THE CHANGING FACE OF CATHOLIC FICTION AND GRAHAM GREENE'S PLACE IN IT

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ÖZET

Katolik romancılar, son zamanlara kadar yazın sanatını inançlarının ifadesinde bir araç olarak kullanma eğiliminde oldukları gerekçesiyle olumsuz eleştiri almışlardır. Bu eğilim romandaki realizm öğesine bir tehdit olarak algılanmış ve Katoliklerin iyi roman yazamayacağı fikri genel olarak kabul görmüştür.

Bu olumsuz tepkiye rağmen, Katolik romancılar üretken olmuşlar ve Katolik olsun veya olmasın geniş bir okuyucu kitlesine ulaşmayı başarmışlardır. Bu yazarların arasında Graham Greene, Katolik imgeleri kullanarak realizm öğesini kaybetmeden iyi roman yazılabileceğini kanıtladığı için, edebiyat dünyasında seçkin bir yer edinmiştir. İlk dönem eserlerinde Greene, Tanrı'nın merhametindeki şaşırtıcı özellikleri ve günahkarları kendine döndürmek için izlediği yolları tema olarak işlemiştir. İkinci dönem eserlerinde daha paradoxaldır ve bu durum, Roma Katolik Kilisesinin üyeleri ile arasında var olan gerginliği artırmıştır.

ABSTRACT

Until recent times Catholic novelists had been adversely criticized for tending to use fiction as an expression of their belief. This was regarded as a threat to 'realism' in the novel and it was generally felt that Catholics could not produce good novels.

Despite this negative reaction, Catholic novelists were prolific and managed to appeal to a wide range of readers, both Catholic and non-Catholic. Among them, Graham Greene was one of the most outstanding figures for he proved that it was possible to write good fiction using Catholic imagery without loss of realism. In the earlier novels he took as common themes the appalling strangness of mercy of God and the strange means he used to seduce sinners back to Him. A later work was more paradoxical and this enhanced the tension between himself and conservative members of the Roman Catholic Church.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The rise of the novel was linked directly with the rise of the middle class element and of the individual in a modern secular society. It belonged to the plural nature of a Protestant society rather than to a Church dominated Catholic community. The novel was accepted as an attempt to express the individual and it required a liberal atmosphere in which to flourish. In this attempt the novelists tried to establish a link between the words and the world, that is realism. They reflected what their characters as individuals experienced in this world without any reference to another world, to another sphere of reality.

Consequently, Roman Catholicism seemed too authoritarian, in fact a hindrance to the novel form. Sir Hugh Walpole once said that he was against the spread of Roman Catholicism because it would be bad for the novel (1991:ix) Like Walpole most critics have been of the same opinion because of its authoritarian attitude and habit of censorshiping the imaginative arts.

In this atmosphere of censorship, one would expect that there would be no Catholic fiction in England, but the reality is very different. Catholic novelists have been relatively prolific and have appealed to a wide range of the reading public. Some of the better known ones are: John Henry Newman, Acton-von-Hügel, Wilde, Tolkien, Evelyn

Waugh, Graham Greere, AJ Cronin, Antonia White, David Lodge, Allis Thomas Ellis and Murial Spark. Despite the heavy criticism these novelists received from the critics they continued to produce and proved their presence in fiction. The readers' poll in 1989 by the Sunday Times showed that three of the twelve books which were chosen as classics of fiction were by Catholic novelists: Evelyn Waugh's Brideshead Revisited, Graham Greene's The Power and the Glory, and Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings. Taking into consideration the fact that the Catholic community in Britain has always been of minority status, this result shows that Catholic novelists were appealing to the public at large.

An interesting factor about Catholic fiction is that until recently it was largely produced by converts to Catholicism, not by cradle Catholics. Until David Lodge and his generation, because of the disadvantageous financial status of Catholics, in educational life cradle Catholics did not have much access to many walks of life in Britain. The first generation of converts were usually clergymen and they wrote for edification purposes. It was with the second generation that the features of a Catholic fiction began to appear. These second generation novelists were from different backgrounds and were in a position to combine their non-Catholic background with a Catholic viewpoint and Catholic imagery.

They made use of Catholic imagery in their writing but were rarely in total harmony with the teachings of the Church. There has always been a kind of tension between the Church and the novelists and, not surprisingly perhaps, this has had a positive impact on their writing. Because their characters were experiencing the same kind of tension with the Church, this brought another dimension to their fiction, providing a new theme for them to exploit.

However, up to the time of Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh, Catholic fiction in Britain did not find a large audience. It was with these writers in the 1930 s, that Catholic fiction first began to be popular. Together they elevated the status of this novel tradition in Britain. Both of them were converts, not cradle Catholics. In some quarters they were adversely criticized because of the Catholic elements in their writing , yet on the whole their works were received well by Catholics and non-Catholics alike, in both Britain and elsewhere.

They combined Catholic imagery with the devices of the realist novel. Both Greene and Waugh were aware that they were writing for a secular society, thus their works were open to different levels of reading. Between them and the Catholic Church, as mentioned above, there was considerable tension. Graham Greene in particular was severely criticized in some circles for his handling of

Catholic dogmas and Catholic clergy in his fiction. His The Power and the Glory was condemned by the Holy Office because of his portrayal of the Catholic priest in it.

Of the two, Graham Greene reflects more what was going on in the progressive side of Catholic fiction. Until the Second Vatican Council which changed the authoritative image of Catholicism in the world and made it much more liberal in its teachings and doctrines, Greene had been looking at institutional Catholicism with questioning eyes. He used much Catholic imagery but never conformed totally to its teachings. There always had been a conflict between the conservative Catholics and Graham Greene. It is interesting that he came into a similar kind of conflict with both certain Catholic and certain non-Catholic circles. There was a conflict with conservative Catholics because he questioned the taboos of Catholicism and the use of supernatural elements in his fiction offended some non-Catholic readers. Even so his works were read by a great number of people.

It was after the Catholic world split into the progressive and post-conservative groups following the Council which was dominated by progressive members of the Church that Greene wrote A Burnt-out Case. He reflected the attitude of the progressive wing of the Catholic clergy so he was celebrated by some Catholics and was condemned by others. He portrayed his priests with a

new and a revolutionary dimension as a result of the new tendencies in Continental Catholicism. From then on his approach to religion was paradoxical and uninstitutional, this was carried to such an extent that some of his contemporaries accused him of having lost his faith.

Whatever the reactions from Catholics or non-Catholics were, Greene's works stand to disprove the assumptions that Catholics could not write good fiction, and proved on the contrary that it is quite possible to write good novels on Catholic themes and with Catholic imagery. Some critics even talked of the positive effect of Catholicism on his writing while some others talked of the limitations or negative effects of it. Greene's successful career definitely justified the views of the first group.

He has helped to give an identity to Catholic fiction and make it popular among the reading public. He was influenced both by his Catholic (especially Ford Madox Ford) and his non-Catholic predecessors but it is unquestionable that he brought a new colour to the Catholic tradition.

After Greene and his generation had established the fact that there was Catholic fiction in Britain, there was a strange turn in events. Up to the 1950s, Catholic novelists had been harshly criticized for their use of the supernatural and their lack of realism. However with the appearance of the new critical trends (of which the

postmodernism was the most influential) they were suddenly celebrated for those very qualities for which they had been criticized.

Simultaneous to these developments in the literary world, Catholic fiction was undergoing a process of change due to the changing image of Catholicism after the Second Vatican Council. The Roman Catholic Church which once was accused of orthodoxy and censorship was trying to loosen old prohibitions so as to appeal to more people and attract them again. Whatever the results were for practising Catholics, the effect of this loosening seems to have been negative as regards Catholic fiction. With the liberalization in the teachings of the Church, the traditional source of Catholic imagery which had coloured the writings of Catholic novelists disappeared. Catholicism was to be no more a valid intellectual option for modern man with its apartness and its age old cultural heritage. It now looked very much like Protestantism with its liberal and plural attitude.

In this research, the First Chapter will be emphasizing the birth and development of Catholic fiction in Britain with reference to Protestant fiction and its nature. The attitude of some of the leading literary figures such as Orwell and Lodge to Catholicism and Catholic fiction will be dealt with in detail and a brief picture of how Catholic fiction extended into the 20th century and

the innovations made by Greene and Waugh in the first half of this century will also be included. This chapter will then go on to discuss what happened after the Second Vatican Council (when the progressive movement came to the fore) in the Catholic world and its impact on Catholic fiction. Further it briefly treats the relationship between Catholic fiction and recent critical trends.

The second chapter will focus on how Greene drew upon Catholic imagery in his fiction as well as on the tension between him and the Catholic church with reference to his religious novels written before the Second Vatican Council (Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory, The Heart of the Matter, and The End of the Affair). With these novels Greene helped Catholic fiction in Britain to gain an identity and popularity but nevertheless he was the target for criticism of both Catholic and non-Catholic circles.

The Third Chapter is an analysis of The End of the Affair as the best example of Green's religious novels. It is the last novel of the first part of his career, so in a way this novel can be regarded as the culmination of this period. Lastly, in the Fourth Chapter, there is an account of Greene's literary activities after the Council and how he reflected the revolutionary decisions taken by the Council in his fiction. A Burnt-out Case is the only religious novel by Greene in this period, thus the focus of the last chapter will be this particular novel.

The reason why this study has focused on Greene and his works rather than on any other Catholic writers is that Greene's career seems to be an epitome of the history of Catholic fiction in Britain. He is fully representative of the Catholic novelist of his time and his career extends through both the pre-and post-Councilliar years which make up two distinct periods in the history of Catholic fiction. Moreover, along with Evelyn Waugh he enjoys a unique place in the history of Catholic fiction because he proved that it is possible to write really good worthwhile novels in the Catholic tradition, in spite of all the negative feedback he received from contemporary critics. As Woodman has said:

> Later writers such as Gabriel Fielding, Piers Paul Read and David Lodge obviously reveal the influences of Waugh and Greene. Yet the distinctive form of the Catholic novel so beloved in critical discussion exists definitely in this century only in Greene's work and in a direct imitation such as Read's The Upstart.
>
> (1991:xii)

CHAPTER I

The Development of Catholic Fiction in Britain

Until quite recent times it has always been felt that Catholicism was an obstacle in the way of novel writing. As in the words of Harvey, 'where metaphysical or final issues arise' and 'where a total commitment to one ideology is envisaged' then 'a kind of fiction, romance, fable, the novel of ideas' may be produced not the novel itself (1991: x).

Research into literary history has justified this idea directly or indirectly. In his The Origins of the English Novel (1600-1740), Michael McKeon praises Ian Watt for his comprehensive analysis of the rise of the novel and its main features in his The Rise of the Novel (1987:1). For McKeon, Watt deserves praise because he puts emphasis, as a primary feature, on the formal realism of the novel. Watt draws a parallel between the rise of the novel and the social context of the 18th century. The outcome of this effort reveals much about the features of the novel as a genre and its relation to circumstances in the 18th century. For Watt, the general characteristics of the social context which promoted the rise of the novel are as follows;

> the validation of the individual experience, development of capitalism, and of economic specialization, the spread of a secularized Protestantism, the increasing dominance of the commercial and industrial classes, and the growth of the reading public. (1987:1)

Watt's analysis is interesting for a research on Catholic fiction because all his remarks seem to dissociate the novel genre from Catholicism. He points to the increasing dominance of the commercial and industrial classes, that is the middle classes, as one of the characteristics of the time. Now, the Catholic community lacked this middle class element until the 20th century. A closer look at the situation shows that the 18th century Catholic community was made up of a small number of aristocratic families who refused to accept Protestantism and of members of the lower classes; these latter were under financial and social pressure, and were isolated from the main stream of life in Britain in many ways. Until Catholic Emancipation was achieved in 1829, Catholics were suppressed in many walks of life but from this time on they gained access to the social and financial life.

Another focus, in Watt's research, is the validation of the individual experience and the spread of secularized Protestantism. The strong link between these two features is of paramount importance because in the social context of the 18th century they promoted one another. The same idea was later stressed by Orwell as when he says;

> Literature as we know it is an individual thing, demanding mental honesty and a minimum of censorship. And this is even truer of prose than of verse.
>
> (1981:240)

It is in this context that Orwell's distrust of orthodoxy should be placed,

> The atmosphere of orthodoxy is always damaging to the novel, the most anarchical of all forms of literature.
>
> (1981:240)

At this point he identifies the novel more with Protestantism rather than Catholicism,

> How many Roman Catholics have been good novelists?... The novel is practically a Protestant form of art, it is product of the free mind, of the autonomous individual.
>
> (1981:240)

Here again Orwell puts individualism side by side with Protestanism. Another writer, a contemporary and a Catholic himself, David Lodge in his Write On says,

> ... as a writer and academic, I would rather work in a pluralist secular state than in one in which the Church (that is the Roman Catholic Church) played a dominant or militant cultural role.
>
> (1986:37)

To these novelists the Catholic tradition seemed authoritarian, it was seen as a barrier to novel writing. These views seem to be harsh but they prevailed in the novel writing world for years. Georg Lukacs summarizes this attitude in his The Theory of the Novel in one sentence, "The novel is the epic of a world that has been abandoned by God" (1978:88).

Ian Watt in his The Rise of the Novel insists that the 'realist' element is one of the most important features of the novel. Most of the critics regarded Roman Catholicism as a threat to this 'realist' element. They seem to be right because the Catholic novelists have always reflected the realities of this world in a way which emphasized the realities of another world, which transcends this world. They felt they had to emphasize the deeper realities that are not to be found "in a complacent liberal Protestant or secular society that has its own vested interest in denying them" (1991: 111).

The concept of the lack of realism in Catholic fiction was affirmed by the Catholic novelists themselves. Chesterton, a leading figure in Catholic fiction in the 1930s says quite simply in his The Return of Don Quixote "Realism is dull" (1991:161). Indeed there seemed to be a fundamental clash between realism and Catholicism. Thematically it was impossible for Catholic novelists to write a realist novel because the emphasis on the Fall, sin and the paradoxes of grace make it impossible for one to recognize the individual responsibility and morality which the novel depends on. For long years the very origins of the novel were supposed to lie in secularism and the liberal realism which prompted the idea that the individual is by and large in control of his/her moral destinies. This was irrelevant to Catholicism.

