

# EVELYN WAUGH STUDIES

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## A Re-evaluation of Evelyn Waugh's Military Service in Yugoslavia

Thomas J. Hellenbrand\*

A curious artifact is hung across the first-floor salon of the city hall in Rijeka, Croatia.<sup>1</sup> It depicts a blown-up map of the Adriatic port with thick red and blue lines streaming out of the city like a network of arteries from a beating heart. These lines, however, do not mark the tourist board's recommended wine tasting tours but, rather, escape routes for WWII soldiers. MI9 printed these maps on waterproof, silk scarves and issued them to British aviators in case of a crash landing in Axis-occupied territory.

The scarf, the original now housed in the Rijeka City Archives,<sup>2</sup> allegedly belonged to the twentieth-century English novelist Evelyn Waugh. Fantasy? Maybe. But like any good urban legend there is some factual basis for the claim. In July 1944, Waugh almost perished in a fiery plane crash in northern Croatia on his way to assist the British mission in Yugoslavia. Luckily for future readers of Waugh, he survived and returned two months later to complete his mission. A Croatian doctor who served at the hospital in the vicinity of Waugh's plane crash donated this scarf to the archives. The scarf is now prized as a memento from Waugh's half year spent in Croatia.

A few years ago, Jeffrey Meyers wrote an essay on Evelyn Waugh's WWII mission to Yugoslavia entitled "Caged Ferrets: Evelyn Waugh and Randolph Churchill in Wartime Yugoslavia."<sup>3</sup> Meyers carefully sifted through one-hundred-and-twenty pages of archival material housed at the National Archives in Kew and Churchill College, Cambridge, to present a holistic assessment of Waugh's involvement in the British mission in Yugoslavia. Although Meyers's research is impressive, his judgment of Waugh seems unduly critical. In one of many

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\* 2022 Graduate of Notre Dame Law School. I would like to thank Daniel Ortiz and Owen Toepfer for their helpful comments, suggestions, and conversations.

<sup>1</sup> Edi Jurković, "Bizaran Susret Na Visu" (*Jutarnji List*, Jan. 10, 2017) <https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/svijet/otkrivamo-tajnu-avijaticarske-svilene-marame-iz-drugog-svjetskog-rata-ovo-je-spijun-koji-je-tita-nazivao-zenom-debelih-nogu-on-je-lezbijac-5486607>; Jeffrey Manley, "Waugh's Scarf," (*Evelyn Waugh Society*, Jan. 10, 2017) <https://evelynwaughociety.org/2017/waugh-scarf/>.

<sup>2</sup> Jurković, *supra*, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> Jeffrey Meyers, "Caged Ferrets: Evelyn Waugh and Randolph Churchill in Wartime Yugoslavia" (*Evelyn Waugh Studies*, 50.2 Autumn 2019) 38.

passages evincing a distaste with Waugh's military service, Meyers writes, "A fanatical Catholic convert, Waugh defiantly sympathized with the pro-Nazi Catholic Ustashe and undermined the anti-German alliance between the godless communists and the Christian British."<sup>4</sup> He seems most offended that Waugh put the interests of the Roman Catholic Church above those of Albion; in reality, those interests should not have been so divergent. Most surprisingly, Meyers does not engage at all with Donat Gallagher's 2014 essay "Civil Waugh in Yugoslavia," which provides a detailed and ultimately positive account of Waugh's military service.<sup>5</sup>

Waugh was certainly not the ideal British soldier, but he contributed to the war effort in a way that Meyers's binary cannot accommodate. Waugh's detachment from the military hierarchy allowed him to tend to the needs of the forgotten and powerless—the Croatian peasant, the priest, and the refugee. To be fair, Meyers is only the most recent critic of Waugh's behavior in Yugoslavia; many of Waugh's biographers have written similarly caustic accounts.<sup>6</sup> They charge Waugh with "myopia"<sup>7</sup> and a "superficial grasp of the situation" there.<sup>8</sup>

So why have Meyers and the majority of Waugh's biographers written damning assessments of his military service in Yugoslavia? The first part of this paper will provide a brief overview of Waugh's service in Croatia and a few anecdotes that have been the focus of scholarly criticism. The second part, using Gallagher's essay and other primary and secondary material, will re-evaluate whether the criticism of Waugh's service in Yugoslavia is well founded. This paper argues, *pace* Meyers and Waugh's biographers, that upon closer inspection Waugh was an effective defender of the Church and Roman Catholics in Croatia, provided vital humanitarian aid to displaced persons, and demonstrated a prescience for political and military affairs.

## I. Evelyn and Randolph's Excellent Adventure

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<sup>4</sup> Meyers, 38.

<sup>5</sup> Donat Gallagher, "Civil Waugh in Yugoslavia," *In the Picture: The Facts behind the Fiction in Evelyn Waugh's Sword of Honour* (Gallagher & Flor, eds., 2014).

<sup>6</sup> Gallagher, 264. Philip Eade is a notable exception. See Philip Eade, *Evelyn Waugh: A Life Revisited* (2016) 257–66. See also *id.* at 266: "In any event, even allowing for the possibility of bias on [Waugh's] part, the persistent ill-treatment of priests in post-war Yugoslavia would show [Waugh's] diagnosis of Communist persecution of the Catholic Church to be broadly correct."

<sup>7</sup> Christopher Sykes, *Evelyn Waugh: A Biography* (1975) 265.

<sup>8</sup> Martin Stannard, *Evelyn Waugh: The Later Years 1939-1966* (1992) 119.

Before the Nazis invaded Poland in September 1939, Evelyn Waugh had already distinguished himself as novelist, satirist, and flâneur. He was a popular name within British literary circles and a guest in high demand at swanky dinner parties. He had published five novels, nearly a dozen short stories, and biographies of the pre-Raphaelite Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the Jesuit Edmund Campion. But in Byronic fashion, Waugh craved military action and, ideally, martial glory. After a brief and unsuccessful stint as a marine company officer, Waugh proceeded to serve rather ineffectively in a litany of military campaigns. There was the failed British siege of the French Vichy port of Dakar; a bumbling amphibious assault at the Libyan port of Bardia; and the frantic evacuation of Crete after a successful German airborne invasion. Yet even amid these military setbacks and the demanding requirements of the service, Waugh still found time to write, and he did so prodigiously.

In the summer of 1944, Randolph Churchill, the boorish, alcoholic son of Winston and Clementine Churchill, recruited Waugh to join him in Yugoslavia. Waugh first met Randolph in 1929 and they continued a tumultuous, love-hate friendship for close to forty years, and often crossed paths early in the war. In London on June 28, 1944, soon after Waugh had finished writing a final draft of *Brideshead Revisited*, he received a series of messages from Randolph requesting that he join a mission to Croatia “in the belief that [Waugh] should be able to heal the Great Schism between the Catholic and Orthodox churches.”<sup>9</sup> In reality, Randolph’s motivations may have been less lofty. Christopher Sykes, one of Waugh’s friends and biographers, recounted that Randolph had burst into White’s Club in London looking for Waugh and shouting “I can’t go to Croatia unless I have someone to talk to.”<sup>10</sup> Despite Waugh’s patchy history with Randolph, he eagerly accepted the offer to join the British Mission.<sup>11</sup>

The incongruous pair departed London on July 4, 1944, and made stops in Gibraltar, Algiers, Catania, and Naples before landing in Bari on the Adriatic Coast of Italy. On July 10 Waugh and Randolph departed for the island of Vis where they immediately joined a large banquet at the Partisans’ HQ which was festooned, to Waugh’s dismay, with Communist insignia—red stars, hammers, and sickles. It was here that Waugh first encountered the Partisan

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<sup>9</sup> *The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh* (Michael Davie, ed., 1976) 568-69. Hereinafter *Diaries*.

<sup>10</sup> Frank McLynn, *Fitzroy Maclean* (1992) 240.

<sup>11</sup> *Diaries*, 569.

commander Josip Broz (popularly nicknamed “Tito”) who made a bad impression on him at the banquet.<sup>12</sup>

Waugh and Randolph’s first attempt to reach Croatia literally crashed and burned. Soon after the banquet they boarded a Dakota transport plane in Bari, Italy. During the landing in Croatia, the engine stalled and the plane caught fire on impact. Several passengers near the front of the plane perished. Waugh and Randolph sat in the back of the cabin and survived escaping with some bad burns and broken bones. They were transported to a Partisan camp in Topusko, a former spa town forty miles south of Zagreb, where Waugh noted they were objects of curiosity: “All the morning people came and peered at me.”<sup>13</sup> Randolph was sent off to Algiers to receive further treatment, while Waugh convalesced in Rome.

Waugh and Randolph successfully returned to Croatia on September 16, 1944. They were moved into a farmhouse on the outskirts of Topusko. Waugh appears to have lived quietly while in Topusko—writing, drinking, and touring neighboring villages. He described it as a “town laid out for leisure” which was “suitable to our habits.”<sup>14</sup> He did not mind that the farmhouse reeked of filth, raikia, and stale Croatian cigarettes for he was blessed with his own room away from Randolph where he could read and proof *Brideshead* in relative tranquility. In reality, the British Mission was in a highly precarious position. Topusko was surrounded by the Ustashe: the Nazi puppet state which occupied the capital Zagreb and villages over the border in Bosnia.<sup>15</sup> Consequently British policy was less concerned with religious coexistence and building a democratic state in Yugoslavia than it was with its immediate war aims. For instance, Winston Churchill ordered the British Mission to “[f]ind out who is killing most Germans and suggest means by which we could help them to kill more. Politics must be a secondary consideration.”<sup>16</sup> Given this criterion, the Partisans were supposedly the obvious choice for British support.

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<sup>12</sup> Id., 571.

<sup>13</sup> *Diaries*, 574.

<sup>14</sup> Id., 579.

<sup>15</sup> But these dangers did not prevent Waugh from urgently signaling to the Mission’s headquarters at Bari for a delivery of high-quality toilet soap. See Frank McLynn, *Fitzroy Maclean* (1992) 242.

<sup>16</sup> Gallagher, 257.

In his diaries, Waugh criticized Britain's support of the Partisans. He questioned their military effectiveness<sup>17</sup> and believed that they were only pursuing their narrow war aims.<sup>18</sup> When a local priest spoke favorably about their martial virtue, Waugh responded "Is it better to be a courageous heathen or a cowardly Christian?" But he had more to worry about than just the Partisans. Randolph soon began to drive him up the wall. Combative, condescending, and consistently inebriated, Randolph was not the chummiest travel companion. Yet their sparring makes for amusing reading. Freddy, the Earl of Birkenhead -- one of their companions in Topusko -- recalled one conversation between Waugh and Randolph on the topic of literature. Randolph asked Waugh's opinion about his father's biography of the Duke of Marlborough. Waugh eviscerated the book calling it "beneath contempt" as history and "worthless" as literature.<sup>19</sup> Randolph, then, turned to Freddy and lamented, "Have you ever noticed that it is always the people who are most religious who are most mean and cruel."<sup>20</sup> Waugh responded "But my dear Randolph, you have no idea what I should be like if I wasn't."<sup>21</sup>

Waugh also indulged in a bawdy sense of humor that vexed his superiors. He had been loudly spreading the rumor throughout London, Bari, and Vis that Marshall Tito was in fact a woman and a lesbian. Freddy recounted Waugh's perverse humor in detail:

Far more dangerous in its consequences was his obstinate insistence that Tito was a woman. He never referred to the Yugoslav leader except as 'Auntie,' and claimed that the Marshal had been seen emerging from the sea off the island of Vis in a wet bathing dress and that there was no possible question about 'her' sex. So obsessed was he with his fantasy that he came almost to believe it and when, at a moment of particular intransigence on the part of Tito to the allied leaders, I remarked how tiresome the Marshal was being, Evelyn replied: 'I think she has come to a rather difficult age for women.' He had already spread the rumour in London and Bari and now repeated it in Croatia, never bothering to lower his voice, so that we became much concerned that the Yugoslav members of the staff would overhear him and that our work might be seriously

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<sup>17</sup> *Diaries*, 580.

