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The Age of Outrage

Scandal and Rebellion Against Literary Order

Evelyn Waugh's Artistic Outcry in *Love among the Ruins* of a Godless World

Le haro artistique d'Evelyn Waugh contre un monde impie dans *Love Among the Ruins*

Julie Morère

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En 1953, Evelyn Waugh publie *Love Among the Ruins, a Romance of the Near Future*, comédie dystopique macabre contrastant curieusement avec le sérieux de ses romans d'après-guerre. Dans cette novella, un incendiaire à demi repenté tombe sous le charme d'une ballerine barbue dans un monde entièrement soumis à un État-Providence impie et pervers qui promeut l'euthanasie au sein d'une société impitoyable et débilitante. Le positionnement de Waugh est

ambigu : il se rebelle contre ses prédécesseurs modernistes et leur rejet du lien qui unit l'homme à Dieu (« Fan-Fare », 1946), tout en questionnant les principes mêmes sur lesquels son univers littéraire est fondé. Sur les ruines de la guerre, la novella érige une Angleterre futuriste qui s'inspire de l'esthétique gréco-romaine, une ambivalence qui montre la fascination de Waugh pour les ordres architecturaux gréco-romains métonymiques de l'ordre d'un monde perdu. Dans un même temps, il fait l'autocritique de sa tendance à porter aux nues des valeurs éthiques disparues aux accents tennysonniens. La satire viole les règles du genre et frôle l'anarchie, tandis que Waugh opère des expérimentations transgénériques osées, et que l'iconotexte a recours à des jeux métapicturaux par le truchement de dessins de la main de l'auteur parodiant l'œuvre de Canova. Le regard apprivoise peu à peu le rythme imposé par l'alternance d'image et de texte, pour accéder à une morale décentrée, et mieux percevoir la dénonciation d'un monde dénué de spiritualité. La conscience tragique d'un tel fait et la maîtrise des outils satiriques donnent à la novella toute sa portée, rendant lumineuses les faiblesses et la fade réalité du monde moderne.

In 1953, Evelyn Waugh published *Love Among the Ruins, a Romance of the Near Future*, a dystopian macabre comedy curiously contrasting with the seriousness of his post-war novels. In *Love Among the Ruins*, a semi-reformed arsonist falls in love with a bearded ballerina in a world fully given over to a godless perverted Welfare State promoting euthanasia and a science-led compassionless humanity debilitating individual existence. Waugh's stance is very ambiguous, leaving the readers' expectations indignantly unfulfilled as he rebels against his Modernists predecessors' denial of the human mind's 'determining character—that of being God's creature with a defined purpose' ('Fan-Fare', 1946), but also seems to question the very principles on which his whole literary world is grounded. Over the ruins of the war, the novella builds a futuristic England which has itself receded to ancient Roman and Greek aesthetics, an ambivalence which shows Waugh's fascination for Greek architectural orders (as being metonymic of the lost order of the world), and his own self-criticism for his tendency to always look back on a bygone world closer to the ethics of a Tennysonian romance. Satire violates the rules of genre and comes close to anarchy with the author's defiant transgeneric experiments, while the iconotext resorts to metapictorial games with hand-drawn beastly parodies of Canova's artwork. Through the visual rhythm imposed by the alternation of text and image, the reader accesses a decentered morale and better perceives Waugh's denunciation of a spiritless world. Such tragic awareness gives the novella the dimension of serious art with the perfectly bridled restraints of the ironic stance, making lucent the failures and the bleak realities of the modern world.

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Texte intégral

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1Published in 1953, *Love Among the Ruins* marks Evelyn Waugh's contempt for the English politics and the times, along with a stubborn and gloomy refusal to see anything good in the world. Outraged he feels, outrageous is his plot in response. The novella, subtitled *A Romance of the Near Future*, provided a break in Evelyn Waugh's series of novels about WWII, what he called 'an hour's amusement for the still civilized' on the dust-jacket of the first edition of *Love Among the Ruins*. He chose a shorter form of writing (52 pages only) and a futuristic genre that goes out of tune in the Waugh cannon to go one step further in what he has to say and in the way he has to say it. This dystopian macabre comedy curiously contrasts with the austerity of his post-war novels, and while remaining darkly serious and indignant, it seems to contain remnants of Waugh's riotous tone in his early novels.

