ways in order to show his artistic failure and eventual involvement in Liberal Capitalist doctrines, and the disintegration of traditional religious values and social constructions in this early modern Western world. Lewis portrays the ways in which the peculiar rules of practice that governed human attitude and relationships in market settings at the onset of the century began to affect human interactions in intimate settings as well, giving origin new visions of interrelationships. By throwing their numerous negative social and psychological connotations into the surface in slanted formal terms, Lewis demonstrates to be very much conscious of all these historical social changes and willing to criticise them in constructive terms.

Naturally, this deformed image of early Western society is absurdly violent in form and very crude in significance in order to avoid all possible identification with reality and desire of dogmatism. The influence of Imagist poets is so much prevalent in this work and the rest of his production that from the construction of *ES* to his last novel Lewis shows that the creation

in words of an image constitutes an end in itself. Lewis is aware of the profound impact and meaning of imagery. This is why the descriptions of society in his fiction can be taken as representing new visions of life. As a corollary, his liking for images could be said to help Lewis *blast* traditional forms of understanding human behaviour and relationships and *reflect* new ones, something that he does, *only* by exploiting the creative energy of his powerful mind.

When peace broke out in 1919, Lewis had lost the sudden notoriety achieved in 1914 as the leader of the Vorticists and editor of *Blast*. He had done some extraordinary abstract pictures²¹ and published *T*, yet he had to some extent to begin all over again. The disasters he saw in the front line had such devastating effects on him that he “buried” himself and “disinterred” himself “in 1926.” During this period, he immersed himself in serious reading and study in various parts of Europe, working hard on the full-length books that appeared in the late 1920s.²² When he reappeared on the artistic scene, Lewis did so with a revised version of *T* as well as with a *new* vision of art, and of the role of the artist in society.²³ In other words, Lewis, the Vorticist transformed himself into Lewis, the bitter satirist of the 1920s.²⁴

²¹ For further reference on Lewis as painter, see Edwards (1992) and (2000).

²² Lewis was in London, and travelled to Paris, Berlin and Venice.

²³ The first edition of *T* was published in 1918. In this revised edition of November 1928, the writer expands a few scenes and adds some new material. In this dissertation, we study this second version.

²⁴ See *TWM* (39) and *BB* (4-5; 231)

This vast amount of work produced between 1919 and 1926 represent an analysis of, and remedy for, the radical decay of post-war European society. Here war becomes the absolute antithesis of the culture Lewis had been fighting for in his previous art and polemics. Consequently, the notion of the romantic role of the artist as part of an elite of individuals who are exiled from society is impersonated in a different creative posture and public image: Lewis, the Enemy. Thus it could be said that the First World War and its aftermath cause Lewis to make a *radical* critical analysis of state power and its methods.

As an Enemy, Lewis offends, attacks and denounces Western society without restraint in order to tell the whole truth about their faulty behaviour and values. His thoughts engendered by war pervade and structure his whole approach to cultural renewal, a task he undertakes precisely as if it were a fight. In his critical *Man of the World* books, Lewis analyses the *causes* of what he considers to be the decay of Western culture; in his novels, he shows the destructive *effects* of the doctrines that become revolutionary in the Western world in this time on the patterns of conduct and relationships of its citizenship.²⁵

Thus the Enemy reflects upon Darwin's "survival of the fittest" and all the fruits of progress such as Einstein's relativity and the doctrines of its main disciples Whitehead, Spengler and Alexander; Bergson's philosophy

²⁵ The Enemy books of criticism *ABR* and the *Man of the World* books (*TWM*, *DOY*, *P*, *MWA*, *RA* and *LF*) represent an analysis of modern literature, history, psychology, popular culture, theoretical physics, politics, philosophy, ... etc. As Edwards (2000: 288) says, "the underlying thesis of the *Man*

of time; social sciences like James's psychology, Freud's Psychoanalysis and Watson's Behaviourism; political doctrines like Marxism, Communism, Socialism, and Democracy; economic systems like Liberal Capitalism, and technological advances like the press and the cinema, pointing out their deteriorating influence on Western social functioning. Lewis (*CHCC*, 91) explains that, after the Great War,

The doctrine of the "Survival of the Fittest" (fittest for war, that is, and of brute survival) established itself everywhere. The result of Darwin's "selection" was that in national armaments, business enterprise, domestic politics, and in the very family circle, everybody armed for merciless war. Europe returned to the ethic of the Viking.

In his view, all the aforesaid new theories and their social constructions merely contribute to vulgarise art, philosophic speculative thought and scientific objectivity because, as products of the mind, they are not utilised for *spiritual* purposes, yet for *pragmatic* aims. As a result, Lewis sees the ethics of these revolutionary doctrines as being responsible for the passive cultures of the depressed West, now dominated by an irrational will for power exclusively.²⁶ As Lewis (*MWA*, 207-9) puts it,

"Materialistic" or "power" values have taken the place of religious non-material values. Every value that is not a political value [...] is taboo [...] No value that is not an economic value [...] is permitted. [...] Hence the violence of the assaults that are made upon "the intellectuals," and upon the "irresponsible" artist-principle.

of the World project appear in Lewis' "The Strange Actor."

²⁶ On the contrary, Lewis is for the idea of the artist of *pure will* whose function in life is to create and perfect life. This notion is opposite to that of the artist who uses his mind and rational thinking for practical purposes, that is, the artist with a will for success. Thus Lewis is against Nietzsche's irrational will for power, a principle that influences the actions and interactions of Western population throughout the first part of the twentieth century in very negative ways.

As a corollary, the figure of the Enemy, as that of an artist in the social plane, is a cultivated man unable to escape from the dehumanising spirit of his own age. The Enemy is someone who defends satiric laughter and absurdity as his own means to destroy *power*, which, in his last work of fiction, defines as the main destroying force of *value*.²⁷ During this period, Lewis shows to be aware that the ethical repressions of Christianity had been overridden by Darwinian doctrines of ‘fitness’ and force from mid-nineteenth century until the Great War. As a result, the *individual* principle or the role of the artist as someone independent of the *Zeitgeist*, yet also as someone who continuously questions its values had been affected over time negatively as well. Thus the Enemy (*TWM*, 160) wants to create an art that provokes understanding, constructive reaction, and immediate revaluation to all the intellectuals who invent instruments of research for the advancement of the common good, since this is, for him, the real impulse behind all ‘revolution’. As an Enemy, Lewis fears that, within present circumstances, “art will die.” Before this fact takes place he wishes (*MWA*, 183) to paint “us a picture of what life looks like without art. That will be, of course, a *satiric* picture. Indeed it *is* one.”

Since then, the Enemy exemplifies the *effects* of progress and the aforesaid socio-economic, political, scientific and psychological doctrines on society in his fiction in satirical terms. Lewis uses satire to provide real

²⁷ As Lewis’ text reads: “Power is absurd because power destroys value.” (*MF*, 181-2)

insight into their pernicious implications for society's welfare, happiness and quality of life. In this way, the exaggerated form of the attitude of his characters and the skewed outcomes of their interactions in *SB* and *VS* constitute aesthetic devices through which Lewis describes and denounces the high degree of assimilation of the Western world to these new progressive conditions.²⁸ To Lewis' mind, these new *magical* systems, their social constructions and values began to be *worshipped* by Western individuals (including its irresponsible intellectuals) as if they were absolutes, only because they *promised* life betterment. However, like him, we consider that these fresh conditions improved their situation to the detriment of their freedom, personality, emotional stability, happiness, welfare and satisfaction.²⁹ Hence the societal malfunctioning that characterises these two fictional works and later ones, like *SC*.

These three novels reflect the forms in which life advance entailed an enormous increase in excitement, invitation, possibility, intrigue and useful information for Western inhabitants. Notwithstanding, it also gave origin to their simultaneous bewilderment at the explosion in responsibilities, goals, obligations, deadlines and expectations. For these reasons, the life of these Western male and female civilians turned out to be out of their control. In other words, they began to suffer in themselves, what

²⁸ During this period, Lewis publishes other important satirical works such as *CM* (1928), *AG* (1930) or *RQ* (1936) that reflect such negative influence as well.

²⁹ Foa (1974: 384) suggests that social organisation is the mechanism that regulates the satisfaction of the needs of individuals in everyday life. All six classes of resources contribute to our "quality of life"; when any of them falls below a minimum level our quality of life is impaired.

Lewis (*CHCC*, 127-128) considers to be the deteriorating process originated by “stratagems that have been so successfully employed in disciplining and mechanizing our society.”

These three Lewisian novels of the thirties and early forties reproduce the forms in which these big social changes brought about by *new religions* promoted values such as profit, excitement, comfort and irresponsibility, affecting human attitudes and relationships in the modern Western world. As the well-known psychologist Gergen (2000: 53) explains,

The railroad, public postal service, the automobile, the telephone, radio broadcasting, motion pictures, and commercial publishing [...] each brought people into increasingly close proximity, exposed them to an increasing range of others, and fostered a range of relationships that could never have occurred before.

Therefore, Lewis novels illustrate the great impact that all these scientific and technological discoveries had on social life, as they contributed to expand the variety of human relationships, and modify the form of older ones. Accordingly, new patterns of relationship evolved, and relationships that were confined to specific situations—to offices, living rooms and bedrooms—became unglued. Consequently, many of these relationships were no longer geographically confined, but could take place *anywhere*. In this regard, we think that all these facts may explain the peculiar nature of the social experience that characterise Lewis’ satirical works worldwide.

As we shall observe, principles such as force, power, competition

and profit determine the interpersonal conduct and relationships of his fictional Western civilians in love, family, friendship, work, school and other social settings. Thus class, race, gender and age differences enlarge, persons are in constant struggle, and the private state of all of them becomes more and more unstable and unfulfilling. Moreover, people become assimilated to objects, and thus, individuals begin to see one another in terms of *quantity*, rather than *quality*. As a result, human relationships become dehumanised in form and spirit. As Snooty rightly says, “we are the children of these conditions” because we “show ourselves hard and insensible”. Like Snooty, other characters by Lewis and the very artist himself have been largely and “loudly denounced as inhumane” and even worst things by critics and readers. Nonetheless, we believe that the unusually flamboyant attitude and out of true interactions of many of these individuals merely intend to break “the social contract, and the human pact” (114) so that their audience reconsider their heartless spirit. In this regard, the outrageousness of the principles that motivate the patterns of conduct and relationships of characters in Lewis’ fiction constitute the artist’s particularly extravagant aesthetic form of proclaiming his awareness of, and answer to, the aforesaid social changes. Thus Lewis’ despicable art form of criticising social functioning, institutions, modes of action and thought in all his novels constitutes his own idiosyncratic way of thrusting into prominence neglected truths so that his cultivated addressees reconsider and modify their faulty behaviour and values.

In 1954, Lewis becomes completely blind. However, he writes his most profound work of art *SC*. Here Lewis portrays the reality of *his* failure and poverty in Canada, where he temporarily exiles for professional reasons.³⁰ In order to do so, Lewis recreates the personal experiences and love relationship of René, a professor of History, and his wife Hester in the Hotel Blundell of Momaco, Toronto. Contrary to previous novels, the social interactions of these two characters in the domestic setting are warm and intimate, yet only at times. Of course, we cannot speak of reciprocity or fraternity between René and Hester, as there is no mutual influence or integration in their relationships. It could, perhaps, be said that it is only the terrible social and financial situation they experience in this Canadian place that contributes to make the patterns of conduct and relationships of these two characters more humane in form and nature than those established by previous ones.

Naturally, neither René nor Hester are happy and have a satisfactory quality of life. As usual in Lewis' fiction, their own self-interests and environmental circumstances play a major part in deteriorating their psychological state and relationships, something that impairs their social and private types of life to a very large extent. In this regard, we think that

³⁰ This failure is provoked by his writing of a pro-Hitler book entitled *Hitler* (1931), and the subsequent *LWOE* (1936) and *CYD* (1937), where Lewis continues his attacks on Communists, Democracy and Jews, and re-affirms his support of Fascism, Franco and Hitler. Lewis stays sympathetic to these doctrines, ignorant of its true character and true danger, until 1938. Then, he recants his extremist beliefs in *JATH* (1939) and *HC* (1939). Nevertheless, this retraction comes too late. As a result, he is permanently tainted and condemned by the superficial formulations of his fateful November in Berlin, when he experiences the Nazis' euphoric political promise two years before they secured power and began their destruction of Europe.

the deformed behaviour and social encounters of this couple, and those of the rest of guests who inhabit this microcosmic hotel reflect the tragic form in which Lewis views the devastating psychological, social, financial and ethical effects of World War II in Western civilian world. This is why their patterns of conduct and relationships are distant, superficial, illegitimate, competitive, and the like most times.

Obviously, *SC* is very revealing for other reasons as well. Thus apart from showing his audience a very much devastating social situation, Lewis self-reflects upon his old absolute (or *intellectual integrity*) in the figure of René. Like Tarr, René has great difficulty in receiving love from, and in giving it to the rest of characters in the novel, including his wife. Hester suffers in herself the effects of her husband's emotional sterility. In this regard, Hester represents Lewis' tribute to his wife Gledys—he called her Froanna—for taking care of him while he was sick, and remaining by his side, despite his always difficult and cold personality.

SC portrays many unsavoury aspects of city life as well as their negative social and psychological implications. However, the main interest of this novel rests in the fact that Lewis conveys a few *humane* forms of understanding life and human relationships that are absolutely novel in his fiction. In this regard, we believe that the rules of practice that control social behaviour and interactions in this novel, not only unearth interesting facts, they, above all, reflect a kind of spirituality that is very original in the artist and his work. For these reasons, our analysis of *SC* can help assess both the

evolution of the artist's personality and way of thinking throughout time, and the influence of his idiosyncrasy in the peculiar representation of social experience in his fiction.

Here René alienates from himself because he refuses to love his fellow men, but he also feels unable to find self-gratifying activities that engage him, as when he was a well-known writer in Britain. Consequently, the *nihilism* or *self-estrangement* that emerges in René appears because, like Lewis, he realises that his extremely aesthetic self-consciousness, and his enormous effort to experiment in art in order to advertise the individuality of his opinions, and avoid being considered “an insufferable moralist” have only deteriorated his public image throughout time, provoking no positive effects on people's minds and hearts in the end.

As Spender (1935: 212-3) suggest, the subject of Lewis' satire is “moral indignation, even though Lewis may have no moral axe to grind, and is no politician.” For Spender, this amorality of the artist “is in itself a moral point of view, because it is related to [...] the position of the artist in society”. In this regard, the critic concludes that Lewis writes “satire which is moral, although the writer is not moralist.” These arguments may explain that, contrary to what Lewis' critics like T. S. Smith (1984) believes “the artist cannot stand completely outside the process of history in which he is involved, and outside his own environment.”

Since Lewis' ideas about society and culture hardly appear explicitly in these four novels yet in indirect ways, we aim to reconstruct his

Weltanschauung, first, by taking evidence from the dialogues of his characters and the speech of the narrator, and second, from his occasional remarks, scattered comments, questions and overt criticism he makes in his books of criticism. As a result, we hope to illuminate both the characteristic Lewisian resource-seeking related events and other social and psychological occurrences, and implications questioned and criticised in his fiction.

2. Teoría de los Recursos: un estudio de la ficción de Lewis

Foa sienta las bases de su teoría en la revista *Science* en 1971. En *Societal Structures of the Mind* (1974) él y su mujer Edna B. Foa la desarrollan completamente. Este amplio trabajo es una notable integración de teoría social y psicológica en torno a los intercambios de recursos. Antes de investigar sobre las interacciones sociales en estos términos, Foa da significado al comportamiento humano. De este modo, el sociólogo clasifica los comportamientos de significado similar, separándolos de aquellos con desenredos diferentes.

A partir de las formas en que tiene lugar la diferenciación de las dimensiones básicas de su estructura de recursos, Foa clasifica las *recompensas* y los *castigos* transmitidos en las relaciones interpersonales de acuerdo a seis categorías: el amor, el status, la información, el dinero, los bienes y los servicios. El “amor” se define como una expresión de alta estima, calor o confort; el “status” es un juicio de valor que implica alto o bajo prestigio, concepto o estima; la “información” incluye consejos, opiniones, instrucciones o aclaraciones, pero excluye aquellos comportamientos que podrían clasificarse como amor o status; el “dinero” es cualquier moneda, divisa u obsequio que tiene alguna unidad de valor

estándar en los intercambios; los “bienes” son productos tangibles, objetos o materiales; los “servicios” involucran actividades llevadas a cabo en el cuerpo o pertenencias de una persona que, con frecuencia, implican trabajo o esfuerzo para otra.

Estas seis categorías están clasificadas sobre la base de dos coordenadas: *particularidad* y *concreción*. La coordenada de *particularidad* deriva de los escritos de Parsons (1951), Longabaugh (1966) y es similar a la noción de recompensas *intrínsecas* y *extrínsecas* de Blau (1964) Este atributo indica la extensión en que el valor de un determinado recurso depende de las personas concretas implicadas en su intercambio, y en sus relaciones. Por ello, el amor y el dinero son extremos y opuestos en la coordenada de particularidad. El amor es un recurso muy particular porque tendemos a ser bastante selectivos cuando escogemos a una persona para intercambiar muestras de amor. Por el contrario, el dinero es el recurso menos particular porque, en general, importa muy poco con quién lo intercambiamos y, de todos los recursos, el dinero es el que con mayor probabilidad retiene el mismo valor no importa cuál sea la relación entre el agente y el destinatario del intercambio. Los servicios y el status son menos particulares que el amor, pero más particulares que los bienes y la información.

El atributo de *concreción* abarca desde los recursos concretos hasta los simbólicos. Algunos comportamientos como dar un objeto o realizar una actividad en el cuerpo de otro individuo son bastante concretos. Otras

formas de expresión como una sonrisa o un gesto son más simbólicas. Los servicios y los bienes suponen el cambio de alguna actividad o producto tangible y son clasificados como concretos. Por otra parte, el status y la información se expresan típicamente mediante comportamientos verbales o para-lingüísticos y, por tanto, son más simbólicos. El amor y el dinero se intercambian tanto con formas concretas como simbólicas. Por eso ocupan una posición intermedia en esta coordenada. La localización de cada recurso de acuerdo con su grado de particularidad y concreción da como resultado la siguiente estructura de recursos:

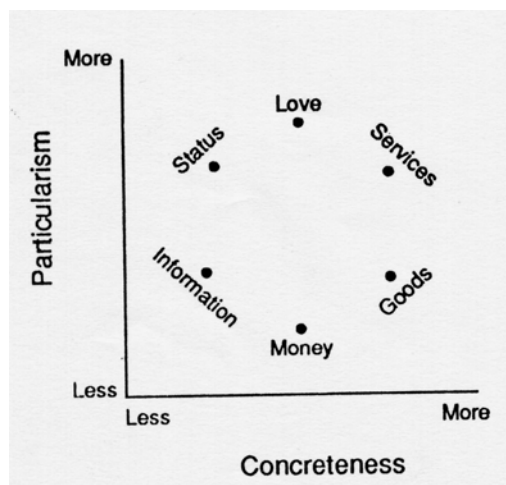


Fig. 1. La estructura cognitiva de las clases de recursos

Como observamos en la figura, cada recurso ocupa un ámbito en el orden circular de forma que algunos de sus elementos son más próximos a una de las dos categorías más cercanas, que a las otras. Estas seis clases de recursos

constituyen categorías del *significado* asignado a las acciones más que una clasificación de las acciones. Debemos entender así que cada tipo de recurso cubre una amplia variedad de acciones y todas ellas significan el mismo recurso.

Este modelo estructural formaliza las relaciones entre cada recurso y expresa la medida en que todos ellos comparten varias propiedades. Por ejemplo, una locución verbal como “Me gustas mucho” es simbólica y, por consiguiente, es más parecida a status que a servicios. A la inversa, besar es una forma concreta de expresar afecto, más cercana a servicios que a status. Los servicios realizados al cuerpo son más parecidos a amor, mientras que los servicios hechos a los bienes de uno son más cercanos en significado a los bienes. Del mismo modo, los bienes que se consumen son más próximos a los servicios que las mercancías duraderas. Una tarjeta de crédito se puede considerar como una clase de dinero, pero es más particular que una moneda. No todo comprador tiene derecho a tener una tarjeta de crédito y la tarjeta no se le da a todo el mundo. Esta forma de pago es más simbólica que la moneda. Aunque no se intercambia nada concreto en un pago realizado con tarjeta, el dinero cambia de manos de forma rápida. Por ello, una tarjeta de crédito es más cercana en significado a información que a dinero. De hecho, la tarjeta proporciona información acerca de la solvencia de su acreedor.

Por tanto, los códigos de práctica de los seis tipos de recursos varían, gradualmente con su posición en la estructura circular. En este sentido, el

dinero no es más racional que el amor; sólo sigue una lógica diferente. La lógica de otros tipos de recursos es más similar al dinero que al amor, dependiendo si estos recursos son más cercanos al último que al primero en el orden circular. En consecuencia, los estados de motivación están secuenciados e interrelacionados. Estas seis categorías caracterizan las relaciones; la distribución del orden circular acomoda tanto sus diferencias como sus similitudes. Una implicación importante de este marco teórico es que los problemas económicos y psicológicos interactúan y no se pueden solucionar de forma aislada. Más bien, estos problemas requieren integración a un nivel teórico. En este sentido, la estructura circular de Foa no solo enfatiza este hecho sino que además proporciona un punto de partida hacia tal integración.

Una clasificación de recursos no es idéntica a una clasificación de comportamiento interpersonal ya que, como acabamos de decir, las clases de recursos representan el significado del comportamiento interpersonal más que las conductas físicas empleadas para expresar significado. La Teoría de los Recursos es un asunto de Psicología Social porque es apropiado para entender el significado de las interacciones interpersonales más que el comportamiento envuelto en ellas.

Otro punto fuerte de la Teoría de los Recursos es que diferencia entre intercambios *positivos* y *negativos*. Foa defiende que cuando estas seis categorías están todavía sin distinguir por el niño, éste ya conoce la discrepancia entre la *aceptación* y el *rechazo*. En otras palabras, el niño sabe

que un recurso puede ser usurpado además de proporcionado. Dar (intercambio positivo) es definido entonces como la acción de incrementar la cantidad de recursos que dispone la persona que los recibe; a la inversa, quitar (intercambio negativo) es un descenso de la cantidad de recursos que dispone el destinatario. De acuerdo con esto, proveer “amor” es una expresión de aceptación, amistad o agrado mientras que privar de amor significa rechazo, disgusto u odio. Procurar “status” es expresar estima y respeto mientras que usurpar status indica desestima, bien denigrando u otorgando una baja puntuación. Mentir, desorientar y engañar son ejemplos de privación de “información”: la persona engañada permanece con menos información que la que tenía, mientras que cuando a uno se le informa de algo se amplía su cantidad de conocimiento. Hurtar y proporcionar “bienes” o “dinero” son recursos evidentes. En cuanto a los “servicios”, despojar implica dañar el cuerpo o las pertenencias del objeto, mientras que suministrar servicios acrecienta el confort físico del último y le ahorra un gasto de energía. Un ejemplo de este recurso es hacer un favor a alguien.

Estos principios que se refieren a las categorías de recursos y al comportamiento implican que cada conducta interpersonal consiste en facilitar y/o inhibir uno o más recursos. Además, el comportamiento que envuelve recursos que son cercanos ocurre más frecuentemente que el que tiene que ver con recursos que son menos próximos. En este sentido, la estructura de los recursos de Foa proporciona un marco para la clasificación

de las conductas interpersonales y predice la frecuencia de ocurrencia de cada acto.

Asimismo, hay un número de aspectos que afectan a los intercambios de recursos y a las relaciones interpersonales que los individuos establecen a diario. Más concretamente, nos referimos a algunas variables en que las categorías de recursos se diferencian unas de las otras sistemáticamente. De acuerdo con Foa, hay dos grupos principales de propiedades: las que afectan el *estado emocional* del individuo, y las que afectan al *entorno*.

Teniendo en cuenta todas estas consideraciones, nos proponemos estudiar el *impacto* que tienen todas las propiedades de los recursos en la comprensión y control de los asuntos humanos reflejados en la ficción de Lewis. Para llevar a cabo esta tarea, analizamos algunos de los principales efectos que poseen las propiedades del entorno (tiempo para procesar imputo, retraso de la recompensa y tamaño del grupo) cuando combinan en los intercambios de recursos de sus personajes. De este modo, tratamos de ayudar a entender mejor algunos de los aspectos más desagradables de la vida en las ciudades que el artista recrea continuamente en sus novelas. Así, examinamos fenómenos tales como el crimen, la alienación y el consumo abusivo de ciertas drogas.

En nuestra opinión, el principal valor del aparato teórico de Foa reside en la posibilidad de derivar predicciones significativas del mismo en las obras de ficción de Lewis. Nuestro objetivo fundamental es aclarar los

modos en que el orden circular de los recursos de Foa opera o no en una variedad de situaciones de intercambio influyendo, en primer lugar, la sustitución de un recurso por otro; en segundo lugar, la satisfacción que experimentan los principales personajes de las novelas de Lewis tras el intercambio; en tercer lugar, la probabilidad de que estos realicen encuentros sociales posteriores y, en cuarto lugar, el impacto del contexto institucional. Como conclusión, intentamos explicar los cambios que existen de un libro a otro y proporcionamos respuestas a las causas que producen dichas modificaciones.

Para empezar, describimos la cantidad de recursos económicos y no económicos que poseen los personajes de Lewis, el significado de sus transacciones, las reglas de intercambio de estas mercancías y los contextos donde tienen lugar tales intercambios de recursos. Después, verificamos si la preferencia por las permutas sigue la estructura de recursos propuesta por Foa o no. De este modo, proporcionamos una visión de conjunto del grado de satisfacción de estos personajes tras establecer relaciones sociales. Al mismo tiempo, damos información acerca de la evolución de sus relaciones interpersonales a lo largo del tiempo.

Otro punto de estudio son los ámbitos institucionales donde interactúan los principales personajes de Lewis. De este modo, describimos la influencia de estos entornos en el resultado de sus transacciones. Estos contextos suelen imponer ciertas restricciones en la frecuencia de uso de algunos recursos. Por ello, analizamos las propiedades afectadas por estos

escenarios, e indicamos las formas en que las características de ciertos entornos inhiben la transacción de algunos recursos particulares. En consecuencia, iluminamos las numerosas implicaciones sociológicas y psicológicas que se desprenden de todas estas circunstancias.

Como el marco teórico de Foa también contempla códigos de conducta en intercambios negativos, en este estudio examinamos si los modelos de preferencia que la estructura de recursos sugiere son similares para las ocasiones en que los personajes suministran y usurpan recursos. Un último punto de análisis concierne varias nociones de Psicología Social como la necesidad, el poder, la atracción, la equidad, el Maquiavelismo, el condescendiente, la conformidad, la ansiedad, la frustración y la agresión. De este modo, proporcionamos un escenario común para aclarar sus características en la ficción de Lewis y sus consecuencias dispares en estos cuatro mundos imaginarios. Como resultado dilucidamos, e inducimos al entendimiento las razones por las cuales el artista recrea todos los fenómenos sociales y psicológicos anteriormente citados tan a menudo en su obra de creación.

2. Resource Theory: A Study of Lewis' Fiction

Foa sets the basis of his theory in *Science* in 1971, yet it is in *Societal Structures of the Mind* (1974), where he and his wife Edna B. Foa develop it further. This large work is a remarkable integration of social psychological theory into the idea of resource exchange. It presents a theory of interpersonal relations, covering the cognitive structures of social events, their development, dynamics, pathology and their relationship to the structure of society and to intercultural differences. *Societal Structures of the Mind* covers a wide variety of concepts of psychology, psychiatry, sociology, social work or education. However, its simple form and enormous implications make it an adequate methodological instrument for this literary analysis.

Before researching on social interactions in terms of resource transactions, Foa gives meaning to behaviour. Thus he classes together those behaviours with similar meaning and separates them from behaviours with different meaning. After carrying out various experiments, the sociologist discovers that, as long as a child begins to move beyond the exclusiveness of relationship with his mother, further distinctions are needed for him in order to be able to participate in the various roles of the family, relate to peers, as well as function in other social institutions such as

school and work. Thus Foa posits that subsequent to the differentiation between love and services, the child differentiates goods from services and status from love. In the last stage of resource differentiation, he differentiates money from goods and information from status. A schematic representation of this differentiation of resource classes is given in Fig. 1. Here we indicate a newly differentiated class by a double frame:

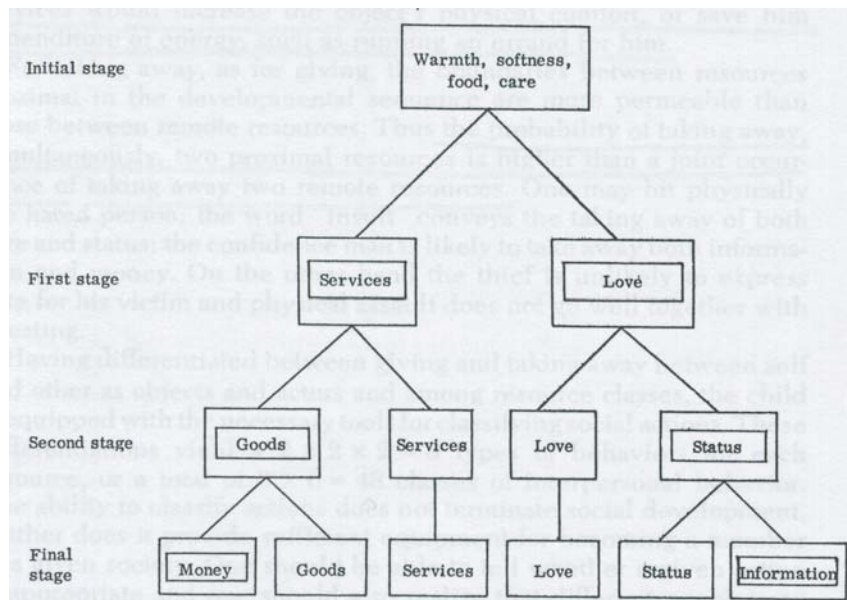


Fig. 1. The differentiation of resource classes

Following the ways in which this differentiation of the basic dimensions of the structure of resources takes place, Foa (1971, quoted in 1993: 15) classifies the *rewards* and *punishments* transmitted in interpersonal encounters according to six categories: love, status, information, money,

goods and services. “Love” is defined as an expression of affectionate regard, warmth, or comfort; “status” is an expression of evaluative judgement which conveys high or low prestige, regard, or esteem; “information” includes advice, opinions, instruction, or enlightenment, but excludes those behaviours which could be classed as love or status; “money” in any coin, currency or token which has some standard unit of exchange value; “goods” are tangible products, objects, or materials; and “services” involve activities on the body or belongings of one person which often constitute labour for another person.

These six resource categories are classified on the basis of two co-ordinates: particularism and concreteness. The coordinate of *particularism*¹ derives from the writings of Parsons (1951), Longabaugh (1966) and is similar to Blau’s notion of *intrinsic* and *extrinsic* rewards (1964). According to Foa (1971 quoted in 1993: 16), this attribute indicates the extent to which the value of a given resource depends on the particular persons involved in exchanging it, and by their relationships. Thus love and money are extreme and opposed on the particularistic co-ordinate. Love is a highly particularistic resource because we tend to be highly selective when choosing a person with whom to exchange tokens of love. In contrast, money is the least particularistic resource because, in general, it matters very little with whom we exchange it, and of all resources, money is most likely to retain the same value regardless of the relation between the agent

and recipient. Services and status are less particularistic than love but more particularistic than goods and information.

The attribute of *concreteness* ranges from concrete to symbolic. Some behaviour like giving an object or performing an activity upon the body of another individual is quite concrete. Some other forms of expression, such as a smile or a gesture are more symbolic. Services and goods involve the exchange of some tangible activity or product and are classed as concrete. Status and information, on the other hand, are typically conveyed by verbal or paralinguistic behaviour and are thus more symbolic. Love and money are exchanged in both concrete and symbolic forms, and thus, occupy an intermediate position on this co-ordinate. As a result, the location of each resource class according to its degree of particularism and concreteness produces the following structure of resources:

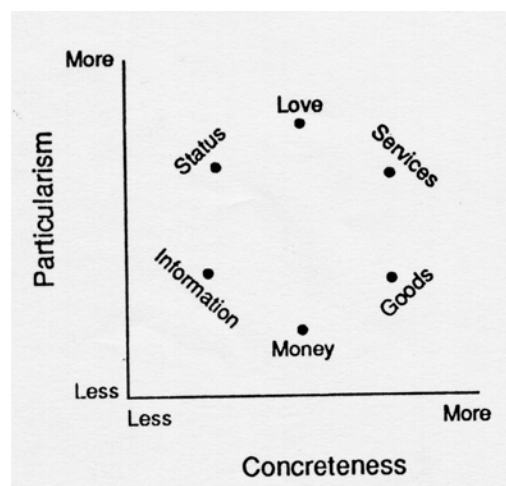


Fig. 2. The cognitive structure of resource classes

¹ For further reference, see Foa (1976: 80).

As we observe in this figure, each resource class occupies a range in the order, so that some of its elements are nearer to one of the two neighbouring classes than to the other. These six resource classes constitute categories of the *meaning* assigned to actions, rather than a classification of actions. Thus each resource class must be understood as covering a wide range of actions all conveying the same resource.

Therefore, Foa (1971 quoted in 1993: 16-7) considers that this structural model formalises the relations between each resource and expresses the extent to which they share various properties. For instance, a verbal expression of love such as “I like you very much” is symbolic and, consequently, is more similar to status than to services. Conversely, kissing is a concrete way of expressing affection, closer to services than to status. Services to the body are proximal to love, while services to one’s belongings are nearer to goods. Likewise consumption goods are closer to services than durable goods. A credit card can be considered a kind of money, but it is more particularistic than currency; not every merchant honours a credit card, and the card is not issued to everybody. This form of payment is also more symbolic than currency. Although nothing concrete is given in a credit card payment, currency surely changes hands. Thus a credit card will be nearer to information than currency. In fact, the card provides information on the solvency of its holder.

Therefore, the rules of exchange of all the six resource classes vary gradually with their position in the circular structure. In this regard, money is not more rational than love; *it only follows a distinct logic*. The logic of other resource classes is more similar to money or to love, depending on whether they are nearer to the latter or to the former in the order of resources. In consequence, it appears that motivational states are sequenced and interrelated. These six resource categories characterise relationships and Foa's circular arrangement accommodates both their differences and similarities. One important implication of this framework is that economic and psychological problems inter-act and cannot be solved in isolation; they require integration at a theoretical level. In this regard, Foa's circular structure of resources not only emphasises this fact, but also provides a point of departure toward such integration.

In this circular order of resources, neither space nor time, are resource classes; rather they are factors that influence resource exchange. In Foa's view (1976: 101), sex, "a combination of love and services", does not appear in the present classification either, because in some sexual relations, love is predominant (sentiment), while other relationships are characterised by the mutual exchange of services (eroticism). In fact, this characterisation of sexual behaviour reflects that a classification of resources is not identical to a classification of interpersonal behaviour, for as we have just said, resource classes represent the *meaning* of interpersonal behaviour, rather than the actual physical behaviour employed to convey meaning. Therefore,

Resource Theory is a major concern of Social Psychology because it is appropriate for understanding the meaning of interpersonal interactions, rather than the behaviour involved in them.

Another strong point of Resource Theory is that it differentiates between *positive* and *negative* exchanges. Foa (1974: 40) states that when these six resource categories are still undifferentiated a child already possesses the differentiation between acceptance and rejection. In other words, the infant knows that a certain resource can be taken away as well as given. Giving (positive exchange) is then defined as increasing the amount of resources available to the object; conversely, taking away (negative exchange) is a decrease in the amount of resources available to the object. Accordingly, giving “love” is expressing acceptance, friendship and liking; taking away love means rejection, expressing disliking or hate. Giving “status” means expressing esteem and respect while taking away status indicates disesteem, by belittling or by giving a low rating. Cheating, misleading and deceiving are examples of taking away “information”: the deceived is left with less information than he had beforehand, while being given information increases the amount of knowledge one possesses. Taking away and giving “goods” or “money” are self-evident resources. For “services”, taking away means damaging the body or the belongings of the object, while giving services would increase the object’s physical comfort, or save him expenditure of energy, such as running an errand for him.

These principles concerning resource categories and interpersonal behaviour imply that every interpersonal behaviour consists of giving and/or taking away one or more resources, and that behaviour involving closely linked resources occurs more often than behaviour that involves less closely related resources. In this regard, Foa's structure of resources provides a framework for the systematic classification of interpersonal behaviour, and for predicting the frequency of occurrence of each act.

There are a number of aspects that affect resource exchanges and the interpersonal relationships performed by individuals in everyday life. More concretely, we refer to several variables on which resource classes differ systematically from one another. According to Foa, there are two main groups: properties that affect the *motivational state* of the individual, and properties affected by the *environment*.

1. 1. Structure-Related Properties

1. 1. 1. Properties affecting the motivational state

1. 1. 1. 1. Relationship between Self and Other

This property indicates that the relationship between the amount of resource given to the other and the amount left to self is positive for love and that it decreases and becomes negative as one moves along the structure towards money. For example, the more we give love to the other, the more is left to ourselves. Giving information to another person does not appear to decrease

or increase the amount possessed by the giver. It can be argued, however, that sharing may reduce the value of the information if the situation is competitive. Giving money and goods to another definitely reduces the amount left for the self. As a result, love has the most positive relationship; status is less positive; information, independent: money and goods most negative. Services, is again less negative. In this sense, giving to another will sometimes result in a gain for the person who gives and at other times will cause a loss to him, depending on which resource is transferred.

In our opinion, the trends of behaviour and resource transactions of Lewis' characters are not always motivated by these principles and assumptions suggested by the sociologist. For instance, Lewis' intellectual characters, and others that are not intellectuals *refuse to give love to their own species*, even though this type of resource exchange improves one's quality of life. Similarly, services are barely done by any character in his fiction, unless there is some *profit* involved in their exchange. Thus we think that giving particularistic resources such as love, status and services to another individual is not seen as a gain for the Lewisian participants that give, but rather as an act that may cause a loss to them, no matter if the type of resource that is transferred is symbolic.

1. 1. 1. 2. The relationship between giving and taking away resources

Again, this relationship is most positive for love. For instance, one can love and hate the same person simultaneously, yet money exchange allows no

ambivalence since giving money appears to exclude taking it away. Ambivalence will increase as we approach the most particularistic resource.

We think that Foa's assumptions concerning this property prove right in Lewis' fiction, as we observe ambivalence in all manner of exchanges frequently. This fact implies that Lewis' characters "love" and hate, and give money and take it away from their fellow men at once. The implications derived from this property are enormously revealing of both the contradictory mind of Lewis and the dialogical² nature of his fiction.

1. 1. 1. 3. Verbalisation of need

This property suggests that the easiest need to express is the need for money and the most difficult is the need for love. This difference may be related to the degree to which verbal communication is suitable for the various resource classes. Language appears quite appropriate for money transactions. Love, on the other hand, is more clearly expressed by paralinguistic communication.

Furthermore, the property verbal communication affects reciprocation and substitution of resources, in the sense that in expressing a need there is a tendency to seek for less particularistic ones. Thus a more particularistic resource is likely to be substituted for a less particularistic one, but the transaction is not likely to move in the opposite direction.

² For further reference on the implications of having a dialogical imagination, see Holquist (1981).

In our view, Lewis' characters meet much difficulty in expressing their particularistic needs. This is why they hardly communicate, and prefer to exchange concrete types of resources. Here is an example of this idea (*T*, 51).

Both were bored in different degrees, **with the part imposed** by the punctilious and **ridiculous god of love**. Bertha, into the bargain, wanted to get on with **her cooking**: she would have cut considerably the reconciliation scene. (my emphasis)

In this passage, Tarr and Bertha show that their love exchanges have become a routine, and no longer fulfil them in satisfactory ways. Thus Bertha prefers to *act* her role by getting on with her cooking (service) rather than exchanging love or status with Tarr in a verbal manner. Tarr prefers to fulfil his social and artistic interests, rather than his psychological needs. In this regard, we think that Lewis aims to convey that language is no longer valid or truthful for modern characters to express their real feelings and emotions, and for writers to represent reality in their works. This is the reason why *T* is so abstract in form and screwy in significance.

1. 1. 1. 4. Reciprocation in kind

When an individual provides a social resource to another person, the debt created may be repaid through an act of reciprocation. Accordingly, the kind of resource used for repayment affects the degree of satisfaction experienced by the participants in an exchange. The results of Foa's experiments indicate

that satisfaction is greatest when debts are repaid in kind; satisfaction diminishes as the distance between the resources increases.

Accordingly, with regard to positive exchanges, if one gives love to someone, he/she will prefer to receive either love, status or services rather than goods or money, which are two and three steps further. Therefore, the closer two classes are in the structure the more similar are the preferences for them. Conversely, there is little or no relationship between degrees of preference for distal classes. As a result, optimal exchanges require the use of the same resource, for example, love in exchange for love. When resources exchanged are at opposite sides of the circle they are inappropriate, for example, love for money is prostitution.

These facts imply that exchange preference follows the structure, being similar for proximal classes and different for distal ones. Thus tendency to exchange within the same class is strongest for love and decreases as one moves along the structure toward money. Consequently, love is most likely to be exchanged for itself while a wide range of preferences are expressed as exchange for money.³

In contrast to Foa's hypotheses, Lewis' characters hardly ever reciprocate their own species with the same type of resources, let alone, when these are particularistic. Far from this, there is extreme shortage of particularistic resource exchanges throughout his fiction. Notwithstanding,

³ Foa suggests that irrespective of the resource people give they most prefer to receive love, while they least prefer to receive money. Following Prof. Bonheim, we consider that this is not true, as we are surely very happy and satisfied when our pay-check arrives.

Lewis' *dramatis personae* do not hesitate to exchange all manner of resource, including particularistic ones to attain concrete ones, like money and goods, something that occurs both in large and intimate settings.

The results of Foa's experiments concerning preference patterns in negative exchanges (i.e. when participants deprive each other of some resource/s) are similar to those obtained for positive. Thus regardless of the resource that is taken away from individuals, subjects prefer to retaliate by depriving their aggressor of love, even though the most preferred form of retaliation is payment in kind. Consequently, it seems to be that transactions of giving and taking follow essentially the same rules.

Respect for social values and fear of retaliation are instances of conditions that often limit deprivation in kind and narrow the range of responses as well. In other words, people cannot always behave in the manner they would most prefer due to social restrictions. Thus Resource Theory predicts that when resources of deprivation and of retaliation are different, some residual hostility can be observed following the retaliatory act. Accordingly, the less similar the resources are, the stronger the intensity of retaliation is.

As far as we are concerned, this property proves right in Lewis' fiction, as his characters deprive their aggressors of particularistic resources like love. However, they more often retaliate by taking status, services and information away from them. For example, Kreisler is deprived of status by Bertha after Fraülein Liepmann's party takes place in *T*. All the same, he

prefers to take services away from the former. This is why he rapes Bertha in a brutal way afterwards. Kreisler retaliates on her with an inappropriate resource, and this exhibition of aggression illustrates an extremely high degree of residual hostility on the part of Kreisler. Therefore, we think that the increased intensity of response of Kreisler implies that this inappropriate resource does not satisfy his retaliation completely. In fact, he suffers much dissatisfaction and imbalance later in the story.

In any case, social norms do not constitute a deterrent for Kreisler, and other characters to perform negative exchanges of resources towards their fellow men in these novels as Foa predicts. In this regard, it appears to be that the relative scarcity of particularistic exchanges in the fictional cities of Lewis' novels deprives his urban population of powerful informal instruments of social control. Consequently, their law enforcement system is built on the assumption that for most people the threat of status deprivation by other is a sufficient drawback against the violation of social norms. Contrarily, we believe that the frequent negative resource exchanges (aggression) undertaken by Lewis' characters in all of them reflect that even the arm of the law is not effective, when particularistic means of social control fail. In this sense, Lewis draws our attention not only to this lack of particularism in modern Western cities, but also to the extreme degree of illegitimacy accepted by its citizenship, stately institutions and representatives as social norms in this time.

Another important implication of this property is that individuals usually view their interpersonal exchanges of resources as somewhat inequitable. On the one hand, Foa distinguishes between inequitable exchanges of resources between friends, which do not appear to produce dissatisfaction (at least, not in the short run) and, on the other hand, inequitable exchanges between hostile participants, which appear to generate additional hostility.

Again, contrary to Foa's predictions, we hardly observe examples of the former in Lewis' creative worlds. One of these examples appears in *SC*, where René and Ian are friends. Thus René performs inequitable exchanges with the latter, yet these do not produce dissatisfaction in Ian. On the other hand, two friends like Snooty and Humph in *SB*, or Kreisler and Tarr in *T* view their exchanges of resources as somewhat inequitable. It is not strange then, that the less favoured member increases his hostility towards the other character as time passes by in these two stories.

1. 1. 1. 5. Relationship between interpersonal setting and exchange

Preference for a given resource depends not only on the resource previously provided, but also on the institutional situation where the exchange takes place. For instance, among friends or acquaintances love constitutes a more appropriate medium of exchange than does money. Conversely, a boss is expected to pay for work done by his employee. This means that people behave differently in different circumstances: behaviour, which is perfectly

appropriate in the family setting, may be unsuitable at school or at work. In fact, family, school and work are all social institutions, and the behaviours suited to each of them involve different resources.

Foa's arrangement of resources facilitates transactions by directing the individual to the institution, where the resource class he needs can be exchanged with the resource class he has to offer. Notwithstanding, it also creates difficulties for the person who does not have access to the appropriate institution, and who tries to perform the exchange in an inappropriate one. Concerning this issue, Foa (1976: 122) proposes that sanctions for using an unsuitable resource in an inappropriate institution can be quite severe.

Consider [...] the guest who is about to leave after having been treated to a very good dinner. [...] In a private home, he would probably thank the hostess profusely, expressing his enjoyment of the pleasant evening (giving love) and his admiration for her cooking skills (giving status). In a restaurant, he would pay the bill and leave a tip on the table. [But] if this guest were to give money for the meal he had at his friend's home or expressed his pleasure at the restaurant in words instead of in cash. [...] In both cases, he is likely to find himself in trouble.

Therefore, not every type of exchange is permissible in a given institution. Indeed, institutions make transactions easier and more predictable, yet they also constitute limitations and barriers to trade. In consequence, one should address to the appropriate context for a given exchange, but he/she may not have an access to it because he/she does not satisfy certain requirements. According to Shuval (1970, quoted in Foa, 1976: 123), one direct

implication of this fact is that a person may seek the needed resource in an inappropriate setting. For instance, some people go to the doctor not because of poor health, but to receive support and love.

Once again, Lewis' characters do not often trade particularistic resources with their friends, relatives and lovers; they prefer to exchange money. The behaviour of these characters do not meet Foa's predictions concerning this property because they show to behave very similarly in different interpersonal settings. In other words, the same behaviour is perfectly adequate both in work and in the family context. These situations emerge because certain institutions often constitute limitations to exchange. Thus Lewis' characters do not always have access to settings where they could satisfy their needs because they do not satisfy certain social requests. This is why they often feel forced to look for their needed resources in inappropriate contexts. In this regard, this thesis examines various instances of this type since they illustrate all these assumptions and implications proposed by Foa in his work.

1. 1. 2. Properties affected by environment

There are also a series of environmental properties that indicate the characteristics of the institutional setting that enhances or inhibits the exchange of a given resource. The first property refers to *time for processing input*. Accordingly, giving and receiving a resource such as love cannot be done in a hurry: it requires time and even some leisure. Money,

on the contrary, can change hands very rapidly. The second property defined as *delay of reward* proposes that love is a relatively long-term investment, whereas an exchange of money with another resource can be completed in a single encounter. The third property, *optimum group size* indicates that small group settings are more suitable for particularistic exchanges, whereas larger groups meet for trade in a stock.

Thus the frequency of direct personal expressions referring to a group member decreases as the group size increases. Communication becomes less particularistic when more people are present. For example, if we take the variables that influence the willingness to help or to safeguard the well-being of another individual in an “emergency” situation, the probability of helping behaviour decrease when the number of bystanders increase.

Contrary to Foa’s first property, most Lewisian characters often exchange love and sexual pleasures in a hurry. This occurs essentially because they do not wish to develop their love relationships; less particularistic resources are more valuable for them. The third property, however, proves right in Lewis’ fiction. For instance, if we take the duel between Kreisler and Soltyk in *T* as an “emergency” situation, most characters witnessing the event are very slow to prevent Soltyk’s death. In our opinion, Lewis depicts this social occurrence in absurd terms in order to reflect that Western civilization began to see crime and violence as social norms in this early time.

Foa's investigations also indicate that exchanges of particularistic resources are more likely to occur in a small group than in a larger one. By contrast, economic transactions appear to be facilitated by larger groups: access to a wide market is considered advantageous by businessmen; shoppers will tend to prefer a store where sales are brisk; and brokers will prefer a stock or commodity exchange where many people convene. We can thus expect that in an environment of large size groups, non-particularistic resources will be exchanged more than particularistic ones.

This property proves right for the suggested fiction to a certain extent because positive particularistic resource exchanges hardly take place at all in Lewis' production. Moreover, if we think of particularistic resource transactions performed by his characters in novels other than the ones that conform our corpus of analysis such as *AG* and *RQ*,⁴ we observe that exchanges of intimate resources occur more frequently in large size groups than in smaller ones. All these facts clarify the high number of Machiavellian types who inhabit these two fictional worlds. All in all, we think that Lewis calls attention to the generalised spirit of hypocrisy and conformity that characterise human behaviour and relationships in certain intellectual circles in his time by doing so.

These three properties of resources have great importance in determining the outcome of exchanges, as well as the environmental conditions that are suitable for their occurrence. In Lewis' fiction, they even

combine to hinder exchanges of particularistic resources. Thus the settings he reflects in his novels are mostly modern urban environments inhabited by large masses of people. The characteristics of these metropolitan areas constitute an obstacle to the exchange of particularistic resources, while facilitating economic transactions. This occurs because, in these modern cultures there are many institutions specialised in the exchange of a few resources. It is not strange then, that Lewis introduces brothels, in his fiction recurrently, that is, places where love, status, information, goods and services are often exchanged for money. Furthermore, encounters are often brief and non-repetitive because every character engages in numerous contacts. As a result, the modern society depicted by Lewis is rich in economic resources, but poor in particularistic ones. We believe that these peculiar features of his fiction constitute signs of his extremely conscious awareness of such lack, and its imperative desire to contribute new ideas and values that compensate for so much social malfunctioning.

1. 1. 3. Some important implications of properties

We propose to study the *impact* that the identification of resource properties has on the understanding and control of human affairs in Lewis' fiction. To carry out this task, we outline some of the effects that the aforesaid environmental properties (time for processing input, delay of reward and optimum group size) have on the resource exchanges of his characters when

⁴ Lewis refers to gregarious groups of artists such as the Bloomsbury and the Sitwells.

they combine. In this way, we hope to help comprehend much better some of the less savoury aspects of city life that the artist depicts in his novel recurrently. More concretely, we examine crime, alienation and drug abuse.

Crime is a consequence of the relative scarcity of particularistic exchanges in the city. This lack deprives Lewis' fictional society of powerful informal instruments of social control, particularly, the giving and taking of status. Thus threat of status deprivation turns out to have little effect as deterrent against the violation of social norms in these large metropolitan areas. For example, if we take a character that does not care about the opinion held by his neighbours such as Kreisler in *T*, sitting in jail may be merely a temporary loss of freedom for him rather than a stain upon his reputation. We think that this is why deprivation of status is meaningless for certain individuals like him who live in large groups, while this very same fact is of utmost importance for other characters who live in more traditional or conservative contexts such as Vincent in *VS*.

Concerning *alienation*, Foa (1976: 113) defends that it is through love that we relate to other persons. Scarcity of particularistic transactions can, thus, be subjectively experienced as loneliness and estrangement, something more likely to happen to individuals among large modern city crowds than in rural or traditional areas. In Lewis' fiction, we often find that many characters feel estranged due to scarcity of particularistic resources, for example, Kreisler and Bertha in *T*, or René and Hester in *SC*.

Finally, the use of *drugs* increases with scarcity of particularistic resources in modern society. When something is scarce, there are two alternative solutions: increasing its supply or reducing the need. In Foa's view (1976: 114), this fact suggests that certain drugs may facilitate particularistic exchanges in unfavourable environmental conditions, while certain others may reduce the discomfort caused by the shortage of particularistic resources. Thus while certain drugs increase interpersonal sensitivity, other drugs reduce the need for friendship. In Lewis' *SC*, most hotel guests consume alcohol for the former reason; other characters like Vincent's mother in *VS* does so in an abusive manner for the latter.

For Foa (1976: 114), one important implication of all these facts is that growth of large metropolitan areas with their high population density and the increased institutional specialisation greatly facilitates economic exchanges, while hindering particularistic transactions. The modern society and, particularly, the urban society portrayed by Lewis in his novels provide new opportunities for trade and work, yet it also reduces the exchange of love, status and services. It could be said then, that the three aforesaid unsavoury aspects of city life (crime, alienation and drug abuse), which Lewis reflects in his novels, are due to this reduction. We think that this is the reason why those characters having a low level of tolerance of deprivation, that is, the cold, distant, manipulative individuals who better

adjust themselves to conditions of city life constitute the urban type that most largely inhabits Lewis' fiction, as we observe in *SB*, *VS* and *SC*.⁵

Another direct implication of these issues concerns those individuals who cannot endure lack of particularistic resources. For them, new institutional forms such as affiliation groups, gregarious circles or brothels are created in the city for the exchange of particularistic resources in spite of unfavourable environmental conditions. Indeed, all these specialised institutions, which appear in Lewis' novels as well, appear to have been constituted in recognition of the fact that in the environment provided by modern society, particularistic exchanges have decreased, and thus, special training and opportunities are necessary. As a result, these specialised institutions often reduce negative aspects of city life.

In our opinion, the main value of Foa's theoretical structure for this study lies in the possibility of deriving meaningful practical predictions from it. Our main aim then, is to clarify the ways in which Foa's circular order of resources operates or does not operate in a variety of exchange situations to influence, first, substitution of one resource for another; second, satisfaction experienced by Lewis' main characters following the exchange; third, probability of their entering subsequent encounters and, fourth, impact of the institutional setting on the suggested novels. As a corollary, we explain the changes that exist from one book to the other, providing answers to their modifying causes.

⁵ These urban types appear in *RQ* to a very large extent. See Terrazas (2000b).

To start with, we describe the amount of economic and non-economic resources possessed by Lewis' characters, the meaning of their transactions, the rules of exchange of these commodities and the contexts of practice where such resource exchanges take place. Later, we verify if exchange preference follows Foa's structure of resources or not. As a result, we provide a general picture of the degree of satisfaction of these characters after performing their societal encounters as well as information about the evolution of their interpersonal relationships over time.

Furthermore, we study the institutional settings where Lewis' main *dramatis personae* interact in order to describe their influence on the outcome of their transactions. These institutional contexts often impose certain constraints on the frequency of using some resources. In this regard, we analyse the properties affected by these fictional environments, indicating the forms in which the characteristics of the institutional settings in question inhibit the transaction of particularistic commodities in Lewis' characters. As a consequence, we enlighten the numerous and varied sociological and psychological implications that stem from all these circumstances.

Since Foa's framework considers behavioural patterns in negative exchanges as well, we test if the overall pattern of preferences suggested by the structure of resources is similar for giving and taking in the artist's fiction. A final point of study concerns various well-known notions within Social Psychology such as need, power, attraction, equity, Machiavellism,

ingratiation, conformity, anxiety, frustration and aggression; all of them aspects of behaviour reviewed by Foa under his framework which are also very recurrent in Lewis' fiction. In this way, we provide a common background for explaining their disparate characteristics and consequences in these four Lewisian creative worlds.⁶ As a result, we elucidate, and induce understanding of the reasons why the artist frequently recreates all the aforesaid social and psychological phenomena in his imaginative production.

Then, chapter three concentrates on the structure of the interpersonal behaviour and relationships of Lewis' main personages in *T*. Thus we analyse diverse aspects such as the "repulsive" and "unbridled individualism" (*T*, 216) of Tarr, the lack of mutual resource exchanges of its characters, the calculating nature of the principles of conduct that govern their resource transactions in love and friendship settings, or the extreme frequency of negative exchanges of particularistic resources that characterise this piece of fiction. As a result, we elucidate many loathsome implications derived from all these facts in their welfare and standard of living.

Chapter four focuses on the attitude and social interactions of Snooty, narrator and main protagonist of *SB*, and other important characters, that is, Humph, Val and Lily. Here Snooty is a Behaviourist writer who surprisingly mounts a satirical attack on Watson's Behaviourism, ridiculing

⁶ All these notions are described in detail in following chapters.

its principles through the sardonic form and significance of his patterns of conduct. By doing so, Snooty throws into prominence the effects of progress and scientific advance on his own values, behaviour, relationships, and on those of his own species.⁷ Here we explain the reasons why these four characters lack respect and sympathy for one another, as far from interacting in order to achieve need satisfaction and welfare, all of them seem to be forced into each other's company in order to attain their needed concrete commodities. As their possession of these types of resources falls below a minimum level, and social institutions do nothing to fulfil their demands either, these four characters meet much difficulty in gaining them in natural circumstances. For these reasons, we describe the ways in which all of them often make use of unorthodox tactics to gain them. In this sense, we clarify the despicable social and psychological consequences founded on their behaviour patterns. More concretely, we refer to notions like frustration, aggression, anxiety, power, Machiavellism, conformity or ingratiation.

Chapter five concentrates on the principles that govern the trends of behaviour and social encounters of the main protagonist of Lewis' minor thriller *V/S Vincent Penhale*. His biased desire to gain money and higher

⁷ Although Lewis never admits his debts to Bergson's theories, S. Campbell (1988: 98) comments how "it has long been recognised that Lewis' theory of satire comes directly out of Bergson's work on comedy *Le Rire* (1900)". In this work, Bergson conceives the human being as essentially comic. Bergson considers that only by being indifferent to the comic nature of man, can the mind have a useful social function: human kind's perfection. In this regard, laughter is converted into a social gesture, and the body reflects the source of this comedy. Then, if the body turns out to be something awkward, mechanised and superimposed on the living mind, depriving this of its autonomy in *SB* all characters must be not only rejected, but also ridiculed, since this is the only way in which society's pernicious patterns of conduct can be portrayed.

social standing causes disastrous social and psychological effects on his view of life, of himself and of other characters in the novel like his wife April, his mother-in-law Ms. Mallow, his friends Martin and Halvorsen, and his relatives, above all, his sister Maddie, who creates her personality following the advice of her brother.

Thus we examine the negative ways in which this obsession with wealth and social class of Vincent not only affects his own happiness, welfare and quality of life, but also those of other characters involved. To carry out these tasks, we focus on the frequent negative exchanges of various resources like information, goods and money performed by Vincent and his friend Halvorsen, as well as on the ingratiatory practices used by Vincent and his sister Maddie. These facts are remarkable because they take place in love, family and friendship settings. As a result, we clarify the ways in which external circumstances cause them to feel oppressed and exploited, and promote their skewed behaviour and relationships in all manner of settings. By doing so, it is our aim to clarify the reasons why processes of competition, and social differentiation, conflict and power relations between characters of different social and financial status, genre and generation are so frequent in *V/S*.

Finally, we pay special attention to April, the first female figure in Lewis' suggested fiction that shows humanity in her social encounters. The analysis of her interpersonal behaviour and encounters in this chapter permits to observe the evolution of the woman figure throughout Lewis'

production, as April shares many personality traits with later female characters like Hester in *SC*.⁸

Ultimately, chapter six focuses on the extremely personal Lewisian novel *SC*. Here, we explore the distorted social attitude and interactions of René with his wife Hester and other characters in the book, like his siblings and in-laws, his British colleague Rotter, and other Canadian personages such as Affie, Mrs. Plant, Mr. Owen, Furber, Jim, Ian and Laura McKenzie. Accordingly, we analyse the many different types of strategies used by its protagonist René in order not to compromise to his mother, relatives and wife, something that leads him to disintegrate many relationships in puzzling ways.

Moreover, we explore the radical revaluation of society's patterns of conduct and relationships in both intimate and large settings carried out by René in the novel. As a consequence, we illuminate a large number of implications based on René's view of the world and human encounters, as they affect not only his own sense of self and quality of life, but also those of other characters with whom he socialises like his wife Hester. The most interesting aspect about this analysis of *SC*, however, is the autobiographical character of the novel, as it permits to examine the development of Lewis' view of the world and social functioning over time. As a result, we try to

⁸ The character of April shares many characteristics with that of Margot in *RL*. Both characters are based on Lewis' wife Gledys, for her devotion to Lewis during his illness. Perhaps, Margot is even a more sympathetic character than April, and is portrayed with extraordinary insight and compassion.

show that this evolution is very revealing not only of his genius, but above all, of his extremely perceptive social discernment.

In our view, the large amount of appalling social troubles reflected by Lewis in his fiction through extreme aesthetic methods constitutes an intellectual answer stemming from his imperative desire to throw into prominence a large and wide-ranging variety of social and psychological implications, which we try to analyse, describe and illuminate here so that his audience question his criticism. In this way, it is our intention to clarify and justify Lewis' attempt to formally illustrate the exceedingly progressive, individualistic and secure motivations that conditioned the attitude and resource exchanges of his modern society turning out their interpersonal relationships to be violent in form, and amoral and inhuman in significance.

Within this context, Lewis' male intellectuals Tarr and René are conditioned by these modernist principles as well. These two characters do not wish to re-adjust themselves to life; they rather adjust life to their intellectual thoughts. Thus they only contribute to ruining their existence, and that of other characters with whom they socialise. These Lewis' male intellectuals are very elitist, cynical and egotistic figures. In our view, Tarr and René can be taken as illustrations of Lewis' early and late creative stance and idiosyncrasy respectively, two characters that merely cause many other creatures, especially, the female ones with whom they associate, to suffer the effects of their unemotional nature. This is why most of the

resource seeking related events they establish with them and other characters involved can be defined as peculiarly Lewisian.

In our view, Lewis utilises radical satirical techniques in his fiction in order to show the degree in which both the Liberal Capitalist Establishment and society are at fault in allowing all the aforesaid malfunctioning to occur in the modern Western world. Throughout his fiction, Lewis self-reflects about the indirect ways in which the Western state, its institutions and the new and *magical* doctrines and constructions supported by them, did not increase the liberty, welfare, happiness and life satisfaction of its male and female citizenship; they only exerted a large number of restrictions and practical manipulations on them in indirect ways. As a result, Western citizenship suffered the *alienating* effects of all these new systems in themselves, locking them out within its iron gates further and further. These are the reasons why all Lewis' characters have low quality of life, suffer enormously and are unable to function as normal citizens in their everyday dealings.

Personally, we think that Lewis was aware that as society became more modern and complex, there was less and less time to exchange. Thus universalistic resources such as money turned out to be exchanged quickly, whereas transactions of particularistic resources that required more time, like love decreased, social exchanges becoming increasingly universalistic in nature and power relations predominant. In his critical production, Lewis puts the blame for these numerous social changes in the modern Western

world on the misuse of scientific progress and technology on the part of its thinkers. Here, he criticises their involvement in politics as well as the gaining importance of the economies of mass production and mass consumption. In this regard, we consider that Lewis was conscious of the ways in which these circumstances were giving origin to economic determinism, and indirectly, influenced the values and practices of people. As a result, the trends of behaviour characteristic of the market institution began to affect the attitude of civilians both in particularistic settings and in non-particularistic ones to a very large extent, turning out the outcome of their social interactions to be very heartless in form and nature. Since the stock market, the heart of the capitalist process is traditionally understood in individualistic terms the behaviour of the market is essentially reducible to the rational decision-making processes of each participant. This is why Lewis' novels satirically illustrate how each character operates to maximise gains and minimise losses, and the sum of total transactions constitutes the market outcome.

Lewis appears to have felt that all these distorted facts needed to be shaped in similarly screwy forms in his art. In this sense, the abstract, mechanical, satirical and naturalistic forms of these four novels respectively, shape the peculiar behaviour changes and relationships that emerged in this time, something that explains, for example, the distorted attitude of a few intellectuals like Tarr, Snooty and René, who state their indifference to life and social constructions, but suffer numerous emotional contradictions in

themselves; the frequent presence of cunning urban types like Humph and Vincent, whose patterns of conduct and interactions are determined by practical motives exclusively; or a large number of unhappy characters, like Bertha, Kreisler, Maddie and Hester, who are devoid of money and goods, and suffer the effects of other people's actions in themselves as well. All these characters are ignorant of the fact that they themselves support forces that control their lives at a superior level in their everyday transactions. These characters consider them magical because they promise life betterment. However, they indirectly prevent them from attaining their also needed particularistic demands. As a result, both their social or private life is very much impaired.

According to the social scientist Blau (1964: 15), social associations carried out in particularistic settings are "intrinsically rewarding." Thus friends, lovers or family members associate because they make one another feel better in this way. The "sociability at a party or among neighbours or in a work group involves experiences that are [...] intrinsically gratifying." In Lewis' fiction, characters do not associate for intrinsic reasons; they prefer to secure alternative sources of supply (accumulating any commodity or commodities) so as to avoid being dependent on any one source for provision of resources. This is the reason why concrete resources accumulation is far more important for them than obtaining an adequate quantity of the six resource categories. As a result, their trends of behaviour are awkward in form and their interrelationships calculating in nature.

Generally speaking, Lewis' characters rather exchange resources that are *extrinsically* rewarding. Some implications of this fact are: particularistic resources such as love, status and services are hardly given by them, even though all of them have extreme need of them; exchanges of universalistic resources are very much prevalent; all these characters appear to be obsessed with time and with putting a price on it; they often try to gain commodities such as goods, money, status and information by using illicit patterns of conduct; power relations are predominant, and social relationships are seen in terms of profit and loss.⁹

All things considered, Lewis' critical and creative production shows his enormous conscious awareness of the historical and sociological context he inhabited as well as of the problems that existed in it. Lewis shows to be alert of the pressing necessity to force his fellow men into thinking differently so that all of them find a rapid and effective solution to their troubles. To carry out this task, Lewis adopts two different aesthetic stances (the Vorticist and 'the Enemy') creating for him a flamboyant persona *detached* from society's corrupting affairs. As Edwards (2000: 5) says, Lewis "aspires to a condition of absolute freedom to justify the world aesthetically." As a Modernist, he aspires to create a

⁹ This fact explains why we often see a character doing services for another in good terms in a work setting in order to gain money. However, when these services are requested by friends, relatives and loving partners to other characters, the latter do not want to do them just for the sake of it or to attain intrinsic reward. Contrarily, they view these requested services as a nuisance, only because they grant no material benefit.

new form of consciousness appropriate to a world reshaped by technology and science; indeed, it aspired to participate directly in that reshaping.

Therefore, the troublesome social functioning Lewis exposes throughout the suggested fiction needs to be taken as his own particular aesthetic contribution to make contemporary society realise the dehumanising type of sociological and psychological consequences they would give origin to if they continued accepting the aforesaid progressive principles passively rather than the new consciousness recommended by thinkers like him in his critical works.

With this study, we try to locate areas of shortage in need satisfaction in each of his works, and thus identify social problems arising out of these unfulfilled needs. We try to draw attention to the fact that acquisition of particularistic resources (status, love and services) on the part of most Lewisian characters falls below a minimum level,¹⁰ and the resources provided instead that are close in Foa's circular order (information, money and goods) do not appear to compensate for the others. As a consequence, the ability of most of his characters to function effectively as normal citizens is very much impaired throughout his fiction.

¹⁰ Kenner (1954: 534) defends this idea with various modifications. As the critic puts it, Lewis is a true satirist [...] scourging the vices and follies of an age of reason. [...] There is no hope of reviving the liberal world of stability and variety and private rights [...] Enlightened self-interest, the slogan of nineteenth-century liberalism, leaves love and faith out of its calculations. **Love lacking**, the inner life of Lewis' characters is dry and sardonic; faith lacking, the civil social order, which Lewis describes with such a ruthless precision dissolves into its constituent atoms. (my emphasis)

In this conceptual context, *attraction* is construed as assessing an individual to be a potentially successful partner for exchange. As many Lewisian characters have the aforesaid inabilities, they suffer from problems of mutual adjustment or social adequacy. As institutions do not appear to be very competent to sort these problems out either, many of these characters are deficient in these basic resources. For these reasons, they endure frequent social and psychological disorders such as frustration, anxiety or aggression. In this regard, we consider that Foa's framework is very helpful, since it permits to make several predictions regarding the causes and effects of their deficits.

In order to assess this fictional society, we study the extent to which needs for certain resources exist in both particularistic and non-particularistic contexts. In this way, we demonstrate the close relationship that exists between the need state of various segments of Lewis' fictional population in certain settings, their deficient well being, happiness and quality of life, and the numerous social and psychological disorders they suffer.

For the most part, Lewis' novels reproduce how economic resources represent important referential points for its inhabitants, as they motivate them to initiate social relations and, at times, appear to be the only thing that provides them satisfaction. In this sense, we believe that these four deformed social portraits are evidence for the harmful effects of such materialistic values on the view these characters have of themselves, their

fellow men and life in general. It is our task then, both to describe their resource needs and the motives that induce their inadequate social and psychological performances in all settings. As a corollary, we hope to clarify that Lewis' creative worlds merely attempt to force his Western audience to reconsider the enormous *lack of integration* between the emotional, and the social and economic aspects of their resource-seeking behaviour in order to safeguard humanity.

In this connection, Foa suggests that it is only by integrating these three types of aspects that we can find better forms of social organisation that compensate for the negative socio-economic factors that characterise life in urban environments. In our view, the words of the sociologist illuminate the critical social intentions of Lewis in his fiction. According to Foa (1974: 327), "the result of the combined effect of institutional specialisation and urban concentration" in the city explains the appearance of the following phenomena:

Modern society may well have reached a point where the amount available of the most particularistic resource, love, is below what is required for the normal functioning of an individual as a member of society. **Love [...] shortages will occur frequently in many individuals. Some readily observable symptoms reinforce this suspicion. Modern society is widely accused of being materialistic, dehumanising, leading to a mad race for more goods and to a feeling of emptiness and inner dissatisfaction.**
(my emphasis)

We believe that these reflections are very revealing of Lewis' mind, pattern of thinking and reevaluating intentions in his critical and creative production.

A protest individual like Lewis appears to have considered that the solution to the large number of problems he witnessed to in large Western urban areas consisted of advocating drastic changes. His two personal and creative stances, clearly based on an antagonistic sense of aesthetics,¹¹ help him *offer relevant insights* into societal problems along aesthetic rather than moral lines.

Nonetheless, his peculiarly dissident feeling of having found an answer to the ills that beset society turns out to be reflected in his critical and creative production eventually. As a result, he makes it far too aggressive and bleak, and neither the settings that he offers in it for satisfying society's particularistic needs, nor the values he contributes to perfect its negative social indicators (as he himself does not even admit to be emotionally sterile) are very numerous. For these reasons, Edwards (2000: 5) considers that his "whole approach to cultural renewal" only "led to atavistic fatalism and a repetition of mass laughter" and to the current negative image many critics have of him and his work. In this regard, we think we Lewis can be accused of how much of a representative of his own era he was.

In sum, Lewis offers *very few* values in order to solve modern social problems. Like Beckett in his early creative works, the mature Lewis seems to have felt that there was nothing he could do, or change in a society like his own, because this did not consider art in their life schemes. For these

¹¹ For further reference on this *antagonistic* stance, see Trilling (1950).

reasons, he shows his opposition to all the aforesaid negative aspects of civilian life not by using linguistic or moralizing terms, but by *depicting* them in action in his experimental art so that his audience *perceives* them as disapprovingly as he does. In this regard, the large number of social plights he *recreates* in tragicomic and nihilistic terms in his former and mature fiction, respectively are endowed with such a significant and *regenerative* force that Lewis may not supply matter-of-fact solutions, but he opens new trends of experimental writing and thinking for later Post-modern writers and thinkers.¹² As a result, we think that the highly unpleasant aspects of human behaviour and relationships that characterise his creative worlds, which are unfairly neglected as biased recently, merely constitute provocative intellectual forms to compel society into thinking differently. This is why his peculiar cultural views, atypical fiction and personal stances still fascinate us, the contemporary readers, about Lewis.

¹² In support of this idea, see Edwards (1993: 479), who also considers that Lewis' principles are still present in the Post-modernist era.

3. Ficción Abstracta: *Tarr*

Tarr (1918) narra las aventuras espirituales de un artista inglés de nombre similar en los círculos intelectuales vanguardistas de París. En este lugar Tarr establece contactos sociales principalmente con tres personajes: Otto Kreisler, Anastasya Vasek, and Bertha Lunken. Todos ellos interactúan en esta gran área metropolitana cuyo sistema económico de producción y consumo en masa dota de muchas ventajas económicas a su población elevada, aunque también parece haber causado que valores antiguos como la fe, el amor, el honor o la bondad hayan caído en desuso mientras que el dinero, la suerte y el poder se han convertido el algo sacrosanto. En consecuencia, muchas tradiciones mantenidas desde hace tiempo han sido demolidas dando origen a nuevas formas de ver las relaciones sociales que han reemplazado a otras antiguas.

Estas circunstancias contradictorias de la vida en la ciudad así como la devaluación de los principios morales que acabamos de mencionar influyen en la vida y el bienestar de sus habitantes de forma muy perturbadora. Sus conductas y transacciones de recursos resultan extrañas en apariencia y desenlace frecuentemente. Por tanto, parece ser que esta curiosa forma artística de recrear la experiencia social por parte de Lewis tiene como principal objetivo romper las expectativas tradicionales de sus lectores, forzándoles así a reconsiderar su situación actual de una nueva

forma. *T* no es un trabajo realista sino un libro poco convencional de cualidades abstractas, poblado de personajes atípicos. La mayor parte de sus habitantes sufren varias clases de dilemas. Por ejemplo, todos ellos requieren recursos simbólicos como el amor y el status, aunque demuestran estar mucho más preocupados de asegurar su aprovisionamiento de recursos sociales y económicos. Como resultado, todos ellos tienen sus necesidades particulares escasamente insatisfechas.

Todos estos individuos necesitan obtener un equilibrio de recursos materiales, psicológicos y emocionales con el fin de funcionar como ciudadanos normales y disfrutar así de una grata calidad de vida. Sin embargo, excepto Anastasya, todos ellos poseen recursos particulares por debajo del nivel mínimo, carencias que les originan tremendos desequilibrios. Es por ello que son infelices y experimentan gran sufrimiento a lo largo de la obra.

Creemos que Lewis refleja una visión del mundo y de las interrelaciones notablemente extrema en aspecto y deformada en significado para llamar la atención de sus lectores sobre la necesidad de buscar formas mejores de organización social que ofrezcan una provisión más equilibrada de recursos a *todos* sus miembros. Para clarificar estos asuntos y sus implicaciones críticas pretendemos concentrarnos en los códigos de práctica que gobiernan las transacciones de recursos más relevantes entre Tarr y Bertha, Bertha y Kreisler, Bertha, Anastasya y Kreisler, y finalmente, Tarr y Anastasya, llamando la atención de paso sobre la función que Tarr

desempeña en los encuentros sociales establecidos por Bertha y Kreisler. Esta descripción permite observar su mal funcionamiento y desenlace; asimismo facilita la identificación de los intercambios de recursos que responden no tanto a principios sociológicos y psicológicos como a la propia visión del mundo y del arte de Lewis. En este sentido, tratamos de examinar la actitud interpersonal y las transacciones de recursos protagonizados por Tarr ya que su gran mayoría están motivadas meramente por principios estéticos. Por ello, están definidas como Lewisianas aquí.

Lewis representa un cierto número de cambios morales que la civilización occidental sufrió en este tiempo mostrándonos las formas tan desagradables en que sus habitantes asimilaban los valores que las nuevas condiciones mecánicas promulgaban en sus vidas. Estos principios empezaban a motivar sus conductas e interacciones afectándoles de modos muy deshumanizadores. Los principios de los mercados en expansión y sus ideales de producción en masa reemplazaron la visión romántica del individuo y la vida. Por tanto, el amor y la bondad nunca aparecen en *T*, mientras que los valores prácticos son muy preponderantes a lo largo de la obra. Por consiguiente, los personajes de Lewis aplican los últimos tipos de ideales a todos los aspectos de sus vidas. Es por ello que siempre se comportan guiados por la evidencia objetiva y una racionalidad utilitaria. También se excitan fácilmente ante el progreso científico y sus frutos.

En resumen, Lewis crea una obra modernista *nueva* que deja de lado lecturas varias de las descripciones de sus personajes y contextos, y enfoca

los hechos irreductibles. *T* no es una novela tradicional, sino una obra de ficción innovadora y poco naturalista. En consecuencia, nuestro estudio de la forma y el significado tan deformado de la experiencia social en ella reflejada muestra los efectos enormemente perniciosos que las nuevas doctrinas y valores promovidos por el *Establishment* tuvieron en el mundo occidental moderno y en su conciencia en esta época temprana.

Tarr es un artista pero no ideal, sino un mero recipiente de todos los principios contradictorios que gobiernan el mundo moderno de Occidente en esta época. El final de *T* es claramente satírico con él porque a lo largo de la obra no ejerce control o poder sobre su propio deseo, y finge haber obtenido un logro y una liberación que claramente no ha conseguido. Los ardides de Tarr constituyen así un artificio mediante los cuales evita enfrentarse a su pasividad fundamental y a su falta de iniciativa. Es por ello que sus necesidades de recursos y ambiciones nunca están satisfechas en buenos términos.

Al contrario que Tarr que es dominado por ideas estéticas, indiferente a la vida, a la gente, y trata de compartimentar todas las facetas de su vida para alcanzar sus objetivos, Parker (1980: 213) considera que “Kreiser sigue su pasión y lucha por integrar las facetas de su vida pero sin mucho éxito.” Como bien dice Foshay (1992: 57-8), las ambiciones de Kreiser están meramente derivadas de lo sensual, y su principal objetivo es la supervivencia física en un entorno severo. Kreiser hace uso del humor—un medio de evitar la realidad—y lleva a cabo acciones y encuentros

sociales ignominiosos. De esta forma, desautoriza los valores, convenciones y construcciones sociales. El predicamento de Kreisler tiene sus semillas en el hecho de que se encuentra amarrado al tiempo y, por tanto, a sus construcciones históricas y sociales. Este personaje se da cuenta de la alienación total de cada individuo de los demás, así como de la futilidad del ser como pura conciencia, es decir, separado del mundo externo y de la acción. De ahí, la extrañeza de su comportamiento interpersonal y el sentido de fatalidad, apatía, hedonismo y nihilismo que determinan sus relaciones a lo largo del tiempo.

