

CONTINUITY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY
IN EVELYN WAUGH'S
WAR TRILOGY

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WAR TRILOGY

by
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ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts an illustration of Evelyn Waugh's war trilogy as the culmination of characterization, childhood, and militarism are traced throughout the trilogy to reveal a tightly cohesive and unified whole. The manner in which Evelyn Waugh's relationship to his fiction provides his works with unity is also demonstrated. Consequently, this thesis relies heavily upon Waugh's diaries; the raw materials for his trilogy.

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INTRODUCTION

In a letter to Graham Greene of August 18, 1951, Evelyn Waugh wrote, "I am writing an interminable novel about army life, obsessed by memories of military dialogue."¹ This is Waugh's first recorded mention of the war trilogy, Sword of Honour, his last large-scale work of fiction. Waugh's friend and biographer, Christopher Sykes, hails this as the grand climax, for which the whole work of Waugh's literary maturity prepared.² In a critical study, William J. Cook agrees that:

It is the war trilogy . . . that marks the culmination of Waugh's art in theme and artistry, and in the successful blending of the technical exigencies of the satiric mode with a serious moral statement in the form of a conventional novel.³

The proposition that Waugh offers a serious moral statement may be opposed on the grounds that the war is described within the narrow confines of the Halberdier

¹C. Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography (Boston, 1975), p. 344.

²Ibid., p. 450.

³W. J. Cook, Masks, Modes, and Morals: The Art of Evelyn Waugh (New York, 1971), p. 238.

barracks. Privilege is prevalent, and there are frequent suggestions that the war is a frivolous entertainment, being run by the men's clubs of London. Yet, as John St. John suggests, Waugh's seriousness is defended by the critical and honest observation present in the trilogy:

Emerging from the whole Sword of Honour trilogy is the futility of much of the war effort, the disenchantment with killing, the inevitable betrayal of civilized values. Some of these collapsing values reflected merely his [Waugh's] idiosyncratic, ritualistic obscurantism, and yet how right he was to avoid treating 1939-45 as an epic; instead he unmasked it as an ironic series of muddled, sordid, often cruel and pointless episodes. . . .⁴

Despite a failure to present the true magnitude of Europe's agony, Waugh's war trilogy is commended by John St. John for providing, "the truest as well as the funniest guide to the war."⁵

In December, 1951, four months after announcing to Graham Greene his involvement with an 'interminable novel about army life', Evelyn Waugh completed Men at Arms, the first volume of his trilogy. "He took the very greatest pains to get army details correct, as a result of which, his correspondence for this year contains a large assortment of letters to and from men with whom he had served in

⁴J. St. John, To the War With Waugh (London, 1974), p. 55.

⁵Ibid., p. 55.

the war, notably Bob Laycock."⁶ Because of the trilogy's autobiographical nature, Laycock and many other friends and associates of Waugh's became models for literary characters.

In 1954, after recovering from the mental illness chronicled in The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold, Waugh began work on Officers and Gentlemen, the second volume of his trilogy. It was well received by the public and critically appraised as superior to Men at Arms. According to Christopher Sykes,

The change in tone and spirit between Men at Arms and Officers and Gentlemen is very striking. There is a freedom and freshness about the writing which is not often found in Men at Arms. There are no more expository accounts of military routine, no more troop movements: the scene has been set and the details can be taken for granted.⁷

Officers and Gentlemen was completed in November of 1954. Its foreword, in the Chapman and Hall edition of 1955, announced that the trilogy would not be completed.

If Waugh was tired of writing after the completion of Officers and Gentlemen, this mood was temporary. Al-

⁶Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 347.

⁷Ibid., p. 420.

though the trilogy was not completed for another seven years, a diary entry of October 2, 1955 illustrates that even at that early date Waugh was considering Unconditional Surrender:

I must ask the experts: is prayer one of the activities which are unimpaired in senility? Or do people pray best at their full strength and are apparently prayerful dotards just blank? The point arises in the treatment of Mr. Crouchback in the final volume or volumes of work in progress.⁸

Waugh later admitted that the volume began from the need to explain a character in Officers and Gentlemen.

According to Sykes, "The composition of the last volume of the trilogy, Unconditional Surrender, the most complicated and the most successful in design of all three novels, kept him [Waugh] toiling . . . for more of his time than he would probably have wished."⁹ It was finally published in 1961, ten years after conception. The theme remained centered on, "the concerns that have characterized Waugh's fiction from the beginning -- the decay of civilization in contemporary times, and the plight of the alien overwhelmed by modernity."¹⁰

⁸M. Davie, The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh (London, 1976), p. 743.

⁹Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 403.

¹⁰Cook, Masks, Modes, and Morals, p. 242.

Waugh's war trilogy, Sword of Honour is often hailed as his finest novel. Christopher Sykes cautions that its concern with the military renders it an exclusively men's book. In an age when both sexes are equally ignorant of militarism as practised in 1945, this theory is suspect. It is true, however, that what may be Waugh's finest effort has never received the public interest afforded his previous novels.

The raw materials for Sword of Honour are found in Waugh's diaries. It is not an uncommon opinion that, "from a literary point of view, the only real interest in the diaries is the raw material he [Waugh] later worked into the novels."¹¹ The proximity of Waugh's life as recorded in his diaries to Sword of Honour necessitates a parallel reading. It is impossible to divorce the man from his fiction, a task this thesis does not attempt. For this reason, the following study of Waugh's war trilogy relies heavily upon information from his diaries, even though they have been carefully edited by Michael Davie.

In an attempt to demonstrate the manner in which Evelyn Waugh's relationship to his fiction provides his works with structural unity, this paper will consider three aspects of Waugh's war trilogy; characterization,

¹¹P. Grosskurth, "The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh", The Globe and Mail

elements of childhood or infancy, and thirdly, the role of militarism.

The relationship between Evelyn Waugh and characterization is especially significant because of Waugh's frequent similarity to the trilogy's protagonist, Guy Crouchback. Unity is achieved through this character, as all subplots and other figures in the trilogy are integrated through his observations. Crouchback's constant domination of plot establishes in the trilogy a unity of focus. Although the importance of other characters rises and declines, there is no doubt that Waugh's chief tale is that of Guy Crouchback. Thematic unity in the trilogy revolves around Guy's progression and search for values to replace his lost illusions.

Other than the physical similarities of age and myopia, and despite the opinion of Nigel Dennis in a 'New York Review' that "the good, brave, kindly figure of Guy Crouchback . . . was modeled by a man who had no resemblance to him at all,"¹² there are many parallels in the lives of Guy Crouchback and Evelyn Waugh. These are obvious both in their army careers and subsequent disillusion.

¹²N. Dennis, "Fabricated Man", New York Review, XXIV (Dec. 8, 1977), p. 3.

Waugh, like Guy, "is incapable of intimacy or deep affection . . . has drinking companions instead of friends, and cannot find one man to admire . . . in the army, where comradeship and loyalty are easy."¹³ The evidence for this view of Waugh's character is derived largely from his diaries. According to Sykes, this diary presentation owes a great deal to Waugh's skill as a caricaturist:

When he came to portray himself he thus inevitably presented a self-caricature. But he had an added incentive, a continuing and distressing psychological abnormality which took the form of a life-long tendency towards self-hatred. In later years he saw this as a "sense of sin". He was morbidly aware of his faults. . . . He needed to fight against so much self-reproach that he was constantly confronted by temptations to despair.¹⁴

It was from this mood of brutal self-misrepresentation that Waugh succumbed to an attitude which plagued Guy Crouchback and many other characters in the war trilogy; the deathwish.

On the surface, there is little about Evelyn Waugh's early life which seems incongruous to a success story. He was born into a middle-class London family, attended a good public school and graduated to Oxford. Waugh, however, was not content with middle-class origins. Once his own status

¹³S. Hynes, "Evelyn Waugh's Sad Mean Life . . .", The Guardian (1977), p. 18.

¹⁴Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 50.

evolved by means of literary success, he engaged his vitriolic attacks on the common man and everything for which he stood. Waugh's caustic scorn is nowhere more apparent than in his treatment of Trimmer in the war trilogy. V. S. Pritchett, in a 'New York Review', explains Waugh's aspiring to high society as part of a protective structure. After the mad chaos of his youth he welcomed the pose of the 'clubbish gentleman'. Pritchett adds that, "Waugh is not the first writer of decent suburban upbringing to find his background dull and to be taken up by an aristocracy, the fashionable and the rich."¹⁵

The conception of the author, "whose heart was in an ideal opposite of himself",¹⁶ is illustrated in Waugh's admirable characters. Their positive qualities are the antitheses of those possessed by Waugh. In the war trilogy Apthorpe's talent and Mr. Crouchback's morality are examples. Apthorpe is skilled in all the arts of the military. Both Waugh and Guy Crouchback are generally deficient in these areas. Similarly, Mr. Crouchback retains his faith in Roman Catholicism in the face of all obstacles. Neither Guy nor Waugh share this fortitude.

¹⁵V. S. Pritchett, "Diaries", The New Yorker (1978), p. 79.

¹⁶Dennis, "Fabricated Man", p. 3.

The study of characterization in the war trilogy suggests that Waugh did not merely design characters with the opposite of his qualities. To his negative characters, he gives some of his own negative features, and mediocre figures are endowed with elements of Waugh's own mediocrity. Almost every example of characterization thus elucidates Waugh's self-loathing. That this is not fabrication is supported by a similar presence in Waugh's diaries, books not intended for other eyes.

The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh illustrate Waugh's self-hatred and frequent despair. They describe his boredom, emptiness, rudeness and drunkenness. In a 'Guardian' review, Samuel Hynes suggests that one must allow for the diary mood:

No one writes his cheerful thoughts in a diary, and I suppose people who are habitually cheerful don't keep diaries at all. There must have been unrecorded moments in Waugh's life when he felt well, was sober, and liked his work and his children; but the account that he felt obliged to record is unrelievedly gloomy.¹⁷

If the diaries are not to be accepted as adequate illustration of Waugh's self-loathing, the memories of his personal friends offer substantiation. Sykes recalls

¹⁷Hynes, "Evelyn Waugh's Sad Mean Life . . .", p. 334.

an incident when Waugh was brutal and uncivil to an unidentified young man:

Evelyn offered no defence but gave an explanation of his behavior which became familiar to many of his friends. 'You have no idea', he said, 'how much nastier I would be if I was not a Catholic. Without supernatural aid I would hardly be a human being.'¹⁸

The childishness apparent in this reasoning is another element through which the war trilogy maintains continuity. In the text of this thesis, Christopher Sykes and Somerset Maugham offer explanations for the emphasis on childhood in the war trilogy. Whatever the reason for their presence, aspects of childhood and infancy abound throughout the three novels.

Characterization in the trilogy is largely affected by the incorporation of childhood trappings. Guy Crouchback is initially the unloved child. His evolution to the state of an unloved man encompasses all the frivolity of school days and adolescence. The obvious ideal for the child-soldier is that of the 'noble warrior'. An obsession with this ideal allows the application of fantasy soldiering to Guy's regiment, the Halberdiers. The apex of this application finds Guy embarking on the basic heroic mission.

¹⁸Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 334.

A realization that fantasy standards are not fulfilled is impetus for Guy's gradual disillusion.

Militarism, a subject severely affected by Waugh's preoccupation with childhood, evolves in a manner contributing continuity to the war trilogy. Its credence emanates from a frequent approximation of Waugh's own military career. The fictitious regiment which Guy Crouchback joins is similar to Waugh's own regiment, the Royal Marines. Letters show that Guy was to originally have been an officer in the Brigade of Guards until Waugh realized the anomalies and complications of Household Troops.¹⁹

The military, as most elements of the trilogy, is filtered through the experience of Guy Crouchback. Continuity results from the juxtaposition of Guy's personal evolution and his evolving view of war and militarism. War is initially an ideal for the trilogy's protagonist. The three novels are linked by its gradual decay. Although the trilogy changed during the course of writing, important elements, like the controlling imagery of the crusader's sword and the quest are present from the beginning.

¹⁹Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 347.

The texts chosen for this thesis are the Penguin editions of Men at Arms, Officers and Gentlemen and Unconditional Surrender. Waugh revised the three volumes for publication as a trilogy, Sword of Honour, in 1965. In doing so he took the liberty of discarding parts which he felt made the work "interminably long". Unfortunately, the bits he discarded were often informative and enjoyable. For this reason the following study will consider the trilogy in its original and entire form.

CHAPTER ONE

CHARACTERIZATION

Evelyn Waugh's war trilogy presents an excellent delineation of character. Through Guy Crouchback, the trilogy's protagonist, "the reader is introduced to all the characters who play even the slightest role in the novel. . . . They seem important only because of their relationship to Guy."¹ Subplots involving minor characters are integrated in the novels through Guy's observations, experience, correspondence and conversation.² The dependence of all other characters on the protagonist provides connecting links throughout the trilogy and unifies Guy Crouchback's story.

A discussion of various characters with whom Guy maintains relationships must first consider the character of Guy, himself. He is the hero as victim, created in the mode of Paul Pennyfeather of Decline and Fall and A Handful of Dust's Tony Last. Guy's character is consistent throughout the trilogy; one of the unifying features of the work as a whole. In fact, he is as consistent as the self-hating personality he caricatures, Evelyn Waugh.

¹Cook, Masks, Modes, and Morals, p. 253.

²Ibid., p. 254.

In Men at Arms, the first volume of the trilogy, Waugh's description of Guy suggests a much older man. This unreliable narration belies the fact that Guy, like Waugh, was only in his mid-thirties at the outbreak of the second world war. When war occurs Guy decides to leave the Italian castle which he inhabits. Its physical state of disrepair encourages a sense of Eliot's "Waste-land" as well as the 'tangled garden' theme prevalent in much Romantic literature. As an inhabitant of this declining environment Guy is the traditional romantic suffering from ill-fortune.

