

# EVELYN WAUGH STUDIES

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## NEWS

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**“He must have been a whole time job for you:” Condolences to Mrs. Waugh**  
**J. V. Long**

When those we love are dead, our friends dread to mention them, though to us who are bereaved no subject would be so pleasant as their names. But we rarely understand how to treat our own sorrow or those of others. (Trollope 128)

**ThanaTech Update:**

Grieving online and sending condolences via e-mail have taken on a whole new meaning following the death of Princess Diana. To see a very interesting example of an opportunity to mourn via cyber space, visit the Online Memorial Service at [www.royalnetwork.com](http://www.royalnetwork.com) [the site is defunct]. In addition to music and a review of her life and funeral, there are links to prayers that are suited for a variety of spiritual beliefs. (Sofka 204)

In his fascinating study of the literature of correspondence, *Yours Ever: People and their Letters*, Thomas Mallon implicitly eulogizes the kind of compositions that have been all but obliterated by the efficiencies of email and texting:

The small hardships of letter writing – having to think a moment longer before completing utterance; remaining in suspense while awaiting reply; having one’s urgent letters cross in the mail – are the things that enrich it, emotionally and rhetorically. (63)

For biographers and scholars those “small hardships” have historically provided “literature’s supporting materials” (18). Access to a biographical subject’s letters is essential for information, for chronology, and for tone. In this essay, I propose that letters received – in this case the letters of condolence sent to Evelyn Waugh’s widow, Laura – are also a rich source in filling out a life under consideration.

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In the summer of 2010 the British Library had almost finished anchoring the correspondence in the Evelyn Waugh Papers in large, permanent settings. However, one set of letters in the collection remained loose: the messages of condolence sent to Laura Waugh in the period immediately following her husband’s death on Easter Sunday, 1966. Though they were alphabetized, numbered, and the correspondents identified in pencil at the top of the page, in viewing them I felt almost that they should have been tied with a ribbon as a mark of their singularity and intimacy. The fact that they were at-large, mixed-up, yet together, reflected the confusion that attends the death of anyone we love. Death’s aftermath is a mess, and I imagined these letters to have been received,

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appreciated and acknowledged, and then put away – perhaps a ribbon was engaged – for a later time when the feelings were less raw. (By August, 2011, they were no longer loose but, rather, carefully arranged in large albums, fixed to sheets that I am sure are designed to last the ages. They seemed like butterflies pinned for exhibition; the scholar in me was pleased; the romantic, less so.)

This particular cache of letters is significant for two reasons. First, they complement Paula Byrne's intuition, which she describes in the Preface to *Mad World: Evelyn Waugh and the Secrets of Brideshead*:

I set out to write this book because I believed that Evelyn Waugh had been persistently misrepresented as a snob and a curmudgeonly misanthropist. I did not recognize Waugh in the popular caricature of him. I wanted to get to the real Waugh, so I began asking questions such as 'When and where was he happiest (and unhappiest)?'; 'What were the relationships that mattered to him most?', and 'What was he looking for in life, and how did his quest shape his best novels?' (Byrne ix)

Waugh's irascibility was an inescapable component of his personality. But the letters his widow received point to relationships and connections and exchanges with him which were warm, memorable, often funny, and not infrequently generous.

And, secondly, these exchanges point to the inherently complex dynamic of the letter of condolence. Noel Coward addressed the issue in his own correspondence in March 1960:

I was very distressed about Edwina's [Mountbatten] death but, as you say, what an enviable way to go. The sadness, as always, is reserved for those who are left. In any case so many of my friends have upped and died during the last few years that I'm becoming sort of hardened to it. I start practically every letter now quite automatically with 'Words are useless but please accept my deepest, etc.' All I ask of my friends who are left is that they should live through dinner. (45-6)

In a situation where the pressure on words themselves is so fierce, where words are liable to "fail," how does a writer manage? A letter of condolence is a composition in which two vulnerabilities confront each other – the grief of the recipient and the anxiety, even fear, the writer encounters, at least implicitly, in the face of death.

The rhetoric of bereavement occupies many forms, from the public reminiscences and solace offered in a conventional eulogy as part of a funeral service to the deeply private, sometimes excruciating, memories of loss that writers as different as Joan Didion

and Roland Barthes have published in recent years.<sup>1</sup> The letter of condolence, in an effort to offer companionship with the grieving, employs ordinary language to approach the most private, inaccessible recesses of human experience. Barthes understands how words might be both revivifying and unwelcome at the same time and describes the complexity in his meditations on the death of his mother in *Mourning Diary*.

Always (painfully) surprised to be able – finally – to live with my suffering, which means that it is literally *endurable*. But – no doubt – this is because I can more or less (in other words, with the feeling of not managing to do so) utter it, put it into words. My culture, my taste for writing gives me this apotropaic or integrative power: I *integrate* (enter into a whole – federate – socialize, communize, gregoriate), by language.

My suffering is *inexpressible* but all the same *utterable*, speakable. The very fact that language affords me the word ‘intolerable’ immediately achieves a certain tolerance. (Barthes 175)

One of the characteristics shared by a great many of the letters Mrs. Waugh received is a tendency to self-revelation on the part of the letter writer. The act of composition involved in writing a letter of condolence is difficult – “I don’t know what to say . . .” – and there is a risk that the writer’s common sense gets distorted to the point where she simply might not know what she’s saying. Joan Didion’s generalization in *The Year of Magical Thinking* is exactly on point: “We are imperfect mortal beings, aware of that mortality even as we push it away, failed by our very complication, so wired that when we mourn our losses we also mourn, for better or worse, ourselves. As we were. As we are no longer. As we will one day not be at all” (198). I am suggesting that such exposure is a consequence of circumstances in which the writer might fear that “words are useless.”

Indeed, Waugh’s own diaries and letters provide evidence that he was not immune to the pitfalls inherent in facing the pressures concomitant with attempting consolation.

On January 2, 1954, the day after Duff Cooper’s death, Waugh wrote to the widow:

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<sup>1</sup> Father Philip Caraman preached the panegyric at Evelyn Waugh’s funeral. His sentences convey the right mixture and elevation of tones that remember accomplishment and virtue and aspiration but don’t ignore imperfection and certainly don’t harp on it. “The perfect craftsman must through your prayers be made the perfect man before he can join the company of Campion and Helena. Only the saints, as he wrote himself, have conformed completely in their lifetime to the will of God. He would expect everyone here, each in his own way and with integrity, to pray for his soul” (Rockett 333).

Dearest Diana

All my poor prayers are for you and Duff.

If there is any service anywhere that I can do, command it.

If my company would be at all comforting, call for me.

Believe in my true, deep love. Evelyn (Cooper 186)

As Artemis Cooper glosses it, in *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh and Diana Cooper*, “Kind as it is, this letter did not touch Diana’s heart as it was meant to” (187). It is difficult to fathom Diana Cooper’s objections. The note reads like a haiku, and the authenticity of Waugh’s feeling seems palpable. Perhaps what the episode displays is the impermeability of grief – or the intractable nature of personality. In her biography of Waugh, Selina Hastings notes, “Nancy [Mitford] lacked Diana’s famous loveliness; but she lacked, too, Diana’s impenetrable carapace of self-regard, the thin, petulant whine of self-pity that so irritated Evelyn.” (524)

Waugh’s diary entry three days later conveys some of the feelings the language of condolence camouflages. After noting, “White’s morning full of fun,” he comments curtly on the recently deceased: “The obituaries treat Cooper as a mixture of Fox, Metternich, Rochester, and the Iron Duke.” Only then does Waugh address the issue of Diana’s heart: “Ed Stanley told me that Diana was desperately seeing everyone she could. Sent her note by his hand. He told me later that she said she hadn’t the patience to open it as I had showered her with letters of condolence beginning ‘My dear Diana’ and signed ‘Yours sincerely, Evelyn Waugh’. However she did open this and was enchanted because I wrote ‘Darling Baby – Bo’, and immediately telephoned asking me to come and see her next day (funeral day)” (Davie 723). It is the talismanic effect of the old nicknames that re-establishes the connection between Waugh and Diana Cooper; it “integrates,” in Barthes’ sense. Notwithstanding, the initial note to Diana Cooper seems exemplary to me.

Waugh was less adept in dealing with Ann Fleming’s bereavement in 1964.

Dearest Ann

I did not write immediately when I heard the news of Ian’s death because I knew that it was something you daily dreaded & prepared yourself for & that you would be overwhelmed with condolences & the business of rearranging your life....

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The papers, such as I see, have been uniformly just & generous to Ian. One said I was his best friend. As you know that is not true but I liked him & fully realise the deep loss his will be to you.

For Caspar's [her son] sake don't marry again. Widowhood is a dignified estate & one specially blessed by the Church. It would be disastrous for Caspar, now, if you produced Ali Forbes or Quennell as a stepfather. You will suffer the particular loneliness which only widows know. But half the most admirable women I have known have been widows. . . . (Amory 623)

It is the parenthetical phrase in the second paragraph, "such as I see," that exposes Waugh. His focus is suddenly utterly self-referential and any effort to rein in his tendencies fails. What rises to the surface is the irony of his analysis and his prescription for her character. It is Waugh manipulating tones and delighting in what he knows how to do so effortlessly – "a dignified estate & one specially blessed by the Church" indeed. In the face of an impossible dilemma – trying to console the inconsolable – he succumbs to the familiar sounds of his own voice and subverts his own sympathy. Given the pressure of the form, personality can't help but extrude.

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There's considerable personality in Mrs. Waugh's condolence letters in the British Library. They are wide-ranging: from the perhaps still Bright but no longer Young People, from members of Waugh's family, including his brother Alec, from neighbors, former employees, from priests, and from writers, some of whom were close friends, others grateful strangers. Graham Greene's note – written in a hand that looks like strands of virus under a microscope – rightly suggests that Waugh's death will result in "a real community of grief for him."

