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'Fashionable Piety': Theological Modernism in Evelyn Waugh's *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies*

Cover Page Footnote

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Fashionable Piety

Evelyn Waugh's Critique of Theological Modernism in *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies*

Deirdre Murphy

When Evelyn Waugh released *Brideshead Revisited* in 1945, literary critics attacked the text with a firestorm of scathing reviews; they could not stomach the overtly religious material presented in his new novel. The most notorious of these came from the American critic Edmund Wilson, who referred to *Brideshead Revisited* as a “Catholic tract” and claimed that in *Brideshead* “something essential [had] been left out of Waugh.” That “something” Wilson referred to was the biting satire that Waugh was so widely known for (Stannard 246–47). Wilson defined the difference between *Brideshead* and Waugh’s early satires: “In the earlier novels . . . there was always a very important element of perverse, unregenerate self-will that [gave] rise to confusion and impudence.” He then explains that in *Brideshead*, Waugh transforms this “perverse element” into sin (247). Wilson, astonished at the explicitness of Waugh’s Catholicism in *Brideshead Revisited*, overlooks allusions to Waugh’s faith in his earlier works. After all, Waugh had been a Catholic since 1930, and a close reading of his early satires reveals that the direct religious elements in *Brideshead Revisited* are present, yet subtle in works that Waugh produced before his official reception into the Catholic Church. *Decline and Fall*, published

in 1928, follows Oxford student turned schoolteacher turned jailbird Paul Pennyfeather as he fumbles his way through a rapidly de-civilizing England. *Vile Bodies*, one of Waugh's most lucrative satires, depicts a world that has lost all of its moral bearings; the plot consists of a myriad of 1920s-era British "Bright Young Things" involved in parties, rampant infidelity, and shallow religion. These early satires portray Waugh's moral convictions and prefigure his advocacy of a thoroughly Catholic worldview by holding up a critical mirror to the kind of society that promotes such "perverse element[s]" (Stannard 247). Broadly speaking, the goal of this paper is to examine the underlying moral convictions that make up the narrative worlds of *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies* and to consider how those convictions may have assisted Waugh on his route to the Roman Catholic Church.

The Roots of Theological Modernism

The Modernist theological controversy that frames the moral world of *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies* is essential for a thorough understanding of how Waugh related to that world. At the start of the twentieth century, Modernist theology started to gain traction within the Catholic Church. Proponents of theological Modernism aimed their efforts at diminishing the influence of the scholastic tradition and incorporating elements of higher criticism, both historical and biblical, into the teaching of the Catholic Church. Furthermore, advocates of theological Modernism promoted ideologies that undermined crucial Catholic doctrines like the divinity of Christ, the Incarnation, a literal resurrection, and the inspiration of scripture. In addition, Modernists tended to emphasize the experience of personal faith over dogma. Father George Tyrrell, one of the foremost leaders of Modernism within the Catholic Church, explained the theological position as such: "To complete the reconciliation of the old Catholic tradition with the new thought and the new social aspirations" (137). Debates about Modernism were certainly not limited to Catholicism, and many of these issues were being explored within other Christian denominations during this period, especially high church Protestantism. In 1922, the Anglican vicar C.W. Emmet described the Modernist in his own tradition as one who "agrees that we can no longer appeal to the authority of the Bible, creeds or church as something fixed and decisive" and who acknowledges "that the Spirit of God is speaking in diverse channels and by diverse voices . . . and that the church must be

brave enough to suffer a great variety of opinion within its walls” (Emmet 563). Clearly aware of the similarities between Catholic Modernism and Protestant liberalism, St. Pope Pius X denounced the following position in his 1907 encyclical *Lamentabili Sane*, which he composed with the intention of officially condemning the movement: “Modern Catholicism can be reconciled with true science only if it is transformed into a non-dogmatic Christianity; that is to say, into a broad and liberal Protestantism” (65). In other words, St. Pope Pius X believed that any acceptance of Modernism within Catholicism would ultimately lead to a conflation of traditional Catholic theology with liberal Protestantism—an outcome he tried to thwart by condemning Modernist positions and, ultimately, by excommunicating priests like George Tyrrell. Curiously, another religious development was occurring in American religion during this same period: Pentecostalism. The “bedrock” of this branch of Christianity was “the emotional power of conversion, the suddenness of its transformative effects, and the unmediated character of the individual’s direct encounter with God” (Jacobsen 7). While Pentecostalism remained decidedly non-doctrinal, it manifested a full-blown belief in the personal experience of the individual as the ultimate definition of faith. Indeed, the Modernist controversy extended far beyond the bounds of one particular denomination and certainly beyond the bounds of the 1910s.

