An Observation of The Religious Structure in *Brideshead Revisited* by Evelyn Waugh

Sister ARAI Toshiko

Brideshead Revisited was completed in June 1944 and the first edition was published in December, although it was in a limited number for presentation. After some revisions were made, the first edition for sale came out in May 1945. While general readers welcomed it so much that it quickly became a best seller on both sides of the Atlantic, the critics'reaction was extremely diverse as Christopher Sykes put it, 'some believe [this book] to be his masterpiece, others believe to be a magnificent failure, and others believe indicated the decay of a talent which in its glorious spring had promised more than it ultimately gave.' [1] Such diversity in critics' opinions was not entirely unexpected.

In this novel Waugh adopted such techniques as three dimensional description and the first-person narrator, which were so different from the well-established Evelyn Waugh style of flatly clear, rather two dimensional depiction suited to his early works of comic satire. And also, with this novel he started a challenging attempt to present his characters as living not only in time and space but also within divine providence, adding the fourth, mystical dimension to the whole story. Waugh's reluctance to allow this novel to appear simply as a grand love story was so strong that in 1947, MGM had to give up their scheme to make a film of *Brideshead Revisited* after a long discussion with the author whom they had invited over from Britain. 'None of them see the theological implication,' Waugh complained. [2] He was overjoyed, therefore, when three years later an entirely different film project

came up with Graham Greene as the script writer. He wrote to Greene, 'Please don't try to get out of *Brideshead*. I am sure you can make a fine film of it.' [3] These words show that Waugh believed that it was, or ought to be possible to present human dramas with their 'theological implication' in film too, if dealt with by someone who has deep enough sympathy and understanding. Graham Greene, a close Catholic novelist friend of his who was also talented in film script writing would have appeared as just a right person for the role. Although this project did not come to fruition because of a lack of funds, this concern stayed with Waugh throughout his post-war works.

In April 1946, about a year after the publication of *Brideshead Revisited*, Waugh wrote 'Fan Fare' in *Life* to respond to American readers' letters, in which he explained what he was trying to do in this novel and said,

> The failure of modern novelists since and including James Joyce is one of presumption and exorbitance. They are not content with the artificial figures which hitherto passed so gracefully as men and women. They try to represent the whole human the mind and soul and yet omit its determining character—that of being God's creature with a defined purpose.
>
> So 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 relation to God. [4]

This was a manifesto of the newly started Catholic writer Evelyn Waugh. In the same article Waugh clearly stated that he considered this work as his best so far and was proud of his new attempt 'not deterred either

by popular applause or critical blame'. Even in later years when his own evaluation of this work changed so much that in 1950 he wrote to Graham Greene that by rereading *Brideshead* he was 'appalled' and was going to rewrite the novel, the intended revision was technical, and he still thought the plot 'excellent'. [5]

The framework of the story is captain Charles Ryder's arrival at a new camp site, which turns out to be Brideshead, the stately home of the Marquis of Marchmain, one of the ancient English Catholic aristocrats. This was the place where Charles spent the formative period of his youth, and, in the course of time, got involved in the complexity of human relationships of the Flytes family. 'I had been there before; I knew all about it.' is the last sentence of 'Prologue' which connects the present life of an army camp to the long reminiscence that forms the main body of the novel. The story line begins in 1923 with Charles Ryder's friendship at Oxford with Sebastian Flyte, the second son of the family, and ends in pre-war 1939 with the closing of his affair with Julia, the eldest daughter. In 'Epilogue', which is set to be the direct continuation of 'Prologue', Charles reappears in his military function to bring the readers back to the reality of the war years of the early 1940s to conclude the whole story. The contrast between Charles in Prologue and Charles in Epilogue seems to signify what was left within him by these reminisced years.

The keynote of 'Prologue' is desolation.

> I had reflected then [on arrival at the site three months before] that, whatever scenes of desolation lay ahead of us, I never feared one more brutal than this, and I reflected now that it had no single happy memory for me. Here love had died between me and the army. [6]

This army camp was in an anonymous part of the countryside in the north where farmlands and farmhouses were all deserted and together with the army huts 'waited their turn for destruction' eventually to become part of modern suburb.

The same destructive effect of the time passing was equally or even more distinct in Brideshead. As the house was used as the regimental headquarters, the rooms were either made bare or locked, or piled to the ceiling with the removed furniture. The fountain was wired in and dried up. This is again a grand scene of desolation. There were only four people, including an evacuee priest, remaining there. Charles found out from nanny Hawkins that the Marchimain house in London had been 'blown up' and 'everything gone'. The Flyte brothers and sisters were all abroad, and all, except for Sebastian, were involved in the country's war effort. The family scene too was desolate.

