The Paradox of Prestige: Unravelling Personal Snobbery in Evelyn Waugh's Brideshead Revisited (1945)

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Abstract

Evelyn Waugh's Brideshead Revisited (1945) is undoubtedly his best and most famous fictional text. Ever since its publication, the novel has been studied and addressed copiously and from different perspectives. It has, for instance, been frequently studied on religious grounds with clear reference to Evelyn Waugh's Catholicism. In this regard, some studies have investigated the influence of St. Augustine on the novel while some others have explicitly addressed the Catholic faith in the text. Besides, some studies have critically read Waugh's novel with connection to John Milton's Paradise Lost. Other studies have analyzed the topics of class and gender in the novel as its chief characters demonstrate a class gap apparently belonging to lower and upper classes. Further studies have touched upon the concept of moral and religious decadence as reflected in the novel, whereas more studies treated the topic of manliness and masculinity as depicted in the novel. Yet, no study—to the researcher's best knowledge—has critically examined the issues of the paradox of prestige and personal snobbery in the novel in a single effort. In view of that, the current research study aims to address and analyze the paradox of prestige and unravel the personal snobbery in Waugh's novel Brideshead Revisited. The paper at hand also aims to address and study the various aspects of the social and religious life and their backgrounds such as class, etiquette and mannerism, gender and sex and others to find out how they affect and influence characters in their overall attitude, thinking and way of life.

***Keywords**: Brideshead Revisited, Evelyn Waugh, Paradox of Prestige, Unravel, Personal Snobbery*

مفارقات النفوذ والمكانة: كشف الخيلاء الشخصي في رواية (برايزهيد ريفيزيتيدد) للكاتب ايفلين واي

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الملخص

تعد رواية (برايزهيد ريفيزيتدد) للكاتب ايفيلين واي والمنشورة في عام (1945) وبلا شك أفضل وأشهر نص سردي له. فمنذ صدورها، تمت دراسة الرواية وتناولها بكثرة ومن وجهات نظر مختلفة. على سبيل المثال، تمت دراستها بشكل متكرر على أسس دينية مع إشارة واضحة إلى كاثوليكية إيفلين واي. وفي هذا الصدد، تناولت بعض الدراسات تأثير القديس أغسطينوس على الرواية، بينما تناولت دراسات أخرى المعتقد الكاثوليكي في النص بشكل صريح. وعلاوة على ذلك، فقد قدمت بعض الدراسات قراءات نقدية لرواية واي وربطها برواية جون ميلتون "النعيم المفقود". كما قامت دراسات أخرى بتحليل موضوعات الطبقة والجنس في الرواية حيث أظهرت الشخصيات الرئيسية فجوة طبقية كونها تنتمي على ما يبدو إلى الطبقات الدنيا والعليا. وتطرقت دراسات أخرى إلى مفهوم الانحطاط الأخلاقي والديني كما تعكسه الرواية، في حين تناولت المزيد من الدراسات موضوع الرجولة والذكورة كما صورته الرواية. ومع ذلك، لم تقم أي دراسة -على حد علم الباحث -بدراسة نقدية لقضايا مفارقة المكانة والنفوذ والعجرفة الشخصية في الرواية في جهد واحد. وفي ضوء ذلك تهدف الدراسة البحثية الحالية إلى معالجة وتحليل مفارقة المكانة والنفوذ وكشف خيلاء وعجرفة الشخوص في الرواية. كما تهدف الورقة المطروحة إلى تناول ودراسة مختلف جوانب الحياة الاجتماعية والدينية وخلفياتها مثل الطبقية والآداب والسلوك والجنس والنوع لمعرفة مدى تأثيرها ونفوذها على شخوص الرواية في توجهاتهم العامة وتفكيرهم واسلوب الحياة لديهم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ايفلين واي، (برايزهيد ريفيزيتدد)، المكانة والنفوذ، كشف، الخيلاء والعجرفة الذاتية

Introduction

Brideshead Revisited by Evelyn Waugh is widely recognized as his magnum opus and most celebrated novel. The novel was a great success and established tremendous popularity from the time it was first published in "a limited edition in 1944, then in a revised edition for the general public in 1945," (Kennedy 23). In fact, Waugh's novel has never waned in gaining wider currency or sparking academic interest ever since. In the 1980s, a prominent TV adaptation and a following film have further revived interest in the novel and brought it back to the lime light.

