

The War Trilogies of Anthony Powell and Evelyn Waugh

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ON AN AFTERNOON in 1962 Evelyn Waugh was in his pajamas in a London hotel. He had condescended to come there to be interviewed for the *Paris Review*. His career as a novelist was over, though that was not known then. He would not long after be publishing his final book, the account of his early years called *A Little Learning*.

There was some awkwardness in the interview because of the unexpected brevity of some of Waugh's answers. When the interviewer asked him, "Who do you read for pleasure?" Waugh answered, "Anthony Powell." Then, with some qualification, he added Msgr. Ronald Knox and Erle Stanley Gardner. The interviewer tried to pick him up on this odd couple, so that Powell's name was left where it was: unreinforced, as the writer whose books gave Waugh pleasure.

Anthony Powell had produced six volumes of *The Music of Time* by then. He and Waugh were friends, but not really

very close friends. They would be more likely to meet on a train bearing them back to their houses in the West Country from London, say, than by arrangement. In the mid-twenties at Oxford they had known one another—both had studied history there, though two terms apart and at different colleges. Probably this flair for history connected them more than anything else. As young writers in the thirties their highly scenic dialogue novels, it is true, had not been historically but topically attuned. It is even possible that the key event of Powell's first novel was inspired by an act of young Evelyn Waugh, retold on the last page of *A Little Learning*. Waugh had resigned from his teaching duties at a Welsh school, written a suicide note, got out of his clothes and swum out to sea to drown himself. Jelly-fish stings brought him around long before he reached the point of no return, and he swam back in. Powell used a nearly identical incident with a character called Pringle in his 1931 novel, *Afternoon Men*—but if Powell was drawing on the actual event, it was mainly, I suspect, because

he was remote from Waugh rather than close to him.

Powell's character Pringle, who does not really much resemble the young Evelyn Waugh, had not been despondent because of a schoolmaster's vexations but because he had been crossed in love. A friend of his had appropriated his fiancée. While this may again be coincidence, it does happen that a friend of Evelyn Waugh's in 1929 brought on the later episode that may have given Waugh real cause to commit suicide. Waugh had been married a year, and the friend went off with his wife; Waugh lost her for good, and thus began a period of eight years of despair for him—years of much travel and periodic return to England, when his travel books would be followed out by his biting topical novels.

In one sense, theologically, Waugh may be thought of as having insured against despair, on account of his conversion to Catholicism in 1930. And on the face of it, his energetic roaming and writing would not seem to indicate any lack of gusto in him in those days. All the same, his main character in his war trilogy, Guy Crouchback, refers to those same numbing eight years repeatedly. To him the war offers a new lease on life through shared action with other men—it is a cause promising to heal him as a man, and to work out a line of salvation that will fuse the Catholic in him with the Englishman. The years that held Waugh's hero moribund, those same draining years of the 1930's, marked by slumps and the rise of -isms, make up in large part the era considered by Anthony Powell in the first sextet of his *Music of Time*. In this recent work of Powell's the historical touch is plainly there. It accounts at least in part for Waugh's declaration that Powell was a writer he read avidly. While Powell was engaged on covering one historical stretch of time, Waugh was covering another, and getting in just a little ahead of his friend,

as usual. For Powell worked from 1951 to 1962 to maneuver his *Music of Time* up to the brink of war, while inside that same span Waugh was producing his war trilogy. The dates of the installments are 1952, '55, and '61.

The British historian A. J. P. Taylor paid Waugh the supreme compliment when he said that the *Sword of Honour* trilogy captured the feel of the war years with unexampled precision. An inevitable comparison now comes up, since Powell has advanced his material through those years, and also in trilogy form. It is certainly lamentable that Waugh could not have lived to read this version of England at war. Though a comparison is indeed called for, perhaps an elevation of the two works to positions of commensurate esteem will be the result. Hard as it would be to outstrip such a verdict as A. J. P. Taylor's, it ought to prove equally untenable to award the palm to Waugh now that Powell is in the field.