<sup>18</sup> *Id.*, 579–80.

<sup>19</sup> *Evelyn Waugh and His World* (David Pryce-Jones, ed., 1973) 150.

<sup>20</sup> *Id.*

<sup>21</sup> *Id.*

imperilled. With this fear in mind I said to him: ‘For God’s sake stop this nonsense, Evelyn. Everyone knows that he’s a man and a good looking one at that.’ But Evelyn, with lips pursed, rather like the abhorred Effie’s, merely replied obstinately: ‘Her face is pretty, but her legs are *very* thick.’<sup>22</sup>

Tito was in his early fifties, strong-chinned, broad-shouldered, and had been living in the damp caves for some time after narrowly escaping a surprise German attack on his previous camp in Bosnia. He must have been bewildered by the jests of the baby-faced writer turned soldier who was ostensibly tasked with aiding the Partisan war effort.

In December 1944, Waugh escaped Randolph when he was transferred to the beautiful walled, seaside town of Dubrovnik in the southernmost tip of Croatia. There he served as the British Mission’s representative to the Partisans. He would attend Mass at the Franciscan church, a Romanesque structure with a charming cloister in the northwest corner of the town. He again deplored the Partisans for covering the town in communist slogans and painting “*Zivio* Tito” and “*Zivio* Stalin” that cloaked the medieval walls and Baroque facades.<sup>23</sup> (But he would be similarly repulsed by the tenor of the town today: George R.R. Martin enthusiasts flooding the Stradun, cell phones unsheathed, obliviously passing the marvellous monasteries of noble Ragusa on their way to purchase Game of Thrones kitsch at the nearest gift shop.) Waugh lived in Dubrovnik for almost two months before he returned to England via Rome.

It is easy to read these hand-picked anecdotes and dismiss Waugh as petulant soldier and subversive character within the British mission. Waugh’s petty feuds with Randolph, his dislike of the Partisans and open mockery of Tito, and general impudence appear to discredit his effectiveness as a soldier. Part II will reconsider these conclusions.

## **II. Re-Evaluating Waugh’s Service in Yugoslavia**

But was Waugh really so disruptive, ineffective, and short-sighted? Was he just a shill for the Catholic Church and its (alleged) Ustashe allies? Waugh’s diaries, his companions’ memoirs, and Gallagher’s research demonstrate otherwise. Reading the diaries, one does not find a fascist sympathizer but simply an ardent defender of the Church, its clergy, and the Croatian peasants

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<sup>22</sup> *Id.*, 150–51.

<sup>23</sup> *Diaries*, 600.

who were largely forgotten amid the great power politics of the Allies. Waugh also concerned himself with the liberty of the Church—freedom to worship, administration of the sacraments, and the protection of ecclesiastical property from lawless appropriation. While defending the interests of the Church, he also performed corporal works of mercy for the poor, lost, and persecuted who knocked at his door in Dubrovnik.

Before discussing Waugh's service during WWII, it is important to note that this was his second visit to Croatia. Waugh and his first wife (Evelyn Waugh *née* Gardner) had visited Dubrovnik while on a tour of the Mediterranean in early 1929. He subsequently wrote a travel journal entitled *Labels*<sup>24</sup> which he proofed just before his conversion to Catholicism in September 1930. Fewer than ten pages are devoted to Croatia and Montenegro, but Waugh's impressions on these pages will contextualize some of his behavior in Yugoslavia during WWII.

First, Waugh had a particular gloss on Croatian history: they were westerners constantly under threat from "barbarian" hordes—the Slavs, Bosnians, Serbs, and Turks.<sup>25</sup> Second, he expressed contempt at the machination of Western powers who meddled in local Balkan affairs. Commenting on the city-state of Ragusa, he wrote "It was the simple task of the allied statesmen of the Peace Conference to undo the work of a thousand years and hand it over to its traditional enemies, the mongrel kingdom of the Jugo-Slavs."<sup>26</sup> Third, Waugh believed that the Orthodox Slavs oppressed the Croatian Catholics. He mentioned that the "Slav officials" in Dubrovnik compelled all shops to close for an Orthodox religious festival; this posed a "real hardship" on the inhabitants, a majority of whom are Roman Catholic.<sup>27</sup> Finally, he had a very favorable impression of the Croatian people. He observed that the Croatian peasants "look[ed] very clean and starched in their peasant costumes" and noted that the townspeople had a "general courtesy and dignity."<sup>28</sup> In contrast, while walking through a market in Cetinje, he describes the Montenegrins as "saving up to buy cartridges for a stolen army rifle, and so snipe the neighbours in a more deadly manner from behind their pig-styes."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Evelyn Waugh, *Labels, Waugh Abroad: Collected Travel Writing* (2003). Hereinafter *Labels*.

<sup>25</sup> Compare *Labels*, 139, with *Diaries*, 585, 600.

<sup>26</sup> Compare *Labels*, 139, with *Diaries*, 579, 607.

<sup>27</sup> Compare *Labels*, 139, with *Diaries*, 615.

<sup>28</sup> *Labels*, 140.

<sup>29</sup> *Id.*, 145.

One can point to these prejudices expressed in *Labels* as evidence that Waugh was using outdated categories to evaluate the current situation in Croatia. But the evidence shows that while Waugh still held these prejudices he was nonetheless able to transcend them by working closely with and learning from the people he encountered there. He was intimately connected with the Croats in Topusko and Dubrovnik. In a letter to his wife, he writes “[a] great number of prayers are being put up on my behalf” and that he experienced “for once in [his] life a sense of being popular.”<sup>30</sup> This was not braggadocio. All reports indicate that Waugh deeply cared for the plight of those suffering in Croatia. Freddy recalled that Waugh would attend Mass each Sunday in Topusko with “a handful of devout but nervous peasants . . . and a [Partisan] soldier with a slung sub-machine gun stationed by the altar to catch any whisper of heresy against the Cause which might escape the priest’s lips.”<sup>31</sup> Waugh took particular care of priests and nuns so they could continue their pastoral duties. In Dubrovnik he provided supplies to nuns and they “twittered like sparrows” and negotiated a delivery of one-thousand rations to the starving Dominicans.<sup>32</sup>

Additionally, Waugh tended to the needs of all those, Catholic or not, suffering from the deprivations of war. In Dubrovnik, while distributing rations to starving refugees, he was irritable and behaved rudely toward a South African woman and her son.<sup>33</sup> His conscience panged him over the next three days, so he found the woman and her son he had offended and promised them regular rations.<sup>34</sup> Waugh ambled around the Lapad peninsula near Dubrovnik, making regular house visits to ascertain need and distribute supplies accordingly.<sup>35</sup> In the days leading up to his departure from Dubrovnik, he was inundated with gifts from all those whom he had assisted. He fondly reflected on his service in Croatia:

Looking back on the last two days I find that everything I have done, which is not much, has been benevolent—giving jobs to the needy, food to the hungry, arranging to get a

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<sup>30</sup> “Letter to Laura Waugh, 23 January 1945 [Dubrovnik],” *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh* (Mark Armory, ed., 1980) 197-98.

<sup>31</sup> *Evelyn Waugh and His World*, 149.

<sup>32</sup> *Diaries*, 610-11.

<sup>33</sup> *Id.*, 609.

<sup>34</sup> *Id.*, 609.

<sup>35</sup> *Id.*, 603, 608.

Canadian moved towards Canada, helping a Dominican priest swap wine for flour. There are few in the Army can say this and also say they have been solitary and comfortable.<sup>36</sup>

A standing question is Waugh's precise involvement in the evacuation of Jewish war refugees from Croatia. In Topusko he encountered groups of displaced Jewish refugees seeking transportation to Italy. Unfortunately the Jews were the last on the list for evacuation—crashed airmen and war casualties were first in line and constantly arriving in Topusko.<sup>37</sup> Meyers credits the British Mission with the successful evacuation of the Jews, and he claims that Waugh minimized these achievements in his diaries.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, in his diaries and letters, Waugh seems detached from the plight of the Jewish war refugees.<sup>39</sup> In contrast, his fictional accounts paint a much more proactive and sympathetic picture of his humanitarian impulse toward the displaced Jews. In the *Sword of Honour* trilogy, Guy Crouchback -- a character loosely modelled off his own wartime experiences -- becomes particularly concerned with evacuating a group of Jewish refugees and succeeds in facilitating their evacuation.<sup>40</sup>

Which account is true? Gallagher and Villar correctly note that the diary accounts are not “symptomatic of [Waugh's] real worries,” but, as we have seen, Waugh often describes occasions where he assisted needy persons. If Waugh really was instrumental in procuring the evacuation to Italy, why wouldn't he mention this in his diaries or letters? Certainly, more research needs to be done, but Gallagher has found a piece of helpful archival evidence that may resolve this question. In 1967, Brigadier Fitzroy Maclean remarked that “Evelyn was very active over [the evacuation of the Jewish refugees] and rightly so.”<sup>41</sup> Additionally, while in Topusko, Waugh wrote a letter to his wife mentioning that “[w]e also arrange for the evacuation of

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<sup>36</sup> Id., 609–10.

<sup>37</sup> Carlos Villar Flor, “Displacement and Exile in Evelyn Waugh's Post-War Fiction” (*Brno Studies in English*, 42.2 2016) 91, 95.

<sup>38</sup> Meyers, 38.

<sup>39</sup> E.g., “Letter to Laura Waugh, 24 October 1944 [Topusko],” *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh* (Mark Armory, ed., 1980): “Our poor jews stay in increasing distress. The more airmen arrive the smaller their chances of getting out” (191); *Diaries*: “No inhabitants [in Topusko] except soldiers and Jews awaiting evacuation who give the Communist salute and write illiterate appeals to Randolph. Permission has been granted to take them to Bari” (579).

<sup>40</sup> *Diaries*, 579.

<sup>41</sup> Gallagher, 266.

distressed jews.”<sup>42</sup> These passages indicate that he had some direct involvement in the evacuation. There are certainly moments in his diaries where Waugh describes the Jews in pitiable terms, but under this layer of detachment is a Christian charitableness. For example, in Dubrovnik he houses and feeds a Jewish interpreter for whom he has no work.<sup>43</sup> These are scattered pieces of evidence and shouldn't be exaggerated, but they complicate Meyer's account and give some indication that Waugh played a more active role in the evacuation of displaced Jews.