For McKeon, another important quality that links the novel with Protestant thought is the literalizing of the Bible. He says,

> In England, if not in Roman Catholic Italy the vulnerability of Scripture itself was paradoxically a clear consequence of Protestant and typographic biblioatry . (1987:77)

The endless controversies on the accuracy of history as it was written by man led to a sceptical attitude towards the Bible as well. Especially the different translations of the Bible strengthened the idea that it was penned by human hands. The Quaker Samuel Fisher calls the Bible:

> a bulk of heterogeneous writings, compiled together by men taking what they could find of the several sorts of writings that are there in...(Keon 1987:77).

Such views strengthened the concept of the Bible as a mere history or narration.

Protestantism brought with it a new way of looking at things quite different from the orthodoxy of Roman Catholicism which accepted everything in the Bible as an absolute. In terms of religion, taboos of the centuries were subject to the questioning of Protestantism. In this state of mind, a character in one of the novels of the time went even further and said; "The Book of Genesis seem'd to me mere Fiction" (Keon 1987:78), similarly the Baptist John Bunyan had the courage to ask himself whether "the holy

scriptures were not rather a Fable and cunning story, than the holy and pure word of God" so his Mr. Badman asks "How do you know them to be the word of God? How do you know that these sayings are true?" (1987:78).

These secular ideas raised the possibility for the literary man of the time of the historicity or fictiveness of the Bible and further encouraged him to narrate what was happening in the world on the grounds of realism. In this effort, the literary figures were, of course, supported by the religious authorities of the time. In 1687, an Anglican apostate to popery found that there were,

> so many mistakes, and so many errors in the beginning of Genesis, that the Jewish religion is little else than a forgery, and that it has but small evidence of a Revelation from God Almighty.
>
> (Keon 1987:79)

In this context it would not be inappropriate to suggest that one of the most important things which prompted the rise of the novel was the very act of questioning of the Bible. This, however, was impossible in the orthodoxy of Roman Catholicism.

As has been stated above, the view that Roman Catholicism is a hindrance to realism of the novel had been very popular until the appearance of the new trends in literature which questioned the realism in the novel. These new trends tried to undermine the realist elements in

fiction. Naturally this gave credit to the works of Catholic novelists. On the other hand, in the period prior to these new trends, Catholic writers had, interestingly enough, produced 'good novels', even from a realistic standpoint. Even though these novels were condemned by some critics, they managed to appeal to the reading public. Therefore before dealing with the relationship of Catholic fiction to the new trends, it would be useful to look briefly at the history of Catholic fiction and culture in England.

Until Catholic Emancipation in 1829, the Catholic community lived in its own environment peculiar to itself. In fact it was a small community, and because of the sectarian attitudes underwent financial and social constraints. As Josephine Mary Ward says, the Catholics lived in the "enforced seclusion and inaction of penal days" (1991:3). After the Emancipation they found the opportunity to improve their position in British public life and this changed their popular concept in society.

Meanwhile an aesthetic and cultural interest in Catholicism was coming to the fore among the public at large due in part to the cult of Medievalism (encouraged by the works of Sir Walter Scott), in part to a longing for a Catholic past, and, in part as a strong reaction to Victorian complacency. The result was a considerable number of conversions to Catholicism. There were, in addition, other factors that changed the scene for the Catholics in Britain

after mid-century. Perhaps the most important ones were the great amount of Irish immigrations and the influence of the Oxford Movement Conversions. During this time the number of Catholic Churches increased because of the Irish influx. Still it is worth noting here that the influx was scarcely reflected in the Catholic fiction of the time because the Catholic novelists themselves were mostly converts and from a middle class background.

The mid-century Oxford Movement Conversions produced the most notable change in Catholic literary life. These new Catholic writers began to criticize the Church of England's liberalism and set down their own ideology which rejected the Victorian establishment. Moreover these converts, former Anglicans, found the service of Benediction and other practices in the Catholic Church which did not exist in the Church of England extremely impressive. These converts wrote popular novels which dealt with, naturally, conversion and controversies associated with it and apologetics.

Among these Oxford Movement converts, John Henry Newman, a theologian, played a very important role in the Catholic literature of his time. He tried to bring the timeless elements of Chiristianity into the changing atmosphere of the age. He attempted to reconcile the major elements of reason and romanticism. This gives him a significant role in Victorian Literature in general. As Woodman says,

> he is the only British Catholic thinker to provide not only a critique of the central Victorian Synthesis but also an intellectual alternative that is neither backward looking nor modishly liberal.
> (1991:7)

His novels can hardly be considered as realistic, but it is quite possible to read them as hybrid because of the debates his characters entered into, and the way he inserts theological technicalities into his fiction. Another thing he did was to treat Anglicanism with a satiric wit in a brilliant technical way. In the first of his two novels, Loss and Gain (1848) he fictionalized his own conversion but as his purpose was the edification of his community he combined his fiction with a sense of emotional suffering and theological doctrines. He reflected in both his novels the personal cost of conversion in terms of career and place in society. In his second novel, Callista, he also dealt with a conversion but this time he chose Africa in the third century as his setting. It tells the story of a Greek pagan woman. She is attracted by Christianity but not converted to it to start with. Later on she is arrested when she helps to shelter Christians and put into prison. There she is converted and becomes a martyr. The use of historical fiction here helps him combine apologetics with entertainment.

Like Newman, his contemporaries Wiseman and Manning included theological detail in their fiction. They too made use of historical fiction in their works and dealt with conversion stories. All three of them drew a parallel between the persecution of the early Christians and the situation of Catholics in Victorian England. They took novel writing as a means to realize their mission that is, as a means to educate their community.

As opposed to the first generation of the novelist converts who were largely clergymen and ordinants, the second generation came from a variety of different backgrounds and among them were society ladies and professional man. There started to appear a middle class element among these converts and a novel reading public for them. They put the emphasis more on entertainment than upon edification, this made them popular. They made use of the elements of Victorian romance and sensational fiction so we find that "foundlings, inheritence struggles, Melodramatic villains, emotional reconciliations and deathbed repentances" (1991:8) make a frequent appearance in their works.

In the works of the second generation of novelist converts, the theme of conversion was combined with the renunciation of earthly love and the flesh. A frequent motif was the heroine-lover-faith triangle. Most of them had adultery or something approaching it for a sub-theme. For

example in Lady Georgiana Fullerton's Ladybird (1853) an account of the heroine Gertrude's love for Adrien d'Arberg is given. After hearing that Adrien has entered a Catholic Seminary, she marries another man. Later on she learns that she has been misinformed. Presently, her husband dies but by then Adrien has already become a Jesuit missionary. From then on Gertrude works for the poor to get rid of the sin of her attachment for Adrien.

As in the example of Ladybird, the events are interwoven as in a typical Victorian novel. Catholic elements simply afford a different colour, they do not determine the course of events.

A closer look at the 19th century context will make it easier to understand further developments in fiction in general and their impact on Catholic fiction in particular. Secularism and science gained importance with the work of Darwin. Darwin especially, "with his monumental marshalling of evidence to establish the theory of natural selection " made the topic public. Religious authorities of the time attacked his works because they seemed to "contradict a literary interpretation of the Bible" (Norton Anthology of English Literature, Volume: II, 1608).

Further, industrialism was the cause for novelists to divide into two camps: One group supported this progress and was influenced by socialist ideas but the other group was nostalgic for the past. They reflected their attitudes in

their fiction. Intellectuals of the time, in their debates for or against the changes, were questioning biblical truth.

Scepticism was in the air more than ever. The woman problem came explicitly onto stage for the first time in the history of England and the traditional roles of wives and daughters were questioned.

The result was social and political unrest, and economic difficulties also came to the fore. The very foundations of Victorian confidence were threatened. Counter to or, perhaps, as a result of these social changes there appeared an interest in spiritualism. The Theological Society (in 1875) and The Society for Psychical Research (in 1882) were founded. These organisations provided a kind of intellectual or spiritual alternative for the man of the time.

The political and religious crisis caused by these changes in Victorian life was ignored by Catholic writers until William Barry wrote his The New Antigone in 1887. The effect was dramatic because his convert was not an Anglican but an agnostic, the beautiful Hippolyta.

The Catholic novelists began to show an awareness of new issues. Craigie, Randolph, Dering and Barry dealt with a wider range of themes than had their predecessors and recognized the scepticism and the progression in the

politcs of their time. To these writers Catholicism was the only solution to the problems of the time.

These novelists were followed by Benson, Rolfe, Chesterton and Belloc in the Edwardian era. Rolfe and Benson, like Ford, attacked the newly militant secularism and scientism of their time. Belloc and Chesterton were more popular with their views and debates they participated rather than their literary products. Belloc's novels largely aimed at criticizing the political and financial system of the time. Likewise, in Chesterton's novels, there is the mingling of style with content and ideology, therefore they are more like a political and religious expression rather than fiction. Chesterton "affirms the centrality of the imaginative, fictive quality" but,

> The simple need for some kind of ideal world in which fictitious persons play an ideal part is infinitely deeper and older than the rules of a good art and much more important.
>
> (1991:18)

He appreciates the literary taste of the common man but also reflects the desire to return to an idealized medieval social order with his words 'ideal world'.

The importance of Chesterton and Belloc lies in the

fact that they helped British Catholics to overcome a sense of intellectual inferiority. They emphasized their Church as an age-old international order and referred to the Catholic past of Britain and compared it with the following turbulent history of British Protestantism and secularism.

Up to this period, Catholic culture was still in many aspects isolated from the main body of British social life. Catholic thinkers had largely appealed to the working classes or lower middle class community and tried to protect their community from the influence of modern ideas, arts and sciences. As Lodge puts it in his Write On, "That 'ghetto' Catholicism had its virtues but openness to the benign influence of culture was not one of them " (1986:32). The clergy were educated in separate institutions and never went to the universities, because universities were "centres of academic excellence where high culture is nourished and transmitted" says Lodge, and he goes on to say "The Institutional Church... has often been positively hostile to it (high culture)" (1986:32). The attitude of the Church to fiction was parallel to its attitude to education. It tried to protect its community from corrupt "high culture" and indeed as Lodge states, "Its interest in imaginative arts; literature, drama and film was mainly of censorship (Write On 1986, 32).

Paradoxically the Catholic novelists were largely

converts from aristocratic origin, that is they were educated in those establishments of 'high culture'. They both reacted against the conventions of their time and were influenced by the literary style those conventions produced. Because of the censorship of the Church, there was usually a tension between the so-called realist novelist converts and the Church. Orwell referring to the negative effect of Catholicism on Catholic novelists says "even the handful ones (Catholic novelists) have been bad Catholics " (1981:240).

In his Write On, Lodge makes an interesting comment on the isolated attitude of the clergy and their refusal to join the high culture. He says that by living isolated they contributed in a different way;

> They protected an image of Catholicism as something essentially exotic and/or badly opposed to the prevailing spirit of the native cultural tradition, whether the latter was seen as liberal Protestant (in 19th century) or secular agnostic (in 20th century).
>
> (1986:33)

The Catholic clergy always expressed their 'difference' and their pride in a religion as an unchanging institution, in its continuity for ages. They referred to the comparatively short history of Protestantism. The deep roots of Catholicism attracted the converts. Lodge says that many of these converts were attracted to Catholicism

because of its ages old cultural heritage. Ironically this heritage had little to do with Britain itself.As Lodge puts it,

> .... that heritage was Continental European or if English, medieval, Catholicism to most of these men (Converts) meant Dante, Aquinas, Gothic Cathedrals...
>
> (1986:33)

This had been the case up to the World War I, but afterwards the social and political scene changed to a great extent. The British nation as a whole was disillusioned with religion, patriotism and secularism. Intellectuals began openly to express their unbelief. In Marshall's All Glorious Within (1941) Father Smith says,

> In the old days a man said that he went to Church on Sundays even if he didn't but now he says he plays golf and would be very distressed if his men friends found out that he really went to church.
>
> (1991:25)

The case was the same for the members of other Churches, yet the Catholic churches were relatively more crowded than the others. The habit of going to church with the family members was fading away and the young generation was growing unfamiliar with the practice of religion. It was becoming normal to hear people believing in nothing.

This disillusionment with religion, patriotism and secularism led to the overthrow of moral values and hedonism. Waugh's early novels successfully reflect this

post-war hedonism and the amoral qualities of the twenties.

During the late 1920 s and early 1930 s, there was a stark polarization of political ideas. Communism and Fascism both came to the fore, but an intellectual revival of orthodox Christianity was also making itself felt. Belief in a religion was an intellectual option for the modern man too. As WW Robson puts it, the thirties were preoccupied with ideologies, "where the twenties had been indifferent to political or religious commitments, the thirties were obsessed with them" (1970:125). Page states in his The Thirties in Britain that it would be wrong to think all writers belonged to the left or to the right wing, there were some who devoted themselves "to a quest for individual fulfillment or pleasure or escape" (1990:49).

According to Orwell, after throwing off old value structures which included patriotism, religion, the Empire, the family... many people still felt the need of "something to believe in" and follows this with the assertion that "several gifted writers fled into Roman Catholicism" (1981:236). Moreover he emphasizes that it was not the Anglican Church or the Protestant sects that attracted them but the Roman Church. Orwell gives an explanation for this preference by pointing to the unchanging nature and the world wide prestige of Roman Catholicism.

These writers were Roman Catholic converts for

intellectual reasons rather than for emotional ones like Waugh did "on firm intellectual conviction but little emotion" (1990:170). For them Catholic Church offered the most complete and vital form of Christian faith. The Roman Catholic Church guaranteed the truth of its doctrines with its endurance. They found both Communism and Fascism destructive to their individualism. Paradoxically these novelists of the thirties chose another orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism when they avoided Communism and Fascism.

Except for Greene and Eric Gill, most of the Catholic novelists showed a tendency to Fascism, but they did not get actively involved. Chesterton and Belloc, however, were expressing their anti-semitic ideas openly, which made life very difficult for them after the Second World War.

In the late thirties, for the first time, Greene and Waugh began to deal with especially Catholic themes. They were classed together as 'Catholic novelists' although in political terms they were quite different from each other, for Waugh was right wing and Greene was left wing. They altered the status of Catholic fiction with their works in this period, for with them the Catholic novel became recognized by the reading public. Their fiction was set in contemporary times but in terms of atmosphere it was exotic and alien. They did not deal with the practice of Catholicism but made use of its imagery.

In spite of their political differences, they still had a lot in common. Both reacted to the complacency of the bourgeois liberalism of their time. Waugh celebrated a Catholic aristocracy and formed a parallelism between his characters' behaviour and the paradoxes of faith. Greene exploited the same kind of paradoxes through criminals, exiles and outlaws, not through the aristocracy.

