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“Wheels Within Wheels”: Finding a Centre Through Memory, Art and Religion in Evelyn Waugh’s *Sword of Honour*

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Dissertação realizada no âmbito do Mestrado em Estudos Anglo-Americanos, orientada pelo Professor Doutor Jorge Bastos da Silva

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Table of Contents

Declaração de honra........6
Acknowledgments........7
Resumo........8
Abstract........9
List of Abbreviations........10
Introduction........12
1.Chapter One – Memory and Identity........22
1.1. The Winged Host........25
1.2. *Principium Individuationis*........39
2.Chapter Two – Art and Love........59
2.1. In the Picture........63
2.2. Finding the Tomb in the Arcadia........78
3.Chapter Three – Religion and Ethics........96
3.1. The Unseen Hook of Providence........99
3.2. Teleological Suspension of the Ethical........111
Conclusion........124
Works Cited........129

Declaração de honra

Declaro que a presente dissertação é de minha autoria e não foi utilizada previamente noutro curso ou unidade curricular, desta ou de outra instituição. As referências a outros autores (afirmações, ideias, pensamentos) respeitam escrupulosamente as regras da atribuição, e encontram-se devidamente indicadas no texto e nas referências bibliográficas, de acordo com as normas de referenciação. Tenho consciência de que a prática de plágio e auto-plágio constitui um ilícito académico.

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Ana Catarina Marques dos Anjos

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Resumo

Leituras críticas acerca do corpus literário de Evelyn Waugh têm-se revelado frequentemente insuficientes no que diz respeito aos seus romances mais tardios. As escassas análises existentes sobre estas obras têm-se centrado, quase exclusivamente, em estabelecer paralelos biográficos ou em detalhar o afastamento de Waugh da sua obra satírica em direção ao que a maioria dos críticos classifica, de forma algo reducionista, como ficção católica. Para contradizer estas tendências, a presente dissertação propõe oferecer uma análise aprofundada da Trilogia de Guerra de Evelyn Waugh, *Sword of Honour* (1965), focando-se nos temas recorrentes, símbolos e estruturas narrativas do romance. Para isso, aproprio-me de um dos símbolos predilectos de Waugh, a roda, como um guia visual para representar o movimento do protagonista do romance, Guy Crouchback, rumo a um centro estável. Tendo isto em mente, estruturei os principais temas da obra de acordo com os estágios de desenvolvimento do seu protagonista: em primeiro lugar, discuto a importância da memória e da identidade para estabelecer o contexto histórico-cultural da história, procurando também demonstrar como são utilizadas diferentes técnicas narrativas para reflectir os estados psicológicos das personagens; no segundo capítulo, foco-me na arte e no amor como mediadores entre mundos internos e externos dentro da obra; por fim, menciono a religião e a ética como ferramentas essenciais para consolidar a filosofia de Waugh face ao mundo moderno. Assim, este trabalho pretende demonstrar como estes temas se enquadram na tradição literária ao mesmo tempo que discute como o romance poderá ser lido hoje, apesar do seu autor e tópicos controversos. Além disso, argumentará que a Trilogia de Guerra é a tentativa mais bem-sucedida de Waugh em fundir conceitos aparentemente incompatíveis com a intenção de alcançar sistemas de ordem pretendidos no meio de uma pérfida e anárquica terra sem vida.

Palavras-chave: Literatura de guerra; Memória; Arte; Religião.

Abstract

Critical readings of Evelyn Waugh's body of fiction have often proven lacking in regard to his later novels. The scarce existent analyses of these works have been focused, almost exclusively, in establishing biographical parallels or in detailing Waugh's departure from his satirical works towards what most critics categorise, in quite a reductionist manner, as Catholic fiction. To contradict these tendencies, this dissertation proposes to offer an in-depth analysis of Evelyn Waugh's War Trilogy, *Sword of Honour* (1965), by focusing on the novel's recurring themes, symbols and narrative structures. In order to do so, I borrow one of Waugh's preferred symbols, the wheel, as a visual guide for representing the movement of the novel's protagonist, Guy Crouchback, towards a stable centre. With this in mind, I have structured the novel's main themes according to its protagonist's stages of development: firstly, I discuss the importance of memory and identity in shaping the story's historical and cultural context, as well as demonstrating how different narrative techniques are used to reflect the characters' psychological states; in the second chapter, I focus on art and love as mediators between the book's internal and external worlds; finally, I touch upon religion and ethics as essential tools for consolidating Waugh's philosophy in relation to the modern world. Hence, this paper will concern itself with how these themes conform to the literary tradition, while also discussing how the novel may be read today in spite of its controversial topics and author. It will furthermore argue that the War Trilogy is Waugh's most successful attempt at merging seemingly incompatible concepts with the intention of achieving desired systems of order amidst a deceptive and anarchic wasteland.

Key-words: War literature; Memory; Art; Religion.

List of Abbreviations

DF – *Decline and Fall* (1928)

VB – *Vile Bodies* (1930)

BM – *Black Mischief* (1932)

POMF – *Put Out More Flags* (1942)

BH – *Brideshead Revisited* (1945)

H – *Helena* (1950)

MA – *Men at Arms* (1952)

OG – *Officers and Gentlemen* (1955)

TOGP – *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (1957)

US – *Unconditional Surrender* (1961)

ALL – *A Little Learning* (1964)

SH – *Sword of Honour* (1965)

ALO – *A Little Order* (2000)

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

- W. B. Yeats, “The Second Coming”

Well, it’s like the big wheel at Luna Park. (...) You pay five francs and go into a room with tiers of seats all round, and in the centre the floor is made of a great disc of polished wood that revolves quickly. At first you sit down and watch the others. They are all trying to sit in the wheel, and they keep getting flung off, and that makes them laugh, and you laugh too. It's great fun. (...) Of course at the very centre there's a point completely at rest, if one could only find it.

- Evelyn Waugh, *Decline and Fall*

Introduction

Until the critical years which preceded the end of World War II, Evelyn Waugh was predominantly known to the public as a comic writer. His reputation as a socialite who mingled with some of the most fascinating personalities in high society throughout the 1920s and 1930s, particularly the group known as the "Bright Young Things", fomented interest in his novels and speculation as to which real-life people could have informed his characters. Further reinforced by their hard-biting social commentary and witty humour, Waugh's early books boasted some commercial success and cemented his relative popularity within the United Kingdom. However, it was his 1945 romance *Brideshead Revisited: The Sacred and Profane Memories of Captain Charles Ryder* that marked Waugh's first deep impression with the American market and gained him recognition amongst a wider, international audience. The epithet of satirist remained, but now another aspect troubled critics who had once found Waugh's anti-humanism to be borderline pessimistic and nihilistic: the presence of God.

Terrence Greenidge, Waugh's friend, once stated: "Evelyn's Christianity continues to fascinate me. What does it mean? To parade one's faith and draw superbly a godless nightmare of a world" (*apud* Larkin, 2004: 9). Likewise, this dichotomy left readers of Waugh's mature works puzzled at the seemingly sudden piety which found its peak in Lord Marchmain's conversion scene in *Brideshead Revisited*. For those who had been captivated by the tension caused by the deeply disturbing subtext underlying clever, yet crude, comedy in Waugh's earlier fiction, the scene must have felt out of place. It was only in an article entitled "Fan-Fare" (1946), published by Waugh in hopes of answering some questions posed to him by new readers across the Atlantic, that he admitted: "In my future books there will be two things to make them unpopular: a preoccupation with style and the attempt to represent man more fully, which, to me, means only one thing, man in his relation to God" (ALO 32). To readers and commentators who had so far been appreciative of Waugh's *oeuvre*, as was the case of American critic Edmund Wilson, this was a "bitter blow" (2002: 245).

In the same article, when confronted with the question of whether his books were meant to be satirical, Waugh resolutely answered:

> No. Satire is a matter of period. It flourishes in a stable society and presupposes homogeneous moral standards — the early Roman Empire and 18th Century Europe. It

> is aimed at inconsistency and hypocrisy. It exposes polite cruelty and folly by exaggerating them. It seeks to produce shame. All this has no place in the Century of the Common Man where vice no longer pays lip service to virtue. The artist's only service to the disintegrated society of today is to create little independent systems of order of his own. (ALO 33)

These continuous contradictions and subversion of expectations, I must admit, fascinated me. Waugh's belief system seemed to be one where "incompatibles marry" (Meckier, 1979: 51), much like what occurs in his fiction, and he could, all at once, be considered "a literary traditionalist" and "an anti-modernist" who "was a modernist despite himself" (Dale, 2006: 113). George McCartney posited that Waugh had "consciously constructed an alternate modernism" (*apud* Tomko, 2018: 313), where he could still carry some of Jonathan Swift's distaste for the term[1] while, at the same time, appropriating it in order to counter the belief that modernism disregards traditional literary modes. Thus, as it were, Waugh became "the most anti-modern of modernists" (Heath, 1982: 41). This struggle to pin Waugh down partially derives from the multiplicity of definitions and interpretations regarding modernist aesthetics, but he was generally considered to be a "second-generation modernist writer" (MacKay, 2007: 118) who was influenced by F. Scott Fitzgerald's and Ernest Hemingway's objective prose and, more closely, by P.G. Wodehouse's sharp humour and T.S. Eliot's emphasis on tradition. On the other side of the coin, Waugh was particularly weary of writers such as Virginia Woolf and James Joyce,[2] and even more so of artists like Pablo Picasso, whom he had once greatly admired. He recognized their ability to stand at the forefront, true *avant-garde* pioneers in their prime,[3] but could not overlook their desire

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[1] In his *Dictionary of the English Language*, Samuel Johnson points out that "modernism" was a word "invented by *Swift*" (1755: n/p). The earliest recorded occurrence of the word was in a 1737 letter to Alexander Pope, where Swift writes: "I wish you would give orders against the corruption of English by those scribblers who send us over their trash in prose and verse, with abominable curtailings and quaint modernisms" (2020: n/p). In a more moderate tone, Johnson proposes that modernism is simply a "[d]eviation from the ancient and classical manner" (1755: n/p).

[2] Waugh clearly didn't appreciate the early modernist writing style, which relied heavily on internal perspective and stream-of-consciousness. In a diary entry dated September 28, 1925, he commented: "Claud lent me a novel by Virginia Woolf which I refuse to believe is good" (Waugh, 1976: 225), possibly referring to *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), and in an interview for the BBC series *Monitor*, Waugh called Joyce a "poor dotty Irishman" who wrote "absolute rot" and "gibberish", as did Gertrude Stein (1964: n/p).

[3] In his 1930 essay "Let Us Return to the Nineties, But Not to Oscar Wilde", Waugh comments that "the artists and writers who can justly claim to be thought avant-garde are almost always middle-aged or quite elderly people – M. Picasso or Mr. James Joyce" (2010: 20). Two years later, in another essay, "Why Glorify Youth?", Waugh repeats that "[s]till more with the Fine Arts of Literature, Music, Painting, the

to represent humans as fully-rounded individuals through a pastiche of disjointed parts. Nonetheless, to a degree, Waugh was indebted to the modernists: their literary works were characterized by the intersectional relationship they conserved with history and modernity, using forms of intertextuality to sustain a dialogical relationship with the reader in spite of large gaps in communication. Similarly, Waugh based the familiarity of his plots on pre-established societal, literary and moral conventions, only to intentionally misdirect the reader and construct a barrier between superficial perception and implicit meaning. Indeed, the most remarkable divergences between Waugh and the modernists were centred on form and "Waugh's rejection of modernism's rejection of tradition" (Tomko, 2018: 313).

Always a man removed from his time, Waugh appeared to be haunted by the opposite conundrum of post-war modern society: whereas the latter was condemned to circle around aimlessly while desperately attempting to press forward, the former was paralysed in great part due to his obsession with the past.[4] One need only read the introduction to Waugh's unfinished autobiography, *A Little Learning* (1964), in order to ascertain a certain level of historical stagnation. In it, the author mourns his inability to mount the contraption H.G. Wells devised in his fictional 1895 novel *The Time Machine* and get propelled back in time. Disheartened by the absence of "all curiosity about the future" (ALL 3), Waugh confesses: "Even in my own brief life I feel the need of some such device as a failing memory alienates me daily further from my origins and experience" (ALL 4). Order, in Waugh's point of view, is defined by continuity, by a line that traverses time and space in one single, swift motion. Going back to *A Little Learning*, he concedes that "we still look to heredity – as our forebears looked to the stars – as the source of character" (ALL 5). Therefore, finding "little independent systems of order" presupposed the existence of roots somewhere in the past; it is somewhat predictable that Waugh would infer such systems from antiquated models of organized religion, national pride and classism.

Here, I must inevitably address what Lewis Macleod described as the decline "Waugh's reputation has suffered in the context of a contemporary academy (…) in which the word conservative has negative intellectual, social, political and aesthetic

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real 'moderns' are all men in late middle age. (…) The 'moderns' are mature artists, such as Mr. James Joyce and M. Picasso" (*ibidem*: 25).

[4] In *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, it is stated that Mr. Pinfold's "strongest tastes were negative. He abhorred plastics, Picasso, sunbathing, and jazz – everything in fact that had happened in his own lifetime" (TOGP 10). This is very much in line with Waugh's own tastes.

implications" (2010: 61). Indeed, as I began to write this dissertation, I became acutely aware of the necessity to write a defence of my decision to write on Evelyn Waugh. After all, to disassociate Evelyn Waugh the man from Evelyn Waugh the writer seems an almost impossible task to literary critics. This undoubtedly stems from the author's supercilious public persona, which made him stand out like a sore thumb amongst his contemporaries – while halfway through the twentieth century intellectual circles were beginning to display increasingly progressive worldviews,[5] Waugh remained attached to his "Tory Romanticism" (Bergonzi, 1963: 23), which sometimes dissolved into a partiality for anarchy, and his conservative politics and religious beliefs often outshone his body of work in terms of public interest. One might even consider that Waugh is the antithesis of what interests modern cultural studies – what can we draw from Waugh's novels which may advance the areas of Marxist, feminist, post-colonial and gender studies? Sometimes they are analysed under a negative lens, as a contrast to other more progressive works, but otherwise they appear to be inevitably lost in the critical landscape.[6] Walter Sullivan also underlines this disparity of interests, reminding us that "given the literary situation, the ambience in which those of us in the trade all work, the name of Evelyn Waugh should never be mentioned" (1990: 123).

Those who are able to look past Waugh's snobbery and prejudices have weaved their praises sparsely. There seems to be a general estimation that, although Waugh's

[5] George Orwell, in his 1940 essay "Inside the Whale", noticed that "as early as 1934 or 1935 it was considered eccentric in literary circles not to be more or less 'left'" (*apud* Stevenson, 1986: 51), and Randall Stevenson identifies how "Evelyn Waugh and Wyndham Lewis are thorough going eccentrics in Orwell's terms, both firmly committed to right-wing views" (*ibidem*). Of course, "all thirties writers did not move in the direction of left-wing politics" (Stevenson, 1993: 64), but political commitment became almost impossible to escape during and after the Great War. As Virginia Woolf pointed out in "The Leaning Tower" (1940), young writers had "to be aware of what was happening in Russia; in Germany; in Italy; in Spain. They could not go on discussing aesthetic emotions and personal relations... they had to read the politicians. They read Marx. They became communists; they became anti-fascists." (*apud ibidem*: 69). By the 1960s, when Waugh was publishing his last books, the social paradigm had already shifted into a more class conscious ideology, and Cyril Connolly correctly predicted how "many of the foundations, both aesthetic and economic, that had supported the Modernist arts in Britain were now weakening, and the long cultural and social dominance of Bloomsbury was coming to its end" (Bradbury, 1994: 304). Similarly, the Oxbridge generation and its "Catholic intelligentsia" were already outdated by the end of the war.

[6] This is not only due to a modern rejection of objectionable prejudices in literary works, but a general problem of mid to late century English novels, as Malcolm Bradbury and Randall Stevenson understand it. Bradbury notices how the contemporary British novel "does not seem to stand very high in terms of critical attention" and argues that the modernist movement has been so often the focal point of criticism that "the period since its decline or disappearance has been a vague one" (*apud* Stevenson, 1986: 7). Perhaps two of the most emblematic figures of the British literary scene in the years following the decline of Modernism were W.H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, whom Waugh heavily satirized in the fictional duo Parsnip and Pimpernel for having deserted their country during the war.

style and prose are often impressive and rightfully extolled,[7] his works are of an inferior quality to those of other, more resounding names which have earned their place in the literary canon. A. E. Dyson makes a point of stating the following:

> Swift and O'Neill are great writers in a way Waugh is not. The experience they offer, though incomplete (and who, except Shakespeare, is complete?) includes important partial truths shot through with deep human concern. This concern is exactly, I have argued, what Waugh lacks. His novels do not extend our awareness of why people are as they are, and they inhibit rather than create compassion. (1960: 78)

Michael Link also agrees that "Waugh's critics make a valid point in asserting that his power as a 'thinker' and as an artist is narrowed by his failure to find the best of human qualities in any other milieu than that of a society which is aristocratic and Roman Catholic" (1978: 59). George Orwell, Waugh's contemporary and reluctant admirer, summed up these opinions quite efficaciously when he concluded that Waugh was "[a]s good a writer as it is possible to be while holding untenable opinions" (*apud* Hitchens, 2003: n/p). Faced with these pushbacks, it may seem like a Sisyphean task to defend Waugh's place in the literary canon outside the role of producer of "minor classics". This becomes especially true once we consider the current tendency to push marginalized voices to the forefront, justly reclaiming the century-long tradition of only elevating the privileged class which has already been discriminated in countless essays (white, male, relatively wealthy, heterosexual, etc.). Waugh fits all of these descriptors, notwithstanding the fact that he was often in the slumps regarding money and that his sexuality has become the object of much conjecture, so it is undeniable that such contingencies strongly affect the way his novels are read today. I do not mean to write off such valid criticism of Waugh, especially since some of the opinions he held and passages he wrote still manage to raise a few eyebrows in the most impartial of readers. Nonetheless, if one privileges a thematic and formal approach to Waugh's novels, there transpires an underwhelming concern with their intrinsic value in most critical appraisals. Most novels, if not all, are underestimated, limited to the role of social satire

[7] Marcel DeCoste affirms that praise for Waugh's writing is "near unanimous, even from otherwise hostile critics" (2015: 1), going as far as enumerating a few. There seems to be a curious divergence between those who focus on Waugh as one of the "greatest prose stylists of the twentieth century" (Hastings *apud ibidem*) and those who heavily criticize his ideas, morals and characters, though a certain intersectionality probably also exists between both groups. Thus, I would hardly call Waugh a writer who brings about academic consensus, even if it seems undeniable that he is perceived as being one of the main figures of Late Modernism in Britain within literary circles.

and restrained by the bonds imposed on them by a disappointingly scant body of criticism. Though these assessments have their merit, my trouble with Waugh being attributed the undeniably apt title of satirist[8] is, and here I quote Marston LaFrance, "simply that it does not go far enough" (1975: 24).

The books outside the author's comic jurisdiction seem to be even more conflicting. Although *Brideshead Revisited* was a critical success, it permanently marked Waugh as an explicitly Catholic author and exposed grave faults in his writing. Christopher Hitchens agreed with Orwell that "the incompatibility of faith with maturity" (2003: n/p) marred Waugh's writing beyond repair, despite his interest in and admiration for the dichotomy of tragedy and comedy which permeates Waugh's opus. In his article "The Permanent Adolescent" (2003), Hitchens regards Waugh's last book as the final blow to his legacy, the nail in the coffin for an immaturity which may have once been excused as moments of "entertainment" (*ibidem*). A stronger assertion about the novel came from Joseph Heller, who claimed that "for someone who has never read Evelyn Waugh, this would be a poor place to begin. For many who always read him, this may, unfortunately, seem a good place to stop" (*apud* Link, 1978: 59). However, the novel has also some notable defenders, among which are Anthony Burgess, Bernard Bergonzi and Andrew Rutherford (see Trout, 1997), with the latter of these hailing it as "probably the greatest work of fiction to emerge from the Second World War" (1978: 113). This divisive work of fiction, and the main object of this dissertation, is Evelyn Waugh's War Trilogy, comprised of *Men at Arms* (1952), *Officers and Gentlemen* (1955) and *Unconditional Surrender*[9] (1961). Although published separately at first, Waugh later on compiled them into a single volume, entitled *Sword of Honour*, in 1965. Now broken up into eleven chapters and having suffered several adjustments, including some excised paragraphs and new depictions of characters and events, it is impossible to ignore the significant alterations this one-volume tome had in relation to its original prints. For the purposes of this dissertation, I will be using the Penguin Modern Classics 2011 edition, for it seems only fair to regard the author's revision in its intended final form. This, of course, does not mean that Waugh's decisions are infallible – most commentators disagree with the subtractions and additions made fastidiously and thoroughly by the author while revising this lengthy novel. However, this study does not

[8] Jeffrey Heath summarizes his contentions with Waugh's assertion that he is not a satirist quite comprehensively in *The Picturesque Prison: Evelyn Waugh and his Writing* (see pages 56 and 57).
[9] The last book in the trilogy was published under the title *The End of the Battle* in the United States.

intend to analyse Waugh's decision-making process, but merely to discuss his War Trilogy within a specific structural and thematic context (though, of course, such observations may entail a few pertinent mentions of the original trilogy).

Why choose this novel among others in Waugh's extensive catalogue of fiction? B. W. Wilson argues that, while in Waugh's earlier novels "a brittle layer of badinage and satire too effectively conceals the humanity at their core and (…) the deliberate heartlessness is a limiting factor" (1974: 87), *Sword of Honour* overcomes these stiff boundaries. This illusion of compassion makes the War Trilogy remarkable in its augmentation of the reader's role within the story, especially because it expands on their previously limited perception. It also holds value in its chronological placement, since it can help us understand, in retrospect, the rest of Waugh's body of work. Indeed, Hitchens comments on and criticizes the repetitiveness of *Sword of Honour* when compared with Waugh's previous novels, presenting the reader with a thinly veiled mimicry of other passages, symbols and characters they are already familiar with. However, this does not read as a nostalgic exercise, but as a purposeful use of repetition within a structure. When Waugh criticized Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* for being merely "a collection of sketches — often repetitious — totally without structure" (1980: 571) in a 1961 letter to Nina Bourne, it seems clear that he was highlighting the concise organisation of his own War Trilogy.

It strikes me as somewhat disingenuous to believe that there is such a distinct cleavage in Waugh's fiction as to merit two factions, one that defends his earlier satires and one that lavishes on about his Catholicism-focused novels. Can one truly believe that *Brideshead Revisited* and *Sword of Honour* stray that far away from the detached prose of *Vile Bodies* and *A Handful of Dust*? After all, one of Waugh's most burdensome tasks was to deal with "the knockabout farce of people's outward behaviour" (ALO 32) as he tried to search for the meaning of their actions. As Michael Gorra states, "Waugh does not allow his readers the comfort, however bare, that comes from intimacy with a character's mind" (1990: 168). Even when the narrator adopts the main character's perspective, which would almost necessarily imply a familiarity with the latter's thoughts and fancies, there is a cold-headedness that leads them to be perceived by other characters and readers alike as "not *simpatico*" (SH 11) and, worst of all, boring. Echoing what most critics who weren't convinced by the literary merits of

Sword of Honour had to say about the novel,[10] Link emphasises that "Waugh's trilogy is weak because its hero, Guy Crouchback, is a pitiful rather than a sympathetic character" (1978: 59) and that "[i]n Guy Crouchback Waugh has given to literature one of its biggest bores" (*ibidem*: 60). This seems antithetical to Waugh's expressed desire to "represent man more fully" (ALO 32) through his characters, as previously cited. Throughout this dissertation I hope to prove that Waugh's concern with both structure and individuality is precisely what makes his main characters, especially Guy Crouchback, so profusely interesting. For now, however, I will simply state that this appeal presumably derives from the characters' unique condition of being complex individuals in a one-dimensional world. Waugh renounces the inner multipotentiality of the archetypal Romantic hero in order to delineate a plot entangled with *dramatis personae* into which the main character is projected, slowly jettisoning their presence through choices which are not fundamentally good or bad, but necessary. If critics are quick to denounce the repetition in Waugh's model, it is not because they have picked up on slothful writing, but because they fail to realize that Waugh has chosen his own limitations; to narrow the path of the hero is to determine their role within the wheel of chaos that represents modernity. One must keep in mind that the motif of meaningless circularity recalls the core symbol found in Waugh's very first novel, *Decline and Fall* (1928): the centrifugal wheel at Luna Park that throws people off whenever they try to get on the ride (see the second epigraph to this introduction above). The character Silenus is certain that "at the very centre there's a point completely at rest, if one could only find it", but also states that "when we do get to the middle, it's just as if we never started" (DF 280-281). In *Vile Bodies* (1930), Waugh provides a similar image, a race track in which the cars spin around in circles, going faster and faster without any specific purpose or destination. Of course, Waugh is thematically and structurally very consistent, and he is so for a reason. "Each of his circular novels mimics the shape of the times" (1973: 167), as Jerome Meckier explains; "[t]he circularity of Waugh's novels, their penchant for ending where or the way they began, combines with the images of circular motion they contain to depict a tragicomic world with no sense of

[10] In his article Link cites one such critic, Joseph Heller, who claimed that "It is a dangerous thing to write a novel about a character as dry and unimaginative as Crouchback. Waugh has written three. Because so much more of the *End of the Battle* centers on its hero, it is I believe, the weakest member of the trilogy whose first two members have not made a very deep impression in this country" (*apud* Link, 1978: 59). Waugh's biographer, Christopher Sykes, also agrees that "[*Sword of Honour*'s] only grave blemish, the unlikeability of its hero, was, by the time [Waugh] reached *Unconditional Surrender*, a fault beyond correction" (1975: 429).

direction" (Meckier, 1979: 51). Walter Sullivan, quoting Katharyn W. Crabbe, also "finds that *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies* are circular constructions. The first begins and ends with Pennyfeather at Oxford; the second opens with Adam in France and closes with him there" (1990: 127), though we could easily find similar constructions in most, if not all, of Waugh's novels.

The imagery of the unstable wheel (which becomes analogous to the aforementioned circular narrative) is not original by any means. One of the most well-known expressions of this symbol came at just the turn of the century, in W. B. Yeats' poetry. Almost prophetically, Yeats pointed to the destruction of a centre in a scattered world, summarizing the existing state of affairs in the often cited verse from "The Second Coming": "Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold" (1989: 187).[11] In the Modernist sphere, if we attentively consider Vorticism and other similar derivations, Wyndham Lewis' and Ezra Pound's words seem to parallel the idea of Yeats' gyre: a centre, a vortex where everything is concentrated in a point of maximum efficiency, the great fascist ideal of the absorption of all power into a single focus point.[12] However, for Waugh, Modernism only gave the illusion of movement: truly, the mechanization of humanity was foreshadowing a great tumble if it were to continue spiralling uncontrollably and meaninglessly. The centre should be composed by roots, expanding into the world, and not the world rushing to meet a non-existent point of concentration. In Evelyn Waugh's novels this only seems to be attainable with the help of three great pillars: memory, art and religion, which are precisely the topics I intend to touch upon in this dissertation. Here I am partially agreeing with Douglas Lane Patey when he identifies the three "forms of devotion" which compose Charles Ryder's arc in *Brideshead Revisited* as essential to the development of Waugh's mature protagonists: "art", "enduring intimate bonds", and "Christ" (*apud* DeCoste, 2017: 245). Marcel DeCoste goes even further, pointing out the similarities between this mode of character development and Kierkegaard's "three existence-spheres: the esthetic, the ethical, [and] the religious'' (*apud ibidem*: 247). However, while the ethical, in Waugh, is intrinsically connected to the religious, I propose another, even earlier step in Guy Crouchback's quest: the distinctive voice of memory within the war novel, upon which the precepts of aesthetics are built, and thus endow the narrative with an overarching

[11] Lewis MacLeod notices this comparison as well, pointing out that "Guy is raised in a traditional context (…), but grows to encounter a world devoid of continuity, the very world Yeats and Achebe decry when 'things fall apart'" (2010: 65), and that, ultimately, "Guy's center fails to hold" (*ibidem*: 69).
[12] For a more general introduction to Vorticism and its main tenets, see Ezra Pound's "Vortex" (1914).

archetypal structure. These, as I will demonstrate, are the roots Waugh's characters cling to. The purpose of this dissertation is to analyse them one by one, to get closer to the centre of the gyre in order to find the neuralgic point of instability. To do so, in the course of each chapter I propose to disinter certain formal and thematic elements found in the text which shall hopefully enable me to answer the following question, posed by Walter Sullivan and permanently echoed by contemporary scholars: "Why (…) do we continue to read and admire Evelyn Waugh?" (1990: 131). To this, Sullivan already offers a few possible solutions:

> Perhaps there is an element in literature that defies deconstruction. Perhaps there are still a sufficient number of old and benighted critics left alive to perpetuate the myth that literature is a moral art and to use that myth as a foundation on which to build Waugh's reputation. One thing is certain. In addition to all his other virtues as a writer, Waugh had a profound sense of the sacred that formed the basis for his late work. Perhaps it is this sense that appeals to our unhappy age. (*ibidem*)

I am inclined to agree with the last assessment the most. To begin with, I will favour a scrupulous analysis of the novel throughout my dissertation so that I can establish how it holds up to close scrutiny, and secondly I will not concern myself centrally with arguing for a moral reading of the novel, much less burden myself with the question of whether literature is, in and of itself, a moral art – far more proficient writers have already debated that topic to exhaustion. But Waugh was indeed very aware of the sacred in his work, not only in a religious sense of the word, but also in the mundane spectrum of human tradition. It seems to me that such dexterity lies at the core of this matter. After all, what could be more extraordinary in "our unhappy age" than to find, amidst the chaos, a little order?

1. Chapter One – Memory and Identity

People would say to him in eight years' time: "You were there during the war. Was it like that?" and he would answer: "Yes. It must have been."

- Evelyn Waugh, *Sword of Honour*

There is a parallel world under this one where everyone of us is real.

- Alice Notley, *Alma, or the Dead Women*

Paula Byrne places us in early 1944 when "Captain Evelyn Arthur St. John Waugh has fallen out of love with the army"[13] (2010: 1) after five years of enthusiastic, though mostly unremarkable, service to the British state and Crown. In subsequent years, Waugh would write the books which compose his War Trilogy, where he fictionalizes select experiences surrounding his military service during the Second World War. Reprising previous themes found in his earlier novels and reordering them under a new lens, Waugh based his protagonist's shortcomings and disappointments on his own frustrated attempts at fulfilling his assumed vocation as an army officer. The autobiographical sources of characters and situations haven't escaped the notice of critics: Byrne suggests that "all of [Waugh's] novels (…) had a strong element of autobiography" (*ibidem*: 114); similarly, Paul Fussell calls *Sword of Honour* "a memoir disguised as a fiction" (1989: 220) and Philip Eade notices how the trilogy, being "based on [Waugh's] experiences in the Second World War", is "more closely autobiographical than any of his work to date" (2016: 291). However, this consensus does not diminish problematic conjectures which inevitably arise from such categorizations: should we perceive Guy Crouchback as a stand-in for the author? If so, how does this affect our reading of the text and its formal elements? Are we to disregard a historical or biographical approach to the novel in order to dissect it as an aesthetic

[13] In fact, Waugh was already writing about his disillusionment with the army in the late summer of 1943, explicitly affirming: "I dislike the Army. (…) I don't want to be of service to anyone or anything. I simply want to do my work as an artist" (Waugh, 1976: 548). However, as Andrew Rutherford reminds us: "This was not a permanent mood. He welcomed the chance of active service in Yugoslavia; in 1945 he was eager to influence opinion and events so as to be of service to the millions of Catholics in Croatia who were falling under Communist rule; and impatience with manifest follies and humbug was to be the motive force of much of his later writing" (1978: 117). Still, as one can infer from Waugh's own remarks, his honeymoon stage with the corps was effectively over by the time he was dismissed from active duty, partially due to his eccentric attitudes and unpopularity among other soldiers.

object or can both possibilities coexist? The similarities between Waugh and his main character(s) greatly increase our task.

In spite of these ambiguities, Waugh was very adamant on disputing any psychoanalytical readings of either himself or his novels. He was exceedingly uncomfortable giving out interviews where questions steered towards his childhood and adolescence, and stubbornly maintained the same position over the years: "I have no technical psychological interest. It is drama, speech and events that interest me" (*apud* Jebb, 1967: 110). However, as Alan Palmer reminds us, "[t]his disclaimer of any interest in psychology should be treated with care. Drama, speech, and events only make sense, and only have any interest, as indications and expressions of psychological processes" (2011: 282). It goes without saying that Waugh didn't specifically set out to write about mental phenomena; even in his most psychologically-driven novel, *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (1957), the protagonist's mind is exposed through external characters rather than a stylistic representation of consciousness. Nonetheless, this does not deny the fact that "he was interested in character and psychology only insofar as they are revealed in drama, speech, and events" (*ibidem*). This is how Waugh chooses to broadcast human experience, in a way that makes it clear that the story is "pure fiction: that is to say of experience totally transformed" (OG n/p), absent of transcription even if partially derived from historical fact. As T. S. Eliot proposed in "Tradition and Individual Talent", a work of art "may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of the man himself; but, the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate in him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will the mind digest and transmute the passions which are its material" (1999: 18). Understanding this important distinction, Andrew Rutherford defends that suspicions that the trilogy "might develop into an uneasy combination of fiction and autobiography (…) did less than justice to Waugh as an artist" (1978: 119). Even so, it seems evident why Waugh would prompt such hybrids of biographical and fiction-oriented criticism, where negative pronouncements of the artistic artefact are often turned into *ad hominem* arguments against its creator. He enjoyed toying with parallelisms between real life and fiction, creating a fine line which seemed to most a large gap meant to invite speculation, and employing narratives where the narrators' opinions simultaneously conflated with and mocked those of characters. If both are true, it appears to me that the best solution is to regard contextualization merely as a necessary step to understand the rich, inner world of the fictional story. Putting aside psychoanalytical conjectures about

Waugh's mental predicaments, it stands to reason that, as he intends to revisit "the same theme time and time again, clarifying and enriching until [he has] done all [he] can with it" (TOGP 4), the novel cannot be scrutinized as an isolated item. Its intervening characters are the result of multiple drafts and models;[14] they are the manifestation of themes and structures which only make sense when placed in direct relation with their author.

