TRANSITION IN THE HOUSE-IMAGERY OF WAUGH'S NOVELS*

Saeko Nagashima

"Houses, houses, houses," Nigel Dennis exclaims in his essay on Evelyn Waugh. As Dennis goes on to say, "large country houses, often falling down or badly kept up," are one of the recurrent central motifs of Waugh's works, even before the celebrated house of *Brideshead Revisited* (1945) (Dennis 36). Country houses in Waugh's fiction are often considered in relation to his undeniably snobbish attitudes, particularly his admiration and sympathy for the life of aristocracy. Raymond Williams, for example, mentions the novelist as one of those writers who make "consciously reactionary idealisations" of the traditional country-house inhabitants and their way of life (249). This remark may hold true for *Brideshead*, which can indeed be categorized as a "country-house" novel; but in his early novels, though the houses are certainly in those works, they are not the objects of idealisation, rather they are the objects of sharp irony and satire. It seems that the early Waugh stresses modern disillusionment with the large house, rather than "reactionary idealisation" of it. Thus we are drawn towards a question: how do Waugh's early houses of disillusion shift to the idealised space of his later works? To elucidate the implications of the house, I would like here to examine Waugh's image of the house, as they appear in his novels from *Decline and Fall* (1928) to *Brideshead*. And I would like to try to make out the roles and meanings of these houses.

I

In the first place, we may say that the image of the house in Britain, particularly "the decline and fall of the country house," has been "one of the obsessional subjects of modern literature from the late nineteenth cen-

* I should like to express my gratitude to Professor George Hughes for his valuable comments.

tury onwards" (Kelsall 155). Country houses were thought to be about to disappear with drastic social changes taking place and, in the twentieth century, the threat of World War. In such a condition modern writers tended to show ambivalent feelings towards the image of great houses in their works; large houses are sometimes described as an emblem of the traditional order worth preserving, but at other times they are satirized as anachronistic remains of the past — things which must disappear as time passes. Aldous Huxley, for instance, shows the doom of a declining country house in *Crome Yellow* (1921), in describing the fate of Gobley Great Park: "[t]en years more of the hard times and Gobley, with all its peers, will be deserted and decaying. Fifty years and the countryside will know the old landmarks no more" (261). Another good example is Elizabeth Bowen, who in *The Last September* (1929) and in many short stories describes the much harder fate of Big Houses in Ireland. Apart from general modern changes in social structure, these houses were considered as emblems of Anglo-Irish rule, and consequently were to be violently broken or burnt down in the 1920s and 1930s.

There seems much in common between the works of these writers and Waugh, in that all of them show an equivocal attitude towards large houses. The social and financial systems that supported traditional houses had already become a thing of the past by the 1930s, and it was impossible for writers to turn their faces away from the actual decline of those houses. One of the central motifs of their works was "a literal walking out from the paternal halls" (Dennis 37), and a famous phrase in one of W. H. Auden's poems precisely shows this characteristic of his generation: "Harrow the house of the dead; look shining at/New style of architecture, a change of heart" (*Poems* XXX).

Waugh, surprisingly, seems to share Auden's feeling to some extent, particularly in the early works. The houses in his first two novels, *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies* (1930), have already been, or are in the process of being, altered; they no longer keep the traditional values they used to have, and Waugh cooly describes them exposed to merciless modernisation. King's Thursday in *Decline and Fall*, which "was recognized as the finest piece of domestic Tudor in England" (116), is being rebuilt as "something clean and square" — "a surprising creation of ferro-concrete and aluminium" (120), designed by a young Bauhaus architect Otto Silenus, who declares that "the only perfect building must be the factory, because that is built to house

machines, not men" (120). (This is an obvious parody of Le Corbusier, whose famous dictum is "La maison est une machine à habiter.") Anchorage House in *Vile Bodies*, "the last survivor of the noble town houses of London," is now full of "vile bodies" as party guests, "debouching from the cloak-rooms like City workers from the underground" (126).

In these descriptions we may find the author's irony, but there seems to be comparatively little of the nostalgia for the past or anger over the present situation which we could find more or less in his later works, particularly in *Brideshead*. It is rather "disillusionment" or a kind of resigned acceptance of the decline of the traditional house that we are to discover in early Waugh. He shows us this disillusionment with a detached narration, so that his early houses have been described as "antihouses," "a foolish parody of the community [they] once [were] or still [pretend] to be" (Gill 135).

