CONCLUSION

Evelyn Waugh is a journalist, essayist, novelist and a social critic of black humour who mixes violent scenes with laughter. He writes travel books and dairies as well. He believes that the only way to deal with this unhappy world is to laugh at it. Therefore he directed his fictions for entertainment. He is probably the most lasting satirist among British modernists. In most of his works he explores the implications of modernism, which suggests that it was not some temporary irregularity, but a serious attempt to create new ways of understanding the world and to embody them in literature. According to him modernity is the main threat to individuality which cannot exist apart from the roots of traditional morality and religious principles. Without such roots, no real personality can flourish. Waugh's distinctive talent shines throughout his works and the reader is actually carried to and lives in the atmosphere that he brings to the fore in his writings. Waugh converted to Catholic Christianity in 1930 believing that only with the truth of the Catholic faith he can save his dry soul.

Throughout this period of the great changes and growing of the technological world, the power of traditional, religious and artistic symbols produced the catastrophes of war on the one hand and the shattering of human beings on the other. Therefore, the art of this period traced the touching aspects of this crisis, anxiety, loss of faith, paralysis, despair, hopelessness, chaos, sense of meaningless and death.

Waugh examines the horrible impact of the two World Wars and the social changes which resulted from and moulded the
uncivilized and barbaric new age. He has blended the history and modernity of changing and changeless things through his works. Waugh has gone through the journey of life exploring and unfolding the past into present by bringing out the pains of modernity in his work. He believed that the English civilization has collapsed and the people have returned to primitive life therefore in Modern England there is no place for civilized man or woman. He represents an ancient nation turning a new page of history. He has frequently played the role of farceur in order to mock the decline of Western culture. In most of his works Waugh has portrayed a decadent world and mockingly tried to evoke disruptive behaviour, infidelity and self-indulgence in the form of illegal sex, drinking, drug-taking, and self-serv ing hypocrisy. He brings out a sense of modern chaos and explains its causes.

Waugh was interested in recording what he professed to be the decadence of morality, family degradation, and the trivial daily behaviour in the social upper-class where the modern world was in a state of decay and practical corruption. He criticises the English society for its secularity and consequent triviality via the depiction of the irreligious Bright Young People in *Vile Bodies* (1930). These socialites of a post-war generation are depicted as withdrawing into a cyclic routine in order to escape contemporary problems. As they engage in pleasure-seeking and escapist behaviour by committing themselves to a social route, themes of disintegration, repetition, and dissatisfaction reveal that such withdrawal does not bring relief or escape; instead, they are trapped in a trivial lifestyle that is destroying them as they try to live within it. In such a world there is clear loss of personal identity, where sexes are hardly distinguishable; people start to wear the same clothes and speak in the same voice.
Like Emile Zola, Stephen Crane, Jack London and Graham Greene, Waugh personifies his characters with the eye of the naturalist as inhumane, savage, unscrupulous, heartless, self-seeking and puny. For him life is a jungle. In his works humans are analyzed like any other beast, where the social environment, played a large part in how the narrative developed. Characters are fated to whatever station in life their heredity, surroundings, and social conditions prepare them for. They are those who prey and those who are preyed upon. The power of primitive emotions to counteract human reason was also a chronic element. Characters are subjected to various stimuli in order to test reactions. He portrays them in a way that if one reads his novels one feels as if he were watching a film.

Thus, Waugh paints the picture of his characters with the brush of realism and the stroke of authenticity vivifying the truth. He needs no magical realism infused into his writings for the entire world becomes magical through the power of his literary expertise. His greatest asset is his quality of reminiscence and his greatest strength lies in depicting the human heart with all its longings and imperfections.