2*Love Among the Ruins* projects the reader forward 'into a 1984 world of totalitarianism . . . [with] Institutions which . . . deny human responsibility, debilitate individual existence . . . and promote the death-wish' (Bradbury 103–104). Miles Plastic, the main protagonist, is nearing the end of a prison term for arson. Crime is dealt with leniently by the State, and conditions in prison are so comfortable that they lead to uncontrollable recidivism. Upon release, Plastic goes to work at a State-run Euthanasia Centre overcrowded with people eagerly waiting in line to end their lives.

3Eight years after *Brideshead Revisited* which signalled that Waugh was getting deeply absorbed in Roman Catholicism in 'an attempt to trace the workings of the divine purpose in a pagan world' (warning written by Waugh for the dust-jacket of the first edition of the novel), *Love Among the Ruins* shows what the social and political consequences of WWII were: the new class structure and much detested Leftist social changes after the 'People's War' have endangered the integrity of traditional English culture and language, a statement earlier made in a famous essay entitled 'Fan-Fare' in 1946 (Waugh 1983, 300–304). Waugh feels 'genuine

anger at the savage cruelties inflicted on fellow Catholics' under the authoritarian regimes of Eastern Europe (Waugh 1983, 292), and deep hostility, bitterness and resentment to contemporary life and the horror of the new Dark Age i.e. modern life.

4 Satiric devices (structural motives, characterisation and stylistic figures) are used to voice out an outraged cry of complaint and as a means of prospection and introspection to denounce spiritual vacuity in the modern world. Genres, subgenres and modes interact and mingle in such a way that they blur the reader's expectations. The reader has to become actively involved in the act of reading to overcome the outrage he may feel when discovering the absurdities of a plot pushed to the extreme. The artistic principles and aesthetic reception defined by the author orientate the act of reading. Text and 'decorations by various eminent hands including the author's' (title page) interplay to reflect contemporary disorder, denounce the loss of artistic, spiritual, political and social order, and launch a call to order, this time ironically resorting to a fable whose excesses Waugh might have criticised in any other writer's work.

5 Waugh was torn between a fascination for innovations (whether scientific, social, artistic or literary), and an indomitable attraction towards tradition. Distancing himself from moods and modes and nevertheless reflecting upon them in his writings, dismissing Modernist standards and the explorations of the inner world that were cut from Godly purposes in the 30s, immune to the revolution that affected fiction in the 50s with the Angry Young Men's disillusion with traditional British society—even if the feeling, anger, was the same—, Waugh remained an artist of modernity: if only antithetically he embodied the spirit of his age, rebelling against his own world while assessing or scanning it all the more accurately. The novella is part of what was defined as 'late modernism' in relation to the 'phosphorescence of decay' (Miller 7) left by modernism in its wake and into postmodernism, 'late modernism' being in between: the novella questions the return of emotions after the detachment of Waugh's early novels, strongly anticipating new developments, which might make Waugh all the more modern. The conservatism of his opinions nonetheless makes his writing pertinent to all-time readers at the intersection of a generic or modal term (satire) with a period term ('late modernism'): 'Satire both expresses and spawns moral outrage' (Greenberg xiv). As Waugh explained to Julian Jebb in an interview in the *Paris Review*: 'An artist must be a reactionary. He has to stand out against the tenor of his age and not go flopping along; he must offer some little opposition'. With that purpose in mind, satire denounces the 'bumbling confusion which occurs in the absence of good sense and with the loss of traditional values' (Kernan 3). The novella becomes an aestheticised literary object that will be used as a backdrop for social satire. It seems that reading the novella, we are meant to infer that 'The modern world . . . is so unmistakably crazy, so certain to smash itself to pieces in the near future, that to attempt to understand it or come to terms with it is simply a purposeless self-corruption.' (Orwell)