Then he went into the chapel, which was closed after Lady Marchmain's death but reopened by the priest. Nothing seemed spoiled by long neglect, and the art-nouveau sanctuary lamp was burning once more before the altar. Charles who had become Catholic said a prayer "an ancient, newly learned form of words", and left to go back to the camp. While walking he pondered about the unbroken flow of time that connects past to present, weaving all constructive and destructive elements into an ever growing organic whole, at whose latest end stood his day-to-day reality.

> The builders did not know the uses to which their work would descend; they made a new house with the stone of the old castle; year by year, generation after generation, they enriched and extended it; ... until, in sudden frost, came the age of Hooper [the modern practical common man]; the place was desolate and the work all brought to

nothing; *Quomodo sedet sola civitas.* Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.

'And yet,' I thought, ..., ..., 'and yet that is not the last word; it is a dead word from ten years back. [8]

In the 1977 Penguin books version which is also based on the 1960 revision, there is another sentence 'It is not even an apt word;' [9] inserted before the last concluding words. This seems to indicate that the author wished to emphasise a clear and drastic change of Charles' frame of mind.

'Something quite remote from anything the builders intended, has come out of their work, and out of the fierce little human tragedy in which I played; something none of us thought about at the time; a small red flame—a beaten-copper lamp of deplorable design relit before the beaten-copper doors of a tabernacle; the flame which the old knights saw from their tombs, which they saw put out; that flame burns again for other soldiers, far from home, farther, in heart, than Acre or Jerusalem. It could not have been lit but for the builders and the tragedians, and there I found it this morning, burning anew among the old stones.'

I quickened my pace and reached the hut which served us for our ante-room.

'You are looking unusually cheerful today,' said the second-in-command. [10]

This is the last and concluding passage of 'Epilogue'. The scene of Brideshead in 'Epilogue' is as desolate as the anonymous village in 'Prologue', but keynote has changed into cheerfulness. What caused this change of tone in Charles' inner world was 'a small red frame—a beaten-

copper lamp of deplorable design relit before the beaten-copper doors of a tabernacle'.

In Roman Catholic tradition, a small red lamp is to be lit before the tabernacle when there is the Blessed Sacrament kept in it. Without this light on, therefore, a church or chapel lacks something essential to a Catholic mind, as Cordelia reminisced about the time when the lamp was put out for closure of the chapel, '... and then, suddenly, there wasn't any chapel there any more, just an oddly decorated room. I can't tell you what it felt like.' [11] This difference is what the author implies by the word 'relit'. In this sense, the chapel at Brideshead had come back to life, once more to function as the special meeting place for God and people.

'Surprising lot use it [the chapel],' said the Quartering Commandant while he was showing Charles around the house. This 'lot' is the mid-twentieth century soldiers recruited from all over the country who had no connection to the ancient noble family for whom the chapel had been built, nor do they have any knowledge or interest in the theological, artistic or technical design the builders and decorators might have had. However, the men were there, drawn to the small red flame of the relit sanctuary lamp. If it is good for the regiment to have a beautiful chapel and proper church services kept there for all ranks of its members, it took the whole history of Brideshead to bring about this simple good: the history starting from the medieval castle, through the periods of rise and fall of the family fortune to the latest stage of deterioration which Charles was witnessing. And throughout these phases of joys and sufferings of an ancient Catholic family, the small red flame had been burning in the sanctuary lamp of different design at different periods, giving out the same unchanging message from the Blessed Sacrament that He was there among them and with them. Looking back the past times with the image of this constant flame in his

mind, Charles no longer felt 'all is vanity', for all had their role to play in God's working through history. He could now be cheerful even in the sight of desolation.

This seems to be a well-constructed framework to give religious implication to a story of apparently chaotic human relationships. However, to make a sanctuary lamp a key symbol may be a problem. How strong an appeal can this whole section have to non-Christian minds that have no idea of tabernacle or sanctuary lamp ? Even among those who know what they are, or even among Christians, many non-Catholics would not share the religious feeling about them, as they do not share the same faith in the Blessed Sacrament. The deeper the feeling is, the more difficult it would be to create it in imagination. It would have to be admitted that the author has chosen an essential, but extremely esoteric symbol of Catholic faith.

Whether it was intentional or not, this seems to be one of the elements which made this work appear an insider story, as Christopher Sykes pointed out, '[the book is] ... ... solely addressed to believing Catholics and admirers of the Catholic Church. The general reader is rather left in the cold.' [12] Or, it may also be one of the reasons why this work is often read simply as a picturesque love romance, with 'the theological implication' missed out or ignored to the author's great frustration.

The geography of this 'fierce little human tragedy' covers Britain, Europe, North Africa, and both parts of the continent of America.

In the centre of this tragedy, the Flyte family forms a small universe in which each star follows its own orbit but all go round one gravity centre of Roman Catholic Faith. In the early days of their friendship, Sebastian introduced to Charles his own family in terms of their religious practice.