Guy is loved neither in his household nor in the Italian village in which he resides. Even his religion offers no brotherhood. Acceptance by the Royal Corps of the Halberdiers does not penetrate Guy's sense of alienation, but instructs him in the art of feigned sociability.

Bellamy's, where last he had slunk in corners to write his begging letters, offered him now an easy place in the shifting population of the bar. He drank hard and happily, saying mechanically 'Cheerio' and 'Here's how', quite unconscious of the mild surprise these foreign salutations roused.³

Guy's mood of amiable companionship results from the belief that he is doing well in the Halberdiers. "At no previous

³E. Waugh, Men at Arms (Great Britain, 1978), p. 78.

stage in his life had Guy expected success."⁴ Waugh's diary reveals a similar familiarity with failure. His education at Lancing and initial attempts as a writer were not distinguished, and Waugh was usually surprised by even the mildest success. Despite attempts at brotherhood Guy remains unloved. Tommy Blackhouse, modelled after Waugh's commander Bob Laycock, points out that Guy was, "never a good mixer." Laycock was equally aware of Waugh's deficiency in the social graces.

Friendships into which Guy enters are doomed to failure because of some flaw in the chosen friend. Apthorpe, Guy's friend and frequent doppelgänger in Men at Arms took hold of Waugh and became the central figure of the book whose three parts are named 'Apthorpe Gloriosus', 'Apthorpe Furibundus', and 'Apthorpe Immolatus', or the triumph, the fury and the slaying. The structure and titles of this volume suggest a book of epic proportion. Waugh's satiric vision, however, defines this as a mock epic.

Apthorpe's friendship is a new adolescence enacted in a former prep school, with Apthorpe a figure of Guy's idealized childhood. It is suggested that as a character

⁴Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 167.

of childhood innocence Apthorpe could not exist in the disillusionment of the two succeeding volumes of the trilogy. He, "had to die, for he symbolizes the high spirits and optimism with which Guy entered the service and which have been drained from him in the course of Men at Arms."⁵ Another explanation is that Apthorpe's death was necessary to prevent his domination of the trilogy. In either case his death was timely and necessary.

Christopher Sykes, Waugh's biographer, suggests that it is a surprise and a disappointment that Waugh had no real life model for Apthorpe and that, "this farcical character makes amends for the pedestrian character of the book."⁶ He is childishly adept at the game of soldiering. Of the men enlisted in Guy's Halberdier troop, only Apthorpe looked like a soldier: "He was burly, tanned, moustached, primed with a rich vocabulary of military terms and abbreviations. Until recently he had served in Africa in some unspecified capacity. His boots had covered miles of bush trail."⁷ Because of similar ages, Guy and Apthorpe

⁵G. D. Phillips, Evelyn Waugh's Officers, Gentlemen, and Rogues: The Fact Behind His Fiction (Chicago, 1975), p. 118.

⁶Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 417.

⁷Ibid., p. 44.

are addressed affectionately as 'Uncle'. Guy's proficiency at 'playing soldier' in no way approximates that of Apthorpe, yet their similarity increases when each returns from leave with a lame leg. In several incidents Guy is mistaken for Apthorpe. Although the latter constantly expresses indignation at these mistakes, the two become friends in a parody of boyhood relationships.

The friendship between Guy and Apthorpe is solidified, as are many juvenile relationships, by a mutual quest or imaginary mission. In their case this mission involves a portable field latrine, referred to by Apthorpe as his 'Thunder-Box'. While the identity of this item is initially a mystery, Guy senses that it is "something rare and mysterious." When Apthorpe produces his treasure, 'a brass bound, oak cube', labelled 'Connelly's Chemical Closet', Guy is surprised. Waugh's friend and associate Cyril Connolly was probably more surprised. As in most childhood missions, disloyalty is at one time an issue when Apthorpe accuses Guy of using his 'Thunder-Box'. Guy's innocence established, Apthorpe makes an offer symbolizing true friendship;

Look here, old man, if you'd care to use the thunder-box too, it's all right with me.

It was a moment of heightened emotion; an historic moment, had Guy recognized it, when in their complicated relationship Apthorpe came nearest to love and trust.⁸

⁸Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 151.

Contentless relationship, Guy looks no farther than that of his friend's condition. He does not realize that 'chuan Tummy', the ailment frequently suffered by Apthorpe, is actually the hangover following an all-night binge. The intensity and uniqueness of friendship bind and carries him, "to the far gardens of fantasy."⁹ Utterly this world of fantasy does not communicate the reality that Apthorpe is a degenerating alcoholic. As a result, Guy does not realize that a gift of liquor will save the death of his hospitalized friend.

"Men at Arms with its hero inspired by an illusion. Officer Gentlemen ends with its deflation. An aspect of this illusion was Apthorpe, so the book begins with the placation of spirit, entitled, in an earlier draft, Apthorpe Place."¹⁰ As this second volume progresses characters & events mature. Accordingly, the ideal of a single befriending established in Men at Arms expands to include friendships with several people. Ivor Claire and Tommy Blackhouse comprise Guy's complement of

⁹ Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 135.

¹⁰ F. J. Stopp, Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of a Novelist (London, 1958), p. 169.

friends. His relationships with these men lack the adolescent loyalty contained in his friendship with Apthorpe. Mistakes made by Ivor and Tommy are not as easily forgiven.

Guy's initial encounter with Ivor Claire occurs in a training camp on the Isle of Mugg. Guy recognized, "from the first a certain remote kinship with this most dissimilar man, a common aloofness, differently manifested -- a common melancholy sense of humour; each in his own way saw life *sub specie aeternitatis*; thus with numberless reservations they became friends, as had Guy and Apthorpe."¹¹ Claire, obviously suspect by virtue of the feminine ending of his name, is presented as a Byronic figure. He "reclined upon a sofa, his head enveloped in a turban of lint, his feet shod in narrow velvet slippers embroidered in gold thread with his monogram. He was nursing a white pekinese; beside him stood a glass of white liqueur"¹² When considering his Commando X as the 'Flower of the nation', Guy imagines that Claire is "the finest flower of them all. He was quintessential England, the man Hitler had not taken

¹¹E. Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen (London, 1977), p. 87.

¹²Ibid., p. 48.

into account."¹³ Christopher Sykes has described Ivor as, "the beau idéal of British society, clever, impeccably dressed, a first-rate horseman, a born officer, the sort of man whom Evelyn was said to worship and whom he did sometimes recklessly admire. But Ivor Claire turns out to be a man of putrefied core, only 'fair without'. He treacherously deserts his men in the hour of crisis."¹⁴ Guy is pleased about Ivor's escape from Crete only until he discovers the dishonour involved. "The bond with Apthorpe had been a link with conformity, with the soldierly type; that with Ivor is the instinctive fellowship of the unclubbable, a common aloofness."¹⁵

Guy's second friendly attachment in Officers and Gentlemen is with the man who stole his wife Virginia, Tommy Blackhouse. Tommy is frequently described as the perfect soldier, a man adept in all areas of military experience. In contrast, Guy's deficiencies are painfully

¹³Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 114.

¹⁴Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 421.

¹⁵Stopp, Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of a Novelist, p. 172.

obvious. Waugh suggests that the basis of their friendship was not proximity in a small commando, but having loved the same woman, and more so, having shared laughter;

Men who have endured danger and privation together often separate and forget one another when their ordeal is ended. Men who have loved the same woman are blood brothers even in enmity; if they laugh together, as Tommy and Guy laughed . . . orgiastically, they seal their friendship on a plane rarer and loftier than normal human intercourse.¹⁶

The model for Tommy Blackhouse is generally recognized as Major-General Sir Robert Laycock, to whom Waugh dedicated Officers and Gentlemen. Although Laycock made no concerted effort to steal either of Waugh's wives, Christopher Sykes suggests that the reason for Waugh's dedication was that Laycock was often Waugh's sole supporter in a time when other officers considered him too unpopular for employment.

The friendships contracted by Guy in Men at Arms and Officers and Gentlemen are noticeably absent in Unconditional Surrender. Disillusionment with the course of the war destroys Guy's sense of boyish idealism and the accompanying need for meaningful friendships. Continuity is achieved in the trilogy, however, through a series of characters with whom Guy is not directly involved. Trimmer,

¹⁶ Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 68.

Hound and Ludovic are central to the plot of Officers and Gentlemen. Trimmer was introduced in Men at Arms as a man obviously unsuited to military life. His success in Officers and Gentlemen substantiates the cause of Guy's disillusion. Although Hound's demise is secured in the second volume of the trilogy, the mystery associated with his death endures as a major theme in Unconditional Surrender. Ludovic, present in the second two books of the trilogy, provides a link with the military exercises of Men at Arms as well as a visual reminder of Ivor Claire. The impetus for this reminiscence is Ludovic's pet dog, a pekinese.

"Trimmer hardly appears in Men at Arms, but his few seconds are so memorable that Evelyn was justified in re-introducing him without explanation in the next volume."¹⁷ In Men at Arms is it quite natural that an ex-hairdresser is named Trimmer. The seventeenth century etymology of his name is only later apparent. In this age a 'trimmer' was a person who could trim to any wind. This is obviously a characteristic of Waugh's Trimmer when he reappears in Officers and Gentlemen. The Trimmer encountered by Guy on the Isle of Mugg has changed his name to Captain and

¹⁷Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 419.

occasionally Major McTavish. Despite the alias, Trimmer is undoubtedly the same unscrupulous wrangler destined for failure in Men at Arms.

Waugh's contempt for the common man is expressed in novels preceding his war trilogy. In Brideshead Revisited a character named Hooper is a perfect expression of the age of the common man. The vile condition this figure embodies is accordingly termed 'Hooperism'. Nowhere is 'Hooperism' more prevalent than in Trimmer, one of Waugh's most bizarre characters.

The rise of Trimmer is set against the declining world of real soldiering. "He is the new and ugly reality which supplants the old illusion which was Apthorpe, he is the denial of all form, tradition, honour."¹⁸ It is ironic that the type of military blunder which 'blotted Guy's copy-book' in Men at Arms is responsible for conferring upon Trimmer the laurels of heroism in Officers and Gentlemen. This theme of success through dishonour continues in Unconditional Surrender and again with Trimmer as an example. Guy questions the similarity between Trimmer's and Ritchie-Hook's military accomplishment;

¹⁸Stopp, Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of a Novelist, p. 61.

It's an odd thing. In all this war I've only twice had any part in an operation. Both have afforded classic stories of heroism. You wouldn't have thought, would you, that Trimmer and Ritchie-Hook had a great deal in common.¹⁹

The literary use of friends and acquaintances is exemplified in the character of Major Hound, a man drawn from Waugh's Commanding Officer's immediate staff. This unfortunate officer, "later suffered a total nervous collapse in Crete, an incident on which Evelyn looked with a merciless lack of compassion."²⁰ This lack of compassion is so pronounced that biographer and critic alike refrain from revealing the officer's true name. An editorial note in Evelyn Waugh's diary explains that;

'Hound' has been substituted by the editor of the diaries, for the real name of this officer, whose crack-up during the Battle of Crete is described by Waugh later in 'Memorandum on Layforce'. In Waugh's novel Officers and Gentlemen, the collapse of the military machine in Crete and the behaviour of its officers ends the illusion of the hero Guy Crouchback that the war is being fought by men of principle, officers and gentlemen. The disintegration of 'Major Fido Hound' closely parallels the conduct of the officer whose real name has been suppressed.²¹

¹⁹E. Waugh, Unconditional Surrender (Great Britain, 1976), p. 223.

²⁰Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 212.

²¹Davie, The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh, p. 496.

The fate of Major Hound in Officers and Gentlemen is foreshadowed in a story told by Guy's nephew Tony in Men at Arms. Tony tells his uncle about an officer from the last war, "who seemed quite normal till he got into action and then went barking mad and his sergeant had to shoot him."²² The adjective 'barking' links this tale to Major Hound, an officer described in canine terms throughout Officers and Gentlemen. Hound appears in this volume as a small, bald, young man who, "had chosen a military career because he was not clever enough to pass into the civil service."²³ Under the duress of the battle in Crete, Hound becomes increasingly dog-like. He 'paws' at Guy. After separation from his troop, the culvert in which he takes refuge is described as a kennel. Like a dog, Fido needs only food and orders. His disappearance suggests complicity on the part of Ludovic. Incidents in Unconditional Surrender substantiate this suggestion.

Ludovic, the man apparently responsible for Major Hound's murder, is initially described as, 'a man of mystery' and a suspected communist. Critics have praised this character as a principle of vitality²⁴ and one of Waugh's most

²²Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 31.

²³Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 119.

²⁴Stopp, Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of a Novelist.

original creations.²⁵ As an exercise in self-parody Waugh, who kept diaries for most of his life, satirizes Ludovic's habit of keeping a daily journal. Although diaries were forbidden as a security risk during the second world war, Waugh was as guilty of this crime as Ludovic.

Christopher Sykes suggests that although it was illegal to keep a diary, it was an offence committed by many men, and not in the least peculiar to either Waugh or Ludovic;

During World War II an addendum to King's Regulations laid down that no one serving in His Majesty's forces was to keep a private diary. The rule was ignored by everyone from the Chief of the General Staff to the humblest soldier or sailor who felt some urge to record his thoughts and adventures at so stirring a time, and I know of no official prosecution against those who were guilty of this act of disobedience and 'insecurity'.²⁶

In Officers and Gentlemen, however, Ludovic's diary is a source of animosity between Hound and Ludovic.

'Crouchback,' said Major Hound, 'has it occurred to you that Ludovic is keeping a diary?'

