

**Time's Compass: The Production of Place in *Brideshead Revisited* (Granada/ITV, 1981)**

When discussing the 1981 adaptation of *Brideshead Revisited* television historians have tended to point to two things: firstly, the long running time of the serial, which, if we discount commercial breaks, is around 11 hours. Long-form adaptations were more common in the UK 30 years ago than they are now, but even when it was first transmitted, the ratio of the novel's word length to the screen time was unusual. Reading a novel usually takes much longer than watching a film or TV adaptation of it, but one could read the whole of Waugh's novel in 11 hours. However, we also have to bear in mind that the serial was originally shown over 11 weeks: one wouldn't spend anywhere near 11 weeks reading a 300-page novel.

Secondly, there is the conspicuous opulence of the serial, not least, its lavish production design and its range of international locations, including a transatlantic liner and the country estates Tatton Park and Castle Howard – which you can see on the slide here..

The lengthy running time and opulent mise-en-scène, coupled with the drawn-out two-and-a-half year production of the serial - have been seen as symptoms of self-indulgence and an obsession with cultural prestige: a slavish devotion to Waugh's novel as source text along with a fetishization of grand properties. This view leads us to heritage criticism: the argument that *Brideshead* and several films after it reflected Margaret Thatcher's Conservative ideology and offered a fetishistic view of the upper classes and their ancestral seats. Heritage critics would say that a shot like this doesn't have a narrative function, but instead offers a pause in the plot so that viewers can gaze longingly on a grand house.

I'm going to offer a different perspective in my paper today. Of course, the company which made *Brideshead* - Granada Television – was very well aware of the importance of cultural prestige. It had originally planned to broadcast *Brideshead* in 1980, the year when the British government was due to review the company's independent television franchise and decide whether it could carry on for another ten years. A high-budget programme adapted from a novel by a respected author could show the company's commitment to both public-service programming and product that could be sold abroad. However, there is much more to the serial than this and its genesis can be traced back to the early 1970s, long before Thatcher's election as prime minister.

My paper is going to explore the vectors of time and place I mentioned at the beginning, namely the serial's extended plotting and its settings. But my focus is going to be on both the making of the serial and its style and meaning, specifically the production of place.

I'm going to talk about the production of place in *Brideshead* in two related ways: both how the way the makers of the programme constructed a rhetoric of place, AND secondly, how the protagonist Charles Ryder as a narrator and a painter articulates time through geography, offering an impression not so much of time's arrow, but of time's compass: a sense of how time is embodied in buildings and other sites and how to go to one place or another may be to imagine oneself moving backwards or forwards in time, or, indeed, both at once.

To give you an initial sense of where I'm going to take this, I'm going to start with a clip which offers a cocktail of metaphysics and vomit. It takes place in the first episode, when Charles meets Sebastian for the first time. In the novel, Charles gives only a few background details:

### **SLIDE - Metaphysics**

'It was shortly before midnight in early March; I had been entertaining the college intellectuals to mulled claret; the fire was roaring, the air of my room heavy with smoke and spice, and my mind weary with metaphysics.'

### **SLIDE – CLIP ONE METAPHYSICS AND VOMIT**

The location used here is Hertford College – to be specific - rooms that Waugh most probably lived in at Oxford. This is one of a number of examples in which an allusion to Waugh's life is placed in the *mise-en-scène*.

### **SLIDE - Motorcycle**

Other examples include a photo of Waugh in Samgrass's office and shots of Sebastian on a motorbike which resemble a photograph of Waugh on a motorbike in the 1920s. These allusions to Waugh place him at distance from the authorship of the television serial – in a sense, rather than being the author, he seems to be part of the narrative we see unfolding on screen. The metaphysical vomit scene itself adds a layer of commentary over Waugh's narrative.

### **SLIDE - Blank**

It's an example of a scene in which background dialogue and characters had to be fleshed out in order to provide a context for an incident described by Waugh. As is often the case, John Mortimer provided the raw material for this context, which was then reworked. John Mortimer's biographers both say nothing from his script survived in the finished programme, but that's simply not true. Producer Derek Granger and an ex-BBC staff writer called Martin Thompson wrote most of the script, but they often fell back on Mortimer's script for ideas, even if they had to adapt them slightly.