> So you see we're a mixed family religiously. Brideshead [the

> elder brother] and Cordelia [the younger sister] are both fervent Catholics; he's miserable, she's bird-happy; Julia and I are half-heathen; I am happy, I rather think Julia isn't; mummy is popularly believed to be a saint and papa is excommunicated—and I wouldn't know which of them was happy. Anyway, however you look at it happiness doesn't seem to have much to do with it, and that's all I want. ... I wish I liked Catholics more. [13]

Just outside of this family circle, two more Catholic characters will have to be mentioned; a simple unquestioning believer nanny Hawkins and a cultured Italian actress Cara who is Lord Marchmain's mistress.

Here, it is clear that the Catholic family whom Charles Ryder as a young agnostic got into contact with was a collection of believers who had their own problems and deficiencies. On this aspect, George Orwell commented:

> ... Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, in spite of improbabilities, which are tractable partly to the book's being written in the first person, succeeds because the situation is itself a normal one. The Catholic characters bump up against problems they would meet with in real life; they do not suddenly move on to a different intellectual plane as soon as their religious beliefs are involved. [14]

In another note, Orwell wrote that an advantage to a novelist of being a Catholic is to have a 'theme of collision between two kinds of good'. But, while admitting *Brideshead Revisited* to be a success and this work is 'a real departure from the humanist attitude, with which no compromise possible', he dismissed the last scene 'where an unconscious man makes the sign of the cross' as a crack of the veneer that revealed that 'One cannot really

be Catholic & grown-up.' [15] Apart from the fact that the actual context seems to suggest a momentary return of consciousness rather than an 'unconscious' state, certainly *Brideshead Revisited* as a fiction is meant to belong to a different sphere than an empirical world of reason and common sense, as the author himself stated in the above quoted passage. Malcolm Bradbury defines the double structure of this work as 'a fable of providence and also a novel of sentiments', and goes on to explain, 'we are less interested in the moral conduct of the characters than in the emotions (love, nostalgia, affection, prejudice, faith) that explain it.' [16]

This effect comes partly from the first person narrative form kept throughout the story, in which all the component personalities, dramas and incidents are presented as they were mirrored on the narrator Charles's mentality and sensibility. Thus staying in the narrator's frame of mind, the reader follows the members of the Flyte family on their different walks of life through which they show their own style of reaction towards the Catholic family tradition. This is at the same time to share Charles Ryder's slow progress through his relationships with the Flytes towards the gravity centre of their family tie, the Catholic faith.

In the passage quoted above, Sebastian introduced himself in terms of religion as half-heathen and was happy. This was in 1923, his first year at Oxford where he first met Charles Ryder. Sebastian was conspicuous for his beauty, charm, wealth, and eccentric behaviors including taking around a big teddy bear named Aloysius. This toy animal was not only the object of his emotional dependence, but also was used by him to evade undesirable approach to his inner privacy from outside, as well as to express his own feeling which he felt too shy or embarrassed to state frankly. Being exceedingly delicate and hyper-sensitive, Sebastian could not bear to hurt or to be hurt. The only time when he felt secure and happy was when he

was alone with his favourite companion in a place he liked best, as the title of the first part 'Et in Arcadia Ego' suggested. Such a time was inevitably very rare as Sebastian felt even affectionate consideration of his family 'bore'. Charles observed, 'His constant, despairing prayer was to be left alone.' And continued to analyze:

> And since Sebastian counted among the intruders his own conscience and all claims of human affection, his days in Arcadia were numbered. [18]

As his intimacy with the Flyte family grew, Charles became 'part of the world which he sought to escape; I became one of the bonds which held him'. [19]

If under such circumstances Sebastian was to grew out of Aloysius as his emotional support, it was in a way natural for him to take to drinking which was inherent in him from his father. And this started the vicious circle of his drinking and his family's effort to cure him from this habit by forced abstention from alcohol. In the depth of misery and sense of guilt, Sebastian was craving for love and understanding. Although Cordelia loved him, and Charles took the side of 'Sebastian contra mundum', their support was not powerful enough to get him free from his dependence.

Eventually he went on vagabondage on the continent, where he met a German homeless, Kurt, whom he took in and looked after.

> ..., 'it's rather a pleasant change when all your life you've had people looking after you, to have someone to look after yourself. Only of course it has to be someone pretty hopeless to need looking after by *me*.' [20]

To be loved and looked after was a bond and burden to Sebastian, but now at last he found peace and happiness in serving someone whom 'no one liked' knowing and accepting all his defects. Even in his irregular life, Sebastian never stopped going to church at odd times. The last part of his life after losing even Kurt in the war was to be spent in a monastery in Tunis as a lay Brother. He ultimately arrived at a haven where he could be needed in the service of God and people, while his fatal weakness known but tolerated. This story was presented by Cordelia as what she imagined after visiting him in the infirmary of the monastery, and having a talk with the Superior.