The structures of the texts are also related to characteristics of houses as places of disillusionment in Waugh's early novels. The general plot of those works in relation to their house settings is that at the beginning the hero does not have his own habitation; as the story of his misadventure is unfolded he is given the opportunity to gain a homestead by marriage to a woman who is or will be the mistress of the house; but finally he is to fail both to marry her and to get the house as his own home. The houses in Waugh's novels often belong to women, though in the early works the women are far from being kind of spiritual centre of the house that might be expected. Women give the heroes the opportunities to gain a stable home of their own, but as a consequence they make the heroes fail to settle in a stable community. Margot Beste-Chetwynde in *Decline and Fall* is an archetypal character of this kind: playing the role of the owner (and destroyer) of King's Thursday, a seducer of Paul, and the mistress of an international white-slaver business, she holds all of modernity, tradition and sexuality together in her hand. As to her wicked business, this is directly linked to the house. King's Thursday is maintained by earnings from her "Latin-American Entertainment Co, Ltd," which actually is a notorious organisation for international prostitution. Perhaps we should not be surprised by this as English country houses were often maintained by funds from the exploitation of colonial estates. The heroes of these novels, on the other hand, are constantly outsiders and even sometimes invaders in the houses, and they are to be expelled in the end.

What is particularly noticeable in these works is a frequent change of

place. Both *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies* consist of a series of loosely connected fragmentary episodes; between them there is usually little logical causation, and as the stories are unfolded, the characters are made to move rapidly from one scene to another. Paul Pennyfeather's misadventures in *Decline and Fall* are a remarkable example. Paul is forced to move from place to place; starting from Oxford, he goes on to Wales, Hampshire, London, Marseilles, Blackstone Gaol, Egdon Heath Panel Settlement, until at last he returns to Oxford again.

It might be possible to explain this movement in terms of cinematic technique. The influence of cinematic style — in particular that of cutting and montage — is obvious in early Waugh's narrative. (It should be added that it is typical of the 1930's generation writers, like Auden and Isherwood, to take the "camera-eye" or "bird's-eye" view in their works.) Also we can make a connection between these moves and the flourishing of travel writing of the time, as Waugh himself was at the time as well-known a travel writer asa novelist. Though there appear so many different places in Waugh's early text, however, we may get a monotonous impression from the whole series of transitions. As Paul finally returns to his starting point and it looks as if nothing has happened through his misadventures, no place in the text essentially has any difference from another, and this applies equally to the houses. In *Vile Bodies*, Nina takes an aeroplane with Ginger, and the waste-landish scene of "a horizon of straggling red suburb" she observes causes her nausea (199–200).

Thus England cannot hold any traditional value in these early books of Waugh, and it seems that Waugh does not hesitate to face up to the social conditions of his time. No matter how frequently the scenes change through the stories, we find that every space in the texts is exposed in two-dimensional panoramic view, so that it keeps us from putting stress on any particular scene. At the same time, however, as we are to see in his later works, it seems obvious that Waugh does not at all appreciate social changes, nor try to compromise with them. Instead, despite the fact that society is changing and old houses are disappearing, in his fiction Waugh will go on to reconstruct them as imaginative spaces which can survive in the modern world.

There are, as we might expect, large differences between Waugh's early house images and the houses which appear in his later fiction. At first sight the later idealisation of the traditional house seems to indicate Waugh's

conservatism; but that may be too simple an answer to explain the full significance the image of the house is given by Waugh. To make clear the complexity and significance of Waugh's idealisation of the house, it is necessary to have a close look at characteristics of the house in *A Handful of Dust* (1934), in which the hero, different from in the early works, becomes the owner of the house as a central setting of the novel, and consequently the house itself becomes foregrounded.