6 To Waugh, socialism was one of the evils of the modern world. He gloomily wrote in his diary in November 1946: ‘The French called the occupying German army “the grey lice”. That is precisely how I regard the occupying army of English socialist government’ (Waugh 1976, 663). In *Love Among the Ruins*, hyperbole and metonymy are often used to satirise the Labour Party under Bevan and Beveridge who are caricatured by Waugh in the novella (Waugh 1953, 11). The founders of the ‘Welfare State’ want to spread euthanasia to the whole population including children, to prevent them from living in a barbaric world. As in Swift’s ‘Modest Proposal’, Waugh gives visible form to vice and madness: ‘In the New Britain we are building, there are no criminals. There are only the victims of inadequate social services’ (Waugh 1953, 10). The novella provides the reader with ‘a quarry of material for flashes of paradoxical humour’ in this ‘Grand Guignol of the future’ (Stopp 153): the law-court nearly acquits Miles for incendiarism (since the new penal system says that ‘no man could be held responsible for the consequence of his own acts’ [Waugh 1953, 8]) and bereaved relatives of the airmen he has incinerated are nearly condemned. As in Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty Four*, a deliberately impoverished form of language like Newspeak is imposed by the State (‘State be with you, Mr Plastic’, ‘State help me’ [Waugh 1953, 14, 19]), and advantages of being an orphan are underlined, rather than being the product of sane Family Life. ‘Courtship was free and easy in this epoch’ (Waugh 1953, 29) is a sentence which comments prospectively on the 60s’ permissive society in this futuristic tale published in 1953. So many absurdities and nonsensical measures translate Waugh’s refusal to understand the workings of the modern world and politics—or does he understand them too well?

7 Extreme advances in sciences are mocked and Miles’s lighter is no better than the atom bomb in its final destructive impulse. A semi-Promethean figure, he has sworn obedience to no God but makes his own law defying the State’s, erasing hierarchy or social order: he is not one who bravely steals fire from the Gods but one who fidgets with a lighter as a guarantee of the power of unlimited destruction. There is a shocking absence of that human compassion which is so much a part of the Catholic spirit as embodied by saintly Helena in Waugh’s 1950 eponymous novel (it is not, of course, Waugh’s faith which is under discussion, but his expression of it).

8 Waugh’s work is articulated around two lines of thought, one essentially classical which expresses his taste for order, balance and the steady values of humanism, the other romantic, born in the cult of a distant, strange and baroque beauty, a sort of idealised medieval aristocracy. Satiric tools are implemented by Waugh to express this contrast as he uses structural motives like the circle and counterpoint, as well as characterization.

9 A contrapuntal or circular system of order is installed within the novels and between the novels (numerous structural echoes and characters circulating from one novel to the next). The religious or political cracks denounced by the author in the real world are mended through unifying circularity and repaired continuity

but the fragile system of order thus created is permanently under threat. For example, the marmoreal beauty of Forest Lawn in *The Loved One* echoes the cover of *Love Among the Ruins*: a pictorial link is established between the novels. The novella's decadent aestheticism takes up the motives of love's failure. Taking a closer look, one can notice how the cover parodies Canova's sculpture, 'Cupid and Psyche' with the special caption 'A. Canova et E. Waugh ferunt'. Cupid's/Miles's wings are cut, symbolising the young man's frustrated love. The presence of ancient ruins seems to signal the weakening of the intellect by ephemeral pleasures.

10The characters evolve in the sterile circularity of Satellite City, waiting for death as they roam around the Dome of Discovery. They remind the reader of the satanic movement of concentric circles in Dante's *Inferno* with a hellish vision of the Dome where the ovens glow night and day. Dr Beamish runs the Euthanasia Centre, he does not 'beam' with optimism, and has turned into a serial killer with no conscience of the lives he is taking. He is nonsensically indignant when people can't find a way to die on their own and all have to come to the Dome: 'There's something in the system, Plastic. There are still rivers to drown in, trains . . . to put your head under; gas-fires in some of the huts. The country is full of the natural resources of death, but everyone has to come to us' (Waugh 1953, 22).