There is nothing too arbitrary in Sebastian's gradual progress from escapism towards unwitting holiness through suffering, as John Betjeman writes, 'The drunken Sebastian without stamina or ambition, a prey to the bottle and flesh, is a fully grown person because he has sense of sin and guilt and a live sense of Divine order of created things.' [21]

Even so, the description of Sebastian in Brideshead and Oxford is much more vivid than that of him in exile, and the report of the concluding phase of his life is even flatter as it is supposed to be a mere surmise. It may be that the first part carries more reality because the author has models among his close friends; Hugh Lygon and Alastair Graham for Sebastian, and many part models including a teddy bear that belonged to John Betjeman. Just as an unsigned review in the T. L. S. points out, the centre of focus seems to shift from Sebastian to Julia in the latter half of the story.

The course of the pilgrim's progress in Julia's case is simpler than Sebastian's journey. Sebastian described her as another of the half-heathens in the family. Anthony Blanche in his long soliloquy about the Flytes concluded his comment on her by saying, 'all she wants is power'. [22]

The first instance of her strong character is seen in the story of her marriage to Rex Mottram against her mother's will and the church's doctrine. She succeeded in winning him over from her friend Brenda Champion whom he had been living with, but immediately before the wedding, her elder brother found out that Rex had got married and divorced in 1919 and the spouse in this marriage was still alive in Canada. This made Julia's union with him invalid in terms of church law. Julia adamantly argued to have her own way, and finding the priest unyielding, simply 'shut her mind against her religion', making herself 'fully-heathen' as it were, in view of the Catholic tradition of her family. With her father's consent, Julia had a 'squalid wedding' in the Savoy Chapel where divorced couples got married.

For Julia personally, this marriage turned out to be unhappy and a frustrating one. For ten years she lived loyal to Rex, and experienced pregnancy too, but only to have her daughter stillborn. Such a stressful life eventually caused Julia to cross the Atlantic for 'the secret, vicious, disastrous escapade' which again came to nothing. It was on her journey back from this visit that Julia found herself in the same passenger boat with the Ryders. Charles as an architecture painter was on his way home from two years' journey through the American continent, and his wife Celia had come to New York to meet him.

The stormy weather on the sea provided opportunities for Julia and Charles to meet alone in the deserted rooms and decks, which led them to find themselves in love with each other, Eventually this resulted in two divorces to achieve one marriage. Although there were no obstacles on their way to a civilian marriage after their divorces came through, neither of them was an eligible candidate for marriage in the light of the Catholic doctrine. This did not affect Charles, but persistence of faith in the depth of Julia's mind became the pivot of her inner conflict, though her mind was

supposed to have been 'closed to her religion'. On their voyage home, Julia told Charles that when she was expecting a baby, she wanted to have her child brought up a Catholic although she had never thought about religion before or since.

> ..., I thought, 'That's one thing I can give her. It doesn't seem to have done me much good, but my child shall have it.' It was odd, wanting to give something one had lost oneself. [23]

She went on to mention punishment for what she had done, and said, 'Perhaps that is why you and I are here together like this...part of a plan.'

The nearer their marriage got, the more wistful her attitude became, and finally when Brideshead referred to their life as 'living in sin', she broke down crying, '...Mummy dying with my sin eating at her, more cruelly than her own deadly illness. Mummy dying with it; Christ dying with it; ....' This kind of outburst occurred several times, making Charles feel left outside. Her faith actually came to take the upper hand when she stood up against Charles and the doctor to claim 'full responsibility for whatever happens', in taking the priest to her father to give him the last sacrament. Then after witnessing Lord Matchmain's last minute reconciliation to God and his peaceful death, she too came to the final decision on her life with Charles, '... I can't marry you, Charles; I can't be with you ever again.' And in future, she will 'Just go on—alone.'

> I've always been bad. Probably I shall be bad again, punished again. But the worse I am, the more I need God. I can't shut myself from His mercy. That is what it would mean; starting a life with you, without Him. ···. But I saw today there was one thing unforgivable —;

to set up a rival good to God's. ...; [24]

By this time, Charles had come round to be able to reply, 'I hope your heart may break; but I do understand.' This was the end of the prodigal daughter's journey, the completion of a cycle of adventures of a stray conscience. Julia was drawn to God by failing him, by her attempts to run away from him. It was probably this mystery that Waugh wanted to make most of in this novel. And that is why the critical evaluation of Julia's characterization is so much diverse as is seen in the following extracts:

