

GLOBAL CONSCIENCE IN THE FICTIONS OF GRAHAM GREENE: HUMAN PSYCHOLOGY, WORLD POLITICS, RELIGION, AND SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

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Abstract

Graham Greene is one of the renowned British writers of the 20th c. He has written both Catholic Novels and suspenseful thrillers or 'entertainments' as he himself has termed these literary works. Greene is very popular among his readers due to his unique writing style. His writing technique immediately captures the attention of the readers for its visual descriptions, fast and quick actions, sharp and intelligent delivery of dialogues and for the narratives. Due to such cinematic methods his works are well acceptable for film making. His novels are often set in unique setting termed as 'Greenland'-the war-torn, seedy and tropical backdrop. His characters often deal with moral dilemmas. He uses his writing as a therapy to fight depression. His friend and later editor Michael Korda has shared the fact that Greene uses a black notebook and a black fountain pen to write 500 words daily. He is a disciplined writer. He writes a limited number of words in regular basis which help to maintain the quality and standard of his writing. His prose is very concise and uses intensifying metaphors. Henry James, Robert Louis Stevenson, H. Rider Haggard, Joseph Conrad, Ford Madox Ford, Marcel Proust, and John Buchan et.al writers are profoundly motivated by his writing. Graham Greene has served as a British Intelligence Officer in Freetown, Sierra Leone and has gathered vast knowledge and practical experiences for this.

Keyword: satire, mock, catholic, World War II, Catholic, faith, moral conflict, spiritual transformation, guilt-consciousness, redemption,

imperialism, politics, post colonialism, social decay, repression

1. INTRODUCTION

Graham Greene is a prominent British writer of the 20th century. He is a prolific writer. His literary works reflect almost every aspects of human life-social, religious, psychological, political, thriller etc. His vast knowledge, wisdom, social awareness of contemporary issues and erudition are reflected in his writings. His serious thriller novels are often mixed and merged with keen satire and mockery to have a perfect poise of gravity with levity. These literary texts are termed as 'entertainments' by him.

2. METHODOLOGY:

The study follows close reading of all the texts. The textual, analytical and interpretative study helps in the deeper understanding of British author Graham Greene's literary works. The theoretical approaches of the Existentialism, Catholic Theology, Psychoanalytic Theory, and Social and Cultural criticism, Political and Ideological Criticism and Postcolonial Theory provide this analytical methodological research a profound wisdom, clarity and detailed understanding of Greene's authentic high standard writings. The secondary sources, scholarly articles and critical writings have assisted in the enrichment and precision of the texts.

3. BRIGHTON ROCK (1938) –

This is a popular thriller novel of Graham Greene. The novel is mixed with Catholic theme. This is a sequel of his previous novel A Gun for Sale (1936), where Kite, the head of a criminal gang is assassinated. Now Pinkie, a 17

year old sociopath takes the charge of this malicious gang. Charles Fred Hale, a newspaper reporter of the Daily Messenger is responsible for Kite's murder as his report aggravates such condition. Fred Hale is being murdered by Pinkie's gang while come in Brighton for his work. Ida Arnold a middle aged woman meets Hale in the pub. Spicer is involved in the plot and accidentally Rose, a 16 years old waitress has noticed him. Pinkie marries Rose to keep the privacy of his misdeed. Ida Arnold later comes with the police to rescue Rose from the love less relationship. Pinkie murders Spicer and plans to kill Rose also. In the last part of the novel Pinkie himself accidentally dies. Rose confesses to the priest that she would accompany her wicked husband to damnation as for her profound love for him. She is eager to play the recorder that Pinkie has recorded on their wedding day which unfortunately contains his contempt for Rose. Colleoni is another infamous criminal of Brighton. The novel contains several autobiographical instances.

