THE STRANGE GENIUS OF DAVID LINDSAY

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An appreciation by

J. B. Pick, Colin Wilson &
E. H. Visiak

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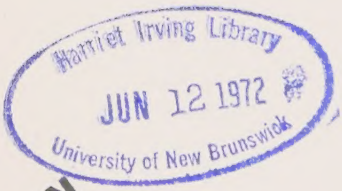

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Foreword

This book on Lindsay was conceived in 1966. E. H. Visiak—then eighty-eight years old—had moved from his flat in Hove into a private nursing home, and was finding that time hung heavily on his hands. I was in America at the time, and I suggested that we might collaborate on a book about Lindsay. Since Visiak was one of the few living men who had known Lindsay during the last twenty years of his life, it seemed a worth while idea to get his views and reminiscences about his friend. Baker offered to publish the book, and E.H.V. settled down to write his part. I had already written a long essay on Lindsay in my volume of essays, Eagle and Earwig (*also published by John Baker); but for various reasons, I delayed beginning my own contribution to the book until the summer of 1968, when I was back in England. And I had only just begun it when E.H.V. wrote to tell me that he had heard a rumour that J. B. Pick also intended writing a book on Lindsay. I already knew a fine essay on Lindsay by Mr Pick, which I had quoted, and it was clear that if he intended writing a full-length study, our own might be superseded. So I wrote to Mr Pick to ask him about his plans. To my delight—and that expression is an understatement—he replied that he would be happy to place his own material on Lindsay at our disposal, including an essay containing the only biographical material that is available, and essays on the unpublished novels* The Violet Apple *and* The Witch. *Mr Visiak shared my enthusiasm, even though it meant cutting his own lengthy essay on* Devil's Tor *to less than half its size.*

This resulting volume, by three authors, may strike some readers as lacking the unity that a single author can give. On the other hand, I think we can claim that this is the definitive work on a writer who will be ranked as one of the most important of this century. A Voyage to Arcturus *is one of the greatest imaginative works in the English language; his subsequent works may be opaque and thorny, but what they are saying is always important. At the time of writing,* Arcturus *is enjoying an unexpected vogue in America; it was reissued in paperback—at my suggestion—by Ballantyne Books, whose paperback edition of Tolkien's* Lord of the Rings *has sold a record number of*

copies. It cannot be said that Lindsay has achieved anything like the vogue of Tolkien in the three months since the paperback came out, but it certainly can no longer be said that he is unknown; and there now seems a fair possibility that Arcturus *will become as familiar on American campuses as* Ulysses *or* Lady Chatterley's Lover.

E. H. Visiak is himself a remarkable and unique figure; his autobiography, Life's Morning Hour, *is a classic of mysticism, and his novel* Medusa *has shared with* Arcturus *a place in Gollancz's series of 'Rare Works of Imaginative Fiction'. To Gollancz's* Arcturus *he has contributed an introduction not reprinted here.*

I had intended to include a section of Lindsay's letters to Visiak in this book; but the additional material has left us no space. I must admit that this is no great loss; Lindsay was never much at ease in his letters, and they are interesting mainly as a record of his struggles against neglect and illness.

Like J. B. Pick, I never met Lindsay; but I exchanged a few letters with Mrs Lindsay before her death last year, as well as with Lindsay's daughters, Mrs Diana Moon and Mrs Helen Baz. John Pick, on the other hand, became interested in Lindsay's work shortly after his death, and what followed was not unlike A. J. A. Symons's 'Quest for Corvo'. Mrs Lindsay's last years were lonely and not very happy; Mr Pick became a close friend, and was able to help her in a great many ways. It may not be possible to publish the full story of his 'quest for Lindsay' for many years; but the most important parts will be found in this book.

COLIN WILSON, Cornwall 1969

J. B. PICK

A sketch of Lindsay's life as man and writer

A SKETCH OF LINDSAY'S LIFE AS MAN AND WRITER

David Lindsay died in 1945. He published five books, one of them a masterpiece, left two unpublished and remains almost unknown. An exploration of his work reveals depth and fascination that only a handful of writers in this century can approach. No book of his brought him any reasonable sum of money, or received adequate recognition from the critics, yet at least one of his books is enduring; this makes his life in one sense a tragedy, in another a triumph.

He was an intensely serious writer, whose life and work was a most arduous pilgrimage in search of ultimate truth—an unfashionable kind of adventure that prevented his books from ever being popular. His whole work is a vivid record of a profound vision. The vision is most successfully and powerfully embodied in *A Voyage to Arcturus*.

It is ironic that the books of a man so desperately concerned with a vision of reality should be discussed by his critics as fantasies. Two reviews may serve as example, one of which appeared in *The Times Literary Supplement* for 30th September 1920 on the occasion of the first publication of *A Voyage to Arcturus*.

The Times Literary Supplement reviewer writes:

> There may be an intention of allegory in what appears to be simply a riot of morbid fancy; but we doubt whether many readers will be inclined to pursue the possible meaning over a quagmire and through a noisome fog. For the book is, at any rate, consistent in respect of its uniform unwholesomeness; the keynote being struck in the opening chapter, which recalls Baudelaire, or Poe in his most grisly vein. It is, no doubt, a legitimate aim of the writer of fiction to make the flesh creep; scarcely, we think, to make the gorge rise.

It may not seem worth while to investigate too closely this tissue of misrepresentations and misunderstandings. I'll only say that it was not Lindsay's intention to make anyone's flesh creep, but to investigate the nature of reality, that his vision is tonic and terrible but neither morbid nor unwholesome, that it in no way resembles the work either of Baudelaire or of Poe and that readers *have* been inclined to pursue its possible hidden meaning

ever since 1920. Indeed, many people have spent days and months and years in following it, not through a fog, for no fog exists, but over rocks and up scree slopes and craggy mountain peaks. In fact, it is not a matter of *pursuing* the meaning, but of *living with it*, for the meaning is not hidden but most clearly expressed by the book which sets out to express it.

Although at a first reading *A Voyage* seems so wild and strange as to be baffling and difficult, it is not to be taken as a problem for solution but as a vision to be seen. If one tries to view it as a field for intellectual analysis, as a puzzle requiring abstract clarification, it appears that the levels on which any explanation must be made are hopelessly mixed, so that the incidents cannot be interpreted consistently in a necessary and coherent order. But there is in fact no need for analytical explanation or interpretation: a careful account of the essential events and statements will reveal the meaning of the book, which is strong, deep and clear. At one point in the story the main character, Maskull, says: 'I have a simple and unoccupied mind—that may be why I sometimes hear things which up to the present you have not been able to . . .' And indeed a simple, serious and unoccupied mind is the best medium through which an interpretation of the book can be made.

Lindsay would not have regarded himself as a realist in the sense of one who devoted his energies to portraying the exact modes of behaviour of his contemporaries, but he *was* a realist in that he scorned anything not concerned with his vision of the nature of reality. As Krag says to Maskull in *A Voyage to Arcturus*: 'Simplify your ideas, my friend; the affair is plain and serious.'

The second review appeared in *The Scotsman* on the occasion of the republication of *A Haunted Woman* in May 1964. The reviewer, Robert Nye, writes:

> Lindsay was a writer of real imagination and skill, who sought to meet Poe's essential requirement in a tale of this kind; singleness of mood, the incidents being subjugated to the one unique effect. A gentle and unforced yarn, a love story set—with agreeable lack of supernatural machinery—in another dimension, politely gruesome, oddly compelling and disturbing in the natural transition of its wonders and horrors, *The Haunted Woman* is a metaphysical thriller in the best sense of that phrase.

I don't want to carp at this piece for many of Robert Nye's

perceptions are acute and admirable. My doubts are due to a suspicion that the categories used are inadequate. Lindsay is too serious a writer to be interested in the rules for a horror story laid down by Poe or anyone else, and had no intention of writing a thriller, metaphysical or otherwise. Poe's macabre stories are not based upon any profound assessment of the nature of reality, but upon personal fears and obsessions. Lindsay's books, on the other hand, are based upon a coherent vision of the human situation and upon the intense thought which resulted from it. He is not indifferent to the skills of construction, the development of character and the movement of a tale, but these are subordinated to an over-riding purpose—an attempt to confront the *real world.* To him the world of appearance is a deceit. The world can be seen as it really is only when the observer has developed sufficiently to overcome the desire for error and can therefore experience truth.

Part of the difficulty is that readers unable to deny Lindsay's power are still unwilling to accept his ruthless insistence that knowledge of the real world is possible, beyond the categories of philosophy and science. They do not like the mystical tradition in which he lives. Boehme, Swedenborg and William Blake are not easy men to come to terms with.

The perception that the book under his eye had a profound spiritual meaning led *The Times Literary Supplement* reviewer to leap at the most obvious word—'allegory'. Lindsay was not an allegorist. In *Devil's Tor* one of his characters says: 'A symbol is a mystic sign of the Creator. An allegory is a wall decoration with a label attached.' Allegory forces the writer to work within a closed system which any sudden insight will break open. He cannot allow this system to be broken so he must refuse new perceptions until his task is done. But in art it is the openings and not the systems that illuminate. A true artist's perceptions are not the work of the rationalising faculty but of direct insight into the nature of things. Any deep and powerful work provides its readers with 'openings'—ways through to the real world, that is, to a vision of *this* world seen without illusion or deception.

In a sense Lindsay makes use of symbols, but his vision transcends symbols just as it transcends allegory. A symbol when put to work by a creative writer grows, shifts and gains ever greater force and profundity, at last attaining a sort of numinous quality,

so that its exact relation to nature is impossible to define. It has a life of its own and is *itself*, in a real, mysterious world.

It is possible to approach Lindsay with absolute simplicity. *The Violet Apple* and *The Haunted Woman* will convey their message imperceptibly to any unprejudiced reader by arousing through their stories the emotional response that they require. But it would not be safe for an opinionated, prejudiced, clever or knowledgeable reader to attempt to see any of Lindsay's books as 'simple'. They need to be approached in the light of the fact that men at different levels of development will see different things in each book, and gain experience at varying depths. The books may or may not be symbolical, but they most certainly conceal as well as speak; they can therefore convey more to those who meditate on them, who penetrate them with direct intellectual insight than to those who wish to categorise them as 'fantasies', 'metaphysical thrillers' or anything else to which they are more accustomed.

Perhaps it is permissible to suggest that the distinction between reading knowledge into a book and deriving knowledge from it is clear in experience to anyone who is willing to feel the difference?

David Lindsay himself was a reserved man, secretive and unwilling to show naked emotion. Any account of his life would need to be bald, factual and perforated with omissions to please him. His own summary, provided for his publishers when *Devil's Tor* came out, indicates his attitude.

> I was educated at Blackheath and in Scotland. Up to the War I was in business in the City of London. I was in the Army for upwards of two years, but saw no foreign service. On demobilisation I took up literature, having many years previously determined to do so sooner or later. *A Voyage to Arcturus* appeared in 1920; *The Haunted Woman* in 1922; *Sphinx* in 1923; *Adventures of M. de Mailly* in 1926. I was married in 1916, and am at present living happily with my wife and two daughters, aged 12 and 9. From 1919 to 1928 we lived in Cornwall; then moved to Ferring in Sussex.
>
> I have done the usual amount of foreign travelling, dislike sports, and take most of my present exercise in tramping the South Downs. My older brother, the late 'Alexander Crawford', also wrote some novels (*The Alias* etc.) which by now are almost forgotten. I trace my stock to the main stem of the Lindsays, whose history is in any book of Scottish families. Ivar, Jarl of the Norse Uplanders, is said to have been the original ancestor.

First, he suppresses his date of birth because he feels, in 1932, that this makes him 'rather older than is proper'. He was born on 3 March 1878, his father Scottish, his mother English. He had an elder brother and an elder sister. He saw a good deal of his sister Margaret throughout his life. She became friendly with some of his friends and outlived him by many years. He was never close to his brother, who died comparatively young and was a hard-living journalist, much entangled with women. Some of his adventures had repercussions on the family that deeply disturbed David. He never forgot them, but preferred not to mention that side of his brother's life.

The family was brought up largely in Blackheath, where he was educated, except for a period during which he stayed with his Scottish relatives in Jedburgh and went to school there. He appears to have acquired a prejudice against the Scots in their Celtic aspect during this period. There seems to have been a Highland boy that he regarded as a particular enemy. The climax of his unhappiness came when he got into difficulties swimming in a river and shouted for help. He was convinced that the other boys heard him but did nothing. They may have thought he was play-acting, but Lindsay never play-acted and he never forgave them. He struggled somehow to the bank without help.

The business he refers to in the City of London was employment as a clerk with a firm of Lloyd's underwriters, an appointment he obtained upon the recommendation of relations. He did not want to go into business. He had won a scholarship to the University, and would have liked to go, but was not allowed to do so by his grandmother, who was responsible for the family at that time. His work at Lloyd's was never congenial to him but he was methodical, conscientious and determined, and became so valuable to his employers that he was on the point of being given a directorship when he resigned to begin writing.

During these years he was an intense and serious reader, attracted mainly to writers who were profound, daring and lonely. His own loneliness caused him to reject human solutions to problems in favour of a quest for sublimity, grandeur and depth. Although he read and admired philosophy, his nature was mystical and solitary. He learned German and read Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in the original. Their influence is plain both in

A Voyage to Arcturus and in his *Sketch Notes for a New System of Philosophy*, but they did not provide his perceptions, they confirmed them. These *Sketch Notes* were in fact compiled by Lindsay from his notebooks, and are unpublished. They are a wonderful record of his preoccupations and ideas, and all my quotations from 'the notes' or 'notebooks' are from this collection. It is commonly supposed that Nietzsche is a dangerous influence, but this need not be the case. A marvellously acute psychologist of man's self-deceptions, a close analyst of the falsifications of reality produced by the biassed judgements of the will, his conception of a Superman in a sense denies these perceptions by deifying the will itself; but the idea of the Superman has been distorted by the prejudices of critics.

Some of the rigid and unattractive concepts of *Devil's Tor* are traceable to the worst of Nietzsche, some of the penetrations of *Arcturus* are traceable to the best. Lindsay's delight in ideas of 'daring', 'freedom' and 'innovation' are very Nietzschean. He writes in the notes: 'Strange and unusual actions should sometimes be practised in order to free the mind from its conventional trammels. The *great* world will then become visible.' Lindsay's 'great world', however, far transcends Nietzsche's.

Some of his political and psychological observations are directly Nietzschean, such as dubbing 'universal brotherhood' 'a refined form of egotism', and remarking 'When the motive for the action of an acquaintance does not appear on the surface it is always wise to look for an explanation in self-interest.' Compare Nietzsche himself '. . . there is neither an unegotistical action nor an entirely disinterested point of view; they are both only sublimations in which the fundamental element appears almost evaporated, and is only to be discovered by the closest observation.' And 'Therefore on this alone is based the value of life for the ordinary everyday man, that he regards himself as more important than the world.'

Lindsay's own comment on Nietzsche is pointed and revealing:

> Nietzsche was by nature a musician, and went mad because in philosophy he found no adequate means of expressing his feelings. His 'superman' is simply a creative artist, and is thus obviously unfitted for a universally human type.

Lindsay too was 'by nature a musician'. This was not all they

had in common. He also says 'Nietzsche wished to produce sublime men.' It is Schopenhauer's idea of 'Sublimity' that most attracted Lindsay to him. He writes:

> Schopenhauer's 'Nothing', which is the least understood part of his system, is identical with my Muspel; that is, the *real* world.

Also:

> To understand the true nature of the World, it is necessary to realise that it is a direct creation of the Will, and that everything in it (including love, self-sacrifice etc.) is either the assertion or the denial of the Will (Schopenhauer); but that the Muspel-World does not possess this inner core of Will, but *something else*, of which the Will is a corrupted version.

Besides Nietzsche, Schopenhauer and the Norse Sagas, he had in these days two other walking companions, the Fitzhenry brothers, cheerful, sensitive young men, both interested in geology and philosophy. They emigrated, each to a different part of the world. Although one wrote to Lindsay for some years, he died young, in Canada. They were his only close friends.

Lindsay walked and climbed in lonely places, particularly the Highlands of Scotland, and the grandeur of sea and mountain fed and liberated his mind from the City drudgery that seemed to him at once trivial and monstrous. I always see the country of the Ifdawn Marest described in *A Voyage to Arcturus* as the mountains about Loch Maree, and never go through that area without expecting to see Maskull stride out from among the rocks.

He writes in his notebook about mountains and the sea: 'Viewing mountains from below, gives a sense of Sublimity; but on gaining the mountains themselves, the feeling is lost, and *freedom* takes its place.' Later he refers to the 'pseudo-sublimity' of mountains, and says, 'The real Sublime consists only in action. Therefore the ocean is sublime, mountains are not; except insofar as they cause atmospheric disturbance.' 'To understand the sea rightly, one has to realise that its gravity is less than that of man; but consequently it represents sudden and certain death to man, and is the gateway to the eternal.' On the subject of solitude itself he writes: 'The beautiful may be enjoyed in Society, but the Sublime demands solitude; the reason being that it is an

emancipation from individuality, and other persons serve to remind one of this individuality.' It was in these years that his concept of the whole broken into parts striving to return grew into vision.

It will be necessary later to come to grips with Lindsay's idea of the 'sublime', which is neither Schopenhauer's nor anybody else's, but his own.

He did his Army Service in the War with the Grenadiers. At this time he was not particularly interested in his Scottish ancestry or in tracing his descent to the 'Jarl of the Norse Uplanders', and refused to join the Scots Guards as his family wished. His service was spent largely in clerical work at the buildings in Birdcage Walk. He disliked this period, and although he makes little direct comment on the Army, he remarks in his notebook: 'After a course of years, every soldier acquires more or less *insanity*, the result of his moral training.'

It was during the war that he became deeply attracted to a young girl, and they were married in 1916. Both families were opposed to the marriage, for Lindsay was thirty-eight, and Jacqueline twenty.

When he was demobilised, instead of returning to Lloyd's, he resigned; he and his wife went down to St Columb Minor in North Cornwall, where he was to write *A Voyage to Arcturus*. He had thrown over security, even affluence, for a life of struggle. He had published nothing, and had no prospects. But his wife believed in him and encouraged him to believe in his mission. He *knew* what was in him. All he had to do was to sit down and write. He remarks in his notebook: 'When one steps out of the land of dreams and longings, by reason of being seized by the idea of a clear and definite plan for the future, it is just as if one's life had got into *focus*; the vague and blurred is all changed into the defined and beautiful.'

Jacqueline was lively, enthusiastic, and used to the good things of life. Neither she nor David appeared to consider realistically the future for a writer of his unusual kind. David had a lump sum from his firm, and a legacy which he invested. They lived as if the money would last for ever, with a large house, servants and a carriage. The house stood close to the cliff, with access to a beautiful, isolated beach. There were picnics, rides, bathing

parties, and friends came down for the summer. They called on the local gentry and entertained in their turn.

David enjoyed visits to London and the theatre, he enjoyed conversation, was a courteous and attentive host and fond of the company of women, but he was far too serious for the life of society. He was serious not in the sense of being without liveliness or humour, but in the sense that he was deeply concerned with what he talked *about*, and had little taste for persiflage. 'Deadly earnestness—without this a man is a mere dilettante, pursuing ambition half-heartedly, with an eye to pleasure en route.'

His friend Robert Barnes describes Lindsay as 'a quiet, simple, inward man . . . somewhat alone in his special mind.' His eyes were blue, sometimes mild, sometimes bright and penetrating, his presence pleasant but formidable. He could be silent and withdrawn or animated and forceful, but he was not wholly of the world in which he lived. Barnes says 'He was always ready to talk but avoided deep subjects unless a sort of mutual sense invited his interest.' He was a man of Scottish Calvinist background who rejected his upbringing and yet retained a contempt for pleasure. 'There is one thing worse than pain, and that is pleasure. So long as men suffer there is still room for sublimity, but in the *happy* society of the sociologists, men will think and feel in battalions, and no one will any more feel himself an individual, rooted in Eternity.' 'Dirt follows sweetness, as a lamb follows its mother. Every love-affair is in one aspect an idyll, in another aspect an orgy. By this is meant, not physical connection, but merely the effect of desire.' Yet his senses and his sensibilities were acute, and he took the keenest delight in every experience with which they enriched him.

He loved mountains, water, open spaces; but he also loved close touch, sweet sound and perfume. He devoted much time in Cornwall to growing flowers and to growing plants from seed. One day the postman made a point of thanking him for 'the beautiful scent' of his roses. It was one of the few times in his life when Lindsay blushed.

In his notebook he writes: 'There is no more vital experience known to me than *perfume*. Perfume arouses feelings which are unique. Things therefore must possess internal qualities which are capable of influencing people in other ways and still more

vividly; for the sense of smell conveys only a faint approximation to the real character of the object.' In *A Voyage to Arcturus*, Maskull, the protagonist, is always acquiring new sense organs and Lindsay explores the nature of the experiences they provide with a kind of passionate and attentive repulsion. He writes: 'The objection to the ascetic life is this: just as a man is born with certain physical organs which require employment, so he is born with a mental, emotional organisation which cannot be suppressed without detriment to his normal well-being.' It is noticeable that although his comments in the notebook are all 'abstract', they are not so in the sense of being rational thought in logical progression, they are all what he called 'aperçues', and to him are sharp, concrete, rooted in observation of life as felt and experienced.

The nature of his brooding concern with love and woman convinces me that he was at least once deeply and unhappily in love before he met his wife—I suspect with someone resembling the malicious, intense and vital young girls, Virginia of *The Violet Apple* and Evelyn of *Sphinx*. The drive of his simultaneous attraction to and repulsion from 'woman' colours and freshens his whole work. He observes women more closely and clearly than men, and understands them more deeply. He finds all the beauty of 'reality' in them. For him women *are* reality, as opposed to individuality. But beyond, transcending reality and making it finally contemptible and irrelevant is the sublime Muspel world, which alone is *serious*.

He writes: 'Women are small wholes: men are large parts. Hence the nature of the first is harmony, of the second emphasised tendency.' But his tone is not always so balanced and wise. 'The sense of beauty which ought to be diffused in our hearts over the whole of nature, is drawn down to earth by the lightning-conductor, Woman, and henceforward we have eyes for nothing but the vulgar prettiness of petticoats.' He is angry, plainly, at his own absorbed interest in this prettiness. He gives to the vulgarity of petticoats a devoted attention sometimes calm and loving, sometimes bitter and sharp. 'Women's faces seem a sort of crystallisation, a spontaneous springing-together, as the effect of a single interior idea. Each part is harmonious, and belongs as much to the whole as to itself. Men's faces seem built-up; the parts are irregular, and have nothing to do with each other.'

'Her sex sways the thoughts and feelings of every woman, as the moon sways the tides.' He says with great force: 'Love is no washed-out sentimentality but a fierce passion. The test of whether one lives is whether one *receives*. Philanthropy only gives.' 'Atomic attraction, molecular attraction, gravitation etc. cannot be explained by *pleasure*, but only by *love*.' This intense interpretation of the material universe in psychological terms is characteristic of Lindsay, and gives astonishing fervour to his writings. 'Sexual passion,' he says, 'is not a rose-bower, but a torture-chamber.' No, he never rejected experience. It is the depth of his involvement in 'reality' that gives force to his vision of that starkly, richly alien Muspel world, where 'another order of things reigns'.

Lindsay's love of music was both sensual and metaphysical. Music was to him a whole, and absorbed both worlds. He writes: 'Music is a microcosm of the feelings. It expresses them all, yet only as Art; it is not the feelings themselves.' It is as if he is warning himself against the intensity of his sense that music *is* itself the feelings it calls forth. 'Music is the experience of a supernatural world. The attempt to identify it with world-experience is a proof of the practical, utilitarian nature of man, which always tries to change the wild into the domestic.' The nature of his view of the high role of music is shown in this appreciation of the *Magic Flute*.

> What words are to Music, individuals are to the Sublime. This is excellently shown in the Temple scene of the Magic Flute. The massive gloom of the interior, the gigantic statue silhouetted against the gleaming sky, Mozart's hymn; contrasted with the declamation of the High Priest, and the double row of white-robed priests who assist him. Both words and men appear absolutely insignificant and meaningless beside the music and the solemn grandeur of the Temple.

While the stream of Cornish social life burbled on he was writing *A Voyage to Arcturus*, in which ten years of intense brooding thought were burned up. The nature of the thought is again best described by a quotation from the notebook: 'The *aperçu*, which springs from the air, when brooded upon produces the "*brood-aperçu*". The relation of the former to the latter is not that of the sketch to the finished work, but of a fine crystal to one still finer in the same vein at a deeper level.'

Lindsay knew the depth and vigour of the book he was writing. He knew that its outlandish originality would prevent its receiving general acceptance. Yet, as every man must, he hoped. It was begun in April 1919 and finished in March 1920. It was accepted by Methuen, the first publisher to whom it was offered, on the recommendation of Robert Lynd. The miraculous nature of this event did not occur to Lindsay at the time, nor to his wife, but he must have wondered at it in later years. His joy at the acceptance of *A Voyage to Arcturus*, which he had waited so long to write, was deepened by the birth of his first daughter, Diana, to whom he became devoted.

After the joy, the disappointment. The first blow he received was the publisher's insistence that some 15,000 words should be cut from the book. He cut them. The excisions are gone and will never now be traced. We cannot know whether whole sections were removed or whether the cuts were scattered throughout the book. To put it mildly, the cuts themselves would be more valuable than any other book Methuen published that year.

Lindsay did not wait for publication of *Arcturus*, but began work at once on *The Haunted Woman. A Voyage* was ill-received, and sold only 596 copies. It lived, though, and still does, acquiring more and more readers by some underground process through the years, until it emerged again in 1946, in 1963 and in 1968. It had to wait from 1920 until 1964 before it was published in America.

Lindsay was writing at full pressure, and the fate of his masterpiece gave him pain but not pause. He finished *The Haunted Woman* in April 1921, and submitted it to Methuen's. They declined it. The nature of the rocky road he was to travel began to become clear to David. He wrote much in his notebook about 'luck', and about 'daring'. He coped with these setbacks as his philosophy instructed him.

> Disagreeable accidents should always be examined, to see if they cannot be turned to account. In the first place, one should always have one's money's worth; and in the second, by the law of impetus, it is always easier to produce activity from a state of activity, however disagreeable, than from a state of repose, however pleasant. . . . Just as the remedy for fear is not courage, but daring; so the remedy for

worry is not relief, but invention; the transformation of an evil into an advantage.

Lindsay certainly did not lapse into a state of repose.

He offered *The Haunted Woman* to Hutchinson, but reclaimed the typescript when advised by someone at Methuen to offer it for serialisation in the *Daily News*. It was accepted as a serial, again subject to a reduction by 20,000 words. Lindsay set to work to make the cuts. Methuen then reconsidered their decision and accepted the book in October 1921. It was reissued by Gollancz in 1964.

Lindsay was 'a writer' now and received more attention from his neighbours. It is likely that Haidee in *The Violet Apple* and Celia in *Sphinx* are modelled upon one of these, a woman of whom the Lindsays saw a good deal. She lived and moved with a fast set, and was distinguished from them by something dark, melancholy and powerful in her character that deeply impressed both Lindsay and his wife. It is possible that there are aspects of her in Isbel of *The Haunted Woman* and Lore of *Sphinx*. She was mischievous, 'fascinating' and a lover of married men. She died when deserted by a lover.

These raffish people, often embroiled with each other's partners, would seem unsuitable companions for Lindsay, but he writes in his notebook: 'To a man of active intelligence, *ennui* is so real an evil, that he will prefer the society of those with intellect but without morality, to that of those with morality but no intellect; this even if he be moral himself.'

That *ennui* beset him even in these years of intense activity is proved by the number of entries on this subject in his notes. 'If there were a Devil, of all his inventions *ennui* might be the one on which he would most pride himself.' He struggled against it with incessant work and 'social activity'. 'The man of activity does not enquire how he can finish off a given job with the least trouble; but how in a given time he can get the most done.'

In *A Voyage to Arcturus* Maskull says to the pure, bright creature Joiwind:

'It seems to me that life is so self-sufficient here that there is no need for anyone to get anywhere. . . . What I don't quite understand is how you manage to pass your days without *ennui*.'

'That's a strange word. It means, does it not, craving for excitement?'
'Something of the kind,' said Maskull.'
'That must be a disease brought on by rich food.'

From a disease brought on by rich food, a light, airy spirit may sometimes save us. Lindsay was in the grip of *ennui* when a Scottish friend he had not seen for a long time paid a visit. The two wives went for a walk down to the beach. Lindsay and his friend set to and finished a bottle of whisky before lunch. His friend, not surprisingly, was wild and befuddled, but Lindsay, grimly pale, remained more sober than Judge in *The Haunted Woman*. This reminds one of Maskull in the observatory at Starkness. 'Nightspore ate and drank little, but Maskull sat down with good appetite. There being no milk, whisky took the place of it; the nearly black tea was mixed with an equal quantity of the spirit. Of this concoction he drank cup after cup, and long after the tongue had disappeared he was still imbibing.' However, when Nightspore suggests that they should go out, Maskull agrees. 'Walking is better than soaking at any time . . .'

Lindsay did not make a habit of seeking in whisky a cure for *ennui*, even though on suitable occasions it may have an effect like the 'gnawl-water' of Tormance:

> . . . the intoxication brought out his better nature, not his lower. . . . All his sense-organs started to show him beauties and wonders which he had not hitherto suspected. The uniform glaring scarlets of the sands became separated into a score of clearly-distinguished shades of red. His ears awakened; the atmosphere was full of murmurs, the sands hummed, even the sun's rays had a sound of their own—a kind of faint Aeolian harp . . .

The cure for *ennui* is no doubt Joiwind's. 'But are you never dull,' asks Maskull.

'How can we be? Our blood is quick and light and free, our flesh is clear and unclogged inside and out.' But on this earth, ours is not.

Lindsay himself was convinced that he benefited from periods of *ennui* and depression. 'Deep depression, even to the extent of a breaking heart; then a sudden flashing light of joy and defiance—that is when the Sublime appears in its elemental purity.' He chose therefore to despise peace and plenty. 'Bright sunshine and

a calm, untroubled mind: both bad for the creative imagination.' Maybe. But he did not find rejection and lack of understanding a benefit to his work.

He began to write *Sphinx* in August 1921. The material proved intractable, the writing difficult. Brooding meditation had exploded into vision and produced *A Voyage to Arcturus*. Now there was no unified whole, no full pattern, but only ideas, perceptions and the need to make a book. *Sphinx* is composed of insights, observations and inventions, profound and often brilliant, but bits and pieces nonetheless, filled with the types he met in the Cornish society pleasureground. He writes:

> The greatest crime in a book is *dullness*. The remedy is variety of episode, information etc. Failing that, deep feeling. If the nature of the book, however, does not admit of variety of feeling, then it must be organised. The unorganised collection of epigrams makes the dullest of books.

In fact he found a novel dealing with so many diverse people and running together so many strands of story most elusive and unwilling to be organised.

Writing becomes more difficult the more you learn about how much is involved in it. A vision is one thing, a 'novel' another. When a book becomes sheer hard work, there is often a blankness and dryness, a dull lethargy in the writer, a reluctance to cope. The whole thing seems senseless labour. The story may demand that there should be a confrontation between two characters. There they are, in the wood, where you meant them to be, you know what sort of people they are, and more or less what they must say to move the story along. You try to allow them to say these things, but they won't. They are wooden, *you* are wooden. They simply won't speak.

You *make* them speak, the baldest words possible, just to push the plot into motion, but all they say is dead, unreal, stilted. You press on, and after determined and repeated effort there comes a sluggish flow of life, together with absorption in the work itself. That point is reached in *Sphinx* when Nicholas replies to a question about why he did not take up a more congenial career: 'I wanted to retain any originality I might possess,' explained Nicholas curtly. But each time Lindsay has to start again from the beginning,

labouring his way into the book. When a small spark is struck, someone speaks if not with tongue, at least with the eyes. Someone says something that surprises the author. Deeper absorption follows, then detachment from this absorption, together with complete attention to the pursuit, the story; finally, consciousness of the whole process and of the matter in hand. *Ennui* is destroyed. Again and again Lindsay endured this agonising process. Once he gave the book up, and then restarted it in October 1921.

The Haunted Woman was published in February 1922 and had only a small sale. Lindsay was a proud, obstinate man. He completed the first draft of *Sphinx* in March 1922. It did not satisfy him. He fell into grim moods of sombre brooding, for which solitary walking was his remedy. 'For dullness, the remedy is physical exercise, but not too much.' He revised the book, trying to pull it into a unity, and reduced its length. He eventually finished it in May, and it was refused by Methuen. It was then refused by the *Daily News*. It was refused by Heinemann.

Lindsay was now growing seriously concerned about his prospects and approached a literary agent, but withdrew without making an agreement. He offered *Sphinx* himself to Grant Richards, who declined it. He approached another agent, Ronald Massey, and in April 1923 this agent placed the book with John Long, whose main author at that time seems to have been Nat Gould, the Edgar Wallace of horse-racing.

In the midst of these depressing efforts to find a publisher for one book, Lindsay began another, called *The Ancient Tragedy*, which proved even more difficult in the writing than *Sphinx*. He discarded the first effort in June 1922 and tried again in July. In October he failed once more. The acceptance of *Sphinx* released him; he renewed the attack on *The Ancient Tragedy* in June 1923, finishing the book in October. During that year his second daughter, Helen, was born.

At the same time as he struggled with *The Ancient Tragedy*, Lindsay began a venture of an entirely different kind—a historical novel inspired by reading French seventeenth- and eighteenth-century memoirs. *The Enterprises of M. de Mailly*, as it was originally called, the only book of Lindsay's without metaphysical overtones, is so carefully plotted that the reader grows stunned and bewildered by its complexities. A writer who is more in-

terested in theme and purpose than in plot tends to overdo the elaboration and intricacy of any story in which plot is a major consideration. *De Mailly* has so many twists and turns that the reader is eventually lost in the maze. He did at least find the writing of the book more straightforward than that of *Sphinx* or *The Ancient Tragedy*, and completed the story between October 1922 and May 1923.

This means that for most of a year the two books were being written side by side, and for several years thereafter they were being submitted to and rejected by a series of publishers. *M. de Mailly* was returned by John Long and Cape. Fisher Unwin requested alterations and then refused the book when they were done. By this time it was 1925.

The Ancient Tragedy was refused by John Long, Andrew Melrose, Cobden Sanderson, Fisher Unwin and Werner Laurie. So we reach 1925 with neither book accepted.

The Violet Apple was begun in February 1924 and completed in July of that year, but when it too had been rejected by John Long, Lindsay began work on a revised version in March 1925.

Rejections of *de Mailly* by three other publishers followed; and rejections of *The Ancient Tragedy* continued monotonously. Lindsay did not offer *The Ancient Tragedy* after Duckworth returned it. Years later he took it up again, completely recast and rewrote it, and it became *Devil's Tor*.

The tide seemed full out. David might well have thought that no book of his would ever be published again. The depression would be deeper because he himself was not entirely certain of the books which followed *The Haunted Woman*. He knew they contained much of value but he had found great difficulty in the writing and was conscious of certain inadequacies. Rejection is bad enough. Self-doubt is worse.

Two things happened to give him heart. He began to receive letters from people who had discovered odd copies of *A Voyage to Arcturus*, and appreciated its power and originality; and then in November 1925 Andrew Melrose expressed interest in *M. de Mailly*. The book was actually accepted for publication in February 1926.

The letter that meant most to Lindsay was from L. H. Myers, dated 16 September 1925.

About six months ago I read *A Voyage to Arcturus* for the first time. I have read it again since, and was still more impressed by it on a second reading. I don't, as a rule, care much about books of that kind —for the reason that, to create a successful fantasy, one must possess first a strong, deep, personal intuition, and, secondly, a very powerful imagination, and these qualities are of course rare. But your intuition was, I am convinced, strong and urgent, and your imagination seems to me to have been quite equal to its task.

I am therefore full of admiration and curiosity. These are the sentiments which prompt me and, I hope, excuse the letter. There are many questions which I should like to put to you, and I should very much like to meet you. If you live in London, and feel on your side sufficiently good-natured, or flattered, or curious, to accept an invitation to lunch with me one day at my Club, I should be very pleased.

Lindsay did and they met. At this time Myers had not produced his best work. *The Near and the Far* did not come out until 1927. He had published only one book, *The Orissers*, which is an odd, stiff, intellectual, melodramatic story that received good notices. He moved among the London literary élite, and came of a distinguished family of scholars and writers. His father was F. W. H. Myers, one of the pioneers of the Society for Psychical Research. Leo Myers was rich, elegant, fastidious, and an amorist. But despite the fact that he and Lindsay were opposites, a friendship began which continued until Myers' death in 1941. It was always Myers who sought out Lindsay, rather than the other way about, and towards the end Lindsay grew most reluctant to visit him. Lindsay liked good food and talk, he liked Myers, but he did not enjoy being chauffeur-driven in a Rolls-Royce through the English lanes while Myers related in a gentle, persistent tone his difficulties with women. The bond that held them was that both men were *serious*. They were writers who had perceived something about the actual nature of the world and wanted to communicate it. Myers had a more philosophical cast of mind than Lindsay, but both were devoted to *reality*, the basis upon which philosophical speculation must rest. Both were uninterested in talk for its own sake, literature for literature's sake and art for art's sake. Robert Barnes says of Lindsay, 'He had not the slightest use for cleverness or technical ability unless the substance was of significance.'

Lindsay's attitude to Myers was a mixture of contempt and

admiration—contempt for the riches and the women, admiration for the mind and the writer. Myers' attitude to Lindsay was admiring and impatient.

After visiting Myers on one occasion Lindsay told his wife that he would not go again. Myers had seemed deeply depressed and Lindsay found the atmosphere stifling. He never did go again. Myers took his own life soon afterwards.

In 1926, after the publication of *de Mailly*, Lindsay set to work on a revision of *The Violet Apple*, which he completed in February. It was never accepted by a publisher and remains in typescript, a fascinating and deceptive book with a profound simplicity and directness.

De Mailly was also published in the United States in 1927, as *A Blade for Sale*, but attracted little notice.

Misunderstanding and lack of recognition were beginning to affect David. He did not complain but grew often morose and depressed. The language in which he wrote was growing more archaic, less closely related to living time, the grammar more peculiar, and the dialogue lost conviction without growing in nobility and force. These defects show most clearly in *Devil's Tor* and *The Witch*. Certain conceptions which were dangerous to his work were taking hold on him. In the early notes he had written, with clear perception:

> Pure breeds and races of mankind stand to cross-breeds in the same relation as the animal species stand to man in general. They are stationary and crystallised; no longer in the main trend of progress. The cross-breed is the free and fluid creature, from whom all is to be hoped. It follows that nationalities and the patriotism that attends nationalities, are inconsistent with fundamental freedom and progress.

Yet in *Devil's Tor*, begun in 1928, he makes a mystique of the pure Norse race and its fair, cold, strong-willed, beautiful representative Ingrid, contrasting her with the somehow-to-be-despised Celt, Hugh Drapier. It is interesting that in the much simpler, livelier and fresher *The Violet Apple*, failure to publish which so deadened Lindsay, the fair, cold, strong-willed, beautiful Grace—who differs very little from Ingrid except in the degree of importance given to her by the author—is shown as shallow in comparison with the dark, fascinating, wayward and unpredictable Haidee.

In *Devil's Tor* the Eternal Feminine, the Mother Goddess, is huge and solemn and served by a blonde, cold, unreal votary; in *The Violet Apple* the votary is profound, flashing and alive. It is as if some part of Lindsay had crystallised, and the flow had stopped. That this is not the whole story is proved by certain passages in *Devil's Tor* which are as good as anything Lindsay ever wrote, and by some astonishing aspects of his last book *The Witch*, but certainly his outlook and his writing had grown more wooden, less vigorous with variety. And variety was something to which in his early notes—and in *A Voyage to Arcturus*—he attached great importance. 'A true ethical system will endeavour to promulgate variety of life; activity, objectivity, and intelligence, as opposed to soul-deadening tradition, formalism, and meek stupidity.' 'When variation ceases, Species arise. Animals and plants are tombstones on the path of evolution.'

