James Joyce's Fable of the Ondt and the Gracehoper: 'Othering',
Critical Leader-Worship and Scapegoating

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'The Gracehoper was always jiggign agog, hoppy on akant of his joyicity.' This quotation from Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* has been used as an epigraph for the first chapter of a book on spirituality and prayer. Such an instance serves to demonstrate how Modernism's 'Safety Pun Factory' has percolated into the cultural sphere in diverse ways and usually, as here, in brief evocative passages. In fact, the main passage about the Gracehoper is short enough to stand as an anthology piece, and has become one of the best-known sections of Joyce's extraordinary text. In his 'joyicity', the Gracehoper clearly operates as a fond simulacrum of the writer himself, and as a kind of assertion of the attractions of his way of being:

the sillybilly of a Gracehoper had jingled through a jungle of love and debts and jangled through auble of life in doubts afterward, wetting with the bimblebeaks, driking with nautonects, bilking with durrydunglecks amd horing after ladybirdies....

(416)

This amounts to what Norman Mailer has called 'advertisements for myself', an affirmation of precisely those aspects of Joyce's lifestyle which worried close friends and supporters such as Harriet Shaw Weaver: his fecklessness, money-squandering, alcoholic binges, sponging, sexual prurience and so forth. The Gracehoper is nothing if not self-regarding: turning Aesop's binary value-system upside down, Joyce inherently endorses the Grasshopper's sunny *jouissance*. Arguably, this was his way of playing the 'stage Irishman', a Brendan Behan *avant le fait*, and quite like the Joyce caricature in Tom Stoppard's *Travesties*: 'to the ra, the ra, the ra, the ra'. (415)

However, implicit within the Gracehoping persona is the telling riposte Stoppard uses to bring down the curtain on his first act: "'And what did you do in the Great War?"' "I wrote *Ulysses*... What did you do?"

From the first words of *Finnegans Wake*—'riverrun, past Eve and Adam's'—it is clear that the book is centrally about language itself: 'The only thing that interests me is style', as Joyce remarked to his brother Stanislaus. The elaboration of the Gracehoper's sexual proclivities demonstrates Joyce's method at its most suggestive - an exemplification of Julia Kristeva's 'Desire in Language':

he was always making ungraceful overtures to Floh and Luse and Bienie and Vespatilla to play pupa-pupa and pulicy-pulicy and langtennas and pushpygydium and to commence insects with him, there mouthparts to his orifice and his gambills to there airy processes, even if only in chaste, among the everlistings, behold a waspering pot. He would of curse melissciously, by his fore feelers, flexors, contractors, depressors and extensors, lamely, harry me, marry me, bury me....(414)

The reader who is prepared to adjust expectations and respond to this kind of intercommunication has to be patiently attentive. The voice is that of a children's story-teller ('The Gracehoper was always jiggign agog,') and many of the word-compounds are of an infant, rather than adult, sphere: 'Vespatilla', 'pupa-pupa', 'pushpygydium' and so forth. However, other words evidence an adult salaciousness: 'insects' (if read as incest), 'oreifice', 'fore feelers', 'extensors'. There is also a 'transgressively' prurient quality in the language. But stronger even than this is the 'crossword puzzle' challenge of ambivalent reference: 'Floh', 'langtennas', 'melissciously, and in particular (later) 'schoppinhour'. Joyce is inviting us to play an unusual language-game: but it is a game very much on his own high-cultural terms. The language is devised to elicit admiration, awe and a sense of initiation into élite hyper-consciousness.

Joyce, the Gracehoper, one cannot help feeling, is indulging an amazing narcissism.
This is probably less ‘primary narcissism’ than a willed and highly crafted secondary narcissism. As will shortly be shown, Joyce’s articulated self-regard, while in and for itself, is, in fact, predicated on the parallel construction of a ‘projected’ (or introjected?) ‘other’. However, considered as prior phenomenon in the introduction to the fable, Gracehoping appears as an individualistic dissolving of the ‘Symbolic’ into what Lacan calls the ‘Imaginary’ and Kristeva the ‘Semiotic’. Joyce, as it were, reverses the function of différence (the production of meaning through distinctions) so that differences become assimilated into similarity-as-sonance, so that radically diffused ambiguity is produced by sound-chimes: ‘Luse’, ‘gambills’, ‘airy’, ‘chaste’, ‘fournish’, ‘Tingsomingenting’. It matters less what the Gracehoper means to convey (though Joyce has it both ways) than that he sings, and that he enjoys his own singing. The medium is the ‘massage’ as Marshal McLuhan—himself a close student of Finnegans Wake—was wont to say:

(seven bolls of sapo, a lick of lime, two spurs of fussfor, threefurts of sulph, a shake o’ shouker…) (415)

The Gracehoper, like Aesop’s Grasshopper, sings of summer with full-throated ease, and boasts his own frivolity, laziness, improvidence and imperviousness to planning. As readers, we can re-Joyce in this: a tabu is lifted, a repression transmuted into the pleasure-principle. Yet in this, the Gracehoper has also implicated us in his own self-magnification (‘I overstand you, you understand’). By the authority of his erudition and powers of auditory seduction, Joyce has manoeuvred his collective readership into acceptance of totalitarian, literary leadership. In group-terms, he induces total dependence. The result can be a virtual paralysis of critical judgment. Joyce scholarship manifests an anxiety as to what the ‘Master’ meant, a life-time having been demanded for comprehension. Hence the compilation of Guides, Concordances and ever more detailed contributions to the James Joyce Quarterly to pursue the greatest possible fidelity to Joyce’s ‘Intention’. No doubt this is inevitable in the world of ‘academic research’, yet it colludes with the extraordinary egotism of the Gracehoper project: ‘Ereathing above ground, as his Book of Breathings’. (415) Basically, the Gracehoper embodies the underlying impulse in Finnegans Wake, which is to articulate the narcissism of a major modernist as a private language striving for global mastery: ‘My unchanging Word is sacred…the rite words by the rote order!’ (167)

As already intimated, such Gracehoping is here asserted in the presence of a represented ‘Alterity’ that is not Aesop’s plural ‘ants’ but the single, leaden Ondt. One should not, as Lacan nicely says, use the term ‘other’ as ‘mouthwash’. Yet clearly the Ondt is the Gracehoper’s represented opposite:

Grousconious me and scarab my sahul! What a bagateller it is! Libellulous! Inanzanarity! Pou! Pschla! Pthul! What a zeit for the goths! vented the Ondt, who, not being a sommerfool, was thootholly making chilly spaces at hisphex affront of the icinglass of his windhame…. (415)

In contrast to the singing Gracehoper, the Ondt is introduced as essentially a nay-sayer: he expostulates at the Gracehoper’s self-expressive exuberance, seeing it as libellous, ludicrous, insane and insincere; hence his expletives: ‘Pou! Pschla! Pthul!’ He deplores the ‘Gothic’ barbarity of the Gracehoper’s playing with time (‘zeit’) in comparison to his own stance as ‘aceticist and aristotaller’ (417), and rejects the very plenitude and play of his words (‘What a bagateller it is!’). Not being a ‘sommerfool’, he is characterised as wintry by nature (preparing himself for what is to come): ‘chilly’ with an ‘icinglass’. At best he is ‘thothfoll’, cultivating ‘spaces’—perhaps as storage areas to set against the deprivations of ‘zeit’. In a slightly later passage he is represented in terms of administration:

He was sair sair sullemn and chairmanlooking when he was not making spaces in his psyche, but, laus! when he wore making spaces on his ikey, he ware mouche mothst
scred and muravyingly wisechairmanlooking. (416)

The Ondt is all that the Gracehoper is not.

It is well known that the chief model for the Ondt was Joyce’s friend and novelistic rival Wyndham Lewis (“windham”). Lewis had criticised *Ulysses* (particularly) in his massive attack on ‘time-philosophy’ in *Time and Western Man* (1927), which greatly expanded his milder critique in *The Art of Being Ruled* (1926). As I have written elsewhere, Lewis’s chapter ‘An Analysis of the Mind of James Joyce’ accuses *Ulysses* of being ‘fluxive, derivative, clichéd, passé, stagnant, superficial, dead and—Victorian…. For him, it is merely a compendium of the dead gestures of the past.’ 15 Basically, Lewis espouses ‘Space’ against Joyce’s ‘Time’—and finds *Ulysses* wanting. This was doubly hurtful to Joyce since, as Paul Edwards points out, Lewis had asked for a sample of his friend’s latest work for his own magazine, *The Enemy*. 16 Joyce sent him a sample from his ‘Work in Progress’. But instead of publishing this in his first issue (February 1927), Lewis tried out his ‘analysis’ of Joyce. Joyce’s response was to come in *transition* (March 1928) in the form of the fable under consideration. 17 In short, the fable is partly a ‘move’ in an intellectual, but also inter-personal, falling-out, much like that between Jung and Freud. In larger terms, the meaning and direction of the modernist movement is at stake. However, there is an important twist in that *Finnegans Wake* assigns the fable to Shaun (*‘I apologuise, Shaun began…’ [414]), and Shaun is usually associated with Lewis to Joyce’s Shem. From a psychoanalytic point of view, the passage thus represents a complex transmutation of introjection-projection phantasies concerning the relations between Joyce and Lewis. The would-be ‘analytical’ reader must negotiate a maze of subtle mirrorings.