Tanto Tarr como Kreisler utilizan a las protagonistas femeninas de la obra como chivos expiatorios para hacer frente a su incapacidad para sobrellevar sus carencias financieras o sexuales. Kreisler actúa desde el supuesto de que todas las mujeres son más pasivas e indefensas incluso que él mismo. Lejos de ser susceptible a su masculinidad intimidante, Anastasya le demuestra su autonomía económica y sexual al alquilar los servicios de Soltyk para que éste venda algunas de sus joyas. Bertha, sin embargo, es más susceptible, una típica bohemia burguesa que adopta un gusto por el arte con el fin de conseguir un marido. No obstante, las dos mujeres demuestran una consistencia ausente en las elaboradas auto-justificaciones de Tarr and Kreisler, cuyas respectivas maniobras acaban con el bienestar de la desafortunada Berta. En este sentido, creemos que Lewis hace que Tarr, Bertha, Anastasya y Kreisler reflejen la deshumanización y demencia que

caracteriza a la civilización occidental en esta época a través de su comportamiento interpersonal y relaciones.

Todos estos personajes siguen códigos de práctica poco típicos en varios entornos, incluidos los íntimos. Creemos que esto ocurre porque no se identifican ni con los valores y convenciones modernos, ni con los tradicionales. En este sentido, sus conductas son moralmente despreciables y los motivos que determinan sus relaciones sociales vergonzosos en muchas ocasiones. En realidad, estos recursos literarios representan, en primer lugar, una técnica no lingüística que refleja el enorme grado en que estos personajes han asimilado las nuevas condiciones mecánicas en sus quehaceres diarios. En segundo lugar, una técnica satírica que el autor utiliza para criticar los efectos perniciosos que tan desesperanzadora verdad ha tenido sobre ellos.

Las circunstancias del ámbito urbano en el que estos personajes se socializan facilitan la aparición de fenómenos sociales muy negativos. Por ejemplo, el hecho de que su ciudadanía tiene enorme dificultad en corresponder o consolarse. Además, estos individuos son incapaces de conseguir con frecuencia sus necesidades psicológicas, emocionales y sociales en circunstancias naturales, lo que hace que algunos de ellos como Bertha y Kreisler las busquen en contextos inadecuados. De ahí, la aparición de desórdenes sociológicos y psicológicos desagradables en sus vidas tales como la ansiedad, el deseo de poder, la frustración y la agresión, ... etc.

Por tanto, el bienestar, la felicidad y calidad de vida de todos estos personajes se ven afectadas de un modo u otro porque son víctimas de las manipulaciones y contradicciones invisibles del Capitalismo Liberal; un sistema de gobierno que contribuye a su enajenación porque defiende valores como la equidad, la justicia, la tolerancia, el altruismo, el individualismo y el lucro, mientras que todos estos estándares se contradicen los unos a los otros.

Lewis lleva los principios de todos estos personajes hasta sus últimas conclusiones con el fin de reflejar y poner en cuestión el grado en que las formas y el significado de las relaciones humanas en contextos íntimos en este período empezaban a parecerse a las transacciones comerciales. En consecuencia, las recompensas intrínsecas parecen no tener mucho valor para estos individuos, sus intercambios de recursos interpersonales decrecen en frecuencia, cantidad y calidad, y sus encuentros sociales se hacen más distantes y agresivos a medida que la historia se desarrolla.

T puede no proporcionar una crítica directa que pueda servir para transformar las formas de organización social en ella reflejadas pero es que, como dice Schenker (1992: 41), Lewis no desea “conducir a la novela a un punto, sino reabrir todos sus conflictos originales.” El valor de su trabajo no reside en el tema tratado en la obra sino en el *efecto* que ésta tiene en su entorno. Por tanto, creemos que es en la descripción de los aspectos emocionales, sociales y económicos del comportamiento utilizado por Tarr, Bertha, Kreisler y Anastasya para la obtención de sus recursos donde debe

residir el interés por la obra ya que son estos, en definitiva, los que proporcionan un punto de partida para una mejor comprensión de sus extrañas motivaciones y de los mecanismos que controlan sus relaciones interpersonales. En su manifiesto Vorticista Lewis defiende la idea de que el crecimiento económico es positivo y crucial. En *T*, el artista muestra que este incremento se ha producido en detrimento de la posición del arte en la sociedad moderna occidental y en el estándar de vida de todos sus ciudadanos.

En nuestra opinión, Lewis siente la necesidad de expresar en su arte la necesidad de buscar mejores formas de organización social que ofrecieran un mayor equilibrio de recursos para la civilización occidental; los códigos de conducta tragicómicos—parecidos en forma y significado a las nuevas condiciones modernas—que gobiernan las conductas e interacciones sociales deformadas de Kreisler son los medios de *redención* propuestos por Lewis para superar todas estas sombrías condiciones humanas. Su comportamiento y encuentros sociales agresivos sacan a la luz las formas que las nuevas fuerzas de dominación, subrepticamente y bajo la promesa de una mejora de la vida, surgieron únicamente para empeorar el grado de confort del mundo occidental moderno. De este modo, Kreisler *presenta* las causas de la agonía moderna, y los fenómenos sociales y psicológicos negativos que se derivan de ellas, es decir, el egoísmo, solipsismo y nihilismo de la tradición occidental, así como la imposibilidad de trascenderlos.

Lewis recrea el *juego* de la contradicción y absurdidad inherente de la condición humana pero no está dispuesto a reflejarlo con formas tradicionales y positivas. Su perspectiva satírica e impersonal constituye una estrategia de *auto-reflexión* acerca de las raíces personales y espirituales de la crisis moderna; en otras palabras, un medio de *revelar* y *rechazar* las excentricidades humanas más allá de las fronteras protectoras del Humanismo. De este modo, *T* transmite una imagen ficticia de la sociedad moderna de occidente que es tan cruda, violenta y absurda como la propia realidad que Lewis observa a su alrededor, evitando así cualquier dogmatismo posible. Por consiguiente, Lewis crea un *nuevo* mundo imaginario quitando autoridad a *antiguas* formas de vida y relaciones. En este sentido, su cambio de enfoque (de lo estético a lo social) en los libros que escribió tras la Primera Guerra Mundial muestran su enorme conciencia de la historia y de la ética.

3. Abstract Fiction: *Tarr*

Tarr (1918) narrates the spiritual adventures of an English artist of this name in the bourgeois Bohemian intellectual circles of *avant-garde* Paris.¹ Here Tarr socialises with three further characters: Otto Kreisler, Anastasya Vasek, and Bertha Lunken.² All of them interact³ in Paris,

A wonderful large polite institution [...] [where] genius, had [a] big place, but *money* had at last come into its own, and climbed up into the spiritual sphere. [...] The old romantic personal values [...] were all deeply modified: money, luck and non-personal power, were the genius of

¹ In this early novel, which closely mirrors the pre-war experiences of Lewis in Paris, the writer projects himself into the figure of Tarr, and makes him his mouthpiece in many occasions.

² Naturally, there are further characters in *T.* However, as their interpersonal behaviour and relationships are less relevant for the purposes of this study they are only referred to *passim* in this chapter.

³ As Kenner (1954: 48) posits,

These characters [...] never interact. Some of them have dealings with each other yet never undergo mutual modification. They may alter direction after contact with one another, but they are not modified. They remain the same sensitive but inviolable robots. Nor do they really talk to each other.

Despite the fact that these four characters may appear dummies at times, we do believe that they interact in the novel. Our analysis of their interpersonal behaviour and relationships in terms of resource transactions describes the forms in which they trade the six resource classes supported by Foa at one time or another. It is true that there is no equity in many of their exchanges or, in other words, their social encounters are not always mutual. Nonetheless, there are many occasions, for example, when Tarr and Bertha or Tarr and Anastasya exchange love (only in the form of sexual pleasures) that they reciprocate each other. Following Simmel (1908), Weber (1922, quoted in Giddens, 1971: 252-59) argues about this issue. We think that his arguments support our idea more consistently.

Existe una <<relación>> social dondequiera que hay *reciprocidad* por parte de dos a más individuos, cada uno de los cuales refiere su acción a actos (o actos previstos) de otro. Sin embargo, (no tiene que ser mutua) [...] en muchos casos, como en una relación de <<amor>> según el adagio *il y a un qui aime et un qui se laisse aimer*, las actitudes que tiene una parte no son totalmente las mismas que las de la otra. Con todo, en tales relaciones, si continúan durante un tiempo, hay sentidos mutuamente complementarios que determinan para cada individuo lo que se <<espera>> de él. [...] Muchas de las relaciones que integran la vida social tienen un carácter transitorio, y están constantemente en proceso de formación y disolución. Esto no quiere decir, naturalmente, que la existencia de relaciones sociales presuponga la cooperación entre los individuos involucrados, el *conflicto* es una característica incluso de las relaciones más permanentes. (my emphasis)

the new world. (85)

This large metropolitan area, whose economy is one of mass production and mass consumption, provides many financial advantages to its high-density population. However, it also seems to have caused past values such as faith, love, honour and goodness decay, while money, luck and power have become sacrosanct. Consequently, this shattering of certain longstanding traditions, beliefs and modes of living has given origin to new views of social relations that have replaced old ones.⁴

These contradictory circumstances around life in this urban environment, and the devaluation of moral principles just mentioned influence the lives and welfare of its fictional inhabitants in very disturbing ways, as their interpersonal behaviour and resource transactions often result awkward in form and peculiarly slanted in meaning. This curiously aesthetic form of reflecting social experience aims to break the traditional expectations of his readers, and thus, force them reconsider their real situation in a new light. *T* is not a realistic work of art, but a book of unconventional and abstract qualities populated by very atypical characters

⁴ The psychologist Gergen (2000: 6) expresses some of the social changes that take place in the modernist era as follows:

Largely from the nineteenth century, we have inherited a *romanticist* view of the self, one that attributes to each person characteristics of personal depth: passion, soul, creativity, and moral fibre. This vocabulary is essential to the formation of deeply committed relations, dedicated friendships, and life purposes. But since the rise of the *modernist* world-view beginning in the early twentieth century, the romantic vocabulary has been threatened. For modernists the chief characteristic of the self resides not in the domain of depth, but rather in our ability to reason—in our beliefs, opinions, and conscious intentions. In the modernist idiom, normal persons are predictable, honest, and sincere. Modernists believe in educational systems, a stable family life, moral training, and rational choice of marriage partners.

We think that Lewis' *T* undermines the *romanticist* view of the self, and some of the assumptions of

as well. Here most people suffer from various types of dilemmas. For example, all of them require symbolic types of resources such as love and status, yet they show to be more concerned with securing social and economic commodities. As a result, they leave their particularistic needs largely unsatisfied. These individuals need to obtain equilibrium of material, psychological and emotional resources in order to function as normal citizens and enjoy a satisfactory quality of life. However, all of them, except for Anastasya, have their provision of particularistic resources below a minimum level. As a result, these shortages cause them great imbalance. This is why they are unhappy and experience much suffering throughout the story. In this regard, we think that Lewis depicts a view of the world and of interrelationships that are noticeably extreme in form and twisted in significance in order to draw his readers' attention to the need to search for better forms of social organisation that offer a more balanced supply of all types of resources for all its members.

In order to clarify all these issues and their critical implications, we intend to focus on the rules of practice that govern most relevant resource transactions of Tarr and Bertha, Bertha and Kreisler, Bertha, Anastasya and Kreisler, and finally, Tarr and Anastasya, calling attention, *passim*, to the function played by Tarr in the social encounters established by Bertha and Kreisler. This description permits to observe their malfunctioning and outcomes, as well as to signal the types of resource transactions that answer

the modernist idiom like a stable family life, a view which Lewis appears to see in danger.

not to sociological and psychological principles, but to Lewis' view of the world. In this regard, we examine the interpersonal attitude and most resource transactions of Tarr, which are merely motivated by aesthetic principles, and are defined as Lewisian here.

As we said, Tarr sets up love relationships with two females: Bertha and Anastasya. His trends of behaviour and particularistic resource exchanges with them are not stimulated by *intrinsic* reward and satisfaction; he merely wishes to freely "role-play" with them. As Edwards (2000: 33) suggests,

The artist's role was to create works of art that suggested an imaginative *reevaluation of life* that [...] might materially affect people's lives: [...] the liberal-democratic and capitalist society of the early part of the century was not one that Lewis identified with, and he shared the Avant-garde assumption that the artist should in some way dissociate himself from it, if only the better to see it whole. [...] [Since he wanted] to live the authentic, non-bourgeois life, Lewis became *free to role-play*, instead. (my emphasis)

Thus the actions and interactions of Tarr do not meet Foa's expectations because they are very much influenced by Lewis' idiosyncrasy. The artist takes his Nietzschean aesthetic values to extreme situations *reflecting* a strange view of human experience. In this way, Lewis contemplates his own artistic process in action, and gains purity of thought.

In other occasions, the rest of characters also behave in distorted ways, something that occurs in all manner of settings. Thus Lewis represents the various moral changes suffered by Western civilization in his

time by showing the despicable manners in which Western civilization assimilated the values supported by the new Machine conditions to their lives. As a result, the principles that motivated their conduct and interactions with their own species turned out to be affected in very inhuman ways.⁵ Naturally, these principles are the values of expansionist markets, whose mass production ideals replaced the romantic view of the individual. Thus love and goodness never appear in *T*, while practical views are preponderant throughout it. As a result, Lewis' fictional population apply the last types of ideals to all life issues. This is why they are always driven by objective evidence and rational utility, and become easily excited with scientific progress and its fruits.

All in all, Lewis creates in *T* a *new* modernist literary work that casts aside richly layered descriptions of its characters and settings, and brings into intense focus the obdurate "facts of the matter". *T* is not a traditional literary novel, but an innovative and anti-naturalistic book of fiction. Consequently, our study of the distorted form and significance of the social experience reflected in it through anarchic aesthetic devices and images, shows the pernicious effects that the aforesaid new doctrines and values

⁵ Throughout his critical production, Lewis conveys that the New Machine conditions unavoidably deteriorate life for the modern Englishman, since they turn out him to be an undifferentiated self among a mass of ignorant puppets, rather than a rational individual. In Lewis' opinion, this situation emerges because these masses of people are submitted to doctrines like Liberal Capitalism, and technological and scientific advance, which are used for pragmatic or economic purposes, rather than for improving the situation and welfare of the Western man in the modern world. In this sense, Lewis considers that the New Machine conditions are very inhuman, as they only contribute to fragment the self of the modern man and his world little by little, converting him into a utilitarian and egotistic grotesque being swamped of cognition.

promoted by the Establishment had in the modern Western world and its consciousness in this early time.

1. Tarr and Bertha

The following excerpt tries to show the metaphysical desolation of Tarr and Bertha, which appears to us to arise from psychological and societal factors.

They sat for some minutes with a stately discomfort of self-consciousness. It was really only a dreary **boiling anger with themselves and against the contradictions of civilized life**: the hatred that personal diversities engender was fermenting under the camouflage of intricate accommodations and in each other's company they were conscious of this stir. (2; my emphasis)

The inner conflicts and suffering of this couple are caused by their different values and modes of being, and environmental circumstances. As Kenner (1954: 97) rightly says, these characters “incarnate the ideas the polemics are directed against.” Thus this passage reflects the incompatible relationship that exists between the individual and his own self, and that existing between human kind and the modern social world.⁶ It could be said then, that Lewis utilises the motif of a pair of complementary, yet antagonistic characters, which work as Jungian *projections* of the fears and aggressions that come from the outer world, in order to convey his social criticism.⁷

⁶ As Porteus (quoted in Head, 1986: 34) wrote in a 1932 study, ‘It is possible to trace the presence of a conflict between two opposite principles ... The eternal protagonists are what Fichte (I think) first termed the Self and the Not-Self ... It is to their antagonism that Mr. Lewis owes his creative impulse’

⁷ See Jung (1968). These types of characters appear in the works of nineteenth century German

Accordingly, Kreisler is the alter ego of Tarr, and vice-versa, and the same can be said of Bertha and Anastasya. Each character sees in the other what he/she is not, as each one *projects* his/her particular fears and repressed actions in his/her own alter ego. Consequently, being close together, as in the previous passage, their “personal diversities” appear on the surface, this fact making them appreciate their faults and observe the disastrous consequences of their withdrawn performances more clearly.

In our view, the origin of Tarr’s dilemma lies in his being *publicly* known as Bertha’s fiancée, while he wishes to be considered an artist, first and foremost. Naturally, both social roles are not incompatible, yet Tarr thinks contrarily. As Foshay (1992: 53) accurately says, “his defective self will not listen to him because he refuses to accept himself as artistically and sensuously creative.” The main imperative of Tarr is to become an ideal writer. Therefore, Bertha is “an irritating nullity” for him, as her particularistic resource interests (which he views as peculiarly feminine) interfere with his “pretensions to intelligence” (which he views as properly masculine). In Tarr’s opinion, Bertha longs for *commitment* and desires to “lead a very pleasant married life naturally,” while he only desires to have “an intrigue”. As he states,

Romantic writers such as Goethe and Hoffman, where they dramatise this contradictory situation in a creative manner and develop it extensively. Other literary works that influence Lewis are those of the Russian novelist Dostoevsky (*RA*, 156-8), who frequently introduces these pairs (he calls them ‘doubles’) in his work. Therefore, Lewis uses the tradition of the dream motif of Goethe and Hoffman, and also the poor folk of Dostoevsky as forms of concentrating in a single moment the greatest possible diversity of conflicts within the human being. In this sense, we think that these three writers impulse Lewis to depict his pairs in this particular way. For further reference on these ideas, see Currie (1974).

I prefer the artist to be free, and the crowd not to be “artists”- [...] The work of very personal genius [...] has [...] no Time and no Country- all effectual men are always enemies of every time [...] To produce is the sacrifice of genius. [...] The conditions of creation and of life disgust me – the birth of a work of art is as dirty as that of a baby. [...] An artist should be impartial like a god. [...] My passion for art has made me fond of chaos. It’s the artist’s fate almost always to be exiled among the slaves: he gets his sensibility blunted. (238-41)

Tarr does not wish to have Bertha as a *companion*, whom he can exchange all kinds of resources with. He aims at keeping himself pure for art, his main duty in life. Thus the only reason why he trades commodities with her in the love institution is because, as a man, he needs “an empty vessel to flood with his vitality, and not an equal and foreign vitality to coldly exist side by side with.” (328) In other words, Tarr needs Bertha to *purge* himself or to have sexual relations with. Therefore, the principles that determine his exchanges of love with her (yet only in the form of sexual pleasures) are exclusively aesthetic, not physical. Nonetheless, Tarr hates the idea of being *dependent* on her in order to fulfil his sensual demands. As Chapman (1973: 70) notes, here is Tarr “posing and tentatively answering questions about the type of sexual relationships suitable for the artist.”

With most people, who are not artists, all the finer part of their vitality goes into sex if it goes anywhere. [...] The artist [...] first creation is *the Artist* himself. That is a new sort of person; the creative man. [...] One solitary thing is left facing any woman with whom he has commerce, that is his sex, a lonely phallus.’ [...] Its character is *ascetic* rather than *sensuous*, and it is divorced from *immediate life*. [...] All the delicate psychology another man naturally seeks in a woman, the curiosity of form,

windows on other lives, love and passion, I seek in my work and not elsewhere. [...] Why should sex still be active? That is an organic matter that has nothing to do with the general energies of the mind.’ (11-12)

This *aesthetic* principle⁸ of Tarr determines his interpersonal behaviour and resource exchanges with Bertha (and the rest of characters) in such extreme ways throughout the story that it is the main factor that causes his social encounters to be very much skewed in pattern and significance. Tarr believes that, as an ideal artist, he needs to be isolated from society and its social constructions, because these only imperil his artistic gift and will to create.⁹ As a result, he adopts the figure of the romantic artist as a lone outsider against civilisation.

The main objective of his *detached* aesthetic stance is to commit his self to writing completely, and transcend his world, and enjoy an ideal intellectual existence outside temporal and spatial co-ordinates in this way. To carry out this plan, Tarr makes his creative production an aesthetic justification of life,¹⁰ forging himself a unique identity in constant struggle¹¹ with society—Bertha and the rest of bourgeois Bohemian characters—

⁸ Lewis defines this concept as *the male artist principle* throughout his work.

⁹ The conflict between art and life is crucial in this reading. Tarr tells Anastasya: “Life is art’s rival in all particulars” [...] “Deadness is the first condition of art.” (311-312) As Chapman (1973: 80) states, Seeing art as ‘life with all the humbug of living taken out of it,’ Tarr attempts to create this same Classical perfection in his own life; as he looks “indifferently” upon existence his value-judgements are based on an extrapolation of these aesthetic criteria.

For a detailed reference on Tarr’s “indifference” and its implications in the novel, see this critic’s work.

¹⁰ Tarr’s aestheticism has its core in Nietzsche’s *Die Geburt der Tragedie*. Here the notion of art, rather than the morale is the characteristic metaphysical activity of the man. Indeed, it is only as *aesthetic* phenomenon that his existence in the world is justified. (1984: 31)

¹¹ This isolated position of the artist is, however, contrary to that exposed by Nietzsche in *Die frohliche Wissenschaft*. (1882)

which he considers to be vulgar, ignorant, sentimental, calculating and utilitarian.¹² Therefore, this self-conflict of Tarr is aesthetic, but it has psychological and societal origins. Thus his social encounters are conditioned by principles that are not sociological, moral or, even, psychological, only aesthetic.

All things considered, Foa's hypotheses fail to explain completely the motivations that drive Tarr to behave in such distorted ways. However, they are very helpful to comprehend much better some important implications derived from his abnormal interpersonal relationships. For example, the love exchanges Tarr establishes with Bertha consist of mere transactions of sexual pleasures. Since these types of sexual dealings are closer in meaning to services than love in Foa's circular order, it could be said then, that Tarr sees his love exchanges with Bertha as services or errands. Therefore, Tarr *rationalises* commodities like love. In other words, he view intimate exchanges in *materialistic* ways. However, worst of all is that Lewis approves of these principles, only because he aspires to be absolutely independent to create. Lewis (*ABR*, 235) says that "sex, when it means marriage and for a man the responsibility of a family, destroys the "child" at

¹² Tarr sees his own species as being involved in mass practices predominantly, while he is fond of individualistic practices. As he says in the novel,

For chief characteristic this particular bourgeois-bohemian circle had in the first plan the inseparability of its members. Should a man, joining them, wish to flirt with one particularly, he must flirt with all—flatter all. (90)

In this way, Tarr conveys the view that they lack consciousness of their undifferentiated position in society. Accordingly, this liberal bourgeois group has a settled position in society. Their principles of conduct answer to a political economy closely related to the same utilitarian philosophy, which is the only significant model of social theory in Great Britain during most of the XIX century. Thus what Tarr does is to step beyond the bonds of conventional behaviour (collectivism and sentimentality),

once.” For an artist like him, there is no pleasure involved in exchanging love. In this regard, it is not strange that Tarr considers that it “would be preferable that only the pleasure principle should remain in sex”, as “surrender to a woman is a sort of suicide for an artist.” As he continues to argue, “He has two enemies (Nature and women) instead of one.” (215) Consequently, Tarr’s ultimate goal appears to us to be a very laudable end. Nonetheless, we think that the means exploited by him in order to attain it result extremely pathetic.

Therefore, Tarr *uses* Bertha in the novel, treating her as an object with which to fulfil his particularistic resource needs.¹³ He trades intimate commodities with her following rules of practice that usually characterise economic transactions. In this regard, we could conclude that these *manoeuvres* of Tarr only aim to hide that the extinction of his artistic talent has already begun, since his resource transactions with Bertha clearly demonstrate that he actively involves himself in society and its constructions, but not with her.

becoming an outsider beholden to none and responsible only to himself. In other words, with him, normal standards and morals do not apply.

¹³ According to Waller and Hill (In Blau, 1964: 78),

The more an individual is in love with another, the more anxious he or she is likely to please the other. The individual who is less deeply involved in a love relationship, therefore, is in an advantageous position, since the other’s greater concern with continuing the relationship makes him or her dependent and gives the less involved individual power. Waller calls this “the principle of least interest”. This power can be used to exploit the other.

A clear illustration of this principle in Lewis’ novel appears in the love relationship of Tarr and Bertha. Thus the latter is more involved in this than the former, something that is used by Tarr to exert power over Bertha. This fact makes the latter accede to Tarr’s wishes and make special efforts to please him.

Needless to say, Tarr has interests other than *artistic integrity*, that is, “need for achievement”¹⁴ and “need for independence.”¹⁵ These two needs refer to specific social and economic types of resources, like status, information, money and goods. However, Tarr does not wish to be dependent on anyone, not even Bertha for its provision, as he fears that if he does so his artistic gift will become extinct in the process. Consequently, he decides to abandon her little by little by going to London. In this way, he hopes that he will forget her more easily.¹⁶ Following this plan, Tarr intentionally gives up reciprocating her in kind in the future resource transactions he establishes with her. It is not strange then, that this decrease in the frequency, quantity and quality of their social encounters provokes Bertha’s dissatisfaction, and the progressive deterioration of their love relationship, which remains warm only for a brief period of time afterwards.

Contrary to Tarr, Bertha is satisfied with her social role: being “Tarr’s fiancée.” Her predicament comes, therefore, from a different source: her female condition. Bertha has enormous needs, which refer to a specific resource or to a combination of two neighboring resources in Foa’s circular framework. Thus she has enormous “need of approval” which indicates a deficiency in status, “need to be with others”—variously labeled affiliation,¹⁷ gregariousness,¹⁸ or social instinct¹⁹—which includes all the

¹⁴ See Rotter (1954: 132).

¹⁵ Ibid. 132.

¹⁶ Tarr does not leave for London eventually.

¹⁷ See Schachter (1959).

¹⁸ See Cattell (1950), McDougall (1932) and Tolman (1951).

¹⁹ See Young (1936)

resources, which are exchanged in face-to-face contact such as love, status, information and services,²⁰ and extreme “need for dependence”²¹ which implies a tendency to maintain supplies—the six resource classes—from *only* one person, that is, Tarr.

According to Foa, the more particularistic the resource, the less one is likely to be independent in it: for particularistic resources, the giver is relevant and, thus it becomes more difficult to secure alternative sources of supply. In our view, Bertha’s interpersonal attitude meets Foa’s hypothesis, while Tarr’s do not since his social encounters are conditioned by rational values exclusively. As the well-known sociologist Giddens (1994: 197) says, this intellectual aspect of a moral individualism (which, in our opinion, is impersonated in the figure of Tarr) introduces itself in the modern world.

A consequence of such moral individualism is the demand of a rational morality too, whose main aim is to erase all vestiges of religion. Moral norms can only survive if one respects and considers them inviolable within the conditions of their application. However, Tarr demonstrates that he both disrespects them and violates them progressively. In this regard, what Tarr does throughout the book is to pretend that his interpersonal attitude answers to aesthetic principles solely, while the rules of practice that determine his relationships with the rest of characters reflect that they respond to Liberal Capitalist doctrines to a very large extent. While acting in

²⁰ This need represents an expectation to receive some resource, rather than an end in itself.

²¹ See Rotter (1954: 132)

this way, Lewis makes Tarr undermine traditional religious doctrines, conventions, values, bonds and ties.

Contrarily, Bertha's patterns of conduct are largely conditioned by Victorian standards most times. Accordingly, she is a sentimental, affectionate, sensitive, abnegated, modest and submissive female—the very personification of a woman as promoted by bourgeois bohemian myths. Bertha meets much difficulty in attaining her needed resources in natural circumstances, without using Tarr as a channel.

As we have just seen, Tarr does not reciprocate her emotionally, owing to his elitist aesthetic principles.²² To make matters worse, social institutions do not contribute solutions to surmount her obstacles; they induce her to negate her transcendence. Consequently, Bertha clings to a passive role that constantly constrains her freedom. Since she does not rebel against it in the story, she is derided in it all the time.

Thus the *attraction* of Tarr and Bertha would be explained because they consider each other as potential partners for the transaction of resources.²³ Attraction is a predisposition to enter into an exchange with another person and is resource-specific; Tarr and Bertha are imperatively obsessed with various needs pertaining to one or more resources. Accordingly, Bertha is attracted to Tarr because she is a very low self-

²² Concerning this idea, Wagner (1957: 53) rightly comments
Lewis' revision for the second edition shows Lewis' intensifying Tarr's
antagonism to romantic womanhood. [...] Sex (sensation) is the opposite of
art (intellect).

²³ For further reference on *attraction*, see Foa (1976: 264).

esteem subject who believes she has little, if anything, to offer, even though he is less than perfect. Bertha usually defines herself as an appendix to Tarr because she finds it very difficult to engage in self-rewarding activities without using him as a medium. Their attraction is established then, because Tarr possesses some resource Bertha needs, or because she possesses some resource supply needed by Tarr.

These two factors that create attraction explain, for example, why a superior individual with some shortcomings like Tarr is rated as more attractive by Bertha than a more perfect one. This occurs, above all, because his weaknesses offer her the opportunity to do something for him. An individual with high self-esteem such as Tarr believes that he has a lot to give; for him, the prevailing factor in attraction is how much Bertha has to offer him. In contrast, a low self-esteem subject such as Bertha believes that she has little, if anything, to offer even when the Tarr is less than perfect. Thus for her the possibility of an actual exchange becomes remote, and the first factor of attraction prevails again. Consequently, a low-self-esteem subject such as Bertha is likely to rate the apparently perfect, superior Tarr as more attractive because he offers an abundance of needed resources. We think that this is the reason why Bertha experiences stability and security, but also frustration, when she is with Tarr.

With all these considerations in mind, we think that the situation of these two characters is not ideal for attraction. Tarr and Bertha do not have similar particularistic needs, and their demands of concrete resource

categories are not complementary either. This fact would explain why the rules of practice that govern their interpersonal behaviour and exchanges are very unorthodox in form and nature most times. Tarr neither reciprocates in kind, nor consoles Bertha because his values are exceptionally elitist and egotistic. In order to clarify our assumptions, we make the words of the social scientist Blau (1964: 84-5) ours.

Commitments must keep abreast for a love relationship to develop into a lasting mutual attachment. If one lover is considerably more involved than the other, his greater commitment invites exploitation or provokes feelings of entrapment, both of which obliterate love. Whereas rewards experienced in the relationship may lead to its continuation for a while, the weak interest of the less committed or the frustrations of the more committed probably will sooner or later prompt one or the other to terminate it. Only when two lovers' affection for and commitment to one another expand at roughly the same pace do they tend mutually to reinforce their love.

These arguments may explain why Bertha, the more committed and frustrated member of the pair, terminates her relationship with Tarr. External circumstances are not very adequate to compensate her for her particularistic needs either. These manners of commodities require small, stable, and unhurried social situations, yet Bertha interacts with Tarr in Paris, a large urban environment whose characteristics favour economic resource needs and transactions primarily. Consequently, it could be said that environmental circumstances facilitate the fulfilment of her social and economic resources, while ignoring her intimate demands, which remain unfulfilled as well due to the interpersonal behaviour of Tarr. Therefore,

Bertha does not have equilibrium of psychological, emotional and material resources, and these facts impair her quality of life. As a corollary, we think that moral individualistic doctrines and aesthetic values deter Tarr from fulfilling his particularistic needs, while social constructions and religious doctrines prevent Bertha from fulfilling hers.

Thus social attraction is the force that induces Tarr and Bertha to establish social associations on their own initiative and to expand the scope of their associations once they have been formed. However, the specific motives that drive them to do so are very different. While Bertha expects that their association is *intrinsically* rewarding, Tarr expects it to furnish him *extrinsic* benefits such as advice, sexual pleasures, ... etc. Then, processes of social attraction, lead to processes of social exchange. Whether reference is to instrumental services or to such intangibles as personal significance, the benefits Tarr and Bertha supply to each other are rewards that serve as inducements to continue supply benefits, and the integrative bonds created in the process fortify the social relationship. However, as Tarr does not fulfill Bertha's expectations in the way she expects, their relationship worsens increasingly quickly. Accordingly, their social interactions turn out to be more and more distant and aggressive as time passes by.

Hence, Tarr and Bertha have their "personality" blurred, and find themselves driven to "an inhuman confusion." As Currie (1974: 123) posits, they are "indirectly governed by the manipulations ingenuously described as

Democracy”, but they ignore so. In this regard, the social and psychological phenomena suffered by them, which constitute our focus of analysis later in this chapter, reflect that social constructions no longer meet their private demands, and thus, they require new forms of living and new moral patterns to follow. This is why Lewis provides them a few here.

These characters embody the contradictions of modern culture,²⁴ showing both the *will to rebel* and the *will to conform*. They reject the patriarchal structure of society, yet are still submissive and obsequious to others. Since they do not challenge social conventions and constructions, their social encounters only contribute to worsen their physical and psychological state gradually. For this reason, their personality is fragmented, and their moods are volatile and inconsistent continually. As Foshay (1992: 25) correctly argues, these four complementary, yet contradictory characters portray the problem of the internal division of the modern Western man and woman within themselves and within the Western world.

They impersonate a wide-ranging system of contradictory values and modes of being. They are personifications of the polarities both within human nature (mind/body; thought/action) and in society (intellectual/man of action; artist/public; individual/collective).

²⁴ This trait of Lewis’ early fiction is very peculiar of modern art. As Ortega y Gasset (1958: 381) says, “La contradicción es patente [...] tan equívoco es este arte como los grandes hechos de estos años en curso.”

As a result, their continuous duets or conflicting social encounters, which structurally and thematically express the alienating social and psychological consequences derived from this fact, convey the idea of disharmony between man and his own species, and man and the outer world. In this way, Lewis goes out of his way to estrange the plot of *T* from the naturalistic expectations of his readers, showing an innovating literary view of life human functioning. As Schenker (1992: 40) states,

Middle-class Victorian readers wanted the legitimacy of their position in the world affirmed, not brought into question. Liberal democracy, free enterprise, and modern technology promised the greatest good for the greatest number, and authors were expected to join the march of progress by telling stories in which a logical sequence of events led to resolution of conflict and uncertainty. [...] But [...] Lewis wanted to present the hero of *Tarr* as new and unfinished, [...] deprived of conventional narrative significance. [In other words, Lewis wanted to present] a farce.

The performances of these four characters convey the vacuous conventions and constructions supported by Western society and culture in this time. In this regard, the next extract could be taken as an illustration of Lewis' novel literary reflection of this unstable social functioning:

They sat impatiently waiting: *a certain formality had to be observed. Then the business of the day could be proceeded with.* Both were bored in different degrees, with the part *imposed* by the punctilious and *ridiculous god of love.* Bertha, into the bargain, wanted to get on with *her cooking*: she would have cut considerably the reconciliation scene. *All her side of the programme* had been conscientiously observed. (51; my emphasis)

With this description of the interpersonal behaviour of Tarr and Bertha, we

think that Lewis appears to want to show that language, as instrument for exchanging information and love, and as a means to attain certainty of reality results inefficient and deceptive. Contrary to the claims of much Romantic literature, this inherent difficulty in communication (lack of information exchanges) implies the remoteness of persons from one another in space and time. Tarr and Bertha need to interact in order to obtain the aforesaid resources; their patterns of conduct show that they rather differ from each other.²⁵ In fact, they have such great difficulty in establishing interpersonal relationships by complying (through their behaviour patterns) with conventional rules of practice in this love institution that these seem to be no longer valid to re-assert themselves in the Western metropolitan world. With regard to this issue Jameson (1979: 4) says, Lewis' "modernist [...] anti-Victorian vocation [made him] [...] develop a battery of onslaughts on moral taboos and repressive hypocrisies." Thus Tarr starts to experience "genuine horror", as "the fatal consequences" of his attachment "begin to take shape." Influenced by his rational and aesthetic views, he views his resource transactions with Bertha as an unprofitable "business" (43) in peculiarly pragmatic ways.

Concerning *profit* in social exchanges, Resource Theory suggests *new* formulations that involve the nature of cost and specification of the resources it involves.²⁶ Accordingly, in the arithmetic of economic

²⁵ Their interpersonal relationships answer to Esslin's (1968: 66) maxim: '*Nec tecum, nec sine te*'.

²⁶ The notion that some balance should be established between receiving and giving has been formalised in several ways that have generally been influenced by economic thinking. For further

exchanges, costs are a value with a negative sign and must be subtracted from gains. In these exchanges, there is a negative relationship between what remains to self and what is given to other. However, this relationship changes from negative to positive as one moves, in the structure of resources, toward the particularistic ones. This fact implies that in the relationship between self and other, resources have the peculiar property that the more particularistic the resource, the less negative is the cost of giving it.

We assume that Tarr and Bertha are two lovers who like to have sexual relations because each gives a great deal of pleasure to the other. Despite the fact that the latter is more committed to the former than the other way round, there should be no cost because giving pleasure to the other adds to rather than subtracts from one's own enjoyment. As Huston and Cate (In Cook & Wilson, 1979: 263) suggest,

Love is supposed to involve caring, altruism, communion and selflessness, and certainly persons "in love" often feel and act this way. The idea that love is anchored in the exchange of rewards seems crass from such a perspective.

Since Tarr views his exchanges of particularistic resources as involving cost, we could say that things do not evolve in Lewis' creative world in the ways proposed by Foa. Tarr is not rewarded or satisfied *intrinsically*. Far from this, the cost is negative for him. As a result, this character clearly *trades* particularistic resources with Bertha following market rules of

reference on this idea, see Foa (1976: 125).

practice characterised by profit and loss. In this regard, Tarr proves to be the very personification of the Liberal Capitalist spirit he despises.

Tarr considers art so much of an *absolute* principle²⁷ that neither can be given, nor taken for love or any other kind of resource.²⁸ However, as we have just seen, his desire of isolation, and “magisterial feeling of full-blooded indifference” (35) towards Bertha and society is very much influenced by these big business principles, the main reason why his love transactions are very much one-sided in form and significance.

Naturally, Tarr tries to convince himself with arguments based on past traditions and values that Bertha’s love is a malady. In his opinion, she wants to exert *power* over him by using her sex.

What is love? Began reasoning. It is either possession or a possessive madness. [...] To give up another person’s love is a mild suicide. [...] She had captured a living place of him and held it as a hostage. She was rapidly transforming herself, too, into a slavish dependency: [...] the people that love us become part of us, [...] Or love was a malady, Tarr continued [...] Perhaps he had already got it slightly: [...] He evidently was suffering from something that came from Bertha, maybe it was that. (65)

²⁷ Lewis describes this theory in his work *WA*.

²⁸ In Lewis’ opinion, *art* cannot be mixed up in *life*, just as *ideal artists* cannot be mingled with *crowds*. Here is he (*CHM*, 6-7) advising the real artist what he should never do

Everywhere you will find a few people, who, although not a mountain people are not a herd. They may be herdsmen gone mad through contact with the herd, and strayed: or through inadequate energy for our task they may be found there: or they may be a hybrid, or they may even be herdsmen temporarily bored with the mountain. (I have a pipe below myself sometimes.) [...] There are very stringent regulations about the herd keeping off the sides of the mountain. In fact your chief function is to prevent their encroaching. [...] Their instinct always fortunately keeps them in crowds or bands, and their trespassing is soon noticed.

Tarr is an individual whose work is ‘ascetic’ and is ‘divorced from immediate life’. Lewis describes art in *Blast II* as ‘not active’ and refusing ‘the demands and responsibilities of life’. With this distanced commentary on existence, Tarr must behave as a spectator rather than a player. Despite his *manoeuvres*, he fails in this task, as we shall see throughout this chapter.

Yet this new *manoeuvre* only confirms that he tries “to resist assimilation” in order to have continued enjoyment. Then, Tarr acknowledges that Bertha is not of the least importance to him because he can obtain total fulfilment and satisfactory quality of life merely by enjoying the pleasures of the intellect. However, he is, again, refusing to admit the depths of the “obedient attachment” (43) he has awakened in Bertha. In sum, it could be said that his attitude towards Bertha in the love setting is very skewed, and extremely elitist, egotistic and obnoxious in nature because Tarr does not want to accept his professional shortcomings and sensual part of his self. Nonetheless, what really amazes about his social encounters is that their mechanisms respond to Lewis’ idiosyncrasy most times. See Lewis’ piece of advice (*CHM*, 6) to artists (like Tarr):

As to women. Wherever you can, substitute the society of men. = Treat them kindly, for they suffer from the herd, although of it, and have many of the same contempt as yourself. They are a sort of bastard mountain people [...] But women, and the processes for which they exist, are the arch conjuring trick [...] It tends to add to the abominable confusion already existing.

With these words, Lewis shows his extreme obsession with art and the dehumanising conditions necessary for creation. His mouthpiece Tarr discharges himself in life (in Bertha) by satisfying his bodily appetites in order to keep himself pure for art. Thus Bertha is his enemy. Nonetheless, since Tarr cannot do without Bertha either, he uses her and, thus, unleashes his frustration on her. In this regard, Foshay (1992: 51) says that Bertha is the visible sign “of his tendency to associate with superficial bourgeois

substitutes for both art and life.” For Lewis, and thus, for Tarr *artistic integrity* is an absolute, and thus it cannot be sacrificed.²⁹ The fact that this supreme notion causes other people to suffer is only another matter, which does not affect him very deeply.³⁰ We take Parker’s (In Meyers, 1980a: 211-2) words to clarify this issue.

Lewis was not hostile to women but found it necessary to adopt this stance because he was trying to reject the ideology and structure of the English nineteenth-century novel. [...] [For him] there are two planes of being, the higher for art and the lower for life. Lewis advised the would-be artist to create various personae, to diversify the personality deliberately, even to adopt different dress and manners on various occasions. [Accordingly,] Lewis argues against social and individual harmony, against the family and the integration of the personality for the sake of society, values implicit in nineteenth-century novels. [...] Lewis places the emphasis on man the artist, the creator of new patterns of living, he rejects the suffering, developing, self-sacrificing intuitive heroine [...] [such as] Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park* [...] For Lewis, women adhere to dead values: [...] they want consistent mates, not diverse individuals who are constantly in the act of self-creation.³¹

There is no doubt that Lewis is a genius who lives, first and foremost to create and supersede his own self aesthetically. In *T*, he transmits forms of understanding life that are very novel and praiseworthy. Notwithstanding, we believe that the aesthetic stance he builds up for Tarr, which very much

²⁹ For further reference on this idea, see Lewis’ *WA*.

³⁰ As the social scientist Blau (1964: 15) notes: “much of human suffering as well as much of human happiness has its source in the actions of other human beings.”

³¹ We make ours Gergen’s words (2000: 228), when the psychologist comments on characteristic features of the post-modern consciousness. Thus, in Tarr, we see

The demise of personal definition, reason, authority, commitment, trust, the sense of authenticity, sincerity, belief in leadership, depth of feeling, and faith in progress.

Thus Tarr rewrites his identity as the ever-shifting, ever-expanding and incoherent network of relationships invites or permits.

resembles his own, is irresponsible and, at times, preposterous. Tarr exploits his mind, yet its products impair his ability to love. Consequently, he behaves as a cynic, since his aesthetic stance affects the welfare of those characters surrounding him in appalling ways. For these reasons, following Normand (1992: 49-50) we consider that Tarr's motives, like Lewis' are ridiculously irresponsible and, to some extent, a paradoxical form not to acknowledge that

the more Lewis searched out his uniqueness the more completely he voiced the political clarion of liberal capitalist society. In this sense he was much more a part of the 'crowd' than he could ever imagine.

Like Lewis, Tarr tries to escape from *commitment* into *art* because they believe that these two notions invalidate each other. Tarr's need of *absolute independence* causes his behaviour patterns to be *indifferent* as a means to assert his authority over equals and inferiors alike. All the same, we feel that their ego is ironically the extension of the most uniform of bourgeois categories, the individual.

Neither Lewis nor his mouthpiece Tarr transcend their situation in this world, but rather sink into it further and further. This *distorted* view of art, the world and human relations³² imperil both their will to create, and

³² See the works by Lewis' biographers Meyers (1980b) and O'Keeffe (2000). According to the former (1980b: 88-9),

Lewis had no serious relations with women after the Great War. [...] He enjoyed luxurious excursions into upper-class society, needed women's money and affection, and rivalled Augustus John in his sexual conquests. But he was interested in women mainly as a physical necessity, felt a disdain for them, kept them at a distance, did not live with any of them, and never let them interfere with his emotions or his work. [...] Lewis' fiction provides

their will to live as normal citizens.³³ Lewis sees his dedicated human relations with scepticism and hostility because he is a very committed modernist artist. However, his cynical stance demonstrates not only that he is under the influence of numerous traditional, and modern social constructions, which, obviously, no longer fulfil his interests, but also that he needs to actively involve himself in their practices, weakening his principles in the process. As one would expect, all these ideas prove right for Tarr as well, since he demonstrates that, as a man, he is dependent on Bertha to re-assert his personality; as an artist, his artistic talent has already begun to be vulgarised. Subsequently, we could say that Tarr has violated the male artist principle in him.

Lewis does not want to admit that he can *give in* to desire as a man without necessarily destroying the artist in him, even though he does not become an ideal one. Then, Lewis, and thus, Tarr try to adjust reality to their ideas, rather than ideas to reality. As Jameson (1979: 37-8) states,

Such a conception of human relationships explains why for Lewis, who saw his privileged role as the essentially non-social one of artist or pure eye, the most desirable condition of human existence remains that of **solitude**. [...] Lewis himself conceived some ultimate vision of the peace of divine and angelic *indifference*. Under such

some insight into his self-protective attitude toward women and his deep-rooted hostility to children. Both were directly related to his Nietzschean concept of the artist [...], and echoed Sturge Moore's earlier warning about the danger of an artist of being trapped by a woman. [...] Lewis' natural severity instinctively opposed his abnormal addiction to sex. [...] For Lewis, sex and birth emphasized the horrifying dichotomy of mind and body, which was the basis of his theory of satiric comedy [...] Lewis was hostile to women, especially those with intellectual pretensions, except when they were ministering to his wants or satisfying him in bed.

³³ For further reference on this idea, see Spender (1935: 201-16).

circumstances, **all human relations are bound to have something ominous about them.** (bold type is mine)

All things considered, Lewis and Tarr are victims of their own peculiar aesthetic stance and principles. Notwithstanding, the most negative aspect about all this is that this posture causes those individuals close to them to be decoys of their idiosyncratic drives, as such position does nothing to compensate for the deficits that contradictory external circumstances provoke them. Their individualism becomes an unconditional value, which applies to their whole view of life, both for themselves and for their creations. The importance, then, of Lewis as a revolutionary, and of Tarr as its revolutionary creature is that they insist on art as a real value, yet this reality is senseless if love has to be sacrificed. They imperatively defend ways of living motivated by this value exclusively, which is laudable, but idealistic. In doing so, they do not propose life patterns that can be put into practice either in their time or in our new millennium, as this particularistic resource is as necessary to the well-being of an individual as money or goods, no matter this individual is an artist, a lawyer or a bank clerk.

Thus it is the extreme obsession with art of Lewis, and thus Tarr that causes their trends of behaviour to be peculiar in form, their resource transactions with their own species one-sided in significance, and their interpersonal relationships intermittent over time. For all these reasons, we consider that part of the aforesaid aspects of Tarr's conduct and relationships can be characterised as peculiarly Lewisian.

Bertha and Kreisler

As we said, one of the *tactics* used by Tarr to postpone the tragic recognition that his artistic talent is expiring is to abandon Bertha. As a result of this fact, an unpleasant sensation motivated by fear of suffering an imminent resource loss emerges in her. Bertha suffers *anxiety* because she expects to receive particularistic resources, which she is about to lose.³⁴ Bertha expects to be rejected, or to lose love. However, this fact does not mean that she is less anxious about an expected loss of money. As the text reads,

My dear Sorbert [Tarr] I am aware of that. You needn't trouble to go any further. But why are you entering into these calculations, and sums of profit and loss?' 'Because my sentimental finances, if I may employ that term, are in a bad state.' 'Then they only match your worldly ones.' [...] What is *yours* and what is *mine*. My God! I know you to be generous – Leave that then, leave these calculations! All that means *so little* to me. [...] If you've made up your mind to go – do so Sorbert – I release you! You owe me nothing. It was all my fault.' (53-4)

Tarr is aware that loss of love will cause Bertha much anxiety, yet he *intentionally* behaves inflicting her loss of this resource. As a consequence, the effect of loss is strengthened in Bertha, and her anxiety turns out to be, first frustration and, then anger.

On the one hand, a *frustrating* event consists of depriving a person of an expected resource.³⁵ Frustration is the feeling of disappointment

³⁴ For reference on Foa's re-definition of *anxiety* under his framework, see (1974: 366-9).

³⁵ Foa (1974: 220-40) also conceptualizes the *frustration-aggression sequence* as a type of resource exchange.

experienced by a person who has lost resources and has been left with an amount that is below minimum level. Thus perceived loss of resources produces frustration. On the other hand, the notion of *aggression* represents any behaviour, which inflicts loss of some resource on its recipient. Aggression requires the act to be intentional and socially disapproved. Both of these elements introduce deprivation of love into the aggressive act, in addition to the specific resource involved, and thus strengthen the effect of loss, as we have just seen in Bertha. The only difference between frustration and aggression then, is that the former focuses on the perception of loss created in the victim, while the latter dwells on the behaviour inflicting the loss.

The frustration-aggression sequence is a *negative* exchange of resources. As we saw in the previous chapter, the overall frequency of aggression follows Foa's framework. Thus most subjects chose the proximal class over the distal one for retaliation, regardless of the resource employed in frustration. In *T*, Bertha suffers deprivation of love by Tarr. As a result, she needs to restore her former balance, yet she cannot obtain her needed particularistic resources in natural circumstances. As she cannot endure this lack, and finds that there are institutional forms in the environmental setting in which she inhabits where she can obtain them in spite of unfavourable environmental conditions, she attends them. Thus Bertha usually goes to the *affiliation* group or *gregarious* circle of Fraülein Liepmann, where bourgeois Bohemian pseudo-artists and pseudo-friends meet in order to

discuss intellectual issues, that is, exchange information, yet only to attain her needed particularistic resources.

We think that Bertha attends this social institution because this is the only setting where she can display Tarr's opinions under her own name, and obtain enough quantity of her needed commodities: love, status, services and information. As we have seen, Bertha meets much difficulty in gaining these types of resources in a love context. It is not strange then, that she attends this gregarious circle hoping to improve her self-esteem, which is very low, and her quality of life, which is very much impaired due to the obnoxious behaviour of Tarr and external cultural constraints.

Foa suggests that these types of *specialised* institutions in the city, that is, the gregarious one depicted by Lewis in *T*, are created in recognition of the fact that in the environment provided by modern society, particularistic exchanges have decreased, and thus, special training and opportunities are necessary.³⁶ These specialised institutions often reduce various negative aspects of civilian life such as *alienation*, which characters like Bertha suffer, as we have just seen.

In one of these visits to Fraülein Liepmann's, Bertha meets Kreisler. This flamboyant German artist is very much ignored by everyone, except for her, due to his unkempt attire. Here Bertha shows affection (love) to, and esteem (status) for him because she considers that "he is in great difficulties – it's money or something: but all I know for certain is that he [is] really in

need of somebody-.” (174) Thus her patterns of conduct and resource exchanges towards Kreisler are determined by altruism, an old romantic personal value. Naturally, the rules of practice that govern her behaviour towards Kreisler do not meet Foa’s predictions because *altruism* is not a resource category contemplated by the sociologist. As we said, Resource Theory is an application of the economic model to explore and describe the mechanisms that govern non-economic transactions. This methodology implies then, that individuals exchange the six resource categories when they perform positive transactions; altruism entails that one of the participants does not receive any commodity, and is intrinsically satisfied with the outcome of such encounter.

Therefore, Bertha’s interpersonal behaviour and resource transactions can be comprehended much better if we accept that, quite often, a person is independent and secure with regard to one resource, while manifesting dependency and insecurity in another. People sometimes accept loss in one resource in order to secure a supply of another, which is needed more.³⁷ Then, it is quite plausible to perceive Bertha’s generosity—giving to other—as a device for obtaining access to her needed resources.

Thus Bertha is very anxious about the loss of resources she has experienced lately. Her “dreary appetite for action” or her aggression increases further and further because she sees nothing beyond Tarr except “measures of utility.” (46) Tarr’s taste in Bertha is slovenly because he

³⁶ See Foa (1976: 124).

isolates the aspect of her he needs, and degrades her into an animal in order to relieve his tensions. However, we also think that when Bertha needs to justify her last affectionate patterns of conduct with Kreisler and, even, excuses herself (which she should not do) by “putting Kreisler in a more unsatisfactory light” (295) to the members of Liepmann’s circle, she demonstrates to have behaved towards Kreisler in the aforesaid manner not for altruism; she *intentionally* retaliates against Tarr in a public place. In this regard, we consider that the rules of practice that determine her interpersonal behaviour and encounters with Kreisler on this occasion follow Foa’s predictions, since she is generous with Kreisler, yet only as a device to have access to her needed resources, and restore her former equilibrium.

There are various factors that influence *restoration* of one’s internal balance in the frustration-aggression sequence. More concretely, there are three paradigms of exchange that have different degrees of intensity. The classical exchange paradigm is *direct retaliation*,³⁸ where the previous actor becomes the object of retaliation and the previous object (the victim) becomes the actor of retaliation. *Displacement* occurs when the relationship between two individuals affects a third individual. Here the object of retaliation is not the previous actor but a third individual. *Vicarious aggression* happens when the object of retaliation is the original actor, but

³⁷ See Staub and Sherk (1970).

³⁸ See Berkowitz and Holmes (1960).

retaliation is carried out by a third individual rather than by the previous victim.

Direct retaliation yields a decrease in residual aggression, displacement does not affect it, and vicarious aggression results in an increase of subsequent aggression. All three forms of retaliation make it possible to restore the internal balance of the victim, which is disrupted by the frustration act. However, if frustration impairs the internal balance of resources by being an act of deprivation, then an obvious means by which it can be re-established, and residual aggression reduced, is restoration. In this paradigm, the person who has committed the act provides the victim with one or more resources. *Restitution* has the obvious advantage over counter-aggression (direct, displaced or vicarious) that it may reduce residual hostility while avoiding further aggression.³⁹

We observe *displacement* in the attitude of Bertha towards Kreisler, as the relationship between Tarr and herself affects a third individual, Kreisler. Bertha does not retaliate herself on Tarr, the real actor of the deprivation, but uses Kreisler as a substitute. In this way, she stains the social status of Tarr. Here is Bertha justifying her attitude later.

They had driven her [Bertha] to this [...] She tried to interest herself in Kreisler and satisfy Tarr, her friends, the entire universe, more thoroughly. (189)

³⁹ See Foa (1976: 238).

This frustration-aggression sequence through a third person performed by Bertha provides low satisfaction and internal balance to her, the person insulted. This displacement does not affect her residual aggression; rather, it increases her frustration further and further. Contrary to what one might expect, Tarr does not retaliate on her in kind; he is most indifferent to her and, even, allows for a love-friendship 'triangle' to emerge. In other words, Tarr becomes acquainted with Kreisler, and leaves him free way to see his ex-fiancée.

All things considered, Bertha should relieve her anger by retaliating on Tarr later. However, she does not do so; again, she uses Kreisler as a substitute. In order to mollify Tarr, she repeatedly demands Kreisler not to see her any more, which does not help her gain restoration either. In sum, Bertha's interpersonal behaviour and resource exchanges are very skewed in form and nature, as she does nothing to restore her balance in an orthodox manner. Contrarily, she conducts herself in a very much submissive way, showing that she is constrained by a matter of culture, that is, values.

We do believe that the portrait of the interpersonal behaviour of Bertha as self-sacrificing and fatalistic answers to Lewis' rejection of Victorian suffering women. *T* conveys an ominous image of human relations, morality and culture in order to make the reader reassesses cherished values, conventions and the circumstances surrounding them,

which he *rejects*.⁴⁰ In this connection, we think that Bertha does not change her attitude throughout the book because Lewis wants to show her *need* to do so. In our view, society is modified when a change of values occurs. Thus we think that Lewis' indictment of Big Business calls attention to its high degree of fault in preventing females like Bertha from modifying their values and abnegated attitude.

As the story evolves, things become even more ominous. Kreisler, on his part, is obstinate because he needs to gain particularistic resources, yet he cannot obtain them in natural circumstances. First, Anastasya despises him and shows interest in Soltyk; second, Tarr neither commits himself to Bertha nor leaves her for himself; and, third, Bertha chooses him as the target of her aggression. In our view, all of them value the affection of Kreisler very little because he is a friendless and lonely person with little or very few resources to offer. As a result, Kreisler's frustration turns out to be anger and, thus, he feels like retaliating in order to restore his balance. His frustration-aggression sequence does not meet Foa's predictions though, because he exerts aggression *only* on Bertha. In this sense, he insults (deprives her of love and status) and rapes (services) her in an abusive manner, an aggressive conduct that, however, does not contribute to restore his equilibrium, as we shall see later.

With all these considerations in mind, we think that Bertha is a victim of Tarr's elitist drives, Kreisler's repressed frustrations and society's

⁴⁰ For further reference on this idea, see T. S. Smith (1984).

cherished prejudices. Bertha behaves in a very submissive, self-sacrificing and altruistic way towards every character in the novel, without gaining any kind of compensation, but much suffering. In her view, society is to blame for all the things that have happened to her recently and must pay for that. As a consequence, she makes up her mind to act *in her own name* from then on:

She must *accentuate her independence*, even to insult and contempt. [...] The recent outrage took up too much space: [...] Everything pointed to the necessity of a confidante. [...] He [Kreisler] had revenged himself as a machine might do, in a nightmare of violent action. (197; my emphasis)

According to traditional standards, Bertha should represent to herself the outrage Kreisler had done to her, yet Tarr “keeps coming forward now in her mind.” (198) Like Kreisler who, somehow, feels compelled to go to her house to apologise, but when he is there he is unable to “prevail upon himself to go through the stupid form of apology [because] He had got there, [and] that would have [had] to be sufficient.” (200)

Bertha cannot feel that his apologies are “necessary” (201) either. Naturally, neither the rules of practice of Kreisler, nor those of Bertha are orthodox in meaning for traditional modes of living. In this regard, we think that Lewis is questioning why she should feel a strong desire to retaliate, and he should feel ashamed of his last action. Bertha is aware that her relationship with Tarr is “substantially at an end.” He has saddled her with Kreisler in an astute and mischievous way, and has accepted “their being

together as the most natural thing in life.” Thus Tarr has caused “her fighting spirit” (217) and her sexual desire to be brought up. However, instead of retaliating on Tarr and society to decrease their satisfaction she decides to

display towards him [Kreisler] the disgust and reprobation that [Tarr] ought to feel, and which he refused to exhibit in order to vex her. (217)

Bertha cannot help showing herself “noticeably distant with Kreisler.” Thus she exerts aggression on the wrong person again and again. Bertha continues to use Tarr as a catalyst for her retaliatory actions, despite the fact that she made up her mind not to, and always chooses Kreisler, one of society’s *less favoured members*, to restore her balance. Since Bertha puts all the blame of the situation on herself (“I alone am to blame” (232)), we could say that she learns nothing. In this regard, we think that Lewis points out that Bertha has assimilated traditional values and violence into her mind to such large extent that, in spite of her brief urge not to be *submissive* and *dependent*, she has become *inhuman* and *unable* to function as a normal individual now.

It is, however, at the end of the book that things become even more paradoxically absurd and brutal. Bertha expects a child from Kreisler, and she informs Tarr of her pregnancy. The latter decides to marry her, even though he is not the father of the coming child. We assume that Tarr behaves in this particular way because he has caused much frustration to, and has impaired the internal balance of Bertha largely. In our view, Tarr

tries to re-establish her balance and reduce her residual aggression, because he has committed the frustration act. In this way, Tarr provides his victim Bertha with the resources she needs: status, love, services and information.

As we said, this *restitution* has the obvious advantage over counter-aggression (direct, displaced or vicarious) because it reduces residual hostility in Bertha while avoiding further negative behaviour. However, Bertha is not the only female character Tarr exchanges love with; he usually sees Anastasya as well. In this sense, Tarr appears to make a commitment with Bertha, only “for form’s sake” since he does not adjust his behaviour to the rules of practice that correspond to a husband in the marriage institution. Tarr is absolutely indifferent to how unfulfilled her particularistic resource needs remain. His actions are intended to be *socially effective* rather than *emotionally moving*. In this way, we think that Lewis draws attention to the unorthodox meaning of the principles of conduct of Tarr, as they answer to rational rather than to psychological drives. By doing so, Lewis points out that the unique resource interests of Tarr are *social* and *economic*, and his trends of behaviour and interactions are only motivated by *liberal* rather than by *aesthetic* values. This may be why he *measures* the time he wishes to spend with each woman.

He came to her [Bertha] with [...] dull regularity. [...] But the cure was finishing: there were signs of a new robustness, hateful to her [...] that heralded departure. His clockwork visits, with their brutal regularity, did her as much harm as they did him good. (301; my emphasis)

Tarr *quantifies* or objectifies his exchanges of particularistic resources, paying no attention to their *quality*. He provides them to Bertha, yet on very few occasions, and in very small quantities, as he passes most of his time with Anastasya. As Chapman (1973; 70) states, “Tarr [...] plans a self-imposed aversion therapy; he “doses” himself liberally and carefully tends his *ennui*.” For all these reasons, his exchanges of love, status, information and services with Bertha decrease to a large extent, while those he carries out with Anastasya are more frequent, higher in quantity and better in quality. As a result, their love relationship becomes more fixed as the story develops.

Kreisler, Bertha and Anastasya

This section concentrates on the German artist Kreisler, whose “real motive” for going to Paris is “to follow his old friend Vokt once more to see the colour of [his] gold.” (79) Kreisler has extreme need of money, yet Vokt refuses to lend him money since Kreisler failed to meet his debts in the past. Soltyk, a young Russian Pole, has “superseded Kreisler in the position of influence as regards Vokt’s purse.” To make matters worse, Kreisler’s father cuts off sending his monthly allowance and thus his debts begin to accumulate. This increasing lack of money causes Kreisler to be accused of

being “the most contemptible and slatternly member of the crook family” (82) by most intellectuals living in this urban world.⁴¹

Kreisler begins to feel anxiety because he expects to receive money and status from his relative and friends, but he loses them. When he is confident that other characters with higher social and financial status than his are receiving *his* allotment of these resources, he experiences great disappointment: “panic and discouragement, [...] [and] rapid deterioration of his will” (91)) take place. As a result, his self-esteem decreases to a large extent.

In our view, all these facts constitute direct implications of his enormous “need to be with others”, “need for approval”, “need for dependence” and “need for security”.⁴² These needs reflect concern over future provision of resources. His nihilistic view of the world derives, thus, from his extreme particularistic and concrete resource demands. In order to surmount his demands, Kreisler plans to involve himself in society. In other words, he tries “to get out of art back into life again by mixing in its practices.”⁴³ Notwithstanding, the rest of the characters refuse to compensate him for his

⁴¹ We believe that the following social and psychological assumptions by Blau (1964: 108) can be very helpful to clarify these increasing deprivations of resources suffered by Kreisler we have just pointed out:

Failure to reciprocate engenders loss of credit and loss of trust, and it ultimately brings about exclusion from further exchanges and a general decline in social status, particularly as a person’s reputation as one who does not honour his obligations spreads in the community.

⁴² See Stagner and Karwoski (1952).

⁴³ Kreisler’s bleak view of existence reflects a Nietzschean—and, definitively, Schopenhauerian—view of the world (1836; 1819). Nietzsche states the impossibility to rationalise life, yet only suggest such perfection. This view also becomes something derisive in *T* because of the presence of Kreisler, who gives a comic perspective upon this novel as well. Thus influenced by Nietzsche’s *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* and his ideas of the existence of man as “a quest for life as absurd” and “laughter as

losses. Far from this they even take advantage of his precarious situation or extreme resource needs in order to exert *power* over him.⁴⁴

As far as we are concerned, the rest of characters possess power because they have more than a minimum amount of one or more resources and can, therefore, give these resources to others in exchange for resources possessed by them. Thus they exert power in various resources because Kreisler is in need of them.⁴⁵ They, as holders of power, can exercise considerable control over Kreisler, who is in need of these resources and has few or no other sources for the satisfaction of his need. This is the reason why these characters, big corporations and the big government, possessing a large amount of resources are perceived as threatening by Kreisler, as we shall see later.

When “a malicious growth of criticism at the expense of the solitary” (91) arises among Kreisler’s German acquaintances, he feels that these characters exert power over him. They have more than a minimum amount of the resources required by him. Thus these characters could provide Kreisler these commodities in exchange for resources possessed by him, yet they outrageously exert power over him because he is in need of money and

corrective” invoking its redemptive character, Lewis gives a comic perspective upon the metaphysical tragedy depicted in *T*.

⁴⁴ *Power* is another well-known social psychological phenomenon re-interpreted by Foa (1974: 134-9) in his framework.

⁴⁵ See Cartwright and Zander (1968: 216-7). These facts imply that there is a reciprocal relationship between *need* and *power*.

status.⁴⁶ Eventually, Kreisler despairs, and alienates himself: “he developed the habit of sitting alone.” (91)

It is through love that we relate to other persons. Scarcity of particularistic transactions can be subjectively experienced as loneliness and estrangement. This alienation of Kreisler emerges, above all, because this individual lives in a large and crowded modern city rather than in a rural or a traditional area.⁴⁷ Kreisler alienates himself because he is in need of affection (love), approval (status) and wherewithal (money) to live, yet, as he acknowledges, “both love and friendship” are “extinct” (102) in this metropolitan place. To make matters worse, power relations are prevalent within all contexts, including intimate ones. In this regard, we could conclude that Lewis makes Kreisler alienate himself in order to throw into prominence the ways in which things have become extremely unwieldy and overwhelming, especially, in the society of artists in his time, where individuals behave in enormously insincere and pretentious ways.⁴⁸

This feeling of alienation causes Kreisler not to adhere to the norms, beliefs and practices of this society that links its members because they comply with its values religiously. Kreisler prefers to follow his passionate attraction to women. As Foshay (1992: 100) argues,

⁴⁶ Ibid. 217.

⁴⁷ For further reference on the social factors that promote *alienation*, see Foa (1976: 113).

⁴⁸ According to the well-known sociologist Giddens (1994: 175), this alienation feeling—he calls it ‘anomie’—that overwhelms Kreisler, would be due to the absence, contradiction or incongruity of social norms. ‘Anomie’ is a social psychological notion that appears owing to the crisis that the modern world faces. This crisis is moral rather than economic, and it is provoked by the preponderance of economic relationships as a consequence of the destruction of traditional religious institutions, which represented the moral background for previous forms of society. Giddens refers to

Love is for Kreisler a means to the “gold of the human heart and any other gold that happened to be knocking about”. His primary interest in life is **money**; he had married off his fiancée to his widowed father, presumably to place himself more firmly in favour. In his present financial straits, the figure of Anastasya, advertising herself as “lously rich”, presents a much-needed “theatre” in which Kreisler can perform his only art, the **purging** of the “violent accumulations of desperate life.” (my emphasis)

Kreisler’s plan is to be “a lady’s man” again. He intends to become “dependent” on Anastasya in order to maintain all types of resource supplies high in case of further lack. As the text reads,

Womenkind were Kreisler’s Theatre, they were for him art and expression [...] ‘woman’ was the aesthetic element in Kreisler’s life. Love, too, always meant unhappy love for him, with its misunderstanding and wistful separations. [...] When the events of his life became too unwieldy or overwhelming, he converted them into love. [...] After weeks of growing estrangement, he would sever all relations suddenly one day- [...] Kreisler had [...] regarded both (love and friendship) as extinct [...] so unaccustomed was he to act with calculation. [...] All he asked was to be her dog! (94-9)

Kreisler aims at *using* Anastasya as a catalyst in order to fulfil his needs, and get over his predicament. One of the first settings he chooses to undertake this plan is the socially exclusive circle ruled by Fraülein Liepmann, where he expects to see Anastasya, newly arrived in Paris. Obviously, Kreisler does not comply with the values of this intellectual group; here, he expects to gain a sufficient amount of the particularistic

this destruction as the main source of the ‘anomie’ in contemporary society.

resources, which he requires, but cannot obtain in natural circumstances.⁴⁹ However, Kreisler is certain that in order to have access to this circle he would be expected to address himself to its members for a given exchange (status) by committing himself to certain requirements. In other words, a “frac” “is *de rigueur*” (132) yet he can neither afford to buy nor rent one. Thus he knows he will encounter limitations and barriers because he cannot meet this prerequisite.

Eventually, Kreisler ignores this fact. He lies to (negative information exchange) its members about his not wearing a tuxedo, and his dishevelled attire (goods convey one’s social status) raises some eyebrows. Despite his effort, the attractive Anastasya ignores him and shows more interest in Soltyk at this party. As a consequence, Kreisler feels humiliated (deprived of status) by the rest of characters, experiencing, thus, lack of equilibrium. As the requirements to access this kind of institution are stronger for giving than for depriving exchanges, a physically powerful desire to insult and shame its members awakens within him.

His self-humiliation was wedded with the notion of retaliation. [...] Society [...] must be taught to suffer, he had paid for that [...] he felt in fact a sort of outcast. (120-32; my emphasis)

Kreisler starts to behave following unconventional rules of practice in this institution. First, he makes a fool of himself and, later, chooses Bertha as the object of his retaliatory actions, despite the fact that it has been Anastasya

⁴⁹ See Foa (1976: 124).

who has ignored him here. As Bertha uses him for the same reason, “unaccustomed” as he is “to act with calculation in these matters,” (102) he retaliates on her again sometime later. In this way, Kreisler is made to behave in ways akin in form and meaning to the new conditions: by force and rebellion.

To our mind, Kreisler’s anger derives from the fact that the last events of his life have taken too much space, and have provoked him much anxiety and frustration. Kreisler becomes, thus, “a source only of *irritation* and *expense*” and “invents *outrage*” (153; my emphasis) from then on. In other words, Kreisler begins to deprive his own species of status and money in order to restore his balance. In this regard, we think that the subsequent trends of behaviour of this outlaw are tragically violent in form and outrageous in significance as a means to abuse, and subvert the cherished autonomy, conventions and attitudes of these intellectual segments of society so that they consider their pernicious values and prejudices.

An individual like Kreisler, who has suffered numerous negative exchanges of particularistic commodities, and alienates from society as a means to find a way out to his metaphysical dilemma, often, commits *crime*. As we said, this phenomenon is a consequence of the relative scarcity of particularistic exchanges in the city. This lack deprives society of powerful informal instruments of social control, particularly the giving and taking of status. This fact implies that threat of status deprivation turns out to have very little effect as deterrent against the violation of social norms in a large

metropolis. This is the reason why Kreisler does not care about the opinion held by his fellow men about him. For Kreisler, sitting in jail is merely a temporary loss of freedom, rather than a stain upon his reputation. Thus this deprivation of status results meaningless for him, while this same type of deprivation proves to be of utmost importance for Bertha, as she socialises in smaller institutions, like the intellectual circle ruled by Fraülein Liepmann, where all its members blame her for her affectionate attitude towards him.

When Kreisler observes Soltyk in the company of Anastasya, who has hired his services so that he sells her jewellery, Kreisler sees him a double rival. In other words, he considers that Soltyk is depriving him of love and money now. On top of that, Tarr becomes an obstacle for him in his amorous relationship with Bertha. As a result, Kreisler treacherously befriends Bertha and *displaces* her aggression by challenging Soltyk.

Like Bertha, Kreisler chooses to take out his frustration by showing aggression not on the original actors, but on third individuals. Kreisler rapes Bertha, and deprives his old friend Soltyk of status before he challenges him to an absurd duel through which he attempts to save the *honour* of her “beloved” Anastasya.

In our view, this event is very interesting because *loyalty* does not constitute a resource category in Foa’s circular order.⁵⁰ Lewis depicts the

⁵⁰ Loyalty is an accepted resource of Renaissance society, but Foa does not contemplate this in his theory. In Shakespeare’s world, for instance, the servant continues to follow the master, even if the latter has no money left. In *T*, it is only Kreisler who advocates for past spiritual values.

behaviour of Kreisler towards Soltyk as being particularly ludicrous and violent. Kreisler assassinates the latter just for the shake of it, but the principle that has motivated this action is old, heroic and altruistic in nature. Loyalty is a resource that guarantees *no profit* to Kreisler. In this regard, we think that Lewis makes Kreisler behave in this peculiarly violent way in order to highlight that he is the only character that does not behave conditioned by rational and calculating motives, as other characters do here.

Before this occurrence takes place, Kreisler asks Tarr and the Pole Bitzenko “to act for him in the duel that will end the life of his rival Vokt.” Tarr, one of Kreisler’s late *acquaintances*, makes excuses; Bitzenko, a man *who passes by*, accepts. When the duel is taking place, neither Tarr nor Bitzenko plays their role as representatives of Kreisler; they attend the event, *only* to see the spectacle. Vokt is unarmed, and Kreisler is willing to forget the whole matter provided the former gives him a kiss (love). In the end, Kreisler is careless with the gun, and assassinates Vokt by accident, while no one does *anything* to prevent so.

It seems to us that the social implications that can be derived from these absurd and brutal social phenomena depicted by Lewis in this novel are numerous, varied and very revealing of Lewis’ mind, and criticism. As Tarr and Kreisler respectively state: “old spiritual values have become economic values” and “love and friendship are extinct.” It is unquestionable that loyalty is not a value prevalent in this modern society as Tarr demonstrates that he does not want to do a service (to act for Kreisler in this

duel) for his friend Kreisler, just for nothing. Moreover, status deprivations in a small context such as this one (two male characters kissing (love exchange)) have not much importance for an urban outcast like Kreisler. Ultimately, violence has become so much of a social norm to all these individuals that, even, a character such as Kreisler is capable of assassinating an old friend, Soltyk at random. Lewis sets for Kreisler the painful task of showing his audience that lack of significance and, even, indifference of various social sectors to particularism can have pernicious social and psychological consequences for certain individuals, like Kreisler himself. This character directs his efforts in performing outrageous social encounters with its own species because they refuse to exchange particularistic resources with him, despite his extreme need of them. In this sense, we think that Lewis makes Kreisler conduct himself in this contemptible manner so that his public question both the extreme degree in which they assimilated liberal capitalist principles and violence into their minds, and the forms in which these values influenced their attitude and relationships in obnoxious ways in their everyday contacts.

Despite the apparently aggressive attitude of Kreisler, Soltyk's death "dismays" him so "deeply" that he turns out to be "as dead as an object." (287) Then, Kreisler alienates himself from society *completely* and wanders aimlessly for a long while. Indeed, it is only when Kreisler spots a police station that he stops:

It occurring to him that here was an excellent opportunity of getting a dinner and being lodged [...] he suddenly, became docile. [...] No effort was made to discover if he were really at fault: by this time they were persuaded that he was a ruffian, if not a spy then a murderer, although they were inclined to regard him as a criminal enigma. (290-1)

These policemen cannot “question his *right* to a night’s lodging” (291; my emphasis), and thus Kreisler is shown to a cell.

He was given some bread and water at his urgent request. [...] Kreisler was led in and prevented from becoming in any way intelligible during a quarter of an hour by the furious interruptions of the enraged officer. [...] In the afternoon a full confirmation of his story reached the authorities. [...] The energy and obstinacy of the rest of the world [...] frightened him as something mad. (291-2)

The implications derived from these events are very revealing because Kreisler goes to the appropriate institution to pay for his crime, and conforms to its rules of practice by meeting its demands. All the same, its staff members use their possession of status as an instrument of power. As the two previous extracts reveal, Kreisler does not go to this provincial jail because he considers himself at fault; he needs to obtain some food (goods), attention (love and status) and shelter (services). In this sense, it seems as if Kreisler felt forced to go to the wrong institution, that is, a police station, to gain the wrong kind of resources, only because he could not get hold of them in natural circumstances earlier. In our view, all these facts result quite paradoxical because, as we also observe in our society, a person in economic difficulty can apply for relief, whereas a person who needs goods,

love, status and services is led to his own devices unless he first becomes a criminal. In this connection, we agree with Foa's sociological assumptions (1974: 388):

We should not obviate the necessity of re-examining the structure of society in an attempt to find out ways of modifying it to optimize the satisfaction of all resource needs.

It seems to be that Lewis is conscious of society's intense need of particularistic commodities as well as the constant deprivations of these very same resources suffered by certain individuals like Kreisler in all manner of settings. In our view, this is the reason why Lewis makes this character alienate him from the world completely, which causes him to be nihilistic. As the text reads,

He became quite used to his cell: his mind was sick and this room had a clinical severity. It had all the severity of a place in which an operation might suitably be performed. He became fond of it. He lay upon his bed: he turned over the shell of many empty and depressing hours he had lived: in all these listless concave shapes he took a particular pleasure. 'Good times' were avoided. (292)

As Tomlin (1980: 76) suggests, "this vein of rage and hatred against mankind is an essential ingredient in all 'nihilism', and therefore in all 'new romanticism.'" As we said, it is through love that we relate to other persons. Scarcity of particularistic transactions is, thus, subjectively experienced as "loneliness and estrangement" by Kreisler.⁵¹ All in all, we consider that Lewis highlights that alienation is a negative consequence of life

⁵¹ For further reference on *alienation*, see Foa (1976: 113).

circumstances in urban environments. These metropolitan areas are far more crowded settings than, for example, rural areas, where inhabitants have more opportunities of performing intimate exchanges, and status deprivations are felt to a greater extent since there are more efficient mechanisms of social control.⁵² As we have just seen, Kreisler neither can obtain his needed resources, nor “find self-rewarding activities that engage him” in this large modern city. Thus he chooses a *provincial* jail to hang, something that, in our view, he does in order to *embarrass* its law enforcement representatives, that is, the ones who allow all these circumstances to exist. In support of this idea, the text reads:

The discovery of Kreisler’s body [would cause] a profound indignation among the staff of the police station. [...] It was clear to their minds that his sole purpose had been to hang himself upon their premises. [...] *They thrust it savagely into the earth, with vexed and disgusted faces.* (293; my emphasis)

Lewis appears to make this outlaw put an end to his life in a provincial jail in this terrible way in order to show that this character finds no better way out. Kreisler has always been a *means* to fulfil some other’s desire of power both in particularistic and non-particularistic contexts. First, within the family institution where

Mr. Kreisler (Kreisler’s father) had got a certain amount of pleasure out of him: the little Otto had satisfied in him in turn a desire of possession (that objects such as your watch, your house, which could equally belong to anybody, do not satisfy), of authority (that servants do not satisfy) of self-complacency (that self does not) - he had

⁵² Foa (1976: 114) supports Seeman’s interpretation of *alienation* (1959).

been to him later, a kind of living cinematograph and *Reisenbuch* combined: and, finally, he had inadvertently lured with his youth a handsome young woman into the paternal net. (118)

Later, from Vokt and Tarr, acquaintances of him, from Bertha and Anastasya, potential love partners, from other characters in social settings like Fraülein Liepmann's and, finally, from government authorities. In this sense, Kreisler's *suicide* constitutes, thus, both an act of retaliation on society, and Lewis' own radical way of showing the degree that contemporary society was responsible for permitting all these events to occur in their large urban areas.

In our view, Kreisler does not want to obey social values, conventions and constructions, like the rest of characters do. Rather, he becomes a "source only of irritation and expense," and experiences a masochistic "wish to suffer" from Anastasya (who challenges such conventions through her interpersonal behaviour and social encounters as well). In this way, he undermines the doctrines supported by the Establishment, something that makes him feel "relief from present torment."

