

= Evelyn Waugh =

Arthur Evelyn St. John Waugh ( / ˈrʌ?vl?n ?s?nd??n w?? / ; 28 October 1903 ? 10 April 1966 ) was an English writer of novels , biographies and travel books . He was also a prolific journalist and reviewer of books . His most famous works include the early satires *Decline and Fall* ( 1928 ) and *A Handful of Dust* ( 1934 ) , the novel *Brideshead Revisited* ( 1945 ) and the Second World War trilogy *Sword of Honour* ( 1952 ? 61 ) . Waugh is recognised as one of the great prose stylists of the English language in the 20th century .

The son of a publisher , Waugh was educated at Lancing College and then at Hertford College , Oxford , and briefly worked as a schoolmaster before he became a full @-@ time writer . As a young man , he acquired many fashionable and aristocratic friends , and developed a taste for country house society . In the 1930s , he travelled extensively , often as a special newspaper correspondent in which capacity he reported from Abyssinia at the time of the 1935 Italian invasion . He served in the British armed forces throughout the Second World War ( 1939 ? 1945 ) , first in the Royal Marines and then in the Royal Horse Guards . He was a perceptive writer who used the experiences and the wide range of people he encountered in his works of fiction , generally to humorous effect . Waugh 's detachment was such that he fictionalised his own mental breakdown , which occurred in the early 1950s .

After the failure of his first marriage , Waugh converted to Catholicism in 1930 . His traditionalist stance led him to strongly oppose all attempts to reform the Church , and the changes by the Second Vatican Council ( 1962 ? 65 ) greatly disturbed his sensibilities , especially the introduction of the vernacular Mass . That blow to his religious traditionalism , his dislike for the welfare state culture of the postwar world and the decline of his health , darkened his final years , but he continued to write . To the public , Waugh displayed a mask of indifference , but he was capable of great kindness to those whom he considered to be his friends . After his death in 1966 , he acquired a following of new readers through the film and television versions of his works , such as the television serial *Brideshead Revisited* ( 1981 ) .

= = Family background = =

Arthur Evelyn St. John Waugh was born on 28 October 1903 to Arthur Waugh ( 1866 ? 1943 ) and Catherine Charlotte Raban ( 1870 ? 1954 ) , into a family with English , Scottish , Welsh , Irish and Huguenot origins . Distinguished forebears include Lord Cockburn ( 1779 ? 1854 ) , a leading Scottish advocate and judge , William Morgan ( 1750 ? 1833 ) , a pioneer of actuarial science who served the Equitable Life Assurance Society for 56 years , and Philip Henry Gosse ( 1810 ? 1888 ) , a natural scientist who became notorious through his depiction as a religious fanatic in his son Edmund 's memoir *Father and Son* . Among ancestors bearing the Waugh name , the Rev. Alexander Waugh ( 1754 ? 1827 ) was a minister in the Secession Church of Scotland who helped found the London Missionary Society and was one of the leading Nonconformist preachers of his day . His grandson Alexander Waugh ( 1840 ? 1906 ) was a country medical practitioner , who bullied his wife and children and became known in the Waugh family as " the Brute " . The elder of his two sons , born in 1866 , was Arthur Waugh .

After attending Sherborne School and New College , Oxford , Arthur Waugh began a career in publishing and as a literary critic . In 1902 he became managing director of Chapman and Hall , publishers of the works of Charles Dickens . He had married Catherine Raban ( 1870 ? 1954 ) in 1893 ; their first son Alexander Raban Waugh ( always known as Alec ) was born on 8 July 1898 . Alec Waugh later became a novelist of note . At the time of his birth the family were living in North London , at Hillfield Road , West Hampstead where , on 28 October 1903 , the couple 's second son was born , " in great haste before Dr Andrews could arrive " , Catherine recorded . On 7 January 1904 the boy was christened Arthur Evelyn St John Waugh but was known in the family and in the wider world as Evelyn .

= = Childhood = =

= = = Golders Green and Heath Mount = = =

In 1907 , the Waugh family left Hillfield Road for Underhill , a house which Arthur had built in North End Road , Hampstead , close to Golders Green , then a semi @-@ rural area of dairy farms , market gardens and bluebell woods . Evelyn received his first school lessons at home , from his mother , with whom he formed a particularly close relationship ; his father , Arthur Waugh , was a more distant figure , whose close bond with his elder son , Alec , was such that Evelyn often felt excluded . In September 1910 , Evelyn began as a day pupil at Heath Mount preparatory school . By then , he was a lively boy of many interests , who already had written and completed " The Curse of the Horse Race " , his first story . Waugh spent six relatively contented years at Heath Mount ; on his own assertion he was " quite a clever little boy " , who was seldom distressed or overawed by his lessons . Physically pugnacious , Evelyn was inclined to bully weaker boys ; among his victims was the future society photographer Cecil Beaton , who never forgot the experience .

Outside school , he and other neighbourhood children performed plays , usually written by Waugh . On the basis of the xenophobia fostered by the genre books of Invasion literature , that the Germans were about to invade Britain , Waugh organised his friends into the " Pistol Troop " , who built a fort , went on man?uvres and paraded in makeshift uniforms . In 1914 , after the First World War began , Waugh and other boys from the Boy Scout Troop of Heath Mount School were sometimes employed as messengers at the War Office ; Evelyn loitered about the War Office in hope of glimpsing Lord Kitchener , but never did .

Family holidays usually were spent with the Waugh aunts , at Midsomer Norton , in a house lit with oil lamps , a time that Waugh recalled with delight , many years later . At Midsomer Norton , Evelyn became deeply interested in high Anglican church rituals , the initial stirrings of the spiritual dimension that later dominated his perspective of life , and he served as an altar boy at the local Anglican church . During his last year at Heath Mount , Waugh established and edited The Cynic school magazine .

= = = Lancing = = =

Like his father before him , Alec Waugh went to school at Sherborne , and , it was presumed by the family that Evelyn would follow , but in 1915 , the school asked Alec to leave , after a homosexual relationship came to light . Alec departed Sherborne for military training as an officer , and , while awaiting confirmation of his commission , wrote The Loom of Youth ( 1917 ) , a novel of school life , which alluded to homosexual friendships at a school that was recognisably Sherborne . The public sensation caused by Alec 's novel so offended the school that it became impossible for Evelyn to go there . In May 1917 , much to his annoyance , he was sent to Lancing College , in his opinion , a decidedly inferior school .