Another idea which grew upon him with unfortunate effect was that of the admirable nature of aristocracy, and a consequent rejection of the 'vulgar mass'. The contrast between 'the sublime' and 'the vulgar' is only legitimate on the level of Nightspore's vision from the Muspel tower in *A Voyage to Arcturus* and cannot be applied successfully in purely human terms. In *Arcturus* the most balanced man is Polecrab, a fisherman, one of the people. But in *Devil's Tor* we must seek for aristocracy and purity of race if we are to find the hero. The effect of this concept on his writing is again to close doors and to tighten muscles.

In 1928 the Lindsays left Cornwall and moved to Ferring, near Worthing, in Sussex. Mrs Lindsay was worried about the girls' schooling, and the long winter months of wild, rough gales had begun to grow oppressive in their house on top of the cliff, into every cranny of which blew gritty particles of fine sand. Besides, they were in need of an income.

Lindsay liked the rocks and cliffs of Cornwall, and the violent, illimitable sea. He always regretted leaving them. At the same time he loved the open, rolling Sussex downs with their long views, mysterious morning mists, and skylarks. Barnes writes: 'He definitely had a love of the silent stillness of the Downs—saying that the sea-shore had little interest for him. Walking on the Downs he "felt" the age of the world and the spirit of the early peoples.'

It was at Ferring that he rewrote *The Ancient Tragedy* as *Devil's Tor*. Whether the original version was freer and less ponderous than the later there is now no means of telling, but certainly *Devil's Tor* has defects which *The Violet Apple* does not. At this time he gathered about him a number of friends younger than himself—the dark, courteous Peter Judge, whom he called 'the impeccable butler', the writer and scholar E. H. Visiak; Robert Barnes the painter; John Corfield, and others.

The girls, Diana and Helen, were growing up, and Lindsay took pleasure in them and in their friends. The summers were filled with trips and parties and visits, and Lindsay was always willing to share the adventures of the day. He wrote a fairy play for them at Christmas, and Bob Barnes wrote the music. They all acted charades. They made many journeys to London for concerts and plays. Lindsay loved to hear those of his friends who could play instruments and Robert Barnes gave them a piano and himself played it well. Lindsay admired Mozart, Brahms and above all Beethoven; of Beethoven he was most deeply devoted to the *Seventh* and *Ninth Symphonies*, the *Andante in F* and the *Overture to Coriolanus*. Robert Barnes writes of Lindsay and music:

> He, like myself, viewed the bulk of music as 'entertainment' only, whereas it reached, but rarely, powers of expression of significant communication associated with great experience or elevated imagination. Hence, he was drawn to this rarer kind and filled himself to saturation point with its essence—interpreting to suit or recreate for his own purposes, which of course he had a right to do . . . Even as a young man I was very aware of his powers of this musical sense when reading *Arcturus*. On reading the chapter 'Wombflash Forest' I was always shaken with deep emotion. He told me that he was inspired to so write that chapter by the 5th Symphony (Beethoven)—especially the *drumming* passage linking the scherzo to the finale.

Music grew more and more important to Lindsay as he grew older; it is significant in all his books, but in *Devil's Tor* it plays a major part, and entirely dominates and explains *The Witch*. 'Poetry can produce the subtle-sublime, but not the overpowering sublime, like music.'

A Voyage to Arcturus had now found a number of admirers, some of them, like Myers, Victor Gollancz and Desmond

McCarthy, influential people, and despite its laboured style and enormous length *Devil's Tor* was placed more easily than its predecessors. E. H. Visiak sent *A Voyage* to T. W. Ragg of Putnam, who was deeply impressed. Ragg then read *The Haunted Woman* and was in a suitable condition of mind to give favourable consideration to *Devil's Tor*. The book was sent to Putnam through L. H. Myers in November 1931 and accepted for publication in January 1932. The advance on royalties was £50—not a princely sum, and this after twelve years of intense work, the publication of four books, one of them a masterpiece, and all of profound originality.

It is typical of publishers—no doubt of human beings in general—that whereas in the first flush of enthusiasm for *Devil's Tor*, Huntington, the Chairman of Putnam's, was writing on 18 April 1932, 'In my belief, *Devil's Tor* is a classic and has a long life before it,' on 18 June he says: 'I wonder if you yourself feel that *Devil's Tor* represents your best and strongest work? That you have powers of the very first rank one has no doubt but the opinions of *Devil's Tor* from even the friendliest critics suggest that your gifts have not been utilised to the best advantage.' I particularly like the phrase 'utilised to the best advantage'.

Visiak, Myers and others worked hard for *Devil's Tor*, and Lindsay felt that his star was definitely in the ascendant. The reviews in fact were far from being universally unfavourable. Yet in the all-important first few months after publication only 650 copies were sold and the book was a failure, despite real efforts by Putnam's to sell it.

It may be worth while to look more carefully at the reception accorded to the only book of David Lindsay's that did get real selling support from a highly reputable publisher.

J. B. Priestley wrote in the *Evening Standard*:

> *A Voyage to Arcturus*, though it begins and ends indifferently, is a grand piece of wild imagining . . . So I began Mr Lindsay's new long story *Devil's Tor* with great hopes. I am sorry to say they were disappointed . . .
>
> Now and then there are flashes of Arcturus quality in this massive chronicle . . . but for the most part I found it woefully cumbersome, turgid and unconvincing.

He ends:

I do hope that Mr Lindsay, who seems to write with difficulty, will not be discouraged.

A pious hope, after the tribulations through which Lindsay, one of the genuine geniuses of this century, had passed.

Priestley's remarks about *Arcturus* show little understanding of the true nature of the book, which is far from being a mere 'piece of wild imagining', and the whole tone of the review is flaccid and rather inept. It must have injured Lindsay more by its ineptitude than by its strictures. No serious writer minds unfavourable criticism provided the critic shows that he appreciates the essence of the book with which he is dealing. Priestley deals only with its surface.

H. E. Bates in *Everyman*, wrote of the new book:

Mr Lindsay's novel, which is almost 500 pages long, is a prime example of verbosity. . . . It is a heavy, woolly piece of work, full of long unnecessary essays in the supernatural, weighed down by pretensions and romantic descriptions of dark and dismal scenery, and peopled by characters who talk either like gods in ancient sagas or professors lecturing in obscure sciences.

He ends:

as for explaining life, it does not even touch it.

I understand Bates' difficulties with the book, and do not find his lack of sympathy surprising. He himself was trying to produce terse, poetic work and Lindsay was simply not moving in his world. But I am surprised at his lack of perception. It is as if the true nature and purpose of *Devil's Tor* escape him completely. His comments too are unobservant. The book is heavy but not 'woolly'. The 'essays in the supernatural' are not 'unnecessary', they *are* the book. The other novels of the week reviewed by Bates receive stars according to merit. Five stars denote a masterpiece. R. H. Mottram's *Home for the Holidays* receives four stars, and the comment 'A warm and sunny book, carefully detailed, almost a masterpiece.' Where is it now? How does it compare, *now*, with *Devil's Tor*? A succession of products from the bourgeois book-factories follow, and receive the same acceptance.

Rebecca West in the *Daily Telegraph* is more acute, more penetrating and perceptive, and goes deeper. She makes a just comment on the woodenness of the verbal exchanges and compares *Devil's Tor* unfavourably with *Arcturus*, again justly. She then continues:

> But all the same, the book is an excellent specimen of its kind, and the mystical portions have the virtue of sincerity, as if Mr Lindsay had scorned to use anything to play the part of truth in his story that he did not believe might be the truth, were the universe a shade more dominated by the dusk than it is. . . . Here is a case where the modern novel, so inveterately kind in its demands on the human attention, has incapacitated the novel reader from making an effort which is necessary if the novelist is to make his legitimate effect.

My respect for Miss West is increased by this review. She was prepared to give an unsympathetic book the tribute of attention and as a result saw light through the mist. Only an alert awareness could produce that remark about Lindsay's 'scorning to use anything to play the part of truth' in his story, but in fact Lindsay could never either play a part in his writing, nor use anything else to play a part. He wrote what he saw.

Hugh l'Anson Fausset of *The Manchester Guardian* has always been a perceptive critic.

> This is a vast, formidable, and overpowering book. Mr Lindsay is not a dexterous writer. He is often cumbrous and heavy-handed, and he handles his narrative with none of that expert economy or glancing cleverness which is so generally characteristic of modern fiction.

This is neatly put and entirely apposite.

> Yet it is, in a sense, true that the length and even the stylistic uncouthness of the book are an intrinsic part of its whole artistic and moral size. For its scope is colossal.

He says later that the 'apotheosis' in which the book 'culminates' has 'an astonishing force and a rare visionary penetration'. Lindsay was delighted with this review, and wrote to thank its author.

The Times Literary Supplement makes irrelevant references to Wilkie Collins, M. P. Shiel and Rider Haggard, giving at last a gently favourable judgement, entirely misconceived.

L. A. G. Strong in the *Spectator* tells us that 'Mr Lindsay is most decidedly a man to watch. He is original, he has ideas, and he can write.'

L. P. Hartley in *Weekend Review* mentions *A Voyage*, and says:

> Mr Lindsay's writing is extraordinarily cumbrous—a sort of obstacle-race, in fact—and quite devoid of conscious humour . . . What is of value in him is a complete originality of mind and great intensity of feeling. He is so different from other writers without in the least wishing to be different. He has an extraordinary sense of spiritual forces; they are perfectly real to him, and enable him to present the supernatural without self-consciousness.

This is enough to show that *Devil's Tor* received wider recognition and more attention than any other of his books, and was noted by all the best reviewers of the day. Many influential people had now acknowledged the importance of *A Voyage to Arcturus*. I do not suppose that Lindsay was disappointed. He would, however, have found the reviews irrelevant. To an author it is always as if the critics are writing of some other book than the one he has written. They perceive the unnecessary and ignore the essential. Nevertheless, Rebecca West, Fausset and Hartley did see something in *Devil's Tor* which is not only actually *there*, but which the author *meant* to be there, and no writer should hope for more.

It is interesting in this connection to compare the tone of the reviewers' account of *Devil's Tor* with Lindsay's own account of it, given to Putnam, amusingly enough, in response to a request for 'a brief note of three or four hundred words on the writing of *Devil's Tor* . . . People are always interested in the method of workmanship of authors and I think it would be good policy to supply them with an effective bait of that kind.' Instead of gossip about quill pens or typewriters they received this:

> There are two orders of imaginative writers—those who describe the world and those who explain it. The first—by far the larger class—are the poets or poetic-minded, even though their merchandise be cynicism or sordidness: they aim only at setting familiar things in new and striking lights. But the second have the musical temper—between metaphysics and music is this inexplicable link of consanguinity. *Their* aim is the presentation of passion, emotion, and the elemental forces generally. They wish to get down to the roots of the world.

Thus the references of poets to music rarely reach the heart of the matter, while the musician of any depth probably never deigns to measure *his* art-form by the standard of mere descriptive words.

Devil's Tor was conceived in a spirit of music. A previous book of mine, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, was similarly generated; and the greatest compliment it has ever received was from the mouth of an artist and musician,[1] who found its whole construction and composition essentially 'musical'. To the curious in such matters I should have to refer *Devil's Tor*, as to its primary origins, not to any master of prose, living or dead, but to the tremendous creator of the Ninth Symphony. The first movement of that work has generally been more or less in my head during the book's writing.

But the story's actual themes—Fate made visible, the Great Mother, the mystic stones belonging to a world of other dimensions, the part of the Northern races in history, the supernatural bringing-together of a chosen pair for the uplifting of humanity, the purpose of the creation of the universes—these belong not to one time or one mental birth, but have been built up of infinite darkness and confusion. The eye caring to discern will see in them the evident traces of an astronomical parallax: by which I mean a progress of the story, not only from the first chapter to the last, but across the sky-space of thought itself.

This piece of writing gives clue enough why *Devil's Tor* was not successful with the public. It lacks warmth and humanity. It is austere and grim; it makes no concessions. The qualities of every writer are balanced by his weaknesses. It is useless to carp at his weaknesses, as if by eliminating these you will preserve the qualities intact. Kill the weaknesses and the qualities die also. Lindsay was concerned with 'the roots of the world' and all else was of minor significance. If he had been more interested in story, character and incident he would have been the less himself, and his readers in the end would have been the losers. It is nevertheless likely that his very isolation helped to drive the warmth from his work. It is there in *Arcturus*, *Sphinx* and *The Violet Apple*.

At any rate, *Devil's Tor* was not a financial success. It is natural to suppose, as Lindsay did, that wide and serious attention, and reviews in all the influential journals will mean sales. This is not always the case. It was not the case with *Devil's Tor*. The 'reviews' which sell books are word of mouth recommendations from one reader to another. The first reader may have been persuaded by a

[1] Robert Barnes?

printed criticism, but it is the thousandth who matters. The average reader would neither understand nor appreciate *Devil's Tor*.

Robert Barnes says 'Of course the family suffered with financial troubles—one chilly night we needed a fire and I happened to go out into the garden—I saw David with a lighted candle digging up the ash-path to use as fuel. Talking of popular authors of his time he once remarked "There's very little art of writing nowadays . . . One must have a mind like a butler to achieve success." However, there was little sourness in his nature and he rarely complained of anything, yet at times he must have suffered in no small degree.'

In June 1932 Huntington of Putnam wrote in reply to Lindsay's suggestion that *A Voyage to Arcturus* might be republished:

> I think you know that we made a very special effort with *Devil's Tor*, spending more than is usual on press advertising etc. The book has certainly received some very gratifying reviews but even these have not described the book in a way that is likely to attract people in these depressed times. The sales are continuing at a very slow rate and we have so far disposed of only 650 copies, which is, of course, very disappointing.
>
> I think the book is making a real impression and especially if conditions improve, there is hope that the book will go on selling during the autumn. Nothing, however, could be more fatal than to present another book of yours to the booksellers this year. I doubt if it has ever been practicable to revive an old book except in connection with a new success by the same author.

Poor Lindsay. Huntington returns more ferociously to the theme on 23 September:

> I think you know that I should myself immensely like to republish *A Voyage to Arcturus* if I thought I could sell it satisfactorily. Unfortunately, however, when a publisher has had disappointing results for one book, he must for some time be surrounded with a sort of discouraging atmosphere extending to travellers and booksellers, which would be unfavourable for another book by the same author.

Nothing could be plainer than that. The discouraging atmosphere extends most decidedly to the author himself. Despite the efforts that Lindsay made in various directions, no one wanted to

republish *Arcturus*, and in fact no one *did* republish it until after his death on 6 June 1945. Republication was made in 1946 at a time when, as Gollancz, who issued it, said, 'the public will apparently buy anything labelled fiction, and there is a chance that of those who buy *A Voyage to Arcturus* a few may be glad that they have done so.' No book of Lindsay's appeared between 1932 and his death.

He wrote to Putnam's before the publication of *Devil's Tor*:

> For my next plans, I can only say that I am at present beginning to see where they should lie. Between the philosophies of *Arcturus* and *Devil's Tor* there seems to be a chasm of contradiction. As both books were sincerely and independently written, and were long matured, no doubt the contradiction is more apparent than real; and it seems to me that a larger synthesis can be found, to include both philosophies. But in that case, a new and higher truth should emerge; and this is what I am after.

This is a clear statement of the level of seriousness on which David Lindsay wrote. For him, this new and higher truth was to emerge in *The Witch*, the book on which he was working until about 1939. How successful he was it is almost impossible to say because only a portion of the book survives. Lindsay's friend Robert Barnes believes it to be his most important work.

He worked on the book very slowly, so slowly that some of the writing shows signs of an obsessive, almost desperate and repetitive concentration, and the language becomes static and opaque. He was subject to slumps into black depression, and this shows in the writing. The light and vitality have gone. No man could fail to be depressed by blows of the kind he had received. Not one of his books had been financially successful. He had failed to publish one of them—or two if *The Ancient Tragedy* is to be considered a separate work from *Devil's Tor*. His last great effort had been received in the tactful, grudging way that gives praise without warmth. No feeling of an encouraging voice came through to him. Although critics paid lip-service to *Arcturus*, it had proved impossible to reissue the book.

That Lindsay set to work on *The Witch* at all proves his courage and determination. How long he took over this strange, powerful, creaking, beautiful, archaic, unworldly, unearthly book I don't know exactly. But it is the last one he wrote. After it he was silent.

He had the now familiar experience of seeing it rejected by several publishers before he died, and his wife experienced the same thing after his death. It still is unpublished and the typescript has disappeared. What remains is a fragment that shows clearly that powerful, intense urge to penetrate to the roots of reality and to communicate the music that sounds behind this illusory world.

Just before the war the financial position became critical. Mrs Lindsay wanted to buy a large house in some suitable place and take in boarders. The idea filled Lindsay with dismay. His wife was as determined in her view as David in his, and borrowed the money to achieve her wish, without his approval. This was a heavy blow to Lindsay's pride. He fell into a grim melancholy. They did not speak to one another for days. He stayed in his room and brooded. Nevertheless, a house in Brighton was bought. There Mrs Lindsay both entertained and chaperoned young lady boarders from the Continent. Lindsay became used to the arrangement, if never entirely reconciled.

The war killed this venture as it killed much else, and it killed something in David Lindsay himself. It came as a sickening shock to him. He said again and again that European culture was finished as a result of it, and would never recover. The guest house was turned over to young naval officers. Lindsay did not want them in his house. He was worried about his two daughters, now of an age to appeal to young naval officers. But the young men took to him as well as to the girls, and more surprisingly he took to them also. A long procession passed through the house. He talked with them, played chess with them, and for many of them had a real affection.

More unexpectedly he was strongly attracted to the wife of one of these officers and they became friends. Mrs Lindsay resented this and there was another quarrel. His sister Margaret Lindsay, writes in a letter to Robert Barnes' mother: 'Tell him (Robert) he isn't exactly dead but the next thing to it. He is ill mentally and physically . . . He is shutting himself in his top room and not even letting the woman in to clean. For a week he fasted entirely and since then I have been taking up trays to him. The last few days I have persuaded him to come down—He looks awful!'

The first bomb that fell on Brighton did not explode, but it fell on the Lindsays' house. David was in the cold bath he took every morning. The roof of the bathroom collapsed and although Lindsay was not physically hurt, he never recovered from the shock. He became grey and silent and in June 1945 died before he was seventy.

If David Lindsay had received some recognition and more fundamental understanding I believe he would not have allowed his ideas to turn inward in such a way that the human world became unimportant and was portrayed stiffly and without grace. It is not possible to present another deeper reality except through images drawn from this one. The more real these images, the more real the other world becomes. The more alive and vivid your presentation of the human drama, the more sternly solid grows the Muspel world beyond. Lindsay himself wrote in the *Notes*: 'Unless a book is lifelike, it will not carry conviction.'

When his contemporaries rejected him, Lindsay began to withdraw into a region peopled with figures which lack the massive human-superhuman reality of Maskull or Krag and show a statuesque rather than a vivid impressiveness. This is our loss, but neither we nor Lindsay have cause for complaint. As a writer he is unique, and his work is enduring. We can draw nourishment from both the tragedy and the triumph of his life.

COLIN WILSON

Lindsay as novelist and mystic

LINDSAY AS NOVELIST AND MYSTIC

I first came across *A Voyage to Arcturus* in 1963, when Gollancz reissued it for the second time. His first reissue was in 1946. It was first published by Methuen in 1920. I had heard about the book several times before—mainly from a friend whom I regarded as a bad judge of books. Still, I was curious, and when I heard it had been reissued, I ordered it at our local bookshop. I read it for the first time on a hot summer day in 1963, lying on the lawn, looking out over a very calm sea, determined to absorb a little sunlight. I have no capacity for idling, which means that I cannot sunbathe in the normal way, with a newspaper over my face; so I sometimes try to compromise by catching up on my reading in the sun.

The first thirty pages confirmed my judgement that my friend was no judge of books. I had always thought of Arthur Machen as a second-rate R. L. Stevenson; Lindsay struck me as a second-rate Arthur Machen. The prose limped its ponderous, unfelicitious course through a late nineteenth-century landscape, and I found myself thinking: Why the hell can't people write as they talk? No one has to write as stiffly and awkwardly as this. I decided to stick it out until the scene changed to Arcturus. And when that happened, and Joiwind appeared, I was astonished at the change that came over the book. Does the prose actually improve? I'm not sure. But Lindsay is suddenly at ease, and the story begins to flow like a fast stream. And I thought 'Ah yes, this is a gentle Blakeian mystic, the Blake of the *Book of Thel* and the *Songs of Innocence* . . .' A few chapters later, where Oceaxe and Maskull take the ride on the shrowk, I was hypnotised; it seemed some of the most powerful imaginative writing I have ever read. And when Crimtyphon's neck snaps, and the Crystalman grin appears on his face, I remember thinking: 'I have discovered one of the greatest books of the twentieth century'.

I am sorry to say that this impression did not last. No doubt I tried to read too much in one go. The images and ideas continued to impress me; I now saw that Lindsay was only Blakeian in part, but it began to seem that his inspiration was flagging. And towards the end, I became badly puzzled. Instead of being the climax, the

last pages seemed to be a messy confusion. Admittedly, it is difficult to finish such a book; Chesterton had the same difficulty in *The Man Who Was Thursday*—a book I read and re-read in my teens—but he brought it off all the same, and I can still remember the effect of revelation when I first heard a dramatised version of the novel on the BBC in about 1944. *Arcturus* only left me irritable and disappointed. So much so that I pushed it on the bookshelf, and forgot about it for a year.

The following year, at about the same time, I happened to be in Blackpool, having swopped houses with a friend for a couple of weeks. The novelist, Bill Hopkins, was with me, and one day as we were driving off to Windermere, he remarked that he would like to write a novel that would not touch everyday life at any single point, any more than a piece of great music touches life. It would be pure imagination, yet it would not strike the reader as a fairy story, but as something deeper and more real than his own life . . . I said sadly: 'It's a fine idea, but it can't be done. The strangeness can't be maintained. The mind falls into old habit patterns. There's David Lindsay, for example . . .', and I went on to outline *Arcturus*. As I did so, the book started to come back to me, and I remembered how powerfully certain episodes had impressed me. When I got back to Cornwall, a week later, I re-read the book, this time taking my time about it. And now, suddenly, I saw very clearly what Lindsay was getting at. It was the scene in Threal, with the three colossi, that gave me the clue. And once this was grasped, the basic plan of the book became clear. And I knew I had been right before. It *was* one of the greatest books of the century; in fact, completely *sui generis*.

I forgot to mention that I had been sufficiently curious about Lindsay's meaning to write to E. H. Visiak in 1963. Victor Gollancz told me he was still alive—as he still is I am pleased to say—and I decided to see if I could get him to explain his introduction a little more fully. For it only offers clues to the meaning of the book, never a clear statement. My admiration for Visiak's *Medusa* led us to continue the correspondence—somewhat irregularly—but I had to work out the meaning of *Arcturus* for myself.

Gollancz again published Lindsay's second novel *The Haunted Woman* in 1964 (originally 1922). I bought it eagerly, read it in

one sitting, and was disappointed. It seemed even less 'definite' than *Arcturus*, but without the compulsive atmosphere. I have re-read *Arcturus* many times; I keep it by my bedside and often open it at random and read a few pages. I have only re-read *The Haunted Woman* once, when writing my long essay on Lindsay in 1965.

When I finally met Harold Visiak in 1966, he lent me *Devil's Tor*, *Sphinx* and *M. De Mailly*. I had already tried to persuade Gollancz to publish the unpublished novel *The Violet Apple*. He had expressed great interest, but then Mrs Lindsay pointed out that he had already seen it and rejected it. I was unable to borrow the manuscript from Mrs Lindsay—she was old, and very ill at this time—and neither have I had an opportunity to examine the manuscript of his final unfinished novel *The Witch*. Perhaps this is just as well. I read *Sphinx* (John Long, 1923) without difficulty, although I found it even more disappointing than *The Haunted Woman*, but I spent nearly two years struggling through *Devil's Tor*, which seems determined to outdo the later Henry James in tortuous sentence structure and immense stretches in which nothing seems to happen.

All the same, when I look back upon Lindsay, I realise that he is a great writer; or rather, a great mind. All his work, no matter how bad, should be in print. The other day, I bought volume two of D. H. Lawrence's *Phoenix*, and tried to read *The Crown*, which he considered one of his most important works (together with *Fantasia of the Unconscious*). It was impossible. I got that frustrated feeling of a man who tries to climb up smooth ice and slips back every few steps. *Fantasia of the Unconscious* produced the same feeling. I read it because T. S. Eliot said (in *After Strange Gods*) that it was one of Lawrence's finest works. I am convinced that Eliot never read it; he was only trying to be kind. Probably no one has ever read it. Well, at his worst, Lindsay is like that; but if all Lawrence deserves to be in print, then all Lindsay does too.

I want to press this comparison with Lawrence; it will help to give an idea of the nature of Lindsay's genius. I personally find it hard to read Lawrence, although I have read most of the books about him, and have his complete works opposite my eyes as I write this. Unless I read very slowly, I bog down; it all seems too

personal, too trivial. (This is purely a matter of temperament; the first and greatest influence on me was Shaw, and he remains the writer I admire most.) But when I am not getting angry with the slow, muddy current of *Women in Love* or *Aaron's Rod*, I can see quite clearly that Lawrence was a great writer. I only have to think *about* Lawrence to remember certain poems, certain stories, certain chapters in the novels, that left behind the odd, lingering impression like great music.

It is the same with Lindsay. Two years ago, I was Writer in Residence at a girl's college in Virginia, and I had to attend some annual holiday on top of a nearby mountain. There was lunch and tea in the open; there was a concert that went on for hours, and various games and other entertainments. It was all very happy and healthy and pleasant, and I sank into an increasing state of depression. I suspect I don't like nature—or at least, I'm indifferent to it. (I live in one of the most beautiful parts of Cornwall, but seldom notice the scenery.) Towards the end of the day, with a faint chill in the air, we were driven back down the mountain in bouncing lorries, winding among trees covered with golden and red autumn foliage. This made me think of *Arcturus*, and suddenly there came into my mind, like a whisper, 'Maskull was his . . . but Nightspore is mine'. My skin tightened as if I had dived into cold water; the hair on my head prickled; a feeling of exaltation rose in me and burst like a bubble. Lindsay's world became real, and the healthy, pretty teenagers who were plunging me into depression ceased to matter.

This is the quality of a great writer. Some years ago I made a convenient distinction between writers; I divided them into 'high flyers' and 'low flyers'. This is nothing to do with literary quality, or even greatness. It is only to do with *how far they feel at home in this world*, and how far they feel strangers in it. Anthony Trollope, Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, were all low-flyers. 'This world' seems to them self-evidently the *only* world. Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Lawrence, John Cowper Powys, Lindsay, are all high-flyers. The ordinary world produces revulsion in them, and they need to create an intenser world.

I must interrupt myself to make a distinction here. It is not really a question of two worlds—obviously, there is only one. Husserl invented a useful term, the 'life-world'. You and I live

in the same world, in one sense, and in quite different worlds in another. We may even live in the same house and work in the same office, and still live in different worlds. The only way I could live in your world is if, by some magical process, I could get inside your skin. This is the 'life-world'. But if you happen to be a novelist of genius—or even just a good one—I *could* read one of your books and enter your life-world, find out what it feels like to be you.

But while we all live in different life-worlds, there is another sense in which most of us occupy the same life-world. If you turn on the car radio as you drive to work, you will hear the same programmes that everyone else is listening to on the radio. When you switch on TV, you see the same advertisements that everyone else sees. We all know what it feels like to get water in our shoes. We all know the latest war news. And young people in the same age group have hundreds of feelings and perceptions in common too, so that a teenager who knew the coffee bars of London would feel perfectly at home in the coffee bars of San Francisco or Melbourne or Paris or Tokyo. All this—the world of McLuhan's 'media'—is a *communal life-world.*

Now this communal life-world has always existed to some extent, although it has never been world-wide as at present. Any closely knit society, whether of Lancashire textile workers or Icelandic fishermen, soon establishes a communal life-world in which people swim, mentally, like fish.

This is what the high-flyers are revolting against—the communal life-world. This world of politicians and pop singers and over-advertised products is obviously not *the* world. The high-flyers try to see the world from an angle—or an altitude—where these things are reduced to their correct—and thoroughly unimportant —positions.

It need hardly be pointed out that this distinction between high- and low-flyers cuts the cake in a quite different direction from ordinary literary criticism. Most writers of the twentieth century are low-flyers, and this includes James Joyce and Ernest Hemingway as well as James Hadley Chase and Mickey Spillane. And the bracket of high-flyers would include writers as different as Mervyn Peake, J. R. R. Tolkien, E. R. Edison, T. S. Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, Kafka, Borges and L. H. Myers. All these

writers have in common a disgusted rejection of the common life-world (L. H. Myers once told a friend that it made him shudder with disgust to imagine one of his characters walking down Piccadilly), and the attempt to create another 'reality'. Ultimately, of course, the literary value of the work depends upon the quality of the building materials they choose, which is why Borges is a great writer and Edison is not. If the communal life-world is rejected too thoroughly, there is a tendency to become light-weight; if it is accepted too thoroughly, there is a tendency to get bogged down—as in Lawrence. The career of John Cowper Powys shows a slow swing from one extreme to the other; the early novels are too ploddingly realistic (*Ducdame*, *Rodmoor*, *Wood and Stone*), the middle period novels are magnificently prophetic (from *Wolf Solent* to *Maiden Castle*), the late novels are so deliberately conceived in terms of fantasy and allegory as to be quite unreadable.

The same thing applies in the case of Lindsay. It would seem that the strange fantasy of *Arcturus* released in him, and allowed him to control, powers that were never again to achieve such total self-expression. The Lindsay of *Devil's Tor* is like the handicapped artist of Baudelaire's poem whose 'giant wings prevent him from walking'.

But I must repeat, even at his worst, Lindsay is important. Once you have read his four major novels, they stick in the brain like monuments.

Why is this? The reason struck me when I read the passage at the end of the 'Hill Shades' chapter of *Devil's Tor*. The book's heroine, Ingrid, is being kissed by her lover, Peter Copping, a painter.

> She wondered what she was doing, playing at this game of love. Thunderstorms, earthquakes, tombs and apparitions were calling to her, her secret heart was full of awful whispers, she was marked out by all her characters [*sic*] to be a woman apart. Every ancient thing was in movement within her range. Hugh [her cousin] might be on Devil's Tor again, tasting new wonders. And Peter was kissing her in childishness, as though the dam of his long hesitation had burst at last. From him she could endure it, for it was his right and nature, and she had but within these few minutes given herself to him; nevertheless, her self seemed doubled. If such caresses were now to go on,

would not she be guilty of duplicity threatening to become permanent? For the one half of her was not in his arms, but in the more terrible real universe.

This passage reveals Lindsay's faults, as well as his strength. It is clumsy. It contains phrases that no competent writer would let past: 'her secret heart was full of awful whispers'; it goes on a little too long: 'From him she could endure it, for it was his right and nature', etc. But with all its clumsiness, it ends by gaining a certain momentum, and making one forget its faults. And the last sentence shows the source of Lindsay's power. It is not simply a case of accepting 'another world', as a good Catholic might; nor is it simply a disgusted rejection of 'this world', of the kind one finds in *The Waste Land*. It is a very clear and powerful sense of a reality that is somehow *seen*, intuitively. This is also the source of D. H. Lawrence's strength, in his best work; not just a rejection of the life-worlds of the Hermione Roddices and Clifford Chatterleys, but a clear, deep instinct for another set of values that make the blood flow more quickly and bring a sudden glow of life. (Admittedly, in Lawrence's worst work he seems to be wallowing in a barren loathing of the world he rejects, and to have no *alternative* vision.)

It may have been unconscious symbolism that made Lindsay choose the double star, Arcturus, as the scene of his major novel. All artists are planets of a double star: 'the world', which they accept and take for granted most of the time, and some 'other reality' that suddenly tugs at them and makes them feel that the everyday world is unreal. Ingrid too feels herself 'double'. The theme is always clearly stated in Lindsay, and it is very clearly and unmistakably the theme of his four novels, as well, according to J. B. Pick, as of *The Violet Apple* and *The Witch*.

The Times Literary Supplement in 1920 dismissed *A Voyage to Arcturus* as 'a riot of morbid fancy' and called it 'uniformly unwholesome'. The novelist L. H. Myers was one of the few to recognise its qualities, and he bought up a great many copies to distribute to his friends. *The Haunted Woman* and *Sphinx* both met with equal indifference. Putnam issued *Devil's Tor*, Lindsay's last published work in 1932 (his entertainment, *The Adventures of M. de Mailly*, had found a publisher in 1926).

After this Lindsay felt he was working in a vacuum. Readers

of *Arcturus* may find it surprising that he cared. But Lindsay was not a fully grown up man—that is to say, there were many unresolved contradictions in him. There is no telling what might have happened if *Arcturus* had achieved the success it deserved. Its basic thesis is a Buddhistic world-rejection. Lindsay wrote:

> One must regard the world not merely as the home of illusions, but as being *rotten* with illusion from top to bottom. . . . The most sacred and holy things ought not to be taken for granted, for if examined attentively, they will be found as hollow and empty as the rest . . . Behind this sham world lies the real, tremendous and awful Muspel-world, which knows neither will, nor Unity, nor Individuals; that is to say, an inconceivable world.

The last sentence identifies Lindsay clearly as a mystic, or at least as some extreme kind of Kantian philosopher who believes that all the 'necessary' conditions of our world—space, time and so on—are somehow not at all necessary.

But the deepest vein in Lindsay's nature was not of mysticism, but a kind of Scots religious seriousness. He was a relative and an admirer of Carlyle, and anyone who has read Carlyle will see the similarity of temperament. Lindsay also reminds me of the mystic William Law, who declared himself 'a stranger to revelation', and whose *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* identifies religion with self-discipline and strong-mindedness.

I have seen a photograph of Lindsay; he has a clean cut profile, a strong chin, and a small moustache; in spite of this, he looks sensitive and vulnerable. I suspect that Nicholas Cabot, the hero of *Sphinx*, is probably a self-portrait:

'He was a pale, lean, shortish, inconspicuous young fellow, in the middle twenties, with rather delicate upper features, but with strong-looking eyes, a determined jaw, and the full, thrust-out lips belonging to an audacious mind, as distinguished from an audacious temperament.'

This last phrase is interesting, for Lindsay was personally shy. 'Unaccustomed as [Nicholas] was to meeting women, his face assumed a deep flush as the door suddenly opened . . . and his hostess walked into the room. He attempted a slight and awkward bow . . .'

One notes the awkward style of the novels, and it is clear that

part of Lindsay's problem as a writer was this immense shyness and constraint. *Arcturus* swings into a powerful un-selfconscious stride after its stiff beginning. After this book, Lindsay was aware that he was writing for publication. The 'reader over his shoulder' may explain the stiffness of the prose. It's a pity he was not more like Lawrence, who was too sure of himself to suffer from self-consciousness, and who is consequently never afraid to write as he would talk. Among letters Lindsay wrote to Visiak, I found a perceptive fragment from some unknown correspondent that summarises the faults of Lindsay's style:

> With this [mystical] Lindsay I am in sympathy, and the other simply has to be endured for his sake. The Lindsay who writes about 'high life' in hotels is ignorant, pretentious and inherently vulgar. He is a hopeless victim of Mark Twain's 'nickel-plated style'; his characters never go, they proceed, they can't just get into a train, they must journey by first-class, they don't leave, they take departure, they don't say yes, they assent. In short, they are hopelessly underbred. They talk in a stilted, ceremonious style which I last remember to have met in a penny novelette I had borrowed from the maid. . . .[1]

While this makes the point with pungency, it is not perhaps entirely fair. Some of the awkwardness is self-consciousness, and at other times, it seems to be due to a tendency to cast his sentences in forms that make it hard to finish without a cliché or a piece of stiltedness. This is the opening sentence of *Sphinx*: 'The local train, with its three coaches, pulled up at Newleigh Station at half past four, and Nicholas Cabot alighted.' The last word strikes the modern reader as Victorian. But what could we put in its place? 'Nicholas Cabot got off'? 'got down'? 'climbed on to the platform'? Once one tries rewriting half a page of Lindsay's prose, one can sympathise with the author, struggling forward stiffly like a man wading in deep water. After telling you that 'the day was gloriously fine, without a cloud in the sky, but with a crisp breeze tempering the otherwise overpowering sun', he has nothing to do but get on with the mechanical business of transporting his hero to the house where he intends to live. D. H. Lawrence or Henry Williamson or Richard Jefferies would spend half a page talking about trees and birds, and establishing the 'spirit of place'. Hemingway would throw in a few details about

[1] The signature of this fragment seems to be H.R.A.

the sun on the metal rails and the whiteness of the railings; Graham Greene would probably mention the vulture on the station roof. Lindsay has to fall back on a lame dialogue between his hero and the chauffeur. And again, one experiences this intuition that the novel was not his true medium. What would have happened if Carlyle had tried to launch himself with a novel instead of *Sartor Resartus* and *The French Revolution*? The interesting thing is that the unique quality of Lindsay's mind still stamps itself upon his unworthy material, making it oddly memorable.

In parenthesis, one might note the wish-fulfilment flavour of *Sphinx*—the young man who has worked in an office for many years (like Lindsay), who has been left a fortune (fifty-five thousand pounds), so that he can pursue his chemical researches, and who, for no very clear reason, decides to go and lodge with a family with three pretty daughters, somewhere in Kent or thereabouts. I once asked Visiak if Lindsay was contemptuous of women, as he seems to be in *Arcturus*. He answered with an emphatic No. 'I think it was because they attracted him so strongly that he felt bound to reject them violently.'

Lindsay's self-identification with Nicholas comes over in many ways. The reader is naturally inclined to wonder why this brilliant young scientist—the equal of Einstein if he has really invented a machine for recording dreams—was doing in an estate agent's office rather than a university. His host asks him the same question, and he answers: 'I wanted to retain any originality I might possess.' This is clearly Lindsay speaking for himself, (a remark J. B. Pick has also noted).

It is curious that Lindsay allows Nicholas to die at the end of the book, although for no very clear reason. It would have been far more effective to have him vanishing, with his dream machine, towards new horizons and prospects; it would have underlined Lindsay's point that the 'world' of his book is not the only reality. I do not wish to psychologise too much—it is easy to invent meanings that were never there—but the death of the autobiographical hero would seem to tell us something about Lindsay. Many writers put vaguely autobiographical characters into their books, and they very seldom kill them off. Joyce's hero in the *Portrait* ends with a challenge to destiny, and the implication is

that he is marching off to triumph, or at least, to a significant and valuable life. Running quickly in my mind over a list of writers who have put self-portraits into their novels only Balzac has killed off his more-or-less autobiographical heroes (Louis Lambert, Lucien de Rubempré), although there is a vaguely pessimistic cast in Thomas Wolfe and Powys (*Wolf Solent*). Balzac had a distinctly self-destructive element that led to his death—through overwork and crushing debts—at fifty-one. But it seems to be a general rule that writers without a self-destructive element try to give their autobiographical heroes the kind of destiny they themselves would regard as desirable—or at least acceptable.

The manner of Lindsay's death seems to confirm my suspicion of a concealed element of self-destruction. I asked E. H. Visiak how Lindsay died; he explained that Lindsay was extremely careless of his physical health, and that he allowed his teeth to decay without bothering to consult a dentist. The result was an abcess that led to gangrene (or blood poisoning—he was not sure which) and a painful death. Looking at the photograph of Lindsay, with its freshness and youth, it is hard to imagine him allowing his teeth to go. Was it partly the result of the frustration of all his ambitions as a writer? (Visiak records a violent reaction—the only one he ever remembers—when Lindsay read him pages from *The Witch*, and he found them incomprehensible.) Or was the self-destructiveness something that went much deeper? This is a question that can be considered more fruitfully after a reading of *Arcturus* and *Devil's Tor*.

When Mr J. B. Pick read my original essay on *Arcturus* (published in *Eagle and Earwig*, 1966), he wrote to me that it hardly seemed necessary to analyse the book at such length, since it spoke for itself with such exceptional clarity. I wonder how far he is right? I certainly missed its point on a first reading. The zoologist Loren Eiseley, who writes the Introduction to the American edition[2] of *Arcturus*, obviously hasn't the faintest idea of what it all adds up to. He speaks of the 'Delphic ambiguity' of the book, when it is surely one of the least ambiguous books ever written. Its strength, and genius, lies in the almost mathematical precision of its design. It is flatly untrue that Lindsay was 'perhaps too

[2] 1963, Macmillan.

honest to record one voice alone among the many conflicting voices that represent the living world'; he knew exactly what he wanted to say, and said it without ambiguity.