The human behaviour depicted by Waugh is that of exiles, outcasts, and people with no valid landmarks or guideposts. He believes that man, by nature, is an exile and will never be self-reliant or complete on this earth. Therefore, since the beginning of the twenties Waugh started to see the collapse of moral standards and dissolution everywhere. He did not like his age, the age of the Common Man who replaced himself in the place of the gentleman. There was no order in man’s life. Therefore Waugh rejected the modern world around him and saw it as a wasteland, but his
humoristic gift helped him to reform the wilderness into a circus. He depicted all the people of the modern age as sterile, paralyzed, outcast, and uprooted. Waugh said, "An artist must be a reactionary. He has to stand out against the tenor of the age and not go flopping along; he must offer some little opposition." (Quoted by James E. Person). Consequently Waugh, like many other novelists, portrays the individual in retreat from a declined world and boring society to yearning for a past in which glory, faith and dreams in a stable society were realizable.

For Waugh, man is inherently guilty and barbaric. He believes that the cultural values and social limits which are associated with the Catholic Church are required to control this barbarism. Without such limitations, Waugh thought that society would fall down into chaos. He believes that human beings are rootless and ludicrous without religious belief. He thinks that when they are truly religious, they have a touching, pathetic, bewildered quality which makes possible a little compassion along with one’s overwhelming scorn. Therefore, religion and the real faith for Waugh are the only saviour, and the lasting shelter in such a chaotic world. He considers religion as the axis force in the individual’s life.

Waugh considers humanism without faith is not better than barbarism. He believes that the loss of faith is one of the main reasons of England’s state of decline. He considers Christian humanism is much in need for spiritual struggle, not only for order in the soul but in society as well. He believes that the faith in God and the faith in man cannot be completely separated. He believes that as long as Man is God's creature with a defined purpose, man becomes more complete, only with one thing, in his relation to God. For him life is
meaningless and unendurable without God. He finds the people, everywhere he meets, with no roots, no understanding of what life is about, no sense of the dignity of its purpose.

Waugh believed that a complete life can only be achieved with real faith and when Death is kept firmly in mind. Therefore, if Man consciously turns away from that enjoyment, he is denying the purpose of his existence. He believed that the trouble of the modern world is that there's not enough religion in it. There's nothing to stop the people doing whatever they like. Therefore, he dwelt on what he saw in the retreat of Modern Man from spiritual faith. Such a Man is active only with his daily physical lusts, without belief in life after death. For this reason, in most of his writings, Waugh says that when people believe in heaven and hell, they behave differently than when they do not believe in the eternal life after death. He believed that Man should always consider Death as a welcome friend at any time.

Though Waugh didn’t get a high literary rank in England through his life time but most critics have justified that Waugh's themes stand as refreshingly sharp scolding to the opinion of our time. Waugh rises to the status of philosopher, who searches and finds meaning everywhere. His vision comes about like fresh breath, appealing us to actually see where life appears to stop, to search for the significant among insignificant things and to look beyond and try to see what remains invisible to the physical vision. Waugh's microscopic vision does not fail to observe the degradation present in the modern society. He is a literary master who senses and sees many things going around him. For the reader everything seems to come alive, while reading Waugh's novels because he actually sees the sights and hears the various sounds in addition to touching, feeling,
and smelling the magnanimous world in all its varied colours. Waugh succeeds in exploring the complexities of human life and Modern Man and captures its texture well. To Waugh the modern world is not a composite of visible facts; it is a "bodiless harlequinade", where individual is still swamped in the mob and swept along by circumstances over which he has no control. In most of his works Waugh attacks the debased modern world of dishonesty and darkness.

In his first novel *Decline and Fall* (1928) Waugh brings out the history and destiny of a common man and mocks the behaviour of the English people, especially the upper and the middle class, their ways of life, the decline of moral values, the decline of the educational system, chaos, loss of faith and identity, and barbarism. It is an episodic and comic story of an innocent man, Paul Pennyfeather, who was expelled from Oxford after he was caught in the web of London society for indecency. He enters a world where justice, fairness, kindness are forgotten. Waugh portrays Paul as an individual who is in retreat from a decaying and boring society. He is an epitome of the modern Man; a naïve and weak character. His unawareness of the evil and hatred around him has reduced his ability to deal with it or to react against things happening to him.

