

VOICES OF DESIRE: HETEROGLOSSIA IN GRAHAM GREENE'S *THE END OF THE*  
*AFFAIR*

By

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The voice of the author permeates the novel, according to Mikhail Bakhtin, and this voice is not isolated to the words or convictions of a particular character. The characters in the novel are masked with dialogue, personalities, ideas, and words. These masked characters set up dialogues and thoughts which not only oppose each other, but also oppose themselves because their views and positions are not static, but fluid. Bakhtin suggests that this art, the ability to disguise authorial voice among the voices of distinct and developed characters with shifting positions, is unique to the novel.

Graham Greene, in *The End of the Affair*, utilizes the social contexts of speech characterization: the voice of the writer, a public servant, a detective, and a wife. Authorial voice is refracted by discourse between the characters as well as discourse through first person narration. The character voices also set up ambivalent relationships; for example, the voices of lovers, Sarah and Maurice and the voices of a husband and wife, Henry and Sarah. The structuring of these characters with their ambivalent voices make a Bakhtinian study an appropriate methodology.

Through varying philosophies and methodologies, meaning in this text has been explored; yet, these studies lack a crucial element in interpreting the text. Critics, up to this point, have interpreted the text as a search for religious or philosophical truth. The few exceptions that exist seek a biographical truth, a link between the life of Greene and his writing. Up to this point, critics have not investigated the nature of desire in Greene's work, specifically heterosexual desire as the driving force of the novel.

Italo Calvino describes desire as a force, a force that propels itself beyond boundaries, beyond love even, from inaction to action, and from unlivable to livable, based on a reading of Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*. Desire, as discussed by Calvino and based on Frye's observation, seems to parallel Bakhtin's methodology. Moreover, Bakhtin's oscillation of voices seems to parallel Calvino's and Frye's ideas of desire. The character voices refract the voice of the author and also refract the expression of desire into separate character voices. These separate character voices, then, can be seen as ambivalent desires. That is, Bakhtin implies that the competing voices within the world of the novel may reveal the voice of Greene.

This study will attempt to explore how the voices of desire in *The End of the Affair* have been used by Greene to reflect a socio-ideological position of desire present at the time of publication.



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Dedication

To Christina and Caitlyn

Your sacrifice of Mom time made this research possible.

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## Chapter One

### Introduction

Voice: This is the speaking personality, the speaking consciousness. A voice always has a will or desire behind it, its own timbre and overtones. (Discourse in the Novel 259)

Heteroglossia, as described by Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975), may organize the novel into “a structured stylistic system that expresses the differentiated socio-ideological position of the author” (Discourse in the Novel 300)<sup>1</sup>. The voice of the author permeated the novel, according to Bakhtin, and this voice is not isolated to the words or convictions of a particular character. The characters in the novel are masked with dialogue, personalities, ideas, and words. These masked characters set up dialogues and thoughts which not only oppose each other, but also oppose themselves because their views and positions are not static, but fluid. Bakhtin suggested that this art, the ability to disguise authorial voice among the voices of distinct and developed characters with shifting positions, was unique to the novel. He wrote, “The language of the prose writer deploys itself according to degrees of greater or lesser proximity to the author” (Discourse in the Novel 299). Is it possible, then, to realize the socio-ideological influences on authorial voice through an examination of the dialogue within the novel? The purpose of this study was to examine the heteroglossia in Graham Greene’s *The End of the Affair* and what this may reveal about the socio-ideological position of the author.

According to Mikhail Bakhtin, within the pages of the novel, voice, character and author, mix, interact and oppose to construct philosophical and sociological dialogues. He wrote in “Discourse in the Novel” that traditional stylistic approaches to novelistic prose investigation, such as studies of allusion and metaphor, deprived researchers of these dialogues, leaving “a

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<sup>1</sup> The writings of Mikhail Bakhtin were translated into English in 1973.

situation in which only individual and period-bound overtones of a style are the privileged subjects of study, social tone is ignored”(259). He further contended that investigations into novelistic discourse based on poetic discourse studies “strayed into linguistic descriptions of the language of a given novelist” i.e. syntax and morphology (Discourse in the Novel 261). This, according to Bakhtin, resulted in a diminished investigation of “the novel as a whole” (Discourse in the Novel 261).

It is the nature of the novel, according to Bakhtin, to resist investigation. He suggested that “[t]he novel as a whole is a phenomenon multiform in style and variform in speech and voice” (Discourse in the Novel 261). The voices are then stratified into “social dialects,” for example, a king or a peasant (Discourse in the Novel 263). The stratification of voice created opposing forces within the text: forces acting toward a single “verbal-ideological world,” which Bakhtin described as centripetal, and forces acting toward “decentralization and disunification,” referred to as centrifugal (Discourse in the Novel 263).

These forces can also be seen in terms of dialogue. Bakhtin suggested that forces acting towards a single ideal (centripetal), a single language, could be referred to as monologic; while forces opposing the isolation of voice to a single ideal (centrifugal) could be termed dialogic (Discourse in the Novel 270). Therefore, in the novel, heteroglossia is expressed as a collection of stratified voices which can be centripetal or centrifugal forces. Bakhtin wrote, “The social and historical voices populating language, all its words and all its forms, which provide language with its particular concrete conceptualizations, are organized in the novel into a structured stylistic system that expressed the differentiated socio-ideological position of the author” (300). In other words, the presentation of the different voices within their social context all work together refracting and then reforming the voice of the author. Bakhtin also suggested that ‘form’

and ‘content’, or structural components of the novel are developed through the exploration of the social context of the voices (Discourse in the Novel 261). Furthermore, Julia Kristeva in “Word, Dialogue and Novel” (1969), an essay on Bakhtin’s “Discourse in the Novel,” described heteroglossia in terms of dialogue and ambivalence. Kristeva captured the oscillation of centrifugal forces present within a context of ambivalence. She wrote, “Dialogue and ambivalence are borne out as the only approach that permits the writer to enter history by espousing an ambivalent ethics: negation as affirmation” (Word, Dialogue and Novel 40). Consequently, heteroglossia can be studied to uncover the socio-ideological position of the author as expressed through dialogue and ambivalence.

Graham Greene’s *The End of the Affair* (1951) is an excellent example of heteroglossia occurring within the novel. Certainly, Greene utilized the social contexts of speech characterization: the voice of the writer, a public servant, a detective, and a wife. Authorial voice is refracted by discourse between the characters as well as discourse through first person narration. The character voices also set up ambivalent relationships; for example, the voices of lovers, Sarah and Maurice and the voices of a husband and wife, Henry and Sarah. The structuring of these characters with their ambivalent voices make a Bakhtinian study an appropriate methodology. As of yet, a Bakhtinian analysis has not been used in published studies to explore *The End of the Affair*.

As you will see, from this chronicle of criticism, study of *The End of the Affair* is often thought of as part of Greene’s Catholic novels, *The Power and the Glory* (1940), *Brighton Rock* (1938) and *The Heart of the Matter* (1948). In the 1960s, *The End of the Affair* was read critically, in turn, through philosophical, theological, and narrative lenses. David H. Hesla (1967) and Herbert Haber (1967) wrote of Catholic themes at that time. Dominick Consolo

(1967) wrote on the narrative technique of Greene in the Catholic novels as a group. The 1960s also gave rise to comparative studies of Greene. Philip Stratford (1967) wrote on Greene and François Mauriac, a French novelist and philosopher, commenting on religious themes, structure and Catholic novel creation.

In 1971, Gwenn R. Boardman looked at the writing of Greene in terms of the metaphor of a map. Boardman's investigation covered many novels, including the Catholic novels. David Leon Higdon wrote in 1979 on the textual transformation of *The End of the Affair*; that is, Greene put forth fifty-three changes to the text between 1948 and 1973.

During the 1980s, criticism varied. The connection between the character Sarah Miles and Saint Catherine of Genoa was described by David Leon Higdon in "Saint Catherine, Von Hugel and Graham Greene's *The End of the Affair* (1981)." Georg M. A. Gaston (1984) and Roger Sharrock (1984) explored religious themes including salvation. Joseph Hayes (1987) compared the novels of Greene and Evelyn Waugh, another "Catholic" writer. Anne Salvatore's 1988 book *Greene and Kierkegaard: The Discourse of Belief* read Greene's novels through the existential philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard. In the 1990s, Michael Gorra, looked at *The End of the Affair* in terms of belief and David O'Connell wrote in *The Modern Catholic Novel in Europe* (1994) about the religious transformation of the characters in Greene's novels.

After 2000, criticism of the novel divided into narrative structure and philosophical studies. Frances Restuccia (2003) read *The End of the Affair* as an example of Lacanian philosophy. Marc Bosco explored the lack of a Catholic consciousness in the characters of Greene's Catholic novels in *Graham Greene's Catholic Imagination* (2005). Murray Roston, *Graham Greene's Narrative Strategies* (2006) structured the narratives of Greene. Through these

varying philosophies and methodologies, meaning in this text has been explored; yet these studies lack a crucial element in interpreting the text. Critics, up to this point, have interpreted the text as a search for religious or philosophical truth. The few exceptions that exist seek a biographical truth, a link between the life of Greene and his writing. Up to this point, critics have not investigated the nature of desire in Greene's work, specifically heterosexual desire as the driving force of the novel.

Northrop Frye in *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957) suggested that it is desire that bears the narrative force in any literary art.

Desire is thus not a simple response to need, for an animal may need food without planting a garden to get it, nor is it a simple response to want, or desire *for* something in particular. It is neither limited to nor satisfied by objects, but is the energy that leads human society to develop its own form. Desire in this sense is the social aspect of what we met on the literal level as emotion, an impulse toward expression. The form of desire, similarly, is liberated and made apparent by civilization. The efficient cause of civilization is work, and poetry in its social aspect has the function of expressing, as a verbal hypothesis, a vision of the goal of work and the forms of desire. (105)

Italo Calvino interprets this passage in "Literature as Projection of Desire: On Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1971) as, "[T]he element of desire, which in literature finds forms that enable it to project itself beyond the obstacles on its way, seems to me extremely topical, based as it is on the unlivable situation of the present and the drive toward the concept of a desirable society" (52). Here, Calvino described desire as a force, a force that propels itself beyond boundaries, beyond love even, from inaction to action, and from unlivable to livable.

Desire, as discussed by Calvino and based on Frye's observation, seemed to parallel Bakhtin's methodology. Moreover, Bakhtin's oscillation of voices seemed to parallel Calvino's and Frye's ideas of desire. The character voices refracted the voice of the author and also refracted the expression of desire into separate character voices. These separate character voices, then, can be seen as ambivalent desires. That is, Bakhtin implied that the competing voices within the world of the novel may reveal the voice of Greene. "The author does not speak in a given language (from which he distances himself to a greater or lesser degree), but he speaks, as it were, *through* language, a language that has somehow more or less materialized, become objectivized, that he merely ventriloquates"(Discourse in the Novel 299). In other words, the unconscious intention of the author is exposed "through" language. "The prose writer uses words that are already populated with the social intentions of others and compels them to serve his own intentions, to serve a second master" (Discourse in the Novel 300). The voices of characters within the novel spoke with words already heavy with social meaning. These meanings are "subject to artistic reworking...The social and historical voices populating language, all its words and all its forms, which provide language with its particular concrete conceptualizations, are organized in the novel into a structured stylistic system that expresses the differentiated socio-ideological position of the author" (Discourse in the Novel 300). The socialized character voices within the novel not only reveal character, plot, setting and other literary elements, but also reveal the socio-ideological voice of the writer.