The decorum of mourning was more insistent fifty years ago. A letter of condolence was another, familiar genre of correspondence. Today, letters are passé; a card of condolence might be the closest one ever comes to conventional letter writing. (The potential of email to convey remorse has been pointed to in *Death Studies'* ThanaTech Update; however efficient, it does indeed give a whole new meaning to "whole new meaning.") Nevertheless, the act of exchanging reflections on the death of a friend is impossible without considering, at least subconsciously, the inevitability one's own fate. It induces awkwardness and oddness, like Waugh's encomium on widowhood.

Penelope Betjeman's letter to Mrs. Waugh is a case in point. The wife of the poet, John Betjeman, and a convert to Catholicism, her letter begins – how can one avoid the characterization? – enthusiastically: "My dear Laura, What a lovely way for Evelyn to die! just after Easter Mass." But before it ends Betjeman includes a chronicle of her own thwarted plans in a tone of jaunty disappointment.

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I am so very sad because I had meant to propose myself to stay with you for a wk-end in Feb when I was invited to a wedding in Taunton, but I had a motor accident end of Jan, so was out of action for a month. I am also sad because of start on a lecture tour in the north tomorrow so cannot get to the requiem at Westminster on Thurs. but I will go & hear Mass in York & will be praying for you all very much.

Certainly Waugh's death was more upsetting than missing the February wedding, but the sentences *are* skewed.

Laura Duggan offers a calm assurance of prayers, "I have prayed for him every night since Alfred died. Now I feel that it is really not more needed than it is for Alfred, just an affectionate courtesy which is more necessary for me to make than for either Evelyn or Alfred."<sup>2</sup> However, she continues in a manner that suggests its own charm and eccentricity: "I was very distressed at not being able to go, as I had meant to, to the Requiem in Westminster, but I have not been well, with high blood pressure, (now getting better), and the journey from here would have had to have started at 7.a.m. Marcella Rice went and was much moved by it, and especially by Father Caraman's mention of Alfred in the panygirc [sic] (I cannot spell that word and the Shorter Oxford is a long way down a passage)." Of course it would have been unlikely for her to make it to Westminster if she were reluctant to walk down the hall.

The emotional requirements of composing a letter of condolence make odd, small, inadvertent bursts of autobiography (like Penelope Betjeman's and Laura Duggan's) all the more startling, and even fascinating, because of the context.

To give Lady Betjeman her due, she did acknowledge the significance of Easter Sunday. As did Diana Cooper, up to a point: "Searching for mites of comfort his death was I suppose what most he would have desired – Easter Sunday – shriven – annealed – in his own house directly after his own latin [sic] mess [sic]. at [sic] least that is what dear Aubron<sup>3</sup> [sic] told me & what I seized upon for consolation."

Father Martin D'Arcy, the sophisticated Jesuit who had instructed Waugh and received him into the Catholic Church in 1930, did not bring up Easter; he wrote from America in the week after Waugh died.

The shock of Evelyn's death, when I heard of it, was so great even for me that I fear for what it must have been to you. I wish I were at home to offer you in person all my sympathy – to you & to all your children. I have already been

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<sup>2</sup> Alfred Duggan, who had overcome a dissipated youth and early middle age to become an historical novelist, died in 1964. Waugh memorialized him on the BBC in July 1964.

<sup>3</sup> Auberon Waugh was Evelyn Waugh's eldest son.

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saying Masses for Evelyn & will remember him always at Mass. Had he been initially (?) unwell before or was his death completely unexpected?

ever yours,

Martin D'Arcy SJ

I need not tell you how much I loved him – for he was the most loyal of friends

No answer

Yes, oddly enough, D'Arcy gets it right: There is no answer. Nonetheless, the fact that he seems to take death almost as a personal affront – “the shock ... so great even for me” – together with the formal signature indicates a character more than comfortable with his own importance.

Religious belief offers both promise and consolation. There's no cloying piety in Helen Asquith's note from Mells on Easter Monday: “I hope there is a little comfort for you that it happened so hard on the Easter Mass and that he was spared the pains of growing old and being ill which he did hate so much. And I like to think of Ronnie [Msgr. Knox] being there to greet him.”<sup>4</sup> She conveys an easy, spiritual generosity that is more accessible than the sympathy provided by D'Arcy's formality.

In a similar vein, Daphne Acton fixes on the timeliness of Waugh's death. “I am afraid you will miss him terribly. He must have been a whole time job for you, which you carried out with all your heart.... He didn't like the way things were going, so he will be happy seeing them from another angle.”<sup>5</sup> It was obviously impossible for Waugh to hide his impatience with the world from his friends (or his readers), as the biographer Robert Speaight pointed out in his note to Mrs. Waugh: “Perhaps he was not altogether sorry to leave a world which he liked so little although it is a world that will be very sorry to see him go.” In his late years, the evidence of Waugh's despondency in his diaries and letters is clear. (He ends a January 1966 letter to Dom Hubert van Zeller, “Please pray for me. I need it. This is the season when I normally go abroad but this year I haven't the spirit. Tourists & terrorists have made travel unendurable.”) However, even if the burden was intractable and the death a release, there's nervousness in admitting it.

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<sup>4</sup> Helen Asquith's mother, Katherine, had inherited Mells Manor House in Somerset. Katherine Asquith was the daughter-in-law of the ex-Prime Minister and a Catholic convert. Mells became an important focal point for Waugh and his Catholic friends; Msgr. Ronald Knox lived there from 1949 until his death in 1957.

<sup>5</sup> Lord and Lady Acton provided a home for Msgr. Knox at Aldenham Park, the Acton's family seat in Shropshire, from 1939-49. Waugh dedicated his biography of Ronald Knox to Daphne Acton, a fervent convert to Catholicism.

Speaight finishes, "I recall what he wrote in my copy of *Pinfold*: 'Look out, you may be next.' And one very well may be."

The letters from other novelists are particularly interesting. Those from strangers, like Angus Wilson, are illuminating about Waugh's character:

Finally when my novel 'The Old Men at the Zoo' received so little critical understanding, his action in writing an independent and admiring estimate to 'The Spectator' made me put aside my doubts about whether I really did know what I was doing at a very critical juncture in my writing career. That this encouragement should have come from someone who as he wrote differed from me in all social and political questions was only what one had come to expect of somebody who cared so completely about writing for itself. But for me that it should have come from our finest novelist was everything.<sup>6</sup>

The letters from friends like Graham Greene reveal the character of the writer as well as the character of the subject: "What I loved most in him was that rare quality that he would say only the kind things behind one's back."

Alec Waugh writes a long note to Laura just after the funeral: "I have always been conscious of his presence. His books filled their shelf in every book shop; there was so much talk of him. Everyone I met would sooner or later ask after Evelyn or if they didn't know him would say 'Tell me about your brother.' He was always a very active and actual person in my life and in the things that matter we were very close...." But those shelves filled in every book shop do seem to rankle.

A.D. Peters, who had been Evelyn Waugh's literary agent and confidant for almost 40 years, sent a letter as moving as it is measured. In a strange way, his note seems to offer a final accounting. The tone suggests how he and Waugh were able to be in business together for the length of a career when so many of Waugh's other relationships were volatile.

I found it impossible to write to you from Rye, with a house full of guests. And I'm afraid I find it almost impossible now, for the shock was so sudden and so great that I have hardly been able to collect my thoughts.

There is no need for me to say that Evelyn was a great writer and that his work will certainly live.... To me his untimely death is a personal tragedy. He was unflinchingly kind and generous to me during the whole of the forty years that I knew him – never a harsh word or a rebuke, even when I deserved them. The

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<sup>6</sup> The letter was written 13 October 1966 and challenges John Mortimer's earlier review of Wilson's *The Old Men at the Zoo*. "There are not so many master craftsmen among the post-war novelists that we can afford to neglect them" (Amory 573).

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world who did not know him had, I'm afraid, a distorted picture of him, which he himself took some trouble to paint. But the real Evelyn was a very fine man. I loved him and I shall miss him for the rest of my life, even though I saw him but seldom in recent years.

I was at his father's funeral. I never thought I should be at his.

May his soul rest in peace.

With love and sympathy,

Peter

Peters' letter is filled with feelings of emptiness – and not because the firm had lost a substantial client.

The cumulative effect of these letters is mosaic-like. Bits and pieces, fragments of memory that recall Waugh's generosity, encouragement, and loyalty remember him in a way that undermines the caricature of his received image. The edges between the different pieces are not always smooth, but the character that emerges from the picture is richer; the more we know about him, the less easy it is simply to dismiss him as "an impossible man."

The fact that this correspondence is so compelling in its candor and generosity, in its recollections of happy times and in its promise of prayers and other kinds of remembrances demonstrates that despite the impossibility of really penetrating, much less relieving, another's grief, *pace* Noel Coward, words are never useless.

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## **Finding the Lush Place: Waugh's Moral Vision in *Scoop*** **Harrison Otis**

On May 7, 1938, an anonymous reviewer in the *Times Literary Supplement* waxed eloquent about Evelyn Waugh's *Scoop*: "In his new novel Mr. Waugh's ribald wit spurts in a brisk uninterrupted flow upon the caprices of sensational journalism. He is ingenious, satirical, extremely funny" (197). Other reviewers agreed, such as Rupert Croft-Cooke, who wrote in *Tablet* that *Scoop* "is all superb entertainment." Croft-Cooke specifically noticed the pointed social criticism of the novel: "The world is mad, Mr. Waugh seems to remark calmly, and one is grateful that this satirist, while moving through the Bedlam he sees about him, keeps his head" (194-5). But John Brophy of the *Daily Telegraph*, though admiring of Waugh's "ribald, fantastic and unpredictable way," slightly disagreed with Croft-Cooke's characterization. "Mr. Waugh is not a satirist," Brophy wrote, "for indignation founded on some belief is necessary to satire, and I have never been able from his books to discover what Mr. Waugh believes in. His job is to provide laughter, and how well he does it" (198-99).