It was Mortimer's idea to make the evening an occasion for a paper on chance that refers to God. Some of the lines are by Mortimer, including Boy Mulcaster's 'looks like a bloody prayer meeting'. As if by coincidence, that line suggests that the philosophy paper is actually a theological one. Influenced by **Arthur Koestler's book** on Extra Sensory Perception and synchronicity, *The Roots of Coincidence*, Granger and Thompson developed Mortimer's dialogue, so that the paper implies that it may be chance or divine providence (or indeed both) which bring Charles and Sebastian together.

To my mind, the thread and the twitch upon it in Waugh's novel are more ambiguous than those in the Father Brown story 'The Queer Feet' where the metaphor came from: is the thread faith, grace or even predestination? Who or what is doing the twitching: the faithful? God? The paper in this scene raises questions about chance and order, pointing to this ambiguity from the first episode of the television version. The television *Brideshead* also uses

superimpositions to suggest threads, which may be providential, coincidental or contrived by Charles as narrator and focaliser.

### **SLIDE - Wedding**

For instance, the dissolve from Julia's wedding to Rex to the deck of the liner, pointing to possible future events or hinting at what ought to have been.

### **SLIDE – Arcadia?**

Or this dissolve, just after Sebastian has spoken about burying a pot of gold everywhere he has been happy so he can dig it later in life. The cross suggests a different future for both Sebastian and Charles and a different way of remembering the day for Charles.

### **SLIDE - Echo**

Or there's this dissolve which is accompanied by a sound bridge: Charles fires a shot, which continues to echo as the image fades to Oxford, where Sebastian will quickly fall deeper into alcoholism and despair. It implies Charles' guilt in what will happen, and links events at Brideshead with those in Oxford.

Such images represent Charles's past, while pointing to later events. They convey this temporality by linking different spaces. Of course, in the novel and the tv serial, Charles the narrator often talks of the past in terms of later events and vice versa. He describes his friendship with Sebastian like meeting someone at sea, some time before he tells us about falling in love with Julia at sea. He compares the army with a failing marriage, which we later work out he knows about only too well. The serial intensifies this slippage back and forth in time, as if time were a compass rather than an arrow, being mapped rather than narrated.

### **SLIDE - Blank**

The most important place on this map is, of course, the country estate, Brideshead Castle.

No other film or television programme has portrayed a country estate in such detail, and at such length as Granada's *Brideshead Revisited*. Crucially, one location, Castle Howard, was used for the main setting, Brideshead Castle, with the exception of a greenhouse, an orangery and Charles' and Sebastian's adjoining rooms, which were filmed at Tatton Park. The crew visited Castle Howard three times, and over 4 hours of the total 11-hour running time of the serial were filmed at Castle Howard. The serial is partly an exploration of a country estate as an entity: the interior of the house is seen in relation to the landscape and all of the ornamental structures in the grounds. On the one hand, there is a documentary inclination in this: the serial engages with the meaning of Castle Howard's landscape architecture, as well as the history of the house and the Howard family. The serial is an adaptation of Castle Howard, as well as an adaptation of Waugh's novel.

### **SLIDE- Artist-Narrator**

On the other hand, the depiction of the house is tightly integrated into the narrative. The estate is seen in all four seasons of the year: this has a pathetic function, in that the Arcadian section of the plot takes place in summer, while the harshest experiences endured by Charles

occur in autumn and winter. Charles's narrative arc as an artist is placed in relation to that of the landscape: decline is measured by the shift from summer to wintry images that reveal abrasion. Castle Howard's Temple of the Four Winds is depicted in a summery glow in episode two, but in episode 10 different light conditions and camera placements reveal the weather-beaten condition of the temple.

Essential to the television *Brideshead*'s style, then, is its engagement with a single location. It is this that makes the film's aesthetic references accessible, because the viewer can visit Castle Howard and consider the way the serial engages with its landscape architecture.

### **SLIDE – *Barry Lyndon***

In this respect, it can be contrasted with Stanley Kubrick's 1975 film, *Barry Lyndon*, which obtrusively links shots of Castle Howard to shots of Stourhead and other locations to form a single fictional setting. Indeed, Kubrick seems to parody the way films often create fictional geography from a montage of different locations.