'No.'

'It's contrary to regulations to take a private diary into the front line.'

'Yes.'²⁷

²⁵Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 421.

²⁶Ibid., p. 203.

²⁷Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 175.

This animosity increases until a conversation between Hound and Ludovic in which the former's death is once again foreshadowed. Ludovic confides to Hound that while talking with an Australian Sergeant he had learned of cases of, "men shooting officers and stealing motor vehicles."²⁸ Hound anticipates an awkward situation when Ludovic loses his mind. Unfortunately he does not anticipate the ramifications of this loss.

While writing Officers and Gentlemen Waugh felt he had exhausted war-time situations and decided to abandon the idea of a third volume. The third book of the trilogy arose from the fact that Ludovic needed explaining. The result was that "each novel had a common form because there was an irrelevant ludicrous figure in each."²⁹ They are Apthorpe, Trimmer and Ludovic. Although Trimmer is present in name, only Ludovic is physically present in Unconditional Surrender. This volume begins with the description of a queue of people waiting to see the 'State Sword', made "at the King's command as a gift to 'the steel-hearted people of Stalingrad.'" Ludovic's compromised morality is evident in the manner in which he avoids waiting to see the sword;

²⁸Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 175.

²⁹Phillips, Evelyn Waugh's Officers, Gentlemen, and Rogues, p. 106.

Major Ludovic went straight to the Abbey entrance, laid his blank oyster gaze on the policeman and raised his gloved hand to acknowledge a salute that had not been given.

'Ere, just a moment, sir, where are you going?'

'The-er-King's present to the-er-Russians-they tell me it's on show here.'

'Got to wait your turn. There's others before you, sir.'

Ludovic spoke with two voices. He had tried as an officer; now he reverted to the tones of the barrack-room. 'That's all right, cock. I'm here on duty same as yourself.'³⁰

The sword which Ludovic visits is the gift from England to the Russians for their help in defeating Germany. In terms of Guy Crouchback's initial idealism and in contrast to the sword of Roger de Waybrooke, this is a sword of dishonour.

After visiting this monument Ludovic embarks upon another visit of dishonour; to the home of Sir Ralph Brompton, the homosexual communist who had been his close friend and mentor. Sir Ralph informs Ludovic that the latter's 'Pensées' will be published in the journal, 'Survival'. Ludovic's meeting with the publisher of this magazine, Everard Spruce, provides a link with Hound's mysterious disappearance in Officers and Gentlemen. Spruce questions Ludovic about the technical devices contained in his pensées;

³⁰ Waugh, Unconditional Surrender, p. 34.

There seem to be 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.'³¹

Ludovic's simple misunderstanding provides evidence for the murder of Hound while revealing Ludovic's total ignorance of literature. It is a parody of the writers who viewed Eliot as the Grand Master of literature and adopted him as their model. In light of the title of one of Waugh's books, A Handful of Dust, this must also be self-parody. Waugh's admiration of Eliot is evident in selecting a phrase from 'The Waste Land' for his title. This admiration, although perhaps coloured with jealousy, was also evident in Waugh's repeated attempts to meet the famous poet. After hearing many unfavourable stories about Waugh, Eliot's "determination not to meet Evelyn became fixed. So Evelyn never met the poet from whose works . . . he had taken the title of what was perhaps his best novel."³²

Ludovic's complicity in the deaths of Major Hound and an unknown shipman is also suggested by his great discomfort in the presence of Guy Crouchback. This complicity is emphasized when after extensive debate Ludovic decides

³¹Waugh, Unconditional Surrender, p. 51.

³²Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 316.

to name his pekinese puppy Fido, because of 'poignant associations' rather than 'convention'.³³ These associations are also present in the delineation of Ludovic's pensées. He read the last pages of his novel and realized;

that the whole book had been the preparation for Lady Marmaduke's death -- a protracted, ceremonious killing like that of a bull in the ring. Except that there was no violence. He had feared sometimes that his heroine might be immured in a cave or left to drift in an open boat.³⁴

Without a substantial revelation, Waugh clearly implies that Ludovic is responsible for the deaths of at least two men. "The synopsis of the first two books, which introduces the concluding volume of the trilogy, makes it plain that Evelyn intended the reader to assume murder. But no convincing explanation is offered as to why Ludovic murdered Major Hound."³⁵

Although Guy Crouchback is not a major success with women, his relationships with females elucidate his character. Guy, like Waugh, had the misfortune to marry a

³³ Waugh, Unconditional Surrender, p. 121.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 188.

³⁵ Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 422.

faithless woman. Guy's wife is reminiscent of female characters in previous novels by Waugh. She is closely related to Brenda Last in A Handful of Dust and Vile Bodies' Nina. These women are caricatures of a type developing in the late nineteenth century. Termed 'New Women' by Shaw, they "belonged to a generation that had found a new emancipation after the war and, with their shingled hair and motor cars and wayward independence, often confused the young men who pursued them.³⁶ Critics have claimed that Waugh's preoccupation with marriage breakdowns evolved directly from personal experience. They have cited a change in his character after the end of his first marriage in 1929. Christopher Sykes first met Waugh during this period and has no recollection of an angry, broken man.

The evidence of his early life shows that he always had a tendency to cruelty; his every book, indeed almost every writing from his hand, shows a deep underlying bitterness; he had some illusions about the world, as appears much later, but they were fantastical; his serious thought was always free of illusion. There are descriptions of calamitous marriage in his fiction, and doubtless these were strongly influenced by his memories of 1929, but there are other descriptions, especially in his later writing, of stoical acceptance of destiny, and these also may have been strongly influenced by memories of that year . . . I believe that Evelyn, for all the anguish he endured, was not radically changed.³⁷

³⁶

Davie, The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh, p. 159.

³⁷

Waugh, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 96.

The extent to which Waugh was affected by the dissolution of his first marriage is uncertain since he did not keep a diary during this period. While the break-up may not have changed Waugh's personality, it had an obvious effect on his career. "First, it deprived him of a settled base, with the result that from 1930 until his second marriage in 1937 he travelled constantly, both in Britain and -- much more adventurously than hitherto, abroad. Next, the marriage breakdown propelled him into the Roman Catholic church."³⁸ While it is doubtful that the infidelity of Waugh's first wife may be held responsible for forty subsequent years of female characterization, the fact remains that in Waugh's novels there is a persistent theme of the betrayed husband, and in few cases, an attractive view of women.

The poor health of Guy Crouchback's wife Virginia necessitated their separation. This was also the cause which separated Waugh and his first wife. In both cases the unsuspecting husbands are notified of their wives' change of heart in a letter. Virginia wrote to Guy regularly;

³⁸Davie, The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh, p. 306.

until one day, still affectionately, she informed him that she had fallen deeply in love with an acquaintance of theirs named Tommy Blackhouse; that Guy was not to be cross about it; that she wanted a divorce. 'And please,' her letter ended, 'there's to be no chivalrous nonsense of your going to Brighton and playing "the guilty party"'. That would mean six months separation from Tommy and I won't trust him out of my sight for six minutes, the beast.'³⁹

This letter reveals many aspects of Guy's situation. Like Waugh, he is usurped by an acquaintance. Virginia's refusal to stage her husband's adultery in Brighton suggests that this service would be demanded by Guy's code of old world chivalry. Tony Last in A Handful of Dust possesses the same chivalrous notions and does travel to Brighton to feign adultery for court purposes. Virginia's motive for refusing this ploy suggests that infidelity is a natural part of her world, thus rendering her name ironic. She cannot leave her new lover because she does not trust him.

Despite the tendency to pass judgement on the offending party in a divorce proceeding, sympathy often lies with Virginia. "She is that over-familiar figure in fiction and drama, the lightheaded, loose-living woman with a good heart. Evelyn makes this stock figure of popular fiction

³⁹Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 118.

alive, interesting, convincing and new."⁴⁰ Virginia's simplicity and gaiety are endearing features which continue throughout the trilogy. She is especially sympathetic when contrasted with her ex-husband, Guy Crouchback.

Familiarity with Guy's character allows some leniency for Virginia. During a chance encounter with a stranger, Guy learns that in the eyes of the Roman Catholic Church he and his ex-wife are still legally married. When reunited with Virginia in London, Guy attempts a sexual relationship in accordance with his new knowledge. Unfortunately for his sudden amorousness, Virginia realizes his motives and explodes;

'I'd far rather be taken for a tart. I'd rather have been offered five pounds to do something ridiculous in high heels or drive you round the room in toy arms or any of the things they write about in books.' Tears of rage and humiliation were flowing unresisted . . . 'I'd thought you chose me specially, and by God you had. But I was the only woman in the whole world whose priests would let you go to bed with.⁴¹

Because of Guy's concept of morality Virginia's actions are partially excused. Crouchback is not the guiltless figure portrayed in A Handful of Dust's Tony Last.

⁴⁰ Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 427.

⁴¹ Waugh at Arms, p. 133.

For this reason Virginia is not seen in the same unsympathetic light as Tony's wife Brenda.

In a relationship with the previously mentioned Trimmer, Virginia also escapes reprimand. Trimmer is an immoral, unreliable egotist, and she treats him accordingly. They have a brief affair in Scotland to which Trimmer attaches monumental importance and Virginia, none at all.

Virginia, as near as is humanly possible, was incapable of shame, but she had a firm residual sense of the appropriate. Alone -- far away, curtained in fog -- certain things had been natural in Glasgow in November which had no existence in London, in spring.

As a result, Trimmer's memory of Virginia encourages a voice within him to continuously repeat 'You, You, You' while Virginia feels only nausea at any recollection of him. Because her lack of kindness is not unwarranted it cannot be despicable. In a comment reminiscent of Nina in Vile Bodies, Virginia is told that Trimmer is in love with her. To this knowledge she replies, "Yes, it's too indecent."⁴²

News that Virginia is pregnant emphasizes the extent of Trimmer's indecency. After unsuccessfully endeavoring to arrange an abortion Virginia despairs.

⁴²Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 219.

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.⁴³

Resolving this situation by marriage to Trimmer is precluded because of Virginia's immense hatred for him.

Strangely, this hatred does not emanate from Trimmer's character flaws, but rather, because "he fell in love with her."⁴⁴

For several characters in the trilogy, Virginia's only inexcusable error is in promoting the 'fin de ligne' of the Crouchback family. Strict Catholicism prevents Guy's remarriage and ensures his childlessness. For her contribution to this condition, Virginia is seen by Guy's Uncle Peregrine as, "a Scarlet Woman: the fatal woman who brought about the fall of the house of Crouchback."⁴⁵ For Peregrine, her name, Virginia Troy, also evokes a suitable comparison with Helen of Troy.

⁴³Waugh, Unconditional Surrender, p. 82.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 89.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 131.

While a belligerent characterization of women may not be completely attributable to Waugh's marriage collapse, the fact remains that in few instances does he create positive female figures. The most unappealing female figure in Waugh's war trilogy is the wife of a soldier in Guy's corps in Men at Arms. The paragraph introducing Mrs. Leonard is preceded by one commemorating Roger de Waybroke's unaccomplished journey and the padlocking of his madam prior to departure. Waugh establishes that to embark on a journey necessitates freedom from female influence.

Less constrained than the Lady of Waybroke, the womenfolk of the Halberdiers were all over the ante-room when Guy returned. . . . One of his own batch, the athletic young man named Leonard, had brought his wife that morning.⁴⁶

It is only until meeting Mrs. Leonard that Guy envisions an idealistic future for Leonard in the Halberdiers.

Mrs. Leonard shares no features with the madam of Roger de Waybroke, and her control ensures Leonard's failure as a soldier. She prefers a career for her husband in the R.A.F. The cool motivation for this transfer illustrates the extent of her control:

⁴⁶Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 63.

You just settle down at an R.A.F. station as though it was business with regular hours and a nice crowd. Of course I shouldn't let Jim fly, but there's plenty of jobs like my brother's got.⁴⁷

Mrs. Leonard's need to dominate transcends the treatment of her husband. She is the only one in the Halberdier barracks to escape paralysis in the presence of Ben Ritchie-Hook. She confronts him on equal ground as a worthy opponent for the domination of her husband. By disregarding the brigadier's wishes and smoking, she offers defiance. When Hook contemptuously demands to know who owns the madam, she bravely replies that she owns Mr. Leonard. Not only her presence, but her designation as a 'madam', a term used to describe Roger de Waybroke's wife, signify a departure from the status of that lady.

Negative female characterization persists in Officers and Gentlemen, as illustrated in the presentation of Mrs. Algernon Stitch. She is the same character who added humour and confusion to the pages of Scoop. Once again she commands a small car which embarks on impossible courses. In the war trilogy, however, Guy Crouchback is her unfortunate passenger:

⁴⁷Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 65.

Soon she turned off into a side street marked OUT OF BOUNDS TO ALL RANKS OF H.M. FORCES....

'Are you sure we can get down this street?'

'Not sure. I've never been here before.

Someone told me about a little man.'

The way narrowed until both mud-guards grated against the walls.

'We'll have to walk the last bit,' said Mrs. Stitch, climbing over the wind-screen and sliding down the hot bonnet.⁴⁸

It is in areas of control and domination that Julia Stitch's negative aspects emerge. Ivor Claire, a fellow officer and friend of Guy's, escapes from Crete. This news is wonderful until the realization of Ivor's cowardice and his protection by Mrs. Stitch. Julia views Guy as a threat to Ivor's eventual repatriation from an Indian retreat. Her attempts to remedy this situation include sweet cajolery and the blatant repetition of the contrived story of Ivor's escape. Intervention of this sort results in Julia's reputation as the protectress of X Commando. "In the manner of Margot Beste-Chetwynde, who lured Paul Pennyfeather into the ambiguous world of King's Thursday and the white slave traffic, Julia Stitch, with fine disregard for traditional moral principles, traffics in the persons of dishonoured officers."⁴⁹

⁴⁸Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 128.