Overall, Joyce has constructed a sly and amusing ‘container’ within which to rehearse differences between selfhood and an ‘other’ (‘Je est un autre’?). 18 One in-joke, presumably, is that the Gracehoper’s summer exuberance depends on an exploitation of ‘Space’ in which ‘Time’ has been suspended (a caricature of Lewis’s position in *Time and Western Man*); similarly, the Ondt must depend precisely on ‘Time’—the coming of winter—to vindicate his industry against the Gracehoper’s idleness. In this sense, Lewis, not Joyce, may be the careless Gracehoper (wasting his time on polemics rather than forging an aesthetic *magnum opus*?). But however one interprets what is going on, it is clear that there is much method in the psycho-babble madness of the writing. Joyce knows quite exactly what he is about and has no need of psychoanalytic ‘diagnosis’ (C. G. Jung felt he was ‘a latent schizoid’). 19 In Kleinian terms, one might say that he has absorbed Lewis’s oppositionality and reparatorily transformed it into a literary game of Who’s Who? 20 Whatever else, the incorporation of the *transition* fable of 1928 into the completed *Finnegans Wake* of 1939 gave Lewis a status in the book at least comparable to that of Adam, Finn MacCool or St Patrick.

In the meantime, Joyce brought the fable to a suitably jokey conclusion. The Gracehoper, like Aesop’s Grasshopper, is soon out in the cold: ‘Bruko dry! fuko spint! Sultamont osa bare!’ (416) His exclamation ‘O moy Bog’ reminds one of Lewis’s equally jokey allusion to Joyce, ‘the bloody bog orange man’, in *The Childermass* (1928). 21 But, at any rate, the Gracehoper is down on his luck: ‘Was he come to hevre with his engyles or gone to hull with the poop?’ (*Ibid.*) He returns to a now-enthroned Ondt, who is ‘sated before his comfortumble phullupspuppyy’ (417), and ‘schneeze’s out his distress. The Ondt (‘that true and perfect host’) is now surrounded by the sycophantic and titillating Floh, Luse, Bienie and Vespatailla, in a comedic ‘reversal of fortune’. The Ondt now has everything, the Gracehoper nothing (‘*Ad majorem l.s.d.! Divi gloriam*’ [418]). The Ondt appears to enjoy his moment of triumph, and deigns to address ‘Thou-who-thou-art’; the text then suddenly turns into a versified doggerel of rhyming couplets:

*He larved and he larved on he merd such a nauses The Gracehoper feared he would mixplace his fauces.*
I forgive you, groud Ondt, said the Gracehoper, weeping,
For their sakes of the sakes you are safe in whose keeping.... (418)

From ‘I forgive you’ onward, the poem is spoken by the Gracehoper. It is a bizarre mixture of humble pie, punning epigram, question, admonition, exclamation and apologia. Its effect is an incantatory negotiation of the differences between himself and the Ondt, with a reparative tendency to see them both less in terms of antipathy than as dialectic forces in process. An early move is placatory—Mohammed will go to the mountain. He accepts ‘reproof’—‘the horsegift of a friend’ (418), but insists on their similarity-in-difference: ‘Culex’ and ‘Pulex’. Such ‘containment’ of binary ‘splitting’ is furthered by a sequence of pairings—‘twins’, ‘Wastenot with Want’, ‘two and true’, ‘Nolans go volants’ and so on. What might appear as ‘verbal salad’ is, in fact, a reconciliatory passage of comradely play (to which Lewis would respond in The Childermass). Subsequent to this, the phrase ‘your mocks for my grapes’ reiterates terms from another fable interpreting the Joyce-Lewis dyad, ‘The Mookse and the Grumpis’. There follows ambivalent tribute: ‘Your whole’s wherabroads’, but ‘trigghyright’ (419); the Gracehoper acknowledges the Ondt’s ‘volumes immense’ and ‘genus...worldwide’, yet in relation to his ‘spacest sublime’ plants the barbed query: ‘why can’t you beat time?’ The ending is comically blasphemous: ‘of the former and of the latter and of their holocaust. Allmen’. The parody of ecclesiastical language exploits a shared area of agreement—a devotion to artistic endeavour as opposed to some religious calling. From story-opening to parody blessing, Joyce has elaborated his fable as a means of exercising, and exorcising, the duality between himself and Lewis. It is a memorable piece of aesthetic ‘nonsense’ and, beyond the specific references, rather in the vein of another Lewis: Lewis Carroll.