After Waugh left Dubrovnik (Davies conjectures that he was expelled from Croatia by the Partisans<sup>44</sup>), he wrote a short report on the Catholic Church in Croatia for the British Foreign Office titled “Church and State in Liberated Croatia.”<sup>45</sup> Waugh's use of “liberated” in the title is perhaps tinged with irony. When the Partisans entered a town liberation was closely followed by liquidation of certain segments of the population, including clerics.<sup>46</sup> In the report, Waugh meticulously documented -- based on interviews and eyewitness accounts -- Partisan killings and imprisonment of priests. Gallagher shows that there is overwhelming evidence that the Partisans shot prominent citizens when they entered towns or cities.<sup>47</sup> Priests were frequently among those selected under the justification that they were influential and “collaborators” with the Ustashe.<sup>48</sup> And Waugh noted one priest had received a fifteen-year prison sentence simply for mocking Tito in a publication. But the report was not a polemical screed; Waugh acknowledged instances when Catholic priests had joined the Ustashe or actively promoted its fascist ideology. He contended, however, that these priests were few and far between. Gallagher carefully reviewed Waugh's report and concluded that it gave “an essentially truthful account” of the situation in Croatia.<sup>49</sup>

Waugh astutely recognized that Britain's true interests did not align with the Partisans'. The conclusions in his report have only been vindicated with the passing of time. The British

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<sup>42</sup> “Letter to Laura Waugh, 16 October 1944 [Topusko],” *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh* (Mark Amory, ed., 1980) 187.

<sup>43</sup> *Diaries*, 610.

<sup>44</sup> *Id.*, 613.

<sup>45</sup> The Report is reprinted in “Catholic Croatia Under Tito's Heel” (*Salisbury Review*, 11 1992) 10-18.

<sup>46</sup> Gallagher, 280–83.

<sup>47</sup> *Id.*, 281–83.

<sup>48</sup> *Id.*, 282.

<sup>49</sup> *Id.*, 301.

either ignored or, at best, were blind to the fact that Tito's regime had the same authoritarian impulses of the Ustashe. Defenders of British policy in Yugoslavia prevaricated and hand-waved whenever confronted with Partisan abuses. The diplomatic relationship with the new communist Yugoslav was too precious to jeopardize. Certainly one should be cognizant of the perils of liberal state-building, but Waugh was not advocating for an intrusive and indefinite British presence in the Balkans. Instead, he implored Britain to take some responsibility for foisting an anti-religious regime on a Catholic populace. He also advocated for the use of diplomacy and international law to contain the worst Partisan abuses, for Britain to use its 'soft power' against communist Yugoslavia. For example, his report to the Foreign Office concludes:

If [Tito] were informed that the position of the Church under his rule is causing alarm, that it is not the policy of the Allies to destroy one illiberal regime in Europe in order to substitute another, that a Government which violates one of the principles of the Atlantic Charter cannot be regarded as acceptable, he might be induced to modify his policy far enough to give the Church a chance of life.<sup>50</sup>

Waugh was likely referring to the provision in the Atlantic Charter that confirmed Britain's commitment to the principles of "life, liberty, independence, and religious freedom, and in the preservation of human rights and justice in their own *as well as in other lands*."<sup>51</sup> He seems correct, especially in hindsight, to have questioned Britain's compliance with these commitments in the case of Tito's Yugoslavia.

Nor does one get the impression from his diaries or other reports that Waugh was in any way sympathetic to the Ustashe or that he "openly courted" them as Meyers alleges.<sup>52</sup> In "Church and State in Liberated Croatia," he calls the Ustashe "the most fanatical and ferocious of the Croat nationalists" and comments on their "criminal character" and "brutality." He quantified in minute detail the Croatian clergy's involvement with the Ustashe rather than lapsing into generalizations that had no reality on the ground. He also refused to countenance unfounded rumours about the Partisans that would have only exacerbated violence and

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<sup>50</sup> "Catholic Croatia Under Tito's Heel" (*Salisbury Review*, 11 1992) 17.

<sup>51</sup> "The Atlantic Charter," (Aug. 14, 1941, last updated July 2, 2018) [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_16912.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_16912.htm) (emphasis added).

<sup>52</sup> Meyers, 43.

persecution. When a Dominican Prior told Waugh that the Partisans planned to execute all those connected with the recent celebration of St. Blaise's feast day in Dubrovnik, Waugh rejected the hysterics.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, he showed great charity toward the Partisans. On one occasion, Waugh relates "[a] Partisan came to say he had a pain, could I give him jam to cure it."<sup>54</sup> Two days later, a "hideous" female Partisan visited Waugh, and he treated her to "soup, chocolates, cigarettes, and an embarkation card to Bari."<sup>55</sup> It says a great deal that individual Partisans visited Waugh *and* that he continued to care for them. He may have remonstrated against the official British policy in Yugoslavia and its alliance with the Partisans, but it is a misrepresentation to allege that he "support[ed]," "sympathized," or "courted" the Ustashe.<sup>56</sup>

Similarly, it is hyperbole to suggest that Waugh's actions "alienated Tito and damaged relations between Britain and its crucial ally."<sup>57</sup> Over a year before Waugh set foot in Topusko, Tito had already made plans to jettison the British alliance. Stephen Clissold, a political adviser to Maclean and companion of Waugh in Topusko, quotes a confidential directive from Tito to Croat leaders where Tito warns of the imperialistic goals of the British mission. Tito ordered that "in public, the alliance between the Soviet Union, Britain and the United States must be stressed, and the two latter powers depicted as our allies. But their agents and pawns inside our country must be opposed."<sup>58</sup> Tito's mind was already made up about the British long before Waugh dared to question his virility.

## Conclusion

Waugh could be pretentious, irritable, and obstinate at times. He did not always endear himself to seasoned military officers who expected order and obedience. Nevertheless, he does not deserve the vitriol directed at him for his service in Yugoslavia; these accusations fly in the face of substantial evidence that Waugh was an effective humanitarian, keenly understood the political situation in Yugoslavia, and accurately anticipated the horrendous political and social results of handing the reins of the government over to Tito. Meyers concluded that Randolph and

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<sup>53</sup> *Diaries*, 614.

<sup>54</sup> *Id.*, 611.

<sup>55</sup> *Id.*, 612.

<sup>56</sup> Meyers, 30, 38, 43.

<sup>57</sup> *Id.*, 30.

<sup>58</sup> Steven Clissold, "Civil Waugh in Croatia" (*South Slav Journal*, III.3 1980) 26-27.

Waugh “did more harm than good” in Croatia.<sup>59</sup> Perhaps this accurately describes Randolph, but a different story could be told of Waugh. Travel to Croatia now and you will find few traces of Tito while Waugh’s scarf is hung high in Rijeka’s City Hall.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Meyers, 43.

<sup>60</sup> Milena Borden, "Evelyn Waugh's Yugoslav Mission: Politics and Religion" (*Evelyn Waugh Studies*, 49.1 Spring 2018) 13.

## Fall and Rise: The Reborn Hero in the Works of Waugh and Schnitzler

Francisco Teles da Gama<sup>1</sup>

“Recipe to Make a Hero”

Take yourself a man,

Made of nothing, like us,

And life-sized.

Soak his flesh,

Slowly,

With a sharp, irrational certainty,

Intense as hate or hunger.

Then, near the end,

Let a flag be waved

And sound a bugle.

Serve him dead.

Reinaldo Ferreira (23-24).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Francisco Teles da Gama is a historian, and the director and founder of the FITA (Friends in the Arts) Association. He has a degree in History and a Master’s in Medieval History from the College of Arts and Humanities of the University of Lisbon. He has worked at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, the Bordalo Pinheiro Museum, the Museum of Lisbon, the Palácio da Independência, and the Monastery of Batalha. He is currently the Editor-in-Chief of the international arts and culture FITA Magazine and the Coordinator of the International FITA Awards of Literature, which are intended to reward the most talented novelists, chroniclers, playwrights, essayists and poets.

<sup>2</sup> Translated by the author.

The following pages were composed in the form of a comparative study that contrasts two immortal contemporary literary works, written by prominent authors from the early 20th century. The first is the dramaturgical text *Fink und Fliederbusch*, created in 1917 by Arthur Schnitzler, and the second the novel *Decline and Fall*, published in 1928 by Evelyn Waugh.

105 years ago, in 1917, Waugh published his first essay in *Drawing and Design* magazine, "In Defense of Cubism," and Schnitzler launched his book, unaware that in London an admirable journalist and writer was emerging. Despite this coincidence, Schnitzler's path is very different to that of the Londoner. Born in Vienna in 1862, he became famous as a playwright, novelist and physician. His father was an otorhinolaryngologist, and expected a similar future for his son, discouraging his literary talent. His example led Arthur to graduate in Medicine in 1895 at the University of Vienna, specializing in psychiatry under the influence of Sigmund Freud.

In order to understand some of the concepts explained here, it is worth mentioning the friendship between Schnitzler and Freud, a detail that influenced the author to use the doctor's theories in his dramaturgical texts. The book *Fraulein Else* is a brilliant demonstration of that (Schnitzler, 2008). In this 1926 monologue the ending is tragic, resulting in the protagonist's suicide, which would also be the cause of the death of Schnitzler's own daughter, in 1931.

The action of *Fink und Fliederbusch* takes place at the beginning of the 20th century, in the city of Vienna, capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in a literary and artistic setting, where opera, theatre and politics stand out. Bureaucracy ruled in the 1910s, and this is reflected in Franz Kafka's emblematic phrase, "All revolutions evaporate and leave behind only the silt of a new bureaucracy." In the play we follow the life of two distinguished journalists.

Fliederbusch was a simple novice journalist living in the impoverished district of Vienna, a member of a large family, who carried in his intellect the ambition to go further, while always remaining humble. He had an underpaid trainee job on the editorial staff of a liberal and secular daily newspaper, *Die Gegenwart (The Present)*. He had been doing this job for many months because the old school was in place and did not give the new editor any room to innovate and stand out from the crowd of successful journalists or those who were merely presuming to be great, like Kajetan.

In another periodical, radically opposite to *Die Gegenwart*, we glimpse Fink, a fashionable and handsome young adult from a wealthy rural family, a social climber and adulator. This weekly newspaper, *Die Elegante Welt* (*The Elegant World*), was strongly influenced by Catholicism and conservative politics, aimed at the upper class. In other words, there could not be more adverse people in more contradictory circles. Our heroes wrote in each respective newspaper, criticizing each other's opinions, under the pretense of truth and reason, on subjects such as class difference or the duties of today's society. The rivalry was such that the son of the editor-in-chief of *Die Elegante Welt*, Egon, imposes on Fink a duel with Fliederbusch. What could possibly prevent such a tragic event is the simple fact that Fink and Fliederbusch are the same person, the protagonist having assumed a bipolar, greedy attitude. Despite this major detail, the duel is scheduled and the godparents are chosen.

Fink got on with high society, and it is in this context that we glimpse a true or cynical, secret passion between him and the very noble Princess Priska Wendolin-Ratzeburg. Fink captivated her with flattering words and by proving his culture and knowledge, extolling Priska's resemblance to her remote ancestors. The possibility of her protégé's death overwhelmed Priska, who saw Fink as calm and confident, even a few minutes before the fateful duel.

