

Candidate #38109

The Political Philosophy of Wyndham Lewis in *The Art of Being Ruled*

Essay submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Studies in Modern History, Trinity Term, 2005

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and thank the San Francisco Branch of the English-Speaking Union of the United States for their generous support. Thanks also to Professor Jody Maxmin at Stanford University for her continual support. I would also like to acknowledge and thank Professor Jose Harris, St. Catherine's College, Oxford, for her supervision and guidance throughout this project and Ms. Emily Blanchard for her help in revision of this dissertation.

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Introduction

WYNDHAM LEWIS is best known for his painting and as the leader of the Vorticist movement, widely considered the only significant English school of painting in the early twentieth century. Part and parcel of his leadership of this group was Lewis's outspoken criticism of various issues both in and out of the arts community. His magazines, *Blast*, *The Tyro*, and *The Enemy*, were all focused on delivering an unabashed critique of contemporary British institutions, and his aesthetics had a decidedly radical slant. Lewis was also a notable novelist publishing many books to excellent general reviews, most notably *Tarr* (1918) and most notoriously *The Apes of God* (1930), a scornful satire of the Bloomsbury Group. In addition to his fiction writing, painting, publishing, and organizing, Lewis was a prolific social and political writer. *Time and Western Man* (1927) is the most famous of the non-fiction books to come out of his ambitious and never fully realized philosophical project entitled *The Human Age*. More often than not, this book is discussed for its harsh criticism of contemporary writers in the later chapters rather than its theories of modern society. The first book to be published from Lewis's *Human Age* project was *The Art of Being Ruled* in 1926. While *Time and Western Man* focuses primarily on social philosophy, this book is Lewis's most extensive political discourse. It is remarkable both as a modernist text, dense with reference and expressive stylistic devices, and a political text exhibiting original ideas couched in deft analysis.¹

The Art of Being Ruled takes as its premise the fact that everyone must be ruled; therefore informed citizens should understand the methods by which modern rulers

¹ Lewis wrote in a distinctively aggressive style that sought to express and, at times, to offend. He deliberately omitted capital letters to disarm prominent connotations of words and terms. He also used frequent emphasis to create a cadence intended to bring across his points powerfully.

subject them. Lewis warns of the deceitful and restrictive methods of rule practiced by the capitalist democracies of the West. At the base of his argument, Lewis believes that the West has become morally and spiritually bankrupt under the capitalist powers. Only a significant social revolution would be capable of creating a state where people might live freely. To this end, he extols the potential of an authoritarian socialist or fascist government headed by enlightened intellectuals.

While *The Art of Being Ruled* received mostly positive reviews, the public did not take to it, only a third of the available copies selling in its first six months.² Lewis was ambivalent about the audience for which he intended the book, claiming in the book's 'Author's Preface' that it was 'not written for an audience already there... [but] must of necessity make its own audience.'³ Goaded dramatics aside, Lewis probably intended his book for people like him: non-academic, upper-middle class intellectuals – a group typically targeted by the book's publisher, Chatto & Windus. The reasons for the book's lukewarm reception are unclear. Lewis's proto-fascist ideas, while not palatable today, were not out of the realm of progressive political thought at the time. Lewis's style as an expository writer, however, may have affected readers' reception. *The Art of Being Ruled* requires a great deal of effort to read. Lewis's arguments, while interesting, analytically strong, and broadly founded, are frequently circuitous or discursive. They, as he puts it, 'burst out into manifold byways,' and one gets the sense that Lewis was so intent on recording his vital ideas that he often sacrificed structural consistency for quantity of statement. Later in his career, Lewis admits that his political writings of the 1920s, of which *The Art of Being Ruled* is a primary component, were 'extremely

² J. Meyers, *The Enemy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 133; O. Pound & P. Grover, *Lewis* (London: Dawson & Sons, 1978), 12.

³ W. Lewis, *The Art of Being Ruled*, ed. R.W. Dasenbrock (Santa Rosa, Calif.: Blacksparrow, 1989), 13.

hurried' and even 'slipshod' at times.⁴ This tendency combines with Lewis's remarkable erudition to work against Lewis's reader. He frequently makes oblique references, occasionally provides his own sketchy translations of foreign texts, and, in two instances, quotes misremembered verse. Despite its problems, *The Art of Being Ruled* is an extraordinary work combining discussions of canonical writers and contemporary revolutionary political thinkers, art, and literature, with Lewis's own astute and penetrating observations and arguments.

Lewis was focused on answering the key political questions of the time as he saw them: How is the modern system inefficient and ineffective at providing an acceptable way of life for the most people possible? How do modern rulers develop and maintain power? What systems would be better than the present one? Lewis's discussion of these questions yields a dense body of references that span much of the spectrum of history and politics, and many of his ideas stand out as unique from his ideological allies as well as his foes. This essay seeks to examine the roots and extensions of his ideas and consider the originality of his arguments. The vital ideas in Lewis's book examined here are: the nature of liberty in the modern state; the role of class in both revolutionary and traditional functions; the function and effect of feminism on society; the function of the family unit and its future in the state; and the role of violence in revolution.

⁴ W. Lewis, *Rude Assignment* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1950), 195.

Chapter 1: Natures and Puppets, Agency and Conformity

IN the “Natures” and “Puppets” section of *The Art of Being Ruled* Lewis discusses free will and liberty in the modern political state. As he does in all of his sections, Lewis aligns himself with like-minded thinkers while contrasting his ideas with previous and contemporary writers. Lewis makes his intention to discuss the nature of liberty in the modern state clear in the epigrams to the section, which include a description of Goethe by J.D. Falk and selections from P.-J. Proudhon, H.S. Maine, and Thomas Hobbes, all addressing the issue of individual freedom within the bounds of civilized society. Lewis develops the ideas explicitly stated in this section in previous chapters, and many of these contentions are fundamental to his overarching assessment of the modern political state which pits the authoritarian governments of the ‘East’ (fascism and socialism) favorably against the postwar morass of self-interest and delusion of the ‘West’ (capitalist democracies).¹ For the title of the section, Lewis borrows the terms ‘Natures’ and ‘Puppets’ from Goethe, though the exact roots of these terms in his oeuvre are obscure, to illustrate the two key types of people in the world: the rare people of free thought and independent will and the masses, automata that would prefer to be absolved from the burden of free thought – ‘machines, playing a part.’² Lewis argues that the gap between these two types of people is widening and the implications of this increasingly marked polarization is driving the populace of modern states further into subservience to the

¹ G. Wagner, *Wyndham Lewis* (London: Routledge, 1957), 34-5.

² R.W. Dasenbrock, editor of the most recent edition of *The Art of Being Ruled*, suggests that Lewis had misinterpreted J.D Falk’s transcription of a favorite compliment of Goethe’s, ‘Es ist eine Natur!’ He suggests that Lewis misunderstood this as, ‘He is a nature!’, as he states on the first pages of the chapter (125), rather than the more literal translation, ‘It (or he) is just like Nature!’ (410); Lewis, *Ruled*, 125.

interests of the ruling class. Lewis develops this position with references that simultaneously support his ideology and place it among key thinkers in the canon.

Lewis argues, in a piecemeal and circuitous fashion, that the idea of liberty in the modern political state is an illusory concept used to control the populace. ‘Liberty’, as an all-encompassing abstraction of freedom to do as one wills, does not exist, but rulers have secured power by exploiting the people’s desire for this concept. Lewis argues rulers exploit ‘*the will of the greatest number*,’ what he terms ‘the dogma of *What the Public Wants*’, which is ‘a simple series of disconnected appetites’ predicated on ‘a luxurious, hypothetical surplus.’³ This ‘new system of governmental metaphysic’, maintains power by what Lewis calls ‘The Democratic *Educationalist State*’, a comprehensive method of indoctrination that ushers a person from primary school to the exhausted complacency of adult life where ‘he is gradually made into a newspaper-reader... rather than a citizen.’⁴ This education, augmented by ‘the hypnotism of cinema, wireless, and press’,⁵ allows ‘what we call conventionally the *capitalist state* [but] is truly an *educationalist state*’ a method of rule ‘far more effective than subjugation by physical conquest.’⁶

According to Lewis, a key part of maintaining this powerful ruse is that ‘people are encouraged... “to express their personality.”’⁷ After all, he writes, it is ‘their privilege to [do so]’, and feeling as though they are participating in democratic freedom, people remain calm and refrain from civil disturbances.⁸ These calm citizens are then easily herded via education and the media into complacent group-personalities. They are

³ Lewis, *Ruled*, 73.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 84, 105.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 148.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 148.

‘drawn into one orbit or another... [into] one of several mechanical socially organized rhythms [of which] [t]here is really less choice every day,’ and in so doing, it ‘absolutely standardize[s] him and [rubs] off (in the process of the “expression”) any rough edges that may remain from his untaught, spontaneous days.’⁹ The process of expressing this false personality, though devoid of meaning, is persuasive to the individual ‘that it was the vote of a free man that was being cast, replete with the independence and free-will which was the birthright of a member of a truly democratic community.’¹⁰

In addition to outlining the methods by which rulers retain power over their subjects, Lewis looks into the predisposition of humans to such manipulation. Lewis writes, ‘The first object of a person with an ambition to be free, and yet possessing none of the means exterior to himself or herself (such as money, conspicuous ability, or power) to obtain freedom, is to avoid responsibility’ and submit ‘to a group-rhythm’ that eliminates contention and difficulty from life.¹¹ ‘Consciousness and responsibility are *prose* as contrasted with the *poetry* of passive, more or less, ecstatic, rhythmic, mechanical life,’ he writes in a chapter titled ““Liberty” Is Dead’. What remains is ‘the intoxicated dance of puppets, and besides that the few *natures*... moving unrhythmically, or according to a rhythm of their own, which is the same thing.’¹² Lewis concludes, ‘And it seems impossible to dispute that, as regards this side of life, and leaving aside the threat of unemployment and fresh wars, people have never been so happy. The Not-Self is the

⁹ Ibid., 149.

