EVELYN WAUGH: TRAVEL WRITING AND POLITICS

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ABSTRACT

In 1936, when deployed as the *Daily Mail*'s correspondent in the Second Italo-Abyssinian War (1935-36), Evelyn Waugh came to realise what previously had seemed a joke: that travel, and travel writing, was deadly politically serious. The purpose of this thesis is to execute a similar move: to take Waugh's political travel writing seriously. In particular, to investigate how his travel writing is guided by a commitment to a form of political Roman Catholicism, which he shared with a coterie of influential right-wing Catholic writers and thinkers in the 1930s. Furthermore, this thesis examines the long afterlife of Waugh's 1930s travel writing in a post-war British political landscape that was hostile to his politico-religious ideas.

Chapters One and Two of this thesis concern Waugh's travel writing from the Second Italo-Abyssinian War. They examine the influence of Hilaire Belloc on Waugh's interpretation of Italian Fascist expansionism as the rebirth of the Roman Empire, and argue that Waugh's travel writing and journalism of this period forms part of the corpus of writing produced by English Catholic propaganda for Italy's Roman Catholic imperialism in East Africa. Chapter Three analyses Waugh's travel writing about Cárdenas' Mexico in 1939. It argues that, by travelling to Mexico, Waugh constructs a travel book that indirectly addresses the Spanish Civil War. Chapter Four provides a reading of *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (1957), which argues that it represents a form of experimental travel book addressing the long-lasting outcomes of Waugh's 1930 political travel books. Chapter Five concerns Waugh's return to Africa in 1959 where the continent was on the verge of decolonisation. It analyses Waugh's response to what he perceived to be the failure of his politico-religious hopes for Africa in the 1930s, and his pessimism for European civilisation as a result. In

summary, this thesis illuminates Waugh’s travel writing through an examination of the politico-religious argument that he advances between the 1930s and the 1960s.

EVELYN WAUGH: TRAVEL WRITING AND POLITICS

CONTENTS

Introduction **7**

Overview of Chapters 21

1. 'We Can Applaud Italy': Evelyn Waugh and the Second Italo-Abyssinian War (1935-36) **26**

From *Remote People* to *Waugh in Abyssinia* 29

Waugh and the *English Review*: British Propagandists for Italy 37

The Travel Writer and the *Duce* 42

'Gas them to buggery': *Waugh in Abyssinia* and War Reportage 48

Campion's legacy in *Waugh in Abyssinia* 54

From Abyssinia to Spain 60

2. 'The permanence of Roman conquest': Evelyn Waugh's Journey of Confirmation in *Waugh in Abyssinia* (1936) **66**

An expert on Abyssinia 68

Abyssinian Unrealities 81

Exporting Fascism 88

'A Call to Order in Times of Hysteria' 92

Anti-Fascists and Sentimentalists 96

Satire and Propaganda 102

3. Christianity or Chaos: Evelyn Waugh, Mexico, and the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) **116**

Waugh and Mexico 118

English Catholics and a Return to '*Spanishness*' 126

The Bellocians and the 'Sovietization' of Europe 132

'The Humbug of Being Unbiased' 143

Mexico and Fascism 153

4. Pre-war Politics in Post-war Britain: The Legacy of Evelyn Waugh's Political Travel Writing in *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (1957) 164

Pinfold and Waugh: '… at the border lines of sanity' 167

The Meaning of Treason: Pinfold the Persecuted Travel Writer 176

The BBC, Radio Technology and Authoritarian Orthodoxy 188

The Politics of Reputation 201

5. 'Tourism and politics have laid waste everywhere': Roman Catholic Imperialism in Evelyn Waugh's *A Tourist in Africa* (1960) 214

Africa and the Faith 218

Life Among the Ruins 231

Catholicism and the English Aristocracy in East Africa 239

Aden, Zanzibar and the African Aristocracy 247

7. Conclusion 258

8. Bibliography 265

INTRODUCTION

Following his first trip to Africa in 1930, Evelyn Waugh noted how unexpected it was that politics should feature so prominently in his travels: 'It is very surprising', he wrote in *Remote People* (1931), 'to discover the importance which politics assume the moment one begins to travel'.[1] Waugh's expression of surprise is consistent with the authorial persona that he advances in his early travel books: that of a faux-naïf and apolitical observer who is comically ill equipped for the political complexities of modern travel. It was, of course, no revelation to Waugh's readers in the early 1930s that political concerns predominated. Travel was and had always been – from medieval pilgrimages to imperial explorations – unavoidably political. This was especially true in an era of increasingly democratised and commercialised travel: the acts of border crossing, presenting papers and boarding ships and planes had familiarised the political bureaucracy of travel to an entire generation. For a writer in the 1920s and 1930s, travel was alluring both as a literal escape from Britain in the aftermath of the First World War and as a metaphor for the mood of dislocation and political anxiety that typified the period. Samuel Hynes identifies travel as 'the basic trope of the generation' between the wars.[2] Travel writing, as such, was a literary means experiencing and representing the political instability of the interwar period.

Politics is inherent in travel writing even in the fundamental relationship between the writer and the world. Specimens of the genre typically display a first-person writer who makes some claim, however mendacious or fanciful, to represent and report on the locations that he or she visits. It involves an implied contractual

[1] Evelyn Waugh, *Remote People: A Report from Ethiopia and British Africa, 1930-31* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985 [1931]), p. 120.
[2] Samuel Hynes, *The Auden Generation: Literature and Politics in England in the 1930s* (London: Faber & Faber, 1979), p. 229.

agreement between writer and reader of the kind theorised by Philippe Lejeune as an 'autobiographical pact', in which the identity of the author, narrator and protagonist of the travel book is considered to be the same.[3] This in itself is a political act: a first-person narrator filters the experience of travel through a single perspective, which, both writer and reader implicitly agree, represent and legislate for the reality of that experience. As Dennis Porter argues, 'to represent the world is a political as well as an aesthetic-cognitive activity' and the travel writer, he concludes, 'is at the same time *representator* and representative, reporter and legislator'.[4] The idea of the travel writer as legislator has long proved fruitful for theorists of travel writing and colonialism, such as Mary Louise Pratt, who has demonstrated travel writing's complicity with, and often legitimisation of, imperialist ideologies.[5] Travel writers historically served, wittingly or otherwise, as propagandists for European colonial project. In an era before travel was made more widely available to the public they constructed the reality of the locations they visited for their readership and, whether implicitly or explicitly, passed judgement on foreign customs. Waugh's ironic astonishment at the discovery that politics feature far more prominently when travelling than he had anticipated depicts him confronting the inherence of politics to travel while, at the same time, obfuscating his role as reporter and legislator of political reality.

In the mid-1930s, specifically when he was deployed as a correspondent in the Second Italo-Abyssinian War, Waugh came fully to realise what, in 1931, had seemed like a joke: that travel, and travel writing, was deadly politically serious. The purpose of this thesis is to execute a similar move: to take Waugh's political travel writing

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[3] Philippe Lejeune, *On Autobiography* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 12.
[4] Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 14-15.
[5] See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).

seriously. In particular, this will involve understanding how his political travel writing is inflected by Waugh's Roman Catholicism and how his involvement in a coterie of right wing Catholics in Britain influenced his writing and thinking in this period.[6] In anticipation of the Italian invasion of Abyssinia of 1935 Waugh wrote in the *Evening Standard* that the Italian Fascists' 'conquest of Abyssinia' was 'an object which any patriotic European can applaud'.[7] During the Second Italo-Abyssinian War Waugh was employed as the *Daily Mail*'s war correspondent in Abyssinia. The conflict represents a decisive moment in Waugh's career as a travel writer. The political thrust of the book that resulted from Waugh's stint as a war correspondent, *Waugh in Abyssinia* (1936), is a significant deviation from what he had written previously. In it, Waugh unambiguously expressed his ideological commitment to the Fascist imperial campaign in East Africa. No longer did he cultivate an apolitical travel writing persona, but vocally promulgated the *casus belli* of the Italian invasion of Abyssinia. Moreover, his writing suggests a distinct intended readership, which was a religiously Roman Catholic and politically right-wing coterie in Britain in the mid-1930s. *Waugh in Abyssinia* forms part of a wider canon of pro-Italian literature, some of which was

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[6] Hitherto there has been little critical work undertaken on British literary responses to the Second Italo-Abyssinian War. The war is unmentioned in Bernard Bergonzi, *Reading the Thirties: Texts and Contexts* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1978); Keith Williams and Steven Matthews, *Rewriting the Thirties: Modernism and After* (London: Longman, 1997); Robert Schumann, *The Power of Political Art: The 1930s Literary Left* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Andy Croft, *Red Letter Days: British Fiction in the 1930s* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990); and Julian Symons, *The Thirties: A Dream Revolved* (London: Faber & Faber, 1975 rev. ed), even though, for Symons, the year 1936 represents the 'heart of the Thirties dream' (p.51). It receives mention in Samuel Hynes, *The Auden Generation: Literature and Politics in England in the 1930s* (London: Faber & Faber, 1976) and *Culture and Crisis in Britain in the '30s* ed. by Jon Clark, Margot Heinemann, David Margolies and Carole Snee (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1979), and Valentine Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), makes three references to Abyssinia, each concerning Evelyn Waugh's *Waugh in Abyssinia* (1936). Cunningham sweepingly acknowledges that, by 1935, '[Waugh's] Catholicism egging on his fascistic streak' could turn him into 'a fervent admirer of Mussolini and the heroic road-building engineers in Abyssinia: the kind who enjoyed bombing medieval warriors on horseback from multi-engined Capronis' (p. 203). For a useful sociological look at the British response to the war more broadly, see Daniel Waley, *British Public Opinion and the Abyssinian War, 1935-36* (London: Temple Smith, 1975).
[7] Evelyn Waugh, 'We Can Applaud Italy', *Evening Standard*, 13 February 1935, repr. in *The Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh* ed. Donat Gallgher (London: Methuen, 1986), pp. 162-64.

travel writing, published by prominent Roman Catholic authors in this period, such as Arnold Lunn, Douglas Woodruff, Christopher Dawson and Sir Charles Petrie. These writers, whom all took substantial political and religious influence from the writing of Hilaire Belloc, published with the express aim of making the Italian case for the invasion and colonisation of Abyssinia to their fellow co-religionists in Britain.

Waugh's early 1930s travel books, *Labels* (1930), *Remote People* (1931), and *Ninety-Two Days* (1934), substantially differ in tone and politics from the rest of his travel writing. These books are, as Bernard Schweizer has noted, 'only implicitly political'.[8] *Waugh in Abyssinia* and his later Mexican travel book, *Robbery Under Law* (1939), contain by contrast, Schweizer continues, 'explicit conservative opinions as well as a large does of cultural pessimism, the hallmark of conservative thought'.[9] The latter travel book begins with Waugh's 'Conservative Manifesto' in which he declares that writers ought to 'dispense with the humbug of being unbiased' when travelling.[10] In his political travel writing from the Second Italo-Abyssinian War and after, Waugh gave greater voice to his politico-religious commitments and made a public display of his own transparency. 'Let me, then, say', Waugh wrote in *Robbery Under Law*, 'that I was a Conservative when I went to Mexico and that everything I saw there strengthened my opinions'.[11] His political inflexibility makes for an unexpected and even subversive introduction to the travel book. Waugh proudly jettisons the common trope of the traveller-writer achieving some personal revelation or political insight as a result of his or her travels. If, as Norman Douglas argued in 1925, there is a traditional, albeit nebulous, agreement that exists between the travel

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[8] Bernard Schweizer, *Radicals on the Road: The Politics of English Travel Writing in the 1930s* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), p. 38.
[9] Ibid., p. 38.
[10] Evelyn Waugh, *Robbery Under Law: The Mexican Object-Lesson* (London: Penguin, 2011 [1939]), p. 19.
[11] Waugh, *Robbery Under Law*, p. 19.

writer and the reader of travel books, then Waugh broke this in the mid-1930s. '[T]he reader of a good travel book is entitled not only to an exterior voyage, to descriptions of scenery and so forth', Douglas contends, 'but to an interior, a sentimental or temperamental voyage, which takes place side by side with the outer one'.[12] Waugh's later travel writing does not tell of voyages of discovery, but rather journeys of confirmation. Such writing aspires to the level of a political treatise in the manner of those that were being published concurrently by his co-religionists and political fellow travellers, such as Dawson's *Religion and the Modern State* (1935) or Jerrold's *They That Take the Sword: The Future of the League of Nations* (1936).

Waugh produced more travel books during the 1930s than any of his contemporaries. Taking in three continents, he published five books between 1930 and 1939. Waugh's first travel book, *Labels* (1930), recounts the author's touristic journey around the Mediterranean. In it, Waugh insists upon his own amateurism, and in an ironic turn that is characteristic of his early travel writing, casts doubt upon the value, literary or otherwise, of his travel books. 'I suppose there is no track quite so soundly beaten as the Mediterranean seaboard', he confesses, and 'no towns so completely overrun with tourists as those I intend to describe'.[13] Accompanied by his first wife Evelyn Gardener, Waugh boarded the Scandinavian cruise ship, the *Stella Polaris*, in 1929 to embark on the journey. The cruise liner's company provided the Waughs with an expenses-paid trip on the condition that the *Polaris* was recommended in the subsequent travel book.[14] This was an agreement that would be replicated at the end of the decade when the Pearson Oil Company paid Waugh to travel to Mexico in order to write a travel book that was hostile to the Cárdenas

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[12] Norman Douglas, *Experiments* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1925), p. 9.
[13] Evelyn Waugh, *Labels: A Mediterranean Journal* (London: Penguin, 1985 [1930]), p. 13.
[14] John Howard Wilson, *Evelyn Waugh: A Literary Biography* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, 2001), p. 36.

government's oil expropriations. It was in the months following the Mediterranean cruise that Waugh and Evelyn Gardener divorced and he embarked on his journey of conversion to Roman Catholicism. Shortly after the publication of *Labels* and his second novel *Vile Bodies* (1930), Waugh embarked for Ethiopia, then named the Abyssinian Empire. He found employment as the Special Correspondent for *The Times* to cover the coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie I. The resulting articles and travel book, *Remote People*, represent the beginning of a fruitful but fractious relationship between Waugh and Abyssinia that would be integral to two subsequent travel books: *Waugh in Abyssinia* and *A Tourist in Africa* (1960). He visited East Africa three times during the 1930s and returned once after the Second World War in 1959. During his first trip he journeyed throughout East and Central Africa, taking in Aden, Kenya, Zanzibar, Tanganyika, Uganda and the Belgian Congo.

In 1933 Waugh journeyed to South America, visiting Guiana and Brazil, and wrote up his experiences in the travel book *Ninety-Two Days* (1934). It opens with 'an apology for the book I am going to write during the coming, miserable weeks' and, following *Remote People*, which was structured as a succession of 'nightmares', Waugh expatiates upon the traveller's experiences of monotony and boredom.[15] In a tone of comic resignation Waugh divorces his work from narratives of voyage and discovery and doubts the commercial viability of such a travel book. '[S]ince there were no hairbreadth escapes,' Waugh poses as the problem facing his book, 'no romances, no discoveries, it seems presumptuous to suppose that I shall interest anyone'.[16] He resolves this conundrum with an appeal to travel writing as travel *literature*, a generic elevation that is 'demand[ed]', Waugh claims, by the experience of travel itself:

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[15] Evelyn Waugh, *Ninety-Two Days: A Journey in Guiana and Brazil* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985 [1934], p. 10.
[16] Ibid., p. 10.

> [F]or myself and many better than me, there is a fascination in distant and barbarous places, and particularly with the borderlands of conflicting cultures and states of development, where ideas, uprooted from their traditions, become oddly changed in transplantation. It is there that I find the experiences vivid enough to demand translation into literary form.[17]

The diction Waugh uses ('conflicting cultures', 'states of development', 'traditions') to describe the aspects of travel that necessitate 'translation into literary form' is derived from a conservative political vocabulary. Fussell's account of the interwar travel book is a narrative of decline, and one of the essential case studies for his thesis is Waugh's 1930s travel writing. Of *Remote People*, Fussell wrote that 'Waugh's principal literary emotion is wonder'.[18] In so doing he anchors Waugh's 1931 African travel book to earlier traditions within the travel-writing genre of voyage and adventure narratives. 'Wonder is', Stephen Greenblatt argues, 'the central figure in the initial European response to the New World'.[19] It is, he continues, the 'decisive emotional and intellectual experience of radical difference'.[20] Fussell's account of the interwar travel book tells the story of the genre's rejection, in his estimation, of wonder and *literariness* in favour of political stridency and corrective ideology. He cites *Waugh in Abyssinia* as a monument to the genre's deterioration as the Second World War loomed on the horizon:

> Waugh's admirable commitment to the art of the travel book begins to attenuate with *Waugh in Abyssinia*, where we are give a foretaste to the gradual corruption of the genre as the 30's begin to gear themselves for war […]. [The travel writing genre]

[17] Ibid., p. 11.
[18] Ibid., p. 222.
[19] Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 14.
[20] Ibid., p. 14.

> abandons subtlety and irony; it grows political, strident, sentimental, and self-righteous […].[21]

However, as Stacey Burton rightly points out, Fussell 'privileges an apolitical aesthetic'.[22] It was not simply the case that the genre was co-opted for radical political purposes at the expense, as Fussell claims, of its literary quality: the travel book represented an essayistic and argumentative form for writers for whom travel was already an inherently political experience. For a right-wing Roman Catholic readership, *Waugh in Abyssinia* and *Robbery Under Law* presented an exotic and internationally-minded antidote to their socio-political anxieties in 1930s Britain. Waugh's late-1930s travel writing forms an extension of what Fussell terms the 'I Hate It Here' ethos that propelled a generation of travel writers abroad.[23] The political critique that is implicit in this attitude is to be found in Waugh's overt and explicit public declarations of support for the Italian Fascists and the Spanish Nationalists. Such writing may stand apart from Waugh's wonder-infused travel books of the early 1930s, but, instead, forms part of an alternative canon of political literature written and consumed by Roman Catholics who were in an ideological minority in Britain in this period. Waugh and his co-religionists looked abroad for political ideas for which the travel book was a useful mode of transmission.

With the publication of *Edmund Campion* in 1935 Waugh cemented his religious and political commitment to defending Roman Catholic hegemonic interests in Britain and around the world. Following his conversion in 1930 Waugh sought to capitalise on his position as Britain's most famous neophyte. The Jesuit priest and

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[21] Fussell, *Abroad*, p. 229.
[22] Stacy Burton, *Travel Narrative and the Ends of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 17.
[23] Fussell, *Abroad*, p. 30

prominent Catholic intellectual Fr. Martin D'Arcy oversaw his conversion. Waugh donated all of the proceeds from his biography of the sixteenth-century Jesuit priest and martyr to Campion Hall, Oxford, of which D'Arcy was Master. As Adrian Hastings notes, 'Fr Martin's Campion Hall in Brewer Street [was] something of a Mecca for converts'.[24] Campion Hall served as an intellectual and spiritual home for a coterie of politically active Catholic writers and thinkers in the 1920s and 1930s. These included Belloc, Lunn, Jerrold, and Dawson, among others, and Fr. D'Arcy. In the preface to *Campion* Waugh identifies the plight of twentieth-century Catholics with the Elizabethan persecution faced by Campion and his contemporaries: 'The martyrdom of Father [Miguel] Pro in Mexico [in 1927] re-enacted Campion's'.[25] The 'hunted, trapped, murdered priest is amongst us again,' Waugh argues, 'and the voice of Campion comes to us across the centuries as though he were walking at our side.'[26] The biography won the Hawthornden Prize, then Britain's most prestigious literary award, and cemented Waugh's position as a politically serious Roman Catholic voice. *Campion*'s tone of Catholic hagiography anticipates Waugh's subsequent polemical writing in his travel books about Italian imperialism, the militant secularism of Cárdenas' Mexico, and the Spanish Civil War.

Waugh discovered that he had won the Hawthornden during his time as a war correspondent in the Second Italo-Abyssinian War. As described above, *Waugh in Abyssinia* represents his clearest expression of a specifically Roman Catholic influenced enthusiasm for the politics of Italy's Fascist imperialism. In it he argues in favour of the Italian cause, of the Roman Empire reborn in Africa, and eulogises the Italian soldiers and engineers. Rose Macaulay famously denounced *Waugh in*

[24] Adrian Hastings, 'Some Reflections on English Catholicism of the late 1930s', in *Bishops and Writers: Aspects of the Evolution of Modern Catholicism* ed. by Adrian Hastings (Wheathampstead: Clarke, 1977), pp. 107-26 (p. 109)
[25] Evelyn Waugh, *Edmund Campion: Jesuit Priest and Martyr* (London: Penguin, 2012 [1935]), p. 2.
[26] Ibid., p. 2.

Abyssinia as a 'Fascist tract' and this view has informed a great deal of the subsequent critical approaches to the book and his travel writing more broadly.[27] In between his two visits to Abyssinia undertaken in 1935 and 1936, Waugh travelled to Rome and was granted audiences with both Pope Pius XI and the leader of the Italian Fascists, Benito Mussolini. In the first meeting the Pope granted Waugh the annulment of his first marriage. This left him free to remarry to Laura Herbert who came from an aristocratic Roman Catholic house of great historical prominence. In the second meeting, Waugh presented Mussolini with information for Abyssinia and was impressed by the theatricality of Italian Fascist statecraft. The audience with Mussolini was had been agreed on the strictest grounds that Waugh would not speak or write publicly about it. His friend and biographer, Christopher Sykes, noted that Waugh 'had found the *Duce*'s personality very impressive' and that 'the next year [1936] was to show how much biased in his favour Evelyn was'.[28] This period not only evidences Waugh's public support for the Italian campaign in East Africa, but his involvement in the organs of the Italian Fascist overseas propaganda campaign. Waugh contributed an appendix to Italy's 'Official Note' to the League of Nations, which attempted to justify the Italian bombing of Red Cross hospital buildings during the Second Italo-Abyssinian War. Martin Stannard has argued that Waugh's contribution to this document originated '[p]robably as a direct response to his interview with Mussolini' of May 1936.[29] In this period Waugh also contributed to a number of pro-Italian publications in Britain, including the *British-Italian Bulletin*, which was funded and distributed by the Italian Embassy in London. *Waugh in*

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[27] Rose Macaulay, 'Evelyn Waugh', *Horizon*, 84 (1946), repr. in *Evelyn Waugh: The Critical Heritage* ed. Martin Stannard (London: Routledge, 1984), pp. 192-93 (p. 193).
[28] Christopher Sykes, *Evelyn Waugh: A Biography* (London: Collins, 1975), p. 158.
[29] Martin Stannard, *Evelyn Waugh: The Early Years, 1903-1939* (London: Flamingo, 1993 [first published in 1986]), p. 433.

Abyssinia was part serialised in the *Bulletin* and in the fervently pro-Italian *English Review* under the editorship of Douglas Jerrold.

In September 1936, following the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, Waugh wrote in his diary that he was '[t]hinking of joining Gabriel in [a] Spanish trip'.[30] Gabriel Herbert was Waugh's future sister-in-law and was an important figure in the Franco-supporting group of Roman Catholics in London, of which Waugh was a fringe member. Waugh never made it to Spain, but he responded to Nancy Cunard and Louis Aragon's 1937 questionnaire for the *Left Review*, which was published as *Authors Take Side on the Spanish War* (1937). Cunard and Aragon sought responses from British writers with a variety of political attitudes and beliefs about the Spanish Civil War. They asked: 'Are you for, or against, the legal government and the people of republican Spain? Are you for, or against, Franco and Fascism? For it is impossible any longer to take no side.'[31] In his reply, Waugh denied he was a fascist but voiced his support for the Spanish Nationalists. 'If I were a Spaniard', Waugh explained,

> I should be fighting for General Franco. As an Englishman I am not in the predicament of choosing between two evils. I am not a Fascist nor shall I become one unless it were the only alternative to Marxism'.[32]

In 1938 the Pearson Oil Company offered to pay for Waugh to visit Mexico and write a travel book that denounced the Marxist government's expropriation of foreign companies' oil reserves and processing facilities. He viewed 1930s Mexico as an ominous foreshadowing of the fate that awaited Europe under leftist secularism.

[30] *The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh* ed. by Michael Davie (London, 1976), p. 406. 19 September 1936.
[31] *Authors Take Sides on the Spanish War* ed. by Nancy Cunard and Louis Aragon (London: Left Review, 1937), p. 1.
[32] Ibid., p. 30.

Waugh agreed and the travel book that followed, *Robbery Under Law*, was his clearest writing on Marxism, 1930s political Catholicism and the Spanish Civil War.

Robbery Under Law is a travel book that is only ostensibly about the oil expropriation crisis in Mexico. A majority of the text is given over to Waugh's discussion of the ideological conflict that was centred on Spain during the Spanish Civil War. The book is remarkably similar in its tone and argument to Arnold Lunn's *Spanish Rehearsal* (1937), which argued for the duty of all Catholics to lend their support to Franco's forces. Moreover, the war in Spain was rhetorically framed as the latest iteration of the perpetual war between the universal Catholic Church and the forces of barbarism, which in the 1930s was reified in the form of the Soviet Union. In *Robbery Under Law* Waugh makes almost identical claims. This is because the conceptions of *home* and *abroad* that are maintained by Waugh's co-religionists are complicated by the doctrine of the Universal Church, which was propagandistically organised in ways comparable to the Communist International. The political crises facing Mexico will have seemed less immediate and perilous for British Catholics than the Spanish Civil War in the late 1930s. However, Waugh anchored the plight of his Mexican and Spanish co-religionists together through the argument that Franco was fighting a holy war to 'prevent Spain becoming like Central America'.[33] Written expressly as a politico-religious polemic, *Robbery Under Law* further consolidated his position within the coterie of highly politicised Roman Catholics in London in the late-1930s.

In 1946, following the Second World War, Waugh abandoned the travel book as a literary genre. He wrote in the preface to the anthology of his interwar travel writing, *When the Going Was Good* (1946), that 'My own travelling days are over,

[33] Waugh, *Robbery Under Law*, p. 360.

and I do not expect to see many travel books in the near future'.[34] Waugh explained that the post-war world in ruins that he saw had engendered a life that was inimical to travel, at least in the way that it had been in the 1930s. Refugees, prisoners, and people whose homes had been destroyed abounded in Europe. The middle-class form of voluntary homelessness that Waugh had chosen in the previous decade was suddenly cast into a new and depressing light. 'There is', he continues,

> no room for tourists in a 'world of displaced persons'. […] Perhaps it is a good thing for English literature. In two generations the air will be fresher and we may again breed great travellers like Burton and Doughty. I never aspired to being a great traveller. I was simply a young man, typical of my age; we travelled as a matter of course. I rejoice that I went when the going was good.[35]

Waugh's preface to *When the Going Was Good* represents his first published reflection on his interwar travel writing. He ruminated upon the failure of the political ambitions that he had expressed in his travel writing of the late 1930s. He noted, on re-reading his travel books, that each 'had a distinct and slightly grimmer air' and subtracted large parts of the political argument of *Waugh in Abyssinia* and included nothing from *Robbery Under Law*.[36] He confessed that his political beliefs were symptomatic of the age, as was his determination to travel abroad. This would not be the last time that Waugh returned to his body of interwar travel writing in order to reflect upon the politics of the present and the future.

A decade later in 1954 Waugh boarded a ship to sail from Liverpool to Ceylon, modern-day Sri Lanka, in order to escape the English winter and finish writing the novel that would become *Officers and Gentlemen* (1955) in solitude.

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[34] Evelyn Waugh, *When the Going Was Good* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1946), p. 1.
[35] Ibid., p. 1.
[36] Ibid., p. 4.

While on-board ship he suffered a mental breakdown that was later diagnosed as acute poisoning brought on by the bromide and chloral mixture he had long been prescribed for insomnia. The paranoia and hallucinations that Waugh experienced as a result were written up in his 1957 novel *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, which is allusively structured as an experimental form of travel book. In the book Waugh described his hallucinatory belief that his fellow passengers are persecuting him for his interwar support of Mussolini and Franco. 'Mr Pinfold's experiences were almost exactly my own', Waugh explained.[37] 'I heard "voices" such as I describe almost continuously night and day for three weeks.' The novel represents a literary investigation into the politics of reputation and the afterlife of interwar political commitment in post-war Britain. Waugh's travel writing had closely associated the writer with a Fascist and Nationalist politics that was no longer palatable for the British reading public in the 1950s. It anticipates Waugh's final travel book, *A Tourist in Africa* (1960), which he recounts his return to Africa and is a light examination of the changes that have occurred both in Africa and the author since the 1930s.

Upon returning to Africa in 1959, Waugh is confronted by the failure of his interwar hopes for a resurgent Roman Catholic imperialism in Africa. The fragmentation and dissolution of the British Empire troubles him, and he bears witness to both Britain's and Africa's decline. 'Thirty years ago', Waugh wrote in the preface to the 1962 edition of *Black Mischief*, 'it seemed an anachronism that any part of Africa should be independent of European administration. History has not followed what then seemed its natural course'.[38] *A Tourist in Africa* contains Waugh's reflections on British imperialism in East Africa, but, crucially, depicts him

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[37] Letter from Evelyn Waugh to Robert Henriques, 15 August 1957, in *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh* ed. Mark Amory (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1980), pp. 493-94 (493).

[38] Evelyn Waugh, *Black Mischief* (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 2000 [1932]), p. 5.

encountering specific sites of religious significance that provide him with some measure of hope for the future of the continent. Central among these is St Mary's chapel in Serima, Rhodesia. Waugh offers the missionary work of Fr John Groeber as an idealised form of Roman Catholic imperialism that exists in spiritual harmony with the landscape and produces beautiful objects that are devoted purely to the assistance of worship. Both *Pinfold* and *A Tourist in Africa* consider the legacy of Waugh's 1930s political travel writing. By the late 1950s, he feels like a stranger in his own country and sees himself as persecuted by the post-war Attlee Government. These two books together represent the long afterlife of the age of political commitment. They are Waugh's most sustained and personal considerations of his earlier politics and the enduring impact they have had on his subsequent life and work.

Overview of Chapters

This thesis is divided thematically and chronologically into two parts. Part one is concerned with the politico-religious content and contexts of Waugh's interwar travel books, focusing in particular on *Remote People*, *Waugh in Abyssinia* and *Robbery Under Law*. Part two addresses Waugh's post-war reflections on his 1930s political writing and the travel-writing genre through critical examinations of his post-war travel books, *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* and *A Tourist in Africa*.

The first two chapters of this thesis concern Waugh's Abyssinian travel writing, with a specific emphasis on the Second Italo-Abyssinian War (1935-36). Chapter one considers *Waugh in Abyssinia* in the context of the coterie of right-wing Roman Catholic writers in 1930s Britain. It argues that these thinkers and their writings were, firstly, an essential source of political and religious influence on Waugh's travel writing about Abyssinia and Italian Fascism, and, secondly, that they

represented a readership to whom Waugh appealed with *Waugh in Abyssinia*. To demonstrate this, this chapter introduces the complex and debated history of the Second Italo-Abyssinian War and circumstances of that travel book's publication. Furthermore, this chapter investigates the role of *Waugh in Abyssinia* in the history and development of the travel-writing genre in the interwar period. It argues that the politically committed writing of Roman Catholic intellectuals in Britain that was prompted by the Second Italo-Abyssinian is an essential context for interpreting the trajectory of the literary travel book in the 1930s.

Chapter two provides an account of the changes that occur in Waugh's representation of Abyssinia, and its representation in British culture more broadly, between *Remote People* in 1931 and *Waugh in Abyssinia* in 1936. It argues that, from James Bruce's *Adventures in Abyssinia* (1873) to the 'Dreadnought Hoax' of 1910, British representations of Abyssinia had been defined by a comedic sensibility. This characterised Waugh's 'preposterous *Alice in Wonderland* fortnight' that he recounted in *Remote People*.[39] By 1935, the Abyssinian Crisis entailed that the country had become intimately connected with the ideological conflict. The transition in the position of Abyssinia in the national imagination is manifested in *Remote People* and *Waugh in Abyssinia*. This chapter contends that this is specifically evident in the representation of Abyssinia through satire and that Waugh, in *Waugh in Abyssinia*, appeals to the rebirth of the Roman Empire in East Africa as a return to the stable values that enabled the great satirists of ancient Rome. It evaluates Waugh's dismissal of pro-Abyssinian 'sentimentalists' and the extent to which his dual role as both satirist and the propagandist are in conflict. This is achieved by placing Waugh's political travel writing on Abyssinia alongside the satirical drawings of Bernard

[39] Waugh, *Remote People*, p. 22.

Partridge in *Punch* in 1935 and 1936. This chapter concludes with a contextualised analysis of Waugh's hagiographic representation of the Italian road-builders and engineers. It suggests an understanding of the late-1930s travel book as a vehicle for reinforcing right-wing values, through both satirical and propagandistic writing, to a community of pro-Italian co-religionists.

Chapter three examines Waugh's Mexican travel book *Robbery Under Law* to argue that this is an extended political treatise on the Spanish Civil War. Franco, Waugh argued, was fighting 'to prevent Spain becoming like Central America' and to 're-establish Spain' and the Spanish Empire through a 'national renaissance'.[40] This chapter advances the argument of chapters one and two because Waugh's political travel writing about Spain and Mexico represents a continuation of his defence of Catholic hegemonic interests and religious imperialism in the twentieth century. It explores the ways that Waugh's writing departs from the viewpoint put forth by the organs of the establishment Catholic press, embodied in the *Tablet* and the *Catholic Herald*, over the wars in Abyssinia and Spain. Waugh's argument in *Robbery Under Law* has more in common with the pro-Nationalist and imperialist right wing than these publications. To evidence this, this chapter considers Waugh's explanation for his support for Italian and Spanish Fascism because of its avowed opposition to Communism. It argues that Waugh used the formal flexibility of the travel book to use his Mexican travels to legislate over the reality of the Spanish Civil War. This is because the conception of *home* and *abroad* that is maintained by Waugh's co-religionists is complication by the doctrine of the Universal Church, which was propagandistically organised in comparable ways to the Communist International. As such, this thesis argues that the investment in such religious and political concepts

[40] Waugh, *Robbery Under Law*, p. 360.

dissolved the national boundaries upon which much of the travel-writing genre in the 1930s had come to rely.

Chapter four begins the second part of this thesis. It argues that Waugh's 1957 book, *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, is a form of experimental travel book because of the ways in which it incorporates aspects of autobiography, travel writing and the novel into the text. Written a decade after Waugh had announced the death of the travel book, *Pinfold* utilises the generic porousness of travel writing to reflect on its author's interwar political declarations. It is a study of the afterlife of 1930s ideological commitments, memory and the politics of reputation in post-war Britain. This chapter argues that Waugh's depiction of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) as an agent of persecution is motivated by the BBC's perceived left-wing and egalitarian biases. It the agent of persecution against those who, like Pinfold, had been left alienated in Britain due to their interwar politics. Though Waugh was content to consign his political travel writing 'to the dust', *Pinfold* presents a world that was not content with forgetting the author's past transgressions. Waugh's committed defence of P. G. Wodehouse in the 1950s and 1960, whose reputation had been damaged because of suspicions of collaborationism perpetuated by the BBC, is cited in this chapter as a key contextual motivation for the political thrust of *Pinfold* in 1957. This chapter concludes with a consideration of the generic relationship between autobiography and travel writing, and suggests that the travel book formally lends itself to a form of experimental autobiography and memoir.

Chapter five of this thesis provides new perspectives on the long afterlife of Waugh's 1930s political travel writing through an analysis his final travel book *A Tourist in Africa*. Published in 1960, the book gives an account Waugh's return to Africa in 1959. He wrote that his intention was to revisit the continent 'against

without preoccupations [and] with eyes reopened to the exotic'.[41] In it he revisits many of the locations of *Remote People* and *Waugh in Abyssinia*, as well as South Africa, during the political turbulence of the period of decolonization and African nationalism. This chapter argues that the 'Pinfold' persona that characterised Waugh post-war autobiographical writing was ideologically ill-equipped to deal with Africa in the late-1950s. It nonetheless represents an instance of autocriticism in Waugh's travel writing and a conscious self-critique of the politico-religious convictions that motivated his interwar writing on Africa and Mexico. *A Tourist in Africa* marks the important transition from the energised Catholic *fellow traveller* that was depicted in the 1930s into the aristocratic Catholic reactionary of the 1950s. The 'tourism' that is represented in *A Tourist in Africa* is both temporal and spatial. In returning to the communities and places of his earlier travel books, such as the white settlers in Kenya, Waugh travels in both memory and geography. It is a journey that explores the conservative politics of nostalgia and, in so doing, makes clear the ideological complicity of the 1930s travel books with imperialism and a Eurocentric hegemony. As such, it provides an essential elegiac examination of the legacy of the interwar travel book.

[41] Evelyn Waugh, *A Tourist in Africa* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1960), p. 7.

1. ‘WE CAN APPLAUD ITALY’: EVELYN WAUGH AND THE SECOND ITALO-ABYSSINIAN WAR (1935-36)

The Italian invasion of Abyssinia commenced on 3 October 1935 when Benito Mussolini’s troops entered the country from Italy’s colonial territories in Eritrea and Somaliland. Since the first days of his premiership the *Duce* had declared his desire to expand the Italian Empire in East Africa. A colonial war, Italian propagandists claimed, would conclusively demonstrate Fascist military power on the world stage and avenge the ignominy of Italy’s defeat in the First Italo-Abyssinian War of 1895-96. Writing in *La dottrina del fascismo* (1922), Mussolini maintained that Fascism ‘leads men up from primitive tribal life to that highest manifestation of human power, imperial rule’.[42] War with Abyssinia represented the opportunity for Mussolini to fulfil his claim to embody the martial spirit of imperial Rome through action. Victory, it was proposed, would finally place Italy at the table with the major European colonial powers and restore national pride.[43]

In December 1934, the Wal-Wal incident, a minor territorial dispute on the contested border between the Abyssinian and Italian Empires, gave Mussolini his pretext for invasion. Both Abyssinia and Italy were signatories of Covenant of the League of Nations, which had been established in 1919 with the purpose of preventing war by way of collective security. In 1923, the League of Nations had proved its effectiveness by obstructing the Italian annexation of Corfu. However, following the League’s failure to prevent the Japanese invasion of Manchuria, and Bolivian hostilities against Paraguay in 1932, Mussolini seized his chance to exploit the weakness of collective security. The concurrent remilitarisation of the Rhineland

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[42] Benito Mussolini and Giovanni Gentile, *The Political and Social Doctrine of Fascism* [*La Dottrina del fascismo*] trans. Jane Soames (The Hogarth Press: London, 1933), p. 27.
[43] See Robert Mallett, *Mussolini in Ethiopia, 1919-1935: The Origins of Fascist Italy’s African War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2015).

further destabilised the Franco-British hegemony over European affairs and undermined League sovereignty. As a consequence of the ascension of the Nazi Party in Germany, the League of Nations was increasingly hesitant to intervene in military disputes. The stage was set for Mussolini's war with Abyssinia. The invasion formally began on 3 October 1935. By 5 May 1936, Italian troops had entered Addis Ababa and Emperor Haile Selassie I had fled to Britain, where he would remain in exile until 1941.

The prospect of the Second Italo-Abyssinian War prompted Evelyn Waugh and many other Roman Catholic writers on the right wing of British politics to publicly declare their support for Mussolini's campaign. In an *Evening Standard* article of 13 February 1935, eight months before the invasion proper of Abyssinia began, Waugh announced his hopes for the forthcoming Italian invasion. In it, he presents himself as an observer who, in spite of his Italian partisanship, advocates British neutrality and non-intervention in response to the Abyssinian crisis. Mussolini's 'conquest of Abyssinia', Waugh claims,

> is an object which any patriotic European can applaud. Its accomplishment will be of service to the world, and fortunately, the world may be allowed to play the part of spectator. It will be the supreme trial of Mussolini's regime. We can, with clear conscience, fold our hands and await the news on the wireless.[44]

Waugh's promotion of British inaction over the prospective invasion was an early statement of support for Italy's colonial ambitions. He implicitly argues against Britain, and therefore against the League of Nations, imposing economic sanctions on Italy or, worse still, offering militarily aid to Abyssinia. As the prospect of war became a reality, Waugh's journalism and travel writing focused increasingly on

[44] Ibid., p. 164.

justifying the *casus belli* of the Italian invasion to his readers. His writing of the period 1935-36, in particular his wartime travel book *Waugh in Abyssinia* (1936), suggests an intended readership of pro-Italian Roman Catholics in Britain. Following the success of his hagiographic biography of *Edmund Campion* (1935), Waugh used the Second Italo-Abyssinian War as an opportunity to consolidate his position as a prominent figure among his right-wing co-religionists. *Waugh in Abyssinia* forms part of a canon of Italian-supporting literature that was published by Roman Catholic writers during the war, which included works by Arnold Lunn, Douglas Woodruff, Christopher Dawson, Douglas Jerrold and Sir Charles Petrie. All took substantial political and religious influence from the writings of Hilaire Belloc and wrote with the propagandistic aim of making the case for the Italian invasion of Abyssinia to their fellow-travelling Roman Catholics in Britain.

Famously denounced by Rose Macaulay as a 'Fascist tract', *Waugh in Abyssinia* represents a significant moment in the development of the 1930s political travel book.[45] It is an uneven book in which Waugh at times returns to the conversational faux-naïve authorial posture of his earlier travel books, in particular *Labels: A Mediterranean Journal* (1930) and *Ninety-Two Days: A Journey in Guiana and Brazil* (1934). At others times, he employs the tone and perspective of a right-wing ideologue and fellow traveller of the Italian Fascists in East Africa. This chapter explores the politico-religious context for *Waugh in Abyssinia* to argue that Waugh acts, in Dennis Porter's terms, as both 'reporter and legislator' on the Second Italo-Abyssinian War.[46] He reported to a coterie of British right-wing Roman Catholics and legislated according to his increasingly Fascist-sympathetic politico-religious

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[45] Rose Macaulay, 'Evelyn Waugh', *Horizon*, 84 (1946); repr. in *Evelyn Waugh: The Critical Heritage* ed. by Martin Stannard (London: Routledge, 1984), pp. 192-93 (p. 193).
[46] Dennis Porter, *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 15.

principles. It argues that the seriousness of Waugh's political travel writing during the war was inflected and amplified by the seriousness of his commitment to a universal church that was increasingly at odds with the ideological positions of Britain and the other European imperial powers.

From *Remote People* to *Waugh in Abyssinia*

Waugh in Abyssinia was Waugh's second travel book about Abyssinia. He first visited the country in 1930 as a special correspondent for *The Times*, tasked with covering the coronation of Emperor Haile Selassie I. The experiences of this trip were written up in the travel book *Remote People* (1931) and would serve as the basis for his satirical novel, *Black Mischief* (1932), which is set in a fictional East African republic with clear echoes of Abyssinia. Upon his first trip to Abyssinia, Waugh regarded the country as barely newsworthy: in *Remote People* he self-consciously casts doubt upon the value of his own work as a reporter and travel writer. 'The reader', Waugh supposes,

> opening his paper on the breakfast-table, has no vital interest in, for instance, Abyssinian affairs. An aeroplane accident or a boxing-match are a different matter. In these cases he simply wants to know the result as soon as possible. But the coronation of an African emperor means little or nothing to him. He may read about it on Monday or Tuesday, he will not be impatient. All he wants from Africa is something to amuse him in the railway train to his office.[47]

Waugh's half-facetious claim that the newspaper-buying public demands only amusement and trivialities from Africa in 1931 provides a useful distinction between travel writing and news reportage. In the narratives of voyage and exploration of

[47] Evelyn Waugh, *Remote People: A Report from Ethiopia and British Africa, 1930-31* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985 [1931]), p. 40.

earlier centuries the travel writer represented a uniquely important source of information from the frontiers of the New World. By the twentieth-century, the value of the travel writer as a conveyer of such novelties had been substantially undermined by the advents of telegraphy and air travel. Since the primacy of travel writing in ethnographic and explorative studies had waned by the 1930s, Waugh suggests that it could provide popular amusement, if no valuable information: 'Who in his sense will read', Waugh asked the reader of *Ninety-Two Days* (1934), 'still less buy, a travel book of no scientific value about a place he has no intention of visiting?'[48] Waugh's early travel books frequently return to this cultivated scepticism with regard to the usefulness of the travel-writing genre in its interwar incarnation. Moreover, this attitude continues to influence literary critical approaches to the genre in the present day: as Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan note in their study of the contemporary travel book: 'suspicions persist as to the worthiness of travel writing as a serious subject.'[49]

However, significant parts of *Waugh in Abyssinia* depart from this ironic style and aspire to an earlier kind of travel writing of exploration and instruction. 'Abyssinia was news', he explains: 'Everyone with any claims to African experience was cashing in. Travel books whose first editions had long since been remaindered were being reissued in startling wrappers.'[50] The public disinterest in Abyssinian affairs had broken. It represented an opportunity for Waugh, and his publishers, to financially profit, and for him to shape the public perception of the Second Italo-Abyssinian War in the terms of the politico-religious coterie of Roman Catholic

[48] Evelyn Waugh, *Ninety-Two Days: A Journey in Guiana and Brazil, 1932* (London: Duckworth, 1934), p. 12.
[49] Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing* (Ann Arbour, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1998), p. viii.
[50] Evelyn Waugh, *Waugh in Abyssinia* (London: Penguin, 2019 [1936]), p. 51. (Further references to this edition in this chapter are given after quotations in the text.)

supporters of Mussolini in Britain with whom he was increasingly associated. In citing the re-issuing of out-of-print travel books, Waugh suggests these texts as the literary antecedents of *Waugh in Abyssinia*. He also appeals to an age of travel writing which was much more overt in its complicity with European imperialism. Waugh adopts the typically nineteenth-century tone of instruction in his explication of Abyssinian history and its present political situation. This is most clearly evident in the Shavian allusion in *Waugh in Abyssinia*'s opening chapter, titled: 'An Intelligent Woman's Guide to the Ethiopian Question', which begins with a quotation from Gerald H. Portal's *My Mission to Abyssinia* (1892) (*WIA*, p. 3).[51] In his travel book, Portal insists upon the manifest superiority of European administration in Africa. He purposefully suppresses any sentimental affection he may have had to the traditional customs of the Abyssinian people and regards the march of progress into the strongholds of barbarism as a religiously ordained mission. Waugh's allusion to Portal's travel book, which was published only shortly before the First Italo-Abyssinian War, allusively portrays the missionary zeal with which Waugh regarded his role as a propagandist for Italian Fascist imperialism in Abyssinia.

On 25 January 1935, Waugh's agent A. D. Peters wrote to inform him that his article, 'Abyssinian Realities: We Can Applaud Italy', had been provisionally accepted by the *Evening Standard*. In the piece, Waugh advances his firm support for Mussolini's campaign. Its argument, however, proved too stridently pro-Italian for immediate publication. As Peters explained, the publication of 'We Can Applaud Italy' would have to be delayed until the Abyssinian crisis worsened: 'They say that the subject has been shelved by the League of Nations for the moment and is therefore

[51] The quotation from Gerald H. Portal's *My Mission to Africa* (1892) reads: 'Although the benefits of a civilized Protectorate are very evident, it is, I confess, with a feeling almost of sadness that I reflect that since I said farewell to Johannis at Afgol, on December 16, 1887, no other European can ever grasp the hand of an Independent Emperor of Abyssinia.' (*WIA*, p. 3)

not exactly topical. They may therefore hold your article until some further row begins between Italy and Abyssinia.'[52] In the article, Waugh aggressively denounces the moralising of Abyssinia's supporters in the British press. These 'sentimentalists', he claims,

> like to imagine a medieval, independent race living according to their own immemorial customs, just as they like to find villages where the people still dance round maypoles in their national costume, but the reality in Africa is more formidable.[53]

Waugh claims in this article to represent the reality of the Second Italo-Abyssinian War ('Abyssinian *realities*'; 'the *reality* in Africa') and, in so doing, self-consciously positions himself as a legislator over the depiction of the situation in the British press. The phrase captured the imagination of at least one editor. Henry Lamb, editor of the *Star*, wrote to Peters in an attempt to secure a 'series of articles on Abyssinia' from Waugh.[54] 'It is clearly not a guidebook account of the country', Lamb wrote, 'or the technicalities of the Italian campaign which interest me, but the *Abyssinian reality* as seen by yourself'.[55] The *Star* editor's request alludes to the oxymoronic quality of Waugh's political travel writing in the late 1930s. In *Waugh in Abyssinia* Waugh offered a subjective interpretation of the Abyssinian situation, which was guided by religion and ideology, through a stylistic appeal to universal objectivity. Upon his return to Italian-occupied Abyssinia in August 1936 Waugh portrays himself as the mouthpiece for the Abyssinian people, whose interests had been misrepresented, he implies, by the 'sentimentalists' in Britain.

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[52] Letter from A. D. Peters to Evelyn Waugh, 25 January 1935. The Evelyn Waugh Papers, HRC.
[53] Ibid., p.162.
[54] Letter from Henry Lamb to A. D. Peters, 11 July 1935. EW Papers, HRC.
[55] Ibid., My emphasis.

> It was by no means the first time in English history that the world has been almost fatally confused by mistaking the peevish whinny of the nonconformist conscience for the voice of the nation. It often happens. Someone is always the loser for it. This time it was the unfortunate Emperor of Abyssinia. The country – except for its perennial distrust of the Mediterranean races – was apathetic.
>
> (*WIA*, p. 216)

Waugh's tone of clarification and, perhaps mendaciously, sympathy for Haile Selassie I represents an appeal to an objective standard by which the Italian invasion had been justified. The 'sentimentalists', in Waugh's estimation, had overemphasised the Abyssinian people's resistance to colonisation. His depiction of Abyssinia in his travel book, with its rejection of emotion and sentimentalism, implicitly makes a claim to objectivity that is utilised to contrast the accounts of Abyssinian sympathisers, such as E. Sylvia Pankhurst and G. L. Steer.[56] Waugh consolidated his self-assigned role as the legislator for 'Abyssinian reality' and distinguished himself from the modes of subjectively-orientated travel writing that had become increasingly popular in the interwar period.

Peters pursued Waugh's instruction to 'cash in on Abyssinia' in a number of ways that demonstrate the generic overlap between Waugh's novels and travel writing in this period.[57] The first way that Waugh's agent hoped to achieve this end was to sell the re-serialisation rights for *Black Mischief* in light of renewed public interest in Abyssinia in mid-1935. Peters recommended the novel to the *Daily Mail*'s fiction editor, Cecil Hunt, as 'not only an extremely amusing book, but also a vivid picture of

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[56] Travel writing, sentimentalism and objectivity is discussed in greater depth in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

[57] Evelyn Waugh letter to A. D. Peters, 20 June 1935. Evelyn Waugh Papers, Harry Ransome Center.

Abyssinia and the mentality of its inhabitants'.[58] It was ripe for re-serialisation, Peters claims, because of its psychological realism that offered readers some insight into the Abyssinian way of life. It suggests that the marketability of *Black Mischief* lay in its ethnographic acuity and, furthermore, implies a generic overlap between the satirical novel and the travel book.[59] This is made clear in Peters' sleight-of-hand in pointedly referring to *Black Mischief* as a 'book' and not a novel. If, as Philip Dodd writes, the travel book can 'claim to be the most important literary form of the 1930s',[60] then it is important to note that, by 1935, its formal predominance was such that Waugh's African novel was marketed on the grounds that it bore a resemblance to a travel book.

Ironically, since its publication in 1932, *Black Mischief* had caused a great deal of upset among Abyssinian politicians and the British Diplomatic Service. This had made Waugh *persona non grata* in some parts of Abyssinia and would frustrate his work as a war correspondent and travel writer. 'I am universally regarded as an Abyssinian spy', Waugh explained to his future wife, Laura Herbert in August 1935:

> In fact my name is mud all round – with the Legation because of a novel I wrote [*Black Mischief*] which they think was about them (it wasnt) [*sic*] with the Ethiopians because of the *Mail*'s policy, with the other journalists because I'm not really a journalist and it is black beg labour.[61]

In spite of Waugh's claim that 'it wasnt' about the Legation, many viewed the British Minister in Addis Ababa, Sir Sidney Barton, as the subject of Waugh's lampooning in

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[58] Letter from A. D. Peters to Cecil Hunt (Senior Fiction Editor at the *Daily Mail*), 15 July 1935.
[59] The relationship between travel writing and satire is discussed in greater depth in Chapter two of this thesis. See Percy G. Adams, *Literature and the Evolution of the Novel* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1983), p. 275.
[60] Philip Dodd, 'The Views of Travellers: Travel Writing in the 1930s', *Prose Studies*, 5.1 (1982) 127-38 (128).
[61] *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh* ed. Mark Amory (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), p. 97. Evelyn Waugh letter to Laura Herbert, 24 August 1935.

Black Mischief. It was widely accepted that Barton's daughter Esmé was the model for Basil Seal's girlfriend, Prudence, in the novel. Throughout his diaries Waugh refers to Esmé as 'ugly Miss Barton',[62] and in *Black Mischief* Prudence is ultimately cannibalised. Christopher Sykes visited Abyssinia in 1956 was told that Waugh 'had done more damage than any other Englishman to Anglo-Ethiopian relations and that the offence caused by [his] travel book and his "disgusting" novel would never be forgotten'.[63] A foreign editor with knowledge of Waugh's past criticisms of the country and its British Delegation might have credibly anticipated the difficulties the novelist would encounter on his return visit as a war correspondent. Nonetheless, the *Daily Mail* sent Waugh to Abyssinia in the autumn of 1935. His letters indicate that his reputation had only worsened since his last visit.

Peters' letter to Hunt indicates that the re-serialisation of *Black Mischief* in a British newspaper was intended to generate revenue for its author. 'It has occurred to me', Peters explains, 'that serialisation of Evelyn Waugh's novel BLACK MISCHIEF might be a good stunt for the Daily Mail in view of the enormous interest that is being raised in the Abyssinian question'.[64] Lamb at *The Star* wrote to Peters to register his paper's interest in securing Waugh's services as a columnist with an eye toward Abyssinia: 'I am wondering if you would care to consider writing a series of articles on Abyssinia, based on your visit of five years ago and on the point of view which emerged in Black Mischief.'[65] In this letter, Lamb follows Peters' description of *Black Mischief* as representing, albeit from the writer's idiosyncratic and satirical perspective, 'the Abyssinian *reality*'.[66] A week later, *The Star* wrote to Peters asking him to set aside the intention to re-serialise *Black Mischief*: 'I hope you are not going

[62] *The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh* ed. Michael Davie (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1976), p. 340.
[63] Christopher Sykes, *Evelyn Waugh: A Biography* (London: Collins, 1975), p. 120.
[64] Letter from A. D. Peters to Cecil Hunt (Senior Fiction Editor at the *Daily Mail*), 15 July 1935.
[65] Letter from Henry Lamb to A. D. Peters, 11 July 1935. EW Papers, HRC.
[66] My emphasis.

to launch "Black Mischief" beforehand,' Robert Sinclair, Features Editor at *The Star*, wrote to Peters, 'as that would completely queer the pitch as far as we are concerned'.[67] In the scramble to profit on the British public interest in Abyssinia, the distinction between satire and reality became increasingly blurred, so too did the porous generic boundaries between the novel and the travel book.

In contrast to this slippage between novel and travel book, several editors and reviewers were ardently attempting to discourage Waugh from writing any more travel books. The novels, they insisted, were Waugh's best and most sellable work. In so doing they enforce a generic distinction, at least in terms of packing to the book-buying public, between the two genres. The American publisher of *Remote People* (published under the title *They Were Still Dancing* in the U.S.) instructed Peters to dissuade Waugh from embarking on another travel book: 'We all [at Farrar and Rhinehart] believe that Mr. Waugh's success lies in his novels. While his travel books are charming, they cannot hope to have the sale that a new novel could command'.[68] A convincing explanation for the eagerness of Waugh's agent to re-serialise *Black Mischief* can be located in the poor sales of the novel the first time round. It had failed to match the success of Waugh's earlier novels *Decline and Fall* (1928) and *Vile Bodies* (1930). John Farrar, of Farrar and Rhinehart, wrote to Peters in 1932 explaining that *Black Mischief* had 'not done as well as we expected':[69] The Italian invasion of Abyssinia represented to both publisher and agent a second opportunity at marketing the novel; this time however, by reframing it as an account of Abyssinian life with claims to facticity. Furthermore, it represented an attempt to divert Waugh from returning to the travel-writing genre. Farrar notes that a 'very important litterateur [*sic*]' told him '"I think you have the most important of the young English

[67] Letter from Robert Sinclair to A. D. Peters, 18 July 1935. EW Papers, HRC.
[68] Letter from Harrison Smith to A. D. Peters, 1 October 1935. EW Papers, HRC.
[69] Letter from Farrar & Rinehart to A. D. Peters, 10 November 1932. EW Papers, HRC.

writers in Evelyn Waugh, but my God, will you stop him writing travel books!'"[70] Throughout his career Waugh insisted on preserving the fictional status of the settings of his African novels, especially when they involve political satire. But the potential profitability of the Second Italo-Abyssinian War incentivised him and his entourage to re-frame *Black Mischief* as a semi-fictional travel book, rather than a semi-factual novel.