II

A Handful of Dust is Waugh's fourth novel and is the one which most his critics put above all among the early works. The general plot of the text spins from commonplace to fantasy. It begins and ends with imprisonment and boredom: boredom of a wife in provincial England shifts to boredom of a husband captured in Brazil. At the start, after seven years of marriage, the hero Tony Last's beautiful wife Brenda, who is secretly called among their acquaintances "the imprisoned princess of fairy story" (57), lives in their country house, Hetton Abbey, and comes to have an affair with a shallow young man, John Beaver. Her bored married life is in the country house; her love affair is significantly in a flat in London designed by John's mother, Mrs Beaver. Mrs Beaver is a modern interior decorator whose favorite style of house decoration is "chromium-plated walls and natural sheepskin rugs" — "[the] unsettling juxtaposition of the modern and primitive" (McCartney 136). After their son has been killed, Brenda confesses her affair to Tony and asks for a divorce. At first Tony consents; however, when he learns that she wants him to sell Hetton to provide alimony, he firmly rejects divorce and suddenly goes off to Brazil to seek for an ancient City in company with an archaeologist Dr Messinger. Then he gets lost and is helped in the jungle by the half English Mr Todd, and imprisoned in Mr Todd's hut to read Dickens aloud to him until the end of his life. At the end of the story we find a memorial to Tony has been built at Hetton, part of which is now used as a silver-fox farm.

One remarkable characteristic of the novel is that house-imagery comes to play a much more important role here than in the previous works. In contrast to these early heroes and to the early houses, Tony is not an outsider nor invader to Hetton, but its legal owner; therefore he is inevitably required to defend his own household, which is his pride and joy,

against various powers which try to deprive him of it. Hetton is so closely related to Tony's characterisation that the readers are invited to look on the house as a place internalized by him.

From the beginning, however, we can find some irony in the description of Hetton. We read that, according to the county Guide Book, Hetton "was formerly one of the notable houses of the country," but "entirely rebuilt in 1864 in the Gothic style and is now devoid of interest" (14). Waugh illustrates the house through Tony's own account.

> . . . there was not a glazed brick or encaustic tile that was not dear to Tony's heart. In some ways, he knew, it was not convenient to run; but what big house was? It was not altogether amenable to modern ideas of comfort; he had many small improvements in mind, . . . But the general aspect and atmosphere of the place . . . with which he had grown up were a source of constant delight and exultation to Tony; things of tender memory and proud possession. (14–5)

Even Tony is aware that the house is not suitable for modern life; but he apparently rejects the "modern idea of comfort" itself, for the house evokes for him "tender memory and proud possession" — the symbolic feelings of English romanticism. Based on this anachronism, however, he at the same time believes that the time will come when opinion will reinstate Hetton in "its proper place" (15).

At first Hetton seems to be introduced as a symbol of declining tradition which is worth defending, "both the embodiment of beauty and the repository of tradition and faith" (Howarth 94). Indeed Hetton is juxtaposed with the tiny maisonette in London, in which Brenda has her affair with John Beaver. In contrast with the classical building of Hetton, the flat is "somewhere to dress and telephone" (42), one room which has a large built-in wardrobe with electric light inside and space for bed, with a bath-room with limitless hot water and everyday transatlantic refinement; this is, according to Mrs Beaver, exactly what people want and will fill a long-felt need. Hetton on the other hand represents, like E. M. Forster's Howards End, "the traditional order of landed England," as opposed to "the shallow, anarchic world of fashionable London" (Gill 157–8).

But we have to be careful not to identify Hetton too hastily as an emblem of tradition. The narrative presents it in such a way only as focussed by Tony's understanding. He concentrates on his fantasy of his house so

much that he cannot realise that he has lost touch with realities, nor that his wife is bored with their life. As we have observed, Hetton has already been rebuilt as a sham Gothic building, and Tony's imagination committed to "the Victorian values" represented by the house — "the picturesque medievalism of Rossetti and Tennyson and the melodrama of Dickens," at last leads him to his imprisonment in Todd's hut (Wasson 134). It is Tony who has named the bedrooms of Hetton after the knights and ladies of the Arthurian legend, and in consequence makes the house a parody of ancient Camelot. (The name of Brenda's bedroom "Guinevere" suggests Tony's fate as a cuckold from the beginning.) When he is told of Brenda's hope of selling Hetton, the narrator comments that "[a] whole Gothic world had come to grief . . . there was now no armour glittering through the forest glades, no embroidered feet on the green sward; the cream and dappled unicorns are fled . . . " (ellipsis by Waugh) (151). In reading this passage we must recognise that, in spite of the narrator's sympathetic tone towards Tony's disillusionment, there undeniably exisits a sharp irony about Tony's childish imagination of the Gothic world.