Despite rejecting comparisons between his life and his fiction, Waugh admits in *A Little Learning* that "[t]he novelist does not come to his desk devoid of experience and memory. His raw material is compounded of all he has seen and done" (ALL 279). In this chapter I will take the liberty of seizing these "raw materials" – emotions, memory, psychology – and discern their role within the novel's structure. Although this is my main objective, and knowing I shall expound on formal aspects in the next chapter, I won't refrain from making a few comments on structure in this chapter. Basing this first approach on memory, my concerns rest upon social constructions, archetypal bases and order. It follows, of course, to acknowledge the Lacanian principle that the unconscious "is structured like a language" (Lacan, 2001: 44) as central to an inward-focused reading of Waugh's novels. It corroborates the notion that the text's definitive form was firstly processed in terms of the author's (and the protagonist's) experience and imagination, and only then exteriorized into a comprehensive language (though Waugh certainly did not abide by its more faithful expression, usually found in stream-of-consciousness narratives). To this end, Yuexi Liu calls our attention to the fact that "Waugh considered [the mind's] inner workings as an impossible self-referential mystery, a potential infinite regress that lead to madness; Waugh gave up understanding the mind through any kind of introspective act. He contented himself with the surface; the responsibility of soul searching was a task left for the reader" (Liu, 2017: 15). It is our role, then, to break the conscious surface of the mind and travel

[14] Like his alter-ego Gilbert Pinfold, Waugh maintained that the "novelist is condemned to produce a succession of novelties, new names for characters, new incidents for his plots, new scenery; but (…) most men harbour the germs of one or two books only; all else is professional trickery" (TOGP 4). Unconvinced by these artifices, most critics quickly bored of these successions. Others have been far more tolerant, though they similarly criticize the books' "inability to develop, so that for all their brilliance they may be read as a series of variations on a very small number of themes" (Ruddick, 1987: 83). Unaffected by this, Waugh dismissed any search "to detect cosmic significance" in his work or "to relate it to fashions in philosophy, social predicaments, or psychological tensions" as futile; in fact, he "regarded his books as objects which he had made, things quite external to himself to be used and judged by others" (TOGP 4).

through its winding spiral in order to find a point of origin for Guy's "psychological pilgrimage" (LaFrance, 1975: 26) towards self-realization.

1.1. The Winged Host[15]

Waugh begins moulding his new-fangled Adam by giving us an introductory account of his family line,[16] more specifically of his grandparents, Gervase and Hermione Crouchback. The family name immediately becomes imbued with meaning – it postulates Catholic aristocracy, whose blazon-bearers were honourably received by the Pope and praised for the bravery of their persecuted lineage. Associated with them are ancient ideas of honour and tradition, and they erect the Castello Crouchback on the small Italian town of Santa Dulcina delle Rocce in hopes of prolonging their fruitful dynasty for years to come. How Guy Crouchback comes to inherit this name is doubly ironic, for it seems to be an allusion to Edmund Crouchback of the house of Plantagenet, whose nickname has two possible origins: hunchback or cross-back.[17] The first one is distinctively related to Guy's life – betrayed and abandoned by his wife Virginia, who has left him for a young officer named Tommy Blackhouse, we find our protagonist in a state of curved submission, weighed down by life and shunned as an outcast of society. The latter interpretation is perhaps even more interesting, for it refers

[15] This is the way Waugh refers to memory in *Brideshead Revisited*: "My theme is memory, *that winged host* that soared about me one grey morning of wartime. These memories, which are my life – for we possess nothing certainly except the past – were always with me" (BR 269; emphasis added). The metaphor is well-adjusted, for Waugh's protagonists face their memories as being not only transient (and thus, winged), but also haunting, like Banquo in *Macbeth* performing the role of host in a daemonic last supper. The spectral quality of the past incapacitates us from being able to look away from it; the ghostly host, both form and formless, merges the material and the transcendent, similar to Christ's body assuming its edible form. Thus, we may divine the conflation of "the Catholic Eucharist with the divine nature of memory" (Coffey, 2006: 69), transforming the latter into "a holy ritual" (*ibidem*: 70), as compulsory to validate our feeble existence. To consume the past would be the ultimate act of catharsis; to watch it fly from our grip is the ultimate condemnation to eternal frustration. These themes, as we will see, are all prevalent in *Sword of Honour*.

[16] Michael Horacki points out that the story "begins almost Biblically, not describing Guy, but his ancestors" (2018: 301). In the *Bible*, we encounter multiple similar accounts, beginning with that of Adam: "This *is* the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him" (King James Bible, Genesis 5:1).

[17] In relation to this possibility, Robert G. Walker writes: "Historians and philologists have had a field day arguing about the possible meaning of crouchback when it was applied to Edmund Plantagenet (1245–1296), the second son of King Henry III, but the fit for Waugh's work has nothing to do with the perhaps slanderously derived meaning, 'hunchback'. Both Edmund and Guy are younger sons, one possible link, and Edmund participated in the ninth crusade, thereby permitting him to wear the cross on his back. And this connection is what Waugh has in mind for Guy. Or, better, what Guy has in mind for himself as he seeks to redeem with military exploits a rather lackluster and failed life" (2015: 675). Though the reading Walker emphasises is more straightforward, I would not discard the possibility of Waugh having intended Guy's last name to be a *double entendre* so hastily. In fact, taking into account how Waugh had a penchant for revealing his characters' personalities through their (usually ironic) names, it is likely that both readings are correct.

to the Holy Cross stitched onto the back of the surcoats worn by the crusaders. By effectively connecting Guy with combatants of the past, Waugh establishes the theme of the Crusade as essential to this mock-epic, conceding special attention to Guy's romantic perception of the impending war. Frustrated by his stagnated life at Santa Dulcina, by the time the war is announced Guy is already "packed and dressed for a long journey, already on his way back to his own country to serve his king" (SH 6). Of course, the mere idea of taking up arms in order to serve a monarch is absurd in the era of dictatorships and liberal democracy, and Guy's journey will teach him that "in the age of mass warfare, just wars are no longer possible, there cannot be any heroic causes, no holy crusades" (Okuma, 2019: 561). This is not for lack of warning: Guy's brother-in-law, Box-Bender, immediately cautions him that this war, unlike the last, is not going to be "a soldier's war at all" (SH 17), and Guy's father, Mr. Crouchback, also tells him that "[i]t's all motor-cars now, you know. The yeomanry haven't had any horses since the year before last" (SH 34).

Guy's understanding of the war as an honourable cause against a "huge and hateful" enemy, what he calls "the Modern age in arms" (SH 7), is not only outdated, but terribly naïve. The advent of armoured warfare marked the beginning of an impersonal battle between tanks, submarines and planes rather than human beings. As Guy will come to find out, "No enemy was risking his own life up there. It was as impersonal as a plague, as though the city were infested with enormous, venomous insects" (SH 832). By the final third of the novel we are told that Allied soldiers wore, "ironically enough, the woven badge of the crusader's sword" (SH 806). Thus, not only is war completely transfigured, but so are its heroes. Fellow soldiers gape at Guy's suggestion that they are fighting for justice (SH 24) and their loyalties are to political and economic systems rather than to morality and patriotism. Ian Kilbannock, a journalist turned propagandist, warns Guy about this shift:

> "(…) Heroes are in strong demand. Heroes are urgently required to boost civilian morale. You'll see pages about the Commandos in the papers soon. But not about your racket, Guy. They just won't do, you know. Delightful fellows, heroes too, I dare say, but the Wrong Period. Last-war stuff, Guy. Went out with Rupert Brooke."
>
> "You find us poetic?"

> "No," said Ian, stopping in his path and turning to face Guy in the darkness. "Perhaps not poetic, exactly, but upper class. Hopelessly upper class. You're the 'Fine Flower of the Nation'. You can't deny it and *it won't do*." (SH 417)

Guy's obsessive yearning to find the "Fine Flower" amidst the debris, a leader who may encumber his men with a fighting spirit defined by ideals of honour and justice, is again dismissed as an anachronistic fantasy. Yet, perhaps more importantly, here Waugh highlights the proletariat's new elevated role in modern politics and the slow degeneration of poetic beauty, as grit and violence take the foreground in daily life. As Ian goes on to explain: "This is a People's War, (…) and the People won't have poetry and they won't have flowers. Flowers stink. The upper classes are on the secret list. We want heroes of the people, to or for the people, by, with and from the people" (SH 417-418). The tongue-in-cheek attribution of the role of hero to Trimmer, a fraud in every sense of the word, is quite telling of Waugh's perception regarding this sentiment. In his book *Intellectuals and the Masses* (1992), John Carey discusses the elitism surrounding modernist literature, defending that "the principle around which modernist literature and culture fashioned themselves was the exclusion of the masses, the defeat of their power, the removal of their literacy, the denial of their humanity. (…) The metaphor of the mass serves the purposes of individual self-assertion because it turns other people into a conglomerate. It denies them the individuality which we ascribe to ourselves and to people we know" (2012: 21). Despite being fairly accessible in terms of writing style, Waugh's mature novels are often detracted by their reliance on the Catholic hero and exaltation of aristocratic families in detriment of the barbarous "other" (the lower classes, Protestants, amoral aesthetes, etc.). This has been the most preponderant criticism to Waugh's body of work by far,[18] and whenever his novels shifted from their comic themes and characters to a more sombre irony, public interest seemed to dwindle.[19] This is because Waugh's "cruel, aloof wit" (*ibidem*: 55), which Carey

[18] Edmund Wilson summed up the general public opinion held at the time in his review of *Brideshead Revisited*: "Waugh's snobbery, hitherto held in check by his satirical point of view, has here emerged shameless and rampant. His admiration for the qualities of the older British families, as contrasted with modern upstarts, had its value in his earlier novels, where the standards of morals and taste are kept in the background and merely implied. But here the upstarts are rather crudely overdone and the aristocrats become terribly trashy, and his cult of the high nobility is allowed to become so rapturous and solemn that it finally gives the impression of being the only real religion in the book" (2002: 246).

[19] It is probable that *Brideshead Revisited* eludes this fate by presenting an uncharacteristic amount of sentimentality when compared to its predecessors, appealing to "the encroaching mass, with its demands for common human sympathy" (Carey, 2012: 55). Even so, it is generally considered that the story declines at the halfway point once Oxford is left behind and Catholic self-sacrifice becomes the main

compares to that of Oscar Wilde, is only palatable at the expense of the elevation of the reader in relation to the characters, regardless of social standing. If Guy Crouchback is immediately deemed as superior due to his socio-religious background, then the ironic tone appears mostly mocking to a reader who might be considered as belonging to the "masses".[20] We are told, for example, that Guy's father, Gervase, "was quite without class consciousness because he saw the whole intricate social structure of his country divided neatly into two unequal and unmistakable parts. On one side stood the Crouchbacks and certain inconspicuous, anciently allied families; on the other side stood the rest of mankind" (SH 36). Further ahead, the narrator explains that this

> engendered in his gentle breast two rare qualities, tolerance and humility. For nothing much, he assumed, could reasonably be expected from the commonalty; it was remarkable how well some of them did behave on occasions; while, for himself, any virtue he had came from afar without his deserving,[21] and every small fault was grossly culpable in a man of his high tradition. (*ibidem*)

This passage is extremely provocative, as Waugh undoubtedly intended it to be. The use of the term "commonality" and the implication that the lower-class are somehow less virtuous than aristocratic families is precisely what sent so many critics into frustrated rampages in their reviews. The criticism is neither unfair nor unfounded, but I must say it comes across as a rather unflattering either-or-interpretation of the work. I concur with Malcolm Bradbury's assessment that not only has Waugh's

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focus of Charles and Julia's relationship. *Sword of Honour*, on the other hand, is clearly delineated as a maturation of these divisive themes from the start, which explains the conflicting reviews it has received over the years.

[20] José Ortega y Gasset discusses this inferiority complex in his essay entitled "The Dehumanization of Art" (1925): "'From a sociological point of view' the characteristic feature of the new art is, in my judgment, that it divides the public into the two classes of those who understand it and those who do not. This implies that one group possesses an organ of comprehension denied to the other – that they are two different varieties of the human species. The new art obviously addresses itself, as did Romanticism, but to a specially gifted minority. Hence the indignation it arouses in the masses. When a man dislikes a work of art, but understands it, he feels superior to it; and there is no reason for indignation. But when his dislike is due to his failure to understand, he feels vaguely humiliated and this rankling sense of inferiority must be counterbalanced by indignant self-assertion. Through its mere presence, the art of the young compels the average citizen to realize that he is just this – the average citizen, a creature incapable of receiving the sacrament of art, blind and deaf to pure beauty" (2019: 5-7).

[21] This sentiment echoes Saint Augustine's understanding of humanity's virtues as gifts from God rather than its own doing. In his *Confessions*, he states: "But every one of these qualities are gifts of my God: I did not give them to myself. They are good qualities, and their totality is my self. Therefore he who made me is good, and he is my good, and I exult to him, (Ps. 2:11) for all the good things that I was even as a boy" (2008: 22). This serves to further emphasize Mr. Crouchback's sainthood and establishes him as the moral paragon of the novel.

fascination with the upper-classes been present since his first novel, rather than being a new-found hobby, it also does not inherently pertain to the novels' merits:

> Clearly his novels are set largely in an upper-middle-class world, verging on the aristocratic; they are much concerned with hereditary distinctions, great estates, and high style in living. Waugh can invest the loss of these things with great pathos; but the novels are usually about their *loss*, and he can perceive these dispossessions largely from outside. The early and the late novels don't differ much in this respect; in the Second World War trilogy, for instance, Crouchback is not vindicated. He lives in a world of heroic delusions and false quests, and must finally compromise and surrender, as Tony Last surrendered. Waugh's novels aren't concerned with retreat into the safe Catholic citadel; he is deeply concerned, as a comic visionary, in the forces of comic anarchy which threaten and destroy. (1994: 456-457)

According to Bradbury, then, Guy's noble background is not as celebrated as many have argued, since it is ultimately lost and meaningless in the modern world. In fact, the author himself acknowledged that the trilogy is "a kind of uncelebration, a history of Guy Crouchback's disillusion with the army", reinforced by his "old-fashioned ideas of honour and illusions of chivalry" (*apud* Jebb, 1967: 112). My point here is that if Waugh truly intended to pay homage to the Catholic aristocracy he would have. Instead, what we are presented with is a clear apprehension regarding the manner in which the modern world and the old world interpenetrate each other until they are unrecognizable in their state of chaos. To better understand this, we will first have to face our protagonist as the author intended: as a "single, uncharacteristic Englishman" (SH IX), which accounts for his generic first name. Guy Crouchback is not a Common Man,[22] nor does Waugh intend for him to represent Catholic aristocracy or any other group in its entirety, even if his experience as a character is closely defined by the historical context surrounding him. He is the particular who shall expand into the universal. In the meantime, his fixation with returning to the past and fixing it, rather than looking forward to his more mature condition, is not conveyed as being laudable,

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[22] This expression was employed by Waugh in "Fan-fare" while referring to "typical" characters. Convinced that characters should be treated as individuals rather than tropes, Waugh stated: "The Common Man does not exist. He is an abstraction invented by bores for bores" (ALO 32). In an interview carried out by the BBC, he insists on this idea when accused of not having "much sympathy with the man in the street": "You must understand (…) that the man in the street does not exist. He is a modern myth. There are individual men and women, each of whom has an individual and immortal soul, and such beings need to use the street from time to time" (*apud* Sykes, 1975: 356).

but as a damning trait. Indeed, the lack of permanence found in a modern world is a fundamental lesson that Guy will eventually have to learn. As a taxi driver quotes to him from an article he had read: "History is a living force (…) no one can put a stop to it and say: 'After this date there shall be no changes'" (SH 13). This historical volatility marks Guy's inadequacies from the very beginning. In relation to this, we are told that Mr. Crouchback

> had a further natural advantage over Guy; he was fortified by a memory which kept only the good things and rejected the ill. Despite his sorrows, he had had a fair share of joys, and these were ever fresh and accessible in Mr. Crouchback's mind. He never mourned the loss of Broome. He still inhabited it as he had known it in bright boyhood and in early, requited love. (SH 36)

Guy's disadvantage here is his inability to enact an emplacement of meaning on sites separated from his experience. While his father is able to understand a fundamental distinction between space and place – that is, that a place is "space to which meaning has been ascribed" (Carter, Donald & Squires, 1993: XVII) – Guy ultimately assigns his feelings to external objects. From Guy's perspective, to be displaced is to be unrooted, and this generates in him feelings of absence and loss which he is unable to replace by force of memory alone. He is a victim of the modern age, where memory does not fortify, but instead breaks apart into fluid anarchy. Thus, the only way to retrieve some semblance of order within the personal realm of consciousness is to seek a source, a structure which sustains the universe and solidifies the experienced past. If traditionally we would attribute this role to collective memory, in the past recent decades we have witnessed the great rise of historiography deny memory its presumed legitimacy. Pierre Nora discusses this in his seminal study regarding the intersection between history and memory, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*. In it, Nora introduces his concept of *lieux de mémoire*, which

> arise out of a sense that there is no such thing as spontaneous memory, hence that we must create archives, mark anniversaries, organize celebrations, pronounce eulogies, and authenticate documents because such things no longer happen as a matter of course. (…) Conversely, if history did not seize upon memories in order to distort and transform them, to mold them or turn them to stone, they would not turn into *lieux de mémoire*, which emerge in two stages: moments of history are plucked out of the flow of history,

> then returned to it — no longer quite alive but not yet entirely dead, like shells left on the shore when the sea of living memory has receded. (Nora & Kritzman, 1996: 7)

As Guy looks around him, he realizes that "he saw little that would have been unfamiliar to Gervase and Hermione" (SH 6); the town of Santa Dulcina is stagnant and the Castello Crouchback is a monument, something which derives its symbolic status from its previous inhabitants and paralyses those who remain among its ruins. Guy becomes the perfect example to demonstrate that "[t]he inhabitant of an anthropological place does not make history; he lives in it" (Augé, 1995: 55). He reluctantly faces the dilemma of modern life (which will become exacerbated in what Marc Augé calls our supermodernity), "where transit points and temporary abodes are proliferating under luxurious or inhuman conditions (hotel-chains and squats, holiday clubs and refugee camps, shantytowns threatened with demolition or doomed to festering longevity); (…) a world thus surrendered to solitary individuality, to the fleeting, the temporary and ephemeral (…)" (*ibidem*: 78). Here we can observe the same binary, space/place, and how Guy's reaction to non-places such as military headquarters, boats and hotels will greatly differ from his father's. The owner of the Marine Hotel,[23] Mr. Cuthbert, who is in the business of displacement, tries to get Mr. Crouchback to leave his accommodations, stating: "That's where the money comes. Keep people moving. Keep them anxious where they're going next. Some of these people with their houses blitzed are grateful for anything" (SH 332). For his part, Mr. Crouchback does not mind the gradual diminution of his home and charitably gives away some of his space so that others may have a place to live. While Mr. Crouchback constructs his own abode in a hotel, a space which usually typifies non-places, Guy is bound by the war's imposition that every place must be transient. He lives within the dilapidated walls of Kut-Al-Imara, an abandoned preparatory school which is transformed into the Halberdiers' military headquarters. In it, Guy feels oppressed by the imagined past and its implications for his future:

> The occupation of this husk of a house, perhaps, was a microcosm of that new world he had enlisted to defeat. Something quite worthless, a poor parody of civilization, had been driven out; he and his fellows had moved in, bringing the new world with them;

[23] Waugh incorporates numerous aquatic elements and references throughout the narrative, which once again takes us back to Saint Augustine, for whom "the unstable, undrinkable sea is (…) [the] standing image for humanity alienated from God" (2008: 14).

the world that was taking firm shape everywhere all about him, bounded by barbed wire and reeking of carbolic. (SH 109)

It is here that Guy's illusions begin to wane. Leaving the Halberdier barracks, the only place in England where there existed "a survival of late-Victorian Sunday so complete and so unselfconscious" (SH 70), marked the end of his honeymoon with the corps. The barracks, to Guy, were his ideals consummated, and as he sat "in the ante-room among all the trophies of the Corps, in the order and comfort of two centuries' uninterrupted inhabitation, it seemed impossible that anything conducted by the Halberdiers could fall short of excellence" (SH 101-102). Guy continues to live in monuments, in places of history rather than places of memory, stuck in his illusions that one day he may be integrated and fully entrenched in their outdated rituals and traditions. One of the few common-sense characters in the novel, Mrs. Leonard, points out this lack of permanency in most regiments: "Isn't it a shame? No sooner settled in one place than you're off somewhere else. I don't see the sense of it" (SH 72). She dolefully expresses her wish to spend her Sundays with her husband and future father of her yet-unborn child, but Colonel Ritchie-Hook immediately rebuts her sorrows by explaining that "[t]he week-end habit could lose us the war" (SH 78). Guy witnesses time and time again cases like hers, observing how "[m]en unnaturally removed from wives and family began at once to build substitute homes, to paint and furnish, to make flower-beds and edge them with white-washed pebbles, to stitch cushion-covers on lonely gun-sites" (SH 196-197). This is the closest that these men get to belonging to a place, yet it is painfully obvious that it does not suffice. They are so occupied with "home-building, repairing, rearranging, improvising" (SH 235) that they cannot be part of anything except themselves in the most abstract and unsatisfying of ways. In this way, Guy is broken off from routines and rituals, trapped in the ever-spinning wheel of moving in and retreating, getting in the picture and falling out of it. His exile is tenfold, for he does not know where he shall land next.

Besides the alteration in places of memory, people were also restrained by their inherited cultural legacy. Authors who, like Waugh, "inherited the Twenties from the deeds of their elders, were already writing of and in a shattered, historically hopeless, morally damaged world" (Bradbury, 1994: 204). Guy's idealism possibly springs from his secluded youth, spent in places like Santa Dulcina and a cottage in Kenya, where his sheltered existence rendered him incapable of comprehending the scope of human

suffering.[24] As such, there are certain memories Guy rejects as a consequence of his detachment from the events of the First World War, of which he has barely, if any, recollection. An example of this is when his sister Angela is horrified by her son Tony's implication that he might get "a nice neat wound" (SH 31) during his service, since she is aware that "[t]here weren't any nice little wounds" (SH 33) in war. At Guy's indifference towards his nephew's inflated spirit of self-sacrifice, Angela says:

> "Oh, Guy, you're too young to remember. I grew up with the first war. I'm one of the girls you read about who danced with the men who were being killed. I remember the telegram coming about Gervase. You were just a schoolboy going short of sweets. I remember the first lot who went out. There wasn't one of them left at the end." (*ibidem*)

Having been a child during those fatal years, Guy carries within him a sense of shame shared by most men his age for having missed "the ultimate test". In addition, the discontinuation between his childhood memories and the picture his sister paints of the war leads Guy to be disconnected from traumatic experiences other than his own. This demonstrates that at the beginning of the narrative Guy is not only immature, but wholly self-centred, and that he is more influenced by seemingly permanent symbols than by shared memories. For instance, while trains are carrying war prisoners towards concentration camps, Guy is busy thinking about how the violent death of Saint Valentine ties in with his amorous disillusionment with Virginia. It is through instances such as this one that we can grasp how Guy is constantly held back by distractions, most of the times willingly, due to his inability to exorcise his failures. The reader is also criticized for falling into the same trap as him: "The reader's willingness to be distracted – or perhaps more accurately, to distract him or herself from the perceived trivialities of struggles and infractions that do not occur on an obviously heroic scale – is critiqued through the trilogy's portrayal of Guy" (Okuma, 2019: 574). Hence, for Waugh, "there

[24] It is important to underline that stagnation not only engenders dissatisfaction, but may function as a stepping stone towards a hedonistic lifestyle. The Castello Crouchback is not a home per se, but a place for honeymoons and vacations; it becomes a nightmare born out of an illusory utopia. Although this serves as Guy's first warning sign against his rose-tinted outlook on life, he does not take heed of it and continues to persist on his heroic quest. Focusing on this aspect, Heath argues that "there can be little doubt that the sweet life of Santa Dulcina has influenced [Guy's] and his family's decline. In the War Trilogy as in *Brideshead Revisited*, idyllic earthly happiness is incompatible with spiritual success", and, thus, Waugh's "diagnosis of the Crouchbacks, as of the Flytes, is that they need to suffer more, for out of suffering comes renewal" (1982: 219). As Sebastian Flyte shrewdly observes in *Brideshead Revisited*, the Catholic faith is a complex belief system in which each person has to struggle against their own personal principles; "happiness doesn't seem to have much to do with it" (BR 102).

are no more non-combatants or innocents in the age of modern warfare"; we are all "complicit in the 'violent' erasure of stories and narratives that do not fit easily into the traditional war narrative" (*ibidem*). In the grand scope of events, it is apparent that Guy's marginalization is inconsequential when compared to the persecutions that were being launched worldwide against entire socio-ethnic groups, something he does not fully comprehend until he meets a batch of Jewish refugees later on in the novel. The hollowness inside of Guy prompts him to desperately search for meaningful connections offered by the presence of war, and, consequently, Angela's assessment of the horrors the conflict may bring is too foreign for him. He is still too immature, too spiritually disinvested to demonstrate sympathy for anyone other than himself.

To accept Angela's worldview would also signify to Guy that his eldest brother's death had been in vain. As T. L. Okuma explains, "Gervase is emblematic of Guy's eagerness to romanticize 'the flower of youth' claimed by World War I, an entire generation of young men who bravely sacrificed their lives for their nation" (2019: 563). Together with many of his contemporaries, including George Orwell and Christopher Isherwood (see Rutherford, 114-115), Waugh noticed the struggle faced by the young men who had just missed the war and whose virility and bravery was put into question by older generations:

> Some of us were sharply conscious of those legendary figures who, almost to a man, were wiped out in the First World War. We were often reproachfully reminded, particularly by the college servants, of how impoverished and subdued we were in comparison with those great men. (ALL, 241)

In *Sword of Honour* the same message is emphasized, and in Guy Crouchback we see the illusions held, though expressed in dissimilar forms, by young men who enthusiastically enlisted to fight in the war:

> Most of those who volunteered for Commandos in the spring of 1940 had other motives besides the desire to serve their country. A few merely sought release from regimental routine; more wished to cut a gallant figure before women; others had led lives of particular softness and were moved to re-establish their honour in the eyes of the heroes of their youth – legendary, historical, fictitious – that still haunted their manhood. (SH 637)

Like these men, Guy proclaims to feel "an especial kinship" (SH 9) with his hero, Sir Roger de Waybroke, an English crusader who died before even reaching the battlefield and whose shrine dwells in Santa Dulcina.[25] H. E. Semple remarks that Sir Roger "is a reminder of the relationship of imperfect man to a perfect ideal – the union of the secular and the sacred. He is a reminder that mere man can and did dedicate his sword to the cause of good. He may never complete his journey, and he may be unworthy, but the ideal remains valid" (1968: 48). In addition to foreshadowing Guy's fruitless excursion into the frontlines, "il Santo Inglese" personifies the figure of the universal hero who serves as an inspiration to the ordinary man trying to live up to society's expectations.

Guy Crouchback, far from being a "typical" character, is nonetheless influenced by common symbols that rest upon the foundations of civilization. He inherits his family and regiment's cultural memory, which are valued above his own personal experience at the beginning of the novel as being true sources of happiness. In this state of ingenuity, Guy is rudely awakened to the reality that modernity seeks to destroy these compact structures in order to establish new ones. Through a post-colonial reading of the novel, Lewis MacLeod views Guy's position in a negative light, comparing him to colonized subjects having to either struggle against their oppressors or abide by their rules.[26] He states: "Likely the last of his line, both in terms of his own lineage and in terms of his values, Guy stands (associatively, at least) as the last member of a doomed demographic that was once indigenous to the British Isles: the last English gentleman. (…) In this sense, Guy is a kind of endangered species, a biological as well as a cultural cul-de-sac" (MacLeod, 2010: 74). As such, it may be suggested that Guy lives

[25] Both knight and city, it should be mentioned, are completely fictional. In *Brideshead Revisited*, Lord Marchmain also mentions a Sir Roger, though very briefly: "Aunt Julia knew the tombs, cross-legged knight and doubleted earl, marquis like a Roman senator, limestone, alabaster, and Italian marble; tapped the escutcheons with her ebony cane, made the casque ring over old Sir Roger. We were knights then, barons since Agincourt, the larger honours came with the Georges" (BR 398-399). This is likely another example of Waugh reutilizing a character, or a character's name, to further explore it.

[26] This may certainly be considered a contentious point-of-view. Guy Crouchback comes from a privileged background and is not the deliberate victim of ethnic cleansing or racial injustice. Rather, he is the product of a declining type, the English gentleman, falling under a favourable category in the socioeconomic spectrum; thus, to compare him to victims of ethno-racial violence would be ludicrous. Nonetheless, as Marina MacKay explains, "Waugh indulges in a sleight of hand that conflates two largely antithetical modern meanings of minority culture: 'minority' as elite and 'minority' as marginalised" (2007: 126). What MacLeod intends to explore here, then, is Waugh's tendency to align himself with themes of "tradition, rupture, and cultural displacement" (2010: 63), which often conflate with post-colonial discourse. Even if straying from our usual understanding of the term, this perspective is still vital to analyse foundations which would later on influence post-modernist thought.

according to macrostructures into which he is inserted, languishing in his passivity and deriving satisfaction from "finding someone else to take control of things" (SH 574). This results from Guy's personal memory having negative associations with the past, as he permanently seeks to find refuge from hurtful experiences regarding love and self-fulfilment. Even so, Guy still claims that he can "only think of the past" (SH 780), which is symptomatic of his close attachment to inherited values and symbols.

According to John Brannigan, "Waugh epitomises to some extent the tendency in postwar British writing to represent the present as a pale shadow of the past, or indeed to see the present through the spectral lenses of the past" (2003: 49). Undeniably, the persistence of memory accompanies the narrative like an omnipresent ghost. Trout mentions the ghost of the country house (1997: 136), but there is also the ghost of Virginia's betrayal and abandonment, of Apthorpe's inescapable influence, of the Kut-Al-Imara schoolboys, of Guy's physical and spiritual injuries, and of Guy himself, who rises from the dead to haunt Ludovic like "Banquo (…) turned host" (SH 658). And memory, like a ghost, also haunts. Similarly to many neurotics who are unable to overcome their initial grief, Guy is consumed by a "compulsion to repeat which overrides the pleasure principle" (Freud, 2005: 232). To put it in other words, Guy begins the story in a state of unpleasure prompted by his wife's desertion, and in his repression of his trauma he creates a metaphorical wound that will continue revisiting him and leave him with a sentiment of inferiority. This repetition is prompted by what Freud calls the *Todestrieb* (death drive), which we will address later on when we explore Waugh's concept of the death-wish. What is important to keep in mind is that this "death drive is occasionally experienced by the subject as the possession of a 'demonic power' in that it, contrary to the subject's conscious wish, seemingly forces her or him to destructive behaviours, as when a person constantly experiences that she is betrayed by her friends or repeatedly ends his love affairs in the same disastrous way" (Sigurdson, 2013: 365). When Guy returns to London he desperately tries to get himself enlisted, even if everyone turns him away because of his age. Discouraged by these constant rejections, Guy himself admits to his desire of becoming canon-fodder as a result of his lack of success in life as a young man:

> "But I'm not the pick of the nation," said Guy. "I'm natural fodder. I've no dependants. I've no special skill in anything. What's more I'm getting old. I'm ready for

> immediate consumption. You should take the thirty-fives now and give the young men time to get sons." (SH 23)

Later on, Guy will become the victim of two new sources of trauma: the retreat from Crete and his parachuting accident. Throughout his experience his death drive seems to increase, since death "represents the past in its real form, that is to say, not the physical past whose existence is abolished, nor the epic past as it has become perfected in the work of memory, nor the historic past in which man finds the guarantor of his future, but the past which reveals itself reversed in repetition" (Lacan, 2001: 76). The problem here is that "repetition is not reproduction" (Lacan, 1979: 50). As we will come to see, repetition only diminishes. What is natural and cyclical becomes mechanic and circular and, devoid of "their original significance, reincarnation and resurrection take their place alongside (…) absurdly secular modern rituals" (Meckier, 1979: 65). For example, throughout the narrative the "motif of the dead knight and his unfulfilled purpose is to be repeated in various guises, and through its repetition an accretion of images suggesting poignancy and futility deepens the reader's perception of Waugh's intrinsic theme" (Wilson, 1974: 87-88). In this manner, we witness the constant "spectral recirculation of scenes and moments" which in turn makes new scenes and actions "seem always to be a pale imitation of the old" (Brannigan: 2003: 49).

