

Chapter I: Representation of Interwar British Aristocratic values in Waugh's *vile Bodies*

Evelyn Waugh's *Vile Bodies* (1930), set in England between the wars, the novel examines the frenetic but empty lives of the Bright Young Things, young people who indulged in constant party-going, heavy drinking, and promiscuous sex. At the novel's end, the realities of the world intrude, with Adam Fenwick-Symes, the protagonist, serving on a battlefield at the onset of another world War, i.e. World War II. Evelyn Waugh's acidly funny satire reveals the darkness and vulnerability beneath the sparkling surface of the high life. In the years following the First World War a new generation emerges, wistful and vulnerable beneath the glitter. The Bright Young Things of twenties' Mayfair, with their paradoxical mix of innocence and sophistication, exercise their inventive minds and vile bodies in every kind of capricious escapade - whether promiscuity, dancing, cocktail parties or sports cars. In a quest for treasure, a favorite party occupation, a vivid assortment of characters, among them the struggling writer Adam Fenwick-Symes and the glamorous, aristocratic Nina Blount, hunt fast and furiously for ever greater sensations and the fulfillment of unconscious desires is the true representative of contemporary British aristocrat.

The Inter-war England of the twenties and thirties is the setting of Evelyn Waugh's novel mostly known for his highly satirical fiction, published right in the middle of the time-period between the Great Wars. Because of the historical events that occupied England at that time, much of British Literature of the late 1920's and early 1930's was concerned with the Modernist movement, which was occupied with the idea of individualism of the young generation. Through the use of prominent and yet highly satirical characters, Waugh strives to criticize his Modernist generation for its unsuccessful movement into Modernism, both on the individual and political/institutional level. He does so by defining his type-characters as

ignorant, self-centered and hypocritical in their disastrous movement toward individualism. Britain, in the late 1920s and early 1930s, was placed on the time line between the great World Wars. Thus, the novel's placement in the history shifts its focus not only toward the emergence of the World War II but also on the depressed postwar economy of Britain at the time. Some of the most prominent ideas evolving during this period of time were embrasive of the idea of change in areas such as religion, science, art, social rules, literature and economic and political conditions—changes that most often led to a feeling of “loss of community”. Because of the nature and the ongoing changes during this period the idea of modernism also played a major role in British community.

Vile Bodies is the story of Britain's “Bright Young Things,” the young people who rose to the top of the social scene in the period between the two Wars. In fact, Waugh even predicted WW II, since the novel ends up being told from one of its battlefields. There are lots of members of the “Things” introduced in his story; trying to figure out the main characters might have difficulties until moving further into the book. Reader eventually settles on Adam Symes as the person of interest. The protagonist Adam, a young writer (one wants to be), who has just finished his first novel (which he was delivering to his publisher), for which has been paid a good advance. Upon getting off the boat from France, Adam encounters a custom officer who confiscates most of his books and then burns his manuscript on his due to its supposed indecency. Adam meets with his publisher and concludes that he will have to write a novel every month for a year to meet his newfound debt, and that he will not be able to marry the lovely angel Nina Blount as planned. Throughout the rest of the book, Adam resurfaces on and off, always suddenly falling into some small fortune, telling Nina the wedding is back on, and then losing everything and cancelling the wedding again. The best of these episodes surrounds Adam's brief discussion

as a gossip writer named Mr. Chatterbox, and he writes a weekly column about the "bright young things" of society and all their crazy night lives. He gets himself involved into the circle of Bright Young Things and goes to party after party with them, trying to tap into some of their members who had money which he badly needed. After a series of meetings with his fellow members of the group, he eventually takes a job with a newspaper as "Mr. Chatterbox," the local gossip columnist. There's plenty of material that he can use as a result of his party-going, but is soon banned from using the names of most of the prominent members. He then decides to make up all the gossip he needs to fill the space available. Much of the book is absolutely hilarious, though not in a knee-slapping way; it is more of the typical British dry humor that we have become accustomed.

He soon gets bored and just begins inventing important people, or hyping restaurants and clubs that are not nice at all and thus tricking everyone else into flocking there. He is promptly fired, of course, but not because his bosses care that he is making things up (they seem to expect this) but because he writes that someone is wearing a bottle-green bowler hat and no one could conceive of such nonsense. So he is fired and the wedding is off, at least until the next escapade. While predictable, this manages to be very funny for the most part and keeps the novel humming along. Adam encounters many of the odd characters from the introduction as he goes along, but they never seem very important, or interesting, and are gone before long. The novel concludes with a surprise flash-forward to Adam in the midst of "the biggest battlefield in the history of the world" wherein he reads a letter from Nina, now happily married to someone else and very much still flighty and out-of-touch. Now in a warzone, the silliness of all the preceding chapters is thrown into sharp contrast and here, but really only here, the irony is deliciously sharp. Waugh writes that the book is set in "the near future, when existing social tendencies have become more marked" - all of which

makes this final chapter, in the biggest battlefield in the history of the world. Waugh's second novel, *Vile Bodies* is a rather bleak comic satire on the "Bright Young Things" of the 1920s and 1930s. It is a witty series of anecdotes, often rather disjointed. The title is from the funeral service and the style mimics Eliot and modernism. The pace is breathless and there is a line in a Disney song which runs "busy going nowhere". Indeed there is an inscription from Carroll at the beginning. The whole story revolves around Adam Fenwick-Symes and his chaotic attempts to marry Nina Blount; or to be more precise, to get enough money to marry Nina. Most of the book follows a series of parties and happenings in the tradition of the real life Waugh is exposing.

The aristocracy was a social class that a particular social order considered the highest of that society. Specifically, in many states, the aristocracy included the upper class of people (aristocrats) who typically possessed a hereditary rank and specifically titles. In some societies—such as Ancient Greece, Rome, and India—aristocratic status could derive from membership of a military caste, although it has also been very common for aristocrats to belong to priestly dynasties in lieu of this, as is the case in polities all over the continent of Africa. Aristocratic status can involve feudal or legal privileges. They are usually below only the monarch of a country or nations in its social hierarchy. In contemporary European societies, especially in London, the aristocracy has often stated with the nobility, a specific class that arose in the middle ages, but the term "aristocracy" is sometimes also applied to other elites. Nobility finally created the rank in humanity practices in all the levels and position of the citizen. Nobility in British had traditionally represented the highest attainable stratum of society below the level of royalty, and is a social eminence usually based on heredity and, most common nowadays on distinguished public service.