This study will attempt to explore how the voices of desire in *The End of the Affair* have been used by Greene to reflect a socio-ideological position of desire present at the time of publication.

## Chapter Two

### Literature Review

Father Crompton produced a formula. He laid it down like a bank note. 'We recognize the baptism of desire.' It lay there between us waiting to be picked up. Nobody made a move.

*The End of the Affair* 126

This analysis of voice in *The End of the Affair* begins in a background in the reading of the novel, how it has been read in the past and how it is read today. Criticism of the novel can be divided into categories: Catholic or religious theme exploration, comparative literary studies, narrative structure analysis and philosophical analysis. Often criticism of *The End of the Affair* (1951) accompanied criticism of the other Catholic novels by Greene, *The Power and the Glory* (1940), *Brighton Rock* (1938) and *The Heart of the Matter* (1948). Points examined in each of these categories add to the richness of this study and complement each other; for example, studies of theme mirror studies of narrative structure on the point of religious salvation or transformation. The studies are organized into categories and then chronologically discussed.

The largest grouping of criticism is studies on religious or Catholic themes. Frances Kuknel, in an essay entitled "The End of the Catholic Cycle: The Writer Versus the Saint," a chapter in Robert Evan's collection *Graham Greene: Some Critical Considerations* (1967), discusses the transformation of Greene's saints. "The sinner, never the sin, enlists Greene's sympathies and then it is a special kind of sinner... guilt-riven and tormented" (57). Within the pages of *The End of the Affair*, it is Sarah Miles who was most tormented and it is this character that Kuknel discusses. Sarah's sin, according to Kunkel, is infidelity. Kunkel contends that it is not Sarah Miles's infidelity that is striking, but her capacity to "grow spiritually" (57). In other words, Sarah is not condemned or celebrated for her indiscretion, it is her journey to redemption, the pain of resisting temptation that endears her. "Nor is it the sensuality and the unfaithfulness



of Sarah that Greene extols, it is her self control in the face of enormous temptation” (57). This spiritual journey, as described by Kunkel, happens in all of Greene’s Catholic novels. Kunkel also contends that the sin to grace theme is possible because of the Catholic or Christian belief that sinners only find grace through Christ. The narrative and spiritual focus then shifts from the sin to the individual. By transitioning to the individual, Greene “cultivates a more profound respect for the mysterious transforming powers of grace” (59). In other words, sin is met with compassion and “grace.” ‘Transforming’ is the operative word for this study. Kunkel seems to focus on the “transforming” nature of divine love, a force that seems to be, in his view, detached from desire.

Desire in the form of choice, however, is noted in some thematic criticism. In the essay, “The End of the Catholic Cycle,” another essay in the Evans collection, Herbert Haber explores the role of the writers: author, Greene and narrator, Maurice Bendrix. Haber sees the role of the writer in terms of choice. The choices a “novelist makes in the process of creation, the detached existence..., the judgments..., and the pride” lead to the moment in the novel where Maurice must choose faith or despair (129). Haber and Greene refer to this moment as “personal morality” (129). For Greene, Haber contends, this personal morality implies “a frustrated impatience with man’s egotism and a denial of conscious intellection” (129). It is this pride or false pride that victimizes Maurice. He is forced to face this pride or professional pride with the diary of Sarah, according to Haber. He suggests that Maurice is forced by professional pride to “prove” Sarah’s conversion (134). Maurice desires to show the conversion to be a “hysterically-misguided sense of obligation,” according to Haber (104). These circumstances lead Maurice to what Haber describes as “a dim and unforeseen sympathy with humanity and an attendant desire for relief from self which belief is quick to feed on” (135). Maurice finds relief, only in “the

memory of desire” (*The End of the Affair* 148). “Neither the novelist’s insight nor his method can relieve the trying uncertainty of his own life” (Haber 141). In other words, the gifts of his craft, the process of writing, lead Maurice to unanswerable questions and the truth that faith comes with belief and uncertainty. Haber suggests that it is this drive to uncertainty that asks the character, Maurice, to choose “extrahuman love” (148). This “uncertainty” and questioning of “personal morality” is a part of a test (Haber 148).

But whatever the genre or vocabulary he chooses to express it in, Greene’s vision, with its denial of complacent notions of human nature and the ultimate worth of human intelligence, with its insistence on the complementary necessity of gratuitous love in the face of man’s almost inescapable egotism, is one that *ought* to persist in testing us. (Haber 150)

In other words, Haber reads the novel as a pull from egotism and connects the meaning of this pull in Greene’s writing as a test of morality. He sees the character of Maurice on a necessary journey away from the self. In this study, the pull away from egotism is comparable to the force of desire. Haber’s comments on the pull from egotism may be viewed as an oscillation between the self or desire for the self and “gratuitous love” (150).

Self destruction is the consequence of ambiguity in David Hesla’s, “Theological Ambiguity in the ‘Catholic Novels,’” another in the collection from Evans. Hesla reads Maurice’s almost suicide by sleeping pills as not ambiguous, but the death of Sarah by her resistance to medical care as ambiguous. Hesla then connects the “beliefs” of the characters of Greene’s Catholic novels and the acts of the sinners, i.e. infidelity and murder, to a Gnostic world-view (104). A Gnostic view imagines that “the world is in some fundamental opposition to the needs and aspirations of man” (104). *The End of the Affair*, according to Hesla, is the “more explicit of the three preceding works” in adopting this world-view (104). Hesla’s reading of Greene’s Catholic novels draws attention to the oscillation he sees in the doctrines

presented, Gnostic and Catholic respectively. The ambiguity, originating in the sins of the characters, is connected, according to Hesla, to the ambiguity of the expression of Christian doctrine by Greene. Hesala writes, “The confusion and contradictoriness of the critical and theological judgments of the novels of Graham Greene may be traced in large part, it seems to me, to the fact that his commentators have failed to see the deep incoherence which is constituted by this combination of Gnostic or neo-Gnostic tendencies with classical Christian tendencies” (110). Therefore, the realization of Catholic “tendencies” is not revealed in this novel, and Greene’s other Catholic novels, due in part to the ambiguous voice of the author.

*The End of the Affair*, for Philip Stratford, is a novel exploring the journey from profane to sacred love. Published in 1967, *Faith and Fiction: Creative Process in Greene and Mauriac* (1967) compares the works of Graham Greene and François Mauriac. Stratford contends that Mauriac was also a Catholic writer. He writes that “[t]he insistence on the ties between sacred and profane love is another theme common to both authors in their Catholic novels because it permits them to emphasize the meeting of nature and Grace in the human medium” (196). In other words, transcendence from sin to salvation is common in novels by both authors. Stratford also notes that both authors portray grace “not in hygienic splendor, but through what is most corrupt in humanity” (197). Stratford seems to suggest here that both authors show grace to sinners, those who most need grace. This study builds on the Hesla’s study. The journey from profane to sacred love demonstrates positional movement between areas of love and establishes ambivalent scenarios between characters; for example a character may choose between a relationship with a lover or God.

“God is ever present” suggests Georg M.A. Gaston in *The Pursuit of Salvation: A Critical Guide to the Novels of Graham Greene* (1984) (44). In this study, Gaston

describes the God of Greene's novels as "watching, apparently eager to answer if called upon, whispering the way to the lost" (44). The story of Sarah, according to Gaston is not a spiritual journey specifically but an "exchange of profane love for sacred love" (45). On this point, Gaston agrees with Phillip Stratford's analysis. Gaston also contends that for Sarah, "with belief comes the light of faith followed by a vision of divine love" (45). What of the journey of Maurice? According to Gaston, Maurice's path begins with "a series of miracles" (45). This loss of control and the struggle with God, has professional consequences for Maurice, writes Gaston. "After he comes to the realization that God has replaced him not only as the lover of Sarah but also as the writer of his novel, he tries to resist by expressing his hatred" (46). The turmoil, this hatred, is necessary, says Gaston. "His rebellious words actually indicate that he is going through a stage of mental suffering and terror, and in Greene's fiction this is a necessary prelude to spiritual transformation," he writes. (47). Gaston refers to this as a finding of grace.

Gaston also suggests that Maurice's journey is lengthened due to his pride. He writes, "Since pride is self-devouring, the final consequence is emotional sterility" (47). Maurice, in his own words, has neither love nor hatred. On the point of pride, Gaston agrees with Haber. Gaston goes on to suggest that the novel serves as a "spiritual diary or journal" and that the final paragraph of the novel "expresses surrender" (48). Maurice prays, "I am too tired and old to learn to love. Leave me alone forever" (*The End of the Affair* 211). Here, according to Gaston, is where Maurice finds salvation. In this way, Gaston's study builds on the studies of Haber and Stratford. Mark Sharrock reads *The End of the Affair* as a metaphor for the rejection of the modern world by the "whole deposit of faith," in *Sinners, Saints and Comedians: The Novels of Graham Greene* (1984). Sharrock connects modern society with the physical and illicit nature of the affair between Sarah and Maurice and asserts Sarah's eventual rejection of that

relationship for the relationship with God as a turning from that modern society. Sharrork further contends that “[t]he intellectual origins of this brand of Catholicism go back to the Decadents and beyond them to the Romantic movement” (176). The structure of Greene’s novel or its tendency toward an extreme religious experience follows a particular historical literary theme.

Analysis of narrative structure began shortly after the publication of the novel. Dominick P. Consolo’s essay “Graham Greene: Style and Stylistics in the Five Novels” was published in the Robert Evans collection of criticism. Consolo adds *The Quiet American* (1955) to the previous list of four Catholic novels, for his analysis. In examining of *The End of the Affair*, Consolo discusses the first person narrator and compares Maurice with *The Quiet American*’s first person narrator. Consolo concludes that in *The End of the Affair* “[a]ction gives rise to reflection and reflection to action with somewhere in between a general truth arising that colors the movement” (91). According to Consolo, the actions, then reflections of Greene’s characters drive their future actions and the moral truth of the actions remains for the reader to decide. The voice of the author appears with the “movement” of the action (91). The movement between action and reflection is similar to the oscillation of voices. Consolo also reads behind the oscillation a search for truth, truth that may be defined as the voice of the author.