### **SLIDE – *Losey and Atlas***

*Brideshead*, on the other hand, follows the example of Joseph Losey's 1971 film, *The Go-Between*, which broke new ground by focusing on one main country estate location. Losey used window shots to stress the aesthetic and socio-economic continuity between interior and exterior. *Brideshead* uses such shots for more poetic effects, such as here where Castle Howard's Atlas Fountain is visible behind Sebastian. Atlas is often associated with Sebastian, Charles and Julia in the television *Brideshead*: there's even another Atlas sculpture visible on the Dogana da Mar in the Venice sequence. Here, at Brideshead Castle, the fountain, with its globe held aloft by Atlas, implies pagan endurance. Indeed the neoclassical landscape architecture at Castle Howard allowed the creators of the serial to place a pagan iconography and Catholic themes in dialogue with one another. I'll come back to this, but suffice to say here that the shot suggests that Sebastian carries the fountain's mythic associations into the house. And the open doors here also confer a sense of aeration on the scene,

### **SLIDE – *Suffocation***

...which is lost when the house enters cooler seasons, as the doors are shut and Charles's relationship with Sebastian deteriorates amidst the suffocating presence of Lady Marchmain and the *mise-en-scène* of two Christmases.

The attachment to an actual country estate location places the serial at a remove from the novel.

Christopher Sykes is probably right to say that Castle Howard was an influence on Waugh's descriptions of Brideshead's architecture, but the house and landscape architecture in Evelyn Waugh's novel are pastiches,

### **SLIDE- *Penguin Cover and Brochure***

as you can see from these drawings based on Waugh's descriptions. This is the cover to a 1950s Penguin paperback copy of the novel and an illustration from Granada television's

preproduction brochure, which was prepared in 1978, before locations had been selected from a list of possible settings.

### **SLIDE – Details of Penguin Cover and Brochure**

Here they are compared with Castle Howard. The 1978 illustration was most probably also based on elements of Castle Howard's architecture, particularly the dome, but it seems to combine details such as the columns and pediment from various other possible Baroque locations, which included Blenheim Palace.

Jeffrey Heath argued convincingly that the novel's theme is the 'operation of divine grace' through 'inauthentic' architectural features. If MGM's plans to make a film of *Brideshead* in the 1940s had come to fruition, the film would probably have been shot almost entirely in the studios and lots. In his memorandum to MGM, Waugh gave considerable thought to set design, but the Hollywood set in general, with its intrinsic mixture of artifice and realism, may have seemed particularly suitable, considering how Charles Ryder's sense of what is illusion and what is real changes over the course of twenty years. Consider the description of Hollywood studio lots in *The Loved One*:

### **SLIDE – *The Loved One***

'When as a newcomer to the Megalopolitan Studios [Dennis] first toured the lots, it had strained his imagination to realize that those solid-seeming streets and squares of every period and climate were in fact plaster façades whose backs revealed the structure of bill-boardings.'

### **SLIDE - BLANK**

As you know, MGM's plans came to nothing. What about television? In 1964, the BBC asked the Waugh estate for the rights to make a single television play from the novel, but was turned down. The BBC approached the Waugh estate several times over the next 13 years, each time planning to devote more screen time to the story, finally proposing to make a 5-hour serial in 1977, the year Derek Granger arranged a deal for what was intended to be a 7-hour serial for Granada. The Waugh estate had held out this long, because it was hoping that a movie would be made from the novel. In a way, that's what it ended up with from Granada, only a very long film made for television. It's not clear why Granada rather than the BBC got to make *Brideshead*, but it seems likely that Granada's suggested initial budget of £3m was much more than the BBC could afford: this budget was partly spent on an expensive deal with Castle Howard, which allowed Granada to make the programme seem in some ways like *The Go-Between* and other recent country house movies, blending interiors and exteriors.

Had the BBC or Granada made *Brideshead* in 1964, it would have been shot with a combination of film and video, on a much lower budget and it would have looked very different.

### **SLIDE – 'In Craven Arms'**

Even in the 1970s, most period dramas on UK television usually featured interiors shot in a studio on video and exteriors shot on location on 16mm film: as for example, here, in a television play called 'In Craven Arms' on which some of *Brideshead*'s crew worked. The

juxtaposition of location and studio, and of 16mm and video led to unavoidable optical contrasts between scenes.

