

Exploration
Education: Histoire et pensée

Peter Lang

Loïc Chalmel

La petite école dans l'école

Origine piétiste-morave de
l'école maternelle française

Préface de Jean Houssaye

3^e édition

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Introduction

In a conversation with Patrick Query, a young American graduate student, I mentioned that at the Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas-Austin during the early 1970s I had worked on the large collection of Waugh papers at the same time as the English biographer Martin Stannard, the Australian scholar-bibliographer Donat Gallagher, and the French critic and literary historian Alain Blayac. He was astonished that people he regarded as representatives of the golden age of Waugh studies had gathered in one place.

Being regarded as a fossil was not new to some of us. Paul A. Doyle, founder of the Evelyn Waugh Newsletter and godfather of Waugh studies in the United States, had worried as he approached the limits of the energy he could devote to editing the *Newsletter*, that, to adapt Ludovic's phrase in *Unconditional Surrender*, all Waugh scholars were now very old and that he could find no successor.

There were other concerns: that serious discussion of Waugh was increasingly confined to North America, his work neglected in England and on the Continent; that even in North America approaches to his work had reached the point of exhaustion, repetition, or revisionist finger-pointing at his political, and religious views, following the lead of Edmund Wilson's hostile review of *Brideshead Revisited* and Stannard's views about just about everything Waugh ever did or wrote.

These fears have now been largely allayed. The *Newsletter* has been revived, on-line, by John Howard Wilson (www.lhup.edu/jwilson3/newsletter.htm). Several other websites, the best of them sponsored in England, are devoted to Waugh (www.doubtinghall.co.uk; www.abbots-hill.freeserve.co.uk). Most important, as the proceedings of the centenary conference held in Spain (La Rioja, 15–17 May, 2003) indicate, current work by greying relics from the 1970s is being extended by young scholars from both sides of the Atlantic by the use of theories of discourse and media studies, for example, and increasingly sophisticated awareness of Waugh's religious, political, and social contexts.

In fact, though at the conference itself there was lively debate over questions of fact and interpretation that to some degree survives in the final versions of the papers submitted and selected for this volume, the authors agree on a surprising range of subjects.

Any ordering of the essays would of course be arbitrary, and imposing rigid categories did not seem desirable. However, we decided to begin with those presenting overviews of topics to Waugh's life and work and then to discussions of particular books more or less in chronological order.

Waugh frequently, and increasingly, insisted that his Catholic faith was crucial for understanding his approach to life and, especially from *Brideshead Revisited* on, his themes and conceptions of character. J.V. Long deals with Waugh's sense of being exiled "from the comfort and promise of a secure identity" that was to some degree alleviated by his allegiance to the recusant spirit of Elizabethan Catholicism. Donat Gallagher supplements rather than contradicts this view, seeing the positive side of Waugh's later religious development in his idea of "a 'call' to unique service," while Patrick Query relates faith to modernist form in Gerard Manley Hopkins, T.S. Eliot, and Waugh.

Waugh's view of class and social standards, often denigrated as mere snobbery, forms the basis of Christine Berberich's essay on Waugh's changing view of "the gentleman" from *Decline and Fall* through *Sword of Honour*, a change attributed in part to Waugh's changing conception of himself and in part to a growing nostalgia for a mode of conduct that was endangered and on the verge of extinction.

George Orwell would have strongly resisted being called a gentleman, but George McCartney finds that two so-called snobs (Waugh aspiring upward, Orwell downward) shared a "resistance to the philosophical implications of relativism in modern thought and politics" in the first of several comparative studies in this volume.

Robert Murray Davis deals with Waugh's conception of himself as a writer in his acute and sometimes anxious awareness of the various audience he sought during more than half a century of putting pen to paper, while for Alain Blayac Waugh's biographies, two before and two after World War II, represent Waugh's apparently looking outward in order to define "the features of the ideal being he would never be and whom he strove to emulate in order not to founder."

The remaining essays deal with individual works. Surprisingly, Maria Luisa Lazaro's comparison of *A Handful of Dust* and *Madame Bovary* is the only examination of a novel from the first half of Waugh's career. She deals with authorial distance and tone in order to account for varying reader response to two quite similar characters, Emma and Brenda Last. Dan Kostopolous discusses *Robbery Under Law*, usually execrated when not ignored, as an uneasy combination of political naivete and bad faith and a shrewd analysis of the conflict between "traditional nationalism" and "the rival ideologies of Left and Right" that does not, in Kostopolous's view, go very far towards redeeming a book that Waugh himself did not allow to be reprinted.

Just over half of the essays concentrate on the second half of Waugh's career. The reasons for this interest can only be speculated about, but it may be that these books were too new for the first and second generations of Waugh scholars to gain perspective on the one hand and, on the other, had met with such hostile responses from reviewers and critics that the burden was too heavy to deal with. Now the controversies have faded, and television versions have not only renewed interest in the novels but given young media scholars the opportunity to look at print and film texts from a new perspective.

The essays on *Brideshead Revisited* range from Ruth Breeze's traditional (in discussions of Waugh, an honorific term) analysis of setting and theme to Carlos Villar Flor's narratological approach to character, to Cristina Flores Moreno's and Roberto A. Valdeon Garcia's comparison of that novel, first with the idea of art in Graham Greene's *The End of the Affair*, second with the theme of homosexuality v. social conformity in E. M. Forster's *Maurice*, and Patrick Denman Flanery's use of the Granada Television version to explore "fundamental narrative elements" in prose and film.

A different kind of generic comparison and contrast, between novel and legend, informs Eulalia Carceller Guillamet's discussion of the progress of St. Helena in ways that parallel and reinforce the essays by Long and Gallagher. Alan Munton's discussion of *Sword of Honour* makes some of the same points about exile, vocation, and disillusion and then compares official War Office documents about the Commando role in Crete with Waugh's fictional account in *Officers and Gentlemen* as a further contribution to ongoing discussion of Waugh's actual role in the war and its effect on the war trilogy.

John Howard Wilson looks outward rather than inward at Waugh's published and unpublished views of Winston Churchill and shows a different kind of awareness of audience – here libel lawyers – in constructing his critiques. And José Díaz-Cuesta and Mar Asensio Arostegui, like Flanery, use the television adaptation of a written text, here to emphasize the way that the concept of fatherhood underlies Guy Crouchback's sense of vocation and ultimate redemption.

Finally, Gabriel Insausti shows that *A Little Learning*, Waugh's last and potentially his most personal book, supports Waugh's life-long aesthetic which rejects psychological analysis for Aristotelian showing, documentation, and objectivity.

Although, to adapt and distort Charles Ryder's words in the epilogue to *Brideshead Revisited*, these essays present a number of apt words, they do not represent the final words about Waugh's life and work. Nor would the authors, on reflection, wish them to be. Where everything is certain, reduced to formula, like the theory of the epic in eighteenth century England, the only thing missing is the breath of life. As these papers and other ongoing work demonstrate, a good deal of healthy inspiration continues.

Robert Murray Davis