When the characters realize that it was all a hoax and that Fink or Fliederbusch had deceived them, to the reader's astonishment, they elevate the faker to hero and build up a mythification of the journalist. The result is the attempt to make him the editor of a single newspaper, with ever-increasing sums of money, in an open-air auction, haggling over the art and ingenuity of a master of letters. All would end well, in the words of Count Gisbert Niederhof, the winner of the auction, "Give the princess your arm, you hero... and victim of the day!" (168).<sup>3</sup>

These duels were more common in the 19th century as a way for journalists to demonstrate their honor. As the writer Guy de Maupassant tells us:

There is still one kind of duel before which I bow, and that is the industrial duel; the duel for publicity; the duel between journalists. When the circulation of a newspaper starts to fall, one of the editors devotes himself and, in a virulent article, insults a fellow

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<sup>3</sup> Translated by the author.

journalist. The other replies. The public stops as if in front of a juggler's hut. And a duel takes place, which is talked about in the salons. (8)<sup>4</sup>

In 1928, the narrative of Evelyn Waugh's book unfolds, set between the United Kingdom, France and Greece. The lavish settings of the story may be a good indicator of contrast with the debacle of the New York stock market crash that broke out the following year. The focus of the whole novel is on a twenty-year-old boy, a theology student at Scone College, Oxford. His name is Paul Pennyfeather, a compulsive lover of study, abiding by all the rules of morality and good manners. Paul is an orphan patiently waiting to reach the age of twenty-one, when his guardian will dispense to him the inheritance his father left him in his will.

However, fate has a way of throwing the poor aspiring shepherd into disgrace. One night, while cycling back to his room, he is mistaken for one of the bullies from the Bollinger Club because of the light blue and white colors of his tie, and ends up being accused of a transgression, which costs him expulsion from Oxford and the unexpected search for a job that will sustain him, at least until he reaches the required age. The Bullingdon Club was the inspiration for the club Waugh invokes in the pages of this comedy of deceit. Bullingdon, in resemblance to Bollinger, is a restricted circle of pupils drawn from noble families or royal houses around the world. The club was founded in the late 18th century, originally aimed at cricket and horse-racing, a purpose which has been distorted over the years. High status is the passport to enter this community, but not only, as the members' objectives go beyond any idea we may have of a formal gentlemen's club, since their annual dinner always ends with the complete destruction of the room where they dine, not to mention the countless excesses committed at that meal, which excels in its lack of frugality. The author even relates an incident that occurred at one of these dinners, where a fox was killed by throwing bottles at it. In other words, the opposite of everything Paul stands for. There are still members of the Bullingdon Club today, many of them in high positions in society.

Chance leads Paul to teach French and German, despite his complete ignorance of the second language, at Llanabba Castle College in Wales on a miserable salary. His colleagues are a nullity in some respects but they prove interesting and worthy of Paul's friendship, in his view.

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<sup>4</sup> Translated by the author.

All are there almost by punishment or the misadventures of their existence, as is the case with our protagonist, Prendergast or Captain Grimes, who is revealed throughout the narrative to be immune to death, which results in an internal speech of apothotic exaltation by Pennyfeather about his friend:

He was a life force. Sentenced to death in Flanders, he popped up in Wales; drowned in Wales, he emerged in South America; engulfed in the dark mystery of Egdon Mire, he would rise again somewhere at some time, shaking from his limbs the musty integuments of the tomb. Surely he had followed in the Bacchic train of distant Arcady, and played on the reeds of myth by forgotten streams, and taught the childish satyrs the art of love? Had he not suffered unscathed the fearful dooms of all the offended gods of all the histories, fire, brimstone and yawning earthquakes, plague and pestilence? Had he not stood, like the Pompeian sentry, while the Citadels of the Plain fell to ruin about his ears? Had he not, like some grease-caked Channel-swimmer, breasted the waves of the Deluge? Had he not moved unseen when darkness covered the waters? (221-22)

The speech demonstrates the aim of the present study, an overlapping between *Fink und Fliederbusch* and *Decline and Fall*, in the resurrection and praise of the returned hero, like a prodigal son.

The piano lessons that Paul teaches Peter Beste-Chetwynde, which he is not competent to teach, lead him to meet Margot, the mother of his perceptive pupil. Margot is a woman in her thirties, owner of countless plots of land in England and even Greece, with a fortune estimated in the millions of pounds. This lady awakens Paul's heart, and to his happiness she also falls in love, a recurring event when encountering a well-spoken man. Margot's various love affairs are apparent throughout the narrative. This one results in a marriage proposal and it seems that the stars have aligned to compensate the poor orphan. Paul even decides to invite the man responsible for his expulsion from Oxford as best man at the wedding, as he feels that this whole miracle of happiness is due to him.

Nevertheless, do not let the reader be fooled, for the wealthy woman possesses rivers of money at the expense of prostitution and trafficking women to South America. Once, a few days before the ceremony, the groom is sent at the request of his beloved to Marseille to resolve an

impasse that prevented some women from travelling to South America. On the wedding day the fairytale collapses and Pennyfeather is arrested for trafficking women while enjoying a well-watered meal at the London Ritz Hotel. He will surely only emerge from the dreadful cell in the form of a coffin. An announced death orchestrated by several of his friends, whom he has won over throughout the novel's thread, helps him to escape this tragic outcome. The reader should not think that we are referring to a real death, but a fake one. Paul is reborn under another name and proceeds to finish the course he left halfway through. Giving a 360-degree turn to the journey of a simple man of knowledge, who is now ennobled with salvation from the fury of Hades.

It is noticeable that the characters that are paraded throughout the text are always the same under various metamorphoses. Philbrick is the greatest example, who is presented to us at first as a butler and at the end a millionaire. This servant calls himself Sir Solomon Philbrick, a man of many identities: writer; criminal; or even a wealthy businessman, responsible for the death of the Portuguese Ambassador in England. This bipolar individual is accused of false identity and we dare say bears a serious resemblance to Fink.

The two methodological lines of the works, which are profiled here, are not very far apart, written within a little more than ten years of each other, and they follow the same course: the bankruptcy of the men of letters and the election to eternity of the reborn hero, after an inevitable death proclaimed. Both Fink and Paul rise from the ashes, like a phoenix, fulfilling the whims of the authors, thus boycotting the predictable vision of the reader. Added to this characteristic is the detail of the simplicity and routine of the two main players, who seek a brighter future, despite the disbelief of society, managing to achieve it at the end of the bitter adventure. Even the age of our protagonists is identical, being in their early twenties, a time when they are looking for their first job, which as we know painfully well is not always very lucrative or encouraging.

It is not by chance that Fink and Paul have a similar outcome, for at the time it was normal to be saved by a narrow escape from death, whether in World War I or in more specific cases. There are several people who can attest to this: Prince Manuel of Portugal, who escaped death by a grazing shot on the 1st February 1908, when King Carlos and the Royal Prince Luís Filipe were killed by Manuel Buiça's bullets; King Alfonso XIII and Queen Victoria Eugenia of

Spain incredibly survived the bombing of their carriage in 1906 during the procession following the royal wedding; the false legend of Princess Anastasia Romanov, in which it is said that she escaped unharmed from the Bolshevik attacks in the assassination of the Russian royal family in 1918. This myth was created to give hope for the restoration of the monarchy; Adolf Hitler, during World War I, turned his back on death, on 28 September 1918, in an act of benevolence and solidarity by the British soldier Henry Tandey, who in a battle at Marcoing, French territory, after victory, did not shoot his wounded enemy, because he thought he was too young to die. Hitler thanked him and fled; finally, in 1916, Grigori Rasputin overcame fatal poisoning with his immunity to the potassium cyanide that had been inserted into his meal at a banquet organized by Prince Yussupov and other members of the Russian high aristocracy. He was later shot, with a total of eleven direct hits, castrated and finally beaten, but he remained alive. Only when his already unconscious body was thrown into the Neva River can a death be attributed, caused not by his wounds, but by hypothermia. All of these conflicts are well described in Evelyn Waugh's *Vile Bodies* by the disgraced speech of the deposed King of Ruritania, when he recounts the fall of the royal family during World War I: "All my family they have bombs thrown at them, but the Queen, never. My poor Uncle Joseph he blow all to bits one night at the opera, and my sister she find three bombs in her bed" (37).

What I intend to demonstrate with these real cases is that the authors of the works, reported above, were based on the context that surrounded them, on the sensationalist press and political instability. Unlike the Russian tales and novels of the 19th century, where the heroes often died, never to return to life, with rare exceptions, like the ghost of Akakii Akakievitch, in Nikolai Gogol's *The Overcoat*.

Schnitzler and Waugh's texts transcribe a bloody but surprising era in which the hero thwarts the predictable victory of Charon, who instead loses money and countless souls to two writing geniuses.

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## **The Chicken or the Egg? 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *Brideshead* Book Publication in the USA<sup>1</sup>**

Jeffrey Manley

The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of *Brideshead Revisited* in America in book format was marked in January 2021. A serialized version had been published in four installments in November 1944 - February 1945 in the American magazine *Town & Country*, but that was in an abbreviated format, not approved or sanctioned by Evelyn Waugh, who was stationed in Italy and Yugoslavia when the serial arrangements were made. The novel first appeared in a format approved by Waugh on 28 May 1945. That edition was jointly published in the UK by Chapman & Hall and The Book Society.

The US debut also involved a book club edition. Both the latter and the first trade edition were published more than 7 months later, in January 1946. The US publisher Little, Brown had apparently planned to issue the book in September the previous year,<sup>2</sup> but the Book of the Month Club (“BoMC”) wanted to make the book one of its monthly selections and decided to offer it to members as its January 1946 choice. Whether this delay was due to availability of paper or planning for advertising and printing/ distribution isn’t known. Little, Brown was in no position to argue, given the leverage of the BoMC, which at the time was in the process of aggressively increasing its membership as wartime paper rationing ended. During the 1940s its membership climbed from 363,000 in 1939 until in 1946 it peaked at 890,000.

In an apparent compromise, Little, Brown issued a “limited edition” in September 1945 under its previous publication schedule. On the copyright page, it states that it was “Published September 1945.” Below that, a notice appeared: “This edition[,] limited to 600 copies, of which

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<sup>1</sup> An abbreviated version of this article appeared in the Evelyn Waugh Society’s online news page in January 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the original plan would have seen the US edition issued in Spring 1945. That schedule assumed the text would be based on the typescript left by Waugh with his UK publishers before departing to Yugoslavia. A copy of that typescript had been sent to Little, Brown, and they may have set a text from that (or begun to do so) but were warned off in December 1944 when Chapman & Hall received major changes in the text that Waugh made in Yugoslavia. Those were incorporated into a new UK proof copy that was received by Little, Brown in March 1945. It was probably then that they would have rescheduled publication for September.

450 are for sale and 150 are for presentation, has been printed before the printing of the first American trade edition.”

The normal Little, Brown trade edition was rescheduled for January 1946, consistent with the BoMC’s distribution of the book as its choice for that month. One of BoMC’s conditions was that the trade edition not be distributed in advance of its selection month. The book club members would have elected their choice in December 1945 when the BoMC’s monthly *News* brochure was distributed. That journal included 6 pages of material promoting *Brideshead*. The opening page contains a drawing of what looks like a fountain in a grove of trees and a quote from the review that follows. This is by Christopher Morley, author and literary critic with over 100 books (mostly novels) to his credit. He is best known for his novel *Kitty Foyle* (1939), a bestseller that was made into a Hollywood film in 1940 for which Ginger Rogers won an Academy Award for best actress. Morley had been a selection judge for the BoMC from its early days.