The novelist makes fun of his prejudices against the English educational system, the Welsh, against well intentioned social reformers, against coloured people’s claims to culture and he ridicules the racialist gossip. He produces an atmosphere of futility and the absence of values which pervaded the English society aftermath the disaster of the First World War; a society which had lost hope and stability. Waugh found the behaviour of the upper-class students not only unsophisticated but it was savage and amoral.
In *Decline and Fall* Waugh evokes the conflict between order and chaos, where brutality and incivility are allowed to proceed uncontrolled by authority. In such a fallen world the innocent, like Paul Pennyfeather, suffer and are punished while the vicious like, the immoral Bollingers, Grimes, Philibrie, and Mrs. Margot get off scot-free.

Through the consequence of events which are loosely connected with one another Waugh tries, in a funny way, to depict Paul’s illusion about honour, gentlemanliness, education, society, love, human relations, the church, faith, the law, the prison system, and the personal identity through the constant appearance, disappearance and reappearance in another identity of the characters.

Like most of James Joyce’s characters in *Dubliners*, Paul is inactive and weak. He moves in a circular, sterile, meaningless, and fruitless movement, achieving nothing. At the end he returns, empty handed, to Scone College, from where he began again disguising himself with a moustache and assuming the identity of a distant cousin of Paul Pennyfeather. It is a circular world of non-development, presents no more than a circular pattern of bareness and meaninglessness. It is a frivolous and futile world, impossible for anyone to grow or take a step forward.

Thus the world of Evelyn Waugh, in *Decline and fall*, is the typical modern world in which the condition of life is no more than slapstick actions. In such a world people play noisily on the revolving circle at which they cannot keep a hold. It is the world of Otto Silenus’ the big wheel at Luna Park in which people merely enjoy the thrill of this kind of action on the stage of life without gaining anything or going anywhere.

In *A Handful of Dust* (1934) Waugh portrays different realistic social issues, like the boredom of life, the collapse and sterility of
marital relations, infidelity, the death of a child, the lack of faith, barbarism, and the horrible fate of a generous father. It seems that all coherence, morality, love, the sense of motherhood and what holds families together are gone and corrupted in the world he describes. Through that Waugh also reveals his bitterness and agony at his first wife’s infidelity with a friend, which left a deep wound, in his inner-self, he had never forgotten.

It is a story of the death-in-life of a civilized man, Tony Last, who drifts unresistingly to his destruction. Tony’s punishment is due to his living blindly under the plight of the English curse of being cut off from the true faith. Tony is immature, and his love for the past holds him back, turning his ancestral home, Hetton Abbey, into a jail.

Waugh strongly accused the modern civilisation of its tangible social and moral disintegration it has witnessed. In such atmosphere, Tony is not overwhelmed by savagery, only, but is exposed to a punishment more than any sins against society. In this novel Waugh portrays a realistic depiction of the conflict between declining upper-class traditions and avaricious earthly materialism in a fashionable London society, through it he tries to show the rise of a new class to which tradition meant nothing. In such a society there is clear lack of moral order. The social scene is one of dreary filthiness and heartlessness. It is also enhanced with scenes of stabbing bitterness and silly lusts through which Waugh wanted to contrast two types of barbarism, one of them is demonstrated by proto-industrialist savages while the other is inherited in the moral decay of the British society. Waugh believes that due to the carelessness of religious consciousness and clerical practices, these worlds seem to unite once again. Through that he bridges the gap between modern civilisation
and barbarism. It is a moral book, about the destruction of a simple and tedious person by his adulterous wife and other vicious and immoral people without heart or affections; through it Waugh wants to show that human life is a chaos of tendencies and passions. It is a conventional story of the failure of marriage in a fashionable society.