⁴⁹Stopp, Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of a Novelist, p. 177.

There is an obvious exception to Waugh's characterization of women in Officers and Gentlemen. Kerstie Kilbannock is a good wife:

personable, faithful, even-tempered and economical. All the pretty objects in their home had been bargains. Her clothes were cleverly contrived. She was sometimes suspected of fabricating the luncheon vin rosé by mixing the red and white wines left over from dinner. . . . There were nuances in her way with men that suggested she had once worked with them and competed on equal terms. Point by point she was the antithesis of her friend Virginia Troy.⁵⁰

At this point Waugh must be accused of slightly unreliable narrative. Kerstie and Virginia are not representative of such polarities as good and bad. While in the first two volumes of the war trilogy Kerstie is a welcome alternative to Waugh's generally negative female figures, in Unconditional Surrender her unattractive characteristics emerge.

The faithful wife capable of serving a rather suspect rosé in Officers and Gentlemen, is at times almost malicious in Unconditional Surrender. When Virginia must pay a £250 fine as reparation for a fraudulent insurance claim, Kerstie is willing to help. The money she offers Virginia, however, is not in the form of a loan, but a payment for many of

⁵⁰Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 133.

Virginia's possessions. Kerstie's friendship is again discredited when she tries to dissuade Guy from remarrying his former wife, Virginia.

While each volume of the war trilogy comments on women through the device of specific female characters, Unconditional Surrender also offers a view of women in general. In this volume Waugh describes a crowd of people waiting to see the Stalingrad Sword, a symbol of dishonour. The disorder of this situation is emphasized because the line is comprised largely of women. At a literary party, the same disorder is reflected in the predominance of women. As chivalry dies in the throes of a barbaric war, women are removed from their pedestals. Trimmer is not the only male who brags of intimacies with women. Guy's major in Italy describes a succession of WAAF conquests.

The most important reference to women, however, concerns Virginia. Everard Spruce explains that she is "the last of twenty year's succession of heroines. . . . The ghosts of romance who walked between the two wars."⁵¹ Spruce reads a 1922 Huxley passage describing a woman, and explains that:

⁵¹Waugh, Unconditional Surrender, p. 200.

Hemingway coarsened the image with his Bret, but the type persisted -- in books and in life. Virginia was the last of them -- the exquisite, the doomed, and the damning, with expiring voices -- a whole generation younger. We shall never see anyone like her again, in literature or in life. . . .⁵²

Family ties played an important role in the lives of both Evelyn Waugh and Guy Crouchback. The most important aspect of this in Waugh's life and in his trilogy is the father-son relationship. According to Christopher Hollis, Guy Crouchback's father is an ideal character. Christopher Sykes adds that, "many readers, including discerning ones, have found Mr. Crouchback a bit too good to be true, have seen in him . . . another of Evelyn's dangerous excursions into sentimentality."⁵³ Waugh, however, offered Frederick Stopp a plausible explanation for Mr. Crouchback's apparently 'too good' nature. Waugh said that the function of Guy's father was, "to keep audible a steady undertone of the decencies and true purpose of life behind the chaos of events and fantastic characters. Also to show him as a typical victim (parallel to the trainloads going to concentration camps) in the war against the modern age."⁵⁴

⁵²Waugh, Unconditional Surrender, p. 200.

⁵³Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 416.

⁵⁴Stopp, Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of a Novelist, p. 168.

In Men at Arms Mr. Crouchback is initially described as:

an innocent, affable old man who had somehow preserved his good humour -- much more than that, a mysterious and tranquil joy -- throughout a life which to all outward observation had been overloaded with misfortune. . . . He had a . . . 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 a fair share of joys.⁵⁵

This portrait of Mr. Crouchback, "is a picture of a gradual but certain, possibly somewhat stubborn, deterioration."⁵⁶ The character of Guy's father remains consistent with this presentation throughout the trilogy.

Mr. Crouchback's strict Catholicism is another constant feature of characterization. William J. Cook, Jr. has suggested that Mr. Crouchback represents the English Catholic aristocracy.⁵⁷ An intolerance of anything but Catholic moral doctrine is illustrated in Guy's father. Mr. Crouchback offers Guy an 'Our Lady of Lourdes' medallion, formerly the property of Guy's dead brother, Gervase. Guy questions the protecting qualities of this

⁵⁵Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 34.

⁵⁶Cook, Masks, Modes, and Morals, p. 264.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 253.

medal in view of his brother's death. Mr. Crouchback explains that the medallion gave Gervase much more protection than one might think:

Once in London, when he was in training, he got rather drunk with some of his regiment and in the end he found himself left alone with a girl they'd picked up somewhere. She began to fool about and pulled off his tie and then she found the medal and all of a sudden they both sobered down and she began talking about the convent where she'd been at school and so they parted friends and no harm done. I call that being protected.

According to Mr. Crouchback's morality, a medal which protects the spiritual life is preferable to one merely guarding the physical.

This theological construct is the basis for Mr. Crouchback's belief in the 'bona mors' or the 'good death'. When his nephew, Tony, disappears in Calais, Guy's father rejects the possibility of surrender and resigns himself to the belief that Tony has had a good death. News of Tony's incarceration is not welcomed by the old man. He rationalizes the responsibility for Tony's plight:

It is God's will for the boy but I cannot rejoice. Everything points to a long war -- longer perhaps than the last. It is a terrible thing for someone of Tony's age to spend years in idleness, cut off from his own people -- one full of temptation. It was not the fault of the garrison that they surrendered. They were ordered to do so. . . .58

⁵⁸Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 202.

Mr. Crouchback's strict Catholicism is the backdrop for a theme which recurs throughout the trilogy, that of 'fin de ligne'. In Men at Arms, the once extended Crouchback family has gradually diminished until Guy is the youngest, and apparently the last, member. In this novel Guy encounters Mr. Goodall, who relates the story of the extinction of an historic Catholic family. This condition has been assured for the Crouchback family by Guy's divorce and childless marriage. Mr. Crouchback's acquaintances envision no alternative. Miss Vavasour, a friend of Mr. Crouchback's, comments on Guy's presence with the following words: "Fin de ligne."⁵⁹ Guy's ex-wife Virginia is also aware of the threat to the Crouchback family. She, however, shares none of Miss Vavasour's sentimentality. According to Virginia, the Crouchbacks are over-bred and under-sexed. She attributes the death of their family to the fact that they do so little "____ing."⁶⁰

It is in death rather than life that Mr. Crouchback achieves truly heroic proportions. If Waugh may be attacked for excessive sentimentality, it must be for his descrip-

⁵⁹Waugh, Unconditional Surrender, p. 60.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 146.

tion of the death of Guy's father. This moving and pious account is a stark contrast to Waugh's diary description of his own father's death;

On July 24 my father died and brigade H.Q. left London for 'Operation Husky'. It was an unfortunate coincidence as I was distracted from one by the other. I was angry with Bob for leaving me behind so easily. My father died with disconcerting suddenness.⁶¹

Mr. Crouchback also died suddenly, yet peacefully, at his residence in Matchet. Like Waugh's father, he took temporary teaching assignments for the duration of the war.⁶² People arrived by all modes of travel for Mr. Crouchback's funeral. The church was as crowded as during Midnight Mass at Christmas.⁶³ This comparison to Christmas is repeated when Mr. Crouchback's grave is described as lined with moss and evergreen leaves and chrysanthemums, "giving it a faint suggestion of Christmas decoration."⁶⁴ The parallel is subtle yet obvious. Some-

⁶¹Davie, The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh, p. 539.

⁶²Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 195.

⁶³Waugh, Unconditional Surrender, p. 63.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 67.

one of Christ-like proportions has died. This is substantiated by Guy's feeling that, "his father was the best man, the only entirely good man, he had ever known."⁶⁵

The moving description of Mr. Crouchback's death is even more interesting for its creation by a man who notes his own father's death as an unfortunate coincidence of disconcerting suddenness.

The paragraph which introduces this chapter claims that the dependence of all characters upon Guy Crouchback is a link throughout the trilogy. Events and characters in the volumes are integrated through Guy's observations, experience, correspondence and conversation. At the conclusion of this chapter the initial claim is extended. The dependence of all characters upon Guy Crouchback, and Guy's dependence upon Evelyn Waugh results in the consistent unity of the war trilogy.

CHAPTER TWO

CHILDHOOD

The great emphasis on childhood in Evelyn Waugh's war trilogy is perhaps explained by the view of Christopher Sykes that there was something child-like about Waugh throughout his life. Sykes augments this theory by paraphrasing Somerset Maugham's idea that

writers of fiction are usually somewhat 'ungrown up' in character. To invent stories and to listen to the inventions occupies a great part of childish activity. Most people in later years, when they put away childish things, retain the taste for listening to inventions (or no novels would sell well) but lose the taste for and ability to invent stories. Few people, except very dry and dreary ones, put away all their childish things. The novelist retains, among other things from his past, the wish and ability to invent stories, and this indicates that such a person has probably retained more childish things than most people do.¹

Waugh's retention of childish elements emerges through the characterization and ideals in his war trilogy.

Guy Crouchback, the protagonist in this trilogy, derives something from the war that he had missed in childhood, a happy adolescence. The first volume of the trilogy

¹Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 50.

begins with Guy forced to consume a large piece of cake offered as a farewell gift by female servants of nanny-like authority. Nannies play important and frequent roles in Waugh's writing. The reader is encouraged to laugh with, but never at them. According to Sykes, this represents some loyalty by Waugh to his first Nanny, Lucy. Sykes elucidates this in a description of Scoop.

Evelyn did not include nursery servants among those he ridiculed. In the uppermost rooms of Boot Magna there are three retired ex-nannies. They are all quite ridiculous. But the fun poked at them is mild and affectionate; Evelyn wrote nothing likely to have distressed Lucy of Chilcompton.²

Forced to eat cake by female servants offering authority without love, Guy Crouchback is initially the unhappy, dominated child. Only upon joining the ranks of the Royal Corps of the Halberdiers does Guy glimpse the freedom and ~~fr~~ivolity of adolescence. He lives in a barracks which integrates the routine and regimentation of the Boy Scouts with the prankish fun of a boy's prep school. Although Guy and his new friend, Apthorpe, are termed 'Uncle' because of their comparatively advanced ages this nickname signifies membership rather than segregation.

²Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 50.

After the eight years of loneliness and isolation which succeeded his divorce, Guy is filled with adoration for the friendly atmosphere of the Halberdier barracks. After only a few weeks as a member of this corps, Guy's entire life revolves around his membership. "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."³ This is the beginning of Guy's love-affair with the army; an affair so all-encompassing that even religion is secondary.

According to Waugh's biographer Christopher Sykes, the great love for the military possessed by many of Waugh's characters is often attributed to Waugh, himself. Sykes feels it is more likely

that the fiction is only indirectly representational, and reflects a hope and an ideal rather than an emotional involvement which Evelyn went through. He admired the tradition of the officer and gentleman, but then he admired the tradition of the country squire living as a benevolent sovereign on his acres, but found in practice that the life was rather boring. So . . . he felt about army life.⁴

³Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 57.

⁴Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 200.

While Waugh recognizes military glory as an ideal capable of enticing Guy Crouchback, he is too much the shrewd cynic to personally attach himself to so lofty a conception.

Guy's consumption of every element of Halberdier life is only exceeded by his friend, Apthorpe's, consumption of alcohol. The trappings of adolescence are obvious in Apthorpe's continuous description of his condition on the mornings after drinking bouts. As countless teenagers suffer twenty-four hour influenza on New Year's Day, Apthorpe is the frequent victim of "Bechuana Tummy".⁵ His talent for applying specialized names to normal occurrences transcends hangovers and includes an apt knowledge of military terminology. When Guy suggests sending a note rather than making a signal, Apthorpe haughtily informs him that; "That's what I mean, old man. You always call it 'making a signal' in the services."⁶

The high seriousness with which Guy and Apthorpe regard the service is not shared by all. The wife of a fellow soldier complains that her husband never has any free time because of playing soldiers all week.⁷ This camp-like view of the Halberdiers is personified in one man,

⁵Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 60.

⁶Ibid., p. 60.

⁷Ibid., p. 64.

Brigadier Ben Ritchie-Hook, a character obviously inspired by a Brigade Commander Waugh encountered while in training at Kingsdown, Kent. A diary entry of January 18, 1940 describes this Commander:

St Clair Morford . . . looks like something escaped from Sing-Sing and talks like a boy in the Fourth Form at school -- teeth like a stoat, ears like a faun, eyes alight like a child playing pirates, 'We then have to biff them, gentlemen.' He scares half and fascinates half.⁸

In his chronicle of the war, To the War With Waugh, John St. John also remembers a certain Brigade Commander and substantiates his connection with Ritchie-Hook.

In command was a brigadier with a boyish but manic laugh who, it was believed, had been selected for his reputation for dare-devil escapades -- clearly the prototype for Evelyn's Ritchie-Hook. In lectures he promised us plenty of blood and confirmed that our prime role would be to mount seaborne raids on the enemy's coastline.⁹

Waugh removed Brigade Commander St. Clair Morford from real life and emphasized his physical eccentricities in the creation of Ritchie-Hook. "Ritchie-Hook receives the projection of all Crouchback's compensatory romanticism; he is the adventurer and figure of irrepressible vital force, a distant descendent of Captain Grimes in Decline and Fall

⁸Davie, The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh, p. 461.