During three terms spent as a teacher in America—in Virginia and later at the University of Washington in Seattle—I made *Arcturus* one of the class books, and set papers on it. The classes were on existentialism and phenomenology, but the students were handed all the necessary clues. Almost without exception they got it wrong.

So perhaps it might not be superfluous to offer a sketchy analysis of *Arcturus* here.

A Voyage to Arcturus is constructed like a series of Chinese boxes, one inside the other. Or it is like a series of confidence tricks, each designed to mislead the reader, although with every one of them, he wants to shout 'Yes, yes, I've got it now'. The only similar book I can think of is *The Man Who Was Thursday*.

Lindsay's basic idea, I have already stated, is of 'another reality', completely unlike this one, with no characteristic in common—perhaps even without the characteristic of existence as we know it. In a letter dated 25 November 1921, Lindsay remarks 'Long since (for my own use) I have postulated the existence of a "sublime" world, the word being employed for want of a better. But this "sublime" is not identical with the "sublime" in common use . . .' Again, in the fine passage in *Devil's Tor* in which Hugh Drapier walks to the Tor early in the morning, Lindsay writes:

> The mood was familiar, and since he could not understand it, he had long ago invented a formula for it. The mysterious hour, the dusk, the aloneness of his being, the dark friendly trees, the intimate wind, and the breaking sky—it, as its equivalent of sombre enchantment experienced elsewhere on earth, he recognised to be the right element of his eternal part. Yet it was all no more than a *hint*. It stood for nothing of itself, but was the faint, imperfect copy of heaven; the proof being that, though it might call, it could not satisfy, but on the contrary produced in him such states as disturbance, sullenness, infinite longing, sadness, despair. *Thus he was inevitably reminded of some grander world not present.* [My italics.] His formula, therefore, was that the merely beautiful might suffice a soul, but that the sublime (which was the shadow of the beauty of another world) could never suffice, since with it came gropings that must amount to pain . . . (pp. 67–8)

Expressed in this way, this sounds pretty close to romanticism; and in fact, anyone who is familiar with the works of the major romantics—Novalis, Hoffman, Tieck, Jean Paul—will be continually reminded of them while reading Lindsay. Lindsay is also obsessed with the 'mincing, formal dance step' of Hoffman's social convention, and the conflicting reality of the rhythm to which 'the bronze fist of destiny beats time'.

The comment in the notebook that 'the most sacred and holy things ought not to be taken for granted, for if examined attentively, they will be found as hollow and empty as the rest' provides the second important clue to *Arcturus*. Again and again, its hero is overwhelmed with sensations of awe, delight, religious ecstacy; and again and again, they prove to be liars.

The book opens with a séance in a fashionable Hampstead home, and the central theme is stated immediately. (It is worth noting that Lindsay was a musician—like Hoffman—and music plays a role in all his books.) Into the séance walk two uninvited guests—Maskull, a bearded giant, the hero of the book, and Nightspore (who, it will become apparent later, is Maskull's alter ego, his spiritual self as opposed to his 'worldly' existence). The medium causes an apparition to materialise—a handsome, Greek-like youth. There is an atmosphere of awe and reverence. Then another uninvited guest bounds into the room, 'a thick, shortish man with surprising muscular development and a head far too large in proportion to his body. His beardless yellow face indicated, as a first impression, a mixture of sagacity, brutality and humour.' This is Krag, the 'devil' of the book. Krag seizes the neck of the materialised youth and twists it. The body falls to the floor. 'The guests were unutterably shocked to observe that its expression had changed from the mysterious but fascinating smile to a vulgar, sordid, bestial grin, which cast a cold shadow of moral nastiness into every heart. The transformation was accompanied by a sickening stench of the graveyard.' (The last phrase recalls the notebook entry about the world 'being *rotten* with illusion from top to bottom'.)

I find myself wondering whether Lindsay chose the séance merely as an effective opening for the book, or whether he had come into contact with spiritualism, with its credulity and sickly piety, and felt revolted by it. (I am willing to keep an open mind

about the ultimate reality of spirit phenomena, but I think there can be no doubt that the atmosphere of spiritualist churches would repel most fastidious minds.)

The book staggers forward slowly for another four chapters. The only event of significance is when the characters visit the Gap of Sorgie,[3] a break in the cliffs on the coast of Scotland, and hear the strange drum-beat that runs all the way through the book. 'The beats were in no way drowned by the far louder sound of the surf, but seemed somehow to belong to a different world.' (Lindsay knew German—like Carlyle—*sorge*—the German 'care' —is a central theme of the book.) At the end of *Arcturus*, the drumbeats turn out to be the beating of Maskull's heart. Later still we are told that the drummer is Surtur, the creator of the universe.

On returning to the deserted farm where they are to meet Krag, Maskull tries to climb a tower. The higher he goes, the heavier his body becomes, until he can go no further. A voice now whispers to him, warning him that he must die when Nightspore wakes up. Later, when he mentions this to Krag, Krag remarks: 'The journey is getting notorious . . . There must be ill-wishers about.'

Already, the reader who is unfamiliar with *Arcturus* must be feeling a certain bewilderment. Krag, Surtur, strange whispers, drum beats, alter-egos. Let me pause to try to clear it up.

Lindsay speaks here as a Buddhist, or Schopenhauerian. He believes that all human beings are stuck on a fly paper of delusions, and the glue is mixed with sugar—pleasure. But human beings regard pleasure as ultimately good, and pain as evil.

According to Lindsay, it is our attachment to pleasure that keeps us trapped in this sweet, sticky world of vulgarity and stupidity. At the end of Brecht's *Threepenny Opera*, Polly sighs 'I'm *so* happy', and the orchestra gives a contemptuous groan. For Brecht, like Lindsay, feels that there are bigger issues than

[3] I suspect this is the Deil's Brig, on Holborn Head in Caithness. It might be mentioned in passing that many of the strange names on Arcturus seem to be derived from Scottish names. One has only to look at the names of peaks visible from Ben Nevis to see the resemblance: Corpach, Gulvain, Ben Sgriol, Ladhar Bheinn, while Loch Hourn immediately brings Discourn to mind.

happiness; unlike Lindsay, Brecht identifies these issues with revolutionary politics. Lindsay would have seen that as another illusion.

At the end of the novel, Krag identifies himself as pain. This is why he is regarded as the devil throughout *Arcturus*. But according to Lindsay, it is only through pain—when forced to reject his natural self-indulgence—that man glimpses the 'sublime' of which he is capable, and which is his true element. In this sense, Lindsay is not a romantic but a 'classic' (in the sense that Eliot and T. E. Hulme understood the word); not a humanist but a religious figure. However, we may be reaching a point in western history when these opposites will blend into a higher synthesis.

Krag is not only Pain; he is Surtur, the real evolutionary force behind the universe. His true world is 'Muspel', the 'real, tremendous and awful' world that lies behind this 'sham'.

Opposed to Krag is Crystalman—Pleasure—whom most human beings regard as God. It is he who whispers the suspicions of Krag and Nightspore into Maskull's ear. The 'sordid, bestial grin' that turns up periodically throughout the book when some noble illusion dies and reveals itself to be another sham, is the 'Crystalman grin'.

Finally, it is necessary to explain that Maskull and Nightspore are aspects of the same person. Maskull is the surface, the mask; the part that is forced to live in society and finally die. Nightspore is his hidden self—the name is self-explanatory, spore of the night, of the dark night of the soul. This is why the whispering voice tells Maskull that he will die when Nightspore awakes.

Maskull is fired to Arcturus in some kind of crystal torpedo—Lindsay never bothers to make his science fiction inventions credible, and this is not a fault—he is simply not interested. And when he awakens on Tormance, the planet of the double star, the real action of the book begins, and moves forward at a pace that makes this the most extraordinary feat of imagination in English fiction.

Maskull wakes up and finds himself alone. What now happens is a sort of Pilgrim's Progress—except, I must emphasise, that it is not an allegory but a *story* with deeper meanings. It can be read purely as a story, on the level of Tolkien, and it will grip.

Everything on Arcturus is a creation of the devil. Maskull will have to discover this, step by step.

The first episode on Tormance is one of Lindsay's finest creations, perhaps because of the romanticism that makes him respond to Joiwind, even though he consciously rejects her.

Joiwind is the girl who comes to find Maskull when he wakes up. When he looks into her eyes, 'he seemed to see right into a soul that was the home of love, warmth, kindness, tenderness and intimacy'. She cuts her arm and allows some of her blood to flow into Maskull, which instantly revives him, although his earth-blood obviously drains her of strength for a while. 'What pleasure is greater than loving kindness?' she asks, and it seems inconceivable that Lindsay means this ironically. But as she talks, it becomes clear—although not to the reader who approaches *Arcturus* for the first time—that she is completely ensnared in the illusions of Crystalman. She tells him that the creator of their world is called Shaping, and that he is synonymous with Surtur—and also with Crystalman. And she tells him that Krag 'is the author of evil and misery, whom you call the Devil'. (It should be mentioned that each new set of people that Maskull meets have their own name for God (or Surtur), and the name usually has an obvious symbolic significance. The meaning of 'Shaping' is clear enough.)

Lindsay's capacity for pure invention—creating a strange landscape—must be unsurpassed in science fiction; here his genius is so plain that no one could deny it. The fruits and animals of Tormance have variety and total freshness. The landscape is something that remains permanently in the mind. I shall refrain from quoting examples, partly for lack of space, partly because it would be a pity to spoil the book's impact on a new reader.

Joiwind takes Maskull to meet her husband; they have to travel through the hottest part of the day, but Maskull is refreshed by a draught of water that fills him with vitality. Joiwind explains that she and her husband live on water, because they refuse to eat living creatures. 'And as one can really live on anything, water does very well.'

Joiwind's husband Panawe is a poet and a mystic. I agree that the names are rather off-putting at first, but one soon ceases to

bother about them. When they climb a mountain, Panawe is so overwhelmed by its beauty that he goes into convulsions, and a crystal egg falls out of his mouth. Maskull remarks that on earth, this happens to poets. Panawe says the egg is of no value, and throws it away.

But the true significance of this whole episode is underlined in a story Panawe tells of his youth; of how he met a 'sorcerer' called Slofork at the top of an immense narrow ridge, which allows room for only one to pass. Slofork tells him that behind Crystalman's world there is another world whose great principle is not love. 'That world we call Nothing—but is not Nothing, but Something.' When Panawe remarks that all experience is misery, Slofork replies 'You have never learned that, and never will. For you the world will continue to wear a noble, awful face. You will never rise above mysticism.' Slofork then jumps off into the void. Panawe comments on his own tale: 'Often I have wondered which of my ill-considered, juvenile remarks it was that caused his sudden resolution to commit suicide. Whichever it might be, since then I have made it a rigid law never to speak for my own pleasure, but only to help others.' This comment reveals how completely he has missed the point. He and his wife are gentle, loving people, idealistic do-gooders, but they have no knowledge of reality. And this, for Lindsay, is all that matters. All the same, Maskull remembers Joiwind throughout the book, and one suspects that the author's attitude towards her was also ambiguous.

One wonders, incidentally, if Joiwind was referring to Slofork in the previous chapter, when she remarks that one corrupt person her husband had met 'believed the universe to be, from top to bottom, a conjuror's cave'. Lindsay's own view, of course.

After he leaves Joiwind and Panawe, Maskull has a vision which declares itself to be Surtur, and tells him that he has been called to this planet to serve Surtur. He offers to answer any question, but at this stage, Maskull has no idea of the right question to ask. This is just as well; the vision is Crystalman again, masquerading as Surtur.

In the next major episode, we have left the mystical, happy world of Blake's *Book of Thel*; the joint presiding deities seem to be Nietzsche and Darwin. It is a world of will and violence.

Maskull meets a savage, sensual woman called Oceaxe. While with Joiwind, Maskull had developed various organs that enabled him to feel universal love and sympathy. At the suggestion of Oceaxe, he destroys these by burning them, and his organ of sympathy changes into a kind of eye called a 'sorb', the organ of the will to power and dominance.

The episodes that follow are certainly among the most impressive in the book on a first reading. (Later, I think one comes to admire every episode equally, each for a different reason.) We gather they are now in a world in which will counts for everything (and, by implication, Lindsay thinks this slightly 'truer' than the universal benevolence of the do-gooder). Oceaxe calls up some monstrous reptilian birds. She concentrates her own will and strikes two of them dead, forcing the third to land tamely on the rock. The 'shrowk' now transports them through the air, and as they fly, huge tracts of country rise suddenly beneath them, or crash into tremendous depths. Oceaxe mentions that they are going to see her lover Crimtyphon, and that Maskull will have to kill him. Maskull at first rejects the idea with horror. Crimtyphon turns his sorb on Maskull, and Maskull has to fight for his life. He breaks the boy's neck, and the dead face immediately takes on the idiot Crystalman grin.

One begins to wonder how long Lindsay can keep up this fantastic flow of invention. The answer is: for the rest of the book. One ceases to notice the occasional infelicities of the writing; this is the work of an assured master. Loren Eiseley's patronising comment 'One must be tolerant, therefore, if his message . . . is rasped from a not quite perfect instrument' should raise a smile. There is simply no other writer of the twentieth century who is capable of this kind of thing; it is science fiction raised in the *nth* power.

There now follows an episode which is one of the most baffling in the book (and which none of my students managed to interpret correctly; in fact, most of them tactfully ignored it). Crimtyphon had a second mistress, a woman called Tydomin, who now appears on the high crag. Oceaxe is obviously afraid of her; '(she) is quite capable of swallowing up Krag himself', and she warns Maskull not to do anything Tydomin tells him to do. The warning obviously comes out of experience, for a few seconds later, as

Oceaxe is about to leave them together (at Tydomin's orders), Tydomin says 'You must be dreaming. That's the way, unless you want to walk over the cliff side.' Obediently, Oceaxe turns the other way—and plunges over the cliff. Tydomin obviously has some hypnotic power. Maskull is shocked and angry—and yet a few minutes later, he too obeys her. I am inclined to speculate that Lindsay had met some such woman in a Cornish village, and perhaps included her as another interesting type of willpower, although I must admit that Lindsay usually seems to have good reasons for everything he does.

Tydomin goes on to expound a gospel of self-sacrifice; Maskull has sinned and he must pay for it. And Maskull seems to agree with her. 'I think the only thing worth living for is to be so magnanimous that fate itself will be astonished at us.' In that case, says Tydomin, give me your body; I want to become a man. And Maskull, still under her curious, quiet domination, agrees.

Before this matter is pursued, there is another episode that seems to me one of the most interesting in the book. They meet a man called Digrung, who turns out to be Joiwind's brother. Maskull, carrying a body, asks Digrung not to mention their meeting to Joiwind. Digrung, as open and honest as his sister, says he cannot do this. Maskull seizes him:

> Instructed in his actions by some new and horrible instinct, he pressed the young man tightly to his body with all three arms. A feeling of wild, sweet delight immediately passed through him. Then for the first time he comprehended the triumphant joys of 'absorbing'. It satisfied the hunger of the will, exactly as food satisfies the hunger of the body. Digrung proved feeble. . . . His personality passed slowly and evenly into Maskull's . . . (Maskull) dropped the body and stood trembling.

For several years, and in several books, I have tried to analyse the nature of the origin of the sexual impulse. Sex is obviously not like food; people do not die when they are 'sex starved'. Sex is obviously a matter of the will and imagination. In that case, what *happens* when a man finally makes love to a woman he has been pursuing? What stomach is filled by the act? The question evaded all my attempts at analysis until I read the above passage,

and then I saw the answer. Lindsay has put his finger on the root of the male sexual impulse; it satisfies the hunger of the *will* as food satisfies the hunger of the body.[4]

In episodes like this, one becomes aware that Lindsay is probably the most acute psychologist since Nietzsche. *Arcturus* is not a 'riot of morbid fancy', but a symbolic text book of depth psychology.

There follows the strange episode in which Maskull attempts to give up his body to Tydomin. They go into a cave and Maskull lies down on a slab. Then he has a vision or dream, in which he becomes the 'Greek youth' in the séance, surrounded by the fashionable Hampstead crowd. Then Krag leaps in, seizes Maskull by the neck, and twists it. Maskull experiences tremendous pain, and wakes up again in the cave. The pain has washed his senses free of the delusions Tydomin has cast over them, and he tells her she must die. Tydomin says: 'You have escaped me. It is very curious.'

Through several re-readings of *Arcturus*, I think I have come to understand most of its mysteries; but about this one I am not sure. I can only guess that Tydomin symbolises an insidious female will to dominance that is deadlier than the open seductiveness of Oceaxe, the 'vamp'. Significantly, Tydomin is a mousy little woman.

In the next episode, Lindsay finally lays his cards on the table. They meet an impressive and powerful stranger called Spadevil, a kind of Old Testament prophet. Spadevil persuades Maskull to allow him to transform his 'sorb' into twin 'probes', which will give him a vision of the moral law of the world. This moral law amounts to duty.

Spadevil explains that he comes from a country called Sant, where the men have seen through the illusions of Crystalman's world, and prefer pain to pleasure. No women are allowed there. The religion of Sant (presumably meaning 'health') seems to be

[4] And what of the female sexual impulse? I propounded this question many times to lecture audiences and students. Only one student came up with what seemed a likely answer: that if the male impulse is a desire to absorb, then the female impulse is a desire to *be* absorbed. Other women have violently denied this as a libel on their sex. I remain open minded on the subject.

pure Calvinism, or perhaps Buddhism; the men of Sant have realised that the pleasures of the world are torments in disguise, like a baited fish hook.

Maskull eventually rejects Spadevil. 'At this moment, the world with its sweetness seems to me a sort of chapel house.' He suddenly feels that all that matters is to fight his own pleasure-loving nature, and Spadevil seems to be a weak and confused intellect, not a prophet.

As a result of meeting the even more ruthless Catice, Spadevil accepts the decision that he shall be executed. Maskull is chosen to be the executioner. He kills Spadevil—rather against his will—with a huge stone, crushing his face (so that Lindsay manages to avoid stating whether the dead face turns into the Crystalman grin). He then kills the self-sacrificing Tydomin—who, it should be observed, has found a new happiness in submitting her will to the will of the prophet (the echo here is of Lawrence)—and cradles her head until she dies. Her face turns into the Crystalman grin, leaving no doubt that noble self sacrifice is another of Crystalman's illusions.

This episode at last reveals Lindsay's central contention—that all pleasure is evil, that it only entangles man deeper in illusions.

The next day, Maskull meets a man called Dreamsinter in a forest, and when he says that Surtur brought him from earth, Dreamsinter contradicts him: 'Not you, but Nightspore.' Maskull asks why he has been brought to Arcturus. 'To steal Muspel-fire, to give a deeper life to men.' (Earlier in the book, Panawe had told Maskull that he was some sort of reincarnation of Prometheus.)

Maskull now has a vision in which he sees himself, Nightspore and Krag marching through the forest to the sound of Surtur's drum beats. (This vision is induced by a bitter and unpleasant fruit offered him by Dreamsinter—perhaps self-knowledge.) In his vision, he sees himself being stabbed in the back by Krag. Nightspore marches on alone, unmoved. It is another one of Lindsay's devices for keeping up the mystery of his strange detective story. The reader wants to cry out to Maskull: For heaven's sake be careful. But the reader is wrong.

In the next chapter, Maskull arrives on the shores of a strange sea, and meets a fisherman, Polecrab, and his wife Gleamiel. The fisherman gives him a meal, and also a little of his wisdom. He

confirms that the world was created by Shaping, but that men have a deep instinct to strive for the world of Muspel that lies beyond. But they are enmeshed in delusions, and go the wrong way, getting more deeply tangled with every attempt to escape. Maskull reflects on the fundamental paradox of which every poet is aware: that this world looks real—in fact, *is* obviously real—and yet, in a deeper sense, is false. And in a single sentence, Lindsay makes Polecrab state the essence of phenomenology: 'We are each of us living in a false private world of our own, a world of dreams and appetites and distorted perceptions.'

Polecrab's wife is yet another of Lindsay's symbols of female self-delusion and entanglement in Crystalman's illusions. Across the sea is Swaylone's Island, from which emanates beautiful, soul-convulsing music which is said to be fatal to anyone who hears it at close quarters. Gleamiel is determined to cross to Swaylone's Island with Maskull and hear this music, even if it destroys her. Her husband tries to dissuade her, but to no purpose. Finally, Maskull and Gleamiel set out for the island on a raft.

Here follows another of Lindsay's curious and symbolic episodes that baffles the questioning intelligence. On the island, they find a small lake of great clarity; when Maskull tries to walk on it, he receives a powerful electric shock that hurls him back on to the land. At the side of this lake, they find Earthrid, the present 'musician in residence', fast asleep. The lake itself is his musical instrument. Earthrid wakes up and explains to them something of his principles of aesthetics. He is obviously another symbol of the artist. His face is weak and pale; he has an unpleasant smell, and when he wakes up, he proceeds to eat earth. And yet he professes to understand the undying principles of beauty and pain. (A legend tells how his lake once gave off only sweet and beautiful tones, until Krag interfered, and made the first musician, Swaylone, play ugly discords. This broke the instrument, so that now it will only play a strange music, a compound of pain and beauty.)

Earthrid begs them to go away, for he must now play his instrument. They refuse, and Earthrid plays. Maskull feels tremendous pain, which soon passes, but Gleamiel is killed immediately. Maskull then drags Earthrid away from the lake, and proposes to play himself. Earthrid is terrified and tells him he will

smash the instrument. Nevertheless, Maskull plays. He imitates Earthrid's posture, placing one foot on the lake and one hand on the ground—which makes it fairly clear that the lake is a symbol of the subconscious or superconscious mind—and then allows his mental images to flow into the lake, which somehow endows them with an electric vitality. Tremendous exhilaration possesses him; he plays wildly and powerfully, causing the hills to rip apart, tearing Earthrid in two, and finally causing the lake to drain away into a chasm that opens up underneath it. Then Maskull leaves Swaylone's Island and the body of Gleamiel—wearing the Crystalman grin. There can be no doubt that, on its most superficial level, the episode is intended to be a rejection of 'art'—even the tormented and sublime art of a Beethoven.

One is now two-thirds of the way through the book, and Lindsay's imagination shows no sign of flagging. On the contrary, it seems to gain strength. The reader begins to wonder how long Lindsay can continue on this level of invention. The answer becomes apparent only on looking back on the book. This is not mere fantasy, of the kind displayed in science fiction, nor intended to convey the author's beliefs; it is a unique blend—a perfect amalgam of a kind that the author was never again to achieve.

Maskull finds a tree floating past, and rides on it. (This sea, by the way, has a strange quality; it possesses different densities in different parts, so that Maskull cannot swim in it.) His 'boat' finally brings him to a land called Matterplay (the home of the murdered Digrung). It is here that Lindsay begins to expose his philosophy nakedly; in fact, from now until the end of the book, the note of conviction grows stronger and clearer.

Maskull walks up a stream that seethes with life; the ground is covered with thousands of different life forms. Matterplay seems to be a country where, as Blake says, 'life delights in life'. As in the tropical forest, all kinds of trees and creepers fight for the possession of the shore, so that Maskull is obliged to stay in the stream. The reader soon begins to suspect that the stream symbolises the Life-Force itself. Maskull picks up a fruit, and sees that inside it there is a fully formed young tree; he throws it into the current; by the time it comes back to him it has sprouted six rudimentary legs and is swimming. He is even more astonished as he notices that these plant-animals seem to be abruptly appear-

ing out of empty space—spontaneous creation. Then his forehead sprouts several new eyes, and he sees the reason for this. The brook is giving off green sparks as it flows along—life itself. The sky is filled with masses of cloud, and the clouds try to capture the green sparks, which seek to escape upward. If the clouds succeed in catching a spark, they imprison it, and a 'plant-animal' suddenly materialises in space. Maskull is awe-struck, and reflects: 'That was like the birth of a thought, but who was the thinker? Some great Great Living Mind is at work on this spot. . . . It would be ridiculous to go on to other riddles until I have solved these.' But Lindsay is playing his usual double game, and Maskull is once again the dupe of his enthusiasm. Maskull discovers this when he meets a strange, ancient creature called a phaen, neither male nor female, for whom Lindsay coins the pronoun 'ae' (instead of he or she—he does not explain why 'it' will not suffice). The phaen explains that it is the last of an ancient race, and that it has spent all its long life trying to get to the source of this stream. Some enormous creature forms in front of Maskull's eyes, and explodes immediately, the life escaping. Lindsay's meaning is clear. Man is a vital spark imprisoned in matter, and it is only the weakness of his spark that prevents him from escaping. This idea is closely related to the Platonic doctrine that the philosopher spends his life trying to escape the flesh that imprisons him, and that therefore death is a consummation.

Maskull agrees to help the phaen. Sure enough, his luck holds, and they stumble on an entrance into the side of the mountain from which the stream issues. They find themselves in a kind of lunar landscape lit by cold light; the atmosphere is solemn, religious, and tranquil, the air of a cathedral. The phaen dies almost immediately, and vanishes. A man called Corpang now appears and tells Maskull that he cannot understand why phaens all want to come there to die. Corpang seems to symbolise the saint and ascetic. (The phaen was perhaps a symbol of the God-intoxicated saint of the Ramakrishna type.)

Corpang's face is noble with a touch of coarseness, of pride in his own sanctity. He is intended to represent Christian saints, as he speaks of Three in One, and One in Three. There are three worlds, he explains: of existence, of love, and of feeling (religious or sacred feeling seems to be meant); these are, so to speak, the

length, breadth and depth of the spirit world. Corpang hopes to draw near to the god of the third world, whom he calls Thire. (Faceny— the phaen's God, is merely the God of existence, the first world.)

Now comes one of the most impressive and powerful episodes in the book. They come to three great colossi; they kneel, and soon the first one glows with a kind of rosy dawn-light, and seems to become a beautiful youth. This is Faceny, the God of existence, and Maskull feels overwhelmed with the poetry and mystery of life. The statue fades into darkness, and the second one emerges; this time the light is so bright that Maskull can distinguish nothing, but he feels purified, freed of his selfhood, and an 'inverted passionate and nearly savage mental state of pity and distress. He felt a tormenting desire to *serve*.' This is the God of the Christian mystics and of George Herbert and Simone Weil. This fades away too, and a voice speaks to Maskull out of the darkness, telling him that he is to die. The voice adds: 'You have despised life. Do you really imagine that this mighty world has no meaning, and that life is a joke?' Maskull faints, and so he does not see the third statue until it is fading.

But now Lindsay produces a typical master stroke. While Maskull is still overwhelmed with the truth and depth of his vision, a strange light begins to shine—Muspel-fire, that Maskull has come to Arcturus to seek. As soon as it shines on the three colossi, their faces change into grinning Crystalman masks. Corpang is horrified as he realises that he has been duped all his life. Maskull states the moral of this transformation, which is the central theme of the book: 'It must mean that life is wrong, and the creator of life, whether he is one person or three.' Christianity, with its belief that God looked at the world and found it good, is decisively rejected. 'Surtur's world, or Muspel . . . is the original, of which this world is a distorted copy. Crystalman is life, but Surtur is other than life.' So much for Joiwind's belief that Surtur and Crystalman are one.

The last stage of the journey is now approaching. Maskull knows that he has not much longer to live. Their final objective is the mountain Adage in the country of Lichstorm. Soon a man called Haunte, a hunter, floats through the air in a sort of aerial boat, and Maskull and Corpang climb in for a trip to Lichstorm.

Haunte tells Maskull, grinning, that he will now be tormented unbearably by the sexual atmosphere.

There they go together in search of Sullenbode, a strange woman who is the Female Principle that causes so much lust and torment in Lichstorm. On the way, Maskull experiences awful torments, and imagines he is about to die; suddenly, the agony vanishes, and he experiences a 'heart breaking joy he had never experienced before in all his life'. He is able to tell Haunte that he has passed through torture to love, and that this should be the end of the torments of lust. 'You men of Lichstorm don't go far enough. You stop at the pangs, without realising that they are birth pangs.'

They find Sullenbode under a tree. She is intensely feminine, yet her face seems only half formed and 'scarcely human'. Yet when Haunte kisses her, features suddenly emerge. But the second time Haunte kisses her, he falls backward as if he has touched an electric cable, his head split open. Now Maskull decides he must kiss her, even if he meets the same fate as Haunte. But although the shock of it makes him lose his senses, he is not killed, and when he opens his eyes again, Sullenbode has been permanently transformed; Maskull's maleness has called her from partial existence into full consciousness. To Corpang's great disgust, she tells Maskull that she will go with him wherever he goes, and that when he ceases to love her, she will die. All the women in Lindsay's books seem to have the same characteristics —passion, self-sacrifice, softness; yet all are victims of the delusions of Crystalman.

As they journey on together understanding grows between Maskull and Sullenbode; suddenly Maskull hears Surtur's drumbeats with deafening volume, and sees the Muspel-light again; he stands there transfixed, while Sullenbode tries to attract his attention by kissing him passionately. When she fails, she turns and walks away. He emerges from his trance and follows her, but she collapses and dies. The emotional life that Maskull has given her has been destroyed by his vision of real purpose. Inevitably, her face becomes a Crystalman mask after death, but there is so much mud on her that Maskull cannot see it, and 'she had never appeared so beautiful to him as at that moment'. Lindsay's purpose seems to have wavered for a moment; but perhaps this is intended ironically.

The final stage of the journey has arrived, and now Maskull meets Krag again. The reader is still unaware that Krag is another name for Surtur—this is only revealed in the last sentence of the book—or that Maskull and Nightspore are one, so there is a certain effect of tension, as in a thriller. One wonders how soon Krag is going to betray Maskull and murder him. Krag is at his most malicious and cynical, and seems to think Maskull's long pilgrimage a joke. He says, 'Perhaps Crystalman will make one more attempt on you', and in fact, this is what happens. They meet a man called Gangnet, another poet (although the second syllable of his name reveals his true nature). Maskull finds Gangnet's feminine features oddly familiar—this is Crystalman, of course. 'His dark hair curled down to his neck, his brow was wide, lofty and noble, and there was an air of serious sweetness [this word gives the game away] about the whole man which was strangely appealing to the feelings.'

As the second sun rises, Maskull has a kind of revelation, a feeling that he is nothing. 'I have lost my will . . . I feel as if some foul tumour had been scraped away, leaving me clean and free.' That this is another trick of Crystalman is proved when Gangnet says enthusiastically: 'Yes, you are nothing.' This is the saint's delusion, that his will is evil, that he must abandon himself.

Almost immediately, the second sun is extinguished by Muspelfire, which causes Gangnet—now revealed as Crystalman—to writhe in pain until he vanishes; his face changes into a slobbering, grinning mask. Maskull sees that the drumbeats of Surtur are actually Krag beating on a blood-red spot with a huge hammer, and Krag tells him that the blood-red spot is his own heart. Surtur's drumbeats are revealed as the strange inner compulsion that drives all men of real genius. Maskull knows now that he is dying. As he does so, he asks, 'Where is Nightspore?' and Krag tells him: 'You are Nightspore.' Maskull dies, and Nightspore immediately appears in his place. Nightspore asks: 'Why was all this necessary?' Krag answers: 'Ask Crystalman. His world is no joke. He has a strong clutch, but I have a stronger. Maskull was his, but Nightspore is mine.'

Maskull-Nightspore knows that he is to be reborn, even though he shudders at the idea.

Nightspore goes through a door, and finds himself in a tower—echoes of the tower he tried to climb in Scotland before his voyage to Arcturus. His body grows heavier as he tries to climb. He is in Muspel itself, and will see a vision of Crystalman's world as it really is.

At the first two windows in his ascent, he sees nothing, but hears a great driving rhythm, like a machine, which is also a kind of mocking laughter. This is the throb of life itself. At subsequent windows, he becomes more aware of the meaning of what he is seeing, and the plan of the book finally becomes quite plain.

And finally:

> The truth forced itself on him in all its cold reality. Muspel was no all-powerful universe, tolerating from pure indifference the existence side by side with it of another false world, which had no right to be. Muspel was fighting for its life, against all that is most shameful and frightful—against sin masquerading as eternal beauty, against baseness masquerading as nature itself, against the devil masquerading as God.

Nightspore knows that it is his destiny to help Krag in the great fight against Crystalman. When he descends again, he tells Krag: 'The struggle is hopeless.' But Krag reassures him: 'I am the stronger and the mightier.' And Krag reveals he is also Surtur, and that his name on earth is Pain. Here the book ends.

The reader lays down the book feeling dizzy and overwhelmed. It is impossible to doubt that Lindsay is a man of astonishing genius. Whether his vision is finally true or not, he has seen very deep, deeper in some respects than Milton or Blake.

Arcturus is not a work of imagination. It is basically a work of science. Einstein once said that his aim was 'perception of the world by thought, leaving out everything subjective'. This is the great drive behind science. We spend our first ten years or so in the trivial, personal universe of childhood, which may be very beautiful, but is always claustrophobic. For most human beings, the rest of life is merely a continuation of this childhood subjectivity; their chief concern is their own emotions; on the deepest instinctive level, they see themselves as the centre of the universe. A few human beings accidentally burst the bubble that surrounds them, and contemplate worlds of objective meaning stretching throughout the universe. At first it is frightening—this knowledge

that negates the individual. Then he discovers that it is not a threat, and that the coolness that replaces personal emotion is a healthier temperature for living. The result is a new drive, a new instinct, that replaces the childlike self-absorption of the ordinary human being, and a suspicion that one's basic nature may be more god-like than one had thought, that the word 'human', in its ordinary implications, may be a libel on our true nature.

This obsession with the objective may not take a scientific form; it may be an obsession with music, painting, literature, nature, even travel. It may also express itself as the religious or mystical impulse. But it is always the desire to escape the narrow, the personal, the contingent.

And sometimes, the impulse remains undirected for a long period. Instead of settling into definite channels of science or art, it remains simply an attitude towards living. When it crystallises, it tends to crystallise into philosophy, or into some more-or-less philosophical form of art. William James is an excellent example of this temperament, and his essay 'On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings' could be printed as a preface to *Arcturus*. Wordsworth and Coleridge had the same temperament, and it caused the early poetic decline of both of them. (It does not make for poetry so much as for a rather detached, analytical frame of mind; Carlyle's description of Coleridge in his *Life of Sterling* brings this out admirably.) Shaw had it; so had Whitehead. And, interestingly enough, it is extremely common among writers of science fiction, who may possess the minimum of actual literary talent; so common that I am tempted to describe it as the driving force behind science fiction.

Arcturus shows this temperament—one might call it the existentialist temperament—developed to a remarkably high degree, and this constitutes Lindsay's tragedy. Literature is not, perhaps, the ideal expression for the temperment, for literature is best when it flows between narrow banks. The existential, or metaphysical temperament, makes for a kind of broad, spreading discursiveness—as one can see in Melville or Dostoevsky. If Lindsay had stumbled upon some natural expression for his mysticism—music, philosophy, science—he might have learned to gear his temperament smoothly to creativity, and have turned into one of the great influences on his age. T. E. Hulme, with a very

similar temperament, and many of the same basic ideas, became a powerful influence although he never published a book and died at thirty-four. When I think about Lindsay's career, it is like imagining Einstein's career if he had abandoned relativity after his paper on the Brownian movement and devoted his life to squaring the circle. It is deeply saddening to think of such a powerful creative machine going to waste.

In reading *Arcturus*, one need make no allowances—except, very occasionally, for a tendency to tautology ('powerful and mighty', etc. But no one criticises Wordsworth for writing 'I listened motionless and still'.) In the other three novels (not counting *M. de Mailly*), one has to make pretty generous allowances. Even so, they remain fascinating works, for one carries to them a knowledge of the author's basic aims and powers.

E. H. Visiak has always preferred *The Haunted Woman* to *Arcturus*. While this seems to me an odd kind of judgement, I can see why he finds *The Haunted Woman* a book to be periodically re-read. Where *Arcturus* is a symphony, this is a moving piece of chamber music. What is more, if one tries to put oneself in Lindsay's shoes after the publication of *Arcturus*, it can be seen as a considerable achievement and artistic advance. What could he do? Philosophically speaking, it would be hard to top *Arcturus*. If the world is a delusion of Crystalman, then the only logical follow-up would be to enter a Buddhist monastery, or to commit suicide like the two characters in *Arcturus*, Slofork and Spadevil. (Spadevil's acceptance of execution is, in effect, suicide; he doesn't have to die.)

The question Lindsay had to ask himself after *Arcturus* was 'Where now?', and the choice of directions was narrow. Another fantasy set on a strange planet? The complete artistic success of *Arcturus* made this impossible. In fact, it made *any* kind of a follow-up very difficult. So the next novel had to be set in this world. What of the hero? Again, to choose a man of any great power or personality would be to risk echoing *Arcturus*. The logical choice was a woman. Again, *Arcturus* is prophetic; it brings to mind Ibsen's *Brand*. (This, in turn, reminds one of Shaw's 'two pioneers' in his book on Ibsen, one of whom tells people that something they have always done is wicked, the other

of whom tells them that something they have always thought wicked is permissible. Lindsay belongs to the first type.) Ibsen followed *Brand* with *Peer Gynt*, his opposite in every way. Lindsay follows Maskull with Isbel Loment.

But these are only the trappings of the work of art. Far more important is its basic idea, and here Lindsay shows that he has tried to dig deeper into his insights. In *The Haunted Woman*, he creates perhaps the most memorable symbol of the artist's basic problem that is to be found in literature.

First of all, what is this problem? We have already spoken of it: the problem of the 'two worlds', or rather, of the collective life-world and the 'peak experiences' of sudden intensity and purpose. We live in the physical world, which means that we are involved continually in practical choices, from long-range choices (such as whether drinking or smoking will shorten our lives) to short-range choices (such as whether to take an umbrella or wear a rain coat). It is no good trying to ignore this necessity for physical choices; it declines to be ignored. But once having accepted its necessity, we now face a further choice: how much interest to put into this matter of choices, how deeply to become preoccupied with the purely physical. A housewife who becomes neurotically obsessed with keeping her floors clean has made a choice. So has a poet who decides not to wash or shave or brush his clothes. So has a Hindu ascetic who decides to live in a cave and wear a loin cloth.

There is no one to guide us in these choices. Shaw made up his mind to spend his twenties writing unpublishable novels, and the choice finally paid off. Bernard Trevisan devoted his life to an obsessive search for the philosopher's stone, and he wasted his life and fortune. Both men followed an 'inner light', but in one case, it proved to be a will o' the wisp.

Not only is the 'inner light' sometimes deceptive; it also turns itself on and off quite erratically. If we all heard Surtur's drum-beats all the time, there would be no problem; but they only sound for a few minutes every month or so.

There is only one thing that can be said for the moments of illumination: their quality is so obviously authentic that they cannot be accused of ambiguity. Yeats describes such a moment in *Vacillation*:

My fiftieth year had come and gone
I sat, a solitary man,
In a crowded London shop,
An open book and empty cup
On the marble table top.

While on the shop and street I gazed
My body of a sudden blazed;
And twenty minutes more or less
It seemed, so great my happiness,
That I was blessèd and could bless.

One can only say that these moments of supreme confidence and power, comparable to the sexual orgasm, seem to set up a completely new standard of conduct and outlook. And although Wordsworth speaks of them as fading 'into the light of common day', the metaphor is misleading; for there is a feeling of reality about the experience that gives it a 'daylight' quality; it seems solider and more real than ordinary experience, as being awake is more real than dreaming.