In fact, the parable of ‘The Ondt and the Gracehoper’ encapsulates a far larger relationship between the careers of Joyce and Lewis, an oppositional one which epitomises a major tension within literary Modernism itself, and one which contemporary critics have only quite recently begun to acknowledge and map. Hitherto, the insistent, and conflictual, references to each other in the writings of Joyce and Lewis have been largely registered in editors’ notes and scholarly articles. When I wrote Intertextual Dynamics in the late 1980s, overall critical versions of ‘British Modernism’ made little of this major splitting in the movement, partly because Wyndham Lewis had been virtually excluded from the accepted pantheon. My aim was to re-focus attention on the core of Modernism (which was becoming diffused into the margins of ‘Bloomsbury’, women ‘writing for their lives’24 and the ‘Harlem Renaissance’) through a study of literary relations between Joyce, Lewis, Pound and Eliot. In doing so, I co-opted some ideas from the group-psychoanalytic movement founded by S. H. Foukes and W. R. Bion. These ideas seemed far more explanatory of modernist sharing and rivalry than the more fashionable ‘theory’ of Jacques Lacan, whose structuralist misreading of Freud was currently being repackaged in ‘Readers’ by the devotees of British Poststructuralism. Apart from anything else, the ‘men of 1914’ (Lewis’s phrase) were, at the least, a ‘phantasy’ group of importance to each writer. Their ‘groupography’ (Wake, 476), as a ‘big four’ (Wake, 384) had a notable symmetry in terms of the ‘Pairing’26 of the two novelists and two poets.

Intertextual Dynamics received some notice. However, perhaps my own caution about the relevance of group-theory27 led reviewers to ignore that dimension. Or, perhaps, they had little knowledge of that development in psychoanalysis. In the London Review of Books, David Trotter had some fun at the book’s expense but magnanimously suggested that: ‘Inside a bad book about Modernism, there is a potentially good book about the relationship between Lewis and Joyce’. Such a book has more recently been written, Scott W. Klein’s The Fictions of James Joyce and Wyndham Lewis, which, though restricted in scope, adds a lot of detail to the Lewis/ Joyce game of ‘otherwise’. In particular, Klein emphasises the central significance of a ‘quasi-mythic’ Lewis in Joyce’s last major work. In this he stresses the interconnectedness
of the two writers at the centre of Modernism: ‘the importance of these parallelisms was not lost on their contemporaries, who thought of Joyce and Lewis together as the most experimental prose stylists of their time’ (8); ‘these mutual articulations border upon collaboration’ (18); ‘to perceive Lewis’s and Joyce’s interconnectedness is thus to revise our sense of modernism’ (203); ‘to discover Lewis and Joyce within each other’s texts is thus to discover two visions of modernity inhering within one another’. (206)

In brief, Joyce was born just nine months earlier than Lewis in 1882. I retain the view that initially Lewis was the more adventurous and experimental writer and that Lewis’s career was fatally disrupted by his service in the Great War (just as Joyce’s scampering neutrality enabled him to triumph with Ulysses). The Ondt’s adversity was the Gracehoper’s opportunity. Joyce’s Ulysses (published in book-form in 1922) incorporated into its stylistic variations the experimentalism of early modernism—including, I believe (as Lewis did), Lewisian prose-Vorticism. Joyce wrote the greater part of Ulysses in Zürich (the mythic locus of Stoppard’s Travesties). At Pound’s instigation Joyce moved to Paris after the war: ‘The whool of the whaal in the wheel of the whorl...has thus come to taon!’ (Wake, 415) Here he built up his artistic reputation and became chief literary Magus of a larger international group. Lewis, at this time, was still recovering from the war (and his mother’s death) and only resurrected his literary career in 1926. Although he visited Joyce in Paris and enjoyed drinking with him, it is likely that there was also something of the resentment of an ex-serviceman in Lewis’s attitude to Joyce’s apotheosis in the French capital he had helped defend from German invasion.