Waugh soon overcame his initial aversion to Lancing , settled in and established his reputation as an aesthete . In November 1917 his essay " In Defence of Cubism " ( 1917 ) was accepted by and published in the arts magazine Drawing and Design ; it was his first published article . Within the school , he became mildly subversive , mocking the school 's cadet corps and founding the Corpse Club " for those who were weary of life " . The end of the war saw the return to the school of younger masters such as J. F. Roxburgh , who encouraged Waugh to write and predicted a great future for him . Another mentor , Francis Crease , taught Waugh the arts of calligraphy and decorative design ; some of the boy 's work was good enough to be used by Chapman and Hall on book jackets .

In his later years at Lancing , Waugh achieved success as a house captain , editor of the school magazine and president of the debating society , and won numerous art and literature prizes . He also shed most of his religious beliefs . He started a novel of school life , untitled , but abandoned the effort after writing about around 5 @,@ 000 words . He ended his schooldays by winning a scholarship to read Modern History at Hertford College , Oxford , and left Lancing in December 1921 .

= = Oxford = =

Waugh arrived in Oxford in January 1922 . He was soon writing to old friends at Lancing about the pleasures of his new life ; he informed Tom Driberg : " I do no work here and never go to Chapel " . During his first two terms , he generally followed convention ; he smoked a pipe , bought a bicycle , and gave his maiden speech at the Oxford Union , opposing the motion that " This House would welcome Prohibition " . Waugh wrote reports on Union debates for both Oxford magazines , *Cherwell* and *Isis* , and he acted as a film critic for *Isis* . He also became secretary of the Hertford College debating society , " an onerous but not honorific post " , he told Driberg . Although Waugh tended to regard his scholarship as a reward for past efforts rather than a stepping @-@ stone to future academic success , he did sufficient work in his first two terms to pass his " History Previous " , an essential preliminary examination .

The arrival in Oxford in October 1922 of the sophisticated Etonians Harold Acton and Brian Howard changed Waugh 's Oxford life . Acton and Howard rapidly became the centre of an avant @-@ garde circle known as the Hypocrites , whose artistic , social and homosexual values Waugh adopted enthusiastically ; he later wrote : " It was the stamping ground of half my Oxford life " . He began drinking heavily , and embarked on the first of several homosexual relationships , the most lasting of which were with Richard Pares and Alastair Graham . He continued to write reviews and short stories for the university journals , and developed a reputation as a talented graphic artist , but formal study largely ceased . This neglect led to a bitter feud between Waugh and his history tutor , C. R. M. F. Cruttwell , dean ( and later principal ) of Hertford College . When Cruttwell advised him to mend his ways , Waugh responded in a manner , he admitted later , was " fatuously haughty " , from then on , relations between the two descended into mutual hatred . Waugh continued the feud long after his Oxford days by using Cruttwell 's name in his early novels for a succession of ludicrous , ignominious or odious minor characters .

Waugh 's dissipated lifestyle continued into his final Oxford year , 1924 . A letter written that year to a Lancing friend , Dudley Carew , hints at severe emotional pressures : " I have been living very intensely these last three weeks . For the last fortnight I have been nearly insane .... I may perhaps one day in a later time tell you some of the things that have happened " . He did just enough work to pass his final examinations in the summer of 1924 with a third @-@ class degree . Having begun at Hertford in the second term of the 1921 ? 22 academic year , Waugh had completed only eight terms when he sat his finals ; under the university 's statutes , nine terms ' residence were necessary before the degree could be awarded . Waugh 's poor results led to the loss of his scholarship , which made it impossible for him to return to Oxford for that final term , so he left without his degree .

Back at home , Waugh began a novel , *The Temple at Thatch* , and worked with some of his fellow Hypocrites on a film , *The Scarlet Woman* , which was shot partly in the gardens at Underhill . He spent much of the rest of the summer in the company of Alastair Graham ; after Graham departed for Kenya , Waugh enrolled for the autumn at a London art school , Heatherley 's .

= = Early career = =

= = = Schoolmaster and incipient writer = = =

Waugh began at Heatherley 's in late September 1924 , but became bored with the routine and quickly abandoned his course . He spent weeks partying in London and Oxford before the overriding need for money led him to apply through an agency for a teaching job . Almost at once , he secured a post at Arnold House , a boys ' preparatory school in North Wales , beginning in January 1925 . He took with him the notes for his novel , *The Temple at Thatch* , intending to work on it in his spare time . Despite the gloomy ambience of the school , Waugh did his best to fulfil the requirements of his position , but a brief return to London and Oxford during the Easter holiday only exacerbated his

sense of isolation .

In the summer of 1925 , Waugh 's outlook briefly improved , with the prospect of a job in Pisa , Italy , as secretary to the Scottish writer Charles Kenneth Scott Moncrieff , who was engaged on the English translations of Marcel Proust 's works . Believing that the job was his , Waugh resigned his position at Arnold House . He had meantime sent the early chapters of his novel to Acton for assessment and criticism . Acton 's reply was so coolly dismissive that Waugh immediately burnt his manuscript ; shortly afterwards , before he left North Wales , he learned that the Moncrieff job had fallen through . The twin blows were sufficient for him to consider suicide . He records that he went down to a nearby beach and , leaving a note with his clothes , walked out to sea . An attack by jellyfish changed his mind , and he returned quickly to the shore .

During the following two years Waugh taught at schools in Aston Clinton ( from which he was dismissed for the attempted drunken seduction of a school matron ) and Notting Hill in London . He considered alternative careers in printing or cabinet @-@ making , and attended evening classes in carpentry at Holborn Polytechnic while continuing to write . A short story , " The Balance " , written in an experimental modernist style , became his first commercially published fiction , when it was included by Chapman and Hall in a 1926 anthology , *Georgian Stories* . An extended essay on the Pre @-@ Raphaelite Brotherhood was printed privately by Alastair Graham , using by agreement the press of the Shakespeare Head Press in Stratford @-@ upon @-@ Avon , where he was undergoing training as a printer . This led to a contract from the publishers Duckworths for a full @-@ length biography of Dante Gabriel Rossetti , which Waugh wrote during 1927 . He also began working on a comic novel ; after several temporary working titles this became *Decline and Fall* . Having given up teaching , he had no regular employment except for a short , unsuccessful stint as a reporter on the *Daily Express* in April ? May 1927 . That year he met ( possibly through his brother Alec ) and fell in love with Evelyn Gardner , the daughter of Lord and Lady Burghclere .