Though not to be confused with memory, another important concept to underline is Carl Jung's idea of the collective unconscious, "which does not derive from personal experience and is not a personal acquisition but is inborn. (…) It is, in other words, identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us" (Jung, 1991: 3-4). Thus, Guy must learn to part with his *lieux de mémoire*, but also with the symbols and images which have become parodies of themselves in a desolate world. Waugh curiously links individual psychology with the collective unconscious in a passage where guilt-ridden Ludovic, a peculiar red-eyed Corporal-Major, ponders on his past behaviour:

> He had read enough of psychology to be familiar with the word "trauma"; to know that to survive injury without apparent scar gave no certainty of abiding health. Things had happened to Ludovic in the summer of 1941, things had been done by him, which, the ancients believed, provoked a doom. Not only the ancients; most of mankind, independently, cut off from all communication with one another, had discovered and

> proclaimed this grim alliance between the powers of darkness and justice. Who was Ludovic, Ludovic questioned, to set his narrow, modern scepticism against the accumulated experience of the species? (SH 702)

Ludovic is aware that something universal is pointing him towards certain doom. This may be the most feasible route to access oneself: through these symbols and archetypes which are inherent to us and bind humanity together. Memory is no longer fixed in place or culture; it is fixed in something deeper, which distorts and creates myth out of experience, much like Waugh conceived *Sword of Honour* out of his time in the military. Michael Horacki notices, for example, that "forcing the new Halberdiers to routinely recite the Corps' version of history reinforces Corps collective memory", though he also highlights that "the regiment's version of the September 11, 1709, Battle of Malplaquet as a gleeful apple fight that resulted in a childish nickname – the 'Applejacks' – represents a dubiously selective view of a battle that ended with an only nominal British victory" (2018: 309). Mrs. Stitch, a modern day Cleopatra, also tries to convince everybody of her darling boy Claire's innocence by reformulating his cowardly retreat as the best and only solution for someone in his situation. Guy himself is aware that his memory is feeble and prone to becoming muddled:

> As Guy foresaw, those mad March days and nights of hide-and-seek drained into a deep well of refreshment in his mind, but in retrospect the detail of alternate ruse and counter-ruse faded and grew legendary. He never again smelled wet laurel, or trod among pine needles, without reliving those encumbered night prowls with Apthorpe, those mornings of triumph or disappointment. But the precise succession of episodes, indeed their very number, faded and were lost among later, less childlike memories. (SH 186)

We may consider that, since mental capabilities are so skewed and access to personal feelings is systematically denied to us, "Waugh actually conceived of a novel in terms of its central symbols" (Meckier, 1973: 173). In this trilogy, what evidently predominates is "Waugh's ultimate symbol for twentieth-century disorder: the Second World War" (*ibidem*: 166), which is made up to be an antrum of spectres, the wheel of life metamorphosed into a circus attraction. The repetition-compulsion gives the novel its circular motion, and in Crouchback's journey "he drifts through a series of military limbos forever attempting to board the chariot of war, but constantly being whirled

aside" (Wilson, 1974: 89). To break the pattern, according to Waugh, it is vital to search for genuine connections between the past and the human beings who rely upon it, so as to avoid senseless regenerations of what was once genuine. Guy believes this is only attainable through large-scale actions, but in his extensive study of universal myths, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1949), Joseph Campbell locates the turning point in the hero's journey at the moment when, "instead of passing outward, beyond the confines of the visible world, the hero goes inward, to be born again" (1973: 84). Disappointed by the lack of comfort the material world provides him, Guy Crouchback turns towards another world, the world of the psyche. Still, following the author's, the narrator's and the protagonist's tendency towards the exterior, we will find that embodied states of mind are unstable in their material form, as they act like a plastic monstrosity which is disintegrated only to incessantly reassemble.

1.2. *Principium Individuationis*

At the end of the prologue, Guy is finally able to acquire a spot in the Royal Halberdiers as a result of his fortunate meeting with Major Tickeridge.[27] For the first time we will see him interact with other people outside of his own family and understand how his relationship with his brother-officers, superiors and friends affect his susceptible personality. Thus, we turn our focus from the protagonist's beginnings to his emergent social bonds. However, we cannot neglect an important aspect in Waugh's philosophy, which he has inherited from the first modernists – the issue of identity and how it affects both personal interactions and the individual's role within institutional organizations. As is the case with many protagonists who inhabit grim fictional worlds, Guy is a dissident who rejects the established system. He is an unorthodox one at that:

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[27] Guy expresses genuine amazement at his luck, stating: "'It's remarkable, (…) I spent weeks badgering generals and Cabinet Ministers and getting nowhere. Then I come here and in an hour everything is fixed up for me by a strange major" (SH 44). To readers familiar with *Vile Bodies*, the random intervention of a "strange major" should raise some red flags. Though it may seem like Guy's fortune is on the rise, it is worth noting that Adam Fenwick-Symes is also under this illusion when a "drunk Major" promises him a great deal of money, only to then disappear and elude Adam in their various encounters. When they meet again in the battlefield, Adam's due winnings are finally given to him, but since the war had caused the pound's market value to plummet they became worthless in the meantime. In similar fashion, when Guy meets Major Tickeridge (now Colonel) again in the battlefield, he is stumped by the fact that he can no longer grant Guy a place in battle. In this way, both Adam and Guy are denied their ideal, romantic lives by those they had once deemed to be personifications of fortune – the former can no longer marry Nina and give her a good life, while Guy is stuck in his passivity, unable to contribute in any way to the war effort and segregated from real comradeship.

the last of an exclusive aristocratic line of Catholics in a growingly atheist and overcrowded society. Hence, few critics seem to place Guy Crouchback in the position of the prey rather than as part of the hegemonic elite. In terms of social and economic standings the latter stands out as being true, but the complete shift of power dynamics accelerated by war politics converts Guy's presumed pre-eminence into something to be scorned. On one hand, this is a great catalyst for Guy's development, as it strips away his romantic ideals quite swiftly. On the other hand, modernity's constant disregard for tradition and ancestry is quite preoccupying, as it turns people into blank slates who may adopt whichever mask they desire in order to fit in. As such, the inexistence of stabilizing places is further exacerbated by the notion that people are also becoming non-persons. Guy's confusion when faced with the term "displaced persons" – to which his Squadron Leader sarcastically retorts: "Aren't we all?" (SH 819) – quickly dissipates as he becomes aware of how modernity thrives on asserting new order out of chaos. Like Mr. Cuthbert, the leaders of powerful nations retain the upper-hand by keeping people moving and actively displacing them from their cultural roots. This lack of a defined identity is in line with the "memory boom" which occurred after the war and "unleashed a culture of trauma and regret":

> The decline of Utopian visions supposedly redirected our gaze to collective pasts, which served as a repository of inspiration for repressed identities and unfulfilled claims. Without unifying collective aspirations, identity politics proliferated. And most often, these identities nursed a wound and harbored a grudge. (Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi & Levy, 2011: 9)

To deny people their shared heritage is to create the so-called "mass", an indistinct entity which is as vicious as it is subservient. The mass in the trilogy is everything that works as a structured, or at least entangled, body. It does not correspond to the "ignorant rabble", as would be suggested by Carey, but merely materializes in response to a loss of singular aptitudes. This loss triggers a mechanized response in people who, according to Waugh, are individuals with a personal soul, regardless of social standing. In one instance, for example, Guy ponders on the "strange faculty of the army of putting itself into order" (SH 196). He concludes that this kneejerk reaction is identical to the one found in the natural world: "Shake up a colony of ants and for some minutes all seems chaos. The creatures scramble aimlessly, frantically about; then

instinct reasserts itself. They find their proper places and proper functions. As ants, so soldiers" (*ibidem*). Though order is of utmost importance to Waugh, he cannot condone automatic responses as its expected result. The growing lack of individuality in the modern world is epitomized in the "Electronic Personnel Selector", which reduces Guy to the comically abbreviated line: "A/Ty. Captain Crouchback, G., R.C.H., att. H.O.O. H.Q." (SH 629). Shorn of his humanity, Guy becomes reduced to his military curriculum and to his minor role in serving as a cog in the war machine. This puts into perspective the following scene in *Put Out More Flags* (1942), Waugh's other war-focused novel, in which Cedric Lyne is overjoyed at being removed from his squadron to go on solo mission:

> As he walked alone he was exhilarated with the sense of being one man, one pair of legs, one pair of eyes, one brain, sent on a single, intelligible task; one man alone could go freely anywhere on the earth's surface; multiply him, put him in a drove and by each addition of his fellows you subtract something that is of value, make him so much less a man; this was the crazy mathematics of war. (POMF 269)

As Okuma elucidates, this disregard for individual human lives "highlights a fundamental problem of modern warfare in its mass scale: a lack of attention to particulars" (Okuma, 2019: 562). Everything is put into perspective by small-scale models which minimize people to mere dots in strategic operations. In the very same manner, as Guy Crouchback becomes surrounded by spectres, shadows of people, his value decreases. He becomes an ant, a submissive follower of the mob, trying to find somewhere to belong. Yet this is not Guy's nature; as someone with individual aspirations, he thrives on well-grounded sites and stable conditions. Like Kafka's Gregor Samsa, Guy Crouchback might as well be a giant insect trying to camouflage himself amidst a hoard of ants.

Throughout the novel, we can perceive how Guy's otherness is tangible in most of his relationships, regardless of his best attempts at being *simpatico*. Noticing this odd casting choice, Cyril Connolly felt that Waugh's main error consisted "in failing to build up relationships between his military characters, who do not exist in the round but only in their reality to the narrator" (2002a: 338). Leech also agrees that these characters are "decentred, while paradoxically viewing themselves as central to everything. This renders them unable to connect with anyone or anything outside of themselves" (2015:

124). To put it in other words, each character lives in a sort of self-contained dome which our protagonist cannot and will not enter, attempting instead to form his own idealized version of every single one of them. Information is withheld on purpose so that mystery surrounds each fantastical character until it falls apart under close inspection. It is this Guy seeks to avoid – human intimacy which might lead to disappointment, thus creating these strange relationship dynamics characterized by their vapid dialogue and reliance on mythicizing the other. Connolly is convinced that without these relationships, the existence of a "band of brothers", filial bonds or an amorous connection, there is no sense in this war novel:

> We do not witness the great battles and deployment of armies which enliven war novels; we see only training camps and the officers' mess and one blurred and mapless conflict; everything depends on human relationships. It is these relationships which seem to me the chief weakness of the book. They are too superficial to sustain the structure. (Connolly, 2002b: 369)

I am in complete agreement with Connolly, though I do not find this to be a particularly dooming weakness as he obviously does. Certainly, if one reads *Sword of Honour* as a war epic, disappointment will be granted – there are no great personalities to make up for the lack of action, such as in the Greek and Roman classics. Everything is linear and minimalized to the point of stagnation, the relationships established between characters are superficial due to their lack of development, and the main character, Guy Crouchback, does not have enough charisma to carry the narrative throughout his wearisome journey. In earlier novels, this worked to Waugh's advantage, as his disinterested posture appealed to the reader's sense of moral superiority in relation to comic caricatures, which amounted to little more than empty vessels. Here, however, these aspects are expected to be developed as part of Waugh's search for a religious truth, yet whatever sincerity finds its way into the narrative comes across as terribly idealistic and immature. Joseph Frank goes as far as calling it "a discreet orgy of adolescent sentiment" (2002: 346), which is made even more evident by the section spent at Kut-al-Imara House.

The innocent protagonist who is not tailored to survive the modern world and the carnivalesque array of caricatures who accompany him, critics argue, are tropes that do not withstand a serious narrative. As Andrew Rutherford tells us: "Complex truth, it

would seem, cannot be told in the simplified terms of either myth or caricature, though these are among Waugh's favourite fictional devices.” (1978: 123). Still, I would like to argue for a different shift than the one often ascribed to Waugh’s *oeuvre* – the narrative which had once been radically exterior has slowly been made interior. In chapter two, I will go in-depth on how this proves itself stylistically, but in terms of themes presented it appears quite obvious that the author is attempting to press deeper into the character’s minds. In fact, *Brideshead Revisited* and *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* had already blatantly turned Waugh’s exteriority into interiority with their first-person narration and concern with the psychological, respectively. I find it quite interesting to find the latter of these situated chronologically between the second and the final instalment of the trilogy, especially since it mainly explores themes of mental illness which are also prevalent throughout *Sword of Honour*. The main bulk of *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* is centred on the protagonist hearing voices while travelling on a cruise, indicating that some degree of schizophrenia is ailing him. The characters in this book, then, are not real people who travel alongside Mr. Pinfold, but mere projections of the subject’s mind who manifest themselves as if they were present in the context of objective reality. It does not strike me as preposterous, then, to suggest that Waugh, perhaps intentionally, has transported this strategy onto a fictionalization of his time in the army. After all, Guy is constantly comparing himself and being compared to by others to his deceased brother Ivo, who succumbed to madness and starved himself to death. We are told that “Guy and Ivo were remarkably alike” (SH 19) and one character outright mistakes Guy for his deceased brother, to which he replies that it is a “very natural confusion” (SH 681). Other characters, such as Guy’s nephew and brother-in-law, constantly suggest that Ivo’s madness could be hereditary. For his part, Box-Bender “had for some years been expecting Guy to go mad” (SH 19), and Ian Kilbannock, in a conversation with his wife Kristie, implies just as much:

> “He must be insane”
>
> “I've always thought he was. It's in the family you know. There was that brother of his.” (SH 783)

The narration, of course, does not allow us to make the claim that the events occurring are subjective. Historical dates are punctually referred to, the third-person narrator is undoubtedly omniscient to a certain degree within the fictional universe, and

personal thoughts and emotions are very rarely verbalized. Yuexi Liu uses the umbrella-term "*talk* fiction" (2017a: 2) to refer to these types of novels, in which the narrative is clearly focused on external communication rather than inner speech. However, this stylistic choice does not impede inner voices from manifesting themselves. What I am suggesting here, then, is that Waugh creates an extension of his protagonist using external elements, which in turn presupposes an almost paradoxical introversion of the character's mind. Arguing in favour of an Exterior Modernism, Liu cites Clark and Chalmers' 1998 essay "The Extended Mind" to also emphasize how certain modernists, such as Waugh, privileged the mind's relationship with its surrounding environment over a process of individual introspection.[28] Although she does not analyse *Sword of Honour*, Liu touches on the issue of cognitive dissonance, more specifically Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID), in *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*:

> In Pinfold's case, he divides himself and plays many distinctive voices, or roles, as if he were staging a play within his mind. By splitting his consciousness and disowning some of his thoughts, the middle-aged writer-protagonist, paranoid, traumatised by war, and concerned about old age, mortality, and his dwindling creative power, can at least detach himself from, if not deal with, his problems. His dissociation, however, deprives him of the control of his own thoughts and therefore leaves him vulnerable and exposed to their attacks. Pinfold's thoughts, now externalised as voices, indeed turn against him, and it is with himself that he must now begin to battle. (*ibidem*)

Similarly, Heath proposes that the "idea of outgrowing the clutches of a pernicious other self, with a view to penetrating closer to a self which is somehow more real, is central to Waugh's fiction" (1982: 17), and "that Waugh continues to think of himself as a split personality and to externalize that split in his fiction" (*ibidem*: 24). These externalizations correlate with the deep paranoia which haunts the protagonist throughout the narrative. Let us analyse, for example, this passage following Guy's traumatic retreat from Crete on a drifting open boat:

[28] In their article, Clark and Chalmers discuss the possibility of "an *active externalism,* based on the active role of the environment in driving cognitive processes" (1998: 7). Guy Crouchback may very well be an "extended self", for his mind is best perceived as "a coupling of biological organism and external resources" (*ibidem*: 18). His duplication and extraction, the constant adding and subtracting to his own consciousness, are expressed in exterior utterances by multiple mouthpieces. The proposition that "certain forms of social activity might be reconceived as less akin to communication and action, and as more akin to thought" (*ibidem*) is then enacted in a fictional strata, as the branching out of one single cognitive source (the implied author) into its multiple outlets (the characters) finds structural solidity through an unreliable medium (a figural narrative).

> There were exterior sounds in plenty, a wireless down the corridor, another wireless in the block beyond the window, the constant jingle of trolleys, footsteps, voices; that day as each preceding day people came into Guy's room and spoke to him. He heard them and understood and was as little tempted to answer as to join in the conversation of actors on a stage; there was an orchestra pit, footlights, a draped proscenium, between him and all these people. He lay like an explorer in his lamp-lit tent while in the darkness outside the anthropophagi peered and jostled. (SH 576)

These instances are strikingly similar to Pinfold’s delusions while he is lying in bed on a cruise ship. The wireless foreshadows the breakdown in communication and, like Pinfold’s, Guy’s “mind works like a radio, but a radio for communication rather than for broadcasting. It first projects its own thoughts in the air and then captures their signals as if they came from an external source” (Liu, 2017a: 45). In this sense, it is “as if he were staging a play within his mind” (*ibidem*: 47) in which he refuses to engage anymore. These are the strategies we find throughout the novel, and they subtly foreshadow Guy’s eventual epiphany.

I find the following passage particularly striking when considering these subjects:

> “...Do you agree,” [Guy] asked earnestly, “that the Supernatural Order is not something added to the Natural Order, like music or painting, to make everyday life more tolerable? It *is* everyday life. The supernatural is real; what we call ‘real’ is a mere shadow, a passing fancy. Don't you agree, Padre?” (SH 90)

Such a mystical approach might seem odd for a Waugh novel, but it appears to me perfectly in line with the near-Gothic quality of his other works of fiction. However, while the reader usually expects some implausibility when reading comedies, as they often imply the use of the absurd and the caricature, they are taken aback by the usage of such devices in seemingly realistic fiction and are quick to take everything at face value. I would argue that Waugh cleverly drops several hints to suggest that reality, in the context of this narrative, is particularly unreliable. The aforementioned quote, attributed to Guy Crouchback, illustrates the motif of duplication which is present throughout the entire novel, not only in relation to other characters (Apthorpe and the

batch from the Training Depot[29] are the most frequently cited examples), but also in relation to perceived reality. Though it may appear an irrational assessment made by the immature Crouchback, it demonstrates that the third-person narration is not as impartial as it seems at first glance, but instead mirrors Guy's state of mind throughout his journey.

It is also important to notice that the narrative, though seemingly more authorial than figural, may be quite misleading. The authorial narrator is naturally assumed to be a teller-character since the first opening lines, where objectivity predominates and an historical recounting occurs. Yet, some passages indicate the narrator's shift into a reflector-character, such as in the following line: "As surely as Apthorpe was marked for early promotion, Trimmer was marked for ignominy" (SH 50). There are no attributive signs here (such as "Guy thought") and therefore we must assign this sentiment to the impersonal narrator who is momentarily reflecting Guy's own thoughts. Furthermore, we later on discover that this is a false assessment, as Trimmer inadvertently becomes the people's hero after an improvised operation; Guy's own prejudices have impaired the narrative voice. The story, then, "is told almost entirely from Guy's point of view, which the narrator seems to share, so that as we read we are fully involved in the process, immersed in the experiences which the hero undergoes" (Rutherford, 1978: 125). I would here emphasise the word "almost", for instances of internal focalisation are attributed to other characters, such as Mr. Crouchback, Trimmer, Fido Hound and Ludovic. The narrator here is playful and invites the reader into the characters' minds only to abruptly pull out again. When the focus shifts, there is an immediate "intrusion from the exterior world" (SH 531) which recalls our immediate attention to the action over the brief reflections we are allowed to glimpse from time to time. Accordingly, all that we can apprehend of Guy's personality are impressions from his dialogue with others and the narrator's reflective nature, and in this process he is severed until his personality seems non-existent. Perhaps it comes across as a process of depersonalization that is almost too radically removed from emotion (or, at any rate, thought disguised as emotion), which is why Waugh has taken the trouble to sustain his protagonist through a myriad of reflected alter-egos. This might also be some extreme facet of Guy's solipsistic nature: to attribute states of mind to others which are only true

[29] In January 18, 1940, Waugh wrote in his war diary that the "other detachments of officers from Deal, Portsmouth and Plymouth", probably his inspiration for the Training Depot doppelgangers, "are so like ourselves in composition that it is like a 'hall of mirrors'" (1976: 461).

in relation to himself; or, to go even further, Guy's thoughts being projected onto actor-characters and creating a fictional mind-palace of subjectivity which labours in the realm of "objective" reality.[30]

Waugh uses the motif of the looking-glass to illustrate this point further. As a result of his desire to belong to the Halberdiers, Guy grows out his moustache – as he remarks to Tommy Blackhouse, "[t]hey've all got big moustaches" (SH 95) – and buys a monocle in hopes of achieving "a military effect" (SH 148).[31] Guy's moustache and monocle work to materialize his shifting identity, and Guy ponders on how he's only seen an appearance similar to his "on the faces of clandestine homosexuals, on touts with accents to hide, on Americans trying to look European" (SH 148-149). The very act of putting on this façade is indicative of something being hidden, and by simply looking at himself in a mirror Guy realizes that "his whole uniform was a disguise, his whole new calling a masquerade" (SH 149). Just like an infant recognizing their image for the first time on a reflective surface, Guy suffers a process of identification and extrication wherein the Self becomes the Other. Through an exterior gaze he processes the Other, the object, as signifying the duplicity of the Self. Jung defines this phenomenon as follows:

> Whoever goes to himself risks a confrontation with himself. The mirror does not flatter, it faithfully shows whatever looks into it; namely, the face we never show to the world because we cover it with the persona, the mask of the actor. But the mirror lies behind the mask and shows the true face. (1991: 20)

When we are first introduced to Ben Ritchie-Hook, one of the first things that is pointed out to us is that his "single, terrible eye (…) was set in steel-rimmed monocle" (SH 77).

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[30] In an interview given to the BBC, Waugh claims that his brief illness, chronicled in *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, "was not in the least like losing one's reason, it was simply one's reason working hard but on the wrong premises" (1960, n/p). The implied author allocates the main character's reason precisely in these wrong premises to disorientate the reader and create a hyperawareness akin to what is experienced when one is directly addressed while watching a play. This is perhaps the most innovative aspect of Waugh's stylistic prose.

[31] This is also tied in with Guy's collective memory, greatly influenced by artistic media such as books and films (even if this is more evident in the original trilogy than in *Sword of Honour*). When Guy sees the monocle in an optician's window, the narrator informs us that "the idiosyncratic choice of word 'eye-glasses' in preference to 'spectacles', the memory of the strange face which had just looked at him over the barber's basin, the memory of countless German Uhlans in countless American films, drew him across" (SH 126). Guy's transformation into a "junker" (*ibidem*) is problematic, as he is essentially giving himself over to the aesthetics of the enemy rather than being faithful to his own ideals. Moreover, it is a mask that does not become him, as he is not a character like Apthorpe or Ritchie-Hook. Contrary to his expectations, Guy does not look threatening or authoritative outside his own restricted circle of Halberdiers; the effect of his masquerade is merely "comic" (SH 148).

In the same fashion, Apthorpe is primarily described as being "burly, tanned [and] moustached" (SH 48). Waugh uses these physical attributes in order to relate these characters back to Guy, and by the time he meets Virginia again he is already "disguised as a combination of Apthorpe and Ritchie-Hook" (Heath, 1982: 225). As Waugh explained about Gilbert Pinfold, "the part for which he cast himself was a combination of eccentric don and testy colonel and he acted it strenuously (…) until it came to dominate his whole outward personality" (SH 11). The same may be said of Guy Crouchback, though he is able to eventually dismantle that facetious combined persona.

In the preface to the novel, Waugh claims that he had to invent "three clowns who have prominent parts in the structure of the story, but not in its theme" (SH IX). I would argue that these "three clowns" do not affect the theme of the novel, as Waugh correctly claims, because they are part of Guy Crouchback's own weakness, which is not overcome by their influence or direct action, but by their symbolic deaths and retreats. Most critics argue that Ritchie-Hook is a positive influence on Guy's development and I agree up to a point; this is true not because he is unlike other lowly characters and against all odds "preserves Guy from the vices embodied by braggartly Apthorpe, despairing Ludovic, and cowardly Claire" (Heath, 1985: 64), but because he interprets a role identical to theirs. Ritchie-Hook is the upgraded version of Grimes from *Decline and Fall*, the rebellious immortal who reincarnates in vicious cycles of sterility and signals to the protagonist his own vices. In this sense, he is as much of an unorthodox representation of providence as he is a noxious figure. More importantly, his death represents Guy's ability to free himself from the endless loop his previous counterparts had become trapped in. Nevertheless, Ritchie-Hook does not belong to the trio of clowns Waugh mentions, as the novel's structure is clearly affected by three major agents in each of its sections: Apthorpe, Trimmer and Ludovic.[32]

[32] David Cliffe (2001) chooses to identify these clowns as Apthorpe, Ritchie-Hook and Ludovic. While certainly this makes sense in terms of Guy's trinity of doppelgangers, I have chosen to abstain from this point-of-view since the second third of the book is undeniably focused on Trimmer. After Apthorpe's death, Ritchie-Hook falls into the background and only returns for his dramatic exit, making him a sort of secondary character in the grand scheme of things. Yet, I would argue that Waugh has played another trick here: just as we have Ludovic adjacent to Claire as his CSM, Ritchie-Hook is constantly connected to Trimmer. Their deaths are pretty much contemporaneous; Jumbo Trotter comments about Trimmer and Ritchie-Hook that "the two of them were a chip off the same block. That's why they never could hit it off" (SH 482); Lieutenant Padfield echoes the sentiment: "You wouldn't have thought, would you, that Trimmer and Ritchie-Hook had a great deal in common?" (SH 876); General Whale also speaks of them as a unit, wondering: "Ritchie-Hook and Trimmer – why should we be held responsible for them?" (US n/p). What Waugh seems to be implying here is that both these forms of bravery – Ritchie-Hook savagely biffing in no-man's-land and Trimmer accidentally becoming the people's hero – are, at their core, founded on lies. As Mrs. Green warns Guy: "You mustn't take all Colonel Ritchie-Hook says quite

Conscious of Waugh's dislike for psychoanalysis, I find it difficult to overlook the piteous dive the narrative takes in terms of representations of consciousness.[33] With each major block in Guy's narrative, we delve deeper into the psychological implications they enforce through identity-construction. First we have one of the most fascinating, and often overlooked, characters in the whole trilogy: Apthorpe. An exemplary officer with a superiority-complex, but also an adjoined alter-ego who threatens to consume Guy's individuality, he is the first obstacle Guy encounters in his peregrination. Frequently he is reduced to being merely a "big, stupid, innocently comic dog" (LaFrance, 1975: 35) who serves as Guy Crouchback's lacklustre double and is only formative insofar as he advances Guy's awareness of the shams of the army. I would instead like to analyse Apthorpe under the light of a story that he himself brings up – just as he is lying in a hospital bed, his illness overthrowing him, Apthorpe admits to Guy that he has never had two aunts as he had previously claimed, only one. Clearly this has a symbolic meaning within the story and is meant to jar the reader into abrupt metafictional awareness regarding Apthorpe's duplicity. His introduction is also symbolic – the scenes at the end of the prologue and the beginning of chapter one mirror each other, foreshadowing Apthorpe's haunting of Guy "in the role of doppel-gänger" (SH 126):

> His last thought before falling asleep was the uneasy question: "Why couldn't I say 'Here's how' to Major Tickeridge? My father did. Gervase would have. Why couldn't I?"
>
> (…)
>
> "Here's how," said Guy.
>
> "Cheers," said Apthorpe. (SH 45-46)

Jeffrey Heath also comments on the importance of this parallel, noting:

literally" (SH 79). In this manner, although Ritchie-Hook defeats Apthorpe in Guy's battle of ideals, he becomes Trimmer's shadow to the point where, structurally, his presence is pretty negligible. Yet, thematically and symbolically, he is perhaps the most important of these men, as he will play a part in breaking a cycle through his indirect action; thus my references to Ritchie-Hook throughout this subchapter.

[33] Even if that is not the focus of my approach in this section, I cannot help but agree with Yuexi Liu that "psychoanalysis is often able to offer insightful and interesting interpretations of Waugh's work, if not of the author himself" (2017: 210).

> Upon Apthorpe's advent the narrative swerves from realism into surrealism. At the end of the Prologue Guy drifts off to sleep wishing he could say "here's how" like a soldier. As the next section opens, he says "here's how" to Apthorpe. An important bifurcation has occurred; in the space between the sections Waugh has split Guy into two by personifying his illusions in Apthorpe. (1982: 223)

Once the barrier between reality and fiction is broken, it becomes quite rational to perceive "Apthorpe as an externalization of Guy's romantic state of mind" (Heath, 1974: 6). Throughout Guy's experience in the Halberdiers, he seems to lean on Apthorpe as a utilitarian crutch who can support his romantic views of the army and lead him in social situations. They walk in tandem, "Guy seeking to withdraw, Apthorpe rather timidly advancing" (SH 61), one's presence presupposing that of the other. As Leonard states: "Can't have our uncles separated" (SH 107). Yet it is only through this separation, this deconstruction of the mask, that Guy is able to become his authentic self. Firstly, he usurps Apthorpe's identity to make a good first impression with Ritchie-Hook, for a moment truly becoming one with Apthorpe. Guy is also aware of their unique condition as an almost united entity, and he immediately despairs when he finds out that Apthorpe has injured his leg at the same time as himself. They become mirror images of each other, symbolically crippled, "a pair of twins" (SH 115). This is the culmination of the merging of the social mask with the individual, which leads Apthorpe to claim that he's "just put a man under close arrest" (SH 160) when Guy is trying to make amends with Virginia.

Towards the end of his predictable demise, Apthorpe's façade begins to crumble. He becomes increasingly paranoid, carrying his own portable latrine everywhere and inspecting the signallers' boots to verify their condition. In one of the most memorable scenes in the trilogy, Apthorpe and Ritchie-Hook get into a conflict for the possession of the "thunder-box", which ends with Ritchie-Hook planting a bomb inside the chemical closet and blowing both the thunder-box and Apthorpe away. Though excellent for comic effect, it is also likely that this ridiculous clash between Apthorpe and Ritchie-Hook represents "a battle between the id and the superego" (Heath, 1974: 10). They both represent exaggerated versions of what Guy Crouchback wishes to be:

an experienced officer-gentleman[34] and an action hero.[35] As discussed earlier, we witness Waugh's split identities struggle against each other and being transposed into the world of fiction. As Jeffrey Heath states:

> Often the characters who confront one another in his books are the conflicting selves who battle for supremacy in his own psyche. Writing was Waugh's means of coming to terms with the world. He used his fiction as a means of exorcising states of mind which had to be outgrown, and as the forum for the central debate of his life: the artist versus the man of action. (Heath, 1982: 39-40)

In relation to Guy, Apthorpe's decline symbolizes his triumph over the parasitical other. If the persona "is a compromise between individual and society as to what a man should appear to be" (Jung, 1972: 217), then Apthorpe's descent into madness is symptomatic of Guy's gradual rejection of society as he becomes more and more disillusioned with the army and the war itself. Furthermore, Guy is finally able to pull apart the artifice of Apthorpe's compulsory lying, coming to terms with his own futile fantasies. By bringing up the story of the "aunts", Waugh is forcing the reader to remember that, throughout their shared experience in the Halberdiers, Guy and Apthorpe are affectionately nicknamed "uncles" by their younger companions and more than once are mistaken for the same person. Colonel Green states upon seeing Guy: "I remember you very well. Apthorpe, isn't it?" (SH 606); Ritchie-Hook commits the same mistake:

> 'Which are you? Crouchback? I knew one of my young officers came from Africa. I thought it was some other name. You'll find your African experience worth a hundred pounds a minute. There's one wretched fellow on my list spent half his life in Italy.[36] I didn't care for the sound of that much.'
>
> Miss Green winked at Guy and he kept silent. (SH 78)

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[34] Paula Byrne remarks that the end of Waugh's love affair with the army "marked the onset of his deep disillusion with the stylish, handsome and brave gentleman-soldier figure he had revered since his hero-worship of J. F. Roxburgh at Lancing" (2010: 279). Aphtorpe and Ritchie-Hook are a symbiosis of this figure, though Guy's belief in gentlemen dissipates sooner than his belief in heroes. As Ludovic writes in his *Pensées*, "*all gentlemen are now very old*" (OG n/p).

[35] In the original trilogy, Guy is infatuated with his literary childhood hero, Captain Truslove, whom he keeps comparing his own adventures to.

[36] This also draws a parallel between the uncles and the aunts, seeing as they are both defined by their place of origin: the aunts are from Peterborough and Tunbridge Wells, while Guy and Apthorpe are distinguished by the fact that one "lived in Italy and the other in Africa" (SH 85).

Much like Apthorpe's aunts, Waugh is letting us know about both uncles that "there never was more than one. The other was an invention", what one could call "a little joke" (SH 281). This is foreshadowed by the fragility of Apthorpe himself as a character, whom we cannot imagine as truly existing outside Guy's narrative. The only concrete fact about his existence is that he once played as a goal-keeper during his school days,[37] but only "bits of brickwork, perhaps, survived from the sanctuary" (SH 119) that was his old school. Although Apthorpe is not an illusion, his entire existence is illusory; he plays the figure of the "artist" against the man of action, in Heath's terms, because he is an embodiment of fiction itself. He occupies a "dreamlike universe" outside "the world of common experience" (SH 129), which is essentially what Waugh aims to underline. By transposing his experience onto these personas, Waugh quite strangely pulls us out of the narrative to remind us that everything we are reading is an elaborate lie. With this, he intends to demonstrate how easy it is to blur the real and the imaginary and to lose ourselves in labyrinths of expression. Events which have been reconstructed through personal recollection are transmogrified, but the text still reads as a revised account rather than a story. Hence, the reader must realize that the historical context of the novel corresponds to that of the real world, but it also differs from it; more importantly, it *builds* upon it. By denying us realism, Waugh is shedding light on our natural tendency "to read fiction as if it were history" (Waugh, 2002: 33), reinforcing the need to encourage the reader's critical thinking through these moments of reality-warping.[38] Virginia exclaims quite pleased when she sees Guy's shaved face that she "knew [the moustache] wasn't real" (SH 150), much like Apthorpe himself would crumble apart under the gaze of a pure materialist such as Virginia. Finally, looking at his clean-shaven face, Guy "recognized an old acquaintance he could never cut, to whom he could never hope to give the slip for long, the uncongenial fellow

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[37] It is worth remembering that, among other sports, Waugh also played "football, at which he experienced some discouraging moments as a goal-keeper" (Heath, 1982: 14).

[38] In her book *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* (1984), Patricia Waugh demonstrates that metafiction "does not abandon 'the real world' for the narcissistic pleasures of the imagination. What it does is to re-examine the conventions of realism in order to discover – through its own self-reflection – a fictional form that is culturally relevant and comprehensible to contemporary readers. In showing us how literary fiction creates its imaginary worlds, metafiction helps us to understand how the reality we live day by day is similarly constructed, similarly 'written'" (2002: 18-19). In this sense, the trilogy could be part of what Patricia Waugh calls "British self-conscious fiction," seeing as it "manages to suggest the fictionality of 'reality' without entirely abandoning realism" (*ibidem*: 49).

traveller who would accompany him through life. But his naked lip felt strangely exposed" (*ibidem*).