¹⁰ Ibid., 148.

¹¹ Ibid., 130, 149. However, Lewis contends that the merely wealthy, especially the *nouveau riches*, those who ‘[*play*] at revolution, and [ape] a “proletarian” freedom’ (134-5) fall into a similar group-rhythm due to ‘a collection of personalities with no traditions, no intellectual training... no religious beliefs usually or any attachments at all in a wider system than that of the stock market or commerce’ (141). For these people he reserves simple contempt rather than the fury he has for rulers.

¹² Ibid., 130.

goal of human ambition.’¹³ Here Lewis invokes a concept he developed over the course of his career, the ‘Not-Self’.

The Not-Self and the Self are conceptions of consciousness Lewis began to develop in Paris just after the turn of the century, when he was in his early twenties. At the time, the nature of consciousness and free will, as Hugh Kenner writes, ‘was being cut up into chronological compartments’ by philosophers such as Henri Bergson, whose lectures were influential to Lewis who had moved to Paris in 1904.¹⁴ In ‘The Physics of the Not-Self’ Lewis argues that truth is invariably lost in the relativism of the Self—the internal existence of a person or the will.¹⁵ This concept was clearly influenced by Bergson, whom Lewis cited repeatedly in *The Art of Being Ruled*. Bergson posited ‘two aspects of conscious life,’ ‘one clear and precise, but impersonal; the other confused, ever changing, and inexpressible....’¹⁶ The former sense is similar to Lewis’s concept of the Not-Self, while the latter resembles the Self. Most people, Lewis argues, exist within the Self, while a select few exist largely outside themselves and use ‘the intellect, or the seat of that forbidden principle of the *not-self*.’¹⁷ Therefore, people move to the group-rhythm and group-personality in hopes of gaining a sense of reality of position, a finite existence within the world. However, through education and media, rulers provide them with a false self. Sociologist and physician Gustave LeBon, whom Lewis cites repeatedly, examined aspects of this type of group phenomenon in his essay *The Crowd*. For a

¹³ Ibid., 149.

¹⁴ H. Kenner, *Lewis* (London: Methuen & Co., 1954), 73-4; P. O’Keeffe, *Genius* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000), 49.

¹⁵ W. Lewis, ‘The Physics of the Not-Self’, *The Chapbook* 40 (1925), 71. This article was also reprinted with minor – yet greatly clarifying – changes in W. Lewis, *The Enemy of the Stars* (London: Harmsworth, 1932).

¹⁶ H. Bergson, *Time and Free Will*, trans. F.L. Pogson (London: Allen & Unwin, 1950), 128-9.

¹⁷ Lewis, ‘Not-Self’, 71.

crowd, LeBon argues, the ‘value of an idea, its intrinsic worth, is without importance.’¹⁸ Ideas such as the ‘social democratic ideas of to-day’, if presented properly, may be taken up by crowds and held onto tightly, ‘possessing an irresistible power... opposition to which is bootless.’¹⁹ In Lewis’s estimation, those capable of ignoring the crowd exhibit the Not-Self and possess agency but are ‘one in a great many thousand’, and these are the Natures that are neither in power nor capable of breaking the current self-perpetuating power structure.²⁰ Lewis implores those people exhibiting the Not-Self to heed his advice in *The Art of Being Ruled*, a book that was ‘not written for an audience already there... It must make its own audience.’²¹

While *The Art of Being Ruled* is rife with unique ideas and can be termed a work of political philosophy in its own right, Lewis also strives to align himself with prominent writers both of his day and throughout the history of political theory. This tendency is no doubt rooted as much in Lewis’s erudition as in his admission that his writing was frequently self-consciously upsetting to the prevalent thought (and thinkers) of the time. He stated late in his career, ‘Every book I wrote would have to be vigorously defended by at least one pamphlet, in the way that a capital ship requires the support of one or more smaller and more active craft.’²² Epigrams and references were certainly not unusual in his era, but by invoking respected writers, Lewis provided an extra level vigorous defense to his arguments so as to prevent them from being dismissed outright as baseless. While Lewis’s constant referencing and buttressing of his arguments can occasionally be tedious or confusing, his use of epigrams in his arguments on modern liberty is excellent.

¹⁸ G. LeBon, *The Crowd* (London: Transaction, 1997), 84.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 82, 85.

²⁰ Lewis, ‘Not-Self’, 70.

²¹ Lewis, *Ruled*, 13.

²² Lewis, *Assignment*, 195.

Here Lewis quotes from Proudhon's *Of the Political Capacity of the Working Classes*, whom he criticizes harshly throughout the book, most notably finding Proudhon's 'federative peasant-socialism' irrelevant in the modern industrial age.²³ Nonetheless, he returns to Proudhon frequently for his incisive appraisals of the modern capitalist state. In Lewis's epigram, he quotes Proudhon defining liberty in the negative: liberty is *not* 'intelligence', 'love and art', or 'society and justice'.²⁴ Like Proudhon, Lewis also points out what freedom is not, and Proudhon's examples are all abstractions that could exist in one of the group-personalities Lewis finds so abhorrent. One can see a similar dissection of liberty into its manipulative components in Proudhon's *The Principle of Federation*: 'However much democracy increases the number of legal guarantees and methods of control... and however frequently it calls on its citizens to vote, its civil servants will still be men vested with authority....'²⁵ Proudhon's famously blustery description of governing also resonates in *The Art of Being Ruled*: 'To be governed is to be... regulated, enrolled, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, checked, estimated, valued....'²⁶

In addition to Proudhon, Lewis quotes extensively from H.S. Maine, a nineteenth century jurist who 'was certain that he could reveal many of the "lessons" of history for Victorian politicians and administrators' through his studies on ancient law and rule.²⁷ Though famous in his day for his textbook *Ancient Law*, his *Popular Government* was also attractive as a well-written account of government in the period in which Lewis finds

²³ Lewis, *Ruled*, 306-7.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 129.

²⁵ P.-J. Proudhon, 'The Principle of Federation', in *Selected Writings of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon*, ed. S. Edwards, trans. E. Fraser (London: Macmillan, 1970), 104.

²⁶ *Id.*, *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. J.B. Robinson (London: Freedom Press, 1923), 294.

²⁷ R.C.J. Cocks, 'Sir Henry James Sumner Maine', *Oxford DNB* (2004).

acceptable descriptions of democracy.²⁸ In the epigram Lewis refers to Maine's belief that nationhood precedes freedom in importance. And while Maine's essay, 'The Nature of Democracy', is similar in function to Tocqueville's glowing assessment of America, his consideration of Western democracy is cautionary: 'We are drifting towards a type of government associated with... a single Assembly, armed with full powers over the Constitution, which is may exercise with pleasure. It will be a theoretically all-powerful Convention... for which its rulers are always seeking to find a remedy in some kind of moral guillotine.'²⁹ Maine also believes that democracy is inevitable.³⁰ Lewis disagrees with this, believing instead that democracy is the dominant idea that pervades the West, and it is a group-rhythm that can be replaced with a more effective system if enough Natures act to do so.

Lewis invokes Hobbes in his final epigram, supporting his ideas about freedom within the state with a quotation from the chapter 'Of the Liberty of Subjects' in

Leviathan:

[N]o man can thence infer, that a particular man has more Liberty, or immunity from the service of the commonwealth there, than in Constantinople. Whether a commonwealth be monarchical, or Popular, the freedom is still the same.³¹

Hobbes's 'freedom' is not the modern liberal sense of freedom. For Hobbes, man, having taken up as a subject within a state, is free from the violence of the natural world. Beyond that fundamental freedom, liberty lies 'only in those things which, in regulating their actions, the sovereign hath pretermitted.'³² Real liberty, liberty along the lines of the modern conception, 'The liberty which writers praise, is the liberty of sovereigns; not

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ H.S. Maine, *Popular Government* (London: John Murray, 1885), 126.

³⁰ Ibid., 70-1.

³¹ Lewis, *Ruled*, 124.

³² T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. A.P. Martinich (Lancashire: Broadview Press, 2002), 159.

of private men.’³³ Lewis, therefore, argues that liberty in the capitalist democracy is really no liberty at all because the sovereigns of the modern age have excluded it and have instead placed a false idea of liberty in the group-personality. The liberty of which Lewis’s Natures are capable is unconnected with the liberty of the state; people that are truly free owe their allegiance only to intelligence and rationality just as citizens in Hobbes’s conception owe their allegiance only to God.