But this is to imply competition where neither author would seek it, and it is seldom much to the point anyhow to rank works of art. Thus I should like to revert to certain qualities right away, qualities which I think differentiate the war trilogies well enough, because of their presence in the characters who are the alter egos for Powell and Waugh in these two works. "Crouchback" is on the face of it a connotative name.¹ It is both highly distinctive—an extraordinary disyllable for a surname—and suggestive as well of an attitude. Though Guy Crouchback sets out with zeal in his heart, the enemy appearing to him to be "plain in view, huge and hateful" as he moves from Italy to England to find his place in this war, the essence of his nature is sounded in his name. It is torpor. It is something I believe Waugh fully realizes—deriving from an emotional wound that even when healed will not produce a fully

restored man. I equate this immediately with the despair years just spoken of—in fact it was common to hear rumored in England, in 1965, that although Waugh had produced such a splendid first installment of his autobiography in 1964, he would write no more. The implication, since borne out by statements of his brother and others, was that he would not be able to encompass the conditions of that first, heart-breaking marriage—though unquestionably in his war trilogy he made his triumphant artistic peace with this affliction to his early years. My point is not to belabor a biographical event and make it the key formative influence in Waugh's life. It is rather to give some slight insight into the *why* of Crouchback's crouching back—falling back on his church, crouching back from his own tentative stretchings-forward, and in particular crouching back from himself after he has permitted one or another illusion to draw him out. It is a heroic posture, in the long run, this crouching back—but a unique one. Briefly to exemplify it, we could go to the end of the second volume, *Officers and Gentlemen*, by which time Guy has experienced the ruinous collapse of the British defense of Crete. He is in an Egyptian hospital and maintaining unbroken, terrifying silence. "He could talk if he wished to," we read. "He must guard that secret from them. Once he spoke he would re-enter their world, he would be back in the picture." Self-monitoring is everything, here—and everything, in the end, to Waugh. "But mad or sane, Guy offered no scope for an observer." At its intensest moments, as these quotations imply, Waugh's trilogy is really delineating a game played for a single soul.

By playing true to temperament, Waugh is going to be able to bring Crouchback through an ordeal in a paradoxical way. Guy's basic, phlegmatic personality—mirrored by his uncle Peregrine, who is almost

militantly boring, and mirrored more dangerously in his dead brother Ivo, who starved himself to death—this personality appears to let Guy in for more than one bout with despair. And for him to entertain spiritual despair would be a colossal, mortal sin. Incidentally, on this matter of mortal sin, in 1962 a group of English writers, including Auden, Waugh, Angus Wilson, and others, brought out a collection of essays called *The Seven Deadly Sins*. Each contributor wrote on one sin and Waugh's was Sloth. He brought it right round to this issue of despair. He defined Sloth as "sadness in the face of spiritual good The malice of Sloth lies not merely in the neglect of duty (though that can be a symptom of it) but in the refusal of joy. It is allied to despair." I mention the essay to show Waugh's preoccupation with such a personality manifestation. In the concluding volume of his war trilogy, at the time of the funeral held for Guy's father, Waugh has recourse to some very close echoes to this phraseology:

His father had been worried, not by anything connected with [Guy's] worldly progress, but by his evident apathy;

and again:

. . . that was the deadly core of his apathy; his father had tried to tell him That emptiness had been with him for years now, even in his days of enthusiasm and activity in the Halberdiers. Enthusiasm and activity were not enough. God required more than that. He had commanded all men to *ask*.

The idea I want to develop from this, I repeat, is that Waugh is going to play straight with this torpid temperament and win a paradoxical victory. While fear of despair and dislocation from one's fellows might well comprise the theme of another

war novelist, Catholic or secular or what have you, I shall be trying to show in a moment that the whole theme of the *Sword of Honour* trilogy revolves around, not despair, but its opposite, presumption. It is appropriate to turn now to Powell. The object of these preliminary remarks has been to account for the high artistic and documentary yield of both these important trilogies, without their necessarily being placed in competition. The differences in thematic approach will derive from temperament. We shall see similarities and then, at a turning point, a fundamental difference so profound that logic might almost demand that one writer be adjudged the more accurate—yet we shall resist making that judgment. The key is that we have got no struggle in *The Music of Time* that will find merit derived from, or salvation inherent in, crouching back.

II

THE NAME OF the narrator and hero of *The Music of Time* is Nick Jenkins. The family seems to have connections, says an uncle, with the English captain who lost his ear in the War of Jenkins' Ear. One exasperated reviewer, whose name happened also to be Powell—Dawn Powell—said that this lineage was appropriately derived—that anyone remotely responsible for producing such a passive, inveterate listener as Nick Jenkins deserved to have his ear cut off.