Interestingly though, Waugh himself has been reported to have been less convinced of its worth, been said to have doubts over the novel and set in a revision task for the second edition of the novel. Surprisingly still, some persist to assume that *Brideshead Revisited* could be perceived more as an autobiographical account of the author's life and life views. It could be said so, more particularly, with relation to the personality of Charles Ryder and his connection to Sebastian: "The character of Charles Ryder is largely autobiographical, yet the differences in aesthetic development are telling. When Waugh went up to Oxford in 1922 there were, he notes, "traditional aesthetes who still survived here and there in the twilight of the 90s," (Murray 604).

In addition to being deemed autobiographical, Waugh's novel is also sometimes taken for a form of a comedy, a callous and obscure comedy though: "Waugh, it should be said, was a very autobiographical writer. Much of his fiction, however grotesque, outlandish and blackly comic, has its roots clearly in his own life. *Brideshead* is no exception," (Boyd 2). The novel seems not to offer any humorous or witty presentation of the events. With the writer's apparently unique voice and clear vision, the novel rather appears too thoughtful and stern in presenting its characters and events.

Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* is assumingly thought to be presenting and describing a generation of young people who are seemingly at a loss but appear to be attentive to their unworldly loss and spiritual banishment. Yet, in response to that religious assumption, the novel seems to have received some harsh criticism. For instance, Edmund Wilson objected to "the religious theme, and Conor Cruise O'Brien, himself raised a Catholic, found Waugh's theology fraudulent, a facade for class-based snobbery," (Moran 2).

Nevertheless, *Brideshead Revisited* was and most probably still is Waugh's most renowned novel; this particular text "was selected as a Book-of-the-Month Club choice and earned him an expenses-paid trip to Hollywood, where he met with studio executives who wanted to buy the rights," (*ibid*).

Moreover, Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1945) is partly but principally considered and recognized as a form of academic fiction. The novel is deemed partly as a form of an academic fiction because it is divided into three parts and only one part of it portrays the academic life at Oxford University. Yet, it is principally received as a form of academic novel because it is in this particular part that the most important events take place and are presented. The events during which Charles and Sebastian meet provide a foundational ground for the entire course of action in the novel:

This theme of a lower middle-class youth befriending and becoming infatuated with the upper class can also be found in Waugh's novel, in which the protagonist Charles Ryder meets the aristocrat Sebastian Flyte. In this novel it can be argued that Charles and Sebastian form a romantic relationship during their time at Oxford University. (Lindén 1-2)

Such a meeting between Charles and Sebastian persists in effect and influence over Charles in the development of his character and over subsequent events in the novel. The university life presented in this segment of the novel is illustrated as "a symbol of youthful arcadia, where a unique place and time intersect to provide [its] heroes with a spiritual rebirth of such magnitude that it continues throughout the rest of their lives" (Rossen 93).

As a form of academic fiction thus, the novel apparently presents and portrays the academic milieu and the university life as secluded and inaccessible places to the outside context. Besides, there seems not to be—as the novel portrays—much of the academia within a university life in terms of intellect and elitism as there is much veneering attraction in the form of wealth and extravagant expenses:

There is no form of elite society distinguished by intellect, but instead Charles Ryder seems to be fascinated with the beauty, extravagance and wealth of Sebastian Flyte and his friends and family. Charles' scholarly ambitions are put aside when he befriends these people and later he completely discards the academic life and pursues a life as a painter. (Lindén 5)

As an academic form of fiction thus, the novel presents characters in such an environment who seem to have and enjoy more personal freedom in enacting and performing their teenage desires and juvenile impulses.

Charles himself admits of having a different purpose and plan in mind to be achieved by going to the university. Neither intellect nor academic stuff seems to be his first concern or top priority. He has other agendas including love, and later on in the novel readers come to know that Charles quits university and the academic life altogether:

I was in search of love in those days, and I went full of curiosity and the faint, unrecognized apprehension that here, at last, I should find that low door in the wall, which others, I knew, had found before me, which opened on an enclosed and enchanted garden. (Waugh 33)

The paradox of prestige—as the title of the current research paper indicates—originates in the novel's depiction of its characters as folks of lower profile who through the academic life of the university seem to join the elite in an open invitation. As a result, the elite life of the academia seems to fascinate and enthrall them right away as they start to embrace this new world and admire its people. In addition, the elite life of the university leads to socializing with their class in the outside world, thus exposing people to the influence of such life in almost all respects.