In addition to aligning with political writers, Lewis places his arguments within the framework of modern science. In the first chapter of the section, ‘What the Puppets Want’, Lewis addresses two texts of popular scientific figures of the time: Charles Richet and A.M. Low. Firstly, despite both believing in the abolition of inheritances and the segregation of intellectuals from the general populace, Lewis gives Richet’s arguments short shrift due to his denunciation of socialism and endorsement of democracy.³⁴ Remarkably, Richet’s criticism of socialism is similar in argument to P.P. Leroy-Beaulieu’s *Collectivism*, which Lewis praises later in *The Art of Being Ruled*.³⁵ Secondly, Lewis considers Low’s *The Future*, which he initially describes as ‘a popular book of gossipy predictions’ but goes on to laud.³⁶ Lewis’s initial impression of the book is reasonable, as it is comprised of haphazard forecasts of the exciting scientific future yet relegates its sole discussion of politics to a toothless affair of seven pages.³⁷

³³ Ibid., 161.

³⁴ C. Richet, *Idiot Man*, trans. N. Forsythe and L. Harvey (London: Werner Laurie, 1925), 44-6, 49. Lewis may have read Richet’s book in the original 1919 French publication, though he appears to be using the 1925 Forsythe-Harvey translation for quotations. Incidentally, while a popular book by the renowned scientist, this text is not widely remembered as Richet’s finest amid his many groundbreaking scientific publications on pathology. It has not been reissued in English since its initial publication in 1925.

³⁵ Compare Richet’s argument that socialism would create its own gentrification (*Idiot Man*, 48-9) with Lewis’s chapter, ‘Paul Leroy-Beaulieu’s Forecast of a Collectivist State, and a *Pons Asinorum* of Socialist Theory’ (*Ruled*, 302-5) referencing P. Leroy-Beaulieu, *Collectivism*, trans. A. Clay (London: ?, 1908).

³⁶ Lewis, *Ruled*, 126.

³⁷ A.M. Low, *The Future* (London: G. Routledge, 1925).

Nevertheless, Lewis focuses on Low's irresolute statement (in a chapter on recreation) that, "Human life appears to depend to a large extent on some superimposed rhythm."³⁸ Lewis is perhaps showing that as a concept, social rhythm is so important that it even crops up in a 'gossipy' book of popular science.

Lewis's argument that liberty in the modern state is a false concept exploited by capitalist rulers forms the foundation for many of the claims he makes in *The Art of Being Ruled*. Lewis rejected the rights afforded by social contract as conceived by Locke and Rousseau in favor of the Hobbesian idea that, in order to survive, individuals must surrender their natural freedom to a powerful and protective sovereign rule. By accepting forthright rule by an honest and enlightened person or group, modern subjects would be able to live within the boundaries of actual freedoms rather than deceptive false liberties propagated by manipulative capitalist rulers. The group manipulation of modern rulers by media and education is only one of the methods Lewis addresses. Lewis also argues that rulers also exploit divisions between individuals. In a sprawling argument spread over multiple sections, Lewis outlines how modern rulers employ a shrewd adaptation of the divide-and-conquer strategy, dicing up the populace and then encouraging conflict to create a stalemate thereby preventing aggression towards the ruling classes.

³⁸ Lewis, *Ruled*, 126-7; Low, *Future*, 69.

Chapter 2: Class, Revolution, and Rule

LEWIS sought to expose the notion of liberty as ‘a capital reason for the political weakness of Europe’ and to propose a more honest system of rule.¹ By accepting an authoritarian sovereign, Lewis believed, society could live more freely than in either in a democratic or communist state. Lewis stated, ‘I am not a communist; if anything, I favour some form of *fascism* rather than communism.’² He reasoned ‘a centralized consciousness and despotic, or at all events very powerful’ ruler could provide the ‘greater solidarity of a community “working together”’.³ In fascism he found an alternative to the ‘Monopoly of Indirectness’ present in the West; fascism was a Leviathan that people could see and understand where they stood in relation to it. Without the ‘frankness’ of rule, ‘It is *we* who are the Machiavels, compared to the soviet or the fascist, who makes no disguise of his forcible intentions....’⁴ Lewis characterized the culture of frank authoritarianism as ‘Eastern’, having developed in Russia and Italy, outside of the crucible of liberalism of Western Europe. Further, he believed that this type of direct rule had a tremendous stumbling block in the West because it was not indigenously Western. Instead, ‘the aristocratic temper of the achaian Greeks’ dominated political life through to the modern age. He observed that the issue of class present in the first democracy is also at the bottom of the political crisis present in his day: ‘The aristocratic liberties of the dominant race in a small city state applied to the whole white

¹ Lewis, *Ruled*, 108.

² *Ibid.*, 35.

³ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 74-5

population of Europe has led to the *impasse* of white “democracy.”⁵ For Lewis, as for many of the writers he considers in the text, class conflict is the major issue of the era; the very title of the book suggests the importance of this issue. Lewis’s treatment of class, however, is unique, different from both his contemporaries and predecessors.

Lewis was acutely aware of the modern discourse on class, though his take on class was different from the prominent Marxian view of economic class struggle. Lewis references Marx extensively in *The Art of Being Ruled*, calling *Das Kapital* an ‘economic bible’, and writes of ‘his [Marx’s] “class war”’, suggesting that he believed the Marxian definition of class to be the dominant one.⁶ Lewis also consistently encloses the word ‘class’ in inverted commas, suggesting that the recognized meaning of the word carries Marx’s definition, a definition with which he is at odds. Lewis did agree with Marx that the ‘history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle,’ and that ‘oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight....’⁷ Marx argued that inequity is not centered in the exchange of products but in the ‘the exchange of the labour which co-operated in production [of products]. The mode of exchange of products depends upon the mode of exchange of the productive forces.’⁸ Marx’s two social classes are based on the division between the laborers who produce and the merchants and capitalists who exploit the labor of the workers. ‘Society as a whole,’ he writes, ‘is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other:

⁵ Ibid., 108.

⁶ Ibid., 35, 203.

⁷ K. Marx, ‘*The Communist Manifesto*’, in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. D. McLellan (OUP, 2002), 246.

⁸ K. Marx, ‘*The Poverty of Philosophy*’, in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. D. McLellan (OUP, 2002), 215.

Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.’⁹ The conflict between these two economic classes, having progressed since feudal days, was exacerbated by the advent of industrialization, which ‘converted the little workshop of the patriarchal master into the great factory of the industrial capitalist.’¹⁰ Along with technological advances came an expansion of the exploitation of the proletariat so that ‘[d]ifferences of age and sex have no longer any distinctive social validity for the working class. All are instruments of labour, more or less expensive to use, according to their age and sex.’¹¹ As Georges Sorel writes of Marx’s definition of class, ‘To most people the class war is the *principle of Socialist tactics*.’¹²

Lewis’s view of class struggle and its origins are different from Marx’s. While Marx identifies the resuscitation of trade during the Middle Ages as the origin of class struggle, Lewis argues that modern Europe’s class struggle finds its roots in fifth century Athens. Marx does acknowledge that the societies of Greece and Rome were the templates for ‘modern bourgeois society’, but Lewis’s investigation of how ancient Greece gave rise to the particular problems of modern government is more thorough.¹³ In what Lewis calls his ‘first political text’, *The Lion and the Fox*, Lewis gives a revisionist description of democracy:¹⁴

The democratic ‘freedom’ of antiquity was a privileged freedom, at the expense of the world. All foreigners were eligible for slavery, for they were all ‘barbarian’ inferiors. They were in the same category as an ox or pig. It is often noted, as though it were a blot on the early democracies of Greece and Italy, that slavery

⁹ Marx, ‘*Manifesto*’, 246.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 251.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 251.

¹² G. Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, trans. T.E. Hulme and J. Roth (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1927), 65.

¹³ Marx, ‘*Grundrisse*’, in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. D. McLellan (OUP, 2002), 388.

¹⁴ Lewis, *Assignment*, 160. Lewis wrote, ‘As in another essay I have examined very thoroughly the idea of class,’ meaning *The Lion and the Fox*, ‘I will not go into it here’ (151). This essay’s treatment of class is not so thorough as Lewis would suggest, nor is it so thin in *The Art of Being Ruled*.

flourished ‘side by side’ with the democratic form of government. But in fact it seems that slavery was an essential factor in the old idea of democracy.¹⁵

Referencing Aristotle’s *Politics*, Sorel, from whom Lewis took many cues, similarly pointed out the presence of class struggle in Greek democracies between the demagogues and the rich.¹⁶ Lewis goes on to relate the politics of exclusivity present in antiquity to the era in which Marx situates the beginning of class struggle:

This antique ‘democracy’ was the same sort of very exclusive political game... that was being played amongst a chosen few, productive in english history of Magna Charta, [which] had nothing to do with the liberties of ‘Englishmen,’ but that of feudal magnates....¹⁷

Class is certainly the key issue here, and Lewis suggests that the disparity between the ruler and ruled classes that existed in his day was of a similar character as that present in democracy’s early days. He saw also that class organization was the only way that political change could be achieved because, ‘The “nation” as a unit is not universal enough for its purposes: only the “class” is general enough, and the subject or slave class bulky enough – both helpless and immense – pathetic enough, and primitive enough, to answer to its requirements.’¹⁸ Lewis’s significant divergence from Marx is his belief that race, not economic position, is the fundamental unit of class: ‘[A] fashionable error of the moment is to neglect the factor of race, as though there were no such thing as race, but only classes....’ Lewis maintains that ‘Race is the queen of all the “classes”’, and, ‘A man’s *race* is the most interesting thing about him, usually—[Marxian] *class* is a parvenu category compared to it.’¹⁹

¹⁵ W. Lewis, *Lion and the Fox* (London: Grant Richards, 1927), 121.