Lewis’s stance as ‘Enemy’ and his ‘analysis’ of Joyce were intellectual strategies, conducted in terms of ideas. Yet some personal animus appears to show through, partly informed by political differences: ‘Joyce and Yeats are the prose and poetry respectively of the Ireland that culminated in the Rebellion’. In Time and Western Man Lewis allows that Joyce was ‘against Sinn Fein’, but suggests he is ‘ready enough, as a literary artist, to stand for Ireland, and has wrapped himself up in a gigantic cocoon of local colour in Ulysses’. However, his deeper thrust is less on the grounds of Anglo-Irish relations than in terms of Joyce’s self-persona in his books:

It would be difficult, I think, to find a more lifeless, irritating, principal figure than the deplorable hero of the Portrait of the Artist and of Ulysses...in the centre of the picture, this mean and ridiculous figure remains—attitudinizing, drooping, stalking slowly, ‘quietly’ and ‘bitterly’ from spot to spot, mouthing a little Latin. (97)

Granted that Stephen Dedalus is far more James Joyce than the Gracehoper could be, this is brutally ad hominem from a drinking companion. (One again thinks of Stoppard’s Henry Carr: ‘I dreamed I had him in the witness box, a masterly cross-examination.’) Where the war-shattered Lewis operated, now, as a lone sniper, Joyce responded by encouraging a battery of civilian bombardiers to rebut Lewis in the hero-worshipping Our Examation Round His Facilitation for Incamation of Work in Progress. According to Scott Klein, Lewis ‘serves as implicit or explicit subject’ in ‘no fewer than four of the twelve essays’. (op cit, 153) Joyce initially took refuge, in short, in the inter-relational dynamics of a Paris-based group where he was the undisputed master of the Word. Lewis is taken at his own estimation as ‘Enemy’—a ‘friend’ of the master who has, nevertheless, publicly attacked him. In such instances the group response is an almost invariable one: scapegoating. As Norris Nitsun has observed in The Anti-Group, ‘the scapegoat may be carrying anti-group reactions that are disowned and projected by the rest of the group in a state of self-righteous condemnation.’ Piers Lyndon describes the scapegoat’s ‘kind of negative importance as the significant other, the leader’s antitype, onto whom may be offloaded the negative elements aroused by the dependency experience’. Thomas McGreevy, for instance, wrote of Lewis: ‘If he would read the story of the Ondt and the Gracehoper, not impatiently, but patiently he might learn from it
how to write a satire not like a barbarian, ineffectively but like an artist, effectively'; while William Carlos Williams (who also rejected the ‘European’ nature of The Waste Land) attacked Rebecca West and Lewis as ‘what might be termed typically British...a criticism...properly due to national exigencies like the dementia of Wyndham Lewis’. Not only ‘barbarian’ and ‘British’, Lewis (according to this medical man) was also demented. After the comparative playfulness of his transition fable, Joyce was clearly not above mobilising a private gang to accuse his detractor (as group-feeling tends to do) of barbarity and madness.

In his heyday, Wyndham Lewis was quite confident and bold enough to write back to Joyce and his clique (and in Self Condemned, 1954, he seems also to offer reparation to his friend, now dead). However, where Our Examation becomes of key importance in literary studies is that it has set a precedent for critical opinion in general. Despite the strictures of a (now mythical) F. R. Leavis, James Joyce has become the revered super-modernist, from Richard Ellmann, say, through Colin MacCabe to Bonnie Kime Scott. The Gallic poststructuralists, especially Jacques Derrida and Julia Kristeva, have endorsed this verdict in neo-scholastic terms. It is almost impossible in the current cultural climate to offer a frank and discriminatory view of Joyce’s achievement in the sort of terms that Lewis once employed. Lewis wrote:

No writing of his before Ulysses would have given him anything but an honourable position as the inevitable naturalist-french-influenced member of the romantic Irish Revival....Ulysses was in a sense a different thing altogether. How far that is an effect of a merely technical order, resulting from stylistic complications and intensified display...I should have only partly to decide here. But it places him—on that point everyone is in agreement—very high in contemporary letters. (Time and Western Man, 73)

After Ulysses came Finnegans Wake—an ‘Open Sesame’ to post-isms of all kinds, but one rarely read carefully by anyone but specialists.

Meanwhile, although admired (and feared) in his lifetime as a founder of the British modernist movement, Wyndham Lewis’s reputation has suffered a neglect similar to the Gracehoper’s winter deprivation: (‘Not one pickoep of muscow-money to bag a tittlebits of beebread!’ Wake, 416). For instance, he was given just two anecdotal mentions in Edmund Wilson’s once-influential Axel’s Castle of 1931, where Gertrude Stein enjoyed a chapter; Lewis’s novels are not examined in over one hundred pages on ‘The Modernist Novel’ in Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane’s important Penguin book Modernism, 1976; he is discussed as a painter (but not novelist) in Christopher Butler’s helpful Early Modernism of 1994. The ‘grondt Ondt’ was for many years almost written out of mainstream critical opinion about fictional modernism. How the Gracehoper would have ‘larved’ and ‘larved’! Yet the larger ‘grouprophy’ of critical fashion has not only scapegoated Lewis by neglect, but also (where he is mentioned) by a kind of disgust. It is as if he falls outside the pale of some collective, critical ‘Superego’.