On the left you see an exterior shot, filmed on 16mm and on location. The alternation of light and shade give a sculpted effect to the costumes and hair, as if they are in relief. The textured bodies and soft focus create an emotive emphasis on the couple and their sexual relationship. The shallow focus also means that the image is non-perspectival, something that was virtually impossible to achieve in studio scenes recorded on video, such as the one on the right.

In this interior shot on the right, note the characteristically flat, excessive lighting and sharp focus. The actors are placed in a line receding in sharp-focused depth, so that you can see each character's expression and so that other cameras can be placed off-right for closer shots of the actors, since the studio editor would cut between during the recording.

Now this play, 'In Craven Arms' was an instalment in a 1972 and 1973 Granada anthology series called *Country Matters*, which consisted of adaptations of HE Bates and A E Coppard stories.

### **SLIDE – *Country Matters***

*Country Matters* is important for a history of the television *Brideshead* in several ways. The producer was Derek Granger and on some of the later instalments of *Country Matters*, he experimented with shooting only on 16mm and location. He persuaded his favourite production designer, Peter Phillips to come with him to dress locations for *Country Matters*. Peter Phillips's background was in theatre and his speciality was designing elaborate sets for studio television, so he was reluctant to work on locations, because he wouldn't be starting from scratch, but would have to adapt what he found at the location. However, he quickly developed enthusiasm for location work and went on to be production designer on *Brideshead*. Also on Granger's team for *Country Matters* was a director called Donald McWhinnie. McWhinnie had worked for BBC radio in the 1950s and produced the Lance Sieveking radio dramatisation of *Brideshead*. He had also directed the 1967 television version of the *Sword of Honour* trilogy. Most likely inspired by the possibilities for shooting on location, it was McWhinnie who suggested to Granger that his next project should be *Brideshead Revisited*. Granger contacted the Waugh estate in 1972, but had to wait five years before the estate said yes.

### **SLIDE - BLANK**

In its eventual length, *Brideshead* could be said to be entirely typical of 1970s period drama serials, which tended towards a long form. But its use only of film and location was unusual. Even into the early 1980s, most UK period drama serials still used a mixture of filmed locations and video-shot studio interiors. In the UK, film was mostly associated with popular contemporary genres like police series and social realism.

### **SLIDE – Arts Television**

*Brideshead* owed its look as much to Arts Television as to period drama serials. Arts programmes often led the way in adopting film for televisual purposes in the 1950s and 1960s. In the early 1960s Ken Russell's dramatised documentary films on the lives of composers and artists, for example, popularised on television the neo-romantic imagery of

landscape as inspiration, often placing the artist in a landscape location chosen for its importance in the life of the artist. Later in the decade, the arts documentary serial *Civilisation*, which also consisted solely of location filming, broke new ground by studying artworks *in situ*. *Brideshead*'s exploration of various features in a country estate owes much to *Civilisation*'s emphasis on the spatial context of the artwork. However, *Civilisation* also placed emphasis on observational fidelity, through its use of 35mm film.

### **SLIDE – 16mm Impressionist Grain**

In contrast, like most filmed drama at the time, *Brideshead* was shot on 16mm. The more visible grain of 16mm was often put to good use in social realist television drama, to produce a visual grittiness which echoed the dramatic grittiness. The graininess is apt in an entirely different sense in *Brideshead*. It adds a texture like that of a Monet painting to the programme, appropriate to the theme of a painter attempting to catch and preserve fleeting moments in his art. The programme makers heighten this effect in the blow-ups used in the end credits. The 16mm thus has more to do with Charles's point of view as an artist, than with trying to get crisp shots of the beautiful architecture.

### **SLIDE – Castle Howard shoot**

Key to the use of Castle Howard, was Derek's close working relationship with the owner of the house, George Howard, who helped Granada get the most out of Castle Howard they could. George Howard is visible in the mirror here, talking to Derek Granger. George Howard played a key role selecting suitable parts of the gardens and house for certain scenes.

### **SLIDE – Garden Hall**

The reciprocal relationship between the house and the filming is particularly relevant to this shot and the room it takes place in, the Garden Room at Brideshead, played by the Garden Hall at Castle Howard.

The room appears many times in the serial.