But since 'everyday consciousness' is the human norm, and we read books and listen to music in everyday consciousness (although the music may heighten it), it is extremely difficult to write about this very simple experience in an uncomplicated way. Metaphors are helpful, but often misleading; for example, Chesterton compares it to hearing 'absurd good news', which immediately leads one to wonder about the content of the good news; *in fact, its content is the same as the content of ordinary consciousness.*

The plot of *The Haunted Woman* is summarised elsewhere in this volume. Its awkward style of *The Haunted Woman* inclines the reader to feel that it is a hit-and-miss affair of curious symbols and odd situations, on an altogether lower artistic level than *Arcturus.* But the lesson of *Arcturus* should at least have suggested that Lindsay has thought out his meanings with extreme care, and then brooded on the best way to convey them. If there seems to be a lack of clarity, this is usually because the reader has not thought deeply enough about the book—as in the case of Loren Eisely and *Arcturus.* And on re-reading, one becomes aware that *The Haunted Woman* is as tight and economical as *Arcturus.* It is in my opinion a novel about the contrast between the reality

that mystics and great artists glimpse, and the messy, muddy, confused world most of us live in, 'the dreamcrossed twilight between birth and dying', though E. H. Visiak interprets it differently. This contrast was already present in *Arcturus*, of course; but that book was not strictly about 'people' and their lives. Lindsay gave himself a head start—as far as exposition was concerned—by writing on the symbolic level of Blake's prophetic books. But while this kind of art can achieve great intensity on its own level, it cannot 'speak directly to man's condition', since it avoids reference to the actual world we live in. From now until the end of his life, Lindsay set himself the far more difficult task of situating his stories in a background that everyone could recognise, and *then* trying to convey the essence of his mystical insight.

Within its more limited sphere *The Haunted Woman* is as successful a novel as *Arcturus*. But, like that novel, it is ultimately pessimistic. A few rare human beings achieve brief contact with 'reality' by an accident, but they have no power to hold on to it. So the ability to see deeper than others is basically tragic. It is the situation of the 'romantic outsider', a theme that runs through the nineteenth century from Novalis to Nietzsche. Is it not possible to go *beyond* the romantic outsider, into a new and stronger position? Shaw thought so—that was his supreme originality; but Lindsay didn't. A shy, awkward man, he was obsessed by convention and its power over human beings. Certainly, his own tragic life seems to support his thesis. No one even began to understand what he was trying to do, and his intransigence was against him.

It is easy to miss the point of Lindsay's last three novels if one fails to consider that there have been many attempts to do what he was trying to do, and that few—or none—have succeeded. What he is trying to do is to write about 'two worlds', and to convey his rejection of 'this world' by the evocation of another. There have been dozens of romantic and post romantic writers who have attempted the same thing, none with complete success.

I cannot think of a single example of the successful evocation of the world that 'the world's million lips are searching for'. Balzac attempted it in *Seraphita*, and the result is only romantic sound and fury. Hoffmann's most successful attempt is in the

story *The Golden Pot*, in which a young student sits under a tree and sees a strange golden snake; the story then plunges into realms of magical fantasy, and becomes inventive rather than imaginative. In Shelley's *Alastor*, the hero wanders around the world looking for a girl he has seen in a dream—symbolising poetry—but never finds her. The major influence on Lindsay, according to Visiak, was George Macdonald, the Scottish novelist, whose *Phantastes*, *Lilith*, *The Golden Key* and *The Wise Woman* are the kind of novels that Yeats might have written if he had not been a poet. I can recall finding the Everyman edition of *Phantastes* in a second-hand bookshop when I was in my early teens, and plunging into it with delight, expecting a trip into a world of complete fantasy and myth. I can still remember my increasing disappointment, the feeling that this was neither reality nor fantasy, but an uncomfortable hybrid of the two; that it was oddly light-weight and unsatisfying. Gollancz reissued *Phantastes* and *Lilith* a few years ago.

There should be a heavy dividing line between Hoffmannesque fantasy and fairy story. It should be noticed that the most successful fantasy of our time, Tolkien's *Ring*, is actually a disguised *adventure* story in the manner of Rider Haggard or John Buchan, with plenty of realistic detail. Fantasy is a fairy story for grown ups (or at least, adolescents) and needs to convince as reality. At the date of writing, I have still not succeeded in finishing *Lilith*, in spite of C. S. Lewis's recommendation, and Auden's comment that *Lilith* is equal to the best of Poe.

In reading *The Haunted Woman*, *Sphinx* and *Devil's Tor*, the reader must focus clearly on the underlying intention. Then they will be seen as impressive achievements in a great tradition. To judge them as realistic novels somehow gone wrong is to completely miss the point. For the point is the feeling underlying them, this passionate attempt to communicate an intuition that 'this world' is in some deep sense unsatisfying, but that this is not the end of the matter. There *is* something else, the something of which Poe's haunted tombs and Yeats's fairylands are only a symbol. For nearly two centuries now, ever since Blake, the world has been trying to articulate this 'something else', from the vague nature-yearnings of Wordsworth and Byron and Shelley and the exotic occultism of Huysmans, Crowley and Montague

Summers to Powys, D. H. Lawrence and T. S. Eliot. Writers who seem to have as little in common as Hemingway and Firbank are united by this same urge to transcend the communal life-world. No one who read Yeats's early poetry actually believes in fairies; the reader simply focuses upon the emotion for which the fairies are an 'objective correlative'. And this is also the trick of reading Lindsay's novels.

Visiak rightly points out that *Sphinx* lacks magic; all the same, it is an absorbing book. *The Haunted Woman* may have been unsuccessful as a conventional novel, but it had given Lindsay the confidence to think of himself as a novelist. Perhaps only readers who have actually tried to write a novel can appreciate the feeling of its opening pages, with the train pulling into the country station, the hero with his trunk, about to embark on a new stage of his life. A novelist gets as fascinated by his own story as he might by somebody else's. He waits eagerly to see what will happen next. In a sense, he is not inventing. He is playing a game according to the rules, and anything might happen. The rule is to place oneself in a situation, and to look around as if one were in a real place, trying to describe what one sees. The aim is 'realism'—to render with reality. (This is true even in fantasy.) If all goes well, it is like an engine that begins to run perfectly; the writer sits back, and watches his mind as it swings into happy improvisation as effortless as dreaming. It is a feeling like setting out on a journey. The engine may stall once or twice, and then the pace flags; but to begin with, there is an excitement about it all.

In *Sphinx*, Nicholas Cabot comes to live with a family in a country village. He is working on a machine for recording dreams. (Both Visiak and J. B. Pick have objected to this as preposterous; but with a little trouble, Lindsay could have made it sound plausible; if, instead of his 'recording machine', he had talked about an electro-encephalograph that somehow picks up 'brain waves' and translates them back into their basic images as a record translates a wavy line back into music, it would have sounded convincing enough.)

The 'heroine' of the book, insofar as it has one, is a composer, Lore Jensen, who has given up writing serious music to compose sentimental trifles with titles like 'Pamela in the Rose Garden'.

From Lindsay's remarks about the sickening music of the waltz at the end of *Arcturus*, one can imagine his attitude to this. One of the daughters plays an early piece of Lore's called 'Sphinx', and Nicholas is impressed:

> The opening was calm, measured and drowsy. One could almost see the burning sand of the desert and feel the enervating sunshine. By degrees, the theme became more troubled and passionate, quietly in the beginning, but with a gradually rising storm—not physical, but of emotion—until everything was like an unsteady sea of menace and terror. Towards the end, crashing dissonances appeared, but just when he was expecting the conventional climax to come, all the theme threads united in a sudden quietening, which almost at once took shape as an indubitable *question*. It could then be seen that all that had gone before had been leading the way to this question, and that what had appeared simple and understandable had been really nothing of the sort, but, on the contrary, something very mysterious and profound. . . . Half a dozen tranquil and beautiful bars brought the little piece to a conclusion.

Nicholas objects to Evelyn's interpretation that the question of the Sphinx is simply 'Why are we alive?'; he believes the Sphinx was the goddess of dreams, and explains that there are dreams that we are unable to remember afterwards, but which amount to visions of reality. This states the central theme of the book, and also indicates its basic outline. Just as, in *The Haunted Woman*, the reader waits to find out what each new trip to the 'haunted rooms' will bring, so in *Sphinx*, he waits for experiments with the dream machine. This is obviously an excellent basic plot, guaranteed to hold the interest; it would take a thoroughly incompetent writer to spoil it; and Lindsay, while clumsy, is not incompetent. This is why *Sphinx*, while no masterpiece, *is* an interesting and readable novel. Read slowly with ears attuned to Lindsay's themes, it is a rewarding experience. In a conversation with one of the daughters, Nicholas says that he reads mainly science and philosophy; she asks whether he doesn't agree that poetry and romance are also, in their own way, real, but he denies this. *Sphinx* needs to be read with the attention one would give to philosophy, not as a 'romance'. (It is amusing to read the list of John Long's 'Latest Library Novels' opposite the title page of *Sphinx*: Edgar Wallace's *The Missing Million*, *Faithful Philanderers* by Basil Hastings,

His Lady Secretary by John L. Carter. . . . No wonder Lindsay failed to make an impression on his audience.)

Perhaps the chief fault of *Sphinx*—and one that nobody would expect from Lindsay—is that it has a pervading atmosphere of triviality. This is partly because of its subject. When Nicholas moves into the Sturts's house, he has entered a little whirlpool of gossip and intrigue. A character called Maurice Ferreira—a smart, shady would-be Casanova with a talent for engineering—is in love with Lore Jensen, and is also flirting with one of the Sturt girls, Evelyn. This causes tension all round; at one point in the book, none of its women seem to be on speaking terms. What is revealed in the last chapter is that the old actor Sturt is actually Lore's father (Ferreira spreads rumours that she was his mistress). Nicholas wastes a great deal of time involved in these intrigues. There is also a pretty widow—Celia Hantish (Lindsay has no talent for names)—who becomes engaged to Nicholas at one point in the book.

But when one has pushed aside the undergrowth of plot, the theme emerges as identical with that of *The Haunted Woman*, although with variations. Nicholas's recordings of his own dreams reveal a Lore who is in agony, and who needs help. (Nicholas plays these 'dream recordings' over to Evelyn; she is apparently necessary to the book's plot because Nicholas will die at the end, and Evelyn will witness his death in a dream.) At a casual reading, it seems that it is her involvement with Ferreira that is causing her torment, and this interpretation seems to be strengthened by a description of Ferreira (as seen in a dream):

'He was leaning against a tree, smoking. . . . He was wearing ordinary clothes, but his face was the face of a *devil*! Dead-white, sneering and smiling, it was at the same time cruel and childish; and the childishness imparted such an aspect of degradation to it that the cruelty seemed almost a redeeming element.'

There is so much of Crystalman in this description that one suspects deeper meanings here. I am inclined to believe this would be a mistake. In a dream-speech made after her death, Lore dismisses him as completely unimportant.

Lore's death is announced at a fête in the local manor house. Her body is found in a deep stream. Ferreira had gone to the fête with the intention of quarrelling with her—she has dismissed him

and announced her marriage to an effete little music critic. Ferreira is even carrying a revolver to threaten her. But it emerges later that her death was suicide, and was nothing to do with Ferreira. 'I thought I was running from him, but I was running *towards* something all the time.'—Lindsay's death romanticism again.

In the last chapter of the novel, Evelyn makes a 'recording' by the bedside of her sleeping father, and then plays it back. The dream reveals the duality of Lore's nature. She is symbolically trapped under water. But her suicide, as she flings herself into the water, releases her 'other self', which is able to escape from the water. Moreover, in this final dream, Nicholas appears on horseback, holding another horse by the mane. Lore mounts, and the two of them ride off over the sea. It is after this dream that Evelyn rushes to Nicholas's bedroom, and finds him dead.

What is one to understand by all this? The novel must have been completely baffling to the readers of John Long's seven and six-penny library. Its meaning—the meaning Lindsay intended (the point of this distinction will appear in a moment)—can only be grasped by someone who has read *The Haunted Woman*. Lore and Nicholas are in the same position as Isbel and Henry Judge, her lover. Social conventions and the messy confusion of everyday life hide from them their basic affinity. (Their first meeting is a quarrel; Lore imagines that Nicholas is sneering at her for writing cheap pot-boilers, and tells him to mind his own business.) Lindsay's thesis—with which almost any psychologist would agree—is that deep dreams may reveal things unknown to the waking consciousness. He also believes that minds with deep affinities can communicate in dreams: this is obviously why Lore appears in Nicholas Cabot's dreams. 'Evelyn saw [on Lore's face] such a shocking, set expression of agonised despair, that her feelings underwent a sudden revulsion. . . . It was such an expression as a woman might wear who is being removed from a torture chamber, knowing that she is to return there a few hours later, when her strength has been sufficiently restored. . . . She addressed Evelyn quietly and slowly, and every word seemed to be a pain:

'Do help me before it's too late. It will soon be too late!'

Evelyn, of course, is witnessing Nicholas's dream, so this

appeal is addressed to Nicholas. But although he plays the dream through on his machine, Nicholas ignores its message—or assumes, mistakenly, that it is connected with her 'affair' with Ferreira. And when Nicholas speaks to Lore soon after this dream, neither of them recognise any deep affinity. In fact, Nicholas gets himself engaged to the pretty but shallow young widow, who will obviously make his life hell.

This seems to explain the book simply and convincingly, and as far as it goes, I believe this interpretation to be correct. Lindsay was obsessed by the falseness imposed on us by society, and the difficulties experienced by people of integrity in 'becoming what one is' (to use Nietzsche's phrase). Lore and Nicholas would be ideal for one another; his taciturnity and seriousness are exactly what she needs in a husband (whereas the pretty widow will obviously be bored sick by him in a few months, and will then become satirical and critical). More important, his fortune will enable her to write serious music instead of turning out pot-boiling confections to support herself. (Money is obviously one of her problems; at one point, her father had to support her in a flat.)

But the book leaves one curious problem. *Why* is Lore in such agony? Her sensitivity about her pot-boiling makes it clear that she feels guilty about it, and does it against her will. She turns out a sugary song for one of the sisters, and admits to Nicholas that she composed it in a few minutes to have a reason for calling. And this song is the occasion of an exchange that again reveals their fundamental closeness. The poem is about a Scottish bard who has been to a hilltop to watch the dawn, but is unhappy and frustrated, and a peat cutter who has not raised his eyes from his dreary work all morning, yet who is happy because the work satisfies him. Nicholas objects: 'Peat cutting may be more *necessary* than mountain climbing, but, after all, it is the mountain climbers who have built up civilisation. Columbus was a mountain climber, and so were Newton and Darwin.'

Is Lore's unhappiness due to her awareness that she is, by nature, a mountain climber, and that she is wasting her life? At the garden fête, where a rather dull piece of her music is performed, Lore remarks: 'My day's done. I have this afternoon to thank for being able to realise it at last.' This would seem the most likely explanation.

I suspect that this is only half the truth. When one views Lindsay's life and work as a whole, a more sinister interpretation suggests itself. Like Lore Jensen, Lindsay is fundamentally a tragic figure. One feels sorry for him, as one might feel sorry for an attractive girl with a hare lip or cleft palate. *Arcturus* reveals him as a man of formidable genius. His other books reveal him as a hopelessly clumsy writer, always tripping over his own feet. The writing is too self-conscious, and totally devoid of grace. When one has read *Devil's Tor*, his last tremendous bid for recognition, one cannot help feeling that the whole thing was a terrible miscalculation. The book is full of elements of greatness, all counterbalanced by the old awkwardness and inability to make anyone speak or act naturally. Somewhere, there is an odd neurosis—or it may be a lack of self-knowledge. Visiak remarks: 'He was radically unhappy, dissatisfied, hungry for recognition in the literary world.' How can this be true of the stern, Calvinistic author of *Arcturus*? Yet it is. Lindsay was thoroughly self-divided. *Arcturus* has the strange maturity and perfection that sometimes happens early in the career of an artist—Rimbaud and Hoffmansthal are examples. When this happens, the artist's personality has to catch up with his intellectual development. But while man's imagination can mature through intensity and will-power, his total personality needs another important element—experience. The body and emotions have their own needs, and are slow to learn. Why do Shelley and Byron exert a more powerful attraction than Wordsworth and Coleridge over so many readers? Is it not because their lives were so much more interesting and fulfilled? Shelley elopes with a pretty 16-year-old when he is only 19; Byron becomes famous at 24; both spend their lives travelling in Europe; both enjoy a full share of female admiration and the friendship of men of letters. Coleridge's life of poverty and laudanum-eating is relatively dull in comparison.

Experience-starvation is one of the artist's basic fears. (Chekhov was one of the first writers to make it the subject of serious literary work.) It goes hand in hand with poverty and lack of recognition.

That Lindsay experienced this fear cannot be doubted. Like Lore, he tried to compromise, to add a pot-boiling element to *The Haunted Woman* and *Sphinx*. It made no difference; they

failed to attract attention. The same reserve and shyness that made him sometimes socially awkward made the surface of his writing incompetent, amateurish, and it was this amateurishness that prevented critics taking him seriously. The pot-boiling of *The Haunted Woman* and *Sphinx* made no difference. Lindsay attempted no more pot-boilers.[5] *Devil's Tor* and *The Witch* are wholly serious; but the seriousness made no difference; they were failures.

This is why Lore Jensen's predicament in *Sphinx* is so serious. Lindsay was a strange compound of genius and naïveté, and the result was an invisible trap that he could not understand or escape. The reader of *Sphinx* finds it hard to grasp why Lore should be so tormented, why she should finally be driven to suicide to escape the invisible barriers that prevent her from becoming 'who she is'. Lindsay was so deeply involved in his own precisely parallel situation that he failed to realise that Lore's despair would seem unmotivated.

A thorough biographical study may help to clear up this problem. Visiak hints at a 'major psychological shock sustained in childhood'. And what of his relation with his wife? Women play such an important role in his books that it is reasonable to assume that his relationship with his wife was of great psychological importance. How happy was it? J. B. Pick has the answer to this question:

Lindsay was not happy with his wife, particularly in later years. She was a great deal younger than Lindsay; her temperament was practical but volatile, so that there was the same clash of temperament that there might have been if Nicholas Cabot had married Celia Hantish. In later life, Mrs Lindsay became extremely lonely and frustrated, unable to escape an obsessive preoccupation with trivialities. J. B. Pick befriended her, and did a great deal to make her last years happier.

In passing, one might note that the writing of his only true 'pot-boiler', *The Adventures of M. de Mailly*, has competence, grace and even a certain panache. This seems to indicate that the clumsiness of *Sphinx* is a matter of self-consciousness that would have worn off if he had written a novel a year for five years. *Mailly* proves that he had adaptability and a sense of humour.

[5] I am leaving *M. de Mailly* out of account because it is written purely as entertainment.

What of *Devil's Tor*, that immense, ponderous block of German metaphysics and pagan mysticism, nearly a quarter of a million words long? (It is, of course, unobtainable at the time of writing, and will probably be so for many years to come.) J. B. Pick says 'The book has a stodgy feel', and E. H. Visiak told me that it was almost unreadable. However, when he re-read it in the course of writing this book, Visiak acknowledged that he found it unexpectedly fascinating. 'It has to be taken slowly,' he wrote to me. He ended by being so impressed that he wrote a fifty page account of it. I then borrowed his copy (inscribed 'To E. H. Visiak, to whose encouragement the writing of this book is largely due, from D. Lindsay, April 1932.') It took two years to read, as I have mentioned, and a great deal of patience. And still it is hard to answer the question: Prickly masterpiece or enormous miscalculation? The odd thing about Lindsay was that he could write so patiently about boring people. Most good novelists feel the need to people their books with striking characters. Lindsay is comparable to Dostoevsky as a writer of ideas; but to think of Dostoevsky is to think of an incredible gallery of obsessed men, grotesques, demonic women, alcoholics, murderers, saints. If he occasionally includes a conventional character—Varvara Petrovna in *Devils*, for example—it is to provide a contrast to the demonic drives of the other characters. Lindsay's characters are all relatively conventional. It is boring to be in their company for nearly five hundred pages. On the other hand, it has memorable pages and even chapters, when Lindsay can get away from his characters.

The book's opening makes the problem quite plain. Its heroine, Ingrid, and her cousin Hugh Drapier, are taking a walk on Dartmoor when a storm comes down. All this passage—nearly forty pages of it—is magnificent; Lindsay is in his element.

> The evening had grown darker, as though twilight were already falling, and at the very instant that she halted altogether . . . a flash of lightning stabbed the sky. . . . After an interval, a long roll of thunder succeeded. The sky overhead seemed to gather together. Ingrid regarded her cousin with narrowed eyes, to ascertain how he reacted to the warning.
>
> 'There's something awfully mysterious and grand about approaching darkness,' she half-soliloquised, when the sound had quite died down.

'My favourite goddess in Greek mythology is Nyx—Night—the daughter of Chaos, and by that very relationship so much nearer to the terrible beginning of things than the bright Olympian deities.'

Precisely, Lindsay's sphere is night and chaos, the 'sublime'. So to write at length about conventional ladies and gentlemen who seem to have stepped straight out of R. C. Sheriff's *Badger's Green* is to pursue a road that leads in the opposite direction from his artistic intentions.

Apart from this, Lindsay is writing as clumsily as ever. Any good editor could have improved his work with a red pencil. In the above paragraph from *Devil's Tor*, I have cut two lengthy dependent clauses that are completely unnecessary. '. . . a flash of lightning stabbed the sky, perhaps a couple of miles away, over the hills to the south-east beyond the road they had left,' '. . . at the very instant that she halted altogether, to recover herself while facing Hugh and taking a survey of the country behind . . .' What is the difference between halting and halting altogether? And who cares whether she is facing Hugh, or whether the lightning is two miles away or five miles away, or to the south-east or north-west?

All the same, this is not important; the first three chapters succeed completely in evoking wildness and power.

> Now the wind abruptly dropping and the rain diminishing to a vertical spotting shower, they were better able to discern the completeness of the wreck [of Devil's Tor]. A single pair of entire massive granite blocks, with some far smaller fragments of others, lay quiescent just within the extreme verge of the hill, where its steepness began; and that was visibly all that remained of the Devil's head. The whole of the upper twenty-five or thirty feet of the stack, ponderous segments of rock of different sizes and shapes, had necessarily been hurled down the hillside, to crash in huge bounds to the valley or be precariously halted on the way. Older by far than the Pyramids, a slowly dipping landmark to innumerable generations of men, the pile had tumbled at last . . .

At one point in *Devil's Tor*, Peter Copping, the artist, remarks: 'This business threatens to drag on indefinitely.' This is the chief fault of the book; personal complications drag on and on. Yet in conception, it comes close to being a masterpiece, and even its maladroit execution cannot entirely spoil it.

Its basic philosophy seems to differ from that of *Arcturus*. Lindsay's obsession is still his feeling that 'this world' is unreal, and that we receive clear glimpses of the real world that lies behind it. But his 'real world' has become more positive than the featureless Muspel, something closer to the Shavian life-force or Lawrence's sexual-creative principle. And in other ways, Lindsay has moved closer to Lawrence. Like Lawrence, he feels that we are living at the end of an era, on the point of total collapse into decadence. Democracy is one of the signs of this decadence. Like the Lawrence of *The Plumed Serpent*, Lindsay looks back nostalgically to the primitive—to the ages when the savage inhabitants of Britain recognised that the creator of the world was an emanation from God called the Great Mother. As embodied in the Great Mother, the principle of femininity meant creation, and protection of her children. It has gradually been degraded into sexuality. Woman has come to think of herself as a temptress whose job is to persuade some man to undertake her lifelong support; she has accepted a degraded subordinate role.

It should be noted that this view of women is inherent in all Lindsay's novels. The women he approves of are indifferent to sexuality, gripped by more important urges: Joiwind, Lore and Ingrid, even Sullenbode and Isbel. He obviously feels an irritable distaste—blended with fascination—for the seductresses—Oceaxe, Celia Hantish. (In a typical episode of *Sphinx*, Celia stops suddenly in a corridor, and whispers to Nicholas 'Now, now', urging him to kiss her.)

The austere mysticism of *Arcturus* has turned into something more like ordinary romanticism. Hugh Drapier, walking in the dawn:

> . . . wondered how all this cultivated part of Dartmoor would have looked, say, in Tertiary times, before the advent of man on the planet; before that uglifying master-brute had put a hand to his congenial and self-honoured labour of clearing lands of their established life. Savage and lonely beyond thought, no doubt. So what had been gained by the substitution? Additional sources of food supply for man himself and some dozen kinds of degenerated animals, his servants. For this, fair trees had been uprooted, strange beautiful beasts and snakes of the wild exterminated, exquisite birds made rare or extinct, the inhabitants of the streams slaughtered and poisoned. Verily, a ruthless campaign!

And the effective result? Why, this foul trail of earth-viscera and metamorphosis wherever man passed. All over England and Europe, and gradually all over the world, the houses, pavements, factories, mines, quarries, cuttings, bridges, railways, cars, engines and machinery, slag-heaps, gas-works, roads, stagnant canals, the grime of unreckonable chimneys, the grit and dust of a hell-maze of thoroughfares; and the slums and backyards and hidden corners of filth and shame. Or the cabbage-rows and manure-heaps, sties, stables and pens—to demonstrate the superlative vulgarity of this scrambler for easy food, the human biped, whose stomach was paramount in the existence of a mystic universe. It would be excellent to die and leave it all! . . .

And under what law, other than *force majeure* . . . had the so-called lower life been dispossessed and destroyed, to make way for a single species? . . . To allow the entrance into the world of idealism and spirituality, he supposed the cant answer would be. Then all the murdered life had a right to demand, where are those things? And the man and woman of today gave the reply by talking only of money, luxury, sport, amusement and sex. The Aryan Brahmins, the Stoics, the Christian saints and martyrs, the Puritans, the makers of noble music, the sublime philosophers—they had been the justification for the destruction, and they were departed, and others had not stepped into their shoes.

> *the nymphs are departed*
> *And their friends, the loitering heirs of City directors;*
> *Departed, have left no addresses.*

For this is what it is: *The Waste Land* all over again; hatred of 'high powered cars on a bye-pass way', and a nostalgic turning to the past. Lindsay is failing to look honestly at the facts. Man did not destroy the great creatures of the early Cenozoic era; they died off, like the dinosaurs, because they were unable to adapt themselves to natural changes. In *Man and Superman*, the devil asks 'And this civilisation, what is it, after all?' and Don Juan replies: 'After all, an excellent peg to hang your cynical commonplaces on; but before all, it is an attempt on Man's part to make himself something more than the mere instrument of Woman's purpose . . .' And this objection applies to the whole of the above paragraph from *Devil's Tor*. Lindsay reveals an interesting kind of sentimentality. Dartmoor would have been more beautiful if it had been more primitive. But there are plenty of parts of Dartmoor that are still primitive, and plenty of parts of Scotland and Ireland

and Wales, not to mention America and Africa. And anyone who has ever spent a week wandering around in the wilds of northern Scotland will agree that civilisation has its own uses and charms, even if the wilds *are* beautiful. We would not notice the beauty of the wilds if we lived in them on a primitive level. As to the complaint that the modern age is nasty and mercenary, and that the prophets have departed, this is also a relative matter. It is not difficult to imagine some Lindsay of the year 3000 looking back nostalgically on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and saying 'What an age of giants—Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Shaw, Lawrence, Gurdjieff, Lindsay . . .'

Further down the same page, Lindsay comes to the core of his argument:

> The cause . . . of the crime and blunder of course started with the possession by man of a brain; and was ending with over-population. [This was a prophetic insight for 1932.] The infinitely greater weight of the mass nowadays was an irresistable force pulling men towards each other and away from the lonely Austere and Sublime. The other name of this gravitation was democracy; so that democracy was the grand evil. No one man could fight such a pull of the whole world . . .

The cause of Lindsay's later pessimism can be seen clearly enough here; he is the 'one man' fighting alone.

What hope does Lindsay see in this decadent world? This is the point of *Devil's Tor*. The answer lies in an Avatar, a new Christ or Buddha. Lindsay's points out with grim satisfaction that Christ, Mahomet and the rest were not Avatars of peace but of war. 'After their vanishing sprang up always hatred, wars, massacres, the stake, the rack, the scourge.' This is the voice of Krag from *Arcturus*, and it echoes some of Lawrence's more irritable pronouncements—the kind of thing that led Russell to call him a fascist.

How will the Avatar appear? This is the subject of *Devil's Tor*. The Earth Mother is stirring in her sleep. She causes the storm that breaks open the Devil's Tor, revealing her tomb, and she brings together the three men who possess the broken halves of a magical stone which, when united, will allow these ancient, long-buried forces to express themselves again. And one of the men, an explorer called Saltfleet, will ultimately become the

husband of Ingrid, the virgin destined to bring forth the Avatar.

Everything depends upon the two halves of the stone being joined. Lindsay manages to prevent this from happening for about four hundred and fifty pages by various twists of the plot. When the halves are finally joined, they seem to explode into stars (in the hands of the man who joined them). Saltfleet and Ingrid recognise that it is their destiny to produce the Avatar, and the novel ends with a resounding burst of thunderous prose.

No doubt this attempt at a summary is unfair. This is inevitable, for reasons I have explained. Apart from *Arcturus*, Lindsay wrote only one satisfactory novel, the light-weight *M. de Mailly*. One can either concentrate on his failure to accomplish his aim, or upon the aim itself. At the head of all Lindsay's work could be set the lines from the end of *Faust*:

> *All things transitory*
> *Are but reflection . . .*

In *Devil's Tor*, he also accepts the rest of this chorus:

> *Das Ewigweibliche*
> *Zieht uns hinan*
>
> *The eternal womanly/ Leads us upward and on.*

This position is not consistent with that of *Arcturus*, but we may presume that it represents the result of deeper reflection. *Devil's Tor* is an attempt to dedicate a monument to the 'Eternal womanly', Ramakrishna's Divine Mother (and perhaps Graves's White Goddess). If this aspect of the book is accepted, then it will be seen as something of a masterpiece, in spite of its longueurs. It is closer to poetry than to the novel, and it must be admitted that page after page succeeds in sounding those oddly deep notes, like the 'cello in *The Haunted Woman*, that have the authentic poetic effect of making the muscles of the skin contract.

All the same, it cannot be denied that Lindsay's final position was deeply pessimistic, as a mysticism based upon violent rejection of 'the world' is bound to be. One often gets this feeling in reading D. H. Lawrence; that he sets out with a deep sense of some reality beyond our social world, then proceeds to criticise the world and people, talking about dissolution and spiritual death, until he has got himself into an utterly negative mood

where the vision of reality has vanished, and all he feels is a sick desire to destroy everything. The negative is a vortex into which it is too easy to get sucked. I find that if I proceed to criticise a writer or philosopher, trying to put my finger on his failings, it becomes increasingly difficult to add reservations, to explain that, in spite of all this, I may regard him as an important and worthwhile figure. It is like running away downhill; it becomes increasingly hard to stop. This also seems to be Lindsay's trouble. *Arcturus* is a Manichean book—the Manichees were a sect who believed that everything to do with 'this world' is evil, and that only Heaven is good, so that their philosophy was a thoroughgoing rejection of all life. Everything is rejected. In subsequent works, Lindsay tried to retreat from the edge of this chasm, and the positive values of *The Haunted Woman* and *Sphinx* are closer to the values of any idealist. He obviously also feels that Lore Jensen's early piano piece, 'Sphinx', is a valuable piece of art; it asks an ultimate question. In *Arcturus*, this piano piece would have been dismissed as a delusion of Crystalman. Lindsay once said 'Music is the higher speech; so that if truly there are angels and they converse with one another, it must be in music'. How has music managed to escape the power of Crystalman?

I have already mentioned *Man and Superman*. The position taken by Shaw in this play is surprisingly close to the Lindsay of *Arcturus*. In the third act, Don Juan and the Devil engage in a long argument. Hell is a place where people talk of nothing but beauty, sublimity, nobility and the rest. Don Juan is in agreement with Lindsay:

> Oh yes: I know. Here there is nothing but love and beauty. Ugh! it is like sitting for all eternity at the first act of a fashionable play, before the complications begin. Never in my worst moments of superstitious terror on earth did I dream that Hell was so horrible. I live, like a hairdresser, in the continual contemplation of beauty, toying with silken tresses. I breathe an atmosphere of sweetness like a confectioner's shopboy . . .

Shaw's Devil and Crystalman are identical. But Shaw contrasts this world of cloying sweetness (in which even music is dismissed as 'the brandy of the damned') with the great evolutionary drive. He wants to go to heaven, not for happiness, but for work—to 'help life in its struggle upwards'.

It is Lindsay's lack of an evolutionary vision that leads him into pessimism. His work after *Arcturus* shows him retreating from his Manicheeism, into recognition that 'the Aryan Brahmins, the Stoics, the Christian saints and martyrs' had justified the destruction of the Tertiary animals. But he fails to think out what this change of position implies. Instead, he falls into a facile pessimism about the evils of civilisation, and turns his face nostalgically to the past, as Carlyle had in *Past and Present*. 'It was all as hopeless as the coming on of a cancer.'

J. B. Pick has said: 'Lindsay's tragedy—and his literary life was really that—is the tragedy of a man who has seen something, tells people, and they don't listen or don't understand what he is talking about', and several times more in the course of his excellent essay,[6] he speaks of Lindsay as a man with a vision who failed to communicate it. This is quite a long way from the truth, for it implies that Lindsay's vision was personal and unique. It wasn't. *Man and Superman* springs from a similar vision, and is dated 1901–3. T. E. Hulme also took up a similar position before the 1914 war: 'Man is an extraordinarily fixed and limited animal whose nature is absolutely constant. It is only by tradition and organisation that anything decent can be got out of him.' According to Hulme, man is born in a condition of hopeless delusion and weakness called Original Sin, and his only hope of minimising its effects is not to follow his heart or his feelings, but to submit himself to rigorous discipline. For 'discipline' substitute 'pain', and you have the view presented by Krag.

But although Hulme rejected Shavian evolutionism as a form of the romantic fallacy that man is leaping upwards on 'stepping stones of his dead selves' etc., he expressed a view that is pure evolutionism:

> You could describe the facts of evolution, then, by saying that it seems as if an immense current of consciousness had traversed matter, endeavouring to organise this matter so that it could introduce freedom into it.
>
> But in doing this, consciousness has itself been ensnared in certain directions. Matter has captured the consciousness that was organising

[6] The Work of David Lindsay, from *Studies in Scottish Literature*, January 1964.

it, and entrapped it into its own automatism. In the vegetable kingdom, for example, automatism and unconsciousness have become the rule. In the animals, consciousness has more success, but along the whole course of evolution, liberty is dogged by automatism, and is, in the long run, stifled by it.

And elsewhere, he writes:

> The process of evolution can only be described as the gradual insertion of more and more life into matter . . . In the amoeba, then, you might say that impulse has manufactured a small leak through which free activity could be inserted into the world, and the process of evolution has been the gradual enlargement of this leak.

That T. S. Eliot, in spite of his anti-evolutionist views, agrees in part with this is clear from his line about 'partial observation of one's own automatism' in *The Family Reunion*. The apparent clash of views between the Shaw-Wells generation of evolutionists and the Eliot-Hulme generation of neo-religionists, vanishes when both sides of the argument are pursued to their limit. In Teilhard de Chardin, the views can be seen more-or-less in a state of reconciliation. (More-or-less because Teilhard, as a Catholic, was bound to believe in man's redemption from original sin *by Jesus*, which is obviously irreconcilable with the evolutionist view.)

The same argument can be applied to Lindsay's Manicheeism. The moment you have admitted the possibility that man is entrapped in delusion—or automatism—and that he is also capable of a degree of freedom, you have obviously admitted that his freedom *could* be increased; i.e. that he can evolve. If Maskull's business is to bring Muspel-fire to men, then he is driven by an evolutionary urge. If Lore Jensen once wrote music that embodied glimpses of reality, and she has lost this capacity through writing pot-boilers, then she has allowed herself to de-evolve; has allowed automatism to push out her freedom.

In Lindsay's belief in the redeeming power of pain—and consequently of war and conflict—one also catches echoes of Nietzsche. (Hulme, incidentally, took up the same position with regard to the 1914 war—and died in it.) And Nietzsche's glorification of war and violence is again a corollary of his evolutionism.

He dislikes more peace because he thinks it turns men into fleas; if man will not mount the evolutionary ladder willingly, he must be flogged up it. Nietzsche was not a consistent evolutionist either; he counterbalanced his doctrine of the superman with a belief in eternal recurrence that means virtually that this world is a delusion and free will impossible. Nietzsche's sanity finally became the victim of his pessimism.

Let me at this point suggest, no matter how sketchily, a theory that unites what has been called mysticism with evolutionism.

I have already pointed out that so-called 'world rejection' is actually rejection of the *collective life-world.* If it is a bright spring morning, I might feel inclined to take a country walk, and try to relax until I have induced a state roughly analogous to Wordsworth's 'glory and the freshness of a dream'. If, as I am about to set out, the village gossip drops in, I may be tempted to delay my departure for half an hour until I have heard the latest malicious gossip about acquaintances. But if I do, I shall almost certainly have destroyed all possibility of allowing my consciousness to expand into a state of 'negative capability'. For I shall quickly become involved in the life-world of gossip, which encloses me like a net. I may even join in myself, adding some piquant anecdote, in which case, I have voluntarily entangled myself still more.

This is obviously not a case of 'two worlds', *but of the mechanism by which consciousness grasps its world.* What happens if I take a country walk and begin to relax, to lose consciousness of myself as a personality and to experience a heightened awareness of the world around me?

A simple illustration will help to answer this. If, by any chance, you have read this essay on Lindsay in one sitting, you have covered a great deal of ground, and your mind is now holding an enormous number of impressions and ideas. If you have taken several days to read it—perhaps keeping it by your bedside and reading a couple of pages at a time—your over-all impression will not be nearly so clear. And if you try to read this late at night, when you are very tired, you will find that although you can understand individual sentences well enough, the whole thing doesn't hang together. If you are very tired, or have drunk too much, you will not even be able to understand full sentences.

Individual words will be clear enough, but they somehow don't connect with other words.

Grasping meaning is a complex act, like doing a jigsaw puzzle. Some people are hopelessly bad at jigsaw puzzles, because no matter how often they look at each individual piece, they cannot fit them into an over-all pattern. A good chess player has this 'over-all pattern' mind. He is like a person who knows a city so well that you could ask him 'In what direction does Millwall Square lie from the Lloyd George monument?' and he will reply without a moments' hesitation 'Nor' nor' east'.

Everyday existence resembles doing a jigsaw puzzle, in that we deal with events and problems one by one, like taking up each piece of the jigsaw and scrutinising it. As I write this, my consciousness is more-or-less fully occupied with expounding a psychological insight; earlier in the day, it was completely focused on analysing *Devil's Tor*; earlier still, in changing the blades on my rotary scythe. I focus on new sets of events like a searchlight, and as the beam moves, new things are illuminated and things I have just been thinking about slip into blackness.

To put this simply: consciousness is *relational*. You grasp this particular sentence in this essay because you grasped the last one and the one before that. You keep adding new meanings to the old ones, making a new whole. And in the same way, as I have been writing this essay, I have tried to relate Lindsay's various novels to one another, and to the events of his life, and to Hoffmann and Shaw and Hulme and Yeats . . . It is as if all these people and ideas formed part of an enormous net, all inter-connected. Your mind is only focused on one part of the net at a time—two or three 'squares', so to speak, but you are dimly aware of the net stretching away in all directions, with other meanings, all related to the ones you are at present focused on.

Now if I am to write efficiently, I must focus narrowly on the job in hand. If I think about my lawn mower when I should be thinking about David Lindsay, it will not benefit either the lawn mower or this essay. Efficiency—which is, after all, one of the most important qualities of an intelligent being—depends upon narrowing the focus of consciousness on to one or two squares of the net.

If I take a country walk, this is no longer necessary. I can

relax. Instead of my consciousness having to move sharply from one part of the net to another, it can afford to stand back and see several parts at the same time. Instead of focusing, it can afford to spread itself. Normally, I am narrowly confined in this moment of time, this location in space. But on my country walk, a smell from a hawthorn bush may bring back a similar walk last year. If my consciousness begins to feel excited and happy, this act of expanding will continue. I shall discover, to my astonishment, that other times and places have been preserved quite intact in my memory. I try to recall a certain sweet shop in which I used to spend my pocket money as a child. Instead of presenting me with a dim, faded photograph, my memory throws up a complex image of brown blistering paint on his shutters, of the smell of gas-tar from a machine tarmacing the road, of the aniseed taste of bull's-eyes and the smell of snuff and tobacco inside the shop.

There is nothing very mystical about all this. Consciousness should be capable of focusing narrowly on an important task, or widening to relax in other times and places. Certain poems or pieces of music may have so many associations for me that I can actually guarantee this surge of widening consciousness when I read or hear them.