> Particularly good is the character development of Julia. Her swift determination to rebel and her slow determination to recant are both equally and inevitably right. [25]

> She [Julia] never comes to life. .... Evelyn brought every device to make her vital and irresistible. .... The result is a carefully modeled wax mannequin. .... Perhaps Evelyn tried too hard. Perhaps he failed with this central character because he was not drawing in the life-class: no one has yet discerned or suggested a model for Julia. [26]

Sykes as the author of the latter passage goes on to say that Celia for whom the author had a model is alive but Julia is not. In the same year 1945 in the June issue of *New Statesman*, Henry Reed also wrote, 'Julia is only a theme and not a person, whereas Sebastian has been both. Julia is only alive in her final speeches; and then simply because what she says is alive.' [27]

It may be said that to the readers who are more interested in the theme and its development through a character's life, Julia is 'particularly good',

but to those who are more concerned about whether a character is 'alive' as a person, she is abstract and lacks reality. In the case of a novel with some thought or philosophy, there is always a danger that without being supported by a living image of a model, the central character tends to become a mouthpiece of the author.

Another character that makes a dramatic spiritual homecoming is Lord Marchmain who stayed overseas from the beginning to nearly the end of the story. The Marquis of Marchmain went off to France with his Yeomanry and never came back. He stayed in Italy with his mistress Cara. Sebastian referred to him as 'a social leper' and was 'excommunicated', but judging from his receiving a sacrament, this 'excommunication' seems to have been no more than in a figurative sense. He comes alive only when he was dying. For the rest of the story his existence was felt through his official function as the head of the family in deciding family matters, or through Cara's analysis of the Flyte family. The only account given by Lord Marchmain about his own life is extremely ambiguous. 'It has been my tragedy that I abominate the English countryside. I suppose it is a disgraceful thing to inherit great responsibilities and to be entirely indifferent to them. I am all the socialist would have me be, and a great stumbling block to my party.' [28]

According to Cara's interpretation, the driving force of Lord Marchmain's behavior is his hatred towards Lady Marchmain, whom he had loved with 'romantic friendship' which is 'a kind of love that comes to children before they knew its meaning. In England it comes when you are almost men;' and, Alex [Lord Marchmain] 'had it for a girl, for his wife.'[29] And now he stayed with Cara not because he loved her but because she protected him from Lady Marchmain.

'.... My friend, he is a volcano of hate.' [30]

'When people hate with all that energy, it is something in themselves they are hating. Alex is hating all the illusions of boyhood —innocence, God, hope. Poor Lady Marchmain has to bear all that. [31]

Cara's analysis of this extraordinary structure of hatred carries some aura of her own personality as an observant, well-balanced woman who knew and accepted her position and roll, who had saved Lord Marchmain from the state of near drunkard. But in spite of its length, the theory and explanation does not bring out the living figure of Lord Marchmain. There are few scenes in which Lord Marchmain himself acts and reveals his own character at his Venetian home.

In the last part of the story Lord Marchmain suddenly becomes a real person, in his appearance, in his orders to his children and servants, in his whimsical choice of the room and the bed he would lie in to spend the last months of his life, and in his reaction to his elder son's choice of spouse. In all these he appears as an old esquire who returned home after a long absence, weakened by illness but still hopeful to be a Lord of the house and estate again.

When his condition became grave, Brideshead brought the parish priest to see him, but he flatly refused to have anything to do with him. As he was gradually weakened, between sleeps and comas his mind wandered around his own and his family's past. At one stage, when he learned from Cordelia that the chapel had been closed after Lady Marchmain died, he said.

'It was hers, I gave it to her. We've always been builders in our family. I built it for her; in the shade of the pavilion; rebuilt with the old stones behind the old walls; ....'

'Then I went away—left her in the chapel praying, It was hers.

It was the place for her. I never came back to disturb her prayers. They said we were fighting for freedom; I had my own victory, Was it a crime ? '

'I think it was, papa.'

'Crying to heaven for vengeance ? Is that why they've locked me in this cave, do you think, with a black tube of air ....' [32]

The doctor had told Charles that Lord Marchmain was kept alive by a great fear of death rather than by a strong will to live. The freedom he was alluding to by 'his own victory' won by 'never coming back' was of course freedom from 'her', Lady Marchmain. And the memory of this freedom now trapped him in the dark cave of troubled conscience, fearing for 'vengeance'. Such a sense of guilt is the signal indicating a persistent undercurrent of longing for the opposite direction. Admitting this conflict is the beginning of a mind's journey home.

When he was in the actual extremis, he could not or did not resist any longer and had the priest at his bedside to give the last sacrament. Responding to the priest who asked to make a sign, if he could, to show that he was sorry for all the sins of his life, at the final blessing Lord Marchmain slowly moved his hand and made the sign of the cross. He died that evening, having made peace with God and all that he had hated. Reconciliation, in the case of Lord Marchmain took the form of capitulation to Grace, giving up 'his own victory'. God's victory over him was the end of the long journey of Lord Marchmain's conscience.