== == " He @-@ Evelyn " and " She @-@ Evelyn " == ==

In December 1927 , Waugh and Evelyn Gardner became engaged , despite the opposition of Lady Burghclere , who felt that Waugh lacked moral fibre and kept unsuitable company . Among their friends , they quickly became known as " He @-@ Evelyn " and " She @-@ Evelyn " . Waugh was at this time dependent on a £ 4 @-@ a @-@ week allowance from his father and the small sums he could earn from book reviewing and journalism . The Rossetti biography was published to a generally favourable reception in April 1928 : J. C. Squire in *The Observer* praised the book 's elegance and wit ; Acton gave cautious approval ; and the novelist Rebecca West wrote to express how much she had enjoyed the book . Less pleasing to Waugh was the *Times Literary Supplement* 's references to him as " Miss Waugh " .

When *Decline and Fall* was completed , Duckworths objected to its " obscenity " , but Chapman and Hall agreed to publish it . This was sufficient for Waugh and Gardner to bring forward their wedding plans . They were married in St Paul 's Church , Portman Square , on 27 June 1928 , with only Acton , Alec Waugh and the bride 's friend Pansy Pakenham present . The couple made their home in a small flat in Canonbury Square , Islington . The first months of the marriage were overshadowed by a lack of money , and by Gardner 's poor health , which persisted into the autumn .

In September 1928 , *Decline and Fall* was published to almost unanimous praise . By December , the book was into its third printing , and the American publishing rights were sold for \$ 500 . In the afterglow of his success , Waugh was commissioned to write travel articles in return for a free Mediterranean cruise , which he and Gardner began in February 1929 , as an extended , delayed honeymoon . The trip was disrupted when Gardner contracted pneumonia and was carried ashore to the British hospital in Port Said . The couple returned home in June , after her recovery . A month later , without warning , Gardner confessed that their mutual friend , John Heygate , had become her lover . After an attempted reconciliation failed , a shocked and dismayed Waugh filed for divorce on 3 September 1929 . The couple apparently met again only once , during the process for the annulment of their marriage a few years later .

= = Years of celebrity = =

= = = Recognition = = =

Waugh 's first biographer , Christopher Sykes , records that after the divorce friends " saw , or believed they saw , a new hardness and bitterness " in Waugh 's outlook . Nevertheless , despite a letter to Acton in which he wrote that he " did not know it was possible to be so miserable and live " , he soon resumed his professional and social life . He finished his second novel , *Vile Bodies* , and wrote articles including ( ironically , he thought ) one for the *Daily Mail* on the meaning of the marriage ceremony . During this period Waugh began the practice of staying at the various houses of his friends ; he was to have no settled home for the next eight years .

*Vile Bodies* , a satire on the Bright Young People of the 1920s , was published on 19 January 1930 and was Waugh 's first major commercial success . Despite its quasi @-@ biblical title , the book is dark , bitter , " a manifesto of disillusionment " , according to biographer Martin Stannard . As a bestselling author Waugh could now command larger fees for his journalism . Amid regular work for *The Graphic* , *Town and Country* and *Harper 's Bazaar* , he quickly wrote *Labels* , a detached account of his honeymoon cruise with She @-@ Evelyn .

= = = Conversion to Catholicism = = =

On 29 September 1930 , Waugh was received into the Catholic Church . That shocked his family and surprised some of his friends , but he had contemplated the step for some time . He had lost his Anglicanism at Lancing and had led an irreligious life at Oxford , but there are references in his diaries from the mid @-@ 1920s to religious discussion and regular churchgoing . On 22 December 1925 , Waugh wrote : " Claud and I took Audrey to supper and sat up until 7 in the morning arguing about the Roman Church " . The entry for 20 February 1927 includes , " I am to visit a Father Underhill about being a parson " . Throughout the period , Waugh was influenced by his friend Olivia Plunket @-@ Greene , who had converted in 1925 and of whom Waugh later wrote , " She bullied me into the Church " . It was she who led him to Father Martin D 'Arcy , a Jesuit , who persuaded Waugh " on firm intellectual convictions but little emotion " that " the Christian revelation was genuine " . In 1949 , Waugh explained that his conversion followed his realisation that life was " unintelligible and unendurable without God " .

= = = Writer and traveller = = =

On 10 October 1930 , Waugh , representing several newspapers , departed for Abyssinia to cover the coronation of Haile Selassie . He reported the event as " an elaborate propaganda effort " to convince the world that Abyssinia was a civilised nation that concealed that the emperor had achieved power through barbarous means . A subsequent journey through the British East Africa colonies and the Belgian Congo formed the basis of two books ; the travelogue *Remote People* ( 1931 ) and the comic novel *Black Mischief* ( 1932 ) . Waugh 's next extended trip , in the winter of 1932 ? 1933 , was to British Guiana ( now Guyana ) in South America , possibly taken to distract him from a long and unrequited passion for the socialite Teresa Jungman . On arrival in Georgetown , Waugh arranged a river trip by steam launch into the interior . He travelled on via several staging @-@ posts to Boa Vista in Brazil , and then took a convoluted overland journey back to Georgetown . His various adventures and encounters found their way into two further books : his travel account *Ninety @-@ two Days* , and the novel *A Handful of Dust* , both published in 1934 .

Back from South America , Waugh faced accusations of obscenity and blasphemy from the Catholic journal *The Tablet* , which objected to passages in *Black Mischief* . He defended himself in an open letter to the Archbishop of Westminster , Cardinal Francis Bourne , which remained unpublished until 1980 . In the summer of 1934 , he went on an expedition to Spitsbergen in the Arctic , an experience he did not enjoy and of which he made minimal literary use . On his return , determined

to write a major Catholic biography , he selected the Jesuit martyr Edmund Campion as his subject . The book , published in 1935 , caused controversy by its forthright pro @-@ Catholic , anti @-@ Protestant stance but brought its writer the Hawthornden Prize . He returned to Abyssinia in August 1935 to report the opening stages of the Second Italo @-@ Abyssinian War for the Daily Mail . Waugh , on the basis of his earlier visit , considered Abyssinia " a savage place which Mussolini as doing well to tame " according to his fellow reporter , William Deedes . Waugh saw little action and was not wholly serious in his role as a war correspondent . Deedes remarks on the older writer 's snobbery : " None of us quite measured up to the company he liked to keep back at home " . However , in the face of imminent Italian air attacks , Deedes found Waugh 's courage " deeply reassuring " . Waugh wrote up his Abyssinian experiences in a book , Waugh in Abyssinia ( 1936 ) , which Rose Macaulay dismissed as a " fascist tract " on account of its pro @-@ Italian tone . A better @-@ known account is his novel Scoop ( 1938 ) in which the protagonist , William Boot , is loosely based on Deedes .