Waugh and the *English Review*: British Propagandists for Italy

After its initial publication in 1936 *Waugh in Abyssinia* was not re-issued and did not receive the offer of an American edition. Waugh's U.S. agent, Carol Hill, found no American publishers willing to include the book on their listings. 'It is most unlikely', Hill wrote to Peters in June 1936, 'that [*Waugh in Abyssinia*] will sell to a magazine here because the subject of Ethiopia is completely dead and without audience'.[71] Other publishers were more overt in their distaste for Waugh's pro-Italianism: 'Waugh seems to like the Italians and I don't,' wrote Chapman & Hall, 'and I don't imagine many other people do – least as regards their adventuring in Empire.'[72] Further correspondence from Peters indicates that the *Spectator*, *Observer* and *Daily Telegraph* all rejected the offer of pre-publication extracts of *Waugh in Abyssinia*. 'The failure to sell *Waugh in Abyssinia* to America was a serious financial blow', Stannard notes: 'In all probability, when he embarked upon the business of settling down, he not only had no money with which to buy a house but was substantially in debt.'[73] After numerous rejections, Waugh secured a publisher in Britain to serialise extracts from his travel book. It should be unsurprising that the argument of *Waugh in*

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[70] Selina Hastings, *Evelyn Waugh: A Biography* (London: Minerva, 1995), p. 247.
[71] Letter from Carol Hill to A. D. Peters, 23 June 1936. Evelyn Waugh Papers, HRC.
[72] Letter from Ly-- to Chapman & Hall, 11 December 1936. Evelyn Waugh Papers, HRC.
[73] Stannard, *Evelyn Waugh: The Early Years, 1903-1939*, p. 439.

Abyssinia appealed strongly to the *English Review*, one of the few British magazines prepared to publish Waugh's writing after he announced his support for Mussolini's campaign. The *Review*'s editor, Douglas Jerrold, was a fervently pro-Italian Roman Catholic and his periodical reflected his enthusiasm. It was a natural home for Waugh's travel writing in 1936. Jerrold had recently published his own book-length defence of the Italian invasion of Abyssinia: *They That Take the Sword: The Future of the League of Nations* (1936). In it, he emphasises the judiciousness of Italy's Roman Catholic imperialism in East Africa. Moreover, Jerrold is anxious to distance himself and his co-religionists from Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists (B.U.F.). Christopher Dawson, the prominent Catholic thinker and controversialist, claimed that 'the average Englishman' was largely totally ignorant of Fascism in the 1930s, and saw it only as 'black shirts, castor oil and Jew baiting'.[74] It is, however, a nebulous distinction. As the historian of interwar fascism in Britain, G. C. Webber, points out: the politics of the *English Review* and its coterie of Roman Catholic writers inhabited the 'grey area between fascism and conservatism'.[75] With the serialisation of *Waugh in Abyssinia* in the *English Review*, Waugh's political writing increasingly occupied that grey area.

They That Take the Sword indicts the League of Nations as the primary cause of the Second Italo-Abyssinian War. This was because, in Jerrold's estimation, the Franco-British hegemony of the League had hypocritically opposed Italy's legitimate annexation of Abyssinia. As a result, it necessitated a military conflict. It is an incident, he argues, with a larger war between the forces of imperial Roman Catholicism and the left-wing secularists who seek to purge Europe of its Christian heritage:

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[74] Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1935), p. 11.
[75] G. C. Webber, *The Ideology of the British Right, 1918-1939* (London: Routledge, 1986), p. 98.

> Is it not common knowledge that it was the League's action against Italy which created for the first time any popular enthusiasm in Italy for the war against Abyssinia? How can anyone have expected a Catholic country to accept, except under the ruthless pressure of force, the moral censure of secularist France or atheist Russia passes comprehension. A political argument, certainly: a moral lecture, never![76]

This is an argument that is echoed in Waugh's criticism of Britain's hypocritical 'preaching' over the Italian campaign in *Waugh in Abyssinia* (*WIA*, p. 9). Waugh describes Italy's actions as 'a minor colonial operation of the kind constantly performed in the recent past by every great Power in the world' (*WIA*, p. 49), and Britain's opposition, he writes, was 'directed solely from motives of imperial jealousy'.[77] Jerrold and Waugh shared the view that Italy's invasion was further legitimised on the grounds that Abyssinia should never have been permitted membership of the League of Nations in 1923. This was because, as Jerrold writes, 'Abyssinia, as a slave-raiding and slave-trading power, had unquestionably forfeited, on these grounds alone, any moral right to League membership'.[78] Such arguments frequently appeared in the pages of the *English Review* under Jerrold's editorship, alongside the serialisation of *Waugh in Abyssinia*. This magazine represented a hospitable publication environment for Waugh's pro-Italian travel writing. It incorporates it into a broader network of fervently imperialist Roman Catholic writing with which it shared a politico-religious perspective.

In the mid-1930s, the *English Review* featured articles and commentary from representatives of the Italian Fascist government. The inclusion of these pieces

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[76] Douglas Jerrold, *They That Take the Sword: The Future of the League of Nations* (London: John Lane, 1936), p. 118.

[77] Evelyn Waugh, review of Emilio de Bono's *Anno XIIII*, *London Mercury and Bookman* (June 1937); repr. in *The Essays, Articles and Review of Evelyn Waugh* ed. by Donat Gallagher (London: Methuen, 1983), pp. 192-95 (p. 192).

[78] Jerrold, *They That Take the Sword*, p. 94.

evidences the integration of the pro-Italian writing of British Catholic conservatives and the overseas propaganda campaign of the Italian Foreign Office. The relationship was a reciprocal one, which is made clear through Waugh's contribution to Italy's 'Official Note' to the League of Nations.[79] For his part, he attempted to minimise and justify the Italian military's use of gas attacks during the war, which was strictly prohibited by the League of Nations charter. In August 1935, Luigi Villari, an Italian diplomat who had served on the League of Nations secretariat, detailed the 'Italian retort' to Britain's condemnation of the invasion in the *English Review*. Villari writes:

> [I]t is all very well for Great Britain to invoke the League now, when she has secured all she wants; by flourishing the Covenant in order to prevent others from doing what she did so successfully in the past she lays herself open to the charge of hypocrisy, using the League as a sort of policeman to stand guard over a *status quo* which is exceptionally favourable to her, but exceptionally unfavourable to other countries.[80]

Villari contextualises the conflict in terms of British colonial history and seeks to demonstrate the hypocrisy of the League of Nations' opposition to Italy's imperial ambitions. Waugh, writing in *The Times*, insists on the validity of the 'fully documented case'[81] that Italy had brought against Abyssinia. It had, he claims, 'never received proper attention, [and proved that] Abyssinia had forfeited her rights to League membership'.[82] Waugh depicts Abyssinia as a tribal state where slavery was endemic and brutal punishments were administered for petty theft. Inhabiting a near-identical lexicon as Jerrold, Waugh argues in *Waugh in Abyssinia* that '[s]lavery and

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[79] Evelyn Waugh, 'Appendix VIII to the Official Note Address by the Italian Government to the League of Nations', 28 February 1936, 'Ethiopian Atrocities and Misuse of Red Cross Emblem in Ethiopia: Protest by the Italian Government to the League of Nations', *British-Italian Bulletin*, 15 (1936), 2; 11 April 1936; repr. in *Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, pp. 185-86.
[80] Luigi Villari, 'Italy and Abyssinia: The Italian Case', *English Review*, 61 (1935), 143-149 (143).
[81] Evelyn Waugh, 'The Conquest of Abyssinia', *The Times* (19 May 1936), repr. in *Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh* pp. 186-87 (p. 187).
[82] Ibid., p. 187.

slave-raiding were universal; justice, when executed at all, was accompanied by torture and mutilation in a degree known nowhere else in the world' (*WIA*, p. 34). Had the case been correctly received, Waugh claimed, it would have resulted in 'proving that Abyssinia had forfeited her rights to League membership'.[83] Integral to the argument made by the Italians and their British sympathisers was the hypocrisy of British opposition and the illegitimacy of Abyssinia's status as a member state of the League of Nations. By pursuing sanctions in defence of barbarous Abyssinia, the British government, in the words of George Bernard Shaw, was a taking a 'position which is fundamentally indefensible'.[84]

Waugh in Abyssinia opens with a survey of the history of Abyssinia leading up to the Italian invasion of October 1935. Waugh recalls the East African missionary work of David Livingstone in the nineteenth century, which, he argues,

> inspired a resurgence of missionary spirit comparable, though in many respects dissimilar, to that of the sixteenth century – Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans, Baptists had followed the laborious stages of his great journey, eager to reclaim the Africans from slavery and superstition.
>
> (*WIA*, p. 4)

Waugh anchors Mussolini's conquest of Abyssinia to a lineage of European missionaries and evangelists in Africa. It returns the reader to Waugh's hagiographical biography of the sixteenth-century Jesuit priest and martyr Edmund Campion. It was during his deployment as a correspondent in the Second Italo-Abyssinian War that Waugh received word that *Edmund Campion* (1935) had won the Hawthornden Prize. The seriousness of the award, as Britain's foremost literary

[83] Ibid., p. 187.
[84] George Bernard Shaw, *Bernard Shaw: Collected Letters, 1926-50* ed. by Dan H. Laurence, 5 vols (London: Reinhardt, 1988), IV, p. 424.

prize, was confirmation of Waugh's increasingly public persona as a serious Roman Catholic voice in Britain. In *Campion* Waugh cemented his commitment to defending Roman Catholic hegemonic interests in Britain and abroad. He donated all of the proceeds from the book to Campion Hall, Oxford, which functioned as an intellectual and spiritual home for the coterie of Catholic, conservative writers and thinkers with whom he became increasingly affiliated in the mid-1930s. This included Jerrold, as well as Lunn, Dawson and Petrie, all of whom took substantial religious and political influence from Belloc. The implied thesis of the biography renders the persecution of Catholics in Elizabethan England as analogous to the war between secular forces, as exemplified by the League of Nations, and the Catholic nationalists in Italy and Spain. The 'hunted, trapped, murdered priest is amongst us again', Waugh argues in *Campion*, 'and the voice of Campion comes to us across the centuries as though he were walking at our side.'[85]

The Travel Writer and the *Duce*

It was during this period that Waugh sought to marry Laura Herbert who belonged to an aristocratic Catholic house of great historical prominence. The Hawthornden Prize increased his credibility as a serious neophyte to the Herbert family and in 1936 Laura accepted his proposal of marriage. These biographical factors characterise the increasing gravity with which Waugh viewed himself as a prominent Catholic conservative. 'With the possibility of marriage and a more committed engagement with Catholic apologetics,' Stannard writes of Waugh in 1935-36, 'the whole cast of his mind was changing'.[86] In order to remarry, Waugh required the annulment of his first marriage to Evelyn Gardener, from whom he had divorced in 1929. Waugh wrote

[85] Evelyn Waugh, *Edmund Campion: Jesuit Priest and Martyr* (London: Penguin, 2012 [1935]), p. 2.
[86] Stannard, *Evelyn Waugh: The Early Years, 1903-1939*, p. 415.

Edmund Campion, Alain Blayac argues, partly in the hope that it 'would rehabilitate him in the English Catholic circles of the interwar period […], and, concurrently, to facilitate the annulment of his defunct marriage by the Vatican'.[87] On his return to Abyssinia in the spring of 1936 Waugh travelled to Rome and was granted separate audiences with Pope Pius XI and Mussolini, the *Duce del Fascismo*. The Pope granted Waugh the annulment. The meeting with Mussolini was agreed on the strictest condition that Waugh was not to acknowledge it publicly. Sykes met with the author soon after his return to England from Italian-occupied Abyssinia. In his biography of Waugh, Sykes provides an account of Waugh's encounter with Mussolini in Rome and the theatricality of Italian statecraft. Waugh, Sykes recalls,

> told me that he had found the Duce's personality very impressive. Like many others, he said, he had been faced with the ordeal of walking the length of Mussolini's enormous room in the Palazzo up to his writing-table where the great man of destiny was waiting to receive his guest. It was, he told me, a theatricality designed setting in which most people would look ridiculous, and in which (all the more so through his satirical eyes) he expected the Duce so to appear. But on the contrary, he said, he did not seem ridiculous at all. He could carry it off with ease.
>
> The next year was to show how much biased in his favour Evelyn was. He returned to London with joy, but to many anxieties.[88]

The most enthusiastically pro-Italian chapters of *Waugh in Abyssinia* were written after Waugh's meetings with Pope Pius XI and Mussolini. In 1929, Pius XI announced Mussolini to be 'a man sent by Providence' and with whom he signed the Lateran Treaty.[89] The Pope conferred papal legitimacy onto the Fascist regime and, because he never condemned the invasion of Abyssinia, tacitly endorsed the notion that the Second Italo-Abyssinian War was a war of Roman Catholic Imperialism. As Douglas

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[87] Alain Blayac, 'Evelyn Waugh, Biographer', in *Waugh Without End: New Trends in Evelyn Waugh Studies* ed. by Robbert Murray Davis and Carlos Villar (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005), pp. 91-102 (p. 92).
[88] Sykes, *Evelyn Waugh*, p. 158.
[89] Quoted in Kevin L. Morris, 'Fascism and British Catholic Writers, 1924-1939: Part 1', *New Blackfriars*, 80.935 (1998) 32-45 (39).

Woodruff, editor of *The Tablet* noted in his editorial of January 1938, the Catholic Church 'has sympathy and goodwill […] for Fascism'.[90] Waugh returned to Abyssinia in the summer of 1936 to obtain an account of Abyssinia in the months following the Italian victory. He was, he claims, 'the first Englishman to get into the country since its occupation' (*WIA*, p. 217). This contributed to the unevenness of the travel book. These passages are filled with triumphalist optimism for the Italian Empire in East Africa. Waugh eulogises the Italian road-builders and engineers who were, he claims, rapidly civilising the barbarous nation. Soon, he imagines in the peroration of *Waugh in Abyssinia*, 'new roads will be radiating to all points of the compass, and along the roads will pass the eagles of ancient Rome, as they came to our savage ancestors in France and Britain and Germany' (*WIA*, p. 254). The lofty rhetoric elevates Mussolini to a Caesarean lineage of dictator, who embodies the spiritual rebirth of ancient imperial Rome.

These climactic pro-Italian passages were first published in the September and October editions of the *English Review*, under the working title of 'The Disappointing War'. Waugh was not the only British writer to be captivated by the mythic cult of the *Duce* and to have keenly felt the decisive importance of Anglo-Italian political relations. The magazine took a great interest in the captivating power of Mussolini, who Sykes described as the 'man of destiny'.[91] Throughout the Second Italo-Abyssinian War Charles Petrie's column 'Foreign Affairs' reported from Italy and claimed that Italians exhibited 'unanimity of opinion behind Signor Mussolini' in 1936.[92] This, he explains, 'is not, as anti-Fascists would have us believe, due to fear, but is the result of conviction'.[93] Travelling to Rome and eulogising the experience of

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[90] Douglas Woodruff, 'Editorial', *The Tablet*, 171 (1938) 100. 22 January 1938.
[91] Ibid., p. 158.
[92] Charles Petrie, 'Foreign Affairs', *English Review* (July 1936), 51-58 (51).
[93] Ibid., p. 51.

meeting with Mussolini became a frequent trope among Roman Catholic conservatives in the 1920s and 1930s. Belloc describes in hagiographic terms his 'sort of pilgrimage to see Mussolini' in 1925 and rhapsodises on the near-saintliness of the *Duce*.[94] 'I had the honour of a long conversation with him alone,' Belloc recalls, 'discovering and receiving his judgements. […] What a sense of decision, of sincerity, of serving the nation, and of serving it towards a known and definite will.[95] In *The Resurrection of Rome* (1930) G. K. Chesterton travelled to Rome to meet with Mussolini and saw the Eternal City to be 'in visible resurrection' as a result of the *Duce*'s animating presence:

> As I was in the first shock of beholding so strange a resurrection, I heard the high, thin but refined voice of an American lady saying in my ear, 'Say (or words to that effect) is Mussolini here?' If she had asked whether Marcus Aurelius or Mark Anthony was here, I should have felt it appropriate; for the moment I had forgotten Mussolini. It is something of an achievement to get oneself forgotten in that way.[96]

Because the pilgrimage to Rome in this period was a common travel trope in this period, it is surprising that Waugh's own audience with Mussolini goes unreported in his travel writing and journalism. Mussolini agreed to the conversation on the condition that Waugh would not write about. However, the visit to Rome was the catalyst for Waugh's acceleration towards becoming an outright propagandist for the Italian regime in Abyssinia. His incorporation into the machinery of Italian overseas propaganda is evidenced by the statement he submitted as part of Italy's 'Official Note' to the League of Nations following Abyssinia's capitulation in May 1936.

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[94] Hilaire Belloc, *The Cruise of the 'Nona'* (London: Constable, 1955), p. 163.
[95] Ibid., p. 163-64.
[96] G. K. Chesterton, 'The Resurrection of Rome', in *The Collected Works of G. K. Chesterton*, 23 vols (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1986), XXII, pp. 266-467 (p. 402).

Waugh's comments were included in 'Appendix VIII' of the document and attempted to defend the Italian bombing of Red Cross hospital buildings in Abyssinia.

In his statement Waugh sought to corroborate the Italian claim that red crosses had been painted on numerous buildings, firstly, as a tactic to prevent bombing, and secondly, because a red cross traditionally signifies a brothel in Abyssinia. 'Certainly four – I think, but am not prepared to swear to more – government buildings bore the red cross' in Harrar, Waugh submitted.[97] He claims that the symbol of the Red Cross was painted on numerous buildings across Abyssinia during the war and that its misuse was in direct contravention of the League of Nations charter. Waugh wielded his experience as a traveller in Abyssinia as a valuable tool in Italy's defence:

> It may be noted that the Abyssinians have always regarded the red cross with great familiarity; it is the sign on brothels throughout the country; it is used as a charm on saddle-cloths (I have seen photographs in the European papers of military mules bearing this red cross described as ambulance transports); it is used on all pharmacies and chemists. Thus it is natural that it should have no sanctity in the Abyssinian mind.[98]

Waugh identifies the royal palace, many government administrative buildings, and estimates 'a third' of the city of Desseye 'flew the red cross'.[99] The bombing of Red Cross buildings was considered a war crime, but the Abyssinians' indiscriminate painting of the symbol around its cities made such accusations much less forceful. Waugh's contribution to Italy's defence shows his increasing involvement in the propagandistic efforts to correct the public's perception of the illegality of the Italian campaign. The statement was therefore not simply part of a legal plea made on Italy's

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[97] Evelyn Waugh, 'Appendix VIII to the Official Note Address by the Italian Government to the League of Nations', 28 February 1936, 'Ethiopian Atrocities and Misuse of Red Cross Emblem in Ethiopia: Protest by the Italian Government to the League of Nations', *British-Italian Bulletin*, 15 (1936), 2; 11 April 1936; repr. in *Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, pp. 185-86 (p. 185).
[98] Ibid., p. 186.
[99] Ibid., p. 186.

behalf to the League of Nations. Stannard suggests that Waugh's contribution to the official Italian statement originated: '[p]robably as a direct response to his interview with Mussolini', which had taken place only weeks before.[100] Although Waugh upheld his agreement with Mussolini not to write publicly about their meeting, its impact can be discerned in the escalation in the forthrightness of his role as a pro-Italian propagandist in 1936.

It was reprinted in pro-Italian publications in Britain to appeal to Roman Catholic conservatives. Waugh's appendix was featured prominently in a special edition of the *British-Italian Bulletin* of April 1936, entitled: 'Ethiopian Atrocities and Misuse of Red Cross Emblem in Ethiopia: Protest by the Italian Government to the League of Nations'. The *British-Italian Bulletin* was published by the Italian Embassy in London as a companion to *L'Italia Nostra*, the Embassy's magazine for Italian expatriates in Britain. The intention was for Italians to disseminate the *Bulletin* to British citizens and, as such, advertised itself as a 'weekly message to our British friends'. The *Bulletin*'s pleas to Italian expatriates to distribute their magazine increased in intensity throughout the Second Italo-Abyssinian War. The issue for 8 November 1935 featured this striking injunction to its readers that is reminiscent of the formal experimentation of Italian Futurist poetry:

ITALIANI!

DISTRIBUITE

LARGAMENTE

[100] Stannard, *Evelyn Waugh: The Early Years*, p. 433.

AI VOSTRI AMICI

INGLESI

"THE BRITISH

ITALIAN BULLETIN" [101]

In her study of pro-Italianism in 1930s Britain, Claudia Baldoli has demonstrated convincingly the importance of the support of British Roman Catholics to the Italian propaganda campaign. Grandi, she argues, 'thought that British Conservative Italophiles, integrated in their society, could be more effective in spreading pro-fascist propaganda than the BUF [British Union of Fascists]'.[102] The correspondence of Mussolini and the Italian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Dino Grandi, Baldoli argues, demonstrates that such publications were considered integral to the Italian overseas propaganda campaign to obtain the support of middle-class Roman Catholics in Britain. The inclusion of Waugh's statement in the *British-Italian Bulletin* demonstrates his integration into this network of Roman Catholic and conservative propagandists for Italy and the campaign in Abyssinia in 1936. Moreover, it displays the usefulness of Waugh's role as a traveller and travel writer to the Italian Embassy in its project of obtaining the support of British Catholics and conservatives.

'Gas them to buggery': *Waugh in Abyssinia* and War Reportage

Waugh in Abyssinia shares many commonalities with other pro-Italian travel books written during the Second Italo-Abyssinian War. An example of this is *Half a Life*

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[101] *British-Italian Bulletin*, (8 November 1935), 2. Trans.: 'ITALIANS! DISTRIBUTE THE *BRITISH-ITALIAN BULLETIN* WIDELY AMONG YOUR ENGLISH FRIENDS.'

[102] Claudia Baldoli, *Exporting Fascism: Italian Fascists and Britain's Italians in the 1930s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 97.

Left (1937), an autobiography by the British Fascist James Strachey Barnes, which contains the memoir of his time as a war correspondent for *Reuter's* news agency in Abyssinia. Barnes has been a supporter of Mussolini since the 1920s. In 1928 he published the influential *The Universal Aspects of Fascism*, which made him among the most prominent British expatriates living in Mussolini's Italy. It also made him a controversial selection as *Reuter's* war correspondent in Abyssinia. Upon his appointment Sir Samuel Hoare, the British Foreign Secretary, wrote that Barnes was 'generally regarded as an ardent Italian propagandist'.[103] The wartime travel writing of both Waugh and Barnes responded to the international outcry at Italy's use of poison gas. Italian propaganda initially denied the use of chemical weapons and claimed that it was, instead, the Abyssinians who had deployed them.[104] By late 1936, the Italian line had changed. Though the use of poison gas had been a war crime since the ratification of the 1925 Geneva Protocol, to which Italy was a signatory, the Italian Government no longer denied that it had been utilised. However, Italian propagandists insisted upon the legality of its usage as a proportionate response to Abyssinia's atrocities and because it expedited the war, saving Italian lives. Barnes mendaciously argues in *Half a Life Left* that 'the whole affair has been grossly exaggerated' and that[105]

> The Italians never denied that they used gas. They used mustard gas, when they had become legally entitled to do so after the Abyssinians had violated other conventions: the mutilating of prisoners, the employment of dum-dum bullets and the abuse of the Red Cross. […] The facts are these: the casualties inflicted by gas were slight. The employment of gas saved many Italian lives. It had no influence whatever on the decision of the campaign.[106]

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[103] Quoted in Donald Read, *The Power of News: The History of Reuters, 1849-1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 181. See David Bradshaw and James Smith, 'Ezra Pound, James Strachey Barnes ("The Italian Lord Haw-Haw") and Italian Fascism', *Review of English Studies*, 266 (2013) 672-93.

[104] Denis Mack Smith, *Mussolini* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1981), pp. 231-32.

[105] James Strachey Barnes, *Half a Life Left* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1937), pp. 206-208.

[106] Ibid., p. 208.

Barnes' account contradictorily claims that the use of gas was inconsequential to the outcome of the war and yet was necessary in saving the lives of Italian soldiers. It is as a result of Abyssinia's war crimes that the decision to turn to poison gas was taken. In *Waugh in Abyssinia* Waugh provides a figure for the number of Abyssinians, including soldiers and civilians, who were killed by poison gas. 'Gas', he claims, 'was used but only accounted for eighteen lives' (*WIA*, p. 239). Waugh argues that 'it seems that at no time was gas or yperite very effective as a lethal weapon' (*WIA*, p. 239) and describes the reaction of the Abyssinian soldiers to poison gas as 'bored and exasperated with a weapon to which they could make no effective answer' (*WIA* pp. 239-40). Similarly to Barnes, Waugh promoted the narrative of the war that had been produced by the Italian Embassy in London.[107] He acknowledges the Italian use of poison gas while attempting to minimise its effect or strategic usefulness. Such accounts were written as an attempt to mitigate the deleterious impact of the criticisms levelled at Italy in the international press.

Emperor Haile Selassie I made a widely reported address to the League of Nations in January 1936 in which he described the on-going Italian use of poison gas during the war. The Emperor denounced this act as the 'very refinement of barbarism' and identified it as Italy's 'chief method of warfare'.[108] As an assessment of its impact, Haile Selassie reckoned that the dead numbered in the 'tens of thousands'.[109] The historian Piers Brendon cites a contemporary estimate that claimed 250 000

[107] However, this was not the case for Italy's internal propaganda. Historian of fascism and totalitarianism Ruth Ben-Ghat explains that 'the slaughter in Ethiopia was so out of keeping with Italians' self -perception as the more "humane" dictatorship that it has been edited out of popular and official memory. Until 1995, the Italian government, and former combatants such as Indro Montanelli, denied the use of gas in East Africa' (Ruth Ben-Ghat, *Fascist Modernities: Italy, 1922-1945* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001], p. 126).
[108] Haile Selassie I, 'Appeal to the League of Nations, Geneva June 1936' <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/selassie.htm> [Accessed 18 March 2018]
[109] Ibid.

Abyssinians were killed or severely wounded as a direct result of the gas.[110] Such deaths and casualties were integrated into Haile Selassie's effective attempts to mobilise international opinion against Italy. As Phillip Knightley explained in his seminal history of war correspondence, 'In this strategy, every bombing of a Red Cross camp […] every mustard-gas victim, every civilian casualty, was a weapon in the campaign'.[111] This provides a framework for Waugh's counter propaganda. His diary from the Second Italo-Abyssinian War suggests the source of his claim that poison gas had killed only eighteen Abyssinians (*WIA*, p. 239). In his diary entry for the 20 August 1936 Waugh notes that he had attended a meeting of fascists 'in honour of the German consul' in Abyssinia.[112] At this gathering, there were, he recorded,

> Speeches in praise of Hitler and the unforgettable friendliness of Germany during the outrageous pro-barbarian sanctionist campaign. […] Said possibility victory December [*sic*] held back by Emperor bombed daily troops melted and turned *shifta*. Gas only caused eighteen deaths, but great moral effect. Army retreated under continuous fire from own people.[113]

The claim made in *Waugh in Abyssinia* that 'eighteen deaths' were attributable to poison gas appears to be derived from Italian sources in the context of a celebration for Nazi Germany's endorsement of the campaign. It indicates the extent to which Waugh's travel writing during the Second Italo-Abyssinian War was integrated into the machinery of Italian propaganda. This is because it demonstrates his willingness to report, without any discernible scepticism, a statistic that had originated from the Italian Government. As Thomas Coffey notes, Waugh's 'entire account of the war

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[110] Piers Brendon, *The Dark Valley: A Panorama of the 1930s* (London: Pimlico, 2001), p. 277.
[111] Phillip Knightley, *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero, Propagandist, and Myth-Maker from the Crimea to Vietnam* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1975), p. 187.
[112] *The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh* ed. Michael Davie (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), p. 401. The German Consul-General also appears in *Waugh in Abyssinia*, p. 153.
[113] Ibid., p. 399.

[…] was so provably inaccurate and so openly biased in favour of Italy that his testimony could not be taken as any more factual than his very entertaining novels'.[114]

In a footnote to this passage in *Waugh in Abyssinia* Waugh acknowledged that it 'is difficult to get reliable figures, but it seems that at no time was gas or yperite very effective as a lethal weapon' (*WIA*, p. 239). Its inefficiency as a weapon, in his estimation, entailed that the claims of the League of Nations and the international press were inflated for anti-Italian purposes. His remarks were written to counter the international perception of Italy's use of gas, as he explains:

> Great publicity was given at the time to the gas cases which came to the hospitals for treatment. All wounds and all the effects of war are, of course, hideous. Actually those caused by gas and ypirite [*sic*] appear to have been far fewer and more temporary in character than those of other weapons.
>
> (*WIA*, p. 239)

It is difficult to disentangle Waugh's perspective from those of his projected Roman Catholic and pro-Italian readership. However, like Barnes, his references to poison gas evidence the intimate relationship between his wartime travel writing and the propaganda of the Italian Fascist administration. In his 1937 *Tablet* review of G. L. Steer's travel account of the war, *Caesar in Abyssinia* (1936), Waugh criticises Steer's many references to Italy's use of gas. Steer, Waugh argues, posits that poison gas invalidated Italy's claims to a civilising imperialism. 'He is, in fact, in something of a dilemma to explain how it was that the Italians won', Waugh argues: 'He escapes with the magic word "gas".'[115] To Waugh's mind Steer had been against the Italians

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[114] Thomas M. Coffey, *Lion by the Tail: The Story of the Italian-Ethiopian War* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1974), p. 307.
[115] Evelyn Waugh, review of G. L. Steer, *Caesar in Abyssinia* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1936), *The Tablet*, 169 (1937); repr. in *Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, pp. 188-89 (p. 188).

from the outset and he denounces the book's sources as originating from 'the official propaganda' of the Emperor and the socialist paper, *Daily Worker*. [116] His condemnation of the book, and its author, followed Steer's banishment from Abyssinia following the Italian victory.[117] Steer explains that on the day following the declaration of victory 'I received an expulsion order from the office of the new Viceroy […] No grounds were given, but from the others who were expelled with me I gather that I was listed as Public Enemy No. One'.[118] The timing of Waugh's public accusation of bad faith at Steer coincided with Italy's contention that he was among many pro-Abyssinian journalists who wrote untruths about the new imperial regime. Waugh's review functioned as a legitimisation of this suppression and further evidences Waugh's integration into the administration of Italian propaganda.

In the eyes of the Roman Catholic readership of *The Tablet*, Waugh implicitly invokes the larger religious and ideological war between the atheist Marxism and Catholic fascism. 'There is no question that yperite was used by the Italians on both fronts', Waugh acknowledges, repeating the line he had taken in *Waugh in Abyssinia*. Notably, however, he adjusts the rationale for its usage:

> Condemned to outlawry by the world, they allowed themselves to behave as outlaws. They could have won as quickly without it. No one knows – least of all the Italian fighting men – how much yrpite was used.[119]

In *Waugh in Abyssinia* Waugh denied the illegality of Italy's use of poison gas. It was, he claimed, a proportionate and largely ineffectual response to Abyssinia's

[116] Ibid., p. 188.
[117] See Michael B. Salwen, *Evelyn Waugh in Ethiopia: The Story Behind Scoop* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), p. 67.
[118] G. L. Steer, *Caesar in Abyssinia* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1936), p. 404.
[119] Ibid., p. 189.

atrocities. In his review of *Caesar in Abyssinia*, Waugh amends this to suggest that the employment of poison gas was, in fact, an act of 'outlawry', but one that was motivated in part by the condemnation of the invasion by the League of Nations. In a letter to Diana Cooper Waugh abandoned the posture of objective reportage that characterise the above passages. 'I have got to hate the Ethiopians more each day', Waugh wrote, 'goodness they are lousy & i [*sic*] hope the organmen gas them to buggery'.[120] This view was certainly coloured by the contrarian bombast of his 'Mr Wu' persona that he adopted in his letters to Diana Cooper. Nonetheless, the sentiment provides an idea of Waugh's cynicism towards the Abyssinian people, and his indifference to the use of poison gas, which was viciously at variance with the opinion of the British press, but crucially in accordance with his pro-Italian co-religionists. Following the Italian victory, Christopher Dawson symbolically associated the ideals of the Fascist state with the military efficacy of poison gas. 'I believe we are entering on a new phase in the history of warfare', he wrote in *The Tablet*, in which 'principles will be as important as poison gas'.[121]

Campion's Legacy in *Waugh in Abyssinia*

In his memoir of the Second Italo-Abyssinian War, the *Daily Telegraph* war correspondent Mortimer Durand pre-emptively denied his support for Italy and the Mussolini-admiration shared by some of his colleagues. 'The accusation, "You are pro-Italian," has become familiar to me to the point of monotony', wrote Durand, 'but while it is true I liked most of the Italians I met in Africa, I hope no reader of this

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[120] *Mr Wu and Mrs Stitch: The Letters of Evelyn Waugh to Diana Cooper* ed. by Artemis Cooper (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1992), p. 53.
[121] Christopher Dawson, 'The Catholic Attitude to War', *The Tablet*, 169, 13 March 1937, 365-68 (365).

book will think I subscribe to the “heroic Roman” attitude’.[122] His ‘personal narrative’ of the war indicates the public suspicion of political bias among war correspondents and travel writers in the late-1930s. It signifies the extent to which the trope of Fascist Italy as the rebirth of the ‘heroic Roman’ Empire had taken root among a notable coterie of readers and writers in Britain. This attitude infiltrated non-Catholic writing of the period too. Writing in the *British-Italian Bulletin* in 1936, Osbert Sitwell described the prospect of Britain going to war with Italy over Abyssinia as an act of ‘spiritual matricide’.[123] For Britain to ‘make war on Italy, a country which has had two great periods of civilisation where other European countries are fortunate if they have had one’, Sitwell argued, ‘would be like murdering our own mother’.[124] An Anglo-Italian war horrified Sitwell because, like Waugh, he acutely felt Britain’s obligations to Rome, which had brought Christianity and civilisation to the once pagan isles. The situation had an overwhelmingly tragic character to it, with British writers expressing their impulses and duties. Tragic allusions reappear in T. S. Eliot’s reflections on the conflict of duties that he felt characterised political life in the mid-1930s: ‘Æschylus, at least, understood that it may be a man’s duty to commit a crime, and to accomplish his expiation for it’.[125] Lewis made recourse the tragic metaphor, referring to the press as ‘a sort of Greek chorus’ that stood apart from events in Abyssinia, yet was ‘babbling, shrieking, and moaning about what it apprehended might be going on within’.[126] The tragic well articulates Sitwell’s predicament; he, like many others, felt himself pulled intellectually and spiritually towards Rome and

[122] Mortimer Durand, *Crazy Campaign: A Personal Narrative of the Italo-Abyssinian War* (London: Routledge 1936), p. x.
[123] Osbert Sitwell, ‘Alma Mater’, *British-Italian Bulletin*, (3 January 1936), p. 1.
[124] Ibid., p. 1.
[125] T. S. Eliot, ‘Commentary’, *Criterion*, 15 (July 1936), 663-67 (664).
[126] Wyndham Lewis, *Left Wings Over Europe: Or, How to Make a War About Nothing* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1936), p. 152.

yet unable to relinquish his British identity. 'The Foreign Office seems bent on war with Italy', Sitwell wrote in July 1935, 'I am really frightened'.[127]

Waugh's perception of the tragic character of Britain's opposition to Italian imperialism is evident in his 1935 biography of Edmund Campion. He introduces the hagiography with a threnody for Britain's loss of its Roman Catholic heritage. Beginning with Elizabeth I on her deathbed, Waugh laments the persecution of the faith during the Tudor dynasty and identifies its legacy that extended into the twentieth century. The Tudors 'left a new aristocracy, a new religion, a new system of government', Waugh argues; '[t]he vast exuberance of the Renaissance had been canalized. England was secure, independent, insular; the course of her history lay plain ahead; competitive nationalism, competitive industrialism, competitive imperialism'.[128] The last of Waugh's enumerations, 'competitive imperialism', accurately describes his perception of Britain's rationale with regard to Italy's increase of its colonial possessions. The potential for conflict between Britain and Italy in 1935 was established in the sixteenth-century with England's national abandonment of the Catholic faith. Alain Blayac has rightly noted that in *Edmund Campion* Waugh 'traced an implicit but illuminating parallel between Elizabeth's age and the Thirties'.[129] However, he is only partly correct in his attribution of this parallel to the 'nazi [*sic*] and communist persecutions against catholic populations', which, Blayac argues, 'gave [Waugh] the tragic perception of national dishonour'.[130] The 1930s analogue for the Elizabethan persecution was, in this instance, the British

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[127] Letter from Osbert Sitwell to David Horner, 19 July 1935. The Osbert Sitwell Papers, Harry Ransom Research Center, University of Texas at Austin, USA.
[128] Evelyn Waugh, *Edmund Campion: Jesuit Priest and Martyr* (London: Penguin, 2012 [1935]), pp. 6-7.
[129] Alain Blayac, 'Evelyn Waugh, Biographer', in *Waugh Without End: New Trends in Evelyn Waugh Studies* ed. by Robbert Murray Davis and Carlos Villar (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005), pp. 91-102 (p. 95-96).
[129] Macaulay, 'Evelyn Waugh', *Critical Heritage*, p. 174.
[130] Ibid., p. 96.

Government in its opposition to and conflict with the universal church, which was reified in the form of Fascist Italy's Roman Catholic imperialism. Waugh wrote in 1937 that Britain's 'opposition to Italian aggrandisement in East Africa was directed solely from motives of imperial jealousy'.[131] In Waugh's estimation the era of rapacious, 'competitive imperialism' and capitalism was a product of the Reformation. He invokes through his biography of Campion an antecedent, Roman Catholic conceptualisation of Britain wherein the ideological and nationalistic conflicts of the 1930s are resolved through a shared commitment to a Universal Church. The persecution of Campion in Elizabethan England and the British Government's opposition to Italy in 1936 and 1936 are extensions of the same anti-Catholic politics, which Waugh deplored.

In both *Edmund Campion* and *Waugh in Abyssinia*, post-reformation Britain is represented as a catalyst for the forces of barbarism and an enemy of Roman Catholic civilisation. This reached its nadir in the nineteenth century with the partition of Africa, from which Catholic Italy was largely excluded by protestant and secular European powers. In the opening chapter of *Waugh in Abyssinia* Waugh enumerates the 'treacherous' crimes of British imperialism, which are particularly relevant 'in the present circumstances', he claims, because of Britain's opposition to the Italian invasion of Abyssinia (*WIA*, p. 8). Bernard Schweizer has correctly noted the oxymoronic character of Waugh's critique of British imperialism, which is framed within a defence of Italy's imperial campaign. 'Waugh's pro-imperialist argument', Schweizer argues, 'is grafted upon a humanist rejection of imperialism's vilest aspects'.[132] For Waugh, Britain's hostility towards Italy represented a hypocritical

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[131] Evelyn Waugh, review of Emilio de Bono's *Anno XIIII*, *London Mercury and Bookman* (June 1937); repr. in *Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, pp. 192-95 (p. 192).
[132] Bernard Schweizer, 'Ethiopia and Dystopia in Evelyn Waugh's African Books', *The Journal of African Travel Writing*, 7 (1999) 17-34 (23).

attempt to prevent the destabilisation of the established imperial hegemony in Africa. Britain, Waugh explains,

> went into the shady business with pious expressions of principle; we betrayed the Portuguese and the Sultan of Zanzibar, renouncing explicit and freshly made guarantees of their territories; we betrayed Lobenguela and other native rulers in precisely the same method but with louder protestations of benevolent intention than our competitors; no matter in what caprice of policy our electorate chose to lead us, we preached on blandly and continuously; it was a trait which the world found difficult to tolerate; but we are still preaching.
>
> (*WIA*, pp. 8-9)

The thesis of *Waugh in Abyssinia*'s history of 'The Ethiopian Question' and British imperialism in Africa argues that Britain's opposition to the Italian invasion in 1935 was an attempt to negate Italy's right to expand its territories in East Africa. This, Waugh claims, was established fraudulently on Britain's diplomatic pretence of colonial benevolence. As Wyndham Lewis put it: 'There is practically no one, outside of Colney Hatch [a Victorian era mental hospital], who believes that there is a spark of sincerity in the purely moralistic aspect of this dispute.' [133] In writing this 'history', then, Waugh frames the ensuing travel book in a politico-religious narrative that has its origin in the Elizabethan persecution of Roman Catholics that Waugh described in *Edmund Campion* as 'an unending war'.[134] 'The hunted, trapped, murdered priest is our contemporary', Waugh writes, 'and Campion's voice sounds to us across the centuries as though he were walking at our elbow'.[135]

Upon its publication the literary critic and editor Sir Desmond McCarthy reviewed *Edmund Campion* favourably on BBC radio. Following the broadcast, John

[133] Lewis, *Left Wings Over Europe*, p. 77.
[134] Waugh, *Campion*, p. IX.
[135] Ibid., p. X.

Alfred Kensit, secretary of the Protestant Truth Society, wrote in the *Listener*, the BBC's magazine, to 'lodge a protest' on the 'behalf of the United Protestant Council' against McCarthy's review and Waugh's biography.[136] 'The Council feels', Kensit explains, 'that something ought to be said to counter the suggestion that Edmund Campion was a kind of injured innocent who was not righteously executed under the laws of the Realm'.[137] Kensit posited that Waugh's biography had been insufficiently scrutinised by McCarthy and that, for the sake of balance, the BBC should 'give publicity' to the evidence against Campion's saintly reputation and the judiciousness of his execution.[138] Citing court documents and letters from the Vatican Archives, Kensit claimed in his letter that Campion had, in fact, returned to England for political purposes and that the priest 'was involved in the conspiracy to dethrone or murder Queen Elizabeth'.[139] Waugh's response, published in the pages of the *Listener*, offered a rebuttal of Kensit's claims. In addition, he proposes that Kensit and the Protestant Truth Society were motivated purely by anti-Catholic prejudice:

> I am forced to the conclusion that Mr. Kensit has not read [*Campion*] and that his rage is aroused, not that an inaccurate work should be unjustly commended, but that any book by a Catholic about a Catholic should be mentioned at all by anyone anywhere.[140]

Waugh makes clear the irony of Kensit's outrage directed at the BBC. To Waugh's mind, Kensit had further proved his thesis that the 1930s Britain was inhospitable to Catholics in a manner analogous to Elizabethan England. 'There was no place for

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[136] J. A. Kensit, *Listener*, 30 January 1936, 221-22; repr. in *Evelyn Waugh: The Critical Heritage* ed. by Martin Stannard (London: Routledge, 1984), pp. 166-168 (p. 166).
[137] Ibid., p. 166.
[138] Ibid., p.167.
[139] Ibid., p. 168.
[140] Evelyn Waugh, *Listener*, 26 February 1936; repr. in *Evelyn Waugh: The Critical Heritage* ed. by Martin Stannard (London: Routledge, 1984), pp. 171-73 (p. 173).

legitimate opposition under the Tudors', Waugh explains to Kensit: 'The reason that we love Campion is that his teaching and example showed the way of sacrifice.'[141] This a statement of Waugh's commitment to the Campion-inspired life of a proselytising voice for Roman Catholic resurgence, both domestically and abroad. *Edmund Campion* is, in Selina Hastings' words, 'passionately partisan'.[142] It demonstrates Waugh's self-fashioning as a highly political Catholic writer and thinker who had elevated himself to the religious seriousness of Belloc and Chesterton, and his co-religionists on the right wing of British politics: Jerrold, Lunn, Dawson and Woodruff.

From Abyssinia to Spain

The work of such Catholic writers during the mid-1930s was to defend the legitimacy of the Italian campaign, but also to insist upon its religious righteousness. For Waugh this became an imperative after Pope Pius XI had officially blessed the war. During the time that he was completing the final chapters of *Waugh in Abyssinia* in September 1936, Waugh's investment in right-wing politics increased notably, with particular regard to the fast evolving Spanish situation. As such, it represents an integral context for the eulogistic, pro-Fascist tone of the book's concluding chapters. In an unpublished letter to Joan Waugh on 20 September 1935, Waugh told his sister-in-law: 'I got back a week ago and am settled here finishing a book about Abyssinia. God, I am sick of the subject. I may pop over to Spain at the end of the month to see the fun'.[143] Waugh's interest in Spain was concurrent with when 'English newspapers stopped printing Abyssinian news' (*WIA*, p. 216). There were 'other crises' that occupied his and the public's attention: 'the German occupation of the Rhine frontier,

[141] Ibid, p. 172.
[142] Hastings, *Evelyn Waugh*, p. 324.
[143] Unpublished ALS Evelyn Waugh to Joan Waugh (née Chirnside), 20 September [1936].

the Spanish civil war' (*WIA*, p. 216). Waugh's concentration was focused on the broader European political situation at this moment and his role in it as a right-wing Catholic novelist and potential activist.

In September 1936, Waugh attended a meeting for British supporters of the Spanish Falange hosted by the Archbishop of Westminster.[144] Waugh's attendance is indicative of his further involvement, however abortive, in the network of English Catholics whose aim was to provide humanitarian aid for Franco's troops in their fight against the Republicans. The Archbishop's Spanish Association was a community of upper-class, right-wing Roman Catholics that included Lord Fitzalan of Derwent and Lord Howarth of Penrith. Waugh's diary records the escalation of his interest in this Christian, pro-fascist activism during these heady months. At the gathering Waugh met his future sister-in-law, Gabriel Herbert, who was imminently 'off to Spain to relieve insurgents'.[145] Gabriel appears in Waugh's diary in the week before the Archbishop's meeting when the novelist noted: '[t]hinking of joining Gabriel in [a] Spanish trip'.[146] Waugh was not an impassive observer at the meeting but 'moved for [Gabriel] to be sent out to advise [the] best means of distribution'. Though there is no indication of Waugh's continued involvement in the Archbishop's Spanish Association, as late as 1939 he would refer to his political allies as 'partisans of Franco, like myself'.[147]

Waugh was one of only five writers to respond to Curnard and Aragon's questionnaire to categorise their attitudes as 'AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT'. However, unlike Arthur Machen and Major Geoffrey McNeill-Moss for example, Waugh's response displays a careful ambiguity. In *Authors Take Sides*, the distinction between

[144] For more on the Archbishop of Westminster's Spanish Association, see Richard Griffiths, *The Pen and the Cross: Catholicism and English Literature, 1850-2000* (London: Continuum, 2010), p. 151-54.
[145] *Diaries of Evelyn Waugh*, 25 September 1936, p. 407.
[146] Ibid., 19 September 1936, p. 406.
[147] Waugh, *Robbery Under Law*, p. 50.

'NEUTRAL' and 'AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT' was not always transparent. Ezra Pound, who within a year had contributed over twenty pro-Fascist articles to the *British-Italian Bulletin*, deemed himself 'NEUTRAL'.[148] Waugh's reply distanced him from the idea of active political involvement in the Spanish Civil War. This may have been intended to ridicule the activism of his left-wing contemporaries, including Stephen Spender, Christopher Caudwell and George Orwell, who had travelled to Spain to join the fight against the nationalists, but this reading is at variance with the personal information found in Waugh's diary and letters from the period, which would suggest the writer's genuine enthusiasm for experiencing the Spanish front. His response to the *Left Review*'s questionnaire reads:

> I am no more impressed by the 'legality' of the Valencia government than are English Communists by the legality of the Crown, Lords and Commons. I believe it was a bad government, rapidly deteriorating. If I were a Spaniard I should be fighting for General Franco. As an Englishman I am not in the predicament of choosing between two evils. I am not a Fascist nor shall I become one unless it were the only alternative to Marxism. It is mischievous to suggest that such a choice is imminent.[149]

It is compelling to read Waugh's statement for *Authors Take Sides* as an attempt to begin the work of recovering his public reputation following his unpopular pro-Italianism during the Second Italo-Abyssinian War. While promoting *Scoop* in 1938, he made light of his right-wing reputation and promised his readers: 'No more Fascist propaganda'.[150] However, Waugh's reply has verbal echoes of Churchill's much-quoted and routinely decontextualized 1927 speech in Rome in which he praised

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[148] *Authors Take Sides*, p. 29. James Joyce, in a letter to his daughter-in-law, Helen Joyce, made light of Pound's commitment to Mussolini: 'May the 17 devils take Muscoloni and the Alibiscindians! Why don't they make Pound commander-in-chief for Bagonghi and elect me Negus of Amblyopia?' (6 October 1935), *The Letters of the James Joyce* ed. Richard Ellmann 3 vols (London: Faber & Faber, 1966), III, p. 381.

[149] *Authors Take Sides*, p. 32.

[150] Quoted in Douglas Patey, *The Life of Evelyn Waugh: A Critical biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), p. 147.

Mussolini yet insisted on the fundamental political differences between Britain and Italy: 'If I had been an Italian,' Churchill argued, 'I am sure that I should have been wholeheartedly with you from start to finish in your triumphant struggle against the bestial appetites and passions of Leninism. But in England we have not had to fight this danger in the same deadly form. We have our way of doing things.[151] The parallels with Waugh's reply to the *Left Review* include the conditional clause structure as well as the notion that the value of Fascism to Britain, is in its contradistinction to Marxism. Waugh nonetheless described himself as 'FOR FRANCO'. It is significant, also, that the questionnaire positioned itself as coming directly after the Second Italo-Abyssinian War:

> We have seen murder and destruction by Fascism in Italy, in Germany – the organisation there of social injustice and cultural death – and how revived, imperial Rome, abetted by international treachery, has conquered her place in the Abyssinian sun. The dark millions in the colonies are unavenged.
>
> To-day, the struggle is Spain.

The inclusion of this passage would have made it difficult for Waugh to take a stance other than the one he had already strenuously adopted in public. After the Italians entered Addis Ababa in May 1936 Waugh wrote to Katherine Asquith, ostensibly with a note of regret about the Italian victory: 'I am sick of Abyssinia & of my book about it. It was fun being pro-Italian when it was an unpopular and (I thought) losing cause. I have little sympathy with these exultant fascists now'.[152] This letter was written before Waugh's meeting with Mussolini and his return to Abyssinia in the summer of 1936 that prompted his rhapsodic elevation of the Italian engineers and

[151] Press Statement from Rome, *The Times* (21 January 1927).
[152] Ibid., p. 109. 4 August 1936.

road-builders. It is an oft-quoted letter that is deployed to suggest that Waugh's pro-Italianism was a persona developed in order to upset the sentimentalist majority, and that *Waugh in Abyssinia* represented merely an elaborate joke. Moreover, it suggests too that there was never any doubt in Waugh's mind that the enormous military asymmetry between Italy and Abyssinia could have led to any result other than a decisive Italian victory. In mid-1935 while the possibility remained that the League of Nations' sanctions might have prohibited Italy's war effort, the length of the war was difficult to predict. As the war correspondent George Baer pointed out: 'Everyone expected a long war, of two or three years. Limited sanctions were supposed to work gradually. Their cumulative pressure on the Italian economy was meant to make Mussolini amenable to settlement'.[153] However, following the failure of sanctions, an Italian victory was all but assured. Indeed, Waugh shared this indeterminacy about the projected length of the war. He wrote to Laura Herbert in August 1935 that it 'may lastthree [*sic*] weeks or three years. […] It should be very gay unless the peace makers spoil everything. In that case I shall be home before xmas'.[154] In Waugh's letters he adopted as many voices and personae as in his travel books. What is consistent, however, is the ideological seriousness with which he was committed to the Italian campaign in 1935-36.

This chapter has demonstrated that Waugh's travel writing from the Second Italo-Abyssinian War evidences an increased level of political commitment than has been previously recognised in Waugh scholarship. This is amplified by the crucial contexts of the publication and reception histories of *Waugh in Abyssinia*, especially when considered alongside the work of his right-wing Roman Catholic contemporaries who also wrote in favour of the Italian campaign in Abyssinia. As

[153] George Baer, *Test Case: Italy, Ethiopia, and the League of Nations* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1967 [1946]), p. xiv.
[154] Unpublished ALS Evelyn Waugh to Laura Herbert c.2 August [1935].

such, Waugh was not an outlier in this period but a highly energised member of a literary coterie of politically engaged Catholics who published prolifically their support for Mussolini. Waugh's writing appeared in the organs of the Italian overseas propaganda campaign, which was financially enabled by the Italian Foreign Office. He met with Mussolini and contributed to the 'OFFICIAL NOTE' submitted by Italy to the League of Nations that claimed deaths and injuries from aerial gas attacks during the war amounted to dozens instead of tens of thousands. Waugh's writing that resulted from this complicated history of political influences represented a departure from his travel books from the early 1930s. *Waugh in Abyssinia* is a multifaceted work that incorporates war journalism, anecdote, farce and political polemic. It evidences that the travel book in the mid-1930s was a genre to which writers specifically gravitated towards in order to put forward political arguments.

2. 'THE PERMANENCE OF ROMAN CONQUEST': EVELYN WAUGH'S JOURNEY OF CONFIRMATION IN THE SECOND ITALO-ABYSSINIAN WAR IN *WAUGH IN ABYSSINIA* (1936)

In the opening chapter of *Remote People* (1931) Waugh protests that words fail him in his attempt to describe the experience of Abyssinia. 'How to capture', he asks the reader, 'how retail, the crazy enchantment of these Ethiopian days?'[155] His solution, however unsatisfactory, is to resort to a fantastical literary tradition to find a shared point of reference between reader and travel writer. 'It is to *Alice in Wonderland* that my thoughts recur in seeking some historical parallel for life in Addis Ababa', Waugh confesses.[156] This is because, he continues:

> It is in *Alice* only that one finds the peculiar flavour of galvanized and transcended reality, where animals carry watches in the waistcoat pockets, royalty paces the croquet lawn beside the chief executioner, and litigation ends in a flutter of playing cards.[157]

Faced with the same task, many of Waugh's contemporaries found the same solution: in *Brazilian Adventure* (1932), recalling his departure from London for South America, Peter Fleming announces that 'the exotic unrealities of our intentions [...] would henceforth supply the pattern of our whole existence. We were through the looking-glass.'[158] Robert Byron titled his 1927 travel book *Europe in the Looking-Glass* and, in it, references the 'Alice-in-Wonderland door' that travellers fruitlessly

[155] Evelyn Waugh, *Remote People: A Report from Ethiopia and British Africa, 1930-31* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985 [1931]), p. 23.
[156] Ibid., p. 22.
[157] Ibid., pp. 22-23.
[158] Peter Fleming, *Brazilian Adventure* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1999 [1933]), p. 50.

sought in Naples.[159] For many travel writers of the interwar period *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* (1874) functioned as a means of describing the indescribable.[160] Waugh's 'preposterous *Alice in Wonderland* fortnight'[161] is characterised by the feeling that Abyssinia stood apart as something wholly different from anything he or his readers had experienced. It resulted in a travel book in which, as Paul Fussell notes, 'the prevailing literary emotion is wonder'.[162]

Waugh's inability to communicate his travel experiences in *Remote People* captures the essential predicament of the travel writer: *how does* the author convey the strange and, at times, otherworldly experience of foreign places to a readership back at home? In this book, Waugh overtly problematizes and acknowledges the inadequacy of his solution to the travel writer's dilemma. Five years later, however, in *Waugh in Abyssinia* (1936) such questions are approached with radically different literary and politico-religious priorities. Waugh's account of the Second Italo-Abyssinian War places little value on 'wonder' as a literary emotion. It begins with 'An Intelligent Woman's Guide to the Ethiopian Question' and, throughout, seeks to educate a 'fatally confused' world of the legitimacy of the Italian colonisation of Abyssinia.[163] For Waugh in 1935 and 1936, Abyssinia is thoroughly understandable and explicable. His perception and representation of Abyssinia is shaped by a pre-existing, Bellocian-inspired commitment to a politicised Roman Catholicism. That which he observes in East Africa is judged according to this politico-religious

[159] Robert Byron, *Europe in the Looking-Glass* (London: Hesperus Press, 2012 [1926], p. 110.
[160] For discussion of the relationship between *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and imperialism, see Emma D. Graner, 'Dangerous Alice: Travel Narrative, Empire, and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*', *CEA Critic*, 76.3 (2014) 252-58.
[161] Waugh, *Remote People*, p. 22.
[162] Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Travel Writing Between the Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 229.
[163] Evelyn Waugh, *Waugh in Abyssinia* (London: Penguin, 2011 [1936]), p. 216. (Further references to this edition in this chapter are given after quotations in the text.)

framework and, as such, leaves no space for wonder or epistemological confusion in the face of the Abyssinian other. Simply put: *Waugh in Abyssinia* does not tell of a journey of exploration or discovery, but, instead, records a journey of confirmation. This chapter considers the ways, formally and historically, that this is evidenced in Waugh's travel writing of this period. It argues that Waugh, marketing himself as an expert on 'Abyssinian realities',[164] sought to resolve the contradictions and confusions that he had once found so compelling in *Remote People*. He achieves this through an appeal to the universalising principles of Roman Catholic nationalism in Europe in the 1930s. The influence of Waugh's increasingly prominent role as a political voice on the Roman Catholic right wing of British politics guided his observations and provided a political and religious framework for his interpretation of his Abyssinian experiences. This, moreover, has ramifications for his role as a satirist and as a travel writer in the late 1930s.

An Expert on Abyssinia

In the months leading up to the Second Italo-Abyssinian War Waugh fashioned himself as an expert on Abyssinian affairs. He published numerous articles of commentary on the crisis and announced his early and enthusiastic support for the Italian campaign.[165] Through this Waugh secured employment as a war correspondent for the *Daily Mail*, which, he argues, was 'the only London newspaper which seemed to be taking a realistic view of the situation' (*WIA*, p. 39). 'Everyone with any claims to African experience was cashing in', he recalls in *Waugh in Abyssinia*: 'Travel

[164] Evelyn Waugh, 'Abyssinian Realities: We Can Applaud Italy', *Evening Standard*, 13 February 1935; repr. in *The Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh* ed. by Donat Gallagher (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1986), pp. 162-64.
[165] See ibid., pp. 162-63; 'Evelyn Waugh on Abyssinian Troop Movements', *Daily Mail*, 3 September 1935; 'The Conquest of Abyssinia', *The Times*, 19 May, 1936; and 'Through European Eyes', *London Mercury and Bookman*, June 1937. See also 'Ethiopia Today: Romance and Reality – Behind the Scenes at Addis Ababa', *The Times*, 22 December 1930.

books whose first editions had long since been remaindered were being reissued in startling wrappers' (*WIA*, p. 39). Waugh's first article on the prospect of the Italian invasion appeared in the *Evening Standard* on 13 February 1935.[166] In it, he castigates the 'sentimentalists in Europe' whose political opposition to Mussolini's proposed campaign was based on misguided romanticism about Abyssinia and its people.[167] 'In the matter of abstract justice', Waugh contends, 'the Italians have as much right to govern [as the Abyssinians]; in the matter of practical politics, it is certain that their government would be for the benefit of the Ethiopian Empire and for the rest of Africa'.[168] His attack on the sentimentalism of Italy's critics, and his advocacy for the judiciousness of the Italian campaign, is characteristic of Waugh's writing of the Second Italo-Abyssinian War. In *Waugh in Abyssinia*, he makes use of the implied credibility of the travel writer as an eyewitness who claims to represent the reality of Abyssinia ('Abyssinian *realities*';[169] 'the *reality* in Africa'[170]) for his readers in Britain. However, this is achieved through an appeal to a Roman Catholic politico-religious framework in which contradictions are resolved and judgements are made against a universal standard of truth and justice. Taking inspiration from Hilaire Belloc, Waugh subordinated the reality of what he observed the greater spiritual and religious realities of the universal Church of Rome. His commitment to the 'realistic view' of the Second Italo-Abyssinian War is circumscribed by the doctrinal realities of faith.