An example of this has been Fredric Jameson’s interesting venture to make the Lewis exemplum fit into Louis Althusser’s theory of ideology. The main argument is set up with occasional passages of Puritanical disdain: ‘his misogyny and his violent anti-Communism’, ‘an atmosphere of violence and destruction which the narratives articulate into a self-perpetuating sequence of rape, physical assault, aggressivity, guilt and immolation’ (8); ‘his implacable opposition to Marxism’ (18). It does not seem to occur to Jameson that Lewis might have good reason to be opposed to Marxist Communism as internationally operative (we know more about that now), or that an admirer of Shakespeare’s darker plays had every right to imaginatively represent evils like rape and assault (they do happen). Jameson admits that Lewis ‘was in no sense an official fascist ideologue’ (14), and might merely have been a ‘classical conservative’ (12), but he nevertheless repeats the content-less phrase ‘protofascism’ and boldly subtitles his
study of the novels ‘The Modernist as Fascist’. In the late twentieth-century, ‘fascist’ was the ultimate blame-word; but it cannot possibly be justified by Jameson’s pseudo-psychologising about ‘political unconscious’, ‘libidinal apparatus’ and so forth. At its worst the book can exemplify the ‘poverty of theory’. Basically, Jameson wants to make his own political points out of Lewis’s unique attunement to modern violence, something that Ezra Pound (who did become a fascist) called ‘something active and “disagreeable”...thepercussions of a highly energized mind’. The same could be said about Coriolanus, Titus Andronicus or (Lewis’s favourite) Timon of Athens. That scarcely makes Shakespeare a ‘protofascist’.

However, overall Jameson is endeavouring to say something fairer and subtler than ‘Down with the Ondt!’ That is not so true of several other commentators. Alan Munton has summed up this trend as ‘imputing noxiousness’ (the phrase is Lacan’s). Psychoanalytically, one might say, this involves negative ‘projection’, ‘splitting’ or hostile ‘othering’. Munton writes:

Lewis is so widely reviled that almost any claim about him, or his work, can be made. That he, or his work, is violent, fascist, misogynist and pathologically insane has become, not the end-point of argument, but the point of departure. For many practitioners, Lewis criticism is an act of sustained condemnation.... Lewis criticism, like no other in the study of modernism, is the arena in which critics have found that they can act out their desires. The nature of those desires is consistently antipathetic towards understanding, sympathy or tolerance.... Lewis has become the person about whom anything can be said. And that is the principle which enables his critics to project their desire upon his work. (5)

Munton has provided strong evidence for this verdict in his two articles in the Wyndham Lewis Annual. In particular, ever since the effectively a-political Joyce was co-opted for ‘Socialism’ some time around 1970, Lewis has become constructed by critical theorists as the demonised other—what else but a ‘fascist’, or ‘protofascist’, or misogynist? Certainly a very bad man. It is not likely that Gracehoping Joyce would have found such a situation anything but preposterous: not only did he ironically appreciate the values of the Ondt, he understood (and represented in his fable) the dialectical necessity of an intelligent opposite who could not be subsumed into group ‘joyicity’.

There does, in fact, seem to be ‘large group’ collusion in the criticism Munton rightly objects to. It is as if the transition group has evolved into a newer generation, and one more prone to mistake venom for political correctness. British poststructuralism, in particular, has endorsed Joyce as Magus, using the theories of such as Althusser and Lacan as later reference points in the celebrated ‘Revolution of the Word’. Lacan, especially, has interesting things to say (although from a group-psychoanalytic perspective his Seminar seems more like an exhibition of leadership-control than a genuine dialogue). But it is precisely the group dimension which Lacan’s structuralist rewriting of Freud lacks for a contemporary psychology. The main findings of group theory, whether in the tradition of S. H. Foulkes or of W. R. Bion, evidence all the hallmarks that seem to characterise the critical attack on Lewis. There is ‘Dependence’ on some leader (Joyce, but also Lacan), ‘Fight/Flight’ politicisation of literature, ‘Pairing’ in political correctness, and, above all, ‘scapegoating’ to demonise all intelligent opposition to consensus. Munton is right to see this as a ‘crisis of understanding, and a crisis of scholarship’. (5)