His review reveals little of the book’s plot but discusses matters such as its portrayal of “creamy English charm...that is done every ten years or so by some English novelist who is no longer quite young.” He warns that many American readers will find certain features of the book “puzzling” and then spends several paragraphs explaining the post-war generation, Waugh’s “Oxford-mongering” (Morley was a Rhodes Scholar at New College) and various books mentioned in the novel. He also offers a long list of “Oxford small talk “ examples and supposes that they will not bother the American reader “because they are carried along in fluent and purposeful narrative” (2). He cites a footnote on page 33 of the US editions that identifies the source of Anthony Blanche’s reading from *The Waste Land* (something I had never noticed because it does not appear in UK editions). Morley felt that the “legalistic” footnote “completely ruptur[ed] the spell” cast by Blanche’s recitation of the poem. He could think of “nothing more comic in modern American publishing” than this intervening “copyright permission” footnote (2-3).

After a discussion of the characters, with particular reference to Hooper, Morley explains that

Mr. Waugh's plot is cooked and calculated, and his manner is deliberately soufflé; if you need to put social and serious feeling into it you've got to put it there mostly for yourself. His bravura chaff, his delicate double-talk, is so neatly done that when you come to a passage in which he bares his bosom, you can scarcely believe it. That is an English habit as old as Chaucer. It goes hard with a Puritan reader; it is not his language.... It is grim comedy, for sure, and comedy of excessive mannerisms. There's more arsenic than old lace.... (3)

The review ends with this:

Mr. Waugh's novel has the horror and sweetness and delicate contagion of sophisticated memories. If you have none such of your own, you'll probably resent it. But some people, and I confess myself one, can be enchanted and transfixed, even corrupted—and still be grateful. (4)

What follows in the *BoMC News* is of equal or perhaps even greater interest. It is a profile entitled "Captain Evelyn Waugh" by Randolph Churchill. He begins by explaining that Waugh, although "one of the three or four finest writers of English prose," has irritated and even angered those in "leading intellectual circles in London" (4). He goes on to explain that this irritation arises from Waugh's failure in his own writing to make reference or allude to the current French writers so popular among the London *literati*, as well as his snub of Bloomsbury and adoption of right-wing positions contrary to those of writers such as Cyril Connolly and Brian Howard, while also rejecting the modern world to the point of refusing to use the telephone:

Waugh is a man about whom it is impossible to be neutral. You are bound to love him or to hate him. For he is not content to confine his satirical genius to his writings, it is part of his every-day life; and friend and foe alike must be prepared to suffer under the thrusts of his poisoned rapier. (5)

Randolph must be the first to appear in print with the story of Waugh's refusal to obey Randolph's order to seek cover in a slit trench along with himself and the others during an air raid that took place while they were on assignment in WWII Yugoslavia. Randolph was his superior officer, but Waugh obeyed only grudgingly, leaving the white coat he was wearing on

the ground spread out beside the trench as if to show the enemy their position. Randolph explained that he later apologized to Waugh if he thought the order was rudely given. Waugh answered, in a line now apocryphal, as quoted by Randolph: “It was not your rudeness I minded; it was your cowardice that surprised me” (*idem*).

The *BoMC News* section devoted to *Brideshead* closes with two “Other First Appraisals,” by Glenway Wescott, a novelist, and Louis Kronenberger, literary critic and author. They were probably among the judges on the panel that selected *Brideshead* as the “Book of the Month.” Their one-paragraph opinions are also favorable, although Kronenberger concluded that his recommendation was not without reservations: “The theme of religion that occupies [the book’s] most serious side, and has the feel of propaganda, damages the tone of *Brideshead Revisited* and rather deadens the impact” (6). In that reservation, he was joined in the contemporaneous review by Edmund Wilson in the *New Yorker*.

How many copies BoMC sold is not known but, according to a book club industry report, 61% of the members chose *Brideshead* as their January selection. Assuming conservatively that the membership had increased to 750,000 by January 1946 (on its way to the peak of 890,000 later that year) that would have meant the sale of nearly 450,000 copies. The author received 30¢ per copy, and that would work out to \$135,000.<sup>3</sup> It would be worth about \$2 million today. How much Waugh managed to keep is not known. Writing in 1959, Malcolm Muggeridge claimed (without attribution) that 700,000 copies of the American edition were sold (long before the 1981 TV adaptation).<sup>4</sup>

Little, Brown’s copyright page for its independently printed trade edition states: “First edition after the printing of a limited edition of 600 copies / *Published January 1946*.” Although the precise date of publication is not stated, reviews began appearing on 30 December 1945 in the *New York Times* and *New York Herald-Tribune*, with Edmund Wilson’s rocket in the *New Yorker* issue dated 5 January 1946.

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<sup>3</sup> Charles Lee, *The Hidden Public: The Story of the Book of the Month Club*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1958, 77-78. This source also says that *Brideshead Revisited* was one of several selections to sell in excess of 400,000 copies in 1945-1946.

<sup>4</sup> Malcolm Muggeridge, “My Fair Gentleman,” *New Republic*, 26 January 1959, 18-19, revised and reprinted in *The Most of Malcolm Muggeridge*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1966, 133-39.

The copyright page of the Little, Brown trade edition states at the bottom: “Printed in the United States of America,” whereas the BoMC edition reads: “Printed and bound in the U. S. A. by Kingsport Press, Kingsport, Tenn.” The binding of the trade edition is light blue and that of at least most of the book club volumes is red (although there may have been variations). The paper and the cover quality of the club edition were also somewhat inferior to those of the trade edition.

The trade edition dust jacket on the front flap shows the price of \$2.50, whereas the book club version shows no price. In addition, the descriptive material on the front flap of the book club dust jacket has been edited to delete or modify certain language that appears on the trade edition version. For example, where the trade version stated “...an illuminating presentation of the modern conflict between religion and *divorce*” (emphasis added) the book club substitutes “materialism” for “divorce.” At another point, the description of Lady Marchmain as “ascetic” is simply deleted. There are at least two other similar variations noted.

Book dealers in the US (as well as this writer) have been confused for years by the release date of the BoMC copies that flooded the market. Given the large number circulated, they have virtually no value as collectibles. There is no publication date stated in that edition, merely the copyright dates of 1944 and 1945. The former was presumably necessary because of the magazine serial publication that began in November 1944. Many booksellers seem to have assumed (as did I) that the BoMC edition preceded Little, Brown’s and was being sold earlier in 1945, but as noted above, book club distribution to members was in January 1946 after they had announced their selection during the previous month and promoted the book to members.<sup>5</sup>

It may have been the case that some BoMC copies were distributed in December, but that may also have been the case with the trade edition, as review copies were sent out. The formal

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<sup>5</sup> As I recall, the way the book club system worked, the member agreed to accept the club’s selection unless it was specifically rejected by the member after the monthly announcement was received. Otherwise, the club’s selection was mailed automatically during the following month. BoMC offered a free “book dividend” after two purchases of monthly selections or alternates. Previous selections were also offered as “alternates” in a list appearing in each issue (apparently until supply was exhausted) and, beginning in 1950, a new alternate selection was regularly offered each month. The members were required to purchase at least 4 selections or alternates every 12 months. *Brideshead* appeared in later issues as an alternate selection, so additional volumes would have been sold after the January distribution. Whether BoMC reprinted its edition is not known.

release date of both editions would properly be stated as “January 1946.” Moreover, the texts of the two editions were identical. There is no reason to believe, contrary to the great weight of ill-informed opinion on the internet, that the publication of the BoMC edition “preceded” that of the Little, Brown “First Trade Edition” in any meaningful sense or has any intrinsic value as a “true first.” According to the Waugh bibliography, Little, Brown reprinted its edition 8 times in January alone, so the first printing should have considerable value (if one can identify it).<sup>6</sup>

Both BoMC and trade versions (to the extent they can be considered distinct editions) followed the text of the UK edition of 28 May 1945 (not the “Revised Edition” with Waugh’s edits issued by C&H a few weeks later or the Third Edition issued still later in the year). Indeed, Little, Brown did not include the edits made by Waugh after that first UK printing in any subsequent printing until they reset and reissued the book in 2012 along with Waugh’s other novels.<sup>7</sup> The text they released at that point was based on the Penguin versions circulating in the UK and included Waugh’s edits up to and including those in the 1960 C&H Revised Edition, as well as his two-page preface explicating those edits.

Waugh was very pleased with the results of the BoMC arrangement. He told Graham Greene about two years later that he should be prepared to deal with the large sums he would receive for the BoMC’s choice of *The Heart of the Matter* as a monthly selection (*Letters*, 278-79). As things worked out, however, no other book by Waugh was ever selected by BoMC after his *Brideshead* success.

The Club did, however, recommend 7 of Waugh’s later books to its readers in the monthly newsletter, including all titles published in the US after 1946 except *Scott King*, *The Loved One*, *Pinfold* and *Ronald Knox*. These recommendations were accompanied by brief reviews; the latter were obviously going to be favorable since they were selling copies of the

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<sup>6</sup> A review of ABE internet offers on 6 December 2021 suggests that this is not the case. Several dealers did state that the BoMC edition preceded the first trade edition but were not asking much for the BoMC version. One dealer had a seventh printing of the trade edition on offer for \$75 and this was followed by two offerings of first trade edition copies, one with what looked like a near perfect dust wrapper easily identifiable as the trade edition version. Each of these was on sale for \$125. A \$50 premium for a first printing does not seem to me excessive.

<sup>7</sup> As noted above, Christopher Morley pointed out that the footnote added by Little, Brown to the quote from *The Waste Land* did not appear in UK editions. It has disappeared from the 2012 Little, Brown reprint (34).

book but are more detailed than mere sales blurbs.<sup>8</sup> They were probably extracts from the readers' reports sent in for the various books and in two cases were attributed to well-known critics of the day.<sup>9</sup> The "recommendations" were not monthly selections or alternates but were offered to members in the publishers' editions through mail orders via BoMC; as I understand it, they did not count toward the member's required purchases for a BoMC bonus book. I could find no information on how such recommendations may have impacted sales.

*The Loved One* did, however, uniquely receive a mention in the February 1949 issue of *BoMC News*, but this was a dis-recommendation. According to Bernardine Kielty in her regular column "Authors Between Books,"

...*The Loved One* ridicules America from start to finish, was written for the British public (lest they make the mistake of overestimating us) and was first published in the magazine *Horizon*. From the focal point of his satire, Mr. Waugh chose a California institution, the most vulgar possible, definitely and narrowly local, and as remote from most Americans as from Britishers or Icelanders. He padded his novel with generalities about the customs of this country at large by way of confusion, and presented the job to his people. No one, even in the Kremlin, could have chosen to do worse by us. But Americans up to December 31, 1948, had bought approximately 51,000 copies of *The Loved One* at \$2.50 per copy.

The American edition had been published in June 1948. Ms. Kielty's belated reaction was exactly what Waugh had expected from American critics. Indeed, so did his British agent, who thought it might be wise not to publish the book in the US market. It would have benefitted both Waugh and the BoMC if they had not underestimated the American public's reaction to the book since the sales might have approached those of *Brideshead* if the BoMC had made it a selection.

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<sup>8</sup> Three of these BoMC "recommendations" are cited in the Waugh bibliography (*TA*, *EB*, *LL*), but the other four are not.

<sup>9</sup> Henry Seidel Canby wrote the recommendation for *Helena* (October 1950) and Clifton Fadiman for *A Little Learning* (December 1964).

## REVIEWS

### The Books You Read

*Essays, Articles, and Reviews, 1922-1934*, by Evelyn Waugh, *The Complete Works of Evelyn Waugh*, Volume 26, Donat Gallagher, ed., Oxford: OUP, 2018. 640pp. \$150.