The body of the text is the topic of investigation by David Leon Higdon in the essay “Betrayed Intentions: Graham Greene’s *The End of the Affair*”. Higdon analyzes the changes in the text from 1948 until 1973, attempting to connect the edits to the intention of Greene. Fifty-three revisions were made and twenty-nine of those are “concerned with Smythe’s birthmark,” according to Higdon (73). The reason for the edits is to make clear the intent of the author, concludes Higdon, “intention appears to be a fixed, platonic concept towards which the

text gradually evolves” (77). Higdon’s essay attempts to demonstrate Greene’s intention and the power of specific language for this author. Perhaps, this study opens the door for the investigation of the “truth” in the voice of Greene and his desire to impart a message or “truth” in the novel.

Michael Gorra, in *The English Novel at Mid-Century* (1990), examines the use of first person narration. Greene’s narrators, Gorra contends, “proclaim their own emptiness and yet the action Greene plots for them makes one distrust their protestations of their own moral exhaustion” (141). In other words, Greene successfully presents a narrator in Maurice who is unreliable, who states that he is unreliable, and in so doing allows the reader to question the accuracy of the narrator’s self assessment, especially in times of distress. The focus on first person narration is significant for this study because the first person narrator gives voice through dialogue and internal thought. The assertion of the first person narrator as unreliable gives a double voice to the first person narration.

Ronald G. Walker looks at narrative structure in the essay in 1984, “World Without End: An Approach to Narrative Structure in Greene’s *The End of the Affair*.” Walker chooses to modify the model of Frank Kermode, as described in *The Sense of an Ending* (1966). The modification is described as follows:

To the extent that a work is structured so as to resist or even invalidate our initial expectations, deliberately frustrating the sense of progression toward a foreseeable final closure – and sometimes, indeed, withholding that closure itself – the reader perforce falls back on the subordinate configurations for whatever assistance they might offer in the search for order. (222)

Walker looks at *The End of the Affair* first to localize the “end-feeling” (222). The “end-feeling,” as described by Walker, is the point at which a reader “forecasts” the novel’s ending

(220). This end – feeling is based on the Apocalyptic myth, the sense that the world is ending. However, the structure of this novel does not allow for easy study. “For the novel turns on a series of paradoxes, not the least of which is precisely that, throughout, Bendrix both appropriates the concept of beginnings and ends and questions its efficacy”(Walker 223). Walker looks at the formal divisions of the text and compares *The End of the Affair* with selected Modern novels and Greene’s other novels based on pages and divisions. Next, the analysis takes rhythm into account. The theme that Walker chooses to explore is “the idea that reality is malleable not fixed and that what shapes continuously, is the sensibility of the human observer, itself always in flux and subject to influence” (234). Walker suggests that this theme is “represented in Greene’s novel by characters who live according to rigid codes,” including Parkis, the detective, Father Compton and Richard Smythe (234). Walker describes Maurice as “formulaic” and concludes that Greene’s strategy is “designed to expose the sham of reductive fictions and their palliative function; and at the same time, however, he relentlessly strives to create assent to a far more profound fiction whose function is anything but palliative” (236). This, according to Walker, connects the novel to the modern apocalyptic myth. The sense of the apocalypse seems to coincide with Hesla’s assertions of the Gnostic world view.

Murray Roston shifts focus back to the first person narrator, Maurice, and his relationship to Greene in *Graham Greene’s Narrative Strategies* (2006). Roston suggests that Greene knowingly projected a protagonist that would be linked to him and portrayed this character in a negative light. Maurice, “despite his patent similarities to the author in profession and in this amorous affair with the wife of a civil-servant, is, in contrast, presented from the first as thoroughly obnoxious” (67). Roston sees this narrative stance as innovative. “Authors such as Tolstoy, George Eliot, James Baldwin and Philip Roth have all injected themselves into

particular characters with the intention of “arous[ing] sympathy for the character,” he writes (67). Roston suggests that Maurice, initially, is beyond sympathy and that “[t]he negative portrayal of Bendrix was thus a divergence from the parallel on which he is constructing the story” (69). This narrator, who can be linked to the author as unsympathetic, separates the voice of the author from the voice of the narrator. This change, according to Roston, is “the next stage in narrative experimentation” for Greene (69).

Unlike previous novels, Greene presents a narrator “whom we must learn to distrust” from the beginning of the novel (Roston 69). He writes, “When he vilifies Sarah, we instinctively come to her defense; and when, conversely, he begrudgingly grants her a virtue, the admission is afforded augmented authenticity,” (70). Is this a failure on the part of Greene to create a believable character? Roston contends that on the opening page Greene and Maurice enter into a dialogue with the reader where the reader will “make out the true course of events existing beyond that provided by the narrator” (71). Roston suggests that this inconsistency teaches the reader “to distinguish also between his statements and the hidden emotions that prompt them, a discrepancy permitted to emerge only in the final stages of the novel” (72).

This duality, as described by Roston, suggests a love-hate relationship that “functions not only in the context of the human love-affair, it functions also in the relationship of both characters to God” (74). This struggle with God is central to the credibility of the characters, writes Roston. Accordingly, it is through the love affair, or the ending of the affair, that Sarah finds faith, a faith that she chooses. “That idea, that their squandering of eros was an unconscious yearning for its replacement by agape...is expressed in their shared dread of the desert that awaits them” (76). Sarah refers to life without Maurice as a desert or wilderness, an



emptiness. Roston seems to suggest that Greene opens the door to divine love through mortal love.

Roston also discusses the pilgrimage to faith of Maurice. He describes the difference between the journey of Sarah and Maurice as the intensity of Maurice's hate; it "is more bitter, more resistant, and hence more protracted" (80). Roston suggests that Maurice reaches faith, not with Sarah, but with seeing the humanity in Henry, Sarah's husband. Roston concludes that "[i]t is the subtlety with which Greene gradually merges the search for Eros into a search for Agape that soothes potential opposition, brilliantly transmuting the anguish and suspense of a disrupted love-affair into a quest for spiritual peace" (82). Roston's work follows the work of Haber. Roston's analysis, the use of the unreliable narrator, can also be compared to a Bakhtinian "double voiced" narrator.

Gwenn R. Boardman approaches the philosophical nature of Greene's writing through the metaphor of the map in *Graham Greene: Aesthetics of Exploration* (1971), is the *Journey Without Maps* (1936). Boardman writes of *The End of the Affair* as showing the "polarities of physical lust and metaphysical Love" (90). Boardman also notes the "inseparability of flesh and spirit in *The End of the Affair*," She writes, that the "taste of Sarah upon Bendrix's tongue is as much a part of the love of God as the taste of God's body at Communion" (93). For Boardman, the physical relationship between Sarah and Maurice is linked to the religious relationship between Sarah and God. Both Boardman and Stratford suggest a transformation in the nature of love from profane to sacred, from physical to metaphysical, however neither of these studies discuss the force that moves the transformations.

“Belief” is the consideration of Ann T. Salvatore in *Greene and Kierkegaard: The Discourse of Belief* (1988). Salvatore discusses the tension between “Greene’s use of the traditional novel form and his stated view on world chaos” (5). The intersection of the “disjunction,” according to Salvatore, arises in Greene’s “different model of irony” (5). Salvatore explores this “irony” through Søren Kierkegaard’s “theory and art” (5). *The End of the Affair*, according to Salvatore, illustrates Kierkegaard’s *Either/Or*. Salvatore contends that “the object of choice is embedded not in the text but in the reader who reacts to the text, the reader who now may question his or her own beliefs about whether psychoethical change is possible” (34). In other words, the narrative is written so that the reader reacts and questions each character’s capacity for change. It is this movement to choice, according to Salvatore, the “progress toward a decision that Kierkegaard and Greene believe to be the only possible means of establishing real control (as opposed to artistic control) over one’s life” (42). The point of the choice, says Salvatore “reflects again the belief of the Christian artist – this time in the human potential to achieve ethical/religious ‘capability’” (42). The concept of capability is shared by Greene and Kierkegaard, according to Salvatore. The insertion of choice into the study opens the critical door to the exploration of desire.

The love-affair is the interest of Frances L. Restuccia’s 2003 article “Graham Greene’s Lacanian Encore: *The End of the Affair*.” Restuccia sees *The End of the Affair* as an ideal for Lacanian study because “Lacan’s idea of love [is] impossible at the level of human interaction” and this impossibility is repeated in the story of Sarah and Maurice (370). Restuccia suggests that the impossibility of Sarah’s love raises “a connection between Greene’s Catholicism and Lacan’s God” (370). Restuccia then discusses the development of Lacan’s thoughts on true love as they evolved from Freud’s theory of transference. “Transference, he [Lacan] proposes, gives

us the opportunity of depicting the fundamental structure of love, which is that in love we persuade ‘the other that he has that which may complement us’”(371 Lacan 133). Restuccia also contends that it is the presence of love that “enables the presence of sexuality...and fuels desire, that desire is based on love” (371). The components, “[d]rive, love, desire,” are along a continuum, according to Restuccia. Lacan, then, says Restuccia, divides love into orders. Restuccia explains that this object, love – object, “would have to be the subject’s missing part” (374). “Moving toward a love object, second order love or desire, then, is excitingly painful, or perhaps masochistic, since to be in love this way (loving) is necessarily to be deprived of the love object” (375). For Sarah, the difference between the affair and love is distinguished; “the affair will end but that her Love...will never terminate” (380). Restuccia extrapolates this difference into a difference in the view of love and of their love.

Maurice’s term of love is defined within the time frame of the affair, according to Restuccia, and the love of Sarah is unending. “She fully abandons herself” (Restuccia 380). Accordingly, Restuccia states that “[while] Bendrix demonstrates the failure of the sexual relation for “man,” Sarah demonstrates it in relation to the not – all (381). In other words, Sarah seeks the “Other,” the greater love. “Sarah leaves Bendrix for God, taking God on as a lover, preferring the third party in their *ménage a trios*,” writes Restuccia” (382). Sarah dies; her pain, according to Restuccia, “entails her *jouissance*, bliss laced with pain, produced in the process of desubjectivation” (382). Restuccia closes with a discussion of Maurice and his love-hate relationship with God. Restuccia contends that “Bendrix seems to be so passionately in love that his own being in death is, after all, activated” (384). At this point, Restuccia suggests, Maurice “transcends phallic *jouissance*” (384). Restuccia concludes with “*The End of the Affair* itself – the text must be credited with pointing to, even for staging, a kind of literary encounter with the

blissful agony, the *jouissance* of Love in the beyond” (385). This study opens several avenues of exploration, including a study on desire as it relates to the relationships between lovers and God. This study also poses the possibility of a socio-ideological position where the suffering of a character is associated with the desire to transcend earthly love for divine love.

Humanity’s search for divine love was explored by contemporaries of Greene. Several critical studies have compared Greene’s treatment of Catholic issues with his colleagues. “Two Affairs Revisited,” a 1987 study by Joseph Hynes, compares *The End of the Affair* and *Brideshead Revisited* (1945), a novel by Evelyn Waugh. Hynes contends that writing at this time, with Catholic or religious themes, is difficult as it requires “overt authorial preachment” (235). Greene and Waugh capably narrate without preaching, according to Hynes, by utilizing a first person narrator that is portrayed realistically and eventually comes to “different notions of what love and truth mean” (Hynes 251). This study demonstrates an oscillation between beginning and ending concepts of love and the finding of ‘truth.’