Among Waugh 's growing circle of friends were Diana Guinness and Bryan Guinness ( dedicatees of Vile Bodies ) , Lady Diana Cooper and her husband Duff Cooper , Nancy Mitford who was originally a friend of Evelyn Gardner 's , and the Lygon sisters . Waugh had known Hugh Patrick Lygon at Oxford ; now he was introduced to the girls and their country house , Madresfield Court , which became the closest that he had to a home during his years of wandering . In 1933 , on a Greek islands cruise , he was introduced by Father D 'Arcy to Gabriel Herbert , eldest daughter of the late explorer Aubrey Herbert . When the cruise ended Waugh was invited to stay at the Herbert family 's villa in Portofino , where he first met Gabriel 's 17 @-@ year @-@ old sister , Laura .

= = = Second marriage = = =

On his conversion , Waugh had accepted that he would be unable to remarry while Evelyn Gardner was alive . However , he wanted a wife and children , and in October 1933 , he began proceedings for the annulment of the marriage on the grounds of " lack of real consent " . The case was heard by an ecclesiastical tribunal in London , but a delay in the submission of the papers to Rome meant that the annulment was not granted until 4 July 1936 . In the meantime , following their initial encounter in Portofino , Waugh had fallen in love with Laura Herbert . He proposed marriage , by letter , in spring 1936 . There were initial misgivings from the Herberts , an aristocratic Catholic family ; as a further complication , Laura Herbert was a cousin of Evelyn Gardner . Despite some family hostility the marriage took place on 17 April 1937 at the Church of the Assumption in Warwick Street , London .

As a wedding present the bride 's grandmother bought the couple Piers Court , a country house near Stinchcombe in Gloucestershire . Their first child , a daughter , Maria Teresa , was born on 9 March 1938 and a son , Auberon Alexander , on 17 November 1939 . Between these events , Scoop was published in May 1938 to wide critical acclaim . In August 1938 Waugh , with Laura , made a three @-@ month trip to Mexico after which he wrote Robbery under Law , based on his experiences there . In the book he spelled out clearly his conservative credo ; he later described the book as dealing " little with travel and much with political questions " .

= = Second World War = =

= = = Royal Marine and commando = = =

Waugh left Piers Court on 1 September 1939 , at the outbreak of the Second World War / and moved his young family to Pixton Park , Somerset , the country seat of the Herbert family.while he sought military employment . He also began writing a novel in a new style , using first @-@ person narration but abandoned work on it when he was commissioned into the Royal Marines in December and entered training at Chatham naval base . He never completed the novel : fragments were eventually published as Work Suspended and Other Stories ( 1943 ) .

Waugh 's daily training routine left him with " so stiff a spine that he found it painful even to pick up a pen " . In April 1940 , he was temporarily promoted to captain and given command of a company of marines , but he proved an unpopular officer , being haughty and curt with his men . Even after the German invasion of the Low Countries ( 10 May ? 22 June 1940 ) , his battalion was not called into action . Waugh 's inability to adapt to regimental life meant that he soon lost his command , and he became the battalion 's Intelligence Officer . In that role , he finally saw action in Operation Menace as part of the British force sent to the Battle of Dakar in West Africa ( 23 ? 25 September 1940 ) in August 1940 to support an attempt by the Free French Forces to overthrow the Vichy French colonial government and install General Charles de Gaulle . Operation Menace failed , hampered by fog and misinformation about the extent of the town 's defences , and the British forces withdrew on 26 September . Waugh 's comment on the affair was this : ? Bloodshed has been avoided at the cost of honour . ?

In November 1940 , Waugh was posted to a commando unit , and , after further training , became a member of " Layforce " , under Brigadier Robert Laycock . In February 1941 , the unit sailed to the Mediterranean , where it participated in an unsuccessful attempt to recapture Bardia , on the Libyan coast . In May , Layforce was required to assist in the evacuation of Crete : Waugh was shocked by the disorder and its loss of discipline and , as he saw it , the cowardice of the departing troops . In July , during the roundabout journey home by troop ship , he wrote Put Out More Flags ( 1942 ) , a novel of the war 's early months in which he returned to the literary style he had used in the 1930s . Back in Britain , more training and waiting followed until , in May 1942 , he was transferred to the Royal Horse Guards , on Laycock 's recommendation . On 10 June 1942 , Laura gave birth to Margaret , the couple 's fourth child .

= = = Frustration , Brideshead and Yugoslavia = = =

Waugh 's elation at his transfer soon descended into disillusion as he failed to find opportunities for active service . The death of his father , on 26 June 1943 , and the need to deal with family affairs prevented him from departing with his brigade for North Africa as part of Operation Husky ( 9 July ? 17 August 1943 ) , the Allied invasion of Sicily . Despite his undoubted courage , his unmilitary and insubordinate character were rendering him effectively unemployable as a soldier . After spells of idleness at the regimental depot in Windsor , Waugh began parachute training at Tatton Park , Cheshire , but landed awkwardly during an exercise and fractured a fibula . Recovering at Windsor , he applied for three months ' unpaid leave to write the novel that had been forming in his mind . His request was granted and , on 31 January 1944 , he departed for Chagford , Devon , where he could work in seclusion . The result was Brideshead Revisited : The Sacred & Profane Memories of Captain Charles Ryder ( 1945 ) , the first of his explicitly Catholic novels of which the biographer Douglas Lane Patey commented that it was " the book that seemed to confirm his new sense of his writerly vocation " .

Waugh managed to extend his leave until June 1944 . Soon after his return to duty he was recruited by Randolph Churchill to serve in a military mission to Yugoslavia , and , early in July , flew with Churchill from Bari , Italy , to the Croatian island of Vis . There , they met Marshal Tito , the Communist leader of the Partisans , who was leading the guerrilla fight against the occupying Axis forces with Allied support . Waugh and Churchill returned to Bari before flying back to Yugoslavia to begin their mission , but their aeroplane crash @-@ landed , both men were injured , and their mission was delayed for a month .