He must excite in her the maximum of contempt and of dislike. [...] He wished to *shame* her: if he did not directly insult her he would at least insult her by thrusting himself upon her. (119; my emphasis)

As we have seen, Kreisler craves acceptance by society, but this citizenship, only address their *public* aggressions towards him in order to relieve their *private* frustrations and anxieties. Certainly, the trends of behaviour of

Kreisler are extreme and violent in form, and his social encounters unsophisticated in meaning. Nevertheless, we believe that these are the *means* through which Lewis reflects that Kreisler neither is abided by society's values, nor is constrained by them; he is, indeed, most ashamed of them.

Kreisler invents outrage as a natural pattern of behaviour and, thus, embarks himself on extravagant adventures, without minding the consequences. In doing so, he illustrates the costs derived from following the pernicious types of values that drive his own species commonly.⁵³ In this way, Kreisler both throws into prominence their inhuman nature, and unearths their social and psychological disorders. As Anastasya suggests at the end of the story: "Kreisler was a living man who only needed time to settle his affairs," implying that this flamboyant German was becoming aware that his socio-economic and emotional deficiencies could not be solved through *aesthetic* means alone, yet by involving himself in life and its practices. However, doing so makes him also appreciate that there is nothing he can do to transcend his contradictory metaphysical situation in this way either. As a result, Kreisler feels compelled to give up finally. In our view, his eventual nihilistic attitude, and suicide shows recognition on the part of Lewis of the fact that there was nothing an artist could do to

⁵³ For example, Kreisler attends a bourgeois Bohemian party without a tuxedo, brutally rapes Bertha, assassinates an old friend in order to save the honor of the elusive Anastasya, goes to a Police jail in order to receive some attention, food, shelter and to commit suicide, and even pays for "the rent, the burial and for disposing the body to the authorities" (292-94) before he dies, despite the fact that he lacks financial resources.

change social circumstances in his time.⁵⁴ With regard to these issues, Chapman (1973: 81) says,

All these facts imply an acceptance from the part of Lewis of the tragic fact underlying all working systems of thought—they must function within an absurd existence.

All things considered, Lewis' peculiar view of the world and art in this time shows features that are very post-modern, as they often are very Beckettian in form and connotation.

Tarr and Anastasya

This last section focuses on Anastasya Vasek, an outlandish female artist from Dresden. This character is very significant because contrary to her *alter ego* Bertha, her behaviour and resource exchanges are not motivated by male principles and constructions. Anastasya is an artist and thus has a socio-economic function in society. These circumstances provide her autonomy, and freedom to choose her partner/s. Of course, she has resource needs, but again, these resource interests are distinct from Bertha's. Anastasya has “need for achievement”, “need for security” and “need for [total] independence.” In other words, she wishes to fulfil her emotional,

⁵⁴ We think that there are other causes for the distress of both Kreisler and Tarr such as the collapse of family attachments and the related blow to their male sexual identity. On the one hand, we observe that the boy of Kreisler and Bertha is fatherless because Tarr does not commit himself to behaving as a father, even though he marries her. Moreover, the fact that Bertha leaves Tarr in order to marry a doctor later must have caused untold damage to the sense of self of Tarr. On the other hand, Anastasya claims that she no longer depends on men, which must have had a devastating effect on Kreisler's and Tarr's health too. In fact, we think that Kreisler suffers from the break-up of his family, friendship, love and other social institutions to such large extent that he decides to commit suicide; Tarr behaves in such peculiarly egotistic manner that all these breaks-up of traditional institutions have very little relevance for him. Indeed, it is only the tremendous fear of being thought feminine and non-artist that really influences his sense of self.

social and financial resource needs *by herself*, and *for herself*, she has no need of a male intermediary between her and the universe.

In our view, Tarr's *attraction* to her can be explained because Anastasya is a female of high self-esteem who avoids depriving herself (or being deprived) of resource supplies so as not to depend on any male (or female) participant for their provision in case of future scarcity. Anastasya has very much to offer to Tarr, regarding resources such as, love, status, and above all, information. As we have aforesaid, Tarr is an individual with very high self-esteem who believes he has a lot to give, even though he is less than perfect. Tarr underestimates her, and takes a patronising interest. For him, Anastasya is an ideal "travelling companion" because with her "delight, adventure and amusement (are) always achieved." (233) Therefore, it could be said that they are satisfied with their social exchanges consisting of mere transactions of status, information and love in the form of sexual pleasures because they avoid, thus, all possible sentimentality. In this regard, both of them view love relationships, not as *commitment* but as *intriguing games*.⁵⁵

In our opinion, Anastasya is contented with the rules of practice that

⁵⁵ It seems to us that the personality of Tarr and Anastasya answer to that of a *ludic* lover type as defined by Smith Hatkoff and Lasswell (In Cook and Wilson, 1979: 223). Accordingly, a *ludic* lover is a person who "plays" love affairs as he or she plays games or works puzzles – to win, to demonstrate his/her skill or superiority. A *ludic* lover may keep two or three or even four lovers "on the string" at one time. Sex is self-centred and exploitative rather than symbolic of a relationship. *Ludic* lovers are not likely to be sophisticated sexually. A *ludic* lover would rather find a new sex partner than work our sexual problems with an old one. Such a person usually enjoys love affairs, and hence rarely regrets them unless the threat of commitment or dependency becomes too great. "Having fun together" is a more important value. The *ludic* lover usually has a good self-concept, usually is

govern her transactions with Tarr because she controls sensuality by reason, without this being diminished. In other words, she crudely dissociates *erotic* love from *sentimental* love; a union that is, however, deeply profound inside a female since she is a teenager. Together Tarr and Anastasya de-romanticise sex. As a result, their love transactions are, for both of them, satisfactory. This is why their resource transactions are high in quantity, and quality, and last for sometime.⁵⁶

In fact, it is *only* when Anastasya challenges Tarr's supposedly intellectual superiority by making it obvious to him that he is sexually—Lewis defines this feeling as *irrational*—attracted to her, while she is capable of refusing his sex that all the rational, psychological, moral, social and aesthetic principles of Tarr turn upside down. He fears not to “master the forces arrayed against his ambition of becoming an artist, that is, inertia, self-doubt, sentimentality or sex”; in other words “all the forces that control Kreisler”, as Schenker (1992: 46) rightly says. Consequently, Tarr begins to

self-assured in love as well as in most other areas. “You win a few, you lose a few – there'll be another one along in a minute.”

⁵⁶ Following Gergen's assumptions (2000: 65-7), we think that their relationship could be defined as a *microwave relationship*. This type of relationship is found increasingly on the domestic front nowadays. Thus Tarr and Anastasya are active members in society. Both of them have recreational relations with other people. Therefore, meeting for exchanging particularistic resources becomes a special event. Due to these facts, a new form of relationship emerges. Both of them try to compensate for the vast expanses of non-relatedness with intense expressions of bonded-ness. Naturally, quantity is replaced by quality here. Thus just like a microwave oven is more than a technological support for those living a social saturated life, it is also a good symbol of the newly emerging form of relationship: in both cases the users (Tarr and Anastasya) command intense heat for the immediate provision of nourishment. In Gergen's opinion, the adequacy of the result is subject to debate. In fact, this form of interrelatedness chosen by Tarr is the most adequate one in order to have some spare time to create. However, as we observe later on, their relationship is constantly disrupted in the social context of saturation created in the novel, and thus it is very difficult for their relationship to normalise.

perform negative resource exchanges with her. As Foshay (1992: 58-61)

puts it,

When Tarr decides that life would be given a chance with Anastasya he feels *anxiety*. The main obstacle is Tarr's rational approach, and Anastasya begins skilfully to disarm his intellect by affirming its independence from *sexuality*: She subtly challenges Tarr's virility, and his ability to be both sensual and intellectual at the same time: Tarr fails to defend the imagination's role in sensuous life, and thus betrays the artist in him. His deeper desire is not art but a woman, and that's all. [...] Anastasya embodies a living, comic art deeper than the superficial humour with which Tarr had approached Bertha. [...] Tarr's dualistic cultivation of ascetic artistic refinement and bourgeois sexual indulgence (with Bertha) clearly could not satisfy him. But his discovery of and conquest by Anastasya involves a "betrayal of the artist in him." (my emphasis)

Anastasya disarms the intellect of Tarr and flatters his masculinity very skilfully. She is a more admirable and masterful character than he is. However, she is also attracted to him, something that Tarr exploits, when he marries Bertha. In doing so, Tarr reverts to his earlier misogyny:

God was man: the woman was a lower form of life [...] a lack of energy, permanently mesmeric state, almost purely emotional, they all displayed it, they were true 'women.'
(328)

Tarr repudiates Anastasya because she is "too big" for him and, thus, "he would be eclipsed, a nothing." In his view, "she is intelligent, active and attractive,"⁵⁷ and these facts make him realise how vulgar "an artist" he will be (215). Tarr must admit that Anastasya is a "superior" and "exceptional

⁵⁷ In *DOY* Lewis suggests that "intelligent and active women [...] are still the exceptions" (262), a quite reductive comment with which we disagree entirely.

woman” (327) because her patterns of trend are unusual for a female of his time. Nonetheless, what really disturbs him is that her behavioural patterns and resource exchanges question and ridicules his self-consistency, artistic integrity and male superiority. Concerning these issues, the text reads

The line had been crossed by Anastasya, yet he had taken into sex the procédés and selfish arrangements of life in general. He had humanized sex too much. (328)

Therefore, Lewis challenges the idea of *woman as object* through Anastasya. This female character refuses to be as submissive and abnegated as Bertha, a real Victorian heroine. Anastasya aims at obtaining all types of resource categories in all manner of settings. She claims her independence and freedom throughout the book, being as autonomous, creative and active as her male counterpart Tarr. In this regard, it could be said that Lewis makes her reach independence through her work, transcend herself, present new ways of living and dominate external constraints.

As other critics have said, Tarr is not the real hero of this early Lewisian novel, but Kreisler. However, it seems to us that *independent* Anastasya also plays a major role in *T* that many scholars have missed. Lewis’ main purposes in this novel are to create an autobiographical novel where he can lecture others of his *revolutionary* notion of the ideal artist, and present *new* forms of understanding life and human relations. In paying attention to aesthetic notions exclusively, critics have obviated the dialogic nature of Lewis’ mind and art as well as a post-modern heroine.

Lewis does not allow Anastasya to win over Tarr eventually. She only leads, distracts, disarms, and seduces Tarr, who surrenders. He tries to convince himself that he cannot sustain a love relationship with Anastasya on an equal basis because he thinks she is too male (naturally, Tarr expects her to be his vassal). However, what really annoys him is that Anastasya works, this fact not entailing that she has given up her femininity or has lost her attraction. Anastasya merely opts to have an active function in society rather than to be submissive, an exemplification of Lewis' novel propositions. When Tarr realises that Anastasya starts to humanise their love exchanges too much, his love relationship appears to him to be *non-profitable*. Thus he starts a number of lesser affairs, on the same pattern as those with Bertha and Anastasya, with Rose Fawcett and Prism Dirkes, which seem to us to be a very Lewisian strategy.⁵⁸ As a result, the resource exchanges of Tarr and Anastasya diminish in quantity and frequency, and deteriorate in quality, their love relationship becoming extinct considerably quickly from then on.

In the preface to *T*, Lewis describes it as “in a sense the first book of an epoch in England”. As many others have said, this early Lewisian work is highly innovative, due to its abstract Vorticist style, anti-naturalistic form

⁵⁸ Meyers (1980b: 99) comments on the usual love affair patterns of the artist in this time as follows: Though Lewis had left Iris to live with Froanna, he usually had a separate studio and continued his affairs with Nancy, Agnes and an “extraordinary” number of unknown models and mistresses. [...] Lewis was “terrified” at the thought of a permanent marriage. And Froanna, like Lewis' mother, worshipped him, believed in his genius and dedicated her life to him. She knew that it would be impossible to confine him to a monogamous existence and did not attempt to limit his sexual freedom. She knew about his women

and complex spiritual content.⁵⁹ Notwithstanding, we believe that many of the aforesaid social and psychological aspects of the interrelationships of our four characters turn out *T* to be very innovative as well; a novelty that derives, above all, from the odd qualities of the social experience portrayed in it, which we have tried to illuminate here.

Within this context, the figure of Tarr and his male artist principle play an important part in conveying this one-sided image of reality and human relations. Resource Theory fails to describe all his social encounters in terms of resource transactions because his values are often aesthetic rather than sociological. However, this framework has permitted to clarify other multiple aspects of his peculiar social encounters in the novel. Tarr's individualism⁶⁰ is so repulsive because it responds to a rational morality exclusively. The rules of practice that determine his social encounters answer to Liberal Capitalist drives most times, even though he invents skewed *manoeuvres* to pretend that they answer to aesthetic principles exclusively. Tarr's main goal is to be in a continuous act of self-creation in order to create an ideal self, and become the arbiter of his own destiny. He splits up his self into various personalities: Tarr as painter, Tarr as friend, Tarr as lover, Tarr as witness, Tarr as husband ... etc., committing himself to none of them entirely. However, he then goes to consider that

and children, eventually learned to accept them without jealousy and even claimed they did not bother her.

⁵⁹ For a detailed reference on this idea, see Bürger (1992: 127-136).

⁶⁰ Following the well-known sociologist Giddens (1987: 153), we consider that Tarr's *cult of individuality* is a direct consequence of the complete secularisation of many sectors of social life. In

Life has become such an affair of *economic calculation* that men are too timid to allow themselves any complicated pleasures [...] Sentimentality [...] is a *privilege*, [...] that the crowd does not feel it can possibly afford in these hard times, and it is quite right'. (333; my emphasis)

Throughout the book, Tarr lectures other people about how vulgar and rotten society is. However, he gradually shows that he is infected by these very doctrines as well. His disagreement with society is, thus, a conflict within his own self. Tarr aims to transcend what he considers to be destructive social and psychological forces impinging on him through successive acts of rebellion and creative birth. But, the more he tries to achieve uniqueness, the more he demonstrates that he is part of the crowd he despises. This is why Lewis derides him in the text repetitively.⁶¹

In sum, Tarr is an artist, yet not an ideal one; he is merely a recipient of all the contradictory principles that govern the modern Western World in this time. The ending of *T* is clearly satirical with him because he has not exerted self-control, power over his own will,⁶² and pretends to an

this sense, Tarr's modern sense of individuality could be the moral reflection of the growing division of work, and its religious precursor Protestantism.

⁶¹ According to Head (1986: 35), Lewis' notion of the Absolute Ego has its basis in Fichte who created the modern philosophical dialectic rather than Hegel. For Fichte, this Absolute Ego sets up the external world as an obstacle to its own activity and then gradually but endlessly triumphs over this obstacle. In Head's view, this is akin to Lewis' view of the Self, shaping itself in defining what it is opposed to. With regard to this issue, we agree with Spender (1935: 214), when referring to this trait of the personality of Lewis suggests,

By imposing an external order on internal disorder, by ruggedly insisting on and accepting only the outsides of things, one does not improve matters. One merely shouts and grows angry with anyone who has a point of view different from one's own. For another point of view is sure to seem visceral, internal and decadent. One is, in a word, merely asserting that one is afraid of the symptoms, which one dislikes in oneself, and more particularly in other people, not that one can cure them.

⁶² This idea is what Nietzsche defines as "will-to-power" in *Der Wille zur Macht*. See (1968: 64).

attainment and a liberation that he very clearly has not achieved. Tarr's tricks constitute, thus, an artifice by which he can avoid confronting his fundamental passivity and lack of initiative. This is why his resource needs and ambitions are never satisfied in good terms.

Contrary to Tarr who is dominated by aesthetic ideas, indifferent to life and people, and tries to divide the parts of his life in order to reach his goals, Parker (1980: 213) considers that "Kreiser is driven by passion and struggles to integrate them without much success." As Foshay (1992: 57-8) correctly says, Kreiser's ambitions are only derivatively sensual, his main focus being mere physical survival in a harsh environment. Kreiser makes use of humour—a means of evading reality—and of outrageous actions and social encounters in order to undermine society's values, conventions and constructions. In our view, the predicament of Tarr has its seeds in the fact that he is unavoidable attached to time and, thus, to social and historical constructions. He becomes aware of the total alienation of each individual from others, as well as of the nothingness of the self as pure consciousness, that is, separated from the outside world and from action.⁶³ Hence the strangeness of the interpersonal behaviour, and the sense of fatalism, apathy, hedonism and nihilism that determine Kreiser's relationships throughout time.

Both Tarr and Kreiser use women as scapegoats for their inability to cope with themselves either financially or sexually. Thus Kreiser operates

from the assumption that all women are even more passive and helpless than him. Far from being susceptible to his bullying masculinity, Anastasya demonstrates her financial and sexual autonomy in hiring Soltyk to sell some of her jewellery. Bertha, however, is more susceptible, a typical bourgeois-bohemian affecting a taste for art in order to gain a husband. However, the two women demonstrate a consistency absent in the elaborate self-justifications indulged in by Tarr and Kreisler, whose respective manoeuvrings work the destruction of the unfortunate Bertha. As Foshay (1992: 54-5) says,

each of the three uses the other as a substitute: Bertha uses Kreisler to get at Tarr; Kreisler uses Bertha to work off his resentment towards Anastasya, Tarr uses Kreisler to engineer his separation from Bertha. Pathetic and vindictive, Kreisler is sordid and evokes little regret. When he has made the world pay for treating him so badly, he kills himself with the same mixture of frustration and revenge, but Tarr's manoeuvrings excite interest, and are in fact the living centre of the novel.

In *Blast I*, Lewis (1981: 141) states: "Dehumanisation is the chief diagnostic of the Modern World." Some pages further, he acknowledges: "Human insanity has never flowered so colossally in the Modern world." (145) In this connection, we think that Lewis makes Tarr, Bertha, Anastasya and Kreisler reflect these dehumanisation and insanity through their interpersonal behaviour and relationships in the book.

As we have seen, they often follow atypical rules of practice in various institutional settings, including intimate ones, because they do not

⁶³ This idea also points out to Sartre's Existentialism. (1948)

identify themselves with modern values and conventions. In this regard, the morally contemptible forms of their trends of behaviour, and the outrageous motives that determine their social interactions reflect, first, a non-linguistic device to show the enormous degree in which they have assimilated the new Machine conditions; and second, a satirical technique used by the writer to criticise the pernicious effects of such despairing truth over them.

All these characters live in a large and modern metropolitan area of mass production and mass consumption, which provides new opportunities for trade and work, and economic resources to its high-density population. However, it results very inadequate for their intimate transactions. As a result, these urban environmental circumstances facilitate the appearance of very negative social phenomena: first, the fact that its citizenship have enormous difficulty in reciprocating or consoling one another; second, they are often unable to achieve their needed psychological, emotional and social commodities in natural circumstances, causing some of them, like Bertha and Kreisler to seek for them in unsuitable contexts; third, the appearance of unsavoury aspects of city life such as, crime and alienation, or of social psychological phenomena such as, anxiety, power, frustration, aggression, ... etc. With regard to these issues, the sociologist Foa (1976: 128) states:

In addition to economic resources, satisfaction requires a sense of pride (status) and a feeling of belonging (love), which members of minority groups [...] may find difficult to acquire. [...] Disregard for the role played by particularistic resources in social functioning is very much prevalent, [...] [and it] further reduces the chances of

participants of autonomous performance as resource exchangers in society.

Therefore, it appears to be that the welfare, happiness and quality of life of all these characters are impaired to one degree, or another because they are victims of the invisible manipulations and contradictions of Liberal Capitalism; a system of government that contributes to their estrangement because it defends values, such as equity, justice, tolerance, altruism, individualism and profit, while these standards contradict one another.

In *T*, Lewis takes his characters' principles to their ultimate conclusion in order to reflect and question the ways in which the forms and significance of human relationships in intimate settings in his time began to resemble market transactions. Since there is no intrinsic reward involved, the interpersonal resource exchanges of its characters decrease in frequency, quantity and quality as long as the story evolves, and their social encounters turn out distant, aggressive, and the like.

T may not provide a direct critique that can serve to transform the system portrayed in it. As Schenker (1992: 41) says, Lewis "does not" wish to "bring the novel to a point, but reopens all of its original conflicts." Thus the value of his work does not lay in the *subject* that the work is about, but in its *effect* upon its environment. As the scholar continues to argue (1992: 113),

The turn from message to medium [...] had its origins in the individual artist's responses to a society whose values were increasingly those of the marketplace—speed,

efficiency, dynamism, innovation, profitability, perhaps even equality [...] recoil from participation in the commercial hurly-burly and choose instead to exercise their significant intellectual powers only for the purpose of sharpening and better understanding those powers. [...] The modernist hero (and his creator) finds the contemplation of the artistic process its own special reward. (my emphasis)

Therefore, we think that it is in the description of the complex emotional, social and economic aspects of the resource seeking behaviour of Tarr, Bertha, Kreisler and Anastasya that our interest in *T* must remain, since this is definitely what provides a small beginning towards understanding its real mechanisms. In his Vorticist Manifesto, Lewis defends the view that economic growth is positive and crucial; in *T* he shows that this growth has occurred to the detriment of the position of art in society, and of the standard of living of *all* Western citizens in the modern world. As Priestley (1960: 335) says in his well-known work,

Long before 1914, [...] literature had given many a sign that Western Man was beginning to feel homeless, charged with angry frustration, in the modern world, where ancient patterns of living were so quickly destroyed and so many primary satisfactions hard to find. [...] All the material progress of the later nineteenth and the earlier twentieth centuries.

Lewis feels the need to express in art the fact that better forms of social organisation that offer a more balanced supply of resources for Western civilization were required; the tragicomic rules of practice—akin in form and meaning to the new modern conditions—that govern the skewed patterns of conduct and social interactions of Kreisler seem to be the

redemptive means proposed by Lewis to surmount all these bleak human conditions. Kreisler's aggressive behaviour and social encounters unearth the ways in which new forms of domination surreptitiously, and under the promise of *life betterment* arouse, only to worsen the level of comfort of the modern Western world. In doing so, Kreisler cites the sources of modern agony, and the social and psychological phenomena derived from them, that is, the egoism, solipsism and ultimate nihilism of the Western tradition, and the impossibility to transcend it.

Lewis recreates the *play* of the inherent contradiction and absurdity of the human condition yet he is unwilling to render it in traditional and positive ways. His impersonal satiric perspective constitutes a strategy of self-reflection of the spiritual and personal roots of the modern crisis; in other words, a means to reveal and reject the play of the eccentricities of the human beyond the protective boundaries of humanism. In this way, *T* conveys a fictional *image* of early modern Western society that is as crude, violent and absurd as the reality Lewis observes around him, avoiding all possible dogmatism in this way. Thus Lewis builds up a new fictional world by undermining old forms of living and human relationships. In this regard, his shift of focus, from aesthetic to social concerns in the books he wrote after the Great War, only shows his enormous conscious awareness of history and morals, even though he states that his later satire is non-moral.

4. Ficción Mecánica: *Snooty Baronet*

Este capítulo responde a un triple propósito. En primer lugar, contribuimos nuevas ideas acerca de la naturaleza distorsionada de la experiencia social reflejada en *Snooty Baronet* (1932) En segundo lugar, iluminamos su función creativa y crítica en el libro. En tercer lugar, aclaramos los desórdenes sociológicos y psicológicos de sus personajes y sus implicaciones. Para llevar a cabo estas tareas, nos concentramos tanto en la conexión entre el comportamiento y las interrelaciones humanas reflejadas en la novela como en las ideas sociales, políticas, económicas, éticas y filosóficas que el escritor discute en las obras discursivas que componen su proyecto sobre *El Hombre del Mundo*, ya que éstas nos ayudarán a dar validez a muchas de nuestras suposiciones sobre *SB* y las dos novelas posteriores de este análisis.

En su obra crítica autobiográfica *BB*, Lewis cuenta cómo los catorce meses que estuvo en las trincheras durante la Primera Guerra Mundial le permitieron observar muchos homicidios y actos de violencia que transformaron su personalidad profundamente. Dicha experiencia le hace reaparecer en la escena artística con una posición diferente en los años treinta. Lewis observa que el mundo occidental y, más concretamente, su cultura británica está más preocupada con ciertos asuntos políticos, económicos y

científicos que con la moralidad o el arte. Para Lewis, estos nuevos intereses de la sociedad son negativos porque la *política* domina la especulación y los inventos. De este modo, los avances *científicos* se aplican al arte con fines exclusivamente *pragmáticos*. En otras palabras, Lewis entiende estos cambios sociales como ilustraciones del siguiente hecho: el poder de la *mente* y el antiguo espíritu *humanitario* está siendo viciado por el poder de la *carne* y otro tipo de valores transitorios como la *riqueza* o el *poder*.

Así Lewis (*TWM*, 360) cuestiona el hecho de que si los estándares materialistas continúan influyendo a la humanidad en tan gran medida, la mente de los pensadores y los artistas se deteriorarán en el proceso también. Como consecuencia, “la crítica real de la sociedad existente” dejará de existir rápidamente. Según Lewis, los seres humanos necesitan ser individuos *conscientes* y hacer uso de su mente tanto para criticar instituciones existentes como para aportar nuevas ideas que den mayor significado a sus vidas. Si lo hacen, se convierten en criaturas cambiantes; si no, siguen siendo criaturas rutinarias.

Lewis (*TWM*, 144) hace llegar la idea de que explotar nuestra mente e imaginación es un impulso necesario para organizar las oportunidades de la vida y darles significado. De otro modo, los frutos de nuestra mente y el progreso funcionan en la sociedad de forma imperfecta porque inculcan en la mente de la gente la idea del cambio “por el mero hecho del cambio” o por

seguir la moda más que por buscar la perfección. Creemos que la realidad saturada de su era hace desesperar al artista y crítico social. Lewis presagia que las *nuevas doctrinas* del mundo occidental moderno llevarían a su civilización al caos muy pronto. Su crítica principal incumbe a los pensadores que renuncian a su función creadora, y al *Establishment* por suscitar valores progresivos y comerciales en la gente sin importarles las pérdidas espirituales correspondientes. En este sentido, opinamos que lo que Lewis hace, sobre todo, en *SB* es recrear el gran número de implicaciones negativas en las conductas y relaciones humanas surgidas de todos estos hechos mediante la explotación de su teoría satírica mecánica.

En este capítulo examinamos unos pocos de los miles de ciudadanos imaginarios que viven en la ciudad de Londres en el período posterior a la Primera Guerra Mundial. Como muchos ciudadanos, el protagonista de la novela, Snooty está tullido. Todos ellos están sobre-estimulados con los avances tecnológicos y completamente integrados en la industria y los negocios. Además, son profundamente conscientes de su clase social, se muestran cada vez más racionales y están dispuestos a luchar los unos con los otros debido a la crisis económica tan profunda que asola al país.

Su principal personaje, Snooty es un artista que explota su imaginación, creatividad e impulso estético para experimentar con su propio idioma y crear una novela Behaviorista revolucionaria. Su editor Humph le aconseja cambiar

su línea de creación Behaviorista por una más popular como el Mitraísmo. De este modo, Lewis ilustra las formas en que el progreso afecta a representantes artísticos como este editor en su tiempo al tratar de hacer que artistas experimentales como Snooty se involucren en asuntos económicos. Es decir, que escriba por conseguir objetivos exclusivamente pragmáticos.

En este capítulo hablamos de la obra creativa y crítica de Lewis de este período ya que refleja los modos en que la *imaginación* y el *genio* de occidente fueron llevados a los márgenes de la vida a causa del *Progreso*. Influidos por estas circunstancias, Lewis adopta una posición estética *nueva*, y aparece en la vida pública como ‘El Enemigo’, es decir, alguien que afronta y denigra a la sociedad en sus trabajos para contar toda la verdad sobre sus efectos degenerantes en la civilización de Occidente. En su nuevo rol, Lewis es un crítico social agudo y un novelista satírico agrio. Como el Enemigo, Lewis critica la *democratización*, pues considera que es la causa principal de todo este colapso. En su opinión, la Democracia *promete* educación, mejor vida, más libertad, pero también favorece a la *masa* más que al *individuo* convirtiendo a las personas en *tipos*. Por todo ello, Lewis considera que las doctrinas democráticas sólo promueven una conciencia de *masa* o de *negocios* convirtiendo a los ciudadanos en autómatas obsesionados con la noción de *acumulación continua y mejoría*. En consecuencia, la persona más individualista, es decir, la figura del artista, que es responsable del gran avance

de la sociedad, se sustituye por la del “genio” como intelectual burgués de afinidades comunistas exclusivamente movido por un interés económico. En este sentido, Lewis considera que estos artistas burgueses bohemios no se comportan como auténticos artistas revolucionarios ya que hacen uso de su *dinero* y de su *tiempo libre* meramente para escribir como artistas *amateur*.

Lewis critica a la democratización como la fuerza vulgarizadora del arte y del talento artístico en la sociedad Occidental. Por ello, Lewis concibe su función en la vida inculcar la idea de *individualidad* en la humanidad. Para acometer este plan, adopta la *oposición*, y de este modo también, trata de expresar la individualidad de sus opiniones. De esta forma, el Enemigo intenta inculcar en las mentes de la gente que tienen que ser individuos más que tipos, seres humanos con iniciativa y deseo más que máquinas humanas pasivas ya que ésta es la única forma en que pueden crear valores, preservar su libertad y controlar su propia historia.

Podemos decir con certeza que esta actitud provocadora y desafiante del Enemigo hacia el *Zeitgeist* daña su reputación como artista en Gran Bretaña en gran medida. Un ejemplo claro de ello es la acogida de *SB*, una obra cómica dirigida a una larga audiencia con el fin de asegurar algo de dinero, pero que no tiene mucho éxito. En comparación con *T*, *SB* gana en complejidad aunque, de nuevo, Lewis utiliza el *conflicto* como fuerza estructural para dar dinamismo a las relaciones interpersonales de sus personajes. Además, como *T*, *SB* es

intensamente auto-biográfica. Por lo tanto, el comportamiento y los intercambios de recursos de sus protagonistas pueden definirse también como Lewisianos en muchas ocasiones.

T. S. Smith (1984: 16) defiende que, como cualquier novela de Lewis, *SB* es “un fresco satírico suscitado por las percepciones del artista de una sociedad en caos.” Por esta razón, examinamos la naturaleza de esta experiencia social imaginaria tan deformada. Para ello, estudiamos las formas en que Lewis recrea la influencia perniciosa de las nuevas doctrinas mágicas en los patrones de conducta y relaciones de sus personajes en todos los tipos de ámbitos. Más concretamente, Lewis recrea la influencia de doctrinas tan dispares como la teoría biológica de “la supervivencia de los más sanos” de Darwin, la teoría psicológica americana de Watson o Behaviorismo, sistemas filosóficos como el de Bergson (con su énfasis en el instinto más que en el intelecto), formas de gobierno como la Democracia y sistemas económicos como el Capitalismo.

A lo largo de la novela, Lewis ilustra los efectos degenerantes de todos estos sistemas “teológicos” o de pensamiento, y sus construcciones sociales con técnicas estéticas muy peculiares. Lewis refleja las formas en que la civilización occidental imita “las condiciones y valores de las herramientas de la edad mecánica” en su vida diaria. Como resultado, nuestra descripción de la transformación de la sociedad con la llegada de los avances científicos trata de

iluminar la visión del mundo así como la crítica cultural que Lewis lleva a cabo en *SB*.

Siguiendo al psicólogo Gergen (2000: xix), creemos que “relación es la fuente de toda significación humana”. Sin embargo, cuando “la fusión de la gente no es con otra gente sino con lo material,” (tal y como Lewis llama la atención en su producción crítica de este período y en *SB*) es “la máquina” más que lo humano lo que “se celebra” En este sentido, consideramos que nuestro análisis de esta *simbiosis extraña* recreada por Lewis en *SB* en términos humorísticos, y de sus implicaciones críticas permite clarificar los propósitos últimos del artista, una crítica que intenta suscitar un cambio y corrección inmediatos de esta unión de sangre fría.

A nuestro modo de ver, los comportamientos e interrelaciones tan poco convencionales de *SB* constituyen una marca de la postura y crítica independiente de Lewis. Esta técnica mordaz, claramente basada en las mismas condiciones mecánicas de su tiempo, enfatiza sus implicaciones negativas mediante su ilustración en acción. Lewis introduce muchos elementos de sorpresa para hacer que su audiencia sea consciente del mal funcionamiento de su vida privada y social. Sin ninguna duda, Lewis consigue esto hasta un cierto punto. Al introducir muchos elementos de su propia idiosincrasia en la obra, creemos que Lewis no induce comprensión completa de todos estos asuntos.

Por lo tanto, nuestro examen de la actitud interpersonal y las relaciones de Snooty con el resto de personajes puede ser muy útil para diferenciar, por un lado, los tipos de eventos relacionados con la búsqueda de recursos que son propiamente Lewisianos y, por otra, aquellos que son atípicamente humorísticos y, con frecuencia, desdeñosos con el fin de hacer énfasis en los efectos negativos derivados de las circunstancias socio-económicas y tecnológicas anteriormente citadas. En consecuencia, aclaramos aspectos variados tales como el interés de los compañeros de Snooty por el consumo de bienes y servicios del mercado de masas, su deseo por adquirir dinero y bienes como forma de auto-realización, su obsesión con el poder y, sobre todo, su recurrente utilización de la adulación y la violencia para conseguir sus metas personales. Así iluminamos las razones por las cuales Snooty muestra un enorme *disgusto* hacia los miembros de su misma especie en esta historia, aunque él mismo defiende que dicho desprecio se deriva de ser un verdadero escritor Behaviorista.

4. Mechanical Fiction: *Snooty Baronet*

This chapter answers to a triple purpose: first, to contribute *new* insights into the distorted idiosyncrasy of the social experience depicted in *Snooty Baronet* (1932); second, to illuminate its peculiar function in the book; and third, to clarify disordered sociological and psychological phenomena based on it. To carry out these tasks, we concentrate on the connection between human behaviour and interrelationships in the novel, as well as on certain social, political, economic, ethical and philosophical ideas discussed by the writer in his critical *Man of the World* books, which will help us validate many of our assumptions about *SB* and the two subsequent novels of our study.

In his autobiographical work *BB*, Lewis describes the fourteen months he spent in the trenches during World War I as something that made him see much manslaughter and violence, and transformed his personality deeply. As Head (1992: 15) puts it, “World War I disrupted his professional career and social life and altered the values and perceptions of that society.” This experience causes such a profound effect on Lewis’ consciousness that the revolutionary aesthetic impulse that brings him and his contemporaries together to create *Blast* I and II before the Great War vanishes. By this time, Lewis is no

longer famous, while many of his contemporaries, that is, the ones who did not go to the front, start to be renowned. All these circumstances make him reappear in the artistic scene with a different creative stance.

Lewis views how the Western world and, more concretely, British civilization is far more concerned with political, economic and scientific issues than with morals or art. In his view, these *new* interests are negative because *politics* begins to dominate speculation and invention, and *scientific* development is applied to art for pragmatic purposes. In other words, Lewis understands these social changes as illustrations of the following fact: the power of the mind and the old human spirit was being vitiated by the power of the *flesh* and other passing values such as *wealth* or *power*.¹

In *TWM*, Lewis argues that if materialistic standards continue to influence humanity to such a large extent, the minds of thinkers and artists would be deteriorated as well. Thus, “real *criticism* of existing society” (360) would depart in the process very quickly. As he (*TWM*, 468-9) posits,

We surrender what control we have over our lives by consigning ourselves passively to the flux of events.² We become simply creatures of time. If we use our reason, on the other hand, at least we can critically assess our options, and choose which course will best lead to a desired goal. [...] The

¹ In *SB*, there is a direct reference to this idea, when Snooty says: the *flesh* gets all the blame for the vices of the *intellect*! That is *so damned true*! Isn't it?” (237)

² Saying ‘flux of events’ Lewis criticises the values promoted by the Time-philosophy of Bergson and his followers Samuel Alexander, William James, Whitehead, Alfred North Whitehead, Oswald Spengler, Benedetto Croce, ... etc. According to Lewis, this time philosophy deprives mankind of any prospect of improving or altering history by any conscious effort. For reference on this idea, see *TWM*.

mind as a medium through which the universe improves itself and works towards a meaningful goal.

According to Lewis (*TWM*, 144), human beings need to be conscious individuals and use their mind both to criticise existing institutions and to contribute new ideas that give a more meaningful significance to their lives. In doing so, they become creatures of change; otherwise, they merely remain creatures of habit. Throughout the rest of his production, Lewis conveys that exploiting our minds is the necessary urge towards organising the opportunities of life and give meaning to them.³ Unless people do so, the fruits of their minds and progress will work in social functioning in imperfect ways because they will instil in people's minds the idea of "change for change's sake" or the "sterile restlessness of fashion."

As far as we are concerned, the *saturated* reality of Lewis' time makes him despair. Lewis foretells that the *new doctrines* of the Western world will very soon turn its culture and civilization into chaos. His main criticism is of thinkers who surrender that creative function, and of the Establishment, for promoting the aforesaid type of progressive and commercial values without minding spiritual losses. In this regard, we believe that what Lewis does, above all, in *SB* is to recreate a large number of negative consequences that spring from all these facts in satirical (mechanical) terms.

³ For further reference on this argument, see *CHCC* (137-61).

Thus the story of *SB* begins in post-war London, where thousands of citizens—many of who are male cripples—are over-stimulated by technological advance, fully integrated in industry and businesses, deeply class-conscious, increasingly rational and eager to battle against one another, owing to the profound financial crisis that ravages the country. Its main protagonist, Snooty is an artist who exploits his human imagination, creativity and aesthetic impulse in order to experiment with the English language, and thus, create revolutionary Behaviourist novels. His publisher Humph advises him that he should change his usual line of writing for a more *popular* one like Mithraism. In our view, this is why the way in which Lewis illustrates the manners in which *progress* begins to infect representatives of art like Humph in this time, as he tries to make experimental artists like Snooty involve himself in economics.

Consequently, we think that Lewis' critical and creative work of his period reflects the ways in which the Western mind and genius were driven into life's margins due to progress. Influenced by these circumstances, Lewis adopts a *new* aesthetic stance, and appears in public life as 'the Enemy', that is, someone who affronts, and denigrates society in his work in order to tell the whole truth about the decaying effects of advancement in Western civilisation. As he (*DOY*, 48) says,

The notion of *Progress* leads naturally to the development of an attitude of disdain and hostility for anything that is not the *latest model*. So all human values end by imitating the

conditions and values of the constantly improving machines of the Machine Age. Industrial Technique imposes its 'progressive' values upon us. Our individual life is quite overshadowed by the machine, which separates us from all human life that has gone before us. There is no new *human* entity present in the world. It is the *machines* by means of which, or because of which, the Great Revolutions are imposed upon us—and, of course, the economic masters of the Machines. Even more that the Age of Machines, this is the age of machine-guns.

In his new role, Lewis is a witty social critic and a bitter satirical novelist. However, this severe aesthetic stance habitually causes him great inconvenience. For example, *AG* (1930) is his major creative pronouncement upon European civilisation, a massive and extremely powerful book that, far from establishing his reputation as an important literary figure, relegates him to the status of unreadable eccentric.⁴ In this same year, Lewis has *Hitler* (1931) published, a book about the rise of National Socialism in Germany, where he attacks Communists, Democracy and Jews, and supports of Fascism, Franco and Hitler, contributing to worsen his name and financial position in Britain.

During this time, Lewis criticises democratisation because he considers that this is the main cause of the collapse of Western civilisation. In his view, Democracy *promises* education, life betterment and freedom, yet it also favours *the mass* rather than *the individual*, turning out persons to be *types*. For him,

⁴ Lewis writes he massive satire *AG* as an attempt to invite comparison with Eliot's *The Waste Land* and Joyce's *Ulysses*, but he does not achieve so much success with it as the two previous writers do, something that occurs, above all, due to the enormous number of satirical references to public figures like

democratic doctrines only promote a mass or *business* conscience that converts citizens into passive automata obsessed with the notion of continuous accumulation and improvement. Consequently, the most individualistic person, that is, the figure of the artist, who is responsible for the real *advancement* in society, is substituted for that of the “genius” as a bourgeois intellectual of communist affinities, only out of *financial interest*. In this connection, Lewis considers that these bourgeois bohemian artists do not behave as *true revolutionaries* because they merely make use of their money and leisure time to indulge in *amateur* writing. Consequently, Lewis criticises democratisation as the *vulgarising force* of art, and of the artistic talent in Western society. We think that Fry (1997: 347-8) summarises all these facts in very accurate terms:

The Industrial revolution, says Lewis, ushered in a form of society accustomed to incessant metamorphosis. This engenders in society a certain stereotype of thought, which Lewis calls “revolutionary,” best symbolized by the advertisement. [...] The political inference from this “revolutionary” consciousness is, of course, the liberal democracy, the forms of which we are vainly endeavour to preserve. This form of society depends for its stability on the creation of stereotypes of mass thinking, mass entertainment and mass action. It depends, in other words, on a wholesale vulgarising of the creative activity of art, the speculative activity of philosophy, the exploring activity of science.

Owing to all these facts, Lewis conceives his duty in life to instil the idea of *individuality* in mankind. To undertake this plan, he adopts *opposition*. In this way, Lewis tries to express the individuality of his opinions as well. Thus the

Joyce, Gertrude Stein or the ‘Bloomsbury’ that appear in it.

Enemy tries to instil in people's minds that they have to be individuals rather than types, human beings of initiative and will, rather than passive human machines, since this is only the only way in which they can create values, preserve their freedom and control their own history.⁵

This provocative and defiant attitude of the Enemy towards the *Zeitgeist* certainly damages his reputation as an artist in Britain. Thus his books often become censored,⁶ like *SB* whose date of publication is put off in various occasions (it cannot to be published until 1931) due to its numerous satirical attacks on various public figures,⁷ and its obscene treatment of sex.⁸

Unlike the anti-naturalistic *T*, *SB* is a comic novel intended for a large audience.⁹ Lewis writes this popular book in order to have some kind of financial security, yet *SB* does not sell very well. As Lewis acknowledges, compared with *T*, *SB* gains "in speed, comedy and the odd confrontation of character." Here the artist exposes "the grotesque side of lust" as a huge

⁵ Following Edwards (2000: 479), we also consider that this idea is still present in the Post-modernist era

⁶ For a detailed analysis of censorship of Lewis' works, see R. Smith (In Meyers, 1980a: 181-95).

⁷ For example, the characters Rhoda and Daniel Shodbutt in *RQ* are caricatures of Virginia Woolf and Arnold Bennet, respectively. Satters and Pullman in *CM* have frequently been identified with Gertrude Stein and James Joyce ... etc. Concerning *SB*, Meyers (1980a: 213) suggests:

Humph is a caustic characterisation of Lewis' current publisher Rupert Grayson, who was also a strong-jawed King's Messenger and author of crime yarns.

Here Snooty's attitude toward Humph is despicable. However, Armstrong considers that this character is in part based on the hapless Sir Michael Bruce (p. 319). The similarities between Marjorie Firminger and the character Valerie Ritter in *SB* have been acknowledged in several discussions of Lewis' life and work. For further reference on these ideas, see R. Smith (1980: 192-194); Meyers (1980a: 363, n. 26); Lafourcade (1984: 268); Armstrong, (2000: 308-21).

⁸ We support Dr. Leavis (1934) when he defines sex treatment in *SB* as "hard-boiled, cynical and external." Dr. Leavis' statement is made in defence of Lawrence in an article entitled "Mr. Eliot, Mr. Wyndham Lewis and Lawrence," where he questions Lewis' ability to judge his contemporary.

⁹ Concerning its style, Schenker (1992: 86) suggests that it "is that of a "gunman bestseller"". However, "Lewis doesn't take the genre seriously enough to actually write one."

ingredient of “sheer fun”, and treats “his characters with a slapping affection” (1932: 411). However, as Lafourcade (1984: 269) posits, there are various similarities between the two novels concerning their characters.

Snooty has often been described as a combination of Tarr and Kreisler, Humph can be seen as an inflated Hobson, and Val and the London Lily as variations on Bertha and Anastasya.

Compared with *T*, *SB* gains in complexity, yet Lewis again uses *conflict* as a structural force that gives dynamism to the interpersonal relationships of its characters. Like *T*, *SB* is intensely autobiographical as well. Therefore, the behaviour and resource transactions of its characters can also be defined as peculiarly Lewisian in various occasions.

As T. S. Smith (1984: 16) rightly says, *SB* is “a satiric fresco drawn from the artist’s perceptions of a society in chaos.” For this reason, we examine the nature of the distorted social experience shaped in it. As a result, we hope to clarify the causes of such *degeneration* and criticise the multiple social and psychological disorders anchored in it. To carry out this task, we study the ways in which Lewis recreates the harmful influence of scientific doctrines such as Darwin’s biological theory of the “survival of the fittest” and Watson’s American Psychological theory Behaviourism, philosophical systems such as Bergson’s (with its emphasis on instinct rather than intellect), forms of government such as Democracy, and economic systems like Capitalism on the patterns of conduct and relationships of its characters in all types of settings in

SB. Throughout the novel, Lewis illustrates the deteriorating effects of these *new* “theological” doctrines or systems of thought and their social constructions on Western civilization through peculiar aesthetic techniques. In this way, we think that Lewis reflects the forms in which Western civilization started to imitate “the conditions and values of the constantly improving tools of the Machine Age”¹⁰ in their everyday life. As a result, our description of the transformation of society upon the technical triumphs of science tries to be revealing of Lewis’ mind and cultural criticism in *SB*.¹¹

Following the psychologist Gergen (2000: xix), we believe that “relationship is the fountain of all human significance”. However, when “the fusion of people is not with one another, but with material,” as Lewis calls attention to in his critical and creative production, “the machine” rather than the humane “is widely celebrated.” In this sense, we consider that our analysis of this strange symbiosis celebrated by Lewis in *SB* in humorous ways, and its critical implications clarifies this extreme aesthetic device used by the artist in order to invoke an immediate change and correction of this cold-blooded union.

As in *T*, Lewis’ characters in *SB* are concentrated in big metropolitan areas, like millions of specialised insects. These citizens are persuaded to work in

¹⁰ In this sense, we think that Lewis’ fictionalisation of what he considers a chaotic Western world reflects an acute understanding of history and modernity.

¹¹ In support of this idea Munton (1997: 17) states,

Dehumanization is the chief diagnostic of the modern world.’ [...] Dehumanization is a problem to which people are newly exposed. Its forms impose upon them and affect them adversely. [...] The business of modernist art,

order to gain more and more money and improve their standard of living. Their actions are largely controlled by an organised society that causes them to be readily predictable.¹² The State and factory owners control their behaviour as rigorously and systematically as behaviourist social scientists do with monkeys and rats. Consequently, Lewis applies his automata technique in this satirical novel in order to criticise the dehumanising ways in which persons were *manufactured* and made as *predictable* as monkeys and rats in order to answer to a particular type of man promoted by the Establishment in post-war time.

Following Burstein, Snooty is one of these modern men: ex-soldier, with a prosthetic¹³ leg, but nonetheless wholly functional, wholly productive and a fully member of the money economy.¹⁴ Here, Lewis conveys the idea that the State favours new doctrines that suppress the initiative¹⁵ of the British

for Lewis, is to represent this experience.

¹² According to Gergen (2000: 40),

It was psychologists who undertook the task of illuminating the nature of the human being by systematically applying scientific methods. These methods were based on observing pigeons, rats and primates. Some of the most influential works in this field are B. F. Skinner's *The Behaviour of Organisms*, Clark Hull's *Principles of Behaviour*, and Edward Tolman's *Purposive Behaviour in Animal and Men*.

This is why we think that Lewis' notion of Behaviourism and of its objective of reducing humans to insect-like workers of the capitalist machine time, which is clarified in *TWM* (See Edwards, 2000: 298-9), is illustrated in *SB*.

¹³ For further reference on the function of these *prosthetic* elements, which characterise the external appearance of many characters in Lewis' fiction, see Burstein. Here the critic describes that Prosthesis is at the heart of the writer's modernism, which she defines as "cold modernism." We agree with Burstein, when she (1997: 158) posits that this prosthetic imagination is

Inherently violent, because it is born in the battlefield, and built as it is from the mere body's amputation. When the wound has cooled the machine can begin.

¹⁴ In fact, the critic argues that the novel "absorbs the monetary structure" in it. For further reference, see Burstein (1997: 148), where the scholar develops this argument using Simmel's work (1903).

¹⁵ In Lewis' opinion, this individualism or initiative is the characteristic trait that defines objective thinkers. We think that Lewis is following Arnold (1933) and his view of the function of culture in society; a view which is very alike in meaning to Lewis' view of art and the figure of the artist in society.

civilization, while machines take their place in society. In this period, the State plays a direct function in making civilians carry out activities that require no intelligence, particular training or skill, converting them into lazy, passive and conformist masses of puppets. This may be why, in his critical work *DOY*, Lewis says:

No one wants to be ‘free.’ [...] People ask nothing better than to be *types* – occupational types, social types, functional types of any sort. If you force them not to be, they are miserable, [...] For in the mass people wish to be *automata*: they wish to be *conventional*: they hate you teaching them or forcing them into ‘freedom’: they wish to be obedient, hard-working machines, as near dead as possible – as near dead as they can get. (94)

We believe that the extreme unconventionality of the human behaviour and relationships depicted in *SB* constitutes a mark of Lewis’ independent stance

Here is Arnold (1960: 45-50) speaking:

Culture is then properly described [...] as having its origins in the love of perfection; it is *a study of perfection*. It moves by the force, not merely or primarily of the scientific passion for pure knowledge, but also of the moral and social passion for doing good. [...] Now, then, is the moment for culture to be of service, culture which believes in making reason and the will of God prevail, believes in perfection, is the study and pursuit of perfection [...] to learn the will of God, [...] and to make it prevail. [...] Perfection, as culture conceives it, is not possible while the individual remains isolated. The individual is required, under pain [...] to carry others along with him in his march towards perfection, [...] happiness [...] Culture [...] consists in becoming something rather than in having something, in an inward condition of the mind and spirit, not in an outward set of circumstances—it is clear that culture [...] has a very important function to fulfil for mankind. And this function is particularly important in our modern world, of which the whole civilisation is [...] mechanical and external, and tends constantly to become more so. [...] But above all in our country has culture a weighty part to perform, because here that mechanical character, which civilisation tends to take everywhere, is shown in the most eminent degree. [...] The idea of perfection is an inward condition of the mind and spirit is at variance with the mechanical and material civilisation in esteem with us. The idea of perfection as a general expansion of the human family is at variance with our strong individualism, [...] our maxim of “every man for himself.” [...] So culture has a rough task to achieve in this country. [...] Faith in machinery is, I said, our besetting danger.

and critique.¹⁶ This humorous technique clearly based on these same machine conditions highlights their negative effects upon society's functioning by illustrating them in action. As Munton (1997: 17-8) rightly says,

Lewis does not advocate extremism. He means that to create an art consonant with the new conditions, artists must have, or represent themselves as having 'clean, clear cut emotions (which) depend on the element of 'strangeness, and surprise and primitive detachment'. **This is a version of 'making strange' in order to induce an understanding.** (my emphasis)

Lewis introduces many elements of strangeness in order to make his audience aware of their inner and social malfunctioning. Without a doubt, Lewis achieves this to a certain extent. However, we think he fails in this task to induce complete understanding of all these issues because he introduces many elements of his own idiosyncrasy. Concerning the strong autobiographical basis of the novel R. Smith (1980: 181) says,

Snooty Baronet itself offers a revealing insight into the way Lewis worked in these years and the habits, which so often led him to trouble. Not only was the novel attended by extra-literary scandal and pique, but also its strengths as satire are typical of his work at the time.

Lewis makes the grotesque Sir Michael Kell-Imrie (its narrator, main protagonist, and very often, his man made ideological mouthpiece), known to his friends as "Snooty," a baronet with very "limited financial resources" and "a

¹⁶ One of the most amusing sections of the book is that in which Snooty compares himself to a man called William Wyndham, renowned for his independence, extremism, and powerful resentments—characteristics that we think characterise his creator. We believe that the philosophy of Snooty and Lewis

writer who banks on *aversion* as the basis of his career.” As Burstein (1997: 148) continues to argue,

Money is an important sign in Lewis, both at biographical predicaments (the author never had it), and of a structure for narrative relations. It is the gold standard of modern relations—a smoothly functioning system erected on, and producing, aversion and indifference.

Therefore, our examination of the interpersonal attitude and relationships of Snooty with the rest of characters can be very helpful to differentiate, on the one hand, the types of resource related events that are peculiarly Lewisian and, on the other, those that are humorously atypical, and often, contemptuous in nature as a means to draw our attention to the negative effects derived from the aforesaid socio-economic circumstances and technological changes that take place in the post-war Western world. As a result, we hope to clarify varied aspects such as the absurd interest of Snooty’s fellow men in consumption of mass-marketed goods and services, their desire to acquire money and goods as a form of self-realisation, their obsession with power and, above all, their recurrent use of flattery and violence to attain their goals. In this way, we hope to illuminate the extensive types of reasons why Snooty shows disgust to his fellow men throughout the book, even though he says this contempt stems from his being a real Behaviourist writer.

would be one of independence because both of them maintain their convictions in the face of society’s pressures toward conformity to mass standards.

According to Lewis' critic Chapman (1973: 110), this behaviourist technique of Snooty is reminiscent of Tarr's "indifferent" view of life. As we said earlier, Tarr conceives artistic integrity as an imperative. This principle causes him to behave and exchange resources with his own species in disturbing ways; in *SB*, Snooty judges everything in terms of behaviour, and thus, he converts his behaviouristic ideals into absolutes. As the Enemy converts Snooty into both *target* and *medium* of his satire,¹⁷ Lewis' joke is prevalent throughout the novel.

Throughout the novel, Snooty equates *behaviour* to *intuition*. Accordingly, his harsh comments on the external patterns of conduct of his fellow throw into prominence what he considers to be wicked *inner* pulses in them, as they drive them to act and interact with one another in callous manners. Snooty describes his fellow men as being motivated not by logical and rational actions addressed to the achievement of consciously held goals, but by non-logical actions spurred by, first, environmental changes and, second, sensual instincts and material interests. Snooty *exaggerates* or caricaturises their impulsive attitude, ridiculing Watson's behaviourist assumptions about humanity in this way.¹⁸ All in all, Chapman (1973: 110) finds that

Interpersonal relationships are reduced to the conjunction [...] of carapaces with masks. Genuineness is a concept alien to the behaviourists for whom appearance *is* reality.

¹⁷ Just like the main protagonist of Lewis' *AG* Dan Boleyn is.

¹⁸ Lewis had already done so in *TWM*.

Lewis derides Watson's theories by reducing his fictional population to a set of mechanical gestures because, for him, the American psychologist insults the human race, when he substitutes the body for the mind in his system of thought. As we said, the behaviourists see the human body as a machine with no mind, yet possessing two things instead: instinct and habits (speech and others). Lewis (*TWM*, 328) criticises Watson's system because, as a behaviourist, the latter considers that the workings of the mind can be observed from outside, only by watching what the human machine does. Therefore, it could be said that the scrupulous analysis of Snooty in the novel, which makes him present all interpersonal behaviour and social encounters as *automatic*, responds to satirical purposes exclusively.

Here Snooty displays Bergson's division of man into two elements: deadening matter (body) and creative *élan vital* (mind) as a mocking duality, ridiculing the patterns of conduct and wellsprings of his fellow men in this way.¹⁹ Snooty points out that fleshy appetites (concrete resources) condition his species exclusively, as they behave as rigid dead mechanisms. In this regard, their behaviour in the novel must not be taken as real, but as a joke played by the writer throughout it in order to illustrate and criticise all the aforesaid

¹⁹ As it has long been recognised, Lewis' comic technique owns its influence to Bergson, whose lectures Lewis followed at the Collège de France. In *Le Rire*, the French philosopher (1973: 401) displays his theory of comedy, where he conceives the attitudes, gestures and movements of the body as ludicrous because they resemble something mechanised. Bergson considers the human being as essentially comic; Lewis takes his theory to present people as if they were objects to be derided because they believe they are

negative social circumstances. This comedy of *SB* stems from Lewis' use of the "automaton" technique²⁰ of *WB*, where the dichotomy between body and mind, on which his theory of satire is based, conveys the grotesque in man successfully.²¹

Lewis (*TWM*, 329) defends that the behaviourists view human machines as having two types of behaviour: explicit behaviour (most important) and implicit behaviour. The last type of behaviour hides the language machinery, and all the mysteries and metaphysics of life. Accordingly, *word-habits* make up the bulk of the *implicit* forms of behaviour for Behaviourists. In this way, human behaviour is open to objective control, and *language habits* become substituted for *acts*. This is why Snooty often refers to the vices and follies of his fictional partners saying: "Humph had me in the Chin" – just as old Val

real people. For a very accurate study of this influence, see S. Campbell (1998: 94-116).

²⁰ Lewis exploits this comic technique for the first time in his pre-war stories of the 'wild body' series, where itinerant circus families travel the Breton coast performing their artistic suffering of being. They make reference to the tragicomic fact that as the mind is the very seat of being, the place where all the energy of the intellect is located, this is irrevocably trapped inside the treacherous human body. As Normand (1992: 19) rightly says, "these 'wild body' stories constitute the first artistic attempt where Lewis outlines "the burlesque drama of existential being, human civilization, and the nature of selfhood".

These pre-war stories are collected together in *WB* in 1928. These comic performances of *WB* show the aforementioned disjunction between mind and body, the latter being identified with a clumsy human machine. The 'wild body' short stories signal failure of the human 'will' to transcend this tragic situation; a fact symbolised by the tragicomic encounters of its protagonists. In *AG* and, later, in *SB*, laughter is the tragicomic assertion of the 'wild body' over the energy of the mind, the nullity of the Self "to triumph over habit and convention". Thus this tragicomic projection of the dualism of mind and body becomes the structural and thematic core of *SB*.

²¹ The best discussions of Lewis' theory of satire appear in his seminal critical works *MWA* and *RA*. The first work constitutes a defence of satire, which Lewis gives the meaning of Art and purports that its main subject is the external or the surface of things and people. For discussion of Lewis' theory, see Wagner (1957: 269), Kenner (1984: 86), and Elliot (1960: 223-37).

“had me in the Bed” (132), ridiculing their respective obsession with fleeting values such as money and sex.²²

Snooty views his fellow men possessing machine-like essences located not too far from the surface. Thus his role in the novel is no more than to *provoke* them to *act* and *react*, while he *predicts* their future patterns of conduct, and comically comments on the major contemptible principles that motivate their social interactions or resource transactions. Thus we think that Lewis calls attention to the following fact: if the mind is redefined as science, and its representatives, that is, philosophers, thinkers and artists adopt the methods, meta-theories and manners of the natural sciences, very soon people will incorporate them in their lives. As a result, Western culture and civilisation will run a serious risk as scientific progress will be used by intellectuals not to cause *spiritual* advance, but to calculate, predict and, even, systematise phenomena like human behaviour. In the end, they will only give origin to a positive, rational picture of the universe, and of man’s place in it, something that, like Lewis, we consider would be fatal at all events.

In 1956, B. Russell views this process carried out by social scientists like Behaviourists in society as if they produced a mathematics of human behaviour as precise as the mathematics of machines. Thus we consider that the

²² In his doctoral dissertation, Ortiz (1994) concentrates on recurrent terms that appear throughout Lewis’ fiction as semiotic imaginary signs through which he reflects his satirical attacks on certain pernicious trends of behaviour, people and ideas. Some of these recurrent terms are: chin, shell, hunchback, bald,

harshly satirical and external descriptions of Snooty illustrate the obnoxious ways in which his companions have become predictable, after having assimilated all these doctrines into their minds and modes of living. As Lewis (*TWM*, 377-8) says,

We are surface-creatures only, and by nature are meant to be only that, [...] and the “truths” from beneath the surface contradict our values. [...] For us the ultimate thing is the surface, the last-comer, and that is committed to a plurality of being.

These facts would explain why his companions copy or imitate one another’s trends of behaviour all the time. In the end, all of them conduct themselves like Snooty does, that is, in snooty ways. Consequently, we consider that the function of Snooty in the book is not so much to *intervene in* the process of production as his companions do as, using a Lewisian (*CHCC*, 261) metaphor, “to tell the manufacturer (his public) what he must *refrain from doing* with his machine” through comic ways.²³ As we said earlier, Lewis is aware that “art will die”. The solution for him (*MWA*, 183), as a satirist, is

to bring human life more into contempt each day. [...] It will, by illustrating the discoveries of science, demonstrate the futility and absurdity of human life. That will be its ostensible function

young, old, to stammer, to limp, children ... etc.

²³ Concerning this comedy of the *new art*, Ortega y Gasset (1958: 381-5) says

La nueva inspiración es siempre, indefectiblemente, cómica. [...] el arte mismo se hace broma. [...] es farsa. [...] esencialmente se burla de sí mismo. [...] el arte nuevo ridiculiza el arte. [...] El arte se ha desplazado hacia la periferia. [...] Al vaciarse el arte de patetismo humano queda sin trascendencia alguna—solo como arte, sin más pretensión.

Thus Lewis exploits this automaton technique again, in order to *magnify* the forms in which his characters, in their obsession with values like sex, action, time, wealth and power,²⁴ turn out their interpersonal conduct and contact to be fanatical.²⁵ It could be concluded then, that Lewis' skewed view of human nature grows out of this particular machine literary technique, which his extremely grotesque and violent narrator Snooty exploits in the novel by exaggerating their *impulsive* behaviour and ruthless social encounters in order to reflect, denigrate and reject their faulty principles.²⁶ As a result, this first-person narrator ridicules and shows disgust towards the dishonest attitudes of his fellow men, and derides their intuitions and emotional drives. By doing so, he also opposes all literature and sciences that deal with the unconscious in contemptuously satirical ways, conveying both his personal experiences concerning monetary shortage and his criticism on war and contemporary

²⁴As Lewis expresses this in *AG*: 'Wealth [...] makes me laugh' [...] seems absurd to me. It is a *man* (who) become(s) a *thing*. (288)

²⁵ In support of our view, we take Edwards' (2000: 436), when he suggests that Lewis uses Snooty "to reveal the psychopathology of Behaviourism".

²⁶ Our critical views of *SB* follow the line of those initiated by Kenner (1954) and Pritchard (1968), which were gathered by Materer in his book (1976: 101). Later in time, critics like Schenker (1992: 87) retakes them saying:

Until recently, Lewis's critics have dismissed *Snooty Baronet* as a minor work, calling it "pointless" and "wayward." [...] Timothy Materer proposed that readers should carefully distinguish between the narrator (Snooty) and the author and should approach the book with the same appreciation for irony that allows Nabokov's *Lolita* to be read as an affirmation of the human values Humbert almost destroys. Materer suggests that Snooty's callousness simply exposes the underlying brutality of a civilization that sent young men off to lose legs and lives in the trenches of France.

Recent critics such as Munton (1997; 1998) support this line of argument as well.

English society, while remaining *detached* from it. As Elliot (1968: 121) suggests,

The medium of satire is laughter, says Lewis—not the laughter of *Punch* or gentle parody or the characteristic English sense of humour, but a bitter, cold, *tragic* laughter in accord with satire’s cruelty and its destructiveness. Lewis sometimes speaks of satire as hybrid form, standing midway between tragedy and comedy: a grinning tragedy [...] But the emphasis is on the tragic. [...] Satire is *cold*; it is the grotesque; it is found in everything good; in short, “Satire is good!”

Thus Snooty shows his audience the obnoxious acts that they commit against one another, only to fulfil their own *self-interests*. In this regard, his antipathetic, coarse and absurd stance is the means through which Lewis expresses his opposition to the mechanistic and utilitarian values that motivate the *hypocritical* behaviour and relationships of his British fellow men.²⁷

As other critics have said, *SB* does not convey the complexity of human nature. However, this fact does not imply that Lewis is incapable to construct it; he barely intends to *illustrate* what the Establishment was promoting *instead of* art in his time.²⁸ Lewis’ objective is not to dwell upon the hidden motives that condition his creatures to behave in the ominous ways they do in order to recriminate them as a distressing moralist would do; he prefers to make Snooty an objective writer and a “man-of-science” (112) for other types of purposes. As Snooty says,

²⁷ In *MWA*, Lewis posits: “It is only by “coarseness” that we can paint our picture truly.” (1934: 202-3)

Mine is a picturesque method. I show my exhibit *in action*. I select one case of typical behaviour. [...] Some of my specimen *people-behaving* (or ‘misbehaving’) have been treated as if they were characters in a novel. [...] I display their ‘behaviour’ in a suitable situation – **adapted of course to bring out the most full-blooded response of which they are capable**. These behaviourist specimens of mine [...] From the standpoint of psychology they were quite ridiculous. But that was not, it seemed, the way to regard them at all! No. *They should be looked upon purely as art.* (66-9; bold letters are mine)

Therefore, this intolerant narrator focuses only on what he observes, describes the outsides of his fellow men, often depriving them of resources (or showing aggression) because they have points of view different from his own. This is why his behaviouristic approach to things and people is external.²⁹ Like his dialogical creator Lewis, Snooty merely wants to emphasize that he is afraid of the symptoms, which he also dislikes in himself and in other people who behave in these intolerable ways. In this connection, Spender (1935: 214) says,

The fact is that by imposing an external order on internal disorder, by ruggedly insisting on and accepting only the outsides of things, one does not improve matters. One merely shouts and grows angry with anyone who has a point of view different from one’s own. For another point of view is sure to seem visceral, internal and decadent. One is, in a word, merely asserting that one is afraid of the symptoms, which

²⁸ I am very much indebted to Prof. Carmelo Cunchillos for this idea.

²⁹ In this regard, we must take Lewis’ satirical approach in the following terms suggested by Munton (In Corbett, 1998: 18).

Lewis conceives of the world of objects. [...] Satire typically renders people as objects: [...] Lewis’s theory of satire depends upon the discrepancies that arise when an object-in this theory, the human body, understood as one object amongst many – attempts to think.

one dislikes in oneself, and more particularly in other people,
not that one can cure them.

Spender is absolutely right in his appreciation. Lewis aims to show the decay of Western civilisation upon the technical triumphs of science and progress, but the images he reflects, and the methods he employs to do so only give origin to more antagonism and violence.³⁰ Lewis uses comedy in *SB* to say something about the brutality of the period and the hypocrisies by which most people lived in his time. His novel is mostly concerned with the deceptiveness of behaviour, its pathological forms, significance and implications. It could be said then, that Lewis' disagreeing anti-hero, who defends a nihilistic view of society and life, behaves in this subversive manner in order to tell the whole truth out of the restraints of civilization. Unlike any man of science in this time, Snooty does not supply any positive principle/s or shows more agreeable ways to live that compensate for so much human suffering. However, he carries out a very valid self-conscious critique of society and its ideology, that is, one that is as illuminating as his disorganised, repetitive and discursive *Man of the World* books.

Here Lewis unearths many latent conflicts and deficiencies of society so that this contemplates their perfection. In this formerly a 500.000 word

³⁰ In support of this idea, the social psychologists Cook and Wilson (1979: 106) posit, "attributing one's own failures to other people should lead to greater feelings of hostility and aggression."

manuscript, later divided into six books for the purposes of publication, he presents the ‘Man of the World’ as the “threatening usurper of that specialised function” (Edwards, 2000: 293), which corresponds to the artist. This particular man follows a “philosophy of duplicity and ruthless mechanical intrigue, directed to the reaching of a definite material end.” (*LF*, 188-93)

The Man of the World is a convenient way of describing [...] mankind hardening and mechanizing [...] *in order not to feel* and in order to avoid suffering. He is also mankind, as opposed to womankind, taking many wrinkles from the subject sex, learning its cowed and cynical duplicity, in order to survive. [...] Iago is strictly the Man of the World [...] influenced by his great spokesman, Machiavelli [...] the king of foxes [...] armed [...] with inertia. [...] He is the most real illustration of Darwinian survival, not by means of fitness, but by strategy; and above all of bare *survival*, and of constant adaptation of environment – nothing more [...] his labyrinth, which is usually termed civilization, in which he buries himself deeper away from nature every day: [...] is “the World”; [...] Today the man of the World [...] has become reckless from impunity. (*LF*, 129-36)

Here Lewis views the effectiveness of law enforcement institutions to prevent this emerging ‘Man of the World’ from attaining his materialistic goals through illicit methods very sceptically. In *SB*, Snooty comments that he and his fellow men live in a “healthy life of killing and eating primarily.” (60) However, they demonstrate that their ability of *adaptation* to future conditions is immense. Throughout the story, Snooty reflects how hard in feeling and cynical in nature all of them are as he satirically describes the many strategic tactics they use to reach their unorthodox aims. As a result, what Snooty points out is the fact that

all of them follow the Darwinian law of animal³¹ survival by ruthless struggle in order to gain mastery or power in the *democratic*, but uncivilized world they inhabit.³² This is why Snooty conveys a world that looks like a business world, where its members compete and fight, only to accomplish their transitory goals. For all these reasons, we believe that Snooty, his literary agent Captain Humphrey Cooper Carter known as Humph, and Snooty's lovers Valerie Ritter (Val) and, in less degree, Lily in *SB* constitute impersonations of Lewis' Man of the World.

In sum, the adequacy of our sociological methodology for studying *SB* arises because Snooty concentrates on everything about his fellow men that is directly and peripherally observable. He describes their conduct or all the facts about their human machines "in terms of stimulus and response" or "habit-formation." This satirical device permits to systematise the form and outcome of their interpersonal behaviour and relationships in terms of resource transactions, and thus, comment on the multiple social and psychological implications derived from them. In this regard, our examination focuses on these fictional machines and their movements, as they provide the keys to comprehend much better their distorted inner motivations.

³¹ As Normand (1992: 52) suggests,

The important point is that Lewis regarded war as the degradation of civilisation, and that this was expressed in the release of animal and mechanical responses in the activities of warfare.

³² The Darwinian doctrine of "the struggle for survival" is equated by Lewis to "Bergson's creative evolution" and to the "will-to-power" of Nietzsche" in *ABR* and *TWM*.

As we said, urban environmental conditions affect this fictional population in very negative ways since they behave no more than as passive respondents to the immense network of stimuli presented to them directly through the senses. Lewis' characters are unable to resist their influence. This is why their human behaviour and encounters work defectively.

In *SB*, Lewis exposes the loss of "the divine" (Edwards, 2000) in man by a culture devoted both to the control of all human and natural energies, and to the rationalization of every impulse. Here the artist reflects his intense dissatisfaction with modern political institutions for sympathetically promoting views that pervade the sciences, government and business, provoking devastating inroads into the sphere of informal relations. These facts explain why its protagonists are not tolerant or humanitarian individuals but passive, corrupt, evil-like and incomplete animals. In other words, they are illustrations of a whole culture and civilization going *in reverse*.

Lewis' *SB* illustrates the fact that if people are in the world open to observation thanks to scientific advance, he, as an artist, is to do the same in his work. Thus what one sees in his work is what one gets, and if one applies systematic powers of reason and observation to his characters one can know what sort of character he/she is dealing with because Lewis caricaturises the surfaces of modern culture here. Like behavioural psychologists do, Lewis

sheds some new light on the human nature; as an artist, he describes it to us in experimental, objective and ludicrous ways. In fact, as Snooty says,

I occupy myself only with scientific research. [...] a man-of-letters [...] my investigations into the nature of the human being had led me to employ the arts of the myth-maker, in order the better to present (for the purposes of popular study) my human specimens. (3)

This is why his analysis of his fellow men often results as “scrupulous” (3) and acid as that depicted by the Renaissance Florentine Niccolo Machiavelli in his work *The Prince*, a work *SB* shares many traits with.

Thus *SB* narrates the adventures of the well-known behaviourist writer Snooty in London, France and the “Persian” desert.³³ Despite his lameness, Snooty is recruit by his mean literary agent Humph in order to investigate the cult of Mithras³⁴ or Persian bull fighting, subject of his next book. Humph wishes to have Snooty kidnapped by native brigands in Persia, and then heavily ransomed in order to provide him with publicity. Snooty has two lovers: a London tobacconist called Lily, whom he has in great esteem, and Val, a mature gossip-column obsessed with writing pornographic novels and himself. Snooty dislikes the latter very much, yet he cannot avoid that she accompanies him and Humph in their Mithraic adventure. The novel ends with Snooty

³³ During the 1930s, Lewis journeyed to North Africa, America, the south of France and Berlin. Lewis’ impressions of Morocco are reflected in *FIB*, where he praises the bravery of the Berbers. The “Persian” desert depicted in *SB* is based on Morocco.

³⁴ The Mithraic cult is defined as “a religion of Action” in *SB* (101). Indeed, the term refers to bull fighting. In *SB*, the Mithras cult is used to ridicule Lawrence’s work *Sol Invictus-Bull Unsexed*. For reference of this subject, see R. Campbell (1936: 195).

returning to Britain, after killing Humph at random and abandoning Val in a very bad health state.

The attitude of Snooty towards his fellow men is antagonistic in form and his relationships are frequently conditioned by sentiments of hatred.³⁵ He believes that Humph and Val socialise with him only driven by sentiments of jealousy and power exertion. Thus Snooty acknowledges to have been “caught” (62) by Humph the very day he met him. This feeling of antipathy towards Humph increases to such a high degree as time passes by that this is the main cause of the *anxiety*, *frustration* and *anger* of Snooty throughout the book. As a result, most of his resource exchanges with Humph and Val are negative predominantly.

Here Humph is a reputed gentleman of high social and financial status; Snooty has extreme concrete resource needs. In Snooty’s view, Humph is no longer interested in him as a friend as he used to, when they served Scotland in the war; Humph is exclusively driven by animal egotism now. Thus this desire of Humph for financial growth is beastly, and his ability of adaptation to future conditions immense. This is why rather than interacting with Snooty in order to achieve *intrinsic* satisfaction, Humph appears to be forced into his company

³⁵ Concerning this issue, Schenker (1992: 89) says

Snooty’s typically obnoxious behaviour toward others can be traced back to a period of convalescence at the end of the war when he read Melville’s *Moby Dick*.

In *SB*, Snooty does identify himself with the whale (“*I felt like the whale*” (61)). In this sense, we think that Snooty sets out to develop a plan of attack against his fellow men, for they seem to be committed to the destruction of all noble values, like the soul.

only to gain *extrinsic* rewards such as wealth, which he appears to use to exert control over Snooty. As a result, Humph is depicted as a representative of the new cosmopolitan Bohemia in the novel, that is, someone who substitutes money for talent as a qualification for membership.

Naturally, this desire of wealth and power of Humph makes Snooty not command any respect or sympathy for him. The resource interests of the former convert him into a thing or an anxious “carnival doll” (58). It is not strange then that their interpersonal relationships are characterised by frequent inequality, imbalance and confrontation. As Pritchard (1968: 109) suggests, Snooty is aware that “he is a puppet, (yet) also knows he is surrounded by puppets; and he proceeds *to manipulate* them with vigorous abandon.” (my emphasis)

It is our contention that all the main characters of *SB*, except for McPhail, use frequent *strategic* devices in their social interactions in all manner of settings as a *means* to reach their resource commodities. As Lafourcade (1984: 260) rightly says, *SB* is “too systematic and playful to be pathological”. However, we also believe that Lewis’ concern with identity signals as behaviour in this satirical work is not arbitrary at all; they simply reflect his extreme interest for making them prominent through art so that the large numbers of problems that are latent in his society are thrown into the surface in this way. As a result, Lewis makes sure that his audience reassesses the large number of negative implications derived from them. More concretely, we refer

to two social and psychological phenomena that Lewis' critics have not studied in great detail, yet we think they are very prominent in *SB*: Machiavellism and conformity. In our opinion, *SB* contains clear evidence that its four main characters conduct themselves answering to Machiavellian practices most times. This is why they usually exchange a given resource for its opposite in Foa's circular structure.

As far as we are concerned, Humph is a Machiavellian because he uses guile, deceit and opportunism in his interpersonal relationships with Snooty and other characters. Humph takes an unflattering view of Snooty and Val because he considers them to be weak and easily subject to pressure from him. Humph knows that Snooty has extreme material resource needs, and feels obliged to run errands (do services for) for him. This is why Humph asks Snooty to write a book on the popular Mithras cult (which is opposite in ideology to Snooty's behaviouristic ideals) shows signs of affection (love) and admiration (status) for him and promotes his work (services). By doing so, Humph demonstrates to have an abstract morality or, more accurately, to lack it in many occasions, as his ultimate goal is only to attain power.

Snooty is slightly Machiavellian as well because he gives particularistic commodities such as status and love to Val (only in the form of sexual pleasures, he never kisses her) merely to obtain money from her. Similarly,

Snooty *conforms* to the views of Humph and Val in order to obtain the concrete resources he needs.

Finally, Lily makes use of these types of tactics as well, as she increases her signs of respect (status) and affection (love) towards Snooty, when she knows that he is a baronet, only to obtain supplies of money and goods from him in case of scarcity. All in all, all of Lewis' characters are opportunistic because they *manipulate* one another for their own *self-interests* and *pragmatic* purposes continually. They are Machiavellians because they are low in concern with conventional morality, take an instrumentalist or rational view of others, and have relative lack of affect in the interpersonal relationships they establish, low ideological commitment and absence of personal closeness or empathy in relationships.³⁶

Accordingly, Lewis' characters try to achieve their needed resources in situations that do not permit them an exchange of such resources. Their behavioural practices and social interactions are unorthodox in meaning most times, yet they accept and carry out these practices as social norms. In this sense, we think that Lewis is at his best at satirically showing his audience the high degree of illegitimacy accepted by society in his time.

³⁶ Our analysis follows the theoretical assumptions of Foa (1974: 252-61), who makes reference to the study of Machiavellism by Christie and Geis (1970) with only minimal changes in terminology for his redefinition of this concept under the Resource Theory framework.

The resource categories that constitute the Machiavellian's goal are unlikely to be the ones which characterise the friendship institution, that is, love and, to a lesser extent, status and services. The Machiavellian is after less particularistic resources, that is, the very ones which are not usually exchanged among friends. In other words, Machiavellism is a term that applies to persons who, well provided with particularistic resources, have a strong need for non-particularistic ones.³⁷

These people have been called Machiavellians after Machiavelli wrote *The Prince*, a book of cynical advice to the ruler, which has turned out the writer to be identified with the idea of *manipulative* behaviour. In our view, Humph and Snooty respond to the prototype of High Machiavellians because they are less in need to receive love (and perhaps also status) than less Machiavellic ones such as Val and Lily. Particularistic transactions do not constitute for the former a goal in itself, but merely means to the acquisition of less particularistic resources that they value more. Thus High Machs like Humph and Snooty maximise their share of non-particularistic resources while letting the other characters have the particularistic ones they cherish. Humph and Snooty do better in situations that permit the transaction of particularistic resources in addition to the non-particularistic ones explicitly played for. They are not persuadable. Indeed, when nothing but status is to be gained by winning

³⁷ See Christie and Geis (1970).

the other's approval, Humph and Snooty engage less in ingratiation than do Val and Lily, who are low on Machiavellism.³⁸

Like typical High Machs, Humph and Snooty are young and live in a large modern city.³⁹ They have a generally unflattering opinion of others, a cynical view of people in general and of specific individuals.⁴⁰ These two High Machs are more cooperative than Low Machs like Val and Lily because they are more rational.⁴¹ One of the most significant advantages of these two High Machs in competitive bargaining with Lows such as Val and Lily is that the latter become distracted by potentially ego-involving elements in the bargaining context, while Humph and Snooty remain detached from such concerns and concentrate on winning.⁴²

Since the modern society portrayed by Lewis in *SB*, and particularly its urban sub-culture, favours non-particularistic exchanges over particularistic ones, these Machiavellic individuals are particularly well adjusted to the exchange conditions of this modern urban culture. Snooty and Humph fit so well because they have low need for particularistic resources and high need for non-particularistic ones. At the same time, these types of individuals thrive on the need of others for particularistic resources in a culture.