Vile Bodies opens grandly on a ship in a storm, and bounces around from character to character - Father Rothschild, bearing someone else's suitcase containing a false beard, Evangelical Mrs. Ape and her seven children (named Charity, Fortitude, Prudence, Divine Discontent etc.) who sing hymns and wear wings, Prime Minister Outrage (only in office a week) and many others, all of whom seem bursting with potential for scandalous, lovely satirical. Yet while they reappear throughout the book in various little episodes, never feel sharp or nearly as clever as they were going to be in imagination. *Vile Bodies* is a presentation of erudite group of social periphery who favors a bohemian life style. About those who like the finer things in life and indulge themselves in love of drinking, dancing and outlandish behavior much to the joy of the press who like to follow us around documenting their frivolous and moderately hedonistic acts. They are also frightfully upper class and a tiny bit prone to navel gazing but some of them are quite arty. They can also be a little bit flaky not flabby and little bit emotionally sterile. Sometimes they talk like the sea wanderers as if they were transposed to 1920s London's aristocratic society pretending to be unknown with the social circumstances . Drugs, alcohol, sex are the subject matter which are the symbolic representation of so called aristocratic society and here the novel is full of it. Hypocritical behavior of Agatha Runcible throughout the novel, mentality of the protagonist Adam Fenwick-Symes, adventures with Miles Malpractice all represents the materialistic aristocratic norms of the Bright Young People in corrupted 'modern' society.

Vile Bodies is a combination of series of meetings with the fellow members of the group, which is quite planned schedule of the high class people which is exactly depicted, which manifests the fear caused by the effect of great world war. There is plenty of material that can be used as a means of proving this thesis, making up all the gossip on much of the book is absolutely hilarious, though not in a knee-slapping way; it is more of the typical

British dry humor that we have become accustomed to hearing. You will have a great time following the adventures of Adam and his various love affairs in this book perfectly resembles the so called aristocracy of contemporary British society.

Vile Bodies has disturbed readers and critics alike since its publication. Numerous critics have examined *Vile Bodies* as a stunning satire on modernism and its values. The satirist of this study is deemed to have portrayed what happens to a society that disregards the metaphysical coordinates which had once given it a sense of purpose. Less conventionally, it is McCartney's (*Evelyn Waugh and The Modernist Tradition 1987*) view that although Evelyn Waugh flaunted his disdains of modernism he delighted in the formal liberation it offered. In particular, McCartney urges recognition of Waugh's 'playful handling of Nietzschean and Bergsonian themes, his ironic treatment of Bauhaus and Futurist theories, and his habitual appropriation of cinematic techniques.

James Halls "The Other Post War Rebellion: Evelyn Waugh 25 Years After" English Literary history, admits Waugh is almost certainly the best British novelist of the depression decade, one of two or three who are read at all. He may be merely an entertainer with a style, but comedy is usually serious, however much some analysis may burlesque its kind of seriousness. Waugh's novels have evocative power, and my friends' embarrassment suggests the presence of something they both like and prefer not to take to themselves.

Naomi Milthrope, *Evelyn Waugh's Satire* further says, like much of what Waugh wrote, this statement is a sophisticated satirical performance that seeks to produce the very feeling it denies the twentieth century is capable of: shame. Waugh's use of this word recalls the unforgettable entry of the feeling (or its signifier) sixteen years earlier, in the second chapter of 1930's *Vile Bodies*.

Jonathan Flatley, *Effective Mapping: Melancholia and The Politics of Modernism* has suggested of modernism that its attempts to represent the experiences of modernity have done so by “being especially attentive to the affective as distinct from the cognitive or the corporeal for example components of modern experience behind the extraordinary level of aesthetic experimentation that we sometimes call modernism” we can see the desire to find a way to map out and get a grasp on the new affective terrain of modernity.

Aldous Huxley “Jesting Pilate” sounds like Orwell, with whom he has more in common than first appears, Waugh denounces the deterioration of the English way of life and of English civilization, though he does so exclusively from a conservative point of view and is mainly concerned with the decline of the upper classes. His tone is also very different from that of Orwell’s mostly humorless criticism. As he has already suggested in his essay on Firbank, Waugh owes much to the latter as a satirist, he not only imitates his audacity and his detachment from the cruelty of life, he exploits brilliantly the form of dialogue initiated by Firbank and makes it the main instrument of his satire. Waugh himself wrote that satire could only flourish in a stable society, “It presupposes homogeneous moral standards – the early Roman Empire and eighteenth-century Europe.” The world he portrays is indeed without foundation, “a polished floor that revolves quickly” and from which people keep getting flung off. The African jungle is his favorite image to describe modern society, in his eyes a treacherous playground for savages and fools.

Evelyn Waugh, quoted by Frederick Stopp in “Evelyn Waugh. *Portrait of an Artist*”, states Adam is an innocent who becomes a victim of his own helplessness and of other people’s stupidity and callousness. But he is not a mere shadow of whom the author is slightly contemptuous; rather, he is a slightly pathetic figure, a melancholy and incompetent young

man. Moreover, he not only belongs to the fashionable set which the author satirizes yet at bottom sympathizes with, he is also the embodiment of that mixture of irresponsibility and anxiety which deters the people of his generation from action. He longs to marry Nina and believes that marriage must last, but he himself creates the obstacles to his marriage. He enjoys roaming about with the Bright Young Things and at the same time longs to escape from their inhuman world.

