

tries. To adopt this course is to be willing to help them while they are in a dependent state but to refuse to allow them to come to full maturity and to stand on their own feet.

We should be deeply grateful for the lead given us in this encyclical, but we should also remember that it is not a blueprint of an ideal social order. The drawing of a blueprint is a technical job demanding the collaboration of experts in many fields. We cannot expect the Church to do that job for us. We have been shown, however, the principles which should guide us. It is the duty of Catholic laymen at all levels to make those principles known and understood, and to study the ways and means of putting them into effect.

The use of key-words in the novels of Graham Greene— *Love, Hate and 'The End of the Affair'*

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'Every creative writer worth our consideration is a victim: a man given over to an obsession', wrote Graham Greene in an essay on Walter de la Mare.¹ Critics have not been slow in applying this statement to Mr Greene himself. He has been considered almost exclusively in terms of a few recurring obsessions: the vision of evil; the concept, borrowed from Péguy, of the sinner at the heart of Christianity; the theme of pursuit, and so on.

This critical approach has contributed much that is valuable to the study of his work. Unfortunately it has, by obscuring its variousness, inadvertently supplied ammunition to those critics who like to dismiss him as a mere manipulator of rigid and repetitive formulae. We can, for instance label both *The Confidential Agent* and *The Power and The Glory* as 'Pursuit' novels. But this does not take us very far. Apart from

¹*The Lost Childhood and other essays* (1951) p. 79.

the fact that *The Confidential Agent* is an 'Entertainment', and *The Power and The Glory* a 'Novel,' the two books are of course entirely different. To determine the identity of each we must probe deeper than the obsessive symbol of pursuit, to the obsessive word. The key-word in *The Confidential Agent* is 'trust', presented mainly in its negative aspect as 'mistrust' or 'distrust'. These three words occur at least sixteen times in *The Confidential Agent*. The irony of its title is therefore clear: the hero is a confidential agent who has confidence in nobody, and in whom nobody has confidence. The key-word in *The Power and The Glory* is 'abandonment', used eleven times in the novel, with many shades of meaning, but principally to establish the physical or geographical abandonment of the part of Mexico in which the action takes place, and its spiritual abandonment by God, which only the whiskey-priest can prevent from being final.²

It is not possible to discuss key-words in all the novels in a single article. I propose, therefore, to examine one novel, where this technique is used with striking effect: *The End Of The Affair*. A brief synopsis of the plot may be helpful. Maurice Bendrix has had a love affair with Sarah, who inexplicably severed their relationship after Bendrix had narrowly escaped death in a flying-bomb explosion. Two years later, Bendrix, still possessed by jealous hatred, meets Sarah's husband Henry and learns that she is behaving strangely, and that Henry suspects a liaison with another man. Bendrix arranges to have Sarah investigated by a private detective, Parkis, and is put in possession of her journal. From this he learns that Sarah had been convinced that he had been killed by the explosion, and had prayed for a miracle to a God in whom she did not really believe, promising to give up Bendrix in return for his life. Since that time, convinced that her prayer was answered, she has resisted the severe temptation to return to him, and has moved, despite herself, towards positive belief in God through the Catholic Faith. Thus enlightened, Bendrix begs her to return to him; but she refuses, and dies shortly afterwards. Bendrix, an agnostic, is bitterly resentful of the destructive effect of religion on their happiness; but he is disturbed by the aura of sanctity which surrounded Sarah in her last days; by information which establishes that Sarah, unknown to herself, had been a baptized Catholic; and by certain phenomena which

²When Mr Greene in his Mexican travels, arrived at Villa Hermosa (the 'port' of *The Power And the Glory*) he wrote: 'One felt one was drawing near to the centre of something—if it was only of darkness and abandonment'. *The Lawless Roads* (Uniform Edition, 1955) p. 139.

have the appearance of miracles performed through her intercession.

One's impression that *The End Of The Affair* is an elaborate study of love and hate on both human and divine levels, is strikingly confirmed by a statistical analysis of the novel. In a rough count I listed 298 occurrences of the word 'love' or forms of it (i.e. 'loved', 'lover', 'lovely', etc.); and 106 occurrences of the word 'hate' or forms of it ('hated', 'hatred', etc.). 'Love' is, of course, a very common word in modern fiction; but this still seems to me a remarkable number of occurrences. In *The Heart Of The Matter*, a much longer novel dealing with similar emotional relationships, there are only 162 occurrences of 'love' and its forms: in Scobie love is confused with more ambiguous feelings of pity and responsibility.³ I discounted only one use of the word 'love' in *The End Of The Affair* on the grounds of its being empty of meaning—when the girl Sylvia replies to Bendrix's invitation to dinner, 'I'd love it'.⁴ In this novel even the epithet 'lovely', which has become virtually meaningless in modern colloquial speech, recovers its original significance. Sarah, addressing God, says:

'What do you love most? If I believed in you, I suppose I'd believe in the immortal soul, but is that what you love? Can you really see it there under the skin? Even a God can't love something that doesn't exist, he can't love something he cannot see. When he looks at me, does he see something I can't see? It must be lovely if he is able to love it. That's asking me to believe too much, that there's anything lovely in me'.⁵

In *The End Of The Affair* 'love' and 'hate' are often linked, by antithesis, synthesis or paradox. Within the quartet of the novel's main protagonists—Bendrix, Sarah, Henry, and 'that stranger I had paid Parkis to track down',⁶ God—love and hate operate in almost every possible permutation. So complex is this web of conflicting and ambiguous emotion, that it is almost impossible to unravel without a lengthy and detailed analysis of the novel which would be beyond the scope of this article. But the main themes of *The End Of The Affair* may be described as follows:—

In writing his account of the 'affair', Bendrix is swayed alternately by the love he has felt for Sarah, by the hate which her apparent deser-

³Most critics of *The Heart Of The Matter* have recognized that 'pity' is a key-word in the novel. It occurs thirty-one times. But 'responsibility', which occurs twenty-nine times, is of equal importance.

⁴*The End Of The Affair* (Uniform ed., 1955) p. 197.

⁵p. 119.

⁶p. 164.

tion has generated, and by the peculiar mixture of love and hate called 'jealousy'. 'This is a record of hate far more than love', he states at the outset of his narrative.⁷ Later he describes it as 'a long record of jealousy'.⁸ Further on he becomes conscious of the ambiguity of his emotions:

'When I began to write I said this was a story of hatred, but I am not convinced. Perhaps my hatred is as deficient as my love. I looked up just now from writing and caught sight of my own face in a mirror close to my desk, and I thought, does hatred really look like that? For I was reminded of that face we have all of us seen in childhood, looking back at us from the shop-window, the features blurred with our breath, as we stare with such longing at the bright unobtainable objects within.'⁹

The image suggests that Bendrix's misery proceeds from a sense of deprivation, deprivation of something which he dimly perceives Sarah to have possessed, and which exerts its influence on him after her death: faith. Faith itself, however, touches him through hate: "I hate You, God, I hate You as though You existed".¹⁰ Similarly Sarah finds her way to God through an irrational, but understandable resentment against him because by accepting her vow he deprived her of Bendrix: 'If he exists, then he put the thought of this vow into my mind and I hate him for it'.¹¹ Again and again the close interrelationship that exists between love and hate is emphasized, culminating in this involved passage (in which Bendrix is the 'I'):

'I lay down on my bed and closed my eyes and I tried to be reasonable. If I hate her so much as I sometimes do, how can I love her? Can one really hate and love? Or is it only myself that I really hate? I hate the books I write with their trivial unimportant skill, I hate the craftsman's mind in me so greedy for copy that I set out to seduce a woman I didn't love for the information she could give me, I hate this body that enjoyed so much but was inadequate to express what the heart felt, and I hate my untrusting mind, that set Parkis on the watch who laid powder on door bells, rifled wastepaper baskets, stole your secrets.

'From the drawer of my bedside table I took her journal and opening it at random, under a date last January, I read: "O God, if I could really hate you, what would that mean?" And I thought, hating Sarah is only loving Sarah and hating myself is only loving myself. I'm not worth hating . . . Nothing—not even Sarah—is worth our hatred if You exist, except You. "And I thought sometimes I've hated Maurice, but would

⁷p. 1.⁸p. 60.⁹p. 64.¹⁰p. 236.¹¹p. 111.

I have hated him if I hadn't loved him too? O God, if I could really hate you'¹²

Of equal importance to the love-hate theme, is the correspondence which is established between human, i.e. sexual love, and divine love. Reviewing *The End Of The Affair*, Evelyn Waugh remarked on the poverty of the English language when required to describe sexual experience:

'The story deals extensively with sexual relations and here any writer, however skilful, is gravely handicapped by the lack of suitable words Mr Greene often uses the term "make love" to describe sexual intercourse. Normally that is an inoffensive euphemism, but here, where love is often used in its high spiritual sense, there is an ironical twist in the phrase which frustrates the writer's aim.'¹³

This is a strangely defective judgment in what is otherwise a perceptive and sympathetic review. It is surely manifest that Mr Greene's invariable use of the term 'make love' is deliberate: the semantic interchangeability of terms describing human and divine love points to a deeper mystery of identification, of which even Bendrix has an obscure intimation:

'The words of human love have been used by the saints to describe their vision of God: and so, I suppose, we might use the terms of prayer, meditation, contemplation to explain the intensity of love we feel for a woman. We too surrender memory, intellect, intelligence, and we too experience the deprivation, the *noche oscura*, and sometimes as a reward a kind of peace. The act of love itself has been described as the little death, and lovers sometimes experience too the little peace. It is odd to find myself writing these phrases as though I loved what in fact I hate.'¹⁴

Some readers have been offended by the frank carnality of the sexual relationship described in *The End Of The Affair*. This problem always resolves itself into a question of private taste; but at least it is demonstrable that the sexual element in the novel is an essential part of its theme. Bendrix is in erotic rivalry with God for the possession of Sarah. He broods repeatedly on the crisis of the act of love, characterized by a quality of abandonment. Parkis retrieves from Sarah's wastepaper basket a fragment of what Bendrix believes to have been a love-letter to another man:

'I know I am only beginning to love, but already I want to abandon

¹²pp. 224-5. ¹³*The Month* Sept. 1951, p.175.