³⁸ See Jones, Gergen and Davis (1962).

³⁹ See Christie and Geis (1970: 315-21)

⁴⁰ See 'the Harris study' (Christie and Geis, 1970: 52)

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 189.

⁴² *Ibid.* 209.

Therefore, it could be said that the structure of the modern society depicted by Lewis in *SB* facilitates the types of situations in which High Machs win, something that explains why their orientations toward manipulation increase as the story develops.⁴³

One of the tactics used by these four Ingratiators is *conformity*.⁴⁴ Conformity is a change of belief and behaviour in order to become more similar to another person or group. Thus Lewis' characters conform in order to obtain social approval, love and status in return. Since people tend to like those who are similar to them, these characters increase their chances of being accepted when, by conforming, they become more like the people whose approval they seek.

Conformity is a technique of *ingratiation*⁴⁵ when the resources sought in return are less particularistic. However, Machiavellians tend to reject conformity when only status is to be gained from it,⁴⁶ even though they are quick to agree when resources they value more than status are in sight. As a result, persons with a moderate degree of self-esteem are most inclined to conform because, when self-esteem is quite high, there is no incentive for

⁴³ Ibid. 358.

⁴⁴ For reference on "conformity" studies, see Nord (1969: 208). *Conformity* is another notion re-interpreted by Foa under his sociological framework.

⁴⁵ Jones and Gerald (1967: 586).

⁴⁶ Jones, Gergen and Davis (1962)

conforming, yet when this is too low, there is not enough status to start the exchange.⁴⁷

In our view, all these notions are tremendously helpful in order to clarify the nature of the interpersonal performance and relationships of Lewis' four main *dramatis personae* of *SB* in a new light. Moreover, Foa's hypotheses concerning Machiavellism permit justify many of the arguments discussed by Lewis in some of his discursive *Man of the World* books such as *LF* and *ABR*,⁴⁸ which support our line of argument about the novel here. We must bear in mind that Lewis does not differentiate between Machiavellism and ingratiation; he fuses them into one: Machiavellism. However, his insights into the human nature concerning this notion of Social Psychology are very revealing. For all these reasons, it is our intention to demonstrate that these four characters constantly make use of *manipulative* techniques in their daily transactions, as they do not initiate relationships as goals in themselves, but merely as stepping stones for the acquisition of other resources that they value more. As a result, they constitute High and Low Machiavellians, and ingratiators.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Empirical studies of the relationship between *conformity* and *self-esteem* such as McGuire (1969: 250-251) generally support these predictions.

⁴⁸ For example, Lewis (*ABR*, 362-3) considers that conformity has grown in the Western world "in the interests of great-scale industry and mass production" because, for their representatives, "the smaller the margin of diversity the better." Lewis is views the fact that "EVERYTHING [has] ASSUME(D) an increasingly associational form [...] fostered in the interests of economy in our overcrowded world" as having very negative effects on society's individuality and quality of life. Naturally, these effects are illustrated in *SB* through its characters.

⁴⁹ See Christie and Geis (1970: 315-27)

Thus their characteristic traits of behaviour correspond to those of typical flatterers.⁵⁰ The rules of practice that govern their patterns of conduct do not conform to exchanges that are typical of any social institution, but to unorthodox trends of achieving need satisfaction. This is why their attitude and social interactions are often illicit in form and obnoxious in significance.

In the first place, we shall concentrate on the attitude and resource transactions carried out by Humph and Snooty. As we said, the resource categories that constitute the object of exchange for these two friends are not the ones that usually characterise the friendship institution, that is, particularistic ones. On the one hand, Humph gives love, status, information and services to Snooty, and does services for him as well. Accordingly, Humph shows him affection, admiration for his work, discusses literary issues with him, and attends to the publicity and promotion of his books. On the other, Snooty only reciprocates him in kind with commodities like information and services. Despite the fact that Snooty obtains more benefit out of their resource transactions than Humph does, the former is not satisfied with their social exchanges. Hence Snooty carries out frequent negative exchanges of status towards Humph. As he says, “this man is a puppet [...] my agent – he attends to my publicity, and is my go-between for my books, with those old ruffians the publishers.” (59)

⁵⁰ See the crude typology of *flatterers* established by Jones in his work (1964: 48).

Snooty should be satisfied with their resource exchanges, as he gains many of his needs, while Humph does not. The degree of personal satisfaction of Humph after sharing resources in these *unequal* ways should not be entirely positive, since there is not balance between the resources he gives and receives. In other words, there is no *equity*, but great imbalance in their social transactions. Humph should show less and less signs of affection and respect for Snooty, their transactions should deteriorate in frequency and quality and their bonds should wane as time passes by. However, their resource transactions do not answer to Foa's predictions because both characters act in their own *self-interests* all the time. As Snooty claims: "I *will* not be made responsible for my agent by you or anybody else! [...] It's my ultimatum". (261)

In our view, their public roles—publisher and writer—cause their capacity for private *genuine friendship* to vanish. Like we observe in the present century (but not completely), close friendship relationships—the celebrated bond between two people, which was very important in the nineteenth century (in this century, devotion to a friend of the same sex could even eclipse the bond of marriage)—have not a preponderant significance in the thirties', as this novel distortedly reflects. Snooty and Humph do not grant *intrinsic* worth or value to each other because *material* or *concrete* resources are at stake. Consequently, we could say that their *public* life has given way to *privatised* and *defensive* modes of living.

Things evolve in this distorted way all the time, because Snooty feels that he is in Humph's *power*, and thus, this fact causes him much *frustration* and *anxiety*. Needless to say, Snooty retaliates on Humph by showing constant *aggression*. Here, Humph suggests Snooty that he should modify his behaviouristic line of writing for a more popular one such as Persian "bull-fighting", but Snooty does not wish to write about Mithraism because he considers it to be a sentimental (having to do with the deep interior of people) "pantomime." (203) Since Humph keeps on flattering him, Snooty suspects that the former tries to *use* him somehow ("His peroration had the stiffening of some *selfish purpose* as yet undisclosed; it was perfectly evident." (78; my emphasis)) In our opinion, Humph is the personification of an "unreal, materialist world, where all "sentiment" is coarsely manufactured and advertised [...] disguised." (ABR, 181) In view of that, Humph is always plotting against Snooty (and other characters) in order to control him.

Quite often, Humph imposes his will on Snooty by means of threats of exercising negative resource sanctions. This effective means of driving Snooty to make things such as writing on the Mithras cult for fear of losing his job, being ostracised or decreasing his social standing is a polar form of power, which rests on the deterrent effect of negative resource exchanges (aggression), and influence based on rewards, as that characteristic of positive exchange

transactions.⁵¹ These circumstances cause Snooty to find himself in a constant dilemma. On the one hand, he needs to sell his books because “most of his mail” are “bills.” (8) Notwithstanding, he neither can afford to go to Persia nor has any interest in going there to write on such *charlotade*. This is why he needs the help of her lover Val, that is, her concrete resources.

“You could do just what you liked of course – you need never see me if you didn't want to. And it would cost you nothing – don't be angry Snoots. You are so absurd about money. You are too proud – that's where it is *Sir Michael!* I know I've put my foot in it – but if I like to spend my three or four hundred pounds in that way why shouldn't I – you'd come and stay with me if I were *rich* and not ask to pay for your bed and breakfast, would you!⁵² Why shouldn't you with *me!* I *am* rich at the moment—or I *shall* be. Why not – it's snobbish of you!”

This was certainly very bad. [...]

“I don't mind how much you frown, so long as you do what I ask, Snoots. [...] “You're so beastly proud – if it wasn't for your silly old title you'd act differently [...] Isn't that *good psychology*, Snoots darling?”

"Yes I'll come!" I said.

"You *will!!!*" (55)

Even though Val is willing to cover Snooty's expenses asking him nothing in return, he refuses her money. Val appears to find his pride and snobbishness

⁵¹ For further reference on these negative sanctions, see Blau (1964: 116).

⁵² According to Christie and Geis (1970: 358),

The manipulative high-Machs subjects have a singular disregard of others as individuals and tend to stereotype them as weak and subject to pressure. The advantage of high Machs have in manipulating others is that they seem more accurate in their views of others' weakness in general, and that the low Machs permit themselves to be run over and out manoeuvred by the intransigent highs while clinging to their idealistic interpretation of how people should behave.

This extract by Val shows that Snooty is the real High Mach, while she responds to the personality of a low Mach. Val is a low Mach because she clings to her idealised view of Snooty and is generally less satisfied with their interpersonal relationship.

absurd; Snooty fears that if he accepts her money he will have to reciprocate her,⁵³ and this fact will allow Val to exert power over him. This type of reciprocation processes are explained by the social scientist Blau (1964: 93-113) as follows:

Social exchange differs in important ways from strictly economic exchange. The basic and most crucial distinction is that social exchange entails unspecified obligations. The prototype of an economic transaction rests on a formal contract that stipulates the exact quantities to be exchanged. Wealth is undoubtedly employed [...] often to maintain power over people in the complex economic structures in modern society [...] (rather than as a sign of one's generosity) [...] The reason for this [...] is the segmental nature of modern society, which makes the approval of most of the persons with whom we come into contact of little significance for us. Failure to reciprocate engenders loss of credit and loss of trust, and it ultimately brings about exclusion from further exchanges and a general decline in social status, particularly as a person's reputation as one who does not honour his obligations spreads in the community. Social exchange [...] involves unspecified obligations, the fulfilment of which depends on trust.

Bearing in mind all these assumptions, we think that Snooty's attitude is reasonable; Val's is slightly awkward. In normal circumstances, Val should accuse Snooty of ingratitude because reciprocation is expected. However, she *conforms* to his values. By doing so, we think she behaves as an automata, as described by Lewis, and as a Low Mach or an Ingratiator, as Foa predicts.

Generally speaking, the structure of the resource transactions of Snooty and Val could be said to be as follows: Snooty carries out scarce positive

⁵³ See Blau (1964: 93-113).

exchanges of information, love and status with Val, while negative transactions of these very resources and others like services are far more preponderant. Snooty exerts *aggression* on Val intentionally. As he says: “old Val revolts me [...] the old harlot” (9), “I feel like vomiting” (10) every time I have sex with her. She is “lazy” because she wastes her time phoning her friends (12), a “doll” because she engages in the great shopping centres daily, an “old sentimental, fat and dirty lesbian” because she is obsessed with “*getting him [and everybody] in the bed*” (10) at home, a promiscuous woman because she often attends parties and orgies (12), a “suffering amateur” for aiming at becoming a writer recreating her sexual affairs in books, ... etc. Thus Snooty considers Val a mechanical, restless, half-useless individual; in other words, a passive civilian living in the new liberal economic era. This couple usually have arguments (“I don’t know why you say such things to me” [...] “Don’t quarrel with me Snooty, please darling.” (227)) Thus their attitude and relationships answer to the following description of the man and the woman of this era made by Lewis (*CHCC*, 102) in his critical work:

these two types of unfortunates of opposite sex are unable to console each other. They cannot bear the sight of each other for long: they feel alone quite sufficiently “noticeable” without *doubling* their bulk as it were.

Snooty and Val reflect Lewis’ conviction (*MWA*, 203) that “the two natural divisions of the human race, the male and the female draw further apart” during

this time. Snooty justifies his despicable behaviour towards Val under the name of Behaviourism and his great oriental “capacity for disinterested devotion.” (108) Surprisingly and paradoxically, these values do not refrain him from accepting her money and having sexual intercourse with her.⁵⁴ In any of their sexual encounters, Snooty’s sexual appetite follows *intuitive* responses. In other words, he treats sex in a behaviouristic way, that is, as a reflex. Observe the following long extract:

Replacing my glass upon the table empty, I leered at her again, and this time she leered back. She dropped the School Miss overboard, and ran up with a will the Jolly Roger.

‘Come Valley!’ I muttered cordially.

She grappled with me at once, before the words were well out of my mouth, with the self-conscious gusto of a Chatterly-taught expert. But as I spoke I went to meet her—as I started my mechanical leg giving out an ominous creak (I had omitted to oil it, like watches and clocks these things require lubrication). I seized her stiffly round the body. All of her still passably lissom person—on the slight side—gave. It was the human willow, more or less. It fled into the hard argument of my muscular pressures. Her waist broke off and vanished into me as I took her over in waspish segments, an upper and nether. The bosoms and head settled like a trio of hefty birds upon the upper slopes of my militant trunk: a headless nautilus on the other hand settled upon my middle, and attacked my hams with its horrid tentacles—I could feel the monster of the slimy submarine-bottoms grinding away beneath, headless and ravenous.

⁵⁴ Concerning this attitude, Trotter (2001: 16) suggests,

If having sex with Lewis seems to have been a thankless task, then lending him money was about as much fun as amputation. Sometimes the same person was required to fulfil both functions.

The idiosyncratic attitude of Snooty towards Val has important autobiographical features. However, we disagree absolutely with those critics who posit that Lewis is a Machiavellian himself.

‘Oh Listerine!’ I sighed, as I compressed the bellows of her rib-box, squeezing it in and out—it crushed up to a quite handy compass—expanding, and then expelling her bad breath. I put my face down beside her ear (I wished I’d brought her a bottle from the States as a useful present).

I was well away, I left much behind me I give you my word in those first spasms of peach-fed contact. Squatted upon the extremity of the supper table, with my live leg (still laden with hearty muscles) I attacked the nether half of my aggressive adversary, and wound it cleverly around her reintegrating fork. (We were now both suspended upon my mechanical limb.) (2)

As a real behaviorist artist, Snooty knows that he must maintain *superficiality* in love. This is why his signs of affection towards Val (merely intended to ridicule her promiscuous sexual practices) only exist on the surface. Thus it is only the *pleasure principle* that remains in their sexual transactions. For Snooty, Val wishes him to be her servant (power), first and foremost. Thus he makes reflex sex appear lascivious through satirical devices, and thus, emotional drives play no role whatsoever in his dealings with her. Therefore, we think that Snooty conducts himself (or functions) exactly as a mature scientist, as he observes, categorises and tests hypotheses, that is, he serves society for pragmatic purposes.

Obviously, Snooty gets more benefit out of these transactions than Val does. Despite the aggressions Snooty says to have suffered from her, his negative exchanges of love, status and services with Val increase as the story evolves. As Snooty neither loves her, nor finds her attractive or intelligent, we

think that the only reason why he performs exchanges of particularistic resources with Val is to gain her money.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, when Snooty's *frustration* and *anger* increases to a very high degree and he feels that the more resource transactions they perform, the more he is in her power⁵⁶ he says,

I was really rather **angry** with her, for she was **pretending** there were so many pounds of this sort between us that she has lost count and never expected to see them again. I knew her so well. Val was **always trying to force money on me to get me in her power** she thought, and I, I was not going to stand it. (21; my emphasis)

As a result, Snooty starts to deprive Val of resources more and more frequently. He behaves in these aggressive ways towards her as a means to counteract the frustration and humiliation that being maintained by a promiscuous woman like Val causes him. When the baronet can no longer stand her, Humph advises him the following:

(Humph) "Bring her along! Or still **better get her to take you!**"
(Snooty) "I couldn't allow that."
"I don't expect it'd be the first time you'd been kept by a woman you old ruffian!"
"I daresay not. One has to pick one's keeper with some care."
(84; my emphasis)

⁵⁵ We believe that Snooty's personality answers to that of a *pragmatic* lover as defined by the social scientists Hatkoof Smith and Lasswell (In Cook and Wilson, 1979: 222-3) for various reasons: first, he is "inclined to look realistically at (his) own assets", decide on (his) "market value" and set off to get the best possible "deal" in (his) "partners"; second, he "maximizes his own assets before putting them on the market"; third, he "thinks ahead"; and fourth, he stays with Val only for "practical reasons".

⁵⁶ Lewis describes this warfare situation as follows in *ABR*: "the "sex war" is not [...] an egalitarian movement [...] (but) a "war" for domination, not "equal rights." (200) In this sense, Lewis portrays he Nietzschean notion that converted in the vague general mind the Darwinian formula of a *struggle for existence* into that of a *struggle for power* to operate everywhere in *SB*.

Here Humph suggests Snooty to take Val with them to Persia because she can be of some *use* to them. Then, Val gives Snooty goods (she buys him the ticket to Persia and a flat), money (she pays his rent), love (shows affection to him) and status (shows signs of admiration for his work), and does services (she cooks for him and has sexual intercourse with him as well) for him as well. In other words, Val *conforms* to the rules of practice that govern their transactions, helps him out in pecuniary terms and accepts the inequitable terms of their resource exchanges. Her unique goal is to have some attention (need of love and status) from Snooty, and services from Humph. Snooty is reluctant to take her to Persia with them, but due to financial matters, he finally gives in. Thus the extract above shows the *strategic* nature of Humph. However, Snooty's plan consisting of having Val *persuade* Humph into bed, and thus, get rid of her in this way is very Machiavellian as well.

When the three of them arrive in *Bouches du Rhône* (France) something happens that changes things considerably from then on. Snooty hopes to convince his friend Rob McPhail⁵⁷ to go to Persia with them, but his plan fails because a bull hits McPhail badly, and he passes away. People attending the *corrida* ("The wife's kneeling figure. A famous Hollywood wax-work...")

⁵⁷ Rob McPhail is a good acquaintance of Snooty in the novel. McPhail is based on the figure of Roy Campbell, one of the few closest friends of Lewis throughout his life. Like Roy, McPhail is very keen on Spanish bullfighting. This character is killed in a bullfight in which he need not have taken part. His death is symbolical of the sacrifice of the "One" to the "Many" (*SB*, 203) in a diseased society. (For further reference on this idea in *SB*, see Currie (1974)) In other words, the sacrifice of the *intellect* over the *flesh*,

(216) appear to show concern for McPhail's death, yet as Snooty acknowledges, they only *pretend*, as "beforehand" they have "all consented to it."

Seeing they had assisted to promote these pretty results – since they were part of a system of life committed to encourage such meaningless energies – their behaviour looked at from the standpoint of the profession of 'Behaviour') was only calculated to induce contempt. [...] *I yawned*. Frankly I was *bored!* [...] This was very bad indeed. (217)

Snooty *yawns* because these witnesses are insensitive and indifferent to his friend's death. As he says: "Yes, I yawned because I was *bored with McPhail*."

(214) In this way, Snooty feels disgust and boredom as they pretend to *sympathise* with the widow, when the body of her husband is bleeding badly in the arena, yet they feel nothing for McPhail. In other words, Snooty behaves as a real satirist since he shows himself as *insensitive* as his subjects and demonstrates that *nothing really disgusts him*: "I could do nothing but sit and look as if perfectly *indifferent* to what I saw. I was indifferent as a matter of fact." (215; my emphasis) In fact, not even the people attending the event run to McPhail's assistance. All of them, except for Snooty are as pleased as possible at what has just happened. Then, Snooty feels "very angry indeed." (215)

I am not perhaps a good friend. [...] It is the soul of a defeated race [...] mankind is responsible for its misfortunes.—And that blood of the cantankerous is in my veins, I am very much

the latter being something that vitiates the former, as Snooty says here. (237) For a very detailed analysis of Lewis' personality and work as seen by his closest friend R. Campbell, see (1984: 15-38).

afraid. Expect nothing out of my mouth, therefore, that has a pleasant sound. **Look for nothing but descriptions out of a vision of a person who has given up hoping for Man, who is scrupulous and just, if only out of contempt for those who are so much the contrary.** (232-3; my emphasis)

This fatalistic view of humanity and nihilistic spirit of Snooty, which are lightened by the sardonic tone of the novel, suggests that if the system encourages such meaningless energies and practices, and its inhabitants appear to be incapable of not being influenced by them, there is nothing to hope, nothing to do, just laugh at it.⁵⁸ As Snooty says,

The War accustomed me to death too much – that may be it. [...] Or I was too brutally indifferent *to myself*. [...] My feeling as regards men does not allow that kind of tender sympathy. [...] **As regards a man I felt [...] things [...] such as criticism of his action for instance.** (217; my emphasis)

Here, Snooty conducts himself not as a Behaviourist as before, but as a “*reflecting* machine” which feels sorry for “nobody” (219; my emphasis). However, in doing so, Snooty behaves as a *real artist* as conceived by Lewis, since his “ostensible function” throughout the novel is to demonstrate “the futility and absurdity of human life” (*MWA*, 183) in his world.

Eventually, Humph, Snooty and Val arrive in Persia. One day, the baronet goes for a walk and finds himself face-to-face with a hatter’s dummy in a store window.

⁵⁸ In this regard, we think that Snooty's confession is a very Beckettian one indeed.

I was in his power. [...] I was unnerved, I must confess, by his mechanical energy. Yes he had me in the Chin it could be said, to paraphrase – just as old Val Had me in the Bed. (133)

As Snooty confesses later, “the Hatter’s Automaton, was a turning point.”

(308) In other words, by seeing the automaton he discovers the irrelevance of his mechanical contempt and feels that he is just as grotesque as his fellow men. In this regard, he realises that even as a comic technique, Behaviourism leads nowhere. Thus Snooty’s existentialist words in front of the hatter’s dummy lead him to reach an absurd conclusion: there is nothing to be done.⁵⁹ We think that Snooty is aware that if the system legitimates certain acts, and civilisation allows for all these unorthodox occurrences to persist, he and his creations similarly will lead nowhere. In this regard, as Pritchard suggests, “the debunking extends to the whole idea of the novel as a dramatic representation of significant human action” (114). Indeed, we consider that this is the main reason why the interpersonal behaviour and relationships of Snooty after facing the hatter’s dummy become even more futile and nonsensical.⁶⁰

Consequently, what we observe from now onwards is constant elements of rivalry, hatred and technical friction between Snooty and the other two characters of the novel (“They are always ready for battle” (251)). Subsequently, their social encounters often take the form of destruction, and

⁵⁹ It seems to us that Snooty’s confession recalls Beckett’s view of art and the world in his work (1929).

⁶⁰ This scene makes heavy use of Berkeley’s (1985: 136-7) principle: *Esse est Percipi*.

these facts make it difficult for sentiments of affection to be entertained.⁶¹ Snooty considers that his “friends” become “the most oppressive companions I could possibly have chosen, or rather who could possibly have chosen me” (277), something that occurs because Humph starts to behave like Snooty does, that is, showing ‘disgust’ to everyone. As Snooty says, “He imitated me so well, as far as Val was concerned, that we changed places entirely. He really became *Snooty*.” (246) Thus Humph *conforms* in judgement, opinion and behaviour to Snooty, and so does Val sometime later. In other words, they copy his behaviour as behaviourists claim that people do when they learn. Concerning this idea on conformity the social scientist Jones (1964: 35) says,

research evidence shows that similarity of values and interests leads to selective association and mutual attraction.⁶² [...] The tactic of opinion conformity ranges from simple agreement with expressed opinions, through more elaborate attempts to articulate the position presumed to be held by the other, to the most complex forms of behaviour imitation and identification.

We think that these assumptions may explain why Val and Humph copy Snooty’s interpersonal behaviour, and thus, become as snooty as Snooty himself. By doing so, Val and Humph behave as real ingratulators themselves.

⁶¹ We do not agree with Maes-Jelinek, when she (1970: 211) defines *SB* as “harsh and destructive to the point of boredom”. We believe that Snooty attempts to convey precisely how boring seeing his own species destroying themselves harshly for attaining passing types of goals is. This radical technique is utilised by Lewis not to doze his audience but to awaken it so that it undermines so much destruction in the world.

⁶² See, for example, Newcomb (1961).

For this reason, we merely observe their frequent deprivations of resources or negative exchanges from this time onwards.⁶³

On the one hand, Val conducts herself in this aggressive manner because she sent her books⁶⁴ to Humph in the past so that he corrected them, but he has not done this service for her at all (152). On the other hand, Humph performs negative exchanges of status towards her, saying that she is an inferior, unattractive, boring and unintelligent woman-writer who needs constant attention, something that Snooty does, only because she holds his plans.

“Now that she’s seen Persia, she might prefer to return to England – but tell her she must do one thing or the other – she is holding up our *plans!*” (256)

Snooty feels that he is in their *power* even to a greater degree (“I’m in your hands – and Val’s of course. Who pays the piper calls the tune” (267)) than before. (“They desired me to be their automaton! I would be in the end become their Frankenstein!” (153)) Humph and Val try to influence Snooty, to induce him to accede to their wishes by rewarding him for doing so. Snooty fears that their unreciprocated exchanges will lead to the differentiation of power. This is why Snooty increases his opposition to them, and thus, their relations become

⁶³ Humph and Val exemplify Watson’s behaviouristic theories because they show they have learned through imitating Snooty’s behaviour. Now, their adult personality has been formed and, naturally, this is as “snooty” as Snooty’s.

⁶⁴ Snooty refers to them as “Stein-like” (32) books, satirising the style of Gertrude Stein’s works in this way. However, this is not the only book where the writer does so. In *AG* and *CM*, we find a large number of satirical attacks on Stein’s personality and her work.

more and more conflicting as time passes by. As Snooty ironically posits, Val “ought to be jolly lucky to be with” them “at all!” (246) because she shares the company of men. Contrarily, Val causes much inconvenience to him by “incessantly plotting to get him away from” Humph (248). For example, the two males go to brothels (which, in Snooty’s view, have the same function as *cafés* or clubs in France or Spain⁶⁵) in Persia, and Val wants to go with them. In the end, Snooty becomes so anxious that it is only when Humph acknowledges that he can no longer bear the sight of Val, even though she is Snooty’s girlfriend, his anxiety and frustration develop into anger.

All I asked him was that he should *share* with me **the burden of being civil** to such a painfully unattractive woman. He laughed loudly – I smiled, I had to humour him. After all, I continued, **the poor girl is alone, thousands of miles from home**, [...] He said he would share with me as far as he was able **the duties of host and consoler** of the Englishwoman in foreign parts, so long as I didn't ask him to sleep with her! But he could not, and would not, pretend that he found old Val rather attractive or violently intelligent. Nor could he pretend he desired her society as much as he desired mine. Eventually she would have to stay put. She must learn to stop when she was told. **Those were the terms upon which she had come with us (to pay the trip for me, see a bit of the wild, have the advantage of the society of a Literary Agent, and be seen (to some extent) but not be overmuch heard.** (249; the outline is mine.)

As Chapman (1973: 227) accurately suggests, “the attitude of Snooty” towards “Val, for instance, like Tarr’s to Bertha, is too comic to be condemned.” Snooty

⁶⁵ This fact is striking because Snooty suggests that people feel bound to attend marginal settings, like brothels in order to gain particularistic resources like love since these types of commodities are hard to

is “deficient in feeling” because he behaves as a *true behaviourist*. Thus the extract above conveys that friendship between these three characters of opposite gender tends to take with it sexual and physical implications, and thus, the spiritual, abstract nature of their relationship are not very clearly defined.⁶⁶ In fact, it appears to be that only sexual love is left here. As a result, all the traditional social ties are fused. In this regard, the extremely comic, uncivilised, beastly and inhuman attitude of Snooty towards Val constitutes one more example of the *degenerating* influence of the over-stimulating environment where he and the rest of participants have to interact.

Of course, the attitude of Humph towards Val is not very different from Snooty’s, as he deprives Val of particularistic resources all the time. As we have seen, Humph is an individual with a very *interested* devotion for things and people. At this point, Humph admits to have shown signs of likeness (love), appreciation (status) for the work of Snooty, and having run some errands for him in the past, only because of ‘the baronet’. In this way, Humph demonstrates to have always seen the baronet not as a friend but as a recognised writer who could make him earn “a fortune” in the long run. Since Snooty feels unable to

gain in normal circumstances.

⁶⁶ We agree with Chapman (1973: 111) completely, when he says,

The tension between sexual drive and personal dislike gives rise to a sexual satire that is typically Lewisian. Where Tarr—with Neo-classical astringency—rebelled intellectually against the romantic slush in which he was being engulfed, Snooty’s reaction is more physically emetic.

reject Val, he is of not much use to Humph. This is why he terminates their friendship and work relationships.

All things considered, Humph shows to be a High Mach, as he has exchanged resources with Snooty, only to gain non-particularistic commodities. His interpersonal behaviour towards Snooty answers to arbitrary and utilitarian values exclusively, that is, the type of progressive values promoted by the liberal democratic State in order to organise society. Hence, Humph emerges as an uninventive, mechanical and pathetic person with very destructive principles in his mind. It could be concluded then, that Humph is an *associational* man (as seen by Lewis) who neglects spiritual morals (the particularistic or psychological dimension) because he is pathologically obsessed with attaining temporal goals (the concrete and sociological dimension).

Within this context, Val does not behave in very licit manners either. She is deprived of resources by both males, but she only retaliates in kind on one: Humph. Thus she stays close to Snooty, yet only to force him to be pleasant to her. As the behaviourist writer says, “Fatally, I was constrained to show some consideration to Val, I could not help myself.” (248) This tactic, which ameliorates part of her frustration, answers to a type of strategy of ingratiation used by a Low Mach. Accordingly, Val *maximises* her share of non-particularistic resources like money (which she obtains from her lover

Mortimer),⁶⁷ while letting Snooty have the particularistic ones he cherishes, that is, love, status and services. In other words, by conforming to Snooty's views Val does not only increase the chances of being liked, but also obtains information, status and love (sex) from him. Val behaves in these anarchic ways in order to obtain her needed resource categories, and thus, form part of a literary ambience and possess power, which, as a female, she cannot attain in normal circumstances. In Lewis' view, these *conformity* tactics are a sign of clear associational forms that emerged in his time as a result of certain economic interests. As he (*ABR*, 362-3) puts it,

These associational forms were fostered in the interests of economy in our overcrowded world, [...] the mass mind [...] the standard idea (emerged). [...] In the interests of great-scale industry and mass production the smaller the margin of diversity the better. [...] Conformity [...] everything [...] effected by public opinion, snobbery and the magic of *fashion*.

Therefore, we think that Lewis makes Val show that she has assimilated the doctrines and values promoted by the new economy into her mind. In this sense, her performances, like those of Humph are condition by the interests of great scale industry and mass production. This is why the rules of practice that

⁶⁷ At the beginning of the book, Val states that she has saved Mortimer from an "inferiority complex" (24) thanks to her sexual favours. This fact implies that she exchanges sex with Mortimer, and the latter reciprocates her with money, an exchange whose rules of practice are quite unorthodox for this intimate context. Later, when Val informs Snooty that Mortimer starts to be tired of paying her rent, she says that she really doesn't care about this because "there are more fish in the sea." (27) In sum, we think that the interpersonal attitude of Val towards men such as Mortimer is not only very opportunistic but also very illicit and cynical in nature.

governs their patterns of conduct and resource transactions in the novel respond to Machiavellian values most times.

To finish up, we want to analyse the types of resource transactions performed by Snooty and the London Lily who,⁶⁸ contrary to Val, is depicted by Snooty as being good-looking and talented.

Lily as a friend was on a different establishment from Val.
[...] Lily knew nothing about me as well except my names
and was quite ignorant of The Baronet. (115)

This girl works in a tobacco-kiosk, where she is said to attract many men from whom she receives wherewithal to live. Lily's resource needs are concrete, first and foremost. Here is Snooty dwelling upon her personal situation,

The making if possible of a **profitable date** is the very ABC of such a girl's life-business when any chance, however remote, offers. Heaven knows they must be few and far between! [...] Since **women in the market-sense have turned from peaches into potatoes and are so plentiful [...] since the Armageddon-revolution released them all into the world to prey freely upon each other, in cut-throat competition for men,** [...] Also of course seeing how harassed, bullied, depressed and penniless are all the men! (114-5; my emphasis)

⁶⁸ We think that the trends of behaviour and social relations of Snooty here demonstrate that he is a very post-modern male figure. His love relationships answer to the patterns commonly associated to a post-modern "*friendly lover* relationship". According to the psychologist Gergen (2000: 65), this new type of relationship is "the result of the saturation process" has helped to create. Accordingly, Snooty is often in motion—travelling, business meetings, conferences, vacations, and so on. Due to these facts, many attractive members of the opposite sex are encountered along the way—providing professional benefits and companionship as well—a multiplicity of low-level, or "friendly," romances is invited.

In *SB*, we observe that Snooty sees Val, yet he also has love affairs with his models, prostitutes, the London Lily and the Persian Lily. Each of these women, in turn, has other friendly lovers. For example, Val sees Mortimer, who also has another lover called Andrey; the English Lily is surprised with a man by Snooty, ... etc.

Snooty takes status away from Lily, and from other women who conduct like she does. Notwithstanding, we think that the outcome of his resource transactions throughout the book resembles that of Lily's to a very large extent. The words with emphasis in the previous excerpt convey that, like Val, Lily has assimilated society's values. As a result, her *luxurious* appearance has departed, now being very cheap for those men who like "a bit of skirt". In our view, all these facts imply that the authority of men appear to be no longer credited as being important (the break-up of the family is one of its most direct consequences) in the Western world in this time. Thus economic factors seem to have caused a woman like Lily—a slave of men in previous times—to *fight* with other women for attaining men like Snooty. As a result, Lily, like thousands of other idle women are released for industrial purposes and work. However, since women appear to be cheap force labour, it is only the businessman who benefits from all these social changes, while women like Lily feel bound to compete among themselves, and with men (sex war) in order to work, gain money and survive in this over-stimulating world.

Here, Lily is practically "rigged out." She has changed her peculiarly feminine and beautiful appearance for *utility*. Lily favours practicality, and thus, her resource needs are concrete. The structure of the resource transactions established between her and Snooty can be systematised as follows: Snooty gives love, status, information, goods (a ring) and money to Lily, who

reciprocates in kind with the same resource categories, except for money. Accordingly, they exchange particularistic resources in kind, and concrete commodities complementarily, which accounts for the good terms in which their relationships go forward.

Snooty complains about the motivations that lead Lily to behave in the aforesaid peculiar ways, and thus, to exchange resources in the *strategic* ways she does yet her motives are very much alike in meaning to his'. We think that this is why they feel so much attraction to each other, and thus, their (love) relationship progresses in much better terms than those established by him and the other two characters of the novel.⁶⁹ As Snooty acknowledges: "our contraband caresses, our illicit still of bubbling free-love." (116) Perhaps, this is why he acknowledges that he "so greatly preferred her." (164)

At the end of the book, things turn out to be extremely sardonic. As we saw in *T*, Kreisler's *criminal* instinct drives him to kill Soltyk by accident; here, Snooty shoots Humph at random, only because he considers him "of no more use to anyone" (298; my emphasis). This negative aspect of civilian life as well as the aggravated moral situation prevalent in the novel displays the decay of the society portrayed in it. Lewis' *SB* shows that society has lost its organic structure and has disintegrated into its individual components, resulting

⁶⁹ In fact, their love relationship is interrupted because Snooty *has* to go to Persia.

everywhere in the wholesale aggression, aimed at anybody. Snooty, Humph and Val behave more and more violently towards one another as the story evolves, but social institutions do not offer any competent instruments of social control that prevent these citizens from conducting themselves in these uncivilised ways. Far from this all of them perform constant negative resource exchanges to one another, ignore the laws and rituals of civilized life and subvert the social order, recalling illegitimate acts such as crime, theft, war, repression, and so on. By doing so, Lewis makes them reveal the actual bases of his inhuman civilization.⁷⁰

In our view, Lewis' characters behave as illegitimately as they want in all manner of settings because nothing happens. In this sense, it is not strange that Snooty kills Humph for "nothing", escapes from Persian authorities without punishment, abandons Val with smallpox (despite her wish to be an accomplice of his crime so that he does not lose his title), sees another *Lily* in the

⁷⁰ With regard to absence of normative standards, the social scientist Blau (1964: 255-7) posits, Normative standards that restrict the range of permissible conduct are essential for social life. Although social exchange serves as a self-regulating mechanism to a considerable extent, since each party advances his own interests by promoting those of others, it must be protected against antisocial practices that would interfere with this very process. Without social norms prohibiting force and fraud, the trust required for social exchange would be jeopardized, and social exchange could not serve as a self-regulating mechanism within the limits of these norms. Moreover, superior power and resources, which often are the result of competitive advantages gained in exchange transactions, make it possible to exploit others. [...] The pursuit of self-interests without normative restraints defeats the self-interests of all parties concerned. [...] Social norms are necessary to prohibit actions through which individuals can gain advantages at the expense of the common interests of the collectivity."

We consider that the absence of these normative standards in *SB*, and the implications derived from them, many of which are indirectly referred to by Blau above, are precisely the aspects that Lewis wants to

Bosphorus⁷¹ and contracts another agent call Mr. *Stinker*. Back in Britain, Snooty wants to tell his version to authorities, yet no one believes him. Later, he claims financial benefit to the State, and he obtains it, ... etc.⁷² In sum, we think that *SB* reflects that there is nothing an artist can do in order to modify the deficient situation of society in this time, as unorthodox patterns of conduct not only have been legitimised by institutions; they also have been assimilated by society, which now considers them licit.

Therefore, Lewis writes a popular novel that ensures him some financial security and reflects the decay of Western civilisation upon the technical triumphs of science by using experimental formal techniques akin in form and meaning to the new machine conditions. Here, he makes use of a first-person narrator, that is, a behaviourist writer who evaluates powerful human blood ties such as those of companionship, love and sex in terms of behaviour; a revolutionary literary technique that causes the interpersonal behaviour and relationships of his characters to appear slanted in form and outcome in order to attack people like Humph and Val, two automata unable to master their word-habits and sensual drives.

attacks in his novel, something that he carries out by constructing such comic and skewed interpersonal relationships.

⁷¹ This open ending is very similar to that of *T*, as we saw in the previous chapter.

⁷² Snooty receives money from the State, due to his physical disability.

These two characters resemble “dolls” (10) since their values are not his own, but those of the system. Consequently, their patterns of conduct and relationships exemplify its vices, follies and despicable standards. Since Snooty is medium and target of Lewis’ satirical criticism, the former presents his fellow men as compulsive, sadomasochistic, authoritarian, paranoid, anxious, psychopathic deviates and antisocial. In our view, all of them illustrate the problems, shortcomings, or incapacities that mental health professionals began to diagnose in order to make sense of the man/woman in the modern era, as a result of the appliance of scientific methods to the study of human behaviour. Thus Lewis’ *dramatis personae* in *SB* are vivid examples of a time in which psychologists like the American Behaviourists tried to explain undesirable behaviour in scientific terms.

Here Snooty calls attention to the pathological obsessions of his fellow men. Accordingly, he attacks the ways in which Humph and Val, in their extreme desire to gain money and sex, respectively surrender to the flux of events becoming passive creatures of time. These two characters are portrayed as living a mechanistic or routine existence suffused with modernist ideals for continuous improvement, advancement, development and accumulation. Naturally, Snooty exaggerates their extremely pragmatic view of the world and of human relations, only to reflect and, above all, to deride their ability to be congenial companions to the increasingly potent and pervasive image of the

Machine. In consequence, Snooty calls attention to the ways in which Humph and Val make most *profit* of their *time* in their everyday dealings or resource transactions. Nonetheless, what really *disgusts* Snooty is that his companions, in their aim to attain wealth and progress, make use their possession of concrete resources to coerce him.⁷³ This is why he views them as *threatening* usurpers of his individuality and freedom throughout the book.

Needless to say, all these circumstances do not invalidate the fact that Snooty obtains some benefit out of trading resources with them in their *own* conditions as well. Contrary to Humph and Val, who behave as two “walking notions”⁷⁴ because they are obsessed with money and sex exclusively, he is a “real Behaviourist” writer though and, as such, a real “entity”, that is, someone “conscious” of his actions.

Rob is an actor – he is the artist in action. He purges himself daily in make-believe. I am the man-of-action incarnate. So he is. But I *act* at being in action. And he too! What man of action has not? [...] I am not a brute. I am *conscious* of my actions. In a word, I am a Behaviourist. [...] Yet to *fight* is as essential as the drawing of breath, to the man of action – that is what man-of-action means I conclude. (182-3)

Contrary to Snooty, whose mind is moulded upon Behaviouristic principles exclusively, the minds of Humph and Val appear to be moulded upon the

⁷³ In support of this idea, Lewis (*CHCC*, 224) says, “Money is power, or power is money, they are commutative terms ultimately.”

⁷⁴ Lewis expresses this idea in his autobiographical work (*BB*, 8) as follows: “I am much more concerned with ideas than I am with people, [...] since people seem to me to be rather walking notions than ‘real’ entities.”

liberal capitalist cultural model.⁷⁵ Accordingly, their interpersonal behaviour is mechanistic and the principles that determine their resource transactions or relationships are progressive and materialistic in outcome. Humph and Val are associational. Thus they try to inculcate their values upon Snooty. However, he refuses to imitate their behaviour. As he puts it,

It is not *nature* but it is man who is responsible for this. That is why I have thrown in my lot with nature – **that is why I break the social contract, and the human pact**. Yet when we, **children of these conditions**, in our turn show ourselves *hard and insensible* [...] **we are loudly denounced as inhumane**. (114; my emphasis)

In our opinion, Snooty's words recall Lewis speaking. As real artists, both Snooty and Lewis feel victims of Western life conditions. This is why one, as a baronet, and the other, as an Enemy, create their own particular stance. In this way, they attempt to break the social contract and the human pact, something that they do consciously and continuously. As Edwards (2000: 439) says,

Snooty is a character whose *ressentiment*⁷⁶ leads to misogyny and violence addressed to a public which fails to buy or understand those books (of him) [...] that had been serious

⁷⁵ Concerning this close relationship between the human being and technology, Gray (1995) compiles more than forty essays that reduced the gap between humanity and technology i. One of these essays is by Michael who deals with "the growing love affair with what is called the *actor network theory*" in his work. Here Michael (1966, quoted in Gergen, 2000: xx) suggests,

Technological implements are seen to function as stands-ins for human action. Thus, an automobile substitutes (and improves) walking, and a microscope does the same for vision. In terms of their functioning, human action and machine action become equivalent. If this line of thinking is extended, then we may view humans and machines as locked together in mutually sustaining systems of action. Humans and machines again become indistinguishable.

⁷⁶ For a detailed study of Lewis' deployment of the Nietzschean trope of *ressentiment* (revenge) see Foshay (1992: 94-107). These two authors speak of Lewis' exploitation of the feeling of *ressentiment* not about ethics and morals, but about the metaphysical nature of Being.

enquiries into the cultural and political consequences of the war.”

Both Snooty and Lewis have been “loudly denounced as inhumane” (*SB*, 114) by their critics because they show *hardness* in their comments. However, it is this hardness that, for them, characterises life in the urban Western world they inhabit, a hardness that is inseparable from successful banking operations, and the crimes by which the possession of power expresses itself. In other words, both creator and creature merely express the dehumanising effects of machines, whose most evident inhuman consequences are more prevalent in the city.

In *SB*, Lewis portrays a world inhabited by citizens who are submersed in an over-stimulating environment, directly suffering the effects of money on the metropolitan economy. Thus their economic contacts increase, while their particularistic transactions decrease. This is why unsavoury aspects of behaviour like anxiety, frustration, aggression, crime, power, Machiavellism and ingratiating emerge in it endlessly. This may be why Snooty advises his audience to look for the sources of their discontent in the cities. (“I shouldn’t wonder if all our troubles come from the monster cities, [...] great concentration camps for the unintelligent majority.” (10-1)

This negative influence of metropolitan areas on culture and human relationships noticed by Snooty in this novel is not new in Lewis’ fiction. In

1918, Tarr had already recalled so. However, things appear not to have changed very much since then, as his *Man of the World* project demonstrates:

The massing of people in the great cities for work [as well as] the **competitive system** [in them convert the city into] **an insane clustering** [and] a **centre of exchange**. (*ABR*, 97; my emphasis)

Therefore, it seems to be that what Lewis does in *SB* is to highlight that the *new religions* promoted by the Establishment, that is, democracy, technological development and the new economy does not favour life *betterment* as much as it promised to primarily. Rather, they *over-stimulate* Western citizenship, provoking tremendous troublesome effects on the welfare, happiness and quality of life of all its members. This is why the interpersonal attitude and relationships of Lewis' fictional inhabitants are incoherent and disconnected, and they suffer a large number of social and psychological disorders like Machiavellism and ingratiating.

As we have seen in this chapter, the shadow of Machiavelli, that is, manslaughter and deceit are present everywhere in Lewis' novel. Thus the rules of practice that govern the patterns of conduct and social interactions of these four characters respond to cynical opportunism and physical adventure most times. On the one hand, Humph behaves like an absolute ingratiation, as he trades particularistic resources such as status, love and services with Snooty, yet only as a means to make him write on the Mithraic cult, and thus, ensure

himself money in the long run. Humph does not do services for Snooty as a real agent should do, except for the necessary, unless these are of some benefit for him in future. If not, Humph performs frequent negative exchanges of resources with, and is antipathetic towards, anyone who “holds [his] plans.” (257) In other words, his behaviour and interrelationships are conditioned by one famous proverb:

Time is money. [...] The world in which Advertisement dwells is a one-day world. [...] the essence of this living-in-the-moment [...] is [...] to banish all *individual* continuity. [...] this value is **a money value** essentially, and functions imperfectly in its social application.⁷⁷ (*TWM*, 14; bold letters are mine)

This obsession of Humph with accumulation and time valuation are highly dangerous for him and those surrounding him, as they answer to values like occupational achievement and financial success, standards that are universalistic rather than particularistic ones.⁷⁸ Since these values affect his view of life, his objects and uses, love, health, friendship, politics, and even his role in art (publisher), his social transactions work imperfectly. This is why Humph often opts to attain his resource needs by using all sorts of *manoeuvres*.

We believe that Spender’s assumptions (1935: 59-61) about this type of persons and the social conditions where they usually live illustrate our point

⁷⁷ In Lewis’ opinion, the principal responsible for this money value is Bergson or the relativists, whose concept of Time, which is fundamentally sensation or the life-of-the-moment with reference the famous proverb, *Time is money*. (*TWM*, 14)

⁷⁸ For further reference on this idea see, Parsons (1951).

very well. In words of the critic, these people are decadent and they live in a similarly decadent world.

They are victims of their environment and of their own tradition; they are limited in their range of action; they are practically incapable, for example, of living an admirable life without a great deal of money. Money is in these novels the golden key that enables people to live in a world where they are free to plot their lives beautifully, and to act significantly. [...] the whole business of money and of money-making disgusted him (Henry James) It simply struck him as a part of the moral incongruity and decadence of the world he was studying, that without this stained and dishonoured money, a life that was civilized and intelligent was practically impossible. [...] his characters cannot be free from the appalling dullness of 'making' money. [...] their lives are parasitic [...] the highest product of history [...] makes civilization servile and wicked [...] business man whose mind has become a machine for calculation.

Thus Humph is a very representative product of history and a victim of his own environment. Humph is "not an expert on art" (152) who advocates for civilized and intelligent life; he forms part of a coterie world where books and authors are merely a product to be marketed. This publisher is a wicked parasite unable to act in a disinterested way. For this reason, he is not interested in promoting the view (Snooty's) that the artist's duty in life is to be a "servant of truth" or of civilization for its *betterment*. For Humph, art has nothing to do with books, but with publicity and sales, which is the real criteria of achievement, and the only drive that moves him to *act* and *react*; in other words, to behave and to

establish human relations with his fellow men in the absurd world recreated by Lewis in this novel.

We believe that Lewis constructs a character like Humph in order to reflect that scientific advance and progress applied to art makes its representatives regard life as a machine, and causes them to be strangers to themselves and his own species. As we have seen, the interpersonal attitude and social encounters of Humph with his fellow men are conditioned by progress and its values to such a large extent that they simply represent the principle of destruction for him, and for those around him. As a result, *competition* and *illegitimacy* are prevalent throughout the book.

Val has skewed goals as well, but these are of a different nature. Val aspires to obtain some attention and affection from Snooty, and to form part of the types of socio-literary circles attended by the baronet and Humph. Val wishes to be felt passionately attractive by Snooty and many other men. Thus she substitutes *marriage* for *sexual passion*. This is why she does not trade resources with males like Snooty or Mortimer aiming at establishing any kind of bond; she only wishes to be *functional sexually*.

Val tries to fulfil her particularistic commodities from Snooty, and her socio-economic ones from Humph. She desires to re-assert herself as a woman (Snooty ridicules her goal as “ladyship”) and as a liberal worker (as a writer) through intervening in culture. By writing, Val does not have to compete with

women, only with men of her same social class. However, she meets many difficulties. As Snooty says in quite misogynistic and comic terms,

The pen, for women, has always proved a treacherous instrument. It eludes them, with its more cold-blooded techniques – for all those emotional purposes at least, to further which they commonly take it up. (30)

With these words, it is clear that Val cannot gain her resource needs because Snooty and Humph are two males who prevent her from doing so. In this regard, we think that Lewis makes Val conduct herself in strategic ways in the book, only to unearth the unorthodox means used by some uncultivated women in his time in order to have *a room of their own* in literature. Within this context, Humph constitutes one of her biggest obstacles, as he undervalues her as a writer (“she is an suffering amateur”), deprives her of opportunities to become so by taking services (he does not correct, but criticise her manuscripts harshly) away from her, and reduces her self-esteem as a woman by taking status away from her. Snooty and Humph deprive her of resources persistently because they consider her to be an intellectual and social snob. Therefore, we think that what Lewis aims to illuminate the tortured types of associations that existed between members of different gender in the work institution in his time.

In *SB*, Lewis reflects the causes why Val is not allowed to be a *fully active* member of society. She is only allowed to be active sexually, that is, privately. However, this circumstance is also criticised by the narrator in fair

ways. Following Beauvoir (1949: 215), we think that this is not a favourable situation for Val to recreate her individuality. Establishing a position for herself on the fringes of society is not to be rooted in that society. However, far from helping her integrate in society and culture, Lewis makes Snooty and Humph view her as a potentially *powerful* and threatening specie.⁷⁹ In this regard, Snooty's biased behaviour and resource transactions with Val, which are motivated by cultural values and the socio-economic circumstances around life in the urban environment where he lives, could be taken as a satirical strategy to point out that these urban characteristics, where economic hardship is very preponderant, in turn, produce bitterness in its inhabitants, converting them into despicable human beings.

Snooty lives in a free-market economy where the price value represents the moving force of the social. One of its most direct penalties in society is the view of human relations within the whole social group as market relations characterised in terms of supply and demand. At the beginning of the book, Snooty says "anything for money now." (8) In this sense, we believe that what this peculiar character does throughout the book is to *point out* and *illustrate* (through his own interpersonal behaviour and relationships, and those of the rest of characters) the declining social and psychological effects derived from such materialistic and pragmatic maxim in the post-war modern West.

⁷⁹ This war between sexes is defined as 'sex-war' in his *Man of the World* project.

This maxim explains some of the most dehumanising implications that can be derived from the novel, for example, the predominantly “matter-of-fact” attitude of Lewis’ characters and their vulgarly utilitarian values, and practices.⁸⁰ As we have seen, all of them treat one another with rigidity because they merely see things and persons in terms of their *exchange value*. In fact, as Snooty suggests: “It is the age of Numbers!” (30)) Thus all individuality is reduced to a purely quantitative level, which explains that Snooty, Humph and Val conduct themselves in insensitive and inhumane manners. As a result, they view their social exchanges quantitatively, rather than qualitatively.

Since the principles that motivate their actions are determined by this utilitarian moral in numerous occasions, their patterns of conduct in friendship relations tend to take with them sexual and physical implications. In this regard, we are witnesses to most unusual love and friendship relationships. For instance, Snooty does not feel attracted to Val, but he has sexual intercourse with her because he needs her money; he accepts that she goes to Persia with him and Humph, yet only to enact revenge on Humph by having Val persuade the latter to go to bed with her, and thus, liberate himself from Val in this way; Humph suggests that Snooty should go to Persia to gather material for his new book so that this becomes a great success, but what Humph really aims at is to

⁸⁰ For the Enemy, this situation represents something like the culmination of Comte’s Positivism and of Bentham’s Utilitarianism applied to humanity because human actions began to be judged good or bad by people insofar as they increased or decreased their total stock of happiness or pleasure.

having Snooty kidnapped, and thus, gain publicity and money for himself (“*We’re* going to make a haul of this book.” (140; my emphasis)) As a result, the spiritual, abstract nature of their relationships is not clearly defined because their emotional relationships do not rest on their individuality; they merely behave and interact in a rational way. All things considered, we could say that they deal with one another as with numbers, treating one another as elements that are of interest only insofar as they offer something objectively perceivable. All these facts would clarify why certain kinds of resources such as information, goods and money are central commodities in *SB*, negative exchanges of love, status, services and information are prevalent throughout it, real love signs never are given nor taken by them, and disinterested services hardly take place at all.

Despite the fact that negative exchanges of information and love can be given to others without reducing the amount possessed by the giver, as it occurs in transactions of money and goods, these characters consider that disclosure of the information they possess may either decrease its value or function against themselves here, something that we think occurs because the level of competition between them is very high. As a consequence, they hardly exchange information at all; rather, they take it away from one another. Similarly, as giving explicit signs of affection, respect and admiration for other people’s attributes in public may have a similar effect, minimizing their

chances to improve their financial or social standing in this particularly competitive institution, these characters opt to deprive one another of love, status and information in all sorts of settings. In sum, we consider that Lewis portrays the behaviour and human relations of these characters in one-sided ways in order to demonstrate the high degree to which Western civilization assimilated industrial competitive values of the Capitalist system in their everyday associations, something that causes them to be obsessed with wealth procurement exclusively.

Naturally, the possession of concrete resources of characters like Humph and Val does not fall below a minimum level. They aspire to increase their supplies in future. Since Humph and Val meet much difficulty in fulfilling their concrete demands in natural conditions, and they are enormously influenced by the class-conscious urban milieu where they live, these characters do not hesitate to gain their craving resources in illegitimate manners, a surplus of concrete resources used by them as a means to exert coercion or power on those participants who lack them, such as Snooty and Lily.

Since existing institutions neither work efficiently nor disapprove of these illegitimate practices by creating more competent instruments that guarantee the rights of all groups through increasing surveillance and law enforcement, underprivileged groups feel in no way compensated for their needed demands. In the meantime, bourgeois citizens like Humph and Val

continue to put into practice the values promoted by liberal capitalist institutions in their daily transactions, acting, thus, in their own self-interest all the time. Concerning this idea Snooty says, “My victims are ‘progressive’, popular, even ‘fashionable’ persons, of top-dog race and showy class ...” (65))

Thus all the characters of *SB* are victims of progress and its values. This is why they suffer great social and psychological imbalance. All of them act under its name incessantly, that is, *hoping* to attain excellence and improve, and getting ahead constantly. Truly enough they are self-directing and self-motivated, yet they also personify some problems of such individualism. For example, their individualistic orientation favours a “me-first” pursuit of self-gratification, and this pursuit trivialises their emotional relationships, sexual intimacy and scholarly research, as each becomes an arena for getting one’s own.

Moreover, their individualistic values interfere with the development of commitment at various levels of society, that is, from friendship or love relationships to participation in community matters. Lewis’ characters rationalise their actions in terms of gains and losses to their selves, and thus, the conception of broader, public goods recedes from view. As a corollary, they fail

to remain in relationships any longer than they can justify them in terms of their own self-interest.⁸¹

Some further social and psychological critical implications we derive from their interpersonal behaviour and relationships are, for example, that public life in this urban context appears to have given way to privatised and defensive modes of living. The individualism of these characters often provokes their sense of isolation, loneliness and alienation, promotes feelings in them of economic exploitation to their own species, champions their competitive rather than their cooperative view of human relations, and leads to their relentless plundering of natural resources in the service of competition and self-gratification. Since their individualism gains ascendance throughout the novel, their social life resembles a Hobbesian condition of all against all. In other words, Lewis views Western civilization become so much conjoined with its social surroundings, that they have come to reflect them. This fact explains thus the idiosyncrasy of the interpersonal relationships that characterise *SB*.

We consider that Lewis writes *SB* in order to throw into prominence that modernist conceptions of social science only obliterated the sublime function of art, making Western culture going *in reverse*. *SB* illustrates the ways in which modernist economic theory, largely based on a view of rational man, busily

⁸¹ Contrary to Schenker's assumptions, our analysis of *SB* demonstrates that Lewis has great "interest in developing a coherent critique of society." However, we agree with the scholar when he (1992: 90) posits

maximizing gains and minimizing losses, or the behaviourist theory in psychology holding that people act primarily to achieve rewards and avoid punishment, highly influential theories at the time, paint a picture of the man as fundamentally greedy and self-centred. As Simmel (1950, quoted in Blau, 1964: 1) posits, “if every grateful action [...] were suddenly eliminated, society [...] would break apart.” We think that this is the main point that Lewis intends to call our attention to in *SB* by portraying social behaviour patterns and encounters in satirical terms. Here all its characters, except for Snooty, seem to unconsciously have accepted these influential theories as social norms. In fact, they appear to take pride in their cunning, and thus, in their unorthodox actions and ways of living. In this sense, we think that both the Enemy and Snooty point out that if people learn that self-centred actions are natural, altruistic activity will be seen as against nature. In the end, all human values simultaneously will fall into disuse, and people will naturally be self-centred, since there will be little reason to argue that they should not be.

This nihilistic view of life implies that both artists, that is, the satirical and the behaviourist, not only deride these types of persons, their values and practices, but also question and reject the doctrines supported by progress as they reduce spirituality or the traditional language of morality in society to

that there is “an understanding of man as a creature whose natural limits obliged him to act in his own self-interest.”

nothing.⁸² Throughout his fiction, Lewis seeks for means of curbing natural greed; *SB* and his subsequent novels show the urgent necessity of finding efficient instruments to stop so. Naturally, Lewis tries to refrain all these values in the name of common goodness. The writer shows the need to undermine them by systematic, and often, abusive opposition in its discourse. Nonetheless, this method demonstrates to be a waste of effort in the end. In our opinion, cultural deliberation and criticism carried out by Lewis in these ways is forced to life's margins because the artist isolates himself in this task.

Lewis fails in his task as a social critic in the aesthetic plane because he clings to a masculine and elitist view of art, and of the figure of the artist in society at a time in which the Western world was far more enthusiastic with commercial and progressive ideals than with Romantic views of art and genius. However, Lewis achieves to show the crisis of modernity in novel terms as he constructs unconventional anti-heroes like Snooty, who conscious of such decay still manage to opt out society by remaining *indifferent* to its threats.

In his work, Blau (1964: 4) observes: "mutual exchange of services creates a social bond between people." Contrarily, the aggressive and contemptuous view of human dealings shaped by Lewis in his novel, only appears to cause further anxiety and frustration to its members. All the same, aggression and emotional deficiency become so much imperative in their lives

⁸² In our view, this is another Beckettian idea.

that they prevent them from communicating their cultural insights to other segments of society. As a result, we think that this Lewisian anti-hero constitutes a first-rate satirical presenter of society's collapse, and of the urgent necessity to find out social and political instruments that permit surpass its crisis. In fact, as Daniel (1995: 2227A) acknowledges,

In re-reading epoch-defining works by T. S. Eliot, Wyndham Lewis, Alfred Dôblin, and Louis Ferdinand Céline, I argue that even texts which might at first seem irrevocably and exclusively masculinist provide evidence of the conflicting subjectivities and bodily experiences of the interwar period. These textual representations confirm my thesis that there are radically varying experiences of modernity that differ in accordance with the class and particularly the gender of the experiencing person. They also suggest that modernity writing, even when it has been constructed by a self-consciously masculinist author so as to delegitimize these competing experiences, instead provides compelling tangible evidence of the complexity of these experiences. Thus, **precisely in failing in its explicit intentions, this writing succeeds in incorporating the corporealities of modernity.** (my emphasis)

We consider that the tremendous effort made by Lewis in this work was of no much use to him in his time because his audience failed to understand his real intentions in it. *SB* does not convey a *humane* approach to reality because his did not consider that the machine conditions of his era provided new social forms and values that gave a more firm sense of self, close relationships and community to all its members in order to improve their quality of life. Despite the fact that his unconventional literary methods were novel, only to provoke

constructive cultural change, his aggressive and illegitimate portraits of reality were taken as examples of his personal desire to promote the appearance of more violent behaviour and corruption. However, we think that the *inhuman* scene of modernity depicted in *SB* and in his *Man of the World* project is nothing less than the result of uniting “science and art”, which, in Lewis’ (*TWM*, 235) opinion, should have been “kept rigidly apart.” As these doctrines were joined, the complete individualizing of society resulting from democracy merely caused both intellectuals and industrial men to use their mind, something that occurred not to perfect life as Lewis wanted, but to use its products *as means* to human ends.⁸³

We think that *SB* constitutes a metaphysical satire where Lewis tries to show how imperfectly social life and intellectual life function when they are influenced by general industrial standards and practices. This appeal to humanism, or this dismantling of liberal capitalist and progressive ethics calls attention to the dark side of the mind in the modern West, for it unconsciously assimilated this ethics modifying the nature of human relations in non-particularistic institutions, and more importantly, in particularistic ones. As a result, family and marriage institutions were dismantled and replaced by the State, the individual suffering the worst effects.

⁸³ This is the philosophy of Machiavellians as seen by Foa, that is, exchanging resources as *means* to obtain other resources opposite in the circular order.

We believe that the peculiar interpersonal attitude and relationships of the characters of *SB* show how, in place of humanism, a generalised Machiavellian aggressiveness pervaded modern Western civilization in this time, provoking madness in its large urban areas.⁸⁴ *SB* is a symptomatic document of decay, which is inseparable from richness accumulation, and the criminal instinct of those whose aspiration to power is infinite.

In this context, the behaviouristic posture of Snooty ‘the baronet’ emerges as most distorted and absurd. The unemotional nature of this character goes in tune with the tone of the novel, where signs of love, in an emotional context, are not shown by, at least, one participant. Thus love turns into hate very often, and it always takes the form of destruction. As a result, money is the most central commodity. Here possession of wealth and goods is synonymous of fame or high social standing (status). This notoriety is equated to power, and thus, control over other people and their lives, something that explains why Lewis’ fictional society is not to be interested in being notorious in intellectual terms. In fact, as Lewis (*ABR*, 184) says: “WEALTH [...] is the only thing today that confers power or “class” on an individual.” This principle would explain why *SB* portrays a society composed by educated individuals driven by a philosophy of duplicity and ruthless mechanical intrigue exclusively directed

⁸⁴ In support of this idea, Symons (1969: 47) says that his novel is the work of a man fascinated by the violence he condemns. Thus the scene in which Snooty shoots Humph is at the heart of the book Here

to reaching a definite material end, something that denies valuable significance to their selves. These Lewisian modernist characters live bare and amoral lives because their deep interior does not exist. However, this fact does not occur because Lewis ignores how to construct so; he merely aims to *reflect* a world inhabited by *Men without Art*.

In a book with this title, Lewis equates Art to Satire; in *MMB* he defines satire as “a criticism of human society [...] undertaken with the deliberate purpose of changing what is criticized.” (142) Thus Lewis’ *SB* warns Western civilization of an imminent World War II of worse consequences than the Great War he witnessed to. Now, we can think if this product of his mind and the things he shows and criticises in it were (have been) mended in good terms for *all*. In our view, we, the developed civilizations, still continue to support them in many ways.

Lewis’s style, ejaculatory, assertive, loaded with images and jokes, is an embodiment of action, and certainly it is active rather than passive like the styles of most novelists.

5. Ficción Didáctica: *The Vulgar Streak*

The Vulgar Streak (1941) tiene lugar en una atmósfera de inquietantes maquinaciones políticas pocos meses antes de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. En ella, Lewis predice en vano los efectos destructores de la violencia, ya que la civilización europea parece estar acostumbrada de forma inusual. Su principal protagonista, Vincent Penhale es un hombre inglés de clase trabajadora con simpatías fascistas. *VS* condena el uso de la fuerza, el poder y la corrupción por sí mismos o como medios para conseguir metas individuales como forma de retractarse del apoyo ingenuo que concedió al Fascismo en los años treinta.

En los años cuarenta, el poder económico de Lewis sigue siendo muy escaso. Este hecho le lleva a escribir esta novela popular, que ha sido considerada un trabajo sentimental y menor ya que tiene muchos fallos. Sin embargo, creemos que su gran espíritu de crítica social refleja un enorme deseo por parte del artista por recrear una serie de irregularidades en las instituciones gubernamentales y en la compleja estructura social de clases británica que ha de estudiarse con mayor detalle. En nuestra opinión *VS* es muy esclarecedora de los modos de pensar de Lewis en este tiempo, refleja una visión del comportamiento y las relaciones humanas muy característica, y contiene reflexiones críticas sobre asuntos políticos y sociales del propio autor que merecen la pena ser discutidas con profundidad aquí.

Quizá, el aspecto más revelador de esta novela para los objetivos de esta tesis concierne los códigos de conducta y encuentros sociales que Vincent lleva a cabo con el resto de personajes en la novela tanto en contextos particulares (el amor, la amistad y la familia) como en ámbitos no tan particulares (una clínica psiquiátrica o una comisaría de policía) En nuestra opinión, Vincent viste, habla y se comporta como un *gentleman* culto y educado, pero sus interrelaciones están *motivadas* por ideales de clase trabajadora tales como la *adquisición de riqueza* o un *mayor status social*. Vincent es un personaje obsesivo y compulsivo movido de forma exclusiva por un deseo irracional de aprobación social. De este modo, este personaje aspira a beneficiarse de placeres temporales que la sociedad ofrece a personas de alto rango social. Sin embargo, estos principios tan parciales acaban determinando sus acciones e interacciones a lo largo de la obra, afectando en gran medida la visión que él tiene de sí mismo, de la vida y de las personas que le rodean. Como resultado, Vincent experimenta gran ansiedad, frustración, deseo de represalia o agresión, hace uso de tácticas de condescendencia e intenta ejercer poder sobre miembros de su misma clase social.

Curiosamente, el objetivo último de Vincent es *modificar* el sistema de clases en Gran Bretaña en este período intervencionista. En su opinión, este sistema institucional causa gran miseria e injusticia a los segmentos menos privilegiados de la población. Sin embargo, Vincent no hace nada de esto ya que ni siquiera contribuye a *reorganizar* sus estructuras sociales

personalmente. Esto sucede porque sus intercambios sociales de tú a tú en contextos íntimos y sociales no son ni equitativos ni lícitos en naturaleza. Vincent no puede llevar a cabo su tarea de proporcionar alternativas constructivas a la organización social e instituciones existentes ya que sus *propios intereses* traicionan sus *motivaciones sociales*. Por tanto, Vincent no *coopera* con sus semejantes para conseguir metas colectivas que favorezcan al conjunto de la sociedad; Vincent sólo causa más sufrimiento a otras personas.

Opinamos que los grandes cambios sociales, es decir, aquellos que benefician a muchos segmentos de la población necesitan tener su origen en intercambios de tú a tú que sea correspondidos. Si no es así, se producen desequilibrios y éstos, a su vez, dan origen a luchas de poder que se transforman en mayores luchas de poder con un incremento de la oposición a niveles superiores. Puesto que los intercambios sociales que Vincent establece con el resto de los personajes no son ortodoxos (porque utiliza tácticas de manipulación continuamente para cubrir sus necesidades de recursos) estos producen un desequilibrio de poder y más insatisfacción indirectamente a otros participantes involucrados. Como consecuencia, Vincent no mejora ni su bienestar, felicidad y calidad de vida ni la de los participantes con quien se socializa. Al contrario, este personaje se comporta como un *cínico* ya que causa mucha aflicción a su mujer April, que le ama desinteresadamente tanto como su hermana Maddie. De ahí la desgracia tan generalizada que observamos en la novela.

Por consiguiente, algunos de los principales propósitos de este capítulo son describir las implicaciones sociales y psicológicas negativas que se derivan de la actitud y las relaciones de Vincent con otros personajes importantes de la novela. Asimismo, tratamos otros aspectos desagradables de la vida en la ciudad de Londres donde la novela se desarrolla en gran parte. En este sentido, hacemos énfasis en varios aspectos sociales como los intercambios negativos de recursos particulares y no tan particulares que Vincent y su amigo Halvorsen llevan a cabo con sus semejantes (incluidos algunos representantes gubernamentales como Tandish) en todo tipo de ámbitos sociales. Igualmente, examinamos el alto grado de transacciones negativas de información que Vincent (y Maddie) lleva a cabo a lo largo de toda la historia. Como corolario, aclaramos el mundo imaginario de Lewis, que es inmoral fundamentalmente con el fin de reflejar la opresión y explotación que sufren los segmentos menos privilegiados de la población británica, así como el alto grado de organizaciones y códigos de práctica sociales corruptas que el Estado y su ciudadanía aceptan como si fueran normas sociales legítimas solo porque están disfrazadas bajo lemas democráticos. En ese sentido, Lewis revela y critica la *escasa interdependencia y cooperación* existente entre miembros de diferente clase social y económica en Gran Bretaña en este tiempo, así como muchas de las consecuencias negativas que se derivan de estos hechos.

En nuestra opinión, Lewis critica al *Establishment* por *no* crear nuevas formas de *reorganización* social que permitan a *todos* sus

ciudadanos alcanzar la felicidad, y mejorar su calidad de vida. Por eso muestra cómo las nuevas condiciones solo dan origen a mayor oposición por parte de las clases desfavorecidas, ya que consideran que la explotación que se lleva a cabo sobre ellos es abusiva. Por estos motivos, muchos de los comportamientos de estos habitantes son predominantemente ilegítimos, sus relaciones interpersonales superficiales en naturaleza, y compiten, tienen envidia y se odian los unos a los otros. De ahí su extrema necesidad de *aprobación social y significación personal*.

En este contexto tan oscuro, hay un elemento positivo: April, un personaje al cuál prestamos especial atención en este capítulo porque es la primera fémina en la ficción de Lewis que interactúa con sus semejantes motivada por principios tales como la *bondad* y la *humanidad*. April es relevante porque es *amor desinteresado* y *comunidad* lo que impulsan su conducta interpersonal desinteresada e intercambios de recursos generosos con Vincent y otros personajes en la novela.

April está enamorada de Vincent, y por tanto, canjea recursos con éste para obtener satisfacción y recompensas intrínsecas. Sin duda alguna, este es un aspecto muy novedoso en la ficción de Lewis. Esta idea del amor es innovadora porque es opuesta a la visión del amor que tiene Vincent ya que sus principios de conducta son egoístas, oportunistas y engañosos. De ahí que sus relaciones interpersonales se basen en el *intercambio de recompensas* exclusivamente. En este sentido, nuestro estudio de *VS* trata de clarificar las formas tan distorsionadas que Lewis utiliza para *ilustrar* la

hipocresía, violencia e ilegitimidad generalizada anteriormente mencionadas, así como el alto número de implicaciones que se derivan de este retrato social distorsionado en su novela. Como dice Chapman (1973: 134-5), Lewis muestra a su audiencia “los medios socialmente aceptados de escapar de las restricciones de la cultura de clase trabajadora” en un período en que “las normas tradicionales y los estándares morales” están “en un proceso de desintegración.” En este sentido, nuestro objetivo, como críticos, es dilucidar las soluciones *alternativas* que Lewis proporciona en su obra.

5. Didactic Fiction: *The Vulgar Streak*

The Vulgar Streak (1941) is an anti-war novel¹ set in an atmosphere of disquieting political machinations in Europe a few months before World War II. Here Lewis helplessly foretells the destructive effects of Fascism and war on Western civilization (which appears to him to be unusually accustomed), while Europe is mobilizing for an impending war. Its main character, Vincent Penhale, is a working-class Englishman of fascist sympathies. For him, war is a “shadow” and “the usual thing” (13), yet also something necessary to “get rid of Hitler” (17) and Chamberlain,² two politicians whose influence is very negative because they allow Europeans to “starve.” (72) Biographer Meyers (1980b: 186) puts this situation well.

Fascist ideology was designed to attract the lower middle classes who were **disillusioned** by the post-war world, **angered by social disorder**, industrial stagnation, chronic unemployment and the **collapse of currency**, fearful of communism and **hostile** to traditional political parties. Though Lewis was educated and elitist, he shared all these political attitudes as well as a **lower middle class income**, and was **anxiously** concerned about how he would earn enough to live on.

¹ In this period, Lewis writes various *anti-war* books like *LWOE* and *CYD*. Here, the artist shows the irrationality of the arguments used by those who try to instil in people’s minds the positive aspects of going through a Second World War. We agree with Head entirely, when he defends that these books have “often been dismissed by his critics as pro-fascist apologetics” (15) in an unjustifiable manner. Indeed, Lewis acknowledges his opposition to war in many of his books, as the following quotation illustrates: “I take my stand with those who believe that war cannot be good.” (*HC*, 175) In this regard, this chapter tries to show that Lewis is a pacifist and against war, the use of force and violence.

² Arthur Neville Chamberlain (1869-1940) was a British politician and Conservative Prime Minister from 1937 to 1940. He was responsible for the policy of appeasement towards Hitler and Mussolini culminating in the Munich Pact in 1938. He resigned in 1940 following the British debacle in Norway. (Longman, 1991: 267)

Because Fascism seemed to offer a stable society governed by a romantic leader who stopped decadence, guaranteed peace by opposing Communism, aestheticized politics and promised respect and rewards for the artist, it attracted an entire generation of modern writers who were radical in their literary technique but drawn to the new totalitarian politics. [...] Despite (Lewis') genius, which may have led (him) to create an imaginative political ideal to replace crude reality, (he) failed to understand the most significant political issues of (his) time.

With this extract, we want to call attention to Lewis' naïve support of Fascism in the early thirties, and later disappointment with it. In this regard, this early forties' novel constitutes his literary means to *condemn* the use of force, power and corruption for their own sake or as a means to fulfil one's selfish interests.

In this period, Lewis' income is very low. This fact leads him to write this popular novel, which has rightly been considered a sentimental and minor work because it has many faults. Nonetheless, we believe that its anti-war and social spirit reflects an imperative desire on the part of the artist to portray certain *irregularities* in contemporary government institutions and the British class-structure within society that need to be studied in further detail. In our opinion, *VS* is very enlightening because it depicts Lewis' workings of the mind in this time, portrays a distinctive view of human relations, and contains critical reflections on contemporary societal and

political issues that are worth discussing.³ For these reasons, we consider that *VS* deserves some special attention in this dissertation.

Due to its highly didactic tone, the narrator of *VS* intrudes into the thoughts of his creatures, as he had never done before. Its story evolves around the figure of a refined English “gentleman” called Vincent, who travels with his upper-class friend Martin Penny-Smithe to Venice. Here they meet Mrs. Mallow and her daughter April, who are also members of the upper class. Vincent’s rapid conquest of April, and her sudden pregnancy accelerate their marriage and settlement in London. A few weeks later, Vincent’s sister Maddie informs him of the death and imminent funeral of their father. This tragic event turns out to be very grotesque with both siblings adopting *patronising* attitudes towards the rest of the family, who are, like them, of working-class.

One day, the Police discover information implicating Vincent’s involvement in a fraudulent business of note forgery and his complicity in the death of Tandish, a government agent assassinated by Vincent’s friend Halvorsen a few days earlier. The story appears in the newspaper, and April reads it with amazement. Vincent feels repentant, and asks his wife for forgiveness, but April suffers a haemorrhage, leading to the loss of their baby and her eventual death. Thus Vincent commits suicide.⁴

³ For an accurate study of Lewis’ political ideas, see Bridson (1972).

⁴ Note that Vincent commits suicide in the same way as Kreisler in *T*. Concerning this type of ending Munton (In Corbett, 1998: 17) comments,

The endings of *Tarr* and *The Vulgar Streak*, with both its protagonists Kreisler and Vincent hanging themselves [...] Lewis belongs to a tradition in which satirists have tried to kill off certain types of behaviour: the tradition runs

The most revealing feature of the novel for the purposes of this thesis concerns the distorted patterns of conduct and the social encounters of Vincent with the rest of characters both in particularistic contexts such as love, friendship and family and in non-particularistic ones like a psychiatric clinic or a police station. It is our contention that Vincent looks, talks and *behaves* as a cultivated gentleman, yet his interrelationships are *motivated* by working-class ideals such as possession of money and higher social standing. More concretely, Vincent is an obsessive and compulsive character exclusively driven by an irrational desire to attain status in order to have the benefit of passing types of pleasures that society offers to persons of high social rank. These skewed principles determine his actions and social interactions throughout the book ultimately affecting the view he has of himself, life and persons in general to a large extent. As a result, these ideals cause him to experience *anxiety*, *frustration*, a desire of retaliation or *aggression*, ultimately leading him to indulge in *ingratiation* and to trying to exert *power* over his own species in his daily social encounters.⁵

from Juvenal to Petronious through Nashe and Donne, to Shakespeare in Timon of Athens and Troilus and Cressida, Jonson, Marston and others of their contemporaries, and then from Swift and Smollet through Byron and peacock, down to Lewis. [...] By killing off bad artists, Lewis makes simultaneous use of two traditions of satire: social satire, and the satire upon ideas. His fictions delineate the social circumstances that support the bad artist and the bad idea.

⁵ Foa reviews these social psychological phenomena in his seminal work on Resource Theory. To carry out this task, he follows the works of Blau (1964) and Jones (1964) on ‘social exchange’ and ‘power’, and ‘ingratiation’, respectively. Here we make use of their concepts and assumptions in order to prove our *new* insights on Lewis’ *VS*. Blau’s notion of “social exchange” is equivalent in meaning to Foa’s resource transactions, “social approval” concerns positive exchanges of status, “intrinsic reward and satisfaction” have to do with positive exchanges of love in Foa’s framework,

Curiously enough, the final aim of Vincent is to *modify* the class-system in Britain in a period of State intervention economy, because it causes much “misery and injustice” (182) to its less privileged segments. Notwithstanding, we think that Vincent does nothing of the kind, as he does not even contribute to *reorganise* its illegitimate social structures and organizations. His social exchanges in face-to-face interactions both in particularistic and in non-particularistic settings neither are equitable nor legitimate. Therefore, Vincent fails in his task to provide constructive alternatives because his *self-interests* betray his *social* motivations. Thus his personal goals lead him to exert *power* over fellow men of his *same* and of *different* class by using all sorts of *ingratiatory* strategies in all manner of settings. Consequently, Vincent does not *cooperate* with his own species in order to gain *collective* goals that benefit every one; he only causes further suffering.

We think that big social changes that profit many segments of society need to have their origin in face-to-face social exchanges that are reciprocated. Otherwise, imbalances are produced and these, in turn, give rise to power struggles, which transform into greater power struggles with increased opposition at a superior level. Since the resource exchanges Vincent establishes with the rest of characters are not licit because he uses *tactics* to attain his needed resources continuously, they indirectly produce an imbalance of power and much dissatisfaction to other participants

and “extrinsic reward” is equivalent to the types of satisfactions people experience when they

involved. As a consequence, Vincent neither improves his own welfare, happiness and quality of life, nor to those of the participants with whom he interacts. Contrarily, he behaves like a cynic causing much distress to his wife April, who loves him selflessly, and to his sister Maddie, who is his female replica. Hence, the overall human affliction we observe in the novel.