Unfortunately, man has not yet reached the stage of having such perfect control over his consciousness—widening it from gossip to poetry at will. He can *narrow* it fairly easily. If I am totally absorbed in listening to music, and my son falls down and hurts his knee, I can dismiss the music and concentrate on bandaging without difficulty. What is far more difficult is to forget the bandaging and get back to the music. And there is a simple reason for this. As a child, my everyday consciousness was much broader, much more 'relational', so to speak. And it used to cost me agony to withdraw it from a sunny day to concentrate on sums or geography. But the world is a stern teacher, and I had to learn to withdraw the mind from pleasant things and focus it on dull ones—like writing long essays on dead writers. The habit is relatively new, and I have not perfected the trick of reversing it. It is like a stiff gear on a car. It will take a long time before it moves easily in all directions.

Man's evolution has consisted in this ability to 'change gears' in his consciousness, to *focus*. Children find the idea of writing

a book inconceivable; they find it hard enough to write a short letter. Animals cannot focus for very long either—unless it is connected with some deep instinct, like a cat waiting by a mouse hole. T. E. Lawrence wrote about the Arabs: 'Their less taut wills flagged before mine flagged, and by comparison made me seem tough and active.' The Arabs were mostly physically stronger than Lawrence, but were more child-like, less capable of focusing. Man has built civilisation through this ability to focus. He has always found the reverse process far more difficult —to de-focus, to relax. He has invented alcohol and tobacco and sedatives to help him. And, most important of all, he has invented art. Art is a kind of artificial aid for helping to 'reverse the gears', to widen consciousness. It actually consists in setting up a new habit. If I put on a record of a favourite symphony, there is no point in concentrating on individual notes or bars. The whole point is to become passive, to let the music speak to me, and to gradually relax my consciousness until I am aware of this whole panorama of meaning that the music is trying to communicate to me. If I am lucky, I become aware of 'Mozart and the stars', as Steppenwolf says.

Men are extremely inexperienced in this business of '*reversing* the gears' of consciousness. But it is important that they learn. Ambition and desire for security may drive me to overcome the natural human distaste for work until I become a human dynamo. But unless I can then learn to reverse the gears and relax, I shall develop gastric ulcers and blood pressure, and defeat my whole purpose.

The direction of human evolution lies, then, towards the development of more perfect control over consciousness, the ability to 'switch on' the wider moods of 'relational consciousness' at will, to re-charge our batteries and restore our vitality; to develop the *sense of purpose* (which is blunted and finally paralysed by a consciousness that is focused too narrowly). Purpose comes from over-all vision. The accomplishment of purpose requires a narrowing of consciousness. The narrowing and expanding mechanisms are equally necessary if human beings are to realise their potentialities. This requires a close study of the mechanisms of consciousness and of habit. A great writer or composer would endeavour to become a good 'consciousness engineer' in the same way that a man who

loves driving teaches himself to be a good motor mechanic: as a necessary precaution against breakdown. At the moment, only a few great psychologists—like Husserl and Gurdjieff—have recognised that consciousness has a 'structure', and can be taken to pieces and studied like any other engine. Perhaps the engine is a bad analogy; the method of study, called 'phenomenology', could be better compared to learning about your own anatomy by X-raying yourself.

In short, the 'mystical' notion of two worlds, each completely out of touch with the other—so admirably symbolised in *The Haunted Woman*—is unnecessarily pessimistic. Consciousness is relational; it is a net. Everyday-consciousness is a focusing upon a few squares of the net. Intenser (mystical) consciousness sees much broader areas.

The romantics were so intensely pessimistic because it seemed to them that the 'two worlds' were completely irreconcilable. This view is taken to an extreme in *Arcturus*. I have tried to show that it is not a case of two worlds, but of two *intentional* states of consciousness. The romantics were wrong. Once we understand the intentional and relational nature of consciousness, the problem of the 'haunted rooms' ceases to be insoluble. There is no *fundamental* duality, no problem of absolutely irreconcilable worlds, of Muspel and Crystalman, of vulgar democracy and 'the Sublime and Austere'. Mysticism can be grasped and analysed by reflective consciousness, and reflective consciousness can learn something about the 'intentions' by which it can be transformed into mystical intensity. The old romantic dichotomy finally vanished.

Lindsay wrote in an unpublished typescript (called 'Sketch Notes for a New System of Philosophy'): 'The first preliminary for all metaphysical thinking is to produce within oneself the sense of *reality*,' thereby revealing deeper insight than English philosophers have achieved in three hundred years. He himself possessed this requisite. But he did not possess the rest of the equipment of the philosopher; or rather, he failed to think deeply and persistently about his ideas. J. B. Pick describes Lindsay as 'a strong, reserved man of Scottish Calvinistic background, a solitary walker, a mountaineer, devoted to German metaphysics and to music . . .' But Lindsay does not seem to have made use of his solitary walks to analyse his ideas and pursue them to their limits.

What I have tried to show, in the last few pages, is that Lindsay was not really a solitary visionary. He was expressing the spirit of the age as much as Eliot, Hulme, Lawrence (both D. H. *and* T. E.—the latter had very much in common with Lindsay), Wyndham Lewis, and the European existentialists. He undoubtedly misunderstood his talents when he decided to become a novelist, for the novel for Lindsay meant people; people wrangling and interacting and quarrelling. And he was not really interested in people. Einstein said to Leopold Infeld:

> I believe with Schopenhauer that one of the strongest motives that lead men to art and science is to escape from everyday life, with its painful crudity and hopeless dreariness, from the fetters of one's own ever-shifting desires. A finely tempered nature longs to escape from personal life into the world of objective perception and thought: this desire may be compared to the townsman's irresistable longing to escape from his noisy, cramped surroundings into the silence of high mountains, where the eye ranges freely over contours that look as though they were built for eternity. (*Quest*, p. 273)

And Bertrand Russell wrote to Constance Malleson in 1918:

> I *must*, before I die, find *some* way to say the essential thing that is in me, that I have never said yet—a thing that is not love or hate or pity or scorn, but the very breath of life, fierce and coming from far away, bringing into human life the vastness and fearful passionless force of non-human things.

Can anyone deny that both these extracts might be quoted over Lindsay's name without anyone noticing the difference? They express the very essence of Lindsay's life and work—and one is by a scientist, the other by a mathematical philosopher. Lindsay was simply not cut out for writing about the endless and boring complications between Ferreira and Lore Jensen and Saltfleet and Arsinal. They actually bored him as much as the reader. But he didn't know that. He assumed he would find no one to accept his vision undiluted, and that the pill had to be sugared. In fact, the best thing that could happen to Lindsay now is that some enterprising publisher should publish his late works in one volume—*The Haunted Woman*, *Sphinx*, *Devil's Tor*, *The Violet Apple*, *The Witch* and the philosophy manuscript—edited ruthlessly so as to cut out all the 'complications'. It would not be too

difficult, for, like Melville in *Moby Dick*, he tends to intersperse chapters of major statements with padding. With Lindsay's major thoughts then between two covers, it should be possible to see that he deserves to be included in any list of the important names in literature in the first half of this century.

E. H. VISIAK

Discovering a genius
Lindsay as I knew him
The Haunted Woman
Arcturus and the Christian dogma
The nature of Lindsay's genius
Devil's Tor

DISCOVERING A GENIUS

The old *Daily News* in the nineteen-twenties, when A. G. Gardiner was Editor, kept a high literary standard. John Masefield and A. L. Lilley, the eloquent modernist, wrote regularly, and I sedulously read their contributions, whose style I much admired. Robert Lynd, the Literary Editor, accepted David Lindsay's *The Haunted Woman*, and printed it as a feuilleton:

> In the latter half of August, Marshall Stokes went to New York, in order to wind up the estate of the lately deceased brother of the lady to whom he was betrothed.

It started and continued in this manner; yet I went on reading it from day to day, bored, but drawn along, as it seemed, by some kind of traction.

On the second or third day out, I found myself, in two senses, drawn along. I had come, in the story, to the 'haunted rooms'. But I had, as it happened, an urgent appointment. I couldn't go on reading in the house, so I did so in the street, the tautly outstretched *Daily News* hurrying me on before the wind.

The tension increased, and was heightened—as is the purpose in serial stories—by being held up between instalments; and driven on, now, instead of drawn along, as originally, I came to the dénouement, which was shocking!

Now, to the title of the feuilleton was sub-joined the rubric: 'By the author of *A Voyage to Arcturus*.' This was peculiarly fascinating. It hinted—but *darkly*—of Jules Verne. I at once ordered *A Voyage to Arcturus*; read it, sustained a shock such as upset and confused my essential philosophy. I wrote urgently to the author. My letter also gave a shock, as I learnt later, but only to the feelings—not, as the book had done, to feelings and philosophy combined. It flashed, not merely dawned, upon Lindsay that, *at last someone*, a *member of the public*, had appreciated his work! Scarcely waiting to appoint a date, he came direct from St Columb Minor, Cornwall, where he lived, to my own address at Brondesbury.

Later on, when Gollancz was publishing my *Medusa*, I lent him my copy of *A Voyage to Arcturus*. 'That book!' he exclaimed, on returning it. 'I'm an indurated publisher. I have read hundreds

of novels, but it affected me as profoundly as when I was an impressionable youth and read Poe for the first time!'

In 1948, he included it, together with *The Haunted Woman*, in his 'The Connoisseur's Library of Strange Fiction'. Still, however, the reviewers failed to see. There remained one more step, or rather on-coming wave.

In 1963 Gollancz reprinted, from the first (Methuen) edition, *A Voyage to Arcturus*; at the same time, in a letter to *The Times Literary Supplement* I mentioned, as it happened, my acquaintance with Lindsay. This brought a letter of enquiry from Sir William Haley, whose great appraisal of the book in *The Times* floated it safe ashore.

Such were the events, accidental or otherwise, that led to the discovery of a genius.

There was a remarkable correspondence between Lindsay's speech and deportment and his literary style. On the evening when he came to see me at Brondesbury he was at first formal, stiff, inhibited; but he soon relaxed, and then he spoke in his normal somewhat stilted manner, that of Judge when he relaxes in the 'haunted rooms' of the *The Haunted Woman.*

His kinsman, Carlyle—whom he facially resembled, and admired—achieved the faculty of writing as he spoke, and Lindsay tried eventually to imitate his style.

This was in a book entitled *The Witch*, about whom he was enthusiastic. A wild eldritch-looking effigy in plaster hung on the boarded walls of his study, which were otherwise bare; the effigy of a woman who might have come from Lapland, where witches dance 'while the labouring Moon eclipses at their charms'.

Nothing else was in the room except his typewriter on a small table in front of the Witch. He was so pleased with the effort of imitating Carlyle that he departed from his rule of silence before finishing a book (*The Witch* never was finished) and began to read aloud from one of the pages. I could not follow the sense, and he put it away with impatience. It was the only time I had known him to lose his calm.

In fact, he was apparently one of the most equable and placable of men. He lived normally in a state of settled, and sometimes it seemed almost phlegmatic, good humour; a genial, comfortable presence, whether seated squarely and complacently in his chair, or forging heftily along in a country walk. He enjoyed life; relished his food, his drink—especially ale in an inn—and his pipe. One day at teatime I said, thinking of the austerities in *Arcturus*, 'You don't practise what you preach!' 'To practise what you preach,' he answered, 'is the sign of a weak mind!'

This was at Ferring, a pretty Sussex village. I used to stay with him there as often and for as long a time as ever I could. Happy that house! His wife was kind, and made one with us in our keen nightly discussions—after which she provided coffee at one o'clock in the mornings.

They had two little girls. One was fair, taking after her father; the other dark, like her mother. I called them respectively 'Day'

and 'Night'. They never missed bathing in the sea in the mornings, and I never missed going to wish them Good Night in the evenings. I might spin some laughable yarn for pleasant dreams, and then 'Day' laughed; 'Night' smiled. They had a name for me; but it escapes me.

They lived in a large bungalow alongside a country road leading down to the sea. Lindsay, a great country lover, did not care so much for this sea, and, as if in token, the house faced the open country, the garden ending in a wood above the road.

Lindsay's imagination entirely differed from mine. Thus his Arcturan sea is to my mind repugnant, repellently dark, yet he was always exhorting me to write another sea story.

He was thorough-going. He typed his novels—at least delivered them—as did Shakespeare his 'papers' without a 'blot', or emendation. At least, it was so in the typescript of his *Devil's Tor*, which, in respect of its length, he called his 'monster'.

He was a gardener as well as a writer, and he removed every weed meticulously by drawing it up by the roots, every stone, picking it out with his fingers. He earnestly observed the grand old text: 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.'

He was careful in all things. An intensive field of thoroughness was the books on his shelves. There were many, and he told me that he had read them all. They towered above his chair in the room where we had our evening talks. I recollect that in one of them we discussed Stevenson, whom I thought he underrated. He asserted that *The Wrecker* was his best book, but I preferred *The Master of Ballantrae*. He thought that the eighteen-nineties writers were unimportant. For my own part, I felt that, in comparison with them, the contemporary fiction was lacking in style, and thence in atmosphere.

He, apparently, had no sense of either. In like manner, he had no appreciation of poetry. He was as allergic to it as Lamb was to music. He loved music. The author who had most influenced him, he told me, was George Macdonald.

A favourite subject of his was Roman history, and he especially admired Sulla the Dictator. The attraction was temperamental, obscurely deep, and may have been atavistic. His comments on the man in the illustration he laid open on the table, one day, were cryptic, and mainly suggested by the word, 'dark'. It arose

in other contexts, in his letters as well as in his works and talks—especially in regard to his mystic feeling. 'Dark, dark' he would say, with a queer, equivocal intonation. As applied to Sulla, it suggested, of course, ruthless power tempered by political control. The idealisation was probably a reaction to his abhorrence of modern democracy with its vulgar trends. The word vulgar expressed his *bête noir*; so he uses it to describe the grin of Crystalman in *A Voyage to Arcturus*. As a social reaction to the animus, he told me he greatly preferred upper and lower class people to the 'betwixt and between', and that he felt considerable satisfaction in being near akin to the head of his clan. I do not know whether there were any upper-class residents at Ferring. A prince sometimes stayed there, but he was 'democratic', or affected to be so. In any case, Lindsay, now a constitutional recluse, had made no friends or acquaintances there.

In this connection, I have to confess to behaviour which, in view of my friend's hatred of vulgarity, was very irresponsible, or worse. It may have been prompted by some schoolboy imp (I was still young and had known the olden days of pestilent practical joking).

At any rate, I met, soon after returning to London, as it chanced, a leading society hostess, and she was sending out invitations to 'meet celebrities'. I told her about Lindsay—that he was a genius, and would become a celebrity. She had the opportunity, I suggested, of becoming a *prophetess*.

'Oh, *do* get him to come!' she cried.

'It will be very difficult.'

She collected all her power, the engaging power of inducing self-gratification. 'You can be *so* persuasive if you want to!' she said.

In this particular case, as it happened, she was right. Of course, I made no mention of *celebrities* to Lindsay himself. But no man could have looked more miserable than he did when I met him at Victoria and we went on to the lady's mansion.

All three classes were represented there, including the celebrities (middle-class), as we found seats among the concourse, which was like a menagerie for noise. Lindsay succumbed, apparently becoming inert. I myself remained vigilant.

At length, 'She's coming!' I cried.

She was approaching, clearing waves of humanity which opened before her, as it were, under full sail.

The inevitable questions followed: *What books had he written? Where did he write? What were his hours of composition? Where did he get his ideas?* The broadside ran along.

Suddenly, she shrieked, 'Why, he's *gone to sleep*!'

It was true. 'But, *no*,' I said. 'He's not asleep. Quite the contrary. He's *concentrating*! He always looks like that when he's really interested.'

'Oh, that's it, then!' she said. Somebody called her away, and the operation was over.

Lindsay's imperturbable composure was but the surface-layer of a great deep. He was radically unhappy, dissatisfied, hungry for recognition in the literary world. Withal, he was extremely sensitive, extremely impressionable. When, one day, I remarked that I ranked *A Voyage to Arcturus* in genius with Kafka's *The Castle*, he blushed.

Beneath it all, however, he was a mystic, and here he tried to express it by the word, *dark*, which involved, as I have said, some kind of mystical intuition. I felt it was the key-word to his imagination, but in what peculiar sense he applied it to Sulla may be conceivable only in a vague, intuitional way.

Of this, I was afforded, as it happened, a remarkable illustration, even a demonstration. It occurred during my stay at Ferring, while we were out for a walk, one night, in the countryside. Suddenly I was brought to a stand, arrested by the *very* strange aspect of the moon. It was at the full, bright, white, yet having a transparent, vacuous appearance, as if it itself was an orifice in space.

'Oh, just look at the moon!' I exclaimed.

He was already looking up at it. 'White,' he murmured. 'White, *empty*.' His face looked wild and tragic, and he cried with startling emphasis, 'I ought *never* to have been born in this world!'

I was amazed, but I said mechanically, 'In what world, then, ought you to have been born?'

'In *no* world!'

He went on urgently as if he were under a stress, a great

urgent desire to express himself, to make me understand. I cannot recall his actual words, but they were spasmodic, disjointed, intensely passionate endeavours to express a yearning, an ideal, an antithesis, the unearthly, unimaginable contrast to normal experience, sense, sensation; the absolute negation of mundane conditions: an unthinkable and, to me, appalling state of arctic or extra-arctic abstraction. To himself, it was something pure, essential, ineffable—the Muspel, or 'Divine Light' of his *Arcturus* in its positive aspect, as inexpressible. I suppose, it would correspond to the Buddhistic *Nirvana*, with the great paradox, 'It is not this, and it is not that.'

Also, there is a remarkable parallel between Lindsay's concept of essential, or pure light, and Milton's 'Bright effluence of bright essence increate'. In Shelley's 'white radiance of eternity', the sensuous word, 'radiance', is obviously inept.

Lindsay coupled, almost united, *mysticism* with *sublimity*, excluding from *sublimity* all such impressive imagery as that of mass, height, grandeur, whether natural or artificial, as of mountains, volcanoes, immense ancient sculpture, temples, and so forth; while, in regard to Semitic sublimity, he flatly denied that the Bible contained any sublimity at all. Before I understood his point of view, I argued vehemently against this, quoting Coleridge's citation of Revelation X, 1–6[1]:

> And can you seriously think that Mercury from Jove equals in poetic sublimity 'the mighty angel that came down from heaven, whose face was as it were the sun and his feet as pillars of fire; who set his right foot on the sea, and his left foot on the earth. And he sent forth a loud voice, and when he had sent it forth, seven thunders uttered their voices: and when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, the mighty Angel lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever that *Time* was no more'?

I also objected to his depreciation and downright damnation of Nature, asking, 'Do you attribute even the blissful impressions of childhood to the degenerating influences of *Crystalman* in *Arcturus*?'

He nodded.

[1] Letter to John Thelwall ('Some words and sentences of the original, either for the sake of brevity or to heighten the dramatic effect, are omitted').

All I could concede was that the operation of 'sex'—which disturbs the homogeneity of the senses that conditions the quality of childhood—its wonderful *subjective quality*, Coleridge's 'beauty-making power'—might be considered as 'evil', and thence due to *Crystalman.*

THE HAUNTED WOMAN

David Lindsay's *The Haunted Woman* begins, as I have indicated, in a very awkward, stiff manner. It proceeds in that way for some pages. Then the pace quickens with interest, with excitement; the persistent reader enters the first of the 'haunted rooms'.

I propose to take a short cut through the initial circumstance. It is my object to advertise the book. I desire that others, as many as may be, shall experience its *magic*!

How rare is magic in literature! It is in 'The Ancient Mariner', but it is of a different order. So, too, in Goldsmith's 'The Deserted Village'. The former derives from the child-like spirit; the latter from the nostalgia of spent youth. There is also, however, the magic of 'Christabel', weird and witch-like, and therein with the magic of the 'haunted rooms' there is some comparison. There can be no one who has read these poems at an impressionable age whose imagination has not been enriched in the process, and the same may be said of *The Haunted Woman*.

Omitting social, domestic and *business* circumstances, I introduce at once Isbel Lamont, the 'haunted woman', and Henry Judge, who, as he becomes similarly involved in the haunted dimension, might fitly be called the 'haunted man'.

One cannot say that Isbel's person, described in the story as 'beautiful', appears to be prepossessing:

> Her face was rather short and broad, with thick but sensitive features, a lowish forehead, and a dull, heavy skin, rendered almost unnaturally pale by the excessive quantity of powder she employed.

and she

> had a queer habit, while sitting, of constantly, though quite unconsciously, attending to her person. She would keep putting her hand to her hair, adjusting her skirt, feeling her waist-band, altering the position of a necklace or bracelet, etc.

She and Judge fall in love. But she is an 'engaged girl'; he a widower of fifty-eight. Both are extremely conventional and, though their times are at the beginning of the present century, they conduct themselves as decorously as if they were back in the eighteen-sixties. They meet, it is true, but converse at utmost

distance of propriety. At their meetings, fate, or destiny—whatever it is—would seem to preside, and to connive, so that these meetings are rather often than seldom. And soon, as soon as they start visiting the large old Elizabethan manor that Isbel's aunt is thinking of buying, one feels that something fatal and portentous is preparing.

The great old manor belongs to Judge, who has known strange, uncanny experiences there. It has a legendary descent, having been built on the site of still older houses, the original of which was built for his own occupancy by an ancient Saxon, one Ulf, and this, with stolid temerity, on 'goblin-haunted ground'. In consequence, the trolls had carried him away with half his rooms. The missing rooms were reported still to exist, having been seen, from time to time, by certain persons, Judge himself being one of them. He makes no secret about this, and negotiations for the sale of the property are held up pending investigation.

Judge and Isbel peer about in obscure places near the roof, the oldest part of the house. (How this can consist with the terms of the legend, since the original Saxon's house was lower, it is difficult to understand; but, as Judge observes at a later stage: 'We have to recognise, I fear, that physical properties here are different.') In the attic, called variously, the 'East Room', 'Ulf's Tower' and the 'Elves' Tower', they discover Runic carvings on a rafter. Moreover, outside its door, which Judge at that time had kept locked, first an American artist and afterwards Isbel, hear a weird sound, and smell a strange sweet scent.

At length, Isbel discovers a secret stair, catching sight of it at a time when she is in an exhausted, abstract state. She ascends, to find herself in a little, empty room, the floor, walls and ceiling of which are of the same dark, handsome wood as the staircase. It has three doors, which are closed:

> Isbel hesitated. She wished to proceed, but those closed doors seemed to hold a sort of menace. . . . They were unlike other doors . . . they were unlike each other. In that fact, perhaps, consisted their chief strangeness. The door in the middle, which she faced, looked noble, stately, and private, whereas the right-hand one had—she could not describe it to herself—a dangerous, waiting appearance, as though the room it belonged to were inhabited and the door at any moment might be flung suddenly open. . . .

At length, she enters by the left-hand door. The room within is empty, devoid of furniture, except for a large oval mirror hung on one of the walls.

Abstractedly she walked over to the mirror to adjust her hat . . . Either the glass was flattering her, or something had happened to her to make her look different; she was quite startled by her image. It was not so much that she appeared more beautiful as that her face had acquired another character. Its expression was deep, stern, lowering, yet everything was softened and made alluring by the pervading presence of sexual sweetness—And what was the meaning of this look of enchanting sexuality which nearly tormented herself?

She is to learn the answer to the question when the secret stair appears again, and she ascends. In the meantime, she is unconscious of what is happening to her, and so remains, until she learns that, unless she records her experiences at the time when she is actually in the haunted rooms, they will vanish as the experiences of an unremembered dream.

Between whiles, she and Judge are in their normal states of consciousness and conscientiousness, behave as decorously as ever. But they are cognizant that some mysterious 'preparation' is taking place, and are consequently uneasy.

On the second occasion when Isbel has ascended the stair, she enters the rooms by the middle door; the third, right-hand one, looks too terrible. The room within, like the first one she had entered, is bare but for a single article of furniture, a carved wooden couch. There is about it an 'atmosphere of stately opulence', and the couch is suggestive that the room was 'primarily intended as a place for intimate meetings'. Isbel sits down, wondering and fearing, watching the door:

She uttered a faint cry . . . the door was opening.

It was Judge.

Isbel could not stare at him enough. He seemed younger, and different. It might have been the effect of the dim light, but it was too remarkable . . . .

The charm is beginning to work. The conversation that ensues is still somewhat strained and diffident, but its *trend* is clear. Isbel tries to prevaricate, but Judge asks:

'Do you feel a worse woman for having spent these few minutes with me?'

'Oh, no—no! Not worse, but far, far better! I feel . . . it's impossible to describe.'

'Try.'

'I feel . . . just as if I'd had a *spiritual lesson* . . . It's foolish . . .'

'Let me interpret for you. Isn't it your feeling that during the short time we have spent here together we have been enabled temporarily to drop the mask of convention, and talk to each other more humanly and truthfully? Isn't that what you feel?'

This sounds both rational and ideal, and beauty, natural, sensuous beauty, is to be added for them; they are to see what is *outside* the haunted place. But something intervenes which might have given them warning.

They are again in the second of the rooms, the room with the stately, voluptuous-looking couch, and they are startled by the entry of a third person. They are also disconcerted, desperately so. It is a Mrs Richborough, who is on a visit to the house. She is a malicious, witch-like woman, an evil tongue. Her wits have been sharpened by a secret passion for Judge and consequent jealousy of Isbel, and despite the careful guard they keep on their behaviour when they are normal and not, that is to say, in the 'haunted rooms', she has ferreted out in their relations what she considers to be a liaison. She has dogged them like a detective, and she has some evidence too. Isbel, freed from inhibition in the 'haunted rooms', had fastened her scarf round Judge's neck; he had forgotten to remove it afterwards, and Mrs Richborough has seen it.

Seated beside them on the mysterious couch, however, she seems to be a changed woman, no longer malevolent. They discuss matters. In the event, she determines to enter the third room, the room that Isbel was so afraid to enter, and leaves them—not without additional perplexity; they do not believe the change in her disposition will outlast her presence in the secret dimension. She will probably forget her experiences there—as they forgot theirs before they became aware of this, and noted them down beforehand. In any case, they must look out for trouble.

However, they resume their former amatory discussion.

Suddenly Isbel raised her head and seemed to listen to some sound outside the room.

'What was that?' she asked quickly.

'It sounded extremely like a stiff window-shutter being jerked open; it's probably Mrs Richborough in the next room.' He had scarcely spoken when another noise, more distinct, and far more peculiar, struck their ears.

'It's music!' said Isbel, shaking from head to foot, and attempting unsuccessfully to rise.

. . . The low, rich, heavy scraping sound certainly did resemble that of a deep-toned stringed instrument, heard from a distance, but to Isbel's imagination it resembled something else as well. She thought she recognised it as the music of that dark upstairs corridor. . . . The sonorous and melancholy character of the instrument added a wild, long-drawn-out charm . . . which seemed to belong to other days . . .

'How beautiful! . . . But how perfectly awful!' said Isbel.

They determine to enter the room, but first Isbel observes:

'Let's finish what we were saying. You mustn't commit that crime.'

'Your honour comes before everything.'

'No, something comes before my honour . . .' She drew a long breath . . . 'You belong to me.'

This reopens the founts of their emotion, and leads to turmoiled expressions, Judge being under greater self-control than Isbel.

At length, Mrs Richborough reappears.

Her natural pallor was intensified, while her face was set and drawn, as though she had received a shock . . . she swayed, as if about to fall . . .

'I'm afraid I've seen a sight which I can only regard as a *warning*. As you look out of the window, there is a man with his back turned. He looked round, and then I saw his face. I can't describe it. . . . I think I'll go downstairs, if you don't mind.'

Judge and Isbel enter the room whence she has come, the third room. The shutter of the antique window there stands open, and they look out upon absolutely unknown country.

'Judge stared in vain for familiar landmarks'—the more he gazed, the more puzzled he became. Not only had his own grounds disappeared, but neither in the foreground nor in the distance was there a single sign of human occupancy or labour. Look where he would, fields, hedgerows, roads, lanes, houses, had vanished entirely out of the landscape.

Beyond a 'bare hillside of grass and chalk', and a 'miniature

valley', with a 'brook glittering in the sunlight', an 'unbroken forest' appeared to extend right to the horizon . . . Apart, altogether, from the strangeness of the scenery, anything less like a late autumn afternoon in October would be hard to imagine; the forests were brilliantly green, many of the smaller, isolated trees in the valley were crowned with white blossom, while the air itself held that indefinable spirit of wild sweetness which is inescapable from a spring morning.

'Just look at that man!' said Isbel, suddenly. He was sitting on the slope of the hill . . . but half-hidden by the crest of the small hollow . . . which explained why they had not previously noticed him. He sat motionless, facing the valley, with his back to the house. . . . It was his extraordinary attire which had evoked Isbel's exclamation. Only his head, the upper-half of his back and one outstretched leg were visible; but the leg was encased in a sage-green trouser, tightly cross-gartered with yellow straps, the garment on his back resembled, as far as could be seen, a purple smock, and the hair of his hatless head fell in a thick, bright-yellow mane as far as his shoulders.

Notwithstanding Isbel's amazement, she began to laugh. 'No wonder poor Mrs Richborough was startled! Is it a man, or a tulip?'

The question is answered in the dénouement; the musician on the hill-top was Crystalman of *The Voyage to Arcturus*. I forbear to narrate Judge's appalling fate. *The Haunted Woman* is a book to buy and keep to re-read, not borrow from a public library, or worse, hear it read on the radio. One might as witlessly borrow, or hear read on the radio, *The Ancient Mariner* or *The Deserted Village*. Whereas Coleridge beguiles us by incantatory verse, and Goldsmith by mnemonic rustic imagery, Lindsay does so, in some indefinable manner, by plain prose.

Lindsay himself would have disliked, and probably rebutted, the assertion, but the significance of *A Voyage to Arcturus*, is dogmatically Christian. Only the aspect is different. Muspel, the 'sublime light', is God; Crystalman, the loathsome incubus who intercepts and perverts the sublime rays as they enter the souls, is Satan; and Krag, who saves the souls from sinking into the abominable abyss, is the Redeemer.

In the case of Crystalman and Krag, the joint presentation is inverted. Crystalman, in his incarnation in Tormance, is a charming personality, like a cultured English gentleman, who is also a poet (Lindsay was allergic to poetry); a vital, vitalising character. His voice is as lulling as sweet music; or it can be as a thrilling summons. This was excellently brought out on the radio in dramatising the work; Crystalman accosts Nightspore, the voyager to *Arcturus*; 'Nightspore!' It is as if he had cried, '*Nightspore, wake up! Arise from the dead!*'

He was a fake, the shadow of selfhood—itself a shadow. Behind his ingratiating amenity is the inane mime. In addressing Nightspore, he is mimicking the exalted words 'I came that ye might have *life*, and that ye might have it more abundantly'; in modern terms, 'I have come to *electrify you*!'

And Crystalman has all the various sorts and conditions of Arcturans in his net, whether they are idealists, intellectuals, hedonists, masochists, sadists, or good, kindly—even self-sacrificing—souls. However hard and sincerely any of them strive after righteousness, when they die, his vulgar rictus comes out in their faces in derision. All that Muspel—who is 'fighting for his life'—can avail, apparently, is, with Krag's help, to prevent by the ministry of pain, the perverted souls from sinking into abominable dissolution. Nightspore is given a dreadful glimpse of it. At the sight, he is appalled, and he too becomes, like Krag, a Redeemer.

Nor is this additional Redeemer un-Christian since Christ himself, according to St Paul, was the 'forerunner of many brethren'.

But the chief and most debatable parallel between Lindsay's *tour de force* and dogmatic Christianity is his ascription to

Crystalman of beauty. Here indeed there is a scriptural difference! Christ appreciated the 'lilies of the field'; in *Arcturus*, even the ethereal hues of dawn belong to Crystalman. In regard to beauty in art, it is not so disparate; Christ apparently discouraged architectural enthusiasm. At any rate, he pointed out the transitory condition of the 'great buildings' his disciples admired; while in the Old Testament, we read 'the hand of the Lord shall be upon all pleasant pictures'. In the main point, however, the fiction and religion are at one; sublimity is the ultimate. It relates to the spirit; beauty relates only to the senses.[1] If beauty obscures sublimity, it is evil; the meretricious substitute of the 'second best', as I have noted.

Lindsay held that beauty and art—art as a means of beauty—were not only evil in this way; he saw them also as causes of perversion. They are the products of Crystalman. Here, there seems to be some sort of spiritual refraction, and we are in metaphysical profundities; for the mystery of Crystalman is the mystery of evil itself. He is an illusion, and the producer of illusions, as the Christian Devil is the 'father of lies', a lie himself, 'who never was, and now is not'.

It is an enigma analogous to that of materialistic phenomena; a paradox like that of the Neo-Platonic proposition of 'Bound and the Infinite'. 'Bound' implies form; form involves physical space, matter, and restriction or limitation. Yet the Infinite cannot logically admit of spatial demarcations, any more than Eternity can admit of being measured off by time and motion (perhaps time and motion are swallowed up in Einstein's principle of Relativity—I am not, in Lindsayan language, *to know*). Nor are Infinitude and Eternity the ultimate concepts. They must presumably be twin-aspects, corresponding to 'space-time', uniting in a transcendental synthesis; the *mystic sublime*. But space and time are elemental, natural, and Lindsay virtually equates Crystalman with Nature, which Blake very accordantly asserts is evil—it and its energy. 'All energy is evil'—which accords in one way with the Hindu *mot*, 'Do nothing and everything is done'. Crystalman in his incarnation, as we have seen, is extremely energetic—'full of vim', in the hearty phrase.

[1] Except abstract artistic beauty, which is intellectual. (The sensuous and sensual are, of course, qualitatively distinguished.)

But here again we are perplexed; for how could Crystalman, shadow without substance, illusion, or the Devil, or Nature, be incarnated—embodied, that is to say, in a specific individual? He may be regarded as an abstraction in the negative sense, as darkness is the negation of light, disease of health. But even Muspel, the 'Divine Light', could not be incarnated, or canalised, in that way. Muspel could only be manifested, on the principle of the 'One and the Many', in facets and scintillations countless as the stars.

There are no Churches in Tormance, no symbology or ceremonial—which seems a pity. Otherwise, it might have been shown how that kind of beauty, on Lindsay's argument, obscures sublimity by sentimentalising it, as in pictures on sacred subjects even by the Great Masters. Again, there are no Saints. Even the most integral Arcturans, the most assiduous and well-intentioned, betray at death Crystalman's vulgar grin. Only, Krag, the administrator of redemptive pain, and Maskull, the voyager to *Arcturus*, are *bodhisattvas*; they defer their own celestial felicity in order to save others. Maskull, or *Nightspore*, as he has then become, decides on following this course, after a glimpse of the abominable waste of putrefaction Crystalman's influence has caused, the horror of which is as that hinted in Poe's story of the Inquisition, *The Pit and the Pendulum*.[2]

[2] My philosophical comments on *Arcturus* are contained in the preface of the Gollancz editions.

THE NATURE OF LINDSAY'S GENIUS

Lindsay's genius as manifested in *A Voyage to Arcturus* is precipitant. So, of course, is all genius essentially; only in most cases its formative delivery requires working up, or working out; the application of Milton's 'slow-endeavouring art'. According to *Arcturus*'s atmosphere, its heat and glare, the delivery was violent; it had to break through obstruction.

The fact is significant, elucidating. Normally, as we have seen in the crude framework of *The Haunted Woman*—and shall see in the verbiage of *Devil's Tor* when we come to it—Lindsay's faculty of expressiveness was inhibited. The state of freedom that ensued when the impediment was removed, we call 'inspiration'.

It is comparable to the state of dreams; which is a state of relaxation—only, in dreams, the relaxation and the freedom is imperfect, and is more fitly to be called a state of licence than of liberty. The images are amorphous, or partly amorphous, their activities fantastic; in genius they are rationalistic and cogent. The weird, grotesque and horrific creations of *Arcturus* would appear to combine the characteristics both of genius and dreams. On the dream side it is a *nightmare*.

Thus, genius may be shown to be 'such stuff as dreams are made on'. However, ordinary dreams belong to the upper layer of the subconscious mind. They consist of memorised vestiges and figments of mental impressions left over from the day before, or from the 'other day', which have been grouped together pictorially by a dominant single impression that has not adequately expressed itself and reacts in a freer element. Such dreams are commonly the effect of recent experience, but if the dominant impression has been afflicting, as a great grief, the dream-theme and scenes may recur successively for a long period. Such dreams are horrific with frustration and deprivation intensified to the desperate point, and fail to perform adequately their Freudian function of purgation and relief. On the contrary they leave an atmosphere of horror as of Poe's 'home by horror haunted' in 'The Raven'.

For imaginative genius belongs to a deeper level of the sub-

conscious. Dreams are relatively inchoate; genius is formed. It is apparently produced by a metabolical, cumulative process, and in this sense, could be called volcanic. A volcano is situated near the sea. It must necessarily be so, since it is fuelled by the sea; the salt water leaks into the crater and, by subterranean heat, is converted into steam; thence is engendered force, the steam being canalised and compressed, and so it goes on intensifying until it produces an eruption. If the crater is open, there is, naturally, no canalisation, no compression, and consequently no eruption. Thus, the ineffectual volcano, Stromboli, merely throws out stones.

On this principle, then, genius is produced by a compound process of repression and transmutation. But here, enters 'sex', Freud's integrator and *deus ex machina* of his complicated cinema, the director of his films. In the engendering of genius, 'sex' is generally operative. Even in my analogy of a volcano, this is suggested; for the soft, salt element that percolates into the crater, is that of the foam whence Venus Aphrodite arose while the component element of fire represents (though nominally Hephaestus) Ares. Genius's salt-water craters lie at subconscious depths, while their elevations, like Milton's and the eminences before him, rise like the Andes.

This is not to imply, however, that sex is invariably operative in dreams or in genius. I relate—and it leads up, in one way, to the genius of Lindsay—a curious personal experience, which was obviously subconscious.

One afternoon, or evening—it was a long time ago—I was trying to write a poem. It would not come off; but I was persistent, and wasted much paper. I became very tired, but still went on. I went on to the point of exhaustion and collapse; whereupon I threw myself down on a couch, and lay there in some kind of comatose state.

But my pen and writing-pad were still in my hands, and suddenly I became aware that I was writing. It was no more than mechanically, since, although I was conscious in a somnolent way that it was verse, I hadn't the slightest notion of what it was all about. Then somnolently I added the title: 'The Skeleton at the Feast'. The strangeness of it aroused me, and I read what I had written. It was as follows:

Dance in the wind, poor skeleton;
You that was my dearie one,
You they hanged for stealing sheep,
Dance and dangle, laugh and leap;
To-morrow night, at Squire's ball,
I am to serve a sheep in hall,
My Lady's wedding, Lord love her.
Wait until they lift the cover!

What was the cause, the *genesis*, of this nightmare in rhyme? One day, about a year later, it occurred to me. My grandfather was a sculptor, and I was taken when a child into his studio. There was a skeleton hanging on the wall. It was the skeleton, I was told—I know not by what unthinking person—of a woman who had been hanged.

Perhaps the unthinking person attempted to moderate her *faux pas* (it was probably a 'her') by adding, in effect, 'People were hanged for very little in the old days, even for stealing sheep'—or, more likely, I had been more than ordinarily impressed on some occasion at seeing sheep being driven along from rustic Hornsey to East Finchley, where I lived. For twenty years and more, the horrific impression had lain dormant, slowly germinating, in my subconscious mind.

Although Freud, in his obsessive way, would probably have seized on the woman in the poem as being introduced by sex, it was sexless—simply a childish nightmare.

But it was organised and formulated, and this not only into a connected narrative, but into a rhymed poem. (A reviewer expressed his astonishment at its effect of condensation without suggesting compression.)

This, however diminutive an instance, is significant. At any rate, it goes to show that, *pace* Freud, all activities of the subconscious chemistry are not of sexual derivation—except, of course, in the universal sense that 'sex' is the active principle of life itself. This it is, of course, at all stages, according to the polar contraries, from dynamism—as in the opposing centripetal and centrifugal forces—to magnetism and electricity, and animal and human reproduction.