### **SLIDE – Shot through to garden**

Crucially, when the back door was open, the crew could shoot from the Great Hall, where Sebastian is in this shot, through the Garden Hall, and out onto garden and the Atlas Fountain. When Derek Granger and Peter Phillips first visited Castle Howard as a possible location in June 1978, Phillips announced that he wanted to achieve exactly this view out from the interior onto the exterior, just the kind of shot you would never see when TV studios rather than locations were used for interiors.

### **SLIDE – Burnt out**

The only problem was that the Garden Hall had burnt away in a wartime fire, leaving a shell, as you can see from the before and after photos here. In an unprecedented arrangement, Derek Granger arranged a deal between Granada Television and George Howard in which

Howard would restore the Garden Hall to arrange the desired view, but with a large financial contribution from Granada.

### **SLIDE - Bicknell and Kelly**

To design the interior of the restored Garden Hall, George Howard employed architect Julian Bicknell and the neo-romantic painter Felix Kelly, who had been a friend of the Howards for many years. Rather than recreate the imposing, elaborate 18<sup>th</sup> Century decoration, they designed a 20<sup>th</sup> century fantasy, which would frame trompe l'oeil fantasy landscapes in the neo-romantic style.

### **SLIDE – Brideshead Garden Hall**

Restoration work was carried out to a middle stage, where the TV crew could build temporary decor, based in part on the Bicknell and Kelly designs, but introducing an even more florid mise-en-scène.

### **SLIDE – CH Garden Hall**

You can compare this with the way Bicknell and Kelly finished off the Garden Hall when Granada had left. The murals here are by Felix Kelly himself.

### **SLIDE – Mike Stocks**

The serial's murals were neoromantic pastiches by Granada scenic painter Mike Stocks – here he is at work.

### **SLIDE – Whistler**

Stocks mixed elements from Rex Whistler's work with

### **SLIDE – Kelly**

the capriccio form that Kelly himself used to envision Castle Howard in a fantastical world. Indeed, the Kellyesque traces in Charles's paintings and in the mise-en-scène imply a reflection on the similar closeness between Kelly and the Howards and between Charles and the Flytes.

### **SLIDE - Mortimer's script**

In Mortimer's original script, there was no voiceover at all. Instead, Mortimer deployed Charles's murals at Brideshead. So every time a setting other than Brideshead appeared, such as a Paris or Morocco, the scene would start with a mural by Charles of that setting, then there would be a cut to the setting itself. The effect would have been to suggest that everything was from Charles's point of view, and that Brideshead formed the centre of his universe. In the finished programme, the murals play a different role.

### **SLIDE – 9 and 11**

Charles tries to catch moments in paint, but his naive paintings of Brideshead Castle ironically end up becoming markers of change. In a mural he paints in 1923, he



characteristically exaggerates the scene, placing Sebastian at the end of a rainbow, as if he were a pot of gold. When a milieu of Tory ‘politics and money’ has invaded Brideshead Castle in 1936, two of the invaders parody Sebastian’s posture in the mural, their left hands on their hips. This is a more subtle, but no less sacrilegious act of iconoclasm than the naked women chalked and pasted over the same mural by soldiers in 1944. Charles’s aestheticisation of Sebastian and the landscape is violated in both cases; his attempt to preserve an instant ironically provides the means for change to register itself, while he is punished for his hubristic effort at imposing his fantasy on the Flytes’ landscape.

### **SLIDE: BLANK**

What happens to Charles? The programme charts a moral decline in his character through his transformation from painter to narrator. It does so partly through the paintings and partly through landscape.

The landscapes in Waugh’s novel are often picturesque. Put simply, rather than, say, geometric shapes and open views, the picturesque landscape typically consists of rugged shapes, winding rivers and roads and – crucially – partial concealments provided by unclipped trees.

### **SLIDE - SERIAL version**

We see Waugh’s picturesque sensibility emerging as he revised the novel between its serialisation in a magazine and its publication in book form. When the house is first described in the magazine version, Charles announces that ‘at last, half a mile ahead of us, inevitable but unexpectedly splendid, prone in the sunlight, grey and gold against a screen of boscage, shone the dome and columns of an old house.’ In the book version, partial concealments are introduced to this passage, increasing the sense that the sight is a revelation: Charles describes a ‘new and secret landscape’ opening, in which the house is amid the boscage, not against it.

Compare this with the moment when the house is first shown in the television adaptation. I’m going to show a clip from that scene now.