After World War II, changes continued to occur at a rapid pace in the Catholic world. With the Education Act of 1944, Catholics financially gained access to higher education and an educated laity began to appear. Lodge as a cradle Catholic is a good example of this. He was from a lower-middle class background, studied at a grammar school and later at a university, both with the help of state funding. He knew the Catholic themes from within, which differenciated him from convert novelists.

During this period, there was a sort of artificial overlap between Catholicism and left wingers. Brian Wicker was the leading figure in the emergence of the Catholic New Left in the fifties. This movement covered a lot of different groups of ideas; pacifists, nuclear disarmamentists, literary critics influenced by FR Leavis and Raymond Williams, democratic Socialists, anti-Stalinist Marxists and radical theologians (Write On, 1986:34). At the end they separated but their gathering at the same point was important because for the first time Catholicism was offering an

alternative to the existing order, rather than merely an opportunity to escape.

Waugh and Greene continued to write on Catholic themes and were joined by Burgess. Although he did not believe in religion, Burgess reflected the Catholic motifs as he had been brought up in a Catholic sub-culture; he exploited the idea of the Reformation as a social and religious disaster, of living as an exile in a Protestant society. He reacted against the uniformity, utilitarianism and reformisim that followed World War II just as Waugh had (1991:32). Murial Spark, at the beginning of her career, was influenced by Greene and seemed to continue the tradition of Catholic fiction. She rejected the secular complacencies and reformism, and dealt instantly with original sin.

Earlier in this study it was emphasized that the unchanging nature of the Roman Catholic Church attracted the intellectualls and offered a kind of alternative to them. However in the second half of the 20th century, the formation of an informed British Catholic laity, following the Education Act of 1944 and the sociological changes they underwent did not overlap with the unchanging structure of Catholic practice. The Church had been functioning in the same way since Henry VIII. This emphasized the Catholic difference or apartness but the gap between what the Church and real life dictated

widened because of the changes the Catholic community lived through. The increasing permissiveness in sexuality and its treatment by mass media, an immensely secularized community (not only intellectuals) and a youth culture unfamiliar with the religious practice (both in Protestantism and Catholicism) reduced churchgoing to a minimum.

The sixties witnessed an event which is as important as the Reformation for Catholics. In 1962 the Second Vatican Council gathered. With this Council, the Roman Catholic Church reformed itself from within. The progressive clergy of the Continent wanted to alter the image of the Catholic Church (in Britain they were still closed to change, more than in other countries). Now the Roman Catholic Church was no longer the one and true Church, but the central body which subsisted the true Church in itself, this was one of the most important decisions that was taken by the Council. That is, the image of the true Church was attributed to other Churches too. The result was that Pope John Paul himself worshipped in Canterbury in 1982, this previously had been regarded as a mortal sin (1991:37). Another big change happened in the image of the Church as an unworldly institution. They recognized that God worked in this world as well as in the other world. This last decision was partly due to the socio-political changes happening in the Third World in

which people sought for social justice. The reflection of this decision in real life is interesting, there appeared guerilla priests in the Third World countries or, in these areas Catholic Marxists began to form themselves as a separate political group.

After the Second Vatican Council, the practice of the clergy changed to a great extent. For example; celibacy was not a must any more and this caused a lot of controversies. The result was that many of the clergy left the Church, even the order. Another thing that caused a controversy was the issue of birth control; progressive priests were for birth control but the conservative wing was against it. Relaxation of old prohibitions against arts (particularly cinema and theatre) changed the viewpoint of clergy because now they were more familiar with popular culture, and liberal studies. The result was reflected in their free lifestyle.

Catholic novelists after the Second Vatican Council divided into two groups: the post-Council and the neo-conservative groups. The first one supported the decisions taken by the Council, the second one ignored the changes and acted as if nothing had taken place. Waugh belonged to the second group but Greene was the first British novelist to recognize and reflect the changes in his A Burnt-out Case. His concept of Catholicism moved from the institutional Church which must be obeyed word for

word, to a paradoxical kind of relationship to it. However after this novel his works became more and more sceptical and ambiguous in terms of their relationship to Catholicism. It is the case with Spark too. She became more and more ambiguous in her handling of the supernatural.

Lodge in his How Far Can You Go? gives an amusing account of these changes. The book tells the experience of a group of students at the London Catholic Chaplaincy. One of the characters leaves the priesthood, the majority of the students marry and face the problem of birth control. One of them accepts that he is gay.

Still, with a few exceptions, the loss of the old image of Catholicism brought Catholic fiction to its end because, with the changing values, the old imagery which had attracted the novelists and supplied them with material suddenly lost its meaning.

In contemporary literature, Catholic fiction lost its voice. In recent years, works with a Catholic content have either been comic or they have expressed a longing for pre-councilliar years. Their importance is negligible.

Catholic fiction had, since its appearace, been heavily criticized in each period because of its unrealistic and supernatural elements until recent literary trends. It is worth noting that it has some features in common with

the post-modernist movement in terms of theme and style. Both of them aimed at going beyond 'realism' in the novel,but for different reasons. Catholic fiction made use of Catholic imagery therefore it had stock properties peculiar to itself; miracles, saints, angels, devils are some of the stock property. Realism in fiction rejects these elements and Catholic fiction moved towards the tradition of romance.

Catholic fiction wanted to go beyond the realities of the secular novel, the novelists needed special techniques to do this. First of all they postulated a triangle between God, plot and author. Bendrix in Greene's The End of the Affair, for example, often refers to the superior plotting of God or in The Comforters by Spark, Caroline imagines herself as a part of a novel written by an ambiguous entity, that is God. The Catholic writers drew a parallel between God's ordering of the universe and their own ordering of fiction. Their thematic concern helped to ease this.

The same triangle of God, plot and author in the works of both post-modernist and Catholic novelists led to a defamiliarization of the norms of the novel, to parody it with supernatural element. The sharp line between fiction and real life in the realist novel became blurred. In The End of the Affair Bendrix undermines his realism:

> If I were writing a novel, I would end it here, a novel, I used to think, has to end somewhere, but I'm beginning to believe my realism has been at fault all these years, for nothing in life now ever seems to end.
>
> (1984:144)

Greene beautifully parodies any attempt at realism in his Monsignor Quixote through a conversation between a priest and Professor Pilbeam, a professor of history. The priest indroduces Monsignor Quixote,

> -Monsignor Quixote of El Toboso. A descendant of the great Don Quixote himself.
>
> -Don Quixote had no descendants. How could be? He's a fictional character.
>
> -Fact and fiction again, prefessor. So difficult to distinguish. (MQ, 240)

In undermining the reality, the unreliable narrator was a big help to both post-modernist and Catholic novelists. Like Bendrix, the unreliable narrators were suspicious of the reality of the realm they lived in and supernatural elements too ease the work of the unreliable narrator. In Spark's Momento Mori, the characters receive a phone call from an ambiguous caller and hear the voice say;"Remember you must die!". After the inspection the characters realize that the caller is death.

To sum up, to postulate a complete overlap between

Catholic fiction and post-modernism would be to exaggerate the situation, nevertheless there is frequently in both the self-consciousness and an undermining of reality, also an unreliable narrator and much use of the supernatural. These common factors helped to make Catholic fiction respectable. So that its lack of secular realism was no more a disadvantage in the eyes of both critics and readers. Unfortunately this new approach came onto the stage too late, for by this time Catholic novelists had virtually stopped writing Catholic fiction.

CHAPTER II

Recurring Motifs in Greene's Catholic Fiction

Graham Greene is one of the most interesting fiqures of the 20th century both because of the nature of his writing which appealled to and yet disturbed many readers, Catholic and non-Catholic alike and because of his thematic exploration of different worlds. His unconventional way of handling matters of faith has been celebrated in some circles while it has been condemned in others.

Some of his Catholic readers were uneasy about his works because of his depiction of Catholicsm and its teachings. In his Catholic novels which he called serious novels because of their thematic concern, he dealt with characters who are Roman Catholics caught up in emotional dilemmas. This gave rise to theological speculations, because Greene's solutions to these dilemmas did not run parallel to those of the Church. Greene was more tolerant than the Church could be to his characters. His understanding of Catholicism usually meant a wider range of humanism and his, time to time, ran counter to the Catholicism of the Church.

Some of his non-Catholic readers were offended because he took religious faith as the background to his writing in his serious novels and invested the 20th century

with miracles. Miracles in the realist novel were unacceptable to these readers at a time when secularism was celebrated. The movements of his characters are sometimes understandable only in a Catholic context and non-Catholic readers felt that his writing was closed to them.

Altough this was the case, still he was able to appeal to a great number of readers and managed to give a message to them. This message varied according to the nature of the reader, as David Lodge said in his The Novelist at the Crossroads;

> No one interested in modern literature has failed to explore it (his writing) but the explorers have brought back conflicting ideas. (1986: 27).

A closer look at his personal and artistic background might help us to an understanding of why his books provoked such different ideas and prompted such different reactions since he very often stressed the idea that the writer reflected himself in his works. He was born in 1904 to an Anglican family in Berkhamstead. After graduating from an English public school of which his father was the headmaster, he entered Balliol College, Oxford. When he was at Oxford he flirted with Communism but remained a member of the Communist Party for a few weeks only. This was so because Greene, as we are told, is;

> ... a man of the left whose sympathy with

> Communism stops short of identification because he believes it does not pay enough attention to the individual. (1991:29).

After university he started his career as a journalist with the Nothingham Journal and it was at this time (1926) that he was received into the Catholic Church. He became interested in Catholicism when he was at Oxford because of the influence of his wife and the Catholic Chaplain, Father Trollope.

He was brought up in a middle-class Anglican famiy which meant he did not have a Catholic type of family education in matters of faith. When he was converted to Catholicism at the age of 23 he brought with him a Protestant insight, in other words the relics of a non-Catholic past. At this period very few Catholics enjoyed the advantages of a public school education and of Oxford.

His conversion was a gradual one as he pointed out many years after it had taken place and by which time he had already written his first Catholic novel, Brighton Rock. He says in his autobiographical book Ways of Escape,

> More than ten years had passed since I was received into the Church. At that time I had not been emotionally moved, but only intellectually convinced. (1980: 58)

More than ten years later, during his Mexican visit when he reported the persecution of Catholics, he was to discover "some emotional belief among the empty and ruined churches" (1980:60). After his Mexican visit, he wrote The Power and the Glory which was through and through religious allegory; however this was not received well by the Church. The Holy Office condemned the book on the grounds that it was 'paradoxical' and 'dealt with extra-ordinary circumstances'. Greene says he wasn't surprised with this reaction because he would not describe himself "as an orthodox Catholic" in his A World of My Own (1992: 53) so that what he understood of Catholicism and what the Church said very often had no common ground.

After he wrote his first Catholic novel Brighton Rock, Greene divides his works into two: serious novels (which dealt openly with religious themes; Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory, The Heart of the Matter, The End of the Affair, A Burnt-out Case) and entertainments (which dealt with political or detective themes such as The Third Man, Our Man in Havana and The Quiet-American). His serious novels can be divided into two groups,those written before the Vatican Council and those written after it. Except for A Burnt-out Case, all the serious novels were written before the Council. A Burnt-out Case was written in the progressive atmosphere following the Council.

In his serious novels,he reflected his belief in the "virtue of disloyalty". Like his characters, he questioned the concepts that as a Catholic he was supposed to view in the light of the Church's teaching, such as the existence of God, the traditional concept of the priesthood (especially in The Power and The Glory) or the virtuous woman and sainthood (as in The End of the Affair). When he was doing this, he was aware of the fact that his religious faith could be a hindrance to his artistic creativity. He says,

> If I may be personal, I belong to a group, the Catholic Church, which would present me with grave problems as a writer were I not saved by my disloyalty. (De Vitis 1987, 87).

He seems to celebrate disloyalty because of its virtues in understanding man. He comments on this as follows,

> ... disloyalty encourages you to roam through any human mind, it gives the novelist an extra dimension of understanding.
>
> (De Vitis 1987, 82)

Disloyalty to the teachings of the Church had been a kind of 'colour scale' for his characters who could in general be divided into three: practising Catholics, muddled or uneasy Catholics and agnostics or atheists. Greene himself often does not like the first group, they are usually drawn as unsympathetic figures like the Lehrs

(German-American brother and sister) in The Power and the Glory, these people are dry and colourless even passionless. They are only capable of doing lip-service to the Church. His practising Catholics are usually the educated who have accepted God and the teachings of the Church without questioning them. They "seem to own their Roman Catholic image of God, who have ceased to look for Him because they consider they have found Him"(1980:197).

For Greene, they remain on the surface of religious matters and they are unable to go deep down in spite of their seeming intellectual capacity. They are usually the ones who try to feed people around them with theory, with bookish explanations, and commit the crime of 'being loyal' to the teachings of the Church. Here Greene goes along with Unamuno whom he often refers to in his writing. Unamuno stated,

> Those who believe that they believe in God, but without passion in their hearts, without anguish of mind, without uncertainty, without doubt, without an element of despair even in their consolation, believe only in the God Idea not in God himself.
>
> (1980:197)

Against these practising Catholics, Greene sides with the lapsed, the damned, the muddled,the uneasy believer who challenges God like Scobie in The Heart of the Matter or who bargains with God like Sarah in The End of the Affair

or who commits a chain of murders like Pinkie in Brighton Rock. Greene defends these lapsed Catholics because as in the words of Unamuno "doing evil is not the same as being evil " (O'Prey 1988;68).

In The Heart of the Matter, he tells the story of Henry Scobie, the Assistant Commissioner of Police in a British West African colony who is married to the unlovable Louise. They have no children. He cannot be promoted because he lacks the necessary qualities as a careerist although promotion was his right. This is a shock to Louise and, Scobie promises her a holiday in South Africa, which involves him in a dept to a Syrian merchant, Yussef. This involvement brings a lot of sacrifices on the part of his professional integrity and moreover he starts an adulterous affair with the childlike Helen when Louise is in West Africa. It all begins when there has been a shipwreck and he pities Helen among the injured passengers, and this pity in a short time develops into an adulterous love affair. Greene comments,

> he had sworn to preserve Louise's happiness, and now he had accepted another and contradictory possibility. (HM,161)

When Louise comes back, Scobie's predicament begins. This gives Greene the opportunity to exploit the theme of the lapsed but lovable Catholic although it runs counter to the teachings of the Church. Scobie's

Catholicism comes to a crucial point and now any kind of happiness is beyond his reach. In his dilemma, as a Catholic he is supposed to give up Helen and go to Louise and thus to the teachings of the Church, that is to God. His choice is a rather interesting one, he decides to keep both women happy at the expense of 'another wrong, another victim', that is God. He prefers to betray God rather than the two women, he goes on seeing them by disregarding God . He keeps on seeing Helen and in order to make Louise happy he takes communion in a state of mortal sin. He is very much aware of what he is doing and Greene gives the explanation through authorial interference, Scobie chooses to betray God because he can see the suffering of these two women while he can "only imagine" the suffering of God (HM, 258).