The Implications of Theological Modernism

Two central characteristics of theological Modernism are a belief in the uncertain nature of truth and the reliance on subjective human experience to define faith. In his novels, Waugh turns a satirical eye toward these Modernist ideals and presents his readers with a multitude of characters who roam aimlessly through decadent and meaningless lives. His characters amusingly display the emptiness of a world that has lost its moral compass, an illustration of the “lamentable results” that a world without any religious principle is bound to have. For Waugh, the foundation of Western Civilization is as inextricable from Christianity as Christianity is inextricable from the Roman Catholic Church. He says as much in a 1930 letter to the priest under whose instruction he entered the Church: “I realize that the Roman Catholic Church is the only genuine form of Christianity. Also, that Christianity is the essential and formative constituent of western culture” (as qtd. in Patey 41). The fact that Waugh titled one of his early works *Decline and Fall*, an allusion to Edward Gibbon’s famous text, *The History*

of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, indicates his disillusion with the state of England in 1928. Yet unlike Gibbon's six-volume piece, it is not Christianity that is to be blamed for England's decay in Waugh's *Decline and Fall*. In fact, it is the curious lack of faith, especially among clergymen, that has added to the nation's deterioration. While Waugh was not yet advocating for a total return to established orthodoxy, his representation of paradoxical clergymen and shallow evangelists indicates his convictions about the problems of modern religion, including its chaotic effects on civilization.

Early in *Decline and Fall*, the reader is introduced to a former Anglican churchman named Mr. Prendergast, a satirical-portrait clergyman who rejects tradition in favor of religious modernization. After losing his faith and forfeiting his position as a vicar, Mr. Prendergast is now employed as a schoolteacher alongside the novel's protagonist Paul Pennyfeather. Almost immediately upon Pennyfeather's arrival to Llanabba Castle in Wales, Mr. Prendergast informs his new acquaintance of his former life as a parson and the moment that his "doubts" began:

I've not known an hour's of real happiness since. You see it wasn't the sort of Doubt about Cain's wife or the Old Testament miracles or the consecration of Archbishop Parker. I'd been taught how to explain those things at college. No, it was something deeper than all that. *I couldn't understand why God made the world at all.* ... You see how fundamental that is. Once granted the first step—Tower of Babel, Babylonian captivity, Incarnation, Church, bishops, incense, everything—but what I couldn't see, and what I can't see now, is, why did it all begin? ... I asked my bishop; he didn't know. He said that he didn't think the point really arose as far as a parish priest was concerned. (*Decline and Fall* 38–39)

This speech comically sums up the dangers that theological Modernism posed for orthodox believers. The type of Modernist biblical interpretation that Mr. Prendergast learned in college is the exact type of biblical criticism that Pope St. Pius X condemned in the *Pascendi*—another denunciation of Modernism—in which he wrote that Modernists take the Bible as a "human work, made by men for men," and denies its inspiration in the "Catholic sense" (*Pascendi Domini Gregis* 24). Modernists believed that they could innovate biblical interpretation and categorically deny the historicity of the sacred texts. The consequence for Mr. Prendergast is that after being "taught how to explain" away the Old Testament miracles as merely symbolic, he

can no longer “grant the first step” (*Decline and Fall* 38–9). Something as fundamental to the Christian religion as God’s purpose in creating the world is now completely abstruse to Mr. Prendergast. Even Prendergast’s bishop is at a loss to answer his questions and believes such concerns to be irrelevant for a parish priest, comically revealing the state of both local parsons and clergymen of authority. Ironically, Mr. Prendergast follows this speech by an acknowledgement that it is time to “go down for prayers,” as if Waugh is pointing out the comedy in a former parson wishing to retain religious formality after losing all of its principle (39). As the narrative progresses, Mr. Prendergast’s doubts never cease, but his conscience is “comforted” when he hears that there is a new class of theologians called “modern churchmen,” who “draw the full salary of a beneficed clergyman and need not commit [themselves] to any religious belief” (188). Mr. Prendergast’s realization that his lack of faith no longer precludes him from a religious career is comical because it draws attention to the contradictory practice of employing clerics who no longer hold to tenets of the Christian faith—an irony that Waugh could not overlook nor reconcile.