Tony's enthusiasm for Hetton is, from Brenda's point of view, just "madly feudal" (39); she loathes the house and firmly rejects her husband's infantile fancy. She is seemingly a typical shallow and faithless wife who betrays her husband and ruins his life; but at the same time her character shows us a possibility of becoming a modern heroine who cannot be content with her conventional life and seeks a new life of her own. We should not be too much surprised when we find that Gill compares this novel to D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928). This seemingly fanciful, but indeed persuasive comparison is helpful to make out some of the characterisation of Brenda. Gill explains that from one point of view *A Handful of Dust* might be taken as a parody of Lawrence: in both novels "a country gentleman preoccupied with his ancestral home is married to a woman who, bored with his house and his company, betrays him with a man not a member of their own class but a stranger, an outsider" (156). This observation reveals a possibility that Tony could be reduced to a bore like Clifford Chatterley, while Brenda could be exalted to a much more powerful heroine like Lady Chatterley. Different from mythical Margot in *Decline and Fall* or apathetic Nina in *Vile Bodies,* Brenda could have been the first life-sized heroine in Waugh's novels we can sympathise with.

In the text, however, she is given only the role of a common villainess.

There is a limitation she could never be brought into focus, for the whole narration of the text and its narrative focus is inseparable from Tony's imagination. In the latter half of the novel, as the settings change from England to Brazil, the narrative spins to fantasy. With the emergence of the fantastic, it seems that the focus also moves from the house to the foreign world. As Tony moves to a distance from the actual house, the image of the house as an ideal place becomes emphasised within his imagination.

A remarkable difference between Waugh's first two novels and *A Handful of Dust* is the existence of unfamiliar, foreign places in the later novel. In *Black Mischief* (1932) also, the novel published just before *A Handful of Dust*, the setting of the story moves abroad to distant country. These distant places can be regarded as a transformation of the places Waugh actually travelled; after the publication of *Vile Bodies* he had "no fixed home and no possessions," and continuously travelled both in Britain and abroad — chiefly in the Near East, Africa and tropical America (see Preface to *When the Going was Good*). He aimed to write travel books, like other writers of the thirties, "as attempts at supplementing the poet's or novelist's less than good income" (Cunningham 349–50).

In spite of the flourishing of travel writing in this period, Waugh's travels were by no means "adventures" and what Waugh found in his travel was not truly foreign nor exotically unfamiliar any more. The title of his first travel book, *Labels* (1930), is chosen "for the reason that all the places [he] visited on [that] trip are already fully labelled" (13). As travelling abroad had become easier and safer in the twentieth century, so there seemed to be less and less room for what we call adventure. Instead, Waugh found everywhere in the world just the "bogus" way of life he was already accustomed to in Britain. The imaginary foreign empire in *Black Mischief* is "a looking distortion of [England]" (Heath 92), and Waugh's representation of foreign countries is always inseparably connected to that of Britain. Thus we can add a new perspective in considering the houses in Waugh by comparing them to remote places, in that both of them are "borderlands of conflicting cultures and states of development, where ideas, uprooted from their traditions, become oddly changed in transplantation" (*Ninety-Two Days* 10–1). Foreign places are always presented as counterparts of England, and only for this reason are they of significance in Waugh's texts.

In *A Handful of Dust*, Hetton, Brenda's flat in London, and Mr Todd's hut in Brazil all range themselves as equally barbaric places; each of these

three settings is analogically related to the others, and Hetton is situated at the centre. Tony makes up his mind to go with Dr Messinger because the City they are searching for is in his mind "Gothic in character, . . . a transfigured Hetton" (160), though at last it turns out to be Mr Todd's prison-like hut. Also the scene of Tony's desparate quest in the jungle is juxtaposed with Brenda's isolation in London by using montage technique: in the jungle Tony imagines a dinner party in London with Brenda, and immediately the scene is switched around with the scene of an actual party at Anchorage House, where Brenda and Jock are dancing together and talking about Tony. While Tony is lying alone in the darkness of the jungle and crying, in London Brenda is also breaking down in an agony of resentment and self-pity at her miserable circumstances. At last, in Tony's hallucination caused by a fever, Brenda and his acquaintances in London appear in Brazil; England and Brazil are merged with each other. Tony sees the mirage of the City and it is also a likeness of Hetton.