Then, some of the main purposes of this chapter is to describe the troublesome social and psychological implications derived from the interpersonal attitude and relationships of Vincent with other main characters, and many other unsavoury aspects of civilian life in London depicted in this Lewisian novel. In this way, we highlight various social aspects such as the negative exchanges of particularistic and non-particularistic resources of Vincent and his friend Halvorsen with both their fellow men and government representatives like Tandish in all types of institutions, or the high degree of negative transactions of information carried by Vincent (and Maddie). As a corollary, we aim to lay bare that Lewis' fictional world is one-sided because it reflects, first, the oppression and exploitation suffered by the less privileged segments of British society, and second, the high degree of legitimising of corrupting organisations and practices, which disguised as democratic, are accepted by the State and its citizenship as social norms. In this way, Lewis reveals and criticises the scarce *interdependence* and *cooperation* existing among members of

exchange instrumental commodities like money and goods.

similar, and of different, social and financial class in Britain in his time, and the many negative consequences anchored in these facts.

In our view, Lewis reflects that the Establishment does not create new forms of social *reorganisation* that permit attain happiness, and life betterment to all its members; it only contributes to give origin to further opposition and abusive exploitation. This is why most patterns of conduct and social interactions of its underprivileged characters are predominantly *illegitimate*, interpersonal relationships superficial in nature, there is high degree of competition, jealousy and hatred among all characters and the need for *social approval* and *personal signification* of all is extreme.

Within this context, there is one positive element: April, a character we pay special attention to here, because she is the first female in Lewis' fiction that interacts with her own species following values such as *kindness* and *humanity*. Her interpersonal attitude and resource transactions with Vincent (and other characters) are relevant because unselfish love and communion motivate them. April is in love with Vincent, and thus, she exchanges resources with him, only to gain *intrinsic satisfaction* and *reward*. No doubt, this is a very novel trait in Lewis' fiction.

This view of love is also novel because it contrasts with Vincent's to a very large extent. His principles of conduct are egotistic, opportunistic and deceitful in nature. Thus his interrelationships are based on the *exchange of*

rewards.⁶ In this sense, our study of *VS* tries to clarify the distorted ways in which Lewis *illustrates* the aforesaid hypocrisy, violence, illegitimacy, and the high number of implications that spring from this slanted portrait of human functioning.⁷ As Chapman (1973: 134-5) suggests, Lewis shows his audience “the socially acceptable means of escaping from the restrictions of working class culture” in a time in which “traditional normative and moral standards” are “in a process of disintegration.” For these reasons, it is our task, as his critics, to elucidate the *alternative* solutions proposed by the artist in this minor piece of fiction.

As we said, Vincent is a working class man who aspires to the privileges of a gentleman. Thus he adopts the manners, looks and Oxford accent of an upper-class person and socialises with members of this social rank.⁸ He lives in London, a very much class-conscious metropolitan area where the money commodity is “sacrosanct” (235), as it guarantees many social privileges. Vincent has a “best friend”, Halvorsen, who saved his life once.

⁶ As biographer Meyers (1980) states, April (like Margot in *RL* and Hester in *SC*) are characterised by extreme *kindness* and *self-sacrificing* nature because they are tributes to Lewis’ wife Froanna, who took care of him while he was sick, and remained by his side, despite his always difficult and icy personality. However, we think that these three female characters are not the only ones that conduct themselves conditioned by humane principles in Lewis’ fiction. This uncommon attribute in his fictional population characterises later *dramatis personae* like Percy Hardcaster in *RL* and Rotter, Ian and Laura McKenzie, and the friends of the latter in *SC*, as we shall see in the next chapter.

⁷ These assumptions are not characteristic of *VS*. They can be applied to *SB* and *RL* as well. As Chapman (1973: 134) suggests,

Where *Revenge for Love* exposes the sham politics of the class-war *The Vulgar Streak* explores through the medium of Vincent’s experience the social snobberies and tensions inherent in British society.

⁸ Note that Vincent usually wears an evening dress to look like a gentleman, and thus, have access to upper class institutions, and enjoy its privileges; in *T*, Kreisler wants to enter the bourgeois intellectual circle ruled by Fraülein Liepmann in order to see Anastasya and gain her love. In both cases, the social requirement is exactly the same. However, while Vincent disguises himself in order to gain status and is indifferent to April’s signs of affection, Kreisler is indifferent to external constraints, yet he is punished for requiring resources like love. We think that the social implications derived from these situations are very revealing of Lewis’ social satire and satire upon ideas.

This man hates “the social order, as it exists” in Britain, and has a money theory: the State subjugates working-class members. For this reason, he considers that defrauding the current social order by counterfeiting money is not illegitimate but “a highly moral act”.

The modern state is based upon organized-*legalized*-Fraud [...] to counterfeit its fraudulent and oppressively administered currency [...] (is) [...] an act of poetic justice. (213)

Influenced by this money theory of Halvorsen and his acts of “poetic justice”, Vincent also initiates a fight against the British Establishment, which he considers to be oppressive. Accordingly, he performs all manner of illegitimate acts like forging money and his own personality. In this way, Vincent converts himself into a faked bourgeois with a fairly “vulgar streak”, annihilating his own integrity in the process.

Vincent resorts to using unorthodox tactics in order to hide his “vulgar streak”, gain money and improve his social standing, as he aspires to live a life of cultured leisure. He tries to convince himself that he conducts himself in these skewed ways in order to subvert the fraudulent and rigid class structure of Britain. Like many other Lewisian characters we have already seen, Vincent merely reflects to have *assimilated* his identity into this system, being involved in its illegitimate practices as well. In this way, Vincent not only destroys the lives of other people; he destroys his own as well.

Thus *VS* is set in a large metropolitan area in a period of State intervention economy. Environmental conditions are very favourable, only to concrete resource exchanges, something that indirectly provokes an enormous lack of *social approval* and *personal significance* (shortage of status) in its civilian population. Here all characters find great difficulty in fulfilling their particularistic demands both in face-to-face interactions and in large settings. As a result, each of them searches for his/her own self-interests all the time, and thus, many acrid aspects of city life emerge. As Vincent says,

“We should keep away from the cities.” [...] “I shouldn’t wonder if **all our troubles come from the monster cities**, [...]” [...] “Why can’t we live outside them I should like to know? Treating them as **great concentration camps for the unintelligent majority**? Most people like them. Well let them *have* them.” (10-1; my emphasis)

One consequence of these external circumstances is crime. Tandish is murdered by Vincent’s “best friend” Halvorsen at the end of the book. However, the latter makes sure that Vincent is accomplice of his murder, so that both of them are punished should the crime be discovered. This crime emerges because there is high lack of powerful informal instruments of social control, particularly the taking of status.⁹ However, there is one curious aspect about law abuse punishment in this novel. Vincent suggests that violation of social norms by high-class members has little effect as deterrent in this large city; authorities punish regulation misuse severely

when underprivileged members perform it. This is why Vincent posits that there is “One law for the Rich – One for the Poor. You can’t escape from facts” (210) in his country.

This relative scarcity of particularistic exchanges in this city, and the shortage of efficient normative standards of social control, which normally provide cohesion to the group and the community, promote the appearance of criminal instinct in its less privileged members, like Halvorsen. In our view, this disagreeable situation emerges because this character considers that, as working class, he does not have much to gain behaving in legitimate ways either.

A second unpleasant aspect of civilian life depicted in *VS* is *alienation*.¹⁰ The socio-economic circumstances of this metropolitan area do not appear to fulfil the expectations of Halvorsen satisfactorily. He does not see his function in society adequately respected or appreciated by the State and larger segments of society. In his opinion, the State promotes the class structure system in his country. Notwithstanding, this system only favours a few social groups: upper and middle classes. Halvorsen experiences his shortage of particularistic resources like status, and of concrete commodities like money and goods as *estrangement*. This fact implies that he is unable to find self-gratifying activities in society that engages him sufficiently, the main sources of his existential predicament. This is why Halvorsen opts to

⁹ For further reference on this negative aspect of city life, crime, see Foa (1976: 113).

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 113.

be *out* of society, and involves himself in illicit practices such as forgery. As a result, he behaves as a real misanthrope or outlaw.

The third negative aspect we find in *VS* is consumption of *drugs*.¹¹ Here Vincent's mother spends the pension of her husband in alcohol, which usually causes her to wander about the streets drunk. The Police often bring her home in very bad health state, and this fact results very degrading for her daughter Maddie ("It's so humiliating, Vincent!" (168)). Apart from Maddie's mother, Mrs Mallow, April's mother, is also fond of alcohol consumption. However, her behaviour is not socially disapproved; her class is sufficient deterrent for not being condemned either socially or institutionally here.

Following Foa's assumptions, the alcohol abuse of both women would have their origin in different environment circumstances, which also provoke distinct sociological and psychological disorders. In our view, both women consume drugs due to their shortage of particularistic resources. When something like particularistic resources is scarce, there are two alternative solutions: increasing its supply or reducing the need. Certain drugs facilitate particularistic resource exchanges in unfavourable environmental conditions, while certain others reduce the discomfort caused by the shortage of these types of commodities. Thus Vincent's mother consumes alcohol, but this practice does not appear to increase her interpersonal sensitivity; it only helps her cope with the discomfort that

shortage of concrete resources causes her. Mrs Mallow's alcohol consumption constitutes a response to emotional problems or her lack of particularistic resources. As we observe throughout the novel, this practice only contributes to reduce even further the need of both females for friendship.¹²

Therefore, it appears to be that urban conditions and institutional specialization seem to concur in making the *upper* and *middle class* characters of this novel rich in economic resources, while *all* social segments are poor in particularistic ones. Here London is presented as a place favourable to economic transactions for a few social groups, while financial crisis is suffered, only by less fortunate social segments. As we have just said, Vincent and Halvorsen feel that the State and its institutions do not fulfil their social expectations to the point of satisfaction. Moreover, they meet much difficulty in attaining their resource needs, and/or their idealised socio-economic situation in natural circumstances. This is why they exploit numerous *strategies* in their everyday transactions. In this

¹¹ Ibid. 114.

¹² In *DOY*, Lewis supports that the State should not intervene in society's regulating mechanisms. For the artist, this separation is crucial in order to reduce much abuse of power. As he says, "the method of government here, just as it is elsewhere in openly socialized states is pedagogic-the politics are intensely 'Youth-politics.'" (ix)

The development, during the years preceding World War II and above all since the end of the Great War, of state intervention in the economy, and the creation, through this intervention, of self-regulating mechanisms made contemporary society go through many negative changes. We think that this is the reason why Lewis illustrates many unsavoury aspects of civilian life in the novels he writes in this period between the two wars. As we have seen, Vincent's mother drinks alcohol in an abusive manner in *V/S*. Vincent puts the blame of his mother's fondness of alcohol and of his father's death to the State, saying that this does not take care of the education of its working classes, which are very much ignorant, or that doctors and nurses kill poor people in hospitals because they do not prescribe medicines to the poor. As he says: "they cost too much to the state." (134) These comments are very much representative of Lewis' satirical attacks upon the state and its liberal capitalist ideology. In this way, we believe that the artist suggests that the State must be connected with society, but as a political

sense, we believe that Lewis illustrates the fact that the general increase of wealth of society causes its disadvantaged members to be in the worst situation of all, that is, having lost emotionally without gaining economically. It is not strange then, that the artist creates characters like Halvorsen, Vincent and Maddie), individuals who *struggle* for achieving social and economic growth by *all means*, while disregarding the particularistic losses involved. In our opinion, this *love poverty* or lack of particularism results in unnatural efforts on the part of all characters in the novel to increase their transactions of particularistic resources in varied ways in spite of unfavourable external conditions. Accordingly, they will try to maximise their supplies in *casual* friendship relationships (as we observe in the case of Martin and Vincent) while the system creates new institutions specialising in emotional exchanges. An example of the latter is the psychiatric clinic of Mr. Perl, where Vincent goes to receive advice (service), yet where he, above all, requests affection (love), respect (status) and information.

Of course, these new social practices provided by specialised institutions do not solve the intimate troubles presented in *VS*. The characters that attend them increase their possession of particularistic resources in these specialised institutions because they go there frequently. Nonetheless, these individuals do not *transfer* their acquired skills to other more particularistic contexts. In the end, Lewis' characters neither reduce

organism. It must differentiate itself from it. Otherwise, "Politics" become "Economics" (*DOY*, 31).

the trend towards resource specialization, nor increase their exchanges of particular resources in intimate settings; they merely contribute to make transactions of love, status and services very limited everywhere.

A direct consequence of all these circumstances is that Lewis' characters, individually or in groups, fight among themselves for relative increases in *power* and privilege. Vincent puts the blame for this widespread use of force, power and violence in his country and Europe on Sorel's *Refléxions sur la violence* (1906), where the philosopher supports the positive side of violence for social order purposes. Here Sorel posits that the reduction of blatant acts of violence in social relations is the direct consequence of an increase in *fraud* and *corruption* (222). In this sense, we think that the *ingratiatory* nature of the interpersonal behaviour and resources transactions of Vincent in *VS* demonstrate that Sorel's convictions are right to a certain extent.

Naturally, Lewis does not approve of violence; he only has great fascination for the very concepts he condemns of Sorel's work, that is, disguise and cunning (ingratiation), revenge (retaliation) and violence (aggression). In this regard, we think that both a reduction of particularistic resource transactions in the city and the high level of tolerance of illegitimacy in it contribute to make that cold, distant and manipulative individuals like Halvorsen and Vincent appear as the types of persons better fitted to operate in Lewis' fictional urban world. In this way, Lewis throws

into prominence a large number of negative social and psychological phenomena derived from all these skewed circumstances so that his audience questions and modifies them.

Following Burnham (1943: 93-4), we consider that Lewis is following Sorel in order to illustrate his social criticism. As the critic posits, when he comments on Sorel's well-known work:

The growth of the humanitarian and pacifist ideologies, this effort to hide the force that nevertheless continues operating in vicious and distorted ways, to place reliance for rule upon cunning and fraud and bribery and corruption, rather than frankly used violence, **is the mark of a social degeneration**. It is not only the masses, which are lulled and degraded. The rulers, too, decay. The rulers rule hypocritically, by cheating, without facing the meaning of rule, and a general economic and cultural decline, a social softening is indicated.

We think that Lewis depicts extremely grotesque behaviour forms and relationships that are very much illegitimate in outcome in *VS* in order to call attention to the high degree in which both the State and society are responsible for these corrupting and violent phenomena to occur. Here there are five characters that have more than a minimum amount of status and money. The possession of these two resources, in exchange for resources possessed by Vincent, entail that Mrs Mallow, April, Martin, Tandish and Mr. Perl hold *power* over him. This power is not exercised on Vincent, who is in need of these resources, overtly. However, this is the way Vincent appears to feel about the interpersonal resource transactions they carry out with him. As he acknowledges when he talks about this issue with Martin:

“I was sorry afterwards I had told you about my working-class origins. You’ve treated me quite differently since then.” (99) With these words, Vincent shows that an upper-class member like Martin often exercises control over working class members like him, only because he has a minimum amount of money and status.

As far as we are concerned, Vincent perceives Martin and the rest of characters as threatening because they own a large amount of resources he lacks. This inequality of resource distribution provokes *anxiety*, *frustration* and subsequent desire of *aggression* in Vincent, as he considers that these upper-class representatives are aggressors whose unique aim in life is to deprive him of his *entitled* resources. In our view, Vincent experiences frustration and disappointment because he considers that he has lost these two resources, and has been left with an amount that is below minimum level. This perceived loss of resources is indeed what produces frustration in him, and explains his constant desire of *retaliation* throughout the novel.

Thus just as Vincent tries to inflict loss of these very resources on Mrs. Mallow, April, Martin and Tandish, Halvorsen wishes to exert aggression on the State. As he can not undertake his plan, Halvorsen chooses one of its representatives: Tandish. The desire of aggression of the former is strong because he believes that the deprivations of people like Tandish are intentional, and are not disapproved socially. Since these negative exchanges introduce withdrawal of love in the aggressive act, in addition to the specific resource involved, they strengthen the effect of loss

on Halvorsen, who emerges as a victim. His retaliation has very acrid consequences sometime later, as Halvorsen *assassinates* Tandish eventually.

Hence, the overall frequency of aggression (negative exchanges) in *VS*, regardless of the resource employed in frustration, indicates that both Vincent and Halvorsen chose particularistic resources for *retaliation* most times. Vincent and Halvorsen try to restore their internal balance through exerting assault on their aggressors in harsh ways. Notwithstanding, it is only their attacks, and not those of privileged classes that are socially disapproved, and institutionally punished.

One of the frustration-aggression sequences they use to deprive their original aggressors of resources is *displacement*. Vincent tells his sister Maddie to spend some time with Tandish in order to improve her working-class manners and accent. When she succumbs to Tandish's attractions ("I only saw him at all because I thought his accent was so good" (165) Vincent deprives him of status "He is an English fascist" [...] (like) "Hitler or Franco" (162).

"You don't understand, but that nasty snob treats you as an uneducated girl, [...] But, Mad, my darling, you are *my* sister. **You are more than a sister to me** – I love you very much. You are part of me. **If he insults you, he insults me. And he knows that perfectly well.** He insults you by treating you as if you were just any girl to have a good time with (**your social standing gives him the privilege of the master over the slave**) and meanwhile quite likely upset your married life with Dick. But I don't like this man. He knows that. **I don't say he takes you about in order to annoy me merely.** [...] (167; my emphasis)

Vincent exerts aggression on Tandish because he has chosen his sister Maddie to exert power over both of them. However, this ironic statement also appears to imply that Vincent worries about his sister's welfare in very atypical ways. In other words, we think that there is some kind of *rivalry* between Vincent and Tandish concerning Maddie. In fact, it is as if both men *competed* for the same woman in order to achieve their personal goals. If so, this narrator would be reflecting upon the peculiar types of *spiritual* bonds that emerged between siblings in this time.¹³

Another type of frustration-aggression sequence exploited by Vincent is *vicarious aggression*. His mother-in-law Mrs. Mallow considers that Vincent lies (negative exchange of information) to her and her daughter April, causing the latter to ask her for money continually.

“I suppose I shall have to shell-out” [...] “I don't know, Mother,” April looked distressed. “You know I shall. So does he!” April moved deprecatingly, to deny responsibility on the part of Vincent. (172)

Mrs. Mallow gives money to the couple reluctantly. Vincent feels much anxiety because his mother-in-law appears to have discovered his tactic, and he fears loss of status and money. Nonetheless, he does not retaliate on Mrs. Mallow, the previous victim; his retaliation is carried out by a third individual: April, who deprives her mother of money and status. In this way, Lewis highlights the strategic side of Vincent as well as the generation-war

¹³ In the chapter devoted to *SB*, we saw that *friendship* between characters of opposite gender tended to take with it sexual and physical implications. This fact indicated that the spiritual, nature of this relationship was not very clearly defined. We think that this scene of *VS* suggests that the last types of bonds that usually exist between *siblings* appear to have mingled with sexual ones as well.

existing between both mother and daughter in the novel.

Therefore, neither Vincent nor Halvorsen can restore their internal balance, because this is disrupted again and again by the frustration acts they suffer. As a result, they exert these same types of acts on each other. For example, any time Halvorsen pays Vincent a visit, the former deprives Mrs. Mallow, April and Martin of particularistic resources. Halvorsen conducts himself in this skewed way in order to coerce Vincent, who suffers much anxiety for this reason. Any time Halvorsen visits Vincent, he laughs at his faked gentleman-like looks, manners and accent. These facts make Vincent fear of losing status (79-80). When Halvorsen goes to prison, and threatens to tell the whole truth to the authorities, unless Vincent confesses his involvement as well, the latter is again anxious about losing status. Vincent promises to get Halvorsen out of prison, provided the latter confesses his murder, yet he does not; Halvorsen says that he and Vincent assassinated Tandish. Thus these negative exchanges of particularistic resources demonstrate that the rules of practice that govern social encounters in love, family and friendship contexts lack spirituality most times. These two characters establish numerous positive exchanges that satisfy their information and services needs. Nonetheless the frequent negative particularistic resource exchanges they perform also follow patterns that are not characteristic of friendship relationships at all, but of business transactions. When their resource exchanges are no longer of benefit to both of them, their interpersonal transactions resume immediately.

These two working-class characters experience lack of social support from upper class persons and institutions in subjective ways. Social approval is of great significance to them because it constitutes an important social reward, yet this results very difficult for them to attain. This is why Vincent often modifies his opinions, changes his conduct, seeks to improve the judgment of his fellow men and devotes efforts to making contributions to the welfare of others by using strategic tactics incessantly.¹⁴ As he says: “No, Mad, it’s not *me* who’s absurd. It is the crazy system that produces such a world of façades.” (153)

Influenced by Halvorsen, Vincent clings to the idea that upper and middle class members employ their possession of wealth to exert power over working class representatives like him and his sister Maddie in the complex structures of the urban world they inhabit. These subjective feelings of oppression and exploitation by the State, its institutions, and upper and middle class representatives motivate the opposition of Vincent to the Establishment. These circumstances inevitably generate an *imbalance* of power in Vincent’s sense of self. As a consequence, his desire of retaliation on the representatives of all these institutions becomes obsessive, compulsive and irrational.

The fact that Vincent refuses any *act of generosity*¹⁵ that comes from members of these social segments such as the loan Martin offers him so that Vincent covers his expenses is very significant, especially, because he

¹⁴ See Blau (1964: 62).

prefers passing money for Halvorsen, something that Vincent does not to survive, but as a means to maintain his false social standing.

In sum, the social differentiation depicted in *VS* calls attention to the need for processes, which initiated by oppressed social members, effect social integration in society. Despite the fact that Vincent aims to modify the class structure in Britain, nothing of the kind occurs to reinforce this integration need in the novel, as neither him nor Halvorsen devise any social measure to overcome social discrimination. Far from this, both of them indulge in *ingratiatory* practices *ad infinitum*. It is not strange then, that Vincent establishes positive exchanges of particularistic resources like love and status with April, only to make her marry him and thus attain *her* social class eventually. For all these reasons, we believe that the following analysis of the large and varied *ingratiatory tactics* used by Vincent, Halvorsen and Maddie in the novel can help clarify the motivations that lead these characters to behave in the skewed manners they do in order to attain their socio-economic goals. This description permits justify the fact that other characters in the novel imitate their obnoxious behaviour, indulging in unorthodox practices as well. As a result, we elucidate the reasons why Vincent frequently changes his beliefs and behaviour, or conforms in the novel.

Vincent seeks to obtain social approval from his own species. People tend to like those who are similar to them. In this regard, Vincent increases

¹⁵ Ibid. 107.

his chances of being accepted when, by conforming, he becomes more like the characters whose approval he seeks. It is our purpose from now on to demonstrate that Lewis' fascination with the *strategic* side of social interaction is very clearly *illustrated* in the figure of Vincent and other characters in *VS*. This twisted portrait of the world and human relationships responds to his aesthetic desire to recreate the most representative appalling features of British civilization in this time in action. These ingratiation actions performed by many characters in the novel are not legitimate; they represent the *seamy* side of interpersonal relationships, since social encounters are directed toward objectives not contained in the implicit contract that underlies them. Therefore, the critical implications derived from these facts are large and varied. As a result, we examine the attitude and social exchanges of Vincent and the rest of characters, the forms and guises of their ingratiation tactics, their antecedents, the conditions that favour or inhibit their practices, and their consequences for social relationships.

Before we start the analysis, we need to clarify the term *ingratiation*, as some critics may confuse it with flattery. Jones (1964: 11) uses these terms differently: *flattery* refers to the situation in which "the securing of attraction is less important than the securing of benefit, and when over-generous praise is especially involved"; *ingratiation* "is a class of strategic behaviours illicitly designed to influence a particular other person concerning the attractiveness of one's personal qualities."

As other critics have said, both flattery and cunning are rejected throughout Lewis' critical production recurrently. The artist refers to these notions when he comments on the behaviour of Western civilians, above all, the British. In *VS*, we observe a large number of illustrations of both types of illegitimate behaviour. For example, Vincent behaves both as a flatterer and, to a larger degree, as an ingratiator. On the one hand, he flatters April because he likes her sex and, above all, her money. On the other, he is often proud of his cunning because this helps him improve his social standing ("If I am able to deceive people that elates me." (30)) Accordingly, Vincent likes not only to flatter, but also to plot, manipulate and deceive April, his friends, his in-laws, his relatives and other people. By doing so, Vincent obtains social approval, which ultimately furnishes him with financial standing in his fictional world. However, these tactical ploys Vincent utilises as instruments of power also show the erosion and deflection of such power.

In his work, Jones identifies three major classes of ingratiation tactics: *other enhancement*, *opinion conformity* and *self-presentation*, even though he mentions a possible fourth class, that is, *giving gifts* or *rendering favours*.¹⁶ Each of these tactics are tremendously important for the purposes of this study, essentially, because they clearly can be identified in the social interactions or resource exchanges established by Vincent in this novel.

¹⁶ See Jones (1964: 24).

As far as we are concerned, Vincent makes use of complimentary *other-enhancement* in his social encounters with Martin, April and Mrs. Mallow. Vincent deploys this strategy, which probably comes closest to the meaning of flattery in its everyday usage, by directly enhancing or giving evaluative statements of these three *dramatis personae*. Vincent finds ways to express a high, positive evaluation of them and emphasises their various strengths and virtues. Thus by grotesquely distorting and exaggerating their admirable qualities, he maximises his positive exchanges of love, status and information towards them conveying the impression that he thinks highly of them. For instance, Vincent says that he likes Martin's company, for he is a good "brick" and a real friend. Nonetheless, he views Martin as a stammering man.

The world of girls was outside the orbit of this fat young bachelor, with his double chin so comfortably settled in his rather high collar, and his moist blue eye that kept itself to itself. (12)

Another illustration of such a tactic takes place when Vincent shows signs of fondness and approbation for April's views on politics, while he thinks that "nice girls should not deal with politics; politics are morals." (40) Vincent uses this ingratiatory tactic only to cause April to marry him, and thus, obtain social recognition in this way.

Vincent had got Miss Mallow in the family way, and so **compelled her**, as it were, **to compel *him* to marry her!** At least **he had manoeuvred things in such a way** as always to appear the *hunted*. (154; my emphasis)

A final illustration of this tactic occurs when Vincent is with Mrs. Mallow. This mature female likes his company because she thinks he is a refined gentleman. In this regard, his frequent compliments to Mrs. Mallow are false-bottomed; he really considers her a mean and suffering mother-in-law. Consequently, Vincent is a sycophant who cannot afford to have his true motives discovered. He manages to conceal his ulterior intentions from himself by *playing down* his dependence on these three characters. In this way, he reduces the suspicion that he needs or expects to be benefited by them. Vincent behaves in this manner in particularistic contexts continually because the benefit desired, that is, money, is not a salient issue. It could be said then, that he exploits this tactic because he is aware that these three characters have doubts about certain attributes in which they would wish to excel.

Accordingly, Martin wishes to stand out in knowledge and appearance. He is attracted by Vincent, and likes his company because Vincent is all of the former. When they are in Venice, Vincent confesses to Martin that he is a faked gentleman.

“I am the son of a workman,” [...] of a labourer [...] you have no inkling of what it means to be born in the ‘working-class’ in a democracy of snobs – in Edwardian England. [...] To make our friendship possible, upon terms that would preclude patronage, I was obliged to deceive you. For the classes do not mix,’ is a good old English dictum, which I could not forget if I tried. [...] I am a sham person from head to foot. I feel empty sometimes, as if there was nothing inside me. [...] And ever since in my intercourse with you I lived inside that empty shell that I began to manufacture [...] Necessity

having taught me to disregard the truth, I have developed a relish for all that is not true. If I am able to deceive people, that elates me. [...] But now I'm telling you the truth.” (29-30)

After this confession, Martin resents the impersonation of his friend because he is “attracted by intelligent people” (85) like Vincent.

Really he *had* a great affection for Vincent – in spite of confessions; in spite of his now detecting vulgar streaks of which formerly he had been quite unaware. (85)

Perhaps, this is why Martin clings to his picture of the gentleman and builds up false hopes about Vincent not being working-class relentlessly. Needless to say, Vincent takes advantage of the situation, as he admits to like Martin's personality, and beauty greatly. As the narrator says in ironic terms,

Vincent's great attraction for Martin Penny-Smithe was therefore [...] a matter of personality, even of personal beauty, rather than of mind. (98)

No doubt, there is something extremely awkward about this episode. Martin, the victim, is aware of Vincent's ulterior motives, yet he still consents to them. Vincent indulges in this ingratiatory tactic by drawing attention to Martin's Christian pity. However, in allowing Vincent to establish face-to-face social exchanges with him in these obnoxious ways, Martin promotes the illegitimate performances of his friend, and this fact has very negative consequences in particularistic settings such as love and family, as we shall see.

Vincent also makes use of this tactic with April, who wishes to excel

in politics and to be conquered by a gentleman and an artist, like him. This may be the reason why he talks politics with her,¹⁷ shows signs of admiration for her views, pays her compliments about her looks and behaves towards her as a real gentleman and artist would do. As before, there is also something awkward about April's behaviour towards Vincent. She often suspects of his "vulgar streak", yet she deceives herself into believing that he is a real gentleman. When she sees Vincent and his sister Maddie playing at "Buckingham Palace" (149), she still clings to her view of the gentleman, saying how great both siblings are because they behave as real sons of artists.¹⁸ In consequence, we think that April, like Martin before, *legitimizes* the unorthodox practices of Vincent.

Mrs. Mallow is also a target for Vincent. His mother-in-law would like to outshine in knowledge. Thus Vincent shows constant signs of admiration for her stories. Mrs. Mallow suspects of Vincent's "vulgar streak" as well, yet she accepts his positive exchanges of status as being honest. We could conclude then, that their weaknesses render these Martin, April and Mrs. Mallow open to flattery, a tactic utilised by Vincent in very cunning ways, only to attain his illicit goals.

A second class of *tactics* used by this ingratiator is *conformity*. Nonetheless, Vincent is not the only character who conducts in suppositious

¹⁷ In fact, Vincent is the only one who makes statements about politics. April only mentions briefly names like Musso, or Mr. Deutsche, Mum and Fuhrer, when referring to Mussolini and Hitler, respectively (67-8).

¹⁸ This episode, which is very sardonic, aims at ridiculing April's naivety. Here, Vincent equates playing at "Buckingham Palace" (class climbing) with his sexual experiences with April in order to

ways; his fellow men also behave in these dishonest manners. Thus April and Martin conform as a *response* to social pressures, Vincent and Maddie as a *tactic* of social influence in its own right. All of them use this tactic because they assume that their fellow men will like them more if their values and beliefs are similar to their own.

The response of these four characters ranges from simple agreement with the others' expressed opinions, through more elaborate attempts to articulate their position, to the most complex forms of imitating, and identifying themselves with the behaviour of their fellow men. Thus all of them deploy the tactic of opinion conformity to their targeted persons in various ways to obtain their social approval.

Accordingly, Martin modifies his patterns of conduct and habits because he wishes to spend more time with Vincent, who cannot cope with the standard of living of the former. ("I'm broke. [...] Poor you."(98)) For this reason, Martin spends less money in food and avoids attending certain events. In other words, Martin behaves in this biased way in order to gain the social approval of Vincent, who unsurprisingly acknowledges to having Martin in very good esteem from this moment on.

Maddie also conforms to the views of Tandish not because she likes and admires him; she wishes to obtain information from him in order to improve her manners and correctness of language. Maddie behaves in this loathsome

make the latter feel ashamed. (148) This episode appears to equate the types of games each social segment usually plays in order to fulfil their selves socially and personally respectively.

manner because Vincent has told her that these two external signs provide one with social standing, and permit one to *dominate* others rather than *be dominated*. In our view, Maddie behaves in this slanted way because she aims to attain her brother's approval, which is of far more significance to her self than gaining social status.

A third tactic of ingratiation used by Vincent involves the explicit presentation of his attributes to increase the likelihood of being judged attractive by the rest of characters. With these *self-presentation* tactics, Vincent communicates his qualities explicitly or with more indirect communicative shadings.¹⁹ In this way, he conveys the information in the way he wishes to be viewed by them. Vincent presents himself in such a way both to advertise his potency and virtues and enhance by implication the strengths and merits of other characters like Martin (friendship institution), Maddie (family institution), April (marriage institution), Mrs. Mallow (in-laws) and Mr. Perl, the psychiatrist (social institution).

Accordingly, Vincent deprecates or humiliates himself in front of Martin, when he confesses to the latter the unorthodox ways through which he attempts to disguise his working-class origins and improve his social standing. Vincent admits to behave in this fraudulent way because "class circulation" in Britain is impossible, due to the generalised "poisonous air of class-discrimination" (36) that exists in Britain in his time.²⁰ In this way,

¹⁹ See Jones (1964: 40).

²⁰ Concerning this "class-discrimination" issue Burnham (1943: 172) says, "the Machiavellians unanimously believe that rapid class circulation contributes to the strength and happiness of a

Vincent emphasises his weaknesses and lack of investments, depriving himself of status in front of Martin. In expressing his difficulty in improving his social situation, he obtains status in return from Martin. As Vincent says to his psychologist Mr. Perl later,

You are quite unable to fathom the intensity of the **religion of class**, which in England restricts the personal development of any man and woman born outside the genteel pale. It denies expression to him or to her. [...] It stops you from breathing freely-indeed from existing in freedom at all. If you are born one of the poor, you *must* go about disguised. It is the only way. (181; my emphasis)

Behaving in this way, Vincent not only reduces the likelihood of being considered a competitive threat by Martin, but also aligns himself with such important cultural values as *modesty*. As a result, Vincent's confessions of weaknesses increase his dependence on Martin and render him vulnerable to exploitation.

At the same time, Vincent's dependence on Martin makes salient the norms of *noblesse oblige* (197) and the Christian ideal of the strong helping the weak so deeply instilled in the mind of the newly Catholic convert Martin. Thus Vincent's modesty, humility and acknowledgement of his reliance on Martin through his confession derive their effectiveness from their contribution to an *implicit* other-enhancement, something that occurs, above all, because Vincent emphasises his inadequacy in the process of

society." Here Vincent sees class circulation as a necessary measure to achieve social equality. This argument is an example of the genius, and the dialogic nature of Lewis' stance, as he is capable of making the same character target and medium of his social satire.

asking for advice or assistance. As a result, such requests imply more admiration or respect for Martin than for any other character in the book. Part of the effectiveness of this ingratiatory practice stems from the fact that Martin is very much disliked by other characters in the novel, for example, April, who often performs negative exchanges of status towards him, due to his habits (smoking cigars) and puritan prejudices (pre-marital sex) against women like her. Vincent's appeals for advice play directly on the *vanity* of Martin. In this regard, it could be said that Vincent's ironic statement: "Confession is a good thing that Catholics have" (37) stands for a most particularly insidious form of flattery, whose effectiveness as ingratiatory tactic springs from all the aforesaid *preliminary* situations.²¹

Furthermore, Vincent indulges in this same type of unorthodox tactic, when he deprives Mrs. Mallow and April of love and status in Martin's presence. In these occasions, Vincent treats April like an animal prey or a sexual object ("she will be ripe for the kill in a day or so" (61)) as an *other-enhancement* tactic. Vincent deprives both women of status because he is aware of Martin's puritan principles. Behaving in this way, Vincent is more likely to obtain social approval from Martin, who dislikes the fact of females succumbing to the charm and *manoeuvres* of the gentleman. As Martin defines the behaviour of Vincent: "Vincent the fortune-hunter, or Vincent the lady-killer (with the emphasis upon the *lady*)." (93) Therefore, Martin *conforms* to Vincent's views because he is

²¹ See Jones (1964: 42).

attracted by his intelligence, and shows aggression towards April owing to jealousy. (61)

We think that Vincent presents himself to Maddie in this strategic way as well because he is aware of her lack of personal significance or low self-esteem. Maddie is ashamed of the behaviour of her relatives (need of status), unhappy in her marriage (need of love) and lacks money (her husband Dick is unemployed). Moreover, she is unfulfilled as a mother, as she wishes to have offspring but Dick does not. Thus Vincent enhances Maddie's low self-esteem (status) by depriving these characters of status, and by showing affection (love) and respect (status) to her. All these resource exchanges of Vincent contribute to enhance her self-esteem, strengths and virtues. As he also helps her out economically (money and goods), Vincent achieves to make her dependent on him in many ways.

Maddie feels *obligated* to reciprocate her brother. As she states: "such a gallant figure; such a perfect gentleman; so loyal a friend." (107) It seems to us that Maddie's resource exchanges with Vincent have sexual connotations as well, since their social encounters follow rules of practice that are quite unconventional in meaning for a relationship of this type, and institution.²² As Maddie admits, "Vincent, Dick said, I must be in love with you." (225)

²² Lewis describes this social change in *ABR*.

Everywhere the non-sexual tends to become the sexual, as the family (and the normal or sexual with it) tends to disappear. [...] Only *sexual love* and *the family* are left. [...] But *the family* today is also disappearing. (183)

Vincent uses this same *self-presentation* tactic with his wife April. Hence, he tells her about his decreasing inheritance, which leads her to assist him financially, about his artistic past, which fulfils her vicariously, about his old profession as a lawyer, which makes her think that he is still a conservative man, and about the vulgar streak of his friend Halvorsen who saved his life once (81), fulfilling her idealisation of Vincent as a good friend and Navy, that is, someone who does not behave as a hero but as a gentleman. All these aspects make her view him as a man fond of politics with a very “serious disposition” (42) towards life. In this way, Vincent creates a very positive image of him on April, who feels compelled to support him financially, socially and emotionally. This is why April demonstrates great dependence on him from this moment on.

Vincent also uses this *self-presentation* tactic with his mother-in-law when he communicates his inability to ask for guidance. His request for help implies respect (status) for Mrs. Mallow, and willingness to receive her advice (services). Naturally, Vincent’s appeal for counsel makes an effect on her vanity, as Mrs. Mallow suggests him to have a meeting with her psychiatrist Mr. Perl, whom she considers to be her “Halvorsen”, as he “saved her life once” (177) as well.

In this psychiatric clinic, Vincent *tries* to exploit this tactic as well. Thus he minimises Mrs. Mallow’s attributes, depriving her of love and status in front of Mr. Perl. The latter does not behave as a professional psychiatrist is supposed to do, as he shows great disrespect towards the

patronising attitude of the old woman. However, he does not give social approval to Vincent, as the latter expects him to do. Unexpectedly, Mr. Perl excels in knowledge, and shows signs of appreciation for Vincent, who reciprocates, as he has not done with any other character in the book. It could be said then, that Vincent's vanity works against him. Here is the psychiatrist diagnosing Vincent's obsessive 'class-complex' (182) or excess of will.

Your obsession with *class* is your tragedy. [...] You are rather *empty*, Vincent. [...] The thing you have been so careful to imitate is empty too. [...] A *gentleman!* [...] You should have ignored class (since you are not a 'martyr' – a fighter). You could have done so. Your brother Harry ignores it. [...] You are an egotist [...] suffer [...] from an *excess of Will*. That [...] drives you along like a relentless tyrant. You have a sort of *personal dictator* (to parody 'personal devil') inside you. It drives you to do this and do that. [...] Mussolini and Hitler [...] are [...] extreme, and curiously disagreeable expressions of this morbid Will [...] diabolical machines of empty *will*." [...] I am your debtor. You have given me very much to think about. Never have I encountered so much crude Will. And so *aimless*." [...] these people are *mad* ... and you, Vincent," he added softly, smiling, "you ... are a little mad, too!" They both laughed, as they shook hands. (178-184)

Mr. Perl equates Vincent's *excess of will* to a mad *will to act*. Both notions have their basis in Lewis' distinction between the 'actor-man' and 'the contemplator'. Lewis' critic Conroy (1996: 21-2) puts these ideas well,

Lewis hewed to the distinction between the man of action and the man of contemplation the latter variously viewed as intellectual (observer) and artist (creator). [...] His will to power, again in contrast to that of most of his fellows, is

best realized not through practical gain or ascendancy over others, but through the creation of art. In all other realms, action is merely a way of reacting to instinctual stimuli, making it fine for insects, perhaps but not worthy of “free men.”

We do not think that the *reprimanding* carried out by Mr. Perl towards Vincent for using such ingratiatory practices has any *pragmatic* purpose at all, since this psychiatrist does not even gain money for doing this service to Vincent. Mr. Perl deprives the latter of status by *laughing at* the motivations that lead him to act in one-sided ways, because he is interested in his situation. Otherwise, Mr. Perl would invite Vincent to another session. Thus the behaviour of Mr. Perl is unconventional. In fact, this is so because it answers to Lewis’ view of the intellectual as thinker rather than actor, that is, someone who pursues *perfection* rather than materialistic goals or social standing.²³ In this regard, the social implications derived from these distorted resource exchanges respond to Lewis’ critical targets.

Apart from this, the rules of practice that govern the attitude and resource exchanges of Vincent with Mr. Perl are not characteristic of this institutional setting. As we said, Vincent finds it too costly to obtain personal significance in particularistic and in non-particularistic institutions as a result of his will to attain power. It is not strange that professional associations like this psychiatric clinic turns out to be a setting where low self-esteem subjects like Vincent (or Mrs. Mallow) conducts themselves as the real person he is.

Vincent seeks social approval illegitimately regularly. Thus any favours he hopes to obtain are no more than the consequence of having made himself attractive.²⁴ In this way, Vincent also induces April, Mrs. Mallow, Maddie and Martin to behave in instrumental, effect-oriented ways. Therefore, his hunger for approval (status) seems to be the only *infectious* factor underlying his autistic self-deception.

Vincent (and, to some extent, Maddie) behave in a manipulative, instrumentally oriented, flattering way towards the rest of characters because they control two valuable resources, that is, money and status, which Vincent hopes to acquire *at minimum cost*. This desire for *improving* in the social scale excels the level that he would normally have achieved in the course of legitimate social exchange. In this regard, Vincent behaves as an *absolute flatterer* or *acquisitive manipulator* because his ultimate aim is *self-benefit*.²⁵

Moreover, Vincent indulges in *protective ingratiation* with Martin, April and Mrs. Mallow in order to prevent a potential attack. Vincent does not look for signs of his worth; he merely cultivates their attraction for a motive of *foresight planning*. In our view, Vincent is a protective ingratiator who thinks that the world he inhabits is peopled with potential antagonists, people who can be unkind, hostile and brutally frank. In this sense, his ingratiatory behaviour appears to be a strategy used by him to transform this

²³ All these ideas have its basis in Lewis' early readings of Nietzsche, whose notion of "will-to-power" marks Lewis' personality and work throughout his life.

²⁴ See Jones (1964: 43-4).

fictional world into a safer place by depriving the potential antagonists of any pretext for aggression.²⁶

April and Maddie also involve themselves in *protective ingratiation* by using *self-presentational* tactics, conceding their dependence on Vincent. Here is Maddie informing her brother of her affair with Tandish.

Maddie sat tearfully watching him. It had all the appearance of the quarrel of a married couple – **only the wife a phenomenally docile one, and the husband oddly authoritarian for 1939.** (164; my emphasis)

We think that Maddie behaves in a compliant manner here because her brother Vincent has always treated her well. Therefore, both of them indulge in protective ingratiation with each other because they know that the norms of *reciprocal kindness* will protect them from harm in future. Similarly, when Vincent confesses to April that everything newspapers say about him is true, April not only is willing to lie for him but also to be accomplice of him.

Thus it seems to be that Maddie, Mrs. Mallow and April behave in ingratiatory ways due to *social pressures*. These three women pursue *personal signification* from males like Vincent. This private need provokes feelings of jealousy between them. As a result, these three members of the same gender, but of different generation and class perform one-sided types of relationships among them following rules of practice are fairly awkward in form and outcome. For example, Mrs. Mallow deprives her daughter

²⁵ Ibid. 47-8.

²⁶ Ibid. 47.

April of particularistic resources because she disagrees with her ideas,²⁷ something that makes April retaliate on her mother in kind. Their negative exchanges of love and status stem, thus, from nothing less than a strong desire to gain social approval (status) from a male like Vincent, a resource need that creates feelings of *rivalry*, *conflict* and *jealousy* between both mother and daughter.²⁸

Throughout the novel, April receives love and status from Vincent, while Mrs. Mallow does not, because her husband is far away fighting for his country. Mrs. Mallow is envious of her daughter for receiving social approval of her husband. All these facts convey that all female characters in this novel have tremendous lack of *personal recognition* in society, essentially, on the part of males. The fact that April conducts towards her mother in unorthodox ways only respond to her imperative desire to increase the opinion Vincent has of her. As the narrator satirically says,

Vincent and she were in love with each other. Now for the rest of the time she would be his, only his! This was what life had been for. (49)

April conducts herself as a *self-validation seeker*²⁹ because she indulges in ingratiatory practices and shows aggression towards her mother, only because she has low self-esteem. April wants to gain Vincent's love and respectability and personal significance, but the only possible means she finds to get so are unorthodox. We think that the critical implications

²⁷ This peculiar type of relationship is an illustration of what Lewis describes as 'age-war' or 'generation-war'.

²⁸ For an illustration of this idea, see *VS* (67-8).

derived from all these circumstances are very revealing of Lewis' mind and criticism throughout the novel.

As the story evolves, Vincent's attempts to create a favourable impression on others is decreasingly rewarded, and more progressively disapproved of. The most salient and intriguing characteristic of *acquisitive ingratiation* as exerted by Vincent is that he seeks social influence implicitly, yet he denies it all the time. He lies to everyone and his behaviour always involves illegitimate social exchange. As we said, the circumstances giving rise to this character's ingratiatory practices are those existing in urban environments, where class discrimination and anonymity are felt more acutely. Vincent wants to believe that he behaves illegitimately in order to break the class-system in Britain and benefit *society as a whole*. As we have observed, the goals Vincent expects to attain by doing so profit *his own self*.

Generally speaking, Vincent, Maddie and April show a greater tendency to *conform* on opinion issues than do subjects like Mrs. Mallow and Martin. The more direct tactic of *other-enhancement* usually commends itself to the high-status persons, whereas typical subordinates use *conformity* more often. The fact that April constitutes an exception appears to us to be a device used by Lewis to make her a contrastive paragon of virtue and spiritual values in the novel.

²⁹ See Jones (1964: 48-9)

Low-status persons like Vincent and Maddie exploit their superior's compliments, that is, those made by April, Mrs. Mallow and Martin to press for favoured treatment. The latter use *self-presentation* tactics through which they acknowledge important positive traits along with an emphasis on weaknesses in nonessential areas. Yet, contrary to Jones' assumptions, both low-status characters, like Vincent and Maddie, and high-status ones such as Mrs. Mallow and Martin over flatter one another.³⁰ In our opinion, this aesthetic satirical device consisting of exaggerating their trends of behaviour is exploited by Lewis in order to throw into prominence the high degree of hypocrisy and cant existing in British society.

Bearing in mind all these considerations, we think that the concept of *power* is inextricably woven into the fabric of *ingratiation* in *VS*. The tactical pursuit of approval has some motivational basis in a desire for approval-mediated resources. As Jones (1964: 159-160) suggests,

Being low in power [...] gives rise to the initiation of impression-managing strategies. The higher-power target person must also be in a position to give or withhold the desired resource as a function of his general attitude toward the low-power person. [...] The low-power person must find closed or too costly the more legitimate avenues of exerting counter-power through effective task performance.

In our opinion, all these assumptions are true for the figure of Vincent, a low-status character with very little power. Throughout the story, Vincent exploits numerous types of tactics in order to impress powerful individuals

³⁰ Ibid.125.

like Mrs. Mallow, April and Martin, withholding his desired resources. Like Halvorsen, Vincent considers that working class members like him are not valued in society sufficiently, and this fact causes imbalance to them.

Vincent and Halvorsen observe strong differentiations of power in society. This exercise of power provokes opposition and conflict in them, above all, because the State does not contribute any instruments to change or adjust these imbalances. Vincent finds in Halvorsen a person who feels in the same way he does. Both of them have expectations and resource needs that are not satisfied. These common feelings and their social exchanges should create social bonds between them, and between them and other peers. In other words, these two characters should join to oppose the State and the upper classes in order to undermine their exercise of power, which has produced social differentiations. Nevertheless, their opposition does not have any *regenerative* force, as it does not engender more happiness in other human beings. Indeed, their actions only contribute to provoke more distress to other participants involved. It could be said then, that Vincent and Halvorsen are so much obsessed with the violence and power of their era that these principles motivate their one-sided interpersonal behaviour and social encounters with their own species to a very large extent. As Priestly (1960: 323) suggests,

It was Jung who [...] warned modern man that [...] certain of his conscious control of himself and events that his mind, no longer fortified by the symbols of religion, was almost entirely at the mercy of his unconscious drives and

fantasies; and [...] would explode into a barbaric fury of violence and destruction.

Like everyone in Europe at this time, Vincent and Halvorsen are infected with aggression; paradoxically, the very notion that fascinates, and is also condemned repeatedly by Lewis in many of his critical works. It is not strange then, that *criminal* scenes are at the heart of *VS*.

In our view, Vincent's main fault lies in the fact that he neither associates with his friends, wife and family members in order to enjoy *intrinsically rewarding* interactions, nor does he interact with other members like Tandish or his butler Willis to enjoy *intrinsically gratifying* experiences. Social attraction is the force that induces human beings to establish social associations on their own initiative and to expand the scope of their associations once they have been formed. However, Vincent merely associates in order to gain *extrinsic benefits* like, advice, from Martin and Mr. Perl, and money from April, Mrs. Mallow and Halvorsen. In this regard, it is very difficult that he achieves anything purposeful or constructive.

Some critics have pointed out Lewis' personal pathological obsession with violence.³¹ Conversely, we think that his depiction of aggression and other disagreeable phenomena such as ingratiation and power exertion must be looked upon in the aforesaid critical sociological line. As Blau (1964: 22) says, *social norms* define the expectations of

³¹ As Chapman (1973: 134) states: "Lewis's obsession with the violence of his era characterizes both his novel and protagonists". This obsession with violence is no more than fascination with it, yet never representative of Lewis' personal aggressiveness, as critics like Freud have pointed out.

subordinates and their evaluations of the superior's demands. Fair exercise of power gives rise to approval of the superior, whereas unfair exploitation promotes disapproval. Our analysis of *VS* has shown that the disapproval of power of Vincent and Halvorsen engenders opposition among them. These two characters feel exploited by the unfair demands of those in positions of power and by the insufficient rewards they receive for their contributions. They communicate to each other their feelings of anger, frustration and aggression. Consequently, a wish to retaliate by striking down the existing powers arises in them as a collective of individuals.

As we have just said, their shared discontent does not cause their opposition ideology to develop because Vincent and Halvorsen do not encourage other members of their same class to organise a union against upper class members or state representatives adequately.³² Rather they decide to go about their self-interests through forging currency. In this regard, sharing basic values and an illegitimate business does not create integrative bonds and social solidarity between them. As a result, their bonds do not serve as a functional equivalent for the feelings of personal attraction that unite persons and small groups in more particularistic contexts.³³ Thus their former poetic plan fails.

Blau defends that exercise of power may produce two different types of imbalance, a positive imbalance of benefits for subordinates or a negative imbalance of exploitation and oppression. In *VS*, Halvorsen and Vincent

experience the effects of a negative imbalance of power in them, which we think stimulates their mutual opposition. As a result, their opposition negatively reciprocates, or retaliates because it simultaneously creates further conflicts, non-equilibrium and imbalances in other segments of the social structure depicted in it.³⁴ Concerning these types of issues, Lewis posits that the power exerted by the state, its institutions and upper classes is strengthened because these entities encourage the masses to be types. As he (*ABR*, 90) says: “People ask nothing better than to be *types* – occupational types, social types, functional types of any sort.” For this reason, Lewis considers that this division of society in specialised workers also divides the opposition, weakening it, an idea that the social scientist Blau supports as well. In this regard, we consider that Lewis proves to be a very innovative writer and a tremendously perceptive social critic. As the artist (*DOY*, 86) says in his discursive work,

Human beings are roughly segmented by nature and accident into a great variety of categories. There is the *race* category – a person is a Celt or a Saxon, a semite or a Slav, and so on. There is the *sex* category – a person is a man or a woman. There is the *age* category – a person is young or old. There is the *social* category – a person is rich or poor. There is the *trade* category – a person is a plumber or a farmer.

In his *Man of the World* books, Lewis refers to this weakening of opposition as *Divide et Impera* (86). We believe that, like the contemporary social scientist Blau, the Enemy is conscious that opposition cannot be resisted

³² Ibid. 23-4.

³³ Ibid. 24.

unless underprivileged classes form *coalitions*. Nonetheless, as he (*DOY*, 60) observes

Many things of a purely political order [...] ensue from the economic conditions brought about by the successful management of the gigantic *class-wars*. In the first place, if as a result of the sex-war women and man tend to draw apart into hostile camps or at least into distinct and self-sufficient classes that must entail results of far-reaching political importance, altering the character of the family life, as practised in the political system of the Aryan world. [...] The relations and attitudes of children to parents will be altered, and of the Man and the Woman respectively to themselves.

Therefore, power conflicts can only be sorted out by putting into practice the maxim: *tertius gaudens* (32), which Lewis identifies with third parties like artists, thinkers and philosophers. In his view, these mediating people are important because they have intelligence, and are independent enough to solve power conflicts *without being involved in them*. In this regard, Mr. Perl emerges as a real contemplator in *VS*, as he observes and performs a constructive function in society through his work, while being indifferent to practical gains or ascendancy over others.

In other words, Lewis conveys that it is only the aforesaid type of people who can undermine conflict and power in society, as this is far too passive to react, and government institutions too keen on promoting economical and political interests. All segments of society approve of illegitimate practices and institutions in this world. They disregard the

³⁴ Ibid. 30.

constructive propositions made by these few individuals or thinkers. As a result, society does not improve its deficiencies.

As we have just said, Mr. Perl is one of these ideal thinkers proposed by Lewis. His working of the mind and words resemble Lewis'. Mr. Perl is the only character that tells Vincent how purposeless and empty his will to act is. Vincent is a tragic persona for Mr. Perl because he *looks, behaves* and *speaks* like a gentleman, but he does not identify himself as one, although he says he does. Mr. Perl recommends that Vincent ignore class, as his brother Harry does. Otherwise, behaving in the skewed ways he does, he not only threatens a conspiracy to defeat class in England, he indirectly creates class. We think that this is why Vincent's relatives dislike him so much.

In our opinion, Vincent should be less *cynical* and *egotistical* if he really desires to overcome class in his country. Nonetheless, he is a snob with an excess of will and a sort of personal dictator inside himself, two things that drive him to do whatever action to attain his aimless goals. Vincent is conscious of the numerous wars, processes of competition and social differentiation that exist in society. As the text reads,

The famous "war psychosis" settled upon everybody and everything. [...] The only person who seemed completely immune from these influences was Vincent Penhale. (71)

Yet he does not wish to acknowledge the necessity to create pressures that increases the need for integrative ties in his natural working-class group. Since he neither withdraws from the competition for superior status, nor does he establish integrative bonds with other members in his same

situation, which might become the foundation of group solidarity, he fails in his task to modify the class system in Britain.³⁵ As a result, Vincent does oppose the system and its upper and middle classes, yet in the wrong way as he always does so in very *individualistic* ways.

As the behaviour and social encounters of Vincent do not create integrative bonds of social cohesion that strengthen the group conformed by himself, Maddie and Halvorsen in the pursuit of common goals, their social control and coordination decreases. Had they created such bonds, social organization would have strengthened their feelings of group, and social support would have reinforced each of them individually, particularly in relation to outsiders. Their support as peers could have facilitated their expression of aggression and opposition against the interfering power figure impersonated by the State. As Vincent and Halvorsen pursue their own self-interests all the time through unorthodox and aggressive ways, nothing of the kind occurs between them in the end. In this regard, we think that Lewis aims to question that by behaving in these manners, working class representatives in his country resemble real impersonations of Fascism and its mad will to action, force and power.³⁶ Thus Vincent and Halvorsen only give origin to further opposition and violence, and cause much affliction to their own species. As a result, the implications derived from their opposition

³⁵ See Blau (1964: 50).

³⁶ Ibid. 139.

are fatal not only for them, but also for all those characters surrounding them.³⁷

We believe that Vincent's desire for power is awful, fragile and irrational, as it dominates his life entirely, driving him to commit suicide in the end. Vincent should have been indifferent to power threats, if he wanted to destroy the class-conscious structure of society, as Mr. Perl advises him to. Notwithstanding, his desire works against him because Vincent is apathetic to *love*, a particularistic resource that is offered to him in great quantities from his wife, relatives, in-laws, friends and other acquaintances.

If social relationships established by Vincent with the rest of characters somehow increase throughout the book, this occurs, essentially, because all the participants feel *attraction* to him.³⁸ As we have observed, social attraction lead to processes of social exchange between people. The benefits Vincent supplies to them illegitimately, and those obtained by him are rewards that serve as inducements to continue supply benefits. Their social exchanges create integrative bonds that fortify their relationships. In fact, it is only when Vincent tries to exert power, or to influence those persons or groups attracted by him, that this magnetism vanishes. For example, when Vincent adopts a patronising attitude towards his relatives for following the norms established by the state, or when he induces to confess when arrested by the Police, promising to reward him in future for doing so. Thus when Vincent's vulgar streak is uncovered, his relatives

³⁷ Ibid. 60-1.

ignore him. Since Halvorsen does not fear suffering negative sanctions of status from society and discovers Vincent's skewed plan he takes revenge on Vincent, the latter being punished as well.

The interpersonal relationships of Vincent and the rest of characters of his same social class do not evolve in good terms because there is no *interdependence* and *mutual influence of equal strength* among them. Contrarily, Vincent and Halvorsen exert indirect power on each other, on other members of their same class (Vincent's relatives) and on those of higher class (Tandish, Martin, April and Mrs. Mallow). In this regard, the dependence of Maddie, April and Martin³⁹ on Vincent, the patronising attitude of Vincent and Maddie towards their relatives, or the supply of services of Vincent towards Halvorsen indicates the root of their power relations.⁴⁰

According to Blau, democratic values demand that all people have the opportunity to improve their social status and are free to organise political opposition in attempts to achieve political power. Lewis sees the duty of British citizenship to take responsibility of their situation in their democratic world by involving themselves in particular power struggles to help safeguard equality of opportunity and political tolerance. In *VS*, Vincent says: "classes do not mix" (29) in Britain because people ask

³⁸ Ibid. 21.

³⁹ Vincent confesses to Martin that if he had not modified his looks, manners and accent, he would have been dependent on him. "I should then have followed *you* as now you follow *me*" (35) Since Vincent created his own artificial self their power relation is different now.

⁴⁰ See Blau (1964: 118).

nothing than to be types. As Vincent states,

We – the British working class – are the worst snobs of the lot. Worse than our middle class, which is saying a good deal. For we accept our status as sub-human inferiors: we do everything we can to help our masters to keep us down. And if one of our numbers makes a move to get out of the line, we do our damndest to stop him. We pursue him with indignation and hatred. (139)

Here participants of the same (and of different) social segment are incapable of collaborating among themselves because they are only driven by feelings of resentment and hatred.⁴¹ Thus we think that Vincent's words draw attention to the harsh *competition* between members of the same class in his country.⁴² As he says, his sister Victoria⁴³ went to Canada to enjoy a better quality of life (to grow up “vertically” rather than “horizontally”). However, members of her same class, including her own relatives, do their best “to drag her back” (138) now. There seems to be so much jealousy, envy and hatred among members of the same class that these biased feelings work against them in the end, when trying to improve their social and economical

⁴¹ Ibid. 142.

⁴² This idea is in accord with Durkheim's (1967: 226-7). The sociologist suggests that, like Darwin, other biologists demonstrate that fight for survival is more violent among members of the same nature. This conflict tends to give origin to complementary specialization, through which organisms can co-exist without one interfering the other's survival. In fact, functional differentiation permits various types of organisms to survive. A similar principle can be applied to human society. This idea is also supported by Giddens (1971: 146-7),

Los hombres soportan la misma ley. En una misma ciudad, las diferentes profesiones pueden coexistir sin dañarse recíprocamente, pues persiguen objetos diferentes. El soldado busca la gloria militar, el sacerdote, la autoridad moral, el hombre de Estado, el poder, el industrial, la riqueza, el sabio, el renombre científico.

⁴³ In Vincent's opinion, his sister Victoria (note her name connotations) set an example for his family when she exiled to Canada. Now, she has a Japanese gardener and a Negro houseman. Vincent views America as a *classless* society and Britain is a *class taboo* society. Since there are no niggers in Britain, Vincent considers that the State has created them. Thus the poor are the niggers of Britain for him. These views, which are very much Lewisian in nature, appear in *P*, where the artist is for ‘internationalism’ and the American culture of ‘the melting-pot’ as a measure to solve the British class structure and the mad European nationalisms. Lewis also deals with this issue in his work *ACM*.

position. In this regard, it is not strange that all these facts affect the emotional state of all these participants in very negative ways.

Therefore, no character experiences satisfaction after establishing social associations both in particularistic and in non-particularistic settings in *VS*. Since their expectations in social life are not fulfilled, their reactions to social experiences in private contexts cannot be entirely positive either. In fact, social encounters appear to cause them only much anxiety and frustration. Since attainment of minimum expectations is of great significance for individuals, and all these participants are unable to attain this minimum, their social associations are likely to develop merely, when these are most *profitable* for them. In fact, this is what occurs in *VS* all the time.

As we have seen, the shared feelings of exploitation of all these characters and all the aforesaid punishing experiences arouse anger, disapproval and antagonism against those held responsible for them. Vincent and Halvorsen feel that the deprivation they suffer is so severe that their desire to retaliate becomes an *end-in-itself*. Accordingly, they will deprive everyone (even each other) of information and status, and will do services for anyone only to obtain *extrinsic benefits* such as money. However, in their pursuit of such retaliation, they will ignore other considerations and other people involved. Thus third parties suffer the

consequences.⁴⁴

By deriding Vincent's conduct in ironic terms, Lewis condemns his desire for retaliation. Naturally, Lewis makes Vincent behave in this brutal way towards everyone as an answer to deprivations suffered. However, Vincent does not appear as a martyr (as he thinks he is) who intends to sacrifice his welfare in the interest of advancing a revolutionary cause in the novel; rather, he is a misanthropist whose selfish indulgence leads him to violate cultural taboos and norms, to struggle against oppressors using his fellow men as means, and to deceive his own self, annihilating his personality in the process. Thus Lewis appears to imply that Vincent's values and practices are not the way to social legitimacy. Vincent and Halvorsen should have pursued collective self-interests, since this is the only way in which their *acts of poetic justice* could be justified, and their opposition against oppressors fortified.⁴⁵ However, their extremist opposition, which, as we have just said, stems from feelings of deprivation and powerlessness, is a *calculated* means to gain *explicit rewards* rather than *expressive action* signifying antagonism against existing powers.

We think that Lewis is very much aware that the success of working-class members like Vincent in raising his socio-economic status threatens the social status of the stratum immediately above them, that is, the middle-classes. This may be why, acknowledging the futility of his actions, Vincent behaves in the following manner at the end of the book:

⁴⁴ See Blau (1964: 227-9).

He threw his head up and his eyes were illuminated with all his old arrogance. “Now, Mad, go find a proper man. And don’t worry, Mad, my sweet, if he jettisons a few silly aitches. Forget about all that. Anything – *anything* is better than some dirty little middle-class fellow. Pick a duke or a dustman. Take my advice and *skip the Middle-class.*” (217)

This feeling of class heterogeneity in the social structure depicted in *VS* promotes political conflicts between members of different social and financial standing. The profound class differences that the Enemy reflects in this novel appear to illustrate the ways in which Lewis sees the deep political and ideological cleavages that existed between European parties in his time.

Blau (1964: 255) suggests that cultural values legitimate the social order. Values and social norms that are commonly agreed upon serve as media of social life and as links for social transactions.

Normative standards restrict the range of permissible conduct that is essential for social life. Social exchange serves as a self-regulating mechanism to a considerable extent, since each party advances his own interests by promoting those of others. However, social exchange must be also protected against antisocial practices that would interfere with this very process. Without social norms prohibiting force and fraud, the trust required for social exchange would be jeopardized, and social exchange could not serve as a self-regulating mechanism within the limits of these norms. Moreover, superior power and resources, which often are the result of competitive advantages gained in exchange transactions, make it possible to exploit others. This is why the pursuit of self-interests without normative restraints defeats the self-interests of all parties concerned.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 233.

In *VS*, Lewis appears to suggest that social values and norms do not guarantee social order in British society in his time because the actions of individuals are addressed to gain advantages at the expense of the general interests of the collective. Hence, Lewis appears to call attention to the fact that sanctions are extremely necessary because this is the only way in which *irrational* patterns of conduct like those of Vincent or Halvorsen can be converted into *rational* forms of pursuing self-interest.⁴⁶

Occupational achievement and financial success constitute the two universal values that differentiate social status in Lewis' fictional society and govern its functioning. In this regard, we consider that the following words by Blau (1964: 265) may clarify Lewis' critical assumptions.

Social values play a vital role in the institutionalisation of social patterns and their historical perpetuation. Thus particularistic values are usually media of *solidarity*, universalistic values are media of exchange and *differentiation*, legitimating values are media of *organization*, and opposition values are media of *reorganization*.

In sum, we consider that Lewis portrays *particularistic* values, that is, the ones that give origin to processes of social integration, social solidarity and group loyalty, as being non-existent in *VS*, while *universalistic values* and the *processes of differentiation* to which they give rise are far more prevalent for critical purposes. Lewis proposes that if the universalistic

⁴⁶ This idea is in accord with the notion of *discipline* of Giddens, who considers it as "an essential element of moral rules." According to the sociologist (1971: 201),

Accepting the moral rules that society offers to individuals is what makes it possible to live normally. If we view egotism and anomie in this context, we will realise that they are stimulated by the very sense of moral individualism, which is nothing less than the result of social evolution.

standards are preponderant in society, they give origin to society's distribution systems, including the *class structure* as the basic manifestation of the differential distribution of major social rewards, the *systems of exchange* and *competition* through which social and economic distributions are accomplished, and the functions associated with them, such as division of labour, technology, and training will be the aspects that really will characterise human relations in Britain. For all these reasons, *VS* presents many negative behaviour patterns of civilian life and varied social and psychological phenomena in very distorted satirical ways.

Within this context, one element compensates for so much human misery, April. As Lewis' critic Wagner (1957: 257) says,

The moral of the story is **the regenerating power of love**, but as in *The Revenge for Love* the central character learns this too late. And, in fact, a tear slides down Vincent's cheek at the end, rather as it does down Hardcaster's.⁴⁷ Vincent finds out that his wife is really in love with him, or that **love is stronger than class**, and there is no other end for him but the most tragic of all in this context, **suicide**. (my emphasis)

April loves and gives status to Vincent in a selfless or disinterested manner, and runs errands (services) for him for altruism and communion. Contrarily, Vincent is a very *pragmatic* lover who looks realistically at his own assets, when he first meets her. Vincent decides on her "market value" and sets off to get the best possible "deal" in her. He is so *matter-of-fact* that he remains loyal and faithful and defines his status as "in love" as long as April is

⁴⁷ Percy Hardcaster is one of the main protagonists of *RL*. Like Vincent, he suffers some kind of *anagnorisis* throughout the book.

perceived as a “good bargain.” In this regard, Vincent thinks ahead and stays married with April only for practical reasons. Consequently, it could be said that April feels and acts in the aforesaid ways *just for love*, while Vincent’s idea of love based on the *exchange of rewards*.

Despite the fact that critics like Rubin (1973: 86-87) takes an uncertain stance regarding the ability of *exchange principles* to account for intimate relationships, we think that Foa’s framework and predictions account for both particularistic and non-particularistic relationships and bonds very accurately. As we have observed, the bonds established by Vincent (and Halvorsen) neither are firm nor last for too long because the principles of the interpersonal marketplace prevail in most of their social encounters. These market principles are more predominant between strangers and casual acquaintances, and in the early stages of development of relationships because, in close relationships, one becomes decreasingly concerned with what he can get *from* the other person and increasingly concerned with what can be done *for* the other.⁴⁸ It is not strange that most interpersonal resource exchanges in *VS*, except for those established by April and Maddie towards Vincent resemble superficial *liaisons* where we can easily recognise the *exchange basis* of their involvement. As a result, these two females suffer very much, and the relationships established among all of them do not

⁴⁸ See Huston and Cate (In Cook and Wilson, 1979: 263-9).

evolve into close or intimate bonds, wherein the partners are selfless in their devotion to one another.⁴⁹

We think that environmental circumstances influence the ability of Lewis' characters to function as normal citizens in their everyday dealings in very negative ways. As we have seen, all of them are very much deficient in basic particularistic resources, their social and personal expectations are fulfilled minimally, and they suffer a large number of unsavoury social and psychological deficiencies. Consequently, most of them are dissatisfied, experience difficulty in initiating relationships in normal settings, and meet much difficulty in accessing certain institutions where their needed resources can be obtained.

Some other times, Lewis' characters have access to such institutions, but they feel unable to use their supply of resources for obtaining their needed ones. Therefore, neither these characters nor society as a whole seem to be very functional in providing resource needs. This is why specialised institutions like psychiatric clinics, that is, places where (as it usually occurs nowadays) individuals (including young males) go to receive resources that are not proper of this institution such as love need to be created. In the end, all of them suffer various types of shortages. For example, females like April and Mad are low in self-esteem (status and love) and feel depressed on many occasions, male individuals such as Vincent and Halvorsen consider them to be externally controlled, and thus, they are irrationally obsessed

⁴⁹ Ibid. 263.

with money and status, something that makes them ignore their particularistic demands.

Within this context, Vincent appears as a fairly authoritarian and slightly paranoid figure. He suffers a mental health problem, a 'class-complex' as diagnosed by Mr. Perl. This type of mental deficit, which starts to be studied by professionals in Lewis' time, harms Vincent's reputation as an individual, as it calls attention to a lack of particularistic resources. In other words, it draws attention to problems, or incapacities solved by the application of science to study human behaviour in the modern era. In this way, Lewis draws our attention to the effect of such lack of particularistic resources on the unorthodox rules of practice that govern the patterns of conduct of males like Vincent, who visits a psychiatrist or mental health professional to explain the motivations of his undesirable behaviour so that Mr. Perl takes on his enormous burden of human suffering.

Vincent performs continuous transactions of particularistic resources with other characters, but his motivations are always false-bottomed. He trades commodities with his fellow men to obtain *extrinsic* benefit, rather than *intrinsic* satisfaction or reward. In this regard, the most illustrative example appears at the end of the story, when Vincent no longer requires the service of his butler Willis because he no longer provides him social standing, but represents an encumbrance for him.⁵⁰ Vincent deceives all the

⁵⁰ Throughout the novel, Vincent acknowledges that Willis is not a butler for him, but a friend. However, Willis provides him social standing indirectly. However, when Vincent's involvement in the murder of Tandish and the note forgery business appear in the newspapers, Vincent takes status

characters that feel social attraction for him, showing himself to be a cynic who fulfils his interests at the cost of part of his own humanity and of other characters such as Maddie⁵¹ and April. By doing so, Vincent demonstrates to be as bad as Halvorsen, a misanthrope who stands outside society because his differences and resentments have distorted his personality.

In our opinion, Halvorsen is an outlaw who corrupts Vincent, yet April is the *injured party*: she stands clearly for good against evil, which is clearly impersonated in the two previous characters.⁵² To use Vincent's words, April is the first (character in Lewis' fiction) person who *says* she loves him and *means* it. He asks forgiveness to her for the part she has played in his story.⁵³ ("My darling," he said "*forgive* me!" [...] You are *so* kind. I have not been kind to you, April, my love. [...] I am – just a brute"), even though he does not say sorry "to the world." (215)

Victoria made him see what he had lost – April, the first human being ever to say to him, and what was more, *to mean it*, that it would be all the same to her if his father were a sweep. He had not known till yesterday, that there was anything stronger than class. **In marrying April he had thought he was marrying Class. Love was a thing he had not so much as suspected.** And all this was having terrible effects. (221; my emphasis)

away from Willis hoarsely, and sacks him. Vincent's behaviour is very much representative of his utilitarian principles, something that leads him to conduct himself in this distorted manner with his fellow men in all manner of settings, including love or friendship, as we have just seen.

⁵¹ We agree with Chapman, when the critic (1973: 136) posits,

Just as Vincent created his self, so, indirectly, has he created Maddie. [...] Her modelling is a more passive form of counterfeit, but equally destructive of self. [...] At the end of the novel, Maddie is still modelling and using her beauty to attract a man. In spite of Vincent's recognition of the hollowness of the pursuit, nothing has changed: the class trap still forces Maddie into this passive fraud.

⁵² For further reference on the negative influence of Vincent's behaviour on other people's lives, (*the injured party*), see Mudrick (1953: 54-64), where the critic describes this same idea in *RL*.

⁵³ In fact, Vincent is the first character in Lewis' fiction that asks forgiveness.

Apart from April, Maddie suffers some of the terrible effects caused by the actions of Vincent as well. His brother makes use of her to fulfil his own egotistic purposes. Thus Vincent's will to change things is barren because it has corrupted her sister as well. This fact would explain why Maddie starts to model again, by selling her body to other men when Dick abandons her. By doing so, Maddie shows to be infected by Vincent's illness as well. Both Vincent and Maddie have a 'will to act' for destruction, Europe's main infection in this time. As Vincent acknowledges,

I should have thought more about my acting and less of living. I have been an actor-man all this time [...] I suffer from the *mal du siècle*. [...] My problem is that I am all made up of *action*." (like Hitler or Napoleon as depicted by Stendhal in *Le Rouge et Le Noir*, as described by Sorel) [...] My acting is a form of *action* – not of make-believe. [...] I am not an artist, Martin. [...] the driving-power that kept me in such incessant activity [...] a sensation of life-and-death importance attached to whatever I had in hand. The will to *change* something: all will-to-action (and-damn-the consequences), is that. But with that goes the belief that it will be better different. See? A p-p-perfect definition of the protestant mind (231-5)

Naturally, this "extreme will to act" is not the best way to change the class-system in Britain, as this will does not aim to perfection; it is empty, purposeless and illegitimate.

Vincent's experience of oppression and exploitation is notably somewhat isolated from the rest of the community because, apart from Halvorsen and his sister Madeleine, he does not promote further communications with other members of his same group. Since Vincent does

not give any relevance to particularistic resources such as *love*, he does not contribute any measure that socially justifies and reinforces his feeling of outrage, and the desire to retaliate against the powers responsible for the frustrations and deprivations suffered.⁵⁴ This is why Lewis portrays Vincent in such pathetic and pitiless way at the end of the book. Thus Vincent commits suicide⁵⁵ leaving a paper pinned upon his chest reading:

WHOEVER FINDS THE BODY,
MAY DO WHAT THEY LIKE WITH IT.
I DON'T WANT IT.
Signed. ITS FORMER INHABITANT. (230)

In sum, *VS* presents a fictional world where old moral values such as *love* and *goodness* appear to have disappeared because expansionist market values have gained further importance in the Western World. As Vincent says to Martin,

“All this is a bug – an infection,” [...] “Europe has run amok. [...] I have proved [...] that force is barren. Conceived in those hard terms of action-for-action’s sake nothing can be achieved, except for too short a period to matter. I have proved that, have I not?” “I don’t know.”(235)

⁵⁴ In support of this idea, see Blau (1964: 303).

⁵⁵ We think that Vincent’s suicide stems from the lack of moral rules in the society he inhabits. Concerning *suicide*, we find that Durkheim’s views clarify our assumptions. The sociologist (1971: 164) considers that ‘anomic suicide’ has its origin in the characteristics of large sectors of modern industry, where the function of severe punishment in society is not considered to be very necessary, yet this is an important factor that permits to attain social unity. In fact, the need of such unity is something that Lewis calls attention to in this novel by throwing into prominence or representing its lack in it.

These facts imply that romantic values have been replaced by modernist mass production values. To make matters worse, most *dramatis personae* are obsessed with politics and money, and show themselves keen on the idea of another World war. As a result, their views of life are very practical, and their social encounters, except for those of April towards Vincent, are usually determined by a *rational utility*.

As we have seen, these characters suffer in themselves the effects of political cleavages, generalised violence, and scientific progress and its fruits. Just as Britain is eager to show to other cultures that it has better weapons and could conquer new countries in this period, Vincent sets for himself the task of ‘conquering’ (his name meaning the “*conqueror*” (42)) April and her class, imposing his “will-to-power” on others, including his relatives and friends.

Lewis is aware that innovations in technology such as electric lamps, washing machines, sewing machines, motion pictures, radio, motorcars or airplanes, sanitation and medicine improvements, ... etc. in the period between the two wars *promised life betterment*. Thus he creates *SB*, first, *RL*, second, and *VS*, third, in order to exemplify their detrimental *progressive* effects on people’s happiness, welfare and quality of life. Probably influenced by Arnold, Lewis creates an anarchic society in a process of disintegration various months before World War II, where he differentiates three classes of people: a few Barbarians, many Philistines and

large masses of the Populace.⁵⁶ All these characters consider that they will attain happiness only by doing what they like. Naturally, their likes differ depending on the class to which they pertain. Thus Barbarians such as Martin, Mrs. Mallow and April enjoy honours, consideration, relaxation and pleasure, Philistines like Vincent and Halvorsen are fanatics involved in business and money making who aspiring to a more relaxed self, comfort and tea-meetings, such as those enjoyed by the class immediately above them and, finally, the Populace impersonated in the grotesque, ignorant, crude and narrow-minded Penhale family who like hustling, eating and beer, yet which, however, *despise* the false-bottomed and patronising attitude of Vincent. All of them, with the exception of April and the latter, are keen on machinery and progress, rather than on the pursuit of *perfection, humanity and love*.