Mr. Prendergast possesses similarly ironic views on Christian marriage. When fellow schoolteacher and implied child molester Captain Grimes complains of his impending marriage to the daughter of the school’s headmaster, Prendergast expresses a thoroughly negative view of the institution. Referring to procreation and companionship as “nothing short of disastrous,” Prendergast reveals his utter incompatibility with traditional Christian thought on marriage and family (*Decline and Fall* 131). Not only is Prendergast unable to understand why God made the world but he is also unable to comprehend any benefits of matrimony. The irony accelerates when this former parson returns to his religious career as a “modern churchman” and winds up ministering at a prison where he finds that “criminals are just as bad as boys” and is unable to conduct orderly chapel services (223). Waugh casts Prendergast’s death as mockingly satiric when the parson is murdered at the hands of a violent religious extremist, who claims that the mysteries of scripture, while inaccessible to most, are perfectly “plain” to him (239). Prendergast, who accepts the mutability of scripture and adheres to no specific doctrines, has his head sawed off by a fanatic who believes in his own personal revelation. The news of this “modern churchman’s” demise is spread irreverently during chapel, and passes “almost unnoticed” (248). Indeed, the narrator satirically points out that any serious investigation into

Prendergast's murder may have "discouraged" the novel prison reforms that the jail was undergoing (248). In other words, it was better that the murder of this modern parson go unpunished than the progress of improving the prison be stalled by an inconvenient murder. If Anglican churchmanship was once a venerated and respectable profession, Waugh satirically points out that by the early twentieth century it is so no longer. Furthermore, Waugh illustrates the flaws of using modern theology to thwart the onset of humanistic, progressive secularism.

Faith as Experience

Another distinctly modern Christian phenomenon that developed parallel to theological Modernism is the explosive growth of the Pentecostal movement that spread rapidly in the twentieth century. Waugh uses his satire to comment upon this emerging religious development, and creates one of his most memorable characters in the form of Mrs. Melrose Ape, a preacher who sells her brand of religion through the means of entertainment and cheap, empty theology in *Vile Bodies*. The character of Mrs. Melrose Ape is indeed based on a real woman evangelist that took Hollywood by storm in the 1920s: Aimee Semple McPherson. Waugh names his female evangelist "Melrose Ape" both as a play on the double surname of his real-life model, and as an insulting blow to the nature of McPherson's faith. An ape is not only categorically non-human but it also engages in imitation; the assertion is that McPherson's gospel is only an imitation of a more substantial faith. Waugh later wrote in 1949 that "if the Christian revelation was true, then the [Catholic] Church was the society founded by Christ and all other bodies were only good so far as they had salvaged something from the wrecks of the Great Schism and the Reformation" (*Come Inside* 130). What separates this specific imitation of a deeper faith from the theological Modernism debated within the Catholic Church and High Anglicanism is that its objections to tradition are not primarily theological at all. Unlike Father George Tyrrell, Pentecostals were not interested in reconciling "tradition with new thought," but instead valued religious *experience* above both theology and modern ideas. And while American Pentecostals generally interpreted the bible more literally and rejected most Modernist theological innovations, they had no essential unifying doctrines outside of generalized ideas about the work of the Holy Spirit and the practice of *glossolalia*, or speaking in tongues.

This meant that for early Pentecostals like McPherson, “dance did precede dogma” and religion as experience prevented many congregations from even adopting a statement of faith, much less taking coherent positions for or against doctrines like theological Modernism (Barfoot 497). In his book on Semple McPherson and the roots of Pentecostalism, religious studies scholar Chas. H. Barfoot offers a helpful definition of the movement that developed and spread so quickly in the twentieth century: “Pentecostalism may be best understood theologically as Pietistic spirituality. With roots in the German and English Protestant movements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Pietistic spirituality is concerned with direct, inner experience with the Divine that transcends dogma or institutional religion” (Barfoot 502). This definition is similar to the Modernist theology reproached by St. Pope Pius X in *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, in which he explains the Modernist definition of faith as a “certain special sense . . . implied within itself both as its own object and as its intrinsic cause” and condemns outright the idea that faith rests in the “experience of the individual” (7, 14). While Pentecostalism does not fall under the umbrella of theological Modernism in any official sense, some Pentecostal practices do align with Modernism in that they seek to redefine dogma and the nature of faith whilst placing an ever-increasing emphasis on the religious experience.