11The circle might be a deathly figure, but Waugh argues in favour of a system of organisation (in life and in writing), whatever it is—and the circle is one. To him, defeated order generates anarchy and purposelessness: Miles cannot escape the totalitarian orbit of Satellite City, he is an exile from the serene gardens of Mountjoy prison and has forgotten that he is a 'creature of God' 'with a defined purpose' (Waugh 1983, 302). When he finally returns to the prison he has just burnt down, it feels like 'The Modern Man was home' (Waugh 1953, 50), and a new barbaric cycle opens up.

12Satellite City is the futuristic avatar of a flunked Rome in a Socialist state where one has to fight to keep one's individuality. It is also a contrapuntal representation of London as a symbol of modern vacuity, a vampire-city that absorbs the energy of its inhabitants. They are 'pilgrims of the dusk' and go back to their huts sullenly to eat refrigerated tiny rations of food that are 'quietly putrefying' (Waugh 1953, 18). In Waugh's eyes, London was the victim of ugly architectural innovations, a 'city of lamentations' where old buildings were replaced by the creations of 'Lilliputians' and 'Yahoos' (Waugh 1983, 215), so many Swiftian echoes which situate Waugh's work in the vein of great satirists.

13Vices are usually exhibited through a character that acts immorally but Waugh's characters are much more ambiguous, even if one always perceives the acknowledgement of a moral norm which presupposes the existence of a system of values constituting the backbone of Waugh's literary world. His characters circulate and evolve from one work to the other, eluding any attempt to strictly classify them. They have to be accepted in their diversity, metamorphosis,

movement, as true embodiments of a fast changing world. Miles Plastic illustrates Waugh's attraction and repulsion for criminality in *Love Among the Ruins*: 'Ah, the criminal classes. That's rather different. They have always had a certain fascination' (Jebb). Plastic is part of the Hoopers (a character from *Brideshead Revisited* that embodies all the defects of the Common Man), but with a tinge of nostalgia for a lost world that seems to redeem his barbaric pyromania. In a way, he is just the right product of the age and the social milieu that created him, a warped paradisiacal prison shimmering under the white moon of a warm Tennysonian night. Miles is a product of the modern age, but also has something of the romantic visionary fighting against this age (an opposition which is a staple of Waugh's writing).

14 Miles Plastic soon begins a romance with Clara, a bearded ballerina met at the Euthanasia Centre. One day, she suddenly disappears, returning with a rubber jaw replacing the former beard that had made Plastic fall in love with her. Distraught, he sets his prison on fire and, uncaught, he absurdly becomes a successfully rehabilitated inmate instead of being condemned. The beard that broke the canon of pure beauty in Clara's face was a crowning feature for Miles, which shows how perverted love codes are. It is replaced by an unnatural mask which is as hideous as the smirking face given to Frank Hinsley at Whispering Glades in *The Loved One*. The Tennysonian dream was just a broken promise, there is no chivalry in Satellite City and it only seems just right that the man it created should be the one that destroys it, burning a past that is not able to rise, Phoenix-like, from its ashes.

15 The characters evolve around the name that they were given, which grants them a dominant feature. 'Clara' does not bring Miles the 'light' he expected, 'Plastic' is a modern material, something artificial but that can be moulded, the characters are literally modelled (Clara undergoes physical surgery) and literary incisions with the author's scalpel allow the reader to penetrate the dark side of Miles's mind during brief moments. Waugh acts as a distant 'narrative director', more of the characters' consciousness is exposed than in the first novels, from detachment to emotion, and once again the author resorts to Eliot's 'objective correlatives' in order to create a network of meanings and denounce the decline of the world. To Charles's fountain, Helena's cross and Crouchback's sword are opposed Joyboy's scalpel and Miles's lighter. When outrage triggers laughing or horror (or the horror of laughing at something so outrageous), the reader recovers objective judgment, freedom and independence from the hero. He can fully grasp Waugh's flammable and sexual analogy between Miles's dehumanised pyromania and world chaos: 'Miles . . . fidgeted with something small and hard which he found in his pocket. It proved to be his cigarette lighter, a most uncertain apparatus. He pressed the catch and instantly, surprisingly, there burst out a tiny flame—gemlike, hymeneal, auspicious' (Waugh 1953, 51). Hellish flames are there for a world that refuses the redemption of religion and Clara's red hair is a correlative of the fire started by Miles. He marries the bland Miss Flower and the hymen will be literally consumed by his pyromaniac madness. To Waugh, the