However, there is increasing evidence of a newer scholarly criticism (one less in thrall to the nostrums of the 1960s). For instance, in Modernist Fiction (1992), Randall Stevenson has two chapters on ‘Space’ and ‘Time’ which are able to address Lewis’s contribution without resorting to the longer ‘f’-word. He writes, for example: ‘By far the most prolific contemporary commentator on [“Time Philosophy”], Wyndham Lewis, had no doubt about the factors responsible for a new concern with time in the life and the art of the 1920s’. Stevenson questions
Lewis's insistence on the causative function of Bergson's philosophy, but he uses *Time and Western Man* extensively as a reference point for spatio-temporal representations in modern novels. As he notes:

Wyndham Lewis's enquiry in *Time and Western Man* needs to be extended into a still wider scrutiny of pressures on Western Man in the late nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth. Why should a hostility to clocks and a preference for 'time in the mind' have appeared so widely throughout the sensibility of this particular period? (113)

In short, Stevenson explicitly endorses the value of the Onndt's description of the issues. Similarly, in *Modernisms* (1995), Peter Nicholls is able to discuss Lewis's strategic deployment of the 'Enemy' and of 'black comedy' without losing judgmental balance: he wryly notes that: 'This aspect of Lewis's writing is familiar and not widely liked'. (273) Later on he also suggests the European dimension to Lewis's form of Modernism: 'it is to writers like Franz Kafka, Robert Musil and Hermann Broch that we must look for forms of negativity, satire and pastiche which bear comparison with Lewis's'. (273) Further, Douglas Mao, in *Solid Objects* (1998), is prepared to appreciate 'the characteristically counterintuitive vigor of a Lewis instigation', while Tyrus Miller in *Late Modernism* (1999) commends Lewis's 'highly erudite discussions of literature, art, and philosophy'. In short, the demonising of Lewis is not an inevitable critical reaction to his work.

Nevertheless, the chorus of critical jeering which Lewis's work can evoke may serve to alert us to two 'psychoanalytic' dangers in the critical endeavour: the first is that of groupish 'basic assumptions' which can infect collective judgment; the second is that of the negative countertransference that can distort individual judgment. In the first instance, criticism is itself inevitably a matter of 'groupography'—of 'schools', theoretical positions, conference networks and so on. The main danger here is when cultural leadership conducts negative campaigning, whether the Joyceans contra Lewis, F. R. Leavis versus C. P. Snow, or Larkin and Amis against modernism in general. Followers easily become as unbalanced as the leaders. Which raises the second, related issue. Countertransference is, also, inevitable in reading, and is useful as its servant, but not as the master of interpretation and judgment. In the case of Lewis, the writing can be provocative, negative and tinged with blackness; but so can that of Shakespeare, or Swift, or Kafka, or Sylvia Plath. The critic will respond to this; but a 'crisis of understanding...and scholarship' sets in where the registration of aesthetic affect produces a merely visceral response. Critical judgment is, in the end, more important than a grasp of theory because it weighs up *worth*.

Lewis's own example is instructive here. He argues against those aspects of Joyce's work which he finds deleterious to the modernist venture, yet he acknowledges Joyce's achievement and preserves his analysis from degenerating into demonisation: 'his work' is 'a considerable achievement of art' (*TWM*, 77). Furthermore, the Enemy's immediate response to the fable of the Onndt and the Gracehoper is couched in Joyce's own jokily parodic terms:

hit's hit hit in me brain-pan and bin an mixt all the lettas! Ho Christ hitfitt hazzent mixt...hall the wordies up in me old tin brainpot wot I dropt in two at a time dayin dayout,...

In *The Childermass* (1928), as I wrote in *Intertextual Dynamics*, Lewis has 'considerable fun at his rival's expense':

'seabird-girl sob-slobber' [so much for the great epiphany in *Portrait*]; "dublin-pubmumper on the rivolooshums highbrowlownneck-racket"; "Master Joys of Potluck, Joys of Jingles, whom men call Crossword-Joys for his apt circumsolutions".

(*Ibid.*)

This constitutes, as Bakhtinians say, the 'dialogic imagination', as the mock-moralistic
Ondt barracks the Gracehopper’s ‘joyicity’ Later, in *Self Condemned* (1954), Lewis’s history professor will admit ‘as a possibility that history should be written as an Alicean chaos, or even as a violent burlesque’, where ‘the mad kings, queens, duchesses, hatters and the rest are the more or less dangerous lunatics who surround our baffled hero’.53 Where H.C.E. is the hero, this constitutes Lewis’s reparative acknowledgement of *Finnegans Wake* (as is the heroine’s pet name ‘Essie’—compare the *Wake’s* ‘Issy’). However, Lewis’s repariation came only after his friend’s death: at the height of their careers the Ondt needed the Gracehopper to be just that—and vice versa.