Mrs. Melrose Ape, like Aimee Semple McPherson, relies on this sort of religious experience to produce the faith that her movement stresses. If personal experience is the locus of faith, it is inevitable that the preaching of the gospel message become an enticing experience itself in order to produce the feelings that precipitate a change in perception. The necessity of enticement helps to explain the importance of personality and charisma in early Pentecostalism, and sheds light on why both McPherson and her caricature Mrs. Melrose Ape are referred to as “magnetic” (*Vile Bodies* 3). Like Semple McPherson, Mrs. Melrose Ape relies on entertainment value to spread her message, and employs an array of young women dressed up as “angels” to help her cause. The real Aimee Semple McPherson used nontraditional mediums like the radio and stage to reach a large population. In his book, Barfoot chronicles what he calls the “parallel” growths of Hollywood and Pentecostalism, and defines Semple McPherson’s ministry by its ability to “blend the secular with the sacred” like “no other Pentecostal evangelist of people’s religion before or since,” which included the raising of “red velvet curtains” prior to her sermons and an increased emphasis on

the collection plate as a means by which to support McPherson's religious endeavors (Barfoot 172). All of this is humorously satirized in *Vile Bodies*, where Mrs. Melrose Ape and her "angels" quite literally perform aboard ships and at a party given by the Lady Metroland. During a rough sea voyage, Mrs. Melrose Ape questions a group of passengers about whether they are ready to meet their Maker, and her performance is telling: "We're going to sing a song together, you and me . . . You'll feel better for it body *and* soul. It's a song of Hope . . . I know all about England, and I tell you straight, boys, I've got the goods for you. Hope's what you want and hope's what I got . . . Five bob for you steward, if you can shout me down" (*Vile Bodies* 17). Mrs. Melrose Ape's literal advertising and selling of Hope, her claim that she has the "goods" for England, as well as her monetary bet with the steward, comically enact Semple McPherson's notorious emphasis on donations as a means to continue her preaching. Nevertheless, this forced hymn does cause the partakers of her chorus to "feel the better for it" (19). It seems that Mrs. Melrose Ape partially succeeds in selling her version of Hope because these Bright Young Things are lacking something to hope in. The underlying assertion here is that without a substantial moral framework with which to build one's life, people are apt to fall into various intellectual and emotional traps of imitative yet ultimately unsatisfying ideologies.

Mrs. Melrose Ape's detection of this void in society and her inability to fill that gap culminates in the scene at Lady Metroland's party. That an evangelist is selected to perform at a house party at the invitation of a brothel-owner is ironic enough, but the method of Mrs. Melrose Ape's preaching is even more revealing. The sermon begins with the simple imperative, "Just you look at yourselves," a statement that compels all of her listeners to reflect on their lives and to feel a degree of remorse for their behavior (*Vile Bodies* 137). Yet these moments of "self-doubt" are short lived, and that "favorite opening" of Mrs. Melrose Ape's falls flat (137). Rather than produce any lasting religious sentiment, Mrs. Melrose Ape's speech only impels the Bright Young Things to briefly recognize their wrongs and then continue their self-centered lifestyles. Nina, the protagonist's on-again, off-again fiancée, thinks about how she once loved Adam, but will go on to marry another and proceed to commit adultery with Adam in spite of her vows. Another socialite, Mary Mouse, "shed two little tears" at the speech but still agrees to become one of the Maharajah's official concubines (*Vile Bodies* 137). This behavior is fittingly summed up by the

resident gossip columnist as “fashionable piety” (137). Any moments of clarity are quickly clouded when all break into censure and laughter, glad that the “awkward moment” has passed (138). For all her talk of having the “goods,” Mrs. Melrose Ape sells nothing (17). The failure of Mrs. Melrose Ape’s evangelistic endeavor represents the more general failure of purely emotional appeals to moral or religious reform, and suggests that people who may be initially won by such appeals are ultimately lost. In this, Waugh agrees with Pope St. Pius X “that faith is not a blind sentiment of religion welling up from the depths of the subconscious under the impulse of the heart and the motion of a will trained to morality” (“Oath Against Modernism”). Due to her emphasis on faith as experience, Mrs. Melrose Ape’s preaching is ill-equipped to produce any long-lasting effects on individuals. Whereas religion that relies on appeals to emotion is fleeting and malleable, religious thought informed by inspired scripture and church teaching is stable.