> At last he came into open. The gates were before him and trumpets were sounding along the walls, saluting his arrival; . . . petals of almond and apple blossom were in the air; they carpeted the way, as, after a summer storm, they lay in the orchards at Hetton. (203)

In this novel, instead of being a realistic setting, the house becomes a symbol of the chaotic disorder of the modern world. The ending of the novel may remind us of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902); Tony's imprisonment can be read as a parody of Conrad. In *Heart of Darkness*, returning from his nightmarish search for Mr Kurtz in Belgian Congo, Marlow visits the house of Kurtz's intended and finds that the false calmness which he cannot break is filled in the house. In contrast, Tony has to be excluded from his dream house, and trying to seek for a refuge outside, he finds genuine "horror" in Mr Todd's hut. His ideal only exists in his childish imagination, so that he is never allowed to find any ideal place in reality. Waugh seems sympathetic to Tony's ideal to some extent, but he obviously realises that Tony's struggle must result in failure. "The country house tradition is good if it has actuality" (Heath 102), and it is the actuality that Tony cannot gain after all.

In this novel, however, the house is not totally destroyed at the end. In spite of Brenda's brother's affirmation that "[b]ig houses are a thing of the past in England" (149), Hetton remains as Hetton — though part of the

estate is changed to a silver fox farm; its new owner Teddy hopes, by means of the earnings from the silver-fox business, "one day to restore Hetton to the glory that it had enjoyed in the days of his cousin Tony" (221). In spite of the obvious irony in the passage, still a kind of strength that originates from internalisation remains in the house. Tony has to be exiled from the house because of his undying infantile illusion; but without his idealisation, the house itself would be ruined at once. After this novel the house in Waugh gradually changes to a shelter from reality, as we shall clearly find in *Brideshead.*

III

Under the threat of war, Waugh's works in the 1940s became more and more serious in contrast with the previous comedies, and the change comes to the surface in *Brideshead.* The novel, told in the first-person narrative as a reminiscence of the narrator-character Charles Ryder, is strikingly serious and religious. Though I do not want to go into the intricate problem of Waugh's conversion to Catholicism here, the house image in the text also seems to reflect this change. In this text, Brideshead Castle becomes a kind of spiritual centre which stands against the desolated modern world without irony. Waugh wrote in 1959, in the preface to the revised edition of the novel as follows:

> It was impossible to foresee, in the spring of 1944, the present cult of the English country house. It seemed then that the ancestral seats which were our chief national artistic achievement were doomed to decay and spoiliation like the monasteries in the sixteenth century. So I piled it on rather, with passionate sincerity. (7)

This comment may remind us of Charles's characterisation as an architectural painter, who is called in all over the country to make portraits of houses that are soon to be deserted or debased. With the potent of complete destruction, the great houses, which seemed to be in the process of collapse, came to regain their traditional value in fiction.

It cannot be denied, therefore, that in the novel the big house becomes an idealisation of the past against its present decline. But Waugh's way of idealisation is not so straightforward as it seems; by employing the first-person narrator as a narrative device, Waugh makes this text a Proustian

story of personal reminiscence, so that we look at everything in it through the narrator's internalized point of view. On one hand, because of this narrative technique, the distance between the reader and the fictional world seem to vanish. On the other hand, however, as it is a limited viewpoint, there remains some doubt whether we may take the whole story at a face value. As we observed, Hetton was idealised only within Tony's understanding; does idealisation of Brideshead Castle also exist only within Charles's understanding, or is it possible to consider the house functioning as a truly ideal space for the first time in Waugh's fiction? In order to fully understand the meaning of Brideshead Castle, I would like to focus on two separate features: first the material beauty of the house in relation to Charles's paintings; next the nursery room and the chapel, which represent the spiritual significance of the house.

Located in a secluded valley, from the beginning the house appears like a shelter from reality. It looks like a secret Arcadia; while Charles first stay there with Sebastian, it makes him believe himself "very near heaven" (77). But actually it is never heaven itself, but a limbo, where people are not allowed to stay eternally. The house seemingly represents an almost complete architectural beauty, and as Charles exclaims, it is "an aesthetic education" to live in it. What should be noted here is, however, that Charles, who receives "an aesthetic education" in the house and later becomes an architectural painter, is referred to in Waugh's letter to Nancy Mitford as "dim" and "a bad painter" (Letters 198). Employing first-person narration, Waugh creates his narrator-character as an artist like himself, but does not make him a first-rate one; and this may suggest that Waugh carefully puts some distance between his narrator-persona and himself. Charles is, more or less like his creator, a faithful recorder of the vanishing old houses; but in fact his painting has "nothing to recommend it except [his] growing technical skill, enthusiasm for [his] subject, and independence of popular notion" (216).