Reviewed by Marshall McGraw<sup>1</sup>

Edited by Donat Gallagher, *Essays, Articles, and Reviews 1922-1934* presents us with the literary output of Waugh ascendant. The volume, the 26th of *The Complete Works of Evelyn Waugh*, is prefaced by a note from Alexander Waugh, General Editor of the undertaking, in which he offers up the project “for the delight of the general reader and as a work of historical, biographical, and literary reference for the inquiring scholar.” This volume, at least, succeeds on both counts.

Vast in scope and admirable in its aim to “encompass ... all that has so far come to light from the pen of Evelyn Waugh,” the project considers “The History of the Text” and “The Text in History,” which is to say we are greeted by each piece *prima facie*, and an arsenal of critical addenda brings up the rear. Each piece is buttressed by any combination of Attribution, Background, Genesis, but the title of the publication in which the piece first appeared is always present, along with the date of original print. A squad of *ad hoc* footnotes to explain the references made by Waugh in passing but which may be obscure to the modern reader, caveats regarding specific (mis)prints, and cross-references to other pieces included in the volume or beyond, is also included.

There is a granular chronology of Waugh’s life, as there usually is in projects like these, which includes years beyond the focus of this volume, and teases the reader to consider the material at hand as the juvenilia of a literary titan. One is grateful for the editorial prowess displayed in this undertaking: commentary is restrained to the period at hand, and only makes passing reference, if any at all, to events after 1934. In the opening section in particular, “Oxford

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<sup>1</sup> Marshall McGraw is an MS/LIS candidate at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

and After: January 1922–October 1927,” there are numerous hints of the writer Waugh would become. For instance, in a review of his brother Alec’s *Public School Life: Boys, Parents, Masters* (1922), the first place Evelyn speaks outside of quotation marks some 50 pages into the volume, he presents a thesis which can extend across much of his own fiction: “a novel must, to retain its interest and effect, give a rather violent, partisan view of a case, must appeal to the emotional rather than the rational in its readers.” Any additional commentary is panned by the editor, generous enough to allow the young Waugh to speak for himself, unshadowed by the figure yet to emerge.

Writing for the Oxford magazines *Isis* and *Cherwell*, Waugh’s accounts of the debates at the Oxford Union are amusing, and have an almost Wodehousian tenor to them. Despite his initial embrace of modernism while at Oxford, his short book, *PRB: An Essay on the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, 1847-54* (1926), hints at just how briefly that embrace would last.

On September 29th, 1930, Waugh was received into the Catholic Church, which he recounts, with startling bathos, in the piece “Converted to Rome: Why It Has Happened to Me.” He does not, however, surrender the staunch tone of his criticism, going on to redress tentative explanations of his spiritual allegiance before delving into the positive case for dear Mother Church. A comparative study of Waugh’s work pre- and post-conversion surely exists elsewhere, but in this short essay we see how he considered his faith as much an intellectual position to be defended as a spiritual disposition to laud.

Prof. Gallagher has elected to arrange pieces not by journal of publication but by chronology, which leads to entertaining (if somewhat repetitive) reading if one goes straight through. In section three, “Abyssinia Coronation Reports, Ethiopia and Arabia Essays, London Journalism: 25 October 1930–28 November 1932,” we read the same events -- state functions related to the crowning of the king of Ethiopia Haile Selassie I -- iterated across three news outlets: *The Times*, *The Graphic*, and the *Daily Express*. The subject remains the same, but Waugh’s voice and style modulate across each commission. We read “extensive preparations are still being made for the Coronation. Intense activity prevails throughout the city” in *The Times*, which becomes the snide “extensive preparations for the coronation are still incomplete, in spite of intense activity, and some confusion prevails throughout the city” in the *Daily Express*. Look

no further than the capitalization of “coronation” in the former for the distinction between a “quality” and a “popular” paper.

The title of each piece is unchanged from how it appeared at the time of publication (Gallagher scrupulously indicates editorial alterations within each entry), but at 640 pages (cloth) one can easily become lost among pieces of identical title. In the first section alone there are 13 articles titled “The Union,” and “The Books You Read” peppers the second. One wishes for some minor editorial subtitle in brackets to remind you that it’s “The Books You Read” on page 315 in which Waugh reviews John Buchan, not the one on page 234, which is concerned with D.H. Lawrence and Aldous Huxley. But then again you can’t expect even the most heavily armatured critical edition to do all the work for you.

One could begin this volume with interest piqued and exit a devout Wavian, educated as to the author’s disposition, his early style, social milieu, and life events. The original text itself remains its own reward, as it usually does given its author. How the general reader will encounter this specialized volume is a question best left to the imagination, but they will surely be grateful to come across the volume’s editorial prowess. This is an enriching addition to the corpus of Wavian studies, which will hold our attention as we wait for subsequent volumes of the project.

## Behind the Rhododendrons

*Vile Bodies*, by Evelyn Waugh, *The Complete Works of Evelyn Waugh*, Volume 2, Martin Stannard, ed., Oxford: OUP, 2017. 400pp. \$105.

Reviewed by Nicholas V. Barney

‘Are your books meant to be satirical?’ No. Satire is a matter of period. It flourishes in a stable society and presupposes homogenous moral standards—the early Roman Empire [Martial] and 18th Century Europe [Swift]. 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 same part of the monks after the first barbarian victories. They were not satirists. Evelyn Waugh, “Fan-Fare,” *Life*. April 8th, 1946 [Martial and Swift mine; if not yours]

I was taking a few weeks’ indulgence in answering the question we Wavians love to be posed (unless your name isn’t Nick), “Nick, which Waugh should I start with?” when by chance the very man who introduced me to Evelyn Waugh asked if I would review the towering Oxford University Press edition of *Vile Bodies*—the very Waugh with which *I* started. Serendipity of this sort has a tendency, in Waugh’s novels if not in his life, to morph into the cruelest of mistresses before too long. After all, it was halfway through writing *Vile Bodies* that Evelyn Waugh divorced Evelyn Waugh. (Waugh’s first wife, Evelyn née Gardner, left Waugh for John Heygate—and she was not the first Evelyn in the relationship to have affections for another man.) Not only that, but the deep psychological gout of the 1929 divorce nearly led Evelyn to take his own life—or, to put it another way, Evelyn Waugh nearly divorced *Evelyn Waugh*—which might

have left *Vile Bodies* gapingly unfinished at Chapter Six with columnist Simon Balcairn's own suicide, one of the dark peaks of the novel's famous cruelty.<sup>1</sup>

I wavered at the assignment and was dealt, naturally enough, an increasingly Wavian hand: the review was initially assigned elsewhere and would I take over the job pronto (the doomed Job of *Vile Bodies* Adam Symes takes over Balcairn's popular Chatterbox column after it's killed him—Balcairn's editress: “I suppose you don't know of anyone who'd care to take on the job? They'd have to be a pretty good mutt, if they would.” Adam: “I'd do it myself...” [71]); and to boot (or *Boot*), I would *not* be given a copy of the text I was reviewing by my editor. Well. With the cards of coincidence stacked against me, yet with my last review in the *Evelyn Waugh Studies* making for, I hope, awe-inspiring reading, I set out boldly to see if *Vile Bodies* still glints in the dark age of our 21st Century, and if the editors of *The Complete Works of Evelyn Waugh* had dipped any of it in amber. After all, if these were the Wavian fates at play (another way of saying original sin), then I didn't really have a choice now, did I? And I may as well prepare for the worst.

Published with Waugh's grandson Alexander Waugh at the editorial helm and the emblazon of revolutionizing Wavianism at the mast, *The Complete Works of Evelyn Waugh* is a critical study of the entire published and unpublished Wavian corpus, from his graphic art to all the parerga and paralipomena a Wavian (and, for those at home with ancient Greek—yes, there *are* lemmas, too) could dream of. With only 15% of Waugh's letters previously published, Alexander Waugh himself oversaw the intercalating of 10,000 new missives into Waugh's complete, unabridged diary, comprising over twelve volumes of the forty-three-volume collection. These personal writings are also freely quoted throughout the collection's various critical essays, Volume Two of which is constituted by *Vile Bodies* and undoubtedly iridesced by the new biographical.

Forty years in the making, the task and the finished edition are not only monumental in scope but colossally outstrip the scale and scholarly comprehensiveness afforded any other British prosaist in Waugh's day or before—certainly *hence*. The Thetises of this edition,

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<sup>1</sup> Though, according to Martin Stannard's excellent compositional history of *Vile Bodies* here in Volume Two of *The Complete Works of Evelyn Waugh*, the exact content of Chapter Six at the time of Waugh's divorce and suicidal period is not definitive—Balcairn's suicide may have been a later edit.

Alexander Waugh, Martin Stannard and the late David Bradshaw, dip each volume by the same heel into the Styx (and might even get the Achilles wet too in the case of *Vile Bodies*): declaration of Editorial Principles, extensive Chronology, multi-sectioned Introductions, and twin Appendices of Contextual Notes and Manuscript Development and Textual Variants—no volume goes denuded of this coat of arms which, in some cases, runs to nearly half or more of the volumes' anointed page counts.

While never quite reaching Vladimir Nabokov *Eugene Onegin* territory for any single volume, the preliminaries are enjoyably exhaustive with the Chronology itself running to twelve pages. One is likely to consider entries of the genus: "June 10th, 1912, [Waugh, age 8] begins new diary about his appendicitis" (ix); silly, perhaps, except that this diary is included in Volume Forty-Two. We then find Waugh's inaugural abandoned novel coming at age sixteen, right on schedule for a future novelist. And, yes, for those who have always wondered on what *exact* date Waugh visited "Pixton Park, Dulverton, Somerset, home of the Herbert family, Earls of Carnarvon, for the first time" (xiv), rejoice, for the debate is at last put to bed: it occurred December 8th, 1934 (your humble reviewer's birthday).

This is all well and good, but before I got to the masterpiece beneath the blazonry, or its last preliminary undergarment knit by Martin Stannard, I wanted to know: Are the editors of sound minds? Turns out there's a pretty simple test, passed early, for one of the critical study's greatest gifts to the reader, if not to the terse complexity of *Vile Bodies*, is its ideological aversion to *ideology*. Just about the closest we come to the much-abused term "theory" or its insidious corymb in the entire edition is the constituted promise in the Editorial Principles to avoid anything that could "date" the text, "e.g. updated figures for sums of money, or *editorial critical interpretation of thematic issues*" [8; emphasis added]. A refreshing diptych indeed! A clearheadedness of how inane and instantaneously superfluous "lit. theory" (a depraved term which should never go without the escort of quotation marks) renders a discussion of literature might have prevented the Freudian blemishes of Richard Jacobs' otherwise deserving 1996 father-obsessed introduction to the Penguin Classics edition of *Vile Bodies*, which the obviously

sane Martin Stannard's introduction here affirmatively supplants as the novel's *definitive* essay.<sup>2</sup> *Vile Bodies* is complex enough, with several leitmotifs linked in invisible, ultraviolet spectrums beneath the novel's apparent surface entropy. It hardly needs "lit. theory" with its more answers than questions principle to obscure our shot at clarity, and the editors should be applauded for their reconsideration of contemporary clichés. (Though, let us pause to catch our breath. Perhaps an equivalence between pecuniary inflation and "lit. theory" *is* overstating it a bit—I suppose a comprehensive understanding of *Vile Bodies* would not have been hurt by figures updated in the present, i.e. Adam Symes' search for his missing thousand pounds. How much *would* that sum be today? And in US dollars? A missed opportunity, to be sure....)