An Alternative to Modernism

Waugh’s satirical opposition to theological Modernism extends beyond his caricatures of modern churchmen and charismatic preachers. In both *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies*, Waugh presents his readers with a world devoid of objective morality, where characters exist in a dizzying combination of meaninglessness and decadence. Contrary to what some critics have argued concerning the frivolity and joust with which Waugh treats the modern, Waugh is serious in his rebuke. By definition, the satirist is almost always a moralist, since to criticize without implying an alternative perspective would be fruitless. The fact that Waugh presents the world of the early twentieth century in such a mocking manner proves his own discomfort and disapproval of many of its principles, which aligns him with the sort of traditionally orthodox views affirmed in the aforementioned anti-modernist papal documents. In addition to rejecting the Modernist proposition of faith as experience, Waugh also rebuffs humanism and utilitarianism while subtly affirming traditional Christian views on original sin, the sanctity of human life, and marriage through a variety of characters and circumstances in these two early novels.

That Waugh rejects both humanism and utilitarianism is evident through his portraits of the prison reformer Sir Wilfred-Lucas Dockery and the architect Otto Silenus in *Decline and Fall*. Sir Wilfred Lucas-Dockery

naively insists that all criminal activity is simply the result of the “repressed desire for aesthetic expression,” and therefore forces every event in the prison to fit within his theory and expects prisoners to be grateful for the opportunity to be part of his experiments (*Decline and Fall* 226). Clearly, Lucas-Dockery’s humanism has its limits. After the unnamed religious madman saws off Prendergast’s head, Lucas-Dockery attributes the act to the former carpenter’s “frustrated creative urge,” and is relieved that no investigation will endanger the continuation of his experiments (244). While daydreaming about the future accolades his research will receive, Lucas-Dockery is interrupted by a report that men are eating paste because it tastes better than their porridge (231–32). Lucas-Dockery proceeds to reprimand the messenger because he has not “ascertained all the facts” as to whether or not the paste has any nutritional benefit, and proceeds to ignore the obviously inhumane food being served at the facility (232). The irony of Lucas-Dockery’s self-serving humanism displays Waugh’s own sense of the shallowness of that ideology. Neither does Waugh affirm the cynical viewpoint of Professor Otto Silenus, an ultramodern architect who prefers to construct buildings that “house machines, not men” (159). Contrary to Lucas-Dockery’s modern humanism, Otto Silenus represents a uniquely modern disparagement about the state of mankind: “How obscure and gross [man’s] prancing and chattering on his little stage of evolution! How loathsome and beyond words all the thoughts and self-approval of this biological by-product!” (160). He also calls humanity “equally alien from the being of Nature and the doing of the machine, the vile becoming!” in reference to its position between animal and machine (160). Silenus longs for the “elimination of the human element” in art and claims that “man is never beautiful; he is never happy except when he becomes the channel for the distribution of mechanical forces” (159). The seriousness with which both Lucas-Dockery and Silenus take their ideologies is comical precisely because of the absurdity with which Waugh invigorates their characters, and by extension, their ideas. Both humanism, which stresses the innate goodness of human beings, and utilitarianism, which defines value only in terms of function, are distinctively modern philosophies. Both are also fundamentally opposed to orthodox Christianity, and especially to Catholicism, because one elevates the human to a position of natural goodness and the other desecrates the human to the level of a machine.