The mission eventually arrived at Topusko , where it established itself in a deserted farmhouse . The group 's liaison duties , between the British Army and the Communist Partisans , were light . Waugh had little sympathy with the Communist @-@ led Partisans and despised Tito . His chief interest became the welfare of the Catholic Church in Croatia , which , he believed , had suffered at the hands of the Serbian Orthodox Church and would fare worse when the Communists took control . He expressed those thoughts in a long report , " Church and State in Liberated Croatia " . After spells in Dubrovnik and Rome , Waugh returned to London on 15 March 1945 to present his report , which the Foreign Office suppressed to maintain good relations with Tito , now the leader of

communist Yugoslavia .

= = Postwar = =

= = = Fame and fortune = = =

Brideshead Revisited was published in London in May 1945 . Waugh had been convinced of the book 's qualities , " my first novel rather than my last " . It was a tremendous success , bringing its author fame , fortune and literary status . Happy though he was with this outcome , Waugh 's principal concern as the war ended was the fate of the large populations of Eastern European Catholics , betrayed ( as he saw it ) into the hands of Stalin 's Soviet Union by the Allies . He now saw little difference in morality between the war 's combatants and later described it as " a sweaty tug @-@ of @-@ war between teams of indistinguishable louts " . Although he took momentary pleasure from the defeat of Winston Churchill and his Conservatives in the 1945 general election , he saw the accession to power of the Labour Party as a triumph of barbarism and the onset of a new " Dark Age " .

In September 1945 , after he was released by the army , he returned to Piers Court with his family ( another daughter , Harriet , had been born at Pixton in 1944 ) but spent much of the next seven years either in London , or travelling . In March 1946 , he visited the Nuremberg trials , and later that year , he was in Spain for a celebration of the 400th anniversary of the death of Francisco de Vitoria , said to be the founder of international law . Waugh wrote up his experiences of the frustrations of postwar European travel in a novella , Scott @-@ King 's Modern Europe . In February 1947 , he made the first of several trips to the United States , in the first instance to discuss filming of Brideshead . The project collapsed , but Waugh used his time in Hollywood to visit the Forest Lawn cemetery , which provided the basis for his satire of American perspectives on death , The Loved One . In 1951 he visited the Holy Land with his future biographer , Christopher Sykes , and in 1953 , he travelled to Goa to witness the final exhibition before burial of the remains of the 16th century Jesuit missionary @-@ priest Francis Xavier .

In between his journeys , Waugh worked intermittently on Helena , a long @-@ planned novel about the discoverer of the True Cross that was " far the best book I have ever written or ever will write " . Its success with the public was limited , but it was , his daughter Harriet later said , " the only one of his books that he ever cared to read aloud " .

In 1952 Waugh published Men at Arms , the first of his semi @-@ autobiographical war trilogy in which he depicted many of his personal experiences and encounters from the early stages of the war . Other books published during this period included When The Going Was Good ( 1946 ) , an anthology of his pre @-@ war travel writing , The Holy Places ( published by the Ian Fleming @-@ managed Queen Anne Press , 1952 ) and Love Among the Ruins ( 1953 ) , a dystopian tale in which Waugh displays his contempt for the modern world . Nearing 50 , Waugh was old for his years , " selectively deaf , rheumatic , irascible " and increasingly dependent on alcohol and on drugs to relieve his insomnia and depression . Two more children , James ( born 1946 ) and Septimus ( born 1950 ) , completed his family .

From 1945 onwards , Waugh became an avid collector of objects , particularly Victorian paintings and furniture . He filled Piers Court with his acquisitions , often from London 's Portobello Market and from house clearance sales . His diary entry for 30 August 1946 records a visit to Gloucester , where he bought " a lion of wood , finely carved for £ 25 , also a bookcase £ 35 ... a charming Chinese painting £ 10 , a Regency easel £ 7 " . Some of his buying was shrewd and prescient ; he paid £ 10 for Rossetti 's " Spirit of the Rainbow " to begin a collection of Victorian paintings that eventually acquired great value . Waugh also began , from 1949 , to write knowledgeable reviews and articles on the subject of painting .

= = = Breakdown = = =



By 1953 , Waugh 's popularity as a writer was declining . He was perceived as out of step with the Zeitgeist , and the large fees he demanded were no longer easily available . His money was running out and progress on the second book of his war trilogy , *Officers and Gentlemen* , had stalled . Partly because of his dependency on drugs , his health was steadily deteriorating . Shortage of cash led him to agree in November 1953 to be interviewed on BBC radio , where the panel took an aggressive line : " they tried to make a fool of me , and I don 't think they entirely succeeded " , Waugh wrote to Nancy Mitford . Peter Fleming in *The Spectator* likened the interview to " the goading of a bull by matadors " .

Early in 1954 , Waugh 's doctors , concerned by his physical deterioration , advised a change of scene . On 29 January , he took a ship bound for Ceylon , hoping that he would be able to finish his novel . Within a few days , he was writing home complaining of " other passengers whispering about me " and of hearing voices , including that of his recent BBC interlocutor , Stephen Black . He left the ship in Egypt and flew on to Colombo , but , he wrote to Laura , the voices followed him . Alarmed , Laura sought help from her friend , Frances Donaldson , whose husband agreed to fly out to Ceylon and bring Waugh home . In fact , Waugh made his own way back , now believing that he was being possessed by devils . A brief medical examination indicated that Waugh was suffering from bromide poisoning from his drugs regimen . When his medication was changed , the voices and the other hallucinations quickly disappeared . Waugh was delighted , informing all of his friends that he had been mad : " Clean off my onion ! " . The experience was fictionalised a few years later , in *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* ( 1957 ) .

= = = Late works = = =

Restored to health , Waugh returned to work and finished *Officers and Gentlemen* . In June 1955 the *Daily Express* journalist and reviewer Nancy Spain , accompanied by her friend Lord Noel @-@ Buxton , arrived uninvited at Piers Court and demanded an interview . Waugh saw the pair off and wrote a wry account for *The Spectator* , but he was troubled by the incident and decided to sell Piers Court : / " I felt it was polluted " , he told Nancy Mitford . Late in 1956 , the family moved to the manor house in the Somerset village of Combe Florey . In January 1957 , Waugh avenged the Spain ? Noel @-@ Buxton intrusion by winning libel damages from the *Express* and Spain . The paper had printed an article by Spain that suggested that the sales of Waugh 's books were much lower than they were and that his worth , as a journalist , was low .