As an enthusiastic Roman Catholic neophyte, Waugh's religious and political thinking was highly influenced by the Belloc's writings of the 1920s and 1930s.[171]

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[166] Waugh, 'We Can Applaud Italy', pp. 162-64.
[167] Ibid., p. 163.
[168] Ibid., p. 164.
[169] Ibid. , p. 162. My emphasis.
[170] Ibid., p. 163. My emphasis.
[171] Martin Stannard, *Evelyn Waugh: The Early Years, 1903-1939* (London: Flamingo, 1993), p. 392.

‘Like [Belloc]’, Selina Hastings writes, ‘Evelyn tended to the belief that no country could be called civilised that had not been conquered by Rome’.[172] Waugh’s friend and co-religionist Christopher Sykes refers to Waugh’s ‘old hero Belloc’ who exerted a profound influence on the writer.[173] Belloc’s influence was felt by all of the British Catholic controversialists of the interwar period. Essential to his political and religious philosophy was his belief that civilisation was a continuation of the values of pagan Rome, as interpreted and corrected by the Roman Catholic Church, from antiquity into the present day. ‘The Faith’, Belloc argues in *Europe and the Faith* (1920), ‘is that which Rome accepted in her maturity’. The Church, he continues, is ‘the conservator of all that could be conserved’ of antiquity.[174] For Belloc and his acolytes, Mussolini’s Fascist government in Italy represented the rebirth of the Roman Empire. It was, as G. K. Chesterton described it, the ‘resurrection of Rome’.[175] ‘Not only had Mussolini given order to Italy’, Kevin Morris argues, ‘but a Roman style of order, and for Belloc ancient Rome, transmitted to the modern world through Roman Catholicism, was a touchstone model of civilization so that Italian Fascism held for him a deep cultural and mythical appeal’.[176] The notion of the Roman Empire reborn, which figured prominently in Fascist propaganda of the period, was anchored to the long-held beliefs of many Catholics who viewed this as a necessary path for the revitalisation of European civilisation. As Belloc writes: ‘The civilisation of Europe – the civilisation, that is, of Rome and of Europe – had a third fortune differing from both death and from sterility: it survived to a resurrection. Its essential seeds were preserved for a Second Spring.’[177] The metaphors of rebirth and

[172] Selina Hastings, *Evelyn Waugh: A Biography*, (London: Minerva, 1995), p., 326.
[173] Christopher Sykes, *Evelyn Waugh: A Biography* (London: Collins, 1975), p. 283.
[174] Hilaire Belloc, *Europe and the Faith* (London: Constable, 1920), p. 20.
[175] G. K. Chesterton, *The Resurrection of Rome* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), p. 1.
[176] Morris, ‘Fascism and British Catholic Writers: Part 1’, p. 35.
[177] Belloc, *Europe and the Faith*, p. 57.

resurrection capture the intense feeling of religious fecundity that had been made newly possible by a community of enthusiastic and politically active believers in Europe. Mussolini's Fascist corporatism was, for Belloc, a political instantiation of this religious view. This perspective maintained a profound spiritual allure to British Catholics, like Waugh, whose conceptualisation of civilisation and civilised values was immutably connected to the ancient lineage of Roman Catholicism.

In Belloc's writing of the interwar period, he lends philosophical credence to Mussolini's Roman Catholic imperialism and vocally champions Fascist Italy's aggressive expansionism in Abyssinia. He insists upon the significant role that 'civilization, that is, the civilization of Christendom' had to play in 'acting also as a leader or instructor of the other cultures in Asia and northern Africa'.[178] For him, Roman conquest had left behind an enduring legacy of civilisation and it was the duty of the conquered countries to export those values to the uncivilised world. 'It was', Belloc argues, 'the disruption of Catholic unity in Europe which let in all the evils from the extreme of which we now suffer and are therefore in peril of dissolution'.[179] This thesis is manifested in the peroration of *Waugh in Abyssinia*,[180] and is cited explicitly in Waugh's proposal for a travel book, titled '*In the Steps of Caesar*'.

In January 1937, Waugh informed his literary agent, A. D. Peters, that he intended to write '*In the Steps of Caesar*'. He proposes it as a 'guide book' to Europe that will explain the historical indebtedness of the continent to Roman, and therefore Catholic, civilisation according to Bellocian principles.[181] Waugh writes:

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[178] Hilaire Belloc, *The Crisis of Our Civilization* (London: Cassell, 1937), p. 3.
[179] Ibid., p. 223.
[180] Which reads: 'And from Dessye new roads will be radiating to all points of the compass, and along the roads will pass the eagles of ancient Rome, as they came to our savage ancestors in France and Britain and Germany, bringing […] the inestimable gifts of fine workmanship and clear judgement – the two determining qualities of the human spirit, by which alone, under God, man grows and flourishes.' (*WIA*, p. 253)
[181] Unpublished ALS from Evelyn Waugh to A. D. Peters, 26 January 1937. Evelyn Waugh Papers, Harry Ransome Center, The University of Texas at Austin.

> [H]ow about 'In the Steps of Caesar.' grand title. Travel through all the most interesting parts of Europe where a guide book is always desirable. Ideology in part Belloc belief in the permanence of Roman conquest, part anti pacifist. I see a very good book indeed on this subject.[182]
>
> Failing that I'll think about some Saints or Renaissance explorers.[183]

Sykes recalls that Waugh's publishers resisted the idea. They suggested, instead, that he write the biography of a religious figure, such as 'St Peter, St Francis Xavier, or St Patrick'.[184] Waugh, however, was committed to '*In the Steps of Caesar*'. It would be a travel book, he insisted in a second letter to Peters, 'I should very much enjoy writing'.[185] His specification of a Bellocian 'ideology' in his proposal reasserts the significance of the travel book as a vehicle for promoting Roman Catholic heritage of modern Europe. It alludes to the costs, represented by war and disunity, which resulted from Europe's abandonment of the universal church during the Reformation.

Travel, for Waugh, was not merely geographical but always historical and religious. His religious politics in this period were guided by a Bellocian interpretation of the universalising obligations of the Roman Catholic faith and history.[186] The universal interpretative framework of Catholic doctrine necessitated objective claims about the reality of the world. 'Most important of all,' Waugh wrote following his conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1930, 'it seems to me that any religious body which is not by nature universal cannot claim to represent complete

[182] Ibid.
[183] Unpublished ALS from Evelyn Waugh to A. D. Peters, 26 January 1937. Evelyn Waugh Papers, Harry Ransome Center.
[184] Sykes, *Evelyn Waugh*, p. 173.
[185] Unpublished ALS from Evelyn Waugh to A. D. Peters, 28 January 1937. Evelyn Waugh Papers, Harry Ransome Center.
[186] See Cyril Creighton Mandell and Edward Shanks, *Hilaire Belloc: The Man and his Work* (London: Methuen, 1916), p. 72.

Christianity'.[187] He continues, with a prescient reference to the predicament facing Catholics during the Second Italo-Abyssinian War: 'Those who regard conversion to Roman Catholicism as an unpatriotic defection – a surrender to Italian domination – seem to miss the whole idea of universality.'[188] This emphasis of *universality* is manifested stylistically in Waugh's formal appeal to objectivity in *Waugh in Abyssinia*. In it, he criticises the subjective and sentimental arguments of Abyssinian sympathisers in the British press. His proposal to frame '*In the Steps of Caesar*' as a 'guide book', and his 'Intelligent Woman's Guide to the Ethiopian Question', conform to this notion. A 'guide' suggests a useful and implicitly objective account of the situation described. It aims to educate and resists polemic. This, however, is consistent with Waugh and Belloc's wider thesis that Roman Catholicism is the essential *guide* for understanding the history of Europe and, so they claim, is the ultimate guide to its future. In 1937, concurrent with Waugh's proposed travel book, Belloc published *The Crisis of Our Civilization*. In it, he poses the question: 'What, then, was the story of Christendom, and why has that story now come to be threatened with an end?'[189] He answers: 'History upon all this is our *guide*; the history of what we were explains what we are.'[190] Belloc goes on to argue that the dismantling of the pan-European Roman Catholic Church brought about the crisis into which the continent had plunged. Waugh's insistence on the 'permanence of Roman conquest' in his proposed travel book suggests a political analysis in the mode of Belloc's: that the only resolution to the political crises of the 1930s was a return to Rome.

Belloc's thesis regarding civilisation and its Roman Catholic heritage represented to Waugh a framework through which the world, both civilised an

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[187] Evelyn Waugh, 'Converted to Rome: Why it has Happened to Me', *Daily Express*, 20 October 1930; repr. in *Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, pp. 103-105 (p. 104).
[188] Ibid., p. 104.
[189] Hilaire Belloc, *The Crisis of our Civilization* (London: Cassell, 1937), p. 13.
[190] Ibid., p. 13. My emphasis.

uncivilised, could be interpreted. It is therefore unsurprising that '*In the Steps of Caesar*' was proposed as a 'guide book' to Europe, rather than a subjectively oriented and self-consciously literary travel book, which renounces any implicit imperative to educate and explain. Waugh's decision, to emphasise objective and religious history over subjective and personal experience, is particularly evident in *Waugh in Abyssinia*. In particular, the passage from Gerald H. Portal's *My Mission to Africa* (1892) with which it opens conveys Waugh's appeal to an objective and universalising politico-religious framework through which to interpret and report on the Second Italo-Abyssinian War:

> Although the benefits of a civilized Protectorate are very evident, it is, I confess, with a feeling almost of sadness that I reflect that since I said farewell to Johannis at Afgol, on December 16 1887, no other European can ever grasp the hand of an Independent Emperor of Abyssinia.
>
> (*WIA*, p. 3)

In this quotation Portal subordinates his personal melancholy at the loss of Abyssinia's independence beneath the objective advantages of it falling under European administration. Waugh imports it into the text of *Waugh in Abyssinia* to imply that the sentimentality of pro-Abyssinians parties in Britain blinds them from the 'very evident' superiority of imperial rule. For Portal, principle took precedence over an individual's moral intuitionism. It is deployed to contrast the personal outrage of Abyssinian sympathisers in the British press, such as E. Sylvia Pankhurst and G. L. Steer. 'It was by no means the first time in English history', Waugh argues, 'that the world has been almost fatally confused by mistaking the peevish whinny of the nonconformist conscience for the voice of the nation' (*WIA*, p. 216). In this rhetorical

framing device, Waugh appeals to an objective moral standard that is derived from his Roman Catholic faith. Such a principle, of necessity, rejects the emotionality and sentimentality of the pro-Abyssinian press in order to establish the legitimacy of the Italian campaign on universal politico-religious principles. This argument anticipates Waugh's Mexican travel book *Robbery Under Law* (1939): its appeal to a universal church, under which all people are subject, is the supreme, if not the only, justification for imperial conquest.[191]

For Waugh, the 'sentimentalists in Europe' maintained an erroneous and morally unacceptable conception of the 'reality' of Abyssinia. His censorious treatment of this contingent in his journalism and travel writing insists on his expertise as an eyewitness to Abyssinian culture and society. Moreover, Waugh vehemently denies the implicit analogy between African and European peoples that underpins their argumenta. Such 'sentimentalists', he argues,

> like to imagine a medieval, independent race living according to their own immemorial customs, just as they like to find villages where the people still dance round maypoles in their national costume, but the reality in Africa is more formidable'.[192]

Waugh rejects the analogy between the benign paganism of medieval England and twentieth-century Abyssinia. In so doing, he constructs the insidious and frightening reality of Africa as something wholly other and which resists a sympathetic identification *with*. It provides a rejection of the kind of liberal and disorderly conscience that is implied by and associated with sentimentalism. In characterising

[191] This is discussed in detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis.
[192] Waugh, 'We Can Applaud Italy', *Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, pp. 162-64.

the arguments of the Abyssinian sympathisers as excessively emotive and devoid of reason, Waugh elevates his own claim to represent the objective reality of Abyssinia.

The intuitive responses of the sentimentalists appeared, in Waugh's estimation, to have abandoned their faculties and indulged in the *Alice in Wonderland* experience of Abyssinian oddities. They have given themselves over to the totalising emotion of *wonder*, which had figured so prominently in Waugh's first African travel book, *Remote People*. His characterisation of the sentimentalists as foolish and naïve represents an implied refutation of the moral intuitionism that Waugh believed governed their political opinions. The conflict is this: where Roman Catholic doctrine is universal and immutable, intuitionism is local and contingent. Waugh's broader stylistic appeal to objectivity in *Waugh in Abyssinia* is a symbolic manifestation of his commitment to the universalising principles of Roman Catholicism.

Curiously, however, Waugh's accusation of fantastical naivety that he levels at the British public, who regard the Abyssinians as harmless as maypole dancers, is subtly contradicted by his war reportage. In his dispatch for the *Daily Mail* of 28 September 1935 Waugh records that he attended a military review in Addis Ababa. As an eyewitness to the ceremony, he reports that Abyssinian soldiers appeared, literally, to dance around the maypole. 'Many carried wands and threw them on the rapidly growing pile at the foot of a "*Maypole*"', Waugh explains. The chiefs and soldiers, having dismounted their horses, rushed towards it

> and performed what seemed half a dance and half a sham-fight, […] and boasting loudly of their prowess in past battles and of the amount of blood –their own and others – which they proposed to shed in any coming war.[193]

[193] Evelyn Waugh, 'Emperor's Review in Storm', *Daily Mail*, September 28 1935. My italics.

The fictional example that Waugh provided in order to justify the 'formidable' reality of Africa, and characterise the absurdity of the pro-Abyssinian press and public is called into question by his own dispatch. It appears that Waugh did, in fact, observe Abyssinians performing rites involving a maypole of one kind or another. However, of interest here is not simply the potential for contradiction between Waugh's argument and his wartime observations. What is important to note is how this apparent incongruity illustrates the difficulty of distinguishing between fiction and reality in Abyssinia. Such slippages are evidence of the plural realities of 1930s Abyssinia, which resist translation into propaganda that accords with religious doctrine and political ideology.

The interwar travel book, with its emphasis on authorial subjectivity, had developed into a particularly apposite form for dealing with such slippages and epistemological instability. Stacy Burton describes travel writing's 'evolution as a provocative means for responding intellectually and subjectively to political crisis and war' during the 1930s.[194] Towards the end of the decade Waugh denounced the emphasis on authorial subjectivity that he found in the travel writing of his contemporaries. Graham Greene describes his travel book, *Journey Without Maps* (1936), as 'only a subjective adventure' and not to be mistaken as an attempt to objectively represent the Liberian interior.[195] Peter Fleming makes a similar confession in the preface to *News From Tartary: A Journey from Peking to Kashmir* (1936). He declares that '[t]he world's stock of knowledge – geographical, ethnological, meteorological, what you will – gained nothing from our journey. Nor

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[194] Stacy Burton, *Travel Narrative and the Ends of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 120.
[195] Graham Greene, *Journey Without Maps* (London: William Heinemann, 1936), p. xii.

did we mean that it should.'[196] As a literary and historical counterpoint to this, Waugh cites the travel writing of sixteenth-century Swiss physician Thomas Platter, whose 'almost ruthlessly objective' writing he regards as a necessary antidote to the excessive subjectivity of the 1930s travel book:

> Writers of travel books today attempt primarily to interest the reader in themselves; then, having captivated him, they lead him about the world at their heels; his proper emotion is one of awe that such alarming events should occur to people so charming and witty. Not so Platter.[197]

The appeal to objectivity, to a higher moral and aesthetic standard, that is expressed in this statement correlates with Waugh's wider turn towards the universal standard of Roman Catholicism in his own travel writing. It is to this standard that Waugh appeals when prosecuting his opinions on Abyssinia and, moreover, it is utilised as an intellectual framework according to which all that he observed in foreign locations became understandable. Such escalating religious and political commitments prompted Waugh to break from the perceived triviality with which he treated his earlier travels, such as *Labels: A Mediterranean Journal* (1930) and *Ninety-Two Days: A Journey in Guiana and Brazil* (1934)

He recognised the subjective imperatives of his contemporaries' travel writing, at least in part, because his earlier travel books indulge in similar tendencies. Beginning *Labels*, Waugh's first travel book, he shamefacedly announces that he was unsure and indifferent about where he intended to travel, only that he desired to leave

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[196] Peter Fleming, *News From Tartary: A Journey from Peking to Kashmir* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1936), p. xi.
[197] Evelyn Waugh, 'A Teuton in Tudor England', review of *Thomas Platter's Travels in England* ed. by Clare Williams, *Night and Day* (30 September 1937); repr. in *Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, pp. 206-208 (p. 206).

England: ‘I did not really know where I was going, so, when anyone asked me, I said to Russia’.[198] The supposition, here, is that the specific destination of this travel book from 1930 is of less interest than the personality of the author behind it. ‘Thus my trip started,’ Waugh continues, ‘like an autobiography, upon a rather nicely qualified basis of falsehood and self-glorification’.[199] The stylistic transition from the ethnographic and scientific imperatives of nineteenth century travel writing to the subjective and autobiographical emphases of that of the twentieth century has been well established in recent criticism.[200] Helen Carr points out that:

> If in the nineteenth century, travel writing might often be produced by missionaries, explorers, scientists, or Orientalists […] in texts in which the purveying of privileged knowledge was central concern, increasingly in the twentieth century it has become a more subjective form, more memoir than manual, and often an alternative form of writing for novelists.[201]

In his review of Platter, Waugh records his perception of the differences in orientation between the travel writing of the preceding centuries and the twentieth-century literary travel book. The propagandistic sections of *Waugh in Abyssinia* plainly reject the twentieth-century trend towards authorial subjectivity. Its opening and closing sections contain the most overtly pro-Italian content and argument. These were written last, following his return to Abyssinia after the Italian victory in August 1936. The first chapter, ‘An Intelligent Woman’s Guide to the Ethiopian Question’, submits the historical and philosophical justification for the Italian invasion. In the closing

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[198] Evelyn Waugh, *Labels: A Mediterranean Journal* (London: Penguin, 1985 [1930]), p. 7.
[199] Ibid., p. 7.
[200] See Fussell, *Abroad* (1980); Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing* (Oxford: Routledge, 2011), pp. 96-129; Bernard Schweizer, *Radicals on the Road: The Politics of English Travel Writing in the 1930s* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2001), pp. 55-60.
[201] Helen Carr, ‘Modernism and Travel (1880-1940), in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* ed. by Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 70-86 (p. 74).

section, Waugh eulogised the nascent Italian regime in Abyssinia, praising the road-builders and engineers who were bringing Christian civilisation to East Africa. It represents the most rhetorically amplified statement of support for Mussolini's campaign anywhere in Waugh's writing. These sections stand apart from the subjective travel-memoir of the middle section and depict Waugh's political commitment to an objective style of writing, which appealed to religious and ideological universality.

In his history of the Second Italo-Abyssinian War, Thomas Coffey dismisses *Waugh in Abyssinia* as a work of pro-Italian propaganda that was more fiction than reality. Waugh's 'entire account of the war', Coffey argues, 'was so provably inaccurate and so openly biased in favour of Italy that his testimony could not be taken as any more factual than his very entertaining novels'.[202] Coffey cites Waugh's pro-Italian prejudice as a justification for his own incredulity towards *Waugh in Abyssinia* as a reliable account of the war. Although, as detailed in Chapter 1 of this thesis, several of Waugh's claims in his travel book were plainly and, perhaps, mendaciously inaccurate, Coffey does not take into account the religiously-oriented standard by which *Waugh in Abyssinia* was written and, accordingly, ought to be evaluated. It is not a work of materialist history but, rather, to be considered in the mode of *Edmund Campion* (1935): an account of the latest iteration of the 'unending war' between Catholic civilisation and its enemies.[203] For Waugh, the observable reality of Abyssinia was interpreted and adjusted in order to confirm his already established commitment to the universal church and its modern-day political manifestation in the form of Italian Fascist imperialism.

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[202] Thomas M. Coffey, *Lion by the Tail: The Story of the Italian-Ethiopian War* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1974), p. 307.
[203] Evelyn Waugh, *Edmund Campion: Jesuit Priest and Martyr* (London: Penguin, 2012 [1935]), p. xi.

Abyssinian Unrealities

Waugh's use of the phrase 'Abyssinian Realities' calls into question the idea of Abyssinia as a monolithic identity or experience. This is because it alludes to Abyssinia's fragmentary identity (both geographic and historic) that made it an alluring destination for European missionaries and travellers from the sixteenth century onwards. During his reign, Emperor Menelik II (1889-1913) substantially expanded the territorial scope of the Abyssinian Empire. This entailed that an increasing number of regional identities, with religious, cultural and tribal differences, fell under the imperial control of the Negus. Essential to the thesis of *Waugh in Abyssinia* is the denial that there is such a thing as a singular and unified Abyssinian. Accordingly, Waugh rhetorically constructs a multiplicity of *Abyssinian realities*, all in conflict, and which serve to legitimise Italian imperial rule. In Waugh's estimation, Abyssinia is a

> vast and obscure agglomeration of feudal fiefs, occupied military provinces, tributary sultanates, trackless no man's lands roamed by homicidal nomads; undefined in extent, unmapped, unexplored, in part left without the law, in part grossly subjugated; the brightly coloured patch in the schoolroom atlas marked, for want of a more exact system of terminology, 'Ethiopian Empire', had been recognized as a single state whose integrity was the concern of the world.
>
> (*WIA*, p. 14)

This furthers Waugh's argument for the judiciousness of the Italian campaign. This is because it establishes an implicit comparison between Abyssinian Coptic imperialism and Italian Roman Catholic imperialism: if, as Waugh claims, the Abyssinian Empire has no internal unity or legitimacy, then the Italian invasion ought to be viewed as a war between competing *imperialisms*, rather than an attempt by a European empire to colonise an independent African nation. Abyssinia, Waugh argues, is 'inhabited by a

complex variety of people all totally dissimilar to it in religion, language, race and history' (*WIA*, p. 23). It 'was taken bloodily and is held, so far as it is held at all, by force of arms'.[204]

Waugh cites the large swathes of Abyssinia that had been 'left without the law' (*WIA*, p. 14) following their colonisation by Menelik II. He provides the example of the pagan tribes of the southern and western regions of the country who were 'treated with wanton brutality unequalled even in the Belgian Congo' (*WIA*, p. 15). Such assertions allude to the deeper politico-religious thrust of *Waugh in Abyssinia*: that Roman conquest is a necessary precondition of the importation of civilisation and Catholic doctrinal law. 'Here was imperialism devoid of a single redeeming element', Waugh explains in denunciation of the Abyssinian Empire (*WIA*, p. 25). Abyssinians were 'the most notoriously oppressive administrators of subject peoples in Africa' (*WIA*, p. 11). For Waugh, plainly, Roman Catholic imperialism was a religiously ordained mission that expanded the boundaries of Christendom. Crucially, however, this mission was further legitimised, he argues, because Abyssinia itself exerted a barbarous and pernicious form of imperialism on the adjacent regions in East Africa.

In the history of its representation in English literature, Abyssinia has always occupied a unique position. The idea of multiple Abyssinian realities, which are sometimes fraudulent and often contested, has been integral to its depiction in writing from the Early Modern period to the twentieth century. Coffey's aforementioned objection to the historicity of *Waugh in Abyssinia* is motivated, in part, because of Waugh's stylistic claim to objectivity: Waugh rhetorically imagines his travel book to be a history of Abyssinia, as well as a guidebook for its future. With missionary zeal he envisions a future for the country that departs from its chaotic history as an outpost

[204] Waugh, 'We Can Applaud Italy', *Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, p. 164.

for the Alexandrian church in East Africa. Instead, following the Italian invasion, it ought to fall under the administration of the Church of Rome. In *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-89), Edward Gibbon commented on Abyssinia's singular position as a Coptic Christian enclave in predominantly Islamic East Africa. 'Encompassed on all sides by the enemies of their religion,' Gibbon wrote, 'the Æthiopians slept near a thousand years, forgetful of the world, by whom they were forgotten.'[205] The idea Gibbon creates is that of an ancient Christian civilisation that was separated from the religious and philosophical developments of Europe. It had, as a result, remained an odd remnant of an earlier, atavistic form of Christianity, and needed to be saved by the Roman Catholic Church.

'In their lonely situation, the Æthiopians had almost relapsed into the savage life', Gibbon concludes.[206] But, for Waugh and many Roman Catholics in Britain, Abyssinia was at once familiar and deeply strange. In a dispatch for the *Daily Mail*, he reported that Emperor Haile Selassie I had declared 'a holy war against the Italians'.[207] Waugh emphasises the feeling that the Second Italo-Abyssinian War was a schismatic conflict whereby the regional orthodox churches would surrender to the power of the Roman Catholic Church. Because of its strange religious position in East Africa, Abyssinia had been a destination for a large number of Roman Catholic missionaries since the seventeenth century. The evangelising priests of Italy and Portugal travelled unsuccessfully to the country in an attempt to convert it from Alexandrian Orthodoxy to the Roman Catholic Church.[208] The Abyssinian people,

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[205] Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 7 vols, (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854-66 [1776-89]), V (1854), p. 376.
[206] Ibid., p. 376.
[207] Evelyn Waugh, '"Holy War" on Italians', *Daily Mail*, 16 October 1935, p. 9.
[208] This was the intention of Jerónimo Lobo, whose account of his mission work was translated by Samuel Johnson in 1735 as *A Voyage to Abyssinia*. Lobo's was one of numerous missionary accounts to come out of Abyssinia and his would provide the textual basis for Johnson's anti-slavery fable *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia* (1759). See Donald M. Lockhart, '"The Fourth Son of the Mighty Emperor": The Ethiopian Background of Johnson's *Rasselas*', *PMLA*, 78 (1963) 516-28.

Gibbon noted, were ‘a rebel to the Caesars’.[209] In 1896, Abyssinia furthered this perception by repelling Italy in the First Italo-Abyssinian War. It was a victory that ensured Abyssinian independence, for the moment, and compelled the European powers to recognise Abyssinian sovereignty. The East African nation was a place where the nineteenth-century hegemonic reality of Africa – that it would, of necessity, fall to European imperialism – had consistently been subverted and rejected.

In Gibbon’s age, the reaction of the British public to travel narratives of exploration and discovery in Abyssinia was frequently one of comical disbelief. This is exemplified in the treatment of eighteenth-century Scottish traveller James Bruce, who lived in Abyssinia in the 1760s and 1770s. Upon the publication of his travel book, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (1779), Bruce was widely ridiculed by an incredulous London press, who dubbed him ‘Macfable’ because of the outlandishness of his claims.[210] This was popularised further by Richard Paul Jodrell’s play *A Widow and No Widow* (1780). In it, a con man named Macfable, plainly alluding to Bruce, fraudulently boasts of his travels to exotic locations in order to profit through his travel books.[211] The historian Richard Reid recently described Bruce’s travel book as a ‘detailed narrative, simultaneously bombastic and reverential, about an Ethiopia which is as much a place of the author’s imagination as anything more tangible’.[212] Although subsequent travellers to Africa would go on to corroborate much of the disputed aspects of Bruce’s account, it establishes Abyssinia

[209] Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, V, p. 376.
[210] James Bruce, *Travels, Between the Years 1768 and 1773, Through Part of Africa, Syria, Egypt, and Arabia, in Abyssinia, to Discover to Source of the Nile* (London: Albion Press, 1805).
[211] For further discussion of James Bruce and Abyssinia, see Arthur A. Moorefield, ‘James Bruce: Ethnomusicologist or Abyssinia Lyre?’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 28.3 (1975) 493-514; see also Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing* (Oxford: Routledge, 2011), pp. 63-64.
[212] Richard Reid, ‘Beholding the Precipice: On the Meanings and Contexts of Kapuściński’s *The Emperor*’, in Colin Teevan, *The Emperor* (London: Oberon, 2016), pp. 3-4 (p. 3). This is Teevan’s English language stage adaption of Ryszard Kapuściński’s *The Emperor: Downfall of an Autocrat* [*Cesarz*] (1978).

as a *topoi* where falsehoods abound and the reality of the place is contested and unstable.

In the early twentieth century the '*Dreadnought* Hoax', the infamous practical joke perpetrated by the members of the nascent Bloomsbury Group in 1910, extended Abyssinia's subversive relationship with reality. In particular, the hoaxers capitalised on the Abyssinia's reputation for destabilising European military supremacy.[213] On 7 February 1910, Virginia Woolf and members of the nascent 'Bloomsbury Group' impersonated a royal party of Abyssinian Princes and received a tour of the HMS *Dreadnought* by the Admiral of the British fleet.[214] Virginia Woolf (then Stephen), Duncan Grant, Adrian Stephen and others arrived dressed in turbans, jewels and robes, and disguised with fake beards and brown face powder.[215] After their escape, it caused an enormous amount of controversy and public intrigue. The *Dreadnought* was the centrepiece of Britain's naval forces, and its most closely guarded secret. It was, as Woolf's nephew and biographer Quentin Bell wrote, 'the most formidable, the most modern and the most secret o' war then afloat'.[216] In an era of increasing Anglo-German military escalation and rapid technological advancement, access to the inner workings of the *Dreadnought* was fiercely restricted. It was, he observed, 'an icon of innovation and progress'.[217] The '*Dreadnought* Hoax', as the historian Dannell Jones argues, 'briefly usurped the Admiralty's narrative of naval power, superiority, expertise and daring and replaced it with comedy'.[218]

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[213] For further discussion of the '*Dreadnought* Hoax' and anti-imperialism, see Moira Marsh, 'Bunga-bunga on the Dreadnought Hoax', *Comedy Studies*, 9.2 (2018) 200-215.
[214] PRO, ADM 1/8192. 7 February 1910.
[215] Adrian Stephen, *The 'Dreadnought' Hoax* (London: Hogarth Press, 1936), pp. 31-32.
[216] Quentin Bell, *Virginia Woolf: A Biography*, 2 vols, (London: Hogarth Press, 1972), I, p. 157
[217] Ibid., p. 82.
[218] Danell Jones, 'The Dreadnought Hoax and the Theatres of War', *Literature & History*, 22.1 (2013) 80-94 (87).

In 1936, Woolf's brother Adrian Stephen published his memoir of the hoax, timed to coincide with the renewed public interest in Abyssinia brought about by the Second Italo-Abyssinian War. Writing in the same year, Harry Greenwall described it as 'the greatest hoax that has ever been perpetrated in Great Britain'.[219] The impact of the *Dreadnought* hoax endured and was frequently cited in the satirical organs of the British press with regard to the Italian invasion of 1935. The catchphrase of the hoax that was used by the press – 'Bunga bunga' – caught the public imagination. This was in part because of its subversive comedy came at the expense of both the British Navy by the impersonation of Abyssinian royalty. It was featured in several popular music-hall songs, such as this from the Pavilion Music-Hall in Weymouth:

> When I went on-board a Dreadnought ship,
> Though I look just like a costermonger,
> They said I was an Abyssinian prince,
> Because I shouted 'Bunga-bunga'.[220]

'More than anything', naval historian Jan Rüger writes, 'the '*Dreadnought* Hoax' demonstrated that the balance of power between governments and monarchs on the one hand and new media and new audiences on the other was in flux'.[221] Irrespective of whether it was intended as such, the *Dreadnought* Hoax combined the public theatre of British imperial might and farcical impersonation, and struck a blow against the hypermilitarism of the age. Writing with the hoax in recent memory in 1931, Waugh's enumeration of the apocryphal oddities and otherworldliness of Addis

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[219] Harry Greenwall, *The Strange Life of Willy Clarkson: An Experiment in Biography* (London: J. Long, 1936), p. 36.

[220] Quoted in Simone Niehoff, 'Unmasking the Fake: Theatrical Hoaxes from the *Dreadnought Hoax* to Contemporary Activist Practice', in *Faking, Forging, Counterfeiting: Discredited Practices at the Margins of Mimesis*, ed. by Daniel Becker, Annalisa Fischer and Yola Schmitz (Bielefeld: Germany Transcript Verlag, 2018), pp. 223-238 (p. 233).

[221] Jan Rüger, *The Great Naval Game: Britain and Germany in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 92.

Ababa alluded to the close association in early twentieth century Britain of Abyssinia with satire and subversion. The Abyssinian royalty captured the public imagination so intensely because so little was known of the East African nation by the British public in the early twentieth century. In order to 'speak Abyssinian', Stephen recalled, they quoted misremembered passages from the *Aeneid*, he 'broke up the words […] and mispronounced them'.[222] Waugh perhaps alludes to the satirical connection between Abyssinia and the languages of classical antiquity when he wrote in *Waugh in Abyssinia* that 'the editor of one great English newspaper believed – and for all I know still believes – that the inhabitants spoke classical Greek' (*WIA*, p. 51).

The religious and imperial history of Abyssinia, combined with its representation in English literature as a country that subverted western military supremacy, ensured that it appealed to Waugh's Bellocian politico-religious perspective. In *The Crisis of our Civilization*, perhaps with Abyssinia in mind, Belloc gives a historical justification for the essentiality of imperial ambitions to Roman Catholicism in the twentieth century. He argues that, since the conversion of Emperor Constantine (c. 312), the fate of Christianity has been inseparable from the Roman Empire and its legacy. Abyssinia needed to fall under the authority of Rome. As Belloc states: 'Unity through an Empire and a common Imperial idea, the ideal of all Christendom acting under one civil authority in civil matters, had been a reality at the moment when the Græco-Roman Empire accepted the Catholic Faith.'[223] Abyssinia occupied a unique position in East Africa through its adherence to the Alexandrian Orthodox Church. As a result, it stood as an affront to the Caesarian ambitions of Mussolini in 1935. Moreover, Abyssinia's independence was a reminder of Italy's ignominious failure to colonise the country in the late nineteenth century. For Waugh,

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[222] Stephen, *The 'Dreadnought' Hoax*, pp. 27-28.
[223] Belloc, *The Crisis of our Civilization*, p. 123.

Mussolini was righting the wrongs of history and bringing Abyssinia into the body of Christendom. Waugh ensured that he was in attendance as an eyewitness to the moment that this rebel to the Caesars was brought into the fold.

Exporting Fascism

Waugh in Abyssinia advances the argument that only Italian Fascism was capable of exporting civilisation to Abyssinia. In his rhetorically heightened peroration in the concluding chapter of *Waugh in Abyssinia*, Waugh declares the Italian occupation as 'being attended by the spread of order and decency, education and medicine, in a disgraceful place' (*WIA*, p. 250). It was, he claims, 'compared best in recent history to the great western drive of the American peoples, the dispossession of the Indian tribes and the establishment in a barren land of new pastures and cities' (*WIA*, p. 251). The travel book makes clear that Abyssinia was incapable of civilising itself and Italian imperialism, which he keenly distinguishes from British imperialism, was required to achieve this.

This was a claim that formed part of the satirical complexity of Waugh's earlier novel *Black Mischief* (1932). The novel is set in the fictional East African republic of Azania, which was loosely based on Abyssinia. Seth, the Azanian Emperor, is fanatically obsessed with an ill-defined notion of 'progress'. He establishes a 'Ministry of Modernisation' to import European-style modernity into Azania. Seth is depicted as continually and unsuccessfully implementing 'One-Year Plan[s]',[224] which parodies a ridiculously expedited version of the Soviet Union's Five-Year Plans that were enacted in order to compete against Western economies.

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[224] Evelyn Waugh, *Black Mischief* (London: Penguin, 2000 [1932]), p. 40.

He identifies himself and his court as 'soldiers of Progress and the New Age'.[225] Azania is a satirical antecedent to the propagandistic picture that Waugh created of Abyssinia in 1935. He relied on the similar claim that Abyssinia was a country that was fundamentally incapable of importing European 'progress' by itself and thereby justified external forces to bring it into the twentieth century. *Black Mischief* introduced the theme into Waugh's African writing whereby Abyssinian attempts at social reform were absurdly futile. Waugh sardonically represents Abyssinia's quest for self-civilising in *Waugh in Abyssinia*: 'The essence of the offence was that the Abyssinians, in spite of being by any possible standard an inferior race, persisted in behaving as superiors; it was not that they were hostile, but contemptuous' (*WIA*, pp. 65-66). Waugh's 1935 travel book therefore represents an extension of the satirical project that began with *Black Mischief*.

Lisa Colletta argues that, in his early satires, Waugh 'doesn't mock with a stable set of values, and the only constant is that he is willing to make everything and everybody the butt of his joke'.[226] However, as we have seen, this is inaccurate. By the mid-1930s Waugh's mockery of Abyssinian attempts at social reform were plainly directed by a distinct ideological perspective. His attitude in his African writing in this period was governed by a propagandistic imperative that sought to justify and legitimise the Italian invasion and subsequent occupation of Abyssinia. In his study of Henry Williamson, the author of *Tarka the Otter* (1927), and Fascism in Britain, Melvyn Higginbottom argues that '[f]or most of the writers attracted by fascism, it was an amusing means of provocation, a feather with which to tickle the throats of the

[225] Ibid., p. 34.
[226] Lisa Colletta, *Dark Humour and Social Satire in the Modern British Novel* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 88.

British liberals'.[227] But, although mockery of pro-Abyssinian sympathisers in the British literary establishment was an important motivation for Waugh's writing in this period, it does not fully capture his ideological and religious commitment to the Italian campaign. Cyril Connolly noted Waugh's increasing movement into a right-wing satirist, recording that 'his development has taken him steadily from the Left towards the Right, and Right Wing Satire is always weak – and he is a satirist'.[228] It is important, therefore, to consider *how* Waugh's propagandistic writing in support of the Italians conforms or resists the broader trajectory of Waugh as a Roman Catholic satirist in this period.

Contrary to Colletta's claim, that Waugh's satire did not 'reply on a stable set of values', Waugh's satirical writing about Abyssinia took an ideological position that emerges even in his African satirical novels of the period. Satire has been defined as a work that derives from the tradition of Latin satire 'in which prevalent follies or vices, or individuals or groups guilty of such, are assailed with ridicule or censure, or by the mixing of jest with earnestness'.[229] *Waugh in Abyssinia* certainly ridicules and censures the sentimentalists that Waugh regarded as the enemies of Roman Catholic imperialism. Writing after the Second World War, he looked to the classical and neo-classical periods in order to find historical moments where a rigidly codified system of values enabled true satire. Waugh framed the Italian invasion of Abyssinia as the rebirth of the Roman Empire and it provided for him the necessary moral and social stability for the satirist. In 1946 he offered his clearest statement on satire. 'Satire is a matter of period', Waugh wrote:

[227] Melvyn David Higginbottom, *Intellectuals and British Fascism: A Study of Henry Williamson* (London: Janus, 1992), p. 8.
[228] Cyril Connolly, 'The Novel-Addict's Cupboard', in *The Condemned Playground: Essays, 1927-1944* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1985), pp. 112-18 (p. 116).
[229] C. A. Van Rooy, *Studies in Classical Satire and Related Literary Theory* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), p. 93.

> It flourishes in a stable society and presupposes homogeneous moral standards – the early Roman Empire and eighteenth-century Europe. It is aimed at inconsistency and hypocrisy. It exposes polite cruelty and folly by exaggerating them. It seeks to produce shame. All this has no place in the Century of the Common Man where vice no longer pays lip service to virtue. The artist's only service to the disintegrated society of today is to create little independent systems of order of his own. I foresee in the dark age opening that the scribes may play the part of the monks after the first barbarian victories. They were not satirists.[230]

In *Waugh in Abyssinia* Waugh enthusiastically imagined 'the eagles of ancient Rome' marching on East African roads 'as they came to our savage ancestors' and bringing with them 'the inestimable gifts of fine workmanship and clear judgement' (*WIA*, p. 168). The twentieth-century *Pax Romana* that Waugh envisions in 1936 supplied his writing of this period with 'homogenous moral standards' and, in the abstract at least, enabled his own satire. Following World War II, Waugh lamented its passing in the new age of 'the Century of the Common Man'. 'Thirty years ago', Waugh wrote in the preface to the 1962 edition of *Black Mischief*, 'it seemed an anachronism that any part of Africa should be independent of European administration. History has not followed what then seemed its natural course'.[231] This appears to be an allusion to Waugh's hopes for the Italian Empire in East Africa, and its historical failure had proved such hopes false.

This is a theme that reappears in Waugh's historical novel *Helena* (1950) when Helena of Constantinople quizzes her future husband, Constantius, about the true extent of the Roman Empire. She suggests that there might come a point where the extent of the Empire was so vast that it encompasses the world, including, pertinently, Ethiopia. Helena asks Constantius,

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[230] Evelyn Waugh, 'Fan-Fare' (1946), in *Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, pp. 300-304 (pp. 303-304).

[231] Evelyn Waugh, *Black Mischief* (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 2000 [1932]), p. 5.

> I wonder won't Rome ever go beyond the wall? Into the wild lands? Beyond the Germans, beyond the Ethiopians, beyond the Picts, perhaps beyond the ocean there may be more people and still more, until, perhaps, you might travel through them all and find yourself back in The City again. Instead of the barbarian breaking in, might The City one day break out?'[232]

This passage expresses the expansionist rationale of the Italian Empire in the mid-1930s. *Helena* takes place in the 3rd century AD and concerns the mother of the Roman Emperor whose conversion to Christianity would shape the future of all Europe. Waugh anchors Italy's imperial ambitions in the 1930s to an ancient history that predates even Constantinople. *Helena* and *Edmund Campion* are linked in their hagiographic treatment of their historical protagonists. As Alain Blayac writes, these works both 'oppose history and legend, hagiographer and novelist but tend nevertheless towards a common goal, the defence and illustration of an eternal Roman Catholic Christianity'.[233] *Campion*, *Helena* and *Waugh in Abyssinia* form a Bellocian-inspired trilogy in Waugh's oeuvre. They are written with the intention of defending the legitimacy of the resurgent Roman Empire and depict in different historical periods the continuation of the universal church, from the age of Constantine, to Elizabethan England, and into the twentieth century.

'A Call to Order in Times of Hysteria'

The Italian invasion of October 1935 precipitated a political crisis in Europe that thrust Abyssinia into the headlines. 'Abyssinia was news', Waugh announces in *Waugh in Abyssinia* (*WIA*, p. 39). He recalls the 'rising tide of foreigners which was then flowing from all parts of the world to the threatened capital' (*WIA*, p. 41). For

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[232] Ibid., p. 39.
[233] Alain Blayac, 'Evelyn Waugh, Biographer', in *Waugh Without End: New Trends in Evelyn Waugh Studies* ed. by Robert Murray Davis and Carlos Villar (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005), pp. 91-102 (p. 92).

Orwell, the political momentousness of the Second Italo-Abyssinian War was such that it necessitated a reorganisation of literary priorities in this period. In his review of *Tropic of Cancer* (1935) Orwell lambasts Henry Miller's decision to concern himself with the trivialities of American bohemians in Paris and evade his responsibility to the concrete political issues of the period. 'When *Tropic of Cancer* was published', Orwell remembers, 'the Italians were marching into Abyssinia and Hitler's concentration camps were already bulging.'[234] He viewed the novel favourably, but in his review argues that the aesthetic priorities of the age demand that artists and writers commit themselves with the crises that imperilled them all. Miller's elevation of character interiority in his narrative came at the expense of the material concerns of the external world. 'Of course a novelist is not obliged to write directly about contemporary history', Orwell concedes,

> but a novelist who simply disregards the major public events of the moment is generally either a footer or a plain idiot. From a mere account of the subject-matter of *Tropic in Cancer* most people would probably assume it to be no more than a bit of naughty-naughty left over from the twenties.[235]

Orwell regarded *Tropic of Cancer* as a literary archaism. Its modernist-indebted stylistic tendencies (stream-of-consciousness; temporal distortions; narrative of a writer in exile) entailed that Miller's preoccupations were out of step with the 1930s imperative where political commitments were manifested in literature. It was a politically naïve mode of writing, as Orwell saw it, which abdicated the author's implied responsibility to address the pressing concerns of 'contemporary history'.

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[234] George Orwell, 'Inside the Whale' (1940), in *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, 4 vols, (London: Penguin, 1970), I, pp. 540-78 (p. 542).
[235] Ibid., p. 542.

The idea of *contemporariness* was a concern of Waugh's, too. The late 1930s evinces Waugh escalating his engagement with political matters. However, the religious inflection of his political views entailed that such concerns were not isolated only to the present-day, but, rather, that 'contemporary' crises were manifestations of an unceasing conflict between Roman Catholic civilisation and its antagonists. *Waugh in Abyssinia* evinces a particular disdain for the newspaper editors who, Waugh argues, 'indulge and inflame popular emotion'.[236] In London, he recalls, 'the editorial and managerial chairs of newspaper and publishing offices seemed to be peopled exclusively by a race of anthropoids who saw, heard and spoke no other subject' than Abyssinia (*WIA*, p. 50). For Waugh, the obsession with contemporary issues entailed that the forces, religious and philosophical, that prompted the crisis were ignored, while emotion and moral sentiment were encouraged.[237] 'It should be the proper function of an intelligentsia to correct popular sentiments', Waugh declaimed, 'and give the call to order in times of hysteria'.[238] Here, Waugh offers a different idea of the role of writers and intellectuals in a period of political crisis. Such individuals, he argues, have an imperative to provide perspective and rationality in order to avoid excesses of public sentiment. Orwell, by contrast, castigated Miller for his aesthetic turn away from political concerns. It was received as such in W. F. Hartin's review of *Waugh in Abyssinia* for the *Daily Mail*. 'The chaos that was Abyssinia', Hartin argues, 'is so lucidly described by Mr Evelyn Waugh in his new book, "Waugh in Abyssinia", that few who read it can retain any shred of the sentimentalities so prevalent about the country at the time of the Italo-Abyssinian conflict.'[239]

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[236] Evelyn Waugh, review of *Vain Glory* by Guy Chapman, *Night and Day*, 29 July 1937.
[237] See Evelyn Waugh, 'Italian Reprisals in Addis Ababa', *The Times*, 12 March 1937, p. 17.
[238] Ibid.
[239] W. F. Hartin, 'Abyssinian – Then and Now', review of Evelyn Waugh's *Waugh in Abyssinia*, *Daily Mail*, 26 October 1936.

Following his conversion to Roman Catholicism, Waugh explained that his new religious commitment was based on a belief in the enduring power of western civilisation. The perception of decline and disintegration of 'western culture' necessitated action. 'Civilisation', Waugh argues, '– and by this I do not mean talking cinemas and tinned food, nor even surgery and hygienic houses, but the whole moral and artistic organisation of Europe – has not in itself the power of survival.'[240] He presents a grand narrative of western culture that contrasts the incidental experience of its associated benefits. His public utterances in this period were intended to counter the perceived myopia of his contemporaries on the left, for whom a materialism and politics took precedence over the spiritual nature of civilisation. Intellectuals in 1930s Britain, Waugh argues, see it as their duty to provoke readers into political commitment,

> so that the mind moves in feverish vacillation from one extreme to another instead of calm classical progress. People now use the phrase 'without contemporary significance' to express just those works which are of most immediate importance, works which eschew barbaric extremes and attempt to right the balance of civilization.[241]

For Waugh, the failure of the intelligentsia to provide a rear-guard defence of civilisation had provided an opening for barbarism's return. His interpretation of the phrase 'contemporary significance' is wilfully counterintuitive. He levels his criticism at writers and editors whose work excite their readers into excessive sentimentalism and hysteria. 'We have no need in England', he claims, 'to be reminded of the

[240] Evelyn Waugh, 'Converted to Rome: Why It Had Happened to Me', *Daily Express*, 20 October 1930; repr. in *Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, pp. 103-105 (p. 105).
[241] Evelyn Waugh, review of *Vain Glory* by Guy Chapman, *Night and Day*, 29 July 1937.

intolerable injustices of the Nazi regime'.[242] To obsess, like Orwell, over contemporary history at the expense of all other aesthetic and moral preoccupations was fundamentally against Waugh's investment in the integral role of Roman Catholicism to western civilisation.

Anti-Fascists and Sentimentalists

For Waugh, the failure of the British intelligentsia was embodied in the corpus of left-wing, anti-Fascist and pacifist literature that was emerging in the mid 1930s. His proposal for '*In the Steps of Caesar*' ideologically positions the travel book as 'part Belloc belief in the permanence of Roman conquest, part anti pacifist'.[243] Virginia Woolf publicly and privately wrote of her deeply held opposition to the Second Italo-Abyssinian War. Twenty-five years after the '*Dreadnought* Hoax' Abyssinia reappeared with an escalating urgency in Woolf's diaries and letters. 'It is a flooded and stormy world', she wrote to Lady Ottline Morrell on 4 October 1935, the date on which Mussolini formally declared the invasion of Abyssinian had begun: 'When even I cant [*sic*] sleep at night for thinking of politics, things must be a fine mess. All our friends and neighbours talk politics, politics.'[244] In what Angela Ingram and Daphne Patai have termed her 'most overtly political novel', *The Years* (1937), Woolf offered a representation of Mussolini that was consistent with the kind of hysterical sentimentalism that Waugh perceived in such writing of the period.[245] In the 'Present Day' section of Woolf's cross-generational family saga, Eleanor Pargiter is depicted

[242] Ibid., p. 200.
[243] Unpublished ALS from Evelyn Waugh to A. D. Peters, 26 January 1937. Evelyn Waugh Papers, Harry Ransome Center.
[244] Letter from Virginia Woolf to Lady Ottoline Morrell, 4 October 1935, in *The Letters of Virginia Woolf* ed. by Nigel Nicolson, 6 vols (London: Hogarth Press, 1975-80), v (1979), p. 428.
[245] Angela Ingram and Daphne Patai, 'Introduction', in *Rediscovering Forgotten Radicals: British Women Writers, 1889-1939* ed. by Angela Ingram and Daphne Patai (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), pp. 1-21 (p. 5).

tearing up the newspaper that bore ‘the usual evening paper’s blurred image of a fat man gesticulating’.[246] It is implied that the corpulent demagogue is Mussolini and Eleanor’s impulsive violence towards the image is evidence of the fervour of her anti-Fascism and anti-Italianism.

> ‘Damned—’ Eleanor shot out suddenly, ‘bully!’ She tore the paper across with one sweep of her hand and flung it on the floor. Peggy was shocked. A little shiver ran over her skin as the paper tore. The word ‘damned’ on her aunt’s lips had shocked her.[247]

Mussolini embodied what Woolf termed the ‘unmitigated masculinity’ of Fascist Italy.[248] The powerful gesture of tearing up *The Times*, Britain’s paper of record, in response to Mussolini’s picture was symbolically resonant with Waugh’s ‘call to order’. The literary establishment had been rent asunder by contemporary politics, Waugh claimed, and the intelligentsia’s hysteria over Italy’s military aggression stood in the way of progress and civilisation.

The British press frequently cast the Italian dictator as a warmongering bully. To accentuate the military and economic asymmetries between the two nations, Emperor Haile Selassie I was by contrast depicted as diminutive and vulnerable. The historian Daniel Waley wrote that the ‘appropriate analogy of the bully, slow to

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[246] In his editorial notes to the 2009 edition of *The Years* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009 [1937]) David Bradshaw deduced that ‘Hitler […] was not a fat man, so Eleanor may have in mind the more corpulent Benito Mussolini (1883-1945), Fascist leader of Italy since 1922, or more likely, a hybrid of the two’ (p. 355). In her diary of July 1934, Woolf wrote: ‘these brutal bullies go about in hoods & masks, like little boys dressed up, acting this idiotic, meaningless, brutal, bloody, pandemonium. […] And for the first time I read articles with rage, to find [Hitler] called a real leader’. (*The Diary of Virginia Woolf* 4 vols (London: The Hogarth Press, 1983) ed. by Anne Olivier Bell, IV, pp. 223-24.)

[247] Virginia Woolf, *The Years* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1937), p. 335.

[248] Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own* (London: Hogarth Press, 1991 [1929]), p. 119.

appear, was to remain'.[249] In cinemas across Britain, newsreel footage of Mussolini and Italian soldiers was met with boos and jeers. It is evidence, Waley argues, of the British public's broadly anti-Italian sympathies. In October 1935 the *Manchester Guardian* declared that the images of Mussolini and Fascist soldiers in East Africa

> are now the signals for a storm of booing and hissing unknown hitherto in these places of entertainment [...]. For the Emperor of Abyssinia, who looks pathetically small in the contemporary newsreel, there is always a burst of cheering, more widely spread than even the clapping which he receives.[250]

The strong public support for Haile Selassie I posed a problem, too, for the British Government. The Emperor had fled to Britain in 1935 at the outbreak of war to live in exile. The popular feeling towards him made Britain's failure to prevent war a source of embarrassment for the government. Rose Macaulay wrote in a letter of June 1936 after attending a press conference by Haile Selassie in which he condemned the abandonment of Abyssinia by Britain and the League of Nations. 'The Cabinet are now longing for him to go away, he is so embarrassing', Macaulay wrote: 'Baldwin hasn't seen him, either, and Eden only for 20 minutes. Meanwhile, the King goes to Ascot and all about, and has a good time.'[251] Waugh's 'call to order in times of hysteria' came in response to the anti-Italianism of the British intelligentsia and the British public, and to which *Waugh in Abyssinia* was his corrective statement.

In *Waugh in Abyssinia* Waugh turned his satirist's eye toward one of his colleagues in Abyssinia, Stewart Emeny, a 'reporter from a Radical newspaper' (*WIA*, p. 54). Emeny wrote for the *News Chronicle*, a paper that took the line that the Italian

[249] Daniel Waley, *British Public Opinion and the Abyssinian War, 1935-6* (London: Temple Smith, London School of Economics and Political Science, 1975), p. 33.
[250] 'Mussolini in the Cinema', *Manchester Guardian*, 10 October 1935. Quoted in Waley, *British Public Opinion and the Abyssinian War*, p. 33.
[251] Quoted in Sarah LeFanu, *Rose Macaulay* (London: Virago, 2003), pp. 202-203.

invasion was an unlawful act of imperialist bullying. ‘Even his private opinions were those of his paper;’ Waugh recalled, ‘the situation, obscure to most of us, was crystal clear to him – the Emperor was an oppressed anti-fascist’ (*WIA*, p. 54). Throughout *Waugh in Abyssinia* Emeny is referred to as ‘The Radical’. Waugh frames ‘The Radical’ as a hardworking but nonetheless misguided war reporter. Moreover, Emeny is presented as symbolic of the wrongheadedness of the British press’s attitude towards Abyssinia. For them, Abyssinia was an independent and dignified nation that for the second time in a generation was fighting against invasion from a colonial power. Waugh explained the position of the Abyssinian ‘apologists’:

> It was customary for apologists to liken the coronation of Ethiopia to that of medieval Europe; there were close parallels, of a kind, to be drawn between Ethiopia, with its unstable but half-sacred monarchy, the feudal fiefs and the frequent insurrections, the lepers and serfs, the chained and tortured captives, the isolation and ignorance, the slow *tempo* and our own high and chivalrous origins; parallels so close that many humane people accepted them as identical.
>
> (*WIA*, p. 142)

The success of *Waugh in Abyssinia* lies in its satirical representation of the attitudes of the British intelligentsia toward Abyssinia. It is satirical because of Waugh’s perception of, and exposure to, the discrepancy between the claims about Abyssinia that were made by the anti-Italian British press and the ‘Abyssinian realities’. He seeks to correct this through his travel book.

‘One consequence of Evelyn Waugh’s role – as the man who finds the activities of others abhorrent and as the man of the world’, James Carens writes, ‘– is the satirical tone of urbane detachment tinged with disgust which pervades *Remote*

People, *Waugh in Abyssinia*, and such satires as *Black Mischief*.[252] In *Waugh in Abyssinia*, Waugh mocks the well-meaning sentimentalism of his reporter colleagues in East Africa and the apparent consensus at home that the Abyssinians were innocent. He devoted his book to exposing the grotesque horrors of the 'Abyssinian reality' with the propagandistic function of legitimizing the Italian Fascists' 'civilising mission'. 'In England', Waugh claimed, 'we were very ill-advised of the true character of the Abyssinian – his venality, treachery, lack of patriotic consciousness, his bluster in victory and collapse in reverse'.[253] In Emeny's memoir of his time as *News Chronicle* war correspondent in Abyssinia he argued that the Italian invasion had abruptly terminated the progress made under Haile Selassie I. The emperor, Emeny maintained, was in the process of putting an end to corporal punishment and endemic illness in Abyssinia. 'Such are the barbarities', he wrote, 'that the Emperor, as a civilised and cultured man, was working to stamp out when his social reforms were brought to a standstill by the Italian aggression'.[254] From Waugh's perspective this was the kind of fantastical thinking that he exacerbated British ignorance over Abyssinia. The failure of Abyssinia's social reforms, as he saw it, was evidence of the necessity of Italy exporting European progress to East Africa. The British press sought to represent the country differently; so too did the Abyssinian propagandists. 'Distant editors were demanding stories of "barbaric splendour"', Waugh recalled, 'while earnest palace officials were trying to interest the visiting correspondents in the new programme of administrative reform and social service' (*WIA*, p. 13). He presented the sentimental credulity of his colleagues who, in

[252] James, F. Carens, *The Satiric Art of Evelyn Waugh* (Seattle, WA: University of Waughington Press, 1966), pp. 129-30.
[253] Waugh, review of *Anno XIIII*.
[254] Stuart Emeny, 'Under Fire with the Emperor', in *Abyssinian Stop Press* ed. by Ladislas Farago (London: Robert Hale, 1936), pp. 192.

seeking evidence of Abyssinians as a Rousseauian *bon sauvage*, propagated a fraudulent pretext for opposing to Italian imperialism.