As Brophy indicates, Waugh undoubtedly succeeds at provoking laughter. But does he have a larger moral point to communicate? Does his vision in *Scoop* go beyond negative criticism to present a positive vision for society? A close reading of the novel suggests that there is such a vision, though it is masked carefully and revealed through hinting imagery and intricate structure. As Frederick Beaty writes, "instead of making direct, systematic assaults, [Waugh] resorted to tentative, glancing blows, overturning rather than demolishing false idols" (26). This paper will examine not only the idols Waugh attacks, but also the icon he exalts in their place. What Waugh lampoons is pretension, and what he valorizes, in response, is innocence—not naïve idealism but an innocence that works within the confines of the foolish world.

### **Presenting Pride and Pretension**

As the title suggests, journalists are Waugh's prime target in *Scoop*, but the novel critiques everything in its line of vision. From Fleet Street to Boot Magna, from civilized Britain to backwater Ishmaelia, nowhere is there utopia. Waugh's particular quarry, then, is not geographical but spiritual: human pride, which, through pretension, goads its victims into ever more comical contortions.

An early example of this is the brief appearance of Algernon Stitch, husband to the inimitable Julia Stitch and cabinet member in the Ministry of Imperial Defence. When John Boot first encounters him, Stitch is standing irresolutely in the hallway with his hands and mouth full and his arm down the wrong coat sleeve. Once rescued from his predicament, Stitch begins and ends the short conversation that ensues with almost

identical phrasing: “Thanks. Thanks very much. Much obliged” (4). When Boot compliments him on his speech, he responds incredulously: “Speech? Mine? Ah. Reads well, eh? Sounded terrible to me. Thanks all the same. Thanks very much. Much obliged” (5). His puzzlement reveals that his speech is not his own; his boilerplate repetition reveals that his words (at least in this situation, and likely in general, judging by his reaction to the speech) are not important to him. He is a parrot; worse yet, a puppet. Yet he is a cabinet minister, the oft-caricatured face of the British government (4). Like the poet laureate whose “most poetic and highly paid work” is “an ode to the seasonal fluctuation of [the Megalopolitan newspaper’s] net sales,” Stitch’s proud, official, mustachioed face only masks the triviality and apathy within (14). The man in power is all too willing to privilege appearance over reality.

This applies to those in seats of cultural as well as political influence. When William Boot first arrives at the headquarters of the Megalopolitan newspaper, he is astonished by the “Byzantine vestibule and Sassanian lounge of Copper House.” There are six elevators snapping between floors “with dazzling frequency,” filling with hundreds of people streaming past. Above it all rises “a chryselephantine effigy of Lord Copper in coronation robes...on a polygonal malachite pedestal.” Grander appearances could hardly be found, but the porter’s poor grammar undercuts the mask. “We have sixteen peers on the staff. Which was you referring to?” (31-32). Lord Copper’s personal offices may even surpass the grandeur of the lobby: they are an inner sanctuary, a holy of holies, harboring “the presence” within. There, in hushed meditation, typewriters sound like “the drumming of a bishop’s finger tips on an upholstered *prie-dieu*,” and Mr. Salter speaks “reverently” of the lamp on Lord Copper’s desk (54-55). But Lord Copper himself, with “massive head, empty of thought, [resting] in sculptural fashion upon his left fist,” idly draws cows on his writing pad (259).

Waugh’s description here, coupled with the earlier religious imagery associated with Lord Copper’s offices, seems to portray Copper as an anti-Prime Mover. Waugh portrays the entire newspaper as revolving in frenetic motion around the journalism magnate, “at the hub and still centre of all this animation” (259), much like Aristotle’s conception of a Prime Mover who moves all but is himself unmoved. However, instead moving all things with intellectual motion, as the Prime Mover would, Copper’s mind is “empty of thought,” and he draws cows on his writing pad. The Megalopolitan offices are the epitome of grandeur, and they are equally the epitome of stupidity. Their aura of majesty, even of holiness, is merely a pretentious mask: again, appearances triumph over reality.

Alongside the triumph of appearance over reality is the triumph of ideology over facts. Here is where Waugh’s critique of journalists becomes most pointed, probably

because the events he describes are based on his own sad experience.<sup>1</sup> Take the great American reporter Wenlock Jakes, for example, as Corker glowingly describes him:

Why, once Jakes went out to cover a revolution in one of the Balkan capitals. He overslept in his carriage, woke up at the wrong station, didn't know any different, got out, went straight to a hotel, and cabled off a thousand-word story about barricades in the streets, flaming churches, machine guns answering the rattle of the typewriter as he wrote, a dead child, like a broken doll, spread-eagled in the deserted roadway below his window—you know. (92-3)

Jakes' rhetoric brought hordes of reporters to the town and caused political and social panic. Within a week an actual revolution had broken out in the region—and Jakes received the Nobel Peace Prize for his description of the carnage. To this reporter, facts are no hindrance to the pursuit of his own agenda. Jakes creates a pretty façade, but, like the Megalopolitan offices, there is little beneath. Here, this is more than a casual critique: a revolution starts—people die—because of Jakes' malfeasance.

And the other journalists in Ishamelia, though they may not cause actual physical harm, are little better. On this point, Waugh notes that the Ishmaelian press cards are repurposed prostitute registration cards (135). This comparison between prostitutes and journalists gives heightened ironic meaning to the moment when Mr. Salter tries to convince William not to leave *The Daily Beast* for *The Daily Brute*: “You'd be selling your soul, Boot,” he says (302). To Waugh, the journalists in Ishmaelia have already sold their souls like prostitutes vend their bodies, abandoning all pretense of truth in favor of their own salaried agenda.

Further examples of this principle recur throughout *Scoop*. The rival Ishmaelian consuls can only see the facts that are colored—literally—by their particular ideology. The Soviet-affiliated Fascist consul asserts that all of history's great figures, from Christopher Columbus to Karl Marx, were black, while the Nazi-affiliated Socialist consul contends that all the blacks in Ishmaelia are, in fact, Aryans.<sup>2</sup> Neither consul has set foot in Ishmaelia himself (68-71). In addition, the *Daily Beast* has its own “policy” on the Ishmaelian war; Lord Copper tells William to write “a few sharp victories, some conspicuous acts of personal bravery on the Patriot side, and a colourful entry into the capital.... We shall expect the first victory about the middle of July” (56-7). That events on the ground may not play out according to this triumphant plan seems not even to enter

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<sup>1</sup> As Ann Pasternak Slater notes, throughout Waugh's time in Abyssinia covering the Italian invasion for the *Daily Mail*—an experience that furnished much of the material for *Scoop*—blatantly deceptive news-manufacturing was the norm among his colleagues (100, 113-115).

<sup>2</sup> “In the course of the years the tropical sun has given to some of us a healthy, in some cases almost a swarthy tan. But all responsible anthropologists...” (70).

the magnate's mind. Lord Copper is acting in line with his divine pretensions here, as though his every whim determines the course of international warfare. But in Waugh's pointed prose, the pseudo-divine Copper is clearly not omniscient. He is merely a man whose proud appearance masks a sorry reality, even as his personal ideology ignores the actual facts.

This system of privileging appearance over reality runs on the gasoline of apathy. Lord Copper, for instance, is so busy sketching bovines that he knows very little about the actual goings-on of his paper: is there a man assigned to the country? It's Boot? Well, who sent him to Africa, and why? Before Lord Copper asks these questions, Mr. Salter asks him what is the *Beast's* policy toward pogroms in Bucharest. That Salter even has to ask this question indicates Lord Copper's indifference toward truly important events, and the impression is confirmed when Copper does not even bother to answer the question (260-61). It's significant that the things Copper *does* care passionately about—the shape of a cow's ears, the date of the Battle of Hastings—are trivial concerns that could be resolved in five minutes with an encyclopedia. Despite (or perhaps because of) his grand appearances, Lord Copper cares much for things that do not matter and is apathetic toward the things that do.

On top of this, Corker tells William that “news is what a chap who doesn't care much about anything wants to read” (91). This is ironic on two levels: first, reading news would, ideally, be the mark of caring about any number of issues domestic and international. In addition to this, one of Waugh's main points in the novel is that the *papers* do not care about the things they report. If what Corker says is true, this apathy applies to the public as well. Later in the novel, the narrator himself writes that the newspaper was “*carrying* William's sensational message into two million apathetic homes” (Scoop 223). This authorial description confirms Corker's dictum. To Waugh, the newspapers and their Byzantine façades are not the only ones trapped in apathy: the British public is also mired. All of society is implicated in one bleak picture of pride and passivity.

This is what makes it so ironic when Lord Copper and Mr. Salter daydream of themselves as the lone representatives of civilization. Mr. Salter, lost and confused by the barbarism of country living, “felt like a Roman legionary, heavily armed, weighted with the steel and cast brass of civilization...the vanguard of an advance that had pushed too far and lost touch with the base” (304). Similarly, Lord Copper thinks of himself as “the deserted leader, shouldering alone the great burden of Duty” (316).<sup>3</sup> However, though

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<sup>3</sup> “He had made a study of the lives of other great men; loneliness was the price they had all paid. None, he reflected, had enjoyed the devotion they deserved; there was Caesar and Brutus, Napoleon and Josephine, Shakespeare and—someone, he believed, had been disloyal to Shakespeare” (316).

this may be the façade they erect for themselves, this is not in fact the truth. As a result, Lord Copper and his offices are strikingly similar to Ishamaelite society: as Lord Copper and his cohorts hide their agendas behind a façade of grandeur and truth, the Ishmaelians clothe their dynastic ambitions in the guise of a republic. This comparison undercuts Mr. Salter's claim to be the steward of civilization: in reality, he and his fellow-workers are no better than the citizens of a backward African pseudo-democracy. Their pretensions in no way match reality.

### **High Places and Lush Places**

Waugh's social criticism is relatively clear. What is not so clear is his positive vision for society. Contrary to John Brophy's assessment, however, a positive vision is present in *Scoop*, insinuated through a chain of crescendoing allusions and imagery. As Waugh writes in a 1938 review of Cyril Connolly's *Enemies of Promise*, good writing is not primarily "creative" but rather "architectural." He asserts, "Writing is an art which exists in a time sequence; each sentence and each page is dependent on its predecessors and successors; a sentence which he admires may owe its significance to another fifty pages distant" (Discontents 238-39). In this manner, Waugh's answer in *Scoop* to societal corruption unfolds gradually and unobtrusively.