mad man is often the one who has privileged access to the truth: 'we're all mad, you know. . . . The sane are not worth noticing', writes Muriel Spark (Spark 55), who wrote a novel about madness the same year Waugh wrote *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (1957). This line strangely echoes *Love Among the Ruins*' topsyturvy and scary world which can be explained by Waugh's fascination for and aesthetic treatment of the ugly and the immoral ('l'exubérance pittoresque et drolatique du vice [face] à l'ennuyeuse austérité de la vertu' [Duval and Martinez 250]).

16 Clara is a dancer who wanted to become a star. Dance and art are her sole reasons for living. The Head of the Ballet insisted to have her sterilised but the Klugmann's Operation she had to go through had side effects like the beard she grew. Not only did the operation go wrong but she also got pregnant. Her sudden disappearance to get rid of her baby shows her refusal to be artistically, sentimentally and socially alienated. The note she leaves ('Miles, Going away for a bit' [Waugh 1953, 34]) is the sign of a will for freedom that neither she nor her paper sisters (Aimée Thanatogenos or Virginia Crouchback, who also write letters of that kind) will conquer. She is a parodic Christ-like figure, a Christ deprived of his beard (also an ambiguous symbol of virility for a gracious dancer). The surgery she undergoes is a pseudo-(re)birth like baby Jesus' on Christmas day, except that Christmas has turned into a play shown on TV in Satellite City ('revived and revised as a matter of historical interest' [Waugh 1953, 37]), and has lost any religious dimension while the highest feelings are engulfed in bestiality and materiality.

17 This is the case in three short books that may seem complementary to the Waugh reader, *The Loved One: An Anglo-American Tragedy*, *Scott-King's Modern Europe*, and *Love Among the Ruins*. One is an attack on American civilisation and its worshipping of corpses, the others seem to say that 'Europe mass-produces them' (Orwell). Waugh's 'warning' to sensitive readers in *The Loved One* underlines the author's willingness to write a shockingly unpolitically correct book built on 'calculated assaults on readers' sensibilities' (Patey 273) so that the reader's reaction/rebellion/indignation is undermined in anticipation: 'This is a purely fanciful tale, a little nightmare . . . The squeamish should return their copies to the library or the bookstore unread'. The reader is warned: he has to accept Waugh's universe and suspend his disbelief.

18 The reader is 'co-creator'/'co-producer' of meaning in the act of reading (Eco) as he carefully disentangles the narrative and intertextual threads, launching them into 'a new circuit of meaning' (Genette 1982, 558) which reflects the writer's internal conflicts, inner and outer disorder. The whole memory of literature is engaged and unfolds on three levels: the memory of the text, the author's and the reader's memories. Quotes, allusions, hypotexts are products or traces of a declining culture: they commemorate it, make it survive and circulate from one book to the other. However, these borrowings also underline the way modern barbarism steals from tradition and distorts it.