Patrick Balfour, Waugh's friend from Oxford and another of his fellow war correspondents in Abyssinia, rejected such depictions of the country in the British press. In his memoir of this time he also rejected the *bon sauvage* as a mythological construct. If Abyssinians were savages, then there was nothing noble about them. Balfour argues:

> I came to know a little of an ancient 'civilization' with a miserably low standard of living and security, in as primitive a state of feudal barbarism as England in 1066. [...] I learnt (not, perhaps, for the first time), that the 'noble savage' is a myth, and that primitive races are obsessed by all the craftiness, avarice, cruelty and suspicion which for some reason we are apt to attribute only to the more advanced and complex stages of civilized man.[255]

In their travel narratives of the Second Italo-Abyssinian War, both Balfour and Waugh intend to puncture the British public's mythologising of the Abyssinian savage. They claim, as eyewitnesses to the Abyssinian character, that all of the vices that inhere European society are present in East Africa. It is not the case, therefore, that the Abyssinians are simply innocent victims whose traditional and benign way of life has been upended by aggressive Italian modernity. Instead, they represent a Hobbesian brutality that is unrestrained by the forces of government and civilisation. For Waugh, such impulses could only be tempered by Roman conquest, which is accompanied by the civilising benefits of Catholicism and political conservatism: tradition and morality, beauty and truth. As Belloc describes this process as the 'high renewal which gives Europe a second and most marvellous life, which is a late

[255] Patrick Balfour, 'Fiasco in Addis Ababa', in *Abyssinian Stop Press* ed. by Ladislas Farago (London: Robert Hale, 1936), pp. 47-80.

reflowering of Rome, but of Rome revivified with the virtue and the humour of the Faith'.[256]

Satire and Propaganda

Included among what Waugh termed the 'sentimentalists in Europe' were the major organs of the satirical press.[257] This, in particular, included *Punch*. Though, as Michael Ross notes, *Punch* maintained its 'usual patronizing tone towards African characters', the Second Italo-Abyssinian War represented a point of ideological departure between the magazine and Waugh. As early as 1930 Waugh perceived the satirical magazine to have lost its cutting edge. He memorably sent it up in *Vile Bodies* (1930) in which the decrepit Colonel Blount keeps a 'morocco-bound volume of *Punch* before his lunch plate'.[258] The clear implication is that the senile colonel typifies the nearly 100-year-old publication's readership. During the Second Italo-Abyssinian War *Punch* frequently featured weekly caricatures that lampooned Mussolini as a warmongering bully and undermined Italy's claim to be exporting *Pax Romana*. Mussolini was depicted variously as a burglar, Mars, a corrupt League of Nations policeman, and Rodin's *Le Penseur* musing over whether or not to invade Abyssinia. The satirical drawings of Bernard Partridge in *Punch* in this period offered greater poignancy than the usual fare. Partridge's work grotesquely amplified the impact of poison gas attacks and asymmetric warfare on the Abyssinian population, and included references to the Italians' strategic bombing of Red Cross hospitals. They appear as a gloomy foreboding of the anti-war drawings and posters that would increase in prevalence in *Punch* during the Spanish Civil War. Partridge and his colleague Ernest Shepherd produced *Punch's* most affecting artwork during the

[256] Belloc, *Europe and the Faith*, p. 206.
[257] Waugh, 'We Can Applaud Italy', *Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, p. 163.
[258] Evelyn Waugh, *Vile Bodies* (Penguin: London, 2000 [1930]), p. 59.

Second Italo-Abyssinian War. One particularly poignant satirical drawing depicted an Abyssinian civilian clutching his eyes in pain while overhead Italian bombers dropped gas (labelled 'POISON GAS') over the country. The image is captioned 'THE DAWN OF PROGRESS. "BUT HOW AM I TO SEE IT? THEY'VE BLINDED ME."'[259]

[259] Bernard Partridge, 'The Dawn of Progress', *Punch, Or the London Charivari*, 8 April 1936, p. 406.

THE DAWN OF PROGRESS.
"BUT HOW AM I TO SEE IT? THEY'VE BLINDED ME."

Such images contributed to what Waugh denounced as motivated by the irrational and uncritical sentimentalism for the Abyssinians' plight. In his review of G. L. Steer's *Caesar in Abyssinia* (1937) in which its author catalogued Italy's war crimes, Waugh

argued that Steer overstated the impact of the gas attacks. Steer 'escapes with the magic word "gas"', Waugh wrote.[260] Steer was *The Times*' correspondent in Abyssinia and was horrified by the manner by which Italians prosecuted the war. Having put forward the pro-Abyssinian case throughout the conflict, the Italians declared Steer *persona non grata* after their victory. Steer was instructed to leave the country immediately.[261] Although it was undoubtedly one of the most controversial aspects of the war, Waugh accused pro-Abyssinian commentators of overemphasising its impact because of its emotive power. He claimed that the Italians' use of gas was a means, however distasteful, of expediting an inevitable and necessary victory.

The disagreement between Waugh and the line taken by *Punch* is redolent of the broader conflict of satirists advancing an ideological position on the Second Italo-Abyssinian War through their work. As Ross argues, Waugh and *Punch* traditionally occupied a similar position in their defence of the values upper-middle class English establishment. 'What Waugh above all shared with *Punch* was the terrain of "charivari," laughter aimed at those branded as inferior. 'Such humour', he claims, 'figures in Waugh's work from its outset; like *Punch*'s, it targets both "remote people" in their exotic lands and outlanders [...] who dared to crash the gates of the Anglo-Saxon citadel.'[262] Though broadly in agreement in their class and racial politics, the Second Italo-Abyssinian War represented a dividing line between Waugh and the major organs of establishment satire in 1930s Britain. However, the perspective advanced by Partridge's drawings is in line with the internal propaganda put forth by the Italian Fascist Government. In his essay *Power* (1938), Bertrand

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[260] Evelyn Waugh, review of G.L. Steer's *Caesar in Abyssinia*, *Tablet*, 23 Jan 1937.
[261] See Michael B. Salwen, *Evelyn Waugh in Ethiopia: The Story Behind Scoop* (Edwin Mellen Press: Lewiston, 2001), p. 67.
[262] Michael L. Ross, *Race Riots: Comedy and Ethnicity in Modern British Fiction* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), p. 74.

Russell quoted from an account by Mussolini's son, Bruno, which detailed the frisson of bombing the Abyssinians:

> The bombs hardly touched the earth before they burst out into white smoke and an enormous flame and the dry grass began to burn. I thought of the animals: God, how they ran. […] It was most amusing: a big Zariba surrounded by the tall trees was not easy to hit. I had to aim carefully at the straw roof and only succeeded at the third shot. The wretches who were inside, seeing their roof burning, jumped out and ran off like mad. Surrounded by a circle of fire about five thousand Abyssinians came to a sticky end.[263]

Throughout 1935 the organs of Italian state propaganda, both at home and overseas, broadcasted their claims that Abyssinian society was rife with endemic violence and degeneracy. It advertised the perpetual problems with slavery in East Africa and used this as justification for the actions Bruno Mussolini described above. However, a transition occurred in the emphases of the propaganda between late 1935 and mid 1936, which is evident in Waugh's writing during this two-year period. In 1935 Italy highlighted the atrocities routinely committed in Abyssinian society and rhetorically framed itself as the liberator that would use violence to end violence. By 1936, after victory was all but assured, the tone and content of the propaganda had altered. The propagandists sought to assert Italy's civilising mission and offered the road-builder and engineer as symbols of the occupation, rather than the bomber pilot or the foot soldier. More pragmatically, however, reports of Italian soldiers 'bragging about their kills', as Michael Salwen argues, resulted in non-Italian war correspondents having their movements restricted and being withheld from the frontline.[264] As a direct consequence, Italy changed the priorities of the propagandistic material that they published and sponsored overseas, particularly in Britain, of which Waugh was a part.

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[263] Bertrand Russell, *Power: A New Social Analysis* (London: Routledge, 2004 [1938]), p. 18.
[264] Salwen, *Evelyn Waugh in Ethiopia*, p. 85.

The Italian Force Office published two books in English that illustrate this shift in the objectives of Italian overseas propaganda in Britain. In November 1935 the Italian Foreign Office published *The Last Stronghold of Slavery—What Abyssinia Is* (1935) by Giulio Cesare Baravelli.[265] In the polemic Baravelli, a professor at the University of Rome, contended that the endemic criminality and poverty of Abyssinia had morally compelled the Italian invasion. Baravelli's book was circulated widely among upper-middle class and especially Roman Catholic circles in Britain. *The Last Stronghold of Slavery—What Abyssinia Is* was published by the Italian Foreign Office with the express intention of legitimising the Italian case for an imperial war and did so through an emphasis on Abyssinian iniquity. The second book, by contrast, by Luigi Villari was titled *Roman Roads in East Africa* (1936) and published in May 1936.[266] Villari was the former Italian Secretary to the League of Nations. Having been instrumental in pleading Italy's case to Britain and France, Villari was also a central figure in the Italian administration of overseas propaganda. He contributed numerous articles to British pro-Italian publications, including the *British-Italian Bulletin* and the *English Review*, in which *Waugh in Abyssinia* was first serialised in 1936. In *Roman Roads in East Africa* Villari purposefully departed from the warmongering rhetoric of the previous year, as exemplified by Baravelli's enumeration of the horrors of Abyssinia. Instead, Villari amplified the case for Italy's 'civilising mission' in East Africa and stressed the effectiveness of the Italian workmen and administrators who laboured tirelessly, he argued, to improve living standards for Abyssinians.

[265] Giulio Caesar Baravelli, *The Last Stronghold of Slavery—What Abyssinia Is* (Società Editrio di Novissima, 1935).
[266] Luigi Villari, *Voies romaines en Afrique orientale* [*Roman Roads in East Africa*] (Roma: Società Editrice di Novissima, 1936).

Waugh returned to Abyssinia in August 1936 to view the 'first days of the Italian Empire' (*WIA*, p. 215). The broad tonal shift among pro-Italian propagandists is evident in Waugh's Abyssinian writing of this period. In 1935 Waugh too insisted on the *casus belli* of the Italian invasion; in mid-1936 he focused his attention on the softer benefits of the renewed Roman Empire in East Africa. He, like Luigi Villari, wrote with hagiographical confidence of the Italian road-builders and engineers: 'By the time these words appear in print the period of waiting will be over', Waugh explained, 'the roadmakers and soldiers will have started on the second decisive campaign' (*WIA*, p. 241). Waugh and Villari organised the tonal thrust of their propaganda around the succeeding phases of the Italian operation in Abyssinia. When Waugh returned to Abyssinia in August 1936 he framed his revisit as an attempt to resolve the 'countless loose ends' that followed the Italian victory (*WIA*, p. 216): 'What was really happening?' Waugh wrote; 'Curiosity could only be satisfied by another visit' (*WIA*, p. 217). However, he was clearly convinced of the success of the Italian civilising mission: 'The new regime is going to succeed. But I am glad to have seen the town [Addis Ababa] at the moment of transition (*WIA*, p. 217). Waugh titled the final chapter of *Waugh in Abyssinia* 'The Road' and it represents the most rhetorically heightened passages in the entirety of his pro-Italian writing. It begins with an invitation from an Italian captain to drive Waugh along the new road that ran from Massawa in Italian Eritrea to Dessye in Abyssinia. The road thus connected the newly colonised Abyssinia to Italy's other colonial territories in East Africa. In emphasising this factor Waugh symbolically integrated Abyssinia into the imperial infrastructure of Italian East Africa from which it was now impossible to divest. Waugh represented the new Italian road with a cleansing river that would purify the

region and bring with it all of the benefits of European civilisation. ‘With its vast tributaries’, Waugh proclaimed,

> of which Dessye is to be the point of confluence, it is at once the symbol and the supreme achievement of the Italian spirit. A main road in England is a foul and destructive thing, carrying the ravages of barbarism into a civilized land – noise, smell, abominable architecture and inglorious dangers. Here in Africa it brings order and fertility.
>
> (*WIA*, p. 244)

He invigorated his description through a negative comparison with British road and, by extension, British imperialism. By eschewing the ‘foul and destructive’ elements of other European colonial administrations in Africa Waugh elevated the Italian cause because, as Villari too argued, it would bring civilisation and virtue. Through such language Waugh self-consciously departed from the earlier rhetoric of the Italian campaign, according to which Abyssinia was plagued by barbarism and impossible to reconcile with civilised values, describing them as ‘by any possible standard an inferior race’ (*WIA*, p. 66). The imagery of Waugh’s celebration of the Italian road network alludes to a literary tradition that depicted the monarch as a fountain or riverhead that brings fertility and life to his or her nation. As Thomas More wrote in his own mock travel book, *Utopia* (1516): ‘from the prince, as from a perpetual well-spring, cometh among the people the flood of all that is good or evil.’[267] The Italian roads in East Africa are metaphorical extensions of the life-blood brought to the region by Mussolini’s Fascist government.

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[267] Thomas More, *Utopia* [1516] trans. by Ralph Robinson, in *Three Early Modern Utopias: Utopia, New Atlantis and The Isle of Pines* ed. by Susan Bruce (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 1-134 (p. 16).

The image of the road recurs in Waugh's travel writing and novels. In *Ninety-Two Days* (1934) Waugh deployed the road as a symbol of modernity that serves as a prelude to 'The Road' in *Waugh in Abyssinia*, but is crucially different in its ideological context. Of his travels in British Guiana in 1932 Waugh wrote:

> Not here those firm, confident tentacles of modernity that extend to greet the traveller, no tractors making their own roads as they advance, no progressive young managers projecting more advanced stations of commerce, opening up new districts, pushing forward new settlements and new markets, no uniformed law asserting itself in chaos. Instead we had overtaken civilization in its retreat.[268]

The absence of the road is correlated with lawlessness and the concrete advance of civilization. It can be contrasted with the association between roads and the deleterious influence of the British road network in Waugh's earlier novel *Vile Bodies* (1930). Waugh depicted the 'arterial roads dotted with little cars' that led to 'empty and decaying' factories and 'a disused canal', and in which 'men and women were indiscernible as tiny spots'.[269] The British road network, Waugh implied, left little room for the human spirit and came at the expense of civilisation, rather than befitting it. In her study of interwar conservatism Alison Light described such representations of modern Britain as redolent of the 'hysteria of the dispossessed, the fears of increasing egalitarianism, a reaction to the march of labour and working-class activism imagined as the onslaught of "barbarians" and vandals'.[270] By contrast, Waugh 'sang the virtues of the new Italian concrete road', as Peter Miles put it, because they appealed to a lineage of Roman roads that brought order and culture to

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[268] Evelyn Waugh, *Ninety-Two Days: Travels in Guiana and Brazil* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985 [1934]), p. 161.
[269] Evelyn Waugh, *Vile Bodies* (London: Penguin, 2000 [1930]), p. 168.
[270] Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature and Conservatism Between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 7.

all of Europe.[271] 'And from Dessye', Waugh concluded *Waugh in Abyssinia*, 'new roads will be radiating to all points of the compass, and along the roads will pass the eagles of ancient Rome, as they came to our savage ancestors in France and Britain and Germany' (*WIA*, p. 254). In this passage, and others like it in Waugh's writing during the latter stages of the Second Italo-Abyssinian War, he anchors the 'Roman roads' to an imperial lineage that extends back to the Roman conquest of Europe. It retains Waugh's studied scepticism towards modernity and contrasts it through the centralising metaphor of the road with an older idea of civilization: 'Think of it,' Waugh wrote in *Helena*, 'mile upon mile, from snow to desert, a single great girdle round the civilized world'.[272] Where in 1930s Britain the road is a literal instantiation of the 'tentacles of modernity' that have crushed the human spirit, the Italian road-builders in Abyssinia were re-establishing a stable and homogeneous society under which, Waugh claimed, 'man grows and flourishes' (*WIA*, p. 254).

For many Roman Catholic conservatives, the notion of Italian civilisation was indistinguishable from the achievements of an efficient train service and a new road system. The image of the road being constructed in Abyssinia, following closely behind the Italian army, took on symbolic significance for the Fascists' supporters. In *Waugh in Abyssinia*, Waugh's most provocatively pro-Italian chapter is titled 'The Road'. George Bernard Shaw, meanwhile, declared that the difference between the Italian and Abyssinian was that of the road-maker and the wanton saboteur. In a letter to *The Times* of 22 October 1935, he wrote:

> Italy is making roads through Abyssinia with the avowed intention of colonizing it. The Danakils are doing their utmost to stop the process by killing the roadmakers and their guards. […] As between the Danakil warrior and the engineer I, as a possible

[271] Peter Miles, 'The Writer at the Takutu River: Nature, Art, and Modernist Discourse in Evelyn Waugh's Travel Writing', in *Studies in Travel Writing* 8 (2004) 65-87 (84).
[272] Waugh, *Helena*, p. 40.

> traveller or trader in those regions, am on the side of the engineers. Any policy which results in the taxes I pay being spent on beleaguering and starving the engineer and encouraging, feeding and arming the warrior seems to me to be an attack on our civilization which must eventually damage this precariously situated island more than Italy, which I do not want to damage.[273]

The civilisation to which Shaw referred is reified in the image of the Roman road and the idealised figure of the Italian proletarian engineer. Waugh, too, made extended reference to the road-builder imperilled by Abyssinian attackers. During his journey along the new arterial road he passed the graves of seventy Italian civilian workers who 'were surprised, unarmed, by an Abyssinian raiding party, and butchered with every traditional atrocity' (*WIA*, p. 163). For Shaw, the roads were of such importance that the lives of Italian civilians were worth sacrificing for them. Moreover, that the Abyssinians mercilessly attacked the engineers further attested to their barbarism and the necessity for them to be civilised by force. The literary scholar and anti-fascist activist F. L. Lucas replied to Shaw in *The Times* with the assertion that 'you cannot advance the cause of civilisation by a disregard of those elementary human rights for which civilisation stands'.[274] The playwright, he continued, 'is in raptures about the Italian invasion of Abyssinia, on the grounds that the Italians will make such good roads'[275]. Shaw's attitude to the Second Italo-Abyssinian War is further illuminated by his relationship with Mussolini and the Corporate State. In earlier letters to *The Times* he had endorsed the Duce's rise to power and continued to support Italian

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[273] G. B. Shaw, 'Risks of Extreme Sanctions: To the Editor', *The Times*, 22 October 1935. Douglas Jerrold wrote that 'Just as in 1914 it was left to Mr. Bernard Shaw to point out that the Germans were not barbarians, so in 1935 it was left to Mr. Bernard Shaw to point out […] that Abyssinia did not represent the finest flower of Christian civilisation' ('Current Comments', *English Review* (1936), LXII, pp. 7-16 (p. 8)).
[274] F.L. Lucas, 'British Opinion and Italy: Mr. Bernard Shaw's Letter', *The Times*, 24 October 1935. In a letter to Julian Bell, Virginia Woolf refers to Lucas' 'don's way of being clever about politics – about Shaw and Abyssinia' (25 October 1935), in *The Sickle Side of the Moon: The Letters of Virginia Woolf, 1932-35* ed. by Nigel Nicolson (London: Hogarth Press, 1979), V, p. 437.
[275] Ibid., p. 437.

colonial ambitions. Possibly as a gesture of gratitude for his endorsement, in 1935 and 1936 Mussolini made allowances to have all of Shaw's plays produced in Rome.[276]

In a letter to Augustin Hamon in January 1936, Shaw told his French translator that for the British Government to take 'the side of the Danakil out of hostility to Mussolini would be an act of opportunist scoundrelism which would make the European situation very much worse than it already is, and do no good in the long run to the Danakils'.[277] Lewis shared the strength of this opinion, arguing in *Left Wings Over Europe* (1936): 'that the industrious and ingenious Italian, rather than the lazy, stupid, and predatory Ethiopian, should eventually control Abyssinia is surely not such a tragedy'.[278] It is important, however, not to suggest by association that Waugh viewed the benefits of the new road in Abyssinia as purely secular. He incorporated his religious sensibility into a depiction of the symbolic potential of the image of the road. It represented to Waugh the 'supreme achievement of the Italian spirit' and brought with it 'order and fertility' to a barbarous country (*WIA*, p. 162). To stand in the way of the Italian road maker would be to deny the importation of civilisation to a barbarous nation. Similarly, the conclusion of *Waugh in Abyssinia* combines Roman Catholic spirituality with a materialist pragmatism of the kind volubly promoted by Shaw:

> And from Desseye new roads will pass the eagles of ancient Rome, as they came to our savage ancestors in France and Britain and Germany, bringing […] the inestimable gifts of fine workmanship and clear judgment – the two determining qualities of the human spirit, by which alone, under God, man grows and flourishes.

(*WIA*, p. 169)

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[276] Stanley Weintraub, 'GBS and the Despots', *Times Literary Supplement*, 22 August 2011 <http://www.the-tls.co.uk/tls/public/article707002.ece> [accessed Thursday 9 April 2017]
[277] *Bernard Shaw: Collected Letters, 1926-50* ed. by Dan H. Laurence, 5 vols (London: Reinhardt, 1988), IV, pp. 424-25 (p. 424).
[278] Lewis, *Left Wings*, p. 165.

Upon his return to East Africa in 1936, Waugh identified the new road network in Abyssinia as the pivotal infrastructural change. It had been implemented with astonishing rapidity and represented to him the most immediate and important improvement the Italians had established. In Waugh's Abyssinian diary the 'greatly improved road' and the 'Great ease and speed in getting [a] pass for Harar' were his first recorded impressions of the country.[279] Here, the new road network is tied to a decrease in governmental bureaucracy. This is decisive because both *Remote People* (1931), an account of Waugh's first journey to Abyssinia for the coronation of Haile Selassie I, and *Waugh in Abyssinia* display the traveller's frustration with the inefficiency of native officials and departments. The progress of the road network in Abyssinia, Waugh makes clear, is as inexorable as the march of Roman civilisation.

Waugh's celebration of the Italian road represents an unexpected object of jubilation because, for many travel writers in this period, the increasing ubiquity of automobile infrastructure entailed the end of exploration. As Eric Newby noted in *A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush* (1958), 'If there is any way of seeing less of a country than from a motor-car I have yet to experience it'.[280] Waugh's journey to Dessye in the Italian General's motorcar symbolically represents his abandonment of his earlier commitment to eschew the well-trodden road. In a dispatch for the *Daily Mail* of November 1935, Waugh cited the appalling state of Abyssinia's roads as a natural barrier that would stall any Italian invasion. The 'impregnable' road to Addis Ababa, Waugh explains, represented '200 miles of natural fortresses'.[281] In so doing, he argues that the very dilapidation of Abyssinian infrastructure represents its best

[279] *The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh* ed. by Michael Davie (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), p. 399. Thursday 20 August 1936.
[280] Eric Newby, *A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1958), p. 6.
[281] Evelyn Waugh, '"Impregnable" Road to Addis Ababa: 200 Miles of Natural Fortresses', *Daily Mail*, 26 November 1935, p. 9.

defence against invasion. Implicitly the Italian promise of roads, so redolent of modernity and its attendant benefits, establishes the war as a battle between barbarism and civilisation. Waugh positions himself as an eyewitness when making the claim:

> I have traversed 300 miles from Addis Ababa to Dessye – the general headquarters of the Abyssinian army – following the single great arterial highway north, down which an invading army would be forced to come to menace the capital.
>
> After realising the difficulties which beset the modern traveller aided by every modern convenience, I believe that a most modest opposition could render the road impregnable.[282]

'A handful of men' on the road from the capital to Dessye, Waugh argues, 'could hold back a whole army'.[283] Because of the clear symbolism attached to the Roman road, the inadequacy of the Abyssinian roads becomes evidence in support of Italian conquest. The idea of a resurgent Roman Empire in East Africa, with its inherent claim to export Roman Catholic civilisation, shapes Waugh's representation of Abyssinia in his travel writing throughout this period. As a result, he travels in the certainty that everything that he observes will be subservient to an encompassing politico-religious thesis. The journey depicted in *Waugh in Abyssinia* is one of confirmation, not exploration. In it, the travel tropes of exploration and discovery are denounced as naïve sentimentalism. For Waugh, the Second Italo-Abyssinian War left no room for the literary emotion of wonder: the experience of Abyssinia in 1935 and 1935, from its people to its roads, is of use to the travel writer only in its capacity to legitimise Italy's Roman Catholic imperialism.

[282] Ibid., p. 9.
[283] Ibid., p. 9.

3. Christianity or Chaos:

Evelyn Waugh, Mexico, and the Spanish Civil War (1936-39)

> What Mr. Fleming found I leave to readers of his book. To me at least it was quite new and quite thrilling to learn that imperialist expansion and the gas-bombing of savage people can be carried out by a Marxian as well as by a Fascist or Democratic State. I hope some of the English Socialists who can read, will read Mr. Fleming's chapters about Soviet penetration in Sinkiang.[284]
>
> —Evelyn Waugh, review of Peter Fleming's *News From Tartary* (1936)

In his *Spectator* review of Peter Fleming's travel book, *News from Tartary* (1936), Evelyn Waugh feigns astonishment at the idea that the Soviet Union was engaging in aggressive expansionism in the 1930s. The major organs of the socialist press, he implies, had ignored this Marxist imperialism. Waugh performs his sarcastic shock at Fleming's 'news' from Turkestan to tell us that he had long been aware that such practices were not the sole province of right-wing states. It is a posture that he adopts in order to expose the hypocrisy of those who denounced him for his support of Italian Fascist imperialism during the Second Italo-Abyssinian War (1935-36). The concerns of Waugh's review – the threat of Marxism, state-sanctioned atrocity, and 'Soviet penetration' – became increasingly prominent in his political writing of the late 1930s. His final travel book of the decade, *Robbery Under Law: The Mexican Object-Lesson* (1939), advances a politico-religious thesis that posits Marxist secularism as a grave and existential threat to European civilisation. It is a polemical work that records Waugh's travels in Mexico in 1938. It interprets the Cárdenas regime's economic and religious persecution of Mexico's Spanish aristocracy and Roman Catholic population as a prelude to the fate that awaits Europe.

[284] Evelyn Waugh, 'Undiscovered Asia', review of Peter Fleming's *News from Tartary: A Journey from Peking to Kashmir* (1936), *Spectator*, 7 August 1936, p. 244.

For Waugh, Mexico exemplified the precariousness of civilisation in 1938. As a former Spanish colonial possession, it represented the historical and religious legacy of Roman Catholic imperialism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It was also a manifestation of the decline of such hopes for the expansion of Christendom. The Marxist government's brutal anti-clericalism, which followed the 1917 Mexican Revolution, had devastated the country. It had cast Mexico as a grim foreboding of things to come should Europe abandon its Christian heritage. Waugh asks the reader of *Robbery Under Law* with Spenglerian portentousness: 'Is civilization, like a leper, beginning to rot at its extremities?'[285] Mexico had once been on the geographic fringes of the Spanish Empire and had been brought Catholic civilisation as a result of European imperialism. By 1938, Waugh saw that the miasma of leftist secularism had mortally afflicted the Central American and this, in turn, imperilled all of Europe.

This chapter argues that *Robbery Under Law* expands upon the politico-religious thesis that Waugh advances in *Edmund Campion* (1935) and *Waugh in Abyssinia* (1936). It explores the ways in which he insists upon the permanence of Roman Catholic conquest in Central America and considers his application of the Mexican crisis to the ideological conflict of the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). In *Robbery Under Law* he declares himself 'a partisan of Franco' (*RUL*, p. 19) and polemically organises the argument of his travel book to provide ideological support for the *Caudillo*'s Nationalist campaign. Franco, as Waugh saw it, was fighting to save Europe from Marxism, and Mexico was the example of what would happen should he fail. As an antidote to the secularism of the Cárdenas Government, he advocates Mexico's return to '*Spanishness'* as a restoration of the values of order and Roman Catholicism integral to European civilisation. For Waugh, the battle between

[285] Evelyn Waugh, *Robbery Under Law: The Mexican Object-Lesson* (Penguin: London, 2011 [1939]), p. 5. (Further references to this edition in this chapter are given after quotations in the text.)

Marxism and Roman Catholicism was a war of two universalising and competing political forces. Mexico had fallen, but the heart of Europe could be saved. From Mexico Waugh wrote his 'notes on anarchy' (*RUL*, p. 6) from the frontline of the war between 'Christianity and Chaos'.[286]

Waugh and Mexico

'A very rich chap wants me to write a book about Mexico', Evelyn Waugh informed his literary agent, A. D. Peters, on 25 May 1938: 'I gather he is willing to subsidise it. I am seeing him on Wednesday & will turn him onto you for thumb chewing.'[287] The man with whom Waugh was due to meet was Clive Pearson, the second son of Weetman Pearson, 3rd Viscount Cowdray, and representative of the immensely wealthy Cowdray Estate. Pearson wished to commission a book addressing the Mexican Government's recent move to aggressively nationalise its oil industry. On 18 March 1938, Mexico's President, General Lázaro Cárdenas, had announced the expropriation of all foreign oil companies' reserves and facilities to international alarm. The Cowdray Estate owned the Mexican Eagle Oil Company, which developed and managed vast oil fields in Mexico. Although the British Government publicly condemned Cárdenas' decision, it did little in the months that followed to reassure Pearson and his estate that it would attempt to take action over the confiscation, or that it would adequately compensate him as a result.

Pearson turned his attention to British public opinion: if alerted to the theft of British holdings by Mexico's Marxist regime, it was thought, the ensuing public outrage might provoke a government response. In order to achieve this end the

[286] Evelyn Waugh, 'Converted to Rome: Why It Has Happened to Me', *Daily Express*, 20 October 1930; repr. in *Essays, The Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh* ed. by Donat Gallagher (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983), pp. 103-105 (p. 103).
[287] Letter from Evelyn Waugh to A. D. Peters, 25 May 1938. HRC Evelyn Waugh Papers.

Cowdray Estate commissioned Waugh, as both a popular novelist and a writer of moderately successful travel books, to visit Mexico and criticise the expropriations in print. Waugh agreed to write Pearson's book and concurred with him that, 'as for the feelings of the British public, these are only aroused when they see politics in simple terms of under-dog and oppressor. They have not yet got used to thinking of British Companies as underdogs' (*RUL*, p. 89). In Waugh Pearson found a writer whose voice was increasingly prominent as a Roman Catholic on the right wing of British politics. As such, Waugh brought with him a pre-existing readership, sympathetic to his political ideas, to which Pearson might direct his appeal. Pearson saw British Catholics, many of whom were already incensed by the suppression of their religion in a former stronghold of the faith, as a potentially rich source of political support for economic or military action against the Cárdenas regime. Many of these Roman Catholics in Britain read Waugh's writing in the *Tablet* and *Catholic Herald*. They would also have likely followed the releases of the major Catholic publishing houses, Sheed & Ward and Eyre & Spottiswoode, both of which had published books that criticised Mexico's Marxist government.[288]

Pearson's offer was timely for Waugh, too. From its outset the Spanish Civil War had provoked many Roman Catholic intellectuals across Europe to declare support for the Spanish Nationalists. Franco's forces, in their estimation, were fighting in defence of the faith and European civilization against the existential threat of Marxist secularism. Mexico's past imperial ties to Spain and recent history of anti-clericalism and leftist politics served as a clear warning for Waugh and his co-religionists on the fate of Spain and Europe, and incentivised Catholic activism. 'We have seen the Church drawn underground in country after country', Waugh wrote in

[288] For e.g. Douglas Jerrold, *The Future of Freedom* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1938) and Collin Brooks, *Can Chamberlain Save Britain?: The Lesson of Munich* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1938), p. 20.

the preface to the American edition of *Edmund Campion* (1935): 'The hunted, trapped, murdered priest is our contemporary'.[289] Waugh agreed to write Pearson's book and was well remunerated by the Cowdray Estate. In addition to the £400 advance from his publishers Chapman & Hall Waugh was promised £800 to cover any expenses.[290] He and his wife Laura Waugh sailed for Mexico, via New York, on the S.S. *Bremen* on 27 July 1938. The trip took three months and the resulting book, *Robbery Under Law: The Mexican Object-Lesson*, was published early in the following year.

Waugh's friend and co-religionist Christopher Sykes considered the book to be 'of great autobiographical though not perhaps much wider importance'.[291] Sykes went on to acknowledge that '[n]owhere in his writings did [Waugh] state with greater clarity his political convictions and preferences'.[292] *Robbery Under Law* represents Waugh's clearest and most polemical articulation of his religious and political attitudes in the 1930s. Contrary to Sykes's first claim, the travel book offers a far-reaching analysis of the political situations in both Mexico and Europe during this period. It also marks the conclusion of the decade of itinerancy and travel writing that dominated the author's life during the interwar period. There is a quiet symmetry between Waugh's first and last travel books of the 1930s. In *Labels* (1930), Waugh's first-published travel book, the writer carried with him a copy of Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* (1926) while travelling the Mediterranean, and *Robbery Under Law* presents the fullest expression of his Spenglerian belief in the decline and fall of European civilization.[293]

289 Evelyn Waugh, *Edmund Campion: Jesuit and Martyr* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1946), p. VIII.
290 Martin Stannard, *Evelyn Waugh: The Early Years, 1903-1939* (London: Flamingo, 1986), p. 478.
291 Christopher Sykes, *Evelyn Waugh: A Biography* (London: Collins, 1975), p. 183.
292 Ibid., p. 183.
293 Evelyn Waugh, *Labels: A Mediterranean Journey* (London: Penguin, 1985), p. 9. 'I packed up all my clothes and two or three very solemn books, such as Spengler's *Decline of the West*, and a great

Waugh's contract with Pearson necessitated that he focus his attention on the injustice of the oil expropriation. However, Mexico's contemporary and bloody history of Catholic persecution meant that the project held additional significance for the writer. Graham Greene travelled to Mexico to focus precisely on this issue only a few months before Waugh. In his *Spectator* review of *The Lawless Roads* (1939), Greene's own Mexican travel book, Waugh argues that, insofar as Greene had 'any particular purpose in his observation', he had travelled to Mexico in order to 'investigate the strength of the anti-religious policy of the governing gang'.[294] Greene's observations of the 'manifest follies and iniquities' of the Cárdenas regime were, Waugh notes, 'the more damning because they are not linked by any political thesis'.[295] In *Robbery Under Law*, Waugh ventures to clarify his politics by labelling himself a 'Conservative' (*RUL*, p. 50), a 'partisan of Franco' (*RUL*, p. 19), and an opponent of 'the intellectual communists of today' (*RUL*, p. 19). However, this travel book at times muddies our understanding of Waugh's politics as much as it represents their clearest instantiation. Much of the analysis of Mexican society in *Robbery Under Law*, on which Waugh's thesis relies, is thin on contextual information. Waugh frames the history of the country entirely in the light of the expropriation crisis. As Patrick Query notes, the book constructs an idea of Mexico to 'suit the expectations of the Cowdray Estate'.[296]

But, although this ostensibly ought to limit the scope of Waugh's enquiry, for him, the problems facing Pearson were symptomatic of the greater disease that

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many drawing materials, for two of the many quite unfulfilled resolutions which I made about this trip were that I was gong to do some serious reading a drawing.' See also Richard Overy, *The Morbid Age: Britain Between the Wars* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), 'Chapter 1: Decline and Fall', pp. 9-49 on the pervasiveness of such narratives of civilization's decline between the wars.

[294] Evelyn Waugh, 'The Waste Land', review of *The Lawless Roads* by Graham Greene, *Spectator*, 10 March 1939; repr. in *Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, pp. 248-50 (p. 50).

[295] Ibid.

[296] Patrick Query, *Ritual and the Idea of Europe in Interwar Writing* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), p. 172.

afflicted civilisation in its entirety. In the introduction to *Robbery Under Law*, Waugh acknowledges that the purpose of the book 'is to examine a single problem': the expropriation crisis (*RUL*, p. 5). However, he makes plain that the perceived singularity of the Cárdenas expropriation policy is illusory. It bears a metonymic relationship to the historical whole of Roman Catholic Europe and her international imperial legacy. 'This is a political book', Waugh announces, which asks *why* the British public

> remained indifferent when rich and essential British industry was openly stolen in time of peace. If one could understand that problem one would come very near to understanding all the problems that vex us today, for it has at its origin the universal, deliberately fostered anarchy of public relations and private opinions that is rapidly making the world uninhabitable.
>
> (*RUL*, pp. 5-6)

For the British Government not to recognise its kinship with another Christian country, which traces its religious and moral history to the Roman conquest, was an act of fratricide. In Waugh's estimation, it had abandoned Mexico to the anarchistic amorality of a bloody Marxist regime. Pearson's commission represented an opportunity to indict the brutal suppression of Roman Catholics by the Cárdenas Government and bolster the claims of Francoist supporters through the 'Object-Lesson' of 1930s Mexico. David Wykes cogently argues that, in *Robbery Under Law*, Waugh 'was able to balance political propaganda with a labour that was *ad dei gloriam*'.[297] The state of the Mexican Church was '[not so] different from that of the oil companies, in Waugh's eyes', he continues: 'Both Church and companies had been plundered from the same motive, human greed and cupidity. It is no hyperbole

[297] David Wykes, *Evelyn Waugh: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), p. 117.

to say that for him oil expropriation and the persecution of the Church were both consequences of Original Sin'.[298] Wykes claims, rightly, that there is no material conflict between the several imperatives of the book and, instead, they maintain a symbiotic relationship.

The chapter entitled 'Oil' in *Robbery Under Law* depicts the expropriations as symptomatic of the threat to civilization represented by the Cárdenas Government. Using an assiduously Bellocian vocabulary, Waugh defines civilisation as 'the whole moral and artistic organization of Europe', which 'came into being through Christianity'.[299] The aspect of the oil expropriation that Waugh chooses to emphasise is the nature of the *law* that sanctioned Mexico's act of 'robbery' (*RUL*, p. 1). For him, Mexican politicians legislated not in accordance with a universal and divine law, but, rather, enacted their politics of class-warfare through the illegitimate mandate of The Partido de la Revolución Mexicana (PRM). Waugh's, instead, insists on the *law* as 'the inherited, and in many systems, divinely revealed, wisdom and morality of the people' (*RUL*, p. 85). It is not, therefore, contingent on the politics of the citizens or the ruling party. In the twentieth century, Waugh argues, 'Law has become intensely provincial. It has followed the general break-up of international concepts. In the drying up of civilization, cracks appear and widen; the parched nations shrink away from one another' (*RUL*, p. 95). He appeals to the universalising legal and moral framework of Roman Catholic doctrine. The 'international concepts' to which Waugh refers are not the League of Nations, or the Comintern, but the universality of the Church's moral teachings. He declares that religious law is, in fact, the 'single, essential question of the nation' (*RUL*, p. 216). As a former colonial stronghold, at the fringes of the Spanish Empire, post-revolution Mexico had reduced universal laws to

[298] Ibid., p. 117.
[299] Evelyn Waugh, 'Converted to Rome', in *Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, p. 104.

local politics. Because the expropriation question was a matter of transcendental, and not accidental, moral law it was not subject to the contingent tumult of politics.

This problem is accentuated in *Robbery Under Law* by the conflict between Catholicism and Communism as competing institutions with claims to ideological universality. Following Hilaire Belloc, Waugh pled the case for 'a Ruler with a commission to enforce the Law' as the solution to Mexico's ills (*RUL*, p. 95). The authoritarianism he prescribed for Mexico can be explained in part through Waugh's thoughts on monarchic rule. In 1959 Waugh expounded, albeit perhaps wryly, on his own anti-democratic politics. He claims to have 'never voted in a parliamentary election' because 'I do not aspire to advise my Sovereign in her choice of servants'.[300] Waugh advances an argument for a religiously mandated monarch, insisting that, in Britain,

> All authority emanates from the Crown. […] In the last three hundred years, particularly the last hundred, the Crown has adopted what seems to me a very hazardous process of choosing advisers; popular election. Many great evils have resulted'.[301]

In the context of 1930s Catholicism Waugh's attitude shares similarities with the theory of Accidentalism that had gained prominence among Spanish theologians as a tactic of non-military resistance to atheist Communism in the country. Accidentalist theologians argued that all forms of government were contingent (and thus accidental) and of secondary importance to the Crown as ordained by God. This theory took doctrinal legitimacy from Leo XIII's encyclicals, which emphasised the need for

[300] Evelyn Waugh, 'Aspirations of a Mugwump', *Spectator*, 2 October 1959; repr. in *Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, pp. 537-38 (p. 538).
[301] Ibid.

Catholics to work internationally to defend the central tenets of their faith.[302] When Waugh asserts that Mexico required a divinely ordained authoritarian he can be seen to be engaging with contemporary Catholic theology as it responded to the Spanish Civil War. As Paul Preston has written, Accidentalism contended that 'the essential issue was the "content" or socio-economic orientation of the regime'.[303] This anchors the economic to the theological. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the Cárdenas Government's oil expropriations should have been interpreted as a religious question for Roman Catholics attentive to European politics in 1938.

Waugh described the expropriations as a 'very nice working model of a modern international-economic problem' with 'all the features of the larger problems that are disturbing our lives' (*RUL*, p. 90). In 1938, the international response to the oil crisis had echoes of the toothless outrage from the League of Nations that followed the Italian invasion of Abyssinia, the rearmament of the Rhineland, and the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. In the chapter 'Oil' Waugh advances rapidly from a critique of La Confederación de Trabajadores de México (CTM), the labour union headed by Lombardo Toledano that had encouraged oil workers on to further strike action, into a vivid articulation of the theological nature of the problems associated with trade unionism. 'Man is by nature an exile,' Waugh declares in his introduction to *Robbery Under Law*,

> haunted, even at the height of his prosperity, by nostalgia for Eden; individually and collectively he is always in search of an oppressor who will take responsibility for his ills. The Treaty of Versailles, Sanctions, Jews, Bolshevists, Bankers, the Colour Bar – anything will do so as he can focus on it his sense of grievance and convince himself that his own inadequacy is due to some exterior cause.

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[302] See 'Mary Vincent, 'Spain', in *Political Catholicism in Europe, 1918-1965* ed. by. Tom Buchanan and Martin Conway (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 97-128 (pp. 107-108); see also Paul Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish Civil War: Reform, Reaction and Revolution in the Second Republic* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1994), pp. 39-42.
[303] Preston, *The Coming of the Spanish War* p. 28.

This is a central factor that incentivised many of Waugh's pronouncements on Mexico and Spain. It represents a subtle departure from his belief in the civilizing mission of the Italian Fascists in Abyssinia. 'In the sixteenth century human life was disordered and talent stultified by the obsession of theology', Waugh argues: 'today we are plague-stricken by politics' (*RUL*, p. 3). In *Waugh in Abyssinia* he had enthusiastically extolled the Roman Catholic virtues of Fascist Italy's exportation of civilisation to East Africa. Mussolini, he argued in 1936, was to have brought Abyssinia into the international and universal organisation of Europe, from which Britain, Spain and Mexico had all been salvaged from barbarism. In his Mexican travel book, by contrast, Waugh laments Mexico's precipitous decline from religion and into mere politics. He advances a polemical politico-religious thesis by which he attempts to alert Europe to the perils that await it should leftist secularism tighten its grip.

English Catholics and a Return to '*Spanishness*'

With the publication of *Edmund Campion* in 1935, Waugh further integrated himself into the social circles of the Roman Catholic aristocracy in England. 'More than anything', Martin Stannard writes, 'he wanted to belong to the community of the Faith'.[304] *Campion*, he argues, 'was [Waugh's] testimony of good-will'.[305] Waugh's hagiography of the sixteenth-century Jesuit martyr had bought him good favour with a coterie of influential, most upper-middle class Catholics. In 1937 he married Laura Herbert. Laura was from a prominent family of Roman Catholic converts and the

[304] Martin Stannard, *Evelyn Waugh: The Early Years, 1903-1939* (London: Flamingo, 1993), p. 388.
[305] Ibid., p. 388.

marriage propelled Waugh into the society of their co-religionists in politics and academia. All were deeply troubled by the Spanish Civil War. His new sister-in-law, Gabriel Herbert, had volunteered for the Anglo-Spanish Mobile Medical Service at the outbreak of the war. As part of this organisation, she drove ambulances and transported medical supplies for Franco's Nationalist forces. Waugh considered joining her in Spain and, on 19 September 1936, announced in his diary that he was 'Thinking of joining Gabriel in Spanish trip'.[306]

In spite of his enthusiasm, Waugh's intention of joining his sister-in-law on the Spanish front was never fulfilled. However, several other notable Roman Catholics of Waugh's religious social circles made the journey. Tom Burns, the future editor of the *Tablet*, drove ambulances with Herbert in 1938.[307] Burns had commissioned Waugh to write *Waugh in Abyssinia* in 1936 and was instrumental in securing the publication of Greene's *The Lawless Roads* at Longman in 1939.[308] Judith Keene's recent research into Gabriel Herbert's life reveals that she was essential to the work of English propagandists for Franco. 'A number of the first hand accounts of "Red atrocities" and conversations with franquista personnel that appeared in London,' Keene explains, 'for example by Arnold Lunn and Hilaire Belloc, can be tagged back to journeys with Gabriel Herbert in Northern Spain'.[309] Lunn met with Herbert and Priscilla Scott-Ellis, another of Franco's English volunteers, in Zaragoza during the war when he was, as he put it, 'out here collecting material about "Red Horrors"'.[310] Herbert was no minor figure in the aristocratic

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[306] *The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh* ed. by Michael Davie (London, 1976), p. 406. 19 September 1936.
[307] Jimmy Burns, *Papa Spy: A True Story of Love, Wartime Espionage in Madrid, and the Treachery of the Cambridge Spies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), p. 16.
[308] Longmans, Green, & Co. was purchased by the Pearson PLC in 1968.
[309] Judith Keene, *Fighting for Franco: International Volunteers in Nationalist Spain during the Spanish Civil War* (London: Continuum, 2007), p. 268.
[310] Priscilla Scott-Ellis, *The Chances of Death: A Diary of the Spanish Civil War* (London: Michael Russell, 1995), p. 69.

coterie of right-wing Roman Catholics in London in the late 1930s. The closeness between Waugh and Herbert can be seen when the writer informed his friend Lady Mary Lygon of his engagement to Laura Herbert in July 1936. Waugh wrote that '[Laura] and the Pope and I and Gabriel have made up our minds but it is not to be announced until after Xmas because Gabriel is so busy selling a house and settling the civil war in Spain'.[311] Furthermore, Gabriel Herbert likely provides a model for Cordelia Flyte in *Brideshead Revisited* (1945).[312] In the novel, Cordelia leaves England to drive ambulances for Franco: '"My job's over in Spain," she said; "the authorities were very polite, thanked me for all I'd done, gave me a medal, and sent me packing."'[313] Herbert, like Cordelia, was awarded the *Medalla Militar* for her medical services for the Nationalists in Spain.[314]

Herbert served as a link between Franco's forces and a network of Roman Catholics in England devoted to raising funds to support the Nationalist campaign, the most significant of which was the Bishops' Fund for the Relief of Spanish Distress.[315] This was a group founded by Lord Howard of Penrith and a well-known coterie of English Catholics. Much of the support for Franco in England in this period came from upper- and upper-middle class Catholics.[316] Lord Howard was Herbert's uncle and had served as the British ambassador to Madrid between 1919 and 1924. On 25 September 1936, Waugh recorded in his dairy that he had 'Lunched with Gabriel who is off to Spain to relieve insurgents'.[317] Then, he records,

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[311] Letter from Evelyn Waugh to Lady Mary Lygon, July 1936, in *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh* ed. by Mark Amory (London: Methuen, 1980), p. 108.
[312] John W Osborne, 'The Character of Cordelia in *Brideshead Revisited*', *Evelyn Waugh Newsletter and Studies*, 29.3 (1995) 1-2.
[313] Evelyn Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited: The Sacred and Profane Memories of Charles Rider: A Novel* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1945), p. 272.
[314] Keene, *Fighting for Franco*, p. 268.
[315] This was known alternatively as the Archbishop's Spanish Association.
[316] Richard Griffiths, *The Pen and the Cross: Catholicism and English Literature, 1850-2000* (London: Continuum, 2010), pp. 152-53.
[317] *Diaries*, p. 407.

> Spent afternoon with Laura. Went to meeting at Westminster of Archbishop's Spanish Association. Committee was appointed of Lord Fitz Alan, Lord Howard of Penrith, etc. Gabriel read report of her talk with Duchess of Laguna. I moved for her to be sent out to advise best means of distribution. Dined Bruton Street, Francis, Howard, Gabriel, Mary.[318]

According to Keene, Herbert 'provided the moving spirit' of the Anglo-Spanish Medical Service.[319] The Bishop's Fund had initially intended to send money to support Franco's men. But, once it became clear that this could finance the purchase of arms and thereby contravene Britain's non-intervention agreement with Spain, it was decided that the committee would purchase medical equipment and send it sent across the Franco-Spanish border. By 1937 the Bishop's Fund had provided the Nationalists with eight ambulances, four lorries (each with two hundred fold-out beds), and a vehicle to transport medical staff between fronts.[320] Gabriel Herbert appeared regularly in the *Tablet* and *Catholic Herald* calling for money and support for the committee:

> **THE BISHOPS' COMMITTEE FOR THE RELIEF OF SPANISH DISTRESS**
>
> The Bishops' Committee have received the following report from Miss Gabriel Herbert, their agent in Spain for Medical relief:-
>
> 'Our ambulances are ceaselessly on the road and standing up well to the work. The hospital has had almost six hundred to seven hundred wounded through their hands in a week, and are evacuating all they possibly can down to Burgos and Pamplona. It is working very well and the doctors are operating from 8 a.m. until 4 or 5 the next morning.'
>
> A further sum of £100 is being sent to Monsignor Henson, of Valladolid, this week, to be spent on the provision of meals for destitute children.

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[318] Ibid., p. 407.

[319] Judith Keene, 'Foreign Women in Spain for General Franco during the Spanish Civil War', in *Right-Wing Women: From Conservatives to Extremists Around the World* ed. by Paola Bacchetta and Margaret Power (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 183-194 (p. 188).

[320] Ibid.

> All donations will be most gratefully received by the Bishops' Committee, c/o the National Bank Ltd., 21 Grosvenor Gardens, S.W.1.[321]

A request for donations also appeared in *The Times* and names Waugh as one of the 'well-known people who are sponsoring the appeal'.[322] However, although a primarily humanitarian effort, driving ambulances for Franco was considered by many not to be the entirely non-combatant occupation that Herbert reported to her Roman Catholic readers. George Orwell wrote of the real dangers faced by ambulance drivers on the Spanish front and, more pertinently, the deeply held suspicion that they were in fact concealed military vehicles. In *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), Orwell recalls the many ambulances that were shelled on their way to and from the frontline. This act was 'justifiable', Orwell argues, 'for in modern war no one had scruples to use an ambulance for carrying ammunition'.[323] Non-Spanish medics were given military identification numbers and treated in much the same way as combatants during the war. As such, Waugh's enthusiasm for the idea of joining Herbert in Spain can be interpreted both as an expression of support for his co-religionists and a serious consideration of *going over* and taking an active role on the Nationalist side in the war.

When informing Mary Lygon of the miners' strike in July 1936, Waugh concludes with Spain as an image of Britain's future at the hands of the trade unionists: 'Well you have only to read the paper and see what is happening in Spain where the lower classes have the upper hand.'[324] Though the acerbity of this comparison is wryly exaggerated, Franco fuelled the anxieties of the English Catholic

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[321] *Tablet*, 17 April 1937.
[322] *The Times*, 29 December 1936, p. 14.
[323] George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, in *Orwell in Spain* (Penguin: London, 2001), p. 73.
[324] Letter from Evelyn Waugh to Lady Mary Lygon, July 1936, in *Letters*, p. 108.

upper class, of which Lady Lygon was certainly a member. Adrian Hastings claims that aristocratic Catholics were broadly sympathetic to Franco's authoritarianism and downplayed the evils of Fascism.[325] For Waugh, Republican (and implicitly, therefore, Soviet) Spain was a threat to European religious freedoms. The true antecedent of secular Spain, he argues in *Robbery Under Law*, was Mexico: 'From the beginning of the Spanish war the Mexican governing party expressed the belief that the Spanish republicans were fighting the battle which they themselves had already won' (*RUL*, p. 266). Left-wing politics had destroyed the 'rich and cultured and orderly' (*RUL*, p. 205) traditions of Roman Catholic Mexico's Spanish heritage. Mexico represented an amalgam of native and colonial cultures, and Waugh deplored its movement away from the history of Spanish imperialism and a return to pagan, pre-colonial culture. '[T]he governing Mexicans', he claims mournfully, 'are ashamed of their Spanish past' (*RUL*, p. 20).

In his biography of Waugh, Sykes remembers the period surrounding the trip to Mexico as a 'time of some fanaticism' and Waugh as 'an enthusiastic and hardly critical supporter of the Nationalists under General Franco'.[326] Waugh, he continues,

> saw the struggle in straight terms as solely and simply a stand by men of goodwill against the encroachments of Russian Communism and the tyranny of Josef Stalin, and the fact that the last-mentioned was at that time highly esteemed on the Left made Evelyn's simplifications all the more plausible.
>
> There are two points that should be made. Unlike some other British sympathizers with the Nationalist cause, Evelyn did not become a hero-worshipper of General Franco. If he was asked to read (as I have no doubt he was) some of the propaganda biographies of the General then being put about in England, he must have laughed them to scorn. Afterwards he never saw the Franco Regime as an earthly Paradise.

[325] Adrian Hastings, 'Some Reflections on English Catholicism of the late 1930s', in *Bishops and Writers: Aspects of the Evolution of Modern Catholicism* ed. by Adrian Hastings (Wheathampstead: Clarke, 1977), pp. 107-26 and 'Britain', in *Political Catholicism in Europe, 1918-1965*, pp. 97-128.
[326] Ibid., p. 189.

Waugh was not alone in this view. Many of his co-religionists on the right maintained more fervent admiration for the *Caudillo*. These ranged from Roman Catholics who tolerated the Spanish Nationalists as an opposition to communism, to others who served outright as propagandists for Franco in Britain. *Robbery Under Law* forms part of the English-language canon of this Nationalist propaganda. Dan Kostopulos has described it more recently as 'little better than a work of propaganda, wavering in tone between hysteria and didacticism'.[327] The circle of these Catholic writers in Britain in the late 1930s, often termed the British Catholic Revivalists, included Douglas Woodruff, Arnold Lunn, Douglas Jerrold, Sir Charles Petrie and Christopher Dawson, among others. All of these writers were heavily influenced by the concept of Europe and the permanence of Roman conquest put forth in the writings of Hilaire Belloc.[328]

The Bellocians and the 'Sovietization' of Europe

Among the most prominent Bellocians, also termed Catholic Revivalists, in the English Catholic press were Jerrold and Woodruff, both of whom held editorial positions at major conservative publications. Jerrold was the editor of the *English Review*, which fervently championed Italy's war against Abyssinia and Franco's force in Spain.[329] He was also the director of Eyre & Spottiswoode. This publishing house commissioned numerous pro-Fascist books in Britain, including the works of 'The

[327] Dan S. Kostopulos, 'Mexico Imagined: *Robbery Under Law* and the Lessons of Mexican Travel', in *Waugh without End: New Trends in Evelyn Waugh Studies* ed. by Carlos Villar Flor and Robert Murray Davis (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005), pp. 115-30 (p. 117).
[328] Kevin Morris writes that Belloc's 'was the loudest, most insistent speculative, propagandist, controversialist, and apologeticist Catholic voice of the time in England' (Kevin L. Morris, 'Fascism and British Catholic Writers, 1924-1939: Part 1', *New Blackfriars* 1998 (80.935) 32-45 (34).)
[329] See Kevin L. Morris, 'Fascism and British Catholic Writers, 1924-1939: Part 2', *New Blackfriars* 80.936 (1998) 82-95 (85).

Italian Lord Haw-Haw': James Strachey Barnes.[330] *Waugh in Abyssinia* was serialised in the *English Review*. Woodruff edited the *Tablet*, having taken over from Ernest Oldmeadow in 1936. When the *Daily Mail* rejected Waugh's proposal for a series of articles on Mexico in 1939, Woodruff's *Tablet* accepted it, publishing 'Religion in Mexico: Impressions of a Recent Visit' between 29 April and 20 May. Woodruff's accession to the editorship of the *Tablet* signalled a change in tone for the publication. It placed an increasing emphasis on the imminent threat to European civilisation posed by the Soviet Union. Where Oldmeadow had condemned the paganism of the Italian Fascist movement, Woodruff treated Mussolini sympathetically in his editorials, heralding the *Duce* as the defender of Europe's Roman Catholic heritage. Oldmeadow remarked in the *Tablet* that 'the Italians are just now acting not under Christian leader, but under a totalitarian Dictator who harks back to pagan Rome for his inspiration, and has deliberately chosen the pre-Christian fasces to be the emblems of this rule'.[331]

Woodruff's departure from Oldmeadow's editorial position on Fascist Italy demonstrates the influence of Belloc's renewed insistence on the importance of ancient Rome in the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church in 1930s Europe. In the interwar period, Belloc argued that the Church accepted and conserved many of the philosophical and moral traditions of the ancient world in its doctrine. 'The Europeans, the Catholics', Belloc writes, are 'the heirs, who are the conservators of the world'.[332] It is this that Waugh alludes to when he writes that, 'though [the Mexican people] may sometimes *feel* like Aztecs or Tlaxcalans, *think* like Spaniards;

[330] David Bradshaw, 'Ezra Pound, James Strachey Barnes ("The Italian Lord Haw-Haw") and Italian Fascism, *Review of English Studies*, 64 (266) 2013, 672-93.
[331] Ernest Oldmeadow, *Tablet*, 12 October 1935, p. 453.
[332] Hilaire Belloc, *Europe and the Faith* (London: Constable, 1920), p. 12.

their minds have been formed on the Aristotelean model' (*RUL*, p. 67).[333] In making a case for Mexico's enduring commitment to Roman Catholicism, he contrasts Mesoamerican paganism with Greco-Roman paganism. The latter, however, was integrated, through the writings of the Church Fathers, into the Roman Catholic tradition. Mussolini's use of pre-Christian symbolism was, therefore, rather than a conscious uncoupling of the *totalitario* regime from the Church, an acceptance of the history and traditions of ancient Rome that had formed the crucible for the faith. As Belloc explains in *Europe and the Faith* (1920), 'some', like Oldmeadow,

> will exaggerate the power of the Roman Empire as a pagan institution; they will pretend that the Catholic Church was something alien to that pagan thing; that the Empire was great and admirable before Catholicism came, weak and despicable upon its acceptation of the Creed. They will represent the Faith as creeping like an Oriental disease into the body of a firm Western society which it did not so much transform as liquefy and dissolve.