In view of all that, the current research paper intends to examine the paradox of prestige and unravel the personal snobbery in Evelyn Waugh's novel *Brideshead Revisited* in the light of the narrative comprehensive background mentioned above.

The Paradox of Prestige and Personal Snobbery in *Brideshead Revisited*

When addressing Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, it seems that snobbery has not just been attached to the characters in the novel, but has also been extended to the writer himself. Such a claim has been grounded on views and perspectives of class consciousness and class mindfulness. Yet, a close reading of the novel at hand and most of Waugh's other texts would apparently lead to counter arguments and conclusions. For one thing, Waugh in this novel under discussion and other texts is perceived to be inviting the attention of his readers to the fact that people of lower classes exist and suffer in plenty of ways and forms in his society; the least of which would just be the difficult economic circumstances.

Yet again, Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* would be more miscellaneous and assorted than just conservative and snobby. It is

apparent that snobbery could conceivably be traced in the novel, but there also seems not to be a sort of categorical approval of upper classes or uncouth deriding of lower classes in the novel. If it is the case, it would then be a form of sweeping statement because the novel contains and portrays quite "a great deal of satirical criticism and even hostile attitudes towards some upper class characters," (Laitinen 4).

Still, an apparent and prominent illustration of the paradox of prestige and personal snobbery in the novel is the unapologetic judgmental attitude and harsh criticism directed at Rex. In this regard, it is depicted throughout the novel's narrative and events how Charles and Julia usually hold and enact negative attitudes and dealings towards Rex. Surprisingly though, most critics of the novel seem to share Julia and Charles' attitude of disparagement and deriding towards Rex as well. If not for David Bittner who argues that Rex has been "unfairly judged as being only repulsive" (Bittner 60), then critics joining characters in the novel would just enhance paradox and snobbery in the novel, so to speak.

In that order, both Julia and Charles continually judge Rex and harshly criticize him for a worthy reason and without any apparent one as well. Julia, for instance, is presented in the novel saying that Rex's sole interest is materialistic matters and gains. As such, she carries on, he neither possesses nor demonstrates any spirituality and has therefore married her only because of her social position. Likewise, Charles rather arrogantly designates Rex as having no esthetical or culinary taste, too.

In a similar context, Rex's age has also represented a chance and offered a subject for personal snobbery as well; a paradoxical and prestigious form of snobbery though. On one hand, Rex's age seems from the start to play to his favor because the novel reveals that there seems to be a sort of gerontophilic snobbery in the midst of Julia's friends. According to the novel's narrative, young men are perceived as uncouth, tasteless and blemished, whereas dining unaccompanied at the Ritz is deemed a lot more elegant, chic and attractive.

This is so because the Ritz is a vantage spot and dining at it has provided the young girls a rare opportunity to peek into the little and closed circle of Julia and her intimate cronies. It is eventually challenging to get a chance to have a look at such a spot and such dining activity as the elders make sure to keep it out of reach and out of sight of all else:

lunching alone at the Ritz allowed to few girls of that day, to the tiny circle of Julia's intimates; a thing looked at askance by the elders who kept the score, chatting pleasantly against the walls of the ballrooms - at the table on the left as you came in, with a starched and wrinkled old roué whom your mother had be warned of as a girl, than in the center of the room with a party of exuberant young bloods. (Waugh 94)

Besides, Rex seems to have no curbing qualities such as reservedness, decorum or looks wrinkly or crumpled. Yet, the elders of his circle have usually perceived him as a pushful and fledgling young man. By contrast, it is Julia who could see through Rex and make out the obviously unique style, elegance and attraction. Rex seems to enjoy a distinctive life style and an exceptional social status so much so that he is envied by Julia's friends and probably by her, too. In him, Julia could sense "the flavor of 'Max' and 'F. E." and "his social position was unique; it had an air of mystery, even of crime, about it; people said Rex went about armed," (95).

In that vein, Julia and her friends have seemingly been charmed by Rex and his life style, but have also detested him particularly for that. They have ostensibly despised Rex for what they called 'Pont Street,' (95). The narrative seems to introduce certain phrases to

help Julia and her friends talk about Rex in a particular way.