With Alexander Waugh dedicating the edition in part to the "ever-living memory of the author and his work" (v; a goal achieved), the pure mass of the *Complete Evelyn Waugh* is a much deserved historical jockeying for posterity, putting Waugh and Wavianism in a camp beyond that of Greeneanism, Wodehousianism, Huxleyanism, Powellianism et al., and making, dare I say it, Waugh's nearest scholastic *confrère* Joyce—themselves hillocks on Mount Shakespeare. Its other dedicatee? "[T]he future of English prose" (v), for which purpose Stannard's scholarly adornments of *Vile Bodies* may prove the most consequential in the whole forty-three volume set, laying the novel bare as a singular phenomenon in all of literature, not just modernism.

For it is a rare thing to witness a writer shift artistic epochs in real time—it usually takes place over the course of several novels, not between two halves of a book. But *Vile Bodies* is a piece of literary impact rock on the scale of the Yucatan extinction event, reorienting the dominant fauna and genera of Waugh's works, including the second half of the novel itself. One watches Waugh begin the first half a modernist if not a bright young adherent of its artistic practices and their rude powers to offend and subvert the regnant—that is, he begins in a self-described mood of "gaiety" (xxvii). This tenor is picked up on easily enough with characters like Fanny Throbbing and her seasick, innuendo-laden duologue with Kitty Blackwater ("Oh, Fanny." "Oh... Oh... Oh." [5]), depictions of lesbianism (which critics of Waugh's non-erotic

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<sup>2</sup> One of the pieces of evidence Jacobs rests his case of Adam's "treasure hunt" being a "search for a father" on is that Evelyn née Gardner's uncle -- her father dead -- was a treasure-hunter who discovered Tutankhamun's tomb. If *that* doesn't close the book.

sex scenes might want to revisit; Chastity is pinched in Chapter Six), hidden plays on the then-new term “queer” aimed at delighting gay friends and, cut from the famously once-missing, now recovered autographed manuscript (containing substantial, mysteriously ignored corrections, all of which are tabulated in Appendix B), and a journalist telling a joke in the novel’s opening embarkation “in which an old lady calls the police about an elephant apparently stuffing carrots up its behind.”

In a famous admission already apparent to readers of *Decline and Fall* (1928), Waugh’s personal cosmogony at the outset of *Vile Bodies* was as close to atheistic “as it was possible to be.” And it would appear from Stannard’s excellent work that he was still writing in the “pragmatic” momentum of his *Decline and Fall*-era epistle to his agent, too: “It would be nice if we could persuade them [the *Daily Express*] that I personify the English youth movement [Bright Young People]” (lxx). Waugh’s “satirical shot,” as Stannard puts it, was of a “scattered range” (lxxiii). Yet, in *Vile Bodies*’ second half -- after the meteorite of his wife’s defection strikes Chapter Six, melting the manuscript content in such a way that guesswork at post-defection edits can only ever be as certain as “probable” -- Waugh turns organically against modernism’s “illusion of permanence” (xxxix) and its Bright Young People, who came to embody the tenuous morals of his wife. This would lead to, if not hasten, his 1930 Catholic conversion, and sharpen the satirical sights not just of *Vile Bodies*’ latter half but the rest of Waugh’s career. As Waugh self-consciously admitted thirty-six years later, “The reader may, perhaps, notice the transition from gaiety to bitterness” (311). Thus, the two Wavian epochs -- Bright Young Holocene and Churchward, Ho! Anthropocene -- are fused into one work.

Besides “lit. theory,” nothing irks more than undue attention paid to artist over art. But the compositional history of *Vile Bodies* is of undeniable importance, nowhere more thoroughly explored than here in Stannard’s consequential introduction. We can thank him for both settling some of its famous bibliographical controversies and constellating his findings with remarkable gems. The root beds of the sixty-eight-page introduction, replete with a perfectly blent “History of the Text” (including the famous, eternal mis-transcriptions of typist Lily Anne) and “Text in History” (analysis of the novel’s critical reception, socio-political contexts, and artistic influences and influencees) abound with footnotes both pleasurably picayune and too-Waugh-to-be-true. As an example of the former, Waugh’s claim to have written three-thousand words a day

of *Vile Bodies* is checked—it's more likely to be twenty-five hundred. As for the latter sort, let's just say they show the umbra of *Gilbert Pinfold* dogging Waugh well before the high noon of his career. Finally pulled together from his nervous breakdown and a persecution mania in which he dined at restaurants convinced of guests gossiping about his divorce, he holed up at the riparian Royal George Inn to finish *Vile Bodies*. Evelyn Gardner and Heygate, fleeing *their* half of the divorce scandal in London and unaware of Waugh's whereabouts, happened to *canoe* down to the George one evening. "Shocked by the news that EW was staying there, they escaped by a window or side entrance to their boat beneath the sea wall one night while EW was inside the pub" (xl). Not boat, *canoe*. Waugh would never know just how Pinfoldian this episode in his life was. "Anything more likely to have driven him mad," Stannard observes, "is difficult to imagine" (xl). And keep in mind, this anecdote, well worth the price of the edition alone, is buried in a footnote.

And yet, there are still those who argue that such *Vile Bodies*-era episodes in Waugh's personal life are irrelevant to understanding the novel. Stannard fixes this delusion, by establishing the most approximate state of the novel at the time of Waugh's divorce, and conclusively correcting the ancient presumption that *Vile Bodies* was already mostly complete at the time of Evelyn's defection from Evelyn. Far from it. The story is this: Evelyn, an almost certainly repressed homosexual (let us ignore the uneasy shifts in certain seats), marries a woman named Evelyn. The two (known as Hevelyn and Shevelyn to friends) bear the appearance, at least in the famous *A Bride and Bridegroom in Duplicate* photograph, of disconcerted twins. Shevelyn falls in love with unremembered novelist John Heygate (the inspiration for Ginger Littlejohn who marries Adam's fiancée Nina out from under him). Hevelyn suffers a six-week breakdown, attempts a fortnight of reconciliation with Shevelyn, and becomes frenetic: he talks of giving up writing for painting; threatens to emigrate to Canada (*Canada*); makes a suicide pact with Heygate's ex-lover Eleanor Watts "behind the rhododendrons" (xxxiv) at her family's countryseat; visits Alistair Graham -- one half of the personal cache for *Brideshead Revisited*'s homosexuality -- en route to the motor races in Belfast (providing the condemning symbol of modernism in the novel's second half, and riding the whole way there in a "fury that the car would not go faster" [xxxiv]); and finally lands at the Royal George Inn in Appledore to revise Chapter Six and finish the novel off, at which point the cuckolding couple then being skewered

by Waugh's pen escape his notice by side window and *canoe*! Or, from the bibliographical-eye's view:

It seems likely, however, that Chapters 1–5 were typed as he was writing, that having posted Chapter 5, he continued with Chapter 6 until his wife's devastating letter arrived [announcing her defection], and that he then took his six-week break, after which, and before beginning Chapter 7, he went back over the whole of the untyped Chapter 6, adding darker touches to smooth the transition. (xlvi)

And transition he does. After writing his last gossip column, Waugh has Simon Balcairn put his head in a gas oven. This fictional suicide as opposed to the real one Waugh was contemplating announces the novel is now playing by different rules. The leitmotif of "sickness ceases to be an amusing commentary on hangovers and becomes the existential horror of the tilting aeroplane from which the view of humanity is that of a writhing, indistinguishable mass in which the individual is rendered anonymous, swept up and destroyed in a secular world" (xlvi). The artistic doublespeak between Adam and Nina manages to drop all (or most) of its irony in one of their last post-coital duologues to express an exasperation not present in the novel's first half (with the "darker touch" of Nina now bought from Adam by new husband Ginger):

'Nina, do you ever feel that things simply can't go on much longer?'

'What d'you mean by things — us or everything?'

'Everything.'

...

Later he said: 'I'd give anything in the world for something different.'

'Different from me or different from everything?'

'Different from everything... only I've got nothing... what's the good of talking?'

'Oh, Adam, my dearest...'

'Yes?'

‘Nothing.’ (131)

The novel’s title, too, once a flippant, oblique allusion to *Phillippians* and *The Book of Common Prayer* through the first half, twists into a grim, shame-inducing statement on “that succession and repetition of massed humanity” (82), symbolized by Agatha Runcible’s famous hospital-bed dream after her car crash at the motor races (recall Waugh’s fury that his own car could not “go faster” en route to Belfast’s races):

‘D’you know, all that time when I was dotty I had the most awful dreams. I thought we were all driving round and round in a motor race and none of us could stop, and there was an enormous audience composed entirely of gossip writers and gate-crashers and Archie Schwert and people like that, all shouting to us at once to go faster, and car after car kept crashing until I was left all alone driving and driving — and then I used to crash and wake up. (128)

This is said before the previously “charmingly reckless” (liii) Miles Malpractice applies *malpractice* to the car-crash recovering Agatha, bringing into the hospital room the novel’s never long interrupted drunken party—the strain of which kills her. By the final chapter, “Happy Ending,” the plot (if there is much of one) comes to no conclusion—the leitmotifs do. Shame and cruelty reach the end of their exponential lifespan. Waugh charted these twin muses from dark peak to dark peak while his personal life arc’d in tandem, until it led him to the novel’s concluding post-defection Everest: the prediction of World War II—which is only declared because the easily confusable Prime Minister misunderstands that Parliament is already planning war and does not want to be kept out of the loop. But these examples have all been spelled out before. Their new iridescence comes from Stannard’s definitive bibliographical proofs linking their developments to the rupture in Waugh’s personal life, allowing us to see with a new precision just what the nature of *Vile Bodies*’ rare and enduring glint is.

I’ll be at my point soon. We plainly get in the second half the emergence of purposeful symbols organically unknowable to Waugh before his Yucatan, artistic coincidences and anti-serendipities like Miles Malpractice’s malpractice; Adam’s purchasing of the defecting Nina from Ginger for the exact amount of the Shepherd’s Hotel bill he’s been ducking the whole novel

(he then buys her back for the Christmas season in a brutal public insult to Shevelyn). Put into motion at the seasick embarkation of the novel's opening with Waugh's marriage yet intact, the momentum of original sin and the Book of Job carry the leitmotifs into an ultraviolet spectrum with, one suspects, *organic* resolutions invisible even to Waugh—resolutions that would not have been possible without the parallel “sharp disturbance” in Waugh's personal life that inspired them. It is here that the novel's genius -- and rarity -- lies: in its perfect ironies and expertly cruel knots that could not, one feels, have resolved organically in any other way than the way they did: Adam in the desolation of the natural world (“Damn difficult country to find one's way about in. No landmarks...” [152] says the Drunken Major, flamethrower in hand on “the biggest battlefield in the history of the world” [151]), sitting in a mud-sunken limousine beside the Major as he makes love to Chastity—the money the Major owes him, once an elusive fortune, now worthless in the wartime economy. This, in parallel to Evelyn's divorcing Evelyn, are both Wavian *faits accomplis*. How could it have been any different for Waugh or *Vile Bodies*—the title alone taking on a meaning it did not possess when it was chosen? As only the greatest works of art do, *Vile Bodies* forces one into a legitimate teetering: is art created, or *discovered*? Or, if Plato puts you ill at ease, consider the wickedest resolution of all: for *Vile Bodies* as a work of art, Waugh's personal tragedy was pure serendipity. It would not be the masterpiece it is without the events that put Waugh, for a spell, “behind the rhododendrons.”