For Waugh and Woodruff, their Bellocian politico-religious interpretation of the role of the Roman Catholic Church in the modern world entailed that the Mexican crisis was particularly poignant. Waugh's *Robbery Under Law* and the *Tablet* under Woodruff's editorship propose Catholicism as a force that would liberate Mexico from the tyranny of Marxism through a conservatism that returned the country to its traditional religious origins. As with ancient Rome, the Church would not preside over Mexico's decline, but, instead, attend to its rebirth.

It is evidence of the strength of friendship between Waugh and Woodruff that in 1933 when Oldmeadow denounced *Black Mischief* (1932) as a 'disgrace to a professing Catholic', Woodruff and several other notable British Roman Catholics came to the novelist's defence. This included Burns, Hollis, D. B. Wyndham Lewis

[333] Waugh's emphasis.

and Fr. Martin D'Arcy of Campion Hall, Oxford. Against Oldmeadow's imputation of Waugh's bad faith they wrote a letter to the *Tablet* that expressed their 'great regret at [Oldmeadow's words] being published and our regard for Mr. Waugh'.[334] With Woodruff as editor Waugh contributed many articles and reviews to the *Tablet*, often without payment. The paper took a strongly anti-modernist attitude to both secular and religious issues, and editorially supported both Mussolini and Franco directly (as leaders martialling the revitalization of Roman Catholic Europe) and indirectly (as a counterweight to Nazi expansionism). However, news of Nazi Germany's military support of the Spanish Nationalists in the civil war was a source of embarrassment for many British Catholics. Sykes wrote that Waugh

> looked with perhaps culpable mildness on the fact that the Nationalists won through allying themselves with the most ignoble political forces in Europe, and though in common with many intelligent Englishmen (including Harold Nicolson, oddly enough) he never shook off the Napoleonic spell cast by Mussolini'.[335]

T. S. Eliot noted in the *Criterion* editorial of July 1937 that the *Tablet* had itself become part of the Spanish Nationalist propaganda wing. 'On the First of May', he wrote, 'the *Tablet* provided its explanation of the destruction of Guernica: the most likely culprits, according to the *Tablet*, were the Basques' own allies, their shady friends in Catalonia'.[336] On 5 June 1937 Jerrold had written in the *Tablet* of 'The Campaign of Fiction' surrounding the bombing of Guernica. The ancient town, he argued, 'was burnt by the retreating Basque (or, more probably, by the Asturian) troops not by the Nationalist forces'.[337] Jerrold supported this false claim and quoted

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[334] Ernest Oldmeadow, Editorial, *Tablet*, 21 January 1933, p. 85; repr. *Evelyn Waugh: The Critical Heritage* ed. by Martin Stannard (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 132-33 (p. 132).
[335] Sykes, *Evelyn Waugh*, p. 183.
[336] T. S. Eliot, 'Commentary', *Criterion* (July 1937).
[337] Douglas Jerrold, *Tablet*, 5 June 1937.

in his articles fraudulent documents that supposedly provided evidence of a Communist plot for the 'Sovietization' of Europe.[338] These documents were used to justify the military uprising. Lunn, too, cited them as evidence of the legitimacy of Franco's cause.[339] Based on the severity of Jerrold's position as a Nationalist propagandist it is perhaps telling that Robert Speaight in a brief aside in his memoir considered Waugh and Jerrold in similar terms. 'One is tempted to bracket Jerrold and Evelyn Waugh,' he wrote in 1970, 'but in fact they were no more than nodding acquaintances and had little in common beside certain basic loyalties'.[340] These 'loyalties', however, included the defence of Roman Catholic civilization in Europe, even if that meant taking on the role of propagandist for Franco in British publications.

In 1943 Orwell reflected on the role of Fascist propagandists in Britain during the Spanish Civil War and, moreover, the importance of Roman Catholic periodicals in this operation. Orwell writes:

> The only propaganda line open to the Nazis and Fascists was to represent themselves as Christian patriots saving Spain from a Russian dictatorship. This involved pretending that life in Government Spain was just one long massacre (*vide* the *Catholic Herald* or the *Daily Mail* – but these were child's play compared with the continental Fascist press), and it involved immensely exaggerating the scale of Russian intervention. Out of the huge pyramid of lies which the Catholic and reactionary press all over the world built up, let me take just one point – the presence in Spain of a Russian army.[341]

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[338] Herbert R. Southworth, *Conspiracy and the Spanish Civil War: The Brainwashing of Francisco Franco* (Routledge: London, 2002), p. 6. (See pp. 2-23.)
[339] Arnold Lunn, *Spanish Rehearsal* (Hutchinson & Co.: London, 1937), p. 174.
[340] Robert Speaight, *The Property Basket: Recollections of a Divided Life* (London: Collins & Harvill Press, 1970), p. 157.
[341] George Orwell, 'Looking Back on the Spanish Civil War', *New Road*, June 1943; repr. in *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell: Volume II: My Country Right or Left* ed. by Sonja Orwell and Ian Angus, 4 vols (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1970), II, pp. 286-306 (p. 295). See also 'The Propaganda War and the Intellectuals', in Anthony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939* (Phoenix: London, 2006), pp. 267-92.

Orwell's point concerns the aforementioned claims made by Jerrold, Lunn and others of a Soviet-Republican plot to takeover Spain as part of the primary objective of the Sovietization of Europe. Though this claim was proven to be false, and the documents on which it was based proven to be fraudulent, Waugh expatiates upon similar themes in *Robbery Under Law*. He mocks the 'ideologues; first in Moscow, then in Barcelona, now in Mexico', and denounces them as 'credulous pilgrims [who] pursue their quest for the promised land' (*RUL*, p. 14). Waugh's bathetic amalgam of the sacred and the atheistic is continued in his labelling Mexico the 'Red Mecca' in his *Tablet* articles.[342] Wyndham Lewis, too, refers to Moscow as the 'internationalist Mecca' in *Left Wings Over Europe*,[343] and Christopher Dawson extends this perception of the Marxism as a 'religious sect' in *The Modern Dilemma*.[344] In it, he argues that the Communist Party

> employs the weapon of excommunication against disloyal or unorthodox members. It possesses in the writings of Marx its infallible scriptures and it reveres in Lenin, if not a God, a least a saviour and a prophet.[345]

In depicting 1930s Marxism as a form of religious fanaticism, Waugh, Dawson and Lewis depict its internationalist tendencies as a perversion of the universalising doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. The title of *Robbery Under Law* alludes to this comparison. The Cárdenas government's oil expropriations were legal under the bastardised 'law' that enabled it to steal from private enterprise with impunity: 'It is

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[342] Ironically, Hastings refers to 'Fr Martin's Campion Hall in Brewer Street [Oxford]' as 'something of a Mecca for converts', in 'Some Reflections on the English Catholicism of the late 1930s', in *Bishops and Writers*, (pp. 107-26), p. 109.
[343] Wyndham Lewis, *Left Wings Over Europe: Or, How to Make a War About Nothing* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1937), p. 245.
[344] Christopher Dawson, *The Modern Dilemma: The Problem of European Unity* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1932), p. 95.
[345] Ibid., p. 95.

no exaggeration', Waugh argues, 'to say that to be an employer in Mexico is to outlaw oneself' (*RUL*, p. 71). Once the law becomes fragmented and contingent on local politics, rather than universal doctrine, it ceases to be just. As such, Waugh's title gets to the heart of the expropriation crisis as it legitimised theft and criminalised private enterprise.

Furthermore, it captures the contrast between Waugh and Greene's accounts of Mexico in 1939. In *The Lawless Roads*, Greene portrays Mexico as 'a place without law'.[346] '[H]uman beings here obeyed the jungle law,' he says, 'each for himself with tooth and nail'.[347] For Greene, Mexico was barbaric and bloody because of the absence of law and justice. *Robbery Under Law*, as its title implies, interprets the Mexican crisis as being precipitated precisely because of the Cárdenas government's legislation. But, although as Michael Brennan claims that in 1939 Waugh and Greene 'stood together at this period as a unified voice of British Catholic writing',[348] their interpretations of the cause Mexico's ills are radically different.[349] Waugh makes reference to Greene's travel book in *Robbery Under Law*. He celebrates the book, and recommends it to his readers who are looking for more adventure and intrigue than he found in Mexico. *The Lawless Roads*, Waugh writes, 'is an appalling account of the mismanagement and miseries which are kept hidden from les courageous travellers; it is all the more damning for its author's obvious antagonism to capitalist society' (*RUL*, p. 226). Waugh is conscious of his point of departure from Greene's interpretation of the Cárdenas regime's economic and legal philosophy. They are united, however, in their indictment of the brutal anti-clerical

[346] Graham Greene, *The Lawless Roads* (Penguin: London, 1987), p. 15.
[347] Ibid., p. 62.
[348] Michael G. Brennan, *Graham Greene: Fiction, Faith and Authorship* (London: Continuum, 2010), p. 264.
[349] See letter from A. D. Peters to Alfred McIntyre (Little, Brown & Co.), 5 April 1939. HRC Evelyn Waugh Papers.

policies of the regime. For them both, Mexico represents the latest iteration of the war between 'faith and anarchy'.[350] However, for Waugh, this was governed and incentivised by secular economics:

> The Church makes claims and imposes restrictions which many men find onerous; she reminds rich men that their possessions are temporary and rulers that there are higher laws than their own. In Mexico, however, in general, anti-clericism [*sic*] has been based on the single vice of cupidity. The Church was rich and physically defenceless; robbery had to be justified; human nature is moved more strongly by guilt than the will to vengeance; we hate most savagely not those who have wronged us, but those whom we have ourselves wronged.
>
> (*RUL*, p. 233)

This passage represents a clear expression of the conservative philosophical argument of *Robbery Under Law*. Waugh's Hobbesian insistence on a benevolent ruler is bolstered through the evidence, manifested in 1930s Mexico, that a malign leader would legalise and incentivise humanity's worst impulses. The Church in Mexico was plundered because it was good, Waugh argues. It represented morality, virtue and order and, as a consequence of this, made itself the first target of the leftist government. Through this, Waugh substantively connects the expropriation crisis with the greater conflict between faith and anarchy: General Cárdenas' oil expropriations were driven by 'cupidity' (*RUL*, p. 223) and the law was adjusted and corrupted in order to justify the crime. The Church's existence, Waugh argues, represents a force of implicit castigation of the Mexican Government. As a result, the Roman Catholic Church in Mexico had to be suppressed.

In October 1938, Waugh requested that Peters contact newspapers or journals for the publication of several articles 'about Mexico dealing with all aspects of it,

[350] Greene, *Lawless Roads*, p. 34.

including its present political situation and its relation with foreign countries'.[351] His pleas were unsuccessful. Waugh had also failed to attract a publisher for an extended article on the nature of Fascism in the same year. *Harper's Bazaar* requested an article from Waugh in 1938 for which their only guidance was 'for pity's sake ask him to be cheerful. With Hitler and Mussolini raging about I don't think we want anything depressing at all'.[352] But, as Waugh put it in *Robbery Under Law*, 'there is at the moment no opportunity for solid happiness in Mexico' (*RUL*, p. viii). Waugh was focused on writing political articles, in particular concerning the dangers of Communism, while also trying to attract interest in a series of articles on Mexico. In his synopses for the *Daily Mail*, he argues that 'Mexico cannot be regarded as [a] mere local freak' and that there was a strong 'Possibility [of a] Fascist coup' in the country. [353] These arguments progress into an extended speculation about the likelihood of a 'species of Hitlerism' taking hold in Mexico.[354]

Though Waugh named himself 'a partisan of Franco' in *Robbery Under Law* (p. 19), Sykes commended him for having 'not become a hero-worshipper of General Franco'.[355] This distinction is clarified by a comparison with the attitudes towards the Spanish Nationalist leader that were prominent among other Roman Catholic intellectuals of the time. Jerrold, when referring to the 'generals who saved Spain, and Europe, in 1936', enthusiastically praised Franco as a 'supremely good man, a hero possibly: possibly a saint'.[356] This kind of hagiographic treatment was commonplace in right wing Roman Catholic circles. Belloc recalled his meeting with Franco in

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[351] Letter from A. D. Peters to Gordon Beckles at the *Daily Mail*, 27 October 1938. HRC Evelyn Waugh Papers (20.32.11).
[352] Letter from P. Joyce Reynolds at *Harper's Bazaar* to A. D. Peters, 21 October 1938. HRC Evelyn Waugh Papers (20.28.00).
[353] Letter from Evelyn Waugh ('Schedule of Mexican Articles') to A. D. Peters for Gordon Bickles at the *Daily Mail*, November 1938. HRC Evelyn Waugh Papers (20.35.29).
[354] Ibid.
[355] Sykes, *Evelyn Waugh*, p. 183.
[356] Douglas Jerrold, *Georgian Adventure* (Collins: London, 1938), p. 323.

similarly rhapsodic terms. His near-transcendent experience is framed through an allusion to the Spanish general's antecedents, which range from Caesar and Napoleon, and extend backwards in time to the legendary figures of Roland and Godfrey of the First Crusade. Belloc describes his meeting with the Spanish General:

> I was led to the ante-chamber whence I should be ushered into the presence of a man last in succession to those many who on this same general battlefield of Europe have endured, planned and achieved Europe's recovery […] [W]hen I had spoken to this man of what he had done for us all and what he meant to us […] I knew that I had experienced something unique. I had been in the air of what has always been the Salvation of Europe – I mean the Spanish Crusade.[357]

Belloc's seemingly hyperbolic language of 'Salvation' and 'Crusade' is characteristic of the writing of pro-Nationalist propagandists for whom the Spanish Civil War was the latest iteration in the perpetual struggle between Christendom and the enemies of civilization. Lunn considered it to be 'essentially a war between the Catholic and Communist cultures'.[358] Waugh returned frequently to this theme in his journalism and travel writing of the period. As early as 1930 he wrote that

> in the present phase of European history the issue is no longer between Catholicism, on one side, and Protestantism, on the other, but between Christianity and Chaos. […] The loss of faith in Christianity and the consequential lack of confidence in moral and social standards have become embodied in the materialistic, mechanized state already existent in Russia and rapidly spreading south and west.[359]

Interpreting the war as a defence of Christian civilization from atheistic Communism was inevitable for such Roman Catholics. Though Waugh's written praise for Franco

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[357] Hilaire Belloc, 'The Salvation of Spain', in *Places* (1942); repr. in *Spanish Front: Writers on the Civil War* ed. by Valentine Cunningham (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1986), pp. 372-75 (p. 375).
[358] Arnold Lunn, *Spanish Rehearsal* (Hutchinson & Co.: London, 1937), p. 8.
[359] Evelyn Waugh, 'Converted to Rome: Why It Has Happened to Me', *Daily Express*, 20 October 1930; repr. in *Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, pp. 103-105 (p. 103).

was rather muted in contrast to his contemporaries, he too shared the belief in the grand religious narrative to which the Spanish Civil War and Mexico were both integral. 'The war in Spain was very much more real to [Mexicans] than any other piece of contemporary history', Waugh writes in *Robbery Under Law*, while noting that the figure of Franco loomed large in Latin America in 1938 (*RUL*, p. 44). He found in Mexico City a 'sweet, heady cocktail' was on sale at bars called 'a "Franco"' and the taxi drivers flew the 'Franco flag' from their cars (*RUL*, p. 44). More Mexicans, he claims, 'were on Franco's [side] than the republic's' (*RUL*, p. 266). The war in Spain was unavoidable in Mexico. The line of influence from Belloc to Waugh's Mexican writing is manifested in his insistence on the return of Spanish and Catholic tradition to the country. The threat of Communism imperilled all of European Civilization and Franco, Waugh argues, 'fought to prevent Spain becoming like Central America' and would precipitate a 'national renaissance' (*RUL*, p. 360). Thus, for Waugh and his readers, leftist barbarism could only be kept at bay at the extremities of Christendom by taking arms in defence of its historic centre. The Spanish renaissance would, of necessity, be international and universal, like the Roman Church, and return Mexico to her former imperial glories.

The 'jungle' is an image that Waugh often relied on in his writing as a metaphor for world outside of Christian civilization. Waugh wrote in 1933 that 'I am deeply interested in the jungle and only casually interested in Mayfair, and one has to write about what interests one'.[360] It is Tony Last's fate in *A Handful of Dust* (1934) to venture into the South American jungle in search of a lost civilization (Chapter 5 is titled 'In Search of a City') and end up imprisoned and forced to read and re-read aloud the works of Dickens for a crazed tribal leader. Like Abraham, Tony 'looked

[360] Evelyn Waugh, 'Travel – and Escape from you Friends', *Daily Mail*, 16 January 1933; repr. in *Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, pp. 133-34 (p. 134).

for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God' and found only barbarism.[361] 'It is not unknown in history', Waugh wrote in *Robbery Under Law*, 'for the jungle to recapture its lost provinces […]. It is only by unremitting, concerted defence and counterattack that man retains his place on earth. Many Mexicans, and those some of the most honourable and disinterested among them, have despaired of the effort' (*RUL*, p. 77). Waugh's travel writing continues themes established in his novels in a more polemically political form. In support of the *casus belli* for the Italian invasion of Abyssinia Waugh declared that it is 'in the very nature of civilization that it must be in constant conflict with barbarism'.[362] Barbarism, he wrote, '*means* provocation'.[363] The 'jungle', here, is the metaphorical antithesis of European civilization. In Mexico the jungle had returned as a corollary of the revolutionary government's brutal religious suppression. The 'jungle is closing in and the graves of the pioneers are lost in the undergrowth' Waugh lamented (*RUL*, p. 227). Mexico is a 'huge country with a long a proud history'; it 'has been rich and cultured and orderly […]; now, every year it is becoming hungrier, wickeder, and more hopes; the great buildings of the past are falling into ruins' (*RUL*, p. 205). The country tragically realised Waugh's Spenglerian belief in the decline of western civilization and the elusiveness of Tony Last's search for a City of God, and his own.

'The Humbug of Being Unbiased'

Waugh's introduction to *Robbery Under Law* ostensibly reads as an attempt to radically reduce his readership. The writer makes no attempt to conceal his conservative politics or appeal directly to non-conservative readers. In a travel book,

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[361] Hebrews 11.10. *KJV*.
[362] Evelyn Waugh, 'Abyssinian Realities: We Can Applaud Italy', *Evening Standard*, 13 February 1935; repr. in *Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, pp. 162-64 (p. 162-63).
[363] My Italics.

Waugh wrote in his introduction, ‘we can dispense [with] the humbug of being unbiased’ (*RUL*, p. 19). He makes no such declaration at the opening of *Waugh in Abyssinia*. *Robbery Under Law* begins with ‘A Conservative Manifesto’ in which Waugh provides a lucid statement of his political and religious convictions. In so doing, he presents the declaration as a form of confession: ‘When we go abroad we take our opinions with us; it is useless to pretend, as many writers do, that they arrive with minds wholly innocent of other experience; are born anew into each new world’ (*RUL*, p. 19). The religious diction in this passage shows the author openly making the association of his political biases with his experience of penitence and submission. Waugh depicts himself abandoning the self-delusion inherent in the travel writing that, implicitly or explicitly, claims to represent the world without such predispositions. Greene writes in *The Lawless Roads* of the ‘atmosphere of the border’: ‘there is something about it like a good confession: poised for a few happy moments between sin and sin’.[364] The essential sin, while travelling, for Waugh, is to deceive oneself and one’s readers that there is no bias on the part of the writer. He is not ‘born anew into each new world’, and, accordingly, he interprets the Mexican crisis in light of the concerns that pressed upon him and his co-religionists in Europe in 1938.

The metaphorical representation of the border as a site of religious importance, where declarations take the spiritual significance of confession, captures the religious thesis of *Robbery Under Law*. It characterises the trip to Mexico as a mission that was undertaken, in Wykes phrase, ‘*ad dei gloriam*’. It is also a rhetorical posture that is remarkably similar to the opening of Lunn’s travel book from the Spanish Civil War. In *Spanish Rehearsal* (1937) Lunn writes: ‘Every writer is biassed

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[364] Graham Greene, *The Lawless Roads* (Penguin: London, 1987), p. 24.

[*sic*], and the true distinction is not between the biased and the unbiased, but between those who are and who are not aware of their own prejudices.'[365] The declarations of such ideological baggage in Waugh and Lunn's cases take the manner of political confessions. Lunn further dramatizes the experience of the border:

> Every writer must pass through the customs of which his readers are the officials. […]
>
> 'Have you anything to declare?'
>
> Indeed I have.
>
> I must declare that my bulky bias against those who have murdered thousands of my fellow Christians, my bias in favour of beauty, and my prejudice against those who have already destroyed so much of Spain's artistic heritage from the past. My political prejudices are easy to define. I accept the Christian tradition in favour of the economy of the farm, the village and the small town, and against the megalopolitan civilisation of giant cities.[366]

For Waugh and Lunn 'bias' is coterminous with 'thesis'. For it is not simply bias that guides their reflections while travelling: both writers state that they undertook their respective travel to confirm their biases. This is further evidenced by Lunn's assertion that he was 'collecting material about "Red Horrors"'.[367] One American reviewer of *Robbery Under Law* wrote that 'Mr. Waugh's conservatism is a philosophy in itself'. As a consequence of his aggressive stance in his introduction Waugh accused his reader of self-censorship by only encountering ideas commensurate with the Left Book Club orthodoxy, something he would later satirise in *Put Out More Flags* (1942).[368]

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[365] Lunn, *Spanish Rehearsal*, p. 7.
[366] Ibid., p. 7.
[367] Scott-Ellis, *The Chances of Death*, p. 69.
[368] R.L. Martin, review of *Robbery Under Law*, *New York Times*, 19 November 1939; repr. in *Evelyn Waugh: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 205-208 (p. 205).

‘Let me, then, say’, Waugh concludes his ‘Conservative Manifesto’, ‘that I was a Conservative when I went to Mexico and that everything I saw there strengthened my opinions’ (*RUL*, p. 19). Confrontationally, he acknowledges that his political and religious biases were unwavering and unaltered by his journey. It typifies the political stridency of the book and radically departs from the consciously self-effacing style of his earlier travel writing. *Ninety-Two Days* (1934) begins with the author wondering whom exactly the book he writes is intended for:

> All this is, in a sense, an apology for the book I am going to write during the coming, miserable weeks. […] Who in his sense will read, still less buy, a travel book of no scientific value about a place he has no intention of visiting?’[369]

When he arrived in Abyssinia for the first time in 1930 Waugh recalled that ‘[s]ix weeks before, I had barely heard the Ras Tafari’s name’.[370] All he knew was intriguing religious trivia: that the Abyssinian Coptic Church ‘had canonized Pontius Pilate’ and ‘consecrated their bishops by spitting on their heads’.[371] This was enough to convince Waugh to attend the coronation of Haile Selassie I in Addis Ababa. It is a common trope of travel books for the writer to acknowledge their unfamiliarity with the travel destinations. Rebecca West opens *Black Lamb and grey Falcon* (1942), for example, with an admission of how little she knew of Yugoslavia: ‘I could form not opinion, for I knew nothing about the South Slavs, nor had I come across anybody who was acquainted with them’.[372] When Waugh visited British Guiana in 1933, he did so, he claimed, in total ignorance of the country. By contrast, Waugh already

[369] Evelyn Waugh, *Ninety-Two Days: Travels in Guiana and Brazil* (Duckworth: London, 1934), p. 10.
[370] Evelyn Waugh, *Remote People: A Report from Ethiopia and British Africa, 1930-31* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 11.
[371] Ibid., p. 11.
[372] Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: A Journey through Yugoslavia* (London: Canongate, 1993 [1941]), p. 19.

knew too much about Mexico before arriving: it is politics and religion, and his obligations to Pearson, that motivated his travel. 'I went to Mexico in order to write a book about it; in order to verify and reconsider impressions formed at a distance' (*RUL*, p. 2). The authorial persona of the early-1930s travel books starkly contrasts that of *Robbery Under Law*. In *Labels*, *Remote People* and *Ninety-Two Days* the reader accompanies the often bored and unimpressed writer on his travels. Toward the latter half of the decade, in *Waugh in Abyssinia* but especially *Robbery Under Law* it is the writer's politics that orientate the narrative. As Stannard writes, '*Waugh in Abyssinia* and *Mexico* reflect a mildly hysterical thesis emphasising tradition and conquest'.[373] Locations and incidents are subordinate to the primacy of the politico-religious thesis, and the confirmation, acknowledged or not, of pre-existing biases.

Evelyn and Laura Waugh travelled in relative luxury during their journeys in Mexico. But even their means of arrival in America was not free from political concerns. When Waugh informed A. D. Peters of his desire to travel to New York on the S.S. *Bremen* his agent counselled against it. The opulent German transatlantic liner flew a Swastika from its stern and, Peters told Waugh, it represented a political decision to sail on it. 'I have never travelled on the Bremen', Peters wrote, 'because I do not like Herr Hitler. […] Quite apart from political prejudice I would recommend you to choose the Queen Mary'.[374] Politics intrude on the level of form, too, in the severe tonal shift that concludes the opening chapter of *Robbery Under Law*. 'These were our holidays. There are few countries that still offer so many surprises to the tourist. But there were graver interests which have no part in this chapter.' (*RUL*, p. 49) The chapter ends there. The weaknesses of this chapter – titled 'Tourist Mexico' – make it emblematic of Waugh's failure to write the kind of travelogue he had

[373] Martin Stannard, 'Debunking the Jungle: The Context of Evelyn Waugh's Travel Books 1930-9', *Prose Studies* 5.1 (1982) 105-126 (124).
[374] Letter from A. D. Peters to Evelyn Waugh, 11 July 1938. Evelyn Waugh Papers, HRC.

previously succeeded with in the early 1930s. Its abrupt ending, terminated by the pressing matters of Mexican politics, demonstrates the all-encompassing nature of the political turbulence of the period, but also its competing preoccupations. In *Remote People* Waugh informed the reader that, '[f]rom now on, this record becomes literally a "travel book"; that is to say that it deals less with the observation of places than with the difficulties of getting from one place to another.'[375] In *Robbery Under Law* he compared his touristic experiences with 'wildly different circumstances' of Greene's trip to Mexico. 'Mr Greene's was an heroic journey, mine was definitely homely; […] he was alone, while I had delightful company; he was travelling as a poor man, I as a rich. There is a great difference there, particularly in a country like Mexico, where the divisions of rich and poor are sharply marked'.[376] What Waugh could not avoid, however, was his 'contempt for the "tourist"', even when he suspected that he was one.

> My own experiences, I am afraid, were definitely homely. Those who have borrowed this book in anticipation of vicarious endurances, of treacherous guides and blistered toes, pack mules, dysentery, common or amœbic, bandits, official or outlawed, camp fires and strange encounters, must, I fear, return it to the library unread. The worst sufferings I can boast were from bed-bugs in two luxury hotels and a film producer at luncheon. I was in Mexico both for a holiday and for work and both kept me in soft conditions.
>
> (*RUL*, pp. 37-38)

Waugh repeatedly directs the reader away from his own text and towards *The Lawless Roads* as if to supplement the lack of action in his own Mexican travel book. There is not much in the latter to maintain the common reader's interest. Harold Nicolson, who agreed with Waugh's criticism of Cárdenas' oil expropriations, called it a 'short but

[375] Waugh, *Remote People*, p. 157.
[376] Waugh, 'The Waste Land', *Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, p. 248.

dull book upon Mexico'. The writer, he continued, 'is not interested in the fauna or flora of the country even as he is bored by the dramatic scenery'.[377]

As Bernard Schweizer notes, the impact of Waugh's travel book 'on the course of Mexico's oil expropriation was virtually nil'.[378] This was, he suggests, 'because the outbreak of World War II shortly after its publication posed much more urgent threats than the economic fate of the Cowdray petroleum estate'.[379] A more convincing implied readership of *Robbery Under Law* is the coterie of right-wing Roman Catholic intellectuals with whom Waugh associated in the late 1930s. As we have seen, in his early travel books Waugh makes apologetic overtures to his reader for the absence of exploration or information in his travel writing. In making such admissions of authorial failure, rather than seeking absolution from his reader for his confession, Waugh points towards at his books' real appeal. Implied here is a foundational principle of his travel writing that holds true across his 1930s work. The subjective voice of the writer takes precedence over the explanatory or exploratory content. In contrast to the earlier travel books, *Robbery Under Law* makes its appeal to a different kind of implied reader: the English Catholic conservative. Readers who are not Roman Catholics or conservative are dared to read a book that is unreservedly hostile to their politics.

In his 'Conservative Manifesto', Waugh advances his belief that man is eternally 'in search of an oppressor who will take responsibility for his ills' (*RUL*, p. 10). Through it, he lambasts the Marxists among his contemporaries for seeking an explanation for their suffering that is outside of their control. He ridicules the fetishization of the feeling of oppression in the writers who contributed to the *Left*

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[377] Harold Nicolson, review of *Robbery Under Law*, *Daily Telegraph*, 30 June 1939; repr. in *Evelyn Waugh: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 203-204 (p. 203).
[378] Bernard Schweizer, *Radicals on the Road: The Politics of English Travel Writing in the 1930s* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia), p. 176.
[379] Ibid., p.176.

Review and the leftist press. 'I remember reading in the *New Statesman*', he mockingly recalls,

> one of those warm-hearted little articles which used to appear in the early days of the Spanish civil war; the author – Mr Cyril Connolly, I think – was describing his emotions when he crossed from capitalist France into the free, proletarian air of Catalonia.
>
> (*RUL*, p. 25).

The capacity for a political and economic system, with its associated nomenclature ('capitalist France'; 'proletarian' Catalonia), to have its own unique atmosphere is evidence for Waugh of the fragmentation and dissolution of man's subservience to a universal, religious law. Connolly's experience of physical geography, he argues, is governed by a sentimental reverence for political labels. Waugh explains that he titled his first travel book *Labels* 'for the reason that all the places I visited on this trip are already fully labelled'.[380] He begins *Robbery Under Law* with the acknowledgement that he himself is already fully labelled, however erroneously: Conservative, Roman Catholic, Francoist, and Fascist. It is the terms that speak in advance of one's beliefs and, moreover, inadequately represent those beliefs that have accelerated the political crises of the period.

Lunn, too, passes judgement on 'The Use and Abuse of Labels' in *Spanish Rehearsal* (1937). The term 'fascist', as Lunn saw it, is so overused and widely applied that it served merely as a term of abuse. 'Labels', wrote Lunn, 'are valuable in so far as they help to clarify thought, pernicious in so far as they are accepted as

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[380] Waugh, *Labels*, p. 13.

substitutes for thought. To paste such labels as “Fascist,” “Communist,” or “Democrat” over the map of Europe is a silly waste of time’.[381] He argues that:

> If you object to dictatorship in Russia you are a Fascist. If you criticize certain aspects of democracy in England you are a Fascist. If you disapprove of that régime of terror which followed the institution of the Popular Front in Spain, you are a Fascist. If you hope for friendlier relations with Italy, if you resent the mischievous activities of our pacifist warmongers, if you are not prepared for your son to die for Geneva, you are a Fascist.[382]

Implicit in their disparagement of political labels is a defence of Roman Catholic who, in their support of Mussolini and Franco, had been regarded as Fascists. But, although their convictions may have constellated around right wing, Catholic politics in the 1930s, Waugh and Lunn contend that all are united in the body of the Church. Not everyone agreed. Orwell claimed that, ‘Outside its own ranks, the Catholic Church is almost universally regarded as pro-Fascist, both objectively and subjectively’. [383] Waugh’s enthusiasm for the Italian Fascists and the Spanish Nationalists is, however, for him, an expression of the primacy of faith to any political commitments. This is something, he and Lunn insist, that ‘labels’ can only insufficiently represent.

Writing to the *New Statesman* in March 1938, Waugh petitioned the paper with a ‘call for order’ and to put a stop to the ubiquity and silliness with which the term ‘Fascist’ was commonly used.[384] He cites the gross overuse of the word, as an adjective and a noun, in an absurd array of contexts: ‘When rioters are imprisoned it is described as a “Fascist sentence”; the Means test is Fascist”; colonization is Fascist;

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[381] Arnold Lunn, *Spanish Rehearsal* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1937), p. 138.
[382] Ibid., p. 138.
[383] Ibid., p. 137.
[384] Evelyn Waugh, ‘Fascist’, *New Statesman*, 5 March 1938; repr. in *Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, pp. 222-23 (p. 23).

military discipline is Fascist patriotism of Fascist; Catholicism is Fascist.'[385] Waugh proposed write a lengthier article on this subject entitled 'Panic on the Left', but no newspapers accepted his offer.[386] In his letter to the *New Statesmen* Waugh makes reference to Nancy Cunard and Louis Aragon's 1937 questionnaire sent to 'Writers and Poets of England, Scotland Ireland and Wales' for publication in the *Left Review*. In it, Cunard and Aragon asked:

> Are you for, or against, the legal government and the people of republican Spain? Are you for, or against, Franco and Fascism? For it is impossible any longer to take no side.'[387]

The writers' replies were divided into three categories, each, to Waugh's mind, inaccurately representing the position of Roman Catholics on the Spanish Civil War. These are labelled: 'For the Government', 'Neutral', and 'Against the Government'. Waugh's response to the questionnaire is included in the last category. In it, Waugh denounces the 'legality' of the republican government in Spain. He anticipates the religious objections that would level at the Cárdenas government in *Robbery Under Law*:

> I am no more impressed by the 'legality' of the Valencia government than are English Communists by the legality of the Crown, Lords and Commons. I believe it was a bad government, rapidly deteriorating. If I were a Spaniard I should be fighting for General Franco. As an Englishman I am not in the predicament of choosing between

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[385] Ibid., p. 23. This exasperation was not confined solely to the Right, however. Orwell agreed, writing in 1944 that 'the word "Fascism" is almost entirely meaningless. […] I have heard it applied to farmers, shopkeepers, Social Credit, corporal punishment, fox-hunting, bull-fighting, the 1922 Committee, the 1941 Committee, Kipling, Gandhi, Chiang Kai-Shek, homosexuality, Priestley's broadcasts, Youth Hostels, astrology, women, dogs and I do not know what else.' (George Orwell, 'As I Please', *Tribune*, 24 March 1944; repr. in *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell: Volume III: As I Please* ed. by Sonja Orwell and Ian Angus, 4 vols (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), III, pp. 135-39 (p. 138).)

[386] Letter from Evelyn Waugh to A. D. Peters, 10 March 1938. Evelyn Waugh Papers, HRC. (19.44.01)

[387] *Authors Take Sides on the Spanish War* ed. by Nancy Cunard and Louis Aragon (London: Left Review, 1937), p. 1.

> two evils. I am not a Fascist nor shall I become one unless it were the only alternative to Marxism. It is mischievous to suggest that such a choice is imminent.[388]

Though it goes undeclared in his response, Waugh's argument is governed by his anti-democratic politics, in which the Catholic and monarchic traditions of Spain necessitate that a secular republican is inherently unjust. His hypothetical proposition ('If I were a Spaniard I should be fighting for General Franco') rings hollow with the Waugh's assertions elsewhere in his writing that Roman Catholics are internationally unified in their defence of Europe and Christendom. As Christopher Hollis wrote in 1937, 'The rebellion was not a rebellion against government; it was a rebellion against anarchy. Personally, I would be for Franco for religious reasons alone, which are much more important than political reasons'.[389] There were substantive politico-religious reasons for Waugh to support Franco. For him, however, politics *were* religious. The Spanish Civil War and the Mexican expropriation crisis prompted his clearest expression of this in *Robbery Under Law*.

Mexico and Fascism

Waugh argued for the civilizing benefits of Fascism for Mexico. His insistence on the reclamation of Mexico's Spanish imperial identity is inseparable from the idea of Spain's prospective rebirth under General Franco. The Mexicans 'understood the Spanish issue in Spanish terms', Waugh wrote (*RUL*, p. 44). Since the Cárdenas Government had all of the negative aspects of Fascism and none of its benefits, he claimed that '[t]he only difference between the Mexican system and the Fascist is that the nation has sacrificed its political liberties without getting internal security or

[388] Ibid., p. 30
[389] Christopher Hollis, *We Are Not So Dumb* (London: Longmans Green, 1937), p. 102.

foreign prestige in exchange' (*RUL*, p. 78). This argument is advanced in the passages in which he claimed that Cárdenas' Mexico was nearer to Nazism than Marxism. This further evidenced the hollowness of political labels for Waugh. Following Lunn's argument in *Spanish Rehearsal*, such labelling did not serve to better clarify thought, but rather to incentivise uncritical attitudes based on a pre-existing and inflexible political identity. It appears in his descriptions of the architectural absurdity of Mexico City, which is styled, he wrote, in the 'Nazi-factory manner' but bizarrely 'is thought to be the more Marxist' (*RUL*, p. 26). Waugh claimed that the country, 'will shortly develop a species of Hitlerism' (*RUL*, p. 310). The oil expropriations themselves, '[i]n practice, as in theory,' Waugh argued, 'conformed to the new, Nazi statecraft' (*RUL*, p. 118). The ideological distinctions between political labels – Marxism, Communism, Fascist, and Nazism – are strained in *Robbery Under Law*. The confused political nomenclature serves Waugh's thesis: that there is no material difference between the terminology. Such differences merely constitute the varieties of state propaganda.

Robbery Under Law is intended as a forewarning of the fate that awaits Europe if Communism is allowed to become further entrenched in Spain and Central Europe. The left, Waugh argues, was blinded by their pathological impulse to divide and label along partisan grounds. This was exemplified by Cunard and Aragon's insistence on it being impossible 'any longer to take no side' in 1937. The oil expropriations 'had been accompanied by a number of potent phrases about democracy', he wrote; 'if the Japanese, or Nationalist-Spaniards, or Germans or Italians had taken our oil, then there would have been a series of meeting in the Albert Hall; but the Mexicans had a Left Book Club vocabulary' (*RUL*, p. 89). This refers to the Albert Hall meetings of 1935 that condemned the Italian campaign in Abyssinia.

The term ‘expropriation’ has its own history in the Marxist political lexicon, too. In late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Russia the revolutionary parties financed their activities through robberies of banks and trains, which they euphemistically termed ‘expropriations’.[390]

In the concluding chapter of *Robbery Under Law*, Waugh turned his attention to the issue of the suppression of Catholics in Mexico that followed the 1917 Revolution. In response to the ‘third wave’ of anti-clericalism that swept across Mexico in 1931 and 1932, Pope Pius XI published the papal encyclical *Acerba Animi*. This represented the strongest condemnation of the Mexican Government’s suppression of Roman Catholics to date.[391] In this document Pius XI exhorted the European powers, including Great Britain, to officially protest Mexico’s religious persecution. However, because such action may have jeopardised its commercial holdings in Mexico the British Government resolved not to act. In a later encyclical that addressed the Spanish war, *Divini Redemptoris* (1937), Pius XI declared:

> Wherever the Communists have gained power and control – we think with fatherly affection especially of the people of Russia and Mexico – they openly proclaim and pursue the policy of using every means to destroy utterly the foundations of the Christian religion and civilization, and to obliterate the memory of it entirely from the minds of men, especially of the young.’[392]

It was not merely the destruction of churches and the execution of priests that was being witnessed in Mexico, Pius XI argued, but a return to pre-colonial paganism. ‘Every traveller to Mexico,’ Waugh told his reader, ‘must read the *Plumed Serpent*’

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[390] Orlando Figes, *A People’s Tragedy: The Russian Revolution, 1891-1921* (London: Pimlico, 1996), p. 138.
[391] Claudia Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals, 1903-1939* (Wilmington, NC: McGrath, 1981), pp. 485-89.
[392] See J. Derek Holmes, *The Papacy in the Modern World, 1914-1978* (London: Burns & Oates, 1981), p. 96.

(*RUL*, p. 10). When discussing the fate of Mexico following the Spanish Civil War, and the likelihood that Nazism will follow Marxism, Waugh returned to Lawrence's focus on Mexican pagan mythology, 'Was the *Plumed Serpent* as fantastic as it appeared when we first read it? The Nazis have been able to stimulate a cult of pre-Christian deities; suppose there were a similar revival, of the kind Lawrence predicted, among the mestizos and the Indians.' (*RUL*, pp. 271-72). He described Cárdenas as 'a man of predominantly Indian blood' (*RUL*, p. 58), thereby characterising him as a leader whose very breeding takes him and his country further into pre-colonial darkness. In this way Waugh can be said to have anticipated what Alan Cassels later termed the 'Janus-faced nature of Fascism'.[393]

The incipient Fascism Waugh found in Mexico is 'Janus-faced' because it is expressed through contradictions: it looks both forward and backwards, concerned with futurity and origin. As Waugh saw it, Mexico looked forward: fetishizing progress through Six-Year-Plan Exhibitions where hygiene, education, agriculture and technological advancements were celebrated. And it simultaneously looked back: undertaking the ancestor-worship and paganism that pre-dated Spanish imperialism. Waugh compared the Mexican Government's expropriations with the 'Nazi confiscations of Jewish shops and factories' (*RUL*, p. 184). He wrote of his 'friends in Mexico who also have been ruined and outlawed' and had received nothing from the Government 'except smug suggestions that they and their ancestors have brought things on themselves' (*RUL*, p. 184). Waugh refers here to Ernest Gruening's book on Mexico, *Mexico and its Heritage* (1928), which he did not admire, for one view on Mexican Catholicism. 'But, says Mr. Gruening to his readers, the Indian is not really Christian.' The Indian's Christianity, as Waugh recounted of Gruening's argument, is

[393] Alan Cassels, 'Janus: The Two Faces of Fascism', *Historical Papers* (4.1), 1969, 166-84 (184).

‘a hotch-potch of polytheism and black magic; with the foreign tongue which the missionary taught him he pays lip service to the Spanish God but in his heart he still worships the old, bloody gods of the Aztecs’. Waugh, however, found the thesis that the Mexicans still secretly ‘perpetuate a form of degraded paganism’ disingenuous: ‘for its ultimate aim is to discredit not the Indian’s religion but everybody’s’ (*RUL*, p. 220). The ‘Nazification’ of Mexico was well underway in 1938, he argued. And, moreover, it exploited the resurgence of pagan mythology in its propaganda. Nazism was, for Waugh, ‘a combination of the race-myth with the destruction of private property that seems peculiarly apt for importation into Mexico. And the trade routes for its importation are already established’ (*RUL*, p. 292). There is an important political irony at work here. Following the expropriation the Mexican Government sold oil to the future Axis powers: Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. Waugh implied that these commercial exchanges further undermine Mexico’s Marxist credentials – which he argued was, at best, only nominally ‘Marxist’ – and increased the likelihood of the importation of Nazism into the country.

In the Preface to Waugh’s 1945 anthology of his interwar travel writing, *When the Going Was Good*, he decided not to include any extracts from *Robbery Under Law*.

> There was a fifth book, *Robbery Under Law*, about Mexico, which I am content to leave in oblivion, for it dealt little with travel and much with political questions. ‘To have travelled a lot’ I wrote in the Introduction to that book, ‘to have spent, as I have, the first twelve years of adult life on the move, is to this extent a disadvantage. At the age of thirty-five one needs to go to the moon, or some such place, to recapture the excitement with which one first landed at Calais. For many people Mexico has, in the past, had this lunar character. Lunar it still remains, but in no poetic sense. It is a waste land, part of a dead or, at any rate, dying planet. Politics, everywhere destructive, have here dried up the place, frozen it, cracked it, and powdered it to dust. In the sixteenth century human life was disordered and talent stultified by the

> obsession of theology today we are plague-stricken by politics. This is a political book.' So let it lie in its own dust. Here I seek the moon landscape.[394]

Aldous Huxley's *Beyond the Mexique Bay* (1934) and Lawrence's *Mornings in Mexico* (1927) are travel books that capture the 'lunar character' of Mexico in a way that, Waugh admits, he could not in 1939. The moon is an image of that which exists without a label. It alone remained unsullied by 1930s politics and Waugh made reference to these Mexican travel books in order to depict the deficiencies in his own. He denies the poetic tradition of lunar escapism. Where Mexico had once represented to Huxley, Lawrence and other English writers something wholly other to European industrialism, by 1939 it does so no longer. Mexico's transition from the subject of poetry to that of the political pamphlet is emblematic of the broader decay of civilization Waugh found inescapable in this period. It is the political nature of *Robbery Under Law* that made it distasteful for Waugh following the Second World War. It is no coincidence that his argument for the selection of *When the Going Was Good* maintains the lament for a prelapsarian, pre-war landscape found in *Brideshead Revisited*, published the year prior in 1945. Stannard wrote that '[t]he movement is from an agnostic a-political and playfully subversive view to a distinctly "conservative" and theological one. It must be remembered that what remains of the original texts in *When The Going Was Good* (1946) is a product of the later attitude.'[395] This theme pervades the post-war work and will be discussed in the following chapter. However, the reasons for which Waugh chose to abandon the work (it was itself out of print from the time of its first publication until recently), are important, not least because it informs us of the value that Waugh placed on his inter-

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[394] Evelyn Waugh, *When the Going Was Good* (London: Penguin, 1951), p. 7.
[395] Martin Stannard, 'Debunking the Jungle: The Context of Evelyn Waugh's Travel Books 1930-9', *Prose Studies* 5.1 (1982) 105-126 (107).

war travel writing at this point. 'I don't want my travel books reprinted', he wrote to A. D. Peters in August 1945.

> Instead I want to produce one book with extracts from all of them. Most belong to Duckworth One (I think) to C&H [Chapman & Hall]. I don't want any cash for editing. Would the best plan be to buy the copyrights from Duckworth? Their value must be negligible & publish with C&H. Or to buy copyright of 'Robbery Under Law' from C&H.
>
> The thing was discarded once before but inconclusively.[396]

Waugh described the anthology as 'simply a mopping up operation' that 'does not deserve much notice'.[397] On the assumption that a majority of readers will encounter his travel writing through the anthology, rather than hunting down the out of print originals, this can be interpreted as an attempt to purge travel writing of its politically ignominious passages. *When the Going Was Good* was certainly not published for financial motives, as evidenced by Waugh's insistence on a lack of publicity. Amusingly, at the same time as Waugh was writing his preface to the anthology, Duckworths wrote to him to ask if they could reprint his early travel books. 'I think Duckworths must be insane', Waugh replied. 'They now have in their possession a preface to 'When the going was good' stating that the travel books will <u>not</u> be reprinted. They now ask "if I mind" Pan reprinting them. Of course I mind.'[398]

The publication context of *When the Going Was Good* evidences a change in Waugh's position as a public intellectual and writer. Following the Second World War it was deemed prudent for the compromising material in *Waugh in Abyssinia* and *Robbery Under Law* to be expunged. However, in his letters of this period the issue of Fascism and Spain is raised, albeit indirectly, in curious ways. In the weeks following

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[396] Letter from Evelyn Waugh to A. D. Peters, 23 August 1945. Evelyn Waugh Papers, HRC.
[397] Letter from Evelyn Waugh to A. D. Peters, 16 January 1946. Evelyn Waugh Papers, HRC.
[398] Letter from Evelyn Waugh to A. D. Peters, [no date]. A reply to A. D. Peters letter of 19 September 1946. Evelyn Waugh Papers, HRC.

his attendance of a 'disgusting exhibition' of Picasso's at the Victoria and Albert Museum in December 1945, Waugh began signing off his letters with a call for Picasso's execution. 'DEATH TO PICASSO', he wrote, sometimes in red ink and often in block capitals.[399] Waugh included the line in a list of instructions to his agent and in several letters to friends in late-1945 and early-1946. 'Death to Picasso the head of the Counter Hons' he wrote post-script in a letter to Nancy Mitford in January 1946. To Penelope Betjeman he wrote later that month: 'DEATH TO PICASSO KING OF THE COUNTER HONS'. The phrase 'Counter-Hons' was used in Mitford's *The Pursuit of Love* (1945) as shorthand to describe those the Radlett children considered ignoble and anti-aristocratic. 'The Hons was the Radlett secret society,' the fist-person narrator, Fanny, remarks; 'anybody who was not a friend to the Hons was a Counter-Hon, and their battle-cry was "Death to the horrible Counter-Hons". I was a Hon, since my father, like their, was a lord.'[400] Jessica Mitford titled her memoir *Hons and Rebels* (1960). Waugh had written to Nancy that he had recently read a draft of *The Pursuit of Love*, which explains the immediate origin of the phrase 'Counter-Hon' in his letters.[401] By 1945 Waugh despised Picasso's art, and when the painter joined the French Communist Party (PCF) in 1944 his convictions were settled.

In December 1945 Waugh wrote a letter to *The Times* regarding the V&A exhibition: 'Señor Picasso's painting cannot be intelligently discussed in the terms

[399] Letter from Evelyn Waugh to Nancy Mitford, 5 January 1946, in *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh* ed. by Mark Amory (London, 1980), p. 216. For references to 'Death to Picasso' in Waugh's letters, see *Letters*, pp. 214-22.
[400] Nancy Mitford, *The Pursuit of Love*, in *Love in a Cold Climate and Other Novels* (London: Peguin, 2000), pp. 7-151 (p. 16).
[401] Letter from Waugh to Nancy Mitford concerning the Spanish Civil War section of her novel *The Pursuit of Love* (1945) 1945, *Letters*, pp. 212-13. 'There is a very good theme in the Spanish refugees camp and it was vicious to falsify the facts to make them fit. The contrast of Linda with her manorial soup and port benefactions and her communist husband with his seal to re-equip the militant workers for the class struggle in Mexico could be excellent. It would give point to her bewilderment that the Spanish gentry did nothing to help. You could make a dramatic climax in the sailing of the evacuation ship with the communists taking off the distressed families in order to pack it with international thugs.' (p. 213)

used of the civilized masters. […] Modern art, whether it is Nazi oratory, band leadership, or painting, aims at a mesmeric trick and achieves either total success or total failure. The large number of otherwise cultured and intelligent people who fall victims to Señor Picasso are not posers. They are genuinely "sent". It may seem preposterous to those of us who are immune, but the process is apparently harmless.'[402] Waugh criticised for the *Times* letter. 'I have had a great fan mail about Picasso – all from Surrey', he wrote sarcastically to Nancy.[403] This attitude to Picasso, especially in light of the Spanish artist's recent and highly publicised commitment to Communism, further details Waugh's belief that the modern art was, alongside Marxism, antipathetic to civilization. Picasso's 'addicts', Waugh wrote to Robin Campbell, 'tell me his message is one Chaos and Despair. […] It is entirely historical to believe that cultures decline and expire. I believe Western culture to be in rapid decay and Picasso and [Gertrude] Stein are glaring symptoms. […] It requires constant effort to keep within the world order and our contemporaries are too lazy to make the effort'.[404] The tone is strikingly reminiscent of many passages from *Robbery Under Law* and Waugh's journalism of the late 1930s. Positioning himself as a stalwart of civilization against such evils, he wrote in a postscript to the travel book that '[a] conservative is not merely an obstructionist who wishes to resist the introduction of novelties':

> He has positive work to do, whose value is particularly emphasized by the plight of Mexico. Civilization has no force of its own beyond what is given it from within. It is under constant assault and it takes most of the energies of civilized man to keep going at all. […] There is nothing, except ourselves, to stop our own countries becoming like Mexico. That is the moral, for us, of her decay.

[402] Letter from Evelyn Waugh to the Editor of the *The Times*, 18 December 1945, in *Letters*, p. 214.
[403] Letter from Evelyn Waugh to Nancy Mitford, 5 December 1945, *Letters*, p. 214.
[404] Letter to Robin Campbell, 27 December 1945, in *Letters*, pp. 214-16 (p. 215).

(*RUL*, pp. 278-79)

The Mexican precedent, as Waugh viewed it, confirmed the precarious status of European civilization. Though *Robbery Under Law* is a Spenglerian articulation of decline it concludes with a call to action. Waugh identified Franco as fighting 'to prevent Spain becoming like Central America' (*RUL*, p. 360). The war to 're-establish Spain' and the Spanish Empire was, Waugh argued, 'only the beginning and not the end of a national renaissance' (*RUL*, p. 360). It is therefore inaccurate to define Waugh's politics in this period only via negation, as he attempted to do in his reply to *Authors Take Sides*. Though a strong opponent of the spread of Communism in Europe, the Roman Catholic writer, as Waugh he insisted in the above passage, 'has positive work to do'. In seeking to re-establish imperial Spain and restore the Spanish-ness (and thus the Catholicism) of Mexico Waugh reassumed the colonial propagandist role he that he assumed in *Waugh in Abyssinia*. He again defended Roman Catholic imperialism of the kind Mussolini exported to Abyssinia and he hoped Franco would reinstall in Mexico. As Kostopulos rightly puts it, '[s]uch a justification is revealing of [Waugh's] total acceptance of all forms of imperialism for the remote places of the world that are seemingly incapable of governing themselves'.[405] The oil expropriations thereby serve as both the provocation for the commission of *Robbery Under Law* and its central example of Mexico's fall. 'Wherever [Pearson's] operations moved, improved sanitation followed. He set a new standard of healthy living conditions, draining swamps, clearing bush, tapping sources of pure water' (*RUL*, p. 93). This claim echoes Waugh's eulogy for the civilizing work undertaken by the Italian engineers in East Africa, and the Mexican writing is

[405] Ibid., p. 120.

largely a continuation of this theme. Waugh had promised his readers in 1937 that he would write ‘No more Fascist propaganda’.[406] *Robbery Under Law*, however, is precisely that. This is true both in terms of the book’s thesis as well as its intended readership. The coterie of Roman Catholic intellectuals and activists of which Waugh was increasingly a member in this period places his travel book in the canon of pro-Franco propaganda published by his co-religionists during the Spanish Civil War. *Robbery Under Law* is his Spanish book.

[406] Quoted in the introduction to ‘Political Decade’, in *Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh*, pp. 153-160 (p. 159).

4. Pre-war Politics in Post-war Britain: The Legacy of Evelyn Waugh's Political Travel Writing in *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (1957)

The conception of Mr Mulliner and Lord Emsworth as potential Eichmanns would be too grotesque to deserve mention were it not a symptom of that diseased period.[407]

—Evelyn Waugh, 'An Act of Homage and Reparation to P. G. Wodehouse'

BBC Home Service (15 July 1961)

Evelyn Waugh's 1961 defence of P. G. Wodehouse is the work of a writer nearing the end of his life who had spent much of his later career in the strenuous examination of his own reputation. Vociferously corrective in its tone, his 'Act of Homage and Reparation' opens with a stern and hopefully conclusive refutation of the lingering accusations of Nazi collaborationism that had dogged Wodehouse since 1941. Waugh's statement was broadcast on the BBC Home Service on 15 July 1961. It had been twenty years since the scandal of Wodehouse's Berlin radio broadcasts first exploded into British public consciousness. Waugh's remarks concern the politics of reputation in post-war Britain and the long afterlife of 'that diseased period' of the 1930s and Second World War.[408] 'Justice', he argues, '*seems* to have been done. Innocence *seems* to have been established. But always there is some mean or ignorant mind ready to reassert the lie'.[409] There is, he revealingly observes, 'a hideous vitality in calumny'.[410] The 'lie' to which Waugh refers is the accusation, widely accepted by the wartime public, that through Wodehouse's five broadcasts from the Hotel Adlon in Berlin the writer had collaborated with the Nazis in 1941 and was guilty of treason.

[407] Evelyn Waugh, 'An Act of Homage and Reparation to P. G. Wodehouse', *Sunday Times*, 16 July 1961; repr. in *The Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh* ed. Donat Gallagher (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1986), pp. 561-68 (p. 562). Text of broadcast over BBC Home Service, 15 July 1961.
[408] Ibid., p. 562.
[409] Ibid., p. 563. Waugh's italics.
[410] Ibid. p. 563.