In our view, it is quite likely that Darwin's theory appears to have helped Lewis create his own particular version of 'the survival of the fittest'

⁵⁶ Relevant Lewisian critics like Normand (In Corbett, 1998: 38-57) and S. Campbell (1988: 174: 190) have supported this influence. For instance, S. Campbell conceives Lewis' cultural model as divided into three kinds of people, whom he locates at different levels depending on "their awareness of reality". Accordingly, Lewis places common men and women who are generally uninformed about the ideas they receive and use at the bottom. This group is formed by mindless masses, which Lewis treats with disdain. In the middle, we find those who deliberately use ideas for their own practical ends. These people belong to the world of industry, exploit scientific discoveries in practical ways, and are often motivated by politics and religion. These facts convert them into manipulators rather than thinkers or workers. This is why they are obsessed with attaining power and wealth. In S. Campbell's opinion, these persons are the ones who tie politics to science, philosophy and the arts politics and are the controlling "they" of Lewis's proposed fiction. In other words, they are the members that conform the "Zeitgeist" or "spirit of fashion" (Lewis' *ABR*, 431) of his time. The third kind of people is made up of the true revolutionaries or those who have a pure thought and originate all really new ideas of all kinds. Their essential activity is the "pure speculative impulse." Within this group, Lewis includes his cultivated audience, his ideal artists, philosophers and all those scientists whose material of thought is not "personal" but "impersonal". We think that this cultural model described by Arnold and S. Campbell appears in Lewis' *VS* as well, a cultural model dominated by the impure thought of the middleman. This is why the interpersonal behaviour and relationships performed by them are weak, uniform and fraudulent.

in *VS*. Darwin's theory holds no clues for human conduct, no answers to human moral dilemmas, but it represents the worthlessness of the physical world of *VS*. Here Lewis adopts natural selection as the key to progress, though Darwin had not spoken of progress, only of adaptation, something that working-class members do in order to *advance* in *VS*. In this regard, we think that Lewis makes use of Darwin's theory to describe competing units like individuals of different sex, race, generation or class, and thus, criticise the British class structure, hypocrisy and opportunism, cunning, ambition and extreme desire for power that characterise British social functioning in this time.⁵⁷

In spite of these facts, we consider that Darwin's theory of evolution works in the opposite direction in *VS* because Lewis wants to reflect the marked class differences, rather than biological unity of the British (and the whole) human family. Thus we observe one of its worst effects, *competition*, with the weakest going to the wall. Lewis would be foretelling the blood letting of World War II and the prospect that organised human aggression, far from improving the happiness and welfare of species, may actually eradicate it altogether. In this sense, the main protagonist of *VS*

⁵⁷ As Burrow (1968: 43-5) rightly says, Darwin's concept of the 'survival of the fittest' has been a basis for many ideological systems of thought. Thus his linking of 'the struggle for existence' with evolutionary changes, which could be represented as progressive, provided a massive 'scientific' endorsement for the theories of Marx and Engels, who adopted Darwinism as the biological counterpart to the class war. The 'survival of the fittest' in a human context also invaded academic sociology, in the work of Herbert Spencer and, even, to the belief that war was 'a biological necessity', as German leading military thinkers showed us. Indeed, Darwin's theory of the 'survival of the fittest' formed a vital ingredient in the stew of racialism, nationalism, and anti-Semitism supported by the young Hitler in the public reading rooms of Munich and Vienna. In this regard, the critic concludes that Darwin himself did not endorse the application of his theory in social contexts – Huxley, indeed, explicitly repudiated it – but inevitably it provided a kind of crucible into the fears

Vincent reflects that, as arbiter of his own destiny, he has assimilated evolution and progress probably to the point of unpardonable self-satisfaction.

Naturally, the crisis portrayed in *VS* is a *moral* crisis rather than an *economic* one. The increasing prevalence of economic relations as a consequence of the destruction of traditional religious institutions, which represented the moral background in previous societies, constitutes the main source of its fictional society's shortages. (175) As Chapman (1973: 135-6) says,

Realizing the worthlessness of his objectives, Vincent's final *anagnorosis* represents **a stoical abandoning of society's values**: a position defined and defended by Lewis from the earliest pieces like *The Code of a Herdsman* and *The Enemy of the Stars*, right through to *Self-Condemned*. (my emphasis)

Since religious ideals constitute the moral ideals on which society bases its unity and these ideals seem no longer valid for Vincent (and, in turn, for British society) there is nothing that re-asserts his faith in moral order. Notwithstanding, this unity is necessary. Otherwise, each individual looks for his own selfish interests in his everyday interpersonal transactions, showing that he ignores the moral values on which social solidarity depends.⁵⁸ In this regard, Vincent clearly illustrates that he fails to counteract his *natural egotism* with some kind of *altruism* and *love*.

and hatreds of the age which could be dipped and come out coated with an aura of scientific authority.
⁵⁸ See Giddens (1971: 193).

All in all, we think that the social reality distortedly depicted by Lewis in *VS* signals the dehumanised interpersonal behaviour and relationships commonly established by human beings in his time. Here Lewis reflects the dehumanisation of persons into things and concepts through the process of the *embourgeoisement* of Vincent; a human being who has lost all essential reality either as an individual or as a community to express himself. This is why he expresses it occasionally and with difficulty, and often does so illegitimately, or in unnatural circumstances.

Very close to him is the figure of the Enemy, the artist as contemplator who purges himself by presenting Vincent's faulty behaviour and unorthodox social encounters with the most scrupulous cold scorn of the real satirist. In this regard, *VS* constitutes the artist's particular *contribution* to society, a cultural creation that reflects his enormous self-consciousness, over-all vision of man and urgent request to perform a *re-structuration* of society towards *integration* and *co-operation* in the service of its *preservation*. Perhaps the two new values that appear in it, *love* and *kindness*, open a possible door of hope to attain this perfecting goal.

6. Ficción auto-biográfica: *Self-Condemned*

En este capítulo nos concentramos en la novela Lewisiana *Self-Condemned* (1954) debido a su extremo carácter personal. Su historia gira en torno a las experiencias íntimas de un catedrático de Historia llamado René Harding y su mujer Hester. René es el autor de un libro revolucionario titulado *Historia Secreta de la Segunda Guerra Mundial*. En este libro, René defiende un acercamiento nuevo a la historia abogando por lo *cuantitativo* más que por lo *cuantitativo*. René no cree que la Historia que enseña en una Universidad de Londres en la actualidad sea objetiva ya que la gran mayoría de sus colegas están inmiscuidos en política. A pesar de sus buenas intenciones, la publicación de este libro sólo ha contribuido a empañar su reputación en Inglaterra, pues ahora se le tacha de fascista. En consecuencia, René decide renunciar a su plaza por razones éticas, y planea llevar a cabo un cambio de *vida* y de *mentalidad* en Canadá.

Los Hardings se trasladan a Momaco, Toronto donde viven en la habitación de un hotel de veinticinco por doce pies en un estado de absoluta penuria durante tres largos años y tres meses. Mientras la Segunda Guerra Mundial tiene lugar en Europa, los Harding se recluyen en este hotel, un *micro-cosmos* de la realidad externa. Sus huéspedes utilizan sus pisos superiores e inferiores como escenarios para realizar todo tipo de actos

violentos, locuras e ilegitimidades en las cuales acaban involucrados los Harding. Más tarde, cuando René acepta una nueva plaza de Historia en una Universidad americana prestigiosa, vemos que se convierte en una réplica de su yo inicial. De este modo, sus intentos por llevar a cabo un cambio de vida y de mentalidad son fallidos.

El interés de *SC* para esta tesis reside en su naturaleza auto-reflexiva ya que Lewis transmite muchas de sus teorías sociales y políticas a través de sus personajes. Este hecho es tremendamente importante porque implica que la actitud interpersonal e intercambios de recursos de René con su madre, hermanas, cuñados, esposa, amigos, colegas, jefe y otros personajes relevantes de la novela están motivados por principios Lewisianos en muchas ocasiones. Además, como René planea acometer un cambio de vida y modo de pensar mediante una re-valoración *escrupulosa* de ciertos valores, lazos espirituales y compromisos sociales, el estudio de esta novela permite esclarecer la nueva visión del comportamiento y las relaciones humanas tanto en contextos particulares como no particulares del autor. René lleva a cabo esta re-valoración porque advierte que las relaciones humanas en occidente han sido influidas por los dogmas religiosos tradicionales y los valores del *Zeitgeist* de forma muy negativa. De ahí que René proponga unos pocos valores, vínculos, códigos de conducta y relaciones humanas nuevos como alternativa.

Para acometer su flamante plan, René trata aspectos sociales y espirituales con un impresionante desprecio maestro y una severidad hostil.

René proporciona nuevas formas de organización social para mejorar las deficiencias actuales de la sociedad a la cual él pertenece. Como muchas de las ideas que René (el recién nacido) expone son absolutamente nuevas en la ficción de Lewis, creemos que su análisis puede ser muy útil para describir los efectos *constructivos* de estos nuevos valores en la sociedad. René propone estos nuevos principios porque el mundo se encuentra en un momento de guerra y caos generalizado, y su población tiene una vida privada muy insatisfactoria. Por este motivo, creemos que las implicaciones críticas señaladas por Lewis en esta obra pueden ser enormemente significativas del cambio de mentalidad sufrido por el artista en esta época.

Otro de los aspectos interesantes de este capítulo es que permite observar la evolución del retrato que Lewis hace del comportamiento y las relaciones humanas a lo largo de las obras que componen nuestro corpus de análisis. Los intercambios de recursos de los personajes de *SC* no tienen como fin exclusivo adquirir categorías concretas, tal y como hemos visto en capítulos anteriores; las motivaciones de algunos de ellos son más *humanas* en desenlace. En este sentido, consideramos que nuestro análisis de *SC* puede arrojar una enorme luz tanto en la evolución de la visión del mundo y de las relaciones de Lewis así como la influencia de dicho avance en la idiosincrasia de una de sus últimas novelas.

René comenta cómo sus antiguos valores absolutos: *auto-conciencia*, *razonamiento libre e integridad intelectual* no interesan a nadie en la actualidad. Él considera que estos principios son *esenciales* para hacer a la

sociedad más *perfecta*. Sin embargo también encuentra muy difícil dominar la ascendencia mecánica que ha sido impuesta sobre la raza humana al nacer y desarrollarse durante el último medio siglo. René se da cuenta de que su propia persona y valores se han deteriorado a lo largo del tiempo y necesita reevaluarlos también. Por todo ello, lo que observamos a lo largo de la novela son los efectos negativos de dicha ascendencia mecánica sobre su personalidad, ética, forma del ver el mundo, su conducta y relaciones interpersonales con su mujer, familiares, jefe, amigos, camaradas y otras personas en la obra.

La descripción de las experiencias personales de René y Hester constituyen un auto-retrato de la relación amorosa de los Lewis durante este tiempo, y la rutina de trabajo de René es una historia de desintegración social y personal. Por ello, *SC* representa un ejercicio creativo de auto-crítica ideológica tremendamente individual. En realidad, *SC* es una crítica de la propia personalidad y conciencia estética del autor así como de la sociedad en su conjunto.

En nuestra opinión uno de los cambios sociales más importantes que René señala en esta obra es la *desintegración* de la unidad familiar y su *sustitución* por la figura del Estado. René culpa a la política estatal de su tiempo de hacer que los individuos posean un suministro muy bajo de recursos particulares. El catedrático considera que la capacidad de la población para funcionar como personas normales, tanto en entornos íntimos (la familia y el matrimonio) como en otros menos espirituales se ha

visto enormemente perjudicada debido a todos estos cambios. De ahí que las relaciones de todos los personajes de la obra resulten muy insatisfactorias en todos los contextos.

René es consciente de que los recursos particulares son fundamentales para el bienestar de la sociedad, así como para la realización privada y social de cada uno de sus integrantes. Sin embargo, las circunstancias políticas y económicas de su tiempo impiden que él y los de su misma especie consigan estos recursos, ya que categorías más concretas como el dinero y los bienes son mucho más preciados. Por eso llama la atención sobre la falta de particularismo en la sociedad occidental y sobre sus consecuencias más directas.

Según Lewis, los grandes cambios sociales de la época han hecho que las personas no consideren el ámbito *doméstico* como un lugar *complementario* y *contrastivo*. Por consiguiente, todos los personajes de *SC* están perturbados de un modo u otro, y encuentran una enorme dificultad para comunicar sus necesidades particulares. Estos personajes no pueden obtener apoyo emocional de sus familiares, su pareja sentimental, sus amistades u otras personas. No hace mucho tiempo, los recursos particulares solían obtenerse en entornos espirituales fácilmente, pero la aparición del Estado provocó que estos tipos de recursos empezaran a considerarse menos necesarios. Por eso, los recursos particulares son enormemente ignorados en el mundo occidental en esta época.

Creemos que los personajes de *SC* encuentran enorme dificultad para obtener categorías de recursos particulares. Además cuando éstos las reciben lo hacen en tan pequeñas cantidades, con tan poca calidad y con tan escasa frecuencia tanto en contextos particulares como no particulares que sus relaciones interpersonales son muy insatisfactorias. Puesto que cubrir este tipo de necesidades es muy necesario para el buen funcionamiento de la sociedad y de los individuos en particular, y estos no las obtienen en cantidad y calidad adecuadas en ámbitos particulares, todos ellos sufren grandes inestabilidades. Es por ello que sus comportamientos e interacciones sociales son agresivos y extraños con gran frecuencia.

Los ciudadanos de *SC* parecen no ser conscientes de que las principales razones por las cuales sufren extremos desequilibrios emocionales y dan rienda suelta a tanto odio y violencia los unos contra los otros en sus contactos diarios tienen su origen en que los lugares donde sus necesidades particulares pueden ser cubiertas son escasos e inadecuados. De ahí el gran número de conflictos sociales llevados a su completo efecto en la vida social en *SC*. Estas guerras provocadas por el *Zeitgeist* han hecho que la institución familiar desaparezca, y que los seres humanos se hayan segmentado por naturaleza y accidente en un gran número de categorías (raza, sexo, clase, generación, nacionalidad,... etc.) Como resultado de estas circunstancias sociales, políticas y económicas la situación del hombre y de la mujer, de la unidad familiar y, por tanto, de la sociedad en su totalidad ha empeorado enormemente.

En resumen, creemos que Lewis crea la figura de René en esta novela para auto-meditar acerca de la condición del ciudadano en el mundo Occidental moderno. Es por ello que todos sus personajes sufren los efectos más amargos derivados de las todas las circunstancias en su propio ser ya que encuentran que han perdido mucho emocionalmente sin ganar nada económicamente. Lewis auto-reflexiona acerca de la condición humana en su obra naturalista a través de la figura de René. Lewis crea un personaje que encuentra mucha dificultad para admitir que él mismo tiene fallos también. En este sentido, nuestro análisis de la conducta interpersonal y relaciones de René demuestra que este personaje se mueve por una obsesión irracional de conocimiento (información), es estéril emocionalmente (falta de amor), tiene un deseo obsesivo por alcanzar el éxito (status, dinero y poder) y muestra un odio cínico hacia su mujer. Naturalmente, este odio nunca se convierte en agresión física, pero le impide corresponder a su mujer con recursos particulares. Por todo ello, René hace a Hester muy desdichada.

Como a Lewis, la ideología liberal de René no le permite profundizar en asuntos del corazón. Sus principios le hacen adoptar diferentes tipos de estrategias con el fin de *no expandir* sus intercambios de recursos particulares en ámbitos espirituales como la familia o el matrimonio. Por eso, su relación matrimonial se deteriora hasta hacerse añicos. Por otra parte, René dice conocer los aspectos que amenazan a la sociedad moderna a la que él pertenece pero se opone drásticamente. Sin

embargo, no admite que él mismo está contaminado por sus mismas deficiencias también.

Mientras demuestra todo ello, René lleva a cabo una re-valoración crítica de actitudes, relaciones e instituciones, y propone unos pocos modelos nuevos de entender el funcionamiento y la organización social. En otras palabras, René celebra el *amor* entre los hombres y las mujeres, la *lealtad* entre hermanos y hermanas, y la *amistad* entre todos los seres vivos. René presenta todos estos vínculos como lazos mucho más *auténticos* y *beneficiosos* para la sociedad que el *amor maternal* o *conyugal*. En este sentido, René lleva a cabo una demolición de vínculos universales tradicionales, proponiendo algunos nuevos como un paso necesario para modificar la compleja, aunque arcaica estructura social de su tiempo. En este sentido, creemos que la nueva *humanidad* y *preocupación por la experiencia de los demás* que Lewis refleja en su ficción desde 1935 en adelante deriva de su cambio de mentalidad, algo que sin duda pudo haber provocado su serio estado de salud y su conocimiento de una muerte inminente.

6. Auto-biographical fiction: *Self-Condemned*

This chapter concentrates on the extremely personal¹ Lewisian novel *Self-Condemned* (1954). Its story evolves around the private experiences of a liberal Professor of History called René Harding and his wife Hester. René is the author of a revolutionary book entitled *Secret History of World War II*, where he defends a new type of History writing. Edwards (2000: 519-20) describes this as follows.

Only the creation of beneficial ideas by the minority of creative geniuses is important in history. Virtually all events and actions of the kind that usually occupy historians are simply examples of the forces that perpetually react against these benefits and drive humankind to violence, murder and war. Such a position, whatever its merits, is actually a denial of the idea of history, or of the writing of history as anything other than chronicle or morality tale.

René defends a *qualitative*, rather than a *quantitative* approach to history.

This character no longer believes in the history he teaches at a London

¹ Lewis' critics unanimously acknowledge the novel's autobiographical roots. Some of the most representative ones are Meyers (1988a: 226-37), R. Smith (Afterword to *SC*, 411-21) and O'Keefe (2000). For example, Meyers (1980a: 227) considers that

Lewis's intellect and emotions are concentrated and intensified in René Harding. [...] A novel that exposes his most intimate feelings and deepest suffering [...] Yet Lewis also maintained the requisite aesthetic distance [...] [in order to recreate the barren] and scarifying years in Toronto.

R. Smith, on his part, says: "René Harding is not Wyndham Lewis. He is a created character who shares characteristics with his creator but who is also observed with detachment and irony throughout the book." (411) In fact, as Foshay (1992: 132) rightly argues, the realistic form of the novel provides Lewis the vehicle for this detachment and irony, since this technique gives objectivity to the fictional story presented in it.

University, where most of his old colleagues are concerned with politics.² However, his book has worsened his reputation as an intellectual in England—he is reputed as fascist now. As a result, René decides to decline his History professorship for *moral* reasons,³ and plans to carry out a *change of life* and *change of mind* in Canada.

Accordingly, René informs, *first*, his relatives and, *second*, his wife of *his* double decision. Hester does not welcome the news very well because she has all her relatives and friends in England. In the end, the Harding's take a liner to Montreal, settling down in the Hotel Blundell⁴ in Momaco, Toronto. Here they live in a room of twenty-five feet by twelve in a state of absolute penury for three long years and three months. While the World War II takes place in Europe the Harding's recluse in this *microcosmic* hotel, the upper and lower floors of which provide its guests with a setting for carrying out all manner of violent occurrences, follies and illegitimate actions in which the Harding's inevitably become embroiled.

One night, the hotel burns into flames, and René sadly contemplates how their microcosm becomes an icy place the day after. However, this tragic event provides René with publicity, and then, a new period of financial prosperity begins for the couple. Enthusiastic about this renewed

² In *WA*, Lewis states his own position: "Before the religious Absolute. Today the political Absolute is the writer's problem." (195)

³ This fact is remarkable because Lewis defends that the intellectual man must never involve himself in politics and morals. The principles that motivate René's resignation, and later, his interpersonal conduct and relationships with other characters reflect that he does involve himself in both. In this regard, we think that *SC* is Lewis' self-justification because René feels himself to be an outsider, threatened by the political Absolute, which René demonstrates to have transgressed later on.

⁴ The Lewis's stayed in the Hotel Tudor. See later sections of Meyers' biography of Lewis. (1980b)

professional success, René initiates a series of social relationships in an attempt to give a more normal appearance to their lives in Canada. However, Hester becomes increasingly depressed and demands to go back to England immediately. Since René refuses so resolutely, Hester's psychological state deteriorates very rapidly, ultimately committing suicide. In an attempt to convert to Catholicism, René enters a monastery. However, his attempts fail and he becomes a replica of his former self, when he accepts a new professorship of History in a prestigious American University.

The interest of *SC* for the purposes of this dissertation rests in its *self-reflexive* nature, as many Lewisian theories about society and politics are conveyed through its characters. This fact is tremendously important, since it entails that the interpersonal attitude and resource exchanges of René towards his mother, siblings, in-laws, wife, friends and other relevant characters in the novel are often motivated by Lewisian principles. Furthermore, as René plans to accomplish a change of life and a change of mind in the novel by performing a scrupulously radical and critical *reevaluation*⁵ of certain values, spiritual bonds and social ties, we think that its study can throw enormous light on the new view of human behaviour and relationships depicted by him in the novel, something that affects both

⁵ We agree with Edwards when he (2000: 522) states,

This reevaluation of Lewis's fundamental assumptions begun in *The Revenge for Love* and carried forward most movingly in the series of imaginative drawings of creation—gestation, crucifixion and maternity. The dualism that had kept an absolute distinction between mind and body during Lewis' most extreme phase has broken down, and is replaced by a humanistic (one).

particularistic settings and non-particularistic ones. René carries out this revaluation because he views Western human relationships as being quite negatively influenced by traditional religious dogmas, and the values of the *Zeitgeist*. Therefore, what René does is to propose a few new types of values, ties, trends of behaviour and human relationships as an alternative. To carry out this plan, René treats all the aforesaid spiritual and social aspects with overmastering contempt and hostile severity. By doing so, René purports new social forms that help improve deficiencies in the unhappy and largely unsatisfied society he pertains.

Since many ideas proposed by René, whose name means "reborn", are absolutely *novel* in Lewis' fiction, we believe that their study can be helpful, first, to describe the effects of the *new secular values* contributed by René to the betterment of society's *private life* in a moment of generalised war ("Everyone was in every way preparing for war" (42)) and chaos all over the world; and second, to clarify the critical implications pointed out by Lewis here.

One of the main interests of this study of *SC* lies in that it permits to observe the positive *evolution* of Lewis' portrait of human behaviour and relationships throughout our corpus of analysis. In *SC*, the attitude and social interactions of its main characters are not aimed at gaining concrete resources exclusively, as we have seen in previous chapters; the motivations on the part of a few of them are more *humane* in significance. In this sense, we think that this analysis can throw enormous light on both the

development of Lewis' *Weltanschauung* and the influence of such evolution on the idiosyncrasy of one of his last works *SC*.

Here René shows that his old absolutes: *self-consciousness*, *free human reason* and *intellectual integrity* no longer seem to interest anyone, even though he considers them *essential* to attain society's *perfection*. As he finds it very difficult to overcome the mechanical ascendancy of what has been imposed on his personality by birth and environment over the last half a century, René realises that he needs to revalue his own *persona* as well. Therefore, René realises that his *own self* and *old absolutes* have been *deteriorated* as well with the passage of time. As a result, what we observe throughout the book is the negative effects of the aforesaid *mechanical ascendancy* on his personality, old values and view of the world, interpersonal attitude towards, and relationships with, his wife, relatives, friends and other fellow men.

In order to understand much better the new view of the world and relationships depicted by Lewis in *SC*, there are some biographical facts that need to be explained first. The lack of publishing success of his popular novels of the thirties makes him not to try to reach a large audience again.⁶ Thus *SC* is a naturalistic novel where Lewis retakes some complex ideas recreated in earlier novels like *T* or his *Man of the World* critical books by portraying them in a new light.

⁶ For further reference on this idea, see Symons (1969: 37-48).

His retraction after writing *Hitler* (1931) with books such as *LWOE* (1936), *CYD* (1937), *HC* (1939) and *JATH* (1939) is almost pointless. His British audience does not forget his earlier support of the German dictator, and still thinks of him as the often-controversial Enemy. Thus these facts cause Lewis and Froanna to be in a constant impecunious situation in Britain.

To make matters worse, a pituitary tumour growing fast inside his skull causes him blindness in a time of imminent war. No doubt, all these circumstances make the Lewis's consider a provisional exile in the United States as a means to improve their serious financial situation. However, the outbreak of World War II in Europe and Lewis' lack of success in the Promised Land oblige the Lewis's to go to Canada (Lewis' mother country) eventually, their professional exile turning out to be a six-year stay.

During this period, Lewis health state deteriorates dramatically, their financial situation does not improve either and their marriage begins to collapse. We think that Lewis never expects that his bad reputation in England crossed the Atlantic, driving him and Froanna to complete penury here as well. This terrible life experience in the States and Canada could have made the artist re-consider his extremely one-sided old critical stance in a new light.⁷ In this connection, we can take both the description of the personal experiences of René and Hester as a self-portrait of the love

⁷ In fact, this tumour causes Lewis to lose sight since 1937. From this moment on, Lewis seems to have experienced a change of mind and heart, as his fiction becomes more humane. By 1950, Lewis

relationship of the Lewis's during this time⁸ and that of René at work as a story of social and personal disintegration. If so, we will understand much better Lewis' *SC* as it constitutes an exceptionally individualistic and self-conscious ideological critique of his own personality and aesthetic consciousness, and of society as a whole.

In our opinion, one of most important social changes pointed out by René here is the disintegration of the family unit and its substitution by the State. According to him, this fact neither contributes to the improvement of society as a whole, nor fulfils its private life positively either. Contrarily, as René ironically suggests,

‘What a united family we are,’ he began. ‘In France, and in Germany too, families cultivate that unity. It is not only a hangover from the Catholic World, it has to do with other things also. In a nation firmly organized, at least half-way down, into family groups that really stick, there can be no *étatisme*. The family is the great enemy of the State conceived as one huge family. All that passionate affection developed within the limit of the family circle is a thing, which violently resists dissolution. And it cannot be expanded very greatly. Thin out that love until it fills the entire State and it has evaporated. Consequently, the whole character of the Society has to be changed (quite apart from the destruction of the Family) in order to establish *étatisme*. Since no one loves the State, when there is *only* the State, there is very little of that warmth and sympathy which the human animal needs.’ (135-6)

had gone blind. Despite his great sight pain, he *forced* himself to write *SC*. For further reference on the extreme influence of Lewis' blindness in the writing of *SC*, see Meyers (1980a: 226-37).

⁸ In support of this idea, Meyers (1980a: 230) comments:

The relationship of Harding and Hester, clearly based on Lewis's marriage, is solidly established in the prelude before being tested and destroyed in the Canadian crucible.

René blames present State politics for causing individuals to have low possession of particularistic resources. As a result, René considers that their ability to function as normal persons both in particularistic settings like family and marriage contexts and in non-particularistic ones turns out to be extremely impaired and unsatisfactory. As René acknowledges, this particularism is fundamental for society's welfare, and for individuals' fulfilment both private and social. Nonetheless, current political and economical circumstances prevent him and his own species from attaining them, only because concrete resources are at stake.

Naturally, René's words are not new in Lewis' production. In 1924, Lewis set art and literature aside in order to concentrate on a systematic analysis of society's troubles. Edwards (quoted in Trotter, 2001: 17) comments how, in his book on sociology *ABR*, Lewis "attributes post-war revolutions in attitude and lifestyle to monopoly capitalism's insatiable appetite for markets." In this way, some of these revolutionary behavioural changes can be felt within the family unit. (*ABR*, 167)

So there is no longer any FAMILY, in one sense: there is now only a collection of children, differing in age but in nothing else. The last vestige of the patria potestas has been extirpated. [...] But in another sense, the FAMILY is more obsessing with us than ever. For the reliefs to the domestic atmosphere that formerly existed are no longer so satisfactory or so numerous from the point of view of the average man. Still, this "average man" will soon disappear; and children get on better with each other than women do, for instance, between themselves. There is not the same need for a complementary and contrasting nature.

Here Lewis calls attention to these two important factors as well. On the one hand, the lack of (yet extremely needed) particularism in British society; on the other, the disintegration of the family unit. In Lewis' view, these two big social changes have caused individuals not to consider the domestic setting as "a complementary and contrasting" milieu. As a consequence, they have become slightly dehumanised. In this regard, a number of conflicts or wars between family members of the same, and of different gender have begun.

In the extract above, Lewis (*ABR*, 172) describes some social implications derived from these facts, for example, the vanishing of the figure of the father as breadwinner and caretaker ("the decay of *the parent*, in the old sense of a symbol of authority"). In his view, this social change has its basis in *work specialization* and *feminist propaganda*; two important phenomena formerly intended for the welfare of both women and families. Far from this, Lewis appears to point out that they ended up fulfilling the political and economic self-interests of only a few, that is, politicians and businessmen. Due to these facts, Lewis considers that the break up of the family unit, and its reconstitution in the image of the State "as *Matriarchy*" (181) have only contributed to make the private life of citizenship living in large and sprawling urban cities be very *unrewarding* at all events. Nonetheless, what results tremendously appalling about all these issues is that this bleak social situation conveyed by Lewis in his mid-twenties work has not improved at all; it has deteriorated even further three decades later, as said by René in *SC*.

Therefore, all the characters inhabiting *SC* are disturbed somehow, and find extreme difficulty in *communicating* their particularistic needs to, and in obtaining emotional support from, their own species in family, marriage and friendship settings, and even in larger social contexts. As Lewis suggests above, particularistic commodities used to be easily obtained in intimate settings in the past, yet the emergence of the State provoked that these types of resources began to be considered less and less necessary. With the passage of time, particularistic resources have become almost totally ignored by everyone in the Western world

It is our contention that particularistic commodities are so hard to obtain by characters in *SC*, and when attained, they are provided in such few quantities, with so low quality, and hardly any frequency both in large and intimate settings that these shortages generate much *aggression* in the trends of behaviour, and *dissatisfaction* in the relationships of these fictional citizenship. Since these types of intimate needs are as necessary as concrete ones for the well being of society, and of individuals in particular, yet all of them obtain them in inadequate quantity and quality in particularistic institutions, they suffer frequent imbalance, something that, in turn, originate their skewed attitudes. As Lewis (*ABR*, 183) suggested in his earlier critical works,

The family today is [...] disappearing, only (in its essence) it is disappearing into government and into social life; that is to say, that social life is being modelled more and more on a vast family pattern, [...] all the social ties are fused

[...] In social life, as in government, the family image
obsesses people.

We think that the sociological implications derived from all these excerpts are large and varied. The father figure appears to be no longer as functional, or as significant as he used to, except for sexual or offspring purposes; women have enlarged their roles in society, due to its rapid mechanization; machines and women have adopted the traditional place of men in society; the individuality and intelligence of both men and women have been replaced by machines somehow. Therefore, the family institution in the traditional sense has disintegrated, the man and the woman have swooped their traditional roles and the figures of the mother and the wife as promoted by conservative religious dogmas are no longer valid because their interests are less altruistic in nature. As a result, particularistic resources like love in its pure sense has turned out to be no longer essential by individuals in the family and marriage settings. This is why these two institutions are not considered to be contrastive settings for individuals any more, something that explains their dehumanisation and frequent conflicts in all manner of settings, including particularistic ones. Here is Lewis (*ABR*, 175-6) commenting on some of these social changes in very pragmatic ways,

The romance of the *family as a unit* is a prosperous nineteenth-century English middle class romance. [...] [To] be described as “free” in industrial conditions is not to be patriarchal, or burdened with a family.

Therefore, Lewis appears to consider that the economical and political interests of industrial revolution and feminist propaganda in this time provoked the decay of the traditional figures of the father and the mother, the disintegration of the family institution, and thus, of its spiritual bonds and ties. As Lewis (*DOY*, 60) explains these facts in the thirties,

Many things of a purely political order, and of far wider significance, ensue from the economic conditions brought about by the successful management of the gigantic *class-wars*.

In the first place, if as a result of the Sex-war Women and Men tend to draw apart into hostile camps or at least into distinct and self-sufficient classes, that must entail results of far-reaching political importance, altering the character of the family life, as practised in the political system of the Aryan World. The relations and attitudes of children to parents will be altered, and of the Man and the Woman respectively to themselves.

These post-war political and economic interests originated numerous social changes, whose effects turned out to provoke very negative social and psychological consequences in both particularistic settings and in non-particularistic ones in the fifties. As a result, the family milieu was considered to be *just another place* inhabited by a group of individuals of very low initiative level, with even a more pragmatic and materialistic mind, and interests in this time. In other words, these civilians turned out to be masses of people completely submitted to the system and its demands, while disregarding that all their particularistic needs were largely unsatisfied. As Lewis (*ABR*, 253-254) posits,

The *more* classes, associations, syndics—occupational, sex, age, cultural categories—into which you cut them up and pen them, the more manageable (for the more divided and helpless) they are.

The citizenship of *SC* appears not to be conscious that the principal reasons why they suffer extreme emotional imbalance and release so much hatred and aggression towards one another in their everyday contacts have to do with the fact that the places where they can fulfil their particularistic needs are scarce, and often inadequate. Obviously, these aspects are not new in Lewis' production; the Enemy (*AG*, 560) foretells them in his thirties books.

For the break-up of the Aryan Family-idea, two “wars” have been arranged. The *sex-war* covers the man-woman relationship: the *child-parent-war*, or the *age-war* covers the child-parent relationship. This is a parallel “revolt,” **when these “wars” have been brought to bear in social life with full effect, the Family will have entirely disintegrated.** (my emphasis)

Therefore, what we observe throughout *SC* is that all these wars “have been brought to bear in social life with full effect,” and the family has “entirely disintegrated”. These various wars brought about by the *Zeitgeist* have caused the family institution to vanish, and human beings to become roughly segmented by nature and accident into a great variety of categories. As a result of the aforesaid political and economical circumstances, the situation of the male and female individual, the family unit, and thus, society as a whole has not improved at all three decades later. Hence, the widespread climate of warfare between members of different class, gender, age and race that characterises *SC*.

In sum, we think that Lewis creates the figure of René in order to *self-reflect* about the condition of the Western citizenship in the modern world. In this regard, what we observe in the novel is that all of them have suffered the bitterest effects of all in themselves, that is, having lost much *emotionally* without gaining *economically*. All things considered, we find an enormous contradiction in Lewis' view of human relationships. Since very early, Lewis sees his duty as a man of genius to contribute new radical aesthetic methods that help society see the necessity to improve its problems, welfare, happiness and quality of life. As we have seen up to now, Lewis experiments with the English language art by means of abstract, mechanical and didactic aesthetic techniques in order to illustrate the origins and terrible consequences of the deficient interpersonal behaviour and relationships of his fictional citizenship. In this regard, he exaggerates their faults through extremely satirical devices laughing at their tragic condition as a corrective.

In *SC*, Lewis carries out this same task again through the figure of René. Here Lewis self-reflects about the human condition by portraying a naturalistic world, which is very absurd too. Thus René highlights the eventual disintegration of the individual, and the family unit, the lack of communication between persons of different class, race, gender and age, and the extreme difficulty all of them find in obtaining particularistic resources in all sorts of settings (“all the warmth and sympathy which the human animal needs” (136)). In doing so, carries out a reevaluation of this

society and of its behavioural patterns, relationships, bonds, ties and institutions through his own personal experience, encouraging society to modify its structure immediately.

Despite all these facts, Lewis creates a character that meets much difficulty in admitting that he has his own faults as well. Our analysis of René's interpersonal behaviour and relationships shows that he is motivated by an irrational obsession with attaining *elucidation* (information) and emotionally sterile (love lacking) has an obsessive will to succeed (status, money and power) and shows a cynical hatred towards his wife. Thus this hatred (which never turns into overt *aggression*) causes him to deprive her of particularistic resources all the time.

Therefore, like Lewis', the liberal politics of René prevent him from cultivating matters of the heart. All these principles make him adopt different types of strategies in order not to *expand* his intimate exchanges with his wife Hester. Consequently, their marriage relationship deteriorates until it crumbles down. René claims to know the aspects that besiege the society that he opposes, but he does not admit that he is also contaminated by these same deficiencies.

Thus Lewis sees the need to reconsider the traditional social structure in Britain for being no longer fulfilling for its citizenship as in the nineteenth century. Similarly, René considers that the social structure "is already an archaism." (151) Thus Lewis makes René carry out a *fastidious criticism* of *present* human attitudes, relationships and institutions by

proposing a few *novel* forms of understanding human functioning and organizations. In this sense, we think that Lewis celebrates *love* between men and women, *loyalty* between siblings, *friendship* between *males* and *females* in order to convey that these bonds and ties can be not only *more authentic*, but also more beneficial to society than traditional ones such as *motherly* and *wifely love*. In this regard, René performs a “universal demolition of old ties,” (151) promoting these new values as a necessary step to modify the current social structure.⁹

Like Lewis, René is conscious that executing this plan “in the world he has always known” (139) is not easy at all. This is why René makes of this task an imperative in life, first, insulating his self “from the centre of emotional awareness”; second, creating “a kind of artificial ‘unconscious’ of his own”; third, becoming “an unemotional man” capable of mastering “his reactions” (140) in family and domestic settings; fourth, resigning his post as high intellectual in England; and fifth, leaving for Canada for no particular reason (138), but to bury his *old integrity and beliefs*. However, what he does instead is to condemn himself, as he suffers the consequences of all these one-sided strategies in himself. As the text reads,

If the personality is emptied of the mother-love, emptied
of the will-love, emptied of the illusions upon which sex-

⁹ As we said, Munton notes that Lewis follows a tradition of satirists who tried to kill off certain kinds of behaviour, and which begins with Juvenal. Lewis makes use of this tradition, “sometimes asserting itself, sometimes submerged, always concerned with how ideas and ways of thinking shape human action, in antithetical to the tradition of sympathy of the nineteenth-century novel.” In *SC*, “René Harding throws from a liner into the Atlantic his copy of George Eliot’s *Middlemarch*. The rejection of a certain conception of the networks of family and civic responsibility implied by that act is present in Lewis’s writing from the very outset. Indeed, it is a primary indicator of his modernism.” (17) For further reference on the implications derived from this fact, see Voogd (1989).

in-society depends, then the personality becomes a shell [...] the resignation of his professorship in 1939, had made [...] him react [...] with bitterness to criticism, he began hurling overboard the conventional ballast, mother love going first. The process of radical reevaluation [...] turned inwards (upon, for instance, [...] the intimate structure of domestic life), [...] disintegrating many relationships and attitudes, which only an exceptionally creative spirit, under very favourable conditions, can afford to dispense with. (400-1)

René's interpersonal behaviour and relationships are very much *deficient in feeling* and *skewed* in nature because they are motivated by an overvaulting *ambition for achievement*, a need that refers not only to information but also to status, money and goods.¹⁰ This ambition becomes so much of an *absolute* for him that it impairs his capacity to give love to his fellow men. In this regard, we think that this absolute draws from him innumerable signs of an inherently destructive and selfish personality, which both affects his desire to create in negative ways, and reflects his *infection* with the individualistic spirit of personal realization, success, accumulation, and even, power possession that deteriorates the old spirit of humanity before, during and after World War II. Since an omniscient narrator intrudes into the mind of René whenever he pleases, commenting on, and evaluating his actions and social interactions throughout (and very occasionally, into the thoughts of Hester and other characters) he also ridicules his faults and

¹⁰ See Foa (1976: 124).

values. By doing so, Lewis reflects again the dialogic nature of his work and consciousness.¹¹

As it is customary in Lewis' fiction, Hester is depicted as an *unlearned* woman. This female is keen on shopping, gossiping, reading tabloids, and the recipient of some male's aggression. As René says: "Hester is allergic to learning, as are many children [...]; expertly unreceptive [...] and "lazy" (3-4)). This is why he avoids telling her his plans (lack of information exchanges), negative exchanges that reflect that the deterioration of their love relationship has already begun. As the text says, their marriage had been "a bus-accident."

No offspring had resulted. A good thing. The male offspring would have resembled Essie more or less. Sex would have been unpleasantly prominent. [...] This was absurd. (31)

Like Tarr, René has extreme horror at exchanging love (in the form of sexual pleasures) with a female like his wife, in case these close dealings force him to greater *commitment* and *offspring* responsibility. René does not wish to be *integrated* in Hester because he aspires to *fulfil* himself professionally, first and foremost. However, he deceives himself into believing that he conducts himself in these skewed ways because he does not need her. Thus while Tarr behaves in an *indifferent* manner towards Bertha and other women in order to create an abstract work of art that transcends his contingent situation in the world, René merely ignores Hester

¹¹ This narrator portrays René as being animated by intellectual and rational principles exclusively,

only to gain familiarity and accomplish his overvaulting ambition for professional success.

Despite this emotional sterility, this professor has a very special relationship with his French mother, and shows to have his three sisters in very high esteem as well. René decides to visit all of them in order to tell them the reasons of his resignation before leaving for Canada.

‘Please do not condemn me before you have heard me. [...] I know that I have to give up part of myself to Mother, to sisters, to wife. I am a responsible man. [...] Men [...] say Good-bye to common ambition with horror. They become nobodies as if they were dying.’ [...] I am in two halves.’ (17)

Like Tarr, René views his social interests as being *incompatible* with the private types of goals which any married man complying with traditional religious dogmas usually assumes. His desire of professional fulfilment is so important for him that it even affects his view of life, and persons as well as his behaviour and relationships with his wife, mother, siblings (except for his sister Helen), colleagues, friends (except for his *comrades* Rotter Parkinson in England and Ian McKenzie in Canada) and other characters in the book. The first signs of the aforesaid biased attitude of René in the marriage setting appear when he informs Hester of his new situation of unemployment, and their imminent departure for Canada sometime after *he* takes such crucial decisions. As Chapman (1973: 154) rightly states,

while Hester appears to be inclined to intuition and sentimental irrationality in very ironic ways.

The complex moral choices that face René are nicely analysed by Lewis. [...] **Such issues must be decided in isolation** [...] Hester's **happiness is quite irrelevant** in this matter. (my emphasis)

Hester feels *frustrated* because René has not consulted her *on purpose*. Hester feels *anxiety* because she fears of losing both particularistic resources like love and status, which she usually receives from her relatives and friends in London, and non-particularistic ones such as money and goods, which René provides her. René considers his wife to be far too ignorant to understand the moral motivations behind his resignation. Her opinion and condition are not of the least significance for René. This is why Hester represents a stupid encumbrance.

It was his acceptance by Hester of the Victorian convention of the strong but stupid masculine in contrast to the weak but wily feminine which is the simplest thing in the world for René to deceive her if he wanted to, though it is true that so far he had never availed himself of this, except for bagatelles, for pulling her leg. [...] When she saw a propitious moment, she subtly asked him for a fur-coat as he was in a good mood. Fury of René because of the naïvely mercenary calculations of the good Hester (34-5)

Thus this significant *lack of communication* (information exchanges) between both partners and her financial dependence on René (lack of money and goods) contribute to lower her *self-esteem* (lack of status). René's ambition is so extreme that it makes him view the personality and resource needs of his wife in very much distorted ways. For him, Hester is a *calculating* woman who takes pride in her cunning in order to deceive him.

In other words, she is portrayed as a Machiavellian that gives René love, only to gain his money and spend it in buying goods like a fur-coat (clothes give one social status). Within this context, we find that there is something paradoxical about René's attitude.

When crossing the landing, René entered his study, he was trembling slightly. But **the tension soon relaxed, out of direct contact with his wife.** This was the first occasion on which **disagreements between them had taken the form of a 'row'.** His training had led to his locking up any irascibility in a frigid silence. [...] **If his attitude to Hester had hardened into a critical analysis, he was still very attached to her upon the sexual level.** Being a man of great natural severity, an eroticism which did not live very easily with it was instinctively resented: and the mate who automatically classified under the heading 'Erotics' was in danger, from the start, of being **regarded as a frivolous interloper by his dominant intellectuality.** [...] **Hester [...] unquestionably had not the talent to leave 'Erotics' in the bedroom, [...] Her 'big baby' eyes, as he described them in his private thoughts, [...] he experienced no pang at the thought of Hester's departure.** The response he received to further testing was that **the great crisis in his affairs dwarfed into significance any merely domestic crisis. He would keep Hester at his side, if Hester would stop.** But that was all. That settled, with a sigh he turned to the newspaper. (41-2)

We believe that it is René rather than Hester who views his marriage relationship, and thus, his particularistic resource exchanges with his wife in partial ways. This long extract reflects René's view of sexual exchanges in pragmatic terms of exchange of rewards. He utilises a strategy in order to cope with his private conflicts, as he thinks of her leaving him in future. René is aware of his dependence on Hester in sexual terms but, as Foshay (1992: 135) states, he resolves, "to maintain his sense of autonomy in the

midst of his social and domestic life” by exploiting the aforesaid tactics. In this regard, René shows to be he is as conceited as to believe that his *familiarity* (large possession of information) gives him power over Hester.¹²

Le roi René was not a man to be unconscious of style, in himself or others. [...] He realized that his gait and gesture were too superb for his status or for the occasion. But this amused him. Sometimes he would deliberately act the king, or the statesman about whom he was just then reading. De Richelieu he was very fond of impersonating. [...] As ever [...] was the unfortunate Hester. (48)

As the extract implies, René thinks that his control of an independent resource such as information is more valuable than Hester’s large supplies of a particularistic one like love. His *absolute* influences him no interdependent on her. Since Blau (1964: 118) defends that “interdependence and mutual influence of equal strength indicate lack of power”, we consider that there is a power relation between them. In other words, René is dramatically conscious that he depends on Hester for the last kind of provisions. Nonetheless, he clings to his *intellectual* and very *pragmatic* view of love transactions. As we said, this *liberal* professor of history cannot be *weak* in regard to matters of the heart. This prejudiced view of marriage results because he equates the intellectual rewards he obtains out of working to psychological types of rewards he gains, when he

¹² This view of René is akin in meaning to Lewis’ (*DOY*, 130):

The old easy-going democracy of Europe [...] puts taboos more and more upon the ‘aristocracy of the intellect’ and its natural privileges. [...] ‘Genius’ is one of the most envied things in the world [...] as much an object of common desire as to be rich. But people are very stupid, even, about being rich – Money is *power* and Marxist attacks upon money are [...] upon power. But ‘genius’, that is also *power*.

exchanges sexual pleasures with his wife. However, the last manner of resource exchanges follows a different logic.

In any case, these peculiar and contradictory types of comparisons are not new in Lewis' fiction. As the artist (*DOY*, 211) posits,

The Family Circle – a small closed system full of the interference and despotism of brothers and sisters and unintelligent Authority, in the person of a dual-governorship of Father and Mother – is not an institution, *from the standpoint of genius*.

Even though intrinsic types of rewards and satisfactions cannot be compared to extrinsic ones in the same terms because they are governed by different mechanisms, René does so because he is motivated by this biased principle. In support of our last assumptions, we make the words of Fry (1997: 380) ours, when the critic explains Lewis' recurrent technique in his discursive satirical works:

Lewis's criticism would be effective if it were confined to satire, but frozen into a dogma of antithesis it is worthless. One cannot combine the convex and concave to get a new perspective. If one combines two qualitatively different substances, like hydrogen and oxygen, one gets a genuine compound: in place of two gases that will burn we get a liquid that won't. But if we mix oxygen with carbon dioxide, which is merely a reaction against oxygen, **all we get is hot air**. [...] There is wisdom only of the conscious mind, which, though versatile, is in one piece. (my emphasis)

His skewed views of the family and marriage institutions, which result from equating things that cannot be compared in natural terms, make him scrupulously compartmentalise his life. These are the reasons why there is a

lot of “hot air” or conflict throughout Lewis’ production, a “hot air” that results quite revealing from a socially critical point of view, as this dissertation has already demonstrated in many occasions. Thus this biased interpersonal attitude of René towards Hester reflects a tremendous lack of *reciprocity* between them.¹³ His cynical spirit and obsessive intellectual ambition hurt Hester very much. However, as time passes by, their love transactions show that René’s absolute is not as *essential* as he wants to believe it is, because he *needs* her particularistic commodities more than he thinks he does.

They hugged. He has a shudder for this. The absurd was happening. **He was unable to escape from the absurd.**
(44; my emphasis)

René says sorry to Hester for treating her in the aforesaid inequitable terms before. Notwithstanding, his attitude and resource transaction are not motivated by *selfless love*; he views this act as an *example of the absurd*, that is, as a proof that his old intellectual integrity has started to decline. Therefore, we think that René is aware that he has assimilated the dogmas promoted by religion in the domestic setting, and the *Zeitgeist* but he refuses to acknowledge it. In any case, the noticeable aspect about the last social exchanges is that René is *the first highbrow* in Lewis’ fiction who behaves

¹³ In support of this idea, Foshay (1992: 135) also says that
Clearly, René’s attitude toward women in general, and Hester in particular, is haughty and uncompromising. There is no accommodation, no recognition of mutuality or of the least reciprocity.

in the aforesaid *compassionate* manner towards a female.¹⁴ From now on, we examine other contexts where this unconventional intellectual conducts himself in a more humane way than previous Lewisian intellectual characters.

The first instance occurs when René announces his imminent departure, and resignation to Rotter, one of his dearest colleagues. René believes that “In a life, there is hardly ever more than one complete friend, and rarely that.” (78-9) René feels much *attraction* for Rotter, and even, considers him as *a real friend*. In René’s view, Rotter is not like the rest of his old colleagues, a “man without art”¹⁵; Rotter has intellectual integrity, and thus, makes use of his capacity *to reason* to elucidate other people rather than fulfil his *pragmatic* self-interests. René’s attraction for Rotter derives from the fact that the latter satisfies his information demands, and helps him gain *elucidation*.

This *peculiar* view of friendship relationships is very *novel* in Lewis’ fiction, as this the first time in which a male intellectual admits that the friendship type of bond can be pure.¹⁶ However, what strikes enormously is the fact that to René, Rotter is a “complete friend”, while other men are

¹⁴ As Murray (1980: 165) posits, female characters have a more predominant role in Lewis’ fiction from 1937 onwards. Lewis’ critical works of this period also claim further social and economic benefits for women, and wider participation in the arts. We think that this fact may also explain why there are more sympathetic female characters in Lewis’ fiction from this time on. More concretely, we refer to April in *VS*, Margot in *RL*, Hester in *SC* and Mary Chillingham in *RP*.

¹⁵ Lewis equates art to satire in a book that has this same title, *MWA*. (1934)

¹⁶ Snooty also acknowledges that there is a special type of bond between him and McPhail, but he does not admit so as overtly as René does here. Indeed, Snooty even doubts whether he is a real friend of Rob or not, for he feels nothing for him when McPhail dies.

“friends in part,” for their resource interests¹⁷ are close “together in the field of political thought.” (79) It seems to us that this view of friendship relationships is very much distorted in significance because it is, above all, exchanges of particularistic resources, rather than independent ones such as information that characterise this intimate institution. Notwithstanding, René’s attitude and resource exchanges with Rotter appear to be motivated by familiarity exclusively. Apart from this, there are some further skewed aspects about this atypical view of friendship relationships of René.

Actually, the last thing René Harding wanted to be was ‘the boss’. [...] Friendship of an exceptional order is allergic to the exercise of domination. Domination may in reality be present, but it must not be exercised openly. [...] René’s cynical eye, when it rested, upon Rotter, rested gently. All master-and-follower relationships, especially so matured a one as this, have in them something of religion and something of love. The pair are a love pair, and they are god and his dedicated. But when they are an english pair, the lovers are evasive, the devout is *sans façon*. There was even, at times, a mockery in the Rotter’s eye. He knew he could only love from a position of complete independence: could only be devout with familiarity (80-98)

¹⁷ René supports that he and Rotter are condemned to death because they live in a world from which all *personal ambition* has vanished. Lewis also discusses the origins of this social problem. As the artist (*DOY*, xv) posits,

The steam-roller of Big Business having gone over the democratic mass pretty thoroughly and achieved a mechanical ‘levelling’ [...] no *exceptional* qualities are of any advertisement at all for Mr. Everyman. [...] Age is for the average man about the only value (in workshop, office, or factory) that survives, in a world from which all personal ambition has been vanished.

Accordingly, this vanishing of a desire for ‘personal fulfilment’ has occurred because people have no longer “interest for things in themselves anymore, but animal egotism of animal growth and adaptation to future adult conditions.” (15) As Lewis continues (*DOY*, 54) to argue,

Individualism or initiative is [...] not only pointless, but actually undesirable, and so taboo. The machine takes the place increasingly of the Man. A bank clerk [...] perform(s) work that requires no intelligence or particular training or skill.”

This is why Lewis views the present lack of *initiative* and *ambition* in men as having its origins in economic and political interests, which he considers to be selfish and destructive in nature.

The professor refuses to trade information and, above all, love with his wife Hester, but he gives to, and accepts these same two resources from his friend Rotter. In fact, he even acknowledges an implicit power relation existing between them. Therefore, René can only involve himself in intimate relationships, no matter these occur in love or friendship settings, yet from a position of *complete independence*. However, René is depicted as being dependent on Rotter exclusively. In other words, René *ignores* his particularistic commodities in the domestic setting, performs frequent negative exchanges of these same needs to his *wife* Hester and exerts overt power over her only her to keep her at a distance. All the same, he exchanges all manner of resources with his *comrade* having him in better esteem as well. All things considered, this view of human relationships is unconventional and very *new* one in Lewis' suggested fiction.

René's obtuseness and condescending attitude towards Hester is so extreme that it enables him to regard her as an actual human being (He always forgot that Hester was a human being, because she was so terribly much the Woman" (147)). This professor always treats his wife as an object, and sees in her an abstract woman whose resource needs are independent of his own. This is why he ignores her personal resource needs, and objections to his decisions. Consequently, it could be said that René's attitude and resource transactions with his wife Hester and his colleague Rotter are ambiguous and distorted in nature due to his absolute, something that

converts him into a cynical and ambitious man.

The next institution René scrupulously analyses before leaving for Canada is his family. In his visits, René treats his three sisters in very positive ways, while their husbands are very much scorned. One of these siblings is Mary, who is married to Percy, a business executive working in a big Insurance company. Due to this fact, René deprives him of status constantly. Like Lewis, René despises men like Percy because he considers that his brother-in-law supports the generalised aggression (“I object absolutely to political terrorism and philosophies of force” (131)),¹⁸ hypocrisy (“Hypocrisy is a thing for which I feel a great distaste” (132)) and illegitimacy that exist in his country.

‘The Machiavellian Tory is capable of anything,’ [...] Hypocrisy has, in our society, put a thick patina over everything: there a number of forms of violence which must not be indulged in. [...] today a man (a politician) may destroy ten million people without it ever being remarked that he has behaved rather badly.’ (56-7)

For these reasons, René shows aggression to Percy. René considers that, as a businessman, Percy is irrationally concerned with money and power.

He had always looked upon Mary’s husband as a man with whom he had so little in common that **it was unnecessary to exchange** anything more than commonplaces. (58; my emphasis)

This extract reflects the *exchange basis* of René’s social interactions very clearly. However, as Percy exalts René’s resignation as “a courageous and

¹⁸ As Lewis comments in his autobiographical critical work *RA*, “Nowadays, man in society is an

non-hypocritical decision, a great public service” (51) the former finds the approbation of the latter.

Whenever I think of it I marvel how many people would **sacrifice everything for a principle, expose themselves ... well, to penury?** [...] You must allow me to place at your disposal the sum of one thousand pounds” [...] support you in any way in my power.’ (59-61; my emphasis)

As a result, Percy is the first businessman that is not presented as a Machiavellian in Lewis’ fiction. We think that these positive exchanges of status and money of Percy with René are very revealing because they demonstrate that his interpersonal attitude and resource transactions with René draw on the vanity of the latter eventually. As a consequence, René shows to be infected by the very aspects he has disdained throughout his life, something that occurs because he discloses his attraction to Percy now, *only* because the latter shows to have intellectual interests now.¹⁹

Apart from this René shows gratitude to Percy’s generosity. However, again, he behaves in a very contemptuous manner again, as he wonders whether the money comes from licit businesses or not. In the end, René adopts another strategy because he alludes to take the money *only for*

animal who is *governed* [...] society [...] its laws are backed by *force*.” (63)

¹⁹ In this visit of René and Hester to his sister Mary, there are recurrent comments on the part of the narrator and Lewis’ characters that are so extremely ironic and misogynistic in nature that cannot be taken seriously. For example, while the husbands of both women are discussing, they listen to them. Thus the narrator describes the scene in the following terms: “Mary and Hester smiled at one another, as if to say, ‘Men are very clever’! It is a debate where our merely feminine views would be *de trop*.” (53) Thus when René and Hester are in the house of Helen, another sister of René, she is not treated in a misogynistic way. She shows *loyalty* to René when the latter quarrels with her husband, and thus, the narrator depicts her positively. For further reference on Lewis’ misogyny, see Mitchell (1978: 223-31) or Freud (1993: 119-87).

Hester, who takes “a more *serious* view” (61) of their future than he does. In doing so, René demonstrates to be the only one who behaves as a Machiavellian, as his signs of *gratitude* (particularistic resource exchanges) are always *false-bottomed*.²⁰ Nonetheless, this is the very first time in which a Lewisian character shows *generosity* towards another, this one accepting it.

We think that the *exchange basis* of René’s resource transactions conveys the superficial types of *liaisons* Lewis’ characters maintain in his fiction. René’s liberal principles condition him to keep his social exchanges superficial, even when these take place in intimate settings. This is why we hardly find René involved in close, intimate bonds, wherein he may seem almost selfless in his devotion to another character.²¹

The next two visits of René result in his sisters’ alienation from their unworthy partners. René gives greater signs of affection (love) and admiration (status) towards his sisters than he gives to his wife; again, an interpersonal attitude that results quite distorted in significance. The first sister he sees is Janet, married to Victor, another businessman working in a Publicity business. As usual, René exerts aggression (negative exchanges of

²⁰ It seems to us that the rules of practice that govern this social exchange are quite Lewisian in nature. In fact, in a recent book review, Trotter (2001: 16) comments:

If having sex with Lewis seems to have been a thankless task, then lending him money was about as much fun as amputation. Sometimes the same person was required to fulfil both functions.

Trotter comments how the painter Richard Wyndham, sitting outside a café in Toulon, told Wyndham that he was a 'Narcissus' and probably a 'bugger'. People, Wyndham remembered him saying, are only friends insofar as they are of use to you. This may be why Trotter posits that Lewis did not so much bite the hand that fed him as mistake it for the main meal.

²¹ See Huston & Cate (In Cook and Wilson, 1979: 263).

status) over persons like him for dealing with Publicity businesses. Like Lewis, René considers that “the whole process of publicity is imbecile, [...] paltry and absurd” (98) because publicity men only think of attaining higher social standing.

This man [...] was no longer the person that he had been. **His status** had suffered, to his mind, a catastrophic decline. [...] With questions of status Victor was very familiar. As a Publicity Agent, status was a cardinal factor in the very existence of such a trade as his. (69)

During these visits, these two male characters show much aggression to each other owing to ideology disagreement. On the one hand, René regrets his sister married this man because Victor is a “slave submitted to Time” (66). As Vincent in *VS*, Victor got rid of his Lancashire accent in the past in order to succeed in life presently. On the other hand, Victor thinks of René as a very high-minded person and idealist (74) intellectual for defending values no one believes in now.

Naturally, these aggressive social encounters cause Victor and Janet, and Hester and Janet to argue, something that René celebrates as examples of the absurd in life by laughing at them cynically. This attitude, which ultimately reveals Lewis’ ability to dialogue with his public about social aspects like class-consciousness and aggression, throws into prominence instances of what Lewis considers absurd in life, as they reflect that his relatives behave more as machines than as conscious individuals.

At last, René visits his youngest and favourite sister Helen. This girl is married to Reverend Robert Kerridge. René considers him a “lazy” bank-clerk who *eclipses* his sister. Again, these two men show aggression to each other, yet his sister behaves differently from the other in this occasion.

René had opened his heart to her that very day. [...] There were more loyalties than one, and loyalty to a husband did not wipe out all others. (126)

Motivated by *loyalty* to her brother, Janet conducts herself towards her own husband aggressively. The revaluation of social forms carried out by René in this setting highlights a spiritual view of *brotherly love* that is absolutely *new* in Lewis’ creative production, a type of intimate bond that is very different as well from those promoted by the political and economical dogmas that were in fashion in World War II.

Another appalling aspect of the last social exchange is that René deceives himself into believing that he makes these series of visits to his siblings in order to instil new values like *familiarity* upon them.

These visits had been futile, as far as elucidation went; no one was wiser as a result of his visit than they had been beforehand, excepting only Helen. (141-2)

However, the motivations behind his scrupulously cynical and aggressive attitude towards his sisters’ husbands, only demonstrate that other types of principles condition his negative resource exchanges. As Edwards puts it,

This infantile desire to expel all males who have usurped René’s place in the feminine family is an equally extreme and brutal denial of the value of such family attachment,

as if resentment against the impossibility of truly reconstituting it. (521)

René avoids acknowledging that he needs the affection of his siblings and mother as much as Hester does. He pretends that the only factor determining his social interactions in the family setting is to make them *benefit* from his familiarity so that they gain elucidation. However, it is only Helen who has benefited from it. Nonetheless, we consider that his distorted will to remain powerful in resources such as information and status is what actually determines his frequent negative resource transactions with his in-laws, and his cynical hatred towards his wife, something that drives René to expand other social ties, bonds that are very innovative in Lewis' fiction. Here is René justifying his attitude,

‘When members of a family are very united,’ René went on, ‘they are apt to have no sympathy to spare for anybody else. I, for instance, have been so devoted to Mother, and you know how I have loved you, Helen—not to mention dear Mary and Janet as well—that I have not had any real friendships, and have felt far too little sympathy for people to whom some fraction of love at least was due.’ (136)

Later, René dismisses the idea of mother-love as a fuss, significantly, about nothing. Even though he values his mother's judgements to a large extent he feels the necessity to reevaluate the figure of the mother as exalted by traditional Western religious dogmas. As the text reads,

Mothers must receive a brief analytical scrutiny; something more had to be hacked away from the old domestic monument. [...] Once the nursing-job imposed upon her by nature is over, and the ‘little toddler’ has

grown to be a noisy and bumptious schoolboy as big as herself [...] she must realize [...] that she has simply been made a convenience of by Nature; and, in any case, that it has been a great deal of fuss and trouble about nothing. [...] Women of the working class go on turning out 'Little Strangers,' because of the importance it gives them among the neighbours, and as an insurance in old age. If by nature bossy, it gives the woman a little community to bully, scold, make favourites of: and eventually this little community will work for you—or that is the idea.

The dogmas of Western European religions and much romance have been built up around the figure of the Mother. [...] Many women, quite naturally, develop a superiority-complex listening to so much man-waffle. [...] When tested, as had recently been done by him, it had proved sadly inadequate. So **his family was a junk he had no further use for. His sister Helen was another matter.** For her he had an attachment produced by something far stronger than the usual old family cement. But (he remembered something) he must salvage Percy from this universal demolition of old ties. (142-4; my emphasis)

As it usually occurs, René carries out this revaluation through negative exchanges of status towards his mother and relatives, except for Helen. In this long passage, he shows to be against Christianity and all his sexual woes. René considers that both the father and the mother figures would be much better off, if the unit of the family were abandoned, if they were relieved from responsibility, as bearing offspring in the traditional sense only represents an encumbrance for fulfilling one's professional possibilities. Moreover, René considers that the child also wishes to be free from family control in order to have an independent existence of his own. In the end, these views only demonstrate that his critical stance is peculiarly pragmatic and very moralising in nature ("I am a sort of moralist

notwithstanding.” (122)) As regards this issue, René’s creator, Lewis (*MWA*, 177) purports the following.

The moralist is, it is generally conceded, one of the most troublesome enemies that the artist has at normal times [...] the principal situations with which “morals” deal [...] sex morals – [...] have mostly been directed to the maintenance of this family-principle, inviolate and intact – But [...] the eventual extinction of the Family – as the Machine-age develops, it will become economically impossible, everyone has begun to see. That little isolated patriarchal unit already begins to look archaic.

Despite the strategies René adopts to ignore that he involves himself in politics, economics and morals by saying that he is against traditional moral dogmas and the *Zeitgeist* (“His beard alone was a testimony to his indifference to the *Zeitgeist*”) because these Twentieth century *absolutes* only “play with” people (65), René’s only comes to demonstrate that his old artistic integrity is declining further and further.²² Bearing Lewis’ words in mind, we think that the artist makes René present another *inhuman* view of social relations in intimate institutions. However, this view of life is not very helpful to reevaluate society in a constructive manner either. Far from this, we think that Munton (In Corbett, 1998: 18-19) is absolutely right when he says,

When Charles Lewis left the family in 1893, his son, then aged eleven, scarcely saw or heard from him again. Percy was brought up from that time on by his mother. Freud’s remark accounts for the consequences of this: ‘a man who has been the indisputable favourite of his mother keeps for

²² This idea must be understood in the following Lewisian terms: Democratic politics possess a magic property, as its rulers are capable of turning an unimportant person into someone; an idea that appears throughout his *Man of the World* project.

life the feeling of a conqueror'.²³ It was out of the psychic confidence induced by such a love that Lewis emerged to treat the object-world (all that was not himself) as something that could be mastered. [...] It is the business of the artist both to render and to control such otherness [...] confirms and negates the romantic assumption that inwardness and depth are the source of value. [...] The individual in possession of such a psychic self-confidence has an inner self-sufficiency that does not need to be supplemented by the world outside the self. In its confrontation with the world, this identity apparently experiences no sense of lack. [...] In truth, such a self is damaged, suffering a lack which it refuses to acknowledge; this disavowal in turn contributes some of its force to the self's antagonism to the world. In Lewis's case the damage [...] arose from the very absence of the father which allowed him to become his mother's indisputable favourite in the first place. There need be little doubt that further damaged was caused by Lewis's experience of war.

In our opinion, these words may illuminate all our previous assumptions about René's distorted attitude and resource exchanges with his wife and relatives. Like Lewis, René undertakes a *critical* reevaluation of society's structure and ties because they appear to him archaic. In his view, these bonds merely contribute to the pulverization of people's professional interests. Nonetheless, we also believe that René invents an intellectual type of existence, which for him (and Lewis) is the ideal, but does not exist in truth. In supporting this, René ultimately turns out his social and emotional life, and that of other people with whom he interacts to be extremely unsatisfying.

²³ Quoted by Meyers (1980b: 6).

René posits that he is against war, for his only absolute is “Moderation” (135). However, seeing intimate relationships from this distorted perspective, René only contributes to promote a *new* private type of life and relations that is very unfulfilling at all events. No doubt, Lewis’ work aims to dialogue about all these issues for constructive purposes but, as Munton has pointed out before, Lewis demonstrates to meet much difficulty in neglecting his self-sufficiency all throughout. Like Lewis, René obtusely refuses to give importance to resources like love, even though he acknowledges that “the human animal needs” them in high degree. In this regard, we think that the remainder of the story is a recreation of the *alienating* effects derived from such skewed view of social functioning, as suffered by his own self (and Hester’s) in Canada, only because René thinks that he is a special type of person. As Edwards (2000: 521) appropriately says, René does not seem to realise that

His mother’s support especially is what has given him the feeling of autonomy that enables him to treat all others with scorn. [...] René needs female support, so even if he repudiates his relationship with his mother he must then immediately revalue his relationship with his wife as a substitute.

According to Edwards, René views Hester as being responsible for breaking the relationship between him and his mother, but he does not wish to recognise that he both requires love from Hester, and is dependent on her for other types of resource categories like sex. In this regard, his new strategies: to go to Canada to bury his old phantom or intellectual integrity

and force Hester to abandon him are very pathetic in significance. In fact, they merely demonstrate that he is a selfish man and a bugger for he obliges Hester to suffer his same tragic destiny.²⁴

Her world must appear to him such a petty world, that losing it could hardly mean very much. [...] It was the beginning of a new way of thinking about Hester, although, at that time, it did not continue for very long. [...] Hester's obscene person must henceforth be his Muse, **in succession to History**. He was going to Canada in order to fornicate with Hester. What else! (148; my emphasis)

Despite the numerous signs of *humanity* René has already displayed in his social exchanges with his friend Rotter, his siblings and, in less degree, with his wife, his real motivations seem to us to be very contemptuous in meaning. Thus René deserves to be condemned in the novel, as the *only* responsible for all the terrible things that happen to him and his wife. We think that this is the reason why an ironic tone characterises Lewis' work repeatedly.

Of course, René's defence of values such as familiarity, free human reasoning, loyalty, brotherly love, camaraderie and moderation is very valuable. But, the trends of behaviour and resource exchanges he performs with characters that love him in order *to test* his revaluation are so loathsome in nature that it is hard to feel any sympathy for him. In our

²⁴ Hester cannot stand life in Canada and suffers very much. Biographer Meyers (1980b: 234) describes that "Lewis disliked Canada far more than Froanna did." Thus both Lewis and René project their self-hatreds onto their wives. Here is Edwards (2000: 525) commenting upon this issue:

Self-Condemed is a story of someone whose self-idealisation outran reality, and who was unable to face the consequences of finding out that he was not only similar in kind to, but also deeply dependent on, a woman his supposed 'idealism' condemned.

opinion, doing *one's duty* in life with such extreme self-consciousness is very laudable, yet when this occurs to the detriment of other fellow men it results wicked, as a large number of signs of René's bad faith demonstrate in the novel.

Thus the Hardings take a liner to Canada eventually. Here Mr. Abbott and his wife join them. When the latter know about René's social standing, they exalt his social position (status) and honour ribbons (goods). Far from discarding their compliments, René approves of them. These comments draw on his *vanity* and *intellectual snobbery*, while Hester takes these social exchanges as "terrifying evidence of the extent to which René's morale had declined." (155) Naturally, René is aware of this demur as well, yet he deceives himself arguing that he has planned a "much simpler type of existence for Hester and himself" in Canada. René makes up his mind to show *repudiation* as a norm in life, and this fact affects Hester quite directly.

Quite likely she would leave him, which might be the best solution [...] **no compromise [but] repudiation**. But such actions [...] led to an estrangement from the norm of life. An individual who has repudiated publicly the compromise of normal living must thereafter be careful never to use compromise, or half compromise, under whatever circumstances. [...] His humiliation had been so great, he had at one point with difficulty restrained himself from confessing to the stricken Hester. [...] He suffered spasms of self-reproach outwardly unchanged. (163; my emphasis)

René suffers this terrible personal recognition, when the Second World War outbreaks in Europe, something that has clear devastating effects on his mind. In Canada, the Hardings confine in the Hotel Blundell of Momaco. Here they have no social interactions, and thus, become used to communicating only with themselves. Their contact with the world outside becomes limited to the programmes of popular radio entertainers, the newspapers and the gossip of characters. As a result, their small room becomes an inhuman void stank of exile, penury and imprisonment, a place to count “the hours” of their “senseless captivity.” (198) In this way, René grows nihilistic, as he acknowledges the *futility* of their lives, their idleness and, above all, their extreme *loneliness*.²⁵

To make matters worse, René refuses Hester’s affection and eroticism (love exchanges). Moreover, he does not inform her of the “announcements of appointments to academic posts” he often reads in the newspaper. Behaving in these distorted ways, he achieves to protect his individuality, privacy and personal self-interests. René becomes so independent that Hester even annoys him only for demanding a small amount of marital affection. As Murray (1980: 169) says,

Quite simply, after years of marriage, Hester bores René, who has taken to staring at younger girls and, of course, undressing them in his mind.

²⁵ We believe that these aspects are also very Beckettian in nature.

Therefore, their love relationship worsens considerably during this period. Later, “they change roles” (173), as he becomes *secretive* and *cunning*, and Hester shows herself sweetly *reasonable*. In the end, Hester turns out to hate their routine life in this prison, essentially, because René’s obsession with “Time” turns out to be so extreme²⁶ that he does not even work as he used to. As a consequence, they become to have no money of their own for food and shoes.

In other words, both of them get so much accustomed to their imprisonment that they even dislike “their room being entered by other people.” Thus René and Hester develop into victims of Time and its social constructions, as they begin to have difficulty in expressing their intimate resource needs. At the same time, this lack of information and love exchanges indicate that their private life does not satisfy them as it used to. Hester loses “self-consciousness” and “vitality.” (198) As a result, they not only *alienate* themselves from the world, but also from each other, and their own selves.

In sum, René and Hester become *assimilated into* this gloomy microcosmic room. Their slanted trends of behaviour and relationship towards each other and the rest of guests in the hotel, most of which are drunks, wife-beaters, gossips and eccentrics, illustrate the appalling social and psychological implications suffered by humanity in extreme ways. Here is René arguing about this microcosmic room and its harmful effects.

²⁶ We think that these are visible signs of the effects that the *Zeitgeist* and Bergson’s theory of Time

Deepen the solitude [...] one's life wasted in corrosive idleness. [...] The seasons kept reminding you of the stupid plodding feet of Time. [...] As the State, the City, the Household waded in a morass of debt and Mortgage, **the Room was charged with despair and decay. [...] The hotel is the State. The hotel is the world [...] a matriarchy. [...] The hotel in question was naturally ill run.** (188-9; my emphasis)

The Harding's turn out to live in an "astonishingly violent" microcosm that is a pervasive reminder of the violence outside. This room is the intimate place of this married couple, their retreat place in a hotel, whose decay reflects that all settings, even intimate ones, are invaded by a despair society ruled by institutions that are similarly ill-run. In this sense, we consider that Lewis scourges the profound social and psychological conflicts experienced by the Harding's and the rest of civilians inhabiting this hotel are illustrations of the deteriorating effects of the political and ideological cleavages that existed between European countries in this time in civilian life.²⁷ In support of our assumption, we take Lewis' views of the world, and of human relations as conveyed in his autobiographical and critical fifties' work (*RA*, 66).

If we, as individuals behaved as the State behaves, we should all be murderers, counterfeiters, bullies, blackmailers, perjurers [...] The State is violent and morally inferior [...] the cause is [...] 'all power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.' (my emphasis)

cause on their own selves.

²⁷ In support of this idea, see Blau's assumptions on 'Opposition' (1964: 224-52).

In our view, the attitudes and relationships of both René and Hester with each other and with their fellow men, and those of the rest of guests among themselves *exemplify* the dreadful social and psychological consequences mentioned above. According to Lewis, these are derived mainly from imitating (or behaving like) the values supported by the State and its representatives. In this sense, the unorthodox rules of practice that govern their behaviour and resource transactions are exemplifications of the atypical kinds of values and mechanisms that control social functioning in the whole planet in this war time. For instance, the Hotel Blundell is not a real hotel, but “a brothel upstairs” ruled by “its governor Affie” described as “the protector of harlots” and “the patroness likewise of rotten janitors.” (205) This place sells hard liquor in its lower floors, where a large number of people gather in order to consume it. These insidious and illegitimate circumstances that lay beneath the Methodist surface of Canadian life spring from the extreme lack of particularism and ineffectiveness of the instruments of social control that exist in its cities. In *SC*, the State, its institutions and urban environmental conditions neither favour this particularism, nor law enforcement. These are the reasons why these civilians resort to obtaining their needs in unnatural circumstances such as hotel rooms, devoted to prostitution purposes. Apart from that the characteristics of this urban setting also facilitate the appearance of other unsavoury phenomena like *alcohol abuse*, which, as described in the above paragraph, is “consumed” by characters here “hoping that his might improve

matters” (128). Another seedy consequence is *domestic violence*. As the text reads,

There was a **woman** next door, being the husband’s nightly habit to half murder her. [...] There was also a **German** who egged on her **Indian husband** to hit her. (230; my emphasis)

This multi-racial and multi-gender climate of hostility and callousness that defines this microcosmic hotel affects the consciousness and spirit of the Harding’s eventually.

In Canada, as in the States, Prohibition had been imposed upon a docile people. An absurd religion, the last of Puritanism was accepted by them: **it drove them out of their homes into hotels to find some natural relief.** [...] **What René objected to in the American system – a modified form of which exists in Canada – was its inhumanity.** They had got involved in a violent and unintelligent dance, in which **all reference to the happiness and interests of the human individual had been abandoned.** (209; my emphasis)

We believe that Lewis is aware that Canadian individuals in this wartime opt to alleviate their psychological imbalances in large settings rather than in intimate ones. These large places, which are located in the upper and lower floors of the hotel, are chosen by its guests to perform all types of *unorthodox* social exchanges, which are disguised as *licit* in this hotel. In this way, René calls attention to the negative influence of religion in American and Canadian countries, as he appears to consider that they promote, above all, a world of *façades*. In his view, these territories promote values that respond to a double morality constantly. This is why human

behaviour and relationships are always motivated by principles like cant and violence exclusively here. However, this bleak view of the world is not peculiar of America and Canada; a letter from René's sister Mary shows the Harding that things are not very different in England ("Everything had changed so completely that the scene she wrote about appeared pallid and meaningless. (210-11))

Therefore, it appears to be that Lewis views chaos as being paramount all over the world. This fact provokes such unpleasant sensation of relentless *scepticism* in this intellectual creature that ("what he wrote did not interest him" (211)). In to describe his state of mind, we make K. Russell's words (1955: 532-3) ours.

The triumph of unreason and brutality is [...] the result of a betrayal of human reason, a deliberate repudiation of the works of the mind. Man has within him [...] the instrument for his salvation [...] his reason; yet, engulfed in a confusion of humanitarianism that really is inhumane, of collectivism that masquerades as sympathy, of fallacious notions concerning human nature and the state, of uniformity under the name of justice, modern man is denying his reason. The nineteenth century world was a world of energy, variety, a considerable degree of justice, private security, and free expression. Those inestimable benefits of modern civilization, the work of Professor Harding's creative men, are now being undone by the destructive men.

This cynicism of René, which is very much Lewisian in nature arises because neither his *old* absolutes and work nor his *new* values and *moderate* patterns of conduct are valued by British, American or Canadian society in appropriate terms. Here these guests disapprove of "any kind of sobriety or

restraint.” For instance, the fact that René does not beat Hester, or is seen drunk every night is not in his favour. As René posits, “war is maintained by everybody [...] this hotel [...] is a [...] rather mild microcosm.” (232) But, his irreproachable behaviour as a guest is registered against him. As a result, his *personality* suffers a process of *disintegration* similar to that experienced by society as a whole. In this regard, its destructive effects can be observed directly in his conduct and relationships.

From Easter 1941 onwards, René and Hester are witnesses to the most obnoxious types of attitudes and social encounters. René’s old self-consciousness deteriorates profoundly, and thus, his daily periods of semi-consciousness increase rapidly. Some of these loathsome occurrences are, for example, those of Herr Starr, a tenant who “kindly” offers to introduce them to a number of people of very extraordinary interests and charm.

This man who had nestled in the lap of wealthy old women, whom he apparently drenched in a scented torrent of flattery, poured equally over their faces and their minds.
(217)

Starr behaves as an urban Machiavellian prototype, since what he really aims at, by doing so, is to gain the money of the Harding’s.

To entertain the Harding’s would cost fifteen dollars, Mrs Starr told them (they began looking at him more and more disagreeably). (220)

With this terrible episode, we appreciate an unsavoury aspect of civilian life because the Harding’s meet much difficulty in initiating social relationships. For this reason, they need to resort to paying a third party (to contract one’s

services) in order to fulfil their particularistic demands. This obnoxious practice of Starr, which does not seem to be unusual in this urban place, is an extreme exemplification of the aforesaid inhuman, decadent and illegitimate mechanisms that govern relationships here.²⁸ In this regard, we believe that Lewis is merely signalling that social encounters have turned out to resemble manufactured products, that is, things that need to be bought first in order to be enjoyed next.

Another abhorrent illustration of this social disintegration occurs in the Beverage Room of the Hotel. One night, René drags Hester down to this place in order to consume illegal alcohol, and thus, “be sociable” (226). Here a man hits René badly, and Jim, one of the janitors of Mrs. Plant (224) goes to René’s assistance. The Harding’s become quite amazed at this dreadful event (“there had been so much hatred, suddenly released, and it had them filled with such a dreadful fear.”) Jim usually robs (negative exchanges of money and goods) but René sees *loyalty* in the behaviour of this dishonest janitor. (229) By doing so, René shows that he no longer views the world in terms of black and white as he used to, but with some shades of grey. In this regard, it is Hester who can neither forget nor recover from this insane streak of violence released towards her husband in the Room. Aggression and *criminal instinct* have invaded the spirit of everyone in this place, even that of her husband, who appears to accept these negative aspects of civilian life as social norms now. Hester sees this world as “a

²⁸ The narrator suggests: “Proust was the bible of Mr. Herbert Starr” (222), a comment that reflects

monstrosity” (229). Its brutal spirit has contaminated René eventually²⁹ (“He had always exhibited an authentic distaste for physical violence” (231)).³⁰ These facts are so distressing for her that the main principle that governs her attitude from this moment on is to “try and *prevail upon* René to return to England” (230; my emphasis). Nonetheless, when René confesses his love for her, Hester’s determination appears to weaken considerably.