“Adam, darling, what’s the matter?” “I don’t know. ... Nina, do you ever feel that things simply can’t go on much longer?” “What do you mean by things – us or everything?” “Everything. ‘Later he said: ‘I’d give anything in the world for something different.’ Different from me or different from everything?’ ‘Different from everything. Only I’ve got nothing ... what’s the good of talking?’” (*Vile Bodies*32)

The only way is to go on attending more parties: “Oh, Nina, what a lot of parties.’ (... Masked parties, Savage parties, Victorian parties, Greek parties. Wild West parties, Russian parties. Circus parties, parties where one had to dress as somebody else, almost naked parties in St. John’s Wood, parties in flats and studios and houses and ships and hotels and night clubs, in windmills and swimming-baths, tea parties at school where one ate muffins and meringues and tinned crab, parties at Oxford where one drank brown sherry and smoked Turkish cigarettes, dull dances in London and comic dances in Scotland and disgusting dances in Paris – all that succession and repetition of massed humanity.”(*Vile Bodies*42) This well-known passage is an eloquent comment on the feelings of the young about their endless search for pleasure. It expresses a resigned acceptance of things as they are as well as self-disgust at the acceptance and a hopeless conviction that nothing will change. The experiences of the Bright Young Things are either “sick-making” or “too shaming,” and their judgment

on everything is “too bogus.” But life sometimes takes them at their own word and proves crueler than they had expected. Flossie Duncan swings on a chandelier and kills herself. Agatha Runcible, irresponsible to the last and drunk with brandy and excitement, gets as spare-driver into a racing-car and crashes. Her nightmares convey a fairly realistic vision of the life of the Bright Young Things. The social periphery what the character presents vividly portrays the contemporary British society.

New historicism is a form of literary theory whose goal is to understand intellectual history through literature, and literature through its cultural context, which follows the 1950s field of history of ideas and refers to itself as a form of "Cultural Poetics." It was first developed in the 1980s, primarily through the work of the critic and Harvard English Professor Stephen Greenblatt and gained widespread influence in the 1990s which is later exercised by Michel Foucault and Lynn Hunt. Sub-literary" texts and uninspired non-literary texts all came to be read as documents of historical discourse, side-by-side with the "great works of literature. In its historicism and in its political interpretations, New Historicism is indebted to Marxism. But whereas Marxism tends to see literature as part of a 'superstructure' in which the economic 'base' (i.e. material relations of production) manifests itself, New Historicist thinkers tend to take a more nuanced view of power, seeing it not exclusively as class-related but extending throughout society. This view derives primarily from Michel Foucault and his work in critical theory.

Stephen Greenblatt *Poetics of Culture*, follows Kernan in reading novel as the study of the contemporary waste land. “With the technique of disconnected and seemingly irrelevant scene, Waugh is attempting to portray the world that is chaotic and out of joint,” and the novel’s characters are only symbolically interesting: “Adam and Nina are significant only as representatives of the sickness of an entire generations and their thwarted attempt to

marry is meaningful and interesting only as a symbol of the frustrated search for values of all the Bright Young People.” And more recently character follows the same tradition, with the added insight that in *Vile Bodies* Waugh’s major target is aberrant religion through Adam’s encounters. Waugh examines the origins of England’s spiritual bankruptcy. The basic problem in the novel is that Adam never considers religion.

There was rarely more than a quarter of a mile of the black road to be seen as one time. It unrolled like a length of cinema film. At the edges was confusion; a fog spinning past; “Faster, faster”, they shouted above the roar of the engine. The road rose suddenly and the white car soared up the sharp ascent without slackening of speed. At the summit of the hill there was a corner. Two cars had crept up, one on each side, and were closing in.

Faster,” cried Miss Runcible, Faster.”(223-24)

This is an apocalyptic vision of the bright young people themselves, caught up in the compulsive and unraveling acceleration of modern life. The road race rescues *Vile Bodies* from Waugh’s self pity with image characteristics of his best fiction: drawn from his active encounter with life, expressing his imaginative involvement with the world. Greenblatt in his work *Three Modern Satirists: Waugh, Orwell, and Huxley* and his fellow new historicists aggressively try to insert works of literature, like that Shakespeare play, back into the historical contexts from where they came. They try in a provocative, postmodern way, of course to get a sense of the political and social atmosphere the playwright himself might have been breathing as he put quill to paper. Marriages often were treated as business transactions in Renaissance England. Love often was beside the point. In Greenblatt's view, *The Taming of the Shrew* is anything but a love story. Instead, he sees it as being about the creation of a type of femininity.

New Historicism is a literary theory based on the idea that literature should be studied and interpreted within the context of both the biography of the author and the history of the critic. New Historicism acknowledges not only that a work of literature is influenced by its author's times and circumstances, but that the critic's response to that work is also influenced by his environment, beliefs, and prejudices. The New Historicist recognizes that this is not a simple yes-or-no answer that can be teased out by studying the text. This work must be judged in the context in which it was written; in turn, cultural history can be revealed by studying the work — especially, say New Historicists, by studying the use and dispersion of power and the marginalization of social classes within the work. Studying the history reveals more about the text; studying the text reveals more about the history. The New Historicist also acknowledges that examination of literature should be judged by its own culture and environment.

New Historicism assumes that every work is a product of the historic moment that created it. New Historicism, then, underscores the impermanence of literary criticism. Current literary criticism is affected by and reveals the beliefs of our times in the same way that literature reflects and is reflected by its own historical contexts. New Historicism acknowledges and embraces the idea that, as time changes, so will our understanding of great literature.

Chapter II: Critique of British Aristocratic values in Waugh's *Vile Bodies*

The world Waugh creates in his second novel *Vile Bodies* stands as the antithesis to the world of Oxford, established in his essay "Was Oxford Worth It". Waugh's Oxford is a very beautiful city in which it is convenient to segregate a certain number of the young of the nation while they are growing up. The universe of *Vile Bodies* shares the similarity with Oxford in the way that both see young people get drunk and act recklessly, but instead of affording the characters with the opportunity to learn and grow from their experiences, there is no consequence to the actions and lifestyles in the novel. *Vile Bodies* shows the dichotomy between life at Britain and life beyond the normal behavior. The story does not work to this effect because there is no alternative world within its universe. Once Adam Fenwick-Symes gets off the boat from France and steps foot onto England he enters a harried, unruly world of chaos. Waugh uses the universe of *Vile Bodies* to show the negative side to a young aristocracy that have not been afforded the necessary opportunities for growth.

Vile Bodies is full of memorable scenes that can be tremendous in finding the aristocratic values in British community through cultural criticism called new-historicism: a custom officer who finds a book on Economics subversive and Purgatorio objectionable, the time and the people were so hypocritical that they always undermine the contemporary less facilitated subject matter including common issues. There was hierarchy between two classes and the low class is always dominated by the high class. The custom officer pretending himself from a superior class, brings hindrance over the passenger's goods by deciding legal or illegal.