Anthony Blanche, his affected friend in Oxford and a cosmopolitan aesthete, severely criticises Charles's Latin American paintings as too "charming " and too "English": from this connoisseur's point of view, his paintings are "a very naughty and very successful practical joke," "simple, creamy English charm, playing tigers" (260). This criticism may hold true also for the material beauty of Brideshead. It is merely a secular beauty related to romantic nostalgia; therefore it cannot attain completion by itself.

While on his first stay in Brideshead, Charles paints in one of the Rococo panels on the walls of the office a "romantic" landscape "without figures, a summer scene of white cloud and blue distances, with an ivy-clad ruin in the foreground, rocks and waterfall affording a rugged introduction to the receding parkland behind" (80). This is a "charming" work, but at the same time it anticipates the ruined Brideshead he is to see later. Beauty or charm is not sufficient to prevent the house from declining, nor to be of great importance in itself.

This is more striking for us because we become aware of the spiritual significance of Brideshead. It seems that there are two separate kinds of idealisation of the house in the text: first, the house as an imaginative space of nursery dreams, a symbol of lost innocence and youth; second, the house as a sanctuary, a holy place in the modern waste land; and these two do not seem to be in accord with each other as might be expected.

In the first place, Brideshead is a dream house of childhood. This characterisation of the house is related to the story of Sebastian Flyte, rather than to that of Charles. Sebastian, the younger son of the Marchmain family and a close friend of Charles in Oxford, is a successor of Tony Last, in that both of them are captured within their infantile imagination. Just as Tony "madly" loves his house, Sebastian "is in love with his own childhood" (100). We have already observed Waugh's irony about immature fantasy in *A Handful of Dust* in describing the result of Tony's childish persistence in his Gothic house: Sebastian's rejection of being grown-up as well "make[s] him very unhappy" (100). Tony is to be imprisoned in the hut of Mr. Todd; while Sebastian becomes a drunkard and runs away from his family to Morocco.

It is Sebastian who takes Charles to Brideshead. When Sebastian comes to the house, he always visits the nurseries, where "the souvenirs of many holidays" in his childhood are kept, to meet his nanny. Guided by this immature Sebastian, Charles as well comes to feel Brideshead as a refuge from the dismal world of grown-ups. While they stay together there, Brideshead becomes the "enchanted palace" where Nanny Hawkins calls them "a pair of children two of you" (78). Like Hetton, Brideshead is also a house which evokes infantile illusion; if captured in it, one is to follow Tony's fate. Thus Sebastian and Charles are not allowed to stay there; Sebastian runs away, while Charles is made to leave, feeling that he is "leaving part of [himself] behind" (163). In Waugh's works, though there is

undeniable idealisation of the dream house of childhood, we cannot overlook, at the same time, how it is not allowed to survive in reality.

On the other hand, it can be said that Brideshead also represents the Roman Catholic Church, and in this respect Lady Marchmain takes a significant role. She is a domineering woman, not completely dissimilar from those femmes fatales like Margot or other female figures in Waugh; she "has destroyed" Lord Marchmain, damages the friendship between Sebastian and Charles, and makes Sebastian run away. In contrast with other women in Waugh, however, she at the same time undertakes the presentation of the religious spirit of the house in the text. She is a member of the class of Catholic squires of England, and Lord Marchmain became Catholic when they got married. As Waugh wrote in a letter to Nancy Mitford, he is not on Lady Marchmain's side, "but God is, . . . and the book is about God" (*Letters* 196).

She is typical of those female figures of the early twentieth century novel who take on the role of the spiritual centre of the household like Mrs Ramsey in *To the Lighthouse* or Mrs Gould in *Nostromo*. She may be compared especially to Mrs Wilcox in *Howards End*; both women are the mistresses of their beloved houses, both die in the midst of the stories, and their influences remain in the texts as significant forces. Lady Marchmain has "brought back" her husband and his family "to the faith of their ancestors" (212); the chapel of Brideshead is Lord Marchmain's wedding gift to her. Once, after her death, the chapel is closed and her influence seems to cease: " . . . suddenly, there wasn't any chapel there any more, just an oddly decorated room" (212). Just as the Wilcox family once try to ignore the will of Mrs Wilcox, the Marchmain family try to wipe Lady Marchmain's spell from the house. Perhaps she is not severe enough, as Heath suggests, to make the house into a representation of the Catholic church all by herself (166–7). But her faith does remain after her death, and it finally makes the house different from Waugh's previous houses. In the epilogue we see the flame burning in her chapel again; there we can recognise a spirituality that the house-imagery finally attains.