Being imprisoned, as we have been, here, has its compensations. [...] You have become **integrated** in me. [...] And this has made me understand you – for most people I should hate to be integrated with. It is when years of misery have caused you to grow into another person in this way that you can really know them.’ [...] In the other world, Hester, I treated you, as you did not deserve. [...] I would sacrifice for you any miserable thing I had as well, as I would for myself? [...] She was crying too, and they remained for a long time clasped together in something like a religious embrace. [...] She would not pester him about leaving this awful place if he did not want to, [...] some day, [...] they would return to England, and leave this hideous ice-box behind! (238-40)

With this confession, René conveys a view of marriage relationships that is absolutely novel in Lewis’ fiction. Here René admits his *interdependence* on Hester, as no other male character has ever done. Lewis’ male intellectuals

Lewis’ disapproval of the ideas proposed by the popular French author in his work.

²⁹ For example, René acknowledges that he could choke a woman guest who is known to bully her husband very often, happen he to be her husband.

³⁰ This comment demonstrates Normand’s assumptions (In Corbett, 1998: 39), with which we agree completely.

Jameson argues that ‘all of Lewis’ works are both expressions of violence and implicit meditations on its source and consequences’ [...] Imputing a destructive psychopathology to all of Lewis’s art and theory fails to acknowledge the self-consciousness, and the quality of ‘autocritique’, which permeates his work. Throughout Lewis’s theory there exists an acute reflexive sense in which he critically objectifies his personal, cultural and ideological position.

always avoid intensifying their love relationships for fear this prevents them from fulfilling their moral and professional interests. Just like Lewis always did, his intellectual creatures rather not sacrifice their different absolutes but maintain a position of absolute independence, going from one woman to the next. In this way, they maintain their love relationships *superficial*.³¹ Undoubtedly, the fact that René acknowledges his *integration* to Hester reflects some kind of recognition on the part of both the artist and its creature. However, as the social psychologists Huston and Cate (In Cook and Wilson, 1979: 265) suggest concerning this concept of integration,

Some relationships remain superficial while others escalate to high levels of involvement. [...] The key ingredient from an exchange theory perspective is growth in the extent and nature of “interdependency.”³² [...] Partners are interdependent to the degree to which each person’s outcomes depend on the outcomes received by their partner, and on the degree to which the profits for each outweigh what they are used to getting and what they believe they could get elsewhere.³³ [...] As persons interact, they begin to discover the degree to which shared activities are mutually rewarding and to explore the limits of their relationship in such terms. At the same time, as a relationship becomes publicly visible, parents, peers and others react to it, thus solidifying or disrupting the partners’ commitment to one another.³⁴

These assumptions imply that if resource exchanges are satisfactory in quantity and quality for both participants, further exchanges take place.

³¹ Perhaps, Vincent in *VS* is the only character that *intends* to develop his love relationship, when he knows that April expects a child from him. However, as the Police discover his fraud before Vincent can put this plan into practice, he is not a totally valid example.

³² See Huesmann & Levinger (1976), Levinger & Huesmann, in press and Scanzoni, in press.

³³ See, Thibaut & Kelley (1959).

³⁴ See, Driscoll et al., (1971) and Ridley & Avery, in press.

Participants become *interdependent* because they realise that they can obtain more satisfaction and reward when they share their provision of resources than when they do not; René seems to have realised that giving love to, and receiving it from Hester did also provided him benefit in the past, even though this reward and satisfaction were *intrinsic*. In this regard, René's confession reflects that his torments have ceased and his extreme *perfectionism* has been undermined, as his interests lie in Hester rather than in the universal catastrophe.

In the 1940's, some years before its completion and publication, Lewis (In Ed. Rose, 1963: 410) described the theme of *SC* as follows

Woman has been called the 'eternal enemy of the absolute': so our perfectionist must encounter immediate difficulties when he comes into contact with woman.

Bearing in mind René's recent confession, he seems to be in this situation now. We think that the mutual lack of concrete resources of the couple causes René to increase his particularistic resource transactions. Hester and René grow closer together than ever before in adversity, something that occurs due to the "passionate solidarity" they find in their room, which is a retreat from the horrors of reality. Nonetheless, maintaining the rate of exchanges at levels that are satisfactory for both of them throughout time is a necessary step so that their love relationship evolves in good terms. In this sense, René appears to experience an "anarchic pessimism" (243), when he thinks of committing to Hester completely.

As we have seen, René is for information, status and money, while Hester is for love. Since external circumstances favour the former types of resource exchanges, René is more likely to obtain his needed resources, while the latter are very hard to obtain in all manner of settings. In this regard, the moment René decides to give up his particularistic exchanges with Hester, their interdependence diminishes, as there is no other place where Hester can fulfil her demands. As a consequence, social circumstances could be said to contribute to the deterioration of the love relationship between René and Hester yet, above all, René's cynical attitude and the rules of practice that determine his interactions with Hester in a private *milieu*.

While this disintegrating process takes place, Affie opens and reads the content of a letter from Vancouver addressed to René. René is offered a chair ("Knowing everyone's secret gave her a sense of power"), and Affie makes use of this information (which is valuable to René) in order to perform illicit exchanges through a legitimate method of minor-moneymaking in Momaco (241-242): she reads their future. In this sense, Affie does not hesitate to conduct herself in this disrespectful manner, only to gain their money.³⁵ Thus this social exchange could give an idea of the extreme disrespect shown by everyone towards everyone else in this microcosmic hotel. As a corollary, René realises that people have "no

³⁵ As Lewis (*RA*, 25) posits, "The **crisis of respect for humanity** is only assuming universal proportions today [...] aggravated by World War II and *its* sequels." (bold letters are mine)

intention of ending this war, until it had become a total catastrophe for everybody.” (245)

He had developed an appetite for this negation of life, and a sort of love for this frightful Room. It was this that Hester most feared in him [...] beginning to ho-ho-ho. He had no wish to be in greater scene, where men falsified everything, and built up their small façades: where “success” meant failure and betrayal [...] places where the intellect was rewarded for its surrenders, and where the mind became illustrious in proportion to its moral flaccidity [...] surrounded by these comedians [...] they came to realize that **it was only the comic that mattered.** (245-6; my emphasis)

Seeing himself living in a world of *men without art*, in a generalised atmosphere of aggression, corruption and cant René comes to *deny* reality, including Hester. While René thinks of these types of metaphysical issues exclusively, Hester is concerned with the silence of her husband (lack of information exchanges), their frequent state of complete insolvency (extreme lack of money), their urgent need to sell their belongings for food (lack of goods) and the fact that her own husband does no longer wishes to fulfil her particularistic demands (love, status and services). This extreme lack of resources impairs Hester’s ability to behave as a normal individual. As a result, we agree with Foshay when the scholar (1992: 136) posits: René’s recognition of his *integration* with Hester is “artificial, imposed by the fiat of his resignation”), something that occurs, essentially, because he “has removed her against her will from all that sustained her, placed her in an alien environment in utter dependence on himself.” It is not strange then, that the personality and state of mind of Hester suffers great imbalance from

now on. It is at this point when René begins to work for Mr. Furber in his library.

At the beginning, René appears to like his boss very much because the latter shows interest in his situation: “Tell me if you need anything. I will do anything I can” (255) and gives him some money in advance. René understands his signs of generosity as *genuine*, reciprocating Furber with *authentic* affection and gratitude.

There are few rich men who, unasked, help a man poorer than themselves. [...] René appreciated that actually this strange creature was kind. [...] Cedric Furber had the generosity of the poor. How was this possible? [...] He kind of liked this inhuman old maid, too. ‘How hard it is to experience gratitude! René sighed one day. (255)

Nonetheless, this former generosity and kindness of Furber turns out to be false-bottomed, as the latter demonstrates to be an authoritarian, insensitive and repulsive patron (work institution) whose unique interest in René is ingratiatory. Consequently, he deprives René of his employment (services), when he becomes infatuated with a young man (homosexuality).³⁶

From now on, we are witnesses to all types of abhorrent attitudes and situations, which we think are overdone by the narrator in order to provoke the reader so that he calls attention to their disastrous social and psychological implications. For example, a man abandons his pregnant wife because she is a drug addict and a lesbian; the owner of the hotel disregards the warnings of the Police concerning many of the fraudulent businesses

³⁶ Lewis objections to homosexuals are commonplace throughout his work as well.

that occur here daily, but nothing happens really (“the only explanation was money” (261)); most guests rob one another in order to sell these same belongings to other guests, and thus, gain their money; women beat (negative exchanges of services) men who have previously robbed them ... etc. Despite all these appalling occurrences, every character is said to dislike the cleanliness of spirit, sobriety, goodness, integrity and honesty of the Harding’s, *only* because they do not *compromise* with all these fashionably illicit performances.³⁷ In this way, the psychological state of René and Hester worsens considerably quickly as they find themselves living in an inhuman world, where fraud, corruption and aggression are commonplace. Thus they suffer great imbalance.

In order to surmount his lack of equilibrium, René makes new male friendships, and diverts his interests writing for the *Momaco Gazette-Herald*, which, as Kenner (1954: 155) aptly observes, “accelerates his personality annihilation until he becomes the thing he rejected.” Hester reacts to these facts differently, because she isolates herself almost completely. In the end, René’s attempt to keep Hester by his side by forcibly integrating her into him ends abruptly owing to external circumstances. One night, the hotel runs in fire, destroying the microcosmic intimate recoil where the Harding’s used to obtain satisfaction and relief from the chaotic human situation existing outside. With this fire, the narrator gives “a foretaste of the destruction of the world” (279) and, of course, of its terrible

³⁷ We think that these hotel guests would illustrate “the essence of the democratic system”, which,

consequences on the psychological state of humanity, something that we think it is impersonated in René and Hester.

As they left the room [...] René did not wish that to happen. The Room was him, it was them, they might never be so happy again. (281-283)

The morning after, Affie's corpse is found among the icy ashes with clear signs of *physical abuse*. René is convinced that Mr. Martin, the actual proprietor of the hotel, released his *criminal instinct* assassinating the patroness and causing over fifteen more people to die, only to gain the insurance policy *money* (303-4). Similarly repugnant for René is that Bess, one of Affie's best friends, seeing her working place vacant now, longs for Affie's past managerial *status*. In other words, this fire is an illustration of the fact that this fictional population do not hesitate to make use of whatever loathsome and inhuman practice, only to attain money and status, and thus, enjoy a pleasant life of privilege. As René says,

'War is so respectable. The rulers, the firebugs, dare not do more than kill a few million people. Theirs is a hypocritical destruction. [...] But no; they must pretend. They must say that it is a very holy cause that they are serving, and fool around for four or five or six years. Fire is not frivolous and hypocritical, it is not human. The Hotel will not be there tomorrow morning. Instead of it there will be a beautiful iceberg.' (291)

This extreme "streak of insanity" that governs the human conduct and relations of these Machiavellians in this part of the world is merely a small sample of the irrational and absurd mechanisms that control global social

according to Lewis, is based on "compromise." (*ACM*, 30-1)

functioning in this war period. The few years at the Hotel Blundell mark a very romantic stage in the lives of the Harding's. However, all these dreadful *external* events, and René's refusal to accept Hester's love in their *private* retreat contribute to deteriorate their love relationship very much. Throughout this period, Hester does not achieve her needed particularistic resources from him on the physical level. Thus their passionate solidarity begins to fall to pieces, they draw further and further apart, and a growing dissimilarity, a tension, owing to a psychological factor, becomes more and more acute between René and Hester and, independently, within both René and Hester.³⁸ However, it is only Hester who suffers most anxiety. As the text reads,

René formed several relationships, which tended to produce a more normal appearance in their life in Momaco. They went out to dinner several times [...] But these events terrified Hester [...] she saw them settled down for good in this monstrous spot. (309)

René resists any pressure to evacuate Momaco (307-8) since he wants their love relationship remain superficial. Thus he cultivates other types of social exchanges. This professor is only interested in fulfilling his will to succeed. In this regard, it could be said that the love relationship of this couple answers to the following logic:

(a) the types of rewards (Foa & Foa) exchanged are readily available from multiple sources, and/or (b) the interaction has not been sufficiently profitable to motivate

³⁸ As Lewis foretells in *MWA*, the obnoxious circumstances derived from the *insane* human interest in politics and economics will cause that "these two natural divisions of the human race, the male and the female, draw further apart." (203)

the partners to intensify their involvement. When partners find superficial interaction with one another unusually unrewarding, or when they begin to feel each has the potential to reward the other in ways few others do, they begin to expand their relationship. [...] Relationships evolve because the “slope of rewards” [...] profits have been steadily increasing with time). [...] The evolution of relationships goes from first acquaintance to close, and ultimately intimate bonds. (267-8)

Thus it seems to be that the resource categories Hester offers René, namely, particularistic ones, are not rewarding for him. René prefers to obtain his needed resource commodities from other sources. The latter knows that Hester wishes to *intensify* her involvement, and thus, he will feel *obligated* to reciprocate her in kind since he does not wish so, the resource exchanges he performs towards Hester decrease both in quantity and quality as time passes by.

Hester [...] warned him that he must not count on her to go to many more of these boring entertainments. [...] He still thought the Momacoans stank. The essence of the whole matter was Hester’s desire to return to England at once. [...] He knew that he could never return to London, [...] if she was obsessed, he too was obsessed. (310-11)

This illustration of their diminishing *integration* or *interdependence* shows that none of them are satisfied privately and socially, something that occurs because they do not wish to fulfil each other’s resource expectations. On the one hand, René refuses to reciprocate Hester’s particularistic needs, preferring to divert her into other interests and other people, which he does not achieve. On the other, she refuses to fulfil his social demands because she merely wishes to go back to England, the place where she can gain the

particularism she longs for. As we have seen, Hester's "personal grievance" derives from the fact that she is forced to be exiled in Canada. London is the environment in which her life had sense to her, as she could fulfil her particularistic needs. Since any of them are satisfied, their anxiety and frustration accentuate eventually. Hester becomes angry because she begins to be aware that the new friendship relationships initiated by René will only lead to settle them down "in this monstrous spot for good." (311) Thus she starts to show constant aggression on René (negative exchanges of love and status) in an attempt restore her balance. As usual, René *ignores* her again. He deceives himself into believing that he is only concerned with familiarity, while he knows that he is for success (status and money).³⁹ As Edwards (2000: 522) suggests,

Only when success in his intellectual life begins to return, and with it a creeping reconciliation with life in a country and city that Hester cannot abide, does René begin to resume his attitude of superiority.

Consequently, René meets new people like Ian McKenzie, a Scottish metaphysician and colleague expatriate professor working at the University of Momaco. They feel great *attraction* for each other because they have similar information needs. This fact accounts for their frequent and increasing exchanges of this resource. René and Ian engage themselves—

³⁹ In Lewis' opinion (*DOY*, 134), "the whole idea of 'fulfilment'" as understood by René is "alien to this time."

become interdependent—in eradicating the *profit-motive*⁴⁰ in Canada. As

René says,

Government is often in the hands of criminals or morons, never in the hands of first-rate men [...] men of a reasonably high order of intelligence and integrity [...] Power does not always corrupt, but corruptible people too often secure it. (315-6)

The view of the world of these two characters is similarly elitist in nature. Both of them think alike concerning the growing degree of violence, dishonesty and power in contemporary society and institutions. For René, Ian is one of the very *few chosen people* who make life in Momaco “more bearable” (323). In fact we think that, like his creator establishes information exchanges with highbrows is the only thing that provides René satisfaction.

Hester, on her part, deceives herself into believing that these new social relationships will modify René’s decision to remain in Canada. As she reflects, “this rebirth of his normal intellectual life would surely, sooner or later, lead him back to England.” (326) In this sense, it is not strange that, when the McKenzie’s invite the Harding’s to dinner Hester’s self-esteem is enhanced. This fact makes Hester no longer feel “like a lady-like vacuity” (328) (extremely low self-esteem). This social event gives her much *satisfaction* (“the greatest she ever had since they arrived in Canada”), only

⁴⁰ Concerning this *profit-motive*, Lewis suggests that the best solution to all these problems would be “a World government”, that is, one that would rule “a cosmic society” where no frontiers and classes existed. As he (*ACM*, 180) says,

A World Government appears to me the only imaginable solution for the chaos reigning at present throughout the world. [...] A corollary of such a

because Laura is from Britain. It could be said then, that it is only the particularism she expects to receive from this social occurrence that makes her reconsider to spend her life “life in this detestable dump.” (329)

Hester and René (marriage setting) have drawn so much apart by this time that Hester can no longer communicate with her husband in the domestic setting. This is why she feels a strong necessity to demand emotional support from these *casual* acquaintances (friendship institution). Thus Hester cries (deprives herself of services) her in an attempt to relieve her frustration, and thus, gain social and personal significance. Nonetheless, René feels ashamed at this situation (negative exchanges of status towards Hester). In this regard, Ian advises her to forget her personal grievances and talk about (superficial information exchanges) things that help them draw closer together, like the Saunders, mutual friends of both couples (332-3). As a corollary, Hester satisfies her particularistic needs neither from her husband nor from these new acquaintances. In sum, we think that Lewis tries to call attention to the generalised indifference of people to fulfil others’ private needs. Here individuals not only silence their psychological demands; they appear to have become sceptic about their ability to surmount their imbalance.⁴¹ However, worst of all is that René regards Hester “as a

merging of power in a world organisation would be a society where the profit-motive grew sanely domesticated ...”

⁴¹ We think that the high degree of inhumanity displayed in the novel illustrates Lewis’ acute observations in his critical works. For example, those made by the artist in his autobiographical *RA* (73-4), which is written in this time.

The instinct of self-preservation [...] can hardly be said to survive today. [...] No one any longer even pretends to be concerned about the ‘other fellow’ – or about the poor old Many. They are just *too many!*”

big sex trap,” who tries “to lure” him “into a situation where offspring may result” (330). As a result, he adopts a new strategy, as he initiates a large number of friendship relationships.

René becomes a friend of Reverend William Trevelyan (something unthinkable in the past). Moreover, he accepts a job as a weekly columnist and a Chair of History at the University of Momaco, resembling his former self completely. No doubt, all these changes contribute to improve their financial situation considerably, yet his private needs (let alone those of Hester) remain largely unsatisfied. Here is Hester warning René against the dangers of this *new prosperity*.

Is that all you want to do, René? Just *keep alive*. [...] René looked at her seriously, for she was a problem, which had to be faced with all the resources he possessed [...] London is as useless to me as Momaco is to you. [...] Here it is possible for me to work and here I stop. [...] My shoes shall be shone: my pocket-book shall be packed with newly printed notes: my quarters shall be in the smart clean part of town--shall be--and there is an end of the matter. (340-1; my emphasis)

This fragment demonstrates that René becomes no longer interested in reevaluating society by promoting *new* values and ties. As Edwards (2000: 522) says, René “resumes his rejection of connection to others” because he is for social standing, wealth and power now.” This character thinks that, without bearing Hester by his side, he is fulfilled. Nonetheless, this fact only occurs because he *ignores* both his and her particularistic demands.

Hester suffers great imbalance, as she cannot accomplish her *particularistic* needs anywhere, and has no access to gain *social* rewards either. However, what really causes her dissatisfaction and lack of equilibrium is that René hints at the fact that she is a *burden*. As the text reads,

She was no longer interested in his plans [...] He gave up telling them to her, while they talked about their personal projects when they were at the other hotel. [...] He was projecting a new volume [...] a study [...] closing the door behind him and keeping out Hester (347-8)

The resource transactions between the members of this couple have decreased so much in quantity and, above all, in quality that there is hardly any communication, let alone, integration between them at present. Their love relationship has deteriorated to a very large extent, and thus, they begin to compartmentalise their married life as they used to in London. Accordingly, René begins to buy books; Hester *amasses* a little money to buy dresses. As Meyers (1980a: 230) describes this situation, “they start to watch each other with the sullen reserve of caged animals.”

During this hard time, Hester feels forced to trying to receive particularistic resources from other suppliers like Laura McKenzie and her friend Alice Price, who “did everything that was possible to ease her” (344). Indeed, the extraordinary kindness shown by Laura and her friend Alice

allowed her self a limited participation in the social life made available to her by new conditions. Her husband experienced an intense satisfaction, akin to triumph. (349-50; my emphasis)

Laura gives *selfless love* and *status* to Hester, which contribute to provide her social and personal significance. However, the interesting aspect about these types of *altruistic* social exchange is that this is the first time in Lewis' fiction that one *female* establishes resource transactions with another *female* driven by selfless principles. Up to now, most social transactions carried out by two females, except for those performed by April towards Maddie in *VS*, have been characterised either by jealousy or aggression. In *SC*, we observe a view of female friendship, which is absolutely novel in the artist's creative production. Thanks to these resource exchanges, Hester gains psychological balance for a time, which we find very revealing of Lewis' change of mind and heart in this time.

Furthermore, René considers Ian as a “new *friend*”, “just the man he needed *for consultation*” (350; my emphasis). These transactions seem to be fulfilling for René, above all, as he not only *shares* his intellectual insights (information transactions) with Ian but also *co-operates* with him (interdependence) in an attempt to surmount society's deficiencies. In this regard, we think that these two features of Lewis' creative portrait of relationships between two *male* intellectuals are absolutely new in the suggested fiction.

He was writing **a book** ever so slightly too much as part of his new plan of life, **from which the old integrity and belief were missing**. However, these labours had the effect of **drawing the two professors together in what became a genuine friendship**. (353-6; my emphasis)

As the text suggests, this book leads both men to gather ideas for a *new* project: a philosophical and ethical work that contributes new instruments to reevaluate society *from the start*.⁴² René seems to be willing to *give in his* old absolutes in order to work on a venture for *global benefit*. No doubt, this change of mind, which is very much determined by Lewis' idiosyncrasy, converts him into a more *humane* kind of person.

Thus René becomes assimilated into Momaco's way of life by doing his duty and working on this new plan. He attains higher social standing and financial security, yet still *ignores* his particularistic needs and those of his wife, who feels *angrily silent* now. René's change of mind is positive but, again, it does not help Hester improve her psychological imbalance.

'I am afraid that my position is as inferior a one as that of a Victorian wife. He who pays the money calls the tune.'
[...] I cry because I have no money of my own,' she told him. (359)

We think that Hester's psychological state is aggravated because she feels far more dependent on René than previously. On the one hand, her particularistic resource needs are higher than before. On the other, she has no concrete resources of her own. These two facts do not provide her personal significance; they accentuate her dependence on René.

Since René, her main supplier of resources, is abusive and oppressive, that is, a master-like type of person who considers her demands

⁴² This idea also appears in the third part of the trilogy *THA, MF*, as we shall see later on.

as absolute 'Nonsense' (359). There seems to be nothing that confers Hester either social or private significance.

She no longer thought of fornication from the commercial angle, nor so lightly, because she had bid adieu to youth. [...] Did she love him still? ; [...] The answer seemed to be *no*; [...] love had nothing to do with all this. [...] She was very deeply worried because she felt she had nothing to bargain with. (362)

After being unreciprocated for so long, Hester's love has vanished. Nonetheless, this narrator keeps on portraying her as a cunning little creature "always looking for ways to bargaining with him" (362) and returning home. Despite his apparently *new* social stance, René's private trends of behaviour and resource exchanges with Hester still are very conditioned by his *old* egotistic and cynical absolute.

It was one day that consciousness asserted itself, and René discovered that he was only a half-crazed replica of his former self. [...] Naturally he continued to live as if there had been no such tragic fracture of the personality. (402)

In our view, René intends to defend *new* values, but he still behaves in the old fashion. His extremely uncompromising and arrogant resource exchanges with Hester only cause her much affliction. In fact, we think that these transactions constitute the root of his power over her indirectly. Jameson (1984: 138) is right, when he says: "Harding is a snob and a prig, an authoritarian husband, the very epitome of emotional repression." René can be accused of using contemptuous strategies in order not to fulfil Hester's particularistic demands, acknowledge his need of love, and his moral and intellectual demur. However, as we find humanity in some of his

actions and interactions at times, we do not consider that René is “a misanthrope” (139) because he does not show aversion towards everyone in the novel, criticises his own self and admits his own faults as well. Therefore, René behaves in such conceited manner all the time that he even assumes that Hester can obtain satisfaction by using him as a *catalyst*.

This is a big and important enough place to satisfy your ambitions on my behalf. Apart from that, I am sure you would like it. (364)

With this ironic comment, René shows that what he really aims at is to accepting a Chair at a reputed American University by all events, and thus, become a well-known intellectual man. However, owing to his obsessive ambition for achievement and social recognition, René fails his own self, and principles one more time, demonstrating that he ignores Hester’s welfare and happiness very much. As customary, René does nothing either to gratify her needs or to make her happier; he merely adopts numerous strategies, disguised under the name of new absolutes such as loyalty, camaraderie, brotherly love, thinking that he does so in order to perfect society and its faults. However, what he really aims at all the time is to gaining elucidation (information), success (status), money and goods. In other words, four resource categories promoted by the *Zeitgeist* that confer power to one person in this chaotic world indirectly. As Hester rightly says,

You have an uncommon capacity for self-deception, my dear René. [...] She seemed to have given up as a bad job the effort to convince him of his mistake. [...] They hardly spoke. (364)

Motivated by the aforesaid resource interests, René releases all his intellectual hatred towards external power, violence and duplicity. As a consequence, his patterns of conduct and relationships with his mother, relatives, wife and other characters become very dehumanised. In doing so, René proves to be a member of the *Zeitgeist* more than he could have ever imagined. As Munton (In Corbett, 1998: 7) suggests,

Lewis's opposition to aggression returns in Lewis's final, self-critical, works of fiction, *Self-Condemned* (1954), *Monstre Gai* and *Malign Fiesta* (1955). There, through the self-accusatory figures of René Harding and James Pullman, Lewis judges himself and his own involvement in the systems of destruction and violence that characterise modernity. Whatever the motivations behind it, his aggression, impelled by the frustration of his desire to create a utopian community of artists and a utopian society, had, as he finally acknowledged, its negative and destructive sides.

In sum, Hester follows René all the way to Canada determined by *selfless love*, while René purposefully *detaches* himself from her, and *forces* her to remain with him. Even though he is aware that this exile will only cause her sorrow and unevenness. Behaving in this abusive way, René emerges as *the only responsible* for all the terrible things that happen to him and her in their everyday life. More concretely, we refer to her numerous social and psychological deficiencies, lack of welfare, low quality of life and eventual suicide.

René behaves in such ways in so many occasions throughout the book that, when his mother dies, he does not cry her death, while Hester

feels this very much. This professor thinks of both women in similar terms, that is, as dramatic actors. Nonetheless, it is not until Hester's dissatisfaction and estrangement grow, and commits suicide than he becomes aware of how much she loved him, and he loved her. As Meyers (1980a: 319) posits,

Like Vincent Penhale in *The Vulgar Streak*, Harding does not suspect the depth of his love for his wife or recognize the intensity of her suffering, until it is too late to help her.

Hester's death drives René to *alienate* himself from society once again. He condemns her behaviour as an act of insane *coercion* and re-adopts his past sceptic attitude towards society and life. Later, he enters into pleasant social relations with a *ruling* group of priests in a monastery, where he tries "to nurse his sick mind." (384) In doing so, René only negates life as much as he had done when he confined his self (and that of Hester) in the Hotel Blundell.

Here René even thinks of converting himself into the Catholic Church, like his mother did. René wants to do so because he views this institution as "the guardian of the great human values of antiquity." (380) Nonetheless, René does not undergo such conversion eventually. In our opinion, it is not his intention to sacrifice his personal interests for religious ones that are of benefit to humanity as a whole, only to temper *his* old intellectual integrity.

It was his second withdrawal and suspension of the intellectual processes, the giving-up of being himself [...] repeating the gesture by which he had given up his academic career in England. Only, **the earlier of these**

two exits had for its rationale a great moral issue, and his second exit was not martyrdom but a sacrifice, and emotional act of propitiation and to assuage a phantom
(385)

As far as we are concerned, this attempted conversion to Christianity constitutes another strategy of René to maintain his independent stance intact. Thus when René says goodbye to Father O'Shea, with who he has formed a friendly relationship.

This father had become a priest because being in business he was in a state of servility. [...] In a primitive democracy such as we enjoy in our community life at College, it may not be an ideal type of existence for every kind of man, but **at least one does not have to lick the shoes of half-a-dozen lousy power-addicts every morning, and offer one's bottom to be kicked.**' (396; my emphasis)

In our opinion, this failed conversion of René is another technique utilised by the professor in order to ignore Hester in a *new* setting. We think that René is aware that this father can remain self-sufficient in this divine *milieu* because of his religious absolute. Thus he may have thought that he could maintain his uncompromising intellectual integrity, and remain *independent* in the same way. Notwithstanding, René realises that he needs *human contact* more than he can think of as time passes by. This is why he abandons the idea, and accepts a new professorship of History in the States. By "repudiating" the "memory" of Hester completely, René makes use of another technique, hoping that this helps him recover from the breakdown that her death has caused him. As Edwards (2000: 522) posits,

Only at the cost of repudiating his memory of what had sustained them both – part of which was sex – during the worst years. [...] The repudiation takes a similar form to his earlier rejection of mother and family.

Therefore, René's desire of autonomy is so obsessive that it makes him adopt a large number of strategies in order not to give love to characters that love him *without concessions*, like Hester does. René needs to put the blame for the deterioration of his intellectual ambition on Hester, who he accuses of having a “destructive selfishness” and placing “her private wishes in competition with everything he desired.”⁴³ René needs to believe that it was Hester who always tried to force him “off the path” he “had chosen”, just like his mother had always done. (390-391) As he says,

We (men) have all these tender reactions about any women, but they (women) on their side do not entertain feelings of that sort about us. It is a one-way sentiment. All their life is spent in fooling us, in creating such feelings as these. To make themselves desirable, ‘little’, pathetic. [...] In most cases they are the *smaller* animals, sometimes only half the size of the male. (391-2)

By doing so, René refuses to accept that it has been only *his* own *rude assignment*, his violent “perfectionism” (82) what has given origin to his distorted behaviour and relations with his wife, someone he dragged to *his* path providing her no intrinsic reward or satisfaction in return. René has emotional shortcomings that are individually disparaging yet he clings to the idea that his attitude is *essential* (modernist) in order to accomplish his professional goals. As Foshay (1992: 142) explains,

Once Hester removes herself, René loses his last external impediment. There is no longer anything or anyone outside himself which he can accuse of obstructing him [...] thinking of her as a vengeful obstructionist, is necessary to his sustaining the belief that he is whole and complete in himself, that any interior conflict must arise from others' attempts to render him as absurd as they appear in his eyes.

In this regard, we think that, like Lewis, René is conscious of faults in others, but not in his own self. His narcissism, egotism and cynical hatred, which critics have defined as *ressentiment*, recalling Lewis' recognised influence of Nietzsche in his work,⁴⁴ motivate his biased attitude towards almost every character in the novel, above all, towards Hester, his wife ("On all sides he found beset by false sentiment") (395). For these reasons, he always sees her as the one who dragged him off his family, imposed domestic responsibility upon him and undermined his intellectual integrity.

René leaves Britain because he wishes to reevaluate his old values and ties. Nonetheless, this revaluation does not "teach him a more humane view or instigate any fundamental reevaluation of his intellectualist

⁴³ This view of love is akin in meaning to Lewis' in his *ABR*, where the artist follows Samuel Butler's Note-Books describing "human love as eating and swallowing. [...] All love [...] could be said to turn into hate [...] always takes the form of destruction." (226)

⁴⁴ The concept of *ressentiment* is tremendously important for understanding Lewis' fiction. Critics of the artist such as Foshay (1992) and Neilson (1999) deal with it in their works in great detail. In this sense, we think that Foshay's assumptions on *ressentiment* (1992: 145) clarify its relevance for the *lack of interdependence* between René and Hester and its effects on their well being to a very large extent.

This denial of interdependence is rooted in *ressentiment*, the "rancor against time" that for Nietzsche is the desire to punish, the search for a scapegoat that arises from the experience of suffering. When René loses Hester, he loses the ability to displace the contradictions of his dualistic existence as both mind and body. The recognition by the world of his book now becomes a challenge to his claim of autonomy. He can no longer blame the world for wrongly valuing him, or Hester for compromising him. His *ressentiment* turns into

isolation.” (Foshay, 1992: 138) Hester disappears, and René starts to conduct himself like he always did in London, that is, making no concessions with his mind. In the end, René shows gratitude to the religious fathers who help him recover from the death of Hester. However, he pays them with the money he has earned giving lectures he no longer believes in. Then, René “accepts the rule of a grief stricken husband”, but again, he does not do so because he is in grief, but *self-defensively*, for he does not wish to be sacked.

I must put on a mask of grief for these good Momacoans.
It is a bore, but they would think me an awful brute if I did
not do so.’ [...] McKenzie accepted it. (399-400)

In sum, we consider that the patterns of conduct and social encounters of René throughout the book reveal that *intellectual integrity* has been the unique principle that has governed his life. René condemns himself (*Self-Condemned*) because this imperative ultimately causes the deterioration of his will to create, his infection with an irrational will for success and the vanishing of his will to love in the process.⁴⁵ In this regard, we think that his aggressive defence of his absolute proves to be meaningless in the end, as

"horror" at his unmediated hunger for recognition and mastery, and his existence becomes a "cemetery of shells."

⁴⁵ We do not think that René is satisfied after exerting aggression on Hester because he is a misanthropist and a satirist, as Jameson (1979: 140-1) states,

The satirist [...] the whole range and potency of the destructive impulses he bears within himself; he alone recoils before the insatiable and unmotivated force of the aggressivity of which he is the vehicle. The satirist is in this sense his own first victim; and his misanthropy [...] violent expression necessarily brings some relief. In this sense, however, the aesthetic distance of satire as a purely symbolic act must leave such impulses intact and relatively unsatisfied.

Contrarily, we consider that René is aware that the motivations that lead him to reject Hester are within his own self. In this regard, what he does throughout the book is to displace aggression

his former motivations and purposes do not turn out to be constructive, but destroy his own self and that of other characters as well.⁴⁶

As Foshay (1992: 146) posits, Lewis “makes the transition from the dualism of critical observation of others to the dialectic of self-criticism, from satire to irony” in *SC*. Then, Murray (1980: 183) says that René is aware that living amidst “quarrels, revenges, vanities, shames and taints, hot desires and urgent appetites,” creating a new world order devoid of borders based on the principle of rationality was long over-due. In order to compensate for this chaotic situation, René purports new values like *loyalty*, *manly camaraderie* and *brotherly love*. In this way, he hopes to open new paths for humanity so that this behaves genuinely and relationships become more authentic and genuine in nature.⁴⁷ For this reason, he chooses his sister Helen, and his friends Rotter and Ian to test these new doctrines, and shares with them *the whole truth* about the real principles that motivate his actions. René is aware that he can only be devoid with *familiarity*, *manly*

towards third parties (his mother and Hester) since he does not wish to injure his self.

⁴⁶ We agree with Edwards entirely, when the scholar (2000: 523-4) states

It seems that the ‘self’ condemned in the novel is a version of Lewis’ own. [...] The artist, as a person engaged in life, would have to be re-valued. [...] Now through René Harding the obverse of Lewis’ rejection of transcendence (is) suddenly explored.

⁴⁷ As Meyers (1980b: 70) says,

Lewis enjoyed manly intellectual camaraderie as an antidote to what he felt were degrading yet necessary relations with women, whom he considered less intelligent than men and resented for their power to awaken and exploit his passions.

As far as Lewis’ view of *male camaraderie* is concerned, we agree with the scholar to a certain extent. Notwithstanding, we do not consider that Lewis is unable to accept the existence of intelligent women at all. In fact, his work contains clear examples of these types of females, like Anastasya in *T*. Here Tarr says that intelligent women are very few in number, which is a very misogynistic comment. However, he portrays her in a much better light than Bertha. In this way, Lewis presents new forms of viewing traditional roles and cultural values in the Western world in this time, that is, a place where women meet much difficulty in publicly superseding men in intelligence.

camaraderie and *brotherly love*.⁴⁸ This is why he becomes interdependent with high intellectuals and his sister exclusively. Social exchanges with people other than these persons are always bound to be low in quantity and quality. Like Lewis' approach to art, which is *external* or *objective* because he conceives that life and art can never be mixed up, René adopts numerous strategies in order not to *expand* his relationships in intimate settings but keep them *superficial*, and thus, remain in a position of absolute independence. Otherwise, he will be forced to *reciprocate* his suppliers, and this fact would entail greater commitment and, worst of all, offspring. As a corollary, he could not fulfil his will for success.⁴⁹ As Foshay (1992: 140) says,

René's critique of the "world" had sheltered his own compromise with the "flesh" in his marriage to Hester, and the enclosure with her in "the Room," while it reveals to him the need of her, reveals also the "bad faith" of their relationship – René's inability to admit any reciprocity, any dialectical "play" (not to mention any synthesis) into the static dualism of his worldview.

René equates Hester to a "baby" (41) who imperils his wish to create. Thus he refuses to reciprocate her with particularistic resources (sexual needs, mostly). Nevertheless, he performs transactions of status, love and

⁴⁸ Lewis is for the disappearance of barriers of any kind, these being class, gender, race, country, ...etc. Indeed, he supports "the rise of 'cosmopolitanism,' [...] the pursuit of happiness (and) the habit of brotherly love" (174) in the critical works he publishes in this time, like *ACM*.

⁴⁹ We think that Freud (1993: 131) is right when she says,

If Lewis had ambivalent and contradictory feelings about sex and women, he felt no ambivalence for what he called "breeding" and for children themselves. [...] Lewis felt disgust at [them], which he evoked time and time again in his fiction.

information with his colleagues Rotter or Ian at levels that, somehow, fulfil the latter's expectations. Like Lewis always did, René only accepts to *interact* with men of genius, even though he does not *reciprocate* them in kind, or in satisfactory levels. In fact, as Lewis (quoted in Murray, 1980: 174) himself acknowledges, "to be like René" results "very dangerous" at times. As Chapman (1973: 153) states,

René is the last in a long line of Lewisian "natures"—men apart, perfectionist among pragmatists—who in attempting to live on a "heroic moral plane," find that **they cannot escape all human contingencies**. (my emphasis)

Like Lewis, René strives for not being assimilated to traditional religious values concerning family and domestic institutions, and to the *Zeitgeist*. Free human reasoning and constant revaluation are the principles that really motivate his actions and relationships throughout the book. In this regard, we think that René sets these absolutes against the social snobbery, power ambition, muddled humanitarianism, self-interest and conspiratorial malice, all of them principles that characterise the British population in this time. By doing so, René reevaluates civilian attitudes and relations in intimate settings and promotes new spiritual values. As a result, René blasts conventional values, ideals, behaviours, interpersonal relationships and institutions. All the same, this scrupulous criticism ultimately affects his personality, motivations, attitude, social encounters and relationship with his wife and family members to a very large and contemptuous degree.

The process [...] turned inwards (upon, for instance, [...] the intimate structure of domestic life), [...] **disintegrating many relationships and attitudes, which only an exceptionally creative spirit, under very favourable conditions, can afford to dispense with.** [...] The pressure of his own will-to-success, of the most vulgar type [...] brought into being, [...] insanely [...] from which the finer inspirations of his intellect shrank, and with which his original self found it impossible to co-exist [...] deprived of his natural audience; [...] an outlandish culture-less world [...] first of all, impaired, and, a little later, injured irreparably his creative will. [...] A tragic fracture of the personality had taken place [...] experience much loneliness [...] an exile missing England as much as Hester was doing. (400-402: my emphasis)

As it occurs to his creator, René's old and new intellectual stance belligerently affect his view of life, its objects and uses, politics, love and friendship relationships, and, even, art to a certain extent, but with less conviction. Now, when his professional integrity is extinct and Hester is not by his side René realises that there is *nothing* in life worth perfecting. This is why René has doubts about his absolutes.

In our view, Lewis may not have realised until very late that his old absolute made him a stranger to his own self, and even represented the principle of his self-destruction. As Edwards (2000: 523) says,

The dualism that had kept an absolute distinction between mind and body during Lewis's most extreme phase has broken down, and is replaced by a humanistic recognition that the mind is actually nourished by affection, sexual relationships, even, perhaps, parenthood. It begins to acknowledge that there might be something pathological in a rejection of such things. René twice repudiates what 'woman' has stood for in Lewis' gendered politics, since he wishes to live on a different level altogether. The second repudiation shows that to destroy the 'feminine' is

to destroy the 'masculine' as well. [...] *Self-Condemned* is then a full acceptance of the feminine not as 'the enemy of the Absolute', but as an essential element in any connection with the Absolute: the intellect, which was always previously for Lewis the vehicle through which any intimation of the Absolute could be attained, perishes without human attachment.

This extract suggests that René has his own faults as well. This professor is emotionally sterile and his views far too extreme. His intellectual absolute makes him carry out a radical reevaluation, which released out of his extremely vulgar will for success rather than a rational and critical spirit, as he deceives himself into believing, converts him into a *cold* thinker and "a glacial shell of a man" (406) eventually.

René needs to repudiate Hester and his love relationship with her openly because he needs to believe that she constitutes the only deterrent for fulfilling his goals, that is, money and the renewed public recognition (status) on which this money depends. René needs to ignore Hester and her demands until he can no longer do so because Hester dies. Thus he starts to ignore her separateness and, by doing so, he refuses to be influenced by her sacrifice. His nihilistic and sceptic attitude towards life and people are objective signs of his becoming a hard man lacking autonomy and wholeness. As a result of these changes, his personality becomes extinct and his intellectual spirit largely decadent.

Thus René becomes a successful, yet disillusioned Professor of History because, as a man of genius, he fails in his *characteristic* task to overcome the mechanical ascendancy of what was imposed on his

personality by birth and environment. His revaluation makes him realise how irrational and senseless his long-standing alienation from society has been throughout his life, as this neither has contributed to perfect society, nor has it done any good to him or other characters involved who have loved him. René's intellectualism is so uncompromising that it denies all reciprocity between himself and Hester, himself and his mother and relatives, and himself and the world. Indeed, his professional ambition is so elitist that it turns out his personality to be as *vacuous of humanity* as the one-sided portrait of human behaviour and relationships that characterise his creator's fiction. This fact may explain why René progressively becomes more deficient in love, and his personality more arid and scornful as time passes by.

As we have seen, external circumstances make René not trust in a possible civil social order. His lack of faith causes his ideals to dissolve destructively inside himself. Thus his hatred towards his fellow men for misusing their reason, destroying one another in war, and worsening their standard of living drives him towards cynical insanity finally. *SC* is an aesthetic exercise of the imagination intended for representing the aggressive behaviour, unfulfilling relationships, unhappiness, lack of welfare and low quality of life of this intellectual and his own species as some of the more devastating effects of half a century of violence. These consequences are the result of paying little or no attention to the ideas of philosophers and intellectuals like René (or Lewis early in time) in a time in

which they warned of such effects in the Western world, when they realised the first symptoms. In this regard, we think that Lewis' novel is extreme in form and significance in order to illustrate "the true advance". Lewis must have seen that "the great civilized art" would "abdicate in the presence of chaos" if things continue to be like that; Lewis never intended (*DPA*, 92) his art to commit a clownish suicide.

Lewis' experience of a near dead could have made him perceive that support to an aesthetic idea did not require to sacrifice one's entire life to it, ignore people's particularistic resources and scourge every person who has an opinion different from his own. As Edwards (2000: 524) says,

Lewis appears reluctant or unable to commit his novel to a statement of the thesis it seems to imply, that values arise naturalistically through our activities as human beings rather than as a rebellion against life's inevitable defeats and dissatisfactions.

As the critic continues to argue, *SC* is a Lewisian endeavour "to make sense of his own life in relation to the fundamental principles that had become fixed in him by his early experience." (527) In this regard, we believe that the "new humanity and concern for ordinary people" and "recognition of the experience of the other" (Edwards, quoted in Trotter, 2001: 18) shaped by Lewis in his fiction from 1935 onwards may have derived from his serious health and the thought of imminent death. As Meyers (1980b: 236) puts it,

Self-Condemned portrays the reality of Lewis's failure and poverty in Toronto as well as the consequences of being a permanent and professional Enemy. His isolation and humiliation led to the characterization of Harding as a tragic, self-destructive figure—intellectual, remote,

humourless, egotistic—who denies human feelings in his futile attempt to avoid suffering. The experience in Toronto gave Lewis the deepest insights into his own nature and enabled him to anatomize his emotional limitations. But he does not give Harding this insight and humility, and projects through him the consequences of severing vital connections with other people and maintaining a hostile attitude toward the world. *Self-Condemned* is an intensely revealing and self-lacerating novel that penetrates the hard external caparace, exposes through Harding Lewis's own emotional disabilities, and pays tribute while it atones for his impossibly demanding and potentially destructive relationship with his wife.

We agree with Lewis' biographer entirely. René denies giving love in order to avoid suffering and prefers to *commit* himself to art entirely, as this engagement involves no emotional harm and fulfils himself personally.

This study has concentrated on a certain selection of sociological events in each novel, highlighting certain variations from book to book. We have seen that all these modifications evolve towards a more destructive portrait of the world and human relations in them that often are very representative of the kind of resource interests that plague our daily life. Nonetheless, these novels also include characters whose benevolent values often reflect a positive view of reality that is very Lewisian in significance.

More concretely, we refer to his last novels *VS*, *RL* and *SC* as well as *MG* and *MF*, books that are more humane in nature and contain deeper moral preoccupations than previous ones. *SC* and *MF* recreate theological issues in their fictional worlds. For example, Lewis creates the figures of René and Pullman respectively. These two characters propose new ways to

improve society's shortcomings, conveying new spiritual ones. However, it is perhaps in *MF* where Lewis ("The Trial of Man", 1966: 235) transmits an absolutely revealing message.

God *values* man: that is the important thing to remember. It is this valuing that is so extraordinary. There are men who only value *power*. This is absurd, because power destroys value. Value can only exist with multiplicity. The only value for Sammael is solipsistic. I Pullman, am acting in a valueless called Sammael.

In this work, Pullman sells his soul to the devil Sammael by working as a counsellor for him. The former proposes to create a superhuman age conformed by entities possessing the best qualities of both humans and angels. When the project is accomplished, Pullman becomes aware that Sammael has required his services or *used* him only to mate humans with fallen angels. Pullman's utopian human age constitutes a mass of entities with which Sammael plays at violent games of genocide dimensions. As a result, Nath (In Edwards, 1996: 163) defends that Pullman tragically discovers that he has co-operated with the ruler of Hell in a project of very destructive ends that will only "increase cosmic disorder" and present decay.

Later, Pullman envisages his conversion to Christianity as a means to be saved, not so much for his many good deeds than because God has chosen him to change society's determinism.⁵⁰ In *MF*, man is said to be *valuable*, and *valued by God*, even though the former is *imperfect*. Pullman

⁵⁰ In fact, Rotter states that René is "a Jansenist" in the article he writes in defence of René's revolutionary historical approach. (*SC*, 144)

contemplates *kindness* as a motor of face-to-face social exchanges that take place in particularistic settings because they contribute to create bonds that are of benefit for the whole *human age* in institutions at a superior level. In this regard, we think that *MF* gathers the *essence* of Lewis' *creative* and *critical* objectives at the end of his life.⁵¹ As Edwards (2000: 549) concludes,

He died on 7 March 1957. His work provides the most comprehensive critique we have of the Modernist urge to overcome our dereliction by violently breaking through to a realm of authenticity, a reality transcending our divided condition; driven by such urges himself, he yet knew that it was our privilege to be no more than imperfect imitators of that authenticity, and urged us to realise that we must be Apes of God rather than gods ourselves.

⁵¹ *MF* presents two main figures: a haughty schoolmaster Pullman (the man who pulls) and his old ex-homosexual partner and old student Satters (the pulled). Both of them are killed in the front in World War I, yet they meet again in an after-world chamber prior to Heaven in the first part of the trilogy entitled *CM*. In *MF*, the third part of this trilogy, they arrive in Matapolis, an apocalyptic setting ruled by the same Devil called Sammael. Here Pullman diverts Satters into having social exchanges with other people, for he considers him an encumbrance and far too ignorant to reach elucidation in this new world. This fact causes much penury to the latter, and abandons Pullman eventually. When the latter experiences extreme need of particularistic resources, he asks forgiveness to Satters, the only person who was attached to him selflessly in this dystopic world. However, once again, it is too late. Like Sancho becomes slightly Quixote-like, Satters has become to resemble Pullman. Now Satters is very independent, arrogant and selfish, and does not wish to develop his old friendship with Pullman. As a result, an interest to rebuild everything from the beginning by promoting these types of spiritual bonds and ties emerges in Pullman, something that occurs soon after two heavenly guards take him to God's presence to face his final judgement.

7. Conclusiones

Esta tesis ha tratado de describir el comportamiento y las relaciones humanas retratadas por Lewis en cuatro de sus obras de ficción de forma inusual en un intento por rechazar trabajos críticos recientes sobre el autor donde se le atribuye una posición parcial de la realidad de su tiempo. El novedoso enfoque sociológico o Teoría de los Recursos propuesto por Foa nos ha permitido, en primer lugar, clarificar la idiosincrasia y propósitos últimos de estas cuatro representaciones creativas de la experiencia social; en segundo lugar, ha hecho posible justificar la energía de los comentarios sociales del autor y, en tercer y último lugar, nos ha ayudado a mejorar su imagen pública.

Aunque nuestro análisis es sociológico, también hemos necesitado examinar las conductas y relaciones de los personajes de Lewis desde un ángulo psicológico. En este sentido, tanto la visión que éstos tienen de sí mismos como de los contextos donde se relacionan han demostrado tener una importancia vital en la evolución de sus intereses por ciertos recursos. A pesar de que este estudio ha suscitado algunos problemas, la Teoría de los Recursos ha resultado ser, en líneas generales, un instrumento tremendamente poderoso y útil para dilucidar un variado número de

aspectos de la ficción Lewisiana que no han sido estudiados por sus críticos profundamente.

Una de las principales innovaciones de la obra creativa de Lewis deriva de su pasión temprana por las imágenes pictóricas. El artista debe este entusiasmo por representar la experiencia social moderna con formas abstractas en lugar de miméticas al movimiento Imagista, algo que lleva a cabo en sus pinturas y escritos prematuros tales como *MDM* y *T*. Este fervor por las imágenes le hace experimentar constantemente con la lengua inglesa en sus obras. De este modo, el artista se supera a sí mismo artísticamente y provoca un efecto directo en la visión e imaginación del lector, haciendo que este último desentrañe su propia forma revolucionaria e intelectual de transmitir su objeto de polémica. Así Lewis sabotea formas lingüísticas, reglas de decoro y asuntos de debate tradicionales con el fin de construir imágenes que priven de autoridad a formas miméticas de representar la realidad y ciertos asuntos utilizados en épocas anteriores. Lewis lleva a cabo esta tarea con el propósito de subvertir las ideas, valores, principios de conducta y convenciones propias de la literatura romántica y Edwardiana, no válidos ya en la sociedad moderna occidental. De esta forma Lewis se diferencia de los escritores que crean obras de arte con el fin de despertar los sentidos y las pasiones de sus lectores para que estos simpatizen con los predicamentos de sus criaturas de ficción. Por lo tanto, los acontecimientos sociales que Lewis refleja en sus obras son extraños formalmente y extremos en significado únicamente para *impactar* a sus lectores y estos se

sientan forzados a reconstruir sus imágenes distorsionadas de la modernidad, reconsideren su peculiar familiaridad y condenen sus numerosas deficiencias. En otras palabras, Lewis hace diabluras con los textos y culturas antiguas para crear nuevos productos de su imaginación que reflejen, a su vez, nuevas formas de entender la vida, los comportamientos humanos, las relaciones interpersonales y los valores morales.

Lewis encuentra en la tensión que se origina en el centro de un vórtice (donde dualidades o ideas opuestas giran) un instrumento artístico productivo para reflejar su nuevo modelo cultural. Lewis plasma la gran energía de su mente dialógica mediante un torbellino de dualidades que sustituyen a la propia experiencia social real. De esta forma, Lewis evita plasmar la realidad con formas literarias subjetivas, y moralizar. Estas tensiones dialógicas se reflejan en los patrones de conducta absurdos y las brutales relaciones interpersonales de sus personajes. Estos aspectos de su ficción dan como resultado unos retratos curiosos de la experiencia social.

Naturalmente, esta técnica tan compleja dota de un gran valor artístico a su obra de creación, aunque también de una gran complejidad, que suele confundirse con una supuesta visión parcial de la realidad en ocasiones. Este procedimiento dialógico tiene dos propósitos constructivos fundamentalmente: el primero, el de exponer la experiencia social mediante formas estéticas innovadoras; el segundo, el de enfatizar la imposición *alienante* de códigos de conducta culturales. Con esta revolucionaria técnica

artística Lewis ejemplifica las libertades que ofrece el arte (el suyo propio) que combina códigos textuales y culturales pasados con el fin de intensificar su objetividad. Para llevar a cabo esta tarea, Lewis se concentra en un tratamiento directo de las cosas y de las personas. Para ello, expone lo *externo* del mundo, incluyendo el funcionamiento humano de una forma *escrupulosa*. En otras palabras, Lewis transmite la *esencia* de la realidad Occidental para que su civilización se pregunte así por sus problemas y reconsidere su situación deficiente.

A lo largo de su ficción, Lewis insiste en *presentar* más que en *contar* la realidad de su época. Esta técnica constituye una materialización de su rechazo de la subjetividad y el sentimentalismo de la literatura romántica, y de los valores Victorianos y Eduardianos. De este modo, Lewis crea unos mundos formalmente extraños donde recrea argumentos de naturaleza bastante anárquica. Su único fin es reflejar la realidad de su propia era de un modo *deformado* para así rechazar los aspectos de su cultura que le disgustan, incluyendo aquellos escritores, pensadores e intelectuales que le enojan con sus trabajos e ideas.

Obviamente, esta técnica artística responde a una estética de la *oposición*; un método que se hace incluso más severo en su producción satírica.¹ Esta técnica literaria pertenece a una tradición de autores satíricos

¹ Munton (In Corbett, 1998: 16) opina que esta tradición va desde “Juvenal hasta Petronius pasando por Nashe y Donne hasta Shakespeare [...] Jonson, Marston y algunos otros contemporáneos, y luego desde Swift y Smollet hasta Byron y Peacock. Esta tradición que siempre se preocupaba de cómo ideas y formas de pensamiento plasman la acción humana tradición es antitética a la tradición de autores que simpatizan de la novela del siglo diecinueve”

estridentes, que tratan de eliminar ciertos tipos de comportamientos. Lewis sigue esta tradición satírica para presentar su propia visión de la cultura y la civilización de Occidente en su obra. Como 'El Enemigo', Lewis ridiculiza el refinamiento y la afectación que caracterizan las obras de sus coetáneos porque éstos recrean patrones de conducta, relaciones y valores románticos. Lewis cultiva la irregularidad en sus experimentos artísticos y en los asuntos tratados en ellos de forma deliberada para hacer que sus novelas sean similares formal y semánticamente a las nuevas condiciones sociales modernas y a sus construcciones. Para ello, Lewis refleja el *impacto social* de doctrinas variadas como las que se ocupan del *inconsciente* (por ejemplo, la teoría del tiempo de Bergson), los códigos de práctica del mercado de masas o la ideología liberal popular en las relaciones interpersonales del mundo Occidental.

Como es normal, estos recursos literarios satíricos tan ampulosos sobrecogen el corazón del lector, pues rompen sus expectativas constantemente. El objetivo principal de Lewis es hacer que su audiencia de ciudadanos cultos se cuestione el *efecto* que estas nuevas doctrinas mágicas promovidas por las instituciones liberales capitalistas causan en sus conciencias, ya que estos valores y códigos de conducta empiezan a gobernar sus relaciones diarias. De este modo, Lewis *denuncia* su influencia perniciosa ya que deshumanizan a la sociedad moderna.

En referencia a esta idea, Munton (In Corbett, 1998: 20) opina que esta clase de sátira es problemática porque cualquiera que sea la realidad

que se concede al otro, al lector se le pide siempre que se ponga de parte de la agresividad del ser antagónico. Esta es la agonía de la sátira, crear y rechazar instantáneamente. Es normal entonces que el lector, al que se le solicita que esté de acuerdo con las visiones del ser dañado, quede turbado. Por tanto, podríamos decir que Lewis desvirtúa formas, estructuras y argumentos en sus obras satíricas con el fin de expresar sus ideas modernistas de la manera más *indistinguible* posible.

Uno de los ataques a la cultura occidental más arduos que Lewis lleva a cabo en su producción tiene que ver con la guerra de clases que el Marxismo introdujo en la civilización Moderna. El artista tiene razón cuando defiende que el Marxismo no promovió ningún tipo de mejora al concebir al hombre más como un *trabajador* que como un *ser humano*. El Marxismo perpetuó la existencia de personas poco inteligentes, ya que su organización de la producción industrial en grupos de trabajadores contribuyó a hacer que la población asumiera responsabilidad autónoma en una secuencia limitada del proceso de producción. De hecho, el Marxismo convirtió al *grupo* más que al *individuo* trabajador en una unidad en la cadena de producción.

Podríamos decir entonces que la ficción de Lewis refleja las formas en que el Marxismo proporcionó un ambiente adecuado para satisfacer a los ciudadanos socialmente y económicamente, es decir, *públicamente*. Sin embargo, la industrialización también convirtió al individuo en una *marioneta* porque el trabajador tenía múltiples obligaciones en una gran

variedad de instituciones que le demandaban no solo su *tiempo* sino también su *atención emocional*. Como resultado, la gente trabajadora sufría numerosas carencias emocionales o *privadas* que, en última instancia, perjudicaban su capacidad para funcionar como personas normales.

A nuestro modo de ver, Lewis plasma los modos en que el Marxismo favoreció la *pasividad* y la *violencia* en la sociedad Occidental. Sus personajes son individuos que han perdido su individualidad y libertad porque utilizan su capacidad racional de forma incorrecta, y hacen uso de los productos de su mente de forma indebida, es decir, con la única intención de conseguir fines pragmáticos. Por este motivo, sus mundos imaginarios están poblados, sobre todo, de seres poco civilizados, animalizados y pasivos, es decir, autómatas que toman posesión de todos los inventos nuevos, bien utilizándolos como juguetes o aplicándolos a fines destructivos, todo ello sin darse cuenta de lo tremendamente insatisfechos que se encuentran en lo personal.

Según Lewis, el idealismo liberal del siglo diecinueve podría haber producido una nueva era de *justicia social* si no hubiera sido por la intervención de la ideología marxista. Después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, un gran número de cambios sociales tuvo lugar y, en una década, surgió una gran uniformidad de pensamiento. Debido a la gran Revolución Rusa, un amplio número de avances políticos y sociales pusieron a Europa de patas arriba política y físicamente. En consecuencia, el extremismo artístico desapareció, la competencia individual se esfumó y muchos

representantes artísticos e intelectuales se involucraron profundamente en política. Desde entonces, la política más que la ciencia comenzó a dominar la escena artística. Como corolario, el *intelecto* y la *experimentación artística* empezaron a ser ignoradas en la cultura de Occidente.

Para Lewis, el gran responsable de esta desintegración del mundo moderno, de la destrucción de las cosas intelectuales, de la entrega a lo sensual de los privilegios y herencias de la mente, y la esclavitud de la inteligencia a la naturaleza afectiva del hombre fue Bergson. Su filosofía del movimiento y el cambio le hizo el mejor portavoz de un modo de vida que caracteriza a la del típico hombre de negocios Americano, es decir, una doctrina que busca la sensación a toda costa. Esta doctrina Bergsoniana fue muy negativa para la civilización de Occidente porque promovió un deseo de cambio por el mero hecho del cambio más que por mejorar de una forma racional. En otras palabras, la teoría de Bergson despertó un deseo irracional por poseer *el último modelo* de todo en la población. Como resultado, todo el mundo, incluyendo los artistas, filósofos y pensadores llegaron a tener un deseo obsesivo de *poder* que acabó dominando sus vidas y comportamientos a diario. Como dice Edwards (1993: 471), la teoría filosófica del tiempo de Bergson privó a “la sociedad de cualquier prospecto de alterar la historia por medio de un esfuerzo consciente.”

La base principal de la crítica de Lewis es una “creencia en la supremacía de la imaginación y creatividad humanas.” Estos ideales dejan al hombre libre (con límites) para crear valores y controlar su propia historia.

Por ello, Lewis ataca frontalmente la obsesión de toda la civilización occidental por nociones tales como el tiempo, el deseo de poder o el progreso, algo que lleva a cabo en sus obras *ilustrando* dichas obsesiones *en acción* con técnicas formales experimentales. De esta forma, Lewis se mantiene independiente de las obsesivas amenazas promovidas por estas nuevas doctrinas. El artista hace esto porque prefiere conseguir otro tipo de metas tales como el libre razonamiento o la pureza de pensamiento. Por eso se alinea con la figura del artista como defensor de la verdad y de los valores morales más que como representante y miembro activo de partidos políticos o de intereses comerciales.

En lo que a nosotros respecta, Lewis teme a los valores democráticos porque exigen que todo el mundo tenga la oportunidad de mejorar su status social, su estándar de vida, y sea libre para organizar libremente su oposición en intentos por conseguir poder político. Sin embargo, ‘El Enemigo’ es consciente, a su vez, de que la democracia incluye el derecho de defender la supresión de disensión y oposición también. Sabedor de estas restricciones, imposiciones alienantes y manipulaciones prácticas del Capitalismo Liberal, Lewis ve su obligación, como artista y crítico social, no tanto involucrarse activamente en luchas de poder particulares como ayudar a salvaguardar la igualdad de oportunidad y la tolerancia política. Por esta razón, Lewis concibe su figura pública como la de un artista ideal (o un miembro de una elite de individuos románticos) que necesita estar aislado y ser indiferente al funcionamiento social normal, y a sus

restricciones externas para alcanzar sus metas constructivas. Entonces, Lewis ataca a sus semejantes porque estos se comportan como masas pasivas. En otras palabras, porque son víctimas de los valores y construcciones sociales promovidas por las instituciones liberales y la mecanización.

A pesar de todas estas ideas brillantes, creemos que Lewis falla en su plan porque no puede permanecer ajeno a las nuevas condiciones e imposiciones culturales. Víctimas solitarias como él están desamparadas en su inútil cólera, mientras que una colectividad entera no. Sin duda, la visión de conjunto de Lewis y su crítica social tienen fines positivos, pero su postura es excesivamente elitista en naturaleza. Este aislamiento de la sociedad y de otros intelectuales incrementa de forma indirecta el hecho de que una persona como él se sienta explotada así como su resistencia a la explotación. Los poderes dominantes pudieron haber explotado la alienación de Lewis más fácilmente porque su aislamiento restringió su comunicación con sus semejantes, y este contacto es necesario para mejorar asuntos sociales. A nuestro modo de ver, Lewis se comportó de este modo tan poco común porque era consciente de que tipos de recursos concretos como el dinero y los bienes eran muy queridos por las instituciones y su propia especie (incluso él mismo) mientras que el *arte* era constantemente ignorado. Además, sus expectativas artísticas no estaban satisfechas del modo que él deseaba y su posición social estaba infravalorada. De ahí que

surgieran en él sentimientos de oposición y reacción al *Establishment* y a la sociedad a lo largo de toda su vida y obra.

La obtención de estas expectativas mínimas tiene gran significado para los individuos. Si la recompensa es insuficiente para alcanzar expectativas justas y necesidades básicas, paradójicamente, se crea a su vez una potencial oposición social. No es de extrañar entonces, que la frustración y la cólera de Lewis se incrementara con el paso del tiempo, convirtiéndose en algo de extrema importancia a lo largo de su producción. La buena voluntad de Lewis por sacrificar su propio bienestar *material* y satisfacción *emocional* en los intereses de avanzar una causa revolucionaria, y el bien común da validez a nuestra convicción de que *no es* indulgencia egoísta lo que le lleva a violar profundos tabúes culturales. Por el contrario, su deseo imperioso por hacer mejoras en la sociedad es una lucha *desinteresada* en contra de los que están en el poder y no contemplan el arte en sus esquemas vitales. En este sentido, consideramos que el deseo del artista por atacar valores y prácticas culturales tabúes que beneficien a sus semejantes y colegas, y no simplemente a él mismo es muy loable; su búsqueda de intereses colectivos a través de una ideología estética es legítimo socialmente también ya que justifica y fortalece la oposición en contra de los opresores.

En definitiva, la oposición artística extrema de Lewis no es significativa de su personalidad agresiva ni un medio calculado para ganar recompensas materiales. Más bien, es una acción que expresa *antagonismo*

en contra de poderes existentes y que surge esencialmente de sentimientos de privación, impotencia y alienación. Lewis debe haber sentido que las pérdidas que la sociedad y él mismo estaban sufriendo eran muy severas. Por ello, su deseo por tomar represalias se convierte en un fin en sí mismo en su arte, una ocupación imperativa que se vuelve en última instancia, en su propia contra, en contra de su obra y en contra de otras personas cercanas a él, pues hace que ignore a su mujer y a muchos amigos de por vida. Por último, este deseo hace que obvie aspectos tales como la satisfacción emocional, que es muy necesaria también.

Lewis culpa a la democracia occidental moderna de promover el *compromiso* a ultranza, y a su cultura por no *resistirse* a las transformaciones sociales. Lewis propone la experimentación artística como medio de cambio cultural, aun siendo consciente de que el arte no tiene (y nunca tendría) la posición privilegiada que solía tener. Por esta razón, creemos que sus obras creativas constituyen imágenes deformadas del mundo, de sus derechos adquiridos y poderes, de sus prácticas establecidas y organizaciones, de sus valores e instituciones tradicionales y otros tipos de inversiones sociales. De esta manera, Lewis resalta el hecho de que todas ellas representan fuerzas de estabilidad y resistencia a innovaciones sociales básicas y reorganizaciones que pensadores, artistas y filósofos independientes y tremendamente conscientes de la realidad histórica como él promovía en su tiempo para proteger a la condición humana. En consecuencia, Lewis supera la conciencia de sus personajes y la conciencia

histórica de su tiempo por medio de la experimentación radical formal. Sus mundos imaginarios inusuales, gobernados por una decadencia universal reflejan su necesidad de expresar un contenido *esencial* y desautorizan formas lingüísticas tradicionales de representar la realidad. Por ende, Lewis muestra una homología escrupulosa de la conexión que existe entre las relaciones del hombre y las materias primas en general y, por extensión, entre el hombre y otros hombres en una sociedad mercantil.

Los mundos de ficción de Lewis reflejan que a medida que la función del hombre y la mujer en el mundo Occidental moderno se ampliaron como consecuencia de los cambios surgidos de la Primera Guerra Mundial y las economías de gran producción y consumo, sus personalidades se fragmentaron y sus conflictos internos aumentaron. Estas transformaciones sociales condujeron a un deterioro de la naturaleza de las relaciones interpersonales que, a su vez, afectó el interés de las personas por recursos de naturaleza simbólica como el *amor* y el *status*. Sus oscuros retratos de la realidad social demuestran que Lewis, en su calidad de artista y crítico social, era muy consciente de todas estas *nuevas* transformaciones sociales, formas de interrelación social y modos de vida. Es por ello que el comportamiento humano y las relaciones en sus novelas se asemejan a las clases de relaciones que existen entre los hombres y los productos, es decir relaciones en que la producción está gobernada de una forma consciente por las cualidades concretas de los objetos y, sobre todo, por su valor de *uso*. Por este motivo, el aspecto *cualitativo* de los objetos y los personajes tiende

a desaparecer porque se reemplaza por una relación degradada basada en valores puramente *cuantitativos*. Por consiguiente, las novelas de Lewis ilustran las formas en que el concepto de *lucro* deterioró el mundo Occidental y su cultura. He ahí el deterioro, la violencia e inhumanidad generalizadas que caracterizan sus obras en todo el mundo.

Así estos valores de uso existen y gobiernan los códigos de práctica que desencadenan las actitudes e interrelaciones de sus personajes asumiendo un carácter implícito, exactamente igual al de los *valores auténticos*. Lewis muestra la conexión entre las estructuras económicas y los contactos sociales en cualquiera de sus manifestaciones literarias de esta forma. No es de extrañar entonces, que sus criaturas vean las relaciones personales en términos de cantidad más que de calidad, o que las relaciones de poder sean predominantes entre todos sus miembros. En otras palabras, la ficción de Lewis representa el nacimiento en el pensamiento de los miembros de la sociedad bohemia burguesa de la tendencia a considerar el acceso a todo tipo de recursos desde el punto de vista de los valores cualitativos basándose en el comportamiento económico y la existencia del valor de cambio. Sus personajes reflejan la propensión a hacer que el dinero y el prestigio social sean valores absolutos y no meramente mediadores que dan acceso a otro tipo de valores de carácter cualitativo como el amor. En este sentido, personajes como Bertha, April o Hester son problemáticas esencialmente porque sus actitudes y relaciones permanecen motivadas por valores cualitativos, aunque son incapaces de diferenciarse completamente

de estos valores de uso cuya influencia y efectos degradantes invade toda la estructura social representada en sus respectivos mundos ficticios. Tarr, Snooty, Mr. Perl o René constituyen otro tipo de individuos problemáticos en este tiempo, puesto que, como intelectuales, sus comportamientos e interrelaciones están gobernadas por la calidad de su trabajo, aunque tampoco pueden escapar completamente de las acciones del mercado.

La forma de *T* corresponde a los valores conscientes y aspiraciones de efectividad de la burguesía. Esta obra constituye una expresión literaria del mundo estructurado siguiendo los valores conscientes de este segmento de la población: individualismo, sed de poder, riqueza y erotismo, valores que triunfaron sobre antiguos valores feudales como el altruismo, el honor, la caridad y el amor, todos ellos personificados en las figuras de Bertha y Kreisler. En esta novela, Tarr pretende crear una obra auténtica que le ayude a trascender su propio mundo individualista y valores. Sin embargo, las creaciones artísticas reales solo ocurren cuando el creador independiente busca valores cualitativos, y Tarr rechaza el amor por ser un aspecto del corazón o irracional.

Además, la ideología burguesa, y de acuerdo con ella, la sociedad burguesa acepta la existencia de la actividad económica y rechaza formas artísticas conscientes. Su racionalismo ignora el arte porque lo concibe como una forma inferior de conocimiento. Por lo tanto, en una sociedad como ésta, un artista como Tarr, obligado a comulgar con los valores de

mercado, es un individuo problemático puesto que su individualidad es estéticamente crítica y como tal opuesta a la sociedad moderna.

Más tarde el tiempo, la ficción satírica de Lewis refleja las formas en que los intercambios de recursos particulares, es decir, la expresión de los sentimientos más profundos, se parecen a las relaciones humanas entre las personas y el mundo material. Por consiguiente, estas relaciones no son naturales sino *manufacturadas*. Los intercambios de recursos particulares expresan relaciones donde los objetos tienen una permanencia y una autonomía que los personajes pierden gradualmente. En este sentido, las novelas satíricas de Lewis sacan a flote el problema de que los cambios sociales crean la necesidad de dar a luz una *nueva forma literaria* que ilustre también el modo en que ciertos rasgos esenciales de esta realidad deshumanizada se expresen en ella. En otras palabras, sus obras de ficción satíricas muestran las formas que una mayor o menor desaparición radical del personaje y un correspondiente fortalecimiento de la autonomía de los objetos empiezan a triunfar en esta época.

Sus novelas están habitadas por unas criaturas que adoran el Capitalismo Liberal como si se tratara de una doctrina mágica. Todas las mercancías se producen para el mercado sin ningún tipo de regulación consciente, como ocurría con la producción y la distribución dentro de un grupo social en cualquier forma de sociedad precapitalista, por ejemplo, la que defiende Proudhon, y con la que Lewis comulga. Sus obras describen muchos de los cambios que tuvieron lugar al nivel inmediato de la

conciencia individual en esta época, mientras la vida económica asume un carácter racional egoísta parecido al del hombre como ser exclusivamente económico. Es decir, alguien que busca el máximo lucro sin tener ninguna consideración por los problemas de las relaciones humanas, otras personas y la sociedad en su conjunto. Desde este punto de vista, los personajes de Lewis se convierten en vendedores y compradores de objetos. Sus protagonistas son meros *medios* que permiten conseguir los recursos necesitados y cuya única cualidad importante es su capacidad para iniciar relaciones sociales y producir obligaciones que les restrinjan. Por consiguiente, objetos y personas valen una suma concreta de dinero, y tienen un precio que es acorde a la oferta y a la demanda, como si de mercancías se trataran.

Como este tipo de valores invade las novelas satíricas de Lewis, la disolución de sus personajes y la aparición de un mundo de objetos autónomo surge en su forma literaria. Por ejemplo, la teoría cómica que Lewis explota en *SB* consiste en describir los comportamientos externos (Behaviorismo) de sus personajes que se comporten como robots cuya única función y aspiración en la vida es la obtención de recursos concretos. Algunas de las implicaciones más directas de las circunstancias que Lewis recrea en esta y otras obras de ficción posteriores son la falta de comunicación entre sus habitantes, la existencia de conflictos entre miembros de clase, sexo, edad y nacionalidad similar o diferente, así como la correspondiente degradación de su estado psicológico. En otras palabras,

la autonomía creciente de los objetos en las obras de Lewis representa la manifestación externa de la degradación humana.

A lo largo de su producción, Lewis alienta al individuo y al trabajador a que se comporte como una parte útil en el todo orgánico más que como una máquina o un esclavo del Estado y su sistema. Lewis sugiere al hombre y a la mujer occidental que acepten su función particular en el trabajo y en la sociedad con el fin de alcanzar autonomía como individuos auto-conscientes ya que solo así cambiarán sus destinos. La gran mayoría de sus personajes son masas de marionetas no diferenciadas, autómatas que incapaces de conseguir los recursos concretos que necesitan en circunstancias normales, resuelven buscarlos en contextos poco ortodoxos, algo que hacen con frecuencia mediante la utilización de tácticas ilegítimas. Sin embargo, no se dan cuenta de que sus necesidades particulares permanecen ampliamente insatisfechas. Lewis hace esto para provocar a su audiencia a que utilice su intelecto de una forma consciente para poder escapar así de restricciones externas que promueven su pasividad, o conformismo político y social.

Nuestro análisis del conjunto de las estructuras sociales que el artista recrea en sus obras de ficción se ha centrado en los códigos de conducta y las relaciones de sus personajes masculinos y femeninos porque estos representan la expresión de las relaciones humanas reales en su totalidad. Este estudio nos ha ayudado a describir su deshumanización, es decir, el efecto más directo de la desaparición de toda importancia y significado en el

comportamiento y las relaciones sociales de los ciudadanos de Occidente. Su transformación en cosas refleja su dificultad para separarse de los objetos, algo que les hace perder su realidad esencial como individuos y como comunidad. Esta es la razón por la cual encuentran tantos problemas en expresar sus necesidades de recursos particulares, lo cual hacen muy ocasionalmente y con grandes dificultades.

Como la necesidad más fácil de expresar es la necesidad de dinero y la más difícil es la de amor (porque el lenguaje es más apropiado para transacciones de dinero, mientras que el amor se comunica más fácilmente por medio de signos para-lingüísticos) la falta de comunicación verbal entre estos personajes afecta a la reciprocidad y la sustitución de recursos en sus relaciones personales. Al expresar una necesidad, estos personajes tienden a solicitar recursos menos particulares. Es por ello que todas las novelas de Lewis presentan a muchos personajes solitarios con baja autoestima que necesitan amor y status, y que seguramente desearían conocer otra persona con quien poder intercambiar estos dos recursos. Sin embargo, como conocer a una persona que posea una gran cantidad de recursos concretos como el dinero o los bienes es más útil y fructífero para todos ellos, porque cuanto menos particular es el recurso, mayor es la probabilidad de que éste sea intercambiado por el mismo recurso, o por otro u otros diferentes, muchos de estos personajes desamparados prefieren recibir dinero y bienes, puesto que estos son un medio más adecuado de intercambio en diversos contextos sociales, mientras que el amor es solo apropiado en unos pocos.

Una consecuencia de estos hechos es que el dinero se convierte en una obsesión para la mayor parte de los personajes Lewisianos ya que concede posición social, privilegios y poder a su dueño. De hecho, la realización ocupacional y el logro financiero son los dos principales recursos que interesan a la mayoría de sus personajes. Estos valores son valores *universales* que diferencian el status social en la sociedad; los valores *particulares* y los procesos de integración social asociados con ellos son la base de la solidaridad social y la lealtad al grupo. En consecuencia, lo que observamos en sus novelas son los *efectos degenerantes* de todos estos principios universales en los códigos de conducta e interacciones sociales de sus protagonistas. Por esta razón, sus comportamientos son extremadamente distorsionados y sus relaciones interpersonales muy inhumanas y agresivas.

En términos generales, se podría decir que los personajes masculinos de Lewis son los que controlan los intercambios sociales mientras que los femeninos raramente son correspondidos de forma equitativa, incluso cuando éstas conceden todo tipo de recursos a sus semejantes para mejorar su bienestar de forma desinteresada, tal y como hemos visto en las figuras de April y Hester. Creemos que los personajes masculinos y femeninos de Lewis no sienten suficiente *atracción* los unos por los otros porque todos *luchan* por conseguir los mismos tipos de recursos, es decir, dinero, bienes y status social. Esta similitud de necesidades explica su deseo por realizar sus propios intereses, así como la gran competencia que existe entre todos ellos. De ahí la frecuencia de sus transacciones negativas de recursos (o

agresiones) tales como el amor, el status, los servicios y la información en diversos contextos sociales.

Estos personajes compiten y se enfrentan los unos a los otros únicamente con el fin de obtener beneficios *extrínsecos* como la posición social y la seguridad económica, equivalentes a poder en estos mundos imaginarios. En realidad, solo unas pocas protagonistas se relacionan con el fin de obtener recompensas *intrínsecas* o satisfacción personal. Las relaciones personales entre todos ellos no son nada estables. Más bien, parecen confrontaciones ya que apenas sienten respeto los unos por los otros. En realidad, casi todos ellos parecen forzados a permanecer los unos con los otros debido a limitaciones sociales externas relacionadas con su falta de recursos. Por ello están siempre en desacuerdo los unos con los otros. De hecho, cuando observamos algún grado de reciprocidad en sus interacciones esta afinidad no implica necesariamente cooperación o integración. Por consiguiente, sus encuentros tienen lugar de un modo intermitente, y durante breves periodos de tiempo con rara continuidad en el futuro, algo que ocurre tanto en contextos particulares como la familia, la pareja, la amistad como en ámbitos no tan íntimos tales como el trabajo o los círculos de ocio. En consecuencia, los códigos de práctica propios de cada uno de estos contextos sociales apenas se diferencian y todo tipo de relaciones tiene lugar en todo tipo de ámbitos sociales.