While Guy comes to terms with his own masquerade, we veer off into the second section of the story, which is focused on a witless officer named Trimmer. Possessor of a wide array of names and personas, Trimmer is the exact outcome Guy is attempting to avoid. Consequently, the first thing we learn about him is that Guy dislikes him intensely. Unlike Guy, who is announced by means of his ancestry, "[n]othing was known of [Trimmer's] civilian antecedents" (SH 50); Guy supposes they must be "theatrical" (*ibidem*), which foreshadows Trimmer's fluid personality. He is often late to parade, ignorant of tradition and discipline, and unorderly. While Mr. Crouchback is "not at all what is called 'a character'" (SH 35), preserving his ideals and identity even in his old age, Trimmer has been conceived in the womb of modernity. He plays the role of a French hairdresser who goes by the name of Gustave aboard the *Aquitania*, where he meets Virginia, and introduces himself to his new regiment as a Scottish man called Alistair "Ali" McTavish (wearing a kilt and bearing a shepherd's staff for good measure). In other words, he is an "outright impostor" (Heath, 1982: 230). Of course his real name (if one can call it that) also has meaning: Trimmer was a widespread term in Britain, meaning a moderate in the political spectrum. It was popularized by George Savile, 1st Marquess of Halifax, in his *The Character of a Trimmer* (1684).[39] Though Lord Halifax tried shedding a positive light on this middle-ground character, a Trimmer is often thought of as an opportunist who jumps on the bandwagon of the most popular ideology and adopts it for their own personal gain. In addition to that, and in spite of Trimmer's denial that his name has anything to do with him being a barber (SH 384), it is significant that Guy's most important moment in accepting himself without additional personas is represented through shaving. Trimmer is apt at "curling women's hair" (SH 480), thus modifying their outward appearance; in the same way, he metamorphoses into whatever the situation calls for and adapts his personality to his exterior environment.

"Masquerades" are an important theme in the novel – people disguise themselves in order to pretend they are somebody else all the time and hierarchies are

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[39] Lord Halifax offers the following metaphor to explain the term: "This innocent word *Trimmer* signifies no more than this, That if Men are together in a Boat, and one part of the Company would weigh it down on one side, another would make it lean as much to the contrary, it happens there is a third Opinion of those who conceive it would do as well, if the Boat went even, without endangering the Passengers; now 'tis hard to imagine by what Figure in Language, or by what Rule in Sense this cometh to be a fault, and it is much more a wonder it should become a Heresy" (1688: n/p).

corrupt and often nonsensical, as they have been infiltrated by masked impostors. Bound to this strange act, no one explicitly says what they mean, and their gestures and words are products of circumstance rather than organic expression. Though, of course, some play their parts better than others. When Guy visits Virginia at her hotel, she calls to him saying: "Come in, I'm finishing my face" (SH 146). While Guy's attentiveness at his own image in the looking-glass denotes his awareness of his disguise and subsequent rejection of it, Virginia is a natural-born performer who enjoys playing parts, which is probably why she instantly connects with Trimmer. As Trimmer lets his façade drop, Virginia's interest in him vanishes. As her friend Kerstie points out: "I think that rather spoils our joke. I mean there's nothing very funny about his being what he is when one knows what he is – is there? – if you see what I mean" (SH 458). Outside his role of entertainer, Trimmer does not have any real personality which can sustain him and his relationships. Meanwhile Guy, disavowing his self-appointed roles, retains what he can of his true self at the expense of being perceived as a dull character. Waugh admits that Guy is the character about whom he has revealed the most information out of all of his protagonists (Jebb, 1967: 110), yet his inner paralysis and dilemmas are not translated externally. He is the anti-Basil Seal,[40] someone who reflects rather than acts, which turns him into a sharp observer rather than an exciting main character. Yet Waugh has achieved what he intended – Guy has avoided becoming a Trimmer, thus escaping the fate of the mass.

The last clown is not a persona nor an actor, but something much darker than that. The first physical description we have of Corporal-Major Ludovic is that his "eyes are horrible" and "colourless" (SH 427). Though Guy is short-sighted, Apthorpe is glazy-eyed and Ritchie-Hook is a one-eyed caricature, it is the complete absence of anything in Ludovic's eyes which inspires distrust. He is also a figure of mystery without antecedents like Trimmer, but while Trimmer has the gift of the shifting appearance, Ludovic has "the manservant's gift of tongues" (SH 518). He uses distinct voices when addressing different people in specific contexts, showing a certain degree of fluidity. Yet he is not a member of the mass. On the contrary, Ludovic is a hermit, someone who thrives on his isolation from society and dwells in his own recondite cave (like a vampire, as De Souza describes him). As such, his attempts to integrate himself into social groups or interact with others are pathetic – he does not belong to the heart of

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[40] The protagonist of both *Black Mischief* and *Put Out More Flags*, and even of a short story entitled *Basil Seal Rides Again*, Basil Seal is the epitome of the modern man in Waugh's fiction.

society, but to its most secluded outskirts. In other words, Ludovic is a clear embodiment of the archetypal shadow. Guy is immediately antipathetic to him, as he was to Trimmer, though for different reasons. Trimmer is everything Guy despises about the modern man; Ludovic is what he fears the most in every man. Thus, the main battle of the trilogy, far away from the underwhelming action of the battlefield, lies in Guy's confrontation with his own unconscious desires.

In *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, the voices that haunt the narrator accuse him of being "a decadent writer, a usurer, a homosexual, an insincere and social-climbing Catholic, a fascist, a communist, an income-tax evader" (Heath, 1982: 261). Ludovic is a composite portrait of nearly all of these characteristics,[41] which explains Guy's initial aversion towards him – after all, the fears that ailed the empirical author were usually connected to the ones that ultimately ailed his protagonists. As we move away from the main focalisation of the narrative, other characters speak of Guy in similarly condemnatory tones, accusing him of fascist sympathies (SH 192), of being a spy disguised as a Catholic (SH 464-466), and discussing his possible homosexual tendencies (SH 735). One could argue that one of the main psychological points of the novel revolves around "persecution mania" (SH 710) and that these omniscient asides may be implying an inward perception rather than a reliable reality. After fleeing from the disastrous mission in Crete, Guy gets on a boat with Ludovic and finds himself unable to escape, trapped in the boundless waters of his unconscious. He emerges from that trip in a catatonic state, an altered man. Ludovic had mirrored unto Guy an image of himself he could not recognize, where even a death-wish predominates, as is made clear by Ludovic's question: "Would moralists hold it was suicide if one were just to swim out to sea, sir, in the fanciful hope of reaching Egypt?" (SH 572). The first hints of this desire to die had already been explicit in Apthorpe, whom Guy noticed "talked a lot about dying" (SH 284) and who began philosophising about the will to live as he lay in his deathbed: "I'll take some killing. But it's all a question of the will to live. I must set everything in order just in case they wear me down. That's what keeps worrying me so" (SH 282). Likewise, Guy is constantly worn out throughout the novel by "a recurring – and perversely compelling – cycle of raised expectation and disappointment" (Trout, 1997: 126). His first illusions died with Apthorpe and, with expectations growing lower,

[41] Ludovic is undoubtedly an aesthete (SH 637), Guy hypothesizes about him being a communist (SH 426) and he also belongs to "Sir Ralph's set" (SH 714), making it clear through many thinly veiled euphemisms that "Ludovic was Sir Ralph's catamite" (Cliffe, 2001: n/p).

Guy's death-wish begins to overpower him. It is when Guy decides to retreat after abandoning his comrades during a German raid that he comes face to face with this daemonic entity. Indeed, "this was a fatal morning" for Guy, in which he was "to resign an immeasurable piece of his manhood" (OG n/p).[42] As Jeffrey Heath concludes, "Guy's escape from Crete is not altogether heroic, for he is motivated and saved by the embodiment of his own death-wish" (1982: 242). Nonetheless, one cannot consider the gradual deflation of Guy's will (here I employ the term in the Hegelian sense of subjective will) as a natural reversion into a state of minimal activity. By this I mean that, although Guy matures as the narrative slowly advances, his death-drive correlatively increases. The threshold of death is not defined by a complete absence of life, but by a perversion of it into an "undead" state as a result of the death drive's lack of biological reason. Ludovic is precisely the drive which has overtaken life and persisted through its limit, death, in a monstrous way. Ola Sigurdson proposes that "to assume the excess of life, we must, paradoxically, die to the world and be born again (to use a Pauline terminology), shedding our defences against this excess of life" (2013: 368). This is precisely what happens to Guy; his voyage inwards, his close encounter with his shadow, are what allow him to be reborn.

To become consumed by the double and to be "diminished and caricatured by duplication" (SH 110) in a non-hierarchized society were among Waugh's principal concerns. Being inserted in the modernist tradition, his fiction "constituted itself through a conscious strategy of exclusion, an anxiety of contamination by its other: an increasingly consuming and engulfing mass culture" (Huyssen, 1986: VII). This does not, however, mean that individuality is Waugh's focus; on the contrary, he "attempts to eschew individuality to emphasize the reductive and inadequate modern perception of the individual as the locus of society" (Leech, 2015: 114). Thus, the novel is both decentralized and personal; its characters are both particular and universal. Waugh's "anxiety of contamination" by the other is nowhere as clear as in *Sword of Honour*, where his protagonist usurps several personalities like an actor in a solo stage play. These men who have reflected Guy Crouchback throughout the novel are disposed of in symbolic rites of sacrifice: Apthorpe dies inebriated and, therefore, "keeping all his delusions" (Semple, 1968: 59) as Guy continues to shed his; Ritchie-Hook is shot in

[42] This is an excised passage from *Officers and Gentlemen* which is not found in the final version of the War Trilogy. Waugh probably felt that it reflected too harshly on his protagonist and did not want Guy to give off the appearance of being a spineless coward like Claire.

action, though as a result of a blunder rather than in an honourable fight, similar to Guy's idol Sir Roger de Waybroke and his eldest brother Gervase; Trimmer is lost at sea, just like Guy would have been if he hadn't the courage to persevere through his shadow's torments; and Ludovic is exiled to the Castello Crouchback, proving that Guy has ended up on the other side of himself, away from the darkness and ready to be received into the light. In a way, these personas represent Waugh's three manifestations of anarchy: "nihilism, barbarism and materialism" (Wilkin, 2016: 750). Waugh explicitly works their influence into Guy, who is overwhelmed by a sense of futility, is twice tempted to strike another man, and attributes meaning only to places and objects which are deemed valuable by others, rather than finding value in these things himself. More importantly, he loses sight of his spirituality as he becomes entangled in the meaningless, fast-paced motions of modern life.

In his condition as an inexperienced, incomplete human being, Guy is purposefully passive, a mere "spectator" (SH 553) throughout the novel. He is his own voyeur, Apthorpe calling from the other side of the line and Ritchie-Hook lurking in the dark depths of Beach A. Although in the end Guy's paranoia is ultimately projected onto Ludovic, who cannot bear to even be in the same room as he is, these overwhelming influences will forever haunt Guy and possess his memory, reconstructing his present by means of his past. The dizzying transferences of focalization precisely announce this *contra mundum* perspective that both author and protagonist are unable to shed. The fear of being watched, the panopticism of the mind and of history, have turned the fearful internal gaze into a worldwide operating machine of conspiracies.[43] To counter this gradual loss of grip on reality, good memories must be kept and "a kind of alternate micro-culture" must be established to ward off the "depersonalization the hegemonic power constitutes" (MacLeod, 2010: 74). Still, this is insufficient to guarantee any semblance of a centre. Simply relying on memory, which is evasive, and identity, which is liquid, dooms us to failure. There is nothing to be done physiologically and psychologically about them except cultivating a stable line between the past and the self. Even so, this is essential – without this foundation either madness

[43] Jeffrey Heath highlights some discrepancies that occurred when Waugh applied his own experiences to the trilogy: "In real life Waugh failed to reach Italy because of his own unpopularity; in contrast, his persona's fate is dictated by external forces like the sinister Ludovic and the dotty Marchpole. Despite Waugh's repeated pronouncements about accepting responsibility for one's own sins, he was human enough to disown it when he transmuted fact into fiction" (1982: 252-253). Besides lifting the blame from off the author's shoulders, this change is also in line with the aura of paranoia that permeates the novel and which leads Guy Crouchback time and time again to fall into conflict with external forces.

or tragedy awaits. Guy Crouchback may not be able to clear himself of his faults, but by the end he is a better man for having faced them head-to-head. He is one of the select few who are able to transcend this imaginary blockade and achieve something that is lacking in extreme quantities in his objective universe: self-awareness. Everything else shall naturally follow.

2. Chapter Two – Art and Love

REFLECTION : Your art ?

ADAM : Again the appetite to live — to preserve in the shapes of things the personality whose dissolution you foresee inevitably.

REFLECTION : That is the balance then — and in the end circumstance decides.

- Evelyn Waugh, "The Balance"

They say that beauty is the snare of the devil; indeed only beauty can make tolerable the need for disorder, violence and indignity that lies at the root of love. (...) There is no reason why sexual love should be invested with an importance that belongs only to the whole of life, but if we did not bring the light to the very point where darkness falls how should we know ourselves as we are, formed by the projection of being into horror? Supposing being is lost, supposing it sinks into the nauseous emptiness which it ought to have avoided at all costs...

- Georges Bataille, *Erotism: Death and Sensuality*

With the outbreak of the war eminent, Waugh wrote in the summer of 1939: "Nothing would be more likely than work in a government office to finish me as a writer, nothing more likely to stimulate me than a complete change of habit" (1976: 438). Excited by the prospect of finding inspiration in the eye of the hurricane, Waugh kept a small journal with him at all times as he navigated the bureaucracy of military affairs and tried to make sense of the chaos of war through his own experience.[44] After all, he held on to his belief that "what makes story telling such an absorbing task [is] the attempt to reduce to order the anarchic raw materials of life" (ALL 33). We have seen

[44] Jeffrey Heath noticed that Waugh's mature fiction became so alike his own experience that "there can be little doubt, for example, that he wrote the Crouchback saga with his diaries at his elbow" (1982: 228). However, one must be careful of appraisals such as Reba Soffer's, who posited that "[i]n Waugh's case, an erased author would have left a blank text because everything that he wrote was a transcription of his own immediate circumstances" (2012: 47). As discussed in the previous chapter, conflating the author with the protagonist and real life with fiction constitutes a grave *faux pas*. Not only does this reading foment preconceptions regarding the text, barring the reader from stepping outside of it and analyse it beyond authorial intent, it also tends to slip into personal judgement, which obliterates any attempt of detachment from compromising contingencies. Furthermore, as Muireann Leech argues in her essay regarding Waugh's autobiography, "[t]he corporeal world can only be represented through the textual prism of art, to such a degree that it is difficult to determine whether life is imitating art or art imitating life" (2015: 119).

how this order is transposed into collective versus individual discourse: through identifying collective memory as central to building individual narratives meant to expurgate unconscious demons. To enact the same process in terms of art and love, we must first address how in Waugh's novels form becomes as important as – if not more than – content. Here, I do not intend to invest in a formal analysis of the novel, but merely to point out how the two concepts addressed in this chapter function as articulators between themes and structure. Waugh held a very pronounced "structural" interest and style was, for him, "not a seductive decoration added to a functional structure", but "the essence of a work of art" (ALO 106). Even so, and although Waugh ascribed significant meaning to style when vested with "lucidity, elegance, [and] individuality" (ALO 107), he did not wish for the text to be perceived as an autonomous unit isolated from its surrounding context. Fundamentally, style should not be merely "effect", but the shaper of meaning within the text. This may lead some to interpret it as a mere communication vehicle that purports to draw in the readers in order to persuade them, by "abiding pleasure" (ALO 110), to consume its substance. This, however, is not the case: if "[s]tyle itself has meaning" (Heath, 1982: 60) it is not because the text's content is deprived of moral nuances, but precisely because style, regardless of its performative neutrality, is able to convey concepts and ideas. Thus, "only the artist who has disciplined both his aesthetic and moral principles can achieve [a lasting style]" (*ibidem*: 61) without being spoiled by superficiality or losing "all faculty of communication" (ALO 107).

A prime example of art without substance in *Sword of Honour* is Corporal-Major Ludovic. He considers dictionaries his "sacred scriptures" (SH 702) and is fascinated by "the latest voodoo" (Pasternak-Slater, 2016: 267), psychology. Already, we find our two first main themes being parodied by Waugh, not on account of their risibility, but of their futility when trying to stand on their own. This occurs because "Waugh believed that taste was a question of God, and dissented from the more fashionable view that God was a question of taste. In his view, art was not valid unless it was thematically concerned with God and formally incorporated decorum, clarity, and order" (Heath, 1982: 35). The sensual ease of the aesthete is also satirised through Ludovic, entwining both the overindulgence of artists leading a hedonistic lifestyle and the "surrogate Edens" found in Waugh's novels. However, similarly to what occurs with art, "if these Arcadias are loved with the right love as means to a divine end, they are beneficial, indeed, necessary" (*ibidem*: 5). In other words, art and love work as

mediators, rather than as ends to themselves, if correctly exercised. Otherwise, if used as teleological arguments, as is often the case in *Sword of Honour*, they become the main driving force for irony in the story. Waugh brings our attention to this by parodying critical readings of his own novels in a conversation between Spruce and Ludovic:

> "(…) And besides these there seemed to me two poetic themes which occur again and again. There is the Drowned Sailor motif – an echo of the *Waste Land* perhaps? Had you Eliot consciously in mind?"
>
> "Not Eliot," said Ludovic. "I don't think he was called Eliot."
>
> "Very interesting. And then there was the Cave image. You must have read a lot of Freudian psychology?"
>
> "Not a lot. There was nothing psychological about the cave."
>
> "Very interesting – a spontaneous liberation of the unconscious." (SH 655-656)

What Waugh seems to be trying to convey here is not only that it is pointless to attempt to interpret authorial intention (the contradiction in this statement attests to the difficulty in refraining from doing so in critical analyses), but also that such readings are comically inept when applied to books which are written with an ornamental purpose. This is perceptible in Waugh's own description of *Brideshead Revisited*, the novel parodied by Ludovic's *The Death Wish*, which he considered to be "infused with a kind of gluttony, for food and wine, for the splendours of the recent past, and for rhetorical and ornamental language, which now with a full stomach I find distasteful" (BR ix-x). Yet Waugh is still aware of these implications, and by explicitly bringing them to light he challenges the reader's warped perception of art and love (and, to some extent, psychology) as straightforward prerequisites in the modern novel. He dismisses them flippantly, almost encouraging mockery and contempt for such abstract notions. One must tread carefully here – the purpose of these themes is not for them to be ushered away as meaningless conceptions, but to be viewed from a broader perspective. They are underneath the surface, but it is through *how* they are revealed, the language in which they are shown to us, that Waugh seems to place real value as a writer. In a 1929 article, Waugh wrote the following about Ronald Firbank, one of the authors he openly admired:

> His raw material, allowing for the inevitable changes of fashion, is almost identical with Oscar Wilde's – the lives of rich, slightly decadent people seen against a background of traditional culture, grand opera, the picture galleries, and the Court; but Wilde was at heart radically sentimental. His wit is ornamental; Firbank's is structural. Wilde is rococo; Firbank is baroque. It is very rarely that Firbank "makes a joke". (ALO 78)

Here Waugh denounces the "insufficiency of aesthetics" (DeCoste, 2017: 253) in sustaining a narrative. What is presented must not only be appealing to the senses in indulgently embellished language, it must also derive its meaning from an overall structure. In this aspect, Waugh echoes Saint Augustine's critique of the overstated importance given in education to poetry and language, noting how men would become embarrassed if they used a wrong term when describing innocent actions, but "if they described their lust in a rich vocabulary of well constructed prose with a copious and ornate style, they received praise and congratulated themselves" (2008: 20). Thus, we find that art and love are inseparable in Waugh – they are the excess of sentimentality which is sought for, denied, and revisited under the craftsman's steady eye. Every aspect of the narrative has been painstakingly assembled and compartmentalized, though this does not signify that there exists an adjacent pattern to guide us. The resolution is always ambiguous in Waugh, for he does not care to aid the reader or his characters in achieving some semblance of happiness or relief. He has organized his raw materials to the best of his abilities – the readers shall do with that what they will.

In creating the world of *Sword of Honour*, Gordon Leah believes "Waugh is allowing the reader to conclude that he is almost returning to the comic, satirical spirit of his early works" (2011: 969). As a matter of fact, we may consider that the novel meets both Waugh's earlier satires and mature fiction halfway. Through this amalgamation, we encounter something akin to a parallax: are we coming face-to-face with a world ruled by chaos or designed by God? Depending on the reader's perspective we may find different interpretations, but the end product remains the same. In the modern world there is no room for the Arcadias envisaged by Guy, for the retrieval of lost love or the permanence of art and beauty. Hence, when Guy goes to a theatre play, he notices that the "second half of the programme seemed less bright and pretty" (SH 93); the same is true of the trilogy, which will relegate art and love to the background almost too surreptitiously. We must dig them up, for these are helpful conduits to lead us towards an enhanced understanding of the novel's thematic concerns.

2.1. In the Picture

At first glance, art seems to occupy a secondary role in *Sword of Honour*. The only artist of the story is a vampiric figure who invites our contempt, and Guy Crouchback himself admits that he "know[s] nothing of art" (SH 424).[45] Faced with this quandary, I want to centre on the foundation of the narrative, that is, its configuration. As I have suggested, the most recurrent techniques utilized by Waugh in constructing his narratives included metafiction and intertextuality (often in the form of parody or subversion) in order to impose an artificial barrier between the reader and the text while simultaneously enabling a dialogic relationship between the text and external sources. Therefore, even though one might expect a straightforward, realistic narrative containing an historical basis, this perception is quickly disrupted by the narrative's outline: the book's tripartite arrangement is reminiscent of the three-act structure often found in plays and its intervenients appear to be acting out archetypal roles belonging to a *Commedia dell'Arte*. As Andrew Moran mentions, *Sword of Honour*, "which alludes constantly to classical and contemporary authors, is self-consciously literary" (2016: 274). He argues that this is because "Waugh is both claiming a place in the literary tradition, and distinguishing himself from another novelist as a way of reflecting on the purpose of his art and laying down his aesthetic principles" (*ibidem*: 278). Indeed, we can apprehend in the novel some remnants of the modernists' tendency to reconfigure (or even transcribe) tradition into modern texts, including numerous allusions to classics and giants of the literary canon. If we take into account Genette's definition of intertextuality as "a relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts: that is to say, eidetically and typically as the actual presence of one text within another" (1997: 1-2), then *Sword of Honour* certainly seems to be part of a highly intertextual realm. Frank De Souza, for example, speaks almost exclusively in literary citations to greatly embellish his tall-tale stories, and Ian Kilbannock applies the same technique to his journalism. Thus, while "Guy's war experience steadily shrinks,

[45] Quite curiously, Guy also claims that he "know[s] nothing of wine" (OG n/p), though in fact "he had tried to learn viticulture" (SH 100) and even "lectured on the Art of Wine Making" (SH 247). Much like his attempt at viticulture, we also know that Guy "had tried to write a book" (SH 100) and he even corrects Ian Kilbannock when he claims that a landscape is reminiscent of John Martin's paintings, remarking: "Not Martin. The sky-line is too low. The scale is less than Babylonian" (SH 293). Instead Guy suggests that the scene is like something out of a J.M.W. Turner painting. He also mentions French painter Toulouse-Lautrec when talking to Virginia (SH 778), demonstrating that he at least has some degree of knowledge on the subject.

moving from the grandiose to the trivial, Kilbannock's propaganda, like De Souza's fictions, works in the reverse, *inflating* irrelevant or banal situations into high drama" (Trout, 1997: 134). Yet they are not the only ones aggrandising narratives. As T. L. Okuma remarks, it is interesting to notice how "the florid language that marks Guy's version of the war ('splendidly,' 'huge and hateful,' 'all disguise cast off') indicates its literary qualities" (2019: 562). B. W. Wilson similarly points out that within the War Trilogy

> numerous unacknowledged quotations and misquotations from Marvell, Byron, Tennyson, Newbolt, Cromwell, Latimer and Shakespeare are used to illustrate various sham-heroic situations. More apposite, though, are the frequent borrowings from Churchill's speeches; borrowings which are concealed within the narrative but provide an ironic contrast between the romantic and heroic flavour of the Churchillian rhetoric, a tone which well suited Guy's early enthusiasm, and the more sordid realities of the war. (1974: 90)

As such, it is "unsurprising that the story Guy begins to tell himself of the war is fantastic and epic" (*ibidem*), but even more so that he ends up being an anti-hero in a forlorn anti-epic.[46] Nevertheless, it is important to note that there is not a specific hypotext which may be ascribed to *Sword of Honour*. Its themes and references are quite dispersed, and its design as a *Bildungsroman* involving a character on a quest has many predecessors, being modelled after chivalric romances, war novels, and tragic epics. What one may say is that it is undoubtedly a mock-heroic. As Steven Trout affirms, *Sword of Honour* "lampoons war fiction itself, subverting every imaginable convention" and it "undermines its own seemingly expansive structure, continually collapsing inward to form an anti-epic" (1997: 126). Likewise, John Brannigan considers the trilogy "an act of historical vandalism" as it steers away from tendencies to mythologize the war and instead "turns all the force of literary modes of satire and

[46] Andrew Moran proposes that *Sword of Honour* may in fact be a response to *Ulysses* (1920) by James Joyce, an author who, as previously illustrated, was not greatly favoured by Waugh. Moran draws several parallels between both novels, especially through the figure of Ludovic, who writes a novel "twice the length of *Ulysses*" (SH 849) and whose idiosyncratic way of writing may be interpreted as a caricature of Joyce's own infatuation with crafting complex prose. Though he concedes that "Ludovic's *The Death Wish* is a parody not of *Ulysses* but of *Brideshead Revisited*" (2016: 282), Moran explores how both *Ulysses* and *Sword of Honour* are ultimately mock-epics which guide themselves upon the precepts of canonical literary texts (Homer's *Odyssey* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*, respectively) and subvert them through irony.

irony against its historical setting" (2003: 50). Still unaware that he is not a romantic or high mimetic hero, Guy is presented as the story's primary ingenu.

In the original trilogy the influence of artistic mediums upon Guy is even more pronounced, especially his adulation for his childhood literary hero, Captain Truslove. Quite curiously, besides the removal of passages meant to refresh the reader's memory as to the happenings of the previous volume(s) or otherwise longwinded pointless scenes,[47] the passages Waugh deleted were decidedly artistic in nature. Jeffrey Heath includes as some of the most striking losses

> the symbolic painting at Kut-al-Imara House; Ambrose Goodall's fascination with Guy's ancestry; Air Marshal Beech's song about Elinor Glyn; the officers' bingo game; the over-technicoloured film of Bonnie Prince Charlie; Captain Truslove, Congreve, and the Pathans; the Loamshire officers' episode; the soldier with the hot-potato voice on Crete; General Miltiades and his obsolete courtesy; the English composer who announces that Guy has "the death-wish"; the description of Ludovic's book which links it with *Brideshead Revisited*. (1982: 216)

Though I do not mean to dwell on the reason as to why Waugh decided to dispose of these passages, it seems quite peculiar that nearly all, in some way or another, relate to art.[48] If we take Captain Truslove, whose "omission is intended to stop Guy from looking ridiculously out-of-touch or seeming to be an ineffectual day-dreamer" (Cliffe, 2001: n/p), then we can deduce that these cuts result from a fear of over-indulgence. Perhaps Waugh found that mentioning the fact that "Troy, Agincourt and Zululand were more real to Guy in those days than the world of mud and wire and gas where Gervase fell" (MA n/p) was too much on the nose.

While still retaining some disruptive elements of the "realistic" narrative commonly attributed to historical fiction, it seems that Waugh felt a necessity to remove some of these passages on the grounds that they were too removed from reality. In view of that, I must partially disagree with some commentators who have deduced that the

[47] There are some additional reasons for removing whole paragraphs, such as maintaining cohesion between volumes, but these are the most prevalent ones. In fact, in the preface Waugh confirms that he had aimed to avoid "[r]epetitions and discrepancies" and "passages which, on re-reading, appeared tedious" (SH IX).

[48] Though it is important to notice that the reference to the Bonnie Prince Charlie film was likely removed due to the fact that it "was first shown in 1948, long after the events of *Men at Arms* took place" (Cliffe, 2001: n/p). Even so, it is possible that Waugh would have removed the passage regardless of its incongruity if we consider its similarities to the Captain Truslove sections.

sole reason for the excision of certain passages was that they doomed Guy to come across as too ridiculously naïve. Even if that is unquestionably part of the reason, I do not believe that Waugh was much concerned with how the character would come across, but was instead preoccupied with how the novel's configuration would be interpreted if it was so blatantly fantastical. If the narrative is to be understood, it is important that the reader should not be apprehensive of Guy's judgement regarding the army from the beginning, but should instead fall in love with it and its charming characters at the same time that Guy does, so that their utter illusoriness comes as a gradual realization. That seems to me the reason why Waugh steers away from giving Guy any added aesthetic sensibilities, rather than immediately exposing him as a modern Quixote, leading his bayonet against a giant monster which turns out to be non-existent. In a way, Waugh becomes his own personal Poundian editor,[49] preferring to rely on the reader's assumed knowledge rather than becoming too explicit. Though these may appear to be regrettable decisions, which many critics have lamented, it was crucial for Waugh to tone down certain repetitions of themes and motifs in order to maintain his control over the narrative.

In effect, Guy's fertile imagination still makes its appearance in *Sword of Honour* – for example, when Guy believes the Germans are going to land by parachute on Penkirk he remembers that "in the momentary stillness he foolishly said: 'Here they come'"[50] (SH 251) – but when placed side-by-side with characters such as Apthorpe and De Souza, Guy seems quite down-to-earth and even pragmatic. In the revised text he no longer makes use of the field telephone "as he had seen done in the films" (MA n/p) nor does he imagine Kut-al-Imara House "as it had been made familiar to him in many recent realistic novels" (*ibidem*). Though it may seem odd that Waugh would

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[49] Ezra Pound was a notably ruthless editor who would cut entire passages on the pretext that the well-read reader – the only implied reader to which he attributed any importance – should be able to apprehend the original context and significance. In "Irony, Laforgue and Some Satire" (1917), Pound writes: "The ironist is one who suggests that the reader should think, and this process being unnatural to the majority of mankind, the way of the ironical is beset with snares and with furze-bushes" (1917: 95). Waugh's approach was quite similar to Pound's (though hardly as extreme), as it consisted of a preference for elliptical ensnarement rather than indulging in moral persuasion. This meant that for Waugh, as for Pound, the importance of literary allusions rested on the fact that they provided a line of communication with the reader amidst the laconic narration. Nevertheless, while Pound's writing at times appears completely undecipherable, Waugh merely uses his economic language as a deceitful coating to hide the true density of the concepts he addresses.

[50] I cannot help but be reminded of a scene from HBO's *Band of Brothers*, in which Private First Class David Webster, a literature student turned soldier, yells out "Jesus Christ, they got me!" after getting shot in battle, only to later on report in awe "'They got me.' Do you believe that? Do you believe I said that?". Reading the original War Trilogy definitely gives us more insight as to why Guy would similarly utter such clichéd phrases in the face of eminent danger – much like what happened with Webster, Guy's mind, polluted by books and films about the war, unconsciously imitates what he consumes.

erase such important traces of this aspect of Guy's personality, the truth is that they are still present in more subtle allusions. I am referring, for example, to Guy growing a moustache to resemble "countless German Uhlans in countless American films" (SH 126) or even citing numerous literary texts: he thinks of "*Cesare armato con un occhio grifano*" (SH 139) when Ritchie-Hook prepares to give a speech, of "*Child Roland to the dark tower*" (SH 355) upon seeing Chatty Corner's castle, and tells Apthorpe: "Where is the best place to hide a leaf? In a tree" (SH 181).[51] Of course, he also has his antecedents – Mr. Crouchback is a remarkably erudite professor and, when it comes to Guy's grandparents, we are told that "Hermione set up her easel among the ruins and while she painted Gervase read aloud from the poems of Tennyson and Patmore" (SH 3-4). Thus, it is evident that Guy is a cultured man, whom we are often told spends his spare time reading, but we are to infer that he bears a poetic nature rather than being shown. Waugh's objective appears to be to cloak Guy in prosaic vestments to hide this nature – otherwise we would be too quickly aware of being in Wonderland instead of trusting Guy's seemingly well-grounded rationality.

To better understand these decisions, though, we must first lay out a basic understanding of how Waugh usually structures his fictional universe. In his essay "The Being and Becoming of Evelyn Waugh" (1992), George McCartney identifies what he believes to represent the binary we find in Waugh's novels: a "clash" between two modes of thought, personified by "[Henri] Bergson the intuitionist" and "[Wyndham] Lewis the rationalist" (1992: 133). To facilitate his argument, McCartney uses two general terms, Being and Becoming, to distinguish these two approaches. Highly influenced by Lewis' interpretation of Bergson's theory in *Time and Western Man* (1927), Waugh positioned himself against the idea that life could be experienced as a successive chain of events devoid of any critical thought, a flux where everything is an indisputable constant, or, in other words, a Becoming. Thus, "Being stood for reason, order, stability; Becoming, for a wilful disregard for consequences and a mindless abandonment to the anarchy of impulse" (*ibidem*: 144). Even so, Waugh remained equally sceptical about the other extreme end of the spectrum, which presented a highly rational approach to life completely devoid of knowledge regarding the real world. In

[51] The references are, respectively, to Dante's *Divine Comedy* (1472), Robert Browning's "Child Roland to the Dark Tower Came" (1855), and to G. K. Chesterton's "The Sign of the Broken Sword" from *The Innocence of Father Brown* (1911). The first of these is not attributed to Guy, but considering that the narrator adopts his perspective I accordingly consider that this thought belongs to Guy rather than to the narrator.

