Chapter VI

Conclusion

Evelyn Waugh uses literature to hold the mirror up to the society. Societies are always structured unequally and individuals are born with differences and deprivations. British has earned the sobriquet ‘sub-continent’ because of its variety and neatly divided castes and classes. Religion and language of course divide the people. Further, such divisions are engendered by devaluing others. Especially, caste and religion have affected the social functions and indirectly, the social institutions. As a result, disenchantment, disaffection, and despondency become part of everyday life. Waugh pictures broken male personalities under the degenerate society pressures and stimulates the human individual to develop an intimate growth and adopt himself to the respective social milieu.

Evelyn Waugh utilizes history and in addition society further bolstering his advantage in his fiction. Utilizing his characters in authentic and social settings, he accomplishes a balance in the portrayal. Evelyn Waugh does not show any fixation on history, but
rather every one of the occasions in his books occurs with history as his background. Society wise, Evelyn Waugh is exactly in his depictions of the higher class and low class people. This study as, opposed to being reductive has obliged all perspectives that relate to the title of the thesis.

When the traditional hero experiences a trauma, he often suffers from pain. This is the narrative voice—the set of values and beliefs embedded in the narrative—that privileges the experience of the male hero over those of any other character. The narrative is coded as belonging exclusively to the man pained hero, and the portrayal of suffering becomes a means of establishing his intrinsic worth. However, while he enjoys supreme subjectivity, pain is also used to objectify him. In highly aesthetic images of blood, tears and brooding, the man pained hero becomes both meaning-maker and fetish object. All storytelling involves a complex process of selection. A storyteller makes choices in deciding which events are narrated and which are not, how much space or time each event or character is allotted within the narrative, which adjectives are chosen, how the lighting is set up, etc.
Man suffering is characterized by four main elements: The narrative voice centralizes the suffering of the character in question, either disregarding the experiences of other characters, or appropriating them to the man suffered heroically; The man suffered hero has agency when few other characters do, and a large part of his sufferings stems from this fact; The man suffered character’s behavior is heavily influenced by the ideals of contemporary hegemonic masculinity; the man suffered hero’s suffering is spectacular and often aesthetically pleasing.

Thus, starting from his first novel until his last novel, Waugh, being a firm believer of traditional values, established this fact that only an adherence to age old values can help a person in leading a purposeful life. Through Paul in *Decline and Fall*, Waugh showed us a degenerated modern world full of corruption, treachery and deceit. It raises a pertinent question about the ways a decent man can survive in this immoral and deceitful world, though later through Paul, the narrator offers a solution by saying that without getting into this vicious circle of treachery and by keeping himself alienated from the wrongs in the society, a person can succeed in
maintaining his innocence. This principle works in two ways—where on the one hand it saves the innocent man from getting deteriorated and helps him in attaining a purpose in his life; there on the other hand, it conveys a message to the degenerated people that they should leave their immoral and deceitful ways if they want to attain eternal bliss in their life. Otherwise, despite attaining materialistic pleasures they will always remain spiritually poor.

In *Decline and Fall*, Waugh’s concept of self-identity is seen in many instances. First of all the change of many places like that Scone college, Llanabba school, Black stone prison and Kings Thursday seems to be a loss of identity. Here Paul Pennyfeather loses social identity and even self-identity. These changes may take away Paul what should remain in this world. For Paul, life cannot be lived in any other name. Paul character is if it is created to recuperate the loss identity throughout the long journey from beginning to end.

The social preoccupations of *Decline and Fall* are accurately indicated by its title. The novel portrays an England whose established social institutions have lost both their integrity and their authority: The church has
lost its faith, the aristocracy has descended to the level of the masses and the educational system teaches nothing worth learning. The social rot is so far advanced, in fact, that even standards of common courtesy have declined to the extent that rudeness has replaced politeness as the mark of a successful person. The humorous aspects of this situation are, however, never far from Waugh's mind, and thus he has a great deal of fun arguing that the criminal classes are the only ones to have maintained their traditional values in this rapidly changing milieu. Elsewhere, the absurd behavior of those characters who are supposed to be pillars of society is generally seen as ignorant and confused rather than deliberately malicious: Many of them would behave better if they could, but this is made almost impossible by the deteriorating moral climate in which they live. The conflict between impulses towards the good and the negative conditioning of society is seen as its most evenly balanced in Paul Pennyfeather, the protagonist of *Decline and Fall*, whose individual struggles point the way to the central theme of the book.

The loss of childhood for Paul seems to have greater significance. Even as a grown up man, Paul longs for his
parents’ love and feels uncomfortable with any other in the world. Paul’s parents have died before Paul has experience with society. He is a kind of man and innocent who longs for the past comfort, and in this process he loses his identity. Even when he feels a pen in his fingers, he starts to remember all his sufferings Luna park.