In this novel the clash between modernism and barbarism is very clear; they are connected together in a modern pattern. All the long-established traditional values have been destroyed. Industrial savagery and plight of humanism reflect Waugh's depressed and disillusioned view of modern life. Like Joseph Conrad's world in *Heart of Darkness* and *Lord Jim*, Waugh added other sort of barbarians at home and the civilized man's trouble among them. In such a world, Tony Last, a civilized man finds himself trapped in the Brazilian jungles only because he is literate and can read Dickens’ novels to his barbarous captor Mr. Todd. That is why Waugh mentioned, in one of his letters, that "The scheme [of *A Handful of Dust*] was a Gothic man in the hands of savages." (*Letters*103).

The adulterous Brenda Last in *A Handful of Dust* betrays not only her trusting, faithful husband Tony but the whole way of life centered on his country manor house, Hetton Abbey. She is like the other characters of the Bright Young People in *Vile Bodies*, and Prudence and her lover William Bland in *Black Mischief*. They all suffer from boredom of such a debased modern world which drives Basil Seal, in *Black Mischief*, to leave London for Africa.

In *A Handful of Dust* Waugh also makes clear how money and wealth is everything in modern life. People do whatever they believe necessary to be rich. Like Mrs. Beaver who tore down a noble home and converted it into flats for lovers to spend some time with each
other. It is a great pity that modern society does not consider other living things important when granting permission for buildings over green zones and pulling down trees. In such a world humanity is damning itself; the world is being ruined for every last possible cent. It is emotionless, ungentlemanliness and material world. Like the world in The Loved One when Dennis comes back to Aimee: "My dear girl, it’s only money that has been holding me back. Now you can keep me, there’s nothing to stop us. An American man would despise himself for living on his wife." (130). Thus Dennis’ character is a real epitome of the modern gentleman who is morally bankrupt, and his desire in life, like John Beaver in A Handful of Dust, is only to live as a sponger and to avoid being responsible for anyone else. His relationship, like most of others, binds up only with monetary concerns where love becomes a matter of financial responsibility.

In A Handful Dust Waugh considers the new barbarians, who are everywhere in this modern age, more dangerous than the old barbaric tribes. Those have evidently devoted themselves to ruin not only the remains of the old heritage of the old Western tradition whenever they still stand but the social conventions in general and the marital lives of the people in particular. Waugh asserts that "Barbarism is never finally defeated...we are all potential recruits for anarchy."(Quoted in Beaty 69).

In Brideshead Revisited (1945) Waugh goes deep to depict the ills of modern life. He focuses on themes of disillusionment, alcoholism, homo and heterosexuality, infidelity, disintegration of family relationships and the decline of faith. Waugh presents realistic accounts of the effects of social and religious pressures which exercise through the tradition of Brideshead Castle where nostalgia
and social superiority permeate the concept of the country house to embody a golden age with better values and morals of a certain class of people.

In this novel, the various characters reflect the concept of disillusionment in their lives such as their daily habits, their relationship with the people around them and their concept of marital relationship, and their love affairs. While their disillusionment with Christianity and consequent awareness of the importance of the religion is one of the most important structural elements Waugh used in this novel. It appears as the central force behind the actions of the people of the world into which the hero, Charles Ryder, is pushed. Like Waugh, Ryder deplores the decline of the Roman Catholics through the aristocratic Flyte family who once flourished on the Brideshead manor house.

In *Brideshead Revisited* Waugh exposes the disillusionment underlying the child-like behaviour of the younger generation of the socialites as he believes that their youthful behaviour is a reaction to their troubled post-war circumstances. He satirises and condemns infidelity in the English society, and asserts not to be carried away by building an imaginative world of relation and jollity and flamboyance, as some critics believe. Waugh is definitely not trying to recruit people by means of their wrong-dongs. His works are not a frank celebration of the decline and fall of the English society, nor does it suggest that their illegal and irresponsible behaviour is something to be admired and copied.