Waugh's understanding, reason, when stripped of all human ambiguity, also contributed to "the contemporary refusal to sustain a dialectic between intellect and will" (*ibidem*: 146). An interesting passage which McCartney quotes to illustrate this contrast is from Waugh's travel journal *Labels*, where upon assessing a Max Ernst and a Francis Picabia "cheek by jowl" he remarked:

> These two abstract pictures, the one so defiant and chaotic, probing with such fierce intensity into every crevice and convolution of negation, the other so delicately poised, so impossibly tidy, discarding so austerely every accident, however agreeable, that could tempt disorder, seemed between them to typify the continual conflict of modern society. (*apud* McCartney, 1992: 146-147)

His own perception of the world being influenced by literature and painting, Waugh was an avid critic of art (including his own) without temperance, whether they skidded into high melodrama [in the novel Guy scorns James Hadley Chase's *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* for being "unreadable" (SH 391) and even Ludovic's monstrous monograph is likened to Waugh's more sentimental *Brideshead Revisited*] or intellectual insanity (modernists such as Joyce, Woolf and Picasso were common targets). Thus, it is far from surprising that in creating his own art Waugh would attempt to balance it out through irony. Even so, this balance did not always come easily, and in Waugh's earlier fiction we find that he simply attempts to

> disquiet his reader by confusing his moral perspective. In a tone which appears neutral but which is in fact laden with charged language Waugh entices the reader into the literary equivalent of a booby-trap. Set out for the reader's consideration is a series of mutually exclusive attitudes, opposed situations, antagonistic characters. The reader "comes inside", withholds judgment, but, confused by the absence of explicit norms, eventually chooses in order to ease his bewilderment. (Heath, 1976: 336-337)

This being the case in his earlier work, Waugh's mature novels are constructed in a slightly different manner. Quoting Frederick L. Beaty, Steven Trout exposes the argument that Waugh's "later novels (…) are works of satire that merely use 'traces' of 'irony as a technical device'. Their 'dominant world view is no longer ironic' since they express a 'discernible moral position'" (Trout, 1997: 126). The claim here is that Waugh's mature fiction, unlike his earlier work, did more than display an upturned

world – it appealed quite strongly to its restoration and balance. In view of that, it seems obvious that *Sword of Honour* "represents Waugh in a more somber, morally engaged, and forthrightly Catholic phase" (Trout, 1997: 125), so that while Waugh's "early satires (…) are enjoyed by people who don't feel impelled to decipher their religious import according to his (firm) beliefs" (Dale, 2006: 111), the trilogy does not allow for such an easy escape. Waugh can no longer "count on the fallen taste of fallen readers" (*ibidem*), since the novel's meaning becomes inscrutable (or at least indigestible) for those who place no value in the concept of God or souls. In this the novel abides by Northrop Frye's description of satire as "militant irony: its moral norms are relatively clear, and it assumes standards against which the grotesque and absurd are measured" (1973: 223).

Trout partially agrees with Beaty's assessment, yet he also adds that "Waugh's use of irony – even as a so-called 'technical device' – in this later work seems (…) much more intricate and extensive than generally recognized" for it "turns from target to target, at times threatening to subsume the entire world into its vision of futility and betrayal" (1997: 126). In this ironic worldview the need to uphold the "ethical norm" or "internal standards" ceases to exist, for the focus is not on external factors, but on the "personal struggles of an ironist deliberately trying to resolve the contradictions in his own perception" (LaFrance, 1975: 25). *Sword of Honour* does not advocate for a choice between an external paragon and an internal one, but instead exposes the incongruities within the self as a response to those exterior forces. These foils are paradoxically bound to each other and that confuses the reader even further – the narrative derives its power from its conflation of incompatible opposites which challenge the protagonist's actions and beliefs, as they do our own.[52]

The war novel seems to be the perfect medium for balancing out the scales. In fact, Paul Fussell posited that "[e]very war is ironic because every war is worse than expected. Every war constitutes an irony of situation because its means are so

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[52] Marston LaFrance lists out most of them: "the sword of Sir Roger and the misbegotten sword of Stalingrad, Guy's raid at Dakar and Trimmer's 'Operation Popgun', Guy's Catholic medal and the dead soldier's identity disc, Guy's notions of justice and the political expediency of everyone else, Guy's leaving Santa Dulcina and Ludovic's retreat to it, Tony Box-Bender's action upon being ordered to surrender and Ivor Claire's reaction to the same order, Mr. Crouchback's advice that 'quantitative judgements don't apply' and the whole wartime world which operates strictly in terms of such judgements, Guy's unsuccessful designs upon Virginia and her successful designs upon him (including, particularly, the role of the Catholic religion in both episodes), what actually happens almost anywhere in the trilogy and the official version of what happens – such a list is by no means exhaustive" (1975: 28-29).

melodramatically disproportionate to its presumed end"; yet he also acknowledged that "the Great War was more ironic than any before or since. It was a hideous embarrassment to the prevailing Meliorist myth which had dominated the public consciousness for a century. It reversed the Idea of Progress" (1989: 7-8). In projecting the nonsensicality of pure intuition and rationality, Waugh found in the Second World War a vessel to expound his philosophy. It was the prime example of excessive sentiment and inflexible reason working together towards chaos. However, although Waugh's novels thrive on their "ironic contrast" (LaFrance, 1975: 26), it is essential to highlight that "any author who equally enjoys both of these opposed archetypes – as Waugh obviously does – cannot logically affirm either of them. What is needed, of course, is the moral decency and gentleness of the one merged with the energy, awareness, and effectiveness of the other" (*ibidem*: 28). Waugh's objective, after all, was "to merge the contradictory perceptions", and according to LaFrance he "succeeded brilliantly" (*ibidem*) in doing so with Guy Crouchback. The fact that "paired ironic perceptions comprise the formal steps by means of which Guy's character changes and develops, the rungs which he ascends to awareness" (*ibidem*: 29) demonstrate that he, unlike other Wauvian heroes, is able to allow for the amalgamation of contrasts and grow. Here, Waugh directly contradicts Edmund Wilson, whom in his assessment of *Brideshead Revisited* argued:

> What happens when Evelyn Waugh abandons his comic convention— as fundamental in his previous work as that of any Restoration dramatist—turns out to be more or less disastrous. The writer, in this more normal world, no longer knows his way: his deficiency in common sense here ceases to be an asset and gets him into some embarrassing situations, and his creative imagination, accustomed in his satirical fiction to work partly in two-dimensional caricature but now called upon for passions and motives, supplies instead mere romantic fantasy. (2002: 245)

If the world of Waugh's earlier satires were indeed two-dimensional, showing only the clash between Being and Becoming, then in order for *Sword of Honour* to achieve the status of a three-dimensional novel it required the amalgamation of both worlds – the normal world and the world of romantic fantasy. Precisely to avoid this impression of being ensnared by decadent gardens, Waugh had to tone down Guy's artistic delusions to balance out his intellect and will, his reason and energy, so that he

would not come across as another Charles Ryder.[53] The scales are still unlevelled at the beginning, but, unlike Charles, Guy has his faith and his father to help him avoid falling into the claws of aestheticism. Waugh does feel the necessity to increase the comedy factor in *Sword of Honour*, but that does not make Guy a "two-dimensional caricature" without "passions and motives", for there are multiple instances where one can see nothing satirical about his predicament (see LaFrance 23-24). The third-person narrative is simply an added barrier which makes his narrative easier to digest and expunges Charles' ornamental poetics. In the same way, though discussing *A Little Learning*, Muireann Leech notes that Waugh's

> autobiography was meant to frustrate public and critical opinion by dismissing the intimate, the psychological and the unremittingly personal in favour of literary citations and textual allusions as a way to understand the permanence that faith endows. In parodying his readership's perception of his own personality, Waugh's text questions the authenticity of the subject. The text also creates a barrier between the writer and his perceived readership. (2015: 122)

The same may be said of Waugh's fiction, where there exists an explicit necessity for the reader to place themselves in the shoes of the implied author and abstain from casting any moral judgements throughout the narrative. After all, "the most reliable sign of the ironic mind is its detachment from both aspects of its perception", which "extends only so far as is necessary to keep [the ironist's] contradictory perceptions mutually distinct" (LaFrance 1975: 24-25). To enact this barrier, Waugh firstly placed his characters (and the reader) "in the picture". This expression is used multiple times throughout the novel and even gives name to one of the chapters in *Officers and Gentlemen*.[54] However, very little explanation is given regarding its role

[53] Waugh read this review by Edmund Wilson and immediately rebuked it, as he believed that the critic was only "outraged (quite legitimately by his standards) at finding God introduced into my story" (ALO 31). Yet, Waugh must have found some legitimacy regarding the claims of the novel being too maudlin – though he did not consider it "snobbish", as Wilson put it, Waugh could certainly recognize that some of Ryder's passages are the work of a nostalgic romantic, which was at odds with how he preferred to craft his fictional narratives. He tries to refrain from committing the same mistake with Guy Crouchback, who goes beyond Charles in his journey so that he does not end up "homeless, childless, middle-aged, [and] loveless" (BR 416). Waugh also fleshes him out so that he is not a caricature like his previous protagonists, but a three-dimensional character, a man rather than an abstraction.

[54] According to David Cliffe, during his revision Waugh "presumably did not wish altogether to lose the title of the second book of his trilogy. In any case he toned down the many references in this chapter to being *in the picture*, a phrase he meant to have an ironical significance in OG but which he wished to moderate in SH" (2001: n/p).

within the context of the novel, and critics have omitted to provide any further comment on its potential meaning. This decision is understandable, since to dissect the expression would possibly result in a redundant explanation of its original meaning – to be informed of a specific situation or to actively partake in said situation. Yet, although the expression is used almost exclusively in this manner in the trilogy, Waugh still intends to emphasize it through abundant repetition. The question, of course, should be: Why does the author employ such a clichéd, mundane expression as his (anti-)epic's *leitmotif*? One may conjecture numerous answers, but it appears to me that this decision not only reflects the importance Waugh attributed to "re-echoing and remodifying the same themes" (ALO 83), but it also concurs with a self-conscious literary awareness which may engender metafictional readings. If we look at some key instances where people are being put "in the picture", we witness them as if being literally dropped in the middle of a map or a model figure. Take the exposition of the plan known as "Operation Popgun":

> Trimmer remained quiet while he was "put in the picture". It was significant, Ian Kilbannock reflected while he listened to the exposition of GSO II (Planning) that this metaphoric use of "picture" had come into vogue at the time when all the painters of the world had finally abandoned lucidity. GSO II (Planning) had a little plastic model of the objective of "Popgun". (…) Trimmer listened agape but not aghast, in dreamland. It was as though he were being invited to sing in Grand Opera or to ride the favourite in the Derby. (SH 459)

Here it is important to highlight three different aspects: the little plastic model, Trimmer's acknowledgement of his role as "performer" and Ian Kilbannock's musing on the state of modern art. The whole scene is laid out like a *mise en abyme*, where its participants are semi-conscious of the performativity of their roles. Just as in the wheel described in *Decline and Fall*, here the characters willingly enter the picture. The plastic model of a real landscape, as Steven Trout argues, reflects the story's tendency towards miniaturization, yet it also highlights the way metaphysics function within the novel's universe. In a later scene, Guy also visits a room called the "studio" where "beaches were constructed in miniature, yards and yards of them, reproducing from air-photographs miles and miles of the coast of occupied Europe" (SH 625). These scenes are reminiscent of another passage McCartney cites from *Labels* in order to exemplify

the Being-Becoming dichotomy. In it, Waugh describes an aerial view which he considered to be

> fascinating for the first few minutes we were in the air and after that very dull indeed. It was fun to see houses and motor cars looking so small and neat; everything had the air of having been made very recently, it was all so clean and bright. But after a very short time one tires of this aspect of scenery. (…) All one gains from this effortless ascent is a large scale map. (*apud* McCartney, 1992: 150)[55]

Art is, as Kilbannock guesses, intimately associated with this metaphorical use of the word "picture". Living during a time when photography had begun to replace painting, Waugh very much opposed the modern dictum that since "[t]he camera was capable of verisimilitude; it was not capable of art; therefore art, the only concern of the artist, was not verisimilitude" (ALO 73-74). He denounced abstractionism as a failure and as an "ideological justification for sloth" (ALO 73), for according to him "the painter's prime task was to represent" (ALO 72). Thus, besides designating the event where one is intimated with certain proceedings, the act of being put "in the picture" denotes a tendency to bring someone else into a world of abstractions, devoid of lucidity, where a signifier does not have a signified. Even if this world gives off the impression of the clearest order (such as in Paul Klee's paintings), its meaning is illusive. Consequently, there looms the danger of ending up like the paranoid Colonel Grace-Groundling-Marchpole, trying to find patterns in codes devoid of meaning and "rejoicing at the underlying harmony of a world in which duller minds discerned mere chaos" (SH 466). On the other hand, the miniature models and photographs do not have any relation to art – they are created out of a necessity for order in a world precisely governed by agents of anarchy. As such, when Trimmer eventually experiences "Operation Popgun" in the flesh, he finds himself overwhelmed by the sheer bedlam he encounters ahead of him.

In a similar manner, if we consider Guy's path, the act of being "in the picture" has at its core Guy's unwillingness to leave a world of fantasy behind. By creating this division between controlled narrative and hectic reality, Waugh is certainly attempting to create a *double entendre* with the popular expression "theatre of operations". We can

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[55] As McCartney mentions, this is likely the inspiration for the aeroplane scene in *Vile Bodies* (1992: 150).

see this by the way he positions certain characters and how their actions are interpreted by the general public – Trimmer, a thespian by excellence, plays his role as hero of the people just as adequately as any Hollywood starlet. Guy himself goes to see some performances throughout the novel. In one he meets a tenor who tells him: "We were next to you in the line once in the last show. We got on very well with your chaps. I was in the Artists" (SH 63). Afterwards, Apthorpe comments that the old man had probably been in a "Grand Opera" (SH 64). It is significant that this comparison between the war and a dramatic opera comes early in the novel, as it prepares us for Guy's rude awakening later on. This contrast is recurrent: when Guy remembers his escape from Crete, he talks about "rehearsing his experiences" (SH 578); after a soldier gets injured, the procedures are likened to "an old-fashioned, well-constructed comedy" as "other characters began to enter Left" (SH 347); Guy's nephew, Tony, informs him: "I wouldn't miss seeing you masquerading as a young officer for anything in the world, Uncle Guy" (SH 87). Even people are relegated to the world of fiction: Virginia is described as "the last of twenty years' succession of heroines" (845-846) and Ritchie-Hook as "one of the great characters of the Corps", though he is sentenced to "play second fiddle as an observer" (SH 858) during the last part of the battle/show. Therefore, although Waugh is putting the reader in the picture, we are intimated with countless monitions about its true nature.

What Waugh is presenting is distinctly different from conventional narratives, yet he hides his intention under a very well-polished veneer – essentially, like the characters in the novel, the reader is not supposed to know that they are in the picture or, to put it in other words, in a performance. Here it is useful to remember Mikhail Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* (1965), where he describes Carnival as a festival where people "stood on the borderline between life and art, in a peculiar midzone as it were; they were neither eccentrics nor dolts, neither were they comic actors" (1984: 8). While Bakhtin was fascinated by the possible renewal brought forth by "the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions" (*ibidem*: 10) during these celebrations, Waugh was weary of such disorder, since he was aware that it was not provisional. The performance was never-ending, a continuous parade of "parodies and travesties, humiliations, profanations, comic crownings and uncrownings" (*ibidem*: 11) – there was no restoration to normality from these momentary liberations, but merely a life that could only be "organized on the basis of laughter" (*ibidem*: 8). Needless to say that "this laughter is ambivalent: it is gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking,

deriding" (*ibidem*: 11-12). It is a laughter that is only accessible to those who are experiencing it from the inside:

> The satirist whose laughter is negative places himself above the object of his mockery, he is opposed to it. The wholeness of the world's comic aspect is destroyed, and that which appears comic becomes a private reaction. The people's ambivalent laughter, on the other hand, expresses the point of view of the whole world; he who is laughing also belongs to it. (*ibidem*: 12)

The necessity to simultaneously be inside and outside the picture demonstrates Waugh's dexterity as an artist. To him, raw materials such as emotions and personality traits were merely dough waiting to be moulded rather than to be probed at. As he himself commented: "I regard writing not as investigation of character, but as an exercise in the use of language, and with this I am obsessed" (*apud* Jebb, 1967: 110). He also expressed his belief that "what makes a writer, as distinct from a clever and cultured man who can write, is an added energy and breadth of vision which enables him to conceive and complete a structure" (ALO 124). If we are able to evaluate the structure while still being immersed in its content, then those laconic speeches and hesitancy to engage directly acquire new dimensions which were previously overlooked. In "The Dehumanization of Art" (1925), José Ortega y Gasset gives an example of this process of emotional distancing with a very simple scene: the death of a man being witnessed by his wife, a doctor, a reporter and a painter. Certainly, the weight of the tragedy is felt less intensely, if at all, by the latter three men than by the wife, for they are intended to be objective. Accordingly, "[a] thing can be seen, an event can be observed, only when we have separated it from ourselves and it has ceased to form a living part of our being. Thus the wife is not present at the scene, she is in it. She does not behold it, she 'lives' it" (2019: 15). On the other hand, the doctor and the reporter must be invested, both professionally, in the event. It is in the painter that "we find a maximum of distance and a minimum of feeling intervention", for his concerns are "exclusively toward the visual part – color values, lights and shadows" (*ibidem*: 17). It is this detachment that is required of both the author and the reader. Even so, the latter is oftentimes lost in the picture – the strange odyssey of Apthorpe's gear, Guy's expedition in Dakar, the bedroom farce with Virginia and other similar episodes are

designed to entertain at the most superficial of levels.[56] The distance between these events and the sordid realities of the war is sometimes too great to close, so that when people suffer for no justifiable reason there is somewhere else to turn to – and we always look away. As Swiss dramatist Friedrich Dürrenmatt tells us:

> Tragedy presupposes guilt, adversity, measure, a surveyable world, and responsibility. In the muddle and mess of our century, (…) no one is guilty any longer and no one is responsible, either. No one can help it and no one wanted it. Everything happens without anyone's doing. Everyone is swept along and gets caught in the meshes somewhere. (…) Comedy alone can still get to us. Our world has led to the grotesque and the atom bomb, both, just as Hieronymus Bosch's apocalyptic paintings are also grotesque. (2006: 155)

This is in accordance with Waugh's rejection of satire in a world devoid of responsibility and moral standards to be upheld. As Guy gains awareness of these mechanics, the world around him fades from the glitter and gold of the Halberdiers' barracks into a second section which introduces nightmarish visions, such as when he is approached by "ten pig-faces, visions of Jerome Bosch" (SH 303). The chaos represented by these unsettling apparitions is symptomatic of the ironic mind, but also of the carnivalesque atmosphere permeating the novel. After all, Carnival "does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators"; it "is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people" (Bakhtin, 1984: 7). As a participant of this world, Guy also "put on his gas-mask and straightened his cap before the looking-glass, which just a year ago had so often reflected his dress cap and high blue collar and a face full of hope and purpose" but now only reflected a "gross snout" (SH 303). Here we see glimpses of the "grotesque realism" which is also present in the scatological humour of the thunder-box sequence, a demonstration of vile bodies without substance. Individuality has given place to an antrum of masquerades and everyone's mask has become so inherent to

[56] This is not to say that these episodes are without meaning, but rather that they, in line with Waugh's earlier satires, are liable to (purposeful) misinterpretation. Though, rather than turning more serious scenes into moral lectures and have their meaning spoon-fed to the reader, Waugh approaches these episodes in similarly unorthodox manners: the comic excerpts are read almost without second-thought, and even if they are possible to engage with the author discourages such in-depth readings, meanwhile the serious scenes force the reader to engage with an absolute void. In both cases, therefore, the reader would appear to be submissive in face of the tyranny of the detached narrator. The augmentation of the reader's role comes, counterintuitively, from the distance enforced by the second of these methods, which is not a denial (as the first), but an invitation.

them that it becomes difficult to "distinguish between them as human beings" (SH 207). There is no longer the possibility for Carnival outside real life – real life has become Carnival. Edward Diller concurs that one of the reasons "for today's grotesque comedy is the extreme difficulty, almost impossibility, of the artist's dealing seriously with his raw material in a time when technology and the sciences have seized and worked over everything and have made inescapable facts out of existence" (1966: 329). If society can no longer recognize tragedy as legitimate, as it easily slips into gross sentimentality or bizarre reasoning, the sole possibility for communication becomes laughter, for "[l]aughter does not permit seriousness to atrophy and to be torn away from the one being, forever incomplete. It restores this ambivalent wholeness" (Bakhtin, 1984: 123). In a similar manner, Northrop Frye writes in his *Anatomy of Criticism*:

> Tragedy and tragic irony take us into a hell of narrowing circles and culminate in some such vision of the source of all evil in a personal form. Tragedy can take us no farther; but if we persevere with the mythos of irony and satire, we shall pass a dead center, and finally see the gentlemanly Prince of Darkness bottom side up. (1973: 239)

In Guy Crouchback's tragi-comedy, a sort of modern-day *Divine Comedy*, the forces of irony pervading the text are vital to keep him afloat. Its participants' picturesque "narratives mask the soullessness of their authors behind a glittery surface of artifice and aestheticism" (Trout, 1997: 134), but upon close scrutiny they fall apart. Once divested of these romantic characteristics, *Sword of Honour* becomes "the ultimate anti-war novel", where Waugh denies "modern warfare even the dignity of tragedy or horror, stressing instead its banality and emptiness" (Trout: 1997: 140). Through this *mundus inversus*, Waugh presents us with a "post-tragedy, denying the reader's desire for pathos and catharsis" and "emerges as a critic of his own interwar tendency toward anarchic, anti-humanist satire and as a pioneer of an alternate comic mode that seeks not to correct, but to heal" (Tomko, 2018: 316). The narrative, then, acquires a previously absent regenerative quality. Yet first, the protagonist must become aware of the trap he is in, the "pretty picture – an oil painting" (SH 850), for if it is anything like the one at Kut-al-Imara House – "a wintry sea-scape empty save for a few distant fishing boats" (MA, n/p) – even its beauty cannot hide the barrenness of its content.

2.2. Finding the Tomb in the Arcadia

Knowing that Waugh's fictional world functions on a highly intertextual level, the question arises as to how he weaves these references into a cohesive picture. If we keep in mind Waugh's formula, it seems clear that Guy Crouchback is doomed to be trapped in the wheel of Becoming – the main question becomes whether he shall be able to break free. To resolve this, we must first concede that the "two-world condition" (1984: 6) proposed by Bakhtin is as valid for art as for the relationships formed in either "carnival" or "officialdom". If art should not be made for its own sake, then relationships should likewise not be constrained by the hypnotic charm or beauty of its participants. In spite of this, Paula Byrne describes Waugh as "a person for whom friendship would become an art" (2010: 27), and in his fiction art as a synonym of beauty similarly becomes analogous to friendships which are fascinating enough to warrant the protagonist's undivided attention. In relation to this peculiarity in the author's character, Jeffrey Heath ultimately advocates that "Waugh's central theme is the flight from vocation into a false refuge" (1982: 9), caused by the "deep rift in Waugh's psyche between the worldly and the other-worldly" – in other words the cleavage dividing temptation and stability, "lush places" and true refuges or sanctuaries (1982: 5). These polarizing forces, physical representations of Becoming and Being, were the main focus of Waugh's works, and he often struggled to conglomerate them into a univocal worldview. As a result, his characters also became entangled in illusory Arcadias, where they could guiltlessly explore their human shortcomings with the help and guidance of their corrupted companions. This inevitably led to tragic endings, explaining "why the hollow and culturally deprived England of *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies* is so often depicted as tasteless, derivative, and confining: a spiritual prison" (Heath, 1982: 36).[57] These are places of love without grace, and those bound to

[57] In one of the most well-known quotations from *Vile Bodies*, the narrator introduces an aside where he enumerates the nauseating sequence of parties that begin to overwhelm the characters, which ends with the following remark: "[(...) all that succession and repetition of massed humanity.... Those vile bodies...]" (VB 155). This jarring commentary midway through the novel explicitly springs from the fear of the mass as an engulfing entity (as previously mentioned), but it also touches on another nerve, which is that of physicality. After all, there is nothing more physical to a human being than a body, especially their own. To become aware of our body, of its vileness, constitutes a difficult exercise of amalgamation between the "I" as spiritual inside and the "I" as material outside. In Waugh's novels the maturing protagonist is simultaneously repulsed by the mass and attracted by it – their spiritual emptiness (which afflicts even more developed characters such as Charles Ryder and Guy Crouchback, and is perhaps only omitted in Helena) is the perfect catalyst for desire of integration. The grotesque body, in many ways, belongs to the mass. If the soul is not nurtured and awakened to spiritual life, then life outside the mass and the mask is impossible. Thus, Waugh's earlier protagonists are bound to earthly prisons, to those vile

their confines are barred from becoming wholly human. A conspicuous example of these lush places in *Sword of Honour* is the Castello Crouchback, where, as discussed in the previous chapter, Guy rested immobile after the devastating collapse of his marriage.[58] However, we have already witnessed Guy walking away from this castle of illusions – his is a delusion of quite a different order.

It might be justly expected that in a chapter dedicated to love the main focus would be on Guy's relationship with Virginia. However, theirs is not a conventional love story, as it is defined, like most aspects in the novel, by loss – in this case the loss of love. Virginia is the primary source of Guy's debilitating paralysis and in the years following her departure he simply "prosecuted a few sad little love affairs" (SH 13) without any interest or passion. Their one amorous meeting in the entire novel turns disastrous after Guy insinuates that she is a "tart" (SH 157). It becomes even worse once Virginia realizes that Guy had chosen her simply because she was the only woman with whom he could have sexual relations within the confines of his religion (SH 160). Despite Ludovic's denial that he was ever influenced by T. S. Eliot, there are some references to *The Waste Land* (1922) in *Sword of Honour* which would impede Waugh from making the same claim. Much as in Eliot's poem, Waugh appropriates Arthurian myths, fashioning Guy after a mixture of the Fisher King and Percival. In the legend, Percival is tasked with asking a question to the Fisher King so that the latter may be cured from his wound, which has turned the land barren. Guy himself is described as carrying a metaphorical "deep wound", an "unstaunched, internal draining away of life and love" (SH 7), though he later on sports an injured knee to visually materialize it. A symbol of sterility, the Fisher King who "was struck by a javelin through both thighs" (2004: 424) denotes both Guy's strange abstinence and his incapability to produce heirs. This is a clear blow to his pride, and we find Guy being continually emasculated as a result of his borderline asexual nature. He is clearly embarrassed when Virginia

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bodies. Further ahead, I will explain the importance of Guy Crouchback's existence outside of his body to engender his spiritual awakening.

[58] Waugh's first marriage to Evelyn Gardner terminated in much the same manner as Guy and Virginia's. Gardner wrote to her husband to announce that she was in love with another man, John Heygate, and soon enough Waugh filed for a divorce (though, unlike Guy, Waugh was granted an annulment by the Church which allowed him to remarry later on). Devastated by his wife's abrupt betrayal, Waugh wrote to his friend Harold Acton in September of 1929: "I did not know it was possible to be so miserable and live, but I am told this is a common experience" (1980: 39). Possibly as a result of this traumatic experience, nearly all his novels highlight adultery as a prominent feature of the decaying world. Evelyn Gardner eventually married Heygate, and after their divorce she became the spouse of a real estate agent named Ronald Nightingale. Similarly, by the time Guy meets Virginia again she has left Tommy Blackhouse and a man named Augustus (whom she did not marry) and is married for the third time to Mr. Troy.

spitefully demands: “And anyway what do you know about picking up tarts? If I remember our honeymoon correctly, you weren't so experienced then. Not a particularly expert performance as I remember it” (SH 158). When Virginia attempts to seduce Guy further ahead, she finds that he is not keen, to which he apologetically insists "[i]t was only my knee” (SH 779). Disheartened by his rejection, she asks Guy why he refrains from engaging in sexual intercourse, to which he replies:

> "I don't know about the others. With me I think, perhaps, it’s because I associate it with love. And I don't love anymore."
>
> "Not me?"
>
> "Oh, no, Virginia, not you. You must have realised that."
>
> "It is not easy to realise when lots of people have been so keen, not so long ago. What about you, Guy, that evening in Claridge's?"
>
> "That wasn't love," said Guy. "Believe it or not, it was the Halberdiers."
>
> "Yes. I think I know what you mean." (SH 778)

Once they “resumed the pleasures of marriage”, they did so “[w]ithout passion or sentiment but in a friendly, cosy way they had (…) and in the weeks while his knee mended the deep old wound in Guy's heart and pride healed also, as perhaps Virginia had intuitively known that it might do” (SH 841). It becomes quite clear that their relationship, rather than being infused with amorousness, is deep-seated on mutual friendship and is a means for Guy to reaffirm his pride and masculinity. Indeed, Guy’s entire attempt at retrieving his manhood is condensed in his desire to join a military unit, since “often the single most evident marker of manhood (…) is the willingness to fight, the desire to fight” (Kimmel, 1994: 132). Virginia is the only one who is able to restore some of his virility, as she is the only one capable of uttering those words Guy had been longing to hear ever since the war began: “Of course I've always known you were brave as a lion” (SH 98). He recovers from his wound, “as though he were leaving a hospital where he had been skilfully treated, a place of grateful memory to which he had no particular wish to return” (SH 841). After Virginia’s death, he merely performs his conjugal responsibilities to her out of a sense of duty rather than any emotional necessity – their romance is essentially a ghost of the past.

In the brief mention to Guy’s new wife, there is also the absence of a romantic motive. Instead, what we are told is that “Domenica got very fond of [the baby]. A

marriage was the obvious thing" (SH 897). Indeed, the only mentions to Guy being in love appear to be in relation to the army. This probably explains why, as Tommy tells Guy, Virginia is "never jealous of other women, but she does hate Bellamy's" (SH 147) – Bellamy's, as Moran reminds us, being a play on the French words "*belle amis*, 'beautiful friends'" (2016: 292). This also undoubtedly relates to the reason "[a]lmost all women in England at that time believed that peace would restore normality" (SH 779). While to some "normality" meant "having [their] husband at home and the house to themselves", "to Virginia normality meant power and pleasure; pleasure chiefly, and not only her own. Her power of attraction, her power of pleasing was to her still part of the natural order which had been capriciously interrupted. War (…) [was] a malevolent suspension of 'normality' (…)" (*ibidem*). As a modern woman who exerts a great amount of influence over the male sex, Virginia finds herself helpless in a time where women have been relegated to a constant state of passivity. The role of women during the war seemed to amount to filling a gap while the men were away, earning their own wages and, most importantly, waiting patiently for everything to end. If one cannot help but "view military life as an important site in the shaping and making of masculinities" (Morgan, 1994: 168), then it is also important to acknowledge that it did so while radically excluding women from an active context.[59] Even when this was not the case, there was an evident implication that female soldiers had to be stripped away from both their sexuality and womanhood in order to join the ranks:

> "(…) You may be surprised to find girls serving in the ranks beside their male comrades. Lying together, sometimes, for warmth, under the same blanket, but in absolute celibacy. Patriotic passion has entirely extruded sex. The girl partisans are something you will never have seen before. In fact one of the medical officers told me that many of them had ceased to menstruate. (…) Even when we have anaesthetics the girls refuse to take them. I have seen them endure excruciating operations without flinching, sometimes breaking into song as the surgeon probed, in order to prove their manhood. (…)" (SH 803)

Hence, the path towards a military career always required a certain amount of male-coded characteristics: "aggression, courage, a capacity for violence, and,

[59] For an in-depth analysis of women's roles during the Second World War, see Barbosa, L. (2020). *Representations of Women in Contemporary Anglophone War Fiction: The Portrayal of Female Characters as Victims of Conflict and/or Agents of Their Own Destinies*. Master's Thesis. Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto.

sometimes, a willingness for sacrifice" (Morgan, 1994: 166). Virginia, a symbol of sex and femininity, is automatically excluded from the experiences of a soldier and, as a result, despairs at the growing gap segregating her from the men who had once offered her unlimited attention. She is forced to settle for Trimmer, since even Guy does not escape the tenet that "combat and military experience separate men from women while binding men to men" (*ibidem*). Thus, while Guy knew that he "was not loved (…) either by his household or in the town" (SH 11), he freely admits that he "loved Major Tickeridge and Captain Bosanquet. He loved Apthorpe. He loved the oil-painting over the fireplace of the unbroken square of Halberdiers in the desert. He loved the whole Corps deeply and tenderly" (SH 59). When Ritchie-Hook goes missing, Guy dismisses the others' concerns by saying: "I love him. He'll turn up" (OG n/p).[60] Aware of critics' surprise at the first volume's affectionate tone, Tangye Lean commented that "[b]ecause [Guy] is in love, Mr. Waugh is gentler than usual" (*apud* Stannard, 2002: 44). Cyril Connolly uses the same terminology: "In *Men at Arms* Crouchback is in love, quite simply, with the army; more especially with the Halberdiers, his first regiment, and with Apthorpe, (…) the chum who becomes a symbol of the hopes and delights promised by the great love-affair" (2002c: 431). Here, too, "the seduction of the army is in fact a seduction by the past" (Semple, 1968: 50), and Guy quickly becomes infatuated with figures such as Apthorpe, Richie-Hook and Ivor Claire. In this boyish one-sided relationship with the corps, Guy finds himself temporarily satiated:

> Those days of lameness, he realized much later, were his honeymoon, the full consummation of his love of the Royal Corps of Halberdiers. After them came domestic routine, much loyalty and affection, many good things shared, but intervening and overlaying them all the multitudinous, sad little discoveries of marriage, familiarity, annoyance, imperfections noted, discord. Meanwhile it was sweet to wake and to lie on in bed; the spirit of the Corps lay beside him: to ring the bell; it was in the service of his unseen bride. (SH 92)

The suggestion that an exclusively male military unit is capable of enacting the role of a wife is certainly evocative and may even appear to go against the grain of Guy's virilisation. However, we must remember that "[i]f in the armed services one

[60] This passage is excised from the final version. Waugh also removed other passages which might have been perceived as sexually ambiguous, such as when Major Hound asks Guy if Ludovic strikes him as "queer" (OG n/p) [Waugh replaces it with the word "peculiar" (SH 509) in *Sword of Honour*] and Claire recounts that him, Bertie and Eddie "got picked up by a sugar-daddy" (OG n/p).

finds an ideological emphasis on homosociability and heterosexuality, it is, as is so often the case in a complex society, a complex ideological unity compounded of several, sometimes contradictory, strands" (168). Quite surprisingly for a conservative author, Waugh did not usually shy away from challenging gender and sexual norms,[61] although some critics have pointed out that queer-coded characters are often the target of scorn or reproach in his novels. If the protagonist's friendships are infused with the nostalgic touch of beauty, they are also dooming in their sterility and usually evolve to a gradual distancing or a mere formal respect. One important exception to be made is Sebastian Flyte from *Brideshead Revisited*.[62] As someone who stands as a nostalgic character of the writer's Oxford days, Sebastian is explicitly idealised throughout the novel, though ultimately disposed of once the main character, Charles Ryder, achieves his maturation. In fact, as Lord Marchmain's mistress, Cara, points out, homosexual affairs appear to be socially accepted as a sort of rite of passage into adulthood:

> "I know of these romantic friendships of the English and the Germans. They are not Latin. I think they are very good if they do not go on too long. (…) It is a kind of love that comes to children before they know its meaning. In England it comes when you are almost men; I think I like that. It is better to have that kind of love for another boy than for a girl." (BR 117-118)

In *Sword of Honour* we are introduced to Guy Crouchback when he is already well into his thirties, jumping over what he terms as his "first youth" (SH 164). Just like Lord Marchmain, Guy seems to have experienced that "kind of love" for a girl, his wife Virginia. Yet in the Halberdiers Guy is introduced to "something he had missed in boyhood, a happy adolescence" (SH 51). In their discussion, Cara also notices that Charles, unlike Sebastian, can control his alcohol; but what she "really wants to point out to Charles by talking indirectly about their different ways of drinking, and what Charles later seems to confirm, is their different ways of loving" (Liu, 2017a: 207). Here it may be pertinent to analyse the similarities between Apthorpe and Sebastian, perhaps two of Waugh's most notorious dipsomaniacs, and the implications of

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[61] Though opposing his religious beliefs, it is worth noting that Waugh held "liberal views towards homosexuality" (Byrne, 2010: 321) and it is well documented that he "experienced an acute homosexual phase at Oxford" (*ibidem*: 67).