In the first scene of the novel, which introduces Adam's engagement, he does not push anything forward despite initiating the scene's conversation. Instead he is forced into a

passive position, where he is unable to impose himself. The introductory remarks of the conversation reflects Adam's position, when despite knowing whom he is talking to, he chooses to act otherwise. Adam calls his fiancée Nina and asks, "May I speak to Miss Blount, please?" (*Vile Bodies* 37). He receives the following response: "'I'll just see if she's in,' said Miss Blount's voice. 'Who's speaking, please?' She was always rather snobbish about the fiction of having someone to answer the telephone; the narrator makes an implication that Adam recognizes the voice on the other end of the phone Nina, by denoting the speaker as "Miss Blount's voice". Despite this recognition that he is talking to his fiancé already, Adam does not immediately interject, but instead allows Nina to proceed with her charade, under the reason that she is "rather snobbish about the fiction of having someone to answer the telephone". This recognition places Adam in a role beneath his fiancé when he responds to the question about who is speaking, with the simple response "Mr. Fenwick-Symes". This show the hypocritical nature of British People, how they pretend themselves in the society, is the demand of the contemporary British society.

Despite being engaged to Nina, Adam allows her to play this game. Adam eventually, passively breaks the charade in a moment Waugh uses to introduce Nina's true character into the novel. After indirectly addressing Adam on the phone, Nina responds to him telling her his name with the singular remark "Oh." The brevity of the retort is clear in the way it shows Nina's disappoint in receiving a call from her fiancé. Nina is young and this response is definitive of the characterization of not only her, but also her peers, which Waugh characterizes as "The Bright Young Things". These characters are constantly underwhelmed and unappreciative, despite the fantastic world they sit at the head of. For example at a party where Adam falls asleep, he wakes up to see that there were about a dozen people left at the party and it was about three o'clock." The "hard kernel of gaiety"

that The Bright Young Things possess is consistently unwavering, ignores time, and exceeds Adam's ability to keep up.

The books confiscated by the custom officers show the decline in sensible society. They nonsensically allow Adam to keep his books on architecture, history, and his dictionary, but confiscate books on economics, propaganda, Dante's Purgatorio, and his own autobiography, which was going to serve as Adam's primary source of income upon publication. The confiscated books all represent higher learning. Architecture, history, and the dictionary are all necessary and educational, but they are much more standard in contrast to the other subjects. All of these are static, unchanging fields that revolve around the nation's past and preconceived ideas. Economics and propaganda present more subversive subjects that given a serious understanding could be useful in shifting the status quo. Dante's Purgatorio clearly represents higher learning and his autobiography stands as a subjective, creative text. The division in what is confiscated represents the general population of the world Adam is entering.

It is a population filled with The Bright Young Things that Waugh despises and Adam does not fit in with. It is a content population ruled by the nation's aristocratic elites, which is why more subversive texts are rejected. This is a group that wants to avoid learning given the fear that their comfortable world would change. The point that he is arriving on the boat from France sets up a further division of the class systems and the point that England has moved away from an exploratory learning and education. France shows how devolution into the contemporary world of England that Waugh despises and is filled with young characters like Nina. The reference Adam makes back to this moment again makes the point that the novel's universe is nonsensical and Adam's fate is not in his hands, but in the trivial hands of those around him. This conversation also shows the divide between Adam and

Nina, which consequently highlights the difference between Adam and the entire universe of *The Bright Young Things*. The most telling point of the conversation is Nina's response, "you are a bore" when he tells her they can no longer be married. Somebody becomes boring person when he could not manage finance for his marriage instead of getting empathy and help from his fiancé. This is the doomed truth of British Aristocrats.

Vile Bodies is a world of seeing and be seen. Adam is in a state of stasis, while the artificial dynamism of Nina is revealed. When Adam removes himself from the action and the drama of the world, like when he calls off his marriage, Nina's reaction is not forlorn because she is no longer able to get married, but frustration because his actions will harm her image by slowing her down in this dynamic universe. Waugh uses the restlessness of his characters to criticize the ultimately futile and doomed nature of their lives, which is realized at the end of the novel when their world is broken down. The novel is truly the by-product of the then society.

The novel's dynamism is also reflected in the literal duration of the scenes. Loss describes this effect and the way that "the scenes, some only a few lines long, carry out the theme of restlessness struck at the very beginning of the book. They also bring to mind the technique of hypocrisy that in the 1920s became such a prominent feature in film. This first scene between Adam and Nina takes place over a page and a half. The final lines of their phone conversation, which ends the scene defines the succinct quality of the novel as the dialogue transitions back and forth, quickly between the two characters until it concludes with "Good-bye, my sweet also shows his extreme affection and reliance on Nina, which is rarely returned by the fairy product, Nina. Both the dialogue and the action are short and driven to the point and then transition immediately out and into another scene. Once the phone is hung up, the moment between him and Nina is over and the novel transitions

swiftly into the next sentence, which resembles the novel's scenes, mimic the quick cuts of a fast paced film. The back and forth nature of the telephone conversation works to the same structure of a shot-reverse-shot technique.

Adam's struggle to acquire the money to marry Nina is never a direct result of his own actions, but is stopped for various reasons throughout the novel by customs officers, an old Major drinking in a hotel, Colonel Blount, and that same Major except in a different incident at a horse race. It shows the misery of high class people that how they are victimized by the social phenomenon. The conversation between Adam and Nina moves on and the first instance of their marriage being unavoidably postponed is presented. The passage reveals again the way Adam is subject to the actions of his universe and it also shows the division between his character and the characters of the Bright Young Things.

“Nina: Oh, I say, Nina, there's one thing – I don't think I shall be able to marry you after all. Oh, Adam, you are a bore. Why not? They burned my book. Beasts, who did? I'll tell you about it tonight. Yes, do. Good-bye, darling .Good-bye, my sweet. He hung up the receiver and left the telephone box (*Vile Bodies* 38).

Adam refers in this passage to an instance, which occurs at the start of the second chapter when he arrives at England and faces custom officers as he gets off a boat from France. The custom officers force the unfavorable and unreasonable situation onto Adam when they tell him. This is what the novel portrays the dichotomy of elite class.