A good place to begin is Uncle Theodore's favorite chorus: "Change and decay in all around I see." Waugh places special emphasis on this phrase by making it the first sentence of its chapter, and he immediately notes that "decay, rather than change, was characteristic of the immediate prospect" (*Scoop* 20). By contrast, the rest of the chapter demonstrates that the city (especially in its dazzling lifts and Caucasian elevator girls [31]) is emblematic of change. The contrast between change and decay appears again at the opening of the next chapter, when William wakes in his hotel room: before describing the pretentious suite, Waugh describes William's bedroom at Boot Magna, complete with stuffed ferret on the shelf and monkey-puzzle outside the window (46).

This description is important because Waugh references it at the very end of the chapter when describing, in euphoric language, William's fantasies on the way to the airport.

High over the chimneys and the giant monkey-puzzle, high among the clouds and rainbows and clear blue spaces, whose alternations figured so largely and poetically in *Lush Places*, high above the most ecstatic skylark, above earth-bound badger and great crested grebe, away from people and cities to a region of light and void and silence—that was where William was going in the Air Line omnibus; he sat mute, rapt, oblivious of the cleft sticks and the portable typewriter. (62-63)

The reference to the monkey-puzzle brings the chapter full circle and is evidence of Waugh's architectural ambition. In the plane, William can rise above the change and decay of both country and city. Here, he can achieve "a region of light and void and silence."

But Waugh cuts short the sentence with the cleft sticks and typewriter, emblematic of Fleet Street society, and he cuts short the chapter with William's missing passport, which prevents him from boarding the plane at all. William does not fly away until the next chapter. Once in the air, "William's heart rose with [the plane] and gloried, larklike, in the high places." But the section immediately stops,<sup>4</sup> the very next sentence ends his reverie—"all too soon they returned to earth"—and William lands in a jostling, dusty crowd at a French customs station (73). Though Waugh waxes euphoric about the experience of transcending earth's chaos, he continually denies the experience as a viable option. As much as William desires it, Waugh implies, he cannot stay in the high places.

The term "high places" is notable because it contrasts significantly with the term "lush places." *Lush Places* is the nature column William writes for the *Beast*—the one that indirectly precipitates his assignment to Ishmaelia—and in this sense it represents part of the decay William hoped to leave behind. But the phrase also appears in a different context, just when William realizes that he has fallen in love with Kätchen.

For twenty-three years he had remained celibate and heart-whole; landbound. Now for the first time he was far from shore, submerged among deep waters, below wind and tide, where huge trees raised their spongy flowers and monstrous things without fur or feather, wing or foot, passed silently, in submarine twilight. A lush place. (181)

This passage directly contrasts with William's airplane experience. He is not above the earth; he is beneath it. He is not removed from animal life; he is surrounded by strange creatures.<sup>5</sup> He does not float in a rarified void; he walks in a watery landscape. He is not in a high place; he is in a lush place. Unlike his rapid fall from the high places, William is submerged, in love—and this time, it seems good for him to stay.

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<sup>4</sup> *Scoop* is divided into three parts ("The Stitch Service," "Stones...£20," and "Banquet"), each of which is divided into chapters, each of which is further divided into multiple sections. The previously-quoted sentence is the last of the fifth section of the fourth chapter of the first part.

<sup>5</sup> Note the parallelism with the oft-quoted phrase from William's nature column, *Lush Places*: "Feather-footed through the plashy fen passes the questing vole" (19). Here, in this truly lush place, the underwater creatures have neither feather nor foot as they pass through the water. Waugh is distancing William not only from the high places but also from William's comfortable existence at Boot Magna.

What is Waugh doing with this underwater imagery? The answer depends on yet another set of images. Several allusions in the second section of *Scoop* indicate that Waugh is working with the theme of Noah's flood in the background—a theme eminently appropriate for the story's emphasis on human wickedness. This theme is hinted at when, immediately after introducing the Ishmaelian journalists, Waugh gives the single enigmatic sentence: "And the granite sky wept" (116). The sky weeps because of the journalists' cupidity and pride; the rain is pictured as a reaction to their folly, just as the rains of the flood were a response to human sin. Later, after Corker and William have turned down Olafsen's invitation to church, and Corker facetiously purposes to take "a day of rest" nonetheless, Waugh writes, "So the rain fell and the afternoon and evening were succeeded by another night and another morning" (135). Coming as it does after the repeated emphasis on the day of rest, this seems a clear allusion to Genesis 1-2 and its repetition of phrases like "and the evening and the morning were the fifth day" when describing creation (Gen. 1:23 KJV). But in this passage from *Scoop*, the focus is not on the days of creation, but on the days that come *after* the day of rest. This points forward to the Fall (another appropriate theme for a satirist) and to the Flood (especially appropriate here with Waugh's repeated mention of rain). Notably, Waugh does not attempt to parallel the description of God's response to his creation: "and God saw that it was good" (Gen. 1:18 KJV).

Throughout the middle section of the novel, rain is consistently associated with the journalists: the sky weeps when they are first described, and it continues to rain throughout their entire stay in Jacksonburg. The instant the reporters leave for Laku, however, "the dark clouds opened above him [William]; the gutters and wet leaves sparkled in sunlight and a vast, iridescent fan of colour, arc beyond arc of splendor, spread across the heavens" (179). The rainbow is particularly appropriate for the theme of Noah's flood. And the flood imagery finally becomes explicit when spring has come for good and Corker and Pigge find themselves stranded in the Ishmaelian desert:

It was a morning of ethereal splendor—such a morning as Noah knew as he gazed from his pitchy bulwarks over limitless, sunlit waters while the dove circled and mounted and became lost in the shining heavens; such a morning as only the angels saw on the first day of that rash cosmic experiment that had resulted, at the moment, in landing Corker and Pigge here in the mud, stiff and unshaven and disconsolate. (210)

William falls in love with Kätchen in the midst of this unfolding flood imagery, and thinking in terms of the flood helps explain why Waugh chooses to describe the lush place as an underwater place: in some sense, William is caught beneath the waters of the flood. Note how the passage above moves from the "ethereal splendor" of the morning—much like the "light and void and silence" of the airplane's upper atmosphere—to the "stiff and unshaven and disconsolate" journalists sitting in the mud. The movement is

from perfection to imperfection, from the transcendent ideal to the messy reality. The flood imagery only reinforces this; “messy reality” is an understatement of the state of affairs for which God sent the deluge to judge mankind. But Waugh seems to be suggesting that the lush places—the places worth staying in—are beneath the waves of the flood, are inextricably tied to the fallen world, in a way that the high places, beautiful as they are, are not.

This is, at first glance, a dangerously antinomian thing to say, and it is especially odd for such a moral writer as Waugh. The character of Kätchen helps explain this discrepancy. Given that William’s experience of the lush place is prompted by his budding love for Kätchen, it seems appropriate that Kätchen herself should have a special significance to this theme. Indeed, if a sort of moral ambiguity is a key feature of the lush place, Kätchen is its perfect representative. William’s romance with her is marked by moral ambiguity—she is already married (by her own account), but it is a common-law marriage, and as far as William can tell, her husband may have abandoned her or died in the Ishmaelian desert. Also, Kätchen herself is an ambiguous character. As Beaty notes,

Kätchen’s personality reflects an ironic world—elusive, unpredictable, changeable, illogical, and fraudulent. To achieve such a delineation, the narrator appropriately refrains from disclosing all that transpires in her mind; and by leaving much to the imagination, he enhances the enigmatic charm with which Kätchen fascinates both William and the reader. (127)

At heart, Beaty believes, Kätchen is “a shrewd coquette manipulating an inexperienced, unsuspecting victim” (127). But because Waugh gives no glimpses into her psyche, this judgment is difficult to make. It is certainly true that Kätchen uses William for her purposes, convincing him to buy her husband’s specimens and give her money to frequent local businesses. The question of her motive, however, is not as self-evident. Beaty’s supposition is certainly plausible, but it seems equally plausible that Kätchen is a wholly and impossibly innocent figure. For example, when faced with the fact that her newly-returned husband is not safe as a German, she asks William, “If after I marry you, I marry my husband, he would then be English, yes?” (Waugh, *Scoop* 231). This is not something a coquette would ask; in context, it has no seductive or pragmatic application. It seems to be the product of genuine confusion. Likewise, when leaving with her husband, she offers to sell William’s canoe once in safety and send the money—a completely impractical suggestion that, again, has no coquettish effect (233-4).

Beaty notes Kätchen’s “Alice-in-Wonderland logic,” but he does not explain how such rampant illogicality is consistent with the picture of a “shrewd coquette” assuming an “ingenuer exterior and affectionate, playful simplicity” to manipulate William (127-28). Surely someone shrewd enough to don and maintain such an alluring mask would have more intelligence than Kätchen demonstrates. By contrast, an innocent child would

naturally have less than average intelligence, even as that intelligence was directed toward the fulfillment of his or her own desires. This seems to be the best way to make sense of Beaty's observations: Kätchen is, in effect, still a child; she has the moral sensibilities of a toddler in an adult's body. She may be shrewd, but innocently so.

If Kätchen can be seen as a figure of childlike innocence rather than of shrewd manipulation, then, her association with the lush place does indeed have symbolic significance. William's lush place—the place where he falls in love—is where the innocence of Kätchen and the watery, fallen world coincide. Kätchen's innocence is not unfallen (in fact, it is rather selfish; Waugh's view of human nature is not particularly optimistic). But unlike the journalists and the bustling society of Fleet Street, it is not pretentious. She is a child, and she does not disguise it; Kätchen is merely herself. It is with her that William first begins to learn the value of this.

A parallel passage from *Brideshead Revisited*—published less than ten years after *Scoop*—reinforces this interpretation. When Charles Ryder leaves Brideshead for what he thinks is the last time, he writes, “I had come to the surface, into the light of common day and the fresh sea-air, after long captivity in the sunless coral palaces and waving forests of the ocean bed” (Waugh *Brideshead* 169). This underwater imagery is oddly reminiscent of the description of William's lush place. But in *Brideshead Revisited*, Waugh's narrator is more explicit about its symbolism.