Nick is a slow starter and a balancer of opposite points of view. His name is clearly not as distinctive as Crouchback's nor is he felt to belong in any certain camp as a result of it; but it may be that Powell, who is quite a good classicist, determined on the name for just as allusive a reason as Waugh. For example, Thomas Love Peacock, in his 1816 novel *Headlong Hall*, presented three main characters, who argued

a progressive, a reactionary, and a middle-of-the-road philosophy. The last figure, the non-committed, wait-and-see, balancing artist, was named Jenkison. Peacock went to elaborate lengths to show how he had derived the name from the Greek, meaning: "one who from equal measures can always produce arguments on both sides of a question . . . [so] as to keep the said question eternally pending, and the balance of the controversy perpetually in statu quo." I think this helps us fathom Powell's reason for choosing Jenkins as his hero's name.² Nick may be one who arrives late to a position, but there will have been careful reexamination by the time he does, and seldom an occasion afterwards for crouching back. It happens that in *The Kindly Ones*, the volume of *The Music of Time* that brings the sequence up to the war, there is a little impromptu enactment of the seven deadly sins by some guests in front of a tapestry at the house of a certain sinister tycoon. Nick Jenkins very unhistorically enacts Sloth. But this is a much more conventionally measurable position than Crouchback's. Nick has been dragging his feet while these weeks and months of 1938 have been crying out for people to make judgments and make commitments. Hitler is swelling up like a great toad and here are these English playing games and having their photographs taken in the posture of the seven deadly sins—it is a microcosm of what has been happening to permit German militarism to generate all that headway unopposed. The parody itself is put a stop to that night by the arrival of an officer in uniform at the house party; the date itself is set significantly just after the Munich crisis.

Powell's dance to the music of time then becomes a war dance, through its seventh, eighth, and ninth volumes. The whole work, cast for twelve volumes, moves in trilogy groups, and with the advantage of two trilogies running ahead, we can see how the

structure gets repeated in the war group—not wholly differently, as it turns out, from Waugh's own structure.

The key to the structure of *The Music of Time* lies in the fact that each trilogy works on a thesis-antithesis-synthesis basis—or as one character puts it: "Commencement—Opposition—Equilibrium You can't get away from it" I am myself putting it very schematically to say it this way. There is much intricacy in the structuring of each trilogy—I shall touch on refinements only in the case of the war volumes here. In the first trilogy Nick Jenkins leaves public school and university to test his wings and runs into *A Buyer's Market* (the name of the second volume). This "opposition" volume leads to equilibrium in the rich but temporary love affair charted in *The Acceptance World*. A new, somewhat more Proustian commencement starts the second trilogy, with Nick now associated with the aristocratic world of "family": the "opposition" book has "Restaurant" in its title now instead of "Market"—*Casanova's Chinese Restaurant*—but it is still a mart demanding a choice that will leave many entailments. It is a marriage-choice. Nick chooses and is entailed. The point of the second trilogy is that the maturing process brings about a sacrifice of individualism; where the first trilogy followed the free agent in pursuit of love, the second saw the agent bound in the entanglements of friendship, marriage, family—ultimately, to Duty with a capital D, demanding now a public manifestation as the war closes in. Nick joins up by getting his reserve commission activated.

In terms of the way they render the picture of their times, Waugh might be said to have achieved a study in breadth, and Powell one in density. Waugh saw a good deal of action. He achieves breadth by recording so many of his heterogeneous experiences. He served with commandos,

parachuted, found himself in all sorts of alien lands. Different species of fighting culminate each of his trilogy's installments: a raid at Dakar, the British disembarkation from Crete, service with the partisans in Yugoslavia. Powell saw no front-line service. It well may have been a sore point with him that he did not, for he comes from a military family. His father was a regular officer of the Welch Regiment, in which Powell also served, but only at the start of the war, for he transferred to the Intelligence Corps in which the bulk of his service was performed. Undoubtedly Powell's book is the richer for his not having gone afield. Whether there was any private chagrin or not does not matter at all—it is consonant with his nature as a novelist that he should have capitalized on the chance of writing of the war from observer's rather than participant's point of view. But even more, his whole theme bends toward the discovery of the fitness of things as they untrack in time. He might say that my categories of observer and participant are too crude in any case, and that the kind of man one chances to be supervenes over the kind of experience one is by chance exposed to. In a word, the fact that he and his protagonist remain in Great Britain during the war—there is one brief excursion to the continent, close behind the Allied armies after D-Day—simply gives him room for exfoliating his major theme. This tells us the following: what counts with the warrior is not what discoveries he makes about himself, but rather *how* he serves *where* he serves. That manner of serving alone—the *where* being secondary—is what matters and becomes ultimately responsible for the somewhat dry and philosophic titles of Powell's war volumes: *The Valley of Bones*, *The Soldier's Art*, *The Military Philosophers*.