The consequences for Wodehouse were severe: libraries were purged of his books, and the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, publicly accused him in July 1941 of 'having lent his services to the Nazi war propaganda machine'.[411] Waugh's eagerness to rehabilitate Wodehouse's reputation continued throughout his later years. In 1953 he wrote an open letter to the *Daily Mail* demanding a public apology from the BBC for its role in publicising the accusations.[412] Christopher Sykes recalls that the Wodehouse affair 'had been smouldering in [Waugh's] mind' for years and eventually led to his full-throated defence in the form of the 'Act of Homage and Reparation to P. G. Wodehouse'.[413]

In it, Waugh at times blurs Wodehouse into his characters, as did many other commenters on the controversy.[414] The idea of Mr Mulliner and Lord Emsworth as 'potential Eichmanns' achieves its end of palpable absurdity. But it also subtly introduces Wodehouse's characters as supplementary authorial personas that are enlisted in defence of their creator. Waugh's account of the public mistreatment of Wodehouse, and the ramifications for his reputation two decades later, represents an extension of the thematic concerns that he first raises in *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (1957). This book introduces Waugh's own author-persona: Gilbert Pinfold. Through this persona, he considers his reputation, politics and religion in an experimental work that radically departs from his previous novels and travel books. *Pinfold* is a formally

[411] Quoted in Ian Sproat, *Wodehouse at War* (London: Milner & Co., 1981), p. 14.
[412] Evelyn Waugh, letter to the Editor of the *Daily Mail*, in *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh* ed. by Mark Amory (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1980), p. 414. 24 November 1953. In the letter, Waugh requests that the BBC invite Duff Cooper, who had made the original case against Wodehouse, to publicly apologise: 'Now that Mr. Wodehouse has at last published the true facts of the case, it would be seemly if the B.B.C. invited the originator of their war-time attack to make an apology to one of the most brilliant of living English stylists.'
[413] Christopher Sykes, *Evelyn Waugh: A Biography* (London: Collins, 1975), p. 410.
[414] In his 'Cassandra' *Postscript* denouncing Wodehouse as a traitor on the BBC Home Service on 15 July 1941, William Connor venomously declared: 'Jeeves may speak softly to us from the radio masts of Berlin, but he will fool none of us'.

ambiguous work. It has been interpreted variously as a confession,[415] a 'false penance',[416] a novel,[417] a satire,[418] an autobiography,[419] and a 'nightmare'.[420] It is, however, a book in which Waugh formally and tonally alludes to the politico-religious content of his 1930s travel writing. *Pinfold* presents a harrowing depiction of post-war Britain and, in Waugh's estimation, focuses its critique on the political oppression of conservatives in a left wing authoritarian state: 'Then came the 1940s,' he writes in 1962: 'first the war, after it the Cripps-Atlee terror'.[421] Waugh constructs this perception through Pinfold's drug-induced hallucinations and persecution mania. The book's fantastical horror is an instantiation of Waugh's feeling that, like Wodehouse, his past politics have made him *persona non grata* in Britain in the 1950s.

This chapter explores Waugh's examination of post-war British society in *Pinfold* through the lens of his 1930s political and religious commitments, the essential parts of which were expressed through his travel writing. It argues that *Pinfold*, though ambiguous in genre, suggests itself as an experimental kind of travel

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[415] Douglas Lane Patey, *The Life of Evelyn Waugh: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), p. 339.

[416] D. Marcel DeCoste views *Pinfold* as only 'apparently confessional'. It is, rather, 'the story of an *ordeal*, an agonizing and agonistic "test of guilt or innocence," from which Waugh's stand-in emerges, we are told, "victor" (*OGP*, p. 231)', 'Contested Confessions: The Sins of the Press and Evelyn Waugh's False Penance in *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*', *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, 21.3 (2018) 67-84 (71; 68). DeCoste's italics.

[417] Selina Hastings, *Evelyn Waugh: A Biography* (London: Minerva, 1995), p. 565; James J. Lynch refers to it as a 'novel' and interprets it in the light of Waugh other fiction of the 1950s: *Men at Arms* (1953), *Love Among the Ruins* (1953), and *Officers and Gentlemen* (1955), 'Evelyn Waugh During the Pinfold Years', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 32.4 (1986) 543-59.

[418] Margaret Morriss has argued that *Pinfold* is a 'satire', in 'Prejudice and Partiality: Evelyn Waugh and his Critics, 1928-1966, PhD Thesis (University of Toronto, 1980), p. 332; quoted in Jeffrey M. Heath, *The Picturesque Prison: Evelyn Waugh and his Writing* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press), p. 259.

[419] Christopher Sykes writes, *Pinfold* 'is among the two or three best things ever written by Evelyn or to be found in modern autobiography', *Evelyn Waugh: A Biography* (London: Collins, 1975), p. 367.

[420] Toynbee describes *Pinfold* as a 'nightmare' in his review of *Pinfold*, *Observer*, 21 July 1957; repr. in *Evelyn Waugh: The Critical Heritage*, pp. 386-87 (p. 386). Waugh structured his travel book *Ninety-Two Days* (1934) as a succession of 'nightmares', *Ninety-Two Days: A Journey in Guiana and Brazil* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985 [1934]), p. 10.

[421] Evelyn Waugh, 'Manners and Morals – I', review of Sarah Maclean, *Pan Book of Etiquette* (1962), *Daily Mail*, 12 April 1962; repr in. *Essays*, pp. 587-90 (p. 589).

book. This reading is encouraged by Waugh's formal allusions to his own interwar travel writing throughout the book and is directed by his anxiousness to address the legacies of pre-war politics in a post-war political landscape. Thematically, *Pinfold* is a work that is heavily invested in the politico-religious thesis that Waugh advances in his late 1930s travel books, in particular *Waugh in Abyssinia* (1936) and *Robbery Under Law* (1939). It is to the BBC – as a totalising tool for suppressing political dissent – that Waugh focalised his perception of political and religious persecution. Writing, as Pinfold declares, 'is a dangerous trade' in Britain after the war.[422] *Pinfold*, in its formal and political complexity, stands as Waugh's expression of the crisis in which he found himself in 1957: a writer whose religion and politics were heterodox in a secular and left wing nation that no longer felt like home.

PINFOLD AND WAUGH: '… AT THE BORDER LINES OF SANITY'

Since its first publication *Pinfold* has been read as autobiographical. D. Marcel DeCoste notes that the book 'was received in the first instance as virtual reportage'.[423] Reviewing *Pinfold* for the *Spectator* in 1957, Conor Cruise O'Brian found the book 'almost entirely unfunny, and a little embarrassing' as a result of Waugh's acutely autobiographical focus.[424] More recently, critics have acknowledged *Pinfold*'s formal opacity and yet insisted that, though clearly autobiographical, it *is* a novel. Paula Byrne regards it as 'the most autobiographical of Waugh's *novels*',[425] while Julie Labay-Morère describes it as '*novel*', but one in which it is 'impossible to ignore the

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[422] Evelyn Waugh, *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold: A Conversation Piece* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1957), p. 21. (Further references to this edition in this chapter are given after quotations in the text.)
[423] D. Marcel DeCoste, 'Temptations of the Craftsman in Middle Age: Diabolical Art and Christian Vocation in *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*', *Renascence*, 63.3 (2011) 189-209 (193).
[424] Donat O'Donnell [Conor Cruise O'Brian], review of *Pinfold*, *Spectator*, 19 July 1957, p. 112; repr. in *Evelyn Waugh: The Critical Heritage* ed. by Martin Stannard (Routledge, London, 1984), pp. 380-81 (p. 380).
[425] Paula Byrne, *Mad World: Evelyn Waugh and the Secrets of Brideshead* (London: HarperPress, 2009), p. 304. My emphasis.

autobiographical dimension'.[426] In his diary, Waugh refers to *Pinfold* as a '"novel"', but only ever in sceptical-seeming quotation marks.[427] These, it would appear, Waugh included to communicate a sense of his own unease at such a positive claim to formal resolution for *Pinfold*. In his *Observer* review of the book, Phillip Toynbee admits defeat in his attempts to describe *Pinfold* for his readers: 'Waugh', he explains, 'has never written a book in the least like this one before', and helplessly he suggests some speculative directions for consideration: 'Fictionalised autobiography? Nightmare? An essay in the macabre?'[428]

Toynbee's anxieties regarding *Pinfold* and genre are justified. The book is certainly autobiographical: it represents an account of the drug-induced mental breakdown that Waugh experienced while on-board a ship to Ceylon in the spring of 1954. This was a reading that Waugh often denied and sometimes encouraged. In a private letter to a 'fellow-sufferer' of psychosis in August 1957 he closely identifies himself with his creation. At the same time, however, he refers to it as a 'novel' in which he has 'given the gist' of his hallucinations and experience of acute psychosis:

> Mr Pinfold's experiences were almost exactly my own. In turning them into a novel I had to summarize them. I heard 'voices' such as I describe almost continuously night and day for three weeks. They were tediously repetitive and sometimes obscene and blasphemous. I have given the gist of them.[429]

However, if *Pinfold* is a novel, then it is a novel that alludes to and incorporates a range of adjacent literary genres: from high Shakespearean tragedy and religious

[426] Julie Labay-Morère, '"Voices at Play" in Muriel Spark's *The Comforters* and Evelyn Waugh's *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*', *Etudes Britanniques Contemporaines: Revue de la Société d'Etudes Anglaises Contemporaines*, 30 (2006) 83-93 (89). My emphasis.
[427] For example, see Waugh's diary entry of 28 October 1956: 'My "novel" has progressed well but is not finished', in *The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh* ed. by Michael Davie (London: Penguin, 1979), p. 770.
[428] Toynbee, *Evelyn Waugh: The Critical Heritage*, p. 386.
[429] Evelyn Waugh, letter to Robert Henriques, *Letters*, pp. 493-94 (p. 493). 15 August 1957.

confessional, to sentimental melodrama and the lurid detective thriller.[430] In its capacity to situate itself among a number of genres, borrowing and adopting aspects of each, *Pinfold* suggests itself as an experimental kind of travel book: it takes place on-board a ship, with its author-protagonist experiencing a profound mental crisis that is largely autobiographical. It concerns frontiers that are geographical and psychological. Waugh's publishers, Chapman & Hall, seem aware of this when they describe *Pinfold* as a 'light novel which should delight all those who live *on the border lines of sanity*'.[431]

Pinfold's task is crucially different to Waugh's own. Pinfold does not invent any persona for his memoir: he writes under his own name. In a meta-fictional turn, the reader discovers that *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold: A Conversation Piece* is the very book that they have just finished reading. At its conclusion Waugh reasserts the implication that *Pinfold* is a travel memoir: there was, he writes, 'a hamper to be unpacked of fresh, rich experience – perishable goods' (*OGP*, p. 184). Waugh conjures the image of Pinfold unpacking his bags upon returning from a long and arduous voyage. It is, however, a journey that is more psychological than geographical. This metaphor has increasing currency in British literature as the 1950s progresses into the 1960s. Alexander Trocchi, for example, described himself as a 'cosmonaut of inner space' in 1962.[432] The hallucinatory content of *Pinfold* anticipates the experimental writing of Trocchi and William Burroughs that attempts to depict the subjective experience of drug-induced psychic travel. The idea of psychic, as well as spatial, travel has always formed a part of the genre of travel

[430] Labay-Morère, '"Voices at Play"', 86; DeCoste, 'Temptations of the Craftsman in Middle Age', 200.
[431] Quoted in O' Donnell [O'Brian], *Spectator*, 19 July 1957, p. 112. My emphasis.
[432] Alexander Trocchi first described himself as a 'cosmonaut of inner space' at the 1962 Writer's Conference in Edinburgh. See William Burrough's introduction to Alexander Trocchi's *Man at Leisure* (London: Calder and Boyars, 1972), p. 9.

writing: travel brings about not only new experiences and events for the writer to report back to their readers, but implicitly contains the idea that foreign lands offer new psychological and identity positions for the author to inhabit. Pinfold's psychological departure from reality is accelerated by his departure from Britain for Ceylon, and suggests *Pinfold* as a radically subjective and experimental form of travel writing.

Jonathan Raban insightfully calls the travel book literature's 'red-light district' because of its propensity to indiscriminately accept a wide variety of writing within its porous boundaries.[433] 'It is no wonder that up till now [1987] criticism has shunned the travel book', Raban argues:

> As a literary form, travel writing is a notoriously raffish open house where very different genres are likely to end up in the same bed. It accommodates the private diary, the essay, the short story, the prose poem, the rough note and polished table talk with indiscriminate hospitality.[434]

In light of the struggle for critics such as O'Brian and Toynbee to make sense of what kind of book it is, *Pinfold*'s indeterminate genre is accepted and, according to Raban, would be welcomed into the travel-writing genre. For Waugh, however, his interest in writing travel books had abruptly ended a decade prior to writing *Pinfold*. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, Chapman & Hall published an anthology of Waugh's 1930s travel writing. His preface to the anthology, *When the Going Was Good* (1946), stands as his farewell to the genre. 'My own travelling days are over', he laments: 'I do not expect to see many travel books in the near future.

[433] Jonathan Raban, 'The Journey and the Book', in *For Love & Money: Writing, Reading, Travelling, 1969-1987* (London: Collins, 1987), pp. 253-59 (p. 254).
[434] Ibid., p. 253.

[…] There is no room for tourists in a world of "displaced persons".'[435] The selection of Waugh's interwar travel writing that he included in the anthology purposefully expunges the politico-religious thesis of *Waugh in Abyssinia* (1936) and the entirety of *Robbery Under Law* (1939). The latter, he explains, 'I am content to leave in oblivion, for it dealt little with travel and much with political questions'.[436] In announcing the death of the travel-writing genre Waugh consigned his political writing to the dust, and, in so doing, pointedly distanced himself from his political and religious commitments of the late 1930s.

In justifying his selections for *When the Going Was Good*, Waugh argues that such travel writing, both in form and content, was specific to the previous decade. His Belloc-inspired enthusiasm for Roman Catholic imperialism had manifested itself in his travel writing. In it, he publicly declares himself a 'partisan of Franco' and a champion of Mussolini's imperial conquest of Abyssinia.[437] Such writing had no place, as Waugh saw it, in a post-war landscape that was hostile to his religious and right wing commitments. He explains that:

> I have omitted many pages of historical summary and political argument. Re-reading them, after the experience of recent years. Hopes proved dupes; it is possible that present fears may be liars. This is not the place in which to attempt to disentangle the *post hoc* from the *propter hoc* of disaster.[438] [439]

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[435] Evelyn Waugh, *When the Going Was Good* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1946), p. x.
[436] Ibid., p. xii.
[437] Evelyn Waugh, *Robbery Under Law: The Mexican-Object Lesson* (London: Penguin, 202 [1939]), p. 50.
[438] Waugh, *When the Going Was Good*, p. xii.
[439] The first draft of the preface suggests that Waugh did not intend to abandon his earlier political opinions, in particular those of *Waugh in Abyssinia* (1936), so entirely: 'I still hold the opinions I then expressed and trace measureless ills to their source in the folly & malice of that time, but there is no worthy satisfaction in saying "I told you so". My hopes proved dupes; as a memorial to them I reprint the concluding passage on the Roman road; as a reminder too that fears may be liars. I was woefully wrong then in thinking the world could easily be recalled to reason; it may be I am wrong now in thinking it easily destroyed.' Evelyn Waugh Papers, Harry Ransome Ceter, University of Texas at Austin.

Throughout *Pinfold*'s hallucinations of persecution and torture, Waugh returns to the question of Pinfold's pre-war political commitments. An essential theme of the work is the author who must confess and atone for the political beliefs that he once held and that are no longer acceptable in post-war Britain: 'One had hopes of Mussolini' Pinfold claims, but is anxious to make clear that he 'was never connected with Mosley' (*OGP*, p. 109). It was in his travel books of the late 1930s that Waugh most publicly and polemically expressed his enthusiasm for Italian Fascism and Spanish Nationalism. It is fitting, therefore, that Waugh allusively returns to the genre that he had abandoned in which to confess to his political crimes. Waugh introduces Pinfold as an author who 'had no wish to obliterate anything he had written, but he would dearly have liked to revise it' (*OGP*, p. 10). *Pinfold* is a confession in the form of a travel book that is addressed to the critics of his 1930s politics. Waugh, like Wodehouse, saw himself as not yet absolved of his pre-war political writing.

Because of this, *Pinfold* represents a literary work that is far more complex than a simple case study of Waugh's experience of a psychological breakdown. However, such readings, which evade the pressing political and religious aspects of the text, are commonplace among scientifically and psychologically oriented critics. As DeCoste puts it, many critics have been 'seduced into the role of the therapist' by *Pinfold*.[440] Sykes, more acerbically, notes that 'it has proved especially fascinating to those who unprofessionally pursue the fashionable study of psychology'.[441] Writing in the journal *Clinical Neuropharmacology*, Daniel and Mary Jane Hurst gave an influential medical reading of the book in which they describe it as 'essentially a day-by-day description of Waugh's own bromide poisoning, a detailed account of his own

[440] DeCoste, 'Temptations of the Craftsman in Middle Age', p. 206.
[441] Sykes, *Evelyn Waugh*, p. 366.

bromide psychosis'.[442] They contend that the text 'stands as the most complete monograph on a case of bromism'.[443] But, although the appearance of an article on *Pinfold* in a journal dedicated to neuroscience and pharmacology may seem unlikely, many more such articles appeared in the decades that followed the Hursts' publication.[444] In one such article, published in *Literature and Medicine*, Stephen Post attempts what he terms a 'patient-distant neuropsychiatric diagnosis' of Pinfold.[445] Pamela White Hadas, meanwhile, writing in the same journal, claims that *Pinfold* serves to exemplify the 'kinship between [Freudian] psychoanalytic techniques in the development of "case studies" and the novelist's craft'.[446] This demonstrates the conviction on the part of a particular cohort of critics that *Pinfold* represents the clinical experience of bromide psychosis to a degree of accuracy and reliability that justifies its treatment as a clinical case study. Moreover, it evidences the extent to which critics, puzzled by *Pinfold*'s ambiguous genre, have attempted to resolve this problem by an appeal to clinical psychological and scientific case study.

'What this novel illustrates so well', Alexandria Pitman writes in the *British Medical Journal*, 'is the difficulty in distinguishing alcoholic hallucinosis [*sic*] from psychotic illness'.[447] Such psychobiographical readings, which elevate *Pinfold* as a

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[442] Daniel L. Hurst and Mary Jane Hurst, 'Bromide Psychosis: A Literary Case', *Clinical Neuropharmacology*, 7.3 (1984) 259-64 (260). To illustrate the oddity of *Pinfold* appearing in this journal the preceding and succeeding articles in this volume of *Clinical Neuropharmacology* were, respectively, Schneider et al., 'Dopamine Receptors: The Effects of Chronic L-Dopa and Bromocriptine Treatment in an Animal Model of Parkinson's Disease', *Clinical Neuropharmacology*, 7.3 (1984) 247-58; Blum et al., 'Naxolone May Be Beneficial in the Treatment of Tardive Dyskinesia' *Clinical Neuropharmacology*, 7.3 (1984) 265-68.
[443] Ibid, p. 60.
[444] Robert J. Kloss, 'Evelyn Waugh: His Ordeal', *American Imago*, 42 (1985) 99-110; Lynch, 'Evelyn Waugh During the Pinfold Years'; and R. Neill Johnson, ' Shadowed by the Gaze: Evelyn Waugh's Vile Bodies and The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold', *Modern Language Review*, 91 (1996) 9-19. See also Labay-Morère, '"Voices at Play"', *Etudes Britanniques Contemporaines*, (2006); Alexandria Pitman, 'Medical Classics: The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold', *British Medical Journal*, 337.7683 (2008) 1421.
[445] Stephen L. Post, 'His and Hers: Mental Breakdown as Depicted by Evelyn Waugh and Charlotte Perkins Gilman' *Literature and Medicine*, 9 (1990) 172-80 (173).
[446] Pamela White Hadas, 'Madness and Medicine: The Graphomaniac's Cure', *Literature and Medicine*, 9 (1990) 181-93 (181).
[447] Pitman, 'Medical Classics', *BMJ*, 1421.

psychologically useful case study, have perhaps predictably resulted in a critical tendency to underexplore the literary ends to which illness and psychosis is set in the text. For Pitman, a neuroscientist, *Pinfold*'s ambiguity is localised in its complex diagnostic potential in its representation of psychosis. In the book, however, Pinfold's breakdown is framed within a religious and political context in which the objects of his hallucinations and paranoia are specific to a post-war landscape in Britain in which Waugh found himself distinctly unwelcome.

At the beginning of the book, Pinfold has withdrawn himself from society and from his faith. We are told that he 'had long held himself inaccessible to interviewers and the young men and women who were employed to write "profiles" collected material where they could' (*OGP*, p. 9). This dramatizes Waugh's realisation that he could no longer successfully evade such profiling in 1950s Britain. As such, the attempts of psychological critics to read *Pinfold* as a case study are repetitions of a critical attitude that Waugh found irksome but unavoidable while he was alive. Pinfold's self-imposed withdrawal from society is also framed as his secession from the religious duties of his faith. Pinfold, like Waugh, was once a prominent Roman Catholic controversialist. By the late 1950s he was 'reputed bigoted rather than pious' (*OGP*, p. 6) and his religion 'made a slight but perceptible barrier' between him and his neighbours (*OGP*, p. 6). This, too, implicitly looks back to the 1930s in which Waugh's politics were, as he saw it, an expression of piety. His departure from the conventional politics of the period, in favour of Bellocian Catholic conservatism, had of necessity alienated him from his peers.

> And at the very time when the leaders of his Church were exhorting their people to emerge from the catacombs into the forum, to make their influence felt in democratic politics and to regard worship as a corporate rather than a private act, Mr. Pinfold burrowed ever deeper into the rock.

(*OGP*, p. 6)

Pinfold is disturbed by the long lasting social ramifications of the politico-religious commitments he had made in the 1930s. The last time he left the subterranean seclusion of his faith it was to publish polemics and propagandise for Mussolini and Franco. These were, for Waugh, extensions of his religiosity. By 1957, when leftism and secularism have, to his mind, corrupted British public life, he is haunted by the outcomes of his religious politics of the earlier decade.

Waugh frames Pinfold's conversion to Roman Catholicism at the start of the 1930s as analogous, if longer lasting, to his contemporaries' commitments to left wing politics. 'He had been received into the Church', Waugh writes, 'at the time when many Englishmen of humane education were falling into communism. Unlike them Mr. Pinfold remained steadfast' (*OGP*, p. 6). Roman Catholicism is represented here as a political movement, similar to the British Communist Party, that had an allure in the interwar period and, moreover, its own ideological precepts. However, although it may have been symptomatic of the intense period of *going-over* of the 1930s, Pinfold's faith had outlasted it. As a result, Pinfold implicitly conveys a sense of the historically peculiar position that he is in: his Catholicism had been born out of and, in turn, reinforced a distinctly right wing political position. He was a fierce opponent of secularism and an ardent admirer of Mussolini and Franco. The ultimate failure of these ideological positions had left Pinfold socially compromised. The public remembered them to his detriment.

As Valentine Cunningham has pointed out, '*going-over*' functions as a metaphor of transition that invokes travel, whether as a fellow traveller of Franco or

of the Soviet Union.[448] Travel, and its attendant political implications, was essential to the sentiment of the late interwar period. Waugh invokes this feeling in *Pinfold* and, in so doing, associates Pinfold's Catholicism with that period of political bifurcation. Cunningham insightfully writes that 'going-over' was

> an intimate part of the widespread feeling among '30s authors of being travellers, on the road, making some literal or metaphorical journey (or both), of being involved in a pilgrimage to socialism and Moscow, it might be, or to Christ and the Church.[449]

By establishing *Pinfold* in an allusive relationship to the travel book, Waugh suggests that it shares the concerns of his earlier travel writing. Pinfold undertakes a voyage in order to finish his novel: 'I can always work at sea. I shall have the book finished before I get home' he informs Mrs. Pinfold (*OGP*, p. 24).[450] Through travelling, Waugh has his author-persona return to the metaphorical location of his travel writing that had so damaged his reputation. It is as a result of this return to the offending genre that Pinfold, and, by implication, Waugh, is able to attempt the expiation of his crimes.

The Meaning of Treason: Pinfold the Persecuted travel writer

Pinfold opens with a 'Portrait of the Artist in Middle-age' (*OGP*, p. 1) that gives no indication of the hallucinatory breakdown that is to follow. Waugh provides us with a generalised account of Pinfold's position in contemporary letters ('at the age of fifty, he had written a dozen books all of which were still bought and read' [*OGP*, p. 1]), a

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448 Valentine Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 211.
449 Ibid., p. 42.
450 Waugh wrote to his daughter Margaret prior to his embarking to Ceylon: 'Oh I have been so ill since I left you. First a cold & then agonising rheumatism. So I am jumping into the first ship available. […] I shan't come back until I have finished my book [*Officers and Gentlemen*]', January 1954, in *Letters*, p. 417.

short life-and-times of the author, and a sketch of his political and aesthetic opinions ('His strongest tastes were negative. He abhorred plastics, Picasso, sunbathing and jazz – everything that had happened in his own lifetime' [*OGP*, p. 7]). This all serves to introduce Pinfold as Waugh's authorial persona in the text. More significantly, however, it establishes Pinfold's existence as largely benign: he was not, at this point in his life, committed to political struggle or intrigue of any kind. Pinfold is presented living out his 'long, lonely, tranquil days at Lychpole, a secluded village some hundred miles from London' (*OGP*, p. 2).

The ensuing chaos of *Pinfold* is therefore a radical departure from the book's initial tranquillity. Pinfold's retreat from modern life is abruptly punctured when he uncharacteristically relents to the BBC's inquiries for a radio interview. The interviewer, Mr Angel, is framed as an interrogator who has no right to question the author. It precipitates Pinfold's psychological breakdown. Imbued with a name of obvious religious significance, Angel is ironically depicted as manifestation of the post-war secularism that hounds Pinfold throughout the book. Waugh details Pinfold's increasing dependence on a cocktail of bromide and chloral, accompanied by pills, in order to help him sleep. In the hope of completing his novel and getting off the drugs, Pinfold boards the SS *Caliban* headed for Ceylon. The name of the ship foreshadows the atmosphere of nightmarish unreality that he finds on board.[451] 'I shall give up the sleeping-draughts as soon as I get to sea', the enfeebled Pinfold informs his unnamed wife,

> I always sleep better at sea. I shall cut down on the drink too. As soon as I get rid of these damned headaches. I can always work at sea. I shall have the book finished before I get home.

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[451] In *The Tempest*, Caliban says to Stephano and Trinculo: 'Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments / Will hum about mine ears, and sometime voices' (III.ii.132-33).

(*OGP*, pp. 23-24)

Once in the Mediterranean, however, Pinfold finds that he cannot write and is increasingly confused by life on-board ship. He experiences auditory hallucinations, which centre on his fellow passengers who, Pinfold believes, suspect him of having committed treason in the 1930s. He fears that they are collectively plotting to have him tried and imprisoned. Pinfold then finds himself being interrogated and abused by an unknown group who, he believes, have stowed themselves away on the *Caliban*. They accuse him, in turn, of being a Nazi collaborator, a homosexual, a Fascist, a second-rate artist and a double agent in the Second World War. As Humphrey Carpenter writes, 'Though they are camouflaged with some genuine nonsense, the accusations include all the major charges that had been made publicly against Waugh in recent years – sentimental over-writing, Fascism, snobbery and insincere Catholicism'.[452] In order to escape his tormentors, Pinfold disembarks at Alexandria and travels by aeroplane to Colombo. Upon returning home to Lychpole, Pinfold hallucinates that Angel, the BBC interviewer, tells him to never mention his experiences aboard the *Caliban*. His doctor diagnoses him with bromide psychosis, a result of overdosing on his chloral and bromide prescription. At the end of the book he sits down to write '*The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold: A Conversation Piece*' (*OGP*, p. 184).

The voices that Pinfold hears accuse him of having a treasonous and clandestine past that he is trying to conceal. These 'hooligans', Pinfold believes, are attempting to elicit a confession from him of his pre-war political commitments: to Italian Fascist, Francoism, and Roman Catholic imperialism: '[we] ought to lock him

[452] Humphrey Carpenter, *The Brideshead Generation: Evelyn Waugh and His Friends* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990), pp. 442-43.

up' (*OGP*, p. 103), he overhears them say. On the *Caliban*, Pinfold imagines that he hears his fellow passengers discussing his political reputation and condemning him for his 1930s writing. 'All I know is that he is a fascist', a passenger identified as 'the Norwegian' declares, 'I have heard him speak ill of democracy' (*OGP*, p. 103). Another unnamed passenger adds: 'I've got a photograph of him in a black shirt taken at one of those Albert Hall meetings before the war (*OGP*, p. 103). Pinfold's shipmates' suspicions of treason pointedly recall the public trial of Wodehouse that had so incensed Waugh since the 1940s. Wodehouse had been accused 'of kneeling to worship Hitler'.[453] Waugh dramatises his own public reckoning through Pinfold's delusional persecution mania. Pinfold is further accused of being a fellow traveller of Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists (B.U.F.). He addresses one of his supposed accusers – 'the Norwegian' – and attempts to correct the historical record: 'I never wore a black shirt in the Albert Hall', he replies, referring to the B.U.F.'s infamous meeting held there in London in 1934. The Norwegian is totally unaware of what Pinfold refers to, since the accusation was itself a hallucination. It results in dialogue of one-sided absurdity in which Pinfold fruitlessly attempts to deny the accusations:

> 'No?' said the Norwegian, interested but uncomprehending.
> 'I had every sympathy with Franco during the Civil War.'
> 'Yes? It is so long ago I have rather forgotten what it was all about. In my country we did not pay so much attention as the French and some other nations.'
> 'I never had the smallest sympathy with Hitler.'
> 'No, I suppose not.'
> 'One had hopes of Mussolini. But I was never connected with Mosley.'
> 'Mosley? What is that?'
> 'Please, Please,' cried pretty Mrs. Scarfield, 'don't let's get on to politics.'
> For the rest of the meal Mr Pinfold sat silent.

[453] Waugh, 'An Act of Homage and Reparation', p. 562.

(*OGP*, p. 109)

In this awkward exchange Pinfold is anxious to differentiate between the various modes of ideological commitments that were prevalent in 1930s Britain. He professes his once-held enthusiasm for Franco, but immediately denies that this 'sympathy' extended to Nazism. He repeats the rhetorical movement with regard to Italian Fascism: he admits his support for Mussolini, and then reflexively denounces the B.U.F.

The overlap between Pinfold's persecution and the Wodehouse scandal is significant. Wodehouse was subjected to a public trial in the British press following his 1941 radio broadcasts from Berlin. In 1953, three months before he embarked for Ceylon, Waugh wrote a public letter in the *Daily Mail* in which he demanded an apology from the BBC. Specifically, he sought the apology of William Connor, the *Daily Mirror* journalist who (under the pseudonym 'Cassandra') on 15 July 1941 had denounced Wodehouse on the BBC Home Service as a traitor who had sold out his country to the Nazis. In the ensuing outrage, one Member of Parliament suggested that Wodehouse, should he return to Britain from France, ought to be tried for treason.[454] Another, Quentin Hogg MP, compared him to the infamous William 'Lord Haw-Haw' Joyce.[455] 'After Cassandra's broadcast', Ian Sproat writes, 'almost all British newspapers took it as an accepted fact that Wodehouse was indeed a collaborator at best; at worst, a traitor'.[456] Though it was later proven that the BBC was not responsible for Connor's invective, it had lent him its credibility and poisoned Waugh against the BBC. *Pinfold* captures Waugh's perception of the injustice that had been done to Wodehouse. It is an expression, moreover, of his deep and paranoid suspicion that he would be next.

[454] Sproat, *Wodehouse at War*, p. 13.
[455] Ibid., p. 14.
[456] Ibid., p. 28.

‘Now that Mr Wodehouse has at last published the true facts of the case,’ Waugh proclaimed in the *Daily Mail*, ‘it would be seemly if the B.B.C. invited its originator of the war-time attack to make an apology’.[457] It was not the first time Waugh would demand such restitution. During the composition of *Pinfold* in the autumn of 1956, Waugh himself was accused of treason in the pages on the *Daily Express*. On 16 October 1956, the *Express* reported that Rebecca West’s revised edition of *The Meaning of Treason* (1949) had impugned Waugh as a traitor. He wrote in his diary of that day: ‘I have worked hard [on *Pinfold*] every day lately. Not today. Rebecca West has libelled me, according to the *Daily Express*’.[458] The newspaper reported that West had denounced Waugh and his fellow Roman Catholics of having in the 1930s ‘created a climate of crackbrained confusion between virtues and vice… a climate in which the traitor flourishes’.[459] Although the paper wildly misquoted West’s book,[460] the *Express*’ literary editor, Anthony Hern, amplified the depth and scope of her critique of political Roman Catholicism in the interwar period. West’s book, Hern argues,

> is the most devastating exposure of the essence of treachery yet made. It is devastating because it is understanding. It is understanding because Miss West speaks with the voice of humanity.[461]

[457] Evelyn Waugh, letter to *Daily Mail*, 24 November 1953, in *Letters*, p. 414.
[458] *Diaries*, p. 770. 16 October 1956.
[459] Anthony Hern, *Daily Express*, 16 October 1956, p. 6.
[460] The actual passage in West’s 1956 revised edition of *The Meaning of Treason* reads: ‘It is certain that Evelyn Waugh [and two other writers] [*sic*] would not themselves sympathize with treachery and they have indeed expressed themselves on various issues with the voice of loyalty. […] But they have created an intellectual climate in which there is a crackbrained confusion between the moral and the aesthetic, and that confusion is inverted; people who practise the virtues are judged as if they had struck the sort of false attitude which betrays an incapacity for art, while the people who practise the vices are regarded as if they had shown the subtle rightness of gesture which is the sign of the born artist.’ Quoted in ‘Queen’s Bench Division. Mr. Evelyn Waugh’s Libel Actions Settled. Waugh v Pan Books, Ltd., and Another. Before Mr. Justice Ashworth’, *The Times*, 14 December 1956, p. 15.
[461] Ibid., p. 6. Quoted in Stannard, *Evelyn Waugh: No Abiding City, 1939-1966*, p. 377.

The *Express* article consigned Waugh to the same ignominious set as William Joyce and John Amery, both of whom had been executed for treason after the war. Upon learning of its publication, Waugh commenced libel action against the *Express* and the publishers of *The Meaning of Treason*, Pan Books. It is unsurprising, therefore, that a profound sense of political and religious persecution fills the pages of *Pinfold*. The central issue, as Stannard explains, was the suggestion 'that Waugh and Greene *encouraged* treason, a view implicitly endorsed by Hern'.[462] Waugh ultimately won the lawsuit and Pan agreed that no more books featuring the offending passages would be printed or sold. However, he now had further reason to identify his, and Pinfold's, plight with that of Wodehouse: they were all artists whose pre-war and wartime pronouncements, respectively, had damaged their reputations in the post-war political world.

It was to BBC that Waugh directed his ire over the Wodehouse scandal in 1953. As he saw it, the Corporation had recklessly promoted a viewpoint that accused one of its foremost literary treasures of collaborationism. In the aftermath of the Second World War, for Waugh, the BBC had become a leftist institution that sought to prosecute in the media those who had taken a politically heterodox position during the 1930s. The BBC is thus integral to the nightmarish vision of post-war Britain that Waugh creates in *Pinfold*. He had regarded the BBC with suspicion since before the war and, accordingly, refused almost all of their requests for interview or for his contribution to their literary programming. Normally, Waugh based his refusals on the grounds of insufficient remuneration. In order to ensure that he would not have to partake in any BBC profiles, he demanded absurdly high fees. 'No, not for 12 guineas', he wrote to A. D. Peters, declining the BBC's offer for an interview in June

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[462] Stannard, *Evelyn Waugh: No Abiding City, 1939-1966*, p. 379.

1947: 'Price for television £50 in a false beard. With the naked face £250.'[463] Although he disliked the BBC in particular, Waugh was hostile to the idea of being interviewed by anyone. When Cyril Connolly approached Waugh for an interview for *Time* magazine in 1951, he exasperatedly asked his subject 'What will you pay me not to write it?'[464] Waugh contemptuously refused to answer Connolly's 'fatuously psychoanalytical questions'.[465] This was because, as he explains in a letter to Nancy Mitford, a 'profile […] always means a collection of lies'.[466]

In spite of his strongly held reservations, by 1953 Waugh's misperception of his own financial circumstances (he was perfectly solvent) led him to reconsider his moratorium on BBC interviews. He believed, somewhat hysterically, that the post-war British Government sought to drive him into poverty. 'My poverty is very irksome', he wrote to Mitford: 'It is often in my mind. It is sad to have been poor all the time one was allowed to be rich, and now one is rich it is against the law'.[467] At the time of his psychological breakdown Waugh was making slow progress on his novel, *Officers and Gentlemen* (1955), and found that magazines were not interested in publishing his articles. 'I have a most instructive article [about visiting India] no one will print', Waugh wrote in despair following a trip to Goa in January 1953.[468] Reluctantly, he turned to the BBC in order to improve his finances. As Stannard has put it, Waugh was 'obsessed by his "penury" [and] had begun to take desperate measures'.[469] Following the Beveridge Report in 1942 and the Labour victory in the 1945 General Election, Waugh's letters and diaries of this period reveal the writer as

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[463] Evelyn Waugh, postcard to A. D. Peters, 12 June 1947, in *Letters*, p. 253.
[464] Evelyn Waugh, letter to Nancy Mitford, 29 October 1951, in *Letters*, pp. 357-58 (p. 358).
[465] Ibid. p. 358.
[466] Ibid., p. 358.
[467] Evelyn Waugh, letter to Nancy Mitford, 24 August 1951, in *Letters*, pp. 354-55 (p. 354).
[468] Evelyn Waugh, letter to Eric Linklater, 22 January 1953, in *Letters*, pp. 390-391 (p. 390).
[469] Stannard, *No Abiding City, 1939-1966*, p. 333.

increasingly under the impression that post-war social reforms had made him, as a member of the wealthy upper-middle class, a target of class warfare.[470]

After more than a decade of self-imposed exile from the BBC, Waugh began accepting offers for interviews. In spite of his long-held abhorrence for the false intimacy of the radio interview format he agreed to partake in two such productions in 1953. The first of these was for a programme – 'Personal Call' – to be broadcast on the BBC's Overseas East Asia Service. The show's producer Hugh Burnett wrote to Waugh shortly before the interview and cheerfully explained the programme's format as 'a very personal one, as though the listener were visiting you to discover the things you regard as important and necessary'.[471] Though such an investigative profile was plainly horrifying to the writer, he nonetheless travelled to London and took part in the interview. The second interview took place at his home in Somerset on the 16 November and was recorded for the programme 'Frankly Speaking', in which three interviewers addressed the novelist about a wide range of topics, both personal and political. Waugh explained his feeling of dread to a BBC producer:

> I do not think I have the necessary talents to give the impression that I am taking part in a three-cornered intimate chat with personal friends with the bandying about of Christian names and so forth, of the kind which deeply shocks me in some of the performances I have sometimes begun to hear'.[472]

For Waugh, the radio interview represents a format that is connected with the loosening of social propriety and, accordingly, requires the pretence that his

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[470] It is curious to note that Waugh, in one of his few interactions with the BBC prior to 1953, had briefly shared a BBC microphone with William Beveridge, one of the architects of modern British Welfare State, in 1942. It was an experience Waugh was at that time determined not to repeat and confirmed his suspicions about the leftist leanings of the BBC (Ibid., pp. 63-64).
[471] Hugh Burnett, letter to Evelyn Waugh, 16 July 1953; repr. in Stannard, *Evelyn Waugh: No Abiding City, 1939-1966*, p. 334.
[472] Evelyn Waugh, letter to J. Weltman, 2 September 1953, in *Letters*, pp. 408-409 (pp. 408-409).

interviewers had any right to make him submit to their questions. The perceived financial imperative, however inaccurate, reframes Waugh's participation in the BBC interview as to his mind involuntary. He expresses this sentiment to Nancy Mitford, then living in Paris, shortly before the first interview:

> You were full of patriotic claptrap when it meant the destruction of Italy & Central Europe. Now that it means paying taxes in order to establish your egalitarian world, you prefer to write advertisements for poppy seeds or whatever it is that earns you French nationality. You cannot conceive of how much I despise you. […]
>
> It's all [Henry] Yorke's fault.[473] No one wrote about the poor before him. Greek thought defined tragedy as dealing with people of the highest rank only. In Shakespeare the low born are always buffoons.[474]

Waugh observes with only half facetious outrage that, in an earlier age, the lives of his social inferiors went unmentioned in literature. Now, in 1953, he finds himself hostage to their interrogation. Waugh's perception of the BBC as the propaganda arm of the modern 'egalitarian world', as detailed in his letter to Mitford, brought a hostile political dynamic to the interviews. It is this sense of the BBC interview as a perverse and uniquely modern iteration of class warfare that underwrites much of the depiction of such interviews with the BBC in *Pinfold*.

Waugh's eldest son Auberon later recalls that it was the interviews with Stephen Black 'which eventually drove my father mad'.[475] Black was the interviewer for 'Personal Call' and was, Auberon claims, the basis for Angel in *Pinfold*.[476] He also formed part of the triumvirate of interviewers for the 'Frankly Speaking'

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[473] Henry Yorke, the English novelist who wrote under the pen name Henry Green. Waugh refers to his novel *Living* (1930), which depicted the harsh social conditions of factory workers in Birmingham in the 1920s.
[474] Evelyn Waugh, letter to Nancy Mitford, April 1953, in *Letters*, pp. 398-99 (p. 398).
[475] Quoted from a 1989 letter from Auberon Waugh to Martin Stannard, in Stannard, *Evelyn Waugh: No Abiding City, 1939-1966*, p. 334.
[476] Ibid., p. 334.

programme. ‘I listened outside,’ Auberon continues, ‘standing by the recording machine in the van, where it was reproduced from within the library. My comment was that the man, later called Angel, did not like my father very much’.[477] As this suggests, the BBC interviews provided a model for the first chapter of *Pinfold*. In the chapter, Pinfold agrees to be interviewed by three men in an atmosphere of nightmarish interrogation and class-based paranoia.

The interviewers arrive at Pinfold’s country house and are defined by the blandness and bureaucratic uniformity that Pinfold associates with the post-war BBC: ‘Out of the car there came three youngish men, thin of hair, with horn-rimmed elliptical glasses, cord trousers, and tweed coats; exactly what Mr Pinfold was expecting’ (*OGP*, p. 19). They arrive with an intimidating entourage of engineers who set about busily converting Pinfold’s library into a makeshift recording studio. Mr Angel, the ‘leader’, who as Auberon points out was based on Black, is described as having a ‘slightly sinister’, ‘commonplace’ face, half hidden behind a beard, with an ‘accentless, but insidiously plebeian voice, menacing’ (*OGP*, p. 19). He later takes the central role in Pinfold’s hallucinations on board ship to Ceylon.

In Pinfold’s sketch of Angel’s facial features he attaches the seemingly anonymous parts of his interviewer’s physiognomy, in an absurdly overstated manner, to his ideological attitudes towards the BBC. Angel speaks without discernable accent. His speech contains no obvious regionalisms, despite which the voice remains ‘insidiously plebeian’ (*OGP*, p. 19). The representation of the BBC through a combination of faceless banality and an ‘underlying malice’ (*OGP*, p. 20) colours the interview with an atmosphere of a tortuous interrogation, a literal *ordeal* in its archaic denotation: ‘A practice of trial in which an accused person is subjected to a test,

[477] Ibid. p. 334.

usually involving physical pain or danger, overcoming of which is taken as divine proof of innocence'.[478] Angel, Waugh writes,

> seemed to believe that anyone sufficiently eminent to be interviewed by him must have something to hide, must be an imposter whom it was his business to trap and expose, and to direct his questions from some basic, previous knowledge of something discreditable. It was the hint of the under-dog's snarl which Mr Pinfold recognized from his press-cuttings.

(*OGP*, p. 20)

In this passage, Waugh acknowledges the implied artificiality of the autobiographical novel through reference to Pinfold as an 'imposter'. As Waugh's author stand-in, Pinfold is a cypher for the author outside of the text: a person altogether more 'discreditable' (*OGP*, p. 20). Pinfold, however, does not function merely as Waugh's surrogate in the text, but is a complex character that simultaneously encourages and resists identification with the author. The images of *trapping* and *snarling*, coupled with Angel's 'basic, previous knowledge' (*OGP*, p. 20), evince a scene of atavistic brutality that lingers beneath the conversation and hauntingly inheres the interview format itself. From Pinfold's class-obsessed, paranoid perspective he is cornered by three of his social subordinates – by literal *underdogs*, those in a 'state of inferiority or subjection' (*OED*) – who represent the end of his world of *noblesse oblige*. This initial interview takes place in the relative security of Pinfold's country home in Lychpole anticipates the hallucinations of interrogation on-board ship later in the novel. There is no information to suggest Angel or his colleagues' origins outside of their class and their embodiment of the disturbing potency of the BBC in post-war Britain.

[478] 'Ordeal', n.1, *OED*.

The BBC, Radio Technology and Authoritarian Orthodoxy

In *Pinfold*, Waugh associates the BBC with persecution and political oppression. He does so in part because, for him, the BBC is a force that reaches all parts of the empire and enforces a new secular and egalitarian orthodoxy in which Waugh was deemed politically heterodox. Since its nationalisation in 1927 the BBC had exported British values overseas to the empire and elsewhere. Its first Director-General, John Reith, had a clear idea of the centralising potential of radio broadcasting. His intention to provide a standardised vision of English culture came at the expense of regional and class differences.[479] After the Second World War, the BBC operated in a radically altered British society and political landscape. In an increasingly fragmented society, the Corporation placed increased emphasis on regional programming and emphasising multiple British identities, rather than only that of the middle-class, Oxbridge-educated administrators of the empire. Robert Reid, the BBC's North Regional Publicity Officer, described its potential as the 'prime re-educative agency of the post-war world',[480] and, as Kate Whitehead has noted more recently, the BBC in this period saw itself as a 'means of international reconciliation' that would adhere to the precepts of the Reithian 'civilising mission'.[481] Waugh clearly depicts Pinfold as an unwilling subject of such re-education. Thomas Hajikowski points out that this involved the radical reimagining of the BBC's relationship to its former empire:

> The pivotal year was 1942, when the public, and to a lesser extent, the official mind, became fervent about the issue of reconstruction after the physical destruction caused by the Blitz and the publication of the Beveridge Report. […] The BBC framed the empire as a 'state socialist empire,' or perhaps a 'professional's empire' where the

[479] See Michael George William Bailey, 'Cultural Governance and the Formation of Public Service Broadcasting: The Early Years', PhD Thesis (2005) Sheffield Hallam University, pp. 53-54.
[480] Robert Reid, quoted in Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom*, 5 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), IV, p. 66.
[481] Kate Whitehead, *The Third Programme: A Literary History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 10.

> ideal of service by government experts seamlessly replaced the *noblesse oblige* that characterized the imperial vocation during the previous one hundred years.[482]

By the middle of the war, the British Government had substantially increased its pressure on the BBC to end its broadcasting monopoly. The threat of imposing competition served as the Government's key source of leverage in order to influence its wartime programming. As a result, the BBC maintained nominal independence while operating, Hajikowski argues, as a *de facto* state-run propaganda service. It was at this time that the BBC first segmented its programming by dividing radio broadcasts into the Home Service and the General Force Programme.

In 1946, responding to the demands from the private sector to allow competition, the BBC further segmented into three separate broadcasting services: The Home Service, the Light Programme and the Third Programme, thereby appealing to a wider range of audiences with more entertainment programming while continuing to uphold its commitment to offer culturally elevated broadcasts. The Third Programme catered specifically to minority interests and occupied a centralising position in the literary and intellectual landscape of post-war Britain. 'Perhaps most significantly,' Whitehead observes, The Third Programme 'was an attempt to stop listeners abandoning the BBC and transferring their allegiances to the rival commercial programmes being broadcast from Europe'.[483] In spite of this there were high hopes among the British intelligentsia for a radio channel that aspired to the Reith's idealism of a culturally elevated public. Edward Sackville-West wrote that The Third Programme could become 'the greatest educative and civilizing force

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[482] Thomas Hajkowski, *The BBC and National Identity, 1922-53* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), p. 53.
[483] Whitehead, *The Third Programme*, p. 7.

England has known since the secularization of the theatre in the sixteenth century'.[484] Following such high-minded intentions, it is telling that Waugh's representation of The Third Programme in *Pinfold* depicts a sniping, pretentious voice appearing over the airwaves to disparage Pinfold's life's work. During one of his auditory hallucinations, Pinfold hears what he believes to be The Third Programme on the wireless. The broadcast, titled 'Mr. Clutton-Cornforth Speaks on Aspects of Orthodoxy in Contemporary Letters' (*OGP*, p. 62), serves as an acidic send-up of the programme's pretensions of intellectual grandeur. More troublingly for Pinfold, it further asserts the totalising influence of the BBC on all aspects of contemporary life:

> The basic qualities of a Pinfold novel seldom vary and may be enumerated thus: conventionality of plot, falseness of characterization, morbid sentimentality, gross hackneyed farce alternating with grosser hackneyed melodrama; cloying religiosity, which will be found tedious or blasphemous according as the reader shares or repudiates his doctrinal conceptions; an adventitious sensuality that is clearly introduced for commercial motives. All this is presented in a style which, when it varies from the trite, lapses into positive illiteracy.
>
> (*OGP*, p. 62)

Such control is achieved not only as a result of the belief that the BBC establishes that which is considered 'orthodoxy' (*OGP*, p. 62) in 1950s Britain, but it is inherent to the medium of radio. Following his Third Programme hallucination, Pinfold leaves his cabin and is confronted by the horrible thought that '[o]ther people were listening to the wireless. Other people, probably, had heard Clutton-Cornforth's diatribe' (*OGP*, p. 63). Even after exiting his cabin, of which the BBC was 'diabolically in possession' (*OGP*, p. 63), Pinfold is still not free from the centralising power of the radio. All of his fellow passengers are brought towards a centre that is ideologically

[484] Edward Sackville-West, 'A Third Choice', *Listener*, 26 September 1946.

constructed by the BBC, enabled by the radio broadcasting technology, and which informs them of Pinfold's deviance from post-war political and religious orthodoxy.

Pinfold depicts the BBC as having a homogenising ideological impact on British political life. As a result of advances in broadcasting technology, the traditional regional and class distinctions that had existed in the country for centuries were at risk of being eroded and dispensed with altogether. 'I believe that inequalities of wealth and position are inevitable', Waugh writes in *Robbery Under Law* (1939), 'and that it is therefore meaningless to discuss the advantages of their elimination'.[485] All people, he concludes, 'naturally arrange themselves in a system of classes'.[486] As such, he and the BBC had radically contrasting attitudes towards the organisation and future of civilisation. For Waugh, civilisation was both a religious and a political achievement. A Roman Catholic aristocracy, as he saw it, had sustained it for centuries, through the Reformation and the Enlightenment, and civilisation was newly threatened by the class-corrosive egalitarianism of the BBC. Waugh describes the increase in secularism in Britain as 'the active negation of all that western culture has stood for'.[487] The BBC in the post-war period, however, consciously imagined itself with evangelising fervour as an educative and civilising force for all members of British society. It's commitments to enabling an *educated* democracy is clear: 'Broadcasting,' a 1932 BBC handbook explains, 'breaking down the barriers of space, destroying distinctions of class, placing its resources at the service of all men, whether rich or poor, can do more to ensure an educational democracy than any other single

[485] Waugh, *Robbery Under Law*, p. 19.
[486] Ibid., p. 19.
[487] Evelyn Waugh, 'Converted to Rome: Why it has Happened to Me', *Daily Express* 20 October 1930; repr. in *Essays*, pp. 103-104 (p. 104).

agent'.[488] The BBC's social mission to educate the working class, dissolve class boundaries and widen democratic participation ran counter to Waugh's politico-religious belief in the preservation of a ruling aristocratic class. 'The most dismal tendency I see', Waugh wrote in 1959,

> is that we are fast losing all national character. […] There were different vocabularies and imitations of speech; different styles of dress. Now all those things that gave salt to the English life are being dissolved'.[489]

Both he and the BBC saw the radical potential of broadcasting. Where the BBC interpreted its utopian possibilities for social reform, Waugh, horrified, saw it as an assault on the aristocracy, the traditional life-blood of the country and the preservers of civilisation.

The BBC, in its turn, enacted its mission to extend civilised values to the most economically and educationally deprived parts of the nation. It intended to achieve this by dissolving the difference between the centre and the margins of British social life. In 1927, J. C. Stobart wrote that, 'as a means of communication which brings three or four million homes into a single circle of influence, [the wireless] is bound to have a powerful effect […] upon the social life, the civilisation and culture of our nation'.[490] It was the duty of the BBC, Stobart argues, to use new broadcasting technologies for the cultural and spiritual betterment of all British citizens: 'The British Broadcasting Corporation are bound to act as an agency of Education in the

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[488] BBC, *Wireless Discussion Groups: What They Are and How To Run Them* (London: BBC, 1932), p. 39; quoted in Bailey, 'Cultural Governance and the Formation of Public Service Broadcasting' (2005), p. 138.
[489] Evelyn Waugh, 'I See Nothing but Boredom… Everywhere', *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1959; repr. in *Essays*, pp. 538-40 (p. 539).
[490] J. C. Stobart, 'The British Broadcasting Corporation and Adult Education', *The Journal of Adult Education*, 1.2 (1927) 211-15 (212).

broadest sense.'[491] David Trotter argues that the capacity for the radio as a modern communication technology had the effect of pulling the margins of society towards a homogenised centre. It is important to recall that the period in question – spring 1954 – occurs on the cusp of the loss of the BBC's domestic monopoly, and the Corporation retained its unifying power as the single voice speaking to Britain. The radio, Trotter argues, was 'always heard in an already socialized space'.[492] The telephone, by contrast,

> always drew the user into a space apart, whether public or private, phone both or bedroom. What is at issue here is the 'centripetal power' with which it is possible to endow media, under particular circumstances, as a way to offset the centrifugal force of a mobile privatization enhanced by the spread of telephony.[493]

It is one of the illusions of radio technology, then, that the listener may hear the radio in a private and enclosed space. The medium, Trotter claims, has itself the power to transform the private *into* the public. It is as a result of this facet of radio broadcasting that Pinfold is able to project his own hallucinatory experience of the radio onto the minds of his fellow passengers. He operates on the mistaken assumption that he and his shipmates have shared a communal experience of his Third Programme hallucinations. Pinfold, we are told, 'eschewed the telephone' (*OGP*, p. 22) making him entirely subject to what Trotter terms the 'centripetal power' of the radio. By 1954, the history of the BBC involved its utility as a wartime instrument for the dissemination of propaganda and its importance in broadcasting to the British Empire. While the BBC was essential in pulling the geographical fringes of the British Isles

[491] Ibid., p. 212.
[492] David Trotter, *Literature in the First Media Age: Britain Between the Wars* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), p. 172.
[493] Ibid., p. 172.

towards the south-eastern centre of the country, it was also crucially involved in symbolically bringing the farthest parts of the empire towards the British centre too. Pinfold's experience of the radio aboard the *Caliban* is not simply another example of his tragicomic hallucinations: it specifically positions Pinfold as subject to the push and pull of the tectonic geopolitical and cultural forces at work in post-war Britain.

The representation of telephone conversations is a recognisable stylistic feature of Waugh's early novels. In *Vile Bodies* (1930) such dialogue is presented on the page as though it occurs in an enclosed hermeneutic loop. Stripped of any explicatory or contextualising information, the conversation in the passage below is rendered simply through the back and forth of Adam and Nina's often monosyllabic utterances. Waugh's dialogue depicts communication, and miscommunication, from one private space to another through the medium of telephony. As opposed to the *centripetal* force of the radio, the *centrifugal* force of the telephone preserves Adam and Nina's separation in distinct and isolated spaces:

> Adam rang up Nina.
> 'Darling I've been so happy about your telegram. Is it really true?'
> 'No, I'm afraid not.'
> 'The Major *is* bogus?'
> 'Yes.'
> 'You haven't got any money?'
> 'No.'
> 'We aren't going to be married to-day?'
> 'No.'
> 'I see.'
> 'Well?'
> 'I said, I see.'[494]

Telephony is represented in *Vile Bodies* is a communication technology that minimises some kinds of interpretative ambiguity (the speaker knows exactly to

[494] Evelyn Waugh, *Vile Bodies* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1930), p. 154.

whom they are speaking), while exacerbating others (the inability to see the other speaker in a separate location causes miscommunication). The telephone conversation provides a signature of authenticity on the pronouncements made by those using it: ‘Is it really true?’ Nina asks Adam. In doing so, she undermines the aptness of the telephone as a means of conveying accurate information in a volatile world. However, the tragicomedy of these passages comes as a result of inadequacies of visual metaphors over the telephone: ‘I see.’ / ‘Well?’ / ‘I said, I see.’ Nina cannot see what Adam sees, but his dead metaphor of seeing-as-understanding is misunderstood precisely as a result of the medium. Though the message may at points be ambiguous, the origin of the voice over the telephone is clear. The telephone allows dialogue between two individuals and in so doing emphasises their individuality and separateness. It represents, symbolically at least, a private and closed loop. The radio, by contrast, projects outwardly for a simultaneous multiplicity of possible audiences and draws them all together. As Debra Rae Cohen observes: ‘To scatter words abroad in space, either through auditory sign or lonely inscription, serves as a reminder of the absent as well as of the dissolving of the individual into massed ranks’.[495] The radio was ‘present even where it was absent’, which Rae Cohen terms ‘the paradox at the very heart of the medium’.[496] In a letter to Waugh, the BBC producer Hugh Burnett describes the format of ‘Personal Call’ as ‘a very personal one, as though the listener were visiting you’, is importantly inaccurate: the radio as a communication medium is characterised precisely by its impersonality. Pinfold’s awkward interactions with his fellow passengers are built on the assumption of communal radio listening, even

[495] Debra Rae Cohen, ‘Introduction: Signing On’, in *Broadcasting Modernism* ed. by Debra Rae Cohen, Michael Coyle and Jane Lewty (Gainesville, FL.: University Press of Florida, 2011), pp. 1-7 (p. 3).
[496] Ibid., p. 3.

though they are separated into individual cabins. Such errors in communication are essential to Waugh's representation of hallucination and madness in *Pinfold*.