I had left behind me—what? Youth? Adolescence? Romance?...

“I have left behind illusion,” I said to myself. “Henceforth I will live in a world of three dimensions—with the aid of my five senses.”

I have since learned that there is no such world; but then, as the car turned out of sight of the house, I thought it took no finding, but lay all about me at the end of the avenue. (169)

In the disaffectedness of the moment, Charles dismisses the magical aura of his youth and his sparkling friendship with Sebastian—whose effervescence in some ways parallels Kätchen's—as illusion. Waugh is quick to tell us that if it is illusion, there is no true life without it. But illusion is probably not the best word for this phenomenon; it is youth, adolescence, romance, an innocence so preposterous that to Charles and even to Beaty it comes across only as farce. This is the glory of Charles' youth, which he now thrusts behind him even as Waugh reminds us he cannot rid himself of it completely. The fallen world—the “real world”—may ravage our idealism, but it cannot destroy the truth behind the ideal. Back in Ishmaelia, William will soon learn the same lesson.

### Waugh's Vision

Unfortunately for William, his lush place does not last: to begin with, Kätchen refuses his proposal. At this point, Waugh inserts another curious, isolated sentence: “The three-legged dog awoke and all over the town, in yards and refuse heaps, the pariahs took up his cries of protest” (Scoop 204). When Kätchen’s husband unexpectedly returns, William’s hopes are dashed for good. Kätchen and her husband float to safety in William’s canoe, and William eventually returns to Britain. But on William’s first night back,

he went to the window and, stooping, looked out across the moonlit park.

On such a night as this, not four weeks back, the tin roofs of Jacksonburg had lain open to the sky; a three-legged dog had awoken, started from his barrel in Frau Dressler’s garden, and all over the town, in yards and refuse heaps, the pariahs had taken up his cries of protest. (275)

Kätchen is gone, as is appropriate—no childhood is eternal—but her loss is real. This is reflected even in the final sentences of the book. In the penultimate paragraph, “before getting into bed he [William] drew the curtain and threw open the window. Moonlight streamed into the room.” This, William’s last night in the novel, is a direct reference to William’s first night back in his room. Kätchen’s loss is still fresh. The last sentence encapsulates the sense that not all is right with the world: “Outside the owls hunted maternal rodents and their furry broods” (321).

What is the best response to this loss? An answer comes in the character of Erik Olafsen, the Swedish journalist and proprietor of Jacksonburg’s Tea, Bible and Chemist Shop. Olafsen is not the shrewdest character in the story, but he is one of the most honest: as Ann Pasternak Slater writes, “Olafsen, like William, is a figure of naïve simplicity and truth” (119). He cannot understand that Sir Jocelyn Hitchcock, the consummate journalist, should deliberately lie to him, and to process this occurrence he must pass it off as a joke. This sort of innocence is how he keeps himself, like his hymnbooks, “restored and fortified” (Waugh, *Scoop* 189). In a large sense, Olafsen is as childlike as Kätchen (though there is no indication his innocence is childishly selfish). But in the climactic scene in Popotakis’ Ping-Pong Parlor, he has changed: “It was the Swede; but a Swede transfigured, barely recognizable as the mild apostle of the coffeepot and the sticking plaster” (247). This apostle is transfigured not by the Holy Spirit but by intoxicating spirits, and under their influence he single-handedly restores order to the nominal republic.

Ann Pasternak Slater recognizes the importance of this incident, but discusses it only in the context of Waugh’s general theme of positive transformation. After the journalists leave and the rain stops, the novel’s good characters undergo positive transformations to which the bad characters are oblivious (119). This is true on the

general level,<sup>6</sup> but there is specific significance to the details of Olafsen's transfiguration. The image of a drunken apostle is not only a remarkable symbol for European imperialism,<sup>7</sup> but also an example of innocence's existence within the fallen world. The spirits spur Olafsen to single-handedly oust the reigning regime, but Olafsen's mild nature also tempers the influence of the spirits. Olafsen may be smashing furniture in the president's palace, but he does so "with the happy inconsequence of an early comedy film," and the result is the usurper's fortuitous overthrow (Waugh, *Scoop* 252). Waugh can poke fun at Olafsen's innocence, but in the end it is only that innocence that can save Ishmaelia.<sup>8</sup> Even so, in the act of saving Ishmaelia, Olafsen loses some of his innocence; or rather, he loses the childlike naïveté that accompanies his innocence. Nothing would have happened if the apostle had not been drunk.

The same principle is evident in Waugh's treatment of the Boot family.<sup>9</sup> As Waugh wrote to Hollywood producers interested in *Scoop*, at the end "Boot should return home without ambition ever to go away again" (Memorandum). This ending is satisfactory, but not because Boot Magna is a utopia. As mentioned earlier, the entire place is characterized by decay. There are even some similarities between Boot family society and Megalopolitan office society—for example, the Boots talk past each other just as Lord Copper talks past his subordinates and as the reporters work at cross-purposes (Waugh, *Scoop* 259-63, 299-301). Like Kätchen and Olafsen, though, the family at Boot Magna has no pretension. As the Boots' dining habits reveal, each family member is not afraid to be his own individual self; there is no concern for keeping up a front or appearing polished (298). This is in itself a form of innocence: a simple acceptance of reality, disregard for excess varnish, and concern with simple pleasures. Waugh can poke fun at this—and indeed, he does—but his jokes do not shake the foundation of Boot Magna in the same way they destroy the Byzantine façade of the newspaper offices. When William explains to Mr. Salter why he will not return to London, his explanation is simple. "'Well,' said William with difficulty, 'I should feel an

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<sup>6</sup> It is curious, though, that Slater refers to Olafsen's drunken furor as a positive transformation. I would argue that the Swede's drunkenness has, actually, humorously negative connotations, which Waugh uses to emphasize the relationship between naïveté and real-world corruption.

<sup>7</sup> I make this point in reference to Mr. Baldwin's identification of Olafsen with British "Might," which he speaks of in strongly imperialistic terms (Waugh *Scoop* 246-48).

<sup>8</sup> That is, as much as what Olafsen does can be called "saving Ishmaelia." The government he restores is just as flawed as it always was; there is no indication that Ishmaelia's political problems are now resolved.

<sup>9</sup> That Waugh intended this comparison is suggested by Uncle Theodore's "strong baritone decanting irregular snatches of sacred music" (290). His voice and style are reminiscent of the transfigured Olafsen's "deep bass, trolling chant, half nautical, half ecclesiastical" (247).

ass” (303). He remains at Boot Magna instead: the Boots may be foolish, but they are not asses.

When William chooses to return to his old life, he is not possessed with Kätchen’s childlike naiveté. He is still fundamentally innocent, as his nature column shows: he writes that “*maternal rodents pilot their furry brood through the stubble,*” even as the narrator reminds us that “outside the owls hunted maternal rodents and their furry broods” (320-21). He still longs for Kätchen. But he is no longer ignorant of the fallenness of the world around him; he cannot bear London society as a result. Like Olafsen, he has been in a sense transfigured: his innocence has been tempered, but not destroyed. The high places may be unsustainable; change and decay may be inescapable; Kätchen’s departure may be inevitable; but by the end of the book, William’s innocence can stand on its own in a world full of hypocrites.

Waugh’s vision for society, then, is a rejection not only of cynicism but also of rarefied idealism. Neither the airplane’s escapism nor Kätchen’s ignorance can adequately answer the hypocrisy, apathy, and deviousness of the fallen world. But Waugh goes further: in spite of all this, he suggests, innocence is still valuable. It cannot be wholly naïve, and it will not escape the world’s foolishness untainted (though it will certainly not be pretentious). Nevertheless, it is the only answer for life in this comical, upside-down, underwater world. This is the positive vision that Waugh presents in *Scoop*.

Based on this information, is John Brophy right to say that Waugh is not a satirist? In a 1946 essay in *Life* magazine, Waugh responds to this question, answering American readers who want to know if his books are supposed to be satirical. His answer is unambiguous: “No.”

Satire is a matter of period. It flourishes in a stable society and presupposes homogeneous moral standards—the early Roman Empire and eighteenth-century Europe. It is aimed at inconsistency and hypocrisy. It exposes polite cruelty and folly by exaggerating them. It seeks to produce shame. All this has no place in the Century of the Common Man where vice no longer pays lip service to virtue. The artist’s only service to the disintegrated society of today is to create little independent systems of order of his own. I foresee in the dark age opening that the scribes may play the part of the monks after the first barbarian victories. They were not satirists. (Fan-Fare 303-04)

Waugh’s disavowal of satire has engendered much debate among critics. Beaty suggests that Waugh may be distinguishing between harsh, blunt satire and his own understated style of criticism; perhaps, too, Waugh is speaking proleptically about his works after *Brideshead Revisited* (1945), a work which demonstrates a different aesthetic philosophy than his previous novels (24-25, 29). Applied to *Scoop*, the statement seems semantic:

many of the techniques Waugh here associates with satire are prominent in *Scoop*, especially the attacks on hypocrisy and the exaggeration of polite folly. Even by his own standards, it seems undeniable that Waugh is using *Scoop* for satiric purposes.

However accurate his rejection of satire, though, Waugh's alternative is directly in line with the message of *Scoop*. The artist is an innocent of sorts, creating "little independent systems of order" apart from the world. But he is not to naïvely pretend that the "disintegrated society of today" does not exist; rather, his cloister-building is an act of passive defiance, a recognition of "an obligation to transmit to posterity the remnants of a civilization greater than the one of which he [is] making a detailed record" (Beatty 24). The artist's innocence is to be tempered by the reality of the fallen world, even as it works to undermine that reality. In this way, Waugh's own artistic philosophy reflects his positive vision in *Scoop*, and demonstrates the importance of this idea for the modern world.

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## **Evelyn Waugh: A Supplementary Checklist of Criticism**

**Joseph Tucker**

This is a continuation of earlier lists published in *Evelyn Waugh Studies*. It contains books and articles published in 2014 and 2015.