What should be noted here is, however, though she is a spiritual centre of the house, this does not mean that she succeeds in creating a house with happy family. On the contrary, she leads her family into an unhappy life from a worldly point of view. She creates the house as an exclusive holy place — a sanctuary in the modern waste land where worldly happiness is

not allowed to intrude. At the very end of the novel, in "revisiting" Brideshead, Charles finds that Brideshead has become a camp for army, but Lady Marchmain's chapel shows "no ill-effects of its long neglect"; the art-nouveau lamp is burning before the altar, the flame burning anew among the old stones and it relieves him from despair (330–1). It is no longer a place where ordinary life is led; inside the sanctuary the stories of the Marchmain family merely become a "fierce little human tragedy" (331). It seems that the destruction of the house and the family turns out to be necessary conditions of making what is truly worth preserving. In spite of the apparent nostalgia and romanticism that fill Brideshead, in this book Waugh rejects any compromise with realities, so that the house as an imaginative holy place, from which even heroes are excluded, and which is premised on the loss of other secular values, can outlive all other scenes as an ideal space.

We may conclude, then, by suggesting that starting from "disillusionment" with houses which are suffering merciless modernisation, the house in Waugh finally comes to get a double idealisation in *Brideshead.* The house becomes for him the illusional place of childhood dreams, and also a sanctuary against the secular world. We can affirm that Waugh's house-imagery attains a certain completion in this novel.

Even this house-as-a-sanctuary image, however, is not his final answer in the transition of his house-imagery. By employing a "homeless, childless, middle-aged loveless" man as a narrator-observer, Waugh makes it possible to describe the house without any compromise with realities in *Brideshead.* As Waugh himself declares in the preface, however, the English country houses were actually "not" doomed to decay as he had once anticipated. We may wonder then, if the house has come to symbolise "the authentic religious and social conditions of England" (Gill 212), and if it can be expected to survive not only as a closed sanctuary, but also as an actual family household, whether there can be someone who will keep it and hand it over to a new inheritor.

This is the problem which will shape Waugh's final images of houses in the *Sword of Honour* trilogy. As we have seen, however, houses are not static in Waugh's work. The image of the house is subtle, interesting and goes through an important process of transition.

The University of Tokyo

Received September 9, 1997

Works Cited

Auden, W. H. *Poems.* 2nd ed. London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1933.

Carens, James F. ed. and Introduction. *Critical Essays on Evelyn Waugh.* Critical Essays on British Literature. Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1987.

Cunningham, Valentine. *British Writers of the Thirties.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Dennis, Nigel. "Evelyn Waugh: The Pillar of Anchorage House". Carens, *Critical Essays* 34–43.

Gill, Richard. *Happy Rural Seat: The English Country House and the Literary Imagination.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972.

Heath, Jeffrey. *The Picturesque Prison: Evelyn Waugh and His Writing.* 1982. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1983.

Howarth, Herbert. "Quelling the Riot: Evelyn Waugh's Progress". Carens, *Critical Essays* 91–105

Huxley, Aldous. *Crome Yellow.* 1921 London: Chatto and Windus, 1949.

Kelsall, Malcolm. *The Great Good Place: The Country House and English Literature.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

McCartney, George. *Confused Roaring: Evelyn Waugh and Modernist Tradition.* Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Wasson, Richard. "*A Handful of Dust:* Critique of Victorianism". Carens, *Critical Essays* 133–143

Waugh, Evelyn. *Decline and Fall.* 1928. London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1937.

——, *Vile Bodies.* 1930. Penguin, 1938.

——, *Labels: A Mediterranean Journal.* 1930. Penguin, 1982.

——, *A Handful of Dust.* 1934. Penguin, 1951.

——, *Ninety-Two Days.* 1934. Penguin, 1986.

——, *When the Going was Good.* 1946. Penguin, 1951.

——, *Brideshead Revisited: The Sacred and Profane Memories of Captain Charles Ryder.* 1945. Revised ed. 1960. Penguin, 1962.

——, *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh.* ed. Mark Amory. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980.

Williams, Raymond. *The Country and the City.* 1973. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.