### **CLIP**

### **SLIDE – Army picturesque**

Waugh’s picturesque composition is displaced; here Army vehicles fulfil the partial concealments effected by the boscage in the novel. Charles is often partially hidden in the landscape by the vehicles and at one point is lost by the camera. Picturesque semi-concealment is used to make an obscure figure of Charles. This distance from Charles’s image detracts from the immediacy of the voiceover and the moving score. This is an ironic picturesque: it not only distances the viewer from the protagonist-narrator, but uses camouflaged military objects rather than trees to do so.

The voiceover is intimate in its confessional tone, but not in its choice of extravagant tropes: the turning-off-the-wireless simile declares an incongruous aversion to the radio. The audience listens to this narrator on television complaining about broadcast sound. The

narrator is therefore placed at one remove from us. Furthermore, when he says ‘an immense silence followed’, the diegetic soundtrack contradicts him, with noises from lorry engines and horns threatening to drown out both him and the score. Ryder is either an unreliable narrator or solipsistic and out of place.

### **SLIDE – Lens length**

Instead of picturesque occlusion, the shots in Charles’s youth depict a summery perspicuity. For instance, there is no picturesque irony when the young Charles first sees the house. The cinematography sensitively evokes the young Charles’s feelings. His first sight of the house is depicted using a telephoto lens: distance is considerably flattened and the house seems within reach. The next shot, however, counters any sense that he has fetishised the house as an icon of landed wealth. He says he should like to meet Sebastian’s family, only to be told he can’t, as they are in London, dancing. The shorter lens for this shot makes the Castle barely visible. It is as if he has associated the house with the family: the absence of the family suddenly makes the house seem distant. After all, Charles is in need of a family - he has no mother and his father is something of a lunatic.

### **SLIDE – Conversion to the Baroque**

It is art that he finds at Brideshead first, however. Charles emphasises the estate’s formative role in his erudition: ‘It was an aesthetic education to live within those walls... This was my conversion to the Baroque.’ He says this as we see the young Charles walk into the house’s Great Hall. He gazes upwards to see the dome, at the centre of which is *The Fall of Phaeton*, a recreation of a painting that the Venetian Baroque artist, Giovanni Pellegrini, executed for the Howards. As Erwin Panofsky points out, the Italian Baroque involved reconciliation between factors that had been in conflict previously: exterior and interior, ‘neopagan humanism’ and ascetic ‘Christian spiritualism’, ‘ideal beauty and reality’. Charles reproduces these characteristics. His murals depict the estate’s ornamental buildings on the interior walls of the Garden Room (Castle Howard’s Garden Hall), introducing pagan Neo-romanticism to a Catholic house. When he paints the Temple mural, the real Sebastian is shown against his vision of Sebastian as ideal beauty: the proverbial pot of gold. The Baroque is intrinsic to the programme’s articulation of his friendship with Sebastian.

### **SLIDE - Verticality**

Later, in episode two, they look down from the Baroque dome at Bridey and the agricultural fair judges, below. This kind of vertical opposition occurs again in episode three, when they look down from the dome in Marchmain House at Julia. As Bacchants, Sebastian and Charles are placed literally and metaphorically above aristocratic mundanity. When Charles lets Sebastian down by spending time with Lady Marchmain, he forfeits this elevated position and never regains it.

### **SLIDE - Downfall**

In episode ten, a complex crane shot moves downwards towards Charles, as if to emphasise the fact that he is now earthbound. It is a descent into picturesque concealment. The Phaeton painting on the dome anticipates Charles’s hubris and fall.

### **SLIDE – Et in Arcadia**

The programme uses an Arcadian theme to chart Charles's guilt. The title of the first episode is 'Et in Arcadia Ego'. The saying 'Et in Arcadia Ego' - which has appeared in many pastoral tales and paintings - has been interpreted to mean either 'I too was in Arcadia' – spoken by a nostalgic being – or that 'I – meaning Death – am even in Arcadia'. In paintings stressing the latter meaning, the phrase often appears as a motto on a skull.

In the episode entitled 'Et in Arcadia Ego', Charles has a skull, but we do not see a motto. There seems little doubt at this point therefore that the title means 'I [Charles], too, lived in Arcadia'.