Barber, Michael. "Evelyn Waugh/Evelyn Waugh: Fictions, Faith and Family." *Quadrant Magazine* 58.10 (2014): 107-09.

Bosco, Mark. "Kindred Spirits." *America* 213.16 (2015): 14-16.

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## REVIEWS

### One Catamite after Another

*The Mad Boy, Lord Berners, My Grandmother and Me: An Aristocratic Family, a High-Society Scandal and an Extraordinary Legacy*, by Sofka Zinovieff . New York: Harper, 2015. 448 pp., \$35.00; London: Jonathan Cape, 2014. 448 pp., £19.99.

Reviewed by Jeffrey A. Manley

This book is largely concerned with the story of the fascinating group of intellectuals, artists and others who gathered around Gerald Berners, especially at his country estate, Faringdon House, near Oxford. It is also the story of what happened to that house and some of the group after Berners' death in 1950, in particular his companion Robert Heber-Percy and the latter's first wife, Jennifer Fry.

Evelyn Waugh was not close to any of the three principal subjects. He knew Gerald Berners, the most interesting and best known of the three.<sup>1</sup> Berners was an independently wealthy composer, writer and painter who thrived in the interwar period. Although his works are little performed, read or displayed today, his versatility and productivity are widely admired. He was the inspiration for Nancy Mitford's Lord Merlin in her novel *Pursuit of Love*. He has also been the subject of several biographical and critical works (including one by Mark Amory, editor of Waugh's *Letters*) on which Zinovieff was able to draw for her description of his life. It is probably for that reason that he comes across as the most fully formed, memorable and sympathetic character of the three. His homosexuality was hardly a secret. He never married but got along well with women while not quite having any "affairs." After a relatively brief (unpaid) career in the diplomatic corps, he settled at Faringdon, which he had earlier purchased for his mother and stepfather after a string of inheritances. In the early 1930s, he met the second of the three subjects, Robert Heber-Percy, who soon joined him at Faringdon, where they both lived for the rest of their lives.

Heber-Percy is frequently described as "The Mad Boy," an epithet also applied to him by Waugh. He was the youngest son of a prominent Shropshire family that had lived at Hodnet Hall for hundreds of years. He had a difficult childhood. Although he loved the country life on the family estate (particularly horses and farming), as the fourth of four children he was never going to be able to afford the life of a country gentleman. His parents tried to provide an education, sending him to Stowe, but he had a difficult personality that did not lend itself to schoolwork.

He was probably what today would be deemed “autistic,” or at least suffered from something like attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). But in those days such diagnosis was impossible, and there was no effective treatment, aside perhaps from psychoanalysis. Hence, in reaction to his peculiar behavior, he was simply dismissed as a bit “mad” by his family and friends. In addition, he was probably bisexual and would today be described as Berners’ “partner.” But he also had affairs with several women and was married to two. Before his first marriage (which provides the book’s thematic crux) he had fairly open affairs with Mary (“Maimie”) Lygon and Dorothy Castlerosse. He was unable to succeed in the military (the career hoped for by his family) since he could not adhere to the necessary discipline or respond to the training. He was, however, able to manage Berners’ estate at Faringdon (perhaps with a bit of forbearance by his employer/partner). In any event, they rubbed along well enough for 20 years.

The third member of the ménage is Jennifer Fry. She was the only child of a wealthy family. Her father was an heir to the Fry chocolate fortune. He was an equal-opportunity misogynist, neglecting both his wife and daughter. His wife suffered from this neglect and retreated into hypochondria and love affairs, leaving Jennifer in the hands of her nannies and governesses. Jennifer aspired to be a member of the Bright Young People but came of age a decade too late. She drifted through affairs and flirtations with both women and men, among them Hamish St. Clair Erskine, a homosexual once engaged to Nancy Mitford.

Her mother, née Alatheia Gardner, was a sister of Evelyn Gardner (Waugh’s first wife) who was, consequently, Jennifer’s aunt.<sup>ii</sup> Alatheia would also have been related through her mother (born a Herbert) to Laura Waugh in the same way that Evelyn Gardner was related to her. This makes Jennifer and her offspring, including the author of this book, some sort of distant cousins of the Waugh children. Waugh himself must have been aware of this family connection with Jennifer when he learned of her marriage to Heber-Percy but seems to have kept quiet about it.<sup>iii</sup> No one seems to recall any particular outward evidence of an attachment between Jennifer and Heber-Percy, although they would have had the opportunity to see each other together at any number of Faringdon functions. It came as a something of a shock, therefore, to the Faringdon set, when the marriage was announced in July 1942, and Jennifer moved to Faringdon.

When, however, Jennifer gave birth to a child, Victoria Heber-Percy, less than 7 months later in February 1943, no one was much surprised, although there was later considerable speculation about the child’s true paternity. Heber-Percy accepted the child as his own with better grace than he did her mother as his wife, and Berners himself took pride in this addition to the Faringdon ménage. But Robert and Jennifer never hit it off as a couple and about a year after Victoria’s birth, she and the child moved out. After the war, Berners’ health deteriorated and he died in 1950. He bequeathed Faringdon House and most of his estate to Heber-Percy, who was accustomed to running the houses and

farm but lost no time in taking up with a new boyfriend (soon joined by a second) to help him.

Waugh was not a core member of the “Faringdon set,” although he seems to have hovered on its fringes. The book names him (2) as one of the visitors with which Faringdon was “awash” during Berners’ residence (along with Stravinsky, Gertrude Stein, Salvador Dali, H.G. Wells and Frederick Ashton, as well as various Mitfords and Sitwells). While visits of these others are chronicled in the book, Waugh himself is always a voice offstage, often commenting on Berners and his entourage. He is, for example, called upon by the author to summarize a lingering doubt about the seriousness of Berners and those around him:

Evelyn Waugh viewed Gerald’s milieu as fundamentally flawed, marked by a sort of original sin: ‘The friends of Berners were so agreeable, so loyal, so charming, but they were *aboriginally corrupt*. *Their tiny relative advantages of intelligence, taste, good looks and good manners...were quite insignificant.*’ (131; emphasis added)

This may be a fair assessment of Waugh’s views. But the quote and its sourcing and attribution are misleading. It is quoted and sourced from a 1999 review by Noel Annan of several books by and about Berners. The quoted language is, in fact, Annan’s own description of Waugh’s attitude. The language in italics, however, is a near quote from Waugh, but in it he refers not to Berners and his friends specifically, but to “the children of Adam” generally as exemplified in the characters from Graham Greene’s novel *The Heart of the Matter*. The ellipsis indicates deletion of the words “he said” from Annan’s text that Annan had inserted because he had slightly paraphrased Waugh by changing the tense of his statement from present to past. But it is Annan, not Waugh, who applies this language to the Berners group. This is poor scholarship at two levels because a reader of the book will take the entire quote as being attributed to Waugh unless he/she follows the cite back to Annan’s review, which itself reapplies Waugh’s language, without explanation, to a subject not intended by Waugh.<sup>iv</sup>

Waugh’s name presumably appears in the Faringdon guest book, which the author mentions several times as a source. But he is never identified as a guest at one of the numerous Faringdon parties described in often humorous and lively detail in the book. Waugh himself doesn’t seem to mention any visits to Faringdon House during Berners’ lifetime in his published diaries or letters.<sup>v</sup> Certainly many of his friends were among Berners’ guests. In addition to some of those mentioned above, the Betjemans, Cyril Connolly, Maurice Bowra, the Lygon sisters (“Maimie” and “Coote”) and Daphne Fielding were close friends of Waugh as well as frequent visitors at Faringdon. Waugh mentions in a letter attending a dinner at Faringdon in 1950, also commenting that he found the inheritance a bit strange: “The Mad Boy has installed a Mad Boy of his own.

Has there ever been a property in history that has devolved from catamite to catamite for any length of time?" This was shortly after Berners' death.

The source of the quote from Waugh's "catamite" letter to an otherwise unidentified "Diana" is given by this book as the *Daily Telegraph* (409, n. 425). From the context in the book, the quote appears to have been taken from a letter to Diana Mosley who is mentioned by her full name in the preceding paragraph, but in fact it is to Diana Cooper and was dated 12 December 1950 (*MWMS*, 113).<sup>vi</sup> The book omits the opening sentence to that paragraph: "I went to dinner at Faringdon from the Betjemans." From this, it appears that Waugh was invited by Heber-Percy. If so, Waugh was being kept on the Faringdon "A list" after Berners' death, consistent with Heber-Percy's handling of such matters. Another possibility is that he attended the party as a house guest of the Betjemans.

In the 37 years of Heber-Percy's ownership of Faringdon House, at least according to this book, he made an effort not only to keep the property in good condition but also to entertain the surviving members of the Faringdon set (and their successors) at weekend parties in the Berners tradition. The party Waugh attended in 1950 would seem to be an early example of this effort. Despite Waugh's animus toward Heber-Percy as expressed in his letter to Diana Cooper, the two men had at least one thing in common: a hatred of Cecil Beaton.

Among those from a younger generation invited to these affairs, toward the end of Heber-Percy's life, was his granddaughter, Sofka Zinovieff, the author of this book. Heber-Percy told her, to her surprise, a few months before his death in 1987, of his intention to leave the estate to her. At the time, she was a graduate student researching her Cambridge Ph.D. thesis in Greece. He offered no explanation of why she was selected over members of his own family or his daughter Victoria (her mother), who didn't want it but wasn't even consulted about the matter. He left his second wife, Dorothy Lygon, a cottage in Faringdon. Their marriage in 1985 (at a time when they were both beginning to suffer the ravages of old age) barely outlasted their honeymoon for reasons explained in the book.