This last scene may inevitably be too narrowly religious or even ridiculous to some readers, just as hinted at above by George Orwell, but to others who have some basic sympathy to faith, it can be an authentically moving scene. At the basis of the description of Lord Marchmain's death,

Waugh had the memory of the death of his Oxford friend, Hubert Duggan, for whom he fetched the priest himself. This priest, Father Devas of Farm Street was the model of simple and humble Father Mackay in the novel. [33] For the framework of the fate of exile and return of Lord Marchmain, he had the episode of the seventh Earl of Beauchamp, the father of Hugh Lygon, his close friend and part model of Sebastian. [34]

Apart from the three members of the Flyte family who were drawn back to God by 'a twitch upon the thread', as Cordelia says quoting a Father Brown story, the other three, Lady Marchmain, Brideshead, and Cordelia remain more or less steady in their own style of being Catholics.

Lady Marchmain was the centre of the Marchmain household after Lord Marchmain had left, and was described by the young Sebastian as being 'popularly believed to be a saint'. Even from this first comment on his own mother, Sebastian carefully excluded himself from the group of her admirers. He was on the alert against her great charm that might draw his friend away from him. In his acquaintance with her, Charles felt that he was 'being drawn into intimacy by swift, imperceptible stages, for she was impatient of any human relationship that fell short of it.' [35] With her orthodox Catholic faith and devotion, she knew always what she was doing, and tried to bring people into a correct way, that was, onto 'her side'. Apparently without any fault, she tended to have 'all the sympathy of everyone except those she loved', as Julia put it with regard to her own marriage. To the people who were very close in relationship, she was a citadel of self-righteousness and there was no break through into the soft or weak part in the depth of it. She was hated by her husband, and Sebastian who escaped from her, felt that she had been 'a femme fatal' who 'killed at a touch'. [36]

She had to endure with her noble patience Julia's marriage against her own will, but Sebastian's drunkenness that reminded her of the same

weakness of his father, was a serious blow to her pride and self-confidence. She made the situation worse by trying only to correct him or cure him by good will and force. Around this affair, Lady Marchmain was brought face to face with the betrayal, as it were, of those whom she had trusted to be on her own side: Charles and Cordelia who had actually taken side of Sebastian, and Mr, Samgrass who had merely been taking advantage of her trust. In the end she was made to find herself standing alone with her faith and prayer to support herself. At her deathbed, she wanted to see Sebastian, who could not and would not come back, and also she wished to see Charles to apologize for her unfairness in her accusation of him at the time of his final leave taking from Brideshead. But according to Julia, even if Charles forgave and forgot about it, this was 'something mummy can never forgive herself—it's the kind of thing she so seldom did.' [37] If it was so, it would again be the matter of her moral pride. She was indignant for having spoiled the perfection of her self-righteousness, rather than admitting her sin and being contrite for it before God and Charles. How much room did she give up for Grace at the time of her departure from this world ? The author's intention in her character formation is shown in the words recorded by John Betjeman as Waugh's reply to someone who said he did not like Lady Marchmain, 'You may not like her, but God loves her.' [38] Even so, probably it has to be admitted that in the context of the novel, this loving relationship is not delivered so clearly in a heart-warming manner.

The Earl of Brideshead, the elder son and heir to the Marquis of Marchmain represents a constant and rather dog-like loyalty to the Church dogma and authority. This hard line is softened and is given a humane and comic touch by Waugh's skill of depicting him as a kind of caricature of a typical Stonyhurst-trained Jesuitical character with a bit of the oddity inherent in the British nobility. His thinking and judgment is always clear,

being made through scholastic logic and Jesuitical method of selection according to the unbiased order of priority. He makes a contrast with Sebastian who was educated at Eton and tended to be indulgent in pursuit of pleasure and satisfaction of his senses rather than cool rational logics.

Having once been aspiring to become a Jesuit priest, he occasionally annoyed Sebastian, and Charles when he was with them, in their family scenes by bringing out religious or philosophical topics which were simply boring to the others. This same aptitude makes him drop bombshells on Julia's life, discovering or pointing out the fatal matrimonial defect in her match first with Rex Mottram and later with Charles Ryder. Both cases were bigamy in the light of the Catholic doctrine. In this way he played a crucial role for the dramatic development of this story. In his simple frame of mind, destroying the secular planning of gorgeous wedding, or in another case, revealing the deep chasm in his sister's mind which had a destructive effect on her hope for a true love match do not bother him at all. They were simply the natural result of the correct order of things. His own love story is a sideline with a touch of humane comic. But this also had a serious enough effect on Lord Marchmain that he disliked his future daughter-in-law so much as to change his will of bequeathing Brideshead Castle to Julia rather than him. But all these things did not affect his relationship with God. In spite of young Sebastian's introduction of him being 'much the craziest of us', Brideshead seemed to stay in God's Grace in his own style throughout the story as one of the stabilizing lines in the plot.