The subconscious mechanism may be set going even in consequence of a sudden shock, and, in that case, the motif may be anything—a piece of philosophy, for instance. I myself have sustained such a subconsciously kinetic shock. In this case it was nothing more serious than the telephone sounding; but it was enough. While I was stepping to the telephone, a whole poem came into my mind! and I wrote it down immediately after answering the call. It was philosophical—in that sense, abstract—and subliminal, since it expressed, at the close, an original esoteric notion:

THE HOUSE OF LIFE

From the attic to the basement,
We well may find our way;
From the basement to the attic—
But never out to day.
And in a mood most dismal,
I said: 'There is no light;
We're phantoms in a haunted house
That only walk by night'

Sex, however, is obviously connected with the genius of *A Voyage to Arcturus* and *The Haunted Woman*. Lindsay was one of those idealists who are tortured by sexual beauty; in both books, and also later in *Devil's Tor*, he condemns eroticism in any form whatsoever. His reaction from sex impetuously impelled him, while his mystic concept of sublimity drew him on, in writing the books; while, in *Arcturus* and *The Haunted Woman*, he exhibits it as a source of horror. What was the cause, what—on the argument I have attempted—was the matrix, the *volcanic crater* of this animus?

The answer, I suggest, is two-fold; a major psychological shock sustained in his childhood, compounded, in due course, with his sexual complex.

I have evidence that this took place.

Devil's Tor is a work of imagination and intellect on cosmic lines, novel and unique, but, to the ordinary book-borrowing public, unreadable, being densely obstructive. It is comparable, in this respect, to such unreadable works of genius as Melville's novel *Pierre of the Mysteries* and Doughty's epic, *The Dawn in Britain.* It is out of print and cannot be republished; a lost work. I take the opportunity of this essay to salve as much of it as may be.

Lindsay's 'monster', as he called *Devil's Tor*, is mainly—and *largely*—the creation of effort. Effort, in some men of genius—effort prolonged to the point of agony and exhaustion—can spring the subconscious and let in the light of inspiration; Lindsay required muscular relaxation: the energy of *Arcturus* is effortless; the afflatus of the haunted rooms in *The Haunted Woman* was not forced.

Yet the forepart of the book shows a great development in diction; after a hundred pages or so, it becomes turgid and involved: in parts, scarcely intelligible, for example:

> Neither was she permitted to stand amazed before any brutality or insolence of such a person; but what seized the rule of his pale silence of many unquiet thoughts came to be her groping after some reasonable motive in him for so flying at a girl unknown to him only yesterday, whose pure sphere was grazing his terrible one on but the infinitesimal point of an accident.

Lindsay has difficulties with the verb to be, which appear at times like gerundial aberrations: 'No, no! I am not to be foolish'; 'You may be to be made use of', 'More things yet must be to take place.' He also—like the Scotsman that he is—writes 'should' where it ought to be 'would'. This is no case of carelessness; he is always meticulous. Thus, the one and only misprint I have seen in his books simply 'proves the rule'. However, a maladroit man of genius is more acceptable in the world of imagination than any mere 'ready writer', especially if the maladroitness, as in Lindsay's case, results from ardour. He was pertinacious; too careful, if his subject-matter was psychological or philosophical, not to leave anything out, to go on 'mincing the matter'. I have told how thorough he was in the matter of stones and weeds in his garden, and misprints in his books; so, on the psychological and philos-

ophical terrains, he 'explored every avenue', in the adage, and left 'no stone unturned'.

I have told also that, as a man, he was socially humorous; as a writer he had no humour at all. When he sat at his typewriter, he became grave and stern. In this, he strangely resembled Milton, who, could write—of Christ answering the Devil—'Mee, worse than wet, thou find'st not'. Lindsay could write, 'He pulled grimly at his smoke', or (meaning '*You have no business on hand*'), 'You have nothing on'; while Milton, like Lindsay, was personally good-humoured: 'delightful company', says his daughter Deborah, 'the life of the conversation, with an unaffected cheerfulness'. Just so, I would have called Lindsay the *soul of conviviality*.

He can make the precise pitch between the sublime and the ridiculous: 'No aerolite, trailing through the earth's atmosphere, was ever thus steadily increasing and *sluggishly lovely*' (italics mine).

He describes sublimity as 'the soul's homesickness', and his own longing for it appears to be in the nature of an exalted perversity, a divine masochistic discontent; the 'merely beautiful might suffice a soul, but . . . the sublime (the shadow of the beauty of another world) could never suffice, since with it came gropings that must amount to pain'. As for his fellow men, they were contaminating, despoiling and defacing the beauty of the earth. The only hope was a new Birth, a new, appropriately modified Redeemer.

The theme of *Devil's Tor* is just that. Only, the theological background is heterodox: the universe was not created by God (here referred to as the 'Ancient', the 'Primal Sublime') the 'Muspel' of *Arcturus*; it was brought into existence by an emanation from God. God was not, however, independent of man, but suffering with him.

This divine emanation was the 'Great Mother', the demiurge of 'femaleness'; not primarily sexual, it 'had in some unthinkable hour of cosmic tragedy fallen into sex'.[1]

The 'Great Mother' herself, however, remained in her original

[1] 'Some call Thais the "Great Mother" the white Goddess; others, goddess of swine and the unsightly phallus. Goethe called her the "eternal womanly". She made Creation in order to evolve a man who would be worthy to be her lover. Many legends contain the seed of this, Atalanta for instance. But to become a "Lover for Thais" a man must strive to become what is godlike.'—*The World of Colin Wilson.*

exalted state. The tragedy of the fall into sex was inevitable; otherwise, the 'Great Mother' could not 'present the archetype of animal maternity, whereby were explainable the two great instincts of mankind . . . on the one hand, the automatic gregarious life of the herd, speaking eloquently of kinship in a common Mother; on the other, the sporadic appearance among men of such stern recluses and austere visionaries as had ever been dubbed mad by the cheerful mob; they should be from that Ancient, dwelling alone.' (Logically, the fall into sex was brought about by the intervention of the Ancient. It was necessary, inevitable and thence fated, fate and the will of God being paradoxically identical.)

But the notion of those 'stern recluses', with the implication of 'all strong, self-controlled and indomitable men', is particularly revealing, for it strikes the key-note of Lindsay's own ideal. Ingenuously, he could have said, 'I want to be like Sulla'—and to Sulla, in his own idea of him, he likens his leading man in *Devil's Tor*, Saltfleet. (I have quoted his estimate of Sulla earlier.)

But he goes further. Saltfleet is so proud, that he 'despises his own will', and eventually surrenders it to fate which, as I have observed, is the will of God, who wills that which is right. In that case, the dictatorial wrong is righted, and Saltfleet could have made as fit a dictator as Moses!

Relative to this is the question of *self-love*, on which Lindsay comments:

> But likewise, the loves of the world—they could be but the self-love of the Ancient, wherein the incomparable Majesty of the Ancient was declared. For the self-love of persons presented the barest of the world's states: the other self-love of the Ancient was that towards which the deepest and most sacrificing love in creatures dimly reached. Towards it the extraordinary mystic love in creatures for this unseen Maker likewise reached.
>
> Accordingly, the Christs had not passed through the world to effect peace and holiness among creatures, but had suddenly descended as apparitions without regard to history. For the initiated such apparitions should be no other than the swift irresistible impulses of that self-love of the Ancient. They preached not reconciliation. After their vanishing sprang up always hatred, wars, massacres, the stake, the rack, the scourge.

In these quotations, it will be noticed, the syntax is sufficiently

clear. I will give another, for the pleasure of it. Saltfleet, after a vision of the Great Mother, 'received the analogy that the sympath etic loving looks of women resembled the isolating yellow rays o feeble candles, to light his soul into beauty; whereas from th miraculous eyes [of the Great Mother] sprang an illustration nowise less than that of a sun, to cast the world itself into a flood of beauty. In *this* serenity his egotism that was the eternal enemy of beauty, might not exist.'

Beauty, it will be remarked, is estimated and treated very differently in *Devil's Tor* than it is in a *Voyage to Arcturus*; while the theme of the 'Great Mother' seems in Lindsay's imagination a new thing. The burden of *Arcturus* is Christianity in a different aspect; that of *Devil's Tor* is the cult of the Virgin Mary in a different aspect.

Devil's Tor reflects on the degradation of the age. It is not a novel in the conventional sense. Love, although the 'eternal feminine' has degenerated into what might be styled the 'external feminine', is still the proper subject of the novel; with egotism as its complement. But in *Devil's Tor* the crude instincts of sex and egotism are transmuted into free, intuitive ideals. Saltfleet, Lindsay's hero—or martyr—is integral, austere, aloof, with strong features and stern-set mouth, who indulges his fearlessness by climbing formidable mountains. The heroine, Ingrid Fleming, is a young woman who possesses the attribute of clairvoyance. She is described in the later, tragical part of the book as 'pale like some young prophetess' with her 'fair long-featured beauty, passiveness, yet illusion of a kind of perplexed pain in the away-slanting eyes'.

Her clairvoyant faculty is brought out by the nearness of her home to Devil's Tor, a Dartmoor monolith so named because of its singular and forbidding appearance; a rock elevation carrying a huge granite boulder 'segmented presumably by exposure to the elements during countless ages', and 'strangely weathered into the rude form of a human, or inhuman, head . . . and neck. Seen in profile . . . it appeared a true gargoyle'; while the rock projecting from the perpendicular seemed to lean downwards menacingly. Ingrid, nevertheless, frequents the place; it inspires exalted and fascinated feelings. She has the sense, insistent as an intuition, that the grim monument is as a mask which conceals,

perhaps protects, a tomb; the tomb of a woman who was no ordinary mortal. In moments she has glimpses of a majestic and celestial presence.

Gradually she becomes aware that strange forces are gathering and converging around the Tor, and around herself. They seem to be compounded: at once, natural and supernatural; manifesting at first naturally in a thunder-storm of extreme violence, then supernaturally in a succession of strangely interacting events. At their outset, she has taken her cousin, Hugh Drapier, a tall, red-haired, blue-eyed man, to see the Tor, and the thunder-storm starts as they arrive. Here Lindsay's diction is free:

> Her cousin nudged her elbow gently, pointing upward to the sky. When she quickly followed the direction of his finger, her expression changed to tenseness, while she left her speech unfinished.
>
> Under the closed canopy of black upper clouds which completely shut off from them all direct light overhead, a single large, flat, livid patch of vapour, of an ugly pale yellow hue, travelled rather rapidly towards them, seeming to descend and uncoil as it did so, until it was barely the apparent height of a tall tree above their heads. It was but too patently the carrier of a deadly concentrated charge of electricity; the least external cause might easily suffice to liberate its freight. The ground atmosphere became a sharp and tingling medium. Drapier's skin crept, while the girl's limbs refused to support her, so that she sank backwards with her shoulders pressing into the rock. Both waited in silence for the inevitable discharge. . . .
>
> As they still stared up in numb and helpless fascination, a knob of what looked like liquid blue flame visibly and quite slowly separated itself from the cloud, and, followed by a half-fiery trail, as in a pyrotechnic display dropped slantwise towards the stack, which appeared to attract it.
>
> 'What can it be?'
>
> 'A fire-ball?'
>
> Simultaneously, the electrical body . . . reached the rock under which they sheltered, and began to wander lightly over its surface, much in the manner of a child's toy balloon moved by a current of air. It approached their refuge, and at one time was within two feet of Drapier's face, while he held his breath. Then it glided like an animate thing upwards out of sight, round the rock.
>
> He forced the unprepared girl to her hands and knees, and dropped himself.
>
> 'Scuttle out of it as fast as you can!'

The electric bomb explodes, and the whole monument, shattered to pieces, comes crashing down. Ingrid and her cousin escape. The storm has accomplished its work—it has laid open the secret tomb. Above it Ingrid sees an apparition of a woman of marvellous stature, whose 'face's beauty had been neither young nor old, neither living nor dead, but was set apart from all comparisons. It had been wise and tranquilly terrible, like a celestial's.'

Next day, Drapier enters the tomb, lowering himself down the ancient stairway, and continuing to descend through a sloping tunnelled passage; flashing his torch, at last, in the great death-chamber upon the long granite corpse-table with the pedestal for meat and drink beside its head. He sees momentarily that both are bare, as, entering, he stumbles and falls. Groping about on the floor for his extinguished torch, his hand closes upon a small oval object. Absently thrusting it into his pocket, he gets up, grasping his torch. It is broken and he stands lost in the thick darkness, trying to recover his sense of direction. Suddenly he becomes aware that the darkness is changing, and presently he can discern the corpse-table, but at a greater distance than before. He feels he is looking at it 'with other eyes', and upon it there appears a 'dark recumbent shape, a wrapped human form'. It is a woman. Her 'stature was incredible, while everything besides that he could distinguish of her was sacred, proud and exquisite'. She is lying with her face to the wall, 'her upper arm drooping behind her towards the floor, with relaxed taper fingers . . . resembled less a physiological member, than a lovely fall of music'.

The strange light wanes, and there is again dense darkness. Drapier retraces his steps to the tomb's entrance in a trance-like state. He has scarcely done so, and emerged into the open air, when a second cataclysm takes place; an earthquake, which causes as much damage underground as the thunder-storm has done above. The whole tomb collapses. Its walls and roof are completely obliterated.

Drapier, examining the object he had taken up in the corpse-chamber, recognises it with amazement. It is the sundered half of an occult black flint, the other half of which is in his possession.

The disclosure of the tomb and Drapier's arrival at Dartmoor are not fortuitous; and the flint itself is of tremendous con-

sequence. We learn that it is a sacred marvel of antiquity and that its existence has been brought to light by an archaeologist, Stephen Arsinal, who, incited by a vision in his boyhood, has spent his life in studying the cult of the Great Mother. At Knossos, the seat of that cult, Arsinal had discovered a clay tablet marked with the double axe, the symbol of the Goddess. Later (as one thing never happens without another in the mysterious psycho-electric field that has been set in operation), Arsinal meets with Saltfleet, who has been diverted from his Himalayan journey, and they travel on towards Crete. They are mutually attracted; and Arsinal, having deciphered the inscription[2] reads Saltfleet his translation, or as he himself calls it tentatively, his paraphrase:

That which came from the stars, and is full of words of its home. That which unwillingly flees from its bride in the west. That which has ever brought fulfilment and ill-hap to him who has borne it. That which the seer has said shall know no change until it has united another man and another woman, of whom shall be born a son greater than they, greater than all mankind, who shall be the saviour. It alone of all the temple treasures has known the Mother. But a son of the Hatti, robbing the treasury by stealth and wickedness, carried it into the east, and Psor, a secretary, followed him, and slew him, but it is lost.

Arsinal ceased reading. . . . He glanced at Saltfleet interrogatively.

'I think the purport is fairly plain? No stone is actually mentioned, yet what but a meteorite could have come from above? And its *bride in the west*—to what can that refer but the removed half of a fractured whole?'

'A meteorite with mystical properties?'

'Dare we, with our limitations, deny the possibility of such? . . . Then a *son of Hatti*—that is a Hittite. So that our half-stone was taken into Asia Minor. . . .'

Hugh Drapier had come to Dartmoor on a visit to Ingrid's mother for two inter-related reasons. One, that he has an insistent

[2] There are three Cretan scripts known—Hieroglyphic, and 'Linear A and Linear B'. None of these had been deciphered until the early 1950s, when a brilliant young architect, Michael Ventris, deciphered Linear B and demonstrated the language to be a form of Greek. Even that is still disputed, but as for the other two, no one knows what the signs mean or what language they express.—Note by A. Vesselo.

premonition of death, and wants to bequeath his money, a 'fortune', to her. And even more important:

'In my possession is a thing of value, Helga . . . And in connection with it I'm to ask you a favour . . . The article . . . is not my own property. I want it got back, after my death, into the hands of a couple of men who have the better claim to it; though, in fact, it's not theirs either. Now, Helga, I can't give you the address or addresses of these people, so the whole of your commission will be to hang on to the valuable until they personally apply for it, which may be tomorrow or in three, six or twelve months' time.'

With this, he handed her the stone.

It was like the half of a broken seashore black flint pebble. In circumference it was about the size of a crown-piece. . . .

'What is it then, Hugh?'

'Its value is traditional, and also natural. . . . Something of the second you can appreciate for yourself . . . By holding it from the light, you will get the appearance, or illusion, of some sort of interior motion.'

Presently she saw that something was travelling perpetually across the face of the flint . . . that resembled smoke. It was a kind of white vapour, now thick, now thin. Its form was ever-changing. Its drift across the flint was quite slow, and the smoke seemed to be in the flint, not on its surface.

Next, after she had become more familiar with it, the tiny field of vision seemed mystically to have grown magnified, till she could fancy that she was peering down at an animated black night sky, over the face of which *clouds* were sailing. . . . Surely what she had been beginning to imagine a glittering aberration of her sight could really be nothing else than infinitesimal star-points shining forth!

A large foreign object came rudely between her eyes and their magic spectrum. She realised that it was Hugh's hand . . . stupidly she heard his words:

'Better not spend too much time on it, Helga. You may get fascinated. . . . You are the last person I should wish to see in the grip of the abnormal. . . .'

'Are you in such a grip, Hugh?'

He answers that he is indeed and tells her how Arsinal and Saltfleet looted the stone from the Lama monastery at a time when he was also in Tibet; attacked by the Tibetans, they had dispatched it after him by a native runner. He has now become so fascinated by its magic that he cannot bring himself to restore it.

The 'infinitesimal star-points', seen by Helga behind the cloud-effects in the stone, are referred to elsewhere as depicting an unknown constellation, and there is the comment, 'The flint itself might originally have dropped from the stars. There it might have been the product of an intelligence higher than any on earth, which had known how to construct such a celestial spy-glass. Some intuitive ancient on earth had recovered its properties, and had split it, to see inside.'

There is much more in the book about the magic stone, its potency and mystery; for Lindsay is at pains—unlike his casual treatment of the dream-recording disc in *Sphinx*—to render it credible. Its concrete form might be a 'shadow', but 'something was lying in another spectral dimension; something with extraordinary properties of mental compulsion: but the three dimensions of earth were too rudimentary to show it as it was, and so one could see no more than the broken halves of a worn pebble, and a sort of distant magic in them', and so forth. Whatever its nature might be, it is patently at the centre of the elemental-supernatural coil that has destroyed the Tor and revealed the tomb and the wraith of the Being whose Avatar had been worshipped by a remote people.

Perhaps, ancient necromancers had discovered the principle of it and learnt how to invest mummies and Buddhistic images, to protect them, with fatal potency; as the threatening effigy that had given Devil's Tor its name, was probably intended also to be protective.

And further visions are to happen there, further uncanny shifting backwards of the lens of time. On the day following Drapier's exploration of the tomb, a young artist, Peter Copping, who knows nothing of the magic stone, goes to the Tor to see the effects of lightning on the rocks. He relates his experience there—how he came upon Hugh Drapier huddled up in a trance, 'one hand . . . clenched over something on his knee'. At this point, apparently, Copping was overtaken by dizziness, and had to sit down. He sees a vision:

> It wasn't the same—that view . . . And what for an instant I had thought to be a darkening of my eyesight, now . . . established itself as a true darkening of the day—to, say, somewhat more than the brightness of full moonlight at its strongest. But the scene so lit was harder

to realise. The familiar general features were retained, but the heights, proportions and aspects were all hopelessly wrong . . .

The Devil-head of the Tor was 'absent . . . But I must explain about the quality of the light. Though so dark, it was definitely daylight, not moonlight . . . and yet the day should be brighter than I saw it. I was seeing the *ghost* of a scene, in ghostly light . . .

It had everything of the consistency, detail and cold logic of a real experience—nothing of the fantastic foolishness and impossibility of a dream; and yet my memory was contradicting it to me. It was not the world I had lived in all my life. In that sense, it was dream-like . . . I saw coming round the bend of that ledge half-way down the face of the cliff across the valley, the head of a long *funeral procession* . . . the distance away would be . . . some hundreds of yards—far enough to make the procession in that light, appear like goblins . . .

A slight horror and quaking went on continuously in me to the end; meaning first that my blood scented the presence of an alien world (dogs have the same instinct very powerfully developed as in bristling and howling on account of the unseen). . . .

The funeral train . . . were half-bare savages, clad in a single animal skin apiece, with flowing manes over their shoulders; brandishing primitive weapons. Caesar's Britons must have scorned them for aborigines; and indeed, they were little more than apes. Their squat trunks, brief legs, gorilla-like arms, crouching balance, and tangle of unclipped hair, were absolutely in the character of apes. And they came along that cliff face in file, an endless string of them, all stamping and dancing outrageously . . . Only the covered death-hurdle . . . required a pair of supporters at either end, and they, in reason, could not dance . . . So they were making for Devil's Tor . . .

The bier was hidden by a hanging skin or cloth. Its length was unusual—abnormal, even—but whether the corpse was of a length corresponding, was not disclosed . . . In fact, that prodigious drawn-out extension of the bier was the most dream-like feature of the whole business.

Copping is Ingrid's lover and future husband: 'a rather slight, rather short young man, of cool carriage, with a sharp darkish face, and with eyes habitually lit with a light that rebuked complacency and was not of the crowd'.

Lindsay has filled this novel with characters who are 'not of the crowd'.

Copping's views on art are worth quoting here:

. . . What every painter worth his salt is trying to present—probably

without knowing it—is neither beauty, nor life, nor truth . . . but the *whole universe*—at one stroke. By means, necessarily, of *action*. That is symbolism in a nutshell. Nothing exists apart, but only the universe exists . . . symbols and allegories . . . there remain quite well-educated persons who definitely don't know one from the other. A symbol is a mystic sign of the Creator. An allegory is a wall-decoration with a label attached . . . It explains nothing of the universe . . . A picture should be *passionate*.

A picture can't help being quiet, but underneath that quietness should be visible the mighty workings of the spirit; and that is passion. For now consider, say, the stupendous feelings caused in us by gazing upwards at a dizzy cathedral vault; or consider our wild unrest before such a play as *Macbeth*. Or the terrific rocking of our faculties when seized by such a piece of music as the beginning movement of the Ninth Symphony. Can pictorial stillness—that resembles a sort of glaze or enamel for the preservation of the painter's ideas—can it in itself and for itself, aspire to the same class of importance as that cathedral vault, that play, and that symphony movement?

He afterwards expresses his aspiration to paint the 'Great Mother'. Copping, like the American artist who appears briefly in *The Haunted Woman*, is one of those characters who intuitively understand things that are beyond the grasp of their intellect. But Lindsay never felt a genuine respect for mere 'artists'; and Copping will eventually lose Ingrid to Saltfleet.

Copping is in fact intuitively aware that Ingrid is an incarnation of the 'Great Mother', and that he is not worthy to be her husband. He says to her: 'So long as the world is to be saved by its great men, so long will these great men have fated mothers. By what signs may they be known, these fated mothers? Perhaps only he can recognise them, who is warned off. And perhaps you are such a fated mother, and I am to be warned off . . . You have seemed to me . . . like the future mother of another supernatural saviour of the race.'

He ends by saying 'Let us enter into no formal contract, but, if nothing in the meantime has happened to prevent it, let us get married in twelve months; and that should give fate long enough to work its will in.'

After this Saltfleet arrives on the scene: 'The forehead was noticeably wide, the features were strong, masculine, severe, the grey eyes direct and uncompromising. He was clean-shaved, and

the set of his mouth fascinated Ingrid's mother, Helga, instantly by its expressive virility. She seemed not to have known before how a man's mouth could be at once so grim and beautiful. No doubt, it arose from the striving with realities—the realities of Nature . . . He looked so altogether different from other men. There was this open-air formidableness in his still, tranquil, menacing manner of holding himself. . . .'

Saltfleet, incensed at Drapier's withholding of the split stone, has followed him to Dartmoor; thence follows him to the Tor—only to find that Drapier is dead, crushed by a falling rock. Gripped in his hand is the half of the stone. It is, of course, the second half, but Saltfleet does not know this. The first half is in Helga's house where Drapier was staying.

Saltfleet too has a vision of the 'Great Mother'. This happens one evening in the room of the inn where he is putting up. While in the dusky light, he is pursuing his examination of Drapier's flint, he fancies that the high-backed oak chair against the wall opposite, was occupied by a gigantic woman:

> Her shape was defined by a sort of phosphorescence, issuing indifferently from her garments and unclothed flesh; but the face was shadowed, so as to be scarcely distinguishable from the darkness of the room. She seemed curiously attired in antique draperies. He recognised her at once for a ghost. And in her immobility was suggested to him an inexpressible menace, her bare arms resting in strength like those of an image on the wooden arms of the chair, while she stared at him from the invisibility of her face and eyes.

In the following chapter, Arsinal arrives. He discovers that the half of the stone in Saltfleet's possession is not the original half they found in Tibet. Now, all the major characters in the novel are aware that the two halves exist, and it can only be a matter of time before they are put together.

Arsinal—a meagre, intense, austere-looking man—expounds at great length his theory about the Great Mother and the notion that a new saviour will be born:

> *To one bed shall I bring another man and another woman, of whom shall be born a greater than they, greater than all mankind, who shall put wickedness under foot, and found my people.*

Thus, Saltfleet, this miracle of a new birth, which in the one predic-

tion was to arise directly from an action of the temple stone, in the other is to be the intelligent personal work of the goddess . . .

I surmise that the broken sections of the original whole stone are to be rejoined before the fated marriage of the man and the woman can be consummated. . . .

The Virgin myth has reappeared in many surprising forms and places throughout the world. Most obviously, it is a statement of the extremely antique Mother-worship. . . . In the Palestine version . . . the extramundane meteor, that is so important an element of the earlier tradition, becomes a bright announcing star. . . . I don't worry you, Saltfleet?

No. Pray go on.

So he does for pages, contending that the myth 'sprang from the north-west of the world' among the 'peoples primitively occupying that cold and mystic region. For only among those peoples do we encounter the reverence of womankind . . . Nowhere else could the chaste worship of the Creatrix have originated than in the first home of those free Scandinavians.'

Meantime, Saltfleet is intuitively aware of something that Arsinal does not know: that Ingrid is the incarnation of the 'Great Mother' who will bring forth the Avatar. He may also suspect that he is destined to be the father. Saltfleet also feels that Arsinal is basically driven by pride, and the desire for fame.

There follows a chapter illustrative of Lindsay's tendency to pad. Nothing in particular happens in it except that Peter goes to Ingrid's house and finds out that she has gone to the Tor. Saltfleet also goes to the Tor. There he encounters Ingrid and that they two should find themselves together on that haunted height is momentous and interesting to the reader.

Ingrid is staring fixedly into space, and, as Saltfleet sits waiting, he also experiences a vision. There is a falling star, followed by a clamour of voices and the steady beat of a drum (Surtur's?): 'A monstrous beast in silhouette, massive, yet low like a rhinoceros, appeared in the moment of lifting itself over the Tor edge.' It brings to mind the 'rough beast' of Yeats' poem *The Second Coming*.

Ingrid recovers from her trance; Saltfleet tells her of the ancient Cretan prophecy that the reuniting of the halves of the stone would bring about a marriage that would produce a

'regenerator of the human race'. He also warns her against Arsinal. The two of them are already beginning to experience a strong but unsexual attraction for one another.

Subsequently Saltfleet and Arsinal have an argument, and Saltfleet expresses some of Lindsay's basic ideas:

> Your subterranean self is never, with your permission, to derive its lights and fires from the *without*, never from the *abroad*, but only from the *down*, and *down*, and *down*. There this self, as well as its infinite reservoir, can still remain your own property. But once the under-surface feeding channel proves to be, not a private pipe-line to the infinite, but something more in the nature of a porous sponge or marsh, open to contributions from all sides, at all depths, then, if we still want a soul of our own, doubtless we must look for it elsewhere. I find no good reason to suppose that at *any* depth we cease to be members of a whole corporate system. It appears to me—I have studied it a good deal—that there is precisely one method of dissociating oneself from the system and being a single soul, and that is by sincerely declining to be concerned. The world is from God and I am from God, therefore the world and I are brothers, but if I scorn my own creation, and all that springs out of it, then my principle of scorning is *before* God, since it judges and may not be judged, except by its peers, who are nowhere in God's world.

This is the key-statement of the book. It actually elucidates Lindsay's mysticism, disclosing his austere philosophy. One could fancy almost that he was daring to identify the 'Lord God' with his Crystalman in *A Voyage to Arcturus*. That is not so; yet it is a kind of apostasy from one aspect, for what Saltfleet implies is essentially that he wishes to be as *nothing*; to be outside and independent of everything, in order that he may be something in himself; in other words, an integral, free, and thence developed being. As for the subconscious that he deprecates, it certainly might be ascribed to Crystalman—at least, that region of it which appertains to perversion and putrefaction, which might as appropriately be ascribed to the Devil.

After coagulations of analytical verbiage in Lindsay's worst style, we are transported—in a vision seen by Arsinal on the Tor—to a scene as impressive and vivid as anything in *Arcturus*.

Arsinal sees, beside a rushing, roaring river, with precipices beyond, lit up in the night by a 'mighty blaze of piled branches

and logs', creatures with 'anthropoid physiques, brutish crouch' (in some cases 'assisted by the actual resting of hairy fingers on the ground'). They are gathered, at a safe distance, about a 'pillar of mist' issuing from a 'spherical knob of brighter light motionless on the ground' (the fallen aerolith).

Suddenly a monstrous undefined form leapt through the air from out of the night, to crush with its sheer weight one of the creatures whose back was turned. The rest jumped round with quick cries and screams . . . The cruel face of a black leopard appeared for a single moment lighted by the crimson and yellow of the fire. In its mouth was the man's arm completely torn off from the shoulder. A woman shrieked high above the clamour, darting towards the victim. But as he gyrated to the ground, where he stayed lying face-downwards, a newcomer rushed into the circle of light . . .

His coarse jetty hair was a mane on his shoulders, while his mournful exasperated face, that was beardless, might by day have been lemon-hued. He was oldish. His sunk cheeks, with the deep-grooved lines between nose and mouth, and others crossing the width of his forehead, served to single him out from the rest present . . .

His shifty eyes fell upon the ravener as it was in the act of retreating with its booty. With an astonishing swiftness of resolution and agility, he sprang forward after it in a wild flying leap, to strike at the back of the beast's neck with the short stone-tipped spear in his hand, using both wrists to give the stab additional ferocity. The pard, that was as tall as an ass, faced round with a frightful snarl, but even so would not drop the prey. The man, flashing out the spear from that first wound, jabbed with it repeatedly in intensest savagery at the disgusting visage, all streaming blood from its jaws. Then, roaring with rage and agony, the leopard relinquished the arm at last, to hurl itself at its torturer.

The spear timber snapped near the head, and the weapon was useless. The man dodged, turned short after the brute from behind, and seized its upper and lower jaws with his two hands. There was a sharp sickening wrench, then the leopard collapsed, writhing, with a wail like that of a lost soul. But snatching a new spear from a follower, the victor never ceased stabbing and restabbing the jowl of the senseless beast until it was an indistinguishable pulp of blood and matter.

He staggered back to straightness, or what could pass for it, then stood with rising and falling breast, glaring round at the details of the scene . . . The woman who had shrieked was still bending over her mutilated one, silently watching the blood well from his shoulder . . . The chief came across to regard the prostrate man gloomily . . . At

last, he raised the borrowed spear. Its point descended hard and swift upon the upturned back . . .

The chief then approached the mystic pillar of light, between the cowering watchers, stood with slow, heavy mind considering it, took a tentative step nearer, staggered and fell . . .

The 'mystic pillar of light' becomes the apparition of the 'Great Mother'.

The culminating scene of the book—the joining of the two halves of the stone on Devil's Tor—occurs after more metaphysical arguments, and a powerful chapter in which Ingrid has another vision of the remote past on the Tor. Whether Lindsay here succeeds in justifying all the arguments and *longueurs* of the book is a matter for individual judgement. What he wanted to do in the final chapters of *Devil's Tor* was to provide a parallel with the final chapters of *Arcturus*, embodying his more considered philosophy of the nature of the universe. He cites the Old Testament: 'Well had the Prophet said that the created universe was no joke'.[3]

At the end of the book, Saltfleet has a vision of the universe as fundamentally feminine. His conviction that the world was created by a male God 'suddenly [seemed] as unreal to him as the flatness of the earth's surface, or the movement of the sun round the planet, or the impendence of Hell-fire for sinners.

All the great elements of the world—the universal and all-powerful incentive of love, the enormous fact and cult of beauty, the endless production of children to supply the wastage by death, the seasonal mating of free animals and annual rebirth of vegetation, the orbits of planets and comets, the doubtless curved paths of the stars, the tides not only of the sea, but the purely instinctive existences of all creatures save the moral among humans, and even of them . . . everything of this was so peculiarly of the female stamp—emotional, blind, repetitive—that it was as if he found himself in a house whose every room contained women's clothes, needlework, flowers, silk and draperies, fragile furniture, infants' toys and garments; and were asked and required to consent that the residence had been equipped for his own use by a man. . . .

At last, they join together the sundered flints:

Arsinal and Ingrid are standing close together on Devil's Tor,

[3] 'Thinkest thou that I made the heavens and earth in jest?'

each holding a half of the stone, when Arsinal 'was all at once visibly encompassed . . . by a mistily-glowing blue nebula, that seemed an emenation from his body causing him to appear glowing with a strange astral fire. And at the same instant Ingrid was glorified by an equal radiance: but her fire, or mist, was whitest silver. Their two shapes but a pace apart were like those of celestials about to meet and merge.

Swiftly Saltfleet stepped between them, to snatch from the girl's delicate fingers the thing they so lightly retained, and with the force of a blow plant it inside Arsinal's free hand, that closed upon it instinctively.[4] The twin splendours vanished.

Then Saltfleet drew Ingrid away.

Arsinal stumbled forward towards the tomb entrance . . . He was gazing at the dim erectness and marvellous statue of Her . . . as yet She shone so faintly. In either hand he held a stone, knowing that they were to be joined.

Undirected his fingers fitted them, for his eyes were always on this Shape before him. The junctures fell at last together, yet no immediate change had come.

Thus she was his boyhood's vision by night . . . This loveliness and awful calm, this deepest peace, so like a will-less eternity, that She both was, and was bringing . . .

What proceeded interiorly was like the slow and dreadful emergence from firm, concreted earth of a rare marble statue, long buried. He was being alarmed lest it should fail to come out perfectly. It was *himself*, stripped of all the foul disfigurements of experienced life. Surely Her apparition was obstetric, and She was here to ensure him easy passage, by purification at the last.

'Here is death, then!' he knew not if the words had been the hollow echo in some unknown empty gallery of his being—the echo of a comprehension too remote to be directly audible . . . He understood, however, that no blow of suddenness was meant, no sharp dividing line; but a movement, slow—slow, in two modes: the gradual slipping away downwards from the life of will, and this other endless emergence.

His folly clung on, endeavouring to know again some of the innumerable incidents and persons of his finishing phenomenal existence. He recalled Drapier, forgetting that he was passed before him: and found it singular that he should so inexplicably be absent from all these

[4] This was to prevent the unfit, fatal involvement of Ingrid with Arsinal who, in passages too long to quote, and too integrated to extract from, had proved unsound.

late scenes—but the scenes themselves he could not remember . . . his two movements continued, uncompleted, joined for him in the mortal likeness and high gleaning, and in that heaven coming through Her eyes, of the One before him, that already was become as the Sea of all his baring soul.

Ingrid and Saltfleet see Arsinal's diminishing shape as he dies, disappearing in the gloom. The stone within one of his hands shone with a dazzling blue light, which changed to silver and burst in a phenomenon such as filled the heavens with stars of transcendent splendour. The night was animate with a rhythm that changed to a harmony of sound; the stars were giving forth a 'metaphysical music'. It was 'like the ordered emotion of a far-distant orchestra numbering not hundreds . . . but millions, it seemed, of instruments that played otherwise than in groups, since each instrument, with its voice of unique *timbre*, should be proclaiming its own peculiar message . . .' To Ingrid it was the message of ineffable birth.

But the potent unearthly influence both she and Saltfleet feel in the atmosphere—inspired, as they believe, by the Great Mother—stirs in them profound thoughts and sublime imaginations; this passage has always brought to my mind the passage in Rider Haggard's *Nada the Lily* where the Zulu, Mopo, has a vision of the Queen of Heaven, and is transported into a state of mystical insight.

The passage in which Ingrid and Saltfleet recognise that they are the man and woman who are destined to be joined together like the two halves of the stone must be quoted at length:

> But soon the light caught them, and bathed them, lingering but whilst they might know and remember each the other.
>
> Neither exclaimed: only Ingrid beheld in her companion's face . . . what in it she had never remarked before, though always it had been there—its scorn, not of men, but of the littleness of men, which had presented but the unconsciousness of his own worship of the Height. And she understood that this was the sign she had been to await—that this was *he*. But Saltfleet perceived in the drawn pain of those young, moonlike features the stern unearthliness which his swollen soul might best approve; discovering in them no beauty.
>
> Then was restored to him his unspeakable sensation of being pierced throughout his nature . . . by the white-hot finger of the angel that was

his nearest wisdom to the Ancient. Whose claiming of him was an exultation in him, because freely and contemptuously he was to cast away his worn life, in the remembrance of that awful Purpose. Neither to any other end was *she* here, with him. A child—a man, that should be a spirit, was to enter life, without whose coming all the past agonies of the world must have stood suspended in memory, a dream. But, for as long as this pain and this sternness should ward her approaches, he knew that never could he feast his imagination upon her loveliness . . .

Their eyes avoided the other's. It was not from fearfulness, nor to conceal their souls: it was that the love appropriate between men and women was never to go between them, and so there was no need for them to seek each other's eyes. Indeed, neither saw the other's person . . . Their pulses were not hastened because he should be a man, and she a woman.

At one time they saw, in a strange preternatural light, 'different regions of space' in which men were the incipient forms and suggested moulds of creation,[5]

hints of great natural masses . . . nearly the tops of mountains—not quite lakes—monstrous, passive forms that might or might not be of life—rushings-together of things, and violent pullings-apart . . . Ingrid believed that she was seeing the lowest of the heavens . . . Saltfleet, however, considered that the fecund night before his eyes might be to the half-mystic ether of modern science what that ether should be to the gross matter of the senses. If out of ether matter was formed, out of these unutterable suggestions of things the inter-stellar universe of invisible substance, named ether, might be formed. For it was incredible that the sick vanity of the world's teeming life should have arisen from the simple mechanical action of electric whirls. Thus this night was like a second step inwards from the life-ground of the body, where it played, worked, and wondered; while still there was no beginning of a simple origin—no approach to an explanatory unity. Then should not variety perhaps, be stamped through and through creation, to express the fearful essence of the Ancient?

There is a great culminating vision of the astral Spirit. But it is more than a vision, for *She* unites Ingrid and Saltfleet. Ingrid, 'incomprehensibly . . . became incorporated, then receded from her direction towards Saltfleet, to become a cloud of silver glory . . . and so envelop him, and vanish'.

[5] In *Arcturus* they are crude types in weirdly unnatural environments.

As they are leaving the Tor, Ingrid says, 'I will go to live in the far North. I cannot breathe here'.

The Adventures of M. de Mailly are a surprising freak, or sport, a complete departure from Lindsay's characteristic vein. The style is entirely different. It cannot be considered in the body of Lindsay's work. It is full of humour which is the stranger as he looked on humour as emanating from the lower part of one's nature,[6] a proclivity due, in some part no doubt to his Calvinistic forbears.

It is a picaresque tale like *Gil Blas*, or *The Three Musketeers*, and tells of the adventures of a soldier of fortune.

It begins humorously with the story of an old French noblemen in the seventeenth century, who is besieged by a virago of a neighbour who intends to marry him, and kidnaps him before he can get legal protection. A melodramatic affair follows in which de Mailly rescues from the police a noblewoman who has committed a murder. De Mailly afterwards meets an old friend who introduces him at the court of Louis XIV. He then becomes the victim of a hoax which causes him to be arrested and taken before the King, who, however, treats him generously, and by whom his empty purse is filled to overflowing to the extent of 9000 crowns.

De Mailly is then caught in the dark toils of the secret police, and exciting and complicated events follow, and we finally leave him in the position of having triumphed over all his enemies.

[6] In accord with Aristotle.

J. B. PICK

The unpublished novels:
The Violet Apple and *The Witch*

D.L.—10

THE UNPUBLISHED NOVELS: *THE VIOLET APPLE* AND *THE WITCH*

Lindsay's two unpublished novels both deserve attention. *The Violet Apple* is publishable; *The Witch* is not, but is more important.