Zinovieff tried living at Faringdon after she had completed her studies, but in the end her own family commitments required that she find some way to use it while she and her family lived abroad. In this she seems to have succeeded, as she still owned the estate at the time of writing and manages to cover expenses and upkeep by letting it out for short-term rentals.<sup>vii</sup>

The book is entertaining and well written. There is, however, as noted, evidence of undue reliance on unverified secondary sources, to the detriment of accuracy, when primary sources were readily available in published versions. Although Waugh is not a

participant in the action, many of those who prominently appear are well known to his readers. The book is well produced and edited by today's standards. I found not a single typo or misprint in over 400 pages. If you plan to purchase the book, be forewarned that it is rather heavy for a book of this sort. It is printed on coated paper to facilitate the incorporation of illustrations with the text to which they relate. That works very well, but it makes the book weigh in at over three pounds; not something you will want to take on a trip or try reading in bed.

Notes

<sup>i</sup> Duncan McLaren, in a recent article on his website *Evelyn!*, argues that Waugh was a closer friend of Berners than is suggested in the book under review.

<sup>ii</sup> According to an article by Duncan McLaren on his website, Alatheia Fry may have contributed to the character of Margot Beste-Chetwynde, who appears in several of Waugh's novels, beginning with *Decline & Fall*: <http://www.evelynwaugh.org.uk/styled-32/index.html> (viewed 10 September 2015). Margot's rather tough, aggressive and enterprising character, however, hardly seems to have much in common with the "reclusive semi-invalid," as Alatheia is described in this book (159-62). On the other hand, Alatheia's child neglect, infidelity and country house modernization are attributes she does share with Margot. As usual, Waugh was able to pick and choose the character traits he borrowed from the real world and combine them with those from his imagination.

<sup>iii</sup> In 1928, the Frys invited Waugh and "She Evelyn" to stay in Oare House, Wiltshire, where they lived with Jennifer, then 12 years of age, while She Evelyn recuperated from measles. Waugh wrote to his publisher about sending a courtesy copy of *Rossetti* to Alatheia and her husband and addressed a letter to Harold Acton from Oare House. After Jennifer's divorce from Heber-Percy, Waugh mentions Jennifer's affair with Henry Yorke in a letter to Nancy Mitford (*Letters*, 27, 29, 274; *Diaries* 299-301). In a 27 October 1960 letter to Mitford, Waugh tells her he reviewed *Don't Tell Alfred* "for a funny little paper run by Evelyn Gardner's niece and a Beaver whose name escapes me—Rosse? Rose? He calls me Evelyn." This is a reference to Alan Ross, editor of *The London Magazine*. Jennifer set up house with him after she left Heber-Percy. Waugh's review appeared in the December 1960 issue (*Letters of Nancy Mitford and Evelyn Waugh*, 429).

<sup>iv</sup> Professor Annan's article ("The Camel at the Door") appears in the *New York Review of Books*, 7 October 1999, 32-34. The near quote from Waugh appears in "Felix Culpa," *Commonweal*, 16 July 1948, reprinted in EAR, 361.

<sup>v</sup> Duncan McLaren in the article cited in footnote 1, *supra*, has noted several visits by Waugh during Berners' lifetime to both Faringdon and Berners' house in Rome. McLaren's article can be accessed here: <http://www.evelynwaugh.org.uk/styled-70/index.html> (viewed 21 September 2015).

<sup>vi</sup> The misattribution of the letter to Diana Mosley rather than Diana Cooper is the fault not of Zinovieff but of the writer of the obituary in the *Daily Telegraph* (17 November 2001) on which the author relied. The obituary of Dorothy ("Coote") Lygon, is available online: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/1362599/Lady-Dorothy-Heber-Percy.html> (viewed 23 August 2015). The full text of the letter was, however, available in *MWMS* which, although out of print, is easily obtainable. Ironically (or perhaps not), the same mistake is made in the *NYRB* article by Noel Annan discussed above. Since Annan's article predates the *Daily Telegraph* obituary by 2 years, it (or one of the books reviewed in it) may be the original source of this error.

<sup>vii</sup> The biography on the dustwrapper indicates that Zinovieff "lives with her husband and daughters at Faringdon." Although that is inconsistent with the text of the book (396), on her internet site it says that she and her family left Greece in summer 2014 and moved to Faringdon.

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## War on Dullness

*Renishaw Hall: The Story of the Sitwells*, by Desmond Seward. London: Elliott and Thompson Limited, 2015. 287 pp., £25.00/\$32.95.

Reviewed by Jeffrey A. Manley

This book describes a family and the impressive house and gardens they built in the Derbyshire countryside over a period of four centuries. But the author gets his priorities right in that most of the text is devoted to the two generations in which this mini-dynasty flourished during the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. This was the time when Renishaw was owned, and from time to time lived in, by Sir George Sitwell, his eccentric wife Ada, and their three remarkable children: Edith, Osbert and Sacheverell.<sup>i</sup>

Evelyn Waugh was a frequent visitor at Renishaw between the years 1930 and 1957, shortly before Osbert moved to Italy. Many of his visits are recorded in the text, which actually begins with a quote of Waugh's explanation of what made this house and family special:

They radiated an aura of high spirits, elegance, impudence, unpredictability, above all of sheer enjoyment. They declared war on dullness. (xiii)<sup>ii</sup>

The first half of the book is devoted to the owners of Renishaw who preceded Sir George. These were not terribly remarkable but are described with sufficient detail to explain their relevance to the "golden age." For example, the first Sir George (1797-1853) had the misfortune to leave the estate heavily indebted, a cloud that would also cast a shadow over the relations between Osbert and his father. According to Seward, this earlier burden was more a matter of bad luck than extravagance, contrary to accounts by Osbert in his family history (73-74). In any event, the second Sir George, during his long tenure, through careful management and better luck (and helped considerably by the earlier efforts of his mother), succeeded in clearing the debt.

The book also explains the peculiar naming of Sitwell Sitwell (1793-1811). His father was named Francis Hurt. Francis inherited the estate from his Sitwell relations. Consistent with the terms of his inheritance, Francis adopted their family name. This occurred, however, after he had already named his son in their honor, Sitwell Hurt. The inheritance resulted in the double name that, according to the author, the bearer "bore with aplomb" (53). This information is needed to explain Waugh's joke in a 1952 letter to Ann Fleming where he said that he had been tempted to write in "Urbane Enjoyment" that, "just as Osbert's ancestor styled himself Sitwell Sitwell, 'Sir Osbert should have taken the name Hurt Hurt.'" He decided against using it but kept it "in the locker 'in case [Osbert] turns nasty'" (221; citing *Letters*, 380; see also *Diaries*, 784).<sup>iii</sup>

Edith and Osbert had prickly relationships with their parents but Sacheverell's childhood seems to have been less troubled. Edith's mother was embarrassed by her daughter's unattractive physical appearance and tended to ignore her. Their father Sir George also had a difficult relationship with his wife. She married at 17 and lacked any education. She was, it seemed, uneducable and it sounds as if she was more than a wee bit dim. Her dimness manifested itself in reckless spending (a habit she shared with other members of her own family). Sir George was frequently called upon to bail her out of her money troubles, but even though afterwards he would try to put her on a shorter rein, she was crafty enough to find a way out. Finally, she fell in with fraudsters in her attempts to secure money without her husband's knowledge. This led to her prosecution after she had been importuned by her "advisors" to sign some fraudulent notes. She was sentenced to 3 months in the Royal Holloway prison in 1915. The children, especially Osbert, blamed their father for not protecting her from imprisonment. Indeed, if she was as dim as the author suggests, it seems odd that she had to serve time.

Osbert and his father also fell out over finances. Although not as extravagant as his mother, Osbert did prefer a lavish lifestyle. His father worried that he would become a reckless spender like his wife and members of her family and run the estate into debt. Seward also suspects (150) that the coldness between father and son may have been abetted by Sir George's suspicion of Osbert's homosexuality. Sir George nevertheless transferred Renishaw to Osbert in 1925, nearly 20 years before his own death, so as to avoid inheritance taxes. Osbert paid back his father's generosity and trust by including a demeaning and biased description of him in his autobiography. Seward frequently (perhaps too frequently) corrects Osbert's characterizations of Sir George, although Osbert's friends, such as Evelyn Waugh and Anthony Powell, who also knew Sir George, seem to concur in Osbert's critical judgment.

It is ironic that "The Trio" owe their artistic bent to their father's difficulties with their mother. At one point, Sir George suffered a nervous breakdown due to the financial burdens his wife created and was advised to find other "interests." He took this advice, and his outside interests became Italy and its culture. He bought an Italian villa south of Florence called Montegufoni and began making regular trips there, often with one or more of the children in tow. He developed an interest in Italian painting, sculpture and landscape gardening. This, in turn, was reflected in the furnishings, decorating and gardens at Renishaw, as well as his children's interests in the world of art.

Edith, Osbert and Sacheverell made names for themselves as writers and patrons of the arts after WWI. Osbert served at the front and Sacheverell had joined up in 1916 but was never sent to the trenches due to spells of bad health. Both went to Eton, but Osbert did so poorly that no university education was deemed appropriate. Sacheverell went up to Oxford in 1919 where he made valuable contacts, including friendships with artists such as composer William Walton and novelist Ronald Firbank, but he was there a

bit before the era in which Waugh flourished. Edith was home-schooled and seemed to make her own way in getting her poetry published.

The Trio set up salons in various London locations as well as at Renishaw, to which they invited those they considered representative of the leading edge in various fields. Waugh had first encountered The Trio at a performance of *Facades* in 1923 (music by William Walton and words by Edith Sitwell) in the Aeolian Hall in London to which he was taken by Harold Acton (164). This was an early example of their innovative efforts to promote their works. He made their closer acquaintance after the successes of his early novels, arriving for his first visit to Renishaw in 1930.<sup>iv</sup> By then the Sitwells had established their own reputations, Edith with her poetry, Sacheverell with his art historical works and Osbert with the force of his personality as a connoisseur of art as well as his writings.

At their peak in the interwar years, Seward describes the Sitwells and their followers as rivals of the Bloomsbury set, which had a substantial head start. Indeed, that advantage may be what allowed the Sitwells to challenge Bloomsbury because they were able to persuade the younger generation that their “*garde*” was more *avant* than that of the Bloomsburys. This book’s best chapter is the one entitled “Rivalry with Bloomsbury,” where Seward succinctly and amusingly describes how the Sitwells were perceived as credible rivals. For example, although the upper-middle-class Bloomsburys (particularly Virginia Woolf) were unashamedly snobbish, they were rankled by the fact that aristocrats such as the Sitwells managed to be accepted as the leaders of the literati and were socially handicapped in cutting their upper-class rivals down to size (175).