Another such a line is Cordelia who stands for a faith and devotion of an affectionate feminine mind, starting as a happy and rather naughty younger sister, and growing into an efficient volunteer helper of war prisoners in Europe. In the main parts of the story, the author uses her as a character who guides the self-styled agnostic Charles, and with him the readers,

through the main stream of Catholic faith and experiences in relation to the changing fates of herself and her family. In the latter half of the novel, there are her soliloquies in which she tries to see things in the context of providence. Referring to the loss of faith in her family, she said:

> .... It takes people different ways. Anyhow the family haven't been very constant, have they ? There's him [her father Lord Marchmain] gone and Sebastian gone and Julia gone.
> But God won't let them go for long, you know. .... [39]

Then she continued to remind Charles of one of the Father Brown stories in which he said he caught the criminal 'by a twitch upon the thread', the thread which was long enough to have allowed him to wander to the ends of the world while being kept at the end of it. The author uses this phrase as the title of Book Three, the concluding part of the story.

With her own dreams of life 'thwarted', as she admitted herself, she stayed unchanging in her faith and inwardly grew up through her experiences of witnessing and sharing people's sufferings in the war. She had learned to see holiness being achieved in the depth of human misery and deprivation, and this was shown in her sympathy and understanding of Sebastian's state. Her long soliloquies about him might be meant to have a double implication; while describing Sebastian's life, they were at the same time to reveal the speaker's personality and her faith which were matured with some inclination to mysticism.

It was the depth of such spirituality that Charles did not follow. But repeatedly faced with it he came to feel he was 'brought up short'. Another negative expression 'thwarted passion' is used as a kind of key phrase that sums up his progress from 'Arcadia' with Sebastian through Brideshead,

Venetian villa, and Marchmain House with the Flytes family, to the 'orphans of the storm' experience with Julia on the passenger boat, which brought him back to Brideshead this time as her husband-to-be. By this time Charles was holding out in his fierce resistance against religion before the final blow at Lord Marchmain's bedside at the moment of his death. This shock felt to him as though 'the veil of the temple being rent from top to bottom' within him. Lord Marchmain's entrance into the new life in heaven initiated Charles's entrance into the new life on earth. He had irresistibly begun to pray at that moment and became ready to accept the priority of God's will to their own wish, as was proposed by Julia in her laconic good-bye.

In parallel with his spiritual journey, his progress as an artist also had to receive fatal damage just after an extremely successful private exhibition in London. It came from his old friend Anthony Blanche who dropped in to see Charles's works.

> 'We know, you and I, that this is all t-t-terrible t-t-tripe.' .... 'It was charm again, my dear, simple, creamy English charm, playing tigers.' .... 'You are quite right,' I [Charles] said. [40]

> .... 'Charm is the English blight. .... It spots and kills anything it touches. It kills love; it kills art; I greatly fear, my dear Charles, it has killed *you*.' [41]

These elements worked together to produce in the end Captain Charles Ryder, a single Catholic army officer, who was brought by war to revisit Brideshead to complete his cycle of spiritual pilgrimage. The contrast between Brideshead in 'Arcadia' time in 1923 and Brideshead in decay in early 1940s is the context of Charles's inner and outward change, on which

Jeffrey Heath commented:

> Ryder is the first Waugh protagonist who successfully matures and his maturation depends upon his acceptance of his unique purpose in god's design.' [43]

In the author's scheme of this novel as 'a religious fable', to use Malcolm Bradbury's expression, the tragic story of the house of Marchmain ends in the note of unchanging hope. Apart from the discussion of technical details and theological or moral arguments about the themes, it would be justified to say that the author has succeeded in making his main characters appear to be pilgrims on their way to find out a 'defined purpose' for their existence in the maze of God's design, with the hope of getting also the full view of the garden at the end of their journey. It would also be to the author's credit that he tried this method not only on one central character but also on plural characters in complex relationships living in the contemporary British society. The critics will never be unanimous in their evaluation of this work, but still this novel will be read and discussed as one of the experimental works in the history of the twentieth century English novel.