This is clear in Joyce’s fable itself: ‘These twain are the twins that tick *Homo Vulgaris*’ (418). One way of describing this strong literary inter-relationship might be to say that in the 1920s both writers were exploring the unprecedented notion of ‘space-time’ which the New Physics had constructed and popularised. As Randall Stevenson has written, ‘Einstein’s views carried into the 1920s a huge wave of popular excitement and interest in such issues’ (*op cit*, 108). By consciously polarising their positions (Lewis throwing down the gauntlet in the name of ‘Space’, Joyce taking it up in the name of ‘Time’) these two novelists colluded, in effect, in a dialectical teasing-out of the implications of Relativity. They wrestled each other about a bit (like Shem and Shaun), but in a strenuous learning process which they could both represent as play. If anyone, it was Joyce who played dirty by summoning up the *Our Examation* gang to ensure that he came out on top. There is no profit in literary criticism perpetuating such partisanship into a fourth generation. Like psychoanalysis-in-practice, responsible criticism is about ‘attention and interpretation’.

Honest attention comes first. Lewis should be fairly read. Or as the Gracehopper puts it: ‘May the Graces I hoped for sing your Ondtship song sensel!’ (419).

NOTES
8. Originally meaning ‘unable to speak’, of course.
10. I prefer Kristeva’s usage since it suggests primitive communication rather than primal ‘dreamtime’.
may be pardoned for feeling similar effects when immersed in the immensity of the *Wake*.

13. As Scott W. Klein has pointed out, these words are uttered by Shaun, generally seen as the opposite (‘twin’) of Joyce’s Shem, *The Fictions of James Joyce and Wyndham Lewis: Monsters of Nature and Design* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 185. However, as I shall argue, Joyce has introjected Shaun into his fictive project and most readers would surely allow that ‘my unchanging Word’ describes the Wake itself.


18. ‘Jung was...mistaken in insisting that Joyce was a latent schizoid who used drinking to control his schizoid tendencies’, Ellmann, *James Joyce*, p. 680.


25. One of Wilfred Bion’s three ‘basic assumptions’ within groups. The sexuality of individuals is not the issue; the group experiences close Pairing relationships as a phantasy coupling to produce a group ‘Messiah’. See W. R. Bion, *Experiences in Groups* (London: Tavistock, 1961), passim.

26. ‘However, it soon became clear to me that the Modernist texts which were my primary interest tended to express, at creativity-aware levels, those group-dynamics which psychoanalysts interpreted from unconscious behavioural interchange.’ *Intertextual Dynamics*, p. 2. I would not, now, wish to differentiate strongly between what is ‘conscious’ and ‘unconscious’ in group behaviour.


32. The allusion, of course, is to Lewis’s later book which, among other things, celebrates ‘the men of 1914’ - *Blasting and Bombardiering* (1937).

33. Samuel Beckett *et al*, *Our Examgination Round His Factification for Incarnation of*
38. See my discussion in Intertextual Dynamics, pp. 171-78, and below.
40. The title of E. P. Thompson's essay attacking Althusser’s ‘theory’.
42. Alan Munton, “Imputing Noxiousness”: Aggression and Mutilation in Recent Lewis Criticism, Wyndham Lewis Annual IV, 1997, pp. 5-20. His follow-up article was ‘Fantasies of Violence: the Consequences of Not Reading Wyndham Lewis’, Annual V, 1998, pp. 31-49. Granted that, on Munton’s evidence, this seems a routine attitude to Lewis by many critics, it surely involves at least notional group behaviour among like-minded critics. The abundant commentary on group scapegoating mechanisms should, at the least, give such commentators second thoughts: e.g. ‘In scapegoating the group members are in denial about some significant aspect of themselves as engaged in an attack: “The group” seems to be the responsible agent’, Kenneth Porter in Basics of Group Psychotherapy, ed. Harold S. Bernard and K. Roy MacKenzie (New York: The Guilford Press, 1994), pp. 114 and 113.
43. ‘Projective identification’ and ‘splitting’ are terms especially associated with the Kleinian school within British psychoanalysis; ‘othering’ or ‘Alterity’ has been more associated with French psychoanalysis: it has also been much expanded from its strictly psychoanalytic meaning to include political phenomena - especially those not approved of. See, e.g., Franz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, trans. C. Farrington (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965) and Jacqueline Rose, States of Fantasy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) for wider uses of such terms.
44. See, for instance, the latter part of Colin MacCabe, James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word (London: Macmillan, 1979).
46. See, again, W. R. Bion, Experiences in Groups. (Note 26.)
52. Intertextual Dynamics, p. 114.