Scobie is damned but more likeable and humane than his wife, a practising Catholic who deliberately forces him to take coummunion while in a state of mortal sin. His major defect is an overdeveloped sense of pity which makes him challege God, take the the load of others onto his shoulders. Through Scobie's predicament Greene has the opportunity of exploiting his theme of the lapsed Catholic. Although Scobie's pity paved the way to damnation and his choice ran counter to the teachings of Catholic Church still Greene seems to be on the side of Scobie rather than that of Louse.

Among his second group of characters whom Greene took sides with, it is possible to include his likeable priests. They differ from the stereotype of priesthood which insisted on absolute acceptance of doctine. His likeable priests except for the Whisky Priest, are not necessarily damned or lapsed but definitely muddled. They fail in the problems of faith or they accept the limitations of the Church's capacity. This is best reflected in The Heart of the Matter; here the scene in which Louise talks to Father Rank depicts how Greene's likeable priests treat the Church;

> -For goodness' sake, Mrs Scobie, don't imagine You-or I-know a thing about God's mercy.
>
> -The Church says...
>
> - I know the Church says. The church knows all the rules. But it doesn't know what goes on in a single human heart .
>
> (H.M, 272)

To his practising Catholics Greene attributes 'belief' which has an association with the Church as an institution while to his lapsed or muddled Catholics he attributes 'faith', the core of belief not yet institutionalized.

As for the agnostics or atheists Greene says "he feels increasingly the need to sympatize with them". His agnostics or atheists are not necessarily portrayed negatively. They are neither immoral nor mean.

Interestingly they are usually more sophisticated and decent in secular terms than the first two groups. A case in point is the moral though godless integrity and the incorruptability of the Lieutenant of Police compared with the discreditable personality both by religious and by secular standards of the Whisky Priest; another is the intellectual Bendrix in The End of the Affair compared with the adulterous Sarah. Greene uses these agnostics to prove his religious points, these characters in most cases paradoxically affirm the assumptions that Greene sets his themes on.

Greene's works show that he was influenced by French Catholics (Bloy, Péguy, Bernanos and Mauriac) in his writings by this group's fascination with evil, its rejection of optimistic materialism, its stylistic tendency to epigram and its interest in extreme religious situations; vows, conversions, challenges to God, miracles and the idea of 'mystical substitution' when an individual takes upon himself the suffering and guilt of others. He draws on French Catholics for ideas and to them gives his own colour, and applies the devices of his native literary tradition.

His instant use of binary oppositions such as good and evil, saint and sinner, shows the influence of Péguy's writing on him. His constant emphasis on the sinner's ability to reach salvation is another important resemblance

to Péguy. Greene's advocating of the lapsed, damned Catholics makes up the core of his writing. His three types of characters are intervowen with this idea which seems to take its origins from French Catholicism especially from Péguy . The apothegm which makes the epigraph to The Heart of the Matter which was taken from Péguy is a demonstration of this,

> The sinner is at the heart of Christianity... No-one is as competent in the matters of Christianity as the sinner. No-one, unless it is the saint.
>
> (H.M, 8).

The damned has the chance of achieving 'real belief' through sufferings caused by his sins, so he is at the heart of Christianity. This idea is best reflected in The Power and the Glory which tells the story of the Whisky Priest who tries to escape from the state in which he is the last representative of the Church. He is fallen in moral terms, he is addicted to alcohol and fathered a child when he was drunk. The book centres on the Lieuterant of Police's and God's pursuit of the Whisky Priest. In his flight, he is arrested for violating the anti-liquor laws but not being recognised, he is released from prison. He manages to escape to the safe side of the country and comes back to minister to a dying gangster although he knows that it is a trap prepared by the Lieutenant. At the end he is executed.

When he is arrested he is put into a cell which reminds the reader of the hell of Dante. Greene makes use of sensory details to create this vision of hell: the stink of the bucket filled with piss, the utterly pervasive sound of mosquitoes 'like a small machine, an electric belt set at a certain tempo', the 'finished cry of protest and abandonment and the pleasure of sexual contact', the lack of place for any kind of movement. Allegorically this is the image of the world, 'overcrowded with lust and crime and unhappy love'.

Paradoxically the Whisky Priest finds peace and affection here in this the lowest pit,

> Again he was touched by an extraordinary affection. He was just one criminal among a herd of criminals... he had a sense of companionship which he had never experienced in the old days when pious people came kissing his black cotton glove (P.G, 128).

Here the Whisky Priest as a lapsed Catholic can discover the beauty of the worst evil when the pious woman complains about the copulating couple to him:

> The pious woman said aloud with fury- Why don't they stop it? The brutes, the animals!
>
> -What is the good of your saying an Act of Contrition now in this state of mind?
>
> -But the ugliness.....
>
> -Don't believe that. It is dangerous. Because

> suddenly we discover that our sins have so much beauty.
>
> - Beauty, she said with disgust, Here in this cell, with strangers all around.
>
> - Such a lot of beauty. Saints talk about the beauty of suffering. Well we are not saints, you and I. Suffering to us is just ugly, stench and crowding and pain. That is beautiful in that corner-to them. It needs a lot of training to see things with a saint's eye: a saint gets a subtle taste for beauty and can look down on poor ignorant palates like theirs. But we can't afford to.
>
> (P.G, 130).

The Whisky Priest finds what before he could not find in this disgusting cell and among criminals. In this scene the Priest by taking sides with the copulating people challenges the conventional idea of priesthood. He knows, "from experience how much beauty Satan carried down with him when he fell" (P.G, 130) because he fathered a child and still suffers for it. In the old days he had been an average priest, following the orders of the Church but without any suffering (which Greene associated with religious faith). Now he knows that he is not up to the standards of the Church and suffers. He cannot resign from his post even though he knows his shortcomings. Through

this suffering he discovers faith and a love of mankind in himself; so we are told that formerly, "... in his innocence he had felt no love for anyone; now in his corruption he had learned..." (P.G, 130). Here the sentence is carefully left incomplete so that the reader is free to imagine what he must or should have learned. Paradoxically, the reader witnesses the Whisky Priest acquiring grace while at the same time, losing it through venial sins.

Péguy also goes further in his 'Saints and Sinners' by saying the sinner and the saint are, one can say, two portions equally integral parts of the Christian mechanism (O'Prey 1988, 70). Greene's serious novels, in many aspects, are a demonstration of this idea. His play on the suffering, saint and sinner triangle, his emphasis on the correlation between the saint and the sinner helps him exploit Péguy's statement. This attempt leads to the exploitation of the correlation between Good and Evil, Salvation and Damnation. They complement each other in a paradoxical way. The sinner is portrayed as perversely aware of the spiritual values, and as the one who got rid of spiritual nullity. In a way he is the existential hero of a corrupt world.

His saints are the people who have the capacity for

damnation, whereas they are lapsed in Catholic terms. In The Heart of the Matter, Scobie's vow to make happy both his wife and his mistress is something impossible to realize. However, the authorial voice comments that, the result is not the feeling of despair. It keeps commenting on the relationship between despair and the evil man:

> It is one is told, the unforgiveable sin but it is one the corrupt or evil man never practises. He (evil man) always has hope. He never reaches the frenzying point of knowing absolute failure. Only the man of good-will carries always in his heart the capacity for damnation. (H.M, 60)

Here Scobie, though damned, is more competent in matters of religion than Louise, a practising Catholic; Helen the agnostic and other Catholics in the book. His love runs parallel to his pity and becomes indicative of a universal love. When he explores this love for human beings he discovers the substance of his religion. On the other hand his pride places him alongside God with his insistance on taking the load of others. He betrays God for an impossible aim and at the end commits suicide. He becomes both Christ and Judas. He dies for man but in doing so he betrays God. He is a

man of good-will thus he has the passport of damnation.

Scobie seems to be the embodiment of what T.S. Eliot says in his essay on Baudelaire and to which Greene often refers in his novels:

> So far as we are human, what we do must be either evil or good; so far as we do evil or good we are human; and it is better, in a paradoxical way, to do evil, than to do nothing, at least we exist. It is true to say that the glory of man is his capacity for salvation; it is also true to say that his glory is his capacity for damnation. The worst that can be said for most of our malefactors, from statesman to thieves, is that they are not men enough to be damned.
>
> (The Novelist at the Crossroads 1986, 95)

This argument helps us to come to a better understanding of why Greene prefers his damned souls or anti-heroes to the incorruptable agnostics who live outside the reign of Christianity and to practising Catholics unable to feel God inside them. Greene's anti-heroes seem to be the existential heroes of this corruptable world in which they are elevated more than the agnostics, because of their faith. They are qualified, more than ordinary practising Catholics because they are willing to do something and their willingness in some form or other paves the way to damnation.

Péguy's attitude is again similar. He tells us that; "... a man who is not a Christian is a man who does not sin." Further he goes on to liken Christianity to a city and continues, "A bad citizen belongs to the city. A good stranger does not." (O'Prey 1988, 71). This is best reflected in the characters of the Lieutenant and the Whisky Priest in The Power and The Glory and of Pinkie and Ida Arnold in Brighton Rock. The Lieutenant of Police is ascetic, incorruptable and a devotee of the ideal world intent on providing his people with an 'equal future' but remaining godless. Therefore he is out of the reign of Christianity. Greene sides with the Whisky Priest who is corrupted, damned in both religious and moral terms but still under the reign of God. It is the same with Pinkie and Ida in Brighton Rock, Pinkie commits a chain of murders and as a primitive unsymphatetic character, is closer to Greene than the fun-loving, humane but agnostic Ida who tries to hand Pinkie over to the Police. The Lieutenant and Ida represent 'common decency' but their lack of religious faith makes them each less of a person than evil or damned souls. There is the idea that it is better spiritually to be a sinful Christian than to be a good atheist or agnostic.

Greene attributed 'right and wrong' to the Lieutenant and Ida Arnold, and 'good and evil' to The Whisky Priest and Pinkie. He establishes the same correlation of Saint and Sinner in Brighton Rock, but the terminology here is 'good and evil'. This novel tells the story of Pinkie, the teenage leader of a gang and of Rose whom Pinkie had to marry as she had witnessed a murder, in order to keep her silent. Pinkie does not hesitate to kill people around him. He is very ruthless to Rose, yet Rose loves him as he is the only man interested in her and, marriage is the only opportunity to get away from her problematic parents. Rose has integrity and a good heart, yet in the novel they (Pinkie and Rose) are brought together. Rose does not accept Ida's offer to rescue her from Pinkie. Ida is the representative of worldly or secular justice and Rose cannot comprehend this. Rose does not understand when Ida talks about 'right and wrong', as both Pinkie and Rose are Catholics, they speak a different language. It is 'good and evil' for them. Therefore what Ida tries to say means nothing to Rose. Eventually Ida sees the impossibility of her attempts and realizes that Pinkie and Rose are complementing each other as 'good and evil' do,

> Good and evil lived in the same country, came together like old friends, feeling the same completion, touching hands beside the iron bedstead.
>
> (B.R, 127)

Another characteristic of Greene's works is that there is always a powerful tension between human impulses and the orthodoxy of Catholicism, as is the case in his personal life. They run counter to each other most of the time. It is often this tension that leads the characters to damination. Greene states,

> ... the personal morality of an individual is seldom identical with the morality of the group to which he belongs .
>
> (De Vitis 1987, 82)

His protagonists question the teachings of the Catholic Church and usually come up with a conflicting decision. Although their decisions are understandable from a humanistic point of view,they are not acceptable in Catholicism. The characters move in a kind of humanism which does not often conform to the teachings of the Church. In The Heart of The Matter, when Scobie sees a young man commit suicide, he protests when Father Clay says that the act is a mortal sin. Scobie, who is not convinced, simply says, "Even the Church can't teach me that God doesn't pity the young." (H.M., 89). Scobie cannot accept an arthodox conception of a God who is indifferent to the sufferings of man. He cannot comprehend the idea of a God who has not got the same sense of pity as himself, who allows misery and unhappiness. So as not to make the two women in his life unhappy he does what his conscience

prompts him to do and this finally leads him to suicide. His suicide is the peak of the tension between individual morality and the teachings of the Church.

At this stage one might wonder how Greene managed to attribute saintly qualities to his protagonists who are lapsed Catholics. Greene's answer to this question is 'the appalling strangeness of the mercy of God". Scobie dies with the word 'love' on his lips. This is significant because 'love' is the agent of grace and redemption in Greene's novels. After his suicide, Louise, his wife is worried that he is damned. Here a priest warns her not to draw conclusions because the eternal destiny is beyond the capacity of man to understand,

> - You think there's some hope then? She wearily asked.
> - Are you so bitter against him?
> - I haven't any bitterness left.
> - And do you think God's likely to be more bitter than a woman?
>
> (H.M, 272).

Another scene in which Greene's characters demonstrate their reservations about the mercy of God, but from different point of view, occurs at the end of It's a Battlefield. The prison chaplain is talking to the Assistant Commissioner;

> The chaplain said 'I can't stand human justice anymore. Its arbitrariness. Its incomprehensibility.

> -I don't mean, of course, to be blasphemous but isn't that very like, that is to say, isn't divine justice much the same?
>
> -Perhaps, But one can't hand in a resignation to God. (1962:199)

The priest in Brighton Rock consolidates this idea of the incomprehensibility of God's ways, when he tries to explain to Rose the ambiquity of Pinkie's afterlife. Rose believes that Pinkie is damned but the priest answers; "You can't conceive my child, nor can I or anyone... the appalling... strangeness of the mercy of God". (B.R, 246)

As Greene sets his plots in a religious frame, in his novels a world without God is hell, humans are abandoned in an 'aboriginal calamity'. In Lawless Roads, Greene pessimistically suggests that there is no peace where there is human being but at least there is 'fraternization' on Christmas morning. In godless states even this morning of fraternization is absent, in Russia, Spain (during Franco's regime) or Mexico (during the regime of Calles). This idea is best given in the descriptive parts of The Power and The Glory which give an account of the predicament of Catholics under a godless regime. There is a prevailing feeling of 'abandoment, being left' with the people. The state of Mexico which denies God symbolically represents evil:

> A few vultures looked down from the roof with shabby indifference. (P.G, 7).