[62] "Sebastian stands apart from Waugh's other homosexuals in that he has a much more dynamic role to play and because the tone in which he is presented is so distinctive. Ambrose and Anthony are critiqued; Grimes and Malpractice are ridiculed; Sebastian is romanticized" (Higdon, 1994: 81).

alcoholism in the novel. A passage that springs to mind is when Guy implies that Apthorpe might have a sexually transmitted disease as a result from being drunk, which Apthorpe refutes quite sternly:

> "What's more, old man," he said, "I don't much like the way you spoke to me just now, accusing me of having clap. It's a pretty serious thing, you know."
>
> "I'm sorry. It was rather a natural mistake in the circumstances."
>
> "Not natural to me, old man, and I don't quite know what you mean by 'circumstances'. I *never* get tight. I should have thought you would have noticed that. Merry, perhaps, on occasions, but never *tight*. It's a thing I keep clear of. I've seen far too much of it." (SH 173)

The dichotomy merry/tight might here be translated into homoerotic/homosexual, as it does in *Brideshead Revisited*, or merely platonic affection/sexual deviance.[63] In this manner, both Sebastian and Apthorpe, symbols of Dionysian overconsumption, represent an escape into the dangerous Arcadias Jeffrey Heath mentions. In different ways they facilitate the introduction into an embellished prison, which is tolerable insofar as they maintain their illusory appeal. Yet they are also the reader's introduction into a "dreamlike universe", the "foreign ground" into which Charles Ryder ventures, anxious to find "that low door in the wall, (…) which opened on an enclosed and enchanted garden, which was somewhere, not overlooked by any window, in the heart of that grey city" (BR 33). Indeed, the Arcadia Guy proposes to sustain with Apthorpe is nearly identical to the one Charles and Sebastian experience during their years at Oxford. This could be explained by the fact that the environment provided by the Halberdiers propels Guy into the first youth he felt was never truly consummated in his earlier years, as seen by Waugh's presentation of the army "by means of school boy imagery" and training as a "preparatory school" (Semple, 1968: 51). While on the subject of school, it is interesting to notice that in "Charles Ryder's Schooldays" (1945), a short story that was meant to be a prequel to *Brideshead Revisited*, Apthorpe makes an appearance as Charles Ryder's house-captain. In it, it is implied that Apthorpe is "keen" on a schoolboy named Wykham-Blake. The subtext could not be clearer:

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[63] For example, Guy entertains the thought that Apthorpe may have "a secret, irregular ménage" or "[l]ittle dusky Apthorpes" (SH 282).

> "I say, have you noticed something? Apthorpe is in the Upper Anteroom this term. Have you ever known the junior house-captain anywhere except in the Lower Anteroom? I wonder how he worked it."
>
> "Why should he want to?"
>
> "Because, my innocent, Wykham-Blake has been moved into the Upper Anteroom." (2000: 297)

In *Sword of Honour*, the implication of Apthorpe's homosexuality is not as clear, if at all, but we can easily perceive his intimate affinity with Guy.[64] Conversely, although Guy displays affection for other men, he is undoubtedly a heterosexual character.[65] Ultimately, he treats Apthorpe with a mixture of admiration and contempt – when Apthorpe suggests that he could change regiments Guy admits that he should greatly miss him, but one can deduce that he would probably regret the absence of Apthorpe's comic relief more acutely than his presence.[66] Meanwhile, Apthorpe is permanently posturing as someone he is evidently not: whereas Yuexi Liu identifies Sebastian Flyte's teddy bear as being his transitional object, demonstrating both his inability to grow up and "his public display of private feelings, or more precisely his homosexuality" (2017a: 211), in the War Trilogy Apthorpe is characterized by his obsession with boots. In his constant remarks about his companions' footwear, it appears that Apthorpe, as "an usurper of personality and a species of psychological invader, is obsessed with other people's boots to the extent of wanting to be in them" (Heath: 9). In fact, much like Sebastian does with Aloysius, Apthorpe personifies his boots, speaking of the fit of its "tongue" and the "construction of the eye-holes" (SH 219).[67] The boots, however, do not reflect Apthorpe's private feelings; on the contrary,

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[64] Apthorpe even admits that he "need[s] a woman", though he immediately clarifies: "For company, you understand. I can do without the other thing" (SH 67). His complaint is that "[y]ou have a good time drinking with the chaps in the club, you feel fine, and then at the end of it all you go back alone to bed" (*ibidem*). At the end of the day, in spite of Guy's express desire to be left alone and rational reminder to Apthorpe that he "won't find [a woman] in the barracks" (*ibidem*), Apthorpe ends up sleeping on the floor next to Guy's bed, apparently content to have any sort of company regardless of gender.

[65] Although Guy acknowledges "one dismal occasion of drunkenness" (MA n/p) which he feels he must confess to a priest in *Men at Arms*, this was excised from *Sword of Honour*.

[66] In *Work Suspended* (1939) Arthur Atwater accuses John Plant of keeping him around for precisely the same reason: "You're paying me for my entertainment value. You think I'm a kind of monkey" (2000: 184). Curiously, the names Atwater and Apthorpe are so similar that Cyril Connolly mistook them for being the same character in his review of *Men at Arms* (2002a: 337).

[67] The motif of boots comes up recurrently. For example, Tommy Blackhouse's injury results from the fact that "his nailed boots slipped on the steel ladder" (SH 495) and Fido Hound's complaints are "lost in the sound of his stumbling boots" (SH 542). Apthorpe's own boots are described as having "covered miles of bush trail" (SH 48) and during his funeral we are told how "boots had moved up and down the blistering road" (SH 291). The boots seem to be agents acting of their own volition and are usually the

they project desired personas. Accordingly, the only time we see Apthorpe's feet "bereft of their 'porpoises'" they are "peeling with fever" (SH 280), further demonstrating that Apthorpe's boots symbolize his attempt at hiding his corroding inner self from the world, like the painting in Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890).

Steven Trout identifies another Dorian Gray in the figure of Ivor Claire, who is "handsome but amoral, [and] thus parallels Ludovic" (1997: 138). Guy becomes immediately arrested by the figure of Ivor Claire – a horse rider and princely in both attitude and appearance, his charm envelops Guy so quickly that soon "they became friends, as had Guy and Apthorpe" (SH 398). As Claire's influence diminishes, we become more aware of "Corporal-Major Ludovic, whom Ivor Claire had succeeded in promoting to headquarters" (SH 437). Here, a bifurcation occurs once again – Claire is both Apthorpe and Ludovic. Or, better yet, Claire and Ludovic are both Apthorpe, though in different variations of Guy's perception of his late friend. Besides noticing Ludovic's discoloured eyes, Guy also asks Claire about his CSM's odd footwear, wondering: "Why does he wear bedroom slippers all day?" to which Claire replies, nonplussed: "He says it's his feet" (SH 427). Much like Apthorpe, whose "boots were dull" (SH 49), Ludovic's "glossy boots grew dull" (SH 710).[68] On the other hand, the scarcity of boots is perceptible in the last portion of the novel in regards to the Jewish refugees. If Apthorpe and Ludovic are able to distinguish themselves by their peculiar (and highly facetious) footwear, those who are less fortunate must content themselves with walking around bare-footed, unidentifiable. Ludovic's extravagance goes even further "as with a travelling manicure set he prepared his toe-nails for whatever endurances lay ahead" (SH 495).[69] He is another usurper of personalities, a mysterious man of no origins aspiring to power. For his part, Claire holds the remnants of

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source of pain as they lead these men down undesirable roads. There is even a suggestion that the men can only hold out as long as their boots do (SH 530), so that, in the end, the boots are the deciding factor as to who survives and who perishes. In other words, if the boots hold out, so does the mask. Waugh seems to imply that this is the only way to survive in the modern world.

[68] In *Officers and Gentlemen* Guy notices that Ludovic comes off as "a strangely clean and sleek man for Creforce" (OG, n/p). In *Sword of Honour* this detail is expanded, as it is specified that Ludovic "wore on his shoulder straps the badges of a major" (SH 573). David Cliffe comments that he "cannot help but think that these are Hound's badges of rank, removed from his uniform after his death" (2001: n/p). If this is true, as it seems to me it is, then Ludovic's wardrobe acquires a new dimension, as he has usurped Hound's identity. This is foreshadowed, unsurprisingly, by Hound's boots: "He then examined his boots; nothing wrong with them; they would last for weeks more; but would Fido?" (SH 530). Ludovic also writes in his *Pensées*: "*Man is what he hates* (…) *Yesterday I was Blackhouse. Today I am Crouchback. Tomorrow, merciful heaven, shall I be Hound?*" (SH 438).

[69] Another interesting instance regarding this motif is when Julia Stitch, her toe-nails also "pale pink and brilliantly polished", changes footwear three times in a single paragraph: from "white leather shoes" to "slippers" to, finally, shoes she deems fit for "street wear" (SH 449).

Apthorpe's fantastical world. An aesthete through and through, Claire is the possessor of a great amount of charm and eccentricity, thus becoming another Sebastian Flyte. [70] He, like Guy and Apthorpe, also injures his leg (as will Tommy Blackhouse), and the vision of Claire in a "wheeled-chair" (SH 443) is an almost exact copy of Sebastian's minor injury where he also becomes confined to a "wheelchair" (BR 88). Both women who hold Charles and Guy in a Circe-like trance perform the same action upon these young princes: as Julia Flyte "kissed the top of Sebastian's head" (BR 89), so did Julia Stitch lean "over Claire and kissed his forehead" (SH 445). However, unlike Charles, Guy does not become a victim of their enchanting grip for long.

It seems, then, that both Claire and Ludovic represent the dangers embodied by Apthorpe and which Guy gradually comes to perceive. However, despite Guy's pilgrimage to placate his friend's spirit, we later find out that "Apthorpe, that brother-uncle, that ghost, laid, Guy had thought, on the Island of Mugg, walked still in his porpoise boots to haunt him; the defeated lord of the thunder-box still worked his jungle magic" (SH 609). Heath comments:

> Waugh both hated and feared the Apthorpe within him and, on a subliminal level, wished to exorcise him. Further, like anyone else, he was struggling to transcend the entire uncomfortable ego-object split by returning to the primal condition in which ego-love and object-love cannot be distinguished. (1974: 21)

While a certain degree of homoaffectivity is tolerated by Waugh, and sometimes even encouraged in adolescence (or, in this case, a second adolescence), homosexuality is often represented as a dooming trait, and, as a rule, homosexual characters are inevitably exiled in his novels. This is symptomatic of Waugh associating homosexuality with a perversion of social norms and "cultural degeneration" (Trout, 1997: 137); he continues to do so by alluding to Sir Ralph's underground society of male catamites, which include Corporal-Major Ludovic, Lieutenant Padfield and a sergeant nicknamed "Susie". The quicker these pernicious doubles are distanced, the closer Guy comes to forming a traditional family. As LaFrance states, "Ritchie-Hook

[70] Andrew Moran points out that "[t]he prose turns positively Ryderian as Guy remembers first seeing Claire 'in the Roman spring in the afternoon sunlight amid the embosoming cypresses of the Borghese Gardens, putting his horse faultlessly over the jumps, concentrated as a man in prayer'. Guy's friendship with Ivor Claire is another parody of *Brideshead Revisited*, Waugh again acknowledging that he too, like other authors, can, overwhelmed by beautiful words and beautiful images, lose control of his art" (2016: 285).

and particularly Apthorpe both belong to the prep-school world of boarders and day-boys, lessons and schedules, juvenile heroics – all an essential part of Guy's education" (1975: 35). Yet the *Bildungsroman* forcefully implies an overcoming of this state of innocence, an entering into maturity, which is what characterizes Waugh's later novels from his earlier ones. The adult man can no longer indulge in the mistakes of the schoolboy. When Guy expresses that "[h]e wished it had been he, not Apthorpe, who called the impudent corporals to order in the gym" (SH 64), he puts into question their power dynamic, as if he might get overridden by Apthorpe and ultimately become emasculated. Apthorpe's subsequent decline and his growing association with anal intrusions by virtue of his thunder-box[71] foretell not only Guy's triumph over his double, but a conquering of his own repressed homosexual desires. He steps away from the effeminate world of adolescent fantasy and approximates himself to the gritty world of masculinity by accepting Ritchie-Hook's guidance. It becomes symbolic that Guy, the duo's heterosexual counterpart, and Ritchie-Hook, the epitome of military aggressiveness, became "the two men who had destroyed Apthorpe" (SH 291). They represent the conquest of traditional masculinity over the *miles gloriosus*.

The fact that Apthorpe is so closely identified with his experience in Africa also denotes a further exorcism: Guy getting rid of his "African Utopia" (Heath, 1982: 217) with Virginia, which is only accentuated by the fact that Guy's training period is set in Africa. In Kenya, Guy lived "in unruffled good humour beside a mountain lake where the air was always brilliant and keen and the flamingos rose at dawn first white, then pink, then a whirl of shadow passing across the glowing sky" (SH 15). Despite having mentioned space and place in the last chapter, here the Arcadia corresponds to a utopia as defined by its etymological root of "non-place". While in *A Handful of Dust* and *Brideshead Revisited* we have a physical space, the country house, as the place of the protagonists' halcyon days, in *Sword of Honour* this place is immaterial, it self-regenerates in multiple instances and is inhabited by various characters, but it is never grounded. Like Tony Last, searching for the lost city of El Dorado, and Charles Ryder, who "abandoned the houses of the great for the ruins of equatorial Africa" (BR 318),

[71] In his "Three Essays on Sexuality" (1905), Freud considers that the defining traits of homosexuality are "a coining into operation of narcissistic object-choice and a retention of the erotic significance of the anal zone" (2005: 291). Following this line of thought, Robert Kloss suggests that "fears of penetration and anal preoccupation is common among paranoids" and that "these anal interests help explain […] the 'Thunderbox' struggle of *Sword of Honour*, a battle between Ritchie-Hook and Apthorpe over a portable field latrine that extends for more than sixteen pages" (1985: 171). Apthorpe is even willing to share his thunder-box with Guy, a moment "when in their complicated relationship Apthorpe came nearest to love and trust" (SH 181).

Guy Crouchback leaves his Italian castle and is received into Apthorpe's jungle-world, itself a mirage distorted by Guy's already sentimental view of the continent:

> Yet there was about Apthorpe a sort of fundamental implausibility. Unlike the typical figure of the J.D. lesson, Apthorpe tended to become faceless and tapering the closer he approached. Guy treasured every nugget of Apthorpe but under assay he found them liable to fade like faery gold. Only so far as Apthorpe was himself true, could his enchantment work its spell. (SH 129)

A comparison may even be drawn between Apthorpe's world and the Castello Crouchback, as we may infer from the following passage:

> "Disappointing when you get up here," said the owner of the yacht apologetically. "Always the way with these places. Best seen from a distance."
>
> "I think it's quite perfect," said Hermione, "and we're going to live here. Please don't say a word against our castle." (SH 5)

The etymology of Apthorpe's name is shrouded in mystery, but it seems possible that it may allude to Apethorpe castle, an important estate in the history of the British monarchy. The fact that such a magnificent building is correlated with such a lowly character is, of course, ironic. Apthorpe is constantly trying to rise above his station (possibly a projection of Waugh's own desires to fraternize with aristocracy) so to be named after a manor with a superior symbolic status is denoting his own (misjudged) identification with the upper-classes. Furthermore, these parallels foretell the fact that Apthorpe will become to Guy what the Castello Crouchback was to his grandparents: "a place of joy and love" (SH 6). Yet he will also represent a decaying quality associated with the castle, a gothic trope found in stories such as Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839), where both topographic site and family heritage appear to be in a state of decline.[72] Therefore, it is symbolic that Apthorpe's spirit is placated in a gothic castle where his friend James Pendennis, best known as Chatty Corner, lives.

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[72] The implication of Guy and Apthorpe performing the role of twins also bears some resemblance to the drama of the Ushers, which abounds in duplications. While one of the twins embodies a physical decline, the other finds himself in a moral/psychological ordeal, so that they are bound by an extra-sensorial link. In the end, like the Usher twins, Guy and Apthorpe experience a simultaneous death – "Both uncles gone the same day" Colonel Tickeridge comments, to which his adjutant replies "Funny, I was thinking the same" (SH 292). There is even an explicit mention to "the fall of the house of Crouchback" (SH 759), so it seems quite likely that this parallel was intentional.

Also nicknamed Kong for looking like a "gorilla", this character indicates an additional significance to Apthorpe's name: a thorp being a small village or hamlet, Ap(e)thorpe symbolizes the village of the apes usurping civilization. In it, men like Chatty Corner – "a Bishop's son, Eton and Oxford and all that, and he plays the violin like a pro" (SH 86), Apthorpe tells Guy – thrive. Much like Emperor Seth in *Black Mischief* (1932), Chatty Corner is a representative of "progress without grace" (Heath, 1982: 101), someone who attests that "civilization will never convert barbarism; barbarism will convert it" (*ibidem*: 96). His lair, like Apthorpe's existence, had Guy "confounded between truth and fantasy" (SH 356), so that he loses himself in a secular world of enchanting, yet terrifying chaos. Afraid of being trapped in Apthorpe's "jungle magic", Guy is forced to kill his brother-officer and, as a result, is doomed to live with a "black mark" (SH 233) like Cain, the first fratricide.

A labyrinthine escape ensues for the protagonist who gradually becomes aware of the rotten core eating away at the heart of civilization – his journey becomes defined by his growing isolation as he rejects both barbaric modes of living and finds himself at the bottom of the chasm. The light-heartedness found in the first quarter of the novel dissipates and gives place to a particularly vicious dark humour once Guy is dismissed from the Halberdiers. In his return to England Guy is met with blackouts, bombings, and general destruction, and after he joins the Commandos the places he is deployed to are almost unreasonably sinister. There seems to be little doubt, for example, that the voyage to Crete is fashioned after Dante's depiction of hell.[73] In the context of the trilogy, Andrew Moran notices that "*Officers and Gentlemen* is the *katabasis*, in which midway through his journey, before the hero can learn his purpose and begin a new life built upon what can be salvaged from the old, he must descend into hell" (2016: 276). The Isle of Mugg[74] provides an entrance into this underworld. As Andrew Moran notices, Hector Campbell is described as "the '[s]tuffy old goat'—the goat an ancient symbol of the devil—'[who] seems to be God almighty in these parts', whose castle is 'haunted' and guarded by Cerberus-like 'infernal brutes'" (*ibidem*: 277). Hector's father

[73] Heath names Alvin Kernan, Stephen Jay Greenblatt and David Lodge as some who have identified Dante's influence on Waugh, and Heath himself points out that "[Waugh] often incorporates Dante's circular imagery and demonic effects into his novels" (1985: 65).

[74] The Small Isles in the novel are named "Rum, Muck, Mugg and Eigg". All of these are actual constituents of the Small Scottish Isles except for the one focused on, Mugg, which acts as a substitute for the Isle of Canna.

is also a "piper" (SH 361), thus identifying him with the pagan god Pan,[75] who, with his goat-like appearance, is often associated with the Devil. Even the candelabrum is described as "consisting of concentric and diminishing circles of tarnished brass", the concentric circles being reminiscent of the configuration of Dante's hell as it hovers above the "circular table" (*ibidem*).

The loss of paradise seems inevitable and it is announced, as expected, by death. Alongside Apthorpe, Guy's Brigade Major Fido Hound proves to be the perfect *pharmakos* (see Frye 41-42) in this context. Heath characterizes Fido as being "Judas-like" (237), and in his Arcadian refuge in Crete the barely discernible "head of a saint" (SH 539) announces a divine presence which presides over his summary trial. Fido had been tested, standing at "the heady precipice of sensual appetite" (SH 512). Like Adam, he faced "the first great temptation of [his] life" and, like Adam, "[h]e fell" (*ibidem*). As Heath explains: "Adam's attempt to turn Eden into a secluded lush place led him into the prison of the appetites, and as if in demonic repetition, the same thing soon happens to Hound" (237). Precisely because Fido is ruled by his earthly appetites does he represent the fallen man in his most vulnerable state as he consumes the forbidden fruit. Waugh builds up to this in his usual surreptitious manner. The men's appetites are first tried during the introduction of "Dr. Glendening-Rees. 'Eminent authority on dietetics'" (SH 391). Guy meets Dr. Glendening-Rees while he is on his way back to his hotel, whereupon he finds the doctor sucking on limpets, and he immediately notices that this strange man has a "grey beard spread in the wind like a baroque prophet's" (SH 407). The doctor's unorthodox eating habits are heavily satirized, as is made clear by the narrator's comment that "he had completed his natural and rational luncheon" (SH 409), but his prophetic services are nonetheless adequate. For example, Dr. Glendening-Rees chastises Guy and his fellow men for gorging on hotel food, which will be unavailable to them in battle, and even advises Guy against a few specific foods: "'Bully beef,' said the doctor. 'Biscuit, stewed tea. Poison. I was in the first war. I know. Nearly ruined my digestion for life.'" (SH 408). For Fido his "price of shame" amounted to a "little lump of the flaky, fatty meat and his single biscuit" (SH 512). Afterwards we are told that Fido "stole six biscuits – all that remained" (SH 536) at Creforce HQ. This is juxtaposed with a later scene where Guy offers a few biscuits to the Jewish refugees, in which "[w]ith tense self-control each took three biscuits, watching the others to see that

[75] Pan is also referenced as "The Piper at the Gates of Dawn" in a famous chapter from Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*, a book directly mentioned in *Sword of Honour*.

they did not disgrace the meeting by greed" (SH 817). Moreover, the obsession with biscuits serves to emphasize Fido's dog-like nature,[76] since in an earlier scene Guy's father had also considered giving his dog biscuits for dinner, but refrained from doing so in case they would turn out to be "something 'dehydrated' which, eaten without due preparation, swelled enormously and fatally in the stomach" (SH 315-316). This not only foreshadows Fido's eventual downfall as a result of his appetite, but it also directly parallels the following scene from Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There* (1871):

> "(…) I'm quite content to stay here—only I *am* so hot and thirsty!"
>
> "I know what *you'd* like!" the Queen said good-naturedly, taking a little box out of her pocket. "Have a biscuit?"
>
> Alice thought it would not be civil to say "No," though it wasn't at all what she wanted. So she took it, and ate it as well as she could: and it was *very* dry; and she thought she had never been so nearly choked in all her life. (Carroll: 161)

In her dissertation *"I Heard the Same Thing Once Before": Intertextuality in Selected Works of Evelyn Waugh*, Janelle Lynn Ortega suggests that this demonstrates that Waugh's characters, "like Alice, embrace the opposite of their needs" so that they similarly "ingest and suffer" (2016: 35).[77] Those who advocate abstinence (which is also condemned by Waugh as an extreme solution) to avoid such fates, such as Dr. Glendening-Rees, are ultimately doomed. The doctor's fate is almost added as an afterthought, so much so that it may even slip from a distracted reader's attention: "On his desert island Mugg crept out to pilfer the sapper stores, and the sappers themselves, emaciated and unshaven, presently lurched in carrying Dr Glendening-Rees on a wattle hurdle" (SH 423). The appearance of the word "emaciated", followed by the act of

[76] Consider also the similarities between Hound and Count Ugolino from Dante's *Inferno*, whose hunger was so acute that he ate his own hands and, afterwards, his own children. In hell he gnaws on the head of the man who betrayed him, Ruggieri ["And even as bread through hunger is devoured, / The uppermost on the other set his teeth, / There where the brain is to the nape united" (Dante, 1997: Canto XXXII)], with the avidness of a dog clinging to his bone ["The wretched skull resumed he with his teeth, / Which, as a dog's, upon the bone were strong" (*ibidem*: Canto XXXIII)]. Much like Ivor Claire, whose moral shortcomings shall be further analysed in the following chapter, Fido Hound is condemned to the circle of traitors for betraying the duty he had to his men in order to satisfy his hunger.

[77] Janelle Lynn Ortega brings up this scene in reference to *Vile Bodies*, arguing that Waugh's paratextual cues (that is, the epigraphs taken from *Through the Looking-Glass*) are essential to understand the overall configuration of the novel and how the author intended it to be perceived. Like many who tackle Waugh's body of fiction, Ortega unfortunately neglects *Sword of Honour*, probably on account of its length and density, though some hypotexts she selects are still pertinent to assess in relation to the trilogy, since, as previously discussed, Waugh had a tendency to repeat themes and motifs.

carrying Dr. Glendening-Rees in a manner that is reminiscent of how prisoners would be "drawn" (succeeded by the hanging and quartering) to their execution, makes it clear that this man is about to be eaten. The fact that a few lines later Claire marvels at how "the local inhabitants are uncommonly civil" (*ibidem*) blurs the line between civilization and barbarism even further.[78] Like these anthropophagi, Fido gorges on whatever he can lay his hands on without any previous pondering. When he enters the cave where he shall unsuspectingly meet his timely end, Fido sees "amid steam and wood-smoke a group of shadowy men sat round an iron cauldron" (SH 542). These men represent a naked barbarism which, instead of shying away from, Fido enthusiastically joins. The cauldron they stir, suffused with a gluttonous amount of food, is a further indicator of the immorality of their tribal ways. Again, Waugh certainly cannot disavow the Cave image as quickly as Ludovic. Though perhaps not intimately connected with Freudian psychology, the cave does represent a distortion of reality in Plato's *Republic*. This distortion can be brought about by strong desires, since in Waugh's fiction succumbing to one's whims is pretty inextricable from a distorted worldview. Just like Apthorpe, Fido becomes a sacrificial victim disproportionally condemned by his excessiveness and moral shortcomings. The master-aesthete Ludovic, who reads his own work "for the sheer enjoyment of his own performance" (SH 830) and walks around in his "opera glasses" (SH 392), delivers this final blow. He does not know that he will later on become the subject of the *pittura infamante*, as foreshadowed by the fact that "a great colony of bats came to life in the vault of the cave, wheeled about, squeaking in the smoke of the fire, fluttered and blundered and then settled again, huddled head-down, invisible" (SH 545). After such a heinous act, we are about to see the Prince of Darkness upside down.

[78] Waugh had already explored cannibalism as an act of transgression in *Black Mischief*, where Basil Seal inadvertently eats his lover Prudence during a strange jungle ritual. The act of drinking and eating and the libidinal drive (not necessarily sexual, but often the case) are much entwined in Waugh. We can see this when Basil tells Prudence: "You're a grand girl, Prudence, and I'd like to eat you", to which she replies "So you shall, my sweet... anything you want" (BM 219). This further corroborates my belief that excessive drinking and eating are, in Waugh's novels, usually symbolic of other unrestrained appetites, while complete refusal of nourishment (such as in Ivo's case) inevitably leads to insanity. For example, De Souza speculates that Ludovic must be "either drunk or insane" after also reporting that he had seen Ludovic's food "going up the back stairs" (SH 715), a euphemism that implies De Souza is aware that Ludovic is involved in some sordid affairs (a certainty he indeed expresses more obviously later on). Not only does Ludovic eat "heavily" (SH 699) and "copiously" (SH 726), he does so in a peculiar fashion – "like a dentist" (*ibidem*), as De Souza explains – accentuating his sinister personality. Meanwhile, Guy has a "slight appetite" (SH 10) and Uncle Peregrine is described as being "naturally frugal and welcomed the excuse to forgo wine and food" (US n/p). More blatantly, when discussing remedies to cure sexual impotency, Virginia asks: "Why is it different from going for a walk to get up an appetite for luncheon?" (SH 767).

Throughout most of the novel, Guy navigates the outskirts of life and neglects what is outside his field of vision, focusing on abstractions in hopes of keeping himself at bay. However, soon the Arcadias begin to crumble and are revealed to be decaying castles. Guy finally realizes that Apthorpe, the forerunner to every other clown in the novel, inhabits "a seemingly dreamlike universe of his own self-importance, a universe in which what normally seems absurd is now normal, and what was normal is now absurd. It is a garden of fantasy" (Semple, 1968: 56). Guy must find his way out; as that strange nutritional prophet tells Guy: "One of the lessons you will have to learn is to eat slowly in the natural, rational way" (SH 408). Guy had been tempted by Virginia, the "Scarlet Woman; the fatal woman who had brought about the fall of the house of Crouchback" (SH 759), and by "the discipline of the square, the traditions of the mess, (…) and the *esprit de corps*" (SH 48) of the Halberdiers. He finds a balance with his new wife Domenica,[79] whose combination of femininity and masculinity embodies Guy's two loves: his wife and his regiment. After his escape, he accepts that he must lay aside his initial hopes and dreams and come face-to-face with the grim reality of war:

> Now that hallucination was dissolved, like the whales and turtles on the voyage from Crete, and he was back after less than two years' pilgrimage in a Holy Land of illusion in the old ambiguous world, where priests were spies and gallant friends proved traitors and his country was led blundering into dishonour. (SH 594)

In the preface to Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* (1843), Alastair Hannay explains the Danish philosopher's estimation that those who indulge in a life of immediacy "have allowed themselves to be so much swallowed up in the system that they have lost sight of what it means to exist, of the sense of being a *particular*" and inevitably "have to be humoured out of their delusion" (2003: 32). Guy had been, without noticing it, excursing in the land of mythos. He had been trapped in a Quixotesque narrative of epic proportions and came out on the losing side of the fight, humiliated, depleted of his manhood, and incapable of trust. He was particularly struck by the fact that the theatre of operations, which had once appealed to him so greatly, had now proven to be a full-fledged farce. However, though the dissonance between the first

[79] Regarding this choice of name, Andrew Moran argued that, being "a name literally meaning 'of the Lord'", Domenica is "a reminder of man's end for Waugh, his being united to God. It is also the Italian word for Sunday, and so there is finally a day of rest for Guy, who at the beginning of his pilgrimage skipped Sunday Mass and sought to fulfill his religious obligations by only attending on weekdays" (2016: 292).

and second half of the novel is certainly jarring, it proves to be efficient at breaking apart both the protagonist's and the reader's illusions. As Kierkegaard himself stated,

> (…) one doesn't begin directly with what one wants to communicate, but (…) going along with the other's delusion. Thus (to keep to the present work's topic) one begins by saying, not "I'm a Christian, you are not", but "You are a Christian, I am not". Not by saying "It is Christianity I preach, and the life you lead is purely aesthetic [the life of immediacy]", but by saying "Let's talk about the aesthetic". The deception is that one does this precisely in order to come to the religious. But according to the assumption, the other is also under the delusion that the aesthetic is the Christian, since he thinks he is a Christian and yet lives the life [of immediacy]. (*ibidem*)

In a similar manner Waugh uses deception to humour the secular reader with his little puppet show, where the stakes are low and the audience is able to gaze as the painter at the dying man, with the keen eye of a dispassionate individual. But the spectator cannot grasp the meaning of the play if they do not infer what its actors truly mean by their laconic speeches and ready-made caricatures. Once the curtain falls there is an attempt to engage from the other side – "that wasteland" where Guy "need not, could not, enter" (SH 9-10) is concealed, but within reach. One must go beyond the illusion – after all, the crust of the narrative still hides a delicate wound which its protagonist has yet to heal. In shedding light on these troublesome aspects of art and love, it is time for us to engage with the silence they distance us from, and, in doing so, sail out of the picture.

3. Chapter Three –Ethics and Religion

Interviewer: Well now, finally, how, when you die, would you like to be remembered?
Evelyn Waugh: I should like people of their charity to pray for my soul as a sinner.
- Excerpt from the *Frankly Speaking* interview given to the BBC

When asked my religion I answer surrender.
- Leila Chatti, "Testimony"

Although he was only received into the Roman Catholic Church in his late twenties, Waugh "was religious from his earliest years" (Heath, 1982: 30). He was raised as an Anglo-Catholic, and as a boy harboured great interest in the Anglican Church. When he was transferred to Lancing this interest dwindled and in June 30, 1921, he admitted in his diary: "In the last few weeks I have ceased to be a Christian" (1976: 127). By the time Waugh arrived at Oxford he had become as close to an atheist as ever. In spite of having turned away from religion, it was during this period that Waugh began to perceive Anglicanism and Anglo-Catholicism as parodies of the Roman Church. This antipathy towards his boyhood faith would persist well into Waugh's later years. In a 1948 letter to Penelope Betjeman, he wrote: "Many things have puzzled me from time to time about the Christian religion but one thing has always been self evident — the bogosity of the Church of England" (Waugh, 1980: 268). In another letter, written also to Betjeman in 1950, he concluded: "The nearer these people ape the ways of Catholics the nearer they approach flat blasphemy" (*ibidem*: 318).