Nina and her peers are given an obviously negative portrayal by Waugh. As shown by the previous depictions of Nina, Waugh generalizes the aristocratic youth of his novel as the Bright Young Things and characterizes them as vapid, attention seeking creatures with

no moral compass. Paul Doyle describes the world and the characters in the novel as a scene of disorientation and moral decay. Obligations are not taken seriously; people hurt one another emotionally, mentally, and physically, and usually do not have the depth or sensitivity to realize their deficiencies. This is what the dreadful situation, loss of morality, loss of humanity and loss of responsibility in the contemporary British inter-war society. Thus the novel is product of such incident and portrayal of those events in a novel. As long as they can pass time pleurably and gratify their personal desires, the Bright Young Things dispense with moral standards and responsibilities. Throughout the novel, Adam is faced with ridiculous challenges and obstructions to his marriage that he is never able to get around and approaches with the same tepid mentality. In a scene where his marriage is again put on hold, it is clear how he is the passive observer to the chaotic and nonsensical action. The scene takes place a third of the way through the novel and mirrors the earlier scene where Adam and Nina discuss their engagement. The passage is introduced as “Before Nina was properly awake Adam dressed and went out into the rain to get a shave. He came back bringing two toothbrushes and a bright red celluloid comb. Nina sat up in bed and combed her hair. She put Adam’s coat over her back” (*Vile Bodies* 100).

All of the elements of the passage work towards the positive union of the couple. Adam brings back “two toothbrushes and a bright red celluloid comb,” which Nina then uses before putting on “Adam’s coat over her back.” However, the narrative characteristically transitions out of this passage of brief tranquility and falls back into its chaotic world: She threw off the coat and jumped out of bed, and he told her that she looked like a fashion drawing without the clothes. Nina was rather pleased about that, but she said that it was cold and that she still had a pain, only not so bad as it was. Then she dressed and they went downstairs. The minute details of all these incidents totally speak up the idea how the

contemporary British society behaved and spent day to day indulging themselves in fashionable culture. The minimal description of what they did in their daily life as a daily routine, how they dressed for the society, what was their behavior for the social issues are sufficient reason to justify the thesis title that it is a best critic on aristocratic values. Aristocratic British young people lived for the society not for their individuality. The individual fake sacrifice for the chaos society.

Putting forward the more representative accreditation to assist the theme of thesis, a judge who has a prostitute swinging on a chandelier in a hotel room and sees that police cover her accidental death, a journalist who commits suicide after being banned from high society, a Charlatan drunken major who becomes general when war is declared, and so on, and so forth. This is the result of the materialistic mentality and also how the society was suffered by physical notion losing all the humanistic values. Even the names are so obvious that instead of completing the characters' portraits, become the characters, a heavily smoking priest is called Bishop Philpot, a silly but valiant lesbian is called Agatha Runcible, calling a journalist – even a homosexual one – Malpractice isn't enough if his first name is not Miles and what better name for a prime minister other than Outrageous? These are all no matter for them because that was very common in that time. People preferred to remain as high class people celebrating all the superior social and cultural norms and the novel can be interpreted new historically justifiable to analyze.

This book takes us across their intersecting and chaotic lives over the course of a few months. The main character, an out of work journalist, receives and loses a job and large sums and money with regularity; his engagement to the world-wearily hipster Nina Blount suffers accordingly. Her dotty father wastes his fortune on a tortuous religious biopic; some socialites attend a party on a dirigible; a gossip columnist kills himself after libeling

everyone in town. There is an amusing segment at a race. In other words, more a stream of anecdotes than a coherent story, and the tone at once languid and lyrical, nostalgic for an era of rich kids being bored and idle, of gramophone records and all-night partying, of being young, carefree and aimless.

Adam is the only character who enters every major social area of the novel and who is associated with all of the other characters. Yet, the character of Adam is constantly overshadowed by the events themselves; it is as though he is merely a part of the fantastic panorama. The attention of the narrative is never focused on Adam and he becomes a peculiar protagonist because he does not stand as a clear point of identification. Instead the narrative focuses on the action, which surrounds and overwhelms his character. For example, the marriage of Adam to Nina Blount is a continuous struggle, which is maintained throughout the text. Despite the repetitive hardships Adam faces (various aristocratic hindrance of then society) that prevent him from solidifying his marriage, his character and the effects of the action are never the focus. He does not learn from one instance to the next, but instead continues to act in the same manner, until eventually his marriage is called off. Waugh places the action at the forefront of these scenes. The action controls Adam, instead of Adam controlling the action, misery. The young aristocrats are puppets of the contemporary society that anyhow they doomed to face social norms, designed by the society.

Nina's reaction to Adam's difficulty in trying to marry her is boredom and disregard for his feelings. Doyle's point is extremely true, the world of *The Bright Young Things* is emotionally vapid and the primary concern of the characters is not to connect with one another, but to maintain their shallow personas. Nina never makes any legitimate attempt to love Adam and instead only becomes openly invested in their relationship when it is

convenient for her. When Adam experiences a brief stint of fame and popularity writing under the pseudonym Mr. Chatterbox, Nina becomes far more invested in his life. However, when he loses this position she again distances herself. This is also why Adam struggles to grow because he is in a world shaped by these beings that do not truly care for him. Waugh uses his novel to criticize this generation of emotionally gaunt, flippant youths. Neil Johnson describes a scene from the novel when the character Mrs. Ape openly criticizes the attendees of her party asking, “Just you look at yourselves” (*Vile Bodies* 136). Johnson writes how the effect for the Bright Young Things is that they for a short time exit their catered universe and become “trapped in the gaze of Mrs. Ape, and whom do they see in that gaze if not themselves? This act of seeing themselves in Mrs Ape’s gaze produces emotions of both shame and guilt, but shame is clearly dominant.”

The Bright Young Things are occasionally forced to look at their lives; they are faced with nothing, but the reality of shame and judgment. Waugh uses *Vile Bodies* to show what would potentially happen to the young wealthy population of England if their education were removed. Symbolically shown through the removal of Adam’s educational texts by the custom agents as he crosses into England, the world of the novel is one that lacks a concrete educational influence.

Vile Bodies is described as “a scene of disorientation and moral decay” (Doyle 14), “too wholly fantastic for any question of sympathy or antipathy to arise” (Hollis 11), a “portrait of the last fling of the Bright Young People – the frivolous and frantic young set that characterized the roaring Twenties in England” (Phillips 15), and with “little direction or consistency in any of the activities” (Cook 83). The descriptions given by critics and scholars of the novel all agree on the chaos of the world Waugh creates; it is fundamentally without order. Waugh creates this world to show his frustration and to highlight the

boundary of the type of lifestyle they lived. Thus, New Historicism truly analyzes this novel, the representation of chaotic world and is briefly encountered in the novel, *Vile Bodies*. Thus it is really a successful analysis of the novel via new historicist perspective to focus on the so called society and its hidden black history which enables to produce this wonderful novel full of historicity richness of then hedonistic impulses and crazy, young and so called bright aristocrats.