¹⁶ Sorel, *Reflections*, 65.

¹⁷ Lewis, *Lion*, 121-2.

¹⁸ Lewis, *Ruled*, 76.

¹⁹ Lewis, *Lion*, 295; Lewis, *Ruled*, 203.

For Lewis, the implications of race were key in the development of Europe's political systems and were, therefore, present in the political problems of the modern day. '[W]hite, european democracy,' Lewis writes, 'is, of course, an aristocratic notion at bottom, for it is a *race* notion: all caste, of course, of that sort originating in the fact of race.'²⁰ After all, he points out, 'Race or nationality... has, in the modern world, been recognized as a sanction for murder by every State,' and class 'is a much easier thing to fix' than race.²¹ Despite the presence of diverse racial classes in Europe for centuries – and it is important to note that Lewis frequently confounded 'race' and 'nationality' – the power of different races 'is very slight – for one reason, because it lacks all organization or even reality.' Economic class, Lewis says, remained the most powerfully organized social group due in large part to Marx, but, 'The success of his system has shown how easy it is to substitute, in a disorganized, non-racially founded society, any "class" for the classical "racial" unit of the State.'²² Therefore, for Lewis, 'class' is both more and less than the Marxist economic class. On one hand, a class is simply a category that a person identifies with in order to differentiate himself from another, but on the other hand, this simple categorization is a powerful method of rule in the modern world. '[E]ven if race were abolished by intermixture,' Lewis points out, 'it would still be possible, of course, to get your class-factor, and with it your organized war, by way of sex, age, occupational and other categories... The more classes... that you can make [a man] become regularly conscious of, the more you can control him, the more of an automaton he becomes.'²³

²⁰ Lewis, *Ruled*, 108.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 203; Lewis, *Lion*, 295.

²² Lewis, *Ruled*, 203.

²³ *Ibid.*, 109.

Georges Sorel's criticisms of Marxian class distinction endorse Lewis's observations. He believed that organizers had corrupted Marx's definition in efforts to gather more power:

Socialism makes its appeal to the discontented without troubling about the place they occupy in the world of production; in a society as complex as ours, and as subject to economic upheavals, there is an enormous number of discontented people in all classes—that is why Socialists are often found in places where one would least expect to meet them... In the end the term 'proletariat' becomes synonymous with oppressed; and there are oppressed in all classes....²⁴

Sorel's observation illustrates the malleability of categorization to include non-traditional members, which echoes Lewis's belief that classes are easily developed. Being easy to arrange, they are also easily pitted against one another, thereby providing an effective method of rule: rule by exploitative force. Lewis writes, '[W]here there are *races*, there are *wars*... Once "war" between classes started spreading, from the teaching for Marx, it did not stop at social "class."'²⁵ When the masses are divided into myriad different categories, their ability to organize into one powerful class is diminished greatly.

Further, once divided, conflict between some of these factions is inevitable, just as conflict between the Proletariat and Bourgeoisie is inevitable, according to Marx. This, then, leads to the effect that Lewis termed 'The war of "one half against the other"', a phrase he borrowed from Renan's *Caliban*: 'A man rules by employing one half of these animals to conquer the other half.'²⁶ By engaging the populace in constant upheaval against itself, the ruling class remains entrenched and unmolested.

Having differentiated his definition of class from the Marxian view and identified its role in rule, Lewis then expands on this theory with case studies of class conflicts such

²⁴ Sorel, *Reflections*, 66.

²⁵ Lewis, *Ruled*, 203.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 184.

as young against old and high- against low-brow. Lewis shows that the war between categories of people has eroded European values and created confounding byproducts that have further entrenched the ruling powers. The most important and fundamental class conflict of the day had arisen, Lewis argues, between men and women, ‘The idea of race [having] substituted itself for that of sex.’²⁷

²⁷ Ibid., 203.

Chapter 3: Women and Feminism

AFTER developing his theory of class, Lewis turns his attention to describing in detail one of the key class struggles in the modern era: the struggle between men and women. The ‘sex-war’, as he terms it, sought to create greater independence for women by breaking up traditional sex roles – a particularly unnerving possibility for Lewis because such a shift would affect the entire makeup of society by unsettling the work force and unseating the family unit. Lewis’s main objective was to explain that the reasons for the sex-war were not what they appeared to be, and its results would not provide the freedoms intended by it. It is notable that Lewis spends more time addressing the sex-war in his book than he does the rise of fascism and communism. The latter upheavals are outside the Western realm and exhibit straightforward, direct struggles for power. As with many of his observations, Lewis focuses on unmasking the deceptive rule by manipulation in the purportedly free democracies of West, and many of his conclusions are unique, though his personal views on women’s efforts towards independence are inconclusive.

In the sex-war Lewis saw the multifarious influences of revolution and conservatism that are fundamental to the art of ruling. The struggle of women to gain greater social independence escalated to an outright ‘war’, Lewis believed, on the strength of the modern Western culture of revolution. This culture of revolution created in society an acceptance of, even a desire for, change and progress driven primarily by scientific advancement. ‘[A]ll *change* today is rooted in science,’ he writes, ‘and in science and its imperative of change, all active political creeds meet and to some extent

merge.’¹ Unprecedented scientific discovery in the previous decades drove rampant industrialization, which spawned political revolutions such as socialism intended to mitigate societal shifts such as agricultural workers to industrial, rural dwellings to urban, and small-scale direct production to large-scale industrial divisions of labor.² These rapid technological and political changes created a confounding condition of eager progress wherein the concept of “‘Revolution” is accepted everywhere,’ and, in theory, ‘the battle is everywhere won, and yet nothing happens.’³ The West developed an acceptance, even expectation, of revolution, from the safety razor to insulin to communism, yet this continual drive for progress created meaningless revolutions and corrupted other worthwhile movements. In part, this propensity for misguided revolutionary zeal incited the feminist revolution, and it has yielded decidedly mixed results.

In his evaluation of the sex-war, Lewis keeps his discussion mostly within the bounds of the major political texts he finds most relevant to his overall argument, focusing largely on Proudhon’s work. As with his discussions of economic class struggle, when discussing the sex-war, Lewis makes no references to specific events or outcomes such as the role women played in industry during the First World War, the extension of general social independence of women, or the provisional suffrage granted after the war. Lewis is generally nonspecific about the composition of the ‘sex-war’, though he does give Ibsen as an example of a ‘great feminist’, and it is likely the ‘modern woman’ such as Ibsen’s Nora from the scandalous Victorian drama *A Doll’s House* (1879) that Lewis considers as the primary activist in the struggle.⁴ Lewis takes the ‘sex-

¹ Lewis, *Ruled*, 18.

² *Ibid.*, 21-4.

³ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 172.

war' as a conceptual whole and focuses on the pitfalls and obscured consequences of the movement. While important in its consequences, Lewis sees the sex-war as another in the progression of class conflicts born of the culture of revolution and encouraged by the ruling powers.

Lewis argues that the sex-war is, first and foremost, an assault on the role of the male, the 'symbol of authority' that is due to fall during this 'era of change and militant revolution.'⁵ As Western culture became more generally revolutionary, the sex-war gathered momentum, and its growth continued unabated because of the encouragement of capitalist rulers who stood to benefit. Lewis argues that these rulers could gain, firstly, because the sex-war would weaken the position of the individual male, 'discrediting authority, and reducing this smallest and feeblest of kings, the little father of the family....' Secondly, and more importantly, it would release 'the hordes of idle women, waiting on little "kings," for industrial purposes,' creating 'cheap female labour,' thereby turning these 'hordes of unmarried women... into a *third sex* like the sterile female workers of the beehive.'⁶ This description evokes Eliot's lines from *The Waste Land* describing the unmarried workingwoman, living in squalor and awaiting the ineffectual materialist, the 'young man carbuncular' for a pathetic tryst:⁷

The typist home at teatime, clears her breakfast, lights
Her stove, and lays out food in tins.
Out of the window perilously spread
Her drying combinations touched by the sun's last rays,
On the divan are piled (at night her bed)
Stockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays. (222-7)⁸

⁵ Ibid., 194.

⁶ Ibid., 195, 196.

⁷ Lewis had met Eliot through Vorticist collaborator and close friend Ezra Pound in 1915. Lewis shared many of Eliot's pessimistic views on the modern world and he was intimately familiar with Eliot's work, including *The Waste Land* (1922), which Pound edited. Lewis does not cite that poem in this book, though he does reference 'The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock' (1917) and 'The Hollow Men' (1925).

⁸ T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land* (London: Hogarth Press, 1923).

Neither Eliot nor Lewis had an optimistic conception of the independent working-woman's life. Lewis extended his cautionary argument with the tenuous argument that desirable women cared nothing for the sex-war and it was only the "poor, hard-featured, unsexed drones that no man would have" that would experience the independence, and the resultant hardship, provided by the sex-war.⁹ Further, the conflict would ultimately lead to a 'sequel', as he puts it, pitting marriageable women and undesirable but independent women against each other.¹⁰ This brief conclusion, though within the bounds of his class struggle rhetoric, is without support or elaboration.