19The decline of our own culture is pointed out by the allusive employment of fragments from three artists of a banished age: Browning, Tennyson and Canova. The Shakesperian intertext of *The Merchant of Venice* is also resorted to when Miles explains how he barbarically burnt air pilots ‘on such a night as this’ (Waugh 1953, 30). The various references are manipulated to serve the satirical project, and to underline the pointlessness of the world, as well as ‘the desultory progress of Miles Plastic’s last melancholy attempt to achieve love among the ruins’ (Stopp 155). The name of the protagonist comes from the novel by Robert Browning ‘Love Among the Ruins’, in which the shepherd meditates on the ruins of a once prosperous civilization: ‘Where the quiet-coloured end of evening smiles,/ Miles and miles/ On the solitary pastures where our sheep/ Half-asleep/ Tinkle homeward thro’ the twilight, stray or stop/ As they crop—/ Was the site once of a city great and gay,/ (So they say)’ (Browning lines 1–8). This civilisation is now gone for it has not known how to preserve love’s values: ‘Love is best’, Browning concludes and so does Waugh.

20Satire is at work to dynamite the whole literary heritage. The reader has to face unstable writing, corrosive genres, the co-existence of contraries, and porous frontiers which transcribe Waugh’s deconstruction of a pre-lapsarian past as well as a plot anchored in the social changes of the time, and underlying it all, a sense of order ‘against which anarchy can be measured’ (Bradbury 81). The subtitle, romance, and the opening atmosphere described as ‘an old-fashioned Tennysonian night’ (Waugh 1953, 1), direct the reader’s expectations towards chivalric values, but a few lines later, peacocks have been savagely killed, marring the idyllic incipit. The peacock is a symbol of immortality and an incorruptible soul, it is the animal with one hundred eyes, the cosmic and solar embodiment of the divine spirit (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 725–726) but in Waugh’s tale, no beatitude can be expected.

21Anachronisms subvert genres: ‘romance’ is linked to the medieval era while *Love Among the Ruins* depicts an indecisive future, a futuristic city in an antique setting, questioning the status of a text in which the universe depicted is not immediately accessible nor recognisable, leading the reader towards a truth and life ethic that appear in filigree in the novella. Defamiliarising ancient aesthetics in a futuristic world, Waugh’s fiction provokes a trompe-l’œil effect. The fictitious world seems to look like the real world, but time gaps underline barbarism. Waugh’s writing is classical in the sense that narration goes on in a controlled way but the text is reflexive and underlines its pre-constructed fictional and pictorial features.

22The latitude claimed by the writer in looking for new forms of writing is also achieved through the paratext which provides reading tracks but is also a ‘threshold’, ‘a zone of transaction’ between text and off-text to offer pertinent reading (Genette 1987, 8), announcing or camouflaging the author’s literary project, through the frontispiece and illustrations by the hand of the author. The paratext seems to act as a filter to the reader’s aesthetic experience, as Waugh

recreates the world and re-appropriates it through writing (*poiesis*) and as the text's meaning is linked to the reader's 'intention' to give meaning (Thérien 72), revealing it in relation to the historical, literary and social context during which it was created and the context in which the reader is reading it, based on Jauss's 'inter-subjectivity' between text and reader (Jauss 1978, 51). The text also unchains the reader from these contexts by projecting him onto the fictional scene. Fiction cathartically frees the reader and places him in a state of aesthetic freedom and judgment (Jauss 1979, 273).

23 Jauss's notion of aesthesis designates the receptive dimension of aesthetic experience where the reader/viewer takes pleasure in renewing his world perception through a new perspective, which is how Waugh's hand-drawn ruins work: they are representative of cultural decline but also bear the energy of sheer amusement, crude vitality, raw indignation and rebellion against modernity. Waugh writes and draws to find the origin of the modern world's disease, symbolized by the caricature of a world in ruins, to retrieve a lost order, and to regenerate an agonising spirituality. The ruins are not only *memento mori* caused by the ravages of time and man, but also reminiscent of 18th-century *capricci*, architectural fantasies depicting archaeological and architectural remains in fictional combinations which epitomise Waugh's outrageous creative energy and translate his nostalgia for the Arcadian type, as well as ambivalently mock it. There's a romantic streak to these illustrations, but a warped one too, there's a need for aesthetic elevation to repress the fear of human termination, but the realistic and thanatorial realisation that this may well happen too since nothing is done to prevent it: 'The truth is we keep forgetting what ruins intrinsically are . . . [,] the imprint of our fragility. Ruins, whichever, are nothing more but ruins, the pathetically subsisting traces of moments of life cut short, individual lives, or whole civilizations' (Morel 127–128).