Waugh produces *Vile Bodies* which deals with the frolicking of the Bright Young People. Adam Fenwick Symes and his fiancée Nina Blount ride through the book partially innocent and partially aware. At one point Adam tells Nina of the futility of it all, Masked parties, Savage parties, Victorian parties, Greek parties, Wild West parties, Russian parties, Circus parties, parties where one had to dress as somebody else, almost naked parties in St. John's Wood, parties in flats and studios and houses and ships and hotels and night clubs, in windmills and swimming baths, tea parties at school where one ate muffins and meringues and tinned crab, parties at Oxford where one drank brown sherry and smoked Turkish cigarettes, dull dances in London and comic dances in Scotland and disgusting dances in Paris-all that succession and repetition of massed humanity. All these types of party organizing community truly refer the British aristocratic society and their elite rituals.

Nina makes an obvious transition out of the content state she was in only moments before. Taking off Adam's coat serves as a metaphor for her reentrance into the world of the novel. Once the jacket is off she admits to being cold and having a pain. Being cold contrasts the fact that she just removed Adam's jacket, which would have served as a clear source of warmth. This reflects the nonsensical elements of the world of the Bright Young Things. It also parallels the structure of their first conversation, which before getting into the heart of the dialogue, there is a brief period of nonsensical introduction. Nina's pain also

reappears in this scene and recurs constantly. The annoying ache is never given a purpose and flows in and out of the novel quickly and without reason. After this introduction to the scene, the couple begins a conversation over breakfast, which is similarly characterized by the short, choppy dialogue.

The conversation quickly gets to a point and then transitions away to a different scene of action. Adam again initiates the conversation: “By the way’ said Adam. ‘You said there was something you wanted to say.’ ‘Oh, yes, so there is, my dear, something quite awful.’ Do tell me.’ ‘Well, it’s about the check papa gave you. I’m afraid it won’t help us as much as you thought” (*Vile Bodies* 100). Adam again serves as the point for moving the action of the novel forward. He reminds Nina of the drama, which once stated, sets off the next series of events. Again the conversation starts almost as an aside. In the previously referenced passage about their engagement, Adam starts the conversation with “there’s one thing –” and here it begins as Adam reminds Nina of “something you wanted to say.” Both of these phrases reduce the significance of what is said by making it seem as if it was almost forgotten. This allows the proceeding action to happen faster. This new incident, halting the marriage of Adam and Nina is as she states because the money her father gave Adam for the wedding is illegitimate. The reason for the check’s illegitimacy is the signature. Adam finally recognizes how “the old idiot’s signed it ‘Charlie Chaplin’” (*Vile Bodies* 101). This situation again reflects the nonsense of the novel’s universe. His character quickly moves through a series of ridiculous situations, like the inexplicable confiscation of his autobiography, or how his would be father in law decides to sign a check with the name ‘Charlie Chaplin’. After Adam and Nina discuss their predicament they agree on the fact that as a result of the false check they could not be able to get married after all.” This is the by-

product of then society that refers that they are living very materialistic life where not their love between each other but money determines the marriage.

Despite this somewhat momentous occasion in the narrative, the scene immediately falls back into the aforementioned style of rapid transition as it cuts away quickly from the action, disregarding space and time, much as a film would. After the affirmation that they will not be able to get married, the dialogue ends with Adam saying, "It is a bore, isn't it?" It shows the frustration of individual regarding social behavior. In this moment Adam reaffirms Nina's mentality by repeating the phrase "It is a bore", which she used when Adam first told her that their marriage was going to be postponed. Waugh uses the repetition of this statement to show Adam's regrettable acceptance of his universe. The narrator does not provide the reader with a moment of reflection or a break in the narrative, but instead the next lines are: "Later he said, 'I expect that parson thought I was dotty too.' And later 'As a matter of fact, it's rather a good joke, don't you think?'" (*Vile Bodies* 104). Both of these lines disconnect from the sullen sentiments of the marriage being again put on hold and instead use Adam as a point of transition by providing a series of unrelated thoughts, which then allows Nina the space to provide her own unrelated explication. Adam is merely a device used by characters like Nina and the other Bright Young Things of the novel as means of finding constant action. Individual suffers lot because of social designed behavior so happens in Adam's life, the representative of British victimized characters vividly portraying in the novel.

There are lots of ridiculously named people ,the prime minister is Mr. Outrage. To offset the exploits of the Bright Young People, the decay of political and religious life of then society is also illustrated with the plots of Lord Outrage and Mrs. Melrose Ape, an American evangelist with her "angels"--Faith, Charity, Chastity, Humility, Prudence, Divine

Discontent, Mercy, Justice, and Creative Endeavor. The reality of these names is fake because it is totally different in British society as it loses all these norms. Waugh concludes this world of "*Vile Bodies*" with Adam selling Nina to Ginger so he can pay off a hotel bill to the perfectly money-minded, corrupted and fragile people. Ginger is drafted, however, after his marriage to Nina, so Adam accompanies Nina as her husband to spend Christmas with Colonel Blount, a kind of funny values shows relation is nothing but money can build strong relationship.

The first part of the manuscript mostly concerns the futile attempts of Adam, a penniless writer, to get some money together so that he can marry Nina, a bright young social butterfly. I go through these pages, taking the odd photo for future use, but basically I'm starting my study at the halfway point of the manuscript where dreadful attempts of protagonist are presented to achieve his goal in contemporary British society. The second half of the manuscript begins with the line: 'Then Adam became Mr. Chatterbox'. That is, Adam gets a job on the gossip column of *The Daily Excess*, Lord Monomark's paper. Nothing to do with *The Daily Express*, Lord Beaverbrook's title.

The first six chapters were written at the Abingdon Arms, Beckley, Oxfordshire, when Evelyn thought he was happily married, if poor. The chapters from seven onwards were written at the Royal George, Appledore, Devon, when he was trying to cope with the fact of his marriage's collapse. New historically why this novel is produced is also because of writer's own frustrated mentality caused by various factors in his life such as his marriage, broke down of his marriage life. In chapter seven, Waugh introduces Adam's rival in love. Adam and Nina are at the horse races in Manchester, watching Indian Runner canter home unexpectedly in first place, when Adam spots in the crowd the drunk Major (who had

promised to put £1,000 on Indian Runner on Adam's behalf, money that Adam had won on the toss of a coin). Adam tries to track him down, in vain.