In the absence of a guiding dogma, Waugh led a hedonistic lifestyle throughout his early twenties. He drank heavily, partied with the outrageous Bright Young People, engaged in homosexual affairs, was insubordinate, and was considered by many of his colleagues to be a general scoundrel. Even so, he still retained, or at least regained, some of his fascination for religion, especially Catholicism. Inevitably, after much ponderation and instruction, Waugh was received into the Roman Catholic Church in 1930, at the age of twenty-seven. In his article "Converted to Rome: Why It Has Happened to Me" (1930), Waugh stated that the opinions people had regarding converts were the result of three misconceptions: either "the Jesuits have got hold of him", "he is

captivated by the ritual" or "he wants to have his mind made up for him" (Waugh, 1983: 103). He refuted these claims and proceeded to add:

> It seems to me that in the present phase of European history the essential issue is no longer between Catholicism, on one side, and Protestantism, on the other, but between Christianity and Chaos. (…) The loss of faith in Christianity and the consequential lack of confidence in moral and social standards have become embodied in the ideal of a materialistic, mechanized state (…). It is no longer possible, as it was in the time of Gibbon, to accept the benefits of civilization and at the same time deny the supernatural basis upon which it rests. (*ibidem*: 103-104)

Even though Waugh's conversion happened relatively early in his life, and despite the fact that Waugh remained faithful to the Church until his death, his novels didn't begin to display explicitly Catholic themes until 1945. Instead, his post-conversion fiction incorporated a satirical approach to the secular modern world which, in turn, depicted Waugh's belief that faith was the only antidote capable of reversing its decline as an implicit possibility, rather than a certainty. Even before his submission to the Catholic faith, Waugh's writing demonstrated a high level of concern regarding the growing lack of spirituality in the modern world, as seen in his only novel published before 1930, *Decline and Fall*, and even in *Vile Bodies*. Yet it seems clear that all of his novels prior to *Brideshead Revisited* are represented by a vacuity which clashes with what Guy called "the supernatural order" (SH 90). Essentially, Waugh's earlier satires showed the world devoid of awareness regarding this supernatural basis, so that his later works "moved from a chameleonic and ironic adoption of Humanist perspective to a tentative expression of Christian belief" (Larkin. 2004: 170).

The dichotomy Christianity/Chaos appears in Waugh's fiction not in opposition to each other, but coexisting in a state of perpetual communication. Even if one chooses Christianity in this hypothetical binary, they are still entrapped in a world governed by chaos, chance and injustice. This impossible dilemma led many intellectuals in the twentieth century to turn towards existentialism and nihilism while rejecting a faith-based doctrine, especially after witnessing countless atrocities first-hand during the World Wars. We can glimpse some of the anxiety and apathy these worldviews engendered in Guy Crouchback, who loses all of his already feeble illusions after returning from Crete and admits to Virginia: "I don't love anymore" (SH 778) – not

only in the romantic sense, but regarding everything in life which had once moved him. Guy also acknowledges his clear disinterest in victory once he becomes disillusioned with both the army and his own country, to the point where "[h]is father had been worried, not by anything connected with his worldly progress, but by his evident apathy" (SH 676). Regarding this detachment from the outside world, quite common in the modern era, Carl Jung wrote:

> Modern man does not understand how much his "rationalism" (which has destroyed his capacity to respond to numinous symbols and ideas) has put him at the mercy of the psychic "underworld". He has freed himself from "superstition" (or so he believes), but in the process he has lost his spiritual values to a positively dangerous degree. His moral and spiritual tradition has disintegrated, and he is now paying the price for this break-up in world-wide disorientation and disassociation. (1968: 84)

A victim of his "rationalism", Guy Crouchback is led towards a painful circularity of high and low expectations as a result of his frustrated attempts at finding refuge in love, tradition and beauty. The modern world does not conform to his outdated views, so Guy inevitably returns to the one stable stronghold which can ground him: the Catholic Church. The worldly concerns catalogued in the past two chapters had an important role in driving Guy's character development, but it is in religion that Guy ends up finding a moral centre. According to T. L. Okuma, "Waugh's Crouchback trilogy is an alternative, Catholic model of war writing that is intended to be a literary corrective to an age whose conscience has been so deeply distorted by a series of tragic moral compromises that it will not recognize, and cannot repent or repair, its sins" (2019: 575). Even though Waugh is often perceived as a talented entertainer, he held very strong opinions regarding faith and ethics. His more mature fiction shows that the wonder and sometimes fondness he exhibited in youth for a decadent way of living had given place to impatience and distaste. As T. L. Okuma pointed out, it was the path towards redemption which propelled Waugh forward in his later writing. Accordingly, Guy Crouchback begins the novel unable to recount his sins in any meaningful manner and ends with him repenting. Only by experiencing a "positive disillusionment", that is, "seeing truth and reality with distractions and falsehood removed" (Larkin, 2004: 171, 174), is he able to move past his childish ambitions and turn towards a higher purpose. As such, Guy is on the path to leave his apathy as a "knight of infinite resignation" in

order to become a "knight of faith". These titles, coined by Kierkegaard, refer to two types of noble men: the first, the knight of infinite resignation, renounces that which he desires most in the world and recognizes the impossibility of possessing it; the knight of faith, however, renounces the same thing while simultaneously believing he shall be able to possess it "on the strength of the absurd" (Kierkegaard, 2003: 65). Thus, the latter is moved by faith rather than morality – it is this struggle between his own strict ethical code and the "dry grains of faith" (SH 34) he still possesses that places Guy at a decisive turning point in his life.

In the end, Guy reaches the conclusion that God shall only show the correct path to those who seek it. When at last Guy prays to his father after he passes away, he dismisses his ennui and actively takes charge so that he may regain control of his life. Finally, he is prepared to take that final step which every protagonist from Paul Pennyfeather up to Charles Ryder had refused to take – the step towards grace by means of fulfilling one's vocation on Earth. If there is any path which may lead to completion, then, from Waugh's point of view, it must necessarily end (and, up to a point, begin) with God. Only through faith can Guy's disillusionment be ultimately positive and awaken him from his paralysis. Once he realizes this, Guy becomes capable of merging worldly matters with those which concern the eternal and, thereby, follow in the footsteps of the moral paragon of the novel: his father. Through this realization, Guy completes the arc of Kierkegaard's "existence-spheres" and claims his place as a saint-hero not by his war efforts, but by becoming a knight of faith. The reader is left to decide whether he is successful in his efforts, and, from a broader perspective, whether it is possible to regain a paradise lost amidst a cataclysmic event defined by the forfeiture of innocence.

3.1. The Unseen Hook of Providence

In his autobiography, Waugh put forth an enigma which seemed to haunt him throughout his life: "God speaks in many voices and manifests himself in countless shapes. Was I living in a world of my own imagination or was I in some faint contact with an objective reality?" (ALL 135). Resulting from this doubt, Waugh's struggle to distinguish between imagination and reality is quite present in his fiction and often translates into a confusing back-and-forth between journalistic and oneiric prose. His characters inhabit a half-world which is as mechanic and dull as it is wondrous, thus

explaining their need to enter dangerous arcadias which often prove to be of facetious value. In fact, similarly to Jeffrey Heath, Christopher Hollis defended that Waugh's main theme rested on "the challenge (…) of Augustine's Two Cities". He explains: "It is not that all are virtuous within the City of God, but simply that there alone is man's home, that there alone can man be truly man" (1966: 20). We see that Waugh's characters often oscillate between two planes – the natural and the supernatural – while also being self-contained in their own world. They usually land on a middle ground which becomes the centre stage for Waugh's ironic scenes. We see a few examples of this back-and-forth between planes of existence throughout the novel: during a conversation between Guy, Tony and the Box-Benders, the narrator highlights that "Tony was from another world; their problems were not his. Guy belonged to neither world" (SH 30); while Apthorpe lies in his death-bed, he dismisses Guy's menial concerns by saying: "It's all another world to me, old man" (SH 280); when Guy is at the hospital we are similarly told that "[o]nce he spoke he would re-enter their world, he would be back in the picture" (SH 578). In this constant shift between worlds, ghostly figures such as Apthorpe "are no more real than Guy, but they do expose and undermine his thin perception of reality" (Larkin, 2004: 190), so that at one point "Guy's world becomes inverted, one where his dreams are more ordered and prosaic than reality" (*ibidem*: 198). This is made explicit in the following passage:

> He dreamed continuously, it seemed to him, and most prosaically. All night in the cave he marched, took down orders, passed them on, marked his map, marched again, while the moon set and the ships came into the bay and the boats went back and forth between them and the beach, and the ships sailed away leaving Hookforce and five or six thousand other men behind them. In Guy's dreams there were no exotic visitants among the shades of Creforce, no absurdity, no escape. Everything was as it had been the preceding day, the preceding night, night and day since he had landed at Suda, and when he awoke at dawn it was to the same half-world; sleeping and waking were like two airfields, identical in aspect though continents apart. (SH 569)[80]

The striking similarity between Guy's waking life and dreams is a reminder of how the reality the reader is presented with in the story is at once concrete and

[80] Waugh writes a similar passage in *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*: "No sound troubled him from that other half-world into which he had stumbled but there was nothing dreamlike about his memories. They remained undiminished and unobscured, as sharp and hard as any event of his waking life" (TOGP 190).

dreamlike. In fact, Guy "saw himself dimly at a great distance" (*ibidem*), like the figure in the "Judging Distance" exercise (SH 113), acknowledging his own insubstantiality at certain points in the novel. This separation between planes of existence is symbolically represented by the looking-glass, explaining the lack of defined boundaries between Guy's reality and dreams. Although Waugh detested the term "conversion", since he thought it suggested "an event more sudden and emotional than his calm acceptance of the propositions of his faith" (TOGP 8), he used it, and the looking-glass imagery, in a 1949 letter to Edward Sackville-West to describe his gradual acceptance of Catholicism:

> Conversion is like stepping across the chimney piece out of a Looking-Glass world, where everything is an absurd caricature, into the real world God made; and then begins the delicious process of exploring it limitlessly. (1988: 237-238)

Here, Waugh is obviously referring to Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass*.[81] In the novel, when Alice steps into the other side of the looking-glass everything seems distorted, reversed, and nonsensical. This is essentially the world of Waugh's early satires – the supernatural basis is there, but it is buried under farcical storylines and wooden characters. What Waugh suggests is that it is also possible to step into a bigger picture outside of the one his characters are trapped in and see the "real world" through the lens of the Catholic faith. In *Sword of Honour*, Ian Kilbannock also references Carroll's novel after a plane crash:

> Ian's senses were clearer now. He still seemed to be in a dream but in a very vivid one. "It's like the croquet match in *Alice in Wonderland*," he heard himself say to Lieutenant Padfield. (SH 861)

After surviving the crash, during which "a great door slammed in his mind" (SH 860), Ian Kilbannock is helped by Guy, whom he recognized as "an inhabitant of this strange land" (SH 864). Thus, Waugh uses the looking-glass as a symbol of not only identification of the self, but also as a gateway into the supernatural order. However, the two-world system which Waugh adopts is confusing in its limits, often blurring the line

[81] Waugh also quotes *Through the Looking-Glass* in the epigraph of *Vile Bodies*:

> "If I wasn't real," Alice said – half-laughing through her tears, it all seemed so ridiculous – "I shouldn't be able to cry."
> "I hope you don't suppose those are real tears?" Tweedledum interrupted in a tone of great contempt. (Carroll, 1993: 183)

between what is and what is not real. David Wykes reasons that this is due to the fact that "the spiritual and supernatural became the true reality for Waugh. They were literally and not just metaphorically the highest order of reality, and much of human life could be seen as frantic aimlessness in comparison with the certainty and stability of the eternal order" (1999: 76). Guy, of course, has a thwarted notion of reality and often drifts into dangerous Arcadias, Saint Augustine's earthly cities, which contrast with the coveted City of God. In fact, Guy becomes so infatuated with the army that he begins to completely disregard his own religious duties: "In youth he had been taught to make a nightly examination of conscience and an act of contrition. Since he joined the army this pious exercise had become confused with the lessons of the day" (SH 64). As in *Alice Through the Looking-Glass*, what Guy had once thought as being honourable is now perverted into a caricature of itself. Those whom Guy admires turn out to be frauds; members of the aristocracy, who should be the protectors of tradition in the modern age, are cowardly deserters; the army itself proves to be a sham, where hierarchies are corrupted by incompetent men, and Guy finds himself an outcast due to his age, faith and outdated ideas.

Consequently, Guy slowly becomes aware of the distortion in the looking-glass by witnessing himself metamorphosing into other people, who must be sacrificed in order for him to move on. The first ghost to be exorcised is that of Apthorpe, who gives name to many chapters, one of which is entitled "Apthorpe Immolatus" – Apthorpe immolated, sacrificed. However, it is not Guy who is sacrificing him, but Apthorpe willingly giving up his body. Like Mr. Toad from *The Wind in the Willows*, to whom he is likened, Apthorpe is an eccentric, self-centred character, but whose complexities also abound. When Guy offers him whisky, he sees "tears on Apthorpe's colourless cheeks" (SH 280) and is discomfited by Apthorpe's talks of his will. Yet Apthorpe seems certain of his death, which is accelerated by his own doing as he ingests "bottles labelled 'Poison'" (SH 69) from his medicine cabinet. Ritchie-Hook is also sacrificed: "Perhaps the body was not really Ritchie-Hook's – they had his full biography – but that of a sacrificial victim" (SH 875).

Another victim is Guy's wife Virginia, who, like himself, is haunted by the jungle. This becomes apparent when she hears sounds like that of African instruments as she goes to visit Dr. Akonanga, whom she hopes will perform her abortion surgery: "The beat of the drum seemed to be saying: 'You, you, you.' She reached the door behind which issued the jungle rhythm" (SH 696). This rhythm is actually the song

Trimmer sings while thinking of Virginia, "Night and Day" by Cole Porter, which opens with the lyrics "Like the beat, beat, beat of the tom-tom, when the jungle shadows fall".[82] This haunting of the jungle foreshadows Virginia's downfall, and though she attempts to get rid of the baby growing inside her, she is unsuccessful: "Her hopes had never been firm or high. It was Fate. For weeks now, she had been haunted by the belief that in a world devoted to destruction and slaughter this one odious life was destined to survive" (SH 695). In their first meeting in the novel, Virginia thought that Trimmer "was the guide providentially sent on a gloomy evening to lead her back to the days of sun and sea-spray and wallowing dolphins" (SH 386). Of course, Providence has other plans for Virginia, and she gets killed by a stray bomb alongside Uncle Peregrine.[83] After Virginia's death, Eloise Plessington remarks that "[t]here's a special providence in the fall of a bomb", and that she "was killed at the one time in her life when she could be sure of heaven – eventually" (SH 848). Just like Constantine in *Helena* (1950), who delays his baptism until he is on his deathbed, hoping to be cleansed from his various sins before entering heaven, Virginia's death coincides with her religious awakening.[84] Yet, one must remember Saint Augustine's scepticism over the cleansing properties of baptism for those who keep purposefully sinning:

> Even now gossips speaking about one or another person can be heard on all sides, saying in our ears: "Let him be, let him do it; he is not yet baptized." Yet in regard to bodily health we do not say: "Let him inflict more wounds on himself, for he is not yet cured". (1991: 14)

One must wonder if Virginia was healed, or if her dream of being "extended on a table, pinioned, headless and covered with blood-streaked feathers, while a voice

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[82] It is also significant that the song was written for and featured in the 1934 film *The Gay Divorcee*; one must not forget that Waugh was an enthusiast of the seventh art, having even produced a film himself, and, as Christopher Sykes pointed out, he had a curious fascination with musicals such as *Kiss Me Kate* (1975: 34). It is probably not a coincidence that the plot of the film resembles the amorous plotline between Guy, Virginia and Trimmer in *Sword of Honour* so closely and that the main character, played by Fred Astaire, is also called Guy. A quote that is repeated throughout the film is "Chance is a fool's name for Fate", fate being a theme which becomes very prominent in *Sword of Honour*.

[83] Peregrine's name is a subtle indicator that Guy's voyage is doomed from the start, and that other peregrines, such as his uncle, have been trying to reach the centre of the wheel for so long that they have become lifeless and dull. It is this fate which Guy attempts to avoid.

[84] One should keep in mind how Virginia's name is both reminiscent of the Virgin Mary and Helen of Troy (the last name of her latest husband), and, therefore, her character appears to display some traces of the Madonna-whore complex. The ambiguities of her character leave a lot of room for speculation regarding the validity of her conversion and sacrifice, making her, undoubtedly, one of Waugh's most fleshed-out heroines.

within her, from the womb itself, kept repeating: 'You, you, you'" (SH 698) is symbolic of her struggle to reach the heavenly gates. This dream is undoubtedly influenced by Virginia's recollection of Dr. Akonanga's room, furnished with "a number of hand-drums, a bright statue of the Sacred Heart, a cock, decapitated but unplucked, secured with nails to the table-top, its wings spread open like a butterfly's, a variety of human bones including a skull, a brass cobra of Benares ware, bowls of ashes, flasks from a chemical laboratory stoppered and holding murky liquids" (SH 697). The striking combination of both sacred and pagan symbols is one of Waugh's preferred motifs. The hand-drums are the perpetrators of the unnerving beat which haunts Virginia and the appearance of the Sacred Heart precedes the vile description of a decapitated rooster, human bones and strange potions. In the *Bible*, the cock's crow immediately follows Peter's denial of Christ (King James Bible, Mark 14:72), and the rooster in Dr. Akonanga's room lies like Christ crucified, nailed to wood. By metamorphosing into the rooster, Virginia becomes an almost martyred figure, whose sacrifice will allow for not only the saving of little Gervase's soul, but also for the continuity of the Crouchback lineage. In Christianity, the rooster is not only the announcer of the beginning of a new day as symbolic of rebirth, but has also come to symbolize God's forgiveness of sinners. Hence, though her penitence will be severe, we may rest well assured that Virginia will eventually be successful in her renewal.

In fact, none of these three human sacrifices are as tragic as they may appear at first sight: Apthorpe gives up the ghost and at least is able to "die happy – at least if anyone ever does die happy" (SH 283); Ritchie-Hook, for his part, is never truly dead and remains trapped in his reincarnation cycles; and Virginia stays behind during a blitz and subjects herself to providence in her intense death-wish, which according to Jacqueline McDonnell "is in many ways an unselfish wish" (1983: 184). These deaths "did not affect Guy greatly" (SH 840). This is not new in Waugh – death is almost never a moment for mourning and his protagonists face it in an abnormally callous way. We must understand that "[a]bsence of compassion – indeed, a deliberate withholding of compassion – seems at the heart of Waugh's irony" (Dyson, 1960: 74). Talking about Waugh's first novels, Christopher Hollis reminds us that, "if we turn from the portrait of society at large to the portrait of individuals, the criticism of lack of pity has little meaning", since "the characters (…) are too wholly fantastic for any question of sympathy and antipathy to arise. No one can shed tears over [their] death (…) because they are clearly not real people." (1966: 5-6). Nonetheless, Hollis argues, an empathic

reaction to characters' misfortunes is augmented as we move closer to Waugh's last novels. By the time we reach *Brideshead Revisited* "we come to what may be called a wholly three-dimensional novel – to a novel on whose characters we can pass judgement as if they were real people" (*ibidem*: 7). Therefore, we must consider *Sword of Honour* as a novel about "real" people in spite of its insubstantiality. In this sense, we witness "an intense pathos that would be tragic if the characters involved had a sufficient degree of humanity to support tragedy" (Bergonzi, 1963: 24-25); instead, although Apthorpe, Ritchie-Hook and Virginia are not completely devoid of redeeming qualities, the reader is complicit with Waugh's view that their deaths are the best outcome for all parties involved. Their deaths also foretell that erotic and platonic loves occupy a secondary role in the narrative – Guy is ultimately driven by an unselfish, generous love which he doesn't recognize at once. *Agape* is placed above *eros*. In spite of this, and although Guy attempts to placate their spirits, their ghosts still haunt him. As Lacan explained: "To reproduce is what one thought one could do in the optimistic days of catharsis", but it has since been understood that "nothing can be grasped, destroyed, or burnt, except in a symbolic way, as one says, *in effigie*, *in absentia*" (Lacan, 1986: 50).

The presence of these ghosts serves as a reminder of the past and of its power to drag someone like Guy down. Larkin states that "Crouchback (…) gradually realises that his own existence has been spectral and unreal while he has been haunted. (…) It is the confrontation with ghosts that leads one to 'something like reality'" (2004: 221-222). Haunted and unable to come to terms with his faith, Guy nurtures a strong death wish, and confesses to a priest that he wishes "to die (…) [a]lmost all the time" (SH 807-808). The horrors which had pursued Waugh's earlier protagonists are quite daunting for a three-dimensional character such as Guy, who takes refuge in his apparent indifference, but who knows he has "much to repent and repair" (SH 65). Therefore, he is caught in the middle of Christianity and Chaos, living in a half-world which may propel him onto either side. Though, instead of considering he has to choose, perhaps it would be more accurate to suggest that Guy must accept chaos as being part of the natural world and, therefore, outside of his control – it is only through his inner shift towards faith that he may experience a semblance of harmony. In the absence of this balance, the gyre cannot hold and the world becomes consumed by violence and war.

The apocalyptic scenery described in the novel recalls God's words in the book of *Ezekiel*: "So will I send upon you famine and evil beasts, and they shall bereave thee:

and pestilence and blood shall pass through thee; and I will bring the sword upon thee" (Ezekiel 5:17). Other important imagery used in the novel may be traced back to the book of *Ezekiel*, such as the appearance of "the likeness of four living creatures", each of which "had four faces" and "four wings" (Ezekiel 1:6). Instead of this prophetic vessel, bearing the faces of a man, a lion, an ox and an eagle, Guy sees "faces transformed as though by the hand of Circe from those of men to something less than the beasts" (SH 303). Guy also noticed that every officer "had three faces", each so alike that he became unable to "distinguish between them as human beings" (SH 206) – one may suppose that these men have become so animal-like that their human head is missing. Here Waugh may have taken some inspiration from William Blake's *Jerusalem*, which is also heavily inspired by the book of *Ezekiel*. In it, Blake "reverses the traditional numerological preference for heavenly triads to earthly tetrads, associating the triad with the fallen psyche" (Mitchell, 1978: 203).[85] Blake also speaks of "Satanic wheels" (1904: 11), as opposed to the wheels witnessed in *Ezekiel*:

> Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. (…) Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels. (Ezekiel 1:15-20)

As briefly mentioned in this dissertation's introduction, Waugh incorporated circular imagery in his novels in order to expound his view of the world as a permanent Becoming. Apthorpe even utters the sentence "wheels within wheels" twice (SH 179 and 226), referring to both the intricate inner workings of the army and to history's (and life's) cyclical tendencies. In *Sword of Honour* this imagery is more accentuated in the repetitive cycles of history and frustrating experience, but the physical circles which do appear are usually, quite interestingly, accompanied by airplanes. Countless times Guy witnesses as, whether hostile or benign, "the machines climbed and circled" (SH 872)

[85] Waugh also uses biblical numerology throughout the novel. For example, Guy and his father have a forty-year age gap and so do Guy and his son Gervase, representing a full generation, as in the *Bible*. Similarly, the number eight is recurrent and symbolizes renewal – after Virginia left him, Guy spent eight years "deprived of the loyalties which should have sustained him" (SH 7) and he spends eight weeks at sea after his escape from Crete and subsequent recovery. Meanwhile the number twelve refers to a complete cycle, which is the number of years that pass from the beginning of the story (1939) to its end (1951).

overhead. These circling machines are prophetic in their own way, announcing death and destruction just like Ezekiel's wheels, and their presence may even be considered providential. However, they are more akin to Blake's vision of "Satanic wheels" in *Jerusalem*:

> (…) cruel Works
> Of many Wheels I view, wheel without wheel, with cogs tyrannic
> Moving by compulsion each other: not as those in Eden: which
> Wheel within Wheel in freedom revolve in harmony & peace. (1904: 15)

The fragmentation of the wheel, becoming a "wheel without wheel", like a broken gyroscope, demonstrates a lack of unity with God. The wheel, then, may be perceived as a scathing commentary on the growing industrialization which became even more heightened with the advent of the war. As such, Waugh uses the circling aeroplanes as symbols of the industrial age: dehumanized, desensitized, incapable of individualizing in their overwhelming concern with collective quantity. At the end of the novel, the narrator exposes the decadence of London urbanity and the dreary sense it drags along with it:

> Monstrous constructions appeared on the south bank of the Thames, the foundation stone was solemnly laid for a National Theatre, but there was little popular exuberance among the straitened people and dollar-bearing tourists curtailed their visits and sped to the countries of the Continent, where, however precarious their condition, they ordered things better. (SH 893)

Here we catch a glimpse of Blake's "dark Satanic Mills" (1810: n/p). For a large portion of the novel London is bathed in darkness, and to Guy it continues to be " the same city he had avoided all his life, whose history he had held to be mean, whose aspect drab" (SH 92). To a man of artistic sensibilities, as we have gathered is the case with Guy, the absence of beauty extracts from him an essential pleasure in life. As Edward Rose points out: "In Newton's universe, of course, all revolves until man lost in space and giddy from the turning wheel stares vacantly into the spinning void thoroughly drugged by the automatic motion" (1972: 41). By travelling all over with his regiment and being kept on his toes as to where the next destination and battle will be, Guy is able to

temporarily escape the bonds of city life. He even experiences a certain level of guilt at leaving his country for "a warm, highly coloured, well-found place far from bombs and gas and famine and enemy occupation; far from the lightless concentration-camp which all Europe had suddenly become" (SH 256). Guy perceives that, to some degree, he is playing pretend and ignoring the root of his troubles, but he is at least able to recapture some of his love for life by escaping his monotonous routine. This allows him to persist past his apathy and develop real compassion, as is required of a Christian.

Returning to W. B. Yeats, whose interest in the imagery of the gyre has already been mentioned, we see that this idea of a circumference is present in his own Christian and literary outlook in his essay entitled "In the Serpent's Mouth" (1907):

> If it be true that God is a circle whose centre is everywhere, the saint goes to the centre, the poet and artist to the ring where everything comes round again. The poet must not seek for what is still and fixed, for that has no life for him; and if he did, his style would become cold and monotonous, and his sense of beauty faint and sickly, (…) but be content to find his pleasure in all that is forever passing away that it may come again (…) (2007: 209)

If we consider Silenus' words from *Decline and Fall*, this certainly seems to be the case – Waugh's main characters are spectators trapped in a wheel of chaos, becoming enamoured with the ephemeral beauty of people and things, and doomed to these constant cycles of renewal. Like Blake, Waugh believed that "the center of the wheel through its productive action rather than egoistic contraction reaches infinity at every point on its ever-expanding perimeter; that is, there are wheels within wheels. Creative centers are cornucopias, not vortices-dilating eyes of plenty, not shrunken orbs" (Rose, 1972: 594). Hence, we may gather that Waugh's objective when writing his characters has never been the centre, but everything which surrounds it – "Waugh's view of modernity, then, is not of a world spinning meaninglessly at the center of a void, but of a void spinning needlessly, perversely at the center of a universe replete with meaning" (Dale, 2006: 112). The most striking scene in the novel regarding these themes is Guy's parachute jump. Before the jump, the men "were not taken direct to the dropping-area but in a long circle, wheeling over the sea and then coming inshore again" (SH 720). At this moment, Guy is literally a cog in the machine, destined to be flung off the wheel just as Paul Pennyfeather in *Decline and Fall*. As Moran explains, "[i]mages of the air

and of flight are consistently negative in the Crouchback trilogy"; therefore, while Guy suffers injuries from his flying attempts, "the mad Ludovic is trained in that art and will become the commandant of a flight school" (284).

Ludovic, being the master of flight, writes in one of his *Pensées*: "*Captain Crouchback has gravity. He is the ball of lead which in a vacuum falls no faster than a feather*" (SH 492). This passage, of course, refers to Galileo's breakthrough in the fields of mechanics, his law of falling bodies. According to this law, if two objects possessing different masses are dropped from the same height they will proportionally accelerate and transverse the same distance as each other in an equal amount of time. A fundamental aspect of this experiment is that it presupposes the absence of air resistance, which interferes with the falling movement of the bodies by exerting more force on the lighter object – hence the vacuum. By claiming that Guy has gravity, Ludovic is both implying that he carries himself with solemnity (*gravitas*) and that he is figuratively weighed down by a gravitational pull. Randall Stevenson claims that this informs us of how Guy's "numb, inert disengagement from his society leaves him too rarely in illuminating conflict with the moral vacuity which surrounds him", and that he must be "eventually redeemed from his inertia" (1993: 76). Interestingly, French philosopher Simone Weil[86] also addressed the meaning of gravity in a Christian context in her posthumous work *Gravity and Grace* (1947). To her, "[a]ll the natural movements of the soul are controlled by laws analogous to those of physical gravity", meaning that one "must always expect things to happen in conformity with the laws of gravity unless there is supernatural intervention" (2003: 1). Gustave Thibon elucidated Weil's arguments quite succinctly in his introduction to her book:

> Gravity is the force which above all others draws us from God. It impels each creature to seek everything which can preserve or enlarge it and, as Thucydides says, to exercise all the power of which it is capable. Psychologically it is shown by all those motives which are directed towards asserting or reinstating the self, by all those secret subterfuges (lies of the inner life, escape in dreams or false ideals, imaginary encroachments on the past and the future, etc.) which we make use of to bolster up from

[86] Waugh actually read Weil, more specifically *Waiting on God* (1950), as he clarifies in his article "Edith Stein" (1952). In it, he praises Sister Teresia de Spiritu Sancto's biography, while claiming that Weil, although seeming "to accept the main truths of Christianity" (ALO 189), struck an arrogant attitude towards the Catholic Church which Waugh could not abide by.

> inside our tottering existence, that is to say, to remain apart from and opposed to God. (*apud* Weil, 2003: XXI-XXII)

Essentially, gravity, *la pesanteur*, is "the law which generally puts force on the side of baseness" (*ibidem*: 3). It is a moral entropy derived from a lack of attention to something real in order to allow for a complete immersion in the fictitious. Gravity, then, demonstrates how in a world devoid of spirituality "everything is obedient to mechanical laws as blind and as exact as the laws of gravitation" (Weil, 1973: 128). For Weil, as for Waugh, "[g]race is the only exception" (Weil, 2003: 1). This contrast between downward and upward movements is also touched upon by Kierkegaard, who uses the metaphor of a dance (quite similar to Waugh's wheel analogy) where some have "elevation" in regards to others:

> The mass of humans live disheartened lives of earthly sorrow and joy, these are the sitters-out who will not join in the dance. The knights of infinity are dancers too and they have elevation. They make the upward movement and fall down again, and this too is no unhappy pastime, nor ungracious to behold. But when they come down they cannot assume the position straightaway, they waver an instant and the wavering shows they are nevertheless strangers in the world. (…) But to be able to land in just that way, and in the same second to look as though one was up and walking, to transform the leap in life to a gait, to express the sublime in the pedestrian absolutely – that is something only the knight of faith can do – and it is the one and only marvel. (2003: 70)

Moving closer to the centre of the vortex does not necessarily imply a perfect order. It is only through getting thrown off that the scales fall from the eyes. Being propelled into the darkness is almost like coming face to face with God – it terrifies and paralyses, so that it marks a turning point in Guy's journey towards salvation. When Guy is halfway through his steep fall, the rapture he is awarded with is so temporary it barely registers before he plunges down. Thus, when "a man turns away from God, he simply gives himself up to the law of gravity. Then he thinks that he can decide and choose, but he is only a thing, a stone that falls" (Weil, 1973: 128). Unfortunately, Guy is still bound to the laws of gravity and falls at a great speed. The need to go on with life presses on. Since he is still a knight of infinite resignation, Guy must learn to become a knight of faith in order to escape this law. As Owen Larkin explains: "This moment where Guy is still, but moving (…) is a moment where the natural and the spiritual

realms overlap" (2004: 207). This is also perceptible in Nina's tilted perception of the world from an aeroplane in *Vile Bodies*:

> Nina looked down and saw inclined at an odd angle a horizon of straggling red suburb; arterial roads dotted with little cars; factories, some of them working, others empty and decaying; a disused canal; some distant hills sown with bungalows; wireless masts and overhead power cables; men and women were indiscernible except as tiny spots; they were marrying and shopping and making money and having children. The scene lurched and tilted again as the aeroplane struck a current of air.
>
> 'I think I'm going to be sick,' said Nina. (VB 256)

Nina's nausea once confronted with the limits of human life seemingly justifies her attempts at incessant distractions. Unlike Guy, who experiences something akin to rapture during his trip to the sky, when Nina dares to peer outside the window all she sees is England as an aesthetically and morally decaying landscape, where people operate like ants. Her point-of-view is skewed and apocalyptic, firmly gripped by her sudden awareness of human baseness, so that when the aeroplane hits a current of air she is itching to return to the ground. In his stead, when Guy regains consciousness after he hits a rush of air, he finds "his senses purged of the noise and smell and throb of the machine". Nina is too attached to her vile body to escape the nightmarish scenery she had thus far ignored – it is Guy, as he is able to "cast the constraining bonds of flesh and muscle and nerve" in order to become "a free spirit", who is able to witness beauty from a higher plane (SH 721). The sudden disappearance of the machine indicates that Guy is finally able to glimpse a heavenly entrance, guarded by wheels within wheels rather than by worldly machinations. In this, he becomes like Ezekiel, who announces at the beginning of his book of prophecies: "the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God" (Ezekiel 1:1).

3.2. Teleological Suspension of the Ethical

It is difficult not to regard Waugh's later fiction as the work of a moralist when it focuses so heavily on the path towards individual salvation. As touched upon before, Waugh believed that he did not live in a time ruled by "homogeneous moral standards" (ALO 33) and that people's inability to distinguish satire from earnestness was proof of this. As a result, Waugh was able to create worlds of pure wickedness, where the reader

struggles to find any semblance of a moral compass. Indeed, the issue of enforced morality is often present when discussing Waugh, and his later novels are often regarded by critics "not simply as fiction, but as persuasion" (Heath, 1976: 329). Of course, as an "ironist", Waugh was always "aware of the dangers of adopting a self-righteous tone in his work" (Wilkin, 2016: 760). In spite of this, Hollis defended that Waugh's first Catholic novel, *Brideshead Revisited*, "is in no way a work of apologetics. There is no consideration of the historical and metaphysical evidence for the Catholic claims. A reader who had considered that evidence and rejected it would find nothing in the work to alter his rejection" (1966: 17). Heath similarly considers that "Waugh does not endorse the chaos he so fascinatedly describes; instead, he uses irony and allusion to make disorder imply order and fraud imply truth. No moral judgment is expressed, but one is suggested everywhere" (Heath, 1982: 36).