One test of a writer's posthumous worth is how the tertiary folds around them—that is, how language takes care of them when they are gone. Besides the dual adjective / patronymic *Wavian* (preeminent in all of literature—making, again, Joyce and *Joycean* Waugh's closest *confrère*), simple Wavian explication has the tendency to reach the state of maxim: “No two batches of paper may be folded identically,” declares Stannard. It is by this method that he differentiates *Vile Bodies*' compositional waves from the early, gentler foolscap'd and cuckolded days to the luxurious monogrammed sheets of the novel's apocalyptic squall, the original *finis* of which reads, “The end thank God. EW.” *Ew* indeed—Waugh would hardly ever be able to reread his masterpiece again. But we can. And upon my own rereading, and in full respect to the tertiary through which I have been shifting, I might now drop a new descriptor into Wavianism.

Nabokov famously established *Anna Karenina* as a rare example of Special Relativity in literature, with coterminous sections happening within the same timeline but at speeds that

conflict in a linear Newtonian perception. That's one way of saying expect a lot out of the following image. *Vile Bodies* is the first and only example in literature of a *spinor*. A spinor is a genus of charged, subatomic particle that, when it rotates in a full circle, changes its charge to its opposite. If at the start it is positive, a full 360 degrees later it is negative. It is as if you stood before a looking glass (perhaps one of the kinds absent from Miss Runcible's room at the car race), spun around in a circle and came to rest with a different face on—or a rosary dangling 'round the neck. Yes, there were once *two* Evelyn Waughes -- one an atheistic satirist, one a Catholic literary missionary -- and they're both fossilized in *Vile Bodies*.

But just as Balcairn left his last column a masterpiece of libel and creative license, I too feel carried away by a potentially dicey muse, and may as well offer up another descriptor while I'm at it. In documenting the reception of the novel by its few dissenting critics, long in the tooth, Stannard gives the following assessment: "*Vile Bodies* was dangerous in the scattered range of its satirical shot, and stylistically experimental. Few of this old guard understood how he had suddenly *introduced a new facet of literary modernism*" [lxxiii; emphasis added]. This new facet is Godelian in nature. According to Kurt Godel's Incompleteness Theorem, a logically consistent system will produce true statements that cannot be proved by the logical system or axioms of the system itself. There is an innate incompleteness in systems that attempt absolute definitions and complete encapsulations, and an ineradicable propensity for systems to legitimately transcend their own strictures in ways that the logically-sound system itself can yet have no purchase on. Another way of saying this is that it is impossible to define or encapsulate anything completely—at some point every system feigning finality will produce its own inexplicable transcendence. The spinorial nature of *Vile Bodies* allows the novel to not simply transcend modernism, but *Godel* into an *anti-modernist modernist*, or *supramodernist*, novel, one of the rarest states of literature in which it finds itself, to my knowledge, alone. Thus, the Godelian *Vile Bodies* contains the spirit and viciousness of the modernist, atheistic *Decline and Fall* and the anti-modernist yearning for a Catholic *Brideshead*. I am not unaware that this may be the succinct missing piece for those Wavians always on the re/post-modernizing make with *Brideshead Revisited*. Godel's Theorem is a remarkably simple way of explaining how modernism produced a Catholic conversion in no way consistent with modernism, and might save us all any more stupendous exertions in this pursuit. I pass on the good news. But, alas, didn't I once frown on introducing "theory" to Waugh?

An atheist through the first six chapters, Waugh ends on a sprint towards the sacristy, declaring to his brother before his divorce was finalized, the novel finished, or Father Martin D'Arcy was even a twinkle in his eye, "the trouble about the world today is that there's not enough religion in it. There's nothing to stop young people doing whatever they feel like doing at the moment" (xxxix). Though his Catholic conversion would come but a year later, *Vile Bodies* finds him converting in real time (putting, for instance, the only direct critical elucidation of Bright Young Modernists in the mouth of the novel's Jesuit, Father Rothschild, before Waugh himself had ever even met one<sup>3</sup>). Not, however, that a Wavian decline and fall can be dated by his conversion—Waugh hadn't even written *Black Mischief* yet (whose pages every Wavian should be urged to hide from the humorless, hemilinguist bloc of *post*-post-modern students currently overpopulating college campuses, until such a time when the coast is again clear). Nor does original sin all of a sudden appear on the scene—it simply begins defracting through a changed, no longer strictly secular prism, a prism that dulls within its spectrum simple "shame," as Waugh later reflected on the purposes of satire, in order to introduce the new colors of his "little independent systems of order." Though *Vile Bodies* offers no system of order, it is the first time in Waugh's corpus we find the bedrock of his proceeding Anthropocene bent on systems of order or the search thereto. This prism was glassblown in and by *Vile Bodies*, and its 360-degree spinorial procession may be scientifically categorized by the artistic transition cited in my epigraph, mapping shame to antidote:

Satire is a matter of period. It flourishes in a stable society and presupposes homogenous moral standards... 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.

Searching early on for this passage, the binding of my *A Little Order* broke open at its exact page, the credo violet-lit by my ancient underlines. Serendipity? Prepared, as I had been, for the

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<sup>3</sup> Though Freudianism may make him prone to "detecting" such "phenomena," Richard Jacobs makes note of another odd prescience in his 1996 *Vile Bodies* introduction: Waugh has Adam begin the novel returning from Paris, where Waugh would eventually flee so as not to linger after his divorce.

worst, I even paused at Chapter Six to see if my own relationship would fall apart. (It did not, though I'm not sure this helped.)

I am still paused, too—quite *languorously* I might add—on that question posed to me by a friend, some months ago at this stage: “Nick, which Waugh should I start with?” For initiation into Waugh is a delicate matter. He was a Catholic idolizable by atheists like Christopher Hitchens and Stephen Fry. He was a brief Mussolini supporter crucial to the satirical development of progressives like Gore Vidal (who, despite making a universal précis in his literary criticism out of *Vile Bodies*' opening insinuation of every novelist beginning a career with a memoir, later never had a kind word to say for him) and Joseph Heller (Adam's purchase of Nina from Ginger is pure *Catch-22*, with Ginger asking Adam to stop butting into *his* affair with her: “I mean, you were more or less engaged to her yourself, weren't you, at one time? Well, what would you have thought if I'd come butting in? You must look at it like that, from my point of you, too, mustn't you, I mean?” Adam: “Well, I think that's rather what did happen” [133]) Is the novice ready for *Black Mischief* off the jump? (I'll stand anyone a drink who is.) Are the irony and original sin of *Decline and Fall* graspable in a world that believes in such things as “post-irony?” Is the spinorial *Vile Bodies* too advanced for the beginner? Can *Brideshead* lift our prospect a “hair's breadth” off the ground without the alpine trail of *A Handful of Dust* and *Scoop* leading them to its clime? Is my editor, my former professor who initiated me into Waugh long ago in a red barn-classroom in a Vermont hamlet—is he, in refusing to give me a copy of the text I was to review, still teaching me something about our dashing curmudgeon, his riddlesome trajectory? I now take my leave to answer these questions. Some of them are quite personal, thank you.

## NEWS

### **John H. Wilson Jr. Evelyn Waugh Undergraduate Essay Contest**

Submissions are welcome for the John H. Wilson Jr. Evelyn Waugh Undergraduate Essay Contest. Essays (normally limited to 20 pages or 5000 words) are invited on any aspect of Waugh's life or work and will be judged by the *Evelyn Waugh Studies* editorial board. The winning essay will be published in the journal, and the author will receive a prize of \$500. Deadline: 31 December 2022. Email submissions to [jpitcher@bennington.edu](mailto:jpitcher@bennington.edu) and [yuexi.liu@xjtlu.edu.cn](mailto:yuexi.liu@xjtlu.edu.cn).

### ***The NYT's* Obituary for Dr. Thomas F. Staley, Director of the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas**

When an author asked for three reasons his papers should go to the Ransom Center, Dr. Staley told *The New York Times* in 2000, he responded by saying, 'Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh and James Joyce' — whose papers are all in Austin.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/02/books/thomas-f-staley-dead.html>

### **Designer Steven Stokey-Daley and *Brideshead***

<https://www.anothermag.com/fashion-beauty/13897/queering-the-british-aristocracy-ss-daley-on-his-subversive-new-show>

### ***The Courtship* at Castle Howard**

<https://www.cheatsheet.com/entertainment/the-courtship-where-the-courtship-castle-located.html/>

## Wodehouse in the Maharashtra Jail

Wodehouse remains a jolly good fellow even if the world he depicted feels archaic. Some might be surprised that Navlakha even wanted to read him in 2022. But as writer Evelyn Waugh presciently told the BBC in 1961, Wodehouse's 'idyllic world can never stale' because he continues to 'release future generations from captivity that may be more irksome than our own.' Little did Waugh realise, in Navlakha's case that captivity would be literal not metaphorical.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/wodehouse-runs-into-heavy-weather-gautam-navlakha-elgaar-parishad-case-7861905/>

## Review of Natalie Jenner's *Bloomsbury Girls*

<https://oakvillenews.org/oakville-culture-and-lifestyle/bloomsbury-girls-natalie-jenner-book-review/>

## Reviews of Daisy Dunn's of *Not Far from Brideshead: Oxford between the Wars*

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/event/article-10710829/Not-Far-Brideshead-review-Daisy-Dunn-brings-inter-war-Oxford-life.html>

<https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/books/book-of-the-day/2022/05/gilbert-murray-the-oxford-don-who-made-greek-chic>

## Internships at *The Spectator*

1) To apply for a **magazine internship**, complete at least two tasks from Part A and at least three tasks from Part B.

Part A:

Name three ways we could improve a) our magazine and b) the website

Suggest five people to get for either a diary or an interview – and any ideas on how you would get them

Suggest a cover story and some potential authors

Write a 300-word blog for *Spectator Life* or *Coffee House*

What was your favourite *Spectator* magazine feature in the last year and why?

Find a grammatical or factual error in anything the editor has written

Suggest three new headlines for [this](#) Evelyn Waugh piece

<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/the-spectator-s-2022-internship-scheme-is-now-open-no-cvs-please>

## **The Catholicism of Septimus Waugh**

<https://www.thetablet.co.uk/features/2/21758/the-relaxed-and-authentic-catholicism-of-evelyn-waugh-s-carpenter-son-septimus>

## **An Obituary for Robert Morse**

Among his films was “The Loved One,” a 1965 black comedy about an Englishman’s encounter with Hollywood and the funeral industry, based on the satirical novel by Evelyn Waugh.

‘I don’t think in terms of whether a picture will help or hinder my career,’ Morse told the Los Angeles Times when the film was in production. ‘I think of who I’m working with.’ Among his “Loved One” co-stars were Jonathan Winters, John Gielgud and Tab Hunter.

<https://www.click2houston.com/entertainment/2022/04/21/robert-morse-two-time-tony-winning-actor-dies-at-90/>

**On Alexander Waugh's *Fathers and Sons***

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2007/07/02/waugh-stories>

## **Evelyn Waugh Society**

The Waugh Society has 190 members. To join, please go to <http://evelynwaughsociety.org/>.

The Evelyn Waugh Discussion List has 78 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) and [yuexi.liu@xjtlu.edu.cn](mailto:yuexi.liu@xjtlu.edu.cn). 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 editor's final decision within twelve weeks of submission.

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**End of *Evelyn Waugh Studies*, Vol. 53, No. 1**

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