> The vultures on the roofs looked contented, like domestic fowls, they searched under wide dusty wings for parasites. (P.G, 12)
>
> There are beetles and mosquitoes and the people are like mosquitoes: In the hot marshy land people bred as readily as mosquitoes (P.G, 19).

There are worms on the bellies of children. There is sin, the horror of poverty and violence everywhere. Dr. Tench (a dentist) having failed to get a cylinder of ether, does not hesitate to treat his patient without it because "it didn't matter so much after all; a little additional pain was hardly noticeable in the huge abandonment" (P,G, 18). For Padre Jose, an ex-priest,this world, "rolls heavily in space under its fog like a burning and abandoned ship" (P.G, 29). As in the quotation from Cardinal Newman in Lawless Roads a human being is, "having no hope and without God in the world, ... the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity." (1988:49). The memory of the characters in the book fluctuates between past and present. They remember the old days when they had a Church. A Mexican father talking about the old days to his son longs for those days even though he was not a practising Catholic. He says, "I was a bad Catholic, but it meant-well music, lights, a place where you can sit out of this heat." (P.G, 51). He says that they would not feel 'so left' if they had the Church again.

This pessimistic account of the world without God is

called 'Greeneland' by the critics (Novelist at the Crossroads 1986, 87). Greene answers these critics in his Ways of Escape, "I have sometimes wondered whether they go round the world blinkered..." (1980; 60). As he worked as a newspaper journalist he says, he depicted the places where much of his life passed in his novels.

Greene sets his Catholic imagery on his peculiar use of metaphysical wit. He claims that he was corrupted by much reading of the Metaphysical poets in his autobiographical book Ways of Escape (1986: 16). This makes his reflection of Catholic imagery more striking as in the following examples,

> He was like the King of an African tribe, the slave of his own people, who may not even lie down in case the winds should fail. (P.G, 19)

In The End of the Affair, Sarah talks to God; "You might have killed us with happiness, but you let us be with you in pain" (E.A, 118). Greene reverses the normal figurative relationship of abstract to concrete when revealing his message, as in the example of the Whisky Priest "who drank the brandy down like damnation." (P.G; 169).

Another thing which goes parallel to this technique is his obsessive use of binary oppositions: God and man, good and evil, salvation and damnation, natural and supernatural, temporal and eternal, secular and sacred, love and hate, loyalty and betrayal. Greene's obsessions serve him as a source of themes, as he says in

his essay on Walter de la Mare, "every creative writer worth our consideration ... is a victim, a man given over to an obsession" (1969: 48).

He displays this thesis brilliantly in his own writings . Most striking of his obsessions is with betrayal and treachery in human affairs and in religious matters; this is called the Judas complex and colours most of his characters: we have Scobie betraying his wife and God, the Whisky Priest betraying his God and post, Sarah betraying her husband and lover.

Another obsession is the theme of pursuit, interestingly he involves God in this pursuit as in the example of the Whisky Priest pursued by the Police and God. Another important obsession that fascinated Greene is death. All his books except Loser Takes All ends with death. He associates death also with the 'little death' of sexual love.These, together with the early impact of childhood on adult life and, dreams are just a few of a long list of obsessions in his writing. He decorates these obsessions with moral and emotional abstractions, such as trust, justice, pity, responsibility, innocence and jealousy.

With his preference for the bad or lapsed Catholics and failing priests, Greene gave offence to certain Catholic readers and the Holy office. Greene answered them in his Why Do I Write?

> As a writer I must be allowed to write from the point of view of the black square as well as of the white: doubt and even denial must be given their chance of self-expression, or how is one freer than the Leningrad group? (De Vitis 1987, 82).

He has drawn his characters from both sides of the board and portrayed them with their inner conflicts. If he was to prefer one, he was for the black, the doubters, the muddled as they offered more of a challenge to the imagination.

He was aware that loyalty to his imagination brought with it disloyalty to his Church. By pursuing his artistic aims, he sometimes had to go out of the confines of his Church, in other words he did not go for the propaganda of the teachings of his Church. This was another reason for reactions from orthodox Catholics. They expected Greene to write for the edification of the Catholic community. He responded to these criticisms in his Ways of Escape where he claimed to be, not as a Catholic novelist but as a novelist who,

> happened to be a Catholic, who in four or five books took characters with Catholic ideas for his materials (1980:58).

He accepts that it is an important source of themes for him,

> Nonetheless for years... I found myself haunted by people who wanted help with spiritual problems that I was incapable of giving. (1987:82)

However he dislikes being labelled a Catholic writer. After the publication of Brighton Rock he says, "I was discovered to be -detestable term!- a Catholic writer". (1980:58). After this discovery he says that he was treated like a member of a clan by the Catholics taking some of his 'faults' too kindly.

Here Greene seems to be contradicting himself by opposing his being labelled as a Catholic writer because a closer look at his serious novels shows that the truth is given in a religious context. He uses Catholic images to give his message. His central characters live ups and downs in matters of religion and this has a central role in the flow of the plot. Scobie's or the Whisky Priest's inner contradictions are meaningful as long as the reader refers to Catholicism and its teachings during the act of reading.

In these novels, the destiny of the characters is determined in the frame of Catholicism. Unless the reader comprehends the religious assumptions that Greene sets his themes on, they most of the time mean nothing as in the example of Scobie's suicide. He committed suicide because of the rigidity of Catholic dogmas, if we disregard his religious stand, Scobie's act seems to have come out of nowhere.

Greene's religious assumptions are most apparent in The End of the Affair. It seems to have been written to a thesis, to demonstrate an idea. In the introduction to the

novel, Greene himself states that before writing the novel he had been reading one of Von Hügel's articles, and he had underlined those statements,which he says, must have inspired him to write the novel;

> Nothing can be more certain than that we must admit and place this undeniable, increasingly obtrusive element and power somewhere in our lives, if we will not own it as a means, it will grip us as our end. (E.A, ix)

Sarah's destiniy in The End of the Affair (as is the case with his other novels) is the demonstration of how 'this undeniable power' manipulates the human being.

Although Greene detests being labelled a Catholic novelist, he accuses the Modernist Movement of lacking a religious frame. His grief on the loss of a religious sense in the English novel is best reflected in his essay on Mauriac,

> It was as if the world of fascination had lost a dimension. The characters of such distinguished writers as V. Woolf and Mr. E.M. Forster wandered like cardboard symbols through a world that was paper thin. Even in one of the most materialistic of our great novelists - in Trollope - we are aware of another world against which the actions of the characters are thrown into relief. (1969:91).

He compares the clergyman in Trollope's fiction to Mr. Ramsay in Woolf's, and asserts that the clergyman exists in a way that Mr. Ramsay never does because

> we are aware that he exists not only to the woman he is addressing but also in a God's eye. His unimportance in the world of the senses is only matched by his enormous importance in another world. (1969: 91)

With this last statement he makes clear why he has taken Roman Catholicism as a background for his characters. Through such a background he brings doctrines of Catholicism to life.

On the other hand his works were heavily criticized by the non-Catholic critics, although they were read by a large amount of readers. There are some reasons for these criticisms as it is stated at the very beginning of this study. First of all as Lodge puts it in his The Novelist at the Crossroads,

> In a period when the most influential school of criticism in England has proclaimed the duty of the novelist to be 'on the side of life' Greene has spoken eloquently 'on the side of death'. (1986:88)

Here Lodge comments on the nature of the English nation and novel, and he links it with the criticism Greene received from the reader. He states that,

> belonging by language and nationality to a tradition in the novel based essentially on the values of secularized Protestantism, Greene adopted the alien dogmatic system of Roman

> Catholicism, and put it at the very center of his mature work.
>
> (1986:88).

His themes based on the dogmas of Catholicism displayed a contrast to the writing of other novelists in the age of secularism. Moreover he made use of authorial interference as a contrast to the authorial non-interference of his contemporaries. This means, his thematic concerns influenced his style and how he delivered his message too.

Christ's presence in the Eucharist or the miracles in the 20th century were not convincing to the secular reader. Whereas Greene was aware of the nature of his audience and tried to balance these 'alien' elements in his fiction with rational explanations for them. For istance, when he refers to the miracles in The End of the Affair, he says, "it seems to the agnostic reader - with whom I increasingly sympathize - to introduce the notion of the magic". (1980:108). He knew that he was writing in a pluralist society in which Catholics formed only a minority, so "... every so-called miracle ought to have had a completely natural explanation." (1980:107).

This quotation does not mean that he did not defend his use of miracles in fiction. He gave his own explanation of them as a Catholic,

> If we are to believe in some power infinitely above us in capacity and knowledge, magic does

> inevitably form part of our belief - or rather magic is the term we use for the mysterious and the inexplicable..... (1980:108)

Because of the assumption of the existence of an infinite power his answer was less than convincing to his secular readers. Even so, Greene's works received positive as well as negative reactions from both Catholic and non-Catholic readers. Maybe he was referring to this diversity of reaction to his fiction when he wrote in Ways of Escape,

> Writing a novel is a little like putting a message into a bottle and-flinging it into the sea- unexpected friends or enemies retrieve it. (1980:14)

CHAPTER III

The Culmination of Greene's Catholic Writings: The End of the Affair

The End of the Affair is structured around the 'supposed' death of Bendrix, the principal narrator of the novel, and it tells the unsuccessful love affair between Bendrix and Sarah. When Sarah, the heroine of the novel, and Bendrix spend the night together, Bendrix, is knocked down by a door during an air-raid and faints. Sarah gets panicked supposing that Bendrix is dead and in her hysteria she prays God for a miracle. She promises to believe in God from then on and to give up Bendrix if he comes back to life. As Bendrix has fainted, when he comes round, Sarah believes her prayer has been answered and leaves him so as to keep her promise to God. Bendrix, unaware of what happened, is suspicious of another lover and experiences fits of jealousy. Sarah manages to escape seeing Bendrix for two years. When Bendrix accidentally meets Henry, Sarah's husband in the street after two years, he is interested to learn that Henry is suspicious of another lover too; still deeply jealous,Bendrix arranges a private detective, Parkis, to investigate Sarah. When Parkis gets hold of Sarah's diary, Bendrix learns the real reason of her leaving him; in return for his life, Sarah had promised to give up Bendrix. After learning the truth, Bendrix begs Sarah to come back but she refuses. Shortly after their meeting, she dies of a cold. Bendrix learns that

there is not another lover in their affair. In fact there is a third agent who kept Sarah away from Bendrix but it is not a human being, it is God. Having learned this, Bendrix's bitterness and jealousy doubles. This is the core of events but Greene weaves other themes backwards and forwards across the web of his novel.

At first sight, the novel may seem to be a simple story of betrayal and remorse. Sarah (the adulterous wife) betrays her husband with Bendrix but, when Bendrix comes back to life after her promise, she shows extraordinary determination and breaks up with her lover because of her guilty conscience. This is the moral, serious aspect of the novel, but it also has certain qualities associated with detective fiction. It has the theme of flight and pursuit (literally between Parkis, the private detective, and Smythe, the rationalist preacher, whom Bendrix takes to be the lover, and metaphorically between Sarah and God.) There is a private detective, a jealous lover and a third agent, in fact many of the stock properties of a typical detective story.

However Greene undermines both levels of reading in the novel. The devices of adultery, remorse, flight and pursuit are there but they are of minor importance. They help to convey another sphere of events, or rather they authenticate the happenings of another sphere: the novel is an attempt to give expression to the relationship between man as an individual and God.

There is the idea of seduction but the agent that seduces the heroine is God. Throughout this story of seduction there is the explicit presentation of Greene's religious views. It is a discussion of theology or in Ian Gregor's words, 'theology-in-fiction' (1987: 110). It is brilliantly done and indeed The End of the Affair is rightly regarded as Greene's best religious novel.

It is set in contemporary times and in familiar places not in exotic places like Mexico or Vietnam (as is the case with the majority of his novels). The setting is limited because of the air-raids to certain districts in London. There is not much action and it really covers only the unhappy love affair between Sarah and Bendrix. Most of the time the novel is restricted to this love affair and the reader learns only as much about their past as the characters themselves or Sarah's diary reveal. The characters themselves narrate the novel and this helps Greene minimize the allegorical elements which constituted a very important dimension in his other serious novels.

Apart from the fact that Greene experimented with style, The End of the Affair has a lot in common with his other serious novels. He makes use of his key concepts here too; abandonment, death, pursuit, miracles, tension between the individual and God and mystical substitution. He is obsessed with the correlation between love, hate and jealousy. David Lodge has commented on this correlation and notes in his The Novelist at the Cross Roads that,

> The End of the Affair illustrates Greene's use of key words more strikingly than any other novel, It rings with the repetition of love and hate.For the statistical record, these words or forms of them recur about three hundred and one hundred times respectively in this short novel. (1986:110).

He adds that the effect is not monotonous since Greene is continually exploring new dimensions and interrelationships between love, hate and the mixture of the two, jealousy.

Abandonment is thematically one of the most important of key words. The source of Sarah's sanctity is her ability to achieve abandonment, first in her affair with Bendrix and then with God. As Bendrix states

> ... her abandonment touched the strange mathematical point of endlessness, a point with no width, occupying no space. (E.A, 51).

In her abandonment Sarah is doomed to suffer like Scobie or the Whisky Priest. Through this suffering she learns to love God and this leads to mystical substitution that is the taking on of the load of others onto her own shoulders, as is the case with Scobie and the Whisky Priest. There is an essential similarity between these three characters, which is perhaps most obvious if we compare the prayers that they make, for each is willing to bear pain that another may be spared. So the Whisky Priest says,

> O God, give me any kind of death without contrition, in a state of sin-only save this child.
> (P.G, 82)

> And Scobie says, "Father... give her peace. Take away my peace forever but give her peace"
>
> (H.M, 125)

And Sarah says,

> I don't mind pain. It's their pain I can't stand. Let my pain go on and on,but stop theirs.
>
> (E.A, 118)

In his "Triology" RWB Lewis points out the Mephistophelean manner of Sarah's prayer, in fact all three expressions share this quality. Lewis defines this quality as follows,

> .... a deity with whom one bargains away one's peace or love or beliefs, for the life of someone else. (1987:29)

They sacrifice their own peace for someore else's and this qualifies them in religious terms. It points to the depth of their humanity and gives them a kind of superiority over other characters.