4. THE HEART OF THE MATTER (1948):

This novel depicts the war time tension during World War II. Mayor Henry Scobie is the protagonist of this literary piece. He is in the custody of West Coast of Africa during the war time situation. He and his wife Louise are sharing an unhappy married life. Louise is fond of poetry, Literature but lead an alienated life. They share a disharmonious, discordant and loveless relationship lacking a genuine feeling for each other. Their only girl child Catherine had breathed her last several years ago in England. Louise is a devout Catholic and her husband has converted to Catholicism. Wilson, the new inspector, very much prudish and socially inept, shares similarity in interests in poetry like Louise, has started amoral feeling for her. Inspector Wilson investigates diamond smuggled ships. The Portuguese ship, Esperanca meaning 'Hope' is being seized by him. The captain of the ship tries to bribe Scobie but he rejects the proposal, both of them are Catholic. Dicky Pemberton, a youth commits suicide due to his incapability to repay the loan. Major Scobie suspects Yusef, the Syrian agent as the culprit for this tragic incident and assures himself that he will never commit suicide in his life as it is the way of eternal damnation. Scobie accepts loan from Yusef to accomplish Louise's dream to visit in South Africa. After some days Scobie rescues a ship containing shipwreck

survivors. There he meets Helen, a 19 years old widow. She is slender and lean in appearance and of a very feeble health. Both of them are inclined to each other and involve in an adulterous relationship. Knowing this illicit affair Yusef begins to blackmail Scobie. Louise returns abruptly and pretending unaware about her husband's illicit affair. Ali, Scobie's servant for the last 15 years, is mercilessly killed. Scobie suspects Yusef for this malicious deed. Scobie considers himself responsible for Ali's murder. Due to the pangs of conscience Scobie commits suicide, the ultimate damnation. Bereaved Louise goes to the Confessional priest Dr. Rank to know the reason of his self-assassination. The priest tells her that nobody knows about the ongoings in the person's heart. Louise has procrastinated Wilson's marriage proposal due to the present unpleasant situation.

5. THE END OF AN AFFAIR (1951):

The novel is set in London. It is written after the World War II. It depicts a complex and triangle relationship among the three major characters of the novel. The novel contains autobiographical instances . Maurice Bendrix is a rising writer during the World War II. He is actually the novelist himself. Sarah Miles is the wife of Henry Miles, an impotent civil officer. Sarah Miles is in real life Catherine Walston and the novel is dedicated to her. Though Sarah was not happy in her marital life but she is reluctant to divorce her boring husband. There was `a V-1 flying bomb explosion near Bendrix's flat when both he and Sarah were present there. Bendrix nearly escapes death. After this unpleasant incident Sarah totally disconnects with Bendrix. He was severely jealous and envious to Henry. Henry begins to suspect Bendrix's moves. Bendrix even appoints detectives to find out Sarah's new love. When the truth is revealed he is astonished and his love and admiration for Sarah Miles increases more. During the explosion Sarah has promised to God that if Bendrix survives the fatal incident she will never come in contact with him. God listens to her cordial prayer and she has kept her promise also. She suddenly died due to lung infection. This heartfelt incident creates Bendrix's faith on God also. There in this novel is Catholic faith is also seen.

6. POWER AND GLORY (1940) –

The novel deals with the themes of faith, corruption, duty, sin, religion and redemption. The novel is set in 1930s in Mexico. The Government of this region of Tabasco has decided to eradicate religion from this region and eliminates the existences of all the priests. There is no priest in the area except one fugitive priest, the Whiskey Priest- the term is coined by the novelist. From the term 'Whiskey' it is evident that the priest is incapable of strictly adhering to the austere lifestyles of priesthood. He is addicted to alcoholism, engaged in illegal affair with Maria and has fathered an illegitimate child Brigitta. Though not a strict follower of the religion due to his weakness of moral character but he has profound regards for Catholicism. He is committed to the religious duties and is a very helpful human being. The Lieutenant inspector is adamant to arrest the priest and the Mestizo assists him in this task by betraying the priest. Through the character of the whiskey priest Greene shows that religiousness or holiness can remain in the sinful or morally weak people. May be due to lack of moral strength they cannot follow the strict rules and regulations of religion but by heart they are holy and good. Even the whiskey priest is arrested while helping others. His selflessness is glorified and he is pathetically arrested for the sake of others due to the conspiracy of a traitor. Whiskey priest despite suspecting the trap does not refrain from helping the people He has time again sacrificed his own safety for the cause of others. Self sacrifices, self-renunciation, serving for the welfare of humanity are the significant religious notions which will eventually lead to the path of salvation and redemption. Catholic theology is prevailed in the novel. The religious concepts of sin, redemption and emancipation are portrayed vividly in the novel.