Adam returns to Nina when she is talking to a young man with a curly red moustache.' This is Mr. Broughton,' she said. 'He and I used to play together when we were children. He's just come back from Kenya. The character has had to be 'brought on' by Waugh, so perhaps that was the reasoning behind the name. The young man says he is fed up with the horse racing, Adam says he is fed up too, and the three returns to London together in the newcomer's racing car. Over dinner Nina explains to Adam'...that the young man used to play with her as a child, and that he had been growing coffee in Kenya for the last five years. Waugh in *A Little Learning*, points to two Scotsmen, one Welshman and one Irishman among his eight great-great-grandfathers. But he deletes Saxon and inserts the name Littlejohn, a name which he sticks with for the rest of the book. Well, no, the young man is most commonly referred to by his nickname, 'Ginger'. The situation is the same doomed situation of that contemporary British society. The character their name and their behavior perfectly resembles the cultural aspects of Aristocratic British society highlighting its inner and outer fragile nature.

Adam, Nina and Ginger go to a party together. First, on a captive dirigible in the suburbs of London. Then to St Christopher's Social Club near Leicester Square, where they can't get a drink. Then to the flat of an old friend of Ginger's, where they drink whisky sitting on a bed while Ginger's old pal is sick next door. Ginger sums up this part of the proceedings with 'there is nowhere like London really, you know.' The partying system of British is vividly illustrated by the character and plot mentioned in the novel which occurs repeatedly throughout the novel, enjoying life indulging in party and alcohol, total ecstatic nature of British aristocrats.

Adam's second attempts to meet Nina's father for the second collaboration completely failed because Colonel Blount was busy playing a bit part in a film that is being made on his property, a scene which draws heavily on Waugh's experience of making *The Scarlet Woman* at his own father's house. Adam fails to extract any money from the crafty old man. When he returns to London, it's to the realization that he has lost his job. This is thanks to Nina, who had written and filed Adam's column that day, mentioning the fictitious fashion for green bowler hats that Lord Monomark had specifically asked not to be mentioned again. The social behavior of making meeting with friends and relatives is differently presented here, people are quite indifference to others, fearful mentality of connecting with people, frustrated, involves in personal happiness, caste and class sense are all the very common features of inter-war period perfectly resembled by the novel *Vile Bodies* when analyzing it with New historicism perspective which was truly historical and has strong connection with contemporary aristocratic British society.

The aristocratic tendency of going to enjoy motor races was following by Adam who went to the motor races with three chums. Because of the big race, rooms to rent in the unnamed town are hard to come by. No luck at the Imperial Hotel. At the Station Hotel they are told that they might get rooms at the Royal George. At the Royal George, the landlady does her best to fit them in. This involves ejecting Mr. Titchcock from his bed onto the floor. In fact, Adam gets Mr. Titchcock's room. In it there is a dressmaker's dummy, which reminds Adam of one that used to be in his family. On the phone, Nina tells Adam she is engaged to be married to Ginger. In the novel Waugh gets it onto a single page - by setting the end of the dialogue into the right side of the page. But initially the end of the call was written on the back of a page, as reproduced below. In this deleted section, Waugh seems to have lost track of who is speaking. The last line '*Goodbye, Nina,*' has to be changed to

'*Goodbye, I'm sorry, Adam*. How funny and humorous incident happened in *Vile Bodies*.

There is chapter called happy ending at last of the novel which satires all the happenings of the individuals ended roughly and sadly although it is considered happily, really chaotic.

The fake and hypocritical behavior of British Aristocrats where they enjoy nothingness. The true story of those people who haunted by the fearfulness of the great war effects but

The parody of the romantic comedy centers around on Adam Fenwick-Symes, reportedly a bright, young, up and coming novelist who has as his love interest, another bright young thing, Nina. We find them and their friends at all the right and seemingly endless parties, with all the right people, doing all the right things. The obstacle in their path, the one thing holding them back from marrying is their lack of money. Adam's quest for enough money to marry is hilarious as is Nina's reaction when the funds are within sight then out again. The cast of characters, some aptly named for their position and disposition add to the enjoyment. The situations they find themselves in are wildly improbable and great fun exactly resembles the contemporary society and its upper class values. The society was always running after the money and proving all the time people's quest for materialistic prosperity. It's bitter and sharp, sometimes vicious, sometimes sad, and at times highly literary. The love story of Adam and Nina is very moving in its dry level. Above all the story starts with a disaster from which everything unfolds like the petals of a particularly noisome flower. *Vile Bodies* finds society mildly amusing as it follows the adventures of several sets of Brits, particularly one young stifled author, Adam, betrothed to a woman who hardly seems interested. In some ways she seems to embody the dispassionate tone of the book so far. It helps finding the society describing and judging the contemporary social phenomena, blurring the remarkable aristocratic tendency. It has equal parts infuriating and engaging enough as a peek into social mores of a time and a people.

All of the incidents in the novel simply do not ring true. For example, Adam wins £1000(!) on a bet about a game, is immediately given the money in cash(!) and promptly hands it over to a complete stranger for it to be wagered on a racehorse(!). Utterly ridiculous. There are several other such improbabilities scattered throughout the story. Another problem is the preponderance of silly character names. We have: Fanny Throbbing, Miles Malpractice, Melrose Ape, Mary Mouse, Margot Metroland and Lady Circumference (to cite just some) while generally workmanlike and competent - fails to leap off the page, and can sometimes be stodgy and difficult to follow.

There is an exchange, for example, between a character called Benfleet and two poets on pages 99 and 100 of the Penguin edition of the book that which is simply incomprehensible! Not only this one also unconvinced by the intermittent references to characters speaking "Cockney". It seems to be forced and silly, intensely justifies the essence of contemporary aristocratic values where character is described as being rigid "from wig to toe"! There is enjoyable incident in which the youngest daughter of the Prime Minister invites some of her friends back to her home (10 Downing Street!) for a drink after an evening of partying and one of them stays there overnight. The darkly comic novel does scathing take on the 1920s London's culture of hedonistic living and near-anarchic levels of partying. The 'Bright, Young people', as they were christened by the media of the period, was mostly men and women from the aristocracy and the upper classes, bohemians and artists. Life for them was round of parties and balls after another, and if they weren't having an impromptu picnic at someone's country house, they were living it up at races or guzzling champagne at art openings. Waugh's novel captures perfectly the 'carpe diem' attitude of these young people. It strings together the absurd events that dot the life of a young writer Adam Fenwick-Symes in the inter-war years, and characters that populate this period his life

are among the most richly comic to ever appear in literature, which are also the glimpse of modernist British aristocracy.