Another thing that this novel shares with the other serious novels is Greene's use of physical deformity. In The End of the Affair two of the characters suffer from a physical deformity and in Greene's novels any kind of deformity refers to the character's inability to adjust to the environment. Here Bendrix has a lame leg and Smythe, the

rationalist preacher who tries to persuade Sarah of the absence of a God, has a strawberry mark on his face. They are in a world without God, and a world without God is hell in Greenean terminology. Bendrix says "To me comfort is like a wrong memory at the wrong place or time...." (E.A,2) He is consumed with jealousy and he can find happiness only when Sarah is with him but even then it is spoilt with bitterness and accusation. Sarah remembers their past,

> We were sometimes so happy and never in our lives have we known more unhappiness. It's as if we were working together on the same statue, cutting it out of each other's misery. (E.A, 96)

Likewise Smythe is miserable, alone and dissatisfied. He suffers from his ugly outlook because of his strawberry mark which was cured after Sarah's kissing the spot. Here Greene leaves it in ambiguity whether it was cured as a result of a miracle caused by Sarah or because psychologically Smythe has found health. Whatever the reason for his cure is, this cure indicates his achievement of harmony with his environment.

On the other hand it is difficult to say that Sarah is happy with God'. After the separation she dreads the feeling of desert, bleak loneliness. She tries to fill this desert with her faith in God and, in her difficult moments she goes to church as a last resort for some peace.However it is not possible to get rid of that bleak feeling. She asks,

"If one would believe in God, would He fill in the desert?" (E.A, 95). Yet she is qualified in her unhappiness with her individual kind of belief. Sarah, as a believer, is much more elevated than either Bendrix or Smythe. In the novel, she is a 'bad citizen of the city' whereas Bendrix and Smythe live in their own sterile worlds, without a God, belonging to nowhere.

Greene in this novel directly exploits his theory of the impossibility of not believing in God and the passivity of the individual in the face of 'God's appalling strange ways' to seduce his sinners. God achieves this in two dimentions, literally for Sarah and perversely (or paradoxically) for Bendrix. For Greene faith, "came to one shapelessly without dogma, a presence above the croquet lawn..." (Gregor 1987, 119). The coming of belief is inexplicable, unavoidable and mystic. In The End of the Affair, Greene consolidates this idea by referring to two different happenings in Sarah's life. First he uses the idea of disease or infection. When Sarah talks about her conversion she associates it with disease.

> I believe there is a God - I believe the whole bag of tricks, there's nothing I don't believe. They could subdivide the Trinity into a dozen parts and I'd believe. They could dig up records... I've caught belief like a disease. (E.A, 159)

Here there is the impression that all happens out of her control, even unwillingly or rather God seduces her

despite herself. The same effect occurs when Sarah's mother implies the idea of infection, when she mentions her baptism at the age of two, which nobody knew about before, "I always had a wish that it would 'take' like a vaccination" (E.A. 179). Towards the end of the story, when Henry and Bendrix are concerned with what kind of burial to give Sarah, Henry touches the very same idea,

> It's an extraordinary coincidence isn't it? Baptized at two years old, and then beginning to go back to what you can't even remember... It's like an infection. (E.A, 205)

In this remark of Henry's, along with the idea of infection, there is also a suggestion of Greene's belief of turning back to the original, as in his epigraph to his autobiographical book A Sort of Life, "Only robbers and gypsies say that one must never return where one has once been." (1971: 6)

Another way for Greene to consolidate the idea of the impossibility of disbelieving in God is related to Bendrix the atheist and Smythe the rationalist preacher who tries to prove to people the absence of a God. After Sarah's death a series of coincidences follow one another, there is the cure of Smythe's strawberry mark and the healing of Parkis' little boy when he is critically ill after he sees Sarah in his dream. These coincidences give the impression of miracles to other characters and at the end Smythe is converted and Bendrix's atheism turns to an exhausted defiance of God.

Greene, in his autobiographical book Ways of Escape, says that he included these coincidences on purpose. Although he regretted having put them later on, he states his aim as follows,

> The coincidences should have continued over the years, battering the mind of Bendrix, forcing on him a reluctant doubt of his own atheism.
>
> (1980:107)

Accordingly in the second edition of the novel, he made Smythe's strawberry mark into red spots caused by psychological reasons which could be healed psychologically.

Interestingly enough, Greene is very insistent on not making any change in Sarah's secret baptism which received a negative reaction from the critics as it has the quality of a miracle. Greene connects this with his belief in 'a power infinitely above us'. In Ways of Escape, he explains that he took this motif from the life of Roger Casement; and recounts how,

> The Catholic Chaplain of Casement's prison to whom he (Casement) applied for reception into the Church, found after inquiries that he had been secretly baptized when he was a child. (1980: 107).

This explanation again directly refers to Greene's belief that later in life one tends to go back to what one originally was.

Greene's principal characters have neither the courage nor the capacity to resist this mystical coming of belief. It is unavoidable. Bendrix, towards the end of the novel, feels exhausted in his atheism and shaken in his skepticism. He has the fear of drowning in the sea, which metaphorically stands for yielding to belief in God. He writes,

> I felt like a swimmer who has overpassed his strength and knows the tide is stronger than himself, but if I drowned I was going to hold Henry up to the last moment. (E.A, 208)

Here the statement 'tide is stronger than himself' is significant because it indicates Bendix's awareness of his defeat, he does not have the energy to resist another miracle.

In The End of the Affair, Greene minimizes the allegory as compared to his other serious novels but still the principal characters stand for an idea. They are the endorsement of Greene's views. Minor characters were created with economy but they have important functions. At least they help the main characters to authenticate Greene's views and Sarah's miracles.

Among the characters of the novel, Sarah is most explicitly created to a thesis. Greene states in his Introduction to the novel that before writing it, he had been reading one of Baron Von Hügel's articles and had underlined the following statements,

> ... the purification and slow constitution of the Individual into a Person, by means of the Thing element, the apparently blind determinism of Natural Law and Natural Happenings. (E.A, ix)

Sarah with her reluctant and painfull progress towards faith demonstrates this idea of the 'Thing element' which makes her a saint at the end. Sarah, like Scobie and the Whisky Priest, constructs her own kind of belief. She bargains with God, challenges God and labels the dogmas of the Church as a 'bag of tricks'. This labelling shows that the Church is not all important in her journey to faith.

Further, in her account of her progress towards belief in God, Sarah's terminology rests in sexual love, (as we have seen above) not in the symbolism of the Catholic Church. Bendrix reverses this process, he uses divine terminology to address Sarah,

> 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 the love we feel for a woman. (E.A, 47).

Both through Bendrix and Sarah, Greene establishes a satisfying correspondance between human and divine love. This is perhaps most obvious when Bendrix rather understandably misinterprets a scrap of a letter stolen from Sarah's wastepaper basket,

> I know I am only beginning to love, but already I want to abandon everything, everything but You!. (E.A, 54)

These lines are written to God but they are interchangeable with the lines written to a lover. It looks as if she shuffled the names (God and Bendrix). However this correspondence seems to have a function, for it makes Sarah's sudden transition or orientatien to Catholicism more credible. For Sarah's capacity for intense love is a permanent factor, the only change lies in the transfer of this love from Bendrix to God.

The emphasis on Sarah's 'capacity for love' and the idea of transfer from carnal to divine love is justified in the novel by Bendrix and by Sarah. Bendrix writes, "She has so much more capacity for love than I had..." (E.A, 52). Sarah implies that her love is all of a piece and the nature of her love for God is the same in essence as that of her love for Bendrix. She holds her love for Bendrix responsible for her conversion. She addresses Bendrix,

> You took away all my lies and self deceptions like they clear a road of rubble for somebody to come along it, somebody of importance, and now he's come, but you cleared the way yourself. When you write you try to be exact and you taught me to want the truth, and you told me when I wasn't telling the truth. Do you really think that, you'd say, or do you only think that you think it? So you see, it's all your fault, Maurice, it's all your fault. (E.A, 160).

Her transfer of carnal love to divine love is also explicit when she addresses God and compares her love for Bendrix and its impact on her love for God, saying:"... one feels the need to use the same old ways one has always used". (E.A, 54)

Another thing that supports this idea of transfer is that she hates 'the statues, the Crucifix, all the emphasis on the human body' when she enters a Catholic Church. However, shortly after, she associates the body at the altar with Bendrix's body and finds it familiar to herself.

In her process of suffering, Sarah identifies herself with Christ and tries to heal people. This is at its most explicit in her relationship with Smythe the rationalist preacher. Smythe asks referring to his strawberry mark, "Why should I love a God who gives a child this?" (E.A, 129). Sarah's reaction to this is given in her own words as follows,

> I shut my eyes and put my mouth against the mark. I felt sick for a moment because I fear deformity and he sat quiet and let me kiss him and I thought I am kissing pain and pain belongs to you as happiness never does. I love you in your pain. (E.A, 129).

This constant repetition of 'pain' is suggestive of the pain of Christ, and in Ian Gregor's view Sarah is here

projecting her own pain and calling it the pain of Christ. Gregor comments, "instead of moving towards God we are assuming Him into our own world". (1987:118) Another example of Sarah's identification with Christ comes from one of her remarks "If I could suffer like you, if could heal like You." (E.A, 126). In her identification the key word is again pain or suffering.

As a parallel to Sarah's individual or non-institutional kind of belief, Greene tries to establish a quality of virtue independent of morality in Sarah. She is, by traditional standards, certainly amoral. In her adultery with Bendrix, she never feels a sense of guilt. There are moments in which Henry, her husband, is in the same environment, interrupts their love-making unwittingly, but even then she is devoid of any sense of guilt. When Henry interrupts their love-making, it is ironically Bendrix who raises the moral question and wants to know if this really upsets Sarah and so he even asks her; "Do you mind?" (E.A,51). Her response is only to shake her head. The idea that Henry will get angry is irrelevant to her. Bendrix tries to explain this attitude of Sarah's with her ability to abandon herself in love. Bendrix refers to her Catholicism and says,

> Catholics are always said to be freed in the confessional from the mortmain of the past-certainly in that respect you could have called her a born Catholic although she believed in God

> as little as I did. Or so I thought then and wonder now. (E.A, 51).

Bendrix continiously tries to justify Sarah's lack of any sense of guilt in different places, still the explanation never satisfies either himself or the reader. Once, referring to her ability to immerse herself in the moment, he recalls that, "She had a wonderful way of eliminating remorse" (E.A, 51).

Another pointer to Sarah's amorality is brought up by Sarah herself and concerns her indifference to the conditions of the poor,

> Have I some grandular deficiency that I am so uninterested in the really important unsuperstitious things and causes-like the charity commission and the index of living and better calories for the working class? (E.A, 117)

Sarah's promise and her insistence on this promise elicits different reactions from different characters. Bendrix regards it as 'hysteria' and Smythe's advice is,

> ... leave God out of this. It is just a question of your lover and your husband. Don't confuse the thing with phantoms. (E.A, 112)

Still neither of these men is able to change Sarah's mind. She does not think of her 'promise' as hysterical because she saw Bendrix coming back to life with her own eyes. However no kind of psychological explanation is relevant

for her. Any moral explanation to her insistence on the promise is meaningless because she never feels guilty of her affairs. Her attitude to her adulterous affairs is amoral and the matter is left ambiguous. The only explanation comes from the inference that can be drawn from Bendrix's remarks, abandonment is the key word again. Her abandonment in the moment makes her not question her acts.

For Sarah, the moment rather than duration is important. Any kind of hesitation or doubt is unfamiliar to her. For her the promise itself is important, not the reason for it. Interestingly enough, she does not have a conscious belief and her attitude to her belief is rather ambiguous. At one point,referring to her promise she asks "Why did this promise stay like an ugly vase a friend has given and one waits for a maid to break it?" (E.A, 110) and elswhere she says "I want Maurice, I want ordinary corrupt human love". (E.A, 94).

These remarks suggest that the promise was somewhere outside of her control, despite herself. In other words there seems to be a power at work other than Sarah and stronger than her, determining her actions. The existence of this power is most obviously felt in the scene in which she decides to leave Henry for Bendrix. As she finishes packing, Bendrix and Henry arrive together. After two years of separation it is shocking to see Bendrix, just as she is about to leave Henry. And Henry next to Bendrix

looks so miserable that Sarah changes her mind and stays. If Bendrix had not come, she would have left Henry because she would not have seen how miserable Henry looked next to Bendrix.

Bendrix, the main narrator of the novel, is the voice of hatred and bitterness along with his atheist point of view. He cannot be happy with or without Sarah. The only happiness he remembers is the moments of love-making which he calls 'little death'. His way of looking at life is totally amoral like Sarah's, but on a different level.He is tormented, at the edge of collapse, tortured with jealousy. His lame leg indicates his inability to adjust to the environment. He lives in a materialist world devoid of any theological assumptions, for him, "if two people loved, they slept together, it was a mathematical formula, tested and proved by 'human experience". (E.A, 136). He cannot understand why he cannot have Sarah. Bendrix hates Henry and then God for taking her from him. He is obsessed with jealousy and is bitter towards Sarah because he is always aware of the fact that one day he will lose her. It is not simply that Henry and then God take her, it is that basically, though he loves her, she is not right for him. He admits to himself that,

> For one thing, she was beautiful and beautiful women, if they are intelligent also, stir some deep feeling of inferiority in me, (E.A, 22)

And again,

> I don't know whether psychologists have yet named the Cophetua Complex, but I have always found it hard to feel sexual desire without some sense of superiority mental or physical. (E.A, 23).

He does not have either mental or physical superiority over her, this causes in him an intense feeling of insecurity. Bendrix's bitterness and jealousy come from this feeling of insecurity. He knows that he is one of many men in Sarah's life. For the same reason he hates Henry too, because he let Sarah have an affair with him and he will let her have an affair with others too.