The Violet Apple is a deceptively quiet book which grows in beauty and strangeness at each reading. On the surface it is a mild tale of the misunderstandings of two engaged couples, but big fish swim beneath the surface.

Anthony Kerr is a successful playwright who soberly regards mankind . . . 'as no more than a petty heap of blind, wriggling . . . insect-like beings, surrounded by terrific unseen forces . . . which . . . were responsible for the major changes of civilisation . . .'

This cynicism corrodes his mind, and his two natures clash. He carries about with him 'a vague, dull, but permanent distress'.

This is precisely the situation of Lore Jensen, the composer in *Sphinx*, and such a situation is a lasting preoccupation of Lindsay's. How is it possible for a true artist to obtain an audience without falsifying his work and so degrading his nature?

Unlike Lore, Anthony is on the surface a conventional character, who regards it as necessary to behave like a gentleman. Unfortunately, he adopts a manner of speech which is not, as Lindsay may have imagined, light and glancing, but rather heavy and priggish.

We are introduced early to two symbols which recur during the course of the story. First, Anthony has bought a picture that troubles him, 'a woodland scene with a pool in the foreground and a cluster of trees behind'. '. . . One day he had quietly remarked how the patch of the two centre trees, inclined towards each other, was in the form of a *cross*, which should be about twelve feet high . . .' This phrase 'which should be' is the first instance of a curious use of tenses that grows in Lindsay's later work and gives a disconcerting air of stiffness and archaic mannerism, becoming only too obvious in *Devil's Tor* and *The Witch*. Lindsay had forgotten his own recommendation in the *Notes*: 'An author should be as careful to remove mannerism from his writing, as fish from his fingers.'

The picture purports to be one of a place near his sisters' home in Kent, but he has never been able to find the exact spot.

The second symbol is a glass serpent sent to Anthony by his

uncle—a family heirloom with a legend attached. It is said to have been brought from the Middle East by a crusading ancestor, and the small black seed contained within the hollow serpent a pip from the original apple of the Garden of Eden.

Jim Lytham, a friend of Anthony's, whose home is in the same village in Kent as Anthony's sisters, breaks the serpent, and Anthony decides to 'pot' the seed.

Anthony goes down to Kent, taking with him Theodore Paysant, his cousin and temporary secretary, who is studying the playwright's craft because he thinks there is money to be made at it. There is, but not by Theodore, who is crudely on the make.

Jim Lytham, who has two sisters, Grace and Virginia, has just announced his engagement to Haidee Croyland, the daughter of another family in the district. These three girls, Haidee, Grace and Virginia, provide the sort of contrast that recurs again and again in Lindsay's work. Grace is in fact the fair, cold, Nordic type that Lindsay elevates to goddess status as Ingrid in *Devil's Tor* but who, as Grace in *The Violet Apple*, lacks depth and vigour.

The change from viewing Grace calmly and quite coldly to viewing Ingrid as a mystic portent marks a definite decline in the quality and vigour of Lindsay's writing, and also in his grasp of reality. Or, on the contrary, if *Devil's Tor* is merely a rewriting of *The Ancient Tragedy* and *The Violet Apple* was therefore written after the basic portion of *Devil's Tor*, then the portrayal of Grace represents a definite recovery from serious malaise.

The exciting characters are Haidee and Virginia.

Haidee is closely related to Celia in *Sphinx*. Both are mischievous, malicious, lively and variable. Celia is clever, and Haidee is deep. Both may well be based on Eva Van Milligan, a woman the Lindsays knew well in Cornwall. Perhaps that is why Haidee-Celia has so much more life than Ingrid-Grace. Lindsay says in the *Notes*: 'Unless a book is life-like, it will not carry conviction.'

Haidee and Grace, however, are early contrasted, through Anthony's eyes, in Grace's favour. 'Grace's quieter fascinations . . . were more to Anthony's taste. She seemed to be quite willing to be effaced by Haidee, yet the playwright reflected . . . that whereas she looked entirely a lady and a thoroughbred, the other . . . might very well have passed at any supper-party of actresses . . .'

Anthony, in fact, has consciously chosen Grace. His trouble is that his conscious will has broken away from the depths of his nature, and he is heading for trouble.

Virginia plays a minor part in the action but makes a major impact on the mind, being fully and vigorously presented. She is very young, very intelligent, very wayward, very self-willed and passionately emotional. She loves Grace, hates and fears Haidee, and admires Anthony.

Virgina is 'a girl of nineteen or twenty . . . with a thick tangle of bobbed auburn hair, setting off a luminously pale face and thin white neck which showed the bones, above a body of such girlish fragility and slightness that it seemed as though it would sink under its own weight unless supported. Her peeping brown-black eyes held something malicious in their depths . . . Her society was a school of tact—one never knew what would drop next from her lips . . . Haidee was the only person who dared deliberately to irritate her for fun.'

Lindsay's interest in women was always deep, passionate and observant. He admired, feared, respected, loved and despised them. Eventually, he worshipped them, for the cult of the Goddess that is evident in *The Violet Apple*, grows more elaborate and ponderous in *Devil's Tor* and culminates in and completely dominates *The Witch*. Sullenbode triumphs, after all.

The *Notes* are full of observations on 'woman', some of which are quite calm. 'Women may be divided into three classes; the sexual, the gay and the dull. The first seek lovers, the second women-friends and society, the third a home.' Haidee is sexual, Grace dull, but where does Virginia, the intellectual, fit into this scheme? It is a measure of Lindsay's stature that he often produces characters who transcend his theories.

'Her sex sways the thoughts and feelings of every woman, as the moon sways the tides.' 'The female human form, with its concave and convex surfaces, resembles the form of insects much more closely than does the male; and both women and insects are famous for instincts. In other words, those beings who live from within, fashion their bodies from within; let the world take them or leave them, as it likes.' 'Men have personal egotism; women, sexual egotism. To women there is only one thing of real interest:—their own sex, and all that pertains to it, including men.'

'A woman alone in a company of men feels superiority, because she alone has roots running down to significant existence. A man alone in a company of women feels superiority, because he alone is intellectually free and mobile . . .'

At the time of writing *A Voyage to Arcturus*, woman appeared to Lindsay as the sweetest and most beguiling trap of the Crystalman world, containing its greatest beauty and nobility. 'The delicate beauty of modern women, like the improved varieties of modern garden flowers, is not an artificial product of civilisation, but a closer approximation to the elemental *sweetness* of world-existence, which is hindered in ancient womankind and wild flowers by the hard struggle for existence, which prohibits a rich and varied development.'

But by the time he wrote *Devil's Tor* Muspel has become 'the Ancient', and although between the Ancient and the world there is still an intermediary, instead of Crystalman the evil shadow, this intermediary has become a female Demiurge. The following is a quotation from *Devil's Tor*: 'He conceived that the primal sublime, dwelling alone—before the issuing forth of Time, Space, worlds, angels, infernals, men and women—could still to this hour be so dwelling, still alone . . . while a female Demiurge, being detached from that sublime to serve as fount and living principle of all creation, should present[1] the archetype of animal maternity . . . whereby were explainable the two great instincts of mankind, that forever had been and must be at variance: on the one hand, the automatic and gregarious life of the herd, speaking eloquently of kinship in a common Mother; on the other, the sporadic appearance among men of such stern recluses and austere visionaries as had ever been dubbed mad by the cheerful mob; they should be from that Ancient, living alone. . . .

'Yet no man could reach that Ancient except through the Demiurge . . . apart from her, even souls had no existence. Accordingly, through and by Her was conceded the possibility of attaining to the Ancient.'[2]

[1] Here is another instance of that odd 'should' which becomes so insistent a feature of Lindsay's later work. I imagine that here he means 'does in fact present'.

[2] This echoes Polecrab's statement in *A Voyage to Arcturus*: 'Surtur's world does not lie on this side of the one . . . but on the other side, and to get to it we must repass through the *one*'.

This is a softer, warmer, less forceful and indeed a more balanced conception than the opposed Muspel-Crystalman worlds of *A Voyage to Arcturus*. *The Violet Apple* is a less ambitious book than either *Arcturus* or *Devil's Tor*, but it is built on a definite conception of life and of the significance of man and woman. Women play the chief roles in the story.

Virginia from the start is more interested than anyone else in the ancient seed. She at first asserts: 'Oh, it's as dead as Methusaleh! . . . I'll put it two inches deep in potting mould, in a five-inch pot, and there it will stop till the last trump . . .' But she tends it with loving care and its fate is in her hands.

At the end of the engagement party for Jim and Haidee at which Anthony also announces his engagement to Grace, they all make a mock pilgrimage to the greenhouse to toast the seed in its pot. Once there, Anthony gives a speech which begins flippantly but ends in sudden bitterness. ' "I don't know how you feel about it, my dear friends, but to me it frequently seems that every new victory of fact over fancy serves only to make our lives more inexpressibly vile. The real tragedy of the Garden of Eden was perhaps this—that upon tasting the forbidden fruit Adam and Eve became man and woman, and ceased to be children. . . ." '

But Virginia, as always, is the one to notice something more significant than speeches. She cries out. 'A tiny green stem, with cotyledons attached, was elevated half-an-inch above the surface of the moist, dark mould.'[3]

Anthony grows abruptly serious, and gets them all out of the greenhouse as quickly as possible.

It is after this that Haidee begins her extraordinary, mischievous, wayward persecution of Anthony, involving him in difficulties with Grace, and herself in difficulties with Jim, apparently from sheer irresponsibility, but in fact for a serious purpose she hardly recognises.

Haidee is always taking Anthony aback, and Anthony is always responding as evasively and conventionally as he can.

[3] 'How long can seeds remain viable? Several cases are now on record of ancient seeds, said to have lain dormant for up to 10,000 years, that successfully germinated when given the right conditions.'—*The Times*, 22 November 1968.

She asks ' "I've often wondered exactly how far down does your nature go?

' "My nature goes down to the bottomless depths of infinity, I hope, so does everyone else's; but the well is choked . . ." '

Haidee presses him but he says only: ' "I have long since adopted the safe plan of never mentioning myself in polite society. There are plenty of others to tell me what a curious specimen of forked radish I am." '

Haidee asks: ' "I wonder if Grace has ever spoken to you in this strain?"

"She's much too practical."

". . . But has she walked *all round* you? I doubt it . . ." '

As the days go by Virginia grows increasingly excited about the plant.

' "You don't deserve to possess the eighth wonder of the world. . . . Come and see it instantly! Don't stop to take your things off, Grace. Come on!" '

' "What's happened?" demanded the other two, in chorus.

'But Virginia, electric torch in hand, replied only by driving them before her towards the door . . .

'The white glare from the torch severed the pot containing Anthony's plant from its companions on the shelf . . . The russet stem, as slender as a wax taper, stood up erect some four inches above the surface of the potting mould. Two clusters of the most vivid emerald green leaves sprang out at different heights from opposite sides. They were shaped like tiny apple leaves . . .

' "You're a gardener, and I'm not. Do seeds ever develop so quickly?"

' "Not apple pips."

' "And this is genuinely mine?"

' "Yes, Anthony, it *is* yours. I swear it." '

A few days later:

'The main stem of the plant, already six inches high from soil to tip, had begun to show woodiness at its base. There were, as well, two or three side stems, each bearing its cluster of miniature lanceolate leaves, of the brightest green; but the miracle of miracles was that, from the centre of one of the clusters, had erected themselves a pair of tiny red flower-buds, still tightly sealed in their calyxes.'

Anthony tells Virginia: ' "I believe you're more interested in all this than you like to own!"

"I'm not ashamed of owning it, and I *am* interested, I've never heard of anything half so weird. I shall begin to think I'm the only person of intelligence in the house, for the others are very casual about it . . ." '

Virginia has a theory about the tree.

'Her eyes flashed sombrely, while her frail frame could not keep still in the excitement of her effort to express herself.

' "I mean, we may ignore the passage of the years, and we may imagine that they don't touch us in any way, but perhaps each year as it passes is attached to our being by an elastic cord. If we go with it, all right. Otherwise, sooner or later, we have to go after it and all the other years with a rush."

' "Which is what our little descendant is doing. I follow." '

Virginia tells Anthony ' "We're not travelling *from* the monkeys, we're travelling *towards* them . . . There never has been such a vulgar age as ours. So I shall go on believing in a Golden Age, if no one else does. Somewhere, at some time, there has been a very lofty chain of celestial mountains, from which the rivers have been flowing down ever since to water our modern civilisation; and should they ever run dry, they can never, never be replenished." '

The relationship of Anthony and Haidee develops with Haidee trying to force Anthony to live from the depth of his own nature. She tricks Anthony into meeting her secretly in London.

Her gaiety subsides 'into a quiet seriousness which suited her features and the occasion very much better'. Anthony finds himself wondering about her '. . . . everything she did was more or less opposed to good manners and good sense; and he could not help feeling that it was owing to a certain superiority of her nature. . . . He had the baffled sense that she was always a move ahead. Of one thing he was sure—that her genius lay in sweetness and personal charm . . . she went *with* her beauty, whereas Grace too frequently seemed to check hers . . .'

Lindsay sees that this quality in Haidee goes with a depth of nature which will lead her into the full meaning of the book. Grace simply does not possess this depth of nature. She is too cold and pure and Nordic. It's strange that Ingrid, of *Devil's Tor*, who

is cold and pure and Nordic, is chosen by Lindsay for the role that her polar opposite fills in *The Violet Apple.*

Haidee's deliberate policy of compromising Anthony leads to a crisis, which takes place in front of the tree.

'Barely a foot high, with brown, dry, curling leaves, harsh to the touch, and having a couple of diminutive leathery, green balls suspended as close neighbours from an upper twig, the little shrub was obviously withering to its death . . . This grimness of reality rendered its feeble proportions and its grotesque aping of ancestral functions a jest impossible to laugh at . . .'

Theodore reveals to Grace and Jim that Haidee and Anthony have met in London. Both engagements are shattered then and there. Virginia attacks Haidee with such virulence that she seeks desperate revenge.

'Her eyes wandered femininely over Virginia's frail person, all twitching and shaking with wrath as it was, to learn what the tenderest spot might be for her stab . . . Her eyes left Virginia's frock, to rove maliciously about the greenhouse, seeking inspiration. The other girl's flaming ones followed them, and saw how they rested with a perceptible startled halt upon Anthony's plant . . .

'They flew towards it almost simultaneously.

' "No, you don't!" cried Virginia. But she was an instant too late, and Haidee's fingers had already encircled one of the little purple fruits . . .'

Grace and Jim protest, but to no avail. 'Bursting into tears, Virginia groped her way out of the greenhouse . . . slamming the door behind her . . .'

This is the last we see of Virginia, and her disappearance leaves a gap. She is a vivid and compelling little character and one of the liveliest women in Lindsay's work. She stands for more than *The Violet Apple* admits. She is neither social woman nor goddess woman, but a sensitive, intellectual and passionate girl, more suited in this world to Anthony than any of the others. She would understand him without the need for eating an ancient apple; but it is not Virginia who bites that, it is Haidee.

'Haidee . . . allowed the little fruit to remain for a few seconds lightly pinched by her two rows of pearly teeth, as if she were defying the brother and sister to interfere, for she continued

calmly to confront them . . . Then the visitor's upper teeth descended by degrees to meet the lower in the centre of the apple. A white frothing juice gushed forth, and the fruit was bitten in two.'

Haidee says she feels 'funny'. The real book has begun. We have dived below the world of appearance and are in touch with the true nature of man and woman. Haidee is committed. Anthony decides to go back to London at once.

On the morning of his departure he stands looking at his plant. The point is made that it is Good Friday. 'Its solitary fruit still clung to the stem, and, after gazing on it for a moment or two, he plucked it softly, to examine it in his hand.' Before he can make up his mind what to do with it, a letter from Haidee is delivered.

It is so different in tone and approach from her other letters and from her conversation that it shows clearly the transformation that is taking place in her. Inessentials stripped away, Haidee's nature speaks without disguise.

'Dear Anthony, Will you do me two favours? You have of course been told that I ate one of your two fruits. Will you personally eat the other? . . . The second favour I ask of you is that you will tell me your sensations afterwards. Not at once, but after five or six hours have elapsed. I have never had a stranger experience in my life.

'I am writing this from Kensington. My telephone number is at the top of the letter. I shall not go out all day tomorrow until you have rung me up. Yours, Haidee.

'P.S. This communication is not like my others, and I wish you clearly to understand that my object in writing is not to try to get to see you again. It is quite impossible to explain the importance I attach to your doing the two things I have asked you to do.'

Haidee knows that the sensations she has experienced as a result of eating the fruit are a revelation of the depth and height of reality. The triviality of Anthony's life and his subordination to conventionality and cynicism make it essential that he should eat the fruit, even though the suffering involved is in the nature of a crucifixion: for this reason the cross in the picture, the reference to the picture, and the timing of the events to take place at Easter. In order to rise again you must die first.

'There comes sometimes a day in the spring neither warmer, more brilliant with sunshine, nor more radiantly beautiful than its predecessors, but on the contrary frequently dull, murky, close and threatening storm, which nevertheless, in a greater degree than other days and in a quite different fashion, bears within its still and overcast bosom the whisper, definite to the senses but inexpressible in human language, of a wondrous *change*, not to arrive, but which has already arrived. Men, beasts and birds feel uneasy at that whisper, and perhaps plants stir in their roots, for it means that the tomb of winter has been flung open, and that the confined dead are summoned to arise and clothe themselves in the immortal garments of creation, love and joy . . . Pure, delicate natures are the most acutely responsive to such subdued moments of the spring. They are tortured by them . . .

'Something of the same sort . . . began . . . to oppress Anthony's spirit . . . He had a queer impression that this flight of (Haidee's) to London signified for him the inauguration of a total breaking-up of his present mode of life . . . He felt as if he were in the act of discarding a burden of stupid and ugly activities too long blindly carried, to the debasement of his finer soul.'

Once in his own rooms in London, before eating the fruit, Anthony rings the number Haidee gave him. Another woman answers. Haidee will not come to the telephone. ' "She asks me to enquire if you have done what she wanted?" '

When Anthony enquires how Haidee is he receives the reply: ' "She wishes to say that she is quite well in health, but greatly distressed." '

Anthony eats the strange fruit. 'A milky gush, like the foaming juice of a soft apple, met his teeth, and he was aware of a quick shock of freshness and coolness throughout his body.' The fruit provides a singular conglomeration of flavours—'the differing tastes of the many modern varieties of fruit, representing merely deviations from a few simple ancient stocks. What he had eaten was a direct survivor from one of those ancient stocks.

'The tang that still persisted in his mouth was rough, sharp, exquisite, bringing tears to his eyes . . . it was not so much his apprehensions that made him uneasy, as some sort of actual voiceless, menacing physical response to his deed, creeping mysteriously upwards and outwards . . . merely sensed by his

instinct. He had the feeling of a wild beast which recognises the approach of sickness, and slinks away . . . into the remotest thicket it can find.'

Lindsay then goes on to describe most brilliantly the nature of the inspiration that presses upon Anthony as the result of eating the fruit. 'Then he found that a thought was struggling to free itself in his head, but his best obstetric skill failed to get it delivered . . . It was not an impersonal intellectual thought, it referred somehow to himself—to his body . . . At first he tried to expel it from his mind, as a preoccupied man attempts to wave off a troublesome fly or midge pinging about his ears; but when it declined either to be dragged to the surface for examination or to leave him, the petty torment by degrees worked him up to such a pitch of irritation that he felt himself obliged to postpone his other introspective business in order to attend exclusively to this, and get it dismissed . . .'

He is interrupted by the servant announcing Grace Lytham. He stares at the man with bewilderment and loathing. 'How grey and dim and lifeless his face looked!—and what terrible eyes he had! . . . Yes, and that was what his thought had been! He had it now. After living with it for four-and-thirty years, he was suddenly realising for the first time that his face was *naked* . . .'

'And then, as the door opened, and Grace herself entered the room alone and unannounced, the name *Haidee* appeared suddenly to traverse the whole sky-arch of his thoughts, from end to end . . . Yet it was not as a beautiful and beloved woman that she was present with him. It was as if she represented for him some unthinkably lofty, maternal, protecting spiritual influence, so that he stood, not face to face with her as one person with another, but in a sort of atmosphere compounded of her being; an atmosphere as necessary to his new and higher existence as air to mammals and water to fishes . . . And he recognised that that was the great single idea which for several minutes back had been inhabiting his soul!'

Anthony sees Grace 'as a ghost of the past. Her face seemed small, tight, dim and mean, her entire aspect was misty and faded to him, but the scrutiny of those relentless, unwavering eyes was intolerable.'

Grace tries to speak to him calmly about his departure to

London and their relationship. She wants to make her peace with him. Anthony cannot concentrate and keeps looking at his watch because he was told by Haidee's friend to ring at 9.30.

'He felt another bubble of thought forming independently of his volition inside his brain. It was as though the inspirational condition were becoming chronic—as though some alien power, seated within himself, were launching these compelling *aperçues* upwards for his own amazement . . .'

Grace begins to weep. ' "And is this really all that you have to say to me, Anthony? . . . You're very—cruel . . ."

'At that, the thought which had been slowly swelling within him with a quiet burst invaded and illuminated his soul. He was not shrinking from her eyes because of their contained moral censure, but because they . . . could only communicate with his frightful, earthy, mortal nature, which was like an invitation to share a common coffin. He was as a man risen from the dead.'

This is the experience given by the apple. The old earth life is broken. The lofty reality of Haidee as a soul is now open to him, and his own depth and height are granted to him. But in one sense this 'resurrection' is an illusion. To be lifted out of this world while still required to live within it can be fatal. Another death and another resurrection are still necessary. Grace leaves.

Anthony, under some compulsion, begins to read the Book of Genesis. When he comes to the passage about the feeling of shame experienced by Adam and Eve, he reflects that this shame 'was not physical shame, but shame of the soul . . . a high delicacy, a shrinking of the spiritual from the low and bestial familiarity of all who were not "as gods" like themselves.' He keeps insisting to himself that it was their *faces*, not their bodies that they covered, although the text makes it quite clear that this was not so.

He explains it to himself. 'Theirs was not a shame of sex . . . The eating of the apple . . . is an eternal symbol of the first time men are eternal souls and sex shame is shame of their animalhood.

'All at once a voice seemed to sound in his ear, but it was toneless, and he knew it to be a hallucination.

' "Haidee is not a woman; she is a spirit!"

'His intuitions, breaking away one by one from their moorings in the depths, were beginning in the violence of their ascent to

overshoot the walls of his conscious brain and to rebound towards him from outside as sense perceptions.'

His mind runs on to examine Haidee as distinct from all other beings. 'She was disliked and maligned because she was an alien on earth . . . She was gay, capricious, light-hearted and witty because the affairs of earth seemed to her of small gravity. Her wonderful homeland, for which she reserved the ardours of her soul, was not here . . . She belonged to the wild spirit world, where no one can be possessed by another; it would be degradation; where love consists in something totally different—in ever-rising, perhaps, and ever helping to rise . . .'

Anthony falls asleep. When he wakes 'A sort of burning excitement was in his bones. His brain continued torpid, but he was nervous, restless and feverishly set to ninety minutes ahead,' which is the time at which he can ring Haidee.

He has a vision which is very like several visions of the Mother Goddess described in *Devil's Tor*. 'The at-first uncapturable full-length person of a draped woman, dimensionally as distant from him as the far wall of the room, wavered nebulously and provokingly before his mental sight.' It is Haidee. 'It grew brighter and more luminous, until her flesh was like an angel's . . . startlingly sad were her eyes . . . Their expression seemed to endow her with the wisdom of the ages, knowing all the griefs, sorrows and sufferings of mortality; and for this reason he knew that her sadness was everlasting and beyond assistance. But it was always Haidee . . .

'. . . Then a dull, luminous crimson glow began to light up the background behind her in scattered and fantastic patches . . . The sunset through the forest at Haidee's back was a conflagration. It was no more sunset, but the threat of a cataclysm—something had happened . . . A frightful night was to come . . . He understood that he was seeing Eve, immediately after the expulsion . . .

'Their eyes met. He read that Paradise was not all, and not the best . . .

'Anthony was overcome suddenly by a convulsion of low, dry sobbing, and the vision disappeared. He crouched down in his chair, burying his face . . .'

Eventually Anthony goes to the telephone. Haidee tells him

her address but does not wish him to come until the morning. She explains: ' "I'm *thirty hours ahead* of you, Anthony—that is what the matter is." '

But Anthony will not listen. He sets out.

Haidee has gone through all that Anthony has endured, 'He seemed with her . . . As an impalpable presence . . . a shadowy companion, whom by the sheer force of her yearning she had conjured up out of the astral part of his being.' While travelling to London she actually sees a phantasm of him 'in the act of passing her by without hat or overcoat', and he looks at her as at a stranger. She calls out, but he has vanished. She feels they will never meet again. She is in agony. ' "Please, God, give him to me!" . . . But no, no—no, no, she was going from him for ever and ever.' She sees the phantom again. In her friend's room in London she notices Anthony's plant, in its pot. 'And then she remarked that it bore two fruits, when it ought to have have borne one . . . and a second later, while she was actually looking at those two little purple fruits, one passed out of existence, and there was only one on the tree. After which, the tree itself disappeared.' She takes this to be a sign, and rushes to write to Anthony, to tell him to eat the second fruit.

During the night she has a dream, 'She thought that she was in a mighty forest of all unknown trees, grotesque and beautiful . . . She was looking for Anthony . . . and she kept rushing from tree to tree to peep round the other side, in a kind of awful game of "hide and seek", for her heart was nearly broken. She incessantly called out his name, and a bird on a tree-top always chattered back to her in mockery . . . The search went on for hours, till her feet were cut and bruised, and her clothing was all in tatters . . .

'Then she stopped exhausted . . . she knew that she could never find him. And quietly a voice just behind her said:

' "Haidee!"

'She turned quickly, and it was Anthony, but oh, how changed! His face and body were indistinct, but his whole existence was in his eyes, so black and bright and wonderful they were, speaking to her in music . . . This spiritual kissing of their eyes was not impure and personal, it was an act of eternal beauty and wisdom.

'Then it came to pass that nothing else existed, or could exist, save they two alone. And time after time, it seemed that their

double spirits were just upon the very point of merging, which she knew would be the final bliss towards which all things moved. Yet that infinite contact held off, and off, and never came . . .'

When she wakes in the morning the high madness has gone. She is worse off than before. 'The subsiding of that weird condition had not merely brought her back to the original dreary level, she seemed to have dropped something in the process. Anthony, for example, no longer appeared to her such a wonderful man . . . her nature seemed completely to have shed its idealism. It was as if they had cut a tendon of her soul and she could not mount any more, but only flutter along the gound . . . Her life had lost its inspiration . . .'

This is the second death. The resurrection awarded by the fruit has been in vain. 'Her dead spiritual response to Anthony's higher nature now appeared to her to resemble *colour blindness*.' She has descended with a bump from the sublime to the common, and the sublime seems to have been cut out of her life.

She finds that simultaneously with her idealism, her taste in beauty has also gone. 'So all that elaborate symphony of beauty, evolved so laboriously and lovingly by a long, thin chain of dimly-apprehending men and women for the noble heritage of all mankind, was stolen from her by an insidious drug in a day and a night!'

When Anthony arrives 'she found herself troubled by a vague complex feeling of pity, deep interest, womanly curiosity and envy as well . . . She wished that she could shake off her paralysing coldness and insensibility, and re-enter those high delights . . .'

' "We two are alone in the world, Haidee."

' "It may be so. But do you know how you appear to me, as we stand facing each other? You are like a very queer and significant book written in characters I could read yesterday, but now can't . . .

' "It is a pity we didn't eat our fruit together, Anthony. Yesterday I saw and felt you everywhere, and then such a meeting as this would have been heaven itself. You were Adam to me too, I think, in a dream. But now it's all no more than an outline. I recollect what I felt, but not the feelings themselves." '

While Anthony is there Jim comes in, sees them together and leaves. Haidee bursts into tears.

She tells Anthony that Jim was there.

' "It doesn't matter." And he smiled, not fatuously or horribly like a demented man, but with a dark archangelic beauty which, with the vigorous power of the deep blazing of his eyes, for an instant transfigured him, so that she was crushed by the meanness of her own words. He resembled the Anthony of her last night's dream. She felt that he was recalling her to that lost state by the unaided force of his faith and marvellous love.'

Then the bubble bursts and she runs away, locking herself in her own room. 'There, sitting in the darkness, with a heaving bosom and a hundred phantasms dancing through her head, she presently heard Anthony go out into the passage and commence the descent of the stairs with a slow, uncertain tread.'

Three days later Anthony returns to Kent. He knows he does not love Grace, but intends to marry her, if she will consent. He learns from Mrs Lytham that Grace is in Bournemouth with Jim, who is leaving for South America. Mrs Lytham returns his ring. Anthony finds he cannot profane the memory of his 'supernatural' hours by giving the apple as his excuse. He leaves.

'As he proceeded down the lane towards Croom, this swift shattering of his week-old romance reminded him curiously of the destruction of the green glass serpent, and of his futile endeavour to recover its splinters. He had picked them up to find them worthless; only that little seed had survived . . . So, perhaps, from every calamity a seed might survive, to spring up into new wonders and glories.'

He visits his sisters, and one of them, Marian, is sympathetic. As he goes she tells him ' "Remember what day it is, Anthony, and try to believe in the promise of the Resurrection. It isn't only the dead who can live again, but we living ones too, if we wish it. I am going to regard it as a happy sign that all this happened on Easter Day." '

This, the quietest and most sweet-natured of Lindsay's books, is the only one in which he uses Christian symbols or indeed deals sympathetically with Christianity at all.

Anthony goes for a walk, to free his mind of the burden of events. 'His sensation of bodily lightness, which was due to long abstinence, the strong whipping of the air . . . everything com-

bined to free his mind from the heavy sluggishness which had depressed it . . . the sudden mysterious failure of his artistic ideals and mysterious flashes of insight had diminished something of his intellectual pride, and he found himself taking a sort of pleasure in regarding himself as one of the common crowd.'

In a sense here is an example, described in experience, of 'attaining to the sublime', with a resultant willingness to 'perform the common task'. This theme is developed, simply and profoundly, in what follows. At the moment, Anthony is persuading himself that he is well rid of the drugged delusions induced by the fruit.

'As he made for the second stile . . . a new amazement seized him that he had deliberately elected during all these precious, irrecoverable years to turn his back on the beautiful, open, blowing world of God . . .' He derides Art in his thoughts, as 'one long succession of pitiful and absurd efforts to produce children through the brain.'

'He reached the pond, and then, over its discoloured, ruffled surface, saw two things, which sharply pulled him up.

'One was the Cross of his picture in his chambers. The other was Haidee, standing with her back towards him . . . it occurred to him that all these deferred happenings were falling together—this mystic Cross, the giving-up of his professional work, his adoption of a simpler and better faith . . . and also, and above all the rest, this vision of Haidee in an out-of-the-way spot, where he had least expected her.'

As he looks at the Cross, and the waving branches 'It seemed to him that this sweet-smelling spring hurricane was trying to blow everything deathly and sepulchral out of his perception of the token of man's salvation erecting itself yonder before him.' It was a living sign, a force, a surety, a prediction.

He goes round the pool to Haidee. 'They met like friends who are thoroughly accustomed to each other's ways and between whom all formality is unnecessary.' They talk easily. Anthony tells Haidee he is giving up his career.

' "I fancied you would have to. You can't write any more, can you?"

' "Well, it's rather complicated, Haidee. I think I could go on writing plays of a sort, but the higher motive has disappeared.

I don't understand it myself yet. It was that higher motive which constituted the cement, and now I can't co-ordinate properly . . . in fact, I've lost the desire to attempt it. This good old solid earth under my feet seems to me now the one thing that matters. I'm going to buy some land, probably in Cornwall, and work on it . . . How is it with you?"

'Haidee smiled faintly. "I have lost some cement too, I believe. It frightened me at first, but now I'm much more reconciled . . ." ' She tells Anthony that she has mislaid her artistic sense.

Anthony tells her he will write no more. He says: ' "The spoken word has a life, because it is warm and spontaneous from the character of a person, and *is* that person; but . . . the written word has nobody, it represents nothing . . . If a man wants progeny, let him take a wife!" '

He adds ' "Haidee, you and I both realise that we have a far more important matter to recover than the writing of books or the understanding of art . . . When I lost you again, I lost my soul."

'There were tears in her eyes, as she seized his hand with both of hers . . . "You are going right away . . . and you are leaving me here all alone to my horrible thoughts, among people who know nothing about it. What is to become of me?" '

He asks her if she still loves him.

' "Yes, I love you." ' She tells him: ' "Anthony, we will go on, and on, and on, step by step and stage by stage, till we have won it all back—and then it will be ours, not a free gift this time, but *ours* . . ." ' And in saying this she is summing up the mythological history of the human race.

' "We cannot have it both ways, Haidee. I can't have your love both as a woman and as an angel of God. But indeed . . . we can continue *towards* the other, in full knowledge that we shall never attain the full perfection in the body . . . So, in God's name, let us get married, and go away together. I could not marry any other woman." '

As they leave, they look back at the Cross.

' "What are you thinking, Anthony?"

' "I was thinking, how singular it is that the spiritual course of our world should run between two trees. The tree of knowledge marked the fall of man, the tree of the cross his rescue. We also

know that the wood of those trees was identical . . . Pride. For the fruit was eaten in pride . . . And it is on our pride that we must be crucified . . .'' '

Haidee kisses him.

'They stayed thus for a few moments, then slowly made their way across the meadow to the wood.'

The book can be interpreted in several ways. In one it is an allegory of love and marriage—the original bewildering attraction, and sense of joint destiny and kinship; the blind, idealistic passion; the lapse into prosaic domesticity; the slow return to deepest fullness.

In another sense it is a parable of death and resurrection: the death of self-pride, swallowed in the experience of sublimity and communion, and resurrection in simplicity and truth. In a sense closely akin to this it is an image and parable of the life-criterion of 'attaining to the sublime and performing the common task'. Before the apple, illusion and ignorance; the apple, and experience of sublimity; after the apple, an acceptance of the common task, and eventually a dedication to work which will recreate through the common task an experience of the sublime. All this is achieved with a very remarkable simplicity and economy of means. The book has a kind of beauty that does not depend upon the words themselves but upon its very essence.

Its theme transcends that of *Devil's Tor* which, with a sublimity so laboured as to be falsified from pure perception, charts the fated achievement of a marriage whose sole aim is the production of a superhuman saviour. In *The Violet Apple* the sublime relationship is its own justification. This book draws down the sublime into a reality which all can recognise and by its very simplicity grows conviction like a tree.

The incomplete *Witch* is a very different affair. We are in the realm of sublimity throughout. The section of the book that survives begins at Chapter Ten and ends with Chapter Eighteen. From the way in which this section runs I believe that there were two or three further chapters to follow, and at least twelve are therefore missing. This makes it difficult to give an adequate picture of the scope of the book, and renders the actual course of the spiritual adventure it describes impossible to record in detail.

For example, several characters obviously important in building

up the total effect do not appear in the eight chapters that we possess.

The part that we have begins with two brothers, Waldo and Ragnar, in conversation. Ragnar feels that Waldo has come to him as a messenger, conscious or unconscious, from a woman called Urda, the goddess-figure of the book.

However, the conversation itself, which deals with Waldo's interest in the 'archaic', is closer to *The Violet Apple* than to *Devil's Tor*. Ragnar and Waldo, despite their far-away names, their stilted language and their private preoccupations, are distinguishable characters actually conversing with one another instead of giving speeches or indulging in internal discursiveness. Their dialogue has an inner logic which although obscure to the reader persists in various forms throughout the book—the dialogue between love and loneliness.

Waldo says: ' "Nights ago, I woke from sleep, and was impelled to get out of bed and go to the window. A bright moon hung in the sky. My own being seemed to me a harp, self-sounding in an unreal breeze. The abnormal sensitiveness of every part of me was like a dark luminosity—a very clear, dark scene of nature under lowering heavy rain-clouds. I had finished with the earth, and my calm clairvoyant exaltation realised the whole secret bale, ghastliness and savagery of the life of earth; its never-ceasing griefs and tortures. It was the lovely picture of a slumbering hell, which for once I could be outside. Then if I could have signed a parchment with my blood, I was in the frame to have renounced the sun, creator of the day and the world of day . . ." '

There is much in the conversation that takes us back to the early *Notes*, and this passage particularly is a recurring vision and a recurring mood of Lindsay's to which expression is given there several times.

With the mention by one brother of the name Faustine we come close to the core of the book. Faustine and Urda are the central figures who hold the significance of *The Witch*, and Urda is the witch herself.

Ragnar says: ' "In a dream, Faustine has seen me moving to a fearful heaven; but it was musical." ' And indeed, what other form than the musical could Lindsay's heaven take?

The action of *The Witch* is never intended to take place on a

level of 'outer realism' like that of *Sphinx* or *The Haunted Woman*, and as the book develops it grows plain that any effort at 'outer realism' would be futile. *The Witch* is concerned more and more intensely as it goes on with spiritual states. The action, such as it is, reflects these spiritual states, and stands for nothing apart from them. The book depends for its power on the profundity and truth of the spiritual states described.

Waldo describes a visit to Urda's house.

' "Only persons of a nature to be ennobled by music are invited to pass the door. But sometimes there are extraordinary guests from abroad . . . Music indeed will be heard there intermittently at all hours—at three, four, five, in the morning. Then there may be a silence of days . . ." ' Waldo sees the house ' "not as a house in the world. It had stolen from the world to this waste, unwanted by others, it could retreat no farther for the wall of downs; here it had entrenched itself with magic, silence, and antipathy . . ." '

As Waldo approaches the door it is opened by a woman, who tells him that he is not expected but that Ragnar *is* expected on the following day. Waldo is turned away.

He tries to see into the house through a window ' "but the bright reflection in the window-glass of the sun-dappled trees behind me . . . prevented my distinguishing anything whatever inside. The image of the trees was as vivid as reality, only the softening of the glass made it far more beautiful . . . Its beauty was as soft as if vision, too, might have another sex . . .

' "Now all at once, in that mirror of the window, I became aware of a man's dark standing shape against the hollow trunk of a dead tree . . . He was of course across the lane, with the trees . . .

' "His elbow rested lightly on a remaining low dead branch of the tree, the feet were crossed, the face . . . I couldn't distinguish . . . His shape was abnormally thin and exaggeratedly tall. He was in dark, tight clothes . . .

' "Wasn't this mirrored idler in a wood, resting against a death-touched tree, as inauspicious there as a shadow of death itself? . . . He seemed to wait . . . for someone—someone expected . . . *you*, Ragnar! Sharply I turned round at last . . . He wasn't there . . .

' "Twice, thrice and more times I compared the tree and

imaged woodlands to resolve the paradox. So slowly the truth dawned on me . . . For this presumed reflected vision of trees behind me . . . was actually the direct view of different trees seen through the house . . . Nothing of the inside of the house was visible, because its gloom was quite overpowered by the brightness beyond . . .

' ". . . It was a phantom—what I had been regarding—for already its humanity was gone. With no difficulty, my eyes always found the dead tree again, but not any longer was there a man beside it; yet where he had been remained. A black gap, a fissure of darkness, occupied exactly his remembered outline. A cleft in what? I don't know . . .

' "I was . . . quickly to discover that the gap wasn't opened before me in innocence. Intolerable sightless waves from it were making nothing of the house between, in ever faster reducing my spirit to the colour of death . . . So death swept me, from that man-shaped crack of blackness past Urda's dwelling, which it guarded until step by step, backwards, I must have retreated to the lane." '

This man-shaped blackness has something to do with a being called Bluewright, whom we never directly meet.

The following morning Ragnar drives with Faustine to the Sussex coast, where this mysterious house lies below the edge of the Downs. Both feel that the day is peculiar, portentous, the light extraordinary . . .

For Ragnar . . . 'the sky seemed neither arch nor atmosphere, it was the slow weight on him of a descending . . . ideal *sky*, of which what he saw was no more than the first face. The heavy general landscape . . . rolled in on him portentously, like a monster inexhaustibly multiplying itself.'