David Leon Higdon in “Saint Cathrine, Von Hugel, and Graham Greene’s *The End of the Affair*,” analyzes new information regarding the religious influences and inspirations of *The End of the Affair*. In the Introduction to the Collected Edition of *The End of the Affair* (1962), Greene writes:

The book began to come to life in December 1948 in a bedroom of the Hotel Palma in Capri. I have always imagined it was influenced by the book I was reading at the time, a selection from Baron von Hugel, in particular passages from his study of St Catherine of Genoa (1962).

Higdon also states that “von Hugel was for over forty years at the center of English Catholic intellectual thought” (47). The volume on St. Catherine of Genoa, the one to which Greene refers, is *The Mystical Element of Religion as Studied in Saint Catherine of Genoa and Her*

*Friends* (1923). Higdon suggests that Greene saw the maturation of the character of Maurice as one of “purification of and slow constitution of the Individual into a Person” (49). Higdon compares Maurice’s “materialism” to von Hugel’s “Thing-element, the apparently blind Determinism of Natural Law and Natural Happenings” (49). Higdon suggests that the materialism of Maurice will be doubted by the “Natural Happenings,” coincidences or miracles performed by Sarah(49). It is the miracles that cause a narrative problem also according to Higdon. He writes, “Each of the miracles has a natural explanation save one – the disappearance of Smythe’s indelible birthmark” (Hogdin 51). The focus on the unnatural miracle present in the novel relates to Higdon’s previous work on the transformation of the body of the text over a span of two decades.

Interestingly, Greene published a second autobiography, *Ways of Escape*, in 1981 and talked of the changes to the body of the text. The volume details Greene’s life from the stopping point of his first autobiography, *A Sort of Life*(1971), whose content closes at the publication of his first novel. *Ways of Escape* chronicles the time from the publication of *The Man Within* (1929), including the writing of *The End of the Affair*, to close in 1980. The portion of the volume given to the writing of this time period is limited to a portion of just a few pages. Greene notes his intention in writing the character Maurice in this way, “I had described a lover who was so afraid that love would end one day that he tried to hasten the end and get the pain over” (146). He also noted that “I (he) was happy in love” (146). Greene’s comment on happiness in love refers to his relationship with Catherine Walston. During the writing of *The End of the Affair*, as well as after its publication, Greene and Walston were lovers. Both were married and remained married. This time in Greene’s life, the time of the affair with Walston, is described by many of his critics as his most productive, including his biographer, Norman Sherry.

Greene's authorized biographer, Norman Sherry, wrote three volumes titled *The Life of Graham Greene*. In the volume devoted to 1935 to 1955, published in 1995, Sherry writes of the connection between Walston, Greene's mistress, and Sarah Miles. He sees the relationship between Greene and Walston as the inspiration for the novel and uses the text of the novel to illustrate this connection. For example, Sherry writes, "But he never spoke better about his love affair with Catherine than in *The End of the Affair*" (*The Life of Graham Greene: Volume II 1935-1955* 336). Sherry also writes, "And indeed Catherine did, for she and Greene had decided to confront Harry. Greene was to do what Bendrix in *The End of the Affair* longed to do"(326). While this language indicates a direct connection between the life of Greene and the fiction of his novel, Sherry also notes the depths of Greene's Catholicism. He writes, "Catholic though he was, Greene no longer viewed their affair as adulterous...His petitions to St. Theresa were always the same: 'Dear Saint, some of us have a vocation to love God. Some of us only have a vocation to love a human being. Please let my vocation not be wasted'" (329). This passage seems to suggest that according to Sherry, Greene, at this point in his life, was attempting to reconcile his desire for Catherine with his devout Catholicism.

The relationship between Greene and Walston is also the subject of William Cash's biography *The Third Woman* (2000). The purpose of this biography, Cash writes, is an "investigation into the fact and fiction in the work of one of the most important writers of the twentieth century" (vi). The volume opens with the meeting of Greene and Walston in 1946 and closes with Greene's death in 1991. Cash follows the "genesis" of *The End of the Affair* through combined readings of Greene's personal diaries and his "love diaries" to Catherine (138). Cash writes:

It [*The End of the Affair*] is a highly complex literary narrative that draws on a remarkably deep p well of literary sources, including

Proust, Dickens, St Thomas Aquinas, the theological criticism of Baron Von Hugel, T.S Eliot (his *Four Quartets* was published in 1944), his friend's Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, and Ford Madox Ford. (138).

In this passage, Cash focuses on the literary influences that played a part in the crafting of the novel, a perspective different from the popular connection between the novel and the biographical connections.

*Graham Greene: A Life in Letters* was published by Richard Greene in 2008. It is the most complete collection of Greene's correspondence and includes letters to Catherine Walston before, during and after the publication of *The End of the Affair*. Greene burned the letters he received from Catherine before his death, leaving her voice out of the discussion. Catherine Walston's personal collection of letters was sold after her death by her husband, Harry Walston, to Georgetown University. The publication of Greene's letters to Walston and others fits interestingly into a voice analysis.

Authorial voice, therefore, is available through direct author dialogue in autobiography, letters, and interviews. This availability opens the voice of the author for critical consideration that was not possible shortly after the original publication of the novel. As demonstrated in this review, critical consideration prior to the 1990s found little separation between authorial voice and narrator voice. Greene is Maurice based on the similar occupation, the first person narration, and the married mistress. This study attempts to reveal the voice of Greene, if, in fact, such a separation is possible, and reveal what this voice says about the nature of desire in the text. As noted, critical commentary seems to suggest a definite oscillation between human heterosexual desire and the desire for divine love. Is there, then, a socio-ideologic assumption about desire present in the voices of the characters? If so, what are the implications for authorial voice? In

other words, is the author's socio-ideologic assumption or assumptions voiced through the character voices? What is Greene saying about human heterosexual desire in this text?



## Chapter Three

### Analysis

I had come into this affair with my eyes open knowing that one day it would end and yet...

The End of the Affair 44

Graham Greene begins *The End of the Affair* with Maurice Bendrix. Maurice is a writer, who appears to be very much in love with a married woman, Sarah Miles. His voice seems to narrate the novel. He begins with a discussion about the arbitrary choice of where and how to begin a story. This beginning he attributes to his “technical ability” as a writer. “I say ‘one chooses with the inaccurate pride of a professional writer’ (1). Maurice then contrasts this choice with the possible existence of God. “[B]ut do I in fact of my own will choose that black wet January night on the Common in 1946, the sight of Henry Miles slanting across the wide river of rain or did these images choose me?” Maurice asks. This pattern, almost pendulous, between choice and lack of choice is characteristic of this narrator and continues throughout the novel.

Maurice then transitions from beginning the novel to its writing. He describes it as a “record of hate” (1). Then, Maurice swings along the arc of hate, proclaiming a “bias.” “If I come to say anything in favour of Henry and Sarah I can be trusted: I am writing against the bias because it is my professional pride to prefer the near-truth, even to the expression of my near-hate” (1). Maurice seems to say that while by profession he is compelled to write “near-truth,” he is writing with “hate” and not “truth”. This use of language by the narrator is significant on the initial page because it establishes the ambivalent nature of the narrator’s voice. One wonders if the reader can rely on the voice of the narrator whose language stands in such ambivalence to itself? Critics disagree on the reliability of the narrator, Maurice. Roger Sharrrock, in *Saints*

*Sinners and Comedians: The Novels of Graham Greene* (1984) suggests that it is the pain of Maurice that makes him reliable. Sharrock writes, “Bendrix speaks, then, with the authority of his pain and the often brutal directness of uninhibited confession” (166). This point is countered by Murray Roston in *Graham Greene’s Narrative Strategies: A Study of the Major Novels* (2006). Roston contends that it is the very nature of this narrator that makes the character unreliable. Roston writes that it is part of Greene’s narrative strategy to present “Bendrix, whom we must learn to distrust” (69) This strategy is “a dangerous process, as traditionally the primary function of the narrator is to win credibility for the events related,” according to Roston (69). However, in the case of *The End of the Affair*, the narrator declares himself unreliable in the first paragraph.

These initial paragraphs also establish an essential characteristic of the voice of the narrator, the voice oscillates. This oscillation, in turn, creates a pattern of ambivalence in the form of digressions or pauses in the telling of the story. Greene uses these brief discursions to give insight to the voice of Maurice through internal dialogue and philosophical statements. For example, in the following passage, Maurice compares Sarah’s affection to eternity. “Eternity is said not to be an extension of time, but an absence of time, and sometimes it seemed to me that her abandonment touched that strange mathematical point of endlessness, a point with no width, occupying no space” (*The End of the Affair* 39). Then, Maurice pauses to describe his affection in terms of space and time. “There are contradictions in time, that’s all, that don’t exist on the mathematical point. She had so much more capacity for love than I had – I couldn’t bring down that curtain round the moment, I couldn’t forget and I couldn’t *not* fear”(40). Here Maurice swings from a limitless eternity to “contradictions in time.” He also asserts that his “fear” causes these interruptions. These contradictions refract space and time creating a pattern

that moves between points rather than converges to a single point, thereby, producing a continuum where voice swings along an ambivalent and oscillating arc.

This pattern is repeated in a passage on insecurity. “Insecurity is the worst sense that lovers feel: sometimes the most humdrum desireless marriage seems better. Insecurity twists meanings and poisons trusts” (43). Maurice does not stop with this confession of insecurity; he details how this insecurity ruled his time with Sarah. “Because I couldn’t bear the thought of her as much as touching another man, I feared it all the time, and I saw intimacy in the most casual movement of the hand” (43). Here Maurice discusses his fear of the possible presence of other men. He imagined, then, that this exaggerated insecurity, an insecurity that led to jealousy, was a measure of his desire. “‘I’d rather be dead or see you dead,’ I said, ‘than with another man. I’m not eccentric. That’s ordinary human love. Ask anybody. They’d all say the same – if they loved at all.’ I jibed at her. ‘Anyone who loves is jealous’” (43). In other words, not only is Maurice insecure in his relationship with Sarah, but he also sees insecurity as an indication of his desire, as a measure of the intensity of his desire and sees Sarah’s lack of insecurity as a sign of lack of intensity or feeling of love.