Bendrix (with Smythe) is the voice of the rationalist against Sarah's mystical outlook on life. He is the anti-God point of view. Bendrix is an intellectual in the 20th century sense and he is a writer, so for this reason his statements are convincing for the readers. Still he is incapable of convincing Sarah and his reluctant progress towards distrust of his atheism makes Sarah's conversion more dramatic and believable. As Paul O'Prey puts it "... the sceptic makes a more persuasive hagiographer than the propagandist." (1988:92) His atheism becomes an exhausted defiance of God, a perverse kind of belief. He states,

> I wanted something very simple and very easy; I wanted Sarah for a lifetime and You took her away

> with your schemes, you ruin our happiness like a harvester ruins a mouse's nest. I hate you God, I hate you as though you existed. (E.A, 210)

So God is affirmed in Bendrix's denial of Him. Bendrix is here serving Greene's thesis of the impossibility of disbelief in God. As Greene himself states in his Ways of Escape, Bendrix is the embodiment of what he read in an article by Von Hügel:

> ... the story which now began to itch at my mind-of a man who was to be driven and overwhelmed by the accumulation of natural coincidences, until he broke and began to accept the incredible-the possibility of a God. (1980:107)

Bendrix's role is significant because he symbolizes the secular perspective of the affair and comments on Sarah's Catholicsm, and also he makes the final assessment on the affair when he is at the edge of collapse. Howerer with this collapse, the rational is devaluated.

Bendix's self-estimation as an artist and as an atheist go hand in hand with each other. In his unhappiness he feels a sense of 'seediness', a word which frequently occurs in the novel. He says,

> Can one really hate and love? Or is it only myself that I hate? I hate the books I write with their trivial unimportant skill, I hate the craftman's mind in me. (E.A, 199)

In his intense jealousy and bitterness he plays around with the idea of God; he rejects God and takes side with the Devil. This is a visible step forwards,

> I have never understood why people who can swallow the enormous improbality of a personal God boggle at a personal devil. I have known so intimately that a demon works in my imagination... I can imagine if there existed a God who loved, the devil would be driven to destroy even the weakest, the most faulty imitation of that love. (E.A,61)

Bendrix has a further significance for he is Greene's mouthpiece. His views on artistry, on Sarah's Catholicsm or on life in general, echo those of Greene, at such moments Greene's and Bendrix's personalities overlap. Bendrix states,

> And all that time I couldn't work. So much of a novelist's writing, as I have said, takes place in the unconscious; in those depths the last word is written before the first appears on paper. We remember the details of our story, we do not invent them. War didn't trouble those deep sea caves, but now there was something of infinitely greater importance to me than war the end of the affair. (E.A, 33)

Here are two references to Greene's own life: the first is the idea of the workings of the unconscious. It makes one recall those years when Greene underwent psychoanalysis and the impact of it on his writing. And second is his own

struggle to write during the war-time, trying not to change his writing habits, his efforts to adjust the hours to fit in with his work when he was working for the British Intelligence Office.

Another common point between Greene and Bendrix is their approach to writing. Greene in his Ways of Escape states,

> writing is a form of therapy; sometimes I wonder how all those who do not write, compose or paint can manage to escape madness, the melancholia, the panic fear which is inherent in the human situation. (1980: 9)

Rama Rao points to the parallelism between this statement and Bendrix's attempt to write about the affair,

> ... the writing of the novel could be viewed as a form of self-designed therapy (for Bendrix) for the obsessive hatred which during the course of narration gets curiously misled. (1990: 92)

Other characters in the book serve mainly for two purposes; to authenticate Sarah's miracles and help Greene devaluate the rational in the light of the mystic. The novel is set in a limited environment and there is very little action in it. This is partly the reason for there being a limited number of characters and no one to share the foreground with Bendrix and Sarah. Among others, Parkis the detective is important because he is the main figure in

flight and pursuit. Smythe gains importance thematically because, as the rationalist preacher who is trying to prove absence of God, he is eventually converted. This enhances the idea of defeat on the rational side. He tries to change Sarah's mind but his words have just the opposite effect on her, he consolidates the belief in her and ironically his strawberry mark is cured by Sarah. This leads to an interesting point, the absence of anyone capable of arguing Sarah out of her belief. Bendrix is not the right person to persuade Sarah from the begining because he is one of the agents in the affair, and Smythe's rationalism is anyhow self-defeating, it serves for the opponent, that is God.

In The End of the Affair, Greene experimented with narrative technique. He introduced different points of view and varied the tone by creating a book within a book through Sarah's diary which offers first person narration. Bendrix's narration is direct and intimate, and these two elements give it a conversational flow, so that simplicity and clarity are the means of expressing his immense feelings of hate, love and jealousy. The result is a brilliant coming together of artistic and thematic concerns.

In terms of Greene's Catholicism this integration has advantages. First of all, his generalizations are endorsed in dialagues and actions, or if there is any direct generalization it is Bendrix's or Sarah's not Greene's, and so does not come like a barrier between author and reader,

as it might if the reader does not share Greene's beliefs. This eases the burden of integrating belief into literature. Another advantage in terms of Catholicism is that the reader gets both Bendrix's rational comments and Sarah's progress from a willing adulteress to a reluctant saint from her own stand point.

When The End of the Affair was first published, it was criticized harshly by the critics because of the supernatural elements in it but as Greene puts it, the novel 'was a greater success with readers' (1980:108) because of the successful fusion of thematic and technical devices.

CHAPTER IV

GREENE'S FAREWELL TO THE CATHOLIC NOVEL:

A BURNT-OUT CASE,

Greene's career between 1938-1951 is referred to as his pre-councilliar phase, The End of the Affair marks the end of this phase and Greene's involvement with the religious novel in it. During this period, Greene produced The Heart of the Matter and The Power and the Glory as well as The End of the Affair, all three enjoyed extraordinary popularity and with them Greene established himself as one of the most outstanding Catholic writers of his time. However his carreer after 1951 took him back to his previous occupation, that is journalism. This return brought with it an involvement in politics and a spate of novels with political themes. His interest in matters of faith was from now on not often apparent in his fiction but was to be seen in some of his plays such as 'The Living Room' and 'The Potting Shed'.

In this period he frequently travelled to exotic parts of the world where the political situation was turbulent, such as Kenya, Poland, Haiti, Russia, Cuba and the Congo. He looked for material both for his fiction and for news reports. His three political works, The Third Man, The Quiet American and Our Man in Havana are the outcome of these efforts.

His visit to the Congo in 1959 and his notes on the leper colony there furnished the material for A Burnt-out Case. This is the only 'serious' novel of the post-councilliar years and is the first book to deal explicitly with progressive Catholicism, it reflects in a very candid manner what is going on in Catholic world in the second half of the 20th century.

Greene gives expression to different stages of belief in the novel, as he himself puts it at the beginning,

> This is not a roman ā cléf, but an attempt to give dramatic expression to various types of belief, half-belief, and non-belief in the kind of setting, removed from world politics and household preoccuppations... (B.C, 5)

His emphasis on the stages other than belief received a harsh criticism both from the critics and the readers. Most of this criticism focused on the anti-hero of the book, Querry who was disillusioned by his achievement in art and sex, and on Greene's way of handling him.

Querry, once part of the Catholic establishment, loses his belief and faith both in God and in man. Life loses all meaning for him and he becomes unable to show any sign of feeling. This is symbolized by his inability to laugh. In a moment of emotional and spiritual crisis he suddenly decides to quit everything and to go to the remotist place he can find in Africa. This place turned out to be a leper colony where a group of missionaries are

struggling to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the lepers. The priests (they are Catholic) are assisted here by Dr. Colin, an atheist, but a man of immense humanity and compassion for the lepers. He preserves his integrity by hard work and is highly respected both by the diseased and the healthy.

The term 'burnt-out case' is used for the lepers whose illness has reached its climax, resulting in the loss of every part of them that can be eaten away, before they are cured. This loss is called 'mutilation'. After the mutilation the lepers get rid of the bacillus but they carry the sign of illness with their sticklike arms and legs.

In the novel Greene draws a strong parallel between the physical mutilation of the lepers and the spiritual and emotional mutilation of Querry. He lost his means of reacting to life, as the lepers do, and he regards himself too as a burnt-out case.

During his stay at the leproserie, Querry ironically begins to recover because he rediscovers a reason for living as a result of his efforts to help Dr. Colin and the priests. The period of recovery does not last long because of the interference of Rycker, a frustrated man who failed in the past to become a priest and now suffers from a spiritual inferiority complex. He discovers Querry's real identity as a world-famous and wealthy architect, and is impressed by this. He makes many attempts to build up a friendship

with Querry but he fails. Querry feels pity for Rycker's childlike wife, Marie and tries to help her. Consequently, Rycker, who had once tried to build Querry up as a saint on account of his sacrifices, now begins to suspect him of seducing his wife.

Rycker's jealousy seems not to be without foundation as Querry has a reputation in matters of women as well as in architecture. Rycker stands for religious hysteria, however, so not all of his acts have a rationale behind them. Querry laughs at the absurdity of the misunderstanding, at being accused of something he is really innocent of, though formerly he had often indulged in such things. His act of laughing shows that Querry is beginning to show signs of feeling again, but ironically Rycker, thinking he is being laughed at, kills Querry. Howerer from all aspects but the purely medical one, Querry had long been dead.

The novel opens with an epigraph from Dante which directly relates to Querry, " I did not die, yet nothing of life remained". (B.C, 7). Querry has gone into the territory of nullity so far that his capacity for feeling is frozen. His attempt to laugh is a 'twitch of the mouth that Colin was beginning to recognize as a rudimentary smile'. The most basic form of communication is denied to him because of his moral and spiritual mutilation. Suffering, as well as happiness is unfamiliar to him. He asks Dr. Colin to teach

him how to suffer because as he puts it, "I only know the mosquito bites" (B.C, 122). Again when Deo Gratias (his leper servant) feels there is something suspicious about his presence in the Congo and asks if Querry had killed a man in Europe, Querry's reply is quite simply, "I have killed everytning" (B.C, 177). Communing with himself it is the same; when he remembers his affairs with women he realizes that he did not love them at all, he only received love and admits, "I really thought in those days that I acted from love." (B.C, 118)

Elsewhere when the Superior (the highest rank in clergy in the Congo) asks Querry if he wanted anything or not, Querry's response is a strange, wholly personal one; he says,

> Nothing. I want nothing. That is my trouble...
> (B.C, 16)

> I suffer from nothing. I no longer know what suffering is. I have come to an end of all that too.
> (B.C, 16)

The novel as a whole is in many ways a kind of allegory of stages of belief or unbelief as Greene mentions at the beginning. Each important character represents one of the stages and here Greene, interestingly, categorizes the forms of unbelief too. The Superior, or head of the Catholic Church there, stands for a settled and easy kind of belief, Father Thomas an unsettled kind of belief, Dr.

Colin a settled and easy atheism, Querry an unsettled kind of disbelief. In addition to these European figures, there are natives who are half Catholic and half Nzambe.

To expose the reader to these stages of belief, Greene uses an imagery setting or as he puts it at the beginning of the novel, 'a region of mind'. Thematically the features of this setting are very significant. It unites with the subject matter. The leper colony is sketched convincingly without any sense of sentimentality and it is the reflection of Querry's spiritual state in physical terms. Like those burnt-out lepers for whom the mutilation is an alternative to pain, he is mutilated by his loss of faith and hope. Querry is put among other characters at different stages of belief and the leproserie is a closed environment for them. Its function is to isolate them from outside world. Greene goes to extremes in his description of the poverty and sickness in this closed environment. However in this place of despair Querry rediscovers his reason to live.

The setting also serves for the juxtoposition of characters with different backgrounds of belief. First is the meeting of Querry and Deo Gratias, the boy who looks after him in the leproserie. Deo Gratias is medically a burnt-out case and his nerves in the limbs are dead to feeling. Querry, an internationally famous architect, tired of success, chased by women, is like Deo Gratias dead to any kind of feeling. Thus the setting brings together two

mutilated figures, one on a spiritual, the other on a physical level. Deo Gratias is a half-Catholic, he attends mass but also celebrates his own native religion. He is, from a Christian point of view, a half believer.

Another juxtoposition occurs with Dr. Colin and the Superior. Dr. Colin, a settled atheist, has committed himself to eradicate leprosy and put an end to the pain there in the leproserie, and the Superior, a settled Catholic, collaborates with Dr. Colin to achieve his aim. They have respect for each other and the Superior appreciates that Dr. Colin is very important for the leproserie.

Then there is Rycker, who failed to become a priest in the past and now tries to heal his inferiority complex by looking down on the priests there. He bores Querry with his religious scruples. There is also Parkinson the journalist who represents the world outside the leproserie. He is in pursuit of success and makes cult heroes by subverting the truth. His victim at present is Querry. Parkinson is the representative of Europe from which Querry escaped in Colin's and Querry's eyes.

The life of the priests in the leproserie reminds the reader of the decisions taken during the Second Vatican Council which asserted that Catholicism is interested in what is going on in this world as well as in the other world and of the guerilla priests in Latin America. The priests in

this novel are seen as being more occupied with building houses for the lepers or raising money for the new hospital than with any kind of moral theology. The setting functions to give a meaningful reason for these priests acting in a commonplace worldly way. Their days follow a typical working routine like this,

> Father Paul with Brother Philippe was in charge of the dynamo which supplied electricity to the Mission and the leper village, Father Joseph had already started the labourers to work on clearing the ground for the new hospital... (B.C, 26)

Their hopes for the future are similarly at a very mundane level,

> we'll have air-conditioning in our rooms yet, Father Jean said, and an drug-store and all the latest movie magazines including pictures of Brigitte Bardot. (B.C, 83)

Further there is a nice worldly track in the fact that the first thing that occupies the Bishop's mind when Querry arrives is whether he plays bridge or not. (B.C,64)

Another purpose that the setting serves is to have a small community set apart by leprosy. Members of this community are incapable of normal social relationships and Greene focuses on more fundamental but meaningful relationships. They are isolated from the mainstream of social life, both native and colonial, and they can find meaning in relationships which depend on the most basic

needs. All the members of this community, healthy or ill alike, are free of any conventionality, social and moral, which could be a hindrance to this different kind of communication. Their unconventional attitude to life is reflected best when the Superior shows his prefence for a hospital not for a new church. Mrs Rycker says to the Superior; "My husband told me you were building a wonderful new church as big as a cathedral, in an African style." (B.C, 71) To this conventional expectation, the Superior's answer is indeed significant, he replies,

> what an extraordinary idea. If I had the money for that, why, we could build a hundred houses, each with a foot-bath (for the lepers)... Doctor Colin would never forgive me for wasting money on a church. (B.C, 71)

On similar lines, one of the nuns at the school has a baby every year by a different man and she goes to class with her cradle, and is still allowed to teach. Such instances met with harsh criticism from conservative Catholics because for the strict Catholics the nun is essentially virgin and the image of a pregnant nun is intolerable.