Notes:

1. Christopher Sykes, *Evelyn Waugh, A Biography* ([1975] Penguin 1977), p.237.
2. Evelyn Waugh, Diary of 'Friday 7 February 1947', *The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh*, Michale Davie (ed.), (Penguin, [1979] 1984), p.673.
3. Evelyn Waugh to Graham Greene, 27 July 1950, *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh*, Mark Amory (ed.) [1980] (Penguin Books 1982), p.333.
4. Martin Stannard, *Evelyn Waugh, No Abiding City, 1939–1966* (Dent, 1992), p.100.
5. Evelyn Waugh, 'Fan-fare', *The Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, Donat

Gallagher (ed.) (Methuen, 1983), p.302.

6. Christopher Sykes, *Evelyn Waugh, A Biography* ([1975] Penguin 1977), p.448.
7. Evelyn Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited* ([1945][Revised 1960] Uniform edition, Methuen [1978] 1989), p.11.
8. Op. Cit. p.380.
9. Evelyn Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited* ([1945] [Revised 1960] Penguin Books 1977), p.331.
10. Evelyn Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited* ([1945] [Revised 1960] Uniform edition, Methuen [1978] 1989), pp.380-381.
11. Op. Cit. p.244.
12. Sykes, p.348.
13. Waugh, *Brideshead*, p.102.
14. George Orwell, *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, S. Orwell & I. Angus (ed.), (Secker & Warburg, 1968), iv, p.442.
15. Orwell, 'Extracts from a Manuscript Note-book, "For article on E. Waugh"', Op. Cit. pp.512-513.
16. Malcolm Bradbury, *Evelyn Waugh* (Oliver & Boyd, 1964), p.88.
17. Waugh, *Brideshead*, p.91.
18. Op. Cit. p.143.
19. Op. Cit. p.143.
20. Op. Cit. p.241.
21. John Betjeman, 'Evelyn Waugh', G. H. Phelps (ed.), *Living Writers* (Sylvan Press [1947] 1951), p.149.
22. Waugh, *Brideshead*, p.64.
23. Op. Cit. p.282.
24. Op. Cit. p.373.
25. V.C. Clinton-Baddeley, Review in *Spectator* (June, 1945), Martin Stannard (ed.), *Evelyn Waugh, The Critical Heritage* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), p.238.

26. Sykes, p.349.
27. *The Critical heritage*, p.240.
28. Waugh, *Brideshead*, p.112.
29. Op. Cit. p.115.
30. Op. Cit. p.115–116.
31. Op. Cit. p.116.
32. Op. Cit. p.367.
33. Selina Hastings, *Evelyn Waugh, A Biography* (Sinclair Stevenson, 1994), pp.455–456.
34. Evelyn Waugh, *Mr. Wu & Mrs. Stitch, The Letters of Evelyn Waugh to Diana Cooper*, Artemis Cooper (ed.) [1991] (Sceptre edn., 1992), p.15.
35. Waugh, *Brideshead*, p.124.
36. Op. Cit. p.238.
37. Op. Cit. p.232.
38. John Betjeman, in *Living Writers*, p.149.
39. Waugh, *Brideshead*, p.245.
40. Waugh, *Brideshead*, p.297.
41. Op. Cit. p.301.
42. Jeffrey Heath, *The Picturesque Prison, Evelyn Waugh and His Writing*, (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982), p.161.

Bibliography:

Bradbury, Malcolm, *Evelyn Waugh*, Writers and Critics (ed. Norman Jeffers et al., Oliver & Boyd, 1964).

Carpenter, Humphrey, *The Brideshead Generation, Evelyn Waugh and His Friends* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989).

Hastings, Selia, *Evelyn Waugh: a Biography* (Sinclair Stevenson, 1994).

Heath, Jeffrey, *The Picturesque Prison, Evelyn Waugh and His Writing* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982).

Littlewood, Ian, *The Writings of Evelyn Waugh* (Barnes & Noble Books, 1983).

Oewell, George, The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell, ed. S. Orwell and I. Angus (Secker & Warburg, 1968), vol.4.

Phelps, G.H.(ed.), *Living Writers* (Sylvan Press [1947] 1951).

Sykes, Christopher, *Evelyn Waugh: A Biography* ([Collins, 1975] Revised edn. Penguin, [1977] Reprinted, 1982).

Stannard, Martin, *Evelyn Waugh, No Abiding City, 1939–1966* (J.M.Dent & Sons, 1992)

Stannard (ed.), *Evelyn Waugh, The Critical Heritage* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984)

Waugh, Evelyn, *Brideshead Revisited* ([1945] Uniform Edition, Methuen, 1960).

----, *Mr. Wu & Mrs. Stitch, the letters of Evelyn Waugh to Diana Cooper* ed. Artemis Cooper (Sceptre edn. 1992).

----, *Diaries 1911–1965,* ed. Michael Davie ([1976] Penguin Books, 1984).

----, *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh,* ed. Mark Amory (Penguin Books 1980).

----, *The Essays, Articles and Reviws of Evelyn Waugh,* ed. Donat Gallagher (Methuen, 1983).