

Graham Green: His Vision of Fiction

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Abstract – Greene's novels are the expression of a variety of experiences of the novelist. These varied experiences have resulted in a moral vision in the novels. Greene is predominantly a religious writer. Therefore, it is obvious that his preoccupation with evil is linked with his religious consciousness. The treatment of evil reminds the reader of the novelist's obsessive awareness of God and his mercy. Greene was not blind to the rampant evil in the society. His early experiences deeply stirred his consciousness. This consciousness of evil finds expression in his major novels, particularly, Brighton Rock, The Power and the Glory and The Heart of the Matter.

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Graham Greene who wrote so many social novels of character and in these novels the writer presented his rebellious nature and a moral vision. Graham Greene is one of the four representative writers of the IIRD. & IVth. decades of 20th. century. These four authors are Graham Greene (b. 1904), Christopher Isherwood (1904-1986), George Orwell (1903-1950) & Evelyn Waugh (1904-1966). Greene is different from his ancestors, but he is a representative writer of the period speaking for his generation. He was born in the Ist. decade of the 20th. century in the upper middle class professional family. For about a decade he experienced the Edwardian life of security, and order followed by the Ist. World War. He lived to see the traditional period of social and political upheavals during the 20's & the 30's. He survived the IIInd World War,

The author is the representative of upper class of the period between the two World Wars and the characteristics of this fiction, is that it refers to its influence on later life. Besides fiction he also has published non-fictional works including autobiographies, memories, criticism etc. In which he discusses his experiences of life. Author like Graham Greene is found in his literature utterly barbarous and reactionary. Greene was rebel and even in his writings he either ridiculed or satirized his institutions. During the rise of fascism in Europe, Greene despaired of the future, sought to define the past in order to repudiate it. The writer tried to justify his present position by constructing a myth about his past that shaped his destiny. In writing his autobiography he was also writing the history of his generation. In his novels, Greene has given a memorable sketch of his environment and the influence that stimulated him.

The autobiography of Greene is neither quite fiction nor quite fact. It is the portrayal of the artist by himself, he puts before the reader a man that he

wants them to know. In his autobiography one finds that his school left an indelible impression on his life that all his initial work was either about school or his characters seemed to conform to the theory of permanent adolescence, as elucidated by Cyril Connolly. The nature of the writings of Greene was very different from the writings of his predecessors as they moved away from the aesthetic emotions and personal relations, which concerned the modernists, he did not experiment with the, "stream, of consciousness as Joyce, Lawrence, Virginia Woolf and other did. Greene was a prolific writer. His works, therefore, refer to social and political problem of the day.

The class structure in England is very elaborate and subtle and when compared to any other ancient civilization it is Justified. The English never compared themselves to the oriental. When the younger generation compared their social system to that of Norway or any other European country, they found it too rigid and unjust. Greene found that each individual, in English social system had a precise and a particular place in the social scale and this was manifested through the habits and speech of the individual. Writers of the period found a rich source in this national idiosyncrasy. Greene was a moralist and he saw the individual within the moral framework, interacting with other individuals. It is significant to note that Greene wished for a change in the stratified, hierarchical pattern of society whereas Waugh wished to maintain a status quo. In "Commentary for the Private Man" he argued that an accepted system of classes is the most valuable possession of any nation and that the result of classlessness would be drab uniformity.

In the novels of Graham Greene, the effect of the single sex atmosphere can be seen. Mostly his novels are all male adventure stories. Generally,

women are secondary characters in his novels. They are confusing or frightening, sometimes they seem to be a different species. Even the marital and sexual relationships between couples -one influenced by experiences of adolescence and character were shown to experience considerable difficulty in making the necessary adjustment. In upper class English society at large, the males preferred a single sex society and enjoyed the male company. The fiction of the interwar years of Graham Greene was not affected by literary and social changes but more often the political upheavals. The 1st. World War was a major influence on the novels of Graham Greene. He was still in his school during the war and his father was a school master and he regretted that he could not participate in it. Repeated references to the disastrous consequences of war were made in the literature of Graham Greene.

Graham Greene was also influenced by varying shades of "Communism" or "Socialism". Greene domesticated socialism or Marxism, a dream of a classless society. He used the Marxist phraseology though he was hardly mature enough to understand it. Communism had a wide appeal because it envisaged social revolution and prophesied that a new social order could be established only after the defeat of the capitalist system. Greene supported the destruction of certain existing institutions and wanted to install a new social and political order. Consequently, he behaved as divided individuals between his environment and his convictions.

The First World War was fresh in his memory and its impact can be seen in his novels. In his literature, Graham Greene has the influence of the first World War. He consciously linked the idea of war with the rise of fascism. He professed in his literature his progressive views about, education, sex, art, health, food etc. His personal experiences showed that the war was not a class struggle or a struggle for a political ideology but only a game of power. Spender has described the position of Graham Greene very precisely and accurately by comparing him to Don Quixote. He writes, "They were, politically, Don Quixote of the new world armed to rescue the Dulcinea of the old-whom they quickly discovered to be all old hag with rotten teeth." Graham Greene professed dissent but in practice conformed to the norms of the establishment. Political & social awareness peep through Graham Greene's novels, and he feels the need to speak for the poor and the weak. Actually, his outlook and attitude has always been that of upper and upper-middle class.

England Made Me is his best novel. In this novel his stream of consciousness is full of recollections of dormitories and prefects and house masters. At the beginning of the novel the reader is introduced to Anthony by his sister Kate as a schoolboy. **Stamboul Train** is an important novel of Graham Greene. This novel is more interesting in that it represents Greene's sense of failure about which often readers are tempted to ask if this failure is the result of the

sexual disgust. **The Power and the Glory** made an advance in every way. The theme is the struggle between the Church and the State. **The Heart of the Matter** has been written by Greene out of full human sympathy. It is the product of Greene's love and understanding. In **The Third Man** is seen Greene's obsessions and preoccupations with setting that is seen in his earlier novels. **The End of the Affair** is a fine product of Greene's Craftsmanship. In this novel humour appears for the first time. **The Quiet American** has the Vietnamese war as its background. Greene was alarmed to see the conflict between Communism Christianity. **A Burnt-out Case** is also a very famous novel of Graham Greene. The Bomb Party also reveals some of the better artistic aspects of Greene's art. **Fanatic Ariba** was Greene's first unfinished novel, next a detective novel, next **Across the Border** was an African story which opened in Berkhamstead; a school novel of a timid boy's blackmail of house master who had protected him. His third novel **The Man Within (1929)**, the first to find a publisher, was a success and brought fame to the author.

Greene's theory of shaping his mind in childhood is confirmed by the first sentence of his autobiography written in 1971. "If I had known it, the whole future must have lain all time along those Berkhamstead streets".

In **The Comedians** (1966) he writes, "For a writer it is always said that the first twenty years of life contained the whole of experience the rest is observation." Greene's personal account is in **A Sort of Life**. Greene's novels are haunted by images of a terrorised child who grows up as smuggler and a traitor in **The Man Within** or a juvenile delinquent and a murder in **Brighton Rock and a Gun for Sale**. It was because Greene's early life was not a happy one. In **The Lawless Road** he writes about his life. In the novels of Greene, the life of his character was also dominated by his childhood experience. All his heroes are like himself, they wish to overcome the sense of boredom, frustration, and loneliness. In the later part of his autobiography **Way of Escape**, he reviews his thoughts on the man within.

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