Guy Crouchback grows exhilarated when he first steps on enemy soil, on a night re-

connaissance of a beach near Dakar. That sort of exhilaration is something numberless war novelists have reproduced, allied as it is to the overcoming of a single fear within a single man. But with this fear problem, Powell works differently. He normalizes it. He does this by seeing fear as a species of embarrassment. He has Moreland, a civilian musician, confide to Nick,

"I have an impression of acute embarrassment when bombed . . . That rather than gross physical fear—at present anyway. It's like an appalling display of bad manners one has been forced to witness. The utter failure of a party you are giving—a friend's total insensitivity about some delicate matter—suddenly realising you've lost your notecase, your passport, your job, your girl. All those things combined and greatly multiplied."

"You didn't like it the other night when the glass shattered in the bathroom window," said Mrs. Maclintick. "You were trembling like a leaf, Moreland."

"I don't pretend to be specially brave," said Moreland, put out by this comment. "Anyway, I'd just run up three flights of stairs and nearly caught it in the face. I was just trying to define the sensation one feels—don't you agree, Nick, it's a kind of embarrassment?"

And Nick answers, "Absolutely."

I suppose the two positions of Waugh and Powell could be drawn together by saying that the exhilaration Crouchback feels comes under that broader species of feelings that we rejoice in when we have out-faced embarrassment. The point is that serving as an officer through six noncombatant years on the British Isles gave Powell such chances to measure what the average war novelist does not remain concentrated on. It is the kind of thing I meant when I said that Powell's rendition was primarily one in density not breadth.

This density, in comparison to Waugh's range, is a product also of some other things that perhaps the last quoted extract helps indicate. Powell has many more people, and many more kinds of propositions, to give ear to (Jenkins' ear) than Waugh does. (In recent years, Waugh used frequently to appear in public with an ear trumpet, to advertise how unreceptive he was to massed and opinionated voices.) There are, first, more civilians in Powell. And though Waugh brings us to many foreign places, there are many more foreigners seen, slowly rather than impressionistically, in England, of all places, by Powell. In the last stages of the war he was in liaison work at the War House, and in *The Military Philosophers* gives us an inexhaustible procession of Poles, Czechs, Norwegians, Belgians, Dutch, Brazilians—all pulling infinitesimal oars of war. Powell runs the gamut of rank also. Even Alanbrooke and Montgomery are described—two men who are the exponents of two different sorts of willpower. They are not named expressly, but seen at close quarters by Nick and referred to by title: the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, the Field-Marshal in command of troops in Western Europe. Powell's feel for the enlisted man, at the other extreme, is more tangible than Waugh's. This is no fault in Waugh once we take it back to temperament again. Had he not been candid it might have been a fault. But he was very candid.

Most English gentlemen at this time believed that they had a particular aptitude for endearing themselves to the lower classes. Guy was not troubled by this illusion, but he believed he was rather liked by these particular thirty men. He did not greatly care. He liked them. He wished them well. He did well by them so far as his limited knowledge of "the ropes" allowed. He was perfectly ready, should need arise, to sacrifice

himself for them But he did not distinguish between them as human beings

The nerveless constructions here are tell-tale. Five sentences in a row begin with "He," and the apathy becomes ingrained with the reiteration. On the other hand, Guy shows enough responsiveness, and over a broad spectrum, once Waugh's aversions get room for air. The famous Waugh biases—against Americans, against the R. A. F., against the wireless, against the way the proletarian's hair grows, against dynamite-obsessed Scottish lairds and homosexually-inclined Communists (or communistically-inclined homosexuals), and the members of all branches of the Press—these biases get free play in the *Sword of Honour* trilogy and hardly have counterparts in Powell. Powell is too *interested* in the clutter that makes up the foreground for him to be a satirist.