*Gilbert Pinfold* was published in the summer of 1957 , " my barmy book " , Waugh called it . The extent to which the story is self @-@ mockery , rather than true autobiography , became a subject of critical debate . Waugh 's next major book was a biography of his longtime friend Ronald Knox , the Catholic writer and theologian who had died in August 1957 . Research and writing extended over two years during which Waugh did little other work , delaying the third volume of his war trilogy . In June 1958 , his son Auberon was severely wounded in a shooting accident while serving with the army in Cyprus . Waugh remained detached ; he neither went to Cyprus nor immediately visited Auberon on the latter 's return to Britain . The critic and literary biographer David Wykes called Waugh 's sang @-@ froid " astonishing " and the family 's apparent acceptance of his behaviour even more so .

Although most of Waugh 's books had sold well , and he had been well @-@ rewarded for his journalism , his levels of expenditure meant that money problems and tax bills were a recurrent feature in his life . In 1950 , as a means of tax avoidance , he had set up a trust fund for his children ( he termed it the " Save the Children Fund " , after the well @-@ established charity of that name ) into which he placed the initial advance and all future royalties from the Penguin ( paperback ) editions of his books . He was able to augment his personal finances by charging household items to the trust or selling his own possessions to it . Nonetheless , by 1960 , shortage of money led him to agree to an interview on BBC Television , in the *Face to Face* series conducted by John Freeman . The interview was broadcast on 26 June 1960 ; according to his biographer Selena Hastings , Waugh restrained his instinctive hostility and coolly answered the questions put to him by Freeman , assuming what she describes as a " pose of world @-@ weary boredom " .

In 1960 , Waugh was offered the honour of a CBE but declined , believing that he should have been given the superior status of a knighthood . In September , he produced his final travel book , *A Tourist in Africa* , based on a visit made in January ? March 1959 . He enjoyed the trip but " despised " the book . The critic Cyril Connolly called it " the thinnest piece of book @-@ making that Mr Waugh has undertaken " . The book done , he worked on the last of the war trilogy , which was published in 1961 as *Unconditional Surrender* .

= = = Decline and death = = =

As he approached his sixties , Waugh was in poor health , prematurely aged , " fat , deaf , short of breath " , according to Patey . His biographer Martin Stannard likened his appearance around this time to that of " an exhausted rogue jollied up by drink " . In 1962 Waugh began work on his autobiography , and that same year wrote his final fiction , the long short story *Basil Seal Rides Again* . This revival of the protagonist of *Black Mischief* and *Put Out More Flags* was published in 1963 ; the *Times Literary Supplement* called it a " nasty little book " . When the first volume of autobiography , *A Little Learning* , was published in 1964 , Waugh 's often oblique tone and discreet name changes ensured that friends avoided the embarrassments that some had feared .

Waugh had welcomed the accession in 1958 of Pope John XXIII and wrote an appreciative tribute on the pope 's death in 1963 . However , he became increasingly concerned by the decisions emerging from the Second Vatican Council , which was convened by Pope John in October 1962 and continued under his successor , Paul VI until 1965 . Waugh , a staunch opponent of Church reform , was particularly distressed by the replacement of the universal Latin Mass with the vernacular . In a *Spectator* article of 23 November 1962 , he argued the case against change in a manner described by a later commentator as " sharp @-@ edged reasonableness " . He wrote to Nancy Mitford that " the bugging up of the Church is a deep sorrow to me .... We write letters to the paper . A fat lot of good that does . "

In 1965 , a new financial crisis arose from an apparent flaw in the terms of the " Save the Children " trust , and a large sum of back tax was being demanded . Waugh 's agent , A.D. Peters , negotiated a settlement with the tax authorities for a manageable amount , but in his concern to generate funds , Waugh signed contracts to write several books , including a history of the papacy , an illustrated book on the Crusades and a second volume of autobiography . Waugh 's physical and mental deterioration prevented any work on these projects , and the contracts were cancelled . He described himself as " toothless , deaf , melancholic , shaky on my pins , unable to eat , full of dope , quite idle " and expressed the belief that " all fates were worse than death " . His only significant literary activity in 1965 was the editing of the three war novels into a single volume , published as *Sword of Honour* .

On Easter Day , 10 April 1966 , after attending a Latin Mass in a neighbouring village with members of his family , Waugh died of heart failure at his Combe Florey home , at 62 . He was buried , by special arrangement , in a consecrated plot outside the Anglican churchyard in Combe Florey . A Requiem Mass , in Latin , was celebrated in Westminster Cathedral on 21 April 1966 . Laura Waugh died in 1973 of pneumonia after a short illness and was interred next to her husband in Combe Florey .

= = Character and opinions = =

In the course of his lifetime , Waugh made enemies and offended many people ; writer James Lees @-@ Milne said that Waugh ? was the nastiest @-@ tempered man in England ? . Waugh 's son , Auberon , said that the force of his father 's personality was such that , despite his lack of height , ? generals and chancellors of the exchequer , six @-@ foot @-@ six and exuding self @-@ importance from every pore , quail [ ed ] in front of him ? .

In the biographic *Mad World* ( 2009 ) , Paula Byrne said that the common view of Evelyn Waugh as a " snobbish misanthrope " is a caricature ; he asks : " Why would a man , who was so unpleasant , be so beloved by such a wide circle of friends ? " His generosity to individual persons and causes ,

especially Catholic causes , extended to small gestures ; after his libel @-@ court victory over Nancy Spain , he sent her a bottle of champagne . Hastings said that Waugh 's outward personal belligerence to strangers was not entirely serious but an attempt at " finding a sparring partner worthy of his own wit and ingenuity " . Besides mocking others , Waugh mocked himself ? the elderly buffer , ? crusty colonel ? image , which he presented in later life , was a comic impersonation , and not his true self .

As an instinctive conservative , Waugh believed that class divisions , with inequalities of wealth and position , were natural and that " no form of government [ was ] ordained by God as being better than any other " . In the post @-@ war " Age of the Common Man " , he attacked socialism ( the " Cripps ? Attlee terror " ) and complained , after Churchill 's election in 1951 , that " the Conservative Party have never put the clock back a single second " . Waugh never voted in elections ; in 1959 , he expressed a hope that the Conservatives would win the election , which they did , but would not vote for them , saying " I should feel I was morally inculpated in their follies " and added : " I do not aspire to advise my sovereign in her choice of servants " .