Through Waugh's rejection of these modern ideologies, he discreetly upholds a worldview that aligns with traditional Christian doctrines, like the concepts of original sin and humans being made in the image of God. When Paul Pennyfeather learns of Grimes's alleged death, he confesses that he cannot truly be dead and locates the former schoolmaster as of the "immortals":

He was a life force. Sentenced to death in Flanders, he popped up again in Wales; drowned in Wales, he emerged in South America; engulfed in the dark mystery of Ergon Mire, he would rise again somewhere at sometime, shaking from his limbs the dusty integuments of the tomb. Surely he had followed in the Bacchic train of distant Arcady, and played on the reeds of myth by forgotten streams, and taught the childish satyrs the art of love? Had he not suffered unscathed the fearful dooms of all the offended gods of all the histories, fire, brimstone, and yawning earthquakes, plague and pestilence? (*Decline and Fall* 269)

This illustration of Grimes as a "life force" is an acknowledgement of a universal human corruption—one that persists despite all natural and personal tragedy. In other words, Grimes's immorality reflects a sinful nature that is embedded within all of humanity; one that is more grievously demonstrated in Grimes than in most. Contrary to the philosophy of modern prison reformers, crime is not merely a "frustrated creative urge" but the natural propensity of the human heart. Yet the acknowledgement of a corrupt human nature does not mean that "man is never beautiful" as Silenus claims, and this extreme is just as opposed to orthodox theology as Lucas-Dockery's philosophy (*Decline and Fall* 159). That Waugh does not adhere to Silenus's line of thought is clear through his treatment of death in his satire. For all his callous handling of deaths and suicides in these early works, Waugh calls the reader's attention to the grim reality of how death is perceived in his own generation. In the world of *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies*, life is cheap and death is taken lightly. That this is at all comic to readers exhibits the erroneousness of a society that does not value human life. Countless characters in Waugh's early satires suffer tragic fates, and their demise is almost always handled with brevity and lightheartedness, revealing how far modern society has strayed from the traditional beliefs associated with the human person. Take, for instance, Flossie's death at a hotel in *Vile Bodies*. It might seem amusing when the owner of the hotel selfishly comments on the passing ("what I mind, is having a death in the house and all the fuss. It

doesn't do anyone any good having people killing themselves in a house"), but by exposing the levity with which characters observe tragedy, Waugh is exposing their unethical outlook (*Vile Bodies* 78).

Waugh does not only satirize modern ideologies; he also pokes fun at modern conceptions of sex and marriage in *Vile Bodies*. After the on-again, off-again couple Nina and Adam first have sex, Nina hates it. Even after Adam assures her that she will grow to enjoy it, she claims that she would rather do almost anything else. In order to show the degree to which premature sex can ruin relationships, Waugh writes of the couple's treatment of one another after their rendezvous: "Adam was inclined to be egotistical and despondent; Nina was rather grown up and disillusioned and distinctly cross" (*Vile Bodies* 121). Both also take marriage relatively lightly, in stark contrast to the Catholic affirmation of its sacredness in the "Syllabus of Errors," a Papal document that reasserts the sacred nature of the marital union despite Modernist tendencies to undervalue the sacrament. After several engagements, break-ups, and re-engagements, Adam tells Nina, "I don't know if it sounds absurd . . . but I do feel that a marriage ought to go on—for quite a long time," as opposed to the traditional idea that marriage should extend until death (169). Concerning happy marriages, Nina doesn't believe that "divine things like that ever do happen," and both go on to participate in an adulterous affair after Nina marries a competing love interest (105). The ultimate culmination of this affair is the conception of a child, which Nina complains is "too awful" (315). Nina's lack of moral grounding has not prepared her for the self-sacrifice that raising a child necessitates, and she cannot conceive of a world in which her own desires are not at the center. Once again, Waugh's satirical treatment of all this implies that he at least recognized the misplaced desire that the modern world imbued sex with, and was perhaps beginning to consider alternative views of human sexuality.

Evelyn Waugh once likened his conversion to "stepping across the chimney piece out of a Looking-Glass world, where everything is an absurd caricature, into the real world God made" (Pearce 210). The worlds of *Decline and Fall* and *Vile Bodies* are a good indicator of what Waugh meant by the phrase "absurd caricature." Waugh recognized the absurdity of a world without God—a mindset clearly visible in his early satires with how he depicts amusing but empty characters. It is naïve for critics like Edmund Wilson, therefore, to think of Waugh's early literature as merely jovial and

overlook the clear moral implications that his satire produced. If one looks closely, it is overwhelmingly clear that from his earliest work that Waugh took issue with religion that was more fashionable than traditional and that the moral convictions that led Waugh to embrace a Catholic faith only became more explicit in *Brideshead Revisited*.

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