III

ALL THESE DIFFERENCES may be temperamental and may count for a lot in the end, but they are not nearly so obvious as I have made them sound, because they derive from difference in texture. Meanwhile the trilogies of Powell and Waugh are essentially similar in structure, and memorably so. In each first volume a fairly overage lieutenant goes through his army indoctrination in a hallowed infantry regiment of the line. They end up as platoon commanders, both a little surprised that they have not been spotted for more exemplary qualities since they think they have discharged their duties in all good conscience. In the second volumes they are attached to staffs, and fairly well *detached* from men: Nick at a divisional headquarters, Guy on the staff of a commando unit. Waugh's second title, *Officers and Gentlemen*, points up this traf-

fic among equals and betters that also holds generally true for Nick Jenkins in *The Soldier's Art*. (As Waugh says of Guy at one point, "His work was solely among the officers; notoriously a deleterious form of soldiering.") In the first volumes, when faults arose, the two heroes had their large share in these; in the second (let us call them "opposition") volumes, not so; the heroes now witness horrid pettiness, infighting and rank-pulling and chicanery among supposed comrades, personal betrayal and moral devastation in the midst of which they are themselves only the most inconsequential tide-washed particles: the wrack and ruin of a whole military system seems in fact to be in process before their eyes. By the end of this Crouchback has become silent in his bed and Jenkins has come to the conclusion that "It's a tailor's war, anyway," and no more than that.

Let us backtrack just briefly before mentioning the third volumes and what they hold in store. For there are a couple of astonishing coincidences about these writers' first two installments that should be mentioned.

The first is that in each opening volume there is one main character who dominates the book and then is seen no more. Years from now any reader of Waugh, on meeting another reader, could pretty well be counted on to say, "And what did you think of Apthorpe?" Years from now, should two Powellians discuss the war books, Rowland Gwatkin's name would have to come up. These are two great, defeated, poignant comic characters.

I propose to deal with only one aspect of their personalities here. They carry away, in a sense sacrificially, the flaws of the protagonists who were their so-called friends, Gwatkin and Apthorpe were basically un-military men who had the superficial endowments of voice and figure and bearing to mislead them. They harbored great de-

sires to rise in this new flung-together army which let them into company commanders' positions in regiments like the Welch and the Royal Halberdiers. In slightly different ways, they are the vehicles for themes in Powell and Waugh that are identical and that could be expressed this way: all calculators must come to grief. Apthorpe and Gwatkin are enormous miscalculators. Apthorpe is greatly crafty and Gwatkin an apostle of honor; but as Powell will intone at a deadly moment, "Honour and Wit, fore-damned they sit." That medieval motto could be said to be the shortest complete thematic utterance that would hold true for both Powell and Waugh.

By the end of each first volume respectively, Apthorpe is dead and Gwatkin is finished as a soldier. The point I want to make is that both are ruined by the solicitations of their friends, which are carried over from civilian modes of comradeship. Guy Crouchback breaks regulations to visit Apthorpe in the hospital with whisky, and directly causes Apthorpe's death. Nick Jenkins advises Gwatkin, who is married, to make an advance on a barmaid, and in the infatuation that overcomes Gwatkin afterwards, he loses his head, forgets codewords, bungles an exercise in an alarm and forfeits his company. These two, admittedly dissimilar, catastrophes occur in part because of the too easy-going moral approaches of Guy and Nick. That is why I said that Apthorpe and Gwatkin are thrown into a sort of sacrificial role. In the army, there is too much potential disaster when the easy-going approach is taken. At others' cost, Guy and Nick learn this. Essentially, the first war volume in each case brought home the lesson that personality had to be shucked, that an integrated, monolithic military machine had to be achieved at the expense of personal quests and even of personal loyalties.

And it took about a year to learn it. This

is the second unusual coincidence. After all, these trilogies each deal with a six-years' war. Why should the first volume of each run through just about a year, and the second also cover only a single year? (Both second volumes end at precisely the same time.) The answer must be that that was the war that the English remembered—when they were going it alone, and the Germans had the initiative; when they were still a great power but taking a terrible interval to ready themselves—incapable of delivering a blow, while preparing for a blow that was never to be struck—the German invasion of Britain.