⁹St. John, To the War With Waugh, p. 10.

and like him, always in the soup."¹⁰

The description of Ritchie-Hook as an 'enfant terrible' is exceedingly appropriate.¹¹ Hook's character is identified in a series of anecdotes, each worthy of notation in a Boy's Annual. He is preoccupied with force and discusses this force with roulette imagery. Hook is the essential child in Waugh's trilogy. He is the prankster, the camp leader and at times even the peaceful innocent:

In the drawing room with the coffee Colonel Ritchie-Hook showed the softer side of his character. There was a calendar on the chimney piece, rather shabby now in November and coming to the end of its usefulness. Its design was fanciful, gnomes, toadstools, harebells, pink bare babies and dragonflies. 'I say,' he said. 'That's a lovely thing. My word it is lovely. Isn't it lovely?'¹²

While apparently a presentation of the softer side of a fierce soldier, this situation actually demonstrates the flaws in Ritchie-Hook's character. The calendar which he admires is not a lovely thing. It was never lovely, in fact, but rather at best, an example of cheap sentimentalism. Like Ritchie-Hook, it is a picture of exaggerated life. Since the month is November the calendar bears another similarity to the Brigadier. In the new year it will be useless, as Ritchie-Hook and his ~~dated~~ war methods will be

¹⁰Stopp, Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of a Novelist, p. 160.

¹¹Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 66.

¹²Ibid., p. 71.

defunctionalized by modern warfare.

Ritchie-Hook's childlike appreciation of beauty is infrequently noted and succumbs to the presentation of his prankster character. Hook lives the life of a perpetual inmate in a Boy's prep school. He gives offending men in his company the choice of reprimand from the C.O. or punishment by means of a cane. Playing pranks is a natural past-time in this school-day atmosphere:

When Ritchie-Hook spoke it was mostly to recount practical jokes or gaffes raisonnées. For this remarkable warrior the image of the war was not hunting or shooting; it was the wet sponge on the door, the hedgehog in the bed; or rather he saw war itself as a prodigious booby trap.¹³

Waugh's description of Halberdier functioning emphasises the similarity between the barracks and a prep school. Guy's course in elementary training ends shortly before Christmas and the men, like all good school boys, are given a Christmas vacation. In a further measure to approximate life in a boy's school, the soldiers are honoured with a guest night. Each man requests the presence of his most prestigious acquaintance. Guy invites his nephew Tony, who accepts for the mere pleasure of seeing his uncle masquerade as a young soldier. The guest evening

¹³Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 72.

includes a ritualistic dinner complete with horn of snuff, and concludes with a rough-and-tumble game of waste-paper basket football.

When a movement order transfers Guy's company to Kut-al-Imara House, Southsand-on-sea, the school-like atmosphere of the Halberdier barracks is retained. The new base is appropriately the former Kut-al-Imara Preparatory School. Food provided in this institution is of the quality Guy remembers from his own school days. "Sleeping quarters had plainly been the boy's dormitories. Each was named after a battle in the First War."¹⁴ Everything is reminiscent of Guy's own adolescence. This includes an argument in which Guy threatens a fellow soldier with a stick:

Just such a drama, he reflected, must have been enacted term by term at Kut-al-Imara House, when worms turned and suddenly revealed themselves as pythons; when nasty, teasing little boys were put to flight.¹⁵

The company's awareness of its school-like regimentation is illustrated when a soldier, Sarum Smith, rings the school bell one day before parade:

¹⁴Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 90.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 104.

Major McKinney thought this a helpful innovation and gave orders to continue it. The curriculum followed the text-books, lesson by lesson, exercise by exercise, and the preparatory school way of life was completely recreated. They were to stay there until Easter -- a whole term.¹⁶

During this term Guy's troop is subject to the exacting influence of Ritchie-Hook. When Hook reprimands the corps, Guy recognizes the scene as one reminiscent of frightened school boys awaiting the wrath of their 'Head'. The reorganization resulting from Ritchie-Hook's anger prompts Guy to feel that he inhabits a far superior prep school, but still a prep school.¹⁷

This school atmosphere naturally affects the men in Guy's group. Apthorpe reverts to the adolescent past-time of passing secret notes. Another soldier, Leonard, sings school songs, occasionally improvising words which more readily accommodate his present situation. Guy thrives in the happy adolescence which he missed during his own school days. Like that of Guy, Waugh's school career was in many ways deficient.

Waugh left his prep school in 1917 and went to Lancing College. He had been intended for Sherborne but his brother Alec was expelled from this college in 1915 for

¹⁶Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 113.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 139.

writing The Loom of Youth, an undisguised autobiography exposing the extent of homosexual activities in boy's schools. This book resulted in the removal of Arthur Waugh and his son Alec's names from the roll of Sherborne Old Boys and the barring of Evelyn's admission.

Lancing College was a run-down, rather monastic institution with which Evelyn had no connections. "In his autobiography, Waugh describes his early days there as 'black misery.'¹⁸ In a school which revered excellent scholastics, athletics and good looks, Evelyn was noticeably deficient in all three areas. His consistent mediocrity produced an expectation for less than success:

We then went to the library, where the library privileges list was up. I missed them by one place, Apthorpe got them and Southwell and I, who were equal next to him, missed ours. It is very hard as I would have almost given anything to get them. I seem to miss everything by just a hair's breadth, first my House colours and now this. I expect when I die, I shall miss getting into Heaven by one place and the golden gates will clang to in my face.¹⁹

This excerpt from a September 28, 1919 diary entry indicates Waugh's pessimism and also reveals the origin of Guy Crouchback's best friend's name, Apthorpe. It is interesting that while the real life Apthorpe may have shared no characteristics with his fictitious namesake, he did secure

¹⁸Davie, The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh, p. 15.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 21.

an honour coveted by Waugh, just as Guy's friend was the more successful soldier.

Guy Crouchback's idealization of Ritchie-Hook Boy's Book war tactics is a normal symptom of an unfulfilled life and return to adolescence. "Two phrases, 'the officers who will command you . . . ' and ' the men you will lead', set the junior officers precisely in their place, in the heart of the battle. For Guy they set swinging all the chimes of his boyhood's reading."²⁰ Guy's childhood acquaintance with reading had introduced him to a literary figure named Truslove, an officer given impossible missions necessary for the survival of his regiment. When listening to Truslove stories at prep school Guy had been spellbound.²¹

Guy's preoccupation with a fantasy world of soldiering encourages him to translate Truslove morality to the Halberdiers. When a fellow soldier requests a transfer, which will enable him to remain in England with his family, Guy recalls a similar incident in Captain Truslove's regiment. A showy captain named Congreve had

²⁰Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 165.

²¹Ibid., p. 166.

resigned on the day his regiment went on orders for foreign service. Although apparently dishonoured, Congreve is in fact an under-cover agent who later returns to save the day. While Guy realizes that this story has no connection with the transfer of a real life Halberdier, the Boy's Book morality remains.

The apotheosis of his fantasies finds Guy in a position to display Truslovian courage. Off the coast of Dakar the Brigadier Ritchie-Hook and Colonel Tickeridge request the volunteer of an officer to lead a reconnaissance mission. Guy offers his services in what he describes as, 'true Truslove-style'.²² What he ignores, however, is that Ritchie-Hook's mission does not command the same high seriousness and prospect of danger as those embarked upon by Truslove. The very tone of Ritchie-Hook's request for volunteers denies the expectation of any feats of bravery. Guy faces the Brigadier, the Captain and Colonel Tickeridge, all looking gleeful and curiously naughty. The Brigadier said: 'We are going to have a little bit of very unofficial fun. Are you interested? The question was so unexpected that Guy made no guess at the meaning and simply said: 'Yes Sir.'

²² Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 222.

Even after the disappointment and disillusion which results from this exercise, Guy continually refers to it as 'Operation Truslove'.²³

Ben Ritchie-Hook is a strict devotee of Boy's Book war measures. In all seriousness he informs his men that, "All fire-plans are just 'biffing'."²⁴ Military tactics as interpreted by the Brigadier consist of this art.

Defence was studied cursorily and only as the period of reorganization between two bloody assaults. The Withdrawl was never mentioned. The Attack and the Element of Surprise were all. . . . Sometimes they stood on the beach and biffed imaginary defenders into the hills; sometimes they biffed imaginary invaders from the hills and into the sea.²⁵

The spirit of Ritchie-Hook's military ideals is strong in the operation at Dakar, strictly against orders, "but very much in accordance with the higher doctrine of 'biffing'".²⁶

Games, an important part of adolescence and the school curriculum, are a constant feature of Halberdier life. Ritchie-Hook encourages his men's proficiency at

²³Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 232.

²⁴Ibid., p. 115.

²⁵Ibid., p. 140.

²⁶Stopp, Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of a Novelist, p. 164.

sports and Bingo. On a course in Small Arms, Guy's group is advised to pretend they are playing football:

'Just imagine, gentlemen, that you're playing football. I daresay some of you wish you were. All right? You're outside right. There's a wind blowing straight down the field. All right? You're taking a corner kick. All right? Do you aim straight at the goal? . . .
'I'd try and pass.'
'That's not the answer I want.'²⁷

The men in Guy's troop have been so thoroughly inculcated in game playing that they accept games as an absolute and cannot conceptualize them as metaphors.

One of the major plots in Men at Arms consists of the game for possession of a portable field latrine played by Ritchie-Hook and Apthorpe, with the frequent participation of Guy. This game demonstrates Hook's lack of scruples wherebiffing is concerned. When Apthorpe's 'Thunder-Box' is finally hidden safely from the Brigadier, Hook organizes an observation game for its recovery. Equally adept at childish games, Apthorpe conceals the location of his prized latrine.

Another boyish game consists of efforts to interrupt another fellow's attempts at love-making. Guy and his ex-wife Virginia are reunited in a London hotel on

²⁷Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 94.

Valentine's Day. "Apthorpe's constant telephonic interruptions of what was planned as a tender scene are a determining factor in the ultimate fiasco."²⁸ When Apthorpe calls for the final time it is painfully obvious that Guy's attempts at reconciliation have failed. While a drunken Apthorpe rambles on about military procedures, Virginia walks out on Guy. As a childish prank, "the interrupted tête-à-tête, burlesque or tragic, is clearly a type situation with Mr. Waugh. Years before Lottie Crump had disturbed the attempted seduction of Baroness Yoshiwara by Walter Outrage, and Tony Last had tried, despairing and drunk, to get through to Brenda, in the arms of Beaver."²⁹ Waugh writes of people and societies which consider love and sexual relations as games. It is only reasonable that their interruption be interpreted this way.

The image of the Halberdiers merely 'playing soldiers' is emphasized by the disrespect afforded their uniforms and military decorations. When Guy meets Virginia in London she wonders why his uniform is a different colour than others she has seen. He explains

²⁸Stopp, Evelyn Waugh: Portrait of a Novelist, p. 162.

²⁹Ibid., p. 163.

that colour denotes various regiments, to which she replies, "Well, I think your colour's much more chic. And how it suits you."³⁰ Virginia's concern with the colour of Guy's clothes does not exceed that of a disinterested fashion designer. Apthorpe is similarly guilty of regarding military trappings from a viewpoint of aesthetic appearance. He carries a stud box containing extra military stars and crowns which he generously makes available to Guy.

The theme of adolescence which is so central in the first volume of Waugh's trilogy is also prevalent in the second, Officers and Gentlemen. This book does not merely focus on school life and pranks but looks back as far as the nursery. Under stress, certain characters revert to the language of their infancy. When faced with an unattractive meal Guy makes an effort to 'do better'. "'Doing well', of course, was an expression of the nursery. It meant eating heavily."³¹ Similarly, when Guy misses a package which is thrown to him the thrower calls him 'butterfingers' and explains that the package contains dynamite. In yet another situation. Guy refuses to speak after the ordeal he suffers while disembarking from Crete. While hospitalized a nurse continues to ask if he has

³⁰Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 83.

³¹Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 64.

anything to say and Guy is reminded of similar periods of silence in the nursery, and the nanny who had asked if he had swallowed his tongue.

Images of school life are a logical progression from those of the nursery. Guy analyses the conversation between himself and the man to whom he delivers Apthorpe's legacy:

It was like the game Guy used to play when he was an undergraduate and stayed at country houses -- the game in which two contestants strove to introduce a particular sentence into their conversation in a natural manner.³²

Although an officer, Tommy Blackhouse's concern with the war is largely in retaining an atmosphere of school boy intimacy. His sentiment is that if it is going to be a long war, the time will best be spent with friends. In a manner equally reminiscent of school life Trimmer tells Virginia of all his female conquests while working as a hair dresser on a boat. "For half an hour he kept her enthralled by his revelations, some of which had a basis of truth."³³

Games and pranks, an important aspect of school life, remain a constant feature in Officers and Gentlemen. In this novel training continues on the Isle of Mugg, a

³²Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 57.

³³Ibid., p. 76.

location drawn from Waugh's 1926 tour of Scotland. In the barracks, a member of Guy's commando, Ivor Claire, "had ordered the local carpenter, a grim Calvinist with an abhorrence of cards, to make a baccarat shoe on the pretext that it was an implement of war."³⁴ It is ironic that for the war as Ivor knew it, gaming was an important feature. Ivor's proficiency at games is also illustrated during a tactical exercise. Since Ivor understands that the object of the manoeuvre is to attain a position, he feels no qualms about chartering a bus to transport his men. He rationalizes that in a real manoeuvre a bus would surely be available.

Disguise, a feature of game-playing, is also an important element in Officers and Gentlemen. Apthorpe's possession of a stud box full of military decorations is echoed by Trimmer, "with his bonnet on the side of his head, his shepherd's crook in his hand and a pair of major's crowns on his shoulders (he had changed them for his lieutenant's stars in the train lavatory)."³⁵ Trimmer

³⁴Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 68.