While Lewis criticizes the future of the independent working woman from the detached perspective of political writer, he gives precious few glimpses into his personal views on women's inherent capabilities and place in society. He positions himself as fair-minded observer: 'I am able to observe very little difference between men and women, and my liking and interest are equally distributed.' The potential implication of this statement cannot be missed considering Lewis's frequent excursions into misanthropy. Nonetheless, he also offers the imprecise compliment, 'If anything, women represent... a higher spiritual average,' which does suggest that inherent differences exist between men and women.¹¹ He goes on to make observations about women that, more often than not, seem conciliatory or gratuitous. For example, Lewis suggests that, as science comes to replace religion more and more, 'the clinical rites of cleanliness and growth of a whole network of ordinances... might be at first in the hands of women.'¹² Rather than a peculiarly progressive viewpoint, Lewis's personal deference to women

⁹ Lewis, *Ruled*, 198.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 198.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 171-2.

¹² *Ibid.*, 187.

(despite his criticism of working women) appears to be an effort to establish himself as an ally of another revolutionary group intent on upending the norms of the capitalist regime, despite the difficulties and contradictions he observes in the movement. This is all the more clear when he lambastes Proudhon for being decidedly ‘unrevolutionary’ in his anti-feminist views.

While Lewis does not discuss other writers’ views on women in any depth, his implicit stance on the place of women is echoed in many of the writers he considers in other portions of the book such as Rousseau, Hegel, and Mill.¹³ In *Émile* (1762), Rousseau gives a romantic view of a woman’s role and prospects for education as compared to the education of the man. While men and women ‘are made for each other’, the women ‘cannot fulfil her purpose in life without his aid’, and, therefore, she is in his debt as the man is better off without her than she without him.¹⁴ However, he states, a woman should be educated, though only insofar as to develop and refine her womanly qualities so as to become an excellent companion for her husband.¹⁵ Unlike Rousseau, Hegel suggests women can be useful in the public sphere, though their inherent differences provide that while they ‘can, of course, be educated... their minds are not adapted to the higher sciences, philosophy, or certain of the arts,’ or to ‘hold the helm of government.’¹⁶ John Stuart Mill provides a more progressive viewpoint, arguing in ‘The Subjection of Women’ (1869) that notions of women’s lack of potential in the public sphere ‘rest[s] upon theory only’, and that their actual strengths and weaknesses will find

¹³ It is notable that, while Lewis avoids feminist texts, he does quote Arthur Schopenhauer’s misogynistic essay, ‘On Women’ (*Ruled*, 203, 233). He also sarcastically recalls Schopenhauer as being ‘one of the first in the field’ in the sex-war, throwing a woman stranger down the stairs of his building and being forced to remit a pension to her for the rest of his life. It is likely that Lewis includes this story merely for sardonic effect, as it does not add to his argument in any meaningful way.

¹⁴ J.-J. Rousseau, *Émile* [online text], Project Gutenberg <<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/5427>>

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, trans. S.W. Doyle (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1996), 172.

uses in the modern capitalist world just as different types of men do.¹⁷ Mill's argument is not dissimilar to Hegel's in that Mill admits that women do have inherent strengths such as a greater sense of morality.¹⁸ Yet while a woman should ultimately have the opportunity to provide for herself, if properly married and provided for, she should remain in the home.¹⁹ From his few observations of women's inherent differences from men, being 'of a higher spiritual average' and more capable of administering cleaning, Lewis is in line with these writers in his belief that women are inherently different from men, exhibiting both greater and lesser abilities. However, unlike these writers, Lewis does not state explicitly his belief as to whether women belong in the public or private sphere; his own views are inconclusive as he defers to detached discussion of the effects of the sex-war rather than its legitimacy.

In discussing the politics of feminism, Lewis chooses to focus on socialist writers, spending most of his time dissecting Proudhon's thoughts. 'P.-J. Proudhon was not a feminist,' he writes, and continues, unraveling this understatement: 'No roman father could have devised more despotic conditions than he did for the woman.'²⁰ Proudhon writes, 'Between woman and man there may exist love, passion, ties of custom, and the like; but there is no real society.' Man and woman are so radically different Proudhon believes that 'far from advocating what is now called the emancipation of woman, I should incline, rather, if there were no other alternative, to exclude her from society.'²¹ He does believe that marriage will benefit from socialism and that women are essential to

¹⁷ J.S. Mill, 'Subjection of Women', in *On Liberty and Other Essays*, ed. J. Gray (OUP, 1998), 489.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 566.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 522-3.

²⁰ Lewis, *Ruled*, 172, 177.

²¹ P.-J. Proudhon, *What Is Property?* [online text], Project Gutenberg
<<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/360>>

his vision of equal society. Unlike many of his fellow socialists, Proudhon believes ‘in retaining the separate household, without which, he says, he cannot conceive of woman as occupying a position worthy of society or of herself...’²² Lewis highlights Proudhon’s misogynistic statements not so much for their inherent falseness but because they are so unrevolutionary. ‘Proudhon regarded himself as eminently of the party of revolt... [but] the woman was the only “revolutionary” that he challenged.’²³ Lewis is likely referring to the widespread belief among socialists that women, just as their proletarian male counterparts, are oppressed by bourgeois values. Marx, for example, rails against the current oppression of women, hoping to substitute ‘for a hypocritically concealed, an openly legalized, community for women,’ thereby eliminating ‘prostitution both public and private.’²⁴

Lewis’s exposition of the sex-war suggests his belief that Marx’s socialist provisions for women would not come to pass in the way Marx intended. Instead, the non-socialist sex-war would perpetuate the capitalist agenda, though the results would be the same ultimately: the pulling away of the sexes from each other. As the relationships between men and women grow increasingly strained and the roles grow further apart, Lewis predicts ‘a considerable segregation of women and men must occur.’²⁵ This separation would have significant implications for the family unit, and ‘It is round the

²² C.H. Dana, *Proudhon and His ‘Bank of the People’* [online text], Proudhon Archives <http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/proudhon/dana.html>

²³ Lewis, *Ruled*, 177.

²⁴ Marx, ‘*Communist Manifesto*’, 260.

²⁵ Lewis, *Ruled*, 179. Here Lewis takes this opportunity to advance his theory that the intellectual will be separated from the non-intellectual, the ‘intelligent life’ and the “‘lower” or animal’ life, eventually leading to different species. This would hamper free choice and severely affect his hopes for an egalitarian intellectual ruling class. Lewis supports this odd claim with a bizarre suggestion: ‘If this idea of segregation seems a disgusting one, all that can be said is that it is often suggested to us that more intelligent beings than ourselves may exist in other worlds... But we live our lives just the same.’ One can hope that Lewis is suggesting that his claim of intellectual evolution, while possible, is very unlikely.

question of the *family* that all the other questions of politics and social life are gathered.²⁶

²⁶ Lewis, *Ruled*, 171.

Chapter 4: Revolution and the Family Unit

FOR Lewis, the sex-war not only divided women into a further class war, it also had significant implications for the family unit. In his discussion of the sex-war, Lewis states that enfranchising women would weaken male authority and transform female domestic labor into inexpensive industrial labor. This declaration is in keeping with his belief in the ultimate ascension of some type of socialism and the destruction of the family unit. With the absence of the family, more efficient social arrangements could arise such as communal living and the termination of ‘that terrible, agelong *tête-à-tête* of the husband and wife, chained to each other for life for the practical purpose of perpetuating the species....’¹ Despite extensive arguments disparaging the familial arrangement and predicting its ultimate downfall, in the end, Lewis supports the maintenance of the immediate family unit. And unlike his comments about the woman’s role in society, which he keeps primarily to detached political discussion, Lewis makes frequent personal judgments regarding the importance of the family unit. This propensity is suggestive of his personal views. Before considering Lewis’s full argument and its place in the discourse of the time, it will be helpful to consider some biographical information.

Throughout his life, Lewis’s commitment to what Marx calls the ‘bourgeois family’ was slight. Lewis’s father, Charles Lewis, abandoned him and his mother for a housemaid when Lewis was eleven. Thereafter, Charles sent financial support intermittently and contacting his son only occasionally.² After his father left, Lewis ‘replaced his father in his mother’s emotional life,’ and they went on to have an unusually

¹ Lewis, *Ruled*, 195-6.

² Meyers, *Enemy*, 4.

close relationship, Lewis confiding in his mother about his many sexual conquests and idle relationships with women.³ Lewis's first significant love affair came in his early twenties with a German woman named Ida. This four-year relationship produced a child, whom Lewis disowned and abandoned along with Ida, thereby beginning a pattern he would continue with Iris Barry, a mistress he abandoned with two children, and Olive Johnson, whom he also left with two children.⁴ Lewis did not arrange for support of these children, leaving the various mothers or his own mother to provide for them. He was also flippant about his reckless procreation, answering James Joyce once that he thought he had '[h]undreds' of children.⁵ His work, especially his fiction, shows 'a deep-rooted hostility to children,' and after marrying Anne Hoskyns in October of 1930, he vowed to never have children.⁶ Anne was the perfect woman for Lewis: 'beautiful but devoted, tolerant of hardship and infidelity, self-effacing yet lively, intelligent without being intellectual,' and fourteen years his junior.⁷ She would stay with him until his death in 1957, twenty-two years before her own. Despite his marriage, Lewis's sexual meanderings continued unabated as he accumulated an "extraordinary" number of unknown models and mistresses' throughout his life.⁸ Infidelity, which his wife tolerated, was perhaps the only way that Lewis could accept marriage, Lewis reportedly admitted he was 'terrified' at the notion.⁹ In addition to his own unusual family circumstances, Lewis's competitive relationship with mentor, painter, and womanizer,

³ Ibid., 6, 15.