Maurice gives voice to a distinct ambivalent relationship. By making insecurity a function of desire, he distrusts the acts of love by Sarah. He not only distrusts these acts, but he also sees these acts, i.e. “the casual movement of the hand” as a sign of infidelity and an indication of Sarah’s lack of desire. In her love, he sees no love. In her desire he sees a lack of desire, thus establishing an ambivalent definition of desire. It seems that Maurice sees his own words and acts of desire as contradictory to this definition and, consequently, hates the woman he desires. “I am a jealous man” Maurice writes, I have “a long record of jealousy, jealousy of Henry, jealousy of Sarah and jealousy of that other whom Mr. Parkis was so maladroitly

pursuing” (42). Jealousy, then, can be seen as a part of Maurice’s characterization of desire. “Jealousy, or so I have always believed, exists only with desire.” In other words, in the mind of Maurice, jealousy accompanies desire, even affirms its existence. There is no desire without jealousy. Maurice goes on to compare this definition of desire to one of the Old Testament. “The Old Testament writers were fond of using the words ‘a jealous God’, and perhaps it was their rough and oblique way of expressing belief in the love of God for man” (31). The allusion to jealousy as an aspect of divine love lends credibility to the distinction of desire as an aspect of human love, as it is proposed in this passage. And yet, Maurice refers to this association as “rough and oblique” as though the connection does not exist. Jealousy as a part of desire is affirmed by the prophets; however, the association between love and jealousy is inaccurate when used in this way by the prophets, according to Maurice. In this way, the passage reinforces the previously mentioned pattern of contradiction.

In another example of the pattern of contradiction, divine love is compared to human love during a discussion of happiness and unhappiness. During another discursive moment, Maurice describes writing about happiness. Maurice discusses the difficulty of writing about happiness, citing the egotism of misery as the cause. “[H]appiness annihilates us,” he writes, “we lose our identity. The words of human love have been used by the saints to describe their vision of God, and so I suppose, we might use the terms of prayer, meditation, contemplation to explain the intensity of love we feel for a woman” (36). In other words, the intensity of the experience of human love is directly compared to divine love. Maurice further contends that “the act of love itself has been described as the little death, and lovers sometimes experience too the little peace” (36). Maurice may intend a comparison between the peace following a sexual orgasm with the promise of a peace after death in Christian philosophy. Maurice continues with the confession

that he doesn't "recognize [his] own thoughts" (36). "What do I know of phrases like 'the dark night' or of prayer, who have only one prayer? I have inherited them, that is all, like a husband who is left by death in the useless possession of a woman's clothes, scents, pots of cream...and yet there was this peace..." (36). The peace that follows a sexual orgasm and the peace that comes with death is replaced by absence. The absence may be described as both physical and spiritual connecting the absence left after a sexual orgasm and a death. Then, the voice oscillates back to peace. In other words, connecting desire, physical and spiritual, Maurice swings on an arc between peace and death.

This comparison between physical and divine love is noted by critics including Marc Bosco in *Graham Greene's Catholic Imagination* (2005). Bosco writes, "The most provocative aspect of the novel thus turns on the human body as the fundamental sign of God's presence, whether they are bodies in pain, bodies disfigured, or bodies in erotic intimacy" (62). Gwenn Boardman agrees. In *Graham Greene: The Aesthetics of Exploration* (1971), Boardmann writes, "Much more significant is the inseparability of flesh and spirit in *The End of the Affair*. The fine taste of Sarah upon Bendrix' tongue is as much a part of the love of God as the taste of God's body at Communion" (93). While these critics do not link the comparisons with voice, the connections between divine love and human love as characterized by the voice of Maurice are noted.

So far, the voice has been Maurice's alone, the fluctuating voice of a lover. In a first person narrative, where communication is relayed through the voice of the narrator, a reader may ponder the "dialogic" nature of the text. In other words, where is the dialogue? In the essay "Word in Dostoevsky," Mikhail Bakhtin expands the definition of literary dialogue to include the "dialogical relationship of the speaker to his own word" (151). Dialogical relationships, as

described by Bakhtin, “are not reducible to logical or concrete semantic relationships which are in and of *themselves* devoid of any dialogical aspect. In order for dialogical relationships to arise among them, they must clothe themselves in the word, become utterances and become the positions of various subjects expressed in the word”(151). Bakhtin further states that “it is possible to have a dialogical relationship to one of our own utterances, to its individual parts, and to an individual word within it, if we in some way separate ourselves from them, if we speak with inner reservation, if we maintain distance from them, as if limiting or dividing our authorship in two” (153).

Maurice introduces this separation of self, this distance from himself, on the first page of the novel. “So this is a record of hate far more than of love, and if I come to say anything in favour of Henry and Sarah I can be trusted: I am writing against the bias because it is my professional pride to prefer the near-truth, even to the expression of my near-hate” (*The End of the Affair* 1). In this sentence, Greene makes the novel dialogic.

In a dialogic novel or polyphonic novel, according to Bakhtin, the characters are “not only objects of the author’s voice, but subjects of their own directly significant word” (Dostoevsky’s Polyphonic Novel 4). In other words, introducing the characters as individual voices gives them an individual identity separate from the author and changes the structure of the novel, from monologic to dialogic. “The weakening or destruction of the monological context occurs only when two equally and directly object-oriented utterances come together” (The Word in Dostoevsky 156). Maurice’s words expose an inner conflict. He wishes, as a professional writer, to portray a “near-truth” but by his own desire to express his hate, he is unable to compose in a credible manner; he must “write against the bias” (*The End of the Affair* 1). This

admission by the narrator splits the validity of his words and adds a doubt to their sincerity, at least when speaking of himself and when giving his account of the story of the affair.

Marc Roston's narrative investigation supports the split in validity of the narrator Maurice stating, "And here emerges the main innovation of Greene's novel. For Bendrix, despite his patent similarities to the author in profession and in his amorous affair with the wife of a civil-servant, is, in contrast, presented from the first as thoroughly obnoxious, to the extent that one is made to wonder at times how Sarah could possibly have loved him" (*Graham Greene's Narrative Strategies* 67). The presentation of the narrator in an unsympathetic light is significant according to Roston. Examples of first person narrators with connections to authors include: "Tolstoy's Levin, George Eliot's Dorothea and James Baldwin's black boy," according to Roston (67). These characters were all portrayed in a way that "endeared them to the reader" (Roston 67). Greene's portrayal of Maurice served to separate the voice of Greene from the voice of the narrator due to the presentation of the character as unsympathetic, different from his predecessors and a significant change in narrative strategy according to Roston.

This separation from authorial voice and character voice also creates a narrator whose words are "double voiced" and ambivalent (*Discourse in the Novel* 324). "Double voiced," as defined by Bakhtin, "serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking and the refracted intention of the narrator" (324). In other words, the dialogic nature of the narrative allows the authorial voice to be embedded within the words of the narrator without changing the qualities of the character. That is to say, Maurice remains a character within the novel, separate and distant from the authorial voice of Greene, but through the voice of the character relays the story Greene wishes to tell. Greene's authorial voice will be realized through the mixing of voices, not

directly in the voice of the narrator. Bakhtin suggests in “Discourse in the Novel,” that the mixing of voices result in a “social heteroglossia” (292). “They may all be drawn in by the novelist for the orchestration of his themes and for the refracted (indirect) expression of his intentions and values (292). Therefore, the “double-voiced” narration of Maurice can be understood as a force in the “expression” of Greene’s “intention” (292).

The voice of Sarah Miles, through the incorporated genre of her diary entries, is also double voiced. Bakhtin suggests, in *Discourse in the Novel*, that heteroglossia may be introduced into the novel through the use of “incorporated genres” (321). Incorporated genres, as described by Bakhtin, include: “the confession, the diary, travel notes, biography and several others” (*Discourse in the Novel* 321). The combination of a first person narrator with the voice of Sarah in the form of a diary yields a novel with two first person narrators. In this example, the two narrators give competing views to the narrative thread. This oscillation between narration and voice is an excellent example of heteroglossia, of centrifugal forces present, and extends the ambivalent nature of the voices of Maurice and Sarah. Maurice’s account may be ambivalent to itself and to Sarah’s.

In “Word, Dialogue and Novel,” a reading of “Discourse in the Novel,” Julia Kristeva suggests that “[d]ialogue and ambivalence are borne out as the only approach that permits the writer to enter history by espousing an ambivalent ethics: negation as affirmation” (69). Sarah’s oscillating voice functions to affirm and at the same time negate. A reader might ask how this is done. Sarah sees the oscillation and ambivalence in the voice of Maurice and at first hopes to satisfy it and then the voice shifts to one of ambivalent conversations with God. Her voice oscillates between belief in the viability of the affair and belief in the existence of God, a belief that surfaced after a bombing.



During the bombing, the lovers separate. Maurice leaves to check the basement, while Sarah waits. After the building is struck, Sarah searches for Maurice and finds him under rubble. She assumes he is dead and prays for his life, vowing to leave him in exchange for his life. After vowing to God to save her lover's life, a God she does not believe in, Sarah struggles with this vow. For example, she writes, "I said to God, I've kept my promise for six weeks. I can't believe in you, I can't love you, but I've kept my promise...I said to God if he (Maurice) answers, I'll go back tomorrow" (79). If, in fact, this God exists, then the affair is negated. If this God does not exist, then she vowed to nothing and her desire to be with Maurice is affirmed. This swing joins and mixes with the oscillation of Maurice. Sarah seeks to affirm his voice, as she sees it reflected in her voice; her ambivalence is a mirror of his.

For example in the following passage, Sarah senses the insecurity in Maurice and then rejects its validity. "Sometimes I get so tired of trying to convince him that I love him and shall love him for ever. He pounces on my words like a barrister and twists them" (72). Here, Sarah acknowledges Maurice's ambivalence. Sarah continues, "I wonder whether it isn't possible to come to an end of sex, and I know that he is wondering too and is afraid of that point where the desert begins" (72). In this section of the passage, Sarah ponders the physical nature of her relationship with Maurice, specifically the ending of the physical relationship. She describes the ending of sex as a "desert," a metaphor that she previously used in this passage to describe the time spent apart from her lover. The language associates the metaphors of the desert with the ending of "love" and "sex." Sarah further expands this metaphor with the introduction of divine love. "If one could believe in God, would he fill the desert?" (72). Sarah seems to suggest here that divine love fills the absence left by physical human love.

The conflict between Sarah's desire to love Maurice and her desire to maintain her vow which she believes saved his life escalates as the novel progresses. Sarah considers returning to Maurice in the following passage. "Nobody will know that I've broken my vow, except me and Him – and He doesn't exist, does he? He can't exist. You can't have a merciful God and this despair" (74). In this passage, Sarah struggles with her desire for Maurice. At this point, Sarah has entered the "desert", the space without Maurice and she wrestles with her vow with God. If God does not exist then there is no vow. "This is the end," she states, "But, dear God, what shall I do with this desire to love? Why do I write 'dear God'? He isn't dear – not to me he isn't. If he exists, then he put the thought of this vow into my mind and I hate him for it. I hate" (74). Here, Sarah is doubtful of the existence of God due to the pain of losing Maurice. This God's existence torments her, keeping her lover alive and leaving her in the "desert." The ambivalence between desire for divine love and physical love also demonstrates oscillation of voice.