³⁵Ibid., p. 73.

further emphasizes disguise with his new Scottish garb and name of McTavish. A fraud himself, Trimmer is adept at seeing through the disguise of others. While trying to engage a table in an exclusive restaurant Trimmer quickly notices the head waiter's false French accent:

The two men looked at one another, fraud to fraud. They had both knocked about a little. Neither was taken in by the other. For a moment Trimmer was tempted to say: 'Come off it. Where did you get that French accent. . . . The waiter was tempted to say: 'This isn't your sort of place, chum. Hop it.'³⁵

The themes of childhood and adolescence which unify the first two volumes of Evelyn Waugh's war trilogy continue in the third volume of the series, Unconditional Surrender. Just as Guy was quartered in the former boy's dormitory of the Kut-al-Imara prep school, the figure around whom the third book revolves, Ludovic, is assigned to the nursery of a requisitioned villa. The stress which in the first two volumes results in characters reverting to infantile language has a similar effect in Unconditional Surrender. As the result of this process, Ludovic sings a song,

³⁵Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 73.

not of his own youth; one which a father or uncle must have sung reminiscently to the extraordinary little boy that was to become Ludovic:

'Father won't buy me a bow-wow-wow-wow.
 Father won't buy me a bow-wow-wow.
 I've got a little cat and I'm very fond of that
 But what I want's a bow-wow-wow-wow.³⁶

Guy's ex-wife, Virginia, also returns to a song from her childhood when attempting to coerce Guy into a reconciliation. "Virginia began to sing a song of their youth about 'a little broken doll.'"³⁷ Surprisingly, the songs of both Virginia and Ludovic, each bemoaning an unhappy condition, are superseded by a rectifying solution. Virginia, although unwittingly a broken doll herself, is rescued by Guy's atavistic chivalry and martyr-like Catholicism. Similarly, Ludovic secures a pekinese puppy.

Reminders of the nursery and childhood precede those of school life, a condition which remains analogous to war in Unconditional Surrender. De Souza, a fellow officer, informs Guy that army courses are like prep schools. He emphasizes this theory by noting the similarity between the welcome given the new soldiers and that received by

³⁶Waugh, Unconditional Surrender, p. 73.

³⁷Ibid., p. 145.

arriving students. Accordingly, the officers in Guy's camp compete for the closest seat to the chief instructor at dinner. A Brigadier substantiates De Souza's idea by admitting:

When I was at Sandhurst no one talked about war. We learned about it, of course -- a school subject like Latin or geography; something to write exam papers about. No bearing on life.³⁸

In accordance with their environment, characters comply with the precepts of school life. After resigning herself to the fact that the life of her baby seemed destined by fate, Virginia sews her layette neatly and happily. This is described, "as a survival of the school-room, incongruous to much in her adult life."³⁹ In a similar reversion to childhood Ian Kilbannock awakes one morning from a debauch:

all the symptoms of alcoholic hangover, such as he had not experienced since adolescence, overwhelmed him. As in those days, he has no memory of going to bed. As in those days, he received an early call from the man who had put him there.⁴⁰

³⁸Waugh, Unconditional Surrender, p. 170.

³⁹Ibid., p. 159.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 215.

The youthful pranks and Boy's Book spirit of adventure found in the first two volumes of Waugh's trilogy remain in spirit yet alter with the increasing disillusion of Unconditional Surrender. Rather than satirize the practical joker, this third volume cites examples of small bands of experts who, "made researches into fortifying drugs, invisible maps, noiseless explosives, and other projects near to the heart of the healthy school boy."⁴¹ The pranks of the Ritchie-Hook school of militarism have succumbed to those aiming at death and not merely inconvenience. While Guy recuperates from a parachute landing he receives two pictorial journals as reading material which,

From their remote origin in juvenile humour, were still dubbed 'comics'; but for their price they would have been more appropriately named 'penny-dreadfuls' for the incidents portrayed were uniformly horrific.⁴²

These books illustrate the same spiritual change affecting pranks and practical jokes. As the war progresses the juvenile Boy's Book view of combat is overshadowed by the desire to kill and conquer.

⁴¹Waugh, Unconditional Surrender, p. 26.

⁴²Ibid., p. 118.

While Men at Arms introduces the image of Guy Crouchback as a child, and the subsequent two novels in the trilogy trace his growth, there is no resulting state of adulthood. Guy progresses from the unloved child to the happy child, and once again reverts to an unhappy childishness. What in his hopeful stage is the innocence of the child is destined to become his ignorance. Images of childhood are a constant source of unity throughout the trilogy. In the first two volumes, however, the focus is on the carefree child. In Unconditional Surrender he is replaced by the youngster giving credence to the adage that 'children are cruel'.

CHAPTER THREE

THE MILITARISM

Because of the similarity in the military careers of Evelyn Waugh and Guy Crouchback, this chapter does not attempt to separate the two, but instead, frequently examines their relationship. For this reason, the following comparative chart makes an interesting and useful preface to the chapter.

Military Careers

Evelyn Waugh	Guy Crouchback
In 1939 at the age of 36 Waugh joins the Royal Marines as a junior officer.	In 1939 at the age of 36 Guy joins the Royal Corps of Halberdiers as a junior officer.
Training in Chatham, Kingsdown and Bisley.	Training in Southsand.
July, 1940 made Captain of a Company.	April, 1940 made platoon commander/later a Captain.
1940-41 assault training as battalion Intelligence Officer round Scapa Flow.	Intelligence Officer at Scapa Flow.
Sailed to West Africa to seize the port of Dakar -- operation cancelled.	Same.
Transferred to Col. Bob Laycock.	Transferred to Tommy Blackhouse.

Evelyn Waugh	Guy Crouchback
Posting in Middle East.	Posting in Middle East.
May, June/1941 formed rear-guard in evacuation of Crete.	Same.
Transferred back to England.	Transferred back to England.
Back in Commandos, training in Scotland.	Refused return to Commandos. Halberdier training in Scotland.
1943 -- spent in U.K.	1943 -- spent in U.K.
December, 1943 -- parachute jumping course.	Same.
1944 -- left London to join a British military mission to Tito's Partisans in enemy-occupied Yugoslavia.	Same.
Survives plane crash in Yugoslavia.	Guy's acquaintances survive plane crash in Yugoslavia.
From Yugoslavia annoyed top brass by sending urgent signals for things like soap.	Annoyed top brass by signalling about Jewish dilemma.
1945 -- disillusioned by war.	1945 -- disillusioned by war.

Evelyn Waugh's war trilogy has been praised for providing the truest and funniest guide to the second world war. "All three books being in light spirit with a series of events in training set in England, with Guy's mood a hopeful one, and all conclude in action abroad, where Guy

witnesses and is involved in a betrayal, as a result of which he suffers in reputation, hope and faith."¹ The picture of service life is one of the trilogy's greatest merits. Details of militarism, honour and patriotism comprise a thread of continuity which links the three novels. It is not the constancy of these factors which develops this link, but rather, the delineation of their decay and resulting disillusionment.

War is an ideal for Waugh's protagonist Guy Crouchback. His progression and search for values provides the trilogy with thematic unity. When Guy learns of the Russian-German alliance he is pleased;

News that shook the politicians and young poets of a dozen capital cities brought deep peace to one English heart. Eight years of shame and loneliness were ended. . . . Now, splendidly, everything had become clear. The enemy at last was plain in view, huge and hateful, all disguise cast off. It was the Modern Age in arms. Whatever the outcome there was a place for him in that battle.²

In this sentiment, Waugh presents a view closely aligned with his own. England, "was indeed going to fight against evil but in asking for a Russian alliance . . . [was] . . . only too ready to fight against evil in the company of evil.

¹Phillips, Evelyn Waugh's Officers, Gentlemen, and Rogues, p. 110.

²Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 12.

To Evelyn, as to Crouchback, the news of the Soviet-Nazi pact, the news that all the evil would be against us was an undiluted relief."³

By viewing the war in such heroic terms Guy endows both himself and militarism with disproportionate qualities. For himself, Guy adopts the guise of crusader or questor. Ironically, he dedicates his quest to Sir Roger of Waybrooke, a Knight enlisted in a Holy War, yet prematurely killed in a false battle. On his last day in Italy, Guy, "made straight for the tomb and ran his finger, as the fishermen did, along the knight's sword. 'Sir Roger, pray for me,' he said, 'and for our endangered kingdom.'"⁴ Initially, Guy's dedication to his cause blinds him to all but the grandeur of war. In Halberdier training a priest speaks of the war as a time of 'doubt, danger and suffering.' "Guy stiffened. It was a time of glory and dedication."⁵ A belief in these qualities provides Guy with a moral objective. After angrily threatening a fellow Halberdier with a stick he is distraught. "Was this the triumph for

³St. John, To the War With Waugh, p. ix.

⁴Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 13.

⁵Ibid., p. 62.

which Roger de Waybrooke took the cross; that he should exult in putting down Trimmer?"⁶

The questing of Crouchback continues in the second volume of Waugh's trilogy, Officers and Gentlemen. Guy sets out

on the second stage of his pilgrimage, which had begun at the tomb of Sir Roger. Now, as then, an act of pietas was required of him; a spirit was to be placated. Apthorpe's gear must be retrieved and delivered before Guy was free to follow his fortunes in the King's service.⁷

This mission of spiritual placation is completed after several coincidental discoveries, and in what Waugh describes as a holy moment. Once Apthorpe's spirit is placated Guy is again a free agent. His recovered freedom leads to a series of minor missions throughout the second two novels of the trilogy.

In a secondary vein of his quest Guy removes the red identity disc from a dead soldier. Extracts from Waugh's diary reveal that this discovery was factual, although Waugh did not remove the soldier's disc. The impact of Waugh's discovery is displaced to Guy.

⁶Waugh, *Men at Arms*, p. 105.

⁷Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 21.

There was one clear moment of revelation between great voids when Guy discovered himself holding in his hand, not, as he supposed, Gervase's medal, but the red identity disc of an unknown soldier, and heard himself saying preposterously; 'Saint Roger of Waybrooke defend us in the day of battle and be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil.⁸

Guy regards the dead soldier's identity disc with the same reverence accorded to the manumission for Apthorpe's gear. These are both symbols of his quest. It is interesting that although Guy locates the heir to Apthorpe's possessions and obtains his signature, there is no mention of the delivery of these goods. Similarly, Guy entrusts the identity disc to Mrs. Stitch, who drops it in a waste paper basket. The significance of Guy's dedication to an unsuccessful knight is obvious, as we see both his quests thwarted.

The opening pages of the first two novels of Waugh's trilogy find Guy Crouchback in London, 'pending posting'. Unconditional Surrender is no exception. As in previous revelations, Guy realizes that it was not for life in the London district that he had dedicated himself on the sword of Sir Roger. Guy finds his larger mission

⁸Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 152.

in a reunion with his former wife, now pregnant with another man's child. He explains his actions in words reminiscent of his dead father;

Knights errant . . . used to go out looking for noble deeds. I don't think I've ever in my life done a single, positively unselfish action. I certainly haven't gone out of my way to find opportunities. Here was something most unwelcome, put into my hands; something which I believe the Americans describe as "beyond the call of duty", not the normal behaviour of an officer and a gentleman; something they'll laugh about in Bellamy's.⁹

Guy bases his new quest on his father's religious principle which maintained that saving one soul is adequate compensation for any amount of 'loss of face'.¹⁰

Guy's final pilgrimage results from a retrospective view of former quests.

He had left Italy four and a half years ago. He had then taken leave of the crusader whom the people called 'il santo inglese'. He has laid his hand on the sword that had never struck the infidel. He wore the medal which had hung round the neck of his brother, Gervase, when the sniper had picked him off on his way up to the line in Flanders. . . . Half an hour's scramble on the beach near Dakar, an ignominious rout in Crete. That had been his war.¹¹

⁹Waugh, Unconditional Surrender, p. 151.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 152.

¹¹Ibid., p. 169.

Guy slowly gains awareness that the war is not a just crusade. The disillusionment of this realization provides the impetus for his next quest.

Waugh's war experience is the frequent model for that of Guy Crouchback. It was during the years of war that Waugh's diary is most interesting;

For the first and only time, Waugh believed that his life might become both interesting and justifiable. He entered the Royal Marines at the beginning of the war, and served through till the end. In that time he managed to participate in some of the greatest military fiascos of the war -- the attack on Dakar in 1940, the retreat from Crete in 1941, and the British Military Mission to Yugoslavia in 1945. . . . He left the service at the war's end bitterly and angrily.¹²

Waugh's diary includes a military memorandum on the British flight from Crete. "The author's rage and despair . . . his disgust with all ranks from generals to privates, appear very rarely in the written words but imbue the whole report with violence and emotion."¹³ The war which failed to accommodate Evelyn Waugh's idealistic notions is fictionalized in an account which details Guy Crouchback's corresponding disillusionment.

¹²Hynes, "Evelyn Waugh's Sad Mean Life . . .", p. 18.

¹³Dennis, "Fabricated Man", p. 3.

While posted as a Liaison Officer in Croatia, Guy's final quest involves repeated attempts to evacuate the displaced Jews in the area. His persistence prompts De Souza, a fellow officer, to label Guy's quest unheroically:

You know, uncle, I'm beginning to doubt if you're fit to be left. You've an idée fixe. I hope you aren't going to become a psychiatrist's case like your predecessor here.¹⁴

For Guy, however, evacuation of the Jews was something more than an idée fixe. It was the last in a series of quests;

It seemed to Guy, in the fanciful mood that his lonely state engendered, that he was playing an ancient, historic role as he went with Bakic to inform the Jews of their approaching exodus. He was Moses leading a people out of captivity.¹⁵

Unfortunately, this as other quests, achieves only partial success. After repeated setbacks the Jews are finally evacuated, yet the couple for whom Guy is most concerned suffer extermination, so it is implied, as the result of his indiscretion.