Following an embarrassing exchange with the *Caliban*'s captain Pinfold returns to his cabin to the sound of a 'wireless performance' (*OGP*, p. 46). It is another of his hallucinations. He incorrectly supposes that it is emanating from an unseen radio hidden in his quarters. By listening, Pinfold identifies three unknown people making what appears to Pinfold to be strangely menacing tribal music. He finds himself imprisoned in his cabin and subjected to torture over the airwaves: 'It seemed to him that the rhythms they played derived from some very primitive tribe and were of anthropological rather than artistic interest' (*OGP*, p. 45). He listens, unable to sleep, to the musicians' 'inexplicably audible' (OGP, p. 45) conversation between the performances:

> 'Let's try the Pocoputa Indian one,' said the young man who acted, without any great air of authority, as leader.
>
> 'Oh not *that*. It's so *beastly*,' said a girl.
>
> 'I know,' said the leader. 'It's the three-eight rhythm. The Gestapo discovered it independently, you know. They used to play it in the cells. It drove the prisoners mad.'
>
> (*OGP*, p. 46)

The torturous tribal drums recall Waugh's portrayal of the 'oxhide war-drums' of the Abyssinian army during the war against the invading Italians in *Waugh in Abyssinia*.[497] In this travel book, Waugh associates the tribal drumming with

[497] Evelyn Waugh, *Waugh in Abyssinia* (London: Longman, 1936), p. 34.

Abyssinian barbarism. The drums of war, referenced a number of times in this text,[498] represent Abyssinia's futile and primitive attitude towards modern warfare. This, Waugh implies, further evidences the legitimacy of the Italian campaign. While the drums beat, the Abyssinian soldiers were, he informs us, 'rolling their eyes, whirling their swords, stamping themselves into delirium as they enacted the slaughter of the day, yelling of the white blood they had shed'.[499] The politico-religious thesis of *Waugh in Abyssinia*, which gave support to Mussolini's Roman Catholic imperialism in East Africa, was damaging to Waugh's subsequent reputation. Most notably, it prompted Rose Macaulay to denounce it as a 'Fascist tract'.[500] Waugh paints Abyssinian barbarism as no match for the religiously ordained mission of Fascist civilisation. Pinfold, alone in his cabin, is subjected to the same tribal drums. This time, however, he is the victim: 'The sound throbbed and thrilled in the cabin which had suddenly become a prison cell. […] The three-eight rhythm was torture to him.' (*OGP*, p. 46) Through this allusion to *Waugh in Abyssinia*, which he largely expunged from his anthology of interwar travel writing, Waugh connects Pinfold's torture to his persecution for the political commitments advanced in his 1930s travel books. It creates an image of the writer, haunted by his past politics and hounded by a post-war society that would never let him forget what he had once written.

Pinfold suspects that his torture is enabled by a fault in the ship's communication technology, likely a result of the Second World War: 'Through some trick or fault of wartime survival everything spoken in the executive quarters of the

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[498] Waugh, *Waugh in Abyssinia*, for example: 'War drums beating in the North' (p. 119); 'There was a jingle of silver sistrums and a rhythmic hand drumming, nasal chanting' (p. 142); 'the great drum of Menelik would be beaten, which had not sounded since 1895' (p. 150); 'The governing Dedjasmach made a strenuous and partly successful attempt to get some of the soldiers to the front. He organized a parade, and himself at their head, drums beating and bugles playing' (p. 207).
[499] Waugh, *Waugh in Abyssinia*, p. 34.
[500] Rose Macaulay, 'Evelyn Waugh', *Horizon*, December 1946, pp. 360-62; repr. in *Evelyn Waugh: The Critical Heritage* ed. by Martin Stannard (London: Routledge, 1984), pp. 192-94 (p. 193).

ship was transmitted to him' (*OGP*, p. 49). Pinfold is portrayed as never having left the psychological and political atmosphere of the 1930s and 1940s. Increasingly, Pinfold suspects that the BBC, embodied in the menacing figure of Angel, is manipulating the *Caliban*'s radio and torturing him. This is with the intention of punishing him for his earlier politico-religious commitments and, moreover, forcing him to accept the new orthodoxies of post-war Britain of secularism and left wing authoritarianism. Theodor Adorno, in his work as musical director for the Princeton Radio Research Project, argues that there is an element of authoritarianism that is inherent in the medium of radio broadcasting. Adorno explains:

> The isolated listener definitely feels overwhelmed by the might of the personal voice of an anonymous organization. Second, the deeper this voice is involved within his own privacy, the more it appears to pour out of the cells of his most intimate life; the more he gets the impression that his own cupboard, his own phonograph, his own bedroom speaks to him in a personal way, devoid of the intermediary stages of the printed word; the more he is ready to accept wholesale whatever he hears. It is just this privacy which fosters the authority of the radio voice and helps to hide it by making it no longer appear to come from outside.[501]

For Adorno, the radio is inseparable from authoritarian control. It holds the capacity to animate the domestic objects of the bourgeois home, imbuing seemingly neutral items with a propagandistic function. When Pinfold leaves his cabin to go to breakfast on-board the ship he experiences the radio's literal animation of the objects around him: 'He was about to eat when, Pinf; [*sic*] the little, rose-shaded electric lamp which stood on the table before him came into action as a transmitter' (*OGP*, p. 78). The waiter, Pinfold notes, 'seemed unconscious of the cries emanating from the lamp; to him presumably they were all one with the unreasonable variety of knives and forks

[501] Theodor W. Adorno, *Current of Music: Elements of a Radio Theory* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006), p. 114.

and the superfluity of inedible foods; all part of the complexity of this remote and rather disgusting Western way of life' (*OGP*, p. 79). The authoritarianism of the radio for Adorno binds all things together, object and person alike, and sets them towards the same homogenised end.

This is consistent with Trotter's notion of the centripetal power of the radio. Initially Pinfold's detective work leads him to attribute his auditory hallucinations to a wiring error in the *Caliban*. Pinfold, Waugh writes,

> gazed at the complex of tubes and wires which ran across his ceiling, he realized that they must form some kind of general junction in the system of communication. Through some trick or fault of wartime survival everything spoken in the executive quarters of the ship was transmitted to him. A survival seemed the most likely explanation.
>
> (*OGP*, p. 49)

The auditory hallucinations, which Pinfold believes to be emanating out of the 'tubes and wires' of his cabin, has much in common with Adorno's notion of the radio as exercising an animating force on the domestic home. Later in the novel, Pinfold 'returned to his cabin where the B.B.C. was loudly in possession' (*OGP*, p. 91). The ghostly 'wartime survival' and the BBC's 'possession' reframes the hallucinations as experience consistent with a war that never truly ended. As well as overtaking and animating domestic spaces, Adorno argues, writing now together with Max Horkheimer, the radio in turn has the authoritarian power to make corporate automata out of individual listeners:

> The step from telephone to radio has clearly distinguished the roles. The former liberally permitted the participant to play the role of subject. The latter democratically makes everyone equally into listeners, in order to expose them in authoritarian fashion to the same programs put out by different stations. […] The mentality of the

> public, which allegedly favors [*sic*] the system of the culture industry, is a part of the system, not an excuse for it.[502]

Pinfold experiences the animating and controlling power of the radio as part of a wider system of control and punishment in post-war British society. He had attempted to isolate himself from modern society, but he is forced into communion with the vengeful masses. As Waugh explains at the novel's beginning, Pinfold's Catholicism 'made a slight but perceptible barrier between them and [his] neighbours' (*OGP*, p. 6). The book charts Pinfold's attempts to achieve individuation through a separation from society; but he finds himself only further enmeshed in a leftist and secular society that so appalled him.

Pinfold overhears that his fellow passengers suspect that his piety is a sham. Pinfold's Catholicism is questioned because it represents the old English aristocracy for which there is no place in modern Britain. The act of *overhearing* is essential because it structures Pinfold's perceptions as a radio drama. Following Adorno's theory of the radio-authoritarianism, this symbolically alludes to the radio's capacity to regulate and denounce deviant behaviour. Central among these, to Waugh's mind, is the modern heterodoxy of Pinfold's Catholicism:

> '[Pinfold will] commit suicide one of these days, you'll see.'
> 'I thought he was a Catholic. They aren't allowed to commit suicide, are they?'
> 'That wouldn't stop Pinfold. He doesn't really *believe* in his religion, you know. He just pretends to because he thinks it aristocratic. It goes with being Lord of the Manor.'
>
> (*OGP*, p. 101)

[502] Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, 'The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception', in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* [1947] trans. by Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), pp. 94-136 (pp. 95-96).

His Catholicism, they claim, is merely a tool for enforcing an archaic class stratification. During the interwar period, Roman Catholics in Britain were frequently the subjects of accusations of treasonous conflicted loyalties: to Rome and to the British Crown. Waugh made his support for the universal church, over and above the government and the sovereign, clear in *Robbery Under Law*. He saw post-war Britain as fundamentally hostile to such politico-religious arguments, and, moreover, aggressively sought to suppress them through the modern techniques of mass communication. This was embodied, for Waugh, in the leftism and secularism of the BBC. *Pinfold* is Waugh's expression of the injustice and the insanity that he perceived resulted from that authoritarianism.

The Politics of Reputation

Pinfold's politics are described as a form of 'idiosyncratic toryism which was quite unrepresented in the political parties of his time' (*OGP*, p. 11). He is a Roman Catholic, 'reputed bigoted rather than pious' (*OGP*, p. 13), who 'abhorred plastics, Picasso, sunbathing, and Jazz – everything in fact that had happened in his own lifetime' (*OGP*, p. 14). This description, which occurs in the novel's opening passages, reads as a pastiche of the kinds of media profiles that were commonly written about the author. If the Pinfold persona does correspond to Waugh then the book is keen to make clear that it is specifically *late* Waugh, not the Waugh of the 1930s or Second World War. It is only later in his career that the persona begins to consume the broader critical understanding of Waugh's political writing. Pinfold's 'idiosyncratic toryism', moreover, suggests itself as a morbid pharmacological pun: it invokes to a connotation of *idiosyncrasy* as an 'unexpected adverse reaction to a drug

or other substance occurring in an individual'.[503] In a book chronicling the impact of chronic drug use, this serves as a subtle indication that Pinfold's own grasp on politics in his middle age are somehow integrated into the bromide poisoning itself. Pinfold's particular 'toryism' is represented as a form of mental illness: a deviant and perverted worldview in a post-war Britain that is inhospitable to his politics. It is therefore unsurprising that critics have, as Douglas Lane Patey observes, 'been prompt to treat the book as a confession rather than a novel, and so to offer not literary criticism but psychological analysis'.[504] Waugh, through his Pinfold persona, ostensibly offers an itinerary of his personal failings and his alienation from life in modern Britain.

To many critics, Pinfold's persecutory hallucinations, which consist of accusations ranging from Communism to Fascism, and homosexuality to anti-Semitism, represent the writer performing his public confession. More accurately, however, the text may be described, as DeCoste claims, as subverting the idea of confession, with Pinfold instead engaging in a war against the contemporary critical culture that invades his privacy. 'Waugh's novel neither depicts Pinfold's confessions nor enacts Waugh's own', DeCoste argues:

> Rather, it is, as its title proclaims, the story of an *ordeal*, an agonizing and agonistic 'test of guilt or innocence,' from which Waugh's stand-in emerges, we are told, 'victorious'. What the book exposes, then, is not the penitent author's grievous faults, but an author's contest with his critics, and what it seeks, by its victory, to establish is the falseness of those critics' stock formulation and reprobation of Waugh's sins.[505]

DeCoste's interpretation is astute because it emphasises the significance of Pinfold's victory over the voices at the end of the book. As such, Pinfold's 'ordeal' suggests

[503] 'Idiosyncrasy', n.1, *OED*.
[504] Patey, *The Life of Evelyn Waugh*, p. 339.
[505] DeCoste, 'Contested Confessions', *Logos*, 68.

itself as the literary successor to Waugh's 1935 biography of Edmund Campion, rather than *Brideshead Revisited* (1945), as two very different lamentations on the fate of modern Britain. Crucially, though, Pinfold's enfeebled resistance to the BBC's interrogation aboard the *Caliban* bears none of the heroic associations of Campion's martyrdom. Though Waugh depicts Pinfold as undefeated by the cruel authoritarianism of the modern world, it is clear that the workings of reputation are not under the control of the individual. The reader is invited to participate in the investigation into the politics of reputation and, by extension, take part in an extended detective story in which the role of the writer is explored in its fullest.

The world to which *Pinfold* refers has an origin outside of the text. However, the air of unreality surrounding Pinfold's hallucinations is extended by his own interpretation of them, to which the reader is privy. The ship is named the *Caliban*, and Pinfold identifies his otherwise unnamed assailants as characters from Shakespeare's *King Lear* (1606). He hallucinates that he hears a prisoner being brought into the captain's quarters and interrogated, like he had been:

> 'Tie him to the chair,' said the leman, and Mr Pinfold at once thought of *King Lear*: 'Bind fast his corky arms.' Who said that? Goneril? Regan? Perhaps neither of them. Cornwall? It was a man's voice, surely? in the play. But it was the voice of the woman, or what passed as a woman, here. Addict of nicknames as he was, Mr Pinfold there and then dubbed her 'Goneril'.

(*OGP*, p. 58).

Consistent with the authoritarian characterisation of the wireless in *Pinfold*, the horror of the hallucinations is interpreted as a radio play. Live broadcasts of Shakespearean tragedies appeared frequently on the Third Programme in this period, and Pinfold begins to interpret his surroundings according to the BBC's programming. The

obsessive treatment of reputation in *Pinfold* reminds the reader to Cassio's despairing repetitions in *Othello* (1603): 'Reputation, reputation, reputation – O, I ha' lost my reputation, I ha' lost the immortal part of myself and what remains is bestial!'.[506] Immediately prior to these lines, Cassio uses a pointedly medical metaphor to illustrate his dire fortunes:

> IAGO: What, are you hurt, lieutenant?
> CASSIO: Ay, past all surgery.[507]

As mentioned above, *Pinfold* has appealed to many literary critics writing in journals such as *Literature and Medicine*, who have been concerned with its representation of mental illness. In a sense, *Pinfold* is an experimental travel book, though one that invokes numerous adjacent genres, in which Waugh is self-consciously engaging in an act of surgical intervention on his public reputation. This is quite separate from an act of confession, as DeCoste makes clear: the Pinfold persona does not consist of an embodiment of Waugh's confession whereby he acknowledges and emerges victorious over his earlier political writing. He is condemned to suffer his *ordeal* as a result of his 1930s travel books.

Conversely, however, *Pinfold* had the effect of providing Waugh with a mask-like public persona that represented a radical departure from the young and enthusiastic neophyte of the 1930s. In subsequent critical and biographical writing about Waugh, 'Pinfold', as a curmudgeonly and reactionary Tory, became a character that spoke in advance of its author. Graham Greene wrote in 1980, following the publication of Mark Amory's *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh* (1980), that 'Evelyn's

[506] *Othello*, II.3.198-99.
[507] Ibid., II.3.1995.96.

diaries have been joyfully exploited by the media, a word that has come to mean bad journalism. Journalists have always been intent on transforming a fine writer in a "character"'.[508] *Pinfold* suggests itself as an act of reputation management from which subsequent critical assessment of Waugh's political writing has taken its lead. Many of the accusations levelled at Pinfold during his hallucinatory episodes have their origins in Waugh's political travel books. However, they are included alongside the nonsensical detritus of outlandish accusations such that they become equally inconsequential. In further complication of *Pinfold*'s genre, it is an act of *auto*criticism undertaken by the author gazing retrospectively on his own body of work, especially his interwar politico-religious writing.

In 1946, Waugh announced the death of the travel book. In spite of this, twelve years later he agreed to write a preface for *A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush* (1958) by the English travel writer Eric Newby. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, Waugh had abandoned the form of the travel book; by 1958, however, he was endorsing Newby's travel writing free of charge. In his preface to *A Short Walk*, Waugh wrote that Newby 'exemplifies the essential (some, not I, will say deplorable) amateurism of the English'.[509] The English, he continued,

> have half (and wholly) killed themselves in order to get away from England. Mr Newby is the latest, but, I pray, not the last, of a whimsical tradition. […] Dear reader, if you have any softness left for the idiosyncrasies of our rough island race, fall to and enjoy this characteristic artefact'.[510]

In this preface, Waugh explains that he considers Newby to be a young writer upholding the traditions of a genre that he had pronounced dead only a decade prior.

[508] Graham Greene, *Ways of Escape* (London: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 201.
[509] Eric Newby, *A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush* (New York, NY.: Hodder & Stoughton, 1972), p. xi.
[510] Ibid., p. xi.

Newby's request for an introduction to the American market came at a significant moment in Waugh's life and in the development of his work. Waugh published *Pinfold* in 1957. In his 1982 autobiography, Newby recalls with some embarrassment that he had not read *Pinfold* and was unaware of the extent of its author's psychological breakdown. Waugh questioned Newby over some of the details provided in *A Short Walk*. Specifically, he doubted Newby's claim to have met Wilfred Thesiger based on a description of the famous explorer's Eton jacket. 'I had not been at Eton, but then neither had Waugh', Newby wrote in his autobiography, baffled by what he perceived as Waugh quibbling over the trivial details of the book.[511] New continues:

> I did not realize then, not yet having read *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*, that there was a distinct possibility that phantom voices were already accusing him of wishing that he had been at Eton, if not of actually pretending to have been at Eton himself.[512]

This seemingly innocuous reflection is suggestive of two key aspects of this period of Waugh's life and work: first, that Newby treated *Pinfold* as an autobiographical account of Waugh's breakdown that subsequently provided a key context for their interaction some years after the breakdown had actually occurred.[513] Second, it indicates the power of the authorial Pinfold persona on the subsequent reception history of Waugh's writing. *Pinfold*, it appears, rather than having been received as Waugh's self-conscious attempt to publicly wrestle with the afterlife of his 1930s religious politics, had itself become a mask that directed and revised the subsequent treatment of the offending material.

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[511] Eric Newby, *A Traveller's Life* (London: Collins, 1982), p. 169.
[512] Ibid., p. 169.
[513] Newby and Waugh's correspondence took place in the spring of 1958, whereas the hallucinatory episodes had occurred in 1954.

In his account of his correspondence with Waugh, Newby notes that the image of the travel writer that he had constructed from reading Waugh's interwar travel books was strikingly at odds with the persona of 'Gilbert Pinfold'. Without knowledge of the 1954 breakdown, Newby had deemed Waugh 'a very considerable and experienced traveller'.[514] However, after reading the *Pinfold*, he questioned the veracity of even the smallest of Waugh's assertions. Waugh wrote to Newby: 'No book needs an introduction less that *A Short Walk*, which is self explanatory', but he would agree to write it because 'I suppose the Americans want some certificate of bona fides'.[515] This represents an acknowledgement, however slight, on Waugh's part that he was giving his blessing to a travel book written after his own oft-quoted abandonment of the genre in *When the Going Was Good*. The idea of '*bona fides*' is essential to the travel-writing genre. As evidenced by Waugh's suspicion that American readers required some form of added credibility to accompany Newby's book, the travel book as a genre is constantly engaging in this process of lending trustworthiness to the claims it makes. Raban has written of the travel book that:

> Much of its 'factual' material, in the way of bills, menus, ticket-stubs, names and addresses, dates and destinations, is there to authenticate what is really fiction; while the wildest fictions have the status of possible facts'.[516]

Although Waugh did indeed provide the certificate of authenticity that Newby's American publishers required, such anxieties over *bona fides* are inherent to the genre. (This, one might suppose, is the motivation behind Waugh's letters to Newby regarding Thessiger's Eton coat.) In *Pinfold*, the precise issue of the protagonist's

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[514] Ibid., p. 168.
[515] Ibid, p. 170.
[516] Jonathan Raban, 'The Journey and the Book', in *For Love & Money: Writing, Reading, Travelling, 1969-1987* (London: Collins, 1987), pp. 253-59 (p. 53).

schooling is raised as the passengers discuss it with menacing scepticism on board the *Caliban*. It directly introduces the suspicion on the *Caliban* that Pinfold's autobiographical writing is entirely fraudulent:

> 'He wears any kind of tie – old Etonian usually.'
> '*Was* he ever at Eton?'
> 'He says he was.' said Glover.
> 'Don't you believe it. Board-school through and through.'
> 'Or at Oxford?'
> 'No, no. His whole account of his early life is a lie. No one had ever heard of him until a year or two ago. He's one of a lot of nasty people who crept into prominence during the war…'
>
> (*OGP*, p. 104)

In *European Witness* (1946), Stephen Spender wrote that his travel book 'consists of the information, the descriptions of scenery, the accounts of personalities and the general reflections which are usual in Travel Books'. However, he reveals, '[f]or various reasons the names of many of the people whom I met have been altered. In some cases, I have invented characters or incidents in order to convey some impression which could not be conveyed more directly. This book is simply a collection of impressions'.[517] The 'information' contained within the book – the facts of Spender's observations – endow the book with the authenticity of reportage. There is no apparent contradiction, however, between this statement and his subsequent admission that some significant aspects of the book have been 'invented'. It is with discernible irony that Spender declares subsequently: 'This is a Travel Book of a conventional kind'.[518] Such ironies are at the very heart of the literary travel book.

[517] Stephen Spender, *European Witness* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1946), p. 6.
[518] Ibid. p. 6.

Spender offers the travel book genre itself as a critical lens through which to consider a work so intensely concerned with autobiography and authenticity as *Pinfold*.

Pinfold embarks on his trip to Ceylon in response to him feeling 'decidedly seedy' (*OGP*, p. 23) in November 1954, which his doctor wrongly attributes to an allergic reaction to an unknown substance: 'The only cure really is a change', Dr Drake instructs Pinfold. 'I might go abroad after Christmas', he replies (*OGP*, p. 23). Travel, the reader is told, represents something very different to Pinfold now than it did in his younger years: 'In youth his long periods of leisure had been devoted to amusement. Now he had abandoned that quest. That was the main difference between Mr Pinfold at fifty and Mr Pinfold at thirty' (*OGP*, p. 22). Travel is now necessary to escape the English winter and to restore his health. Furthermore, it has a creative aspect to it. Pinfold, like Waugh in this period, had made increasingly slow progress on his novel. '"I *must* get away," said Mr Pinfold later to his wife. "I must go somewhere sunny and finish my book."' (*OGP*, p. 25). It is early on in the narrative that Waugh introduces Pinfold's failing memory, which is attributed to his illness. Pinfold's memory 'began to play tricks' (*OGP*, p. 23) Waugh writes, he 'remembered everything in clear detail but he remembered it wrong. He would state a fact, dogmatically, sometimes in print – a date, a name, a quotation – find himself challenged, turn to his books for verification and find most disconcertingly that he was at fault' (*OGP*, p. 23-24). This is substantively different to Spender's invention of certain aspects of his journey for the purposes of the travel book: Pinfold experiences the involuntary inventions of his corrupted memory.

What is of importance here is the notion that Pinfold returns to his books for clarification of fact, that the written word has become the clarification for memory. As Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson observe: 'Contexts are charged politically. What

is remembered and what is forgotten and *why*, change over time. The act of remembering has its politics also. There are struggles over who is authorized to remember, over what is forgotten, both personally and collectively.' [519] This is especially important with regard to the perceived uneasy relationship between truth and the travel book, especially in a book that incorporates formal aspects of both the novel and the travel book. At the very end of the text, Pinfold is depicted sitting down to begin work on the memoir of his travels.

> He took the pile of manuscript, his unfinished novel from the drawer and glanced through it. The story was still clear in his mind. He knew what had to be done. But there was more urgent business first, a hamper to be unpacked of fresh, rich experience – perishable goods.
>
> He returned the manuscript to the drawer, spread a new quire of foolscap before him, and wrote in his neat, steady hand:
>
> *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold*
> *A Conversation Piece*
> *Chapter One*
> *Portrait of the Artist in Middle-Age*

(*OGP*, p. 157)

Pinfold symbolically returns fiction to the drawer and, turning to the 'fresh, rich experience' of his trip to Ceylon, takes up the task of the autobiographer. The metaphor of memories as 'perishable goods' conveys the fragility and temporality of experience, which, like fruit from a hamper, will degrade and perish with time.

Throughout *Pinfold* Waugh problematizes the translation or, to use his metaphor, *unpacking* of experience into writing. This metaphor also recalls its use to ironic effect in the title of Henry Green's autobiography written at the start of the

[519] Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), p. 18.

Second World War, *Pack My Bag* (1940). In a reversal of the conventional literary metaphor of *unpacking*, Green acknowledges through his title that the act of autobiography is also that of writing one's own obituary. Anticipating a war that he will not survive, Green packs his bags ready for a final departure. The newfound optimism of the passage from *Pinfold*'s concluding paragraphs, quoted above, may be juxtaposed with the despair with which Waugh's 1934 travel book *Ninety-Two Days* opens: '*October 12th, 1933*. At last, relentless, inevitably, the lugubrious morning has dawned; day of wrath which I have been postponing week by week for five months. […] It was the end of the tether. There was nothing for it but to start writing this book.'[520] For Waugh in 1934 there was no 'urgent business', only the drudgery of returning through his notebooks and memories in order to produce the travel book.

This opening, too, is intimately concerned with the workings of reputation: 'I read the other day that when his biographer revealed that Trollope did his work by the clock, starting regularly as though at an office and stopping, even in the middle of a sentence, when his time was up, there was an immediate drop in his reputation and sales. […] It would have been better for trade if writers had kept up the bluff about inspiration'.[521] Waugh acknowledges that authorial personas exist across literature and are themselves constructed in subtle, culturally prescribed ways. The conception of the inspired Romantic writer is itself a 'bluff', a fictional persona that is accepted consensually by both author and reader. When this illusion is punctured, the writer's stock falls.

As Samuel Hynes had written of travel in the 1930s, 'journeys in the 'thirties were often symbolic journeys […], self-conscious crossings of the frontier between the known and the unknown, in search of some reality that was not visible at

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[520] Evelyn Waugh, *Ninety-Two Days* (London: Duckworth, 1934), p.11.
[521] Ibid., pp. 11-12.

home'.[522] Pinfold, like Trocchi, is engaged in a similar voyage into the invisible territory of the human psyche. If, as explained in the preface to *When the Going Was Good*, Waugh was happy to consign his political travel writing 'to the dust', the interrogation passages of *Pinfold* evidence that the writer was still grappling with the afterlife of these opinions in post-war Britain. Pinfold's 1930s opinions are sharply in contrast with post-war British identity, which the BBC was essential in forming and maintaining. It is through a combination of psychoanalysis and repurposed military communications technology that Angel and his colleagues at the BBC interrogate Pinfold. The 'hooligans', as Pinfold terms them, terrorise the protagonist in their attempts to make him confess to his deviancy from the political and moral centre of post-war Britain. Pinfold writes to his wife near the end of his ordeal that

> These B.B.C. people have made themselves a great nuisance to me on board. They have got a lot of apparatus with them, most of it new and experimental. […] I spend most of my days and nights carrying on conversations with people I never see. They are trying to psycho-analyse me. I know this sounds absurd. The Germans at the end of the war were developing this Box for the examination of prisoners. The Russians have perfected it.

(*OGP*, p. 157)

Throughout the book, Pinfold is depicted engaging in conversations with his fellow passengers based on a false perception that, as the voices were broadcast over the radio, they too must have heard the accusations. Because of its position at the very centre of British post-war culture, the BBC held an enormous power over the individuals within that society. It dictated the narrative with which Pinfold dissents. It is as a result of this dissent, it is implied, that he is punished for his crimes, historical

[522] Samuel Hynes, *The Auden Generation: Literature and Politics in England in the 1930s* (London: Faber, 1979), p. 288.

and present. '[W]hen the war was over', Waugh recalls in *A Tourist in Africa* (1960), 'politicians did what they could to keep us all wired in'.[523] This is at the heart of Pinfold's paranoia. In this sense *Pinfold* represents an extended exploration on the politics of a writer's reputation as it exists in relation to the ideas of Britishness formulated and maintained by the BBC. As a work that is intensely autobiographical and formally indebted to the travel book, *Pinfold* provides a crucial link between the writer of the 1930s and that of the 1950s.

[523] Evelyn Waugh, *A Tourist in Africa* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1960), p. 6.

5. 'TOURISM AND POLITICS HAVE LAID WASTE EVERYWHERE': ROMAN CATHOLIC IMPERIALISM IN EVELYN WAUGH'S *A TOURIST IN AFRICA* (1960)

Those who regard conversion to Roman Catholicism as an unpatriotic defection – a surrender to Italian domination – seem to miss the whole idea of universality.

—Evelyn Waugh, 'Converted to Rome: Why it has Happened to Me' (1930)[524]

In 1959, Evelyn Waugh retraced a journey he had first taken in Africa thirty years earlier. Having recently finished his biography of the Roman Catholic priest Ronald Knox, Waugh resolved to return to 'Africa again without preoccupations, with eyes reopened to the exotic'.[525] *A Tourist in Africa* (1960), the travel book that resulted from his journey through Kenya, Rhodesia and Tanganyika[526], was an edited version of the travel journal that he kept throughout the trip. In it, Waugh reflects on the failure of the hopes that he held in the late 1930s for a Roman Catholic Empire in East Africa. The movement for African independence, which was accelerating rapidly during his visit, troubled him. He mourned the collapse of the European imperial project and commented despairingly on the deep political fissures that he observes in Britain in the late 1950s. Waugh's travel book portrays Africa in a crucial moment in the history of decolonisation: Kenya was still in turmoil following the Mau Mau Uprising (1952-60) and would go on to obtain its independence from Britain three years later in 1963. Tanganyika declared independence in the same year, followed by Northern Rhodesia in 1964 and Southern Rhodesia in 1965. In *Waugh in Abyssinia*

[524] Evelyn Waugh, 'Converted to Rome: Why it has Happened to Me', *Daily Express*, 20 October 1930; repr. in *The Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh* ed. by Donat Gallagher (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), pp. 103-104 (p. 104).
[525] Evelyn Waugh, *A Tourist in Africa* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1960), p. 7. (Further references to this edition in this chapter are given after quotations in the text.)
[526] The Tanganyika Territory was a British protectorate mandated by the League of Nations. It was the British share of German East Africa that was divided between Britain, Belgium and Portugal after the defeat of Imperial Germany in the Frist World War. In 1963 it received independence from the United Kingdom and in 1964 joined with Zanzibar to form the nation of Tanzania.

(1936), Waugh had advanced a politico-religious thesis that enthusiastically supported Mussolini's plot for a resurgent Roman Empire in East Africa. Thirty years later, in *A Tourist in Africa*, he is confronted by the reality of the imperial project after the Second World War. The travel book situates Waugh at the epicentre of the radical changes that were occurring on the Africa continent. In it, he bears witness to the failure of his great hopes for the expansion of Christendom that he set forth in his travel writing of the late 1930s, and reflects doubtfully on the future of the Roman Catholic faith in Europe.

A Tourist in Africa recasts Waugh's earlier politico-religious aspirations for Africa as abortively chimerical. The travel book is filled with disillusionment and despair. In particular, the dissolution of European imperialism substantively undermined Waugh's once strongly held belief in the possibility of achieving a religious mission through political praxis. 'Eighty years ago it was hoped that a province was being added to Christendom', he laments, 'British rule has merely created an Indian settlement' (*TIA*, p. 59). In 1960, Waugh was convinced of the fragmentation of Europe, which had in his estimation been corrupted by rampant leftism and secularism. As early as 1946 Waugh had intended to abandon Britain, then under the post-war Attlee Government (1945-51), in favour of Ireland, which would be more hospitable to his Catholic and aristocratic sympathies. He wrote to Randolph Churchill, whose father had only the year prior been ousted from government by the Labour Party's landslide electoral victory of 1945:

> I have put this house on the market and am negotiating to buy a castle in Ireland where I hope to find brief shelter from the Attlee terror; but Hic non habemus manentem civitatem.[527]

[527] Evelyn Waugh, letter to Randolph Churchill, 22 December 1946, in *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh* ed. by Mark Amory (London: Weidelfeld & Nicolson, 1980), p. 243. Amory trans.: 'Here we have no abiding city'.

The political and religious dissolution of Britain forced Waugh to question the value of European administration and influence in Africa. In Africa, Waugh sought a religious 'vision' that will 'remain uncontaminated by Europe and America (*TIA*, p. 131). However, although doubtful for the continent's future, he finds hope in Father John Groeber's Catholic mission in Selima, Rhodesia. Waugh identifies the plight of the indigent Arab aristocracy with that of the landed English nobility in the twentieth century. He hopes that, like Campion in Elizabethan England, African Catholics can preserve their faith in the face of anti-religious forces that he sees as sweeping the world. His hopes are not entirely extinguished, as he explains:

> England was Roman Catholic for nine hundred years, then Protestant for three hundred, then agnostic for a century. The Catholic structure still lies lightly buried beneath every phase of English life; history, topography, law, archaeology everywhere reveal Catholic origins. Foreign travel anywhere reveals the local, temporary character of the heresies and schisms and the universal, eternal character of the Church.[528]

At the heart of Waugh's condemnation of British imperialism in East Africa is the deleterious impact of unhindered capitalism on the traditions of the region. In Tanzania, he denounces the elevation of the mercantile middle class Indians, which he argues had brought about the dissolution of the traditional Arab aristocracy. *A Tourist in Africa* is a threnody for his 1930s commitment to a universal Roman Catholic imperialism, and his valediction for the travel-writing genre. In the movement for African independence he sees only fragmentation and collapse. This, Waugh argues, follows from the disintegration of shared political and religious values that had

[528] Evelyn Waugh, 'Come Inside', in *The Road to Damascus: The Spiritual Pilgrimage to Roman Catholicism by Fifteen Converts to Catholicism*, ed. by John A. O'Brien (London: Doubleday, 1949); repr. in *Essays*, pp. 366-68 (p. 367).

occurred in Europe following the Second World War. As the imperial and hegemonic well spring for the exportation of civilization to Africa, Europe had abandoned its promise to the continent and had behaved abominably.[529]

This chapter investigates Waugh's response to the decline of European imperialism in Africa during the period of decolonisation. It argues that African independence confirms for him the politico-religious thesis that he advances in his 1930s travel writing: if Europe abandons the traditions and imperial obligations of its Roman Catholic heritage, then it will fall. *A Tourist in Africa* is his testimony to this truth. *Waugh in Abyssinia* and *Robbery Under Law* represent, respectively, Waugh's ideological optimism and gloomy forewarning regarding the fate of Christendom. His 1960 travel book, however, is his elegiac account of its ultimate demise. In it, Waugh travels in the Africa of both the past and the present. He makes a journey that is both geographic and temporal, which recalls, with hopeless futility, the future he had hoped awaited both Europe and Africa. For Waugh, the dissolution of Africa into independent nations represents a symptom of the wider secularism of the post-war period. In *A Tourist in Africa* he frames decolonisation in light of the ephemerality of politics, which are contingent and transient, beneath the enduring might of an eternal and universal faith. It is, as such, ambivalent in its tone: he has faith that Roman Catholicism will have the ultimate victory, but writes an elegy for its momentary decline. The travel book captures the momentous changes that Waugh witnesses in 1950s Africa while insisting on the illusory nature of such change. The Church is permanent, he argues, and politics are local and temporary. *A Tourist in Africa* is his testament to this politico-religious thesis.

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[529] See Alissa Karl, 'A Little Fiction is Good for You: Currency Crisis, The Nation State, and Waugh's African Texts', *Modern Fiction Studies*, 58.2 (2012) 261-83.

Africa and the Faith

In a diary entry of September 1963, Waugh noted with despair that the barbarians were no longer merely at the gates, as he had long feared them to be: they had taken the city. There was no need to endure the ardours of travel to far-flung places in order to encounter difference and disorder, he argues. Britain was no longer recognisable, and was barbarous enough. 'It was fun thirty-five years ago to travel far and in great discomfort to meet people whose entire conception of life and manner of expression was alien', he writes: 'Now one has only to leave one's own gates.'[530] In his 1930s travels, to which Waugh's diary alludes, the traditions and heritage of the United Kingdom provided an arbiter by which the civilisation and barbarism could effectively be judged. However, by the end of the 1950s, it was unclear how such a binary opposition, between civilisation and barbarism, could be maintained. It is the erosion of such differences, precipitated by the decline of empire and the leftist secularism of post-war Britain, that negated the purpose of travelling, and travel writing, altogether.

In his preface to the 1946 anthology of his interwar travel writing, *When the Going Was Good*, Waugh recalls the powerful impulse that drove him and his contemporaries to abandon England for the allure of distant and barbarous places in the 1930s. 'We turned our backs on civilization', he writes, and confesses his own ignorance in holding the belief that civilisation's security was assured.[531] For Waugh, civilisation could wait: it would always be there and would await his return. He confesses himself to be a 'travelmaniac' and contrasts himself with the boring and

[530] *The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh* ed. by Michael Davie (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1976), p. 791. 3 September 1963.
[531] Evelyn Waugh, *When the Going Was Good* (London: Duckworth, 1946), p. vi.

unimaginative dispositions of those who resist the call of abroad.[532] 'The stay-at-home', Waugh writes in 1933,

> vaguely imagines the world as being under calm European domination, peopled with peppery colonels and astute officials. But those who know the fantastic variety, even among British possessions, know that literally every place in the world is worth visiting, and treasures some peculiar gift for the traveller who goes there in decent humility.[533]

The idealism of this passage captures Waugh's giddy excitement for the innumerable possibilities that travelling enabled in the early 1930s. He cites the British Empire as a stabilising force, but one that does not exert too great a homogenising influence on foreign cultures so as to eliminate national differences. His insistence on the value of travel is established on the premise that Britain was a solid and stable entity: it kept the barbarians out and, as such, one needed to flee its shores to encounter radical difference.

After the Second World War, Waugh perceived that the rapid increases in egalitarianism and secularism in post-war Britain came at great cost to the nation's traditional aristocracy and its religious heritage. As his biographer David Wykes writes, he 'both hated and feared the common man'.[534] By 1946, Waugh already perceived himself to be increasingly isolated, politically and religiously, in his own country. There was no place for him, he laments, in 'the Century of the Common Man where vice no longer pays lip service to virtue'.[535] 'Class-consciousness,' Waugh continues, 'particularly in England, has been so much inflamed nowadays that to

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[532] Evelyn Waugh, 'Travel – and Escape from Your Friends', *Daily Mail*, 16 January 1933; repr. in *Essays*, pp. 133-34 (p. 134).
[533] Waugh *When the Going Was Good*, p. 134.
[534] David Wykes, *Evelyn Waugh: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), p. 8.
[535] Evelyn Waugh, 'Fan-Fare', *Life*, 8 April 1946; repr. in *Essays*, pp. 300-304 (p. 304)

mention a nobleman is like mentioning a prostitute sixty years ago'.[536] In *When the Going Was Good*, he reflects upon his past desperation to leave England and he certainty that it would remain distinct and insulated from the barbarism he sought abroad:

> Had we known, we might have lingered with 'Palinurus';[537] had we known that all that seeming-gold, patiently built, gorgeously ornamented structure of Western life was to melt overnight like an ice-castle, leaving only a puddle of mud; had we known man was even then leaving his post. Instead, we set off on our various stern roads, I to the tropics and the Arctic, with the belief that barbarism was a dodo to be stalked with a pinch of salt.[538]

A Tourist in Africa maps Waugh's journey in the melted puddle of civilisation. In this passage, he ascribes the tone and character of his early travel books to the naivety of the age. Waugh indicts himself for having given no thought to the precariousness of civilisation. The 'gorgeously ornamented structure of Western life' to which he intended to return once his days of itinerancy were over had collapsed in his absence: 'My own travelling days are over, and I do not expect to see many travel books in the near future', Waugh concludes.[539] He rhetorically counts himself among the post-war refugees who had been uprooted or exiled as a result of the Second World War, announcing bleakly: 'There is no room for tourists in a world of "displaced persons".'[540] With his preface to *When the Going Was Good* Waugh announced the death, as he saw it, of the hegemonic order that had existed prior to the war, whether manifested in the form of European imperialism or the potential for a resurgent

[536] Ibid., p. 304.
[537] Cyril Connolly used the pseudonym 'Palinurus' in *The Unquiet Grave: A Word Cycle by Palinurus* (1944). Unlike his contemporaries, Connolly did not see the allure of foreign countries, preferring instead home comforts. See George MCartney, *Evelyn Waugh and the Modernist Tradition* (Oxford: Routledge, 2004), p. xiii.
[538] Ibid., p. vi.
[539] Ibid., p. vi. Waugh's italics.
[540] Ibid., p. vi.

Roman Catholic Church. At home in England, Waugh was newly lost among the barbarians, in a manner that appeared to him analogous to his days spent 'among cannibals and mosquitoes' in South America and East Africa.[541] What purpose, he asks, is the travel book when a distinction between home and abroad, civilisation and barbarism, order and chaos, is no longer possible?

A Tourist in Africa opens in the form of a diary entry for the 28th December 1958. In it, Waugh records that he is celebrating the feast of the Massacre of the Innocents. He is reminded of Breughel's commemoration of the biblical account, which rendered the events of Matthew 2.16 in the context of the inciting events of the Eighty-Years War (1568-1648):

> *28th December* 1958. On the third day after Christmas we commemorate the massacre of the Holy Innocents. Few candid fathers, I suppose, can regard that central figure of slate in Breughel's painting in Antwerp without being touched by sympathy. After the holly and sticky sweetmeats, cold steel.
>
> (*TIA*, p. 5)

Waugh's reference to Breughel's painting alludes to and indirectly introduces the political and religious argument of his travel book. It invokes the European wars of religion that were precipitated by the Protestant Reformation, which tore the continent apart from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Brueghel's 'Massacre of the Innocents' (c. 1565-67) depicts the brutality of Spanish soldiers in a Flemish village. The occupying soldiers are translations of Herod's soldiers that had been instructed by their king to kill all of the male infants of Bethlehem.[542] It symbolically functions

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[541] Waugh, 'Travel – and Escape from Your Friends', p. 134.

[542] Matthew 2.16: 'Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof,

as a prelude to the eventual Dutch revolt against Spanish rule that began in 1568, which was a Protestant rejection of Roman Catholic imperialism in Europe. The introduction of Breughel's painting establishes the thematic concerns of *A Tourist in Africa*. It functions as an overture to Waugh's interpretation, in his travel book, of the dissolution of European administration in Africa as an event in the eternal war between the forces of barbarism and civilisation. The Massacre of the Innocents is, in this case, invoked as an event that accelerated the rejection of Catholicism and the ensuing religious wars in Northern Europe. The continent, Waugh argues, has never recovered.

In *Europe and the Faith* (1920) Belloc cites the 'catastrophe of the Reformation' as the decisive event in which Europe first rejected civilisation: 'The grand effect of the Reformation', Belloc writes, 'was the isolation of the soul'.[543] The 'soul of Europe', he clarifies, 'which is the Catholic Church'.[544] From the outset of *A Tourist in Africa* Waugh can be seen drawing an analogy between post-war decolonisation and the inciting events of the wars that followed the Reformation. In so doing, he offers a religious interpretation of contemporary political events. The fragmentation of European hegemony in Africa prompts Waugh to return to the schismatic conflicts of the sixteenth century and after, and, moreover, represents a distinctly Bellocian way of interpreting history. Belloc argues that the crisis and chaos of the Reformation precipitated the spiritual and political dissolution of Europe. It set in motion the radical politics and nationalistic divisions of the twentieth century. The ramifications of the Reformation, Belloc writes, were vast and ruinous:

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from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.' (*KJV*)

[543] Hilaire Belloc, *Europe and the Faith* (London: Constable, 1920), p. 164.

[544] Ibid., p. 164.

> Its spiritual result – the isolation of the soul; its political result – a consequence of the spiritual – the prodigious release of energy, the consequent advance of special knowledge, the domination of the few under a competition left unrestrained, the subjection of the many, the ruin of happiness, the final threat of chaos.[545]

Belloc was not alone in interpreting the events of the twentieth century in the light of the Reformation. In *Fascism and Providence* (1937), the Roman Catholic writer J. K. Heydon advances an argument for the necessity of fascism as the only political force that could reverse the harm that had been done to Europe specifically by the Reformation.[546] Since 1912 Belloc had argued in favour of a monarchic corporatism in order to solve the chaos of democracy, which was a consequence of the fragmentation brought about by the Reformation.[547] His writing binds the spiritual to the political in a manner that is clearly manifested in the politico-religious argument of Waugh's late-1930s travel books: *Waugh in Abyssinia* and *Robbery Under Law*.

In *Edmund Campion*, Waugh argues that, following the Reformation, 'the old Church was scattered and broken'.[548] The hagiography of the Jesuit martyr presents an interpretation of Elizabethan history that is influenced by Belloc. As James Lothian argues, Waugh's account of the Jesuit's life evinces a 'distinctly Bellocian interpretation of sixteenth-century English history'.[549] In it, Waugh laments that 'a great tradition has been broken' and, with the Reformation, England and Europe had been cut off from the life-blood of the Church of Rome.[550] Donat Gallagher goes further to argue that, although Waugh's account of the Jesuit's life was historically

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[545] Belloc, *Europe and the Faith*, p. 163.
[546] J. K. Heydon, *Fascism and Providence* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1937). See Tom Buchanan, 'Great Britain', in *Political Catholicism in Europe, 1918-1965* ed. by Tom Buchanan and Martin Conway (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 248-75 (p. 267).
[547] Hilaire Belloc, *The Servile State* (London: T. N. Foulis, 1912).
[548] Evelyn Waugh, *Edmund Campion: Jesuit and Martyr* (London: Penguin), p. 154.
[549] James R. Lothian, *Making and Unmaking of the English Catholic Intellectual Community*, 1910-1950 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dames Press, 2009), p. 187.
[550] Waugh, *Edmund Campion*, p. 19.

accurate, he 'surrounds the biographical narrative with a highly controversial "Bellocian" or "revisionist" historical framework'.[551] This was contentious because, Gallagher explains, in the 1930s, most Roman Catholic historians fervently disagreed with Church of England historians over Tudor religious history.[552] Catholic historians, 'some of whom strongly influenced Waugh',[553] believed, he concludes,

> that the intention to extirpate Catholicism existed 'from the beginning' of Elizabeth's reign. Moreover, they questioned the Gloriana mythology and adopted a sour view of England's widely lauded achievements in Empire and commerce.[554]

This frames *A Tourist in Africa* as a travel book in which Waugh still journeys in the spiritually and politically fragmented lands that had been rent asunder by the Reformation. Moreover, it positions it in the trajectory of his representation of Catholic persecution in *Edmund Campion*, through *Robbery Under Law*, and concluding with *A Tourist in Africa*. In his 1960 travel book, Waugh questions the mythology of *Pax Britannica* and denounces the deleterious impact of capitalist exploitation of its colonial subjects under a fraudulent evangelising promise.

Edmund Campion draws the comparison between the Catholic persecutions of Elizabethan England with the rampant secularism of the twentieth century. It depicts a church that has been severed from its ancestral home and a nation that has made exiles of the faithful. Waugh felt himself to be living in such times. 'The hunted,

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[551] Donat Gallagher, '1066 And All That? History in Evelyn Waugh's *Edmun Campion*', *Evelyn Waugh Newsletter and Studies*, 42.1 (2011) 1-5 (1).
[552] Ibid., 1.
[553] For example, Leo Hicks, S. J., 'Wanted: A New and True History of Queen Elizabeth', *The Month*, 3 (1930) 212-17; A. D. Meyer's *England and the Catholic Church under Elizabeth* (London: Kegan Paul, 1916); Hilaire Belloc *How the Reformation Happened* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1928); and Alan Gordon Smith, *William Cecil: The Power behind Elizabeth* (London: Kegan Paul, 1934).
[554] Ibid., 2.

trapped, murdered priest is our contemporary', he writes in 1946.[555] All Roman Catholics in Elizabethan England, Waugh continues,

> despaired of the restoration of the Church, and only begged sufferance to die with the aid of her sacraments. It was at this juncture that Campion gently proposed to examine the despair of heresy and show that all its violence sprang from its consciousness of failure.[556]

His religious and political writing in this period evidences an analogous 'consciousness of failure'. *A Tourist in Africa* charts the failure of the European imperial project. In his Belloc inspired analysis of European civilisation after the Reformation, Waugh despairs at the decline of 'the West' and its promise of expanding Christendom to include barbarous and uncivilised places. He includes Belloc's *How the Reformation Happened* (1929) among the few secondary sources that he cites at the end of *Edmund Campion*.[557] His travel book makes reference to another of Belloc's works: Waugh explains that his 'resolution to eschew aeroplanes' was undertaken so as to capture the spirit of 'Belloc's decision to eschew trains in *Path to Rome*' (*TIA*, p. 66). In *The Path to Rome* (1902), Belloc writes:

> I watched a train come in. It was full of tourists, who (it may have been a subjective illusion) seemed to me common and worthless people, and sad into the bargain. It was going to Interlaken; and I felt a languid contempt for people who went to Interlaken instead of driving right across the great hills to Rome.[558]

[555] *Edmund Campion*, p. xi.
[556] Ibid., p. 154.
[557] Ibid., p.158.
[558] Hilaire Belloc, *The Path to Rome* (London: G. Allen, 1902), pp. 191-92.

For Belloc, at the turn of the twentieth century, the tourists' decision to bypass Rome on their way to the Swiss Alps is emblematic of modern society's turning away from its ancestral religion heritage. He is on a pilgrimage from Toul to Rome and seeks to find that traditional road into the Eternal City. Belloc describes, in the above passage, his confusion and his contempt for those who turn, spiritually and literally, away from Rome and its church.

Edmund Campion opens with Waugh's own vision of contempt. It begins with a picture of Queen Elizabeth I ill and dying. Her reign had seen an immense escalation in the persecution of English Catholics, including the martyrdom of Campion. Waugh depicts the Queen as decaying and frail: a manifestation of the country that she had poisoned and destroyed. It grotesquely subverts the image of Elizabeth as the absolute imperial monarch. The Queen, he writes,

> refused to take medicine, refused to eat, refused to go to bed. She sat on the floor, propped up with cushions, sleepless and silent, her eyes constantly open, fixed on the ground, oblivious to the coming and going of her councillors and attendants. […] She had round her neck a piece of gold the size of an angel, engraved with characters; it had been left to her lately by a wise woman who had died in Wales at the age of a hundred and twenty. Sir John Stanhope had assured her that as long as she wore this talisman she could not die.[559]

With the abandonment of the true church, Elizabeth I is reduced to ignominy and superstition. The amulet that she wears, while collapsed on the floor, is intended to provide the Queen comfort. Waugh's reference to it, however, creates the sense that, in the absence of the last rites and the true faith, she is left to the paganism and idolatry of Protestantism that provides no solace for her pain. Christopher Hodgkins argues that Waugh's attitude to Elizabeth I differentiates him from his literary

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[559] Waugh, *Edmund Campion*, p. 5.

predecessors, among which he includes Kipling, Conrad and Forster. 'Where earlier writers', Hodgkins claims, 'at times look back elegiacally to the spiritual élan and unified consciousness of the Elizabethan Protestants who conceived the British Empire, Waugh looks back with scorn'.[560] In his *New Yorker* review of *Edmund Campion* in 1946, Edmund Wilson claims that 'Waugh's version of history is in its main lines more or less in the vein of *1066 And All That*. Catholicism was a Good Thing and Protestantism was a Bad Thing, and that is all that needs to be said about it'.[561] Waugh's representation of Elizabeth in *Edmund Campion* is governed by the same attitude towards the dissolution of Roman Catholic Europe as that which compelled his despair over the fragmentation of European imperialism in Africa in the 1950s and after.[562] Waugh extends this religious interpretation of history into his political analysis of Africa during decolonisation. For him, Europe's abandonment of its empire as well as its faith was a modern instantiation of the Reformation. It was a direct consequence of it. The decrepit body of the imperial queen mirrors the destitution, spiritual and political, of her empire. The fragmentation of Africa that Waugh witnessed in 1959 was a consequence of Elizabeth's betrayal of the faith in the sixteenth century.

This is not the first travel book in which Waugh depicts a nation that has rejected its traditional connection to Christendom. *Robbery Under Law* portrays Mexico as having fallen into economic and spiritual ruin as a result of revolutionary left wing politics and the abandonment of its religious heritage. Essential to this, too,

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[560] Christopher Hodgkins, *Reforming Empire: Protestant Colonialism and Conscience in British Literature* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2002), p. 231.
[561] Edmund Wilson, review of *Edmund Campion*, *New Yorker*, 13 July 1946, p. 81.
[562] Nicholas Griffin, 'Ethical Responsibility and Historical Biography', *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 6.1 (1989) 17-30: 'Of course it is easy to find example of extreme bias in biographies […] but Evelyn Waugh's biography of Edmund Campion […] springs readily to mind, even though Waugh was not distinguished as a dispassionate biographer. But his zealous Catholic viewpoint no doubt encouraged Waugh to press Campion into posthumous support for a proselytising and rhetorical treatment of his own life' (26).

is Mexico's rejection of a divinely ordained and benevolent Spanish monarch. In the decades that followed the accession of the revolutionary Marxist government of 1917, Mexico's spiritual body had atrophied and withered. Under General Cárdenas' regime (1934-40) this decline had only accelerated. All hope, however, is not lost for the country as an outpost on the fringes of the Roman Catholic Empire, as Waugh contends:

> The whole country has been saturated with Spanish influence; then the European source was cut off; the surface became dry and dusty but below it there was still rich, moist soil; for another century Mexico remained essentially Spanish. Four hundred years of history cannot be obliterated. The traditions of Spain are still deep in the Mexican character and I believe that it is only by developing them that the country can ever grow happy.[563]

In his prescription for Mexico's national ills in 1939, Waugh identifies the revival of the Church. Through this alone, he argues, Mexico could achieve its return to the traditional Spanish-imperial character of Mexican life. This was the only way that the country can flourish. His arboreal metaphor for Mexico's Spanish Catholic heritage – the 'rich, moist soil' that nourishes faith, even under Cárdenas' brutal religious suppression – anticipates his depiction of Africa's deracination from European influence in the period of decolonisation. Waugh writes in *A Tourist in Africa*: 'The foundations of empire are often occasions of woe; their dismemberment, always' (*TIA*, p. 157). The branch that extended from Europe, whose religious traditions had only lately been abandoned, had been cut. Though, as he saw it, European imperialism had not been administered with the greatest compassion and had caused

[563] Evelyn Waugh, *Robbery Under Law: The Mexican Object-Lesson* (London: Penguin, 2002 [1939]), p. 74.

untold suffering, the retreat of the empire entailed the abandonment of the African continent to chaos.

In *A Tourist in Africa*, Waugh alludes to the politico-religious thesis of *Robbery Under Law* when he finds the period of decolonisation analogous to Mexico's rejection of imperial Spain. He invokes the Mexican Revolution (1910-20) in order to describe the secularism and irreligious anarchy that he saw in Africa on the verge of independence:

> I suppose the nearest historical comparison to modern Africa is the reality behind the fiction of Buster Keaton's Latin America. The Spanish monarchy was dispossessed by local revolutionaries who spoke the already antiquated language of the Enlightenment. A century of chaos and tyranny followed and is not yet everywhere abated.
>
> (*TIA*, p. 157)

This is an exposition of Waugh's politico-religious attitude towards history and imperialism in his writing, which, beginning with *Edmund Campion*, extends into *A Tourist in Africa*. The movement towards African independence and decolonisation represents, for Waugh, the continuation of a spiritual and ideological movement that began with the Reformation, adopted the secular lexicon of Enlightenment philosophy, and wreaked havoc in the twentieth century. As such, Waugh's 1960 Africa travel book displays its author's ambivalence towards the changes that he observes: he is aware that the period of decline and dissolution has not yet ended; it may well only be the beginning. However, although he tends towards despair, in *A Tourist in Africa* Waugh commits to hopefulness for a reconciled church that will manifest itself in the resurgent imperial Christendom.

The travel book was received negatively in the British press, and continues to be disparaged in subsequent criticism. Selina Hastings notes that Waugh had been 'too ashamed' to send his 'African pot-boiler' to his friends, and describes the book as 'almost as boring to read as evidently it was to write'.[564] Martin Stannard asserts that that 'the sheer complexity of African politics defeated [Waugh]. In 1931 he had offered confidently eccentric opinions on whatever crossed his path. In 1959 Africa was no longer a white man's joke. Colonialism and apartheid could not be dismissed as the bugbears of lunatic liberals'.[565] However, *A Tourist in Africa* succeeds in capturing Waugh's religious and political ambivalence towards what he saw in Africa in 1959. 'The Empire', as Derek Peterson has recently written, 'was the crucible wherein British values were worked out'.[566] For Waugh, the empire had fallen as a result of the collapse of those values. Decolonisation was, to him, spiritually connected to Europe's Roman Catholic history and a grim foreboding of its future dissolution.

In his review of the book, Cyril Connolly calls it 'quite the thinnest piece of book-making which Mr. Waugh has undertaken'.[567] He continues, arguing that 'the particular pose he affects – of an elderly, infirm and irritable old buffer, quite out of touch with the times – is hardly suited to enthusiasm, a prerequisite of travel-writing'.[568] Connolly finds the authorial voice of *A Tourist in Africa* to be an extension of the 'Gilbert Pinfold' persona, which Waugh cultivated in his public interviews: that of an intemperate and curmudgeonly Tory. Basil Davidson writes that

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[564] Selina Hastings, *Evelyn Waugh: A Biography* (London: Sinclair-Stevenson, 1994), p. 590.
[565] Martin Stannard, *Evelyn Waugh: No Abiding City, 1939-1966* (London: Flamingo, 1993), p. 415.
[566] Derek Peterson, *Abolitionism and Imperialism in Britain, Africa and the Atlantic* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2005), p. 5.
[567] Cyril Connolly, review of *A Tourist in Africa*, *Sunday Times*, 25 September 1960; repr. in *Evelyn Waugh: The Critical Heritage* ed. by Martin Stannard (London: Routledge, 1984), pp. 414-16 (p. 416).
[568] Ibid., p. 416.

this is Waugh 'of the Middle-Late Mood, […] more in sorrow than in wit'.[569] However, as was argued in Chapter 3 of this thesis, *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* represents a much more complicated and ambiguous depiction of Waugh's relation to religion and post-war politics in Britain than Connolly's assessment would suggest. The same holds true for *A Tourist in Africa*: Waugh submits his despairing interpretation of decolonisation before his reader; but, in spite of this, he also advances a thesis of hope and rebirth for Roman Catholic imperialism in the future.