Yet, whatever Rex might have been, he is certainly not 'Pont Street'. The grudge against him might possibly be because he has walked out of the downtrodden and lower classes into the world of the elite and upper classes of Julia, Sebastian and the like of the Flyte family. Still, Rex himself seems to always convey a different picture about himself; in a conversation about Charles' paintings, Rex seems like he has a taste and an attitude to appreciate Charles' paintings and efforts as well:

Even then, my dear, I wondered a little. It seemed to me that there was something a little gentlemanly about your painting. You must remember I am not English; I cannot understand this keen zest to be well-bred. English snobbery is more macabre to me even than English morals. However, I said, Charles has done something delicious. What will he do next? (Waugh 139)

Moreover, Julia-Rex marriage episode is quite interesting within the context of the paradox of prestige and personal snobbery in the novel. For one thing, Julia is still single and has not got married yet, whereas Rex is already a divorced man, a widow; he married someone while in Canada and got a divorce. On religious grounds, Rex is Protestant while Julia is Catholic, which seems to be a banning difference, too. Besides, Julia belongs to the upper class while Rex apparently coms from a middle class at best.

However, it is Julia who is more eager and who insists on marrying Rex regardless of the seeming obstacles. Julia marries Rex in a Protestant church against her religious instructions and against her mother's wishes as well. It is also Julia who later regrets this marriage and translates certain bad things happening to her as a sort of punishment for the same. Later on the story when Charles and Julia are crossing the Atlantic in the storm, Julia tells Charles about her being punished for marrying Rex: "you see I can't get all that sort of thing out of my mind, quite—Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell, Nanny Hawkins and the catechism. It becomes part of oneself, if they give it one early enough," (Waugh 247). Julia even seems to think that her stillborn child is also a form of punishment for marrying Rex.

It is as well a paradox of prestige and a kind of personal snobbery to learn that Rex himself wants to be Catholic before marrying Julia, but partly because he wishes to ingratiate himself with Lady Marchmain and partly because he wants to have a grand wedding through a Catholic ceremony, and not because of a religious conviction. Yet, his plans have been thwarted by his instructor Father Mowbray who wishes Rex to go through Catholic instructions before he is accepted in the Catholic faith. Likewise, Father Mowbray later admits to Lady Marchmain that "Rex has been the most difficult convert he has ever met," (Waugh 185).

Hence, it could be assumed that the demand of Rex's instruction into the Catholic faith by Father Mowbray is an exemplary illustration of the paradox of prestige and personal snobbery in the novel. This instruction in the Catholic faith is ultimately "the occasion of some amusing theological farce," (Lodge 32). It also communicates a kind of irritating snobbery and contemptuous attitude on the part of Lady Marchmain towards both Father Mowbray and Rex all at once. Lady Marchmain seems to be condescending in her attitude when dealing with these two people in the novel: "poor Rex. You know, I think it makes him rather lovable. You must treat him like an idiot child, Father Mowbray," (Waugh 187).

Besides, Rex could be perceived through the narrative as the archetype of the normal, reasoning modern man. Yet, it seems like both Julia and Charles deals with him in contempt

and feels quite a sense of superiority over him. This is quite apparent when Julia describes him to Charles and Father Mowbray:

You know Father Mowbray hit on the truth about Rex at once that it took me a year of marriage to see. He simply wasn't all there. He wasn't a complete human being at all. He was a tiny bit of one, unnaturally developed; something in a bottle, an organ kept alive in a laboratory. I thought he was a sort of primitive savage, but he was something absolutely modern and up-to-date that only this ghastly age could produce. A tiny bit of a man pretending that he was the whole. (Waugh 193)

According to Wirth, such a statement is quite a "harsh indictment of Rex, and also of the modern world which produced him," (Wirth 68). More surprisingly though, readers soon come to realize that Rex is not at all bad except for the view of the narrator; Charles, and for the attitude of Julia and her mother.

Rex has, for example, offered his help for the Flyte family with their troubled finances, has helped Sebastian with the judge in his drunken driving and offered to take him to Zurich for rehabilitation. Rex has also offered to take Lady Marchmain to a specialist who could treat her for her illness. Rex seems like a true gentleman and always treats Lady Marchmain 'masterfully' and has never pretended to her or any other to be a religious man. He has also agreed to give Julia her divorce by the end of the novel quite easily.

If, for instance, the state of his unfaithfulness to Julia is brought up to the surface, it could as well be remembered that Julia, too, has been unfaithful to him. What, then could make her morally superior, right or better than Rex if not a paradox of prestige and a sort of personal snobbery? And yet, even though Rex is a "blunderer", he still is "a good deal more honorable than most of the Flytes," (McDonnell, *Evelyn* 101). So, it seems that all the criticism and negativity directed towards Rex would mostly be grounded on class considerations, making it seem that Rex's lower or perhaps wrong class is all to blame.