Sarah's voice also oscillates when addressing the insecurity Maurice's insecurity. She writes "only when he is there with me, in me, does he feel safe. If only I could make him feel secure, then we could love peacefully, happily, not savagely, inordinately, and the desert would recede out of sight" (72). Later in the passage she continues, "I have always wanted to be liked or admired. I feel a terrible insecurity if a man turns on me, if I lose a friend. I don't want to lose a husband. I want everything, all the time everywhere" (72). Sarah moves from reflecting about Maurice's reluctance and insecurity to her own self doubt. "God loves you, they say in the churches, God is everything. People who believe that don't need admiration, they don't need to sleep with a man, they feel safe. But I can't invent a belief"(72). Sarah's self doubt then moves

to another ambivalent discussion of a belief in God. She links the fulfilling and affirming love of a belief in God with the negation of her desire for affection and admiration, specifically from men.

This negation of desire for affection leads to a negation of love for Maurice. Sarah questions the intensity of her desire and love for Maurice in a later passage. She writes, “Did I love Maurice as much before I loved You? Or was it really You I loved all the time? Did I touch You when I touched him? Could I have touched You if I hadn’t touched him first, touched him as I never touched Henry, anybody?” (99). This language negates the desire for Maurice while affirming divine love. Sarah compares sexual orgasm with divine love. The “touch” of Maurice, as previously mentioned, a touch of which Henry was incapable of eliciting, is directly compared to the “touch” of God. Sarah seems to understand the intensity of the affair with Maurice as similar to the intensity of divine love. This comparison is supported by Marc Bosco in *Graham Greene’s Catholic Imagination* and Gwenn Boardmann in *Graham Greene: The Aesthetics of Exploration*.

At this point in the novel, the ambivalent relationship between Sarah’s desire for her lover and the desire to maintain her vow to God has transitioned to a form of acceptance. “You willed our separation, but he willed it too. He [Maurice] worked for it with his anger and his jealousy, and he worked for it with his love. For he gave me so much love, and I gave him so much love that soon there wasn’t anything left, when we’d finished, but You” (*The End of the Affair* 99). Sarah seems to say that the emptiness left when the affair was finished is filled with divine love. And yet, the last journal entry expresses the oscillation. “I’m not at peace any more. I just want him like I used to in the old days” (99). Sarah’s voice oscillates between affirmation.

and negation. She desires Maurice and at the same time negates her desire for divine love, and then, in contrast, she desires a belief in God and negates her love of Maurice

Sarah's voice returns after the diary entries. She writes to Maurice after their last meeting continuing the first person narration. Maurice receives this letter after her death. The letter refers to the last meeting of the couple. At this meeting, Sarah and Maurice decide to go to Dorset together and start divorce proceedings for Sarah. After their meeting, Sarah decides she will stay with Henry. She writes, "I love you but I can't see you again. I don't know how I'm going to live in this pain and longing and. I'm praying to God all the time that he won't be hard on me, that he won't keep me alive" (120). She explains, "I asked him [a priest] couldn't I be a Catholic and marry you. I knew you wouldn't mind going through a service. Every time I asked him a question I had such hope" (120). Sarah hopes for a way to reconcile her desires, for Maurice and God. "He said I couldn't marry you [Maurice], I couldn't go on seeing you, not if I was going to be Catholic" (120). This statement is followed by Sarah's affirmation of belief, despite initial ambivalence, "I have fallen into belief like I fell in love. I've never loved before as I love you, and I've never believed in anything before as I believe now...I fought for belief for longer than I fought love" (121). This letter demonstrates oscillation of voice. The previous ambivalent voice is reconciled with the negation or termination of the relationship with Maurice demonstrating the dialogic nature of this portion of the text as previously defined by Kristeva.

Voice is presented through first person narration in one other place in the text, a report from Parkis. Parkis is the detective hired by Maurice to report on the comings and goings of Sarah. The passage does not add to the discussion of the dialogic nature of the text, but introduces the presence of Sarah's diary as an item of interest and mentions that Sarah.

often misses appointments, a detail that adds to the oscillating nature of the voice of Maurice.

While there are other voices in the text, each is presented through the voice of a narrator and is subject to the interpretation and analysis of the narrator. For example, the voice of Henry is seen through the narrative lenses of Maurice and Sarah, and therefore it does not contribute to the text in the form of first person narration. Since this study focuses on the dialogic nature of first person narration as presented in this text, the exploration of voice filtered through the voices of the narrators should be analyzed in a future study. The voice of Smythe is presented in this way as well and requires the same treatment.

At this point in the study, voices were examined; the socio-ideologic concepts of desire can be explored. In other words, what does the combining of these first person narratives say about desire within the world of this novel. Bahktin suggests that “in the hidden polemic the author’s word is directed toward its object, as is any other word, but in addition, every statement about the object is so constructed that, besides expressing its object-oriented meaning, it strikes a blow at the other person’s word about the same topic” (The Word in Dostoevsky 162). The voices of Maurice and Sarah collide with each other as well as societal norms present within their dialogue.

Bahktin asserts that characters are not merely single voices but are representative of an “impersonal form,” a social and societal ideal. And it is this ideal that in the novel, according to Bahktin, is “unmasked and destroyed as something false” (Discourse in the Novel 312). Bahktin continues that while the stylization “verges on a rejection of any straightforward and unmediated seriousness...sentimentality and ‘high seriousness’ is not completely eliminated” (Discourse in the Novel 312). In other words, the parodic nature of the novel, allows the exaggeration and

sentimentality of the voices to be unmasked and made false but only to the extent that it “limits itself to a principle criticism of the word as such” (312). Bakhtin suggests that this assertion separates the novel from other forms of storytelling. “There is a fundamental difference between this comic form for incorporating and organizing heteroglossia in the novel and other forms that are defined by their use of a personified and concretely posited author (written speech) or teller (oral speech)” (312). The difference is authorial distance, according to Bakhtin. “The posited author and teller assume a completely different significance where they are incorporated as carriers of a particular verbal-ideological linguistic belief system, with particular value judgments and intonations”(312). For the writer of prose, the belief system is that of another; “a particular view on the world belonging to someone else, is used by the author because it is highly productive, that is, it is able on one hand to show the object of representation in a new light...and on the other hand to illuminate a new way the ‘expected’ literary horizon, that horizon which the particularities of the teller’s tale are perceivable” (Discourse in the Novel 313). In the case of *The End of the Affair*, Greene, a Catholic, uses a narrator who is a proclaimed atheist to explore the oscillation between desire and divine love.

Beyond the voices of the characters, what can be assumed about the belief and judgments of desire within this novel? Is there a verbal linguistic belief system that exists outside of the character voices that may influence their expression of desire? Sarah writes, “While I loved Maurice, I loved Henry, and now I’m what they call good, I don’t love anyone at all” (*The End of the Affair* 82). Insertion of the phrase “they call good” serves as an outside voice, an outside authority or societal classification. While loving Maurice and Henry, Sarah was not “good” and loving no one is associated with being “good.” Authorial voice, according to Bakhtin, may represent a “common view” and may in this example, represent a common thought. The thought

represented by a desireless marriage, a marriage without the desire found with Sarah's lover and even the contention that this state of marriage, separated from desire is "good" is given in the statement as if it were an accepted societal norm. This language also suggests that Sarah sees her desire for Maurice as not good.

The societal restriction of religion is also discussed with Sarah's letter to Maurice received after her death. She writes "no, no, no, he [the priest] said, I couldn't go on seeing you, not if I was going to be a Catholic" (120). This language sets up an opposing relationship between the socially acceptable desire for divine love and the desire for "corrupt human love".

Can it be said, then, that the definition of desire posed by this text, is one of oscillation and ambivalence within a context of socially accepted norms? Such a definition would include jealousy and insecurity, and a need to have that insecurity and jealousy recognized and mirrored. For example, Maurice admits his jealousy, but goes further to negate the desire of Sarah because she does not mirror his jealousy. He writes, "Jealousy, or so I have always believed, exists only with desire" (31). Maurice seems to recognize desire and love in the reflection of jealousy and insecurity, requires it even. But the definition goes beyond the jealousy and insecurity of Maurice.

Sarah's voice is ambivalent to this insecurity. She says, "If only I could make him feel secure, then we could love peacefully, happily" (72). The transition that occurs in this passage gives a clue to Greene's intention with regard to desire. This passage transitions to Sarah's thoughts on her own personal insecurity. She writes, "I have always wanted to be liked or admired" by men specifically. Sarah then states that those who believe in divine love "God's love" do not require admiration, desire even. "People who believe that don't need admiration, they don't need to sleep with a man, they feel safe. But I can't invent a belief"(72). The

inclusion of divine love within the language of insecurity and heterosexual admiration associates the desire for human love with divine love, but in an ambivalent way. The voice of Sarah seems to suggest in this passage that the need for human contact, the contact between lovers, may be negated by the belief in a loving God.

Her voice shifts on this point by the end of the novel. In her letter to Maurice, she admits that for her, the negation of affection for him is not possible. She will desire him regardless of her desire for divine love. In her diary she writes, "I know one day I shall meet you on the Common and then I won't care a damn about Henry or God or anything" (121). While her voice changes late in the novel, much critical discussion focuses on the transition of the ending of human desire as it opens the path for divine love. Philip Stratford in *Faith and Fiction: Creative Process in Greene and Mauriac* (1967) sees the ending of human desire as grace. He writes, "The insistence on the ties between sacred and profane love is another theme in both authors (Greene and Mauriac) in their Catholic novels because it permits them to emphasize the meeting of nature and Grace in the human medium" (196). Stratford seems to suggest that the ending of profane love is the beginning of divine Grace. Receiving grace, then, would be with acceptance of belief.

What would be the purpose, from the point of view of the author, of introducing the idea of belief into a definition of desire already characterized by insecurity and jealousy, ambivalence and negation? As previously stated, Bakhtin suggests that an author enters the novel through "a particular view on the world belonging to someone else" (Discourse in the Novel 312). In drawing the character of Maurice, Greene creates a man "of obsessive hate" and without belief in "the possibility of a God" (*Ways of Escape* 142). The introduction of belief not only establishes yet another ambivalent relationship. It may ultimately destroy Maurice's false sense of desire.



How is Maurice's false desire destroyed by the introduction of belief? Maurice writes of belief after his last meeting with Sarah, after they spent time together in church. "When I began to write our story down, I thought I was writing a record of hate, but somehow the hate has got mislaid" (*The End of the Affair* 107). In this passage, Maurice's voice shifts on the purpose of the writing of the novel. On the first page of the novel, as previously discussed, Maurice writes with "hate" acknowledging a "bias". In mislaying the hate, Maurice and Greene negate the bias. Maurice continues and associates this negation of hate with belief in Sarah. He writes, "[I]n spite of her mistakes and her unreliability, she was better than most. It's just as well that one of us should believe in her: she never did believe in herself" (107). Yet with Sarah's death, Maurice's voice changes to anger. He writes, "I thought, why did You (God) have to do this to us? If she hadn't believed in You she would be alive now, we should have been lovers still" (113). Then, the anger swings to fear. Maurice writes as if speaking to Sarah, perhaps praying to her, "Loving you I had no appetite for food, I felt no lust for any other woman, but loving him there'd be no pleasure in anything at all with him away. I'd even lose my work, I'd cease to be Bendrix. Sarah, I'm afraid" (152). Maurice's final swing is to ambivalence to a belief in God. He writes, "I hate You, God, I hate You as though you existed" (159). There is no movement of voice beyond this point. He continues in the final paragraph of the novel:

I wrote at the start that this was a record of hate, and walking there beside Henry towards the evening glass of beer, I found the one prayer that seemed to serve the winter mood: Oh God, You've done enough, You've robbed me of enough, I'm too tired and old to learn to love, leave me alone for ever.