⁴ Ibid., 21-2, 91, 80.

⁵ Quoted in Meyers, *Enemy*, 122.

⁶ Meyers, *Enemy*, 88; O'Keeffe, *Genius*, 295.

⁷ Meyers, *Enemy*, 99; O'Keeffe, *Genius*, 295.

⁸ Meyers, *Enemy*, 99.

⁹ Ibid., 99.

Augustus John, was also influential.¹⁰ From his actions, it is clear that Lewis was not in possession of a deep, abiding sense of bourgeois family values. In fact, it is understandable that Lewis was entirely at ease with, even hopeful that, the family unit might deteriorate.

Despite the lack of importance of the family in his own life, Lewis was convinced it was ‘round the question of the *family* that all the other questions of politics and social life are gathered.’ He writes of the family: ‘The relationship of men to women, of the child to the parent, of friendship and citizenship to the new ideals of the state, are all controlled by it.’¹¹ And it is the family unit, and all of its relational importance, that will fall apart as the modern state continues to evolve. In making the case for the eventual demise of the family, he discusses the idea that the family is the foundational unit of the political structure. In the epigram to the ‘Family and Feminism’ section Lewis quotes from *Idée Générale de la Révolution au XIXè Siècle*, in which Proudhon is discussing Louis de Bonald’s contention that the family is the state in miniature.¹² In the third chapter of the section, he paraphrases the selection in English and adds emphases:

The idea of government, [Proudhon] says, is modelled on the experience of the family; its tenacity is owing to the fact that men have always had under their eyes the small model of the state in their own family circle. The family is the embryo of the state. The father is *the king* the mother is *the minister of state*, the child is *the subject*.¹³

This theory, which Lewis supports, has a significant history of development beginning notably with Aristotle’s *Politics* and finds modern development with Rousseau.

¹⁰ Ibid., 88.

¹¹ Lewis, *Ruled*, 171.

¹² Proudhon is referring to L. de Bonald, *On Divorce*, trans. N. Davidson (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1993), 44-6. Bonald describes the state as a miniature of the family invoking the Bible as precedent for the hierarchy of relationships between man, woman, and child (e.g. 1 Cor. 11: 3, Gen. 2: 23, and Eph. 6: 1, respectively).

¹³ Lewis, *Ruled*, 177-8.

Rousseau suggests in *On the Origin of Inequality* (1754) that the state grows out of collections of families settling near each other.¹⁴ In *The Social Contract* (1762), Rousseau writes, ‘The most ancient of all societies, and the only one that is natural, is the family,’ which ‘may be called the first model of political societies: the ruler corresponds to the father, and the people to the children; and all, being born free and equal, alienate their liberty only for their own advantage.’¹⁵ In *Leviathan*, Hobbes also describes the evolution of ‘small families... [into] cities and kingdoms’.¹⁶ He argues that ‘the rights and consequences of both *paternal* and *despotical* dominion are the very same with those of a sovereign by institution and for the same reasons,’ though families need to band together into states lest they remain in a perpetual state of defense from raids by other families.¹⁷

The function of the family unit is perhaps most fundamental to Lewis’s ultimate belief that it should remain intact. While Lewis generally reserves the harshest criticism for Rousseau’s liberal treatises, ideologically, he agrees with Rousseau’s assertion that the family exists to produce functioning offspring, so that ‘the children remain attached to the father only so long as they need him for their preservation. As soon as this need ceases, the natural bond is dissolved.’ Any familial bond that exists beyond the maturation of the children is no longer natural but voluntary.¹⁸ In *The Descent of Man* (1871), Charles Darwin supports this idea as it relates to natural selection and the propagation of the species. He also posits that man is a social animal ‘willing to defend,

¹⁴ P.-J. Rousseau, ‘Origin of Inequality’, in *The Social Contract and Discourses*, trans. G.D.H. Cole (London: Everyman, 2003), 89.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 182.

¹⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 126.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 153.

¹⁸ Lewis, *Ruled*, 182.

in concert with others, his fellow-men,' and only letting his offspring perish, either naturally or by infanticide, if the society required it.¹⁹

Hegel supports Rousseau and Darwin in the view that the family has the function of raising offspring. However, he also discusses the role of the family in ethical and psychological terms in *Philosophy of Right* (1821). For Hegel, a family unit is not just a functional association but 'essentially an ethical relation' that includes members of a unit that experience 'the feeling of love... the consciousness of the unity of [oneself] with another.'²⁰ Hegel also believes the marital union 'is a substantive end' in itself, 'distinguished from concubinage, since in concubinage the chief factor is the satisfaction of the natural impulse, while in marriage this satisfaction is subordinate.'²¹ To this end, Hegel echoes Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* (1690) as well as Rousseau's *Social Contract* proposing that in marriage two people 'give up their natural and private personality to enter a unity, which may be regarded as a limitation, but, since in it they attain to a substantive self-consciousness, is really their liberation.'²² Hegel also states that a family exists for children 'to be supported and educated out of the common family means', and, as with Rousseau, 'The ethical or social dismemberment of the family occurs when the children have grown to be free personalities.'²³ Hegel reiterates the concept of the contract with the child-parent relationship. 'That the children of Roman parents were slaves,' he writes, 'is one of the facts which most tarnishes the Roman law,'

¹⁹ C. Darwin, *Descent of Man* [online text], Project Gutenberg <<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/2300>>.

²⁰ Hegel, *Right*, 166, 164.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 168, 169.

²² *Ibid.*, 167. Specifically in section 82 regarding the contract between husband and wife of J. Locke, *Second Treatise of Government* [online text], Project Gutenberg <<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/7370>>.

²³ Hegel, *Right*, 176, 179.

and therefore in a modern, liberal society a child should be free to dissolve the familial bond if he is not supported suitably.

In *On Liberty* (1869), John Stuart Mill puts the obligation of the parents in terms of law. Mill believes ‘that to bring a child into existence without a fair prospect of being able, not only to provide food for its body, but instruction and training for its mind, is a moral crime, both against the unfortunate offspring and against society.’²⁴ To ensure these ‘most sacred duties of the parents,’ Mill argues the parents should be compelled by law to raise children properly including ensuring their civic education which should be monitored by compulsory examinations.²⁵ Mill also proposes that parents should prove their ability to support a child financially prior to having one.²⁶ Unlike Rousseau, Darwin, and Hegel, Mill’s writing is most concerned with translating moral philosophy into actionable plans for the liberal state.²⁷ Mill and Hegel are also aligned in their beliefs that parents are ethically bound to provide for children. Of course, Lewis believes that these fundamental tenets of liberalism are wrong and ‘are being strangled off stage,’ soon be replaced by a new political order.²⁸

The new system that Lewis envisions is based on the writings of socialists. While he does not specifically quote Marx regarding the dissolution of the family, Marx’s views on the family from the socialist perspective are concise, effective, and in line with Lewis’s own:

²⁴ J.S. Mill, ‘On Liberty’, in *On Liberty and Other Essays*, ed. J. Gray (OUP, 1998), 117.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 116-7, 118.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 120.

²⁷ Mill’s ‘rule utilitarianism’ was focused more on plausibility in the public sphere than was Jeremy Bentham, whose *A Fragment of Government* Lewis includes as an epigram at the beginning of ‘The Family and Feminine’ section. This selection places Bentham alongside Rousseau in postulating that society grew out of the family unit.

²⁸ Lewis, *Ruled*, 69.

On what foundation is the present family, the bourgeois family, based? On capital, on private gain. In its completely developed form this family exists only among the bourgeoisie. But this state of things finds its complement in the practical absence of the family among the proletariat, and in public prostitution.²⁹

By ‘completely developed’, Marx is suggesting the family that is financially capable of supporting and educating its children. Economically, this is not feasible among the proletariat, he argues, therefore the ‘bourgeois family will vanish... with the vanishing of capital.’³⁰ In addition to creating more economically efficient living arrangements, the elimination of the family will ‘stop the exploitation of children by their parents’, who have been ‘transformed into simple articles of commerce and instruments of labour.’³¹ It will also free women from their status as ‘mere instrument[s] of production’ of both children and domestic labor, and eliminate ‘prostitution both public and private.’³² Marx admits that ‘even the most radical flare up’ at this proposal, but the ending of the ‘despotic dominion’ of the family, to borrow Hobbes’s phrase, is inevitable.

Lewis is also convinced that, ‘The break-up of the family unit today is the central fact of our life.’ He continues, ‘[I]t is from [the family’s] central disintegration... that all the other revolutionary phases of our new society radiate.’³³ His assessment of the exploitation of modern family relations (husband and wife) and the family’s inability to function in raising children properly is similar to Marx’s: ‘The romance of the *family as a unit*, he writes, ‘is a prosperous nineteenth-century English middle-class romance.’ As Marx argues the impossibility of the family ‘in its completely developed [bourgeois] form’, Lewis points out, ‘To tell the impoverished English labourer today to keep at all

²⁹ Marx, ‘*Communist Manifesto*’, 259.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 259.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 259.

³² *Ibid.*, 259, 260.