### **SLIDE – Death in Arcadia**

A single shot in the next episode suggests otherwise. Charles and Sebastian gaze across arcadia – This was filmed across a prospect in Castle Howard's estate that garden historians have interpreted as being arranged to suggest futurity: a prospect in both senses. In this shot – death, in the form of the mausoleum peeps over the trees.

### **SLIDE – Lady Marchmain and Death**

Charles then becomes more friendly with Sebastian's mother Lady Marchmain, spoiling his friendship with Sebastian. When Lady Marchmain stands admiring Charles's drawings, the motto is now visible on the skull. It is clear that Et in Arcadia Ego now means 'I [Death] am even in Arcadia'. Death is again associated with Lady Marchmain when the mausoleum appears in full during her funeral, a scene which also ends the last episode in which Charles and Sebastian are together.

### **SLIDE - Exhibition**

The effect of Charles's association with aristocracy and, in particular, Sebastian's family is only made fully clear in Episode 9 when we see a full exhibition of Charles's mid-1930s paintings of South America. Again, Mike Stocks produced some florid Kellyesque paintings. The camera circles in long takes around the room to reveal how, as the character Anthony Blanche puts it, 'charm has killed him'. The floridness of the paintings becomes a reflection of the aristocratic visitors to the gallery: slow dissolves superimpose details from the paintings over the visitors, as if they are tangled in the jungles depicted. It asserts that the English upper class's perception of the exotic is a home-grown fantasy, an unwitting self-portrait. Charles is shown dominated by his art, as one painting projects into the foreground and he seems to bend under the weight of the painting above his head.

**Here's a CLIP now from episode 10, when the consequences of Charles's behaviour really become apparent**

### **SLIDE – BLANK**

I mentioned earlier the way Charles uses his meeting Julia on a liner as a simile for his relationship with Sebastian. In fact thalassic metaphors and other references to the sea abound in the television *Brideshead*. A crisis in the family is compared to a fire deep in the hold of a

ship and in this scene Charles confesses that he was 'all at sea'. Above all, in this episode, Charles and Julia keep returning to the fountain, where Atlas is circled by Tritons. These references to the sea create a thread – not a divine one, but a profane one authored by Charles.

### **SLIDE – Julia and Charles**

With Julia, Charles attempts to regain what he has lost, but she claims to feel pressed between time past and time future. In episodes 9 and 10, we find out that Charles finished more paintings at Brideshead than we were led to believe. Indeed, we discover that he painted the mausoleum, thereby bringing death inside the house. As Julia tells Charles of her dilemma, she stands between a painting of Castle Howard's obelisk and one of the mausoleum. The obelisk marks the beginning of the Castle Howard: both the history of its construction and the start of its main approach. The mausoleum marks the end of the estate's landscape iconography. The past and future between which she stands is one painted and arranged by Charles.

The full implications of this become clear in the following scene, when Charles describes events in their day as acts in a play. The scene marks the emergence of Charles the narrator: a man who can only see things second hand and who tries to impose his fantasies on Julia's family.

### **SLIDE – End shots**

Is Charles redeemed at the end? At the end of both the novel and the television serial, Charles has converted or is being converted to Catholicism. The novel ends with someone saying that he looks unusually happy. This line appears in the television version, but not at the very end: we are still to be given one last landscape scene. He drives away from Brideshead Castle, through picturesque partial concealments. Once again we are distanced from the older Charles. It appears, though, that he can finally leave the house. However, in a surprise turn, the road takes him up again and the house suddenly appears behind him. The programme's last shot gives the precedence of finality to a bleak image of Brideshead, with Ryder's jeep splashing through a dirty puddle. It is the antithesis of the novel's upbeat ending.

### **SLIDE – shots from same point**

It is not only the house that reappears, but a way of looking at it; this is the same camera set-up seen countless times in the serial: from Charles the soldier's first sight of the house, to frequent views of it as his relationships with Sebastian and Julia collapse. Ryder's departure is yet another return. The house/framing appears as if by chance, but the familiarity of the set-up reinforces the fact that this return is the result of design. It is not the novel's Catholic thread that is asserted here. The serial certainly portrays the consolation a conversion to Catholicism may have brought Charles, the result perhaps of the operation of a thread of divine grace, but the final image shows the effects of a manmade thread. The landscape is designed to bring him back; he is the victim of the estate's picturesqueness: a worldly, aristocratic trap set to catch an arriviste and imprison him as the estate's spirit of place.