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Therefore, Maurice ends the novel in ambivalence to the belief in God.

Critics disagree on the nature of the ending of the novel. Georg M. A. Gaston in *The Pursuit of Salvation: A Critical Guide to the Novels of Graham Greene* (1984) sees this admonition of Maurice as a reluctant acceptance of salvation. He writes, Maurice “glances at the distance he has already traveled and expresses his surrender in quietly ironic terms in the final paragraph” (48). Marc Bosco writes in *Graham Greene’s Narrative Strategies*, that it is the transition from desire to divine love, from desire to belief, that takes place in this last paragraph. “It is the subtlety with which Greene gradually merges the search for Eros and into a search for Agape that soothes potential opposition brilliantly transmuting the anguish and suspense of a disrupted love-affair into a quest for spiritual peace” (82). While disagreement about the ending exists, the idea of belief permeates the critical commentaries.

If Greene intended to introduce belief into a definition of desire, then why end the novel with ambivalence to belief? It would seem at this point that the false belief of Maurice, as previously described, would have been torn away with this introduction of belief, and yet the novel closes with a return to ambivalence. The return to ambivalence causes the Bahktinian analysis to continue beyond the character voices. Without the destruction of the false belief, or the unmasking of that belief, a Bahktinian analysis is suspended. Perhaps, then, there is another explanation. What would be the intention of the return to ambivalence on the part of the author? These questions are appropriately answered in an examination of the voice of Greene in this novel while reviewing the socio-ideologies present at the time of the novel’s publication.

## Chapter Four

### Findings and Conclusion

Don't you see that it's the worst thing in the world for an author to write with the intention of converting men. If one is Catholic, he doesn't have to try to be "Catholic." Everything that he says or writes inevitably breathes Catholicism. When I sit down to write, my only ambition is to tell stories that are as fascinating as possible.

"Table Talk with Graham Greene" 1949

In *The End of the Affair*, Graham Greene utilizes the social contexts of speech characterization, the voice of a writer, a public servant, a detective, and a wife, and their discourses to explore human desire. Greene poses characters with differing social values in opposing positions which allows for exploration of perceived social norms. What do these voices say and what social norms are being expressed? *The End of the Affair* is a dialogue of desire, many desires, the desire of a lover, Maurice, for Sarah Miles and the desire of Maurice to cling to an atheist belief. Sarah desires her lover, Maurice, but this desire is complicated by a desire to save her lover through divine grace and the consequences of divine grace. How then, within the oscillation of these voices can the voice of Greene be revealed? Bakhtinian analysis provides a framework for such an investigation. Once the presence of heteroglossia has been established Bakhtin suggests that closer examination of the dialogic nature of the character voices reveals the voice of the author.

According to Bakhtin, the author interrupts the speech of the narrator to insert what Bakhtin describes as 'direct authorial word.' This authorial voice usually takes the form of sentiment or ideal, when it interrupts the voice of the narrator. Greene frequently inserts authorial voice in the form of sentiment. For instance, Maurice discusses insecurity as a piece of desire. "Insecurity is the worst sense that lovers feel: sometimes the most humdrum

desireless marriage seems better. Insecurity twists meanings and poisons trust. In a closely beleaguered city every sentry is a potential traitor. Even before the days of Mr. Parkis (the private detective) I was trying to check on her”( *The End of the Affair* 43). In this passage, the emotion of insecurity is discussed as a given. Its sentiment is described as fact, as common, and presented as common knowledge, a knowledge that extends beyond the character himself and then Greene narrows the focus to Maurice, taking the dialogue from the larger belief of insecurity to the dramatization of it with the investigation of Sarah’s other relationships through Parkis. The voice of Greene takes the form of the general and then shifts to the character’s voice with the specific action with Parkis.

Bakhtin also describes authorial voice as one of “common language.” “[T]he primary source of language usage in the comic novel is a highly specific treatment of ‘common language’” (Heteroglossia in the Novel 301). Bakhtin further explains that it is this “‘common language’ – usually the average norm of spoken and written language for a given social group – is taken by the author precisely as the *common view*, as the verbal approach to people and things normal for a given sphere of society, as the going point of view and the going *value*” (301). In other words, the author chooses the narrator and utilizes the words of the narrator not only in characterization, but also to assert a ‘common view’, a normed perspective of a section of society, the ‘value’ of that society. The words of the narrator, then, speak not only for its character, but are a representation of specific societal norms, i.e. an author, a wife, a civil servant, a detective, as voiced through the character and the author. “[T]he author distances himself from this common language, he steps back and objectifies it, forcing his own intentions to refract and diffuse themselves through the medium of this common view that has become embodied in language (a view that is always superficial and frequently hypocritical)” (302). In

other words, the author puts forth characters, “always superficial and frequently hypocritical” in an effort to refract the authorial voice. Bakhtin also suggests, that the relationship between the author and the “common language” is fluid; “(this sometimes is a rhythmic oscillation); the author exaggerates, now strongly, now weakly, one or another aspect of the ‘common language,’ sometimes abruptly exposing its inadequacy to its object and sometimes, on the contrary, becoming one with it, maintaining an almost imperceptible distance, sometimes even directly forcing it to reverberate with his own ‘truth’” (302).

“Truth,” as defined by Bakhtin, is the moment in the novel where the “author completely merges his own voice with the common view” (302). “As a consequence of this merger, the aspects of common language which in the given situation had been parodically exaggerated or had been treated as mere things, undergo change” (302). In other words, the combining of voices functions to alter “truth” in the sense of common language. This “shifting of distance between author and language, so that first some, then other aspects are thrown into relief” is required according to Bakhtin (301). Otherwise “the style would be monotonous or would require a greater individualization of the narrator” as well as a “different means for introducing and organizing heteroglossia” (302).

An example of “common view” follows:

“‘Yes,’ I said, playing with the danger, for what did it matter if Henry learnt a little about the past? It would be good for him and perhaps teach him to control his wife better. ‘I could pretend to be a jealous lover,’ I went on. ‘Jealous lovers are more respectable, less ridiculous, than jealous husbands. They are supported by the literature. Betrayed lovers are tragic, never comic. Think of Troilus. I shan’t lose my amour proper when I interview Mr. Savage.’ Henry’s sleeve had dried, but he held it towards the fire and now the cloth began to scorch. He said, ‘Would you really do that for me, Maurice?’ and there were tears in his eyes, as though he had never expected or deserved this supreme mark of friendship.”

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Is it, then, a commonly held view that it is the responsibility of the husband to “control his wife”? Is this “control” “good”? Barbara Caine writes, in *English Feminism 1780-1980*, that the shift from the Feminism of the 1920s and 1930s, the feminism of Virginia Woolf and Rebecca West, to the feminism of the postwar 1940s evolved to focus on “femininity, domesticity, and an acceptance of their ‘natural’ femininity for women, not only for their own happiness, but also for the well-being of children and society at large” (225). Caine further contends that this message of a more “domestic” woman was communicated by “sociologists, psychoanalysts and welfare workers” as well as the “popular press” (225). The transition to a larger sense of common good at the sacrifice of desire, personal heterosexual desire, repeats the ambivalent relationship previously established in regards to desire between Sarah and Maurice.

The prevailing British feminist discourse, at the time of publication of *The End of the Affair*, is described by Caine in this way. “That feminism should have as its primary concern the well-being of society as a whole, even if that well-being involves strain and sacrifice for women – rather than the needs and problems – unquestionably serves to distinguish the writings of the 1950s and 1960s from that of preceding decades” (*English Feminism 1780-1980* 236). The shift in dialogue on feminism can be connected to the wording of control in the example of *The End of the Affair*. The social commentary by Caine suggests a trend in postwar feminism toward a greater domestic purpose of women. The contention by Maurice that Henry needs to “control” his wife fits into this social sentiment. The mood from the feminism of the 1920s and 1930s, a time of focus on women’s sexual freedom, economic freedom shifts in the following decades to a focus on family and domesticity, a more controlled female existence. The use of the word “control” by Maurice, coupled with the prevailing moves in feminism serve as a mark of “common language.” It can be inferred that Greene’s tone of language would be acceptable to a

population that was experiencing such transitions in social norm definition. This shift in tone would have influenced the voice of Greene and is certainly apparent in the text. However, in making Sarah, the character who stood in contrast to the norm, a worker of miracles, the voice of Greene while influenced by this social sentiment, might not have agreed with it. While the voice of the character Maurice seems to be influenced by this social sentiment, the then current voice of feminism, it does not appear to be reflected in the voice of Greene.

Bakhtin also describes the authorial voice as containing “compact masses of direct authorial discourse – pathos-filled, moral-didactic, sentimental-elegiac or idyllic” (Heteroglossia in the Novel 302). Bakhtin seems to suggest that authorial voice, in the novel, can be differentiated by its emotive quality, the presence of pathos. “Direct authorial voice,” according to Bakhtin, “is thus realized in direct, unqualified stylizations of poetic genres (idyllic, elegiac, etc.) or stylizations of rhetorical genres (the pathetic, the moral-didactic)”(302).

Several of these interruptions occur in *The End of the Affair*.

A story has no beginning or end: arbitrarily one chooses that moment of experience from which to look back or from which to look ahead. I say ‘one chooses’ with the inaccurate pride of a professional writer who – who when he has been seriously noted at all – has been praised for his technical ability, but do I in fact of my own will choose that black wet January night on the Common, in 1946, the sight of Henry Miles slanting across the wide river of rain, or did these images choose me? It is convenient, it is correct according to the rules of my craft to begin just there, but if I had believed in God, I could also have believed in a hand, plucking at my elbow, a suggestion, ‘Speak to him: he hasn’t seen you yet’(1).

In this example, Greene utilizes a parody of the “choice” of an author, the beginning of a story, to introduce the concepts of choice and the presence of God. Greene begins with the choice by the writer and narrator, of the beginning and ending of stories, a generally accepted concept among writers. Then, as the paragraph continues, the concept of choice changes, shifting in the meaning of the word. Does the narrator choose or was this choice made for the narrator, if

so, by whom? The narrator interrupts the choice of the beginning with the image of the evening, “black wet January” and the image of “Henry Miles” (1). Upon presenting this image, the narrator questions if the “images chose me” (1). The final sentences directly compare the “rules of my craft” to the hand of God “plucking at my elbow” (1). The power to choose shifts within the paragraph.