³³ Lewis, *Ruled*, 171.

costs his home-and-castle-in-one, and continue to cling to this phantom of authority, is to urge the continuance of a stupid torture.’³⁴ Lewis characterizes Marx’s vision of the communist state as the ‘All-father’, an institution that relieves the crushing responsibility of the proletarian patriarch.³⁵ ‘The women and children,’ Lewis writes, ‘would be very much relieved if the state would take over their maintenance.’³⁶

To reinforce his argument, Lewis introduces the work of ‘a liberal colleague of Mr. Shaw’, publisher, novelist, and prominent Roman Catholic writer G.K. Chesterton (1874-1936).³⁷ Chesterton was a staunch supporter of a strong family unit that was capable of producing productive, civic-minded citizens. Lewis focuses on Chesterton’s article ‘Fear of the Family’ and the argument that the family unit is crucial to the stability of society because it buoys the ego of the male who is, on the strength of ‘christian civilization’, the ‘head of the family, morally, socially, and legally responsible for the maintenance of the family.’ ‘If a man has a wife and family to support,’ Chesterton reasons, ‘he can always make some show at the bar of public opinion... [but if] the state supports his wife and family for him, he can make no show at all.’³⁸ From Marx and Lewis’s perspective, Chesterton is out of touch with the realities of the modern world. ‘[T]he well-to-do,’ Lewis writes, meaning Chesterton and his ‘liberal’ allies, ‘have seldom any conception of what a mockery it is to speak in sugary or heroic terms of that to people who, like the majority, have to live in a half-savage condition of poverty.’³⁹

³⁴ Ibid., 175.

³⁵ Ibid., 171.

³⁶ Ibid., 175.

³⁷ Ibid., 174. Best known today for his *Father Brown* detective fiction, by most accounts, Chesterton was a moderate Roman Catholic conservative. However, within the context of Lewis’s socialist arguments he may appear liberal.

³⁸ Quoted in Lewis, *Ruled*, 175.

³⁹ Lewis, *Ruled*, 175.

Despite his argument consistently to the contrary, in the matter of the future of the family, Lewis ultimately admits a more moderate stance than Marx's. Lewis's tendency in most of his arguments is to swing violently between unabashedly condemning viewpoints he disapproves of and wholeheartedly lauding those he finds correct, just as he would 'Curse!' or 'Bless!' great lists of items in his *Blast* manifestos. In extended treatises like *The Art of Being Ruled*, however, he frequently settles into a more moderate version of this dichotomy, as he does between Marx and Chesterton. In this case, he dissects Proudhon's ideas on the family unit and ultimately agrees with him.

Lewis argues that Proudhon was conflicted about the future of the family in the socialist state. According to Lewis, Proudhon recognized that '*Socialism wishes to abolish family life, because it costs too much*', and that 'the fraternist-socialists, who take the family as the model of society, all arrived at the idea of dictatorship, the most exaggerated form of government' – two statements against the family.⁴⁰ Proudhon does remark in *The Philosophy of Misery* that the family 'is the type and the cradle of monarchy and the patriciate: in it resides and is preserved the idea of authority and sovereignty,' and if it is adopted as the basis of government then despotism will result.⁴¹ Proudhon believes that government should not be based on either the family or the workshop, as he maintains capitalist democracy is based.⁴² Instead, the society should eliminate property (but not possession) and create small, decentralized federative states or 'syndics' that can exist and trade without a despotic or capital-based political system. In Proudhon's 'system of absolute equality,' 'all existing institutions [will be] instruments

⁴⁰ Proudhon quoted in Lewis, *Ruled*, 172; 178.

⁴¹ P.-J. Proudhon, *System of Economical Contradictions, or the Philosophy of Misery*, trans. B.R. Tucker (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 146.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 146.

of equality.’ This equality extends to everything from ‘individual liberty’ and ‘the division of power’ to ‘marriage [and] the family’.⁴³ In his era, Proudhon argues, like Marx, that the capitalist system has poisoned family unit so that ‘a husband is a proprietor,’ and that, ‘Widespread misery results from love and marriage....’⁴⁴ However, unlike Marx and, up to this point, Lewis, Proudhon holds out hope for the family *after* the establishment of the federative state, which will alleviate any Malthusian crises (such as the ones to which Chesterton is oblivious) and allow the family unit to operate naturally and effectively. ‘We need to love our wives and children,’ he writes. ‘It is our duty to protect and support them.’⁴⁵ Lewis criticizes Proudhon for his unrevolutionary idea that the family should remain intact, though under his ideal syndicalist system, the family would revert to its natural, healthy state. The family might still be the basis for despotism, but as long as it is localized to its immediate function of raising children and the state is not based on the familial structure but rather federative states, Proudhon’s argument is not contradictory.

What is actually contradictory in Lewis’s discussion of Proudhon is his own stance. Lewis argues throughout this section that the family is being destroyed, and it ‘is a good thing’.⁴⁶ He lambastes Proudhon for his unrevolutionary stances on feminism and the role of the family. And yet, despite his circuitous and, at times, blustery arguments, Lewis settles on the simple and very ‘unrevolutionary’ notion that ‘the family image obsesses people’, and therefore ‘the obsession with the family should be overcome except for the purposes of the narrow family circle – so long as that exists: that its reflection, in

⁴³ Proudhon, *Property?*, 10.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 43, 203.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 282.

⁴⁶ *The Art of Being Ruled*, 172.

the life of government or in the life of society, should be abolished.⁴⁷ One may draw parallels between this oblique and contradictory argument and Lewis's personal experience with family. Lewis vacillates between revolutionary zeal, attacking the simple 'unrevolutionary' ideas and proponents of traditional or 'bourgeois' family values (regardless of their actual revolutionary ideas, as with Proudhon), yet he ultimately settles on the persistence of the individual family unit. Similarly, despite his fear of marriage and inability to accept the responsibility of providing for offspring, he settles into a family unit of his own with a wife whose tolerance of his terms (no child, rampant infidelity) is revolutionary in its own right. Despite any difficulties in Lewis's conclusion, his explication of this complex issue is noteworthy. In this case, while Lewis's stance is ultimately not as revolutionary as he might have liked, it remains within his overall framework of the overthrow of the capitalist democracy. Another matter of some contention between Lewis and the canonical writers he considers is the role of violence in this necessary revolution.

⁴⁷ *The Art of Being Ruled*, 183.

Chapter 5: Revolution and Violence

REGARDLESS of any argument that Lewis might quibble over, he is first and foremost an avowed revolutionary. Lewis believed that the dominant force of capitalist democracy must fall, and it could be made to happen quickly, though not catastrophically, and without violence. In terms of Lewis's overarching argument, the most relevant and influential writer to his thoughts on revolution is Georges Sorel, whom he greatly respected. Like Lewis, Sorel was a proponent of rapid revolution, but he was also a great supporter of violence. Lewis's break from this seemingly crucial aspect of Sorel's philosophy provides a fascinating glimpse into the shrewd humanism of an aggressive revolutionary.

Much of Sorel's writing was a harsh revision of Marxian political philosophy. Sorel sought to update socialism for a modern world in which 'the march toward socialism will not come about in a manner as simple, as necessary, and, consequently, as easy to describe in advance as Marx had supposed.'¹ The Marxian vision of a 'catastrophic' collapse of bourgeois society had not happened as a matter of course, regardless of how likely it appeared in the late 1840s. In the years since Marx, 'it was demonstrated that usury capitalism had not spoken its last words.'² As a result, Sorel was focused on creating a renewed sense of vigorous revolution in the socialist party, which he found complacent and lacking radical eagerness. He preached separatism in order to create an untainted nucleus of socialist pride that he likened to early Christianity, a fitting

¹ Sorel, *The Illusion of Progress*, trans. J. Stanley and C. Stanley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 207.

² *Ibid.*, 208.

analogy considering his penchant for Biblical allusions.³ And he preached violence, a tactic for which he also found ample inspiration in the Old Testament. In his seminal treatise on violence, *Reflections on Violence* (1908), Sorel outlined the reasons why violence was both necessary and ethical. '[T]he middle classes allow themselves to be plundered quite easily,' he observes, 'provided that a little pressure is brought to bear....'⁴ He believed that the 'party will possess the future which can most skillfully manipulate the spectre of revolution.'⁵ Because the current social policy was founded on 'middle-class cowardice, which is always surrendering before the threat of violence,' he reasoned, 'the middle class is condemned to death, and that its disappearance is only a matter of time.'⁶

Sorel reasoned that each violent engagement pitting the workers against the middle class would yield ground to the socialist cause, and, therefore, 'each time they come to blows the strikers hope that it is the beginning of the great *Napoleonic battle* (that which will definitely crush the vanquished).'⁷ In this manner violent general strikes could bring about the downfall of the bourgeois regime that would not fall on its own as Marx anticipated. Ethically, Sorel argued his vision of violent revolution was sound. Violence in terms 'disseminated by middle-class philosophers,' he observes, 'is a relic of barbarism... bound to disappear under the influence of the progress of enlightenment.'⁸ However, Sorel argues that the bourgeois society dictating that view is irrelevant. Therefore it is imperative that 'Socialists raise themselves above our frivolous society

³ Ibid., 214.

⁴ Sorel, *Reflections*, 68.

⁵ Ibid., 68.

⁶ Ibid., 78.

⁷ Ibid., 78.