En otras ocasiones, los personajes de Lewis necesitan intercambiar recursos con participantes que les disgustan y en los términos establecidos

por estos últimos. Esto hace que los más desfavorecidos se sientan oprimidos y explotados. La posesión de recursos de algunos de estos personajes privilegiados les confiere poder o control sobre otros más desaventajados porque tienen pocos o ningún recurso que ofrecer. Cuanto menos dinero y status social tienen los participantes, más dificultad encuentran para obtener los recursos que necesitan en circunstancias normales. Por ello los personajes no privilegiados fingen que están satisfechos con los términos injustos en que se desarrollan sus relaciones sociales con frecuencia. Sin embargo, como los personajes acomodados ofrecen una gran abundancia de recursos que participantes menos privilegiados necesitan, pero no pueden obtener en circunstancias normales, los últimos actúan e interactúan para conseguir sus recursos o metas utilizando todo tipo de tácticas manipuladoras. En este sentido Lewis describe muchos *tipos urbanos* que se esfuerzan por conseguir los recursos que necesitan explotando todos los medios a su alcance. De este modo, Lewis llama la atención sobre el gran número de prácticas sociales ilegítimas, y denuncia la falta de instrumentos de control social, mejoras legales y normas en su cultura.

En nuestra opinión, Lewis expone el alto grado de ilegitimidad que el Estado, sus instituciones y la sociedad de su época aceptan e incluso dan por sentado en las grandes áreas metropolitanas del mundo occidental moderno, así como su contribución directa a la aparición de dos tipos de fenómenos. En primer lugar, el surgimiento de aspectos desagradables como

el crimen, la alineación y el consumo de drogas. En segundo lugar, un elevado número de fenómenos como la agresión, la ansiedad, la frustración, el Maquiavelismo, el condescenso o el deseo de poder.

Todas estas circunstancias podrían explicar la tensión tan frecuente que encontramos entre varios tipos de intercambios de recursos potenciales. Por ejemplo, los intercambios de amor y servicios que se ven turbados recurrentemente por consideraciones de dependencia. Otras veces, los intercambios potenciales de status no se realizan porque los personajes temen sufrir opresión y explotación posteriormente. En otras ocasiones, las transacciones de información no tienen lugar debido a cuestiones tales como la competición o el Maquiavelismo. De esta forma, los intercambios de recursos particulares son cohibidos en buena parte, mientras que las transacciones de recursos concretos se incrementan más y más a medida que el tiempo pasa, y Lewis publica sus obras. Es por ello que aunque el artista introduce unos pocos personajes y valores morales honestos en sus últimas obras, sus retratos del mundo y de las relaciones humanas son cada vez más desagradables y deshumanizados, tal y como observamos en *SC*.

Si tenemos en cuenta todos estos aspectos, el modernismo de los mundos imaginarios de Lewis reside en su tratamiento *directo* formal y en su reflejo de la crisis socio-económica del mundo, de la civilización Occidental moderna y de su profunda conciencia de pérdida. Su peculiar manera de exponer actitudes y relaciones humanas constituye una forma revolucionaria de hacer hincapié en que las formas literarias tradicionales no

eran ya válidas en su tiempo para representar la cambiante estructura social pues los modos de percibir la realidad y la experiencia social habían sufrido grandes y numerosos cambios también. Lewis es consciente de que esta pérdida de estabilidad ideológica estaba teniendo terribles consecuencias en la identidad individual de la ciudadanía. Por ello, nuevas formas literarias se necesitaban para reflejar los nuevos asuntos sociales, económicos y psicológicos.

Como hemos observado a lo largo de esta tesis doctoral, Lewis no compensa de modo alguno por estas pérdidas sociales y culturales aportando alternativas artísticas coherentes. Por el contrario, un sentido de vacío anima su obra, y motiva su rechazo de la modernidad. Sin embargo, al recrear la experiencia social moderna con las formas experimentales deformadas que él utiliza, Lewis da vida a nuevas y modernas creaciones de mundos complejos que representan un éxito absoluto. Como Stan Smith (1994: 11) sostiene, “ser moderno es mejorarse a sí mismo constantemente.” En este sentido, creemos que Lewis demuestra ser un ejemplo muy representativo del modernismo ya que no solo hace que su ficción sea siempre novedosa sino que también consigue hacerlo cogiendo energías de las mismas fuerzas que busca evadir.

Los discursos artísticos de Lewis, como los de otros escritores modernos, “siguen de cerca y escriben ampliamente las contradicciones de la historia del siglo veinte porque están en una relación dual con su tiempo.” Por un lado, expresan “el deseo de poder de la época por recuperar, como la

Tradición de Eliot, ‘todo el pasado’ en un acto de conservación cultural que se identifica con la procesión triunfal de los vencedores.” Por otro lado, “sus discursos fragmentados y sus narraciones interrumpidas destacan la realidad de un orden histórico de explotación basado en las desigualdades de clase, raza, nación y género en exclusión, privilegio y, en última instancia, masacre.” (1994: 239) En este sentido, consideramos que el esfuerzo tan enorme que Lewis lleva a cabo por plasmar todos estos aspectos en su ficción es muy loable y revelador para los estudios culturales actuales puesto que proporciona documentación sintomática de una crisis que desestabilizó modos de experiencia tradicionales.

La visión alternativa de Lewis es la *integridad intelectual* o la *pureza de pensamiento*, una estrategia que implica un individualismo radical y una esterilidad emocional. Estos principios condicionan su comportamiento y relaciones interpersonales a lo largo de su vida. Su actitud fue siempre tremendamente individualista, fría y evasiva. Siempre trató que sus relaciones personales no crecieran. Para ello solía ingeniárselas para mantenerlas siempre superficiales. Sin embargo, curiosamente muchos de sus personajes masculinos intelectuales tienen una personalidad que, en nuestra opinión, constituye una extrapolación de la del mismo Lewis. En otras palabras, estos personajes se comportan siguiendo los principios y valores del propio artista.

En nuestra opinión, la idiosincrasia del propio autor influye en tan gran medida los principios sociológicos y psicológicos de muchos de sus

personajes que creemos que este es el motivo por el que sus lectores y críticos suelen concebir sus peculiares retratos del mundo y de las relaciones interpersonales de forma parcial. El interés de Lewis por preservar su independencia y libertad personal, y por conseguir reconocimiento social, seguridad económica y conocimientos es tan imperioso que le lleva a *no* dar recursos particulares a sus semejantes, especialmente, cuando estos son mujeres. Estos intereses hacen que prive a seres de sexo distinto al suyo de recursos, o que les abandone. Lewis se comporta de esta forma tan extraña porque considera que las mujeres son, sobre todo, sensuales y representan un impedimento para conseguir sus fines intelectuales.

A lo largo de esta disertación, hemos contemplado como estos principios motivan muchas de las transacciones de recursos protagonizadas por algunas de sus criaturas contemplativas; intercambios de recursos que hemos definido como propiamente Lewisianos. Estos personajes son tan individualistas que las mujeres con las que se relacionan se sienten ignoradas, aisladas del mundo. Ello hace que su comportamiento sea absurdo y sus relaciones nihilistas en desenlace. Al mismo tiempo, las interrelaciones que estos personajes masculinos y femeninos establecen reflejan la existencia de diferencias de poder entre ellos. Así sus interacciones se parecen al tipo de relaciones que se suelen dar entre un amo y un esclavo, en las cuales el hombre da muy poco amor e información a la mujer y apenas nunca hace servicios por ella, mientras que ella le abastece con muchas clases de recursos, a pesar de la iniquidad de sus transacciones,

y de todas las privaciones de recursos o agresiones (no físicas) sufridas gracias a él. Cuando el personaje femenino mujer muestra signos de afecto (amor) hacia el masculino, ésta suele ser rechazada de forma brutal por el representante masculino. Excepto por el tipo de mujeres que Lewis admira, es decir, la artista o modelo Teutónica independiente (por ejemplo, Anastasya), el resto de féminas, incluso las que son tolerantes y abnegadas como April y Hester son descritas parcialmente, es decir, como personas sentimentales, astutas, indoctas, caprichosas, obscenas ... etc. Es por ello que a Anastasya se la exalta por su talento y personalidad en *T*, mientras que a Bertha y a Val se las ridiculiza en *T* y *SB* respectivamente por su estupidez y abnegación. En este sentido, Anastasya, por un lado, y April y Hester, por el otro, personifican el tipo de valores que para Lewis son necesarios para conservar la naturaleza racional y honesta del ser humano de otro tiempo, es decir, la independencia, honestidad y amabilidad, valores que abren la puerta a la cultura de Occidente hacia lo significativo y lo permanente en esta vida.

A pesar de que las novelas de Lewis contienen personajes de diversa nacionalidad y etnia, los estándares Europeos y, más concretamente, los Británicos caracterizan la personalidad, comportamiento, valores e intereses por todo tipo de recursos de sus criaturas de ficción así como los temas de sus obras. Aparte de estos valores, estos intelectuales fomentan otros principios de naturaleza global. Así abogan por la tolerancia y las ideas

cosmopolitas, y aprueban los estándares que definen las culturas Americanas y las de los países del lejano Oriente y Egipto.

Estos intelectuales consideran que la cultura Europea es insular y totalitaria, mientras que la Americana es una *olla podrida* de razas, es decir, lo opuesto de la naturaleza cerrada y totalitaria de la cultura Europea, obsesionada de un modo irracional con los nacionalismos. Por eso, estos intelectuales defienden los valores americanos como parangón de modernidad, libertad y liberalismo. Estos mismos personajes hablan de las culturas de Oriente de forma positiva debido a su naturaleza contemplativa. Al contrario que Europa que es aficionada a la acción violenta, las emociones desenfrenadas y la irracionalidad, las civilizaciones de Oriente son más serenas, pues otorgan mayor importancia al intelecto. En este sentido, estos intelectuales y pensadores defienden que la cultura Occidental debería estar obsesionada, no tanto con preservar sus nacionalismos como sus costumbres y especies, puesto que la Primera Guerra Mundial solo demuestra que sus valores, basados en la acción y la fuerza únicamente, contribuyen a empeorar su situación en todos los sentidos.

A pesar de todos estos consejos, ninguno de los personajes de Lewis, ni siquiera los intelectuales pueden permanecer indiferentes a las circunstancias externas y a sus restricciones alienadoras. Más bien, se asimilan a ellas y ello hace que no puedan disfrutar de una forma superior de existencia como mentes creadoras. Todos ellos se sienten obligados a relacionarse con sus semejantes y a involucrarse en las estructuras

complejas sociales externas de forma activa. Al final, todos ellos se convierten en víctimas del *Establishment* y de sus intereses económicos y políticos, los cuales prevalecen sobre su personalidad, forma de ver la vida, relaciones y valores en última instancia. En este sentido, Lewis demuestra tener conciencia de que la civilización occidental simplemente no estaba dispuesta a reorganizar sus principios, convenciones, funcionamiento y organizaciones siguiendo su consejo hasta que su situación en el mundo fuera completamente caótica. Los homicidios y el terror producidos tras dos Guerras Mundiales descritos brillantemente sobre todo en *SC*, demuestran que Lewis no estaba equivocado, sino bien en lo cierto.

La crítica de Lewis no ha pasado desapercibida al interés del autor por aspectos tales como el status, el dinero, el amor o la información. En este sentido, nuestra visión de la ficción de Lewis se ha visto alterada por la selección del método sociológico de Foa en gran medida. Sin embargo, también creemos que críticos anteriores nunca habían profundizado (como aquí hemos hecho) en las razones por las cuales las obras de creación de Lewis demuestran una atención mayor a ciertos tipos de relaciones interpersonales, ignorando otras. Además, tampoco se habían examinado la mezcla de acontecimientos basados en el intercambio de recursos que nosotros hemos definido aquí como propiamente Lewisianos. En consecuencia, nuestro enfoque de la ficción de Lewis ha permitido clarificar estos dos aspectos importantes de su obra e iluminar las múltiples

consecuencias sociales y psicológicas descritas, reconsideradas y condenadas en esta tesis al centrarnos en el porqué de su deformación.

Pensamos que, motivado por su propia idiosincrasia y su visión de la integridad intelectual y del mundo, Lewis tiende a concentrarse en su obra en ciertos tipos de intercambios de recursos, ignorando muchos otros. En ella, muchos personajes intelectuales sufren varios tipos de dilemas metafísicos puesto que tratan de conseguir metas estéticas, pero no pueden evitar tampoco intercambiar recursos sociales y emocionales. Lewis auto-reflexiona sobre la parte intelectual y sensual de su propia persona en términos dialógicos probando los efectos de seguir un tipo de principios u otros. Esta auto-meditación explica los tipos de actos y relaciones tan contradictorios que aparecen en su ficción, así como otras clases peculiares de fenómenos sociales y psicológicos.

Además, el hecho de que el dinero esté siempre en poder de personas que el autor siempre rechazó (mecenas literarios, agentes, críticos, editores, intelectuales, pseudo artistas, escritores de línea romántica, jóvenes poetas o círculos intelectuales exclusivos) no es nada arbitrario. Tampoco lo es la aparición de personajes intelectuales que privan de recursos particulares a representantes de las clases medias y altas, políticos y gobernantes, aristócratas, a soldados de alto rango, padres espirituales, feministas, agentes de la ley e infantes mientras los artistas y las clases trabajadoras que en ellas aparecen son pobres, siempre están al borde de la hambruna y son retratados de forma positiva.

Otra peculiaridad de estos intelectuales es que nunca llevan a cabo intercambios puros de recursos como el amor en contextos particulares. Más bien, el significado de sus transacciones de amor se asemeja a otros recursos. Así cuando estos intercambios de amor se llevan a cabo entre intelectuales masculinos, su significado es siempre más cercano al de status que al de amor. Estas interacciones se parecen a las que suelen ocurrir entre camaradas en el trabajo. Los intercambios de amor entre estos intelectuales y féminas son más próximos en desenlace a servicios puesto que las muestras de afecto que se intercambian consisten en meros placeres sexuales.

De este modo, Lewis muestra que las reglas de práctica que normalmente controlan el comportamiento y las relaciones humanas en contextos íntimos se han extendido incluyendo todas las formas de interrelación en el mundo moderno. Estos cambios sociales afectaron a la población, incluso a sus intelectuales más perfectos e ideales, que empezaron a preocuparse excesivamente por recursos tales como el dinero, los bienes y los servicios. Esto hizo que, a su vez, se modificaran sus formas de ver otros tipos de recursos como el status, la información y el amor, que no garantizaban lucro material alguno. Al final, el deseo imperioso de Lewis por perfeccionar las deficiencias sociales mediante la experimentación artística radical no resultó tan efectivo como Lewis esperaba, pues sus valores intelectuales absolutos desintegraron su propia identidad y

personalidad al final de su vida, afectando a sus personajes intelectuales también.

Creemos que es incuestionable que la técnica estética de Lewis es tremendamente innovadora, sus observaciones acerca del comportamiento humano y las relaciones personales muy receptivas, y su genio crítico y creativo increíblemente poderoso. Sin embargo, Lewis falla en su propósito último por inducir un entendimiento efectivo de sus ideas a su audiencia porque las actitudes y relaciones de sus personajes intelectuales masculinos se ven influenciadas por su propia idiosincrasia intransigente y auto-conciencia artística muy a menudo. Como dice Edwards (1993: 462), “una razón de la falta de reconocimiento del modernismo estético de Lewis es la idea de la creación de una obra de arte como (al menos, en parte) una crítica ideológica auto-consciente de la sociedad.”

La crítica reciente de Lewis ha descrito su ficción como tendenciosa. No obstante, creemos que su única falta es la incapacidad de aceptar hasta muy tarde en su vida que la *satisfacción emocional*, la *interdependencia* y la *cooperación* son fuerzas que no se ven pero que son necesarias pues dotan a nuestra vida y relaciones gran significado. Como explica el psicólogo Gergen (2000: 27), la mayor parte del vocabulario de la persona, así como las formas de vida asociadas a ella, encuentran su origen en el periodo romántico. Este es un vocabulario de pasión, propósito, profundidad y significado personal. Este vocabulario identifica al amor al frente de los esfuerzos humanos, elogiando aquellos que abandonan lo “útil” y lo

“funcional” por amor a los demás. Este vocabulario promueve una creencia en la dinámica profunda de la personalidad, el matrimonio como una “comunidad de almas,” y la familia cuyos vínculos se basan en el amor y la amistad como un compromiso para toda la vida. Debido al romanticismo podemos confiar en valores morales y la trascendencia última de nuestra empresa humana. Para muchos la pérdida de este vocabulario sería esencialmente el colapso de todo lo que tiene sentido en la vida. Si el amor como comunión íntima, recompensa intrínseca, inspiración creativa, valores morales y expresión apasionada fueran todos retirados de nuestros vocabularios, la vida para muchos sería una aventura muy pálida.

Ni que decir tiene que el genio de Lewis reside en la naturaleza dialógica de su mente y producción. Por un lado su visión personal de las relaciones humanas amenaza todos los valores expuestos por Gergen hace un momento. Por otro lado, su capacidad para auto-meditar sobre el mundo en su ficción permite observar los efectos negativos tan tremendos que se producen en la felicidad, bienestar y calidad de vida de la civilización al retirar todos estos aspectos de nuestras vidas. Lewis concibe un valor estético como la integridad intelectual como un sustituto satisfactorio del amor. No es de extrañar entonces, que sus intelectuales masculinos no se integren jamás en relaciones íntimas y prefieran mantener sus compromisos superficiales. Estos personajes consideran que este tipo de uniones es irracional, mientras que el pensamiento reflexivo es más valioso, genuino e incluso necesario.

Ciertamente, esta solución es acertada para ciertos personajes en su obra, por ejemplo, Tarr. Sin embargo, esta visión de la vida no parece proveer un modelo que se pueda extender al conjunto de su población ficticia, tal y como René muestra en *SC*. En este sentido, la ficción de Lewis está ampliamente habitada por intelectuales como estos dos últimos, es decir, personas que necesitan recursos particulares como el amor, pero que lo niegan o incluso lo ignoran de forma intencional buscando otro tipo de recursos en su lugar. Al comportarse de este modo, estos personajes dejan sus necesidades reales sin satisfacer. De ahí que no se sientan realizados ni personal, ni pública, ni artísticamente.

‘El Enemigo’ auto-reflexiona sobre los modos en que los indicadores económicos empezaron a ser los únicos puntos de referencia que medían la satisfacción de la civilización Occidental en su tiempo de un modo formalmente inusual en su obra. A pesar de su esterilidad emocional, Lewis parece darse cuenta de que los recursos económicos son importantes, pero también insuficientes para asegurar el bienestar y la felicidad total humanas. Sin embargo, como crítico social, no consigue crear un mundo imaginario en el que los códigos de práctica que regulan los intercambios de recursos económicos, sociales y emocionales se integren satisfactoriamente para todas las personas. En consecuencia, ni *SC* ni su última novela *MF* contemplan relaciones personales gratificantes en las que todos las clases de recursos se intercambien en buenos términos.

En nuestra opinión, la integridad intelectual de Lewis le impide aceptar que la vida, como el mercado, funciona mejor, y más satisfactoriamente si las personas intercambian recursos en sus relaciones llegando a grados de *interdependencia*. Naturalmente, este hecho no significa que la *integridad intelectual*, la *independencia personal* y la *libertad* tengan que perecer en el proceso. Como dice la socióloga Rubin (In Cook and Wilson, 1979: 86-87), a medida que un vínculo interpersonal se hace más firme, este empieza a ir más allá del intercambio. En las relaciones íntimas uno se preocupa en menor medida de lo que puede *conseguir de* la otra persona y más de qué puede *hacer por* él o ella. Pero incluso en las relaciones más cercanas, los principios del mercado interpersonal nunca se revocan completamente ... incluso en el caso de las relaciones amorosas los temas duales de lo que podemos obtener y lo que podemos dar permanecen estrechamente ligados.

Como un gran número de personajes en la obra de Lewis (incluso sus intelectuales) sigue estos principios de Rubin basados en el *intercambio de recompensas* cuando dan o reciben recursos, sus relaciones interpersonales se parecen a las que normalmente suelen ocurrir entre extraños y conocidos en los primeros estadios de desarrollo de las relaciones. En este sentido, excepto las relaciones sociales que inician April, Hester, Helen, Rotter y los McKenzie, los cuales se comportan de un modo altruista en su devoción por los demás, el resto de personajes están siempre

comprometidos en enlaces superficiales donde se puede reconocer perfectamente la base mercantil de su relación.

Según Huston y Cate (In Cook and Wilson, 1979: 265), algunas relaciones permanecen superficiales mientras otras escalan a altos niveles de compromiso. El ingrediente crucial desde la perspectiva de teoría del intercambio es crecimiento en el alcance y la naturaleza de “la interdependencia.” Algunos compañeros son interdependientes en la medida en que las metas de cada una de las personas dependen de los recursos recibidos por su pareja, y en el grado en que los beneficios para cada uno superan los que están acostumbrados a obtener y los que creen que podrían conseguir con otras personas. A medida que los individuos se relacionan, empiezan a descubrir el grado en que las actividades que comparten son satisfactorias mutuamente y exploran los límites de su relación en esos términos.

De acuerdo con esto, es más bien la *superficialidad* y no la *interdependencia* o la *integración* lo que caracteriza las relaciones interpersonales de los personajes Lewisianos. Esta es la razón por la cual sus intercambios de recursos rara vez son correspondidos o vistos como justos por todos los participantes que se involucran en ellas. En opinión del psicólogo social Blau (1964: 118), “la interdependencia y la influencia mutua de igual fuerza indica carencia de poder.” De hecho, las relaciones de poder y los conflictos o la violencia son primordiales a lo largo de la obra de Lewis. Sobre este tipo de cuestiones, el sociólogo Simmel (citado en Blau,

1964: 1) defiende que si “ toda acción gratificante [...] fuera eliminada de repente de la sociedad [...] ésta se desquebrajaría.” Por el contrario, Blau (1964: 4) opina que “los intercambios de servicios mutuos crean un vínculo social entre las personas.” Como el crítico sigue diciendo, el intercambio que no es correspondido conduce a las diferencias de poder. El ejercicio del poder promueve fuerzas de oposición, conflicto, reorganización, y cambio y estos desequilibrios requieren mayores ajustes. Buenas obras correspondidas crean vínculos sociales entre los seres iguales, mientras que los no correspondidos producen diferencias de status. (7-8)

Creemos que Lewis representa mundos creativos que no promueven soluciones o ajustes para superar los problemas socio-económicos y psicológicos que en ellos se reflejan porque el artista debe haberse dado cuenta que sus semejantes no querían intensificar sus compromisos o corresponder a sus proveedores de recursos. Los personajes Lewisianos no quieren tampoco expandir sus relaciones porque no las consideran suficientemente satisfactorias. Además, rechazan a los pocos individuos que tienen el potencial de satisfacerles de forma adecuada. Por eso prefieren mantener relaciones superficiales, aún cuando éstas no les satisfacen, algo que, en nuestra opinión, empaña su bienestar y calidad de vida. Al final, ninguno de ellos consigue sus recursos necesarios de forma gratificante y ello no les hace ser felices. Los personajes de Lewis no sienten *atracción* por sus semejantes, no desean corresponderles de forma equitativa. Es por ello que todos son incapaces de funcionar como individuos normales,

establecen constantes intercambios negativos de recursos, son víctimas de un elevado número de aspectos negativos de la vida en las ciudades y experimentan numerosos desórdenes sociales y psicológicos.

Según Blau, la reciprocidad es una fuerza equilibrante en la sociedad. Los *individuos* que reciben beneficios de otras personas están obligados, a menos que los beneficios cesen, a corresponder de alguna forma, bien mediante muestras de gratitud, aprobación, recompensas materiales, servicios o conformidad. En las novelas de Lewis, muchos participantes están obligados a acceder a los deseos de otras personas porque estas les prestan servicios esenciales por los cuales ellas no les pueden corresponder de ninguna otra forma. En este sentido, su conformidad se corresponde por los servicios unilaterales que ellos obtienen y de este modo la balanza se restablece, aunque también crea un desequilibrio de poder. Si el ejercicio de poder se lleva a cabo con equidad y moderación, este se gana la aprobación de la sociedad en su conjunto. Sin embargo, los personajes Lewisianos experimentan este uso de poder de una forma opresiva. Por eso hay tanta desaprobación, conflicto y violencia en sus obras creativas.

Lewis debe haberse dando cuenta que el espíritu antiguo de la humanidad (incluido el suyo propio) se había deteriorado de tal manera que no había retorno posible. Lewis auto-medita acerca de esta clase de cuestiones en su ficción con el fin de llevar a la superficie los efectos destructores de las nuevas condiciones para que sus lectores queden así

impactados y reconsideren, y modifiquen todos estos aspectos. Esta lealtad a la *verdad objetiva* es en sí misma una idea moral, a pesar de que Lewis defiende que su sátira no es moral a lo largo de toda su vida. Esta meta estética tiene un contenido moral porque la ética es principalmente eso, es decir, la consideración del comportamiento humano desde el punto de vista de las metas, los estándares, las normas y los ideales.

Naturalmente, Lewis nunca admitiría sus preocupaciones morales pero él también tenía faltas y como su biógrafo Meyers (1980b: 266) dice, “las mismas que él parecía siempre inclinado a culpar a otra gente de tener.” En este sentido, creemos que atribuir sus propios fracasos o fallos a otras personas sólo le condujo a tener mayores sentimientos de hostilidad y agresión dentro de sí y en sus obras. Por ello, las auto-reflexiones de Lewis acerca de la humanidad en *SC* y *MF* demuestran claramente que sufrió algún cambio de mentalidad y corazón al final de su vida. No obstante, nunca pudo dejar a un lado su idea del artista como un ser superior de gran integridad intelectual.

Lewis no fue más “neurótico” que cualquier “otro hombre de genio” aunque, como dice Eliot (1957: 169), fue “independiente, franco y difícil.” Sin embargo, su extremada conciencia de una cultura pasada, y su crítica poderosa del caos que él temía había triunfado en el mundo moderno en su producción puede tomarse como una *ilustración* de su conocimiento de la desaparición y de la corrupción de valores y filosofías de naturaleza humana pasadas, más que como retratos parciales de la realidad de su época. Si

creemos esto, quizá podríamos comprender mucho mejor por qué muchos de sus personajes son inmorales, deshonestos, poco fidedignos, egoístas, poco comprensivos e indiferentes a otros personajes y a sus problemas. En otras palabras, creemos que estos son los medios utilizados por el artista para recalcar la desaparición de valores tales como la *honradez* y el *altruismo* en el mundo occidental.

En nuestra opinión, Lewis le dice al lector algunas verdades e infortunios, que algunos críticos pueden no querer oír. Sin embargo, al hacerlo, Lewis muestra de forma brillante la naturaleza dialógica de su mente y obra, su estudio concienzudo del comportamiento y su extrema receptividad de las relaciones humanas. Su idea de un mundo más perfecto que depende de la integridad intelectual es idealista, pero él sigue insistiendo en que estas ideas deberían dar forma a nuestras vidas. Lewis expresa algunas debilidades estructurales fundamentales de nuestra cultura de la que él depende directamente pero persiste en quedarse fuera de ella. Por ello, creemos que todas estas contradicciones no deben tomarse como características negativas de su trabajo y personalidad, sino como ejemplos de su capacidad para poner en cuestión sus propias ideas, cultura y valores. De este modo, el poder de este genio podría verse en su intento imperioso por explorar las complejidades de su mundo cambiante de forma estética; su integridad, en su buena voluntad por dejarnos ver los modos en que su exploración crítica le forzó a rechazar la faceta emocional de su vida, solo

para involucrarse finalmente en las circunstancias y construcciones externas y por ello sufrir una lucha interna continua.

Sin duda alguna, Lewis es un romántico contradictorio y un modernista innovador con unas ideas muy post-modernas de la vida y de las relaciones humana. Por un lado, Lewis es un romántico incongruente al considerar al arte como un absoluto, un propósito merecedor de dedicarle toda su vida y esfuerzo, lo único que da significado a la vida y un principio tan valioso que incluso le impide integrarse completamente en sus propias relaciones amorosas. Lewis considera que los códigos sociales románticos, es decir, las relaciones basadas en el compromiso no garantizan satisfacción intrínseca o valores a otros y son menos gratificantes personalmente que el arte. Por eso cree en valores románticos como comprensión moral y autoridad, pero rechaza el discurso romántico y sus indicios sobre los profundos misterios de la persona, el amor, el compromiso, la inspiración o ideas de esta clase.

Por otro lado, el discurso de Lewis es modernista porque hace énfasis en los aspectos racionales, fidedignos, conocibles y mejorables de la persona, es ciego a las profundidades de la psique humana y priva a la vida de significado, y a las personas de valor inherente. Al hacerlo, su discurso modernista abre el camino a un juego fascinante de potenciales y a un sentido de la realidad relacional incrementado que es muy post-moderno. Todas las propiedades intrínsecas de sus personajes, así como el valor moral

o el compromiso personal se pierden de vista y no dejan nada en lo que creer.

Consideramos que esta perspectiva modernista de Lewis continua dominando nuestra cultura occidental porque refleja tres aspectos: el progreso, el individualismo y la creencia en la seguridad, es decir, valores que todavía representan problemas para la perspectiva post-moderna. Lewis ve sus personajes como el producto de las construcciones sociales y los reemplaza por la relación porque, como individuos, no significan nada. En este sentido, sus acciones no tienen sentido a menos que estén coordinadas con las acciones de otras personas. Por eso creemos que la realidad representada en sus novelas cambia hacia todo lo que se relaciona porque la realidad de su era cambiaba del mismo modo. En este sentido, el genio de Lewis reside en su habilidad por mostrar mediante la experimentación estética radical las formas en que las relaciones de familia, amorosas, conyugales y de amistad, así como otras formas de compromiso estaban siendo alteradas en su tiempo, y como comprometerse en relaciones íntimas empezaba a resultar algo arduo para los habitantes de Occidente en la modernidad.

Como hemos visto, la alternativa escogida por sus artistas ideales modernos es la de liberarse de las responsabilidades onerosas. Muchos otros personajes no pueden elegir entre relacionarse o mantenerse autónomos puesto que prefieren estar entre varias formas de interdependencia y significación. Naturalmente, esto no es el producto de mentes individuales

sino de relaciones. En este sentido, Lewis demuestra ser no solo un escritor y artista modernista excelente sino además un brillante crítico social post-moderno.

Para finalizar, los textos de ficción de Lewis constituyen gestos rebeldes románticos provocados por acontecimientos contemporáneos. Expresan la desintegración de normas previas socio-políticas e intelectuales a través de técnicas radicales modernas que reflejan muchas de las condiciones sociales post-modernas. Nuestra tarea, como lectores y críticos contemporáneos, no es tanto criticar la naturaleza parcial de su obra para lucir nuestras ideas o conseguir metas académicas sino tratar de *esclarecer* su peculiar naturaleza. Si así lo hacemos aclararemos definitivamente que los experimentos artísticos de Lewis son extraños y recrean mundos y situaciones crueles con el fin de hacer que el lector se haga preguntas sobre los dilemas que atribulaban a culturas pasadas. De este modo podríamos utilizar estas preguntas para descifrar pasados entornos y civilizaciones, y responder así más rápida y eficazmente a problemas de dominio público en la post-modernidad.

Lewis intenta decirle al lector que la agresión y el instinto criminal generalizado que invadieron a la sociedad contemporánea eran dos de las peores consecuencias del proceso de deshumanización que la Primera Guerra Mundial trajo a los seres humanos. A lo largo de sus obras, Lewis puede no proponer una solución a todo este caos, como defiende T. S. Smith, pero permite reconsiderar un *nuevo* mundo en el que los seis tipos de

recursos propuestos por Foa, es decir, económicos, sociales y emocionales sean reintegrados en mejores términos para *todos*, incluyendo nuestros genios.

Lewis anhela un tiempo anterior al Marxismo y a Bergson, es decir, el siglo diecinueve, porque la raza humana estaba motivada a actuar y a socializarse siguiendo valores altruistas y honestos, y en el que la figura del artista era importante y escuchada por la sociedad y el *Establishment*. En esta época el hombre no tenía una mente económica exclusivamente, sino humana y racional. Ya es hora de que adoptemos los valores, ideas y enfoque artístico de Lewis el artista y de Foa el sociólogo tal y como son, ya que todos ellos constituyen los puntos de partida para llevar a cabo una *re-valoración moral*. De este modo entenderíamos mucho mejor que ambos enfoques no solo se complementan sino que también se iluminan el uno al otro mostrándonos el camino hacia la felicidad y la calidad de vida.

7. Conclusions

This dissertation has tried to describe Lewis' unusual portrait of human behaviour and relationships in four of his fictional works in an attempt to discard recent criticism on his supposed biased stance and criticism. Foa's novel sociological framework Resource Theory has helped us, first, clarify the real idiosyncrasy and ultimate purposes of these original creative representations of social experience, second, justify the artist's vigorous social commentary and, third, improve his public image. Although this analysis has been made from a sociological angle, we also have needed to examine the patterns of conduct and social encounters of Lewis' characters from a psychological perspective. In this sense, the view they have of themselves as well as of their fictive environmental backgrounds have proved to determine the evolution of their resource interests over time, and thus, the nature of their fictional worlds. As a result, this methodological tool has resulted tremendously powerful and helpful to elucidate a wide-ranging number of aspects of Lewis' fiction, which we think have not been studied in great detail by his critics, even though it has raised some little problems as well.

One of the principal innovations of Lewis' work springs from his early passion for pictorial images. The artist owes to Imagism his enthusiasm for depicting modern social experience in abstract (intellectual)

rather than mimetic (subjective) forms, something that he carries out in his premature paintings and writings like *MDM* and *T*. This fervour makes him experiment with the English language constantly, first, to supersede his self aesthetically and, second, to provoke a direct effect on his reader's eyes and imagination. In this way, Lewis makes the latter disentangle his revolutionarily intellectual form of conveying his modernist subject matter. We think that the following anarchic verses in *OWS* contain the essence of Lewis' aesthetic method throughout his fiction.

It is the chart that matters—the graph is everything! [...]
Cleave to the abstract of this blossoming [...]
What is plainest seen is a mere buffer [...]
Do not expect a work of the classic canon. [...]
Never demand the integral—never completion— [...]
Neglecting causes **always in favour of the effects—**
Reading between the lines—**surprising things half-**
made—
Preferring shapes spurned by our intellects.
(30-31; my emphasis)

Accordingly, Lewis *sabotages* traditional linguistic forms, proprieties of tone and subject matter in order to build up images that *blast* representative forms of shaping reality and traditional contents. Lewis undertakes this task in order to subvert the ideas, values, morals and conventions of much Romantic and Edwardian literature, which they appear to him to be no longer valid in modern Western society. In this way, Lewis differentiates himself from the writers who create works of art intended for awakening their readers' senses and emotions, so that they sympathise with the predicament of their fictional creatures. Thus the social occurrences

depicted by Lewis in his novels are strange in form and extreme in significance, only to cause great *impact* on the intellect of his/her reader so that he/she feels impelled to reconstruct such distorted images of modernity, reconsider their familiar peculiarity and condemn their numerous deficiencies. Consequently, Lewis tricks the textual and cultural past in his novels in order to create *new* products of imagination that reflect novel forms of understanding life, human behaviour, relationships and moral values.²

In order to reflect his *new* cultural model, Lewis finds in the tension located in the centre of a vortex (Vorticism), where he considers that dualities or opposite ideas are spinning, a productive instrument. Thus Lewis shapes the great energy of his dialogic mind through an intentional erection of dualities that substitutes human experience in itself. As a result, he avoids creating subjective literary forms of shaping reality and moralise. These dialogical tensions, which are reflected in the extremely absurd trends of behaviour and crude interrelationships of his characters, give origin to the curious social experience reflected in his fiction. This complex technique provides his fiction with great artistic value, but also much confusion about

² As S. Campbell (1988: 174) notes, in his role as culture critic

Lewis is [...] part of two different though overlapping contexts: I) the British tradition including such writers as Burke, Coleridge, Arnold, and Ruskin, and continuing into this century with Shaw, Eliot, F.R. Leavis, and Raymond Williams; II) the group of culture critics writing between the two world wars including such figures as Ortega y Gasset, Charles Maurras, Irving Babbitt, Julian Benda, and Oswald Spengler, all of whom follow arguments earlier developed by Burke, Taine, Nietzsche, and other European precursors. Lewis's ideas show the influence of both the British and the European traditions, yet his vision of culture is also distinctively his own.

his supposed bias. This dialogical procedure has two constructive purposes: first, to expose social experience in innovative aesthetic ways; and, second, to highlight the *alienating* imposition of cultural codes. In this way, Lewis' revolutionary technique exemplifies the freedoms offered by an art—his own art—that recombines past textual and cultural codes in an attempt to intensify its objective present reality. To carry out this task, Lewis places his values in direct treatment of the thing. This is why he concentrates on a scrupulous rendering of the external world, including human functioning. As a consequence, he conveys the most objective *essence* of the Western world so that its civilization questions and reconsiders its troubles and deficient situation.

Throughout his fiction, Lewis insists on *showing* rather than on *telling*. This radical technique constitutes the materialization of his rejection of the subjectivity and sentimentalism of much Romantic literature, and the doctrines of Victorian and Edwardian England. Thus Lewis creates worlds that are outlandish in form and plots that are anarchic in nature in order to reflect the reality of his own era in deformed ways, and thus, disallow the aspects of his culture he dislikes, including those writers, critics, thinkers and intellectuals who annoy him with their works and ideas. Obviously, this aesthetic technique constitutes an aesthetic of opposition, a method that becomes even harsher in his satirical production. This literary device pertains to a tradition of raucous satirists who try “to kill off certain kinds of behaviour.” As Munton (In Corbett, 1998: 16) says,

This tradition runs from Juvenal and Petronius through Nashe and Donne, to Shakespeare [...] Jonson, Marston and other of their contemporaries, and then from Swift and Smollet through Byron and Peacock. This tradition [...] always concerned with how ideas and way of thinking shape human action, is antithetical to the tradition of sympathy of the nineteenth century novel.

Lewis follows this satirical tradition in order to create *his own* fictional view of the Western culture and civilization. As an Enemy, Lewis ridicules the refinement and affectation of contemporary writers who recreate Romantic patterns of conduct, relationships and values in their works. Lewis cultivates irregularity in his satirical experiments and subject matter in deliberate ways in order to turn out his works to be similar in form and meaning to the new modern conditions and constructions. Accordingly, he reflects the *impact* of varied doctrines such as those dealing with the unconscious like Bergson's philosophy of time, mass-marketed values and popular liberal ideology in Western human functioning.

Naturally, Lewis' bombastic literary devices strike fear into his reader's heart, as his/her expectations are constantly broken. Lewis aims to make his cultivated Western civilian audience enquire the *effect* of the new magical doctrines promoted by the Liberal Capitalist Establishment on their consciousness, since their values and rules of practice began to govern their patterns of conduct and relationships daily. In this way, Lewis denounces their pernicious and dehumanising influence in modern social functioning. Concerning these ideas Munton (In Corbett, 1998: 20) says,

Satire is troubling because, whatever reality is conceded to the other, the reader is always asked to side with the aggressivity of the antagonistic self. [...] This is the agon of satire: to create and instantly to disavow. The reader, asked to concur with the visions of a damaged self, is right to be troubled.

Consequently, Lewis distorts expected forms, structures and subject matters in his satirical works in order to convey *his* modernist views in the most undistinguishable aesthetic manner possible. We think that Rotter's words concerning the style of his friend René (Lewis' man-made ideological system) in *SC* contain the essence of Lewis' aesthetic method and purposes throughout his life.

His unorthodox utterances ... skilful use of the technique of surprise and paradox ... astonish us ... he **is not a purely destructive intelligence. He is, on the contrary, in a remarkable degree, a creative ... and violent perfectionist.** (81; my emphasis)

One of the harshest attacks on Western culture carried out by Lewis in his production is the class-war that Marxism introduced in modern civilization. The artist is right in his defence that Marxism did not promote any improvement by envisaging man as a workman rather than as a human being. Contrarily, Marxism perpetuated the existence of unintelligent persons, as its organisation of industrial production around groups of workers contributed to make people assume autonomous responsibility for a limited sequence of the production process. In fact, Marxism turned out *the*

group rather than *the individual* worker to become a unit in the production line.

In our view, Lewis' fiction reflects the ways in which Marxism provides a suitable environment for satisfying civilians socially and economically, that is, *publicly*. However, industrialism also converts the individual into a puppet because the worker has multiple memberships in a variety of institutions competing not only for his time, but also for his emotional attention. As a result, working people turn out to have *private* or *emotional* deficiencies that ultimately impair their ability to function as normal citizenship.

Throughout his fiction, Lewis portrays the manners in which Marxism favours *passivity* and *violent* human standards in Western society. Thus his characters are individuals who have lost their individuality and freedom because they *misuse* their reason and *misapply* the products of their minds to attain *pragmatic* goals exclusively. This is why his creative worlds are inhabited, above all, by passive and uncivilized Western animal-like civilians, that is, automata that take possession of all inventions, either using them as toys or applying them to destructive ends, while being largely unsatisfied privately.

According to Lewis, the liberal idealism of the nineteenth century could have produced a new age of social justice, had it not been for the intervention of the Marxist ideology. After World War I, many social changes took place, and within a decade, a great uniformity of thinking

evolved. Thanks to the Great Russian Revolution, a large number of political and scientific revolutionary advances turned Europe upside down politically as well as physically. Consequently, artistic extremism vanished, individual competition weakened, and thus, many representatives of art and intellectuals became deeply involved in politics. Since then, politics rather than science began to dominate the artistic scene. Thus the intellect and aesthetic experimentation became disregarded in Western culture.

For Lewis, Bergson was the great responsible for this disintegration of the modern world, the destruction of the things of the intellect, the handing over to sensation of the privileges and heirlooms of the mind, and the enslaving of the intelligent to the affective nature. Bergson's philosophy of movement and change made him the best spokesman of the life lived by the typical American business man, that is, a doctrine of sensation for sensation's sake. This doctrine was negative for Western civilization because it promoted a desire of change for change's sake, rather than for rational improvement. In other words, Bergson's theory awakened in people an irrational desire for attaining everything that was the latest possible model. As a result, everyone, including artists, philosophers and thinkers turned out to have an obsessive desire for power that ultimately dominated his lives and actions. In this regard, Edwards (1993: 471) defends that Lewis viewed Bergson's time-philosophy robbed "mankind of any prospect of altering history by any *conscious* efforts" (my emphasis)

The main basis of Lewis' criticism is "a belief in the supremacy of the human imagination and human creativity." In his view (1993: 478), these ideals leave "man free (with limits) to create values and control his own history." This is why Lewis embarks himself on attacking the aforesaid obsession with time and the inhuman thirst for progress and power that pervaded Western civilization in his time, something that he carries out by *illustrating* them in action in his fiction using experimental formal terms. In this way, he remains detached or indifferent to the obsessive threats of these new doctrines; he merely prefers to gain other types of goods like free reasoning and purity of thought. As a result, Lewis aligns himself with the figure of the artist as defender of truth and values rather than as representative and active member of party-politics or market interests.

As far as we are concerned, Lewis fears democratic values because they demand that all people have the opportunity to improve their social status and standard of living, and are free to organise political opposition in attempts to achieve political power. However, he is aware that democratic politics also include the right to advocate the suppression of dissent and opposition. Conscious of all these restrictions, alienating impositions and practical manipulations of Liberal Capitalism, Lewis sees his duty, as an artist and critic in society, not so much to be actively involved in particular power struggles as to help *safeguard* equality of opportunity and political tolerance. For this reason, he conceives his public figure as that of an ideal artist (or a member of a romantic elite of individuals) who needs to be

isolated and indifferent to social functioning and external constraints in order to reach his constructive goals. Thus he attacks his fellow men for behaving as passive masses, that is, for being victims of the values and social constructions promoted by the Establishment and the new machine conditions.

Despite these intelligent ideas, we think that Lewis fails in his plan. Lewis cannot remain alien to cultural impositions because isolated victims are helpless in their futile anger, while an entire collective is not. No doubt, Lewis' views and criticism are well aimed, yet his stance is very elitist in nature and his insulation from other intellectuals indirectly increases his chances of feeling exploited, and of actively resisting the exploitation. Lewis' alienation is more easily exploited by dominant powers because his isolation restricts his communication with his fellow men, and this contact is necessary for improving social matters.

Lewis behaves in this skewed manner because he sees that concrete types of resources like money and goods are very cherished by the Establishment and his own species (including himself), while art is ignored constantly. Moreover, his aesthetic expectations are not satisfied in the way he desires, and his social position is undervalued constantly. This is why feelings of opposition or reaction to the Establishment and society arouse in him throughout his life.

As the attainment of these minimum expectations is of great significance for individuals because if rewards are entirely insufficient to

meet one's expectations of fairness and basic needs, paradoxically they also create a potential social opposition, Lewis' frustration and anger increase with the passage of time. It is not strange then, that his opposition to the State, its institutions and society's values becomes paramount in his production as well. Lewis' willingness to sacrifice his own material and emotional welfare in the interests of advancing a revolutionary cause and common good validates the conviction that *it is not* selfish indulgence that leads him to violate profound cultural taboos. On the contrary, Lewis' imperative to improve society's deficiencies is an unselfish struggle against those in power who do not consider art in their life schemes. In this regard, we consider that his desire to attack values and practices culturally tabooed that benefit his comrades and not simply himself is very laudable; his pursuit of collective self-interests by an aesthetic ideology is socially legitimate as well, as it justifies and fortifies opposition against oppressors.

All in all, Lewis' extremist aesthetic opposition is neither personally aggressive, nor a calculated means to gain explicit rewards. Rather, it is an expressive action signifying antagonism against existing powers steaming, essentially, from feelings of deprivation, powerlessness, and alienation. Lewis must have felt this deprivation suffered to be very severe. This is why his wish to retaliate becomes an end-in-itself in his art, an imperative pursuit that ultimately works against him and other persons involved, as it causes him to ignore other considerations like *emotional fulfilment*, which is very necessary as well.

Lewis blames modern Western democratic politics for promoting *compromise* at all events, and his culture for resisting to social transformation. He proposes aesthetic experimentalism as a means to cultural change, even though he is conscious that art does not (and will never) possess the privileged position it used to. In this regard, we consider that his distorted creative works constitute reflections of the world and its vested interests and powers, established practices and organizations, traditional values and institutions, and other kinds of social investments. In this way, Lewis throws into prominence that all of them constitute forces of stability and resistance to basic social innovations and reorganizations, which independent and self-conscious thinkers like him promote in order to protect the condition of humanity. Consequently, we believe that Lewis does supersede the consciousness of his characters, and thus, the historical consciousness of his time through radical aesthetic experimentation. His unusual imaginary worlds governed by universal decay reflect both his need to express an *essential* content, and undermine traditional linguistic forms of shaping reality. As a result, Lewis shows a scrupulous homology between the everyday relation between man and commodities in general, and by extension between men and other men in a market society.

Lewis' creative works reflect that as the function of the man and the woman in the modern Western world widened in society, as a result of the changes brought up by the Great War and the economies of mass production and consumption, their selves became fragmented and their private conflicts

increased. Thus these social modifications led to a deterioration of the human nature of interpersonal relationships, which, in turn, affected people's concern for symbolic kinds of resources like love and status.

His bleak and atypical portraits of social experience prove that Lewis, as a creative artist in the social plane, was very much aware of all these new social transformations, views of interrelationships and modes of living. Applying Goldman's (1975: 7) words for the purposes of this argument, we could say that human behaviour and relationships here resemble the types of relations that exist between men and goods, that is, relations in which production is consciously governed by future consumption, by the concrete qualities of objects, and above all, by their *use value*. In this sense, the *qualitative* aspect of objects and characters tends to disappear because they are replaced by a degraded relation, that with purely *quantitative* exchange values. Thus Lewis' novels illustrate the forms in which the *profit motive* deteriorated the Western world and its culture. Hence the widespread decay, violence and inhumanity that characterise his creative works worldwide.

These use values exist and govern the rules of practice that motivate the trends of behaviour and interrelationships of his characters, assuming an implicit character, exactly like that of authentic values. Lewis shows the link between the economic structures and social encounters in any of his literary manifestations in this way. It is not strange then, that participants view social interactions in terms of quantity rather than quality, and power

relations are so much predominant in them. Lewis' fiction represents the birth in the thinking of members of bourgeois bohemian society, on the basis of economic behaviour and the existence of exchange value, of the tendency to consider the access to all values from the point of view of quantitative standards. His characters reflect the propensity to make of money and social prestige absolute values, and not merely mediations that provide access to other values of a qualitative character such as love and status. In this regard, characters like Bertha, April or Hester are essentially problematic because their attitudes and relationships remain motivated by qualitative values, even though they are unable to differentiate themselves entirely from these *use* values, whose degrading influence and effects pervade the whole of the social structure depicted in their respective fictional worlds. Tarr, Snooty, Mr. Perl or René are another type of problematic individuals in this time, since, as intellectuals, their patterns of conduct and interrelationships are governed by the quality of their work, even though they cannot escape entirely from the action of the market.

More concretely, we think that the form of *T* corresponds to the conscious values and effective aspirations of the bourgeoisie. *T* constitutes a literary expression of the world as structured by the conscious values of this segment of society: individualism, the thirst of power, money and eroticism; values which triumph over the ancient feudal values of altruism, honour, charity, and love impersonated in the figures of Bertha and Kreisler. In this work, Tarr aims to create an *authentic work* that helps him transcend this

individualist world and its views.³ However, real cultural creation only occurs when the individual creator seeks qualitative values, and Tarr rejects love as an irrational matter of the heart.

Moreover, bourgeois ideology, bound up like bourgeois society itself with the existence of economic activity, rejects aesthetic forms of consciousness. Its rationalism ignores art because it conceives it as an inferior form of knowledge. Therefore, in a society such as this one, an artist like Tarr bound up with the market is a problematic individual, since this individuality is aesthetically critical and, as such, opposed to modern society.

Later in time, Lewis' satirical fiction reflects the forms in which exchanges of particularistic resources in all manner of settings, that is, the expression of deep feelings, resemble human relations between persons and the material world as well. Accordingly, they are not natural, but manufactured. Particularistic resource transactions express relations where objects have a permanence and autonomy that Lewis' characters are gradually losing. In this sense, Lewis' satirical novels raise the problem that social transformations create the need for a new novel form that also illustrates the way in which certain essential features of this new inhuman reality are expressed in it. In other words, his satirical works show the ways in which a more or less radical disappearance of the character and a

³ For further reference on this idea, see Peppis (1994).

corresponding strengthening of the autonomy of objects triumphed in his lifetime.

These novels depict how their Western fictional members worship Capitalism as a *magical* doctrine. Thus all goods are produced for the market, without conscious regulation way, as it occurred with both production and distribution within a given social unit in every form of pre-capitalist society, for example, in a socialist-type society as supported by Proudhon, that is, the type of society defended by Lewis. His novels describe the many changes that took place on the immediate level of individual consciousness, while economic life assumed the aspect of the rational egotism *homo economicus* of the exclusive search for maximum profit with no consideration for the problems of human relations with others, and above all, with no consideration for society as a whole. From this viewpoint, Lewis' characters become for the seller or buyer of objects like any other object, that is, mere means that enables him to achieve his resource interests, whose only important quality is their capacity to initiate social relations and produce constricting obligations. As a result, objects and people are worth a particular sum of money, of having a price linked to supply and demand, as if they were commodities.

Since these types of values pervade Lewis' satirical novels, the dissolution of his characters and the emergence of an autonomous world of objects appear in their form as well. Hence *SB* and its external theory of comedy that turns out characters to behave as automata following concrete

resource interests exclusively. Some of the most direct consequences of these facts are lack of communication between their participants, the existence of conflicts between members of the same and different class, gender, age and nation, and the subsequent degradation of their psychological state. In other words, the increasing autonomy of objects in Lewis' works constitutes the external manifestation of this human degradation.

Throughout his production, Lewis encourages the individual and the worker to behave as a useful part in the organic whole, rather than as an automaton or a slave of the State and its system. He suggests the Western man and woman to accept their particular function at work and in society in order to gain autonomy as self-conscious individuals and change their destiny. The great majority of his characters as undifferentiated masses of puppets, which unable to attain their needed concrete resources in natural circumstances, resort to looking for them in unorthodox settings, often by using illegitimate tactics, while their particularistic needs remain largely unsatisfied. However, he does so in order to make them use their intellect in a conscious way, and thus, escape from external constraints that promote their political and social passivity, or conformism.

Our analysis of the overall structures of the social reality depicted by the artist in his novels has focused on the trends of behaviour and relationships of his male and females participants because they stand for the expression of real human relations as a whole. This examination has helped

us describe their dehumanisation, that is, a most direct effect of the disappearance of all importance and all meaning from the interpersonal behaviour and interactions of Western citizens on themselves. Their transformation into things reflects their difficulty to separate themselves from objects, something that causes them to lose their essential reality either as individuals or as a community. This is why they have so much trouble in expressing their particularistic resource needs, something that they do very occasionally and with difficulty.

As the easiest need to express is the need for money and the most difficult is the need for love (as language is very appropriate for money transactions, while love is more easily expressed by paralinguistic communication), lack of verbal communication between Lewis' characters affects reciprocation and substitution of resources in them. Thus, in expressing a need, these characters tend to skid toward less particularistic resources. As a result, all these novels present many lonely individuals with low self-esteem who need love and status, and would surely wish to meet another lonely person from whom to receive these two particularistic resources. However, as meeting a person with a large amount of non-particularistic resources like money is more profitable for them, because the less particularistic a resource is, the higher it is the probability that it will be exchanged for the same resource and for different ones, many of these forlorn characters strive for money and goods, as they constitutes

appropriate means of exchange in several institutions, while love is suitable only in a few.

One consequence of all these facts is that money becomes an obsession for most Lewisian characters, as it provides social standing, privilege and power. In fact, occupational realization and financial accomplishment are their main resource interests. These values are *universalistic* values that differentiate social status in society; *particularistic* values and the processes of social integration associated with them are the basis of social solidarity and group loyalty. Consequently, what we observe in Lewis' novels are the deteriorating *effects* of all these universalistic principles in the rules of practice that govern the trends of behaviour and social interactions of their protagonists. This is why their attitudes are extremely distorted in form and their interpersonal relationships very inhuman and aggressive in outcome.

Throughout his fiction, young male characters master social exchanges, while female characters of all ages are rarely reciprocated in fair terms, even when these selflessly contribute all types of resources to the welfare of others, like April and Hester do. We think that Lewis' male and female characters do not feel sufficient *attraction* for each other because they fight for gaining the same types of commodities, that is, money and status. Thus this similarity of needs explains their desire to fulfil their own self-interests, and thus, the high competition that exists between them. Hence their frequent negative transactions of love, status, services and

information in various settings. These characters compete and fight with their own species, only to obtain *extrinsic* types of benefits such as social standing and financial security, the *alter ego* of power in these creative worlds. In fact, only a very few female members interact in order to attain *intrinsic* reward and personal satisfaction. It could be said then, that human relations often resemble *confrontations* because participants hardly ever command any respect for each other; they appear to be forced into each other's company due to external social constraints. This is why Lewis' characters disagree with one another constantly. Whenever we observe some degree of mutuality in their interactions, this affinity does not necessarily imply co-operation and integration. As a result, their social interactions take place in an intermittent way, and over short periods of time with rare continuity in future, something that occurs both in particularistic settings like love, family and friendship and in non-particularistic ones like work and leisure circles, the rules of practice of their social interactions in all them being hardly undistinguishable.

Some other times, Lewis' *dramatis personae* need to trade resources with participants they dislike, and in the terms established by the latter, even though they feel oppressed and exploited. This occurs because the large possession of resources of some privileged characters gives them power or control over disadvantaged ones who have little or no resources to offer to them. The less money and social status participants have the more difficulty they meet to attain their required resource categories in normal

circumstances. Thus underprivileged members often pretend to be satisfied with the unfair terms in which their social transactions with fortunate participants evolve. However, as the latter offer an abundance of needed resources that underprivileged ones cannot gain in normal circumstances, they act and interact with fortunate ones by using all sorts of unorthodox tactics in order to attain their goals. In this way, Lewis depicts many urban types helplessly striving for obtaining their needed commodities by all means. In this way, he calls attention to a widespread number of illegitimate social events and denounces the lack of instruments of social control, law enhancement and social norms in his culture.

We think that Lewis exposes the high degree of illegitimacy accepted by the Establishment, institutions and society in the city, and their direct contribution to the appearance of, first, unsavoury aspects of city life like crime, alienation and drug abuse, and second, a high number of negative social and psychological phenomena such as aggression, anxiety, frustration, Machiavellism, ingratiation or power in the modern Western world.

In our view, all the aforesaid circumstances may explain the frequent tension we find between various potential resource transactions. For instance, exchanges of love and services are recurrently muddied by considerations of dependence. Some other times, potential status exchanges remain unfulfilled because characters fear of suffering oppression and exploitation. In other occasions, information transactions do not occur due

to matters of competition or Machiavellism.⁴ Consequently, transactions of particularistic resources are largely inhibited, while concrete resource exchanges increase further and further as Lewis publishes his novels. As a corollary, his final world portraits are increasingly more disagreeable and dehumanised, even though Lewis introduces a few honest characters (and values) in them.

All things considered, we think that the modernism of Lewis' creative worlds lies in their *direct* formal reflection of the socio-economic crisis of the modern Western civilization and its deep consciousness of loss. His peculiar manner of displaying human behaviour and interactions constitutes a revolutionary way of stressing the fact that traditional literary forms were no longer adequate or valid in his time to represent the changing social structure because conventional modes of perception and experience had suffered many and great modifications as well. Lewis was aware that this loss of ideological stability had terrible consequences on its citizenship individual identity, and thus, new literary forms were needed in order to reflect social, economical and emotional issues.

As we have seen, Lewis does not compensate for these social and cultural losses by providing coherent aesthetic alternatives to them. Contrarily, a sense of loss animates his work, and motivates his rejection of

⁴ According to Lotman (1990), fictions are string of events, and events are defined as the *crossing of a boundary* from one state to another, like ignorance to knowledge, indifference to love, etc. We think that an exchange of resources can also be a kind of boundary crossing. The physicality of an act, then, is not what constitutes an event: rather it is the trading of one psychological state for another that is the important boundary crossing that matters in a work of fiction.

modernity. Nonetheless, by portraying the experience of modernity in the distortedly experimental ways he does, Lewis creates new modern creations of complex worlds that represent a complete success. As Stan Smith (1994: 11) posits, “to be modern is to be constantly self-superseded.” In this regard, we think that Lewis demonstrates to be a very representative example of modernism, as he not only makes his fiction to be always new, but also achieves to do so by drawing energies from the very forces he seeks to evade. Following Stan Smith’s assumptions about modernists writers, we think that Lewis’ discourses “shadow and write large the contradictions of twentieth century history, because they stand in a dual relation to its time.” On the one hand, they express “the age’s will to power, to recuperating like Eliot’s (1920) Tradition ‘all the past,’ in an act of cultural conservation, which identifies with the triumphal processions of the victors.” On the other hand, his “fractured discourses and interrupted narratives figure the reality of an historical order of exploitation founded in the inequalities of class, race, nation and gender, in exclusion, privilege and, ultimately massacre.” (1994: 239) In this regard, we consider that the enormous artistic and personal effort of Lewis shaped in his fiction is very laudable and revealing for cultural studies, as it provides symptomatic documentation of a crisis that destabilised traditional modes of experience.

Lewis alternative vision is intellectual integrity or purity of thought, a strategy that involves radical individualism and unemotional sterility. These principles condition his behaviour and relationships throughout his

life. Thus his attitude was tremendously individualistic, cold and evasive and he always tried not to expand his relationships, often maintaining them superficial. In his fiction, many of his male intellectual characters have a personality that constitutes an extrapolation of Lewis' own in many occasions. In other words, they behave following the artist's own principles and values.

Accordingly, these intellectuals promote a type of values that are internationalist in nature. They are for tolerance and cosmopolitanism, and endorse the characteristic principles of conduct of American, and Eastern cultures of the far Orient and Egypt as valid. They consider Western culture and civilization to be insular and totalitarian, while American culture is exalted by them as being a positive 'melting-pot', that is, the opposite of the narrow-mindedness and totalitarian nature of European cultures, which they view as irrationally obsessed with nationalism. Thus these male intellectuals defend American values as paragon of modernity, open-mindedness, revolution and liberalism.

These same characters also talk about Oriental cultures in positive manners owing to their contemplative nature. Contrary to Europe's fondness of action, which is synonymous of violence, emotion and irrationality, Oriental civilizations seem to them to be more composed since they give more importance to the intellect. In this sense, these intellectuals and thinkers defend that Western culture and civilization should not be so much obsessed with preserving their own nationalism, but their customs and

species, as the Great War only demonstrated that these active values only contributed to worsen their situation.

Despite these pieces of advice, none of Lewis' characters, not even these intellectuals, can detach themselves from environmental circumstances and constraints. Rather, they become assimilated to them and cannot have a superior form of existence as creative minds; they feel bound up to interact with their own species and the external world in active ways. In the end, all of them are victims of the Establishment and its interests, which ultimately prevail upon themselves, their personality, lives and resource interests. In this regard, Lewis demonstrates to be very conscious that Western civilization and culture were simply not willing to modify their values, social functioning and ways of living by following his advice, until their situation and world had become absolute chaotic. The manslaughter and terror derived from two World Wars, which are brilliantly depicted in *SC*, proves Lewis not wrong, but quite right.

In spite of the fact that many nationalities and ethnicities are depicted in his novels, Western standards and, more concretely, male British standards usually characterise the personality, behaviour and resource interests of his fictional population and the topics of his novels. For all these reasons, we think that Lewis' idiosyncrasy influences the sociological and psychological well springs of many of his characters to a very large extent. This is why his audience and critics usually conceive his skewed portraits of the world and human relations as biased.

Lewis' compelling interest in preserving personal independence, and attaining social recognition, financial security and familiarity drives him not to give particularistic resources to their own species, especially, when these are females. He often deprives the latter of particularistic resources, or abandons her to her own devices. Lewis conducts himself in these skewed ways because he considers that females are sensual first and foremost, and thus represent an encumbrance to achieve his personal intellectual goals.

Throughout this dissertation, we have observed that these principles motivate many resource transactions initiated by contemplative characters, which we have defined as peculiarly Lewisian. These characters are so individualistic that the females they interact with frequently feel ignored, isolated from the world, their interpersonal behaviour becoming absurd in form, and their relationships nihilistic in nature. At the same time, social interactions performed between males and females reflect the existence of power differences in them. Thus their social interactions often resemble master-slave relationships wherein the male figure provides very little love and information to the female, and hardly ever runs errands for her, while she provides him many resources, despite all the aggressions suffered.

When the female participant shows affection towards the male, she is rejected brutally. Except for the female figures who resembles the type of woman whom Lewis is keen on, that is to say, Teutonic-like artist-models such as Anastasya, the rest of females, even those who are tolerant and self-sacrificing like April and Hester, are described in tilted manners, that is, as

being sentimental, cunning, illiterate, spoilt, old, fat, obscene or the like. This is why Anastasya is exalted for her talent and independent personality in *T*, while Bertha and Val are ridiculed in *T* and *SB* respectively. In this regard, Anastasya, on the one hand, and April and Hester, on the other, impersonate the kind of values which, for Lewis, are necessary for preserving the one-time rational and kind nature of the human species, that is, the one that opens the door for significance and permanence in life for Western civilization.

Lewis' critic has not overlooked his interest in questions of status, money, love or information. In this sense, our view of Lewis' work concerning these aspects has been altered by the addition of Foa's sociological model to a very large extent. However, we also think that previous critics have never gone deep into the reasons why Lewis' novels demonstrate a twisted attention to certain kinds of interpersonal relationships, and thus, to a few kinds of resource exchanges, while ignoring others. Furthermore, Lewis' critics have never examined the special mix of resource related events that can be defined as being peculiarly Lewisian either. Consequently, our novel approach to Lewis' fiction has permitted not only to study these two characteristics of his fiction, but also to clarify and elucidate the multiple social and psychological implications that, due to their being reflected in distorted manners, we have paid attention to, reconsidered, and condemned in this thesis.

We believe that, motivated by his own idiosyncrasy, Lewis tends to focus on certain kinds of resource transactions, while avoiding others. Here many intellectual characters suffer various types of metaphysical dilemmas since they strive for attaining aesthetic interests exclusively, but they cannot help exchanging social and psychological ones as well. Lewis self-reflects about the intellectual and sensual parts of his own persona in dialogical terms, testing the effects of following either type of principles. Thus this self-reflection explains the contradictory types of facts that appear in his fiction, yet also other peculiar social and psychological occurrences.

Furthermore, the fact that money is always in power of persons very much disliked by the writer such as literary patrons, agents, critics, publishers, high brow intellectuals, pseudo-artists, romantic writers, young poets or socially exclusive intellectual circles is not arbitrary at all. Neither, the appearance of Lewis' intellectual characters often depriving high and middle classes, politicians and rulers, aristocrats, high-rank soldiers, priests, feminists, policemen and children of particularistic resources frequently, while poor artists and working classes are usually on the edge of starvation and depicted in positive ways.

Another peculiarity of these male intellectuals is that they never perform pure exchanges of love in particularistic contexts. Rather, the meaning of their love transactions is usually closer to other resources. Thus when these love exchanges take place between them and other males, these are always closer in significance to status than love, resembling the types of affection

exchanges that usually occur between *comrades*; love exchanges taking place between them and women often are closer in meaning to services because their signs of affection consist of sexual pleasures.

Therefore, Lewis shows that that rules of practice that usually control economic behaviour and transactions had been extended to include all forms of interpersonal transaction in his modern world. These social changes affect the concern of people, including his ideal intellectuals, for resources like money, goods and services, something that, in turn, modify their way of seeing resource categories such as status, information and love, which grant no material profit to its owner. In the end, Lewis' imperative desire to perfect society's deficiencies through radical aesthetic experimentation does not result as effective as Lewis wants to because his intellectual absolute ultimately disintegrates his self and personality, affecting his intellectual characters as well, as we observe in his autobiographical novel *SC*.

We think that it is unquestionable that Lewis' aesthetic technique is extremely innovative, his observations of human behaviour and relations very receptive, and his critical and creative genius incredibly powerful. Nevertheless, Lewis fails in his ultimate purpose to effectively induce understanding of his ideas on his audience because the behavioural forms and relationships of his male intellectual characters turn out to be very much influenced by his own uncompromising idiosyncrasy and aesthetic self-consciousness. As Edwards (1993: 462) rightly says,

One reason for the lack of recognition of Lewis's Modernist aesthetic is the idea of the creation of a work of art as (at least partly) a self-conscious ideological critique of society.

Recent critics of Lewis have described his fiction as biased. However, we think that his only fault is his inability to accept until very late in his life that *emotional fulfilment, interdependence* and *cooperation* are necessary unseen forces that ultimately give our life and relationships real significance. As the psychologist Gergen (2000: 27) explains,

Much of our contemporary vocabulary of the person, along with associated ways of life, finds its origins in the romantic period. It is a vocabulary of passion, purpose, depth, and personal significance: [...] It places love in the forefront of human endeavours, praising those who abandon the "useful" and the "functional" for the sake of others. **It fosters a belief in deep dynamics of personality—marriage as a "communion of souls," family as bonded in love, and friendship as a lifetime commitment.** Because of romanticism we can trust in moral values and an ultimate significance to the human venture. For many the loss of such a vocabulary would essentially be **the collapse of anything meaningful in life. If love as intimate communion, intrinsic worth, creative inspiration, moral values, and passionate expression were all scratched from our vocabularies, life for many would be a pallid affair indeed.** (my emphasis)

Needless to say, Lewis' genius lies in the dialogic nature of his mind and production. On the one hand, his personal view of human relations threatens all the values exposed by Gergen above; on the other, Lewis' ability to self-reflect about the world in his fiction permits to observe the disastrous effects

that scratching all these aspects from life have for the happiness, welfare and quality of life of Western civilization.

Lewis conceives an aesthetic value like *intellectual integrity* as a satisfactory substitute for love. It is not strange then, that his male intellectuals do not integrate themselves in intimate relationships, and prefer to maintain their attachments superficial, something that they do because they consider that these types of commitments are irrational, while reflexive reconsideration is more valuable, genuine and even necessary. Certainly, this solution is adequate for certain characters in his work, for example, Tarr. But this view of life does not seem to provide a pattern extendible to the whole of his fictive population, as René shows in *SC*. In this sense, Lewis' fiction is largely inhabited by intellectuals such these two, who need particularistic resources like love but negate or ignore them intentionally, settling down for other types of resources. By behaving in these skewed ways, they leave their original needs very unsatisfied, and thus, feel unfulfilled privately, publicly and aesthetically.

The Enemy self-reflects upon the ways in which economic indicators turn out to represent the unique referential point that measures the satisfaction of modern Western civilization in his time in his unusual fiction. Despite his emotional sterility, Lewis is aware that economic resources are important, yet also insufficient to secure total human welfare and happiness. However, as a social critic, he fails in his task to create a world where the rules of practice that regulate economic, social and emotional resource

exchanges are integrated in positive terms for everyone, something that we think occurs because he is very much influenced by his own intellectual absolute. As a consequence, neither *SC* nor his last novel *MF* devises satisfactory social relationships in which all types of resource transactions thrive. Lewis' intellectual integrity disables him to comprehend that life, like the stock market, works more successfully as patterns of *interdependent relationships*. However, this fact does not necessarily mean that *intellectual integrity, personal independence and freedom* have to perish in the process.

As the social scientist Rubin (In Cook and Wilson, 1979: 86-87) says,

As an interpersonal bond becomes more firmly established [...] it begins to go beyond exchange. In close relationships one becomes decreasingly concerned with what he can get *from* the other person and increasingly concerned with what he can do *for* the other. But even in the closest of relationships, the principles of the interpersonal marketplace are never entirely repealed ... even in the case of love the dual themes of what we can get and what we give remain closely intertwined.

Since a large number of characters in Lewis' fiction, including his intellectuals, follow these principles suggested by Rubin based on *exchange of rewards*, when they trade resources with their own species, their interpersonal relationships resemble the ones that usually occur between strangers and casual acquaintances in the early stages of development of relationships. In this sense, except for the social encounters initiated by April, Hester, Helen, Rotter and the McKenzie's, all of whom behave in an altruistic manner in their devotion to their fellow men, the rest of characters are always engaged in superficial *liaisons*, where we can easily recognise

the trade basis of their involvement. According to Huston and Cate (In Cook and Wilson, 1979: 265),

Some relationships remain superficial while others escalate to high levels of involvement. [...] The key ingredient from an exchange theory perspective is growth in the extent and nature of “interdependency.”⁵ Partners are interdependent to the degree to which each person’s outcomes depend on the outcomes received by their partner, and on the degree to which the profits for each outweigh what they are used to getting and what they believe they could get elsewhere.⁶ As persons interact, they begin to discover the degree to which shared activities are mutually rewarding and to explore the limits of their relationship in such terms.

Accordingly, it is *superficiality*, rather than *interdependency* or *integrity* that characterises human relationships in Lewis’ fiction. This is why resource exchanges are never reciprocated in fair terms for all the participants involved.

In Blau’s (1964: 118) opinion, “interdependence and mutual influence of equal strength indicate lack of power.” However, power relations and conflicts are paramount throughout Lewis’ fiction. Concerning issues of this type, the sociologist Simmel posits: “If every grateful action [...] were suddenly eliminated, society [...] would break apart.” (In Blau, 1964: 1) Contrarily, “mutual exchange of services creates a social bond between people.” (Blau, 1964: 4) As the scholar continues to argue (7-8),

Unreciprocated exchange leads to the differentiation of power. The exercise of power [...] promotes forces of opposition, conflict, reorganization, and change [...]

⁵See Huesmann & Levinger (1976), Levinger and Huesmann, in press, and Scanzoni, in press.

⁶ See Thibaut and Kelly (1959).

imbalances or disequilibrating forces [...] requiring further adjustments. [...] Reciprocated benefactions create social bonds among peers, whereas unreciprocated ones produce differentiation of status.

We consider that Lewis depicts creative worlds that do not provide solutions or adjustments to overcome the complex socio-economic and psychological problems in them reflected because the artist must have realised that his fellow men did not want to intensify their involvement or reciprocate their suppliers. Lewis' characters neither expand their relationships because they do not feel them to be sufficiently rewarding. However, they also reject the few characters that have the potential to reward them appropriately. In this sense, they rather have *superficial* interactions, even though these do not satisfy them. In the end, none of them meets his resource needs in rewarding ways, which explains why his welfare and quality of life are very much impaired. Consequently, Lewis' characters cannot feel *attraction* to their own species, let alone, reciprocate them in fair ways. This is why all of them are unable to function as normal individuals, perform so many negative resource transactions, are victims of a large number of negative aspects of civilian life and experience numerous social and psychological disorders.

In Blau's opinion, *reciprocity* is an equilibrating force in society. Individuals who receive their needed benefits from others are obligated, lest the supply of benefits cease, to reciprocate in some form, whether through expressions of gratitude, approval, material rewards, services, or compliance. In Lewis' novels, many participants are obligated to accede to

others' wishes because they render essential services to them for which they cannot otherwise compensate them. In this regard, this compliance reciprocates for the unilateral services they obtain and in this sense restores balance, but it also creates an imbalance of power. If exercise of power is carried out with fairness and moderation, it earns the social approval of society as a whole. However, Lewis' characters experience this exercise of power in an oppressive manner. This is why there is much disapproval, conflict and aggression in all his works.

Lewis must have observed that the *old* spirit of humanity (including his) had been deteriorated with the passage of time to such a large extent that there was no way back. Lewis self-reflects about this type of issues in his fiction in order to bring about to the surface their destructive effects so that his audience reconsiders and modifies them. This allegiance to objective truth is itself a moral idea, despite Lewis defends that satire is non-moral. His aesthetic goal has an ethical content because ethics is merely that, the consideration of human behaviour from the point of view of goals, standards, norms and ideals. Naturally, Lewis would never admit his moral concerns, but he too has faults, and as Meyers (1980b: 266) rightly says, "the very same ones he always seemed inclined to blame other people for." In this regard, we think that attributing his failures to other people only leads to greater feelings of hostility and aggression in him, and in his

novels.⁷ In this sense, Lewis' self-reflections about humanity in *SC* and *MF* clearly demonstrate that he suffered some change of mind and heart at the end of his life, yet he could never give in his idea of the artist as a superior being.

Lewis was no more “neurotic” than “other men of genius”, yet he was “independent, outspoken, and difficult,” as Eliot (1957: 169) defends. However, his extreme conscious awareness of a culture of the past, and his powerful criticism of the chaos he feared had triumphed in the modern world can be taken as exemplifications of the vanishing and corruption of past values and philosophies of human nature, rather than as biased portraits of reality. If we think so, we could, perhaps, comprehend much better why many of his characters are immoral, dishonest, unreliable, selfish, unsympathetic and unconcerned for other people and their problems. In other words, the very means used by the artist to throw into prominence the disappearance of *trustworthiness* and *altruism* in the Western world.

Lewis tells his reader some hard truths and misfortunes, which some critics may not want to hear. However, by doing so, Lewis shows the brilliant dialogic nature of his aesthetic stance and work, his conscientious study of behaviour and his extreme receptiveness to human relationships. His idea of a more perfect world that depends on intellectual integrity is idealistic, yet he insists that these things should shape our lives. Lewis expresses the fundamental structural weaknesses of his culture on which he

⁷ See Cook and Wilson (1979:106)

depends directly, but persists in remaining without. Thus we think that all these contradictions must not be taken as negative characteristics of his work and personality, yet as examples of his ability to question his own views, culture and values. In this way, the power of this sort of genius would be seen in his imperative attempt to explore the complexities of his changing world aesthetically; his integrity, in his willingness to let see the ways in which this critical exploration forced him to reject the emotional facet in life, only to involve himself in environmental circumstances eventually, and suffer interior struggle.

No doubt, Lewis constitutes a contradictory romantic and an innovative modernist with very acute post-modern views of life and relationships. On the one hand, Lewis is an incongruous romantic for considering art as an absolute, a purpose worth dedicating his whole life to, the only thing that gives significance to his life and a principle valuable enough to deter him from integrating in love relationships. Lewis believes that romantic social patterns, that is, committed relationships, which grant intrinsic worth or value to others, are less personally fulfilling than art. Therefore, he trusts romantic values like moral insight and leadership, but rejects romanticist discourse and its intimations of profound mysteries of the person, love, commitment, inspiration, and the like.

On the other hand, Lewis' discourse is modernist because it makes emphasis on the rational, reliable, knowable, and improvable aspects of the person, is blind to the profundities of the human psyche, and deprives life of

meaning and people of inherent value. In doing so, his modernist discourse opens the way to a fascinating play of potentials and an increased sense of relational reality that are very post-modern. Thus all intrinsic properties of his characters, along with moral worth and personal commitment, are lost from view, leaving nothing to believe in.

We think that Lewis' modernist perspective continues to dominate our Western culture because it reflects three aspects: progress, individualism and secure belief, that is, values still constitute problems of the post-modern perspective. He views his characters as the product of social construction and replaces them by the relationship because, as individuals, they do not mean anything. In this regard, their actions are nonsensical until coordinated with the actions of others. Thus we think that the reality portrayed in his novels shifts towards relatedness because the reality of his era was shifting in the same way. In this sense, the genius of Lewis lies in his ability to show the forms in which family, love, marriage, friendship relationships and other forms of commitment were being altered in his time, and committed intimacy was proving arduous for Western inhabitants in experimental formal ways.

As we have seen, the alternative chosen by his modern ideal artists is one of freedom from burdening responsibilities; many other characters cannot choose between relationship and individual autonomy, as they prefer to be between varying forms of interdependence and meaning. Naturally, this is not the product of individual minds, but of relationships. In this

regard, Lewis proves to be not only an excellent modernist author, but also a brilliant post-modern social critic.

In sum, Lewis' texts are romantic rebellious gestures provoked by contemporary events. They express the disintegration of previous socio-political and intellectual norms through radical modern techniques, reflecting many post-modern social conditions as well. Our task as contemporary readers and critics is not to criticise the biased nature of his work in order to fulfil our personal purposes, but to try to describe and illuminate their peculiar nature. In doing so, we will definitely make clear that Lewis' aesthetic experiments are strange, and recreate harsh worlds and situations in order to cause the reader to ask questions about the dilemmas that troubled cultures in the past. If so, we could use these questions to decipher past *milieus* and civilizations, and thus, respond to post-modern public predicaments more rapidly and efficiently.

Lewis tries to tell his reader that the overall aggression and criminal instinct that pervade contemporary society are two of the worst consequences of the process of dehumanisation that the Great War brought to human beings. Throughout his peculiar work, Lewis may not propose a way out of this chaos, as T. S. Smith says, yet it permits to reconsider a *new* world where the six types of resources, that is, economic, social and emotional ones are reintegrated in better terms for *all*, including our genius.

Lewis longs for a time prior to Marxism and Bergson, that is, the nineteenth century, because the human race was motivated to act and

interact following altruistic and honest values, and the figure of the artist was important and listened to by society and the Establishment. In this time, the man did not have an economic mind exclusively, but a humane and rational one. We believe that it is high time we take the values, ideas and approach of Lewis the artist and Foa the sociologist as they propose, that is, as starting points to *moral revaluation*. In this way, we could understand much better that they not only complement, but also illuminate each other, showing us the way to happiness and satisfactory quality of life.

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