The commencement-and-opposition sequence of Powell's first two war novels made it clear that a year to assemble an army from a "Valley of Bones" was a very great reprieve. All the war songs and hymns, all the drills and maneuvers of that mostly Welsh group showed that the monolith was indeed being formed. And that was true for Waugh too—his first book was resoundingly called *Men at Arms*. The irony and letdown came with the second year—rehearsing now getting theatrical and stale. *The Soldier's Art*, though, is a less ironic title than *Officers and Gentlemen*. True to the dialectic of the *Music of Time* trilogies, an antithesis could arrive which might appear disintegrative but which still could offer value. This is where Powell begins to depart from Waugh, whose second book showed unalleviated calamity. *The Soldier's Art* comes from Browning's line in "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came": "Think first, fight afterwards—the soldier's art." Where *The Valley of Bones* has enjoined men to move and obey by instinct, not to think, *The Soldier's Art* invites them, once past the initiation, to recommence thinking. Deliberating is all that can be done in *The Soldier's Art*; the English can by no means profitably get to grips with the enemy in the second war year. But the Browning

motto about thinking first and then fighting offers assuagement in the long view.

While staleness results in this book—bare hanging on, as I have implied—the fusion of thought and action will be the synthesis discovered in the final volume, *The Military Philosophers*. That book literally rushes through its sections dealing year by year with the now stepped-up and coordinated Allied timetables. What Powell was really in position to see was the concerted but still flyweight effort of all the minor Allies, based in England, as they joined with the British and the Americans. What he is to be congratulated for is the depiction of this very fine qualitative effort, which in his pages receives its due at last, a valid corner of the larger quantitative effort of the big powers.

This last book starts off after Nick has been spotted by a general as being more fit for a liaison section in the War Office than for his office-boy duties under the preposterous Widmerpool (where he moults during *The Soldier's Art*). That a general should have made this observation and acted on it is a good instance of the sort of fusion of thought-and-action now finally to prevail as *The Military Philosophers* unfolds itself. This is the equilibrium novel. What have to be brought into balance are the two ways of arriving at military decisions—the routine, instinctive, self-suppressing way that conforms to regulations; and the individualistic, largely irregular way that involves secret dealing and the cutting of red tape. In a word, the putting to use of the two messages learned in *The Valley of Bones* and *The Soldier's Art*: fusing the army's way and the way of the independent thinker.

I shall mention only that the climax of Powell's trilogy occurs within this context. It discloses Nick's contribution—the rescue at long range of some Belgian resistance units who were in the way of being shot up

by Montgomery. Nick effects their withdrawal from Brussels to England, by working with the Belgian liaison officer—but he indulges in one irregularity, namely, going over the head of his section chief in one important particular.

That chief is Colonel Finn, newest of the *Music of Time* heroes and perhaps the most colorful to date. Finn is the greatest of the "Military Philosophers," a man who excelled on the action side in the first war, but whose one weakness now as a thinker is to abide too much by protocol. That is why he has to be bypassed by Nick at the novel's climax.

However, he has a great moment in France which shows him able to fuse the idiosyncratic with the punctilious. With Nick along to help, Colonel Finn is shepherding a group of attachés behind Montgomery's lines in France. One thing these foreign observers are not supposed to see is PLUTO—Pipe Line Under The Ocean, a secret Allied method for transporting fuel. But it so happens that Finn's small convoy of vehicles stops near some excavated ground to let the officers relieve themselves. Nick suddenly sees a mistake has been made. Something is going to have to divert these officers' attention from one part of the ground they are about to wet on.

Out of the corner of my eye, I saw the worst had happened. We had blundered on a kind of junction of Plutonic equipment. Finn must have instantaneously seen that too. He rushed towards the installation, as if unable to contain himself—perhaps no simulation—taking up his stand in such a place that it would have been doubtful manners to pass in front of him. On the way back to the cars he caught me up.

"I don't think they noticed Pluto," he whispered.

In its own little way this scene does epitomize the ability to analyze and to act, si-

multaneously—synthesizing the opposite pulls of *The Soldier's Art* and *The Valley of Bones*. "Finn must have instantaneously seen He rushed" To double the significance, let us note that Finn discharged both a military and a personal function at once—again the parallel themes of the first and second war novels. "Taking up his stand" conveys, as a phrase, both a military and a urinary connotation. One can't get around that.