The setting also helps Greene convey the lack of communication between human beings. The novel as a whole is the demonstration of the inability of man to communicate with his fellow men. A Burnt-out Case lacks the type of priests who can comprehend the dilemmas of man unlike the other serious novels. Even the priests

themselves have their own dilemmas which they cannot communicate. Language is seen as a barrier to their attempts to communicate. The setting brings a variety of languages with it and each language represents a different culture or mentality. For example, Flemish is the language of the priests so that if one can speak it he can understand the priests (not only literally but also metaphorically). Querry can speak both Flemish, the language of the missionaries and English, the language of Parkinson who represents European conventions. Among the colonials only Rycker and Father Thomas who are unsymphatetic religious figures can understand Parkinson and ironically they cannot speak the language of the natives. This is significant because these three characters stand for the European way of looking at things which destroyed Querry's peace both in Europe and in the leproserie. Querry cannot speak the language of the natives which signifies that he cannot understand what Deo Gratias says in his language about Pendélé, a mysterious place to which Deo Gratias escapes and which later on signifies an idealized final point for Querry.

A new departure in A Burnt-out Case, when we compare it with Greene's earlier works, is his rejection of Péguy's thesis of a bad citizen of Christianity who is more elavated than the decent atheist or agnostic as in the example of the Lieutenant of Police versus the Whisky

Priest in The Power and The Glory and Pinkie versus Ida Arnold in Brighton Rock. In contrast, in A Burnt-out Case, the most symphathetic character is Dr. Colin who is an atheist yet a profoundly humane person. He can understand Querry's inner conflicts much better than the priests in the leproserie. He has committed himself to improve the conditions in the leproserie and is much respected by the priests. While the priests believe in a Christian truth he believes in a Christian myth. He believes in evolution which has taken place in the brains of man, and which caused the change from diesel to jet. He says,

> I have a small hope, that's all, a very small hope, that someone they call Christ was the fertile element looking for a crack in the wall to plant its seed. I think of Christ as an amoeba who took the right turning. (B.C, 124)

Though he resembles the Lieutenant of Police in The Power and The Glory in his integrity, unlike him, Dr. Colin does not hate God. He simply does not believe in God. The aim he set for himself is more realistic than that of the Lieutenant who dreams of an equal future for everybody in his country. Dr. Colin only fights for the reasonable aim of curing the lepers. He is neither an extremist nor a utopian.

Another characteristic that differentiates A Burnt-out Case from Greene's previous serious novels is that the book portrays Father Thomas as a muddled priest.

He tries to impose his own dilemmas in religion on Querry. He is drawn as a poor creature unable to know what he believes, unable to control or overcome his doubts. To Querry he says,

> We both of us have our doubts. Perhaps I have more than you. They even come to me at the altar with the Host in my hands. (B.C, 91)

Querry insistently says that he has got no doubts,

> I've long ceased to have doubts. Father, if I must speak plainly, I don't believe at all Not at all. I've worked it out of my system like women. I've no desire to convert others to disbelief, or even to worry them. I want to keep my mouth shut, if only you'd let me. (B.C, 91)

Father Thomas replies,

> You can't think what a lot of good our conversation has done me... There's not a priest here to whom I can talk as we're talking. One sometimes desperately needs a man who has experienced the same weaknesses as oneself. (B.C, 92)

Father Thomas says that he is capable of judging a man's actions (B.C, 92) but he cannot accept that Querry has lost his beliefs. He resembles Querry's professional loss of belief to his own religious dilemmas.

Rycker is portrayed as a victim of religion. He is very much like Father Thomas in his dilemmas but as he

was denied the priesthood, he does not have a place to belong to. He simply tortures his wife Marie with his bitterness because he is incapable of loving anybody. His concept of marriage is very much coloured by his unsuccessful attempt at becoming a priest. Querry can see the real motifs behind his marriage. He says to Rycker,

> And your heart isn't in your wife either. You made that clear to me the first time we met. You wanted someone to save you from St. Paul's threat of burning. (B.C, 145)

Rycker defends himself,

> There's nothing wrong in a Christian marriage. It's far better than a marriage of passion. But if you want to know the truth, my heart has always been in my faith. (B.C, 145).

Querry is quick to see the resemblance between them;

> I begin to think we are not so different, you and I, we don't know what love is. You pretend to love a god because you love no one else. (B.C, 125)

In A Burnt-out Case, Greene again treats some of his old themes such as a paradoxical kind of belief, or the ultimate affirmation of God in the very denial of him by the characters, the importance of suffering or the making of a saint out of a sinner. However he exploits these themes on a different level.

The paradoxical kind of belief is most expicitly reflected in the allegorical story which Querry tells Marie.

In this story he draws a parallel between the royal jeweller who lost his faith in the King and himself, who has lost his faith in God. He inserts the statement below into the story,

> I'm told that there were moments when he wondered if his unbelief were not after all a formal and conclusive proof of the King's existence. This total vacancy might be his punishment for the rules he had wilfully broken. (B.C, 158)

Other characters in the novel make Querry paradoxically affirm the existence of God because of his Catholic past. When Rycker says to Querry that once he had read Querry was a Catholic, Querry replies, "I'm retired." Rycker answers, "Oh come now, one hardly retires from that." (B.C, 39) When Colin refers to Querry's attitude to religion and compares it with his own, he says,

> All the same you talk as if you'd lost something you'd loved, I haven't... (B.C, 82)

Querry with his paradoxical kind of belief both affirms the existence of God and also keeps the tension between man and God, which is typical of Greene's novels. He says,

> He has made us as we are and expects us, on terrible penalties, to behave otherwise. He would not leave us in the state of the amoeba, yet He denies us adult brains. (B.C, 76)

As in Greene's previous serious novels, in A

Burnt-out Case too, suffering as a sign of healing is emphasized. When Querry mentions his inability to suffer to the Superior, he is told,

> Oh well, you know, suffering is something which will always be provided when it is required.
>
> (B.C, 16)

This answer indicates that there is going to be a kind of suffering in the future and a recovery from spiritual mutilation. Querry learns to suffer again in his efforts to help the lepers. This rediscovery of suffering directly relates to his rediscovery of peace. He ironically finds this peace in the leproserie where suffering is prevailing everywhere. The members of the leproserie are so absorbed in bettering the conditions there, that they do not worry Querry with questions about his past. They accept him as a plain man not as a wealthy and famous architect. They leave him in peace and this functions as a kind of therapy for Querry. He says to Colin, "You know I am happy here." (B.C, 94)

He begins to feel pity for the lepers and this indicates that he is being cured. He moves towards a new reason for living and reaches a settled form of disbelief. Green makes the reader sure that he would be cured at the end if the members of the 'great world' of European culture did not intervene.

Rycker and Parkinson the journalist try to make out

that Querry is a saint as he 'buried' himself in the leproserie. In his articles on him, Parkinson refers to him as the Hermit of the Congo. From then on, these interventions disturb the sense of peace in Querry's life and thus interfere with his recovery. Father Thomas also inadvertently joins in their attempt to block his recovery by misunderstanding Querry. Querry says to Father Thomas repeatedly that he has lost his faith, Father Thomas goes on drawing a different picture of Querry in his mind, though Querry tells him bluntly 'You've misunderstood me Father', Father Thomas still sticks to his own misguided opinion and says,

> Don't you see that perhaps you've been given the grace of aridity? Perhaps even now you're walking in the footsteps of St.John of the Cross; the noche oscura. (B.C, 92)

Dr. Colin indicates, after Querry's death, that their efforts to make him a saint or a Hermit were inevitable as Querry was famous. For him success is like a disease from which one cannot be cured. He says to the Superior,

> Something was bound to happen sooner or later... They would never let him alone.

The Superior asks who 'they' are, Dr. Colin replies,

> The fools, the interfering fools, they exist everywhere don't they? He had been cured of all but success, but you can't cure success anymore than I can give my mutiles back their fingers and toes, I

> return them to the town, and people look at them in the stores and watch them in the street and draw the attention of others to them as they pass. Success is like that too- a mutilation of the natural man. (B.C, 197)

For Dr. Colin the reason for Querry's spiritual mutilation is his success. Querry comments on success and the praise following it, "Disgust of praise. How it nauseates, doctor, by its stupidity". (B.C, 193) The very same people or conventions followed him down to the remotest parts of Africa, and gave him the same feeling of nausea and took this temporary peace away from him again.

The three men (Rycker, Father Thomas and Parkinson) who stand for the European conventions in their attempt to build Querry up as a saint are different from Greene's earlier characters with the same purpose of making the anti-hero of the novel into a saint. Because this image of sainthood is destroyed by themselves at the end. Ironically Rycker kills Querry as he suspects an affair between him and his wife. Querry will be forgotten shortly after his death even by the ones who believed in his innocence and loved him, unlike Sarah who continued to influence the lives of others even after her death or the Whisky Priest who has become a legend. Dr. Colin makes this clear when the Superior asks him where he is going he simply says, "To the dispensary. Surely we've wasted enough time on the dead." (B.C, 197)

An important characteristic that A Burnt-out Case shares with Greene's previous serious novels is that most of the characters stand for an idea, therefore the novel has an allegorical quality. Grahame Smith points to Greene's efforts not to give Querry a definite nationality. Querry does not use his Christian name and it is difficult from his surname to understand his nationality. Smith says for this reason there is a similarity between Everyman and Querry. He also points to the oddity of his surname which reminds one of 'query' and 'quest'. Another thing that makes Smith think of Querry as an allegorical character is his continual involvement with the mysterious Pendélé where Deo Gratias tries to go but fails and about which the reader is told almost nothing. Smith states that Pendélé is a kind of an idealized land for Querry. At the end Querry realizes that he had found this Pendélé in the leproserie but it was demolished by the 'great world'.

In spite of the common characteristics that A Burnt-out Case shares with Greene's previous serious novels, there are a lot of reasons to support the idea that Greene abandoned institutional Catholicism in this book. After publication Greene was accused by the non-progressive Catholics of having renounced his faith. Critics established a parallel between Greene and Querry. Greene defended himself as follows,

> Must a Catholic be forbidden to paint the portrait of a lapsed Catholic? Undoubtedly if there is any realism in the character it must come from the author experiencing some of the same moods as Querry but surely not necessarily with the same intensity... If people are so impetuous as to regard this book as a recantation of faith I cannot help it. Perhaps they will be surprised to see me at Mass.
>
> (1980: 196)

Interestingly the same kind of criticism came from Marxist critics too; Greene answers them as follows:

> I wrote to the Communist paper that as a Catholic I considered myself able to treat loss of faith just as freely as discovery of faith, and I trusted that if I were a Communist writer in his country, I would be able to take as a character a lapsed Communist.
>
> (1980:196)

Yet Greene is paradoxically confirming the views of the critics by not making use of Catholic themes in any novel after A Burnt-out Case.

CONCLUSION

Since the orthodoxy of Catholicism was too often diametrically opposed to the secular realism of novel, there had always been a lot of critics condemning the Catholic elements in the works of Catholic novelists and they associated novel writing more with the Protestant tradition. In spite of all this adverse criticism, Catholic writers tended to be more prolific than their Protestant counterparts. They were the voice of the Catholic community in Britain which had to preserve its cultural structure with the least possible change due to the sectarian attitudes in many walks of life. The themes and concerns peculiar to the Catholic tradition produced a distinctive voice in British fiction.

Towards the mid-century the developments in the international Church led to a change in the Catholic identity, even one may say, to its loss. Before, the Roman Catholic Church had put the emphasis on what differentiated it from other churches and on its age-old cultural heritage. With the progressive trends, the emphasis was now on what it had in common with the other churches. This change brought with it a much more liberal and plural way of looking at life and religion. It no longer constituted a challenge to secular or Protestant values. There remained only surface features that differentiated Roman Catholicism from other churches. The Catholic Community after the developments in its

principles became, in Lodge's words, a "more decent, open-minded Christian community than it once was but it is also rather blander, duller and more amorphous." (Write On 1986, 36)

Roman Catholicism tried to adapt itself to the developments in the world and by doing so could appeal to a wider range of people. However, in terms of its distinctive culture and literary tradition, the result was the loss of the imagery that its apartness had once preserved and made available for the imaginative arts.

Following this loss of imagery, there have been very few Catholic novels produced. So the critics who attacked the orthodoxy in Catholicism as a hindrance to novel writing seem to have been proved wrong. After the destruction of that orthodoxy, there apparently remained nothing to inspire Catholic novelists, so the Catholic novel tradition is no longer as prolific as it used to be, due to the loss of this source of imagery. Recent works with a Catholic content have been either comedy programmes or a nostalgic yearning for a Catholic past.

Lodge states that he was struck by the absence of Catholic fiction in the field of contemporary fiction (Write on 1986:55). This does not mean that there have been no Catholic writers but, because there is nothing to encourage a distinctive outlook on life, their work is defined, by themselves or by critics, no more in terms of their religious affiliation (Write on 1986:35). In other words with the new

developments in the teachings of the Catholic Church there is nothing to preach them a distinctive way of thinking.

This apartness was already on the wane even in some of Greene's later works. His characters were no longer damned or saved because of their acts, as was the case in his pre-councillar novels. The city walls in Péguy's thesis of the 'Christian city' were demolished and in Greene's A Burnt-out Case, the sinner was not qualified by his beliefs, not elevated above the atheist. Indeed just the opposite was the case, the atheist is more respectable than most of the Catholics in this novel. His works are no longer conclusive in matters of religion.

As was stated above, Greene divided his works into two; serious novels and entertainments. He turned again to entertainments after the progressive developments in the Catholic world. It is significant that he occupied himself more with entertainments than with serious novels in which he dealt with human problems of universal appeal.

Greene in his last serious novel tells the story of lepers in the last stages of decrepitude. After a very painful stage these lepers are mutilated, that is they lose their fingers and toes, because they are 'burnt-out cases'. In other words there is no hope for them to be cured. Greene exploits this idea of mutilation both in physical and medical terms in the novel. It is significant that this novel marks 'the end of his affair' with Catholic fiction and it seems to be the very last novel of all to deal with Catholic

themes (except for How Far Can You Go? by Lodge). One cannot help applying this term 'a burnt-out case' to Catholic fiction as a whole at this period, as it too seems to have lost its fingers and toes, that is its imagery. One cannot help being surprised" at seeing Greene at Mass" after the publication of A Burnt-out Case or at his producing almost nothing, again deserving the label of Catholic fiction.

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