After all, all these favors and acts of gentlemanliness demonstrated by Rex have not conveyed a different and better picture of him than the one penetrating throughout the narrative. Lady Marchmain, for example, declines Rex's offer for help for she considers herself too saintlike and holy to accept such worldly favors from anyone, let alone from Rex. The other characters like Charles, Sebastian and Julia seem to take Rex for granted as a bad man though they are no better or no less evil, to say the least.

On the part of Rex, the novel depicts certain acts of paradox of prestige and personal snobbery. For instance, when Rex complains to Charles about the extravagant finances of the Marchmain household, he probably refers to Nanny among others and intends to indicate her in his complaint but seems unable to explicitly do so. This assumption could be perceived from his statement as he lists the expenses: "… dozens of old servants doing damn all, being waited on by other servants," (Waugh 168). Thus, it seems like Rex could never succeed in disposing of Nanny. As some argue, a nanny in an aristocratic family becomes a part of the family, an important and influential member though: "once a nanny is established in an aristocratic family, she cannot be easily removed. A nanny often brings up several generations, and thus it is unthinkable that such a part of a family should be considered a servant who can be dismissed," (McDonnell, *Waugh on Women* 123).

In addition to Julia and Rex, Julia and Charles present more into the paradox of prestige and personal snobbery in the novel in their claims of moral and spiritual superiority. For a case of illustration, both Julia and Charles

seem to agree on condemning both Rex and Celia for adultery. While readers are fully aware of Julia and Charles' adultery to one another, how it could be that they both have and demonstrate no feelings of equal guilt or compunction.

To the contrary, they think of themselves as morally superior, as nobler and as truer lovers and not as adulterers, which is quite astonishing, strangely astonishing though. Additionally, just as Julia's marriage to Rex against her religious faith and mother's wishes has been deemed an act of rebellion, her liaison with Charles while still Rex's wife has equally been received as a rebellious act as well: "Julia at first rebels by marrying a divorced man, Rex, and then by having at least two extra-marital affairs, the second with Charles," (Kennedy 31).

Besides, Charles falls in love with Sebastian and then with his sister, Julia, without being subjected to any sort of maltreatment, vilification or even negative attitudes like Rex Mottram. He even seems to fall in love with Julia just because she looks a lot like Sebastian who is his original lover. The beginnings of his love to Julia also resemble those of his love with Sebastian; Charles once even tells Julia that Sebastian "is her forerunner" (Waugh 245), which also means that he still loves Sebastian.

Moreover, Charles' love for Sebastian is perceived as a natural perhaps necessary step in his journey of development to maturity, and eventually to his absolution and return to God: "He must move from his immature love for Sebastian, with its implicit homosexual overtones, to his mature but extra-marital love for Julia, and finally to the calm satisfaction of his love for God," (Kennedy 24). Furthermore, Charles connects the university life at Oxford to Sebastian and their romantic relation. He adores the university life, not for its own sake, but apparently because of Sebastian: "It was my third term since matriculation, but I date my Oxford life from my first meeting with Sebastian, which had happened, by chance, in the middle of the term before," (Waugh 25).

In addition, there seems to be a sort of understanding and permission for such romantic relationships as long as they exist independently between men and do not go beyond the age of adolescence. Cara, the mistress of Sebastian's father, affirms such assumption: "I know of these romantic friendships of the English and the Germans. …, I think they are very good if they do not go on too long," (Waugh 117). It is therefore quite obvious that such romantic relationships between adolescent men exist, are recognized and even comprehended and tolerated.

In that order, both throughout the narrative and seemingly, too, as demonstrated by the novel's critics, Charles is perceived and dealt with nicely and with considerations. Into the bargain, Charles' love for Sebastian seems to even be celebrated and applauded as a typical and passionate love. In divergence from such readings, however, David Leon Higdon wrote a revolutionary essay in 1994, titled "Gay Sebastian and Cheerful Charles: Homoeroticism in Waugh's 'Brideshead Revisited'". This essay has for the most part drawn the attention of readers and critics alike to the unidentified male relationship, or rather homosexuality, between Charles and Sebastian Flyte, (Higdon).

Furthermore, Sebastian is referred to in the novel and by the novel's critics as Charles's first love, and is described as "so sympathetic a creation that Charles's other loves seem pale by contrast," (Heath 178). For Julia, Charles and Sebastian, their acts and attitudes seem to be accepted and excused as if they are deeds that are running within the norm.