In *Brideshead Revisited* Waugh portrays what he considered to be the last days of the English old order and the death of a centuries-old tradition in a progressively modern society where we find nobody
is happy; everybody seems to have lost everyone in the end. But behind such a sad farewell, there is a hidden happy message that they deserted each other to join God. Their strong faith in religion is reborn to embrace the world of God by transcending the mundane and materialistic world. Through that and despite all Waugh’s pessimism he placed a hope of regeneration and left a light at the end of the dark tunnel of the modern world. But it is a conditional hope, which can be achieved only through going back to God; through a pure and innocent love and being faithful to Him to get His love and His Mercy. Waugh tries to make clear that man without God is less than a man. He completely believed that Man is created to worship and be happy with the love of God, a love which he expresses in service. This philosophy is one of the main religious instructions of Islam. Therefore, one can note that though depression and pain is there frequently in Waugh’s writing but it is never without a glimpse of optimism.

In Love Among the Ruins Waugh reveals his pessimistic and the horror vision of the new world. In this novella he depicts the modern life as a stage of chaos, depression, fear and death. It is an age of nihilism. As a result of the Second World War Waugh describes New Britain as a ruined world overwhelmed by chaos, sloth and boredom. In this novella Waugh depicts the conditions in prison, where criminals are treated much better and quite superior than others by the State. It seems life in such a world is difficult and disgraceful. People are hopeless and depressed; they prefer prison to freedom and death to life. Waugh sees the contemporary world as futile and anarchic hell; a world without principles. He depicts the days of the present time as filled with recklessness, madness, noisy, wrongdoing and sin.
Contrary to the world of Browning’s poem *Love among the Ruins*, in Waugh’s novella Miles Plastic’s love is associated with hatred and destruction; while in Browning’s poem the wanderer’s love symbolizes glory and happiness. The wanderer finds absolute enjoyment in such a pure love while Plastic finds absolute enjoyment in firing and destroying buildings. As a result, the continuity of absurdity, chaos, disorder, corruption and the decline of gentlemanly values are visible with a profound sadness.

In this novella Waugh extrapolates the future of the Welfare State, due to the horrible destruction caused by the two World Wars and the change that took place in England by the Labour government; which was shockingly unkind and violent. Furthermore, the loss of identity and the social life in the Welfare State was worse than death. He depicts that Western civilization is in a state of decay and destruction. England, in *Love Among the Ruins*, is not the motherland Waugh knew and loved; it is a worn out country by ruin, depression and death.

As modern life has some distinguished characteristics, loaded by the atrocities of the two World Wars, Waugh’s fictions parallel with modernist literature show this life as chaotic, gloomy and depressed. Like many artists of his age, Evelyn Waugh finds in the old past days and in the Catholic religion the safe shelter and the real authentic human values. Like T. S. Eliot, Waugh finds the paradoxical portraits the best way to express his disgust and satire of the decline of values, chaos, infidelity, betrayal, faithlessness and the disintegration of familial life in modern society. And, though many critics said that Waugh sank between fantasy of the old world and the hopelessness of his time; the fact is that Waugh put his finger on the wound to diagnose the social ills of his time and ours.
Accordingly one can conclude that Waugh completely believed that the best cure for these phenomena is the restoration of the old traditions and its authentic values. He believed without shaping the discipline of tradition and without guidance, the individual is lost and at every moment he is trying to reinvent himself. Such philosophy is clear and tangible in the life of Paul Pennyfeather, Adam Fenwick, and Tony Last the heroes of *Decline and Fall*, *Vile Bodies*, and *A Handful of Dust* who are suffering because of the lack of any traditional tools without which they cannot achieve any self-restraint. In these novels, Waugh portrays the heroes as orphans, young men thrown, without help, into a cruel world on their own to find themselves among visible symbols of the passing established order. They seem bare, immature and without psychological depth because they have no ability to analyze and understand neither themselves nor the world they are living in.

The world portrayed in Waugh's novels is lasting. It is a world of untruthfulness, hypocrisy, frivolity, horror and anarchy; a world from which all spiritual values have been eradicated; a chaotic world in which the innocent suffer instead of the guilty, like the world of *Decline and Fall*, *A Handful of Dust*, and *Love Among the Ruins*. A vacant world, like the world of Dublin city in James Joyce's *Dubliners*, in which Joyce's characters move in a vicious circle of aimlessness, boredom and futility; though they are eternally active but they achieve nothing except failure, and death because they are physically alive but spiritually dead.

