

AP English Literature and Composition  
*Brideshead* 3.3: Julia by the fountain

First, understand the monologue:

- Explore what elicits her revelation (Group 1)
- Summarize what she says (Group 2)
- Interpret what it means (Group 3)

Then, explore the literary techniques in play:

- Follow the imagery of black and white and interpret what it means
- Explore the symbolism of the fountain, mainly as given here but informed by the larger text,
- Consider Ruskin's discussion of *The Awakening Conscience* and the painting itself.

Here is a summary from The Tate Gallery, London:

*The Awakening Conscience* was conceived as the material counterpart to Hunt's *The Light of the World*. Its inspiration was a verse from Proverbs: 'As he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, so is he that singeth songs to an heavy heart'. With his typical thoroughness, Hunt hired a room at Woodbine Villa, 7 Alpha Place, St John's Wood, a 'maison de convenance', to use as the setting.

A gentleman has installed his mistress (known to be such because of her absence of a wedding ring) in a house for their meetings. As they play and sing to Thomas Moore's *Oft in the Stilly Night*, she has a sudden spiritual revelation. Rising from her lover's lap, she gazes into the sunlit garden beyond, which is reflected in the mirror behind her.

The mirror image represents the woman's lost innocence, but redemption, indicated by the ray of light in the foreground, is still possible. Intended to be 'read', the [painting](#) is full of such symbolic elements. The cat toying with the broken-winged bird under the table symbolises the woman's plight. A man's discarded glove warns that the likely fate of a cast-off mistress was prostitution. A tangled skein of yarn on the floor symbolises the web in which the girl is entrapped.

Indeed, as Ruskin wrote to the *Times* on 25 May 1854, 'the very hem of the poor girl's dress, at which the painter has laboured so closely, thread by thread, has story in it, if we think how soon its pure whiteness may be soiled with dust and rain, her outcast feet failing in the street'.

The frame, designed by Hunt, also contains various symbolic emblems; the bells and marigolds stand for warning and sorrow, the star is a sign of spiritual revelation.

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Prompt: How does Waugh use literary means to further the characterization of Julia in her monologue by the fountain? Consider one of the three offered techniques—the use of black and white imagery, the symbolism of the fountain itself, or the allusion to Hunt's *The Awakening Conscience*—to support your idea. Write a topic sentence that serves as a thesis for your 6–7 sentence paragraph. Be sure to anchor your discussion solidly in the text.