Life Among the Ruins

On his journey to Africa in January 1959, Waugh travelled through the Mediterranean and went by way of Genoa to visit his friend Diana Cooper.[570] He spent two days taking in the architecture and dining in candlelit cellars in the city.[571] In *A Tourist in Africa*, Waugh notes how unfit he feels for travelling: 'I was the same seedy old man who had groaned up to Paddington' from Somerset (*TIA*, p. 18). His strength is bolstered, however, by the Catholic Revivalist architecture of the small Jesuit *chiesa* in Genoa. 'I needed a strong draught to quicken my faculty,' Waugh informs us, 'and I found it in the Counter-Reformation extravagance of the Gesu. That picked me up and I was ready for the subtler beauties of the Cathedral' (*TIA*, p. 18).

Genoa prompts Waugh to recall the bombing of Italian cities by the Allied forces in the Second World War. He remembers a British politician speaking on BBC radio exhorting the military to 'add notably to the ruins for which the country was justly famous' (*TIA*, p. 15). As Waugh demonstrates in the novels collected as the *Sword of Honour* trilogy (1964), the war, far from being the honourable endeavour

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[569] Basil Davidson, 'Mr Waugh's Africa', *New Statesman*, 24 September 1960; repr. in *Critical Heritage*, pp. 413-14 (p. 414).
[570] Waugh refers to Diana Cooper as 'Mrs Stitch' in *A Tourist in Africa*.
[571] Stannard, *No Abiding City*, p. 413.

that he had initially hoped for, was a cataclysm that had left him a refugee in his own country. He explains mournfully in the preface to it: ‘On reading the book I realized that I had done something quite outside my original intention. I had written an obituary of the Roman Catholic Church in England as it had existed for centuries.’[572] The despair that Waugh feels for Africa in *A Tourist in Africa* represents an extension of the emotions that he feels for his own country and its severance from its European and Roman Catholic heritage. It partakes in his broader lamentation for English life, still reeling from the Reformation centuries later, with its aristocracy in penury, and its empire in retreat.

In Genoa, however, Waugh is surprised and pleased to discover that the city was not in ruins, but showed signs of rebirth. He found that its religious and aristocratic architecture had been restored: the monumental cemetery of Staglieno is splendorous, and there is ‘little evidence of damage’ to the Cathedral of St Lawrence (*TIA*, p. 15). It appears to him as though the great cataclysm of World War II had never occurred. Waugh writes that Britain’s lust for Italy’s devastation had anticipated powers of self-restoration of neither the country, nor its Church:

> He did not take account of the Italians genius for restoration. They do not, as do those in authority in England, regard the destruction of a good building as a welcome opportunity to erect something really ugly in its place. They set to work patiently exercising the arts of their ancestors. The palaces and churches of Genoa were, it seems, in ruins in 1945. Now walking the streets with Augustus Hare’s guide book of 1875, Mrs Stitch and I could see almost all that he saw, as he saw it.

(*TIA*, pp. 15-16)

If Italy could resurrect the architectural links to its Roman Catholic traditions, Waugh seems to say, then why not Britain and all of Europe. He hopes for a return to the art

[572] Evelyn Waugh, ‘Preface’, in *Sword of Honour* (London: Penguin, 2001 [1964]), p. xxxiv.

and architecture of Medieval England that represents continuity and heritage, prior to the great schism of the Reformation. The Church of Campion had survived innumerable struggle, but it would one day be triumphant: 'For more than 2,000 years Rome has been "The City", the unique capital of the Western world',[573] Waugh writes, explaining the Eternal City's perpetual struggle and ultimate victory against secularism and religious persecution: 'Like the heart of a man, it has always been torn from within by faction and threatened from without by the barbarian.'[574] However, although Waugh finds in Genoa evidence of the continuation of the Church after catastrophe, he cites post-war modernity in England as the antithesis of beauty and upholding tradition.

In his essay 'I See Nothing But Boredom… Everywhere' (1959), Waugh offers a summation of his reactionary post-war politics. This centres primarily on the prospect of nuclear war ('I can see nothing objectionable in the total destruction of the earth, provided it is done […] inadvertently')[575] and his intense dislike of modern Britain. Waugh felt that the authoritarianism of the National Government in Britain during the war had never entirely rescinded the powers it accrued during that time. As Naomi Milthorpe writes, Waugh perceived that the '[p]olitical and social measure conceived during the Second World War under the Emergency Power Act have wrought massive changes on English society. The "variety" and "elaborately stratified" system that once distinguished England from other nations is fading away'.[576] 'I see nothing but drab uniformity', Waugh writes.[577] The technological

[573] Evelyn Waugh, 'These Roman Sandals', review of Frederico Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* (1960), *Daily Mail*, 11 March 1960; repr. in *Essays*, pp. 540-42 (p. 540).
[574] Ibid., p. 540.
[575] Evelyn Waugh, 'I See Nothing but Boredom… Everywhere', *Daily Mail*, 28 December 1958; repr. in *Essays*, pp. 538-40 (p. 539).
[576] Naomi Milthorpe, '"Death is at the Elbow": *The Loved One* and *Love Among the Ruins*', *Renascence* 62.3 (2019) 201-217 (213).
[577] Waugh, 'I see Nothing but Boredom', p. 540.

advances that had precipitated the acceleration of the homogeneity of culture and society that Waugh observed had created new methods of travel that, through eradicating difference, had rendered themselves obsolete. 'The motor-car has already destroyed its own usefulness', Waugh writes,

> Suppose, as seems most unlikely, it once more is rendered mobile by making he whole country into a speedway and a car-park, there will be no inducement to go anywhere because all buildings will look the same, all shops sell the same produce, all people say the same things in the same voices. Foreign travel will be scarcely more attractive for the elderly and experienced. One went abroad to observe other ways of living, to eat unfamiliar foods and see strange buildings. In a few years' time the world will be divided into zones of insecurity which one can penetrate only at the risk of murder and tourist rates along which one will fly to chain hotels, hygienic, costly and second-rate.[578]

For Waugh in 1959, the corrosive impact of modernity had eroded any sense of national distinction. This passage sets forth the same argument as the preface to *When the Going Was Good*, in which Waugh argues that, as a result of the flattening out of culture, there is no place for travel in the modern world. The sterilised and sanitised post-war landscape appears to him its own form of barbarism. It has been purged of variety and, as a result, negates the imperatives for foreign travel. It is rendered as a perverse manifestation of the universality of Roman Catholic doctrine. However, in modern Britain, the universally enforced standard was sterile, ugly and uncivilised, rather than the sharing in the civilised beauty that Waugh had found revivified in Genoa.

One of the major concerns of *A Tourist in Africa* is the lack of artistic beauty in modern Britain. Waugh embarks on his trip to Africa hoping to find some spiritual restoration in African native artwork. He is disappointed. Not only has British colonialism retarded Africa's incorporation into Christendom, it has also negatively

[578] Ibid., p. 540.

impact its ability to produce its own native artwork: 'The savage African art of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries which delighted the European and American connoisseurs of the 1920s, seems as dead as the civilised art of Europe' (*TIA*, p. 127). Where Waugh envisaged Christendom as a totalising and universally benevolent force, the mangled evangelism of the British Empire has erased national and cultural difference. While in Rhodesia, Waugh made a pilgrimage to St Mary's chapel in Serima. This was home to a missionary art programme orchestrated by the Swiss priest, Father John Groeber, who founded the chapel after the Second World War and had been constructing it himself since 1949. By 1960 it housed a religious school that was dedicated to instruction in the arts, with a specific intention of adding to the beauty and function of the chapel building itself. 'Quite soon', Waugh writes, 'there will be at Serima one of the most beautiful and original churches of the modern world' (*TIA* p. 131).

He was greatly sympathetic to Groeber's methods, in particular the priest's outright rejection of modern European artist influence: 'Fr Groeber has been at pains to keep all European models away from his pupils' (*TIA*, p. 127). However, although a radical departure from European art, the art of St Mary's chapel in Serima appears to Waugh as a return to an earlier, pre-Reformation religious tradition. 'The sort of carving they produce is symbolic and didactic, like that of the European Middle Ages; entirely novel and entirely African' (*TIA*, p. 128). The mission represents something familiar but also a significant departure from the decadence and corrosive influence of modernity of European culture. It is explained to the students, Waugh writes, 'that it is far easier to make ugly things than beautiful; that, implicitly, the paintings of Mr Francis Bacon are a rudimentary accomplishment which the Mashona boy[s] must outgrow' (*TIA*, p. 128). Groeber taught his pupils a unique style of carving, but one

that was indebted, Elizabeth Morton notes, to European Romanesque, West African masks, and Shona traditional woodcarving.[579] His insistence on the creation of aesthetic objects for the sole purpose of aiding religious observance had engendered an art that invoked the Medieval Catholic past of Europe, but also presented Waugh with a compelling vision of the future of the faith in Africa.

He fears, however, that Groeber's art could not escape the 'well-intentioned exploitation' of European commercial interests and museum collections (*TIA*, p. 131). Inherent in twentieth century decadent art, Waugh contends, is the promise of commercial success. The 'aim of the builder', he contends, is 'to make a church, not to found an Art School'. The sculptors of Serima 'have been called into existence for the church, not the church for the sculptors' (*TIA*, p. 131). This is a vision of religious art that had drawn Waugh to convert to Roman Catholicism in 1930. As he recalls in a diary entry of Easter 1964:

> When I first came into the Church I was drawn, not by splendid ceremonies but by the spectacle of the priest as a craftsman. He had an important job to do which none but he was qualified for. He and his apprentice stumped up to the altar with their tools and set to work without a glance to those behind them, still less with any intention to make a personal impression on them.[580]

Here, Waugh alludes to the liturgical changes that had occurred following the convening of the Second Vatican Council in 1962. The increasing involvement of the laity in church services, the vernacular mass and the priest turning to face his congregation had all appalled the author. In Serima, which he visited on the cusp of these seismic changes to the performance of the sacred church rituals, Waugh found

[579] Elizabeth Morton, 'Missions and Modern Art in Southern Africa', PhD Thesis (2003) Emory University.
[580] *The Diaries of Evelyn Waugh* ed. by Michael Davie (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1976), pp. 792-93. Easter [March 29] 1964.

an ideal instantiation of a disinterested artist whose only purpose was to serve God. 'The artist', he writes in *A Tourist in Africa*, 'has no concern with the future' (*TIA*, p. 131). Groeber's great achievement, he continues, was 'to leave a church where they and their descendants can worship, which their descendants will cherish with the pride and awe with which we in Europe survey the edifices of our Middle Ages' (*TIA*, pp. 131-32). For Waugh, the priest was the craftsman, and in St Mary's chapel he found an alluring version of the faith that was in spiritual and artistic decay in modern Britain.

In spite of his hopes for the long-lasting impacts of Groeber's vision for Serima, Waugh expresses his fear for its survival after the Swiss priest had died. He undermines his new found optimism for the Roman Catholic Church in Africa with the sad thought that the pernicious interests of European capitalists will ultimately corrupt the disinterested religious artwork in Serima. 'What will happen when Fr. Groeber is no longer there to direct them?' Waugh asks his reader. He explains his fears for the priest's students:

> They are very much younger than he. Their technical skills will remain ripe for well-intentioned exploitation by collectors and museums. How long can their vision remain uncontaminated by Europe and America? Their eager apprentices I saw today will find that there are larger rewards awaiting them for inferior works. With very little labour they can imitate 'expressionist' or 'abstract' models.

(*TIA*., p. 131)

Groeber serves as a metaphorical model in *A Tourist in Africa* for the possibility of a benevolent Catholic imperialism in post-colonial Africa. Waugh depicts the priest as an artisanal missionary who, through the creation of a beautiful chapel in Rhodesia,

suggests a future for the faith in the least likely of places. However, without this influence, Serima may be plundered and exploited by European commercial interests. This is his interpretation of what had happened to the continent. The capitalist Protestantism of the colonial pioneers of the seventeenth and eighteenth century had ensured that a benevolent and religiously ordained imperialism was abated.

Waugh identifies himself with Groeber. *Edmund Campion* was, for him, a work of devotion for the purposes of instructing his co-religionists through the life of the martyr. All of the proceeds that resulted from the book went to Campion Hall, Oxford. For Waugh, Fr Groeber represents a twentieth-century instantiation of the driving spirit behind Campion and Fr Miguel Pro: 'The martyrdom of Father Pro in Mexico re-enacted Campion's in faithful detail', Waugh writes in 1946: 'We are nearer Campion than when I wrote of him [in 1935]'.[581] Through missionaries such as these, Waugh argues, the Church will survive among the ruins of modernity. The literary emotion that pervades *Edmund Campion* is one of spiritual gratitude: Waugh recognises through his hagiography of the Jesuit martyr that his own conversion to Roman Catholicism was made possible by the sacrifice of those of great faith like Campion. As Bernard Bergonzi writes, *Edmund Campion* is of great importance in Waugh's oeuvre 'because it shows, for the first time, his feeling for the recusant families who, despite immeasurable difficulties, had kept the Catholic faith alive in England for three centuries'.[582] Serima therefore also appealed to Waugh because of its rejection and condemnation of any commercial incentives for artistic production. Groeber personally declined all enquiries to purchase his or his students' carvings. 'We have no art school at this mission', he wrote to one such enquirer: 'The pupils of our Central Primary School, during the time of the industrial work in the afternoon,

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[581] Waugh, *Campion*, p. ix.

[582] Bernard Bergonzi, 'Evelyn Waugh Gentlemen', *Critical Quarterly* 5 (§963) 23-36 (27).

do some wood carving and painting to decorate our own church only. We are therefore not selling any of their work.'[583] Waugh sets the religious vision of Groeber against the rapacious exploitation of Africa that had been undertaken by Britain throughout the history of its empire. St Mary's chapel in Serima serves in *A Tourist in Africa* as Waugh's own model of how Roman Catholic imperialism might have functioned and enabled Africa to flourish through retaining its inherently African idiosyncrasies while being incorporated into Christendom.

'In Kenya, it is easy to forget that one is in Africa': Catholicism and the English Aristocracy in East Africa

The fragile optimism that Waugh found in Rhodesia contrast with his sorrow for the dissipation of the white settler community of Kenya that had enchanted him thirty years earlier. *A Tourist in Africa* refers its reader to the enthusiasm and idealism with which Waugh had regarded the Kenyan settlers in *Remote People*. The situation is characterised by mourning and loss: 'I had made no plans and knew nobody in the colony. Nearly all my old Kenya [*sic*] friends have died, some by suicide, or returned to their homelands' (*TIA*, p. 36). In 1931, Waugh had found Kenya to be an idyllic version of imperialism done well: the settlers were invested in the land, intended to establish a culture in which their descendants would share, and worked in harmony with the native Kenyan population. Moreover, Waugh found in Kenya that an aristocratic and gentlemanly way of life had been preserved among the settlers, which was no longer possible in Britain. A sense of quintessential Englishness thrived in the East African colony, a location that he refers to through the Trollopism of 'Equatorial

[583] Quoted in A. Plangger, *Serima: Towards an African Expression of Christian Belief* (Bweru: Mambo Press, 1977), p. 66

Barsetshire'.[584] Of the settlers, Waugh writes in *Remote People* that they were motivated by 'the wish to transplant and perpetuate a habit of life traditional to them, which England has ceased to accommodate – the traditional life of the English squirearchy'.[585] In 1960, with Kenya on the verge of independence[586] and following the tumult of the Mau Mau Uprising, Waugh finds the colony radically different to the idyll he had enjoyed in the early 1930s. 'There was nothing in the Kenya I knew to suggest that it enjoyed any immunity to change', he explains in *A Tourist in Africa*: 'Why should not this equatorial arcadia, so lately and lightly colonized, go the way of Europe?' (*TIA*, p. 36) Upon his return to Kenya, Waugh finds that it confirms his fears for St Mary's chapel Serima. In the intervening years it had been subjected to the unsympathetic mercantilism of the British Government officials, who the settlers regarded with great hostility. These, Waugh argues, sought only to plunder Kenya of its natural resources and return to Britain as soon as possible.

As a result, Waugh found that the settlers in 1960 had become for the first time 'politically conscious' (*TIA*, p. 38). At the root of this was the antipathy between settlers and officials that he had discovered in 1930. 'In my last visit to Kenya I met few officials', Waugh recalls in *A Tourist in Africa*: 'There was a rigid apartheid between them and the settlers, who looked on them almost as enemy agents' (*TIA*, p. 38). For the settlers, the officials were passing mercenaries. They contributed nothing to the culture and were only interested in profiteering. The settlers, by contrast, saw Kenya as home and had transplanted into it an archaic version of England that Waugh greatly admired. As he states, the settlers,

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[584] Evelyn Waugh, *Remote People: A Report from Ethiopia and British Africa, 1930-1931* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985 [1931]), p. 141.
[585] Ibid., p. 138.
[586] Kenya would achieve its independence from Britain in 1963.

> saw the Colonial Office as their declared enemy who sought to rob them of the lands they had cleared and ploughed and watered. The officials, they said, had no stake in the country; they were in transit, thinking only of promotion and pension; they would return to die in Europe. The settlers were transforming a wilderness where they intended to found families.
>
> (*TIA*, p. 38)

As with the mission in Serima, Waugh champions the work of European missionaries and settlers in Africa whose work chiefly benefits the continent itself. The artwork produced by Groeber's students was reserved entirely for the aggrandisement of the chapel of St Mary's church. The labour of the Swiss priest and his pupils was for the benefit of the Roman Catholic Church in Rhodesia. Accordingly, Waugh views the rapacious commercial interests of the British colonial officials as antithetical to the traditional, pastoral and religious life that had been preserved by the settlers in Kenya: 'Europe has only one positive thing which it can offer anyone, and that is what the missionaries brought'.[587] He finds vibrancy and hope in Kenyan settler culture that was absent in Europe. While Europe crumbled, Kenya, he argues, was stronger as a result of the white settler's influence. Amidst a threnody for European civilisation, Waugh optimistically looks to the settlers and missionaries in Kenya and Rhodesia as the forces that will extend the traditions of Europe and the Church away from the corrosive influence of twentieth-century Europe. 'I found myself falling in love with Kenya', Waugh writes in *Remote People*: 'There is a quality about it which I have found nowhere else but Ireland, of warm loveliness and breadth and generosity.'[588]

At the outset of his visit to Kenya in 1930, however, Waugh had anticipated hating the country. He explains: 'I entered Kenya fully resolved to add all I could to the already extensive body of abusive literature that has grown up round that much

[587] Ibid., p. 158.
[588] Ibid., p. 137.

misunderstood dependency'.[589] The aristocratic glamour that he found in Nairobi and Mombasa converted him to understand Kenya as a last refuge for a gentlemanly and romantic way of life that he lamented the loss of in Europe. After a few days, spent smoking cigars and drinking champagne from a silver goblet on the first-class train to Nairobi, Waugh was increasingly enchanted by Kenya's aristocratic flavour. He contrasts the Kenya he encountered in his travels with the place depicted in the Kenya novels and found the comparison unjust: 'No one reading a book about smart people in London or Paris takes them as representing the general life of the country; but it is exactly this inference which is drawn when a book is written about smart people in Kenya'.[590] Waugh argues against the perception back in England that the white settlers were a 'gang of rapacious adventurers',[591] as they are represented in the writing of Macgregor Ross. He cites Ross's *Kenya From Within: A Short Political History* (1927) has having popularised this unjust attitude towards the colony.

Following this defence of Kenyan white settler culture in *Remote People*, Waugh progresses into a defence of the right of the settlers to their land. He contends that, since the clock cannot be rewound on the scramble for Africa, it is ineffectual to consider the legitimacy or morality of European imperialism in Africa. However, this, Waugh argues, is a separate question from the kind of colonial administration that Britain ought to desire for its possessions. He states:

> There is a body of serious opinion in England which holds that in the past, the Africans have been unjustly exploited by European commercial interests, and is anxious to prevent this in the future. It is unprofitable to discuss the question of abstract 'rights' to the land; if one does, one is led into all kinds of ethnological byways – have the Nilotic immigrant tribes any more 'right' in East Africa than the British? One must confine oneself to recent history and rough justice.[592]

[589] Ibid., p. 134.
[590] Ibid., p. 138.
[591] Ibid., p. 138.
[592] Ibid., pp. 138-39.

Waugh's answer to the serious question of colonial exploitation is found in his enthusiasm for the settlers in Kenya. He argues that the central defect in British imperialism was that it had exported all that was worst about British industrialisation and secular modernity. 'Whether it wanted it or not, [Africa] was going to be heaped on the rubbish of our own continent', Waugh states, 'mechanized transport, representative government, organized labour […]. All the negative things were coming to him inevitably'.[593] The exception to this was Kenya, in which he found a flourishing aristocratic and agrarian culture in which the pastoral traditions of England could be maintained. Waugh's first visit to Kenya in 1930 coincides with what David Cannadine describes as the 'golden period of patrician preeminance in Kenya'.[594] Many of the white English settlers to Kenya, Cannadine concludes, 'were seeking to re-create an idealized world of aristocratic supremacy and genteel living which was so conspicuously on the wane in Britain'.[595] Interwar Kenya, then, was a place where reactionary politics felt less out of date. This was because, in Dane Kenney's terms, the 'dominant element within the white population of Kenya consisted of a social stratum most appropriately termed gentlemanly'.[596] In this sense, Waugh's own notion of his ideological belatedness found refuge in Kenya in this period. It is therefore unsurprising that Waugh depicted Guy Crouchback, his own gentleman-soldier of the English Catholic aristocracy, as having exiled himself in Kenya between the wars. His support for aristocracy was not merely born out of snobbery, as Bernard Bergonzi argues: For Waugh, 'a handful of Catholic aristocratic

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[593] Ibid., p. 158.
[594] David Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (New Haven, C.T.: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 440.
[595] Ibid., p. 393.
[596] Dane Keith Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1939* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1987), p. 92.

families had kept alive a spark of pre-Reformation Catholicism in England'.[597] The Crouchbacks were such a family, and Guy had found fertile soil for his Catholic and aristocratic values to flourish among the settlers in Kenya.

These values were a manifestation of Waugh's religious politics. His commitment to the aristocracy is governed, in part, by his belief in the recusant Catholic families that had kept the faith alive throughout the years of suppression in post-Reformation Britain. As Stannard notes, 'In 1945 [Waugh] had seen the aristocracy as doomed. By 1959 it no longer existed for him, and the knights and ladies had faded into the mists of his mythical Old England'.[598] In Kenya, however, among the white settlers, he found an archaic and reactionary aristocratic culture that had thrived in its separation from England. It is a romantic and idealised version of the lost potential of an English Catholic aristocracy that he finds in Kenya. He rhetorically frames his travel to Kenya as a return home to a traditional and lost England. The white settlers that Waugh describes in *Remote People* live the life of country gentlemen. As Waugh saw it, this harkened back to an ancient lineage of British aristocracy who no longer inhabited their traditional and ancestral country houses. What he finds among the settlers of Kenya is a way of life for which he is nostalgic, but is yet in the context of abroad. As such, Waugh constructs the ironic reality of the settler culture in Kenya, in that one had to go abroad in order to find traditional England. 'English culture', Bernard Schweizer writes, 'at its best seemed to be performed with greater success than it was in England itself. The result was an inversion of values that might be funny were it not for the bitter aftertaste of cultural disillusionment'.[599]

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[597] Bernard Bergonzi, 'The English Catholics', *Encounter*, 34.1 (1965) 19-30 (20).
[598] Stannard, *No Abiding City*, p. 426.
[599] Bernard Schweizer, *Radicals on the Road: The Politics of English Travel Writing in the 1930s* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2001), p. 113.

Kenya takes a significant symbolic role in Waugh's Second World War trilogy of novels, *Men at Arms* (1952), *Officers and Gentlemen* (1955), and *Unconditional Surrender* (1961), which were published with minor amendments in a single volume as the *Sword of Honour* (1965) trilogy. In it, Lewis MacLeod has argued, Waugh's protagonist Guy Crouchback's Catholic aristocratic lineage positions him as a 'colonized subject' in the modern world.[600] Guy's malaise is not that of an individual but emblematic of historical and political tensions between traditional and modern ways of living. The older, aristocratic world that Guy represents is displaced by a newer cultural logic which, MacLeod writes, displaces older values and treats previously hegemonic practices as anachronistic, insignificant and in need of rehabilitation'.[601] The *Sword of Honour* dramatizes the conflict between the traditional and the modern. At the start of the novel, following news of the outbreak of the Second World War, Guy makes his pilgrimage to Sir Roger of Waybrook, who symbolically embodies the ideals of the gentleman-soldier to which Guy aspires and is 'a man dead eight hundred years'. Thus foreshadowing Guy's ultimate failure to find glory and honour restored in 'the modern age in arms' at the outset of the novel. After his brother Ivo's death, Guy

> took his younger son's share of the diminished family fortune, and settled in Kenya, living, it seemed to him afterwards, in unruffled good humour beside a mountain lake where the air was always brilliant and keen and the flamingos rose at dawn first white, then pink, then a whirl of shadow passing across the glowing sky.[602]

In the same paragraph Waugh describes Guy's wife, Virginia, returning to England and having an affair with Tommy Blackhouse. She asks Guy to abandon all of the

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[600] Lewis MacLeod, '"They Just Won't Do, You Know": Postcolonial Discourse and Evelyn Waugh's *Sword of Honour*', *Literature Interpretation Theory* 21.2 (2010) 61-80 (65).
[601] Ibid., p. 66.
[602] Evelyn Waugh, *The Sword of Honour* (Penguin: London, 2011 [1964]).

‘chivalrous nonsense’ that, it is made clear, has no place in contemporary England. At the same time, Guy’s father leaves the Crouchbacks’ ancestral home, Broome:

> So Guy left Kenya and shortly afterwards his father, widowed and despaired of an heir, left Broome. The property was reduced by then to the house and part and home farm. In recent years it had achieved a certain celebrity. It was almost unique in contemporary England, having been held in uninterrupted male success since the reign of Henry I. Mr Crouchback did not sell it. He let it, instead, to a convent himself retired to Matchet, a nearby watering-place. And the sanctuary lamp still burned at Broome as of old.

Waugh, like Guy, had failed to partake in the defence of Christendom that he had initially hoped. Instead, the Second World War had given rise to the anti-aristocratic horrors of the 1950s and 1960s. It had precipitated and accelerated decolonisation. Waugh wrote that life for him had ‘ceased with the war’.[603] It further exacerbated the egalitarian policies that had followed the First World War. Cannadine argues, the aristocracy ‘believed the war gave them the supreme opportunity to prove themselves and justify their existence’.[604] It in, he continues, they would ‘demonstrate conclusively that they were not redundant reactionaries […] but a patriotic class of knightly crusaders and chivalric heroes, who would defend their nation in the hour of its greatest trial’.[605] The outcome, however, was that the war would pose the greatest threat to the existence of the English aristocracy. It transformed a rigidly class-organised society into one, as Alan Hodge and Robert Graves argue, in which the ‘old rigid class distinctions had almost been eliminated’.[606]

A Tourist in Africa depicts Waugh’s lament at the loss of this traditional English way of life in Kenya as a result of the movement towards decolonisation.

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[603] Evelyn Waugh, letter to Nancy Mitford, 23 October 1954, *Letters*, p. 432.
[604] Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*, p. 72.
[605] Ibid., p. 72.
[606] Alan Hodge and Robert Graves, *The Long Weekend: A Social History of Great Britain* (New York, NY: Norton, 1963), p. 13.

Where in 1930 he had found a robust and lively community of English gentlemen in Kenya, by 1960 the future of the settlers was in jeopardy. ‘Now officials, settlers and Indians have a common uncertainty of their future, and since the Mau-Mau “emergency” no one pretends to understand the natives.’ (*TIA*, p. 38) Waugh notes that he found ‘poor whites in quite formidable numbers – a thing unknown 30 years ago’ (*TIA*, pp. 39-40). It displays his ambivalence towards the withdrawal of the empire and the movement for African independence. In *Remote People* and *A Tourist in Africa*, Waugh declares his strong dislike of the British colonial officials, which he shared with the settlers. ‘The officials, they said had no stake in the country; they were in transit, thinking only of promotion and pension; they would retire and die in Europe’ (*TIA*, p. 37). But, although they are representative of all that is pernicious in a commercial and exploitative imperialism, the retreat of the British Empire had left the gentlemanly settler exposed. It has resulted in the breakdown of the communality that the settlers shared with the Kenyan natives: they no longer understood each other. This is a relationship that Waugh characterised in *Remote People* as one of benevolence and mutual agreement: ‘There has never been an example of colonization being carried out with so little ill-will between the immigrant and the indigenous races.’ [607] Decolonisation had corrupted this relationship. As Waugh expressed in his concerns for the future of Groeber’s chapel in Serima, the result of European influence was corrosion and decay of what had been a beautiful and pious way of life. This, he found in 1960, had come to pass in Kenya.

[607] Waugh, *Remote People*, p. 141.

Aden, Zanzibar and the African Aristocracy

The devastation of an aristocratic community that Waugh witnesses in Kenya in 1960 recalls his lamentation in *Remote People* for the indigent aristocrats of Zanzibar. In his 1930 travel book, Waugh claims that he had 'a fairly clear picture' of what to expect from Aden, the small British 'settlement' at the southern tip of the Arabian peninsular.[608] He anticipated that he would find a place characterised by the worst aspects of British socialist architecture: 'typical in part of Welwyn Garden City'.[609] A 'New Town' that had been planned by Sir Ebenezer Howard in 1920, Welwyn Garden City represents for Waugh the ugliness of Britain's experiments in egalitarian city creation. The Garden Cities and Town Planning Association, he suggests, erected towns that were filled with people that had been uprooted from their traditional urban and rural environments. After the Second World War, 'New Towns' such as Welwyn Garden City and Letchworth were symbolically important as evidence of an architectural attitude that involved a rejection of traditional aesthetics and the importance of history. Where he finds Genoa restored and returned to its ancient glories in 1960, in England the government, Waugh argues, 'regard the destruction of a good building as a welcome opportunity to erect something really ugly in its place' (*TIA*, p. 16).

In 1930, Waugh feared that he would discover Aden to be characterised by the petty concerns of lower-middle class merchants. He imagines that he will find 'conversation full of technical shop among the men, and harsh little snobberies among the women. I contrasted it angrily with the glamour and rich beauty I expected to find at Zanzibar. How wrong I was'.[610] Such expectations are guided by Waugh's broader suspicions regarding the British imperial project. He assumes that Britain, in the

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[608] Waugh, *Remote People*, p. 97.
[609] Ibid., p. 97.
[610] Ibid., p. 97.

interwar period, would have exported to Aden the kind of secular and egalitarian modernity that Waugh saw corroding traditional British society. The 'technical shop' conversation he imagines anticipates his description of the middle-class Indians in Zanzibar, who had experienced the economic benefits of the British abolition of slavery in the British protectorate. As with the settlers and officials in Kenya, Waugh establishes an antithetical relationship between the middle-class Indians and the tradition Arabian aristocracy in East Africa. 'Pure mischance had brought me to Aden, and I expected to dislike it'.[611] However, he finds it a lively international community. Most of all, he enjoys the 'English community' of Aden: 'I think that perhaps it was the predominance of bachelors at Steamer Point that made the English community there so unusually agreeable'.[612] This is in spite of the fact that Aden is, as he writes, in 'dissolution'.[613] The Aden 'business men still talk gloomily about the "world slump", but it is clear to most honest observers that the chances of recovery are extremely small'.[614] Trade, Waugh explains, was declining, and other ports in the Red Sea and along the East African coast were now more appealing for shipping. It is Aden's decline, however, that introduces him to the Arabs, the traditional aristocracy of the region who, facing bankruptcy, most arouses his sympathy.

To Waugh, the traditional Arabian aristocracy in this part of East Africa represented the lifeblood of the region. Upon his first encounters with them they complain to him of their penury, stating that things would be improved 'if only the banks would give longer and larger overdrafts'.[615] Waugh immediately draws the connection between the indigent aristocrats of East Africa and those of 1920s and 1930s England, recalling the degenerate aristocrats that populate his early satires: 'I

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[611] Ibid., p. 97.
[612] Ibid., p. 103.
[613] Ibid., p. 98.
[614] Ibid., p. 98.
[615] Ibid., p. 100.

remarked that in England we are embarrassed in exactly that way too. They laughed politely. Europeans, they said, could always get all the money they wanted' (*RP*, p. 100).[616] Waugh's reactionary politics are manifested in his sympathy with the traditional upper class Arabs who have been displaced by the mercantile spirit of British imperialism. Their request throws the travel book into disorder and questions its purpose but an Arab businessman beseeches Waugh to use his book to enable them to obtain better credit from the British organised banks: 'Would I, in my book, persuade the bank to lend them more money? (Will any official of the Bank of India who reads this book please let the Aden Arabs have more money?).'[617] This parenthetical aside, which addresses an imagined reader at the Bank of India, makes clear the absurdity of the Arabs' suggestion. This is because, as it is ironically implied, Waugh's travel writing does not hold that level of political capital.

Nonetheless, its comical lack of subtlety brings to the fore a pointed question about the functionality of the travel book as a genre in this period: *would* Waugh's travel book have any effect on the lives of the Aden Arabs? In posing the question, he alludes to a generic convention of nineteenth-century travel writing whereby the traveller returns home with a serious ethnographic case to make about life in the colonies. It functions as a burlesque of the writings of Stanley Livingstone, whose work was instrumental to the British Government's administration of antislavery policies. Essential to the argument of *A Tourist in Africa* is Waugh's demonstration that his representation of the plight of the Aden Arabs and the Zanzibar aristocrats had no impact, as he knew it would. 'We found an existing culture which, in spite of its narrowness and inflexibility was essentially decent and valuable;' Waugh

[616] Ibid., p. 100.
[617] Ibid., p. 100.

announces in *Remote People*: 'we have destroyed that – or at least attended to its destruction – and in its place fostered the growth of a mean and dirty culture.'[618]

Waugh describes his meeting with the Sultan of Aden: 'As head of the Fadl family, the hereditary rulers of the Abdali tribe and, for a brief period, the former possessors of Aden, he holds by far the most influential position in the protectorate'.[619] He is, for Waugh, a perfect example of how the aristocracy might thrive in unexpected places, and, unlike Zanzibar, remains uncorrupted by European commerce and the Indian middle classes. Waugh portrays the Sultan as a man of gentlemanly disposition:

> His habit of life was pious and scholarly. He had private estates, almost as large as his brother's, whose cultivation he supervised himself, experimenting with new methods of irrigation, new tractors and fertilizers, new kinds of crops – a complete parallel to the enlightened landed gentlemen of eighteenth-century England.[620]

He does not render this anecdote politically useful by presenting the plight of the indigent Arabian aristocrats for the purpose of generating sympathy in his western readership. Instead, he derives a blackly comic episode from it. Waugh's indirect quotation of the Aden Arabs' question ('Would I, in my book persuade the bank…') and his repetition of it as a direct address to the reader ('Will any official of the Bank of India…') absurdly literalises his attempts at advocacy. Like the Aden Arabs, a Somali Scoutmaster he encounters makes a similarly absurd request to the author:

> '… perhaps you won't think it such cheek what I am going to ask. We thought of starting a patrol magazine. I wondered if you would write us a short story for it. Just some little thing, you know, to do with scouting in different parts of the world.'

[618] Ibid., p. 128.
[619] Ibid., pp. 114-15.
[620] Ibid., p. 116.

> I thought it simplest to agree, but I do not feel very guilty at not having kept that promise. After all, I was on a holiday.[621]

Again, the function and value of Waugh's travel book is thrown into doubt. This time, however, the destabilising effect of the request for the author's support is partially resolved by Waugh's insistence that he was 'on a holiday'. Here, Waugh evades responsibility by seeking refuge in his status as a tourist. It was not incumbent upon him, as it might be on the traveller or explorer, on Burton or Livingstone, to be an advocate or sympathiser with the native's plight. He is merely a holidaymaker. The characters that Waugh encounters in *Remote People* perceive a utility value in the book he is to write that the author himself does not recognise, and through the comedic discrepancies between the author and his subject Waugh purposefully degrades the political efficacy of his travel writing.

This effect is further amplified by Waugh's satirical treatment of the humanitarian groups that British imperialism brought to the colonies. Waugh had expected to find Aden 'overrun by mission schools, district officers, clinics, prevention-of-cruelty-to-animals inspectors, German and Japanese commercial travellers, Fabian women collecting statistics and all the other concomitants of British imperialism' (*RP*, p. 109). While this could be interpreted as a tepid entry point into the propagandistic writing he would produce later in the decade, in *Waugh in Abyssinia* and *Robbery Under Law*, it appears here to be more of a send up of the generic expectations of the genre itself. However, it does advance another of the themes of *Remote People*, and Waugh's oeuvre more generally, in that it offers a critique of the guiding spirit of British imperialism, which he interpreted as benefitting the middle class, mercantile Indians over the historical and glamorous, but

[621] Ibid., p. 103.

newly poor, Arabian aristocracy. His fear is that, as in Britain, the corrosive impact of colonialism will export the mundaneness of modernity into the vibrant millennia old culture of East Africa.

Upon his return to East Africa in 1959, in Tanzania Waugh found the same 'tall, impenetrable Arab mansions where the descendants of the slave-traders and dhow-builders lived their decadent lives' (*TIA*, p. 53). This was the core constituency for whom he feared so greatly in *Remote People*, the indigent Arabian aristocrats who had been displaced by the upwardly mobile Indian middle class merchants. This, Waugh argued, was brought about through Britain's 'evangelical' zeal for the abolition of slavery in the protectorate. 'It is said that a mild form of domestic slavery still survives behind their blind white walls. [...] No European lives there except the Commissioner, and few Indians. There is a "Lucky Bar" where the younger and more decadent Arabs openly defy the precept of the Prophet. They are said to be weak in intellect and deplorable in morals', Waugh observed (*TIA*, p. 54). It is important that Waugh notes finding this group again, thirty years after he had chronicled their decline.

> That is all there is to see at Pagani, but it is well worth a visit. Perhaps it will not survive long. It has no function in modern Africa. Should I scruple to disturb its gentle decay by recommending it to tourists? I don't think so. There are no gracious dreams in its present tranquillity. In its heyday the place was cruel and grasping and philistine. There is only physical beauty here and that of a low order – the picturesque. Let it be a target for cameras.
>
> (*TIA*, p. 53)

Waugh conceives of Pagani as a kind of reservation for the crumbling Arab aristocracy. It is part of the elegiac tone of *A Tourist in Africa* that conveys the sadness inherent to retracing one's steps. This is the target for tourism, which is

placed at odds with the idea of the immersive travel experience that he once had here. The Europeans that caused this have left, as have the Indians who were promoted. Those who have remained are the Arabs. They remain as though they are tied to the land by some spiritual connection, evoking memories of Waugh writing on the British aristocracy and their crumbling stately homes. There is, moreover, a contradiction in the paragraph quoted above that conveys Waugh's ambivalence towards the scene he describes. 'Should I scruple to disturb its gentle decay by recommending it to tourists? I don't think so.' He goes on to state mournfully: 'Let it be a target for cameras'. There is the recognition that the impact of tourism on such places serves to prolong and make visible the senescence of what were once noble, gentlemanly people. Better to let it sink into obscurity and anonymity on its own. The idea of a 'gentle decay' is important, here. The gentlemanly associations contrast with the implied brutality of 'modern Africa'. Africa itself has become, over the past thirty years, as committed to modernity as Europe had been. Waugh experiences Africa in transition. 'No church has made much progress in this last of the Arab sultanates', he claimed. 'Eighty years ago it was hoped that a province was being added to Christendom. British rule has merely created an Indian settlement' (*TIA*, p. 55).

The commonest argument made against the abolition of slavery in Zanzibar was that it was a largely benign for of indentured servitude and a symbiotic arrangement. The ethnic groups of late-nineteenth century Zanzibar were, broadly speaking, divided into three distinct economic categories: the Indians in control of finance, the Arabs in control of policy, and the Africans as forced labour supplied by the African interior.[622] The history of the British Empire and slavery in Zanzibar is pertinent to Waugh's critique of colonialism offered in *Remote People*. Following the

[622] John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 128.

abolition of slavery in British India under the India Government Act of 1843, the Gladstone government agreed an antislavery treaty with Zanzibar in 1872-73 in which the Sultan of Zanzibar vowed to end the slave trade in East Africa. The Colonial Secretary in 1874, Lord Carnarvon, administrated this process.[623] Prior to the British annexation of Zanzibar, the slave trade in East and Central Africa had long been under Arab control.[624] Edward Hutchinson wrote in 1874:

> It used to be an old notion that the British flag carried with it the privileges of British soil, and to plant his foot on the deck of an English man-of-war was for the slave equivalent to treading English ground. We have maintained this right for the exile, why not for the slave? And if it is so, what right have we to hand them over to captivity again? In the eyes of the world we have guaranteed their freedom. Let us see to it that we have fulfilled, and do fulfil, our pledge.[625]

The rhetorical organisation of this statement of Britain's commitment to the perpetual ending of slavery in East Africa provides an interesting counterpoint to Waugh's writing about the outcomes of abolition in Zanzibar half a century later in 1930. *Remote People* is full of contradictions. He takes the idea of being 'on British soil' through the performances of the native of traditional British customs – such as the Scouting movement. Yet he takes a wry look at the displaced Arabs whose culture was upended by abolition and the hollowness of the Christian missionary origins of the British imperial project itself. Britain left a vacuum that benefitted the Hindu middle class. The Zanzibar sections of *Remote People* form an elegy for the passing of Arabian culture in East Africa into disrepair.

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[623] Lord Carnarvon was the grandfather of the writer's first wife, Evelyn Gardener Lady Winifred Herbert, Henry Herbert, 4th Earl of Carnarvon's eldest daughter, was Evelyn Gardener's mother. Waugh and Evelyn Gardener were divorced in 1929. Carnarvon was also the grandfather of Waugh's second wife, Laura Herbert, whom he married in 1937.
[624] See Kenneth Morgan, *Slavery and the British Empire: From Africa to America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 202-203.
[625] Hutchinson, *The Slave Trade in East Africa*, p. 95.

A Tourist in Africa revisits the politico-religious thesis that emerges in Waugh's travel writing of the late-1930s. It reflects upon the failure of his imperial ambitions for East Africa, while demonstrating his faith in the possibility of renewal and restoration. Through the examples of Groeber's mission in Serima, Waugh presents a case for the means by which Christendom can expand to incorporate modern Africa. Decolonisation appears to him as a repetition of the great religious schisms of the past, in particular the Protestant Reformation, which had brought about the centuries of war and suffering that he bore witness to in his travel books. Written after Waugh had publicly announced the death of the travel book in *When the Going Was Good*, *A Tourist in Africa* takes place in the ruins of the twentieth century. His faith, however, is bolstered by the potential for a recusant Catholicism in Africa that reminds him of Campion in Elizabethan England and Fr Pro in revolutionary Mexico. As he writes in *Robbery Under Law*: I believe that man is, by nature an exile and will never be self sufficient or complete on this earth'.[626] African independence and European leftist secularism only serves to confirm his thesis. For Waugh, the Church, however, survives the corrosive impacts of modernity, as it had done the reformation, and gives hope of new life and restoration to an increasingly corrupt world. In Africa in 1959, Waugh encounters a priest, 'an Italian long habituated to Africa'. He, Waugh recalls,

> spoke of African 'nationalism'. The mistake, he said, was to introduce 'Africanization' through politics instead of through service. None of the young men now filling the lower government offices should have been sent from England. Natives should have filled those places and an all-African administration should have been built up from the bottom.

(*TIA*, p. 104)

[626] Waugh, *Robbery Under Law*, p. 19.

This argument is at the heart of *A Tourist in Africa*. Waugh, too, rejects the decoupling of politics from religious duty. He appreciates the native art of St Mary's chapel because the woodcarvings are made for no commercial purpose, only to be an aid in religious observation. Waugh views his hagiographies of Edmund Campion and Ronald Knox in the same terms. For him, from the mid-1930s onwards, the travel book became a literary form that he could advance a political *through* religious service. *A Tourist in Africa* stands as his statement of religious hope in the face of an ever more fragmented and secular world.

CONCLUSION

Evelyn Waugh's travel writing of the late 1930s is an extension of the politico-religious argument that he first advances in *Edmund Campion* (1935). In his biography of the Jesuit martyr, Waugh makes clear that he intends to persuade his reader that they are living in a time of religious persecution that is analogous to that of Elizabethan England. He eulogises the Roman Catholic aristocracy in England that had preserved their religion throughout the centuries of suppression. 'We are the heirs of their conquest',[627] Waugh proclaims, and quotes the dedication that adorns Campion Hall in Oxford:

> There will never want in England men that will have care of their own salvation, nor such as shall advance other men's; neither shall this Church here ever fail so long as priests and pastors shall be found for their sheep, rage man or devil never so much.[628]

Waugh travel books, *Waugh in Abyssinia* (1936) and *Robbery Under Law* (1939), are written in the light of this declaration. Moreover, they are works that seek to fulfil the obligation of Roman Catholics to their church and to the religious heritage of England. 'In the sixteenth century', Waugh writes in *Robbery Under Law*, 'human life was disordered and talent stultified by the obsession of theology; today we are plague-stricken by politics. It is a fact: distressing for us, dull for our descendants, but inescapable'.[629] The escalation of political tensions and social fragmentation of the interwar period appeared to Waugh as a return to the bloody wars that succeeded the Reformation in Europe. This was amplified by what he perceived as Britain's

[627] Evelyn Waugh, *Edmund Campion: Jesuit and Martyr* (London: Penguin, 2012 [1935]), p. 151.
[628] Ibid., p. 151.
[629] Evelyn Waugh, *Robbery Under Law: The Mexican-Object Lesson* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1939), p. 5.

increasing secularism and leftism, which represents the abandonment of the unifying and universalising legacy of Roman Catholicism on European culture and society.

'It was self-evident to me that no heresy or schism could be right and the Church wrong', Waugh wrote in 1949.[630] Waugh's travel writing of the late 1930s is structured around this central opposition: between the temporary fractures of politics, which are local and contingent, and the precepts of the Roman Catholic Church, which is eternal and universal. It is in this line of argument that the influence of Hilaire Belloc is felt most keenly. In particular, Belloc's thesis that Europe *is* Christendom, and that the artistic and moral organisation of the continent descended directly from Roman conquest. Waugh takes up this argument in his travel writing from the Second Italo-Abyssinian War. Mussolini's invasion of Abyssinia was, Waugh wrote, 'an object which any patriotic European can applaud'.[631] His invocation of a unified European conscience, the duty of which was to support Italy's Roman Catholic imperialism in East Africa, is derived from the perception that the continent had obligations to its religious heritage that extend into the twentieth century.

In *Europe and the Faith* (1920), Belloc chronicles the 'unceasing wrestle'[632] between the forces of civilisation and barbarism, and argues that it is the duty of the faithful to seek to restore Roman Catholic hegemony to Europe and extend Christendom throughout the uncivilised world. Waugh alludes to this injunction in *Edmund Campion* when he refers to Campion's martyrdom as but one instance in an

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[630] Evelyn Waugh, 'Come Inside', in *The Road to Damascus: The Spiritual Pilgrimage of Fifteen Converts to Catholicism* ed. by John O'Brien (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1949); repr. in *The Essays, Articles and Reviews of Evelyn Waugh* ed. by Donat Gallagher (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), pp. 366-68 (p. 367).
[631] Evelyn Waugh, 'We Can Applaud Italy'
[632] Hilaire Belloc, *Europe and the Faith* (London: Constable, 1920), p. 11.

‘unending war’[633]. The heart of the conflict, as Belloc articulates it, is between ‘the outer, the unstable, the untraditional – which is barbarism – pressingly blindly upon the inner, the traditional, the strong – which is Ourselves: which is Christendom: which is Europe’.[634] Waugh’s late 1930s travel writing was written in defence of Christendom, albeit with different emphases in different times. During the Second Italo-Abyssinian War, Waugh wrote with enthusiastic optimism for the rebirth of the Roman Empire that would be achieved through the martial supremacy of Mussolini. In *Waugh in Abyssinia*, he regards the Italian soldiers as missionary-like figures, whose war is restoring the glory of Roman Catholic imperial ambitions. Waugh calls it ‘a new type of conquest’,[635] one that is undertaken to fulfil the duties of the Church, and contrast it against the rapacious commercialism he saw in the British Empire:

> The idea of conquering a country in order to work there, of treating an empire as a place to which things must be brought, to be fertilized and cultivated and embellished instead of as a place from which things could be taken; to labour like a slave instead of sprawling idle like a master – was something wholly outside [the Abyssinians’] range of thought. It is the principle of the Italian occupation.[636]

Waugh’s repetition of metaphors of rebirth and new life in this passage convey his belief in the religiously ordained mission of the Italian invasion of Abyssinia. It evinces an interpretation of interwar politics in the light of the eternal struggle of civilisation against barbarism. It is wholly Bellocian in its vocabulary and argument. In 1936, Waugh viewed Mussolini’s conquest of Abyssinia as a portent of a radical reimagining of the imperialism of the nineteenth century.

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[633] Waugh, *Edmund Campion*, p. ix.
[634] Belloc, *Europe and the Faith*, p.11.
[635] Waugh, *Waugh in Abyssinia*, p. 166.
[636] Ibid, p. 166.

By contrast, in Mexico in 1939, Waugh found the faith in retreat. *Robbery Under Law* tonally departs from its predecessor in its representation of a country, which had once been part of the Spanish Empire, newly abandoning its ties to European civilisation. 'It would be idle to pretend that a visit to Mexico, at the present moment can be wholly agreeable;' Waugh informs us, 'the pervading atmosphere ranges from vexation to despair, and only the most obtuse traveller could escape infection'.[637] Mexico was afflicted, he explains, with the miasma of leftist secularism. Where the Second Italo-Abyssinian War had bolstered Waugh's faith in a resurgent Catholic empire, Mexico prompts his deep concern for the security of European civilisation itself. He interprets this experience of Cárdenas' Mexico as a grim foreboding of the fate that awaits England and Europe should they abandon their Roman Catholic heritage. Waugh's travel book is a note from the frontline of the war between Christendom and barbarism. 'Politics, everywhere destructive,' he writes in it, 'have dried up the place, frozen it, cracked it and powdered it to dust. Is civilization, like a leper, beginning to rot at its extremities?'[638]

Despite the dire circumstances of 1930s Mexico, Waugh took some degree of hope from Franco's Nationalist cause in the Spanish Civil War. Though he did not travel to report on the conflict, he, like many of his Roman Catholic contemporaries, such as Arnold Lunn, Christopher Dawson and Douglas Woodruff, saw it as the latest iteration of Campion's struggle against religious persecution. Waugh, moreover, prescribes a return to '*Spanishness*' as the cure to Mexico's ills. He gives a history of ideologically guided history Spanish imperialism in the country and the consequences of its separation from Europe. 'It was only after her severance from Spain', Waugh argues, 'that the decay of Mexico […] was consummated by the revolutionary

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[637] Evelyn Waugh, *Robbery Under Law: The Mexican-Object Lesson* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1939), vii.
[638] Ibid., p. 3.

troubles that are still daily debasing her'.[639] He implicitly suggests the potential of Mussolini's imperialism to return Mexico to the fold: 'Fascist enterprises in Italy and North Africa in draining marshes, watering deserts, binding loose sand and so have shown what land settlement means in efficient hands.'[640] In Mexico, even the soil had been corrupted by the loss of its ancestral Catholic faith. As a result of revolutionary left-wing politics, the Catholic Church in Mexico had been driven underground, its adherents had been brutally suppressed and the country had been severed from its Spanish and Catholic heritage. Waugh takes the martyrdom of Father Miguel Pro as repetition of Campion's sacrifice. In his preface to the 1946 re-issue of *Edmund Campion*, Waugh acknowledges the points where he departs from Campion's nineteenth-century biographer, Richard Simpson. Waugh attributes his difference in perspective to the absence of religious persecution in the time of the publication of Simpsons' *Edmund Campion: A Biography* (1867):

> We have come much nearer to Campion since Simpson's day. He wrote in the flood-tide of toleration when Elizabeth's persecution seemed as remote as Diocletian's. We know now that he age was a brief truce in an unending war. The Martyrdom of Farther Pro in Mexico re-enacted Campion's in faithful detail. We are much nearer Campion than when I wrote of him.[641]

As Waugh makes clear in this passage, Mexico and, subsequently, post-war Britain appeared to him as a return to the suppression of public religion of Elizabethan England. His attitude towards Campion's life, he explains, was dictated by his perception of contemporary politico-religious concerns. This thesis has argued that Waugh's travel books are guided by the same perception of Roman Catholic

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[639] Ibid., p. 136.
[640] Ibid., p. 194.
[641] Evelyn Waugh, *Edmund Campion: Jesuit and Martyr* (London: Penguin, 2012 [1935]), p. ix.

persecution and the dissolution of Europe and Christendom. In his travel books, as with his biography of Campion, Waugh depicts himself bearing witness to civilisation's collapse.

But, following the Second World War, Waugh announced the death of the travel book. He regarded it as a genre that could not outlast the period of itinerancy and unmotivated travel that he and his contemporaries had enjoyed in the early 1930s. He acknowledges in the preface to *When the Going Was Good* (1946) that he wishes to consign most of the political argument of *Waugh in Abyssinia* and *Robbery Under Law* to the forgotten past. Waugh paints a picture of the imprisonment he feels in post-war England, and the kinds of travellers that will make it out:

> [O]thers, not I, gifted with the art of pleasing public authorities may get themselves despatched abroad to promote 'Cultural Relations'; the very young, perhaps, may set out like the *Wandervogels* of the Weimar period; lean, lawless, aimless couples with rucksacks, joining the great army of men and women without papers, without official existence, the refugees and deserters, who drift everywhere today between the barbed wire. I shall not, by my own wish, be among them.[642]

In post-war Britain Waugh found himself an outcast. It is implied that, as Britain no longer resembles home for him in 1945 and the premise on which the travel book rests, on a distinction between *home* and *abroad*, is broken down, there is no space for travel writing in this secular and left wing context. Moreover, this is further amplified by Waugh's perception that the barbarians had stormed the castle. Since the early 1930s Waugh had associated the threat of the Soviet Union and the rapidly spreading leftism in European politics with the retreat of Catholic influence: 'The loss of faith in Christianity and the consequential lack of confidence in moral and social standards

[642] Evelyn Waugh, *When the Going Was Good* (London: Duckworth, 1946), p. xi.

have become embodied in the ideal of a materialistic, mechanized states, already existent in Russia and rapidly spreading south and west.'[643]

A Tourist in Africa (1960) was Waugh's last travel book. By 1960, he felt himself to be a stranger in his own country, but he took solace in the universal community of the Roman Catholic Church. By 1962, however, following the edicts of the Second Vatican Council, Waugh felt himself a stranger even in his own religion. Waugh was appalled by the new vernacular mass and the emphasis on the larger role of the laity in the liturgy. Waugh's conversion had put him on the outskirts of English society; Vatican II put him on the outskirts of the Church. 'It never occurred to me, writing *Sword of Honour*,' Waugh lamented in 1964, 'that the Church was susceptible to change. I was wrong and I have seen a superficial revolution in what then seemed permanent. […] Recent changes have made it, in fact, a document of Catholic usage of my youth'.[644] In the 1960s, the constancy and universality on which he had predicated his politico-religious argument for Roman Catholic imperialism in the late 1930s had been radically undermined. In the interwar period, Waugh had travelled to seek out barbarism in the knowledge that civilisation would preserve itself in Europe. In 1945 he wrote that his ambitions for the expansion of Christendom that manifested itself in his travel books had temporarily failed: 'Hopes proved dupes', he write in *When the Going Was Good*, and 'it is possible that present fears may be liars'.[645] In 1962, after Vatican II, Waugh realised that his fears had been realised to a greater extent than he could have imagined.

This thesis has argued that Waugh's travel writing responds to a reading that takes his politics, in the 1930s and after, seriously. It has suggested that this politics is

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[643] Evelyn Waugh, 'Converted to Rome: Why it has Happened to Me', *Daily Express*, 20 October 1930; repr. in *Essays*, pp. 103-105 (p. 104).
[644] Evelyn Waugh, *Sword of Honour* (London: Penguin, 1999 [1964]), p. xxxiv.
[645] Waugh, *When the Going Was Good*, p. ix.

informed by a Bellocian Catholic intellectual tradition, in which religion and politics were not discrete entities but one unified body for achieving the furtherance of Christendom. As a result of the 'Gilbert Pinfold' persona that Waugh developed in *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (1957), critical analysis of Waugh's 1930s has been obfuscated by the 'idiosyncratic Toryism'[646] of the character, who is described as 'reputed bigoted rather than pious'.[647] This thesis has returned directly to the late 1930s travel writing to contend that, in that period, Waugh's reactionary politics and enthusiasm for Catholic imperialism were expressions of piety. Furthermore, it has suggested that, after the Second World War, secular Britain enforced a distinction *between* religion and politics. Waugh perceived himself to be persecuted by the leftist agendas of the BBC and what he termed the 'Cripps-Attlee terror'.[648] His support for the Roman Catholic aristocracy in England was deemed unacceptable, to his mind, by the secular orthodoxy of the 1950s.

The travel book, for Waugh, was a literary form that was uniquely hospitable to politico-religious argument. He travels to the fringes of civilisation and reports on the health of the Church in its eternal conflict with barbarism. Travel writing forms an essential part of Waugh's religious mission. It was a genre to which he returned in order to reflect on the ultimate failure of those political and religious ambitions post-1945. Travel writing, for him, was political; and politics were religious.

[646] Evelyn Waugh, *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold: A Conversation Piece* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1957), p. 11.
[647] Ibid., p. 13.
[648] Evelyn Waugh, 'Manners and Morals – I', review of Sarah Maclean, *Pan Book of Etiquette* (1962), *Daily Mail*, 12 April 1962; repr in *Essays, Articles and Reviews*, pp. 587-90 (p. 589).

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