Lovers in most of Waugh’s novels are cheaters and liars, like Mrs. Margot in *Decline and Fall*, Mr. John Beaver and Brenda in *A Handful of Dust*, Nina Blount in *Vile Bodies* and Dennis in *The Loved
One, Celia and Ryder, Julia and Rex in *Brideshead Revisited*. They are the real epitome of the modern lovers.

Along with Paul Pennyfeather, the protagonists of *Vile Bodies*, *A Handful of Dust*, *Scott- King’s Modern Europe*, and *Sword of Honour* all suffer because they didn’t listen to the voice of their feelings, and saying anything about the moral, and emotional implication of their experiences however urgent, painful, or startling. They leave us stranded. They are superficial, and resist all attempts to voice their psychological interiors. Unlike Virginia Woolf who expresses the inner life of her characters, Waugh always stays outside of his novels’ scenes, rarely giving us more than a glimpse of motivation.

Like the elder modern writers who preceded him, Waugh creates modern characters with old tools. His characters come out from the center of modern life’s conflict and the tension of his personal experience from which they were born. He always places them to the trial, to see how they encounter the special conditions of modernity.

As one of the distinguished farceur of the twentieth century, Waugh’s novels are based on sharp satires of disorderliness, chance events and the collapse of values and meaning in modern life. In Waugh’s eyes the struggle lies between truth, order and civilization, and their opposite, disorder and barbarism. By using the element of extravagant farce and caricature in his works, Waugh, can drive comedy and funny situations from the cruelty of tragedy. He believes that there is nothing that cannot be laughed at. For instance, in *Black Mischief* which deals with barbarism, cannibalism, colonialism and the conflict of civilization with all its terrible ills; we see how Waugh
introduce the cannibal theme and repeated it in another image when Azania’s soldiers were eating their boots. Waugh portrays Basil Seal, without knowing, partakes in a cannibalistic feast, at which his girlfriend Prudence has been cooked and eaten. Through such horrific acts of cannibalism, Waugh proves his ability of creating jokes that can offend and amuse at the same time, though for most readers, this incident has darkly weaken the hoarse laughter of the novel. But also we should not neglect that through such a cannibal feast Waugh wants to make the point at which the distinction between civilisation and barbarism is clearly confirmed by the tragedy of savagism’s triumph. In this novel Seth, the emperor, though he is the main figure of the African barbarism, but he became a victim of not only the African savagism but the British barbarism as well. Waugh honestly reveals that modernity cannot be imported because it is not a series of material objects but a state of mind.

Thus readers can note that through his travel writings and fictions like Remote People, A Handful of Dust, Black Mischief, Waugh in Abyssinia, Waugh obviously depicts the clash between modernism, barbarism and its relation to ideologies of Western colonialism and the failure of difference between a civilized self and a primitive as well. Like many other modern works, as Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness, Andre Gide’s Travels in the Congo, Graham Greene in Journey without Maps, Waugh sheds light on the plight of the colonized Africans in particular and the endless troubles of the colonizers against the people of the target countries over the globe in general.

Consequently, the different social, economic and political issues Waugh has portrayed, satirically, has made his novels modern
both in matter and manner, and gave him a distinguished rank as one of the major satirists and comic novelists of the twentieth century. Besides, his use of quick dialogue and a filmic technique of cutting rapidly from one scene to another gave his novels the chance to enter the world of Hollywood. All that makes Evelyn Waugh's works, as moral art, appeal to our unhappy age, and still maintain his reputation.

Waugh's fame has been increasing over the entire world since the eighties. His name began to reappear widely and had appealed to different scholars and critics. He is considered as a writer of standard works very suitable for the remarkable social changes that had appeared, since the twenties until now. His works have a universal and timeless appeal.