In spite of these suspicions, Waugh does not, in fact, provide us with any *a priori* argument for the existence of God – his characters interact according to their independent systems of belief whether they presuppose the existence of God or otherwise. As Waugh himself informs us, "despite the faith of many of the characters, *Sword of Honour* was not specifically a religious book" (SH X). If there is no attempt on the author's part to conjecture ontological proof, it unsurprisingly becomes more difficult for someone coming in from the outside to regard the novel's theological themes as anything but unreasonable. A process of identification with Guy becomes automatically impossible outside a possible moral perspective. Thus, a person may find validity in Guy's decisions from a deontological point of view, but they are barred from going beyond that. This happens because the text requires our acceptance of logical contradictions, such as the premise that God exists – entailing all characteristics pertaining to God, such as omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, and, most importantly, omnibenevolence – but so does evil and chaos. In this sense, the ethical becomes ambiguous and the actions of some characters, though well-intentioned, usually end up backfiring. This is also one of the main causes behind Guy's apathy and his growing lack of interest in the people and events surrounding him – he is overwhelmed by a "sense of futility" (SH 892). Waugh's philosophy regarding this issue may be condensed in Mr. Crouchback's letter to his son, where he explains that the Church

> *doesn't strike attitudes and stand on its dignity. It accepts suffering and injustice. It is ready to forgive at the first hint of compunction (...) Quantitative judgments don't apply. If only one soul was saved, that is full compensation for any amount of loss of "face".* (SH 612)

When his father dies, Guy comes back to this letter in search of guidance. After all, Guy believed that "his father was the best man, the only entirely good man, he had ever known" (SH 674). At a time when most were concerned with the victory of nations, factions, ideologies, and other collective endeavours, Mr. Crouchback warns Guy about the importance of individual salvation. Dwelling on the past is simply a manner of getting trapped in the wheel without hope of ever understanding one's purpose and vocation. From this perspective, Waugh's "aesthetes" are usually more advanced than his protagonists – even if their focus is on the wrong end goal (art, beauty, pleasure, power, etc.), they still offer essential moral insights and are quite perceptive about the world surrounding them, to a degree that is almost prophetic. Ludovic, the story's main aesthete, is not as morally grey as Anthony Blanche or Ambrose Silk, but in his godless state of mind he is able to, like them, assess some fundamental truths about the modern world. While the dropping leaves reminded Guy of "boisterous November days when he and his mother had tried to catch leaves in the avenue; each one caught insured a happy day – week? Month? Which? – in his wholly happy childhood" (SH 678), we are told that they carried "no fond memories for [Ludovic]" (SH 718-719). Afterwards, Ludovic writes in his journal: "*Those who take too keen an interest in the outside world, may one day find themselves locked outside their own gates*". Though, as reported in the next line, this is "not an entirely original *Pensée*" (SH 719), it is very interesting in the context it is presented. Guy Crouchback is facing a paradise lost, to which his entry has been barred at the gates. His childhood is irretrievable and his second adolescence, as a man in his thirties, is completely inadequate. According to Andrew Moran, "[t]he association of the dead with falling leaves is a convention of epic poetry, occurring in *The Iliad*, *The Aeneid*, *The Divine Comedy*, and *Paradise Lost*", and it signals "part of an endless cycle of death and birth" (2016: 274-275). Whereas Guy is unable to move past his idyllic years, Ludovic is able to shun the outside world and focus on transcending it, even if his is a downward trajectory towards hell. During his walk in the forest, Ludovic even inadvertently

echoes Chesterton's observation that the best place to hide a leaf is a tree, just as Guy had previously done.

The full citation is from a story in *The Innocence of Father Brown*, where Father Brown remarks: "Where does a wise man hide a leaf? In the forest. But what does he do if there is no forest? (…) He grows a forest to hide it in (…). A fearful sin" (Chesterton, 2020: 211). A few things must be noted: the story in question is titled "The Sign of the Broken Sword" and it tells the story of a seemingly honourable soldier named General Sir Arthur St. Clare, who against his usual prudence had launched an attack against the superiorly numbered forces of another highly-esteemed war hero, "the great Brazilian patriot Olivier" (*ibidem*: 207). Hailed as a saint-hero, General St. Clare was thought to have been hanged by the opposing troops after his defeat. Father Brown deciphers otherwise ignored incongruities as being fundamental to understanding what truly happened during that battle, especially the importance of General St. Clare's broken sword. As a result of his deductions, Father Brown concludes that General St. Clare had murdered a fellow officer, General Murray, and in a desperate attempt to cover up his crime decided to send his own men towards their death – "if a man had to hide a dead body, he would make a field of dead bodies to hide it in" (*ibidem*: 217). However, the other soldiers found out about General St. Clare's betrayal and hanged him with his broken sword.

We can certainly trace certain references from this short story back to *Sword of Honour*. Much like Ivor Claire, General St. Clare is a fraud whose treachery comes at the cost of other men's lives. The fact that his sword is broken denotes the corrosion of values previously upheld by it, such as honour, dignity and commitment to the common good. Ivor Claire's desertion is, likewise, an abandonment of these values, and the Sword of Stalingrad, which gives the War Trilogy its ironic title, also stands as a symbol of something profoundly corrupt hiding under the guise of patriotism.[87] Here, Waugh not only enhances our awareness of *Sword of Honour*'s intertextuality, but also uses these allusions to reinforce the idea of a descent into hell (Flambeau, whom Father Brown tells the story to, is likened to "Dante, and the priest with the rivulet of a voice

[87] The myth of the broken sword if also prevalent in Arthurian legend. As Richard Barber explains: "When a sword is given to Perceval by the Fisher King at his first visit to the Grail castle in *The Story of the Grail*, Perceval's cousin prophesies that it will break at a crucial moment. Two writers actually tell us that Perceval broke the sword: in Wolfram, it fails him in his battle against his half-brother at the end of *Parzival*, and Gerbert de Montreuil describes how he shatters it on the gates of the Earthly Paradise". (106)

was, indeed, a Virgil leading him through a land of eternal sins" – *ibidem*, 219) and the unclear distinction between the barbaric and civilized. It would be easier to accept that General St. Clare was a man who died in a brave enterprise as a martyr of a noble cause, a Christian hero – instead it is revealed that "he kept a harem, (…) tortured witnesses, (…) [and] amassed shameful gold" (*ibidem*: 218). Guy, who also builds an image of Claire as a Christian (or at least aristocratic) hero, fails to notice that "with his turban, his pekinese, and his sofa of Turkey carpet, languid Claire is not a crusader but an infidel" (Heath, 1982: 229).

As Father Brown remarks, "St. Clare was a hell-hound, but he was a hound of breed" (Chesterton, 2020: 220). The difficulty in recognizing men of value even among nobility is as greatly troubling to Guy as it was to the English public who venerated St. Clare, perhaps explaining why both he and Father Brown remain quiet on the subject. Father Brown argues that St. Clare's "marble statues will erect the souls of proud, innocent boys for centuries, his village tomb will smell of loyalty as of lilies. Millions who never knew him shall love him like a father — this man whom the last few that knew him dealt with like dung" (*ibidem*: 222). Here the parallel with Guy and Sir Roger is unmistakable. Sir Roger, "whose tomb was always littered with screws of paper bearing petitions, whose fingers and toes were tied in bows of coloured wool as aides-mémoire" (SH 8), is another fraud who was not committed to Christian values, and instead died in dishonour, though he is remembered fondly and hailed as a martyr. Guy eventually leaves both of these men behind by the appearance of a silent character, a dead soldier in Crete who "lay like an effigy on a tomb – like Sir Roger in his shadowy shrine at Santa Dulcina" (SH 547). While Claire cowardly abandoned his men, soldiers who had looked up to figures like him had their lives taken away by the war. This soldier dies unknown because of Claire's treason, not only because he is the by-product of incompetent leadership (both on the battlefield and on the seats of parliament), but because his identity disk, which Guy had saved so he could send to his family, is thrown away to cover up Claire's desertion – Julia Stitch, convinced the envelope Guy entrusts her with contains damning evidence regarding Claire's dishonourable escape, throws away the last remain of that soldier's existence. The great sin of building a forest to hide the leaf hints that the problem lies not only with the act of hiding, but also with the banalization of the act. In the end, this dead soldier, perhaps the only real martyr among the ruins, becomes a casualty, a dead leaf in a forest built by those who fabricate history.

Could Waugh, perhaps, be criticizing Chesterton, who bestows Father Brown with near infallibility and then permits him to stay mute when faced with injustice? It would seem unlikely, since Guy himself remains quiet on Claire's desertion. Much as in Chesterton's short story, a great deal of blame is placed upon the shoulders of "Orientalism" (Claire is the model figure of a sultan, rather than a knight) and a stiff upper lip is kept in regards to the Jewish portion of the blame (Father Brown comments that St. Clare's downfall came from his misguided readings of the Old Testament) mainly due to *Sword of Honour* being published in the wake of the Second World War, when sensibilities regarding antisemitism were at its peak. In both cases, a critique of British imperialism through depictions of English savagery and dishonour is withheld. The recognition that these grave faults exist and that they are deeply rooted in English society, even with its pretences of decorum, is ultimately overshadowed by the inaction of those who are able to apprehend the truth.[88] Far from being helpless, Guy could very well cast reasonable doubt on Claire's motives for escaping and have him trialled. After all, he has in his possession "the pocket-book in which he had kept the notes for his War Diary. (…) It was all there. (…) The last entry was a deep scrawl, covering a sheet, recording the appearance of an aeroplane over the boat. This was his contribution to History; this perhaps the evidence in a notorious trial" (SH 591-592). Thus, Guy "has the proof in the written orders to the rearguard, the full culpability of Claire's desertion" (US, n/p) and unlike Julia, who tries to protect her friend, and Tommy, who is too idle to be bothered by Claire's seemingly benign misconduct,

> Guy lacked these simple rules of conduct. He had no old love for Ivor, no liking at all, for the man who had been his friend had proved to be an illusion. He had a sense, too, that all war consisted in causing trouble without much hope of advantage. Why was he here in Mrs Stitch's basement, why were Eddie and Bertie in prison, why was the young

[88] In 1857 Karl Marx wrote an article entitled "The Future Results of British Rule in India", where he suggested that "the profound hypocrisy and inherent barbarism of bourgeois civilization lies unveiled before our eyes, turning from its home, where it assumes respectable forms, to the colonies, where it goes naked" (2005: n/p). This is one of the very few points raised by Marx that Waugh would probably agree with. In Guy's experience with his African utopias, he unveils what was carefully hidden to him in the dress of civilization, a dark reflection accentuating the hypocrisy of the developed world. Though perhaps not the most original (or by modern standards, tasteful) metaphor, Waugh's depiction of the jungle as a naked display of primitivism is bitterly aimed at England itself, with its false decorum and decaying moral values. By holding up a mirror to the middle and upper-classes of England, Waugh suggests that they are in some ways identical to the barbarism they claim to despise.

soldier lying still unburied in the deserted village of Crete, if it was not for Justice? (SH 592-593)

Yet, later on we are told that Guy "took his pocket-book to the incinerator which stood in the yard outside the window, and thrust it in. It was a symbolic act; he stood like the man at Sphakia who dismembered his Bren and threw its parts one by one out into the harbour, splash, splash, splash, into the scum" (SH 595). In both cases, Father Brown and Guy demonstrated a practical, utilitarian mind and sided with the greater good rather than particular justice. In *Unconditional Surrender*, one may apprehend that Guy is sympathetic towards Tommy's view that "to instigate a court-martial on a capital charge [against Claire] was inconceivable; in the narrowest view it would cause endless professional annoyance and delay; in the widest it would lend comfort to the enemy" (US, n/p). Furthermore, he is struck by the news that Germany has invaded Russia, suddenly making the communist state an ally of the British cause. With his pride wounded and his illusions finally dissipating, Guy surrenders to the machinations of the world and burns the evidence which could have condemned Claire. At the end of the novel we are informed that "Ivor Claire had spent six months in Burma with the Chindits, had done well, collected a D.S.O. and an honourably incapacitating wound. He was often in Bellamy's now. His brief period of disgrace was set aside and almost forgotten" (SH 894). Therefore, the outcomes of these dishonourable men are nearly identical. There is a divergence, however, in how the narratives progress – Father Brown ends the story by announcing his implacable decision, while Guy is ultimately proven that his inertia is a moral lapse. If Father Brown is sure that young men will hail St. Clare as an honourable hero and model themselves after him, Guy should understand that the idolization of a false saint leads to a life devoted to a dangerously romantic worldview. In a way, Guy goes against his father's future counsel: "quantitative judgements do not apply". Waugh's admonishment is not perfect (consider, for example, the fact that Claire has retreated into a forest among the "savages" once he is revealed to be morally lacking), but he still goes a step beyond Chesterton's "greater good" rhetoric. Guy's refusal to tell the truth is seen as a grave mistake, for if he had fulfilled his duty this soldier would not have died an unknown death, and his family would have been granted closure. Instead, Guy acts like the soldier who dismembers his gun and throws its pieces into the water, an act of surrender and unwillingness to fight.

Once Guy ponders in a conversation with Ian Kilbannock that Claire had the will to win in spite of his discrediting of sacrifice. In quite a blatant manner, the narrator notices how “Guy brooded about the antithesis between the acceptance of sacrifice and the will to win. It seemed to have personal relevance, as yet undefined, to his own condition” (SH 754). To his own father, Guy admits: “I don't think I'm much interested in victory now” (SH 610). John Wilson argues that Guy “is fighting for political rather than spiritual reasons, but worldly dispensations are ephemeral, and Guy needs to fight for eternal life instead. As Waugh suggests, individuals achieve salvation by accepting sacrifice but also by showing the will to win” (2008: 331). Guy finally becomes aware that his desire to be a martyr like Sir Roger is misplaced; his unwillingness to discover his purpose in life

> was the deadly core of his apathy; his father had tried to tell him, was now telling him. That emptiness had been with him for years now, even in his days of enthusiasm and activity in the Halberdiers. Enthusiasm and activity were not enough. God required more than that. He had commanded all men to *ask*. (SH 676)

This is precisely what Guy does, replacing his complacent "I don't ask anything from you" for an assertive "Show me what to do and help me to do it". Even though he does not expect a “heroic destiny”, he knows that “he must have his function in the divine plan” (*ibidem*). These considerations and prayers do not necessarily imply that there are any miracles or obnoxiously affected interventions of grace in *Sword of Honour*. Often, prayer goes unanswered and Guy is left to decipher the silence he receives “like an old woman, he sometimes ruefully thought, talking to her cat” (SH 844). Even engagement in battle is underwhelming and continually postponed, so that Guy is trapped in a vicious cycle of expectation and disappointment. However, his faith does not waver for long. At the end of the novel, Guy is dispatched to the Balkans, where he meets a desperate group of Jewish people trying to flee from the war. One of them, Madame Kanyi, gives the following touching speech on the causes of the war:

> "Is there any place that is free from evil? It is too simple to say that only the Nazis wanted war. These Communists wanted it too. It was the only way in which they could come to power. Many of my people wanted it, to be revenged on the Germans, to hasten the creation of the national state. It seems to me there was a will to war, a death

wish, everywhere. Even good men thought their private honour would be satisfied by war. They could assert their manhood by killing and being killed. They would accept hardships in recompense for having been selfish and lazy. Danger justified privilege. I knew Italians – not very many perhaps – who felt this. Were there none in England?"

"God forgive me," said Guy. "I was one of them." (SH 887)

We have witnessed this selfishness in Guy countless times throughout the narrative. For example, when Guy conceives of "a personal comforting thought. However inconvenient it was for the Scandinavians to have Germans there, it was very nice for the Halberdiers" (SH 208). After Guy is first tasked with leading the Jewish refugees to safety he begins to perceive himself as a prophetic figure, as "Moses leading a people out of captivity" (SH 879). He has yet to realize that "[t]he Church isn't a cult for a few heroes. It is the whole of mankind redeemed" (H 173). It is also worth noting that the one who ultimately shatters Guy's utopian vision is a Jewish refugee. Madame Kanyi's name is not common for a Jewish woman – it is, in fact, a name which originates from the Kikuyu tribe in Kenya. She reflects Guy's privilege twofold, since she is both a symbol of the dark side of his Kenyan paradise and of his military ambitions. Regarding this, Okuma points out that:

According to Waugh, the unique qualities of a saint arise from the individual's ability to recognize his or her particular vocation, not from any dramatic or "cosmic" circumstances of that calling. True heroism, therefore, is located in particular, personal, even trivial acts that are not performed for recognition (they may, in fact, go completely unrecognized) and are, in a sense, not even a matter of choice because they are the acts for which the individual was made. (2019: 570)

In order to enact his heroism, then, Guy must first repent and actually acknowledge his sins. He must get rid of his armour, his masquerade, granted by his role as a soldier, and embrace his true vocation. As Gustave Thibon wrote in his introduction to Simone Weil's *Gravity and Grace*:

The hero wears armour, the saint is naked. Now armour, while keeping off blows, prevents any direct contact with reality and above all makes it impossible to enter the third dimension which is that of supernatural love. If things are really to exist for us they have to penetrate within us. Hence the necessity for being naked: nothing can enter

> into us while armour protects us both from wounds and from the depths which they open up.

Guy's process of shedding his illusions and stepping away from earthly, sensual paradises is one of great patience. He must strip himself down to the bare bone. He begins to do so when he talks to "godless" Corporal-Major Ludovic in Crete, itself a representation of a descent into hell in the narrative, where Guy is literally naked. He is finally able to confront his inner demons and to accept God's will after nearly dying during his escape from the island. That deep wound is at last penetrated, and, in the end, Guy learns from his father that there is more value in being a saintly person of menial duties than a cosmic hero. It seems clear that Guy's moral journey is fundamental for his development into a mature character, yet it is also important to underline how non-linear and individual his expedition is. Just as in Father Brown's story, Guy is secured by "an unseen hook and an invisible line which is long enough to let him wander to the ends of the world, and still to bring him back with a twitch upon the thread" (Chesterton, 2020: 69).[89] Exposing his own philosophy, Kierkegaard noted that "[t]he ethical is the universal and as such the abstract" (2004: 546), or as Marcel DeCoste puts it, "something universal and, to that extent, at odds with individual identity" (2017: 249). In *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard further claims that "[t]he tragic hero stays within the ethical. He lets an expression of the ethical have its *telos* in a higher expression of the ethical". He gives the example of Abraham, who, on the other hand, sacrificed Isaac "not to save a nation, not to uphold the idea of the State", but as "an act of purely personal virtue" (2003: 87-88). In this manner, Kierkegaard concludes that "Abraham's story contains a teleological suspension of the ethical. He has, as the single individual, become higher than the universal" (*ibidem*: 95). Thus, as is the case in *Sword of Honour*, ethical laws and codes are essential in the natural world, yet they pale in comparison with the individual's vocation. As Jeffrey Heath states:

> Waugh's worldview rests upon the conviction that behind contingency there stands a design which reveals itself when individuals exchange their self-centred perspectives on the world for a God-centred perspective. A man's place in God's design becomes clear

[89] This line is quoted by Cordelia in *Brideshead Revisited* and marks a very important theme in Waugh's mature fiction, that of the drifting away and returning to faith.

> when he exchanges his false refuge for a true one in which he can become genuine. (Heath, 1982: 7)

Or, to put it more plainly: “When a man accepts his unique vocation, he submits his own design for himself to a larger design; he ceases to be an end in himself and becomes a means to a more important end” (Heath, 1982: 8). The truth is that “tradition is a stronghold of stability in a dissolving world” (LaFrance, 1975: 28) and only through the actions of men who can enact certain values “can the stability of truth be eternally recreated in a continuous present” (*ibidem*: 30-31). Hence, “[t]he hero has died as a modern man; but as eternal man—perfected unspecific, universal man—he has been reborn” (Campbell, 1973: 18). Guy’s task seems almost bitterly cruel – to remarry Virginia and raise Trimmer’s child. When Kerstie Kilbannock confronts him about his decision, accusing him of being chivalrous, Guy retorts that “there’s another life to consider”, though, of course, what he is ostensibly saying is that there is a soul at stake which has been placed into his hands. To Kerstie’s question –“What is one child more or less in all the misery?” – Guy answers: "I can't do anything about all those others. This is just one case where I can help. And only I, really. I was Virginia's last resort. So I couldn't do anything else. Don't you *see*?" (SH 785). Here, we can perceive that Guy is finally indulging in the only “positively unselfish action” (*ibidem*) of his life. As made clear by this scene, his concern with individual salvation does not mean, as I have previously stated, that Waugh adheres to individualist values. Another symbolic passage representing this is that Guy refuses to donate his father’s money to institutions so that he may continue his “payments to individuals” who are “entirely dependent on him” (SH 682). Even though there is more value in quality than quantity from Waugh’s perspective, this does not entail a disregard for other human lives. In his novel *Helena*, where Waugh fictionalizes Saint Helena’s discovery of the True Cross, Constantius talks about the importance of keeping a border between the city of Rome and the rest of the world:

> “(…) mile upon mile, from snow to desert, a single great girdle round the civilized world; inside, peace, decency, the law, the altars of the Gods, industry, the arts, order; outside, wild beasts and savages, forest and swamp, bloody mumbo-jumbo, men like wolf-packs; and along the wall the armed might of the Empire, sleepless, holding the

> line. Doesn't it make you see what The City means? (…) There seems to be a natural division in the human race just where the present wall runs; beyond it they're incurable barbarians. It takes all our time to hold the present line." (H 43-44)

Helena is troubled by this, and, in her state of natural curiosity, muses:

> "(…) sometimes I wonder won't Rome ever go beyond the wall? Into the wild lands? (…) Instead of the barbarian breaking-in, might The City one day break out? (…) [C]ouldn't the wall be at the limits of the world and all men, civilized and barbarian, have a share in The City?" (*ibidem*)

It is symbolic that when Helena finds the pieces of the True Cross, they are placed behind a wall, and that she "stayed in prayer while the wall was broken down" (H 214-215). In Broome, there is also a wall separating the inhabitants of the small Catholic town from the rest of the world: "After the Act of Emancipation a wall had been built to divide the aisle from the rest of the church and for a generation it had served the Catholic parish" (SH 668). Though the journey towards faith is individual, its purpose is universal. The key here is that "salvation, both personal and collective, will come from the individual" (Gallagher, 2005: 34). It is important that "Guy's awareness of good and evil rises above group thinking" (Semple, 1968: 53), and thus he surrenders "any hope of public or collective action in which he can conscientiously participate" (Hynes, 1972: 75). This is because "the state places itself above religion and therefore above God. Truth and morality are no longer things for citizens to come to know through their private actions, through their relationship with God, even less through their upbringing and customs; rather they are public truths to be dispensed and enforced through state policy" (Wilkin, 2016: 753).

Guy Crouchback is not a believer in progress, but he is a believer in *nostos*, in the return to something. In this he is already closer to the truth than what may be expected – redirecting that energy into his faith is the catalyst towards satisfaction. He is aware that his "hopeless sense of disaster was (…) something that would pass and leave no mark" (SH 288). Following his father's philosophy, Guy "*accepts suffering and injustice*" (SH 612) and gradually adopts an attitude of *amor fati*, meaning a love for one's destiny regardless of its setbacks. Just like Camus' Sisyphus, the reader looks upon Guy with a hopeful sort of pity – "one must imagine Sisyphus happy" (Camus,

1979: 111). In spite of this, Guy is not like his communist companion De Souza, who "seemed to find a curious private pleasure in doing something he knew to be absurd, with minute efficiency" (SH 239). Instead, Guy performs these tasks in order to fulfil a vocation conceded to him by a divine being, giving him a sense of purpose outside of life's seemingly aimless circularity. Eventually, his resignation grows into faith and he finds in his adoptive son a soul redeemed, the one case in spite of all the misery around him where he can help. Guy spends the entire novel trying to be perceived as *simpatico*; he ends it by simply being a good person. In his own private duties, family-oriented, living at a farm like a second Adam, Guy is content to survive in a nightmarish world in order to fulfil his vocation. Waugh leaves open the possibility that perhaps one day Guy will find himself on the other side of the looking-glass – to the reader, he simply leaves the doors to the City of God open.

Conclusion

Arriving at the end of this dissertation, I must return once more to the question posed in its introduction: why do we still read Evelyn Waugh? The answer will likely vary from reader to reader, but the truth is that Waugh's body of fiction is one of those rare gems which hold different attractive qualities for people who may hold radically different outlooks on life. The ambiguity portrayed in his novels is both a strong point, since it allows for a wide, varied audience, yet it also becomes a weakness on account of those who are prone to misread Waugh's original intentions. Though this frustrated the author, it is interesting to notice how the vastly different receptions his novels experienced reveal some of the human nature criticized on them. The conservative scholars who misread *Black Mischief* as an apology for barbarism and the modern intellectuals who misinterpreted *Brideshead Revisited* as an apology for the Catholic aristocracy in Britain both aggravated Waugh to exhaustion. After all, he remained terribly attached to his art in spite of always maintaining a cautious distance from it. Still, the impact his novels had in both Great Britain and the United States is undeniable. As he told Harold Acton on October 31, 1961: "[*Unconditional Surrender*] has had a mixed reception exciting some class warfare among the young reviewers" (Waugh, 1980: 579). Certainly, a novel which is able to arouse such radical, passionate divisions within academic circles is worth being discussed.

If there is admiration for Waugh's writing, it is also worth noting that the author has himself gained a cult following. After all, difficult characters have always been fascinating to decipher. The urge to villainize them, create apologetics for them, erase them or immortalize them has always been undeniably powerful. It is unsurprising, then, that Evelyn Waugh has been both side-lined and the object of growing interest in both the academy and popular culture for the past few decades. Though the density of his literary philosophy has often been overlooked, it is interesting to note that his novels still hold up regardless of his public's faith or political compass. As George McCartney pointed out: "One need not have much interest in theological issues to see the appeal of Waugh's position, at least as far as it regards our ability to achieve certainty about the world around us". Hence, though "we have been urged to cut anchor and drift among our signifiers as they float above the void of our unknowing", McCartney wonders whether this "logic has inadvertently stimulated the growing critical interest in the satirist of the mind's malfeasance" (1992: 154).

My goal in writing this dissertation was to synthesize what I consider to be Evelyn Waugh's three most important themes – memory, art and religion. As I have hopefully demonstrated, in *Sword of Honour* these themes build upon one another in order to create an arc which had been lacking in Waugh's earlier works. Guy is able to conciliate his inner struggles with memory and identity, and his relationship with his outer environment, defined by art and love, so that he may find a balance, what I have called a centre. However, as established, the centre is not able to hold in modern society and, thus, other sources of order have to be found. It is difficult to tell whether Waugh is successful in his attempts, though that is also part of his novels' appeal – there is always some new perspective to consider and other interpretations regarding their meaning which may be worth further investigation. For example, the final scene in *Sword of Honour* has been the target of much conjecture, which is constantly propelled by variations on the same question: does Guy's pilgrimage have a happy ending? Waugh was distraught by the fact that people would even consider that possibility, and soon after *Unconditional Surrender* was published found himself forced to alter the ending. Answering Anthony Powell's letter, where he claimed he "was aggrieved that Crouchback achieved comparative happiness at the end", since he preferred "him pursuing his *via dolorosa* to the grave", Waugh wrote on October 31, 1961:

> I am disconcerted that I have given the impression of a "happy ending". This was far from my intention. The mistake was allowing Guy legitimate offspring. They shall be deleted from any subsequent edition. I thought it more ironical that there should be real heirs of the Blessed Gervase Crouchback dispossessed by Trimmer but I plainly failed to make that clear. So no nippers for Guy and Domenica in Penguin. (Waugh, 1980: 579)

So the question remains – is it a happy ending? If we take Box-Bender's word, it is at least a convenient ending. However, it is worth reminding that to Nancy Mitford's enthusiastic assertion that she was "so glad about the happy ending", Waugh huffily answered that "[o]nly Box-Bender thought the ending happy" (*ibidem*: 577). In fact, when he compiled the trilogy into one volume, Waugh realized that it marked quite a gut-wrenching period in his life. In the preface to the novel, Waugh confesses:

> On reading the book I realized that I had done something quite outside my original intention. I had written an obituary of the Roman Catholic Church in England as it had existed for many centuries. (…) It never occurred to me, writing *Sword of Honour*, that the Church was susceptible to change. I was wrong and I have seen a superficial revolution in what then seemed permanent. (…) Recent developments have made it, in fact, a document of Catholic usage of my youth. (SH IX-X)[90]

As what Waugh considered to be the world's last permanent institution also became liable to transformation in order to accommodate the modern world, he was struck by a great disillusionment. All of this serves to add to the bitterness of the novel's ending, which begs the question of whether Guy Crouchback has settled for his life or if he truly feels fulfilled as a result of his act of faith. Box-Bender, as a witless politician, may have found that Guy gaining a family and, perhaps most importantly, an heir so late in life is an expression of success. While analysing this scene, Andrew Moran highlights that "Waugh's Commedia concludes on St. James Street — an English *Camino de Santiago*, a fitting end for a pilgrimage" and with a "happy marriage", which is "[f]itting for a comedy". Though this is true, I am sceptical to agree with Moran's notion that "Waugh's *Commedia* nonetheless ends with a vision of felicity, what one might liken to the Earthly Paradise in *Purgatorio*" (2016: 292). Guy ends the novel back in Broome, in Lesser House, as was his father's desire, where he sustains a farm with his wife and (in the revised version) raises his only son Gervase. Indeed, Guy's escape from the oppressive Castello Crouchback and return to England are quite idyllic, and even his settling in the country denotes a classic literary trope of how happy endings should be formulated. In relation to this trope, Joseph Campbell wrote:

> The happy ending of the fairy tale, the myth, and the divine comedy of the soul, is to be read, not as a contradiction, but as a transcendence of the universal tragedy of man. The objective world remains what it was, but, because of a shift of emphasis within the

[90] Waugh is here speaking of the Second Vatican Council, from which emerged a controversial *aggionarmento* intended to bring the Church up-to-date with the modern world. The reformation made a break with many of the traditions associated with the Catholic Church, such as mass being given in Latin rather than in the vernacular. In a letter dated March 9, 1966, sent to Lady Diana Mosley, Waugh wrote that he felt "enfeebled" and that "[t]he Vatican Council ha[d] knocked the guts out of [him]" (Waugh, 1980: 638). In another, sent later that same month, he describes his deteriorated spirits: "Easter used to mean so much to me. Before Pope John and his Council – they destroyed the beauty of the liturgy. I have not yet soaked myself in petrol and gone up in flames, but I now cling to the Faith doggedly without joy. Church-going is a pure duty parade. I shall not live to see it restored" (*ibidem*: 639). Ironically, Waugh died only a month later, on April 10, 1966 – Easter Day.

> subject, is beheld as though transformed. Where formerly life and death contended, now enduring being is made manifest (…). Tragedy is the shattering of the forms and of our attachment to the forms; comedy, the wild and careless, inexhaustible joy of life invincible. (Campbell, 1973: 26)

Sword of Honour is a novel which focuses on redemption and salvation amidst tragedy and horror. Being modelled after Dante's *Divine Comedy* and even displaying some elements common to a farce, it seems clear that the book's ending is supposed to be perceived as conventionally happy. Even so, I would not consider that it displays an earthly paradise. Waugh is purposefully vague regarding Guy's new life, only allowing the reader to catch a glimpse of it through the eyes of his brother-in-law. It is likely that Guy is still suffering, and Waugh's concern with having the audience understand that his heir, being Trimmer's son, marks the end of the Crouchback legacy seems to highlight this. Yet I do not find this ending to be a tragedy either. If I could liken it to another literary classic, it would be to *Paradise Lost* – the gradual disappearance of Guy's Arcadias, no matter how deceptive, take a toll on him and leave him dispossessed of any illusion he had of gaining a paradise on Earth. Instead, like Adam and Eve, Guy must wait to one day re-enter Paradise by leading an exemplary life – "then wilt thou not be loth, / To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess / A Paradise within thee, happier far" (Book XII, lines 585-587; Milton, 1996: 311). It is only through sustaining his faith that Guy is able to surpass the tragedy of his existence. In this sense only may we claim that *Sword of Honour* has a happy ending.

In demonstrating how Waugh constructs his narratives, I have attempted to outline a plausible continuity in their configuration. Through his use of prominent symbols, such as the looking-glass and the wheel, and motifs, such as the death wish and being in the picture, Waugh was able to maintain order in a fictional world which is reflective of our own and which is, therefore, governed by chaos. As a storyteller, of course, he holds up a mirror to the reader and to the human condition in general. It is not only because of the way Waugh finds meaning in a nightmarish world that his novels are remarkable – they appear to be an ascent composed of trial and error with a defined purpose, but, most importantly, they are composed of contradictions working together towards that purpose. There are wheels within wheels, and past the looking-glass we move from the concentric circle at Luna Park towards a gyre which must be held together. Remembering Silenus' words in *Decline and Fall*: "the whole point about

the wheel is that you needn't get on it at all, if you don't want to. People get hold of ideas about life, and that makes them think they've got to join in the game, even if they don't enjoy it. It doesn't suit everyone" (DF 281). When Guy plunges down during his parachuting accident, he breaks his leg and becomes crippled because he has returned to his sterile, apathetic way of thinking. Yet, unlike many, Guy is able to glimpse what lies beyond the machine which circles around in perpetual, meaningless motion: a rebirth into another world, the supernatural order where the City of God dwells. Rather than stating that the novel has a happy ending, it would perhaps be more accurate (and important) to state that Guy's pilgrimage has been successful. In the end, only that seems to matter, and, as we come to the conclusion of his pilgrimage, one must imagine Guy Crouchback happy.

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