Among those artists of Waugh’s generation whose accounts of their pilgrimages to Renishaw are included in this book are Peter Quennell, Rex Whistler, Beverley Nichols, Anthony Powell, Lord Berners and L.P. Hartley. But according to Seward,

No one fell quite so desperately in love with Renishaw as did Evelyn Waugh. Gradually it cast its spell over him, in the end even more completely than Madresfield...Renishaw was his earliest experience of country house life, before he knew Madresfield...[He remained] the most appreciative guest even in the beleaguered [war] years...and saw the house as the last bastion of patrician civilization. (190, 210)

Another artist who fell “totally under Renishaw’s spell” was painter John Piper. Both Waugh and Piper reflected their admiration in their works.

For Waugh’s part, he wrote appreciatively of the Sitwells and Renishaw in his nonfiction works. His views are gathered in the 1952 essay “Urbane Enjoyment” but are scattered throughout his other literary journalism, particularly in favorable reviews of the books of all three Sitwells.<sup>v</sup> They are also mentioned in his letters and diaries, in some

instances not so favorably, at least in the case of Osbert. It seems that Osbert had a higher estimation of his writing ability than did Waugh. Osbert also expressed to his friends some jealousy of Waugh's success with *Brideshead Revisited*, perhaps perceiving that Waugh was poaching on the territory that he was in the process of describing in his ongoing autobiography; he told his companion, David Horner, that *Brideshead* revealed Waugh's "unpleasant snobbishness" but he said nothing in public (211). Waugh wisely chose not to pick fights with Osbert and was careful in his published writings not to say anything that would cause obvious offence. Seward goes so far as to suggest that Waugh's caution was premised at least to some degree on a desire not to jeopardize his position on the Renishaw guest list (222).

Piper was commissioned to paint landscapes of Renishaw and other Sitwell family properties over a fairly extended period. Waugh actually met him at Renishaw in 1942 at the beginning of this project: "There is an extremely charming artist called Piper staying here making a series of drawings of the house" (*Letters*, 163). Piper also illustrated and designed the dustwrappers for Osbert's autobiography.<sup>vi</sup> Waugh told Osbert that he didn't much like "Mr. Piper's sketches," suggesting politely that they may have suffered in reproduction (211). Osbert and perhaps others in the family were active in acquiring additional works by Piper. As a result Renishaw today holds the largest collection of his works (totaling over 70). It is the largest collection of paintings by a major 20<sup>th</sup>-Century British artist in private hands (207).

In the years of austerity during and after the war, Renishaw was allowed to become somewhat run down. In his later years, Osbert, following the practice of his father, gave the estate to his heir, Reresby, Sacheverell's son. Also like his father, Osbert moved to Montegufoni, and he died there. The final chapters of the book describe how Reresby restored Renishaw, both the house and gardens, during his tenancy (but fail to explain where he found the money). His daughter Alexandra, the present incumbent, has kept up that tradition, and in 2015, Renishaw was named the garden of the year by a country house association.

The book is well written and entertaining to read. It is also well produced, carefully edited and thoughtfully illustrated. Even the beginning chapters, which retell the early history of the house and family, manage to avoid drifting off into unnecessary detail. A bibliography or list of works consulted might have been useful, but otherwise the notations and index are exemplary. The portions on Waugh and his generation are quite good of their kind. There are several letters from Waugh that are cited from the Renishaw archives. This was another innovation of Reresby, who had Osbert's accumulated clutter systematically catalogued. Most of these previously unpublished letters are in the nature of "Collinses" sent by Waugh to thank Osbert for a house visit or one of his books. While not contributing any major additions to Waugh scholarship, they do contain nuggets of Wavian humor. Several of these are summarized at pp. 210-12.

Waugh's last letter to Osbert was dated 10 December 1964 on the occasion of Edith's death:

How well I remember climbing those steps at Pembridge Gardens (?) Square (?)—sitting entranced by her anecdotes. (228, question marks in original)

Waugh is here recalling Edith's flat at Pembridge Mansions in Bayswater where she lived for several lean years with Helen Rootham, her former governess. This humble abode is described by Seward as a "grim red-brick block in nearby Moscow Road in a sparsely furnished top-floor flat up four flights of stone stairs (there was no lift). They kept body and soul together on buns, packets of soup and tins of beans" (149). Virginia Woolf recalled a reception for Gertrude Stein in this flat at which "the refreshments consisted of bowls of cherries and jugs of barley water" (170).

According to Seward, Osbert never quite recovered from his depression over Edith's death. He died at his villa in Italy in 1969, a few years after Waugh. Seward also writes that Osbert regarded Waugh as his only equal as a writer (220) and considered his closest literary friendship to be that with Waugh (xiv). Waugh guessed at this flattering opinion and pretended to reciprocate.

Notes

<sup>i</sup> Osbert inherited the title as 5<sup>th</sup> Baronet when Sir George died in 1943, so was both Osbert and Sir Osbert in the years covered by this review. For the sake of simplicity, he is referred to as “Osbert” throughout.

<sup>ii</sup> This quote is cited (253) to *The Sunday Times*, 7 December 1952. The same source is later mentioned and cited (261) as an article in the *New York Times Magazine*, 30 November 1952. The original title given there was “Urbane Enjoyment Personified: Sir Osbert Sitwell.” *The Sunday Times* changed the title to “Prince of Enjoyment.” Seward seems to consider these to be different articles (e.g., 216, 221). The two differently titled versions are, however, described in *A Bibliography of Evelyn Waugh* (1986, 111) as identical, and the quotes cited to *The Sunday Times* also appear in the *NY Times* version. The article is reproduced in *Essays, Articles and Reviews* (423) under the U.S. title and will be cited here as (“Urbane Enjoyment”).

<sup>iii</sup> The family had a tradition of using family surnames as first names. Sacheverell and Reresby, the name given to his son, are both surnames of other branches of the family.

<sup>iv</sup> Waugh was accompanied on this visit by Robert Byron and later joined at Renishaw by Alastair Graham (who was “summoned” by Waugh). Sacheverell and his wife Georgia met Waugh and Byron at the station, so they may have been the source of the invitation. Waugh leaves a fairly detailed description of this 10-day visit in his *Diaries* (327-28).

<sup>v</sup> E.g., Edith: *I Live Under a Black Sun* (novel, 1937) and *Taken Care Of* (autobiography, 1964); Osbert: *Dumb Animal* (collected stories, 1930) and *Scarlet Tree* (v. 2 of autobiography, 1946); Sacheverell: *Touching the Orient* (art history, 1934) and *Roumanian Journey* (travel, 1938). Source: *A Bibliography of Evelyn Waugh* (1986). All of Waugh’s reviews of these books are available in *EAR* or on the internet (free access) except for *Dumb Animal*. All are favorable to the book reviewed.

<sup>vi</sup> Osbert’s autobiography, *Left Hand, Right Hand*, appeared in five volumes between 1945 and 1950. It was extremely popular at the time and made him a lot of money. Waugh thought it his “masterpiece” and assured him a “secure place in English literature” (“Urbane Enjoyment,” *EAR*, 426), but it is now out of print and largely forgotten.

Works Cited

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## NEWS

### **From Bright Young Thing to Last Rites: The Evelyn Waugh Collection**

To celebrate the opening of the new [Treasures of the Brotherton](#) exhibition space at the University of Leeds, and to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Waugh's death, on Wednesday, the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March, Alexander Waugh, Martin Stannard and Barbara Cooke will be discussing the collection's gems including the manuscript of *Vile Bodies*, the only complete Waugh manuscript to still reside in the UK, and rare copies of *The Cynic* and *The Pistol Troop* - magazines produced by the author in his youth.

#### **Event Schedule**

Host: Professor Michael Brennan, Leeds

13.00-13.30: Selected collection items available for viewing in the Sheppard Room

13.30-14.00: An introduction to the Waugh Collection with Sarah Prescott

14.00-14.45: Waugh's juvenilia with Alexander Waugh

14.45-15.00: Tea break

15.00-15.30: *A Little Learning*, Waugh's autobiography, with Barbara Cooke

15.30-16.00: The *Vile Bodies* manuscript with Martin Stannard

Questions and summing up

### **The Huntington**

Preliminary discussions are underway regarding a potential Evelyn Waugh conference in Los Angeles, CA, in 2017, hosted by the Evelyn Waugh Society and possibly in conjunction with the ongoing Complete Works of Evelyn Waugh project. The Los Angeles area is home to the Huntington Library, which boasts an impressive archive of Waugh materials, and, moreover, to the cemetery of Forest Lawn, a site of undying importance in the Wavian world. Please stay tuned for updates.

### **Evelyn Waugh Society**

The Waugh Society has 167 members. To join, please go to

<http://evelynwaughsociety.org/>.

The Evelyn Waugh Discussion List has 81 members. To join, please visit

[http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Evelyn\\_Waugh](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Evelyn_Waugh).

The Evelyn Waugh Society is also on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/evelynwaughsoc>.

The Waugh Society is providing an RSS feed: <http://evelynwaughsociety.org/feed>.  
And the Waugh Society's web site has opportunities for threaded discussions:  
<http://evelynwaughsociety.org/forums/>.

## **Submission Guidelines**

Essays as well as notes and news about Waugh and his work may be submitted to *Evelyn Waugh Studies* by mail or email to ([jpitcher@bennington.edu](mailto:jpitcher@bennington.edu), [patrick.query@usma.edu](mailto:patrick.query@usma.edu)). Submissions should follow MLA style and be no more than 5000 words in length. Since most readers will be familiar with Waugh's work, authors should minimize unnecessary quotations and explanatory references. All submitted essays are first screened by the Editors and if deemed acceptable for publication are then sent to Associate Editors for further review. Authors should expect to be notified of the editors' final decision within twelve weeks of submission.

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