It might be the first time since Gargantua that a tactical situation was saved by such a sudden copious flow. What it is emblematic of—again we go back to the notion of density—is the concentration on the little thing, which requires the confidence that the larger thing, the whole war, is being taken care of and will work out. The secret of Powell's difference from Waugh is that, over the course of the trilogy, Powell's main character has been able to feel more caught up in the immediate foreground problem and has been less prone to judge events from a rigidly private pre-formed point of view.

That is why, though the second installment of each trilogy ends on the same incident, the end results are so different that logic seems to demand a verdict from us about which author got it right. When Crouchback was cajoled back into talking at the end of *Officers and Gentlemen*, he was greeted with news of an event that collapsed his whole fatuous position as a fighter in the second war. The news was of the German invasion of Russia: 1941, "the morning of 22 June—a day of apocalypse for all the world for numberless generations, and for Guy among them, one immortal soul, a convalescent lieutenant of Halberdiers." That idea of the embattled soul is the key inclusion, as Guy acknowledges the uselessness of the issue now that "his country was led blundering into dishonour." Powell ended *The Soldier's Art*

on the same day. But here is Nick's reaction, when a colonel tells him, "Germany's invaded Russia":

An immediate, overpowering, almost mystic sense of relief took shape within me. I felt suddenly sure everything was going to be all right. This was something quite apart from even the most cursory reflection upon strategic implications involved.

As much disposed to hate Communism as Waugh—as traditional in all points as Waugh—this yet was Powell's reaction. The simplicity of the diction is conclusive—"everything was going to be all right." Powell is an even more complex writer than Waugh, overall, but these are words that fit the reaction of a man, and a soldier, among many men and soldiers, sensing a change almost mystically—and not disposed to do more than record the great relief of the sensation. Of course it is also because he was not disposed to see the whole issue in a flash as it would bear on "one immortal soul."

This reminds us that Nick's war, as the final emphasis on cooperation shows, saw niches discovered for men, and their sacrifices made and accepted, *vis-à-vis* one another. But his two years of false camaraderie were totally delusive for Guy, and when Waugh got ready to present his third volume, he said, "I shall deal with Crouchback's realization that no good comes from public causes; only private causes of the soul."

To conclude. One can see that to throw the patriot into despair is not the same thing as to throw the man of religion into despair. So Guy's fight continues in the final book but becomes entirely private. Though he continues to serve well, he is really in a position of readiness, even as a soldier, to accept what it is that he can perceive as a *spiritual* task. The motif that

dominates is the phrase, passed along to Guy by his father, "Quantitative judgments don't apply." Those who have read the book will not have been able to forget that phrase. It was even used as the title of an obituary column composed right after Waugh's death. It means that all issues must be looked at by the individual man qualitatively, that is spiritually. Mass death, massive victories, even such mass climacterics as the entry of the Communists on the Allied side, can be looked at steadily and finally disregarded. This we recognize as the standard Christian position. *Life* is the battle, not a certain *war*, and Guy in his new readiness has arrived at *The End of the Battle*. That is the American title of the last novel. But the English title *Unconditional Surrender* is more instructive.

Let me mention three things that happen in England, in Bari, and in Yugoslavia. (Breadth, range, remains in force.) Guy makes his gesture of unconditional surrender when, in England, he takes back his wife Virginia, who is pregnant with the child of the worst lout to appear in either of the war trilogies. It involves absolute loss of face for him among his friends. To blunt their protests—they *do* protest—he turns to his father's letter: "Quantitative judgments don't apply. If only one soul was saved, that is full compensation for any amount of loss of 'face.'"

Well, we can see he has "gone it alone." And he is sent in alone to work with some Yugoslavs. At confession before going across the Adriatic from Bari, at a point when he has recognized a death-wish in himself, he makes this known to the priest. "You do not accuse yourself of despair?" "No, Father; presumption. I am not fit to die."

This is an unexplained anomaly. We understand why he is ready and willing to die. For one thing, the chance is behind him, the opportunity to be unselfish that he acted

on—in giving a name to a derelict baby.

In Yugoslavia we can see why Waugh brought in presumption. Depressed beyond all limits by Tito's partisans and their mock-war and treachery, Guy is persuaded that he sees another spiritual chance offering. He becomes, in his own mind, the indispensable agent in the evacuation from Yugoslavia of one hundred eight Jews: displaced persons. On the day their flight out is arranged, he fancies himself like Moses, "leading a people out of captivity." But fog prevents that flight, and Guy's prayers for it to lift are sent up in vain.