Even after the breakup between Sebastian and Charles and a considerable period of time passes—almost ten years—Charles still remembers and speaks of such days not only

with blunt candidness but also with joy and veneration:

Never during that time [the ten years after his separation from Sebastian], except sometimes in my painting—and that at longer and longer intervals—did I come alive as I had been during the time of my friendship with Sebastian. I took it to be youth, not life that I was losing. (Waugh 215)

The connection between Charles and Sebastian is never overtly referred to as homosexual or homosexuality throughout the novel, despite assuming Waugh himself to have been homosexual and deeming Charles to reflect the writer's position: "In the letter to Mitford, Waugh depicted his affection for Richard Pares as 'my first homosexual love'," (Onishi 162). However, heterosexual relations are much more openly depicted and discussed in the novel.

Charles' love for Julia, Sebastian's sister, "is often spoken of in sexual terms," (Lindén 13). Charles himself speaks of such air of sexuality when he meets Julia for the first time: "I caught a thin bat's squeak of sexuality, inaudible to any but me," (Waugh 87). Apparently though, Charles's affair with Julia seems to have no peace, no innocence and seemingly little passion of the sort that ignites the emotions between lovers. This assumption could be made clearer through the disconcerting account Charles offers of the experience of making love to Julia for the first time:

A formality to be observed, no more. It was as though a deed of conveyance of her narrow loins had been drawn and sealed. I was making my first entry as the free holder of a property I would enjoy and develop at leisure. (Waugh 248)

Yet, for Charles, Julia and Sebastian; they are made allowances for and are given the benefit of the doubt, as it were. In religion as it is in love, nobody seems to criticize Sebastian or Julia for wrongdoing; after all, Sebastian engages in homosexuality and Julia gets involved in adultery, which are ultimately a form of "challenging the institution of marriage and blurring the borders between the sexes," (Showalter 169). However, for Sebastian as it for Julia, such wrong acts are interpreted as acts of rebellion against religion in the first place.

Such statement is grounded on the assumption that both Julia and Sebastian have received strong Catholic education since their childhood. Therefore, their acts of rebellion against the Catholic faith will inevitably bring them back to it, which seemingly is a grand paradox of prestige and personal snobbery at its best. Thus, there seems to be established a normal and unavoidable association between Julia and Sebastian's childhood and their faith so long as Catholicism is part and parcel of their nurturing background. Sebastian, they argue, is "in love with his own childhood, and that childhood includes, willy-nilly, Catholicism," (Kennedy 30). It is ultimately assumed that there is no surprise for Julia and Sebastian's coming back to the faith for there has been established a powerful connection between Catholicism and their childhood.

Charles, too, is considered to be running away from God and rebelling against his faith. Yet, running away and the acts of rebellion demonstrated by Sebastian, Julia and Charles indicate their need for unadorned forgiveness that would eventually lead them back to God: "Sebastian, however, is not the only runaway in need of severe mercy. Julia, because of moral problems, and Charles, because of his non-religious upbringing, also flee God and meet with sufferings that ultimately effect their conversion," (Moran 45). Nevertheless, Sebastian, Julia, Charles and, for that matter, Lord Marchmain all have not come back to their faith in the absolute seclusion of intellectual objectivity and a life at peace. To the contrary,

they have returned to God after fretfulness, dispossession, and lonesomeness.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, the analysis has revealed forms of stark paradoxes of prestige and instances of personal snobbery as reflected by the novel's characters. One form of a grand paradox of prestige would conceivably be in the sort of residence and class. Brideshead—Sebastian's home—has come to feel more like home for Charles, whereas London—Charles' home—has grown more homey for Sebastian. The life of the elite represented by the Flyte family has appealed more to Charles who has adapted more into it by having an affair with Julia and by becoming a painter, while Sebastian has turned to a life of a drunkard and an outcast. It also becomes obvious that Sebastian has fallen into alcoholism because of accumulative psychological, religious and social pressures put on him by his family and surroundings. As a homosexual, his mother rejects his affair with Charles and insists on ending it, then actually this relationship is put to an end by Charles in falling for Julia. In addition, it is prestigiously paradoxical to learn that though Julia has sacrificed her marital life with Rex for Charles, he seems either unwilling or unready to marry her by the closing of the novel. It is also a form of personal snobbery that Julia after getting divorced from Rex starts to think of her affair with Charles as a sin, has qualms and thinks of leaving Charles and returns to God.

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