Waugh’s style is somewhat loose and rambling. It is not a closely knit and well-structured writing. The reason is Waugh wants to include everything about British and its environs. Waugh finds it difficult to escape from the degenerate society, because the society has fully occupied the follies and crimes. The result is as closed mind set only aggravated by self-protective instincts. To break out of their besieged mentality and to reach out to another culture that requires the will of spirit. Finally, Paul does not get fulfillment in his journey, places like, Scone College, Llanabba School, and Kings Thursday. Only he gets suffering from these places. Paul is an innocent, although self-disciplined, meek, credulous, and fundamentally passive by contrast. Everything that happens to him, good or bad, simply happens.
In Waugh’s next novel *Vile Bodies* traces the search for identity and aim in life. The major character, Adam Penwick-Symes from different background mingles with each other as a joint force; he wants to prove his self-identity in the society. Adam, the protagonist of the novel, suffers at his younger age.

Being spiritually blank, they had no adherence to the rules of the society, and so like characters of *Vile Bodies* they will keep going round and round in circles attaining only materialistic pleasures leaving their spiritualistic dimensions behind and thus finally they’ll meet death at the traps laid by God, which will ultimately end their aimless life. Waugh not only emphasizes the value of spirit over matter, but through his novels, he also tries to show the path to attain these values.

By stressing that, people should respect their traditional values. Waugh emphatically conveys that a man cannot succeed without his roots. A large tree can only exist if it has strong roots beneath the earth. Therefore, a human being deprived of his roots. i.e. traditional values can never attain growth in his inward and outward personality. A person deprived of these
values that provides spiritualistic dimensions of his life is as aimless as driftwood in the water, because, like driftwood keeps floating in the water from one place to another without knowing its aim in the same manner modern generation is aimlessly running after one thing and another. His aimlessness is a result of his mental depravity and a lack of spiritual dimension in his life.

The characters in *Vile Bodies* manifest this aimlessness of the modern generation. Deprived of any purpose in their life, they keep running after one thing, then another without knowing what they want in life. This further results in leaving them estranged at the end as Waugh portrays Adam’s wandering alone in the desert at the end of the novel. This lack of purpose affects the young generation and the older generation differently. Devoid of any purpose a young generation finds satisfaction in doing a number of small jobs temporarily; on the other hand devoid of any aim the older generation starts running after all the materialistic things as their leitmotif by any possible means. To attain these gains, they accept unfair means and to hide this fact, they opt for hypocrisy, by portraying themselves what they were not. Further attaining materialistic pleasures
makes their life superficial as they start valuing people only as per their accumulation of such things; as a result show-off becomes the norm of the day.

Here the writer wants to stress the fact that other normal but spiritually weak people try to follow the example set by these showy people and attempts to analyse things on its demonstrative value. Thus, slowly like an infectious disease, the disease of hypocrisy and superficiality spreads from one person to another. Waugh emphasizes through his novels that the saddest part is getting entrapped into this vicious circle that leaves a man spiritually blank. As a result, he becomes alienated from his social moorings and all he can foresee is his own pleasures.

Therefore, after establishing the need of spiritual development in his first novel, in his next novel *Vile Bodies* Waugh showed the evil effects of blindly following the path of materialistic gains. In his undefined pursuits in order to gain money in any condition, Adam kept going round and round in circles failing to understand the futility of his attempts and so when he found money at the end of the novel, it became worthless by then. Thus, novel emphatically conveyed the desperate
need of modern man to identify his aim in life otherwise; despite having wealth they will always be poor and like Agatha Runcible going round and round in their life, they will also meet an untimely death or like Adam at the end they will find themselves in the middle of nowhere. The novel further establishes the importance of relationship in the life of a person, as much decay was caused to the people in Vile Bodies because of their social and spiritual alienation from the society in which they were living.

In the following novel A Handful of Dust, Waugh proves himself a matured writer. Here, Tony Last’s journey is in search for selflessness and caring soul in different places such as, Hetton, London, and the Amazon jungle. In the novel A Handful of Dust Waugh portrays the repercussions of the loss of values in the modern London society. By portraying the spiritually deprived life as led by the people of London’s aristocratic society, Waugh conveyed that despite their availing materialistic pleasures, they are doomed to failure. He satirized their immoral ways of living and conveyed that due to leading such a life, at the end they will only have A Handful of Dust as the meaningless pursuits after which they are
running can never provide them eternal bliss and happiness. Therefore, Brenda Last’s immoral relationship with the social parasite John Beaver was doomed to failure for which Brenda even left her loving and caring husband Tony Last. Despising her palatial house Hetton Abbey, she left it also but what all she got in London was a small single room flat, lacking all the amenities. Therefore, while satirizing the modern man for his aimlessness and his blind adherence to so called modernity Waugh succeeded in establishing the futility of such pursuits. But along with this, Waugh also succeeded in conveying that even merely following traditional values will not work as a man must learn the ways to cope up with the modern decadence. Tony Last despite following traditional pristine values failed to attain salvation because he closed his eyes against the changes taking place in the modern world. His blind romanticism played a vital role in his failure and thus at last he got entrapped in the blind romanticism of Mr. Todd in the forest with the books of Dickens.