According to Bakhtin, this device is considered a “double-styled hybrid construction” (Heteroglossia in the Novel 304).<sup>2</sup> Greene’s narrator speaks with the voice of the writer that is contrasted with the second voice, perhaps God or Greene, himself. Bakhtin suggests that this shift “frequently happens that even one and the same word will intersect in a hybrid construction – and, consequently, the word has two contradictory meanings” (305). In this selection, the construction shifted with the power of choice, the power of desire and the shifting of power of desire to include the power of belief. Why, then, would an oscillation between desire and belief be significant to the voice of Greene?

In the biography, *The Third Woman* (2000), William Cash notes that Greene was influenced by the writings of Jean-Pierre de Caussade, a French theologian. The connection between Greene and de Caussade was established by Cash through personal interviews with contemporaries of Greene as well as letters written to Catherine Walston by Greene. In one such letter Greene quoted de Caussade, “Nothing happens in this world, in our souls or outside them, without the design or permission of God: now we ought to submit ourselves no less to what God permits than to what he directly wills” (Cash 11). In selecting this quote, Greene seems to suggest that the will of God can be derived from what God permits as much as what he wills. Why the

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<sup>2</sup> “Hybrid construction” as described by Bakhtin, “is an utterance that belongs, by its grammatical (syntactic) and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two “languages,” two semantic and axiological belief systems



is the connection of de Caussade with Greene significant to a discussion of desire in the voice of Greene?

The writings of de Caussade speak directly to the joining of belief and desire. de Caussade writes in *Abandonment to Divine Providence* c.1733-1744<sup>3</sup>, “Give your desires free reign, setting absolutely no limits, no boundaries to them. Listen to me: let your hearts demand the infinite, for I can tell you how to fill them. There is never one moment in which I cannot show you how to find whatever you can desire. The present moment is always overflowing with immeasurable riches, far out to you: as you believe so will you receive” (41). This passage seems to suggest that for this theologian, the will of God is expressed through the desires of man and that perhaps the voice of Greene can be found within the dialogue of desire and belief.

Bakhtin, when discussing dialogue of characters, also defines “quasi-direct discourse” (Heteroglossia in the Novel 319). Quasi-direct discourse, as described by Bakhtin, is the character’s “inner speech, but transmitted in a way regulated by the author, *with provocative questions from the author with ironically debunking reservations*” (Heteroglossia in the Novel 319). The display of internal speech is often “disorderly and impetuous,” according to Bakhtin (319). Bakhtin suggests that this speech is “of course a hybrid form, for the author’s voice may be present in varying degrees of activity and may introduce into the transmitted speech a second accent of its own (ironic, irritated and so on)” (320). *The End of the Affair*, through narrator, expresses voice in this way.

I can imagine that if there existed a God who loved, the devil would be driven to destroy even the weakest, the most faulty imitation of that love. Wouldn’t he be afraid that the habit of love might grow, and wouldn’t he try to trap us all into being traitors,

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<sup>3</sup>*Abandonment to Divine Providence* was published posthumously between the years 1733-1744 in French. The English translation and the source for this study was published in 1975.

into helping him extinguish love? If there is a God who uses us and makes his saints out of such material as we are, the devil too may have his ambitions; he may dream of training even such a person as myself, even poor Parkis, into being his saints, ready with borrowed fanaticism to destroy love wherever we find it.

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In this internal dialogue, the narrator discusses the possibility of a devil that works within people to destroy the love that God provides. Maurice describes himself as a traitor to this love, an assistant in the labor of destruction. Placing love in association with God and the destruction of that love with the devil and himself, Maurice separates himself from love and God and associates his character with the loss of love, a destroyer of love and his desire as the instrument of a devil. In this dialogue, human love then is associated with divine love, perhaps a manifestation of it. The destruction of human love is associated with the devil, and Maurice aligns himself with the devil, calls himself a “saint,” “ready with borrowed fanaticism” (47). Associating the words fanaticism with the descriptors of Maurice serves as a personal reflection on his behavior. Maurice, in this example, views his behavior towards Sarah as “fanaticism” and his desires as fanaticism (47). Why is Greene associating the destruction of human love with the absence of divine love?

Does this separation of desire foretell of an absence of God in other social aspects? Through de Caussade, Greene was influenced by the assumption that the will of God could be recognized within the desires of man. What could this separation of desire and divine love indicate in the voice of Greene? In 1945, Greene wrote on Francois Mauriac and predicted the effects of the absence of God from the pages of literature.

For with the death of James the religious sense was lost to the English novel, and with the religious sense went the sense of the importance of the human act. It was as if the world of fiction had lost a dimension: the characters of such distinguished writers Mrs.

Virginia Woolf and Mr. E M Forster wandered like cardboard symbols through a world that was paper-thin...

The novelist, perhaps unconsciously aware of his predicament, took refuge in the subjective novel. It was as if by mining into layers of personality hitherto untouched he could unearth the secret of 'importance', but in these mining operations he lost yet another dimension. The visible world ceased to exist as completely as the spiritual

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Greene predicts in the future of the novel a move to investigation of self and the selves of the characters. Greene sees this transition to these selves as the death of the souls of the characters as an extension of the death of the author, who has "the traditional and essential right of a novelist, to comment, to express his views" (*The Collected Essays* 116). As shown throughout this analysis, the voice of Greene permeates this novel, refracted in the discourse between the characters. Several factors, including the atheistic characters, Maurice and Henry, would lead a reader to believe that there may be a voice of trepidation on the souls of future characters of fiction, within the voice of Greene.

The voices, their parodic natures, should be unmasked then in *The End of the Affair*. For the voice of Sarah Miles, the desire for Maurice and what she refers to as "normal corrupt human love" is replaced for a desire for the acceptance of the presence of a God and the love of that God. The desire for Maurice and the absence of self worth must be torn away for Sarah to reach the divine love she seeks, the journey toward the recognition of her own soul and the worth of her soul. Furthermore, the expression of desire described by Maurice as hate, i.e. hate of Sarah, Henry and God is destined to die or be extinguished. The move to extinguish the hate of Maurice begins in the first paragraph with the possibility of "God plucking at the shoulder" of Maurice as he passes Henry in the rain to moving in with Henry after Sarah's death (1). The transformation is not simply the addition of empathy to the character, or the absence of the

driving desire to possess love and an acceptance and giving of compassion to Henry, the transformation requires a reflection of belief, “an understanding,” according to Greene (Donaghy 39).

In a 1953 interview with the *Paris Review*, part of a collection edited by Henry Donaghy, Greene is asked about the transformation of the characters in his Catholic novels. Greene writes, “They sin, but there is no limit to God’s mercy”(Danaghy 38). Greene opens the possibility of forgiveness through faith with this passage. When asked if his characters find redemption, he responds, “Yes, though redemption is not the exact word. We must be careful of our language. They have all understood in the end. This is perhaps the religious sense” (Danaghy 39). For Maurice, the transformation or the “understanding” is not complete, in the closing paragraph his voice swings to ambivalence. The transformation and therefore the unmasking does not happen? Why? What is Greene suggesting?

In *Ways of Escape*, Greene sees *The End of the Affair* as incomplete. Greene writes, “Sarah, the chief character was dead, the book should have continued at least as long after her death as before and yet, like her lover Bendrix, I found no great appetite to continue now that she was gone beyond real and only a philosophical theme was left behind” (143). In the actual writing of the novel, the character who hoped to merge belief and desire, died and with her death the opportunity for Greene to complete the novel died as well. He writes, “I began to hurry to the end, and although, in the last part there are scenes, especially those which express the growth of tenderness between Bendrix and Sarah’s husband, which seem successful enough, I realized too late I was cheating”(143). Greene seems to say that while the transcendence of Maurice was beginning, it was not finished; there was no transcendence and that the fault lay with the author, in the author’s voice. Greene continues, “The coincidences should have continued over the years

battering the mind of Bendrix, forcing on him a reluctant doubt of his own atheism” (143). Maurice should have doubted his lack of belief. If Maurice’s atheistic beliefs faltered, the transcendence would have been complete, in a Bakhtinian analysis. “The last pages would have remained much as they were written (indeed I very much like the last pages), but I had spurred myself too quickly to the end”(143). In other words, Greene did not feel that the ending of the novel reflected his idea of the novel, or by extension his voice.

Critics have noted the extensive changes to the original draft since its initial publication. David Leon Higdon notes in his 1979 essay “Betrayed Intentions” Graham Greene’s *The End of the Affair*”, that Greene made fifty-three revisions resulting in “six states of text – four of them in print” (70), a significant number according to Higdon. He further contends, “These revisions underline Greene’s intention to make all the results – the appearance of Mrs. Bertram, the cure of Lancelot, etc. – following Sarah’s death become far more problematical and coincidental” (76). The revisions, then, seem to be used to clarify the voice of Greene. Higdon suggests that perhaps the intent of Greene was realized in the replacement of Smythe’s birthmark with a “skin condition” (75). This change, according to Higdon, “closed off ambiguities and uncertainties” (75). In other words, making the birthmark a rash, in the case of Smythe, suggests a more elusive nature to Sarah’s miracles. Making the miracles elusive, as described by Higdon, supports the proposition that Greene intended to move Maurice in the direction of acceptance of belief in a God, an acceptance that was not reached in the original text.

In attempting to move Maurice into the direction of acceptance, Greene therefore intended to tear away Maurice’s ambivalence by the presence of the elusive miracles. In this way, the novel would have not only have completed the Bakhtinian analysis, but also would have revealed the voice of Greene in accordance with the writings of de Caussade. Therefore, through

extended Bakhtinian analysis, the voice of Greene can be revealed in regards to heterosexual desire as it is connected to divine love described by de Caussade. Greene seems to see heterosexual desire as directly connected to divine love, physically and spiritually. He seems to view desire as a driving force not only for heterosexual love but also for revealing the will of God. Through the influence of the writings of de Caussade, Greene seems to suggest that desire must be present for the fulfillment of human love and divine love. This common force of desire then, Greene poses as a necessity of belief, through the writings on James and Mauriac, in *The Collected Essays*. Therefore, Greene seems to give voice to an idea of desire that transcends prevailing social norms, specifically the domestication of women present in England in the 1940s and 1950s and that also forecasts a more secular future for the novel, while at the same time interprets heterosexual desire as an instrument for revealing divine desire.

The use of a Bakhtinian framework for exploring not only character voice but also authorial voice within a socio-ideologic context adds an ability to examine a novel as a whole. Through character and authorial voice analysis, social norms are revealed, authorial biographical sources are considered and literary influences and authorial works are explored. This kind of investigation allows for a combination of voices, whether social or political in an effort to explore authorial voice. This type of study also uses differing interpretations and attempts to utilize several influences on authorial voice and character voice in an effort to examine the intent of the author. Also it is hoped that this type of study would reveal consistency of voice amid the varying influences and environments that are present in his other works. Many of the other works of Greene are set in Eastern countries and the voices and social context would be different from those present in England during Greene's lifetime. For example, *The Quiet American* (1955) was set in Vietnam. Nevertheless, a Bakhtinian study examines voices within a text

through the lens of language, exposing the voices of not only character and author, but of a community or larger society as well.

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