Waugh 's Catholicism was fundamental : ? The Church ... is the normal state of man from which men have disastrously exiled themselves . ? He believed that the Catholic Church was the last , great defence against the encroachment of the Dark Age being ushered in by the welfare state and the spreading of working class culture . Strictly observant , Waugh admitted to Diana Cooper that his most difficult task was how to square the obligations of his faith with his indifference to his fellow men . When Nancy Mitford asked him how he reconciled his often objectionable conduct with being a Christian , Waugh replied that ? were he not a Christian he would be even more horrible ? .

Waugh 's conservatism was aesthetic as well as political and religious . Although he praised younger writers , such as Angus Wilson , Muriel Spark and V.S. Naipaul , he was scornful of the 1950s writers ' group known as ? The Movement ? . He said that the literary world was " sinking into black disaster " and that literature might die within thirty years . As a schoolboy , Waugh had praised the art of Cubism but soon abandoned his interest in artistic Modernism . In 1945 , Waugh said that Pablo Picasso 's artistic standing was the result of a " mesmeric trick " and that his paintings " could not be intelligently discussed in the terms used of the civilised masters " . In 1953 , in a radio interview , he named Augustus Egg ( 1816 ? 1863 ) as a painter for whom he had particular esteem . Despite their political differences , Waugh came to admire George Orwell , because of their shared patriotism and sense of morality .

Throughout his literary works , Evelyn Waugh freely expressed racial and anti @-@ semitic prejudices , especially in the books he wrote before the Second World War . The writer V.S. Pritchett said that Waugh 's anti @-@ semitism , ? like Mount Everest , is there , nonviolent , but undeniable ? . Wykes said that anti @-@ semitism is Waugh 's " most persistent nastiness " , adding that Waugh 's racism was " an illogical extension of his views on the naturalness and rightness of hierarchy as the [ main ] principle of social organisation " . As an admirer of Waugh 's writing , Orwell said that Evelyn Waugh was " almost as good a novelist as it is possible to be ... while holding untenable opinions " .

= = Works = =

= = = Themes and style = = =

Wyke observes that Waugh 's novels reprise and fictionalise the principal events of his life , although in an early essay Waugh wrote : " Nothing is more insulting to a novelist than to assume that he is incapable of anything , but the mere transcription of what he observes " . The reader should not assume that the author agreed with the opinions expressed by his fictional characters . Nevertheless , in the Introduction to the Complete Short Stories , Ann Pasternak Slater said that the " delineation of social prejudices and the language in which they are expressed is part of Waugh 's meticulous observation of his contemporary world " .

The critic Clive James said of Waugh : " Nobody ever wrote a more unaffectedly elegant English ...

its hundreds of years of steady development culminate in him ". As his talent developed and matured , he maintained what literary critic Andrew Michael Roberts called " an exquisite sense of the ludicrous , and a fine aptitude for exposing false attitudes " . In the first stages of his 40 @-@ year writing career , before his conversion to Catholicism in 1930 , Waugh was the novelist of the Bright Young People generation . His first two novels , *Decline and Fall* ( 1928 ) and *Vile Bodies* ( 1930 ) , comically reflect a futile society , populated by two @-@ dimensional , basically unbelievable characters in circumstances too fantastic to evoke the reader 's emotions . A typical Waugh trademark evident in the early novels is rapid , unattributed dialogue in which the participants can be readily identified . At the same time Waugh was writing serious essays , such as " *The War and the Younger Generation* " in which he castigates his own generation as " crazy and sterile " people .

Waugh 's conversion to Catholicism did not noticeably change the nature of his next two novels , *Black Mischief* ( 1934 ) and *A Handful of Dust* ( 1934 ) , but , in the latter novel , the elements of farce are subdued , and the protagonist , Tony Last , is recognisably a person rather than a comic cipher . Waugh 's first fiction with a Catholic theme was the short story " *Out of Depth* " ( 1933 ) about the immutability of the Mass . From the mid @-@ 1930s onwards , Catholicism and conservative politics were much featured in his journalistic and non @-@ fiction writing before he reverted to his former manner with *Scoop* ( 1938 ) , a novel about journalism , journalists , and unsavoury journalistic practices .

In *Work Suspended and Other Stories* Waugh introduced " real " characters and a first @-@ person narrator , signalling the literary style he would adopt in *Brideshead Revisited* a few years later . *Brideshead* , which questions the meaning of human existence without God , is the first novel in which Evelyn Waugh clearly presents his conservative religious and political views . In the *LIFE* magazine article , " *Fan Fare* " ( 1946 ) , Waugh said that " you can only leave God out [ of fiction ] by making your characters pure abstractions " and that his future novels shall be " the attempt to represent man more fully which , to me , means only one thing , man in his relation to God . " As such , the novel *Helena* ( 1950 ) is Evelyn Waugh 's most philosophically Christian book .

In *Brideshead* , the proletarian junior officer Hooper illustrates a theme that persists in Waugh 's postwar fiction : the rise of mediocrity in the " *Age of the Common Man* " . In the trilogy *Sword of Honour* ( *Men at Arms* , 1952 ; *Officers and Gentlemen* , 1955 , *Unconditional Surrender* , 1961 ) the social pervasiveness of mediocrity is personified in the semi @-@ comical character " *Trimmer* " , a sloven and a fraud who triumphs by contrivance . In the novella " *Scott @-@ King 's Modern Europe* " ( 1947 ) , Waugh 's pessimism about the future is in the schoolmaster 's admonition : " I think it would be very wicked , indeed , to do anything to fit a boy for the modern world " . Likewise , such cynicism pervades the novel *Love Among the Ruins* ( 1953 ) , set in a dystopian , welfare @-@ state Britain that is so socially disagreeable that euthanasia is the most sought @-@ after of the government 's social services . Of the postwar novels , Patey says that *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* ( 1957 ) stands out ? a kind of mock @-@ novel , a sly invitation to a game ? . Waugh 's final work of fiction , " *Basil Seal Rides Again* " ( 1962 ) , features characters from the prewar novels ; Waugh admitted that the work was a ? senile attempt to recapture the manner of my youth ? . Stylistically this final story begins in the same fashion as the first story , ? *The Balance* " of 1926 , with a " fusillade of unattributed dialogue " .