All this seems to menace him like a nightmare from which there is no refuge—and the centre and source of the menace is Urda's house, to which they are travelling so rapidly. Ragnar begins to see this 'stepping forth in singleness' of the world's appearance in terms of music. 'In music, the spirit of man, moving forward on the deepest feelings as on a quaking floor, was no longer to hear the speech to the eyes of the relations of things, but was to see beneath them to the blackness of the invisible, which was the same as silence. The other natural silence for the ear . . . that only music could end—it was the deathly stillness of a

prison-house; the prison sounds interrupted it, but it was a waiting for the sounds of heaven.'

The obscurity here is not due to the language used but to the thought itself, with its relationship of earthly music to sound and heavenly music to a silence of which the sights of the world are a token. The perceptions of Ragnar's psychological state are difficult but precise. This is not inner discursiveness but an exact relation of what Ragnar is experiencing, and are therefore on a different level to much of *Devil's Tor*. Ragnar has the extraordinary idea that Faustine is 'faintly participating in all these matters—she was joined to him for a moon; why should he need a moon?' Images likes this are typical of Linday when 'in form', and have the effect of breaking open the reader's mind to make it receptive to whatever wonders and surprises may follow. Lindsay always insisted upon the necessity for surprises in literature, and writes in the *Notes:* 'In art, in life, in love, *surprises* should be taken as a token of vitality. As men of genius have more vitality than others, so they are more fruitful in surprises. In this sense, plants which *sport* may be considered geniuses of the vegetable world.' 'What the forks are to a flash of lightning, the surprises are to a man of genius.'

'If heaven itself were the full dream, this was not yet dreaming. Before dreams, however, came sleep, the corridor between the waking and dreaming worlds. . . .'

This is the sleep before death. Lindsay is about to describe the soul's experiences after death, and the whole book from this point on is a symbolic description of these experiences, like the Tibetan *Bardo Thodol*. No author could conceivably attempt anything more ambitious. Ragnar, though, is not dead—he is privileged to share these experiences while yet living.

The flow of psychological perceptions continues unabated. 'He was not two, but many men—many wills. Besides this driver of a machine, and that one who slept and was confounded, was a third who desired a return to the old, comfortable things; another who breathed in the sheer adventure like a mountaineer; another to whom the horror of such an encounter with the likeness of heaven was everything.'

Lindsay goes on: 'Those various wills inside him . . . how was it they could exist amicably together, quietly fused into a

colourless whole of consciousness? But the fusion was untrue, for it was within the capacity of any one of his wills to step forward alone suddenly, and crush the rest, for the minute of its dominion . . .

'High-soaring, poised motionless like a hawk in the upper air, must be enduring in quietness his ultimate intelligence, that could review his diverse wills; yet not to use, only to know them. It should be his antique, imperishable spark, already existent before the existence of these dim, partial, half-blind wills, not itself a will, and determining no action of his. His action at any time was determined by some other thing, choosing out of his different wills. Thus in him, as well, was a will of wills, invisible to him just because it was *himself*. It was inferior to the imperishable spark, his soul, also. The soul, taking no part in life, but merely observing should be no more than the unwavering magnetic needle to his fallible lower will of wills.

'But then man's life must be useless to the soul. It must be the perpetual exercise of choice by ignorance between one illusory advantage and another. The soul must part from the world as it had joined it, a timeless, changeless essence . . .

'So the soul must possess life and will, though not for earth. The ancient breeze from its home, which was eternity, must agitate it too . . . And if in this hour he were entering music and dream, that were as the beginning shadow of eternity . . .

'The natural worlds for eye and ear were the true ghostly, for all in both was flat and spectral . . . In the eye's world was that inevitable ground of association, from which no individual could be more than very slightly lifted, and in the ear's world was that inevitable ground of silence which no natural sounds could end—the sounds were *in* the silence. But if a sight or sound could become so significant that its ground disappeared, then from the ghostly world would have emerged reality. Man's tests of reality, as solidity, cause, universality of belief . . . were still as dependent on faith as the foundations of any religion . . .

'Reality was what the mind perceived so vividly that, with the perception, the worlds fell away, leaving only a thing of passion. Nowhere in the natural world was such a passion to be found, but in the human mind alone . . . The passion which could sometimes stand out from it . . . had nothing in common with the human

emotions and passions of living men and women. It was one world appearing through another . . .'

There is evidence in this dignified passage of Lindsay's old distrust of the visible world. The very ground of a sight or a sound must disappear before it can become real. But how can a sight disappear and remain a sight? Passion itself must have *nothing* in common with the passions of living men and women. Why nothing? Ragnar has already reflected upon the existence of the original Muspel spark, the Master of all those rebellious servant wills, which alone gives coherence and significance to the multiplicity of little warring selves. It is through this Muspel spark that any penetration from the other world must come, and it is because of the existence within the material world of this spark that the phenomena of the material world can give clues to a possible reality beyond them. In this way human passion can give an inkling of the nature of the passion of which Lindsay is speaking.

The car comes closer to the sweep of the Downs. 'They dwarfed the earth, those grey-green ancient heights, which, as often as he glanced upwards, seemed to grow in clearness, and to move on him.'

Faustine and Ragnar leave the car and walk towards Urda's house. 'The narrow roadway was muddy from recent rain . . . It must have been past noon. The day remained grey and cool, without sun or drizzle. The same unnatural bright clearness was doubtless continuing to change everything, but his instant expectation of the view of the house took precedence even of that marvel . . .'

Faustine walks ahead, and there is a vivid and exact description of her. 'He wondered at her form's sensitive grace. It was not the half-insolent ease of a woman used to dancing, but was more like a natural speech. Each movement of her body seemed in its perfect fitness for the purpose to express her spirit as well, no movement repeated any before it, none could be conscious.'

When they reach the house Faustine refuses to go to the door with him, and says she will wait.

Looking at the house, Ragnar says: ' "It is the most real, most isolated thing I have ever known . . . it can't be in solidness, definition, anything physical, but I must be feeling *twice sure* of

its existence. Other things, say, I seem to be, this house says, I am . . .'' '

The door is opened by a woman called Mrs Toller, who invites him in, although Urda is not there. As they walk through the house, it grows obvious that this house is more than a house, it is a world. They descend stairs which are not stairs, but rough, bare ground. The air is outdoor air. 'He heard the noise of trees softly bending under the wind.' He feels himself to be on a track leading downhill.

Why then the darkness? It is not night. 'A million rooted natures were faintly straining towards him from their individual prisons—and the freshness on his cheeks was their breath. The tree-sighing was their speech, the sweetness of the air was their purity—the authenticity of their authority. Sombre and awful now was that slow coming and dying call to him.'

All that went before the entry into the house is but a presage of death, the falling through dream into death. This walk through the house is a walk through darkness that precedes a new light, when the earth is gone but the soul does not know how to behave without its accustomed physical ground.

Ragnar calls to Mrs Toller but only echo answers. '. . . the startling hollow return of his own voice—its unexpected mockery shocked him curiously . . . His altered personal tones had sounded half prophecy, half despair . . . A moment afterwards a woman's faint cry seemed to answer . . . The remote voice . . . was surely sharper, higher than Mrs Toller's. It was even more like Faustine's . . .'

The voice calls his name. He feels sure it is Faustine, and that somehow they have been together all the time in this strange wild darkness.

'His feet sped on, and sometimes he stumbled over the broken ground, but never fell headlong, while the shocks of stumbling seemed only to wake him to still heightened excitement . . . A *fear* had separated them . . . This was his secret place, that only Faustine shared . . .' Ragnar dare not call, afraid that Urda will hear, and intercept them.

He feels that Faustine now is more than a woman, 'she was an essence—the spirit of this enshrouded place . . . He might almost be embedded in her, as a tree in the earth; she was his earth, out

of which he could grow aloft towards these scenes now dark. If she were snatched from him altogether, he must somehow lose his life of the scenes, and return to the world . . . so she was both: the spirit of these cloaked scenes, enabling them to be communicated to him; but likewise his companion . . . his *wife*—mystic, not carnal . . .

'. . . Far down under him on the right, away from Faustine's last cry, he heard falling water, like the dim trotting of horses—quick, hollow, crystal, wild, confused, yet staccato; so deep below him that then he understood his falling path to have been skirting, perhaps all the time, the very edge of a ravine.' He has a sense of impending chaos, the multiplying of a night of tempest and feels a foolhardy joy, alien to his nature.

The hastening water seems to be his own voice in another mood, 'a premonition; another facet of his storm of planes, each meeting the rich emptiness of mystery.'

'Low thunder was growling intermittently. The wind was no stronger against him, but sang like the wind in the tall shrouds of a ship; he must be nearer to the trees. He scorned their song that was between imprecation and anguish. He was rejoining Faustine in spite of the world . . .'

It is explained that the music is not actual, but Ragnar's feelings provide the character of music. 'Thus even the brains of the divine ones of music must invent, contrive, piece together, eliminate, change and change again, polish, perfect. What by inspiration was presented to the brain, however . . . *that* was the soul's right music . . . it surely was that his soul . . . was risen in inspiration . . .

'This mystic place was around him by the passion of his exposed soul. The rising of his soul in the passion that was instead of inspiration—it was on Faustine's account.'

The language is such that at no time is it easy to follow Lindsay's meaning, yet the meaning is not in real doubt.

Ragnar finds that there is a falsity in the place. 'Passion caused it to be, an excess, an audacity, of the passion, shook its continuance; from the very inconsistency of its nature, it could not stand . . .'

We come now to an astonishing shift of emphasis, when the purgatorial nature of Ragnar's condition becomes plain.

'How should an audacity of passion be a sin, in a place where there were no persons to injure, laws to transgress?' He decides that some sins are marked out from others, as being motiveless and not directed against other people. 'Their perpetration went with a frightful dark joy of audacity and triumph. A work was destroyed, and the destroyer metaphysically felt himself mightier than the creator of the work. It was a snapping of supernatural chains. God was not denied; He was given look for look, and flaunted . . .'

The soul contains within it 'in association with its elements of deity another nature of diabolism, insanity, passions, the pride of destruction of the works of God. When deliberately sealed within the soul, perhaps this wicked nature must bring the soul's corruption. . . .'

This darkness, this wild place, is the soul's purgatory in which it explores its nature, its possibilities and its depths, before it can go on into unimaginable new birth.

The crime that drove him and Faustine apart in this darkness was pride, a will of mastery—and at once comes the sense of 'dark, heavy, irremediable evil . . . which, no doubt, was the heaviness and living tragedy of life itself; the evil of the individual soul, that had no private existence save dissevered from the body of God . . .'

Here Lindsay trembles on the edge of complete orthodoxy, but cannot rest there. He leaps on into another music.

'But with persisting audacity, fear and night both might be made to give way before the triumph.

'That in joyful audacity he should be as a god, was good. If in its joy it were good, the evil of his soul outside the joy could claim him only in so far as he should be low in fear. The fear was with him. It was of the vaster, grimmer universe, against which his triumphing soul must be measured, to be found a writhing nothing. But could his pride be fast fixed in immortality, that other universe might all dissolve, torturing him no more . . .

'So in his present spirit were fear, audacity, joy, horror, music, glamour, all interwoven, half-interfused . . .' And this indeed is the soul in purgatorial darkness, seeking beyond this world's feelings for the light.

' "Ragnar! . . ."

'Faustine's voice called him for the third time, from quite close

at hand. It was almost soft . . . He stared quickly forward through the changed darkness, and now could just make out her shadowy form not many paces away, appearing to face him from lower down the hill.'

At this point it is certain that in *The Witch* elements of all the other books meet, raised to a unity—Sullenbode's sacrifice in *Arcturus*, the dark garden of *The Haunted Woman*, when Isbel continually finds and loses Judge, the dream of Lore's death in *Sphinx*, the recognition of Anthony and Haidee in *The Violet Apple*, the violent storms and the strange, lengthy inner discursiveness of *Devil's Tor*. But in spiritual atmosphere *The Witch* is closer to *The Violet Apple* than it is to *Devil's Tor*, and concentrates wholly on the eternal preoccupations of the essential Lindsay. There is nothing extraneous here.

Ragnar and Faustine speak together, but it is their minds that speak, and the words are simply 'an accompanying shower of sound'. We have no need to ask for naturalistic language. This is neither the time nor the place for it, as we are in neither time nor place. We certainly do not get it.

' "I am the world," Faustine said, in a marvellous simplicity. "I am as old as the world, and no older. Where is the world?—what is it? That is the world which can be called a home . . . We are upon an island encompassed by mystic seas . . . I will a world that can be to me a home. Death should prevent it."

' "Death then must be prevented."

' "I will have my home," says Faustine. ' "My home shall be of love; my love shall live, and not die. When my love shall sometimes weary, or sleep, I will look steadfastly again on my beast; then love again shall seem my only weapon." '

This seems a more satisfactory answer to the defeat of Sullenbode in *Arcturus* than the monumental Mother Goddess of *Devil's Tor*. It has the ring of that simplicity which in *The Violet Apple* gave sublimity, but it is to the simplicity of a home that Faustine clings.

Ragnar's journey is a progression, and his state of soul alters with each stage of the journey and no summing up is possible until the journey is finished. Unfortunately, the end of the journey is lost to us.

They go together down the hill. A 'dark brightness' makes

dimly visible 'a wild country of many waters, with the cones and slanting battlements of wooded hills, and stark crag-faces, hollows, basins, the mouths of secret valleys, phantasmal islands . . . But neither in the colours of daylight nor in the tones of the dominion of night showed the opened vision, the light revealing it shone from his own spirit; the visibleness of this mystic scene was passion, its time was *storm*.' I imagine that this means that Ragnar's own spiritual passion is shedding the light by which his soul sees.

When Faustine stops and asks him ' "Is it not the self of me you love?" ' Ragnar feels 'Deep, quiet, unchanging was the current of love, heaped only by the loved one's peril or sorrow. The rapture of passion must fade like the colours of the dawn, the beloved's image become familiar and human, the dammed waters of desire escape to those quiet, equable permanent depths, before love could settle within the spirit of man, to fructify his life and make him noble.'

This is a statement of the experience described symbolically in *The Violent Apple*. But Lindsay goes further.

'He gave himself to her in such wise, that no joy or liberty would he accept that was refused to her. The effortless abandonment was pity; it was love.

'But now deeper still had sunk his love . . . A wilder ascendancy ruled him . . . In truth, she was as a second *I* to him—forgotten, and the cause of nothing, yet the invisible condition of all . . .'

Ragnar speaks to Faustine in a stylised formal language that we have to accept without uneasiness if we are to see his meaning. 'When we were severed from the great Unself, we partly died—that death . . . lives on as the self in us, but ghostly and fleeting . . . Another nature . . . not of the Unself, not of the self, but original . . . came at the selfsame moment into being in us; which we call, the soul.' He distinguishes *self* from *soul* by saying that soul desires the eternal, self the perishable, and he distinguishes soul from spirit, for spirit is the life of all living forms, while soul is merely individual. ' "The soul of you, then, I love, while *spirit* is but the life and sustenance of both of us." '

In the world, souls move as captives of the self. Here 'the living spring . . . shall so renew and vivify our souls from the Unself, we may not doubt that the evil self in us will presently awake

as dazed from the dead. Then the evil will vanish from it within its corruption of death. No more shall the soul fight it as an enemy, but live in it as a spirit in body, denying it nothing save only to fall back into death . . .' '

Faustine says: ' "Other souls there are than ours. Of what worth to us should be our love while that world is heavy with the sounds of pain—while . . . one single other soul remains in need of love? What nobleness has our love if it but consummates our two pleasures? . . . All grows very dark and fearful to me. How shall it not be with love as with spirit—that being separated, it dies, to become something else? Now we two are one in love; yet if this one were but another *self*—if our love were now already dead, henceforth to produce only the works of death . . ." '

Ragnar's reply is: ' "And now I think that so wonderful a fire is love, it may be greater than the worlds, greater than creatures . . . What then if all love were a living soul . . . whose shadowy instruments men and women were . . . ?" '

But Ragnar has lost suddenly his feelings of triumph and terror, and has no sense of struggling for light, for possession, but is simply conscious of his own soul, in pure tranquillity. 'Indeed, his consciousness of calm was engendered of these storms, but the calm was of his soul, indestructible. So tranquil was his soul's sense of power for its indestructible sublimity and absoluteness . . . truly, it was a flowering serenity of storm, a continuance of extraordinary delicacy, trembling and wavering within its bounds of peace.'

He seeks for Faustine, 'but another woman stood in her place, and she was gone. . . .

'She was woman or angel. Through the dusk fast becoming night he indistinctly discerned that her face was not young like Faustine's but far older, yet unwrinkled, living, quiet, appearing incomparably noble . . .'

There follows a passage that not only gives the gist of Lindsay's mysticism of music, but that also serves as a guide to the stages of the soul's journey from time to eternity.

' "There are three musics," she said, "The first music, which is passion, has been to liberate you from earth; as on the earth itself extreme heat must liberate substances from the binding of earth. But next, in order to gather again what now is

diffuse through that liberating passion, you must discover in yourself a principle of oneness, which yet cannot be the personality with which you have walked the earth, for just the dissolution of that personality is your liberation from earth. The oneness . . . is your immortal soul, and its rediscovery of itself in this my second music is attended by great calmness and the sense of great power . . . Yet, however superior may be this second music to the first, were the first suddenly to vanish, the earth must return, your parts fly together again in the old person, and your calm soul return once more to its living grave.

' "But your soul . . . shall now at once pass to the third music, that is not mine, but belongs to one still superior to me . . . in it the soul shall . . . at last gain the wisdom of its own loneliness. And still again, were my second music singly to vanish, those heavens and distances equally must disappear for the soul; again you must be deluded and dissolved amid the storms of passion of the first music . . ." '

I do not think it would be helpful to try to interpret these descriptions in psychological terms. We must accept Lindsay's vision as he presents it. There are three stages in the soul's journey after death: it discards self and discovers the meaning and fullness of love; it attains tranquillity beyond the storms of passion and emotion, resting in the second self, in the Muspel spark, or what in this book Lindsay calls 'the immortal soul'; it moves on into the third music, which we are now to experience. These 'musics' are not merely stages in a journey and states of a soul, they are whole experiences comprising the fullness of possible worlds. Music is not sound, but the experience which creates sound and the experience to which it gives rise, and the atmosphere that surrounds it.

Ragnar asks about Faustine, and is told that she is very wise, but not all-wise. ' "She fears music, and loves the earth. She will even restore you to earth, for your years there . . . not withstanding which, this your vision must continue as far as to the third music against her will . . ." '

He asks why he has been selected to experience these things while still living.

' "The hour, the work, the instrument are all one, and never has there been a human choice." '

Ragnar asks if Urda's music is the third music. ' "Do I seek Urda's music, and am I not hindered?"

' "You are . . . hindered by your mortality . . . Till death you cannot know them (the three musics) except in shadow. But after death they shall endure together, and in their different degrees, through many and many heavens. And in ceaseless progression the third music shall wax, the first wane, until at last . . . the third shall be alone; but mine is the link . . ."

'In silent rapidity it grew grey, to full daylight, and he was in a room. He knew the house again, though the room was strange . . . through its glass door he saw a great and shapeless wild garden, possessing tall trees, a wood behind it; but all in greyness . . .'

He recognises that the woman he has been speaking to is the one who has led him through the house. The three women of the house are the angels of the three musics, and the third is Urda.

The second woman tells him that Urda is on the Downs, at Morion House, and that the best way is by a path through the garden. As he goes through the garden, Ragnar meets Faustine, as if both were in the normal world again. They pass along a narrow inhospitable track through the woods. They feel threatened by the man known as Bluewright, whom Ragnar identifies with the 'shape of darkness' seen by Waldo the day before.

Ragnar anticipates pain . . . 'he might hardly experience the increase of heaven without suffering a corresponding augmentation of his natural pain. Heaven's light must throw intenser shadows for life, but these shadows, even in the dusky light of earth, were always *pain*. . . .'

The will loves pleasure; its weapon against pain is endurance. 'It was the will's quiet breathing during the violent access or fearful monotonous continuance of pain; its patient accompanying effort to reconvert pain to pleasure . . .' Lindsay goes on to list the pains on earth. 'In drawing near to heaven, as heaven's influence became more felt, the more should the earthly will exert itself in action to resist it; the heavier then must be the pain of the failure or relapse, but that was the blacker shadow from heaven. Thus heaven and the other unrelenting life of pressure were the same in their incitement of the earthly will to a relief of pleasure, bringing necessary pain, with sleep and death. Therefore . . . the life of constant pressure . . . was from heaven, though its

seen nature could not be the interior nature of heaven, but was only its appearance in the world . . . If the will possessed not its shadow of pain, there could be no heaven.'

His earthly will must die before he could enter heaven. On earth 'an instinct was a channel of pleasure which, if stopped or broken, must bring pain instead. . . . In heaven . . . the will of instincts being unable to subsist . . . a pain experienced by the will should not be relievable . . . The soul there must be *all* instinct. Everlastingly from its whole being it must reach out to its desires—of pleasure or of grandeur . . .' It would be impossible to resist or to endure the pain of heaven. 'If pain there were in heaven . . . unchallengeable and hell-like it should seem to be.' Hell then *is* the pain of heaven, caused by the soul being unable to leave will behind.

Ragnar and Faustine climb onto the Downs. Ragnar experiences 'a supernatural lucidity for all his senses'. 'The greyness, quietness, suspense, crystal continuance of freshness and coolness, the illumination from out of gloom, as it were the mysterious bright dusk of a sea-cave—all this frame of outward day was but to create the symbol of the opening marvels of Urda's heaven . . .'

He has the sense that things no longer 'congregate' or draw 'downwards in weight towards the middle of the earth', but move 'incessantly towards himself, each in its own inexhaustible nature . . .'

A sudden fog gathers. 'The air was clammily colder. Everywhere on the right of that lower wall of fog, as regular in its long line as though cut by art, the old grey luminousness prevailed . . . Nothing else showed above the wall but the vast shoulder of grass, the sky . . .'

This is a description of an actual phenomenon often experienced on the Downs.

Until this point in *The Witch*, the closeness with which Lindsay has concentrated upon the essentials and the progressive movement of Ragnar's psychological and spiritual state has allowed the reader to ignore the unsympathetic nature of the often involved and archaic writing itself—'it should merely be to reassemble in deepened forbiddance yonder in the north', and so on—but there now follows a long, clogging passage which instead of advancing meaningfully Ragnar's inner development consists mainly of verbal images followed wherever they may lead, with the kind

of inner discursiveness common in *Devil's Tor*. Eventually Lindsay himself is driven to write 'Dark and even incomprehensible was the analogy'—in this case, the comparison of Ragnar's 'changed heart' to a 'quaking lake of quicksilver'. This does not prevent him from going on 'Another figure came', and unfortunately, it is not a human or even a superhuman figure, but a figure of speech: 'these unsuggested deep perturbations of the heart were like some rude, swollen primeval sea, swinging senselessly, long ages before the first living eye of man or monster, whose restless floor should influence the pure blue roof of heaven above, where supernatural bolts were forged.' This sort of passage, of which there are a large number, makes *The Witch* a publisher's nightmare. The distinction between analogical discursiveness and a genuine penetration into spiritual states cannot be made without some knowledge of the states concerned, and some knowledge of the way in which Lindsay's mind works, nor can it be made without a patient and attentive acceptance of theme, language and intention. Publishers know very well that few readers are willing to give a difficult book this degree of attention, and they are therefore unwilling to lose money in granting them the opportunity. Publishers will produce pretentious rubbish in plenty if only it is smart and fashionable rubbish which provides the hope of a profit, but they dare not issue a book like *The Witch*, dealing as it does with the most profound and difficult possible theme in a thoroughly intense, awkward and unfashionable way, especially when there is no solid and definite story-stream to sweep the doubting reader along.

Ragnar now gains the impression that he is in some sense creating what he sees and feels about him. 'As the breaking flower, in bursting the prism of its sheath to gain the outer light, at the same time disclosed its mystic form and odour, so he himself, in throwing off his old existence to gain Urda, was to create another world, which should then be as his new body, whereby alone he might know Urda. Through his own creation, then, he was to meet her.'

'Soon afterwards he had the notion that a *house* was shaping from the world before him . . . There were no walls to it, but the emptiness over where the low weald had been was somehow determinately separating from the visible hills just as if an unseen masonry wall were between . . .

'Its shaping was his approaching it . . . He also felt a silent rhythm passing through him, but rhythm, he knew, was life; nature was ordered by rhythm; it entered, as well, into passion. Passion, wanting rhythm, fell to convulsive rages and derangements; but having rhythm, its strokes were to a plan, its intervals allowed the gathering of beauty . . .'

Throughout Lindsay's work this constant interaction of the viewing mind with the thing seen gives the impression that the world can be affected at will by the individual passion. It cannot, except in delusion, and the fact that it cannot is one of the causes of what Lindsay calls 'pain'—the intractibility of the world before the force of human passion. This theme underlines all that Lindsay wrote. On earth, in this world, a sense of the power of passion does not prevent feeling from being beaten back by the wall of things as they are. But after death, in 'heaven', the fact that passion creates everything through the form of a tremendous music, makes the walls of things as they are insubstantial and the shadow-house of earth and sky are shown to be in their essence passion itself.

Ragnar feels that Faustine's presence is his assurance that he is still alive. On top of the Downs, with everything on either side of the ridge invisible in the mist, it is as if they are passing over a viaduct into an unreal world. Ragnar believers that the supernatural house is *condensing* around him, and that this is to reveal heaven to him.

He feels that heaven cannot be for joy 'since pleasure in itself . . . was always a spending, and thus souls in heaven should grow eternally meaner and smaller through joy.' This is the oddest and most miserly of Lindsay's recurring ideas; if giving demeans a man, does taking ennoble him? Joy is not a thing to be despised but to be accepted; the nature of the universe is not joy, nor gloom, but both. Lindsay's insistence on equating seriousness with grimness is characteristic. I have the suspicion, however, that by taking joy in grimness itself, he allowed that forbidden quality in through the back door, and indeed the word 'joy' itself slips in later as a description of the most significant of all experiences, and this must surely be true for all mystics.

Ragnar reflects on the horror of death, and insists that tragicalness and pain are a necessary part of heaven. 'All life feared and

shrank from death; it was its immediate and necessary knowledge of the supernatural translation awaiting it . . . as if it were heaven's mighty hush, wherein new terrors should be wide, bare and sacred, new delights like pain—so music showed . . . but all foreshadowing higher spirit universes yet, perhaps to transcend the immaterial heaven as ruthlessly as it the crude universe of bodies. . . . Heaven itself is but a passage through to . . . something unthinkable.'

Ragnar perceives 'a shadowy tall form' beyond Faustine. This is Bluewright, who is always connected in Ragnar's mind with the threat of death. Faustine says to Bluewright: ' "You must go away. Today he has another occupation, and cannot spare himself to you. . . ."

'He could hear no second voice in reply, only Faustine's broke again, quietly indignant, as though for an insistence:

' "I shall not allow it. He is unwilling and unready, and on another business. You have had opportunities, you will have others. Please go . . ."

'When Ragnar glanced round for a second time, the shadow was no longer beyond her.'

He begins to see the slowly forming house as heaven. It is a house without scale 'suggesting neither earthly distance nor measure, save that another intuitive perspective told him it was still remote . . .

'It was of the type of dreams. Thereby he was not recalling the broken, inconsequent character of dreams, but what came through it, as reality through appearance. In truth, all dreams possessed that twofold nature: of glamour, vividness, deep wonder, on the one hand; of mad fancy, to very impossibility, on the other . . . no stronger clue to heaven prevailed among men, and only music contended with dream in exaltation . . . But while everyone in dreaming knew this essential nature of dreams, afterwards . . . it was forgotten. Scarcely was the dream itself to be remembered, and the mind, in trying to prevent its going, fastened naturally on its frame of incidents, and these alone were remembered. The extravagances, the impossibilities, were preserved of the fast-fading wonder; the music, glamour, darkness, emotion, disappeared.'

It is as if the word 'music' has gradually swallowed for Lindsay

all the mysteries with which he is dealing; when he utters it, that depth of feeling is what he wishes to signify. To the reader the significance must remain obscure. Often 'music' implies the whole emotional and spiritual frame of any event—and more, but inexpressibly more.

'Now . . . it was as if he were given to see in purity the other deeper, nobler dreaming nature. And . . . he seemed to know what dreams stood for: namely, for the spirit's backward-walking those few steps into the region of *death*, while having its gaze still fastened on the incongruous things of life.'

Throughout Lindsay's work dreams have been more than 'mere dreams', and his view of the soul's experiences after death is based upon the idea of a solid, transfigured dream which, by attaining to a supernatural unity, becomes a 'music'.

'While, in dreams, the weird emotional reality bore no true correspondence to the fantasies of the all but uncontrolled imagination . . . now the same deep, weird reality . . . was joined . . . to an image accordant with its nature.'

Lindsay now produces another statement of the nature of the soul and of heaven. The body dies on earth. In heaven the soul dies. The soul is but a second interior covering to the impersonal eternal spirit. 'The body died, and went its physical ways; the soul in heaven was to die, and go its immaterial ways. But as the substance of the soul should surely be more vitally interwoven than that of the body, so its disintegration must be correspondingly more shocking.

'. . . Yet as in the world the universal ineradicable secret fear of the body's death, in being ever present as a silent background to the thoughts of human creatures, exerted a final influence on all the activities of life, and formed life's awful frame, not otherwise the fear of the soul's death should be the character of heaven . . . But these death-fears of body and soul were doubtless the spirit's immediate knowledge of the spectrality of its place of passage, whether earth or heaven; with the perpetual instinct of always a ghostlier seriousness beyond.'

It may seem that this is merely an expression of Lindsay's determination to insist upon pain everywhere at all costs; but in fact it is futile to say 'the world is full of pain and suffering, so we will make a heaven free from both'. We did not make the world;

we cannot make heaven. The reality of the states of the soul known as heaven must be the reality of the universe as it exists. Lindsay is justified in showing us a heaven that contains the same spiritual constituents as earth, but on another level. Lindsay says 'The least examination showed pain to be an absolute . . . The actual life of the will sought pleasure, the outer life pressing on the will brought pain—it was not accidental, but necessary and eternal. As on earth, so in heaven.'

'Out of heaven must open a farther door with the death of the soul.' It is because, says Lindsay, we realise the lonely pilgrimage of the soul towards its own death after the death of the body that we feel pity for the dead.

'The heavenly music which seizes the soul is a music which lives without soul just as the soul lives without body.' '. . . this interior spirit of the toneless music' is the same 'with the pain of souls in heaven'.

'And so the universal instinct of the creatures of the material world to put pleasure as the nature and meaning of life, and to strive with pain as an intruder to be quickly dismissed, might truly be no other than the first unconscious desperate field fought with inadequate force against advancing *pain*, in an entire war to come; whose next pitched field, darker and more terrible, for the souls of creatures, should be already in progress in the heaven that now opened yonder gap before his eyes. But pleasure, having proved inadequate on earth, should in heaven turn to grandeur, whose gleams and echoes sometimes faintly descended to earth . . .'

'After the battle fought between grandeur and pain; the spirit of those souls . . . surviving their heavenly death, should still be to fight other ghostly fields: always with one enemy—*pain*, the permanence among vanishing things, the fearful mocker of the changing armaments of the spirit; drawing the spirit on and on. For the abhorred image of pain for the spirit in an ascending series of worlds should generate the successive repulsions which were like the steps to the final majesty of pain. So the end and destruction of pain might be but the annihilation of its name of hatefulness.'

In other words, as state of the spirit succeeds state of the spirit, it is not the nature of pain that changes, but the spirit itself that grows through heavens and 'musics' which gradually

transform it into something for which pain is unified with all else in a final, indissoluble music.

Ragnar and Faustine stand at the door of the house. 'He could not understand . . . if the door led into the house, or *were* the house . . . It also bewildered him that except this door or house there was nothing any longer—that all the other world was gone save . . . the unthought space . . . they . . . occupied. Of all the disappeared world, Faustine alone remained with him, and she was no more than shadow.'

Loneliness too is eternal.

'Love might bridge the emptiness, but love was broken by a single death, its surviving end must fall back on memory, and, infinitely augmented, the loneliness reappeared . . .' Neither work nor pleasure could overcome loneliness for long. Nor could 'contrasting the quiet depths of sustained loneliness with the vulgar social agitations and excitements of the crowd' succeed in banishing the pain of it. Lindsay had himself tried this attitude for long enough. 'That delicate solitary temper . . . was but another pleasure; the true loneliness was still under it, affording no pleasure, but only dread and despair. Being stripped of the quiet delights of contemplation, solitariness was revealed a fearful thing.' So the soul in heaven is still lonely. 'Indeed, the soul's consciousness in heaven of its solitude must be intensified by the liberation from a body.' Lindsay compares the recognition of the depth of loneliness with the recognition of the immense distance which separates the stars . . . 'the shocking conception of universe beyond universe, in a seemingly infinite streaming of stars and the stuff of stars; till distance itself . . . had become without meaning, and what the farther sight was to the touch of the fingers, another nameless faculty of perception must be to the sight, before so much as the nearest regions of space could be brought within man's intelligence. Like those stars of sky were the individuals of earth.' 'Thus men and women moved from search to search for contentment, and found no expedient against their secret loneliness.'

After the abandonment of the body in death 'Distances between soul and soul so immense must be disclosed, heaven appear so boundless . . . that exploration must be without hope. But as in the world pleasure essayed to shut the windows of the spirit against

this awful spectacle of the enlarging spaces, so in heaven it was grandeur that should do so.' Eventually the soul must die at last, 'in order to confront spaces still more fearful. Yet that unthinkable loneliness should grow to be the image of God.'

Here then we have passed in thought from Urda's third music, which is still the heaven of the Mother Goddess of *Devil's Tor*, to the threshold of the Ancient himself.

Ragnar enters Urda's house, where 'a silent music filled and transformed vision, while strange scents, coming incomprehensibly upon his feelings . . . tormented him like a dark message . . . How could he *be* this scene—yet it and he were somehow one. So much more actual was it than any scene for his natural eyes, he seemed for the first time since birth to know substance again, after . . . long dream-years of flat shadow for his eyes only.'

There is a gap in the narrative here, and we find Ragnar 'Quiet, unoppressed and easily breathing, he either stood or floated erectly in the stupendous, swaying depths of an endless sea, whose emptiness all around him was uninterrupted.' The waves are 'passions, immaterially flowing over and past him like mighty bursts of silent music.'

He is isolated in the terrible loneliness of heaven. How could such loneliness be vanquished? By love? The lover's existence apart from the beloved is insupportable yet 'lives must continue apart . . . never could love reach him to end his isolation in the frightful spaces.' 'Were there no loneliness, there could be no love. Older and more awful was loneliness.' This is the loneliness of the Ancient.

He sees Urda before him, less like a woman than 'an alien burning mist'. The waves passing through her 'supply her spirit', and this image vividly resembles the image of Muspel-fire passing through the body of Crystalman, as his food. Her face has a luminosity which is the sign of 'a passion so deep, silent, essential . . . that' he cannot judge whether 'she were in the passion, or were merely its outward apparition . . .' 'And her hair was a mystery of black and living flame . . . As she faced him, her eyes . . . were slanting from him . . .'

'A desolation in him took the road of sadness—like a night coming on, it could darken to terror.' For he sees that he can get no nearer to Urda. On earth bodies can join in love as a symbol of

an intertwining of natures. Spirits cannot. 'Therefore, all love except the bodily remained necessarily incomplete, while love desired nothing but completion.' The realisation of the other's aloneness causes incessant sacrifice one for another, 'like heavily disguised bewitched shapes from the dullest ground of life, meeting similar shapes from the other's spirit', and this is the 'earthly heaven of marriage'.

'Here, in the heaven of which this was the outer door, souls . . . might join in marriage, as bodies on earth. The interfusion must be finer, swifter and more terrible than that of earthly parts.' 'Like bodies in the world, the mortal souls of heaven should join imperfectly in love, but now all the pangs of earthly ideal love must be transferred to that within the souls, singularly multiplied in torment by the deeper wisdom of separation permitted in heaven.' Souls must die, so there must come 'the inner joining of spirits not to die . . .' and this in turn 'should bring with it the immeasurably more awful loneliness. And in the states beyond heaven, successively the next inwardness of spirits might find love and intermarriage, and each new pinnacle of joining must be more immediate and terrible in delight than that before; and each must bear with it two things: the even nobler other love, of fear and pity; but also the ghostlier loneliness preventing the true consummation of the love.'

Here the portion of *The Witch* that we have ends, except for some unnumbered pages, many of which repeat each other over and over again with only small variations, and most of which do not run in sequence. These pages consist of sections of what must be a speech of Urda's. An incredible, obsessive concentration is evident in the number of times the same page is typed almost exactly—in some cases twenty or thirty times.

The speech deals with the culmination of the whole process of death and rebirth—unity with 'ancientness', that Ancient of *Devil's Tor*, or Muspel of *Arcturus*. 'Ceaselessly even by the way of death shall living being move to ancientness. For the seeming dying of natures upon earth shall but in shadow image the true dying of living being' which is its translation into 'ancientness', a translation by which all lives are joined to life. 'The translation of the lives shall be their journey's ending. Thereby no longer shall they fall in mortal natures . . . nor shall they enter life, and

to it be joined, of which the sign . . . shall be their deliverance from multiplicity . . .' At this translation will come 'the dreadful ceasing of the breath of Voice', which breathes out the music of all forms. 'They three, life and ancientness and deathly being, together shall become living meaning in translation.' 'To this end, no other, shall be the dying of living being.'

We are back here with the green sparks striving through worlds and states and deaths and heavens to return to Muspel; and at the same time we have a record of the soul's journey through the realm of life, ruled by the Mother Goddess, through the loneliness of the Ancient to the Ancient itself, and to unity in translation with the Ancient. In this conception *A Voyage to Arcturus* and *Devil's Tor* attain unity of mind.

The conception, as nearly as I can express it, is: From the Ancient came the breath of Voice. The breath of Voice brought into being life, which is the Mother, and the Mother separates Ancientness from all the forms of living being. Despite this vast and bewildering separation which makes the world a mysterious shadow-house, the spirit that is within living beings derives from the Ancient and must strives always to return to that source so infinitely dark and far back through the physical and metaphysical universes.

An individual may resist the force of life and strive to retain its form, parted as it is from ancientness. If it does so, it will perish; or it may move forward through pain and love, through the three musics, the death of the body, the death of soul and the final translation of spirit. There is a theory known to Lindsay that inner spiritual work during a man's lifetime can form in him an 'astral body' or soul which persists after death. Lindsay makes it clear that this soul also dies, and the spirit alone passes on into the 'third music' of heaven. Spirit is the Muspel spark.

The loneliness of the Ancient, causes metaphysical pain. The spirit, twisting and turning in its ceaseless search for the way through the heavens, home, and in its striving to avoid that unavoidable pain, makes the world into a terrible clash of wills. The spirit suffers always the agony of its separation from the Ancient, for its loneliness is the loneliness of the Ancient. It seeks to overcome this loneliness trivially by pleasures and nobly through love. In love it longs for unity with other beings. Such

unity can never finally be attained except in the translation into unity with the Ancient when the breath of Voice ceases at last.

Lindsay's whole work is a struggle with the intractable and ends with a raid upon the impossible: no less than a psychological picture of the spirit's voyage after death through the heavens and home. That any writer in the twentieth century should have the courage to make such an assault on the eternal significance of existence seems to me both amazing and deeply moving. No one can in humility confront the journey of David Lindsay himself from the magnificent *A Voyage to Arcturus* to the incredible *The Witch* without the most profound and sober admiration.

After re-reading all his writings in order to write on these books, my main feeling is one of gratitude to Lindsay, and a sense that he did in fact fulfil his ambitions. It does not matter that he was little recognised during his lifetime, or that he is little recognised now, or that he had his share of unhappiness, or that his writing itself has serious deficiencies. His work provides an overall sense of release and power which is so rare that it can only be provided by a man of genius as the result of genuine visionary experience.

Lindsay left a note with two typescripts of *The Witch*, making it plain that the last chapter remained unfinished, and that although he considered the book unpublishable as it stood, 'it is, as to its material, one of the world's greatest books'. Mrs Lindsay made several efforts to find a publisher but failed, and so put the book aside; it was only when she gave me Lindsay's papers to study that we discovered the early chapters to be missing. The story of the search for the second typescript of *The Witch* is a long one and can't be told here, but I'm convinced that no second typescript now exists.

BOOKS BY DAVID LINDSAY

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