24 Confronted with these drawings, the eye of the reader goes back and forth, from text to drawing, and the reader can thus experiment/apply/understand the artistic principles developed by the author elsewhere (in articles, essays, novels, letters, etc.). These principles and aesthetic criteria stand erect against modern experiments that undermine the foundations of the English pictorial tradition. According to Waugh the eye is the main organ that allows man to apprehend the world and judge of the aesthetic quality of a work of art. Sight is a civilised medium as opposed to hearing, a corrupted sense that can only allow us to perceive the thunderous disorder of the world. Vision relies on specific canons: '[Classical artists] remained true to Vitruvian canons, and it is to those canons that we must return' (Waugh 1983, 218). The Roman architect Vitruvius was the first one to underline proportion based on the Golden Number in *De Architectura, Dix Livres d'architecture*. Da Vinci's Homo Vitruvianus (human proportions based on Vitruvius' canons) was another of Waugh's art 'basics'. According to him, not being familiar with architectural 'Orders' was a metaphor that was essential in understanding the world's disorder, a postulate expressed in an essential 1938 article, 'A Call to Orders' (Waugh 1983, 215–218). The novelist argues in favour of

balanced proportions inspired from antique values. But his drawings are parodic copies and collages from old masters' art works, which show that there once was a superior world to the one depicted here. Even if the frontispiece displays no traditional Doric, Ionic or Corinthian columns and the pediment is ornamented with fanciful baroque decorations, Waugh's artistic discipline and principles reflect the novelist's commitment in his combat against modern barbarism. Even in parody, measure, harmony and balance are preserved in order to renew with tradition.

25The novella's drawings are the perfect illustration of Waugh's artistic stance. They appear and disappear as the pages are turned, and convey a particular cadenza to the eye movement, de-centring the message and morale of the novella. Satire, as a way of prospection and introspection, appears in the gap between the classical feature of the illustrations and the futuristic temporality of the novella. Waugh retains the purity of Canova's form and rounded harmony of body lines, the verticality of ruins and columns, the sinuosity of a vine's foot taking root at the bottom of the page, but the artistic subject is denatured and looks like the 'difference game' that can be found in some newspapers and in which the reader's eye has to bear out the anomalies that distinguishes the copy from the original—the 'hypo-icon' (Canova's) from the 'hyper-icon' (Waugh's) (Louvel 155).

26When reading the novella, one has to acknowledge the graphic quality of Waugh's 'iconotext' (Louvel 15) combined with verbal images in the text, mental images in the reader's mind, or dreamed ones (depending on each reader's culture and experience). In *Love Among the Ruins*, the profusion of literary and artistic allusions as well as the abundance of historical and religious references ironically counterpoint the idea of a decadent culture and the destruction of literary tradition. The paintings that Clara's mother left her are the mere fragments of a bygone artistic age unapproved by the Ministry of Art. One of them could have been a Pre-Raphaelite painting by Edward Burne-Jones because it bears the same title as the novella, and because Waugh was fuelled with admiration for Pre-Raphaelite works which embodied a world wiped out of Satellite City and the modern age.

27Textual 'transpicturality' underlines the relationship between two semiotic systems, as Waugh subordinates the image to the word to denounce barbarism, whether structurally or emblematically. The image is part of 'the archeology of memory' (Louvel 181) and obsessive images recur, as if they came before language, a primitive sort of thinking, triggering reverie and the 'creative horizon' of the novella (Louvel 19-29). In this work, the image is a source of textual creation as well as a cause of textual interruption in some kind of *arrêt sur image*, a frozen image which comes to life as we flip through the pages, and which creates an infinite dialogue between the picture and the word. The reader has to deal with the 'co-presence' (Louvel 156) of image and text, their simultaneity, tensions and dynamic juxtaposition: 'the novels are organic wholes, analyzable but indivisible' (Davis 336). At the heart of the text, the reader's sensibility is awakened by the

significant details that the interaction between text and image underline, as if the image fulfilled a didactic function in attracting the reader's attention on the very aesthetic experience he is having.