Vile Bodies is out of their fantastical setting and placed them in a world rooted in reality. The wine represents a forlorn symbol of comfort and reflects the priorities of the novel's former world. After this initial description, the girl presents a monologue, which Waugh uses to unapologetically criticize her character. In her monologue, she reveals her name to be "Chastity", which Waugh again places ironically to mock the despicable quality of the old world. The rest of her monologue is wayward as Chastity attempts to assemble the narrative of her life and how she ended up wandering the battlefield. There is no logic to her series of events, she was sent to Buenos Aires, "then when the war came she brought me back again", and then the "lorry I was in got stuck in the ditch so I got in with some other foreigners" (*Vile Bodies* 287). Her monologue makes little to no sense and reinforces Waugh's point that when faced with a harsh reality such as war, The Bright Young Things will be completely ill equipped. Waugh ends this brief final chapter with the line: "And presently, like a circling typhoon, the sounds of battle began to return." (*Vile Bodies* 289) This final statement again ironically parallels the rest of the novel. Adam moves through a circular narrative as he is confronted by a number of social situations and characters that all lead him nowhere. For example, he is unable to marry Nina at the beginning of the novel, he continues to struggle to honor their engagement through the middle, and by the end he is still unable to find enough money to marry her.

The irony here is that the circularity of the old world presented very little actual significance; all of the characters were completely content to float through their repetitive lives. However, in this new world of the final chapter the repetition hold all of the consequence as it leads them back into "the sounds of battle", which they are completely

unable to handle. The final chapter is a “Happy Ending” for Waugh because despite war breaking out, it finally presents the reality of the characters and separates them from the bullshit world they previously ruled. When Waugh finally does give the characters a new world in the final chapter, they are completely ill equipped and flounder as they are thrown into the deep end of a more realistic reality.

Chapter III. Hedonistic Impulses in Inter-war British Aristocratic Society

The *Vile Bodies* is the novel about vile people and vile attitudes, only they could have named themselves 'bright young thing'. Everything was vile in contemporary British society. The way that so called elite people spent their life indulging themselves always in partying culture, their indifference regarding other social and personal matter, money minded and corrupted mentality, mocking upon purity of love are all the very common features to justify the thesis topic here. The characters seem, for all their dated speech and clothing, to be people that shiftless, uncertain folks who are not quite at peace with the world, or their place in it. The several conversations between characters are totally enriched with fake elite values and somehow present the hedonistic mentality of contemporary British people.

Vile Bodies is a delicious story about a doomed sort of confused aristocracy. A boat full of colorful characters, swaying on choppy waters, heads across the Channel to England. This book takes us across their intersecting and chaotic lives over the course of a few months. This novel demonstrates the nostalgic feeling for an era of rich kids being bored and idles, of gramophone records and all-night partying, of being young, carefree and aimless, as the engine-noises of war close in.

Mayfair society was even more thoroughly displayed in *Vile Bodies* which perfectly illustrates the movement of the bulk of young people between the wars. The more mature elements of the Mayfair society is represented by many masculine and opportunistic characters. It is aimed at inconsistency and hypocrisy. It exposes polite cruelty and folly by exaggerating them. The inter-war period witnessed an explosion of a variety of leisure activities within British society. Some of which were new and some of were not. One such

leisure activity was that of the cinema, and featured as popular pastimes in Evelyn Waugh's *Vile Bodies*.

Vile Bodies, provides a completely antithetical setting to inter-war period. The novel's central figure Adam Fenwick-Symes is sucked into this world and becomes trapped within the riotous universe of the aristocratic youth's that Waugh ironically refers to as "The Bright Young Things". Waugh uses the novel to show a world where everyone is denied the educational experience he cites as a necessity in his article. The result for Adam is that he is tossed around through a series of discordant action is never afforded any opportunity for growth. However, Adam is hardly the center of the novel's action and instead is used as a way to transition between action and nonsensical situations for other characters. Waugh shows through the other characters in his novel how without a proper, formative education they are doomed to act idiotic, spoiled, and foster a meaningless world of simple comforts.

Aside from Adam, The Bright Young Things are seemingly flushed with money, yet their wealth is unable to correct the issues of their universe and instead magnifies it. Their senseless behavior cries out for the corrective, formative education they would receive at an institution like Oxford. It is not until the end of the novel when The Bright Young Things are confronted with the intense realism of war that the truth of their characters as entirely incompetent is unapologetically revealed. The plot lacks the unified thrust characteristic represents hypocrisy of British people. In many ways, the novel of Waugh provides some of the most unforgiving social criticism of early twentieth century Western culture. Waugh is master of social critique as literary art who emerges more symbolic and thematic as well as more satiric and ironic, this novel all attempts a criticism of illusions and ideals, and of the attitude toward existence found amongst the young and wealthy in Britain in the 1920s.

Characters display naivety, callousness, insensitivity, insincerity, flippancy qualities which determine their destinies. Though in no way unique to the kind of fractured consciousness that evolved with modernity, these characteristics are best seen as adaptations by which the men and women of the novels parse the realities of modern life. They lack seriousness and are devoid of reflective judgment, using distancing techniques as defense mechanisms against assimilating social change. They are relatively unaware of or unconcerned with the conditions of possibility that have buoyed their privilege, a repression which expresses itself in terms of various violent returns in each of the novels. Their relationships and dreams fail, and the future is a precarious game of chance. What binds people to one another is not it turns out, some eternal and indestructible moral code but, rather, a web of contingent self-interest. These characters represent, in short, the freighted arrival of modernity.

Thus, truly speaking the novel *Vile Bodies* is about the British aristocratic people, their life style, behavior, mentality and social responsibility which is written in the context of contemporary inter-war British society by the British writer that is why it perfectly speaks the voice of aristocratic doomed values all the time in novel.

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