¹⁴*The End Of The Affair*, p. 52.

everything, everybody but you: only fear and habit prevent me'.¹⁵

Bendrix's jealousy is particularly aggravated by her use of the word 'abandon': 'reading her letters to my unknown successor would have hurt less if I hadn't known how capable she was of abandonment'.¹⁶ In fact, as Bendrix later realizes, Sarah's words were addressed to God, and the abandonment was the soul's abandonment of itself to His love.

Sarah, however, is a sensual woman, and her love of God proceeds from her capacity for carnal love. This connection is subtly employed to create an apologia for the materialism of the Catholic Faith—statues, crucifixes, the dogma of the Resurrection of the body, *et cetera*. When Sarah first enters a Catholic Church she 'hated the statues, the crucifix, all the emphasis on the human body. I was trying to escape from the body and all it needed'.¹⁷ She would prefer, she thinks, to believe in a God 'that would have no relation to ourselves, something vague, amorphous, cosmic like a powerful vapour moving among the chairs and walls'.¹⁸ Later in her train of thought she recalls a scar on Bendrix's shoulder, which he received when protecting another man from a falling wall. 'And so I thought, do I want that body to be vapour (mine yes, but his?), and I knew I wanted that scar to exist through all eternity. But could my vapour love that scar? Then I began to want my body that I hated, but only because it could love that scar'.¹⁹ She 'no longer felt any hate of those statues'.²⁰ The transition from Maurice to Christ is made in sexual terms:

'And of course on the altar there was a body too—such a familiar body, more familiar than Maurice's, that it had never struck me before as a body with all the parts of a body, even the parts the loin-cloth concealed I looked at that material body on that material cross and I wondered, how could the world have nailed a vapour there?'²¹

Mr Greene has travelled a long way from the naive dualism of *The Man Within* (1929), in which sexual love, represented by the trollop Lucy, is evil, and the chaste love of Elizabeth is good; from the Manichaean disgust with the flesh which is depicted with a certain horrified fascination and sympathy in the Minty of *England Made Me* (1935) and in the Pinkie of *Brighton Rock* (1938).

The purpose of this essay has been to draw attention to a neglected aspect of Graham Greene's art. Although I have discussed only one novel in detail, the study of key-words can, I believe, be usefully applied

¹⁵ p. 59.

¹⁶ p. 81.

¹⁷ p. 130.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ p. 131.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ pp. 132-3.

to other novels by him. In almost every case we find that his vivid imagery, shrewd observation of character, and thoughtful meditations on the human situation, are anchored to a particular word or group of words, in which the theme of the novel is epitomized, and through which the latter is communicated to the reader. An analysis of this technique does, I think, reveal him as a serious literary artist who utilizes the resources of language more fully than some critics are prepared to acknowledge.

Russian Opinion

THE PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND THE COUNCIL

Since the new Oecumenical Council was announced, the Patriarch of Moscow has more than once declared the attitude of his church towards it. The first time he did so was in answer to a report in *Il Tempo* (19th May 1959) that the Papal Nuncio in Vienna, Mgr Dellepiane, had been in touch with Orthodox bishops sent from Moscow to arrange for Russian participation in the Council. This story the Patriarch denied outright in a short and dignified announcement published in *Izvestya* (21st June 1959), and it was added that the Russian Church neither had considered nor would consider taking any part in what was regarded as a strictly domestic affair of the Roman church. Nothing further appears to have been said about Mgr Dellepiane and the Orthodox bishops, either by *Il Tempo* or by the Vatican, so we can only believe that the Patriarch was telling the truth. No doubt the story in *Il Tempo* made things no worse than they would have been anyway, but even on so small a scale it seems a pity that a fresh example should have been given of that curious lack of feeling which the West seems fated to show when approaching the schismatics of the East.

The second occasion when the Patriarch mentioned the Council was during a stay in Istanbul on his return from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. His spokesman repeated what is for the most part the usual Eastern view, that the Orthodox churches are already united, and that any step towards union with Rome would have to depend upon the Pope's renunciation of his claim to infallibility and, what is more unusual, his acceptance of the dogmatic reforms of the Orthodox church. A specifically Russian worry was voiced when the Patriarch was in Athens, and his spokesman said that if there were to be any question of meeting the Pope for discussions on reunion, then the Russian church would