28A line of characters who can't get euthanised can be seen on a double page in 'Exiles from Welfare' (Waugh 1953, 16-17) with a sign reading 'Closed during strike' that underlines one of the malfunctioning symptoms of modern society according to Waugh. This illustration, set in the offices of the Department of Euthanasia where Miles is employed, contains a note at the bottom in Latin indicating that it comes from a work of Canova as engraved by Henry Moses and redrawn by Waugh. This is from the drawing in the Moses-Canova collection entitled 'Socrates Sending Away His Family Before Drinking the Poison'. It is the only drawing that is not perfectly synchronised with the text as it appears before any mention is made of the Euthanasia Centre. Taking the reader by surprise, it is all the more dreary and destabilising. The title of the illustration 'Tidings of Comfort and Joy' (Waugh 1953, 36, based on Canova's 'Annunciation') represents the profile of an angel and Paradise and antithetically translates the deep despair felt by Miles when he discovers Clara's new face. Clara sacrifices everything to dancing. Her corrupted femininity shows how contaminated love is by the world's disorder. Unhappy love affairs kill life: Clara aborts on Christmas day and the illustration 'Experimental Surgery' (Waugh 1953, 39, based on Moses-Canova's 'The Death of Socrates') represents a surgeon who is victoriously brandishing the young woman's beard like a scalp as she is lying down on the operation table. High and low Camp aesthetics theatrically alternate in these drawings, verging on the carnivalesque and the incongruous. On one of the last drawings, Parsnip's skeletal body is ready to embark on its last journey to meet his partner Pimpernell in limbo ('Parsonip ad Portas' [Waugh 1953, 45], based on Canova's 'Charity'). Waugh's work is peppered with allusions to the socialist writers Auden and Isherwood. Parsnip is holding a book entitled *Newest Writing*, a superlative used to underline the guilt of those who contributed to cause the ruin of English literature. The remaining Waugh drawings are untitled but taken from the Moses-Canova 'Venus Dancing with the Graces' with beards added, where appropriate, by Waugh.

29In the end, it is the frustration of a romantic ideal or a desire for creation that seems to lead to barbarism: 'almost all crime is due to the repressed desire for aesthetic expression' (Waugh 1928, 142). Miles writes his story in letters of fire, Pinfold will next take up his pen to exorcise madness. The truth comes out of Waugh's textual and pictorial depiction of the world's absurdity. Each character can only be saved by himself and it is this core of tragic awareness which gives to Waugh's comic vision the dimension of serious art.

30The paradox, in fact, is that when Waugh is being comical, he makes luminous the failures of his age, and confronts us vividly with desolating realities. The themes that circulate in the work show how insignificant cracks can lead to chaos. Hatred for the other (the loved one) leads to hatred of the humanity, family and

the loss of Godly love. Waugh pushes the consequences of an uncontrollable thirst for action to the extreme in *Love Among the Ruins*. He unveils the negative effects of frustrations, powerlessness and uselessness. A local phenomenon (Miles's failure to adapt) has an impact on the whole structure and destabilizes satire's project. The novella is the reflection of a purposeless country which is wasting its energy, with no bearings, rejecting traditions. But to survive, society has to go deep down into the roots of the past (or of the page), and not live in the enclosed wall of a city, a prison or an island.

Fascinated as he is by the energy of soulless rascals, the reader—outraged but amused, has to be convinced that regeneration will come through art, which, according to Waugh, is the first step towards religious inspiration and self-quest. Satiric devices are used to represent the hardships of such a quest, be it intellectual, literary, spiritual, love-oriented, etc. As we analyse and criss-cross Waugh's articles, essays, reviews, novels and novellas, we find echoes with the world we live in. In the end, it seems necessary to find a personal order system of our own because, after all, 'We are all potential recruits for anarchy' (Waugh 1939, 279).

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