The need to quest is inextricably bound up with causation of the war and motives for enlisting in the forces. This is summarized by a Jewish woman Guy meets in Croatia;

¹⁴Waugh, Unconditional Surrender, p. 225.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 226.

It is too simple to say that only the Nazis wanted war. . . . It seems to me that 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?

This woman's accusation is even more potent for the reply it evokes. In an answer identifying his own incentive for joining the allied cause Guy replies, "God forgive me . . . I was one of them."¹⁶ Waugh must also have sought this forgiveness. Friends have described him as possessing a death wish. After a soft life of easy privilege Waugh was eager to suffer some redeeming hardship. This need also impelled him through war-torn Abyssinia and the jungles of Guyana.

While Waugh provides the reason for which he and Guy Crouchback enlisted in the war, several other motives are suggested;

Most of those who had 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.¹⁷

¹⁶Waugh, Unconditional Surrender, p. 232.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 37.

Of this list, the third condition is appropriate to Guy Crouchback. He did not suffer from the boredom of regimental routine. Neither did he wish to impress women. As the Catholic husband of a wife who had deserted him this was unthinkable. He had, however, led a soft life and could not reconcile this with his view of manhood; a view grounded in the epic fantasy of boy's adventure books.

Guy is sheltered from the grim realization of war's horror by his idealized conception of battle and honour. An increasing awareness of the base features of war gradually nurtures his sense of futility. After the initial belief that the war held a place for him, Guy is shocked by his brother-in-law's statement that the present war was not for soldiers. After many unsuccessful attempts to enlist, Guy grasps the truth in his relative's cynical words. Even after England declares war there is no change in Guy's routine appeals and interviews. He theorizes the possible grounds for his acceptance;

I'm not the pick of the nation . . . I'm natural fodder, I've no dependents. I've no special skill in anything. What's more I'm getting old. I'm ready for immediate consumption. You should take the 35's now and give the young men time to get sons.¹⁸

¹⁸Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 24.

Waugh, like Guy was in his mid-thirties during the second world war. He felt that his years put him at a disadvantage. Failure to achieve higher rank or qualify for dangerous missions were attributed by both Waugh and Guy to their age. What neither man realized was that even after losing ten years from their age, their personalities would have hindered advancement.

Waugh's detailed account of Guy's attempts to enlist parallel the author's own difficulties. Waugh, however, had dissimilar motives for service. His diary entry of August 27, 1939 explains a view of the war years not shared by Crouchback;

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. There is a symbolic difference between fighting as a soldier and serving as a civilian, even if the civilian is more valuable.¹⁹

Waugh believes that the war will provide endless material for future novels. He does not admit a feeling of guilt for leading 'the soft life'. Despite actual or proclaimed motivation, both Evelyn Waugh and Guy Crouchback were determined to enlist in the services. Each man saw his name added to countless lists and was promised future notifica-

¹⁹Davie, The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh, p. 438.

tion. Each waited, only to find these promises empty. Finally, both men were accepted under circumstances which appear miraculous. Guy meets a friendly general while visiting his father. Through this man's effortless intervention Guy secures a position in the services. Similarly, Waugh endured a medical examination which resulted in the doctor pronouncing him unfit for service. After conveying this seemingly fateful message to an enlistment office, Waugh was instantly accepted. A diary entry of November 25, 1939 expresses Waugh's incredulity;

A colonel . . . in khaki greeted me in the most affable way, apologized for keeping me waiting and gradually it dawned on me that I was accepted. He said, 'The doctors do not think much of your eyesight. Can you read that?', pointing to a large advertisement across the street. I could. 'Anyway most of your work will be in the dark.'

Both Waugh and Guy were too young to understand the horror of the first world war. As a result Guy envisions a second war which will be fought according to his conception of the first. This idealized notion is confirmed by second-hand accounts and heroic legends. As a temporary officer Guy longs for the reinstatement of regular soldiers, men he sees as, "survivals of a happy civilization where differences of rank were exactly defined and frankly accepted."²⁰ His first world war orientation

²⁰Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 71.

is exploded by correspondent Ian Kilbannock, who tells Guy that heroes are no longer in style. "Delightful fellows, heroes too, I dare say, but the wrong period. Last-war stuff, Guy. Went out with Rupert Brooke."²¹

Guy's atavistic view of war prevents his adoption of the fun-seeking attitude cultivated by many fellow soldiers. In Men at Arms, Tommy Blackhouse, Guy's superior officer, says, "Well, it'll be a long war. There'll be fun for us all in the end."²² Blackhouse repeats this sentiment in Officers and Gentlemen with the declaration that, "It's going to be a long war. The great thing is to spend it among friends."²³ This spirit is shared by Ian Kilbannock, who admits that his journey to the Isle of Mugg, is in fact, a pleasure trip. He thinks it will be a pleasant change from the blitz.

For many of the characters in Waugh's trilogy the grim reality of war is so far removed that fear is instead inspired by events of a nearer proximity. Fear of war's trappings rather than war itself, as well as the adolescent

²¹Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 101.

²²Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 81.

²³Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 47.

state of many characters, endows the blackout with special terror. In Men at Arms Guy hears of:

incidents and crimes in the blackout. So-and-so had lost all her teeth in a taxi. So-and-so had been sand-bagged in Hay Hill and robbed of his poker winnings. So-and-so had been knocked down by a Red Cross ambulance and left for dead.²⁴

Waugh's farcical treatment of blackout casualties reflects Guy Crouchback's early optimism. Waugh's own high spirits at the beginning of the war are also evident in a description of the blackout. In a diary entry of October 17, 1939, Waugh notes the situation of his friend and critic, Cyril Connolly:

The blackout is really formidable -- all the gossip is of traffic casualties -- the night watchman of the St. James knocked down the club steps, Cyril Connolly's mistress lamed for life and Cyril obliged to return to his wife.²⁵

The first few months of war did little to dispel the belief that the blackout was a prime terror. In Officers and Gentlemen, Ivor Claire, a fellow officer, discusses the blackout with Guy. "'The dark', said Claire, 'the blackout. That's the worst thing about the ship. It's the worst thing about the whole war.'"²⁶ Perhaps the child's

²⁴Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 22.

²⁵Davie, The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh, p. 446.

²⁶Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 109.

fear of the dark, perhaps a visual symbol of distant battle, the blackout is frequently more ominous than the war itself.

The jovial, game-like atmosphere of war is at times undermined by glimpses of the real war. When present, these enhance the continuity of Waugh's trilogy. News of actual war events occur frequently at the end of chapters or sections, emphasizing the contrast with preceding incidents. In Men at Arms, a series of practical jokes at Apthorpe's expense is followed by the news that, "this happened, though the news did not reach Penkirk for some time, on the day when the Germans crossed the Meuse."²⁷ The farcical description of Guy's training camp in Scotland is completed with the communication that the Germans had taken Boulogne. In Officers and Gentlemen the description of a dead soldier embellishes an actual event recorded in Waugh's diary;

In the square a peasant girl came and pulled at my sleeve; she was in tears. I followed her to the church, where in the yard was a British soldier on a stretcher. Flies were all over his mouth and he was dead. There was another girl by him also in tears . . . I told them to bury him.²⁸

²⁷Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 179.

²⁸Davie, The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh, p. 504.

By fictionalizing this experience Waugh endows the war with more reality than in the countless times he describes someone as having, 'caught a packet'.

Like his invented character Guy Crouchback, Evelyn Waugh served as a Liaison Officer in Croatia. Unlike Crouchback, Waugh was concerned with the treatment of Roman Catholics by Partisans. This concern prompted his desire for an audience with the Pope which he secured in March of 1945. Although the results of this meeting are suspect, Waugh's diary entry for March 2, 1945 is clearly optimistic;

Embarked at once on Yugoslav church affairs, gave him a brief résumé. . . . He took it all in, said 'Ca n'est pas la liberté', then gave his English parrot-talk of how many children had I and that he saw the naval review at Portsmouth. Gave me rosaries for my children and a 'special' blessing. But I left him convinced that he had understood what I came for.²⁹

It is probable that the Pope understood even more than Waugh gave him credit for. The audience which Waugh attained was certainly granted on the strength of his literary rather than political merits. It is suggested that Evelyn's actions in Yugoslavia were motivated by blind allegiance to his religion and did not emanate from any considered ideology;

²⁹Davie, The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh, p. 618.

In Yugoslavia, he annoyed the top brass by sending signals in the urgent code in dramatic demands for things like soap. He was tactless and at a loss in that guerilla war, when faction and ideology divided the Yugoslavs. (Waugh was all for the Croats, because they were Catholics: awkward -- many Croats, Communists said, had collaborated with the Germans.)³⁰

While the efforts of Evelyn Waugh were expended in the cause of Roman Catholics, Guy Crouchback fights for a group of displaced Jews. The frantic messages which Waugh relayed for such necessities as soap are fictionalized as desperate pleas for evacuation of homeless Jews in Unconditional Surrender. Guy's dedication is foreshadowed by passages from Men at Arms which stress the horror of the Jewish plight. A paragraph describing guest night in the Halberdier headquarters concludes with;

It all seemed . . . immeasurably far, from the frontier of Christendom where the great battles had been fought and lost; from those secret forests where the trains were, even then, while the Halberdiers and their guests sat bemused by wine and harmony, rolling east and west with their doomed loads.³¹

That these 'loads' were Jews is substantiated by a further passage describing the Altmark, a ship which aroused public indignation for the condition of its passengers;

³⁰Pritchett, "Diaries", p. 91.

³¹Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 76.

There were long accounts of the indignities and discomforts of the prisoners, officially designed to rouse indignation among a public quite indiffernet to those trains of locked vans still rolling East and West from Poland and the Baltic, that were to roll on year after year bearing their innocent loads to ghastly unknown destinations.³²

The Altmark was a German armed merchantman which after six months of picking up British prisoners was captured by the British while en route to Germany. Its 300 prisoners were debilitated by long confinement but generally healthy.³³ Waugh is cynical about a public which is indignant about the condition of these British prisoners yet indifferent to the fates of thousands of Jews.

The Jewish situation typifies all the horror of war unknown to Guy Crouchback and fellow Halberdiers. It is natural that Crouchback, knight errant, should adopt the Jewish cause as his final quest in Unconditional Surrender. "In a world of haste and waste, he was being offered the chance of doing a single small act to redeem the times."³⁴ While Guy's sympathy for Jews is a logical progression of his questing nature, Waugh's own feelings for the Jewish people were only gradually empathetic;

³²Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 126.

³³R. Wrnick, World War II (New York, 1977), p. 81.

³⁴Waugh, Unconditional Surrender, p. 192.

In the tense political Arab-Jewish situation of that time, Evelyn's sympathies were with the Arabs and his feelings towards the Zionists of Israel were extremely hostile. Circumstances made it difficult for him to maintain a consistent attitude. . . . A few Zionists . . . fortified Evelyn's prejudice, but they were outnumbered by courteous and intelligent men and women pleased at the opportunity of discussing the Israeli situation with a person of formidable intelligence. . . . Evelyn could not but admire the constructive determination in the spirit of Israel.³⁵

As previously mentioned, the impact of the war was slow in reaching Guy and his fellow Halberdiers. This was in part because Waugh was always in fashionable regiments with, "more than a touch of the war being run by White's."³⁶ In To the War With Waugh John St. John, who served with Waugh, praises the latter for his treatment of service life;

The officer's mess of the Halberdiers may offer too narrow, too privileged a viewpoint and the magnitude of Europe's agony only occasionally pervades his pages, yet his observation is meticulous and completely honest.³⁷

Although Waugh may be criticized for portraying a limited element of the military, this he depicts honestly and with exacting precision. The progression of his trilogy also involves a broadening view of the war and a variety of

³⁵Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 340.

³⁶Pritchett, "Diaries", p. 91.

³⁷St. John, To the War With Waugh, p. 55.

soldiers. The sense of Apthorpe and Blackhouse as representative of the second world war fighting man disappears by the third volume of the trilogy.

Description of Guy Crouchback's military barracks violates most preconceptions about service life. While in training the Halberdiers live comfortably. Drill consists of regurgitating scraps of Halberdier history and acquiring such useful skills as distinguishing rabbit from cat by the number of ribs. Diary entries indicate that the latter was also part of Waugh's own training. Guy loved the entire corps tenderly, yet, like Waugh, retains a vehement dislike for any form of physical training. In his book To the War With Waugh, St. John confirms Evelyn's intense hatred for sessions in the gym.

The continuity extending from these 'Halberdier' days is one of progressive disillusionment. In Men at Arms Guy is lamed in a juvenile game of waste-paper basket football during a Halberdier guest night;

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.³⁸

³⁸Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 78.

In the early days of his 'romance' with the Halberdiers Guy's love is fueled by such phrases as, "the officers who will command you" and "when the brigade forms." At these words Guy forgets all sense of shame. He becomes, "one with his regiment, with all their historic feats of arms behind him, with great opportunities to come."³⁹ The captivating spell of boyhood reading emerges at the sound of these words.

During the course of Men at Arms the propagandistic phrases of Halberdier strength are sufficient to quell Guy's occasional feelings of disappointment. There are few overt examples of his disillusion. The instance in which Guy learns that the Finns are beaten is an exception:

For Guy the news quickened the sickening suspicion he had tried to ignore, had succeeded in ignoring more often than not in his service in the Halberdiers; that he was engaged in a war in which courage and a just cause were quite irrelevant to the issue.⁴⁰

In the introduction to John St. John's book, Christopher Hollis stresses the distinction between Waugh's early enthusiasm and later cynicism about the British cause;

³⁹Waugh, Men at Arms, p. 136.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 142.