⁸ Ibid., 80.

and make themselves worthy of pointing out new roads to the world.’⁹ In the 1913 addendum to *Reflections on Violence*, Sorel invokes the ‘Napoleonic armies whose soldiers accomplished such heroic acts,’ thereby bringing into relief the moral and historical gravity of his proposition.¹⁰

Lewis finds Sorel’s arguments and intensity enthralling. He believed that Sorel is ‘the key to all contemporary political thought,’ and adds that he was also ‘a highly unstable and equivocal figure.’¹¹ Numerous times in *The Art of Being Ruled*, Lewis appears to laud Sorel’s violent intensity. ‘George Sorel is a mercenary,’ he writes, ‘who is devoted to his profession – that of arms – and is willing to fight without pay... [T]he “battle” is everything. ... He is a semitaur who sees red both ways, the bull-nature injects the human eyes with blood.’¹² ‘Genuinely *violent*,’ Lewis later writes, ‘about that there is little doubt... He steals the philosophy of “war,” in short, and passes it quickly to the “slave”....’¹³ Ultimately, however, it is Sorel’s insistence on action and his refocusing of the revolutionary spirit that Lewis finds exciting rather than his program of violence. It is this same sense of powerful mission enacted by a ‘Nature’ personality, what he terms the ‘Will to Power’, that Lewis finds admirable in Lenin’s ascent to power during the October Revolution.¹⁴

Though Sorel published nearly to his death in 1922, his most influential writing for Lewis was all published by 1909, well before the First World War. It was the war, in which Lewis participated as an artillery officer at the front and later an official artist,

⁹ Ibid., 275.

¹⁰ Ibid., 275-6.

¹¹ Lewis, *Ruled*, 119.

¹² Ibid., 119.

¹³ Ibid., 120.

¹⁴ See the chapter ‘Bolshevik “Will to Power”’ (*Ruled*, 89-91) in which Lewis quotes extensively from Michael Farbman, *After Lenin* (London: Leonard Parsons, 1924).

which exhausted Lewis's interest in violence and turned him towards other means of precipitating revolution. Lewis's memoir of the war, *Blasting and Bombardiering*, reveals some of the pain he experienced in the war. However, since it was not published until 1937, much of Lewis's narrative is greatly altered by time so that many of his accounts exhibit his favored weapon of satire. Nonetheless, he is occasionally earnest, and in the book he addresses in the death of his beloved mother and explains his belief that it was the war that had killed her:

She died from yet a third attack [of pneumonia], in the great pneumonia epidemic which immediately followed the War, and which was undoubtedly the result of it. Consequently she was as well and truly killed by the military upheaval as if it had been shellfire and not pneumococci that did the trick... And as far as my private feelings about war and all its works were concerned, this death affected me more than anything else.¹⁵

Later in the book Lewis writes that her death caused him to swear 'a vendetta against these abominations [of war].'¹⁶ In *The Art of Being Ruled*, Lewis writes that violence 'is not the type of action that appeals to me most... I found myself in the blood-bath of the Great War, and in that situation reflected on the vanity of violence.' In addition to deriding the 'vanity' of violence, Lewis denounces any claim of morality in violence. Violence is 'an excess', and, 'a sadism merely, a degeneration the powerful ruler would ban.'¹⁷ Additionally, Lewis argues that war, like class struggles, can be exploited by capitalist interests that compel the opposing parties to "get on with the war" in order to continue to supply them with expensive muniments and weapons and to lend them money at crushing interest.¹⁸ Most at odds with Sorel's argument is Lewis's contention that violence is not necessary for a revolution, and, further, that, 'The war, the blood, and the

¹⁵ W. Lewis, *Blasting and Bombardiering* (London: Calder & Boyers, 1967), 189.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 211.

¹⁷ Lewis, *Ruled*, 64.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 54.

“catastrophe” is the method of the capitalist, not the method of the socialist....’¹⁹ In Lewis’s conception, revolution comes at the words and deeds of remarkable individuals who convince the majority to cast off of the oppressive dominant ideas of the capitalist system. ‘Force is a passing and precarious thing,’ Lewis argues, ‘whereas to get inside a person’s mind and change his very personality is the effective way [towards revolution]... The physical part of power, like the bloody part of revolution, should not be insisted on.’²⁰ Further, Lewis argues that this method of revolution can happen rapidly because if ‘[c]aught very young, a new mankind almost could be made from one generation to the next.’²¹

While Lewis finds Sorel’s insistence on violence unnecessary, he remains a staunch supporter of Sorel’s writing and singular revolutionary vision. Additionally, in Sorel, Lewis perhaps saw a model of revolutionary intensity that he might replicate in certain respects. Lewis describes Sorel as ‘a fabulous hybrid, attacking himself, biting his own tail, kicking his own heroic chest, contending his own unsympathetic flesh, and showing his wounds with pride – self-inflicted, *self* in everything.’²² Lewis would likely have accepted this description of the egotistical, manic, and brilliant revolutionary for himself. But unlike Sorel, Lewis was fatigued from the war. His own experiences at the front, coupled with the death of his mother, demonstrated for Lewis the futility of violence. Lewis’s stance was perhaps buoyed by Lenin’s nearly bloodless rise to power in October of 1917. Despite the violence of the February Revolution, Lenin’s ascent

¹⁹ Ibid., 52.

²⁰ Ibid., 94.

²¹ Ibid., 52.

²² Ibid., 119.

supported Lewis's contention that a powerful, independent individual, or 'Nature', can lead a populace to 'new road', as Sorel deemed the victory of socialism.

Conclusion

THE ART OF BEING RULED is an ambitious work. Lewis's ability as a student of politics is unassailable, as is his facility for synthesizing original conclusions from his own observations. In his discussion of liberty in the modern state, Lewis argues that the liberal notion of freedom has failed, and politicians should accept as practical the Hobbesian view of limited freedom within the state. Lewis's observations as to how the idea of liberty was being exploited by capitalist interests do not have an obvious precedent. In developing this argument, Lewis looked to new ideas and disciplines for support including crowd psychology, and sociology, as well as philosophy and scientific inquiry. While Lewis's underlying argument in favor of the Hobbesian view is not innovative in itself, his analysis of canonical concepts of liberty and the state provides a uniquely modern update. He provides a similar update to the Marxian notion of class. Unlike Marx, Lewis believes class struggle is not fundamentally economic in nature but racial. Further, Lewis posits the unique idea that class is merely a category used to differentiate people. As a result, classes can be more divisive and exploitable by rulers than the economic lines that socialists typically consider. This view is altogether different from that of the socialists', and Lewis puts it to effective use in his discussion of the 'sex-war'.

Lewis's discussion of the sex-war and its implications is unique. He combines his own conception of class with his theory of manipulative rule to develop an argument unlike any made by either a canonical liberal or socialist writer. As with many of his arguments, Lewis lacks a clear conclusion as to the ultimate result of the sex-war, and his

personal thoughts on the subject suggest a potential bias; but his observations of the impetus and result of the conflict are distinctive. Lewis parlays his discussion of the conflict between men and women into a discussion of the future of the family in the state. His arguments and observations regarding the family are some of his most complicated and convoluted, yet his myriad lucid observations make it exceptionally interesting and worthwhile. By endorsing the Marxian contention that the family would naturally disappear with the rise of socialism, Lewis is able to critique this most radical of Marxian propositions. He agrees with Marx's beliefs that, economically and socially, the modern family is inefficient and exploitative, and he agrees that the family model is inappropriate for governments. However, his ultimate support of Proudhon and that writer's defense of the family shows that Lewis does not allow his revolutionary interests to overcome the need for plausible plans for inciting revolution. In the intimate family unit, regardless of his own sympathy for the 'bourgeois family', he ultimately sees an effective method for raising children and a 'obsessing image' with which moderate revolutionaries would be unwilling to part. While Lewis does adopt Proudhon's position on the matter, he does so for reasons relevant to his era rather than those that influenced Proudhon.

Lewis's ideas on violence and revolution are similarly focused on providing a revolutionary platform for the modern age. In spite of his scathing criticism of the modern political unit and his revolutionary enthusiasm, Lewis is adamantly against violence. Revolution is necessary, and in the modern, civilized world, it is possible to overthrow the capitalist democracy without taking lives. This position is unique among most of the socialists he discusses throughout the book, and it supports Lewis's belief that rapid change can, and must, be effected through intellectual means. Violence is a

slovenly, ineffective method, and, ultimately, Lewis truly believes in his overarching argument: Once a core group of individuals begin acting and thinking for themselves, they will be able to upend the ideological manipulation of the modern capitalist government that oppresses the populace. Lewis's stance on violence demonstrates his character as a critic and political theorist, which is typically obscured by his aggressive and, at times, offensive rhetoric: Despite his vitriol for the modern world, he is essentially an optimist. He believes that the world can provide a governing system for itself without accepting an oppressive regime or engaging in the barbarities of war. While Lewis's discussions are frequently thick with canonical writers, some with whom he aligns, his conclusions and observations are focused on a political philosophy for a new era. As an artist and political thinker, Lewis is deeply sensitive to the fact that postwar era is different from the periods before it, and *The Art of Being Ruled* is his attempt at creating an acceptable world in which to live. Many of his ideas appear irrelevant or even odious today, but enough of his observations and predictions have come to pass or evince themselves as true to prove that Lewis was an insightful mind with a unique vision.

Appendix



Wyndham Lewis, *Self-Portrait*, 1921

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