Waugh’s historical situation involves construction of a new identity in the nation to which Tony has migrated and a complex relationship with the cultural
history of the nation, he has left behind. He dramatizes the pangs of alienation in London and Amazon jungle. Waugh, therefore, successfully evokes a sense of loss and nostalgia in Tony’s experience and alienation.

Aside from his previous novel in *Brideshead Revisited*, Charles Ryder struggles to adopt his new world and the story of the past in different places such as Brideshead Manor, Oxford University, Ryder family home, Venice, London, Ocean liner, North Africa. Waugh succeeded in establishing the value of faith in a life of a person. However, the novel brings out the permanence offered by catholic religion but through his writing, Waugh conveyed that irrespective of any religion, it is faith that is offered by a religion, which ultimately helps a man in attaining spiritual wealth. Therefore, Waugh warns those people who merely follow a religion without understanding its depth. He shows that blind adherence to Catholicism failed to satisfy the spiritual needs of Bridey and Lady Marchmain because they failed to understand its depth, whereas due to their adherence to faith despite not blindly following the religion Cordelia and Sebastian succeeded in attaining their goals. However, Waugh satirises those people who enter a
spiritual faith and then moves out of it as per their convenience. Along with it, he also criticizes those people who curb their most valuable desires just to attain spiritual bliss, because dissatisfied at heart they fail to find satisfaction in the religion also and kept wandering from one place to another. Waugh illustrated it with his characters Julia and Charles, who decided to become catholic in order to attain eternal bliss, but dissatisfied at heart, they failed to find happiness.

The works, *Decline and Fall*, *Vile Bodies*, *A Handful of Dust*, and *Brideshead Revisited* project the individual struggles of male characters. Every main character trusts someone, depending on that individual to act in a certain way or facilitate something particular. In each event the trustee fails the one who trusts; abandoning them in strange and frantic positions. All the four male protagonists Paul Pennyfeather, Adam Fenwick-Symes, Tony Last and Charles Ryder have suffered by the follies from the society. They trust others; Paul’s trust for Margot, Adam’s trust for Nina, Tony’s trust for Brenda and Charles trust for Julia is failing in the end. It has been the general trend of the literature that literary
giants have evoked divergent opinions from different critics. Evelyn Waugh has taken the subject of changing the paradigm of the society so different critics like Edmund Wilson, Barry Ulanov, Stephan Jay Greenblatt have highly appreciated his humanistic approach of looking at life and its multifaceted forms and therefore went to the extent of comparing him to the comic genius of the past. As he succeeded in translating his observations gathered from the day-to-day life into complex, ironic structures by amalgamate the content with form. In that way, it can be said with certitude that Evelyn Waugh has described the malaise that was affecting the different parts of the body politic of society like religion (Church), fourth estate – journalism, royalty, army for its extermination from the veins of the society. No doubt, there are certain critics who do not find favour with this perspective of Waugh and they criticize him in numerous ways. Every novelist with a purpose gets affected by certain circumstances and so decides avowedly for their removal.

Therefore, throughout his career, Evelyn Waugh emphasized the value of traditional principles, which are losing its value at a fast pace in the modern degenerated
society. Being a custodian of the old principles, he satirized any deviation from the path of virtue. His novels still provide a ray of hope to the modern deteriorated souls, as they convey the path to be followed in order to attain salvation. His ‘never say die attitude’ saved his satire from becoming misanthropic, and gave him the hope that admitting its mistake, one day the world will again follow the path of virtue. His novels provide us a hope that only rising above our ulterior motives can live a life of contentment and complacency.

Thus, it becomes clear that Evelyn Waugh believes in two golden principles of compassion and benevolence, and feels that the world could progress only by shedding the moral incongruities. In that way, the human beings will be able to transform knowledge into wisdom. This will become a beacon light for the ships – human being adrift in the vast sea of humanity. This gets strengthened by his moral vision which takes a composite picture of the entire humanity. Waugh’s works resonate with an essential optimism that celebrates humanity and human nature. His fiction is a testament to the fact that acts can help
people to understand their own experiences or the experiences of other people in the world.

Thus, Evelyn Waugh conveys his message for shunning exploitation of people to the world through his novels. He doesn’t stop with attacking the social evils in their society. Waugh also conveys better solutions to those social disparities and evils through his works. His novels made some tremendous improvements in their respective society. Waugh has successfully demonstrated that hope springs eternal in the human heart. All human beings develop relationships with others because those relationships fill particular needs. These needs may be physical, economic, psychological, or social. The loneliness is, on the one hand, real—none of the men want to be alone. The loneliness is also, though, profoundly existential and symbolic. The men do not want to be alone with themselves, and they do not want to be left behind by society. Everyone must feel that the human beings are all equal, liberal, and belong to one fraternity. It enables to respect the feeling of a man as they do on their own. It will pave the path for the peaceful life on the earth.