7. THE QUIET AMERICAN (1955):

The novel is set up in French- colonial Saigon, Vietnam. The novel deals with political intrigues, colonialism, and Western intervention in foreign counties for imperialism. French Indochina war in Vietnam in the year 1952 is the backdrop of this novel. Thomas Fowler is British journalist lives in Vietnam. He tries to keep himself detached from the politics and is a reporter of war. Alden Pyle is the quiet American and has involved in active politics. He is the supporter of American intervention in this region for the welfare and spread of democracy in Vietnam. Pyle is a sophisticated, soft-

spoken man, naive political idealist and aspires to become a member for the 'Third Force'. His activities and political outlook give rise to violent activities and chaotic situation. Like Fowler he also inclines to Phuong who starts to cherish amorous feelings for both the men. It creates tension and personal detest between these men. Pyle ultimately assassinated due to his active political actions. Fowler has assisted in the assassination of Pyle, the quiet American. Graham Greene was a war correspondent in the French Indochina from the year 1951 to 1954.

8. OUR MAN IN HAVANA (1958) –

This novel is a dark comedy. This piece of literature is categorized as the Entertainments. The novel mocks the British Secret Intelligence Service specially the M16. James Wormold, a vacuum cleaner sales person in Havana, Cuba. He is recruited for the espionage service by Hawthorne. He agrees to this serious task to maintain the extravagant life- style of his 17 years old daughter Milly. Only to earn some extra money Wormold is executing the intelligence service. Neither has he had neither any genuine interest nor any knowledge about this profession. He fabricates his report and creates a fictitious intelligent net work. He provides false reports to London. He uses story from Shakespeare's tales and his own experiences from Vacuum cleaner duty. Surprisingly all his imaginations become real. The people of the fictitious network start dying. M16 trusts his report and he himself becomes a target of the enemy group especially for the Captain Segura. Beatrice Severn plays a crucial role in the novel by assisting Wormold. The novel exposes the incompetence and the gullibility of the intelligence force and their unwise actions. Wormold tries his utmost to rescue Milly and himself from this chaotic situation. This novel was written during the Cold War. There are elements of satire, mock, fun, surprise etc. The theme of Cold war politics prevail the text.

9. THEORITICAL APPROACHES:

Existentialism: The characters of Graham Greene's novels deal with existential themes. The moral dilemma, the contrast between duty and desire, existential crisis is a common theme in his fictions. Existential identity in a

morally unstable world specifically during and after the wars is a veritable condition for modern human beings.

Catholic Theology: Catholic ideas of faith, sin, redemption, spiritual transformation, sacrifice, renunciation, emancipation and salvation prevail in most of his literary works. Trust, betrayal, psychological trauma, alienation, emotional detachment, suspicion, post war trauma, depression are prominent traits in the characters.

Psychoanalytic Theory: Desire, guilt, guilt consciousness, moral conflict, repression are seen among the characters.

Social and Cultural criticism: Greene's novels demonstrate crime, moral degradation, lack of ethics and values and societal decay and degeneration.

Political and Ideological Criticism: His novels are charged with political issues. Western ideology, colonialism and imperialism, cold war, espionage and intelligence service are vividly described.

Postcolonial Theory: The settings of Greene's novels are often regions affected by colonialization and Western imperial interventions. There are consequent themes of political exploitation, cultural hybridity, marginalization and subjugation of colonized peoples, corruption, exploitation of native people, political instability, cultural hierarchy, dominance of the Western countries are the common thing.

10. CONCLUSION:

Graham Greene is a prolific and brilliant novelist of the 20th century. His keen observation of human psychology, social religious and political has established his world wide popularity and his name and fame as a dominant British novelist. The keen prediction and immense knowledge of global political affairs have made his literary works highly acceptable and popular across the globe. His themes, dialogue delivery, fast pace and narrative technique and a perfect backdrop for the ongoings of the plots and story made his works instantly suitable for film making. Therefore he has assisted in awakening the mass of population to aware of the world politics, social consciousness and a profound knowledge of human psychology immensely.

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