In the early mood he wrote Put Out More Flags. His only criticism of the war was for insufficiency. It was in his later spirit that he wrote Guy Crouchback's disgust at the cynical sacrifice of the Jews in Yugoslavia who had been evacuated from their homes, of the war in which the price of victory would be a world made safe for Timmer and for Hooper.⁴¹

Evelyn Waugh's increasing disbelief in the justness of Britain's war effort is projected upon his fictional character Guy Crouchback. The result is that Waugh's war trilogy becomes the history of Guy's, and Waugh's disillusionment.

In Officers and Gentlemen there are frequent references to disillusion and its causation. Guy envisions himself as a disillusioned troop leader and refers to Crete as 'an island of disillusion'.⁴² His disappointment results from the constant delays and anti-climax characterizing the war effort. In a metaphor likening soldiers to toy knights Guy thinks the former should sleep until they are needed since, "This unvarying cycle of excitement and disappointment rubbed them bare of paint and exposed the lead beneath."⁴³ The war is described as one of attrition against the human spirit and its chief weapon is anti-

⁴¹St. John, To the War With Waugh, p. ix.

⁴²Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 189.

⁴³Ibid., p. 84.

climax. An example of this weapon occurs when Guy's troop sails to aid the battle in Crete. Its sense of purpose is shortlived as engine trouble forces a return to Alexandria. Diary entries reveal that Waugh suffered many similar delays and cancellations. Not all met with disappointment, however. John St. John discusses the true reaction by Waugh's troop to the news that a landing would not be attempted on Dakar. In recording his own feelings he also includes a quotation from Men at Arms;

Secretly I was light-headed with relief, though until then I hadn't been aware of the extent of my fright. Shit scared. I doubt if I was the only one. When Crouchback was told to break the news of the withdrawal to his men "' . . . and keep their spirit up." There was little need for this order. Surprisingly a spirit of boisterous fun possessed the ship.⁴⁴

A mood of disillusion continues in Unconditional Surrender. Despite noble intentions, Guy realizes that his war has been limited to a 'scramble on the beach near Dakar' and 'an ignominious rout in Crete.'⁴⁵ This description closely approximates Waugh's war as well. In a diary entry of September 27, 1940 Waugh's 'scramble on a beach near Dakar' is detailed.

⁴⁴St. John, To the War With Waugh, p. 53.

⁴⁵Waugh, Unconditional Surrender, p. 169.

The battle of Dakar took place in the following way. Our force, 'M', had the intention of installing General de Gaulle and the Free French in Dakar . . . we had issued an ultimatum calling on Dakar to surrender and got the answer, 'I defend Dakar to the end.' Later that night an order: 'No landing operations tonight. Bombardment may be continued tomorrow.' By next morning everyone had made up his mind that the operation was off and sure enough we were . . . told to withdraw southwards.⁴⁶

Waugh's 'ignominious rout in Crete' is similarly described in his Memorandum on ~~Layforce~~, "which records Waugh's service with the Commandos in 1940-41. . . . Despite the title and numbered paragraphs, the Memorandum was evidently not intended for any official purpose."⁴⁷

Christopher Sykes writes that like Guy's, Waugh's main adventure was in Crete. Here Waugh functioned as Bob Laycock's Intelligence Officer and personal assistant. Sykes excuses his failure to record Evelyn's deeds in the battle of Crete for the reason that Waugh

related the whole grisly story himself in the second volume of his war trilogy Officers and Gentlemen. In this case he followed his experience in his fiction closely, as a reader of his diary and the trilogy can easily appreciate. To vindicate how and to what extent the two diverge is to deal in minutiae.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Davie, The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh, p. 481.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 489.

⁴⁸ Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 215.

While Sykes is ostensibly correct, a comparison of divergent aspects in the Cretan experience of Guy and Waugh is often elucidative of the author's character, and therefore valuable. Both Guy and Waugh discover a dead English soldier in the care of some peasants. Guy removes the soldier's identity disc and prays for his peaceful rest. Waugh merely instructs the peasants to bury the corpse. In another example of the difference between fact and fiction, Guy escapes Crete in a small craft which offers no great prospects of survival. Waugh, however, embarks in a small motor boat and boards a destroyer which transports him to Alexandria. His account of Guy's escape is obviously drawn from a description in section 14 of 'Memorandum on LAYFORCE.'

Two MLC's escaped from Crete on 1ST June.
 When petrol was exhausted, they hoisted a sail
 made of blankets. They had no map or compass
 and steered by the sun and their memory of
 their map. They were nine days at sea and at
 the last gasp. One man had died and one shot
 himself.⁴⁹

The disillusion which progresses from Guy's halcyon days with the Halberdiers in Men at Arms is juxtaposed with increasing changes in war and militarism. In Officers and Gentlemen Guy is posted on the Isle of Mugg where no

⁴⁹Davie, The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh, p. 510.

one calls him 'Uncle'. The need for soldiers has forced the War Office to abandon its selective program of enlistment. As the ranks swell with recruits previously deemed fit only for canon fodder, Guy's age is no longer a distinction. Yet he remains distinct or alienated. The standard catch-phrases of military fervour have lost their effect. "There was none of the exhilaration of a year ago, of Brigadier Ritchie-Hook's: 'These are the men you will lead in battle.'"⁵⁰ War according to Ritchie-Hook is a thing of the past and Guy cannot fail to notice that his former hero is now more than slightly ridiculous. This realization, however, does not prevent Guy from romanticizing war as it used to be in the days of Ritchie-Hook's undisputed supremacy. He is distrustful of a war which would see Trimmer and Ritchie-Hook rewarded for similar acts of bravery. Guy cannot imagine that the two have many common features.

As Guy's strength becomes sapped by a sense of futility he unintentionally dissociates himself from the army. This is exemplified when he reads copies of 'Country Life' rather than journals of military heroism. His former relationship with the military had been based on a highly

⁵⁰ Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 84.

romanticized sense of honour and chivalry. In his first days in the Halberdiers this notion had been represented by the Halberdier tradition of the 'unbroken square'. This tactic involved a group of soldiers forming an outward-facing square in the event of encirclement by the enemy. From this position they would fight bravely to an end that was assured by the very necessity of forming this tactical square. The tradition of this manoeuvre is inapplicable in the second world war. In Crete, Colonel Tickeridge, also a proponent of this mythical square, asks if a last-man, last-round defence is planned. He receives a prompt reply: "No. No. A planned withdrawal."⁵¹

The theme of dishonour in war is important as it represents, "not only a fictitious hero's fictitious thoughts but the author's own convictions. (Evelyn was enamoured of the romantic conception of war expressed in the poems of Julian Grenfell and Rupert Brooke.)"⁵² According to Waugh's biographer Christopher Sykes, throughout life Waugh, "joined in the hero-worship that surrounds the names of the gifted young men who were lost in the First World War: the Grenfells, Charles Lister, Raymond Asquith, and pre-eminently at this time Rupert Brooke."⁵³

⁵¹Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 180.

⁵²Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 424.

⁵³Ibid., p. 35.

This knowledge elucidates the extent to which Guy's atavistic romanticism evolves from that of his creator, Evelyn Waugh.

As dishonour becomes rampant and disillusion general, the death wish possessed by many of Waugh's fictional characters is a common attitude. Christopher Sykes suggests that Waugh, himself, was encumbered by the wish to die. According to Sykes, Waugh's brutal self-misrepresentation, "is the self-portrait of a born caricaturist in continual danger of despair, continually subject to a death-wish."⁵⁴ The 'brutal self-misrepresentation' to which Sykes refers is constantly obvious throughout Waugh's diaries.

Waugh's preoccupation with the 'deathwish' is illustrated by the very structure of Unconditional Surrender. This volume consists of three books: 'State Sword', 'Fin de Ligne' and 'The Death Wish'. Each book considers a certain type of death. In 'State Sword' there is an obvious death of honour as people line up to view a sword commemorating the 'steel-hearted people of Stalingrad'. Neither Guy nor Waugh can accept an alliance with communism. 'Fin de Ligne' deals with the end of a family through lack of procreation. It is the second element in this volume

⁵⁴Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 50.

which is constantly shadowed by the prospect of death. Finally, in the book entitled, 'Death Wish', the mood of despair and hopelessness is painfully omnipresent. It culminates in the farcical death of Guy's hero Ritchie-Hook, a figure now encumbered by a death wish himself.

Guy Crouchback enters the second world war in a mood of cheerful optimism. Men at Arms is for the most part the record of a 'happy warrior'. The initial book of Officers and Gentlemen maintains this pose of contentment, and is in fact entitled 'Happy Warriors'. Unfortunately, the happy tone is undercut by subtle references to an all-encompassing war. Guy meets a squad of men wearing gas-masks and is ordered to put on his own;

Guy saluted, turned about and marched off. He 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.⁵⁵

In an age stressing the gas-mask rather than dress cap, the image of a 'happy warrior' is already an anachronism. This reality is emphasized by the dark rectangle over a fireplace where once a symbol of Halberdier fortitude had hung.

⁵⁵Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 17.

The second book of Officers and Gentlemen, 'In the Picture', traces Guy Crouchback's gradual recognition that the spirit of war has changed. Ironically, first world war jargon, 'in the picture', describes Guy's illumination. The setting for this book is the evacuation of Crete. The landscape is reminiscent of Eliot's 'The Waste Land', with its "trampled gardens, damaged and deserted villas."⁵⁶ The novel ends, as does Men at Arms, with Guy back in London;

He was back after less than two years' pilgrimage in a Holy Land of illusion in the old and ambiguous world, where priests were spies and gallant friends proved traitors and his country was led blundering into dishonour.⁵⁷

The despair felt by Guy at this realization sets the tone for the final volume of the trilogy, Unconditional Surrender.

The three books of Unconditional Surrender trace the death of honour, the family, and the wish to die. The condition of these elements completes Guy's progression and search for values. He has made a complete revolution. The once unloved child with no faith in modern virtue has transcended his state of hopelessness only to see its

⁵⁶ Waugh, Officers and Gentlemen, p. 182.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 240.

return. While Waugh offers his writing of Unconditional Surrender as a necessary explanation of Ludovic, it is much more than the completion of a specific character. It is the final step in a thematic progression; a progression which gives the trilogy as a whole unity.

CONCLUSION

On an autumn afternoon in 1953, Graham Green told Evelyn Waugh, over a drink at White's, that he had been refused a visa to visit America because of a brief involvement with a university Communist club. Angered at this injustice, Greene proposed writing about politics instead of God, for a while. Waugh's response is notable: "I wouldn't give up writing about God at this stage if I was you. It would be like P. G. Wodehouse dropping Jeeves half-way through the Wooster series".¹ In this observation of an element central to the artist's craft, there is a suggestion of both Waugh's strength and weakness as a writer. His own constant was the portrayal of the hero as victim. As this figure appears repeatedly throughout Waugh's novels, a continuity develops within the scope of his writing as well as individual works. The strength of this continuity, however, wanes with the realization that herein lie the roots of Waugh's frequent use of autobiographical material. Despite any heroic facades, in his own eyes, Waugh was no less a victim than Guy Crouchback or Paul Pennyfeather.

The emphasis of this thesis has been on elements of continuity and autobiography in Evelyn Waugh's war

¹Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 357.

trilogy. The continuity stressed has been predominantly thematic. Another important area deserving attention, however, is the continuity of form.

The chapter construction and appellations in the war trilogy suggest an Epic genre. This is substantiated by a thematic concern with the deeds of a central heroic figure, Guy Crouchback. The very name of this protagonist indicates a less than heroic character. The result is that Waugh's satiric vision necessitates a mock-Epic. Its purpose is not to expose the inadequacies of the Epic style, but rather, those of its subject; in this case, war.

The quest motif, appearing throughout the trilogy, suggests an influence by the traditional Romance, particularly the Arthurian. The tale of Guy Crouchback involves both chivalric and amorous adventure. It is the absence of the conventions of Courtly Love which elucidate the mock nature of this genre as well. In the war trilogy there is a marked absence of the ideal woman, whose love ennobles and refines her lover and allows him to attain excellence. Instead, Waugh presents women who owe their inheritance to a model more reminiscent of Guinevere. Although also an element of the Arthurian Romance, this constantly negative depiction precludes a serious Romance form.

As previously mentioned, John St. John commends Waugh for refusing to treat World War II as an epic. In a similar commendation, Christopher Sykes describes Unconditional Surrender as, "no imitation War and Peace but a record of a great event, given as only Evelyn could have done."² Despite Waugh's early assessment of the war trilogy as 'interminably long', it is unsurpassed by any other of his works.

The trilogy was not the bigger and better Put Out More Flags which many readers had eagerly anticipated. If this had been the case, a statement made in The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold would gain credence:

A novelist is condemned to produce a succession of novelties, new names for characters, new incidents for his plots, new scenery; but, Mr. Pinfold maintained, most men harbour the germs of one or two books only; all else is professional trickery.³

While professional trickery may be observed in some of the novels following Decline and Fall, the war trilogy does not spring from the seeds of any other book. Pinfold's statement occurs in a novel written during Waugh's period

²Sykes, Evelyn Waugh: A Biography, p. 429.

³E. Waugh, The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold (Great Britain, 1957), p. 10.

of mental illness. Evidence that this belief was shared by Waugh exists in his decision, at this time, to abandon the final volume of the war trilogy. The reinstatement of Waugh's health coincided with the beginning of Unconditional Surrender. The conclusion must be that either Waugh rejected Pinfold's theory, or realized that after Decline and Fall, the war trilogy was the second book in his capacity.

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