= = = Reception = = =

Of Waugh 's early books , *Decline and Fall* was hailed by Arnold Bennett in the *Evening Standard* as " an uncompromising and brilliantly malicious satire " . The critical reception of *Vile Bodies* two years later was even more enthusiastic , with Rebecca West predicting that Waugh was " destined to be the dazzling figure of his age " . However , *A Handful of Dust* , later widely regarded as a masterpiece , received a more muted welcome from critics , despite the author 's own high estimation of the work . The book 's ending , with Tony Last condemned forever to read Dickens to his mad jungle captor , was thought by the critic Henry Yorke to reduce an otherwise believable book to " phantasy " . Cyril Connolly 's first reaction to the book was that Waugh 's powers were

failing , an opinion that he later revised .

In the latter 1930s , Waugh 's inclination to Catholic and conservative polemics affected his standing with the general reading public . The *Campion* biography is said by David Wykes to be " so rigidly biased that it has no claims to make as history " . The pro @-@ fascist tone in parts of Waugh in *Abyssinia* offended readers and critics and prevented its publication in America . There was general relief among critics when *Scoop* , in 1938 , indicated a return to Waugh 's earlier comic style . Critics had begun to think that his wit had been displaced by partisanship and propaganda .

Waugh maintained his reputation in 1942 , with *Put Out More Flags* , which sold well despite wartime restrictions on paper and printing . Its public reception , however , did not compare with that accorded to *Brideshead Revisited* three years later , on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean . *Brideshead* 's selection as the American Book of the Month swelled its US sales to an extent that dwarfed those in Britain , which was affected by paper shortages . Despite the public 's enthusiasm , critical opinion was split . *Brideshead* 's Catholic standpoint offended some critics who had greeted Waugh 's earlier novels with warm praise . Its perceived snobbery and its deference to the aristocracy were attacked by , among others , Conor Cruise O 'Brien who , in the Irish literary magazine *The Bell* , wrote of Waugh 's " almost mystical veneration " for the upper classes . Fellow writer Rose Macaulay believed that Waugh 's genius had been adversely affected by the intrusion of his right @-@ wing partisan alter ego and that he had lost his detachment : " In art so naturally ironic and detached as his , this is a serious loss " . Conversely , the book was praised by Yorke , Graham Greene and , in glowing terms , by Harold Acton who was particularly impressed by its evocation of 1920s Oxford . In 1959 , at the request of publishers Chapman and Hall and in some deference to his critics , Waugh revised the book and wrote in a preface : " I have modified the grosser passages but not obliterated them because they are an essential part of the book " .

In " *Fan Fare* " , Waugh forecasts that his future books will be unpopular because of their religious theme . On publication in 1950 , *Helena* was received indifferently by the public and by critics , who disparaged the awkward mixing of 20th century schoolgirl slang with otherwise reverential prose . Otherwise , Waugh 's prediction proved unfounded ; all his fiction remained in print and sales stayed healthy . During his successful 1957 lawsuit against the *Daily Express* , Waugh 's counsel produced figures showing total sales to that time of over four million books , two thirds in Britain and the rest in America . *Men at Arms* , the first volume of his war trilogy , won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in 1953 ; initial critical comment was lukewarm , with Connolly likening *Men at Arms* to beer rather than champagne . Connolly changed his view later , calling the completed trilogy " the finest novel to come out of the war " . Of Waugh 's other major postwar works , the *Knox* biography was admired within Waugh 's close circle but criticised by others in the Church for its depiction of Knox as an unappreciated victim of the Catholic hierarchy . The book did not sell well ? " like warm cakes " , according to Waugh . *Pinfold* surprised the critics by its originality . Its plainly autobiographical content , Hastings suggests , gave the public a fixed image of Waugh : " stout , splenetic , red @-@ faced and reactionary , a figure from burlesque complete with cigar , bowler hat and loud checked suit . "

= = = Reputation = = =

In 1973 , Waugh 's diaries were serialised in *The Observer* prior to publication in book form in 1976 . The revelations on his private life , thoughts and attitudes created controversy . Although Waugh had removed embarrassing entries relating to his Oxford years and his first marriage , there was sufficient left on the record to enable enemies to project a negative image of the writer as intolerant , snobbish and sadistic , with pronounced fascist leanings . Some of this picture , it was maintained by Waugh 's supporters , arose from poor editing of the diaries , and a desire to transform Waugh from a writer to a " character " . Nevertheless , a popular conception developed of Waugh as a monster . When , in 1980 , a selection of his letters was published , his reputation became the subject of further discussion . Philip Larkin , reviewing the collection in *The Guardian* , thought that it demonstrated Waugh 's elitism ; to receive a letter from him , it seemed , " one would have to have a nursery nickname and be a member of White 's , a Roman Catholic , a high @-@ born lady or an

Old Etonian novelist " .

The publication of the diaries and letters promoted increased interest in Waugh and his works and caused publication of much new material . Christopher Sykes 's biography had appeared in 1975 , between 1980 and 1998 three more full biographies were issued and other biographical and critical studies have continued to be produced . A collection of Waugh 's journalism and reviews was published in 1983 , revealing a fuller range of his ideas and beliefs . The new material provided further grounds for debate between Waugh 's supporters and detractors . The 1982 Granada Television adaptation of *Brideshead Revisited* introduced a new generation to Waugh 's works , in Britain and in America . There had been earlier television treatment of Waugh 's fiction , as *Sword of Honour* had been serialised by the BBC in 1967 , but the impact of Granada 's *Brideshead* was much wider . Its nostalgic depiction of a vanished form of Englishness appealed to the American mass market ; *Time* magazine 's TV critic described the series as " a novel ... made into a poem " , and listed it among the " 100 Best TV Shows of All Time " . There have been further cinematic Waugh adaptations : *A Handful of Dust* in 1988 , *Vile Bodies* ( filmed as *Bright Young Things* ) in 2003 and *Brideshead* again in 2008 . These popular treatments have maintained the public 's appetite for Waugh 's novels , all of which remain in print and continue to sell . Several have been listed among various compiled lists of the world 's greatest novels .

Stannard concludes that beneath his public mask , Waugh was " a dedicated artist and a man of earnest faith , struggling against the dryness of his soul " . Graham Greene , in a letter to *The Times* shortly after Waugh 's death , acknowledged him as " the greatest novelist of my generation " , while *Time* magazine 's obituarist called him " the grand old mandarin of modern British prose " and asserted that his novels " will continue to survive as long as there are readers who can savor what critic V. S. Pritchett calls ' the beauty of his malice ' " . Nancy Mitford said of him in a television interview , " What nobody remembers about Evelyn is that everything with him was jokes . Everything . That 's what none of the people who wrote about him seem to have taken into account at all " .