Waugh's crucial job here has had to be to uncover smugness. If Guy in the end can wear a British army uniform but have concern only for the little qualitative pockets of life that suit his fancy, Waugh must unman him. The issue was not faced by Powell, because while Nick could lend his own qualitative support (the case of the rescued Belgians is a very similar one), there was a difference. There was no resistance by Nick, nor hatred on his part, toward the great quantitative evolutions, not even the hook-up with Russia that would bring on the Cold War itself. Just as Powell is less satiric than Waugh, so is he much less prophetic—he would never refer to the Russian alliance as "a day of apocalypse for all the world for numberless generations." But if you are not inclined to be prophetic, you are less likely to be stubbing up against the problem of presumption.

Nick is accepting, never judging on the snap of a thing, in his way pulling with others, respecting the pull made by others. This is actually a more spiritual position than Waugh's. And this because Waugh has permitted Guy to become presumptive—over-sure of what constitutes quality and how the quantitative can be overlooked. This is nothing less than guessing God's ordinations in advance. And that is the definition of presumption.

The slogan, "Quantitative judgements don't apply," is a valid spiritual slogan to live by, but runs the risk of becoming a *presumption itself* when carried out to the last intransigent breath. (If one says "Quantitative judgements don't apply" often enough, applying it ceaselessly, it becomes itself a quantitative judgment.) That is why, I believe, one hundred six Jews get saved out of Guy's entourage in Yugoslavia. Of the one hundred eight, Guy had taken a special liking to a certain young spokeswoman, Madame Kanyi, and her husband. Detecting this partiality, the partisans put the worst construction on it and assumed counterrevolutionary activities on the part of this innocent couple. Because of Guy's affection for them, they are detained from the evacuation, and eventually, shot.

Readers of Evelyn Waugh, when they reach the end of *Unconditional Surrender*, must be horrified by the fact that the Kanyis are summarily executed. Their sense of outrage will be misapplied if they reserve it for Communists. They must see first that things do not come out right at the end of anything, since presuming to know or to implement God's plan is futile. The loss of the Kanyis is best seen as forcing an abdication from the habit of anticipating "what

The historical reason Waugh probably had for choosing the name was that "Crouchback" was the nickname of Richard III. The English, in the time of Richard and in times before him, sometimes chose surnames adoptively, as from such a nickname as Richard's. But this was a sporadic practice. Surnames themselves did not come into general use in England until the time of the Tudors (the first Tudor having supplanted Richard III, and "Tudor" itself being an actual surname). Since it was the Tudor line that broke from the Roman church, Waugh is suggesting, with Crouchback, an English (and Catholic) family name antedating the start of the royal line that split from Catholicism. See L. G. Pine, *The Story of Surnames* (Rutland, Vt., 1967).

is right." Waugh and Crouchback receive no *comfort*, in the end, from their religion, though they believe in it. Meanwhile the only way to make peace with the idea of such a waste as that of the Kanyis—from the Christian point of view—would be to imagine, say, the possible conversion of one member of the firing squad that performed the execution upon them. Only something as intangible and never to be known as that.

Crouchback had made a *qualitative* judgment in singling out the Kanyis as two of one hundred eight who especially deserved to be saved. From his point of view that should have guaranteed the feasibility of their rescue. These two were lost, and with that loss, Waugh's theme was turned around. Having leapt to a conclusion, all that was left for Guy to do was to crouch back. But in that acceptance of his humiliation lies his unconditional surrender. Meanwhile the one hundred six that *were* saved count too. Powell would immediately have seen that. The quantitative *also* counts. I think Waugh must have understood that too. After all, for quality he might turn to Anthony Powell or Msgr. Ronald Knox. But for sheer quantity, who could exceed Erle Stanley Gardner?

Alongside the Greek derivation of "Jenkison" we might place another possibility that led Powell to adopt the name Jenkins. In the early years of *Punch* Douglas Jerrold created the first "snob," a reporter who was called Jenkins—a prototype of Thackeray's famous "Snobs of England" (Thackeray himself having written some of the early "Jenkins Papers" for *Punch* in the 1840's). This Jenkins was a caricature of a *Morning Post* reporter who attended receptions and noted down the comings and goings of important people in society. Undoubtedly Powell, (who was an editor for *Punch* himself for a time) knew of this Jenkins and it would not be beyond him to make some light sport of his own impeccable narrator by endowing him with that name.